

## GSSA Prestige Award for Sue Milton

*By: Timm Hoffman and Nicky Allsopp*

Prof. Sue Milton has been awarded the Grassland Society of Southern Africa's Prestige award for her outstanding research, teaching and outreach contributions over many years to the field of rangeland science.

This is a fitting award for someone whose research career spans more than 25 years, much of which has been spent in the Karoo. She is best known for her population ecology work in which she has studied the response of plant populations to a variety of impacts including harvesting, grazing, alien invasive plants and natural disturbances. Sue has worked in a variety of ecosystems but particularly in the arid zones of southern Africa.

She currently leads a number of innovative research programmes including several long-term studies on the ecology and restoration of Karoo and Renosterveld vegetation and an analysis of camelthorn woodland dynamics and biodiversity. Prof. Milton has an extensive and well-cited publication record in the peer-reviewed literature and together with her ornithologist husband Dr WRJ Dean, has published two important books on the Karoo.

Prof. Milton has taught at undergraduate and postgraduate levels at several South African universities and technikons over the last 10 years. Her innovative and passionate teaching style has enthused many young ecologists and conservationists. She supervises an impressive number of southern African postgraduate students and has contributed significantly to the field of rangeland science through these activities. Anyone who has been with Sue in the field will appreciate her encyclopaedic knowledge and ability to inspire.

Prof. Milton's outreach activities are varied and extensive. She has served as a member

of GSSA council and as Editor of the Society's Journal. She currently serves on a number of Editorial Boards and review committees for national and international organisations. Together with her students, Prof. Milton regularly attends annual conferences of the GSSA as well as several other local (e.g. the Arid Zone Ecology Forum [AZEFA]) and international meetings. She has played an important role at recent International Rangelands Conferences, organising workshops and theme sessions, presenting papers and delivering one of three final synthesis papers at the VIIth IRC conference in Durban in 2003.

Sue Milton finds time to lead an exciting field work course for children at the school in her home village, Prince Albert. She is well known to farmers in the Karoo and devotes considerable time to translating the outcomes of scientific research into easily understood, practical management options. Those who've heard her talk at conferences will agree that she has a rare talent for turning complex concepts into easily understood ideas without oversimplifying or losing scientific rigour.

Prof. Milton has made a substantial impact on the discipline of rangeland science and the GSSA is proud to be associated with the recognition of her achievements.



**Above:** *Sue Milton at the office*