



It's all happening
by Sharon Bosma

We started off our year saying goodbye to familiar faces at the Regional Office, and we enter our second quarter saying hello to new ones. We welcome Philippa Huntly as Senior Environmentalist and Lorraine McGibbon as Environmentalist / Education Officer. Both report to Steve du Toit, who has been promoted to Head of Conservation for the Western Cape Region. Philippa will be based in Cape Town while Lorraine is in George, covering the Southern Cape. Both Lorraine and Philippa are already well known to many of our WESSA colleagues and Friends who have applauded their appointments. Patrick Dowling has been promoted to Head of Education, Training & Public Capacity Building for the Region and will be assisted by a graduate intern, Andrea Gordon. A second intern, Shagan Carelse has been recruited to work with the Conservation section under Steve. Both one-year internships have been fully funded by the Table Mountain Fund, and we are grateful for the opportunity to benefit from and contribute to this partnership. We also appreciate CapeNature's assisting Lorraine in George, and Sam Ralston who is now with CapeNature, collaborating with Philippa.

Project management of our Funded Projects has been outsourced to Mandy Noffke and her hard-working team at Wetland Solutions, with our Charmaine Anderson attending to project administration. Our accounting function is being revised completely, with outsourced help from Michelle Bock and Mary-Anne Kearns. Sadly, we have said goodbye to Alta Swanepoel, our bookkeeper. Roshan Stanford and Maureen Ngubane continue in their posts, but with extended responsibilities.



A new Regional Business Manager and Head of Public Participation, Membership & Fundraising are still to be recruited. In the interim, Sharon Bosma is Acting Regional Manager for a fixed period of three months, while Deputy Chairman Rudy Schats has assumed interim Chairmanship of the Region.



With new staff on board we also need to address our aged infrastructure. A critical component is the upgrading of our computer hardware and software. We can donate four 'steam-driven' computers to Friends' groups or other deserving causes. Please contact Roshan at roshan@wessa.wcape.school.za to enquire. The buildings are in need of renovation and improved security, which will be a fun project tackled later in



Philippa Huntley (top),
 Lorraine McGibbon & Andrea Gordon

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Our Vision:

WESSA is a membership-based environmental organisation that promotes public participation in caring for the Earth. We embrace professionalism and sound corporate governance, fostering collaborative partnerships to succeed in our Mission. With enthusiasm and a spirit of unity, we work to achieve a South Africa that is wisely managed by all to ensure environmental sustainability.

the year, while a huge clean out of the archives and offices is in progress.

A major re-focus of our new strategic plan is the promotion of public participation in caring for the Earth. Please attend our Friends' workshops or contact us to tell us how you think we best can do this. Fundraising is another critical area and we would welcome your suggestions here too. This is YOUR or-

ganisation and we need your input. Please feel free to visit us, meet the new staff and participate in the changes.

Thank you to the staff, outsourced staff, the Regional Committee, Regions and National Office for their support in helping us with this tricky transition: retaining the best of a stately, mature organisation while operating dynamically in the 21st Century.

WESSA WESTERN CAPE AGM

Date: Thursday 26 June 2008

Venue: Pinelands Town Hall (Enter Pinelands from Forest Drive (M52). Turn left at robots (BP garage on left) into St Stephens Rd. Directly after BP garage turn left. Town Hall directly in front).

Time: 19:00 for 19:30

Speaker to be confirmed

For more details or to **RSVP** for catering purposes, please contact Roshan (roshan@wessa.wcape.school.za) on 021 701 1397.

Choices that will affect our children

by Steve du Toit

The Breedezicht development in Witsand serves as an example of ill-informed decision-making on behalf of Government.

A brief background:

On 5 December 2004, the DEA&DP refused an application for the construction of upmarket residential units in the tiny hamlet of Witsand next to De Hoop Nature Reserve. The key factors affecting the decision to refuse the application stretched to 19 pages and included concerns relating to:

- water supply (existing sources are already heavily over-utilised)
- visual impact (given the topography and position of the site, any development will have a significant visual impact in an area of remarkable natural beauty)
- flaws in the public participation process
- planning principles ("The location of the proposed development is in conflict with the most rudimentary of planning principals and would, if approved, constitute "urban sprawl" in possibly the habitat requiring the most protection - that of our coastline and estuaries.")
- precedent setting ("Any approval of this development will result in a precedent being created, and

an uncontrollable amount of applications for development will ensue. This will be the destruction of the Breede River and any chance of saving the areas as heritage or conservancy")

Nonetheless, final approval for the development was given by the MEC of Environment Affairs on 23 August 2007 (thereby turning down a number of well-motivated appeals, including one from WESSA)

The critical "show-stopper" of sustainable water supply has yet to be addressed. As stated in the Record of Decision (ROD) refusing the application; "The plant need operate for only 3 months of the year. Yet the fixed annual overhead costs such as depreciation, power availability, rent, insurance, wages etc, amounting to millions of rand will have to be recovered over the short periods that the plant will be in operation, i.e. the cost per litre of desalinated water will be massive." Additionally, given the current energy crisis, implementation of electricity-hungry desalination plants for luxury developments seems practically and economically questionable.

As stated in our appeal: "Of grave concern to

WESSA is the lack of formal, scientific analysis on the ecological flow requirements, and biological and/or ecological component of the applicable rivers and their estuaries from which it is proposed the water needed for the development will be abstracted. Of the 250 estuaries in South Africa ranked in terms of their ecological and conservation importance, the Bree Estuary is positioned 18th, scoring very high habitat and biodiversity importance scores.”

According to local communities, the developer that received the authorisation promptly sold the property to someone else, who is paying scant attention to architectural guidelines, visual impact and sense of place. Apparently the development was to create some 235 815 man-days of employment and contribute R50 million to the local economy. Little evidence of these promises has yet been provided to concerned residents.

