**Rooiels- A community with a Vision and Commitment**

Over many years the community of Rooiels has demonstrated a passionate commitment and responsibility to conserve the natural beauty of the area and act as a buffer to the natural core of the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve (KBR). Rooiels is a small residential community that is active in promoting local biodiversity and living in harmony with nature. Village residents have cleared most invasive alien plants from the village to retain natural flora thus enhancing its role as a refuge to the flora and fauna of the area.

Residents are active in protecting the estuary, dunes and endangered marine life close to its shores. The Rooiels Estuary is acknowledged as the cleanest in the Overstrand Area[[1]](#footnote-1)

Rooielsers have a proud history of fighting for what they believe in. This commitment reached the peak of community mobilisation in what is called *The Somchem Saga- an encounter with the arms industry[[2]](#footnote-2).* In 1979 Somchem (Armscor) ‘rented’ Portion 186 from the Caledon Divisional Council for R25 per year for an indefinite period. This portion of land, spanning 400 hectares, is situated in pristine mountain land east of the R44 and in close proximity to the core of what is now the Kogelberg Biosphere. Has the richest diversity of plants in the world. There were still some Eland there at the time. This area had been set aside as a declared catchment area for the Buffelsrivier dam which was built in 1972 to supply water to the coastal villages of Rooiels, Pringle Bay and Bettys Bay. Somchem were to use the place to test heavy munitions and rocket propellants. The risk of water and air pollution let alone fires in the area was very real. Residents in Rooiels were plagued by the sound of heavy munitions explosions and ominous clouds realeased by the testing of rocket propellants. No one was allowed near the site and it was surrounded by Forestry land.

However, concerned residents jumped into action when they learned that Somchem wanted to buy the land for R500. At a well-attended meeting (1989) of the Rooiels Ratepayers Association, chaired by Dr. Denis Cowen, the unanimous decision was that RERA representatives, in close collaboration with the Pringle Bay Ratepayers Association, should negotiate with Somchem to persuade them to leave and if not successful, to go to court as their presence was illegal. A legal battle began in 1991. A trust fund was established which collected R1 000 000 to fund the costs. The outcome was a thunderous success as Somchem was forced to agree to the Cape Supreme Court orders to make a settlement offer to the Rooiels community.

A research work, *From defense to development: redirecting military resources* by Jacklyn Cock and others, Canada 1998 commented as follows:

*Rooiels is one of the few instances in South Africa where public debate has taken place over the environmental impact of military activities.*

The Washington Post, in an article on 9 June 1992, drew the attention of the world to the efforts of *The village council of tiny Rooiels, an oceanside community east of Cape Town (which) has challenged the Denel chemical subsidiary, Somchem.*

Another famous battle is that of Erf 324 which stopped development of 21 ha against Klein Hangklip, thus preserving pristine mountain and wetland. Klein Hangklip is an iconic feature of Rooiels which can be seen across False Bay and from the air. Because of the Erf 324 battle, which caught national attention, the mountain remains largely unspoilt and harbours spectacular wildlife including leopard, black eagle, klipspringer, caracal, as well as the red-listed Victorin’s warbler and the Cape rockjumper which is considered highly susceptible to climate change, with it having a low tolerance of high temperatures (Milne 2014 per Taylor et al. 2014).

Cape Rock Jumper.

This kind of determination, courage and hard work are still very evident in Rooiels where residents do not hesitate to take up battles against authorities, developers and even amongst themselves to protect and strengthen the entrenched vision they believe in.

Through the years Rooiels managed to avoid having street lights, tar roads in the village, fencing that hampers the comings and goings of wildlife as well as being very serious about protecting Rooiels fauna and flora. They have strongly defended the retention of natural fynbos along the road verges and encouraged landowners to retain natural fynbos.

The Rooiels Baboon Troupe has become famous and cherished. They are a tourist attraction on their own. Rooiels has been hailed as a prime example where people and animals live in harmony. Rooielsers passionately protect breeding birds and their babies… have regular beach clean-ups and run a very successful dune-stabilisation programme.

