



# grass roots

*Newsletter of the Grassland Society of Southern Africa*

*Incorporating Vol. 16-4 of the Bulletin of the Grassland Society of Southern Africa  
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**The future of South  
African Dairy  
Farming**

**Fire and  
grassland  
productivity**

***Glyceria  
maxima:*  
invading our  
wetlands**

*Agricol Farmers' Day*

# Editorial

Dear Members

**A**lien invasive plants, as we all know, are a serious threat to the healthy functioning of ecosystems all over the world. Yet too often attention is focused on the obvious woody and shrubby weeds such as the wattles, lantana or chromolaena. Invasive herbaceous weeds can be just as destructive but can escape the attention of all but the specialists who study them. As Donovan Kotze wrote in the previous issue of *Grassroots*, an invasive aquatic grass, *Glyceria maxima*, has become a threat to the Drakensberg ecosystem. In this issue, he gives more detail about the ecology of the plant and the implications if it is not controlled.

On a different note, progress is now well under way for next year's Congress. The Congress and the Journal are the two most important products of the GSSA, and also, respectively, our largest source of income and our largest expense. Professionally run Congresses of the highest standards will ensure that the reputation of the GSSA, as a top-quality organisation for agriculturalists and ecologists, will be maintained, and will ensure the long-term future of the Society.

So, enjoy your holidays, and let's hear your news and views next year.

*Alan*

*The Grassland Society of Southern Africa is dedicated to the advancement of the science and practice of range ecology and pasture management.*

*We welcome any contributions to the Grassroots, in the form of news, informative articles, reports, short research notes, scientific papers and letters to the Editor. Email alan.short@dae.kzntl.gov.za or admin@gssa.co.za or fax 033-3559 605 or 033-390 3113*

## GSSA Council

President:  
Mark Hardy  
markh@elsenburg.com

Immediate Past President:  
Annelene Swanepoel  
annelenes@elsenburg.com

Vice-President:  
Rina Grant  
rina@sanparks.org

Honorary Secretary:  
Lorraine van den Berg  
plblvdb@puknet.puk.ac.za

Honorary Treasurer:  
Justin du Toit  
dutoitJCO@ukzn.ac.za

Scientific Editor:  
Peter Scogings  
pscoging@pan.uzulu.ac.za

Publications Editor:  
Alan Short  
Alan.Short@dae.kzntl.gov.za

Public Relations Officer:  
Luthando Dziba  
Ldziba@arc.agric.za

Chairperson of Trust:  
Winston Trollope  
winfire@procomp.co.za

PAC Chairperson:  
Leslie Brown  
lrbrown@unisa.ac.za

Additional Member: Editorial Assistant  
Khanyisile Mbatha  
mbathakr@yahoo.com

Additional Member:  
Jorrie Jordaan  
jordaanj@agricho.norprov.gov.za

Additional Member:  
Susi Vetter  
S.Vetter@ru.ac.za

Administrator:  
Freyne du Toit  
admin@gssa.co.za

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P.O. Box 41 • Hilton • Pietermaritzburg • 3245 • South Africa

Tel: +27 (33) 390 3113 • Fax: +27 (33) 390 3113 • Cell: 083 256 7202

## Upcoming events

From [www.gssa.co.za](http://www.gssa.co.za)

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### ***The 5th KNP Science Networking Meeting***

**Deadline for registrations:** 16 February 2007

**Date:** 16 - 20 April 2007

**Venue:** Skukuza Goldfields Auditorium, Kruger National Park

**Contact:** Jackey Deacon  
dot@mpu.co.za  
082 447 1570

### ***SANSOR Annual Congress 2007***

**Date:** 3 - 4 May 2007

**Venue:** Spier Estate Conference Centre, Stellenbosch

**Further details will be announced in February 2007**

### ***21st Annual Conference of the Society for Conservation Biology***

**Date:** 1 – 5 July 2007

**Venue:** Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, Port Elizabeth

**Website:** [www.conbio.org/2007](http://www.conbio.org/2007)

### ***The sixth extinction - conserving zoological biodiversity: 33rd meeting of the Zoological Society of Southern Africa***

**Date:** 8 - 11 July 2007

**Venue:** North-West University, Potchefstroom

**Website:** [www.natural-events.com/ZSSA/](http://www.natural-events.com/ZSSA/)

### ***4th World Environmental Education Congress***

**Dates:** 2—6 Jul 2007

**Venue:** International Convention Centre, Durban

**Early Bird Registration Deadline:** 15 January 2006

**Website:** <http://www.weec2007.com/>

### ***Grassland Society 42nd Annual Congress: Twenty-first Century Challenges in Range and Forage Research***

**Date:** 16 - 20 July 2007

**Venue:** Eden Grove, Rhodes University, Grahamstown

**Contact:** [admin@gssa.co.za](mailto:admin@gssa.co.za).

**Website:** [www.gssa.co.za/congress2007](http://www.gssa.co.za/congress2007)

### ***XXVIIIth International Union of Game Biologists Congress***

**Deadline for submission of abstracts:** 15 February 2007

**Deadline for early registration:** 2 June 2007

**Date:** 13 - 18 August 2007

**Venue:** Uppsala, Sweden

**Website:** <http://www-conference.slu.se/iugb2007/>



# Council News

## **The Council met at Irene, 12th October 2006.**

The reports from Congress 41 at Bela-Bela indicated that it was a financial success. A more professional approach to running the Congresses is bearing fruit.

**The organisation of Congress 42 is well under way, and the website is now up and running (see page 21). A scientific committee has been chosen, and post-congress tours (arranged by Andrew Ainslie) are planned.**

The Thicket Forum has agreed to a joint Congress with the GSSA at Congress 42. A number of other special symposia have already been proposed, and any further proposals are welcome. A strong effort will be made to attract pasture scientists to the Congress.

**The Council discussed whether the GSSA had the right to propose changes to draft legis-**

**lation on behalf of Members, and whether the Council has the expertise to do so. The Expertise Database could be used to identify relevant Members who have the expertise to comment on particular draft legislation. Once comments have been received, the right person needs to be chosen to carry the comments to the relevant authority. Luthando Dziba, Leslie Brown and Andrew Ainslie will carry the process forward.**

Freyne du Toit and Khanyisile Mbatha have worked on updating the Expertise Database by developing a new, user-friendly electronic and paper questionnaire. The format will be finalised at the next Council meeting in January and placed on the website. The Expertise Database is for the use of members who are looking for advice in a particular field.

**A page will be set up on the website for Mem-**

**bers to apply for funding from Trust.**

The GSSA Society is now formally registered as a public benefit organization and for VAT. The first tax return for the Society was completed in November 2006. The registration as a non-profit organisation is still being processed.

**There are four new Trustees of the GSSA Trust, plus Winston Trollope, who will stay on for another term as Chairman. The new members are Alan Short, Chris Dannhauser, Klaus Kellner and John Clayton. Mark Hardy, as GSSA President, is the final Member of Trust.**

A new full-colour roll-up banner for the GSSA has been produced, to be used at functions where the GSSA is to be represented. Members who wish to use the banner and GSSA flyers for a display should contact the Administrator.

