

# Annual Report 2013



## About ACT

The African Conservation Trust (ACT) is an established not-for-profit and public benefit organisation that has been operating in southern Africa since 2000. We strive to contribute to a world where urban and rural communities take responsible care of their environment, work consciously to conserve and protect natural resources in sustainable ways, and preserve historical assets and heritage for the benefit of future generations.

Our core focus areas are environmental conservation and the socio-economic upliftment of vulnerable communities. ACT projects specifically focus on climate change, water conservation, food security, urban greening, waste recycling, sustainable energy and the preservation of endangered indigenous fauna and flora.

ACT has a head office in Hillcrest, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa and two regional offices in Pietermaritzburg and St. Lucia, KwaZulu-Natal.

## Vision

Our Vision is simple...

### **A LIVING WORLD**

*People on a Profitable Planet*

A world that is able to sustain human life, profitable as a result of investment into our most precious asset: Planet Earth, with its abundant natural resources; profitable enough for people to draw from its environmental goods and services, and from a social and economic sense. Living, in that our Planet and its inhabitants are not simply surviving, but are flourishing, and have capacity to give, share and grow.

## Mission

Our mission is to conduct, implement and facilitate pioneering environmental, heritage and conservation projects in Southern Africa in a financially accountable and sustainable manner.

## Memberships & accreditations

- Member of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
- Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) Level 2 accreditation

## Contact details

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## Trustees

Carl Hector Grossmann (Chairperson)  
Oscar Mpiyani Emmanuel Mthimkhulu  
Leonard Outram van Schalkwyk

## Organisational details

**Trust registration number:** IT 2174/00

**Not-for-profit number:** NPO 303-243  
*SARS Section 18(A) tax exemption status*

**Public benefit organisation number:** PBO 930014758

## Donors

- The National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund
- Wesbank
- German Federal Foreign Office
- Critical Ecosystems Partnership Fund
- United Nations Development Programme (through the Global Environment Facility)





# Contents

<b>Message from the Board</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Focus Areas, Projects and Achievements</b>	<b>3</b>
Food security through conservation agriculture	3
Climate change	4
Biodiversity preservation and education	5
The Mkuze River conservation project	5
The iSimangaliso Wetland Park Youth Environmental Education Programme	5
The Butterfly Routes Project	7
Project Rhino KZN	7
Heritage Preservation	9
The Rock Art Mapping Project	9
The Heritage Mapping Unit Project	9
The Battlefields Pilot Project	9
Geographical Information Systems and Remote Sensing Technology	10
nSimbi Partnership Process	12
<b>Campaigns</b>	<b>14</b>
Skydive for Rhinos Campaign	14
Sustainable Alternatives to Fracking and Exploration (SAFE)	15
<b>Conference Presentations, Awards and Publications</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Finances</b>	<b>18</b>

## Message from the Board

**T**he African Conservation Trust is a flexible and dynamic organization which is essential in the current non-profit arena in South Africa. This flexibility was tested early on in the year as ACT wrapped up two years and R36 million of funding for six major projects from the National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund (NLDTF). We said goodbye to a number of staff that had become a part of the ACT family for a number of years and who contributed to building ACT into the organization it is today. Always a sad time but that is the nature of project specific funding.

ACT has always had a conservation agriculture focus and this has grown from strength to strength with the accreditation of our Agro-Ecological Farming Practices NQF Level 2 course material during this reporting period. A number of staff became accredited Assessors for the course and the first group of rural homestead farmers went through the 10 day course (funded by the German Federal Foreign Office) with a 100% pass rate. We believe fundamentally that conservation agriculture techniques will add considerably to climate change adaptation capabilities, especially for impoverished rural homestead farmers. This view is shared by Wesbank who are generously funding a three year homestead garden project in and around ACT's core operations in Mtubatuba on the KwaZulu-Natal north coast.

