



GC&SA Ear to the Ground

“A wise man once said, every society is judged by how it treats it's least fortunate amongst them”

**Gauteng Conservancy & Stewardship Association Newsletter – No 29 – February/ March
2011**

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GC&SA News

The GC&SA is very lucky to have recently been donated two very special sets of books to add to our already very extensive library – Natal Plants (published 1876) and Marloth's The Flora of South Africa (published 1925)

Go to the library link on the website to see a full list of all the books, publications and DVDs that the GC&SA have.

Everything in the library is available to GS&SA members.

Conservancy subs go a long way towards helping us to maintain the books in the library.

Comments from Around the World

Thank you all!

I enjoy seeing that YOU *still* care about conservation THAT MUCH!

I still think about our happy meetings and would like to keep on getting your emails.

I have been in Australia for 3 years now and still enjoy the newsletters!

Keep on going! "Good on ye, Mates! See ya!"

Blessed Christmas and a VERY GOOD 2011 to you all!

Jan Grey

. Hello

We are a new grassroots conservancy here in Colton, California at present its 40 acres in the next three years it will be some 800 acres of hilly slopes rocky slopes many trails for horseback riding walking/jogging and mountain biking the highest peak is only 1,214 ft yet high enough for a star glazing lookout platform

We are in need of all the assistance we can receive and your operational manual says just the thing we are looking for? If there is any other information you can send us we would deeply appreciate any assistance that you can direct towards our way. Looking forward of working with you as a fellow conservationist-

Regards,

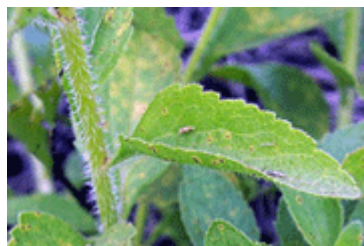
Ranger Michael Zurn
Colton Wildlands Conservancy

Snippets From Around the Province

Lammermoor Pompom and litter cleanup day



Pompom Flowers.....



Leaves.....



Seeds...

On 22nd January, residents, friends and helpers arrived in force to remove the dreaded pompom weed (*Campuloclinium macrocephalum*) from pavements and communal areas in Lammermoor and while we were at it, to pick up litter. The pompom plant's pink "pom-pom" looking flowers characterise this plant when they flower between December and March. These flowers produce many seeds which are efficiently dispersed by the wind.

The pompom weed is classified as a "category 1" weed, according to the Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act (CARA), Act 43 of 1983 (amended in March 2001), and therefore it must be removed. The Agricultural Research Council's Plant Protection Research Institute (ARC-PPRI) has several research projects aimed at controlling the spread of this weed. According to their website, this weed is becoming the most serious threat to our grasslands and is reducing the biological diversity and carrying capacity of our veld.

Considering the seriousness of this weed, we were ecstatic with the turnout and the enthusiasm from the residents who split up into teams and each tackled a road. We had double luck...with all the rains, the soil was soft and we were able to dig the weeds up easily, *and* it had stopped raining long enough for us to get the job done. Since the cleanup day, a few more pompom plants have reared their ugly heads, but if we keep at it we'll win the pompom battle.



Pompom weed is a perennial, erect herb up to 1.5 m high. The stems and leaves are covered with rough, bristly hairs. Leaves are scattered along the length of the stem but clustered at the base to form a rosette. The plant has a short woody rootstock that ends in thick tuber-like perennial roots. In spring shoots arise from, and in autumn die back to, the rootstock. The showy pink flower heads (inflorescences) are produced in dense clusters at the ends of the aerial stems, and look like bright-pink powder puffs. Each flower head, measuring 15 mm long \times 25 mm wide, consists of hundreds of tiny, star-shaped florets (individual "flowers") surrounded by purple bracts (brightly coloured, leaf-like scales). A long protruding style from each floret gives the flower head a fluffy appearance. Mature florets each produce a single-seeded dry fruit (achene) with a tuft of brown hairs (pappus) that promote wind dispersal.

