

## Importance of Loose Management: A Case of Highland Forest of Southwestern Ethiopia

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This presentation points out that the highland forest located in southwestern Ethiopia may lose the biodiversity because of the forest management project.

The forest located in the highland of southwestern Ethiopia is not only recognized as precious forest but also as habitats of diverse living things. The forest fosters Ethiopian origin plants, such as *Coffea arabica* of Rubiaceae and *Aframomum corrorima* of Zingiberaceae, and endangered plant species, including *Prunus africana* of Rosaceae and *Cordia africana* of Boraginaceae.

The forest is also the place for local people to conduct livelihood activities. The local residents of Geera administrative district, which is located in the highland of southwestern Ethiopia, gather fruits from naturally grown *C.arabica* while they cultivate the fields at their home villages. They do not manage *C.arabica* trees in order to enhance their growth or their fruiting except for removing weeds and sapling and young trees which will compete with *C.arabica*.

In Geera administrative district, the forest management project had taken place between 2003 and 2012 in order to conserve the forest and at the same time, improve the local people's living. In the project, local residents who have the forest use right are organized into forest managing cooperatives. Also project enabled cooperative members to sell *C.arabica* fruits at premium price by making coffee beans produced in the area certified by one of major fair trade organization.

In this presentation, I first show different vegetations are established in mosaic in the forest. Then I point out reason behind the mosaic vegetations are loose forest management which is conducted through the *C.arabica* fruits gathering activities. At last, the system of enabling local residents to sell coffee beans at premium price may decrease the diversity of forest vegetation followed by loss of biodiversity.

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