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FRIENDS OF TOKAI FOREST

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WILDLIFE AND ENVIRONMENT SOCIETY OF SA

NEWSLETTER NO 18.

FEBRUARY 2001



From the Toadstool:

John Green

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The Cape Peninsula National Park (CPNP) is to take over the Tokai and Cecilia plantations from SAFCOL. Negotiations are still taking place between CPNP and SAFCOL with regards the lease agreement. As the formal legalities of a lease have to pass through six government departments, which could take a year or two, it has been decided to implement a heads of state agreement to facilitate the process at ground level with almost immediate effect.

The intention is for CPNP to take over Tokai, and presumably Cecilia, in its entirety, including all assets and infrastructure e.g. Arboretum, Picnic Forest, Guest House and offices. SAFCOL will be the agents to manage the commercial plantation operations. CPNP will be responsible for all Eco-tourism activities. SAFCOL will hire any necessary buildings to carry on with its commercial operations.

Take over NB

CPNP would like to keep much of the lower plantations to act as a sponge for recreational activities and the upper slopes will be clear felled and allowed to revert to fynbos (a process which is currently being progressed). SAFCOL will work under parameters set by CPNP e.g. if CPNP decides that the plantation boundary line must be level 4 not level 5, so be it.

SAFCOL is currently busy with rehabilitation work (primarily weeding) in the Groot Constantia block. Thereafter they will move to Tokai to start with rehabilitation above level 5. The Lourensford team has been sent in to assist as the time to tackle the serious weed infestation is now before the alien growth spurts with winter rains. They are also clear felling Vlakkenberg, which will not be replanted.

On the conservation side, SAFCOL and the Project Chrysalis volunteers have assisted the Friends of Tokai to clear burnt pines from the Diastella area in the lower plantation, which has been declared one of the Core Cape Flats Flora Conservation areas by the Botanical Society. We have identified other flora-related projects for the lower forest in which SAFCOL will assist once the rehabilitation of the upper slopes has been completed. SAFCOL have opened up various riparian zones between levels 1 and 3 and they are working with volunteers from Friends of Silvermine, the Mountain Club and the CPNP to clear the aliens from the Silvermine Cliffs.



...ce as possible. It is ...
...ce a month. It would be great
... Orpen Road, at 8h30 on Satur
... anyone, we will be delighted
... le, one of our members, More
... ers from Immaculata High Sch
... l. Also, Mark Wiley has unde
... volved, for at least one session



"OUR MISSION: PE

OKAI FOREST"

John Green (Chairman) 712-1341 / L
Gery Higgs (Walks & PRO) 712-41

udi Skibbe (Treasurer) 712-7653 /
Fowkes (Membership) 712-4663



From the Toadstool/continued

TOKAI MANOR HOUSE: A consultant architect has been appointed by the Provincial Asset Management Department to oversee the re-thatching; renovation of the gables and joinery of the Historic Manor House. The Cape Peninsula National Park is still negotiating with Asset Management to lease the Manor house and surrounds for the Headquarters of the Park. We are delighted that there is at last some positive action and hope that there will be substantial action before the **winter** rains come.

PORTER ESTATE: there is little to report on the outcome of the November 2000 call for tenders for consultants to recommend a development process for this incredibly important and sensitive estate. We will continue to watch for an opportunity to participate in any mandatory participation processes necessary to guide the future planning/rezoning development.

SILVERMINE: some 29 organisations have shown an interest in participating in the future development of portions of the Silvermine Naval Property which are surplus to State needs. We believe that the tender should have been limited to the approximate 20 hectares, which falls outside of the CPPNE (portion scheduled for ultimate incorporation into the National Park) and the Urban Edge. Two representatives from Non Government Organisations will be appointed to represent the interests of Civil Society in the development arbitration process. We will work closely with these representatives.

ECOLOGY ON A PERSONAL LEVEL

Lesley Skarzynski

7122282



It appears from news reports that homeowners on the urban fringe (high fire risk areas) will soon be forced to purge alien vegetation from their gardens; and the rest of us will be encouraged to do the same. With this in mind we are enclosing, for all our members, the Botanical Society's pamphlet on Firescaping Your Garden. It is a good idea to begin replacing alien plants with these recommended plants because they are also "water wise".

NOTE: The Kirstenbosch annual plant sale is on the weekend 17/18 March !

UKUVUKA OPERATION FIRESTOP held an informative and interesting meeting at the Tokai Library on Thursday 15th February, where we were given instructions on methods of protecting our homes from brush fires, as well as tips on 'firescaping' our gardens. It proved a good forum for answering our questions. For that reason, those of you who missed this meeting can organize their own neighbourhood meeting with the Ukuvuku team. Our members who live "on the fringe" are encouraged to do this.

Contact: Ukuvuka – Operation Firestop Campaign, Private Bag 4390, Cape Town 8000.

