

Sustainable Seas Trust



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Plettenberg Bay Hope Spot

Second joint Mission Blue-Sustainable Seas Trust press release for Launch of first five International Hope Spots in South Africa detailing particulars of the Plettenberg Bay Hope Spot.

PLETT FOR HOPE ☺

What a wonderful place we live in! Gorgeous beaches, mountains, rivers, fynbos, forest and ocean - a natural wonderland with wonderful people, what more can we ask for? Plett has everything going for it and that is one of the reasons why Plett has been chosen as one of only 5 international Hope Spots in South Africa; an exciting global initiative that we can now be a part of. And the reality is, that we can be the best Hope Spot in the world not only because of the natural beauty that is Plett, but also because of the dynamic, innovative people that live here.

What is a Hope Spot?

Hope Spots are a global network of marine areas identified as being critical to sustaining the long-term health of the ocean's ecosystems. [Mission Blue](#), the promoter and driver of Hope Spots, was established through the Sylvia Earle Alliance (SEA), an initiative aimed at exploring and caring for the oceans and started by [Dr Sylvia Earle](#), a world famous diver, oceanographer and National Geographic Explorer in Residence. The [Sustainable Seas Trust](#) (SST) is Mission Blue's South African partner organisation, which is overseeing the launch of South Africa's first five Hope Spots.

Protecting certain interconnecting marine areas will result in a range of benefits. These include sea life regeneration through the provision of safe breeding and nursery grounds; maintained biodiversity; preservation of critical habitat; generation of oxygen; storage of atmospheric carbon; and providing stability and resiliency in response to accelerating climate change. Conserved marine areas will also offer expanded opportunities for low impact eco-tourism and sustainable utilisation of our seas.

The Benefits to Plett

The establishment of this Hope Spot will support the proposed linkage of the Tsitsikamma Marine Protected Area to the Robberg Protected Area, but with a more inclusive approach where science, tourism, education and sustainable development and utilisation are possible. This will to some extent allow us as Plett locals to drive how we want our Bay managed, without seeing it pillaged from outside influences.

Trustees: Robert Lowe (Chairman), Frederick Krohnert (representing Nedbank Trust), Richard Laing, Baldwin Ngubane, Frederick Oosthuizen, Anthony Ribbink, Michael Rodel, Louis van Vuren

The Sustainable Seas Trust is registered as a charitable, non-profit, public benefit institution

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There are several clear benefits to having the Bitou coastline area declared as a Hope Spot. Not only will the area obtain international recognition and support as a valuable marine area critical to the health of the ocean, but it will also be promoted internationally as an area to visit for its beauty and uniqueness. This will significantly benefit tourism, business, and sustainable development.

Furthermore, on-going research and monitoring of our natural assets/resources are strongly encouraged by the initiative, and will be beneficial in promoting the area while ensuring sound management and informed decision making within the area. Together with this, Hope Spots are obligated to have set geographical boundaries that will further guide future planning, development and management.

The structure of a Hope Spot is such that public participation and support plays an integral part in all activities and decisions made which will greatly enhance the success of the initiative.

With Mission Blue endorsement and support, the fundraising capabilities for key existing and proposed projects will be strengthened. Mission Blue is a well-established and highly recognised international initiative that will give any project, whether it be educational, research, or conservation orientated, a major boost and therefore a better chance of succeeding.

Dr Sylvia Earle will launch the Plett Hope Spot in early December 2014, placing Plettenberg Bay on the international marine conservation map. Let us make this the greatest event of the year, a celebration of progress and unity.

A small local committee, working under the guidance of SST's CEO [Dr Tony Ribbink](#), has already been established, and is starting to plan the event. The committee is made up of representatives from various stakeholders in the community. A few fundraising events will take place throughout the year to enable us to make the December launch a fabulous and successful event.

If you would like to be part of the [Plettenberg Bay Hope Spot initiative](#) by either donating your time or skills (logo designs, brochure printing, venues for fundraising, promotional video development etc.) or endorsing it, please contact [Mark Brown](#) at mark@naturesvalleytrust.co.za

Copy provided by Chrissie Cloete – Plettenberg Bay Hope Spot Committee

