



NGO's respond to Climate Change Crisis

Reports on the imminent effects of climate change are now mainstream, with predictions of rising oceans that swallow coastal areas, mass extinctions of plants and animals, epidemics of exotic diseases and increasing conflicts over dwindling resources in the next 20 to 70 years common place in the media.

Human industry is mostly responsible for climate change, because of the carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases spewed out by factories, power plants, airplanes, trucks, cars, and other sources. What few people realize is that burning or clearing tropical forests is also a major source of atmospheric carbon - 25 percent of the total, which is second only to the power generation sector. In fact, the destruction of tropical forests contributes twice as much carbon as all of the world's cars and trucks.

Our survival depends on the successful reduction of our greenhouse gas emissions by increasing energy efficiency, slowing deforestation rates and rehabilitating the world's natural ecosystems. Implementing solutions requires bold leadership. Already, corporations such as Woolworths, Nestle, Bank of America and General Electric understand that their profits, the well-being of their supply chains, and the happiness of their consumers and employees are linked to sustainability. Religious voices from the Evangelical, Catholic, Jewish, and Muslim communities are rising against environmental destruction, regardless of personal creation beliefs. And our young people, the heirs to the planet, want a healthy environment for their lives and their children.

DID YOU KNOW

A move to new ultra-efficient technologies - such as appliances, lights, and cars that use 75 percent less energy and buildings that use 67 percent less energy - would mean sufficient energy savings to cover at least half of the anticipated global energy demand in coming decades while using fewer resources, emitting dramatically less greenhouse gases, and lowering overall energy costs by literally trillions of dollars. In China, which is soon to become the world's biggest emitter of greenhouse gases, switching to decentralized power supplies such as home and office energy systems instead of continuing to build big coal-fired plants could halve carbon emissions while reducing energy use and saving \$400 billion in consumer and construction costs by 2021.

South African conservation NGOs, The Wilderness Foundation, Wildlands Conservation Trust, The Botanical Society of South Africa and Conservation International's Hotspots Programme have responded to this call to action by initiating CAP - the South African Climate Action Partnership - at an MOU signing on the 19th April 2007 at Kirstenbosch.

The partners recognizing that:

- Climate change is among the most pervasive threats to biodiversity today, which, without action, will cause the extinction of countless species and destroy some of the world's most precious ecosystems;
- Climate change is a major threat to South African biodiversity, particularly in the Succulent Karoo and Cape Floral Kingdom Biodiversity Hotspots; and
- A collective effort to mitigate and adapt to climate change will have greater impact than the sum of the work that each organization can carry out individually.

These South African conservation organizations collectively aim to:

- Promote the climate change message and the links between climate change and the conservation of natural habitat;
- Provide a platform for discussion and debate on the impact of climate change on South African biodiversity;

Promote South Africa – relevant solutions for reducing carbon emissions;

- Offer corporates, individuals and organizations a competitive package that allows them to offset their carbon footprint through indigenous forest rehabilitation or maintenance projects – thereby contributing to biodiversity conservation, poverty alleviation and rural development in South Africa;
- To develop standards for carbon-biodiversity projects in South Africa.
- To raise funds to finance climate change adaptation stewardship projects.

Action With A Positive Reaction

Stewardship is the latest buzz word used to approach landowners who own or utilize land that is of critical importance for conservation. For years conservationists have struggled to find a balance between protecting threatened habitats/species and not negatively affecting landowners' ability to derive an income from their land. Stewardship is conservation's win-win solution that satisfies both the landowners' needs and that of the environment - maintaining ownership of the land, providing landowners with assistance in managing their land and creating sustainable livelihoods, while protecting the country's unique biodiversity.

The stewardship approach also responds to the universal difficulty of maintaining extensive areas of pristine habitat in a rapidly developing world. Protected areas are often too small and isolated to maintain the ecological and evolutionary processes that sustain biodiversity, yet conservation agencies seldom have the resources to purchase and manage additional land (and in South Africa, the traditional approach of purchasing land for conservation is not popular or even viable in the post-apartheid reform climate, where 30% of land is targeted for redistribution to historically disadvantaged South Africans by 2015). In such circumstances, conservation efforts need to focus on creating stewardship corridors that connect core conservation areas. These corridors allow some level of human use while aiming to protect biodiversity and allow ecosystems to function at the landscape level. Stewardship corridors have been highly successful in maintaining the viability of species and ecosystems and have become one of the highest conservation priorities around the world.

The stewardship approach also provides significantly higher conservation returns compared to the traditional purchase of land. A recent external review of the CAPE Stewardship Program's two year pilot phase revealed that **investment in stewardship provides fifty times the conservation returns**, in terms of hectares of land under conservation management, when compared to the direct purchase of land!

