

Targets for ecosystem repair after alien plant clearing in riparian zones

A special issue on riparian vegetation management and ecosystem repair in alien plant-invaded South African landscapes has been published in the latest issue of South African [Journal of Botany](#). Volume 74 (2008) is a culmination of work (plus some additional papers contributing to the theme) from a project commissioned by Working for Water (WfW) on targets for ecosystem repair in alien-invaded riparian zones. The ultimate aim of this project was to produce guidelines and tools to improve management of these systems. Since 1995, WfW, with its combined aims of enhancing ecological integrity, water security and social development, has been functioning under the assumption that its target ecosystems, mostly riparian, would “self-repair” once the main stressor (dense stands of invasive alien trees) had been removed. This assumption has been largely untested until now. The special issue contains 15 papers focussing on a range of issues from the setting of priorities at different scales; refining methods for effective removal of the invasive species and subsequent treatments to steer recovery in desired directions; to the problem of identifying reference sites. Target riparian systems include those found in the Fynbos, Grassland and Savanna biomes. South African Journal of Botany is published by Elsevier, and is available online at www.sciencedirect.com. Contact Prof Karen J. Esler, Centre for Invasion Biology and Department of Conservation Ecology & Entomology, Stellenbosch University, kje@sun.ac.za should you need further information about the special issue.