

NATURE'S VALLEY DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLAN

BACKGROUND

Nature's Valley is an isolated, coastal, holiday settlement, approximately 17 km east of Plettenberg Bay (35 km by road) on the Southern Cape's Garden Route in South Africa. It is located on a low-lying, triangular wedge of land on the western side of the estuary of the Groot River. The Groot River has incised a deep valley, which cuts through the coastal plateau to the sea. Nature's Valley lies at the mouth of this valley and is surrounded by steep escarpments, at the top of which lies the coastal plateau (approximate altitude 200m).

Nature's Valley is completely surrounded by the Tsitsikamma National Park, including the Marine Reserve, accentuating its spectacular and contained natural location. The dunes, estuary and island found in Nature's Valley are intrinsically linked to those of the surrounding Tsitsikamma National Park, having been declared a contractual part of the Tsitsikamma National Park.

The coastal area of the Tsitsikamma region consists of a scarp 180m high, behind which is a coastal plateau, 5 – 8km wide which gradually rises to 275m at the base of the mountains. The rivers running from the mountains deeply incise the coastal plateau on their way to the sea. The belt of Cape fold mountains to the north of Nature's Valley separates the coastal plateau from the Langkloof valley and includes the Tsitsikamma mountains. The mountains rise to a high point of 1675m at the top of the distinctive Formosa Peak.

There are a number of vegetation types in the area, namely coastal fynbos, montane fynbos, Afromontane forest, coastal forest, dry dune thicket and coastal littoral vegetation. The vegetation found in the area falls within the eastern section of the Cape Floristic Region, one of the six floral kingdoms of the world with the highest species diversity per unit area. Nature's Valley falls within the Sensitive Coastal Area.

Nature's Valley has 4 public open areas: the Phyl Martin Park (a botanical garden), the Fynbos Reserve and erven 380 and 381, which are all zoned as Open Space 1. These areas are under the jurisdiction of the Bitou Municipality.

OBJECTIVES

The vision of the Conservancy is ***“to actively encourage a growing membership who work together to promote protective management of Nature's Valley so that residents and visitors can enjoy its unique environmental, educational and recreational assets in perpetuity.”***

Objectives:

The purpose of the Conservancy is to:

- a. promote preservation of the indigenous fauna and flora of Nature's Valley;
- b. promote co-operation between members;
- c. promote compliance with all environmental legislation with specific reference to the National Environmental Act No 107 of 1998 (To provide for cooperative environmental governance by establishing principles for decision making on matters affecting the environment, institutions that will promote cooperative governance and procedures for coordinating environmental functions exercised by organs of state; and to provide for matters connected therewith.);
- d. co-operate with conservation authorities and the Bitou Municipality;
- e. co-operate with surrounding NGO's and conservancies;
- f. promote environmental awareness;

- g. monitor proposed developments and actively oppose developments which will have negative impacts on the character and natural environment of Nature's Valley;
- h. acknowledge and respect homeowners' rights and independence;
- i. produce a management plan in accordance with the objectives and vision of the Conservancy;
- j. initiate and/or facilitate projects which fulfil the above objectives;
- k. Educate residents of and visitors to Nature's Valley to promote home and garden management that does not impact on the environment and to promote sustainable resource use; within the defined area of the Conservancy.

BENEFITS OF A CONSERVANCY

The core focus of activities of the Urban Conservancy will initially be individual erven, highlighting the role that each homeowner can play in ensuring the preservation of the environmental integrity of Nature's Valley.

The focus area of the Conservancy will be on Nature's Valley specifically, linking with adjoining conservancies and conservation areas on projects impacting on or of relevance to Nature's Valley.

The benefits of the Urban Conservancy are:

- With membership comes a certain responsibility and it is believed that membership will encourage people to strive for 'best environmental practices' on their own erven;
- This focus should, in time, then extend to other areas in Nature's Valley: the sidewalks, Fynbos Reserve, Phyl Martin Park, beaches, etc;
- As a recognised body, although it has no legal standing, the Conservancy is able to address problems and bring attention to problems and issues as an environmentally focussed group representing the Nature's Valley area;
- Conservancies are a nationally recognised and respected initiative and, as such, are able to utilise this status to implement projects, submit funding applications, etc.
- As an established urban conservancy, Nature's Valley will have the full support of Cape Nature.
- The community actively participates in the management of the environment
- Environmental awareness is promoted
- Appropriate development can be ensured within the conservancy and it strengthens the communities case if action is taken where developments are seen to be inappropriate
- Neighbouring conservancies can collaborate on projects
- Costs for essential conservation activities are shared

While the Nature's Valley Trust is an established body that provides logistical and financial support for the Urban Conservancy and is able to focus on environmental issues within and surrounding Nature's Valley, the Urban Conservancy will focus more on specifically local and 'back yard' issues to achieve its objectives.

INFRASTRUCTURE & FACILITIES

There are 401 erven in Nature's Valley residential area, of which approximately 388 have been developed. Apart from those listed below, all the stands are zoned as Residential 1.

- Erf 135: Business Zone - the shop
- Erven 380, 381: label wetland and forest reserve Zoned Open Space 1 - northern side of St Georges St near NG Kerk Hall

- Erf 460: Zoned Open Space 1 – Fynbos Reserve
Erven 380, 381 and 429 are now known as the Brenton Complex
- Erf 429: Zoned Open Space 1 - Phyl Martin Park Botanical Garden
- Erf 379: Institutional Zone II - NG Kerk Community Hall
- Erf 451: Service Use Zone - Telkom site next to NG Kerk Hall
- I see 336 is missing from this list and is one of the erven that is marked as being sold off.
Correct this please
- Erf 337: Authority Zone - Dump site and municipal staff housing
- Erf 335: Vacant stand – residential 1. Belongs to the Municipality check the status of this erf and how it is listed with the ratepayers
- Erf 411: Zoned Residential V - Nature's Valley Guest house / Hikers Haven
- Roads – Zoned Transport II

Open Space I: No structure shall be erected or use practiced unless it is compatible with public open space i.e. can be utilized as an open space or a park, garden, picnic area playground or square.

