CSIR/DFID

Investigation into Private-Sector Community Partnerships in Forestry in the Eastern Cape: **Manubi Woodlot Case Study**

June 2000

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Project context

The Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF) has recently initiated the Woodlot Devolution Project. The aim of the project is too hand over ownership, control and management of woodlots to communities with established rights to the land on which they are planted.

The brief given to the authors was to draw up a situational analysis of Manubi forest to determine how far the devolution process had proceeded, identify the main role players in the various partnerships and what factors determine these relationships. 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).

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).

In the Eastern Cape there are 120 woodlots, covering approximately 12 000ha, that are owned and managed by DWAF. It is currently DWAF's intention to hand over the ownership, control and management of viable woodlots to communities that demonstrate a willingness to take on this responsibility. 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 Department has classified woodlots 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

Those woodlots that are linked to adjacent indigenous forests have been classified as either primary conservation areas (PCAs) or conservation areas (CA's), these will be 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).

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

Box 1. The envisaged steps in the devolution process.

According to Mr Magongana, Chief Forester East Griqualand, the devolution process is envisaged to include the following steps:

1. The devolution team (2 consultants and 8 foresters) will investigate:
   a) History of the community;
   b) Land ownership in consultation with the Department of Land Affairs (DLA) and
   c) Commercial feasibility.
   Once these factors have been determined the devolution team will inform all relevant stakeholders (Community members, Community leadership structures & and local government) of the devolution process.
2. If agreement of the process is accepted a task team is elected to draw up a constitution for all relevant stakeholders.
3. Once all the stakeholders have accepted the constitution a committee comprising of all stakeholders will be elected.
4. The committee then will decide whether they will form a CPA or a trust.
5. The committee together with the task team will design a business plan.
6. The community must accept the plan before the devolvement of the woodlot

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 $30m^3/ha/a$. This is due to the high rainfall the area receives as well as the good doleritic soils (Ham 2000). Despite the high yields produced by the woodlot the Department has not selected Manubi woodlot for the devolution process because of its PCA status and peripheral location. An assessment of all the indigenous forests was carried out and the following criteria was used to determine the status of these forests: the level of bio-diversity, the size of the unit (forest) 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 devolution process.

The woodlot is still managed by DWAF but falls under a different directorate within the Department. The management of the woodlot falls under Community Forestry division and the management of the indigenous forests under Conservation Forestry division (Ham 2000). A foreman and four labourers are responsible for the maintenance of the woodlot and they fall under the control of 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 woodlot spans across three villages, Qolweni, Manubi and Ngqwarha, who fall under the authority of the same chief. The villages fall in an area, which can be defined as rurally remote, the nearest town being Centani approximately 40km away. The villages are marked by poverty and very few opportunities exist for employment. Consequently households in the area are heavily reliant on their surrounding environment for resources. The resources utilized include those from the woodlot, the indigenous forest and small patches of indigenous forest (conservancies) located along the kloofs and rivers. Trees are felled from the woodlots for construction purposes and firewood is harvested. Community members are allowed to harvest fresh and dry wood (one head-load of wood per person). In order to harvest each member is required to get permission from the 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 species are favoured over the gum species because the latter smoke badly and cause chest problems if used regularly for fuel. Indigenous timbers 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 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.

This is a highly contentions issue 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.

Box 2. 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 sicken 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 there used to be more small-scale entrepreneurs operating in the area but their businesses have apparently been affected by the bad state of the roads that are not being maintained regularly. Two (coloured) 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 the 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 sell. Their businesses have however been effected 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 *ad hoc* bases but this is not a regular source of income.

Box 3. Commercial viability of woodlots.

The commercial viability of Manubi differs to the Longweni woodlot. Longweni woodlot is located in the Bizana region. In this 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 subsided 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. Local communities are currently not benefiting from these profit margins because of the lack of access they have to capital to enter into the trade. Surrounding community members are not even benefiting from causal employment as the middlemen bring their own labourers to harvest the tree from the woodlots.

