

Community-Based Forestry Protection

A Case Study from Krang Skear Commune,
Toek Phos District, Kampong Chhnang Province, Cambodia



Forest Livelihoods and Plantations Project
Land and Livelihoods Programme

Land Information Centre
The NGO Forum on Cambodia

Community-based Forest Protection

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Introduction

The demise of the forest concession system in Cambodia has created an urgent need for discussion on viable alternative forest management systems. As a contribution to that discussion, this research will present a case study of an initial attempt in Cambodia to introduce community-based forest protection over a large area. Examples from other countries are also provided.

Between 1990 and 1997, the Cambodian government awarded 32 forest concessions, giving well-connected companies long-term control over logging in state forests totalling 6,464,021 ha, or 35% of Cambodia's total land area. The concession system was heavily criticised for both poor governance and its negative impact on local community livelihoods. Local communities reliant on forest products for their daily subsistence, faced threats and intimidation, found their resin trees illegally cut, and lost access to important forest resources.

In 2001, a logging moratorium was imposed, though inconsistently maintained. A World Bank-funded programme attempted to introduce sustainable forest sector management practices, but failed to alter the incentives for rapid, unaccountable timber extraction. In 2004, a multi-million dollar independent forest sector review, commissioned by donors and the Cambodian government, called for an end to the concession system, and suggested that commune-level partnership forestry be considered as an alternative. In November 2005, the World Bank wrote to the Cambodian government to suggest that, in their analysis, concessionaire performance was unlikely to improve and that the government should exercise its legal right to cancel concessions and plan for sustainable management of forest areas through other means, including through community or commune-based forest protection. Presently, only a few forest concessions remain under consideration for re-exploitation, and all are inactive.

The Need for Community-based Alternatives

Much has been written about the importance of timber and non-timber forest products (NTFPs) to rural villagers in Cambodia. Babon (2004:6) suggests that "NTFPs may contribute up to 60% of household income in some areas", and provide an important safety net for rural communities. McKenney and Prom (2002:78-9) suggest that:

"Cambodia's forests are a rich common property resource that plays a crucial role in rural livelihoods. Forest resources support subsistence and income-generating activities such as small-scale timber harvesting, fuelwood collection, resin taping, and collection of wild fruits, vegetables and medicines..... even people with no land, little money for capital investments, and few alternative livelihood opportunities can collect forest resources for subsistence. In this manner, the forest resource base serves as an essential 'safety net' for the rural poor."



Illegal logging detected and suppressed by villagers in Krang Skear commune, in 2003
(Photo provided by research participants)

Oxfam GB (2000:4), in a case study of degraded forests and livelihoods in Kampong Thom and Kampong Chhnang Provinces, found that “access to degraded forests is very important to the livelihoods of the rural population, providing up to 100% of the livelihoods of the poor landless population, as much as 70% of the livelihoods of poor farmers, and 20% or more of the livelihoods of better off families.”

Given the high reliance of many rural Cambodians on forests, community-based methods of forest protection and utilisation seem appropriate avenues to explore. Fichtenau *et al* (2002) has suggested that as much as 8.4 million ha or 66% of Cambodia’s forest area is suitable for community-based management, being within 10 km of the nearest villages.

However, community-based forest protection in Cambodia is currently practiced on only a small scale. Braeutigam (2003) identified 228 community forests in Cambodia covering 83,000 ha, or just 0.8% of the total forest area in Cambodia. Two-thirds of these community forests are located in areas of “no, little, or heavily degraded forest resources” (Babon 2004:14). As of the end of 2006, the Forestry Administration’s website listed 264 community forests in Cambodia, covering approximately 179,000 ha, with an average size of 678 ha per site, with most sites smaller than 500 ha. On 19th November 2007, the Forestry Administration signed the first Community Forestry Agreements with 10 Community Forestry Management Committees in Siem Reap Province which signifies a milestone for securing local rights to forest resources.

The Forest Sector Review (2004) found the current model of community forestry in Cambodia to be too small-scale and to provide insufficient incentives to support community-based forest protection on a larger scale. Heng and Sunderlin (2006) point out that “community forestry benefits are often only a small portion of overall forest resource use in a village.” While much of the forest resources used by villagers come from forest outside the boundaries of recognised community forests, little is being done to protect these areas.

This raises the question of whether community-based forest protection on a larger scale than currently practiced would provide a viable forest management alternative. Community-based forest protection is already taking a larger role in other countries. In Appendix One, a literature review looks at examples from India, which help put the Cambodian case study in perspective.

Choice of Case Study

This research presents a case study of initial attempts to introduce community-based forest protection over large areas of forest land.

The case study involves community attempts to protect the forest in Krang Skear commune, Tek Pos District, Kompong Chhnang province. The Krang Skear case study was chosen as the community is endeavouring to protect the whole commune (59,214 ha) and not just a designated community forest area. Official approval of and support for their efforts would likely improve its effectiveness. Although the forest in this area is considered to be of “low value” by the authorities, the community finds it valuable and is motivated to protect it.

It should be noted that the land in Krang Skear has been allocated for future utilisation by an agricultural concession. The community’s dispute with the concession company is not the focus of this piece of research, however, and will be discussed only in passing.

Purposes of this Research

The purposes of this case study are to:

- Collect information about community uses of the forest within the case study area;
- Describe the models of forest protection being used; and
- Identify some of the strengths and weaknesses of those models, as seen by the community members themselves, and how they may be better supported by various stakeholders.

This research intends to give these communities a voice in the policy discussion, to allow them to share their experiences, and to provide their perspectives on forest protection. It is hoped that this written report will lead to opportunities for representatives of the communities to present their experiences to decision-makers themselves.

Methodology

The research in Krang Skear began with a two-day meeting in September 2006, involving 10 community representatives (who declined to be named), including 8 men and 2 women, from the villages of Tuol Samrong, Anhchanh, Krang Skear Tbaung, Damnak Ampil, Chambak Prasat, Trapaing Mlu, Phnom Ta Sam, and Khneang. This was followed by a visit to the villages of Anhchanh, Sou K'orng, Chambak Prasat and Tuol Samraong, from 20 to 22 February 2007, and meetings with district officials on 23 February 2007.

The research used qualitative Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) methods including semi-structured interviews, timelines, sorting and pie diagrams, Venn diagrams, seasonal diagrams and SWOT analysis.

PRA is normally used to help local communities analyse their own situation and make plans for their own development (Chambers 1994). The reliability of data collected through such methods may be ascertained through triangulation of information acquired from a variety of sources (Pretty 1995). PRA is intended to be open-ended, allowing outsiders to learn things they would not have learned following a more pre-determined survey-based approach.

Much NGO policy advocacy tends to be done "on behalf" of local communities and stakeholders without directly involving them. The purpose of this research is to bring the voice of the forest community and its supporters to policymakers.



Villagers prepare a seasonal chart of forest products in Sou Kh'orng village, February 2007

Limitations

The research was hampered by the usual limitations of time. A second case study in a high value forest, which was intended to provide the research a more rounded picture, was not completed. However, the preliminary findings of this second case study suggest that high value forests have even greater potential to benefit from community-based protection due to the greater incentives accruing to villagers from preserving them. However the degree of social capital and the ability of the community

to work together are also important factors impinging on the ability of communities to protect the forest.

Community-Based Forest Protection vs Community Forestry

For this research, it is important to make a distinction between community-based forest protection, which is the focus of this study, and community forestry. In Cambodia, community forestry is understood to encompass activities carried out by a formally constituted forest community¹ to manage, develop, protect, use and benefit from forest resources in a specifically designated area. These rights are formally laid out in the 2002 Law on Forestry, 2003 Sub-Decree on Community Forestry Management, and 2006 *Prakas* on Community Forestry Guidelines. These legal documents provide a formally constituted forest community the right to manage, develop, protect, use and benefit from forest resources in a specifically designated area. As mentioned above, these community forest areas are often relatively small and normally comprise only a portion of the forest surrounding a village or used by villagers. A community forestry agreement gives management rights over the forest for a period of 15 years. The forest community is required to develop a Community Forest Management Plan, which if approved may give the community the right to harvest the designated forest area at sustainable levels above and beyond what may be termed as customary use. Protection is just one of the duties of a formally designated forest community.

Community-based forest protection, by contrast, comprises any actions taken by a community to protect forest resources in their vicinity; it is one part of community forestry, but need not be limited to official community forestry areas. It involves villagers working together to patrol forest areas, report forest crimes, and take action against illegal activities. With appropriate support from government officials, it has the potential to significantly reduce illegal activities in forests that receive insufficient monitoring from overstretched officials. Villagers are “on the spot” and in the position to take action on forest crimes, whereas officials are likely not present and unable to respond promptly.

The incentive for community-based forest protection comes largely from villagers own dependence on the forest, which they may use for traditional uses even if the area is not a designated community forest. The Law on Forestry also provides financial incentives for the reporting of forest crimes. Additional NGO or government support may be necessary in some cases to motivate communities, but the costs are only minor and insignificant compared to the cost of formal policing.



