



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,
our “business” year has ended and often this means changes....
So it is time to say goodbye.....

In this instance Linda Widlake has left the Committee to enable her to expand more environmental energies in Great Brak where she lives. We hope to be able to assist her there and if anyone would like to link up with her, please do: widlake@isat.co.za

At our April **Committee meeting** we were joined by 3 members of WESSA Knysna : Steve Gettliffe (Chair), Barbara (his wife) and Pat Nurse (Secretary) as well as Colin Ralston and Ken Gie (Trustees of the Garden Route Botanical Garden).



As you can see we actually don't work too hard, so if anyone is tempted to join us.....give it a try!

The **Knysna Basin Project outing** on 9 April was a huge success. Here is Annemarie's report:

“What a wonderful, perfect day!

Thank you all so very much for your generous hospitality and your enthusiasm in sharing your knowledge with the thirty WESSA participants ! Everybody had a great time and left with the memories of the discovery of the fascinating residents of the estuary.



The four youngsters played show-off by running to neighbouring groups to brag with their finds, which included an octopus. It was so great to see.

You made your stand so informative and attractive and also thanks for our registration table.

Thank you Louw for your introductory talk on the structure and ecology of the estuary and thank you - Louw, Maureen, Peter, Frances and Inga - for keeping your groups spell-bound!

It was such a privilege to have the inset from Prof. Brian Allanson. Or very best wishes for the last stretch of research towards the Doctors degree Louw. You are so fortunate to have such a super local support team all rooting for you.



We hope to make use of your expertise again, perhaps Gericke Point next time? “

More info: <http://www.knysnabasinproject.co.za>

Our AGM on 19th April was poorly attended. This was very sad as Colin Ralston's brilliant presentation held us spell bound!!!

We could have easily have coped with another 100 slides because his research, photographs and the correspondence surrounding each critter was fascinating. Colin's focus is on the non-plant biodiversity of the Garden Route Botanical Garden and through hours spent trawling the Garden taking photos and then posting these on i-spot <http://www.ispotnature.org/communities/southern-africa> some amazing "conversations" have taken place. Thanks Colin – we can't wait for the next instalment!
...But there will be another opportunity – see Forthcoming Activities 25 May below.....

WESSA proudly presents

21 May 2016 Kammanassie Geology Tour

A full day trip, commencing in de Rust and moving east towards Uniondale, south to the Langkloof and ending just before Herold the route basically circumnavigates the Kammanassie Mountains which lie between the Swartberg to the north and the Outeniquas to the south.

Two of our expert geologists, **Paul Rixom and Colin Ralston** will each lead a small group of about 20 participants.

It is definitely a case of roadside-geology, mostly driving with stops at geological features en route.

The book that inspired this tour is "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/>



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.

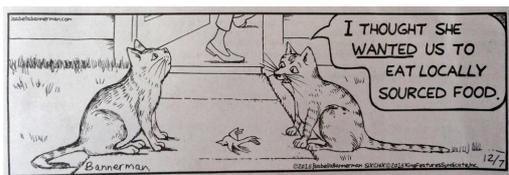
As always on these tours, lifts will be arranged to fill vehicles with passengers obviously sharing petrol costs. **Bookings essential** along with info whether you can offer a lift or require one, where is your home suburb and phone contacts (to facilitate lifts)! wessageorge@isat.co.za
Participants will receive detailed route instructions. Limited numbers ! Deadline 16th May. Should you be unable to participate, PLEASE be sure to cancel so that others may join the tour.

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

To celebrate WESSA's 90th year we will be holding a fund-raising event

"SUNDOWNERS AT SALINAS" -

it is all about sustainability



Make a date in your diary.....
Sunday 12 June from 16h00

The programme includes a beach walk with Dr Steve du Toit (WESSA), a talk by Prof Christo Fabricius (NMMU) and refreshments and cash bar at Salinas Beach Restaurant, Wilderness. More details in the June Newsletter !

Forthcoming Activities

With the aim of joining up more with our Knysna neighbours the Committee plans to meet up twice a year and everyone is invited to the **WESSA Knysna Branch 39th AGM** which will be held on the **21st May 2016 at the Knysna Elephant Park at 11.00am.**

After the AGM there will be a presentation by Dr Debbie Young on :

"Getting inside an elephant's head: The use of research in managing elephant welfare."

<http://knysnaelephantpark.co.za/elephant-management/our-research/>

On completion of the meeting braai fires will be available at the lapa, so bring a picnic lunch and enjoy the outing. There is also a restaurant available.

