

AgulhasNPark eBulletin

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www.sanparks.org



Earth Day ~ 22 April

Earth Day is held yearly on 22 April to promote awareness of and appreciation for Earth's environmental issues. It is an opportunity to celebrate Planet Earth. Our planet is at a turning point. The massive global migration underway now from countryside to cities will demand huge investments in energy, water, materials, waste, food distribution, and transportation over the next 25 years. If the right investments are made now, this unique opportunity will be the catalyst for dramatic changes in the built environment and the fight against carbon emissions and climate change. Some major environmental issues our planet faces are the greenhouse effect and global warming; destructive energy sources versus sustainable alternate energy sources; toxic waste and ways of effective, efficient responsible waste management; groundwater contamination, abuse of water resources, wetland destruction, and pollution of waterways and the oceans; the impact of litter on our water resources and on ecosystems; overfishing and unsustainable fishing of our seas and oceans; destruction of rainforests; expanding deserts. WWF-SA is asking individuals and organisations to make a public promise to the Earth by thinking about their choices around food, water and energy use, and understanding how these impact on the environment.



What do you choose?

(www.earthday.net; www.earthlife.org.za; www.earthday.org; www.wwf.org.za)

Geological origins of the Agulhas National Park: we are ancient

The Cape Supergroup formations were formed about 400 million years ago, when sediments were deposited in an elongated southern ocean. Folding and uplifting of the Cape Supergroup formations into the Cape Fold Mountains with their plains, took place about 250 million years ago, associated with huge sedimentation processes when glacial sediments were deposited across Gondwanaland and when Gondwanaland began drifting northwards. The Cape Supergroup consists of three groups or series. These are the Table Mountain, Witteberg and Bokkeveld Series. The Bokkeveld Series is prominent in the Agulhas and consists of red, mauve, pink, brown and yellow shale beds alternating with thinner sandstones. The soil of the Bokkeveld beds is generally more fertile than that of the Table Mountain Series and the shales form good agricultural soil. However, these soils tend to be deficient in phosphoric acid and nitrates owing to the fact that the dry summers tend to prevent the accumulation of organic matter and the wet winters leach out the soil any nitrates that are produced.

Limestone formations

The greater part of Agulhas is underlain by Tertiary limestone of the Bredasdorp Formation, part of the Bokkeveld Group. These limestones cover most of the Bokkeveld and Uitenhage basement rocks within the park. The Bredasdorp limestones were deposited as shallow marine environments and as coastal dunes. The oldest deposits (Wankoe Formation) form the higher lying dunes into which the coastal plain had been eroded during subsequent marine transgressions. Subsequently new dune systems (Klein Brak and Waenhuiskrans Formations) were formed on the coastal plain. The most recent member of the Bredasdorp Group was deposited within the last 10 000 years as a strip of unconsolidated dunes along the coast (Strandveld Formation). The sandstone and quartzite are approximately 4000 million years old and the limestone 5 million years.



Connecting to Society

The coastal plain

The coastal plain of Agulhas is covered mainly by calcereous sands and surface limestone that originated between 65 and 23 million years ago (Tertiary Period). The coastal mountains (Sandberg and Soetanyberg) are Cape Fold Belt sand stone, capped in places by limestone. The coast itself is rocky and consists of dune rock (aeolianite) created between 65 and 23 million years ago during the Tertiary Period when dunes were blown into place during the lowering of the sea level associated with glacial periods. At places these aeolianites form cliffs with overhangs and caves, such as Waenhuiskrans Cave near Arniston. They are part of the Waenhuiskrans Formation of the Bredasdorp Group.

(SOURCE: De Jong, R. 2007. Agulhas National Park Cultural Heritage Survey. Unpublished.)



Spotted in the Park

Sekretarisvoël, Secretary Bird
Sagittarius serpentarius
Hangnes section, 4 year old veld



Trees give life

An old Chinese proverb says the best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago. The next best time is now. Earth and you urgently needs more trees. Trees are seen as the biggest living organisms on the planet. They give us shade and shelter, flowers and fruit, peace and calm, homes to animals and birds; they live on carbon dioxide; have medicinal values, spiritual qualities and a psychological impact on people. Across the world tree planting projects are being implemented to absorb the carbon dioxide humans are pumping into the atmosphere through coal burning. Now is the time for the winter rainfall area community to plant trees to help Earth to not choke finally on carbon dioxide. Become a member of the National Tree planting movement and plant a tree on Earth Day, 22 April. (Eugene Moll, 2014).



