

Private-Sector
Community Forestry
Partnerships in the
Eastern Cape
Manubi Woodlot
case study

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About this report: This report is one of a series prepared as part of a collaborative research project on instruments for sustainable private sector forestry in South Africa. The reports in this series are listed below.

Instruments for Sustainable Private Sector Forestry, South Africa – report series

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Redistribution of opportunities and assets in forestry

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- Crawford Cousins, C. 2000. *The impacts of stakeholder consultation in the FSC certification process on sustainable forest management in South Africa*. Focussing on the Stakeholder consultation process within FSC certification, this report highlights key assumptions about the efficacy of consultation.

Outgrower schemes and community-company partnerships

- Zingel, J. 2000. *Between the woods and the water: tree outgrower schemes in KwaZulu-Natal - the policy and legislative environment for outgrowing at the regional level*. This report discusses the environment surrounding trends in outgrower development, both past and future.
- Cairns, R. 2000. *Outgrower timber schemes in KwaZulu-Natal: do they build sustainable rural livelihoods and what interventions should be made?* Focussing on case studies of outgrower households, this examines the role played by schemes in rural livelihoods.
- Ojwang, A. 2000. *Community-company Partnerships in forestry in South Africa: an examination of trends*. This is a broad overview of types of partnerships in Southern Africa, with comparisons between forestry and other sectors.
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- Sisitka, L. 2000. *Private sector community forestry partnerships in the Eastern Cape: the Lambazi case study*. This case study examines the relationships between stakeholders and actors in a corporate-initiated scheme
- Cocks, M., Matsiliza, B. and Fabricius, C. 2000. *Private sector community forestry partnerships in the Eastern Cape: the Longweni woodlot case study*. This report examines community preferences and options for the use of a woodlot in the context of opportunities provided in the forest restructuring process.
- Sisitka, L. 2000. *Private sector community forestry partnerships in the Eastern Cape: the Umzimkulu case study*. This is a study of a corporate-community joint venture project in a part of the province that has good afforestation potential.
- Cocks, M., Matsiliza, B. and Fabricius, C. 2000. *Private sector community forestry partnerships in the Eastern Cape: the Manubi woodlot case study*. This study examines issues around partnerships and joint forest management around a state-conserved indigenous forest
- Ham, C. 2000. *The importance of woodlots to local communities, small scale entrepreneurs and indigenous forest conservation*. Comparing issues and opportunities arising around two woodlots, this study highlights the relative importance of government-planted woodlots to different community interest groups.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Project context

In line with policy changes in the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF), the Manubi forest and woodlot has been declared a Primary Conservation Area and responsibility for management has been transferred to its Conservation directorate. While plans are underway to transfer ownership, control and management of most woodlots to local communities through a process referred to as 'devolution', woodlots that fall within primary conservation areas will remain under DWAF control. In these cases opportunities for joint management will be investigated.

The Manubi woodlot falls within a primary conservation area, so will not undergo devolution but the possibility of joint management does exist. The brief given to the authors was to draw up a situational analysis of Manubi forest to assess the potential for joint management. A major focus of the research was to identify the main role players, and assess use of and attitudes towards the forests and the relationships between the various role players. The fieldwork was undertaken in April 2000.

1.2. Background

Woodlots were originally established for the benefit of local communities. They were established because of the perceived threatened shortage of the availability of natural fuel wood resources, particularly in the "homeland" area (Evans 1998). In response the first woodlots for poles and fuel wood for rural communities were established more than a century ago by municipalities (in small rural towns) and departments of forestry in remote areas to take the pressure off the indigenous forests (Ham 1999). The authorities at the time assumed that people would prefer to use the former for building material and firewood.

Woodlots are generally small and have little formal industrial value, as they are located in areas far removed from processing plants (LHA 1998). They may however play an important role in providing fuelwood and building materials in remote areas, and in protecting indigenous forests from over-utilization.

The first woodlot was established in 1893 near King William's Town to provide firewood and hut building material for rural people. Since then woodlot development continued slowly until the 1970's when it accelerated, particularly in the former Transkei. The implementation of the woodlot was initiated with top-down approach and community members and leaders were seldom consulted during the planning, implementation and maintenance stages. This resulted in a lack of knowledge and apathy on behalf of the chiefs and tribal authorities regarding the management and utilization of the resources. In many instances people believed that the woodlots belonged to the government and therefore it should be their function to manage, protect and harvest timber (Ham 1999).

From the mid-1980s onwards there was a growing disillusionment regarding woodlots amongst community members and DWAF management. Many of the homeland administrations ceased to take a proactive role in woodlot development or they abandoned them altogether. By 1990 woodlot development was virtually at a standstill (Gandar, 1994).

