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Paula Morrison

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Paula Morrison

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This research is dedicated to my late mother who nurtured in me a passion for exploring new frontiers

I have completed this research journey with the support and encouragement of many friends. I wish to thank;

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1. (A situational analysis of the Natal Parks Board's Community Conservation Programme in the Zululand Region (March 1997).) = Appendix 2 of 1.
- 2.1. Research Proposal for: A report on the planning process of the development of an Environmental Education Centre at Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park, KwaZulu-Natal (February 1998).
- 3.2. Analysing Social Science Research Traditions (September 1998).
- 4.3. A report on: The planning and development of the Mambeni Environmental Education Centre in Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park, KwaZulu-Natal (July 1999).
- 5.4. A Changing Conservation Landscape: Conservation management discourses in/on Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa (January 2000).

A report on :

**The planning and development of the
Mambeni Environmental Education Centre
in Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park
KwaZulu-Natal**

Paula Morrison
KwaZulu-Natal Nature Conservation Service
Tel: (035) 5500569
e-mail: paulam@futurenet.com.za

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is the culmination of a six year process during which emerged the need to establish a meeting or *indaba* place for the collaborative 'People and Parks' partnership of the KwaZulu-Natal Nature Conservation Service (NCS) in Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park (HUP) and stake-holder communities adjacent to the Park.

Comprising two parts which compliment each other, the report has been developed to inform, guide and advise the NCS in the planning and development of an education centre in Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park.

Part I documents the processes of engagement and interaction between the NCS in HUP and neighbouring communities during this period, which led to the need for an education centre, whilst placing and contextualizing the process within historical, socio-political and organisational processes. This is taken further with a description of the research process and an analytical narrative of four key programmes. Part I concludes with a summary of the outcomes of the planning process which shows how through local community input and participation, and through networking with other EE practitioners, a conceptual development plan for the Mambeni Education Centre emerged.

The second part of this report (Part 2) is the conceptual development plan which has emerged out of the processes described in Part 1. This plan constitutes practical guidelines for the NCS on how to develop and manage the Mambeni Education Centre. More specifically the plan provides ideas about: what type of centre it should be and where it should be located; who the stake-holders are, their educational needs and ideas for possible programmes; the physical and logistical requirements; management and staffing structures and a detailed business plan.

The report intends to draw the reader into understanding the complex social and environmental issues that the collaborative partnership of 'People and Parks' are engaging with, so that the Mambeni Environmental Education Centre can play a [more] meaningful and responsive role in contributing to processes of social transformation.

In sharing this environmental education re(search) story which represents a unique approach to centre development, it is hoped that the notion of environmental education centres might be viewed by environmental educators through a different set of lenses. Through having the participants' views represented, I wish the report to reflect the richness of the research process.

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PART 1

THE PLANNING PROCESS

1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research background

In September 1992, the former Natal Parks Board (NPB) adopted a Policy on Neighbour Relations, thereby formalising and giving effect to an extensive and far-reaching programme of engagement with communities, particularly those neighbouring protected areas (Sandwith, 1998). In 1996 the programme was reviewed and evaluated and become known as the Community Conservation Programme. Sandwith (1998:2) describes the Community Conservation Programme as *"..... a process of community engagement and co-definition of the opportunities, values and beneficiaries of nature conservation as a public good"*.

In support of this process, a successful application was made for an amount of R 350 000, by the Community Conservation (Zululand) team to the provincial government, towards the funding of an Environmental Education Centre (hereafter known as the 'Centre') in Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park (HUP). This application was the culmination of a six year-long process of engagement, between the conservation organisation and neighbouring communities to HUP, during which emerged a need for a meeting or *indaba* place in the Park where people could come together to interact, learn and engage in environmental education (EE) processes.

Part 1 of this report aims to document the processes of engagement and interaction between the KwaZulu-Natal Nature Conservation Service (NCS) in HUP and its neighbours during this period, whilst foregrounding and contextualizing this process within historical, socio-political and organisational processes. In an analysis of the process, I will be showing how the key aspects of the development plan (Part 2) emerged. Using analytical narrative, I discuss the key aspects of the process and 'unpack' and look at:

- ◆ How the conceptualization of the Centre came about
- ◆ Why this particular type of centre and ideas for programmes were selected
- ◆ What and who influenced the final management structure

This process and the reporting of this research reveals a unique approach to EE Centre development in South Africa (see 3.7).

The initial plans for the Centre were drawn up for a proposed site at Siwasempila, in Umfolozi Game Reserve over-looking the Nselweni peninsula. This site was later rejected, as research by the author (for an assignment whilst doing the National Goldfields EE course) revealed that the site was inappropriate for a number of reasons.

Parallel, although independent to this process, was the development of a proposal from the Planning Division of the NPB to develop the 'Game Capture Centenary Centre' at Mambeni

Gate in the Umfolozi section of HUP. The Centenary Centre was to comprise a game capture complex, a curio and tea-room outlet for the local Machibini community and an Exhibition Hall and Auditorium for visitors. It was decided later to consolidate these developments and place the proposed EE centre within walking distance of the Centenary Centre and the Mambeni entrance gate into HUP.

As Co-ordinator of the Community Conservation (CC) team for the Zululand Region, it has been my task to 'champion' this process. This has included the need to develop the conceptual development plan (Part 2) which will inform and advise the way forward for the newly established KwaZulu-Natal Nature Conservation Service (The Natal Parks Board and the KwaZulu Department of Nature Conservation amalgamated into one organisation on the 1 April 1998).

1.2 Report aims

The aims for Part 1 of this report are;

- ◆ To 'report on' the processes around the development/planning of the concept for the Centre, and tell the story of evolving EE processes in and around HUP (thereby outlining and contributing towards the shaping of ideas for programmes that could be offered). Part 1 of the report focuses on processes that culminated in the need for developing the centre, and in doing so covers the following dimensions:
 - the contextual background and history
 - the research analysis
 - the detailed results
 - the conclusion

The aims for Part 2 of the report are:

- ◆ To develop a 'conceptual development' plan for the proposed Mambeni Education Centre in HUP which is intended to guide, inform and advise the NCS through achieving the following objectives:
 - Develop a framework in which to clarify EE processes (this is undertaken as a position paper in Appendix 1)
 - Identify stake-holders and establish their respective educational needs/concerns
 - Make recommendations which can inform/shape programmes
 - Develop a plan for the physical buildings, logistics and supporting management-structures
 - Develop a business management plan
 - Make recommendations as to how the Centre will function

2: INTRODUCING THE RESEARCHER & THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research as 'Insider'

I began this research as an 'insider' to the various participatory social processes taking place around Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park (Malone, 1995). Other participants in this process included my colleagues in HUP, the sub-regional tribal authority and political leadership, teachers and pupils from local schools, community-based tourism groups, *iziNyanga* (traditional healers) and various EE networking organisations.

My current role in the NCS is to co-ordinate the Community Conservation Programme for the Zululand Region. I am also a fourth-generation Zululander, having grown up in the Mtubatuba area, speaking the Zulu language and understanding Zulu culture. This has given me an *entrée* as 'insider' to many social interactions in the community. I often (with the rest of the Community Conservation team) have the invidious task of wearing 'two hats' at 'People and Parks'¹ meetings, and on many occasions I am the bridge that provides a communication platform towards better understanding for 'People and Parks' interaction. I have a keen interest in issues that affect women, and I am known both within the organisation, and in the community, as an activist for feminist issues.

Critics would say that this gives me a rather subjective role, as my 'position' as an insider, and my own experiences and interests, would influence my research position. I argue that being an 'insider' researcher, understanding and knowing the multiple contexts, and having my professional and personal life blurred, places me in a catalyst position as researcher to contribute towards [more] meaningful social change.

This approach is not without its limitations. Sometimes I struggled, in Malone's words (1995:9) to find a "*compromise between becoming too involved or too detached*". However I was acutely aware that my subjectivity should not cloud my ability to critically reflect on the emerging data.

2.2 The research approach

This report has been undertaken as a qualitative case-study. According to Stenhouse (in Smith 1998:2) "*a case-study involves the collection and recording of data about a case or cases, and the preparation of a reportof the case*". It is hoped that through presenting this report as a case-study the data will:

¹ The term 'Parks and People' has been used throughout the report in reference to the developing processes of partnership building between the management of HUP and neighbouring communities to the Park.

- Be in a more "*publicly accessible form than other kinds of research report*" (Cohen & Manion 1991:150)
- Provide a step towards developing an education centre
- Through representing the viewpoint of participants will be [more] embedded in social reality (Cohen & Manion, 1991). This case-study whilst being about the development of an EE Centre, is located within the larger case-study of the interactions between 'People and Parks' in the context of HUP.

A qualitative case study involves the study of a 'bounded system' which emphasises the unity and wholeness of that system (Smith, 1998). While this case-study looks at the processes involved in a particular system (that of an EE Centre) what became evident as this process evolved was the complexity of the situation. In this way the boundaries were not always clear and certain. What did become obvious was the complexity of the multiple-contexts. According to Smith (1998:2) "*a holistic case study calls for an examination of these complexities*".

Within the clarifying process of my research I examined some of the key contexts and their complexities. These include the historical, socio-political, economic and organisational contexts. I endeavoured to reveal some of these complexities so that the reader can come to a better understanding of how history, contexts and social processes have shaped the present CC Programme which in turn has contributed towards the emerging need for an EE Centre.

2.3 The research paradigm

In looking at the actual processes which have taken place over six years it is difficult to identify the dominant paradigm, although the CC process is informed by socially critical theory as it seeks to be transformative and is critical of current social practices (Fien, 1993).

The CC Programme has leaned towards an Action Research and Community Problem-Solving (ARCPS) approach which has a socially critical orientation. According to Wals *et al* (1990:13) ARCPS as an approach to environmental education is defined as "*the process that enables students and teachers to participate more fully in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of educational activities aimed at resolving an environmental issue that the learners have identified*". Simply speaking we (People and Parks) would meet, engage in, explore and talk around environmental issues/problems; discuss appropriate responses and plans, implement and act on upon plans and then evaluate. This is a cyclical process which continually evolves into new cycles of

interaction. In this way there has been a participative 'de-construction and re-construction' of knowledge which has contributed to new ways of knowing and learning through problem-solving (See Appendix 1).

This approach is not without its drawbacks as it tends to be a drawn-out process with delayed action, with participants sometimes becoming frustrated at the slow pace of response.

The report and research that went into the report is based on interpretive orientations (Cantrell, 1993). As insider to the research, I have acknowledged my subjectivity in interpreting my understanding of 'the world around me', and have endeavoured to make this understanding accessible to those who participated in generating this research data (Cohen & Manion, 1991). According to Cohen and Manion (1991:38) "*the central endeavour to the interpretive paradigm is to understand the subjective world of human experience*".

2.4 The research process

Whilst the formal process of research on this report began for me during early 1997, I had already been a participant since 1993 in a range of EE processes whilst developing partnerships between 'People and Parks' through the CC Programme.

The CC Programme, according to Sandwith (1998:3) is primarily about:

working with people to ensure that the opportunities and values/benefits of nature conservation can be harnessed by all communities, within a framework of environmentally, socially and economically self-sustaining community-based natural resource management.

For the purpose of researching this report, I have drawn on data that has evolved out of the CC processes. In addition, from early 1997 after selecting the development of this report as my research 'topic' for a Masters in Education, I began to focus more on the collection of data that was specific to the developing of a conceptual development plan for the Centre. Data was collected from interactions with stakeholders in the community, the Planning and Education Division of the NCS, and the appointed architects and other interested parties (which included the Wildlife and Environment Society of Southern Africa, and the Wilderness Leadership School). In addition I visited seven EE centres and collected information on the physical buildings and resources, interviewed the centre co-ordinators/staff and investigated what programmes were being undertaken. I also

interviewed and collected documentation from a number of people associated with centres.

Most programmes were school-centred, with very few catering for adults, and I developed the impression [perhaps incorrectly] that in quite a few cases the programmes were an afterthought to the actual building of the centres. This was supported by personal communication with Van Harmelen (1998). In discussion with Nangu (1997) she said that [at that time] courses offered at the Golden Gate National Park EE Centre did not respond to local environmental issues and were primarily for children from privileged city schools.

As a participant observer (Cohen & Manion, 1991) I employed a range of research techniques. These included:

- ▶ Participating in and recording a number of meetings with stakeholders (who are identified later in the summary of the outcomes of the planning process and in the conceptual development plan). This included being the developer of a strategic plan for the 'People and Parks' process
- ▶ Holding workshops with focus groups (see Appendix 3 - minutes of stakeholder workshop)
- ▶ Document analysis and literature reviews (Cohen & Manion, 1991; Cantrell, 1993)
- ▶ Open-ended interviews with a range of stake-holders (Cohen & Manion, 1991)
- ▶ Field visits to seven EE centres
- ▶ Field visits to the proposed Mambeni EE Centre site in HUP

Through using a range of different research techniques I was able to make use of 'triangulation' (the use of more than one data collection technique)(Cohen & Manion, 1991), to corroborate the data collected and, to develop a more inclusive and rich understanding of participants' views and ideas. Through including others views, this report will be representative of a collaborative initiative to develop and inform an EE centre development.

2.5 Reflecting on the research process and emerging research headings

In reflecting on the research process and in trying to make sense of it, I found it useful to group the data thematically into five main headings. These were the background and contexts; the rationale; the analysis of the process; clarification of the concept of EE; and data relating to the practical aspects of informing/developing an EE Centre.

This thematic grouping helped in providing a particular focus to my thinking which contributed to shaping the final plan. However, I found that information relating to the

clarification of the concept of EE had become peripheral to the process [although not irrelevant] and I have included this in the form of a 'position paper' (See Appendix 1). I also decided to separate and consolidate the 'product' of the process as a conceptual development plan in Part 2. Whilst this should facilitate quick and easy accessibility for my colleagues in the NCS, and for community stakeholders, it is, however, only 'part' of the whole plan and should not be viewed in isolation from the contextual processes which are described in Part 1.

What I found most difficult in writing this report was the exclusion of data. I had collected much rich information, but to write a 'crisp and clean report' which would be both accessible and useful to my colleagues, I have had to selectively choose the 'voices' that have collaborated in producing this report. I have compromised by including the ideas of the key respondents throughout the report.

This report of the process attempts to analyse the key dimensions within the conceptual development plan and how these emerged and developed, so that the notion of EE centres might be viewed differently by environmental educators. It is therefore, hoped that environmental issues and problems in which the collaborative partnership are engaging will be [more] meaningfully viewed and deconstructed.

3 MULTIPLE CONTEXTS

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I briefly introduce the context of the NCS and locate the CC Programmes within that context. I will also define the case-study area through a socio-political and economic analysis and I will place the social processes in a historical context. I have included 'stories' of the four key programmes which have had the most influence on the CC Programme and which created the [greatest] need for the Centre. They are: the Local Board for Protected Area Programme, the Hluhluwe Nursery 'Greening' Programme, the Community-Based Tourism Programme, and the Schools-Based Programme.

3.2 The KwaZulu-Natal Nature Conservation Service

The KwaZulu-Natal Nature Conservation Service is a para-statal organisation responsible for the conservation of the indigenous biodiversity in the province of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa, and being a member of the World Conservation Union (IUCN), subscribes to the principles of the World Conservation Strategy.

The proposed new vision and mission of the NCS are:

the long term conservation of the indigenous biodiversity of KwaZulu-Natal in such a manner that the people of KwaZulu-Natal and of South Africa will benefit and share in the diversity, economic value and opportunities for spiritual well-being and recreation which it offers (KZNNCS Mission 1998:1).

and:

To ensure that the national heritage of the parks, wildlife, land and seascapes within KwaZulu-Natal are sensitively protected as a source of spiritual and physical sustenance for all its peoples" (KZNNCS Mission 1998:2).

3.3 A Community Conservation Programme within the NCS

The HUP CC Programme strategic plan takes the vision and mission statement a step further by endeavouring to integrate the Park into the sub-regional social landscape. This is articulated in the HUP strategic plan as follows:

The primary vision of the Community Conservation Programme in HUP is:

To contribute to the Mission of the Board through developing processes and protocols for engagement with community stake-holders and to foster the value of nature conservation to society, within a framework of sustainable co-management of natural resources, including maintaining the integrity of Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park and to promote and integrate Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park into the social, economic, cultural, political and biophysical systems at landscape level

(KZNNCS, 1997:4).

The Community Conservation function has become an integral part of the NCS at mission, policy and management level, with CC activities being undertaken by staff at all levels, and extending far beyond the context of protected area neighbours (Sandwith, 1998).

To achieve its mission, the NCS has through collaborative and participatory processes, established policies and strategic plans which guide and inform both staff and stakeholders.

At a provincial level these include:

- The KwaZulu-Natal Nature Conservation Service Community Conservation Programmes policy and strategy
- The KwaZulu-Natal Nature Conservation Service policy for Community Conservation Areas.
- Establishment of Local Boards: Guidelines

At a sub-regional level these include:

- The Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park user rights policy
- The Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park conceptual development plan
- The Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park stock and crop losses policy
- The Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park Community Conservation strategic plan.

In addition, to facilitate co-ordination of the extensive CC Programme, the NCS has established six CC Regional teams', each managed by a regional co-ordinator. The CC Programme is a shared function which is undertaken by all staff who work in and around protected areas and conservation districts.

As I will illustrate in this report, the proposed EE Centre at Mambeni in HUP represents a particularly interesting and dynamic move in the NCS's Community Conservation Programme to achieve the principles of biodiversity conservation as prescribed by the IUCN, the Mission of the NCS, the Principles and Policies of the NCS's CC Programme, and the HUP strategic plan.

3.4 The case-study area defined

In order to understand the historical situation and the processes that followed, it is necessary to present a brief situational analysis which provides a backdrop to the rationale for the Centre.

3.4.1 Location

Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park (See Appendix 4), the oldest formally proclaimed protected area in Africa, is located in the uThungulu Regional Council area and is surrounded by the magisterial districts of Hlabisa, Mahlabatini, Ntonjaneni, Lower Umfolozi and Nongoma.

Towns located in this area are Mtubatuba, Kwa-Msane, and Hluhluwe, to the east; Hlabisa and Ulundi on the west, and Empangeni in the south. Neighbouring HUP are ten Tribal Authority wards, namely Mdletsheni, Mpembeni, Hlabisa, Zungu, Mandlakazi, Mlaba, Obuka, Mthethwa, Somopo and Mpukonyoni.

3.4.2 Political context

The political structures of these rural communities constitute three spheres of government:

- The Transitional Local Councils (TLC) which have jurisdiction over towns
- The Sub-Regional Councils who represent political parties in the rural areas

- The hereditary leadership of the *amaKhosi* (chiefs) and their appointed *iziNduna* (sub-chiefs).

According to the Association for Rural Advancement (AFRA 1990:3) "*traditional chiefs are salaried agents of the provincial government which has a certain political agenda and they are no longer independent representatives of the people*". Furthermore according to AFRA "*local rural people are subjected [therefore] to an undemocratic and often corrupt form of governance*". Other concerns include the non-representation of women in leadership and decision making processes (Morrison, 1997), and the increasing political intolerance which has led to acts of violence.

Land tenureship in these rural areas is almost entirely vested with the Tribal Authorities through the Ngonyama Trust² with land being communally held and used by all those that live on it.

The 1991 census for these magisterial districts recorded a total population of 739 372 people, with an urban population increase of 4.48% per annum and a rural population increase of 1.76% per annum (Münster & Sandwith 1998). With these increased levels of population growth, the pressure on land is being accelerated.

3.4.3 Socio-economic context

Of the region's population, only 13.21 % are economically active, with an unemployment rate of 26% (Münster & Sandwith, 1998). The major providers of direct job opportunities are the NCS in HUP (720 people) and the Zululand Anthracite Colliery (1200 people), which borders the Park on the south-west.

The dominant land-use is agriculture and its output and productivity differ sharply between the former KwaZulu homeland areas and the extensive monoculture practised by farmers in the former Natal (ZAI, 1994). In the former KwaZulu homeland areas, livestock ranching and subsistence crop production is prevalent (Münster & Sandwith, 1998). Many of these subsistence farmers were formally tenant farmers who have relocated to this area after having been forcibly removed from white-owned commercial farms in Northern KwaZulu-Natal (Hlabisa 1995 pers. comm).

To the east and south-west of the Park, areas are densely settled, and the natural resource

² The Ngonyama Trust was established in 1994 to include all Tribal Trust lands under the 'ownership' of the Zulu monarch.

base has become over-used and over-grazed. This has resulted in a degraded biophysical environment with; large areas of erosion, silted rivers and polluted water, which in turn affect the quality of life of rural communities.

More often than not households are reliant on income derived from migrant labour (ZAI, 1994), with bread-winners working in the industrial areas of Richards Bay, Durban and Johannesburg. As a result many women are left to fend as best they can for their families. Workers residing in these areas comprise mostly of small scale subsistence farmers, government employees (teachers, police officers, health-workers) and small business owners (of taxi's, spaza shops ³ and tourism-related business). A large number of people have relocated their families to the western areas of HUP to escape faction fighting in the Tugela Ferry area (Mchunu pers. comm, 1997), and in the areas close to Okhukho and Mahlabatini, some families have continued feuding on a sporadic basis.

An analysis of this situation reveals that what we have here is an environment at risk. According to Beck (1992:4) physical risks are *"always created and effected in social systems...and the magnitude of the risk is therefore a direct function of the quality of social relationships and processes"*. We, the 'People and Parks' partnerships, have endeavoured to respond to these risks, and it is this risk situation which has contributed to the shaping of the present CC Programme and which has provided the rationale for the need for the Centre.

3.5 A brief overview of the historical context

Social programmes and policies cannot be viewed in isolation. They are shaped and constructed by history, the socio-political contexts, and by the different ideologies and philosophies that people in power hold (O'Donoghue, 1997 & Popkewitz, 1991).

The current CC Programme of the NCS has been shaped by, and developed out of 50 years of 'conservation' practice and people interactions/tensions in the province of KwaZulu-Natal (O'Donoghue, 1997).

This historical section is given to illuminate the location of the CC programmes and projects within, and as a part of, the emerging HUP CC Policy. This section will show how this process led to the emerging idea of an EE Centre.

Early EE interactions around HUP were dominated by law enforcement, and the priority of

³ Small informal shops which sell a range of food-stuffs and commodities

the preservationists of that time was to *".....take such steps as will ensure the security and preservation thereof and of the animal and vegetable life therein, in a natural state"* (Ordinance 35 of 1947 Natal in Geddes Page, 1987:1).

During the 1960's, EE in Umfolozi game reserve came to be seen as experiential learning excursions which, together with 'show and tell' teaching methods, were to provide visitors with real-life encounters. Later on these programmes expanded to include the African Conservation Education Project (A.C.E.) for local biology teachers, the African Chiefs Training Programme (A.C.T.) and the Trails Programme at Umfolozi Game Reserve, which provided the public with opportunities for trails into a designated Wilderness Area (Morrison, 1995).

During the early 1990's there was a growing realization that the existing policies and the Board's management style in relation to its neighbours needed critical reflection (NPB Neighbour Relations Policy, 1992). Through a series of participatory workshops involving NPB staff and interested stakeholders, a Neighbour Relations Policy (NRP) and supporting strategic plan was developed.

One sees, therefore, that it was only in the 1990's that problem solving partnership approaches emerged within a coherent, although diverse, EE programme *"which centred on activities to establish forums, engage with stakeholders, deliver benefits and foster economic opportunities"* (Sandwith, 1998:2).

3.6 Relationships begin to shape policy and action plans

After the implementation of the NRP in 1992, EE became the shared responsibility of Management and EE practitioners, and the policy included for the first time "the notion of community development" (Morrison, 1995). Park management believed that the first step to implementing the NRP should be to develop relationships with their neighbours, and this was accomplished through providing opportunities for 'social upliftment' through facilitation of community development projects. Needs assessments in the form of Participatory Rural Appraisals (PRA) were undertaken with key communities, and donor funding was raised to fund priority needs (building of schools, crèches, clinics, sanitation and water schemes).