A partnership between Cape Nature, Botsoc, WWF, CAPE and CI has pioneered the stewardship approach to conservation in South Africa, developing site assessment procedures, identifying appropriate incentives, developing legal procedures for contracting land into conservation management and building the stewardship capacity of extension officers. Over its three years of operation, the CAPE Stewardship Program has achieved a good image among landowners and has received an unprecedented landowner response, greatly contributing to the conservation of critical habitat fragments in the Cape Floristic Region. Working with wine, fruit, wheat, potato and rooibos farmers, and owners of land, the program has entered into agreements with 286 landowners, securing over 1 million hectares of the Cape under voluntary sustainable management. Stewardship programs in other regions, such as the KZN Stewardship Programme in KwaZulu-Natal, are hot on the heels of the CAPE program and are looking to achieve similar stewardship success in their provinces.

As William Ruckelshaus recently said in The Business Week: "Nature provides a free lunch, but only if we control our appetites". South Africa's stewardship programmes are a "diet and maintenance" solution to the over consumption of our natural resources. Let's hope that South Africans follow this sensible programme for the benefit of all!

In the News



Hotspots Recovery Campaign

Fundraising Update

The Skeppies Fund answers the challenge of creating sustainable livelihoods and conserving biodiversity in the remarkable Succulent Karoo Hotspot. The Fund provides accessible small to medium

scale funding for projects with combined development and conservation benefits. For example, one of the projects supported by Skeppies is a hiking trail developed in the Roodebergkloof Communal Conservancy in Namaqualand. This eco-tourism project provides a sustainable land use option that, with proper management, should improve local livelihoods by attracting tourism to the area.

In February this year, Skeppies completed its one year pilot phase and a review of the Fund, carried out together with our partner the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), showed the Fund to be on track. In its pilot phase, the Fund supported 12 projects, placing a total of 1,870 hectares of critical Succulent Karoo veld under sustainable management while at the same time creating 22 new business ventures and providing 109 new jobs to local people.

Up to highest level management, the DBSA have indicated their approval of this partnership and have committed a further \$350,000 in financial support over four years to match a generous commitment from the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF). We are actively seeking an additional three partners to join CI, CEPF and DBSA as benefactors of the Skeppies Fund.

We look forward to seeing the Skeppies Fund roll out to reach all corners of the Succulent Karoo, demonstrating that stewardship of one's natural heritage is a viable and sustainable livelihood option in South Africa.

Hot off the Press

CI has officially launched materials for the campaign to Recover the three Southern African Hotspots, the Cape Floristic Kingdom, Succulent Karoo and the Maputaland-Pondoland Albany Hotspot. The Earth Alive Campaign is running for three years and seeks to raise more than \$15million dollars. For more information contact: Dr. Amy Spriggs at a.spriggs@conservation.org

Earth Alive
protecting our future



Stop the Killing!

In March 2007 the Cederberg lost one of their endangered Western Cape Leopards, a male known as Colin. Colin who was fitted with a GPS collar and was part of a Cape Leopard Trust (CLT) study, was tragically caught in a gin trap and died. Piketberg vet Dr Andre van der Merwe was unable to save this adult male leopard that had undergone serious trauma while lying injured in the trap.

Gin traps which are banned in many countries are still commonly used throughout South Africa as a defensive reaction against predators to minimise stock losses. Sadly the traps usually end up killing many other non-target species in the process.

The CLT presently studies 5 leopards collared with GPS transmitters in the greater Cederberg area – 4 adult males and 1 adult female. They are researching them to assist livestock farmers in better farming practices while aiding leopard conservation. They encourage farmers to use alternative methods to ward off predators, some of which include the use of Anatolian Dogs or cage traps, neither of which cause harm to the stock or predators.

Ironically, on the very day that Colin died, the Cederberg Conservancy (a wilderness area that covers 171000ha, 100 000ha of which is privately owned farm land) announced that no more animals will die at the hands of gin traps in their Conservancy.

The Cederberg Conservancy has banned the use of gin traps as well as hunting in the area. This groundbreaking agreement was made in collaboration with the Cape Leopard Trust and Cape Nature and is, as far as we know, the first initiative of this kind by farmers in South Africa.

We hope that this initiative will prove to be a catalyst for more areas to follow the example of the good stewards of the Cederberg Conservancy.

Congratulations Cederberg Conservancy Members, we support you every step of the way.

For more information on the Cederberg Conservancy go to www.cederberg.co.za

African Wilderness Expedition

As part of our commitment to promoting conservation with youth, CI is hosting a 7 week Wilderness Tour travelling throughout the Succulent Karoo Hotspot. Young adults from abroad will travel with South African & Namibian Youth from poor communities, providing an opportunity for young adults to gain insight into one another's views of the world and the environment as well as an opportunity to understand one another's different cultural and social practices.

This initiative is in response to South Africa's lack of interest from the youth in the earth or life sciences as a preferred career choice.