It is the Departments hope 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 were 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 Nkonjiswa[1]; 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, Mr Jones and ?

5. Graham Harrison: Deputy Director of Community Forest, Kodstad.

6. Mr Magongana, Chief Forester East Griqualand, Kodstad

[1] Contact details are provided in the Appendix 1.

4. METHODS

The area was visited during the week of 16th to 17th 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 pole sales records kept by the foreman at Manubi were consulted 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 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 devolution 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. With regards to harvesting indigenous species community members have in the past have had no recognized legal or informal rights. In the past DWAF did not officially recognise any legal or informal rights for community surrounding indigenous forests. This however has changed

under the new Forest Act that allows surrounding community members rights to harvest on a subsistence basis from such areas.

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 through the devolution process.

Entrepreneurs: Local entrepreneurs have been seriously affected by the poor condition of the roads. 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, they are entitled too use the resources. This is likely to change due to the new Act and recent workshop with DWAF staff.

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.

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. Problematic community project.

The aim of the project was to generate funds for community development initiatives. 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 being achieved within their community.

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 then two years because of their lack of capacity and inability to enforce regulations.

Box 5. 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.

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 verses secondary beneficiaries is very problematic as in most areas, overlapping land claims exists 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 there 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 6. Concerns raised about the devolution process by local DWAF staff.

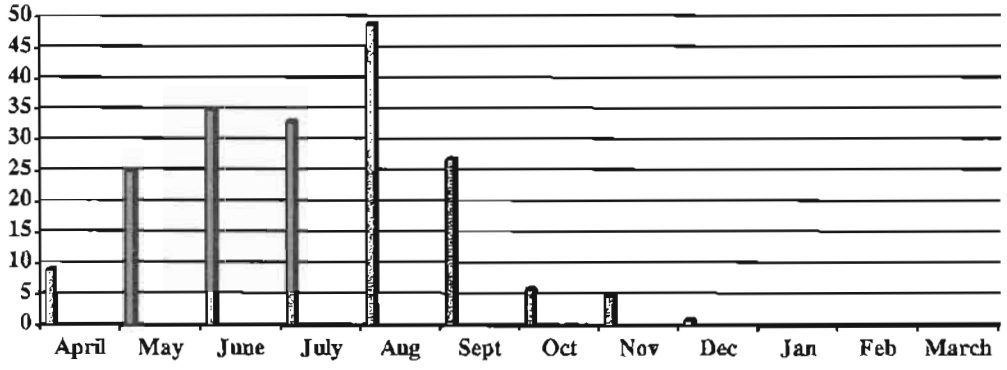
The local staff also believed that local community structures would not support the devolution process as they would question why, the Department (after all this time) had only decided to initiate the devolution process now. They were well aware of the financial difficulties that the Department was facing to continue funding the management of the woodlot. It was believed that community leaders and members would become aware of these hidden agendas and not support the process

5.3. Resources at stake for each party

Community leaders and user groups – woodlot: 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 (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Number of people who purchased poles from Manubi woodlot, April-March 2000,



In total 190 people purchased poles over a period of one year. Figure 1. reveals that during the months May and June the highest number of people purchased poles. The graph also reveals that the majority of poles are being purchased on a subsistence level as very few individuals purchased large quantities of poles. Villagers' ability to harvest larger qualities 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.

Figure 2: Number of poles purchased and income generated from Manubi woodlot, April-March 2000

