

## Project Update: December 2012

1. All field works, which were planned to collect data for assessment of fragmentation effects on population connectivity of *Prunus africana* in NW Ethiopia, were successfully accomplished in April 2012.
2. We gathered enormous photographic and video evidence on what was going on the remnant natural forest patches in Awi Zone of Amhara National Regional State, Ethiopia. Looking at these pictures, no one can deny the worst deforestation scenarios which were operating in all the remnant forest patches of this region. I tried to approach the local authorities and the next higher officials and shared the photographic and video evidences as well as my concerns regarding the fate of these forests. I thought this might stimulate them to take required mitigations.
3. A conservation training workshop was organised and successfully conducted on April 10, 2012. Mr. Meseret Workie (the former head for Guangua Wereda Department of Rural Development and Agriculture) and colleagues had invaluable contribution in organizing this workshop. Both photos (see below) and video pictures for this event are available. About 100 participants attended this workshop. Most participants were forest guards but we also had some representative farmers and conservation practitioners. A few experts from the Guangua Wereda Department of Rural Development and Agriculture also attended this workshop. Unfortunately, invited political authorities and lawyers didn't attend although they promised to come along and discuss on hot conservation issues. Their presence could have helped to resolve key problems regarding the protection of the remnant forest patches. I also invited two speakers to cover related topics but they did not eventually make it. So, I had to make the workshop as interactive as possible by first presenting my PowerPoint slides, which were prepared in Amharic (the official language of Ethiopia) and facilitating very hot discussions among all participants. The PowerPoint slide used as introduction and guidance for the active discussion among participants is attached in another file but is in Amharic language, which was appropriate for the audience. The major agendas of the workshop were: i) values of natural forests and their conservation, ii) methods of conservation and sustainable use of forest resources, iii) how was the history of forest cover in Awi Zone during the last 10, 30, 60, 100 and 200 years?, iv) what extent of forest cover will we expect after 5 or 15 years from now (2012)?, v) if there were historical massive deforestation events in the years mentioned in iii, what were the major causes?, vi) how is the current status of forest cover and protection in Awi zone?, vii) what do you think are the major causes for the current worst deforestation scenarios and what should be done to stop or minimize these?, and viii) what is our responsibility to mitigate these activities and restore the remnant forests?
4. Permit to export collected *Prunus africana* samples was processed and granted by the relevant organisation in Ethiopia in April 2012.



5. Quarantine inspection and import permits (including renewal for continued use) of samples were processed in Australia in April and September 2012.
6. The next task after obtaining all the required permits for collected experimental samples was the intensive laboratory analyses, which included DNA extraction, PCR assays and genotyping. At this stage, I have got sufficient genotype data that can be used to draft two manuscripts for possible publication.
7. The data for the first manuscript is already statistically analysed and the write-up of this is in progress. I am planning to submit this to a peer-reviewed and reputed international journal by at least January 2013.
8. Data analysis and write up of the second manuscript will be commenced immediately after submitting the first one.
9. Laboratory analysis for the third paper is still in progress but this one requires additional funding and may take a bit longer time to accomplish, probably until May 31st 2013.