



#### OUR VISION

To be a highly effective and well-supported champion of the environment.

#### OUR MISSION

To implement high impact environmental and conservation projects which promote public participation in caring for the Earth.

## WESSA EDEN Newsletter October 2015

Dear Friends of the Environment,

The first week in August saw the second run of the Department of Science and Technology's Science Week here in George. The five schools that were involved were:- Blanco Primary, St Mary's, Pacaltsdorp Primary and George South. The theme this year focused on Light as it is the UNESCO theme.



WESSA Eden focused on sunlight Energy and other alternative and renewable energy.

Sustainable Living is also an area that needs much attention.

We showed the learners (mostly Grade 5, 6 and 7's) How we can use Solar Energy to cook, using a sunstove. There were a number of learners that have seen them and others that understood the concept.

A mini experiment was carried out using water and the sunstove. the temperature rised by 20 degrees within 30 minutes from 21 to 45 degrees.

We also showed the learners the slow cooker. Here one has to pre-cook the food in order to achieve the required outcomes.

Our Sustainable House was the draw card, the learners loved the different ways of saving electricity and making your home a more energy efficient home.

We left them with the CONCEPT that they need to become innovative and create simple ways to use renewable energy in our daily lives. They were encouraged to think of ways to reduce their costs at home so that they don't have to pay for resources that are free essentially.

Most learners had or solar geyser or water tanks, food gardens and make their own compost, some recycle.

Part of the items on display at the house were:

HOT WATER GEYSER	RECYCLING STATION
COMPOSTING	WORM GARDEN
SOLAR PANELS	WATER TANKS
WIND TURBINE	GREY WATER AND ITS USES
INDOOR FIRE PLACE	VERTICAL GARDENS



It was great to hear their comments and how they already understand that we need to stop our energy and food demands if we want to show our children this planet.

Thank you to the learners of those schools for their excellent behaviour.

Thank you to the hard working team: Annemarie, Hester , Claude, Linda, Monica and Lorraine for putting the programme together. [https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.872020309535206.1073741858.333591223378120&type=3&notif\\_t=like](https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.872020309535206.1073741858.333591223378120&type=3&notif_t=like)

Ken Gie kindly compiled this report on

*“The **WESSA outing to Pietersrivier Nature Reserve (29 August)***

*finally kicked off after it was cancelled due to inclement weather in July. Determined to make it happen, Annemarie Gebhardt rallied everyone to “Just do it” (compliments to Nike) despite the fact that the weather was still dicey at the end of August.*



*Our first stop was at Katot Meyer’s Rondekop camp where 22 indigenous trees had been planted in the shape of an ox wagon wheel. The wood from these trees had inherent qualities and were used in the manufacture of ox wagons, the flexible Assegaai wood for the wheel spokes, strong iron wood for the chassis and “disselboom”, etc.*

*Plans changed as it kept drizzling and we skipped the visit to Burchell’s bust and his trail and headed for the “Iapa” at Ingo Wennerman’s trout farm. During our DIY lunch Lynne Thomson had us spellbound by the adventures of William Burchell who was known as a polymath – someone who knows a lot about many things. This remarkable man traveled 7000 km in 4 years covering the Western, Southern and Northern Cape to satisfy his curiosity about geology, astrology, botany, sociology and as an accomplished writer and artist, meticulously recorded all his discoveries and observations which later ended up in 3 (?) volumes of books and 60,000 specimens of plants and animals were shipped to England.*

*Ingo, as chairman of the Middle Keurbooms Conservancy, explained how he, Katot Meyer and Jimmy Zondagh had been relentless in their effort to eradicate invasive plants and trees in the conservancy and that Black Wattle were not the only problem, but pine trees which grow on inaccessible mountain slopes and ridges by their seeds being carried by birds.*

*He warned that we were on the brink of ecological destruction due to bad farming methods, lack of political will by the authorities and the lack of concern by individuals. Those who care should spread awareness of the dilemma we are in and what it holds for future generations. We should stop trying to own everything as we are merely short term residents on the planet and there is no planet B out there. We are all children of nature and every human, animal and plant makes up one huge living organism being dependent on each other for our very survival.*

*We all went our separate ways with much to think about and wondering if we are still capable of saving what is left of our fragile natural environment. What I personally wondered about was the driving skills of Annemarie who handled the mud and furrows in the road so superbly and what her position could be in the Dakar Rally!”*

Compiler's comment: Well done all those brave souls who participated despite the weather !

