

NARBO workshop participants' Study tour to the middle part of Maha Oya on 27 of April 2005

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Problems in the middle part of the basin

Major problems in the middle part of the basin are urban pollution and sand mining. Drainage canals with waste water and urban waste from towns like Mawanaella and Kegalle flow in to the river polluting the river. The water in the river is tapped by the Water supply and Drainage board at Hiriwadunna and Alawwa town areas to supply drinking water for the people in Kegalle and Alawwa towns and suburbs in these areas. In addition, there is an elephant orphanage at Pinnawala, close to Kegalle providing shelter to elephants (about 300). The river is used for bathing elephants (around 50 animals) at a time and it leads to pollution of water in the river and has significant impact on drinking water supply scheme at Aluwwa town area.

Pinnawala and Hiriwadunna areas being tourists centers, tourists making visit to these areas stay long time in the river banks enjoying the scenic beauty and elephant bathing. They leave polythene, bottles and waste matter in the river banks further polluting the river.

The other major problem in the area is sand mining. Though machinery is not used for sand mining, a large number of residents in the area make their livelihood through sand mining. For example about 130 households in Karadagastanna, a settlement area close to Kegalle depend thoroughly on sand mining. They dive about 15 feet deep to do sand mining as the river bed has been deepened due to sand mining activities. The people in the area report of sinking of water levels in drinking wells (around 35 feet) due to excessive sand mining in the river. River banks have also been eroded due to sand mining. Though there are police raids to arrest people doing sand mining, they manage to continue sand mining as it is their main livelihood activity.

Specific issues

1. Urban pollution and its impact on down stream water users, especially those using river water for drinking and bathing
2. Tourism and its negative impacts on the river
3. Elephant bathing and its negative impacts of down stream water users.
4. Sand mining as a livelihood activity and its impact on the river and water resources

The program of the field visit for the middle part of the basin is given below:
Maha Oya Basin – Program of the middle part of the basin

27th April

Time	Location	Description of problem	Remarks
07:00	Negombo		Depart Hotel
09:00 –	Kegalle		Meet Proc. Victor Rajakaruna P-1 on Field visit Map
09:15 – 09:45	Karadagastenna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sand mining • Deepening of the river bed by about 7 meters 	P-2 on Field visit Map Snap 1
10:00 – 10:15	Hiriwadunna intake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water pollution and its impact on a drinking water supply scheme 	P-3 on Field visit Map Snap 2
10:15 – 10:35	Pinnawala	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative impacts of tourism – polythene, plastic and glass accumulation in the river banks 	P-4 on Field visit Map Snap 3 Sanp 4
10:35 – 10:50	Pinnawala		Refreshments
11:00 - 12:00	Pinnawala	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elephant bathing and river water pollution 	P-5 on Field visit Map Snap 5
12:30 – 13:30			Lunch at Rambukkana
14:00 – 15:30	Rambukkana		Meeting officials P-6 on Field visit Map
17:30	Negombo		Back to Hotel

