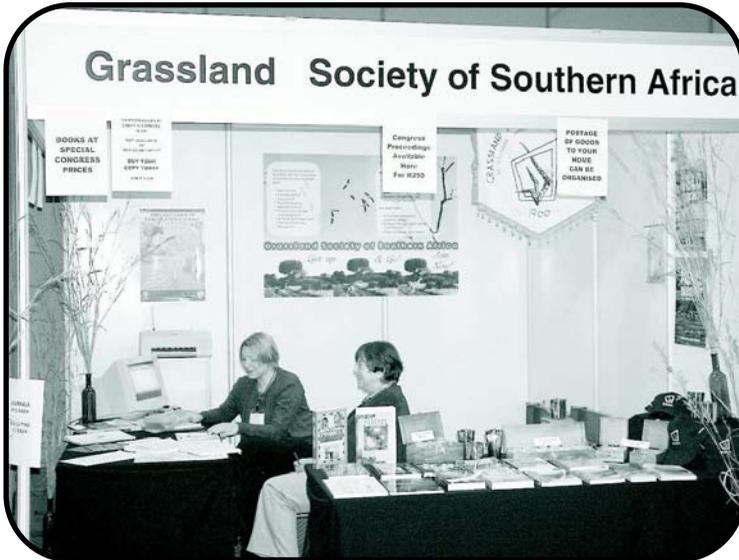


grass's roots

Newsletter of the Grassland Society of Southern Africa

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The GSSA at the VIIth International Rangelands Congress 2003

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Best Practices and Innovative Approach to Sustainable Biodiversity

Threat to the Wild Coast of South Africa

Highway Imperils Pristine Wilderness

*P.O. Box 41 • Hilton • Pietermaritzburg 3245 • South Africa
Tel: 033 390 3113 • Fax: 033 390 3113 • Cell: 083 256 7202
e-mail: admin@gssa.co.za • <http://www.gssa.co.za>*

Editorial

From the Editor

As I'm sure you would have noticed, we have changed the format of Grass Roots. This is in response to numerous requests from members for a publication that is easier to keep on the bookshelf. The A4 format was relatively cheap to produce, but quite disposable. We have been able to get a very competitive price to produce an A5 with a stiffer cover. We hope that this format meets with your approval. Please let me, or other council members know what you think of the revised format of Grass Roots.

If you have any comments or thoughts that you wish to share with the Society please send them in. Maybe as a start we can look at the question of monitoring. The current 200 - point, nearest-plant technique, which is widely used in the humid parts of the country, has been criticised for not being able to predict change. This is valid comment, the question is, what alternative should be used? Please send you comments to me - peddieg@dunrs.kzntl.gov.za or P O Box 626 Dundee 3000. I look forward to some lively debate.

Regards,
Graham

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

It is my pleasure to update you on recent developments in our Society. You are all aware that, for various reasons, the Society is struggling to get its administration up to standard. Due to Freyni Killer's (our administrator) hard work 31 new members have joined the Society, and paid up membership has increased from 160 to 250 out of the 480 registered members. As fees were due by 30 September, I urge all members to make sure that they settle their accounts. Please contact Freyni (admin@gssa.co.za) if you haven't received an account, or if there is any uncertainty. Please note that members who are not paid up will not receive a journal as has happened in the past. This is the main reason for the Society's current poor financial situation. We again ask you to be patient in assisting and supplying us with your updated details either by contacting the administrator or via the web page.

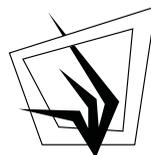
Members have requested that we change the format of Grass Roots from A4 to A5 as it is more practical format to store on your bookshelves. We are pleased to comply with your request.

We are all looking forward to the Second Joint Congress to be held at Goudini Spa from 27/6 to 1/7/2004. Should you have any queries, please contact the congress organizers at: + 27 21 805 5321 or aneldavh@elsenburg.com.

The VIIth International Rangeland Congress which was held in Durban from 26 July to 1 August was a worthwhile experience. The Society would like to thank Dr Tony Palmer and his organising team for their hard work and being ambassadors for the Society and South Africa.

Remember, the Society can only be as good as the support it receives from its members.

Annelie de Beer
President: GSSA



Members write to the GSSA

The following letter was received from Geof Calvert (farm care-taker of Plumtree High School, and GSSA member since 1985) of Zimbabwe. It has been slightly edited.

