

Governance of wetland resources...

who is doing what?

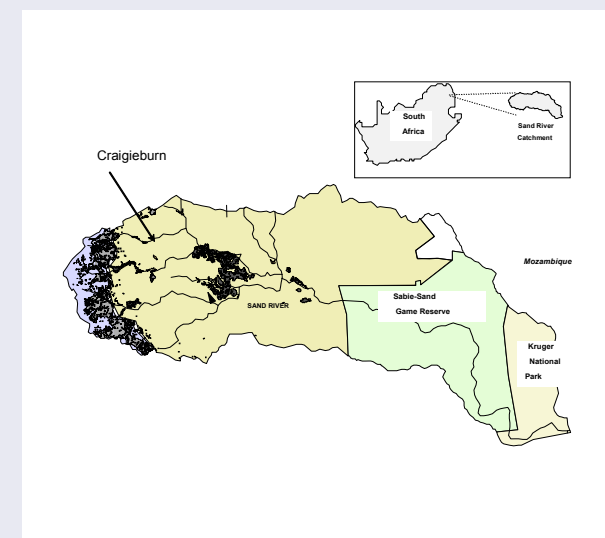


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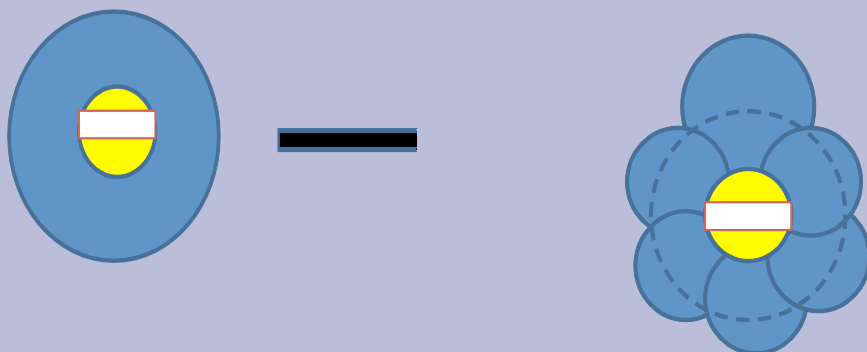
Governance is also often thought of as the same as government – and indeed governments are engaged with governance, but they are not the only institutions and actors involved in the process of governance. For example, natural resources governance involves p community structures, traditional authorities, civil society and government.

What is governance?

Definitions of governance vary widely depending on the context. The definition used by Pollard and Cousins (2008) sees governance as a socio-political process to manage affairs; it thus describes the relationships between people and the rules and norms that are set up to guide these interactions. Governance is often conflated with management, but it goes beyond management functions, and resides at a number of interacting levels. The nature of the resource informs its governance and wetlands are an interesting intersection of water and land.



The governance of wetlands is a COLLABORATIVE ISSUE



The Association for Water and Rural Development (AWARD) – has established a multi-disciplinary research initiative that shows that an improved governance at multiple levels would be critical to maintaining a sustainable system, particularly since practices in the micro-catchment (including grazing land, paths and roads) also impact on water flows and wetland degradation. In partnership with the LEAP Association (Learning approaches to tenure security; <http://www.leap.org.za/>) the baseline assumption was that strengthening governance requires building on an understanding of the land tenure and natural resource systems.

Throughout the world wetlands are used to sustain livelihoods, and have a particular importance in the lives of the rural poor, providing access to a unique array of natural resources. In colonial Africa, the use of wetlands was often prohibited by the colonial administration and so indigenous people living on communal lands were forced to use wetlands secretly.

Attention has turned to support for the sustainable use of wetlands, particularly within the context of agricultural use – an emphasis led largely by the FAO and others nearly a decade ago. This has meant asking 'what is sustainable use'? And what kind of governance would support sustainable use?

Table 1. Summary of status of natural resource governance in the Craigieburn, indicating major role-players.

Governance	Actors and status					
RIGHTS	Community	TA/ induna	CPF	CDF	State	NGO
• to use land & natural resources		/	/	/		/
• to participate in decision making	weak	some	/			ad hoc
• to organize to address problems	at times	not happening	not happening	not happening		ad hoc
RESPONSIBILITIES						
• To abide by rules	users	/	/	/	/	/
• to monitor and report problems	very limited	not happening	not happening	not happening	DWAE; DALA	□
• To mediate problems	/	weak	weak	weak	DWAE; DALA	/
• To act on problems		weak	not happening	weak		
AUTHORITY						
• to transfer fields between people	User/ family		/	/	/	/
• to open season for collecting reeds	/	weakening	/	/	/	/
• to approve new fields	/	used to	/	/	DALA, Municipality	/
• to set rules	/	used to	/	/	DWAE; DALA	/
• enforce rules	/	weak	/	/	weak (DWAE, DALA)	/
• to allocate usufruct <i>with consultation</i>	/	poor consultation	/	/	poor consultation	/

Multiple actors are involved in various aspects of natural resource governance (Table 1). Rights and responsibilities reside with most actors whilst authority is shared by the TA and the state. It is also clear that many governance functions - an estimated 60% of those identified - are not being undertaken. It is notable which rights are taken up, and which are not. For example, community members do access resources, but not decision-making. When it comes to responsibilities, only the NGOs are carrying out their rather limited role at present.

Government bodies do not monitor problems even when pressed to, and offer no recourse to investigate or check abuses. Although lack of capacity is cited as the reason, there is also a lack of political will. Authority is only expressed in a limited way with regards to administration, The local government councilor and the CDF, which is linked to him, are seen to be extensions of the ruling political party, They have had no involvement in NRM until financial stakes were raised through the development of the aforementioned brick factory.

Those in authority express little concern for natural resources and their sustainable use and livelihood role, but focus solely on their potential for commercial exploitation.

Key to table: TA = Traditional Authority; CDF = community Development Forum; CPF = Community Policing Forum; NGO = Non-governmental organization; DWAE = Department of Water Affairs & Environment; DALA = Department of Agriculture & Land Administration. Blue – happening, yellow – should but limited; Orange – should happen but does not.