

Protected Areas as Economic Drivers for Rural Communities

A Case Study of Somkhanda Game Reserve, a Community Owned Protected Area in South Africa

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The Rural Economy

As demands for goods and services increase with human populations, so too does the pressure on resources and cash requirements

Subsistence



Cash Based



Land Reform in South Africa

Land restitution, land tenure reform and land redistribution

Government aiming to transfer 30% of current agricultural land back to black communities

- Includes game reserves and prime wildlife habitat

Little success due to lack of follow-up support and extension service.



**rural development
& land reform**

Department:
Rural Development and Land Reform
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Traditional
Structures



Legal
Structures

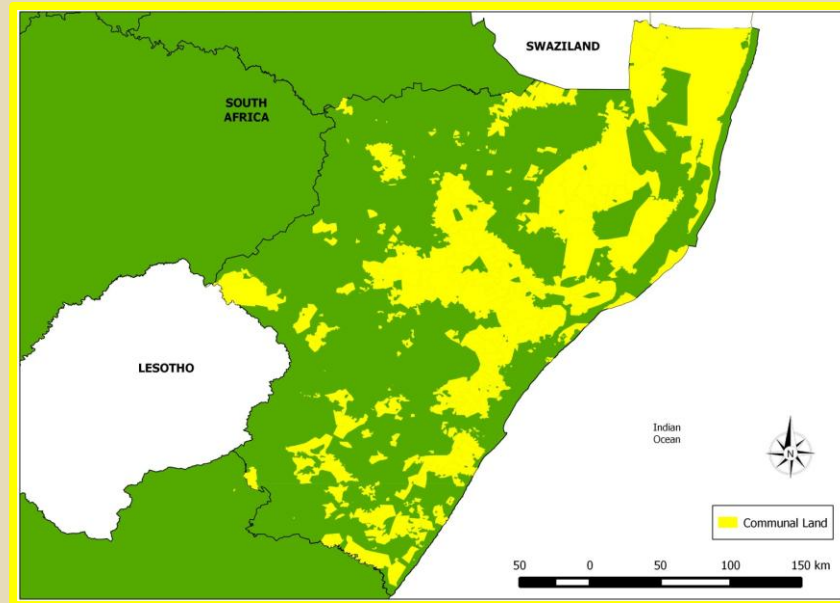


**Traditional
Authorities**



**Community Trusts,
Community Property
Association**

KwaZulu-Natal



- Large proportion of land in KZN communally owned and undergoing land reform
- History of lack of land tenure and open access
- Many communities located in rural areas with few economic opportunities
- History of conservation in areas follows ‘fines and fences’ approach with criminalisation of traditional livelihood activities

Community Ownership

- Large numbers of people
 - Decisions and transactions slow due to numbers
- Lack of experience and knowledge in wildlife and tourism enterprise
- Need strong platforms on which to carry out business
 - Need strong leadership



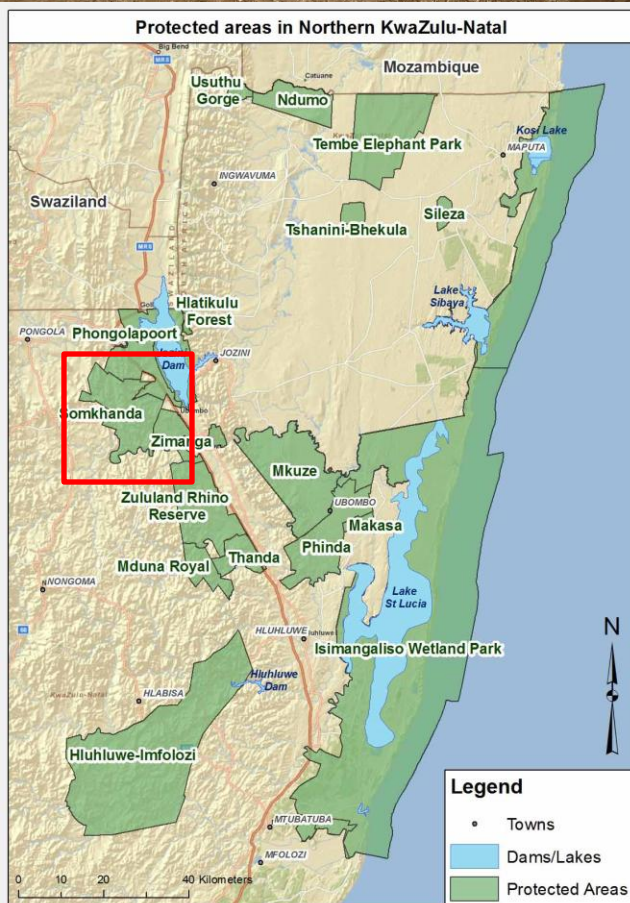
Business development requires knowledge, experience and specific strengths, all the things which communities are lacking.

