CapeNature

DATE OF BOARD MEETING: 11 **DECEMBER 2015**

RESOLUTION NO: **16 of 2015/16**

APPROVAL : WESTERN CAPE PROTECTED AREA EXPANSION STRATEGY

The BOARD hereby resolved to-

APPROVE THE WESTERN CAPE PROTECTED AREA EXPANSION STRATEGY

The above approval is on the recommendation of the Board Conservation Committee.

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GAVIN MANEVELDT
CHAIRPERSON: WESTERN CAPE NATURE CONSERVATION BOARD

Western Cape Protected Area Expansion Strategy: The 2015 - 2020 strategy to expand the Protected Area network of the Western Cape Province.

Draft Document **August 2015**

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FOREWORD

[To be written by Minister Bredell, HoD Piet van Zyl or CEO Razeena Omar]

ACRONYMS

CBA	Critical Biodiversity Area
CFR	Cape Floristic Region
CoCT	City of Cape Town
CR	Critically Endangered
DEA	Department of Environmental Affairs
DEADP	Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning, Western Cape
DCCP	Dassenberg Coastal Corridors Partnership
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EN	Endangered
HA	Hectares
LHSKT	Leslie Hill Succulent Karoo Trust
LT	Least Threatened
MEC	Provincial Member of the Executive Council
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NDPW	National Department of Public Works
NEMA	National Environmental Management Act
NEM:PAA	National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NPAES	National Protected Area Expansion Strategy
PA	Protected Area
PDPW	Provincial Department of Public Works
SANBI	South African National Biodiversity Institute
TMF	Table Mountain Fund
VU	Vulnerable
WfW	Working for Water
WWF-SA	World Wide Fund for Nature South Africa

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Why a provincial Protected Area expansion strategy?

The formal declaration of lands and waters as Protected Areas remains the cornerstone to any biodiversity conservation programme worldwide. Once properly secured Protected Areas represent the strongest and most secure level of statutory protection which can be afforded to biodiversity; for it is only at the point of declaration that we can assume the biodiversity contained within that land is safe from inappropriate development and contributing to biodiversity targets.

Although approximately 14.5% (1 858 200 ha) of the Western Cape Province is deemed protected in terms of the National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act (Act No. 57 of 2003) (NEM:PAA), this is only meaningful if the right kinds of places are protected and that protection actually affords the environment the level of security intended by the Act - which is not always the case in the Western Cape.

Historically, Protected Areas have been located in the mountains or on infertile landscapes where there is little to no competition for land use. As a result, our Protected Area network does not adequately protect the majority of ecosystems and biodiversity found in the province. Currently Protected Areas are significantly biased towards mountain fynbos ecosystems, to the near exclusion of lowland renosterveld ecosystems. Further, largely due to past administrative shortcomings, only about 40% of areas deemed protected under the Protected Areas Act are fully compliant[1] with NEM:PAA and/or are fully regularised (meaning that they have the appropriate institutional home, boundary description, and other evidence to verify their existence and to ensure continued environmental security). Given the risks of unmanaged landscapes, it is imperative that both the costs and benefits associated with Protected Areas are linked to the appropriate administrative authority. Clarity on this can only be achieved through the regularisation of historically irregular Protected Areas, in cooperation with Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) and other national departments.

Thus, given the ecologically biased and administratively irregular nature of significant portions of our current Protected Area network, the primary focus of this strategy is twofold:

1. To expand the Western Cape Protected Area network to encompass a more representative and resilient suite of areas that support biodiversity and ecological infrastructure, especially those threatened species and ecosystems that remain as yet unprotected; and
2. To regularize existing Protected Areas, so that environmental security is ensured for everyone in South Africa and the costs and benefits of protection accrue to the appropriate entity.

Protected Area targets

The previous Protected Area Expansion Strategy (Purnell et al. 2010) adopted a target of formally protecting 60% of the biodiversity thresholds[2] for all terrestrial ecosystems by the year 2030. Importantly, the target speaks to both ecological requirements (i.e., biodiversity thresholds) and political commitments (i.e., the total area implied by the target is equivalent to the area committed to by the Government of South Africa in terms of the Convention on Biological Diversity's Aichi

[1] e.g., have an assigned management authority, approved management plan, and title deed endorsement. See Chapter 3.
[2] Biodiversity thresholds (for terrestrial ecosystems) represent the percentage of the original extent of a vegetation type which needs to be maintained in a natural state in order to ensure that 75% of the species contained within that vegetation type survive. Biodiversity thresholds are based on actual plant diversity surveys or relevé data which estimate the parameters of species-to-area relationships.

Target 11[3]). Thus, this 2015-2020 Strategy will honour the targets defined in 2010 by continuing to aim to secure 60% of the biodiversity threshold for all terrestrial ecosystems by 2030[4]. In addition, we aim to protect 10% of the marine environment by the year 2030[5].

In terms of progress made towards the 2030[6] target (set by the previous CapeNature Protected Area Expansion Strategy) for the 2010-2015 period, an additional 124 106 ha was formally declared. This represents 84%[7] of the provinces' own target set for this period.

Looking ahead, in order to reach the target of protecting 60% of the biodiversity threshold for all terrestrial ecosystems by the year 2030, a minimum of 1 046 500 ha will have to be added to the existing Protected Area network. This means securing an additional 8.1% of the province for conservation in the next fifteen years, or 2.7% (348 840 ha) in the next five years. This poses a challenge for the province and can only be achieved through strong partnerships, smart decision-making and appropriate resourcing.

Furthermore, within the 2015-2020 period we aim to significantly increase the proportion of Protected Areas which are regularised[8] and compliant with NEM:PAA, from approximately 40% to 50%. As such, the strategies contained in this document will not only result in an expanded Protected Area network, but also a more legally and administratively secure Protected Area network, better able to deliver environmental security to the people of South Africa.

Priority areas

The priority areas for Protected Area expansion in the Western Cape Province are based on the provincial map of Critical Biodiversity Areas (referred to as the Western Cape Biodiversity Framework; see Pence, 2014). Critical Biodiversity Areas (CBAs) are terrestrial and aquatic features (e.g. wetlands, rivers and estuaries) that must be kept in a natural state in order to retain a reasonable proportion of biodiversity pattern in an ecologically functional and resilient landscape. CBAs represent the most area-efficient option to meeting all stated biodiversity thresholds (Maree and Vromans, 2010).

Two factors, importance and urgency, are then used to identify the highest priority CBAs for formal protection. An area is considered important for the expansion of the land-based Protected Area network if it is one of the best remaining examples of a Critically Endangered ecosystem, contributes to meeting biodiversity thresholds for under-protected terrestrial or freshwater ecosystems, maintaining ecological processes or climate change resilience, provides essential habitat for threatened and under-protected taxa, or a combination of these. Urgency is determined by the extent to which spatial options for meeting targets (and optimal Protected Area design) still exist, which is often linked to the degree of competing land or resource uses in an area.

Areas that have emerged as top priorities for landscape-scale Protected Area expansion in the Western Cape are highlighted by the Conservation Action Priorities (CAP) Map[9]. This CAP Map is underpinned by a comprehensive database which indicates specific cadastres targeted for Protected Area expansion according to objective, mechanism, organization and urgency.

[3] Aichi Target 11 aims to achieve protection of 17% of terrestrial and inland water areas by 2020.
[4] Note that although the network will ultimately deliver on the Aichi target, the date of delivery is ten years later than that stipulated by Aichi.
[5] Adopted from Aichi Target 11 which aims to achieve 10% protection of coastal and marine areas by 2020.
[6] See section 1.4
[7] See section 1.4 for a detailed report per organization and mechanism
[8] To establish (a hitherto temporary or provisional arrangement) on an official basis.
[9] See Text Box on CAP Map

Mechanisms for Protected Area expansion

The acquisition of land for conservation through purchase by the state is no longer a common occurrence due to budget availability. As a result, the conservation sector has become increasingly creative at devising alternative and more contemporary mechanisms with which to expand the formal Protected Area network of the province.

Thus, the 2015-2020 strategy focuses on the following expansion mechanisms:

Formal protection of private conservation-worthy lands through Biodiversity Stewardship:
Biodiversity Stewardship is an approach to protecting important biodiversity features on private or communal land by working with landowners to formalize their involvement in conservation. At the highest level of engagement, a contractual agreement to declare the land as a Nature Reserve is signed between the landowner and the conservation authority, with one of the two parties – or a third party (e.g., a conservation NGO) – assigned as the Management Authority. A 'reactive' stewardship model has also emerged whereby a new Protected Area is created through the mitigation requirements of a regulatory authorisation.

Transfer of forest exit lands and other state-owned lands into conservation custodianship:
This entails securing publically owned lands with high biodiversity value as Protected Areas; including the transfer of Forestry Exit Lands which are not viable for forestry into conservation custodianship. In addition, it can include other state lands not currently legally declared or vested with a conservation agency, as has recently been done for over 7 000 ha of state land in the Dassenberg Coastal Catchment Partnership area.

Purchase of land in collaboration with NGOs:
Where funding is available from external funding sources such as trusts and donors, land can be purchased and declared as Protected Areas. The land purchased usually has to conform to the stipulations or requirements of the funder, e.g. land purchased specifically for the conservation of specific plant species or important bird areas.

Declaration of Marine Protected Areas:
Operation Phakisa is a national initiative led by the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) aimed at unlocking the economic potential of South Africa's oceans. A component of this project is the formal declaration of priority marine habitats as Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). The Western Cape Province supports the proposed MPAs and the target of protecting 10% of South Africa's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) through Operation Phakisa.

Protected Area regularisation and NEM:PAA compliance

In addition to expanding the Protected Area network, we will work to better ensure the environmental security of existing Protected Areas by addressing historical irregularities in Protected Area administration and increasing NEM:PAA compliance across the entire network. The focus will be on the appropriate vesting of state lands currently managed for biodiversity, the translation of Local Authority and Private Nature Reserves into NEM:PAA-compliant Nature Reserves, and the regulation or other appropriate means of effecting meaningful protection to private Mountain Catchment Areas.

It is also worth mentioning several supporting actions intended to help address regularisation and compliance at an administrative level rather than per individual Protected Area. These include,

amongst others, the gazetting of the provincial Biodiversity Bill[10], the establishment of a provincial Protected Area register and formalising biodiversity protection MoUs between conservation agencies and partnering NGOs.

Financial tools for Protected Area expansion

Certainly the major challenge to Protected Area expansion is currently a financial one. Shrinking budgets not only make the outright purchase of land for conservation by the state prohibitive, but current budget constraints are so severe that covering even basic reserve management costs make it seemingly impossible to responsibly take on new lands and waters. Where the risk of doing so is acceptable, securing new lands and waters now, and tackling management later is something which needs to be considered.

This strategy does not include an implementation plan but rather sets the parameters to which individual organisations involved in Protected Area expansion or management should be aligning their resource and implementation plans.

Who implements and monitors the strategy?

The goal of biodiversity conservation is shared by many organizations and the province relies heavily on partnerships in order to deliver on our shared vision. While CapeNature is the lead implementing agent for the Western Cape Protected Area Expansion Strategy, success undoubtedly depends on a combined effort across all spheres of government, the private sector and NGOs.

It is proposed that lead implementing agents[11] draft their own Letters of Commitment outlining how they propose to support this strategy over the next five years – and that these ultimately be attached to this strategy as addenda.

As part of the State of the Biodiversity reporting (updated every five years and next report expected in 2017), Annual Performance Plan monitoring (conducted quarterly), and annual DEA monitoring and reporting, CapeNature will monitor progress on meeting our targets as well as report on both the expansion and regularisation components to this strategy. A full review will also be conducted every five years as a component of the revised Protected Area Expansion Strategies.

Summary of targets and actions

The Protected Area targets and priority actions[12] which have been highlighted by this strategy are ambitious and numerous. They speak both to increasing the size of the network as well as improving the legal status of the network and rely entirely on a partnership approach.

Broadly speaking we need to secure an additional 348 840 ha of priority terrestrial biodiversity and 25 216 km^2 of our marine environment by the year 2020. We also need to increase the proportion of the current Protected Area network which is fully compliant with NEM:PAA from approximately 40% to 50% in this same time frame.

Despite the ongoing loss of natural habitat to competing land uses, conservation partners in the Western Cape Province have demonstrated that amazing results can be achieved when we focus on a common objective and allocate resources to that purpose. The recently proclaimed Knersvlakte Nature Reserve, the cumulative conservation gains in the Little Karoo, and the new Dassenberg

[10] Currently referred to as the Biodiversity Bill although the final name may change
[11] See Chapter 4 for partners
[12] See Table 4 in Chapter 5

Coastal Catchment Partnership are cases in point. Going forward, there are certainly more opportunities within reach to achieve key biodiversity outcomes and to increase the representivity and security of Protected Areas in the province. Success depends, however, on our ability to work a little differently from how we have in the past, to work "Better Together", to focus on a clear set of priorities, and to harness new resources or reallocate existing resources where possible.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Biodiversity of the Western Cape Province

The Western Cape Province includes nearly the full extent of the World's most diverse non-tropical flora, the Cape Floristic Region (CFR). Although most famous for the fine-leaved, fire-prone fynbos vegetation, the CFR also includes the core of the Succulent Karoo, undoubtedly the richest desert flora on Earth. Covering less than 0.1% of the Earth's surface the CFR represents between 3% and 4% of the worlds' total higher plant species (well over 9 000 in total) and approximately 70% of them are considered endemic[13]. Recent work suggests that terrestrial and aquatic invertebrate diversity and endemism may be as exceptional with the CFR being a centre of endemism for freshwater fish, reptiles, amphibians and a number of invertebrate groups (Cowling *et. al*, 2003) which also encompasses diverse, productive marine ecosystems.

The natural systems of the CFR and Western Cape are however under serious threat from a range of factors including historical patterns of unsustainable natural resource use, extensive alien species infestations and recent rapid infrastructural development. Many areas, particularly the lowlands, have been reduced to a fraction of their original extent and little of what remains is protected. As a result, three-quarters of the province falls within a global biodiversity hotspot[14] – these are the 34 highest priority locations globally, where exceptional biodiversity is under severe pressure from habitat loss.

The importance and urgency of better conserving the province was emphasized by the 2009 SANBI National Ecosystem Status assessment. With 21 Critically Endangered (CR), 13 Endangered (EN) and 22 Vulnerable (VU) ecosystems listed from the Western Cape, this was by far the highest concentration of threatened ecosystems countrywide (of the 53 CR, 64 EN and 108 VU in South Africa). In 2014, CapeNature re-applied the ecosystem status analysis based on updated land cover data and an updated Vegetation Map of South Africa (SANBI, 2009), and the results indicated that nine of the province's ecosystem types are now even more threatened than the national statistics had revealed five years earlier (Pence, 2014). Unfortunately the province now hosts an additional two CR, three EN and nine VU ecosystems. Virtually all of the province's mainstem river ecosystems are in a CR state. The 2009 Red List of South African Plants further emphasises the extent and severity of ongoing permanent biodiversity loss: with 67% of all threatened plant taxa in South Africa occurring in the Fynbos Biome, and the second highest concentration occurring in the Little Karoo and Namaqualand habitats of the Succulent Karoo. Urgent conservation action is clearly required.