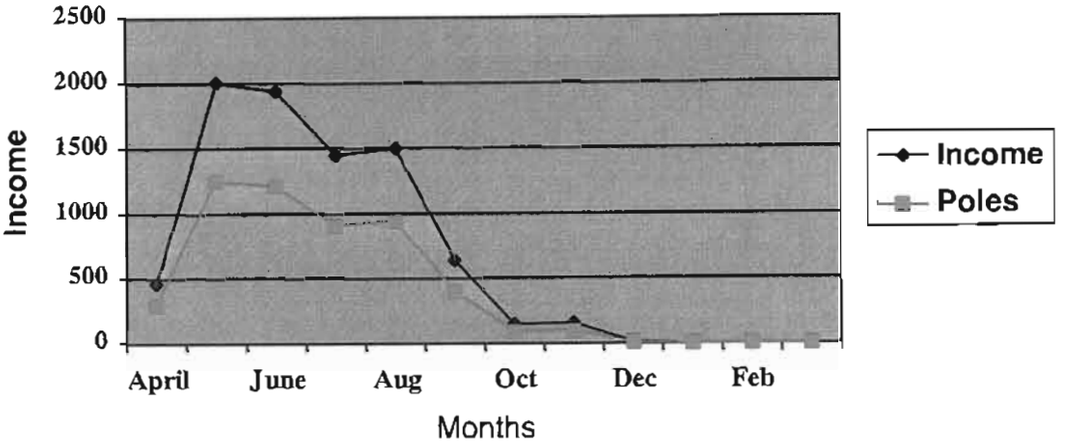


Figure 2. reveals that the majority of these purchases had been made in the months of May (R2 004) and June (R1 938). In total the woodlot generated R8 295 for the year. Figure 2 also clearly reveals that between January and March no poles had been purchased, this is because of the heavy rains, which 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.

Box 7. Potential costs for communities to bear through the devolution process.

Currently poles can be bought at R1,60 per pole and per truckload. If the devolution process where to occur the cost of harvesting trees for poles could be considerably higher as community structures will 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.

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. According to Mr. Nkonjizwa a sneeze wood (*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 to this 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 harvesting from the indigenous forest as no clear mechanisms are in place to discourage this. Currently if offenders are caught the guards are obliged to report the incident 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.

The following institutional constraints have also been identified: The local headmen are not in a position to affect 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's ability to process the cases was non-existent. 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 no gun policy. This, they believed, had resulted in the increase in illegal operations beyond their control.

Local headmen and community members confirmed these proponents, 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.

5.5. Strategies used to pursue intentions

Community user groups: Superiority of indigenous species: The reported superiority of the indigenous species and lack of appropriate management procedures is resulting in community members harvesting extensively from the indigenous forest.

Entrepreneurs: 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.

Community leadership: Un-cooperative: Implementation of regulations. Supportive of devolution: They want control and employment.

DWAF: Control: Try to implement regulations on the use of indigenous species.

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. Community tensions – Within the woodlot no clear boundaries exist between the villages to determine which villages qualify as primary beneficiaries in the devolution process.
2. Increased tensions and 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 8. 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 in the two areas. It is difficult for both local and outside small-scale entrepreneurs to operate viable businesses under these conditions because of the expensive outlay on their vehicles.
2. Insufficient local demand /markets. Markets for the poles do exist in the neighbouring larger centres.
3. The current tree species selected are not appropriate for the woodlots. The *Eucalyptus* (gum) species are considered to be unsuitable as fuel wood as they cause chest problems if used on a regular basis. *Acacia* (wattle) species are considered to be more appropriate for fuel. Entrepreneurs in the sawmill industry consider the *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.

National level - DWAF:

1. The lack of a clear policy regarding the devolution process and the lack of faith DWAF officials have in the devolution process. It was felt by the local DWAF officials that the regional authorities in the Dept. 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.
2. History of non-recognition of community rights to indigenous forests and attempts to exclude them from using forests by DWAF. This is changing due to the new Forest Act.
3. Constraints on retrenching DWAF staff may present devolution and opt for Joint Management initiatives.

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.

Joint Management initiatives

DWAF needs to get agreement on management policies and accommodate needs of various groups. Once objectives are agreed on 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.

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.

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

Local users:

1) Under utilisation[2] of woodlot and destruction of indigenous forests.
2) No employment opportunities or say in management of forests.
3) Greater potential and possibilities exist under JOINT MANAGEMENT initiative for the surrounding communities, as they will have increased access to the resources that they require. In addition, JOINT MANAGEMENT initiatives will provide community structures a greater involvement in the decision-making processes around the management of the indigenous forest.

