

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

M. Cocks, B. Matsiliza
and C. Fabricius



***Private-Sector Community
Forestry Partnerships
in the Eastern Cape: Longweni Woodlot case
study***

M. Cocks, B. Matsiliza & C. Fabricius

August 2000

**A report prepared as part of the South Africa Country Study
for the international collaborative research project steered by IIED:
*Instruments For Sustainable Private Sector Forestry***

Partners in the South Africa Country study:

CSIR-Environmentek

International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)

In association with:

Department for Water Affairs and Forestry

Forestry South Africa

**Production of this report has been made possible by the financial
support of the
UK Department for International Development
and the European Commission**

Citation: Cocks, M., Matsiliza, B & Fabricius, C. 2000. *Private-Sector Community Forestry Partnerships in the Eastern Cape: Longweni Woodlot Case Study*. Instruments for sustainable private sector forestry, South Africa series. International Institute for Environment and Development and CSIR-Environmentek, London and Pretoria.

Contacts for the lead author: Michelle Cocks, Environmental Science Programme, Rhodes University, P.O. Box 94, 6140 Grahamstown, South Africa. Tel: +27 46 6038592, Fax: +27 46 6225524

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

Overview and synthesis

- Mayers, J., Evans, J. and Foy, T. 2001. *Raising the stakes: impacts of privatisation, certification and partnerships in South African forestry*. This report draws on all the studies below and widespread consultation in South Africa. It analyses the impacts to date of privatisation, certification, outgrower schemes and company-community partnerships and presents conclusions and a set of options and next steps for all the main stakeholder groups.

Redistribution of opportunities and assets in forestry

- Khosa, M. 2000. *Forestry contracting in South Africa*. This study of trends in outsourcing and contracting in the South African forest industry seeks to deepen understanding of the national context within which contracting is an increasing practice, and examines possible options for outsourcing.
- Heyl, L., von Maltitz, G., Evans, J. and Segole, R. 2000. *Issues and opportunities for small-scale sawmilling in South Africa: an Eastern Cape case study*. This report describes the scale, structure and market niche of the small sawmilling subsector, with a focus on the Eastern Cape Province.
- Horn, J. 2000. *The role of small-scale sawmilling in household and community livelihoods: case studies in the Eastern Cape*. This study focuses on the livelihoods of small-scale sawmillers in the Eastern Cape, using a case study approach.
- Bethlehem, L. 2001. *Bringing democracy to the forests: developments in South Africa's forestry policy and legislation*. This paper describes the policy and legislative changes in the forest sector, and sets recent initiatives in the context of a drive towards sustainable and equitable forest management.

Forest certification in South Africa

- Frost, B., Mayers, J. and Roberts, S. 2002. *Growing credibility: impact of certification on forests and people in South Africa*. This is an overview of all the certification studies with additional supply chain analysis.
- Scott, D. 2000. *Environmental aspects of the forest management certification process*. This report by a member of FSC certification audit teams examines the audit inspection instrument and provides commentary on how it is used.
- Clarke, J. 2000. *Social and environmental aspects of the forest management certification process: a discussion of social assessment components in South Africa*. This report, drawing on audit experience, tackles the ability of FSC certification and the certification process to improve the wellbeing of workers and communities dependent on plantations.

- Hamman, J. 2000. *Forestry certification: social aspects*. Also by a member of FSC inspection teams, this report analyses the composition and focus of the audit teams and highlights issues which can compromise the positive impact of certification.
- Dunne, N 2000. *The Impact of Environmental Certification on the South African Forest Products Supply Chain*. This study traces the route of FSC certified timber from mill to market, seeking to understand the impact of certification on traders and retailers in South Africa and the UK.
- von Maltitz, G. 2000. *The impacts of the ISO 14000 management system on sustainable forest management in South Africa*. This is a study focussing on one company's decision to adopt ISO accreditation, comparing the impacts of the ISO system with those of FSC certification.
- 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.
- Andrew, M., Fabricius, C. and Timmermans, H. 2000. *An overview of private sector community partnerships in forestry and other natural resources in Eastern Cape*. Focussing at a provincial level, this report captures partnership trends in the Eastern Cape, drawing on five case studies.
- 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.