The natural landscapes of the Western Cape not only support exceptional threatened biodiversity, but also provide an irreplaceable source of goods and services for people and the economy (Jackelman *et al.*, 2008). In 2003, the total economic value of these services flowing from the natural resources and biodiversity in the CFR, known as ecosystem services[15], was estimated to be at least R10 billion per year, equivalent to more than 10% of the Gross Domestic Product of the Western Cape (Turpie *et al.*, 2003). Most of these ecosystem services we take for granted, such as the provision of water, clean air, crop pollination, medicines and grazing for livestock. As importantly, intact natural systems mitigate the worst impacts of climate change, particularly in buffering flood events and an unpredictable water supply.

[13] Occurs nowhere else on Earth

[14] Sites identified by Conservation International, see www.biodiversityhotspots.org

[15] The benefits that people get from nature (ecosystems), such as a regular supply of clean water, flood control, prevention of erosion, pollination (important to the fruit industry, for example), carbon storage (to counteract global warming), stone and sand for building, and clean air vital for our survival. In other words, ecosystem services are 'what nature does for us'.

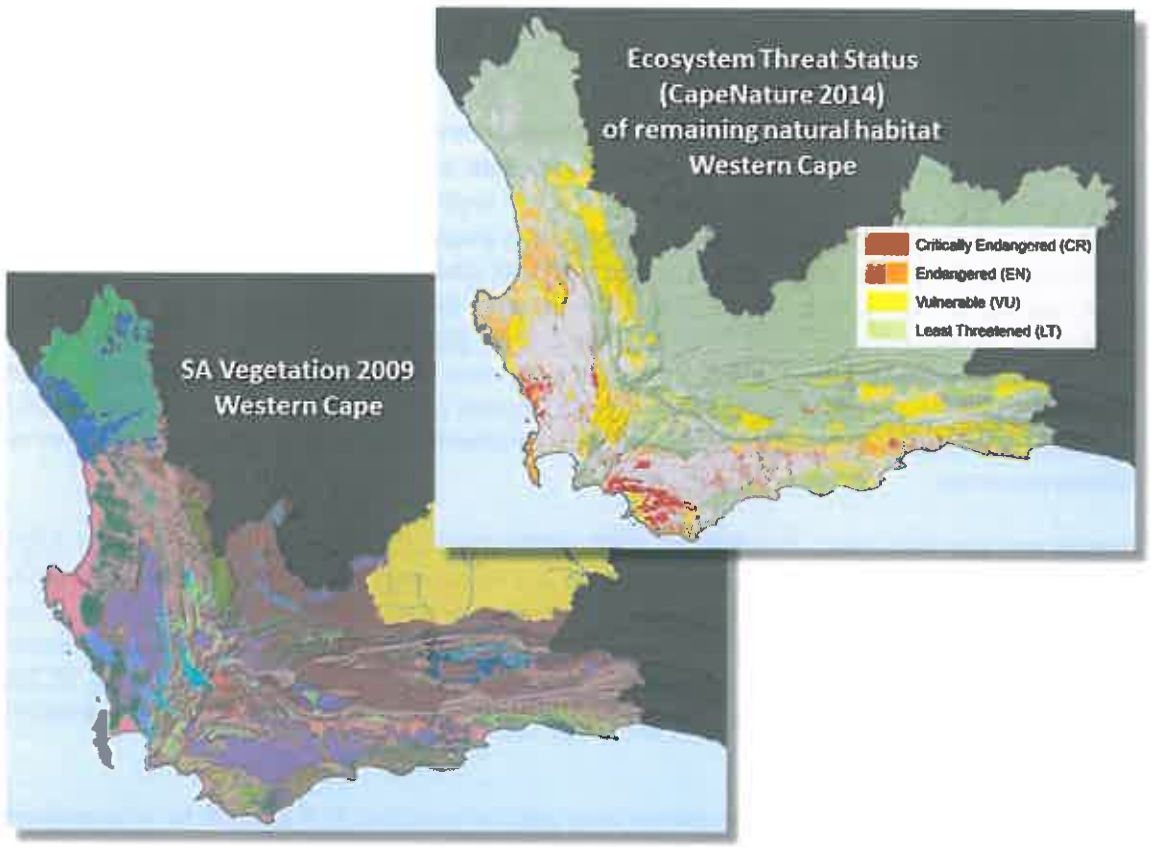


Figure 1 Even the coarse-scale mapping of South African vegetation types (SANBI, 2009) shows the massive diversity and complex distribution of biodiversity in the Western Cape. The top right figure shows (in pale grey) areas where no natural habitat remains within the Western Cape, with remnant natural habitat coloured by Ecosystem Threat Status (CapeNature, 2014). With up to 95.5% habitat loss in certain ecosystems, more ecosystems are considered highly threatened in the Western Cape than any other province in South Africa. This diversity and threat together mean that the CFR and the Succulent Karoo, which are both located within the Western Cape, are considered a global Biodiversity Hotspots.

In addition to habitat loss and direct impacts, climate change and global warming are predicted to further threaten the natural ecosystems of the Western Cape. Within this century, the climate is likely to become warmer and drier, with less winter rainfall and more irregular and intense rainfall events (Midgley *et al.*, 2005). This will have various consequences for the province's economy, ecological integrity and livelihoods including: i) reduced water quantity and quality through negative impacts on rivers, wetlands and estuaries; ii) detrimental effects on biodiversity, including significant species losses; iii) increased fire danger and frequency; iv) threats to livelihoods, especially of the poor who are most vulnerable; and v) impacts on economic sectors such as fishing, forestry, agriculture, insurance, banking, infrastructure and construction (Midgley *et al.*, 2005).

1.2 Current Protected Area network

From as early as the 1900s, state forests and other lands were set aside for conservation by the authorities. Typically these were the least economically productive sites: infertile, dry, remote, steep or inaccessible areas not suited to agriculture, mining, industry or human settlement. The result is that our current Protected Area network does not contain examples of entire ecosystem types and the novel species and ecological interactions inherent to them. In fact, 20% of types are not represented at all, and an additional 40% are considered poorly or hardly protected (relative to

national biodiversity targets). As a further result of the strong tendency to conserve only economically unimportant land, nearly half[16] of the ecosystems that are currently protected are protected more than adequately.

Responding to this historical imbalance in the highly heterogeneous, sensitive, and locally unique ecosystems of the CFR is a huge challenge. A complete Protected Area network must not only represent the full range of plant and animal species in large enough habitats to support them, but must also include landscape-scale natural systems and processes, aquatic and marine habitats and be ecologically functional and resistant to the impacts of climate change. This must also be achieved in a reasonable amount of space without impacting negatively on livelihoods or economic production. As an early adopter of systematic biodiversity planning[17], the South African conservation community now has a robust and scientifically defensible approach to identifying areas to best conserve a representative, ecologically viable and resilient network of natural habitat. Increasingly this work is coupled to a practical and clear implementation framework to make the best use of very limited resources.

Within the last ten years, CapeNature, with other provincial partners, has developed Critical Biodiversity Area (CBA) Maps showing terrestrial and freshwater areas that must be retained in a natural state to meet biodiversity pattern and ecological process thresholds. These CBA Maps have informed Protected Area expansion in the province over the last eight years. Since the completion of the CapeNature Provincial Protected Area Expansion Strategy and Implementation Plan of 2010 (Purnell, K. et al., 2010), approximately 28 200 ha of CBAs have been secured into our Protected Area network (Pence, 2014).

The province's current terrestrial Protected Area network amounts to 1 858 200 ha (approximately 14.5% of the province). Although this network is deemed protected in terms of the National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act (Act No. 57 of 2003; (NEM:PAA), not all of these Protected Areas are fully compliant with NEM:PAA. In addition, the province's current terrestrial Protected Area network remains unrepresentative of approximately half of the ecosystems contained within it. Although we still have far to go before our Protected Area network is considered representative of our biodiversity and delivers on our national targets, thanks to systematic biodiversity planning and our Critical Biodiversity Areas Maps, we are confident that the positioning of new Protected Areas is starting to align with the most appropriate areas.

With regards to our marine environment, Inshore Marine Protected Areas currently account for approximately 300 km (33%) of our coastline. There are no offshore Marine Protected Areas located within that portion of our National EEZ which is located off the Western Cape Province coastline.

[16] 57 of the 121 ecosystems are moderately to well represented by the Protected Area network

[17] See section 2.3 for more information on systematic biodiversity planning

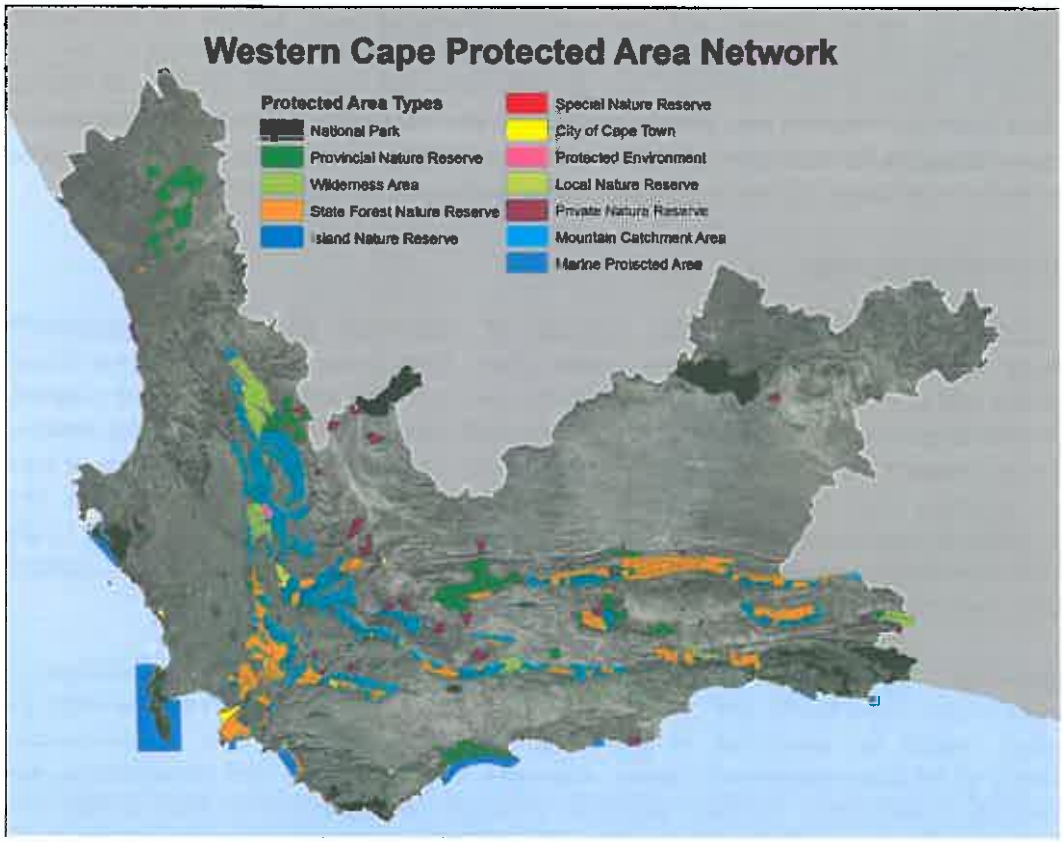


Figure 2: The Protected Area network of the Western Cape Province as of March 2015.

1.2.1 How we define Protected Areas

This strategy addresses the formal declaration of priority habitats as Protected Areas in the Western Cape. The terminology surrounding Protected Areas is, however, often confusing and it is important to clarify not only the words we use, but the intentions of the strategy.

Protected Areas are areas of land, water or sea that are formally protected by law and managed mainly for biodiversity conservation. Formal Protected Areas allow for long-term security of tenure and are gazetted in terms of the National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act (Act No. 57 of 2003) (NEM:PAA). Section 9 of the NEM:PAA distinguishes between several types of Protected Areas: Special Nature Reserves, National Parks, Nature Reserves, and Protected Environments. It also recognises World Heritage Sites declared in terms of the World Heritage Convention Act (Act No. 49 of 1999); Marine Protected Areas in terms of the Marine Living Resources Act (Act No.18 of 1998) and/or the NEM:PAA; specially protected Forest Areas declared in terms of the National Forests Act (Act No. 84 of 1998); and Mountain Catchment Areas declared in terms of the Mountain Catchment Areas Act (Act No. 63 of 1970). Protected Areas can include privately-owned areas if they have been formally declared as National Parks, Nature Reserves or Protected Environments under NEM:PAA. And, while not specifically named in the NEM:PAA, both Local Authority Nature Reserves and Private Nature Reserves must be regarded as having been declared (Section 12 and 23 (5)) and are therefore deemed to be Protected Areas. Accounting for all of the above-mentioned types, our current Protected Area network amounts to 14.5% of the Western Cape Province.

Conservation areas are those areas of land not formally protected by law, but informally safeguarded by the current owners and users, and managed at least partially for biodiversity conservation. Conservation Areas are therefore not considered formal Protected Areas as they are not gazetted in terms of the NEM:PAA and do not allow for long-term security of tenure. Conservation Areas do however now contribute towards the 'conservation estate' as stipulated by the Outcome 10 targets for 2019 (see box below on Outcome 10) and are considered 'conserved' as stipulated by the Aichi target 11 (see box below on how our targets compare with Aichi targets).

1.3 The need for a strategy

National policy is underpinned by the principle of sustainable development. Sustainable development aims to ensure that all development serves both present and future generations. Therefore it is vital to safeguard critical natural services such as clean and adequate water supplies, nutritious veld for grazing livestock, and stable, healthy soils resilient to flood damage and erosion. An obvious prerequisite for sustainability is the safeguarding of biodiversity (i.e. the variety of local plants and animals, their habitats, and the natural processes that sustain them) (Maree and Vromans, 2010). As custodians of globally important biodiversity and a signatory committed to the goals of the Convention on Biological Diversity, we also have a moral obligation and political commitment to preserving our rich natural heritage for future generations.

The safeguarding of biodiversity is achieved through a suite of mechanisms. The formal declaration of land as Protected Areas is only one of these. A holistic approach to biodiversity conservation (or safeguarding) should be comprised of Protected Areas together with the complementary establishment of informal conservation areas, wise land- and water- use and management, and environmentally conscientious business practices. Although each mechanism plays a vital and complementary role in safeguarding biodiversity, only the formal declaration of Protected Areas (and the ongoing management of these areas) can assure the retention of biodiversity into the future. For this reason, the pivotal conservation mechanism remains the formal declaration of Protected Areas, and our ultimate goal is the adequate representation of biodiversity within the Protected Area network.

The Western Cape Province needs a clear and concise long-term strategy on how we intend to achieve our protection goals. The strategy will be operationalised by all partner organisations mandated with biodiversity conservation within the province. This Western Cape Protected Area Expansion Strategy 2015 – 2020, will replace the CapeNature Protected Area Expansion Strategy and Implementation Plan 2010 – 2015 (Purnell et al., 2010), which expired 31 March 2015.

OUTCOME 10 Delivery Agreement (2014 – 2019): Protected and enhanced environmental assets and natural resources.

In order to realise the National Development Plan 2030, the government of South Africa has prioritised 14 outcomes which need to be achieved. Outcome #10 addresses the need to protect and enhance our natural assets and all organs of state with an environmental management function are responsible for implementing this outcome and delivering on its targets set by DEA.