However, South Africa's new forestry policy plans to radically restructure the state forestry sector by ensuring that the State withdraw from the ownership and management of forests and ensure that these resources are transferred to local communities and the private sector in such a way that they promote socio-economic development in rural areas and small towns. One component of this programme is to devolve woodlots to local communities that demonstrate a willingness to take on this responsibility. The National Forest Act (Act 84 of

1998) also makes it possible for communities to enter into agreements with the Minister regarding the management of woodlots. However, woodlots that are linked to adjacent indigenous forests that have been classified as primary conservation areas (PCAs) will not be devolved but transferred from the Community Forest Division to the Conservation Forestry division in the near future (Ham 2000). This will result in a committed DWAF staff remaining in the area to manage the indigenous forest and the woodlot. A management plan will be drafted for the unit, which will include an Annual Plan for Operations for the woodlot to meet the units' conservation objectives. Participatory forest management between Conservation Forestry and the relevant communities will also take place to ensure sustainable utilization and thus effective sustainable forest management.

Under this directorate the feasibility of Joint Forest Management initiatives with the surrounding community will be investigated (Harrison pers. com.) The provisions of the new National Forest Act also allow immediate neighbours access to natural resources for domestic use. The implementation of this policy will enable communities to access natural resources from the indigenous forest on a sustainable basis (Andrews 2000). Other possibilities such as tourism related initiatives and sustainable medicinal plant harvesting in the indigenous forest are also being investigated (Ham 2000).

With the exception of Manubi, Khobonqaba, Mabululu and Centani, which have PCA's, the management of the CAs and all other categories of woodlots will eventually be handed over to community leadership structures to manage (Harrison per. com).

2. LOCATION MANUBI - BRIEF DESCRIPTION

The Manubi woodlot is situated along the Centani–Mazeppa Bay road approximately 7km from Mazeppa Bay. The woodlot was established in 1957 by the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF). The Manubi woodlot consists of 199ha of a mixture of Eucalypt species planted in compartments that are scattered throughout 3 227ha of indigenous forest. The main species are *Eucalyptus grandis* and *Eucalyptus cloeziana*. The woodlot has a high forestry potential with an estimated average MAI of more than 30m³/ha/a. This is due to the high rainfall the area receives as well as the good doleritic soils (Ham 2000). Despite the high yields the Department has not selected Manubi woodlot for the devolution process because of its PCA status and peripheral location. DWAF assessed all the indigenous forests and the used the following criteria to determine the status of these forests: the level of biodiversity, the size of the unit and its location in terms of distance from other conservation areas. Manubi was selected because it fulfilled the relevant criteria. Consequently the surrounding communities have not been informed about the proposed changes. The management option that DWAF consider most appropriate here is a Joint Management Agreement, although the community apparently are not convinced of the benefits of this approach.

The woodlot is still managed by DWAF, under its Community Forestry division, while the management of the indigenous forests falls under Conservation Forestry division (Ham 2000). A foreman and four labourers are responsible for the maintenance of the woodlot and they report to the forestry station at Ibika, outside Butterworth.

A manager and three guards are responsible for the management of the indigenous forest. All nine employees are from neighbouring districts of Qumbu, Xhora and Centani. Until recently substantial amounts of funding were received from the Department for the management and maintenance of the woodlots. The numbers of staff, funding and tools have been drastically cut. This has resulted in the deterioration of the woodlot. It is not uncommon to find livestock in the woodlot because of the lack of fences. The staffing levels are however still higher than for comparable commercial forests, and perhaps the problem of

poor management and control is less one of insufficient resources than one of limited capacity, training, and motivation, although more funding would always help.

The woodlot spans across three villages, Qolweni, Manubi and Ngqwarha, who fall under the authority of the same chief. The villages are rural and remote, the nearest town being Centani approximately 40 km away. The villages are marked by poverty and very few opportunities exist for employment. Consequently households in the area rely heavily on their surrounding environment for resources. The resources utilised include those from the woodlot, the indigenous forest and small patches of indigenous forest located along the ravines and rivers. Trees are felled from the woodlots for construction purposes and firewood is harvested. Community members are allowed to harvest one head-load of wood per person from the woodlot. Each harvester is required to obtain permission from the local forestry office. The harvesting of trees for poles, for commercial purposes, requires a permit and payment.

Timber and fuel wood is harvested from the indigenous forests because they are considered to be more suitable. The indigenous fuelwood species are favoured over the gum species because the latter smoke badly and cause chest problems if used regularly for fuel. Indigenous timbers (especially those of Umzimbiti *Meletia grandis* and Sneezewood *Ptaeroxylon obliquum*) are regarded as being more suitable for the building of kraals and houses because they last significantly longer, even when the exotic species are treated. From observations made of households in the villages it was evident that indigenous species such as Umzimbiti and Sneezewood are sought after for the corner posts of kraals.

A number of households are involved in the medicinal plant trade for income generating purposes and are harvesting material from the indigenous forest. This material is being sold in local markets and some of it is even being transported and sold in markets in Cape Town. The harvesting of material from the indigenous forest is engaged in illegally as the forest is still under the management of DWAF. Under the current legislation the harvesting of resources for commercial purposes from the indigenous forest is prohibited.

