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The Australian Mekong Resource Centre

was established at the University of Sydney in 1997 to promote research, discussion and debate on development and environment issues in the Mekong Region. The AMRC is a focal point for information, dialogue and activities in support of an equitable and sustainable development path for the Mekong Region.

The *Mekong Update & Dialogue* provides:

- lead article on the key topic of the issue
- responses to the lead article
- news of current developments in the region
- news from the AMRC
- information on Mekong-related conferences and events in Australia

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READER CONTRIBUTIONS

The Mekong Update & Dialogue welcomes the comments of its readers on issues raised in the Feature article and in the Responses to the Feature. If you do wish to make comment please email us at mekong@mail.usyd.edu.au. Comments should be sent by late July and should be limited to 1-2 paragraphs.

EDITORIAL - Community Forestry

Like so many terms in the field of development and environment, community forestry means many things to many people. It suggests an approach that takes social equity and sustainability as governing principles, moving toward a decentralised mode of managing tropical forests according to local knowledge and local priorities. However, it is also an approach that has served as the covering rubric for other development agendas, such as plantation expansion, village-based logging and resource tenure formalisation.

Community forestry illustrates the diversity of contexts in which progressive development and environmental initiatives operate within the Mekong Region, and as such it also highlights the importance of context-bound natural resource and environmental management.¹ In Thailand, community forestry has emerged as a civil society challenge to centralised bureaucratic control and management over resources. In other countries in the region, community forestry is a program established through development assistance initiatives. Yet elsewhere, it is a context for land and resource tenure reform. The equity and sustainability implications of these different contextual emphases vary from one place to another.

One of the most significant questions raised by the contributions in this issue of Mekong Update and Dialogue is whether decentralised natural resource management empowers and / or enriches economically and politically marginalised rural communities. A general dilemma of decentralisation is that it can all too easily represent an extension of the bureaucracy down a rung on the ladder of resource administration, rather than extending real control of users up the same ladder. The latter relies on leeway to adapt management to local ecological and cultural circumstances, to use patterns and preferences that may differ from place to place. In other words, overly generalised or formulaic approaches to decentralisation may, ironically, reduce the scope for diversity in local resource management and the empowerment that such diversity delivers in terms of access and use options based on culturally derived norms rather than technocratic imperatives. Community forestry has not been immune from such tendencies.

In this issue, Bob Fisher outlines the diverse contexts of community forestry in three Mekong countries. Academics from two of these countries provide their own perspectives on community forestry, reflecting well the different social scientific analyses that derive from the more politicised and more program-based approaches in Thailand and Laos respectively.

¹ For a thought-provoking argument against “homogeneous thinking”, see Honadle, George, 1999, **How context matters : linking environmental policy to people and place**, West Hartford, Connecticut, Kumarian Press

FEATURE

Controlling the forests: community forestry in the Mekong Region

by *Bob Fisher*

Introduction

In the last twenty or so years there has been widespread recognition of the need to involve local people in forest management. There have been several reasons for this. Participation is considered to be desirable because people who use forests are most likely to follow forest management rules and practices if they are involved in deciding on these rules and practices and if they benefit from management. Recognition of the role of forests in rural livelihoods has been another factor - an argument based on rights and equity. Other factors include the global shift towards leaner and more efficient bureaucracies (including forest services): reduced government budgets have encouraged devolution of responsibility for carrying out forest management.

Globally a variety of different approaches to participatory forestry have been developed under a variety of different names. Community forestry is just one of the terms applied. In this paper it is used as a generic term to include approaches known by other names in various places. Broadly, community forestry can be defined as approaches to forest management which involve communities or groups in some sort of joint activities, either on common land or on land which is formally government land. This definition excludes activities by rural people on private land, although some definitions would not exclude private forestry activities.

The aim of this paper is to briefly review experiences in community forestry in several Mekong countries, especially in terms of benefits and devolved decision-making power.

