

# INTEGRATED REPORT 2023



NATURE CONNECT



Whilst some say that humanity is currently experiencing its most peaceful and prosperous era, it is difficult to not see that we are facing great challenges. These include glaring inequality, war in the Middle East, Sudan and Ukraine, and extreme weather conditions now being experienced in many parts of the world. Scientists warn that we might have gone past the irreversible tipping point for climate change and are witnessing massive climate-induced human migration.

In the face of all this, it is easy to throw up our hands in despair, to be defeatist. However, I do not believe this to be a core characteristic of humanity. While we may tend to be comfortable with what we feel is the norm, we also recognise that our generation has the potential to make or break this world and that we need to act. We are seeing some significant commitments to environmental protection through the COPs. We are also seeing large capital funds emerging to support the Just Energy Transition. Too little, too late? Perhaps, but the tide is turning.

I ask myself where we stand, as Nature Connect, in our contribution to protecting the environment. What change do we want to see, and how we can drive this? There are several things we are doing right, but also areas where we can improve to bring about change.

Firstly, we need to scale up our efforts to bring about behavioural change that may lead, for example, to a reduction in our consumption, to a lowering of population growth rates, and improved waste management.

Secondly, we need to improve access to education, particularly for girls and women, as it has been shown that when this happens, economies improve and population growth rates decrease.

Thirdly, we need to recognise the influence of AI in the future of work and develop the skills and expertise of our younger generation, enabling them to pursue jobs that contribute to improved environmental protection.

Lastly, we must continue to drive innovative conservation programmes that address humanity's need for development while striving towards no-net-loss to biodiversity and ecosystem functioning.

A very big ask. However, my resolve is strengthened daily by engagements with my team, conversations with other organisations (particularly NPOs), and myriad news stories that tell of the successes of Change-makers out there. Although so much could get us down, I believe we need to look at what has been done and what can be done to support the initiatives that bring about the change we want to see, and to collaborate and maximise impact.

Thank you to our donors and partners for your continued belief in our work. Were it not for you, this organisation would be a shadow of what we are today. I look forward to sharing this journey of growth with you as we take our programmes forward.

To our Board of Trustees, thank you for your constant support, guidance and oversight, and your giving of your time to help steer this ship.

To the Nature Connect team, you are the lifeblood of this organisation, and your remarkable and indefatigable efforts are helping us to change the course of humanity and improve the world we live in. Keep focussed on our destination and enjoy the journey.



Dr Anthony Roberts  
CEO



*“While we may tend to be comfortable with what we feel is the norm, we also recognise that our generation has the potential to make or break this world and that we need to act.”*



# CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

What made 2022 a special or memorable year for you? There are many answers, one of which is that we were finally free from COVID. We have moved into a different world compared with pre covid. In our work we too have seen changes, the biggest being our name. Here at Nature Connect, our new name is finally established with our branding transitioning to our new cool logo.

The big excitement for the year has been the growth of our Sustainable Schools programme into new areas across the country. We were delighted to sign up 4 schools in Beaufort West. Our partnership with the Lapalala Wilderness school has seen our programme really take off in Limpopo. The sustainable schools online platform has struggled to cope with our fast growth in number of schools. However, we have addressed this challenge and are now able to offer all our schools the online support we promise.

The other programmes that we run continue to add amazing value to the space we work in . The Nature Care programmes are unique in how they are able to harness private donors and city support to conserve valuable parcels of land across the city. I am so proud of our training programmes that are preparing people to take up positions of employment in the green economy. The full story is found in this report.

I am so grateful to our staff, who under the leadership of our CEO, Dr Anthony Roberts have worked tirelessly in our programmes over the years. This is a team of hard working, talented and selfless people who have left an indelible mark on conservation, education and skills training across the country.

From a Financial point of view, we are extremely grateful to all our donors who believe in our work and have funded it so generously.

Writing this report I am tempted to reflect on 20 years of work in this space by this organisation. I am grateful to Dalton Gibbs, who with others in the City of Cape Town had a vision of what we could do and how we could Change lives through Nature. We started with the school children in the Grassy Park, Ottery

and Lotus River areas and today we impact children across the country. This is quite an achievement indeed.



David de Korte  
Chairman of the Board of Trustees



***“This is a team of hard working, talented and selfless people who have left an indelible mark on conservation, education and skills training across the country.”***

# MISSION AND VISION

## *Evolving Dreams, Empowering Change:*

In a world that continually transforms, so do we - a team dedicated to breaking barriers and reshaping dreams. We are continually evolving and adapting, driven by an unyielding dedication to making a tangible impact through our work.

We imagine a future where South Africa's passion for the environment blends seamlessly with the rhythm of nature. This year, we've set audacious goals and are dreaming bigger than ever to become a driving force that propels Africa towards sustainability.

### *Will you join us on this journey?*

The **Primary Aims** of the Trust are to contribute to Environmental Stewardship and Sustainable Development through:

- Advancement and delivery of Environmental Education
- Training and development of youth to enter the Green Economy
- Participation in activities that support environmental stewardship and the development of the Green Economy
- Receiving, management and disbursement of funds for conservation projects.

Our **mission** is that we have an environmentally-empowered citizenry who collectively work towards zero species and habitat loss.

Our **vision** is that we have youth across Africa who have developed a connection to nature, who have adjusted their behaviours for the betterment of the environment, who have a shared responsibility towards environmental protection and who have the knowledge and skills to drive environmental stewardship. Through collective action having a voice to influence policies and decisions thereby promoting sustainable development.



# SOWING SEEDS OF TRANSFORMATION

In the world of environmental education, every moment counts. Our dedication to fostering change is quantified through environmental education impact hours - a metric that encapsulates our engagements with our beneficiaries. From in school lessons, information distributed and shared, green skills training for out-of-school youth, to nature experiences, school camps and excursions; these hours are not just counted, but contribute towards creating a greener, more conscious world.

As we tally these "hours" we gain a clear picture of the footprint we leave on minds and hearts.

Yet, the true essence of our work goes beyond mere numbers. It lies in the spark of curiosity ignited in a child's eyes, the echo of newfound understanding in a boardroom, and the ripple effect of awareness in communities.

While we diligently quantify our environmental education impact hours, let us remember that their true worth can never be fully calculated. They are the seeds of change we plant, nurturing a network of shifted perspectives and empowered youth.

## Total Environmental Education Impact hours

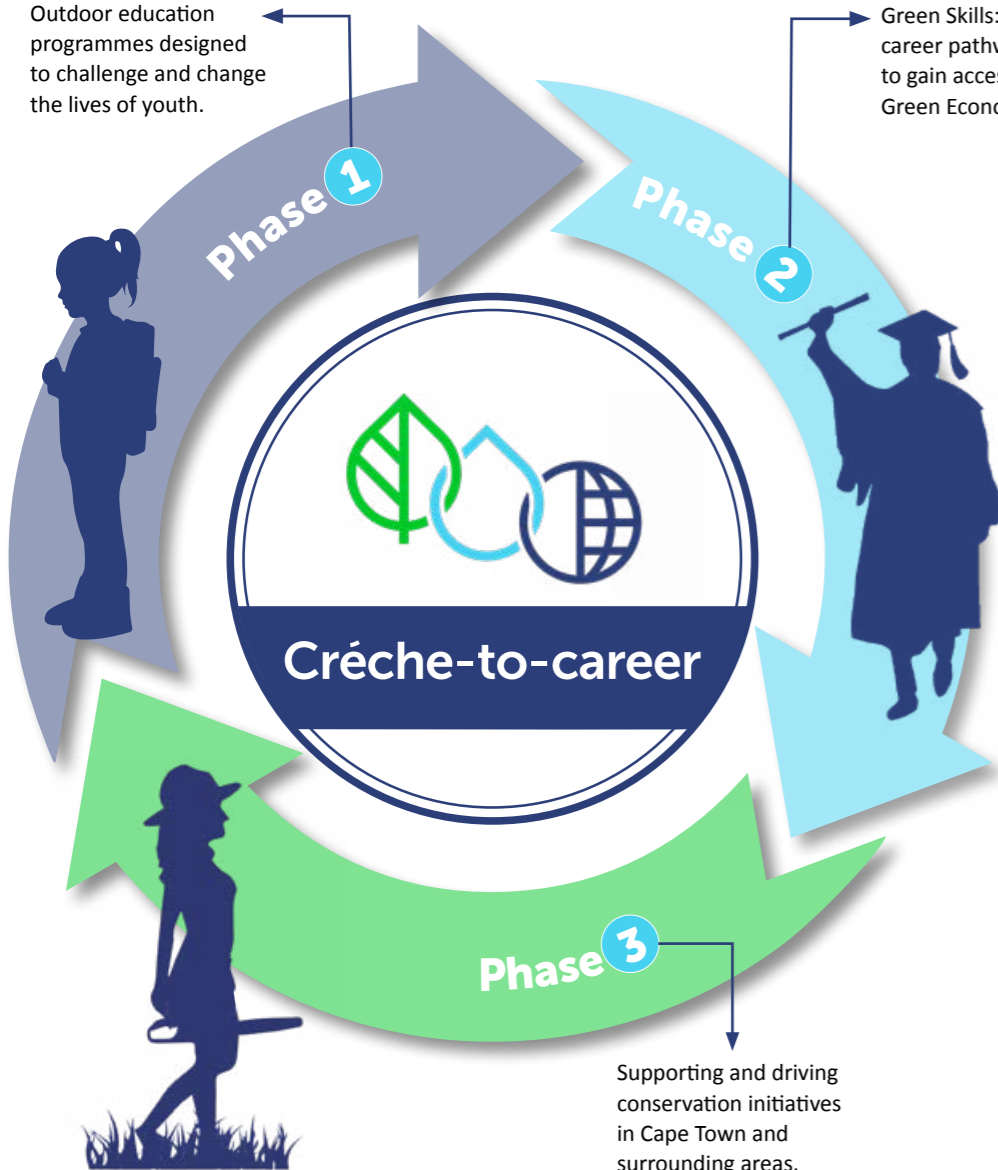
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# THE NATURE CONNECT JOURNEY

Sustainable Schools:  
Outdoor education  
programmes designed  
to challenge and change  
the lives of youth.

