

# Nature Conservation in SA: Current and Desired States

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**Nature Conservation is 90% managing people and 10% managing the resources**

(JR Fazio & DL Gilbert 1981, Public Relations and Communications for Natural Resource Managers)

From Aldo Leopold (1940), A Sand County Almanac – And sketches here and there: **'We abuse land because we see it as a commodity belonging to us. [But] When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.'**

**Public is used to pictures of dead rhinos, focus is too much on the dead**

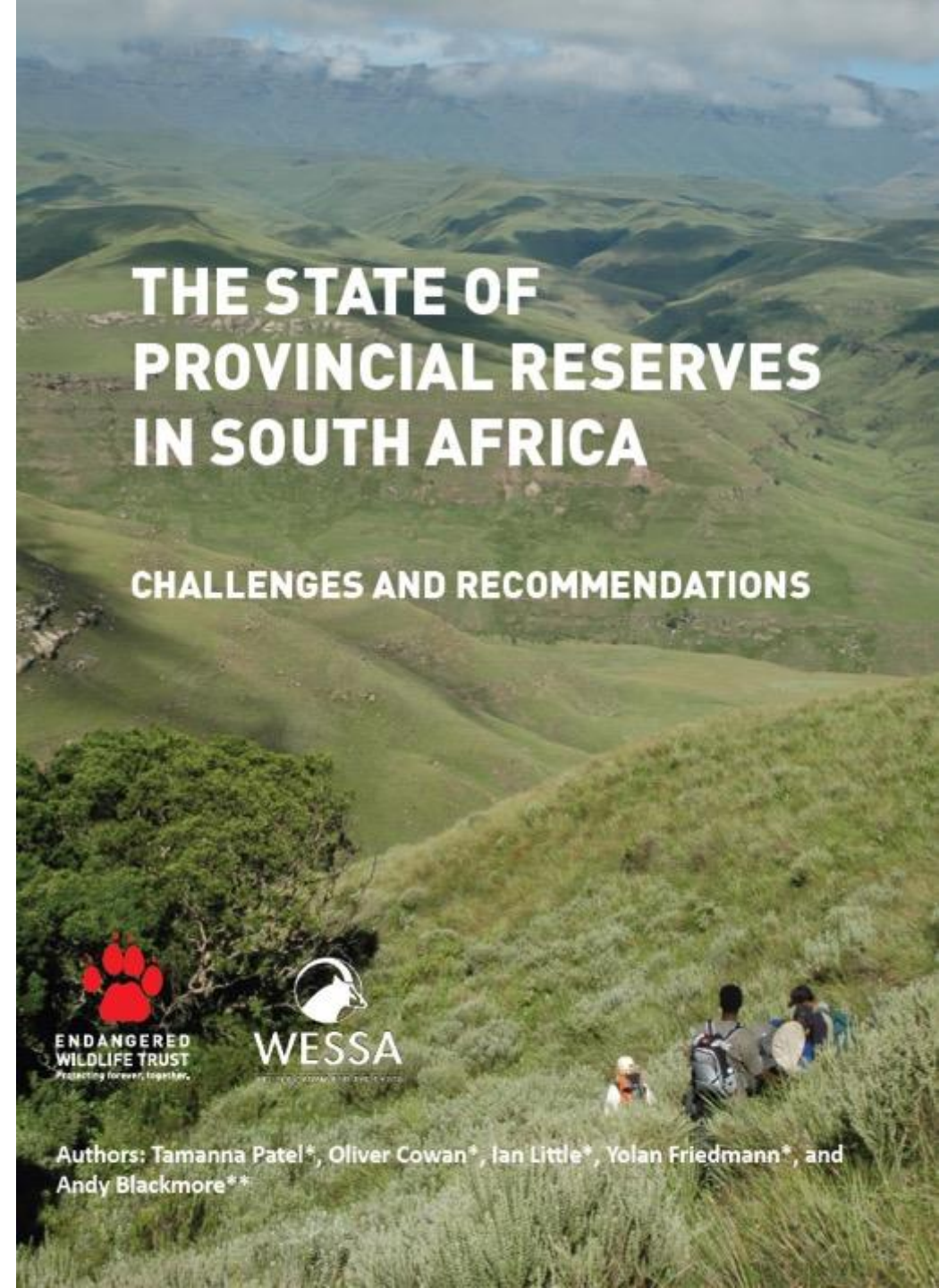


**Photo: Sandra Snelling**

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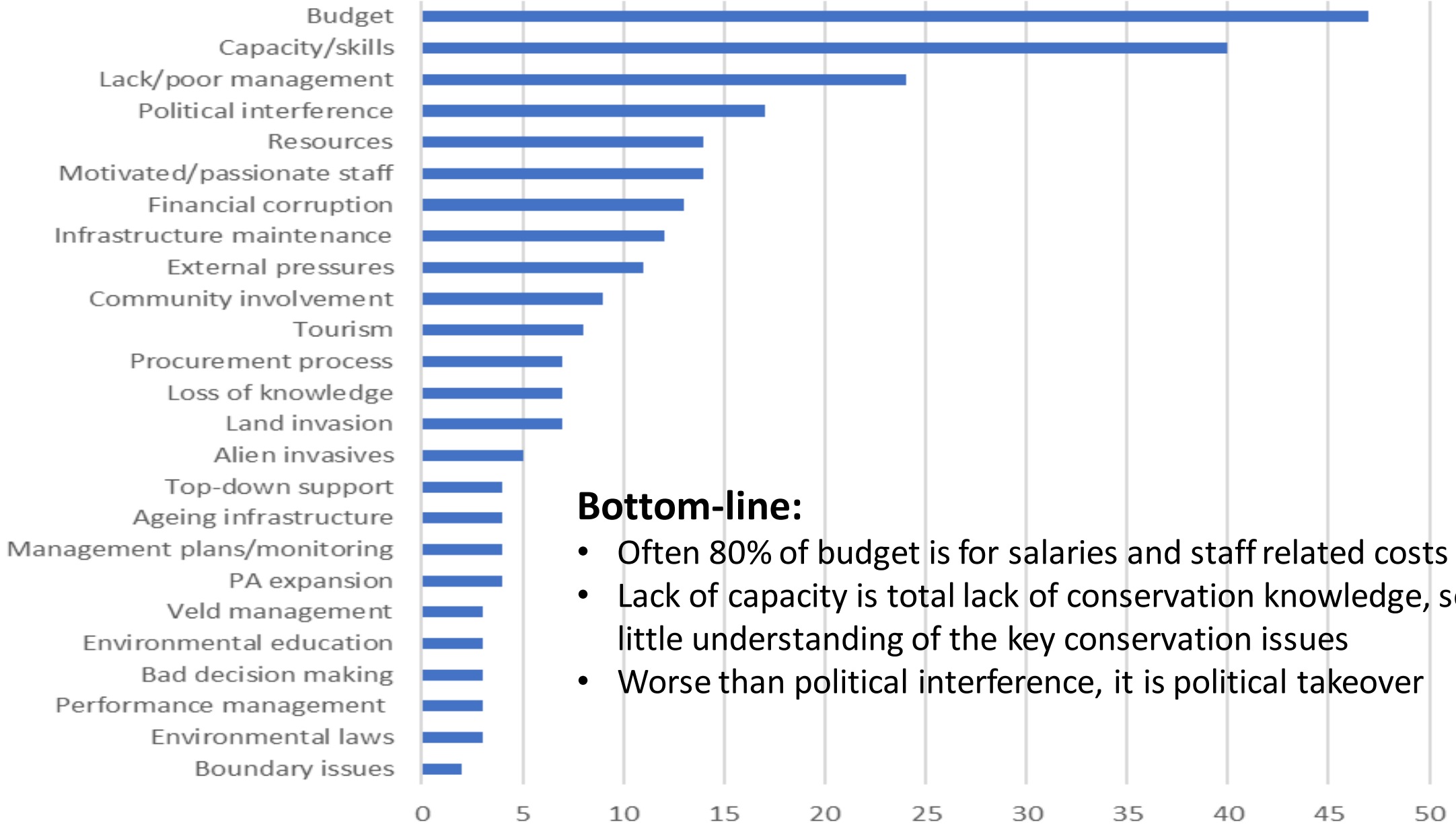


*“There is growing concern that South African Provincial Reserves, which contain high biological diversity and threatened ecosystems, are not fulfilling their conservation objectives”*



