

Honorary Member Award Suzanne Milton

Dr. Suzanne Milton of the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa, is a leader in the ecology and management of arid and semi-arid ecosystems. Her work has focused on the conservation, sustainable utilization and rehabilitation of natural vegetation, especially in southern African environments. Milton's research interests are in plant population and community responses to harvesting, grazing and disturbance, in the causes and effects of invasive plants and animals, and in the processes leading to re-establishment of self-perpetuating indigenous plant assemblages in overgrazed or denuded areas.

Dr. Milton's research combines observational studies, field experiments and spatially explicit models to reveal how the influences of these factors vary with site, temporal variation and management. Her collaborations with ecological modelers have been especially important in testing ideas about long-term vegetation change and rangeland management. She has a special knack for comparative ecological analysis and is able to use her deep understanding of southern African ecosystems to generate and inform broader ecological theory. She has participated in a wide variety of policy debates concerning international and national grazing, land management and rehabilitation. She is especially talented at translating her ecological understanding into easily understood, practical management options for land managers. Through direct involvement with ranchers, farmers and government agencies, her research results have been applied to the protection and sustainable management of rangelands and to recent efforts to restore degraded ecosystems.

She has many international collaborators and is sought after for her ecological insights, effectiveness, enthusiasm, cooperation, and uplifting attitude. She is a generous and informative host of international visitors,



imparting a South African perspective that sticks in the mind and permanently alters perspective. She has become an essential conduit for the two-way exchange of information between South African scientists and the international scientific community. Furthermore, she is a creative and passionate teacher, stimulating enthusiastic curiosity in undergraduate students.

Suzanne Milton has managed to remain an effective researcher and educator under the most challenging conditions. Her career has spanned the days of resistance to apartheid, conflict and upheaval, the wholesale reorganization of society and the current period of rapid development in the midst of new social priorities. Her extraordinary research and publication record has been achieved without the funds and other resources available in more stable and developed countries, and in spite of the disruption and disturbances of rapid social change in South Africa. She has done so much, with such limited resources, under such difficult circumstances, that she is a fitting and inspiring choice for the ESA Honorary Member Award.