Huge need for support and this is the space where Wildlands Conservation Trust is working.



Somkhanda Game Reserve

- Claimed by Gumbi Traditional Authority and registered under **Emvokweni Community Trust** (2004)
- 675 listed beneficiaries, not all members of traditional community
- Approximately 2600 households
- Approximately 12 000 hectares
- Proclaimed as a Nature Reserve through the Biodiversity Stewardship programme
- Aims to provide economic activity to rural area
- Strong interdependence between community and the reserve – local economy dependant on the production of the land.



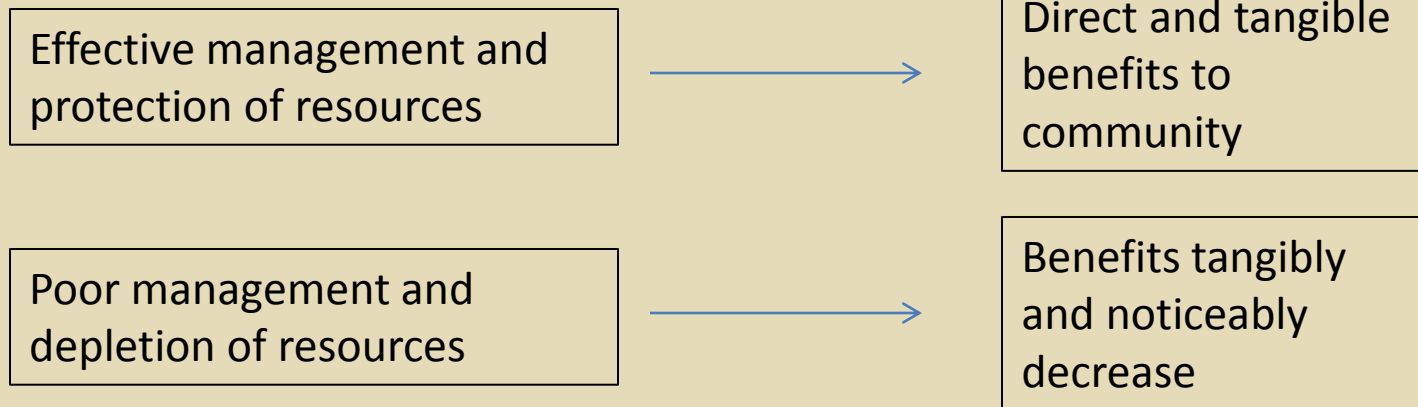
Status Quo of PA

- Managed in partnership with Wildlands Conservation Trust
 - Provide stable platform
 - Mentoring and training
 - Capital investment
 - Establishment of business ventures
 - Funding model to allow business development and growth



Economic Opportunities

Incentivise the users of natural resources to manage them by ensuring that the costs and benefits are internalised.



Economic Opportunities



Tourism

- Different business models
- Science on Safari (niche market)
- Community engagement
- Further opportunity to develop and train individuals



Hunting

- Reintroduction of high value species (Buffalo, Kudu)
- Allowing additional businesses (abattoir, venison and meat for community)
- Additional boost for tourism accomm



Game Sales

- High value species selling into South African wildlife industry (Nyala, Buffalo)



Wildlife Monitoring

- Full time monitoring team (feed information to management team)
- Populations creates tourism attraction



Other

- Resource harvesting (thatch and river sand)
- School and adult environmental education camps (exposure to wildlife and environment)



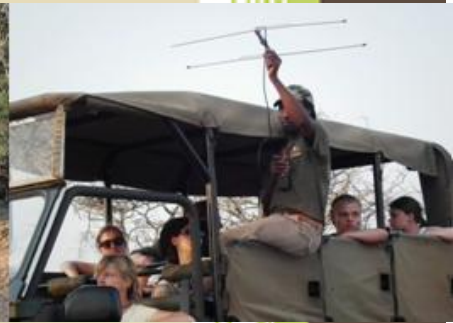
Somkhanda Tourism



- High tourism potential for reserve
 - Populations of threatened species;
 - Beautiful scenery and vegetation;
 - Freedom to utilise all elements of the reserve for number of activities;
 - Local culture and history of Somkhanda added attraction which can be explained by owners of the land;
 - Potential to employ and train large numbers of local community members.

