



# FRIENDS OF TOKAI FOREST

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WILDLIFE AND ENVIRONMENT SOCIETY OF SA

1999

**NEWSLETTER NO 13**

**NOVEMBER**

**FROM THE TOADSTOOL**

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CPNP. We  
Plantation r

As we draw to the end of the Millenium, we face major planning initiatives and privatisation of State properties in Tokai (especially Porter School and SAFCOL). These changes have the potential to fundamentally alter our area: whether for the better or for the worse will depend to a large degree on how constructively we can involve ourselves in the scoping processes for any proposed changes.

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I believe that the opening words of Brian Huntley's, Roy Siegfried's and Clem Sunter's 1989 Booklet "SA Environments into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" to be some of the most important that I have ever read:

**The Arboretum**

The effort th  
Arboretum f

**"The present generation of mankind is the first one that can irreversibly transform our planet for the worse. It is also the last generation with the capacity to introduce the changes required to avert environmental disaster. South Africa is a microcosm of the challenges facing the world. Will we choose a path which provides a rich and sustainable heritage for our children or will we descend into a wasteland of lost opportunities?"**

On World Environment Day in June 1998 at a Friends of Tokai Forest get-together, we agreed that we should **PROMOTE A VISION FOR THE TOKAI GATEWAY** to the newly established Cape Peninsula National Park (CPNP). We agreed that there was an urgent need for an integrated vision for the whole area controlled by State or quasi- State bodies including CPNP, SAFCOL, the Porter School and the two other Constantia Reform Schools, plus the approaches managed by Local Authorities. We urged that all these bodies plus local resident and environmental associations should network to develop a guiding vision for the many subsequent plans and negotiations which will inevitably transform this beautiful but under- utilised fringe and gateway to our unique central Peninsula mountain chain.

We are currently involved in a number of major initiatives by each one of the different controlling authorities. All of them are looking at their own turf in isolation:

- **The Western Cape Education Department** is currently holding public hearings on the possible closure of the three Constantia/ Tokai reform schools. We are pressing for a holistic vision and will also meet Helen Zille later this month with other community organisations from the area.



**"OUR MISSION: PEOPLE CARING FOR TOKAI FOREST"**

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- In February SAFCOL divided its commercial forestry interests into seven regional packages and called for privatisation bids for each package. In October they announced that they had received tenders from preferred bidders for five of the regions but would have to look again at options for the Western Cape and Northern Province, where no suitable bids had been received. They are losing some R12 million pa in the Cape, and have trimmed expenses below a level necessary to maintain, let alone restore, the seriously degraded riverine environment and alien infestations. We have written to three Central Government Ministers (Environment, Forestry & Privatisation) urging that they adhere to previous undertakings and proper public process when considering alternatives.

activities.

- **The Cape Peninsula National Park (CPNP)**, which will ultimately combine the Peninsula, is currently the subject of a detailed public participation process for developing management policy and an Integrated Environment Management System (IEMS). (Attached is our 12<sup>th</sup> November 1999 submission to the CPNP) scope to address the urgent need for an overall vision for the area and comments on the various aspects of the process.
- **The South Peninsula Municipality (SPM)** is currently extending its park plan to set principles and guidelines for the future development of the area by Wetton, the Tokai watershed, Muizenberg and Strandfontein. We are aware of the wealth of the State lands within this area, which were being excluded from the park with the hope that they will be incorporated. We have received assurances that "The State, along with local property owners, whether private or public, is required to follow due process with regard to a number of legislative prescriptions".

reasons, for

**Proposed changes in State or other land usage will therefore have to conform between Land Use Planning Ordinance (LUPO); National Environment Management Act (NEMA), as well as local planning initiatives such as Constantia- Tokai Valley Local Area Growth Management and Development Plan, and the CMC initiated Peninsula Urban Edge Study (which is integrated with the baseline scoping reports for the SPM Sub- Regional Structure Plan).**

From the above it is highly apparent that there is a one time opportunity right now to play a significant role in *choosing a path which provides a rich and sustainable heritage for our children.*

Our resources are very limited but we are networking with other residents' associations, Friends' Groups, the Wildlife and Environment Society and the Peninsula Mountain Forum. Often we are unable to participate in public meetings because of clashes in dates. We would welcome any assistance in getting involved in any one or more of the above initiatives or the future ones which are bound to be spawned from the current developments. It is essential that we ensure that we use the opportunities which the democratic legal system now provides. The alternative is to *descend into a wasteland of lost opportunities*: Gone are the days when the State could do whatever it pleased with public land.

