

REPORT: WWF-SA HANGKLIP CORRIDOR PROJECT

WWF-SA has recently reached a final phase in its Hangklip Corridor Project within the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve (KBR), between Pringle Bay and Betty's Bay. The project has the following main aims:

- Protection of biodiversity in a core area of the Cape Floral Kingdom.
- Creation of an ecologically functional corridor from the mountain tops to the sea as part of the KBR and incorporation of this corridor in the core zone of the KBR.
- Prevention of progressive urban sprawl which would have led to eventual merging of Pringle Bay and Betty's Bay. *Inter alia*, this protected both aesthetic- and property values in the region.

The area concerned is indicated on the map at the end of this report. The project elicited much interest not just in the communities of Pringle Bay and Betty's Bay, but also amongst all who have sound management of the KBR at heart. The project was conducted over a twelve year period from 1998 to 2010. While it is not appropriate to mention the negotiated prices for the various small-holdings acquired during the course of the project, it can be divulged that a total amount of some R13 million was involved.

Initial funds were donated in 1998 by the Brodie Family who reside in London, but who have an enormous interest in nature conservation in Africa. Bernard Brodie was a generous supporter of a number of WWF projects and after his death his wife, Rita with her family, wanted to recognize these contributions in tangible manner. This led to the purchase in 2000 of the small-holding 'Koppie Alleen' (Portion 162 of the original Hangklip Farm 559) by WWF-SA – (see the area bordered in yellow on the map below). It was renamed the Brodie Link Reserve and a memorial plaque for Bernard Brodie was mounted on a rugged piece of Table Mountain Sandstone at a spectacularly beautiful spot overlooking both False- and Walker Bays. The donation was made on condition that the 94ha thus acquired should be registered in the name of WWF, so that it could not be alienated. WWF-SA came to an agreement with Cape Nature that the Brodie Link Reserve would be managed by them as part of the KBR. In 2001 the Brodie Link Reserve was enlarged through the purchase of an additional 22 ha of adjacent land (559/115), from a Mr. André Esterhuizen.

In 2005, a property of substantial ecological importance came on the market following the death of its owner, Mr. John Mudge, who was also an avid nature lover. To their regret, his family was forced to put these 294 ha - including the iconic Hangklip Peak, on the market – (see the area bordered in green on the map below). There was substantial interest by estate agents in this property and Overstrand Municipality feared that sub-division would lead to a process of urban creep and hence eventual merging of the Betty's Bay and Pringle Bay townships. Intensive negotiations and a fund-raising drive by WWF-SA followed and in 2006, they were successful in also purchasing these 294 ha for purposes of incorporation in the "Hangklip Corridor". The funds for this purchase were generously provided by the 'Trellis Trust', which has special interest in the protection of mountain environments. The Mudge family contributed by accepting a lower price than originally envisaged.

However, reference to the map below clearly indicates that the Brodie Link Reserve and the former Mudge land, were virtually divided by Portion 161 of 559 – some 69ha. WWF-SA and the Trellis Trust believed that an effort should be made to acquire this portion as well for incorporation in the “Hangklip Corridor”. Investigation showed that 161/559 belonged to Mrs. Gemma van Schaardenburgh and negotiations with her and her family were initiated in 2007. Very fortunately, the van Schaardenburghs are a highly conservation orientated family and fully supported the objectives of the Hangklip Corridor Project. However, Mrs. van Schaardenburgh has a beautiful home and pottery studio on the lower portion of this property and, understandably, wished to retain these. Substantial efforts were therefore made to arrange sub-division so she could retain ownership of her house and the lower portion of the erf. These efforts were scuppered by intransigence on the part of the Department of Agriculture, who said that sub-division of agricultural land was not acceptable, even though this property was not used for active farming and was highly relevant to nature conservation. After much further negotiation it was agreed that WWF-SA should purchase the entire property and that Gemma van Schaardenburgh would continue living in her house in terms of a life usufruct agreement. Again the Trellis Trust generously provided the necessary funds and Gemma van Schaardenburgh agreed to a purchase price in keeping with the funds available to WWF-SA.