Patrolling the forest in Krang Skear commune in the wet season (Photo provided by research participants)

¹ While in English the term “community forestry” is normally used, in Khmer the term “forest community” (*samakhum preycher*) is in common use, perhaps suggesting an emphasis on building a community of forest users rather than on the technical aspects of forest management.

The Legal Framework

Cambodian law allows villagers to harvest forest products for customary use. Chapter 9, Article 40 of the *Law on Forestry* states that:

For local communities living within or near the Permanent Forest Reserves, the state shall recognize and ensure their traditional user rights for the purpose of traditional customs, beliefs, religions and living as defined in this article.

The traditional user rights of a local community for forest products & by-products shall not require the permit. The traditional user rights under this article consist of:

- 1- The collection of dead wood, picking wild fruit, collecting bees' honeys, taking resin, and collecting other forest by-products;
- 2- Using timbers to build houses, stables for animals, fences and to make agricultural instruments;
- 3- Grass cutting or unleashing livestock to graze within the forests;
- 4- Using other forest products & by-products consistent with traditional family use;
- 5- The right to barter or sell forest by-products shall not require the permit, if those activities do not cause significant threat to the sustainability of the forest. The customers or any third party who has collected forest by-products from local communities with the purposes of trade, in a manner consistent with the provisions of this law, shall have the permit for forest by-products transportation after royalty and premium payments.

A local community can not transfer any of these traditional user rights to a third party, even with mutual agreement or under contract. These traditional user rights shall be:

- 1- Consistent with the natural balance and sustainability of forest resources and respect the rights of other people;
- 2- Consistent with permissions and prohibitions under the provisions of this law.

No permit is required if harvest levels are “at the amount equal to or below the customary subsistence use defined in Chapter 9 of this law” (Article 24). A community forestry agreement gives a community the right to increase harvest levels in a designated community forest area in accordance with an approved management plan, but is not necessary for customary subsistence.

Although the community’s right to use forest resources for customary subsistence is reasonably clear, their legal right to protect the forest and take action against violations of the Law on Forestry is subject to legal interpretation. Communities may patrol forests they wish to protect and report forest crimes which they witness to the Forestry Administration. However, if they witness forest crimes in the absence of a forestry officer, in order to effectively protect the forest they may also feel the need to temporarily apprehend offenders and/or confiscate illegal logging equipment, in order to hand over offenders and illegal equipment to the Forestry Administration for further legal action. Neither the Law on Forestry nor the Sub-Decree on Community Forestry Management clearly provide these rights, even in the case of crimes committed in a community forest. Article 80 of the Forestry Law gives powers of temporary detention and confiscation only to “Forestry Administration officials qualified as judicial police.” Article 78 states that:

All levels of local authorities, armed forces, custom and excise agents, all airport and port authorities and other concerned authorities shall facilitate and assist in the investigation, prevention and suppression of forest offenses and temporarily safeguard any seized evidence, upon request of competent Forestry Administration officials”,

The above article does not specifically mention a role for members of the public. Nevertheless, an annex to the 2006 *Prakas* on Community Forestry provides a template for the internal regulations of a forest community which clearly presumes these rights:

- Article 48 states that: "...The Community Forestry Management Committee (CFMC) shall detain all evidences and offenders for sending to respective Forestry Administration (FA) Triage to take legal action."
- Article 51 states that: "Any person who is not a Community Forest member or person who comes from outside the local community committed forest offense within the community forest, the CFMC shall report and send the offenders to the respective FA Triage to take legal action...."
- Article 52 states that: "Community Forest members can temporarily detain the offenders and evidences and shall inform CFMC or report to respective FA Triage about the forest offences occurring within their CF area to take legal action. Any member who plays outstanding role in reporting and cracking down forest offenses within the community forest area is deserved to receive reward according to Article 92 of the Forestry Law."

Likewise, while not specifically granting ordinary people the right to suppress forest crimes, the Forestry Law appears to presume these rights. Article 92 of the Forestry Law states that "...The Royal Government may decide to award incentives for people and officers who have participated in suppression of specific forest offenses."

If these presumed rights of temporary apprehension and confiscation do not emanate from the Law on Forestry, they could be derived from general legal principles concerning citizen's arrests. Many countries allow citizens to temporarily detain a criminal who is caught *in flagrante delicto* (in the act of committing a crime), for the purpose of handing the criminal over to the relevant authorities. Cambodian law provided such a right in a Legal Decree, No. 27, dated March 1986. Article 20 stated that "In the case of *flagrante delicto*, everyone shall have the right to arrest perpetrators and take them to the police station or a nearby office of the People's Revolutionary Committee." However, while not specifically repealed, this right is not mentioned in the more recent legal code developed during the UNTAC period. Penal and Civil Codes and Procedures are in the process of being revised, but it is not known whether their final versions will incorporate the concept of citizen's arrests."

Another possible interpretation is that when a Community Forestry agreement is signed, members of the forest community become by extension "concerned authorities" as described under Article 78 of the Law on Forestry, empowered to cooperate in the suspension of forest crimes. Forestry Administration officials met during this research stated that they believed this article provides a right to all citizens to assist in the suppression of forestry offences wherever they occur, even in the absence of a community forestry agreement.

Greater clarity is still needed on the rights of communities to protect forest resources and the means permissible within the limits provided by law. According to the observations of this piece of research, while village forest patrols may threaten illegal loggers with detention, they rarely or never actually do so. They sometimes request the offender to sign a statement saying they will not break the law again, and they sometimes deliver illegal logging equipment to the authorities after it is left behind by offenders who run away from the scene of the crime. Such caution on the part of village forest patrols seems quite justified considering the vagueness of the legal framework.



Forest in Krang Skear commune, February 2007

Case Study: Krang Skear Commune

About Krang Skear

Population figures held by the commune council in Krang Skear indicate that, as of 2006, Krang Skear had a population of 11,445 people, including 2,404 households and 5,932 women (see Appendix 2). The National Census of 1998 indicated a population of 9,283 people. The population of the commune has increased by 2.7% per year since that time. Census figures (NIS 1999) show that the rural population of Kompong Chhnang province, where Krang Skear is located, is 57.8% literate (males 66.4%, females 50.3%).

The commune is quite large, covering 52,165 ha, with a population density of just 22 persons per sq. km. Although official maps and administrative records show just eight villages in the commune, the commune council is aware of 16 villages. Participants in the research identified the location of these villages on the topographic map (Appendix 3).

A Forestry Administration map dated 1997 (Appendix 4) shows large areas of mainly deciduous forest, particularly in the southwest of the commune. Agricultural areas are located mainly in the northeast and along the railway. Research participants felt that the map may have been accurate in 1997, but that there have been significant illegal logging and forest fires since then. People have planted cashews and mangos in between the stumps, especially in the area south of Phnom Ta Sam. The research participants claimed that the commune now has 11,280 ha of jungle and 9,005 ha of sparse forest.

A baseline assessment of natural resources and rural livelihoods conducted by the Cambodia Development Resource Centre (McKenney & Prom, 2002), notes that community forest activities in the commune provide fuelwood and non-timber forest products (NTFPs) sufficient for household consumption, though not sufficient for selling.



Villagers erect a sign to protect the forest (Photo provided by research participants)

History of Forest Protection in the Commune

The eldest research participants could remember how the abundant the forest was in the commune in the 1960s and before, when *“the trees were so big we could not put our arms around them”*, and there

were many wild animals like rhinoceros. Deforestation began during the 1980s, with the presence of Vietnamese troops, but the forest was still abundant. It was not until the year 2000 that people realised that the natural resources they all relied on were in serious trouble and that something had to be done to save it.

Research participants explained the history of forest protection in the forest as follows:

“Between 1979 and 1990, there were abundant forest, wild animals, fish, and richness in biodiversity.

“Between 1990 and 1993, timber traders and uncontrolled groups arrived and destroyed the forest. They brought with them as many as 150 small and large chainsaws, 7 trucks, 3 tractors and 3 carriages for loading and transporting timber both inside and outside the country.

“Between 1993 and 1996, a growing number of people from all over Cambodia came to do their business in Krang Skear commune. The area was at the time under the control of the soldiers of Battalion 6, during which the forest destruction and encroachment for forest land continued at a steady pace.

“Between 1996 and 2000, the natural resources in Krang Skear commune were put in an even more deteriorative state; for example, poaching of wild games, catching fish with electric shock equipment, use of illegal fishing gears, tree logging, and forest encroachment for land occupation. All of these activities were completely uncontrolled.

“Seeing the constant loss of natural resources, [beginning in 2000] the villagers worked together to form a forest community in each village. When they witnessed forest crimes, they lodged complaints with the concerned institutions, but no resolution was forthcoming. The community asked for cooperation from the relevant institutions, chiefs of forestry and environment and soldiers to help protect the forest. But instead of providing their cooperation in cracking down on the crime, they only demanded some money from the offenders for their own pockets. Thus, the crimes continued to rise rather than fall.



