



The Mandlakazi Food Sovereignty & Ecological Restoration Project – Manyoni Nursery Proposal

MANYONI
— PRIVATE GAME RESERVE —



Zululand
Conservation Trust



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INTRODUCTION

The Mandlakazi food gardens project was started in July 2019 in partnership between ACT, Zululand Conservation Trust & Manyoni Game reserve and with the generous financial aid and other support of Ollie van Walsem. Since then project inception the following milestones have been reached:

- Developed food gardens and installed rain tanks at crèches in all 3 communities adjacent to the game reserve
- Provided a 5 Day Permaculture training course for each community
- Developed a phase 1b plan for the crèches
- Developed a full demonstration garden (phase 1b) at Mzamoyethu Crèche
- Provided Permaculture support, mentorship and additional resources to the project for May, June, July, Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov, Dec 2020
- Conducted farmer interviews for 41 households

The Manyoni Nursery Project seeks to develop an “ecological restoration nursery” that will supply plant material to the project main interventions:

- Ecological restoration of the broader landscape and

- developing Food gardens in homesteads, small scale farms, community gardens & public centres (crèches, clinics etc.)

In the 3 communities that border Manyoni Private game Reserve: Gudlinataba, Vungama and Sekane.

Project mission statement:

Our ultimate goal is to develop our rural communities in such a way that they can deliver foodstuffs and other products directly to the park. This without degrading their surroundings, but actually improving them.... The secondary goal is to make these communities into prime examples for surrounding communities. We want to make them the foundation for the development of their neighbors. The reserve will benefit through the delivery of fresh produce and shorter supply lines. Hopefully, this will reduce poaching pressure from the communities and increase intel from these communities regarding poachers from further afield..... If we want communities to care for their direct environment or neighboring wildlife areas, we have to give them a direct stake in it. Therefore, our motto

‘Development and Conservation Integrated’.

~Ollie van Walsem (Founder of Roots Up)

BACKGROUND

A recent household survey of the project area's communities has revealed that many households are not food secure, that economic opportunities are lacking and that "in some areas" the natural environment has been degrading over the years to the point that many people are abandoning farming.

In the case of Gudlintaba it is particularly easy to see the environmental degradation that has been caused by overgrazing and other unsustainable human activities.

See figure 1.

We all know that this puts great pressure on the reserve and that there is no doubt a link between the socio economic stresses of communities – as a result of land degradation - on the outside of the reserve and wildlife crime and poaching on the inside of the reserve.

The project recognizes the intimate link between the well-being of people and the health of the environment and vice versa. By restoring degraded landscapes, we improve ecosystem services, which not only mitigates against the effects of climate change but also supplies its inhabitants with vital resources that can improve their socio economic situation; this ultimately reduces stress on our most vulnerable conservation areas such as Manyoni and extends conservation efforts beyond the reserve boundaries.

~ Rory Clark (Project Implementation)



Figure 1 Gudlintaba, degradation of community compared to Manyoni

As populations in the communities grow and Climate Change challenges increase this will further exasperate the problem – **DEGRADED LAND = POVERTY!**

THE BENEFITS

The Mandlakazi Food Sovereignty & Ecological Restoration Project, although has a solid aim, is multifaceted in its approach and works intimately with tribal authorities and local leaders. Every move we make in progressing the project involves the community and the project constantly evolves as the needs of the community become clearer creating ownership and uptake of the project as a natural result of the way we engage.

The “Manyoni Nursery” is a major step forward in the project and will be a part of the foundation building for *phase 2*. Being able to produce our own plant material will have multiple benefits:

- ✓ **Control of quality**
- ✓ **Control of quantity**
- ✓ **Save hundreds of thousands of Rands**
- ✓ **Provide livelihood (when we branch out into the communities)**
- ✓ **Save time & logistics (proximity of nursery to project area)**
- ✓ **Help create intimate knowledge of the species grown**

We will focus on propagating Indigenous trees, shrubs and ground covers that are endemic to the area and are keystone species to drive ecological restoration; that provide ecosystem services such as erosion

control, vegetative cover, habitat, food, timber, bee nectar, improve rain runoff infiltration, etc.

A secondary focus will be given to growing exotic species, especially fruit and nut plants that will be used in developing the “Forest Gardens” at the homestead (and other – crèche’s, clinics) level.

The nursery will be able to work with Reserve in growing species that are needed in the park for such programs as the “Bio Bank Project” a project for plant nectar rich species for bees in targeted areas around the reserve - the nursery could potentially add great value to the reserve as it grows and develops.

DESCRIPTION

During preliminary discussion held with Karen Odendaal of Manyoni Management, we identified areas that potentially could be utilised for the nursery and vetiver plantation

- Nursery: area a) Nyala/Buffalo Boma, *see figure 2*
- Vetiver plantation: area b) Open land between Rhino Orphanage & staff compound, *see figure 3*

Nursery

The Nursery will be comprised of 2 areas: Seedlings and saplings; and bagged plants. Irrigation in the form of micro sprayers connected to a solenoid valve controlled by an automatic timer will be installed.

A “water meter” will also be installed, strictly monitored and results would be

reported to Manyoni management as not to burden the reserves resources.

The estimated water usage for the nursery:

Per day	Per week	Per Month	Per year
1000lt	7000lt	30000lt	360000lt

Vetiver Plantation

The vetiver will be planted on prepared ground that has been ripped by a tractor with manure and or compost added. Young vetiver tillers will be planted in close rows on contour to cover the entire area.

An overhead sprinkler system – Impact sprayers on a tall 1.8m tripod stands will be used to irrigate the crop. We anticipate the crop to only need watering in the initial stages of establishment – 2 or 3 times in the first few weeks. It is a very drought hardy plant once established, and we may only need to water occasionally for production purposes or not at all (post establishment & prior to harvesting) if there is water scarcity.