Among the many approaches to community forestry are approaches which involve contracts between communities and forest agencies, specifying services and benefits in return (Joint Forest Management in India), arrangements by which people are granted formal use rights and authority to carry out activities in forests subject to submission of an approved management plan (Community Forestry in Nepal), locally-initiated forest protection systems without legal status (Thailand) and a variety of other types of arrangements. While it is clear that different approaches are suitable in different contexts, and no single model is appropriate everywhere, there are some criteria by which various approaches can be compared and evaluated.

Typically, community forestry is proposed as a means to meet (or improve) peoples' livelihoods through use of forests while, at the same time, improving forest management. Of course, the problem here is that what constitutes improved forest management is a matter of opinion, since forests can be managed for a whole variety of socially determined objectives such as preservation of biodiversity, production of commercial timber, or provision of locally desired products (whatever they may be). In this context, forest management objectives need to be negotiated between various stakeholders. In any form of community forestry, the "community" members are critical

stakeholders. Thus, assessment of any community forestry program or approach needs to focus on (a) what role the community has in determining (or influencing) management objectives and controlling forest resources and (b) whether the community obtains tangible benefits from community forestry. The word "participation" is often applied to forestry activities in cases where the participation implies little more than passive consultation, or carrying out objectives set by others. In this paper "real" participation is taken to involve a serious input into decision-making.

It is important to stress here that use of the word "community" does not imply heterogeneity or lack of conflict. Although advocates of community forestry are often accused of romanticising communities, the reality that communities are heterogeneous and often in conflict, is widely recognised. The word "community" is used purely to suggest a group of people resident near each other who have a collective interest in a forest and to define a broad type of forest management different from state forestry or industrial forestry.

Thailand

In Thailand, community forestry is more of a social movement than a government program. Many local communities have made arrangements for managing and conserving forests near where they live. They have frequently declared these forests to be "community forests". However, while sections of the Royal Forest Department (RFD) are concerned with supporting such community activities, and while individual officers have been very active, the community forests have no legal status. For many years, supported by NGOs and academics, there has been pressure to pass a Community Forestry Bill into law, but, as yet, no law has been passed. There have been many drafts of the Bill, which essentially have fluctuated between people-friendly versions supported by the "light green" NGOs and versions which are very restrictive in terms of what rights would be granted to communities. These conservation-oriented drafts have been supported by so-called "dark green" NGOs and the RFD. At present the RFD does not support recognition of community forests in protected areas, which effectively rules out most potential community forests in Thailand.

The debate over community forestry in Thailand involves both a fundamental philosophical difference between those who see rural people as essentially linked with the natural landscape and those who don't. But it also involves a real conflict over the control of forest resources between the RFD and rural people. Since 1997, a peoples' movement called the Assembly of the Poor has included demands about access to forests as major elements in its calls for change.

Despite this lack of legal status, community forestry continues to be an important activity. Most community forests do not allow for any commercial use of timber. Although cutting of timber is illegal, limited cutting of trees, even in state forests, is often tolerated for domestic construction. Other products are collected for subsistence use and for sale. In some hill villages forest products constitute a substantial proportion of income. Generally, however, the forest management practices revolve around conservation, probably because the RFD is more prepared to tolerate community forestry when it is conservation-oriented. For all this, the underlying issue for most community forests lies in the debate as to whether forest dwellers (whose

occupancy frequently predates the declaration of Protected Areas) will be forcibly removed from these areas.

Thus, community forestry in Thailand essentially involves conflict over control of forest resources.

Lao PDR¹

In the Lao PDR, all forests belong to the state. There is a framework which allows for community forestry. Forest law allows the allocation of forest lands to organisations and individuals. Forest land allocation, linked with land use planning, is a major activity. Community forestry has not emerged from this framework.

Two major projects (the Forest Management and Conservation Programme - FOMACOP - and the long-running Lao-Swedish Forestry Programme) have piloted community forestry activities in the form of joint management arrangements between villagers and the Forestry Department. The arrangements involved profit sharing as payment for village labour. The profit-sharing agreement broke down when the logs were being sold.

Clearly, in this case, control of resources rested ultimately with the forest authorities and sharing of real benefits by communities did not occur. The resources were, apparently, just too valuable.