Copies of the CD containing the above reports can be obtained from:

Forestry and Land Use Programme, International Institute for Environment and Development, 3
Endsleigh Street, London, WC1H 0DD, UK.
Tel: +44 207 388 2117 Fax: +44 207 388 2826 e-mail: forestry@iied.org
<http://www.iied.org>
and The Librarian, Environmentek CSIR, PO Box 395, Pretoria 0001, South Africa.
Tel +27 12 841 3640 Fax: +27 12 841 2689

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. PROJECT CONTEXT

The Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF) has recently initiated the Woodlot Devolution Programme. The aim of the programme is to hand over ownership, control and management of woodlots to communities with established rights to the land on which they are planted, in such a way that local economic development is enhanced.

The brief given to the researchers was to draw up a situational analysis of Longweni woodlot, to identify the main role players and the main issues that will need to be considered and dealt with in any devolution process. The fieldwork was undertaken in April 2000.

1.2. BACKGROUND

Woodlots were originally established for the benefit of rural communities, particularly in the former homeland areas, to alleviate the perceived shortage of natural fuel wood resources (Evans 1998). The first woodlots for fuel wood and poles for rural communities were established more than a century ago by municipalities (in small rural towns) and the Department of Forestry in remote areas to relieve the pressure on indigenous forests (Ham *et al*/1999). The authorities at the time assumed that people would prefer to use the cultivated species for building material and firewood. Woodlots are generally small and have little formal industrial value as they are located in areas far removed from timber processing plants (LHA 1998).

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 poor understanding and an apathetic attitude by tribal authorities towards the management and utilization of the woodlots. 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 *et al* 1999).

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

Since 1994 the DWAF has begun a process of restructuring and introduced significant policy changes. Community forestry has now become an important component of DWAF's activities and has been completely redefined. Prior to the political transition in South Africa government forestry policy in black rural areas focused on the protection of indigenous forests and the alleviation of fuel wood shortages through the growing of exotic trees. DWAF's new community forestry policy focuses on using forestry as 'a vehicle for economic upliftment and improvement of livelihoods in impoverished areas' development (Andrew *et al* 2000). DWAF's withdrawal from the ownership and management of forests (except primary

conservation areas), is seen as an opportunity to implement the new community forestry policy. These new forestry policies have consequently introduced significant shifts in how forest resources are to be managed and in the relationship between the State and local communities (CSIR in press).

The State is in the process of withdrawing from the ownership and management of forest plantations and has redefined its role. It has taken on the role of creating an enabling environment that encourages private investment, and begun to act as a broker facilitating partnerships between communities and the private sector that promote rural development (Andrew *et al* 2000).

Currently Community Forestry manages 91 woodlots in the Eastern Cape totalling approximately 12 000 hectares (DWAF 2000). DWAF's intention is to hand over the ownership, control and management of viable woodlots to communities that demonstrate a willingness to take on this responsibility. The role of the Community Forestry Division is to transfer the necessary management and organisational skills to properly constituted legal entities to which the ownership and management rights are given. A team of eight foresters working with a team of technical consultants and representatives from the Department of Land Affairs have been assigned this core function (White Paper 2000). The National Forest Act (Act 84 of 1998) paves the way for the devolution of these woodlots. The Act makes it possible for communities to enter into agreements with the Minister regarding the management of woodlots.

The process of restructuring woodlots is expected to provide opportunities for communities to take ownership of these resources and develop and manage them for the benefit of local residents. It will also provide these communities with assistance in developing business plans and entering business partnership with small-scale entrepreneurs.