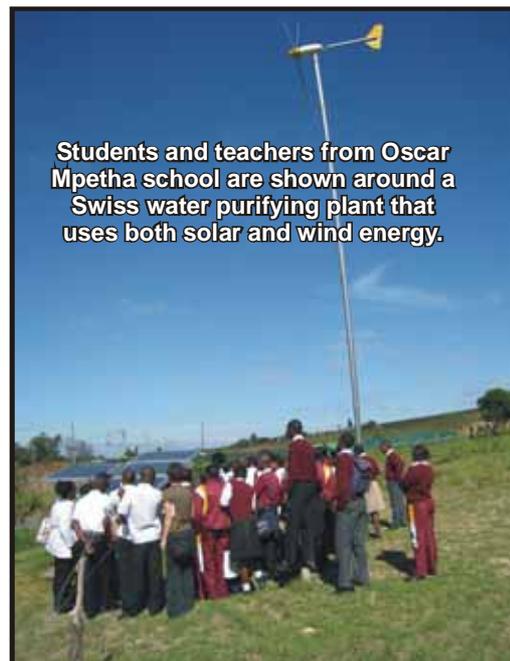
We also still do not know what the cumulative impacts

of this development will be, for example, the ecology of the adjacent estuary of the Breede River; the tourism potential of the area; the water resources; the infrastructure of Witsand (solid and liquid waste, traffic etc). And the list goes on.

It is hard to find a general panacea to all these issues. Perhaps, if communities are genuinely opposed to such ill-informed decision-making, a formal community-based protection mechanism is necessary. Imagine a well-funded, strongly supported “Friends of Witsand” structure, the sole aim of which is to ensure that the medium to long-term sustainability of the areas’ physical, biological, archaeological and social resources are protected. Firmly. With sufficient funds in place to, when necessary, launch a strong legal challenge to any person (developer or government) who does not respect and comply with such principles. No court in the land should oppose the enforcement of the wise and sustainable use of our life-giving resources.

Energy Week *by Patrick Dowling*

Energy Week is part of the City’s ongoing Youth Environmental School (YES) programme. Patrick Dowling of WESSA Western Cape helped put together an energy “tour” that included the Sustainability Institute at Lyne-och, the Klipheuwel wind farm and Koeberg. Staff at the Sustainability Institute were very helpful in guiding the visiting High School groups around their centre which includes energy efficient buildings, water recycling, gas production, composting, a plant nursery, research projects and a primary school.



Students and teachers from Oscar Mpetha school are shown around a Swiss water purifying plant that uses both solar and wind energy.



TOP LEFT: Contrasting technologies – Oscar Mpetha students from Nyanga visiting Koeberg where watts and money are at the mega level.

BOTTOM LEFT: Worms at work – Hector Petersen Secondary learners take a close look at the Sustainability Institute’s Biolytic sewerage treatment system.

CoastCare projects now concluded

Working for the Coast Hout Bay Project

As the Hout Bay Coastcare project drew to a close the team looked back and reflected on what was achieved. The project encompassed setting up vegetable gardens at the YMCA, which provided food for the "Y", and for the team members themselves. The ablution blocks were maintained in a clean and presentable state for the duration of the project. The beaches, Disa River estuary and adjoining streams were kept clear of litter and other refuse generated by the more wasteful aspects of urban living. This project in particular, received positive feedback from the general public in the form of several compliments.



Hout Bay Certificate Ceremony 29 Feb 2008

At the farewell each remaining team member received a WESSA training certificate, letter of recommendation and a gift relevant to identified future work possibilities. We thank the Chapman's Peak Hotel for use of their venue and contribution to refreshments.

Working for the Coast Yzerfontein Project

The Yzerfontein team members can feel proud of their achievements throughout the duration of this project. A comprehensive training programme was undertaken including some practical skills such as carpentry and path building, but also included some basic life skills courses to enrich the lives of the team members. Restoring pathways, maintaining public benches, removing alien vegetation and beach clean-ups were but a few tasks completed by this team.

At the Certificate Ceremony team members received their WESSA training certificate, gift and a letter of recommendation. We thank the staff at the Environmental Education Centre, Eerstestein in Blaauwberg for the use of their interesting venue.

The CoastCare Management team wishes all members of the projects well in their future endeavours and thanks them for their enthusiasm in broadening their existing skill levels.

Christo Beukes, Field Manager in Koekenaap, for the Working for the Coast: Groenrivier Project, passed away on 7 March 2008. Christo will always be remembered for his dedication and enthusiasm to the project and the people. Our sincere condolences are extended to his family.

Sufficient Energy?

*Passages extracted from Enviropaedia.
Article: Energy, by Dr Eureka Rosenberg & Claire Janisch*

Energy is one of the most fundamental requirements of modern society. We rely heavily on energy, not only for our individual domestic and business needs, but for the country's economic development. However, the manner in which we have obtained and used energy has caused a considerable amount of damage. There are many social, health and environmental impacts and costs that have not been acknowledged or paid for by those who have used energy or profited from energy supply.

What can consumers do?

1. Effect energy savings: We need to be aware of the many opportunities to reduce the amount of energy we use. Any reduction achieved will not only be beneficial to our environment and society, but will also provide cost savings to the individual or organisation that makes the effort to reduce energy usage.

- Energy efficiency is recognised as one of the most cost-effective ways of moving towards sustainable development.
- The majority of interventions will involve no cost or low cost with a payback period within five years.
- Energy efficiency in industry helps to improve competitiveness.
- Energy efficiency is one of the most cost-effective methods of reducing Greenhouse Gas emissions,

thereby combatting global warming and climate change.

- Energy efficiency can also save water, since power stations use two litres of water for every unit of electricity (kWh) generated.

2. Voice a demand for a wider and better choice of energy supply options: In many countries consumers are able to choose a supplier of cleaner electricity or purchase at least some 'green' power electricity produced with fewer or no emissions of harmful substances. This enables suppliers of 'green' power to increase their capacity and reduce the demand for 'dirty' sources of power, such as coal.

