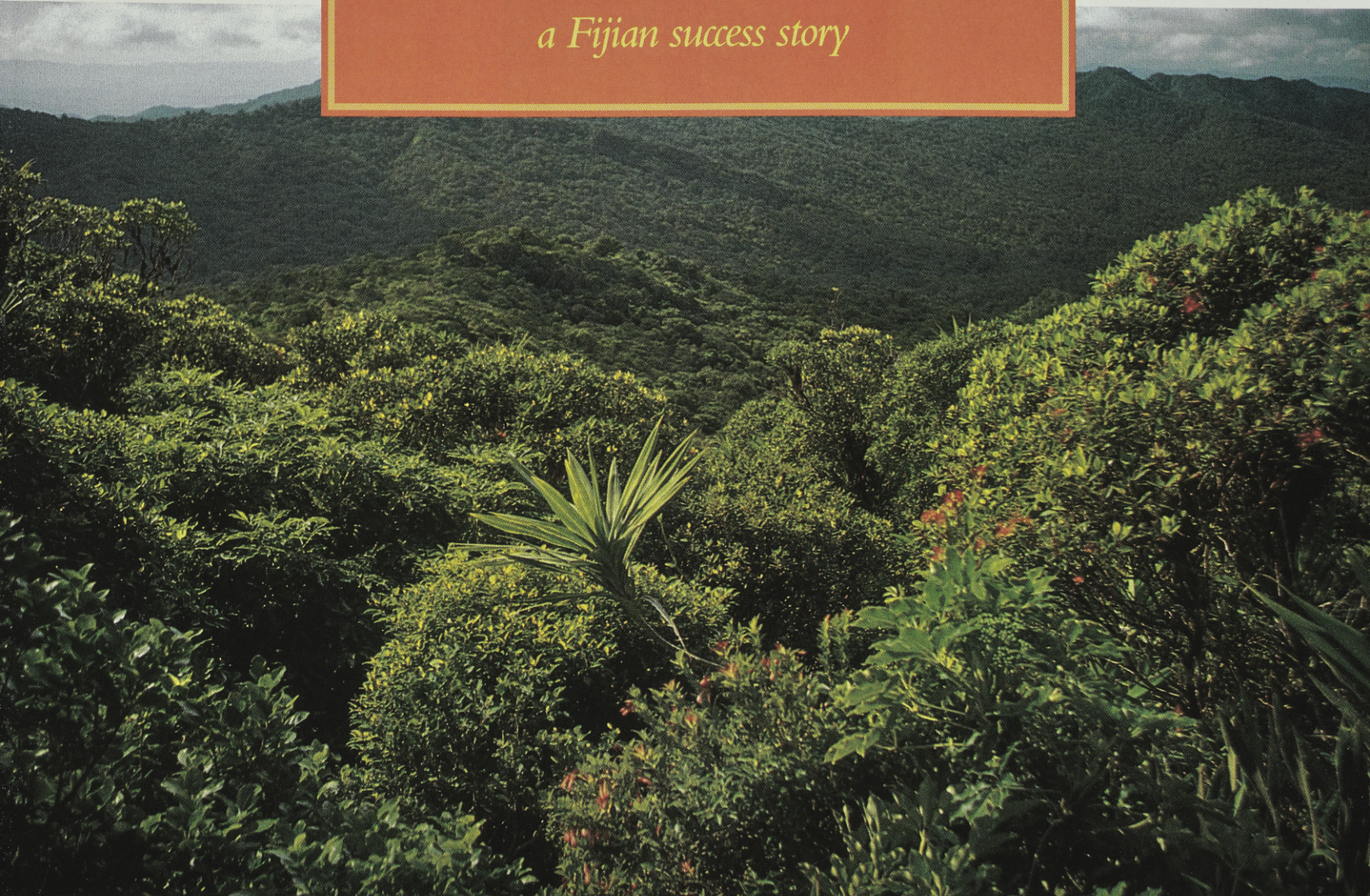


# WABU CREEK KAURI FOREST

*a Fijian success story*



The Wabu Creek catchment adjoins the 1,300 hectare Mount Tomanivi Nature Reserve. Much of the Wabu Creek catchment is steep forest zoned for water and soil protection, with the lower slopes supporting dense stands of old-growth Fijian kauri.

**T**HE FIJI KAURI FOREST of the Wabu [pronounced Wambu] Creek catchment covers some 4,000 hectares in an enclosed unmodified valley perched high in the mists of central Viti Levu, the largest of Fiji's islands. Of all the unspoilt landscapes in Fiji, Wabu stands among the finest.

Less than half of Fiji's two million hectares is forested. Of this forest most is either secondary growth indigenous forest or exotic plantations. Very few areas of unlogged rainforest remain. The forests of Wabu Creek are among the few that have escaped 150 years of logging activity and they have an exceptionally high conservation value.

*Forest and Bird's Pacific rainforest campaign took the society to Fiji in 1988 in an effort to assist in the conservation of Fiji's tropical rainforests. Many of the country's native forests are threatened by logging. Sean Weaver looks at one particular forest with an interesting story. The problems that surrounded the efforts to protect it shed light on some of the central issues faced by forest conservationists in the Pacific.*

As the last remaining example of dense old growth Fijian kauri (*Agathis macrophylla* to scientists, *dakua makadre* to the locals), it survives as a remnant of a forest type that was formerly widespread in the island group.

**M**OST of Fiji's rainforests, including this one, are owned by indigenous Fijian mataqali or clans. A mataqali can vary in number and often consists of a group of families which form part of a village population. A village may contain up to five mataqali. But the mataqali which owns the Wabu Creek kauri forest is represented by only a single living member. If this person were a man then the ownership of this forest

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