



### **The Greater Simonsberg Conservancy**

The Greater Simonsberg Conservancy is situated in the heart of the Cape Winelands along the slopes of the iconic Simonsberg Mountain in Stellenbosch. The GSC was initially established under Cape Nature's Stewardship Programme as the Klapmutskop Conservancy in 2004, with five wine farms (Delheim, Elsenburg, East Hill, Le Bonheur and Warwick) all huddled around the Klapmutskop. It has now grown to 21 members in 2011 and is still growing! The farmland area currently covers a total of 4,866Ha with 1,562Ha designated under conservation (which is 32% of the total area). The GSC is situated in an area that has precious fragments of critically endangered Swartland Shale Renosterveld and Mountain Fynbos. Where there is a wide variety of fauna and flora, including critically endangered *Serruria pinnata*, endangered *Aristea lugens* and a large stand of *Aloe plicatilis*. Efforts in restoration of the natural environment have only been possible through sponsorship and landowner support.

The members are actively involved in conservation initiatives on their wine farms and since 2009 until now, when a full time Conservation Officer was employed to manage the conservancy, over 478Ha of alien invasive plants have been removed with the assistance of funding from Landcare. Further clearing is to continue in the years to come, as this is one of the major threats to water supply, fire management and conservation of biodiversity in the area. Other sponsorships from Cape District Winelands Municipality have assisted with the initial construction of an Environmental Education Centre on DelVera farm, which with anticipation will hopefully be open in June 2012. The EE Centre will be an asset to the community of Stellenbosch whereby a myriad of fun activities for school children focusing on key environmental weeks, together with interactive displays and information will be accessible to the public free of charge.

Other projects that the GSC co-ordinate is fire management, eco-tourism, skills training, rehabilitation, consulting and provision of conservation services. Eco-tourism activities are linked to various service providers, such as horse riding by Equine Sports Centre and hiking and mountain biking through Dirtopia trail centre, where permits are available to the public. We encourage public participation, whereby 25% of the permit fees are ploughed back into conservation. The GSC is also involved in active fire management through integrated landowner cooperation, together with firebreaks and staff training. Uncontrolled veld fires are a great threat to biodiversity and is of a great concern to the landowners, who co-ordinate efforts with Stellenbosch Fire Protection Association, Cape Nature and CDWM in controlling run-away fires.

Partnerships with BWI (Biodiversity and Wine Initiative), CDWM, Landcare, Cape Nature, Stellenbosch Tourism and WESSA have been beneficial in the establishment and development of the GSC and further partnerships and support are welcomed. The GSC is one of the few conservancies in the Western Cape that is actively managed by a Conservation Officer and it seeks to deliver professional conservation services to its members and aims to transform this unique part of the Cape Winelands into a pristine natural landscape, which will hopefully become an iconic eco-tourism route for the wider community to enjoy and benefit from.

If you would like further information and partnership/funding opportunities, please visit the website at: [www.simonsbergconservancy.co.za](http://www.simonsbergconservancy.co.za) or contact Georgina Thomas at: [conservancy@delvera.co.za](mailto:conservancy@delvera.co.za) or at: 079 276 3638.

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**MEMBERS:** De Goede Success; Delheim; DelVera; Dirtopia; East Hill; Elsenburg; Glenelly; Kanonkop; Knorhoek; Laibach; Le Bonheur; Muratie; Quoin Rock; Remhoogte; Rustenberg; Thelema; Tokara; Uitkyk; Warwick; Wiesenhof

Klapmutskop Renosterveld Conservancy:  
PBO Ref No 930 023 258  
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Member of: Western Cape Conservation Stewardship Association - Cape Fox Awards Winner 2007



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