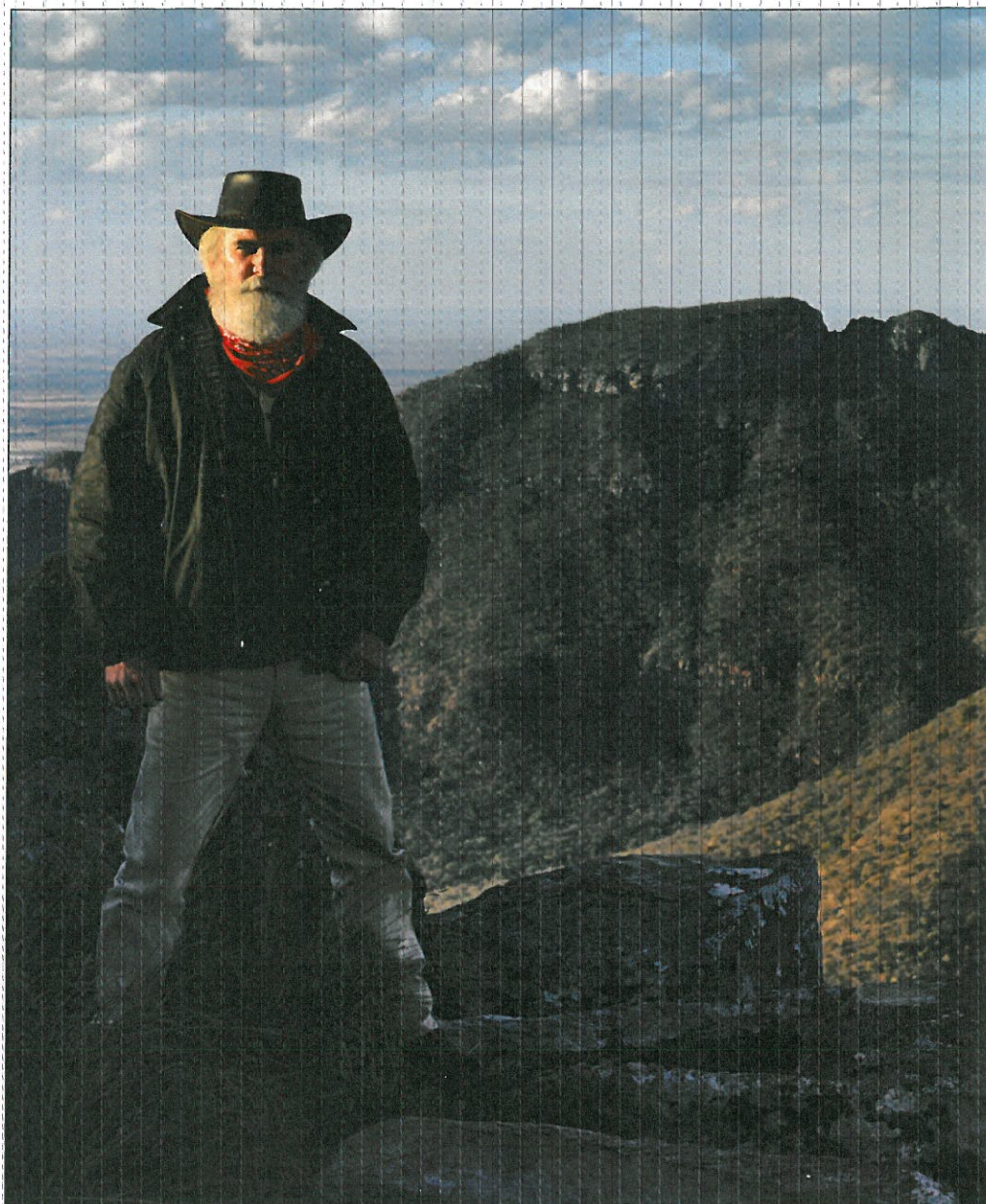


The South African Conservation Success Story





Top: Shane Mahoney at Blyde River Canyon.



Above: Fly-fishing.

Shane Mahoney and the North American Conservation Model

I'm Shane Mahoney, a wildlife biologist, writer and researcher from Newfoundland, Canada. For the last 15 years or so, I have written and lectured extensively on the North American Wildlife Conservation Model. In conjunction with the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, a highly regarded nonprofit conservation organization based in the United States, I produced a documentary describing the enormous success this model has enjoyed in rescuing and maintaining wildlife abundance in North America, while at the same time affording huge economic and social opportunity to develop. This story also included the important role that hunters and anglers, the sustainable use community, have played in achieving this wildlife success. In recent years I have been delighted and intrigued by the success South Africa has had in conserving its wildlife. I have also become aware of the different methods, certainly compared to North America, which this country has used to achieve this extraordinary and critical objective.