Tel. 0800 005 376 or e-mail: ukuvuka@iafrica.com

...with your dog and mee
...y of the month at 8.30 a.m.

Sat. 21. Apr Sat. 19.
Sat. 18. Aug Sat. 15.:
Sat. 15. Dec

We owe a very big thank you ~~to all the~~ people who helped with our Carols by Candlelight, 2000.

Heather Williams, who became convenor at the last minute.

Chris Botes of SAFCOL and the Forestry Staff.

Bagpipers Duncan McMillan and Ronnie Stuart who created such a special atmosphere.

Chaplain Trevor Tyers, for leading the service,
The Tokai Church Choir who led the singing.
Local Wine Farms - Steenberg. Uitsig. Constantia.
Soundworks - next to Kirstenhof Centre.
Mr. Peter @ Piccardi - Blue Route Centre.
Jeanie @ Pick n Pay - Constantia
The Barnyard Farmstall - Tokai
The car guards from Sentry Security.
The children of the Tokai foresters.



All monies collected go toward the conservation and protection of this (our) Valley.

We were overwhelmed by the number of people who came to the Carols in the Arboretum. An estimate based on the number of cars indicated about double the attendance of the previous year and consequently programs and candles were insufficient. The equipment and facilities, though adequate for previous events were also overstretched and cognisance of this must be taken into consideration for the future.

We feel that it is very important to retain the unique ambience of the simple Carols by Candlelight in the beautiful forest setting.

There has been some feedback which is invaluable but further comment and constructive criticism from members will be appreciated. Heather Williams has agreed to convene it again this year but would like to get organised much earlier this time. She needs helpers, please give her a call on 761 0772.

WORKPARTIES THIRD SATURDAY AT 8.30 TO 10.30 LOWER PLANTATION:

We continue to meet once a month to keep the riverine banks and core flora conservation areas in the Lower Plantation as alien free as possible. It is amazing how much a couple of people can achieve in a couple of hours once a month. It would be great if we had a few more hands. Please join us at the main parking area, Orpen Road, at 8h30 on Saturday March 17th if you possibly can. If this timing is not suitable for anyone, we will be delighted to discuss alternatives for us to get involved together. For example, one of our members, Morgan Merrington, will be bringing a combi load of Interact volunteers from Immaculata High School in Wittebome to work with us for an hour or so after school. Also, Mark Wiley has undertaken to ensure that the Chrysalis Academy volunteers will get involved, for at least one session per intake, in alien clearance in the Tokai plantations.

It's going to be a New Year's resolution, right? I will put on my walking boots the last Sunday of each month, and I will get fit. No excuses now. The weather has cooled some-what and it is a fine time of year to begin. Our "Rock Pool Ramble" on the 25th Feb. will take you from Muizenberg to Fish Hoek and back, stopping off to swim in the tidal pools along the way and stopping at Kalk Bay on the way back for a Fish 'n Chip lunch, watching the boats come in and purchasing a fresh fish or two to take home.



Your 2001 year's brochures are included in this month's newsletter for you to diarize our walking dates.

Last month – too hot to do anything during the day but go to the beach - saw us do a "Night Prowl" with an introduction to our "A Froggie-A Walking He Would Go" walk to be held end-August with a member of the UCT Avian Demography Dept. They are a research unit conducting research in partnership with BirdLife South Africa. Their aim is to achieve long-term monitoring, innovative statistical modeling, population-level interpretation of results, as well as enjoying and understanding the dynamics of frogs. They play a very important role in controlling the insect population, particularly that of mosquitoes. They are themselves, in turn, a vital link in many food chains. The secretions from their skins hold great promise for the discovery of new antibiotics. And let's face it, frogs ARE beautiful. They are fascinating. And they are loved by children all over the world.

Frogs are under severe threat of extinction.



Almost 20% of our species are on the Red Data List (17 have become rare). Unless we get to know more about them and put into action plans to protect them they may go extinct. Atlas-ing is a useful first step in finding out how our frogs are doing, which species are in trouble, and which areas have the best potential for conservation efforts.

You can do this in your own garden. You can do it when traveling on holiday. You can do it at the caravan park. You can do it anywhere. Once you know how, you will be given a starter kit. We hope you will join us on this worthwhile project 26th Aug.

FOREST NOTES



Waging War on Alien Invaders...

Our Alien Control Group, headed by Les Keith, Tel: 712.9859 needs all the assistance he can get. Combine your walk with your dog and meet him at the Orpen Forest entrance, every third Saturday of the month at 8.30 a.m. heading down to the Diastellas area.

Alien Dates to Diarize:

Sat. 17. Feb	Sat. 17. Mar	Sat. 21. Apr	Sat. 19. May
Sat. 16. June	Sat. 21. July	Sat. 18. Aug	Sat. 15. Sept
Sat. 20. Oct	Sat. 17. Nov	Sat. 15. Dec	

