



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 May 2016

Dear Friends of the Environment,

2016 is an exciting year for WESSA as it marks 90 years of our organisation “caring for the earth”! Not only is March our actual birthday month, it also saw the start of a number of celebratory activities to mark the milestone event.

Some of the celebratory activities WESSA Members can look forward this year to include:

- § **A social media campaign** celebrating WESSA’s rich heritage with interesting facts posted every Tuesday.
- § **A commemorative publication** documenting our rich 90-year history.
- § **Photographic and video competitions** featuring great prizes.
- § **Our 90th AGM** taking place on Saturday 17 September in the Kruger National Park

WESSA proudly presents

....HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO WESSA !!!!!!!!!!!!!

Sunday 12 June To celebrate WESSA's 90th year we will be holding a **fund-raising** event at Salinas Beach Restaurant, Wilderness



“SUNDOWNERS AT SALINAS” -



Donation of R90 per person for the WESSA Eden coffers includes canapes and a welcome glass of wine.

Booking absolutely essential for catering purposes ! wessageorge@isat.co.za

Programme

16h30 – 17h15 - a beach walk with Dr Steve du Toit (WESSA),
meet on the beach near NSRI building.

17h30 - Welcome – Annemarie Gebhardt, Chair, WESSA Eden
9 Highlights of 90 years of WESSA - Dr Steve du Toit

Dialogue about Earth Stewardship with Prof Christo Fabricius, NMMU Sustainability Unit

“The WESSA mantra ‘People Caring for the Earth’ is a call to Earth Stewardship – voluntary actions that ensure the long-term resilience of our planet in the face of global change. In this dialogue about Earth Stewardship on Sunday 12 June at Salinas, I hope to lightly introduce some of the discoveries my students and I have made about people caring for the earth in the Garden Route. People caring for the earth are doing great things.

We launch new projects at the drop of a walking-stick to conserve landscapes and seascapes, form societies, fence places off (to keep things in and people out), plant trees, grow vegetables (of all kinds), go off-grid, write letters, attend many meetings, and seem to experience lots and lots of problems and obstacles – often with authorities who say they are also earth carers. Sometimes we go on outings to cheer us up.

But despite our numbers we, the Garden Route earth caring community, don’t always seem to work together terribly well. Sometimes we seem to be staggering about - like we’ve returned from a heavy night out. Are there perhaps new options we might have missed while searching for more problems and obstacles? In this interactive dialogue I hope we can get closer to the nub of the issue.

What does Caring for the Earth mean to you – how do you interpret it? What were the magic times when you felt energized in your caring for the earth ways – when you felt like shouting “yes!now-we’re-getting-there!” ? What were the main ingredients? What can we learn from this, moving forward? Before the end of the evening I will try to pull it all together, to tell you what you told me.”

Prof Christo Fabricius

18h00 Finger food will be served. **Cash bar** available

20h00 Event ends

17 July CREW Outramps Botanical double act – Moriarty Centre, Caledon Street 10-12h00

The CREW programme was founded to harness the capacity of citizen scientists to assist professional botanists and conservationists in surveying and monitoring threatened plants, and towards this purpose the Outramps’ contribution is truly phenomenal.

The Outramps is the most dedicated and hardworking group of volunteers of SANBI’s CREW Programme. *CREW stands for the “Custodians of Rare and Endangered Wildflowers’ Programme.* Their core-function is to search for, find and monitor Red Data listed plants that are under threat. This data is then forwarded to SANBI’s Threatened Plants Programme, to update the SA National Red Data list. Over the past 13 years, they have surveyed an area of nearly 6 000 km², predominantly in the Southern Cape, between Swellendam and Nature’s Valley. They have collected 2 000 records, which include more than 300 rare and threatened species. This data collection amounts to nearly a third of all the National CREW data received, to date, by SANBI. This involves two explorative excursions per week, with a once per month camping in the veld for several days. These expeditions include frequent summits to the highest peaks of the Langeberg-, Outeniqua-, Swartberg-, Kouga-, Rooiberg-, Anysberg- and Kammanassie Mountains.

Di Turner, CREW Outramps, - A Year in the life of the CREW Outramps Group

Knowing Di’s capacity for humour as well as serious reporting on the travels of this group in the infamous Buchu Bus as recorded in her Monday Outramps Diaries, and her general unwillingness to give talks, this opportunity to hear her should not be missed!