Matters arising!

1. In my last muddly missive I think I brought up the question of being able to use "M.G.S.S.A" as a professional "Institute" recognition where appropriate, as with the SA Forest Institute, - especially having joined in the midding 'eighties during my veld research days at Matopos where, I seem to remember, one was required to hold a basic degree from a recognized University and support from two professional members in good technical [BSc (+)] and membership standing, with a year or three of professional practice. Then the Consultants Register and restriction of "MGSSA" to these Eminent people in (R)SA. I think I suggested a minor amendment which would provide the Consultants with, e.g., a C(onsulting) MGSSA, and the rest of us 'professionals' with plain MGSSA and technical / diplomate / interested / experienced practical farmers/workers with A(ssociate)MGSSA. Useful in those areas (eg Conferences, Workshops (!) etc.) where certain people don't even converse

with those of us lacking a Doctorate ----- I've experienced it, as a specialist at odd international gatherings including Ethiopia, Zambia, (Zim) and Finland.

2. I like Grassroots may it remain informative but informative, I regret I found the degradation summary disappointing I was, as a "field" person, perhaps expecting a more specifically practical and less academic article! (no disrespect implied or intended for the Authors). A very neat little study on *Acacia karroo* thornveld was done in Matopos not long before I retired in '93 on a severely degraded (experimentally created) site which provided the eminently practical results that simple pitting (by hand in our case rather than contemporary scalloped-disc mechanical) plus protection from grazing and rain compaction by thorny branches WORKED overseeding added to the seedbank. Don't know where it was written up as the internal annual reporting system was changed to "international (marble-polishing) publication" in /from the early nineties. [To the detriment of local on farm priorities along with much else around this time . . .

3. Please try to maintain the ' field day summaries' for we out of access members!

Very Best Wishes,
Sincerely, Geof

GSSA SOUVENIRS

To raise some funds for the GSSA, the Council organised some limited edition GSSA branded souvenirs to sell at the International Rangelands Congress held in Durban earlier this year. For those of you who couldn't make it, now is your opportunity to get some for yourselves (and they make excellent Christmas gifts!!). All of the items are engraved with either the GSSA logo or one of Africa's "Big Five". The sets of

Schnapps Glasses or Glass Coasters are available with either all GSSA logos or with one GSSA logo and one each of the "Big Five". If you would like to order any of the items listed below, email admin@gssa.co.za, fax 033 390 3113 or phone Freyni on 083 256 7202. Postage is not included, but will be determined by how much is purchased.

	DESCRIPTION	PRICE
	6 Schnapps glasses in wooden gift box	R180.00
	2 Whiskey glasses in wooden gift box	R130.00
	6 Glass coasters in wooden gift box	R110.00
	Stainless steel mugs (with GSSA logo and one of the "Big Five", or just GSSA logo, or just one of the "Big Five")	R25.00
	Stainless steel glasses (with GSSA logo and one of the "Big Five", or just GSSA logo, or just one of the "Big Five")	R25.00

REGIONAL NEWS

KwaZulu-Natal

Pasture Tour

A very successful pasture tour, organised by GSSA, SASAS and the Pasture Association, was held in the KZN Midlands from 19 to 21 August. Nine dairy farms and Cedara Research Station were visited. The farms visited are some of the leading dairy farms in the province and ranged from high input (TMR) through medium input (PMR) to low input pasture based systems. The production of high quality maize silage was also seen.

Over sixty people from all over the country participated in the tour, and positive comments have been heard all round. Much discussion was held over the merits of the various dairy systems and pasture management. The general conclusion was that it is a matter of "horses for courses".

Thanks and congratulations to the organisers.



Above: - Silage: discussing high quality silage at the pit face.



Above - Discussion: Bryan Mappeldoram in discussion with other tour participants in a field of hybrid ryegrass.

Left - Planters: viewing planters for over sowing ryegrass into kikuyu

Prestige Dairy Symposium

A successful dairy symposium, 'Dairy Feeding Strategies Maximise your Profits!' was held at Cedara in KwaZulu-Natal on 12 September. It was attended by 178 registered delegates and was co-hosted by the GSSA, KZN Branch of SASAS, the Pasture Association and the KZN Branch of the MPO.