The woodlots have been divided into the following categories:

- D1 Woodlots with a high commercial potential
- D2 Woodlots with a medium commercial potential
- D3 Woodlots with a low or poor commercial potential

DWAF have identified eleven D1 forests that it has prioritised for devolution to neighbouring communities during the initial phase of restructuring. Preparations for devolution of these 11 woodlots are underway, but some major obstacles have been encountered. The long-term plan is to devolve the land and assets of all viable woodlots to the local communities. Where and when devolution is not practical, efforts will be made to enter into Community Forestry Agreements (according to the new National Forests Act No. 84, 1998) with local communities. These agreements would not entail transfer of ownership, but would allow local communities to take over the management of these woodlots or enter into joint management agreements with DWAF. Under such agreements communities could then enter into partnerships with small-scale entrepreneur to maintain and exploit the resources.

This process of devolution has a number of components that are described in Box 1.

Box 1. The envisaged steps in the devolution process.

The process of devolution entails the following steps (which need not be followed sequentially):

- The identification of the neighbouring communities and the primary beneficiaries
- Securing the agreement of the communities
- Undertaking a technical evaluation of the feasibility
- Mobilising the community to become involved in the process
- Developing an assets list.
- Setting up legal entities, such as Communal Property Associations (CPAs) or Trusts for the communities.
- Resolving issues related to DWAF employees working in the Woodlots
- Developing a Business Plan
- Obtaining agreement from all interested and affected parties
- Empowering the local communities
- And finally transferring the land and assets to the communities (Andrew *et al* 2000).

It is however important to note that even once devolution of the woodlots has occurred, the state intends to continue providing technical advice and support to the communities to ensure the sustainable management of communal property. The role of the state in these cases is that of facilitator and educator, and not manager (CSIR in press).

2. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE LONGWENI WOODLOT

The Longweni woodlot, situated in the Bizana region, covers approximately 74ha and was established in 1929. In comparison to the Manubi woodlot which consists of *Eucalyptus* species only the Longweni woodlot includes both *Acacia* (wattle) and *Eucalyptus* (gum) species. The woodlot surrounds an indigenous forest and is encircled by three villages, Kwazulu, Sidozingana and eKusitheleni. The communities of Kwazulu and Sidozingana border on the woodlot whereas eKusitheleni is situated further away. The community of Kwazulu is claiming sole ownership over the woodlot. The leadership structure comprises three headmen who fall under the authority of one chief.

The DWAF and the Department of Economic Affairs Environment and Tourism (DEAET) jointly manage the Longweni indigenous forest. A forewoman, a forest guard and three labourers are responsible for the maintenance of the woodlot. All five employees are from neighbouring districts. The Longweni woodlot is being considered for devolution. At this stage it is still being determined which villages will be classified as primary and secondary beneficiaries as disputes exist over who the rightful beneficiaries should be. In the Longweni situation it needs to be determined which of the three villages will classify as primary and secondary beneficiaries.

In addition to the woodlot and pockets of indigenous forest in the area, small plots of wattle trees are being cultivated around homesteads. These patches are utilized on a regular basis as a source of fuelwood as they are close to the homestead and save women a considerable amount of time in harvesting. These plots have not become invasive in the area.

The villages are marked by poverty and very few employment opportunities exist. Consequently households in the area rely heavily on their surrounding environment for resources, such as fuelwood, timber and medicinal plants. Those households without wattle plots of their own utilise the woodlot for firewood and building materials. Community members have to obtain permission and pay for both firewood and poles harvested.

Strong preference was given to the wattle species for construction material as they are considered to be stronger and longer lasting than the gum species. The households in Longweni region did not consider the gum species as a good fuel wood because of the chest problems caused by smoke inhalation. Indigenous timber is preferred for firewood as it burns slower and makes better coals. From the interviews conducted and observations made of households in the village, it was evident that people prefer poles from the indigenous forest for the construction of cattle kraals as they last longer (up to 80 years) compared to treated gum poles (up to 20 years).

A number of households are involved in the trade of medicinal plants to generate income. Tree bark and various bulbous species are harvested from the indigenous forest and sold in local markets or transported to urban markets. Wood from the indigenous forest is harvested illegally. Currently the DWAF only has the capacity to employ one forest guard to control harvesting in the entire forest.