Kanferbos, Camphor-bush, *Tarchonanthus camphoratus*

Kershout, Candlewood, *Pterocelastrus tricuspidatus*

Trees to plant at the Southernmost Tip



SoetenSuurfontein en route to the coast from the Cape

SoetenSuurfontein, also known as *Candeelfontein*, is situated on the northern slopes of Soetanyberg. It was originally a well-known outspan place on the route from Uilenkraal via Soetendalsvlei to the Cape Agulhas coast. The route was used frequently to rescue shipwreck survivors and salvage valuable cargo. The original name of Soetanyberg was *Soutpansberg*, referring to the big saltpans to the north-east of the mountain range. The name changed most probably because of the freshwater fountains found along its foothills and the buchu plant. *SoetenSuur* also was a stock post of Rietfontein farm. Portion 7 of Rietfontein 293 became *Zoet en Zuur* and amalgamated with other portions to become Hangnes in 1972. The old house was built of *koffieklip*, limestone, mud bricks and rubble walling. The last family who lived there was the Fourie family. Water flowed naturally from a fountain to the *werf* into an earth dam. The name *SoetenSuur*, sweet and sour, refers to the ecosystems which show a markedly sweet and acidic character.



Rubble walling



Limestone



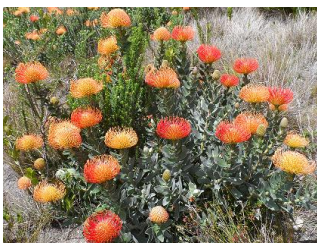
Koffieklip



Mud bricks

Soetanyberg

Soetanyberg or Soetany Mountain, is one of Agulhas National Park's most iconic spots of interest and an important botanical site which makes it an important node for fynbos conservation. It derives its name from the Anysboegoe, *Agathosma cerefolium* which grows abundantly on the mountain and its foothills. As already mentioned, the mountain was also called *Soutpansberg* on early maps, referring to the saltpans to the north-east. Described as a steep coastal mountain, it reaches an elevation of 248.6m above sea level and is the highest point in the eastern section of the Park. This is also the guiding height for the limitation for use by aircraft of 2,500 feet (762m) above highest point over the current Agulhas National Park. The flight height is thus 1010.6m or 3315.5 feet. It is ± 16 km NW of the Southernmost tip. The mountain consists of sandstone and quartzite of the Table Mountain Group. Soils derived from these rocks are acidic and highly infertile. Soetanyberg is part of the Hagelkraal land system with shallow well drained grey calcareous sands. The Soetanyberg area as a botanical site is approximately 100km² and supports seven different fynbos types. Four of these - Limestone proteoid (restricted to limestone substrata), Elim asteraceous fynbos (unique to the Agulhas Plains), (Wet) Restioid fynbos (closely associated with vleis and drainage systems) and Neutral sand proteoid fynbos (confined to colluvial sand derived from limestone) are endangered in the Cape Floristic Region. Patches of the threatened Elim asteraceous fynbos grows in the Soetanyberg area. Together with, Heuningrug, Elim (24 x 28 km) and Soetanyberg, more than 60 Red Data Book plant species were identified, of which at least 15 are threatened.



Cooperation prospects probed between the Nuwejaars SMA and SANParks

Nuwejaars SMA and SANParks officials met to assess ways to work together in vegetation and game management, as well as in joint tourism opportunities. The meeting took place at Bosheuwel, in the Agulhas National Park, on Wednesday 5 March 2014. SANParks' Agulhas National Park borders the SMA. As such, the SMA and SANParks signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2010. The Memorandum at the time sought to encourage cooperation across the broader landscape. The recent meeting was the second in a series of proposed meetings to further this cooperation. It has now been decided to take on management burns together in those fynbos areas that require burning across the Park and SMA-land. Research and monitoring, through newly-trained field monitors, will also happen across both areas. It is hoped the field monitors will assess trends in vegetation before and after management burns, as well as the impacts of bio-control agents on invasive alien species. The SMA and SANParks are also assessing a drop-fence agreement in certain areas, in order to encourage the free-flow of game between the two. The reintroduction of Bontebok and Zebra are being discussed. Bontebok in particular are being prioritized, given their low numbers in the areas they historically lived in, including the Agulhas Plain. The SMA is currently home to approximately 120 Bontebok. The Park and the SMA both offer tourism activities and accommodation, which promoted together could enrich the visitor's experience to the Agulhas Plain. The Park, for example, is potentially planning a half-marathon and mountain bike trails, which could traverse land belonging to both organizations. In the past, a Southern Tip – Zoetendals Vallei Relay Race was organized across the Park and the SMA. Smaller working groups consisting of officials from both groups will now further investigate these opportunities, and report back later in the year.



