



Friends of Bracken NATURE RESERVE

Newsletter / Nuusbrief

WELKOM AAN ONS NUWE LEDE!

Baie welkom aan al ons nuwe lede: Sue Maxton, Sunette Brink en gesin, Marita Cilliers en gesin, Rochelle Boois, Brenda Adams. Ons sien uit om jul almal beter te leer ken by ons skemerpiekniek op 5 November.



We visited Kenilworth Racecourse on 14 July and were shown round by Maya Stauch, Reserve Manager



Four picnic benches were delivered and installed in August, thanks to a grant from Rowland & Leta Hill Trust



Judging the entries in the Children's Art Competition was a difficult task as the standard was very high

SPRING CELEBRATION & CHILDREN'S ART COMPETITION

The Celebration of Spring on 1 September is set to become an annual event in Bracken Nature Reserve, but this year the weather did not play fair. It was overcast and dull and decidedly chilly and few flowers were open. Nevertheless the activities got off to an early and cheerful start with the planting of trees by the ladies of the VLV and the reserve staff, with the enthusiastic assistance of the children of the nearby Everite hostel.

The focal point of the morning was the prizegiving for the winners of the Children's Art Competition at the EE Centre, which was attended by around 100 people. (Borrowed chairs were at a premium as we still have no furniture of our own!) The theme of the competition was Brackenfell "in die ou dae" and the establishment of the nature reserve. The 94 entries were all on display and brightened the walls of the Centre. A local artist, Suzanne Laten of Strand, a former Brackenfell resident, selected the winners in the three age categories and this was no easy task as the standard was extremely high.

Councillor Carin Brynard congratulated the winners and presented the prizes to the top 20 entries, and Tamryn Nel, who was celebrating her birthday was given a rousing chorus of "Veels geluk, liewe maatjie"! A few days beforehand we had been at a loss to know how to pack the prizes of various shapes and sizes, but Lindie came to our rescue by making more than 20 fully lined hessian shoulder bags within a week! The Everite children were not forgotten. For some weeks they had been busy helping Lindie with clean-up operations in the reserve and they arranged their own impromptu art competition which was also judged by Suzanne. Cllr. Brynard donated six school satchels for these excited winners.

After the presentation it was the turn of the raffle draw and three lucky numbers came out of the hat. A bottle of quality wine donated by Erika Foot (Area Manager - Central) was won by Hestelle Melville (Environmental Educationist, Tygerberg Nature Reserve). And the second draw brought the house down when Lizzie the labrador (Tshepo's dog) won the beautiful circular hand-crocheted tablecloth donated by Barbara Reinecke. Naturally, as Tshepo had paid for the ticket, she has claimed the prize! The third draw was for a breakfast for two at Haus Enzian, donated by Emil and Heidi Meyer, and this was won by Anna Biedermann of the VLV. The raffle raised a total of R393,00.

After this an enticing aroma drew us to the stoep at the back of the cottage where Eddie and Carla had set up Eric's braai in a sheltered spot. Boerewors rolls and other refreshments were on sale, which more than compensated for the chilly weather. The wops and rolls were a much appreciated donation by Spar. All in all this was a very happy and successful morning – it was just a pity that the sun didn't shine and show off our spring flowers to best advantage.

Jo Hobbs (Secretary)

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TERUGBLIK

Aan die einde van die jaar neem mens mos voorraadopname van die wat verby is, en begin vir die volgende jaar beplan. Ons het vanjaar baie geleer en wil graag vra dat elke FoB lid saam moet besin oor wat verbeter kan word. Laat weet ons gerus van enige voorstelle; kritiek sal nie persoonlik opgeneem word nie! My gedagtes is oa. dat ons meer geleenthede moet maak vir ons lede om in die reservaat betrokke te wees. Ek pleit skuldig dat ek nie self genoeg plaaslike uitstappies en praktiese werk gedoen nie. Is daar dalk iemand wat die uitstappies vir ons wil reël en koördineer? Eddie het ook aangebied om die "Hacks" te reël vir die wat krag het vir Port Jacksons uitkap.

Met dankbaarheid kan ons egter meld dat die komitee baie besig was met die reël van finansies en die koop van die piekniekbanke. Verdere onderhandelings met die Stadsraad vorder ook vir die toerus van die Omgewings-opvoedings gebou volgende jaar.

Thea Weyers (Voorsitter)

RESERVE NEWS - Picnic sites and landfill rehabilitation

First and foremost, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the members of FoB for organising the successful art competition for local schoolchildren. This was an awesome event that took dedication and hard work. You made all of us proud!

In the Reserve itself four new picnic sites have been created and these have been named after indigenous fauna and flora found in the reserve. One of these was the brainchild of the Reserve's foreman, Eric Bunu, with the assistance of Nokuzola Tyala (worker). All of this happened while I was on leave. On his own initiative Eric borrowed a brush cutter from Tygerberg Nature Reserve as we did not have our own equipment at the time, and he cleared a pathway of approximately 100m and a shaded area around an old Pine tree. I was amazed and proud of this wonderful achievement as the result of Eric's creative and innovative idea. The site looked beautiful and I wished we could place a bench for visitors to enjoy picnicking at this scenic and serene spot. Well, there is a happy ending to this story as the Friends of Bracken were granted funds from the Rowland & Leta Hill Trust which were used to purchase four picnic benches. And, yes, the first one was placed at the Heron picnic spot - the picnic area created by Eric!

