

Uilenkraal Forest Restoration Project

2025-2026 PROJECT REPORT



Bodhi Khaya

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Through our Forests for Life programme, we form long-term partnerships with small-scale, local organisations and provide support to plant trees, restore forest and woodland habitats, manage critical catchment areas, and improve the lives of communities that rely on forest resources in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Since 2011, Greenpop has implemented forest and landscape restoration projects across **four countries**, with **290,524 trees** planted across **147 hectares**. Over this period, we have collaborated with **15 implementation partners** in Sub-Saharan Africa and are currently actively implementing three projects. This annual project report focuses on one of those **three projects**: the **Uilenkraal Forest Restoration Project**.

A collaboration between Tree Liberation Front, Platbos Conservation Trust, Bodhi Khaya Nature Retreat, Bodhi Forest, Kleinbos, and the Greenpop Foundation, the **Uilenkraal Forest Restoration Project** aims to enhance land management in the Uilenkraal Valley, just outside Gansbaai, Western Cape, South Africa. The project seeks to restore **66 hectares** of degraded forest patches in the Uilenkraal Valley, across the Platbos Forest, Bodhi Khaya Nature Retreat, Bodhi Forest, and Kleinbos Farm through alien vegetation management, natural regeneration, and tree planting. To date **162,645** indigenous saplings have been planted. The expected outcomes of this project include climate change mitigation, improved soil quality and stability, increased species biodiversity, reduced alien invasive vegetation, and increased community income.



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INTRODUCING THE UILENKRAAL FOREST RESTORATION PROJECT

The Uilenkraal Valley forests, nestled near Gansbaai in South Africa's Western Cape, represent Africa's southernmost forest ecosystem. This ancient landscape – spanning Platbos Nature Reserve, Kleinbos, Bodhi Khaya, and Bodhi Forest – hosts relic trees over 1,000 years old and supports a remarkable diversity of plant and animal life, including the elusive Cape leopard, bushbuck, and endangered western leopard toad.

Located on the Baviaanspoort Hills between Hermanus and Gansbaai, these forests survive in deep, sandy, alkaline soils with relatively low rainfall (≈ 650 mm/year). This challenges conventional forest ecology, as most forests require moister mountain ravines or riverbanks.

Historically, these forests have endured centuries of degradation from agriculture, invasive alien vegetation, and wildfire, leaving only fragmented patches of indigenous woodland, making the protection and restoration of Uilenkraal Valley's unique biodiversity critically important.

Since 2011, Greenpop has partnered with Tree Liberation Front, Platbos Conservation Trust, Bodhi Khaya Nature Retreat, Bodhi Forest, and Kleinbos, to restore and expand these forest remnants. Our efforts focus on removing invasive species, planting indigenous trees from our dedicated nursery, and re-establishing ecological corridors between forest patches.

As of February 2026, over **162,000** trees have been planted across more than **66 hectares**, with annual highlights including the Reforest Fest, which brings together communities to plant thousands of trees in a single weekend.

By restoring the Uilenkraal Valley forests, Greenpop is not only safeguarding a living relic of South Africa's natural heritage but also enhancing biodiversity, improving water and soil health, reducing fire risk, and contributing to climate change mitigation for generations to come.



INTRODUCING THE PROJECT PARTNERS

THE GREENPOP FOUNDATION

The Greenpop Foundation NPC is a leading environmental non-profit organisation (NPO#: 151-411 NPO; PBO#: 930050622) based in Cape Town, South Africa. We are on a mission to educate for action.

As an antidote to eco-anxiety, we aim to inspire enthusiasm and build capacity for positive environmental action. Our work is diverse. We provide technical and financial support for reforestation and urban greening projects. We craft creative eco-education curriculums and awareness campaigns. We run engaging nature-based events and experiences. From getting our hands dirty running local projects to consulting for global organisations, we turn ideas into impact.

Greenpop was founded in 2010 and has since worked across Sub-Saharan Africa and empowered thousands of people around the world to get active (not anxious) about the future of our planet.



PLATBOS FOREST RESERVE

Platbos Forest Reserve has engaged in forest restoration activities for the past 20 years, creating a semi-permanent job market within the forest restoration sector. This initiative stimulates local communities by providing additional income and fostering a broader understanding of the value of forest restoration within the local context. As the southernmost forest in Africa, protecting Platbos is crucial for preserving the natural heritage of all South Africans and ensuring the forest's continued survival, which will help mitigate the local impacts of climate change.

BODHI KHAYA NATURE RETREAT

Bodhi Khaya intends to manage the reforestation of the original species of the coastal sand forest that once thrived on the land. The goal is to rehabilitate the degraded farmland with reforestation and regenerative farming practices up to where the original forest meets the fynbos.

INTRODUCING THE PROJECT PARTNERS

BODHI FOREST

Bodhi Forest, owned by Georgina Hamilton, is a property situated between Platbos Forest Reserve and Bodhi Khaya Nature Retreat. It contains patches of indigenous forests and fallow agricultural land in need of restoration. The work conducted on this property will complement ongoing restoration efforts within the Uilenkraal Valley through active indigenous tree planting and the completion and maintenance of a firebreak, which protects both Platbos Forest and Bodhi Forest.

KLEINBOS

Kleinbos is located at the top section of Platbos. With the new owner's (Jo Fuller) interest in contributing to restoration activities in the Uilenkraal Valley, Platbos has extended the existing firebreak onto Kleinbos. This delineates the line between fire-prone fynbos habitats in the top section and the forest in the bottom section. The firebreak stretches across three properties partnering with Greenpop to conduct restoration-related work, allowing the extension of Platbos Forest to its historic extent, considering the changes within the burning and non-burning communities in this area.



THEORY OF CHANGE

WITHIN OUR UILENKRAAL FOREST RESTORATION PROJECT, WE...

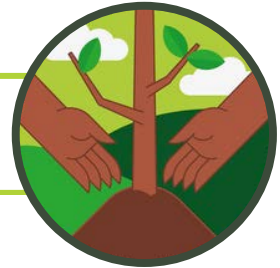


PROVIDE FUNDING TO 3 LANDOWNERS IN THE UILENKRAAL VALLEY



CONDUCT TRANSPARENT AND EFFECTIVE MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND REPORTING

SUPPORT LANDOWNERS IN FOREST LANDSCAPE RESTORATION BEST PRACTICE



SO THE LOCAL LANDOWNERS CAN...