The Struisbaai **Suiderlig Dienssentrum** enjoyed a walk on the Southern Tip boardwalk as part of their weekly Wednesday programme and to celebrate a friend's birthday on 5th March 2014. They also visited the Southernmost Tip. These are the ladies, and partners, who prepare the wonderful Southern Tip meal every year for the Southern Tip Programme. This community centre's name is very appropriate and translates as the Southern Light Community Centre.

Southern Tip Day Programme

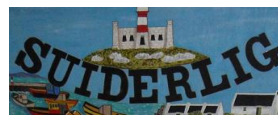
Southern Tip Talk and Meal, 16 May 2014: *The Schoonenberg wreck*, Dr Jan Malan; Suiderlig Dienssentrum, Struisbaai; Cost: R80,00; Time: 19:00; Bookings: Truida Groenewald, 028-4356340; Emmerentia De Kock, 028-4356078.

Southern Tip Shipwreck Display, 1 – 31 May 2014: In collaboration with the Bredasdorp Shipwreck Museum, Cape Agulhas Lighthouse. Theme: *Museum Collections make connections.*

Southern Tip Historical Walk, 17 – 18 May 2014: An accompanied walk between the Cape Agulhas Lighthouse and the Southernmost Tip.



On 16 May 1488 **Bartolomeu Dias** saw a certain flat piece of land. He named it after an Irish monk, St Brendan, whose festival day it was: "Ponte de Sao Brendao".



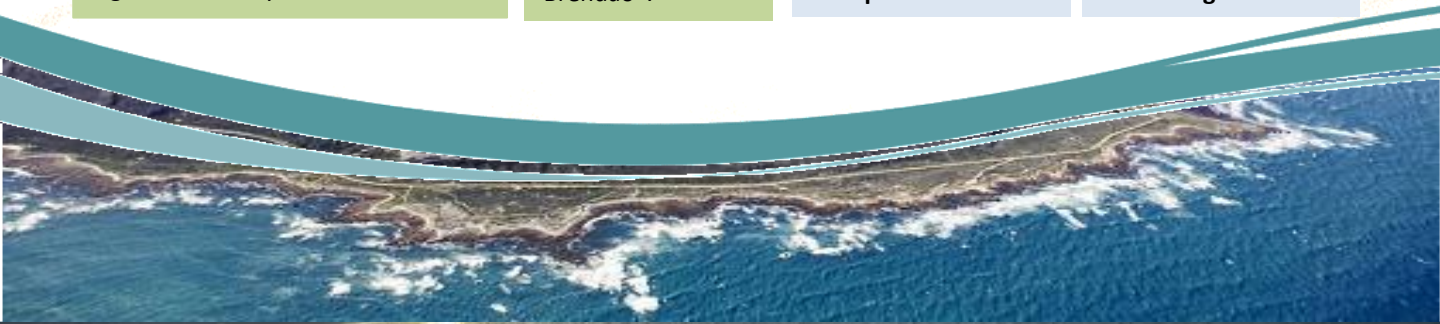
New staff appointments



Betsie Graaff
HR/Admin officer
Previously Agulhas
Receptionist



Branwill Solomans
WfW Field assistant
Previously TMNP
Field Ranger





“Pat yourselves on your backs and give yourself a big hand as we sing: ‘You are a jolly good fellow’, then sing ‘We are jolly good fellows’” - Dr Nomvuselelo Songelwa, Director Park Operations.

On 27 March 2014 the Agulhas Working for Wetlands Programme celebrated being the Best Project country-wide and received the Best Project Award, which acknowledges excellence in the implementation of the programme’s wetland rehabilitation projects. The Best Projects Awards came into inception in 2007 after Working for Wetlands saw the need to acknowledge projects that achieve their targets, produce a consistently high standard of rehabilitation work, innovate in order to achieve project objectives, overcome challenging conditions or excel in building relationships with stakeholders, empower their beneficiaries and raise awareness. Over the past five years this recipe has worked exceptionally well in encouraging projects to strive to overcome adversity and excel. The programme has realised that its partners and funders need to also be involved and get to witness the great work being produced as a result of their funding. The Agulhas Working for Wetlands Programme prides itself in the huge impact it has in the lives of all the communities throughout the Strandveld, while rehabilitating the essential ecological infrastructure.



Dr N. Songelwa
ME Parks Division



We are jolly good fellows!!



Bulelwa Msengi
Park Manager welcoming
all present



Proud Agulhas Working for Wetlands team with their awards



Arnold Viegeland,
Outgoing Project Manager



S. Koert
Admin Assistant



Springfield interventions

