

FYNBOS FORUM 2020 CONFERENCE

A poster titled, “Natural Vegetation Land-Cover Change Across the Western Cape, 1990-2018”, was presented at the 42nd Fynbos Forum, authored by Lyndre Nel, Dr. Csaba Centeri, Dr. Eszter Kovacs (from the Institute of Natural Resource Protection, Szent István University, Gödöllő) and Lavhelesani Simba (from the South African National Biodiversity Institute). This three day online virtual forum, held from 9 to 11 September 2020 on fynbosforum.co.za, was attended by more than 100 participants. This year’s theme was “Connection. Community. Commitment.” and the Forum was co-hosted by Stellenbosch University, CapeNature, Table Mountain Fund, and various other partners.

The Fynbos Forum is a scientific group of natural scientists, researchers, planners, managers, landowners and key stakeholders. It meets annually to discuss the collaborative production of knowledge that underpins regional conservation efforts in the fynbos biome in South Africa. As a transdisciplinary regional learning network, the Fynbos Forum supports discussions on management issues and research results, prioritizing future research and conservation management actions required to ensure the conservation and sustainability of fynbos ecosystems.



Figure 1. The threatened fynbos ecosystem in South Africa which the scientific group, Fynbos Forum, research and manage (Source: Wikimedia Commons).

Five keynote talks were given, Bongani Mnisi (City of Cape Town: Conservation) spoke about urban nature conservation, Dr. Cornelia Krug (bioDISCOVERY) covered the role of research networks and science-policy interfaces, Dr. Odirilwe Selomane (Stellenbosch University) spoke about social-ecological systems research, Prof. David Le Maitre (Centre for Invasion Biology) spoke on alien plant invasion, and Prof. James Blignaut (Stellenbosch University) spoke about ecological restoration. There were 21 thematic sessions where 39 oral presentations were given and 11 posters presented on research results, case studies, management recommendations and policies, to support the conservation and sustainable

management of fynbos. The themes included fire regimes and fynbos diversity, plant invasions and restoration, ecological interactions, citizen science, mapping and modelling, sustainability and economics.

On each day, a video was shown of a “virtual field trip” to various fynbos sites. On day 1, Johann van Biljon took us to a river restoration site to present the Berg and Breede River Riparian Rehabilitation Program. On day 2, Adriaan Grobler showcased fynbos plants on beach sand dunes. On day 3, Ceinwen Smith presented Ingcungcu’s gardens at a local school developed as an “ecological stepping stone” for sunbirds.

The next Fynbos Forum will be held in partnership with the international MEDECOS Conference (Conference on Mediterranean-type ecosystems) at Langebaan, South Africa, from 6 to 10 September 2021.

Lyndré Nel
Szent István University
Institute of Natural Resource Protection