

CEPF FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

Organization Legal Name:	BirdLife South Africa
Project Title:	Protecting Key Biodiversity Sites through Expanding and Implementing Biodiversity Stewardship in the Grassland Areas of southern KZN
Date of Report:	15-01-2014
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CEPF Region: Maputaland-Pondoland-Albany Biodiversity Hotspot

Strategic Direction: Strategic Direction 2. Expand conservation areas and improve land use in 19 key biodiversity areas through innovative approaches

Grant Amount: \$77 000

Project Dates: March 2012 – December 2013

Implementation Partners for this Project (please explain the level of involvement for each partner):

- Chris Wilkinson, the land owner and Gareth Alcock, the manager of Tillietudlem: Both parties have been closely involved in the process especially during the development of the management plan and veld condition report which they will be implementing post CEPF funding contributing to the ecological sustainability of the site.
- Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, specifically Derrek Ruiters the Biodiversity Stewardship Officer and Greg Martindale the Biodiversity Stewardship Programme Manager. Both supplied constant support and advice during the project surrounding the Biodiversity Stewardship process which Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife are custodians for in the province. Additional support was received by Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife during site assessments.
- The Department of Agriculture and Environmental Affairs (specifically Cobus Botha) provided the necessary expertise to complete veld condition assessments on the property and oversaw the writing of the veld condition report.

Conservation Impacts

Please explain/describe how your project has contributed to the implementation of the CEPF ecosystem profile.

We have contributed to reaching the objective of strategic direction 2 because our interventions have led to the improved management of 1928 ha of important grassland in the KZN Midlands (CEPF U1) and Highland Grasslands (CEPF T5) which will benefit the conservation of the many endangered and endemic species that occur here. The first steps have also been taken towards affording the farm formal protection status with the signing of a Biodiversity Agreement.

Please summarize the overall results/impact of your project.

The farm Tillietudlem is 1928 ha in extent and conserves an important component of KZN grasslands and a number of important associated species. During the site assessment and site review process Tillietudlem was recommended for Nature Reserve status based on the following key reasons:

- The conservation of important biodiversity areas
- The presence of threatened and endangered species.
- Tillietudlem is an important stepping stone linking other protected areas (Impendle NR, Umgeni Vlei and Boston View)
- Falls within EKZN Wildlife's 5 year Protected Area Expansion Strategy
- Landowner commitment and willingness. The owner has spent considerable resources to rehabilitate Tillietudlem to its previous natural state.

During the project period we have contributed to reaching the objective of strategic direction 2, which has led to the improved management of the property through the development of a veld condition report which has provided the owner with an in depth and reliable analyses of the condition of the property based on the current condition of the veld. The report also provided a clear future strategy with regards to maintaining and improving the quality of the farm with recommendations on management units, a grazing regime for cattle, a burning regime, optimum stocking rates, and an alien invasive plant control regime. Furthermore, a comprehensive management plan was developed which provided further inputs regarding the management of endangered species and other aspects of the management of the farm. This management plan will in future form the backbone of the Biodiversity Stewardship contract. At the end of the period the landowner formally signed a Biodiversity Agreement which is a formal commitment to Biodiversity Stewardship. Although this agreement does not provide formal protection status the owner has made a commitment to sign either a protected environment or nature reserve contract in future.

Planned Long-term Impacts - 3+ years (as stated in the approved proposal):

Securing the protection of Tillietudlem will directly contribute to the expansion and conservation of the Mistbelt Grasslands in KZN, by securing mistbelt grasslands through contractual agreement.

KZN Wildlife aim to secure critical wetlands in Mt Shannon, which combined with securing 1928 hectares of Tillietudlem, will develop a conservation corridor to Impendle Nature Reserve, and expand the protection of the KZN Midlands (CEPF U1) and Highland Grasslands (CEPF T5).

This will also expand BLSA's KZN Misbelt Grassland IBAs (SA078), which will assist the persistence of the Blue Swallow and other species in the Mistbelt Grasslands.

In all, this will meet the conservation targets of CEPF, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, the National Protected Areas Expansion Strategy and BLSA's Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas Programme.

Build capacity within BirdLife South Africa through skills development and seed funding for a Regional Conservation Manager, who can continue supporting long term conservation in the region, part of which is to support Biodiversity Stewardship at other sites.

Actual Progress toward Long-term Impacts at Completion:

The declaration of Tillietudlem will formally secure land tenure for conservation at Tillietudlem and greatly enhance the conservation of endangered species and these important high altitude grasslands. Currently, the status of this area has been improved due to the establishment of an effective management plan and buy-in from the owners and management team. The foundation has been laid to move to the next level of formally declaring the farm which BirdLife South Africa has committed to supporting post CEPF funding at this site.

