



Successful But Not Effective? Systematic Conservation Planning in South Africa

Andrew T. Knight, PhD
Dept. of Conservation Ecology and Entomology
Stellenbosch University

What is Systematic Conservation Planning?

Sub-discipline of conservation biology, which aims:

... to minimise the loss of biodiversity ... through the selection of areas for conservation **action** that achieve explicit **targets**, by ensuring that implementation of these actions occurs by willing and effective **stakeholders**.

Pressey, R.L. and R.M. Cowling. 2001. Reserve selection algorithms and the real world. Conservation Biology 15(1), 275-277.



It is essential that the creation of protected areas be planned systematically to ensure that investments are as effective and efficient as possible.

Brooks, T.M., G.A.B. da Fonseca, and A.S.L. Rodrigues. 2004. Protected areas and species. Conservation Biology 18(3), 616-618.



The South African Context

First systematic plan conducted by Tony Rebelo in 1987 (unpublished)

Strong history of research in SCP

Innovations : ✓ ecological and evolutionary processes
✓ target setting (Desmet & Cowling 2004)
✓ planning for implementation – planning products

Applied by SANParks and Ezemvelo-KZN Wildlife for reserve expansion

Most regions have plans (at various scales), with more in the pipeline

National Spatial Biodiversity Assessment completed 2004 (Driver et al. 2005)

Enshrined in legislation (Biodiversity Act 10 of 2004)

Fine-scale 'bioregional plans' now being developed for all Municipalities

The Apparentness of 'Success'

Internationally well regarded for research and implementation (Balmford 2003)

Hierarchical scales of planning – national, provincial, regional, local

Plans cover most of the country

Integration of plans into legislation

Large increases in conservation agreements and PA extent

Adoption of the 'mainstreaming' approach by The World Bank (Huntley)

But....The Reality of Effectiveness

A group of people, including a woman in a red shirt and two men, are gathered around a table in a meeting room. They are looking at a large map or document spread out on the table. The room has wooden paneling and a window in the background.

Too many plans – confusion

Plans overlap – confusion, technical challenges

Plans superseded – confusion, sovereignty issues

Conservation agreements way under targets (but good by international standards)

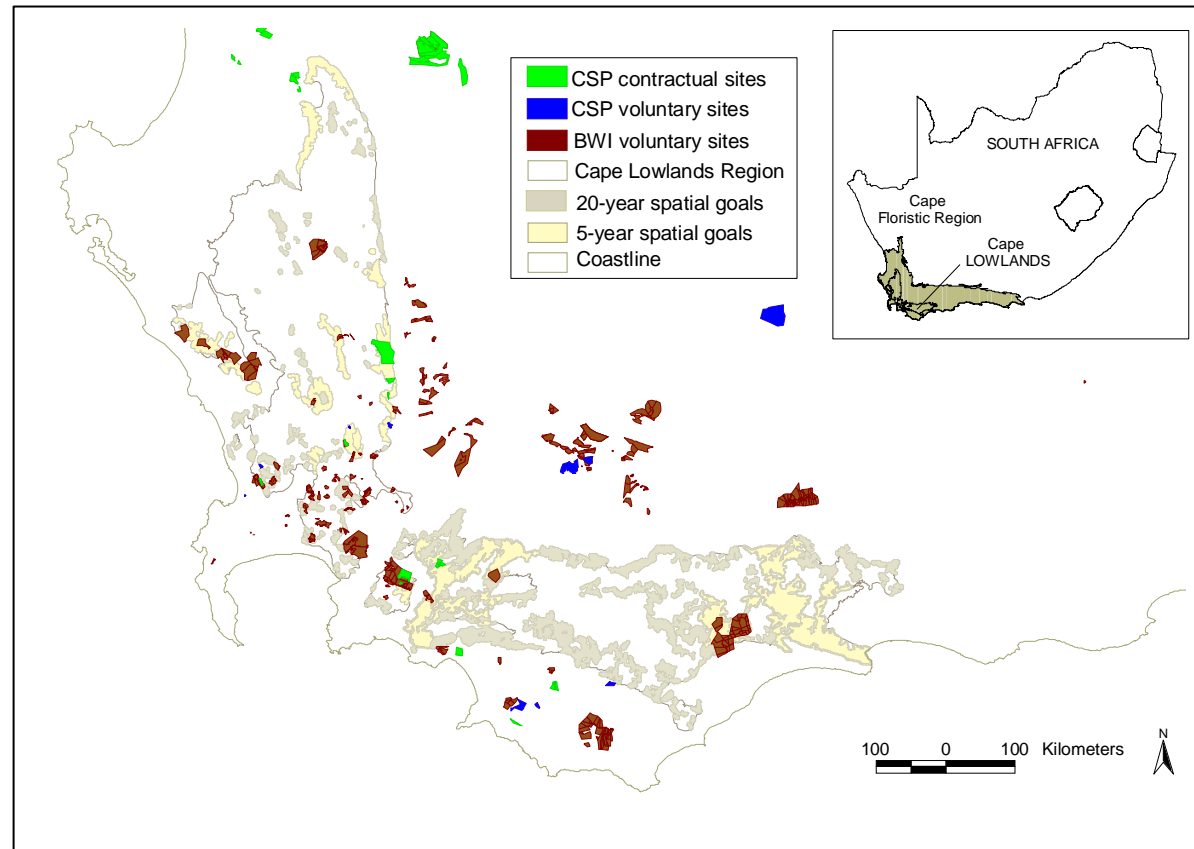
Reserve expansion fraught with farm worker relocation issues