In collaboration with the Cape Leopard Trust, Rooielsers manage a very successful surveillance project with cameras tracking leopard, honey badgers, antelope, otters and other animals, especially in the Strandloper Cave.

Rooiels with its widespread locally indigenous flora is an important buffer to the neighbouring protected area. Rooiels residents have invested considerable time and money over many years to remove invasive alien plants. What was once a forest of rooikrans (*Acacia cyclops*) is now naturally seeded fynbos. This provides habitat and food for insects and animals and the natural areas are an important seedbank. Thus Rooiels helps to sustain the biodiversity of the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve

Rooiels is proud of its heritage as a community that lives closely with nature and helps to enhance the value of the environment for the future. The residents would like to ensure that it continues this legacy.

Through RERA and REC, ratepayers of Rooiels support the Overstrand Municipality’s *Proposed Overlay Zones and Land Use Planning Revisions.*

However, Rooielsers would like the entire Village to be included in an Overlay Zone that provides it the special protection needed in keeping with its role as a Scenic Corridor and Gateway to the Overstrand and in its role in preserving the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve**.** A submission to this effect has been made to the Overstrand Municipality.

Currently the designation of Rooiels HPOZ applies only to the sections that can be seen from the R44 and to erven along the sea front which are included in the Coastal HPOZ. The residents of Rooiels would like to apply for a special Overlay, similar to the HPOZ status for the entire village in order to ensure that we maintain the natural fynbos of this scenic corridor.

The Rooiels Residents’ Vision reflects the values articulated in the HPOZ but applies to the entire village. The Vision is also in line with the support for Rooiels to be active as a buffer to the protected area of the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve. The well attended stakeholders meeting in 2018 reaffirmed the commitment of residents, for Rooiels to apply to be formally incorporated as a Buffer zone into the KBR. Rooiels is proud of its heritage as a community that lives closely with nature and helps to enhance the value of the environment for the future. The residents would like to ensure that it continues this legacy.

The sections of Rooiels currently designated as HPOZ are only certain areas that can be seen from the R44. They are so designated because of the important scenic and aesthetic role that the corridor plays in the Overstrand economy. The area can become an important hub for eco- and conservation tourism.

However, Rooiels in its entirety adds real value to these attractions because of the way it reflects people living in harmony with nature. Most of the village is open and retains indigenous fynbos along the roadsides and many of the Erfs. Wildlife can be seen foraging naturally in the village and visitors to the Overstrand often incorporate a drive through Rooiels as part of their visitor experience. To retain this, we do need all of Rooiels to be incorporated into the HPOZ or in a special Overlay. The rationale that was applied by the Overstrand Municipality, for the designation of parts of Rooiels as an important HPOZ along the scenic corridor, is relevant to the entire village.

In addition to its role in the aesthetics and attraction of the Overstrand, Rooiels also currently plays an important role in mitigating the risks of the loss of diversity through climate change. Rooiels still retains much of its natural fynbos and thus acts as a seed bank and also as a host for insects and all animal life. Rooiels is also currently exploring the options of actively engaging in providing opportunities and support for Western Cape universities, including Hermanus, to carry out research on sustainable living in ways that promote natural ecological systems. The importance of climate risk mitigation and adaptation is increasingly recognised as essential to the future in South Africa. Thus Rooiels can become an important research destination for national and international scholars and scientists.

Rooiels residents voted overwhelmingly (2018/19) to lobby at various forums and UNESCO for a change in the Biosphere zones so that Rooiels Village move from being a designated Transition Zone of the Kogelberg International Biosphere to a buffer zone.

At a recent stakeholder meeting (October, 2019) representatives from the Overstrand Municipality supported this initiative and furthermore suggested that a specific overlay for Rooiels Village be created.

**Rooiels Village**

The village itself lies on an uneven marine-eroded platform (comparatively recent in geological terms) of sand-covered Table Mountain Formation consisting mainly of layered sandstone and quartzite. There have been fluctuations in sea level in recent years. There is a prominent fault running between Rooiels and the Western end of Bettys Bay which may account for the location of the Rooiels Bay.

