

# ONE HEALTH

## Improving the Health of People, Ecosystems and Livestock in South Africa's uMzimvubu Catchment



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The uMzimvubu catchment spans over two million hectares of the poorest rural areas of South Africa's Eastern Cape Province. This critical ecosystem provides water to approximately one million people and supports more than 2,000 plant and animal species that are unique to this area.

The catchment is presently under threat due to the degradation of land from overgrazing, the loss of land to water-thirsty invasive vegetation, and vulnerability to the impacts of climate change. Rural communities also face significant challenges: unemployment is higher than the national average, with many people dependent upon social grants and the landscape for their livelihoods. The proportion of households with access to piped water inside the home or yard is as low as 16 percent, and waterborne diseases pose a risk to youth and the elderly.

In order for conservation to be effectively implemented, the health needs of the community and the proper management of their livestock need to be addressed.

Conservation South Africa (CSA) is working in the upper reaches of the Mzimvubu to improve water resources sustainability by applying a "One Health" framework that integrates water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) activities with freshwater conservation, improved livestock farming and restoration efforts. By empowering local communities to manage and benefit from their natural resources, and supporting local governance structures that enable sustainable livelihoods, "One Health" aims secure water futures for all water users.

This project draws on work from the Africa Biodiversity Collaborative Group—a consortium of seven international conservation NGOs—to develop project implementation guidelines and a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework and indicators to measure the added value of integrated freshwater conservation and WASH programming.

The district government for the Alfred Nzo District Municipality (ANDM), covering approximately 70 percent of the watershed, recognizes the importance of fresh water for the region's poverty alleviation efforts and continued economic growth. ANDM is partnering with CSA to share WASH data, complementary tools, and raise awareness among all stakeholders about the intersection of socio-economic and environmental issues in the catchment.

CSA's "One Health" initiative in the uMzimvubu catchment is demonstrating how human well-being, economic growth, and environmental sustainability go hand in hand.



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