



SUSTAINABLE  
CEDER

# SUSTAINABLE CEDER



## Monthly Report August 2025

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## Keeping it Wild in Rocklands

The 'Keeping It Wild' weekends are a 'Love Our Trails' initiative that began in the Central Cederberg in 2023, in partnership with Sustainable Ceder. A wonderful addition to this initiative, is the 'Keeping It Wild in Rocklands' weekend which was hosted by Blake Dyason (Love Our Trails) at Traveller's Rest Farm located in the Northern Cederberg. Sustainable Ceder had the privilege of collaborating on this initiative by providing assistance and conducting a talk.



Fig 1: Around 120 guests gathered at Traveller's Rest for the first 'Keeping it Wild: Rocklands' Event — Featuring Jethro Watson (right).



*Fig 2: Dawie Burger (second from left), Blake Dyason (third from left) and Patrick Hanekom (fourth from the right), with volunteers and CapeNature personnel.*

Over 120 people, from both Clanwilliam and the climbing community, came together for an evening of talks by four inspiring speakers.

Our first speaker, Jethro Watson, leads the Rocklands Association for Development (RAD). He shared his story of life in Rocklands after his bouldering accident, and spoke about the important work he is doing to help protect Rocklands and to promote a positive climbing culture.

Dawie Burger followed with an introduction on Sustainable Ceder: sharing how the project began, the ongoing efforts to save the critically endangered Clanwilliam cedar, the important role played by the local community, and the ways in which people can get involved.

The next speaker was Royden Yates, a South African archaeologist and rock-art researcher, who spoke about the history and meaning of the rock art around Rocklands.

Finally, Jeremy Shelton, Freshwater Conservation Biologist at the Freshwater Research Centre, presented some of the remarkable projects being conducted to protect and reintroduce the Clanwilliam sandfish and other endemic fish species to the rivers of the Cederberg.

The evening ended with the screening of a film by world-renowned climbers Ethan Pringle and Catie Monteiro, followed by a buffet dinner prepared by Traveller's Rest. From each meal, R50 was kindly donated to Sustainable Ceder, raising a total of R5,000.

The next day, despite the cold and wet weather, more than 40 volunteers gathered at Kliphuis Campsite. After a quick briefing by CapeNature and Sustainable Ceder, the group split into two.



*Fig 3 & 4: The Cedar Guardians and climbers preparing for planting at the top of Pakhuis Pass.*

One team hiked up to 1,000m elevation, planting 128 cedar saplings along the way. Patrick Hanekom, a local conservationist and environmental educator from Algeria (Cederberg), joined the hike and shared his knowledge about the area's unique plants.

Meanwhile, the rest of the volunteers stayed behind at Pakhuis Pass, which has suffered significant damage from flooding over the past two years and where erosion has become a major concern. With the help of CapeNature, they filled about 130 sandbags to help prevent further erosion. It was tough, physical work, but the efforts of both teams will make a big difference to the area's trails and environment.

Our first 'Keeping It Wild in Rocklands' was a huge success. It was remarkable to see such a diverse group of people (climbers, researchers, and local visitors) come together. We look forward to returning again next year.



*Fig 5: Volunteers and CapeNature personnel filling sandbags to help prevent further erosion.*



Fig 6 & 7: Dawie Burger giving a talk to the Bluffer Trail Running Group at Kromrivier in Cederberg Park (left), and a group of runners at the top of Sugarloaf Peak (right).

## Bluffer Trail Running Social

At the beginning of this month, a group of 30 trail runners brought their energy, spirit, and generosity to the Cederberg Mountains. Having run together for nearly 18 years, they decided this year to explore the trails in the Cederberg and support Sustainable Ceder.

They kicked off the weekend by planting cedar saplings, and in the evening we joined them for dinner at Kromrivier (Cederberg Park), where we had the opportunity to share the story of Sustainable Ceder.

We are especially grateful to the Bluffer Group for their generous donations to the project, which will go a long way in supporting the work of Sustainable Ceder.



Fig 8: The group of runners on the first day of their three-day adventure.



Fig 9: Eight volunteers from Jeep Tours Cape Town with local planters Josef Robane (second from right) and Dwayne Farmer (far right).

## Jeep Tours Cape Town Planting Expedition

As part of Jeep’s global commitment to protecting and preserving nature, Jeep Tours Cape Town, together with Jeep South Africa, decided to give back this year by sponsoring a full tray of 128 cedar saplings.

Four Jeeps and eight volunteers travelled to the Cederberg to take part in the project and spent the weekend at Driehoek Guest Farm.

Despite predictions of rain, the weekend brought cold but ideal conditions for planting, and we set off early to Welbedacht Kloof, just below the Jeep Track (Figure 10). Due to the recent rains, the river was running strong. Fortunately, our two local tree planters, Josef and Dwayne, quickly made a plan and found a tree stump to use as a temporary bridge to cross.