Mr Magongana, Chief Forester East Griqualand, reported that entrepreneurs from outside the communities had purchased trees from the woodlot in the past. The poles were transported by tractors and sold to villages in the lower lying regions where there are no woodlots. Longweni woodlot is currently inaccessible due to the poor state of access roads thus hindering commercial utilisation of the woodlot. Consequently the woodlot is under-utilised, and in the case at Manubi woodlot, a number of sections have exceeded their optimum size for clear felling.

In the Bizana area private entrepreneurs run a number of small-scale timber enterprises. Under the previous dispensation there were five sawmills in Bizana region managed by white and coloured entrepreneurs however there are now only two. These entrepreneurs have relocated to Mt Ayliff, Mt Frere and Lusikisiki because of the lack of appropriate timber in the area.

Saw millers require pine trees for timber but the DWAF no longer recommends the planting of pine species in the area because of the long growing season and the high maintenance cost incurred for pruning and thinning. Gum and wattle species are not considered appropriate for the saw milling industry, only for the processing of poles. The latter type of business was perceived as being considerably less profitable by local entrepreneurs.

Since 1996 four entrepreneurs have established new businesses, felling, transporting and treating poles. For this industry gum species are considered suitable.

Box 2. Commercial viability of woodlots.

The commercial viability of Longweni differs from that of the Manubi woodlot. In the Bizana region there are significantly more timber-related industries with many more entrepreneurs running small sawmill industries and enterprises selling treated poles. According to DWAF these enterprises are predominantly operated by middlemen, who purchase trees at a subsidised price of between R2-5. A tree is re-sold for approximately R18. The middlemen are consequently making approximately R12 before costs on each tree purchased. Local communities are currently not benefiting from these profits of this trade. Surrounding community members are also not benefiting from causal employment in the harvesting and processing of poles as the middlemen bring their own labourers to harvest from the woodlots.

It is the Department's hope that the devolution process will redistribute some of the profits to the communities surrounding the woodlots. It is believed that this could be made possible by operating a centralised depot were the trees in the area could be sold (Harrison pers. comm. 2000). 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. comm. 2000). This however is would not be feasible for all woodlots, particularly those in extremely isolated area where no other timber related industries are located.

The villages neighbouring the Longweni woodlot have not yet been informed about the potential for devolution and only Chief Mpondombini has been officially informed about DWAF's plans. He has the responsibility of informing the chiefs in the area.

3. OUTLINE OF PEOPLE AND GROUPS INTERVIEWED

The following persons and groups were interviewed.

- The forewoman of Longweni woodlot.
- Headmen of Kwazulu, Sidozingana and eKusitheleni villages.
- Chief Mpondombini of Kantolo area.
- Community members: a women's group (four) and a men's group (four).
- Two private entrepreneurs.
- Graham Harrison: Deputy Director of Community Forest, Kokstad.
- Mr Magangana, Chief Forester, East Griqualand, Kokstad

4. METHODS

The area was visited during the 18th to 20th April 2000. The information was collected by means of interviews with key informants and informal discussions with larger groups. The larger groups consisted of men and women of four people respectively. The interviews were conducted 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 middle-aged men and the women's group consisted of mixed age groups.

Records of pole sales kept by the forewoman at Longweni were consulted to determine the annual amount of sales for 1999.

5. KEY ISSUES

5.1. MAIN ROLE PLAYERS AND THEIR OBJECTIVES

There are a number of interested and affected parties associated with the woodlot who would be affected by any devolution process. These parties and their objectives are identified and discussed below.

DWAF officials and employees:

DWAF officials are employed to manage the woodlot and oversee the protection of the indigenous forest. There are three labourers, one forest guard and a forewoman at Longweni. They are all from neighbouring districts and not from the surrounding villages. Their objectives are to maintain their current employment status, to implement NFAP and to transfer responsibility and reduce costs.