South African energy-supply options: In South Africa most consumers do not yet have the freedom of choice of an electricity supplier as Eskom currently holds a virtual monopoly position. There has been some progress in this regard as illustrated by an initiative by the Darling Independent Power Provider, which is developing a wind farm in partnership with the City of Cape Town to give consumers the choice to buy 'green electricity'. The Electricity Act allows others to compete with Eskom, but in the past, because of cost, most competitors have been unable to effectively compete. Eskom therefore currently generates about 96% of the electricity used in South Africa, mainly through its coal-fired power stations on the industrial Highveld. Eskom also invests considerably in generating electricity from nuclear energy. To date, however, it has invested comparatively little in diversifying energy sources and commercially developing renewable energy options such as solar, wind or biomass generated energy.

While South Africa is committed to provide universal access to electricity by 2012, it is recognised that the electricity peak load demand will be greater than generation capacity by the year 2007. To meet South Africa's growing energy demands, Eskom is



expected to spend R48 billion between 2005 and 2010 on building new capacity, with the private sector expected to invest a further R23 billion. Eskom will be involved in 70% of new energy production projects in the country, with independent producers being invited

to provide the remainder. This will create an opportunity for independent power producers to generate electricity from renewable sources. In 2004, the Department of Minerals and Energy (DME) published the White Paper on Renewable Energy Policy, which targets the provision of 10 000GWh of electricity from renewable resources (mainly biomass, wind, solar and small-scale hydro projects) by 2013. This is approximately 4% of the country's estimated electricity demand, a small percentage compared to countries like Denmark.

In conclusion, to make sure we have sufficient energy in the future, it is up to all of us to use energy wisely. Much can be done to reduce our energy consumption. This is within everyone's ability and will have a significant impact on the future quality of our lives. It is the most important thing we as consumers can do. At the same time, we need to lobby for energy production with fewer ecological and health impacts and greater potential to stimulate socially just economic growth. We need to recognise that the real costs of cheap energy include acid rain, the health risks of air pollution, poor water quality, the build-up of long-lived radioactive wastes, economic inequalities, and widening security threats. These 'hidden' costs are becoming unacceptably high, leading many to question the traditional 'build-and-grow' strategies involving fossil and nuclear fuels. Instead, energy conservation, improved energy efficiency, and a shift to renewable energy development increasingly represent the most promising tools for our energy future.

Extracted from the Enviropaedia website. To read the comprehensive article visit www.enviropaedia.com

For many ways in which to reduce your energy usage, see the 'Sustainable Lifestyle Guide' Section of The Enviropaedia.

Lotteries Project

by Patrick Dowling

Various Friends and other civil society groups operating within the coastal zone of the Western Cape were invited to submit proposals for the Lotteries Project. The spread was from the Olifants River on the West coast to Storms River on the South East Coast. As at end March 2008 twelve labourers have been hired by the various projects. This small number is in keeping with the understandably small scale of these "micro projects". As more of the projects come "on stream" it is likely that this number of beneficiaries will increase. Alien vegetation identification and removal methods, basic carpentry and plant propagation have all featured in the projects thus far.

Groups involved in this project at the moment are:

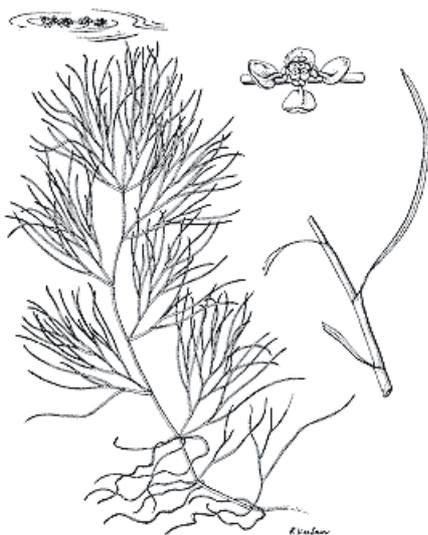
- Eden to Addo
- Pledge Nature Reserve
- Boggomsbaai Conservancy
- Fransmanshoek Conservancy
- Zandvlei Trust
- Friends of Simon's Town Coastline
- Hout Bay & Llandudno Heritage Trust
- West Coast Field Study Centre

Networking

FRIENDS OF RIETVLEI

Potamogeton in Rietvlei: A problem to the recreational users of Rietvlei is the excessive growth of *Potamogeton pectinatus*, the water grass also known as sago pondweed, or fennel-leaved pondweed. It has always been present in Rietvlei, but the last few years have seen a bloom in growth.

There are about 20 *Potamogeton* species, most of which occur only in the northern hemisphere; *Potamogeton pectinatus* is the only one found throughout the world. It grows in wetlands, lakes, rivers, canals, ditches and ponds from sea level up to nearly 5000m above sea level; it is also the only *Potamogeton* species found in brackish water. It has been recorded growing in waters 6-7m deep, but it is dependent on light penetration and in turbid waters will rarely grow in waters deeper than 3m.



Potamogeton stands are important feeding and rearing habitats for waterfowl, fish and many other organisms. It is not only a source of food, but also provides a protected habitat for many aquatic animals. In many parts of the world migratory waterfowl have established their migration pathways via water bodies dominated by *Potamogeton* spp. *Potamogeton* also protects shorelines from erosion as they serve as a very effective buffer against wave action. *Potamogeton* plays an important role in keeping water clear.

However, there is also a downside to *Potamogeton*. Because it grows so prolifically, it can clog irrigation canals and is a nuisance to recreational users it interferes with fishing lines and winds around powerboat propellers.

A lot of research into control methods has been carried out throughout the world, including the use of herbicides and other chemicals, mechanical methods and biological control. A burrowing chrysomelid beetle causes great damage to *Potamogeton*, but has not permanently eradicated the plant in study areas. Grass carp was introduced into the United States to control aquatic plants, but it has exterminated virtually all aquatic plants in water bodies to which it had been introduced and caused a complete collapse of the ecosystem leading to the disappearance of other fish and bird life in such systems.

