



OUR JOURNEY ON THE LANDSCAPE

PAST | PRESENT | FUTURE



Living Lands Section 21 Not-for Profit Company

**We are a proud partner of Commonland and work according to the
4 Returns® framework.**

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FOREWORD

As the Members of Living Lands, we invite you to come along on a journey of reflection and celebration of the past, as well as envisioning the future. Since our inception, collaboration and creating long-lasting alliances continue to drive our efforts in working on living landscapes. Every day, Living Lands strives to build a culture of positivity, encouragement, growth and inspiration to achieve sustained impacts. We have seen small acts of kindness carry great significance. An interesting conversation with a landscape resident or kind message to a partner has proven to have long-lasting effects on our relationships and as a direct result, the landscapes we nurture.

It is this collective vision that continues to shine through in everything Living Lands does. Over the years, we’ve interacted with a wide spectrum of people who continue to help us build an understanding of global land degradation challenges and

prototype sustainable ways of addressing these challenges locally. But it is evident our approach has always been unique. When faced with day to day challenges, Living Landers let the landscape take the lead. In other words, the people who live in the area and the natural environment itself informs our work. We refuse to take an arms-length approach to facilitate and enable living landscapes. Making things happen on the ground, listening to the landscape and adapting to changes is what defines us. Living Landers walk the talk, and it is this essential outlook which has continued to empower the landscapes, as well as the people who serve them.

This has not only brought life into our working relationships but also encouraged individuals to recognise their own values and potential within their roles. Our approach truly seeks to meet each individual where they are and as a collective address chal-

lenges head-on. We pride ourselves on always being and continuing to be humble team players with the ability to lead by example. And this past decade would not have been what it is without our strong collaborations and partnerships. For that reason, we are extraordinarily thankful towards all partners for their intention, involvement, and interest throughout the years. Some of our shared experiences in the landscape have included active rehabilitation in the Baviaanskloof and Langkloof. Not to mention, the establishment of the Baviaanskloof Hartland Bewarea and Baviaanskloof Hartland Implementing NPC. Along with this, we have facilitated knowledge exchange events, ranging in topics from farm level riparian rehabilitation, to new financial mechanisms for investing in ecological infrastructures in the Cape Town Catchments. Our diverse collection of complementary projects allows an ongoing, holistic presence on the landscape, with the ability to adapt to changing environments.

We have been given room to listen and grow, try, fail, and try again to continuously better ourselves. This has made the ultimate difference to our own growth and experience and assisted in our work for actions with maximal impact. We are proud of our past, and even more excited about our future. We will continue to work towards the sustainability and measurability of our impacts whilst continuing to be an awesome organisation to work for.

This annual report presents our journey through its many challenges and successes. We invite you to join us in appreciating this snapshot of our incredible path. And above all, we commend the Living Landers, who are active on the landscapes, for their dedication and are delighted to be celebrating this with you.

Living Lands Members:

- Mr. Dieter van Den Broeck (Chair)

Mr. Japie Buckle

Ms. Rienette Colesky

Ms. Thelani Grant

Dr. Rudolf de Groot (Non-voting)
- (Commonland, Living Lands Co-founder)

(DEA, Natural Resource Management)

(Gamtoos Irrigation Board, CEO)

(Living Lands, Landscape Innovator)

(Wageningen University, Professor)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report reflects on the remarkable Living Lands journey since its beginning. It is intended to celebrate and summarise the successes, failures and future of Living Lands and give thanks to everyone involved in making the journey unforgettable.

The report draws attention to the founding Living Lands vision for the rehabilitation of degraded landscapes with a strong focus on innovation and the implementation of new ways of thinking. The activities that take place on our three core landscapes; the Baviaanskloof, Langkloof and Cape Town Catchments, include Landscape Mobilisation, Landscape Facilitation, Knowledge Brokering, Landscape Innovation and Business Development.

All work on the landscapes are guided by our overall vision of collaboration and principles of openness and continuous learning. Additionally, work is implemented with The Living Lands Approach which integrates the building blocks of Theory U and Commonlands' 4 Returns model. This has effectively helped unify the organisation in order to gradually expand from only mobilisation-related activities to now include facilitation and implementation.

Prominent successes over the years include the facilitation of the first Participatory Restoration of Ecosystem Services & Natural Capital, Eastern Cape (PRESENCE) workshop in 2007, the launch of the Baviaanskloof Development Company and the establishment of field offices for Living Landers to work from in all three landscapes. The report also emphasises the importance of continuous learning and adapting to changing conditions. Some of which include the ending of activities in the Sneeu Berg and the closure of the PRESENCE Learning Village, giving rise to the PRESENCE Learning Network.

