



Annual Review 2025

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Background

Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to allow us to share our achievements, challenges and milestones for 2025 with you. Together we will continue to make a meaningful difference in the preservation of Stellenbosch's natural landscape and trails.

We are a non-profit organisation which was founded in 2011, committed to our mission of taking care of our town's natural beauty and trails. Given that we do not receive any municipal funding, we are completely reliant on individual and corporate donations to perform our duties. We sincerely thank all our donors for their wonderful support!

Our team

Stellenbosch Trail Fund NPC has four directors, namely Ernst Gouws, Holden Marshall, Unathi Msophi and Stephan Venter. Ernst, Holden and Stephan volunteer their services, together with David Papenfus who assists with our website and media content.

Our Management Team further includes two part-time salaried members, Linda Schaefer (social media and project management) and Christelle Kriel (financial control). The team meets every month to plan and manage fund raising, events, trail and river operations, municipal and other relationships, communication, legalities and finances.

Unathi heads up our Trail Maintenance Team, consisting of eight full-time employed staff members: Gomeni Simlindile, Thozamile Mfazwe, Ayabonga Msophi, Asiphilele Meliwa, Thembele Lukalo, Mzimasi Stemela and Asiphe Sixubane.



Trail maintenance and environmental care

Main focus areas

Our Trail Maintenance Team has two main focus areas:

- We work all along the Eerste River, from the suspension bridge in Karindal down to the bridge opposite the Rupert Museum. We do alien clearing and rubbish removal on a daily basis, and plant numerous new trees each year. These are also watered by hand for the first three years.
- We maintain over 50km of single-track mountain bike trails on municipal land in and around town. These trail areas include Paradyskloof, Eden Forest, G-Spot, Coetzenburg, Koloniesland, Brummer Park and Botmaskop Nature Area.

The team works in difficult conditions, from blistering hot summer days to cold and wet winter days. The table below details the total number of man-hours worked during 2025, split between our main focus areas.

MAN-HOURS WORKED BY THE STF TEAM DURING 2025					
TRAIL WORK		WORK ALONG THE EERSTE RIVER			TOTAL
Mountain trails	River and Park trails	Removing Invasives and Planting Trees	Tree Watering	Rubbish Removal	
1 760	1 240	1 230	1 290	1 350	6 870



Serious repair work done on the Goddess Trail in Botmaskop (left).
The team working hard on Stellenbosch Mountain (top).

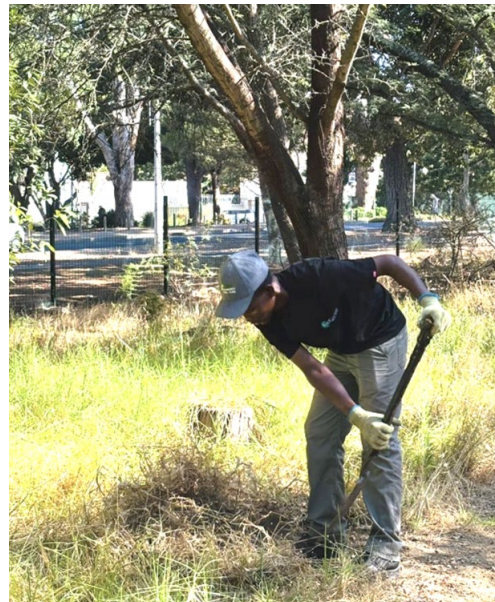
New focus areas and work expansion

STF is always keen to make a bigger contribution to Stellenbosch and to collaborate with like-minded partners. We kicked off several new projects during 2025:

- We used to service the stretch of the Eerste River from the suspension bridge in Karindal to the Paul Roos Spar. However, following the amazing work done by Remgro to upgrade the area along the river from Paul Roos Spar to the Rupert Museum, STF was asked to include that additional portion of the river in our area of regular focus.
- STF joined hands with Stellenbosch Art Mile (<https://www.artmile.co.za/>), a wonderful initiative which showcases artworks and site-specific features along the Eerste River. We do regular site maintenance and assist with site preparation for new installations.
- STF partnered with the Friends of Jan Marais Park to embark on the inspiring journey of eradicating alien plants and trees threatening this cherished park. This dynamic collaboration is not only revitalising the environment but also creating amazing job opportunities for our community's youth!