This will also contribute to the vision of creating a corridor between Tillietudlem and Impendle Nature Reserve, greatly enhancing the ecological integrity of this landscape. We have made the first steps to achieving these goals. This would not have been achieved alone by Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife who did not have the capacity to focus on this key site for Biodiversity Stewardship. In this way the funding has contributed greatly to the conservation objectives of the province and national protected area expansion strategies as well as BirdLife South Africa's mission to improve the protection status of Important Bird Areas.

CEPF funding has allowed BirdLife South Africa to establish a KwaZulu-Natal Regional Conservation manager, with additional funding that we have secured for the position during this project period. This has greatly enhanced the work being undertaken by the Important Bird Areas division. Furthermore, the KZN Regional Conservation Manager continues to contribute to the CEPF objectives through the implementation of Biodiversity Stewardship at other sites in the Maputaland-Pondoland-Albany Biodiversity Hotspot, which will commence in 2014 – 2015.

Planned Short-term Impacts - 1 to 3 years (as stated in the approved proposal):

Secure legal conservation and protection tenure of Tillietudlem resulting in the proper management of the habitat and species on the site through coordinating and implementing Biodiversity Stewardship on behalf of KZN Wildlife. This includes putting measures in place to ensure the sustainability of Biodiversity Stewardship at the site, and therefore the long-term conservation tenure.

The project will support KZN Wildlife and the Tillietudlem owners/managers to conduct a site assessment and evaluation, determine a management plan for the site, develop monitoring programmes for the site, negotiate a stewardship agreement for the site, and facilitate the signing of this said agreement. The project will also assist the project site with various management objectives, e.g. negotiating resources for alien plant removal.

Actual Progress toward Short-term Impacts at Completion:

The owner of Tillietudlem has signed a Biodiversity Agreement and has expressed a willingness to pursue formal protection status in the near future. A management plan and veld condition report have been completed which lays the foundation for formal conservation status. We have ensured that there has been buy-in for this process from the owner and management team who are implementing the recommendations made by these reports. The Biodiversity Stewardship process as outlined by the proposal has been followed with the following achieved: site assessment and review panel evaluation, development of a management plan, completion of monitoring on site and the facilitation of the signing of the Biodiversity agreement. Herbicides have been negotiated and a comprehensive mapping exercise completed to develop an alien invasive plant eradication scheme.

Please provide the following information where relevant:

Hectares Protected: 1928 ha under Biodiversity Agreement, improved management and future formal conservation status

Species Conserved: 7+ endangered species

Blue Swallow (CR)

Blue Crane (VU)

Grey Crowned Crane (VU)

Natal Midlands Dwarf Chameleon (KZN endemic)

Oribi (Vu)

Southern Ground-Hornbill (En)

And an unknown number of important, localized plant species associated with these high altitude and mistbelt grasslands.

Corridors Created: The conservation of Tillietudlem greatly enhances a corridor between Impendle Nature Reserve (One of the most important reserve in KZN) and other important reserves such as Umgeni Vlei, Boston View and the Maluti Drakensberg Park. Tillietudlem falls within an important corridor highlighted by the Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife short term expansion strategy.

Describe the success or challenges of the project toward achieving its short-term and long-term impact objectives.

The main factor leading to the success of the project to date was the trust and the relationship developed between the landowner, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife and BirdLife SA. This allowed us to remain flexible and respond to challenges. Key to this has been open communication and transparency from the outset.

A number of unforeseen challenges during the project emerged. This led to the project asking for an additional 6 month extension to fulfill the commitment to have the landowner sign a Biodiversity Agreement. Some of these challenges included:

- A change in management staff: At the end of 2013 the management couple resigned and a new management team was sought to take over the running of the farm. With the change of management time needed to be spent building trust with the new managers and a period of orientation regarding the stewardship process, what it entailed and what the benefits are needed to be carefully explained and demonstrated which delayed certain aspects of the work. This however did not negatively impact at all on the outcome of the project.
- The farm owner's sudden uncertainty regarding the commitment requirements for Biodiversity Stewardship: The landowner was always very supportive and still is but he has developed some uncertainties regarding the long term implications. This was not related to the current team (Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife and BirdLife SA) and the progress to date but was more related to future uncertainties regarding the ability of the programme to deliver in 10 or 20 years' time. An important benefit to the landowner of stewardship is the support that the local conservation authorities are able to give to landowners involved in the project. Possible future capacity problems and upheavals in local government are therefore a worry to the landowner. However the landowner remains committed to the process and we have worked hard to address these issues. This is ongoing and we continue with this work post CEPF funding.
- The owner is a resident of Australia who visits South Africa 1-2 times a year. This presented a challenge especially with regards to arranging meetings, getting inputs for certain documents and the actual signing of the Biodiversity Agreement.
- An unforeseen outcome critical to the process that was not necessarily considered was the development of the veld condition report which was a lengthy and intensive document to produce. This document was developed alongside the management plan and certain aspects of the veld condition report were critical to the management plan. The drafting of this report was however supported and guided by the Department of Agriculture who were very efficient during the process.

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

We addressed the impacts listed above and have managed to keep the project on track with our timeline and objectives, although a 6 month extension was needed to formalize the Biodiversity Agreement. An unexpected impact was the economic upheavals and unrest in the mining sector which affected the owner's business interests in South Africa and led to his questioning the sustainability of Biodiversity Stewardship and his uncertainty regarding the South African government. This has in a way been a positive as it led to the owner needing to really address his motives for wanting to enter into Biodiversity Stewardship. The owner is however an individual who has a strong motive to make a contribution to conservation and leave an important and special legacy for his family in the form of Tillietudlem.

Project Components

Project Components: *Please report on results by project component. Reporting should reference specific products/deliverables from the approved project design and other relevant information.*

Component 1 Planned: Land Owner Engagement (months 1-18)

The BLSA Stewardship Officer, still to be appointed by BLSA, will first be trained in Biodiversity Stewardship by the existing BLSA IBA Manager and Grasslands Manager. The Stewardship Officer will then engage with the relevant land owner throughout the 18 month project period, to firstly introduce the concept of stewardship and obtain initial buy-in from land owner. From there Activities 2-7 listed below will require continuous engagement of the Stewardship Officer with the land owner and other partners to conduct site assessments, develop a management plan, negotiate incentives and contracts, proclaim the stewardship site, provide post-proclamation management support, and conduct an annual audit.

Component 1 Actual at Completion: Landowner engagement was the most critical component of the project and was successfully implemented and navigated throughout the project to attain the best possible outcomes. The KwaZulu-Natal Regional Conservation Manager also gained skills in the Biodiversity Stewardship process which can now be implemented elsewhere in the province.

Component 2 Planned: Biodiversity Site Assessment (month 2)

Onsite assessments will be done to determine the current state of the habitat, presence of threatened and other species as well as important ecosystem services. Furthermore, threats to the habitat or species will be identified, e.g. improper management practices. The Stewardship Officer will coordinate the biodiversity assessment with input from other professional conservation organizations such as the BotSoc and the EWT. Between KZN Wildlife and the Stewardship Officer, the site assessment will be reviewed and assigned an appropriate Stewardship category, e.g. protected environment, nature reserve, etc.

Component 2 Actual at Completion: The Biodiversity Site assessment was completed and a presentation delivered to the KZN Biodiversity Stewardship working group which led to the agreement that Tillietudlem, because of its exceptional features, qualifies to pursue the highest level of protection (Nature Reserve).

Component 3 Planned: Management Plan Development (month 3-5)

Each Biodiversity Stewardship agreement needs a management plan, which will be developed parallel to negotiating the Stewardship Agreement (activity 4). Based on the threat assessments in Activity 2 and the conservation needs of the specific habitat and species types, the Stewardship Officer will develop conservation management plans for the site and align this with the larger area (protected environment) management plan of KZN Wildlife. The Stewardship Officer will coordinate expert input into the development of a management plan from BotSoc, KZN Wildlife Ecologists, a regional ornithologist and EWT. This management plan will aim to improve the habitat for biodiversity and improve productivity for the land owners.

Component 3 Actual at Completion: The development of the management plan took longer than expected mainly due to the requirement of a veld condition report which needed to be completed. The veld condition report is based on actual veld condition fieldwork that could only be completed in late 2013. Furthermore, it was a very comprehensive document that required input from the landowner and management team as they would need to implement the recommendations which feed into the management plan. As such it was important to work with the owner and management team to ensure buy-in and a plan agreeable to all parties. This was further complicated by the landowner who was rarely in South Africa. Therefore, time was taken

to complete the report and ensure that the outcome and final product was one that the landowner and management team felt a degree of ownership for and would be happy to implement. This was hugely important and worth taking the time to do which in the long term will pay more dividends and yield important results.