The recent global COVID-19 pandemic is but one of the challenges that have urged the organisation to drive a vision for change ever further. Overall, Living Lands and the landscapes we work on have shown great resilience and growth which is set to continue into the future.

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INTRODUCTION

At the start of the Living Lands journey, ecological rehabilitation was a foreign concept. Fast forward to today and we now find ourselves surrounded by like-minded partners. Our vision is becoming more and more prevalent and was further highlighted by The United Nations (UN) in 2019. With their declaration announcing 2021-2030 as the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, the fight to protect and nurture natural ecosystems is greatly recognised. This poignant call to action aims to "prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems worldwide" - a cause we hold close to our hearts.

We work towards a future where people complement their environment and vice versa. This report presents an overview of the journey which has brought us to this point in time and inspired us to continue the work. Together with this reflection, we provide a summary of ongoing activities on our three landscapes, our Living Landscape Approach and the principles which guide our work.

Over the years, we have adapted and learned by gradually expanding from only mobilisation-related activities to include facilitation and implementation. Now, we are exploring how to transform opportunities on a landscape into business concepts to address specific needs. There is not only a drive for social learning and change processes with stakeholders, but a strong focus on innovation and the implementation of new ways of thinking. We acknowledge that the real substance lies in the details and day-to-day actions. And as such, this summary represents a backbone onto which every past and current Living Lander can add their own individual experiences.

OUR VISION

We would not be where we are without our shared vision of:

“Collaborations working on Living Landscapes”

When we speak about **‘Collaborations’** we mean working together to solve a common challenge and co-creating solutions based on collective understanding, trust and respect.

The power of **‘working on’** a living landscape means to have your feet planted in the ground and to work with total awareness of your context and the needs of the landscape.

‘Living Landscapes’ refers to a variety of healthy ecological, agricultural and social systems, which are managed to

OUR PRINCIPLES

Guiding principles help us align our vision to maintain a consistent approach for all landscapes and the people they serve.

The following beliefs are integral to how we operate as a unified organisation:

- We believe that in order to create collective action, you need to build social capital
- Our work is dynamic and based on continuous learning
- We strive to have an open heart and mind
- We practice deep listening and do not impose preconceived ideas
- We value an informal yet professional approach and enjoy getting to know the people we work with.

Whilst these principles help connect us, we often juggle seemingly contradictory elements in our work. Rather than make presumptuous decisions, we listen, learn and respond to changing conditions.



A BRIEF HISTORY

We are an organisation which exists through the actions of motivated individuals, evolving over time through listening, learning and applying the knowledge shared by the landscapes that we live in and work on. Even so, to understand how we grew to where we are now, we need to reflect on where it all started.

About 13 years ago, among the hillslopes of the Kouga mountains, a group of friends and fellow students envisioned their future. The Living Lands seed was planted. Equipped with a vision to affect change, the Living Landers called on everyone they knew in the area. In trying to bring researchers and implementers together, our initial milestone was reached in 2007 with the first Participatory Restoration of Ecosystem Services & Natural Capital, Eastern Cape (PRESENCE) workshop in the Baviaanskloof. It was in this moment we identified research gaps and discovered what was really needed for us to properly start the journey to rehabilitate degraded landscapes. After which, our vision of knowledge transfer and restoration started to come alive. We registered Living Lands as a non-profit company in 2008 and established the PRESENCE Learning Village research station at the Kouga Dam. With that, our first landscape-wide project, Water for Food and Ecosystems was ignited.

Our journey continued, from Thicket rehabilitation on farms in the Baviaanskloof to expanding mobilisation and implementation to the Sneeuberg, Langkloof and Cape Town Catchments. With growth and long-term impacts at the core of our vision, we've been fortunate to work through existing platforms such as the Thicket Forum and the Upper Breede Collaborative Extension Group. We've also supported the

establishment of the Baviaanskloof Development Company and the Algoa Water Fund to further facilitate a lasting presence.

One of our most notable achievements was being able to develop landscape offices for Living Landers to work from. This milestone is something we still value greatly as it gives us the ability to live and work within the context of the land. Because of this, we're able to understand the environment around us and address its needs in the most appropriate way.

It's evident we've experienced many successes. But most crucially, we've endeavoured to learn from our failures. Even as the Living Landscape Approach was nurtured and properly cultivated in 2011, we still went through ups and downs. We had a major increase in rehabilitation implementation under the Coca Cola project in 2016 and in 2017 we made a few changes as our beloved PRESENCE Learning Village closed its doors, giving rise to the PRESENCE Learning Network. We also ended activities in the Sneeuberg. However, we recently secured funding for upscaling activities in the Baviaanskloof - a feat we are very proud of as this allows us to support the process of large-scale rehabilitation.

