

threats to biodiversity.

While several of the threats and their attendant interventions seemed familiar to conservation practitioners (e.g., park fences for reducing threats from grazing livestock), the plan also identified ‘root causes’ that generally do not get included in plan documents. As a result, the final NBSAP draft, compiled from the different state and regional plans, also contained criticisms of the state itself, including a critique of its chemically driven agricultural development paradigm, and its command-and-control forest policy.

For several participants, engagement in the NBSAP process was contingent and strategic. It was inclusion in the NBSAP process that gave certain groups legitimacy to speak, act and collaborate. As activists, researchers, and state officials developed professional relationships, they frequently took

the work of conservation beyond the constraints and demands of this planning effort. Understanding the ultimate implementation of the plan as unlikely, they sought to make it as open and inclusive of their agendas as possible. Activists saw their participation as a temporally limited space within which they could maneuver, and as an opportunity to establish a degree of plurality and creativity within a project of government. By working restively and conditionally with a government planning process, some participants sought to engage *tactically* to reach particularly defined ends different from those that the state desired.

That this was a precarious and temporary opportunity was soon made very clear by the Ministry of Environment and Forests. First by stalling its completion, then by delaying its confirmation, the Ministry resisted the final draft

presented by the Technical and Policy Core Group (TPCG). Then, on 5 October, 2005, it summarily rejected the plan, citing *technical inaccuracies* as the reason. In doing so, the Ministry went from celebrating the initiative as an example of good governance to calling the document ‘unscientific.’ They proposed to start the entire NBSAP process over again with a different NGO, perhaps with a more diluted version of participation. Kalpavriksh, meanwhile, has made both the process documentation, and the final technical report available to the public.

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Dilemmas in British Conservationism in Zimbabwe, 1890-1930

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During the first 40 years of British colonial rule in Zimbabwe, from 1890 to 1930, European farmers and miners established commercial farms and mines (in prime natural regions ‘i’ and ‘ii’; Figure 1). The Mazoe District of northeastern Zimbabwe embodied the two major pillars of the settler cash economy – mining and

commercial agriculture. Its capital city was Bindura, which, together with Trojan and Concession, were booming centres of gold and nickel exploitation, facilitated by good road and rail networks to Harare (Salisbury). The colonial state sought to orient settler farmers towards the production of export crops, tobacco, maize and cotton. It encouraged the production

of minerals, and cash and food crops, envisaging that a diversified economy would provide ‘greater self-sufficiency’ for the colony. It also envisaged benefiting the ruling British South Africa Company (1890-1923) by cutting the food import bill and raising the value of land, as well as by building and sustaining a stable European community.

White miners and farmers depended on state support in expropriating natural resources at the expense of the indigenous population, which was largely composed of the Shona and Ndebele.

The extractive economic activities of colonialists directly caused a fundamental transformation in soil and forest use. This led to widespread deforestation and soil erosion, resulting from unregulated clearing of vegetation and timber cutting, especially in the Mazoe River valley. The rehabilitation of lands around abandoned Mazoe mines was expensive and often difficult due to waste material polluting the soil, vegetation, and water. The state provided preferential treatment to miners in meeting their timber and energy requirements because they contributed the bulk of state revenue. This policy was a source of protracted conflict over soil and forest exploitation between miners and farmers. Soil erosion and deforestation were major environmental impacts arising from the competing interests of mining and agriculture. Environmental degradation highlighted the negative effect of settler farming, particularly the perennial

cultivation of the same crop – notably tobacco and maize – on the same field. Land was ‘mined’ for short-term economic gain. The settler community was unwilling to acknowledge and deal effectively with the problems of deforestation and erosion. There was no radical change in individual or collective attitudes towards natural resource management.

The ignorance, neglect, and greed of early settler society contributed to the permanent loss of biodiversity and wildlife from various habitats. Much wild flora and fauna gradually became extinct as a result of new techniques of farming and mining, such as the use of artificial fertiliser-chemicals and processes, respectively. However, with Responsible Government in 1923, new conservation initiatives were introduced to control the exploitation of resources. Nonetheless, old habits were difficult to change and the rapacious

exploitation of natural resources by some farmers and miners persisted well into the late colonial era. There were wider impacts on African men, women, and children who worked for the colonial system as ultra-cheap labourers, earning parsimonious wages under conditions of overwork, inadequate food rations, and the absence of proper housing. African poverty and environmental degradation were the two outstanding consequences of British colonisation, specifically in the Mazoe District, and in Zimbabwe more generally.

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Area under different farming regimes

Region	Area (million ha)	Percent of Total	Description
i	0.62	1.6	<i>Specialised and diversified farming:</i> High annual rainfall (> 1000 mm), temperature <15°C. Suitable for dairying, forestry, tea, coffee, fruits, maize, beef ranching.
ii	7.31	18.8	<i>Intensive farming:</i> Annual rainfall 750-1000 mm. Ideal for rain-fed maize and tobacco, beef, cotton, winter wheat and vegetables.
iii	6.85	17.6	<i>Semi-intensive farming:</i> Annual rainfall 650-800 mm, mostly as infrequent heavy storms, with severe mid-season dry spells. Marginal for maize, tobacco and cotton. Favours livestock production with fodder. Requires good management to retain moisture during growing season.
iv	12.84	33.0	<i>Semi-extensive farming:</i> Annual rainfall 450-650 mm, subject to seasonal droughts and severe dry spells during the rainy season. Found in hot, low-lying land. Marginal for rain-fed maize. Ideal for drought-resistant fodder crops.
v	11.28	29.0	<i>Extensive farming:</i> Annual rainfall < 450 mm and too low and erratic for most crops. Very hot, low-lying region. Suitable for animal husbandry, and for growing drought-resistant fodder crops under irrigation. Below the Zambezi escarpment, this region is infested with tsetse fly.