The Rufford Small Grants Foundation

Final Report

Congratulations on the completion of your project that was supported by The Rufford Small Grants Foundation.

We ask all grant recipients to complete a Final Report Form that helps us to gauge the success of our grant giving. The Final Report must be sent in **word format** and not PDF format or any other format. We understand that projects often do not follow the predicted course but knowledge of your experiences is valuable to us and others who may be undertaking similar work. Please be as honest as you can in answering the questions – remember that negative experiences are just as valuable as positive ones if they help others to learn from them.

Please complete the form in English and be as clear and concise as you can. Please note that the information may be edited for clarity. We will ask for further information if required. If you have any other materials produced by the project, particularly a few relevant photographs, please send these to us separately.

Please submit your final report to jane@rufford.org.

Thank you for your help.

Josh Cole, Grants Director

Grant Recipient Details	
Your name	Silvia Weel
Project title	Wildlife habitat assessment in the Baviaanskloof Nature Reserve – supporting wildlife management in a World Heritage Site
RSG reference	9521-1
Reporting period	March 2011 until August 2012 (18 months)
Amount of grant	£6000
Your email address	silvia@earthcollective.net
Date of this report	03/09/2012

1. Please indicate the level of achievement of the project's original objectives and include any relevant comments on factors affecting this.

Objective	Not achieved	Partially achieved	Fully achieved	Comments
1. Wildlife monitoring		X		Wildlife monitoring comprises of intensive field work data collection (census techniques) and GIS modelling. The second one was successfully undertaken, although field data collection was restricted due to unexpected management decisions (see 1.b).
1.a Habitat suitability			X	Habitat suitability models were carried out not only for cape mountain zebra (CMZ) and black rhino, but also for all antelope in the area. Some species didn't have enough statistically significant sightings in order to run the model and therefore had to be discarded.
1.b Communities demography	X			Although the team spent 2 months conducting a GIS-desktop assessment (partitioning habitats) as a preparation for the definition of the survey sites, the reserve's management didn't allow the team to reach some of the most neglected survey areas. The nature reserve hosts a population of black rhinos for which the current poaching crisis has led to restrictions in the reserve's accessibility. Nevertheless, the team was allowed to access sites that enabled greater focus on species habitat requirements (and challenges) of CMZ and black rhino.
2. Capacity building		X		In a general sense, capacity building was partially successfully achieved. We engaged a group of young researchers and a student from a local university in learning data collection and analysis. Local field rangers were not as much involved as we intended, although they did attend field work and became acquainted on wildlife survey techniques.
2.a Researchers			X	A total of four students and two internships were involved in the project. Each student learned how to survey, analyse and report.
2.b Field rangers/reserve managers		X		The project team experienced challenges in engaging with reserve managers and field rangers due to a frequent change in

				staff. When the project was proposed, the team was fully engaged with reserve managers but during the project reserve management changed twice. During the same period a new group of field rangers was appointed who were busy with training and a job acquaintance process. We finally managed to involve the Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency's (ECPTA) regional ecologist in field surveys and process discussions as well as the newly appointed reserve manager. Furthermore, we were able to introduce a group of field rangers to the survey technique and general wildlife related issues.
3. Outreach		X		The challenges the team faced during data collection and analysis, and capacity building demanded the team's greatest attention in engaging with the reserve's staff. Seeing as current field rangers are local community members, we believe that awareness and livelihoods' connections to the nature reserve's wildlife are increasing. The team has attended stakeholders' meetings, presented outcomes, and has successfully engaged farmers unions in a game-farming suitability process. This project has been seed money for the team to extend the project into private land, with great opportunities for stewardship-supporting research in the near future.

2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled (if relevant).

The primary unforeseen difficulty has been with accessing restricted areas of the nature reserve for conducting field surveys. Although good relations have been set up with the Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency (ECPTA), the reserve's management decisions have not considered the project's objectives. Prior to the development of the project proposal, the team engaged with ECPTA and sought to understand priority research questions. A wish list was created, and support found for the decision of intensifying field data collection and extending to areas minimally surveyed in order to estimate wildlife populations' habitats and demographics. As soon as the project was initiated, ECPTA had various changes in management posts, especially reserve managers and field rangers, which slowed down the project's progress. Additionally, ECPTA had to make important decisions with regards to the protection of the reserve's black rhino population. Anti-poaching strategies became a high priority, which led to the team not being allowed to move freely in the nature reserve.