Green Skills: Providing  
career pathways for youth  
to gain access into the  
Green Economy.



Through applying our Crèche-to-Career model, we aim to expose as many children and youth as possible to the wonders of nature and create the platforms and structures for them to pursue a career in the Green Economy. As these programs flourish, it's inspiring to witness the positive impact we're making in changing lives through nature. Our intervention model, defined by Education for Sustainable Development, Training and Development, and Employment in the Green Economy via the Nature Care Fund, not only cultivates responsible citizenry but also nurtures effective employability.

# STAFF STORIES

"My journey with Nature Connect has been amazing. I started in 2016 at CTEET as a student, volunteering. I then completed my WIL year in 2018 through the organisation. Following that, I have held the position of ACO from 2019 to the present. I have experienced significant personal growth within the organisation and have gained valuable knowledge throughout my journey. I love that Nature Connect feels like a family that constantly uplifts one another. Nature Connect has a great support system for its employees. They encourage self-development and provide assistance whenever possible."

*Fayruz Prins - Assistant Conservation Officer, Kenilworth Racecourse Conservation Area*



Fayruz Prins

"I love working for Nature Connect because it is an organisation whose core value is to change people's lives through nature. I love that the organisation employs people who are passionate about making a difference. Nature Connect is growing, and it has a vision to reach youth across South Africa. It also understands the link between teaching people about nature and positively impacting the broader conservation strategies in South Africa. Mostly, I love coming to work because I work with an amazing and dedicated team. They make me happy and excited to start my day, and they are the humble heroes who are already making a difference in the world."

*Catherine Kühn - Education Programme Coordinator*

"The joy comes when I teach. It comes during that moment when I show a learner how special a particular specimen of a plant or an animal is. My reward is not the salary but the facial expression. I bask in the adulation of their amazement when that child's face lights up. That's when I know I'm doing something special in my workspace. I've been with Nature Connect for one year and 4 months. There's a lot of growth at Nature Connect. I have learned so much, and sometimes I think I was in a trance to be able to absorb so much in such a limited amount of time. I am still learning, and it's exciting."

*Dijaro Magana - Camps Coordinator*



Dijaro Magana



Catherine Kühn



## STRATEGIC OVERVIEW

My introduction to Nature Connect was during my second year of studies. We attended a week-long camp at Rondevlei where I learned about launching captivating environmental programs. I met Eland from the Gantow project and later volunteered for them. Nature Connect granted me a bursary that helped me complete my studies debt-free.

After my B-tech in nature conservation, I became a conservation officer at Nature Connect. The organisation provided me the opportunity to gain experience in my field of study and serves as a stepping stone for development and further growth in my career.

Today I am a site manager and I appreciate seeing the impact made by the implementation of conservation strategies done by myself and the Nature Connect team. This role has expanded my view on urban conservation and the challenges that come with it.

During my time with Nature Connect I have learned not to shy away from hands-on experience – it's the best teacher. Love what you do or find your passion and commit to it!

*Jamy Lee Fredericks Site Manager,  
Muizenberg East Biodiversity Cluster*



*Jamy Lee Fredericks*

Our name change to Nature Connect has indeed supported our revised strategy, one that focussed on increasing our Footprint, Influence, Partnerships and Recognition. It has been an interesting journey as we emerged from the havoc that Covid brought about, to tackle our expansion whilst trying to put back together some of the pieces. Key to this have been the partnerships that we have formed, some old and some more recent - speaking to the relevance of "Connect" in our name, where we work towards connecting people to nature, connecting people to people and connecting people to cause.

The launching of our national Sustainable Schools Programme in early 2021 was the first step in increasing our footprint. With the online hub as the foundation, the digital platform has allowed for the dissemination of educational material for schools on the Programme and also strengthened a community of practice throughout South Africa as teachers shared their stories of success. Ongoing funding through the Allan and Gill Gray Philanthropies and Mapula Trust has been instrumental in enabling this growth - we are extremely grateful for their continued buy-in to the programme. With an interest expressed by individuals and organisations in other African countries, we are looking for options on how we can suitably support expansion beyond our borders.

Increasing our influence requires a multi-faceted approach. Such influence is nested in driving behavioural change for a healthier world and also the way that businesses and government go about developing their ESG strategies and policies respectively. We openly share our expertise in the formulation of strategy and policy around sustainable development enabled through representation on several committees and fora at a national and international level. We also ensure that representatives from our Programmes have the opportunity to attend and present at conferences and workshops, to share the stories and metrics behind the work we do.

Our efforts to nurture and increase our partnerships are based on our desire to increase our impact, maximising return on investment for our stakeholders and leveraging off shared value opportunities with Corporates, Public entities and NGOs. We recognise that we need to identify and work with key strategic

partners for us to scale our work; from NPOs and government departments through our Sustainable Schools programme to conservation authorities and biosphere reserves through our Green Skills programme or property developers and Conservation managers through our Nature Care Fund all the time working towards enacting our Crèche-to-Career model.

We understand that if we are to have success in expanding our footprint, increasing our influence and growing our partnerships, we need to make a strong effort to elevate our recognition as a force for change in the environmental sector. Over the years this has come about passively through numerous awards we have received as well as high-quality execution of our programmes and actively, through the development of our PR and social media strategy.





# RISK ASSESSMENT AND MITIGATION

The past three years has seen many organisations and businesses folding and it has been a true test of the sustainability measures we have been putting in place over the past 10 years. Our strategic vision of expansion and increased offerings to our beneficiaries have taken root and we see a great deal of traction, particularly in the Sustainable Schools and Green Skills training. However, with the expansion we have increased our risk of exposure and we need to make sure that we constantly evaluate our position, balance risk and put in mitigating measures.



*Our programmes work to support the United Nations Sustainability Goals, as well as the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, which align with our own. We have indicated our alignment using the recognisable icons in each of our programmes, where we work towards specific goals to meet these.*





Risk Area	Risk Factor	Mitigation
Finance	Sustainability	Identify new sources of income
		Manage Donors diligently, deliberately, thoroughly and continuously, ensuring accurate reporting and expenditure
		Seek external guidance in building the fundraising strategy and drive our fundraising efforts
		Diversify and identify new Income Streams including broadening of Donor base
		Forge strategic partnerships with other NGOs, education institutions, the private and public sector - pooling resources and expertise to collectively address sustainability challenges.
		Seek external guidance in building the marketing and PR strategy to promote the Nature Connect brand and increase beneficiary awareness
	Liabilities	Maintain appropriate Insurance
		Thorough review of vulnerability
	Financial Management	Regular review and engagement with external accounting firm with experience in NPO financial management.
	Governance	Policy changes (governmental and private sector)
Play an advocacy role in the development of policy through presence in various interest groups, forums and national bodies		
Appoint or seek legal advice when necessary to ensure compliance		
Board Review		Broaden the talent and diversity of the Board
		Establish appropriate committees to assist management
Senior Management		Succession planning and talent management
Policies and Procedures		Continue to develop and implement effective policies to provide a supportive environment for the organisation and minimising potential risks
Liabilities	Review and update legal and registration obligations and MoUs	
Staff	Skills	Match staff capacity (new and current) with job requirements through KPA review and alignment and regularly update training plan
	Organisational culture	Consistently engage with staff to include them in defining and taking ownership of the organisations culture
	Support	Put measures in place to support staff, institute training interventions and improve performance tracking to ensure optimal productivity and acknowledge employee contributions through recognition/reward
	Staff retention	Continuously review salaries to ensure competitiveness and institute appropriate rewards
		Strong corporate culture
		Encourage and enable ownership or projects, especially senior staff
Lack of staff engagement	Foster open and transparent communication channels within the organization, encourage ideas sharing and celebrating successes	

Risk Area	Risk Factor	Mitigation
Communications	Change management	Ensure top-down, bottom-up communications for staff. Manage communications on "change" to stakeholders.
	Stakeholder Engagement	Implement a communications strategy for internal and external stakeholders
	Internal communications	Foster open communication channels between the board, staff, and other internal stakeholders taking broader perspectives of the organization when making governance decisions
	Online presence	Strategically increase reach and support through well-defined social media strategy
		Ensure the website unifies the programmes and showcases our complete Crèche-to-Career model.
	Framework	Seek external guidance in building the marketing and PR strategy to promote the Nature Connect brand and increase beneficiary awareness
	Organizational Structure	Relevance
Strategy		Ensure effective governance to adapt and make fast decisions in the disruption and to assess opportunities and threats
		Engage in strategic planning processes that involve the board, staff, and key stakeholders to ensure unified thinking
Data	Data storage and access	Trust to create, enforce, and update a comprehensive data storage security plan that encompasses on-premises infrastructure, mobile devices and across the web
	POPIA compliance	Ensure personnel are appropriately trained and measures are implemented to ensure compliance
	Data protection	Setting of policies that that are simple, concise and practical utilising appropriate software for data protection





# SUSTAINABLE SCHOOLS

## **Promoting Sustainability, Empowering Educators, and Cultivating Conservation Leaders**

Throughout the year, the Sustainable Schools Programme achieved remarkable progress in promoting Education for Sustainable Development and fostering positive change in schools and communities. The programme's success is evident in the high level of teacher engagement, with workshops and meetings providing invaluable support and guidance to educators, enhancing teachers' understanding of sustainability and empowering them in their journey. Teachers have shown dedication and passion, investing their time and effort to implement impactful action projects that promote sustainability within their school communities.

Alongside meaningful teacher and school support, Nature Connect's education team conducted numerous, impactful education activities in the form of camps and day programmes, as well as through our long-term Conservation Leadership Project, reaching thousands of learners.

## **Expanding Reach and Nurturing Partnerships**

Closing the year with 155 registered schools across five provinces, this rapid expansion and success of the programme within South Africa was only possible by establishing partnerships with various organisations and government departments. Such is evident in signing a new Implementing Partner, Perridon, expanding our reach into the Northern Cape.