Community leaders:

Community leaders and members were not aware of the devolution process. However during the research process, DWAF's devolution plans were explained to the community leaders and community. The community leaders currently have very little involvement in the management of either the woodlot or the indigenous forest. Consequently any devolution process is perceived as a means to increase their status and possibly access revenue for the community. Community leaders currently have no recognised legal or contractual rights over the woodlot, although it is established on their land. Their main objective in light of the above circumstances is to gain control of the woodlot.

Community user groups:

Both men and women utilise 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. With regards to harvesting indigenous species community members have previously had no recognised legal or informal rights. DWAF's new NFA does however now officially recognise local resident's rights of access to resources on a subsistence level.

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 it is a better source of fuel wood and poles.

The main objective of the men was to obtain possible employment and business opportunities through the devolution process.

Entrepreneurs:

Local entrepreneurs complained about being negatively affected by the withdrawal of the subsidies previously given to them by the Department of Forestry and the poor condition of the roads. They alleged that this had resulted in many of these businesses closing down. Entrepreneurs have been entitled to harvest sections of the woodlot if appropriate procedures are followed and payment is made. Their main objective is to maintain or increase the profit margins.

5.2. NATURE OF THE VARIOUS RELATIONSHIPS

In relation to the indigenous forest

Strong issues of contention exist between DWAF officials and community members over access to the indigenous forest. Forest guards patrol the indigenous forest to control illegal harvesting. 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 in controlling illegal harvesting as they believe that it is the forest guards' responsibility since they are paid to do so. In addition, they believe that since the forests are on their land, they are entitled to use these resources. Resources obtainable from the indigenous forest are more diverse and are considered to be more valuable than the resources obtained from woodlots. Currently a 'zero utilisation' policy is adhered to at Longweni. This however is likely to change due to the new NFA and recent DWAF staff workshops. This is because the new act allows community members to access natural resources from the indigenous forest on a sustainable basis.

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 employment of outsiders and the lack of opportunities for locals. Minor complaints were voiced about being charged to harvest timber.

Conflict of interest between the various role players:

DWAF is compelled to plant tree species which meet the following criteria: 1) fast growing; 2) have low maintenance costs and 3) do not pose a threat to the surrounding environment such as invasive species. Consequently, the Department selected gum species as the most appropriate species. This selection however does not meet the needs of all the role players. For example, the local residents require tree species that are a good source of fuel wood and are durable as building material. In addition they also seek employment opportunities in the area, pine species require high maintenance and consequently offer such opportunities. On the other hand local entrepreneurs require tree species for the production of poles (Gum) and timber (Pine). Consequently the woodlot remains under-utilised, as the species selected do not meet the needs of the various role players. This continues to result in timber species being harvested from the indigenous forest continues because these species are of better quality for construction purposes and as fuel wood.

5.3. RESOURCES AT STAKE FOR EACH PARTY

5.3.1. Community leaders and user groups – woodlot:

The woodlot is perceived to be valuable by the community members as it provides access to firewood and building material. One headman went as far as to say that those communities who did not have access to woodlots were less fortunate than themselves because of long distances people have to cover to access fuel wood and timber. Community members are allowed to harvest fresh and dry wood (one head-load of wood per person). In order to harvest fuel wood each person is required to get permission from the DWAF office and a permit and payment is required. Poles can be bought at R1.60 per pole and truckloads of firewood at R12 per load. The majority of purchases had been made in the months of June to August. The pole sales dropped during the months of November, December and January. This is because of

the poor conditions of the roads due to heavy rains. Villagers are hindered in their ability to fell more trees by their poor tools and equipment. Harvesters of fuel wood, generally women, are only allowed to use their hands to break firewood as the DWAF policies prohibit the use of other cutting tools.

The following records from the DWAF offices reveal the utilisation levels of the woodlot. In the past twelve months from May 1999 to April 2000, 154 people had purchased 815 wattle poles and 593 gum poles to the value of R4 252.16. In addition 129 tons of wattle valued at R1 683.45 and 6 tons of gum valued R78.30 were purchased for firewood. These statistics reveal the preference households have for wattle species. In total the woodlot generated R60 13.91 for the year. The majority of these purchases had been made in the months of June to August. The woodlot at Longweni has to some extent been affected by the wet season as pole sales have dropped for both gum and wattle during November, December and January (Table. 1). The poor road conditions to the woodlot during this period have had an adverse affect on the business. Table 2 shows the fluctuations in sales/utilisation of the woodlot for firewood during the winter months (June, July and August) and a decrease in the following summer months.