Three of the outcome 10 indicators are particularly relevant to this Protected Area expansion strategy, namely: the extent of our conservation estate; the extent of our Marine Protected Areas; and the number of stewardship sites.

By 2019, the province's conservation estate must represent 13.2% of the Western Cape. The conservation estate includes formal Protected Areas as well as 'biodiversity stewardship' - which is defined to include Biodiversity Agreements. More specifically, by 31 March 2019 (i.e. only the last 4 years of the agreement as year 1 has already lapsed) an additional 30 000 ha need to be secured.

A second relevant indicator is that 26 new stewardship sites need to be signed by March 2019 (with a further ten which needed to be secured between April 2014 and 31 March 2015).

This strategy is poised to deliver on both of these targets by 2019 with the 2014/2015 achievements being 41 184 ha and 4 stewardship sites. Through the Protected Area component of Operation Phakisa, we also anticipate meeting the MPA target by 2019.

Indicator	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019
Additional hectares secured in conservation estate	10 000 (41 184 ha achieved)	9 000	8 000	7 000	6 000
# new stewardship sites	10 (4 achieved)	8	7	6	5
#km² MPAs (National target not provincial)	72 100	72 100	72 100	72 100	72 100

1.4 Report back on the previous strategy

The 2010 strategy set a CapeNature expansion target of an additional 147 740 ha of land to be formally protected[18] by 2015. The amount achieved was 124 106 ha, or just over 84% of the target.

The strategy recognized an additional 55 280 ha of land which was to be declared as the Knersvlakte Nature Reserve post 2015. The Knersvlake Nature Reserve declaration process had been stalled by a mining application and was not expected to occur before April 2015. A total of 85 518 ha (purchased by WWF-SA) was however declared as the Knersvlakte Nature Reserve in September 2014. Thus,

[18] Therefore only land that has been declared as of 31 March 2015 has been counted.

about three-quarters of the amount achieved between 2010 and 2015 was due to the unforeseen declaration of the Knersvlakte Nature Reserve.

The remainder of the expanded Protected Area network (38 588 ha) was secured through CapeNature's Biodiversity Stewardship Programme: as Nature Reserves and one Protected Environment. It is important to recognize that although the full expansion target was a stewardship driven one, it was based on the assumption that CapeNature would receive R16 million additional funding from Treasury. These funds, however, did not materialize and the Programme's success (26% of target) without any additional funding is laudable. The Programme also went on to secure just over R4.5 Million through the Leslie Hill Succulent Karoo Trust for the appointment of two Stewardship Negotiators and an assistant for three years (as well as their associated operational costs) to focus on Protected Area expansion in the Succulent Karoo. These hectares will however only be realised in the 2015-2020 period.

The progress made towards securing the specific spatial priorities which were identified in the 2010-2015 strategy are highlighted in Figure 3 below. Nearly a third of the sites (51) have either been conserved or are in the process of being secured for conservation. About 40% of sites (66) will carry over into the new strategy and a further 11% (18) will be downgraded in terms of their importance, due to either a lack of interest in participating in Biodiversity Stewardship on the part of the landowner, or a lack of capacity on the part of the conservation sector to attend to the sites. Two nodes of sites making up 15% (25) of the priority set require further investigation to determine whether they should remain in the top tier of importance and which conservation organization would take the lead in pursuing them. And finally, one CR lowland renosterveld site has been degraded by overgrazing and invasive alien plants to the point of no longer being a top priority for formal protection.

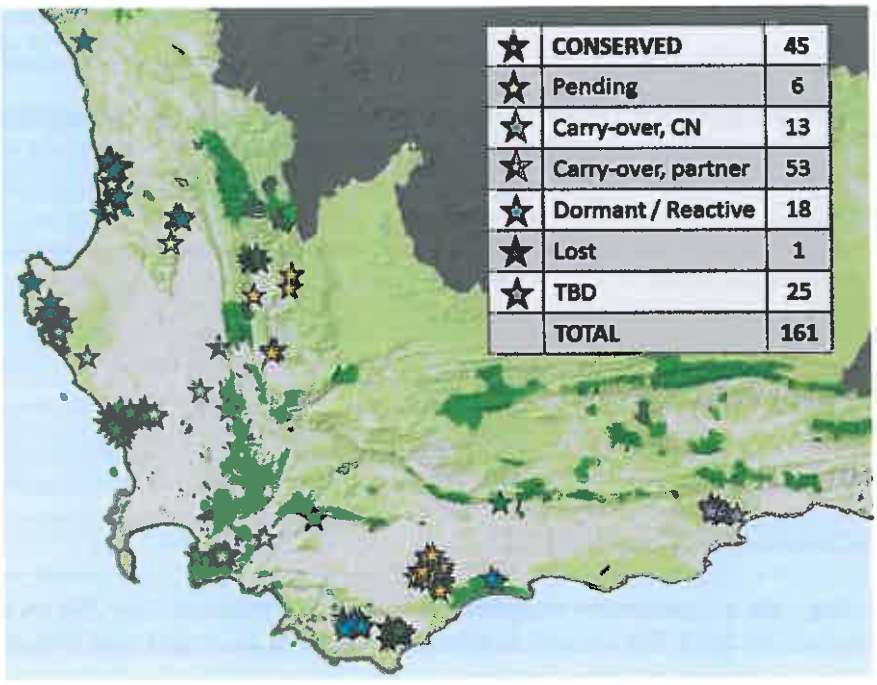


Figure 3: The portfolio of priority sites from CapeNature's 2010-2015 Protected Area Expansion Strategy identified for Biodiversity Stewardship, coloured to indicate their current (2015) status: Conserved (dark green stars), pending protection (yellow), will be carried over into the new strategy with CapeNature as the lead entity (light green) or be partner-lead (orange), are considered dormant or inactive priorities (blue), have been lost to conservation through habitat degradation (grey), or are as yet to have their status determined.

The 2010 strategy also set a target of 22 060 ha of land to be secured by other agencies active within the province. South African National Parks (SANParks) declared 8 200 ha during this period (and acquired or contracted an additional 2 150 ha not yet declared). The City of Cape Town declared no extra Protected Areas within this period, however, by November 2014, it had secured 16 160ha of land - bringing it well within reach of its own goal of securing (albeit not yet declared) 60% of all Critical Biodiversity Areas by 2014. Counting only declared Protected Areas the combined achievements by other agencies amounts to 37% of that target[19].

Notably, in December 2014, over 7 260 ha of state lands in the Dassenberg Coastal Catchment Partnership area of the City of Cape Town were transferred into the custodianship of CapeNature, securing a critical conservation corridor comprising thousands of hectares of Endangered vegetation and hundreds of threatened plant species, as well as protecting a key drinking water aquifer and an important area of cultural heritage. While not yet declared, and therefore not reported against CapeNature's 2010-2015 Protected Area expansion target, this visionary initiative warrants mention.

Similarly, WWF South Africa's Land Programme, during the course of the 2010 to 2015 strategy, has purchased thousands of hectares of land for conservation, amounting to over 17 200 ha that are currently awaiting declaration.

In addition to setting expansion targets, the 2010 – 2015 strategy outlined ten actions to be implemented by 2015. Three of those were achieved, two were partially achieved, two will be carried over into the new strategy, and three are no longer relevant. Table 1 (below) summarises these actions, highlights progress made towards meeting them, and provides explanations (where relevant).

[19] If we count signed and or contracted (but not necessarily declared), this amounts to 26 510 ha - or 120% of the target

Table 1: Report back on progress made on the 2010 CapeNature Protected Area Expansion Strategy and Implementation Plan (page 36 thereof). Please note that the action points were specifically directed at CapeNature in the 2010 strategy.

ACTION	PROGRESS AND EXPLANATION
Negotiate and contract Stewardship Agreements identified for the first two years and source funding for further negotiation of sites in year three to five	Partially achieved. 29 Nature Reserves and 1 Protected Environment was declared. A further 19 Biodiversity Agreements measuring 3353ha, contributing to the supporting Conservation Estate, were signed. The envisaged R16 million from Treasury was not secured and as a result the Programme was only able to achieve 26% of its target for this period. However, alternative funding of R4.5 million was secured from the Leslie Hill Succulent Karoo Trust which should be reflected in the 2015 – 2020 period. In this regard, a three year MoU between CapeNature and WWF-SA was signed.
Revise CapeNature's Land Acquisition Policy	Partially achieved. A Land Acquisition operating procedure was defined. All potential acquisitions and transfers are reviewed by the Stewardship and Protected Area Expansion Review Committee. WWF-SA (generally the purchaser of such lands) will only purchase land which qualifies for Nature Reserve status.
Formalise an MoU with WWF-SA regarding land acquisition and management	Not achieved and remains a priority for 2015 – 2020.
Undertake an assessment on all state-owned land which has been identified as a Critical Biodiversity Area	Not achieved and remains a priority for 2015 – 2020.
Determine which Forestry Exit areas are available for conservation and negotiate for the areas which are Critical Biodiversity Areas	Achieved. Formal land transfer to take place in 2015 – 2020.
Investigate the options of a financial biodiversity offset mechanism and if possible mobilize its formation and operations	Not achieved by CapeNature as it is a DEADP function and will be addressed through a Biodiversity Offsets Policy in 2015 – 2020, which CapeNature will assist in establishing.
Re-evaluate the interpretation of the Ramsar Convention and declaration of Ramsar sites, outside of existing Protected Areas	Not achieved and no longer a priority for 2015 - 2020. DEA have confirmed that all proposed Ramsar sites must first be declared as Protected Areas.
Evaluate unproclaimed Mountain Catchments for declaration and investigate the promulgation of regulations as well as the assignment of management authorities for Mountain Catchment Areas	Not achieved and remains a priority for 2015 – 2020.
Establish a Protected Area Management Fund	Achieved. Through the Shaw's Pass Offset, a management fund has been set up within CapeNature which is now able to receive funds to manage reactive stewardship sites.
Establish a Land Acquisition Fund	Not achieved, although technically a fund does exist (WCNCB Fund); it lacks capital. The priority action for 2015-2020 is to secure new funding and strengthen partnerships through formal MoUs with conservation NGOs, e.g. WWF-SA, TMF, Overberg Lowlands Conservation Trust, etc.

In looking back at the previous strategy, it is clear that the context within which we work has changed and the new strategy needs to respond to current circumstances and opportunities. The primary differences between the 2010 and 2015 strategies can be summarised as follows:

- 2010 strategy was a CapeNature strategy while the 2015 strategy is a Western Cape strategy;
- 2010 strategy was largely a stewardship-based strategy informed and limited by operational structures and budgets while the 2015 strategy is informed by ecological and political commitments. The 2015 strategy requires individual partners to a) draft supporting resource strategies and b) align Annual Performance Plans and Key Performance Areas to their confirmed budgets;
- 2010 was heavily reliant on stewardship as the key mechanism for expansion while the 2015 strategy is equally reliant on the transferring, vesting and formal protection of state owned lands as well as increasing the role of environmental authorization and biodiversity offsets, in addition to traditional Stewardship. Thus, the 2015 strategy will focus both on increasing the Protected Area network and increasing the proportion of that network which is fully compliant with NEM:PAA;
- 2010 priority areas had to meet a full suite of criteria in order to quality as a priority in the CAP Map, the 2015 strategy sets individual objective for different ecological objectives and tries to highlight the best sites for each individual theme in the Conservation Action Priority Map; and
- 2010 strategy only set targets for terrestrial based Protected Areas while the 2015 strategy sets targets for both terrestrial and Marine Protected Areas.

1.5 Legal mandate and legislative framework supporting Protected Area expansion

The Minister of Local Government, Environmental Affairs and Developmental Planning (hereafter referred to as 'the Minister') is responsible for the environmental mandate within the province, including the conservation of biodiversity. The Minister has appointed the Western Cape Nature Conservation Board (trading as CapeNature and hereafter referred to as 'CapeNature') as the implementing agency responsible for the biodiversity conservation component within the province. This includes the expansion and management of Protected Areas as well as biodiversity planning and biodiversity conservation outside of the Protected Area network.

Protected Area declaration is undertaken in terms of the National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act (Act No. 57 of 2003) (NEM:PAA). In the Western Cape, NEM:PAA is also supplemented by the Nature Conservation Ordinance of 1974, the Western Cape Nature Conservation Board Act of 1998, and the Western Cape Nature Conservation Laws Amendment Act (Act No. 3 of 2000). All new declarations of terrestrial Protected Areas are now done solely in terms of the NEM:PAA.

The Minister is also delegated to implement the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (Act No. 10 of 2004) (NEM:BA). However the National Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs is empowered to sign Biodiversity Management Agreements under NEMBA with landowners and as of yet has not delegated this responsibility to the provinces. Thus, in the Western Cape, CapeNature signs Biodiversity Agreements with private landowners under the Western Cape Nature Conservation Board Act (Act No. 15 of 1998). These areas are not necessarily fixed on the title deeds of a property and are therefore not sufficiently secure to be considered as formal Protected Areas.

Table 2: The Legislative framework for Protected Area expansion in South Africa and the Western Cape

LEGISLATION	PROVISIONS FOR FORMAL BIODIVERSITY PROTECTION ON PRIVATELY OWNED LAND
National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act (Act No. 57 of 2003) (NEM:PAA)	One of the objectives of the NEM:PAA is to provide for a representative network of *protected areas on state land, private land and communal land* (Chapter I, Section 2). NEM:PAA recognises a streamlined set of categories for Protected Areas and details the legal procedure for declaring Special Nature Reserves; Nature Reserves; National Parks; and Protected Environments (Chapter 3). The protection of private and communal land is specifically catered for under these categories. It requires the mutual agreement of landowners and the National Minister or MEC (depending on the category of Protected Area).
National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (Act No.10 of 2004) (NEMBA)	NEMBA provides important spatial and strategic planning instruments that enable conservation outside of formally declared Protected Areas, including: • the publishing of bioregional plans that identify Critical Biodiversity Areas outside of the protected areas system; • the listing of threatened or protected ecosystems and species; and • the development of biodiversity management plans and biodiversity management agreements (e.g. with landowners other than the state).
The Western Cape Nature Conservation Board Act (Act No. 15 of 1998)	The Act provides for CapeNature to negotiate and cooperate with *any other party* in order to achieve its objectives for conserving biodiversity. (Chapter II, Section 9: 1c, d, f) CapeNature may therefore enter into biodiversity stewardship agreements with private and communal landowners as well as the state.
Nature and Environmental Conservation Ordinance, (No. 19 of 1974)	The Ordinance provides for the establishment of nature reserves on private land (see Chapter II, Section 12, 13, as amended in the Western Cape Nature Conservation Laws Amendment Act 3 of 2000). However this mechanism has now been replaced in practice by the use of NEM:PAA.
Draft Western Cape Biodiversity Bill	The draft WC Biodiversity Bill is due for completion in the 2015/ 2016 year. It will replace both the WCNCB Act and the Ordinance. Together with NEMA, NEM:PAA and NEM:BA, the Bill will govern biodiversity conservation within the province.

CHAPTER 2: A LONG-TERM VISION FOR THE PROTECTED AREA NETWORK OF THE WESTERN CAPE PROVINCE

Our protection targets are defined by the long-term vision for biodiversity conservation within the Western Cape Province. The Provincial Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan states that: "By 2040, biodiversity and its associated ecological infrastructure is valued, wisely used, conserved and restored for its intrinsic value and thus also maintains a pillar of strength for delivering ecosystem services that improve the quality of life of the people of the Western Cape province". Biodiversity conservation is just one of the many strategic objectives of the province and the country and, as such, has to work alongside our equally important social and economic imperatives. It is therefore important that our collective efforts are directed by a set of principles, as outlined below, and underpinned by defensible science (section 2.3).