Cullinan Busy at it as Usual

Don't come and mess in the platteland.

December school holidays, count down to Christmas still in the low double digits. Time for a break, be reckless and only get dressed at 08 o' clock, lots of time to have another coffee fix before I get started. So I thought.....

All of a sudden the door bell clangs, and there is a delegation of conservancy members standing with notices in their hands. Notices! At this time of the year, 15 days before Christmas, lets hear them out. Having an open house as I do, they know how to help themselves while I get some rags on.

Yes the notices inform us that an "idiot" has applied for a mining permit within 900 meters from Rayton, he delivered a notice to one person who then mobilised the mob. Closing date 5 January 2011, Twenty six days time with Christmas, New Year in between and every one away for the school recess.

First things first, check the dates of the notices.....3 months after the application was made, not the mandatory 30 days. Time for action, today they call it strategic planning. The boere say 'kom ons B.....hom"

After contacting the applicant who was and is one of those arrogant specimens of humanity, we decided to keep our noses clean, and put his out of joint.

Registered letters to DMR, GDARD, DAFF (the whole alphabet) Quick meeting with local Director of Town Planning, he supports us and puts us wise to a few tactics we can use.

Now to get a few people to register as IAP'S, the "A team "went to work. Photocopied a few IAP forms, every one is away. Arrange a table outside the local Pick and Pay and start the process. More and more photocopies made, thank heavens the Video shop is 20 met away



Die boere is kwaad, baie kwaad. sign-up

Members of the community were only to willing to sign-up

Next drama, rumour, fact or fiction 'some one" is on their way from Pretoria to confiscate the forms, signed forms must be taken to a place of safety.....in a trommel on the back of a bakkie. What an amazing team to work with, no grumbles or groans. There is a job to do so let's do it, and the nice people we met good advertising for the Conservancy as well. People from Rayton join the "Friends of Cullinan Conservancy" turns out to be quite a social event.

Now time to put the applicants nose out of joint, no contact details on the applicants notices. The call goes out Bob please do a windeed search on the applicant...reply comes fast, got the info I need. Now to parcel up the **461 IAP** forms, no, keep copies of 5 forms, pay- back time. IAP forms sent by speed couriers, we made the dead line. Oh the other 5 forms, the applicant informed us he did registered the notices to the ma-plotters, it's not his fault that there isn't postal delivery to plots.

An email is sent to him informing him that the IAP forms were sent to his Post Box, even the tracking number given. The remaining 5 were sent to his residential address in Mabopane, didn't know there was no postal delivery in Mobopane.

Thanks to the Conservancy members, who were there when needed, and to a special lady who works for GDARD Air Quality, without her advice our task would have been more difficult. Have you ever got a reply to a question on the 26th December from GDARD we did.

It's the 14th January 2011 and we are still giving DMR additional information they require. No, I will not arrange the Public Participation meeting for the arrogant sod, but we are waiting to see if, when, and where he puts up the notices. So that the boere "kan saam staan manne"

When was Christmas, New Year and the holidays?

**The NZASM and its heritage.
Nederlandsche Zuid-Afrikaansche Spoorweg-Maatschappij.**

Cullinan Conservancy was privileged to host a lecture by Dr Robert de Jong on the railway lines built during the late 19th century. Dr de Jong describes himself as a ferro equonologist. Of particular interest to our Conservancy was the railway line from Pretoria to Delegoa bay, as it ran through our conservancy and we have many relics in the area which we conserve.



Robert de Jong lecturing the group (recognise some of the heads in the fore ground)

Dr de Jongh gave an overview on the economical and political reasons why the Transvaal Government wanted the railway line built. After Pres. T.F. Burger failed to get overseas funding 1872-1877 the railway line was put on hold. When Pres Kruger became head of state in 1883 he went on a mission overseas to source funding for the railway line. In 1887 the NZASM was established with funding from Dutch and German banks.

