



AgulhasNPark eBulletin

VOL 3 • NR 5 • April 2013

www.sanparks.org



South African
NATIONAL PARKS

Earth Day ~ 22 April

Forty-three years after the first Earth Day, the world is in greater peril than ever. While climate change is the greatest challenge of our time, it also presents the greatest opportunity – an unprecedented opportunity to build a healthy, prosperous, clean energy economy now and for the future. The 43rd anniversary of Earth Day will be celebrated in 2013 with the theme *The face of climate change*. This day marks an opportunity for volunteers to initiate actions towards a sustainable future. On 22 April 1970, approximately 20 million Americans supported and celebrated the first Earth Day and today it is celebrated worldwide with more than 17 000 groups in 174 countries forming a global network that works towards environmental protection in communities, regions and around the world. More than a billion people around the world participate in Earth Day activities. In 1990 Earth Day had an enormous effect on recycling efforts worldwide and assisted in leading the way to the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. Earth Day is a global attempt for international co-operation to address issues such as global warming, toxic waste, destruction of rainforests, expanding deserts and ocean pollution. Individuals and organisations are encouraged to use Earth Day to take environmental action in their area. (SOURCE: *A Year of Special Days 2013* published by WESSA Share-Net)



Cultural landscapes give us a sense of place

A cultural landscape is a geographic area that includes cultural and natural resources associated with a historic event, activity, person, or group of people. It can be seen as the cultural layer that was built up through ages over the natural environment since the beginning of man. Cultural landscapes can range from thousands of acres of rural land to homesteads with small front yards. They can be man-made expressions of visual and spatial relationships that include grand estates, farmlands, public gardens and parks, college campuses, cemeteries, scenic highways, and industrial sites. Cultural landscapes are works of art, texts and narratives of cultures, and expressions of regional identity. They also exist in relationship to their ecological contexts. (Dr Robert De Jong, 2008)

Dirt: the erosion of civilizations

An interesting review of a book by an American geologist, David R. Montgomery, was spotted in the *Landbouweekblad* of 11 January 2013. The title is *Dirt: the erosion of civilizations*. He is of the opinion that various economic activities still exist which use soil as a replaceable resource and which are so destructive that the thin soil layer of earth is being skinned, so to speak. He describes how many old civilizations and communities disappeared because they did not use their soil (environment) sensibly and the way they treat their soil shows their standard of civilization. Most of the book describes how soil fertility and erosion determined the course of the history of communities. The book is however more a plea for less cultivation, crop rotation, less use of chemical substances and other positive actions. (Review by Amelia Genis). This book should thus be very useful during the mapping process of the cultural landscape of a national park or conservation area, to understand man's impact on the natural environment over millennia and decide on possible rectifying actions.

Agulhas Working on Land project

Working on Land is a new initiative of the Expanded Public Works Programme. The Objectives are Job creation, Poverty alleviation, Skills development, Biodiversity conservation, Infrastructure development and is very labour intensive. In Agulhas the groups concentrate on the demolishing of unused structures, removing unwanted fences, clear, rehabilitate and secure historical sites. Some of the groups harvest thatching reed for the infrastructure development in the Park, while others are building board walks at the Southernmost Tip. The teams are managed by Arnold Viegeland and Eugene Mitchell. Three groups were originally appointed. When two more groups were appointed they worked under the Working for Wetlands project for a while. In September 2012 two more groups were appointed as Heritage site rehabilitation groups. Their contract ended in February 2013.

Working on Land



K. Groenewald and team



T. Diop and team



Freddie Africa and team



Working on Land Heritage Rehabilitation



Sime Twalo and team



Ernest White and team



Infrastructure Development



Robert Greeff and team



Peter Thomas team



Opportunities available for 'field monitors'

Capacitating rural communities to become involved in fynbos monitoring and conservation – that's the aim of a new project on the Agulhas Plain. The Agulhas Plain Fynbos Monitoring Project is being implemented by Flower Valley Conservation Trust, in conjunction with fynbos industry players. It will see 32 individuals from local communities on the Agulhas Plain upskilled as field monitors. They will undergo specific training that will help them monitor the effects of fynbos harvesting, and offer basic training on invasive alien plants and clearing, as well as fire management. The project is being funded in part by the Global Environment Facility/Small Grants Programme, which is implemented by the United Nations Development Programme. According to Roger Bailey, Conservation Manager at Flower Valley, the project will address the area's conservation and social challenges. "On the environmental side, fynbos is threatened by invasive alien plants, uncontrolled fires and in some cases, poor land management. At the same time, the opportunity exists to capacitate those living in the rural community to become involved in conservation." The Agulhas Plain Fynbos Monitoring Project will be rolled out over the next two years. Service providers are currently being sourced to develop the appropriate curriculum for the trainees. Following this, field monitors will be selected and enrolled for training. Land users and community groups who would like further information are invited to contact Roger Bailey: rbailey@flowervalley.co.za.



Wine, birds and Fynbos

The Agulhas Honorary Rangers will be hosting their second wine auction on 4 May 2013 at the Bosheuvel Precinct in Agulhas National Park. The starting time is 9:00 with a very interesting programme of birding and walking through the fynbos with wine tasting afterwards. The auction will start at 13:00. For more information contact Flip van Staden at 082 378 1245 or email drflip@phildi.com and Angela Altendorfer at 072 283 5282.



Cape Agulhas Lighthouse restoration

The Transnet Restoration contracting group was waiting for a final decision from Heritage Western Cape to continue work at the Lighthouse. They received notification from Heritage Western Cape on 12 March 2013 that the *Stop works Order* has been lifted and commenced immediately with the preparation work to the weathered limestone exterior masonry in order to accept the new plaster. The work will commence from the top and will be worked down to the building plinth. The contract for the construction of the verandah was also awarded. For exploration and investigation purposes the embankment on the southern side of the building, more or less in line with the dummy entrance, will be excavated from the embankment to the building, 1,5m deep by 1m wide in order to expose any layer of works or dumped material to determine the natural topography of the hill. This is also to expose old foundations of demolished South side additions for exploration and mapping purposes. The black day marker boards on the sea side of the building will be removed and the recesses re-plastered and painted black to represent the day markers.

Southern Tip Day programme

Bosheuvel programme:

11 May 2013: Southern Tip-Zoetendals Vallei Relay Race & Walk Stalls, Kiddies programme, Canoeing, Other (jukskei, etc.)

L'Agulhas programme:

17 May 2013: Southern Tip Talk & Meal, Suiderlig Dienssentrum *The Bredasdorp Shipwreck Museum – a treasure chest full of memories...*

11-19 May 2013: Southern Tip & Shipwreck Art Display, Ocean2Ocean Art

18 May 2013: Southern Tip Historical walk; Shipwreck Display in conjunction with Bredasdorp Shipwreck Museum to commemorate International Museum Day Opening of new Lighthouse Museum display