### **International Coastal Clean Up September 2015**

The WESSA Committee invited all and sundry to join us at Suiderkruis Beach, Great Brak on Saturday, 19<sup>th</sup> September. Over 20 children from Holy Cross Primary School brought their parents along. A group of Brownies & Guides from George and several families of Aurecon staff enjoyed a busy morning on the beach. Cllr Cliffe Baymen of Ward 14 (Great Brak) and some families from Mossel Bay also joined us. The 2 hours spent on the beach, dunes and estuary brought large quantities of rubbish – mostly associated with food and drink - to the collection point.





**Repeat of Noetzie Conservancy - October 31<sup>st</sup>**

This second tour has been scheduled owing to the massive demand....and there are just 6 spaces left !

Contact Annemarie Gebhardt:- 044 870 0086 or [angebhar@telkomsa.net](mailto:angebhar@telkomsa.net) urgently if you wish to participate.

**George Open Gardens Day – 7 November**

Make a note in your diary – more details next Newsletter.

For those who visited our just-started conversion to fynbos last year ...come and see what it looks like now!

[www.facebook.com/GardenRouteGardens](http://www.facebook.com/GardenRouteGardens)



**Kammanassie Geology Tour – 28 November**

Our geologists are champing at the bit for another geology tour– and many of our readers too! So we are off on the Kammanassie Circuit again. An all day, self-drive guided tour starting in de Rust and.

Three expert geologists, **Paul Rixom, Peter Ginn and Colin Ralston** will lead a small groups of about 20 participants. A full daytrip, commencing in de Rust, the route basically circumnavigates the Kammanassie Mountains which lie between the Swartberg to the north and the Outeniquas to the south moving east towards Uniondale, south to the Langkloof and ending just before Herold. It is definitely a case of roadside-geology, mostly driving with stops at geological features en route.



The book that inspired this tour "die ooervlakte - primordial plains Little Karoo" compiled by Louise Heckl & Leon Nell . Enjoy a preview at the following blogspot – especially the photos that Paul Rixom took <http://dieoervlakteprimordialplains.blogspot.com/>

This and all other activities organised by the WESSA George/Sedgefield Branch is only possible thanks to the energies of volunteers who give generously of their time and knowledge to raise funds for Environmental Education and Awareness.

Obligatory Donation for this tour:

R 100 for WESSA members (students and pensioners too),

R120 for non-members is for our Enviro & Education Fund. The geologists only receive petrol expenses – they contribute their time and expertise at no charge.

Bookings now open..... [wessageorge@isat.co.za](mailto:wessageorge@isat.co.za)

As always on these tours, lifts will be arranged to fill vehicles with passengers obviously sharing petrol costs. **Bookings essential** along with info whether you can offer a lift or require one, where is your home suburb and phone contacts (to facilitate lifts)!

Participants will receive detailed route instructions.

## Environmental updates

### The Garden Route Biosphere Reserve Public Presentation took place early in August.

Herewith attached is the documentation for the application to UNESCO MAB to have the Garden Route Area declared a Biosphere Reserve. This will also eventually lead to increasing a large corridor of great importance, The Baviaans. Please read through the slides and see what its about.

An appeal from the organisers:-

*“ As promised, attached is a pdf version of the presentation. As mentioned, we need to 'spread the word' far and wide and if there are any groups of people who you know of who may benefit from the presentation, we would be happy to set this up. Alternatively, feel free to share the presentation information far and wide. We will also be including articles in the local media, etc.*



*The next round of meetings will take the form of mapping workshops and we will be in contact with dates, venues, times, etc for this.*

*Please don't forget that we need letters of support to submit with our application to UNESCO MAB. These do need to be signed and we need two originals for this.*

*Feel free to contact us with any queries. Onwards .....*

*Kind regards*

*Julie, Mary Jane, Simon, Vernon and Londeka”*

Julie Carlisle

Garden Route Biosphere Reserve

[ecovive@mweb.co.za](mailto:ecovive@mweb.co.za) 044 535 0064 or 044 535 9258 or 082 322 2209

[www.facebook.com/pages/Garden-Route-Biosphere-Reserve](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Garden-Route-Biosphere-Reserve)

[www.grbr.org.za](http://www.grbr.org.za)

## Garden Route BOTANICAL GARDENS



**Garden Route  
Botanical Garden**

### Spring Indigenous Plant Sale

**2nd ( 08-16h00 )& 3rd ( 08-14h00 ) October 2015**

**Plant sale:** It is that time of year again when the Garden Route Botanical Garden gears up for a *fantastic Spring Indigenous Plant Sale*. This year you will have the pleasure of buying plants from a variety of participating nurseries and various other interesting stalls.