As there was no longer any means of contributing to a whole-reserve demographic overview, the team had to embrace other options. The team decided to focus on accessible areas, which were coincidentally areas inhabited by CMZ groups. A new challenge arose amongst supporting management as to exactly why there has been a lack of success in establishing a healthy population of CMZ in the nature reserve. Specific sub-projects were developed to address the diet of CMZ and habitat suitability index development (which is different to the mapping exercise, as it is based on grasses acceptability and contribution indexes derived from the field). Both research projects contributed to a better understanding of the low suitability of the currently used habitats by the species, which has already contributed greatly in the evaluation of other areas for the introduction of new populations in more nutritional areas.

3. Briefly describe the three most important outcomes of your project.

The first most important outcome is the development of the habitat suitability maps for 13 species in the nature reserve. The second one is the results obtained from the diet and habitat of CMZ in areas of the nature reserve as a means to understand why the species hasn't been successful in the nature reserve. Thirdly, I believe that the project contributed greatly to planting a seed in the area by involving private landowners in a game-based industry who can greatly benefit from the extension of the habitat suitability analysis into unprotected land.

4. Briefly describe the involvement of local communities and how they have benefitted from the project (if relevant).

Local communities can be seen as the field rangers and the farming community. The first group has been involved in capacity building for field survey techniques, which created greater awareness for wildlife-related surveys to a newly appointed group of individuals. Frequent talks with the farming community have proved to be the best way of engaging with landowners in the area. After several informal visits and a more formal meeting with most of the landowners in the area, the group showed great interest in having a habitat suitability map developed for several wildlife species on the privately owned land, with a view on engaging in stewardship programmes. The main benefit of farmers setting conservation agreements is that of expanding wildlife habitat with positive impacts on conservation whilst promoting livelihood opportunities through game-based tourism.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes. The team is extending the habitat suitability mapping in private land for the next 6 months. Future opportunities are being considered as the community shows greater interest in stewardship programmes, implying opportunities for further developing wildlife-related applied research.

6. How do you plan to share the results of your work with others?

Partial and final results have been shared with ECPTA along with the project development. A report is going to be handed to ECPTA in November/December, translating results into management decisions (as recommendations and practical insights). A presentation will be given to the farmers union in the Baviaanskloof, showing the results and proposing the way forward in terms of wildlife-related projects on private land.

One to two articles are intended to be published in national journals in collaboration with Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, with Dr Laurence Watson.

7. Timescale: Over what period was the RSG used? How does this compare to the anticipated or actual length of the project?

RSG was used over the period of intense field work, as this was the period with the most costs and human resources involved. In this regard, accommodation, fuel costs, field supplies, and subsistence were very costly. Desk work didn't require as much from the funds, although it took considerable time prior to field work, during analysis of the data, and during reporting.

8. Budget: Please provide a breakdown of budgeted versus actual expenditure and the reasons for any differences. All figures should be in £ sterling, indicating the local exchange rate used.

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Subsistence	3240.00	4320.00	-1080.00	Subsistence costs were higher than expected due to the team size. Field subsistence was the main cost.
Transport	2117.00	1057.88	1059.12	There was less driving that occurred due to not travelling to remote areas as proposed, and so there were less fuel expenses. A lifting scheme with other projects was put in place.
Material	420.00	454.00	-34.00	We underestimated the material required for successful field work.
Printing	223.00	198.00	25.00	Less printing was needed.
Rate: 11.229				
Total	6000.00	6029.88	-29.88	

*detailed budget is available upon request

9. Looking ahead, what do you feel are the important next steps?

The team feels that the opportunities in habitat and wildlife conservation are really extensive on private land at the vicinities of the nature reserve. The potential for stewardship and new wildlife-based activities on these areas of land is huge, especially concerning the increase in wildlife habitat once areas become protected.

10. Did you use the RSGF logo in any materials produced in relation to this project? Did the RSGF receive any publicity during the course of your work?

The following publicity and material was produced:

- Presentations to stakeholders (conservation agencies and researchers);
- A newsletter on the EarthCollective website - which is also distributed amongst local and international partners/subscribers.
- Posters displayed at two regional workshops.
- Students' reports delivered to their universities.
- A final project report delivered to the conservation agency.

11. Any other comments?

We are really grateful for the small grant provided by RSG to the team in order for us to engage in the research project. We appreciate the way RSG handles the arrangements with the grantees in terms of simplifying the process by avoiding usually overwhelming formalities and financial reports – instead of spending time on managing the project we could actually do it!

One insight to be shared is the fact that one cannot work on one's own – a team is much more creative and beneficial for the learning process; although lack of communication was one of the biggest challenges faced, especially while sorting out arrangements and ensuring common agreement with the nature reserve management board. The difficulties and bureaucracies involved with working on protected land makes the process slow and unpredictable.