Open Space III: Accords the area Nature Reserve or conservancy status. Special development rules will apply to each case individually. This is the highest possible form of municipal protection at present.

Residential V: The primary use is for residential building, guesthouse or boarding house. Consent usage can, however, be given for group houses, town houses, flats or a place of assembly.

Contractual National Park erven

- Erf 434 - Open Space 1 - Lagoon edge in front of The Syndicate
- Erf 382 – Open Space III - Lagoon edge leading up to the island and island edge
- Erf 444 – Open space 1 – The dunes

The Residential Area check all formatting Bethany it is not consistent. Some is aligned some is not.

There are approximately 88 permanent residents in the Valley. During peak season the population is estimated to swell to 2 000 people in residence, and up to 1 500 visitors per day.

Domestic water is supplied from a pump station, situated above the bridge on the Groot River. A water purification plant uses what is known as the Ozonclear™ process. This process clarifies and disinfects water pumped from the Groot River without having to use metal flocculants or chlorine (Marilyn Boyd Communications, 2000). Should the primary generator fail there is a second diesel generator which can be used to pump water directly from the river into the reticulation system. The Bitou Municipality is responsible for maintaining the system (Strydom, 2001). Water restrictions are imposed over peak holiday periods when the water reticulation system is unable to maintain sufficient pressure and flow volume to meet the increased demand.

Eskom supplies electricity to the entrance of Nature's Valley, from where the supply is managed by the Bitou Municipality. No backup supply exists in the event of a power failure and it is not unusual for Nature's Valley to be without electricity for several hours.

Approximately 255 erven have septic tanks, and 111 have conservancy tanks, which require emptying by a tanker known as the 'Honeysucker'. All new houses, extensions or alterations are required by law to put in conservancy tanks. The Nature's Valley Ratepayers Association is presently researching sewage systems so that those properties presently using conservancy tanks can be incorporated into a reticulated system.

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

In order to achieve the objectives of the Conservancy, the following activities are being proposed:

- a. ***Promote preservation of the indigenous fauna and flora of Nature's Valley:***
The initial focus of this objective will be to encourage all conservancy members to remove invasive plant species from their gardens and to replace these with locally indigenous plants. The benefits of indigenous gardening can then be illustrated and highlighted to attract additional members. (See 7 below)
- b. ***Promote co-operation between members;***
Conservancy membership will be acknowledged through the conservancy tiles/plaques which will be given to each member for erection on his/her erf. Project developments will be recorded and, through a newsletter members will be kept informed and updated on projects.
- c. ***Promote compliance with all environmental legislation with specific reference to the National Environmental Act No 107 of 1998 (To provide for cooperative environmental governance by establishing principles for decision making on matters affecting the environment, institutions that will promote cooperative governance and procedures for coordinating environmental functions exercised by organs of state; and to provide for matters connected therewith.);***
- d. ***Co-operate with conservation authorities and the Bitou Municipality;***
Collaboration on projects with Cape Nature, Tsitsikamma National Park and the Bitou Municipality will be imperative. These bodies will be kept informed of conservancy developments at all times. Participation at and attendance of meetings arranged by Cape Nature will be vital in keeping the Conservancy active and will be an excellent networking tool. Reminder to give a copy of our resource file to Bitou, Cape Nature and SANParks
- e. ***Co-operate with surrounding NGO's and conservancies;***
The Conservancy will work closely with the Nature's Valley Ratepayer's Association, the Open Spaces Committee and the Southern Crags and Indalo Conservancies.
- f. ***Promote environmental awareness;***
Through reporting to the constituency and surrounding and relevant communities and organisations, projects implemented in Nature's Valley can be highlighted. Through the visible success of projects, other property owners in Nature's Valley can be encouraged to become part of the Conservancy.
- g. ***Monitor proposed developments and actively oppose developments which will have negative impacts on the character and natural environment of Nature's Valley;***
One of the biggest threats facing this area is development and, as a recognised body, the Conservancy can play an important role in monitoring developments which may impact on this area. It is envisaged that projects of concern will be highlighted by the Nature's Valley Trust and/or the Nature's Valley Ratepayers Association and, if applicable or necessary, the Conservancy will participate in objecting to such developments.
- h. ***Acknowledge and respect homeowners' rights and independence;***
The Conservancy Management committee will in no way enforce its objectives on non-members. It is important that the Conservancy is seen to play a positive role in the Valley, rather than one of policing.
- i. ***Produce a management plan in accordance with the objectives and vision of the Conservancy;***

The management plan and should be viewed as a working document which will evolve and develop with each new project that is adopted or each new issue that is flagged.

j. *Initiate and/or facilitate projects which fulfil the above objectives;*

The following issues have been identified. These are issues which individual homeowners can tackle and which can be adopted by Conservancy members.

k. *Educate residents of and visitors to Nature's Valley to promote home and garden management that does not impact on the environment and to promote sustainable resource use;*

The Nature's Valley constituency should regularly be informed of developments, researched viable 'home management' options and recourses available to them to enable them to manage their erven in a manner which is appropriate to the Nature's Valley environment. This home 'management plan' should, in the long-term, be voluntarily adopted by home owners once its benefits become obvious.