

CEPF SMALL GRANT FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

I. BASIC DATA

Organization Legal Name: Western Cape Conservation Stewardship Association (WCCSA)

Project Title (as stated in the grant agreement): Biodiversity and Effective Management Assessment of Voluntary Conservation Sites in the Western Cape Province

Implementation Partners for This Project: Cape Nature and the Provincial Department of Agriculture (Landcare division)

Project Dates (as stated in the grant agreement): December 1, 2006 – March 30, 2008

Date of Report (month/year): October 2008

II. OPENING REMARKS

Provide any opening remarks that may assist in the review of this report.

The project was ambitious in that it sought to measure the affectivity of voluntary conservation effort over a large geographic area that makes up the Western Cape, in a highly variable, politically-culturally and biodiverse landscape. The socio-economic demands on landowners are on the increase, as well as the challenges being presented by the effects of Climate Change and Global warming, continually limiting the ability of landowners to manage natural habitat for the common good for philanthropic reasons alone.

The sheer geographic dispersal of the sites across the province made for complicated and expensive data collection, as well as taking much longer than estimated to get to all the sites. In order to meet the tight timetable for the project, the consultants needed to begin the project immediately, which was not the case, and has resulted in the late submission of this report.

The context of the site selection should be clearly understood in that although sites were selected in part due to the possibility of them holding threatened habitat, they were also selected because the agencies (CapeNature and the Provincial Department of Agriculture-Landcare) as well as the Association had little or no information on them or were aware of only low levels of support to these sites in the past.

The sites were selected as microcosms over varied landscapes, geographic areas and activities on the land, in order to provide us with information on the state of the macrocosm. The Agencies and partners presently do not have the funds nor resources to actively engage with the entire macrocosm, partly due to the sheer geographic scope involved, but we feel that it is essential to be informed on the status before it becomes critically endangered. We see this project as the provider of that information, and the first step in getting these landowners educated and actively engaged in conservation activities.

South Africa is challenged in several ways which in turn creates challenges for our conservation efforts and biodiversity:

- ❖ Scientists have predicted that the effects of Global warming and climate change will be felt more keenly in Africa than anywhere else on the planet, and we are already experiencing this situation.
- ❖ Our Department of Agriculture actively encourages and supports the growing of GM (genetically modified) seeds and plants, and the use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides. We are the ONLY country in the entire Africa which has allowed GM to be grown.

- ❖ We have 2 competing needs: the protection of our biodiversity versus the need for development and resultant employment of the millions of previously disadvantaged people who still live in abject poverty.

WCCSA and our implementation partners acknowledge optimism in choosing these sites, but we believe that more information is needed on the conservation and biodiversity status of the broader landscape (the macrocosm)- in view of the above challenges which in fact are creating increasingly large areas of destroyed or threatened habitat. The project results will provide more informed data and facts.

The relatively new and often poorly understood concept of biodiversity stewardship, by landowners, and the objectives of the Stewardship Program as well as the real or perceived capacity constraints of the agencies had an impact on the way the consultants engaged with the targeted land owners and their resultant responses. This is evident in the landowners responses as reported in the consultants reports.

We have not yet had time to work through all the reports in detail due to the sheer volume of reports and paperwork , and in order to gain the best results this will take time and co-operation from all the C.A.P.E partners. We believe this information will be extremely useful to all the agencies and partners and will assist us all in understanding what is still needing intervention, funding, assistance, attention, etc thereby assisting us in setting strategies for the future.

What was very evident from the landowner responses and comments is the need for landowner education as well as a more co-ordinated approach to landowners. The landowner feels confused by all the different agencies, NGO's, conservation associations, etc who intermittently engage with them, or not at all. They are unclear about the areas and definition of responsibility and authority of all these bodies/agencies/initiatives. The majority perception from landowners is that their needs are not understood nor met, that they are increasingly under "attack" and required to do and give more but do not get incentivised, recognised or rewarded. For example at least nine of the landowners who reported not having received any support from the authorities have actually received support for alien clearing. Therefore it is clear that work is needed to develop good relationships with landowners, clear misunderstanding and misconceptions, to educate and give them clarity on their responsibilities and where they can expect or ask for assistance, from whom, and to assist them with achieving their responsibilities.