Construction materials for tracks were imported from Germany and Indonesia, other building materials were sourced locally. Traction (steam engines) were imported from Germany and the Netherlands.

The Eastern line

It was interesting to hear that the building of the line actually started on the eastern side at the border (Transvaal and Mozambique border) in 1890. The western side started in 1893. From the border to Maputo problems arose as this section was controlled by a different company and Mozambique authorities.

In June 1894 the railheads met near Brugspruit (Clewer) the Ceremonial tightening of the last screw was done by Pres. Kruger near Wilge river station in November 1894.

January 1895 the railway line became fully functional.

As these were all steam trains they had to stop very frequently to fill up with water and coal, this resulted in many halts and stations along the line. It took about three days to get from Pretoria to Delegoa bay.

With the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer war in 1899 the NZASM was mobilised to assist the ZAR's war effort Troops, artillery, provisions, ammunition and horses were transported by rail. It even became the temporary ZAR Government offices (government on wheels).

When Pretoria was occupied by the British forces in 1900, the British seized all documents and transferred the NZASM to the Imperial Military Railways. This proved to be a difficult liquidation, but it was finalised in October 1908.

As a closing remark Dr de Jong said "***the minimum that should be done, is to document what is left before it disappears***"

A special thanks to the members from other Conservancies who supported us. Bob and Cheryl from Smuts House conservancy and Jan Visser and family from Seringveld.

Dr de Jong has emigrated to Australia and will be joining his family in the near future. We wish him well "down under"

Articles of Interest

MISSION 6 OF 2010

Name of Mission: Caracals relocated from Limpopo to the Eastern Cape

Aircraft used: KingAir

Beneficiaries: Nicci Wright and Peter Girdwood

Pilot: Ivan Marx and Hardus du Preez



Objective of Flight:

To move six adult caracal from Limpopo Province to the Eastern Cape Province for release

We met Bateleurs pilot Dr Ivan Marx and a co-pilot, Hardus du Preez at the Wonderboom Airport early on Sunday morning, 7 March.

An hour or so after leaving Wonderboom we landed smoothly at Hoedspruit Airport. Waiting for us on the landing strip was Mr Brian Jones, owner of Moholoholo Rehabilitation Centre where the caracals had been in safe-keeping since their confiscation five months previously. Together with Brian's staff we loaded the transport boxes into the KingAir plane.

We placed the boxes onto tarpaulins to prevent any marking of the plane's interior carpeting, and covered the boxes with sheets to minimise visual stress for the animals.

After a short delay (due to my mis-measuring of a box!) we took off again. A couple of hours later, we landed at Bloemfontein Airport for re-fuelling, checking of the aircraft and a leg-stretch. The caracal were calm and quiet but aware of my every move, greeting me with a powerful hiss whenever I peered into a box to check on the occupants. Flying over the Free State and Eastern Cape, we were struck by the extent of soil erosion visible from the air and also the flooding level of dams such as the Gariep.

About 3 hours after leaving Bloemfontein, we approached Port Elizabeth where we were to meet the last link in the chain of assistance offered to the caracals. We landed and were met by John who reversed his bakkie up to the plane for easy loading.

We unloaded the crates, taking care not to scrape the interior of the aircraft, and placed them on the tarmac alongside the vehicle to photograph and say goodbye to our lucky cargo.

Once the formalities were out of the way, John and the caracal left for the reserve which he would reach within an hour or so, leaving us to refuel again for the flight back to Wonderboom.



Leaving Port Elizabeth Airport, we flew right out across the bay before climbing up to 25 000 feet and zooming home at just under 500kms p/h!

The mission was completed with a safe landing at Wonderboom Airport just after 6pm, after almost twelve hours of a busy and exhilarating day. The pilots were skilled and professional, the take-offs and landings smooth and faultless and ... most important, the caracal were free by nightfall. This was a wonderful experience and it was a privilege to have shared it with The Bateleurs team. Thank you.