Lessons learnt in earlier plans not implemented in new CBA process – several of these lessons significantly compromise effectiveness

Example #1: The Cape Lowlands

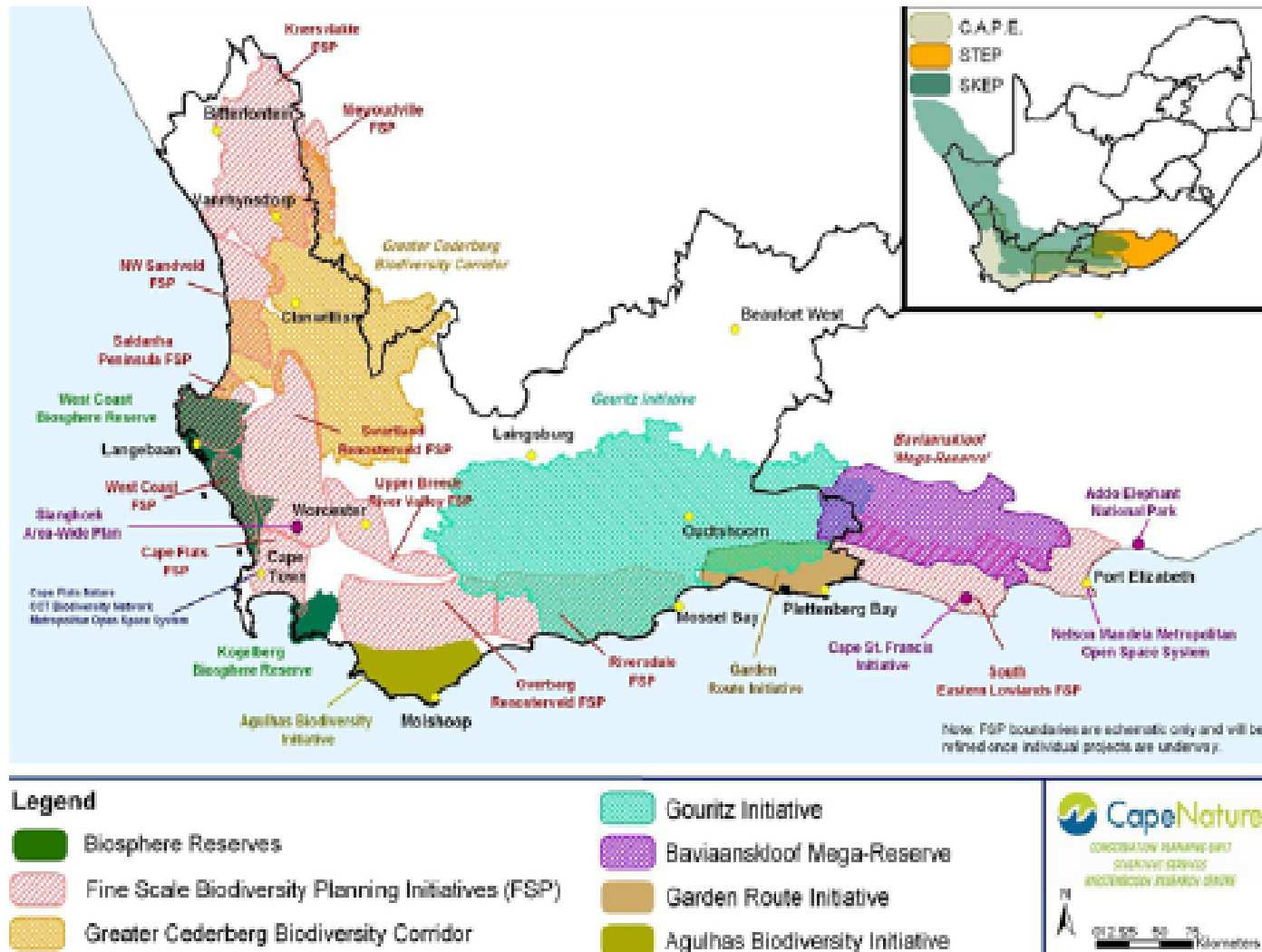
Cape Lowlands Region	Conservation stewardship achievements			
	CSP	BWI	Total: CSP + BWI	
	Contractual	Voluntary	Vegetation (ha)	Vegetation (%)
5-year goal (61503 ha vegetation)	<u>11 agreements:</u> 3581 ha (5.8%)	<u>16 agreements:</u> 3095 ha (5.1%)	6676 ha	11% of goal
20-year goal (96390 ha vegetation)	<u>12 agreements:</u> 3787 ha (3.9%)	<u>28 agreements:</u> 4570 ha (4.7%)	8357 ha	8.7% of goal
Outside priority areas	<u>No agreements</u>	<u>12 agreements</u> 122 ha	122 ha	-

- All CSP contract sites in 5- and 20-year priority areas
- Most BWI sites in priority areas (28/40)
- Big gap to meeting goals



Example #2: Western Cape

- “Too many plans”.
- No provincial conservation planner.



Example #3: Plan Uptake in the Eastern Cape

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1. Confusion around the 'right' plan to use
 2. Inappropriate nature of CAPE irreplaceability map
 3. Poor uptake of plans in low-capacity municipalities
 4. Decisions by officials over-ridden by politicians

Perpetuating the Myth of Success

A photograph of two zebras in a savanna landscape. The zebras are partially obscured by green bushes in the foreground. The background shows a vast, hilly landscape with dense green vegetation under a bright sky. Six dark blue text boxes are overlaid on the image, each containing a white text string.

