

PLAN OF ACTION

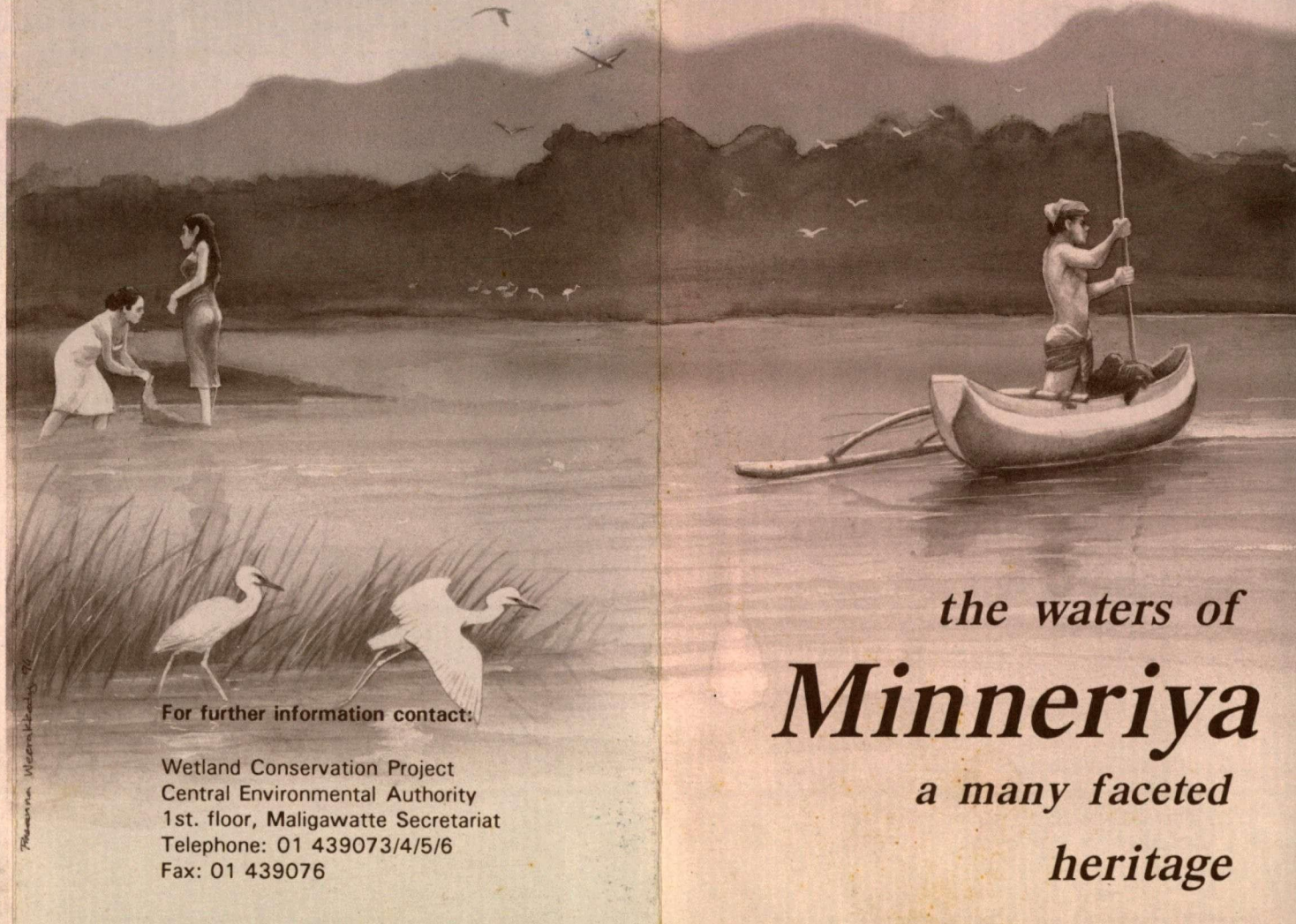
If no action is taken the resources of Minneriya tank and its catchment will further degrade and will affect local inhabitants, wildlife and downstream farmers. To avoid, this the *Minneriya Reservoir Conservation Management Plan* of the *Wetland Conservation Project* proposes:

1. A *task force* to assist in a programme of conservation activities, under coordination of the District Secretary.
2. To assist in a survey and demarcation of Forest, Wildlife and Reservoir Reserve boundaries, so that all know who is managing what land.
3. To re-plant (with local species) degraded catchment forests and to establish new Village Forest woodlots as "buffer zones" to provide the local community with firewood and timber.
4. To assist catchment area villagers in exploring alternative agriculture and livestock production techniques to reduce catchment grazing, chena cultivation and use of pesticides.
5. To organize fishermen for fisheries management and enhancement of income.
6. To assist in a survey of tank-bed levels and to design a catchment monitoring system.
7. To conduct a public awareness campaign and training in wise use and management.