2.1 Principles

The Western Cape Protected Area expansion strategy 2015 – 2020 has embraced the following principles:

- *Protected Area expansion must occur within our priority biodiversity areas*: The declaration of Protected Areas in term of NEM:PAA, on land which is not a biodiversity priority or specifically required to meet ecological targets, must not be encouraged. All organisations engaged with natural resource management or protection within the province should align their operations accordingly. Within the Western Cape Province, the spatial depiction of priority biodiversity areas is the Critical Biodiversity Areas Map.

- *Not all hectares are equal:* Not all Protected Area hectares are equal in importance. Certain of our ecosystem types have been protected over and above that which would ever be required in order for the ecosystem to persist. This 'over-protection' of ecosystem types is most likely going to be at the expense of protecting under-protected ecosystems as we cannot protect a disproportionate percentage of the land within our province. The protection of a hectare of an under-protected ecosystem is far more important than the protection of a hectare in an over-protected ecosystem. Furthermore, we recognise the need to avail land for other forms of development and need to facilitate and support sustainable development within these areas which have not been earmarked to meet long-term conservation targets.

- *Plan for what is needed and align operations accordingly, not vice versa*: The targets which have been set in this Protected Area Expansion Strategy are based on a) ecological requirements depicted by the biodiversity thresholds and b) political commitments. These are no doubt stretch targets which will prove very difficult to deliver on without full partner support. Operational support, especially in the form of financial resources, will need to be secured in order to align our individual organisational actions with this strategy. The inverse, of setting targets against a confirmed budget, should be applied in individual organisational Annual Operational Plans.

- *Partner up*: All partners involved in natural resource protection and management within the Western Cape Province will need to work together to deliver upon these targets. Partners will need to complement each other to ensure maximum achievements.

2.2 Defining our goals

The 2015 – 2020 strategy will focus on the following two goals:

Expand the Protected Area network to increase its representivity and resilience

Regularize the Protected Area network to ensure NEM:PAA compliance and environmental security

2.2.1 An expanded Protected Area network

Answering the questions: *How much do we want?*; or *How much do we need?* are not simple exercises. The question of need is guided by our understanding of ecological thresholds, while the question of want is reflected in our political commitments. Ultimately, we would like to ensure that a representative sample of our biodiversity remains functional and resilient. In order to achieve this, we as a province, need to ensure that our Protected Area expansion strategy speaks to both the ecological requirements of our biodiversity and the political commitments made by the Government of South Africa towards global biodiversity conservation.

CapeNature's first Protected Area Expansion Strategy (2010–2015) adopted a unique target of 60% of the biodiversity thresholds[20] for all terrestrial ecosystems by the year 2030. This strategy is honouring the targets defined by the 2010 strategy (Purnell et al. 2010) and continues to aim to secure 60% of biodiversity threshold for all terrestrial ecosystems by 2030 (Figure 4). Furthermore, we aim to secure 10% of the marine environment by the year 2030[21]. Table 3 summarizes these long-term targets across the Western Cape landscape and seascape, as well as the five year targets that are the focus of this 2015-2020 strategy.

Representative targets: Targets have been set nationally per ecosystem type, and thus need to be met in the right places. Not just any configuration of places can form our Protected Area network as the network needs to be representative of the full suite of biodiversity contained within our boundaries. The correct siting of Protected Areas is guided by systematic biodiversity planning and the resulting Critical Biodiversity Areas Maps. With 100% efficiency and adequate habitat remaining for each type, just over 14% of the province would be required. However, because our current Protected Area network is biased, we still require an additional 8.1% of the province.

[20] Biodiversity thresholds (for terrestrial ecosystems) represent the percentage of the original extent of a vegetation type which needs to be maintained in a natural state, in order to ensure that 75% of the species contained within that vegetation type, survive. Biodiversity thresholds are based on actual plant diversity surveys or relevé data which estimate the parameters of species-to-area relationships

[21] Adopted from Aichi targets which aimed to achieve 10% by 2020

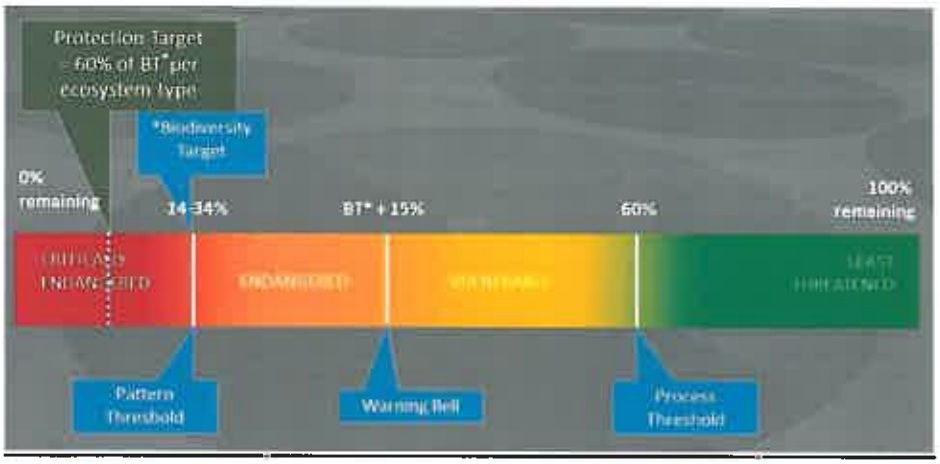


Figure 4: The relationship between ecosystem status, biodiversity thresholds and our protection targets

In addition to these headline targets for terrestrial and marine ecosystems, this strategy recognises that in pursuing our goal of a representative and resilient Protected Area network we should look beyond the accounting of ecosystem types alone. Ecosystems are indeed a useful lens through which to view broad patterns of biological diversity, but attention should also be given to certain species, habitats or landscape features that are of conservation concern. Thus, in addition to our overarching ecosystem-based target, we have developed a set of objectives for Critically Endangered vegetation types, strategic landscapes and corridors, essential habitat for certain species, estuaries, the coast and freshwater systems. Sections 2.4.1 through 2.4.5 provide more detail about these objectives and the specific outcomes we hope to achieve through implementing this strategy.

How do our targets compare to the Aichi target 11?

The Aichi target 11 is that by 2020, 17% of land and 10% of coastal and marine areas are conserved. Conserved however includes conservation areas (see section 1.2 above).

This Western Cape Protected Area Expansion Strategy will aim to achieve 60% of biodiversity threshold of terrestrial ecosystems (which equates to a land portfolio approximately equivalent to 17% of ecosystem) by 2030 – but as formal Protected Areas. This strategy will also aim to formally protect 10% of the marine environment by 2030.

Table 3: Protection targets for the Western Cape Protected Area Expansion Strategy 2015 – 2020. The current land based Protected Area network amounts to 14.5% of the province. In order to ultimately achieve a Protected Area network which is fully representative of the ecosystems contained within the province, an additional 8.1% of the province is still required. This will result in an ultimate Protected Area network of 22.6% of the province. The current Marine Protected Area network amounts to 0.4% of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The Protection target for the marine environment is to formally protect 5 % by year 2016.

OBJECTIVE	TARGET BY 2030	CURRENT PROTECTED AREA NETWORK	ADDITIONAL AREA REQUIRED TO CONSTITUTE A REPRESENTATIVE PROTECTED AREA NETWORK	PROTECTION TARGET 2015 – 2020 ($^1/_3$ of additional needed)
LAND BASED	60% of biodiversity threshold per ecosystem type	1 858 200 ha (14.5%)	1 046 522 ha (8.1%)	348 840 ha (2.7%)
MARINE INSHORE (km)	10%	1 629 km^2	unknown	616 km^2
MARINE OFFSHORE: SA EEZ (km^2)	10%	0 km^2	10%	24 600 km^2

2.2.2 Regularizing our Protected Area network to ensure NEM:PAA compliance

In addition to expanding our Protected Area network, we would like to regularize[22] the network and ensure that it is fully compliant with NEM:PAA. Largely due to past administrative shortcomings, a substantial proportion of our current Protected Area network is either not legally gazetted through an official notice, vested appropriately, assigned a management authority, surveyed and adequately documented, or managed according to an approved management plan. Within the next five years, and in cooperation with DEA and other national departments, we aim to significantly increase the proportion of Protected Areas compliant with NEM:PAA, from approximately 40% to 50%, in one or more of these ways. As such, some of the strategies contained in this document will not result in an expanded Protected Area network but rather a more legally and administratively secure Protected Area network. This regularization of existing Protected Areas will better deliver environmental security to everyone in South Africa, and ensure that the costs and benefits of protection flow to the appropriate management authority.

2.3 Designing our multi-layered spatial strategy

Priority biodiversity areas within the Western Cape Province are identified through a process of systematic biodiversity planning. The priority areas identified through this process are called Critical Biodiversity Areas (CBAs). CBAs are terrestrial and aquatic features (e.g. wetlands, rivers and estuaries) that must be kept in a natural state in order to retain a reasonable proportion of biodiversity pattern in an ecologically functional and resilient landscape. CBAs represent the most area-efficient option to meeting all thresholds (Maree and Vromans, 2010).

[22] Regularization refers to the process of establishing a hitherto temporary or provisional arrangement on an official basis; the act of making (something, such as a situation) regular, legal or officially accepted.

The Western Cape Province does not yet have a provincial-wide and up-to-date CBA Map[23] and, in the interim, makes use of the Western Cape Provincial Biodiversity Framework (Pence, 2014) as the lead spatial biodiversity informant in all land-use planning and decision-making[24]. The Western Cape Biodiversity Framework is a compilation of all current fine-scale biodiversity plans across the province and provides a common CBA framework for all the different plans. Where systematic biodiversity planning is not yet complete for an area, the WCBF identifies those features already known to be CBAs such as natural remnants of Critically Endangered ecosystems

Furthermore, the Western Cape has not produced a CBA Map for its marine and coastal environment. As the marine environment is a national function, it remains unlikely that the province will drive the production of such a product in the near future.

All new Protected Areas must, as a minimum, be comprised of or contain CBAs. This is a fundamental principle of this strategy and an operational parameter for all government departments engaged with resource management and protection within the Western Cape.

Because Critical Biodiversity Areas are delineated through a robust and scientific approach, they are the logical starting point for identifying priorities for Protected Area expansion. Subsets of the CBA network will however be produced to inform and drive the expansion of Protected Areas according to a) the objective they are delivering on[25]; b) the expansion mechanism to be adopted[26] and c) the organisation concerned[27]. In addition to this, a further dimension which speaks to the time-frame in which the area is to be protected will be added to these subsets of spatial priorities, i.e. 5 years or 15 years. This will also allow for the user to scale-up on targets based on additional operational budgets which may be secured.

Systematic biodiversity planning

Systematic biodiversity planning is an approach to conservation that prioritises actions by setting quantitative thresholds for biodiversity features (e.g. vegetation types). It is premised on conserving a representative sample of biodiversity pattern, including species and habitats (the principle of representation), as well as the ecological and evolutionary processes that maintain biodiversity over time (the principle of persistence). The configuration of priority areas identified in the plan is designed to be spatially efficient (i.e. to meet biodiversity thresholds with the least amount of land) and where possible to avoid conflict with other land-uses where these are known to exist (principles of efficiency and conflict avoidance). It recognises that the whole landscape must be planned and managed strategically to ensure sustainable development.

The targeting of CBAs for formal protection is guided by two simple factors: importance and urgency. As illustrated by the 2008 National Protected Area Expansion Strategy (NPAES), an area is considered important for the expansion of the land-based Protected Area network if it contributes to meeting biodiversity thresholds for terrestrial or freshwater ecosystems, maintaining ecological processes or climate change resilience, or a combination of these. Urgency is determined by the extent to which spatial options for meeting Protected Area targets still exist, which is often linked to the degree of competing land or resource uses in an area.

[23] The first provincial CBA Map is due in April 2016

[24] The DEADP Circular 0016.2014, the Head of Department has endorsed the use of the CBA Maps as the best available science to be considered in EIA and Spatial Development Frameworks.

[25] See Section 2.4

[26] See Chapter 3

[27] See Chapter 4

Importance and urgency can be illustrated on a graph or matrix divided into four quadrants (Figure 5). Quadrant 1 areas, those that are important and urgent, may seem like the obvious place to focus expansion efforts. However, if we focus only on the areas that are important and urgent, we lose opportunities to secure protected areas where there are currently fewer competing land and resource uses. Protected area expansion is often most cost effective in Quadrant 2, the important but not (yet) urgent areas. This is where, Rand for Rand, most can be achieved in terms of meeting biodiversity thresholds and contributing to ecological sustainability. As landscapes become fragmented, we rapidly lose the ability to create large protected areas, which are especially important for resilience to climate change. It is important to grasp opportunities to create viable large protected areas in currently intact landscapes. The NPAES concludes that protected area agencies should aim for a balanced portfolio of expansion activities in Quadrants 1 and 2, both of which contribute to biodiversity conservation and ecological sustainability.

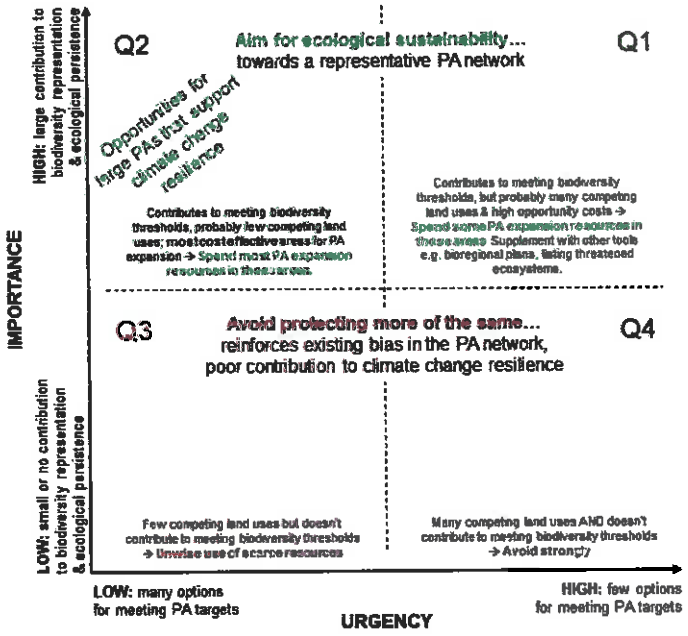


Figure 5: In the National Protected Area Expansion Strategy (2008), priority areas for Protected Area expansion are identified on the basis of importance and urgency. A similar approach has been adopted in identifying priority areas in this strategy.

2.4 Themes driving our Protected Area expansion

In the Western Cape, we have endeavoured to develop a portfolio of expansion priorities that strikes the balance described above (i.e. between important and urgent sites, and important and not (yet) urgent sites), but which is also focused on achieving more specific biodiversity outcomes.