Biodiversity conservation was supported by the Critical Ecosystems Partnership Fund with a focus on the Mkuze River Conservation Project. ACT continued

to support and build on the butterfly domes project that had been previously funded by the NLDTF and established the Butterfly Route, linking four ecosystem specific butterfly exhibition and educational domes - a first in South Africa. Environmental education was carried out at these butterfly domes as well as marine education in partnership with iSimangaliso Wetland Park. ACT continued to serve the vital role as secretariat of Project Rhino KZN as well as host the fundraising bank account for this association. ACT's direct role in the aerial surveillance aspect of this fight against wildlife crime was enhanced when we took ownership of the WWF Netherlands donated Cheetah XLS light sport aircraft that forms the backbone of the Zululand Anti-Poaching Wing.

Our nSimbi partnership programme grew from strength to strength with ACT receiving and managing funding from the NLDTF on behalf of Growing Parks Trust, Wilderness Action Group, Zakhe Foundation Trust, African Spirit and the Preservation of the Mpushini Mkhondeni Biodiversity Trust.

The Board sincerely thanks our CEO Francois du Toit for his relentless and inspirational leadership of our dynamic team, and all staff for continuing to build a meaningful entity that is increasingly recognized as innovative in a challenging environment. We look forward to a great future.

*Carl Grossmann - Chairman*





# Focus Areas, Projects and Achievements

*In 2012, ACT projects focussed on food security, climate change, biodiversity and heritage preservation. ACT also successfully supported a number of partnership organisations in implementing projects.*

## *Food security through conservation agriculture*

Sustainable food security remains one of ACT's core focus areas and in 2011, ACT assisted in the development of the Conservation Agriculture Institute at the Dovehouse Organic Farm near Howick, KwaZulu-Natal. Since then, the Institute has developed a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) level 2 course in Agro-Ecological Farming practices. This has been integrated into ACT's food security projects to promote sustainable farming and food security.

Building on the foundations laid by ACT's National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund (NLDTF) projects, ACT implemented two food security projects in 2012.

*Conservation agriculture practices have proven to be an effective means for growing nutritious food staples in remote and harsh environments, and have shown to increase agricultural yields, produce crops that are more resilient to changing weather conditions, improve water usage and reduce soil erosion.*

Both projects were implemented in Northern KwaZulu-Natal and saw rural farmers trained in conservation agriculture practices and mentored in the establishment of homestead food gardens making use of these practices.

Funded by the German Federal Foreign Office, 16 rural farmers were trained in conservation agriculture and provided with equipment and materials to develop food gardens.

A Wesbank funded project saw another 40 farmers trained and mentored in the establishment of homestead food gardens. The projects not only benefited the farmers themselves but also their families who have access to a more diverse and improved nutrition.

# Climate change

Climate change has a profound and unavoidable effect on food security in Southern Africa, as increasing temperatures and changing rainfall patterns reduce access to food. The situation is further aggravated by high levels of soil degradation and a decline in fertility, which threaten agricultural productivity.

Recognising this, ACT projects promote the use of conservation agriculture to increase food security and contribute to improved land and water usage in areas where rural communities are heavily dependent on subsistence agriculture.

Conservation agriculture practices have proven to be more resilient to shifting weather conditions. The manner in which they are grown requires minimal water usage, at the same time improving the condition of the soil and reducing soil erosion.



*ACT promotes the use of heirloom seeds in its projects. These seeds are hardier and more adaptable to climate change events. They also reduce input costs for rural farmers as they can be harvested for future planting, without losing genetic integrity.*





# Biodiversity preservation and education

Northern KwaZulu-Natal is characterised by a fragmented protected area network that is interspersed with rural communities that are still heavily reliant on the delivery of ecosystem services. Increasing socio-economic pressures within these communities and the inability of formal government structures to alleviate them are resulting in further stress on the region's landscapes. ACT has been working in the area for a number of years, implementing projects that aim to join 'gaps' in the existing protected area network and reduce pressure on the area's valuable biodiversity.