To get an idea of the rich history of Rooiels one should read the latest Rooiels book “*Rooiels: A village between the mountains and the sea”* (2018 Gerard Scholtz ed.)

Rooiels is dotted with evidence of people who have lived on these shores thousands of years. 21 000 years ago late Stone Age people left shell ornaments behind… followed the San who moved in 10 000 years ago, living in the same area and using the same caves and middens. Fish traps are dotted around the coast line.

After them came Khoikhoi and still later Europeans. The cave in the kloof of the Rooiels river has offered rich archeological findings… unfortunately not always handled in a scientific, respectful manner.

Early trails and roads were nothing more than a path that at best could be negotiated by pack horse. Apart from the elements, early Dutch farmers had to contend with roaming bands of runaway slaves and deserters from the VOC.

The coastal road to Rooiels which is recognised as one of the most scenic drives in South Africa has a colourful history using prison labour, manually making the road, which was to become Clarence Drive (R44). The supervisor drove around in his jeep with two tame baboons…

From maps of the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve it will be seen that a very small area of

Rooiels is actually designated as a Transition Zone. This zone centres around the small business centre which houses mainly tourist-oriented businesses e.g. three restaurants/pubs/coffee shops and one café/superette. There is very little opportunity for further business development in Rooiels, which strengthens and supports the view that Rooiels be designated as a buffer zone, a conservation village with tremendous scope for research attracting environmentalists and academics from all over the world.

Rooiels is in very close proximity to the Core zone of the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve. Through the Rooiels Ratepayers Association (RERA), Rooiels is lobbying with UNESCO to be declared as a buffer zone.

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**Rooiels as a Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve Buffer Zone**

1. **Background**

At the 2018 Stakeholders Meeting RERA/REC was tasked by those present to pursue the potential for Rooiels to be incorporated into the Buffer zone of the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve (KBR). RERA appointed a Workgroup to tend to the most burning issues raised at the Stakeholder meeting. Buffer zone status for Rooiels was one of these. A sub-group is tasked to look at matters environmental, especially the expressed wish by the majority of RERA/REC members to pursue the issue of being designated as a buffer zone as opposed to a the present status of being a transition zone.

The Rooiels Conservancy (REC) will form part of this endorsement as RERA and REC work closely together in all matters environmental. The Rooiels Security Association (RESA) and Rooiels Boatclub are also involved from the perspective of conservation and management of resources. After the devastating fires of the past five years, a fire management group, REDI was created.

1. **Framework for motivation to be designated/reaffirmed/confirmed as a buffer zone of the KBR**

Managing and maintaining a Biosphere is about shared responsibility, a spirit of community stewardship and a special kind of caring that celebrates the diversity, beauty and richness of plants, animals and micro-organisms which make up our *living biosphere.*

The challenge is to maintain healthy eco-systems while, at the same time, meeting the material needs and aspirations of an increasing number of people.

2.1 **A Biosphere Reserve has 3 zones**:

·         the Core where there is no human activity (or very limited and transient, with nature conservation paramount);

·         the Buffer zone where there is human activity and some settlement but where the emphasis is on co-existence in a way that ensures protection of the biodiversity of the Core;

·         the Transition zone where human activity predominates (agriculture, industry, settlements) with some effort made to reduce negative impacts on the environment and biodiversity.

2.2  **Natural capital:**

A key concept to keep in mind within the framework of living in a buffer zone, is that of *natural capital*. *This idea defines nature as, among other things, a set of economic assets which, if managed well, can produce dividends that flow from those assets indefinitely*. This is not what generally happens at the moment. Assets such as soils and forests are often simply liquidated, as if they do not need to be maintained or replenished, and it is surely does not require a financial expert to point out that this is the fastest way to bankruptcy.

The shift towards seeing Nature as the provider of a set of economically vital services, rather than resources that can be used up to fuel economic growth is one of the most important conceptual shifts in history.

