

SUCCULENT KAROO ECOSYSTEM PROGRAMME

SKEP

SUB REGION NAMIBIA

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME I

FEBRUARY 2005



“WHICH WE PERSIST IN DOING BECOMES EASIER – NOT THAT THE NATURE OF THE TASK HAS CHANGED, BUT OUR ABILITY TO DO HAS INCREASED”



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What is SKEP

What is SKEP

INTRODUCTION

Succulent Karoo Ecosystem Programme (SKEP) is the result of a one-year planning process, which combined a rigorous scientific process with broad land-user participation to identify and generate broad consensus around an ultimate vision and set of conservation targets for the Succulent Karoo.



Figure 1: Planning Workshop

This process was initiated in September 2001 and completed one year later. Conservation International's (CI) Southern Africa Hotspots Programme facilitated it. This formed part of Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund's (CEPF) preparation to expand its investment to the hot spot. Out of this workshop /planning, a vision were developed that "the people of the Succulent Karoo take ownership of and enjoy their unique living landscape in a way that maintains biodiversity and improves livelihoods now and into perpetuity."The team included scientific advisors and four coordinating organizations from the region. Because of this process, an ecosystem profile

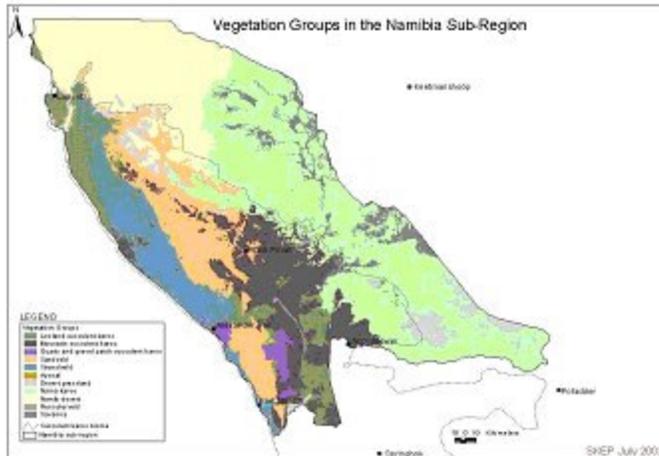
has been produced for the CEPF that identifies key areas for investment in this region.

UNIQUE APPROACH

SKEP pioneered a unique approach to conservation planning in South Africa by integrating high-level scientific expertise with socio-political, economic and institutional concerns.

DEFINING CONSERVATION OUT-COMES

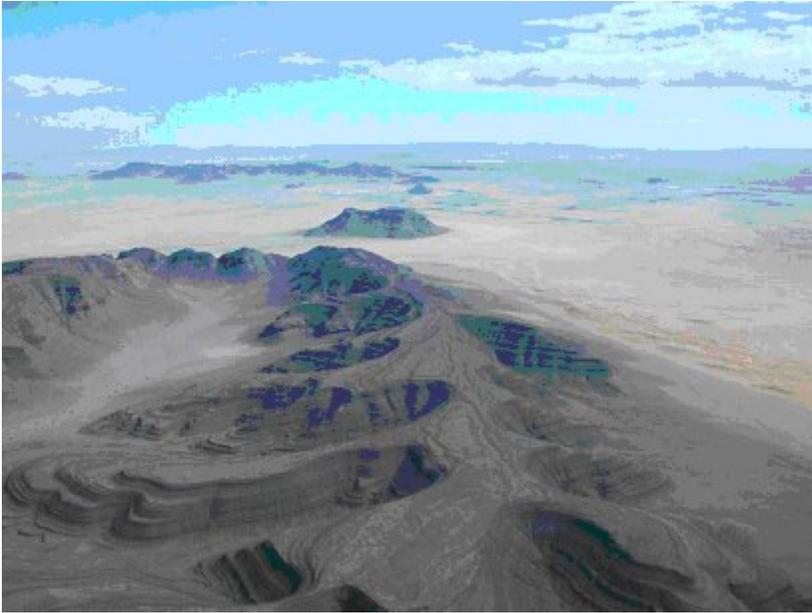
The 20-year conservation targets that have been identified thus far for the Succulent Karoo are: 75 percent of the conservation targets set in the SKEP process for 135 vegetation types will be protected and conserved.



Namibia veg groups

Key climatic gradients and riverine corridors are taken into consideration in the creation or expansion of any protected areas.

