

# *GCA Ear to the Ground*

Gauteng Conservancy Association Newsletter – No 20 - September 2009

[www.conservancies.org](http://www.conservancies.org) / [www.nacsa.org.za](http://www.nacsa.org.za) [www.nacssa.co.za](http://www.nacssa.co.za)

**“Take nothing but pictures.  
Leave nothing but footprints.  
Kill nothing but time.”**

**In this e-newsletter:**

**Yebo Gogga, Yebo AmaBlomma**

**2009 Awards**

(see GC&SA website [www.conservancies.org](http://www.conservancies.org))

**NACSSA 2009 General Meeting**

**Snippets from around the province**

## ***Notices***

**Delta Environmental Centre** will be hosting a talk by well-known climatologist, Simon Gear, on Sunday, 20 September 2009. A light breakfast will be served from 10h00 and the talk will start at 11h00 sharp and will last about an hour, with time for questions.

The cost is R50.00 per person.

- Address: Delta Environmental Centre Delta Park, Road No 3, Victory Park
- Date: Sunday, 20 September 2009
- Time: 11h00 until 12h0 Light breakfast from 10h00
- Cost: R50.00

Please e-mail [sandy@deltaenviro.org.za](mailto:sandy@deltaenviro.org.za) or phone Sandy on 011 888 4831 option 2.  
[www.deltaenviro.org.za](http://www.deltaenviro.org.za)

**Thorntree Conservancy Annual Spring Fair** – Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> November Walkerville Showgrounds – contact Ivan Parkes [ivan@thorntree.co.za](mailto:ivan@thorntree.co.za) for details

## **Melville Koppies: Cross Koppies Hike**

Date: **Thursday 24 September**

Time: **08:00 prompt**. The gates will be locked at 08:00 and no entry after this

Parking: Marks Park Sports Club, Judith Road, Emmarentia

Duration: Three hours

People: Adults. Not suitable for young children or the unfit, or people with hip problems etc. No dogs allowed

Gear: Shoes with proper tread, hat, sunblock, water, snacks

Route: The circular route winds though Melville Koppies Central, East and West. We walk through grasslands, indigenous forests and 2.9 billion year old rock formations. The views are stunning

Pace: A walking pace and the whole group stays together, with Melville Koppies guides leading and bringing up the rear

Facilities: MK Central has water and toilets at one stop only

Cost: R20 (or more) donation for maintenance of the Koppies *Wendy Carstens*, 011 482 4797.

**Friends Of Kloofendal** (The Kloofendal Nature Reserve is situated in the suburb of Kloofendal, Roodepoort, on the western side of Johannesburg. The entrance is on Galena Avenue, between Topaz and Argent Avenue. (Karin Spottiswoode can be contacted for a map/ directions to Kloofendal - Tel: 011-674-2980 Cell: 072-595-6991)- **Scorpions**- nocturnal event Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> October 18:00 for 18:30 – presentation followed by scorpion walk – looking for scorpions with a UV torch – these will be available from Jonathan. Please bring chairs or picnic blanket, picnic, torch & rain coat (just in case!)

**Buffelsdrift** – Darwin’s theories for the novice - Charles Darwin, the English naturalist, is seen as the father of the evolution and the natural selection of species theory. What did he really say? Prof. Erik Holm will discuss Darwin’s theories, what did he say and how applicable is it still today. 3<sup>rd</sup> October – 9:00am Imbabala Tea Garden, Buffelsdrift. Contact Johan Rademan 082 375 0599

## ***Yebo Gogga Yebo AmaBlomo 2009 'Fitness' Exhibition at Wits***

The annual exhibition of arthropods, other critters and plants takes place from **Wednesday 7 - Sunday 11 October 2009**. The theme for this exciting Johannesburg event this year is FITNESS. Learn in what ways bugs, plants, minerals and animals are fit for existence. Are you a fit? Will your choices ensure personal fitness and a healthy environment for your descendants?

Please tell your friends and bring your family to enjoy close encounters with goggas, awesome animals and weird plants.

Opening time on weekdays: 09:00 - 16:00, and on the weekend : 10:00 - 16:00.

GC&SA will again have a stand at this exhibition – if you are able to help please contact Ivan Parkes on [ivan@thornetree.co.za](mailto:ivan@thornetree.co.za)

## ***2009 Awards***

### **Mail & Guardian 2009 Greening the Future Awards**

GC&SA was a finalist in the “Environmental Best Practice Not-For-Profit Organisation” category, the award was presented to the World Wildlife Fund – formidable competition.

## ***NACCSA 2009 General Meeting***

This meeting will be held on the 6 & 7 November at Habula Lodge situated within the Dome Heritage Area (Between Potchefstroom and Parys) approx an Hours drive from Joburg.

