



# FRIENDS OF TOKAI FOREST

P O Box 442 Bergvliet 7864



**WILDLIFE AND ENVIRONMENT SOCIETY OF SA**

*People caring for the Earth*

**NEWSLETTER NO 22**

**APRIL 2002**



FROM THE TOADSTOOL

- Chairman John Green -	Tel:	712 1341
	Fax:	713 2448
	email:	<a href="mailto:greenhse@mweb.co.za">greenhse@mweb.co.za</a>

The rate of increasing developmental pressures on State land in our beautiful Constantia/ Tokai Valley continues to escalate at a rate faster than our planning schemes, participatory processes, and bureaucracy appear to be capable of handling. Meanwhile developers scramble, and abandoned or neglected State properties fall further into disrepair.

### PORTER ESTATE

The consultants eventually published a "Final Development Framework and Report November 2001" which we, the elected Constantia Valley Committee, received late January: despite their undertaking to discuss the recommendations with us prior to submission to the Provincial Directorate of Property Management.

We have reviewed the "Final" proposals in depth and have addressed a letter to the new Provincial MEC for the Planning, Development and the Environment, Minister David Molatsi, detailing our in principal comments and specific comments on each of the 11 precincts into which the consultants have divided the Porter Estate. We have requested a meeting to discuss our input prior to any final decision making. Our comments include:

#### • General Issues

- 1. Zoning:** Sub-Division before Sale, and "Departure Conditions", which can be monitored for compliance, rather than "Spot Commercial" Zoning.
- 2. Management Forum:** for elected members of the community to participate in the setting of "Departure Conditions" and monitoring their compliance.
- 3. Environmental Issues:** A Tree Survey for the entire site to ensure preservation of important trees; and enforceable standards for "Line of Vision" non- developmental zones to ensure the visual integrity of the important Gateways into the historic and scenic Constantia Valley are preserved.
- 4. Traffic Issues:** We are very concerned about the cumulative traffic impact from escalating developments in the Tokai end of the valley (Steenberg, Silversteen, Westlake, Silvermine, Porter Estate) on the already overloaded scenic routes and Tokai and Firgrove road systems. This is compounded by the Chapman Peak closure and planned R300 ring road. We are insisting on a proper Traffic Impact Assessment prior to any Developmental Planning decision making, and have made constructive proposals regarding circles at the Firgrove/ Spaanschemat and Orpen/ Upper Estate intersections and the Tokai Road extension to the Manor House and Arboretum.



**"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

### • **Precinct Proposals**

In the interest of brevity, I will report on the main concerns regarding the precincts of the Porter Estate Development Framework which about Tokai Forest:

**Precinct 6 "Die Ondertuine":** The committee supports the proposal that the portion of land which has historically been used as market gardens continue to be used as such and expanded where soils, ecological processes, and economic viability permit. After consultation with the Sand River Catchment Management Forum, where we represent the Prinskasteel and Westlake stream areas, we recommend various floodline and ecological buffer constraints to new structures, and a provision for a proposed green belt trail

**Precinct 7 "Old Stone Church":** including Zeldenrus and the Range: The committee supports the proposal that the area and existing buildings be leased on a long- term basis to one or more operators (following a public tender process) as function facilities, allowing for parking. We believe that the area should be declared a 'Historic Precinct' in terms of the Heritage Act; be used for the promotion of tourism facilities directly associated with the natural environment (consistent with the Urban Edge Report) that benefit the local community in particular and the public of the Western Cape in general; and that any use must be such that it limits the amount of traffic. Amongst other recommendations, the committee feels strongly that this site must be monitored by the proposed Management Forum/ Advisory Body.

**Precinct 8 "The Upper Estate Farm":** The committee supports the proposal to lease, on a long- term basis, or sell, the precinct to one or two commercial operators for agricultural use. All use should be consistent with the various Plans in force for the Valley and view lines must be enforced to maintain the rural, as opposed to agricultural, character. Use of indigenous trees is encouraged especially along boundaries.

**Precinct 9 "Porter Campus":** The committee supports the proposal that this area be leased to institutional- type users to operate along the line of, or in the spirit of, the historic use of the site, and accommodating a range of different uses that can work together. We support the continued use of this precinct by the Chrysalis Academy and request that any use be monitored by the Management Forum / Advisory Body.

**Precinct 10 "Pasture" or "Lower Fields:** this area of 3 ha lies between the Porter Campus and the SAFCOL 'Picnic Forest' and is closely associated with the SAFCOL paddocks and stables. The committee supports the proposal that this precinct be leased to one or more operators to use for agricultural activities or an equestrian centre. It is suggested that these operators negotiate with SAFCOL/ CPNP regarding additional land and riding rights. All use should be subject to the Management Forum review.