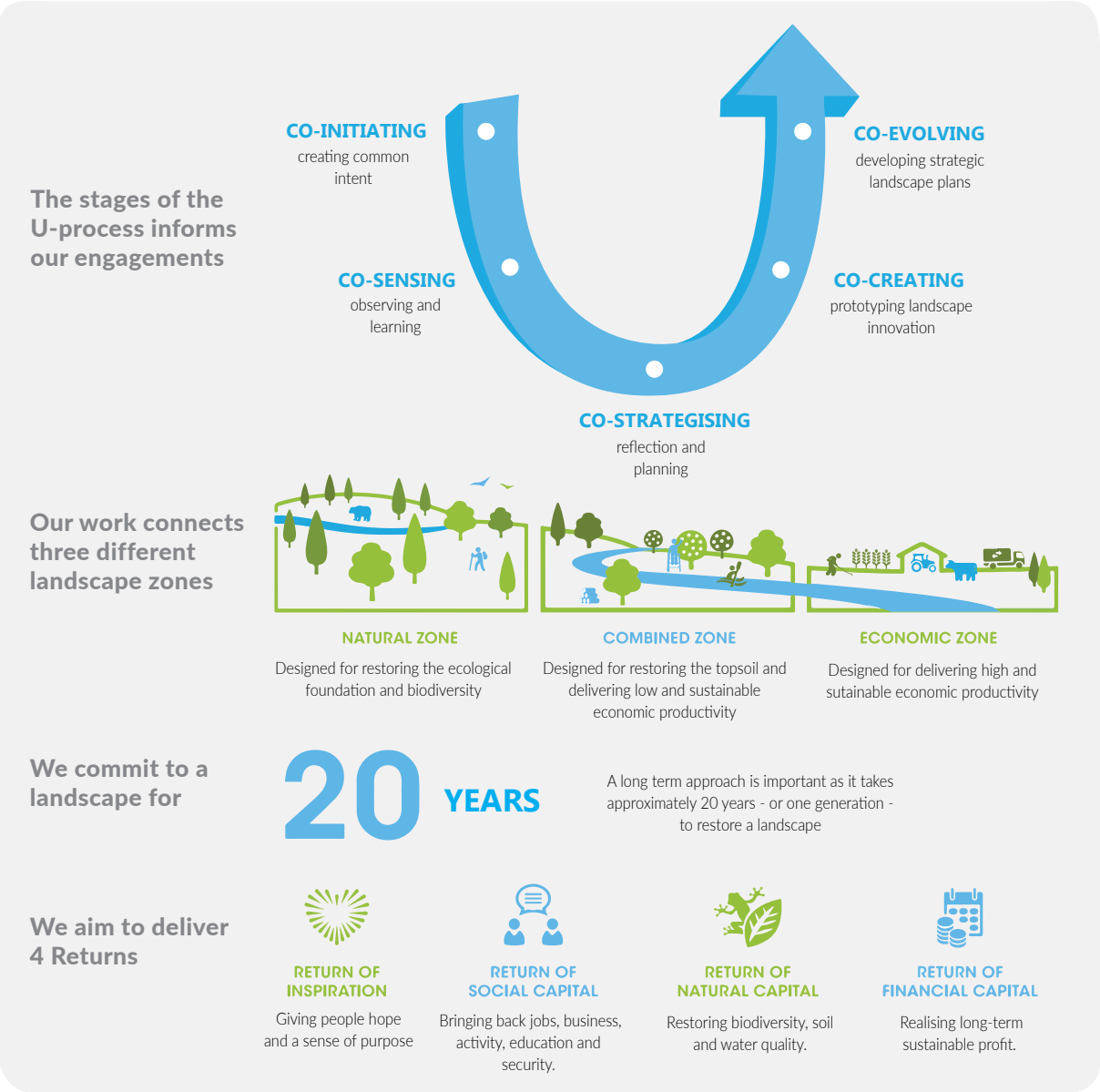
Overall, we've had the opportunity to prototype and finetune our work and organisation to address the dynamic challenges on the landscapes. But without all our past endeavours, we wouldn't be where we are today. Our team would not have grown to where it is now, and we wouldn't have these amazing opportunities to drive our vision for change even further.

The journey most definitely continues!

