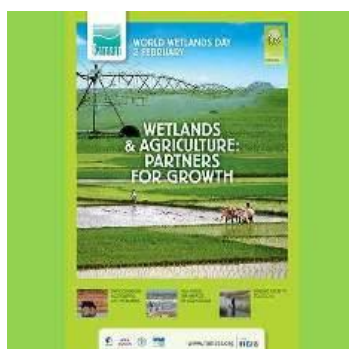




February 2014

World Wetlands Day Celebrations



The first week of February was humming as people across the world gathered to celebrate World Wetlands Day. The theme for 2014 was 'Wetlands and Agriculture: Partners for Growth', placing a focus on the need for the wetland, water and agricultural sectors to work together for the best shared outcomes.

World Wetlands Day is an annual event that commemorates the adoption of the international convention on wetlands, the Ramsar Convention, on 2 February 1971; and aims to amongst others raise awareness on the importance and benefits of wetlands as a natural resource in communities. The key objective of the 2014 edition of World Wetlands Day was to raise people's awareness of the inter-dependence between wetlands and agriculture; to highlight ways to ensure sustainable utilization of wetlands; and to promote the understanding that wetlands create an opportunity for small-scale farming when appropriate farming methods are used.

National Celebrations were led by the Deputy Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs, Ms Rejoice Mabudafhasi, at the Mbongolwane Sports Field, Eshowe, in KwaZulu-Natal. Deputy Minister Mabudafhasi indicated that 'over these two decades, the environment sector has made great strides as government and DEA have worked tirelessly towards the national vision of a prosperous and equitable society living in harmony with its natural resources. The Deputy Minister spoke of this harmony during her address, advising that, "The need to find this balance, as well as recognize the importance of wetlands to agriculture, can be achieved through collaborations and initiatives aimed at ensuring integrated water resources planning, reducing the impacts of agriculture on water quality, managing land and water for multifunctional agro-ecosystems and restoring wetlands in Agricultural landscapes."

More locally, the Western Cape Wetlands Forum, Table Mountain National Park and Working for Wetlands Peninsula Project; hosted a 'Walking for Wetlands' event at the Silvermine River Catchment Area. The Friends of Rietvlei members also coordinated a walk in the coastal section of Table Bay Nature Reserve, a round trip walk along the cycle/pedestrian path past the Dolphin Beach pond and then along the beach.

The Western Cape Wetlands Forum, on the day, endorsed the wetland protection and rehabilitation work being done by groups throughout the province such as the work being done at Princessvlei, Philippi Horticultural Area and Verlorenvlei.

Wetlands have often been seen as a barrier to agriculture, and they continue to be drained and reclaimed to make farming land available. But the essential role of wetlands in support of agriculture is becoming clearer and clearer, and there are successful agricultural practices which support healthy wetlands including water efficient irrigation systems and drought-tolerant crops. Organic farming and other practices that reduce water pollution can also help in maintaining healthy wetlands.

Two SA cities in the running for global sustainability challenge



Two South African cities have been selected as finalists in the 2014 WWF Earth Hour City Challenge, a global competition that recognises the substantial long-term efforts of cities to combat climate change.

The two contenders – Cape Town and Durban – were among six South African cities that participated in a collaborative programme between WWF and ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability by registering their green urban development plans for building, transport, energy and food systems on the carbon Cities Climate

Registry (cCCR), an internationally recognised carbon reporting platform managed by ICLEI.

Participating local cities included the City of Johannesburg, the City of Tshwane, Buffalo City Municipality and Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality.

CEO of WWF South Africa, Dr Morné du Plessis said, “we are absolutely delighted to see six South African cities taking up the mantle and proudly participating in this global challenge. This is a clear indication that South African cities are consciously taking steps towards more sustainable futures for the well-being and prosperity of their citizens. Healthy environments result in healthy and happy people. I look forward to seeing more South African cities taking part in the challenge in future – and, who knows, perhaps even winning!”