The vetiver will be harvested every year to 2 years and replanted, It can serve as a “feed bank” during times of drought for the Rhino Orphanage.

The estimated water usage for the vetiver:

To Establish (first few weeks)	Per Year
100 000lt	100 000lt – 300 000lt



Figure 2 Area a) Proposed Nursery

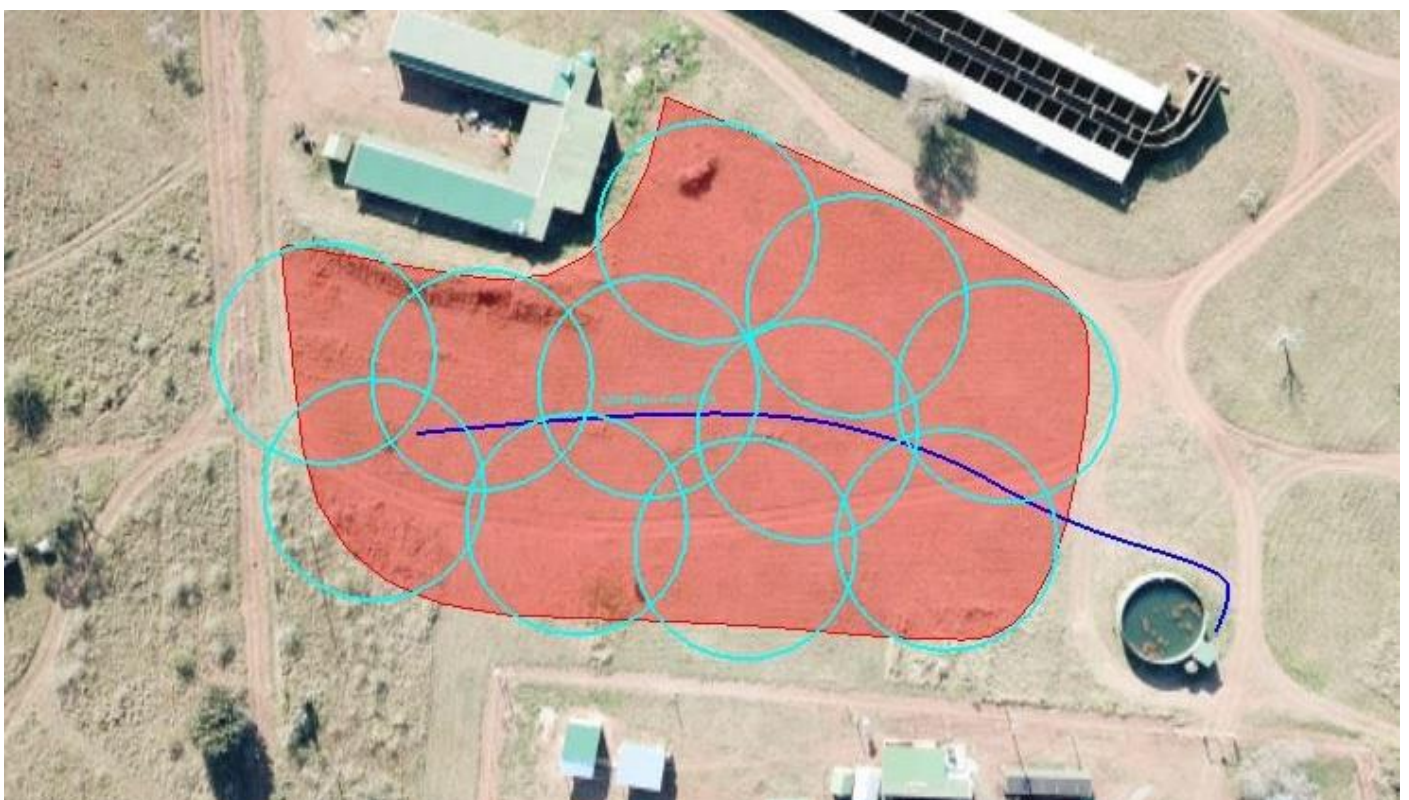


Figure 3 Area b) Proposed vetiver plantation

ASSISTANCE

Funding for the setup of the nursery will be generously provided by “Roots Up” foundation and implementation and ongoing development by ACT (African Conservation Trust).

The project however seeks Manyoni game Reserves assistance in the following:

- Provision of the Boma area for Nursery
- Provision of land for vetiver plantation
- Water for irrigation
- Staff quarters for labour of the nursery
- Tractor to prepare the land
- Assistance in identifying and collecting seed of indigenous plants in the reserve
- Place to keep tools and seed fridge
- Scrap materials to build propagation tables
- Material –Rhino dung and hay to make compost

SCHEDULE

We would like to start immediately if possible. The installation will take several weeks and it would be advantageous to plant the vetiver during the rainy season.

The development of the Nursery will take will be ongoing and we hope to work with members of Manyoni and lodges who have good knowledge of the indigenous plants of the area to help make this aspect of our project a success.

CONCLUSION

The nursery is an exciting opportunity for the Project stakeholders to partner in a special and unique intervention that will be yield incredible benefits to the project.

As we progress the project - into phase 2 and beyond, and broaden its scope and impact, a closer relationship with reserve and its various stakeholders will be very desirable, mutually beneficial and critical.

Although we seemingly work in “silos” much of the time the project team is keenly aware that it is essentially an “outreach” program for the reserve and our efforts are directed towards tackling broader conservation issues.

The reserve has assisted the project in many ways in the past 1 and a half years and the project team is greatly appreciative.

We really look forward to continuing building this relationship and growing the project together.

*Thank you in advance
for considering this
proposal!*