



AgulhasNPark eBulletin



VOL 9 • NR 4 • March /hoa#gais 2019

Cape Agulhas Lighthouse celebrating 170 years

www.sanparks.org

South African
NATIONAL PARKS

Cape Agulhas Lighthouse: 170 years old and still shining bright

The Cape Agulhas Lighthouse is situated on the historic farm *Paapenkuylsfontein aan Angulas Rift*; today it is *Paapekuil Fontein* 218, portion 4, about 900m east of the Southernmost Tip of Africa. Johannes De Villiers received the land as a loan farm in those early years and after him Matthys Johannes Lourens (*1753) in 1790. The first official owners were Reitz, Breda, Joubert & Co., *Papenkuylsfontein*, no 281, portion "d" in 1836 and on August 3, 1852 **Michiel Jacob Van Breda**, became the sole owner. Portnet Lighthouse Services took over ownership of portion 4 and other portions in 1902, 1907 and 1931.



After all these years and various changes and add-ons, the building was declared unsafe in the 1960s and the light keeper and staff withdrawn. The government of the day wanted to demolish the lighthouse, but the community resisted and in 1973 it was declared a national monument, today a provincial heritage site. In 1983 the building underwent a major restoration and was opened on March 25, 1988 when the automatic light came into operation. On January 28, 1994 the Lighthouse Museum was officially opened. On **March 1, 1999** SANParks took over Portnet land officially to manage it in a contractual agreement for 99 years.



Visit the Lighthouse Museum for more interesting information about the Lighthouse and other lighthouses on the South African coastline from 9:00 to 17:00; the tower closes at 16:30.



The most southerly cape on the African continent is part of a coastline dotted with dangerous reefs, on which more ships have been wrecked than on any other part of the South African coast. The necessity for a lighthouse at Cape Agulhas was recognised by **Colonel CC Michell**, surveyor-general and civil engineer of the Cape colonial government, early in 1837 and local farmer and prominent Cape inhabitant at the time, Michiel Van Breda. After approval of the building site Colonel Michell started the planning and the foundation stone was laid on January 8, 1848. Final construction ended on December 15, 1848. The light was officially lit on **March 1, 1849**.

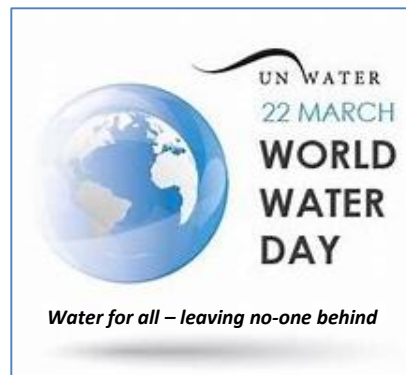
International Historic Civil Engineering Landmark

In 2012 the building underwent its second major restoration and was closed for 10 months. The American Civil Engineering Association in 2016 nominated the lighthouse as an International Historic Civil Engineering Landmark, one of three in Southern Africa.



World Water Day 2019

What is World Water Day? Sustainable Development Goal 6 is crystal clear: **water for all** by 2030. By definition, it means **leaving no-one behind**. But today, billions of people are still living without safe water - their households, schools, workplaces, farms and factories struggling to survive and thrive. Marginalised groups – women, children, refugees, indigenous peoples, disabled people and many others – are often overlooked, and sometimes face discrimination, as they try to access and manage the safe water they need. This World Water Day, March 22, is about tackling the water crisis by addressing the reasons why so many people are being left behind. What are you going to do about it? (SOURCE: <http://www.worldwaterday.org/>)



Christa Jomat 1972 – 2019: a tribute

It was with sadness that the Agulhas National Park said goodbye to Christa Jomat, fondly known as Bokka and long-time member of the Agulhas Biodiversity Social project - from 2008 as a Working for Wetlands intern, from 2009 as a Working for Water contractor and from 2010 as a Working for Water Field Assistant until January 2019. She passed away peacefully on January 16 after a long battle with cancer. Christa dedicated her life to conservation, people and the community. She dedicated 10 years of her life to providing leadership, assistance and developing Working for Water participants. Her presence and leadership will be sadly missed by all, *Uwil'umthonkhulu*: a giant tree has fallen. (Thys Ahrends, Assistant Cluster Manager and Monitoring and Compliance and colleagues, Biodiversity Social Projects)