PLANT TREES
(ACTIVE
RESTORATION)

MANAGE NATURAL
REGENERATION
(PASSIVE RESTORATION)

MANAGE ALIEN
VEGETATION &
WILDFIRE

ESTABLISH RESTORATION-
RELATED EMPLOYMENT



**GROW
TREES**

IN DEGRADED
FOREST PATCHES



PROTECT FORESTS

FROM THREATS SUCH AS
DEGRADATION AND WILDFIRE

INCREASE KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND
INCOME



**EMPOWER
PEOPLE**

TO STEWARD THEIR
ENVIRONMENT &
SUPPORT THEIR
FAMILIES

IN ORDER TO...

**RESTORE HEALTHY &
SUSTAINABLE FOREST LANDSCAPES**

ALIGNMENT WITH LOCAL & GLOBAL GOALS

UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)

Our work contributes to SDGs 13 (Climate Action) and 15 (Life on Land) through the restoration of forest ecosystems which are vital in combatting the impacts of climate change.



STRATEGIC PLAN FOR FORESTS (2017-2030)

Our work contributes to the Strategic Plan's Goal 1: Reverse forest cover loss & Goal 2: Enhance forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits by restoring forest ecosystems and working with local communities to identify economic opportunities related to forest restoration and conservation.



UN DECADE ON ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION

Our work contributes to Goal A - The integrity of all ecosystems is enhanced, with an increase of at least 15 per cent in the area, connectivity and integrity of natural ecosystems, supporting healthy and resilient populations of all species - of the UN Decade by strategically planting indigenous trees to restore connectivity to degraded forest ecosystems.



BONN CHALLENGE

Our work contributes to the Bonn Challenge's goal to bring 350 million hectares of degraded and deforested landscapes into restoration by 2030 by restoring degraded forest landscapes.



10 NYDF GOALS

Our work contributes to the global effort aimed at bringing 350 million hectares of land under restoration activities by 2030 #5 "Restore forests" by restoring degraded forest landscapes.



AFR100

Our work contributes to the AFR100 goal to bring 100 million hectares of land in Africa into restoration by 2030 by restoring degraded forest landscapes



DFFE 10 MILLION TREES PROGRAMME

Our work contributes to the DFFE initiative to plant 10,000,000 trees across South Africa to restore degraded forest ecosystems and landscapes.



KUNMING-MONTREAL GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK

Our work contributes to Goal A: Protect and Restore of the KMGBF by restoring degraded forest landscapes and educating local communities on the importance and benefits of protecting natural ecosystems.



PROJECT LOCATION

The Uilenkraal Forest Restoration Project is located near Gansbaai, Overberg, Western Cape, South Africa.

GPS: 34°33'41.1"S 19°26'51.9"E

View our interactive map on explorer.land.



Map of the 23 sites under restoration in Uilenkraal Valley

OUR RESTORATION APPROACH

PLATBOS

Platbos is a dry forest on nutrient-poor soils, requiring specific conditions for recovery. Over the last century, the forest has adapted to survive, with anthropogenic climate change posing additional challenges. The restoration approach at Platbos Forest Reserve involves managing alien vegetation, supporting natural regeneration, and planting indigenous seedlings harvested from the forest interior. Each spring, newly germinated seedlings are collected and nurtured in the forest nursery. After two years, they are replanted at the start of the rainy season using a dryland planting technique.

The most common adaptation to site conditions is called "facilitation," where trees grow in communal clusters around decaying stumps. This technique involves digging a 700mm x 700mm pit, creating a berm to capture runoff, and filling the pit with wood chips from cleared alien vegetation. Saplings are planted at the pit's edge, aiming for a closed canopy to cool the soil and suppress alien vegetation germination. High-density planting patterns are based on observations of natural forest recovery. As young stands grow, they thin themselves, facilitating further recovery through natural regeneration. Active tree planting serves as a critical "kick start" for forest recovery. Each year in spring, the Platbos staff harvest the newly germinated, naturally regenerated forest seedlings from the forest floor and rear them in the forest nursery. After 2 years, they are ready to be replanted to expand the forest. This tree planting happens at the start of the rainy season to ensure the best survival probabilities



OUR RESTORATION APPROACH

BODHI KHAYA

Bodhi Khaya is located on former agricultural land where approximately 40 hectares of afro-montane coastal sand forest once occurred, much of which was cleared for cultivation. The restoration approach at Bodhi Khaya aims to rehabilitate these degraded fields back to coastal sand forest, using a combination of alien vegetation management, natural regeneration, and the active planting of indigenous seedlings sourced from the Platbos forest nursery. As at Platbos, newly germinated forest seedlings are harvested in spring from the forest floor, reared for two years in the nursery, and then planted out at the start of the rainy season using the same dryland planting technique to maximise survival.

On Bodhi Khaya, this technique is applied to rebuild forest structure along the interface where the historic forest once met the surrounding fynbos, helping to re-establish ecological gradients and habitat connectivity. Alien stands on and around the restoration blocks are systematically cleared and chipped, with the resulting mulch used in the planting pits to improve soil moisture retention and add organic matter to the nutrient-poor sands. The project also emphasises employing and training local labour in restoration methods, building practical skills and creating a stronger link between livelihoods, land rehabilitation, and long-term conservation of the valley's forest habitats.



OUR RESTORATION APPROACH

BODHI FOREST

Bodhi Forest is a privately owned property situated between Platbos Forest Reserve and Bodhi Khaya Nature Retreat, with a mosaic of remaining indigenous forest patches and fallow agricultural land now earmarked for restoration. The restoration approach here mirrors the broader Uilenkraal model: clearing invasive alien vegetation, protecting and expanding existing forest fragments, and planting indigenous seedlings produced in the Platbos nursery using the dryland planting method developed and refined since 2011. In 2025, the FFL9D site on Bodhi Forest became a key focus area, positioned between the Platbos nursery and earlier planting blocks to help strengthen the emerging corridor of restored forest across the valley.

A critical component of work on Bodhi Forest is the development and ongoing maintenance of a shared firebreak that protects both Bodhi Forest and the adjacent Platbos forest from high-intensity wildfires driven by dense alien stands and fire-prone fynbos. Within cleared blocks, alien biomass is chipped and incorporated into the pits used for cluster planting, mimicking natural nutrient pockets and supporting rapid canopy closure to shade out alien regrowth. Through this combination of fire management, alien clearing, and cluster planting, Bodhi Forest plays an important role in expanding the effective forest edge and stitching together previously isolated restoration sites across the Uilenkraal landscape.