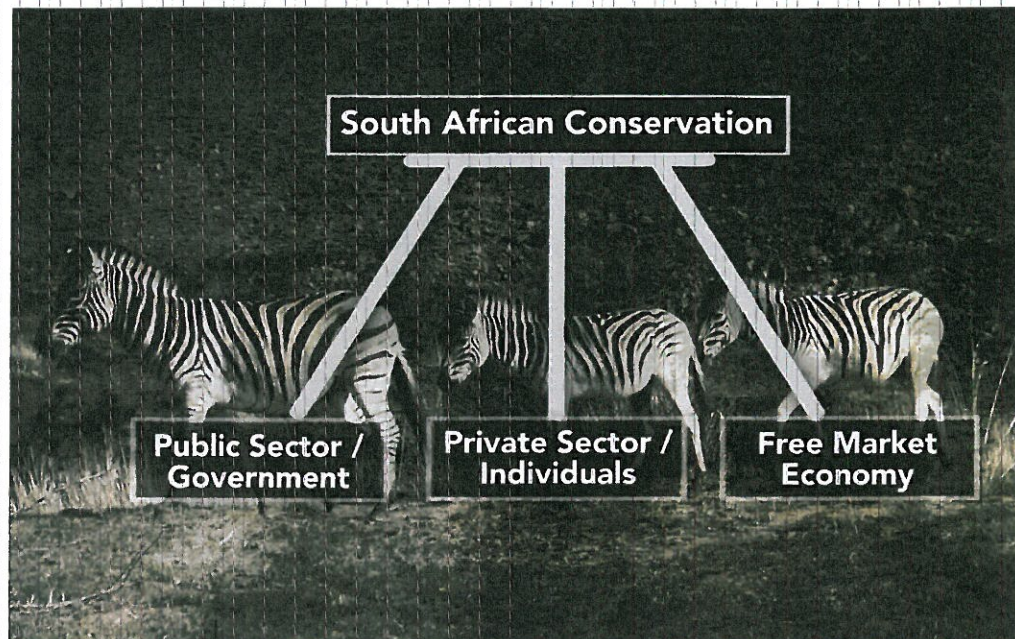
The Three-legged Stool

Like a robust and sturdy wooden stool, the highly successful South African Conservation Model, rests on three legs. The first leg is provided by the public sector or government, the second leg by the private sector or individuals, and the third is the free market economy which determines the economic value of wildlife and the price of goods and services applicable to it. The cooperative engagement of these three institutions has resulted in South Africa providing the most cost effective and efficient access in all of Africa to a thriving wildlife sector. This comes in a variety of forms, from eco-tourism to recreational hunting; from wildlife ranching to wildlife translocation. As a result, there is more land under wildlife production and more wildlife itself in

this country now than at any time over the last 100 years. Indeed the numbers of large game animals alone have increased nearly forty times since 1964!



Top: Wing shooting.
Above: Game viewing.



More importantly for a developing economy like South Africa, the industries that have grown up around wildlife contribute some R7 billion annually to the economy. What is perhaps even more significant is that these wildlife based industries provide three and a half times more and better skilled jobs, at salaries and wages more than five and a half times higher than did the domestic livestock industry that, for the most part, they replaced. In other words, the equivalent amount of land converted from livestock to game, has transformed the land based agricultural economy in South Africa while massively expanding the net worth of both the product harvested and the land itself. Incredibly, in this case, the land transformation and production model has benefited wildlife immensely,

contrary to the experience of agricultural development in most parts of the world.

In this documentary I will explore the factors which led to this extraordinary circumstance and the challenges that must be met to ensure its continued success. The livelihoods of people and the fate of wildlife in South Africa are at stake. It has become fashionable in the international debates over wildlife's future to often forget the dignity and worth of human life and cultures and to emphasize only the conservation of animals.