At the same time the NPB began developing collaborative partnerships with Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO's) as it was felt that the organisation had neither the capacity nor the skills to adequately implement development projects. A milestone was achieved with the appointment of a Community Development Officer (CDO) for the Zululand Region who was trained and funded by the Rural Foundation. Whilst the

Community Conservation team were responsible for the establishment of various development committees, the CDO became responsible for formalising and training the various committees with whom the NPB were interacting with.

What ensued was a frenetic period of action, as the CC team (of which I was a member) extended its relationship building beyond the development projects to include many grass-roots organisations and committees in the CC Programme. In our haste and over-zealousness we were trying to become 'all things to all people'.

Whilst many of the projects were fairly mediocre, the process of engagement with neighbours resulted in a number of key events happening. Neighbouring communities and especially political and tribal leadership began to voice their concern and frustration at being excluded from the decision-making and management processes of HUP, and the management of HUP began to realize that they had a very superficial knowledge of the every-day struggles and environmental issues that impacted upon and affected neighbouring communities. As a result, the idea of an HUP leaders' and *amaKhosi* forum (Local Board for Protected Area) was proposed, and HUP management and local leadership began meeting on a three-monthly basis to discuss issues of common concern, and to resolve Park/Neighbour conflicts.

For the first time in HUP's history, neighbouring communities now had a 'voice' with which to influence the management and policies of the Park.

In early 1995 it became obvious to both HUP management and neighbours that we had outgrown the usefulness of the Neighbour Relations Policy. Consequently the CC team and HUP management initiated an evaluative process of the programmes in and around HUP. This later evolved and grew into an organisational move to review "*the nature and scale of community conservation activities in the Board*" (Sandwith 1998:1). As a result a number of workshops were undertaken at Provincial level with all staff involved in the Community Conservation Programme, to evaluate and plan a way forward. This resulted in a draft policy and strategic plan for CC in the NCS.

Running parallel to this provincial process, HUP management and local leadership from the ten *amaKhosi* areas neighbouring the Park were meeting on a regular basis, using the NPB draft policy as a framework to develop a strategic plan for the 'People and Parks' partnership. It was clear from the workshops that issues of politics (determining the various forums and their terms of reference) and economics (developing community-based tourism opportunities) were of the greatest concern to the political stakeholder leadership. Interest groups (which mostly comprised women) cited development issues such as the

lack of schools, clinics, and water and depletion of natural resources. Many of the stakeholders (especially traditional healers and teachers) expressed their concern for the degrading biophysical environment and asked that the NCS assist them to 'formally' conserve community areas of conservation, historical and cultural significance.

Participants to the workshops reviewed and modified existing programmes, and added to the plan numerous aspects which were pertinent to local environmental issues. As a result, a discussion document (the HUP CC strategic plan) emerged which was then workshopped with various stakeholders at grass-roots level.

The HUP CC strategic plan includes the following key statement and supporting functions:

The KwaZulu-Natal Nature Conservation Service undertakes to:

Define the value of nature conservation to society with all stake-holders, within a framework of developing partnerships in communities throughout the Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park area, and to maintain Community Conservation services in the NCS by performing the following functions:

- (i) To build trust , co-operation, and partnerships between the NCS and its neighbours and visitors and to develop co-management structures at various levels with neighbouring and other stake-holder communities.
- (ii) To facilitate and promote community development in order to promote sustainable living and an improved quality of life.
- (iii) To promote and support the sustainable use of natural resources within and around HUP.
- (iv) To promote the integration of HUP into the social, economic, cultural, political, and biophysical systems at landscape level.
- (v) To develop partnership projects based on Nature Conservation principles and ethics.
- (vi) To engage in Biodiversity Education processes which foster nature conservation value amongst protected area visitors, neighbours, schools, communities and other interest groups.
- (vii) To maximise and enhance the visitor experience to Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park through developing and sourcing interpretive and educational resources.
- (ix) Maximise and develop capacity/skills of NCS staff so that they can perform and contribute to the Community Conservation function"

(KZNNCS, 1998:4)

The strategic plan, which is open to constant review, has evolved out of a participatory

process and aims to serve as a guideline to planning, practising, evaluating and improving Community Conservation practice in and around HUP.

3.7 Stories about four key programmes

As a result of this cyclical strategic planning process a wide variety of programmes have emerged. The following analytical narrative tells the story of four key programmes and how the stake-holders in the programmes articulated their 'need' for a meeting place.

3.7.1 Local Board for Protected Area Programme

For the past four years there has been in place in HUP an interim 'Local Board for Protected Area' (LBPA). The LBPA comprised: *amaKhosi* and their *iziNduna*; political leadership consisting of the regional councillors and standing committees, and other interested parties which included businessmen and interest groups. During the past year the idea of LBPA's has been extended to other conservation areas and in 1998, legislation was passed in KZN enabling and determining the terms of reference of these Boards. The proposed Board membership for HUP will be extended to also include organisations nominated by various stake-holder and user-groups to the Park. It is envisaged that user-groups such as local tour operators and bird-clubs, environmental groups such as WESSA and the Zululand Environmental Alliance (ZEAL), and representatives of local Departments of Agriculture and Education will be represented.

The initial meetings with the present LBPA were fraught with tension and conflict as both partners jostled to find their position on the power gradient. HUP management guarded their authority jealously, and local leaders were aggressive [and sometimes impatient] with their demands. It has taken a long process of interaction to understand and respect each other, with the result that both partners have learnt to compromise and work towards integrating the HUP into the local social and political environment. The current LBPA has participated in, and contributed to, the management and decision-making processes of HUP through their contributions at local management and CC meetings. They have also been active partners in developing the HUP CC strategic plan, the 'Animal and crop loss policy' and the 'User-rights' Policy.

One of the most important aspects of this developing relationship is the call from the LBPA for an 'educative' process for local leaders and Park managers. Suggestions include a programme which will provide opportunities for workshops on conservation management, project management, and conflict resolution. However, there is a need for a suitable venue. At present the small conference centre at Hilltop camp is sometimes utilized when it is not

being used by paying conference groups. This venue has proved unsuitable as it is too small (only accommodates 40 people), it does not have sufficient facilities (for seating and catering), there are no overnight facilities for large groups, and participants from the community have difficulty in accessing public transport to this venue.

3.7.2 The Hluhluwe Nursery 'Greening' Programme

The Hluhluwe Nursery 'Greening' Programme is a particularly interesting one for the NCS, for what started out as a traditional healers' project has evolved into a programme which includes schools, organic vegetable gardeners and those merely interested in growing indigenous and ornamental plants for re-sale.

For more than twenty years neighbouring communities to HUP have utilized plant (thatch, reeds, hay, *ncema*⁴ and wood) and animal resources (meat and animal by-products) from the Park. Five years ago traditional healers (*iziNyanga*) requested that the then Natal Parks Board allow them to harvest *muthi* (medicinal) plants in HUP. In addition *iziNyanga* asked that sales of animal by-products from HUP be made available only to *iziNyanga* Associations, and not to individual healers.

Through this interaction with the *iziNyanga* Associations, and through research done on various biomes in the neighbouring community, HUP management came to realize that there was a threat of over-utilization of *muthi* plants in the adjacent communities. Consequently, in discussions with the various *iziNyanga* Associations, the management of HUP initiated a pilot project aimed at conserving and promoting the sustainable use of indigenous medicinal plants in three affected communities neighbouring Hluhluwe Game Reserve. Funding was obtained from the Provincial Government and the project commenced in July 1995 as a partnership between the former NPB and communities from the Mpembeni, Mdletsheni and Mpukonyoni Tribal Authorities. As it was felt by the partners that the project had regional importance to the conservation of biodiversity, it was decided to establish a steering committee consisting of regional stake-holders to advise and assist the Project Co-ordinator.

In addition to the *iziNyanga* Association and Park management representatives, the steering committee includes staff of the Silver Glen nursery (Durban Parks Department), the Institute of Natural Resources (INR) and the Biodiversity Section of the NCS.

A number of workshops using Participatory Learning Activities (PLA) were held with the

⁴ *Ncema* is a reed (*Juncus kraussii*) which is favoured by Zulu women in making traditional mats

stake-holders during which their needs and expectations were debated. A decision was taken to start the project with four *iziNyanga* who had shown prior initiative in establishing *muthi* gardens and, to establish three growers' interest groups from amongst the *iziNyanga*. The project was supported by a part-time horticulturist based at a small 'parent' nursery at Hilltop Camp in Hluhluwe Game Reserve.

A vital part of the project has been the educational and networking aspect. Members from the interest groups and the nursery co-manager have participated in numerous courses, undertaken field trips to other medicinal gardens and projects, and hosted many visiting traditional healers and EE groups.

More recently, the *iziNyanga* decided that the project should focus on developing individual *muthi* gardens as the two communal gardens had not been entirely successful. In addition other interest groups began to show interest and consequently the programme was extended to become a more inclusive 'Greening' Programme which represents the needs and interests of a broader section of the neighbouring community. These interest groups included two schools which have become involved in 'greening' their school environment and are using locally owned *muthi* gardens for educational purposes, organic garden groups who require technical expertise with the propagation and growing of vegetables and fruit trees, and entrepreneurs who are growing indigenous plants to sell to tourists.

As the Greening Programme has expanded to include more participants, the project partners have raised concern over the future of the Hilltop Camp parent nursery which has supported both the educational and horticultural needs of the user-groups. Some of these concerns include the fact that there is insufficient water and space at Hilltop Camp to extend the nursery, thereby making it financially viable. In addition the nursery, whilst located on the Mpindisweni fence-line, is not easily accessible to neighbouring communities or to HUP visitors and there is no overnight accommodation for workshop/course participants.

As a result project partners have requested that the infrastructure be moved to a more easily accessible, secure area which has sufficient water and space, and overnight accommodation. This need would be best accommodated at the proposed Mambeni Environmental Education Centre.

3.7.3 Community-Based Tourism Programme

In the HUP context, most community-based tourism initiatives have grown out of the Community Development Programme. Early projects such as the Vulamehlo and Vukuzame

curio markets were developed with the rationale that the HUP should contribute towards improving the 'quality of life' of neighbouring communities through providing entrepreneurial opportunities. Linked to this rationale was the notion that the integrity⁵ of HUP would remain intact if the NCS could justify that communities were benefiting from the Park [and conservation].

Despite these dubious beginnings the Community-Based Tourism (CBT) Programme has for the most part involved a participatory and empowering process with various community stake-holders driving the programme in partnership with HUP management. For the past three years encouraged by local (uThungulu Regional Council standing committee on tourism) and provincial government (KZN Tourism) and the Lebombo Spatial Development Initiative (SDI), communities neighbouring HUP have developed a number of small CBT projects based on eco-tourism opportunities. These include a curio outlet at Memorial Gate, a community-based field guiding programme, a community Bed and Breakfast, a cultural dance programme for tourists and a cultural 'village' experience at one of the homesteads. It also includes the proposed establishment of a Community Conservation Area (CCA) at Mpembeni Tribal Authority area.

However, a number of problems have emerged from this particular programme, not the least being that CBT is being touted as the only 'sustainable' development option for the region (Koch, undated). This is being done to the exclusion of other options which could lead to a narrowing of relationships that people have with their environments. In addition the economic rationality driving this form of development [and conservation] actually minimises options rather than broadening the possibilities for living 'sustainably' (Janse van Rensburg, 1998).

Through networking with my fellow M.Ed students and EE practitioners at Rhodes University and through my research, I began to reflect more critically on these aspects of CBT. As a result, my colleagues and I came to realize that [unwittingly] we might be contributing to these 'narrowing' of options. We began to draw into the CBT workshops discussions/dialogue in which we could de-construct some of the myths around CBT and develop a more critical understanding of the notion of 'sustainable development' (Bak, 1995). As a result participants (mostly publicity and tourism associations) asked that we extend the workshops to the broader community and include traditional leadership. Whilst we have been able to undertake workshops of this nature in one of the Tribal Authority areas, for the most part other neighbouring communities have very few venues where workshops can be held.

⁵ In this case 'integrity' applies to the current land management use, that of nature conservation

Consequently CBT stake-holders have asked HUP management to facilitate a venue in HUP which will be accessible to the majority of CBT interest groups.

3.7.4 The Schools-Based Programme

The HUP Community Conservation team has for six years been interacting with a number of schools which are located close to HUP in the Hlabisa magisterial district. At the onset of the programme field staff visited schools to give presentations and show wildlife videos. This 'Education about the Environment', which emphasised interaction between natural systems and social systems (Fien, 1993), expanded later to include 'education through the environment'. Teachers and pupils were brought on day and overnight excursions into the Park to add "*reality, relevance and practical experience to learning*" (Fien, 1993:15).

In the past few years the school-based programme has broadened to include the needs of teachers as expressed by them. These needs include support for curriculum-based programmes and Outcomes Based Education (OBE), and community-based problem-solving. Some of the ways in which this has been supported has been through undertaking teacher workshops in which teachers are introduced to a variety of educational and networking resources, assisting schools in implementing a 'Schools Environmental Policy'⁶ and providing educational opportunities in the Park which can support the school curriculum.

Although recent trends in the HUP EE Programme have been away from education 'in' and 'about' the environment, to community-problem solving, teachers and learners felt that the Park, as a vital educational resource, should be made available to support the school curriculum. Teachers also requested that Park management make available a 'meeting' place for educational workshops, an EE resource library and overnight accommodation for teachers and learners participating in field visits. To support these ideas and activities, schools have organised themselves into 'clusters' of six schools, with a teacher from each school representing the aims/concerns of the EE programmes of their respective school. In addition, teachers from the cluster groups and the CC team have made a successful application to the uThungulu regional council for funding of a schools programme which would be 'Centre' based.

⁶ A resource pack to guide and support the development and implementation of school environmental policies has been developed by a group of environmental educators in KZN in partnership with the KZN Department of Education, the Sharenet resource development network and the Gold Fields Environmental Education Centre at Rhodes University. The pack contains resources designed to support teachers and learners when engaging in school-based EE activities (Lotz, le Roux and O'Donoghue, 1998).

3.7.5 Conclusion

Through the telling of these four 'stories' I have tried to interpret [critically] how, why and with whom the NCS developed key partnerships and how through the developing relationship the partners came to see the need for a permanent meeting or *indaba* place. Whilst educational needs were diverse, there was a need for a place in which people can get together and share, learn, and act on environmental issues, have access to EE networks and resources, develop and acquire practical skills, and participate in workshops and field-days in a secure and supportive environment. In Zulu culture this 'type' of meeting place would be likened to the *indlu yangenhla* (grandmothers house) in a traditional homestead, where all the extended family, both men, women and children come together to tell stories and have conversation. It is hoped that the Mambeni Education Centre will [further] support the EE family of the People and Parks partnership through encouraging 'sustainable conversation' about conservation (le Roux, 1997).

4: SUMMARY OF THE OUTCOMES OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

4.1 Introduction

The historical analysis of this report revealed the particular processes that led to the need for a centre. This section tells how that process was shaped and developed into a conceptual development plan. In doing this I will be looking at the conceptualization of the centre, the type of centre, the location of the centre, ideas for centre programmes, management and administration structures, and a business plan. This section is essentially a summary of the outcomes of the planning process which is presented as Part 2.

4.2 The conceptualization of the centre

The conceptualization of the Centre is uniquely different to how most other EE centres in South Africa are developed (Van Harmelen pers.comm,1999). The idea for the Centre emerged from a long process of engagement with various stakeholders to HUP during which both stake-holders and the NCS realized, and articulated, the need for a meeting place which could enhance and provide opportunities for good EE practice, through supporting the current CC Programme of HUP. It is through this engagement with stake-holders that the general *modus operandi* was developed (See Part 2, 2).

The second important aspect of this conceptualization is that a relationship with key partners in the programme has already been established. This has given the NCS the opportunity to develop a concept plan for the Mambeni Education Centre in consultation

with HUP partners and interest groups.

4.3 Type of Centre, logistics and physical structure of the Centre

As neither I, my colleagues, nor our community partners have experience in the development or management of education centres, we initiated a workshop in which various stake-holder and interest groups came together and discussed their needs and ideas (see Appendix 3). In addition, I visited and undertook research on some existing centres (in respect of the logistics, physical structure and management). In the conceptual development plan I have drawn much on the workshop minutes, data (discussions and drawings) gathered from field visits to these centres, and on discussions with EE centre managers. The data gathered gave me good ideas to take forward and raised concern about issues/aspects in Centres which needed to be avoided/improved.

Table 1: EE Centres visited and respective staff interacted with:

Name of Centre/where located	Person/s interacted with	Responsibility of person/s
Thomas Baines Nature Reserve (Eastern Cape)	Ingrid Schudel	Centre Co-ordinator
Golden Gate National Park (Free State)	Mvuso Nangu	Centre Co-ordinator
Pilanesberg National Park (Northern Province)	Joyce Chalale Moses Thebe Mack Magodiello	Extension Officer Education Officer Co-ordinator Tertiary Education Programme
Umgeni Valley Nature Reserve (KwaZulu-Natal)	Tim Wright	Regional Manager, WESSA, KZN
Ndumo Community Resource Centre (KwaZulu-Natal)	Anton Makhabela	Former Centre Co-ordinator
Twin Streams EE Centre (KwaZulu-Natal)	Jonathan Wrigley	Centre Co-ordinator
Treasure Beach EE Centre (KwaZulu-Natal)	George Friedel	Former Centre Co-ordinator

I also had the opportunity of discussing the development and management of centres with fellow EE practitioners who are involved in managing other Centres. They include Nick Shaw, centre manager for the Drakensberg Wetland Park and Roger Gaisford of the Eshowe EE Centre. Nick Shaw assisted me in drawing up the initial 'conceptual plan' for the Mambeni EE Centre (I have included these ideas in the conceptual development plan) and he undertook field visits to the-proposed site in Umfolozi Game Reserve in order to advise on the project.

Most of the EE centres I visited were built when funding from both government and NGO's was more easily available. Physical buildings were generally large and well resourced, with the exception of Twin Streams (a relatively small centre which has been built [very adequately] on a small budget). What was quite noticeable was the deterioration of buildings and equipment of some centres, especially those built with government funding. This led me to realize the importance of ensuring that a business plan for the Centre be developed which will provide for maintenance and upkeep through sound fiscal control.

Some other aspects I learnt from my study of the centres included observations that buildings need to be sturdy and as maintenance-free as possible (Shaw pers. comm, 1997) that we should start 'small' and let the buildings grow with the programme (Shaw pers. Comm, 1997) and we need to carefully plan the 'connections' and through-flow between various units (especially the working/dining area and the kitchen)(Chalale and Nangu pers comm, 1998).

Local Zulu-speaking teachers were adamant that sleeping accommodation for males and females should be separate and placed quite a distance apart and that provision should be made for a teacher to sleep 'in' with each group. They also asked that ablution facilities should be accessed from within the sleeping accommodation so that learners would not have to venture outside at night.

In addition, through discussions with van Harmelen (1997) and Robottom (1998) I came to realize that although some centres (particularly those run by WESSA) had very active recycling programmes, most of the centres I had visited had not been designed and built using 'alternative' uses of power, fuel and energy. Neither had much attention been paid to designing infrastructure that supported 'sustainable living practices'. In response to this realization, and drawing on the Conceptual Development Plan for HUP, I have made recommendations in the Development Plan (see Part 2, 5.3) for measures which will support 'sustainable living practices'. In addition, recommendations regarding the physical structure and logistics which emerged from my research have been taken up with the architects and with the Planning Division to be used as a framework for the draft architectural plan.

4.4 Location of the Centre

Up until the end of 1998 the process of selecting a site for the Centre has been beset with top-down management decisions, with the proposed location of the site having changed five times. The first four sites were selected by Park managers and various persons from the technical and planning division who had little experience in environmental education or community conservation.

These sites were eventually discounted for a variety of reasons. These included: too great a distance from the entrance gate; aesthetically unpleasing area; steep slopes which would have made building costs prohibitive; west-facing and hot site; too few trees and lack of potable water. The fourth site was declared unsuitable by the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The final site was selected by staff representing both HUP management and the CC team using as selection criteria and guidelines, the information and data gathered from my many interactions and workshop sessions with our 'People and Parks' partners and others involved in EE Centres (See Part 2, 5.1).

In selecting the site we took into account the need expressed by teachers and local leaders, and by Pilanesberg EE staff (Chalale and Thebe, pers. comm, 1998) that the Centre be located close to the boundary-fence and gate entrance for easy access by foot and public transport. Local teachers also suggested that the Centre should not be located in a heavily wooded area (as most rural Zulu folk clear all dense vegetation around their homes). Taking this into account my colleagues suggested that the site be located in an elevated area with good visibility which was preferably surrounded by open grassland. This would also be more conducive to safe walking as HUP contains dangerous game (lions, elephant, buffalo and rhino) and ultimately management would be held responsible for the safety of learners at the Centre. We had to juggle this concern with that of wanting the location to be in/near to a diverse range of habitats where we could develop a thematic self-guided educational trail which could open up and add richness to the educational opportunities offered (Schudel pers. comm, 1998).

4.5 Towards Ideas for Centre Programmes

The historical analysis of this report as outlined in 3.5 has identified the key stake-holders with whom the CC team are interacting and collaborating, and stake-holders have made a number of suggestions as to their educational needs.

In developing stake-holder needs (Part 2) I have drawn on these ideas and I have also included ideas from the current programmes which the CC team are undertaking. In addition, I have added ideas for programmes which have emerged from my interaction/networking with other EE practitioners over the past seven years. This is done with the understanding that EE is a dynamic process in response to social issues and that educational practices and decisions cannot be undertaken in isolation. Whilst the EE Centre in HUP will support the CC programme in responding to local environmental issues we need to be interacting and sharing with others so that we are constantly challenging and questioning our own views, ideas and practice.

There is also an understanding amongst the CC team that we do not have all the necessary skills, knowledge and experience, to develop programmes and curriculum in response to all the needs of the stake-holders. To do this adequately we will have to develop collaborative partnerships with others who can support the Centre. A list of prospective partners is given in Part 2.

4.6 Management and administration

4.6.1 Management of the Centre

When discussions first emerged around the development of the Centre, it was proposed by certain community members and the CC team that a 'management' committee representing different stake-holders be established to assist with the management of the Centre. In researching this idea further, I attended a number of management meetings at Ndumo Community Resource Centre, where this concept had already been applied. From this experience I felt that it might be rather premature to apply this idea as my perceptions were that the management committee (consisting of a diverse range of interest groups) were hindering rather than assisting, the centre management of that particular centre through their continual bickering and promoting of own agendas. There did not appear to be a 'shared vision' or 'shared responsibility' amongst participants.

To compromise, and in discussion with community leaders, we opted for the idea of an advisory/networking committee representing different organisations which will be able to contribute their skills and experience in developing, shaping and evaluating the Centre programmes. It was decided that day to day management should be undertaken by the Centre staff assisted by the CC team.

4.6.2 The business plan

Conservation organisations in South Africa are under great financial duress at present to ensure that financial losses are not incurred for any services which are offered to the public. The NCS is no exception, and in developing the management and business plan, I have taken this into account. In researching this aspect, I consulted with staff of WESSA, as they have many years experience in the management of EE centres which are financially viable.

The advice from various WESSA staff (Shaw, Friedel, Wright, pers. comm, 1997) was that the Centre should have as few 'permanent' staff as possible. For the NCS (a para-statal and subscribing to acts affecting Civil Servants) this is pertinent, as a large permanent staff would be very costly to the Centre project (as regards Unemployment Insurance Funds,

pension contributions, medical aid, over-time and accommodation). In addition, women from the Vulamehlo Curio Stall had approached the CC team, asking that the NCS consider giving them the contract for cleaning/cooking at the Centre. There had also been an earlier request from Dr Ian Player asking that the NCS look for opportunities that would facilitate the employment of retired game-guards (from the NCS and the Wilderness Leadership School). Management then took a decision that, in keeping with our policy of encouraging and providing opportunity for outsourcing through entrepreneurial development, we should recruit all staff (except for the core team) on a contractual basis.