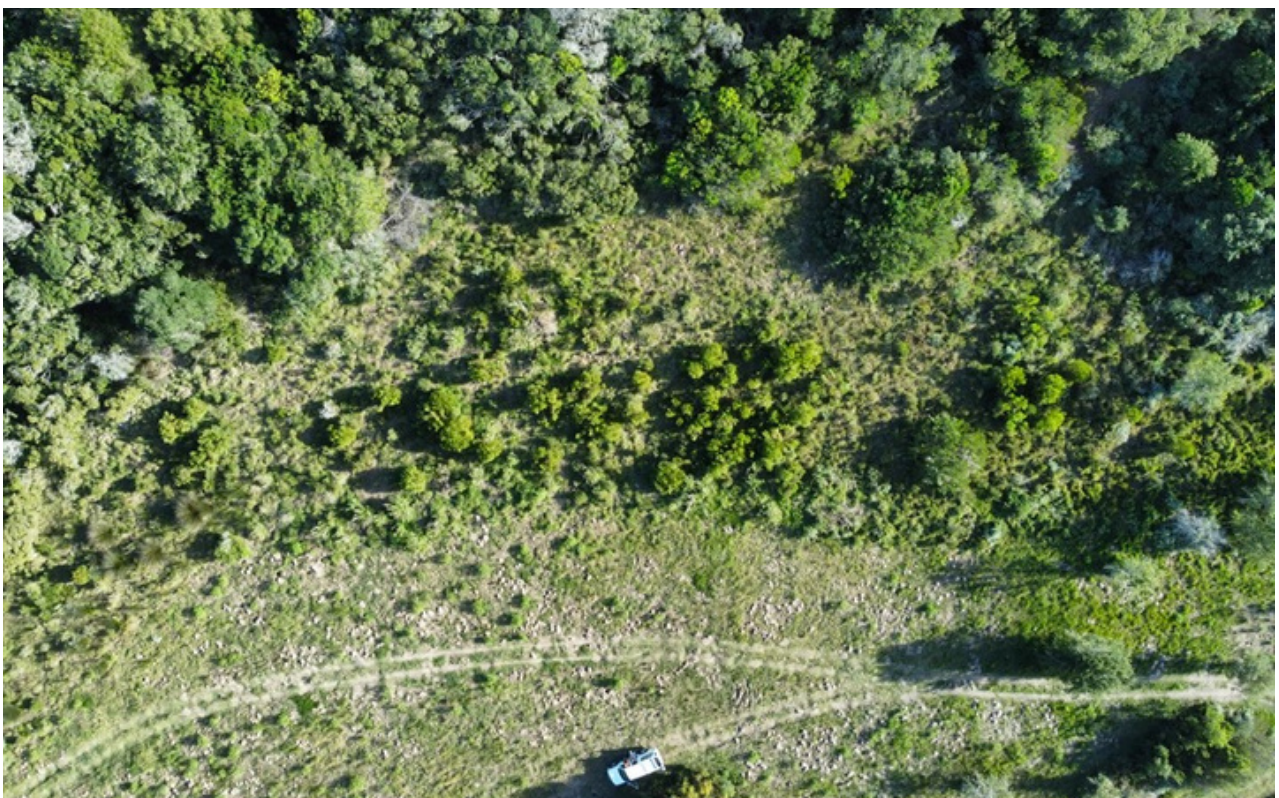


OUR RESTORATION APPROACH

KLEINBOS

Kleinbos is located on the upper slopes above Platbos, where fire-prone fynbos grades downslope into forest, and has recently been brought into the project by a landowner committed to restoration. Restoration activities on Kleinbos build on the Platbos model by extending the existing firebreak upslope across the property, clearly delineating the boundary between the burning fynbos system and the non-burning forest below, and creating a safer buffer for restored forest patches. The first 5,000 trees were planted on Kleinbos in 2023, with ongoing planting and alien vegetation management planned as part of the valley-wide restoration strategy.

As on the other properties, indigenous seedlings propagated from naturally regenerated Platbos forest seedlings are planted in clustered pits filled with chipped alien biomass, using the dryland planting technique to cope with low rainfall and sandy, nutrient-poor soils. By combining firebreak management, alien clearing, and high-density cluster planting, Kleinbos helps to extend the Platbos forest towards its historic extent and improves connectivity between burning and non-burning habitat types in the upper catchment. Over time, this approach is expected to support natural regeneration, increase forest cover and structural complexity, and further reduce landscape-scale fire risk across the Uilenkraal valley.



COMMUNITY & STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Due to the private ownership of the Platbos Forest Reserve, Bhodi Khaya, Bodhi Forest, and Kleinbos properties, there are no “traditional” community engagement activities as part of this project. However, local community members are employed through the restoration activities undertaken as part of the project as well as across the properties for a variety of roles and responsibilities.

The Uilenkraal Forest Restoration Project is a direct beneficiary of Greenpop’s annual **Reforest Fest**, which annually invites 1,000 members of the public to the Valley for a restoration festival which plants 5,000+ trees. While not traditional community or stakeholder engagement, this experience facilitates conversations about restoration and educates the public on the work being done in the Uilenkraal Valley.



PROJECT STATUS

The primary focus of the Uilenkraal Forest Restoration Project involves activities such as alien vegetation clearing and management, the development and maintenance of firebreaks, and the annual planting of up to 20,000 indigenous trees. Since the project's inception, it has expanded from just the Platbos Forest Reserve to include the nearby properties of Bodhi Khaya, Bodhi Forest and Kleinbos with new activities being extended onto the neighbouring Strandkloof property in 2026. The addition of these properties has enabled the project to create greater connectivity between the degraded and disparate forest patches that remained in the Uilenkraal Valley after decades of deforestation and degradation. The addition of these properties has also enabled the expansion of restoration activities, thereby creating further employment opportunities for local communities, and the trialling of innovative approaches such as grazing livestock to help manage alien vegetation.



MONITORING & EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Monitoring and evaluation tools for the project include vegetation and soil monitoring methodologies, satellite data, fixed-point photography, Fixed plot photography and records maintained by project managers (e.g., purchase and activity records). Vegetation monitoring was conducted by Greenpop's Monitoring Team using the latest Greenpop Monitoring and Evaluation guidelines. This involves baseline monitoring, the establishment of fixed plots before planting, and consecutive assessments of vegetation growth, health, and cover. Additionally, fixed-point photographs are captured by the Greenpop Monitoring Team to visually document changes in the landscape over time. Out of the field, Greenpop is able to access satellite data to determine indicators such as the Normalised Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) for the site over time, through the Restor platform.





