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APPENDIX 5

CONSERVANCIES IN MIDVAAL



SAVING OUR BIODIVERSITY OUR RESPONSIBILITY

NACSSA and GCSA have been saving our Biodiversity for 10 Years 2003 - 2013



NACSSA

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVANCIES/STEWARDSHIP OF SOUTH AFRICA



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Background

What is a Conservancy?

A conservancy is a vehicle for community-based conservation. It is a registered, voluntary association of land-owners and land-users who decide to cooperatively manage their natural resources in an environmentally sustainable manner without necessarily changing the land-use of their properties. (Community-based means communities within the conservancies and surrounding areas).

Types of Conservancies

Rural
Urban
School
Industrial
Informal Settlements

National Association of Conservancies/Stewardship of South Africa NACSSA

The National Association of Conservancies of South Africa (NACSA) was established to:

- promote community-driven conservation nationally by supporting provincial conservancy associations
- Network with local and international bodies with similar aims.

NACSA's membership consists of two representatives from provincial conservancy associations plus co-opted members as needed.

Currently there are provincial conservancy associations in seven of the nine provinces. Through this network NACSA represents +-750 conservancies in South Africa. In total, these conservancies own and manage about 30 million hectares of land, five times what is in state-controlled conservation areas.

NACSA received The WESSA Presidential Award 2005 for promoting conservation in South Africa

Gauteng Conservancy and Stewardship Association GCSA

The Gauteng Conservancy Association (GCA) was formed in February 2003 (in the Midvaal) to promote conservation on private property in Gauteng and to give "teeth" to efforts to protect Gauteng's fast-disappearing greenbelt areas. It is an independent body recognised by the Gauteng Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (GDARD). The GCSA registers Conservancies on behalf of GDARD in Gauteng.

The GCSA represents 53 conservancies. These conservancies range in size from tens of thousands of hectares to tiny areas, measuring a few hectares.

Conservancies have to deal with a multitude of problems: illegal mining activities, dumping of refuse, overgrazing, veldfires, game poaching, ill-planned Golfing estates, theft of plants and rocks, tree-cutting, alien vegetation - to name a few. The momentum that the GCSA has created is a sign that people at grassroots level need to network and support one another. The concept has moved way beyond the old idea of conservation as putting up a fence, putting in game and (preferably) removing people out of the equation. We see it as community-driven conservation - people working towards protecting, conserving, restoring and growing whatever is valuable in their own neighbourhood.

The GCSA received the Mail and Guardian Greening the Future Merit Award for Environmental Best Practice in the Not-for-Profit Organization Category in 2005, 2008 and 2009



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In 2007 the GCSA received the Mma Tshepo Khumbane Award for their contribution to Civil Society Natural Resource Management.

In 2008 the GCA received the Kudu award for their Community Contribution and the award for Environmental Education from SANParks

It also received the NACSA Aardvark Gold Award for best environmental practice in a province in South Africa 2006 and 2009 and again in 2011

Gauteng Conservancy and Stewardship Association Publications

- Guidelines For Conservancy Management Planning
- School Conservancies
- Community Development and Upliftment Projects
- Conservancy Handbook including Projects and Ideas
- Bevaria Handleiding
- Bukana Ya Dibaka Tsa Paballo (Sotho Conservancies Guidelines)
- Conservancies Biodiversity and Farming A long Story

o Educational Publications

- Protect our Frogs
- An Educational Guide To Frogs
- Grasslands and Activity book
- Owls and Activity book
- What you need to Know about Bullfrogs
- Wetlands (Primary School)
- Environmental Education (Primary School)
- Vleilande (Laerskool)
- Environmental Education (Nursery School)

Gauteng Conservancy and Stewardship Association Library

The association has a library with over 2000 environmental publications, some sets of books that should be mentioned here are the full set of Plants of Natal published in 1876, Marloth the Flora of South Africa volumes 1 to 4 Trees of Southern Africa Volume 1 to 4

Recently donated to the Library were over 800 historical books on Southern Africa dating from the 1800's.

Heritage Sites

It is important to mention here that heritage sites have been identified within the conservancies of the Midvaal and are being monitored by them. As mentioned in the NACSA constitution conservancies are not there to only conserve our natural resources but also the heritage of all the people of South Africa.

Importance of Grasslands (The dominant habitat in Midvaal)

As Midvaal is predominately a grassland habitat it is important to ensure that they are recognised and protected.

There is a wide misconception that grasslands are less important, ecologically than forests or indeed single trees!

Primary grasslands have become an endangered habitat through irresponsible property development and lack of proper land management.

