

Coetzenburg Mountain and Eerste Rivier Rehabilitation Project

Years of uncoordinated management of the Coetzenburg Mountain reserve have resulted in extensive damage and degradation of the area, manifested by severe erosion through uncoordinated land use, an unsustainable but potentially valuable timber resource, unused land and uncoordinated land-use albeit for recreational, environmental or for research purposes.

In 2010 Mr John de Wet, an experienced South African forester, was appointed by the University to manage the rehabilitation of the Mountain area and the Eerste River under the auspices of the Department of Forest and Wood Science and the University's Facilities Management. The vision of the project is to create a sustainable resource of the mountain area that is available to research, teaching and outreach by the university and its stakeholders.

A survey of the area prioritised key intervention areas to receive attention in the short, medium or longer term.



Work completed in 2010

- Rehabilitation and upgrading of critically damaged roads
- Rehabilitation of the largest and most potentially threatening erosion gully's
- Redesign of the storm water management system
- Chemical treatment of the various invasive specie present in the area
- Thinning out of existing *Eucalyptus* compartments as part of silvicultural management of these stands
- The tending of these stands by reducing unnecessary residual biomass

Projects planned for 2011 and beyond

- The upgrade of the balance of the road network and its drainage systems
- Continued chemical and biological treatment of invasive species
- Implementation of a fire management system which will include fire prevention, suppression and the training of fire control personnel
- Provide areas for research experiments, such as renewable energy resources and fertilisation trials
- Development of two new mountain bike trails in conjunction with local and national biking association
- Maintenance of the erosion galleys through hydro-seeding
- Development of an arboretum of indigenous trees for carbon sequestration
- Improving the water quality of the Eerste River by cleaning the river and surrounds, and maintaining the banks of the river
- Create interest in the Mountain area through stakeholder consultation

