

An African Perspective on Wilderness

Article: Frode Sundnes, "[Scrubs and Squatters: The Coming of the Dukuduku Forest, an Indigenous Forest in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa,](#)" *Environmental History* 18.2 (2013) DOI: 10.1093/envhis/emt003.

Class Discussion/Analytical Questions

- 1) What cultural motivations encouraged the removal of people inhabiting Dukuduku starting in the 1930s? What factors led to the dramatic increase of in-migration Dukuduku experienced beginning in the 1980s?
- 2) Sundnes describes a colonial dual wilderness vision in explaining the varying views toward Dukuduku forest. What benefits can be gained from this vision? Whom do they benefit? What inherent detriments accompany this vision? Who do they adversely affect?
- 3) Describe the dichotomy that exists between the government's conservation efforts and attempts by locals to maintain their livelihoods in Dukuduku. What value does the park service—and by extension the government—see in keeping people out of the remaining uninhabited areas surrounding Dukuduku? What value do the forest dwellers see in this land?
- 4) Explain why Sundnes argues that seeing Dukuduku as pristine, untouched, natural land is not only a problem, but also completely wrong. What kind of impact have people had on creating Dukuduku as it exists today? What are the environmental implications for this?

Activities

1. Creating a Dukuduku Timeline

Sundnes splits Dukuduku's history into titled sections in his article. Break the class into four groups, assigning each group a different set of sections.

Groups:

- 1) "Dukuduku Forest's Early Recorded History"
- 2) "British Empire Management" and "Forestry at Dukuduku"
- 3) "Agriculture in the Dukuduku Area" and "Squatters and Forced Removals"
- 4) "Nature Conservation, 1960s and Onward" and "Landscape Change"

Explain that each group has four tasks to complete.

Tasks

- 1) Explain the significant events occurring in your section(s) of the article, pinpointing 3 to 5 key events your group can add to the overall timeline.
- 2) Describe the actions and decisions made by both the government and the people. Analyze these actions and decisions in regards to their impact on the Dukuduku environment.
- 3) Create a timeline using an online site like Time-Glider or OurStory explaining your key events.
- 4) Teach the class your section of the article by using your online timeline.

2. Creating a More Complete Wilderness Vision

Sundnes claims that the wilderness vision of nature—one in which humans necessarily intervene via utilitarian motives or conservation visions—is incomplete. Break the class into small groups and ask them to answer the following question: How can this vision, one based upon American ideas of wilderness, be changed in order to fit other geographical and cultural areas? Each group should write a detailed answer that references the dual colonial wilderness vision Sundnes mentions as well as an idea of how their more complete wilderness vision could be applied in Dukuduku. This can also be made into individual projects or assignments.