

Greening the Volta Basin

Submitted by: Volta Basin Development Foundation

Key Players:

Volta Basin Development Foundation

The building of a dam in 1964 is today threatening to paralyze the communities that it was meant to be serving. Volta Lake in Ghana was created by inundating about 8,500 km² of forest land. At the time it enabled communities to settle around the lake and its arms for farming and fishing activities as well as providing hydro power for the region.

Over time unchecked farming and deforestation has left the surrounding lands bare which is disastrous during the rainy season as soil run off is silting up the northern end and waterweeds covering the surface of the lake impeding transportation and fishing. These aquatic weeds, caused by chemicals leaked from the textile factory, are providing a habitat for bilharzias vectors. The decreased water holding capacity will eventually affect not only electric power production but also threaten the main source of water for domestic use.

The Greening Basin Initiative, from the Volta Basin Development Foundation, hopes to reverse the trend of degradation of the lake environment and therefore protect the water source for the local communities. Restoring the vegetative cover in the basin area by tree planting will decrease soil erosion and siltation of the lake and its tributaries. The trees planted will also serve as income generators through fruit production.

Other advantages will be enhanced local climate, opportunities for alternative livelihoods (snail farming, mushroom cultivation, bee keeping, rural wood preservation, seedling production).

For more information

rtwumus@yahoo.com