Other organisations such as Rand Water, Cape Nature, I Am Water, Guardians of the Deep, and Cape Town Tourism officially joined as Supporting Partners, contributing their expertise and resources to the programme. Additionally, the programme partnered with EnviroVito, supporting our Implementing Partner in Limpopo, Lapalala Wilderness School, and its registered schools in the area. The programme's expansion efforts have also resulted in the registration of several new schools in the Western Cape, with expansion into Beaufort West and Gauteng, alongside ongoing discussions for potential partnerships between schools in Gauteng and the City of Ekurhuleni.

The Sustainable Schools team had the opportunity to attend and present at the Environmental Education Association of Southern Africa (EEASA) conference in Windhoek, Namibia. The presentation generated significant interest from organisations across South Africa and other African regions, showcasing the programme's potential for expansion. These engagements have led to discussions to expand the programme to new areas within South Africa and beyond our borders.

## **Teacher and In-School Support**

Through the Sustainable Schools Programme, the Nature Connect team provided in-school support for action projects to over 51 schools and 102 teachers. Nature Connect's teacher workshops, registered with the South African Council for Educators (SACE), have accumulated a total of 594 educational hours, empowering teachers with knowledge and skills.

Rewards ceremonies were held for the schools in the Western Cape, Limpopo, and KwaZulu-Natal to recognise and celebrate the work done by the teachers over the year. In the Western Cape, 26 prizes and certificates were awarded to 13 schools based on their exceptional school-based action projects. A total of 15 schools were rewarded in Limpopo and KwaZulu-Natal combined. These celebratory events highlight the tangible progress and positive outcomes of the Sustainable Schools Programme.

Overall, the Sustainable Schools Programme has made significant strides in promoting sustainability education, fostering collaboration, empowering teachers, and driving positive change in schools and communities. The high level of teacher engagement, expansion into new regions, and partnerships with supporting organisations have contributed to the programme's success and long-term sustainability.

## **Educational Enrichment through Connecting to Nature**

### **Day Programmes and Camps**

During this period, Nature Connect conducted 48 in-school lessons, 35 excursions, and 28 overnight camps, reaching a combined 11 643 learners, of which 76% were from underserved communities.

Nature Connect's day programmes and overnight camps provide learners comprehensive and engaging educational experiences centred around sustainability and environmental protection. Key themes explored in our lessons included Biodiversity; Production, Consumption, and Waste; Catchment to Coast; Marine and Coast; and Energy and Climate Action. Through these Focus Areas, learners gained knowledge and skills related to freshwater assessments, marine ecosystems, rocky shore surveys, and climate change education. Team building and leadership activities were also integrated to enhance learners' communication and leadership abilities. Notably, camps have been particularly valuable for schools seeking to re-establish cohesion among learners and teachers after the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A standout moment of the year was the highly anticipated re-opening of the newly renovated Bokbaai campsite. This remarkable site allowed us to provide even more enriching experiences for schools and groups, allowing us to expose learners to multiple ecosystems over one camp. In addition to Bokbaai, other notable highlights included the Lotus High Eco-club camp, which saw existing eco-ambassadors depart with a deeper understanding of nature; and the CPUT 2nd year Nature Conservation Student's camp, which was held at Bokbaai for the first time and featured talks and activities by specialists in the field.

Furthermore, several schools had inaugural camps at Bokbaai, such as Laerskool Aristeia and Lourier Primary Schools, which praised the facilities and programme content. Mamre Primary School, located in the local area, had unforgettable wildlife encounters during their camp, leaving a lasting impression on the learners. Additionally, partnerships were crucial to many of our programmes, collaborating with our Kenilworth Racecourse Conservation Area team and the City of Cape Town at the Smart Living Centre to incorporate heritage education into sustainability lessons. While a partnership with the South African Education Project (SAEP) increased camp bookings, enabling us to reach more schools.

Our day programmes and overnight camps have received enthusiastic endorsements from participating schools. By fostering teamwork, leadership skills, and a deep understanding of nature, we continue to empower young learners to become active agents for a sustainable future. The re-opening of Bokbaai has significantly expanded our offerings and created transformative experiences for all.

## **Cultivating Conservation Leaders**

The Conservation Leadership Project has made significant progress in the past year providing learners with numerous growth opportunities, both in their knowledge of the environment and development of self. The selection process for the project's fifth intake of Conservation Leaders resulted in an impressive response, with 98 applications received from 17 schools in the Cape Flats region. Notably, 76% of the applications were received from schools registered for the Sustainable Schools Programme, highlighting the success of Conservation Leaders as an integral part of the programme. After the completion of rigorous selection activities, 23 exceptional learners were accepted into the Conservation Leaders 2022 Group, with 12 of them being female.

New and existing groups engaged in various activities throughout the year, including clean-ups, immersive camping experiences, hikes, and collaborative study sessions. These activities have promoted environmental responsibility and awareness, while participation in community action days has fostered community involvement and social engagement. The project also prioritised personal development, offering programmes on mental health topics facilitated by organisations like Hope House and SHAWCO.

The project has an active community of 60 learners and has successfully cultivated a new generation of conservation leaders, showcased by the continued involvement of alumni who have joined as volunteers or staff members. It has been a year of growth and development, with transformative experiences and an eagerness to create more opportunities. The project continues to nurture these remarkable individuals and their potential as future leaders.





## Empowering Journeys: Alumni Success Stories

Several alumni, including Josiane Habinshubi, who graduated from the 2015 intake, Mario Barnes, a graduate from the 2013 intake, and Jumah Alih Abubakr, who completed the program in 2017, have chosen to maintain their connection with Nature Connect. They have enthusiastically joined our ranks as volunteers or casual staff members, embodying the enduring impact of our program on their professional journeys. These individuals exemplify the positive influence of our initiative, serving as beacons of inspiration for future learners considering career pathways within Nature Connect and our esteemed partner organizations. An outstanding alumna, Siyolise Gxagxa, hailing from the 2017 intake, has achieved a significant milestone by securing an internship at the esteemed Wortelgat Outreach Trust. Such remarkable success stories fuel our commitment to fostering meaningful opportunities and fostering a thriving network of environmentally conscious professionals.



## Teacher Feedback

### What value do you see in the Sustainable Schools Programme?

*“The Sustainable Schools Programme helps the individual teachers at school especially when we feel isolated, they give us a good support structure. They also help with connecting schools to join up on projects and with sponsors. It is valuable in opening the learners’ eyes to their role in sustainability and how even a small change can contribute positively.”*  
**– Observatory Junior School.**

*“This is the kind of programme schools need to help and support kids and teachers. The support and opportunity for learners to be exposed to environmental education has been so beneficial to the school. For a no-fees school...This programme has been gold to our school.”*  
**– Westville Primary School.**

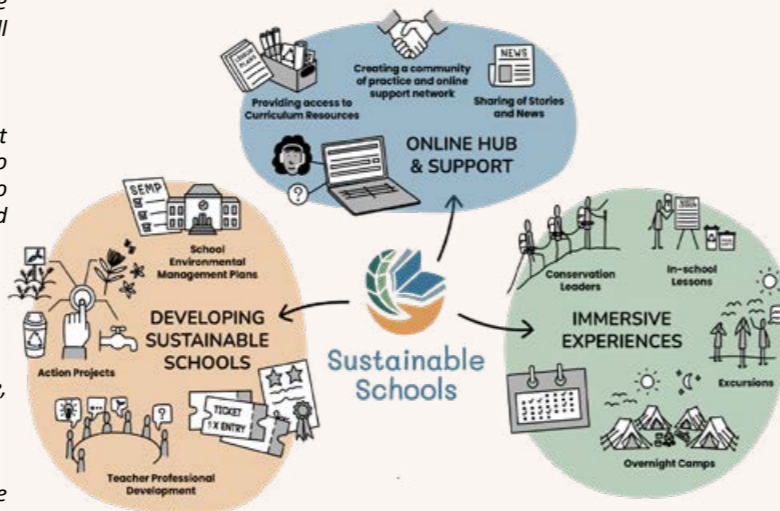
## Connect to Nature Programme Feedback

*“The activities offered by the facilitators boosted the self-confidence, environmental responsibility & self-esteem of our learners.”*  
**– Stephen Road Primary.**

*“Our learners went home with smiles on their faces. The programme was linked to the curriculum and learners could relate to it. The programme is educational and even the teachers learned a few things.”*  
**– Spine View Primary.**

## Learner Feedback

*“There’s so much to see under the rocky shore – I saw and held a starfish for the first time and got to see Oyster Catchers up close.”*  
**– Thaddee Kabengela (Gr 7).**





# GREEN SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

## Programme Overview

As custodians of the young lives whom we impact as we develop their care and appreciation for the natural environment, we witness change through the hard work that these young adults have put into our protected areas.

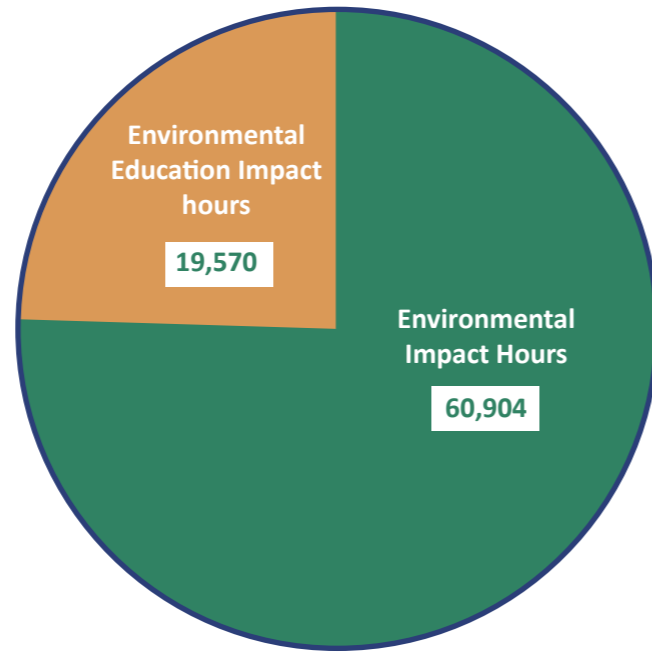
A focus of this past year has been to rekindle our stakeholder relationships whilst actively engaging with new and potential stakeholders. We continue to run Learnership, Work Integrated Learning and Graduate Internship programmes.