Tourism Development

- Tourism industry is complex
 - Not just about product but also requires ability to market and administer bookings
- Partnership with tourism specialist
 - Develop product for niche market (focus on reserve strengths)
 - Training and mentorship of new tourism staff
 - Marketing of products
 - Booking and communication channel for clients



Tourism products



- Kudu Bush Camp



- Student Camp



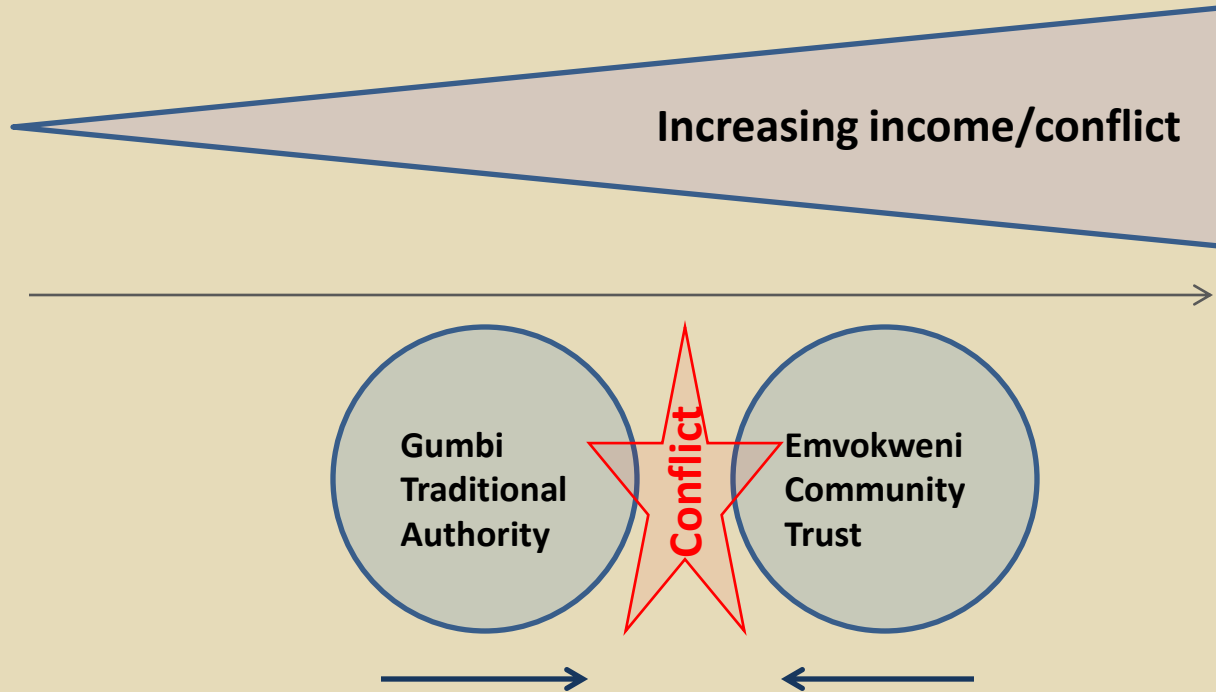
- Mobile Safaris (not exclusively operating in Somkhanda) and
- Walking Safaris – linked up to Mobile Safari Camp

Tourism and Economic Extension

- **Science on Safari**
 - Tourism activities developed to allow visitors to experience conservation and contribute
 - Information provided to management of reserve, while providing hands on, relevant experience for visitors
- **Community programmes to provide direct benefits to community members and create positive link between reserve and community**
 - Cattle Dipping project
 - Community Home stays



Challenges



Conflicts:

- Governance structures within community tested
- Who holds the power (decision making and expenditure of funds)
- Lack of strong leadership creates indecision
- Channels for income flow lacking



Outcomes

- Wealth capture
- Poor communication
- Information withheld



- Lack of 'buy in' from the general population
- Lack of ownership of the reserve
Decentralisation reverts to recentralised committee type structures
- Sustainability a problem
- Community members receive no benefits through formal process, therefore use their own methods to obtain benefits
 - Poaching of game and uncontrolled burning (side effect on threatened spp)
 - Uncontrolled harvesting of resources
 - Removal of reserve infrastructure
 - Herding of livestock onto reserve to use resources

What is required



- Improved governance within existing structures
 - Moving from extractive to inclusive and participatory governance
 - Increasing accountability of the leadership and management
- Training leaders in business management and leadership
- Training of community members in conservation - expectations
- Improved communication
 - Implementing monitoring system and participatory governance

Conclusion

Wildlife Economy:

- Huge potential for wildlife to provide the economic activity
- Capacitates leadership to effectively manage and develop community
- Strengthens voice of community within government to push for service delivery
- Allows platform for capacity building within community



'Wildlife ranching allows economic sustainability with a powerful green footprint'

Gert Dry (Vice President: Wildlife Ranching of South Africa)

Thank you