2.4 Over many years the community of Rooiels has demonstrated a passionate commitment and responsibility to conserve the natural beauty of the area and act as a buffer to the natural core of the KBR. Rooiels is a small residential community that is active in promoting local biodiversity and living in harmony with nature. Village residents have cleared most invasive alien plants from the village to retain natural flora thus enhancing its role as a refuge to the flora and fauna of the area.

Residents are active in protecting the estuary, dunes and endangered marine life close to its shores.

They would like to be more engaged in supporting research and would like to ensure that Rooiels remains as a buffer to the conservation of the core. To achieve this Rooiels needs to be designated as part of the buffer zone within the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve.

It is a challenge as new residents/visitors come into Rooiels with new ideas and ways. Open communication and sharing of ideas are vital to ensure all who live and play in Rooiels buy into the ethos of seeing Nature as the provider ensuring economic stability and growth within the parameters of the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve in which we have to good fortune to live.

The RERA/REC stakeholder workshop in 2018 left participants with the firm conviction that Rooiels, within the framework of UNESCO guidelines, can take charge of its own environmental destiny by reinforcing and reaffirming its KBR designation as a buffer zone. Rooiels, as a narrow piece of land wedged between the Kogelberg mountains and the sea is ideally set to be a buffer and as the entrance to the coastal part of the KBR should be a clear illustration of a Buffer zone where there is human activity and some settlement but where the emphasis is on co-existence in a way that ensures protection of the biodiversity of the Core. There is very little scope for Rooiels to be a transition town which allows industry and development. It is quite evident that Rooiels forums such as the Rooiels Rate Payers Associations and the Rooiels Conservancy will have to take the lead, in collaboration with the KBRC, Overstrand Municipality, Cape Nature, DEA and UNESCO to confirm the designated status of the village and to stick to the plan accordingly.

 2.5 Partners essential to achieve the vision of being a model of sustainable living in a buffer zone

* Rooiels residents
* Visitors and tourists
* Kogelberg coast community
* The Business Sector
* Educational institutions in the Western Cape
* Overstrand Municipality
* Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve Company
* CapeNature
* Department of Environmental Affairs
* UNESCO
* The South African Biosphere Network

The Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve Company manages the KBR and reports to Dept of Environment, Fisheries and Forestry and falls within the Cape Town and Overberg Municipal areas. There is a growing recognition that conserving natural ecosystems could provide a suite of ecosystem services related to climate change, ranging from protection to providing additional insurance against the predicted increasing instability of agriculture, fisheries and water resources. The KBR plays an essential role in protecting the environment and species diversity.

There are many definitions of a buffer zone but all relate to the role of conserving the integrity of the core. A Buffer zone is essentially an area peripheral to a protected reserve where “special development measures are undertaken to enhance the conservation of an area”. Developing effective buffers are recognised as part of crucial efforts to extend and protect core reserves so that they can better mitigate the effects of climate change. There is wide diversity in the conditions for designating a buffer zone reflecting the different ecological, economic, institutional and social situations. The buffer zone approach is “a long-term intervention for various reasons, the main ones being that it demands a participatory and process approach, which takes time. It also often demands a change of attitude and even cultural thinking, changes which cannot be achieved overnight. Buffer zones are crucial areas for both people and nature. Therefore, careful planning based on complete information of the natural resource base and socio-economic context is necessary. The multi-disciplinary planning process is complicated, as many stakeholders at different levels will be involved.” (Ebregt and de Greve, 2000)

A terrestrial buffer zone should encompass near-natural areas to protect and provide a “refuge” to plant and animals which may come under fire and changed rainfall from climate change. Buffer areas are also useful as a base to carry out research on the effects of human activity and of adaptation. Buffer zones can assist in strengthening the resilience of the system in the face of change. Although buffer zones do not usually include populated areas, there are buffer zones which

include human settlements and these are particularly important where it is possible to take the protective measures necessary to ensure environmental integrity of activities in the settlement to enhance protection of the core. “ It will become increasingly important, however, to take into account projected impacts of climate change when designing new protected area systems, and to expand spatial scales through buffer zones and corridors to aid species migration” (Hansen and Biringer, WWF, 2003). Buffer zones are usually privately owned and not under the same governance as the more heavily protected core. In the case of the buffer zones for the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve they are privately owned and some of the more pristine buffer areas have a management agreement with Cape Nature whereas other parts of the buffer zone are privately managed as part of the Overberg Municipality.