Households also purchase wattle saplings for the construction of wattle and daub houses from the Longweni woodlot, see Table 3. It is of importance to note that having access to both *Acacia* sp. and *Eucalyptus* sp. there is considerably more utilization of the woodlot by the surrounding communities. For example, preliminary statistics reveal that Longweni woodlot generates R81 p/ha whereas Manubi woodlot only generates R42 p/ha for poles purchased.

Table 1: Utilization of Longweni woodlot, for wattle and gum species for timber purposes, April 1999- March 2000

Month	No of wattle poles purchased	No of gum poles purchased
April	91	Nil
May	14	Nil
June	162	78
July	184	283
Aug	Nil	122
Sept	Nil	Nil
Oct	15	87
Nov	Nil	Nil
Dec	Nil	23
Jan	Nil	Nil
Feb	80	Nil
March	262	Nil

Table 2: Utilization of Longweni woodlot, for firewood, April 1999- March 2000

Month	No of tonnes of firewood purchased
April	8
May	5
June	19
July	28
Aug	24
Sept	15
Oct	8

Nov	12
Dec	8
Jan	Nil
Feb	5
March	1

Table 3: Data for utilisation for wattle lathes

Month	No of wattle lathes bundles purchased
April	Nil
May	Nil
June	Nil
July	Nil
Aug	6
Sept	1
Oct	Nil
Nov	17
Dec	Nil
Jan	Nil
Feb	4

Box 3. Preference for wattle species by communities.

According to DWAF officials the communities prefer to use wattle rather than gum. The spread of wattle is seen as a serious problem by the DEAET. However, studies by DWAF (Harrison pers. comm. 2000) have shown that wattle invasion occurs along water catchments and river banks as water helps to disperse seeds and livestock only account for 2% of seed dispersal. DWAF has been trying to convince the Water Licence Committee that wattle can be grown if managed and planted in appropriate places. DWAF still receives applications to plant wattle from the communities. The Department approves these only if they are situated away from water catchment areas.

If the devolution process were to occur, the cost of harvesting trees for poles could be considerably higher as community structures would have to cover the cost of the maintenance of woodlot, which previously has been subsidised by the Department. Community leaders will experience an increase in responsibilities to ensure the maintenance of the woodlot.

5.3.2. Community leaders and user groups - 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. The gum species are considered unsuitable as fuel wood because they smoke excessively and cause chest problems if used regularly. This contributes to under-utilisation of the woodlot. The level of under utilization at Longweni is however considerably less than at Manubi.

5.3.3. Entrepreneurs:

Entrepreneurs purchase sections of trees within the woodlot. Labour is hired to fell the trees and the poles are treated and sold in neighbouring towns.

Small-scale entrepreneurs operating in the area have been 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 Fort Donald. This also contributes to under-utilisation of the woodlot.

5.4. FACTORS SHAPING RELATIONSHIPS

There are a number of factors shaping relationships between the various role players. These include:

DWAF past policies:

DWAF policy in the past has not taken adequate cognisance of the rights of local users and has tried to exclude local residents from indigenous forests rather than instituting sustainable utilisation management systems. This has caused conflict and opposition from locals who have ignored regulations.

The lack of appropriate management of the indigenous forest:

The lack of an appropriate management program has resulted in community members harvesting relatively freely from the indigenous forest. No affective mechanism has been in place to apprehend offenders. Currently guards are obliged to report illegal activities to the local chief. Mr Magangana, the regional manager of woodlots in East Griqualand, complained that the community structures were not effective in punishing offenders caught harvesting in the indigenous forest.

Local headmen and community members confirmed that local residents and outsiders were undertaking extensive trade in medicinal plants from the indigenous forest. They stated that if the residents were to own the forest they would have a vested interest to protect it. No evidence of this being practiced in the area was noticed.

