

## Oral presentation

### Patterns of Botanical Resource Use in Three Rural Villages in Southwest Niger

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**Introduction.** In Niger a continual degradation has become increasingly evident over the last thirty years of environmental and economic resources that threatens the cultural, botanical and faunal diversity. There are many development and conservation organizations both international and local that seek to protect the remaining resources and help to reverse this pattern. As the problem becomes more severe these organizations are seeking to unify their objectives. However research is needed to better understand the interrelationship between the rural communities and the natural resources on which they depend.

**Objectives.** This study seeks to examine the patterns of use within the landscape of three villages of southwest Niger in order to inform development and conservation organizations of the cultural and botanical conservation priorities of the region.

**Methods.** Interdisciplinary fieldwork was conducted in three villages in southwest Niger (Boumba, Gongeye and Djabou) during July-October 2006. We used key-informant interviews, participant observation, market surveys and group interview techniques to explore the use of uncultivated plant resources and ecological survey techniques to analyze the impact of these usage patterns.

**Results.** The study revealed thirteen main categories of use of importance to the habitants of these three villages. Within these categories number of species used, preference and degree of exploitation significantly differed greatly by gender and occupation.

**Conclusion.** These results show that local use of the botanical resource is not homogenous within these communities. Thus environmental initiatives that seek to preserve diversity or to protect species with heavy exploitation should look to these patterns of use to inform the plan of action. Furthermore management actions that rely on specialists, such as traditional herbalists, to understand the conservation concerns of the local region may only reveal the diversity of use and not the relative exploitation or economic impact.

Keywords: agroforestry, conservation, community development, natural-resource-use, Africa

#### Selected References

PRESENTATION WILL OCCUR IN FRENCH WITH SUMMARY AND VISUAL AIDS IN ENGLISH

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