

# Conservancies in the **SPOTLIGHT**

**BWI Fact sheet No 1**

## *What is a conservancy?*

Conservancies are about doing something "in your own backyard". Conservancies do not require you to set aside vast tracts of land and to actively stock wild animals. They can be anywhere and any size, from a rural natural area to a small space in an urban setting. Wherever the land is managed according to sound environmental principles and best environmental practices, you may register a conservancy.

A conservancy is established by a voluntary agreement between two or more landowners to manage the environment. Conservation objectives are achieved by co-operation and commitment to the conservation of the environment on private property.

### **Many conservancies share the following activities as practical ways to protect the environment:**

- monitoring river and catchment pollution, often leading to river clean-up activities
- waste recycling drives
- invasive alien plant control
- identification, monitoring and protection of rare and endangered species
- education and awareness programmes
- erosion control.

## *What are the advantages of a conservancy?*

The neighbouring community shares in the management of the environment. Natural resources are sustainably utilised and wildlife increases. The environment's conservation status and its economic and aesthetic values improve, while environmental awareness is promoted. Quality of life and security also benefit.

## *What does registering a conservancy entail?*

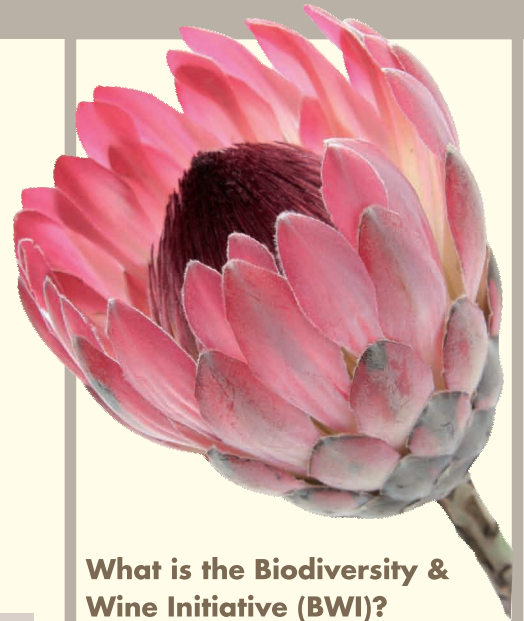
Registration of a conservancy does not require a change in land use. There are many farms that are part of conservancies.

## *Need help?*

CapeNature is willing to:

- facilitate meetings and give advice,
- motivate communities and landowners,
- provide administrative assistance and
- train members and conservancy game guards.

**Contact CapeNature at its regional offices or visit [www.capenature.co.za](http://www.capenature.co.za).**



## **What is the Biodiversity & Wine Initiative (BWI)?**

The BWI is a partnership between the South African wine industry and the conservation sector to minimise the further loss of threatened natural habitat and contribute to environmentally sensitive and sustainable wine production. [www.bwi.co.za](http://www.bwi.co.za)

## **BWI philosophy**

BWI's central philosophy is the conservation and continual improvement of all aspects of environmental management on farms. BWI members are assisted by the project to ensure both legal compliance and ongoing continual improvement of all environmental activities on the farm. BWI membership is valid for a two-year period. Thereafter they are re-evaluated and membership renewed only if members can demonstrate ongoing improvement and commitment to both the management of their natural areas and active involvement in sound environmental practices on their farms.



# The bigger picture

Establishing conservancies is one of the three stewardship options promoted by CapeNature's Conservation Stewardship Programme.

Within the context of conservation, stewardship means wisely using natural resources with which one has been entrusted on one's property, protecting important ecosystems, effectively managing alien invasive species and fires, and grazing or harvesting without damaging the veld.

The three stewardship options are:

- contract nature reserves. Contract nature reserves are legally recognized contracts or servitudes on private land to protect biodiversity in the long term.
- biodiversity agreements. Biodiversity agreements are negotiated legal agreements between the conservation agency and a landowner for conserving biodiversity in the medium term.
- conservation areas. Conservation areas are flexible options with no defined period of commitment. **This option includes conservancies.**



## Western Cape Conservation Stewardship Association

The Western Cape Conservation Stewardship Association (WCCSA) represents the National Association of Conservancies of South Africa in the Western Cape.

WCCSA welcomes all landowners, conservancies and conservation-minded supporters to join the Association. Membership is not restricted to landowners who have signed formal agreements with CapeNature. Although WCCSA works closely with CapeNature, it is independent.