Species selected for woodlot:

In the past pine (*Pinus*) species were planted in the Longweni woodlot. These species were sought after by the small-scale saw mill enterprises in the area because of their good timber properties. The DWAF no longer recommends the planting of pine species because of the long growing season and the high maintenance cost incurred for pruning and thinning these trees. Consequently more gum and wattle species have been planted. These species are however not considered appropriate for the saw milling industry, only for the processing of poles. The latter types of business are considered less profitable. Gum species are not suitable for firewood or timber for local residents.

5.5. STRATEGIES USED TO PURSUE INTENTIONS

Community user groups:

Selective harvesting: The perceived superiority of the indigenous species and lack of appropriate management procedures is resulting in community members harvesting extensively from the indigenous forest as they depend on these resources for their livelihood.

Entrepreneurs:

Risk management: Due to the bad condition of the roads to the more isolated woodlots entrepreneurs have moved their businesses to woodlots which have better access routes, i.e. those situated closer to towns. Due to the lack of availability of

Pine species in the Bizana area many small-scale industries have closed down or moved their operations to areas such as Mt Ayliff, Mt Frere and Lusikisiki where Pine timber is still available.

Community leadership:

Community leaders are generally supportive of devolution process as they wish to gain more control of the woodlot. Currently however community leaders do not enforce laws and sanctions and seem unwilling to implement DWAF's regulations.

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. The NFA has introduced new legalisation, which provides local residents with recognised rights to harvest from indigenous forests for subsistence purposes. DWAF staff have recently received training in the legalities of the new act.

5.6. BARRIERS TO THE PROCESS

The following have been identified as barriers to the successful implementation of devolution process and or the establishment of CFA's (Joint Management initiatives).

Community level:

- Community tensions - Boundary disputes between the villages exist. The issues of determining which villages qualify as primary beneficiaries in the devolution process is problematic as the Longweni case study reveal that the woodlot is surrounded by three villages. The question still remains as to which village qualifies as primary beneficiary. This could lead to intra-community tensions.
- Increased conflict between community leaders and members - the utilisation of the woodlot for subsistence versus commercial purposes. For example disagreement exist between community leaders and members. The community headmen supported the notion that the woodlot should be utilized for commercial purposes whereas majority of community members felt that it should only be utilized for subsistence purposes.
- Gender differences at community level could lead to increased conflict within communities. The women believed that if the management of the woodlot were to be given to the community leadership structures it would be destroyed. The men on the other hand believe that the woodlot should be managed by community leaders and not be in the hands of DWAF.
- With complete devolution community structures will have to bear the full costs of maintaining the woodlot in area where they are not commercially viable. These costs could add additional financial burdens to already impoverished surrounding communities, as sufficient profits would not be generated to ensure the maintenance of the woodlot. The increase in the price of trees would impact negatively both on subsistence use and small-scale entrepreneurs.

- The women in Longweni identified that the community structures in Longweni lack capacity and resources to manage the woodlot successful. This problem has already been identified in other communities where the devolution process has been discussed with community leaders and members and they have stating a preference to enter into joint management initiatives with the Department. See Box 4. for details.

Box 4. Preference expressed for joint management initiative.

The lack of capacity by community structures to cope effectively with managerial issues appears to be a problem readily identified by community leaders and members. For example, Mr Magongana pointed out that certain groups had stated a preference to enter into joint management initiatives with the Department rather than be given full ownership and managerial responsibilities.

Provincial level:

- The poor road conditions are a barrier to the commercial viability of the woodlots. It is difficult for both local and outside small-scale entrepreneurs to operate viable businesses under these conditions because of the expensive maintenance on their vehicles.
- Insufficient local demand/markets. Markets for the poles do exist in the neighbouring larger centres.
- There is a need for the Department to reconsider the type of species selected to grown in woodlot. A specie need to be selected, which can assist in increasing the benefits to communities and local entrepreneurs. This could assist in relieving pressure on the indigenous forest.