## *The Mkuze River Conservation*

**Project** worked with communities living in the Mkuze valley to guide them through a land-use planning exercise to identify areas of land that can be set aside for farming, water points, economic development and conservation. Ultimately the project aims to establish community conservation areas that can become formally protected to establish links between the existing reserves.

## *The iSimangaliso Wetland Park Youth Environmental Education*

**Programme** was implemented in partnership with iSimangaliso Wetland Park and resulted in 464 school children from 29 schools going on marine related environmental education fieldtrips to the Park.





### *The Butterfly Routes Project*

resulted in the establishment of network of 4 community-owned butterfly domes in KwaZulu-Natal housing indigenous butterfly species. The domes contribute to biodiversity conservation and the upliftment of local communities. They are also used as a base to conduct environmental education and awareness programmes.



ACT was a founding member of **Project Rhino KZN** – an association of organisations involved in rhino conservation in the province who have agreed to collaborate on rhino conservation initiatives and work collectively to counteract the growing poaching threats in both public and private game reserves. ACT continues to act as the Secretariat and central recipient of funds for Project Rhino KZN members.

For more information, see:

<http://www.projectrhinokzn.org/>



ACT procured equipment for anti-rhino poaching initiatives in KwaZulu-Natal with funding from the SeaWorld and Busch Gardens Conservation Fund.



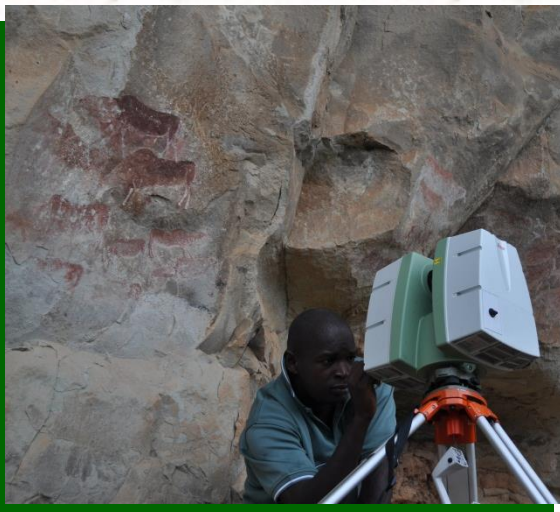


# Heritage preservation

In 2012, ACT completed its Rock Art Mapping and Heritage Mapping projects. Both projects were implemented in partnership with the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) Geomatics Department and made use of surveying, scanning and Geographical Information Systems (GIS) technologies to digitally document rock art and heritage sites.

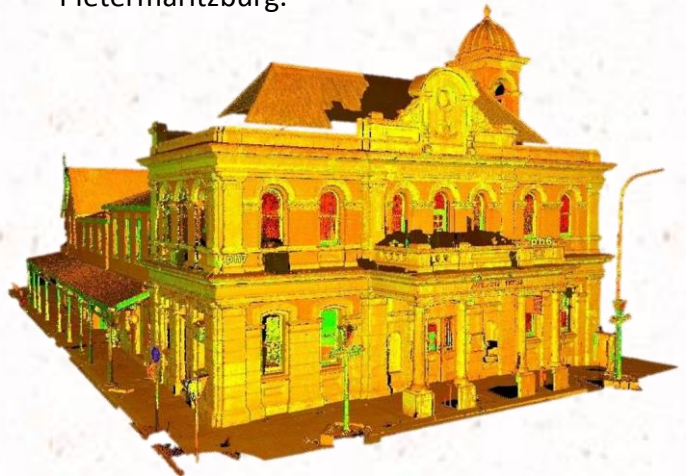
## *The Rock Art Mapping Project*

resulted in 450 San rock art sites being documented; 80 of these were new and previously unrecorded sites. The project employed 38 people and trained 8 students from the Mangosuthu University of Technology in land surveying.



## *The Heritage Mapping Unit (HMU)*

saw 3,799 heritage buildings being entered in the HMU database. During the project, state-of-the-art technology was used to create millimetre-accurate digital models of historical buildings in Pietermaritzburg.