Our primary grasslands (that is, grasslands that have never been subject to any soil disturbance such as excavation, ploughing or soil erosion) carry relatively high to very high biodiversity, and often include rare, vulnerable or endangered species of both flora and fauna. Up to 80% of South Africa's grasslands have already been irreversibly transformed by forestry, agriculture and urban development. Less than 2% of the remaining 20% is under formal protection! It is within this context that we must manage these diminishing habitats responsibly and sustainably.



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Conservancies in the Midvaal

There are Eleven Registered Conservancies situated in the Midvaal. Our aim is to have green belts running from North to South and East to West in the Midvaal or at most to form conservancies in areas where the GDARD *conservation plan 2* has recognized important and irreplaceable sites

1. Apple Orchards

Size: 1417.2 hectares

Established: 12 October 2002

Type: Rural

Conservation Status: A few important sites in the north of the Conservancy were recognized by GDARD conservation plan 2

The Community of Apple Orchards, are recording data on indigenous plants and animals, as well as information on the challenges facing the human inhabitants of the Conservancy. The Conservancy acts as an educative forum by being a channel for the acquisition and dissemination of environment-related information. It informs and educates local residents about living in ecologically sustainable ways, incorporating identification of environmental problems and the possible solutions to those problems.

2. Henley on Klip

Size: 6894.2 hectares

Established: 06 September 1998

Type: Rural/Urban

Conservation Status: Irreplaceable sites in the South and West and important sites in the east bordering on Suikerbosrand Nature Reserve GDARD conservation plan 2.

The Klip River is a major concern as it has been recognized as one of South Africa's most polluted rivers. The Conservancy monitors water quality and regularly performs river clean-ups.

3. Klipkraal

Size: 4200.00 hectares

Established: 9 January 2006

Type: Rural

Conservation Status: important site in the middle of conservancy and irreplaceable site on the southern end.

This conservancy is situated north-east of the Vaal Dam

It is a very important tourism site. They have hiking trails through unspoilt grasslands and koppies that are used to benefit the awareness of the importance of grasslands and koppies. Educational institutions have used this conservancy for educational purposes. This is one of the newest conservancies in Gauteng and has grown from one member to five members in this short time.

4. Klipriviersuikerboschrand

Size: 2949.86 hectares

Established: 01 March 2003

Type: Rural

Conservation Status: Most of the area in this conservancy has been recognised as irreplaceable sites by GDARD Conservation Plan 2.

It borders the Suikerbosrand Nature Reserve and has two rivers running through it, namely the Klip River and the Rietspruit. Regular River cleanups are run by the community.

5. Thorntree

Size: 4571.68 hectares



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Established: 01 April 1999

Type: Rural

Conservation Status: More than 50% of this conservancy has been recognised as important and irreplaceable by GDARD Conservation Plan 2.

Thorntree Conservancy was established to look after the environmentally sensitive areas. There are koppies situated in the middle of the conservancy which have been declared irreplaceable sites by the GDARD conservation plan 2.

The Conservancy monitors red data plants and invertebrates, and the Walkerville / De Deur landfill site on a regular basis.

Thorntree Conservancy received the Meerkat Award for Best Overall Performing Conservancy in Gauteng in 2004 and 2005.

Thorntree Conservancy received the EWT Gold award for Best Biodiversity practice in a Gauteng Conservancy in 2006 and the Mail and Guardian Greening the Future Merit Award for Environmental Best Practice in the Not-for-Profit Organization Category in 2006. The Conservancy also received the SANParks Kudu Award in 2007 for their contribution to saving Biodiversity in Gauteng.

6. Twesolopele

Size: No info available at present

Established: 18 June 2005

Type: Informal Settlement

Conservation Status: None

This Conservancy was established by a few residents of Sicelo west of Meyerton. They have realized the importance of their environment and have planted trees and limiting the number of dogs to attract wildlife (birds and Mammals) back to the area. Many vegetable gardens have appeared.

In May 2006 they received a certificate of merit from the Wilger Veld and Youth Club for their efforts.

7. Welverdiend Triangle

Size: 1499.95 hectares

Established: 25 November 2005

Type: Rural

Conservation Status: This whole conservancy has been declared an important site by GDARD Conservation Plan 2

This conservancy is situated south of the Suikerbosrand Nature reserve and consists of large tracts of unspoilt grasslands. The Community of this conservancy has shown great enthusiasm in protecting this area. They received a Silver Award for Conservation from the GCA in May 2006.

