

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP

Pilot projects in the Swartland and Overberg

How can you make a contribution to conservation?

Landowners play a pivotal role in conservation. With 80% of the priority habitats in private hands, conservation strategies must involve private landholders. In addition, the existing network of formal reserves cannot adequately protect the many threatened species and ecosystems in South Africa. This means that landowners can make a significant contribution towards the conservation of the unrivalled biodiversity of our country.

Innovative approaches are required that will enable, encourage and assist landowners to protect priority habitats. With these needs in mind, Cape Nature Conservation (CNC) has launched a dedicated Conservation Stewardship Programme through which a number of conservation options will be offered to landowners.

What is stewardship?

Stewardship refers to the wise use, management and protection of that which has been entrusted to you or is rightfully yours. Within the context of conservation, stewardship means protecting important ecosystems, effectively managing invasive alien species and fires, and grazing or harvesting without damaging the veld.

THE CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PILOT PROJECT is a two-year partnership project between Cape Nature Conservation and the Botanical Society, funded by the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund. The project will investigate ways of encouraging conservation stewardship of privately owned areas in the Western Cape lowlands, with the ultimate goal to expand conservation beyond the boundaries of formally conserved areas – to the benefit of landowners, their immediate environment, and the country as a whole.

What are the conservation stewardship options available to you?

Conservation stewardship options refer to those alternatives that are available to private landowners that either wish to set land aside for conservation or utilise the land sustainably.

Currently, a cumbersome system exists of more than 25 stewardship options such as private nature reserves, conservancies, natural heritage sites or mountain catchment areas, each of which have their own characteristics and legal status. To simplify this, Cape Nature Conservation proposes three stewardship options that are being piloted by this project:

1

CONTRACT NATURE RESERVES:

comprising legally recognised contracts or servitudes on private land to protect biodiversity in the long term.

2

CO-OPERATION AGREEMENTS:

negotiated legal agreements between CNC and a landowner for conserving biodiversity in the medium term.

3

CONSERVATION AREAS:

flexible options with no defined period of commitment.

How do these work?

Landowner benefits and possible incentives will increase in conjunction with the level of security and land use limitations of each option



These 3 options function in a building block manner. Conservation areas are recommended as the entry level.

(For more detail on these options please refer to the pamphlet "Conservation Stewardship - Options for landowners")



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Your conservation needs
are our priority!

The following information sources can
be downloaded from the Botanical
Society website:

www.botanicalsociety.org.za/ccu

- Hidden jewels of the Cape - renosterveld information brochure
- Understanding a farmer's position - Veld & Flora article, December 2002
- So you want to conserve your land? - a short report on Conservation Options
- Conservation Incentives: Options and Opportunities - an analysis report

General conservation information can
be sourced from the Cape Nature
Conservation website:

www.capenature.org.za



What does the Stewardship Pilot Project want to achieve?

The Pilot Project will investigate ways of making conservation on private land (high biodiversity value), simpler and more attractive to landowners by:

- Developing tools and stewardship options that are tailor-made to address landowner needs.
- Lobbying for incentives and legislative reform at a local, provincial and national level.
- Forming strategic partnerships with other departments and organisations such as the Department of Agriculture and the Working for Water Programme.
- Positioning landowners to receive benefits or assistance when they adopt one of the stewardship strategies.
- Improving the capacity of conservation extension services to provide support, advice and assistance to private landowners.
- Launching negotiations in three pilot sites with interested landowners.
- Instilling an appreciation of our country's unique natural heritage.

Why should YOU become involved?

- Be a trendsetter! You will be part of an initiative that is the first of its kind in South Africa. This process will redefine the approach to conservation on privately owned land.
- Adopting one of these stewardship options will place you first in line for incentives and additional benefits, as they become available. The pilot project is currently lobbying for incentives that, when accepted, will only be available to landowners that have entered into a formal conservation agreement.
- Dedicated, competent staff will support and assist you in the management of natural areas on your property.
- If you have renosterveld or lowland fynbos on your property, you can play a vital role, as these are the most threatened vegetation types in South Africa.

Where will this project operate?

Three pilot sites have been chosen in the Western Cape: two in the Overberg and one in the Swartland. Here the three stewardship options will be tested and refined. The boundaries of the pilot sites indicated on the map below are indicative only.

