

WILDLIFE AND  
ENVIRONMENT  
SOCIETY OF SA

# FRIENDS OF TOKAI FOREST

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NEWSLETTER NO 14

MARCH 2000

FROM THE TOADSTOOL

John Green 7121341(Tel)

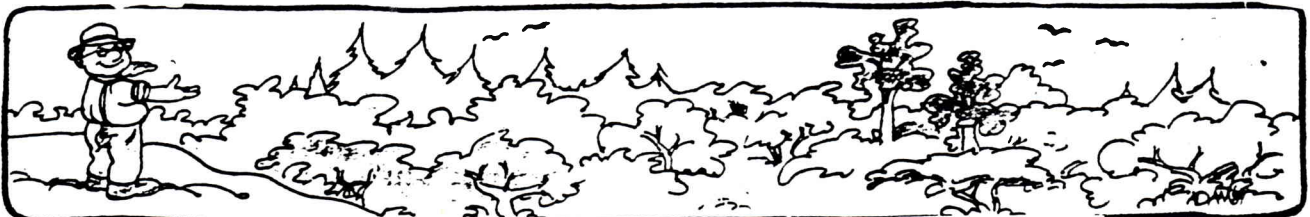
7132448(Fax): email [john@green.com](mailto:john@green.com)

In our November newsletter we advised that 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. We have therefore taken every opportunity to constructively involve ourselves in the scoping processes for any proposed changes. Current indications are that the National and Regional authorities will respect democratic rights and due process which, as previously reported, the local authorities have already committed themselves.

**SAFCOL PRIVATISATION PROCESS:** Valli Moosa, National Minister of Environmental affairs and Tourism recently responded to the Peninsula Mountain Forum's October 1999 letter seeking certain assurances about the privatisation process.

- In terms of environment impact regulations(R 1182 5<sup>th</sup> Sept 1997), a change in land use from "agriculture", "undetermined", "nature conservation", or "zoned open space" to any other land use are identified (under Sect 21 of the Environmental Conservation Act (73 of 1989) ECA) as activities which may have a substantial detrimental effect on the environment. As such the environmental impact assessment (EIA) process will have to be followed. This EIA process includes a public participation process and applications for land use change will have to be evaluated by the provincial authorities.
- The National Environmental Management Act (NEMA Chap 5 section 24) "the potential impact of activities that require authorisation and which may significantly affect the environment must be considered, investigated and assessed prior to their implementation". Valli Moosa encourages us to discuss any conditions for afforestation with the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWA).
- Tokai and Cecilia Plantations fall within the Cape Peninsula Protected Natural Environment (CPPNE) and the Cape Metropolitan Council's defined "Urban Edge". Section 16 of ECA provides for the establishment of PNE's but assigns responsibility to the provinces (Proc R 29 of 7<sup>th</sup> Apr 1995).
- As the CPPNE is a proposed World Heritage Site, this area will be given sufficient protection to prevent activities that could cause environmental degradation.

The "visioning" process which the Cape Peninsula National Park (CPNP) is undergoing will also consider changes. *"It is your right as an interested or affected party to give inputs and raise concerns through the public participation process as part of the integrated environmental plan."*



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

John Green (Chairman) 712-1341 / Lesley Skarzynski (Secretary) 712-2282 / Rudi Skibbe (Treasurer) 712-7653 /  
Gerry Higgs (Walks & PRO) 712-4176 / Les Keith (Aliens) 712-9859 / Michael Fowkes (Membership) 712-4663

The Minister of the Environment is giving us every opportunity to participate in scoping the future of our Tokai Forests. We are in serious need of willing heads who are prepared to learn, consult, and get involved in these processes as stewards for the future protection of this special area.