THE LIVING LANDSCAPE APPROACH

As an organisation, we facilitate social learning and change processes to implement new ways of both thinking about and doing socio-ecological rehabilitation. We see ourselves as facilitators. That is to say, we enable Living Landscapes through establishing collaboration to sustain people’s livelihoods and the environments they depend on. As every landscape is a work in progress, our approach is one we’ve nurtured over many years and streamline on a consistent basis. Our approach integrates the building blocks of Theory U and the 4 Returns. Theory U

was developed by the Presencing Institute at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and the 4 Returns framework by Commonland. Our approach combines bottom-based and top-guided processes to facilitate social learning and collective action. It builds ownership and willingness and is supported by an integrated effort of both government and the private sector to implement and establish policies and programmes. A knowledge and evidence base is developed which informs the programmes and policies that arise out of the process.





WHERE WE WORK AND WHAT WE DO

We are active in the Eastern and Western Cape of South Africa. More specifically, in the Baviaanskloof, Langkloof and Cape Town Catchments. Our work and projects are diverse, as are the landscapes and the people we work with. The central vision of collaborating with different stakeholders towards rehabilitating degraded socio-ecological landscapes is integral to every aspect of our work. To follow is a brief snapshot of each landscape, including the current work we are involved in.

THE BAVIAANSKLOOF



Situated between the Kouga and Baviaanskloof mountain ranges lies the Baviaanskloof valley. Over the years, we have worked to build social capital in the area. Our collaborations with the local farming community has resulted in large-scale rehabilitation and regenerative agriculture programmes and supported the economy of the area.

THE LANGKLOOF



The Langkloof, comprising the Kouga and Kromme catchments, lies to the south of the Baviaanskloof. As an important agricultural area with a diversity of ecosystems, people and long history, our involvement focuses on understanding the dynamics of the area and supporting land management in a way that is appropriate to the area. Our work has supported sustainability in the local honeybush industry and combines this with invasive species management.

THE CAPE TOWN CATCHMENTS



The Cape Town Catchments are vital water sources for the Western Cape and also provide important agricultural, environmental and industrial value. However, invasive alien vegetation, river bank erosion and pollution by industry and residents threaten the catchments. We work to develop innovative rehabilitation projects that enable improved functioning and resilience of the land.