**Precinct 11 "Manor House":** The committee supports the proposal that the Manor House and associated buildings be used for tourism, environmentally and socially based activities, including a potential gateway to the National Park, museum of forestry/ agriculture and/ or the Park, tea garden/ restaurant and curio type shops and also for public offices for related organizations and activities. However we strongly object to 'spot' commercial zoning use of buildings. We urge, as Friends of Tokai Forest has done since 1998, that Province, SANP, and SAHRA should appoint a consultant team to undertake a detailed Strategic Development Framework for the Manor House Precinct, Arboretum and Tokai Road axis in conjunction with the proposed Management Forum. They would need to formulate an integrated, culturally, socially and economically viable Management Plan prior to any long- term decisions regarding the use of this area.

Participation in the **Porter Estate Development Framework** has been a time consuming and energy sapping exercise, but from the above brief report it can be seen that, at this stage, we are far better off than the original statement of intent by the consultants which included a 'Westlake' development on the upper estate! There is still a long road ahead.

#### **SAFCOL (now MTO)/ CPNP**

There is still no indication of the progress of negotiations between the Ministry of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAFF) and the SA National Parks regarding the incorporation of the Tokai and Cecilia Forests into the Cape Peninsula National Park (CPNP). The tragic accident in the picnic forest, when a falling gum tree killed two young girls, must have complicated negotiations enormously, and the authorities are now faced with making some very hard decisions regarding the future of the existing Picnic Forest which is the main generator of revenue. The subsequent indefinite closure of the picnic forest, as well as the Elephant's Eye and Waterfall Trails are indicative of the problems associated with withdrawing resources necessary for minimum maintenance prior to finalizing negotiations on future management.

We extend our condolences to the families of the bereaved, and trust that their tragic deaths will be a catalyst to urgent action to bring to a conclusion the long period of indecision regarding the future management of the Tokai Forests within the CPNP for the benefit of current and future generations.

With the destruction of the pines which gave essential shade to the picnic areas of Silvermine, and the closure of Tokai which hosted some 140,000 picnickers a year, as well as many hikers, the local community has been deprived of a major part of the recreational facilities which made Constantiaberg so important to the people of the Flats. At the same time, the managing authorities have been deprived of major sources of revenue which should have allowed them to better manage the natural environment. Surely this is time for the Community to demand action?

#### **SILVERMINE**

I do not want to dwell on this project too long, as other members of the community have been elected to represent the public on this development. I have however submitted my strongest reservations that close to 400 high density houses (in the Transition Zone between Westlake/ Steenberg Road and the Urban Edge below the Silvermine Communications Base) seems to be totally incompatible with the approved urban Edge Report. We can only trust that the further public participation process will take place meaningfully as promised in the Cape Argus article of 23<sup>rd</sup> March under the headline '**R200 million Silvermine project takes shape**': no house to cost less than R1 million.

#### **MOUNTAIN BIKING IN THE CPNP**

The CPNP's response to the public comment on the initial plan to manage a series of biking trails on the mountain range has now been published and should be available from the CPNP office at Westlake. I have had a brief glance and note that both my comments

(on behalf of FOTF) and those of Gerry Higgs (in her private capacity) have been included. Our request to be involved as an I&AP in the Tokai area has been noted.

### **BABOON MANAGEMENT**

In our last newsletter we thanked the many forest users and residents who donated R21000 which allowed us to fund a baboon monitoring programme through until the end of November. We employed up to 5 monitors in the peak period when the baboons moved into the Swaanswyk, Forest Glade and Dennendal West area and were starting to move into Dennendal East and even as far across as Morningside. Our monitors, recruited from unemployed Chrysalis Academy graduates and housed by Chrysalis, inexperienced as they were, managed to coax the main body of the baboon troop up into the fields around Chrysalis and then slowly further and further up the slopes. We believe that this timely intervention prevented a very serious situation from developing before the majority of the troop became habituated to the much easier food sources in the urban environment

We were thanked by the Baboon Management Team (BMT) which was set up some years back to manage the baboon problems South of the Fish Hoek Gap and have greatly benefited from their professional advice and encouragement. We are now represented on the BMT. From November, we progressively reduced the number of monitors down to 2 per day and now only one with another on standby. Mark Wiley and the Chrysalis Academy staff continue to give major management and logistic support to the monitors. This was initially funded by the Friends of Tokai Forest but we have subsequently been reimbursed in full by the BMT. From March 2002, the monitoring programme is being funded by Province, the City and National Park on a Rand for Rand basis to match Residents' contributions as is being done South of the Fish Hoek Gap

