Sacred forests often comprise the last remaining native patches in the landscape, making them especially important reserves of natural resources for both local communities and biodiversity. However, changes in cultural values together with the pressing need to expand productive lands weaken the motivation to continue protecting once-sacred forests. In this Commentary, we propose an alternative strategy for the conservation of these forests, consisting of the implementation of community-managed forests (CMFs). We illustrate this strategy with the case of a project undertaken in northern Guinea-Bissau by a regional non-governmental organization. We further discuss the need for non-governmental efforts to be aligned with governmental ones for effective CMFs.