

<p style="text-align: center;">FIRST ONE DAY CONSULTATION WORKSHOP OF PALAS FOREST OWNERS</p>
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**Organized by: PCDP – NWFP Wildlife Department,
NWFP Forest Department**

**Besham
19th August 2003**

**WORKSHOP REPORT
PFM-Sector PCDP**

**FIRST ONE DAY CONSULTATION WORKSHOP
OF PALAS FOREST OWNERS ON 19TH AUG.2003
AT BESHAM**

Background

The overall goal of the Palas Conservation and Development Project (PCDP) is *“To Safeguard the biodiversity of the Palas Valley by enabling the local communities to tackle the linked causes of poverty and incipient natural resource degradation”*.

To achieve the Goal of the project following results have been set for accomplishment: -

1. Establishment of viable community organizations.
2. Safeguarding biodiversity and sustainable use of natural resources through creation of awareness and improved management in the field of Biodiversity Conservation, Participatory Forest Management, Agriculture, Livestock and Rangelands.

3. Rehabilitation and Development of Infrastructure
4. Development of improvements in Health, Nutrition and Sanitation, particularly in women and children on sustainable basis.

Under the annual work plan for year 4 of the project, result 2 ii stipulates;
“Participatory Forest Management initiated, including to set aside the forests of highest biodiversity value “core zone” from commercial timber harvesting; sustainable timber harvesting in remaining forests “sustainable use zones” supported and conservation of biodiversity and sustainable use of non timber forest products in all forests implemented.”

The activity 2.19 of the result 2ii, envisages, “Establish effective and locally accountable organizations for forest owners.”

To accomplish this activity a series of consultative meetings with individuals, CBOs and groups of people at Morro, Paro, and Ledhi were initiated. From these meetings a common proposal of holding a joint meeting with elites of the area emerged. To materialize this proposal and to initiate the process of formation of owners organization, a consultative one day workshop of owners was arranged for 19th of August 2003 at Besham.

The objectives, sharing of information with regard to NWFP Forest policy 1999, forest issues, list of invitees, venue of workshop and the program of the workshop were decided through mutual consultation with Project Director, other Program Officers, the Member Provincial Assembly and a few of the elites of the area.

Objectives:

- ✍️ To create awareness amongst the Forest owners about NWFP Forest Policy 1999, New Planning Strategy and Forest Development Fund.
- ✍️ To share the problems of NRM with the participating owners so as to have their proposals for viable solutions to these problems.
- ✍️ To create awareness among the Forest owners about the negative impacts of pre-sale of royalties and to seek their proposals to forestall this nefarious practice.
- ✍️ To entrust the responsibility to this representative “Jirga” to convene Intra-Khel meetings for the establishment of such organizations of the owners which can enter into an agreement with the FD for timber harvesting through their own harvesting societies.

✍️ To create awareness about the loss of forests at the hands of unsupervised royalty purchasers through illegal cutting.

Workshop Technique

- ✍️ Presentations on NWFP Forest Policy, New Planning Strategy and Forest Development Fund.
- ✍️ Presentation on Forest Management issues.
- ✍️ Questions, Answers and Discussions.
- ✍️ Group work, Presentations and Discussion.

Workshop Tools

- ✍️ Overhead Projector.
- ✍️ Paper Sheets, Markers.

Proceedings of the Workshop

The workshop started with recitation from the Holy Qura'an. The facilitator of the workshop Saleem Ahmad, PO COP invited Maulana Asmatullah, local MPA to preside over the workshop proceedings.

Welcome Address by PD:

The Project Director welcomed the participants and informed the plenary that the workshop has been arranged to initiate dialogue / discussion on very important forest management issues such as pre-sale of forest royalties, illicit cutting of trees at the hands of royalty purchasers, indiscriminate cutting of Quercus trees for sale as fire wood, damage to forests by fires and local conflicts in the Palas valley. The PCDDP and the Forest Department do not have the mandate to decide on the issues without full involvement of the whole of the community. However, the participants of this workshop are expected to discuss in detail the issues and propose plausible solutions to these problems and then discuss the solutions in their respective Khels. Thus the present workshop may be considered as an initiative for the solution of these problems. PD also welcomed the newly appointed DFO lower Kohistan Raja Imtiaz and hoped that he would try his level best to work for the betterment of the Palasi people. PD resolved to give his full support to the decisions made by the people and to bring it into the notice of the Government.