## *A component of the HMU project was The Battlefields Pilot Project;*

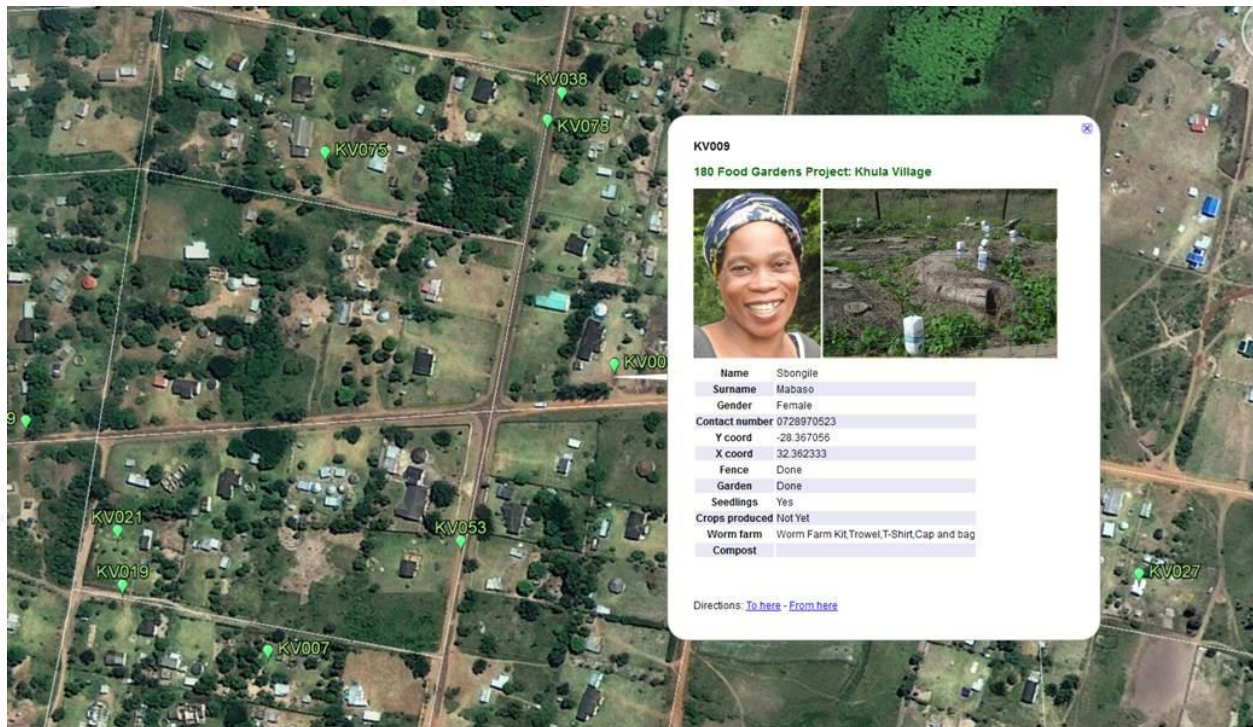
implemented at Spioenkop in KwaZulu-Natal. The project resulted in the accurate documentation and visualisation of the Spioenkop battle through the creation of maps, virtual tours and 3D models of the battle scene. These showed strategic gun positions, infantry movements and routes followed by British and Boer forces.



# Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and remote sensing technology

ACT has invaluable expertise in GIS and remote sensing technology and uses this extensively in its conservation projects. In 2012, ACT started development on its food garden database, which makes use of GIS technology to map food garden locations, record grower details, crops planted and

expected harvests. The database is an effective tool for monitoring and evaluating project progress as it integrates different types of data, including field sheet data, GPS points, photographs and database records.







