



# grass roots

*Newsletter of the Grassland Society of Southern Africa*

*Incorporating the Bulletin of the Grassland Society of Southern Africa  
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## **Rehabilitating rangelands— technology and challenges**

**Practical  
considerations  
for developing  
African  
pastoralism**

*Milk production from  
mixed kikuyu-clover-  
ryegrass pastures*

**A grazing  
management  
decision support  
system for farmers**

***What causes  
woody plants to  
increase in  
savannas?***

*Advancing rangeland ecology and pasture management in Africa*

# Editorial

Dear Readers

The GSSA has always tried to play a greater role in society than simply being a forum for grassland scientists to interact. Our discipline - or rather, our disciplines - are not glamorous. I'm sure many of you have experienced the difficulty of trying to explain your job to distant family at weddings.

Nonetheless, we do have an important role to play in agriculture, in biodiversity conservation, in resource conservation. Rangelands cover most of Africa's land surface, and millions of people rely on the products and services generated by functioning rangeland systems.

The GSSA can make a contribution by helping to spread the knowledge contained within our membership. For example, the GSSA has registered as an interested and affected party for the Environmental Impact Assessment process for the construction of the new multi-products pipeline between Durban and Johannesburg. The GSSA also hosted a successful rehabilitation symposium in Pietermaritzburg which brought together researchers, practitioners and consultants in the field of rangeland rehabilitation.

All of us can contribute by using the GSSA as a platform to arrange similar events, or by using the GSSA website, Congress, the Journal and the *Grassroots* to disseminate information to the public.

*Alan Short*

*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](mailto:alan.short@dae.kzntl.gov.za) or [admin@grassland.org.za](mailto:admin@grassland.org.za) or fax +27 (0)86 622 75 76*

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**On the cover:** Degraded veld in the Herschel District of the Eastern Cape. What solutions are available to pastoralists (p. 27) and how do we rehabilitate veld (p. 38)?  
Photo: Wiseman Goqwana.

*Send your photographs to the Editor*

# News

## Introduction to Veldcare

Craig Morris of the Agricultural Research Council and Donavan Kotze of the University of KwaZulu-Natal have produced the first in a new series of books aimed at small-scale farmers, called *Introduction to Veldcare*. The book illustrates the basic principles of veld management in clear, understandable terms and with the aid of illustrations. The books are available in English or Zulu, and are available on the GSSA website or from Craig Morris. Contact him at [moris@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:morris@ukzn.ac.za)

## GSSA Annual Report published

As a newly-registered non-profit organisation, the GSSA is now required by law to produce an annual report detailing the activities of the Society.

Loraine van den Berg, the Society Secretary, has produced a professional annual report for the 2006/07 financial year, which is accessible to any members who wish to see how their membership fees are spent. Simply visit the GSSA website or contact the Administrator.

## GSSA Trust application forms

The application forms for GSSA Trust funding are available to members on the GSSA website. The GSSA Trust was established for the purpose of "furthering the aims of the GSSA", and funding is available to members who suitably motivate their application, for a variety of purposes, such as attending conferences and workshops.

Limited funding is available, and applications will be decided on a first-come, first served basis, subject to approval with conditions by the Joint Allocations Committee.

## Upload your publications to the website

The website has a new facility for members of the GSSA and the broader range and forage science community: members can now share their publications on the website, or provide links to their publications on other academic websites.

Send in your thesis, reports, journal articles or abstracts, or any other relevant outputs that you would like to have available to the wider world.

Several members have already done so. Note that the Society cannot assume responsibility for dealing with copyright issues; it is up to members to determine whether their publications can be made freely available on the website.

## Journal submissions

AFRICAN JOURNAL OF RANGE & FORAGE SCIENCE  
Volume 12 (1), 2008  
Email your submissions to the African Journal of Range and Forage Science to [journal@grassland.org.za](mailto:journal@grassland.org.za)

## **GSSA listed as interested and affected party for new multi-products pipeline**

The GSSA has been listed as an interested and affected party (IAAP) for the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of the new multi-products pipeline from Durban to Johannesburg.

The new pipeline is commissioned by Transnet and will transport various petroleum products from the refineries in Durban to reservoirs in Gauteng. The existing pipeline was built in the 1960s, and can no longer cope with the demand for fuel. The demand for fuel will grow exponentially over the next few decades and the new

pipeline will have to have sufficient capacity to cope with current and projected future demand.

The GSSA was represented at a meeting between non-governmental organisations and the environmental consultants performing the EIA, in Howick near Pietermaritzburg on 12 February 2008, by Justin and Freyni du Toit and Alan Short.

