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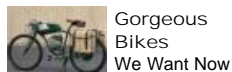
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Prioritizing Conservation Over Farming Does Not Protect Nature

by Sami Grover, Carrboro, NC, USA on 08.29.11
 BUSINESS & POLITICS

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MEANWHILE, ON THE INTERNET

FOOD & HEALTH



From small-scale agriculture boosting global food production to reinventing our entire food system, the case for radical agricultural reform has been made many times over. Science Daily reports on a new analysis resulting from the joined forces of the UN Environmental Program (UNEP) and the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) that argues we can no longer pursue conservation and agricultural production as separate activities or goals. The key lies not in creating separate nature reserves and intensified, efficient agriculture—but rather in redesigning our food production systems so that they protect and enhance the natural world *and* produce the food we need to survive:

"Blanket prohibitions against cultivation do not always reduce ecosystem destruction and can make things worse," said Matthew McCartney of IWMI, who co-authored the report. "For example, the grassy 'dambo' wetlands of sub-Saharan Africa often provide vital farmland to the rural poor. Banning farming in these areas, however, has exacerbated rather than reduced ecosystem destruction. It has prompted deforestation upstream and led to a shift from farming to grazing in the wetlands themselves so that, overall, there has been a

Green. To go.

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