

Challenges of sustainable land-use management on ecosystems around protected areas. A case of Bwindi Impenetrable National Park.

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Abstract

Increasing rates of human population growth and anthropogenic impacts on a global scale have left few populations of plants and animals undisturbed. Globally land use activities have had a profound impact on the ecosystems as well as their functioning activities. Many ecosystems are exposed to the effects of land use in different measures. Land-use change and related habitat loss and fragmentation have long been recognized as important drivers of past and present ecosystem change. High population density, high poverty and dependence on natural resources pose a major threat for the conservation of the protected areas, especially in the situation of Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, which is an isolated forest surrounded by a densely concentrated population. The study is to investigate the challenges of sustainable land-use management around protected areas. The main aim is to establish different land-use activities that impact on sustainability of ecosystems around the park. The problem is not clear whether land-use activities result in perturbations of ecosystems around Bwindi Impenetrable National Park. This is exacerbated in destruction of habitats, wet land degradation, migration of certain animals, and encroaching among others. The problem seems to be compounded by, intensive agriculture, forest fires, soil erosion and degradation of the ecosystems. These in turn impact on the ecosystem structure and resilience. The literature review mainly focused on ecosystem disturbance as a result of land-use. The research design includes the use of qualitative data that will be in a descriptive form and quantitative data that will comprise of statistical or measurable aspects like land area and distances. Bwindi Impenetrable National Park is located in southwestern Uganda (0° 53'–1° 08'S, 29° 35'–29° 50'E) The park consists of 321 sq. km of rugged land with steep slopes. The study will use a sample of 30 respondents especially the community leaders, conservationists in the field, the staff from UWA, the porters and tour guides, the tourism association leaders, cultural leaders and agricultural officers. Purposive random sampling will be utilized in conjunction with interview guides and oral interviews. Analysis of data will be done by use of excel and frequencies plus percentages.

Key words: Land-use, ecosystems, disturbance, anthropogenic effects, sustainability.