The consultants presented the proposals for the possible alternative routes that the pipeline could take, and explained how the developer was intending

to engage with every landowner along the route in order to ensure appropriate compensation for landowners.

The major issues that the GSSA will be concerned with are the damage to the environment caused by the construction of the pipeline, and the rehabilitation process after construction is complete. The GSSA will follow this issue closely, and we will keep members informed of developments.

Documents can be accessed at [www.zitholele.co.za/currentprojectseianmpp](http://www.zitholele.co.za/currentprojectseianmpp)

## **Mining now under environmental law**

Mining will now be subject to the same environmental legislation as other developments, the Cape Argus reported on the 12 March.

Environmentalists have long been concerned that mining was exempt from environmental regulations.

Interim measures

will be put in place until the legislation is changed to allow the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism to take over the Environmental Impact Assessment process for mining entirely.

Until then, the EIA process will be jointly administered by the Departments of Miner-

als and Energy and of Environment, but the final appeal authority will be the Minister of Environmental Affairs.

The legislative changes should take place by June, according to the Cape Argus.



# Bursaries

## Post Doctoral Research Fellows Fire Ecology and Communal Range Management

*Department of Livestock and Pasture Sciences, University of Fort Hare*, to work within the project “Communal Range Management (CRM)”, funded by Govan Mbeki Research Development Centre of the University of Fort Hare and W.F. Kellogg Foundation (Deadline for applications: 30 June 2008). Starting salary is R100,000.00 p.a. For more information contact the Project Leader: Dr. Sikhulazo Dube, email: [sdube@ufh.ac.za](mailto:sdube@ufh.ac.za). Application should be via email to the Project Leader stating suitability for the job; accompanied by a comprehensive CV and 3 traceable referees. The closing date is 30 June 2008.



## MSc: Problems related to tree recruitment and bush encroachment in the coastal zone of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

*School of Biological and Conservation Sciences, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus, South Africa.*

This will be part of an international project funded by the Shell Foundation in The Netherlands, comparing savannas in each of the continents. This will involve a lot of experimental fieldwork in a remote part of KwaZulu-Natal, and a greenhouse study based in Pietermaritzburg. Specifically, we will address the following questions related to the issues of recruitment of young trees:

1. Do tree seedlings respond differently to resources in savannas around the world? If so, are there community-level differences that reflect consistent underlying plant traits related to environment of origin (Rainfall X Soil type), or to continent of origin?
2. Do tree seedlings differ in their ability to compete with grasses for different re-

sources?

3. Do tree seedlings differ in their ability to tolerate defoliation?

This will result in at least one joint, worldwide publication comparing savanna recruitment across the world and a number of publications specific to KwaZulu-Natal's humid zone.

All qualified applicants will be considered. A bursary will be R40,000 per annum, part of which will be obtained from a National Research Foundation bursary (R30,000) and the remainder (R10,000) from research funds. All research costs will be covered by the Shell Foundation. Full-time students only.

Please contact:  
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E-mail: [ward@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:ward@ukzn.ac.za)  
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# Movers and Shakers

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Have you recently moved jobs, or been promoted, transferred, fired or imprisoned, or emigrated? Let us know in our new regular column.

As we don't have time to edit your letters, *Grassroots* recommends that you keep your comments about your previous boss to your mates in the pub.

## **Brian Dalton:**

I have been appointed as an Environmental Specialist at Rio Tinto within the Safety, Health, Environment, and Quality (SHEQ) department of the Palabora Mining Company (PMC). My area of responsibility covers primarily environmental compliance with the relevant legislation, Rio Tinto Standards, and PMC policies whilst providing specialist Grassland Science input into specific projects related to copper mining and eventual mine closure. The mine is a declared nature reserve which opens into the Kruger National Park which makes for an exciting and challenging environment to work in. Small town, great people, challenging job...loving it!!!

## **Frits van Oudtshoorn:**

I recently resigned from the Limpopo Department of Agriculture, as Pasture Scientist, to work for a new slave driver (but with much less hassle!), myself. We (the slave driver and I) started a consultancy company named "Bushveld Environmental Consultants" at the end of 2007. We are doing mainly Game Farm Management Plans and Ecological Reports for EIA's in Southern and East Africa. To sound more prestigious (and because I could), I have changed my job title to "Rangeland Ecologist". We can be contacted at [bushveldec@lantic.net](mailto:bushveldec@lantic.net).

## **Khanyisile Mbatha:**

I have been appointed as a senior lecturer of the University of Zululand, Department of

Agriculture as from the beginning of 2008.