Rooiels has long been dedicated to enhancing the natural biodiversity of the village. The resident baboon troop moves freely around the village as an example of co-existence. Villagers have cleared most invasive alien plants and continue to protect our natural plants as habitat for animal life and as seed banks for the village and the neighbouring KBR core. This is a community that have a passion for nature and who highly value both the existence value of the nature in the KBR and its role in sustainability. They are prepared to adapt to living in a way that promotes the conservation of the flora and fauna in the village.

The Rooiels vision is to be a community that is united by their passion to conserve the natural splendour of Rooiels and that is keen to share this appreciation of the environment with others. Rooielsers have pledged that here nature will be nurtured.

**From *transition* to *buffer***

Rooiels is a residential area that is currently designated as a transition zone in the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve. On the north east side of Rooiels there is no buffer zone between the core and the transition area of Rooiels. Furthermore the marine ecosystem of Rooiels is not currently protected. However, in the Kogelberg Biosphere Plan, as part of the Marine Protected Area expansion, the coast around Rooiels is designated to become a buffer zone (Fig 27, 2012 report). If Rooiels is to be an effective buffer it needs the recognition that regulations appropriate for settlements in the transition zone may not always be appropriate. It will need to ensure that regulations are in keeping with its role as part of the buffer zone to the Kogelberg Biosphere Zone core area.

The Rooiels residents are committed to conservation of the environment and would like to put in place special measures that will further enhance the contribution of the village to biodiversity and the sustainability of the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve. The Rooiels river estuary is a pristine estuary, the sea still has some, although declining, populations of kreef (Jasus lalandii) and perlemoen (Haliotis midae) and the town still has large areas along the roads, in the nature reserve and on people’s plots, that are natural fynbos.

The residents would like to see their village, the estuary and the surrounding marine area declared a buffer zone in order to ensure that these valuable resources are retained and enhanced and that this area remains an effective ecological corridor from land to sea. This request is in line with the definition of a buffer zone where special measures are put in place to enhance the conservation values of an area (Bioversity A-Z: Buffer Zones).

Some specific arguments relating to Rooiels inclusion as a Buffer Zone:

1. Location – see the map. It would make sense to designate Rooiels a part of the buffer zone to reduce the hard edge along the pristine Rooiels river estuary and to extend the ecological corridor from the mountains to the sea. Along the coast to link up with the smallholdings south east of Rooiels that are part of the buffer zone. (*need to get an A3 version of the map and we then mark on it the change we would like to see)*
2. Geological: Rooiels is one of the few areas of coastal plain within the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve that is still dominated by indigenous vegetation. The other areas are either significantly altered by both urban footprint and alien vegetation (Kogelbay beach, Pringle Bay, Hangklip and Betty’s Bay). This area is also important because it is “an important edaphic interface occurs between sandstone and shale derived soils (Bokkeveld Group) at lower elevations (Cowling et al. 2003)” (in van Schalkwyk, 2019).
3. Ecosystem protection and Ecological Corridors

Ecosystem services and the ecological corridors that protect them are essential to life and to mitigate the impacts of climate change. Species are the building blocks of ecosystems, playing a fundamental role in maintaining well-functioning and sustainable systems.

“*As such, the effective conservation of the exceptionally high species diversity of the KBR is one of the key determinants of environmental resilience. The lack of extensive corridors linking the coastal plains with the mountains will have serious impacts on natural ecosystems and biodiversity in the future. The single biggest cause of loss of biodiversity in South Africa, and in most of the world, is loss or degradation of natural habitat and ecosystems*”. (van Schalkwyk, 2019)

The inclusion of Rooiels into the buffer zone would strengthen its role as an ecological corridor, linking the land and marine ecosystems of the Rooiels river, the estuary and the sea and extending the buffer across the current small island of the Rooiels transition zone into the core.