The problem recreational users, such as the boaters and fishermen, have with *Potamogeton* in Rietvlei will not be easily solved. In fact people using Rietvlei will have to accept that the plant is here to stay and learn

to live with it. The only remedy is to clear channels in the Potamogeton stands to allow boats access to the shore, it can also be cleared in areas where anglers require access to the water. However such clearing will have to be repeated at regular intervals to ensure that channels stay open.

HILLSIDE- HIGHWAY ORGANISATION FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT (H.O.P.E) GROUP

Improvements and Work in progress: We have continued the construction of terraces in the middle area of the garden which are planted with water-wise plants, donated by generous neighbours. The H.O.P.E garden extends over 4.000 square metres (say about seven ordinary size Fish Hoek house plots) so we still have a considerable area that can use some TLC! The terracing work will continue, eventually reaching down to Hillside Road as the land becomes progressively more steep and our funds remain limited, this may take a year or two to complete. A splendid new bench, providing a spectacular view over False Bay Coast, was generously donated by Mrs. Pauline Groves (19 Hillside) in memory of her late husband, Ronald, who gave our organisation and the garden it's name "H.O.P.E"

5th Annual Bring - & Braai on 16th February: Well over 50 neighbours and friends of the garden attended and were hosted by Sandy and Bruce Geddes, who once again made their garage and forecourt available for the event. Members of our Management Committee brought additional dishes, Bruce and Michael Busschau were our braai-masters, and Renoldo Cosentino provided transport for the tables. Thanks are due to all. We hope to see everybody again next year.

FRIENDS OF DIE OOG

The Friends of Die Oog woke up one morning just before Christmas last year to find that instead of a dam there was a green carpet completely covering Die Oog. The carpet proved to be the duckweed (*Lemna gibba*) which is a harmless, free-floating plant and is a food for ducks. It absorbs nutrients and gives off oxygen when it is growing but consumes oxygen and releases offensive hydrogen sulphide when it decays. Several valiant attempts were made to remove the duckweed mechanically over Christmas and New Year by teams from the Department of Nature Conservation and later by teams of the Friends. Over 500 bags were removed but the duckweed continues to grow. The good news is that it has brought back the ducks and there are now 24 wild yellowbilled ducks as well as several coot, moorhen and dabchick.

The other noteworthy event of the last 6 months was the Cape Horticultural Show on the 29 and 30 March. We are very grateful to the Cape Horticultural Society for inviting us. The Friends of Die Oog were asked to give a talk on "Die Oog Bergvliet's Best Kept Secret" and were also permitted an exhibit. The talk was attended by about 50 visitors which was encouraging. The exhibit was placed on the website www.dieoog.org.za that was launched by the Friends last November. The website has had 8,000 hits to date.

The main problem of the Friends of Die Oog is funding. Die Oog should be part of the Department of Nature Conservation of the City of Cape Town, but remains a public open space under the Parks Department. The Friends of Die Oog have about 120 members and struggle to raise enough funds by way of subscriptions and donations to pay a gardener for one day a week. The gardener is the key to the maintenance of Die Oog as became apparent over the Christmas holidays when he was on leave and Die Oog became badly overgrown. Die Oog is an oasis in an increasingly urban environment and merits conservation. The Friends of Die Oog are financially solvent for 2008 so please come and visit particularly in the Spring when the fynbos blooms. It is small; but last year someone said "Why bother to go to Namaqualand?"

BOTFRIENDS

Estuary: We are debating about the salinity reading of the Bot which records about 6.5ppt despite the huge drop in the water level. Nevertheless, early rains in May would result in the opening of the Bot at the beginning of winter, which could possibly be the most natural time of all! Some of us could find this agreeable, and especially the birdlife, but such early opening would certainly not satisfy the fish folk as spawning mostly takes place in spring. There are some complaints regarding weeds, (it is after all a vlei), but by and large we believe that the Bot is in remarkably good shape. Both the Kleinrivier and the Kleinmond estuaries have shown elevated *E.coli* counts, The Bots' is taken at Caledon and excepting for one puzzling occasion the results are always very healthy. The Arabella estate does water sampling twice per annum and shows similarly good counts.

Unfortunately camping, on a grand scale, took place over Xmas and New Year. Considerable effort to have them removed proved useless despite the Overstrand Bylaw and the Sea Shore Act, both of which prohibit camping, especially below the high water mark and the edge of the estuary. We, in collaboration with the Fisherhaven Ratepayers Association, finally took legal action on the 4th January in the absence of any response from the OSM law enforce-

ment.

Botfriends compiled a photographic record, since 1998, of ongoing illegal activities in the entire "Middelvlei" area- it is evident that crime, poaching, dumping and littering is rife and that something needs to be done to solve the overall problem. We also provided R1500 for a loader to close off access points in an effort to stop illegal vehicles on the beaches and are very happy to report that, for the first time in years, the waterfront was free of illegal vehicles and tents over the Easter weekend. Many flamingos have been observed feeding in that area which also usually supports a huge amount of water-birds and waders.

FRIENDS OF ZEEKOEVLEI AND RONDEVLEI Don't plant "INDIGENOUS", Plant "LOCALLY INDIGENOUS"!

If one is to create a truly indigenous garden that thrives and supports local biodiversity, one must plant "LOCALLY INDIGENOUS" plants. To do this, one must establish the vegetation type in your area.

In Cape Town the vegetation type changes within a very short distance because of the unusual topography and climate. There are many different fynbos types here, such as Strandveld, Sand plain fynbos, Renosterveld and Mountain fynbos. Most of the Southern suburbs and Cape Flats are either Sand plain fynbos or Strandveld. Strandveld occurs on young alkaline sands within a few kilometres from the sea. Sand Plain Fynbos occurs on older sand further inland where the pH becomes neutral to acid.