As it is WESSA's 90th Anniversary, you may like to have a free tour of the elephants courtesy of the Elephant Park. <http://knysnaelephantpark.co.za/>



Wednesday 25th: U3A General Meeting: Colin Ralston: "Just the Tip of the Iceberg":

10:00 = Tea, 10:30 = Meeting starts, at Emmaüs, Hope Street

Colin will show just some of the more unusual creatures and interactions at the Garden Route Botanical Garden. The photos are chosen for content rather than photographic quality.

(N.B. This is not about the Titanic – Ed) Contact Sue: 044 877 1180. Non-U3A Members R10

Environmental updates

"Dear Stakeholder,

It is a great pleasure we share with you the first four Draft Strategies for the Garden Route Biosphere Reserve NPC - for your review and comment.

These Drafts has been informed by the information we received during the strategy workshops conducted in November last year together with the input and expertise of the GRBR Board of Directors. The practical implementation plan is the critical next step to this process, and will be worked out once we have received your feedback.

We would like to remind you that this round of comments on the draft strategies, is to focus on the information within the sections and not the actual structure of the document. <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/mowocd2kvqgw52f/AADmaAK-F6eSylvEPOchTKFla?dl=0>

*We look forward to receiving your consolidated comments by **15 May 2016** at the latest, but preferably earlier! We will use this feedback in the preparation of the final strategies and implementation plan.*

Sincerely,

The Garden Route Biosphere Reserve Team

e mail your feedback to grbr@atthesource.co.za "



Garden Route BOTANICAL GARDENS



Garden Development

The trustees decided that a primary aim is to develop a botanical garden that meets the standard set for a national botanical garden. Actions are now being taken to achieve this ideal. A generous donation of R 100 000 was received from a member of the trust to enable the trustees to get the ball rolling in this regard.

As is now generally known, a Master Plan for the layout and development of the Garden developed by a landscape architect was approved by the trustees last year. A quality panel was established to advise on the execution of the Master Plan. The herbarium curator (Priscilla Bourgoyne) and the garden curator (Tarita Pollicute) are members of the panel with volunteers who are horticulturists and botanists serving as advisers. The panel is doing substantial work on identifying the contents of the garden (plant families, genera, species and subspecies). The trees in the garden are being labelled according to their correct scientific names as well as the common names in Afrikaans, English and Xhosa. Planting has started in some of the beds identified according to the Master Plan. The panel obtained geological material to be used in an area designated to display flora growing among rock formations found in the area covered by the Garden.

Similar activities are on-going and promise to bring great upgrading of the Garden, changing it from a park to a botanical garden. But: Proper development will demand large sums of money. The following developments were identified for 2016/7. Money will have to be found to make these a reality.

1. Paving of the parking area inside the Garden.
2. Securing the Garden perimeter
3. Development of a more sophisticated entrance control system
4. The EPIP centre (salary for a manager, furniture, tiling and lighting).
5. Cupboards and microscopes for the herbarium
6. Information material (writing, printing, binding)

The trustees are working on a strategy for obtaining financial assistance from the George community. Assistance from our members will be very important in this regard.

Kos en Fynbos - Healthy food in your own garden



Kos en Fynbos

members last week held yet another successful demonstration of creating a no-dig vegetable garden from scratch when they visited the residence of final year medical students who are doing practical training at the George Hospital.



Read more and watch a video here: bit.ly/1MCVt2n

<http://www.georgeherald.com/news/News/General/161933/Students-learn-about-nodig-gardening>

Photos: Alida de Beer

https://www.facebook.com/kosenfynbos/photos/?tab=album&album_id=791377497665214

Just before the Easter weekend, Ashleigh van Zuydam attended an **alien workshop in Cape Town**. Here is her report.

"On the 16th and 17th of March the South African Green Industries Council held a two day training course in Cape Town on Invasive Species. This was one in a series of country-wide courses. Those in attendance included representatives from Cape Nature, other local authorities (e.g. municipalities) and NGO's as well as landscape architects, landscapers, nurserymen, growers, contractors, conservationists and private landowners.

The course was divided into two modules.

The first module was aimed at explaining the history of invasive species, where they came from and why/how they are invasive and harmful (e.g. fire) as well as the legislation. One key point that was highlighted was that the emphasis is not on "aliens" (as we are able to enjoy many exotic species in our gardens that are not invasive), but on "invasive" species. I say species because the lists include many species other than plants. However, plants are our focus - there are currently 379 listed invasive plant species in South Africa.

Invasive species pose the second greatest threat to biodiversity, second to habitat loss and greater than climate change. Fortunately South African law is in place to assist us with this threat. The National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (NEM:BA) now supersedes CARA which was the original reference point for invasive species. There has therefore been a shift from the Department of Agriculture to the Department of the Environment. NEM:BA came into being in 2004, however the regulations for NEM:BA as well as the species lists and their categories were only published in 2014. Various amendments have also taken place and no doubt will continue to do so. What was most apparent from the lectures was that this is a new and developing field where scientific research and findings are essential and stimulates continual learning and adjustment e.g. the research into gum trees and food for bees. Only six species of Eucalyptus are listed as invasive.

