

## **National Biodiversity Planning Forum**

### **Background**

Established in 2004, the National Biodiversity Planning Forum is an annual event providing an opportunity for individuals, agencies and departments involved in spatial biodiversity planning to share and synthesise valuable lessons from biodiversity planning projects across South Africa. The Forum is intended primarily for those involved in the technical aspects of biodiversity planning and the production of biodiversity planning products. Although the core focus of the Forum is on systematic biodiversity planning a key theme is planning for implementation. Much of the biodiversity planning done in South Africa underpins strategic interventions and supports improved environmental decision-making.

The Forum attracts practitioners, scientists and managers from a range of institutions and organisations including national, provincial and local government, conservation NGOs, universities and research institutes and independent biodiversity planning consultants. The Forum has seen huge growth in numbers over the last 9 years, from 45 participants to over 180 participants at the 2012 Forum. The Forum also encourages students and interns to attend and offers funding, when possible, to support student involvement.

Each year the Forum identifies key issues that are presented, discussed and debated in plenary and parallel sessions.

### **Forum objectives**

The Forum has a number of key objectives including:

- Share lessons learnt from systematic biodiversity planning initiatives including review of implementation effectiveness
- Introduce aspects of advanced biodiversity planning
- Provide case studies that highlight the challenges of planning for implementation
- Contribute to guidelines and standards for systematic biodiversity planning
- Build networks for better communication among the various projects and agencies in the country
- Develop capacity in the biodiversity planning sector through sharing of experiences and the introduction to new innovations
- Investigate training needs



# National Biodiversity Planning Forum 2005 - 2011



Didema (2005)



Blyde (2006)



Pilanesburg 2007



Mpekwani 2008



Pumula 2009



Bela Bela 2010



Wilderness 2011





## 2012 Biodiversity Planning Forum

22–25 May 2012, Skukuza, Kruger National Park

The 2012 Biodiversity Planning Forum, co-hosted by DEA, SANBI and SANParks, took place from 22 – 25 May 2012, at Skukuza Camp, Kruger National Park

### Highlights from the 2012 Biodiversity Planning Forum

The 2012 Forum focused on the following:

- Mining and biodiversity which stimulated discussion on how we can move towards a more strategic approach to integrating biodiversity issues into mining to ensure a more sustainable future
- Mapping ecological infrastructure for ecosystem services which started to identify the key knowledge gaps and devise a strategic way forward for addressing there through both new projects and an alignment of existing projects
- Invasive alien species management which resulted in a productive discussion on strategic issues for more effective planning and management of invasive alien species, especially those that impact of ecosystem service delivery to society
- Climate change adaptation and biodiversity planning where examples showing some of the current thinking, approaches and methodologies used in incorporating climate change adaptation into biodiversity planning were discussed

Other sessions featured at the 2012 Forum included a plenary on new national biodiversity plans and assessments where the highlights from the recently completed National Biodiversity Assessment (NBA) 2011 as well as other national biodiversity planning products were presented; Taking stock of our protected area estate where work on the development of DEA's spatial database on protected areas was presented and discussed; Tools for conserving threatened species and whether our biodiversity plans were sufficient in achieving this; a discussion on moving towards a stronger strategy for building biodiversity planning capacity; and a Making the Case for Biodiversity workshop where some of the key findings of the process were discussed and ideas for taking the messaging strategy forward were identified.