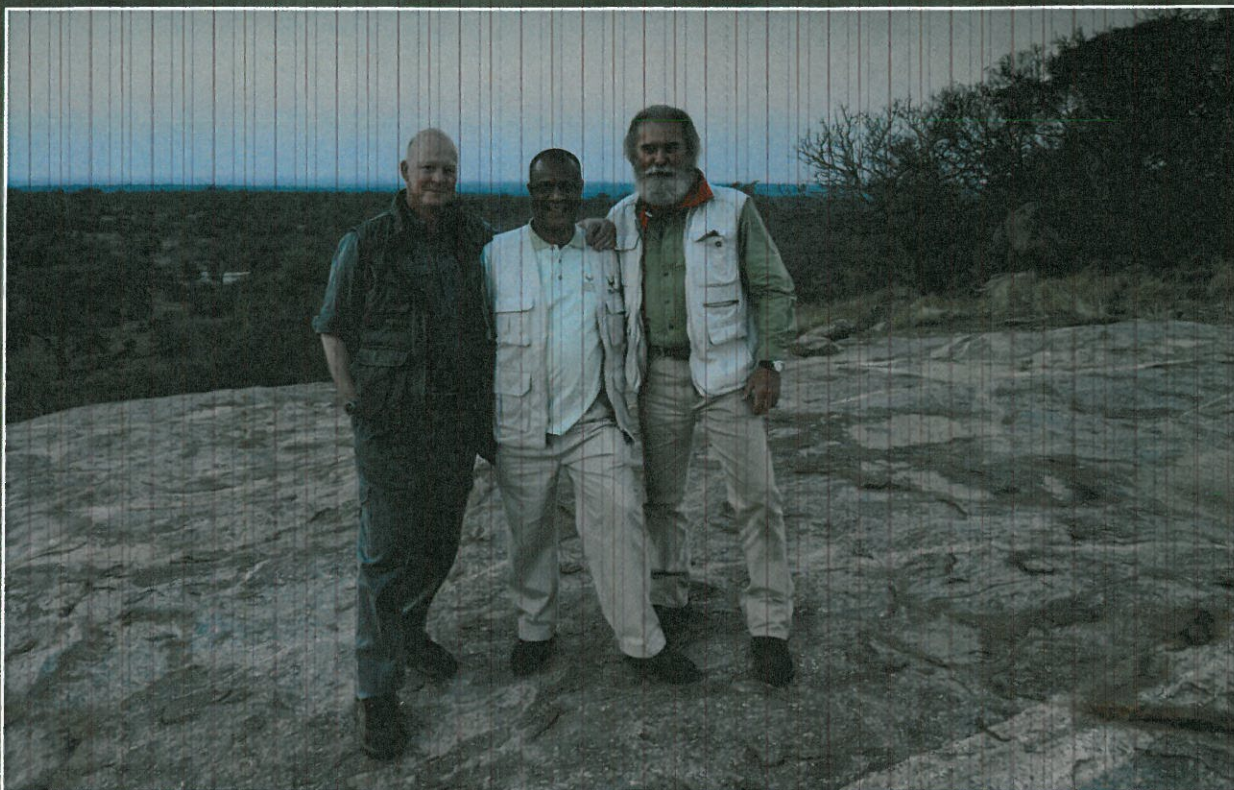
Top: The three-legged stool showing the sectors involved in the successful South African Conservation Model.
Above: Common reedbuck.

This is one of the great tragedies of modern conservation. Each human life, each human culture is a jewel within our universe and demands our respect and our best efforts on their behalf. Of course we ought to be able to see both humanity and wildlife as a beautiful continuum and inter-dependence. They taught us to be human and we came to love and marvel at them in turn.

This inter-dependency is nothing new, of course. It has existed since the first humans appeared in South Africa some 180 thousands of years ago. Thus our exploration of the South African Conservation Model must begin at the beginning...



Top: Roan antelope. • Above: Bushman painting.



The three narrators of the documentary, from left to right: Peter Flack, the producer – a lawyer, businessman, conservationist and retired game rancher; David Mabunda – CEO of the 22 South African National Parks; and Shane Mahoney – a Canadian wildlife biologist, writer and researcher.

"The object of this documentary has been to give you, the reader, the factual foundation upon which to base sound decisions regarding the future of wildlife and its conservation in South Africa, in the belief that, if you do, wildlife will provide opportunities for all, in perpetuity."

Peter Flack

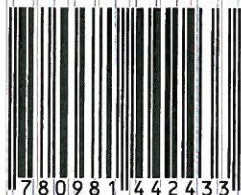
"Approximately 150 years ago, a great conceptual leap was made by mankind. A conceptual leap that in my opinion is probably the greatest intellectual invention that we've had in centuries. And that is to change our attitude towards the natural world and to believe that progress and civilisation really was associated with how well we could manage to keep wild nature with us."

Shane Mahoney

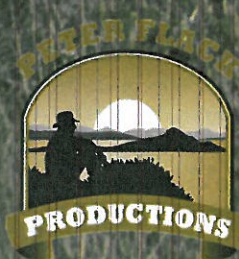
"Parks and preserves cannot and have not in Africa in themselves maintained the biomass and variety of wildlife that is possible in combination with a strong game ranching industry."

Dr David Mabunda

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