The second module was aimed at enabling municipalities and other organs of state (such as SANRAL, ESKOM etc.) to fulfil their legal requirements to create invasive species control plans. For example every municipality and organ of state is required to submit their invasive species control plan by the 1st of October 2016. The concept of a "control plan" indicates the acceptance of the reality that a long term approach is required with prioritised species and areas. These priorities are reflected in the categorisation of the listed plant species. The module was also aimed at training qualified Invasive Species practitioners to assist private landowners with completing invasive species declaration forms for property sales as well to create control plans when required.

The listed invasive plants are divided into four categories, 1a,1b, 2 and 3.

Category 1a - Must be eradicated. Trading is strictly prohibited.

e.g. *Acacia stricta* (Hop Wattle), *Pittosporum undulatum* (Australian cheesewood).

Category 1b - Must be controlled, where possible, removed and destroyed. Trading is strictly prohibited. e.g. *Acacia cyclops* (Rooikrans), *Acacia elata* (Peppertree Wattle), *Acacia saligna* (Port Jackson), *Cortaderia selloana* (Pampas grass), *Hakea salicifolia* (Red tipped Hakea).

Category 2 - Permit required and only allowed for restricted activities

e.g. commercial plantations. If escaped, in riparian zones or in protected areas = 1b. e.g. *Acacia mearnsii* (Black Wattle), *Acacia melanoxylon* (Australian blackwood), *Pinus pinaster* and *Pinus radiata*.

Category 3 - May remain in prescribed areas. Further planting, propagating or trading is prohibited.

e.g. *Myoporum laetum* (Manatoka), *Schinus terebinthifolius* (Brazilian pepper tree).

Further information www.invasives.org.za Permits - AISpermits@environment.gov

Environmental Crime HOTLINE - 0800 205 005

Compiled by Ashleigh van Zuydam

The CREW Outramps walk on 8 April was in Wilderness along the Duiwerivier.

*Unfortunately there are lots of aliens. Bill managed to dispatch 3 very large *Sphaeropteris cooperi* (Aussie Invader Tree Fern). We pulled out a number of Black Wattle and Blackwood saplings along the length of the hike. The stunning scarlet and poisonous berries of *Solanum pseudocapsicum* are eye-catching under the dark-green canopy. The even more stunning *Anredera cordifolia* (Madeira Vine) is festooned over the vegetation, particularly at the start, where there isn't much of a canopy and there is lots of light. Ring-barked Bluegums raise their bleached stems against the startling blue sky. Despite the aliens, this is a very pleasant short hike that deserves more publicity than it gets.*

Di Turner's comments led to more information being exchanged about the Madeira Vine:-

"Yes please some info on treating madeira vine would be great. I have some in the milkwood forest on my property in Wilderness. The problem is that the nodules or whatever they are called hang like bunches of grapes on the vines and they drop off and root themselves by the hundreds the minute you try to pull the vine out of the tree branches. What I have taken to doing is just manually pulling out the tubers (some as thick and long as my arm) at the



base of the thickest vines and then pulling down as much as possible of the vine. I collect as many of the nodules which drop off as possible and throw them with the vines and tubers on a pile in the shade under the milkwoods and they seem to die and rot on the pile. Young vines constantly come up again where the nodules have not been picked up but I just keep pulling out the thickest vines and in so doing prevent them from dominating the canopy. So basically I am just being a natural predator and if I get taken away the vines will just dominate again. This will also not be sustainable for a bigger area. Lars Nyler did spray some of the seedlings once with herbicide but the leaves only fell off and then they recovered and carried on growing. I will be happy to try another recommended method.

Thanks and regards,"

Tom Barry (Cape Nature)

"Working for Wetlands cleared this at Tokai and succeeded in spreading it very widely. Any collecting will require the plants to be bagged in situ and all bulbils collected and bagged as well, before any transport from site to dump.

Poisoning kills the plants but does not appear to affect the bulbils: only a systemic poison (one that is taken up and distributed to all organs before killing the plant) will work."

See: <http://weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au/Weeds/Details/83>

http://www.weeds.org.au/WoNS/madeiravine/docs/47053_ERGO_Weed_Mgmt_guide_Madeira_vine_Pages.pdf

http://www.daf.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/59336/ipa-madeira-vine-pp86.pdf

Ta, Tony Rebelo (SANBI)

Having received a few compliments on the content of this monthly Newsletter, it would also be appropriate to thank all the people who send their organisation's Newsletters or information on environmental matters and permit me to use the contents here. Without this kind of input and networking it would be half as interesting!

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

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"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