An international jury panel is scrutinising the information supplied by finalist cities in order to select national Earth Hour Capitals and the overall Earth Hour Capital to be awarded at the Earth Hour City Challenge Conference and Awards Ceremony in Vancouver, Canada, in conjunction with the international conference GLOBE 2014. The March 2014 awards ceremony will coincide with global Earth Hour celebrations. Citizens of participating countries will have an opportunity to express their support for their favourite cities among the finalists through WWF’s We Love Cities social media campaign, which runs from 17 January to 20 March 2014. The favoured city will also be recognised at the Vancouver ceremony.

Carla Higgs, Climate Change Mitigation Programme Manager at eThekweni Municipality said, “eThekweni Municipality (Durban) is pleased to be recognised globally for their efforts and achievements in climate action. Durban has for a number of years implemented climate change adaptation and mitigation measures that lead the way to a greener and more sustainable city. Being a finalist in the Earth Hour City Challenge is an important acknowledgement of the City’s climate change mitigation and adaptation strategy, a worthy achievement and encouragement to keep working towards our goals.”

"We are overjoyed that Cape Town has been selected as one of the finalists in the WWF Earth Hour City Challenge. Along with 33 other cities from all over the world, Cape Town is being acknowledged for the incredible efforts being made by so many individuals and organisations across the city striving to make this a more sustainable, more habitable city. Now Cape Town's residents have the opportunity to mobilise towards that dream with the same spirit, ingenuity, and accountability that we saw with the hosting of the 2010 FIFA World Cup™," said City of Cape Town's Executive Mayor, Alderman Patricia de Lille.

ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability - Africa, Urban Low Emission Development Strategies Project Manager Steven Bland stated that, "we are delighted for ICLEI Members Cape Town and Durban- they are outstanding representatives for South Africa in the global competition. We look forward to supporting all the participating cities in South Africa to work towards their goals of a low-carbon, sustainable urban future for their citizens- it is in our hands!"

Original article by WWF-SA

You can help in restoring the Roodeberg



On 28 January 2014, three CAPE partners launched the "Restore the Roodeberg Campaign", on site at Roodeberg, Kommetjie Road. The Table Mountain Fund, WWF South Africa and the South African National Parks have teamed up to save this precious piece of mountain land for posterity – and are calling on the public to help raise R 9,2-million by June 2014 to do so.

Lying south of the Noordhoek wetlands, the Roodeberg is a mountain landscape of exceptional beauty and species diversity that is of global conservation importance. The southern portion of the Roodeberg is already part of the Table Mountain National Park, where recreational users of the mountain come to immerse themselves in some of the Cape's most exquisite fynbos and scenery. But the northern section consists of privately owned properties, a portion of which was run as a tourism venture of the now defunct Solole Game Reserve.

The "Restore the Roodeberg" campaign aims to raise the money to buy the remaining privately owned land for incorporation into Table Mountain National Park. SANParks' TMNP Planning Manager, Michael Slayen, explains: "For the past decade, we have been working to consolidate five private properties in this area into the park. To date three of the five properties have been incorporated by purchase and contract, which leaves two of the most vulnerable still outside of the Park's protection.

"These remaining properties are threatened with inappropriate development, and have been overwhelmed with fire-prone alien invasive vegetation, making the need to acquire them an even greater priority." WWF South Africa's Fynbos and Succulent Karoo Programme Manager, Onno Huyser, adds: "After extensive negotiations with the private owner we have secured an excellent deal to purchase the two remaining properties. We now have until June 2014 to raise the money."

The vision is to open up this previously restricted area to hikers, runners, dog walkers and horse riders, while ensuring that the land and its diverse and unique species are restored and conserved for generations to come.

“In order to safeguard this area of global biodiversity we are now calling on individuals, organisations, schools and businesses to help us to raise this much-needed funding which will help us to restore the Roodeberg and incorporate it into the National Park,” says Huyser.

Once the properties are secured, SANParks will initiate a programme of alien clearing and land rehabilitation, which will also see numerous job opportunities being created for surrounding communities.

To find out more about the Restore the Roodeberg campaign please [click here](#), join us on [Facebook](#) or follow us on [Twitter](#), and don't forget to use #Roodeberg as you help us to spread the word about this globally important mountain landscape.