Globally threatened and endangered species listed in the Red Data sources will be under additional protection. Sites in the Succulent Karoo hotspot that house unique, endemic and globally threatened species will be identified and protected. After a more fine-scaled analysis, this will be formalized as conservation out-comes for the Succulent Karoo hot spot.



Arial view-Sperrgebiet

ABOUT THE NAMIBIAN SUB REGION

The SKEP programme in Namibia has first been administered and facilitated by the Economic Development Officer of the Karas Regional Council.



Leonora Joodt, that has been the Champion for the programme.

In 2003, a Coordination Unit has been established whereby Conservation International has employed a coordinator and an assistant. Coming from a total non-conservation background, but capacitated through the SKEP process, Kauna Schroder –Assistant Coordinator (left) and former Project Coordinator –Yvonne Adriaanse (right).



In 2002, a regional office has been established in Keetmanshoop and an Advisory Committee was selected. Stakeholders have committed themselves to support SKEP throughout the implementation and project design phase. The role of the coordinators was to facilitate the process of biodiversity conservation within the Succulent Karoo. After two years, SKEP Namibia had to identify their niche in order to have a clear vision for the future. Namibia Nature Foundation- NNF has been approached to host the SKEP programme in Namibia and after intense discussions an agreement has been reached in November 2004, that SKEP Namibia be hosted by NNF. This has been verbally confirmed on the 15 November 2004 during the visit of Conservation International Director for Southern African Hotspots- Sarah Frazee, SKEP Project Manager- Owen Henderson and the African Hotspot Grant Director of CEPF- Nina Marshall's visit to NNF's Director Dr. Chris Brown. The SKEP programme is hosted by NNF as from 1 January 2005 until 31 December 2007. However, a Project proposal for the funding of the programme is forwarded by NNF to secure funding for the SKEP Namibia Programme.

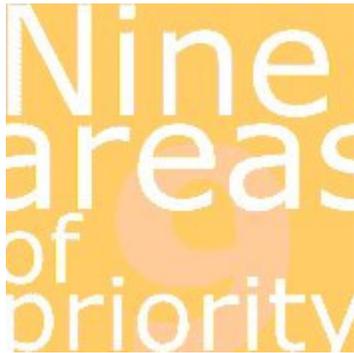
NNF was identified to host the SKEP Namibia Coordination Unit because their conservation and sustainable development mission and objectives are closely aligned with those of CI. In addition, the NNF runs a number of grant-making projects and has considerable experience in this area. The NNF will then be taking on the small grants component of SKEP for Namibia. NNF with the support of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET) will take responsibility to assist the SKEP Coordination Unit with Programme Implementation, in order to achieve its long-term goal to see that:

"biodiversity in the Succulent Karoo ecosystem in Namibia is effectively conserved and managed by the state and civil society through an integrated programme of conservation action and co-management of

conservation areas for the sustainable development of the region and for the improvement of peoples livelihoods".

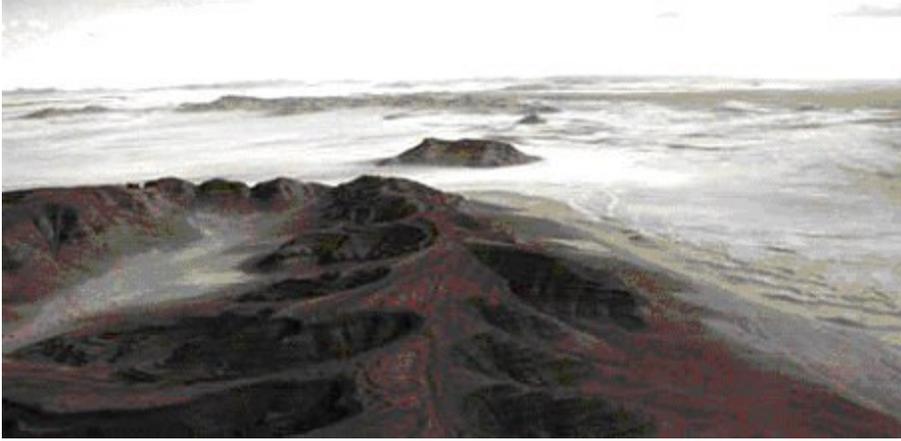
NNF has employed Ms. Kauna Schroder the Assistant Coordinator of the project since the 01 January 2005, as part of their commitment to this Programme. The position for the SKEP Project Coordinator is advertised, and will be filled shortly.