2011-2025 IN NUMBERS

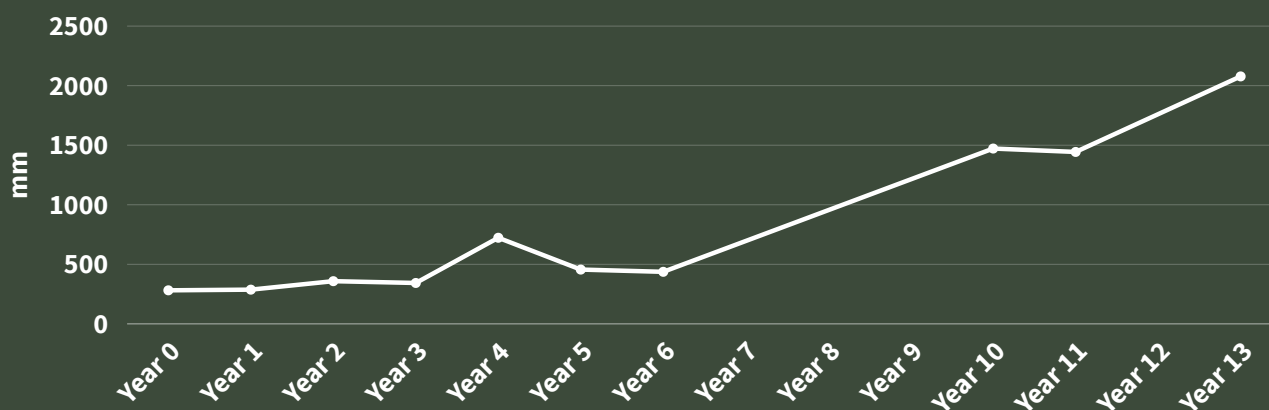
	2011 - 2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	TOTAL
TREES PLANTED	85,645	20,000	20,000	20,000	17,000	162,645
HA UNDER RESTORATION	7.45	4.5	5	5	4.5	66.95
# OF SPECIES PLANTED	17	17	17	17	17	17
PARTNERS ENGAGED	2	3	4	4	4	4
COMMUNITY MEMBERS EMPLOYED	9	12	12	15	15	15



MONITORING RESULTS ACROSS ALL SITES

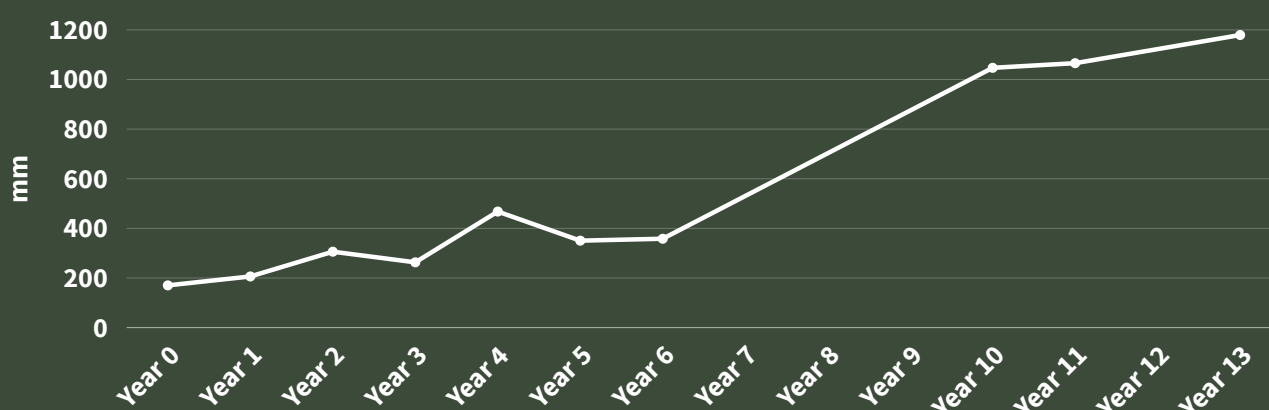


TREE HEIGHT



Over the 13-year monitoring period, average tree height in the restoration plots increased steadily from approximately 282 millimetres at the end of Year 1 to just over 2.0 metres by the end of Year 13, indicating consistent growth and successful establishment of the young forest. This upward trajectory shows that, on average, trees are progressing from seedling to small-tree size within a little over a decade, which is in line with expectations for dry afro-montane forest on nutrient-poor soils and suggests that site preparation, species selection and aftercare have been effective.