Illegal harvesting is a highly contentious issue and a source of conflict between local villagers and the DWAF employees. Recently the forest guards confiscated nine 50kg bags of harvested material from illegal harvesters. Currently the Department only has the capacity to employ three forest guards to patrol the entire area to prohibit the harvesting of resources from the forest. They however felt that considerably more staff were needed to ensure that illegal harvesting of resources did not occur, and confessed to be unable to apprehend illegal users or poachers and being afraid of them.

Box 1. List of species harvested from the indigenous forest.

The following species were confiscated by the guards: *Raphionacme hirsuta* – Imfingwana; *Ocotea bullata* – Umtungwa; *Dioscorea dregeana* – Ingcolo; *Pittosporum viridiflorum* – Umkhwenkwe and *Curtisia dentata* – Umlahleni (Dold & Cocks 1999).

Due to the poverty stricken nature of the surrounding villages and poor condition of the roads to the Manubi area there are very few entrepreneurs exploiting the resources of the woodlot. In the past more small-scale entrepreneurs operated in the area but their businesses have been affected by the bad state of the gravel roads. Two entrepreneur families living in the area have also been forced to stop their businesses because of the lack of funds to repair

the damage to their vehicles. They did however feel that the woodlot offered potential business opportunities in Butterworth where gum poles are sought after for building and

fencing purposes. The key obstacle is access to sufficient amounts of capital to purchase appropriate vehicles to transport the poles. Currently there are only two entrepreneurs in the area purchasing poles for commercial purposes. They buy a section, fell the trees, tar the poles and transport them inland to towns like Butterworth and Umtata to sell. Their businesses have however been affected by the last three months bad weather. Some of the entrepreneurs also harvested firewood to sell by the truckload to families arranging funerals and ceremonies on an *ad hoc* basis but this is not a regular source of income.

Box 2. Commercial viability of woodlots.

The commercial viability of Manubi differs from that of the Longweni woodlot. In the Centani region there are significantly more timber related industries as there are many more entrepreneurs running small sawmill industries and enterprises selling treated poles. These enterprises are predominantly operated by middlemen, who purchase trees at a significantly low price because of the subsidised price of the trees, (R2 – R5 per pole). A tree is sold for approximately R18; the middlemen are consequently making approximately R12 before costs is made on each tree purchased. The local communities currently do not benefit from these profit margins because of the lack of access they have to capital to enter the trade. Surrounding community members are not even benefiting from casual employment as the middlemen bring their own labourers to harvest -trees .

The Department hopes to distribute more of these profits to the communities surrounding the woodlots. It is believed that this could be made possible by operating a centralised depot where the felled trees could be sold in the area (Harrison pers. com).

The possibility of a depot in the Bizana region is viable because of the high number of woodlots, entrepreneurs and companies engaged in the trade (Harrison pers. com). This however is not a possibility for Manubi as the woodlot is extremely isolated and no other timber related industries are located in the vicinity.

3. OUTLINE OF PEOPLE AND GROUPS INTERVIEWED

The following persons and groups were interviewed.

1. Manubi forest: the forest manager of Manubi forest, Mr Nkonjiswa¹; the foreman of Manubi woodlot, Mr Xhabadiya; two forest guards and four labourers, all employed by DWAF.
2. Manubi traditional leaders: headman of Qolweni village, Mr Mataka; headman of Manubi village, Mr Doni; headman of Ngqwarha village, Mr Mgebe.
3. Community members from both areas: a women's group (five) and a men's group (six).
4. Two local entrepreneurs.
5. Graham Harrison: Deputy Director of Community Forest, Kodstad.

¹ Contact details are provided in the Appendix 1.

6. Mr Magongana, Chief Forester East Griqualand, Kokstad

4. METHODS

The area was visited during the week of 16-20 April 2000. The information was collected by means of nine interviews with key informants and three informal discussions groups with larger groups. The larger groups consisted of men and women of between five and six people. Attempts were made to conduct the interviews separately to ensure that the women were provided with an opportunity to express their opinions. The interviews were carried out informally to encourage the participants to freely express their opinions. The men's group predominantly consisted of elderly men and pensioners whereas the women's group consisted of a wider spectrum of ages from early thirties to mid sixties. The women participated enthusiastically in the discussion whereas the men were more reserved.

The sales records of poles kept by the foreman at Manubi were analysed to determine the number of sales made for a one-year period.

5. KEY ISSUES

5.1. Main role players and their objectives

A number of relationships exist regarding use and access of the woodlot and the indigenous forests. The key role players include the following:

DWAF officials and employees: DWAF officials are employed to manage the woodlot and oversee the protection of the indigenous forest. There are four labourers, three forest guards, a foreman and a manager at Manubi. They are all from neighbouring districts, such as Qumbu, Xhora and Centani and not from the surrounding villages.

