

ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION AND CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION STRATEGIE CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Forest cover in Cross River State (7,920km²) decreased by 12% from 1991 to 2000 and a further 15% from 2001 to 2008. The State Government then resolved to manage her forest estate for Carbon Concession, removed revenue targets from forest exploitation, placed an indefinite moratorium on logging and set up an Anti-Deforestation Task Force. Climate change caused a land slide disaster at Afi Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary in 2012. Ecological restoration and climate change mitigation programmes were undertaken in 2009. Two million polythene bags were distributed to individuals, communities and forest officers to raise tree seedlings. A total of 2,041,000 seedlings of indigenous tree species were raised between 2009 and 2012 and 10% or 204,000 were planted in 30 communities across the state. The mean survival rate after one year was 74%. The wetter southern part had a higher survival rate of seedlings than the drier northern part of the state. Challenges included bush burning, illegal farming, inadequate funds and lack of vehicles. Opportunities included a strong political will of the state government and the conservation culture of the people. It was recommended that awareness raising and sourcing for new funders be embarked upon.

KEYWORDS: Ecological Restoration, Climate Change Mitigation Strategies, Cross River State, Nigeria