Some retail nurseries are starting to display indigenous plants according to their respective vegetation types. This makes it a lot easier for the buyer. Living near the sea, for example, means that you can purchase any of the plants displayed in the "Strandveld Garden" section with confidence.

The Friends of Zeekoevlei and Rondevlei opened the Cape Flats Fynbos Nursery based at Rondevlei Nature Reserve in order to supply "LOCALLY INDIGENOUS" plants to the Southern suburbs and Cape Flats. These plants form part of a threatened vegetation type. Funds raised from the sale of plants goes towards fighting pollution and alien invasion of Zeekoevlei and Rondevlei. So come and get some environmentally appropriate plants for your garden and support our projects at the same time.

For more information contact Neil Major at 076 4737095 or email neilmajor@telkomsa.net

FRIENDS OF LIESBEEK

World Wetlands Day was celebrated with a walk and talk led by Kevin Winter. Over thirty-five people visited the artificial wetland in Mowbray and then the Valkenberg Wetland, which we hope will in time be re-linked to the Liesbeek. Kevin using a kitchen colander, soil and debris of various textures gave a simple and effective demonstration of how a wetland operates much to the delight of the children present.

In Water Week we held a walk down the upper reaches in Bishopscourt (Protea) and Fernwood looking at the different methods of river management and trying out the new path along part of Riverside Road. The River Team were shown how to do water sampling using the SASS score sheet which gave a reading of 5.2 at Protea indicating a slightly impacted stream. The Team also visited Die Oog and the Silvermine River.

We put up Wetland and Water exhibitions at Riverside Mall, Rondebosch on our notice board, kindly donated by BECO Institute for Sustainable Business.

Autumn is here and the River Team is busy clipping the overhanging vegetation on the edges of the canal in anticipation of high winter waters and sweeping leaves from the Trail and gutters. The picking up of litter and debris never ends. We thank SA Breweries and Tuffy Brands for their generous sponsorship. Our supervisor Siphelile Sontundu left us at the end of March as he is now in full-time employment with the City Nature Conservation Department. We miss him but our very best wishes go with him.

Joan Parker has as always been very busy at the Bishopscourt Village Riverine Park.

An Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP) team from Table Mountain National Parks (TMNP) has reconstructed one of the stepped paths to the river and this was made possible by a grant of R16 000 from the Ward 62 budget for 2007/8. Matthews Moetsi and his brother Francis (who is being employed temporarily until the end of June) have had a busy summer and good progress has been made. The area has been popular with visiting Garden Clubs. There has been a most rewarding showing of a wide variety of *Plectranthus* species during March and April and more plantings will be done as soon as the rains start. Matthews has been most fortunate to be given a sponsorship by Roomtogrow Business Skills to attend a ten-week landscape Maintenance Course commencing in April 2008. Roomtogrow are the Western Cape Agent for BC Landscape Training and Consultancy CC and they

provide accredited horticulture, landscape and sports turf skills training for all employed or unemployed individuals.

MONTAGU NATURE GARDEN

The Montagu Nature Garden is drawing increasing numbers of tourists and visitors who enjoy the peace and beautiful surroundings. The bird life is increasing because of the dams and the stream which flows through the garden. The good summer rains have ensured that the spring show will be great this year. On Tuesday 1st April the fund raising tea garden resumed. Tea is served to the members and public every Tuesday morning until end October. During the summer months the committee organised various fundraising events, which proved to be very popular with our members. Our chairman, Christopher Powell, opened his garden to the public in December, in January a luncheon was arranged and various other events have been planned for the year. Meetings with the local Municipality have proved to be fruitful. They have painted the buildings and done maintenance work where required. We are grateful for their support. All our "Friends" are welcome to join us for tea if they are in Montagu on a Tuesday.

FRIENDS OF SILVERMINE NATURE AREA

As indicated by our name, our hacking activities take place within the Silvermine section of the Table Mountain National Park and we contributed 1,841 hours to this task during 2007. Volunteers for our Adopt-a-Plot project and hacking groups are always welcome. Contact person: Sandy Barnes 021 785 1477.

Our sub-committee Riverine Rovers have created a Blind Trail at the Lower Silvermine River, Clovelly, with funds acquired through the World Wildlife Fund.

We were invited to comment on the use of the section of the Hoerikwaggo Trail from Chapman's Peak to Noordhoek Beach, a proposal for three-year desiccation experience to be implemented in Silvermine East, the harvesting of pines in the Tokai Forest (on our boundary) and the Dog Walking EMP.

We were invited to the opening of the Hoerikwaggo overnight camp located in Silvermine. This camp has been named after our group in recognition of our work in Silvermine over the past two decades. We very much appreciated this gracious gesture and the award, in December 2007, of a Volunteer Recognition Certificate.

A continuous flower specimen display and walks brochure are available to the public at the Silvermine pay gate. Walks take place on Thursday mornings and over week ends. Contact: Heron Burger at Tel: 021 782 5079.

Our wild flower photography project continues to confirm the record of existing flora species on the Table Mountain chain. Our publications, Checklist of the wild flowers of the Cape Peninsula and Botanical names: what they mean, remains popular.

For enquiries, please contact Yvonne Viljoen at Tel: 021 788 5620 or yv3@mweb.co.za

FRIENDS OF BRACKEN NATURE RESERVE

At our Annual General Meeting on 7 April 2008 we welcomed Karen Marais who gave us an excellent presentation on the work of CREW, with some wonderful slides of the interesting flowers they have identified. We were delighted to learn that our own tiny Perdekop reserve is home to no less than 227 species. This includes 9 Red Data and 1 Critically Endangered species. In September this year our Spring Event will be the "Perdekop Flower Show" which we hope will put us firmly on the botanical map!

At the meeting we looked back at some of the year's achievements. We are now fully registered as a Non-Profit Organisation and have received welcome financial assistance from the Rowland & Leta Hill Trust which enabled us to purchase picnic tables for the reserve, and from the City of Cape Town's Grant-in-Aid fund. With the latter we have equipped the EE Centre with tables and chairs, cupboards and curtains, and our new EE intern, Elzette, has already started work on an educational programme for local schoolchildren.