These landowners are a representation of the macrocosm who own the majority of land in South Africa which is increasingly under threat. The agencies and partners do not have the resources nor funding to get to the landowners in this immensely vast area, so we need to strategize how to educate and assist the landowner to do this conservation work him/herself.

This project will now provide us with the detail and information we will need to understand the situation, the scope and the needs and set these strategies.

This is a big ask and task, but without them it will be difficult to achieve our conservation targets now and in the future.

We see this project as only the first step in a longer journey of educating, informing and assisting landowners in conserving and protecting their biodiversity, as well as assisting and informing the conservation industry on how to overcome the challenges of resource and funding constraints, negative perceptions of the industry by landowners, and setting and achieving their/our future strategy.

The logical next step is to apply for further funding which will allow and assist us to achieve these important and essential objectives, but I am aware that the long delay in getting this report to you will probably negatively impact on this request. I do ask that the "greater good" is not affected nor compromised by the time constraints and personal challenges experienced both by the consultants and then by me which affected the timeous completion of this project and its reports.

III. NARRATIVE QUESTIONS

1. What was the initial objective of this project?

- ❖ The evaluation and assessment of 50 priority voluntary conservation sites in the Western Cape for biodiversity value and management effectivity.
- ❖ the provision of best practice guidelines and seven generic Ecosystem Management plan templates (based on the Fynbos Forum Ecosystem Guidelines 2005),
- ❖ and recommendations for the association and its partners in terms of appropriate support to these sites in particular the aspect of capacity development for civil society, as well as recommended Stewardship status for each site .

2. Did the objectives of your project change during implementation? If so, please explain why and how.

No, although some of the methodology was adapted due to unforeseen practical and logistical constraints.

3 How was your project successful in achieving the expected objectives?

- A comprehensive and thorough report was produced. It includes the consultant s summary, as well as detailed information on each of the 50 sites visited. This detailed information includes the following for each site:
 - ❖ Geographical context/situation
 - ❖ Ecosystem inventory. Most sites consist of at least three or more ecosystems.
 - ❖ State of biodiversity
 - ❖ State of management
 - ❖ Remarks and comments on findings
 - ❖ Recommended stewardship status
- Production of useful management guidelines and management plan templates. These will now be further interrogated, assessed and adapted in consultation with the C.A.P.E partners before they are given to each of the landowners and sites visited. These will be accompanied by recommendations to the landowners as to the way forward for them and where applicable in partnership with ourselves.
- The data from the METT (Management effectivity tracking tool) for each site and site assessments will be extremely useful and worth interrogating for the purposes of adapting strategy and policy of the partners.
- The Cape Nature stewardship database will also be further populated with the newly received data.

4. Did your team experience any disappointments or failures during implementation? If so, please explain and comment on how the team addressed these disappointments and/or failures.

The lack of interest of consultants in tendering for this project was disappointing but does perhaps point to an ambitious brief for the amount of funding provided.

The dispersed nature of the management team resulted in management of the project being quite challenging and as a consequence communication and direct guidance to the consultant could have been improved.

We underestimated the time needed to prepare for the implementation of the site visits.

There were timing challenges right from the start of the project.

- ❖ Due to the large area that had to be covered, and the immense distances to be traveled, the consultants did not want to go into an area before they had all the tools and information for all of the sites in and around that area. They would be very challenged to re-visit these areas.
- ❖ Therefore due to many of the sites being in remote areas, obtaining GPS information and correct identification of the site and ownership details was essential. However obtaining this information took several months.
- ❖ The consultants were also expecting and dependant on being given assistance in travel and accommodation in these remote areas from Cape Nature and Dept of Agriculture-Landcare extension officers, but there were also constraints in mutually convenient timing between these agencies and the consultants.
- ❖ Therefore when the consultants finally started their traveling and site visits they had only 6 months to complete the entire project together with all their reports, and this timing included the Xmas and New Year festive season. This was clearly not enough time, and eventually they submitted their final documentation in August 2008. Three months after the final report was due to yourselves.
- ❖ The consultants delay created a snowball effect as it was then impossible for me to give it my full attention as it fell into the busiest time of the year for me with my farming activities and also our project finance manager who was overseas and on his return had a major annual 5 day festival to arrange.