National level - DWAF:

- The lack of a clear policy regarding the devolution process. The lack of faith DWAF officials have in the devolution process. It was felt by the managerial officials that the higher authorities of DWAF do not have sufficient practical experience to base their policies on and are not adequately aware of the difficulties involved in establishing community based management bodies.
- 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.
- The constraints on retrenching DWAF staff, should community members be employed as part of the joint management arrangements.

5.7. POTENTIAL ACTIONS THAT COULD BE USED TO OVERCOME BARRIERS

- *Improved conditions of the roads.* This however is problematic as no other foreseeable large-scale business initiatives are being proposed for the area.
- *High commercial status:* Longweni has been classified as a having a high commercial status. However DWAF is still engaged in a more detailed study.

DWAF officials felt that despite Longweni's isolation and bad roads, possibilities exist for the woodlot to be utilised for commercial purposes as it is situated in a timber area.

- *Engaging in the devolution process in stages.* The current plan is to implement joint management where DWAF staff is still employed as an interim measure and to eventually devolve complete management to the community. This will be done over a two year period (Harrison, pers. comm. 2000)
- *Integration of indigenous forests and woodlot management.* DWAF needs to agree on management policies and accommodate the needs of various groups. Once objectives are agreed on then they need to adapt management and development strategies to meet those objectives.
- *Tree species grown:* New planting programs aimed at growing the most appropriate species to: 1) meet local needs for fuel wood and building material and 2) meet entrepreneurial needs for high value timber (with good value adding opportunities) and employment opportunities.

5.8. SHORT TERM OUTCOME FOR ROLE PLAYERS

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

- *DWAF* continues to bear costs and cannot meet objectives, as indigenous forests are still under threat.
- *Entrepreneurs:* Very limited business opportunities for local or larger entrepreneurs.
- *Local users:* Under utilisation of the woodlot, the destruction of indigenous forests and no employment opportunities or say in management of forests.

5.9. SHORT TERM OUTCOME FOR THE RESOURCES

- *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.

5.10 RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS TO OVERCOME BARRIERS

- 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.

- It is also recommended that the Department encourages the planting of sought after indigenous tree species in the area by providing seedlings and other necessary materials.
- 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.
- 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.
- The road to Longweni needs to be improved to draw forestry entrepreneurs to the area.

6. CONCLUSION

Longweni woodlot is considered a valuable resource to the villagers, and probably plays an important role in protecting the indigenous forest. 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.

It is possible to improve the economic viability of the woodlot by developing the capacity of local entrepreneurs. It is however important to create a climate of co-operation and shared responsibility. 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.

The weak capacity of local community structures, 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, it 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 facilitating and capacity development role.

7. REFERENCES

Andrew, M. & Fabricius, C. (2000) Overview of Private-Sector Community Partnerships in Forestry in the in the Eastern Cape. Report prepared for CSIR/DFID.

Evans, J. (1998) Enclosure and changing social relationships to land: a case study of Masakona. Report prepared for Enviromentek, CSIR. 1st Draft.

Ham, C. & Theron, J. (1999) Community Forestry and Woodlot Development in South Africa: The past, Present and Future. *Southern African Forestry Journal*. No. 184.

LHA Management Consultants, (1998) Restructuring Options for the Forest Resources of the Former Homelands. Report for the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry.

Introduction to the National Forestry Action Programme and the key issues to be addressed National Forestry Action Programme Discussion Document 1. <http://www-dwaf.pwv.gov.za/idaf/DirectorTES/Forestry/NFAP/Nfap.htm>

White Paper on Forestry Policy - Ministry of Water Affairs and Forestry. March (1997).

8. APPENDIX 1: CONTACT DETAILS

1. Graeme Harrison : Deputy Director of Community Forest, Kodstad. – 039 7273620 or 083 534 0374.
2. Chief Forester Mr Magongana East Griqualand, Kodstad – 039 7273620.
3. Mr Cweba Mtoba Director of DWAF Eastern Cape - 043-642 5665.