Their objectives are: 1) to maintain their current employment status, 2) to implement NFAP and Forestry Act and 3) to transfer responsibility and reduce costs.

Community leaders: The community leaders currently have very little involvement in the management of either the woodlot or the indigenous forest. Consequently any joint management process is perceived as a means to increase their status and possibly access revenue for the community. Community leaders currently have no recognized legal or contractual rights over the woodlot, although it was established on their land. Their main objective is to gain control of the woodlot.

Community user groups: Both men and women utilize the resources from the woodlot and the indigenous forest. Community members have a recognised right to harvest from the woodlot if they follow appropriate procedures of obtaining permission and paying for timber harvested.

Community members have had no recognized legal or informal rights to the indigenous forest, and DWAF did not officially recognise their entitlements to indigenous resources. They do however make extensive use of these biodiversity resources and stealthily or even openly harvest indigenous trees for kraal posts, fuelwood and sticks for walking and fighting. They also collect medicinal plants, hunt wildlife in the forest, and utilise certain species such as Wild Olive (*Olea europea var africana*) for ceremonies. Households living closer to the indigenous forest than to the woodlot make more extensive use of the former and, in addition to using indigenous species for kraals and fuelwood, also harvest species such as Yellowwood (*Podocarpus spp.*) for roof beams. Despite the new Forest Act's provision for

the harvesting of forest resources on a sustainable and subsistence basis by surrounding community members, a 'zero utilization' policy is adhered to at Manubi.

The main objective articulated by the women was to continue utilising the woodlot at a subsistence level and to have more access to resources in the indigenous forest as

indigenous species are considered to be more appropriate as both a fuel wood and as a timber. A number of households are more reliant on species from the indigenous forest patches than the woodlot as the former are situated closer to their homes.

The main objective articulated by the men was to seek employment and business opportunities.

Entrepreneurs: Local entrepreneurs have been seriously affected by the poor condition of the roads and the declining rural economy. This has resulted in their businesses closing down. Entrepreneurs have historically been entitled to harvest sections of the woodlot if appropriate procedures were followed and payment was made. Their main objective is to generate income/make profit.

5.2. Nature of the various relationships

In relation to the indigenous forest: Strong areas of contention exist between DWAF officials and community members over access to the indigenous forest. Forest guards patrol the indigenous forest to prohibit illegal harvesting by the local community and outsiders, however their capacity to be effective is severely hindered by the lack of staff to patrol the area. Community members and leaders are not prepared to assist the Dept. in controlling illegal harvesting, as they believe that it is the forest guards' responsibility since they are paid to do so. They also believe that since the forests (woodlot and indigenous) are on 'their' land, as they understand it, they are entitled to use the resources. This is likely to change due to the new Act and recent workshops with DWAF staff. Communities also regard some of the resources as rightfully and legally theirs, and at least two land claims have been registered under the Land Claims Act.

In relation to the woodlot: Minor tensions exist between the various role players regarding the management of the woodlot. The main point of contention amongst the community leaders and user groups is the lack of employment opportunities. In the past, a small timber industry operated from the woodlot but was closed down. Hopes exist amongst community members that the Department could reopen it and assist in creating jobs in the area. Only minor complaints were voiced about being charged to harvest timber from the woodlots.

Political tensions: Political tensions exist between the local tribal authority and SANCO members at Manubi. The majority of people interviewed felt that the tension between local tribal authority and SANCO members was not considered serious because the tribal authority structures are more powerful in the area.

Box 3. Problematic community project.

In order to raise these funds, a project was initiated whereby community members and outsiders who utilized sand from the beach had to pay R50 to the local headmen. These funds appear to have been misappropriated and no developments projects have been initiated within the community. In a neighbouring community where the same project was initiated, the headman recently purchased dip for a communal dip of all livestock. The former community members were therefore upset that this success had not been achieved within their community.

Gender tension within the community. The difference in opinion between men and women appears to have stemmed from past bad experiences that occurred within the community after the initiation of a community based project.

Box 4. Gender differences.

Informal interviews were held with a group of elderly men, concerning the utilization and current management of the woodlot. The discussion soon attracted other people (younger women) who joined in. Once the issue of who should manage the woodlot was raised the discussion got very heated between the two groups.

The women began voicing their grievances about the Sand Project (Box 4). The men strongly opposed by saying that they did not believe that this was the appropriate forum for them to be revealing these problems. The discussion got so heated between the two groups that the interview had to be stopped.

The women believed that if the management of the woodlot were to be given to the community leadership structures it would be destroyed in less than two years because of their lack of capacity and inability to enforce regulations.

Tension between regional and local DWAF staff: Differences in opinion exist between the two levels. The local staff has the opinion that the regional staff is not aware of the difficulties involved in establishing community based management bodies because they do not have sufficient practical experience. The local staff also fear that the ability to determine which villagers qualified as primary beneficiaries versus secondary beneficiaries is very problematic as in most areas, overlapping land claims exist between communities. The local staff therefore believed that the woodlots had more potential of surviving and being utilized productively if their ownership were to be given to private owners/companies rather than communities. If this were to occur the possibilities for employment opportunities would be higher than if they were managed by the community. They believed that the surrounding community leaders and members would support this because of the high employment opportunities for community members.