Villagers pose next to illegal logging equipment which they confiscated in 2002 (Photo provided by research participants)

“Seeing that the timber dealers and authorities were all the same group, the community groups discussed ways to address the problem. The community groups decided the best solution was to

seize and impound the illegal chainsaws and round saws. After the gathering, the community began their operation to seize axes, jigsaws and one chainsaw. These were taken to the Kompong Chhnang provincial Department of Agriculture. They were given a reward of 100,000 riels (about 25 US\$) for every offence controlled by the Deputy Director of the Provincial Department of Agriculture, who continued to present further rewards to the community for any offense controlled. The community was strongly encouraged to carry out another operation which seized two chainsaws that were then handed over to the Department of Agriculture for a reward of 100,000 riels per chainsaw.

“The community later applied to commune and district authorities and the forestry chief of Kompong Chhnang province for permission to set up of a forest community. However, the request was disregarded and disapproved. Seeing that prevention is better than cure, the community came up with a decision to continue to protect the forest while awaiting approval, or otherwise the forest would sooner or later be completely destroyed. Although the forest community of Krang Skear commune was rejected, threatened, incited to have internal rifts and faced intimidation, the community groups saw that the forest protector is in the right while the forest destroyer is in the wrong.

“The community groups who wanted to protect and maintain the natural resources, culture, tradition and custom, beliefs, religion and lifestyle, gathered to educate people about the importance of the forest. As a result, people’s awareness of this issue have been improved and more of them have become engaged in patrolling the forest, placing signs for forest protection, setting up guard posts, planting poles to mark the borders, organizing the guardian spirit ceremony and helping the neighbouring communes and Krakor district, Pursat province, in similar activities.”

Conflicting Claims on the Forest

As mentioned above, one of the problems facing the forest community in Krang Skear is that the entire commune has been allocated for future utilisation by an agricultural concession.

Some background on this conflict are mentioned in passing here, but for more information readers are referred to the report of the United Nations Special Representative on Human Rights report on *Land Concessions for Economic Purposes in Cambodia: A Human Rights Perspective*, November 2004. Annex Four of this report focuses on the “Pheapimex company and its land concession in Pursat and Kompong Chhnang Provinces”: http://cambodia.ohchr.org/report_subject.aspx.

Further information may be found in the NGO Forum on Cambodia’s 2006 report: *Fast-Wood Plantations, Economic Concessions and Local Livelihoods in Cambodia*, Phnom Penh, Cambodia: <http://www.ngoforum.org.kh/Land/Docs/Doc3.htm>.

Although this agricultural concession was quietly granted in the year 2000, there was no direct affect on the people in Krang Skear until the year 2004 when the company tried to clear land in the commune for a tree nursery. As explained by research participants:

“On November 11, 2004, the Pheapimex Company brought in machinery to clear and bulldoze the forest land to make a nursery for eucalyptus and acacia, but was prevented several times by the non-violent protests of the community groups. The community sent petitions to the King and requested the supreme institutions to provide interventions to stop the company’s activities and cancel the contract in order to leave the natural forest land as the heritage for the next generation.”

The King forwarded the people’s petition to the Prime Minister, who replied to the King in a letter dated February 18, 2005. The Prime Minister, though largely dismissive of the community’s concerns, did suggest that authorities: “Conduct further field study, set up border markers and identify the involved land areas of the villagers to be separated from the concession land and to conserve the forest of some value for them as per the appropriate requests.” To date, however, no community forests have been approved within the concession area, and the Forestry Administration has been reluctant to actively assist such claims, saying that it is up to “higher-ups” to decide (Interview with Forestry Administration division officials, 23 Feb 2007).

Following a number of tense confrontations with villagers, the Pheapimex company withdrew from Krang Skear commune in early 2005, and has not yet returned. Although the conflict with the company was short-lived, whereas other threats to the forest are more constant, research participants

considered the company's claim to the area a major impediment to getting official support for their forest protection activities or recognition of their community forests. In addition, authorities have not responded to various cases of illegal land clearing. To community members, it appeared as if government officials were not willing to recognise that the land is forested, as an agricultural concession legally should not have been granted in a forested area.

The Cambodian Land Law (2001), Article 59, requires that "Land concessions areas shall not be more than 10,000 hectares", and that "Existing concessions which exceed such limit shall be reduced", although exemptions may apply if "such reduction would result in compromising the exploitation in progress." Given that the Pheapimex concession covers 315,028 hectares across two provinces and is not yet active in Krang Skear commune, a political decision to preserve Krang Skear for community-based forestry protection is still possible. However, the government has not yet shown any signs that it intends to do so.

It is notable that people in Krang Skear commune are motivated to protect the forest despite a very uncertain future.

Methods of Forest Protection

Forest community groups have been set up in all 16 villages in the commune. Each forest community includes a forest patrol, usually consisting entirely of young men, whose job it is to patrol the forests. When confronting illegal loggers, they use active non-violent measures to apprehend the offenders or their tools. Research participants explained their methods as follows:

"Sometimes we sleep in the forest. We confiscate chain saws, then call the Forestry Administration. We are armed only with the Forestry Law. We quote them Article 92, Article 76. We mobilise our group. We surround them, prepare documents, laws, audio-tape, camera. The criminals are scared of being photographed. They try to give bribes, but the people don't accept. This is our method. We carry only laws, not guns. We solve crimes based on the law, and inform the competent authorities. We use active non-violence. The people are motivated, even though they are illiterate. They have religious belief, faith and customary rules."

"When stopping people involved in illegal logging, we try not to use any guns, knives or clubs ... but, we have in our hand the forestry and land laws and other documents. In a simple sense, we handle the case according to the laws when approaching the scene and then notify the competent authority thereafter. Though active non-violence was not always successful, we still repeat the practice."



Forest patrol group in Krang Skear commune, 2006 (Photo provided by research participants)

Participants gave examples of both successful and less successful actions:

"Last month, the villagers saw the lumberjacks with the chainsaws and they later reported to the police. Since it was too late for them to bribe the police, the chainsaws were then impounded."

“About half a month ago, I saw people sawing the trees and reported to the village chief and police, but they were bribed. Thus, I asked them and the police said they found neither chainsaw nor evidence.”

“In Tuol Samrong area, there were previously around 50 charcoal factories. Now there are none. The forest patrols took action to block the roads. They slept in the forest. They met with ox carts carrying timber and convinced the people to stop. They took photographs, made phone calls, and showed the Forestry Law and Order of Hun Sen. Now even cutting of small trees is quiet. Wildlife is increasing.”

Some villages have up to five forest patrol groups, each consisting of five or more men, and each responsible for patrolling a different area. In some villages, all villagers contribute to a fund to support the forest patrols. In Tuol Samrong, they collect 100 riels per month per person. In Anchanh, each person contributes 30 kg of rice per year. Participants felt that the forest patrols were still under-resourced:

“Our forest patrols have been industrious, but there has been a shortage of materials as they have worked day and night for the prevention of crime.”

“They work hard, with shortages. They need hammocks, boots, flashlights and head-flashlights, as they patrol both day and night. Boots are needed because of snakes.”

The strength of the forestry communities varies from village to village. In Tuol Samrong they have reduced use of the forest through creating projects for the poorest people – for example raising chickens and pigs. They have made strong links with NGOs and the Forestry Administration. In Kneang, they don't have NGO support, and logging is ongoing. Only five families in Kneang could be called 'rich'; the other 90 households are very poor.

Each village forest community has a Chief, a Deputy Chief, Cashier and Secretary. Other committee members take responsibility for information dissemination, forest protection, and forest planting. The village chief, elders and monks are often called on to be advisers to the forest community, though this varies from village to village. Meetings are regularly held to devise strategy, raise awareness and build consensus.

“One by one, each forest community has been set up in 16 villages. In setting up the community, a motivated and honest focal person in each village was sought for and chosen in communication, aiming to control the forest crime. These focal persons need to have close cooperation with the officials of forestry administration, environment and other relevant authorities.”

In February 2007, village forest committees voted in commune-wide forest committees, separated into eastern and western portions, in order to help coordinate forest protection activities in the commune.

Community Forestry Claims

In addition to their efforts to protect the entire forest, the forest community in each village in the commune has designated a community forest area close to their village. . Each is at a different stage of formation. The Tuol Samrong village forest community have already completed 7 of the 9 steps required to create a community forest. They have mapped the forest using GPS equipment, and submitted a request for recognition of their community forest to the Forestry Administration. In other villages, they have begun to demarcate the boundaries of their community forests. Tuol Samrong's community forest covers 179 ha, Anchanh village's has two separate community forest areas totalling around 400 ha, and the community forest shared by Kraing Skear Tbound and Chambok Prasat villages is around 350 ha, or possibly greater. Various NGOs have helped in the process of setting up the community forests, but none so far have been approved. However, the community forest in Tuol Samrong village has defacto approval and support from the Forestry Administration, while the other community forests do not.

Official support for Community-Based Forest Protection

The research participants felt that official support for their forest protection efforts was greatest between 2000 to 2004; that is, from the beginning of their forest protection efforts until the arrival of the concession company. Significantly, during this time provincial authorities gave rewards to

villagers who helped suppress forest crimes in accordance with Article 92 of the Law on Forestry. Close cooperation was built between the community and local forestry officials. Community opposition to the concession company strained relationships from 2004 onwards, and had a significant effect on the motivation and effectiveness of subsequent forest protection efforts.