5: REFLECTIONS ON THE PLANNING PROCESS

As I reflect on this process within the policy of the Parks and within my relationship with the community the following highlights have emerged;

Within the 'People and Parks' partnership, although the NCS is working for the interests of the community we are also working for our own interests and agenda. In working towards developing a CC program such as we have, and in developing the Centre as it emerged, the ultimate goal was to find a balance of the two. This balance was in the coming together of NCS' interests and the communities' interests, in the process of developing the Centre. Whilst there has been compromise from both parties, we have tried to be honest and open in the process with the NCS acknowledging that it also has a responsibility to make the Centre financially sustainable, and to ensure that the educational opportunities and experiences offered are relevant and of a high standard.

I have also realised that we (including myself) have become 'seduced' by the idea/notion of participation, especially in rural development. It seems that processes do not have validity and legitimacy unless there has been participation at every turn from anyone remotely connected with the process. Whilst I understand that perhaps this is a pendulum swing away from the autocracy in the decision-making process practised in the past (NPB, 1992), it can also be debilitating and dis-empowering for EE practitioners working with rural communities. Not every aspect of this process was participatory or collaborative. I often had to use my own base-line understandings in making decisions. In respect of developing the financial and physical buildings aspects of the conceptual development plans, I obtained limited participation from our neighbouring community partners as they often did not have sufficient understanding of these matters to be able to share their ideas with me. Does this make the process of developing the plan any less valid?.

In looking at the plan and how the plan emerged, there are certain dimensions which are completely collaborative, and there were others which were less collaborative. However each of the ideas that emerged in the final plan were based on the following: workshops

undertaken, lots of discussions and conversation, interviews and my knowledge of Zulu language, custom and culture. It is an interpretation of these interactions which was then translated into the product or conceptual development plan in Part 2.

Finally much of the clarification of the NCS's position and stance within EE in HUP in both this report and in the 'doing' of EE has come from my reflections whilst doing the Masters in EE at Rhodes University. I have had a privileged opportunity to engage with others in conversation about, in and for EE, and through sharing our stories I have been able to critically reflect on 'our' story [the NCS] and have come to a better understanding and interpretation of the social processes that have shaped the need for the proposed Mambeni EE Centre.

PART 2

THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

1: INTRODUCTION

The development plan for the Mambeni Environmental Education Centre (hereafter known as the 'Centre') in the Umfolozi section of Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park (HUP), is intended to provide ideas for educational programmes and to guide and inform the KwaZulu-Natal Nature Conservation Service (NCS) about the administrative, logistical and financial matters of the Centre.

This plan emerged from a need articulated by neighbouring communities to the Park, and other interested stake-holders, to have an 'indaba' or meeting place where environmental issues affecting the 'People and Parks' partnership could be debated and to which responses could be made. The business plan has been developed out of ideas and views articulated by a number of stake-holders, including those communities participating in the (HUP) Community Conservation (CC) programme and environmental education (EE) networking partners.

2: GENERAL MODUS OPERANDI

The Centre will provide educational support to the current CC programme in the Zululand Region and to other interested stake-holders. It is envisaged that varying sizes (up to 60 people) of school and adult stake-holder groups will have the opportunity of participating in a pre-negotiated programme(s), and may also utilize the centre as a venue for workshops and meetings. The Centre will provide overnight accommodation and a catering service to learners/teachers.

3: STAKEHOLDERS AND IDEAS FOR PROGRAMMES

3.1 Stakeholders

Stake-holders constitute key groups with whom the management of HUP have established partnerships and formal liaison. Most of the key groups have collaborated and contributed to the current HUP strategic plan, which gives reference to stake-holder 'educational' requirements.

Whilst this report does not intend to develop a curriculum for stake-holders, it is hoped that through providing a profile of key stake-holders, their terms of reference and desired educational needs and outcomes, some ideas for possible programmes will emerge.

This will point a way forward for the Centre staff, who together with the CC team and stake-holders will co-construct the Centre curriculum.

The following tables define key stake-holders, their terms of reference, their educational needs and persons/organisations who may/can provide educational and financial support.

Table 1: Local Board for Protected Area (LBPA)

<p>TERMS OF REFERENCE: The LBPA's terms of reference have been defined by legislation (Section 25 of the KwaZulu-Natal Nature Conservation Management Act - No.9 of 1997) and will include at least 15 persons whom the Minister appoints from a list of candidates nominated by interested and affected parties. The LBPA's will contribute towards policy development and implementation thereof in HUP. The LBPA's will also be responsible for administering and distributing the Community Levy which will accrue to the Community Trust¹.</p> <p>NEEDS/OUTCOMES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ For members of the LBPA to be able to actively and competently contribute towards the development of policy and management of HUP. ▶ That the members of the sub-committee of the LBPA responsible for the Community Trust, have relevant skills to manage and administer the financial affairs of the Trust. <p>POSSIBLE FUNDING ORGANISATIONS/DEPARTMENTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HUP Community Trust, uThungulu Regional Council, Minister of Traditional and Environmental Affairs. 	
Ideas for programmes	Persons/Organization who can assist
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ National Goldfields/Rhodes EE course (to be adapted to HUP Park & Neighbour environment) ▶ Small business and project management course 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lynette Masuku-van Damme (NPB) • Heila Lotz (Rhodes University) • Institute of Natural Resources (INR), Peter Morrison (Small Business Development)

¹ All visitors to NCS Parks and reserves pay a Community Levy. Monies collected from the Community Levy are placed in a Community Trust which is then distributed once a year by the LBPA' of each park/reserve to community projects.

Table 2: Local Schools to Hluhluwe-Umfolozzi Park

<p>TERMS OF REFERENCE/DESCRIPTION: The Community Conservation Programme has established three EE 'cluster' groups, of six schools each in the Mdletsheni, Hlabisa and Mpukonyoni areas. Each 'cluster' group committee is responsible for co-ordinating EE programmes and activities at their respective schools.</p> <p>NEEDS/OUTCOMES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ To develop a support network and resources for key teachers in each 'cluster' group ▶ That 'key' teachers in each school feel competent and confident in being able to approach learning programmes by using 'environment' as phase organiser in Outcomes Based Education (OBE). <p>POSSIBLE FUNDING ORGANISATIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ uThungulu Regional Council, Richards Bay Minerals, Alusaf, World Wide Fund for Nature-South Africa (WWF-SA), Green Trust 	
Ideas for Programmes	Persons/Organisations who can assist
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ National Goldfields/Rhodes EE course (to be adapted to HUP & neighbour environment) ▶ Workshops on and to support OBE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rob O'Donoghue (NCS) & Lynette Masuku-van Damme (NPB) • Eureka Janse van Rensburg (Rhodes University) • Heila Lotz (Rhodes University) • Ursula Van Harmelen (Rhodes University) • The Wildlife and Environment Society of Southern Africa (WESSA) • Department of Education (Hlabisa Circuit).

Table 3: Traditional Healers Association and Organic Gardeners Association

<p>TERMS OF REFERENCE/DESCRIPTION:</p> <p><i>Traditional Healers Association:</i> This association comprises three groups of traditional healers which are affiliated to the National IziNyanga Association. They include iNyathi Healers, Machibini Healers and Mdletsheni Healers. In support of the traditional healers programme a small indigenous nursery (which includes a demonstration garden) has been established at Hilltop Camp in Hluhluwe and five satellite nurseries have been established in the Community. Plant material used for propagation is sourced from the Park.</p> <p><i>Organic Gardeners Association:</i> The Organic Gardens Association includes four communal gardens. Gardens provide fresh produce to the Hospitality Industry in and around HUP. A 'demonstration' garden will be established at the Centre.</p> <p>NEEDS/OUTCOMES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ To develop skills in propagation, growing and caring of, indigenous plants, exotic fruit trees and vegetables, based on the principles of permaculture. ▶ To develop small business and marketing skills. <p>POSSIBLE FUNDING ORGANISATIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ WWF-SA, International Research and Development (IRED), Peace Gardens Association of South Africa, South African Nurserymen Association. 	
Ideas for Programmes	Persons/Organisations who can assist
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Workshops in: indigenous plant propagation growing and caring of plants, and nursery management. ▶ Courses in organic gardening and permaculture. ▶ Course in Small Business Development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Miles Mander (Institute of Natural Resources) • Steve McKean, (NCS) • Mr Mhlongo (National Traditional Healers Association) • Jeff Nicholson (Silverglen Nursery). • Valley Trust.

Table 4: HUP Community-Based Tourism Programme

<p>TERMS OF REFERENCE/DESCRIPTION: This project comprises groups and families involved in Community-Based Tourism projects adjacent to HUP. The group includes: Craft market committees, Tourism Associations, Community Conservation Area Committees, Community Bed and Breakfast owners, Community Tour Guides, Cultural groups, and Tour Operators.</p> <p>NEEDS/OUTCOMES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ To practise responsible and sustainable tourism and to develop understanding of the concepts of the Integrated Environmental Management (IEM) process and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). ▶ To develop an understanding of the tender process, feasibility studies, and concept and business plans. ▶ To gain small business and marketing skills, and skills more specifically relevant to the Hospitality Industry. <p>POSSIBLE FUNDING ORGANISATIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ uThungulu Regional Council, Richards Bay Minerals, Alusaf, 	
Ideas for Programmes	Persons/Organisations who can assist
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Workshops on community-based land-use planning and management options, and tourism. ▶ Small business development and marketing and skills specific to hospitality industry. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KZN Tourism • uThungulu sub-committee on Tourism • Lynette Masuku-van Damme (NPB) and Koekie Maphanga (NCS) • Khalani-Kagiso Supervision Food Services

Table 5: Staff of HUP

<p>TERMS OF REFERENCE/DESCRIPTION: Whilst the Training Division of the NCS has the responsibility for staff training, local staff have identified specific skills training courses which can be undertaken at a local Park level.</p> <p>NEEDS/OUTCOMES: To provide educational opportunities and support for staff of HUP which will enable them to understand the context within which they work and to maximise job performance.</p> <p>POSSIBLE FUNDING ORGANISATION: ▶ NCS Staff Development Committee, Umfolozi Wilderness Trails, NCS Training Division, KZN Conservation Trust, Wild-lands Trust</p>	
Ideas for Programmes	Persons/Organisations who can assist
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ National Goldfields/Rhodes EE course (to be adapted to the Park & Neighbour environment) ▶ Practical Ecology ▶ Conflict management ▶ Participative management strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rob O'Donoghue (NCS) & Lynette Masuku-van Damme (NPB) • Heila Lotz (Rhodes University) • WESSA • Steven Roberts (NCS), Thelma Trench (consultant) • Siphon Khumalo and Themba Sibeko (NCS) • Zululand Anthracite Colliery (ZAC).

3.2 Programmes focus

Programmes/Curriculum will be negotiated with learners and teachers, and it is intended that they will be integrated, multi-disciplinary, learner-centred and in-keeping with the presently changing education system (du Toit, 1997:15). However, it is important that the activities of the centre do not diversify to the point that "anything goes" (Shaw pers. comm, 1997). Wright (pers. comm, 1997) suggests that "*it is best to try and establish what you do best and concentrate on that, you cannot be all things to everyone*". The activities of the centre should fall within, and support, the Mission of the NCS, the NCS Community Conservation Strategic Plan and Policy, and the HUP strategic plan.

Another important function of the Centre during quiet periods would be the training of NCS staff. In the past most staff training that could be done 'in-house' has been out-sourced to other organisations (Shaw pers. comm, 1997). Centre staff would also assist with the interpretative function of the Park by producing interpretive materials and resources.

Courses should focus on and respond to 'local' environmental issues, and be kept relevant through constant evaluation and review, by both educators, participants and independent evaluation (Shaw, pers. comm, 1997). According to Schudel (pers. comm, 1997) centres should also be *"a happy, enjoyable environment where learners feel comfortable and confident in their surroundings"*.

4: MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

4.1 Proposed management structure

It is proposed that the Centre has an advisory committee which will assist and guide management with the shaping and evaluation of the programmes. It is recommended that the following organisations be represented:

- ▶ The Hlabisa Circuit Office of the Department of Education
- ▶ HUP Local Board for Protected Area
- ▶ uThungulu Regional Council (Standing Committee on Tourism)
- ▶ Hlabisa Crafters Association & Community Based Tourism Association
- ▶ Hlabisa Traditional Healers and Organic Gardeners Association
- ▶ Wildlife and Environment Society of Southern Africa
- ▶ Midnet (Midlands Network of participatory rural appraisal practitioners)
- ▶ Rhodes University EE unit

4.2 Staffing Structures

The Centre should be adequately staffed with professional and competent staff. It is recommended that only core staff are employed full-time by the NCS. Other staff will be recruited on a contractual basis from the Machibini community, and assistant educators will be sourced from students who are pursuing part-time studies in Education and Conservation (Shaw pers. comm, 1997).

The following staff structure is recommended (See Appendix 5):

4.2.1 Core Staff

- ▶ **Senior Community Conservation Educator (S/CCE-HUP)**
The S/CCE-HUP will be responsible and accountable for the activities and overall performance of the centre, as well as supervising the staff of the Interpretive Centre. The S/CCE-HUP will report to the Community Conservation Co-ordinator (Zululand) and the Chief Conservator Zululand Reserves through the NCS's normal reporting channels.
- ▶ **Community Conservation Educator (CCE-HUP)**
It is proposed that the CCE-HUP will assist the S/CCE-HUP with all duties relating to the Centre.
- ▶ **Senior Clerk (S/C)**
The S/C will be responsible for the booking system, project administration, catering and housekeeping. In addition the S/C will act as secretary to the CCE-HUP and assist in various marketing and Public Relations functions.

4.2.2 Contractual staff

- ▶ **Education Officers**
As big groups will have to be divided into manageable sizes, a large education staff (a teacher to learner ratio of 1:10) is necessary. The apparent dilemma between a large, well trained staff contingent and low financial resources can be resolved by the employment of 'students' as is done by the WESSA (Shaw and Friedel pers. comm, 1997). It is proposed that four students be employed in this capacity.

Students of distance learning institutions who are undertaking a relevant degree or diploma will be employed on a one or two year bursary system. The NCS will assist with tuition costs, provide accommodation and lodging, pay a subsistence allowance and, undertake to provide educational and training opportunities in EE. Preference will be given to students who are conversant in Zulu and English.

- ▶ **Support Staff**
General support staff can be drawn from the local community on a contractual basis. These staff will also be responsible for the cleaning and maintenance of the interpretation and audio-visual centre at the Centenary Centre.

Field Rangers can be drawn from the ranks of the community tour guides who are currently undergoing the practical aspect of their field-guiding course, or from retired Field Rangers and support staff will consist of:

- 1 x cook/caterer
- 1 x cleaner
- 1 x handyman
- 1 x general assistant
- 6 x field rangers

4.3 Staff Development

Planning and implementation of the Centre staff development curriculum will be the responsibility of the S/CCE-HUP in consultation with the CC (Zululand) team, the Senior Education Officer (SEO), the Education Officer (EO), the Conservation Planner Social Scientist (CPSS) and the Training Section of the NSC. Training will be 'in-house', with reciprocal arrangements with other sections in the Park (particularly Umfolozi Wilderness Trails and the field rangers) and organisations such as WESSA, the INR, and the Environmental Education Association of Southern Africa (EEASA).

5: LOCATION, PHYSICAL STRUCTURE AND LOGISTICS

5.1 General

The physical and logistical facilities should cater for both large (up to 60 learners) and smaller groups (teachers, community committees).

Most schools accommodate approximately 140 pupils per grade, a number of 60 (half grade to allow split group bookings) is suggested. One teacher per 20 pupils would normally accompany one group. The size of adult learner groups varies from 10 to around 30 persons (Shaw pers. comm, 1997).

5.2 Location

In locating the Centre the following aspects and needs should be taken into account:

- The centre needs to be:
 - placed on the periphery of the reserve, close to Mambeni gate so that local communities and other stakeholders and workers can easily access the centre (by foot). Being placed on the periphery the Centre will also have far less impact both physically and aesthetically on the Park (See Appendix 6).

- ▶ located within close walking distance to the proposed Centenary Centre so that services (water, energy, waste disposal) can be easily accessed, and so that teachers and learners can make use of the proposed rhino capture bomas and pens and the Interpretive Centre for educational purposes.
- ▶ located in an elevated, aesthetically pleasing, and interesting area, which includes a diversity of flora, fauna and habitats. It would be preferable if the area has many evergreen trees and is exposed to the prevailing north-easterly winds.
- ▶ located in an area which has a relatively level surface (to reduce building costs)
- ▶ located in a 'safe' walking area which is open and has good visibility. For safety security reasons the Centre will have to be fenced (electric) to exclude predators and other dangerous game. It would be preferable if the fenced area includes enough space (approximately 10 hectares) for self-guided and interpretive trails, interactive activities, and games. There also needs to be a safe corridor between the Centre and the rest of the Centenary Centre (Rhino Capture Bomas² and Interpretive Centre). The Centre area must be well lit at night and be free from concealing vegetation to minimize risk. The buildings need to be in a U or L configuration so that access to all facilities is across a well-lit and easily visible quadrangle.

5.3 Measures to support sustainable living practices

"Centres should practise what they preach, and implement waste disposal and energy saving measures in keeping with ...[sustainable living practices] "

(Robottom pers. comm, 1998)

5.3.1 IEM & EIA's

In accordance with the published guidelines for Integrated Environmental Management (Department of Environmental Affairs, 1992) and the regulations under sections 21, 22 and 26 of the Environment Conservation Act (No. 73 of 1989), all development within protected areas is subject to an environmental impact assessment procedure. This includes concept planning at the protected area scale, through to decision-making, regarding development on particular sites. The Conceptual Development Plan for HUP (Munster & Sandwith, 1998) states *".....environmentally friendly technologies which minimise the use of natural resources, e.g. energy and water saving technologies, will be incorporated into the development of visitor facilities"*.

For the purpose of this report and in-keeping with the ethic of sustainable living practices

² Bomas are wooden fenced pens/stockades which are used to accommodate/house animals which are in captivity

that we as EE practitioners are trying to promote, it is important to adhere strictly to both the EIA procedure and IEM processes. The NCS must be seen to be 'practising what we preach' from the EIA, through to the implementation of the building plans, and the actual 'business' of running and maintaining the centre. This must include active participation in 'sustainable living practices', and educative measures for all 'teachers', 'learners' and staff that visit the centre.

5.3.2 Building design and waste management

Another aspect which needs to be taken into account is the design of the building. According to Van Harmelen (pers. comm, 1998) most centres (with regards to the buildings) are not, particularly environmentally friendly or good role models for good environmental education practice. She added:

they don't use solar panels, the lip service that is paid to recycling is unbelievable. They are badly designed in terms of heating and insulation, they are badly designed in terms of their toilet facilities. They are not sending any messages about alternative use of power, fuel or of resources

I recommend that the Integrated Environmental Management Guideline Series (1-6)(1992) be taken into account with implementation of this report. Whilst this report cannot cover all the issues around 'good environmental and sustainable living practices', some which I believe the NCS should focus on are:

- ▶ **Waste management** - to include: sorting and separation of all waste at source for recycling and re-using, the use of bio-degradable waste for a small permaculture demonstration garden at the centre and the use of 'environmentally friendly' detergents and cleaners.
- ▶ **Water saving** - to include water saving technologies (eg. low-flow showers) and water saving measures (eg. user-pays concept and catchment of rain water),
- ▶ **Energy** - use of solar power wherever possible
- ▶ **Appropriate technologies** - this applies to both administrative and teaching/learning technologies and those used in the construction/maintenance of the physical structure (eg. insulation).

5.4 Physical structure

Facilities should be aesthetically pleasing, durable, of low maintenance, and where possible, building materials should be accessed from the local environment and from local entrepreneurs (See Appendix 7).

The Building Plan will include the following:

- **A central multi-use building which comprises:**
 - ▶ a large dining/work area with space for interactive displays. Seating must not be static - needs to provide for a space that is associated with interactive learning and group work (du Toit, 1997)
 - ▶ kitchen with food store-room and cold-room. Kitchen to have self-serve area and scullery where learners can wash utensils and store them
 - ▶ a small reception area where refreshments can be served and fast foods (cold-drinks and snacks) sold. This area can also be used to provide publicity materials and to promote the philosophy of the centre
 - ▶ a large office with medium sized library/resource/media centre which could be used for resource production and networking
 - ▶ an equipment store-room.

- **Overnight Accommodation which comprises:**
 - ▶ Four brick and mortar dormitories to accommodate up to fifteen people or alternatively six safari tents on raised platforms which will be protected by sterkolite (a durable type of plastic) fly-sheets. If safari tents are to be used, raised wooden walk-ways with side-rails must be used to connect accommodation to multi-purpose hall and ablutions.
 - ▶ Accommodation for male and females should not be closely located (this was emphasized on numerous occasions by Zulu-speaking teachers). Partitions between sleeping areas could be erected if the rooms are to be large. This would also make them more comfortable for adult occupation. Ablutions must be accessible from within each dormitory.

- **Teacher and driver accommodation which comprises:**
 - ▶ A separate three room facility with its own ablutions, or alternatively, teachers could be accommodated in a separate room at the end of each dormitory (Shaw pers. comm, 1997).

- **A central, open amphitheatre:**
 - ▶ This area may be used as an out-door venue for cultural activities, social gatherings and recreation and theatre workshops. It is proposed that this area be built and decorated according to traditional Zulu culture (du Toit, 1997).

- **Staff accommodation** (to be placed within the fenced-in Centre area):
 - ▶ Two-bed roomed cottage for the S/CCE-HUP and Senior Clerk
 - ▶ One-bed roomed cottage for the CCE-HUP
 - ▶ Five-bed roomed cottage for five single (bursary) staff which will include: a communal lounge/dining-room; a kitchen and ablution facilities.

Service staff will be accommodated outside of the Park in their own accommodation.

- **Miscellaneous**
 - ▶ Safe parking to be provided for all vehicles. Large, open 'turn-about' area for buses is necessary.
 - ▶ Access should be maintained through Mambeni Gate for course participants and for staff to purchase supplies. This will serve the benefit of reducing distances from Mtubatuba, maintaining accessibility for the community of Mambeni and reducing the impact of vehicles from the Centre on tourists coming to the Park.
 - ▶ The proximity of the Centre to both the Vulamehlo Curio Centre and the game capture bomas must be carefully considered. Both should be close enough to be used as educational resources but not close enough to be impacted upon (noise and aesthetics).

5.5 Logistics

5.5.1 Furniture and Equipment

Furniture and Equipment requirements for the various units are as follows:

- Overnight accommodation for students and teachers
 - ▶ 66 beds and mattresses, 66 metal/wooden lockers, 11 dustbins. Bedding will only be provided for the teacher/bus driver accommodation.
- Kitchen
 - ▶ 2 x refrigerators or double door refrigerator
 - ▶ 1 x large chest freezer
 - ▶ 1 x industrial stove
 - ▶ 1 x electric urn
 - ▶ 1 x toaster
 - ▶ 1 x bain-marie
 - ▶ cutlery and crockery
 - ▶ stainless steel work tables
 - ▶ free-standing, movable crockery/cutlery rack
 - ▶ oil jacketed boiling pan and tilt pan

- Working area/dining hall:
 - ▶ 70 plastic chairs & 8 folding metal tables
 - ▶ display unit (2 Marla Hayley boards)
 - ▶ overhead projector and screen
 - ▶ video projector
 - ▶ whiteboard;

- Office, reception area, resource production area :
 - ▶ desks and chairs
 - ▶ filing cabinet
 - ▶ book-cases
 - ▶ computers, printers and software
 - ▶ fax machine and photocopier
 - ▶ small cane lounge suite and table

- Resource display area
 - ▶ small reference library to include: Sharenet resources, EE and development publications, books and field guides

5.5.2 Field kits and field equipment

A field kit for each of the six educators and field rangers should consist of :

- field guidebooks, Share Net publications and other education resources
- comprehensive first aid and medical kit
- rifle (.458 calibre)

(Shaw & Friedel pers. comm, 1997)

In addition inexpensive field equipment likely to enhance learner centred, activities-based education includes:

- binoculars
- clipboards
- nets
- rulers
- rope
- measuring tape
- gardening tools

(du Toit, 1997)

5.5.3 Vehicles.

At least two vehicles will be required for purchasing of supplies, game/educational drives and business outside the park. One of the vehicles should be adapted to transport passengers in tiered bench-type seating. A trailer for transporting equipment and food will also be required.