We hope that this experience will leave these young adults with a life long appreciation and love of nature and animals, as well as a taste of what it might be like to become an ecologist, climatologist, astronomer, field guide or social worker.

If you are interested in joining this dynamic team of experts and fellow Africans and would like more information please contact Chandra Fick at c.fick@conservation.org

Drinking a BWI Wine is only Natural

In Cape Town we are incredibly fortunate to be able to enjoy nature whenever we choose. One can experience the mountains and the sea within a small distance from one another and at the same time feast on the fruits of mother nature. Restaurants, deli's and supermarkets do a roaring trade selling local vegetables, meat, fruit and other products, all nurtured by the country's fertile soils. But how often do we make this link back to nature? Probably not often enough.

One such industry that has become world famous for producing first class fruits from just this combination of fertile soils and a healthy climate is South Africa's Wine Industry, currently the ninth largest wine producer in the world. Since this industry now contributes 3.5% of the world's global wine production it is safe to say that this industry has quite a substantial footprint across our landscape, particularly in the Cape Floral Kingdom (CFK). The CFK is the smallest yet richest plant kingdom on earth with 9,600 plant species and has earned international recognition as a global biodiversity hotspot, and is South Africa's newest World Heritage Site.

Wine Industry players are quite aware of their footprint and have been working together with conservationists for the past 4 years to reduce the further loss of threatened natural habitat to ensure the production of wine is sustainable. Since it's time with Conservation International, the Biodiversity and Wine Initiative (BWI) has moved on and is now housed within the South African Wine & Brandy with a membership of 4 champions, 4 co-operative cellar members and 68 members. The partnerships first success was to integrate best practice management guidelines into the Integrated Production of Wines Standards (IPW). The IPW, which provides guidelines to farmers on how best to manage their land, promises the consumer that the wine they have purchased has been produced in the most environmentally friendly manner possible. Farms that have become BWI partners all agree to adhere to these guidelines and in fact go much further by keeping special areas of their land aside for conservation.

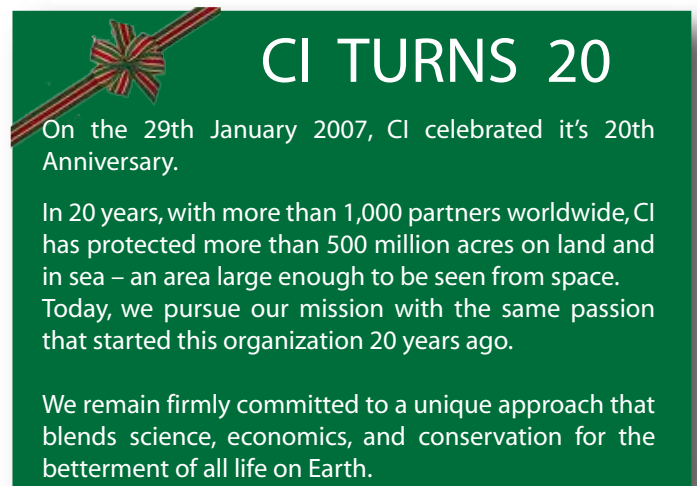
The BWI has through various agreements and incentive mechanisms, implemented by Cape Nature, now collectively protected 45,000ha of Cape Fynbos - this equates to 45% of the wine industry's footprint. This 45% is not just any piece of land but comprises areas that have been identified by conservationists as incredibly sensitive and in some cases provides a refuge for the last remaining species or habitat of its kind in the world (including the unique and highly threatened renosterveld and lowland fynbos ecosystems).



Many of the BWI members have taken the natural experience much further and have incorporated biodiversity experiences into their visitor offerings - ranging from vineyard hiking trails, guided walks through the fynbos, bird hides and "biodiversity & wine" tourism routes.

10 years ago we thought these jewels were lost to us but thanks to a motivated and concerned sector we can drink up and enjoy - but make sure it's a BWI wine!

For more information on the programme and a list of BWI approved wines see www.bwi.co.za



CI TURNS 20

On the 29th January 2007, CI celebrated it's 20th Anniversary.

In 20 years, with more than 1,000 partners worldwide, CI has protected more than 500 million acres on land and in sea - an area large enough to be seen from space. Today, we pursue our mission with the same passion that started this organization 20 years ago.

We remain firmly committed to a unique approach that blends science, economics, and conservation for the betterment of all life on Earth.

What are you doing for the planet today?



The Hotspots Programme is about to undergo another cycle of change. As part of our commitment to reduce our carbon footprint all South African Hotspots Programme staff attending our Annual Planning in Crystal City will be offsetting their flights and using bicycles as their preferred mode of transport for their stay.

By the end of this year, CI-SAHP will undergo an audit to assess where we need to make changes in our operations in order to operate as a CARBON NEUTRAL programme.

We look forward to sharing the results with you!