Through our partnership grants from Cathsseta we were able to run both learnerships and internships this past year: Work Integrated Learning programmes for Nature Conservation as well as Environmental Management students; and also a Nature Conservation Learnership, for employed learners, selected from SANParks' Cape Cluster reserves.

The year also saw a Nature Conservation learnership funded through a corporate partner, Quemic Africa.

We have also delivered a number of short courses over the year which included Chainsaw Operator, Brushcutter Operator, Venomous Snake Handling, and Fire Awareness.

Our objectives as a Green Skills team is to always bear the needs of the learners and industry in mind, as we mentor future conservators in their path ahead.



*“As an organisation it is our aim to provide training to young professionals in the field of wildlife conservation and forensic science in order to equip them with the skills necessary to fight wildlife crime. We believe that Nature Connect complements this objective of ours by facilitating an immersive educational environment where young professionals can receive hands-on experience and knowledge in conservation management, including its challenges. This provides a realistic yet enjoyable environment for students to learn in, providing them with a fantastic overall experience of the industry with ample opportunities.”*

*– Landi Retief, Wildlife Forensic Academy*





Interns on Venomous Snake Handling training at Glencairn.



Learners conducting basic maintenance checks on a chainsaw during their chainsaw operators training course at False Bay Nature Reserve.



Learners during their first contact training session at Bokbaai.



Interns and learners attended fire awareness training at Witzands Nature Reserve.



Snake handling training; learners handling a non-venomous snake and learning about snake husbandry.



Learners on the Venomous Snake Handling course at Zandvlei.



Learners practicing their newly acquired chainsaw skills.



SANParks employees on a learnership at the Wildlife Forensic Academy, getting an opportunity to investigate a staged wildlife crime scene as part of their compliance module.

### Story of Change

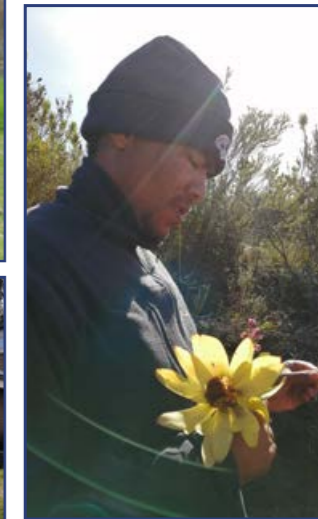
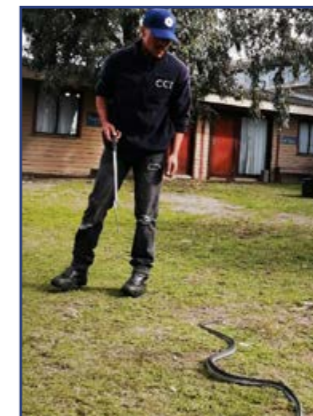
Gene-Claude Fuller successfully completed his one-year Nature Conservation Learnership with Nature Connect at the end of 2022. In May 2023, he was employed by the City of Cape Town Biodiversity Management Branch as a field ranger, based at the Helderberg Nature Reserve, where he was also based during his learnership. Gene-Claude first started as a volunteer trail ranger for the Friends of Helderberg before applying to Nature Connect for our learnership towards a Further Education and Training Certificate, Nature Conservation: Terrestrial Guardianship NQF4 with Nature Connect.

Gene-Claude said “before I was on the learnership, I knew nothing about plant species or animal species or nature conservation in general but with all the modules and practical’s I did, with my learnership at Nature Connect, now I love working in nature conservation”.

The knowledge and skills Gene-Claude gained allowed him to take on additional task at work during his learnership and he was trusted with operating chainsaws, brush cutters and handling venomous and non-venomous snakes.

“I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone at Nature Connect for the great opportunity and support you all have given me and my fellow learners for the year we were with you. I am a field ranger now all thanks to Nature Connect.”

– Gene-Claude Fuller, former Green Skills learner



“The other day I looked outside my house and thought “I should cut the grass soon”. This made me realise that the training did not just equip us with new skills, it was empowering!”

– Piwe Ludidi, Cathsseta Intern



“I am not the same way I was before the training. It has changed my perspective in regards to ideas, nature and things.”


– Lusanda Macebe, Cathsseta Intern



“It was great to learn new skills and being a part of something that will make a difference in conservation- this week really reignited my passion for conservation.”

– Braden Ingram, Groen Sebenza Intern





*“I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone at Nature Connect for the great opportunity and support you all have given me and my fellow learners for the year we were with you. I am a field ranger now all thanks to Nature Connect.”*

*– Gene-Claude Fuller, former Green Skills learner.*

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# NATURE CARE FUND

The Nature Care Fund continues to enjoy doing the business of conservation. From securing funding for this noble work to affording deserving candidates the opportunity to undertake this work, the Nature Care Fund has served to “dot the i and cross the t” in the “crèche to career” journey for which this organisation has become known.

The Nature Care Fund manager has invested time in promoting Nature Connect to channel funds derived from development processes into conservation. In addition, the Nature Care Fund continues to explore opportunities to serve as a conduit to facilitate donations from organisations keen to invest in nature while providing green jobs.

## Supporting Kenilworth Racecourse Conservation Management

Other than the winds of change blowing across the Kenilworth Racecourse Conservation Area and the expansion of our footprint, there has been ‘business as usual’ on the ground.

The Nature Care Fund supported Kenilworth Racecourse conservation management as the City of Cape Town withdrew its resources in September 2022, leaving significant gaps. There is no doubt that without the foresight for the establishment of the Environmental Advisory Committee in 1999, as part of the development rights, this area would have been significantly degraded by now. At the same time, we assisted with onboarding new property owners.

## Focused Efforts in Ecological Restoration

We have increased our efforts in ecological restoration within the City’s exceptional yet highly threatened local lowland fynbos biodiversity. We celebrated a richer involvement in ecological restoration, partnering with FynbosLIFE to support the work of their specialist nursery and care for their Veld Circles. We also expanded our footprint by adopting Rondebosch Common as a new site in our family through the local ‘Friends’ group, and we continue to walk a journey with the Westlake community, supporting ecological restoration along the Westlake River.

## Collaboration in Conservation and Education

It is a privilege to work alongside like-minded and passionate NGO’s doing great work in the conservation, education and job

creation space. We hope to lever off our Nature Connect Schools programme and GreenSkills team to “change lives through nature” whilst advancing conservation.

## Role in Biodiversity Offset Process Recognised

As a valuable cog in the Biodiversity offset process Nature Care Fund has been recognised as an organisation able to facilitate biodiversity offset processes, being approached for support in several development applications. As is the nature of the biodiversity offset beast, these processes are slow, and the outcome is uncertain. Our presence as an organisation with an internal Biodiversity Offset Policy gives us the edge as a facilitating organisation in this sector.

## Staff Commitment to Global Conservation Goals

Staff get their hands dirty whilst aligned and supporting global conservation targets to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030. Nature Care Fund staff have been honing their skills whilst growing together as a team committed to doing conservation well. Attendance at the Western Cape Stewardship Peer Learning Workshop presented cutting-edge theory focused on “Other Effective Area-based Conservation Mechanisms” – examples of which are represented in practice by our site managers. These, along with reactive stewardship through biodiversity offsets, are currently being explored by conservation authorities to advance South Africa in meeting national targets. It is a great pleasure to know that the Nature Care Fund is part of a global community working to secure biodiversity for the benefit of present and future generations.



Significant Achievements Despite Challenges Despite research activities being curtailed, achievements have been significant, and donors have been generous, such that four additional toad underpasses have been successfully installed.

## Adapting to Changes: New Roles and Initiatives

The loss of our Species Conservation Manager allowed for staff restructuring and creating a new position entitled ‘Stewardship Project Co-ordinator’ within the Nature Care Fund. This person oversees the implementation of all Nature Care Fund projects. Projects include the installation of four additional Western Leopard Toad tunnels in Peninsula Road, Zeekoevlei Cape Town. With the tunnels in place, we are now, along with fellow researchers, preparing to more formally monitor the impact of these tunnels during this year’s breeding season.

## Highlighting Conservation Milestones

Good planning and a sensible conservation model reveals two “firsts” in decades. The Milnerton Race Course Conservation Area (MRCA) was in the spotlight for the identification and first iNaturalist loading of Hydrodictyon africanum, commonly known as ‘water net’ algae. This algae is read about in books, but rarely seen in real life - not even by the local freshwater ecologist ‘Who’s Who’ - until August 2022. The first sighting of Delalande’s Beaked Blind Snake in the greater Table Bay Nature Reserve since 1999 was recorded around this time at the MRCA. Hat’s off to our former Nature Connect staff member, now full-time City reserve employee Thozama Notshati, for spotting the algae. And another former Nature Connect staff member, now Table Bay Reserve Supervisor, Louis van Wyk for its identification. Congrats to our Table Bay Nature Reserve: Milnerton Section Conservator Ntombikayise Lolwane and the City of Cape Town team for their excellent partnership to secure a pristine patch of Cape Flats Sand Fynbos vegetation within the Mother City. And congrats to the foresight of City planners 20 years ago, who set aside the Milnerton race course as a conservation area within what has subsequently become Royal Ascot properties.