New Working for Water Project Manager

Tinyiko Chester Chauke recently joined the Agulhas Working for Water project on January 7 2019. Tinyiko joined SANBI as a Contract consultant for the identification and eradication of Category One invader species in Cape Town after graduating from Cape Peninsula University of Technology with a National Diploma in Nature Conservation. He then joined Cape Nature in 2013 for five years as a Fire Operation officer, managing and implementing the Working on Fire programme. In March 2018 the programme discontinued and was taken over by the Greater Cederberg FPA (Fire Protection Association) where Tinyiko continued with the programme under the FPA until December 2018. Tinyiko is passionate about the conservation of the natural environment and is looking forward to this new opportunity in the Agulhas National Park. (Pontsho Ramila, Working for Water Field Assistant)



The Agulhas National Park's Working for Water project

The Agulhas National Park's Working for Water project started 21 years ago in 1998, a Biodiversity Social Project initiated by the South African Government through the Departments of Water Affairs, Agriculture and Environmental Affairs. The areas initially cleared was not yet proclaimed as part of the Agulhas National Park and also included part of the Elim Mission settlement, Rietfontein and some smaller biodiversity important areas. Although the main aim was to clear invasive alien plants in Agulhas National Park, the project created jobs for the small rural communities of Elim, Bredasdorp, Struisbaai, Waenhuiskrans (Arniston) and Napier, as well as Gansbaai, Buffeljagtsbaai and surrounding farms, other smaller farming communities like Spanjaardskloof and informal settlements. For many this was their first job, but from the outset they have shown discipline, hard work, dedication and a willingness to learn. Apart from the provision of hundreds of jobs, training and education for previously disadvantaged communities and minorities were provided. In 1998 the project started with over 30 contractors under the management of Roger Bailey. Thys Ahrends took over in 2003 and established a very successful project. The project indeed lives up to their mission: 'to eradicate all alien plant species from the natural Agulhas fynbos areas so as to restore the veld processes and patterns to its original state and in so doing improve the rich biodiversity and associated life forms of the Agulhas Plain, as well as regenerate the natural water flows.' The recovering of the natural landscape of fynbos, wetlands and coastal dunes in Agulhas National Park is phenomenal.



2012 Ratelrivier – turn off to Die Dam 2013



Rhenosterkop back road before and after 2014



Twenty years on: how the Agulhas National Park has developed

2001

Portions of *Ou Baai*, Paapekuilfontein 281(10), Pietie se Punt 281 (57) *Ou Plaas* (Suiderstrand) and Erf 665, where the Park's office is situated today, were acquired. The first Park Manager, Ettienne Fourie, was officially appointed. The staff component consisted of the Park Manager and an Administration officer. The first office was at Potpourri Stay of today, moving to 214 Main Road after the property was acquired. The Working for the Coast project started officially in May.



Ettienne Fourie



Aletta Fourie

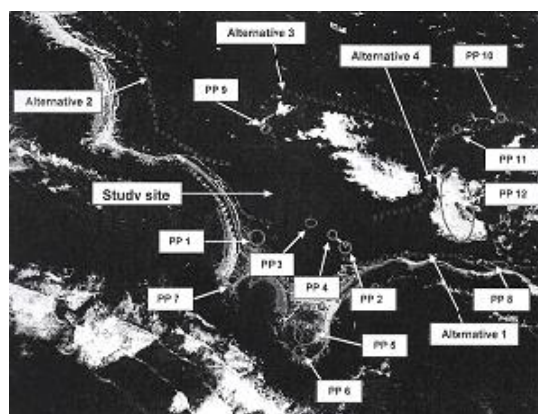


Ou Baai, Paapekuilfontein 281(10), Pietie se Punt 281 (57), *Ou Plaas* (Suiderstrand)

The Agulhas Rest camp is situated on portion 10 of the historical farm *Paapekuilfontein*, which was originally a loan farm given to Johannes De Villiers under the fieldcornetcy of *Zoetendaals Vley* of M. J. Lourens for animal husbandry. Afterwards it became formally part of the farm *Zoetendals Valle* owned by the Van Breda family before 1853. According to some maps it was also known as *Southdowns* at some stage. The Van Breda sheep grazed in the area. Evidence of this is the stock post situated at the back of Suiderstrand. In 1898 P.K. Albertyn bought about 80 hectares, including the point, from Mike Van Breda, also called *Sand Knoll Point* since before 1853. A cottage was built in the same year as a birthday gift for Mr Albertyn's wife. The property reminded her of the book she had read – the well-known story called the *Blue Lagoon* and she called the property *The Lagoon*. The land was bought to consolidate the coast line.