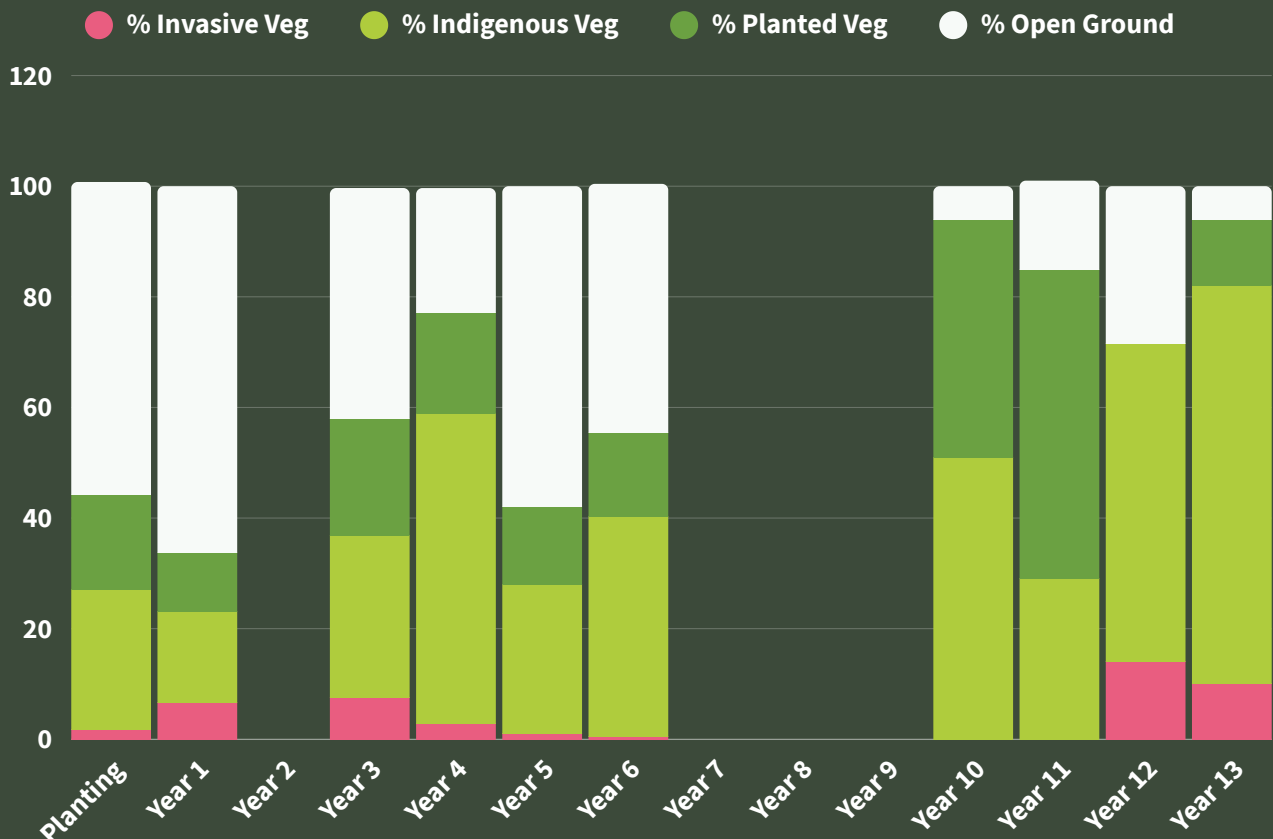
CANOPY DIAMETER



Over the same 13-year period, average canopy (crown) diameter expanded from around 170 millimetres in Year 1 to roughly 1.18 metres by Year 13, showing that individual trees are not only getting taller but are also occupying more horizontal space in the stand. This increase in crown size reflects improving tree vigour and greater leaf area, which in turn supports higher carbon uptake, shading and microclimate benefits within the recovering forest, and indicates that the restoration sites are developing more complex canopy structure over time.

MONITORING RESULTS ACROSS ALL SITES

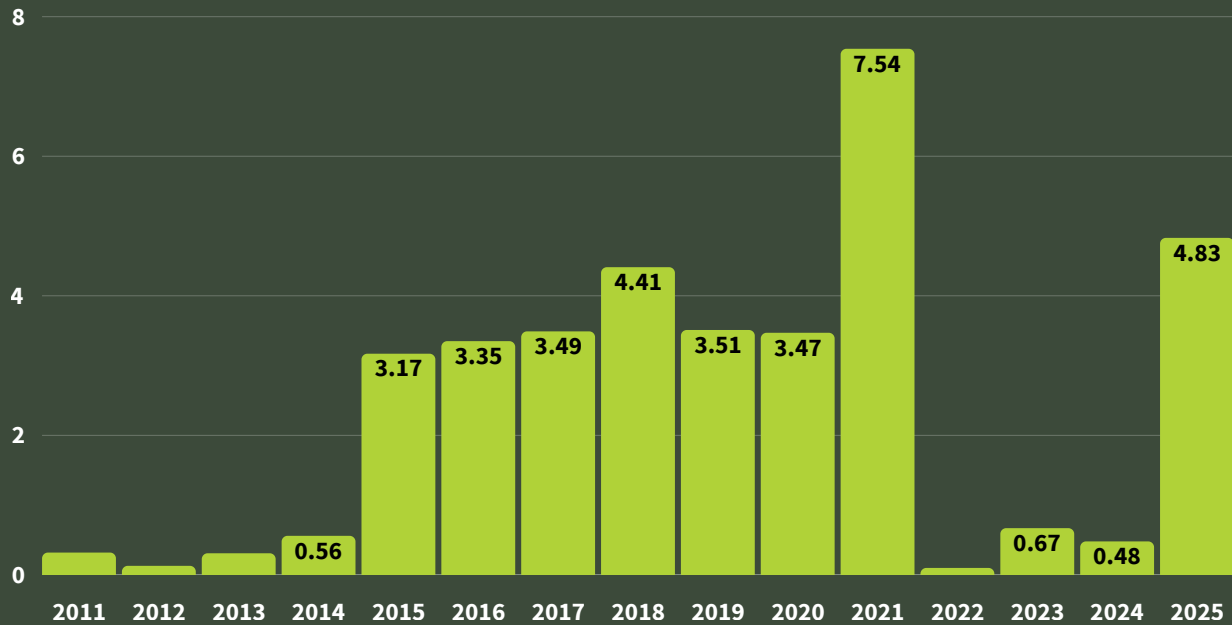
VEGETATION COVER



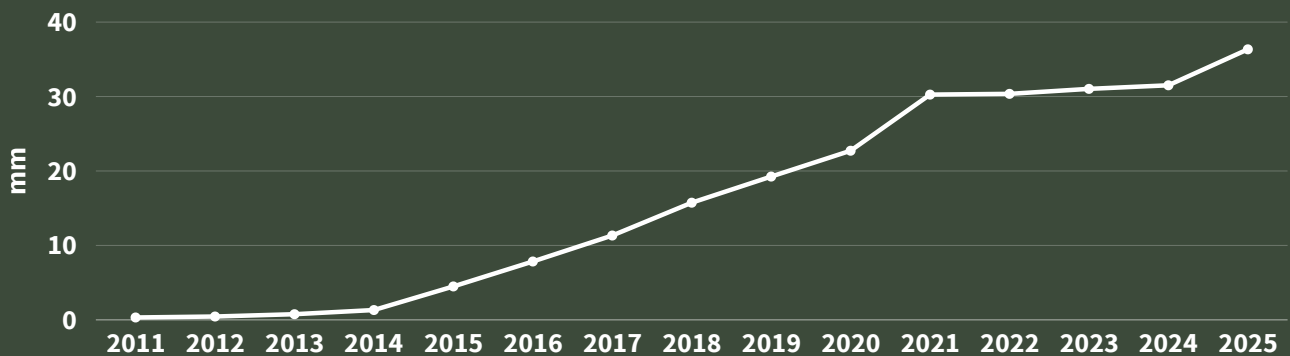
Across the 13-year monitoring period, vegetation cover data show a clear transition from open, sparsely vegetated ground towards a more continuous indigenous tree canopy. Bare ground declined sharply from about 56% at planting to just 6% by Year 13, while indigenous vegetation cover increased from roughly 25% to 72%, indicating that previously exposed soils are now increasingly shaded and stabilised by native forest cover. Over the same period, planted vegetation declined from about 17% to 12%, which is expected as planted trees and assisted natural regeneration merge into a single, closed canopy layer and become indistinguishable in the field, while invasive vegetation increased from around 2% to 10%, largely reflecting the fact that new sites with high alien cover are added and cleared at the start of each project phase. Taken together, the overall trend is a strong shift away from bare ground and towards a closed, predominantly indigenous canopy, which is associated with improved ecosystem function through better soil protection, more stable microclimates and higher productivity, even though ongoing alien clearing and new restoration blocks mean that some invasive cover remains in the system.

