



# FRIENDS OF TOKAI FOREST

P O Box 442 Bergvliet 7864

## NEWSLETTER NO 1 JUNE/JULY 1996

Dear Friends and Concerned Citizens,

Thank you for braving the storm to attend our inaugural meeting on Saturday 15th June or for expressing interest in joining this new Wildlife Society Friends group.

Firstly, I must apologise for the over-ambitious agenda which prevented our really getting to grips with the needs of the Forest itself and some of your own particular concerns. As we see below, however, we have still been able to make a start.

Our first committee met shortly afterwards and decided to concentrate our initial activities as follows:

### ADMIN & MANAGEMENT

Chairman:	John Green	Ph 721341
Secretary:	Lesley Skarzynski	Ph 722282
Treasurer:	Rudolph Skibbe	Ph 727653
Membership:	Geraldine Higgs	Ph 724176
Publicity:	William Barker	Ph 7941155

### MAJOR PROJECTS

Natural Habitat & Species:	Sibyl Morris	Ph 724150
Streams & Riparian Zone:	Interim John Green	
Alien Invaders:	Bob Lee	Ph 727522
Arboretum:	Lesley S & Judy McKune	Ph 752107
Walks & Trails:	Geraldine Higgs	Ph 724176
Mountain Biking Liaison:	Warren Fraser	Ph 7613298
Facilities (Bridges/Parking):	Interim John Green	
Activity & CPPNE Planning:	Maurice Deary	Ph 720726
Education (Schools Involve):	Interim John Green	
Education (Information Centre):	Volunteer needed	

The activity allocations are aimed at starting to make it happen in these general priority areas. None of us pretend to be experts in these fields but we consider these are major areas where the help of Friends is most needed. Please advise if you would like to get involved in any of these, or other, areas as the opportunities are endless and OUR FOREST NEEDS YOU! The following may give you some ideas.



# FRIENDS OF TOKAI FOREST

P O Box 442 Bergvliet 7864



## NATURAL HABITAT & SPECIES

The initial task will be to identify where in the area there is natural habitat and start listing the various species including flora, trees, birds, reptiles etc. As can be seen in the latest June 96 edition of the SA Botanical Society journal, Veld & Flora, Sibyl Morris has already, over the last 4 years, done sterling work in the lower forest. A number of endangered species of flora have been identified in the last remaining acid sandveld habitat where pines have been harvested. The bird count in the upper forest is 78 including some raptor specials such as Honey Buzzard. There is a wonderful patch of climax indigenous forest in amongst the redwoods higher up. What about the nerinas and other fynbos species above the plantations on the Elephant's Eye path? We can then start putting out information listing species, Information Centre exhibits, contact with experts etc

This kind of information also provides justification for eg the Wildlife and Botanical Societies to base a case for reclassification of the lower forest, "East of Orpen Rd" from "Low Intensity Activity" to "Special Preservation" in the latest Table Mountain (CPPNE) National Park Plan. SAFCOL is currently preparing a case for a compartment to be declared as a Natural Heritage Site.

Sibyl will show us some of her excellent slides as part of our next meeting on Fri 9th Aug at 3.30 in the Arboretum.

## STREAMS & RIPARIAN ZONE

The Tokai forest is the source of a number of streams/rivers and the current management of SAFCOL is putting a major effort into cleaning up this important riverine area. Have you seen the work that Isaac has done to open up the Prinseskasteel stream above the Arboretum or the progress of Gareth and his team in reclaiming and cleaning up the river through the "Lower Forest"? We can get involved with planting the new terraces with appropriate indigenous plants, testing water quality, identifying and action in new priority areas etc. Suggestions and volunteers? We also have some detailed riverine management plans which were a priority of the the erstwhile LCCV, before the formation of the Southern Sub-structure, which need to be actioned.

## ALIEN INVADERS

Bob Lee & I had our first lesson in control of these nasties when we visited with the Friends of Silverboom Kloof at Helderberg on 22/6. Bob is now eager to form a group of volunteers to start eating our own elephant one mouthful at a time! He plans to start with the kloof/donga on the Elephant's Eye track immediately above the Arboretum. Help please.



# FRIENDS OF TOKAI FOREST

P O Box 442 Bergvliet 7864



## ARBORETUM

The Nairobi Arboretum, very similar to our own, has its own dedicated group of "Friends" who map out paths, bird & tree lists, organise concerts, conduct educational trails etc. David Daitz has suggested an initiative to start replanting areas of the arboretum where the old trees have reached the end of their allotted span. Judy and Lesley are busy researching some of the excellent material available from SAFCOL's records to develop an overall management plan. They are eager to get a team together to start supporting the cradle of forestry in South Africa.

## WALKS & TRAILS

The Tokai Forest area encompasses some of the most beautiful and interesting environment in which to ramble or hike seriously, yet most of it is remarkably little known and unused. Geraldine has taken ownership of the important "walks" portfolio and needs an active group of volunteers to put together a series of regular walks of varying difficulty and a reasonable degree of environmental expertise to cover a wide range of interests. We have an invitation from the active trails group of the Friends of Silvermine to link up trails and have some joint hikes. Lots of opportunity for everyone from toddlers through twitchers and mountaineers.

## FACILITIES & MAINTENANCE

We are blessed to have a wonderful area in which to walk our dogs, ride horses, mountain bike, let the kids enjoy the open air etc. A few simple bridges over the river, or a path cleared of winter storm felled trees, or a parking area not covered in muddy potholes, makes such a difference. Maybe you could just take a shopping bag in your pocket occasionally and pick up some the junk with which less thoughtful souls pollute our forest. A small group of friends who just quietly identify and get the job done can make a huge difference and give the SAFCOL team the moral support they need. John is co-ordinating the lower forest and Warren would like to encourage the bikers to get involved higher up.

## EDUCATION

We need to get school environmental clubs involved in all these projects. This will help the new generation to play a part in fulfilling the vision of our new Constitutional Rights (Section 24 adopted on 8/5/96) "Everyone has a right to an environment that is not harmful to their health or well-being and to have the environment protected for the benefit of present or future generations". What a wonderful opportunity we all have to get involved to make this happen right on our doorstep!