

## **Time Travel/ Landscape Education Program Mamre**

### **Goals/objectives**

Awareness of the benefits of conserving the landscape for the property owners

Creating a platform for local youth to be able to experience environmental education outdoors

### **Facts**

The Dassenberg Coastal Catchment Partnership (DCCP) is a joint landscape initiative and partnership between the Wilderness Foundation, City of Cape Town, CapeNature, World Wide Fund for Nature – South Africa (WWF-SA), Table Mountain Fund (TMF), Cape West Coast Biosphere Reserve (CWCBR), South African National Parks (SANParks) and South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) and the surrounding communities of Mamre, Pella, Chatsworth, Riverlands and Atlantis. This initiative spans across two municipal boundaries (City of Cape Town and Swartland Municipality) and is located to the north of Cape Town in the Atlantis area of the Western Cape. The DCCP is an Environmental and Natural Resource Management initiative.

This proposed conservation area was already highlighted in the 1980's as an important conservation area and is still emphasised as a priority in CapeNature's (the provincial conservation authority for the Western Cape) Provincial Protected Area Expansion Strategy. In addition, the area was identified as a priority in the 2010 WWF-Table Mountain Fund Climate Change Adaptation Corridor study. As such this region is arguably one of the highest priority conservation areas in the country. It is furthermore highlighted on the Biodiversity Network (BioNet), the fine scale conservation plan for the City of Cape Town and is also acknowledged as a conservation area on the City's Spatial Development Framework.

The area is prioritised on the basis of **having extremely high biodiversity value**. This area encompasses **some of the most extensive critically endangered lowland habitat within the Western Cape** and is also the last relatively intact and ecologically functional area of Critically Endangered and poorly protected Atlantis **Sand Fynbos**, and includes Critically Endangered **Swartland Shale Renosterveld, Swartland Granite Renosterveld, Swartland Silcrete Renosterveld and Endangered Cape Flats Dune Strandveld habitat**. The area is also known to be a localised **hotspot of highly threatened and narrowly endemic plant species**. It is estimated that the corridor houses between 200-300 threatened plant species of which roughly 30% are endemic to the corridor and 60% endemic to within 50km of the corridor. There is however a **considerable risk that this unique area would suffer severe on-going degradation** and the extinction of multiple species if the habitat was to be lost.

**Urgent action is required in order to prevent the transformation of this irreplaceable biodiversity due to rapid agricultural and urban expansion.** Continual degradation of the area due to the proliferation of **invasive alien plants** and too frequent fires is also an ever increasing threat. Habitat loss is certain to continue without formal protection and management of this priority area and more extensive connectivity is required to maintain ecological functionality as well as to mitigate the effects of climate change. This initiative will catalyse negotiations with all land owners (including state, private, communal and local authority) within the defined area. The ultimate goal is to secure legal conservation status (in perpetuity) for priority areas, thereby increasing the conservation estate, contribute to national conservation targets and make the greater area more ecologically viable. The envisaged protected area includes or borders the impoverished communities of Atlantis, Mamre, Pella, Riverlands and Chatsworth. This large protected area has the potential to provide extensive socio-economic advantages to neighbouring communities.

Apart from the unique biodiversity present, **this area is also critical for Cape Town's water security as it contains the Witzands Aquifer protection zone**. The capital costs of replacing this water should the aquifer become degraded is estimated to be R300 million to build new pipe lines and pump stations or R800 million to build a desalination plant. The immense value of the aquifer as natural infrastructure is therefore considerable.

Furthermore this area is an excellent locality for skills development projects and economic development opportunities. Alien vegetation clearing alone, can create numerous jobs. Not only is this a critical biodiversity intervention, but the clearing will enhance the productivity of the aquifer.

Several recreation and tourism activities currently take place in the area and can be expanded on (e.g. Mamre Heritage and Wild Flower show). The area also lends itself for numerous potential recreation and tourism activities (including a possible site to reintroduce game such as Eland and Red Hartebeest and other species) with its close proximity to Cape Town.

The initiative aims to identify opportunities to secure formal conservation protection for all the land parcels identified within the project area. The ultimate goal is to proclaim all conservation worthy land in terms of the National Environmental Management Protected Areas Act (No. 57 of 2003).