This was most evident when comparing the situation in different villages during the field visit. Tuol Samraong village is the only village in the commune to be outside the designated concession area, and the only village to have active support from the Forestry Administration for its community forest. They actively patrol the forest once or twice a week, both day and night, and they generally feel that their protection efforts have been effective.

Anhchanh and Sou K'orng villages are also active in suppressing forest crimes, but without support from officials can only suppress the smaller crimes. *"If we find people cutting trees, we tell our committee, and we mobilise a force of around 15 people to go catch them. But we usually allow them to take away the timber after making them sign an agreement not to do it again."* However, they have been unable to stop an individual from Kompong Chhnang town from coming and clearing a large area of nearby forest. The land clearer, who was interviewed during the research, claimed to have cleared over 20 hectares of land and to have the support of provincial officials. District officials interviewed during the research promised to investigate.

In Chambok Prasat village, many villagers have given up on protecting the forest due to what they see as official support for forest destruction. Despite some initial success in attempts to close down the charcoal kilns around the village, these are now springing up again. Villagers complained that police were running the charcoal kilns, but also admitted that ordinary villagers were supplying them with wood. Comments made by the villagers in Chambok Prasat included:

"Powerful people from outside don't stop cutting the trees, so why should we stop... Soon the concession company will come to clear the forest, so people think they should clear it first."

"Before in the 1990s, everyone had chainsaws, but now there are fewer. But authorities have not supported our forest protection efforts... We want the Forestry Administration to cooperate with the people, and help us control a community forest in a clear manner. We need help from higher levels to stop operation of chainsaws. They ask us to protect the forest, but there are still two chainsaws here owned by people with powerful people behind them."

"We are like small pebbles. They are a strong wind. When we get close, they blow us away."

"We still like our forest. We can still collect mushrooms, bamboo shoots, potato, and vegetables. If the forest is destroyed, the vegetation won't grow again. The forest helps meet our needs."



Land cleared illegally near Anhchanh village (Photo taken February 2007)

Community Uses of the Forest

In order to ascertain the importance of forest resources to local livelihoods, research participants listed the various livelihoods common among people in Krang Skear commune. For this exercise, they divided the villages of the commune into two different groups with similar livelihood patterns:

Group 1 consists of the villages of Rakdol, Kdol, Damnak Ampil, Khneang, Krang Skear Tbaung, and Damnak Khlong. People in these villages live next to the railway and earn their living by selling firewood, growing vegetables, do farming, doing business and harvesting forest by-products. A large number of them are not native to the area, but migrated from their home villages some time in the past.

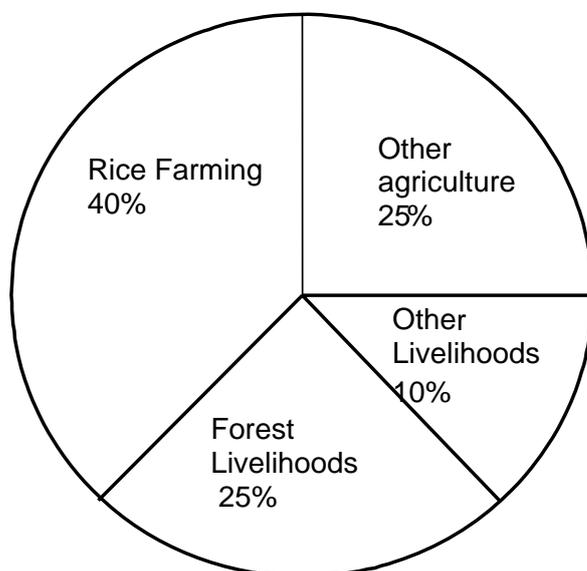
Group 2 consists of villages from Anhchanh and Sou K'orng, Ou Lpov, Chambak Prasat, Trapaing Mlu, Tuol Samrong, Chan Krak, Phnom Tasam and Krang Skear Kandal. People from these villages practice farming and raise cattle as well as collect forest products and by-products.

Participants ranked the importance of each source of livelihood as follows:

<p><u>Group 1</u></p> <p>Villagers of Rakdol, Kdol, Damnak Ampil, Khneang, Krang Skear Tbaung, Damnak Khlong and Veal Sbov.</p> <p>Main livelihoods (in order of importance) Rice farming Cattle raising Growing water melons and peanuts Growing corn Growing string bean Growing mango and jackfruit Commercial water green Custard apple and guava orchard</p> <p>Other livelihoods (in order of importance) Grocery or traditional herbs Motor taxi driver Bicycle and motorbike repairman, mechanic Rice mill and fermented liquor Garment factory workers</p> <p>Forest products and by-products (in order of importance) House construction Mushrooms Potatoes Bamboo shoots Traditional herbs Snails Firewood, rafters Vine and tree logging Lacquer resin Dry resin Furniture</p>	<p><u>Group 2</u></p> <p>Villagers of Anhchanh, Sou K'orng, Ou Lpov, Chambak Prasat, Trapaing Mlu, Tuol Samrong, Chan Trak, Phnom Ta Sam and Krang Skear Kandal.</p> <p>Main livelihoods (in order of importance) Secondary crops Rice farming Livestock Coconut palm tree climber Growing vegetables like cabbage Potatoes Growing corn Growing beans Water melon orchard</p> <p>Other livelihoods (in order of importance) Grocery Sewing Bicycle repair Motorbike repair TV repair Mat weaving handicraft Forge Construction workers</p> <p>Forest products and by-products (in order of importance) Timber for house construction Wood for house fence Wood for furniture Traditional herbs Burning wood for charcoal Firewood Resin Vines Potatoes Bamboo shoots</p>
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Ranked list of village livelihoods, Krang Skear forest community group, 28 September 2006.

To get an idea of the relative importance of each group of livelihoods, participants were asked to create a pie diagram. Using a whiteboard enabled the participants to discuss and easily change the diagram until everyone was satisfied. Both groups came up with very similar diagrams. The end result provides a useful, if not precise, impression of the relative importance of each livelihood group:



Pie Diagram of village livelihoods, Krang Skear forest community group, 28 September 2006.

More importantly, the discussion on livelihoods led to an unexpected discussion on customary uses of the forest and local belief systems. It was revealed that the community holds an annual ceremony for the spirits of the forest, and avoids cutting trees in designated spirit forests (see below). This led naturally to a discussion on forest by-products, as described in the seasonal diagram below:

Forest By-Product	Typical Earnings	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Kuy fruit, Phnieu fruit	20,000 riels / day				—————								
Chinese New Year trees	60,000 riels / day (for one bunch)	—											
Mushrooms	10,000 riels / day				—————								
Bamboo shoots	20,000 riels / day (for 30kg)				—————								
Hard resin (for making torches)	5,000 riels / day (for 5 torches)	—————											
Rattan (made into earthwork baskets)	15,000 riels / day (for 10 baskets)	—————											
Traditional herbs	100,000 riels/month (10 people collecting, 2 to 3 times per mth)	—————											
Wild potatoes	No sale value. Used as food and traditional medicine (e.g. for snake bite).								—————				

Seasonal diagram of most important non-timber forest product livelihoods, determined from semi-structured interviews with the Krang Skear forest community group, 28 September 2006.

Villagers in Sou Kh'orng village made a long list of forest products that they commonly access, including mushrooms, bamboo shoots, *damlong chrouk* (a kind of tuberous plant), resin, vines, fish, *kduoch* (manioc tubers), ripe *kuy* fruit, *pring* (jambolan plums), snails, *treal* (a kind of fruit tree, which is of two varieties: *treal doskrabey* or "treal buffalo's breasts", a type of vine having fruits in clusters and are shaped like a buffalo's breast and *treal sva* or "monkey treal", which is *uvaria* in English), *plae lopeak* (rattan fruit), *plae srakum* (a kind of small, sweet and sticky fruit), *kom chark* (young green bud of small rattan), and other rattans used for different purposes. Wild animals which they sometimes find in the forest include rabbits, peacocks, wild chickens, wild pigs, *totea* (a kind of wild bird similar to partridge), gray squirrels, squirrels, monkeys, jackals, deer, fallow deer, snakes, turtles, snails, monitor lizards, tortoises, frogs, large spiders, and agamid lizards. A seasonal calendar of forest products for this village is found in Appendix 5.

Significantly, villagers said "All our food (*mhop*) comes from the forest. We have no need for buying and selling. We buy only MSG and cooking oil."