Indigenous plants such as succulents, aloes, bulbs, medicinal plants, culinary herbs, shrubs, trees, proteas, ericas, restios, annuals, perennials, flowers, potting soil, manure and early bird specials will be available in abundance. Furthermore, expert gardening advice will be available along with all your gardening needs.



### **3 October 2015 AT 11h00 - "FANTASTIC CAPE FLORAL KINGDOM"**

**Priscilla Burgoyne**, Curator of the Southern Cape Herbarium, will be giving an interesting presentation **TEA TIME TALK** in the Environmental Centre Hall (49 Caledon Road, George.).

**Cost: FREE, but donations to the Botanical Gardens will be accepted.**



#### **Environmental and Science Centre Building Underway**

The building officially started on Monday, 14th September 2015. The Garden Route Botanical Garden looks forward to exciting times ahead.

**The Botanical Brew** Completely secure and shadowed under a giant Cape Fig Tree, the Botanical Brew Tea Garden boasts a spectacular view of the mountains. Come and enjoy a delicious snack and a cup of freshly brewed Coffee, and let the children play in the playground. Family fun for all.

Tuesday to Friday from 09:00 to 16h00, Saturdays and 08:30 - 16:00 Sunday and Public Holidays 10:00 - 15:00.

For more information about Botanical Brew, please call Zelide (Zee) Breedts on 079 212 6582 / email: [thebotanicalbrew@gmail.com](mailto:thebotanicalbrew@gmail.com)



It is time for the Summer Competition again which will from now on be called the Summer Festival. There are currently more or less 600 gardens in and around George More or less 60 gardens per area will participate in the festival of which  $\pm$  30 of these gardens will be new gardens.

The new gardeners are very enthusiastic to get going but we need more seeds, seedlings and implements to help them to start their gardens. These gardens should be established as soon as possible as it is planting season at the moment.

Keep your eye on the George Herald for full coverage. (Photo courtesy of Alida de Beer, George Herald)

If you wish to get involved contact Hester Greeff :- [hcgreeff@gmail.com](mailto:hcgreeff@gmail.com)



**GEORGE NEWS FLASH - The George Herald, in cooperation with Kos en Fynbos,** is bringing our community a double page centre spread this week ( 1 Oct.) packed with invaluable information for growing your own food, all at a glance.

There are lists of summer and winter vegetables, fruit and nut trees that should be part of any food garden, and plants that attract birds and bees, as well as illustrated instructions for making compost and creating a no-dig garden (quickest, easiest and best for the soil).

It also includes charts for companion planting and planting with the moon phases, and much, much more.

An enormous effort has gone into this by the collaborators Monica Vaccaro from the Landmark Foundation and Anthonie du Toit from the NMMU.

Lisa Oudejans, George Herald designer has captured it all creatively in her design of

the pages that can be laminated and hung on the wall of every keen gardener's home or garden shed as a handy reference and educational guide.



## Forthcoming Activities

### Wednesday 28 October: U3A General Meeting: **Judy Dixon: "Extremophiles":**

10:00 = Tea, 10:30 = Meeting starts, ends at 12h00 at Emmaüs, Hope Street, George.

"Extremophiles" are organisms with the ability to thrive in extreme environments such as hydrothermal vents.

Since they live in "extreme environments" (under high pressure and temperature), they can tell us under which range of conditions life is possible. The unique enzymes used by these organisms enable these organisms to function in such forbidding environments. These creatures hold great promise for genetically based medications and industrial chemicals and processes. It's important to note that these organisms are 'extreme' only from a human perspective. While oxygen, for example, is a necessity for life as we know it, some organisms flourish in environments with no oxygen at all.

Contact Sue: 044 877 1180. Non-U3A members R10.

## Interesting websites



**Spring Alive** is an international project to encourage children's interest in nature and the conservation of migratory birds and to get them to take action for birds and other wildlife as well as to participate in events organized by BirdLife Partners.