The purpose of articulating more specific biodiversity outcomes is to help further prioritise sites for Protected Area expansion, especially given the fact that so many sites are both important and urgent for meeting our primary protection target in the Western Cape[28]. Consider, for example, that the province is home to two global biodiversity hotspots (Cape Floristic Region and the Succulent Karoo), together supporting over 8600 endemic plant species, and that a full 80% of the land area required to meet national biodiversity thresholds falls within Critically Endangered (CR) ecosystems.

[28] 60% of the biodiversity threshold for each of the 160 ecosystem types in the province

Technically, this means every remnant of natural vegetation left in these systems is irreplaceable, and is both important and urgent to protect. Practically, it is more meaningful to identify the best remaining examples of each poorly protected and Critically Endangered ecosystem to pursue for formal protection. Thus, it is useful to think of our specific provincial biodiversity outcomes as a set of more tangible objectives nested under our overarching protection target. By developing outcomes that are scaled to our provincial context and linked to familiar landscapes, we can better come to grips with what our strategy needs to, and can, achieve.

The outcomes articulated below were borne out of a set of Protected Area expansion workshops held between September 2014 and November 2014, and were used to highlight places that will achieve multiple biodiversity outcomes as the highest priorities for protected area expansion[29]. The resulting provincial Protected Area expansion objectives are grouped into the following themes and discussed in more detail in the sections below.

2.4.1 Critically Endangered ecosystems

Objective Statement: Secure at least one 'best remaining' site in each of the province's poorly protected Critically Endangered ecosystems.

Critically Endangered (CR) ecosystems are those vegetation types which have been modified from their natural state to the extent that their biodiversity threshold target can no longer be met; so little natural habitat is left that not only have ecosystem structure and functioning been severely impaired, but species associated with the ecosystem are being lost.

Of the 19 CR ecosystems in the Western Cape (Pence, 2014), four are considered to have the best remaining examples of the type secured in the Protected Area network (i.e. Peninsula Shale Renosterveld, Cape Flats Sand Fynbos, Lourensford Alluvium Fynbos, and Swartland Alluvium Fynbos). For the remaining 15 types[30], a set of best remaining examples were expert-identified and added to the provincial Conservation Action Priorities database.

2.4.2 Under-protected ecosystems and strategic landscapes

Objective Statement: Make a significant contribution towards meeting Protected Area targets for under-represented ecosystems in the province, including fully meeting protection targets for at least an additional 5 ecosystems, in strategic locations.

Of the 160 ecosystem types in the Western Cape, only 44 meet their provincial protection target. To meet outstanding targets, over one million hectares are still required across 116 different terrestrial ecosystem types. While these numbers indicate that we still have a long way to go to reach our long-term protection goals, there are a handful of places in the province where it is not only within our

[29] Where sufficient data were available to identify specific sites. For some objectives, further work will be required to identify the most effective set and/or configuration of places to achieve the desired result.

[30] Langkloof Shale Renosterveld, Piketberg Quartz Succulent Shrubland, Muscadel Riviere, Swartland Silcrete Renosterveld, Swartland Shale Renosterveld, Western/Central/Eastern Ruens Shale Renosterveld, Ruens Silcrete Renosterveld, Elgin Shale Fynbos, Elim Ferricrete Fynbos, Cape Lowland Alluvial Vegetation, Garden Route Granite Fynbos, and Knysna Sand Fynbos.

reach to meet targets, but where there are opportunities to create relatively large Protected Areas in key landscapes. Consider, for example, the Piketberg Mountains where an entire vegetation type, Piketberg Sandstone Fynbos, is essentially unprotected and where the country's most significant 'unprotected and threatened plant species hotspot' is located. Yet two proposed Stewardship projects covering a combined area of over 15 000 hectares could not only meet the protection target for Piketberg Sandstone Fynbos, but make a substantial contribution to one Endangered and one Critically Endangered ecosystem, as well as a suite of important mammal, bird, fish, insect and reptile species.

2.4.3 Essential habitat for selected species

Objective Statement: Secure at least one site considered essential to ensuring the long-term viability of the following threatened species or species groups[31]:

- *Cape Mountain Zebra*
- *Riverine Rabbit*
- *Geometric Tortoise*
- *Endemic fish species[32]*
- *Threatened and unprotected plant species hotspots*
- *Bird congregation sites*
- *Endemic butterfly species of conservation concern[33]*

Although our provincial protection target is ostensibly linked to ecosystems, the intent is to protect the full spectrum of animals, plants, ecosystems, and ecological processes occurring in the province, in a layout that conflicts as little as possible with economic development and human livelihoods. Ensuring that species' conservation needs are catered for in our provincial Protected Area expansion strategy is imperative; the species/groups listed above were identified because formal habitat protection is considered essential to their long-term viability and the current Protected Area network is inadequate in meeting their specific spatial requirements.

2.4.4 Marine, estuarine and coastal systems

Objective Statement: Advance marine, estuarine and coastal conservation in the Western Cape through a set of interventions aimed at addressing key gaps in protection, and also by supporting national MPA expansion efforts.

More specifically, this component of the strategy is about:

- Supporting Operation Phakisa's proposed MPA network and target of protecting 5% of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).
- Working with DEA to pursue the appropriate mechanism for enhanced protection and management of existing MPAs and island reserves (including ostensibly protected 'rocks').

[31] This proposed set of species and species groups emerged from a series of workshops as those which stand to not only significantly benefit from having portions of their habitat formally protected, but for which formal protection is considered essential to their long-term viability, and where significant progress is feasible within the 5-year timeframe of the strategy.
[32] The following species have been flagged as 2015-2020 priorities and have had candidate sites selected: Barrydale Redfin, Doringrivier Redfin, Tweerivier Redfin, Spotted Rock Catfish, Verlorenvlei Redfin, Bergrivier Redfin, Clanwilliam Sandfish, Cape Galaxias (Leeu and Haelkraal).
[33] Individual taxa and candidate sites to be determined.

- For example, MPA re-zoning to increase the proportion of 'no-take' areas in the Betty's Bay, Goukamma and Robberg MPAs; improved management zones around Bird Island for land-based species conservation (seals and gannets); and laying the groundwork for potential future MPAs around Dassen and Dyer Islands.

- Securing key gaps in the protection of provincial coastal habitats and ecological processes.
  - While approximately 24% of the 1km wide coastal zone is formally protected, key gaps remain in coastal habitat representation and in terms of NEM:PAA-compliance (mainly Local Authority and Private Nature Reserves)[34], as well as physical gaps between land-ward and sea-ward protected areas (e.g. admiralty lands).
- Increasing the extent and level of protection within the estuarine functional zone of identified core estuaries.

2.4.6 Freshwater ecosystems

Objective Statement: Secure at least one 'special' (i.e., unique, threatened, and under-protected) freshwater ecosystem per District Municipality.

Wetlands are the most threatened of all South Africa's ecosystems and among the least well-protected, despite the relatively small proportion (2.4%) of the landscape that they make up (Nel and Driver, 2012). To address the gaps in the Protected Area network for freshwater ecosystems, we have decided to focus on a suite of systems that are of special conservation concern due to their uniqueness, vulnerability and poor protection status:

- Peat wetlands;
- Vernal pools embedded in Critically Endangered renosterveld; and
- The "wet" set of Critically Endangered ecosystem types and the river systems associated with them, namely: Cape Lowland Alluvial Vegetation, Swartland Alluvium Fynbos, Kouebokkeveld Alluvium Fynbos, and Muscadel Riviere.

In addition to targeting these particular types, we will seek to create better designed Protected Areas that accommodate entire wetlands and river reaches. Freshwater ecosystems represent high-value ecological infrastructure that provide critical ecosystem services such as water purification and flood regulation (Nel and Driver, 2012), but delivery of these services requires a focus on protecting whole, functional systems.

2.5 Conservation Action Priorities

As briefly mentioned above, one reason for developing a more specific set of objectives is to help identify those places that will achieve multiple strategic biodiversity outcomes, and elevate them as the highest priorities for Protected Area expansion in the province.

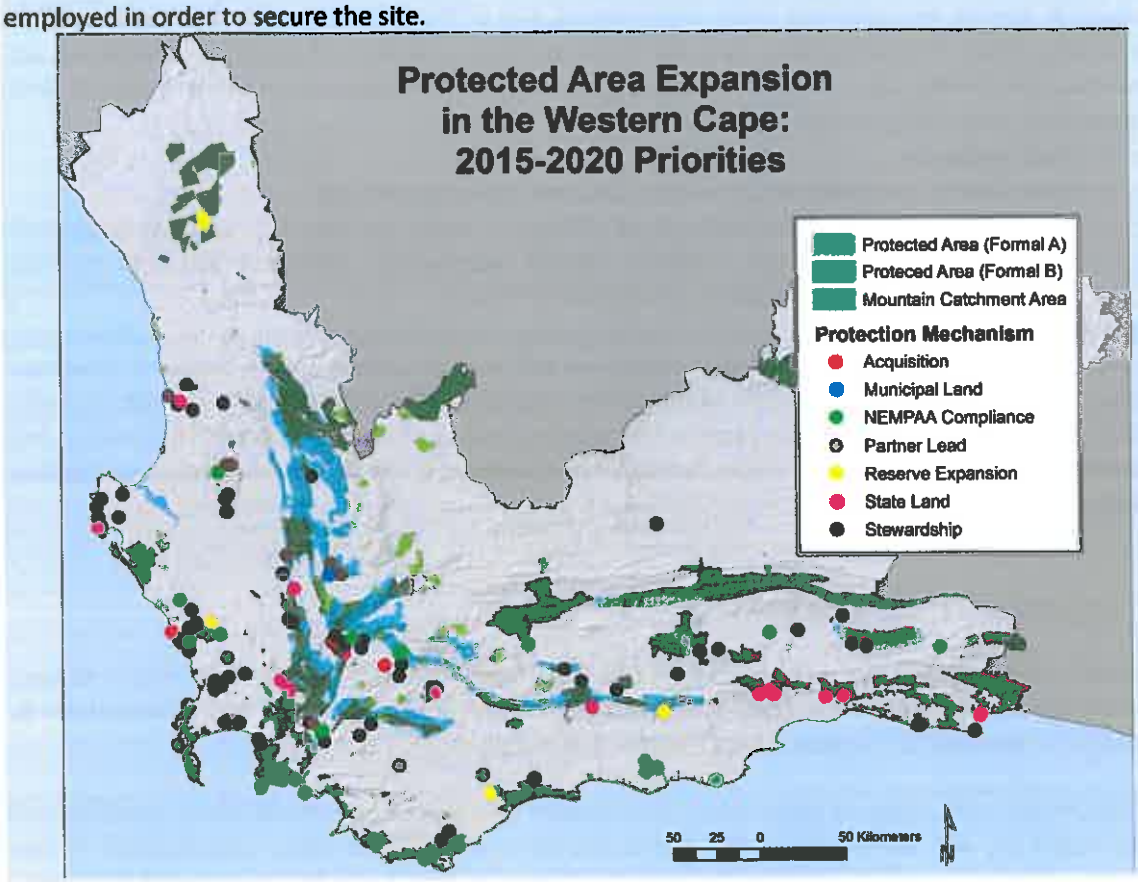
To determine various tiers of importance, all candidate sites were first entered into a database and then linked to, and evaluated against, provincial objectives. The resulting Conservation Action Priorities (CAP) Map depicts the priority areas for Protected Area expansion in the next five years. Importantly, the CAP Map is underpinned by a database that will be updated on a regular basis to inform and prioritise conservation action in the province, based on best available information.

[34] See sections 3.5 and 3.6 respectively

Conservation Action Priorities Map

The province's spatial depiction of priority areas for Protected Area expansion is referred to as the Conservation Action Priorities (CAP) Map. The CAP Map, which is underpinned by a comprehensive database, indicates specific cadasters targeted for Protected Area expansion according to objective, mechanism, organization and urgency. As such, the CAP Map contains highly sensitive information, and anecdotal evidence of the unintended negative consequences of similar products becoming publically accessible includes: a) land prices being artificially elevated so that acquisition for conservation purposes fetches far higher prices than fair market value; b) illegal cultivation and development as landowners anticipate potential difficulties in obtaining environmental authorization, and c) applications for prospecting rights are triggered. As a result, the CAP Map will be housed by CapeNature (the lead implementing agent) and will not be publically available. The principles and objectives which drove the selection of these cadasters are however outlined by this strategy which is publicly available.

Below is an image of the CAP Map. The dots represent the priority areas to be targeted for formal Protected Area expansion and the colour of the dot alludes to the likely mechanism which is to be employed in order to secure the site.



CHAPTER 3: MECHANISMS TO EXPAND AND SECURE THE PROTECTED AREA NETWORK

Historically, the primary mechanism for formally protecting land was through purchase. Prior to 1945, there was a long history of proclaiming state forests for meeting the timber needs of the British Navy. Conservation of biodiversity per se was not regarded as a priority (Cowling, in prep). In 1945, Wicht published a report stating the need to proclaim as statutory reserves representative examples of the Cape Floristic Region's biota. Land purchases in the early 1950s by the provincial conservation authority were, however, primarily intended as breeding areas for rare and endangered wildlife with which to stock private farms (Rebelo, 1992). The 1970s finally saw the proclamation of large tracts of formal Protected Areas, and additions to the conservation estate, by the state, continued into the first decade of the new millennium with the 135 000 ha Garden Route National Park proclaimed in 2009 (Cowling, in prep) and the 85 000 ha Knersvlakte Nature Reserve declared in 2014.

The acquisition of land through purchase by the state is, however, no longer a common occurrence. Land is expensive and there are more urgent needs pressing on government. As a result, the conservation sector has become increasingly creative at finding alternative and more contemporary mechanisms with which to expand the formal Protected Area network of the province.

Although numerous mechanisms can be employed to expand Protected Areas, and all potential mechanisms will be considered, the strategy for the next five years will focus on the following primary mechanisms:

- Stewardship via both proactive and reactive means, as well as one additional Stewardship and Land Reform site;
- the transfer of desirable forest exit lands and other state-owned lands into conservation;
- the purchase of land with support from NGOs; and
- the declaration of Marine Protected Areas.

In addition to this, we will also be working to better ensure the environmental security of our Protected Area network by increasing the proportion which is fully compliant with NEM:PAA, focusing specifically on state land which is currently managed for conservation.

3.1 Stewardship

Biodiversity Stewardship is the practice of effectively managing biodiversity outside of the existing state-managed Protected Area network. It achieves this by placing the responsibility to conserve biodiversity into the hands of private landowners through a variety of contractual agreements.

The motivation for adopting Biodiversity Stewardship as a core strategy for CapeNature and the province, is that the vast majority of conservation-worthy (and under-represented) biodiversity is located on private land in the Western Cape; furthermore, stewardship contracts are widely regarded as one of the most cost-effective and feasible mechanisms for protecting important natural systems across the world (Jackelman *et al.*, 2008 and Stolton *et al.*, 2014 and SANBI, 2015).

CapeNature's Biodiversity Stewardship Programme:

The Biodiversity Stewardship Programme was formally launched by CapeNature in 2003 after a successful two-year pilot phase and has since secured 42 Nature Reserves and 1 Protected Environment amounting to 49 081 ha which contribute to the formal Protected Areas of the province. The Programme has also concluded a further 19 Biodiversity Agreements and 28 Conservation Area Agreements which do not have formal conservation status but contribute to the improved ecological management of the landscape.

