

# CEPF SMALLGRANT FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

## I. BASIC DATA

**Organization Legal Name:** Friends of Die Oog

**Project Title:** Die Oog Rehabilitation and Improvement Project

**Implementation Partners for This Project:** City of Cape Town, WWF–South Africa

**Project Dates:** February 1, 2005 – August 31, 2006,

**Date of Report** August 1, 2006

## II. OPENING REMARKS

Die Oog Nature Reserve and Bird Sanctuary is based on the dam of Bergvliet Farm which was built about 250 years ago and is one of the oldest in the Western Cape. The Reserve is comprised of four separate biodiverse areas (a) a small but unique area of granite fynbos (b) the dam and island which is major bird roosting site (c) a surrounding area of indigenous grassland and shrubs and (d) a seasonal wetland which is a breeding site for the endangered Leopard Toad. The Nature Reserve was created in 1998 when Bergvliet Farm was subdivided and belongs to the City of Cape Town. The Friends of Die Oog were constituted in October 2003 and have played major role in the conservation and upgrading of Die Oog. The project sponsored by CEPF has been a great success and has made a significant contribution to the rehabilitation and improvement of Die Oog as a Nature Reserve and Bird Sanctuary.

## III. NARRATIVE QUESTIONS

### 1. Objectives of Project. These were

- (a) to clear the fynbos area and the grassland surrounding the dam of alien shrubs and grasses, to plant indigenous species and to create an attractive and bird-friendly environment.
- (b) to plant water lilies and other indigenous aquatic plants to improve the water quality and prevent the growth of algae
- (c) to rehabilitate the seasonal wetland by removing alien trees and vegetation and planting indigenous trees shrubs and reeds.
- (d) to provide signage and literature on the history, flora and fauna of Die Oog, to promote public awareness and interest and to involve the local civil society in the conservation of Die Oog as part of the Cape Floristic Kingdom.

### 2. Change of Objectives

The objectives of the project did not change but the main emphasis was placed on objectives (a), (b) and (d). In respect of (c), a poverty-alleviation organization “Working for Wetlands” assumed responsibility for the clearing of poplars and other alien vegetation in the lower part of the seasonal wetland and planted some indigenous species but were unable to continue. The Friends of Die Oog endeavoured to maintain the areas that had been cleared. The rehabilitation of the seasonal wetland proved to be a major undertaking and the Friends of Die Oog have been obliged to concentrate on the other objectives of the project

### 3. Objectives Achieved

**(a) Fynbos and surrounding area** has been largely cleared of alien species and a programme for the control and elimination of the invasive kikuyu grass instituted. Over 50 new indigenous trees and shrubs have been planted during course of the 18 months of the project and approximately 300 plants have been re-introduced into the fynbos and adjacent areas. A labourer has been employed

for one day a week with the assistance of WWF South Africa and funds from the CEPF grant were used to provide additional help in the recent planting season. A major step has been taken in the rehabilitation of the fynbos area and the natural habitat of the surrounding grass area has been greatly improved.

**(b) Water Lilies and Aquatic Plants**

The City of Cape Town had previously drained and dredged the dam to remove the accumulated sediment. About 30 water lilies and 20 waterblommetjies were planted. The dam has refilled but none of the plants appear to have survived. The water quality has greatly improved as a result of the dredging and it is planned to plant more water lilies and waterblommetjies in the course of this year.

**(c) Signage and Information**

An attractive signboard has been erected at the entrance to Die Oog giving information on the history, flora and fauna of Die Oog. The signboard also includes information on the Friends of Die Oog. The Friends of Die Oog have received encouraging support from the Departments of Environmental Planning, Parks and Forests and Nature Conservation of the City of Cape Town, the National Institute of Biodiversity at Kirstenbosch and the local community. The Friends of Die Oog now have approximately 120 members. A quarterly newsletter is published and the Friends of Die Oog have received considerable publicity in the local press. A pamphlet has been produced giving information about the history of Die Oog and the flora and fauna of the Nature Reserve.

**4. Disappointments and Failures**

The main disappointment of the project was the failure of the aquatic plants to become established and to ensure that the water quality continues to improve. The reasons why the plants failed to thrive is not known but expert advice is being obtained and a further attempt will be made to introduce suitable plants.

**5. Lessons Learned**

The lessons learned were almost entirely positive

- (a) **Success** has been dependent upon the enthusiasm, energy and time that the members of the Friends of Die Oog have been able to give to the project
- (b) **Importance of personal contact** and of establishing good working relations with the local government authorities and Nature Conservation organizations
- (c) **The need to establish a permanent basis and organisation** for the care and management of Die Oog preferably under the Department of Nature Conservation of the City of Cape Town. The ability of the Friends of Die Oog to continue to maintain the Die Oog Nature Reserve on the basis of specific projects and grants is limited by the problems of both donor and volunteer fatigue. Die Oog Nature Reserve is an integral part of the natural environment and amenities of the City of Cape Town and is an important asset of the City

**6. Follow-up Activities**

The Friends of Die Oog will continue to maintain Die Oog Nature Reserve and Bird Sanctuary and to improve Die Oog. A grant has been obtained from WWF South Africa for the rehabilitation of the seasonal wetland in collaboration with the City of Cape Town commencing 1 August 2006. A workshop has been held with authorities on wetland management to draft an Environmental Management Plan for the seasonal wetland at Die Oog. The City of Cape Town has recently submitted an application to Heritage Western Cape for Die Oog to be granted Heritage Status in view of its historical and environmental importance. Once this is achieved it is hoped Die Oog will in due course become a recognised Nature Reserve in terms of the recently enacted South African Biodiversity legislation.

### **7. Additional Information**

Gardening equipment and a shed necessary for the care of Die Oog was purchased with the funds provided by CEPF and will continue to be of great value for many years. In June 2005 the Friends of Die Oog were awarded a certificate by C.A.P.E. (Cape Action for People and the Environment) in recognition of the Friends of Die Oog as a "committed partner in South Africa's programme for sustaining the fynbos and adjacent shores". The extension of the project from January 31 to July 31 2006 enabled the Friends to complete the project as described above. The Friends of Die Oog wish to express their sincere appreciation to the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund for this grant that has played a major part in the rehabilitation of Die Oog

### **8. Information Sharing**

CEPF aims to increase sharing of experiences, lessons learned and results among our grant recipients and the wider conservation and donor communities. One way we do this is by making the text of final project completion reports available on our Web site, [www.cepf.net](http://www.cepf.net), and by marketing these reports in our newsletter and other communications. Please indicate whether you would agree to publicly sharing your final project report with others in this way.

Yes

If yes, please also complete the following:

**For more information about this project, please contact:**

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