

S. Udzungwa: Mufindi Forest Conservation Project

Participatory Forest Management

Summary

Since 1995 TFCG has been providing support for forest conservation in the Southern Udzungwa Mountains in Mufindi District. The focus for support in Mufindi has been on participatory forest management for six forests covering 620 ha and working with six villages. The project has also been working with communities to increase household incomes through activities such as fish farms, improved fruit crops etc.

In addition TFCG has been reforesting two areas of land that act as corridors between forest fragments. Through enrichment planting and fire protection forest species are beginning to return to the area including black and white colobus monkeys.

Introduction

The overall objective of the project is that: 'The biodiversity of the forests of the southern Udzungwa is protected through sustainable forest management and communities have improved livelihood security.'

The forest has a number of plants and animals that are endemic to the Eastern Arc. There is also a strictly endemic species of coffee *Coffea mufindiensis* which has only been recorded from Lulanda. TFCG have been working with six communities to establish a management system for the six forests. This has included strengthening the Village Environmental Committees and writing and implementing management plans.

History of Lulanda

Of the six forests that TFCG is working with the history of Lulanda has been the most thoroughly documented. In the late 19th Century Lulanda was a continuous forest area. The local Hehe tribe revered parts of the forest for their spiritual values. Only the leaders were allowed into these areas which were called 'Pakane' or 'Pa mutwa' – 'for leaders only' (Woodcock 1998). One of these areas is known as Fufu. Tradition has it that Chief Mkwawa, the leader of the Hehe tribe used to rest beside one of the large trees in this forest on his way back from war or while planning his next attack. No-one else was permitted to rest in the shade of this tree.

In the 1940s under the British Administration people living inside and adjacent to the forest were moved to other areas. The boundaries were demarcated. In the 1950s there was a reversal of policy and the British Administration encouraged people to return to the forest to cultivate coffee (Woodcock 2002). This began the fragmentation of the forest. By the late 1950s three distinct forest fragments remained. In 1974 with Ujamaa, a Forest Attendant was assigned to the village. He accelerated the process of fragmentation by illegally authorising pitting of the forest's timber.

In the early 1990s a number of biologists visited the forest including the botanist Jon Lovett and the lepidopterist Colin Congdon. They found the forest reduced to the three patches of Fufu, Magwilwa and Ihili and that people were beginning to encroach on the forest edges collecting wood products. The forest

Site Details

Location: Southern Udzungwa Mountains, Mufindi District, Iringa Region

Area: Eight Eastern Arc montane forests covering 621 ha.

Biodiversity: Two Eastern Arc endemic and two Eastern Arc / Coastal Forest endemic vertebrate species; five plants which are strictly endemic; two locally rare IUCN-listed species and two IUCN data-deficient species in the Lulanda and Lugoda-Lutali forests.

Status: Threatened by agricultural encroachment, logging, pole cutting, and firewood collecting.

● **South Udzungwa Mountains**
TFCG's efforts in these forests has included environmental education, reforestation, agroforestry, and creation of a management plan.



was under the authority of the District however the District Forest Officer had not visited in over 12 years due to a lack of funds and transport.

The biologists who visited Lulanda brought its plight to the attention of the Tanzania Forest Conservation Group with a request to prevent further forest loss. Between 1993 and 1998 TFCG provided support in demarcating the new forest boundaries, planting the boundaries with *Hakea saligna*, making and maintaining fire lines and starting to plant the forest corridor. TFCG also supported environmental education, income generating activities and establishment of wood lots. Since 1998 there has been a change in the National Forest Policy enabling communities to participate in the management of their forests. Since then TFCG have been supporting the community of Lulanda to take responsibility for the management of the forest by strengthening the Village Environmental Committee and preparing a management plan.

Biological Importance

Of the six forests that TFCG is working with Lulanda is the most important in terms of biodiversity. For its small size Lulanda has a high diversity of canopy trees. The forest is montane forest with a canopy dominated by *Parinari excelsa*. Other common canopy species include *Bersama abyssinica*, *Rauvolfia caffra*, *Albizia gummifera*, *Prunus africana* and *Millettia oblata*. Overall TFCG have recorded a total of 254 species of tree, shrub and herb from 66 families in and around the Lulanda Forest.

Species with restricted ranges which are found in Lulanda include *Coffea lulandoensis*, *Coffea mufindiensis*, *Psychotria megalopus*, *Trichilia lovetii* and *Zimmermaniopsis uzungwae*.

Some of the interesting animals that have been recorded in the forest include the Mozambique galago (*Galagoides granti*), the horned bush-viper (*Atheris ceratophorus*) and the Keith's creeping frog (*Phlyctimantis keithae*).

TFCG continues to support biological research in the forest. In 2002, a team from Newcastle University visited the forest to assess its biodiversity. Other biologists who have visited the forest include Andrew Perkin for his doctoral study on galago, Colin Congdon to record the forest's butterflies and Jon Lovett for his study of the vegetation.

TFCG's Conservation Activities

TFCG has assisted six communities to develop management strategies for their forests in collaboration with the District. Each village has elected a Village Environmental Committee charged with the responsibility to manage the forest. These teams have identified, mapped and planted the boundaries of their forests in consultation with those living around it. The committees then drafted management plans describing the forest and specifying how the forest can and can not be used. These plans are now being implemented and monitored.

Since 1993 TFCG has been providing regular lessons at the local primary schools. Through seminars and forest walks TFCG also reach the adult population.

Many people in these communities rely on wood for fuel, building materials and furniture. TFCG has been working with farmers to encourage them to plant their own supplies of wood. Popular species have included pine and eucalyptus.

In Lulanda the project has reforested a corridor of land in order to link two forest patches which had been fragmented in the 1970s. Over 400,000 trees have been planted. In Luhunga the project has supported the planting of a 'millennium forest' where over 10,000 trees have been planted.

References

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