Cape Peninsula  
National Park

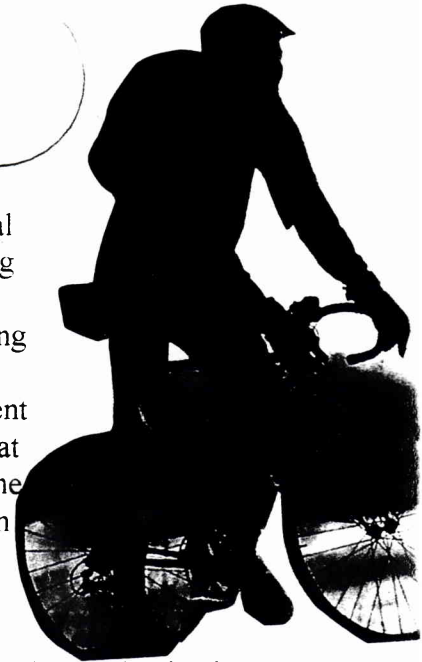


TOKAI MANOR HOUSE

# which way now ?

## ***Mountain Biking on the Constantiaberg***

Mountain biking is one of the fastest growing international recreational activities. Already some 300 bikers access the slopes of Constantiaberg on a Sunday and toil up the forestry trails, onto the tarred road, and up to the Vlakkenberg Nek. The more adventurous, want to avoid returning the same way, and have recently been coming down a path through a lovely forested kloof. We voiced our concerns to SAFCOL management who arranged for us to meet with a couple of the bikers who realise that we need to work together to find a solution. The kloof area falls into the CPNP. We consider that another return route needs to be established in Plantation rather than on sensitive indigenous forest or fynbos slopes.



## ***Sand Plain Fynbos in the Lower Tokai Forest***

The SPM environmental overview for the Sub- Regional Plan states that "urbanisation has transformed much of the sand plain fynbos. Its conservation status is very poor and at least 84 Red Data plant species occur in this vegetation type within the boundaries of the metropolis, and are in danger of extinction. .... An important patch exists in the Tokai Forest with red data species, including *Diastella proteoides*. Despite the area being largely under pines, patches of fynbos still survive in the open areas. This site is unique in that it is the only known site on the basal slopes of Table Mountain characterised as sand plain fynbos." Our CPNP IEMS submission draws attention to both this and biking.

## ***The Arboretum Oak Leaf Trail***

The effort that Michael Fowkes has put into surveying the individual trees in the Arboretum has been of great value in leading school groups. We now deviate from the gums and go up to wonderful grove of very ancient cork oaks which must have been planted long before 1885 to provide corks for the early Constantia/ Tokai wine farms. We then return to the Canary pines through a grove of cedars and encourage the children to be dinosaurs walking in ancient Gondwana forests. From there we cross the wetland upstream over a new bridge made by SAFCOL to replace the old one which had rotted away. Lesley Skarzynski and Jenny Mountain are now adapting the self guided information "Oak Leaf Trail" to incorporate these changes, and have put in new signposts where some people were losing the path. The new trail brochure should shortly be on sale in the Lister's Place Tea Room.

## ***Afro- Montane Trees for the Arboretum***

The lovely young trees, which Jeremy Croudace used at or AGM to demonstrate suitable indigenous trees for planting on the fringe of the CPNP, have now been planted close to the ' a room. When they grow bigger, we will develop a guide to encourage gardeners to plant indigenous trees and discourage the spread of aliens onto the slopes of our unique park with its heritage of fynbos and rare pockets of Afro- Montane forests.

## ***Control of Invasive Aliens***

The streams in the Tokai catchment area are very badly infested with aliens. Despite the excellent work started by SAFCOL to clear the Prinseskasteel immediately above the Arboretum, the river flow has already dried up as the gums soak up every available drop.