## Towards a Sustainable Conservation Future

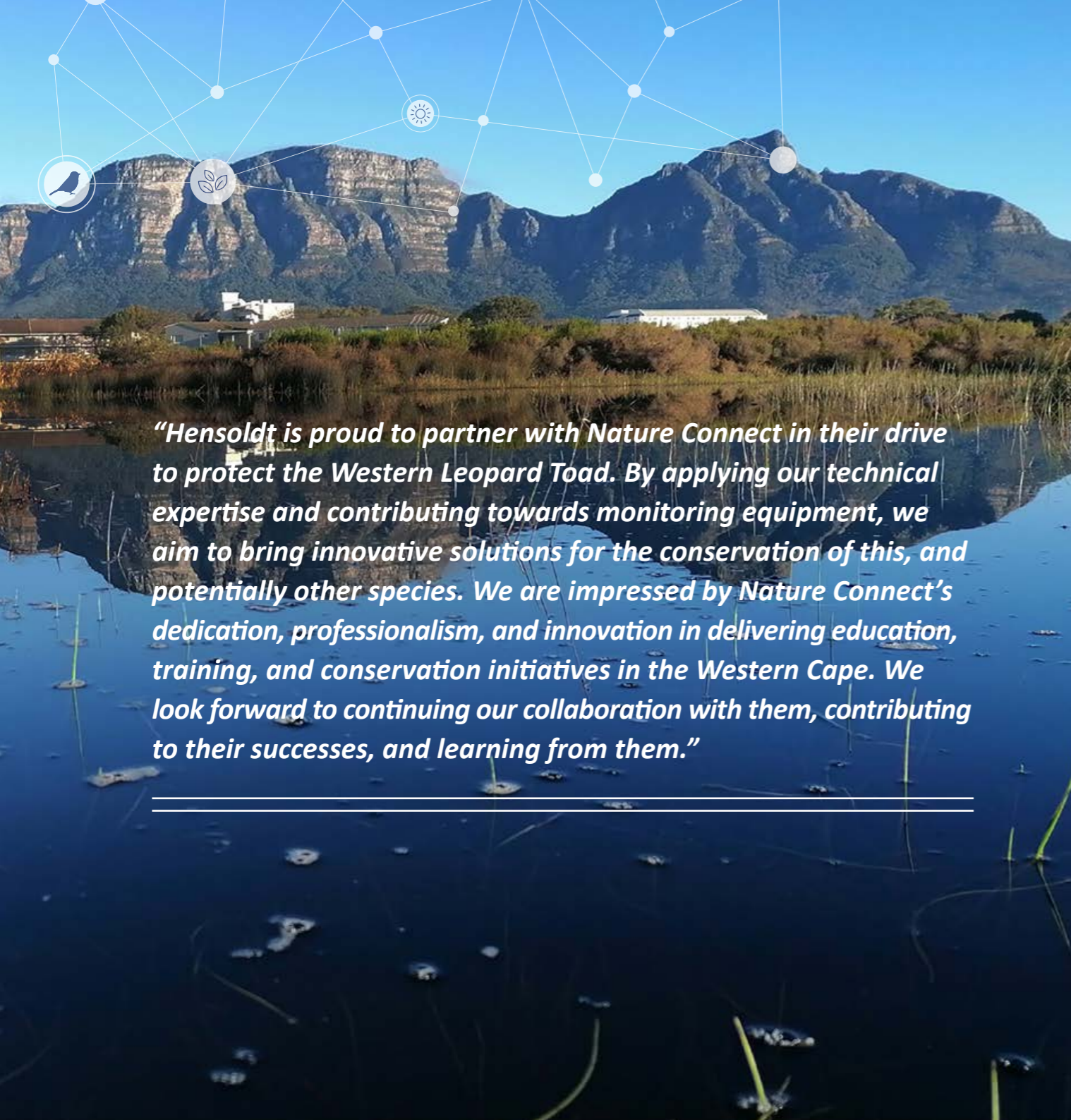
The future for conservation needs more of this model: land set aside in perpetuity for conservation, with a sustained funding stream, supported by residents in partnership with the City. The Nature Care Fund looks forward to implementing conservation projects that make a sustained difference, changing lives through nature, and completing the crèche to career journey.

*I came to the organisation only knowing how to do field work. Through monthly meetings with the Nature Care Fund and Environmental Management Committee I have learned how to effectively present and engage in conversations that promote the protection of biodiversity. Additionally, I have acquired skills in event planning and engaging with members of the public. I can confidently state that I am now capable of conducting environmental education programs with genuine passion.*

**– Lwandile Tyeba, Groen Sebenza Intern 2023**







***“Hensoldt is proud to partner with Nature Connect in their drive to protect the Western Leopard Toad. By applying our technical expertise and contributing towards monitoring equipment, we aim to bring innovative solutions for the conservation of this, and potentially other species. We are impressed by Nature Connect’s dedication, professionalism, and innovation in delivering education, training, and conservation initiatives in the Western Cape. We look forward to continuing our collaboration with them, contributing to their successes, and learning from them.”***

## **Story of Change:**

### **Tshepho Dikobo - Groen Sebenza Intern**

I had recently completed my honors in Animal, Plant, and Environmental Sciences. As a recent graduate, my hope was to enter the working space, particularly one aligned with my studies. Fortunately, SANBI had been advertising a graduate internship opportunity through the Groen Sebenza Programme. Although the program offered numerous positions across multiple provinces in South Africa, I was interested in a specific position in Cape Town. This was because I had previously lived in Limpopo and Gauteng, and I was excited about the prospect of working in a new and ecologically different environment.

During the application process, I was unaware that I would be working for Nature Connect. I became acquainted with Nature Connect when I received a contact and an invitation for an interview from the hiring managers. Coming from the eastern tropical side of South Africa, it was my first time hearing about Nature Connect. However, I quickly resonated with the organization’s mission and vision after conducting research and learning about its evolution.

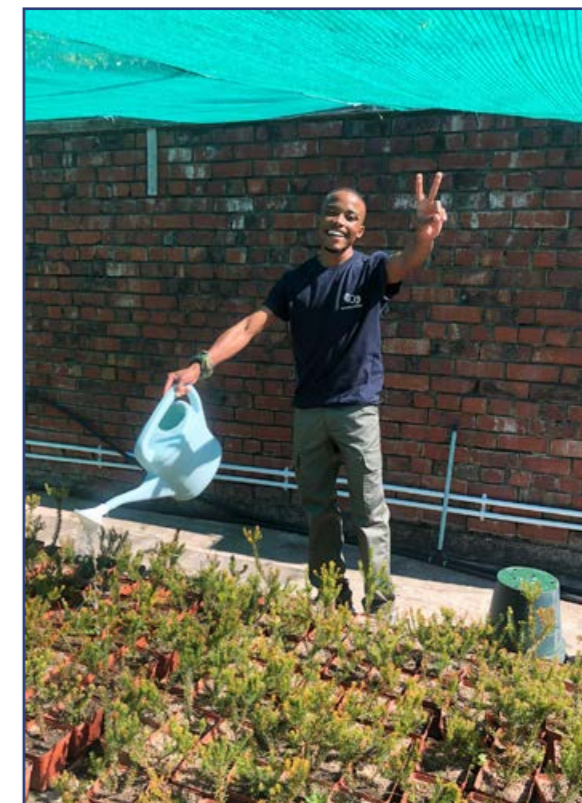
Although my time was limited, the program was filled with skills development initiatives that greatly contributed to both my personal and professional growth. Consequently, I gained valuable skills and significant work experience from the organisation.

To begin with, I was stationed at the Kenilworth Racecourse Conservation Area (KRCA), where the majority of our tasks involved clearing Invasive Alien Plant Species (IAPS). My supervisor and team promptly educated me on how to identify these species, the area’s history, and the purpose behind clearing IAPS. This process entailed using hand tools and power tools, including brush cutters and chainsaws. Nature Connect provided training and certification for operating power tools. Additionally, due to frequent encounters with snakes in the conservation area, I also received training and certification for snake handling.

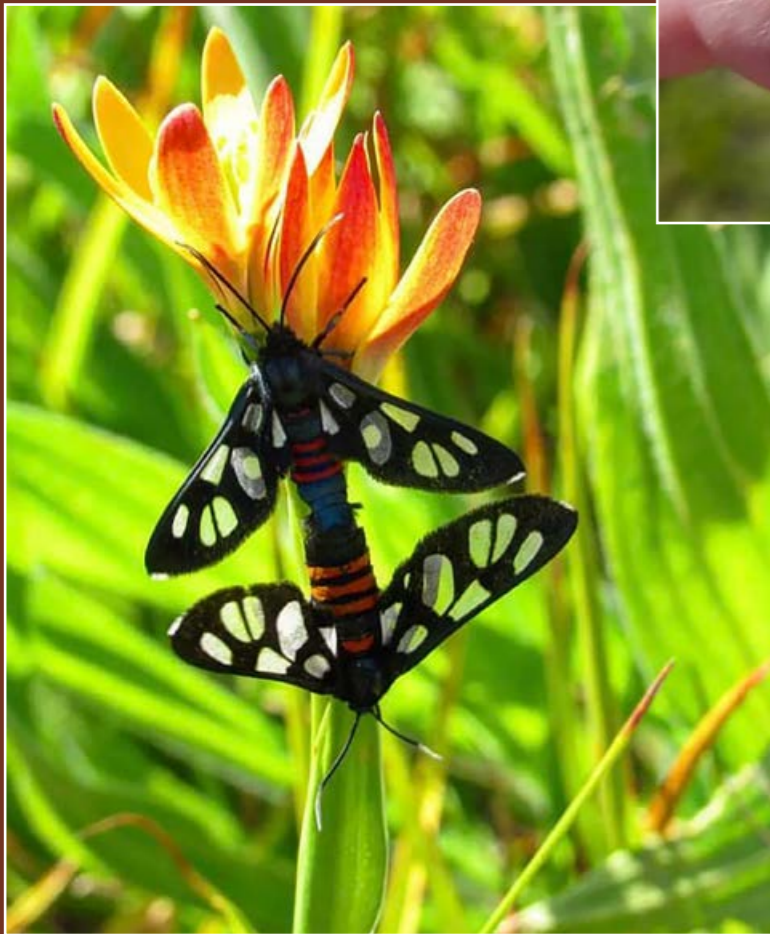
KRCA is an ecological hotspot that serves as a habitat for red-listed species, some of which are endemic and even extinct in the wild, such as *Erica turgida*. The area also attracts diverse avifauna, allowing me to refine my skills in identifying plant and bird species and conduct surveys of these species.