The major limitation of CapeNature's Biodiversity Stewardship Programme is that of capacity: both the number of new sites that can be taken on year after year, and the total number of sites audited are limited by the number of available staff. All potential new stewardship sites are presented to the Western Cape Stewardship and Protected Area Expansion Review Committee. Even those that qualify for full Nature Reserve status, based on their exceptional biodiversity value, cannot always immediately be accommodated by the programme. If a site does not display such high levels of biodiversity value, it can only be considered for a Biodiversity Agreement or as a Voluntary Conservation Area – two tiers requiring far less of a resource commitment from CapeNature. This is an unfortunate situation as demand from land owners to protect is exceeding the capacity of CapeNature to sustainably commit. There is an obvious need to expand the programme and/or identify additional partners to assist CapeNature in stewardship; this will need to be addressed within the next five years.

Biodiversity Stewardship can be entered into proactively or reactively. Proactive Stewardship, whereby the conservation entity (in most instances CapeNature, but increasingly by the CoCT, SANParks, Biosphere Reserves, WWF-SA, etc.) approaches the land owner to determine if he or she would be interested in protecting their land (due to it having been identified as a conservation priority); and Reactive Stewardship, whereby either the land owner approaches the conservation agency voluntarily, or the land owner enters into an agreement as a condition of an environmental authorization.

Both reactive and proactive stewardship sites undergo an ecological site assessment and are then reviewed by the Stewardship and Protected Area Expansion Review Committee.

3.1.1 Proactive Stewardship

In a proactive stewardship scenario one of the Stewardship Programme partners approaches owners of top priority biodiversity sites within the province and initiates discussions with them to determine their interest in participating. As the programme is strategically directed towards priority sites, the land would most often qualify for Nature Reserve status and the negotiators will aim to convince the land owners to sign into such an agreement. The land owner could however select any one of the stewardship options.

In such instances, the resources which the conservation agency will need to invest in the negotiation, drafting of management plans, declaration and post declaration management and auditing is high.

Stewardship and Land Reform

There are significant potential synergies between stewardship, land reform and rural development. In 2008, a national land reform/communal lands biodiversity stewardship initiative was started by SANBI and the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR), in partnership with provincial conservation agencies, and land and conservation NGOs. In the Western Cape, CapeNature has already signed Biodiversity Agreements for three such sites: Thandi Wine Farm (a collective ownership scheme), the Algeria Community and Fynbos Vrugte en Wyn (a land reform project); and is currently in negotiations with an additional two – one of which falls within the Dassenberg Coastal Catchment Partnership (discussed in more detail in Section 4.6 and 4.7).

Community engagement through the Dassenberg Coastal Catchment Partnership

3.1.2 Reactive stewardship

Reactive stewardship[35] has arisen as a complementary approach to proactive stewardship for securing stewardship agreements. Reactive stewardship can take one of three main forms:

- A landowner approaches the conservation agency to pursue stewardship;
- A landowner applies for environmental authorization to develop parts of their land and stewardship is a condition for acquiring these rights; or
- A landowner applies to rezone their land to Open Space III or any other conservation zoning.

Reactive stewardship often requires less resource investment from the conservation agency than proactive stewardship[36]. This is because the land-owner willingness to enter into such an agreement already exists (albeit in exchange for an environmental authorization) and the costs associated with the drafting of contracts and management plans, conducting biodiversity specialist reports and audits are borne by the applicant. The added benefits of reactive stewardship are that it increases the conservation estate by focusing on areas of both high biodiversity value and high threat levels, and also allows for small sites to be protected which otherwise might not have warranted intensive resource allocation through the proactive stewardship route.

Although reactive in nature, these sites must still be aligned with province-wide stewardship priorities based on biodiversity value and should not be pursued at the cost of proactive stewardship priorities. Reactive sites are also subject to a review by the Stewardship and Protected Area Expansion Review Committee.

Unfortunately, the potential of the environmental authorization process contributing to safeguarding our important biodiversity has been limited by the capacity within CapeNature to enter into contractual agreements with landowners. CapeNature must therefore verify that the site is a conservation priority prior to the issuing of an environmental authorisation. Currently, environmental authorizations which deliver a benefit to conservation require the land owner to enter into formal legal agreements with CapeNature.

The potential is further hampered by the minimal degree of compliance monitoring which takes place within the province to ensure that reactive stewardship sites are in fact formally declared. It is common knowledge that many reactive stewardship sites which have been stipulated by DEADP as conditions of environmental authorization, have not been delivered on.

In addition to this, the lack of a Provincial (and National) Biodiversity Offset Policy which clearly outlines how biodiversity offsets should be considered in the environmental authorisation processes, once again limits the potential that the environmental authorization process can have on securing priority biodiversity within the Western Cape Province.

In response to these three challenges, within the next five years we hope to achieve the following respectively: A land-use scheme[37] whereby if CapeNature is not able to accommodate land in the Stewardship Programme, it is at least zoned for conservation; Compliance monitoring of all reactive stewardship sites is undertaken by DEADP; and DEADP finalise a Provincial Biodiversity Offset Policy.

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[35] Consult the reactive stewardship fact sheet, compiled by CapeNature, for further information on this mechanism

[36] Although the offset negotiation process is often also resource intense for the conservation agency

[37] Rezoning in accordance with environmental authorization legislation presents itself as a powerful tool for the control of lands of biodiversity value. These rezoned lands will not contribute to the formal Protected Area network but will contribute to the vitally important and supportive conservation estate of the province.

Financial implications for CapeNature in meeting our terrestrial protection targets

CapeNature is legally mandated to conserve the valuable and unique biodiversity of the Western Cape on behalf of the people of the region, the nation and the international community - protection and expansion of the conservation estate is therefore its primary strategic objective. The current protected area network provides extensive protection to mountain catchments; encompassing approximately 60% of South Africa's Strategic Water Source Areas[1] which are located within the province. The historic focus on mountains has however left the lowlands under-protected – with 20% of these vegetation types not protected at all. Consequently, if the Western Cape Province is to meet its provincial protection target for terrestrial ecosystems (which is aligned to national and Aichi targets, and is equivalent to approximately 60% of biodiversity thresholds), then an additional 8.1% needs to be systematically added to the Protected Area network of the province by 2030. This amount, when divided into three equal five-year implementation cycles, results in an additional 350 000 ha needing to be added to the network by 2020.

As a means of expanding and supplementing our unrepresentative Protected Area network, CapeNature pioneered the establishment of legally binding Biodiversity Stewardship Agreements with private and communal landowners, beginning in 2002. When compared to the more classical option of purchasing land for protected area establishment, this approach costs 70 times less in terms of initial establishment costs, and four times less in terms of running costs (SANBI, 2015). Moving forward, the primary focus for CapeNature's limited internal funds will thus be on Biodiversity Stewardship together with the transfer of suitable land from other government departments.

CapeNature currently spends approximately R3 million per year on implementing the stewardship programme, which includes the salary and operational budgets of all staff who play a role in reaching stewardship targets. Experience indicates that this budget can support the declaration of approximately seven new stewardship sites per year, amounting to 10 000 ha per year and 50 000 ha by 2020 (i.e. one seventh of the protection target).

In order to achieve the 350 000 ha protection target by 2020, the Biodiversity Stewardship Programme will require an additional R6 million per annum (amounting to a total of R9 million per annum). This figure is based on the model proposed in the Business Case for Biodiversity Stewardship (SANBI 2015) which accurately calculates that a well-resourced provincial biodiversity stewardship programme would require a budget of R9 million per year.

Clearly there is a gap between the Protected Area expansion needs of the Province and CapeNature's ability to address the scale of need within the current budget. Without additional resources these Protected Area commitments are unachievable; with inevitable consequences for water security and ecosystem health.

[1]Strategic Water Source areas – these areas which are mostly in the mountains cover 8% of the country's surface area but produce 50% of the water. The water produced by these areas is particularly important as the province is highly water stressed and under projected reductions in precipitation caused by climate change water is likely to be the most limiting factor for economic growth.

3.2 The transfer of forest exit land to CapeNature for Protected Area establishment

Due to the poor soil conditions and prevailing climatic conditions of the Western Cape Province, forestry has proven to be a marginal economic investment. As a result, unprofitable plantations are being redistributed to alternative land managers for more appropriate land-uses. Such plantations, referred to as forest exit land, are properties vested with the Department of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) and leased to Cape Pine: Forests and Timber Products (Cape Pine). CapeNature has been recognised as one of the potential land recipients, and formal conservation as one of the land uses.

The transfer of forest exit lands consists of three phases, namely: conversion, restoration, and rehabilitation. Conversion is the initial clearing of the planted trees to a natural vegetation type for which Cape Pine will be responsible. Restoration is the medium-term act of transforming the area to its eventual desired state, while rehabilitation is the final long-term goal and is achieved when the area has returned to its pre-planting state or another desired end-point. Once the land has been rehabilitated, Cape Pine releases the land back to DAFF. Much of the land to come over to CapeNature has already been handed back to DAFF. CapeNature and DAFF have agreed that this land will be assigned to CapeNature through Section 47, 1998 (Act No. 84 of 1998) of the National Forest Act. As an interim measure license agreements pending assignment are currently being explored.

CapeNature assessed every parcel of land in the Western Cape Province which the DAFF is releasing from forestry. Land was assessed on both its biodiversity merits and whether or not managing the land could facilitate better overall management of existing and adjacent Protected Areas. All properties were then assigned to one of three categories: Land which CapeNature does not want; land which CapeNature wants but only on condition they receive additional management funds; and land which CapeNature wants regardless as to whether or not they receive management funds.

Land which CapeNature wants regardless of whether or not additional funds[38] are received amounts to approximately 11 230 ha. Due to the cost implications of managing the land, this portfolio of land was kept to a minimum. This land, some of which will first have to be sub-divided, should be transferred over to CapeNature as the new management authority within the next five years.

Land which CapeNature wants only on condition of receiving extra management funds amounts to 1 300 ha. For this portfolio, CapeNature is undertaking a costing exercise with regard to the management of invasive alien vegetation, road maintenance, fire management, fencing, patrols, sign posting, etc. An average management cost per hectare for a period of five years was will be determined. Within the next five years, CapeNature will make a proposal to Treasury for these additional funds to supplement our existing Nature Reserve Operational Budget. In the interim, DAFF will have to provide these management funds before CapeNature will be willing to manage the land. To support of the transfer and declaration of this land, CapeNature has already secured donor funding to appoint a Land Affairs Officer for a period of five years.

Within the next five years, we aim to have already successfully transferred and declared (as Protected Areas) the forest exit lands which CapeNature has indicated they will accept regardless of whether or not they receive management funds. During this period, CapeNature will also aim to submit a proposal to Treasury for the forest exit lands they have indicated they will accept only on condition that extra management funds are provided for.

[38] Note that these additional funds refer to the management costs post rehabilitation. The assumption is that all land coming over to CapeNature will: a) either be rehabilitated or b) receive a transfer fee from Cape Pine to cover the rehabilitation costs.

The role of World Heritage Sites in the Protected Area network

The Western Cape has a UNESCO World Heritage Site called the Cape Floral Region Protected Areas World Heritage Site. This serial natural World Heritage Site is comprised of eight Protected Areas (Cederberg, Grootwinterhoek and Boosmansbos Wilderness Areas, Table Mountain National Park, Boland Mountain Complex, De Hoop Nature Reserve, Swartberg Nature Reserve and Baviaanskloof) amounting to 557 584 ha.

The World Heritage Site status is of even more significance in this case as much of the land in the World Heritage Site did not have formal conservation status. The declaration of the World Heritage Site had bestowed formal Protected Area status on these areas as NEM:PAA considers all World Heritage Sites as formal Protected Areas. This has gone a long way in regularising the State-owned Nature Reserves in the Western Cape as: a) CapeNature has officially been assigned the World Heritage Site Management Authority for our Nature Reserves contained within the World Heritage Site; and b) many of these areas have completed Protected Area Management Plans - further ensuring their compliance with NEM:PAA.

An extension for the Cape Floral Region Protected Areas World Heritage Site was approved by the IUCN and UNESCO in July 2015. The extension adds an additional 37 Protected Areas (amounting to 537 214 ha) to the Cape Floral Region Protected Areas World Heritage Site. In addition to this, the proposed extended World Heritage Site has a buffer of approximately 755 830 ha which is largely comprised of declared Private Mountain Catchments and other Protected Areas not selected for this extension nomination.

3.3 The vesting of state lands with CapeNature

Many of the properties currently managed by CapeNature are in fact state forests vested with the National Department of Public Works (NDPW) or the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF)[39] and not with CapeNature[40]. Since 1994 however, CapeNature has been administering and managing these areas without the legal authority to do so. This places the organisation at risk. For example, it is doubtful whether it would be able to institute legal proceedings to eject unlawful non-commercial occupiers or to obtain compensation for damage caused by fires negligently started on adjacent land. Furthermore, as only the land owner can declare the property a Protected Area, most of the land is not declared and remains vulnerable to inappropriate development.

Types of state forest currently managed by CapeNature

1) Forest Reserves declared under the National Forest Act, (Act 84 of 1998); and
2) State Land released by DAFF in 2006 in terms of section 50 (3) of the National Forest Act to the NDPW for vesting with the PDPW. This can include:
    a. registered properties with title deeds which can be transferred after the vesting process has been completed;
    b. surveyed but unregistered properties; and
    c. unsurveyed land which needs to be surveyed by DAFF before the transfer process can take place

[39] Refer to text box for types of State Forests currently managed by CapeNature
[40] Refer to Appendix 2 for a history of these state lands and the ownership thereof

These state forest properties need to be vested with the Provincial Department of Public Works (PDPW) and the management thereof needs to be officially assigned to CapeNature. In order for the properties to be correctly vested and managed, CapeNature has embarked upon a process in partnership with the PDPW to ensure that all of the land is correctly allocated as soon as possible. This does however require the assistance of many departments and is time-consuming.

CapeNature is also in the process of compiling five-yearly management plans (that meet the requirements in terms of the NEM:PAA) for each of its 32 management complexes. These 32 management complexes include these unvested state lands which CapeNature is unofficially managing.

In order to legally declare these areas as Protected Areas ito NEM:PAA, additional funding will be required. CapeNature is currently managing these state forests and Wilderness Areas with the annual grant funding provided by Provincial Treasury (including Expanded Public Works Programme funding) and National Treasury funding (Department of Environmental Affairs: Natural Resource Management). An earmarked allocation for tourism development has also been allocated by Provincial Treasury, to expand the tourism portfolio. No additional funds will be required to manage the land that CapeNature is currently managing, however without an annual increase from Provincial Treasury to compensate for inflation, this does put tremendous strain on the current resources available for operations. The five year strategy will thus include a proposal for an increased budget to cover both the declaration process and the increased management funds associated with the management of the newly declared Protected Areas.

3.4 Purchase of land in partnership with WWF-SA

CapeNature, the mandated biodiversity conservation agency of the province, and WWF-SA have worked together in the past to acquire and manage valuable biodiversity in the Western Cape. This is clearly illustrated by the joint CapeNature, WWF-SA and Leslie Hill Succulent Karoo Trust partnership which recently declared the Knersvlakte Nature Reserve.

The mechanism employed is that WWF-SA facilitates the purchase of the land[41] through an appropriate donor or trust. CapeNature then declares the land under NEM:PAA and WWF-SA concurrently assigns CapeNature as the management authority. In some instances, where CapeNature is not financially able to manage the site, alternative arrangements for additional financial support from WWF-SA can be made. However this remains one of the obstacles to acquiring land through purchase.

