



DEVELOPING RADIO PARTNERS

## Focus: Drying Rivers and Streams

Zambia like most other Africa countries is experiencing the drying up of its river systems.

It's occurring between the months of May and June following the rainy season.

For instance, the Munyeke River in Namwala used to run throughout the year, but in recent years it dries up by May or June.

A watershed is the area of land where all of the water that is under it or drains off of it -- goes into the same place. The watersheds and catchments play an important role by ensuring there is water in rivers and streams for human needs.

Watershed management involves planning, developing, distributing and managing the optimum use of water resources to ensure that competing demands for water are met on an equitable basis -- satisfying all uses and demands.

# The Weekly

## Information Resource Bulletin

The goals of the Weekly Bulletin are:

- Bring listeners in the project area the latest information on natural resources, the environment and agriculture
- Focus on solutions, what works and what people can do
- Encourage listeners to share both their questions and solutions (African solutions for African problems)
- Raise awareness of issues that need to be discussed to affect public policy.
- Bring the latest solutions and practices that have relevance to this region from around the world
- Identify and link other NGOs working in the region share the project interests and goals
- Give the participating journalists guidance and tips on their reporting on these issues

## The Problem: Rapidly Drying Up of Rivers and Streams

The major cause of drying up of rivers and streams is human activity. For instance, poor farming practices leading to soil erosion into the streams and the opening up of watersheds for farming and other industrial needs -- contribute to the loss of water.

Zambia is experiencing massive construction projects countrywide and the impact of these projects has an impact on natural drainage of water.

Forest covers ensure that the regular flow of clean water is enhanced.

Deforestation, on the other hand, destroys this natural flow of clean water.

This kind of human activity has greatly contributed to the drying up of most natural streams as can be seen in deforested areas of the Southern provinces

The change in climate that includes frequent droughts leading to high demand for water resources is another contributor to the drying up of the streams.

Soil erosion also affects the flow of water -- by adding more and more silt to streams.

## Solutions: Activities for Journalists

Find out from the radio listeners about their local streams, how have they changed in the last ten years?

Ask them what they think contributes to rapidly drying up of the rivers/streams in their particular areas?

Ask listeners about their knowledge of a watershed or water catchment areas in their areas? Do they consider these areas important and worth protecting?

Consult the Ministry of Agriculture and Department of Forestry on watersheds in the local area and invite an expert to discuss the importance of protecting these areas.

Talk about the link between deforestation and the rapidly drying up of the rivers and streams.

Ask listeners to link some agricultural practices to the drying up of streams – such as the clearing of land along the rivers for gardens.

The forest plays a key role in natural water purification and regulating evaporation rate from the streams. Hold a discussion on this with an expert.

Discuss how plant life near streams reduces the loss of water in those streams.

Most development activities require the use of water and the Zambian government almost always prioritizes infrastructure development. Find out from listeners what has been the experience of water shortages in line with

construction works in their area?

What times of year are water supplies less reliable?

Ask listeners about water quality as well. Have they noticed poorer water quality in the last ten years?

Ask listeners what they think causes the loss of water and the poor quality of water in their area.

Some communities have formed water-user committees. Ask the listeners if they have a committee assisting government in watershed management?

The Zambia Government has established a Water Management Authority. Ask listeners how much they know about the Water Management Authority.

The Water Management Authority is supposed to support community watershed management committees. Is it working in their community?

### Useful Links

Information about farming and the environment: Makweti Sishekanu, National Farmers Union Zambia: +260-211-252-649 or +260-965-098-360. Email: [makwetiskanu@yahoo.com](mailto:makwetiskanu@yahoo.com)

Mr Paul Kapotwe Director General Water Management Authority contact number 0977 68 9172

Good source of information: Vincent Ziba, FAO Zambia; Email: [vinceziba@yahoo.com](mailto:vinceziba@yahoo.com). Phone: 0966-246-924

Good source of information; Mwape Sichilongo, WWF Conservation Manager. Email: [msichilongo@wwfzam.org](mailto:msichilongo@wwfzam.org). Phone: +260 966442540