6: MARKETING

At present there are approximately 6 000 pupils and some 1 500 neighbouring community adult educational groups visiting Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park each year. Most of these groups use the park for day visits only and are accommodated overnight elsewhere. A basic marketing strategy involving simple mail-shots with a prospectus, school visits, media marketing and 'in-house' (NCS reserves) advertising will easily result in a learner day rate of about 4 000 persons in the first year of operation. Marketing should be aimed at the whole of southern Africa with emphasis on KwaZulu-Natal.

7: BUSINESS PLAN

7.1 General

It is hoped that by facilitating funding from donors and by seeking a client base from a wider context the centre will become self-funded. Schools based EE centres tend to exhibit a 'peak and trough' phenomenon in their bookings (Shaw, pers. comm 1997). Busy periods (March - May, and August - October) generally provide income for the entire year and the quieter periods can be filled with community based initiatives. Funding can be sought from various donors for those learners and participants who are unable to afford the tariffs.

Budgetary control will be the responsibility of the S/CC-HUP who will be assisted by the CCC(Z) and the Admin Officer (Zululand). A brief discussion of an estimated operational budget follows. All figures are based on actual figures from an operational, financially sustainable education centre. (Shaw pers. comm 1997)

7.2 Basic premise

Through-put for the first full year of operation is calculated conservatively at 1 500 learners attending an average course of 2,45 days. This gives a learner day rate of 3 675. This budget assumes that all major capital development will have been carried out and only accounts for operational expenditure (OPEX).

7.3 Income (for more accurate budget management, expected income has been separated into smaller categories):

- Administration

This covers administration and sundry costs e.g. bookings correspondence, telephone calls, general maintenance and housekeeping and vehicle use.

Suggested charge : R 3.00 per person per day (or part thereof)

Total income (administration) R 3.00 x 3675 pupil days =	R 11 025 00
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- Personnel

This would assist in covering staff salaries and any contractual arrangements with the local community.

Suggested charge: R 18.00 per person per day
R 10.00 per person per half day
R 10.00 per person per night (includes the following mornings activities)

Total R 28.00 per person for a 24 hour period.

Average course length of 2.45 days.

Total income (personnel) R 28.00 x 2,45 x 1500	=	R 102 900 00
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- Food

Most centres make their surplus on catering. Low income groups who visit during quiet periods can reduce their costs by self-catering.

Suggested charge : R 10.00 - breakfast
R 12.00 - lunch
R 15.00 - supper

Average food income
p/ p per course (7 x meals) R 86.00

Total income (food)	R 86.00 x 1500	=	R 129 000 00
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- Accommodation

A low charge ensures that the centre is accessible to low income groups during quiet periods.

Suggested charge: R 15.00 per person per night.

Total income (accommodation)	R 15.00 x 2 nights x 1500	R 45 000 00
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- Additional charges and income

Any extraordinary activities, such as night/day drives, bush breakfasts, overnight hikes, rafting, abseiling, visits to the rhino capture bomas and Interpretation Centre will be charged for as extras. Educational resources and snacks (chips and cool-drinks) will also be available for sale and will earn additional revenue.

Entrance fees will be waived in accordance with the NCS educational concession policy, which states that all schools in KZN have free access to NCS Parks. Schools not from KZN will pay an educational concession rate.

The total approximate charge per learner for a three day course will be R 180 00 This is slightly below most other similar EE centres (Shaw 1998, pers. comm). Low income groups may be supported by sponsors or alternatively these groups may provide their own meals and will be charged at a 'subsidised' rate.

7.4 Income and Expenditure

The following table details Income and Expenditure for the first year of operation. Contract staff and electricity and water expenses will be paid for by the Centenary Centre Operation. Expenditure is operational only, does not include capital development, and figures are based on actual expenditure of a similar centre (Shaw pers. comm, 1997).

Table 6: Estimated Income and Expenditure for first year of operation.

INCOME		EXPENDITURE	
Administration	R 110 250.00	Salaries :S/CCE-HUP	R 64 000.00
Personnel	R 102 900.00	CCE-HUP	R 59 000 .00
Accommodation	R 45 000.00	Senior Clerk	R 38 460.00
Ed resource/Snacks	R 20 000.00	Students (4x)	R 60 000.00
Food	R 129 000.00	Food	R 50 000.00
TOTAL	R 307 925.00	MV running costs	R 28 560.00
		Vehicle registration	R 312.00
		Subsistence & Travel	R 3 000.00
		Cleaning materials	R 1 800.00
		Sundry	R 1 200.00
		Maintenance (building)	R 2 000.00
		Vehicle maintenance	R 6 000.00
		Telephone & postage	R 11 040.00
		Stationery	R 4 000.00
		Duplicating & PC	R 4 000.00
		Uniforms	R 4 800.00
		Training	R 2 000.00
		Education resources	R 2 000.00
		TOTAL	R 322 172.00

7.5 Conclusion

This business plan illustrates that a community/schools based Education Centre in Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park can be financially viable. As can be seen from this budget, a conservative estimate of learners using the Centre provides a small deficit on the operating budget in the first year of operation. Through-put can be expected to increase by 15% in the second year and a further 15% in the third year. This would indicate that the centre should generate an annual surplus from the second year onward.

However, significant initial expenditure would be needed for both infrastructure and equipment. At present there is an amount of R 650 000-00 available for building the Centre and an amount of R 55 000-00 is available from the KZN Conservation Trust for the purchasing of equipment. There is also an amount of R 129 000-00 (donated by the uThungulu Regional Council) available for a Centre-based schools and adult education programme for the Hlabisa district, which is being held in Trust by the NCS.

8: RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ◆ The Mambeni Centre needs to contribute towards 'good EE practice' through integration into and support of the HUP CC programme and through actively addressing local environmental issues.
- ◆ The Centre needs to support the NCS's Mission Statement and the HUP strategic plan.
- ◆ The Centre must serve to provide a 'meeting place' which will strengthen the relationship between HUP and neighbouring communities.
- ◆ The Centre must serve as an example of sustainable living practices.
- ◆ The Centre needs to be financially viable.
- ◆ Start small

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Van Harmelen, U. (1998) Lecturer, Education Department, Rhodes University.

Wright, T. (1997) Regional Manager, WESSA KZN, KwaZulu-Natal.



PAULA MORRISON

M.ED (ENVIRONMENTALEUCATION)

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TUTORS: E.JANSE VAN RENSBURG

U. VAN HARMELEN

Partnerships for social change:
A framework for clarifying and participating in EE processes
in and around Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park

PARTNERSHIPS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

*" 'O Looking-glass creatures', quoth Alice, 'draw near!
'Tis an honour to see me, a favour to hear;
'Tis a privilege high to have dinner and tea
Along with the Red Queen, the White Queen and me!"*

(Lewis Carroll, Alice in Wonderland)

INTRODUCTION

In this paper I have set out to develop a framework within which I can clarify and participate with others in the environmental education (EE) process within the context of the Natal Parks Board's (NPB) Community Conservation Programme in rural development in the Zululand Region. I will develop this framework through 'viewing' environmental education processes through a socially critical lens, as defined by Wals (1994), Fien (1993) and Robottom (1993) where Action Research and Community Problem Solving (AR&CPS), are environmental education approaches used to effect social transformation. In viewing I will use metaphor to look deeper and wider through the 'looking glass'.

Although I have looked at environmental education through a socially critical lens, I do not believe that it is useful [for praxis] to confine oneself to viewing any concept from one paradigm; this would merely entrench a state of "false consciousness" of socially critical theory as the one and only ideology (Fien, 1993, page 15).

BUILDING PEOPLE AND PARKS PARTNERSHIPS

"They were indeed a queer-looking party that assembled on the bank - the birds with draggled feathers, the animals with their fur clinging close to them, and all dripping wet, cross and uncomfortable."

(Lewis Carroll, Alice in Wonderland)

The context of my workplace landscape is the interface between 'People and Parks', more specifically the people in and around Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park (HUP), a protected area of some 100 000 hectares which lies in the heart of rural Zululand. Neighbouring communities to the Park consist of 10 *amaKosi* (*chief*) wards, with a population of some 600 000 people, most of whom are poor subsistence farmers, with little or no job opportunities (Joint Services Board, 1995).

The relationship between the People and the Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park was formally constituted when, in 1992 the NPB adopted a Policy on Neighbour Relations thereby giving effect to an innovative and far-reaching programme of engagement (Sandwith, 1996).

During 1995 the process came under review, principally to evaluate lessons of experience and to plan a way forward. Whilst clarity and direction of the process at Board level was needed this review process did not include any protected area community stakeholders.

Subsequently the Zululand Community Conservation team took the process a step further by conveying a series of participatory workshops, using the new policy as a reference point, with neighbouring stakeholders to HUP (Morrison, 1997) to re-define the partnership, and to develop an Action Plan in which Parks and People could respond to the local 'Environment' issues as defined by the Partners.

ENVIRONMENT AS SOCIAL CONSTRUCT

*" 'When I use a word,' Humpty Dumpty said in a rather scornful tone, 'it means just what I choose it to mean - neither more nor less.' 'The question is', said Alice 'whether you **can** make words mean so many different things.'"*

(Lewis Carroll, Alice in Wonderful)

According to Kuiper (1995) 'environment' is a concept that lives mainly in people's heads. We define environment according to the conceptual glasses that we wear, which are individually and culturally 'imposed' by our history, experiences and interactions with others.

'Environment' does not have existence outside of ourselves and our social interactions, rather it should be understood, according to Di Chiro (1987, page 25) as "the conceptual interactions between our physical surroundings and the social, political and economic forces that organise us in the context of these surroundings."

If we then view the environment as a social construct, it would not be presumptuous to assume that certain aspects of it "can be transformed according to whichever social relationships are in operation" (Di Chiro, 1987, page 25).

In my context the social relationships are between the People and the Park and to understand these relationships we need to take a look at how history has shaped them.

Early environmental education interactions around HUP were dominated by law enforcement. The priority of the 'preservationists' of the time was the protection and maintenance of the Park Boundaries. Later other interactions included the Wilderness Trails in Umfolozi which took place during the 50's and 60's, the African Conservation Education (A.C.E) Project in the 70's and 80's which included field visits to the Park by local biology teachers, and the African Chiefs Training (A.C.T) Programme which was an 'educational' programme for local *amaKosi*. Towards the end of the 80's and early 90's the relationship became very strained because 'problem' animals emanating from the Park were constantly raiding community livestock and crops. It was only in the early 1990's that problem solving partnership approaches emerged within a coherent although diverse environmental education programme which centred on

activities to establish forums, engage with stakeholders, deliver benefits and foster economic opportunities (Sandwith, 1997). It is within the tensions and struggle of these emerging partnerships that local environmental problems came to be identified and located in interacting biophysical, social, economic, cultural and political concerns and that the 'ignorant other' beyond the fence-line came to be seen as a partner. These local shifting orientations to environmental education can be seen as a reflection of global environmental education processes (Janse van Rensburg & O'Donoghue, 1995).

It is relevant to explain here that at the request of traditional and political structures, partnership workshops were held at two different levels; these included leadership (tribal and political leadership) and later interest groups (e.g. Traditional Healers, Tourism Associations, Development Committees). It was also clear from the workshops that issues of politics (determining the various forums and their terms of reference) and economics (developing community-based tourism opportunities) are of the greatest importance to the stakeholder leadership. Interest groups (which included women) cited 'bread and butter' development issues such as: the lack of schools, clinics, and water; and depletion of natural resources and environmental degradation. However a number of people within each forum were equally outspoken about the desire to conserve community areas of conservation and historical/cultural significance. Stake-holders saw these areas as having the potential to contribute to sustainable development and quality of life.

BRIDGE OVER TROUBLED WATERS

"Alice said to the Cheshire cat 'Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to walk from here?' 'That depends on a good deal on where you want to get to,' said the cat."

(Lewis Carroll, Alice in Wonderland)

Throughout this process of Action Research and Community Problem Solving (AR&CPS), the People and Parks Partners have had to explore, compromise, sometimes relinquish their positions on the power gradient, act on local environmental problems and critically reflect on their actions. According to Wals (1990, page 14) this approach is different from the "standard way of solving a problem, which is first thoroughly understanding the problem and then consider what actions, if any, to take". The disadvantage of this latter approach is that the power gradient is most often unequal and the 'expert' drives the process whereas in AR&CPS understanding and learning comes from being 'in' the action taking process, and critically evaluating those actions. Some of the key functions that emerged from this process of Parks and People are:

- i. To build trust, co-operation and partnerships between the Natal Parks Board and neighbours and visitors and to develop co-management structures at various levels with neighbouring stake-holders.
- ii. To facilitate and promote community development in order to promote sustainable living and an improved quality of life.

- iii. To develop and promote an integrated environmental education programme for all neighbouring community stakeholders.
- iv. To promote the integration of HUP into the social, economic, cultural, political, and biophysical systems at landscape level.
- v. To develop partnership projects based on Nature Conservation [refers specifically to community-based eco-tourism]
- vi. To promote and support the sustainable use of natural resources amongst communities neighbouring HUP.

Whilst this is not a definition for Environmental education, it provides some kind of direction/focus for Parks and People with which to engage in dialogue. The challenge is how do we [as partners in the process] actively contribute further towards changing present patterns of "unsustainable development to ones which are based upon principles of social justice and democracy and which respect ecological laws and limits"? (Fien, 1993 page 1). What bridge/s and vehicles do we use in the process of crossing over the troubled waters to the other side. And how do we in the NPB challenge the 'silent' issues, those which include non-representation of women in leadership and in decision making, a mostly undemocratic 'tribal' system of governance, the 'tragedy of the commons' and the slow response of the NPB leadership to respond and support partner initiatives. If we adopt a socially critical response to environmental education we cannot remain neutral and support an unjust social system, however we also run the risk of being accused of meddling with cultural values and the current social order!

Wals *et al* (1990, page 13) defines Environmental Education as "the process that enables students and teachers to participate more fully in the planning, implementing and evaluating of educational activities aimed at resolving an environmental issue that learners have identified." According to Huckle (1991, in Fien, page 14) it is a critical approach to teaching which becomes:

...a shared speculation with pupils on those forms of technology and social organisations which can enable people to live in harmony with one another and with the natural world. It would be a form of social education cast in...the liberatory mould. This seeks to empower pupils so that they can dramatically transform society. It does this by encouraging them to reflect on their experience in the light of critical theory and to act on the insights gained. It is a form of praxis...which by allowing pupils and teachers to reflectively construct and reconstruct their social world, develops the critical and active citizens who are capable of bringing about the transition to sustainable.

Both approaches reflect a strong socially critical or transformation orientation in environmental education (Fien, 1993). This orientation is not value-free; rather it reflects a challenge to, and critique of the dominant empirical-analytical paradigm of positivism. I believe that socially critical environmental education is a useful paradigm in which to both critically reflect on/in and practise environmental education in the Zululand Region.

SOCIALLY CRITICAL THEORY

" 'You are old, Father William,' the young man said, 'And your hair, has become very white; and yet your incessantly stand on your head - Do you think, at your age, it is right?'"

(Lewis Carroll, Alice in Wonderland)

According to Nel (1997) understanding the circumstances [social, economic and political] wherein theories of society evolve is as important as understanding the theoretical principles themselves. Socially critical theory developed as a radical breakaway from the empirical-analytical paradigm of positivism. Early critical theorists such as the philosopher Horkheimer, were influenced by the economic crisis, and the rise of National socialism in Germany. The Frankfurt school (of which he was a member) drew on the works of Marx and Freud and stressed the need for 'a complete transformation of society' (Kolakowski 1978, in Nel 1994). Later Horkheimer transferred to the University of Chicago where his works influenced educational theorists such as Giroux, Lather and Apple. More recently socially critical theory has been applied to environmental education by Huckle, Fien and Wals. All three have in common the belief that the orientation should be socially transformative.

Fien, (1993) argues for the curriculum theory 'education for the environment' and goes as far as to state that unless the overall intention of a programme is education for the environment, then effective environmental education is not taking place. Fien adds that 'education for the environment' builds on education *about* and *through* the environment by engaging students in the exploration and resolution of environmental issues in order to 'promote lifestyles that are compatible with the sustainable and equitable use of resources' (15). I believe that this theory has value for education in rural communities in that it respects and builds on their existing knowledge and opens up alternatives through collaborative social action. Through engaged interaction, stake-holders can de-construct environmental issues and re-construct responses to these issues. This orientation is not without problems, "education for the environment" could be viewed as deterministic, and confusing the difference between education and activism (Jickling & Spork, 1996). Jickling argues that the semantic construction of the term "education for the environment" uses the language of activism which is not compatible with that of educators. In the South African context we take for granted (perhaps uncritically) the language of activism as part of common discourse. Perhaps because this country has only recently become a democracy we still need to 'chew' on the discourse of our new freedom.

THE MPEMBENI STORY

"It wasn't very civil of you to sit down without being invited," said the March Hare. 'I didn't know it was your table,' said Alice; 'it's laid for a great many more than three.'"

(Lewis Carroll, Alice in Wonderland.)

Amongst many of the 'stories' which have developed before and from the Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park action plan is the Mpembeni story. Mpembeni is the ward of *iNkosi* Hlabisa which is located on the western boundary of the Park.

Over the years, the people of Mpembeni have developed a good working relationship with the NPB and during 1995 requested that a Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) be undertaken in the community. Community members assisted an investigation of local issues through, social and ecological mapping of the area and then linking community needs and concerns with appropriate resources (people, places, publications). A report was then produced by the community to record the development options for them to further investigate. Subsequent to this a number of these options have been taken up. These include: market gardens, a very active *iNyanga* programme (which includes the establishment of four nurseries in the community and the re-vegetation of areas of the local environment), a craft industry and low-key community based tourism.

More recently, the community leadership, the Tourism Committee and the Publicity Association of Mpembeni indicated that they were concerned about the degradation of some of the catchment areas (which are not inhabited) adjacent to the Park and would like to investigate different options for current land use (subsistence agriculture and cattle grazing) for this area. However the concern was that the present land-users need to be brought into the process and contribute to the decision making.

A series of workshops were held using participatory methodologies, these included mapping, group work and the use of matrices and ranking. Participants geographically mapped area and indicated where different activities took place, they also developed a time-line of how and why this area has 'changed' physically over the years. They then developed a 'vision' for how they believed the area should be planned and used and then through group work and investigation (with others in the community) engaged in discussions over the disadvantages and advantages of various land-uses. These included subsistence agriculture, commercial agriculture, hunting and tourist lodge. The various land uses were then placed on a matrix and evaluated according to their 'worth'. Some of the criteria used for defining 'worth' were: maintenance of cultural lifestyle, gender equality, business opportunities and job opportunities, training/educational opportunities and conservation of biodiversity. What was most interesting was that the women (who constituted the largest part of the group) insisted on having mixed gender groups, rather than (what is the cultural norm) there being single sex groups. It transpired later that the reason for this was that they suspected that some of the land-users had grossly exaggerated the number of sacks of maize per field that they

were harvesting, as they were under the impression that the community would 'buy' them out if the land was put to alternative use! The worth of each option was then ranked, taking into account that none of the land users were necessarily mutually exclusive and that there might be a good argument for 'multiple' land uses.

At the conclusion of the most recent workshop with stake-holders, a decision was taken to set aside two thousand hectares of land adjacent to the Park (which would be stocked with game by the NPB) on which a small lodge (40 beds) would be built. A small section of this area would be left for organic gardens and the hunting option has been left open. Once the stocking rates have been worked out for game there might be the possibility of running some Nguni cattle, however the decision would need to be made as to whether having Nguni cattle or buffalo would be more preferable. The next step is to define the community equity (which requires that the NPB defines its traversing rights policy), develop a management and business plan and a tendering process and further facilitate the environmental education process, a tall order.

Whilst no environmental education principles were 'taught' throughout the whole process, the participants engaged and grappled with social and political influences on their local environment and one cannot stress enough the importance of the 'working knowledge' that emerges from this critical, community based enquiry. The kind of 'working knowledge' that comes from this knowledge is, according to Robottom (1993, Page 7), "transactional rather than transitional, generative/emergent rather than pre-ordinate, opportunistic rather than systematic and idiosyncratic rather than generalisable".

Whilst recognising that systematically organised and presented propositional knowledge has a role to play in environmental education, in contrast [especially in rural communities], "working knowledge" emerging from socially critical enquiry has increasingly important value both for education and for the environment (Robottom, 1993).

RECOMMENDATION

"In another moment Alice was through the glass, and had jumped lightly down in to the Looking-glass room."

(Lewis Carroll, Alice in Wonderland)

Socially critical environmental education is a useful way in which to 'view' and 'contribute to' the environmental education process. It allows us as environmental educators to establish bridges between People and Parks partners, to contribute towards the process of social transformation and to develop a framework of responding to environmental issues through participatory (AR&CPS) methodologies and "working knowledge" based enquiry. However in keeping with the ideology of socially critical environmental education we need to be ever vigilant of rarifying any grand meta-theory.

PAULA MORRISON

M.ED (ENVIRONMENTAL
EDUCATION)

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TUTORS: E. JANSE VAN RENSBURG
U. VAN HARMELEN

**A SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS OF THE
NATAL PARKS BOARD'S
COMMUNITY CONSERVATION PROGRAM
IN THE ZULULAND REGION**

A SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS OF THE NATAL PARKS BOARD'S COMMUNITY CONSERVATION PROGRAM IN THE ZULULAND REGION

INTRODUCTION

In this assignment I have undertaken a critical analysis and evaluation of the Natal Parks Board's Community Conservation Programme in the Zululand Region. More specifically I have looked at the origins (our)story of the programme, the value system as espoused by the organisation within the historical context and an analysis of the present programme. I have also, through critical (re)search and by using others stories, attempted to paint a clearer picture of the Programme, and, explore the biophysical impacts on the local environment and the political and socio-economic factors that impact on the Zululand Parks.

BACKGROUND

The Natal Parks Board (NPB) is a parastatal organisation responsible (along with the Department of Nature Conservation [KDNC]) for the conservation of the indigenous biodiversity of the Province of KwaZulu-Natal. The Natal Parks Board's Mission is:

"To conserve the indigenous biodiversity of KwaZulu-Natal, which includes the landscapes, ecosystems and processes upon which it depends, and to assist all people in ensuring the sustainable use of the biosphere."

In support of this mission the Natal Parks Board's 1992 Neighbour Relations policy states:

"...the Board BELIEVES that accelerated attention should be given to these issues where they concern neighbouring communities and UNDERTAKES to do so by concurrently:

1. creating trust through:
 - a. improved communications;
 - b. negotiating solutions to common problems;
 - c. encouraging participation in conservation activities;
2. developing environmental awareness, through education and interpretation programmes;
3. facilitating access to the material and spiritual benefits of protected areas through understanding neighbours' needs and encouraging access;
4. fostering the economic and social development of neighbouring communities and thus contributing to an improved quality of life or the continuous existence of an acceptable and/or desired lifestyle;
5. training staff in order that they may participate effectively in neighbour-related activities."