Box 5. Concerns raised about the policy changes by local DWAF staff

The local staff also believed that local community structures would not support the restructuring process as they would question why the Department (after all this time) had only decided to change now. They were well aware of the financial difficulties that the Department was facing to continue funding the management of the woodlot. It was believed that community leaders and members would suspect a hidden agenda and not support the process. Concerns were also raised as to how community structures could access sufficient funds to pay community members to work on the woodlots since the Department was not in a position to do so.

5.3. Resources at stake for each party

Woodlot users: The resources obtained from the woodlot are perceived as being valuable by the community members and leaders, as it provides access to firewood and building material. Community members are allowed to harvest fresh and dry wood (one head-load of wood per person). In order to harvest fuel wood each member is required to get permission from the office. For commercial purposes and the harvesting of trees for poles a permit and payment is required.

The following records were available from the DWAF office at Manubi, which reveals the levels of utilization of the woodlot, in the past twelve months from April 1999 to April 2000 (Table 1).

In total 190 people purchased poles over a one year period. Table 1 reveals that during the months May and June the highest number of people purchased poles. The records also revealed that the majority of poles were being purchased on a subsistence level as very few individuals purchased large quantities of poles. Villagers' ability to harvest larger quantities for commercial purposes is hindered by their inferior equipment, as the majority of households only own an axe. The ability to transport large numbers of felled trees is also restricted to ox drawn sledges.

The majority of these purchases had been made in the months of May (R2 004) and June (R1 938). In total the woodlot generated R8 295 for the year. Figure 2 also clearly reveals that between January and March no poles had been purchased, this is because of the heavy rains, which led to the deterioration of the condition of the roads. According to Ham (2000) Manubi woodlot has the potential to produce 25 000 poles per year, resulting in R40 000 per year. If the size of the Manubi woodlot (+/- 200 ha) is taken into account the sales figures are well below the number of poles that could be sold annually. It is estimated that only 17.7% of true potential of Manubi woodlot was utilised in 1999 (Ham 2000). The local foreman estimated that nine sections within the woodlot have past their optimum clear-felling stage.

Additional reasons cited for the under utilization were that community members preferred to utilize indigenous species for timber because of their durability. The gum species were considered to be inferior.

Table 1: Utilization of Manubi woodlot, April 1999 - March 2000

Month	No of people purchasing poles	Income
April 99	9	R463.04
May 99	25	R2004.03
June 99	35	R1938.95
July 99	33	R1444.04
Aug 99	49	R1498.06
Sep 99	27	R635.11
Oct 99	6	R147.20
Nov 99	5	R155.64
Dec99	1	R13.68
Jan 00	0	Nil
Feb 00	0	Nil
March 00	0	Nil

Users of indigenous forest Indigenous species are perceived as having a higher value. They are considered more suitable for the building of kraals and houses because they last significantly longer than the exotic species. According to Mr. Nkonjizwa a Sneezeewood (*Ptaeroxylon obliquum*) pole lasts up to 80 years compared to 20 years for a treated gum pole. The gum species are considered unsuitable as fuel wood because they smoke badly and cause chest problems if used regularly. This contributes to under-utilisation of the woodlot. In addition a number of households are involved in the medicinal plant trade. Certain indigenous species are being harvested and transported to Cape Town for sale.

Entrepreneurs: Entrepreneurs purchase sections of trees within the woodlot. Labour is hired to fell the trees and the poles are tarred and sold in neighbouring towns. Small-scale entrepreneurs operating in the area have been negatively affected by the poor state of the roads and as a result are buying trees from more accessible woodlots situated closer to towns such as Butterworth and Idutywa. This is contributing to under-utilisation of the Manubi woodlot. Some entrepreneurs also harvest firewood that is sold by the truckload to families arranging funerals and ceremonies on an *ad hoc* basis. This is not a regular source of income.

5.4. Factors shaping relationships

In the past, DWAF policy has ignored the rights of local users and has tried to exclude local residents from harvesting resources from the indigenous forest for subsistence purposes. This has generated conflict and opposition from locals, who have consequently ignored regulations.

The lack of appropriate management of the indigenous forest: The lack of an appropriate management program is resulting in community members harvesting relatively freely from the indigenous forest as no clear mechanisms are in place to discourage this. Currently the guards are obliged to report incidents of illegal harvesting to the police or the local chief. DWAF employees however stated that due to opposing views the police and local chief did not take these offences seriously and very seldom took any action.