An Art Mile work by Rudolf Gouws and Jacques Buys – one of many along the Eerste River.



Asiphe Sixubane recently joined our team and now plays a vital role in Jan Marais Park.

We have exciting ambitions to expand our scope of work even further, with a specific focus on hikers and trail runners. To this end we started to engage with the following external parties:

- Cape Nature, with the aim of taking over the maintenance of their hiking trails in Jonkershoek Nature Reserve.
- Stellenbosch University, with the aim of doing regular maintenance of their hiking and running trails across Coetzenburg.

We hope to have agreements in place soon, in order to support hikers and trail runners while also helping to ensure the survival of these beautiful trails.



Examples of disintegrating hiking trails on Stellenbosch Mountain

Other projects

Annual commemorative tree planting initiative

STF's commemorative tree planting initiative continued to grow in 2025, with 23 indigenous trees donated and planted during the winter planting season. This annual initiative forms an important part of STF's commitment to environmental stewardship and the long-term preservation of the unique natural heritage of the Stellenbosch basin. By focusing exclusively on genetic indigenous species native to the region, the programme contributes to the restoration and protection of local biodiversity while ensuring that the landscapes surrounding the trails remain ecologically authentic for future generations.

Each commemorative tree is generously sponsored by an individual donor, creating a meaningful and lasting connection between supporters and the natural environment. Sponsorship includes the sourcing of an indigenous tree through Trees SA, professional planting and ongoing care by the STF team, as well as a guarantee that the tree will be replaced free of charge should it not survive within the first 24 months. Every tree is also accompanied by a commemorative plaque displaying both the species name and a personalised message chosen by the donor, creating a lasting tribute within the Stellenbosch landscape.

Beyond the environmental value of the initiative, the programme has become a deeply personal way for members of the community to celebrate milestones, honour loved ones, and leave a positive legacy in nature. The continued support shown through the 2025 season reflects the growing appreciation for conservation-driven projects that combine ecological restoration with meaningful community involvement.

If you would like to donate a commemorative tree during the 2026 planting season, please visit www.stellenboschtrailfund.co.za/trees for more information.



Bicycle Park and Walk facility

STF first proposed this concept to Stellenbosch Municipality in August 2023. Given our town's traffic congestion and lack of vehicle parking, it is imperative that Non-Motorised Transport (NMT) strategies be investigated and tested.

We received Municipal Council approval in October 2024 to implement the bicycle parking solution as a pilot project. With approved building plans and thanks to tremendous community support, STF is proudly launching this service to the public in March 2026.

Our first location is conveniently positioned in Andringa Street, directly across Eikestad Mall. From this location we will test public demand, fine-tune our operational processes and then hopefully expand the service to several more sites around town.



We would like to thank and recognise the following supporters from the Stellenbosch business community, who all contributed their resources free of charge:

SiteEye, a technology solutions business who designed and manufactured the bicycle storage system free of charge, and supplied the 24/7 security monitoring.

Tim Ziehl Architects, who drew up the formal building plans and drove the municipal approval process.

Groeneveld Construction, who assisted with the overall implementation of the service.

Repairs of the Landbousaal

Following the 2023 Stellenbosch floods, STF sadly had to vacate 50% of our allocated area at the Landbousaal, due to safety concerns. Whilst the Municipality has done fantastic work to secure the foundations and adjacent riverbank, we still await structural repairs to the building before we can fully re-occupy our allocated space. Work will commence in 2027 once the Municipality secures Heritage Western Cape approval.

We thank **Stellenbosch University** for coming to our assistance for our storage needs in the interim.