Address of the DFO Lower Kohistan

The newly appointed DFO Lower Kohistan, Raja Imtiaz in his address appreciated the initiative of the PCDP in assisting the Forest Department to resolve the issues of forest management and assured his full support for the cause. He told the plenary that the Govt. of NWFP has already switched over to a new paradigm of forest management. The most important change brought about is the management of natural resources through the active participation of all the stakeholders. He hoped that the participants of the present workshop would work as a think tank for the poor people of Palas Valley and would come up with workable solutions to their problems.

Presentation by Hanif Shah

Hanif Shah, Program Officer Participatory Forest Management gave a comprehensive presentation on the Forest Policy of N.W.F. Province 1999, New Planning Strategy and creation of Forest Development Fund. Salient Features of the presentation are given below:



NWFP Forest Policy 1999

Mission:

The Government of NWFP by sustainably managing and developing the forests of the Province is to foster the economic, social and ecological well being of the people residing around the forests, the people of NWFP and of Pakistan, and of International community.

Objectives:

- ☞ Meeting the domestic needs of the local communities for timber, firewood, grazing and medicinal plants.
- ☞ Increasing the income of the local people by providing them gainful employment while adding value to the traditional outputs of the forests.
- ☞ Enhancing the protective functions of the watersheds for regulating their water regimes, retarding soil erosion and siltation of reservoirs and protecting downstream cultivation and infrastructure from flood damage.
- ☞ Manage and rehabilitate rangelands so as to harness their full potential through appropriate range management practices such as controlled grazing systems and grass cutting besides other needed interventions.
- ☞ Contributing towards Pakistan's demand for constructional timber, eco-tourism and medicinal plants.
- ☞ Conserving, promoting, developing and managing fisheries, wildlife, sericulture and other natural resources for the benefit of individuals, communities and societies.
- ☞ Generating income for forest owners of Guzara Forests and shareholders in Protected Forests.
- ☞ Conserving biological diversity.
- ☞ Promoting non-consumptive uses of forests such as eco-tourism.
- ☞ Improving the quality of human environment through promoting urban forestry.
- ☞ Fostering attitudinal change in support of sustainable forest management among individuals, communities and the society at large.
- ☞ Assisting the Govt. of Pakistan in meeting the obligations of the relevant international agreements such as the Convention on Biodiversity, Climate Change Convention, Desertification Convention and Agenda 21.

Principles:

- ☞ Integrated Resource Management.
- ☞ Participation of the People.
- ☞ Equity.
- ☞ Public Awareness.
- ☞ Cross-sectoral Linkages.

Instruments of the Policy:

- ✍️ Plans for implementation of the Policy
- ✍️ Creating a Forestry Development Fund.

New Planning Strategy For Management of Natural Resource by the Forest Department

Government of NWFP in the DFFW has promulgated the following planning strategy from 1st of March 2000;

Planning at Forest Division Level (Strategic Plan)

A team comprising of DFO, DFO Wildlife, Assistant Director Fisheries and District Officers of other concerned Govt. Departments will carry out the Planning. The team will be headed by the DFO of the concerned forest division.

The Government will approve the Strategic Plan.

Planning at Range Level (Operational Plan)

The plan will be prepared by a team of experts of different departments at Tehsil level and will be headed by the Range Officer. The Chief Conservator of the Forests will approve this plan.

Planning at Village level (Village Plan)

This plan will be prepared by a team of experts from different departments in close collaboration with the village level male and female organizations. The plan will be approved by the Conservator of the Forests and will be implemented by the village communities through technical assistance of the Forest department.