LANDFILL SITE REHABILITATION-PROGRESS REPORT

First, a little background: The Brackenfell Landfill Site, managed by Solid Waste Department, reached its full capacity for the disposal of municipal waste and was officially closed in January 2007. The end-use of the landfill site (5ha) is "open space" to be incorporated into the Bracken Nature Reserve. It was planned that the site should be capped and rehabilitated with Cape Flats Sand Plain Fynbos and Swartland Granite Renosterveld. The Nature Conservation Branch specialist, Dr. P. Holmes, recommended that the topsoil layer should consist of 500mm of compatible soils from neighbouring sites, preferably granite derived soil because this was the original soil type of the area.

The capping process has already been completed, but there were unforeseen erosion problems due to excessive rainfall and poor landscape design by contracted engineers. As a result emergency erosion control meas-

ures had to be applied, berms and drainage channels were designed and biddums (wind-rows) were put in place to slow down the water flow and prevent excessive soil loss.

Unfortunately due to financial constraints only 200mm of sandy topsoil was used instead of the recommended 500mm, thus altering the types of plants species that could be used on the site. Instead we will now be focussing on planting annuals and perennials which will be better suited to the shallow sandy soils. As it was too late to sow winter plant species, our priority has been to stabilise the dry soils with straw and rye grass for wind erosion. Planting will now start with the coming rainy season. In the surrounding natural areas of the reserve hand planting of hardy vegetation and rooted cuttings will commence early May until July 2008 with plants such as *Sutherlandia frutescens* (Wild cancer bush), *Protea repens* (Sugar bush) and *Chrysanthemoides molifera*.

Tshepo Mamabolo (Reserve Manager)

BIRD LIST

Elzette is compiling a bird list for Bracken and doing bird checks every Thursday morning. This list will eventually be placed on the website with monthly updates on what's been happening "birdwise".

FRIENDS OF RONDEBOSCH COMMON

If you are interested in the future of our Common, we have a general leaflet available as well as a History pamphlet. We bring out 2 to 3 newsletters for members each year. Our comprehensive Rondebosch Common Flower List ties with Mary Maytham's Kidd book of Indigenous Flowers of the Peninsula. Contact Sue at 021 686 8968.

FRIENDS OF TYGERBERG HILLS

CREW Workshop 2008: The annual CREW workshop (Custodians of Rare and Endangered Wildflowers), was held at Geelbek, West Coast National Park from the 7th-9th of March 2008. This year, 6 members (Gurli, Hedi, Sandra, Bobby, Etienne and Karen) of the Tygerberg CREW team (also part of the Friends of the Tygerberg Hills) went along. It was Sandra de Swart's first time, as she only joined our team during the course of last year. As always, we learnt a great deal and had lots of fun catching up with the other CREW groups from as far as PE to Kamieskroon! We also heard great talks on the reptile and butterfly atlas projects! (So now we'll have to look out for reptiles and butterflies as well as plants!) It serves as a great inspiration, when you hear other "Crewites" stories, struggles and highlights of the past year. I am sure I can speak for the whole group, that we have been truly touched and motivated by the shear passion and enthusiasm of the CREW leadership as well as all the

fellow volunteers! This has been the best workshop so far and proves that the CREW program is going from strength to strength. Viva CREWITES, viva!

Karen Marais

Lighthouse walkers: We are looking forward to host the Lighthouse walkers on the 17 May for a walk in the reserve. The Lighthouse Association for the Blind is a social club of normally sighted and blind or partially sighted people aged between twenty and seventy. To exercise, or simply to get out, they often go on walks throughout the Peninsula. Did I say "blind"? After walking with them a couple of times, I have come to realise that their love for life is an inspiration to all and that they use their other senses to make up for their lack of sight. Johan van Zyl

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FRIENDS OF RIETVLEI

Niel van Wyk reports as follows:

Saturday 2nd February was World Wetlands Day, to commemorate this day we had a walk to the Bird Hide on Sunday 3rd February. February was Wetlands Month. The Ramsar theme for Wetlands this year is "Healthy Wetlands, Healthy People" - this basically means that having healthy well-functioning wetlands can only enhance the health of people the world over. Wetlands cleanse water and improve its quality, they prevent flooding, and they can counter the effects of droughts. Wetlands also support a large variety of living organisms and are important in many aquatic and terrestrial food chains. As such wetlands are important sources of food for local communities in many parts of the world, either directly in the form of fish, or indirectly where crops are planted and grown on the floodplains during the dry season - these floodplains are allowed to flood during the wet seasons during which time the soil is enriched by nutrients.

As usual, Niel has posted the photographs taken on the walk on the website. They are stunning photographs and you are encouraged to take a look, whether you were there on the walk or not. (www.friendsofrietvlei.co.za)

The City's Roads and Stormwater Dept has appointed consultants to plan the upgrading of the stormwater channel that runs past Bayside Shopping Centre and Pick 'n Pay and enters Rietvlei just south of the soccer fields. Capacity for stormwater and water quality, are issues that will be investigated. There will be a public participation phase to the project.

The new Integrated Zoning Scheme (IZS) for the entire City is out for public comment. Niel Van Wyk investigated the maps and zoning for Rietvlei and picked up some discrepancies and concerns. These will be submitted to the Planners.

Spatial Development Frameworks (SDF) for the 8 Planning Districts of the City are being prepared. The SDF for Blaauwberg will be available for comment soon. The questions being asked are:

How do you see the future of the City?

Do you think Cape Town should spread out as far as possible? Or that new buildings should be at least three stories high, to help prevent urban sprawl?

Do you think it's worth preserving endangered fynbos rather than building houses on it? And if so, where should new houses be built instead?

And how are we going to connect Capetonians with each other, and with economic opportunities? Through better public, or private, transport?