**Visit WCCSA's website ([www.capestewardship.co.za](http://www.capestewardship.co.za)) for information on how to develop a management plan, relevant legislation, understanding the cost schedule for alien clearing and lots more.**



## Cederberg Conservancy

The Cederberg Conservancy, a voluntary agreement between 18 landowners to manage the environment in a sustainable manner, is part of the greater Cederberg area, about 200 km north of Cape Town. The vast Cederberg area encompasses some 162 000 hectare of rugged, mountainous terrain and is the proud custodian of a rich legacy of rock art, as well as the Clanwilliam Cedar (*Widderingtonia cederbergensis*). It also offers refuge to the rare Cape Leopard.

Three BWI members play a prominent role in the Cederberg Conservancy: Vogelfontein of Steven Windell, Nuwerus of Jannie Nieuwoudt (chairman of the Conservancy) and Cederberg Wines of David Nieuwoudt. Together they own one quarter (27 000 ha) of the Biodiversity and Wine Initiative's conservation footprint!

*The Cederberg Conservancy celebrated its 11th anniversary with an open day in November 2008. It was well attended by farm workers of the area, conservancy members and other guests. A variety of guided hikes and talks were offered to inform guests and unlock the wealth of knowledge of the workers.*

## Bottelary Hills Renosterveld Conservancy

The Bottelary Hills Renosterveld Conservancy encloses the Bottelary Hills on the northern fringe of Stellenbosch, approximately 40 km east of Cape Town. It is home to many endangered species of fauna and flora, including the rare and critically endangered renosterveld vegetation.

Due to the nature of the landscape, certain areas could not be cultivated, forming isolated patches of natural vegetation. These are the focus areas of the Conservancy's conservation efforts. Concerned landowners, assisted by CapeNature, initiated a conservation programme to protect the remaining vegetation, rehabilitate sensitive areas and reintroduce species lost to the area.

BWI's very first members, Mooiplaas and Koopmanskloof, are both actively involved with the Conservancy. Tielman Roos of Mooiplaas, chairman of the Conservancy, and winemaker Louis Roos regularly host the Mooiplaas Langtafel, a luncheon held in the historic manor house on the estate, followed by a trip to view the renosterveld. [www.bottelaryconservancy.co.za](http://www.bottelaryconservancy.co.za)



## Walker Bay Fynbos Conservancy

In December 1999, a group of landowners determined to ensure the preservation of the natural splendour of the Walker Bay area, established the Walker Bay Fynbos Conservancy. Custodians to an amazing diversity of flora and fauna, the members have set about securing the long-term conservation status of the area and raising funds for projects in the Conservancy. At a special food and wine evening that was hosted recently by one of its members, Grootbos Private Nature Reserve, the Conservancy under the chairmanship of Sean Privett raised substantial funds for the Early Learning Centre at Flower Valley farm near Gansbaai. At the same event, BWI member Lomond Wines launched a new white blend, Snowbush, as part of its portfolio of wines named after fynbos species. Royalties from the sale of these wines have been committed to the Conservancy's projects.

*Marianna Afrikaner, chairperson of the governing body of the Early Learning Centre at Flower Valley farm, received a cheque from the Walker Bay Fynbos Conservancy's chairman, Sean Privett (centre) and member, Wayne Gabb of Lomond Wines.* [www.fynbos.co.za](http://www.fynbos.co.za)

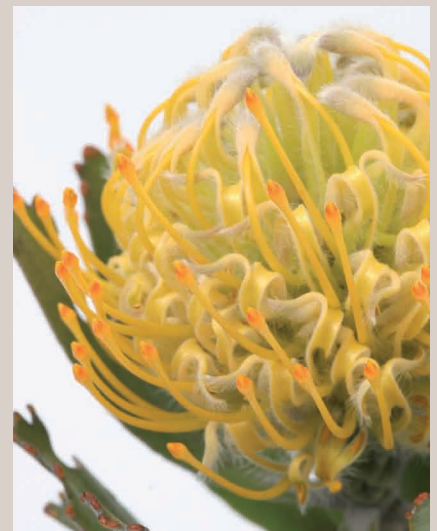
## Klapmutskop

Klapmutskop Conservancy near Stellenbosch was established in 2004 by BWI members Delheim and Warwick, as well as Elsenburg, East Hill and Le Bonheur. Today the number of members has grown to include De Goede Sukses, Delheim, Kanonkop, Knorhoek, Muratie, Quoin Rock, Rustenberg, Thelema and Uitkyk.