The Community Conservation (CC) Programme of the Board contributes towards the achievement of both the Mission and the Neighbour Policy primarily through working with people to ensure that the " benefits of nature conservation are fostered in society, within a framework of environmentally, socially and economically self-sustaining community-based natural resource management" (Sandwith 1997). Community Conservation programmes are consequently located within the objective framework of the Board.

The Natal Parks Board's Community Conservation Programme functions within the six NPB regions of KwaZulu-Natal. Each region has a CC team consisting of a regional co-ordinator and assistants. I am the team co-ordinator of the Zululand Region, and it is within this region that I shall be focusing my critical analysis.

HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE PROGRAMME: HOW THE NPB HAS RESPONDED TO THE ENVIRONMENT CRISIS.

In order to undertake this critical analysis of the Community Conservation Programme and to paint a clearer picture, it is necessary to journey back in time and (re)search how the Programme evolved out of a response to the organisation's changing view of the concept of 'environment'.

In 1952 the, then Natal Parks Game and Fish Preservation Board took control of Umfolozi Game Reserve armed with Ordinance 35 of 1947 which stated "Provision is made for the Board within Parks to.....take such steps as will ensure the security and preservation thereof and of the animal and vegetable life therein, in a natural state".

According to Morrison (1995:1) "historically people in the organisation have however, construed the notion of environment to mean only the bio-physical elements of our natural surroundings". She goes on to add "we perceived the environment as being only natural, consisting of plants, animals and the physical world; it was to the problems in the natural environment that the Natal Parks Board first responded".

According to Player (1995 pers. comm) the environmental crisis as understood by the preservationists of that time were the constant fear of deproclamation, poaching and inadequately protected boundaries. These risks were responded to by an aggressive media campaign (Player 1995 pers.comm), the deployment of more staff (Vincent 1970:43) and arresting more poachers. The first environmental education activities included school educational visits to Wilderness areas and the targeting of prominent politicians on Wilderness Trails. According to Hungerford and Volk (1990:55):

...this(behaviourist) thinking has largely been linked to the assumption that, if we make human beings more knowledgable, they will, in turn, become more aware of the environment and its problems, and, thus, be more motivated to act toward the environment in more responsible ways.....

During the 1960's the NPB mounted their very successful Operation Rhino in Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park. This was in response to a fear that the last remaining population of the southern species of the white rhino *Ceratotherium simum* might become extinct and therefore it would be visionary to spread the gene pool. This led to the sale and relocation of other game which was later to lay the foundation for the conservancies concept outside of formally protected areas. According to Morrison (1995:9) "so began a shift in thinking and 'preservation' became 'active management' through control and manipulation of nature...."

During the 1960's, environmental education in Umfolozi came to be seen as experiential learning excursions which, together with 'show and tell' teaching methods, were to provide people with real-life encounters in nature. These occurred in the form of the Umfolozi Wilderness Trails and, the trails undertaken by the Wilderness Leadership School. The latter were designed to give young people with leadership potential a 'spiritual experience'. According to Player (1982:7), a great admirer of Jung:

.....We were never in doubt either about the power of the individual. Many years later when I became familiar with the works of Carl Gustav Jung, he put into words what I believe we were doing by exposing leaders to wilderness.....

I believe these methods were closely linked to Steve von Matre's promotion of spiritual involvement aimed at 'immersing' one in nature.

During this time, transmission teaching was an approach used in Hluhluwe Game Reserve and according to Morrison (1995) methods to educate the public included 'targeting' of various groups and 'show and tell' lectures and demonstrations. This also included educational guidebooks and full length films. A quote from Hungerford and Volk reflects the behaviourist assumption within this approach: "It appears that before individuals can engage in responsible citizenship behaviour, they must understand the nature of the issue and its ecological and human implications".

The 1970's brought about divisional drift in the NPB and the line functions were separated into three divisions (conservation, interpretation and recreation). As education began to be seen as a tool for achieving conservation aims, a separate division (interpretation) was created in order to educate the public and neighbours about conservation. Prior to this all 'education' functions were the role of management. This divisional drift continued for 12 years and according to Morrison "environmental education 'interpretation' became a specialist function, remote and separate from conservation".

In 1975 the A.C.E. (African Conservation Education) programme was launched and according to Gcumisa (1982:3) it's aim was "...to get the conservation message across to as many African (black) people as possible". A top-down and didactic teaching approach was used; Gcumisa commented "like any didactic event, authority is essential for the maintenance of a desirable didactic situation".

During this decade and flowing into the 1980's the NPB scientists in Hluhluwe-Umfolozzi Park dominated the conservation managers, and with their unquestioning belief in science insisted that the Park was overstocked. This led to a large scale culling programme. The Park was only to recover from this during the early 1990's (Conway 1996 pers.comm).

In the 1980's the NPB in the Zululand Region adopted an approach to environmental education with the emphasis on interpretive methods, this included auto-trails, self-guided trails, brochures and video shows. According to Morrison (1995:11) "these targeted messages were used to validate the existence of the reserves and to encourage people to become 'aware' of their increasingly degraded environment". The function of the Interpretation Officer according to Vincent (1987:2) was :

...to provide a service primarily to reserve visitors, but also to schools and other groups in neighbouring communities. It is their main function to interpret the work of the Board and to put the Board's role in perspective....

This was in response to the growing antagonism to the NPB from neighbouring communities and the greater Natal (at that time) public. Towards the end of the 1980's and early 90's hostilities with neighbouring communities reached a crisis over the continual forages of hyaena (emanating from the Park) into the neighbouring communities. The Interpretive Officer of the time spent an entire year eradicating hyaena dens outside the Park, and Park management electrified the boundary fences. This resulted in an easing of tensions which facilitated better interaction with neighbours. According to Morrison (1995:13) "this laid the foundation for the implementation of the Neighbour Relations Policy which emerged in the 90's".

During the 1990's there was a growing realization that the existing policies and the Board's management style (NPB Neighbour Relations Policy 1992) in relation to its neighbours needed critical reflection. Through a series of participatory workshops involving NPB staff and some 'outsiders' the present Neighbour Relations Policy and supporting actions evolved.

Environmental Education was to become the shared responsibility of conservation and environmental education staff, and according to Morrison (1995:14) "the policy included for the first time, the notion of community development."

One of the initial responses to the local environment crisis was a pendulum swing away from 'interpretation' to the facilitation and implementation of a community development programme. Neighbours were seen as a 'threat' to the integrity of the Park and all efforts were put into developing trust and relationships with neighbours. This was accomplished through needs assessment (Participatory Rural Appraisal), the facilitation of 'projects' such as the building of schools, creches, clinics and water scheme, and training in community development.

In the past three years a more balanced response to the local environmental crisis has emerged with a more holistic understanding by the NPB of the concept 'environment'.

There is a recognition that whilst the local environment crisis is complex and diverse we need to work in partnership with neighbours towards social transformation through integrating the Park into the social, economic, cultural, political and biophysical systems at landscape level.

Over the past five decades we have seen enormous processural shifts in environment education in the Zululand Region. What began as wilderness education, evolved into interpretation, to conservancies and schools education, to include community development, action research, community problem solving and co-management. This then is the journey through which the present Community Conservation Programme emerged.

DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA: LOCATION, SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND BIOPHYSICAL.

The Zululand Region comprises the Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park (HUP) an area of 100 000 hectares and Mkuzi Game Reserve (MGR) an area of 47 000 hectares.

HUP is located west of the towns of Mtubatuba, KwaMsane and Hluhluwe and is surrounded by former KwaZulu homelands. These rural communities include 11 chieftain (amaKhosi) wards. Mkuzi Game Reserve is located east of the Ubombo mountains and Mkuzi village. Communities neighbouring Mkuzi include four chieftain wards and a number of commercial game farmers.

The political structures of these rural communities constitute three spheres of government, the Transitional Local Councils (TLC's) which have jurisdiction over the towns, the sub-Regional councillors who have virtually no power, and in the rural areas chiefs and headman. According to the Association for Rural Advancement (AFRA 1990:3) "traditional chiefs are salaried agents of the provincial government which has a certain political agenda and they are no longer independent representatives of the people". Local rural people are subjected therefore to an undemocratic and often corrupt form of governance.

People residing in these areas are mostly small scale subsistence farmers, many of whom were tenant farmers having relocated here after having been forcibly removed from farms in Northern Natal (Hlabisa 1995 pers.comm). There are high levels of unemployment (Joint Services Board 1995:9) and poverty in this area. The Natal Parks Board is the biggest major employer and some 720 people are directly employed in conservation from a population of around 400 000 surrounding the protected areas. Most of the bread-winners are migrant labourers and as a result many women are left to fend for their families. As the major natural resources users, women, (especially those who are illiterate and therefore unemployed) are forced to overutilize these resources (wood, incema, reeds and thatch) in order to survive.

According to Morrison

...the biophysical environment of this region has been greatly affected by these factors. Overstocking, population expansion and the migrant labour system has led to overgrazing, deforestation and overutilization of natural resources. The results are social conflict over a declining resource base and lack of economic growth, unemployment and development(Morrison 1995:6).

It is to these environmental issues that the Community Conservation Programme is responding.

THE PRESENT COMMUNITY CONSERVATION PROGRAMME

The Community Conservation team in the Zululand Region includes, a co-ordinator (Community Conservation Officer Zululand), three assistants located in each of the reserves (Hluhluwe, Umfolozi and Mkuzi), a Community Development Officer (CDO) who is shared with the St Lucia Region and a part-time clerk who is responsible for the teams administrative functions. There are also 7 part-time Community Conservation Assistants (CCA's) who report to the Section Rangers. An additional member of the team is the Hluhluwe Nursery Project Co-Ordinator (HNPC), who has been contracted in to work on this project for four years.

The CC team's responsibility include the following programmes:

1. **Staff Development** - the development and teaching of environmental education and life skills to staff. This includes the part-time CCA's who work in the communities adjacent to the section in which they reside.
2. **Partnerships Programme** - Establishing structured (institutional) communication channels with neighbours, focusing on relationship building in order to establish trust, resolve conflict and develop partnership projects.

However, in the main they include three tiers; Induna (headman) ward level, Inkosi (Chief) ward level, and the local Area Board's (LAB's) which include the NPB and community leaders from the greater Region.

The LAB's are a decision making Board which is responsible for the management of the Park and the development of policy relating to individual Parks (the powers of these Boards are presently being promulgated) .

3. **Eco-Partners Programme** - facilitation of eco-tourism opportunities with neighbouring communities and the establishment of Community Conservation Areas (CCA's). This includes acting as broker between communities and other partners or funding agencies. This programme also includes three curio markets, community Bed and Breakfasts, a traditional village, community guiding and marketing cultural activities.
4. **Community Development** - brokering and facilitation of community development. This includes capacity building, building of networks and facilitation of funding for development projects in relation to the conservation of biodiversity. This is an extensive training programme co-ordinated by the Community Development Officer and includes training in; committee skills, book-keeping, running projects, marketing and basic business skills.
5. **Biodiversity Education** - promotion of biodiversity education through eco-clubs, schools, public groups, agencies and organisation. This includes running teacher workshops and curriculum support, support for the eco-clubs network, establishing resource centres in schools which service different geographical areas, using the Park as an educational resource and support for the visitor programme through the development of resources (pamphlets, self-guided trails, exhibitions). This also includes action research and community problem solving.
6. **Resource Users Programme** - Education and support for the users of indigenous resources with the view to promoting sustainable living. More specifically this includes the traditional healers (*iziNyanga's*) programme and the indigenous nursery at Hilltop.

It needs to be noted here that whilst I have listed six 'programmes', in practise it is one integrated programme with all programmes interlinking in order to respond to the multi-dimensional environment crisis.

DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

Although I have used both an interview schedule and a questionnaire as part of my research in this situational analysis, I also need to explain that we (the CC team) are constantly reflecting on and evaluating our work and I have included these reflections in this analysis.

Our reflections take many forms : weekly reports, two-weekly team meetings, monthly meetings of stake-holders (Non-Government Organisations, Government Organisation's and community leaders), meetings with the traditional and political leadership, meetings with the greater Community Conservation team (from the other Regions), annual reports, and participatory rural activities. I have not in this research taken either a strong positive, interpretivist or critical theory approach, (as I understand them) rather I have 'borrowed' from all three in an attempt to see for myself their advantages and limitations.

About the Interviews

Although I believe that I should have undertaken the questionnaires first and then gone back to some of the 'subjects' for interviews based on the questionnaires, I put the cart before the horse and started with the interviews. This was done because I had a rare opportunity of spending a weekend away with a number of my colleagues which gave me an opportunity to explain to my colleagues about the analysis and then to interview six people from three different reserves. These included the Chief Conservator (Zululand), the three Officers-in-Charge from Mkuzi, Hluhluwe and Umfolozi, the Audit Officer (Zululand) and the Community Conservation Assistant for Hluhluwe.

I developed a structured interview schedule based on the requirements of the assignment and because I wanted to know more about my colleagues' feelings towards problems/issues facing the Natal Parks Board in the Zululand Region. Although I intended the duration of each interview to be ten minutes, I soon realised that they would take longer as my colleagues were eager to take this opportunity to voice their concerns on a one-to-one basis.

The advantage of such interviews is that if the interviewer is a trusted 'insider' then the interviewees will raise all manner of concerns which they would not do in either formal meetings, reports or with 'outsiders'. As there was already a relationship of trust and I was familiar with the background information, I was also able to probe issues that the subjects discussed which helped me to understand peoples' viewpoints and perceptions. One of the advantages of the interviews was the way in which I sequenced the questions (there was a logical progression towards action taking). This afforded me the opportunity at the end of the interview to co-develop an action plan with each of my colleagues (included as addendum 1). However, a disadvantage of the trusting relationship between interviewer and interviewee is that it gives opportunities for discussing issues 'irrelevant' to the research. I did not use a tape recorder as I felt it would inhibit my colleagues responses, however I think taping the interview would have enabled me to listen more carefully and be more aware of my colleagues' unspoken responses (body language).

For this situational analysis, I have fused my understanding of the interviews (see addendum 2 for example) with the responses to the questionnaire (see addendum 3 for example) as I believe these different research methods complement each other in this context.

About the questionnaire

In developing the questionnaire I decided first on the purpose of the evaluation (to undertake a situational analysis of my work situation); I then translated this into particular objectives. The objectives were then developed into questions which, when responded to, would reveal certain variables (how much, how many etc.) as well as tell me what the respondents thought and felt about certain issues. There was also a need to experiment, to see the usefulness of open and closed questions, and to combine qualitative and quantitative "techniques and procedures" (Howe 1992). I wanted to use "alternative paradigms" and move beyond the qualitative/quantitative debate.

As I have had no experience in formal academic research I was guided in the methodology by my colleagues, by readings, and by my own knowledge and experiences (intuitive).

After developing a draft questionnaire I showed it to two colleagues who helped me modify it; unfortunately time precluded me from undertaking a trial run. I believe a trial run would have enabled me to rephrase some questions in order to make the questionnaire more accessible to some colleagues who were not comfortable with the language used (I did not want the questionnaire to become a gate-keeping exercise).

The questionnaire was then sent to 13 colleagues and 12 were completed and returned to me. The respondents included: the CCZ, the Regional Scientist, a Technical Assistant, one Officer-in-Charge, two Community Conservation Assistants, the HNPC, the CDO and four Section Rangers.

I shall discuss the research findings of the questionnaire and my understanding of the interviews around four themes. The overall objectives were; to explore how my colleagues felt about and understood the Community Conservation Programme and the local environmental crisis, to establish what resources were being provided for the Programme, to establish who they were networking and working with and to elicit some ideas for planning a way forward.

Theme 1

[The objective here was to gather personal details and to establish if Community Conservation featured in the list of priorities in my colleagues' areas of responsibilities and to find out what my colleagues thought the ethos/philosophy was behind the NPB Community Conservation Programme.]

My colleagues have a wide and diverse range of responsibilities these range from law enforcement, biological research and administration through to tourism and community conservation. However, I am concerned that Community Conservation was not listed as a top priority by any colleague except for those directly involved in the programme. I also noticed that one of the Section Rangers did not include it at all on his list of responsibilities. (Later in the questionnaire he stated that he felt this was a specialist function.)

According to those colleagues that were interviewed there was mutual consent that the ethos for the Community Conservation Programme was for the conservation of biodiversity and to improve quality of life of the neighbouring communities. However one colleague felt that it was really a response to; the threats from neighbours to the continued survival of the Park. (I believe this response is shared with many of our neighbours!!)

Theme 2

[The objective here was to look at; the different understanding my colleagues have of the broader problems/issues/threats facing the Parks, to look at the range of issues and to look at how they perceived the economic, social and political issues to impact on the biophysical dimension of the environment].

A whole range of biophysical issues were cited these included: the shrinkage and depletion of biodiversity, habitat transformation due to lack of natural processes, siltation and poor quality of the rivers, and alien plant invasions. What was interesting was that all three of my Zulu colleagues and the HNPC mentioned deforestation; perhaps this was a result of their intimate indigenous knowledge of indigenous plants or the fact that in their homes the former rely to a great extent on wood for fuel.

A whole range of social, economic and political issues were mentioned, these included over-population, unemployment, poverty, political intolerance and undemocratic structures, and violence. Again only my Community Conservation colleagues cited loss of land or need for land as a pressing issue, which raises the question as to whether understanding and knowledge are socially constructed. Perhaps this needs to be seen against the background of the conflict that has arisen in some areas adjacent to the Park as a result of land claims. Another interesting observation was the fact that health and pre-school care problems were cited by the only woman respondent.

I had thought that the last question in this theme (section B of the questionnaire) seemed almost too simple and perhaps a little paternalistic, but some of my colleagues struggled to make the connections (some did not respond at all); perhaps it required a little thinking and other pressures were calling! !!

However according to the responses, overpopulation leading to overuse of natural resources leading to loss of biodiversity, poverty and an unsustainable way of living seemed to be where the links were most clearly made. Another link directly impacting on the management of the Park was the incidence of poaching (subsistence) which was linked to poor economics, poverty and desperate measures to survive.

Whilst people pressures, political instability and land demands/claims appeared more severely in the form of a threat to the Parks, there appeared to be general perception that the organisation itself has institutional problems which contribute towards threatening the existence of the Parks. These included demotivated staff, staff lacking integrity and 'quality', outdated policies and lack of resources. This could be as a result of clarity/communication about the impending amalgamation (between the NPB and the KDNC), the new salary structures and affirmative action policies.

Theme 3

[The objective here was to look at the extent of resources (time, people, money, logistics) that were being allocated to the CC programme and where those efforts were concentrated. In the questionnaire I specifically used some closed questions and quantitative questions in order to evaluate the usefulness of these methods in research design].

From the responses it is evident that the majority of staff who are not part of the CC team only allocate 0 - 20% of their time to carrying out Community Conservation work. Those staff who indicated that they are allocating a lot of time to undertaking CC work are the CC team, one OIC and the HNPC.

Whilst the responses to this question did indicate how much time people were spending on the programme it did not include any kind of qualitative 'evaluation' of the time spent on the programme and therefore I think it's usefulness was limited.

Additional information which emerged from this section (closed question) was the lack of communication between the CCA's and the Section Rangers which I believe is a fundamental flaw in the system that needs to be addressed.

The quantitative data relating to resources being allocated to carrying out the CC Programme will be absolutely vital in motivating for more funding for the Programme. I have enclosed this information as Addendum 4.

After having assessed section C of the questionnaire, I believe that both closed questions and quantitative data can be most useful in research design if used in conjunction with other research methods.

Theme 4

[The objective for this theme was to look at the range of activities being undertaken, the extent of the networking and to list strengths and weaknesses of the CC programme as well as listing some ideas for the way forward].

My colleagues are involved in a range of fora/and a diverse range of activities. The CC team meet with virtually all local fora listed, at both a formal and informal level, whilst senior colleagues (OIC's and CCZ) work with forums that are regionally based. Section Rangers seem to predominantly work informally at ward level with individual *iziNduna* and *amaKhosi*. This latter is an area of concern and I believe that the interaction with *iziNduna* should always include a formal forum in order to facilitate better communication and to alleviate the criticism from local leadership that they are not always aware of NPB activities within their constituencies.

Section D of the questionnaire within this theme, included a mini SWO(T) (strengths, weaknesses and opportunities) analysis. The responses to these questions have been invaluable in planning two workshops for the Zululand Region and to be used as a framework to engage in planning a way forward. However, used out of context of the bigger picture and without other methods of evaluation and critical reflection, they have limited value either for research or for evaluation.

The overwhelming weakness of the CC programme which emerged out of the SWO(T) analysis is the lack of resources (people, money and logistics).

Other weaknesses included: Protected Area Managers are not skilled in Community Conservation, Section Rangers have not really 'bought' into the Programme and the CC team are seen as specialists so there is no need for others to take on the responsibility of this function.

Both interviews and questionnaires stressed the motivation and commitment of the CC team as a strength. Other strengths included the developing trust and communication with neighbours, communities having a better understanding of conservation through their active participation in community problems solving, and the conservation of biodiversity was being actively practised both in and outside of the Parks.

In synthesising 'the way forward' I have taken all the suggestions and comments and compiled them into an action list. This will contribute towards further workshops both with staff of the NPB and neighbouring communities and the development of policy.

CONCLUSION

As stated earlier I do not have experience in academic research , I therefore undertook in this research to 'borrow' from a range of different approaches to explore their limitations and usefulness. I used a questionnaire with both open and closed questions, I undertook both a formal interview schedule and informal 'chats', I researched reports, publications and historical documents, I used information from workshops and meetings and advice from my colleagues. I have used both quantitative and qualitative research methods and have been objective and subjective. Some information I have interpreted and other information I have used at face value.

Whilst I started out with the assumption that all questionnaires and formal interview schedules were a 'positivistic' approach to research, through exploration I discovered that a 'suite' of different methods and approaches have added value to and strengthened the research design and have enabled me to undertake a more critical reflexive situational analysis.

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MAMBENI ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTRE WORKSHOP

HELD AT MASINDA LODGE, UMFOLOZI GAME RESERVE
ON 21/4/97 AT 09H00

1. WELCOME

Mrs Morrison welcomed everyone present and thanked the participants for travelling so far to attend this very important meeting..

2. PRESENT

See attached register.

3. WORKSHOP PROTOCOL

Mr Nick Shaw briefly outlined the 'etiquette' for the workshop:

Idea generosity - each person is an expert in his/her own field - feel comfortable to say what you want to say..

Respect - respect other's opinions

Time - make contributions brief so that everyone will have an opportunity to participate..

Participation - all are encouraged to participate and contribute.

4. A SELECTION OF 'STORIES'

Ms Morrison said that the objective of the workshop was to share and discuss stories in order to better understand the needs, options and current perspectives on Environmental Education Field Centres. This was necessary for the Zululand team as they are currently developing a project plan for the Mambeni Environmental Education Centre. Building on this Centre is to commence at the end of July 1997.

Participants then briefly described the activities that they were involved in.

4.1 NATAL PARKS BOARD'S STORY

Ms Morrison outlined the Natal Parks Board's story and explained the history of the development of the centre and its proposed location.

Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park is the biggest consolidated protected area in KwaZulu-Natal and amongst the oldest proclaimed areas in Africa. Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park has a unique diversity of flora and fauna and boasts 'the big five'. Since the early 1950's children have been visiting the Park on educational programmes.

These early environmental awareness programmes included the Wilderness Leadership School and the Unfolozi Wilderness Trails.

Since these early days other programmes have been undertaken these included the African Conservation Education Programme (A.C.E.) the African Chiefs Training (A.C.T) Programme, interpretation programmes, environmental awareness and community development.