Villagers in Tuol Samraong village listed the following forest products to be found in their nearby forest:

1. **Vegetables:** *Sloek Chres* (a kind of leaf), *Reang* (a kind of shrub that has edible leaves), *Leab* (a kind of tree with edible leaves), pumpkins, large rattans (edible parts), bamboo shoots, *Chak* (a kind of tree, which grows in water), *Kramoung*, *Sloek Khnoeng* (edible creepers with sour leaves), *Plae Tumpaor*, *Sloek Sandar*, *Pros Svar* (a kind of plant with edible young shoots), *Krachork Andeuk* (wild tree edible young fruit), mushrooms, small rattans (edible parts only)

2. **Fruits:** *Kuy* (a kind of vine having yellow sour but edible fruits), *Semaon* (the fruits resemble litchi nuts, but smaller), *Srakum* (the fruit is small, sweet and sticky), *Kantuot Prey* (wild mallow), *Sramor* (a kind of tree with bitter fruits), *Prous* (a kind of small fruit tree), *Tromuong* (a kind of tree having fruits used as sour spice), *Pring Pluk* (a kind of jambolan plum), *Pring Bay* (a kind jambolan plum), *Nguy* (local name not used elsewhere in Cambodia), potatoes

3. **Medicine:** *Kuy* (a kind of vine having yellow sour but edible fruits), *Vaor Chuy* (a kind of vine), *Vaor Meas* (a kind of vine), *Bandenh Meas*, *Bay Kork*, *Bay Kdang* (a kind of plant with red flowers), *Damrey Pramdork*, *Deum Thnam Chen*, *Chhke Sraeng*,

4. **Animals:** Snails, fish, snake, gray squirrel, small monitor lizard, rabbit, turtle, giant spider, deer, bore, crab, frog, a kind of toad, toad, gecko.

A seasonal diagram of forest products for Tuol Samraong village is found in Appendix Six



Forest products collected near Sou Kh'orng village, February 2007

Research participants admitted that *“Those who rely on the forest by-products for their livelihood don’t become rich. But they benefit from the forest.”* By contrast, an average rice harvest may bring in one million riels (US\$ 250) and those who have a lot of cattle to raise may earn up to three million riel (US\$ 750) in a year. Illegal forestry is much more lucrative, however. *“An ox cart can hold two cubic metres of timber, and each cubic metre can earn 600,000 riels. In two weeks they can earn two million riel.”*

Participants explained how forest products provide a safety net, especially in times when they run short of money, for example during the rice transplanting season. They are also a major source of sustenance for the poorest people in the commune who have no land. The poor, who are often migrants from other areas, also sell their labour for ploughing, transplanting rice or minding cattle.

The forest in the commune plays an important role for those raising cattle. Farmers regularly take their cattle to the forest to graze. *“In the dry season, they let cows walk freely. In the rainy season, people look after their cows.”* Farmers from surrounding communes also use the forests of Krang Skear for cattle grazing, as vacant land in their own communes is more scarce. *“The grass grows as high as our neck, and looks green.”*

Villagers sometimes travel up to 20 kilometres away from the village to collect non-timber forest products. Villagers may travel long distances into the forest about twice a year, especially when going to collect traditional herbs. At other times, they collect forest products in the areas near to or surrounding their home.



Collecting snails from the forest, February 2007

Community beliefs about the forest

Research participants admitted that the forest community did not have any strict rules about how residents may use the forest, beyond stipulating that they are entitled to traditional and customary use but not commercial use. *“Trees are cut for house building or for barter to get rice”*. They considered the main threats to the forest to come from outside the local community.

They did, however, attest to some important beliefs about the forest which assist forest preservation.

“People believe in the spirit forest (prey neak ta). Each year, we organise a celebration, gathering people from all villages, and perform a ritual to give offerings to the spirits. There are people who can invoke the chief guardian spirits and become possessed. We play traditional music and beat drums. Annually, around 3,000 people come to Phnom Trong spirit forest. When people prayed, it brought rain. Every village has a spirit forest. We invited all relevant institutions, but they did not come. Police came to investigate, but did not disturb us. People do not cut trees in the spirit forest. They just harvest the forest by-products in the area of spirit forest and have never cut down the forest except those outsiders who came to log trees in the forest.”

In order to explain the importance of the forest, research participants made the following additional comments:

- *“We still have our forest. If we cut it all, like in Prey Veng, we will not leave a legacy for the next generation. If we preserve the forest, it is an inheritance we can give to our descendants.”*
- *“It is like the Khmer story about silver hidden in the bamboo. People destroyed their defences to get the silver. Today, people destroy the forest to get money.”*
- *“In the past, the poor only ate fish. Now the poor cannot afford fish. The rich eat fish, and the poor eat meat. And now, only the rich can afford a wooden house.”*



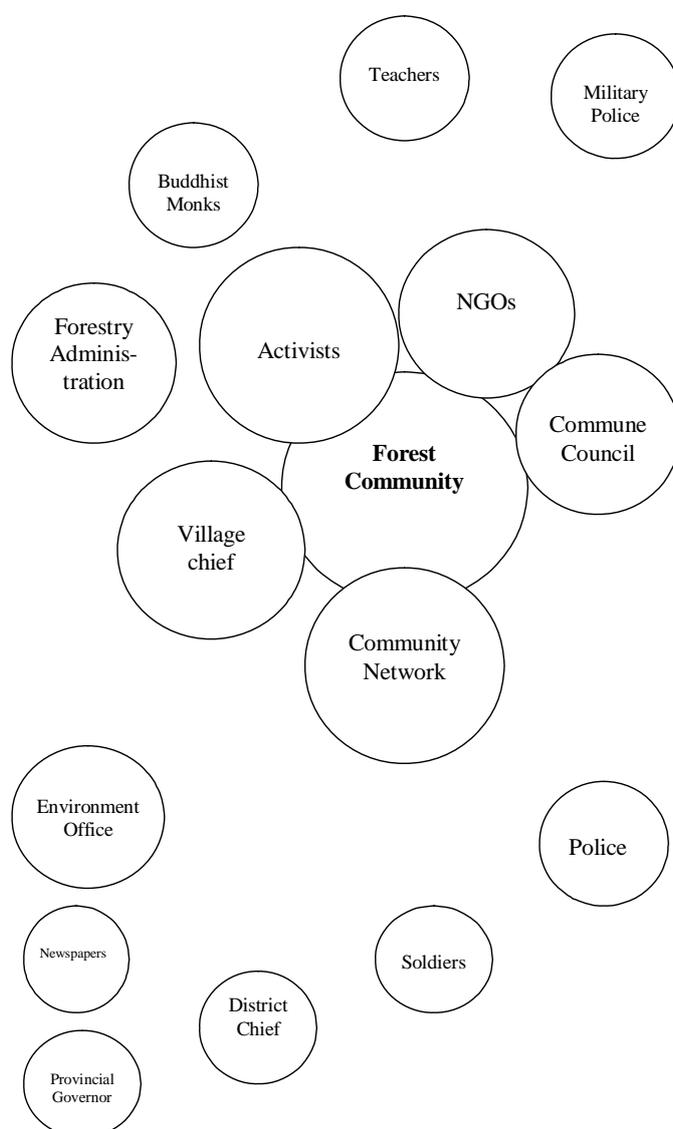
Ceremony to respect the forest in Krang Skear commune, 2005 (Photo provided by research participants).

Community Perceptions of Stakeholders

Venn diagrams were used to explore institutional relationships. Participants listed institutions or individuals important for forest protection, and then ranked them in order of importance. The resulting list was as follows:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Forest community | 9. Buddhist monks |
| 2. Forest patrol groups (“Activists”) | 10. Teachers |
| 3. Community network | 11. Police |
| 4. Village chief | 12. Soldiers |
| 5. Non-government organizations | 13. PM (military police) |
| 6. Forestry Administration | 14. District chief |
| 7. Commune chief | 15. Provincial governor |
| 8. Environment Department | 16. Newspapers |

The research participants then proceeded to make a Venn diagram, as shown below. The size of each circle represented the *importance* of the organisation to the forest community, while the distance from the forest community circle indicates the *closeness of the relationship*.



Venn Diagram of institutional relationships, Krang Skear forest community group, 29 September 2006. The word “Activists” was used by the participants to describe forest patrol groups.

The research participants were asked why they felt that they had a distant relationship with most of the authorities. Participants explained that environment and forestry officials, soldiers, police and

military police have all been involved in forest destruction; some of them possess their own chainsaws and have made forest exploitation their source of livelihood. The relationship with the Forestry Administration is the closest and most important, but has become strained due to the granting of the agricultural concession. The Forestry Administration has apprehended small-scale illegal loggers, but has not taken action against the major timber traders.

The involvement and support of the village chief varies from village to village, but is considered important in generating the support and understanding of villagers. A number of commune councillors are supportive of the forest communities, though not all. The creation of a community network has helped link efforts between villages. Meetings of the community network have been held to share experiences and discuss strategy.