The Committee will be actively involved in the above matters and will submit comment where necessary.... So can you!!

New multi-night hiking trails in the Cederberg

The Cederberg Heritage Route (CHR), a Voluntary Association Not-for-Gain, has launched a new multi-night hiking trails project in the Cederberg. These trails offer a mix of guided rock art walks, a 12km donkey cart trail and conventional hiking. On all three trails the group size is limited to six. Details of the trails can be found on www.cedheroute.co.za. For more detailed information, prices and bookings contact: Cedarberg African Travel - Cecily Muller - Ph: 027 482 2444/Fax: 027 482 1420, or email her at cecily@cedarberg.co.za

Errors in previous CE

The incorrect fees for Membership were published in Vol.1 2008. The surname of Henk Altling, Chairman of the WESSA George Branch, was incorrectly recorded. We apologise for any inconvenience these errors might have incurred.

"The future is not some place we are going to but one we are creating. The paths to it are made not found, and the activity of making, changes both the maker and the destinations...." - Philip Adam.

Diary

Hottentots Holland Branch

Meetings take place in the Somerset West Library Hall at 20:00 on the third Wednesday of the month. Bookings are essential for outings and usually takes place on the first Sunday of every second month.

21 May 2008 Meeting

Dr Jo Barnes, an Epidemiologist from Tygerberg Hospital will give a talk on how failing sanitation effects our health.

18 June 2008 Meeting

Dr Marianna Smith will give a talk on Medicinal Plants.

6 July 2008 Outing

We visit the Rondevlei Nature Reserve for a great day of Birdwatching and discover Sandveld Fynbos.

16 July 2008 Outing

"Marine and Fresh Water Alien Invasive Species" by Dr Charles Griffiths from the Marine Biology Research Institute at University of Cape Town.

3 August 2008 Outing

Join us for a scenic drive in the Hottentots Holland mountains with mountain Fynbos and afro-montane forests on the Lourensford Estate.

20 August 2008 Meeting

Dr Jurie van den Heever, Paleontologist from University of Stellenbosch, will give a talk on the Evolution of Man. Subject to confirmation.

Friends of Liesbeek

Hacking & Weeding: More volunteers needed. First Wednesday of each month. Meet at 9am at Protea, Winchester Avenue, Bishops court.

Art Exhibition: Rivers of the World featuring the Liesbeek - links schools across the globe and encourages young people to create artworks inspired by the study of their river. In the Company Gardens near the Iziko South African National Gallery from 23 April until 22 May.

River Walks by arrangement, Tel: 021-671-4553

Notice of Friends of Bain's Kloof AGM

When: Saturday 17 May 2008

Time: 10:00

Where: Eerste Tol, Bain's Kloof

RSVP: Sieg at esk-roger@ezinet.co.za or 082 745 9810 before 10 May 2008

On 19 May 2008 some of us will be joining a group under the very enthusiastic leadership of Hannes Truter from Bellville to tackle a patch of wattle above Gawie se Water in Bain's Kloof. There will be other such hack meetings. Contact Sieg Kröger at 082 745 9810 if you are interested.

CAPE BIRD CLUB

MOUNTAIN OF THE SEA: Anton Pauw will give insight into the natural history of Table Mountain. Saturday morning, 2nd August, 9.00-13.00 at UCT. Cape Bird Club members R120, students R50, non-members R150, students R60. Contact Judith Crosswell on 021-6711787 or email judith@kingsley.co.za

Friends Workshops

Feedback on our Friends Workshop of 9 May 2008 will be featured in the next Cape Environment edition. Proposed dates for the next two Friends workshops are:

Friday 8 August 2008, 12:30 16:30

and

Friday 7 November 2008, 12:30 16:30

Contact Maureen (maureen@wessa.wcape.school.za) or Roshan (roshan@wessa.wcape.school.za) for more information.

Friends of Silvermine Nature Area

A G M: Wednesday 14 May, Time: 19:00 for 19:30, Venue: Methodist Church Hall, First Avenue, Fish Hoek

Speaker: Prof. Andy Smith Subject: Archaeology of the Early Inhabitants of the South Peninsula. "Who were the strandlopers?"

Walks and Hacks:

- Saturday 17 May Time: 14:00 - 17:30 Convenors: Sandy Barnes & Claire McCarthy. Phone for Venue (021 7851477 or Walk: Slow Walkers Hack Hike 021 7891334)
- Thursday 22 May Time: 08:00 - 16:00 Convenor: Heron Burger Meet at: Silvermine Reservoir Parking Walk: Down Blackburn Ravine to Hout Bay Contour Path into Tokai Forest - back into Silvermine. Bring Lunch
- Thursday 29 May Time: 8:00 - 12:30 Convenor: Maria Sibley. Meet at: East Fort Hout Bay Walk: Chapman's Peak
- Thursday 5 June Time: 8:00 - 16:00 Convenor: Heron Burger Meet at: Black Hill Walk: Black Hill to Scarborough. All day hike.
- Saturday 7 Jun Time: 14:00 - 17:00 Convenor: Jay Cowan Meet at: Silvermine Gate 1 Hacking afternoon
- Thursday 12 June Time: 08:00 - 12:30 Convenor: Heron Burger Meet at: Silvermine Gate 1 Walk: Circular Walk
- Saturday 14 June Time: 13:30 - 17:00 Convenor: Yvonne Viljoen Meet at: Silvermine Reservoir Parking Walk: Noordhoek Peak
- Thursday 19 June Time: 08:00 - 12:30 Convenor: Terry Gaylard Meet at: Silvermine Gate 2 Walk: Muizenberg Peak.
- Saturday 21 June Time: 14:00 - 17:30 Convenors: Sandy Barnes & Claire McCarthy Phone for Venue (021 7851477 or Walk: Slow Walkers Hack Hike 021 7891334)
- Thursday 26 June Time: 08:00 - 14:30 Convenor: Sue Windo. Meet at: Silvermine Reservoir Parking Walk: Constantiaberg. Bring Lunch.