Snap 1



Snap 4



Snap 2



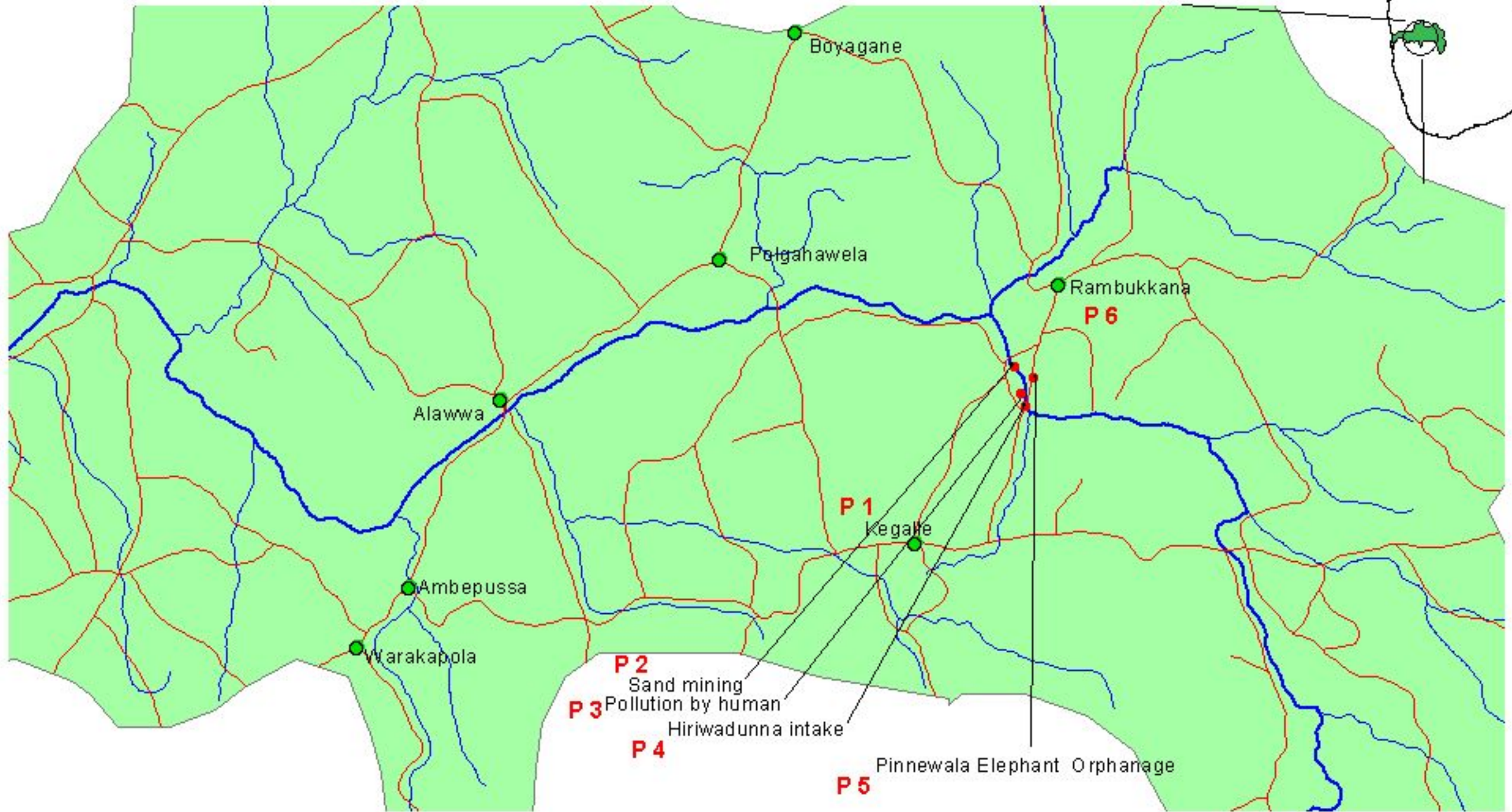
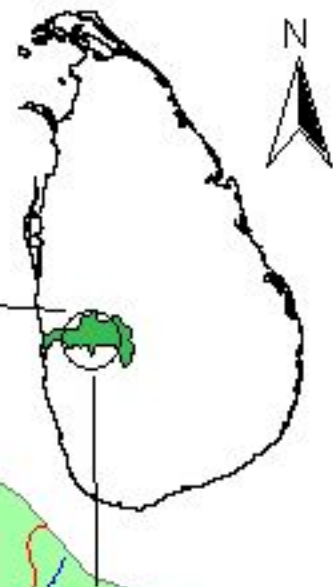
Snap 5



Snap 3



Maha Oya Basin Middle Reach Program



- Visiting Locations
- Main Towns
- Roads
- River network
- Maha Oya Basin