Within the next five years, WWF-SA and CapeNature are to enter into a formal MoU regarding land acquisition within the province. In addition to this, WWF-SA is to formally declare land which they have already acquired for conservation purposes but have not yet declared.

[41] Once again the site is subject to a review by the Biodiversity Stewardship and Protected Areas Expansion Review Committee. Only sites which qualify for Nature Reserves or Protected Environment will be purchased by WWF-SA.

WWF-SA land-acquisition trusts and funds

WWF-SA manages two independent trusts for the acquisition of land, namely:

- Leslie Hill Succulent Karoo Trust which provides funding for the purchase of land which will result in the conservation of the plant diversity of the Succulent Karoo Biome; and
- National Parks Trust which provides funding for the purchase of immovable property which enlarges the existing National Parks or establishes a new National Park or contributes to capital works, such as the building of dams and fencing.

In addition to the above mentioned trusts, WWF-SA also has internal funds earmarked for the acquisition of land which does not require external approval, namely:

- Elizabeth Harding Bequest is to be used to purchase (or enlarge) and maintain nature reserves for the purpose of providing a sanctuary for indigenous and migratory birds in the Western Cape; and
- Fynbos Land Fund for the purposes of protecting fynbos in its natural environment in South Africa.

3.5 Making Local Authority Nature Reserves and Private Nature Reserves NEM:PAA compliant

Private or Local Authority Nature Reserves which have been established under both national and provincial legislation prior to the operation of the NEM:PAA are regarded as Nature Reserves in terms of Section 23 (5) of NEM:PAA. The requirements for establishing Nature Reserves under the previous legislation are, however, less stringent than the requirements set out in the NEM:PAA. The Act now requires: 1) a formally appointed management authority, 2) an approved management plan, and 3) the required title deed endorsement as set out in the NEM:PAA.

As a result, although these properties are formally recognised by NEM:PAA as Protected Areas they remain vulnerable to degradation and/or development and have therefore been targeted for the compliance component of this strategy.

The National Department of Environmental Affairs is currently in the process of verifying the legal status of all Private Nature Reserves within the country. This Nature Reserve Verification project aims to verify the declarations (and possibly deproclamations) status of Private Nature Reserves. In the Western Cape, this desk-top exercise of Private Nature Reserves will then be followed up by a ground-truthing exercise to ascertain the current land-use of the Private Nature Reserves. CapeNature will assist DEA with this component of the study which aims to establish the biodiversity value and legal status of these Private Nature Reserves.

Once the value, land-use and legal status of the 181 Private Nature Reserves within the province have been established, CapeNature will assist landowners of priority biodiversity[42] who wish to fully secure their properties. In response to this, CapeNature have developed a standard operating procedure outlining how to comply with the three NEM:PAA requirements set out above.

CapeNature will provide technical assistance to ensure that a competent management authority is appointed and that the management plan of the Nature Reserve is duly approved by the MEC. The cost associated with the drafting and approval of the management plan and the drafting and registering of the notarial deed shall however be for the account of the land owner.

[42] Subject to review of the Stewardship and Protected Area Expansion Review Committee

It is important to note that the Nature Reserve status can only be withdrawn by way of an application by either the land owner of the property or CapeNature to the Provincial Minister of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning. Such applications will again be presented to the Stewardship and Protected Area Expansion Review Committee for consideration. Only if the biodiversity value is low and the Nature Reserve no longer meets the requirements of a Nature Reserves in terms of NEM:PAA will the application for withdrawal be supported by CapeNature. This implies that all existing Private Nature Reserves are currently in a state of limbo until such point as they are either deproclaimed or made NEM:PAA compliant[43].

Within the next five years, we hope to have converted all Private or Local Authority Nature Reserves identified as having high biodiversity value and displaying land-owner willingness into NEM:PAA compliant Nature Reserves[44]. We also aim to have a plan in place on how to address the Nature Reserves with either low biodiversity value, low land-owner willingness or inappropriate land-uses on them (i.e. to deproclaim or not). In the interim, all ad hoc requests for the withdrawal of Nature Reserves will need to feed through the Stewardship and Protected Area Expansion Review Committee for consideration.

3.6 Declaring Admiralty Reserves as Protected Areas

Section 1 of the National Environmental Management: Integrated Coastal Management Act 2008, Act No. 24 of 2008 defines the admiralty reserves as "any strip of land adjoining the inland side of the high-water mark which, when this Act took effect, was state land reserved or designated on an official plan, deed of grant, title deed or other document evidencing title or land-use rights as 'admiralty reserve', 'government reserve', 'beach reserve', 'coastal forest reserve' or similar reserve". In the Western Cape Province, it is currently unclear how much of the coastline admiralty reserves constitute, but it is clear that they often effectively form an unprotected gap between coastal Protected Areas and the actual coastline, marine environment, or Marine Protected Area.

Although unconfirmed, the original intention of an admiralty reserve is believed to have been for biodiversity conservation (particularly coastal dune vegetation), geomorphological preservation (providing dune stability and ensuring that the natural coastal processes of sand transport and deposition persist in this dynamic coastal zone) and to ensure that the public continue to have access to the beaches (Update on Admiralty Reserve in KwaZulu, 2008).

For whatever reason they were delineated, these admiralty reserves are not recognised by NEM:PAA as a type of Protected Area. Furthermore, as independent cadastres running parallel to the coastline, they at times create an unmanaged divide between a land-based and marine-based Protected Areas which places substantial burden and risk on the management authorities alongside these admiralty reserves.

In the next five years, we aim to have identified all admiralty reserves which are biodiversity priorities and/or are located either side of a Protected Area. Post 2020, we then hope to have: facilitated the transfer of these reserves from the National Department of Public Works to alternative legally assigned management authorities; and declared these reserves as Protected Areas ito NEM:PAA. It is important to note that various potential management authorities exist and could include national agencies (e.g. SANParks or DEA), provincial agencies (e.g. CapeNature), local

[43] This strategy has been supported by the draft Western Cape Biodiversity Bill which stipulates a time frame for all land owners of Private Nature Reserves to either apply for NEM:PAA compliance or initiate the deproclamation process.

authorities (where willing and a competency for biodiversity conservation has been displayed) or even private land owners (through stewardship agreements).

3.7 Protecting Mountain Catchment Areas

Private Mountain Catchment Areas (MCA) formally declared in terms of the Mountain Catchment Areas Act (Act No. 63 of 1970) provide and augment vital linkages between many Protected Areas. These linkages are extremely important particularly for the support of ongoing ecological and evolutionary processes, not to mention their essential role in the production of water. Furthermore, MCAs are recognised by NEM:PAA as a type of Protected Area and for MCAs specifically, NEM:PAA does not stipulate that a management authority must be assigned[45]. The Mountain Catchment Areas Act, however, does stipulate that these MCAs require promulgated regulations limiting development. Regulations have not been developed and management plans are not being implemented and as a result thereof, MCAs are not always being managed for conservation nor water security, and the biodiversity and ecosystem services therein cannot be considered safe.

Within the next five years, we aim to unlock the potential of Private Mountain Catchment Areas contributing to long-term biodiversity conservation by: a) obtaining a legal opinion with regards to Mountain Catchment Areas and what needs to occur in order for them to be regulated and managed for long-term conservation purposes; and, b) act on the legal recommendations (which will possibly include the drafting and promulgation of regulations) and ensure that priority biodiversity contained within MCAs is in fact protected and contributes towards the Protected Area network and ecological infrastructure of the province.

3.8 Declaring Marine Protected Areas and extending No-Take zones

Operation Phakisa is a National Initiative which is aimed at unlocking the economic potential of South Africa's oceans. A component of this project, which is being led by the National Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA), is the formal declaration of priority marine habitats as Marine Protected Areas (MPA)[46]. The protection target of Operation Phakisa is to declare 5% (72 000 km^2) of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) as a Marine Protected Area by the year 2016 (currently only 0.4% is declared). The MPA component of the envisaged second round of Operation Phakisa will then aim to secure a further 5% - although this is not necessarily scheduled to occur before 2020.

In addition to expanding the MPA network, the strategy also highlights the need to better protect the existing MPAs. There are currently two categories of MPAs, namely: No-take MPAs and MPAs in which some extraction is permitted. The assignment of extraction rights to MPA zones should be based on the population dynamics and threat of the underlying biodiversity. Although the extension of a 'No-Take' zone in an existing MPA does not constitute the expansion of the MPA network, if can translate to a higher degree of protection being afforded to the biodiversity. For this reason, the province will also consider extending the 'No-take' zones in existing MPAs and if deemed a priority, will engage with DEA to effect the necessary amendments.

Although the declaration of MPAs is a national competency, the management of such areas can be delegated down to provincial level. Such arrangements however, need to be officially recorded and

[45] With regard to assigning management authorities, Section 38 of NEM:PAA stipulates that the Minister may for any Protected Area but must for a National Park and that the MEC must for a Nature Reserve and may for a Protected Environment.

[46] The formal declaration of MPAs is a national competency and provincial organisations are thus not able to drive such processes. The WC will instead inform and support such processes.

management authorities need to be adequately funded in order to carry out such additional responsibilities.

Within the next five years, DEA, with the support of CapeNature, SANParks and other key agencies active within the province aims to: a) formally declare 72 000 km^2 of South Africa's EEZ as a MPA; b) identify the second set of priority marine areas to be declared; c) investigate and possibly effect the extension of No-Take zones in existing MPAs; and d) ensure that all MPAs have officially designated management authorities and that the authorities have been sufficiently capacitated to undertake the management thereof.

CHAPTER 4: PARTNERSHIPS

As the mandate of biodiversity conservation is shared across many organizations, the province relies heavily on partnering in order to deliver on our shared vision for biodiversity conservation. The following chapter describes the partnerships that make Protected Area expansion possible in the Western Cape.

4.1 CapeNature

CapeNature is the lead implementing agent for the Western Cape Protected Area Expansion Strategy. CapeNature is mandated to act as an implementing agency on behalf of the Minister of Local Government, Environmental Affairs and Developmental Planning and delegated with the responsibility for biodiversity conservation within the Western Cape, including Protected Area management. This delegation includes biodiversity planning and biodiversity conservation outside of Protected Areas.

CapeNature currently has no explicit budgetary provision for implementing this strategy. However as a lead partner of the C.A.P.E. programme[47], CapeNature had already begun to implement Protected Area expansion by working with private landowners from 2003 as part of the mandate of the Biodiversity Stewardship Programme. It continues to do so at present but its internal capacity to drive the Biodiversity Stewardship Programme is beginning to decrease. This is due to the fact that CapeNature needs to maintain the contracts it has already entered into with landowners and cannot continue to take on more sites indefinitely.

Over and above Stewardship, CapeNature will also drive most of the strategies contained within this document. These include the transfer and declaring of specific Forest Exit Lands and State lands into formal Protected Areas, the translation of Private Nature Reserves and Local Authority Nature Reserves into NEM:PAA compliant Protected Areas and the investigation into admiralty reserves.

CapeNature hopes to achieve this with the extra capacity and expertise which is to be secured with the appointment of a Land Affairs Legal Officer. This incumbent is to provide legal advice and support to the province on matters incidental to the declaration process as well as ensuring formal Protected Area expansion by way of binding legal contracts and/or official declaration thereof.

With regards to our marine environment, CapeNature will not be leading the declaration process but instead will support DEA (especially the Protected Area component of Operation Phakisa) through management when required and whenever such funds are provided.

4.2 The Western Cape Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning

The Western Cape Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning is responsible for ensuring that the integrity of the natural environment of the Western Cape is maintained. One of the primary ways in which it achieves this is by regulating which types of developments can occur where in the province. It is thus paramount that as an offset to the impacts of development, the DEADP increase the contribution that the environmental authorization processes has in securing priority biodiversity: both formally as Protected Areas (through partnering with conservation agencies) or informally as conservation areas.

[47] www.capeaction.org.za

In response to this, the DEADP will lead the production of a robust and implementable Provincial Biodiversity Offset Policy. Offsets, requiring formal declaration through CapeNature's Biodiversity Stewardship Programme (i.e. reactive stewardship) will be strongly encouraged and once included in an Environmental Authorization, will undergo rigorous compliance monitoring by the DEADP. In instances whereby CapeNature is not able to accommodate the site as a Nature Reserve, the site must be zoned for conservation and the land owner instructed (as a condition in an Environmental Authorization) to manage the land for conservation. All such reactive stewardship or rezoning for conservation purposes will also be spatially tracked by DEADP and reported on as their contribution towards safeguarding valuable biodiversity.

4.3 The National Department of Environmental Affairs

The management and conservation of our marine environment is a national function mandated to the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA). The Constitution of South Africa, together with NEM:PAA, dictate that MPAs are to be declared by the National Minister of Environmental Affairs under NEM:PAA. The national competency of managing such areas, can however be contractually assigned to the provinces. As a result thereof, we in the Western Cape Province cannot drive the declaration of MPAs, instead we can recommend to and support DEA with their priority selection for declaration processes. We can also be contracted to manage MPAs.

Existing MPAs were declared using the Marine Living Resources Act, hence the need to delegate management down to CapeNature. However the declaration and management of MPAs has now been moved to the NEM:PAA. Effectively MPAs will now be managed in the same way as terrestrial Protected Areas, i.e. the management authority will be assigned in the declaration process by the Minister. The implications of this will be clarified over the next twelve months.

The National Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) and CapeNature have signed two Memoranda of Agreements (MoA) with each other. The first MoA is regarding the management of the five Marine Protected Areas within the Western Cape Province by CapeNature on behalf of DEA. These include Betty's Bay, De Hoop, Stillbaai, Goukamma and Robberg MPAs. The second MoA is for the management of sea birds on Bird, Dassen and Dyer Islands as well as several 'rocks islands' (e.g. Vondeling). All of these rock islands are Provincial Nature Reserves which CapeNature already manage.

These MoAs stipulate that a percentage of the funds provided to CapeNature needs to be used for research and monitoring. However, the funding is minimal and is almost solely allocated to the management of the islands with only minor monitoring occurring. CapeNature is in the process of developing a monitoring programme for these islands which is in line with national priorities and National Monitoring Programmes and is implemented by the partners.

The priority marine and estuarine areas identified through this strategy will hopefully feed into the second iteration of the National Protected Area Expansion Strategy which is currently being developed by DEA. The priorities are presented and discussed at the national MPA Forum hosted by DEA. Once priority areas for expansion are identified, DEA, in collaboration with its partners, identifies appropriate mechanisms to secure such areas. One such mechanism is Operation Phakisa[48]. By ensuring that the priorities highlighted by this strategy feed into the national Protected Area Expansion Strategy, we can expect for them to ultimately be addressed through Phase 2 of Operation Phakisa.

[48] See section 2.4.4

With regards to the terrestrial Protected Areas, the DEA is working with CapeNature on the Nature Reserve verification project[49] which aims to assess and confirm the use and legality of all Private Nature Reserves within the country. It is also envisaged that DEA will have to play a pivotal role in drafting any Mountain Catchment Area Regulations which may be required.

Within the next five years, CapeNature will have a monitoring programme for its MPAs which it manages. It will also support the suggestions of Operation Phakisa and represent the additional priorities highlighted by this strategy to the national MPA forum for consideration in the National Protected Area Expansion Strategy.