Priscilla Bourgoyne, Curator Herbarium -



From Fossils to Fynbos - The evolution of plants on the African plate.



Africa has always been at the centre of the shifting tectonic movements. In order for us to appreciate the diversity of plants we have here today we have to take a look into the past at how plants have adapted to changing environments. We will be going back in time to the very first glimmer of plant-life and looking to see what that might have been and how this changed and adapted over the eons, what factors influenced this to what we have today.

Forthcoming Activities

Southern Cape Landowners Initiative: 22 June meeting

SCLi is hosting an afternoon workshop (coincidentally also at Salinas), on Wednesday 22 June, and it would be great if you, or one of your team, can attend.

We focus on invasive plant control and eradication, and there is lots of synergy with WESSA activities.

We will be forwarding the invite and agenda later this month, but please diarise the date.

The objective of the workshop is to take stock of where the respective conservation entities and landowners are in terms of controlling invasives, and what is in the pipeline in 2016/ 17, and so we need your input.

If anyone wishes to make a short presentation, contact Cobus Meiring, Manager, Stakeholder Engagement.

044 889 0030 083 626 7619 cobus@naturalbridge.co.za



What's that walking under the Rocks?

Come join us and become a 'citizen scientist'!

Everyone knows dolphins, whales and sharks. But very few realise the unique combination of living organisms under our feet on our coastline. These intertidal ecosystems have huge impact on

subsistence provisioning and on ecotourism. But there is not much local knowledge about the intertidal organisms – the species that live between the two tide levels.

Oceans Research and the Gouritz Cluster Biosphere Reserve invite you to a series of beach workshops where you will learn how to recognize, appreciate and conserve these important creatures.



Saturday 4 June Still Bay – meet us at 09h00 at the harbour parking

Saturday 18 June Tergniet, Reebok – meet us at 09h00 at the tidal pool parking



Saturday 2 July – Mossel Bay – meet us at 09h00 at Mossel Bay Point

* Keep an eye on <http://www.facebook.com/Oceans-Research-80871762664> for schedule updates in case of adverse weather conditions.

For more information contact Acheley Nortje 079 770 8376 or Dr Enrico Gennari 076 215 3360 Wendy Crane Tel . 028 735 2174 www.gouritz.com

Environmental updates

LAKES BIRD CLUB. CHAIR'S REPORT FOR 2015 (Extract)

“ Many of our members have continued in their roles as “citizen scientists” by being involved in CAR and CWAC counts in January and July. In addition in February, at short notice a detailed shorebird count of most of the beaches in our area was undertaken at Dale Wright’s request. With Oliver Purcell as co-ordinator, our African Black Oystercatcher Breeding monitoring in areas of Knysna and Sedgfield has continued, with varying levels of success in breeding attempts. Various members continue with atlasing for SABAP2 and also My Bird Patch. The value of long term monitoring is shown when one compares waterbird numbers in the Knysna Lagoon from 1993, when Joy von Korff and Lorna Watt initiated the CWAC count to the present. The average used to be 5343 birds, at present, it is just over 3000, a huge drop and raises alarm bells for the state of health in this the largest estuary in the warm temperate region of South Africa. A huge vote of thanks goes out to Lorna for her 22 years of dedication to this project and also to Oliver for his comprehensive Oyster catcher Reports. Also to all members who give so willingly of their time to conducting surveys on a weekly basis for nearly 6 months of the year. “

Pat Nurse

Press Release

Sustainable Seas Trust to launch the African Marine Waste Network

Plastic Pollution will be in the spotlight on July 25th and 26th in Port Elizabeth. During these two days the Sustainable Seas Trust, Plastics SA and other partners will launch the African Marine Waste Network. The need for the network was recognized some years back by the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) and a number of government departments, universities, research institutions, NGOs and concerned citizens, but a decision to launch the network was only made in 2015 with a view to building on the back of the South African Hope Spot Network, launched by Sustainable Seas Trust and Dr Sylvia Earle of Mission Blue. Dr Earle is also one of the Patrons of SST. Appropriately the Network will be launched in Port Elizabeth as Algoa Bay is one of South Africa’s six Hope Spots. Although the launch will take place in South Africa, the African Marine Waste Network will be the first to address marine waste at a Pan-African level. The SST has emphasised the enormous contribution of Plastics South Africa to this initiative.