THE WETLAND CONSERVATION PROJECT

The Wetland Conservation Project is executed by the Central Environmental Authority. It facilitates implementation of management activities by responsible agencies, such as the Department of Wildlife Conservation. Financial and technical assistance is provided by the Netherlands Government. Activities include data collection on Sri Lanka's wetlands, preparation of Conservation Management Plans for selected wetland areas, and provision of guidance for implementation of these plans.

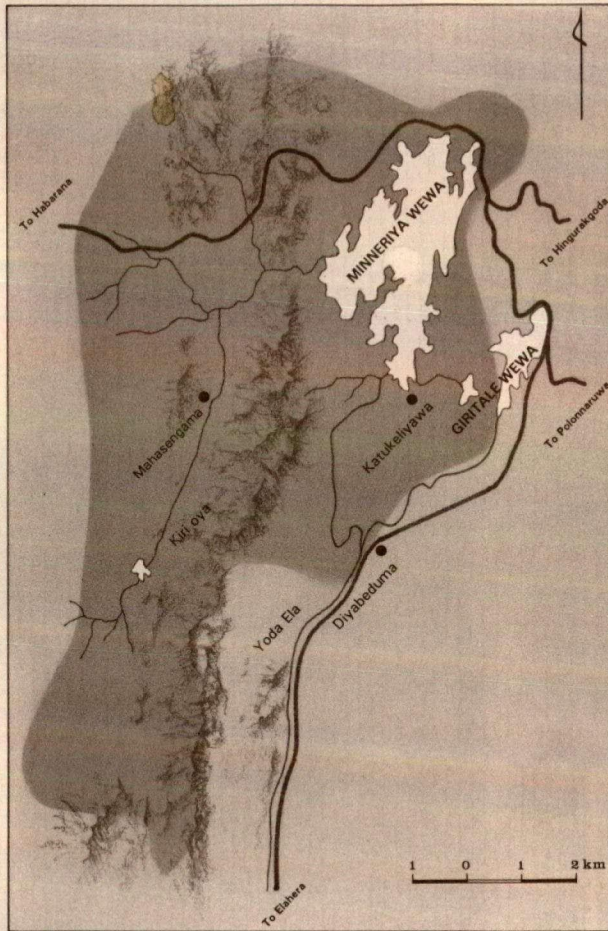


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the waters of
Minneriya
a many faceted
heritage

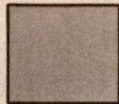
THE LOCATION



LEGEND



Hill ranges



Catchment area

The Minneriya Nature Reserve is managed by the Department of Wildlife Conservation

OUR RESOURCE

Irrigation: Minneriya tank (surface area 2,550 ha, mean depth 5.8 m) was constructed by King Mahasen in the 3rd century to provide irrigation. Today the tank supplies water to

- 11,500 downstream families;
- 8,900 ha of paddy in the Minneriya scheme;
- the tanks at Kantale and Kaudalla.

To support the farming community and irrigation schemes, the storage volume of Minneriya tank needs preservation.

Fish and nature: Minneriya tank also provides -

- a home for 31 species of fish (23 indigenous);
- a successful fishery for 95 fishing families;
- food for wildlife;
- a source of drinking water;
- water for bathing and washing;
- lake-side forage for livestock and wildlife;
- potential for tourism.

For the local community, as well as for wildlife and tourism, we must keep the waters clean, the fish stocks healthy, and preserve the natural beauty of the area.

Forests, soil and streams of the catchment: The tank receives water from the catchment area (249 km²) of the Kiri and Batu Oya, and the Elahera-Minneriya Yoda Ela. If the catchment forest is protected or carefully farmed, the soil will not erode and add silt to the tank.

For clean water, healthy fish, wildlife habitats, sufficient irrigation water, firewood, timber and fodder supplies, the Minneriya's catchment should be managed to conserve the soil.

THE PROBLEM

Minneriya tank, its catchment area, fish and wildlife populations are today under pressure from various activities.

Such as:

- brick making;
- rice husk dumping;
- illegal logging and firewood collection;
- chena cultivation and agricultural encroachment;
- un-managed grazing livestock;
- un-managed pesticide use in the catchment area;
- poaching and loss of jungle habitat;
- lack of fisheries management within the tank.

This is causing:

- degradation of catchment forests and jungle clearing;
- exposure of soils and increased siltation of the tank;
- polluted stream and tank waters;
- increasing man-wildlife conflicts;
- increasing threat to fish stocks and wildlife;
- increasing threat to water users;
- increasing threat to fishermen and paddy farmer's.

The reasons:

- the pressure of an expanding human population.
- gaps and overlaps in agency jurisdiction, poorly marked administrative boundaries, a lack of effective inter-agency collaboration and shortages of staff and resources.
- a lack of public and agency awareness on environmental problems, lack of clear regulations and responsibilities for control of resource usage, and absence of community involvement.

CAN WE DO SOMETHING TO HELP?

YES!