Given KRCA’s ecological significance and ideal location, it welcomed individuals for environmental education activities and programs. Consequently, I found myself at the forefront of engagement, educating and interacting with the public during trail walks. Involvement in community engagement projects provided me with the opportunity to share the knowledge I had acquired and refine my public speaking skills.

Above all else, I became part of a community of like-minded individuals who supported my personal and professional growth. Through its focus on nature, Nature Connect positively transformed my life.









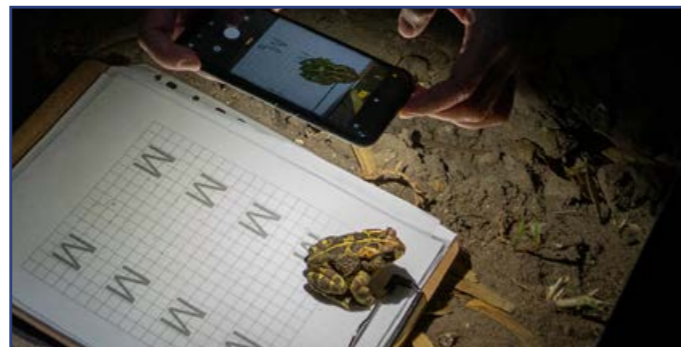
## SPECIES CONSERVATION: WESTERN LEOPARD TOAD

The Western Leopard Toad's endangered status on the IUCN Red List emphasises the urgency of conservation. It is endemic to South Africa's Western Cape, where ongoing development threatens its habitat. Toad populations in urban areas have declined dramatically over the past two decades, resulting in fragmented subpopulations. Continued conservation efforts are crucial to sustain the species' survival in this disturbed habitat.

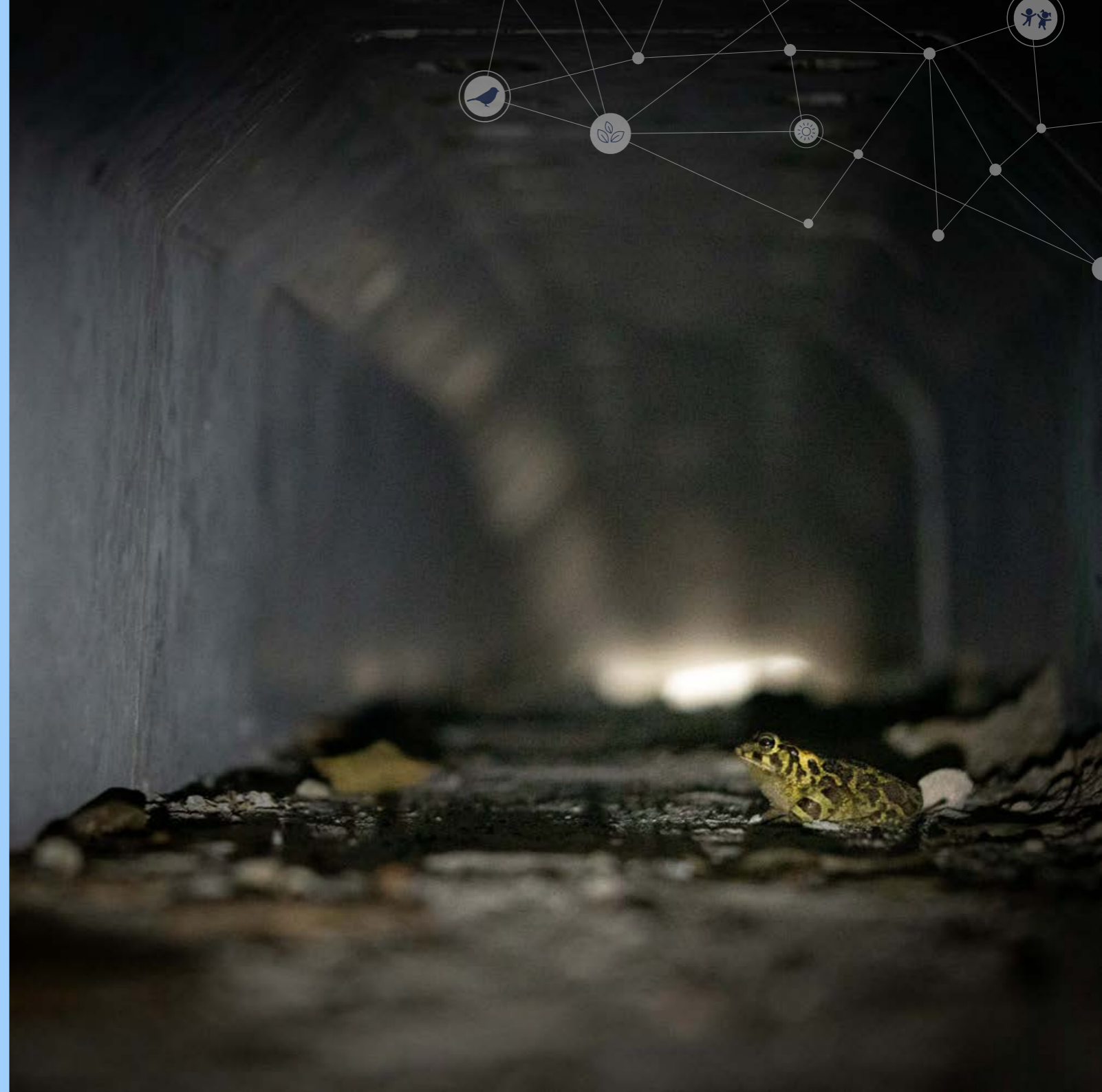
Urban environments pose challenges for toads, with hazards such as roads, walls, dams, and canals hindering their movement and leading to numerous fatalities, especially during the breeding season. The Western Leopard Toad, already endangered due to ongoing habitat loss and its short, sporadic breeding habits at night, faced continuing threats on the roads.

Significant progress has been made in conserving the toads through our installation of toad tunnels and seasonal drift fences on Peninsula Road, Zeekoevlei. This effort ensures safe passage for the toads during their breeding season, reducing road fatalities. With the installation of the first two tunnels in 2021, we recorded a significant reduction in road fatalities in that section of the road.

In the coming year, with the appointment of William Dau Civils contractors, we plan to add four additional tunnels on Peninsula Road. This has been made possible through the generous funding from Leisure Charitable Trust, Fondation Ensemble, and the Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund. Various City of Cape Town departments have and continue to provide expertise and permissions. Exciting news of additional funding for more tunnels holds promise for ongoing Western Leopard Toad conservation efforts.



Photos by Jeremy Shelton





# EVENTS AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

## EVENTS

In the ever-evolving journey of our organisation, our commitment to connecting people with the profound beauty of nature remains unwavering. Through our hosted and participated events, we have once again ignited the spark of passion for the cause, reminding all involved of the incredible significance of our collective efforts in nurturing and preserving our precious planet.

Here are a few highlights of the various events we attended and hosted.



Wilderness First Aid Training



Fishing day



Conferences & Training for Gauteng EE Friends



Action Day – Beach clean-up for World Environment Day



The Kommetjie Beach Clean-up Make a Difference week ("MAD" week) 34



Spring walk at Milnerton Racecourse Conservation Area



Holiday program



Gauteng Introductory Workshop to Sustainable Schools



Action Day for River Mini - SASS



Holiday program



World Wetlands Day



SAWMA conference



## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Partnerships enable skill-sharing and resource optimisation. We believe in the power of unity. Effective partnerships are built on mutual understanding, which grows over time through networking, conferences, targeted communication, and collaboration within communities of practice. Our team engages across a wide range of fora, representing Nature Connect on international, national, and local platforms including:

- International Society for Wetland Scientists
- International Society for Ecological Restoration
- IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management: Impact Mitigation and Ecological Compensation Thematic Group
- International Association for Impact Assessment South Africa
- South African Wetlands Society
- South African Botanical Society
- Western Cape Stewardship Forum
- Western Cape Wetland Forum
- Fynbos Forum
- The Cape Floristic Region Partnership
- The Protected Area Advisory Committee for Blouberg, Table Bay, False Bay and Helderberg Nature Reserves
- South African Wildlife Management Association
- PECID (Paarden Eiland Community Improvement District)
- RAMPOA EMC (Royal Ascot Master Property Owners Association Environmental Management Committee)
- Capricorn Environmental Advisory Board
- Coastal Park Landfill Site Residents Monitoring Committee
- IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA)
- IUCN Commission on Education and Communication (CEC)
- WCPA Human-Wildlife Conflict Task Force committee.

During the financial year, we were honored to receive a Bronze Award for Conservation from the Eco-logic Awards, as well as being recognized as the recipient of SANParks' prestigious Kudu Award for Non-governmental Organization Contribution to Conservation.



## ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

It's noteworthy to highlight our recent efforts in the realm of social media. We have diligently increased our posting frequency, resulting in a remarkable 216% growth in followers across all platforms. We share compelling stories, captivating highlights, and educational content that contributes significantly to environmental education, thereby enhancing our brand's presence while underscoring our commitment to making a positive impact on our community and the environment.

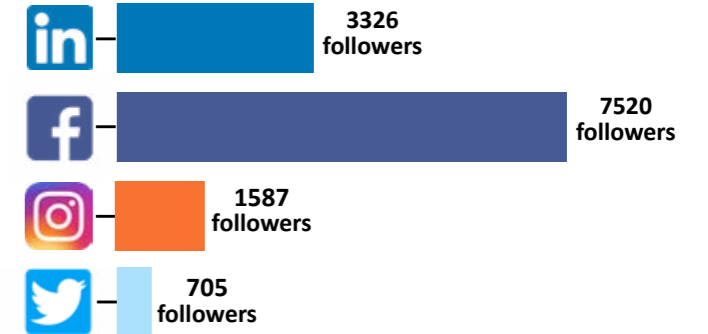
We've expanded our reach beyond social media with staff-authored blogs and quarterly newsletters. Looking ahead, our focus will also shift towards prioritizing Public Relations to disseminate our impactful work through traditional media channels to strengthen our brand's reputation and establish ourselves as leaders in our field.