Failure to recognise the knowing-doing gap

People are very busy, lots of 'product'

Reporting using log frames – outputs versus outcomes

No regular evaluations – hides the reality

No (long-term) monitoring – hides the reality

No explicit social learning process – hides the reality

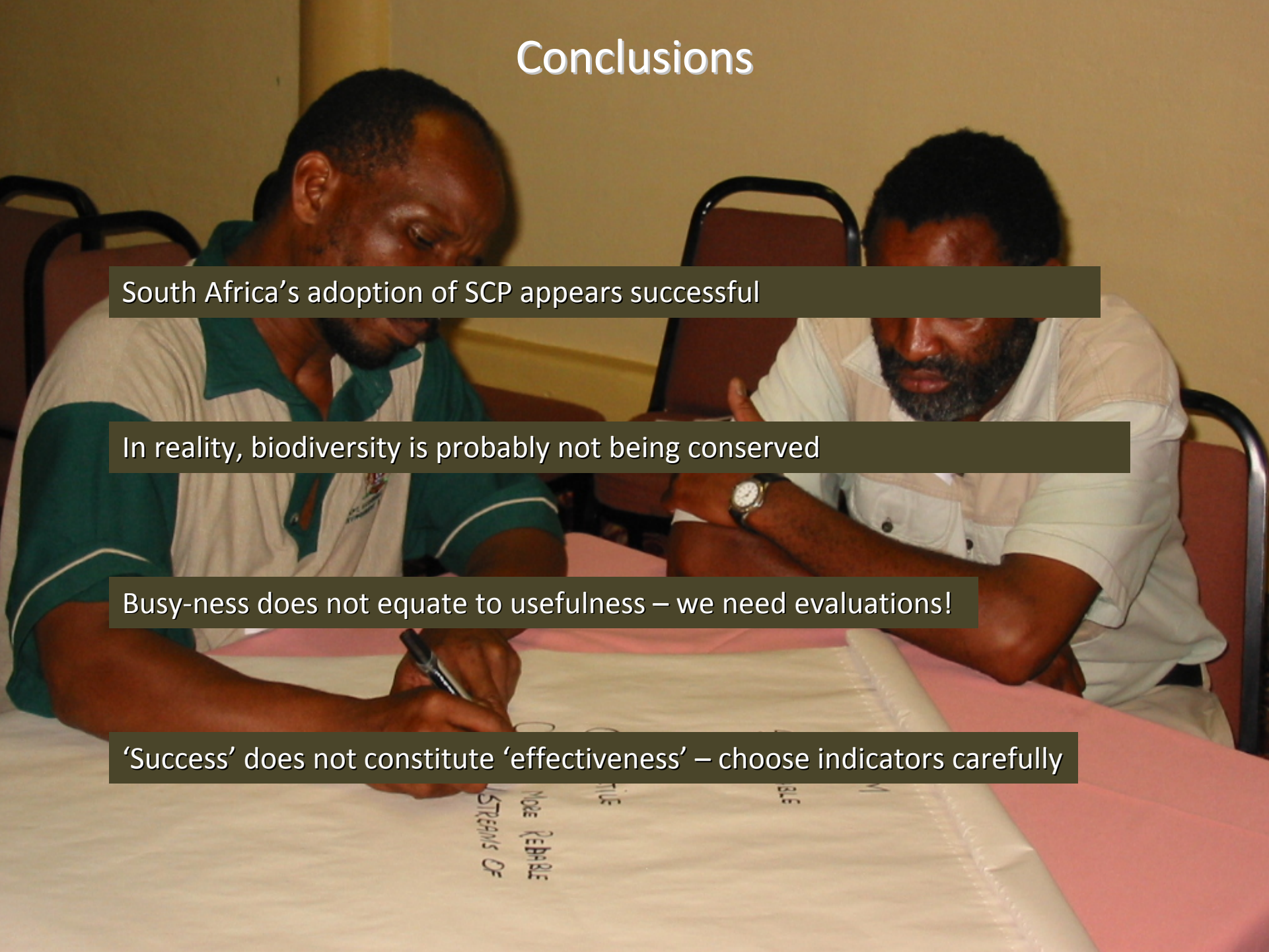
Conclusions

South Africa's adoption of SCP appears successful

In reality, biodiversity is probably not being conserved

Busy-ness does not equate to usefulness – we need evaluations!

'Success' does not constitute 'effectiveness' – choose indicators carefully



(This is not) 'THE END'!

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