

Many students who are doing research in the region have joined the PRESENCE Network. They've introduced themselves and their studies below. We look forward to learning together and using our shared knowledge to restore living landscapes!

Longer term studies (Masters, PhD), students based in South Africa... smiles you'll see around for a year or more



Lindie Adao-Smith

(lsmithadao@csir.co.za)

PhD student, Rhodes University & CSIR, South Africa

Project description: The relationship between valley form, fluvial land forms, vegetation distribution patterns and groundwater in the Baviaanskloof catchment.

How it applies: The study will contribute to rehabilitation programmes, monitoring programmes, and sustainable catchment management strategies.

One thing she loves about her study site: The fresh air and lush riparian vegetation



Maura Andrew

(m.andrew@ru.ac.za)

PhD student, Stellenbosch University & Rhodes University, South Africa

Project description: Institutionalizing Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) in the Baviaanskloof Mega-Reserve Area

How it applies: She hopes her work will lead to the creation of functioning PES institutions

One thing she loves about her study site: The beauty of the Baviaanskloof feeds my soul.



Carina Becker

(carinab@iway.na)

Masters student, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, South Africa

Project description: Vegetation comparison of degraded and pristine alluvial fans and plants to be used for restoration of fans in the Baviaanskloof

How it applies: Results can be used for restoration of fans. A database of plants can be used for monitoring and can be distributed to landowners

One thing she loves about her study site: The beauty of the landscape.



Kerry Bobbins

(g06b0008@campus.ru.ac.za)

Masters student, Rhodes University, South Africa

Project description: Developing a framework to investigate alluvial fan functioning in the Baviaanskloof Valley

How it applies: Results can guide alluvial fan restoration initiatives

One thing she loves about her study site: The stars at night



Patrick Curran

(g06c0565@campus.ru.ac.za)

Masters student, Rhodes University, South Africa

Project description: The research and development of a South African carbon project standard (criteria for certification)

How it applies: The standard should speed up implementation of carbon storing restoration projects by providing an efficient, local carbon crediting process.

One thing he loves about his study site: The potential for the carbon market to improve socio-ecological systems in the region.



Julia Glenday

(julia.glenday@gmail.com)

PhD student, University of California Santa Barbara, USA

Project description: Assessing the influence of wetlands and restoration on river flow and water supply in the Kouga and Baviaanskloof catchments.

How it applies: Results can assist and promote sustainable wetland restoration

One thing she loves about her study site: Amazing aloes, red rocky sunsets, donkey carts



Katie Gull (katie_gull@hotmail.com)

Masters of commerce student, University of Cape Town, South Africa

Project description: Economic Impact of Restoration of the Kromme River System

How it applies: The study will illustrate to Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality alternative and sustainable options of augmenting water supply

One thing she loves about her study site: The wetlands, the Langkloof Valley beauty and the people who live there



Rebecca Joubert (rebeccajoub@gmail.com)

PhD student, Rhodes University, South Africa

Project description: Floodplain geomorphic form and dynamics of the Baviaanskloof River for understanding human impacts and most suitable restoration strategies

How it applies: Development of river/floodplain/alluvial fan restoration strategies that are sensitive to natural functioning of the river system and the needs of local communities.

One thing she loves about her study site: Natural beauty and diverse people



Pearl Mzobe (pearlmzobe@hotmail.com)

Master's student, Rhodes University, South Africa

Project description: Looking at erosion and sediment connectivity in Mount Fletcher, Eastern Cape, to aid restoration efforts

How it applies: The methods can be used to assess erosion in other areas and used to plan restoration activities.

One thing she loves about her study site: The silence.



Alanna Rebelo (arebelo@sun.ac.za)

Master's student, Stellenbosch University, South Africa

Project description: Water in the Kromme: how much water have we lost through land degradation? How much water can we gain through restoration and clearing alien plants?

How it applies: She hopes results will be used to restore natural capital (nature's benefits to humans) and see farmers and municipalities working together for water security

One thing she loves about her study site: The immense opportunity to make the system healthy again and the area's potential for ecotourism.



Breanne Robb (breannerobb@gmail.com)

Masters student, Rhodes University, South Africa

Project description: Political Geoecology of Water in Gamtoos catchment: upstream-downstream relationships from the Gamtoos R. mouth up to Baviaans and Kouga sources

How it applies: Results can inform bigger projects, providing a holistic approach to the entire catchment.

One thing she loves about her study site: The photographic opportunities



Odirilwe Selomane (odi@earthcollective.net)

LivingLands & future PhD student

Project description: Developing a framework for valuation of ecosystem services: looking at ways to make the importance of natural benefits explicit.

How it applies: He hopes the outcomes will inform local policy, especially of Water User Associations, conservation planners, and developers on the importance of ecosystems

One thing he loves about his study site: Steep mountains, quietness, and the nice people



Vanessa Sheehan (vanessa.l.sheehan@gmail.com)

Bachelors student, University of Birmingham, UK

Project description: Studying the perceptions of landowners in Stinkhoutberg towards ECPB Stewardship Program through dialogue using the U Theory Process

How it applies: The process can be a blueprint for community dialogue & transformation.