Sperrgebiet the Priority Area for Namibia Sub Region



The Succulent Karoo has nine geographical priority areas namely,

- Sperrgebiet
- Greater Richtersveld
- Bushmanland Inselbergs
- Namaqualand Uplands
- Central Namaqualand Coast
- Knersvlakte
- Hantam- Roggeveld
- Central Breede River Valley
- Central Little Karoo



SPERRGEBIET- A GEOGRAPHIC PRIORITY FOR BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

In every sub region a priority area has been identified due to its vegetation type/ geographical outcomes during the planning phase. In the Sub Region Namibia, the Sperrgebiet has been identified as one of the nine geographic priority areas in the Succulent Karoo Ecosystem Programme – SKEP.

Background on Sperrgebiet

For almost a hundred years, a 26 000km² piece of land in south-western Namibia has been closed to the citizens of Namibia and the rest of the world. Following the discovery of Namibia's first diamond near Kolmanskop in 1908, sole prospecting and mining rights were granted over an area stretching from the Orange River, in the south to just north from Luderitz (about 300km) and extending 100km inland from the coast. Although diamond mining was confined to the narrow diamondiferous strips along the coast and Orange River, general public access to the entire public license area was prohibited except with a special permit.

Years of diamond related security has provided de facto preservation, and today the Sperrgebiet is a pristine desert wilderness throughout much of its extent. Recently, large parts of the Sperrgebiet were de-proclaimed from exclusive diamond prospecting and mining licenses and the land have reverted to the status of un-proclaimed state land.

The Sperrgebiet lies within the Succulent Karoo Biome, which is globally recognized as an outstanding hotspot of unique biodiversity. Because of the fact that the area was off limits to most people and for

so many years there have been very few scientific surveys. The SKEP project aims to rectify this situation, by identifying and prioritizing conservation needs within the whole Succulent Karoo Biome, and in particular, in the Sperrgebiet.

The vast natural terrarium of the Sperrgebiet is of extraordinary high value in terms of biodiversity and tourism. The area forms one of the last major refuges for red data mammals. Over 700 plant species are believed to occur in the area, of which about 50 species $\pm 10\%$ are endemic to the Sperrgebiet. Dozens of highly restricted plants, some endemic to single mountains, may remain unclassified. We may expect this high plant endemism to be correlated with high insect endemism, through co evolutionary associations such as pollination and herbivory. Nine lichen species, all highly fog- dependent, are found there. The area also has fascinating and impressive fossil deposits dating from the Cretaceous period about 85 million years ago. On the 22nd April 2004, this areas proclamation has been approved by cabinet to be declared as a National Management Zone Park.

WHO IS NNF?

The Namibia Nature Foundation is a non-profit and non-governmental organisation (NGO). It operates under a Deed of Trust registered with the Master of the Namibian High Court, whereby its mission statement is that;

“The primary aims are to promote sustainable development, the conservation of biological diversity and natural ecosystems, and the wise and ethical use of natural resources for the benefit of all Namibians, both present and future.

The management of the NNF is based on a philosophy of interactive participation and partnership with Ministries within the Government of the Republic of Namibia, non-governmental organisations, community-based institutions, international bilateral and multilateral donors, the private sector, management staff and project executants, regional southern African organisations and international institutions. One cannot emphasize enough that it is because of this reasons that SKEP be hosted by NNF.

For more information, please visit www.nnf.org.na

FUTURE ACTIVITIES

On the 7-8 March 2005, a stakeholder workshop will be conducted by NNF, SKEP and the Ministry Of Environment and Tourism to inform stakeholders on the project and specific demo-sites. Another objective is to look at implementation arrangements for the Sperrgebiet NP and the stakeholder matrix. This opportunity will also be used to familiarize Small Grant Programmes within the NNF to the community in the Karas region with the Namibia Nature Environment Fund-NEF and UNDP/Small Grants Programme, as well as promoting the fund. More information on SKEP activities will be in Volume II.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Don't succumb to the difficult environment or situation you're in. Capture your environment, make a difference there, focus on what you can do, not what you can't do".

SKEP Contact details:

The Namibia Nature Foundation

4th floor Kenya House, Robert Mugabe Avenue

P.O.Box 245, Windhoek

Tel: + 264-61-248345; Fax: + 264-61-248344