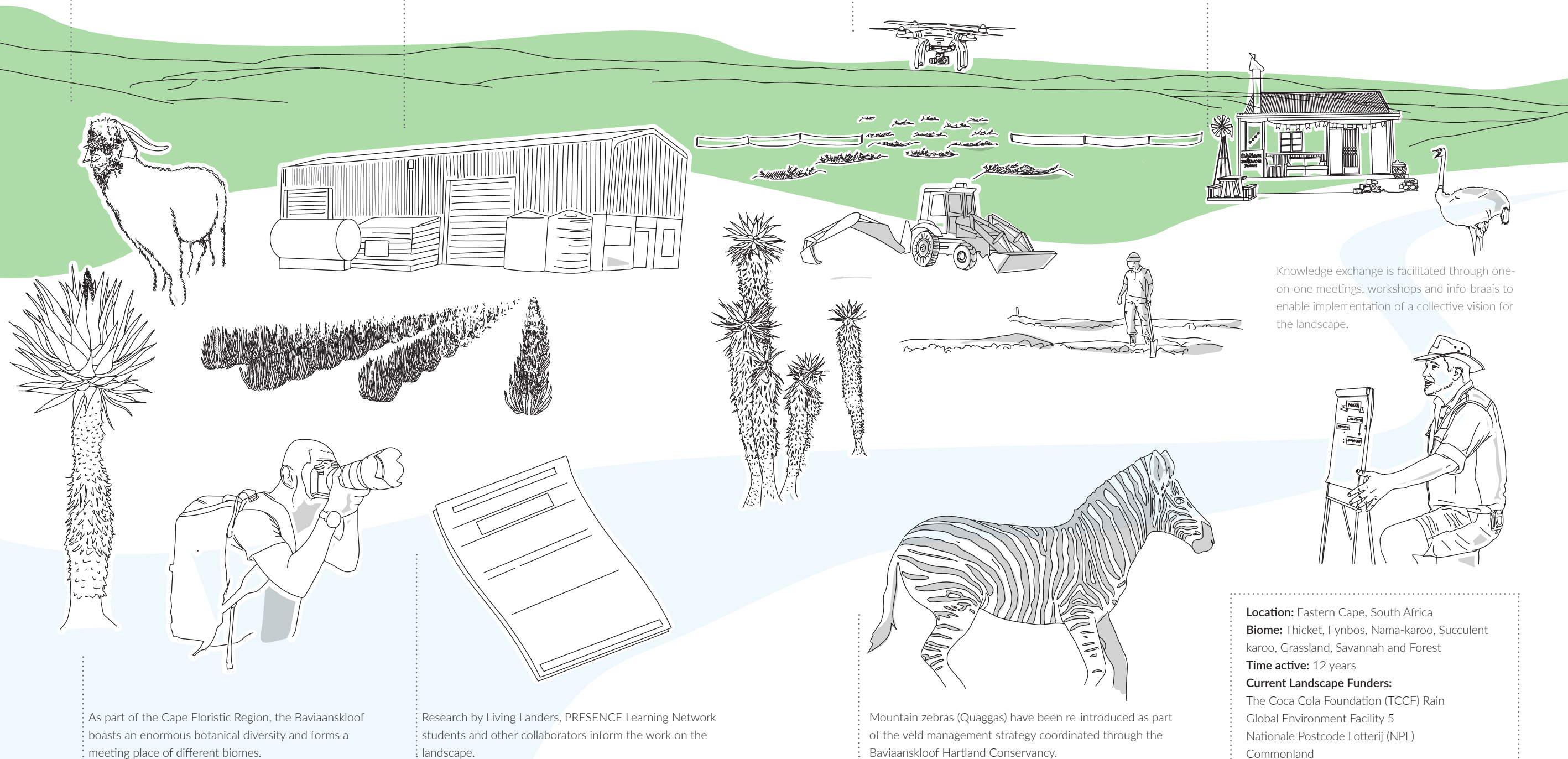
THE BAVIAANSKLOOF

Goat farming for mohair has been the largest agricultural export from the Baviaanskloof for decades. Overgrazing by goats has led to erosion and decreased water retention of the hillslopes.

The Baviaanskloof Development Company is cultivating and processing lavandin and rosemary for essential oils as an alternative to goat farming in the area.

The ongoing ecological rehabilitation of hillslopes are being monitored and evaluated to assess short-term and long-term impacts. Drone technology is being used to establish vegetation cover.

Tourism plays a major socio-economic role in the Baviaanskloof. It is a popular destination for motorcyclists and aspiring astronomers as the night's sky makes for perfect star gazing.



As part of the Cape Floristic Region, the Baviaanskloof boasts an enormous botanical diversity and forms a meeting place of different biomes.

Research by Living Landers, PRESENCE Learning Network students and other collaborators inform the work on the landscape.

Mountain zebras (Quaggas) have been re-introduced as part of the veld management strategy coordinated through the Baviaanskloof Hartland Conservancy.

Knowledge exchange is facilitated through one-on-one meetings, workshops and info-braais to enable implementation of a collective vision for the landscape.

Location: Eastern Cape, South Africa
Biome: Thicket, Fynbos, Nama-karoo, Succulent karoo, Grassland, Savannah and Forest
Time active: 12 years
Current Landscape Funders:
 The Coca Cola Foundation (TCCF) Rain
 Global Environment Facility 5
 Nationale Postcode Lotterij (NPL)
 Commonland