Rooiels could become a model of how communities can work with nature and enhance biodiversity by providing special services (e.g. retaining essential seed banks; providing habitat to animals when fire reduces it elsewhere; providing a good base for research to take place[[3]](#footnote-3)) and establishing and maintaining a repository of knowledge of the research carried out.

1. Flora – Kogelberg Sandstone Fynbos – there are good stands of the locally endemic *Diastella themelaeoides* and also of the endangered *Erica brachialis. Sideroxylon inerme* are widespread throughout the village, with a coastal wind-cut hedge stand along part of Rocklands road. The nature reserve, the road reserves and many of the plots and gardens have been left natural to form healthy seedbanks and animal habitat. These become particularly important when fire ravages the core and to replace flora lost to development along other settlements of the KBR coastal plain. Rooiels would like to continue to protect this resource. The village has been committed to protecting the flora for fifty years and have worked tirelessly to almost completely eradicate stands of alien invasive plants, which is an ongoing exercise as seeds remain so long in the ground.
2. Fauna – although the residents currently do not know of endangered mammal species to be specifically protected, Rooiels is home to a healthy and diverse mammal population which lives surrounded by the human population. Rooiels has 207 bird species in a confirmed sightings list, including the rare and endemic Cape rockjumper and Victorian’s warbler. Verraux eagle periodically nest in this area. The shoreline also hosts nesting black oystercatcher, with the Caspian’s tern and the bank cormorant recorded here. Tortoises are everywhere and other reptiles, frogs and insects are living in the abundant natural fynbos.

1. Marine – *get information on the Estuary and also in here need to find again the information on KBR zones that refer to a buffer zone that does allow limited use – for the small fishermen making a living, and for recreational and tourist fishing and diving – but with seasonal and catch limits. Protection would be from the big outside commercial ventures being allowed to catch near shore and Also we should see how it links along the coast to the Bettys Bay Marine Reserve which I think is about to get even stricter protection. We mention our seal colony and otters etc – do we also speak of poaching*

MPAs provide insurance against environmental variability and year-to-year fluctuations: the conditions that are predicted to increase under climate change. A review of 80 marine protected areas found that on average reserves doubled abundance, tripled biomass and increased both size and diversity of fish by a third (Halpern, 2003) and the same data showed that increases usually became obvious within five years of protection (Halpern and Warner, 2002). This evidence is building public support for marine protected areas as a longterm insurance policy. …….. Many current reserves are too small to have a significant impact on fisheries 20-40% of fishing grounds to be set aside. Thus it would make sense to include the coastal area off Rooiels as part of the buffer zone to the Betty’s Bay core reserve, with limited offtake restricted to artisanal fishing and recreation only.

1. Aesthetic Value of the area is enhanced by a village where visitors feel part of the natural environment and where they are able to see wild animals still common along the roads and in the gardens. It is widely recognised that the physical beauty of the natural environment is the region’s single largest asset. As such, the Overstrand’s economy and its ecology are inseparable. If the natural environment is not effectively managed, the declining natural resource base will limit future economic growth. Rooiels is of special importance as its wild natural appeal enhances the aesthetic value of the area increasing property values and the value of Clarence drive as a tourist attraction (See Overstrand Municipal Environmental Mgt Framework)
2. Land Use Planning – Rooiels is a Heritage and Coastal special protection overlay zone (*or most or part of it, not sure until we get the final Overlay)*. It would therefore make sense to strengthen the contribution of Rooiels to the Overstrand scenic corridor. The purpose of designating Rooiels HPOZ status is “to enhance and protect the visual spatial threshold at the point of entry to the OM, to protect and enhance the green links from the mountains to the coast, and to ensure that the natural green context remains the dominant element with the built footprint subsidiary to the landscape rather than dominating it”. (2016 Draft Environmental Overlay HPOZ Section 13)

*This helps us to show that the Overstrand Municipality is on side and likely to support our request to be declared a buffer zone rather than classified alongside the other larger villages as part of the transition zone.*