If you would like to get involved please contact sue@restoretheroodeberg.co.za or sarah@restoretheroodeberg.co.za.

CAPE is a partnership programme, coordinated by the South African Biodiversity Institute.

Original article by *WWF-SA*

GCBC celebrates 10 years of partners working together



The Greater Cederberg Biodiversity Corridor (GCBC), one of the CAPE landscape initiatives recently celebrated a decade of partnerships working together in the Greater Cederberg Area. The celebration took place at the Citrusdal Country Lodge, and was partly sponsored by the West Coast District Municipality.

The celebration intended to reflect and celebrate the achievements of the GCBC with all partners involved. A presentation by Azisa Parker, Programme Developer with the CAPE Coordination Unit in SANBI reflected on how the landscape scale approach put forward by the CAPE 2000 Strategy saw the establishment of the GCBC and other landscape initiatives across the CFR. Parker also reflected on the role that landscape initiatives continue to play in encouraging collaborative governance and implementation at the landscape level. Noel Oettle, of Environmental Monitoring Group, and Deputy Chair of the GCBC steering committee since its inception, reflected on the early days of the steering committee, and in particular the on the ground mobilisation of the GCBC. Johan Burger, Coordinator of the GCBC, presented on past, current and future projects in the region; while Jenifer Gouza of Cape Nature provided input on institutional change with a specific focus on beyond pilot projects: institutional arrangements to embed sustainability.

The GCBC has created a neutral space where stakeholders can come together, share achievements, frustrations, inspirations and gather energy for the next phase as well as to strengthen the understanding of the environment and the power of cooperative governance. It serves as a platform for all tiers of Government, NGOs, communities and landowners to learn and share ideas around projects that work towards implementing the GCBC Strategy. This is the only forum in the region where all these groupings can get together.

Achievements include: 33% of the GCBC planning domain of 1,8 million ha is now under some form of better environmental management through the implementation of innovative mechanisms including stewardship. R 11, 5 million has been spent on the rehabilitation of the Verlorenvlei wetland and its catchment to clear alien invasive plants and build structures to stop further erosion.

80 % of this system has been cleared to date, offering job opportunities to 53 people from identified poverty nodes along the West Coast. 11 farm workers from stewardships sites were able to attend an introductory course in nature conservation. Five went on to do Nature Guardianship training with the Nature College, with three of these farm workers successfully completing the course and receiving a certificate in Nature Guardianship.

Many individuals and organisations have contributed their time and resources towards a common effort to conserve this unique environment for future generations. Currently, R 11 million per annum is directly invested by the GCBC partners within this living landscape.

CapeNature, which coordinates the GCBC, has successfully “held the process” of engaging a diverse range of stakeholders and creating a platform for collective action. A key point going forward will be in engaging community stakeholders more effectively in all processes.

In closing, CapeNature CEO, Dr Razeena Omar stated that ‘the work that GCBC together with its partners is doing is encouraging and inspiring and these achievements need to be shared’.

ISP: EDRR publishes Five Year Review



The ISP: EDRR recently launched its Five Year Review at a breakfast event held at Rhodes Memorial Restaurant on the slopes of Devil’s Peak. The venue is adjacent to the only known naturalised population in South Africa of *Acacia paradoxa*, one of the invasive species targeted for eradication.

The Western Cape team, headed by Ernita van Wyk, has been responsible for co-ordinating the management of this species since 2009. The Five Year Review covers the work of the Invasive Species Programme: Early Detection and Rapid Response (ISP: EDRR) from

2008 to 2013 and the lessons learnt over this period through early detection, evaluation, research co-ordination and eradication.

The theme of “Celebrating Partnerships” demonstrated ISP: EDRR’s appreciation and admiration for their partners and their contribution to helping ISP: EDRR realise their goals. All speakers emphasised the essential role partnerships play in achieving the eradication of alien invasive species. Five speakers - Ms Louise Stafford, City of Cape Town Invasive Species Programme Co-ordinator; Prof. Dave Richardson, Director of the Centre for Invasion Biology; Nomahlubi Sishuba, Director: Bio-security – Department of Environmental Affairs; Mrs Carmel Mbizvo, Deputy Director General at SANBI and Dr Guy Preston, Deputy Director General at Working for Water - spoke on wider invasive species issues with specific reference to the ISP: EDRR strategy and their active involvement in supporting the programme over the past five years.