Over 225 posts shared in the past year

Overall reach across all platforms:

519 997  
PEOPLE

We are committed to ongoing refinement of our social media and communications strategy. These efforts, in conjunction with our educational initiatives, will continue to play a critical role in driving our overall success. This comprehensive approach will not only fuel substantial channel growth but also foster meaningful engagement with our audience.



Note: Social media reach refers to the total number of unique users (not only followers) who have seen or interacted with a particular piece of content posted on social media platforms during a specific period. It represents the potential audience or exposure that posts have achieved.



# OUR PEOPLE

A strong focus of our developing strategy is to facilitate new entrants to the Green Economy, provide stepping stones for youth to begin their careers, and provide growth opportunities to individuals within the organisation. Our vision is to grow leaders and managers from the ground up, where individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds get opportunities for personal development so that we can contribute to sustainable transformation.

We continue to review our transformation plan with the goal of enhancing workplace diversity and aligning to the transformation objectives, in particular:

- alignment of Human Resources policies, practices and procedures to the Department of Labour's Code of Good Practice on integrating Employment Equity
- ensuring better workforce representation of the nationally Economically Active Population statistic of South Africa
- prohibiting unfair discrimination in the workplace.

## Head Office



**Dr. Anthony Roberts**  
CEO



**Nicole Georgiou**  
Operations Coordinator



**Louise Matschke**  
Green Skills  
& Partnership Strategist

## Sustainable Schools Programme



**Jocelyn Anderson**  
Manager, Sustainable  
Schools Programme



**Catherine Kühn**  
Education Coordinator



**Melissa Zackon**  
Regional Schools  
Coordinator



**Tamsyn Henshall**  
Resource & Platform Curator



**Tammy-Lee Solomons**  
Day Programme  
Coordinator



**Leah Mulenga**  
Conservation Leaders  
Project Coordinator



**Anwar Boonzaaier**  
Educator



**Lanah Murray**  
Schools Coordinator



**Nhlanhla Moya**  
Senior Educator



**Dijaro Magana**  
Facilities Co-ordinator



**Thandokazi Daweti-Qayi**  
Schools Coordinator



**Liezal Solomon**  
Educator



**Amy Walters**  
Office and Platform  
Administrator



**Mapula Mokwele**  
School  
Coordinator

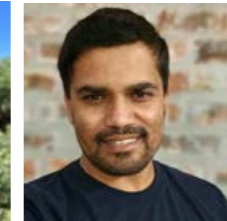
## Green Skills



**Letasha Hesqua**  
Training Manager



**Petro Botha**  
Training Officer



**Jose' Ganess**  
Training Administrator

## Nature Care Fund



**Lynette Munro**  
Conservation Partnership  
Facilitator, Biodiversity  
Offsetting



**Kim Gordon**  
Stewardship Programme  
Coordinator



**Fayruz Prins**  
Assistant Conservation  
Officer, Kenilworth Racecourse  
Conservation Area



**Lindile Masinyana**  
Site Manager, Kenilworth  
Racecourse Conservation  
Area



**Fabrice Turikumwe**  
Site Manager,  
Zoarvei Wetlands



**Ntombi Lolwane**  
Site Manager, Milnerton  
Racecourse Section,  
Table Bay Nature Reserve



**Vardaman Hahndiek**  
Penguin Rangers  
– African Penguin  
Conservation Project



**Mikaela Slier**  
Penguin Rangers – African  
Penguin Conservation Project



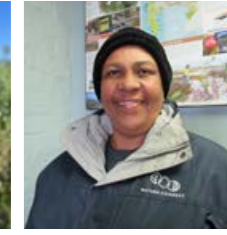
**Kashiefa Amos**  
Penguin Rangers – African  
Penguin Conservation Project



**Mpumelelo Mabutyana**  
Penguin Rangers – African  
Penguin Conservation Project

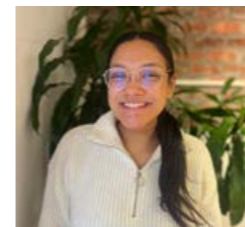


**Jamy Lee Fredericks**  
Site Manager,  
Muizenberg East  
Biodiversity Cluster



**Tania Snyders**  
Senior Field Ranger

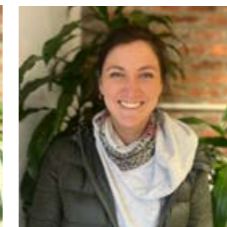
## Supporting Staff



**Nabeelah Bedford**  
Human Resources



**Inge van Niekerk**  
Accounting



**Carla Glen**  
Communications



## GOVERNANCE

The organisation works to align its policies to various South African governance and ethics documents (such as King IV, the Department of Social Development's Code of Good Practice for South African Non-profit Organisations and The Independent Code of Governance

and Values for Non-profit Organisations in South Africa). The organisation has had clean audits from reputable auditors and is in good standing with SARS, the Department of Social Development, and the Department of Labour-COIDA.

### Board of Trustees



**David de Korte - Chairman**

David de Korte is one of the founding members of Nature Connect (previously Cape Town Environmental Education Trust). David is currently working for Common Good as the Education Programme Coordinator. He was the previous headmaster of Camps Bay High School. From his time as headmaster and now with Common Good, it is evident that David firmly believes in uplifting children from disadvantaged communities. We are grateful to have David's insights and understanding of the school system and curriculum. In his free time, David enjoys the outdoors with his family, and whenever the swell is suitable and time allows, you will find David on his surfboard.



**Mike Gregor - Trustee**

Mike is the CEO of Rapula Farming, a business linked to several conservation initiatives across South Africa. His business knowledge and acumen, coupled with an understanding of conservation challenges in South Africa, enables Mike to critically assess and guide intervention programmes that Nature Connect pursues. Mike has served on several NPO boards that are involved with environmental education and community upliftment programmes for a number of years, serving on Boards of several Non-Profit Organisations.



**Dalton Gibbs - Trustee**

Dalton is another one of the original founders of Nature Connect. Dalton has been involved with the City of Cape Town for over 20 years and was instrumental in developing the Cape Town Biodiversity Network with his colleagues in the Biodiversity Management Branch. He strongly believes and understands the importance of educating children on the value and need of conservation interventions in Cape Town. Dalton is an avid naturalist, ornithologist, and historian and will take all opportunities to share his knowledge with people for the betterment of conservation.



**Stephen Granger - Trustee**

Stephen Granger holds degrees in land surveying and environmental studies from the University of Cape Town. His 15-year tenure as head of the environmental management unit at Ninham Shand consulting engineers was followed by roles in the Cape Metropolitan Council, where he oversaw environmental strategy, climate policy, green infrastructure, and partnerships. He contributed to ecological and environmental organizations, serving on the national executive of the South African Institute of Ecologists and Environmental Scientists and the international board of the International Association for Impact Assessment. Additionally, he chaired ICLEI international's Local Action for Biodiversity program and the Montebello Design Centre Board of Trustees. Beyond his environmental work, Stephen is involved in distance running journalism and trail running administration in South Africa. He is a family man with a passion for mountain trail running and a keen interest in environmental and climate science.

## FUNDING AND SUSTAINABILITY

Diversification of income streams remains vital, as is expansion of our existing donor base, ensuring alignment with national strategies such as the National Development Plan and the Youth Employment Services initiative. We believe that we will build sustainability through:

### Increasing income-generating activities

Our income generation in 2022/2023 was 29.9% of total revenue, similar to the prior year's. Whilst proportionally similar between the two years, the rand value was significantly different with R3,329,747 and R2,437,716 for the 2023 and 2022 years, respectively. We predict that as the Bokbaai camp and the Green Skills training programmes gain traction, we may be able to raise this proportional contribution of income-generated funds further.

### Managing existing donors and diversifying donor streams

Relationships with existing donors are maintained by ensuring all reporting deadlines, publicity requirements and targets are met. Donors are kept up to date with the organisation's activities by distributing a quarterly newsletter, mainstream media and social media.

We have made ongoing fundraising efforts to identify and apply for funding from new sources, both locally and internationally. The securing of funds from Allan and Gill Gray Philanthropies in 2021 for our Sustainable Schools programme and their commitment to three years of funding gives an excellent launch pad for the national roll-out of this programme.

In the 2023 financial year, 12 donors contributed to various programmes, with grants from trusts and foundations accounting for 51% of the organisation's income.

### Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

As part of our sustainability plan, we constantly review the efficacy of our monitoring and evaluation tools and aim for an integrated approach. Contracting external consultants this year helped us strengthen our M&E by further building the tools for data capturing and assessment. Using this feedback mechanism, when implemented correctly, helps us better understand our impact, highlights improvement areas, and allows us to adapt to

external factors. This is vital to our resilience as an organisation and for our stakeholders to know - and believe in - what we do.

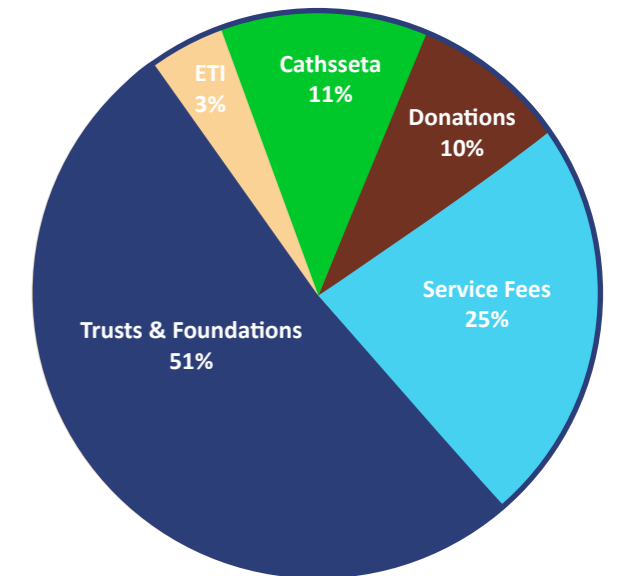
### Endowment Fund

Most of the money sitting in our endowment fund was depleted during the COVID-19 pandemic, and we are slowly rebuilding this fund. We aim to build this sufficiently to cover three months of salaries and fixed operational costs - currently around one million Rand.