FRIENDS OF RONDEBOSCH COMMON

F.R.C will have 6 spring flower rambles lasting 1½ hours with flower expert leading the group on 3 August, 24 Aug, 14 September, 28 Sept, 19 October and 2 November. All take place on Sunday at 11:30 am Meet on grass area Campground Road side of Common. Bring a little money for cards or donation. Wear wellies or old shoes. All are welcome.

Groups: We can arrange other times for groups of approx 10 people. Best between 10 am and 2pm when most flowers are open. More details phone: Sue at 021 686 8968 or Joanne at 021 685 3451

F. R.C. will hold their Members Evening & AGM on Tuesday May 13th. Venue is Guide Hall, Alma Road Rosebank, starting 5:30pm for 6pm. Refreshments followed by our Guest Speaker. This year we are delighted to have Dalton Gibbs, Area Manager for Nature Conservation, South Peninsula. All are welcome to attend this informative and uplifting talk, followed by our general business Park along Alma Road. Finish about 7:45 pm Phone Sue: at 021 686 8968

Friends of Tygerberg Hills

May 17: Hack above Kanonberg at 8h45

May 24: Walk in reserve at 8h00

June 03: Talk on "tba"

June 07: Walk in reserve at 15h00

June 16: Firing of cannon at noon

June 21: Walk in reserve at 8h00

July 01: Talk subject to be advised

July 05: Walk in reserve at 15h00

July 19: Walk in reserve at 15h00

All Walks start at the Welgemoed entrance to the reserve. Please be at the gate 10 minutes before the starting time! Bring along a snack and plenty to drink and wear appropriate walking / hiking shoes!

For general information on the walks, please contact Jürg on 083 701 8496 or via e-mail at jurgz@mweb.co.za

HACKS

Weekend hacks take place once a month on a Saturday .Mid-week hacks take place on an ad hoc basis. Wear old clothes; bring gloves, saws, loppers and plenty of water/cool drink and a snack.

For details or to be placed on our hackers' list contact Neville at 021 671 2766
CREW outing dates APRIL-JUNE 2008

Friday 16 May: Uitkamp

Friday 23 May: to be announced (tba)

Friday 30 May: tba

Friday 6 June: Groot Phesantekraal

Friday 13 June: TNR

Friday 20 June: tba

Friday 27 June: tba

Please phone me if you would like to join us on any outing. We pool cars to reduce our carbon footprint...!

Karen Marais 021-945 2855 or 084 358 2207

H.O.P.E

Illustrated Notecards are still available. Packs of 6 cards and envelopes cost only R25. Excellent gifts. Useful for all occasions. Call Katherine Donkin at
021 782 5745

NB Dates to Remember May, June, July

- 22 May:** International Day for Biological Diversity
5 June: World Environment Day
2-6 June: World Environment Week
17 June: World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought
11 July: World Population Day

Chairman: Rudy Schats
 Treasurer: Graham Lovely
 Acting Regional Manager: Sharon Bosma
 Section Heads: Patrick Dowling & Steve du Toit
 Senior Environmentalist: Philippa Huntly
 Environmental & Education Officer: Lorraine McGibbon
 Editor / Layout and DTP: Shaune Rogatschnig
 Copy Editor / Project Support: Roshan Stanford
 Project Logistics: Charmaine Anderson
 Receptionist: Maureen Ngubane
 Intern: Andrea Gordon

Thanks to:

- the "Lick 'n Stick" team, Mrs Goodchild and the Kirstenhof Primary School children who ensure that this newsletter reaches you.
- the members and friends of WESSA Western Cape who offer their time and services willingly and at short notice.
- Mr Les McEwan who maintains the Region's beautiful fynbos garden.
- Forms Media Independent for printing this newsletter at a very reduced rate.

ALL THOSE WHO HAVE DONATED GENEROUSLY TO THE REGION, INCLUDING:-

- Estate Late Egon Benno Mendel
- The Jean Edwards Charitable Trust
- The Lily Ashton Charitable Trust
- Helgo Kahle and Family
- Mrs Rudings

WESSA Western Cape would like to acknowledge the funders of its various projects. They are as follows:

- ArvinMeritor A & ET SA (Pty) Ltd
- City of Cape Town
- Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund
- Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism Social Responsibility Project Department
- Development Bank of Southern Africa
- Gabriel SA (Pty) Ltd
- Market Toyota Tokai
- Pfizer Laboratories (Pty) Ltd
- ROSE Foundation
- Syntell (Pty) Ltd
- Tellumat (Pty) Ltd
- SA Breweries
- Tuffy Brands (Pty) Ltd

WESSA Western Cape would like to acknowledge our corporate members. They are as follows:

- BP Southern Africa
- Caltex Oil S.A (Pty) Ltd
- Old Mutual

WESSA Western Cape would like to acknowledge our patron members. They are as follows:

- Rose Foundation
- Woolworths

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WESSA Annual Membership Fee

| | |
|---|--------|
| • Regional (Cape Environment) | R85 |
| • EnviroKids & Regional newsletter | R170 |
| • African Wildlife & Regional newsletter | R255 |
| • (for over 65s/ under 25s) | R150 |
| • EnviroKids & African Wildlife & Regional newsletter | R320 |
| • Clubs/Education | R200 |
| • Affiliates (Friends & Institutions) | R440 |
| • Small business | R1700 |
| • Corporate | R7500 |
| • Patron | R17000 |

Note: All categories of membership can be mailed anywhere in the world. Please contact Nina at the WESSA Membership Office on (033) 330 3931 or wessamembers@icon.co.za for postage rates.

FOR FURTHER DETAILS AND MEMBERSHIP FORMS PLEASE CONTACT MAUREEN ON 021 701 1397 OR maureen@wessa.wcape.school.za OR GO TO www.wessa.org.za/organisationmember.htm