An additional institutional constraint is that the local headmen are not in a position to effect punishment. Only the local chief has this authority and he lives some distance away. The forest manager also stated that it was a waste of time taking offenders to the court/magistrate in Centani because the court was unable to process cases. The guards also complained about the local authorities, policemen and magisterial officials from Butterworth and Willowvale coming regularly to the forest in large groups to hunt with guns. It has subsequently become difficult to apprehend these offenders since DWAF employed a gun-free policy. This, they believed, had resulted in the increase in illegal operations beyond their control.

Local headmen and community members confirmed the views of forestry officials about illegal use of the indigenous forest, particularly regarding the extensive trade in medicinal plants in the area by local residents and outsiders. One headman viewed the trade negatively as he believed that it did not help the community and yet it is very destructive to the forest. The community leaders were not prepared to stop the harvesting because they believe that it is the forest guards' responsibility since they are paid to do so. It was stated that if the community were to own the forest they would have a vested interest to protect it. This was however contradicted by the women, who expressed their doubts about the men's ability to enforce rules and manage the forest.

5.5. Strategies used to pursue intentions

Community user groups: Community members harvest extensively from the indigenous forest because a) indigenous species are superior to *Eucalyptus* spp. in most respects; b) the lack of appropriate management procedures and enforcement and c) because it is free. Communities have further registered land claims to the forest, and are minimizing the cost of the woodlot and the forest to them while maximizing the benefit they derive from it. Community members are unwilling to police themselves because of the social and time costs, and are, according to the forest manager, unwilling to participate in forestry management forums.

Entrepreneurs: Due to the bad condition of the roads to the more isolated woodlots timber entrepreneurs have moved their businesses to woodlots which have better

access routes, i.e. those situated closer to towns. Some entrepreneurs from other centres are buying large volumes of illegally harvested medicinal plant products from community members, but the extent of this problem needs to be further researched.

Community leadership: Community leaders are generally supportive of devolution, but do not enforce laws and sanctions and seem unwilling to implement DWAF's regulations. They want control of the woodlot and have registered a claim to the land.

DWAF: At the local level, DWAF officials try their best to implement regulations on the use of indigenous species and collect revenue from the woodlot. They are adopting a cautious approach to community participation, mainly because they are at a power disadvantage. They are also very cautious about apprehending transgressors and fear for their safety. At the National and Provincial levels, DWAF has embarked on a devolution process to boost rural development but also to downscale its own operations.

5.6. Barriers to the process

The following have been identified as barriers to the successful implementation of devolution process or Community Forestry Agreements and Joint Management initiatives.

At community level:

1. Lack of clarity about boundaries - Within the woodlot no clear boundaries exist between the villages to determine which villages qualify as primary beneficiaries in the devolution process. This has led to intra-community tensions.
2. Differences of opinion between community leaders and members regarding the utilisation of the woodlot for subsistence versus commercial purposes. For example two of the headmen felt that the woodlot should only be managed and utilized for subsistence purposes and not be managed for commercial purposes as this would cause conflict and tension between the communities and within them. The third headman however felt that the woodlot had commercial potential and the surrounding communities should harness this resource to generate an income for the area.
3. Political tensions - between tribal authorities and SANCO members.
4. Gender differences at community level could lead to increased conflict within communities.
5. Community will have to carry costs of maintaining woodlots - Lack of capacity and resources.

Box 6. Lack of capacity by community structures The lack of capacity by community structures to cope effectively with managerial issues appears to be a problem readily identified by certain community leaders and members. For example, Mr Magongana pointed out that some communities had opted for joint management initiative with the Department as a result.

Provincial level:

1. The poor condition of roads is a barrier to the commercial viability of the woodlots, and it is difficult for both local and outside small-scale entrepreneurs to operate viable businesses under these conditions because of the cost of appropriate vehicles and the high probability of incurring damage to vehicles.
2. Insufficient local demand /markets. Markets for the poles do exist in the neighbouring larger centres, but are produced more cheaply closer to these

centres than at Manubi. The recent price increase from R1.60 to R2.65/pole is likely to exacerbate this constraint on sales.

3. The current tree species selected are not appropriate for local conditions. The *Eucalyptus* (gum) species are considered to be unsuitable as fuel wood as they cause chest problems if used on a regular basis. *Acacia mearnsii* (wattle) is considered more appropriate for fuel. Entrepreneurs in the sawmill industry consider *Pinus* (pine) species the most suitable. Unfortunately the department has ceased to plant these species because of the high maintenance cost they require. It is therefore of paramount importance that the department finds more appropriate species which suit the needs of the various stakeholders. Indigenous species such as *Acacia karroo* and *Meletia grandis* need to be considered for planting, and more research is needed on the invasive ability of Black Wattle if planted away from rivers and drainage lines.

National level - DWAF:

1. The lack of a clear policy regarding the devolution process and the lack of experience of DWAF officials of the devolution process. It was felt by the local DWAF officials that the regional authorities in the Dept. do not have sufficient practical experience and are not adequately aware of the difficulties involved in establishing community based management bodies.
2. The history of non-recognition of community rights to indigenous forests and past attempts to exclude them from using forests by DWAF. This is changing due to the new Forest Act.
3. The constraints on retrenching DWAF staff, should community members be employed as part of the joint management arrangements.