In conclusion the question must be asked whether the ecologically functional corridor from the mountain tops to the coast in the area covered by the KBR can be regarded as being permanently protected. In this context, two areas are of vital importance.

Firstly, the area bordered in orange, is a conservancy which incorporated exceedingly interesting environmental features such as the Blesberg climbing dune, and which stretches to the sea. The conservancy is known as ‘Seafarm’ and is exceedingly well run. This is of obvious importance to the integrity of the Hangklip Corridor.

Secondly, the area bordered in purple represents a nature conservation area run and managed by Overstrand Municipality. This is of equal importance to the integrity of the Hangklip Corridor. It will therefore be highly appropriate for WWF-SA to enter into negotiations with Overstrand Municipality aimed at ensuring its permanent protection.

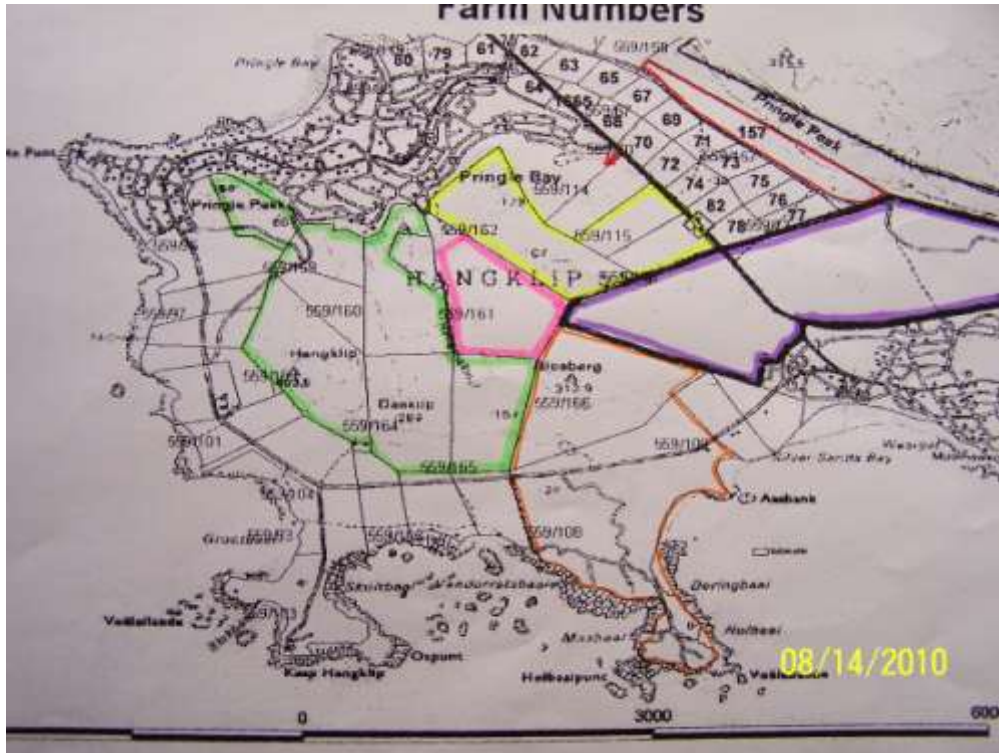
Formal discussions between WWF-SA and the Seafarm Conservancy and Overstrand Municipality, therefore still need to be conducted. These will form the final steps of the Hangklip Corridor Project.

Finally, great appreciation is expressed to all who participated in this project and who made its successful completion possible. These include: Rita Brodie and her family; the Trellis Trust; the Mudge family; the van Schaardenburgh family; Councillor Louis van Heerden of Overstrand Municipality for his support throughout the project; Cape Nature, who administer the land acquired as part of the core zone of the KBR; many others who were involved one way or another.

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Map indicating various stages of the WWF-SA Hangklip Corridor Project

Yellow: Brodie Link Reserve (acquired 1998-2001) (94 + 22ha = 116ha)

Green: Mudge Property (acquired 2005-2006) (294ha)

Pink: Portion 161/HangklipFarm 559 (acquired 2010) (69ha)

Orange: Seafarm Conservancy (259ha)

Purple: Municipal Conservation Area (±330ha)

The total current functional area of the Hangklip Corridor: ± 1068ha