There is, however, another aspect of Lao policy where a community forestry related program has been more successful. The Lao forestry legislation allows for the collection of Non Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) both for domestic use and for sale. According to IUCN data, people dwelling in hill areas obtain a large proportion (around 40%) of their cash income from NTFPs and projects supporting NTFP management and marketing have been increasingly active and apparently quite successful. In this case, community-based forest management activities have apparently led to significant benefits. The point here is that NTFPs are valuable, but are less amenable to centralised management and control of benefits than “big” resources such as timber. Whether this means community forestry efforts should continue to focus on NTFPs rather than more valuable resources remains open to question.

Vietnam

In Vietnam, there is a strong focus on people in the Forestry Development Strategy. However, in practice the role of local people in major programs, such as the Five Million Hectare Reforestation Program, has mostly involved the provision of labour for protection and tree planting.

A major thrust of policy has been the allocation of forests to various organisations and to households. However, for legal reasons, forest land cannot be allocated to organisations without legal identity. Thus, while formal cooperatives and State Forest Enterprises can receive allocations, communities cannot. This presents problems in cases where scale and access make individual ownership inefficient and where de facto common property management by ethnic groups remains illegal. Interestingly, despite the formal difficulties, experiments have been made in which households have combined individual allocations to manage them, in effect, as common property. This shows that it is always dangerous to assume that formal legal rights reflect reality.

The situation in Vietnam shows an emerging environment in which community forestry could develop, but, as yet, decision-making (and, to a large extent, effective control of resources) remains centralised and benefits, apart from NTFPs, have not yet flowed in a major way.

Conclusion

The question is: to what extent have devolution of control and decision-making, and benefit sharing from forest management been associated with community forestry related programs? It seems that progress has, so far, been limited. Benefits have mainly been restricted to continued subsistence use of forests, combined with continued (and, in the case of Lao PDR, enhanced) income from NTFPs. In the case of Thailand even this use is more tolerated than legal. In all three countries, forest resources remain, at least legally, pretty much under the control of state forest authorities.

There are some good signs, however. Governments are increasingly using the rhetoric of participation, even if the participation that occurs is more of the tokenistic than substantive variety, and small experiments, some government approved, and some supported by civil society, are pushing the boundaries and creating space for community management of forests. Perhaps the most promising thing is that community-oriented forestry flourishes informally, often in the absence of supportive legal or policy frameworks.

¹ The information on the Lao PDR and Vietnam draws heavily on two unpublished reports prepared by the Asian Regional Office of IUCN The World Conservation Union.

Bob Fisher is an anthropologist who works with the AMRC as a Senior Researcher. Bob was Deputy Director of the Regional Community Forestry Training Center (RECOFTC) in Bangkok from 1997 until 2001. He specialises in social and political ecological aspects of natural resource management, particularly community forestry.



Bamboo management as a major focus of a community forest, Chai Nat, Thailand. (Source: Bob Fisher)

RESPONSES TO FEATURE

Community forest in Thailand: a representation of power struggles and new social movements

by *Chusak Wittayapak*

Bob Fisher is right to put it that community forestry in Thailand is a form of social movement. However, I would add that the community forest movement is not only a struggle for control of forest resources but is also increasingly becoming a constitutive struggle for power to govern themselves by the local communities. The community forest movement has evolved from the contest to gain access and control over material resources to become a representation of a contest for self-determination of local people in the periphery. This self-proclaimed unique case of the community forest movement in Thailand needs to be understood within a larger context of Thai political economy in the last 20 years or so since community forest was introduced to Thai society.

Long before the term “community forest” or the concept of “Pa Chumchon” was conceived amongst Thai academics, NGOs and progressive technocrats the concept of “Community Culture” or “Wattanatham Chumchon” had been at the forefront of criticism of state-led and top-down rural development. I argue further that the concept and movement underlying community forest derives from the community culture ideas popularized in the circle of those critiquing centralized government. Suffice to say community forest is a representation of the community culture movement in the postmodern politics of Thailand. To a large extent, the conflict over forest resources that is manifested in the opposition to community forest represents power struggles by the urban elites and bureaucrats trying to hold their grip on power, assuring their control over valuable resources.