Within the next five years, DEA will finalise its Nature Reserve verification project with the assistance of CapeNature where required. The DEA will also draft the Mountain Catchment Area Regulations (if required).

4.4 WWF – SA

WWF and CapeNature partner on multiple levels to give effect to Protected Area expansion in the Western Cape. The one mechanism has already been described under Chapter 3: Purchase of Land in partnership with WWF.

CapeNature also collaborates with the Sustainable Agriculture division of WWF-SA. The Wine and Biodiversity Initiative and the Fruit Initiative especially in the Western Cape also sign contractual agreements with landowners regards the better management of biodiversity. Their extension staff and CapeNature's plan and operate collaboratively in the landscape. WWF-SA is planning to assist CapeNature with the auditing of Protected Areas while in return, CapeNature will assist WWF with the legal processes of declaring important sites.

CapeNature is currently implementing a Leslie Hill Succulent Karoo Trust (LHSKT) Biodiversity Stewardship Project. Funding was received from LHSKT to sign up twelve Stewardship Agreements within three years. The salary and operational funds for two stewardship negotiators and a facilitator as well as "Technical Assistance" for on site management were supplied. CapeNature has appointed the staff in the Little Karoo and Robertson Karoo to focus on the LHSKT priorities and this is reflected in this five year strategy.

Currently WWF-SA and CapeNature do not have a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) regarding land acquisition and management, however a MoU will be finalised shortly as the two organizations continue to engage in a partnership which results in the Protected Areas of the Western Cape expanding into the appropriate places. The MoU, which forms a vital component of the five-year implementation plan, will be based on the following principles:

- Contact between the organisations will be regular and strategic;
- The same spatial biodiversity informants for land acquisition or any other Protected Area expansion mechanisms will be adopted; and
- The management of all land acquired by WWF-SA and managed by CapeNature will be governed by the agreement.

[49] See section 3.5

4.5 Table Mountain Fund

The Table Mountain Fund (TMF) is considered to be the premier fund for the conservation of the Fynbos and is also recognised as one of the worlds' leading Conservation Trust Funds. The TMF has identified 'supporting conservation on private land' as one of the key activities that needs to occur in order to secure the Cape Floristic Region (CFR). In 2004, TMF opened the TMF Stewardship Fund, which is dedicated to financing incentives for land owners and projects that support the rollout of the Biodiversity Stewardship Programme across the CFR. TMF continues to support the Biodiversity Stewardship Programme on an annual basis and this is directly linked to incentivising Protected Area expansion.

4. 6 South African National Parks

South African National Parks Board (SANParks) and the provincial partners collaborate to meet the common provincial targets in the most effective and complementary manner possible. As far as possible, the approach is to not target the same land parcels for expansion but rather complement each other. SANParks's Protected Area expansion focal areas for the next five years include the West Coast Corridor, a north south corridor that buffers the National Park and stretches into the Dassenberg Coastal Corridor Partnership (DCCP) (the latter corridor is jointly implemented by the City of Cape Town and CapeNature). These two corridors make up the West Coast Node that forms part of the Protected Areas expansion activities funded through the fifth replenishment of the Global Environment Facility 5. Where organisations may be overlapping, e.g. SANParks, CapeNature and the City of Cape Town in the DCCP, the organisations will agree on a joint strategy before approaching the land owner.

4.7 The City of Cape Town

The City of Cape Town collaborates with CapeNature in the expansion of Protected Areas within the province by the City implementing the Biodiversity Network (Bionet). The Bionet is a fine-scale map and implementation plan for the conservation of important biodiversity areas within the City boundaries through various mechanisms including Biodiversity Stewardship. The City is also a member of the Stewardship and Protected Area Expansion Review Committee and processes all of its proposals for Biodiversity Stewardship Agreements including Nature Reserves through CapeNature to ensure that they are in-line with the Province's priority areas. The City also relies on CapeNature submitting the ministerial submissions for declaration of these areas.

The City of Cape Town has 14 "Conservation Areas" which either had no formal conservation status or portions of them were declared under old legislation. In partnership with CapeNature a process was embarked upon to undertake biodiversity assessments of all the City's natural land. It was then reviewed by the Stewardship and Protected Area Expansion Review Committee and given the appropriate status. Fourteen conservation areas received Nature Reserve status. These properties have completed their 60-day Public Participation period and will shortly be submitted for declaration to the Minister as Provincial Nature Reserves, allowing the full status and protection they require. In addition to this, CapeNature and the City of Cape Town have signed an additional Biodiversity Agreement to ensure the better management of 381 ha of City land which adds to the broader conservation estate.

The City of Cape Town and CapeNature will co-manage the new Dassenberg Coastal Catchment Corridor area which is expected to be declared as a Protected Area within the next two years.

4.8 Eden to Addo

CapeNature has signed a MoU with the Southern Cape NGO, Eden to Addo. This MoU aims to increase the extension capacity in the area in order to sign up more Biodiversity Stewardship Agreements. The Robberg Coastal Corridor was the first project entered into by CapeNature and Eden to Addo and is expected to be declared shortly. The agreement is proving to be a viable alternative mechanism for Protected Area expansion when faced with capacity constraints.

4.9 BirdLife South Africa

The Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBAs) Programme identifies and works to conserve a network of sites critical for the long-term survival of bird species that are globally threatened, have a restricted range, and are restricted to specific biomes/vegetation types and congregatory sites that hold significant populations of birds.

This objective is echoed by the Western Cape's Protected Area Expansion Strategy. CapeNature and BirdLife South Africa have recently started collaborating on a project which looks at securing the estuary and catchment areas of the Moutonshoek and Verlorenvlei as stewardship sites. BirdLife South Africa has secured the funding to appoint an extension officer to negotiate a Protected Environment in the Moutonshoek and an appropriate stewardship arrangement for the Verlorenvlei itself. The funding covers all operational and legal costs for the declaration of this important site. The challenge for both organisations is to secure an extension officer in the area in the long-term to maintain both of these areas. The investigation of an operational and financial sustainability model is part of the project.

The two organisations are about to enter into a MoU, with the following proposed areas of collaboration:

- Commit themselves to working closely together to achieve the expansion of Protected Areas through biodiversity stewardship agreements or other means, in one or more of the Western Cape Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBAs) identified by BirdLife South Africa, in partnership with CapeNature and other relevant bodies including government agencies and non-governmental organizations;
- Acknowledge BirdLife South Africa as the stewardship facilitator for those sites which are duly agreed to, and developing and implementing post-declaration maintenance schedules and assisting in other projects as jointly identified by the partners;
- Acknowledge CapeNature as the authority responsible for auditing the implementation of the management plan on an annual basis and for endorsing the application to the Minister of Environmental Affairs for the Western Cape; and
- Commit themselves to developing collaborative projects, such as data collection for IBA trigger bird species in specific IBAs in the Western Cape or CapeNature Reserves if an opportunity arises to do so.

4.10 The Cape West Coast Biosphere Reserve

The Cape West Coast Biosphere Reserve works closely with CapeNature Protected Area expansion in the priority areas highlighted by this strategy. This results in an increased extension capacity in this area. The Cape West Coast Biosphere Reserve and CapeNature are considering signing a MoU.

4.11 Working for Wetlands

Working for Wetlands has agreed to rehabilitate the Zuurvlak wetland properties adjacent to CapeNature's Waterval Nature Reserve. These properties are forest exit lands. This partnership has allowed CapeNature to accept the transfer and management of the property to be managed as a Protected Area. The inclusion of the Zuurvlak properties will make the Waterval Nature Reserve more viable in terms of Protected Area design and size, enabling improved management effectiveness and appropriate fire management strategies, enhancing the maintenance of the area as an important water source area.

4.12 The Overberg Lowlands Conservation Trust

The Overberg Lowlands Conservation Trust focuses on the conservation of renosterveld in the Western Cape. They function by promoting the use of conservation servitudes on private land and source funding for incentives to landowners for improved habitat management, in a way that will benefit both farming and conservation objectives.

CapeNature and the Overberg Lowlands Conservation Trust are entering into a MoU to formalise the support of each other's land protection initiatives where they are already happening in the Overberg.

4.13 The Turtle Conservancy

The Turtle Conservancy is a 501(c) 3 organization dedicated to protecting the most endangered turtles and tortoises and their habitats worldwide. The Turtle Conservancy are establishing The Southern Africa Tortoise Conservation Trust, a public benefit trust based in South Africa, which is dedicated to the protection of the Critically Endangered Geometric Tortoise in its habitat in the South Western Cape. The Trust is in the process of concluding the purchase of approximately 85.5 ha of some of the last remaining Geometric Tortoise habitat near Worcester in the Western Cape Province and has partnered with CapeNature towards declaring the property a Nature Reserve. Work is on-going in the region towards the acquisition of additional hectares of land towards the conservation of the Geometric Tortoise and its habitat.

CHAPTER 5: A SUMMARY OF PROTECTION TARGETS AND PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2015 - 2020

Table 4 presents a summary of the protection targets and priority actions for the Western Cape Province for the period 2015 – 2020. Where possible, the lead and/or responsible partner is indicated in brackets. Partner organisations are encouraged to draft operational/ implementation plans which speak to the actions listed below. Commitment letters from each partner organisation should also be signed as a record of their intention to support and deliver on this strategy.

Table 4: Protected Area targets and priority actions for the Western Cape Province from 1 April 2015 until 31 March 2020. Action points have been grouped per headline strategy and lead responsible partners are indicated in brackets.

Expand the Protected Area network to increase its representivity and resilience	Regularize the Protected Area network to ensure NEM:PAA compliance and environmental security
Terrestrial Protected Area network: Formally protect an additional 348 840 ha of the province (all partners) and specifically: • Protect at least one 'best remaining' site in each of the province's 15 poorly protected Critically Endangered ecosystems; • Make a significant contribution towards meeting Protected Area targets for under-represented ecosystems in the province; • Meet the full protection targets for at least an additional five ecosystems, in strategic locations; • Secure at least one site considered essential to ensuring the long-term viability of the following endemic, threatened and under-protected species or species groups: Cape Mountain Zebra , Riverine rabbit, Geometric tortoise, Redfin and Galaxias fish species, butterfly species, plant species hotspots, and bird congregation sites; • Secure at least one 'special' (unique, threatened and under-protected) freshwater ecosystem per District Municipality; • Including completing the following: o Declare State Lands and Bity and Bokbaai stewardship sites within the Dassenberg Coastal Corridor Partnership (CoCT; CapeNature: SANParks); o Declare all properties signed-up to the Robberg Coastal Corridor Protected Environment (Eden to Addo;	Increase NEM:PAA compliance of the Protected Area network from approximately 40% to 50% (CapeNature); • Ensure priority state-owned Protected Areas are appropriately vested: o Appoint a land affairs officer to address the transfer of state land to CapeNature (CapeNature); o Vest agreed-upon state owned lands with PDPW and assign management authority to CapeNature (CapeNature: PDPW); o Ensure that all MPAs have officially and appropriately designated management authorities and active MoAs in place (CapeNature; DEA); and o Identify all admiralty reserves which are biodiversity priorities and/or are located either side of a Protected Area, as a first step towards securing and improving the management of the biodiversity contained therein (CapeNature). • Ensure existing Nature Reserves are NEMPAA-compliant: o Ensure that each of CapeNature's 32 management complexes has a recent (i.e. revised every five years) approved management plan (CapeNature); o Finalise the Nature Reserve verification project (DEA);

CapeNature); ○ Sign-up and register the 'intent to declare' all properties participating in the Moutonshoek Protected Environment (Birdlife South Africa; CapeNature); ○ Secure the Verloerenvlei (Birdlife South Africa; CapeNature; ○ Sign-up twelve stewardship agreements (including Nature Reserves where appropriate) through the Leslie Hill Succulent Karoo Trust (CapeNature); ○ Sign-up stewardship agreements (including Nature Reserves where appropriate) through WWF-SA's Sustainable Agriculture Programme in the identified Ceres, Grabouw/Elgin and West Coast focal areas (WWF-SA; CapeNature); ○ Initiate rehabilitation of the Zuurvlak wetland properties adjacent to CapeNature's Waterval Nature Reserve (Working for Wetlands); ○ 85 ha Geometric Tortoise habitat is formally protected (The Turtle Conservancy; CapeNature). • Including the Exit Land Project: ○ Undertake a costing exercise regards managing the forest exit land which CapeNature will only take 'on condition that management funds are provided' (CapeNature); ○ Transfer and declare the 'Land which CapeNature wants regardless as to whether or not they receive management funds' (CapeNature; DAFF); ○ Submit a proposal to Treasury for the funds required to manage 'Land which CapeNature wants but only on condition that it is provided with extra management funds' and additional funds required to declare new protected areas (CapeNature) **Marine Protected Area network:** • Formally protect 616 km^2 of the marine inshore located off of the	○ Convert all Private or Local Authority Nature Reserves with high biodiversity value and land-owner willingness into NEM:PAA compliant Nature Reserves (CapeNature; DEADP); ○ Investigate the deproclamation of Nature Reserves with either low biodiversity value or low land-owner willingness (CapeNature; DEA); ○ Obtain a legal opinion with regards to Mountain Catchment Areas and what needs to occur in order for them to be regulated and managed for long-term conservation purposes (DEADP; DEA; CapeNature); ○ Draft Mountain Catchment Area regulations – if this is the recommendation of the above legal investigation (DEA);

Western Cape Provincial coastline through Operation Phakisa (DEA); • Formally protect 24 600 km^2 of the marine offshore located off of the Western Cape Provincial coastline through Operation Phakisa (DEA); • Investigate the potential for declaring a second set of priority Marine Protected Areas not included in Operation Phakisa (SANBI; CapeNature; DEADP); • Investigate and possibly extend No-Take zones in existing MPAs (CapeNature; DEA).	

Improve Protected Area and conservation area administration

- Gazette the new Western Cape Biodiversity Bill (DEADP; CapeNature);
- Maintain a Protected Area and Conservation Area register and event log (CapeNature; DEA);
- Actively review all *ad hoc* requests for the withdrawal of Nature Reserves (CapeNature; Stewardship and Protected Area Expansion Review Committee for consideration);
- Finalise a Provincial Biodiversity Offset Policy (DEADP);
- Establish a model provincial land use scheme[50] whereby land can be explicitly zoned for conservation without requiring protected area declaration (DEADP; CapeNature; all municipalities)
- Monitoring compliance of all reactive stewardship sites originating from Environmental Authorisations (DEADP);
- Sign an MoU between CapeNature and WWF-SA regards land acquisition within the province (WWF-SA: CapeNature);
- Sign an MoU between Birdlife South Africa and CapeNature (Birdlife South Africa; CapeNature);
- Sign an MoU between CapeNature and Overberg Lowlands Conservation Trust (Overberg Lowlands Conservation Trust; CapeNature);
- Consider signing an MoU between CapeNature and the Cape West Coast Biosphere Reserve (Cape West Coast Biosphere Reserve; CapeNature);
- Draft a monitoring programme for all Marine Protected Areas managed by CapeNature (CapeNature).

[50] Rezoning in accordance with environmental authorization legislation presents itself as a powerful tool for the control of lands of biodiversity value. These rezoned lands will not contribute to the formal Protected Area network but will contribute to the vitally important and supportive conservation estate of the province

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