➤ **Protect and promote the incredible natural and cultural heritage of the area**

- There are many highly significant cultural heritage features in the area.
- A large and ecologically viable area (potentially 30 000 ha)
- There is good potential to reintroduce game such as Eland and Red Hartebeest.
- Contains extensive high quality remnants of 3 Critically Endangered and one Endangered Vegetation types.
- Estimated that more than 200 threatened plant species occur in the Dassenberg Coastal Catchment corridor (30% endemic to corridor & 60% endemic within 50km of corridor).

## **A succinct history of the Groene Kloof.**

In this area, southern South Africa, the first homo sapiens developed about 200 000 years. The extremely high biodiversity in vegetation, plants, coastal resources and wild animals gave the best conditions for human growth. Hunter-gatherers have been living here for thousands and thousands of years. Among others, shell middens on the region's Atlantic coast show their presence. Pastoralists with cattle, sheep and goats arrived about 2000 years ago and changed the use of the landscape by their livestock.

In the mid-seventeenth century, Koina of the indigenous Cochoqua clan (of Chief Oedaso) (Gouraiqua) grazed their cattle and sheep among the green hills and in the dry coastal strip between Table Bay in the south and the Berg River in the north. They were nomads, whose portable houses were made of vegetable material. They lived mainly on dairy produce and therefore used the region's many fountains and streams to their best advantage. They also found sustenance in the natural vegetation, in the form of a variety of berries, fruits and bulbs. The area was also inhabited by elephants, buffalo, lions, leopards, hyena, jackal, etc., as well as many different kinds of antelope and birds, large and small.

The name 'Groene Kloof' (i.e. green valley) appears in the Dutch records by 1682, the reference being to the region's verdant appearance. Because of the range of hills that form the Groene Kloof, the region's rainfall is higher than that of the adjacent coastal strip. The Groene Kloof also has many fountains, and many of the present farms' names end in '-fontein.' The VOC annexed the Groene Kloof at the end of seventeenth to graze its own cattle and sheep. The Cochoqua clan moved north to avoid them, and shortly thereafter, probably because of the deadly smallpox epidemic of 1713, disappeared from the record.

In 1701 the VOC established a military presence in the Groene Kloof, that soon developed into a permanent settlement or '*buitepost*,' with a staff ('postvolk') that varied between twelve

and twenty. They built and occupied 'buitepost Groene Kloof.' Their tasks were (a) to guard the Company's hundreds of draught oxen, that were brought there in rotation to recuperate, after three months under the yoke (b) to guard the stock of the contracted butchers who supplied in the Company's needs for its ships, garrison and hospital. (The coastal strip from Geelbeksfontein to north of Blaauwberg, set aside for the contracted butchers, is therefore called 'Slagtersveld.') (c) to recover runaway soldiers and slaves (d) guard over and regulate the use of the salt pans in the Kloof. (e) carry mail and serve as a link between the Cape and other outstations like Saldanha Baaij, St Helena Baaij, Ganze Craal, etc. (f) accommodate and assist travellers, e.g. 'explorers', cattle traders, botanists, etc.

The outstation remained in use until 1791 and a government property until it was turned into the Moravian mission station in 1808. At nearby Juffrouw Louwskloof remained a Koina settlement under the headman Hans Clapmuts, of people who had served as labourers at the buitepost. For more information on the outstations referred to above, see D. Sleight: *Die Buiteposte*. Pretoria, 1993. PS The farm still called 'Juffrouw Louwskloof,' was first given in loan to the butcher Aletta van Brakel, the widow of Jacob Louw, in 1728.

### **Moravian mission**

In early 19<sup>th</sup> century the Groene Kloof had been government land for more than a hundred years. In 1806 the British took over the Cape and in 1807 they stopped the slave trade. 1808 the Moravians got the permission to establish the Moravian mission in Groene Kloof, the second Moravian mission after Grenadendal. There was a Khoi settlement at Juffrouw Louwskloof, former labourers of the outpost under chief Hans Clapmuts. Under the poplars of Louwskloof the first Moravian service was held on 27<sup>th</sup> March 1808.

The Moravians used some of the old outpost buildings for their mission. The church was completed in 1818. Other buildings followed. The name of the place was changed to Mamre in 1854.