5.9. Short term outcome for resources

Unsustainable harvesting of indigenous resources: The demand for indigenous species and lack of access to the protected indigenous forest is believed to be having an impact on forest conservancies in the area. Currently the forest conservancies' fall under the management of DWAF but no regulations are being enforced. The forest conservancies are often located along the rivers and streams and the local headman stated that the over-harvesting of these resources is impacting negatively because it is affecting the filtering systems of the water in the area.

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.

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.

5.10. Facilitating mechanisms

The study clearly reveals that there are significant problems with current management and significant barriers to the devolution process, which have been outlined in section 5.6. above.

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

It is therefore proposed that the Dept. should consider the possibility of joint forest management initiatives that integrate the woodlot and the indigenous forests. These partnerships should be formed between surrounding communities and the Department. The New Forest Act promotes an enabling legislation for this. Recent DWAF staff workshops were held to bring staff on board with the new policies.

New planting programs aimed at growing the most appropriate woodlot species to: meet local needs for fuel wood and building material and meet entrepreneurial needs for high value timber.

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Manubi woodlot is considered a valuable resource to the villagers. Currently it is only meeting a portion of subsistence needs at a household level. Household members are harvesting fuel wood and poles for building purposes. The species *Eucalyptus grandis* and *Eucalyptus cloeziana* are however considered inappropriate by community members and hence indigenous species are favoured which are harvested from the indigenous forest and surrounding conservancies.

Very few local residents or entrepreneurs from the surrounding towns utilize the woodlot extensively for commercial purposes. This is largely because of the poor condition of the roads. Entrepreneurs from neighbouring towns prefer to utilize more accessible woodlots such as those located at Centani. Last year a family living near the woodlot operated a small pole treatment plant at Manubi. They operated the plant for about a year and they were forced to close it down because of the bad road conditions.

The commercial viability of the Manubi woodlot appears to be low despite the high yields generated from it. This is because of the poor condition of the roads and surrounding community member's lack of access to capital to make use of the opportunity. Local entrepreneurs under present conditions of heavily subsidized tree prices have not been able to generate profit and are unlikely to do so once devolution occurs as the price of the trees is likely to increase 3-5 times more.

The resources from the woodlot do not meet the full needs of the community. This is comparable to Evan's finding in the Masakona community (1998). The indigenous forests were perceived as having much higher value than the woodlots and are an important source of income for a number of households engaged in the medicinal plant trade. Consequently conflict exists between the communities and DWAF employees over access to these resources.

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.

The Joint Management proposal is therefore strongly supported in this instance. The devolution of the woodlot would not provide income-generating opportunities for surrounding community members or communities. Instead of providing such opportunities it could lead to additional financial costs to the 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 latter issue is of paramount importance that the Department engages in feasibility studies to ensure that the devolution of the woodlot does not result in additional financial cost to surrounding impoverished communities.

Furthermore the capacity of local community structures appears to be poor as seen from the failure of past experiences of community-based initiatives in the area. This has led to the women having no faith in the community structures' ability to effectively manage such initiatives. It appears that despite the men's support of the devolution process they are more motivated by the possibility of obtaining employment then 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.

The Department proposes the devolution appears to be proposing the devolution process for a number of contradictory reasons, including the downsizing of the department; promoting the conservation of indigenous forests and providing communities recognised entitlements to resources and income generating opportunities. The major driving force however appears to be the downsizing of the Department which could add additional burdens on already weak community leadership structures and threaten conservation objectives.

Whichever option is pursued by the Department it is strongly recommended that the Departmental staff undergo appropriate training to work with, and build capacity of, community structures effectively. Community leaders identified this as being very important.

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Investigation into Private Sector/Community Forestry Projects in the Eastern Cape:

Longweni Woodlot Case Study

Prepared for – Environmental Science Department, Rhodes University

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June 2000

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Project context

The Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF) has recently initiated the Woodlot Devolution Project. The aim of the project is too hand over ownership, control and management of woodlots to communities with established rights to the land on which they are planted.

The brief given to the authors was to draw up a situational analysis of Longweni woodlot to determine how far the devolution process had proceeded, identify the main role players in the various partnerships and what factors determine these relationships. 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).