The aim of the day was to provide dairy producers with the latest technology on feeding the dairy herd, and to allow

discussion by farmers, advisors and other specialists. Dr Neil Miles, a researcher and manager with the KZN Department of Agriculture & Environmental Affairs, chaired the symposium. Prof. Kevin Kirkman of the University of Natal started off the day with a review of the role improved pastures in the dairy system. He looked how pastures fit into the system given the high input costs in relation to the income received from milk sales, and questioned some of the advice that dairy farmers are receiving on pastures at present.

John Evans, a well-known dairy feeds consultant in KZN, continued with a presentation on silage, and how this feed can be used to fill the fodder gaps that result from changes in pasture production over the season. In addition, silage can provide an economical base for TMR feeding systems. Trevor Dugmore, a researcher from the KZN Department of Agriculture & Environmental Affairs, continued with a talk on Concentrates in Dairy Systems, and how these are used to cost-effectively increase milk production. Concentrates also improve the general condition of animals which can have positive spin-offs for aspects such as fertility and cull value.



Dairy speakers:

*Trevor Dugmore (KZNSA),
Neil Miles (chairman, KZNSA),
Kevin Kirkman (University of Natal)
and John Evans (Dairy consultant).
Absent: Allan Penderis (Dairy consultant)*

The last talk was presented by Allan Penderis, another well-known KZN dairy consultant, who examined the financial aspects of different feeding systems and approaches. He analysed the costs of producing roughages and feeding dairy meal and what sort of returns could be expected from different feeding strategies at different times of the year.

Delegates were provided with bound copies of the proceedings of the day, and some copies are still available for anyone who was unable to attend. Contact Richard Hurt on rich@mindmap.co.za for more information.



Dairy audience: part of the 170 people who attended the dairy symposium.

North West

South Africa-China Joint Research Programme

Lorraine van den Berg

In 2003 South Africa and China reached an agreement for a joint research programme with regard to the selection and evaluation of drought-tolerant species mainly for the restoration of degraded and desertified arid areas in both countries. After some in-depth discussions and exchange of ideas it became evident that South Africa and China face similar problems regarding



The South Africa-China research group

rangeland degradation and desertification and that combating the degradation of arid rangelands is the common task for scientists of both countries.

Prof. Nan and a research team consisting of scientists and a government official visited South Africa in August this year. The visit included a tour to the Kalahari region of South Africa to give the visitors a general impression of the climate, different biomes, vegetation composition as well as management and land use practises in the area. During the tour the focus was mainly on restoration technologies carried out in the region, and especially the different species used in the restoration treatments. The problems of bush encroachment and the eradication thereof were also discussed and the tour included a visit to sites where the invader bush species were removed. The visitors indicated that they found the tour interesting and helpful as they experienced things they have only read in textbooks up to now. In a last round table discussion a very

enthusiastic team finalized the details of the research programme. In the future a team from South Africa will undertake a similar visit to China and hopefully come back with a bag full of ideas.



The Chinese visitors taking a better look at South African vegetation

Mpumalanga Lowveld & Eastern Limpopo

SOUTH AFRICAN ENVIRONMENTAL OBSERVATION NETWORK FOR THE LOWVELD

by Johan Pauw and Mike Peel

National Research Foundation, Pretoria
(johan@nrf.ac.za)
Range and Forage Institute, Nelspruit
(mike@itsc.agric.za)

SAEON's first observation area identified

The South African Environmental Observation Network (SAEON) Advisory Board and its Technical Steering Committee agreed to the development of a first observatory or node in the Lowveld. The Lowveld was selected because it is believed that building on the extensive long-term research programmes of many research organisations, both in and adjacent to the Kruger National Park, will quickly bear fruit demonstrating the value of SAEON. In addition the Savanna Biome is globally underrepresented and the Lowveld provides major opportunities to compare across different land-uses.

This first SAEON Node must be designed to meet the objectives of SAEON, which are to:

- * Offer leadership in long-term data systems

- * Support long-term observations on crucial and missing variables
- * Archive long-term data (own & other)
- * Make long-term data accessible
- * Broker and partner long-term data
- * Integrate long-term data
- * Package long-term data
- * Secure the SAEON system and long-term data collections
- * Communicate with local and international stakeholders
- * Provide a platform for capacity building, outreach and education

SAEON's Technical Steering Committee has provisionally identified a limited set of thematic issues of high importance to both ecosystem function and human wellbeing in South Africa. They are, in random order, water, soil/sediments, carbon/nutrient cycles, biodiversity, disturbance regimes and climate/atmosphere. Associated with a node will be a set of observing facilities, consisting of at least one core site, several affiliated sites, and a significant number of sample locations (eventually in the order of 100's).