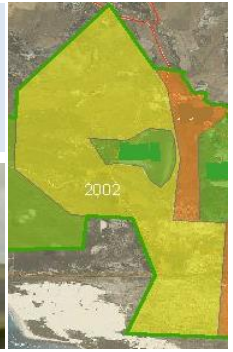
Shell middens

Twelve middens were recorded on these Paapekuilfontein portions that is today the Rest camp, which identified it as an important cultural historical site. Shell middens are found all along the South African coast. It was formed through different actions, such as naturally by sea storms, seagulls or over time by prehistoric man. The middens made by man contain remains of stone tools, potshards, bone, fish hooks from bone and stone sinkers. The world's oldest middens are found along the Cape coast. They date from the last 12 000 years when the sea level rose to the level it is today. Sea levels stabilised 4000 years ago and the best conserved middens are younger than this date. Shellfish was used as a food dating back 120 000 years.



2002

The Office annex (Erf 2), Springfield (Remainder and 1) and Rhenosterkop (285 Remainder and 1) were bought. More valuable Fynbos and cultural historical sites were added. Rhenosterkop was already registered as a heritage site (national monument) by the previous owners.



Rhenosterkop Heritage Site

In accordance with proclamation 6028 in Government Gazette 1083 dated May 26 1978, a certain piece of abolished quitrent land (Portion 1 of Rhenosterkop) of 303,813ha plus a certain piece of abolished quitrent land (remainder of the farm) of 461,717ha were declared a national monument (heritage site). They were deemed to be important ecologically and also because they included four historic buildings in vernacular style. The buildings were built, probably from salvaged shipwreck materials.

Valuable fynbos added

Rhenosterkop and Springfield is situated in the Overberg Dune Strandveld (Mucina & Rutherford), also called the Dune Asteraceous Fynbos or *Duineveld Fynbos* (Mustart, Cowling, Albertyn). The Overberg Dune Strandveld consists of dune vegetation dominated by *Thamnochortus insignis*, *Metalasia muricata* and *Ischyrolepis eleocharis* occurring on calcareous sands forming dunes to sandstones and limestones of the Bredasdorp Group on underlying Table Mountain Group sandstone. The largest of this type surrounds the Agulhas Peninsula. It is the least threatened vegetation type with a conservation target of 36%. About 30% is being statutorily conserved in Agulhas National Park and Cape Nature reserves. More than 5% is transformed by urban development and cultivation. Typical specimens are Dekriet, Thatching grass, *Thamnochortus insignis*, Blombos, *Metalasia muricata*, Seaguarri, *Euclea racemosa*, Rosyntjebos, *Searsia crenata*, Wasbessie, Waxberry, *Morella cordifolia*, Melkhoutboom, *Sideroxylon inerme*, Bietou, *Chrysanthemoides monilifera*, Lemoenbessie, Noem-Noem, *Carissa bispinosa*, Aambeibossie, Christmas berry, *Chironia baccifera* and Kooigoed, *Helichrysum crispum*.



What's in a name?

Soetanysberg was called **Zoutpansberg** by the first travellers who came from the Cape to investigate shipwrecks, because of the salt pans to the north-east of the mountain. It became **Zoet Anysberg** referring to the buchu, the Anysboegoe, *Agathosma cerefolium*, which grows abundantly on the mountain and its foothills. The farm **Zoetendals Vallei** was documented as **Zoudendaals Valley** because of the proximity to the salt pans. **De Ruigte Fontein** or Ruigtefontein comes from a fountain between Hangnes and Bergplaas, now totally overgrown by vegetation. **Hangnes** refers to a very big bee nest suspended from the rock face in a kloof just above the farmstead. Bergplaas was once called **Soetanysplaas**, being situated at the foot of Soetanysberg. **ZoetZuur** or **SoetenSuur** refers to the two types of vegetation that grow on Soetanysberg.



Hangnes kloof



Anysboegoe *A cerefolium*



Rhenosterkop – rhinos did roam the Agulhas Plain once upon a time as this rhino skull found in the Agulhas dunes is evidence of.



2019 was declared by the United Nations as the International Year of Indigenous Languages.

March in Khoe, *!hoa#gais*, means turned ears or hyraxes are giving birth