## **Dr Adrian M Shrader**

In February, I took up a lecturer position (Wildlife Conservation and Management) in the School of Biological and Conservation Sciences at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg. Having spent the past six years doing postdocs at the University of Pretoria and the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, I figured it was about time to get a 'real' job. I've joined what was the old Grassland Science Department and will be continuing my research on the ecology of large herbivores, as well as teaching Advanced Rangeland Ecology and Behavioural Ecology.



# Upcoming events

From [www.grassland.org.za](http://www.grassland.org.za)

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## **World Environment Day**

### **Kick the Habit! Towards a Low Carbon Economy**

*Date:* 5 June 2008

*Venue:* Global

*Contact:* Rajinder Sian

*Email:* [worldenvironment-day@unep.org](mailto:worldenvironment-day@unep.org)

*Website:* <http://www.unep.org/>

annual-congress/2008

## **Joint Forum- AZEF and FF**

*Date:* 3-7 August 2008

*Venue:* Oudtshoorn, South Africa

Further information will be made available soon

## **Groundwater and Climate in Africa - an international conference**

*Date:* 24 - 28 June 2008

*Venue:* Kampala, Uganda

*Contact:* Alice Aureli

*Email:* [a.aureli@unesco.org](mailto:a.aureli@unesco.org)

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

## **Annual Thicket Forum Conference Preserving Thicket's Heritage Today for Tomorrow.**

*Date:* 20 - 22 August 2008

*Venue:* Goldfields Education Centre, Grahamstown

*Contact:* Bronwyn Palmer

*Tel:* 084 813 2431

*Email:* [bron.palm@gmail.com](mailto:bron.palm@gmail.com)

## **Organisation and Management in the Seed Sector Training Programme**

*Date:* 23 June - 4 July 2008

*Venue:* Berlin, Germany

*Contact:* Dr. Walter Haege

*Email:* [walter.haege@gmx.net](mailto:walter.haege@gmx.net)

## **SAWMA Conference 2008**

*Date:* 16 - 18 September 2008

*Venue:* Mpekweni Beach Resort, Eastern Cape

*Contact:* Elma Marais

*Tel:* 021 554 1297

*Email:* [elma@mweb.co.za](mailto:elma@mweb.co.za)

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

## **Adaptive Collaborative Management Course**

*Date:* 23 June - 5 July 2008

*Venue:* Bloemfontein

*Email:* [nico.rozemeijer@wur.nl](mailto:nico.rozemeijer@wur.nl)

## **New World: Future World**

### **The 10th World Conference on Animal Production;**

*Date:* 23-28 November 2008

*Venue:* Cape Town International Convention Centre, South Africa

*Tel:* +27 12 420 3276 or +27 12 420 3290

*Contact:* Deidre

*Email:* [deidre@iafrica.com](mailto:deidre@iafrica.com)

*Website:* [www.wcap2008.co.za](http://www.wcap2008.co.za)

## **43rd Annual Congress of the GSSA**

*Date:* 21-25 July 2008

*Venue:* Aventura Badplaas, Mpumalanga, South Africa

*Tel:* +27 (0)33 390 3113

*Contact:* Freyni du Toit

*Email:* [admin@grassland.org.za](mailto:admin@grassland.org.za)

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



# Council News

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**The Council met from 25 – 28 March for a very exciting Strategic Planning session. After a challenging debate around the purpose of the Society a new mission statement was formulated. The Strategic Objectives of the Society were also revised and refined to fit in with the current context of the GSSA (see article about Strategic Planning session on p. 10).**

The preliminary program for Congress 43 was presented and included ample opportunity for scientists, practitioners and farmers from various fields to contribute. Please note that only three Post-Congress tours are being organized, so don't wait too long before signing up. Remember to submit your abstracts and visit the website for updates and further information!

**The website continues to elicit positive responses from both members and the general public. However, it remains essential that the content is continuously updated and added to, so please don't hesitate to send new information, updates, job opportunities and upcoming events to Khanyi Mbatha or Freyni du Toit.**

It was decided that a special Strategic Planning session for the Journal would be beneficial to clarify issues surrounding the operation of the Journal, low submission rates and other matters. This meeting will take place before Congress and members will be informed about the outcome.

**Council is currently looking at a new cost structure for membership, where members essentially**

**choose and pay only for the components (e.g. Journal, Grassroots) they want. A final draft of this structure will be presented at AGM.**

Trust would like to remind members that funding is available for attendance of conferences and other special projects. Application forms are available from Freyni du Toit.

**Council would like to remind all members involved at tertiary institutions to please send in nominations for GSSA student awards.**

Congratulations to Justin du Toit, who organized a very successful and informative GSSA rehabilitation day. Members are invited to contact Council if they would like to organize similar events.

**Hope to see you all at Congress!**