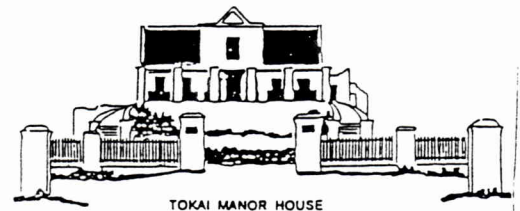
The National Council of the Wildlife and Environment Society is currently writing to Government that "Our Society feels strongly that Tokai and Cecilia State Forest Plantations should be excluded from SAFCOL's current privatisation bid package and eventually be included within the boundaries of the CPNP and therefore under the custodianship of SA National Parks. The commercial timber plantations on these areas could be leased out to a private operator or gradually phased out in favour of conversion of these areas to indigenous vegetation for conservation, recreation and tourism purposes. We firmly believe that the above functions would best reflect the true long-term land-use value of these areas." (WESSA Council has also appealed for the Western Shores of St Lucia currently controlled by SAFCOL to be incorporated into the Greater St Lucia Wetland Park).

### **CORE FLORA CONSERVATION SITES ON THE CAPE FLATS**

I am delighted to report that Sybil Morris received a letter from the Botanical Society's Endangered Wildflower Project advising "I have pleasure in enclosing the summary report of our Cape Flats Flora study. You will see that the Lower Tokai Forest has been identified as a core flora conservation site having, in addition to being a rare habitat, a number of highly conservation worthy plant species. ( 8 Red Data Book species and 184 South African species along with 30 different species of alien are identified)." Botsoc's letter ends with a special word of thanks to Sybil and urges the Tokai Friends to keep up with their "great conservation efforts". We need more active members if we are really going to make a difference conserving but this is an important step forward in protecting the Lower Forest from future developmental land- use change.

### **CLOSURE OF PORTER SCHOOL**

Since the series of public meetings held late last year on the proposed closure of the Porter School (and conversion of the Constantia School to a "Secure Care Centre"), and our subsequent meeting with MEC Helen Zille, it has been decided to close Porter. Porter land management thus transfers from the Provincial Department of Education to the Dept of Asset Management under MEC Hennie Bester. Through the Tokai Residents Association, community representatives have kept close to the process. We are lead to believe that there will probably be an acceptable interim management solution for the alternative use of the Porter School facilities and Tokai Manor House. It is hoped that a public meeting will be called before mid- April and that this will be the start of a proper public process for the alternate use of this beautiful and unique area within the defined CMC "Urban Edge".



# DS OF TOI

## CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT OF CAPE PENINSULA FORESTS

An excellent report has just been tabled by South African forest expert Coert Geldenhuys. It was prepared for the Afro- Montane Information Forum, of which we are a member, and funded by the Table Mountain Fund. "The Cape Peninsula is of immense cultural and historic importance with a very diverse, unique, and internationally recognised fynbos vegetation. Amongst all these features are 164 small patches of mixed evergreen forests, tucked away in the landscape, and providing equally unique features. They have received a low priority in the management of the vegetation of the Cape Peninsula and represent Afromontane high and scrub forest, and coastal Milkwood and scrub forest. *Floristically, structurally, and ecologically they are very different from fynbos, and cannot be managed like fynbos*".

"The forests have a greater resilience than generally accepted, provided that disturbances are within the tolerance levels and limits to which they have adapted. Beyond these levels, the forests are very sensitive. Forests can only survive and persist in "wind-shadow" areas in relation to the hot dry winds during summer. This was clearly demonstrated during the devastating January 2000 fires. When the fire regime is changed, such as protecting timber plantations, farmland and urban development against fire, alien invader plants establish, but as they grow up, they nurse the establishment of the shade-tolerant forest species. Such stands can be manipulated to gradually remove the plantation or invader plant species to facilitate the establishment of the forest species, i.e. to restore forest cost- effectively.

"The CPNP authorities have a specific responsibility to manage the CP forests as required by the National forests Act. .... The NGO's with a specific interest in the forests have a particular responsibility to develop a basis for good liaison and collaboration among themselves and with the CPNP authorities. Together they need to develop an appropriate management plan along the recommendations and guidelines provided in this report, including research, monitoring education in environmental matters and effective patrolling by rangers." *An injunction from the expert: who is willing to be involved?*

### UKUVUKA OPERATION FIRESTOP

***Recent devastating fires destroyed over 9000 hectares of precious land- this cannot happen again:*** Every Capetonian has a role to play to ensure safety from fires,

We are being urged by Ukuvuka Operation Firestop to help protect our community and to attend an open public meeting to hear what Ukavuka will be doing and how we can work together to restore the environmental integrity of our mountains.

