



DEVELOPING RADIO PARTNERS

## Focus: Protecting Wetlands

The dry season is characterized by more gardening activities by small scale farmers using wetlands. Wetlands are areas where water and land are mixed.

Wetlands in Zambia, based on this definition, occupy slightly more than a fifth of the country's total area.

Wetlands have soils that become saturated from precipitation and this impacts the soils and what lives in it. Crops are grown in wetlands the year round – mostly rice and/or maize are the main crops produced in dambos during the rainy season.

Vegetable production is mainly done during the dry season.

Communities need to be aware of the vital environmental, social and economic benefits that wetlands provide to both people and wildlife – so that these areas can be managed effectively.

# 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

## Problem: The Permanent Drying of Wetlands

Mismanagement of wetlands such as over cultivation, discriminate digging of drains and overgrazing, will lead to permanent drying up of wetlands. The destruction of wetlands will lead to the loss of the ecological importance of these wetlands and also loss of the biological diversity

Drying of wetland may aggressively affect wildlife, the vegetation and ultimately, people. Zambia loses approximately five percent of its wetlands each year.

The loss of wetlands is from natural processes and human activities. Natural processes include drought -- the rising temperatures accelerates

evaporation of wetlands while human activities -- such as road construction, mining, water pollution from the release of chemicals and farming threaten the survival of wetlands.

Local communities can play a key role in protecting wetlands by voluntary and regulatory actions – to minimize the impact of human activities that threaten these areas.

For instance, communities can form conservation groups to monitor activities on wetlands. The Department of Environment is the ministry to contact for technical support.

## Solutions: Activities for Journalists

Zambia has a variety of wetlands areas and some of them include: Barotse Floodplain, Lake Bangweulu, Kafue Flats, Lukanga Swamp, Mofwe Lagoon and Lake Mweru Wantipa.

Use your community radio station to help listeners understand the significance of wetland management.

Ask your community to identify the wetlands found in their local areas.

Find out from your listeners what they consider the benefits of the local wetland areas.

How are the local wetlands mostly being used?

Can they educate their fellow neighbors on what they think about how they use local wetlands.

Find out what time of the year they see changes in their wetlands? And what kind of changes do they experience? Do any of the changes affect their livelihood activities?

Find out what kind of projects are taking place in their wetlands?

From the projects taking place in their local wetlands, how are the communities involved?

Can they identify activities that are contributing to drying up of wetlands in their areas?

What wetlands services in your area need

protection?

Do you have regulations/traditional measures in place for protecting wetlands in areas?

What kind of activities are mostly protected or neglected in your area?

Do you think the wetlands in your area are well-protected? In not, why?

What do you think would happen if the wetlands were to dry up in your area?

Have your listeners noticed changes in the wildlife population due to the drying up of wetlands?

What kinds of birds live in the local wetlands area?

Ask your listeners how they would like to see their local wetlands managed. Ask about the presence of conservation clubs and any possible community action to protect against the drying up of wetlands.

### 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)

Good source of information: Vincent Ziba, National Coordinator, Community-based National Resource Management Forum, 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