Support for The Bateleurs

Please would you help us to conserve and protect our environment by letting us know of environmental organisations or individuals who need our assistance, or by forwarding this to conservation or environmental agencies that could benefit from an aerial perspective. Please remember that we do not fly for the benefit of any commercial enterprise, and we do not transport people from place to place.

As a not-for-profit organisation, The Bateleurs – Flying for the Environment in Africa depends on donations from private organisations to cover its expenses. We are therefore most grateful for any contributions that we receive. We would like to invite all our readers to assist The Bateleurs in

its mission to conserve and protect our environment and wildlife by providing aerial assistance to a wide range of beneficiary organisations.

Your assistance could encompass any or all of the following activities -:

- * Becoming a volunteer pilot member of our environmental air force;
- * Spreading the word about our free-of-charge service to conservation and the environment, so that we fly more missions for more beneficiaries concerned with protecting and conserving the natural heritage of southern Africa; and
- * Connecting us with potential donors who may be interested in supporting our work.

Please direct your own, or any other enquiries, to -:

Joan Cameron

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The environment

Litterbug caught red-handed

I received this report from Nick May on 15 February. Well done Nick! We must name-and-shame all who are caught damaging or degrading our precious environment. I caught this man, T.G Erasmus of 185 Longmarket Street, Pmb red-handed while emptying out a big pile of all-sorts from his cooler box onto the side of our road along the Lower Mpushini. He was driving a new white Audi Registration number NU43386. Apparently he works in the Pharmacy business in Pmb around Smuts Avenue .I wont be reporting this one this time around, as I may have accidentally bumped his new car when I stopped him and I may also have also accidentally smacked him, not too gently, into the bushes when he said that he did know that it was a Nature Conservancy. I also made him clean up litter along the road for an hour and a half in the mid-day heat while I kept his keys ransom and left him to stew for a while, while I took care of some other business. I apologise to anybody who may think that this might be the incorrect course of action. If he decides to lay a charge of assault, so be it, but he did apologise profusely to anybody in the area and has vowed to never throw his rubbish down again. Keep an eye open for him anyhow if you see him driving in our area, as he is a LITTERBUG!

Regards,

Nick May

**LET THIS BE A WARNING TO ALL PROSPECTIVE
LITTERBUGS – WE HAVE HAD ENOUGH**

Books:

Juta Law New Book Notification

Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act & Related Material Mineral and Petroleum Resources Royalty Act Mineral and Petroleum Resources Royalty (Administration) Act

(JUTA'S POCKET STATUTES)

Publication date: 2nd edition - 10 February 2011

ISBN: 978-07021-8573-1

Extent: 280 pages

Edited by: Juta's Statutes Editors

Price: R75.00 (incl. VAT, excl delivery)

The second edition of this book from the *Juta's Pocket Statutes Series*, reflecting the law as at 30 December 2010, includes:

- A Quick Finder for Key Topics

PART A:

- Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act 28 of 2002
- Pendlex: Pending amendments
 - Scorecard for the Broad-Based Socio-Economic Empowerment Charter for South African Mining Industry
 - Broad-Based Socio-Economic Empowerment Charter for the South African Mining Industry
 - Codes of Good Practice for the Minerals Industry

PART B

- Mineral and Petroleum Resources Royalty Act 28 of 2008
- Pendlex: Pending amendments

PART C

- Mineral and Petroleum Resources Royalty (Administration) Act 29 of 2008
- Pendlex: Pending amendments

Please send us your news and notices of events for inclusion in *"Ear to the Ground"*. This e-newsletter goes to all the Gauteng conservancies and to a long list of "friends of conservancies" plus other interested people. The list grows by the day. If you would like to contact any of the conservancies or people mentioned in this "Ear", let us know.