## nSimbi Partnership Process

Recognising the need to increase the capacity and influence of the Southern African environment, conservation and heritage sectors, ACT has a strong ethos of working with other Not-for-Profit Organisations (NPOs) and Community Based Organisations (CBOs);

transferring skills and building a supportive network that encourages interdependence, knowledge-sharing, advancement and sustainability. In 2012, ACT partnered and provided support to six organisations. These include:

Organisation	Geographic Area	Funding Awarded	Project Goal
Zakhe Foundation Trust	Richmond, KZN	R9,899,823.00	Facilitate the development of 20 food gardens at rural schools and the rejuvenation of the Zakhe Agricultural College. The project includes the installation of water tanks, erection of fences and the planting of fruit trees and seedlings.
Wilderness Action Group	uKhahlamba Drakensberg Park, KZN	R3,059,688.00	Promote wilderness conservation regionally and internationally through advocacy, technical planning, management advice, education and training.
The Preservation of Mkondeni Mpushini Biodiversity Trust (PMMB Trust)	Pietermaritzburg, KZN	R3,999,940.00	Preserve the ecological and environmental integrity of the biodiversity area for the communities living in the vicinity of Pietermaritzburg in KwaZulu-Natal.
African Spirit	Estcourt, KZN	R3,313,500.00	Development of craft training skills for rural communities, as well as training in business planning, proposal writing and other business skills.
Growing Parks	Pietermaritzburg, KZN	R2,499,869.00	Adopt parks in Pietermaritzburg, clean them up and create a safe, clean environment for children.





# Campaigns

## Skydive for Rhinos Campaign

In response to the escalating threat to South Africa's black and white rhino populations from organised poaching syndicates, ACT ran its successful Skydive for Rhino's campaign in KwaZulu-Natal in 2011. Building on the success of the campaign, ACT rolled out a nation-wide campaign in 2012 to raise funds for four major national anti-poaching strategies. The campaign was a huge success and resulted in 400+ jumpers skydiving from 4 sites around the country raising R6.6 million.

The funds raised have been used for aerial surveillance, advanced training for game reserve staff, the provision of equipment for rhino anti-poaching units (APUs) and community intervention programmes.

The Skydive for Rhinos campaign has morphed into a broader campaign called Act for Rhinos, which continues to raise funds for anti-poaching initiatives in KwaZulu-Natal.

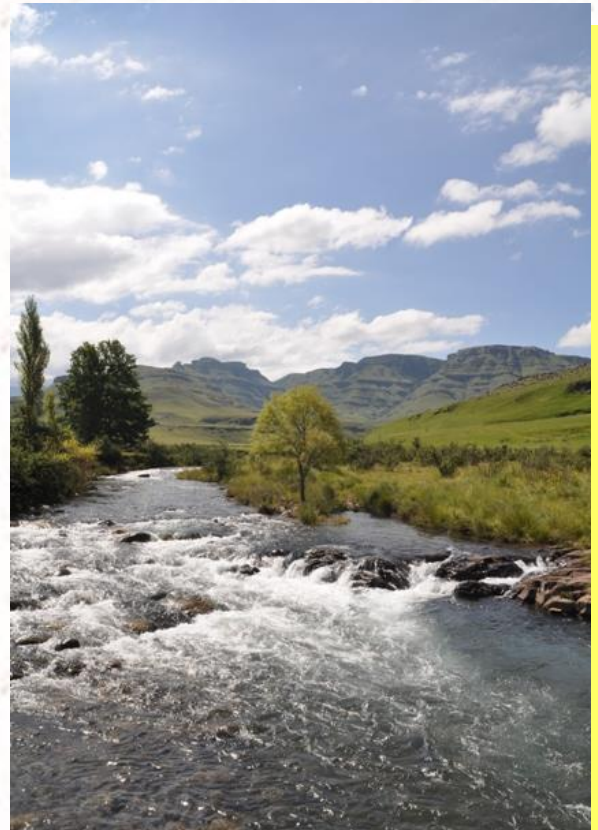


# *Sustainable alternatives to fracking and exploration (SAFE)*

Established in August 2012, the Sustainable Alternatives to Fracking and Exploration (SAFE) Alliance aims to act as a platform to oppose fracking and seek alternative, more sustainable development options for targeted fracking areas. The Alliance's current focus is to utilise legal tools to oppose the issuing of any license in connection with fracking in South Africa and build a public education and information campaign to inform rural communities and the South African public about their environmental rights, in particular those associated with the impacts of fracking.

