

Challenges in Integrating Biodiversity Conservation and Local Development: A case study of Ang Trapeang Thmor (ATT) Protected Area in North West Cambodia

Dominic.T.Tassa¹, Myles Oelofse²

¹Forest & Landscape, Faculty of Life Sciences, Uni. of Copenhagen, Denmark dominictaku@yahoo.ca

²Department of Agriculture and Ecology, Faculty of Life Sciences, Uni. of Copenhagen, Denmark myles@life.ku.dk

BACKGROUND

- Ang Trapeang Thmor (ATT) was created in 1976/1977 as a large reservoir with three dams aimed at providing irrigation water for rice cultivation.
- In 2000, the reservoir was declared a protected area (Crane Sanctuary) with a number of zones following the discovery of a significant non-breeding congregation of Eastern Sarus Cranes (*Grus antigone*).
- The protected area covers about 12,650ha consisting of large lake, lowlands and forest.
- In 2003, demonstrations by two bordering villages (Pongro and Sambuor) due to loss of land led to a re-negotiation of the various zones of the protected area.
- In 2005, conflicts arose over high water levels causing flooding of rice fields between upstream and downstream villages. These conflicts are still present today
- The protected Area is managed today by the World Conservation Society (WCS) taking over from the International Crane Foundation (ICF) in 2005.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To assess the impact of the protected area and its management on local livelihoods in the local villages of Pongro and Sambuor
- To investigate the local perception, participation and understanding of the need for conservation of natural resources among the local population of Pongro and Sambuor.

STUDY AREA

Pongro (13°48'46.78"N 103°19'33.52"E)
Sambuor (13°49'17.62"N 103°19'43.94"E)
Poay Char Commune, Phnom srok District, Banteay Manchey Province, North West Cambodia.

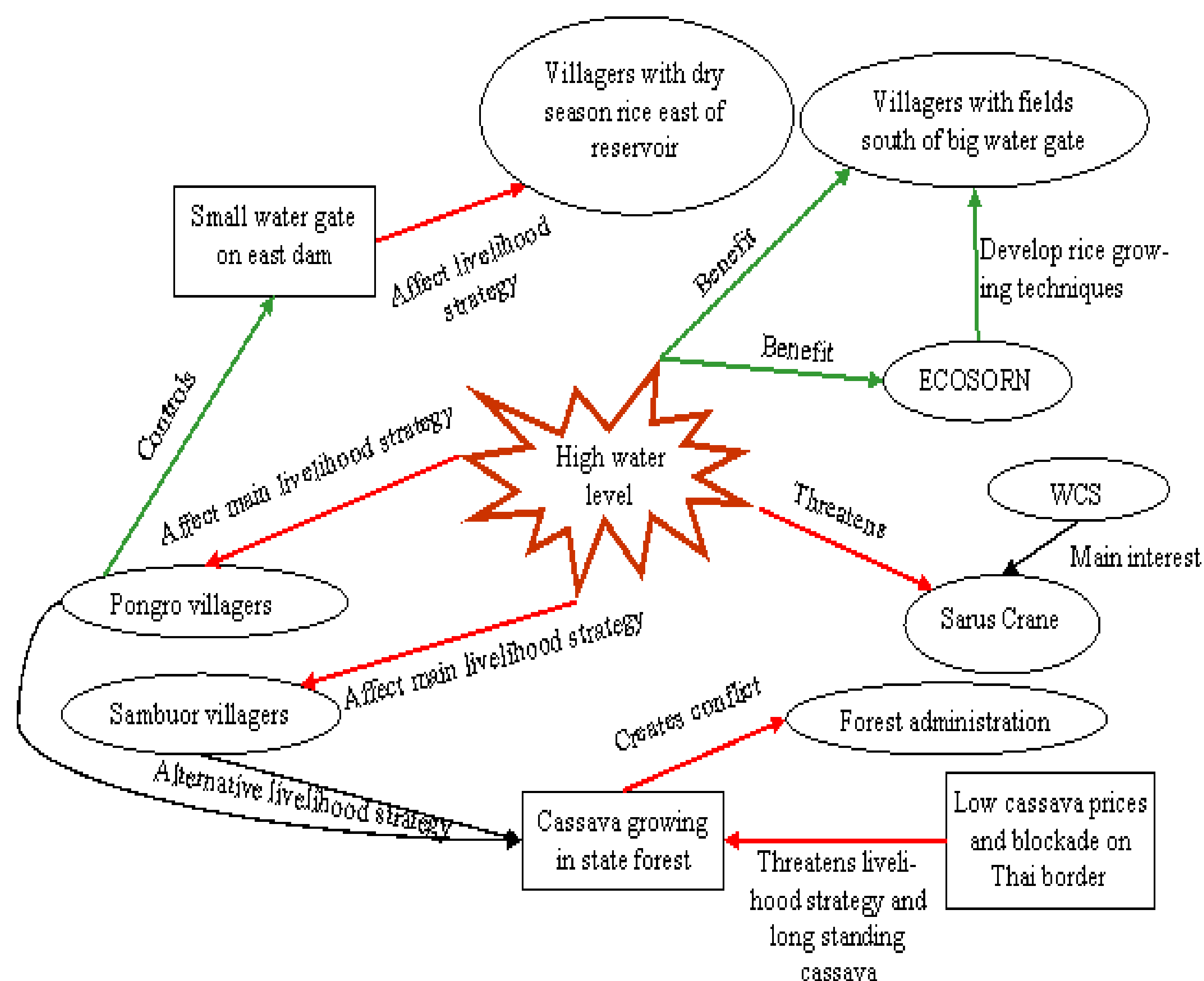
METHODS

- Semi structured interviews (SSI)
- Questionnaire survey (QS)
- Participatory Rural Appraisal (History Trend, Focus Group Discussions, Transect walks etc)
- Participant observation



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- The protected area has a negative impact on the livelihoods of peoples in the studied villages;
- Loss of agricultural lands led to encroachment on the surrounding public Forest for the cultivation of cassava;
- There are conflicts over use of water resources between the studied villages and those downstream
- The general perception of the villagers with respect to the protected area (ATT) is very negative.



Situation map presenting the involved parties and the effects of the conflict over water resources (Model adapted from Friedman & Miles, 2006)

CONCLUSION

- The designation of the protected area has had a strong bearing on local livelihoods due to restrictions to access and user-rights to land and management of resources around the area
- The poor management of natural resources especially water is at the center of conflict between villages on one hand, and villages and the State on the other hand
- The passive participation of the villagers in the protected area management coupled lack of understanding of the aims of the project has led to negative perception by the villagers.

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