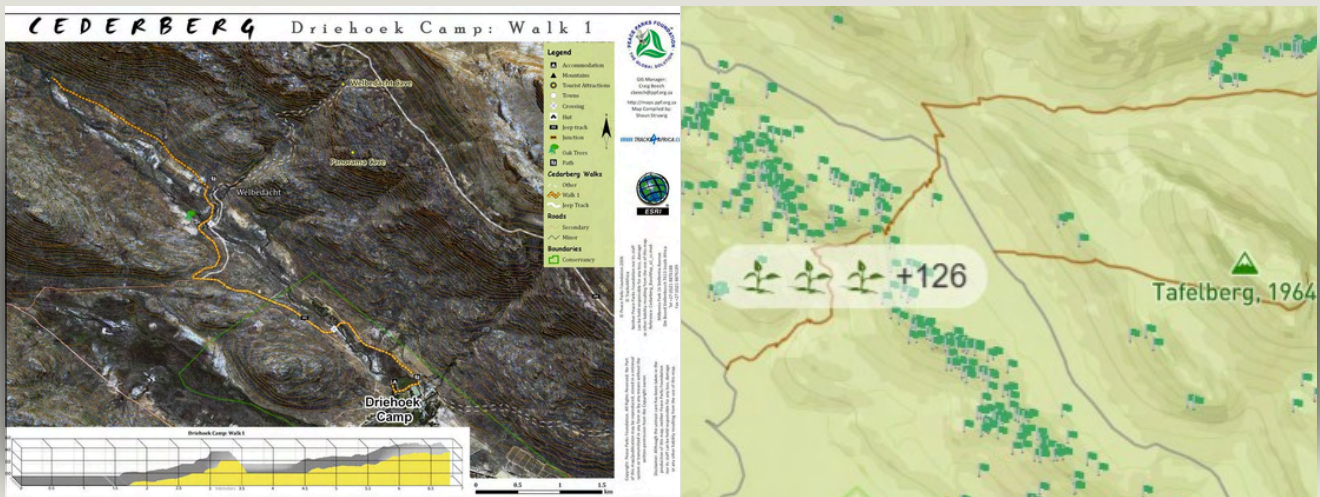


Fig 10 & 11: Map of Welbedacht Kloof and Overview of the 128 Trees Planted.



*Fig 12: From Crossing Rivers, Planting Saplings, and Sharing Sundowners at Rondeheuvel.*

Once at the planting site, approximately 1,150m above sea level, Dawie Burger gave a brief overview of the planting process and how to identify ideal locations for the cedar saplings. By the end of the day, the volunteers had planted the entire tray of cedar saplings and have gained a deeper understanding of the Sustainable Ceder project.

After a day of hard work, we enjoyed sundowners at Rondeheuvel, one of the project's earliest planting sites. This site was established to raise awareness before the project formally began. The next day, on their way home, the volunteers took a detour to explore some remote areas and local communities, driving along the backroads of the Cederberg via Wupperthal and several mountain passes.

We would like to thank Jeep Tours Cape Town for getting involved and partnering with us in protecting and restoring the Clanwilliam cedar, as well as raising awareness of this critically endangered species.



*Fig 13: Four Jeeps and eight volunteers - Jeep Tours Cape Town.*



Fig 14: Overlooking the village of Heuningvlei in the Cederberg.

## Heuningvlei Cedar Planting Event

On a cold and windy Saturday morning, around 60 people, including members of the Heuningvlei community, gathered at Heuningvlei Lodge for a long-awaited cedar tree planting day. The event was hosted by CapeNature, together with the Heuningvlei community, and in collaboration with Sustainable Ceder, Bushmanskloof Wilderness Reserve and Retreat, Just Trees, and Negative Carbon Solutions (NCO2).

The event began with a warm welcome from Monique Ruthernberg, Conservation Manager of the Cederberg Complex, followed by Dawie Burger's introduction of Sustainable Ceder NPO, its project, and its importance to Heuningvlei. Despite the cold, windy, and rainy conditions, everyone remained enthusiastic to plant cedars. Fortunately, we were allowed to drive closer to the planting site above Heuningvlei, toward Krakadouw. A few brave volunteers, well prepared for the weather, hiked to the site where the skies cleared just long enough for them to plant around 200 cedar saplings before the rain started again.

As a perfect way to end a challenging but productive morning, Daleen van der Westhuizen and the community treated everyone with freshly made roosterkoek, along with soup that was generously donated by Bushmanskloof. As the day drew to a close with calming winds, Andries Louw, founder of NCO2, explained how the drone and its payload system is set up to carry and drop cedar plugs. This was followed with a drone flight demonstration, with the assistance of Denvill Sass, one of our local planters.

We are thrilled to have hosted another cedar planting event at Heuningvlei, and a special thank you goes to Penny Mustart, whose past work with Bushmanskloof and CapeNature motivated us to make this event happen. We are also deeply grateful to everyone who joined, braved the weather, and helped make the day a success.



Fig 15: Cedar sapling.



Fig 18: Hiking to the recently burnt area above Heuningvlei toward Krakadouw.



Fig 16: Braving the cold to plant cedars above Heuningvlei.



Fig 19: Our volunteers in action.



Fig 17: Using EarthRanger App to capture data.



