



Waterberg Nature Conservancy Newsletter

Occasionally issued news of interest to WNC members and others in the Waterberg

Number 8, October 2009

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Newsletter items by John Miller
unless otherwise attributed.

Next WNC Meeting

Date: Thursday, 19 November 2009

Venue: Farmers Hall, Vaalwater

Please note that the venue is the Farmers Hall, not Waterberg Academy.

The acoustics should be much better.

Time: 2:30 pm

Guest Speaker: Claire Janisch on the subject of Biomimicry.

Claire's illustrated presentation will tell us what Biomimicry is all about and what it means for us. For an introduction to Biomimicry, see article below.

Claire is a chemical engineer with a speciality in the field of environmental process engineering. She is an active researcher in new ways of designing and manufacturing products and processes as well as in urban and agriculture systems that are beneficial to the environment. She continues to study Biomimicry as a cross-discipline among biology, design, engineering and business.

As this is our Annual General Meeting, the agenda will also include:

Chairman's Annual Report

Annual Financial Report

Amendments to Constitution (see article below)

Nominations for two year terms for members of the Executive Committee

Cash Bar and Light Supper at Very Reasonable Prices

RSVP to Heidi Carlton by Tuesday 17 November 2009

(contact details at left)

What is Biomimicry

According to the Biomimicry Institute and Wikipedia, Biomimicry is an ancient concept recently returning to scientific thought that examines nature, its models, systems, processes, and elements – and emulates or takes inspiration from them to solve human problems sustainably. Studying a leaf to invent a better solar cell is an example – innovation inspired by nature. The core idea is that nature, imaginative by necessity, has already solved many of the problems we are grappling with – energy, food production, climate control, transportation, packaging, and more. Animals, plants, and microbes are the consummate engineers. They have found what works, what is appropriate, and most important, what lasts.

Walter Eschenburg

The Waterberg community will miss Walter Eschenburg who passed away on 9 September at the age of 75. To his family, Walter was loving and devoted. To the rest of us, he was a happy friend, a generous neighbour, and of course a wise veterinarian.

Waterberg Meander

The Waterberg Biosphere Reserve has produced an excellent Waterberg Meander brochure for visitors to the area. Waterberg residents will appreciate it as well. It was available as an insert in the September 2009 issue of *Country Life* and is now available with the November 2009 issue of *Africa Geographic*. You can also get a copy of the brochure from any of the 32 advertisers, several of which are members of the Conservancy.

Amendments to Constitution

There are two proposed amendments to the Waterberg Nature Conservancy constitution, both open for discussion at the AGM on 19 November.

Deletion of Annual Audit Requirement. The Executive Committee proposes to delete the requirement for an annual audit. The Conservancy has a very low rand turnover (income only from membership fees and expenses only for meetings, expenses for guest speakers, secretary/treasurer, bank fees, project support, and other miscellaneous expenses). It is our intention to assure ourselves of transparent and sound financial management at minimal cost. The Executive Committee has consulted attorneys, accountants, and other Conservancies, and concluded that the WNC constitution requirement for an annual audit is disproportionately expensive and in fact is unnecessary. We are satisfied that the duties of the Secretary/Treasurer are sufficient for our financial responsibilities.

Adding a New Membership Category. As there are several existing and potential WNC members who do not readily fall into Class A or Class B, the Executive Committee proposes a new class of member that reflects the realities of not-for-profit and other similar operations. Many such operations have a keen interest in nature conservation in the Waterberg, but have very limited funds. It is therefore proposed that Class C is created: *Not-for-profits, charities, schools (and others as determined by the Executive Committee) whose operations reflect a sincere interest in the conservation of the Waterberg and in the affairs of the area.*

The Constitution itself does not establish the annual subscription, but rather gives the Executive Committee the authority to set such fees at the Annual General meeting. The Executive Committee proposes that the annual subscription for Class A members remain at R550, for Class B members remain at R150, and for Class C members be set at R50, and that Class C members have one vote.

Whose Dues?

One of our members paid their dues in a timely manner, thank you, but neglected to note their name, farm name, or invoice number. If you deposited R550 cash to the Conservancy's FNB account on 11 August 2009, please give Heidi a call – 082 336 8757.

Mabatlane Landfill Site

Those of us who for years have driven a bakkie full of rubbish and scrap to the Vaalwater dump encountered an unhealthy, unsafe, and uncontrolled environment. At the same location, we now find the Mabatlane Landfill Site – enlarged, fenced, and sign-posted for agricultural waste, general waste, and recycling. Charlie Malesela is its permanent staff of one, a local resident determined to keep the site well controlled.