5.7 Short term outcome for role players

The current situation has the following outcomes for the various role players:

DWAF: Continues to bear the costs of management, and struggles to meet its objectives of sustainable forest management.

Entrepreneurs: No viable business opportunities exist for local or larger entrepreneurs.

Local users:

- 1) Under utilisation² of woodlot and extensive use of the indigenous forests.
- 2) No employment opportunities or participation in the management of forests.
- 3) Poorly regulated (almost free) access to indigenous forests, and therefore a reluctance to share responsibilities and costs for sustainable forest management.

5.8. Short term outcome for resources

Unsustainable harvesting of smaller forest pockets: The demand for indigenous species and lack of access to the protected indigenous forest is believed to be having an impact on small forest pockets (conservancies) in the area. Currently the forest pockets fall under the management of DWAF but no regulations are being enforced. They are often located along the rivers and streams and the local headman stated that the over-harvesting of these resources is having a negative impacting on the hydrology of the area. Visits to

² Preliminarily statistics reveal that Manubi woodlot generates R42 p/ha whereas Longweni generates R81 p/ha.

some of these pocket forests showed that they were quite heavily used although there was much regeneration from coppicing. The species mix was much poorer than in the main forest, and there was less seedling regeneration. These pockets are in many ways probably serving at least one of the purposes for which the woodlots were intended, reducing pressure on the main indigenous forest, and providing materials closer to peoples homesteads.

Under-utilisation of the wood lot. The wood lot is currently under-utilised as large numbers of trees have past their optimum felling stage. Factors contributing to this are the poor condition roads as well as the people's preference for indigenous species for timber and fuel wood purposes. There is however evidence of use of the woodlots to supply some construction timber and rails for kraals (although not the poles)

Deterioration of the woodlot. Since the Dept. reduced funding, staff compliment and equipment the woodlot has suffered from lack of maintenance. This has resulted in a loss of young trees due to livestock grazing/browsing. The lack of cutting has also some areas to produce poles too large for local use.

5.9 Recommended strategies and actions to overcome barriers

Joint Management initiatives

- It is essential to establish a Local Forestry Management forum at Manubi to act as a conduit for negotiations and relationship-building.
- DWAF needs to get agreement on management policies and accommodate needs of various groups. Once objectives are agreed then they need to adapt management and development strategies to meet those objectives.
- There is a need for the Department to rethink the types of species grown which could assist in increasing the benefits to communities and local entrepreneurs and thus relieve pressure on the indigenous forest. Management of the pocket forests as outlying woodlots, with planting of indigenous species should also be considered.
- A participatory needs analysis and feasibility study is a priority.
- DWAF urgently needs to address the problems surrounding access to the indigenous forest as both the community leaders and members prioritised this. Currently no effective management programs are operating in the indigenous forest as DWAF employees lack capacity and staff to effectively prohibit community members from harvesting in the indigenous forest. Community members and leaders are not motivated to operate in collaboration with the DWAF employees because of the lack of benefits they receive.

Optimisation of forest and plantation land

- It is clear that the woodlot is under-utilised and too large for local and regional use, and it is unlikely that demand will exceed supply, even after the roads had been upgraded. On the other hand, there is concern over the unsustainable use of indigenous forest products (particularly bark for medicinal purposes and trees for corner posts).
- It is therefore recommended that the woodlot be reduced by 20-25 % (40-50 Ha) adjacent to the indigenous forest and allow the indigenous forest to regenerate in the clear-felled patches. The most sought-after species, Umzimbiti (*Meletia grandis*), Sneezewood (*P. obliquum*) and Yellowwood (*Podocarpus* spp.), grow fast and straight if managed properly. Umzimbiti grows from cuttings and it is feasible to establish groves of these species in place of *Eucalyptus*. Supporting the proactive management of the pocket woods by the communities themselves by provision of seedlings and other

materials could be considered. It is also possible to grow medicinal trees, bulbs and shrubs in clear-felled areas, as has been done in the Tena region of Ecuador (C. Fabricius, pers. obs.). The Tena medicinal plant nurseries generate US\$ 15 000 annually for a small community of 600 people through direct sales and tourism, and medicinal plants are in lower demand in Ecuador than in rural South Africa.