I apologize for the very late submission of the final report for this project. I undertake to correct, not repeat, and better manage this aspect of a project should I ever be managing a funded project in the future.

5. Describe any positive or negative lessons learned from this project that would be useful to share with other organizations interested in implementing a similar project.

The scope of the project was large and ambitious, so we should have managed the consultants and their timing better right from the start, or we should have asked for more time.

6. Describe any follow-up activities related to this project.

- ❖ We are busy setting up workshops and meetings with the various C.A.P.E partners to present and share the findings.
- ❖ To brainstorm in these workshops:
 - How to deal with and correct the negative perceptions widely held by the landowners on the conservation agencies and conservation industry.
 - Evaluate the consultants recommendation of a “one-stop-shop” and collaborative extension work, and complimentary branding for the conservation industry
 - Evaluate the findings per site of their biodiversity value and management effectiveness, and write management reports for each site. Discuss how this information is to be given/shared with the landowner - electronically or via personal follow-up site visits. By whom and when.
 - Share the information in the EMP’s (Ecosystem management plans) for the 7 ecosystems and Best Practice Guidelines with the partners and landowners, and discuss who else would benefit from the information. Several conservancies and other conservation bodies have already requested the information. To discuss how, when and by whom.
 - Evaluate and review the recommendations for Stewardship status per site, and report on final recommendations. Write strategies on how to implement and incorporate into the provincial stewardship plan.
 - The development of an integrated communication and capacity development strategy will be enhanced by the products resulting from this project.
- ❖ Recommendations for the association and its partners in terms of appropriate support to these sites in particular the aspect of capacity development for civil society,
- ❖ Funding for the guidance and assistance to the owners of the sites visited- in preparing realistic and practical management plans can now be more easily leveraged using the project products.
- ❖ Apply for further funding.
- ❖ Review of partner strategies to provide catalysts for and direct support to voluntary sites.

7. Please provide any additional information to assist CEPF in understanding any other aspects of your completed project.

Other provinces embarking on stewardship programs are grappling with the problem of maintaining the balance between securing priority biodiversity sites whilst maintaining civil society support and responsible sustainable management in areas of importance in the landscape but not of immediate priority to agencies(due to current capacity constraints) The final report and methodologies as well as some of the more generic products will be useful in resolving these issues in other provinces.

It is also envisaged that this project and its products will support the WCCSA in their further endeavours to reach like minded landowners and communities who are willing to contribute to sustainable environmental management and to influence those who are as yet not willing or able to do so.

IV. ADDITIONAL FUNDING

Provide details of any additional donors who supported this project and any funding secured for the project as a result of the CEPF grant or success of the project.

Donor	Type of Funding*	Amount	Notes
CapeNature	A	USD1395	Accomodation/project management/GIS support

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

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

V. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

VI. INFORMATION SHARING

CEPF is committed to transparent operations and to helping civil society groups share experiences, lessons learned and results. One way we do this is by making programmatic project documents available on our Web site, www.cepf.net, and by marketing these in our newsletter and other communications.

These documents are accessed frequently by other CEPF grantees, potential partners, and the wider conservation community.

Please include your full contact details below:

Name: Liz Eglington

Organization name: Western Cape Conservation Stewardship Association (WCCSA)

Mailing address: PO Box 7068, Roggebaai, 8012 South Africa

Tel: +27 21 7151953 or +27836533635

Fax: +27 21 7155247

E-mail: lizeglington@netconnect.co.za