Two days have been dedicated to the launch in order to set aside time for national and international experts to participate in a planning workshop, for public lectures and the first meeting of the Network’s Advisory Panel as well as to provide an opportunity for celebrations to mark the official launch.

Pollution of all kinds, a major global problem; it causes 40% of premature human deaths globally, costs US\$ 13.8 trillion annually and is influencing climate on the planet. An exceedingly important part of the pollution problem, marine waste, is the focus of the Network. Debris and solid waste enter the sea in ever increasing amounts every moment of every day. About 270kgs of plastic enters our seas every second; that is a little over 15 tons every minute; 900 tons every hour. Plastic washed into rivers and estuaries and then carried to the sea, beaches and rocky-shores is the major contributor to this form of

pollution. The remainder comes from ships and boats. By 2045 the flow of plastic into the sea will be 600kgs per second; 36 tons per minute or 2160 tons and hour, if present trends continue. This situation poses a serious threat to humans, to animals and plants and to ecosystems. Estimates suggest that there are 150million tons of plastic in the sea at the moment. If present trends continue, there will be more than 700 million tons in the ocean by 2050, outstripping the total weight of fish in the sea.

The exact amount of debris entering the sea from South Africa or any other African country is not known. What is known, however, is that the rapid development of Africa, coupled with poverty, has seen waste accumulation outpace management. International organizations now fear that Africa may soon become as badly polluted as South East Asia, which has the foulest record on the planet. The Network urgently needs to find out how serious the African problems are, where they are and how to address them.

In his message to the 5th International Marine Debris Conference, Achim Steiner, in his capacity as the United Nations Under-Secretary-General and UNEP Executive Director, emphasised that the threat of marine pollution can only be tackled effectively by means of a trans-national initiative actively supported by the private sector.

The African Marine Waste Network is an African cross-boundary initiative supported by the private sector which aims to make a contribution to solving a global crisis.

The organisers of the launch expressed the hope that all South Africans will join this initiative to help Africa to play its role in ensuring that the children of our planet have a better tomorrow.

More information regarding the launch and the initiative is obtainable from
Stephane Meintjes, Communications Manager at Sustainable Seas Trust (SST) :
info@sst.org.za steph@sst.org.za Phone [\(+27\) 83 640 1588](tel:+27836401588)

Garden Route BOTANICAL GARDENS

GARDEN ROUTE BOTANICAL GARDEN TRUST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 6 JUNE 2016

The Garden Route Botanical Garden (GRBG) Trust will be holding its AGM on Monday the **6th June 2016** at the Voortrekker Hall, Caledon Street, George. **The AGM will commence at 17h00 for 17h30.**

Please pay your membership fees on or before the 1st of June 2016 as only paid up 2016 Members will be eligible to vote.

The community is invited to nominate persons to act as trustees for consideration at the AGM. Nominations will close on Monday 30th May 2016. [Only nominations on the official nomination form will be accepted].

Kindly note that several existing trustees who were co-opted during the year have indicated that they will make themselves available for election at the AGM.

Dr Cilliers, President of the George Business Chamber, will make a presentation at this meeting.

All wishing to attend or requiring further information are hereby requested to RSVP or contact Kristen on 044 874 1558 or email info@botanicalgarden.org.za.

All are welcome.

The roof is now on the new Environment Education Centre
Now tiles, furniture, blinds etc. are needed.....



Commercials

“The **Farmers Weekly of 27 May** will cost you the princely sum of R17. It has excellent content, notably an article by Dr John Hanks – Why Conserving Africa’s Biodiversity is so crucial. See also the Leader for population figures.

Yours in conservation,
Chris Gow “

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*

Honorary Secretary, WESSA EDEN

e-mail: wessageorge@isat.co.za www.wessa.org.za
www.facebook.com/wessa.eden

“NEVER DOUBT THAT A SMALL GROUP
OF THOUGHTFUL, COMMITTED
CITIZENS CAN CHANGE THE WORLD.
INDEED IT’S THE ONLY THING THAT
EVER HAS.”
MARGARET MEAD