The Conservancy's 450 ha is bursting with fauna and flora, including 23 bird species, 126 indigenous plants, at least 24 geophytic plant species (bulbs), and a range of reptiles and mammals. It has one of the best examples of Swartland shale renosterveld, a type of fynbos that only occurs in the Western Cape lowlands and which is critically endangered. Today, less than four percent of this unique vegetation still remains. A massive fire in 2000 and the clearance of alien trees from the slopes of Klapmutskop led to the discovery, on the top of the mountain, of a small 300 year-old indigenous yellowwood forest. The Conservancy's nursery participates in the Millennium Seed Bank Project, which sees it propagating the seeds of rare and endangered species.

The hiking and biking trails at Klapmutskop, amongst which a full moon hike, are organised and run by a leading mountain bike event and trail building company, whose office at Delvera is open seven days a week.

[www.delvera.co.za](http://www.delvera.co.za)



# CONSERVATION PROJECTS

**Many BWI members and conservancies participate in conservation initiatives, some of which are listed below:**

## *Millennium Seed Bank Project*

The Millennium Seed Bank Project (MSBP) is an international plant conservation programme of the Seed Conservation Department at the Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew, in the UK.

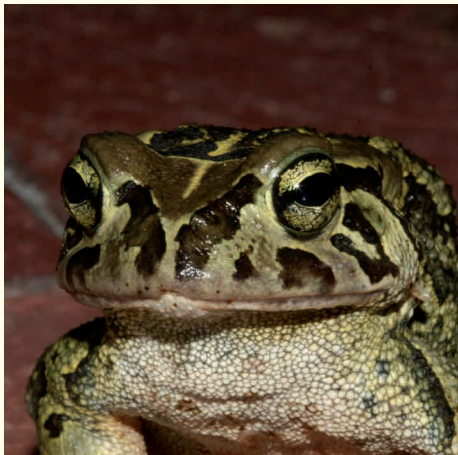
It was launched in South Africa in 2000 with the help of MSBP's local partner, the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI). The national aim is to contribute seed of around 2 500 of the country's indigenous species to this conservation effort through the collection of verified and well-documented seed collections.

Visit [www.sanbi.org](http://www.sanbi.org) and click on Millennium Seed Bank.

## *Conserving the Western leopard toad*

The stronghold of the endangered Western leopard toad is the Cape Peninsula. In an attempt to implement an effective conservation strategy to increase the population of the toads to sustainable levels, SANBI established a conservation committee consisting of stakeholders and members of the public.

For more information, visit [www.leopardtoad.co.za](http://www.leopardtoad.co.za) or contact the Leopard toad hotline on 082 516 3602.

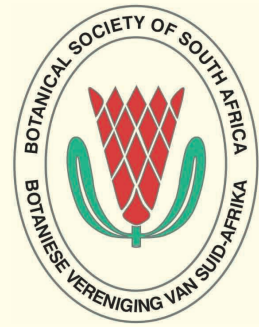


## *Butterfly atlas*

The Southern African Butterfly Conservation Assessment (SABCA), launched in May 2007, is a four-year conservation project aimed at determining the distribution and conservation priorities of all butterfly species in the southern African region, especially those threatened with extinction.

Previous atlas projects for birds, frogs and reptiles show that the public can play an extremely useful role in species conservation. Similarly, the public can contribute greatly towards butterfly conservation. People can become involved with SABCA by submitting photos to the virtual museum, joining a field trip as a volunteer and/or contributing data from their private butterfly collection.

For more information visit <http://butterflies.adu.org.za> and <http://sabca.adu.org.za> (click on Public Participation) or contact Silvia Mecenero, SABCA Project Coordinator, at [sabca@adu.org.za](mailto:sabca@adu.org.za).



Another BWI fact sheet features Groenlandberg, Tygerberg, Rooiberg and Paardeberg Conservancies, as well as projects to conserve cranes, riverine rabbits and rare and endangered wildflowers.

### Visit us at:

16 Stellantia Ave,  
Millenia Park (WWF offices),  
Stellenbosch  
Private Bag X2,  
Die Boord 7613

### Contact us at:

**Inge Kotze**

Tel: 021 888 2813  
E-mail: [ikotze@wwf.org.za](mailto:ikotze@wwf.org.za)  
Fax: 086 531 1669

**Joan Isham**

Tel: 021 888 2853  
E-mail: [jjisham@wwf.org.za](mailto:jjisham@wwf.org.za)  
Fax: 086 531 1669

Fynbos photos kindly supplied by the Flower Valley Conservation Trust.

**BWI gratefully acknowledges LandCare for the kind sponsorship and printing of this factsheet.**