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 a 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).

In the Eastern Cape there are 120 woodlots, covering approximately 12 000ha, that are owned and managed by DWAF. It is currently DWAF's intention to hand over the ownership, control and management of viable woodlots to communities that demonstrate a willingness to take on this responsibility. The National Forest Act (NFA)(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 Department has classified woodlots 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

Those woodlots that are linked to adjacent indigenous forests have been classified as either primary conservation areas (PCAs) or conservation areas (CA's), these will be 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 utilisation 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).

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

Box 1. The envisaged steps in the devolution process.

According to Mr Magongana, Chief Forester East Griqualand, the devolution process is envisaged to include the following steps:

The devolution team (2 consultants and 8 foresters) will investigate:
History of the community;
Land ownership in consultation with the Department of Land Affairs (DLA) and
Commercial feasibility.
Once these factors have been determined the devolution team will inform all relevant stakeholders (Community members, Community leadership structures & and local government) of the devolution process.
If agreement of the process is accepted a task team is elected to draw up a constitution for all relevant stakeholders.
Once all the stakeholders have accepted the constitution a committee comprising of all stakeholders will be elected.
The committee then will decide whether they will form a CPA or a trust.
The committee together with the task team will design a business plan.
The community must accept the plan before the devolvement of the woodlot takes place.

2. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF LONGWENI WOODLOT

Longweni woodlot is situated in the Bizana region and covers approximately 74ha and was established in 1929. In comparison to the Manubi woodlot the Longweni woodlot consists of both *Acacia* (wattle) and *Eucalyptus* (gum) species. The woodlot also surrounds the indigenous forest and is encircled by three villages, Kwazulu, Sidozingana and eKusitheleni. The communities of Kwazulu and Sidozingana are situated very close to the woodlot whereas eKusitheleni is situated further away. It appears that one of the communities is claiming sole ownership over the woodlot and within another community there is internal conflict over ownership of the woodlot. The leadership structures involve four 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, 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 addition to woodlot and pockets of indigenous forest in the area one also finds small patches of wattle trees being cultivated around homesteads. These patches are utilized by homestead on regular bases as a source of fuelwood. These patches are maintained by the homestead and have not become invasive in the area. These patches are in close proximity to the homestead and consequently save women considerable amount of time in harvesting fuelwood for the household.

The villages are marked by poverty and very few opportunities exist for employment. Consequently households in the area are heavily reliant on their surrounding environment for resources. The resources utilised include those from the woodlot and the indigenous forest. Those households which do not have access to their own patch of fuelwood utilise the woodlot for firewood and building materials. Community members are required to obtain permission and pay for both firewood and poles harvested. Strong preference was given to the wattle species because they were 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 it caused. They prefer indigenous timber 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 (last up to 20 years).

A number of households are involved in medicinal plants 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 to urban markets. 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. Currently the Department only has the capacity to employ one forest guard to patrol the entire area to prohibit harvesting.

They however felt that considerably more staff were needed to ensure that illegal harvesting of resources did not occur.
Mr Magongana reported that entrepreneurs from outside the communities came to the woodlot and purchased trees. The poles are transported by tractors and sold to villages in the lower lying regions where there are no woodlots.

Transport from Longweni is even more problematic than at Manubi woodlot because currently no road actually goes to the woodlot thus hindering commercial utilisation of the woodlot. Consequently the woodlot is under utilised, as is the case at Manubi woodlot, a number of sections have passed the optimum clear-felling stage.

In the Bizana area there are a number of private entrepreneurs running small-scale timber enterprises. It appears that these industries were heavily subsided by the DWAF in the past. In the past DWAF also promised to issue contracts and financial assistance to private businesses to fell and processes poles but these were never realised. This has resulted in businesses struggling to access loans from the bank to purchase reliable vehicles and equipment. This is impacting negatively on the smaller industries in the area as they are struggling to compete with the larger companies.