Today the Zululand Community Conservation Programme has broadened to include a programme structured around interrelated themes and community needs that include; schools , staff development , natural resource utilization , forums, community eco-tourism, community development and reserve visitors. The Community Conservation team are involved in a diverse range of activities although there has also been the realization that with the limited resources (people, vehicles, budget) available, the team cannot be 'all things to all people'.

Over the past number of years the numbers of school children visiting the Park has increased enormously and approximately 6 000 students visited the Park this past year, half of whom were from neighbouring communities. As there is a serious lack of facilities (ablutions and picnic sites) for large groups in the Park, most school groups are only able to spend a day in the Park. Local schools sometimes assist schools who have travelled distances by providing accommodation in class-rooms.

Structured educational programmes for schools and communities undertaken by the Community Conservation Staff are done with great difficulty owing to the lack of appropriate facilities and resources. During 1994 application was made to Province for funding for a Environmental Education/Community Resource Centre in HUP, an amount of R350 000 was allocated by Province for this project.

Mr. O'Donoghue pointed out that in the 1960's money was set aside for schools by the Government for the purpose of excursions, this funding has since been terminated. In the 1980's all services to schools provided by the Natal Parks Board were stopped and the Education Department had to provide Environmental Education services to schools. He went on to add that he thought that at present , the NPB do not have the logistics to deal with scholars and that therefore we should concentrate all efforts on the teachers and by doing that hopefully reach more children.

Ms Morrison said that a number of sites had been looked at for the EE centre and with input from the local communities , a site at Mambeni has finally been selected.

In response to a question from Tim Wright about the status of the Mlaba centre, the meeting then went on to discuss this former KDNC EE centre which is located just outside Cengeni gate (Umfolozi Game Reserve). According to Ms Morrison the Centre has been totally neglected and is derelict.

4.2 THE WILDLIFE AND ENVIRONMENT SOCIETY'S STORY

Mr Wright from the Wildlife and Environment Society (WES) explained that they have managed to mix two elements of EE together i.e. taking people into the wild and also giving curriculum support. He said that it is best to try and establish what you do best and concentrate on that, you cannot be all things to everyone.

The WES have four centres in KwaZulu-Natal, with Twin Streams, near Mtunzini being the newest venture. He added that there is a big demand for environmental centres and that in 1996, some 30 000 children visited the WES centres.

The WES are presently concentrating on supporting teachers with resources and curriculum support, he added that the WES centre's have to be financially viable. He said that the WES would support the NAB's MAMBENI EE Centre through offering training opportunities and resources (Sharpened).

Mr Shaw stressed that the Mambeni EE Centre needs to be run as a business. He added that the Drakensberg Wetland Project Centre is very busy for 5 months of the year and was able to break even, though the rest of the year was fairly quiet.

4.3 ST LUCIA EDUCATION CENTRE STORY

Mrs Jone Porter gave a description of the Centre.

This Centre consists of a large dormitory with an outside kitchen. It has been built on a low maintenance basis and due to lack of resources and staff, the St Lucia Region are unable to offer any assistance with guides or curriculum support. Costs are kept as low as possible

Mrs Porter cautioned against asking Central reservations to take over the bookings of the EE centre as it then became very difficult to include local schools in the use of the EE Centre.

4.4 WILDERNESS LEADERSHIP SCHOOL'S STORY

Mr Bruce Dell from the Wilderness Leadership School (WLS) explained that their operation was run totally differently, and that only a third of people taken out on Wilderness Trails are children. He said that the WLS take people out into the wilderness to personally experience 'the wild' in the hope that these experiences will impact positively on their lives and that they will want to share these experiences.. The emphasis is on smaller groups and the "spiritual" aspect of Wilderness. The Wilderness Leadership School undertake five day trails.

Mr Dell went on to add that the WLS has two projects that they are involved in these are: the wilderness trails and the imbewu project.

The imbewu project is aimed at assisting children to rediscover their heritage during four day programmes in the parks. It includes the use of retired black game rangers as key teachers in that these 'old wise men' impart their wisdom at night through stories to the children and also share their knowledge with the newer game guards. The aim is to 'root conservation in an African context'.

WLS try to identify potential leaders (amongst school groups) who have the potential to pass on wilderness knowledge. In response to a question from Ms Morrison, Mr Dell said that the main drawback of the programme appears that the WLS at present offer no support after the 'wilderness' experience.

WLS apply different methods to fundraise. Two examples are; the table mountain spring water project (spring water is sold and a percentage of the profits go the WLS) and the sponsoring of underprivileged children by overseas funders..

4.5 THE NATAL EDUCATION'S STORY

Mr Roger Gaisford, from the Eshowe Environmental Education Centre said that in the past the Centre was run by the Natal Education Dept. for white children to learn environmental education and the need to protect the environment. This has changed somewhat and now the emphasis is on programme and curriculum support for teachers. Their programmes include; studies on man-made effects on the environment and economics e.g. visits to sugar farms and Richards Bay. He stressed the importance of practising cross curricular environmental awareness. He said that teachers need to put this across everyday to their pupils. The Centre is fortunate in that it is at present heavily subsidised, but Mr Gaisford was unsure how long this situation would continue. Large groups can be accommodated at low cost at the hostel, although there is only one teacher to assist.

4.6 THE KDNC'S STORY

Mr Anton Mkabela, from Ndumu Centre, gave a brief background to this centre. Phase one of the Centre is now complete, but due to various problems the Centre is not operational. Mr Mkabele said the aim of the KDNC is to empower local communities to manage their natural resources through environmental education. They also train adults in literacy and partnership based projects in eco-tourism.

Mr O'Donoghue added that after hearing all the stories he felt that we all actually have the same needs. He stressed that it did not matter whether it was wilderness or wildlife education, as long as it was good education. He said that throughout history people have always journeyed away to reflect on their situation and that we need to look at how best the child's education needs can be met, by making use of the wild areas available.

The meeting then developed a number of questions which would point the way forward for the Zululand Community Conservation team. Ms Morrison asked that the meeting participants divide into groups and discuss these issues.

5. REPORT BACK

5.1 WHO IS LIKELY TO BE THE USER GROUP FOR THE CENTRE ?

Community interest groups
Day visitors and overnighers
Priority should be given to local groups and others in Natal
Environmental societies or clubs
School teachers and students
Nature conservation staff e.g. trails.

5.2 SUSTAIN ABILITY (what costing possibilities need to be considered)

Comfort level - do you want luxury or just a clean bed
Food, accommodation etc., if food is catered for aim to keep under R20 00 p.p.p.d,
Accommodation - depends on service, bedding, electricity
Transport (local taxies rather than hiring vehicles)
Entrance and accommodation tariffs should be equal for all
Building must be well planned e.g. low maintenance, refuse disposal, functional equipment
Preferential bookings for local schools
External funding should be avoided as there are always strings attached
Recommended tariff of R10 00 per person per day (not for overnight stay)
Make use of contract staff rather than permanent staff e.g. students and local retired game guards..

5.3 INFRASTRUCTURE

Must be able to accommodate up to 80 pupils.
Preferably 4 different accommodation units so that different groups could be accommodated .
Kitchen equipment must be functional and user friendly.
Self-catering option must be available.
Dormitories must have different sexes separate with entrance/exit passing the teachers room - Wagondrift design is good.
Teachers accommodation should be attached to pupils, but should allow for privacy.
Basic, clean accommodation.
Open air boma for braaiing.
Open space for games e.g. soccer, volley ball and a mud hole where the children can get dirty.
An area for non-environmental activity for night time e.g. televideo.

5.4 TOOLS (what resource support needed for good teaching and learning)

Booklets and field guides must be clearly marked - what can be taken away and what must remain at the centre.

Writing boards - white boards.

Trails, both self-guided and guided.(suggest trail to rhino pens)

Packages for subject studies e.g. water testing kits.

Curriculum must cover every area of learning (cross-curriculum).

Action based programmes.

Experimental & practical hands on activities.

Staff manning the centre must be friendly and sociable.

Will the services of a teacher be available or must the teacher accompanying the group do everything.

5.5 PROGRAMME (should a programme/curriculum be provided)

Supply writing materials.

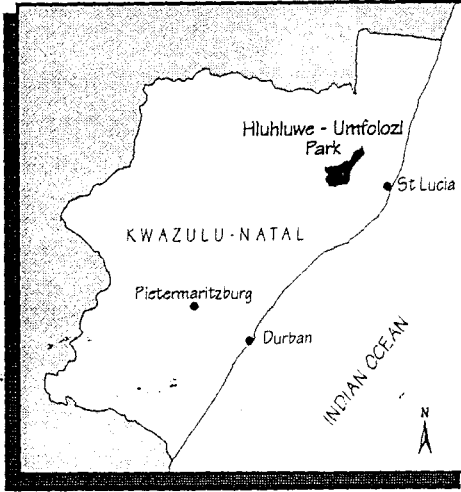
Animals (big and small) are a resource.





Game viewing.

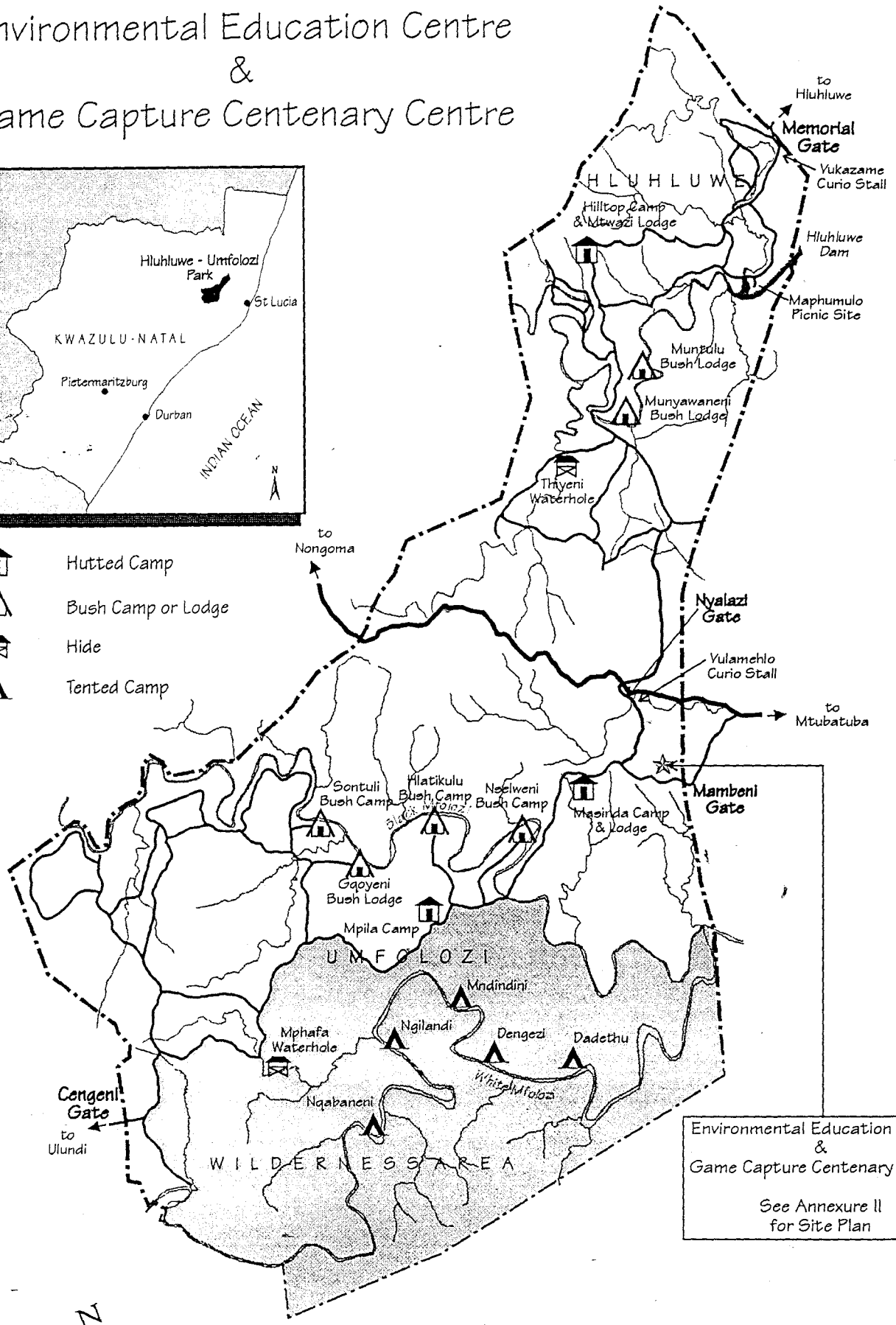
Worksheets.

6. The workshop closed at 16h00 and Ms Morrison thanked all for contributing to the 'way forward' for the Mambeni EE Centre.

Hluhluwe - Umfolozi Park Environmental Education Centre & Game Capture Centenary Centre

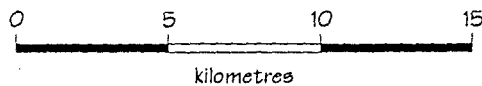


-  Hutted Camp
-  Bush Camp or Lodge
-  Hide
-  Tented Camp



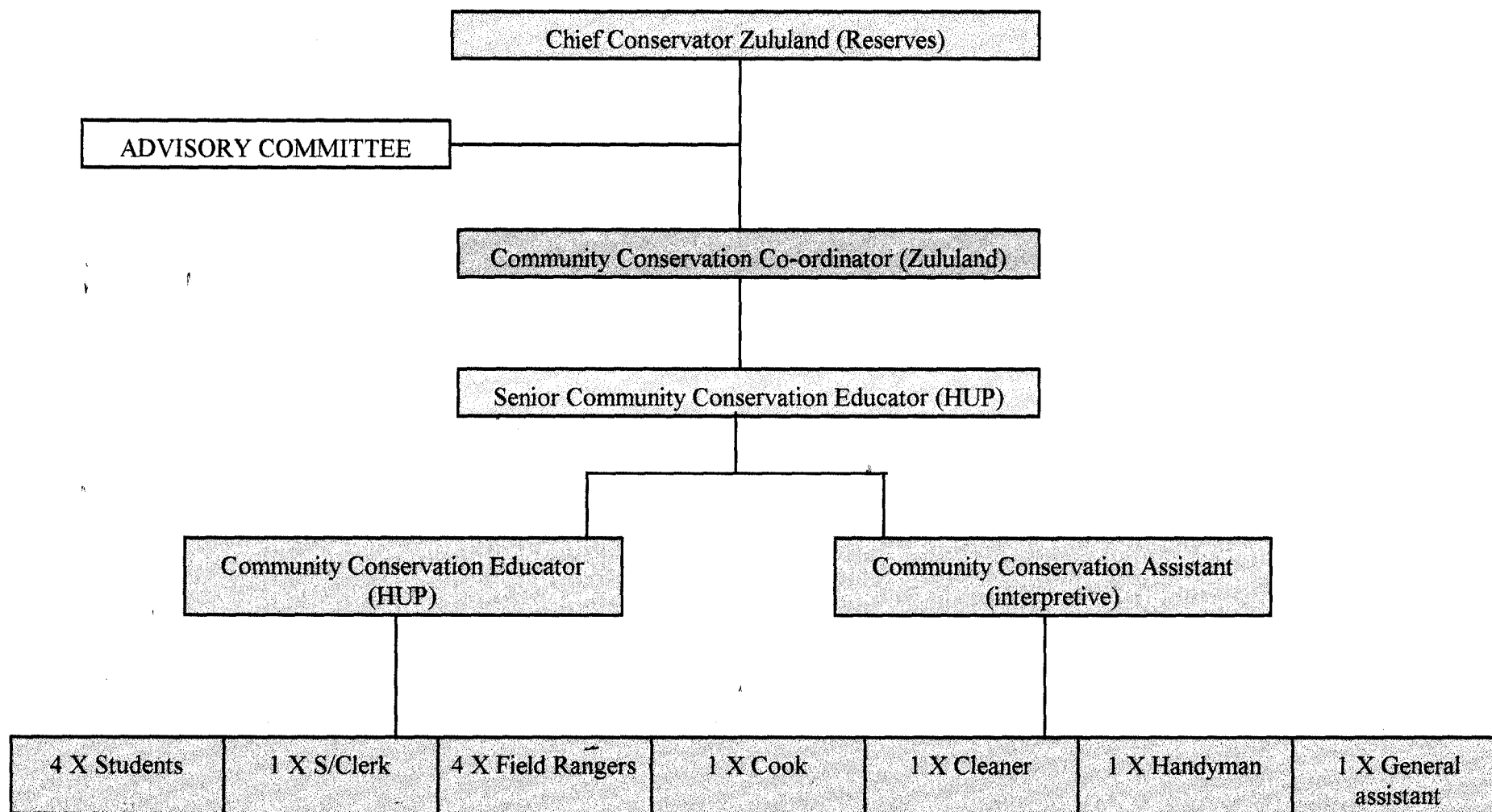
Environmental Education Centre
&
Game Capture Centenary Centre

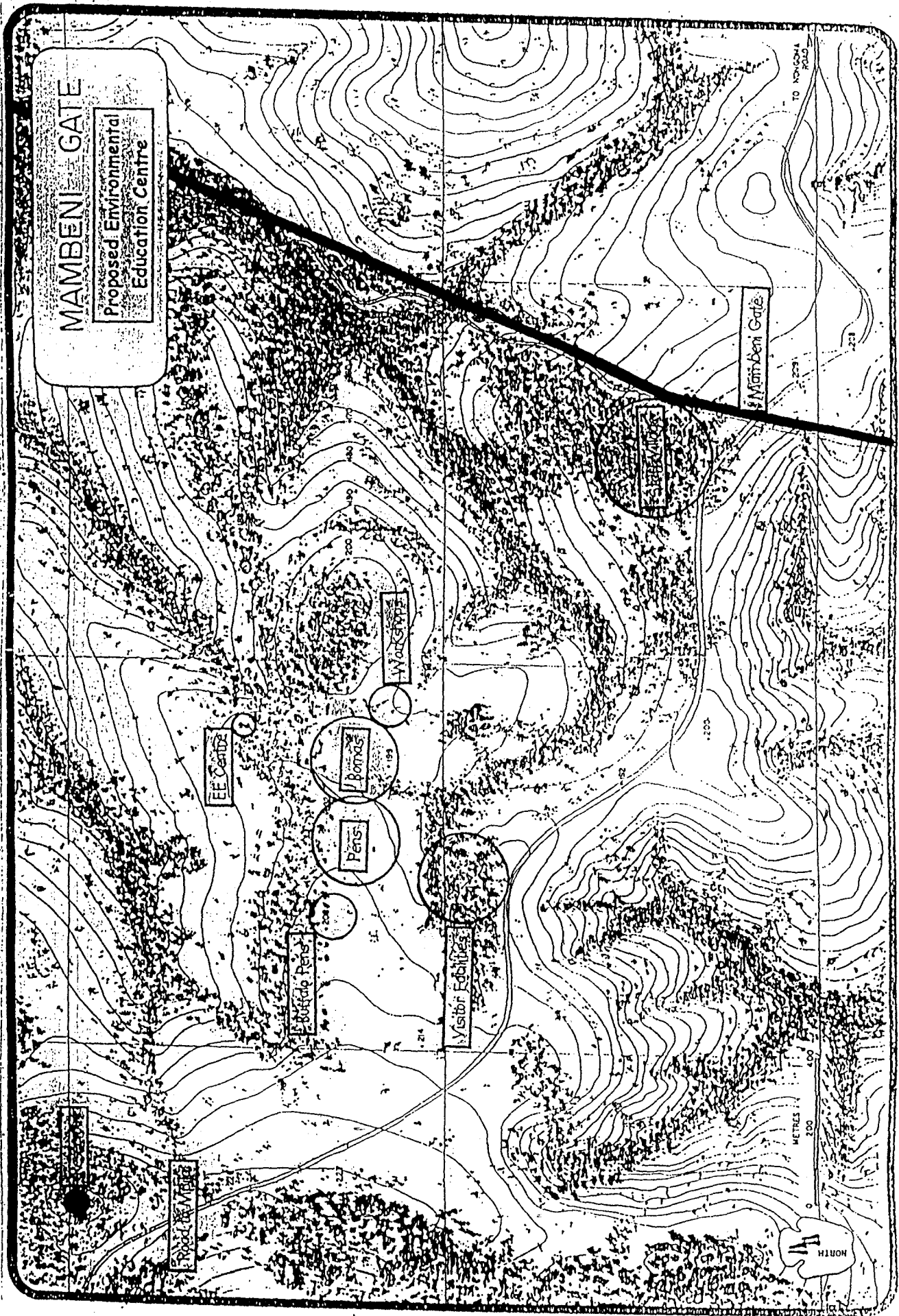
See Annexure II
for Site Plan

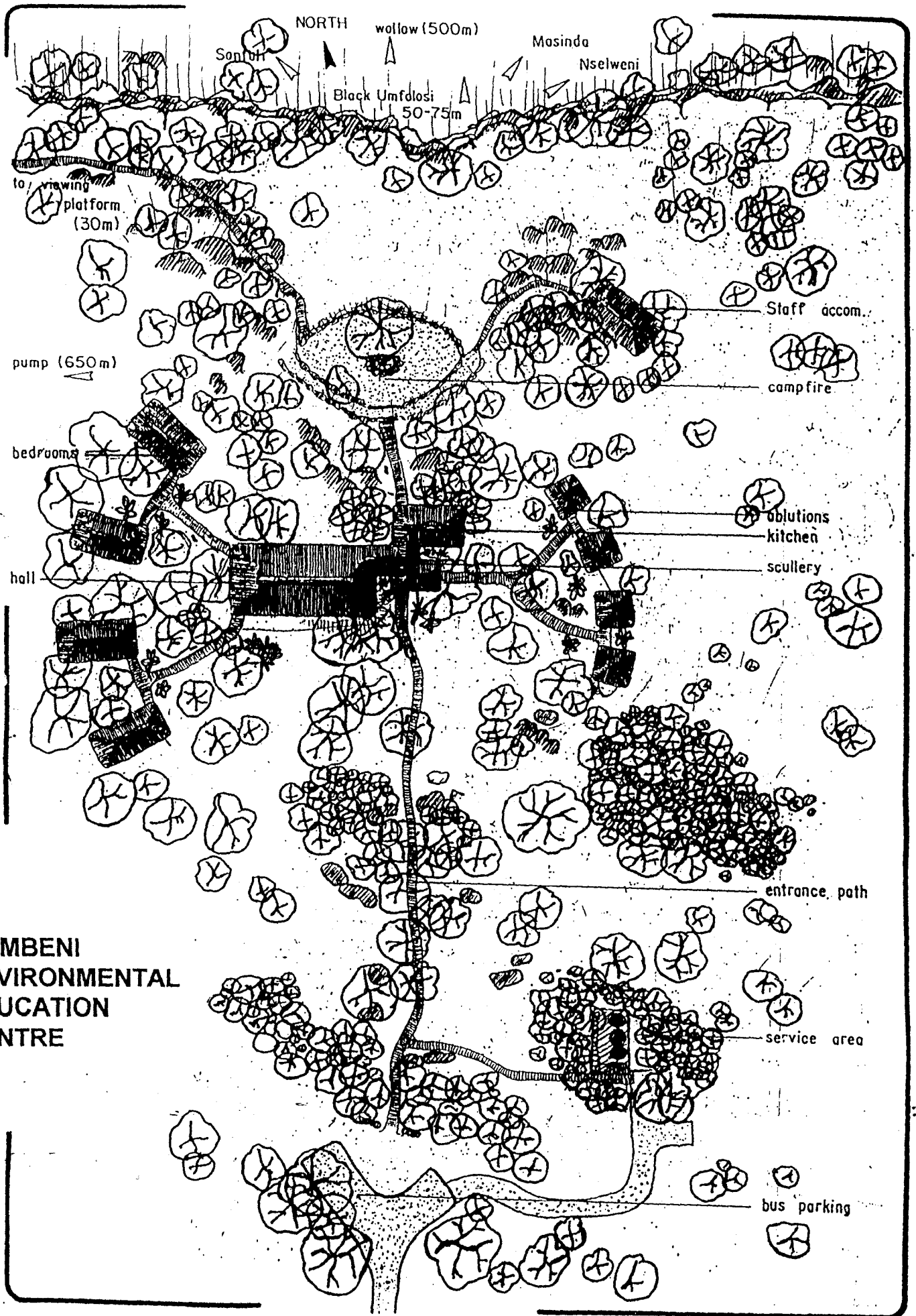


KWA-ZULU NATAL NATURE CONSERVATION SERVICE

MANAGEMENT DENDROGRAM FOR MAMBENI ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTRE







**MAMBENI
ENVIRONMENTAL
EDUCATION
CENTRE**

PAULA MORRISON

M.ED. (ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION)

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**TUTORS: E. JANSE VAN RENSBURG
U. VAN HARMELEN**

**ANALYSING SOCIAL SCIENCE
RESEARCH TRADITIONS**

ANALYSING SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH TRADITIONS

There are times in life when the question of knowing if one can think differently than one thinks, and perceive differently than one sees, is absolutely necessary if one is to go on looking and reflecting at all.

