

**Synergies between biodiversity conservation and sustainable rural development
of adjacent communities: a case study of the Tsitsikamma National Park**

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SUMMARY

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa promotes participatory, cooperative governance and environmental conservation. This constitutional directive is enhanced into the National Environmental Management Act and other conservation laws. These legal requirements for active community participation in natural resources management, including benefit sharing are sufficiently captured in the SANParks' policy and strategy for the management of national parks. The aim of this study is to detect whether SANParks is committed to implement this noble policy and strategy in the Tsitsikamma National Park to simultaneously achieve biodiversity conservation and socio-economic development. This was accomplished by conducting personal observations, interviews and by informal interactions with four communities in the vicinity of the park. A workshop with community leaders, interviews with park officials and assessment of the park's official records and reports also contributed useful information. Accordingly, the views of the local communities were assessed on three major themes: local community support to the conservation mandate of the Tsitsikamma National Park; the depth of community participation in the management of the park; and the community views for improving relationships with the park.

First, it was found that the respondents' ethnic groups, area of birth and their language proved to be the best socio-economic indicators of their support to the park's conservation mandate. The respondents who are native to the area and coloured were the most negative towards the park's no-fishing policy. Second, the respondents' area of birth, main sources of income, levels of education, employers and their age proved to be the best predictors of their responses to benefit sharing with the park. The same socio-economic characteristics influenced their views of active involvement in the management of the park. Few respondents reported having benefited from the park. The majority of respondents felt that they were inadequately represented on the park management. Third, black community members in Tsitsikamma were more willing to forsake fishing on provision of alternatives, while the coloured community members would need more than alternative benefits. All the respondents with tertiary educational qualifications maintained that communities would desist from their desires to fish if the communities were involved in decision-making in the management of the park. Finally, the study concludes that there are weak synergies between biodiversity conservation and sustainable rural development in the Tsitsikamma region.

OPSOMMING

Die Grondwet van die Republiek van Suid-Afrika bevorder deelnemende, koöperatiewe regeringsbestuur en omgewingsbewaring. Dié grondwetlike voorskrif word verder ondersteun deur die Wet op Nasionale Omgewingsbestuur and ander omgewingswetgewing. Hierdie wetlike vereistes vir aktiewe gemeenskapsdeelname in natuurlike hulpbronbestuur, insluitende die deel in voordele, is bevredigend bevat in SANParke se beleid en strategieë vir die bestuur van nasionale parke. Die doel van die studie is om te bepaal of SANParke verbind is tot die implementering van die edele beleid en strategieë in die Tsitsikamma Nasionale Park om gelyktydig die bewaring van biodiversiteit en sosio-ekonomiese ontwikkeling te bewerkstellig. Die doel is bereik deur persoonlike observasies te maak, onderhoude te voer en informele interaksies met vier gemeenskappe in die omliggende area rondom die park. 'n Werkswinkel met gemeenskapsleiers, onderhoude met park personeel en die assessering van die park se amptelike dokumente en verslae het ook nuttige inligting verskaf. Gevolglik is die plaaslike gemeenskappe se opinie oor drie hooftemas bepaal: plaaslike gemeenskapsondersteuning vir die Tsitsikamma Nasionale Park se bewaringsmandaat; die mate van gemeenskapsdeelname in die bestuur van die park en die gemeenskappe se voorstelle vir die verbetering van hul verhouding met die park.

Eerstens is daar bevind dat die respondente se etniese groepe, plek van geboorte en hul taal die beste sosio-ekonomiese indikatore is van hul ondersteuning vir die park se bewaringsmandaat. Die bruin respondente wat inboorlinge van die area is, was die negatiefste teenoor die park se 'geen-visvang' beleid. Tweedens, is daar bevind dat die respondente se plek van geboorte, hoofbronne van inkomste, vlakke van opleiding, werkgewers en hul ouderdom die beste sosio-ekonomiese voorspellers is van hul response teenoor die deel van voordele met die park. Dieselfde sosio-ekonomiese eienskappe het hul siening van aktiewe deelname in die bestuur van die park beïnvloed. Min respondente het aangedui dat hul voordeel trek uit die park. Die meerderheid respondente het gevoel dat hul onbevredigend verteenwoordig word op die betsuur van die park. Derdens, was die swart gemeenskapslede meer gewillig om op te hou visvang as alternatiewe voordele voorsien word, terwyl die bruin gemeenskapslede meer as alternatiewe voordele vereis. Al die respondente met tersiêre opleiding kwalifiseer het aangedui dat die gemeenskappe hulle daarvan sal weerhou om vis te vang as die gemeenskappe betrek word by besluitneming in die bestuur van die park. Laastens bevind die studie dat daar swak sinergieë bestaan tussen biodiversiteitsbewaring en volhoubare landelike-ontwikkeling in die Tsitsikamma gebied.

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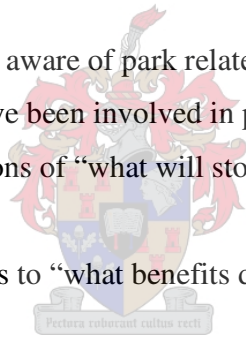
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