

Giba Gorge Environmental Precinct and Nature Reserve

Special Rating Area (SRA)

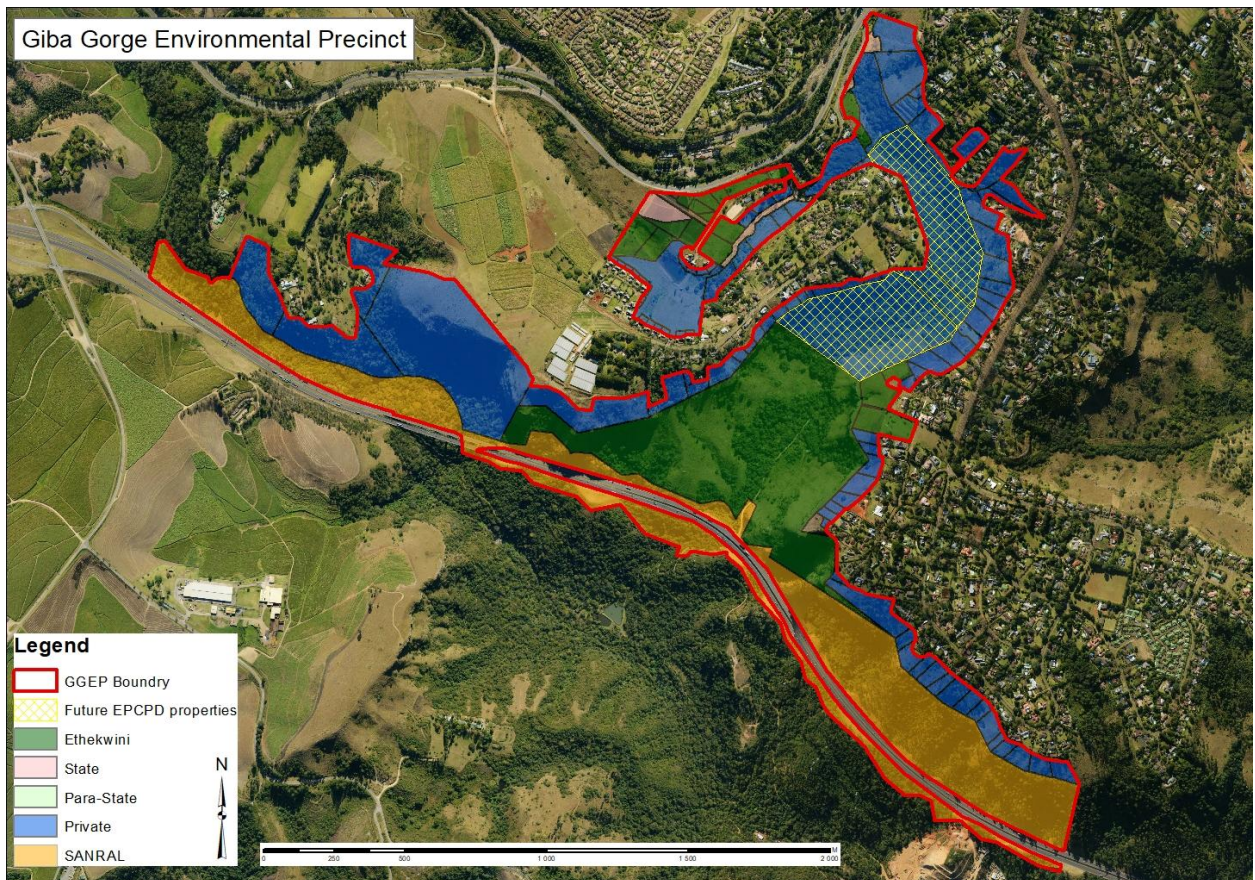
Business Plan

For period: July 2025 – June 2026

1.) Business description

The Giba Gorge Environmental Precinct (GGEP) utilizes a public private financing model to fund environmental management activities. The private portion is collected by means of a Special Rating Area (SRA) process, which directs funds from various landowners in the vicinity of Giba Gorge, including the eThekweni Municipality (EM), to a Section 21 company that will implement conservation management interventions. The co-management funding is derived from the municipal Treasury through a Section 67 agreement.

2.) GGEP area



The above map outlines the boundary and properties that are affected by the SRA (area indicated as future EPCPD properties are now owned by the City as of 2024).

Background to area

Giba Gorge has been identified by the eThekweni Municipality's Environmental Planning and Climate Protection Department (EPCPD) as being highly significant to biodiversity conservation in the eThekweni Municipal Area (EMA). The area is home to important Critically Endangered KwaZulu-Natal Sandstone Sourveld Grassland and Vulnerable Scarp Forest habitats. These habitats are becoming increasingly scarce in the EMA and the few patches that do remain require conservation management action in order to insure their functional integrity and long-term survival.

The area constitutes land that is vested with both private landowners and the eThekweni Municipality. The EM owns 59.1 ha of properties in the gorge and along Longforan Drive (see map above). In addition, the EPCPD is in the final stages of acquiring two properties comprising 25.9 ha of Eastern Scarp Forest.

The Current SRA has been in effect for 15 years. The resultant outcomes have been significant with the following seen as key achievements:

- Over 85% of the SRA area has been initially cleared.
- Fire management (block burns and fire breaks) successfully implemented.
- Conservation patrols have seen a significant reduction in medicinal harvesting and illegal hunting.
- Soil erosion prevention along trails and tracks implemented and maintained.
- Conservation awareness, through organised excursions with various institutions, improved.
- Water pollution control monitoring and response included in recent activities.
- Protection of sites of historical significance, including regular patrols to the uMhlatuzane Rock Shelter.
- Recreational facilities (trails, picnic sites etc.) installed and maintained to improve the amenity value of the SRA.