(Michel Foucault 1990: 8-9 in Gough 1997: 1)

The research paper that I have chosen to analyse is; *Celebrating our subjectivity, Feminist participatory research with environmental educators* by Karen Malone at the Faculty of Education Deakin University, Australia. I have selected this quote from Foucault (as an example of constructed discontinuity in knowledge creation with reflexivity) which I believe; reflects the researchers changing position/role in this research process and my own journey in being able to 'think differently' and 'perceive differently' in 'looking' and 'reflecting' on this research paper.

This feminist participatory research story is as much about the researchers 'lived experience' and de-centring of perspectives as it is about giving an account of the struggles of the people whose 'voices' are represented alongside hers.

I found it significant that the researcher talks about the [research] question being raised rather than 'asked'. This illustrates how a reflexive de-centring within a lived experience can give 'rise' to questions that are debated and clarified in the developing story. In this research, a pre-ordinate question is not asked, on the contrary the research question 'rises' out of the lived experience and within the research process itself. The researcher 'raises' the question;

Can we dissociate feeling from knowing, the conscious from the subconscious or the person from the researcher ? (Malone, 1993:1)

The text embodies a feeling for knowing in the person of the researcher consciously engaged in making what may have been subconscious and obscure, more explicit and clear. This can be seen in the struggle within the 'setting' for this research narrative which is Laverton Park, an urban middle-class suburb of Melbourne where members of the school community struggle to save their school and its environmental education program (ibid 1). The researcher is invited

[through the university at which she is a staff member] to come and support the community endeavours to keep the school open. From her 'insiders' perspective she paints the detailed social, political and historical context of the 'problem' as she weaves it into a rich narrative which emerges through multiple 'voices' represented alongside hers .

At the onset of the research the researcher adopts an 'outsider' posture initially using this lens for looking into the 'glass bowl' of Laverton Park (ibid 6). She uses the words 'my research' - indicating that she is driving the research agenda and holds the locus of power. Her intentions for an ethnographic research design using observation , documenting and interpreting gradually recede as she is drawn into the 'inside' of the school community as her interviewing schedule begins. This heralds in a significant shift for the researcher as the distinctions between herself and those with whom she is researching , become blurred. As she acknowledges the role of her own multiple 'voices' [those of teacher mother, community member, activist] (ibid 7) as a women, she becomes more involved at a personal level with the community's struggle and becomes 'subsumed' in their research process and in their research goals. In her words;

The fundamental goal of their research is to challenge the power relationships that existed between the community and the authorities as was made clear to me by one of the participants (ibid 7)

She goes on to add that she '*became committed to the request of the participants to produce an account of their struggles in a form that would come to locate and recognise them as individuals*' (ibid 7). Clearly her research agenda has changed from an interpretive interest, as she works alongside the participants, sharing their pains and fears, and struggles to find a compromise between the tension of detached 'objectivity' and involved insights. This is a struggle with herself as researcher looking in/on the research process and, locating herself amongst the 'researched' within the shared struggle of the research process.

During these processes the locus of power changes and comes to be shared with other participants who then become recognizable 'voices' in the research. In her words;

By presenting my voice alongside, the voices of others, the research evolves as research with and by the participants rather than about or for participants.

This brings in the second major methodological shift as the research process develops and in the researchers words she adopts an 'empathetic, democratic and reflexive position towards power relationships by adopting a feminist perspective'(ibid 10). Her need to position herself in the research as a 'woman' and researcher contribute to the way in which the research emerges. According to Lather, (1991 in Gough 1997:5);

To do feminist research is to put the social construction of gender at the centre of one's inquiry.....feminist researchers see gender as a basic organising principle which profoundly shapes and/or mediates the concrete conditions of our lives

This changed 'researcher' role prompts the researcher to question her own place in the research process as she get's personally involved and forms relationships with the participants. She reflects as an integral aspect of the narrative her developing subjectivity and value-position and how these relationships influence and inform "her changing sense of 'self'" (ibid 10) . According to Shulamit Reinharz (1992:195 in Malone 1993:10) whilst this is not a common intention in feminist research it is a common consequence.

Challenging traditional participatory research, new forms of knowing/knowledge are created as participants share the power and take on both ownership of information and action. This is one of the cornerstones of participatory research , the intersubjective symbiotic relationship of researcher in action, evident in how the researcher views its purpose;

the purpose of participatory research is not to describe social reality (understanding 'what it is') but to transform reality by providing a vision of 'what could be'.

The outcome of the research is an emerging [or move towards identifying] framework for feminist participatory research which has evolved out of lived experience and which gives 'space' for and representation to participants voices. The researcher also clearly recognizes

[celebrates] that her ontological view and subjectivity are 'constructed within an historical and political context'. For the participants it is about the sharing of power and 'ownership' of information within the developing narrative/struggle.

The narrative style of the research which includes the participants voices (not dissimilar to Patti Lather's : *Troubling the Angels, Women living with HIV/AIDS*) is written in the first person giving the researcher opportunity to critically reflect within her own changing perspectives at both a personal and professional level. According to Gough (1997: 2) first person narrative "is one of the powerful aspects of feminist research". I found the language clear, down-to-earth, personalized and uncluttered - a refreshing change ! This helps to draw the reader into the research story and to engage with [and become part of] the struggles that both researcher and participants are grappling with.

This research is located within post-structuralism, and feminist theories. This is not explicitly stated but the research is action-orientated, multi-voiced, reflexive, emergent and includes collaborative praxis. On the other hand it does exhibit aspects of critical theory which include activism, participatory (feminist) research and recognition that the researcher is not value-free [on the contrary she celebrates her subjectiveness!]. The post-structuralist position is developed around and in tension with critical theory where it's centring on narrative come to articulate critical emancipatory processes in first person/multi voiced struggle.

Whilst participatory feminist research is not stated as an explicit tradition here, I believe that as a post-structuralist methodology or approach it has potential and usefulness. If we acknowledge; our own multiple subjectivities, that social reality is constructed within our own lived experience in the company of others out of developing social history shaping and narrating social orientation, and, our social construction of gender, then feminist research is a means of opening up and making visible the female experience and it's orientation. If we as environmental educators are to 'think differently than what one thinks and perceive differently' (Foucault 1990:8 in Gough 1997:2) and to act upon the change in our perspectives, then exploration of other ways of developing praxis which put gender at the centre would open up the possibilities for reconstituting knowledge. Participatory feminist research develops

traditional participatory research taking it a step further by including 'experience, intuition and rapport as modes of knowing and learning from the research' (ibid 12).

These multiple subjectivities and ways of knowing and interacting (Gough 1997: 3) contribute towards a reconstituting of knowledge not only about but for the environment with forward looking ideals to make things better in shared struggle. Dale Spencer in (Gough 1997: 3) argues that "at the core of feminist ideas is the crucial insight that there is no one truth, no one authority, no one subjective method which leads to the production of pure knowledge". In addition Di Chiro (1987:40 in Gough 1997:7) says "A feminist perspective [on] environmental education offers a more complete analysis of environmental problems and therefore a better understanding of those problems and their potential solutions". By placing the social construction of gender at the centre of this research, the researcher uses a different lens to explore the questions that are 'raised' out of the research process. By using a feminist lens to analyse this paper I have contributed to the de-centring of my own perspectives.

No research lens however is without it's flaws, and I believe that the limitations of post-structuralist participatory feminist research as evidenced in this research paper are that it develops a moral 'blind spot'. The researcher selectively chooses the 'voices' heard alongside hers. She doesn't choose 'passive' voices, she selects those 'voices' she likes and wants to hear. The tone which emerges from the 'voices' and is carried along through this post-structuralist research orientation is the emancipatory, moral imperialism of socially critical theory which does not always deal with the complexity of the social space nor reflect it's richness. In addition sometimes the deconstruction of the text suffers from abstraction which distorts the realities of the context and disembeds it from social space.

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**A report on the planning process of the development of an Environmental Education
Centre at Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park, KwaZulu-Natal.**

Paula Morrison

Field of Research: Environmental Education

Research proposal submitted in the Department of Education, Rhodes University,
in partial fulfilment of the degree Masters in Education (Environmental Education)
to be supervised by Dr Eureka Janse van Rensburg

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**A report on the planning process of the development of an Environmental Education
Centre at Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park, KwaZulu-Natal**

CONTEXT

Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park (HUP), a protected area of 96 453 hectares, is located in the heart of rural northern KwaZulu-Natal and is managed by the Natal Parks Board. Neighbouring communities to the Park consist of 10 amaKhosi (chief) wards, with a population of some 600 000 people, most of whom are poor subsistence farmers, with little or no job opportunities (Joint Services Board, 1995).

Early environmental education interactions around HUP were dominated by law enforcement but a developing concern for extension/education developed into the 1980's. It was however only in the early 1990's that problem solving partnership approaches emerged within a coherent although diverse environmental education programme which centred on activities to establish forums, engage with stakeholders, deliver benefits and foster economic opportunities (Sandwith, 1997). It is within the tensions and struggles of these emerging partnerships that local environmental problems came to be identified and located in interacting biophysical, social, economic, cultural and political concerns and that the 'ignorant other' beyond the fence-line came to be seen as a partner (Janse van Rensburg & O Donoghue, 1995).

This partnership between the 'People and the Park' was formally constituted when, in 1992 the NPB adopted a Policy on Neighbour Relations thereby "giving effect to an innovative and far-reaching programme of engagement" (Sandwith, 1996). In these early days programmes centred on community development and the facilitation of projects and capacity building. During 1995 the process came under review, principally to evaluate the lessons of experience and to plan a way forward. Whilst clarity and direction of the process at provincial (Board) level was needed this review process did not include any protected area neighbour stakeholders.

Subsequently the Hluhluwe-Umfolozi management team took the process a step further by convening a series of participatory workshops, using the new policy as a reference point, with neighbouring stakeholders to HUP (Morrison, 1997) to re-define the partnership, and to develop an Action Plan in which Parks and People could respond to the local 'environment' issues as defined by the partners.

Some of the key themes/functions which emerged from this process are:

- (i) To build trust, co-operation, and partnerships between the Natal Parks Board and its neighbours and visitors and to develop co-management structures at various levels with neighbouring stakeholders.
- (ii) To facilitate and promote community development in order to promote sustainable living and an improved quality of life.
- (iii) To promote and support the sustainable use of natural resources amongst communities neighbouring HUP.
- (iv) To promote the integration of HUP into the social, economic, cultural, political, and biophysical systems at landscape level.
- (v) To develop partnership projects based on Nature Conservation.
- (vi) To develop and promote an integrated Environmental Education programme for all community stakeholders.
- (vii) To maximise and enhance the visitor experience to Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park through developing and sourcing interpretive and educational resources.
- (viii) Maximise and develop capacity/skills of Natal Parks Board staff so that they can perform and contribute to the Community Conservation function.

Within this meaning-making process and shifting orientations to environmental education, ee came to be viewed as a process/ orientation to resolving problems of risk and learning from each other so that "we can work towards a shared and sustainable future" (O' Donoghue and Janse van Rensburg, 1995). The problem was however that while 'learning and teaching' were taking place in tents, open-air classrooms and community halls there were no adequate, easily accessible facilities in the Park which could be used.

A successful application to the provincial government was then made in 1995 for funding for an environmental education centre in HUP.

Parallel although independent to this process was the development of a proposal from the Planning Division of the NPB to develop the 'Centenary Centre' at Mambeni Gate in the Umfolozi section of HUP. This centre was to comprise ; a game capture complex, a curio and tea-room outlet for the local Machibini community and an interpretation centre for visitors. It was decided to consolidate these developments and place the proposed ee centre within walking distance of the Centenary centre and the Mambeni gate. This report proposes to document the process of developing a plan for the Mambeni ee centre which will be linked to the Centenary Centre.

GOALS

To 'report on' the planning of an environmental education centre for the Natal Parks Board at Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park which will guide and inform the process and which will outline and contribute towards shaping the curriculum and programmes offered through the achievement of the following objectives :

- ▶ Consultation with local and other interest groups to establish stakeholder views and needs.
- ▶ Develop a concept plan for the physical buildings and logistics.
- ▶ Develop a business plan to include financial viability and which can be used to support funding proposals.
- ▶ Develop the institutional/management framework for managing the Centre.
- ▶ Make recommendations which can; inform/shape the curriculum and possible programmes, make links between the ee and the Centenary Centre, provide networking opportunities and educational resources.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To facilitate an in depth investigation of how interest groups view their 'environment' at risk and how the EE centre can support educational initiatives to address these risks, an intrinsic case study has been selected as an appropriate research methodology. According to Stenhouse (1984: 220) "The method involves the collection and recording of data about a case or cases, and the preparation of a reportof the case". A qualitative case study involves the study of a 'bounded system' which emphasise the unity and wholeness of that system (Stake 1994:236) , however the boundaries are not always clear and certain features lie within boundaries and others outside.

This case study will be approached from a socially critical orientation by engaging interest groups in the exploration and resolution of environmental issues through an environmental educational orientation. Wals *et al* (1990:13) defines ee as "the process that enables students and teachers to participate more fully in the planning, implementing and evaluating of educational activities aimed at resolving an environmental issue that learners have identified." The challenge will be how do we [Parks and People] actively contribute further towards changing present patterns of "unsustainable development to ones which are based upon principles of social justice and democracy and which respect ecological and limits"? (Fien, 1993:1).

A range of techniques for collecting qualitative data will be used these include:

- ▶ Focus groups, workshops and discussion sessions with various stake-holders at both leadership and interest group level.
- ▶ Participatory Learning Activities (PLA) where 'marginalised' groups in the community (women, children, very poor) can share their knowledge and investigate and identify the priorities (Chambers, 1996:?).
- ▶ Face-to-face semi-structured interviews (Chambers, 1996:?) with a sample of people from the interest groups. Participants will be interviewed on their views on how they see an ee centre contributing as an educational response to environmental issues.

- ▶ Literature review and document analysis (Cohen & Manion , 1989) of NPB reports, management meetings, PLA minutes, Parks & People meetings, institutional analysis.

Use of more than one data collection technique , or ‘triangulation’ will be made so as to corroborate the data collected and to get a more inclusive and rich understanding of participants views and ideas so that the report will be representative of a collaborative initiative to develop and inform an ee centre development.

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**A Changing Conservation Landscape:
Conservation management discourses in/on
Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park
in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.**

Paula Morrison

A Changing Conservation Landscape: Conservation management discourses in/on Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

The goal of deconstruction is to keep things in process, to disrupt, to keep the system in play, to set up procedures to demystify continuously the realities we create, to fight the tendency for our categories to congeal.

(Grosz 1989 in Lather 1991:5)

Abstract

This paper examines the struggle and transformation in power relations behind the discourses¹ encountered in interviewing five colleagues about their perceptions of change within a conservation organisation in South Africa. It sets out to understand perceptions of what has contributed to past and present change in the KwaZulu-Natal Nature Conservation Service's Community Conservation Programme in Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park.

Both differences and similarities were evident in the discourse used by interviewees; these seemed shaped by organisational position, politics and power struggles. I argue that multi-voiced discourses are a shaping reality, narrating change amidst wider tensions.

Introduction

Transformation has become the new 'sign-post' for all South Africans who are travelling the [often painful] journey towards a more equitable and just society. Whilst legislation has been introduced to encourage and speed up the transformation process [especially in government departments] many conservation organisations are still in a state of 'transition' and re-birth as they struggle to emerge [presumably as multi-coloured, economically-orientated² butterflies] from their 'pale' and male-dominated cocoons. The 'sign-posts' are characterized with a discourse of economic rationalization as the new government is placed under pressure to divert resources to critical areas such as education, health and housing amidst calls to address poverty and unemployment. Apparently the panacea for 'upliftment' is economic development and growth which includes the view that conservation 'has to pay for itself' (Mokaba, in Janse van Rensburg, 1998) and that protected areas are 'cash cows' that should be made to 'deliver' benefits to neighbouring communities. Conservation organisations have adopted new policies and strategies in response to the changing social circumstances and this is revealed in emerging conservation discourse, for example, performance measures linked to a business model. This reflects a process of economic rationalization³ underpinning some of the narratives that follow.

¹ According to McDonnell (1986) discourse is the social aspect of language and may be understood by its position in relation to another ultimately opposing discourse. Fairclough (1992) sees discourse as the situational context of language. Robottom (pers comm, 1999) regards discourse as "an institutionalized, more patterned form of everyday conversation/language". All three perspectives are relevant to the discussions on discourse in this paper.

² Conservation organisations in SA are increasingly under pressure to become financially sustainable as Government funding is reduced and labour costs soar. The *raison d'être* of biodiversity protection which has been the foundation of many conservation organisations is being replaced by economic rationalization.

³ Economic rationalization has been born out of the view by economists that the option that makes the most efficient use of resources is the preferred one. Through employing the decision-making tool of cost-benefit analysis it reduces all values to economic terms/values (Koch, undated).

Against this background of transformation both in the country and in conservation, I aim in this paper to deconstruct the discourses evident in spoken texts of colleagues in the KwaZulu-Natal Nature Conservation Service [NCS] in order to *"disrupt, to keep the system in play, to set up procedures to demystify continuously the realities we create, to fight the tendency for our categories to congeal"* (Grosz 1989 in Lather 1991:5). I include myself in this sample. I have undertaken the analysis in an effort to prevent us from becoming too complacent and comfortable about the changes we have made, and to encourage both colleagues in the NCS, and others in transforming environmental organisations, to examine more critically what our discourse reveals about our intentions for change. To do this and to place the process of deconstruction in context, I start by painting the organisational and historical landscape of the Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park within the NCS.

In developing the research narrative in context and with the aid of metaphor, I have intermingled the 'voices' of my colleagues and my own in conversation, within the organisational tensions that are shaping of the landscape within which we work. Discussion follows, ending with a tentative description of the implications of my findings for the organisation, and environmental educators more broadly.

Background

The NCS is a para-statal organisation responsible for the conservation of the indigenous biodiversity of the province of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa. The NCS's statement of Vision (KZNNCS Mission, 1998) is: *.....to ensure that the national heritage of the parks, wildlife, land and seascapes within KwaZulu-Natal are sensitively protected as a source of spiritual and physical sustenance for all it's peoples.*

Born in April 1998 out of the politically-dictated merger between the former Natal Parks Board and the KwaZulu Department of Nature Conservation, the NCS has brought together the *"collective wisdom and experience of 50 years of formal conservation practice and people interactions and tensions in the province"* (O'Donoghue, 1997).

Historically the policies, strategies and discourse of the NCS have changed to reflect shifting values and orientations. This reactive process saw the development of a Neighbour Relations Policy in 1992 by a range of stake-holder groups. This Policy represented a major paradigm shift from the 'nature-centred' policies of the past to include the notions of community development and community problem solving partnerships (Sandwith, 1998). It was in the tensions and struggle of these emerging partnerships that local environmental problems came to be identified and located in interacting biophysical, social, economic, cultural and political concerns (KZNNCS, 1998) and that the 'ignorant other' beyond the fence-line came to be seen as a partner (O'Donoghue, 1997). This was evidenced in the establishment of a Local Board for Protected Area and partnership projects with communities neighbouring protected areas. These same trends can be seen globally as demonstrated in *From Strategy to Action, the IUCN response to the Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development* (IUCN, 1989). In the ensuing years as the environmental issues changed [as perceived by the NCS and its partners] and as experience was gained, it became necessary for the Conservation Service to begin a process of review and evaluation of the Neighbour Relations policy. This developmental process has culminated in the 8th draft of the newly-named *NCS Community Conservation Policy & Strategy*. As co-ordinator of the Community Conservation Programme for the NCS in the Zululand Region and having a keen interest in the development and enactment of policy, I was a participant in this process.

Research Methodology

My interest in discourse analysis came about because I was concerned that the NCS Community Conservation policy document did not reflect the rich and participative social processes from which it had emerged. What should have been a guiding policy which reflects, the collaborative process which gave rise to it, the richness of multiple-voices/texts within the NCS and 'communicative' uses of language which are essential for environmental thought⁴ (Jickling & Weston, 1997) had been displaced by 'strategic' uses of language, orientated to success and ultimately supporting consumerism. According to Habermas (in Fairclough, 1992) 'strategic' language is orientated to success, to getting people to do things. I have come to note that the strategic orientation of the document discourse narrows the options for change and an exploring of 'other ways' of practising environmental education.

In keeping with this research interest in discourse analysis (whilst preparing a Masters in Environmental Education research paper), I conducted open-ended interviews on 'Community Conservation and Change' with five colleagues who were working with this policy document. I asked them to discuss their views on what had contributed to change/transformation in the Community Conservation Programme of the NCS. Cohen and Manion (1991) define the research interview as "*a two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information, and focussed by him on content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction or explanation*". I approached the interviews as open-ended conversations in the hope that 'conversation' about conservation would narrate subjective views and diverse perspectives and that this could be used to probe some of the ideological dimensions of conservation discussion on this issue. I knew all interviewees, and my questions were shaped, in what I hope was a refining manner, by this knowledge. This inter-subjective relational dynamic (Beck, 1992) placed me in contextual conversation amidst the diversity of views examined; in addition I also outline my own perspective as a source of 'data'.

With my post-modern⁵ binoculars and with my post-structuralist⁶ walking-stick I began to 'poke at and about' and disturb the *termitaria* of discourse through de³construction and analysis. To guide me I drew on the insights of Fairclough (1992) and Janks (1993). I had collected an abundance of data with the objective to analyse⁷ texts focussing on the social practice of which the discourse is a part. More specifically I sought to see emerging themes and patterns and word meanings with their ideological and political effects. It was difficult to separate what I knew about participants' views from the views expressed in the interview, and interview discourse analysis was thus part of a wider fabric of shared meaning and struggle, with and amongst all involved. I concede that I have a closer working relationship with two of the interviewees (the Chief Conservator

⁴ Jickling and Weston speak about environmental thought in the context of what it should 'not' be. It should not be conceived, shaped and filtered by economic interests and should not convert broad environmental values into economic language and 'one-dimensional discourse'.

⁵ Here I was particularly influenced by the notion that post-modernity involves - a rejection of grand narratives, meta-physical philosophies and any other form of totalizing thought.

⁶ According to Derrida in Agger (1991), poststructuralism is a theory of knowledge and language; Janse van Rensburg (1998) describes it as the academic arm of the cultural shift we call the post-modern, having developed within linguistics and providing us with linguistic tools to study the world.

⁷ It is to be noted that the analysis in this paper is preliminary and not as far-reaching as it could be, because of the scope of the study.

and the Community Conservationist) which might account for some of our shared views.

The extracts in the analysis have been selected for a particular purpose, but observations made go beyond the scope of the text provided and are based on the whole interview.