Support from NGOs

Research participants strongly conveyed that their forest protection efforts were community led, and were not the result of any NGO intervention. Nevertheless, they were able to mention a number of NGOs who have provided them assistance:

- Phnom Kangrey (PNKA) has provided village income generation projects and assisted in the seven initial steps required to organise a community forest.
- Action for Environment and Community (AEC) has helped to organise village forest community elections, to raise awareness about forest protection, and provide training on the Forestry Law.
- The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) has assisted with training, a public forum, and support for transport and communication costs, and has helped to liaise with officials at the district level.
- The Southeast Asia Development Program (SADP) has provided assistance for development work such as rice banks and cash banks, plus network meetings at village and commune level.
- Community Forestry International (CFI) is presently helping with boundary demarcation and provides equipment such as global positioning devices (GPS) in Anhchanh village.
- The Community Peace Building Network (CPBN), a network of community leaders, has provided training to promote awareness on rights in each community.
- The NGO Forum on Cambodia has helped respond to problems, especially with regards to helping prepare a petition to send to the King, and organised various meetings in Phnom Penh to link together forest community activists.

In addition, the Cambodian Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the human rights group ADHOC have helped activists who were threatened with arrest. In general, the research participants rated the NGOs working directly in the commune as most important to them. They did not yet have a clear understanding of how national level NGOs and agencies could assist in advocating their concerns to higher levels of government.

There was no clear indication of any concerted effort by the NGOs to coordinate their assistance to the community.

Community recommendations to stakeholders

The research participants agreed that greater cooperation from the authorities and other stakeholders would improve the impact of their forest protection efforts. The research participants were asked what they expected from each stakeholder, and came up with the following list:

Forestry administration:

- Provide good cooperation for forest protection
- Provide official recognition of the forest communities
- Follow the law
- Provide technical support for the establishment of forest communities

- Help take timely intervention against offences
- Help disseminate laws and information on the benefits of the forest to the local people
- Authorize the local people to take action against forest crimes
- Help organize a visit to other forest communities for an exchange of experiences
- Disseminate information on forest protection via short television advertisements
- Pay more attention to the community than to a company

Local NGOs:

- Provide training to the community on: the land and forestry laws; advocacy; establishment of forest communities; and techniques for active non-violence
- Provide development projects
- Provide budget plans
- Help build contacts and cooperation with government officials
- Help provide any materials such as torch, radio, camera and I-Com (short-wave radio's) to community forest patrol groups

National NGOs:

- Bring people together in meetings, held in Phnom Penh and provinces
- Provide training on forest management
- Help make an arrangement for the involved authorities to make a field visit to the forest
- Protect the forest community from official harassment and intimidation by disseminating information and carrying out intervention activities
- Provide materials such as instruments, cameras, tape recorders and posters to forest community groups

Community Networks:

- Share information [within the network] quickly and hold protests together
- Build relationships with relevant organizations and official institutions
- Encourage organizations to provide financial support for community development

Commune council:

- Help support the community
- Help protect the forest
- Grant rights concerning forest protection in a broad manner, including authorization for the establishment of forest community and advocacy
- Help protect the villagers' traditional occupations (including farming, plantation, tapping trees for wood oil, raising animals, etc), and don't work for the needs of a company.
- Help contact relevant institutions to authorize the forest community and help develop the community
- Provide health and education services

Village chief:

- Provide assistance when a forest crime is committed
- Bring villagers together to participate in the forest community
- Contact the commune council and relevant institutions on behalf of the community
- Take part in meetings with community members
- Recognise forest community's statutes
- Help develop the village

Forest Patrol Groups:

- Be honest
- Be firm and patient
- Be courageous when conducting activities
- Provide advocacy (lead the process of advocacy on behalf of the forest community)

- Be direct informers to villagers, [i.e. be active in sharing information with them]
- Actively patrol the forest
- Divide people into groups for monitoring crime prevention
- Take actions against an offence and refer the case to the forestry administration

SWOC² Analysis

Research participants were asked to list the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and constraints of the forest community. Strengths and weaknesses are concerned with factors internal to the forest community; whereas opportunities and constraints are external factors affecting the forestry community. They created the following list:

Strengths:

- The community has participated in the prevention of crime
- Patrol groups have slept in the forest
- Photographs have been taken of forest crimes to be kept as proof and a contract written in which we have stated the punishment or measure to be taken by bringing both the materials and the offenders to the commune level.
- Some of the patrol groups have reported forest crimes by phone calls from the forest (although it is sometimes outside the service area)
- Disseminate laws or documents
- Pretend to take photographs via camera even though there is actually no film!
- Disseminate documents or laws, approved by Samdech Hun Sen
- Patrol groups have proven to be an effective method to prevent small-scale forest destruction
- Communities have proven their commitment through providing: time and financial contributions, 100 riels a month for each member. For Anhchanh village, approximately a bushel of rice is given as a contribution annually by each member.
- Has strengthened relationships with outsiders
- Has included participation from the villagers
- Organizational structure has been created
- Statutes and internal regulations have been prepared by some communities

Weakness:

- Lack of budget
- Lack of knowledge
- Lack of solidarity
- Lack of participation from leaders, authorities and institutions involved
- Lack of human resources (learned people) who have been persuaded and convinced [of the need for community-based forest protection]
- Lack of network relationship from one village to another
- Lack of materials
- Most communities have not been able to prepare statutes or agree on forest borders
- Lack of motivation

Opportunities:

- Organizations can help provide skills training and budget
- There are exposure visits
- There is a legal framework to support forest communities
- Communities participate in the forest network meeting at national level which disseminates information to the community
- There are relationships with NGOs
- There are relationships with the first deputy chief of the Commune Council
- Commune council members who are responsible in the community provide support and get involved in the forest protection

² This is often called a SWOT analysis, meaning an analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. In Cambodia, the term "Constraints" is often used instead of "Threats" due to the more violent connotation of the latter word, especially when translated to Khmer.

Constraints:

- Some villages have not yet received development assistance from NGOs
- Organizational structure, statutes and internal regulations have not been recognized yet
- There is lack of motivation
- The Forestry Administration's behaviour undermines the communities' goals
- There are obstacles created by the commune authorities

Conclusions and Recommendations

The case study suggests that there is considerable potential to engage local communities in the protection of forest areas beyond the normal limits of formal community forestry as it is currently practiced in Cambodia. Communities can be effective in monitoring, reporting, and suppressing forest crimes, wherever they occur. However, these efforts need recognition and support from the relevant government authorities to be effective. Donors and NGOs may also support these efforts by providing technical assistance and community development. Some specific recommendations follow:

1. Villagers should be encouraged to monitor, report and cooperate in the suppression of forest crimes, wherever they occur. Unless community forest areas are significantly expanded, a narrow focus of only protecting officially-designated community forests will not be effective in protecting forest resources at large.
2. Areas of forest which are currently under no kind of management, including ex-concession and inactive concession areas, should be considered for community-based protection. Communities need to decide for themselves whether they are willing to help protect the forest, but may be encouraged by appropriate support provided by NGOs and donors, and by cooperative local authorities.
3. NGOs may assist communities to protect larger areas of forest by assisting community organising, and providing equipment and funds necessary for increased patrolling efforts and reporting.
4. Until such time as the legal rights of communities to suppress forest crimes are better defined, communities should be advised to be cautious when considering apprehending offenders or confiscating illegal logging equipment, especially when patrolling forest areas outside of designated community forests. Building good relations with Forest Administration and other local officials may help provide legitimacy to and support for the community's forest crime suppression efforts.
5. Field-based staff of the Forestry Administration needs to be provided clear guidelines and training on how to take the next step when communities bring illegal activity to their attention, so that the full potential for cooperation with communities is achieved.
6. Donors should provide technical assistance to help government realize the potential of cooperation with communities, in particular enabling clarification of the rights of communities in assisting the suppression of forest crimes. (Similar concerns also exist about the right of communities to assist in the suppression of fishery crimes.)

Further research is recommended to compare these results with the situation in other areas of Cambodia and to address in more depth issues which were beyond the scope of this case study. Two areas of particular interest were identified. Firstly, strategies to support community based forest protection activities would be strengthened by a greater understanding of the dynamics controlling local forest protection institutions (perceptions relating to the types of forest resources requiring protection; motivations behind forest protection and how they are influenced by socio-economic and/or demographic changes; and the role of the type of institution chosen itself). Secondly, further analysis is required of the relationship between community-based forest protection groups and other stakeholders involved in the forest sector. This could address how communities rank these relationships and their importance, and also how illegal loggers are responding to protection activities by the community groups.

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Appendix 1: Community-based Forest Protection in India

Although Cambodia has made some progress in introducing small-scale community forestry, its efforts in promoting community-based forest protection fall far behind that in other countries such as Nepal, The Philippines and India. Some examples from India are provided here for comparative learning purposes. The first example is from the Indian state of West Bengal, and the second from the India state of Uttar Pradesh at the base of the Himalayan mountains.

Community Forest Protection in West Bengal

By 1996, in southwest Bengal, 61 percent of all state forestland was under community protection. Satellite images showed a 14 percent increase in closed canopy forest (to above 40 percent) between 1988 and 1991. Villagers' income from NTFPs averaged \$87 per household or about 22 percent of total annual family income (Poffenberger *et al*, 1996). By 2002, 490,582 ha of forest land in West Bengal was being managed by 3,431 forest protection committees (Ballabh *et al*, 2002).