Forest Development Fund

The creation of a Forest development Fund as envisaged in the NWFP Forest Policy of 1999 has been legislated under section 104 of NWFP Forest Ordinance 2002. Section 104 is reproduced below;

“Section 104 (1) To ensure adequate and timely availability of funds for implementing the forest management plans with specific reference to ensuring forest regeneration or forest development schemes, Govt. shall establish a forest development fund.

(2) There shall be credited to the fund-

- a. An initial amount of Rs. 50 million from the existing cash reserves of North-West Frontier Province Forest Development Corporation plus 70% of its pre-taxed profit each year;

- b. Timber surcharge on commercial timber harvesting and sale from reserved forests, protected forests, guzara forests, protected wastelands, and other forest areas as notified by Government at following rates:
- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| i. Deodar | = Rs.10/- cft converted. |
| ii. Kail | = Rs. 8/- cft converted |
| iii. Fir/Spruce | = Rs. 6/- cft converted |
| iv. Chir pine timber | = Rs. 4/- cft converted |
| v. Shisham and other notified
Species on Govt. lands | = Rs. 5/- cft converted |
- c. Management charges levied by Government on the management of various types of forests;
- d. Seigniorage* Fee recovered from landowners and right holders;
- e. All fines imposed by the forest magistrate in forest offence cases; and
- f. Any other source notified by the Government.

(3) The fund shall be managed in the prescribed manner.

(4) The fund shall be utilized in accordance with such procedure as may be prescribed

- a) Raising forest nurseries
- b) Forestation in the cut over areas if warranted by silviculture principles and in the blank areas of forests;
- c) Range management; and
- d) Any other purpose which will realize the objectives set out in sub-section (1) above.”

*Seigniorage Fee: It is a reciprocal fee paid by the Govt. on commercial sale of trees from reserved forests to the owners of the village from whose jurisdiction these reserved forests were separated and receives from the Guzara owners on commercial sale of trees from Guzara forests at the rates notified by the Govt. from time to time which will be half of the net sale proceeds.

GROUP WORK

The briefing was followed by the formation of four groups. The groups were given the task to discuss and give their suggestions on the following issues:

- 1. Pre-sale of Forest Royalties**
- 2. Illegal cutting of Forests by the Forest Contractors**
- 3. Destruction of forests due to accidental fires**
- 4. Unsystematic cutting and sale of Quercus trees**
- 5. Inter and Intra Khel conflicts at local level**

Group 1

Facilitation: Dr. Zulfiqar Ali Qazi

Presentation: Haji Saif-ur-Rehman

Participants:

Mufti Ubaid-ur-Rehman, Dr. Noor Qadeem, Javed, Batang, Jahangir, Bakhtiar, Khalid, Gul Khan, Aspin, Afzal, Shah Zarin, Abdul-Rasheed, Subedar, Dr. Zulfiqar, Zia-ur-Rehman.

Suggestions by Group 1

1. Pre-sale of forest royalties should be stopped.
2. Harvesting of forest should be done in presence of representatives from the forest owners as well as the Forest Department employees. Illegal cutting may be stopped through joint efforts of the Owners and the FD.
3. The extinguishing of forest fires should be the joint responsibility of the FD and the local forest committees.

4. A committee together with the FD should be made responsible to cut the dry trees and transport them to a Depot where the committee should sell it at appropriate rates.
5. Local inter and intra Khel conflicts may be resolved through mediation of a special committee comprising of Local elite and Ulema.
6. The FD and the Project should make special arrangements for plantation where the harvesting is scheduled.
7. A special Forest Depot be sanctioned at Tehsil Palas to facilitate the sale of timber.

Group 2.

Facilitation: **Anees Ahmad Khan**
Presentation: **Dr. Mohammad Hanif**
Participants:

Maulana Hazrat Ghani, Humayun, Ghulamullah, Fateh Mohammad Khan, Sona, Jama Sayed, Abdul-Rehman, Kima, Nasib Shah, Haibat Khan, Sherbaz Khan, Sabir, Mohammad Hanif, Kima, Khurshid.