3.) Marketing strategy

Most of the landowners within the SRA are conservation-minded people who appreciate the common environmental asset that they live next to. Accordingly, many of them have voluntarily improved and managed their individual properties to conservation standards, especially with regards to the eradication of alien invasive plant species. However, the nature of the area requires a broader strategy to deal with some of the threats to Giba Gorge employing methods that will ultimately see the entire area, and not just parts of it, return back to its pristine natural state.

Communication with all landowners is therefore vital so that all concerned can cooperate effectively to achieve our goals. The GGEP utilises three main channels for different forms of communication. These are;

1. www.ggep.org – Principally for general information and history on the project. Contains information on trails, access points, species of interest, and management. Update on an infrequent basis when the need arises.
2. https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJFuixtR33R7GVL_6hEdAbw - Used to showcase the fauna of Giba Nature Reserve, as captured by movement sensing cameras.
3. <https://www.facebook.com/gibagorge/> - used for regular updates in events, management activities, interesting sightings.
4. An additional WhatsApp group has been established for the precinct for information and sightings.

4.) Goals and objectives

Main objective (vision)

The GGEP aims to be the first successful Environmental Special Rating Area in South Africa. Success will be achieved by the recognition and continued support by all landowners (private, state and municipal) of the need to manage this important conservation area in the long term. The benefits of conservation management will need to be tangible and equitable to all contributors, taking care not to undermine the natural integrity of the precinct area. The GGEP strives to succeed in this vision and promote this model so that it can be used in similar contexts in other conservation-worthy areas in the eThekweni Municipal Area.

Goals:

- 1) To restore the ecologically degraded areas of the GGEP to a functional and indigenous state that promotes biodiversity in the area.
- 2) To manage the natural habitats of the GGEP according to up-to-date conservation management best practice principles.
- 3) To provide facilities, infrastructure and well trained personnel that accommodate a safe and meaningful experience to the visitors of the GGEP.
- 4) To build a good relationship with all landowners within the GGEP through regular and effective communication.
- 5) To identify sources of pollution to the aquatic environments of the GGEP, and to put measures in place to rectify these problems.
- 6) To promote the involvement of educational institutions in the use of the GGEP for environmental education purposes.

Programmes related to the above goals:

MP No.	Management Programme (MP)	Goals
1	Alien Invasive Plant Species eradication programme	1,2
2	Burning programme	1,2
3	Patrol programme	2,3,5
4	Communication programme	4
5	Trails and amenities programme	3
6	Pollution monitoring programme	2,5,6

5.) Organisational structure

The GGEP is a not-for-profit organisation managed by volunteer committee members with the following portfolios:

Name	Role	Responsibilities
Colin Coulbrough	Chairman	Chair meetings, AGM and staff related matters
Directors (Michael Faurie, Colin Coulbrough, Keith Mulder), Dave Hotchkiss and assistance from Osborne Accounting (Rohan Osborne)	Finance	Monthly, quarterly and annual expenditure and income reports; annual auditor's report; procurement; salaries.
Colin Coulbrough	Conservation Management	Implement Conservation Management Plan according to deliverables set out in Monthly Implementation Programmes.
Simon Day	Fund Raising, Sponsorship	Investigate and follow up on opportunities for capital and operational support from external organizations to help subsidize the GGEP's operations.
Carl De Heer, Colin Coulbrough	Monitoring & education	Investigate opportunities for links between environmental education, biodiversity monitoring and awareness.
David Hotchkiss	Communication & administration	Update web site periodically. General info, and assist with minutes and reporting

Michael Faurie	Community representative	St Helier Rd
Scott Immelman	Community representative	Winston Park
Denzil Bazley	Development Assessment	Assess impacts of proposed and existing developments on the GGEP and represent GGEP's interests when objecting/commenting on such developments.

6.) Staff

Staff will comprise:

- 1 Team leader
- 6 field staff
- Assistance from the Biodiversity Management Department is anticipated in the beginning of 2025 with additional staff and fire management support.
- All additional staffing operates under the principle of Poverty Alleviation/Public Employment Programmes, where staff from historically disadvantaged backgrounds, living in close proximity to the SRA are selected.
- Anticipated onboarding of a part time Conservation Manager

7.) Resources to be acquired

The following is a list of the resources that will need to be acquired during the 2024/2025 year of operation:

- Strategic signage
- Conservation equipment when required (e.g. chainsaws, slashers etc)

8.) Financial Plan

The following table describes the various contributions that will make up the proposed budget:

Account Name	2023/2024 YEAR TOTAL	2024/2025 YEAR TOTAL	2025/2026 YEAR TOTAL	2026/2027 YEAR TOTAL
Income - eThekweni Municipality	532,186	564,117	591,360	622,000
Income - Landowners	179,600	190,376	199,895	209,890
Income - Other	124,786	131,916	139,435	148,777
Total	836,572	886,409	930,690	980,667

9.) Additional income anticipated

The GGEP has recently signed up and implemented a zipper donation system. It is envisaged that a small donation amount will be received from this. Investigations are currently underway regarding charging of a day visitor tariff, however, no decision has been made on this as yet.