Julia and Luyanda collecting data from a rain gauge



Silt traps installed to prevent further soil erosion



Angora goats and their Anatolian Shepherd



Nicoleen Jacobs on site with her brushcutting sectors

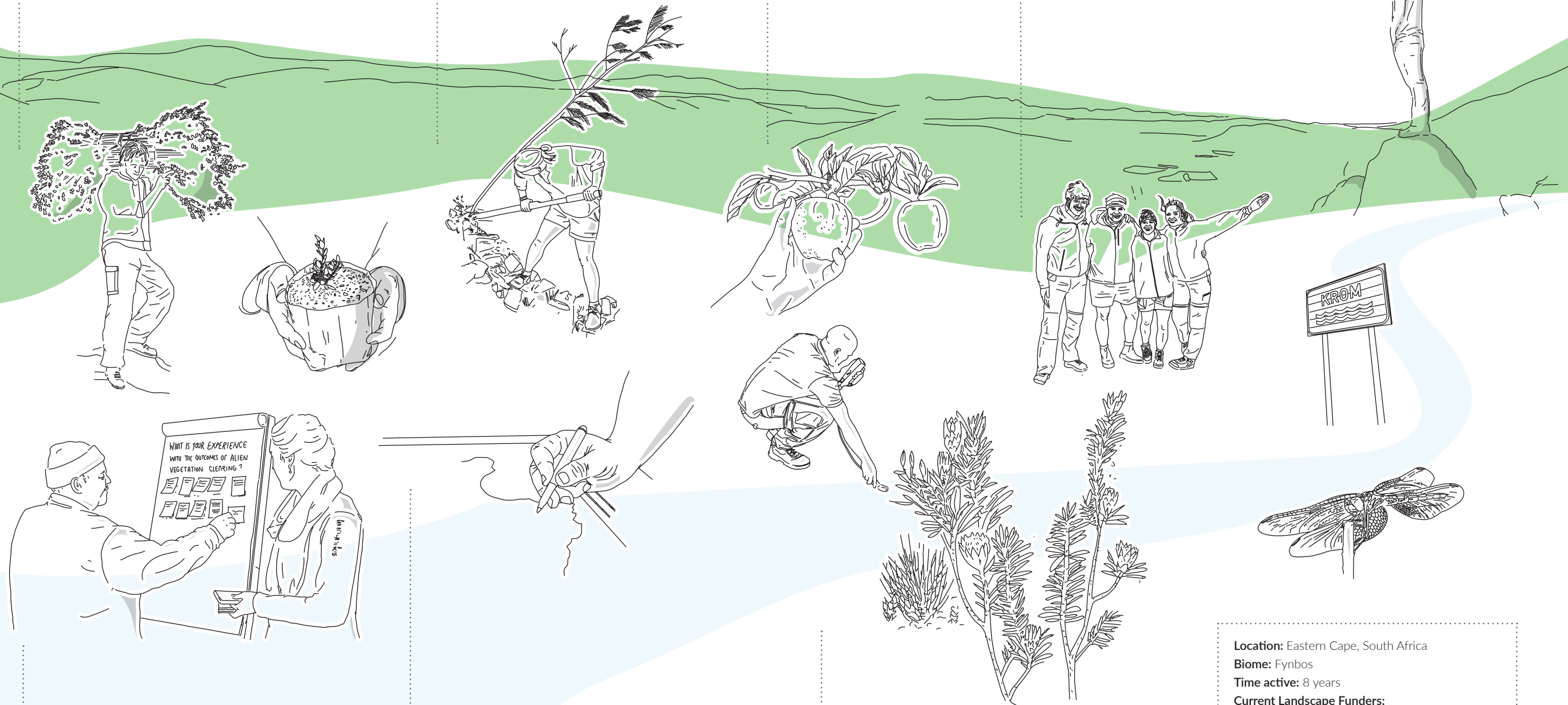
THE LANGKLOOF

The harvesting of honeybush is engrained in the history of the Langkloof. The Sustainable Honeybush Programme is ensuring that honeybush and the surrounding fynbos is managed with the future in mind.

Different techniques are being tested to clear alien vegetation and rehabilitate riparian habitats.

The Langkloof is an important agricultural region known for pome fruit production

Hosting students, researchers and interns allows us to explore and build a knowledge base of the ecological and socio-economic landscapes within the Langkloof.



Social capital is built through engaging with local residents, practitioners and business owners. This allows us to co-develop contextually relevant interventions.

The Algoa Water Fund has been established to support the coordination of investment in catchment management and ecological infrastructure.

Holistic veld management is being trialled, encompassing the diverse activities on the landscape from alien tree management to honeybush augmentation, while ensuring continuous knowledge exchange.

Location: Eastern Cape, South Africa
Biome: Fynbos
Time active: 8 years
Current Landscape Funders:
 Commonland
 The DOEN Foundation
 WWF Nedbank Green Trust
 The Coca-Cola Foundation