Through working with other programmes and government institutions, the ISP has made great strides in its work over the past five years. The programme has made noticeable progress in fulfilling its mandate with research on and management of up to 120 alien invasive species, some of which are targets for eradication. The review provides insight into the achievements of the programme. A few highlights from the publication include the growth of the ISP team from one individual to the current team of 33 researchers, co-ordinators and managers. In ISP: EDRR’s efforts to support job

creation the project has created over 38,000 person-days of work in 2012-2013 alone and the team and students affiliated to the programme have published, on average, up to three scientific papers a year. The programme currently has fifteen papers either in preparation or published.

“We trust the review successfully communicates another key element that makes our programme work and our achievements possible – namely our dynamic staff. The ISP: EDRR Programme has received very positive feedback from our partners and stakeholders in environmental management and conservation, which has added to the vigour with which we approach future work. It has also become evident that there is an increasing need for further collaboration in the sector to enhance the reach and quality of our work”, said van Wyk.

For more information, please email [Alex Marsh](#) or tel: 021 799 8404.

For an electronic copy of the review, please [click here](#).

SANBI welcomes new board member



SANBI is pleased to announce the appointment of Mr Sathie Gounden to its Board by Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs Edna Molewa, effective from 1 January to 30 November 2014.

Gounden is a chartered accountant by profession and comes with extensive experience in the area of his specialization. He currently serves as non-executive director and audit committee member on the boards of various companies.

Gounden previously held the positions of Chief Executive Officer of Gobodo Incorporated from February 2003 to June 2010; Managing Partner at Gobodo from 2000 to 2002 and Managing Partner at S Gounden and Co. prior to the year 2000.

He holds various memberships with the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants; South African Institute of Professional Accountants; Independent Regulatory Board for Auditors; and the Association for the Advancement of Black Accountants of Southern Africa.

The SANBI Board and Executive Management look forward to Gounden's positive contribution to the work of SANBI and to a long term relationship.

Prescribed burning in Table Mountain National Park set for coming weeks

Table Mountain National Park (TMNP) is in the process of obtaining a permit to conduct a number of biodiversity burns in various sections of the Park. These prescribed burns will take place between March and April under favourable weather conditions, i.e. temperatures under 25°C, moderate a wind of less than 20km/hr and 2-3 days after light rain has fallen.

The removal of dry flammable material by means of a prescribed burn will reduce the likelihood of future uncontrolled wildfires. Fynbos vegetation is both fire-prone and fire-adapted and the use of fire forms an integral part of the ecological management of the park. TMNP Fire Management Department together with the SANParks Cape Research Centre has developed a scientific Prescribed Burning Plan for the entire park – this plan determines and prioritizes areas for prescribed burning,

taking into consideration veld age, rare and endangered species, alien clearing as well as protection of properties.

The reasons for conducting prescribed burns in fynbos vegetation are: to reduce fire hazards by reducing the unnecessary “fuel” accumulated in field as a result of Alien Plant Clearing operations; to rejuvenate the fire-adapted and fire-dependent fynbos vegetation; and to form an essential part of control operations aimed at eliminating invasive alien plants. Weather-permitting, TMNP is planning to undertake prescribed burning at: Klein Leeukoppie in Hout Bay, in the Tokai Picnic Area, Tokai Cape Research Centre, Cecilia Forest: 2 test burn areas each 45x40m, Silvermine between Ou Wapad and Ou Kaapse Weg (2 areas), Cape Point section Da Gama Peak, and Cape Point section Main Gate to join up with the previously burnt area along Plateau Road.

Residents in the adjoining areas of the park should be assured that Park management will do their best to minimize any possible inconvenience to adjacent households during the preparatory work and burning operations. Where adjacent properties to the park may be affected by a prescribed burn, Park management will make an effort to inform such landowners and residents in good time of the intent to carry out a burn.