ALIEN VEGETATION CLEARED

HECTARES OF ALIEN VEGETATION CLEARED YEARLY



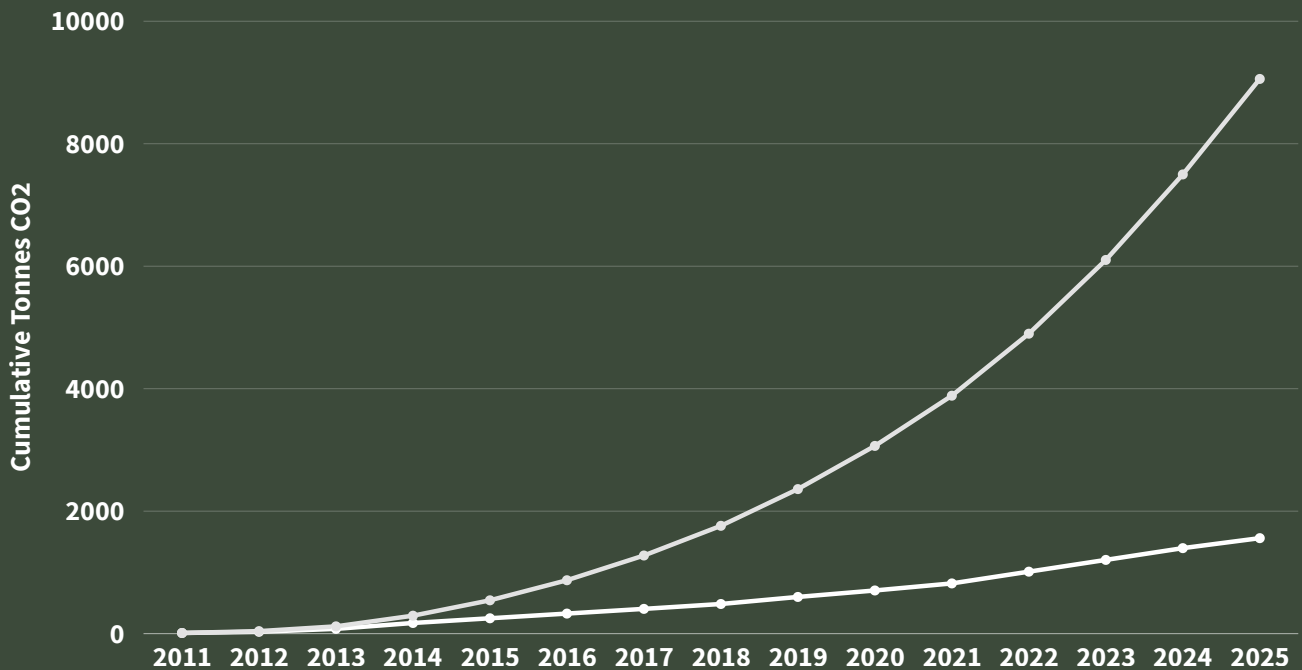
HECTARES OF ALIEN VEGETATION CLEARED CUMULATIVE



Alien vegetation management (AVM) is central to the project because invasive plants suppress indigenous biodiversity, increase fire risk and use more water than native vegetation, undermining ecosystem function and water security. The AVM graphs show consistent clearing effort from 2011-2025, accumulating to about 36 hectares treated and highlighting a sustained, rather than one-off, intervention. The steadily rising cumulative curve demonstrates how repeated clearing and follow-ups progressively expand the area under control, enabling invaded, open ground to transition towards a more continuous indigenous canopy that supports healthier fire regimes, better hydrology and more resilient ecosystem function in the Uilenkraal landscape.

CARBON SEQUESTRATION

ESTIMATE CARBON SEQUESTRATION 2011-2025 12 KG PER TREE PER YEAR AT 80% SURVIVAL RATE



The data show a steady increase in estimated carbon sequestration from 2011 to 2025, reflecting both expanding planting efforts and the cumulative effect of trees maturing over time. Using a conservative rate of 12 tonnes of CO₂ per 1 000 trees per year (that is, 12 kg CO₂ per tree per year), the project follows the same per-tree sequestration standard applied in the Credible Carbon-verified Grootbos Conservation Project near by, which calculated that 12 tCO₂ per year are sequestered for every 1 000 indigenous trees over a 20-year period.

Because Grootbos works with similar indigenous forest species and ecological conditions, it provides a relevant benchmark for our restoration work at Uilenkraal. Under this standard, total annual sequestration rises from about 10.9 tonnes CO₂ in 2011 to roughly 1 559.5 tonnes CO₂ in 2025, with the cumulative total reaching an estimated 9 058.0 tonnes CO₂ by 2025 as each year's sequestration is added to all previous years. However, these values should be understood as indicative estimates rather than precise measurements, because they rely on generic per-tree rates, survival assumptions, and simplified growth dynamics. Our monitoring team is therefore developing a more tailored methodology that will derive carbon sequestration estimates directly from field measurements, growth data, and species-specific traits in the Uilenkraal project, so that future reporting better reflects the actual performance of our restoration work and the particular mix of indigenous species we are planting.

SPECIES PLANTED ACROSS ALL SITES (2022-2025)

SPECIES PLANTE/ LATIN NAME	SPECIES PLANTED / COMMON NAME	2022	2023	2024	2025	TOTAL
Sideroxylon inermis	White Milkwood	6000	6000	6000	6000	24,000
Olea europaea africana	Wild Olive	6000	6000	6000	4000	22,000
Kiggelaria africana	Wild Peach	1000	1000	1000	1000	4,000
Celtis africana	White Stinkwood	0	0	0	200	200
Apodytes dimidiata	White Pear	2000	2000	2000	800	6800
Halleria lucida	Tree Fuchsia	1000	1000	1000	1000	4,000
Cunonia capensis	Red Alder	1000	1000	1000	1000	4,000
Curtisia dentata	Assegai	800	800	800	800	3,200
Ilex mitis	Cape Holly	600	600	600	600	2,400

SPECIES PLANTED ACROSS
ALL SITES (2022-2025)