Exploring the extent of invasive alien vegetation



Matt and local farmers discussing honeybush cultivation



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The Tsitsikamma Mountains



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Landscape surveying

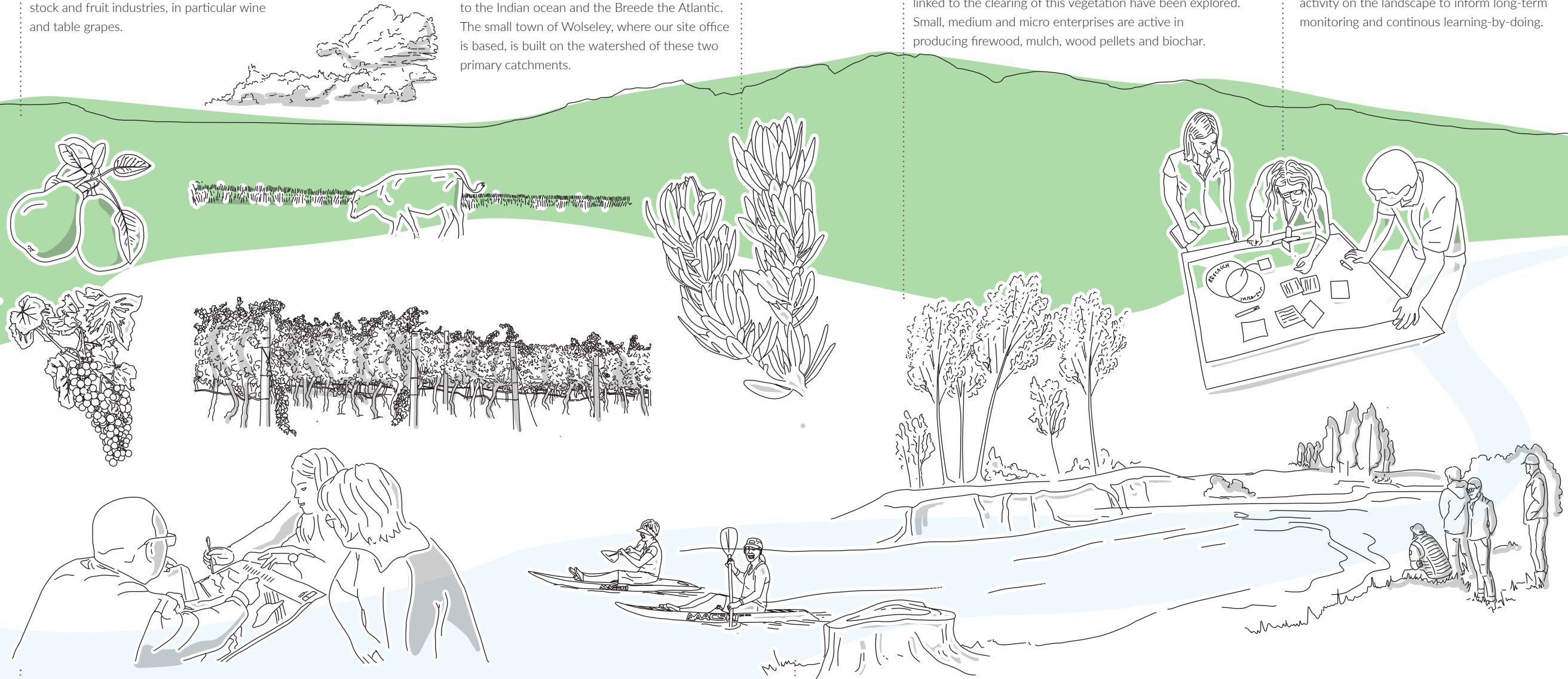
THE CAPE TOWN CATCHMENTS

The Berg and Breede are active agricultural rivers which provide water for the grain, live-stock and fruit industries, in particular wine and table grapes.

Both the Berg and Breede rivers are fed by the Boland mountains, however the Berg river runs in to the Indian ocean and the Breede the Atlantic. The small town of Wolseley, where our site office is based, is built on the watershed of these two primary catchments.

A major threat to the health of the catchments are the spread of invasive alien vegetation. Value added-industries linked to the clearing of this vegetation have been explored. Small, medium and micro enterprises are active in producing firewood, mulch, wood pellets and biochar.

Facilitating knowledge exchange between researchers and implementers is a key activity on the landscape to inform long-term monitoring and continuous learning-by-doing.



We fulfill the role of Secretariat for the Upper Breede Collaborative Extension Group which is a hub for collaboration and knowledge exchange aimed at coordinating socio-ecological interventions in the area.

Riparian rehabilitation is crucial for riverbank stabilisation after alien vegetation clearing. This also improves river quality which is very important for the tourism industry linked to both the Berg and Breede rivers.

Location: Western Cape, South Africa

Biome: Fynbos

Time active: 6 years

Landscape Funders:

LandCare - Dept of Agriculture

Water Research Commission



Wenzie and Otto facilitating knowledge exchange for the Western Cape Biodiversity Spatial Plan



The Berg River Dam in Franschhoek



MiniSASS in the Berg River



Soil health workshop to inform riparian rehabilitation practices in the Breede catchment

WHO WE ARE

LANDSCAPE TEAM & CARETAKERS

The Landscape Team applies the Living Landscape Approach on a daily basis engaging in activities related to Landscape Mobilisation, Facilitation, Innovation, Knowledge Brokering and Business Development. This includes our management team, who embody the role of Caretakers in the organisation. Caretakes play an important dual role in ensuring the wellbeing of fellow team members whilst also providing managerial oversight.



