



THE OVERBERG RENOSTERVELD CONSERVATION TRUST

POSITION STATEMENT ON: **NON-CONSUMPTIVE USE OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**

The Overberg Renosterveld Conservation Trust (ORCT) is a small Non-Profit Organisation. We primarily work on privately-owned land or with land belonging to WWF-SA, under Stewardship with CapeNature.

We acknowledge that in order for some conservation areas (e.g. easements, conservation servitudes, stewardship sites) to remain viable, there may be a need for supporting some non-consumptive use of the natural environment. However, due to the fragmented nature of the remaining natural habitats in the Overberg Rûens (including lowland renosterveld, fynbos and watercourses), any infrastructure or disturbance within the remaining habitat fragments, can cause continual degradation, causing irreversible negative impacts.

The ORCT will consider non-consumptive use on a case-by-case basis where the relevant EIAs or other requirements are met, as required by legislation (e.g. NEMA & CARA). It is therefore crucial that the ORCT makes its position on certain uses clear. These include:

- 1. 4X4 vehicles or quadbike tracks:** The ORCT supports the use of existing tracks for 4X4 vehicles or quadbikes for the sole purpose of conservation area management. We do not support the creation of new tracks for sporting purposes and we will only support the creation of new tracks where deemed absolutely essential, from a veld management and human safety perspective, to implement a conservation management plan.
- 2. Mountain bike trails:** The ORCT supports the use of existing roads and mountain bike trails, and the maintenance thereof, where disturbance to the vegetation and wildlife in the conservation area are kept to an absolute minimum and further degradation resulting from the roads or trails is actively prevented. The ORCT does not support the establishment of new mountain bike trails in renosterveld habitats, due to the existing fragility of the system.
- 3. Hiking trails:** The ORCT supports the use of existing roads and trails for walkers and hikers but does not condone the creation of new trails in renosterveld remnants, due to the fragility of the system. Only under exceptional circumstances, and when included in a conservation management plan, will the ORCT consider endorsing such trails.



4. **Bee-keeping in natural veld:** The ORCT does not support the use of natural renosterveld remnants for housing *managed* honeybees. Overgrazing by managed bees can be detrimental to specialised and more effective pollinators, in particular a host of solitary bee species. Placement of managed honeybees within the renosterveld therefore does not align with conservation objectives of the ORCT.

This position statement is hereby ratified on the

DATE: 30th August 2023

Signed: 

By (name): Dirk van Papendorp

Designation: Chairperson of the Board of Trustees