

VeldCare combats desertification in the rural areas of South Africa



Desertification is the development of desert-like conditions in the areas that have experienced human disturbance such as deforestation or poorly managed scarce resources and overgrazing, etc. It is largely caused by a combination of human and natural factors that contribute to an unsustainable use of scarce natural resources.

Increasing human population and poverty contribute to desertification as poor people may be forced to overuse their environment in the short term without the ability to plan for the long-term effects of the action. Desertification affects the livelihoods of millions of people who rely on the benefits that dryland conditions

water scarcity limits the production of crops, wood and other services that an ecosystem provides to humans. The implication is that when facing desertification people often respond by making use of land that is even less productive, transforming pieces of rangeland into cultivated land. This can lead to unsustainable

agricultural practices and to further land degradation. Desertification has an environmental impact that goes beyond the areas directly affected, for instance loss of vegetation can increase the formation of large dust clouds that can cause health problems in more densely populated areas. Desertification affects a wide range of services provided by the ecosystem to humans: products such as food and water, natural processes such as climate regulation, but also non-material services such as recreation and supporting services such as soil conservation. Desertification poses one of the greatest environmental challenges today and constitutes a major barrier to meeting basic human needs in dryland conditions. The number of animals on the land must be reduced, allowing plants to regrow. Fencing is a valuable tool of good veld management practices.

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