**WITH GERRY** Tel: 712 4176 : 671 7076 : 082.5500868

- Sun.24.Oct: Newlands Forest  
**WITH PIXIE LITTLEWORT**
- Sun.28.Nov: Pantomime & Champagne Breakfast  
**WITH THE GHOST OF THE MANOR HOUSE**
- Sun.19.Dec: Carols by Candlelight  
**With a String Quartet & Bag Pipers**
- Sun.23.Jan: Star Gazing  
**WITH THE OBSERVATORY**

If you ever wondered about the birds and the bees and the sycamore trees then this was a walk to be on. Pixie Littlewort, Friends of Newlands Forest, is a mime of information and a character to boot. We walked through the Old Olea (Olive Tree or Black Ironwood) Forest, criss-crossed the river and for all intent and purposes, could have been in Knysna. It was beautiful. We went to find out more about forest regeneration. Forest margin dynamics and gap dynamics. In other words the combining of old and new forest, the exploitation of gaps (left by fallen trees) by herbivores, Lianas (Monkey Ropes) and how herbivores eat up saplings which in all probability had stood "stand-by" for hundreds of years waiting to fill the gap but then eaten up by the greedy herbivores. Monster movie stuff! We saw the damage created by Muti hunters. A suggestion was made by Rory Wood of Rare Woods: if he could supply the Sangomas with the bark they required from his business, perhaps we could lessen the destruction of these magnificent and important-to-the-environment trees.

Don't forget to join us on Sun.28.Nov. at 9.00 a.m. Meet us at the Arboretum for a Champagne Breakfast followed by a Pantomime – **THE GHOST OF THE MANOR HOUSE** - on the steps of the Manor House this year, where it all unfolded long time ago.....

Bring: umbrella, chairs, rugs, own glass, bowl, plate, knife and spoon, coffee or tea and always a hat. R10 per head. Orange Juice, Champagne, Fruit/Salad & Muffins will be supplied. A easy walk on the Oak Leaf Trail is an option if you have the energy after the Champagne! Lovely outing for the children.

**Carols by Candlelight** is a must on Sun.19.Dec. 6.30 p.m. We advise you to come early for the queue. Bring rugs candles and picnic baskets. Last year we were "amateurs", it being our first time and we certainly did not expect the turnout. This year we will be a bit more organised. We have for you a String Quartet. Bag Pipers who will lead the children up to the Arboretum from the river, our "Forest Folk" (Wood Cutters) and their children doing a presentation and more. Extra wine will be supplied from the local farms. All you have to bring is your picnic baskets, candles and rugs and a donation for the evening. This year we are appealing to the children to bring a ("old") toy for those less fortunate.

**STAR GAZING** in the new Millennium with the new skies in focus will be on the evening of Sun.23.Jan. 7.30 p.m. Meet a representative from the Observatory at the middle gate of Dennendal West Avenue. We may trip up to the mountain. Bring coffee.

Always remember your binoculars (you just never know) – we have 17 species of raptors flying around the forest, including the Fish Eagle. (In case you didn't know, you can invert your binoculars, look through the other side and see insects and fynbos with dynamic close-up clarity.) Don't forget your camera for the beauty around you and good memories to be had. And R5,00 if you are not a member on any of our walks.

Go easy till the end of the year. And relax!

(See p.2 marked # - Berta)  
(Submission, 12 Nov. 1999, CPNP stakeholder Programme)

## FRIENDS OF TOKAI FOREST

*"People Caring for Tokai"*

### SUBMISSION TO COMMON GROUND CONSULTING RE THE IEMS & MANAGEMENT POLICY FOR CPNP

The Committee of the Friends of Tokai Forest re-affirm the position taken by the public meeting of the Group on June 5<sup>th</sup> 1998 that we should **PROMOTE A VISION FOR THE TOKAI GATEWAY**. Essentially this requires:

- Urgent need for an integrated vision (and environment management plan) for the whole Tokai area within the CPPNE and Urban Fringe of the CPNP including the areas already under the stewardship of the CPNP; the SAFCOL areas of Tokai (and Cecilia) including the plantations and Arboretum; and the Porter School and Constantia Boys and Girls reform schools.
- Networking on a constructive basis with all the above state and quasi-state bodies as well as the local authorities and resident and environmental CBO's to establish a creative guiding vision for the many detailed subsequent plans and negotiations.
- Extremely urgent action now in the light of the Western Cape Education Department's current public process on "**the possible closure of the reform schools in Constantia/ Tokai**" and "**SAFCOL's current process of Privatisation**" as well as the SPM's current process of determining a Regional Sub-Structure Plan for the area bounded by the Tokai/ Constantia Water Catchment areas and the CMC's Urban Edge Study.
- Tokai is the natural "People's Gateway" to the Central CPNP as well as being in the heart of the important historic and scenic Constantia Valley and Tourist Route. It is the natural Headquarters for the CPNP and is more accessible to the majority of the Cape's residents than any other gateway.
- There must be significant scope for integrating many of the activities currently spread among the existing 3 reform schools and to introduce other education activities (such as learning disabled schools and Life-skills training). Creative reforms to education made within the holistic broader context of the CPNP and robust plantations plus the wonderful opportunities for Outcomes Based Education within the Tokai Arboretum, must be of great value in rehabilitating Youth at Risk, Learning Disabled, and Township youth being prepared to play a constructive role in our new society.
- There must also be great scope for releasing under-utilised and historic buildings, including the Tokai Manor House, for Gateway activities for the CPNP which could provide a cash flow both for funding education and the management of the park.
- There must be scope for increasing controlled high impact recreational activities (such as mountain biking, horse and dog activities, picnicking, camping, and community activities) on the lower slopes and plantation areas. These too could provide much needed cashflow and take place in already degraded areas where the natural habitat cannot be realistically rehabilitated.
- However, whatever changes are considered, great care must be taken to retain the quiet rural context of the area and to complement rather than destroy the historic context of the area (from Gondwana to pre-Colonial times as well as the changes since colonisation).

Regarding **INTEGRATED ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT POLICY**, we urge that the following be incorporated into the plan:

- **Pockets of indigenous forests** in the Kloofs and Riverine areas be clearly identified and specific practical management plans be developed in conjunction with responsible volunteer (such as Friends Groups) and management bodies (such as SAFCOL).
- Strict control parameters be built into any activity on the fringe or gateways to the park which involves food preparation, distribution, consumption or waste disposal to **ensure that the baboon population is not encouraged to change from natural food foraging behavior.**
- **Mountain Biking** is one of the fastest growing international recreational activities. It can also be a high impact and dangerous activity and does not easily combine with horse riding or low impact activities such as hiking. There is precedent for bikers to pay for access to trails. In consultation with responsible other local user bodies and environmentalists, we consider that there is considerable scope to develop controlled trails where the impact can be contained, without damage to the natural environment or reasonable relationships with other users on a bikers paying for "services desired and provided" basis. We would be pleased to work with park management and responsible biking associations in this regard.
- **Alien invader control on CPNP fringes.** We consider that there is a wealth of experience and willingness on the part of volunteer organisations to work with the CPNP management to identify areas of infestation, educate residents and local authorities on the fringe, and if necessary to encourage legal compliance with alien control. We urge that CPNP tap into this considerable resource base.
- **Networking with environmental and resident CBO's.** For complex reasons, for which blame can be apportioned to all parties concerned, the co-operation between parties has not been as resonant as it could have been. We urge that a new start be made to work together in the interest of our unique heritage and pledge our organisation to strive towards resonance in this regard.
- **Pockets of Acid Sandveld Fynbos.** There are small pockets of well preserved examples of this very rare and seriously threatened habitat within the plantations below Orpen Rd. SAFCOL has permitted the cessation of commercial forestry activities in the immediate surround and a proper management plan is required to manage and steadily expand this habitat within the context of a well utilised community recreation area.
- **Any considered change of land use within the CPNP, CPPNE or Urban Fringe must be the subject of proper public process from scoping through completion and subsequent management.** The Local Authorities have a list of the processes upon which they will require compliance by all parties, not the least the State or quasi- State bodies. It is however only reasonable that as far as practical, process must be made as constructive as possible. We consider that if designed into the process from inception, the positive could be emphasised and the negatives managed. Ideally, **developments should to the greatest extent possible be confined to use of existing structures.**
- **Streams and views should be managed from Crest to Coast.** A major effort is required to rid the riverine areas of serious alien infestation.