Struggles over control of forest resources represented in the community forest movement are also played out in many social and political landscapes. In addition to being a counter-discourse to official and scientific discourse on forest management, the community forest movement has been instrumental in getting rid of the yoke of colonial mentality in forest resource management in Thailand. The community forest alliance has incessantly called for an overhaul of forest laws by showing that the existing forest laws were supplanted from the British colonial administration of forest in its former colonies, i.e. India and Burma. The initiative by the community forest alliance to collect 50,000 signatures from people to propose the Community Forest Bill, a people’s version, as allowed by the new constitution, clearly signifies the participation process in law making. This innovative movement is seen by many as a watershed for political reform and emerging civil society.

The push for community forest law is, on the one hand, seen as a decentralization of control of forest resources to local communities. On the other hand, it represents, to some extent, the movement towards the recognition of citizenship rights and basic human rights for livelihood sustainability as witnessed in Northern Thailand. The community forest movement is often associated with the ethnic Karen identity in terms of forest stewardship. The community forest movement has constituted a

space for indigenous knowledge and a repertoire of protest of powerless and marginalized people. It is endowed with and enriched by various forms of symbolic resistance and cultural meaning. For instance, the community forest network in Northern Thailand has occasionally “ordained” 50 millions trees in contest with the government plan to reforest 50 million rai; the latter is a reforestation scheme, in a way intended to reclaim the degraded forest lands occupied by local villagers. Ironically, both claimed to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the King’s accession to the throne.

When it comes to institutionalization the Community Forest Bill has turned into a battlefield of resource rights, values, ideologies, class, and ethnic conflicts deep rooted in Thai dualistic society – urban/rural and centre/periphery. This differentiation is clearly reflected in the debate over community forest in protected areas that took place during the senate meeting to deliberate the bill. The “dark green” alliance which opposes community forest in protected areas represents the views, values and ideologies of the urban-based middle-class and the powers-that-be. These people are preoccupied with imported environmentalism and hardly share the same view on forest as rural folk. Community forest is undeniably seen as a peripheral view on forest management.

Since it came into being, the community forest movement has always been a learning process for local communities. The forest people learned to use simplified cartographic tools to counter official maps and satellite images. Counter-mapping and vernacularization of forest management became a powerful medium for negotiation with foresters about forest boundaries.

To this end I see the community forest movement as becoming a symbolic struggle that constitutes a grassroots movement demanding an equal share of power, resource rights, and political participation. The conflicts born out of the Community Forest Bill truly reflect an unequal power relation, differences in



Fungi provide a source of income in a community forest, Chai Nat, Thailand. (Source: Bob Fisher)

class and ethnicity, and lop-sided political and economic transformations in Thai society. Ongoing conflict over the Community Forest Bill lingers on for the time being, and the political ramifications of the community forest movement have already appeared in various forms of new social movements and institutional reforms engulfing Thai society.

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Community forestry in Lao PDR

by *Khamla Phanvilay*

It is generally agreed that community forestry involves interaction between human society and the forest resources. Sustainability of forest resources will be very much dependent on human behavior towards these resources. Forest management depends on how the community and its members can benefit from the resources that they manage.

Laos is a multicultural and ethnically diverse country. The term community forestry normally refers to a certain social group of the same ethnic or administrative unit such as the village or hamlet using and managing the forest located nearby or within reach of the group. Based on this socio-cultural structure and organization, community forestry in Laos exists with either village units or ethnic groups who manage forest and generate benefits from the management. To some extent forest boundaries of villages have been recognized between communities that settle next to each other. In many cases the fact that forest resources remain rich and diverse to date is due to some of these traditional management systems.

Under Lao forestry law the term village forest management appears synonymous with community forestry. This is the basis of the land and forest land allocation program that has been taking place throughout the whole country, under which forest that is legally declared as state property has been allocated to the village. Presently the term village forest is in widespread use for community forestry.

Community forestry or village forestry in Laos can be observed from two different points of view.