Last but not least, phase 02 of the landfill site rehabilitation process has commenced. As most of you are probably aware, we experienced many erosion problems during the first phase of this project, resulting in a great loss of large quantities of soil obtained for the rehabilitation of the site. Fortunately more funds were allocated for the project and more soil has now been brought in order to compensate for the eroded topsoil. A 500mm topsoil layer will provide a sustainable habitat for the indigenous plants and seedlings that are going to be planted on the site once the project is complete. This will eventually lead to the incorporation of the area known as the landfill site into Bracken Nature Reserve.

Tshepo Mamabolo (Reserve Manager)

FOB AKTIWITEITE - Outings & Meetings

Ongelukkig was dit nodig om die uitstappie na Blaauwberg te kanselleer agv. die oorvloedige reën wat die toegangspad te modderig gemaak het. Sommige van ons was vroeër in die jaar daar, maar ons sou graag die lentebloem wou sien. Dalk kan ons dit weer vir 2008 beplan.

Op 14 Julie het ons vriendin, Maya Stauch, wat nou die bestuurder is van die Kenilworth Reservaat, ons daar op 'n besigtigingstoer geneem. Eerstens is tee bedien in die Gold Circle gebou, waar sy ons meer van haar werk vertel het. Haar verloofde, Oscar, het saamgekom om ons daarna die ongerepte stuk vlakke-plantegroei te wys. Ons het die paddavissies gesien van die hoogsbedreigde paddatjies wat daar voorkom, en nêrens anders in die wêreld nie! Intussen was ons skaars bewus van die perderesies in die agtergrond. *Proteoides diastella* was nog 'n pragtige herinnering van die bedreiging vir ons kosbare fynbos; dit is die kleinste pienk, rankprotea, weggesteek in die gras!

On 17 September we met at the EE Centre (which at last has electricity laid on!), to view Al Gore's thought-provoking DVD "An Inconvenient Truth". We understand he recently became one of the joint winners of a Nobel Peace Prize for this presentation, and deservedly so. The evidence for global warming is there for all to see, and one wonders how much (if anything) has been achieved to remedy the situation in the three years since the DVD was originally produced.

On 13 October 12 FoB members visited Rondevlei Bird Sanctuary and enjoyed an hour-long boat trip on the vlei to view the nesting colonies of Sacred Ibis, Cattle Egrets and three species of herons at close quarters. The weather was ideal, being mild and windless. Joy Bennett of Imvubu gave us an excellent explanatory commentary and Sebastian guided us expertly in and out of the reedbeds, also turning the boat in a full circle to give us all a good view of a Purple Gallinule on our return to the boat house. A visit to the museum and a stroll to the bird hides after our elevenses rounded off a very pleasant morning.

INVITATION: Friends of Zeekoevlei & Rondevlei - a family festival of food and fun!

Live entertainment, food stalls, craft market, face painting, environmental exhibitions and displays, snake show, indigenous plants and much much more ... (*Proceeds to Rondevlei & Zeekoevlei Nature Reserves*).

Where? Zeekoevlei Community Hall and Environmental Centre, Peninsula Road, Zeekoevlei

When? Saturday 24 November, 11.00am - 7.30pm.

For more details, contact Colleen McDowell on 021 706 2231.

TAKE A WALK IN THE FYNBOS - (from a newspaper report)

We have all experienced how a walk in the park gives us a lift, but locals might be delighted to know that a walk in the fynbos, with its high species diversity, will enhance our well-being far more.

According to *EurekAlert!* researchers have shown that green areas are good for people's general well-being. They have also shown that the psychological benefit gained by visiting urban green spaces increases with the levels of biodiversity.

Richard Fuller of the University of Sheffield and researchers from De Montfort University in Leicester, have shown that biologically complex surroundings enhance a person's well-being more than spaces less rich in species.

So, while a stroll along a golf course with grass and a few pines will lift your spirits, it won't lift them as much as a walk in Kirstenbosch. And a hike up Skeleton Gorge, through biologically complex mountain forest into the richest floral kingdom in the world, is guaranteed to make your spirits soar.

Environment Writer – Cape Times
21 May 2007

So - take a walk in our own Bracken Nature Reserve this spring, and let your spirits soar!

VOLGENDE JAAR

Kom geniet die Reservaat enige tyd: bring 'n piekniek en stap daar rond. Daar is 24uur sekuriteit, en toegang van beide kante. As u in Perdekop wil kom, skakel gerus die kantoor, of 021 982 3654 en ons sal gaan oopsluit. Ons beplan om in die wintermaande meer aktiwiteite aan te bied, en uitstappies in die lente. Die jaar sal weer afskop met 'n gesellige bring en braai.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

NOVEMBER 2007

Monday 5th – Sundowner picnic

We will gather from 6.30 pm at the Heron picnic site. Use the entrance in Kruijn Street opposite Spar. Bring your own picnic supper and liquid refreshments and watch the sun go down.

This will be our last organised event for 2007, but remember that you and family or friends are always welcome to walk and picnic in the reserve at any time. Access to Perdekop can be obtained by contacting Tshepo at the office (021 982 1323) or Thea at home at 021 982 3654.

Hacking group

Anyone interested in joining the recently formed hacking group to assist with the eradication of alien vegetation, clearing paths, weeding and generally keeping the reserve tidy can contact Edward Allen at 021 982 4548. As soon as we have sufficient funds we plan to purchase one or more tree-poppers which will make the work easier (and more fun!).

FEBRUARY 2008

Monday 4th – Bring & Braai

Instead of trying to fit in a Year-end Braai in December as this is such a packed month for most of us, we shall celebrate the new year with a Bring & Braai in February. This will take place from 6.30 at the EE Centre as before, but full details will be circulated nearer to the time.

A WARNING OF THINGS TO COME? I shot an arrow in the air – and it stuck. (*Anti-pollution slogan, 1970*)