Fire Warning System

The Conservancy maintains a free sms-based fire warning system for its members and their neighbours in the Waterberg area. From August to December each year, a daily assessment is made of the fire risk according to a template designed by Sappi that takes account of temperature, humidity, wind speed and days since last rain. If the risk is assessed to be high, a fire warning sms is sent to all numbers on our list, to sensitise recipients.

In the event of a fire occurring and for which help is required, anyone need only call with details of its location and an sms will be sent out immediately to all numbers in the vicinity, requesting their assistance. The system has operated successfully for the last three seasons. There are currently about 100 numbers on our list.

If you would like to have your cell number – and/or those of your neighbours – included on our database, please call Richard on 083 609 1425. And if you need help in fighting a fire, please call either Richard on 083 609 1425 or Lyn on 083 609 1464 with detailed directions on how to reach it and they will send out a sms help call.

Richard Wadley.

Recently Published Nature Books

Two nature books by local authors have recently been privately published. Richard Wadley, with no commercial motive whatsoever, says that both are excellent and remarkably good value.

Marthinus Steyn (Polokwane), several small, extremely well-illustrated tree guides, published between 1996 and 2006: *Acacia; Commiphora; Albizia; Combretum & Terminalia; Ficus*. Prices are about R50 each. Contact Marthinus at soutsteyn@absamail.co.za or phone him on 015 298 8352.

Retha van der Walt (Musina): *Wild Flowers of the Limpopo Valley* (but it includes most of our local species too). Published August 2009. Price R250 including postage and packaging. Contact Retha at ludwigslust@xnets.co.za or phone her on 015 534 2727.

Richard Wadley

Waterberg Wildlife Industry Study

Aurecon has been contracted by the Waterberg District Municipality to conduct a study of the wildlife industry in the Waterberg. Very little hard data exists regarding the industry as it falls somewhere between tourism and agriculture. This lack of data is particularly acute in Limpopo Province and the Waterberg is one of the main wildlife destinations within Limpopo. The danger is that without this research the industry may be misunderstood despite its obvious growing importance within the South African rural landscape.

To do this, Aurecon is interviewing a number of specialists and players in the industry. In addition, we are conducting interviews with 30 landowners drawn from a random sample of all properties in the Waterberg. The idea is to gather verifiable empirical data on a scientific basis that can be used to analyse the state of the industry, its contribution to the local and wider economies, its position within conservation and its position within the tourism industry. Individual property data is completely confidential and will only be used to form a composite picture through analysis.

Members of the Waterberg Nature Conservancy who are interested in contributing to the study should contact Rupert Baber at rupertbaber@yebo.co.za and the questionnaire will be forwarded to you. This questionnaire has a number of sections, some seeking detailed production, tourism and financial data – "hard data" if you wish – and some seeking "soft data" in the form of opinions or insights regarding various issues facing the industry. You are welcome to contribute to either type of section. While the study's analysis of hard data will refer exclusively to the random sample, in order for the numbers to be scaled up, all information provided will assist in developing an overall picture of the industry.

Rupert Baber

Residential Development

Thaba Lesodi Golf and Game Estate was the proposed development located about 19km on the Vrymansrust Road from the tar road just south of Vaalwater. Its plans included 850 residential units plus an international golf course, 60 room hotel, equestrian facilities, and much, much more. The Conservancy and others objected to many aspects of the plans. Our arguments to the province's Development Tribunal about density and water use were met with very little sympathy. In addition, the Tribunal's irresponsibly poor communication with interested and affected parties left us in the dark most of the time. In the end, I believe it was only Modimolle Municipality's input that was taken seriously enough to force the developers to reduce the number of units to 650 (but with no other significant changes).

Following the Tribunal's approval in December 2008, there seemed to be no attempt by the developer to begin construction work or to market the development, presumably a consequence of the world's troubled financial situation. More recently, the developer did not exercise its option to purchase the land by the due date (July 2009), so at this writing, Thaba Lesodi seems to have disappeared altogether, for all the wrong reasons.

Rock Art in the Waterberg

At our 10 September general meeting, we enjoyed an excellent and interesting presentation about rock art in the Waterberg from Dr. Ben Smith, Director of the Rock Art Research Institute at Wits. Ben says he's now inspired to return to work on Waterberg rock art (after a few years in other places). He'd like to continue the Institute's search for new sites and to publish more of the findings from its work. We certainly encourage that and offer our support in those efforts. If you want to contact Ben, he can be reached at 011 717 6068, bws@rockart.wits.ac.za.

Weather Information Website

There are a number of websites that provide local weather information, but here's one you might find interesting – <http://wxmaps.org/pix/af.vv.html>. It's from the US-based Center for Ocean-Land-Atmosphere Studies and the Institute of Global Environment and Society.