The founding members of the Alliance are the Wilderness Foundation, Treasure the Karoo Action Group (TKAG), the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) and the African Conservation Trust (ACT). SAFE co-ordinated a Symposium in 2012 at the Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife conference facility in Pietermaritzburg, which was attended by over 150 interested and affected people.

SAFE members continue to present information and co-ordinate action between stakeholders, including tertiary institutions, farmers, schools and the business community.







# Conference Presentations, Awards and Publications

## Conference Presentations and Lectures

The Geo-Information Society of South Africa (GISSA) Ukubuzana Conference (2-4 October 2012, Johannesburg) - *Spioenkop: a case study of the potential of modern mapping techniques to enhance understanding of historical battles*

Symposium of Contemporary Conservation Practice (22-26 October 2012, Howick, KwaZulu-Natal) – *Safe Alternatives to Fracking in South Africa*

Symposium of Contemporary Conservation Practice (22-26 October 2012, Howick, KwaZulu-Natal) *Moving to sustainable community conservation*

Magqubu Ntombela Foundation, Annual lecture at KwaZulu-Natal museum.

## Academic Publications

GISSA Ukubuzana Conference Proceedings: *Spioenkop: a case study of the potential of modern mapping techniques to enhance understanding of historical battles*

## Awards

ACT received a Heritage Award from Amafa Heritage KZN.

Recognition award to ACT's Sheelagh Antrobus for her efforts to combat rhino poaching in South Africa from the Game Rangers Association of Africa and the Department of Environmental Affairs

## Press Articles

*ACT projects have appeared in a number of electronic and printed newspaper and magazine articles these included:*

PositionIT (July 2012) - *Using GIS technology to document the KwaZulu-Natal battlefields*

Africa Geographic (April 2012) - *Run Baby Run: A Special Issue Dedicated to Africa's Wild Rhinos. Vol.20, No.3*

The Zululand Observer (30 November 2012) - *Sustenance for Rural Somkhanda*



# Finances

	Mar 2011 - Feb 2012	Mar 2012 - Feb 2013
<b>Balance CF</b>		
<b>Income</b>	R 31 096 647.00	R 29 124 589.77
<b>NLDTF 43205</b>	R 2 000 000.00	
<b>NLDTF 29991</b>	R 18 212 008.00	
<b>NLDTF 43202</b>	R 828 375.00	R 828 375.00
<b>NLDTF 46053</b>		R 13 567 544.00
<b>CEPF</b>	R 608 438.00	R 210 761.50
<b>Project Rhino</b>	R 135 483.05	R 4 032 785.48
<b>Enhance</b>	R 792 216.67	
<b>Use-It</b>	R 524 480.00	
<b>Rockefeller Philanthropic Society</b>	R 52 170.45	
<b>VAT</b>	R 1 012 130.04	R 1 461 721.59
<b>Interest</b>	R 161 044.09	R 498 437.67
<b>Isimangaliso Partnership</b>		R 850 000.00
<b>German Federal Foreign Office</b>		R 233 828.65
<b>SeaWorld</b>		R 121 200.00
<b>Wesbank</b>		R 500 000.00
<b>Other</b>	R 6 770 301.70	R 6 819 935.88
<b>Operating expenses</b>	R 30 427 675.00	R 23 267 634.30
<b>Surplus/Deficit</b>	<b>R 668 972.00</b>	<b>R 5 856 955.47</b>
<b>Non-Current Assets</b>	R 3 476 315.00	R 6 614 451.87
<b>Current Assets</b>	R 18 997 001.94	R 7 046 755.12
<b>Total</b>	<b>R 22 473 316.94</b>	<b>R 13 661 206.99</b>
<b>Equity</b>	<b>R 23 142 288.94</b>	<b>R 19 518 162.46</b>