Component 4 Planned: Stewardship Agreement Negotiated and Gazetted (months 3-12)
During this phase, the Stewardship Officer will coordinate negotiations between the land owners and KZN Wildlife around incentives, rights and responsibilities. By month 8, the Stewardship Officer would have successfully mediated the negotiation of the Stewardship agreement between the land owner and KZN Wildlife. After the necessary Public Participation Process and commentary, the Stewardship Officer will have successfully coordinated the proclamation and gazetting of the Stewardship Agreement by the MEC of KZN by month 12.

Component 4 Actual at Completion: A Biodiversity Agreement has been entered into between EKZN Wildlife and the landowner. Although this does not provide formal protection to the reserve it formalizes the landowner's commitment to Biodiversity Stewardship. In future the landowner will make a decision to enter into a protected environment or nature reserve contract which will be formally gazette.

Component 5 Planned: Stewardship Site Advisory Committee (months 14-18).
It will be critical to provide the land owner with ongoing management support. By the end of month 16, the Stewardship Officer will have established a site advisory committee, consisting of the land owner, KZN Wildlife, the Stewardship Officer and BotSoc, to meet quarterly and advise and assist with management of the stewardship site. By month 17 this advisory committee would have already met once.

Component 5 Actual at Completion: A stewardship site advisory committee has been established with members made up of the management team, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife and BirdLife South Africa. The committee met during the beginning stages of the project to provide advice to the landowner. The next meeting is scheduled for 2014 after the landowner has had time to implement the recommendations made by the management plan and veld condition report.

Component 6 Planned: Biodiversity Annual Audit (month 18)
Each Biodiversity Stewardship site needs to undergo an Annual Audit, to assess whether management plans are being implemented correctly and to assess habitat condition and change. In month 18, and after the first advisory committee meeting, the Stewardship Officer will conduct the annual audit, with assistance from BotSoc, EWT and possibly KZN Wildlife.

Component 6 Actual at Completion: The annual audit will be completed in 2014 to assess the habitat condition and progress made as per the management plan and veld condition report. It can already be reported however that the landowner has followed recommendations regarding burning, cattle stocking rates, alien invasive plant eradication schemes and is on track to reach objectives.

Component 7 Planned: Avian monitoring (months 2-18)
The Stewardship Officer will identify gaps in the SABAP2 data during Activity 2. The Stewardship Officer will work with atlasers to provide further SABAP2 avian data for the site. The Stewardship Officer will feed this data into the site management plans and the ongoing monitoring and Annual Audit (Activity 6). By month 18, the site and surrounds will have comprehensive avian data, using the SABAP2 as a platform for data collection. The Stewardship Officer will use the SABAP2 data to establish the change in presence and distribution of indicator bird species, as specified in the Stewardship sites management plan.

Component 7 Actual at Completion: Avian monitoring has been completed on Tillietudlem and surrounding areas during the project period. The main focus of the monitoring has been the Blue

Swallow. This has especially contributed to our understanding of the distribution of Blue Swallows in the area and led to BirdLife updating the KZN Mistbelt Grasslands IBA ensuring that all sites where Blue Swallows occur are included in the IBA map which is used by local government, conservation planners and EIA practitioners. Data has been submitted to SABAP2.

Were any components unrealized? If so, how has this affected the overall impact of the project? We set out to have the farm formally declared and gazette as a Nature Reserve or Protected Environment. This is the ultimate aim of our involvement at the site. This does have a bearing on securing the conservation status of the site into perpetuity. However, Biodiversity Stewardship is a process that takes time and patience is needed to develop the trust needed and to provide an environment where the landowner decides to make what is a huge commitment. We are still working towards this end and the landowner remains committed to the process. CEPF have been instrumental in providing the funding needed to build a strong foundation and we are committed to continue working with the landowner to achieve the ultimate aim of securing Tillietudlem. The *status quo* has not changed and the farm is being effectively and competently managed in terms of conservation objectives. Our involvement to date has greatly improved the conservation objectives of the farm and provided important guidance for the landowner and management team.

Please describe and submit (electronically if possible) any tools, products, or methodologies that resulted from this project or contributed to the results.

Lessons Learned

Describe any lessons learned during the design and implementation of the project, as well as any related to organizational development and capacity building. Consider lessons that would inform projects designed or implemented by your organization or others, as well as lessons that might be considered by the global conservation community.