Conservancy Point People

If you would like to discuss any of the following issues, please contact the Conservancy's designated point person:

Proposed Residential and Other Developments in the Waterberg - John Miller

Conservation (includes environment, flora, fauna, species) – Andrew Parker

Waterberg Biosphere Reserve – Andrew Parker, John Miller

Water Quality and Quantity in the Waterberg – Richard Wadley

Community Outreach and Upliftment in the Waterberg – Peggy Parham

Alien and Invasive Vegetation in the Waterberg – Wendy Adams

Waste Recycling – Andrew Parker, Franz Rolink, Tom Hugo

Eskom Power Lines and other Eskom issues in the Waterberg – Kelly Abram

Community Policing Forum – Conway Volek

Fire in the Waterberg – Richard Wadley

Telecommunication in the Waterberg – Rachel Poole

Local Government – Franz Rolink

Relevant Activities outside of the Waterberg – Franz Rolink

African Community Outreach

Terri Rogers described the efforts of African Community Outreach (ACO) at our 10 September meeting. With her husband Hamish, they have established ACO to focus on the area's poverty, high unemployment, malnutrition and disease. They work particularly with children and the elderly. ACO supports hundreds of families by visiting with them in their homes, providing food, medical care and helping to get children into schools. One of their main activities is looking after the many widows and orphans affected by the AIDS crisis in Vaalwater. Many women, many of whom are elderly, have been left to look after small children and teenagers. Due to the high rate of unemployment and poverty, these people have little to no income. In some cases ACO is able to help youngsters register for government grants, though such income is not sufficient to feed a family of between 6 to 12 people. ACO provides these families with food parcels. ACO also funds 13 college students. At the soup kitchen in Leseding, ACO and a team of volunteers feed about 1200 children per week. From a large marquee type tent, ACO provides meals to young children, expectant mothers, the elderly, and disabled. In the afternoon they feed up to 850 school children. For further information contact Hamish and Terri Rogers: htrodgers@mweb.co.za, 082 968 1515.

Skills Training Initiative

Sam van Coller and Daphne Montgomery told us about their skills training initiative at our 10 September meeting. In response to the high unemployment rate and low skills level of Vaalwater youth, they are establishing a programme to facilitate education, skills development and employment opportunities for disadvantaged youth. Their four areas of activity are: creating self-belief and preparing youth for work; developing specific job skills that are in demand by employers; establishing and mentoring small or community businesses; and creating a data base of potential employers and employees to match supply and demand.

The initial goals are to: mobilize support for the project in the Waterberg Community; obtain support among local youth; recruit volunteers, mentors and trainers; secure the support of employers; secure core funding and gain support from SETAs; ensure courses are accredited; and move from "initiative" to a fully fledged organization.

The following steps have been taken: the initial ideas have been developed and endorsed at a workshop of local volunteers; a sewing course with a view to producing garments for local lodges commenced in September; a catering course started in September; a pilot readiness-for-work event was held; a FGASA accredited course is planned for October; a specialist snake course is due to start in October/November; and mentoring of community projects funded by the Waterberg Biosphere Reserve has started.

Fundamental to the project is obtaining meaningful support from the greater Vaalwater community. This support can take many forms: volunteering to be a trainer or mentor; donating funds, materials or equipment that can be used in courses; providing catering support for courses; or simply volunteering to be involved. Sam and Daphne will be talking to many people over the next few months to discuss the initiative and secure their endorsement and support. For more information, contact Daphne Montgomery, 071 837-5265, daphnex3@yahoo.com or Sam van Coller, 083 267-5043, dvancoller@telkomsa.net.