All owners and occupiers of adjacent properties have a right to lodge written queries / objections to the proposed open burning with the City.

Kindly direct all queries or objections to the City’s Air Quality Control section on tel: 021 590 5200; via fax to 021 590 5215; or via email to ossie.oswald@capetown.gov.za.

For further enquiries, please contact Philip Prins, Fire Manager: TMNP at 021 6897438/9.

A big Stand for the environment through WWFs BWI



WWFs Biodiversity and Wine Initiative (BWI) is a South African home-grown initiative that continues to draw attention and research as well as increased consumer awareness. BWI supports South African producers to enhance their on farm environmental performance.



This is achieved through WWF partnering with key companies and influential stakeholders in the supply chain that can provide support, awareness and leading innovation in managing broader environmental risk across the agricultural sectors. In one of its

many contributions to the environment, BWI recently participated in WWF’s “Journey of Water” Campaign, which focused on the intrinsic value of freshwater ecosystems such as rivers, wetlands and natural buffers in farmlands; and the importance of protecting these through various means, including stewardship. This initiative has also been involved in empowering communities in the winelands to lead on conservation matters. Periodic natural fires have always occurred in the fynbos and renosterveld ecosystems.

Many plants actually need fires to reproduce and ensure long-term survival. The challenge today is the use of fire in a fragmented and highly modified modern landscape to ensure the survival of all

plant and animal species. Although fynbos is a fire-adapted system, just one or two inappropriate fires at the wrong time, or no fire at all, can cause the local extinction of many species. BWI encourages its members and champions to continue sharing their challenges and successes in fire management; especially with regards to the activities related to preparing firebreaks, development of fire management plans in partnership with relevant Fire Protection Associations (FPA), maintenance of fire equipment, fire training and skills development, accurate record-keeping of fires as well as linkages to an active alien clearing programme.

In their 2014 newsletter, BWI acknowledged the efforts on Uitkyk Estate with regards to intensive clearing of invasive alien plants; especially in areas demarcated as high biodiversity value and high freshwater yield areas. The annual planning operations, managed by a well-led team, integrates herbicide applications, mapping and in-field verifications of alien densities and contracting teams within the landowner conservancy space. This journey is carried through to the tasting room in an amazing showcase of Uitkyk's unique biodiversity story.

In addition, the Greater Simonsberg Conservancy and the Delheim Estate received special mention. Delheim was awarded the 2013 Green Wine Awards Overall Winner in the Category: Conservation, Farming Best Practise and Community Development.

For more info www.wwf.org.za/bwi

For enquiry bwi@wwf.org.za

Following PengWin Trax



BirdLife South Africa is running an exciting satellite-tracking programme on the African Penguin; where they are tracking the birds outside the breeding season, both before and after they moult – times when it is vital that the penguins find sufficient food to regain their body condition.

Satellite tracking, while providing vital information, is an expensive process. BirdLife South Africa's new partner, GreenMatter, saw a way to use this project to raise funds while educating people about marine conservation. Together the two organisations have developed PengWin Trax, an action-orientated, educational game.

Teams of students will be paired with a particular penguin and, based on a range of environmental factors, they will try to predict where the penguin will go to feed, and when and where it will return to shore. The game will be played online and it is connected to a variety of blogs, discussions and social media channels. Through playing the game, the students will learn about the different natural and human factors that impact marine ecosystems and endangered species.

In order to roll out the game, they are seeking partners to sponsor each team's penguin. Sponsorship will go towards setting up the mechanisms for the game to be played, engaging the youth/teams and supporting BirdLife South Africa's African Penguin satellite-tracking research, which underpins the game's content.

For more information contact [Christina Hagen](#) via e-mail.

BirdLife South Africa is one of more than 35 CAPE partners, who are committed toward the goal of ***uniting government and civil society in a strategy to conserve and restore the biodiversity of the Cape Floristic Region and the adjacent marine environment, while delivering significant benefits to the people of the region.***

The CAPE Partnership is convened by the South African Biodiversity Institute.