One thing she loves about her study site: It is absolutely beautiful and gives me the feeling of being invited home as a human being



Jordy Stokhof de Jong (jordy.stokhof@wur.nl)

Masters student, Wageningen University, Netherlands

Project description: Design of a landscape plan with emphasize on land use change and stakeholder engagement in the Baviaanskloof

How it applies: The study may give inspiration to local stakeholders and give more insight into possible land use changes.

One thing he loves about his study site: The beautiful landscape and people



Marius van der Vyver (mariusvdv@gmail.com)

PhD student, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, South Africa

Project description: Spekboom restoration - growth survivorship, biodiversity return and restoration endpoints.

How it applies: The results will lead to better spekboom restoration protocol and guidelines.

One thing he loves about his study site: Just the sheer fact that it exists.



Matthew Zylstra (matt@earthcollective.net see <http://eyes4earth.org>)

Transdisciplinary doctorate student, Stellenbosch University, South Africa

Project description: Understanding how insights from meaningful nature experiences/profound wildlife encounters can inform education for sustainability (focus on ages 18-25)

How it applies: To inform design and implementation of experiential education courses & community-based nature awareness strategies in the Baviaanskloof and beyond.

One thing he loves about his study site: The lure of finding oneself in the wilderness.

Longer term studies, students not based in South Africa, but who are visiting or will visit



Katalin Petz (katalin.petz@wur.nl)

PhD student, Wageningen University, Netherlands

Project description: (joint project with Alexander, see below) Modeling the impact of land management strategies on biodiversity and ecosystem services

How it applies: Results can be used in land management and decision-making

One thing she loves about her study site: That I have the chance to go there and challenge to make the most of it!



Sam Schramski (schramski@ufl.edu)

PhD student, University of Florida, USA

Project description: Vulnerability and resilience to climate change and HIV/AIDS in the Eastern Cape with an emphasis on the strength of ties and cohesion in social networks.

How it applies: He hopes this research will help build capacity and lead to socio-ecological betterment in the study sites and Southern Africa more generally.

One thing he loves about his study site: The grandeur of the Baviaans--and spekboom!



Alexander van Oudenhoven (alexander.vanoudenhoven@wur.nl)

PhD student, Wageningen University, Netherlands

Project description: (joint project with Katalin, see above) Analyzing the effect of land management on the services provided by nature

How it applies: Integrating existing information and relating it to land management and services provided by the area will hopefully result in "numbers that mean something".

One thing he loves about his study site: Apart from its beauty, hilliness (I'm Dutch, so...) and great diversity, I love the way all people involved work together in great spirit.



Jasper de Vries (jasper.devries@wur.nl)

PhD student, Wageningen University, Netherlands

Project description: Studying the role of trust between different partners and organizations in spatial planning projects. (In the Baviaanskloof: studying the role of trust in relation to group membership/ social identity and land ownership)

How it applies: The study will help strengthen the collaboration between the different groups, individuals and organizations in the Baviaanskloof.

One thing he loves about his study site: the people

Shorter studies (Bachelors and honors projects, internships)... visitors for a few months



Damian Baselman (d.baselmans@gmail.com)

Honors student, Hogeschool Zeeland, Netherlands

Project description: Describing land and water use and alien invasive species in the Kouga River catchment.

How it applies: My research could be used by stakeholders and other students to look for the best opportunities for new projects in the Langkloof.

One thing he loves about his study site: The views, landscape and friendly people



Nicolein Blanksma (nicolein.blanksma@wur.nl)

Master's student, Wageningen University, Netherlands

Project description: (working with Katalin and Alexander, see below) Quantifying ecosystem services for the main land use types in the Baviaanskloof Mega-Reserve

How it applies: The outcomes will increase understanding of the effects of land use on ecosystem services, such as carbon storage, clean water provision, etc., to help planning.

One thing she loves about her study site: Beautiful nature, impressive geology, and friendly people



Jeroen van Gastel (jeroen.vangastel@wur.nl)

Bachelors student, Wageningen University, Netherlands

Project description: Monitoring the surface run-off and soil erosion in spekboom-thicket and in degraded vegetation at a case-study monitoring plot in the Baviaanskloof.

How it applies: The outcomes will provide an understanding about the positive effects spekboom vegetation has on the water and soil conditions and help further studies.

One thing he loves about his study site: The remoteness and intense beauty combined with the kindness and warmth of the farmers you meet in the Baviaanskloof.



Iwan van Veen (iwan.vanveen@wur.nl)

Masters student, Wageningen University, Netherlands, South Africa

Project description: Black rhino habitat modelling in the Baviaanskloof Nature Reserve

How it applies: The outcome of the study can help the management of black rhino populations

One thing he loves about his study site: The natural beauty of the area.