**Wait, there's more in this Newsletter.
Learn a little about some of our members.**

Scroll on to Member Profiles

Company	Contact	Contact Numbers	Email	Web Address	Brief Description
Ant's Nest and Ant's Hill Bush homes	Tessa and Ant Baber	014 755 4296 / 014 755 3584 / 083 287 2885	reservations@waterberg.net	www.waterberg.net and www.ridingsouthafrica.com	Ant's Nest and Ant's Hill are private bush homes in the magnificent malaria-free Waterberg. Enjoy fabulous horse riding safaris, guided bush walks or game drives on our privately owned property. Suitable for families, riders, honeymooners or just good friends travelling together
Driehoek Feeds / Voere	Janneman van der Merwe Karel van Vuuren Hanlee van der Walt	014 755 4370 014 755 4211 083 273 2743	Janneman@driehoek.co.za and info@driehoek.co.za	www.driehoekfeeds.co.za and www.equusfeeds.co.za	With over 20 years experience in milling, Driehoek Feeds manufactures a wide range of products. With a committed team of expert nutritionists, Driehoek Feeds has become a leader in the highly specialised Game Feeding industry. Driehoek has also recently launched the new Equus Range of horse feeds which compare to the highest international standards. For Cattle, Game, Poultry and other farm feeds, Driehoek combines research and science with value for money in every bag!
Jobedi Game Reserve 	Sharin	014 755 3993 / 086 612 9937 / 073 280 8670	game@jobedi.co.za	www.jobedi.co.za	Tucked away deep in the Waterberg Mountains is a private retreat. A purposely well kept secret set in a vast landscape of rocky terrain blessed with lush vegetation and scenic vistas of breathtaking beauty which lends itself to an abundance of peace and tranquillity. We offer self catering units and camping and are the only reserve in the area offering self drive game drives.
Kgama Eco-Ranch (Pty) Ltd 	Steven Klagsbrun	012 362 2280 (office) 012 362 5982 (fax) 083 450 7510	steven@kdv.co.za		Conservation – Fauna and Flora – Ecological enhancement. Selected hunting opportunities.
Kololo Game Reserve 	Elize Oosthuizen	014 721 0920 / 014 721 0080 / 014 721 9910	admin@kololo.co.za	www.kololo.co.za	Kololo Game Reserve is situated in the heart of the Waterberg biosphere: A malaria-free area, home to a large variety of game makes Kololo a perfect safari destination. Visit neighbouring reserves and view the Big 5 - lion, leopard, elephant, rhino and buffalo, or enjoy a sneak preview over the fence, from the comfort of your chalet at Kololo.
Kwalata Wilderness CC 	Reinhard Heuser	014 755 4104 / 014 755 4249 / 082 414 5622	reinhard@kwalata.com ; caroline@kwalata.com ; office@kwalata.com ; werner@kwalata.com	www.kwalata.com	Our company's main activity is hunting. Kwalata consists of 13 000ha. Kwalata boasts 4 of the Big 5 and numerous plains game species and birds.
Where the real Africa begins!					

Company	Contact	Contact Numbers	Email	Web Address	Brief Description
<p>Lapalala Wilderness</p> 	<p>Roger Collinson (General Manager) Wild Revolution; Jessica Babich / Patrick Bonior (PR)</p>	<p>(014) 755-4071 (Lapalala Main Office) 084 404-7800 (Wild Revolution)</p>	<p>roger@lapalala.com info@wildrevolution.co.za</p>	<p>www.lapalala.com</p>	<p>A private reserve that is dedicated to conservation, ecotourism, community upliftment and environmental education</p>
<p>Mokabi Lodge, Moletadikgwa Wildlife Sanctuary</p> 	<p>Lyn and Richard Wadley</p>	<p>014 755 3506 083 609 1425 083 609 1464</p>	<p>yeldaw@mweb.co.za</p>	<p>www.mokabilodge.com</p>	<p>A luxury stone and thatch self-catering lodge set in secluded woodland affords guests a comfortable and tranquil experience in the magnificent Waterberg. Numerous clearly marked and annotated walking trails and mountain bike routes on this private game reserve enable visitors to enjoy the diversity of plant, bird and animal life offered by the unique environment of the Waterberg Biosphere Reserve</p>
<p>M'solosolo Safari</p>  <p>Relax in the heart of the Waterberg biosphere, private but luxury!!!!!!</p>	<p>Dr. Volker and Marita Neemann</p>	<p>014 755 4106 / 083 450 6535</p>	<p>office@msolosolo.com</p>	<p>www.msolosolo.com</p>	<p>Nestled deep in the Waterberg, you enter a quiet, malaria- and crime-free paradise. Your German hosts have been successfully involved in the hunting and lodging business for over 12 years. Activities include hunting trips with a professional hunter, guided walks to bushman paintings, horse riding, clay target shooting, pistol shooting exercises, bird watching or game drives in an open 4x4 vehicle. We gladly organize elephant back rides, visits to the white lion park or a personal touch with rhinos. Longer trips e.g. to the Kruger National or Pilanesberg Park, sightseeing or tours to God's window or Tzaneen can also be organized.</p>
<p>Nkonka Bush Lodge, Nkonka African Safaris and Idube Safari Lodge</p> 	<p>Conway and Becky Volek</p>	<p>082 824 1750, 082 570 8494, 014 755 4170</p>	<p>conway@nkonka.co.za</p>	<p>www.nkonkabushlodge.co.za www.nkonka.co.za</p>	<p>Under the shade of the bushveld, broad leaved trees, the 4 star Nkonka Bush Lodge, provides guests with an escape to enjoy the true beauty of nature surrounding them. Enjoy the small, intimate nature of the camp on a fully or self catered basis. Informative game drives or walks with our experienced guide, mountain biking and trips to surrounding attractions can all be enjoyed during your tranquil bushveld getaway. There is also the</p>

					option of a self catered rustic bush camp, which is exclusive to one party at a time, so you are able to enjoy the beautiful Waterberg in the manner you prefer.
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