1. Human – *commitment to conservation – why Rooiels would like to do this and what they are currently doing and how they have tried to address human/animal conflict and also development, fire and environmental considerations – finding ways to moderate human behaviour so that it allows for human living but maintains environmental integrity*.
2. Contribution to Research

Designing conservation strategies with only partial information about both the marine and terrestrial ecosystems in question is difficult. Research is an important element of the UN Biosphere Reserves programme and detailed reporting on research is part of the ten-year review process. Rooiels as part of the buffer could be shown to be contributing by promoting, tracking and keeping a repository of all the research generated.

Rooiels has some experience in hosting and supporting researchers based in the village. Rooiels is in touch with a number of universities in the area and will establish formal agreements to host research students and student field visits. Rooiels will use its resident networks to reach out to other universities across the world to encourage research into those species and systems which are identified as important to the KBR. The research carried out here will be documented and shared with the KBRC Board. Rooiels will set up an electronic repository of all the research carried out in, or relevant to, Rooiels. This will be openly shared with other researchers to assist them to embed their work in what has gone before. Rooiels is a living laboratory of how humans can live with and support biodiversity and the environment. Rooiels would like to encourage green living and to provide an opportunity for both the Overstrand Municipality and the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve to track the effect of different off-grid and alternative living systems. The open, unfenced properties make it possible to carry out research on the impact of humans and their gardens on indigenous fynbos. Climate change is resulting in changes that require adaptation and Rooiels provides a useful living laboratory e.g. experiments with different water regimes for specific plants could be established

**Evidence of Interest to become Buffer Zone by the Landowners**

Stakeholders have always been very aware of environment. In the 1980s and 1990s they were instrumental in protecting the area from encroachment for inappropriate development and by protecting water sources. The community invested in large-scale eradication of invasive alien plants and have subsequently been active in preventing re-infestation. In 2018 at a community meeting there were discussions relating to specific problems with some regulations that apply throughout the Overstrand that are inappropriate for a village wanting to support nature. At that meeting the KBRC Board Chairperson suggested that Rooiels should consider becoming a part of the buffer zone. This was strongly endorsed by the community. Rooiels would now like to take this further and are hereby applying to the KBRC Board to approve of their application to be included in the Buffer Zone and request that this be taken forward, through the KBRC to DEFF

**What Rooiels strives for**

Keeping all the public areas as natural as possible.  It is fine to have some gardened areas at the village business centre but as far as possible we need to maintain public areas natural.  Residents will be encouraged to garden in ways that support our natural heritage.  For those who would like brighter gardens, the plants included in the village centre gardens, are examples of what can be colourful but still supportive to our environment by avoiding invasive plants.

Encouraging people to live in harmony with the wild animals and to ensure that Rooiels is a place where we find ways to adapt our behaviour to reduce conflict and to **make it possible for wildlife and people to co-exist**. Within the Rooiels Vision residents have always been encouraged to not erect fences to ensure the free movement of animals. Where residents feel the need to have fences the Vision motivates the erection of natural looking fences that blend in with the environment.

3.4 Acting as a defence against fire in the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve – both in prevention and in fighting any fires.  Where fire prevention and biodiversity are in conflict, we will call on botanical and fire experts to ensure that a reasonable compromise is arrived at.

* 1. Applying for the coast around Rooiels to be part of a marine buffer zone – not a marine reserve (or core), but a buffer where limited recreational fishing, crayfishing, collection of shellfish and bait etc. will be allowed, but not large trawlers and not commercial shellfish or seaweed offtake.  A buffer to help to sustain the marine life and help to restore sea-life populations

1. Cape Nature: Marine protected areas, islands and estuaries working group. 2018 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Scholtz, Gerard, Edit. 2018. Rooiels, a village between mountains and the sea. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Rooiels would organise reasonably priced accommodation, eventually possibly be in a position to provide office space (community centre) and share expertise of a range of residents with specialist knowledge of the area [↑](#footnote-ref-3)