



## **Taryn MORRIS**

### **Home Country**

South Africa

### **Degree**

PhD in Ecology

### **Expertise**

Ecology and Invasion  
Biology

### **Research Focus**

Introduction of  
Invasive Alien Species

### **Host University**

University of Colorado  
at Boulder, United  
States

### **Fellowship Awarded**

2010

Taryn Morris was born in Johannesburg, South Africa as the youngest of four siblings. Her close-knit family and supportive parents have played an important role in her personal and professional development throughout her life. She loves being outdoors and is a keen runner, hiker and birder as well as a passionate photographer who enjoys documenting the natural and scientific wonders that surround us.

In 2004 Taryn graduated cum laude with a BSc (Hons) in zoology from the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, where in 2008 she also graduated cum laude with her MSc degree. After earning a professional certificate in environmental policy and economics at the Centre for Environmental Policy at Bard College in New York, United States, in 2010 she enrolled in doctoral studies in ecology at the University of Colorado at Boulder.

Taryn's research will be carried out in the Cape Floral region of South Africa, which supports one of the richest diversities of flora in the world. While representing less than 0.5 percent of Africa's land area, it is home to nearly 20 percent of the continent's flora. It also displays remarkable levels of endemism with almost 60 percent of plant species being found nowhere else in the world. The biome's high plant diversity as well as its unique plant reproductive strategies, nutrient cycling patterns, adaptations to fire, pollination biology and patterns of endemism and adaptive radiation found in the flora are of outstanding value to science.

Taryn's research aims to investigate biogeochemical dynamics and ecophysiological properties of the unique fynbos biome in response to several anthropogenic pressures, particularly the introduction of invasive alien plant species. Her research will enhance understanding of how such pressures can influence diversity, structure and functioning within this unique and fragile ecosystem. She feels that her research is not only pertinent to the conservation of the unique Cape Floral region, but insights gained there can also be extended to many other parts of the globe.

Taryn plans to teach at the Organization for Tropical Studies in South Africa.