Legal point of view

Under the existing forestry law, state forest can be categorized into production, conservation, protection, rehabilitation and degraded forests. At village level, village forest has been delineated through the Land and Forest Land Allocation program into production forest, conservation and protection forest, classified according to the forest condition and its functions. Based on the forest law, a well-stocked forest cannot be allocated to individuals or households, but it can be allocated to the village authority as the representative of the members of the village. Forest law recognizes customary rights of local communities who are living in the forest. Harvesting of non-restricted timber species by individuals or households needs the authorization of the village chief. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry has issued a new regulation on village

forest management that allows local communities to collect NTFPs for their consumption and even for commercial purposes. Government has the daunting task of involving these communities in the management of this resource. NTFPs are the main reason why people go into the forest; therefore they are potentially a powerful incentive for rural communities to manage forest resources (Foppes, 2000).

Customary law and traditional point of view

Due to the diversity of ethnic groups and cultural practices, forest resource management exists and is maintained by ethnic groups or people who share the same culture and belief. Forest is believed to be spiritual since it provides shelter for the dead in cemeteries or is the residence of ancestral spirits. In such forest areas there is a very strict rule prohibiting members of the community from entering and using the resources of that forest. In some communities and groups, forest at the headwaters has been maintained and protected either by those who benefit from water use or by forest beliefs that maintain and regulate water. Apart from tangible products, e.g. timber, local people at either the household or the community level protect forest because it indirectly benefits them. Traditionally, forest plays a significant role in supporting people's livelihoods, and benefit from forest management is not always just timber but non-timber forest products as well.

In Laos, based on both legal framework and traditional forest management practices, it is hoped that local communities can be involved in forest management, especially the forests that are allocated to villages through the land and forest land allocation. The main points of discussion and debate are centered around alternatives between joint forest management or co-management, in terms of which approach to local involvement would provide greatest benefit by providing cash generation and job employment opportunities that contribute not only to improve community infrastructure development but also strengthening local capacity in managing resources.

However, in many cases, though forest has been classified into different categories, forest management means to harvest or extract timber, NTFPs and other products from the forest. Timber is a priority for both government and communities for cash generation or infrastructure development. It is quite often the case that forest management leads people to think of forest as an asset or as cash for the development of community infrastructure by exchanging forest products for village access roads, schools, electricity connections, etc.

Based on many cases studies and current forest management practice, in order to manage and protect forest as well as protect community rights to benefit from forest, in both the short and long term, NTFPs seem to be a valuable and alternative resource to attract local communities and villagers to participate in the protection and management of natural forest.

References

Joost Foppes & Sounthone Ketphanh. 2000, *No More Timber, More Non-Timber?* Discussion Paper, IUCN-Non-Timber Forest Products Project in Lao PDR

Khamla Phanvilay is a teacher and researcher at the Faculty of Forestry, National University of Laos.

NEWS FROM THE REGION

Nam Theun 2 dam update

The Lao government signed a US\$2 billion concession agreement with the Nam Theun 2 Power Company (NTPC), the developer of the of the Nam Theun 2 hydroelectric project, on 3 October last year. The agreement allows the company to build, own and operate the dam for 25 years. NTPC is a consortium consisting of Electricite de France International, Electricite du Laos and Italian-Thai Co. The Nam Theun 2 dam, situated on the Nakai Plateau 250 kilometres east of Vientiane, will have a capacity of 1,070 megawatts.

In July 2002 the World Bank announced it would not extend its risk guarantee for the project until there is wider support from the international donor community and social/environmental groups. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is funding an evaluation and due diligence study of the dam project. But although dam construction has not begun, the project has already had a significant impact on surrounding forests and, moreover, the terms of the ADB's proposed new forest policy, replacing an existing one instigated in 1995, do not require the bank to take into account the direct and indirect impacts of the Nam Theun 2 project on forests before funds are released.

