

Trees 4 Africa Progress Report 2005 -2006

Introduction

The trees4africa project was set up to help a small community in the Gambia protect and improve their local environment through nature conservation efforts. The main objectives of Trees4africa are:

1. To provide an income for a small community to allow them to grow saplings and replace local areas of land which have been deforested.
2. To support the local community development and education through sponsorship for the local nursery school
3. To support local birdwatchers to monitor the forest areas and report on illegal logging
4. To help provide a public profile for tree planting and preservation in the Gambia
5. To help protect habitats used by overwintering birds from the UK particularly the Osprey

This project was started in 2004 as a trial to help Modou Colley the local birdwatcher to protect the woodlands around his home village and encourage the whole community to become involved in tree planting and nature protection.

Project partners

The project was set up by Jon Proctor who is an environmental auditor working in tourism together with Modou Colley a local birdwatching expert and Jammie a local nursery school teacher. All are committed environmentalists and would like to ensure that nature and the environment is protected. Given the effects of climate change and the increasing evidence that the natural parts of the world are now being damaged by global warming as well as ongoing human interference we believe initiatives like trees4africa need to be supported further.

Financial Support

Since 2005 the project has relied on donations to support the work in the Gambia. The following donations have been received:

2004 Donation of £200 to support the set up of the tree planting project purchase of saplings and setting aside of natural areas by community. Sponsorship for first tree planting initiative.

2005 Donation of £500 to support a second tree planting initiative involving the wider community, sponsorship for the protection of

older trees in the area through a recording system at the school, establishment of a local tree nursery.

2006 Donation of £400 to support a third tree planting initiative involving the community and further efforts to protect older trees and support the local school.

These donations to the project were made by Jon Proctor personally together with £200 received by anonymous donors from the UK and the GTBS.

SEA Ltd the company who Jon Proctor works for have decided to donate £1000 towards the project this will support the planting of over 1000 trees. The funding will be made available on 2007 and follow a revisit to the community to monitor progress, evaluate successes and make plans for future development. SEA Ltd have decided to sponsor this number of trees in order to offset all the emissions made by the company for travel by car rail and flight since the company's creation in 1990 This includes the emissions associated with operating the Green Tourism Business Scheme for which it is estimated that 100,000 miles have been driven, 5000 miles have been traveled by rail and 3000 miles by air.

"Given SEA Ltd is a small company and can only make donations due to personal sacrifices by its staff we believe the donation of £1000 is a real contribution to the project."

Non Financial Support

It should not be underestimated the quantity of non financial support which has been provided to the project to date. The majority of this has come from the goodwill in the Gambia and the commitment of the Faraba community to see their natural environment protected and enhanced. The Gambia suffers from significant tourism and local population pressures and this is having a very significant impact on the local woodlands and the biodiversity of the area. Although Faraba Bush track is considered a local biodiversity hotspot this is mainly due to the remaining areas of woodland particularly rosewood. Sadly this is still disappearing despite the best efforts of the community. In the UK Jon Proctor co-ordinates work on the trees4africa website together with website updates. Clare Bailey provides website design support and technical development assistance. Without the voluntary efforts of such a wide range of people the project could not be successful. Exmoor Falconry who do bird of prey demonstrations and donate the proceeds to bird conservation projects have helped the project by encouraging the community to do more and sponsoring the development of a waterhole for birdlife.

It is hoped that visitors to the Gambia will provide further support to the project either through taking part in a bird tour with Modou

Colley, visiting the Faraba community to see the tree planting efforts or visit the nursery school. We welcome any feedback from visitors to jon@trees4africa.org.

Trees planted 2005-6

Overall the project has resulted in the planting of approximately 2000 trees of a general mix of Ironwood, Molina, cashew nut, rosewood and other natives. In addition some tree planting has been done in the main village of palm trees to provide shade and general village enhancements. Trees are being grown on in the nursery areas by villagers in order to ensure they have a better survival rate.

Further developments

In order to consider activities which could help reduce the local dependency on wood we sent details on the manufacture of SOLAR cookers to the school for them to trial.