Ancia Cornelius
Langkloof



Luyanda Luthuli
Baviaanskloof



Matt Sephton
Langkloof



Pienaar Du Plessis
Cape Town



Roderick Juba
Langkloof



Justine Rudman
Baviaanskloof



Thelani Grant
Langkloof



Elwin Malgas
Baviaanskloof



PW Erasmus
Chief Financial Officer



Melloson Allen
Baviaanskloof



Sanell Bothma
Bookkeeper



Liezl Kruger
Non-Executive Director



Liz Metcalfe
Langkloof
Landscape Coordinator



Justin Gird
Baviaanskloof
Landscape Coordinator
Strategic Director



Marijn Zwinkels
Cape Town
Landscape Coordinator
Managing Director

BAVIAANSKLOOF BEWAREA REHABILITATION TEAM

The team, informed by Landscape Innovation activities, who implement various ecological rehabilitation practices in the Baviaanskloof and Langkloof. The team is employed by the newly established Baviaanskloof Hartland Implementation NPC (BHI).



Michael Jack
Baviaanskloof



Nicoleen Jacobs
Baviaanskloof



Shelton Maarman
Baviaanskloof



Trevor Filander
Baviaanskloof



Valerie Visser
Baviaanskloof



Michael Ruiters
Baviaanskloof



Piet Windvogel
Baviaanskloof



Brian George
Langkloof



Sebastian George
Langkloof

RESEARCH ASSOCIATES

Researchers and industry professionals who inform our work through their diverse expertise and often collaborate on specific projects on the landscapes.



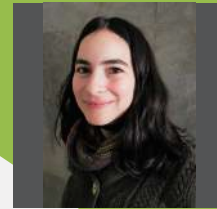
Dr Jessica Cockburn
Rhodes University



Dr Nicola Favretto
Leeds University



Dr Julia Glenday
SAEON



Ancois de Villiers
Stellenbosch University

THE PRESENCE LEARNING NETWORK



PRESENCE Learning Network internships offer students and recent graduates the opportunity to gain experience through working on the ground and contributing to the landscape. The type of work will depend on the requirements of the landscape at the time of the internship. From large-scale assignments to multiple smaller responsibilities, our internships require significant flexibility. Living Lands mentors work with our interns to adapt to the landscape’s needs and we require all interns to embrace ever-changing tasks and requirements with ease.

Internships are offered for a minimum of 3 months, up to a maximum of 6 months. This period allows interns to settle into the area and subject matter and to produce a substantial piece of work. Start and end dates are agreed upon by the intern and the Living Lands mentor.

See Available Internships at www.presencelearning.network and follow the application process described below.

1



Please fill in the enquiry form for us to determine if a suitable internship position is available.

2



If your enquiry fits with our requirements, you will be assigned a potential mentor who will arrange and carry out an interview with you over Skype.

3



If the interview is successful, you will be asked to complete a detailed information form and pay a deposit.

4



Arrival dates will then be mutually agreed upon and pick up transportation from the airport will be organised.

5



Once you arrive at the landscape, your tasks will be discussed and you'll get started! Final payment is required prior to finishing the internship.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Living Lands continues to attract funding and support for the various projects from both local and international funding organisations who have similar goals and objectives, meeting and enhancing the vision of Living Lands. These include the South African Government, the private sector, landowners and international bodies.

Project funding for the year 2020 grew by 36% (Table 1) and while this supports the work on the landscape and organisations’ overheads, the bulk of the income is dedicated to the successful implementation of the projects on the ground. The staff and operational budgets are drafted each year by the Directors and approved by both the Caretakers and Members. In 2020 there was an increase of 5% on salaries while operational costs increased by 2.6% during the year. Table 1 reflects an overview of the growth in these areas of expenditure for the period 2018 to 2020.

While not a requirement in terms of South African Law, as Living Lands we elected to have our financial statement audited on an annual basis to ensure that all transactions reflect the true status of the organization and are accurately captured. Hudson Accounting are the current auditors and have produced the unqualified Audited Financial Statements and audit report as at February 2020. Living Lands is fortunate to reflect a healthy set of accounts as indicated in Table 2.

Table 1: Overview of salaries, operating and project costs

	SALARIES	OPERATION	PROJECTS
2018	R3,355,894	R6,386,18	R4,409,559
2019	R4,282,243	R763,287	R6,423,248
2020	R4,503,013	R961,380	R7,095,748

Table 2: Living Lands' accounts for 2018 - 2020 (Audited annually by Hudson Accounting)

	EQUITY AND LIABILITIES	PROFIT/LOSS	RETAINED INCOME
2018	R2,974,874	R257,691	R2,757,793
2019	R10,098,674		R2,405,915
2020	R16,940,118	R2,385,525	R4,791,440





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to thank all our partners and collaborators, without whom Living Lands would not exist. A special thank you to our long-term landscape partner Commonland. The landscape informs the work we do, and we will continue to work towards a reality where people and the natural environment complement each other to enable a living landscape.