This will be 2 days of fellowship with people involved in conservancies from around the country, it will be a wonderful idea sharing opportunity and a chance to be involved in the decision making of the role of conservancies in South Africa.

Interested parties contact either John Wesson (Chairman NACSSA) on [jwesson@wessanorth.co.za](mailto:jwesson@wessanorth.co.za) or Kathy Oliver (Secretary NACSSA) on [kathy@nacs.org.za](mailto:kathy@nacs.org.za)

## HABULA



### *Snippets from around the province*

#### **Elandsvlei Conservancy**

##### **Our Wetlands and Pans**

The Pans are still full, and a visit to the pans is a wonderful experience at this time of year. We have had several groups of visitors to the pans from all over Gauteng. Northern Gauteng Birders, Bedfordview Girl Guides, Wits Birders and several private birders have come through to enjoy what our Pans offer. We have had a wonderful pledge by one resident to sponsor the re-thatching of the Birdhide, as our friendly birds have been using the thatch for their nests.

New benches will be erected in the birdhide as well as the walkway over the water will be attended to.

The view from the birdhide is uninterrupted at this time of year, as the grass is low and the bird spotting made a great deal easier. The breeding pair of Marsh Owls are easily seen from the hide.

#### **Hartebeestfontein**

##### **Werkskeppingsprojek vir die Bewarea**

Die Hartebeestfontein Bewarea is verbind tot volhoubare ontwikkeling en sal projekte ondersteun waarby inwoners kan baat vind. *Hartebeest Jobs* is 'n vaardigheidsontwikkelingsprojek wat volhoubare kleinsake-ontwikkeling en werkskepping tot voordeel van alle belanghebbendes sal bevorder, maar veral van behoeftige permanente inwoners van die Bewarea. Die doel is om harde werkers wat kan bydra tot die kleinsaketokoms van die gebied met vaardighede toe te rus om bemarkbare produkte en dienste op 'n volhoubare basis te verskaf, asook die bewaring van natuurlike hulpbronne daardeur te bevorder. Sodoende behoort ondersteuning vir plaaslike produkte en dienste bekendgestel, bevorder en verbeter te word en 'n gees van samewerking onder inwoners te ontstaan. Indien hierdie projek suksesvol bedryf word, sal armoede ook verlig en misdaad bekamp word.

'n Eerste vergadering in hierdie verband het reeds op 16 Augustus 2009 plaasgevind en daar word beplan om binnekort met elektrisiënsopleiding te begin. Lede sal op hoogte gehou word van vordering met die projek. Kontak gerus vir Ivan Lätti (083 252 7256 of ivan@koptoe.co.za) in hierdie verband.

#### **GREATER KYALAMI CONSERVANCY**

The Greater Kyalami Conservancy (GEKCO) is consulting residents, businesses and organisations in the area, and held

its first stakeholder engagement workshop this week.

About 45 representatives came to share their opinions in a well-run workshop. The workshop was the initiative of GEKCO, a conservancy established only 3 years ago.

Long known as the mink and manure belt the Kyalami area is famous for the horse industry and related activities. The Greater Kyalami Conservancy and the Greater Kyalami Residents Council quantified the extent of the industry in 2007/8. This nearly billion Rand a year industry includes not only the value of the horses but its influence extends as far as the Cape and Kwa-Zulu Natal where horse food is grown for this area. Many people are employed in service of this industry including Horse Riding Instructors, horse grooms, farriers, specialist horse vets, horse dentists, equine physiotherapists, horse arena makers, horse magazines and many more. Kyalami is home to the Gauteng Horse Society, the South African Lipizzaner Centre, the Rand Hunt Club, Equicare - a specialised veterinary Hospital for horses and numerous stables and horse riding yards. This area is also one of the last remaining open spaces in Johannesburg and is rich in wetlands. Surprisingly it is still home to small mammals and various species of wild life including black backed jackal, mongoose, civet, bullfrogs, duiker, Cape Otter and many varied bird species.

When established the core focus of the Conservancy was to respond as Steward for the environment, ensuring the preservation of remaining indigenous vegetation and wildlife. Of necessity, the Conservancy responded in the public participation processes of development applications, city planning and Escom strengthening projects. This resource-draining activity also meant that the conservation orientated activities often received less attention than the committee intended.

GEKCO decided to re-evaluate its vision of the conservancy within Kyalami. Several sessions later, the Conservancy realised that their vision was so sweeping and bold that other stakeholders who may not necessarily place environment considerations first on their agenda, could be included in a synergistic relationship.

The invitation was extended to representatives from a cross section of activities and organisations in Kyalami, to collaborate in defining a new vision for the area.