SPECIES PLANTE/ LATIN NAME	SPECIES PLANTED / COMMON NAME	2022	2023	2024	2025	TOTAL
Diospyros whyteana	Bladder nut	400	400	400	400	1,600
Euclea racemosa	Sea guarri	200	200	200	200	800
Olinia ventosa	Hard pear	200	200	200	200	800
Chionanthu s foveolata	Pock ironwood	400	400	400	400	1,600
Canthium mundianum	Rock alder	400	400	400	0	1,200
Searsia pyroides	Taaibos	0	0	0	400	400
Gymnospor ia grandifolia	Forest Spike Thorn	0	0	0	0	0
Gymnospor ia buxifolia	Common Spike Thorn	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL		20,000	20,000	20,000	17,000	77,000

SPECIES PLANTED ACROSS ALL SITES

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CHIONANTHUS FOVEOLATA



CANTHIUM MUNDIANUM



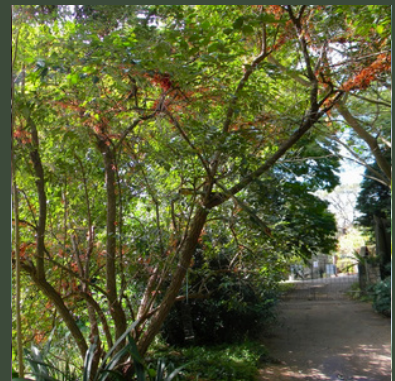
KIGGELARIA AFRICANA



CELTIS AFRICANA



APODYTES DIMIDIATA



HALLERIA LUCIDA



CUNONIA CAPENSIS



CURTISIA DENTATA



ILEX MITIS



DIOSPYROS WHYTEANA



EUCLEA RACEMOSA



OLINIA VENTOSA

SPECIES PLANTED ACROSS ALL SITES



SIDEROXYLIN INERME



OLEA EUROPAEA AFRICANA



SEARSIA PYROIDES



GYMNOSPORIA GRANDIFOLIA



GYMNOSPORIA BUXIFOLIA

FIXED POINT PHOTOGRAPHY PLOTS

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Photographs taken from one fixed plot within the Bodhi Forest Property from 2022 to 2025 illustrate improved vegetation cover.

2022



2023



2024



2025



COMPARATIVE AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY

Photographs taken from satellite imagery from 2012 to 2024 indicate a steady improvement in vegetation cover within the project's restoration sites as well as expanded firebreaks protecting the restored and old growth forest.

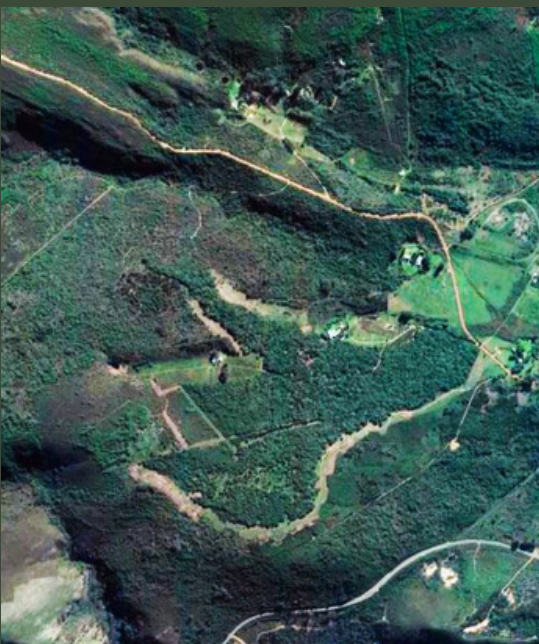
2012



2016



2020



2024



NDVI

The Normalised Difference Vegetation Index tracks plant health (NDVI) over time, showing how it changes across years. Higher values indicate healthier plants.

NDVI EXTRACTED FROM RESTOR ONLINE PLATFORM



The Normalised Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) is a satellite-derived indicator that compares how much red and near-infrared light the land surface reflects, providing a simple measure of vegetation greenness and vigor. NDVI values range from about -1 to 1, where values near 0 or below indicate little to no live vegetation (such as bare soil, rock, burnt areas, or water), values around 0.2–0.4 indicate sparse or stressed vegetation, and values above about 0.6 typically indicate dense, healthy plant cover. Because it can be calculated consistently over large areas and long time periods, NDVI is widely used to monitor ecosystem recovery, track the effects of restoration interventions, and detect early signs of degradation or stress. At our restoration sites, NDVI values have increased steadily from approximately 0.4 to 0.8 since 1985, indicating a clear improvement in vegetation density and health, consistent with successful restoration and canopy development.

NOTEWORTHY ANIMAL SPECIES SIGHTINGS

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Camera traps are motion-sensitive cameras that allow us to record wildlife moving through the Uilenkraal Valley without disturbance, building an objective record of which species are using the restored forests, firebreaks, and surrounding fynbos. Because they operate day and night, in all seasons, camera traps pick up elusive and nocturnal animals that are rarely seen during human surveys, giving a much clearer picture of ecosystem recovery than casual sightings alone. For the Uilenkraal Forest Restoration Project, this method helps us track how mammals respond to alien clearing, reforestation, and recent fires over time, providing concrete evidence that restored corridors and forest patches are supporting a diverse, functioning wildlife community.



CARACAL | 23 FEB 2024 | 4:42 PM | PLATBOS FOREST

Caracal are medium-sized native predators that prey on small mammals, birds, and occasionally young antelope, helping to regulate herbivore and meso-predator numbers and thus maintain a balanced food web. Their presence in camera trap footage indicates that there is still sufficient cover, prey diversity, and relatively undisturbed movement corridors across the valley. As a shy species that generally avoids high levels of disturbance, regular detections suggest that restoration activities and fire management are successfully sustaining functional habitat patches within and between the project properties.

NOTEWORTHY ANIMAL SPECIES SIGHTINGS



HONEY BADGER | 9 JAN 2024 | 4:44 AM | PLATBOS FOREST

Honey badgers are wide-ranging omnivores that dig for insects, small vertebrates, bulbs, and tubers, aerating soils and contributing to nutrient cycling as they forage. Their persistence in the Uilenkraal landscape points to a mosaic with intact invertebrate communities, small vertebrate prey, and natural foraging substrates like undisturbed soils and coarse woody debris. As a higher-trophic generalist that is sensitive to persecution and heavy disturbance, their presence is a strong indicator that human-wildlife coexistence, low snaring pressure, and connected habitat are being maintained across restoration and surrounding fynbos areas.