Suggestions by Group 2

Sale of Royalties:

- ~~✍~~ A representative organization of each of the eight tribes should be responsible to manage their forest and should monitor the process from marking to market.
- ~~✍~~ Forest Department should provide finances and technical expertise through an agreement with these organizations.
- ~~✍~~ The Govt. should provide an appropriate market for the sale of timber within Palas to benefit the local forest owners.
- ~~✍~~ There should be an arrangement for replanting of cut over areas in the forest marked for commercial harvesting.

Illegal cutting by Forest Contractors

- ~~✍~~ The forests should be marked and harvested under the supervision of an elected organization /committee of the respective Khel and the Forest Department.

Control over Forest fires

- ✍ Timely retrieval of over aged and wind fallen trees should be ensured.
- ✍ The elected committee should be made responsible for timely information to the FD about the forest fires and both the FD and the committee should help each other in extinguishing fire.

Uncontrolled cutting of Quercus trees

- ✍ The elected organizations/committees representing all the Khels should start an awareness campaign among the people about the impacts of uncontrolled cutting of Quercus trees.

Local Conflicts

- ✍ The local committees/organizations should work to educate the masses and create employment opportunities so that the local people get awareness as well as alternate business to avoid the local conflicts.

Group 3**Facilitation:** Barkat Ali Khan**Presentation:** Mohammad Siraj**Participants:**

Mohammad Siraj, Abdul Qudus, Mehran, Maulana Khalil-ur-Rehman, Askandar, Ghenzar, Zaboora, Maulana Samandar Khan, Askandar, Wazir Kasir, Khaista Gul

Suggestions by Group 3

1. Eight Jirga's of all the eight Tribal groups should be held on tribe basis.
2. Jirga of the two big Tribal groups as main tribe should be held separately.
3. A grand Jirga of all the tribes of Palasi community should follow it.
4. Awareness raising be the responsibility of the Forest Department.

5. Workshop of the public representatives.
6. Close contact of the Project with Nazimeen of the union councils and the Councilors.
7. A clean up operation within the Forest Department to purify it of corruption and to replace the old system of management with a free and transparent system of management.
8. The Forest Department should help in getting rid of the forest contractors.

Group 4

Facilitator: Hanif Shah

Presentation: Maulana Asmatullah (MPA)

Participants:

Haji Roshan, Sher Mian, Maulana Asmatullah, Adad Khan, Maulana Sharifullah, Abdul Rahim, Gulzar, Afzal, Hazrat Khan, Sang-i-Paras, Shah Alam, Noor Jalil, Boora, Masheet, Haidar, Shah Jahan, Matol Khan, Abdul Mustaan, Mohammad Nawab Khan

Suggestions by Group 4

1. A Jirga Council representing all the eight tribes (Khels) in Palas valley be constituted with a mandate to discuss the issues of Forest Management with the Government. At the same time local leadership be evolved at local level through mutual consultations.
2. During harvesting period, the Jirga Council together with the Forest Department, closely monitor all the operations and any lawbreaker should be brought to the task.
3. Wind fallen and dry trees should immediately be retrieved from the forests so as to avoid forest fires.
4. Fast growing tree should be introduced and wild Olive trees should be grafted so as to contribute in reducing unemployment through skill development in grafting and planting of fast growing trees.
5. The Jirga Council is capable to eliminate inter and intra tribal enmities through consistent consultations.

The presentations were followed by Question/answer session. Maulana Habib-ur-Rehman put a very interesting question.

How the biodiversity conservation benefits the community?

Hanif Shah responded to the question and dilated upon while quoting verses from the Holy Qura'an and citing examples from Germany, Chitral, kegal and other parts of the globe. Maulana Asmatullah also responded to this question and provided details from the Hadith.

Address of Maulana Asmatullah (MPA)

Maulana Asmatullah, in his address appreciated the efforts of the PCDP towards the well being of the Palasi community. He pledged full support in eradicating the pre-sale of the royalties not only being the MPA but also as a forest owner. He asked the forest owners to fully cooperate with the project in implementing its program.

Closing

Project Director in his concluding remarks thanked all the participants and especially the MPA who came all along from Peshawar to attend the workshop. He hoped that the workshop findings would help the FD and the project team to address the issues in the light of the findings of the workshop.