### Biodiversity offsetting funds

For the past several years, we have been housing funds linked to biodiversity offsets for developments in Cape Town whilst we awaited the establishment of the Advisory panel. The panel has now been established, and we will be looking to allocate funds towards conservation projects over the coming three years.

**Graph 3:** Chart showing the breakdown of organisational income streams.





# PARTNERS AND DONORS



# FINANCIAL SUMMARY

## Qualified Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Cape Town Environmental Education Trust (the Trust) set out on pages 7 to 18, which comprise the statement of financial position as at 31 March 2023, statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and the notes to the annual financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In our opinion, except for the possible effect of the matter described in the basis for qualified opinion section of this report, the annual financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Cape Town Environmental Education Trust as at 31 March 2023, and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with the International Financial Reporting Standard for Small and Medium-sized Entities and the requirements of the Trust Deed.

## Basis for qualified opinion

In common with similar organisations it is not feasible for the Trust to institute accounting control over cash collections from donations prior to the initial entry of the collections in the accounting records. Accordingly, it is impractical for us to extend our examination beyond the receipts actually recorded.

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are independent of the trust in accordance with the Independent Regulatory Board for Auditors' Code of Professional Conduct for Registered Auditors (IRBA Code) and other independence requirements applicable to performing audits of financial statements in South Africa. We have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the IRBA Code and in accordance with other ethical requirements applicable to performing audits in South Africa. The IRBA Code is consistent with the corresponding sections of the International Ethics Standards Board for Accountants' International Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including International Independence Standards). We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

## Other Information

The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the Trustees' Report as required and the supplementary information as set out on pages 19 to 20, which we obtained prior to

the date of this report. The other information does not include the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon.

Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and we do not express an audit opinion or any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

## Responsibilities of the trustees for the Annual Financial Statements

The trustees are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the annual financial statements in accordance with the International Financial Reporting Standard for Small and Medium-sized Entities and the requirements of the Trust Deed, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of annual financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the annual financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the Trust's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intends to liquidate the trust or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

## Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with International Standards on Auditing will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with International Standards on




Auditing, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

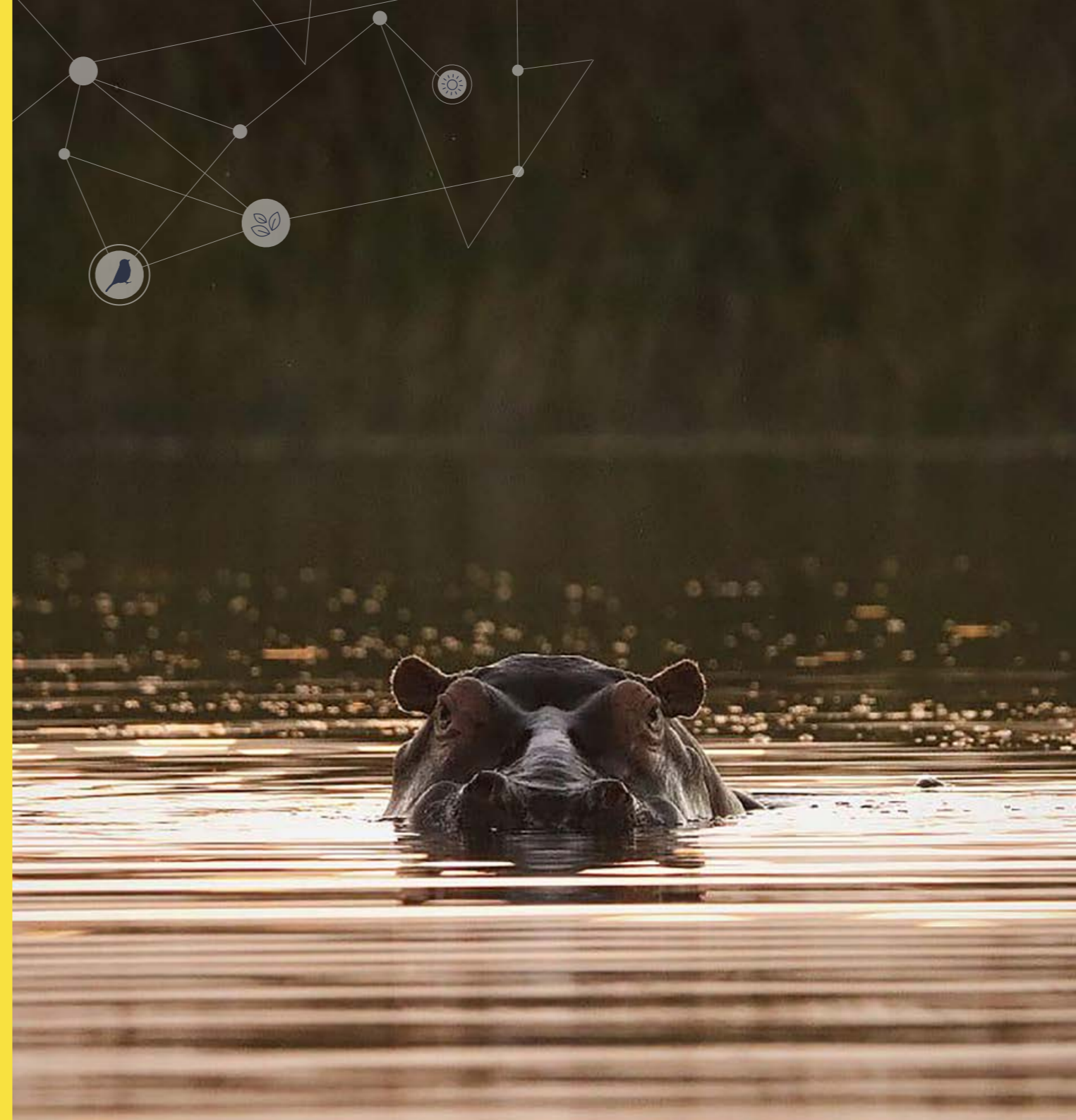
- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the trust's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the trustees.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting and based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the trust's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the trust to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with the trustees regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

## Extract of Annual Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2023

	2023	2022
<b>Statement of Comprehensive Income</b>		
<b>Income</b>	13,178,663	8,748,412
<b>Expenses</b>	13,794,254	8,824,552
<b>Total</b>	<b>- 615,591</b>	<b>- 76,140</b>
<b>Assets</b>		
<b>Non-current Assets</b>		
Property, Plant and Equipment	904,071	540,600
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Trade and Other Receivables	4,715,392	167,617
Other Financial Assets	2,777,581	2,695,599
Cash and Cash Equivalents	5,998,841	5,990,369
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,395,885</b>	<b>9,394,185</b>
<b>Funds and Liabilities</b>		
<b>Funds</b>		
Accumulated Surplus	1,021,818	2,000,880
Asset fund	904,071	540,600
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,925,889</b>	<b>2,541,480</b>
<b>Non-Current Liabilities</b>		
Finance lease obligation	529,684	0
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Trade and Other Payables	211,307	160,454
Funds for Future Projects	6,678,849	2,735,839
Deferred Income	4,816,309	3,717,057
Provisions	233,846	239,355
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,395,884</b>	<b>9,394,185</b>

  
 LPH Chartered Accountants Inc.  
 Registered Auditors  
 Per: ER Livesey  
 Director  
 Chartered Accountant (SA)  
 Registered Auditor





# LOOKING FORWARD

## ***Aiming for Five years of sustained growth***

Mid-way through our 2021-2025 Strategy, a period where we targeted organisational growth and recognising two years of COVID-19 impact, we considered where we are at relative to our destination. Across the organisation, we have grown in leaps and bounds, enabled through organisational restructuring, a refocus on programme deliverables and onboarding new donors and partners.

## ***Expansion of the Sustainable Schools programme***

In answering the call from across the SADC region for a unified and coordinated programme for environmental education, we launched the Sustainable Schools programme in early 2021. Now, two years into the programme and with metrics on the use and value of the online hub, we realise the value and importance of leveraging the power of digital dissemination of information. Furthermore, we have seen the programme's impact in building a community of practice. We are now convinced of the investment into further development of the online hub, the expansion of resources on offer and the need to build the support systems and personnel to accommodate the scaling up of the programme.

## ***Building skills to drive employment in the Green Economy***

As a nation it would be short-sighted to envisage implementing our National Development Plan 2030 without recognising the limitations a failed education system has placed on us. With high numbers of school dropouts, poor matric pass rates and extremely high levels of youth unemployment nestled within a struggling economy, we need to identify where the opportunities for employment lie. Looking at developed nations, such as the US, where more people are employed in the renewable energy industry than in non-renewables, and with the Just Energy Transition driving policy shifts, we need to explore opportunities for youth to upskill to support environmental services to the sector. This, coupled with various Natural Resource Management and restoration programmes, allows us to develop careers that can support our efforts to improve ecosystem functioning and reduce biodiversity loss.

## ***Driving funding of conservation initiatives***

Through collaboration with conservation authorities, we are exploring ways to support various veld management initiatives by unlocking funds from property development processes. If done transparently in ways that addresses the conservation targets, we believe we will facilitate further channelling of funds for conservation projects as we work towards no net loss.

With a wealth of Red Data Book species in South Africa added annually, we would like to extend our endangered species conservation work, supporting amazing organisations such as EWT. In particular, the Western Leopard Toad Underpass project, as this becomes a flagship species for urban conservation efforts. With the strong focus on biodiversity protection that has come out of the 2023 COPs, coupled with the UN's Decade of Ecosystem Restoration, we feel it is an opportune time to drive species conservation work.



***“Education is the foundation of conservation, and together they pave the way to a greener, more sustainable future, where nature’s wealth is measured not only in currency but in the harmony of our planet.”***







## NATURE CONNECT

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