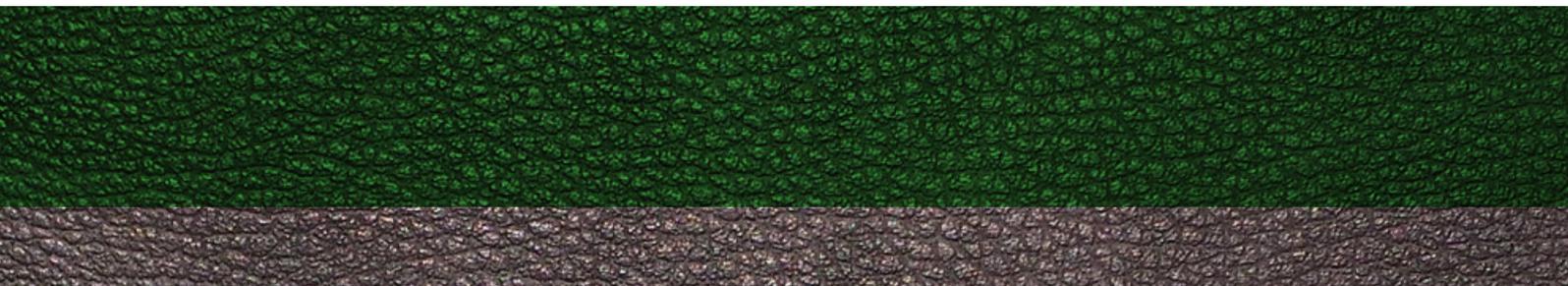




Steynsrus Slangbos Project



Steynsrus is a small farming town in the Free State province. It falls under Mophaka Local Municipality and is administered from Kroonstad. Steynsrus is located on the R76 and R720 road between Kroonstad and Senekal, roughly 50 km from both. A LandCare committee was established in Steynsrus with huge success. The LandCare committee ensures commitment, involvement, debate, transparency and awareness. The most important thing about the committee is that it ensures all the projects in the area are community based and it is empowering local people to make decisions about their own problems. Invader plants are a serious threat to sustainable farming practises in the Steynsrus district especially on the communal land and adjacent farms that contribute to the causes of the land degradation in the area. The project helps to control the invader bush, *Seriphium plumosum*, Slangbos/Bankrot bush, with herbicides and pulling out the bushes by hand. By controlling the Slangbos, with its competitive effect on grass, production is increased and more soil moisture is available for grass production. The result is that the current unproductive area is changed to a productive area due to optimal grass growth by climax species. The emerging farmers will also benefit from the project with better field management systems in place. One of the priorities of the Department of Agriculture in the Free State is addressing environmental issues. This is a very complex and difficult problem. Ignoring these problems is not an option anymore as the impact of the problem is getting bigger and bigger and soon it will be a national disaster. The project is addressing the problems of the emerging farmers in the district by combating invader plants on their farms. Addressing the causes, rather than the effects, is high on the priority list as rehabilitation can be very expensive.

The project also has an impact on poverty relief by using skills development to create income for people who don't have any income. The development of a proper awareness and training programme ensures that the real problems of the farmers are being addressed and this will ensure that the farmers understand the real problem.

PROJECT FUNDING

The LandCare conditional grant managed to contribute R450 000 since the project's initiation. 25 people were employed by the LandCare project, including two men, 23 women and 16 youth for a total of 84 days for the 2015/16 cycle of this project. In addition, 11 people were employed by EPWP funding, including one man and six women for a total of 76 days.



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