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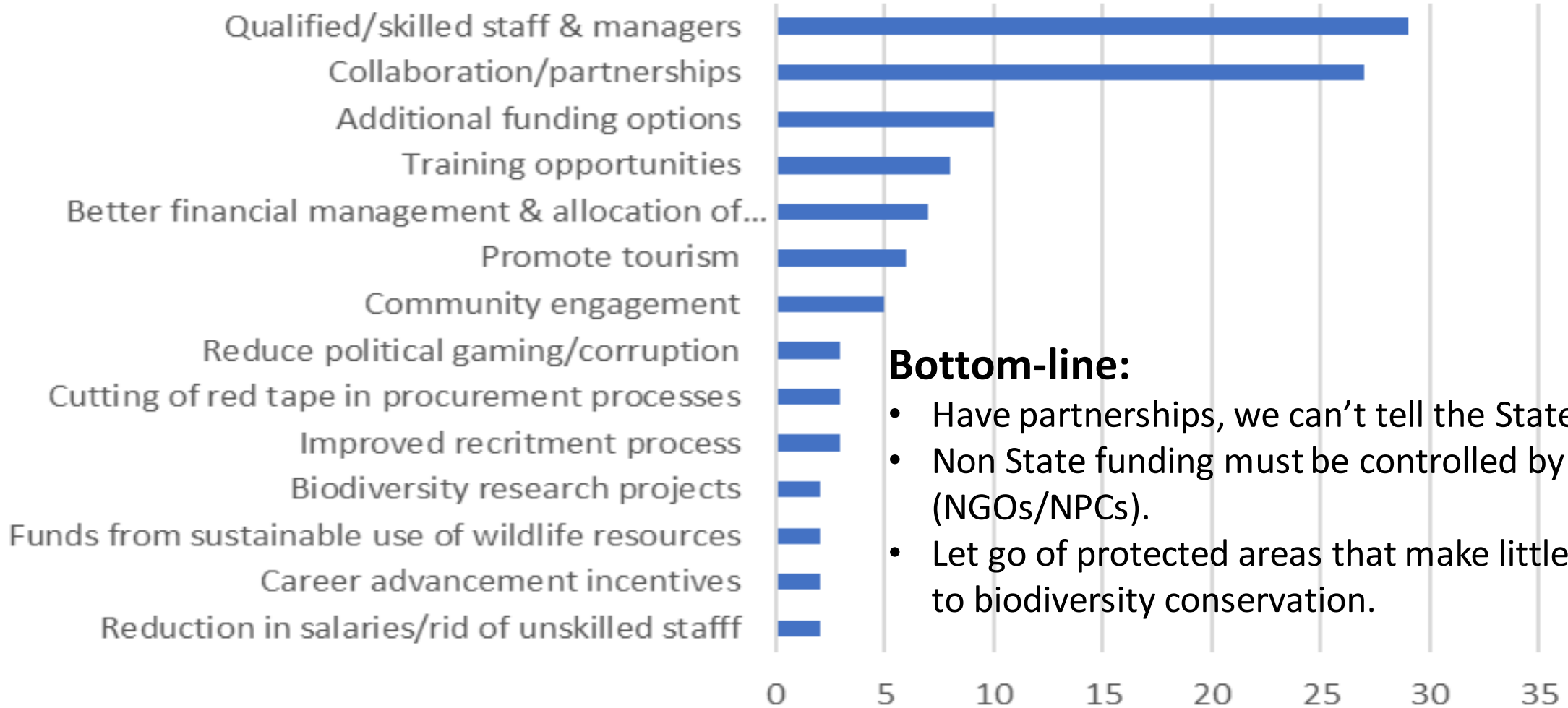
# Frequently mentioned challenges



## Bottom-line:

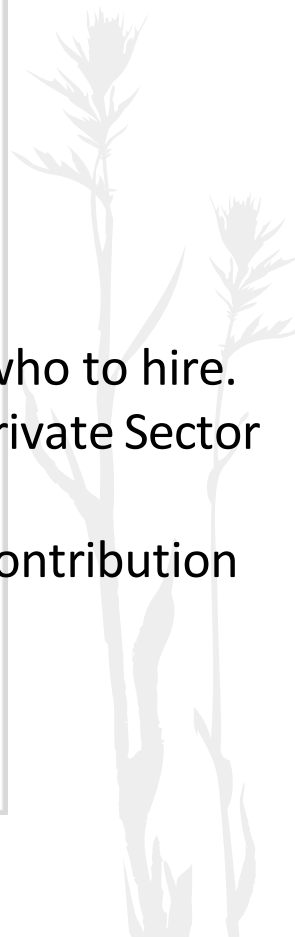
- Often 80% of budget is for salaries and staff related costs
- Lack of capacity is total lack of conservation knowledge, senior staff have little understanding of the key conservation issues
- Worse than political interference, it is political takeover

# Frequently mentioned opportunities to address challenges



## Bottom-line:

- Have partnerships, we can't tell the State who to hire.
- Non State funding must be controlled by Private Sector (NGOs/NPCs).
- Let go of protected areas that make little contribution to biodiversity conservation.



# **Needed Interventions for desired states – Lessons from Elsewhere**

## **Bottom-line, the answers are with us, those who want solutions**

### **Community/NGOs or NPC (The State as enabler or disabler)**

- Namibia: works well because NGO/NPCs and Communities seem bonded forever (that is key)
- Botswana: NGO/NPCs and Communities once worked well until the State disabled the partnership
- Malawi: the State admitted failure but was wise enough to let NGOs, NPCs and other governments in

### **Challenges for South Africa**

- Except for SA National Parks and perhaps Cape Nature, provincial parks without good tourism income will totally collapse. However there is hope for Provincial Parks such as Madikwe and Pilanesberg because of strong private tourism concessions
- Some Provinces are keen to have the African Parks model, providing for total takeover by NGOs or NPCs, we must be push hard for this kind of help
- The Protected Areas Acts allows for co-management or for other persons to manage protected areas.

# **Conclusion**

**The state will not provide sustainable funding, it is already failing to fund key social and economic functions**

**Time is against us, our status as a megadiverse country is at risk**

**We can still salvage the current situation, all is not lost**

**Thank you**