NOTEWORTHY ANIMAL SPECIES SIGHTINGS



SPOTTED GENET | 4 FEB 2024 | 11:30 PM | PLATBOS FOREST

Spotted genets are nocturnal, arboreal-leaning carnivores that feed on rodents, birds, reptiles, and invertebrates, helping to keep small-animal populations in check and linking forest edges, thickets, and riparian corridors through their movements. Camera-trap records of genets suggest structurally complex habitat with layered vegetation, safe den sites, and functioning edge and corridor habitats between forest patches and surrounding fynbos. Because they readily use restored forest strips and remnant thickets, their presence indicates that alien clearing and indigenous planting are already creating usable microhabitats and stepping stones for small to medium-sized mammals.

NOTEWORTHY ANIMAL SPECIES SIGHTINGS



BUSH PIG | 16 JAN 2024 | 5:47 AM | PLATBOS FOREST

Bushpigs are omnivorous ecosystem engineers that root and dig for bulbs, roots, fungi, and invertebrates, disturbing soil, mixing organic matter, and creating microsites for seedling establishment, while also serving as prey for apex predators like leopards. Their presence around forest edges and in restored patches suggests there is ample cover, wet depressions, and productive soils supporting diverse plant and invertebrate communities. Although their foraging can sometimes conflict with agriculture, within conservation and restoration areas bushpigs indicate a recovering, productive system where nutrient cycling, soil turnover, and predator-prey interactions are functioning

NOTEWORTHY ANIMAL SPECIES SIGHTINGS



CAPE LEOPARD | 4 MAR 2024 | 12:26 PM | PLATBOS FOREST

Cape leopards are apex predators in this system, moving over large home ranges and preying on medium-sized mammals such as bushbuck and bushpig; their presence helps regulate herbivore densities and meso-predators, stabilising trophic cascades. Detecting leopards on project properties signals a relatively intact, connected landscape where large carnivores can move between mountains, valley forests, and farmland without complete barriers. As flagship species with low tolerance for fragmentation and persecution, their ongoing use of the valley is a powerful indicator that restoration, fire management, and cooperative stewardship across properties are maintaining ecosystem integrity at a landscape scale.

UILENKRAAL FOREST RESTORATION

PROJECT STATUS

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The Uilenkraal Forest remains in a steady state of recovery, thanks to dedicated conservation and restoration efforts coordinated across multiple stakeholders and landowners in the Uilenkraal Valley. Ongoing alien vegetation management, dryland tree planting, assisted natural regeneration, and the maintenance of strategic firebreaks have continued to strengthen the resilience of this relic forest ecosystem and support its long-term protection.

In 2025, restoration activities expanded onto Bodhi Forest while supplemental planting took place at Bodhi Khaya and Kleinbos, helping to fill in sparser areas where natural regeneration has been slower to establish. At the same time, regular maintenance, watering, and follow-up alien clearing have ensured that the 17,000 trees planted in 2025 are supported through their critical early years. These efforts build on more than a decade of work across Platbos Forest Reserve, Bodhi Khaya, Bodhi Forest, and Kleinbos, and further consolidate the emerging corridor between fragmented forest patches in the valley.

The project has also expanded Southwards with the sale of the Strandkloof property at the Southern edge of Platbos. Preliminary work was done here in 2025 with a team dedicated to alien clearing, and for 2026 the project will begin active restoration there with the planting of 1,000 indigenous seedlings.

However, the year also highlighted the vulnerability of the landscape, with significant fires affecting the 2025 planting sites and parts of the broader project area. In response, the project partners are placing renewed emphasis on proactive fire management in 2026, including maintaining and improving firebreaks, integrating fire risk more explicitly into restoration planning on all three Uilenkraal sites, and refining land management practices to reduce fuel loads and protect regenerating forest stands.

Looking ahead to 2026, there is a clear intention to broaden collaboration beyond the current project footprint by engaging stakeholders and landowners from the wider bioregion. This includes working together on collective, landscape-level fire management strategies, scaling regenerative land management and reforestation across neighbouring properties and forest ecosystems, and exploring bioregional value chain development that can help finance wider restoration efforts. In this way, the lessons and momentum from Uilenkraal can contribute not only to the long-term resilience of Africa's southernmost forest but also to a more connected and regenerative landscape throughout the region.

CLOSING WORDS

The project as a whole is a source of great joy and satisfaction, not only for me but for everyone involved, including my staff and the public who visit Platbos and are inspired by what has been accomplished. Reflecting on the environmental disaster zone that surrounded the remaining forest fragments when we arrived 30 years ago, compared to the current landscape, I can honestly say I never imagined this transformation was possible.

In this light, I am intensely grateful for the partnership with Greenpop, which has made our wildest dreams come true.

In 2025, we cleared a significant amount of alien vegetation, expanded the nursery substantially, with lessons learned on how we can manage the future restoration sites in terms of fire resilience considering the fires that took place this year. I look back on 2025 with gratitude and satisfaction. The future holds more alien clearing and proactive fire management on the landscape. We now have good neighbours on all sides, with the sale of the Strandskloof farm on the southern boundary of Platbos Forest. We have already cleared there with a team of six men for two months and will plant a further 1000 trees there in 2026. A "narrative trail" is being built across the five properties — Bodhi Khaya, Bodhi Forest, Platbos, Kleinbos, and Strandskloof — to showcase landscape restoration and the progress and processes involved.

Every time I encounter the products or logo of one of the donors, I am filled with gratitude and admiration. I wonder if they truly know the difference they have made? Should we not host them here and walk them through the sites? Introduce them to the people who depend on this restoration work for a living and have learned so many skills along the way? If this is not possible, then a simple thank you will have to suffice.

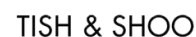
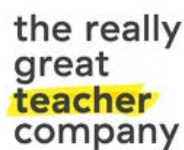
Francois Krige, Project Implementer



THANK YOU

PLEDGE PARTNERS

The Greenpop Foundation is proud to be partnered with the following donors who have all pledged to support our forest restoration work on a monthly/quarterly basis. The consistent and ongoing support from these companies allows us to plan our restoration impacts and financial budgets accurately each year. These partnerships are our bread and butter, and we are so grateful for the ongoing relationships we have with you all. Thank you.



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NOTEWORTHY DONORS

We would love to give special thanks to a few of our notable Brand Partners who have contributed significantly to our Forest Restoration work. Your ongoing support and investment in communities and spaces allow us to push the boundaries of impact in the work that we do. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you.



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And a HUGE thank you to the countless individuals and businesses who supported this programme through one-off donations, monthly donations, Tree Certificates, green gifting purchases, GivenGain campaigns and more over 2025.

Every single donation is seen and appreciated, and we are grateful for all of the trust and support that we receive from our TREEvolutionary community.

Together, as this report can attest, we have made an incredible impact.