8. Sunset De Deur

Size: 100 hectares

Established: 6 October 2007

Type: Rural

9. Drumblade

Size: 1213 hectares

Established: 11 march 2009

Type: Rural

10. Aloe ridge

Fenced and sustain ably managed
Rural

11. Elandfontein

Rural



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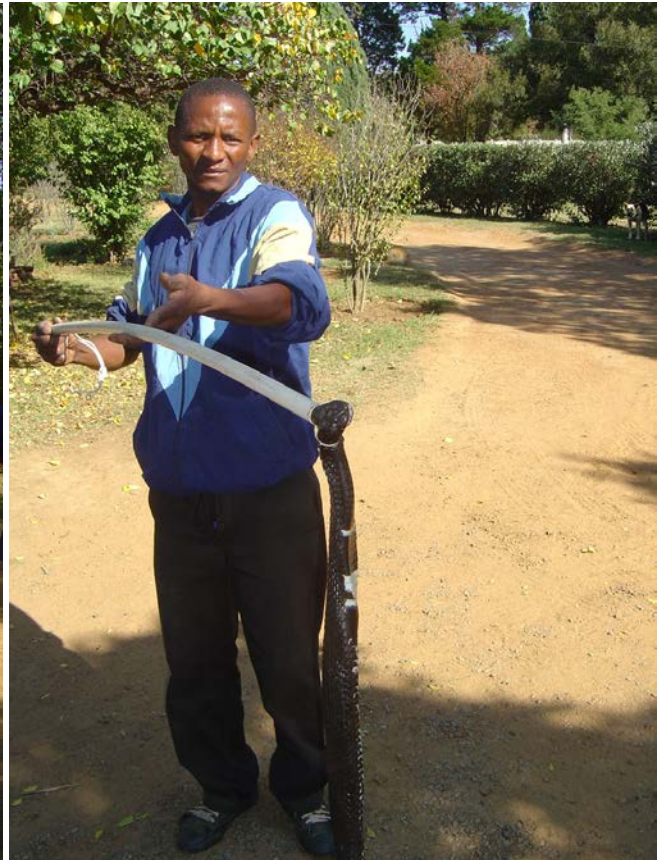


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Projects in Midvaal Conservancies

Snake removal and release



We have relocated 25 snakes since January 2013



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Poaching

Thanks to our Community Police two young men were caught on Sunday night at 23h45 poaching in our area pictures attached

These young men were from Primrose Germiston,

The two pellet guns with telescopic sites and hares were confiscated and handed in at the SAPS De Deur I advised them that it was illegal to poach and that hunting at night is prohibited without a license and hunting of game with an air rifle is also an offence according to the Nature Conservation Ordinance No12 of 1983

Please be vigilant we need to stop people from other areas coming to our area and destroying our Biodiversity

Once again thanks to our Community Police for being out there at all hours of the night and day not only looking after our security but protecting our natural heritage

Each person received a fine of R750.00 and advised that if they are caught again the fine would be R3000.00 or 18 months jail term

Thanks to Col Slabbert's help all environmental crimes are severely dealt with

We are making sure that future generations can also enjoy our Biodiversity



Operation Wildlife

The Community Police and De Deur SAPS assist us in Operation Wildlife on a regular basis

These operations are aimed at confiscating illegal wildlife and rehabilitating it back to their natural habitat.

Six Tortoises were confiscated. These tortoises had been kept in the most horrible conditions (Picture Attached). Great costs are involved in getting these animals rehabilitated.

We need to educate people to try and stop the destruction of our precious biodiversity.



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Tortoises released on farm in Aloe Ridge



Rehabilitated bird released

Members from the conservancy had the honour of releasing a Steppe Buzzard at the Arboretum. It had been mauled by dogs and was treated by the local vet Dr Brenda Schlachter Daleside Veterinary Clinic. This bird made a miraculous recovery and was able to be released. Seeing the Buzzard fly off into the distance was an emotional and heart warming experience for all involved. While on our way to the release site, we came across a magnificent puff adder crossing the road, these are notoriously shy and not often seen so it was also an exciting event. If you find a wild animal in need please contact someone from Thorntree Conservancy or your local vet. Keeping our wild animals in the wild is something that will benefit everyone in the area. How many people can still say that they saw a Puff Adder, Eagle, Duiker etc in their area?



5 Owls 1 Chameleon 1 Gennet 1 Porcupine Has been release back into the wild Since january 2013



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Ongoing Projects

- Snake removal
- Bee removal
- Patrol and remove Snares
- Monitor Illegal dumping
- Monitor Illegal removal of plants
- Remove indigenous Wildlife illegally kept without permits
- Educational Projects (WITS YEBO GOGA AMA BLOMO making science fun, Johannesburg Zoo Bird Fair and environmental talks at schools).

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