Fig 20: Andries Louw (left) and Denvill Sass (right) at Heuningvlei Lodge.



Fig 21: Behind the scenes of filming in Heuningvlei Village.

## CNN Explores Sustainable Ceder

Earlier this month, we had the opportunity to meet Peter Rudden, a producer from CNN, during a planting day event at Heuningvlei. This was an important moment to create awareness around Sustainable Ceder, as footage was captured to showcase the project's vision — from environmental restoration and the use of the latest drone technology, to the important role of the local community in cedar conservation.

The opportunity highlighted community involvement in Heuningvlei village, including planting alongside local youth. Filming continued in the Southern Cederberg, where the focus was on our innovative use of drone technology in restoration work. The story also followed the growth process from seed to sapling, offering a unique opportunity to share the journey of the Clanwilliam cedar and the communities working to protect it.



Fig 22: Where technology and nature meet: Andries Louw (right) and Denvill Sass (left) preparing the payload for a drone flight demonstration.



Fig 23: The Cedar Guardians and local planter Dwayne Farmer (far right) from Sustainable Cedar preparing for planting just above Driehoek Farm.

## Tree planting this month

Since the rainfall forecast for August 2025 was not very promising, we had to carefully plan our planting sites for the month. August turned out to be even drier than July 2025, so our focus was on identifying microclimates with higher levels of moisture where the trees would have the best chance of survival.

Date	Location	Trees Planted
07.08.2025/12.08.2025	Eikeboom / Sneeberg Hut	267
09.08.2025	Pakhuis Pass/Kliphuis	128
15.08.2025	Welbedacht	359
23.08.2025/26.08.2025	Heuningvlei/Krakadouw	466
29.07.2025	Welbedacht Cave	18
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1038</b>

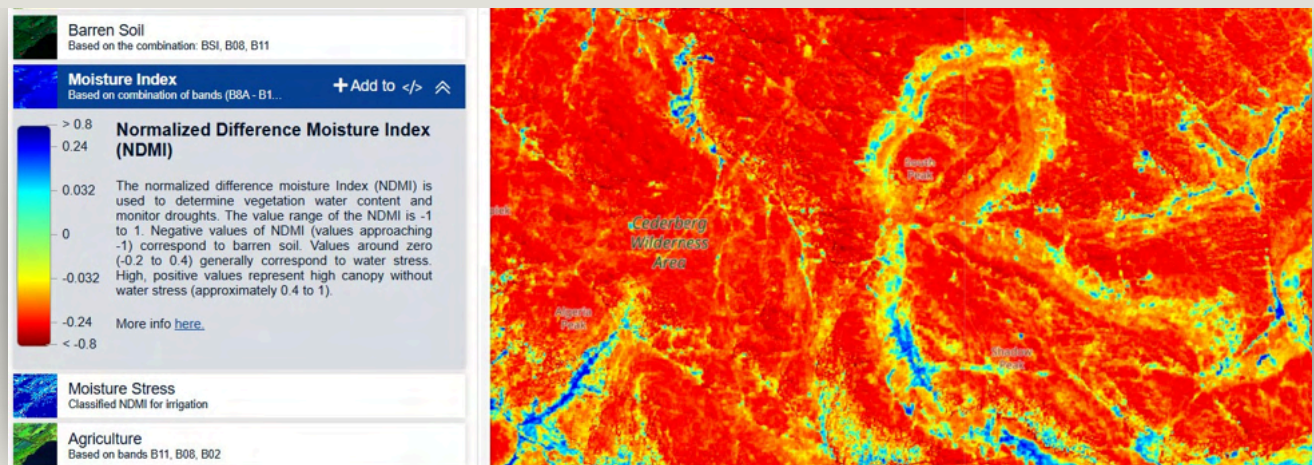


Fig 24: The Copernicus Data Space Ecosystem is used to select planting sites by focussing on indicators such as the Soil Water Index (SWI) for soil moisture and the Moisture Stress Index (MSI) for vegetation water content.



## Further News

### New Wood Trees visits Sustainable Ceder

We were very fortunate to welcome back **Phillip Nieuwoudt**, owner of **New Wood Trees Nursery** in the UK. New Wood Trees has supported our project since the very beginning, and we are truly grateful for their continued commitment.



*Fig 25: Phillip Nieuwoudt, owner of New Wood Trees joined us for a hike to one of the research sites to collect data for the Paleo Cedar Project.*

### Mindset Movement's Cederberg Adventure Gives Back to Nature



*Fig 26: Running with Purpose*

At the end of August, The Mindset Movement (running initiative), hosted a three-day Cederberg mountain adventure. In honour of the Cederberg, they provided support to Sustainable Ceder by donating an endangered cedar seedling for every participant who joined the adventure. Dawie Burger gave a talk about the legacy of the Cederberg and the importance of protecting the Clanwilliam cedar, the tree after which the Cederberg is named.

### Planning ahead

We are currently building up stock for next year's planting season. To date, we have approximately 13,000 cedar saplings. In September, we will begin seed harvesting across the entire Cederberg.