We are developing a Baboon Management Budget for the Tokai Area for the BMT and have various ideas about the management of raising the Rand for Rand contribution from the residents and forest users. The BMT has produced a very good video on Baboon Management in the Cape Peninsula and various experts have agreed to meet with the Tokai community on World Environment Day, Wed June 5<sup>th</sup>, to agree the way forward prior to the start of the peak baboon season in the winter months

**“BABOON MANAGEMENT ON  
TOKAI’S FOREST EDGE”  
WEDNESDAY 5<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 7.30PM  
“THE RANGE”**

Meet the Peninsula Baboon Management Team to discuss plans to manage baboons on Tokai’s urban edge this winter to prevent the last year’s problems before they occur  
*Venue kindly sponsored by the Range management: Bar Facilities available*



ARBORETUM

As reported in previous newsletters, the decision was taken to replace the temporary white plastic nametags on the trees by a durable aluminum tag with the number etched in and secured by a screw bolt to allow for future growth. Initially 155 tags were obtained through the kind assistance of the Kirstenbosch gardens and a start was made along the Oak Leaf Trail. A further 177 tags have been obtained and a start made in tagging in blocks.

The R1 000 which we have allocated from current funds will tag about 500 trees. The total number of marked trees is 830 of the some 1600 trees in the Arboretum, but with large stands of the same species it is only necessary to mark a few of the boundary trees in the block. The procedure is proving less arduous than expected; though it is frustrating at times to identify trees with missing plastic tags due to the depredation of squirrels, baboons and the heavy winter rains.

The detailed list of the scientific names and numbers of all the trees mounted behind the Raptor exhibit at the entrance to the Arboretum. To complement this permanent data from the last tree survey, we are putting together a pamphlet consisting of the consecutive number/scientific name/common name and origin of most of the trees in the Arboretum.

Endangered Wildlife Trust  
Bayer (Pty) Ltd.  
Reg. no. 68/11192/07  
P.O. Box 143 Isando 1600.  
Tel. (011) 921-5380, Fax. (011) 921-5379



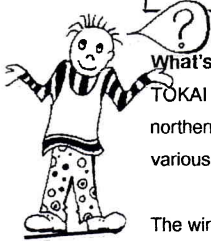
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### What's in a Name?

TOKAI should be written Tokaj, since it is a name of a wine from a town and region in northern Hungary. The British, the Austrians and the old Divisional Council spelled it in various ways as Tocky, Tokay and Tokai.

The wine was produced on the Tokaj Hills, through which flows the river Tisza, a tributary of the Dunav, (or as is known in English, the Danube River.)



This wine, called Tokaji Aszu, (or nectar from Tokai) was famous in Mozart's time and when he and his librettist, *they had at hand "Tokai" wine and cigars from Seville.* got together to write the *Magic Flute*, The result - "magic".



It was also Schubert's favourite, when he could afford it (which was not often). He wrote a 'lied' or song in praise of this wine, which is titled *Lob des Tokayers*, or "In Praise of the Wine of Tokai."

Around about the year 1790, cork oaks were planted in a "magic circle" in what is now known as the Arboretum. This area was originally called Buffelskraal and the name changed to "Tokay". The magic circle is well worth a visit. Look out for it after Observation Point (3) on our Oak Leaf Trail. If you don't know the Oak Leaf Trail, ask for a pamphlet at the Tea Room.

It is not known if the wine planted here in "Tokai" was successful at the time, let alone exported! Prost.

P.S. Commercially interested parties have recently tried to persuade the residents of Tokaj, Hungary to sanction a plonk factory in the region, but to this day the residents are still resisting this proposed desecration.

### Isn't man Amazing!

He kills wildlife by the million in order to protect his domestic animals and their feed. Then he kills domestic animals by the billion and eats them.

This in turn kills man by the million, because eating all those animals leads to degenerative and sometimes fatal health conditions like heart disease, kidney disease and cancer.

So, then man tortures and kills millions more animals to look for cures for these diseases.

Elsewhere, millions of other human beings are being killed by hunger and malnutrition because food they could eat is being used to fatten domestic animals.

Meanwhile, some are dying of sad laughter at the absurdity of man

Who kills so easily and so violently

And once a year sends out cards praying for "Peace on Earth".

(C. David Coats)

FROM THE **r**OOT • CARING FOR THE  
FYNBOS

- Bill van der Poll - Tel: 712 8836  
email: [bill.vanderpoll@freemail.absa.co.za](mailto:bill.vanderpoll@freemail.absa.co.za)  
- Les Keith - Tel: 712 9859

### CLEARING OF ALIEN VEGETATION

We are looking for "Friends" who are prepared to assist us  
In the clearing of alien vegetation. We meet the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday  
Of each month at 8.30 a.m. in the Orpen Road car park or  
Down at the bridge / river for a few hours work. Bring gloves -  
All other "implements of destruction" are supplied.  
For those who are interested, please contact Bill.  
Kids welcome. Dads too!