The NTPC plans to start construction of Nam Theun 2 late this year. EGAT (Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand) is intending to sign a power purchase agreement with NTPC. The original intention was to sign in June 2002 but this was delayed over several sticking points which remain unclear.

anon. 2002 "Laos signs \$2-bn deal for Nam Theun II dam", *The Nation*, 4 October 2002

Kwek, I. 2003 "Laos Nam Theun 2 Power Purchase Deal To Be Signed April", *Dow Jones Newswires*, 17 February 2003

Kwek, I. 2003 "Nam Theun Pwr Proj Construction Likely To Start Late '03", *Dow Jones Newswires*, 25 February 2003

Lang, C. 2003 "Laos: Asian Development Bank to support proposed Nam Theun 2 dam", *WRM Bulletin* 69, April 2003

AUSTRALIAN MEKONG NEWS

Visit to Save the Sand project, South Africa

In April, AMRC Director Phil Hirsch visited one of the partner initiatives in the Both Ends/Gomukh program on River Basin Management: a negotiated approach. The Save the Sand project is run by a South African NGO, Association for Water and Rural Development (AWARD), located on the northern edge of the Sand River Catchment. The Sand is part of the Inkomati River System, several of whose tributaries flow eastward from the Drakensburg escarpment through the Kruger National Park into Mozambique. Under the apartheid regime, several hundred thousand people were dumped in two "homelands" in the Sand catchment, as part of the racist policy of "separate development". AWARD is thus dealing with both the social injustice

and environmental nightmare left by this system, and an extraordinarily dedicated staff is working with local stakeholder groups dealing with the myriad problems that link environmental and social issues in post-apartheid South Africa. Essentially this is a pilot project to try to make the country's progressive water law and policy work on the ground, putting basic human needs and environmental sustainability above all other water uses. The week-long exchange was part of a number of such cross-visits, following our co-hosting of AWARD and Both Ends/Gomukh staff in Cambodia and Thailand in February. Among spinoffs from the visit is a potential cooperative approach to using environmental flows methodologies that include "subsistence flows" in relevant situations in the Mekong.

NGO/Australian Government Roundtable on multilateral development banks

The first Roundtable for 2003 was held on 2 April and hosted by Treasury at the Department of Treasury, Canberra. A major item on the agenda was the ADF 8 (8th replenishment of the Asian Development Fund) mid-term review (MTR). AusAID reported that the Australian Government has been reasonably satisfied with the progress of the MTR and its emphasis on policy settings and process but is aware that insufficient attention has been paid to outcomes on the ground in Developing Member Countries. The MTR is seen by all as an important prelude that will set the scene for the ADF 9 replenishments.

Australian NGOs participating in the roundtable have, however, been critical of the MTR's lack of transparency to date - in contrast to the relatively transparent review of the Inspection Function.

Also discussed were the continuing poor outcomes on the ground. As an example, the AMRC reported back to the Roundtable on increasing community concerns regarding trans-boundary infrastructure developments and impacts in the Mekong Region that were raised by NGOs and community representatives at a number of forums in late 2002 that the AMRC organised and participated in (eg. Dialogue on River Basin Development and Civil Society in the Mekong - see previous MU&D).

Another item of concern on the agenda was the review of the ADB's Inspection Function. Oxfam CAA highlighted a number of problem areas to be addressed in the final draft of the review's Working Paper. Other items on the agenda were plans for cooperation for the upcoming ADB Annual General Meeting, and the ADB-NGO-Government Cooperation Framework.

Originally focused on the ADF8 reforms of the ADB, the Roundtable for the first time opened up to discussions on issues regarding other International Financial Institutions. These included information sharing on the IMF's proposal for a Sovereign Debt Restructuring Mechanism (SDRM) and the World Bank Spring meetings.

Minutes from the Roundtables are available from the AMRC on request. The next Roundtable is to be held in Sydney at the AMRC on a date to be decided between July and August.

Andrew Wyatt

NEWS FROM THE CENTRE

Negotiating River Basin Management CD-ROM

Production of an interactive CD-ROM on *Negotiating River Basin Management: Lessons from the Mekong* is nearing completion. The CD-ROM is based upon the outcomes of the 2002 Dialogue process (see MU&D 6.1). Most of the production work on the CD-ROM has been done by AMRC Project Officer, Alanna Linn, who in late May left for a working holiday in Europe. Alanna joined the AMRC in 2002 while completing her geography honours thesis, which looked at the contestation of water management in northern Thailand. Last year Alanna assisted in coordination of the Dialogue on River Basin Development and Civil Society and co-authored an AMRC working paper looking at the transfer of water management models between the Murray-Darling and Mekong river basins.