Under the previous dispensation there were five sawmill industries in Bizana region managed by white and coloured entrepreneurs and now there are only two. These entrepreneurs have relocated to Mt Ayliff, Mt Fere 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 in the area because of the long growing season and the high maintenance cost incurred for pruning and thinning. Gum and wattle species were not considered appropriate for the saw mining industry, only for the processing of poles. The latter type of business was perceived as being considerably less profitable by local entrepreneurs.

Since 1996 three black and one coloured entrepreneurs have opened 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 to the Manubi woodlot. Longweni woodlot is located in the Bizana region. In this region there are significantly more timber-related industries in existence as there are many more entrepreneurs running small sawmill industries and enterprises selling treated poles. According to DWAF sources these enterprises are predominantly operated by middlemen who purchase trees at a significantly low price because of the subsided price of the trees, between R2- R5. A tree is 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 profit margins because of their lack of capital to enter into the trade. Surrounding community members are not even benefiting from causal employment as the middlemen bring their own labourers to harvest the tree from the woodlots.

It is the Department's hope that the devolution process will 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 were the trees could be sold in the area (Harrison pers. com).

The possibilities 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

The surrounding villages have not 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.

- Longweni forest: the regional manager of woodlots (Mr Magangana),
- 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.

The pole sales records kept by the forewoman at Longweni were consulted 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 who form these relationships 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 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 1) to maintain their current employment status, 2) to implement NFAP and 3) 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 was established on their land. Their main objective 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 Dept. 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 the profit margins that they are accustomed too.

5.2. Nature of the various relationships

➢ *In relation to the indigenous forest*: Strong issues of contention have existed between DWAF officials and community members over access to the indigenous forest. Forest guards have been patrolling the indigenous forest to inhibit 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. In addition, they believe that since the forests (woodlot and indigenous) are on their land, they are entitled to use these resources. This is likely to change due to the new NFA and recent DWAF staff workshops.

➢ *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.

The men felt unhappy that the community leaders have to deal with many problems that occur at the woodlot such as punishing illegal harvesters and assisting with putting out fires in the woodlot despite the fact that no local people are employed at the woodlot. Only minor complaints were voiced about being charged to harvest timber since the woodlots were situated on community land.

➢ *Conflict of interests between the various role players:*
DWAF as a governmental institution is obliged to plant tree species which meet the following criteria: 1) fast growing; 2) have low maintenance costs and 3) tree species which do not pose a threat to the surrounding environment such as invasive species. Consequently gum species have predominately been selected. however these do not met the needs of all the role players. Local residents require tree species that are a good source of fuel wood and are durable as building material. However they also seek employment. Pine species require high maintenance and consequently offer employment opportunities. Entrepreneurs require tree species for the production of poles (Gum) and timber (Pine). Nevertheless the woodlot remains under utilized and the indigenous forest continues to be harvested for the better quality construction and fuel wood.

5.3. Resources at stake for each party

➢ *Community leaders and user groups – woodlot:* The woodlot is perceived as being valuable by the community members and leaders 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[1]. 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 (see Fig. 1). The poor road conditions to the woodlot during this period have had an adverse affect on the business. Figure 2 shows the fluctuations in sales/utilisation of the woodlot for

[1] Preliminarily statistics reveal that Longweni generates R81 p/ha whereas Manubi only woodlot generates R42 p/ha.

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.

➢ *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 badly and cause chest problems if used regularly. This contributes to under-utilisation of the woodlot. The level of under utilization at Longweni is considerably less than at Manubi.

➢ *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 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 the report that both 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.

➢ *Change in species selected for woodlot*: In the past pine (*Pinus*) species were planted in the Longweni woodlot. These species were sough after by the small scale saw mill enterprises in the area because of their good timber properties. The Dept. 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 mining 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*: 1) The superiority of indigenous species: 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:* 1) Poor condition of the roads: 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. 2) Lack of appropriate timber species: 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 is still available.

➢ *Community leadership:* 1) Uncooperative: Implementation of regulations. 2) Supportive of devolution: They want control and employment.