The driving force behind the development of forest protection committees in Bengal and elsewhere in India is often attributed to a government forester by the name of Ajit Banerjee. The World Bank Participation Source Book (Clark & Banerjee, 1996) tells the story this way:

“The idea of using what are now called forest protection committees (FPCs) began in 1972 in West Bengal. At the time, the role of the state Forestry Department was mainly to protect the forests from illegal use by unauthorized persons. Foresters spent most of their time on armed patrol, hunting forest product poachers and evicting people encroaching on forest lands, yet foresters behaving like police were losing the battle to conserve the forests. Even though the forests continued to degrade rapidly, local people became increasingly aggressive toward the foresters, whom they generally considered corrupt. In the Arabari Range of West Bengal, the local people had literally thrown the department out of its territory, threatening any forester who entered with bodily harm.

“One forester, however, had a different idea on how to save the forests. He felt that people living in the forests were not thieves. If they could supplement their incomes through legal forest work and organized extraction of forest products, he believed they would not haphazardly destroy the forests. In fact, he wondered, would not the local people actually protect the forests if they had a real stake in them? So he went to Arabari to talk to the local people about a new way of managing the forests—largely by and for the people. On its part, the Forestry Department would provide real support to the local people, who would receive some of the economic benefits on behalf of the government.”

It is worthwhile to note that when Banerjee began this experiment in community-based forest protection, India had no community forestry laws and regulations. In 1989, the West Bengal government passed legislation to officially recognize the agreements already made between the Forestry Administration and local communities. The methodology quickly spread to other parts of India, such that by 1992, 17 Indian states had initiated joint forestry management and about 2 million ha of forests were managed by around 20,000 protection committees (Banerjee 2000). Nevertheless, Banerjee laments that in many parts of India, forest protection committees have only been permitted on degraded forest land.

Ballabh *et al* (2002) in a comparative analysis, offers a number of lessons to be learnt from the Indian experience. They found that community initiative and effective forest management declined when faced with inadequate support and excessive control by authorities, leaving little room for people's participation. Institutions can provide effective support only when institutional arrangements are fully understood by the members of the community. There needs to be sufficient flexibility for community members to engage in day-to-day problem-solving activities without dependence on external forces. Forest protection committees should be able to hold meetings without forestry officials always present. Regulations affecting forest protection committees must be flexible to allow for local variation and different ways of making decisions.

As noted by Poffenberger *et al* (1996: Part 3), “Policies and guidelines that dictate specific organizational structures and management prescriptions for FPCs have been poorly received by village communities”, as they undermine community authority. Although the forestry departments in

India had embraced community forest management, they were not well organized to implement participatory programs. Changes in attitudes, specific training and new institutional mechanisms were needed to build capacity.

Poffenberger *et al* (1996: Part 22) also note that community-based forest protection did not help all community groups equally. An early emphasis on forest protection and regeneration dictated a practice of forest closure, which severely impacted low-income groups. This was later rectified as the focus moved from protection to sustainable production.

Agarwat (2001), commenting on forest protection groups in India, notes that “what initially appear to be success stories of participative community involvement in resource regeneration are found to be largely non-participatory and inequitable in relation to women.” She further notes that:

“Men’s interests can be traced mainly to their dependence on the local forests for supplementary income, and/or for small timber for house repairs and agricultural tools, which are their responsibility. Women’s interests are linked more to the availability of fuel, fodder, and non-timber products, for which they are more directly responsible, and the depletion of which has meant ever-increasing workloads. In other words there is clearly a link between the gender division of labour and the gendered nature of the stakes.” (Agarwat, 2001:14).

Gupte (2004) suggests an important role for NGOs in facilitating and encouraging women’s active participation in community forest protection, to ensure that women’s participation is transformative and not just nominal.

The ‘Chipko’ Movement

The above provides an example of an effective effort by a forest department to engage the community in forest protection. This next example provides a compelling example of community-initiated efforts to protect their local forest from destruction by external forces.

The Chipko movement emerged in the 1970s, in the foothills of the Himalayas in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. People in this region had already experienced a decade of forest clear-cutting by logging companies, leading to soil erosion, floods and a rapid deterioration of the local forest-dependent village economy. The movement was sparked off, in 1973, by the State Forest Department’s decision to grant a plot of forest to a sports company. Women from the village of Mandal went into the forest and formed a circle around the trees, preventing the company from cutting them down. The word “chipko” means *to embrace*, and refers to the women’s attempt to protect the forest by hugging the trees.

The “chipko” method quickly spread to other areas. The women routinely refused all attempts to bribe or intimidate them. Their efforts initially invoked opposition from the District Forest Office:

The official there told them, in the indifferent tone of someone who did not yet understand the significance of what was happening, that the forests belong to the government, not a bunch of village women, and that police would be dispatched if this tree-hugging did not stop immediately. Unimpressed, the women refused to back down; they left word that any police intervention would simply be greeted by even more protesters. (Nelson, 1993)

Eventually, however, the authorities came to a better understanding of the ecological concerns of the Chipko movement and the needs of local villagers. In 1980, the Indian government proclaimed a 15-year ban on green felling in the Himalayan forests of Uttar Pradesh (Edugreen, 2006). Prime Minister Indira Gandhi gave awards of recognition to some of the women involved in the movement.

The Chipko movement has since developed into a comprehensive system of community-based forest management. Villagers are re-building badly damaged watersheds through tree-planting, contour farming, agroforestry and soil management (Nelson, 1993). By 1996, the Chipko movement is said to have saved some 100,000 trees from excavation. In addition, the Chipko movement’s tree planting efforts resulted in a 65 to 80 percent survival rate of saplings, compared to the government’s 10 to 15 percent success rate with much greater financial resources (Espy, 1996).

Important aspects of the Chipko approach include self-reliance, an emphasis on shared responsibility rather than hierarchy, and the important leadership role played by women in the movement. The movement is based on a philosophy of participation:

“The villagers act when they are ready to act, according to their own felt needs and their own priorities. They work with that they have at hand, and waste no time waiting for aid of answers from the powerful cities of India, let alone the West.” (Nelson, 2003)

The Chipko experience provide important lessons for the Cambodian experience. Firstly, it illustrates the possibility of non-violent community action to influence government decision-making. Secondly, it shows that initial friction between community activists and government officials can, with effort, be overcome, leading to better understanding and better policy. Thirdly, it provides an example of how local community groups can overcome the usual internal problems of elite capture, male dominance, and the corrupting influences of external assistance.

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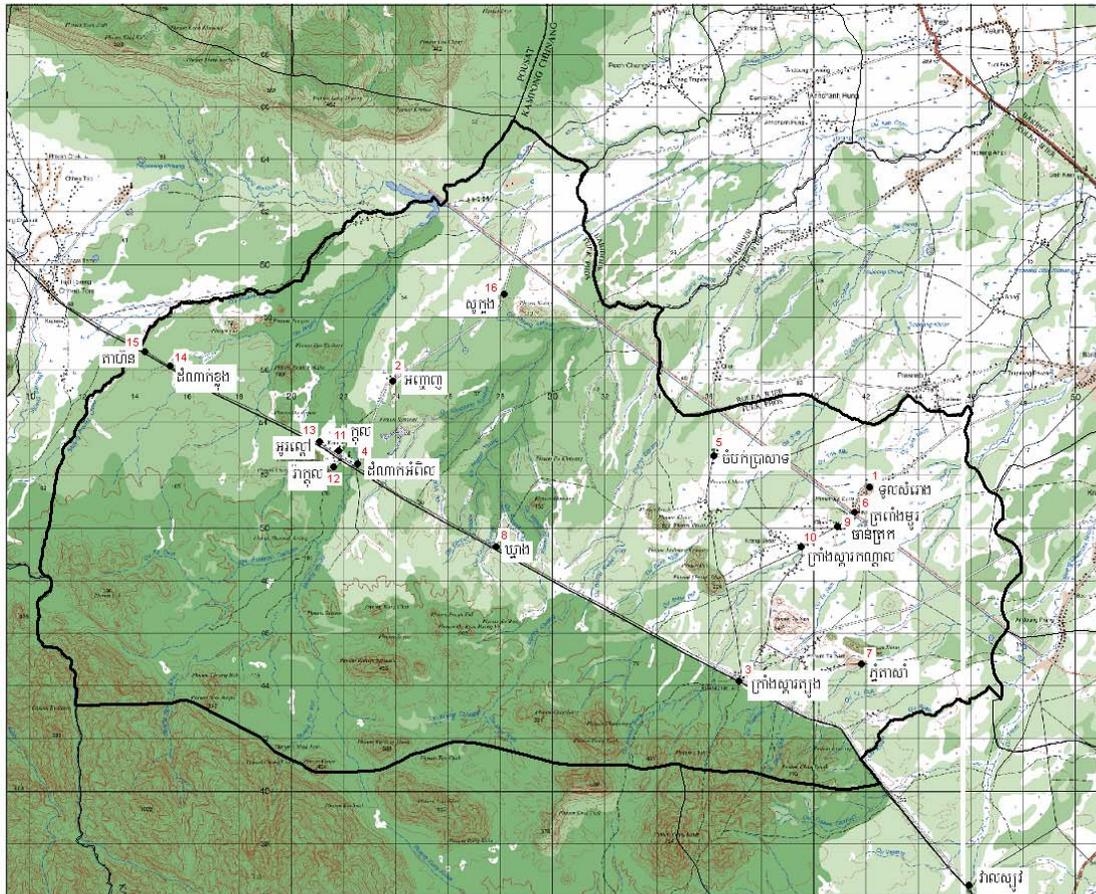
Appendix 2: Village Data