The CD-ROM contents include sections dealing with themes in river basin management (with case studies of the Se San Basin, blasting of Mekong rapids and Pak Mun dam), stakeholder dialogue and links between the Murray-Darling and Mekong river basins. Video clips taken at the Brisbane and Ubon conferences provide living illustrations of the diverse perspectives on river basin management. The CD-ROM will be ready for distribution later this year - keep an eye out on our website.



New Regional Research Program Officer

From February 2003, AMRC has taken on a part-time Regional Research Program Officer. Based in Chiangmai, Nattaya Tubtim is a social science researcher specialising in community-based natural resource management. Nattaya has extensive experience on

research projects in Thailand and Lao PDR, particularly in the field of community based natural resource management. She will be participating in specific collaborative research initiatives and will also assist in program development and coordination. Her work will complement that of Andrew Wyatt, AMRC's Research Program Manager, who is now based in Vietnam.

Andrew Wyatt relocates in the Mekong

AMRC Research Program Manager, Andrew Wyatt, has been assigned as a part-time Research Fellow to a 3-year Australian Research Council funded project headed by Philip Hirsch entitled 'Toward a Political Ecology of Risk in River Basin Development: The Case of the Mekong' (see www.mekong.es.usyd.edu.au/projects). To carry out the assignment, he is now based at the Department of Environment and Natural Resource Management, Can Tho University, Vietnam. From Can Tho he will be setting up a number of case studies in the Mekong Basin, including the Mekong Delta where Can Tho University is located, and Yunnan Province, China. Andrew will also continue to support other AMRC associated work and partners in the region.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Politics of the Commons: Articulating Development and Strengthening Local Practices

11-14 July 2003, Chiang Mai, Thailand

RCSA Conference Secretariat,
Regional Center for Social Science and Sustainable
Development (RCSA),
Faculty of Social Sciences,
Chiang Mai University,
Chiang Mai, 50200 THAILAND
Tel: 66-53-943595 / Fax : 66-53-943596
Email: rcsd-con@soc.cmu.ac.th
www.rcsd.soc.cmu.ac.th

Sixth International River Management Symposium: "Urban rivers – balancing the expectations"

2-5 September 2003, Brisbane, Australia

Contact: Stephen Nelson
Riversymposium Manager
Ph: +61(0)7 3846 7444
Fax: +61 (0)7 3846 7660
Email: symposium@riverfestival.com.au
http://www.riverfestival.com.au/2003/content/symposium_standard.asp?name=RiverSymposium

EMECS 2003: the 6th International Conference on the Management of Enclosed Coastal Seas

18-21 November 2003, Bangkok, Thailand

Contact: EMECS 2003 Secretariat,
c/o Environmental Research Institute,
Chulalongkorn University, Patumwan,
Bangkok, Thailand 10330
Tel. +66-2218-2110
Fax. +66-2218-8124
E-Mail : secretariat@emecs2003.com
<http://www.emecs2003.com>

2nd International Meeting on Dams, Rivers and People

1-7 December 2003, Rasi Salai, Thailand

Contact: Aviva Imhof
International Rivers Network
1847 Berkeley Way
Berkeley, CA 94703 USA
tel: 510-848-1155 fax: 510-848-1008
email: aviva@irn.org
<http://www.irn.org/index.html>

The events listed above are changed with each issue of Mekong Update & Dialogue. For a complete list of upcoming events please go to our website at www.mekong.es.usyd.edu.au. For submission of new events please contact the AMRC Administrator at mekong@mail.usyd.edu.au

IMAGES OF COMMUNITY FORESTRY IN THE MEKONG



Traditional NTFP medicines on sale in Vientiane, Laos. (Source: Bob Fisher)



Karen community forest, Huay Hin Lad Nai, northern Thailand. (Source: Bob Fisher)



Small-scale forest based industry, southern Laos. (Source: Bob Fisher)



Fishing boat in community mangrove forest managed to preserve crab habitat, Pred Nai, eastern Thailand. (Source: Bob Fisher)



Settlement inside protected area of mangrove forest, U. Minh Thuong, Mekong Delta, Vietnam. (Source: Bob Fisher)

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