The new “Richard de Villiers Walkway”

The same 2023 floods caused significant damage to the road infrastructure along Suidwal Street, opposite Paul Roos Gymnasium. That area has always posed a safety risk to scholars, students and other pedestrians. Led by Dup Venter and assisted by Lucas Louw from BSI Consult, municipal approval was obtained to install a walkway along the affected area. The walkway will make it far safer and more enjoyable for walkers to traverse along Suidwal Street.

The walkway will be named after the founder of STF, Dr Richard de Villiers, who sadly passed away in 2021.

We thank the surrounding schools (Paul Roos, Bloemhof and Rhenish Girls’ High), Stellenbosch Academy of Sport and several other donors who made this project possible.

We expect the walkway to be completed towards July 2026.



Services further afield

Our alien clearing and rubbish removal activities are concentrated in and around the Eerste River. We do sometimes take on responsibilities further afield, especially if the additional cost of labour is covered by ringfenced funding. A case in point is the daily cleaning of the rubbish bins along Piet Retief and Park Streets, which STF performs thanks to donor’s committed support.

Donors and finances

Annual auction

This year's STF Auction, held on 20 November, was a huge success. With 180 guests in attendance, we managed to raise R440,000! The auction remains our biggest, single source of revenue.

We thank Die Hofmeyrsaal, Red Pepper Catering and all our auction lot donors for their amazing support!

Doringbos Guest Farm	https://www.doringbos.com/
Farm Keerweer	https://keerweer.com/
Camissa Farm Cabin	https://www.camissafarm.com/
Greg Minnaar	https://www.gmcycles.co.za/
Mont Marie Wine Estate	https://www.montmarie.co.za/
Spier Wine Estate	https://www.spier.co.za/
Lanzerac Wine Estate	https://lanzerac.co.za
Plaisir Wine Estate	https://www.plaisir.co.za/
Postcard Café at Stark-Condé	https://stark-conde.co.za/
De Eetkamer Restaurant	https://www.de-eetkamer.co.za/
Jordan Wine Estate	https://www.jordanwines.com/
Alto Wine Estate	https://alto.co.za
Muratie Wine Estate	https://www.muratie.co.za/
Tokara Wine Estate	https://www.tokara.com/
Portchie	https://portchie.com/
Rudolf Gouws & Jacques Buys	@stellenbosch_art_foundry/
Francois Retief Sports and Wellness	https://www.fhrsport.co.za/
Kaapzicht Wine Estate	https://kaapzicht.co.za/
Vuurberg Wine Estate	https://www.vuurberg.co.za/



Stellies Shakeout

Stellies Shakeout has become one of Stellenbosch's most vibrant and inclusive outdoor community initiatives since its founding in 2019. What began as a simple weekly social trail run has grown into a thriving gathering that brings together runners, walkers, outdoor enthusiasts and visitors from across the region every Thursday evening.

Beyond the social aspect, Stellies Shakeout plays an important role in supporting the work of STF. Through the continued support of participants, volunteers and community partners, the initiative helps raise awareness around the importance of maintaining and protecting the local trail network. The regular gatherings encourage responsible trail use, environmental stewardship and a deeper connection to the outdoors, while also fostering a strong sense of community among trail users.

Over the years, the Shakeout has helped strengthen Stellenbosch's growing trail-running culture by creating an accessible entry point into the outdoor community. Locals, students, visiting athletes and international runners regularly join the weekly outings, contributing to the unique energy and camaraderie that have become synonymous with the Stellies Shakeout community.

STF extends its sincere appreciation to everyone involved in organising, supporting and participating in Stellies Shakeout, and looks forward to seeing the initiative continue to grow in the years ahead.