The mission had quite many converts from the beginning, although several of the khoi resisted, including Hans Clapmuts. The mission allowed people to stay on the land of the mission and helped them to be close to self-sufficient. Most of these men worked as labourers on the farms and came back to the mission in the evening. When there was no work on the farms, the mission gave them some duties to survive. The mission promoted certain family values. They preached obedience, hard work, hierarchy and social order. At the mission, no alcohol, no swearing were allowed and monogamy. Men and women learnt how to read and write. The mission gave people a feeling of community, identity, being respected. The traditional khoi way of living had for long been lost but at the mission they could built up an identity, saving some of their traditions. Many were proud of the place. The mission became a haven for the Khoisan, a reminiscence for the khoi way of living. Farmers used the dop system and paid workers in alcohol, dop system. The Moravian mission became an alternative for the khoi.

## **Scenario, Groene Kloof, 27<sup>th</sup> March 1808, How to keep the valley green? Diversity in nature, diversity between people**

Life in the Gochoquas kraal is going on today as every day. Much is focused on grazing of the livestock, fetch water and edible plants. The women take care of the children and make some food. A new hut is needed and will be built. The khoi uses the landscape for their living as they have done for centuries.

But life has been challenging since the Europeans came. Hundred years ago this valley was green, with a rich diversity of species and game, almost an Eden for man. There were elephants, buffalos, lions, antelopes and a variety of plants and birds. But a century of intensive grazing has changed the landscape. Much of the game has disappeared, many of the plants might soon be gone forever. The Europeans have also started to plant new trees and bushes not understanding the consequences for the environment. The green valley is not as green as before. The Gochoqua clan is concerned. What will happen to the Green Valley?

Also the khoi way of living has changed. Most men are nowadays working as labourers on the farms. The khoi society is under economic pressure and the traditional lifestyle is shifting. Is our kraal the last one?

And even more Europeans are coming. The Gochoquas has heard that three Reverends from the Moravian church have arrived in Groene Kloof. They have received a large portion of land and use the buildings from the military post for their mission station. The first thing the Moravians must do is of course to pay a visit to the Gochoqua kraal and greet Chief Hans Klapmuts. The question is what they want, what will be the consequences of their presence in the valley? Do they want the khoi people to come to their mission and convert to Christianity? Will they offer some land close to the mission?

The people in the kraal are worried. There have been so many changes in the valley the last generation. And now these Moravians, what will happen? Is it a good idea to connect to the mission? Can we still keep our traditions and identity? Which is our way for the future? How do we keep this valley green and a good place to stay?

The Gochoquas are expecting a visit from the newcomers today, quite concerned but also curious.

### **Roles**

Khoe family members, boys and girls, women and men (labourers)

Hans Clapmuts, khoi chief

Moravian missionaries, Rev. Hallback, Rev. Korhamer, Rev. Kritzinger (wives?)

Explorer

Farmer

## **Key Questions**

How to keep the valley green? Our way for the future?

- What is the Khoi way of living for the future? The life in the kraals seems to be over. Stay on farms as labourers? Moravian mission? How do we keep our pride and identity?
- What is the advantage of biodiversity? What are the benefits for people in the area? How to ensure a sustainable landscape?
- What is the advantage of human diversity?

## **Activities**

- Monitoring the different plant species in a certain plot
- Make medicine of plants, pick edible plants
- Build a khoi hut
- Learn to write, khoi and English, word list
- Make a stew (tripe, vegetables), fried sheep head, biltong, fruit

## **Time Plan**

- 08.00 Set up the site
- 08.30 Registration of adults and learners
- 09.00 Welcome, background, dress up, scenario, rules
- 09.30 Initiation, song  
Arrival of Moravians, explorer and interpreter  
Activities  
A farmer is coming?
- 10.30 Gathering, food, presentations/ideas, decisions  
Prayer, khoi dance
- 11.00 Time Travel ends  
Evaluation
- 11.30 Clean up

11<sup>th</sup> April 2016

Natasja Davids, Cape Nature

Ebbe Westergren, Kalmar county museum, Sweden/ Bridging Ages

Annina Ylikoski, Region Ostrobothnia, Finland, Bridging Ages