Vincent Carruthers, author of many books including his latest book "A Field Guide to Frogs in South Africa" and the patron of the Greater Kyalami Conservancy, set the proceedings in motion with a provocative presentation. He invited the stakeholders to avoid a mentality of insular conservation in which "keep out" was the general theme. He encouraged the stakeholders to recognise the great value to ecological processes their

"As people spoke about their reasons for living in Kyalami, I had the impression of the area representing a haven from the pressures and stress of daily life. People talked about the 'peace and quiet', about space for children to grow up in a healthy, nurturing environment. They spoke about a community spirit that is unheard of in densely populated urban settings – here there is collaboration, support, and people know their neighbours. They spoke about the horse and how interaction with the horse feeds one's very soul". These were the impressions of Mercia Komen, one of the facilitators of the process.

"I am proud to be associated with the work GEKCO is doing", she said. "Conservancies are often the structure used to organise communities and give people a voice. Yes, the focus is on conservation, but first you need to win hearts and minds, and conservancies are a great platform for doing just that".

Margie Donde, Chairman of the Conservancy, explains that GEKCO is working towards establishing a distinctive identity for Kyalami. "We want others to know how special this area is so that when we talk about conservation, people know why it matters here in this place. We would like people to feel personally affected by what happens to this open space. When we are directly affected by the survival or degradation of an area, there is a greater chance that we will speak out or act for its protection".

To find out more about the Greater Kyalami Conservancy and its initiatives go to [www.gekco.co.za](http://www.gekco.co.za)

## **Kliipriviersberg Conservancy**

### **logo launched at tree planting Ceremony**

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**From left to right:**

National Director Miss Earth South Africa – Catherine Constantinides  
Vice Chairperson Suideroord South CPF – Veronica Schutte  
Chairperson Suideroord South CPF – Leonie van der Merwe  
Ward 54 Councillor – Cllr Anne Boxall  
Chairman Klipriviersberg Nature Reserve Association – Clem Kourie  
CEO SOJO – Nicky Vakaloudis  
Chairman Klipriviersberg Conservancy - Andrew Barker

The Klipriviersberg Conservancy gave its new logo its first public airing at the tree planting ceremony held in Suideroord on Saturday, 5 September 2009.

In celebration of Arbour week, which runs from 1 to 6 September, the Klipriviersberg Conservancy hosted a tree planting event at which four indigenous trees donated by Johannesburg City Parks were planted along Columbine Avenue in Suideroord near Columbine Square and directly opposite the Sasol garage.

The trees were planted by invited guests who included Ward Councillor Anne Boxall, and our sponsors Thaba ya Batswana for the preparation of the logo and the Dignity Boards, Afrisam for the preparation of the holes and Johannesburg City Parks. Representatives from the Klipriviersberg Conservancy, the Klipriviersberg Nature Reserve Association, the Suideroord Community Forums, SOJO Business & Tourism and Miss Earth South Africa also assisted with the planting of the trees.

The planting of these trees is considered to be an important event at this stage in the life of the Klipriviersberg Conservancy as it signifies the beginning of a new life which needs to be cared for and nurtured, like our environment, for the sustainable benefit of future generations.

The logo has been carefully designed with only a few elements to create a feeling of openness and space – something which is being protected and promoted throughout the area of the conservancy.



***Articles of Interest***

## Pink Invasion of Gauteng



Spring is here and the flowers of the highveld can't wait to amaze us with their splendour, but beware ..... Pompom weed (*Campuloclinium macrocephalum*) is an ornamental South American herb belonging to the daisy family, Asteraceae. It is rapidly becoming the most serious threat to the conservation of grasslands in South Africa.

Infestations become conspicuous when the plants are in flower between December and March, transforming the veld from green to pink. The plant initially establishes itself in disturbed sites such as roadsides, but then invades natural grasslands, open savanna and wetlands.

Pompom weed is a perennial, erect herb up to 1.5 or even 2.0 m high. The stems 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 tuberlike perennial roots. In spring shoots arise from, and in autumn die back, to the rootstock. The showy pink flowerheads are produced in dense clusters at the ends of the aerial stems. The flowerheads are replaced by brown, fluffy seedheads. Pompom weed survives fires and frost during the winter months because all of its living components are in a dormant state underground. Under drought conditions during summer it can revert to a dormant state by withdrawing its nutrients from the shoots back to the roots. It has therefore evolved strategies to survive and multiply in grassland and savanna ecosystems in South Africa.

**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**

### ACRONYMS:

NACSSA:	National Association of Conservancies & Stewardships of SA
GC&SA:	Gauteng Conservancy & Stewardship Association
GDARD:	Gauteng Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
EWT:	Endangered Wildlife Trust
DME:	Department of Minerals and Energy
DFA:	Development Facilitation Act
EIA:	Environmental Impact Assessment
I&AP:	Interested and Affected Party
SLAPP:	Strategic Litigation Against Public Participants

## Previous Ears to the Ground

These files are available in PDF format



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