

ABSTRACT

Title : Villagers' Knowledge and Attitudes towards the Watershed
Management Methods in the Huay Marglium Watershed
Management Unit Areas, Muang District, Chiangrai Province

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This research was conducted to examine knowledge and attitudes towards watershed management as well as problems and obstacles concerning proper watershed management methods of local people in the Huay Marglium watershed unit areas of Muang district, Chiangrai province. The data were collected between February 1 and April 30, 1997 by means of interview schedule from 291 family heads, belonging to 6 tribes and selected by stratified random sampling, of the villages under the responsibility of the watershed unit which covered Doi Hang and Huay Ghomphu sub-districts, and analyzed by using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS/PC).

The results were as follows :

Most of the respondents (99.00 percent) were male, Buddhist, 39 years old on average, belonged to the Muser tribe, and had no formal education. The average income per household was 9,067 bath/year and their land holding was 13 rais per family on average. They were mainly engaged in agriculture, growing mostly field crops. Most of them obtained knowledge of conservation mainly through radio,

had no experience in any training or study tour concerning forest conservation, and did not join any social organization in the community. Their contact with forestry officers was infrequent and the topic was concerned with land for cultivation.

The respondents had a moderate level of knowledge of the following : principles of conservation and management of natural resources in watershed areas as well as forest influences for the optimum quantity and good quality of water ; soil and water conservation; disadvantages of forest fire; and effects of clearing the watershed forest. This implied that some respondents did not have proper and sufficient knowledge of conservation practices. However, local lowland people had good knowledge of these aspects.

In the aspect of natural resources management and environmental conservation, most of the respondents had the positive attitudes. This indicated that they realized the necessity of soil, water, and forest conservation for future generations. They agreed that they had to be responsible for the impacts of all activities in the watershed and the effects on the people in the lower areas. They also agreed that they should have more knowledge of proper watershed management.

In terms of their problems concerning proper watershed management methods, the respondents stated that they did not have enough knowledge and understanding of watershed management principles and that the economic pressure caused them to do everything for the survival of their families.