The discursive landscape

I have selected Umfolozi Game Reserve in Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park as my metaphorical landscape. Not only is it my spiritual home and place of work, it also has a long association with conservation efforts that go back to the days of the Zulu warrior King, Shaka. It is a place of indescribable beauty and reflects a tapestry of rich and changing Zulu and Colonial culture, history and heritage. It is, now, also a green island amidst a sea of rural poverty, political intolerance and environmental degradation (Münster and Sandwith, 1998) .

Within this landscape I will place the 'voices' of my colleagues and my own, embodied metaphorically in the forms of African creatures that wander over this land. I selected these specific people as they have played a key role in the transformation processes in the organisation and I have characterised features of the discourse with the fables of Credo Mutwa⁸. To signify this interpretative process for readers I have placed extracts and comments alongside illustrative 'story' fragments from each conversation with my five colleagues. I then take the interpretive process further with an analysis of the discourse. I begin the description and discussion with the portrayal of the organisational leader.

The Leader:

I don't see my job as trying to do things at the coal-face...nor do I see it as my job to evolve policy....I had a number of clear-cut goals,... to become responsible with money ..and I certainly wanted to improve our relationship with black people.

Conservation has gone through an evolutionary process of maintaining mythological landscapes to ...where the involvement and participation of all people [in managing protected areas]⁹ became a primary goal...this is not unique to South Africa.

We rejected apartheid in 1982 in this organisation,.....and we were under no pressure from anybody to do it when we started. Oh well they [Parks & People workshops] certainly did have [an] impact on [change].....

To the south-west of Mpila camp in Umfolozi Game Reserve is a rocky hill named Mantiyane, where according to the old ones, a wise leopard, has its lair. Mutwa (1996:42) sings the praises of the leopard:

Ingwe mabala

Oh great spotted cat of the high mountains of our country.....

Where you cough, the baboons do not shout,

Where you snarl, the hairy ones must flee

From his lofty perch on top of Mantiyane hill the visionary leader of the NCS sees beyond the Mfulamkhulu flood-plains, beyond the white Umfolozi river, beyond the boundaries of the Park to the blue seas of the Indian ocean. Perhaps he does not see clearly the clashing of horns from the rutting impala in the Mphapha stream below, for he has his gaze fixed on the political storms brewing in Ulundi (the political capital of KwaZulu-Natal). Deftly he treads and leads the organisation, over and around the new policies, strategies, Local Area Boards and transformation of the organisation. He has been a pioneer in opening up this landscape for others 'beyond the boundaries' to share its benefits.

⁸ Credo Mutwa, one of only two *Sanusi's* (the highest office traditional healers can attain) in South Africa, is also renowned for his story-telling.

⁹ The use of square brackets has been used in the interview extracts by the author to clarify and explain incomplete statements made.

In examining the discourse of the leader, what struck me was his choice of words which reveal optimism, extreme loyalty and immense pride at both his and the organisation's achievements. He does make use of the word 'I' frequently which suggests in Elias's words (1998) neglect of the fact that *"a person's we-image and we-ideal form as much part of that person's self-image and self-ideal as the image and ideal of him-or herself as the unique person to which he or she refers as 'I'"*. Whilst this might suggest an individualistic leadership orientation the leader goes onto to add that his primary goal was *"the involvement and participation of all people [in managing protected areas]"* which is evident also of a consensual management style. For example, in the case of the neighbour relations policy, a wide range of management levels from senior staff to field rangers were involved under the Leaders strategic direction.

The Leader believes that change and transformation in the NCS has been an evolutionary process which has been influenced by social processes at both an international and local level and he paints the organisation as pro-active in terms of addressing discrimination. Throughout the interview he referred to changes that were made from within the organisation and was adamant that transformation in the organisation began long before the democratization of the country, although he did give recognition to the role that the 'Parks and People' workshops had played in transforming the organisation.

The Planner:

I think that the change that the country has been going through hasbeen very dominant [in affecting change].

[Neighbouring communities] have matured into a more realistic appreciation of what the future might be

So...the chief executive says that's the way to go and he markets that...but there was no structure.

....you've got some people...the not-that-keen-on-change, holding back, not embracing what the new future brings...

I'm going to talk completely off the top of my head.....I think I'm not making sense.

...and that's what we try to engineer [structure and coherence] without much success...

Scrambling up the side of the hill are a troop of baboons engrossed in planning a raid on the succulent flowers of a *Schotia brachypetala* tree. Led by the ²Head of the Planning division, they strategise, set goals, measure inputs and outputs and undertake an environmental impact assessment of the area to be raided. Mutwa (1996:114) sings the praises of the baboon:

Listen to me, imfene, you dweller among the kranes....

*Your wisdom is great, as great as your nostrils which look like the flutes of Venda herd-boys
Your eyes are as red as the eyes of a wizard
concocting mysterious preparation in a cave*

The alpha male in a baboon troop is a master at organizing. With his diverse skills and sharp intellect he arranges his accomplished sentries in strategic places and challenges even the 'coughing' of the leopard.

What emerged most strongly in the interview with the planner were the different patterns of discourse. These include; a strong socially critical orientation in which the speaker recognizes that 'power-balances' have changed through 'risk'¹⁰ situations and that communities interacting with the KZNNCS come with a 'lightness in their step' and expect things to change. In contrast with this reflexive sensitivity is a framing of ideas in the technician language of a Planner yearning for 'order' within the diverse and loosely managed Community Conservation Programme: *"I would like to see coherence, ultimately"*.

¹⁰ According to Beck (1992:21) Risk may be defined as *"a systematic way of dealing with hazards and insecurities induced and introduced by modernization itself. Risks, as opposed to older dangers, are consequences which relate to the threatened force of modernization and to its globalization of doubt. They are politically reflexive"*.

Through his tone of voice and laughter he displayed some cynicism for the Community Conservation Programme. The discourse analysis also revealed that the Planner did not always have fixed ideas and was using the interview to clarify his perspective.

His final words on transforming the Community Conservation Programme were *"I think it's really in Community Conservation that lies the pioneering spirit: new people, new relationships...but it will have to be a new generation...the younger, more innovative people who are going to press fastest."* This reflects a disposition to acknowledge responsiveness to the need for change, and to encourage innovation.

The Chief Conservator:

<p><i>We're the ones that called for changes in the neighbour relations policy, started challenging some of the outdated thinking.</i></p> <p><i>...those people [old school] thought we could come into the new South Africa with the old thinking....</i></p> <p><i>Ya, we had to change our thinking, we knew that the power was within those people outside [of the park].</i></p> <p><i>...remember some of those original meeting with amaKhosi,...they were very threatening...</i></p> <p><i>We were in for some radical changes, and we had to fit in with that kind of thinking.</i></p> <p><i>I think electrification of the boundary fence was a significant aspect [contributing to better relationships between Neighbouring communities and the Park]</i></p> <p><i>...they [neighbouring communities] could see this was no longer this, them and us situation because the area's all [of] ours...</i></p> <p><i>....we still have a long way to go....</i></p>	<p>At the bottom of the hill, in the open grassland leading onto the <i>Mfulenkulu</i> flood-plain, a lone black rhino bull is browsing on <i>Acacia gerardii</i>. In his song of praises to the rhinoceros Mutwa (1997:101) says:</p> <p><i>Ubhejane, you are the thunder of the valleys</i> <i>You are the roar among the mountains</i> <i>You are the noise upon the plains....</i> <i>You are Ubhejane</i> <i>You, whose dung unites the nations of Africa!</i></p> <p>This animal which has come close to extinction and is still a threatened species is as at home here as it is on the tops of nearby ridges and flood-plains. The ³Chief Conservator for the Zululand Region skilfully bridges and manages the gap between Head Office and the field, and between the Park and its neighbouring communities. He is considered a world expert on rhino management and rhino security, and like the rhino he has his ears close to the ground and is said to be fearless about defending his 'territory'.</p>
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Amongst the interviewees who were critical of how the organisation has managed and contributed towards transformation the Conservator was the most openly so. He attributed some of the 'slow changes' to *'the old school...they thought they could come into the new South Africa with the old thinking'*. Whilst he believed that some Community Conservation staff *"were on their own mission"* he gave cognisance to the *"significant influence [the CC programme had] in how people perceived the organisation and the Park"*. He made continual references to *'we had to [change]'* which suggested that he thought change had come about directly as a response to disequilibrium and conflict. This was in direct contrast to what the leader had said. He also made much reference to the Park's neighbouring communities as *"they"*, this reflecting a notion of separatism between the Park and neighbouring communities. However at the end of the interview the Conservator changes the discourse [he appeared to clarify his ideas during the conversation] away from a separatist view by saying *"it was no longer this 'them-and-us' situation, because the-area's all ours"*.

The pragmatic discourse used by the Conservator - note his reference to the value of the electrification of the fence, which would have kept problem animals away from community resources - revealed that he had been personally involved in some of the conflict and that these experiences had helped to shape and change his own views on how transformation had/should take place. In drawing together the conversation the Conservator attributed change in the organisation to: democratic changes in the

country; land claims; labour policy; conflict and balance in power and concluded the interview by saying that there was "a whole bunch of variables that all like happen[ed] at the same time" and "we still have a long way to go".

The Senior Professional Officer (Education):

You get to the stage where struggle and discontinuity has happened and now they [KZNNCS] lose sight of it.

..now Bourdieu says habitus is very difficult to change, because it's kind of robust..

What concerns me ..is that you're looking at this...as one idea..

Examine his language very carefully and you might find that he/we....

So take along ..Bourdieu and Beck..you know you really need to be more into Sociology....

So whichever view you decide, and they are really compatible, it's a subtle difference, no they're not....

Not far from the river, near to a clump of *Scleryocarya birrea* trees a strange animal can be seen digging. He digs a hole deep into the ground and then abandons it. He might dig a number of holes before he finds one that pleases him. In his praises to the ant-bear Mutwa (1997:185) sings:

*Oh diligent digger, who digs many holes
Oh diligent miner, who mines deeply into the earth
What are you looking for, ant bear?*

Why do you dig so many holes, but spend your nights in only one?

The ant-bear is the symbol of all healers in southern Africa (Mutwa: 1997), because it digs up roots. It is also the symbol of a person who toils for others whilst gaining very little in return, as its abandoned holes become homes for other creatures. The Senior Professional Education Officer (Education) with the NCS is an extraordinary creature who has much in common with the ant bear. Author of many innovative papers and ideas, and probably the major contributor to Share-net¹¹ he is continually searching and finding other ways of knowing and understanding.

The interview with the Senior Professional Officer (Education) (SPO) was different from the other interviews in that the focus was not specifically about transformation but a discussion on the 'tools' and concepts which could be used to clarify the various discourses used by my colleagues. Drawing on environmental educators discourse the SPO scuttled about, and with the adeptness of a professional bone-thrower, hurled concepts at me which included habitus, axes of tension, re-orientation in a variety of interactive social situations, benign disequilibrium and detachment. Whilst the discourse revealed what he knew about and what I ought to be considering in writing this paper, it revealed little about what he considered had shaped the Community Conservation Programmes. What was evident was that he might just change conceptual lenses half-way through the interview.

In analysing the discourse, my own discomfort and frustration was apparent as I struggled to sift through the conversation for 'answers' to my questions. As soon as I attempted to locate the SPO in one 'hole' [paradigm/idea] he would move off (with Elias, Bauman and Bourdieu in tow) to move the boundaries and dispel any perspective that I might be clutching too closely.

The probing of ideology and change exposed the hand of economic rationalism behind a developing narrative designed to steer community conservation processes. It became clear to me that the previous ideology was picking up and transforming the narrative in ways that often escape our notice and as the new narrative developed, so the processes of change can be subverted.

¹¹ Share-net is an informal network of individuals and organisations collaborating to produce EE resource materials.

The Community Conservation Officer:

Conservation has not been going with culture...we've been pushing it as far from culture...so we have been just pushing as we want just to make this conservation everyone just to bow to it.

...this is our [Zulu people] thing, conservation is not something else, but it's exactly what we've been practising just for so long.

Now women got a right to express and so on. That has made the programme also to be successful.

...by introducing this importance of Zulu culture to them, it encouraged them and it gave them just some vision.

...not considering culture so then they totally then also lost as if they lost their culture, their culture is respect..because of apartheid.

At the edge of the Mfulemkhulu flood-plain, close to the Umfolozi river, is a large hippo walking about like a fat pumpkin on four legs. Mutwa's (1997:96) praise song to the hippo says:

You are the one whose knowledge is the envy of all the gods

Your fat brings love to our huts and fertility to our loved ones

Your meat sustains heroes, for cowards can never digest it

Your feet can dance where no Zulu can ever dance

And no Venda can ever gyrate...

Oh imvubu, oh hippopotamus

Towering over six foot and looking more like a Nguni warrior than a "fat pumpkin on four legs" is the ⁵Community Conservation Officer (CCO) for the Hluhluwe Game Reserve. He is responsible for managing a number of partnership programmes which include: environmental education; community development; and staff education. He is passionate about conservation and Zulu culture and has an insight which belies his young age.

The most notable aspect of the CCO's discourse is his constant use of the word 'we', through which he identifies in solidarity with both his colleagues and with communities adjacent to the Park. I believe he does this because he does not separate his thoughts and ideas from his social and cultural context which implies that his idiom is immersed in an *uBuntu*¹² perspective. Whilst he gives recognition to changed social processes at a broader country level as having influenced the CC programme, he brings the shaping social processes right down to the level of the Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park and its neighbouring communities. Of further interest is the notion of 'being empowered' which was also raised by some other interviewees. The CCO believes that communities are now acting from a position of empowerment and that management have been released, to some extent, from a position of fear [which is empowering] allowing the processes of change to happen. He attributed some early failures of the CC programme to exclusivist approaches in which only *amaKhosi* (traditional leaders) were included in the decision making and implementation process of the Neighbour Relations Policy which excluded less important and influential people, especially women.

A further pattern identified in this interview was the importance that the CCO attached to culture; he felt that the adoption of a cultural approach to CC had opened up the possibilities for change and had contributed to change. I also found this interview different from the others because of the pain that came through in the CC's voice as he recalled how in the passage of history, people have lost their respect, dignity and awareness of conservation through apartheid policies that excluded/marginalised rural people from access to their ancestral lands.

¹² *uBuntu* is an African philosophy which literally translated from Zulu means 'a person is a person through other people'.

The Community Conservation Co-ordinator:

The most important changes..seem to be actually at local level, our relationship with neighbouring communities.

...a lot of it [change] seems to be taking place within a conflict situation.

...the community is quite politicised...and we had to respond to things that they asked [about]....

...where women tend to have very little power in the community... especially in rural conservative families.

The slip in power relations must have had an enormous effect on our organisation?

If you don't go into unchartered waters one never finds out if what you are doing had any relevance...

So in fact there were a whole lot of different [social] processes here [contributing to change]

because that's really what it was a shift in power relations

Loudly trumpeting across the Mfulemkhulu flood plain, the matriarch of the Umfolozi elephant herd wards off an aggressive bull that ventures too close to the young calves. She is fiercely protective of her rights, both to lead this group and to participate in all matters relating to this place. With little tactfulness, she constantly urges the herd to move on. Mutwa (1997:106) sings the praises of the elephant:

Be angry elephant, shout at the land that no longer cares about living things

Be angry elephant, shout at the very stars themselves and demand

from them justice.....

Indlovu, elephant, servant of the great Earth Mother!

MamDlovu, [mother of the elephants] was the name given to me by an old field-ranger named Zungu many years ago, whilst undertaking my first trail in Umfolozi. For me it represents my role as mother, ⁶Community Conservation Co-ordinator, researcher and concerned South African. It also adds my 'voice' and my 'concerns for social justice', as a woman, to this multi-textual discourse (Gough, 1997, Malone, 1995).

My voice reflected in the extracts above was that of interviewer in conversation. I regarded the interviews as continuing clarifying discussions about/for conservation (Le Roux, 1998). The review of my role in the discourse during the interviews, and then to review my own discourse in the context of my work was a challenging process that is neither as complex or convoluted as it may seem. I simply went back to what I had stated and critically examined this having the benefit of the interview processes that I had been through. This process enabled me to construct the narrative that follows. This is in some ways a critical review and pulling together of where I am in the transformation processes.

My own views on what has contributed to transformation in the organisation are not notably different from some of those expressed by my colleagues. I think change has happened in a variety of complex social settings at global, national and local level and that they have influenced and agitated the disequilibrium in an increasingly 'risky' Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park environment. Risks include: the threat of land-claims; conflict and tension between the Park and Neighbours; poverty and political intolerance. Most dominant in this disequilibrium has been the change in power-relations between the organisation and neighbouring communities. What I do view differently from my colleagues and share with the SPO is how Environmental Education processes such as this can shape useful transformation, and how an institutional discourse of community conservation is not easily reconciled with economic rationalism. Participation and change might well be better articulated in a different discourse of relationship building in sustaining trial and error partnership. Through Environmental Education programmes some people locally have been able to think and work out [de-construct and

reconstruct] their own problems to make more sustaining choices (O'Donoghue, pers comm, 1999).

The implications of the revealed discourse patterns for the NCS

Like the myriad game-paths that criss-cross the Umfolozi landscape connecting animals to water, food and security, the multiple 'realities' in the conversation with my colleagues intertwine and connect us in a fabric of closely-held beliefs and within institutional comfort zones. Whilst the paths we walk in our ideas are many and diverse, they are generally well-trodden routes. There are thus both common views and diverse perspectives amidst the multiple discourses examined here. I briefly discuss some of the discursive threads which I picked up from the interviewees as I believe they have significance for both the NCS, and environmental educators more widely.

Discursive trends tend to be influenced by changing balance of power and emerging tensions which threaten the status quo, in this case the autonomy of the conservation organization, threatened in a developing democracy.

The discourses of my colleagues and myself reflect our struggles to feel and act more appropriately in these changing circumstances. As discourses of participation and cooperation developed, these came to be articulated in policies, initially in somewhat rhetorical ways.

Here policies of participation seem to have been influenced by institutional dispositions which appear to be little more than empty ideals. Community Conservation programmes were thus slow to change but were picked up and were reorientated within continuing narrative struggles to reconcile tensions and ambiguities in community conservation policies and actions. Here moving from setting policy on conservation issues to processes of consultation to shape policy with the people initially developed into a matter of lip-service in anticipation that they would come to our way of thinking. This is evidence of the narrative disposition of dominance amongst the people in the institution being slow to change.

During developing participatory processes it is of note that ideas tended to be put forward and picked up in emerging discourses as people like my colleagues interviewed here, tried to narrate better ways of seeing and doing things amidst continuing tensions and ambiguities as I posed interview questions that had us critically reflect on what we were doing in the developing game.

I have noted that the emerging changes in perspectives then tended to bottleneck again as a dominant institutional ideology, in this case rational economics, sought through management documents to steer change in rational ways within performance evaluated programmes. Of note here is that the rational management strategies reflected in developing community conservation narratives may actually subvert the desired participatory change by cutting off the processes of open-ended struggle necessary for people to come to new ways of seeing and thinking about things.

In looking back along the pathways of our discursive struggles, I have come to note many ups and downs as well as the twists and turns noted earlier in the journey. My fear now is that we are still on the same track within an institutional landscape that may subvert rather than foster change.

This text reflects my struggles to document and to probe these problems in the company of colleagues. Our struggle to get words and actions into some kind of balance that might foster change in useful ways is reflected in the discourses reviewed for this paper.

It would seem that the NCS has, both internally and in some quarters been 'seen' as having one of the most dynamic and progressive Community Conservation Programmes in Southern Africa (Hughes & Sandwith, pers comm, 1998). However what has emerged from the analysis of the discourse is that at this point of our long process of struggle and change we are becoming habituated and complacent in these new ways of thinking (O'Donoghue, 1998) and our thinking and talking may have become institutionalized in narrowing ways. Bourdieu (in Jenkins, 1992) describes this notion as *habitus* and explains that it derives its power not from consciously learned rules and principles but from the thoughtlessness of habit and habituation. According to Elias (1998) *habitus* is "a fund of symbolic representations which can serve people as means of orientation". In addition Elias says that scientific establishments "derive their knowledge from the monopolization of a particular type of knowledge" and that this knowledge [symbolic representation] is handed on by previous generations. He explains that this is not a static polarity of two mutually exclusive states but rather a shifting continuum "between thawing and freezing trends, and between innovatory rebellion and authoritarian orthodoxy".

Have we in the NCS becoming complacent and thoughtless in the transformation process allowing our knowledge generated out of 'innovative rebellion' to sediment into a new 'authoritarian orthodoxy' which, if left unchallenged, will perpetuate the *status quo*?

Whilst my discourse and those of my colleagues reflect certain narratives, which both challenge and legitimize the dominant ideology (institutional rationalism) and culture of the organization (Bennett, 1996), and perhaps narrows the opportunities for change, there has been change in the clarity that has come from our conversations. Often, when clarifying discourse is translated into policy¹³ it entrenches institutionalization and reduces the opportunities for innovative change and for going into uncharted waters. This then is the contested arena in Conservation where many environmental educators find themselves working and re-considering their roles 'to disrupt, to keep the system in play, to demystify,' a game of ambiguity and pragmatism where hopefully, the practical and sustaining of humanity prevails.

I believe that it is the role of environmental educators to take more seriously the responsibility of reflexivity (Lather, 1991) and education within our organisations so that the transformation process becomes an inclusive process, where the language which we use reflects our commitment to search for new possibilities of change. This should reflect a continuing examination of those ideas that might have sedimented our narratives in policy and which contributes a legitimacy less evident in the activity on the ground. We have to both live with and question an institutional conventional wisdom and the resultant rationalist guidelines for community programmes if we are to contribute to processes of engaging change. This is often not an easy matter, requiring both educative processes and the will to 'keep the conversations going'.

¹³ According to Codd (1988), policy is any course of action (or inaction) relating to the selection of goals, the definition of values or the allocation of resources

In the search for narrative trends and developing perspective one finds cautious leopard, busy baboon, pragmatic rhino, delving ant-bear, solid hippo and emotive elephant all in conversation as Dr Doolittle might have found us. Despite tensions amidst what is (was) said, there are some hopeful signs:

we are talking, seemingly about the same thing;
transformation is an established priority, and,
the developing narratives are shedding light on sustaining possibilities in
the contexts we share.

These words from Rahnema (1997:391) reflect how I believe we could better "*search for new possibilities of change*".

....It [change] should prompt everyone to begin the genuine work of self-knowledge and 'self-polishing', an exercise that enables us to listen more carefully to others, in particular to friends who are ready to do the same thing. It could be the beginning of a long process aiming at replacing the present 'dis-order' by an 'aesthetic order' based on respect for differences and the uniqueness of every single person and culture.

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PERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS

Hughes, G. (1998) Acting Chief Executive Officer, KwaZulu-Natal Nature Conservation Service, South Africa.

O'Donoghue, R. (1999) Senior Professional Officer, KwaZulu-Natal Nature Conservation Service, South Africa.

Robottom, I. (1999) Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education at Deakin University, Geelong, Australia.

Sandwith, T. (1998) Head Planning, KwaZulu-Natal Nature Conservation Service, South Africa.

ENDNOTES

1. The leader's function in the NCS is to strategically manage the organisation and inter-face with politicians and the national and international community.
2. The planner's function is to conceptualize and facilitate the implementation of development plans for the organisation.
3. The Chief Conservator is responsible for the co-ordination and management of the Zululand Reserves which includes Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park and the Mkuze Conservation District .
4. The Senior Professional Officers function (Education) is to facilitate and co-ordinate the NCS's Biodiversity Education Programme and liaison with the formal education sector.
5. The Community Conservation Officer (Hluhluwe Game Reserve) is responsible for co-ordinating and implementing the Community Conservation Programme in and around Hluhluwe Game Reserve.
6. The Community Conservation Co-ordinator (Zululand Region) is responsible for co-ordinating the Community Conservation Programme within and around the Zululand Region and Zululand Districts.