(Follow Stellies Shakeout on Instagram: @stelliesshakeout)



Wine Lands Cycling Club

STF is a proud member of the Wine Lands Trails network of mountain bike trails. By buying an annual Regional Permit, the rider gets access to 18 different MTB networks and over 1,400km of trails across the Western Cape! Included are the following trail networks:

- Jonkershoek Nature Reserve
- Banhoek Conservancy (including Old Bethlehem, Boschendal and Plaisir)
- Bottelary Hills and Muratie
- Paarl Trails, Wellington Trails and Franschhoek Wine Valley Trails

STF maintains over 50km of mountain bike trails on municipal land across Stellenbosch. These trails are open to the public and free to use. We therefore rely on donations to cover our trail building and maintenance costs.

As a member of the Wine Lands Trails network, STF receives a R100 portion of the total price of each Regional Permit sold. Our revenue from the sale of these permits during 2025 was just over R150,000 and made a significant contribution to our total cash flow.

We sincerely thank the Wine Lands Cycling Club, who administers the Wine Lands Trails permits and user interface.



Team bicycles

STF acquired commuter bikes from Francois Retief (FHR at Coetzenburg Gym) for our entire Trail Maintenance Team. This helps them travel along the Eerste River and to their various areas of responsibility. Thanks for your support, Francois!



Corporate donors

Given that we do not receive any municipal funding, we are completely reliant on corporate and individual donations to perform our duties.

We thank all our corporate donors for their wonderful support – without whom STF would not be a viable project.

ABC Security	https://www.abcsecurity.co.za/
ABSA Cape Epic	https://www.epic-series.com/capeepic
Adventure Shop	https://www.adventureshop.co.za/
BoVest	https://bovest.co.za/
Capitec Bank	https://www.capitecbank.co.za/
Casa Cerveza	https://casacerveza.bodyandlifestyle.com/
Cluver Markotter	https://cluvermarkotter.law/
De Fynne	http://www.defynne.co.za/
Digital Trails	https://digitaltrails.co.za/
Eiestad Tuinsentrum	https://eiketuin.co.za/
Investec	https://www.investec.com/
National Trailer Rental	https://natrail.co.za/
Pay@	https://www.payat.co.za/
RE Beverages	https://rebeverages.co.za/
Remgro	https://www.remgro.com/
SITI SRA	https://www.siti.org.za/
Smith & Associates	https://smith1.co.za/
Visit Stellenbosch	https://www.visitstellenbosch.org/
Stellies Shakeout	https://www.instagram.com/stelliesshakeout/
Stillwater Sports	https://www.stillwatersports.com/
Thesen Island	https://www.thesenislands.co.za/
Trees SA	https://www.trees-sa.co.za/
Winelands Cycling Club	https://winelandscyclingclub.co.za/

Individual donations

We also thank the numerous individuals who support STF through their donations. Stellenbosch residents, as well as tourists visiting our beautiful town, are our true clients, with whom we partner to protect and enhance the natural beauty and trails around Stellenbosch.

To make a donation to STF, simply scan one of the QR codes below, or visit:

<https://stellenboschtrailfund.co.za/donate/>



Supporters are also encouraged to buy STF-branded merchandise, which is available from Adventure Shop at Die Landbousaal on Die Laan Street.



Financial sustainability

We set a bold target to generate R3 million of income for 2025 and ultimately earned an income of R2.452 million. This was in line with the R2.595m raised in 2024.

Our expenses were well managed and kept within budget. Total expenses amounted to R1.860 million (compared with R1.760 million in 2024), resulting in a healthy cash flow surplus.

Our audited financial statements are available on the STF website:

<https://stellenboschtrailfund.co.za/financials/>

Contact us

Stellenbosch Trail Fund is a registered non-profit company (NPC 2015/113617/08) and Public Benefit Organisation (PBO 930053257).

You can contact us through the following:

- Website : <https://stellenboschtrailfund.co.za/>
- Email : info@stellenboschtrailfund.co.za
- Instagram : <https://www.instagram.com/stellenboschtrailfund/>
- Facebook : <https://facebook.com/stellenboschtrailfund/>