Project Design Process: (aspects of the project design that contributed to its success/shortcomings)

The process for implementing Biodiversity Stewardship has been tested in the Western Cape and KZN has been implementing the programme over a number of years. This made implementing the various steps straightforward with the constant help and guidance from EKZN Wildlife. However, Biodiversity Stewardship is a relatively new process and many lessons are still being learnt and explored within the Biodiversity Stewardship Working Group.

Project Implementation: (aspects of the project execution that contributed to its success/shortcomings)

Biodiversity Stewardship is a long term process that hinges on trust and the development of relationships. These relationships cannot be built over night and each individual landowner has their own, needs, perceptions and fears. These can only be addressed symptomatically as they arise and it is important to always remain understanding and supporting of the landowner. The most important lesson learnt is that Biodiversity Stewardship is a long term process and it continues long after any agreement is signed. Being completely transparent and ensuring communication with all parties is vital.

Other lessons learned relevant to conservation community:

Additional Funding

Provide details of any additional funding that supported this project and any funding secured for the project, organization, or the region, as a result of the CEPF investment in this project.

Donor	Type of Funding*	Amount	Notes
Mr Price	C	R 100 000	R 100 000 a year promised into perpetuity starting in 2012
Mr. Jack Mitchell	C	R 50 000	Once off funding for regional work in 2013
Sappi	C	R 399 800	Funding secured until the end of 2013 - 2015

**Additional funding should be reported using the following categories:*

- A Project co-financing (Other donors or your organization contribute to the direct costs of this project)*
- B Grantee and Partner leveraging (Other donors contribute to your organization or a partner organization as a direct result of successes with this CEPF funded project.)*
- C Regional/Portfolio leveraging (Other donors make large investments in a region because of CEPF investment or successes related to this project.)*

Sustainability/Replicability

Summarize the success or challenge in achieving planned sustainability or replicability of project components or results.

The challenge of achieving sustainability will be to ensure that the landowner is positively engaged during post proclamation which is into perpetuity. This will require a combined effort from Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife and NGOs such as BirdLife South Africa well into the future.

Summarize any unplanned sustainability or replicability achieved.

Safeguard Policy Assessment

Provide a summary of the implementation of any required action toward the environmental and social safeguard policies within the project.

None

Additional Comments/Recommendations

Information Sharing and CEPF Policy

CEPF is committed to transparent operations and to helping civil society groups share experiences, lessons learned, and results. Final project completion reports are made available on our Web site, www.cepf.net, and publicized in our newsletter and other communications.

Please include your full contact details below:

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*****If your grant has an end date other than JUNE 30, please complete the tables on the following pages*****

Performance Tracking Report Addendum

CEPF Global Targets

(Enter Grant Term)

Provide a numerical amount and brief description of the results achieved by your grant.
Please respond to only those questions that are relevant to your project.

Project Results	Is this question relevant?	If yes, provide your numerical response for results achieved during the annual period.	Provide your numerical response for project from inception of CEPF support to date.	Describe the principal results achieved from July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008. (Attach annexes if necessary)
1. Did your project strengthen management of a protected area guided by a sustainable management plan? Please indicate number of hectares improved.	yes	1928 ha	1928 ha	Results from January 1 2012 – December 31 2013 A management plan and veld condition report was developed in consultation with the landowner and management team. The recommendations of these reports are being implemented on Tillietudlem contributing to improved management of the farm and therefore improved benefit to the endangered and endemic species which occur.
2. How many hectares of new and/or expanded protected areas did your project help establish through a legal declaration or community agreement?				A Biodiversity agreement was signed between the landowner of Tillietudlem and Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife formalizing the landowner's commitment to Biodiversity Stewardship. We are still working with the landowner who has made a commitment to work towards formally declaring the farm a nature reserve or protected environment in future.
3. Did your project strengthen biodiversity conservation and/or natural resources management inside a key biodiversity area identified in the CEPF ecosystem profile? If so, please indicate how many hectares.	yes	1928 ha	1928 ha	Tillietudlem is found within the Maputaland-Pondoland-Albany Biodiversity Hotspot. It also falls within a priority area as identified by KZN wildlife in their protected areas expansion plan, biodiversity corridor plans and area of high irreplaceability value.
4. Did your project effectively introduce or strengthen biodiversity conservation in management practices outside protected areas? If so, please indicate how many hectares.	yes	1928 ha	1928 ha	Tillietudlem is privately owned but occurs adjacent to the Impendle Nature Reserve which is a protected area and one of the most important in the province.
5. If your project promotes the sustainable use of natural resources, how many local communities accrued tangible socioeconomic benefits? Please complete Table 1 below.	no	no	no	no

If you answered yes to question 5, please complete the following table