No.	Village	No. of families	No. of people	No. of women
1	Tuol Samraong	120 (now 124)	705 (now 705)	363 (now 368)
2	Chan Trok	157	802	411
3	Trapeang Mlu	138	657	359
4	Chambok Prasat	264	1130	599
5	Krang Skear	198	1008	522
6	Krang Skear Tboundg	199	981	544
7	Phnom Ta Sam	247	1187	627
8	Damnak Khlong	197	795	406
9	Ou Lpow	99	501	256
10	Rakdol	184	860	445
11	Ta Horn	147	716	354
12	Damnak Ampil	142	667	341
13	Kneang	84	392	165
14	Kdol	86	404	204
15	Anhchanh	74	334	187
16	Sou K'orng	68	314	149
	TOTALS:	2404	11453	5932

Commune population statistics, from the Krang Skear Commune Office, dated 10 January 2006 (with updated figures for Tuol Samraong village as of September 2006 provided by commune councillors).

Appendix 3: Krang Skear Commune Topographic Map

Krang Skear Commune Topographic Map



Transliteration of Village Names

1.	Tuol Samraong
2.	Anhchanh
3.	Krang Skear Tboung
4.	Damnak Ampil
5.	Chambak Prasat
6.	Trapeang Mlu
7.	Phnom Ta Sam
8.	Khneang
9.	Chan Trak
10.	Krang Skear (Central)
11.	Kdol
12.	Rakdol
13.	Ou Lgov
14.	Damnak Khlong
15.	Ta Horn
16.	Sou K'ong

This map was prepared by Community Forestry International, Cambodia, using ArcView GIS 3.3 software, September 2006.

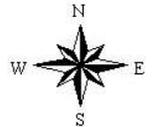
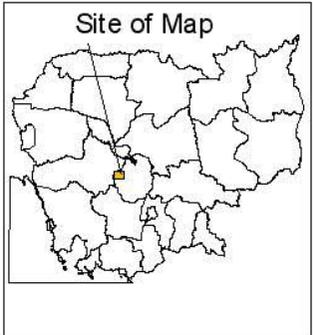
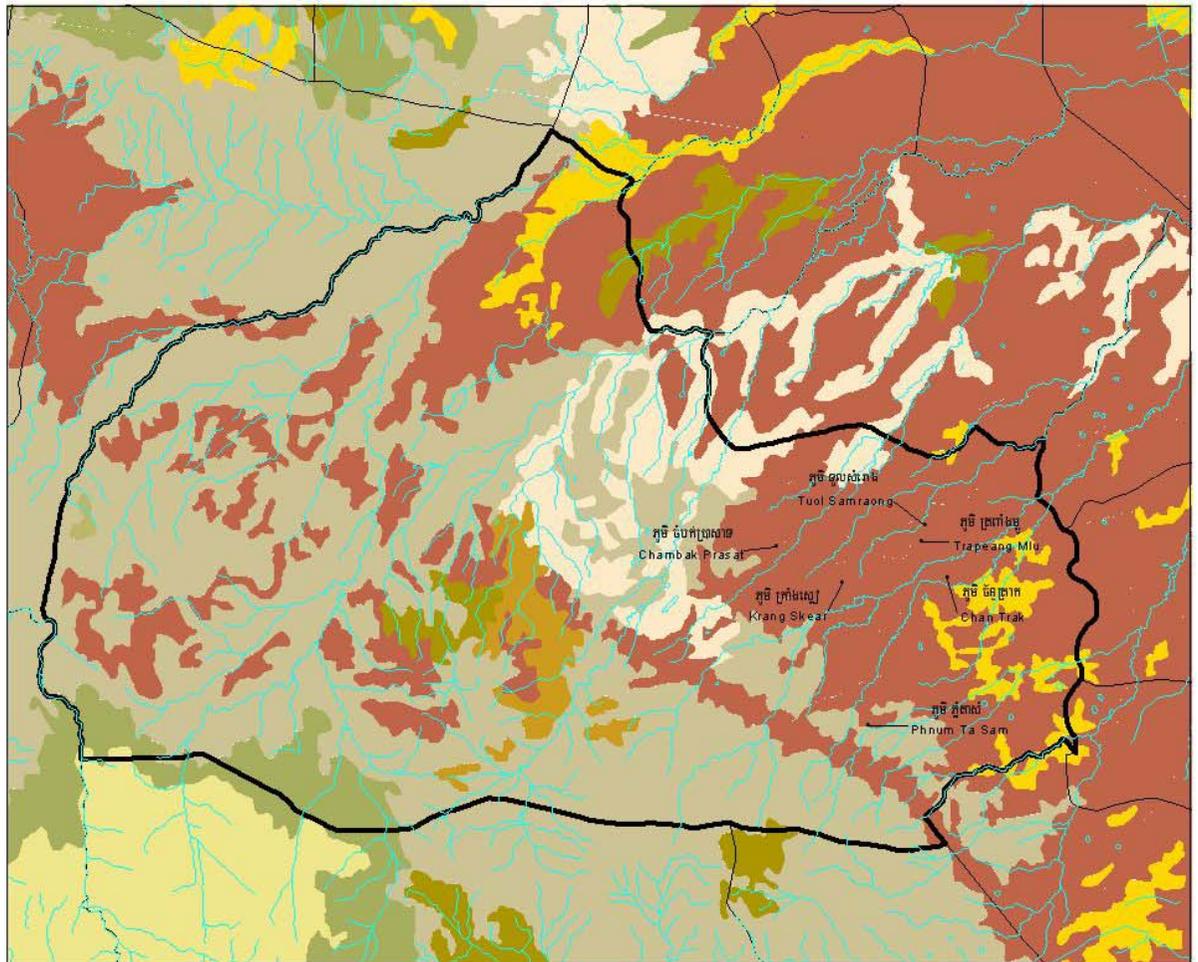
The map was extracted from a topographic map of Cambodia prepared by the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Ministry of Public Works and Transport (MPWT) in cooperation with the Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction (MLMUPC) under the technical cooperation program of the government of Japan and the Government of Kingdom of Cambodia. The map was completed in 2003 in 1:100,000 scale.

The topographic map was produced from SPOT images acquired from January 1998 to January 2002. Ground control was derived from the existing 1:50,000 map. Field surveys were not carried out because of security conditions. Aerial photos from 1994 to 2002, land sat imagery from 1998 to 2000 were used for vegetation and infrastructure village locations and name were generated from the village gazetteer and system of Romanized transcriptions was prepared by the National Geographical Department of Cambodia. All boundary information was provided by the National Geographic Department of Cambodia. Deliberation boundary must not be considered authoritative.

Village names were added by NGO Forum on Cambodia following consultation with village representatives on 28 September 2006. Only eight of the villages appear on village maps and lists namely Krang Skear, Tuol Samraong, Phnom Ta Sam, Chan Trak, Trapeang Mlu, Kdol, Krang Skear Tboung, Chambak Prasat (see http://www.cambodia.gov.kh/ansql/egov/english/provinc e/samrong_chhang.html)



Appendix 4: Krang Skear Commune Forest Cover Map, 1997



Appendix 6: Tuol Samraong Village Seasonal Chart of Non-Timber Forest Products

Buddhist months:	Dec-Jan	Jan-Feb	Feb-Mar	Mar-Apr	Apr-May	May-Jun	Jun-July	Jul-Aug	Aug-Sept	Sept-Oct	Oct-Nov	Nov-Dec
NTFP:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1- <i>Sleok reang, Sloek leab, Sloek khnoeng, Tumpoar fruit, Potato</i>	—————											
- <i>Chres, Bamboo shoot, Tromoung, Pros Svar</i>				—————								
- <i>Chrork Andeuk, Mushroom, Kom Pdao, Ropeak Sloek Sandan</i>					—————							
2- Fruits:												
- <i>Tumpaor Tromoung, Sramor Prous</i>	—————											
- <i>Kuy, Chemaon Pring, Pring Pluk, Pring Bay, Nguy</i>					—————							
3- Medicines												
4 – Animals:												
-Forest snails, Snakes, Turtle	—————											
-Spider, Agamid lizard, Gray squirrel, small monitor lizard, Rabbit, Gecko												
- Frog, toad (<i>hing</i>), Toad (<i>kingkuok</i>), crab						—————						



Disclaimer:

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The NGO Forum on Cambodia
Address: #9-11 Street 476,
Sangkat Toul Tom Pong I
P.O.Box 2295 Phnom Penh-3, Cambodia.
Tel: (855-23) 214 429
Fax: (855-23) 994 063
E-mail: ngoforum@ngoforum.org.kh
Website: www.ngoforum.org.kh



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