➢ *DWAF:* 1) Past policies to maintain control and implement regulations on the use of indigenous forest. The NFA has however 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 - With the woodlot now in place, boundary disputes between the villages exist. The issues of determining which villages qualify as primary beneficiaries in the devolution process.

Increased conflict between community leaders and members - the utilisation of the wood lot for subsistence versus commercial purposes.

Gender differences at community level could lead to increased conflict within communities.

Political tensions - between tribal authorities and SANCO members.

History of failure of government-community projects.

Community will have to carry costs of maintaining woodlots - Lack of capacity and resources.

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 then be given full ownership and managerial responsibilities.

Provincial level:

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.

➢ *Outcomes of Joint management*: Greater potential and possibilities exist under Joint Management initiative for the surrounding communities, as they will have increased access to the resources that they require. In addition, Joint Management initiatives will provide community structures a greater involvement in the decision-making processes around the management of the indigenous forest.

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. Facilitating mechanisms

The study clearly reveals that there are significant problems with current management and significant barriers to the devolution process, which have been outlined in section 5.6. above.

It is therefore proposed that the Dept. should reconsider devolution and rather focus attention on development of Joint Forest Management initiatives that integrate the woodlot and the indigenous forests. These partnerships should be formed between surrounding communities and the Department. The NFA goes a long way to enabling such moves. Recent DWAF staff workshops were held bringing staff on board with the new policy.

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.

6. CONCLUSION

From the interviews held with the various stakeholders it appears that the Longweni woodlot is considered to be a valuable resource. Currently it is only meeting a portion of subsistence need at household level. Household members are harvesting fuel wood and poles for building purposes. The gum trees are however considered inappropriate by community members and hence indigenous species are favoured which are harvested from the indigenous forest

Very few entrepreneurs from the surrounding towns utilise the woodlot for commercial purposes. This is largely because of the poor condition of the roads and the distance to the

main town centres. Entrepreneurs from neighbouring towns prefer to utilise more accessible woodlots such as those located at Kokstad.

The commercial viability of the Longweni woodlot is seen as high by the DWAF because it is in a timber zone. The possibilities 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 is despite poor condition of the roads, which makes it difficult for surrounding community members to access.

The resources from the woodlot do not meet the full needs of the community. This is comparable to Evan's finding in the Masakona community (1998). The indigenous forests were perceived as having much higher value than the woodlots and source of income for households engaged in the medicinal plant trade.

The Joint Management proposal is therefore strongly supported in this instance. The devolution of the woodlot would not provide income-generating opportunities for surrounding community members or communities. Instead of providing such opportunities it could lead to additional financial costs to the 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.

It is of paramount importance that the Department engages in feasibility studies to ensure that the devolution of the woodlot does not result in additional financial cost to surrounding impoverished communities.

Furthermore the capacity of local community structures appears to be poor as seen from the failure of past experiences of community-based initiatives in the area. This has led to the women having no faith in the community structures' ability to effectively manage such initiatives. It appears that despite the men's support of the devolution process they are more motivated by the possibility of obtaining employment then 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.

The Department appears to be proposing the devolution process for a number of reasons, including the downsizing of the department; promoting the conservation of indigenous forests and providing communities recognised entitlements to resources and income generating opportunities. The major driving force however appears to be the downsizing of the Department which could add additional burdens on already weak community leadership structures. It could also threaten conservation objectives.

Whichever option is pursued by the Department it is strongly recommended that the Departmental staff undergo appropriate training to work with, and build capacity of, community structures effectively. Community leaders identified this as being very important.

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APPENDIX 1: CONTACT DETAILS

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Mr Magongana, Chief Forester East Griqualand, Kodstad - 039 7273620.

APPENDIX 2: DATA FOR GRAPHS

Table 1: Data for utilisation for poles

Month	Wattle	Gum
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: Data for utilisation for firewood

Month	Wattle
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	Lathes bundles
April	Nil
May	Nil
June	Nil
July	Nil
Aug	6
Sept	1
Oct	Nil
Nov	17
Dec	Nil
Jan	Nil
Feb	4