



DEVELOPING RADIO PARTNERS

Focus: Water Management

Water is an essential resource for all life on the planet.

Water resource management is the activity of planning, developing, distributing and managing the optimum use of water resources.

Ideally, water resource management planning considers all the competing demands for water and seeks to allocate it on an equitable basis to satisfy all uses and demands.

This is rarely possible in practice.

Agriculture is the largest user of the world's fresh water resources. Farming consumes 70 percent of the world's water.

As the world's population rises and consumes more food (currently exceeding 6%, it is expected to reach 9% by 2050), industries and urban development must expand – putting more and more stress on water resources.

The Weekly for Zambia 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: Poor Water management

In Zambia, water scarcity is very common and a very prevalent issue in both urban and rural areas.

Women in rural and urban areas walk longer distances to fetch clean water compared to 20 years ago.

The water resources have dwindled in most parts of the country leaving insufficient fresh water for the population.

This is caused by several things: polluted freshwater resources, overexploited groundwater resources, insufficient harvesting capacities in the surrounding rural areas, poorly constructed and

maintained water supply systems, a high amount of water use and insufficient technical and water management capacities.

Agriculture is competing with industry and municipal users for safe water supplies, while traditional water sources are becoming polluted with urban wastewater.

As cities offer the best opportunities for selling produce, farmers often have no alternative but to use polluted water to irrigate their crops – and this can lead to significant health risks.

Solutions: Activities for Journalists

One of the biggest concerns for our water resources in the future is the sustainability of the current and future water resources. Are your listeners concerned about water issues? What are they most concerned about relating to water?

Finding a balance between what is needed by humans and what is needed in the environment is an important step in the sustainability of water resources.

The field of water resources management will have to continue to adapt to the current and future issues relating to the allocation of water. With the growing uncertainties of global climate change and the long term impacts of management actions, decision-making will be even more difficult. It is likely that ongoing climate changes will lead to situations that have not been encountered. As a result, new management strategies will have to be implemented in order to avoid problems in the allocation of water resources.

Zambia is currently facing a reduced water supply in the Kariba Dam -- the major source for generating electricity. This relates directly to water management in Zambia.

What can small, medium and commercial farmers do to protect water catchment areas? Do you believe enough is being done? How important are water catchment areas?

Deforestation leads to water shortages. Is enough being done in your community to reforest areas that have been cut?

How does deforestation affect the availability of

water?

Are there water user committees in your community? How well do they work? What else can be done to protect water resources in your community?

Ask farmers how much they are engaging with the Water Resources Management Authority. If they aren't, why not?

The rainy season is known for outbreaks of cholera in Zambia. This disease is caused by human and animal waste in the drinking water.

Communities are encouraged to drink boiled water during the rainy season to help limit the spread of cholera.

Do a series of stories on water resources in your community. Is water properly managed in your area? If not, what can be done to improve water management?

Have a panel discussion with citizens – including farmers and experts discussing ways to improve water resources in your 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

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

Mwape Sichilongo, WWF Conservation Manager. Email: mwapesichilongo@wfwzam.org. Phone: +260 966442540