*This month we are meeting in the Arboretum!*

FROM THE FOOTPRINTS WALKS with Gerry

Tel/Fax: 712 4176  
Cell: 082 5500868  
Email: [higgshome@mweb.co.za](mailto:higgshome@mweb.co.za)

Your new year's Walks Brochure is enclosed with this newsletter.

They are also available at the Tokai Library and the Meadowridge and Claremont Libraries.

Walks and events are advertised in the "What's On Page" of the *Constantiaberg Bulletin*, the *Chronicle*, the *Echo*, the *Tattler* and the *Hout Bay Sentinel* as well as the *Argus*.

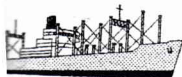
Our walks aim at being informative, educational and pleasurable.

The **Night Time Prowl** in January drew some 168 people  
(a small army!) Someone must have reported the torches  
moving through the forest as a fire, because at one point  
we were met by Fire Engines.

Consequently, I have offered my services on **any given  
Sunday at 7.30 p.m.** Just phone to make a booking. No  
more than 15 and no less than 5 please.

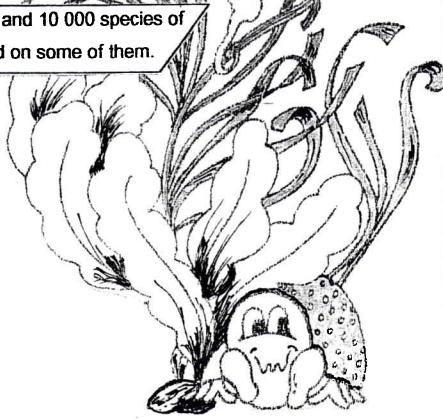
The **Rock Pool Ramble** in February was a perfect day for walking and observing.

This walk is interesting in as much as it looks at the historical aspects of Muizenberg,  
including *The Battle of Muizenberg*. There are many wrecks in the bay from the year  
1788 - sharp reminders of our coast known as the CAPE OF STORMS - where they  
ended their sea life on the coast line of the Cape Peninsula, traveling from as far as  
Holland, France, Rio de Janeiro, trading their cargoes of spices, coffee, whale oil,  
tortoise shell for jewellery, wine and military supplies.



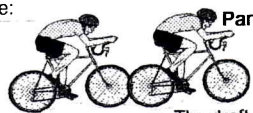
There are 900 bird species in southern Africa and 10 000 species of marine plant and animal life. We touched on some of them.

**Seaweed:** Did you know that the green one provides food colourant in cheese, coffee creamers, egg substitutes, margarine and mayonnaise? Seaweed plays an important role in many industries. It is used as a fertilizer. It is harvested as a feed for commercially farmed abalone. It is used as a nutritional supplement for farm animals. It is also an important source of alginate used in salad dressing, icecream and gravies. There is much interest being shown in our seaweed from overseas – particularly Japan. Why don't we reap the benefits ourselves.....?



On the way back we stopped at Kalk Bay (*kalk – chalk* lime from the kilns used for painting the white walled houses of the Cape in the 17<sup>th</sup> century), waited for the boats to come in and purchased a fresh fish for home and had lunch on the quay. What a pleasure!

I need to mention here the proposed Mountain Bike Trail. **The Pedal Power Association** together with **Cape National Parks** are looking at running trails through our mountain range from one side of the Peninsula to the other. There are varying points of view. The key issue for the bikers is that there is a lack of available riding areas. The key issues of the NGO's is that there is sure to be an impact ecologically and physically. The concern is, where and when will it all end? Who loves the ethos more? What is more important? As we now live in a *transparent* society, politically and otherwise, it is only right for the people who live in the environment to have their say. You are invited to participate. The following contact numbers are available:

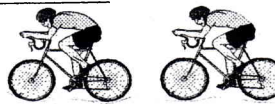
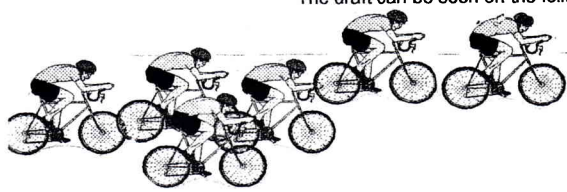


**Parks – James Jackelman: Tel: 701 8692**  
**Fax: 701 8773**

**Email: [jamesj@parks/sa.co.za](mailto:jamesj@parks/sa.co.za)**

The draft can be seen on the following website:

**[www.pedalpower.org.za](http://www.pedalpower.org.za)**



**WE NEED**



**TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE.**