Capacity development

- The capacity of communities to enter the forest product market needs to be developed, and DWAF should continue to play a facilitatory role.
- Community members need to be trained in the technicalities of plantation management, and the use of SAFCOL training structures needs to be explored. The Working for Water Project has initiated a number of training courses on a contract basis, and these could be used to train community members. The nearest Working for Water initiative is at Qolorha, the woodlot of which falls under the jurisdiction of the Manubi forest manager.
- A partnership between DWAF and a rural development NGO, and other Government Departments such as the Dept of Labour, needs to be developed to strengthen the community's management capacity.
- The capacity of DWAF's middle and lower management, to deal with collaborative management and community-based natural resource management, needs to be developed. This could be done through short courses, and optimal utilization of in-house expertise. There is also a need to develop the capacity of the forest guards and other forest staff, not only in relation to their technical capabilities but also with regard to their critical roles in interacting with local communities. Recruitment of staff from within the local communities would be of great advantage in this respect. In this regard there should be better cooperation between Community and Conservation forestry.

Improved forest management

- Law enforcement must be stepped up. At present community members do not need to take any responsibility for better management, as they have virtually free access to the indigenous forest without being required to make any sacrifices or take collective responsibility.
- Closer collaboration between the police and judiciary and DWAF at Directorate level needs to be promoted. The link between law enforcement, sustainable natural resource use and tourism needs to be made and conveyed to law enforcers.
- A monitoring system should put in place, and baseline data collected as soon as possible.

Improved conditions of the roads

- The roads from Butterworth to Mazeppa Bay need to be improved to draw tourists and forestry entrepreneurs to the area.
- DWAF, the Eastern Cape Tourism Board and DEAT should formulate a joint strategy for the improvement of local infrastructure.

Improvement of economic viability of the indigenous forest and woodlot

- A business plan needs to be developed, incorporating market demands, wages, optimal pricing of poles and other management costs. The Manubi woodlot's status as a PCA means that DWAF will continue to play a role and possibly contribute some of the

management costs. The rights and responsibilities of the community needs to be defined, and the expected financial benefits to them need to be calculated.

- The tourism value of the indigenous forest needs to be investigated. Hiking trails on the Wild Coast are increasing in popularity and the hotel owner at Mazeppa Bay claims to have received regular inquiries about forest trails. Other opportunities include horse trails, tree identification and appreciation courses, exposing tourists to traditional medicines, and tree-top boardwalks or even tree-house accommodation in the forest. This could be done at low densities, and with strong community involvement. It once more points to the importance of collaboration between different sectors.
- The Department should engage in feasibility studies to ensure that the devolution of the woodlot does not result in additional financial cost to surrounding impoverished communities. All initiatives relating to the indigenous forests and the woodlots must be integrated with other developments; agricultural, industrial, tourist-related, in the area. This should be co-ordinated under the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) of the Centani municipal authority.

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Manubi woodlot is considered a valuable resource to the villagers, and probably plays an important role in protecting the indigenous forest. We agree with Ham (1999) that several tonnes of wood would have been harvested from the indigenous forest annually, had the woodlot not been there. It is also true, however, that the indigenous forest would have been larger and possibly more productive, per unit area, had it not been for the woodlot. The woodlot's impact on hydrology has not been studied but could be considerable.

Community members' preference for indigenous resources is corroborated by Evan's finding in the Masakona community (1998), where the indigenous forests were perceived as having much higher value than the woodlots and were an important source of income for a number of households engaged in the medicinal plant trade. Because of the low market demand and poor road conditions, the woodlot is therefore severely under-utilized, and it is improbable that demand will meet supply even after the upgrading of the road. Optimization of land use by removing a proportion of the plantation and allowing the indigenous forest to regenerate in the gaps will relieve some of the pressure on the indigenous forest.

It is possible to improve the economic viability of the woodlot by developing the capacity of local entrepreneurs, combining forestry with tourism, diversifying operations by cultivating medicinal plants, and stepping up law enforcement. It is however important to create a climate of co-operation and shared responsibility, and therefore the establishment of a joint management forum and the improvement of law enforcement are priorities. At present there are few incentives for community members to share the responsibility for the management of the forest and woodlot, because they have virtually free and unregulated access to trees and wildlife. Under those circumstances it is remarkable that the forest is in such a good condition. This might mean that a) the forest supplies local demand; b) the local community is exercising some self-restraint; c) demand from outside is low, because of the area's inaccessibility; d) the current prohibition on harvesting is having at least some effect.

The weak capacity of local community structures, as seen from the failure of past experiences of community-based initiatives in the area, is a source of concern. This has led to the women having no faith in the community structures' ability to effectively manage such initiatives and has led to gender conflicts. It appears that despite the men's support of the devolution process they are more motivated by the possibility of obtaining employment than faith in the actual process. This is similar to Evan's (1998) findings whereby the issue of gender and woodlots is heavily intertwined and needs to be addressed sensitively.

If devolution is not approached sensitively and strategically by DWAF, joint management could add additional burdens to already weak community leadership structures and threaten conservation objectives. It is possible to address the barriers identified in this report, but it would require a goal-driven approach and sound feasibility assessments and business plans. It is essential for DWAF to continue playing a facilitatory and capacity development role. DWAF's Conservation Forestry staff at middle management and field level should be trained to effectively deal with collaborative management.

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8. APPENDIX 1: CONTACT DETAILS

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