**12<sup>th</sup> April 2000 at 18h30: Musgrave Park Retirement Village Hall  
Old Kendal Rd, Diep River      More Info Phone 0800 005 376**

## CAPE PENINSULA NATIONAL PARK

## WORLD HERITAGE SITE

The revised nomination now includes not only the Cape Peninsula but also the entire Cape Floristic Region



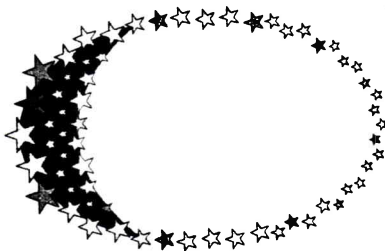
is giving us every oppo

FROM THE FOOTPRINTS

-WALKS-

Gerry Higgs Tel: 712.4176  
671.7076

"Star Gazing" with **Case Rijdsdijk** next to the Riverclub in February was fascinating and interesting. The dome was opened and the floor, on which we were standing, was raised and lowered to the telescope for viewing.



We observed the Moon, unique to our solar system in that it is the only satellite comparable size-wise to its planet earth. Many other planets have satellites, but they are small in relation to their mother planet. Best observed, not when it is full moon (when the sun shines directly creating no shadow) but when the sun is lower in the lunar sky, near the terminator, or irregular edge of the Moon, as we were lucky to have seen. We observed plains, high, sharp-peaked mountains, some of which reach a height of 35 000 feet (higher than Mt. Everest) or, as a corresponding range on the Earth, would tower 20 miles into the sky.

Thousands of craters named after philosophers and men of science, possibly caused by the impact of meteorites, ranging from approximately a mile across to magnificent walled plains of some 150 miles in diameter. From two of the most well-known, Copernicus and Tycho, bright streaks radiate for thousands of miles across mountains and valleys. Their origin is unknown; they may be some whitish material that welled up through cracks in the Moon's crust, or surface deposits thrown out when the craters were formed.

We saw Jupiter – a puffy ball of pulsating, shimmering white.  
And Saturn – clearly showing her rings (thousands, condensed.)  
We saw what they now believe to be the nucleus of all star formations. Called "The Nursery" this is a black hole containing millions and millions of tiny pin pricks.

March saw us walk from Muizenberg to Fish Hoek. A windy blustery day (hence the poor turn out no doubt, or was it the distance that appeared daunting?)  
Nonetheless, the walk was surprisingly sheltered and the distance easily covered by those who "braved" it. Added to it was the pleasure of purchasing fish at Kalk Bay for the evening braai. Delicious and delicate, some bought Cape Salmon (Geelbek), some Steenbras and others Kabeljou (Cob). These had been literally "blown in" for easy pickings of line fishermen that dotted the harbour walls and the entire coastline of the walk.



We always try and cover a little bit of history of the Cape on our walks. **Chris Collins**, who has a passion for trains and who has photographed many old and new from all over the country and the lines on which they ran or still do, filled us in on the history of the Cape Line, Muizenberg Station (The Clock, the Cannon) and various historical monuments and buildings along the way i.e. the S.A. Police Museum which houses a display of the Battle of Muizenberg, the unique Venetian-style princely residence now the Natale Labia Museum which was erected on the site of an old British Military Battery named the Fort. The beach cottage of Sir Abe Bailey (designed in 1904) and of course the famous paper house "Yokohama". There were five shipwrecks between the years 1788 and 1841 on Muizenberg Beach. None of which carried gold (unfortunately), but such cargo as sugar, coffee, nutmeg, cloves and tortoise shell en route from such places as Sumatra to Antwerp, from Reunion to France etc.



It will be interesting to see the devastation caused by the fires on our next walk (Noordhoek Peak-16.April) and the rejuvenation. Massed clumps of Red Watsonia have led the way. Join us at a communal braai spot afterwards or find your own tucked away in this area "little Switzerland" along the Dam and enjoy lunch – and relax!



Stretch those legs and we'll see you at the Arboretum.