By posting their first sightings of Barn Swallow, White Stork, Common Cuckoo, Common Swift, and European Bee-eater on the [www.springalive.net](http://www.springalive.net) website, children from Europe, Central Asia and Africa create a real-time map of the incredible journeys these birds take every year.

Spring Alive brings together children, their teachers and families to record their first sightings of five easily-recognised migratory birds: Barn Swallow, White Stork, Common Cuckoo, Common Swift, and European Bee-eater.

By posting their records on the Spring Alive website, they help create a real-time map of the gradual arrival of spring.

Each year, spring begins with a few scattered early sightings in warm countries, which are displayed as patches of pale orange on the Spring Alive map.

Over the next few months, as more sightings flood in, the colour spreads and deepens, until all the countries where these birds breed are a rich, glowing red.

Spring Alive began in 2006 as a European project, which soon spread to Central Asia. In 2010, Spring Alive was extended to Africa, where from September onwards children look out for the return of the same five species from their breeding grounds in Europe and Asia.

Creating the map is one of the core activities. But Spring Alive involves lots more indoor and outdoor events, to engage children, schools and the wider community in the conservation of migratory birds, and to encourage them to support their national BirdLife Partners.

Spring Alive is organised by OTOP, the BirdLife Partner in Poland, on behalf of the BirdLife Partnership. Wildlife groups, teachers and others who would like to become more involved in Spring Alive should contact the International Manager, Karolina Kalinowska, at [karolina.kalinowska@otop.org.pl](mailto:karolina.kalinowska@otop.org.pl).

<http://www.springalive.net/en-za>



2014 marked 35 years of *EnviroKids* – WESSA's award-winning publication. *EnviroKids* is an invaluable, reusable educational resource for children, parents and teachers interested in the environment, wildlife and environmental issues. Children are wonderful ambassadors for the environment, and many take what they learn into their homes and communities.

*EnviroKids* magazines are full of amazing facts and fun activities that promote more sustainable lifestyles and caring for the Earth. Each issue has a different theme and supports the National curriculum, making *EnviroKids* a perfect source of ideas and information for school projects. Most readers keep their magazines as a reference library.

With Christmas coming up...or as a Birthday present, avail yourself of the special offer of 4 issues for just R150. Subscription form attached.

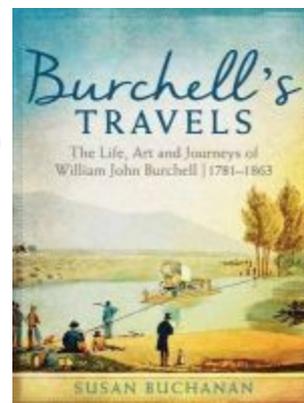
### **New Book :- Burchell's Travels by Sue Buchanan.**

200 years ago, William John Burchell departed from Cape Town for England.

Sue Buchanan's beautiful book on Burchell will hit the streets in November - long overdue recognition of the man. Susan Buchanan has studied social work, psychology and literature, and has spent many years researching William Burchell.

### **Google gave this synopsis of the book Burchell's travels**

Just over 200 years ago, in 1810, a 30-year-old Englishman named William Burchell landed in Cape Town after a four-year stint as a naturalist on St Helena island. The following year he embarked on an epic journey through the Cape Colony, which lasted four years and during which he covered 7 000 kilometres, mainly through unexplored terrain, and collected over 50 000 plant and animal specimens, as well as built up a vast collection of sketches and paintings. He went on to travel in Brazil, and after many years back in Britain, he committed suicide at the age of 82. Burchell's travels tells the story of Burchell's journeys, bringing to life an important figure who has faded into historical obscurity. It is a fascinating account of what travel was like 200 years ago - reconstructed from the rich source of Burchell's own writings. Beautifully illustrated with over 100 of Burchell's sketches and paintings, this is a perfect book for anyone interested in history, art, nature and travel.



**EAN: 9781770227552**

**ISBN: 1770227555**

**Publisher: Zebra Press**

**Age Range: 15+ years**

It will be available from Wordsworth here in George, but no price as yet. The publication date is set for end September so will only get to the shops by November.

As always, feel free to forward to others. And as always, all errors are entirely mine!

If you wish to unsubscribe – just let me know.

Regards, *Christine Ridge-Schnauffer*

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