

- Doubling the size of Namaqua National Park to 150,000 hectares (370,658 acres). This expansion connects the highest mountains of Namaqualand to the west coast of South Africa.
- This crucial connection includes a variety of ecosystems and gradients that will act as a corridor for species migration in response to climate change
- Creation of a small grants fund, called SKEPPIES, which promotes conservation through socioeconomic development. The fund has contributed to the creation of more than 452 new jobs and ensured better environmental management of 42,228 hectares
- Transitioning the management of the SKEP program to the South African National Biodiversity Institute — a government entity — to ensure the program's long-term sustainability.
- Creation of the 70,000 hectare Knersvlakte Conservation Area, renowned for its tiny succulents that emerge from the region's quartz fields, which provide life to 133 IUCN Red List plant species.  
Development of management plans and grazing guidelines for communally owned lands — a first for the region.
- Establishment of a stewardship program that has led more than 50 private and communal farmers to reduce their stock and follow grazing guidelines and alternative predator management strategies to restore and maintain these degraded high priority areas and threatened species.
- Expansion of the Oorlogskloof Nature Reserve, which has helped to secure local water supplies.

In the past decade, the Succulent Karoo's protected areas have increased by 90 percent, and 63 percent of vegetation types are now under some form of protection, 20 percent more than when the program began. There are still many difficulties to overcome in the Succulent Karoo; government cooperation and support needs to be strengthened, and responsible mining and restoration of degraded ecosystems continues to be a challenge across the region.

But all in all, what started as just an idea is now a mature program that has positively altered the lives of hundreds of people — demonstrating conservation as a land use rather than instead of land use in the rather than instead of land use in the most trying of arid conditions. I'm privileged and proud to be a part of this movement, and look forward to seeing what the next 10 years will bring.

*Tessa Mildenhall is the communications and operations manager for Conservation South Africa, a member of the CI affiliate*

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## Meet Dr Wayne F Truter - GSSA President

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**W**ayne is currently employed by the University of Pretoria as a senior lecturer and researcher in the Department of Plant Production and Soil Science. His field of specialization is Planted Pastures, Forage Crops and the application thereof in Land reclamation.

He currently manages various research projects for the Pasture Seed Industry, Water Research Commission as well as Mine-land Reclamation projects for Coaltech, the Coal Mining Research Association of the Chamber of Mines. He also heads the Land Rehabilitation Services Unit at the Business Division of the University of Pretoria.

He is responsible for the undergraduate teaching of Planted Pastures to 1<sup>st</sup> year Veterinary Students at Onderstepoort, as well as 3<sup>rd</sup> year Agricultural students at University of Pretoria, main campus. He also presents undergraduate courses in Environmental Resource Assessment and Monitoring as well as Turfgrass Management. Postgraduate training is also one of his responsibilities at the University, where he has trained approximately 20 post graduates. He currently supervises 3 Hons students, 10 MSc students and 2 PhD students in the fields of Planted Pastures, Irrigation of pastures, Land Reclamation and Rangeland Management.

Wayne has completed a BSc (Agric) in Animal/Pasture Science, an MSc (Agric) in Rangeland and Forage Science and a PhD in Integrated Environmental and Agricultural Sciences at the University of Pretoria.

During his postgraduate research, one of the components of his studies was the agricultural use of agricultural and industrial by-products (Waste), especially in land reclamation. This led him to become involved in the South African Coal Ash Association, of which he is the Vice-President.

Wayne has spent many years establishing environmentally acceptable methods of reclaiming and using these by-products in land reclamation, to ultimately re-vegetate these areas with selective planted pastures to improve the agricultural potential of these degraded areas. The science of Planted Pastures and their role in agriculture and land reclamation lies very close to Wayne's heart, and he has taken up the challenge together with other colleagues to revitalize this discipline in South Africa.

One of his most recent contributions is the role of pasture ley crops in conservation agriculture (no and/or minimum tillage systems). Wayne is involved in a few international research projects on Land Reclamation as well as Pasture development programs for the Dairy industry in North and South America and in Africa.

Wayne has published numerous times both internationally and locally, and also serves as an Associate Editor for the African Journal of Range and Forage Science. Wayne has been a member of the Grassland Society since 1999, and on Council since 2008, and is also a trustee of GSSA Trust. This surely shows his commitment to the Grassland Society of Southern Africa to maintain it as a renowned Society of our country.



**GSSA Trust**

**Our focus is to promote:**

- Development
- Student Participation
- Mentorship Programmes
- Growth for Young Scientists

The Council of the GSSA, as well as paid up GSSA members can apply for funding from the Trust for attending national and international congresses, or for other GSSA matters.

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