At least one of the affiliated sites should be an experiment contrasting treatment within an experimental site, or between the experiment and the core site.

The design of SAEON combines relevant international approaches such as the United States Long-Term Ecological Research (LTER) Network, the National Ecological

Observatory Network (NEON) and the Global Terrestrial Observation System (GTOS). SAEON is receiving tremendous support from the research community and a range of science institutions, government departments and private sector organisations. These are all represented on SAEON's advisory structures, both of which are fully functional and making good progress.

Limpopo

RANGELAND RELATED RESEARCH PROJECTS IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE

The following projects are being conducted by members of the University of Venda in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture in the Limpopo Province:

1. An Assessment of the Impact of Fire on Vegetation in the Arid Sweet Bushveld of the Limpopo Province.
2. Calibrating a Disc Pasture Meter for Arid Sweet Bushveld at Mara Agricultural Development Centre.
3. An Investigation into the Influence of Tree Density on the Grass Sward in the Savanna Biome of the Limpopo Province.
4. Calculating Optimum Sample Size for the Application of the BECVOL-Model (BECVOL: Biomass Estimates from Canopy Volume) in Arid Sweet Bushveld at Mara Agricultural Development Centre.
5. Calculating Grazing Capacity of Rangeland in Sourish Mixed Bushveld, Limpopo Province.
6. An Assessment of Methods to Control Alien Plants in Riparian Zones of the Luvuvhu River Catchment.
7. Assessing Rangeland Management strategies in Sourish Mixed Bushveld, Limpopo Province.

The Mopane Research Group of the University of the North is currently hosting two postgraduate students of the University

of Wageningen in the Netherlands. Ms Lenneke Knoop and Ms Debbie Otto will spend the next three months studying the feeding ecology of kudu in the mopani veld of the Messina Experimental Farm. Their study visit forms part of a research partnership between Prof Dirk Wessels and Mr Martin Potgieter (members of the Mopane Research Group), Mr Cornelis van der Waal of the Mara Research Station and Dr Fred de Boer of the Tropical Nature Conservation and Vertebrate Ecology Group, University of Wageningen.

Free State

Cactus pear research and development at the University of the Free State

Cactus pear research and development in South Africa has taken a major step forward with the formation of the **Prickly Pear Working Group (PPWG)** at the University of the Free State in June 2002.

The choice of "prickly pear", as opposed to "cactus pear" in the name of the working group is based on the familiarity of the former name to the general public and amply demonstrates the commitment of PPWG to serve the larger South African community in cactus pear development.

The founder members of the working group are all experts in a broad spectrum of disciplines, all of which have a definite point of contact with cactus pear. The persons currently making up the working group and their fields of expertise are:

- Co-ordinator: Prof Maryke Labuschagne

- (Plant Breeding)
- Prof Wijnand Swart (Plant Pathology)
- Prof Schalk Louw (Entomology)
- Prof Seef Pretorius (Agronomy)
- Prof H O de Waal (Animal Nutrition)
- Prof Hennie Snyman (Grassland Science)
- Prof Gary Osthoff (Food Science)
- Dr Chris Viljoen (Plant Molecular Biology)
- Dr Herman Fouché (Grassland Science)
- Dr Leon van Rensburg (Soil Science)

Namibia

1. A very successful 7th Namibian Rangeland Forum was held recently (7-11 July 2003) in the #Khoadi /Hoas (Elephant Corner) Conservancy in the Kunene Region, north-western Namibia, hosted by the Desert Research Foundation of Namibia and the Grootberg Farmers' Union. As its name indicates, this is where the remaining 200-odd free-ranging desert elephant have their "head quarters". In fact, the communal camp site was located on the banks of the river used regularly by the "groot voete" to transverse the Grootberg area, including during the Forum, but unfortunately always at night.

The topic of this year's Forum was "From Science to Implementation", focusing on the role of 3 UN conventions in Namibian rangeland matters. About 80 people listened to presentations by:

Bertus Kruger: Applying the Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) to support rangelands

Sem Shikongo: Applying the Convention on Biodiversity (UN CBD) to support rangelands and

Dr Mary Seely: Applying the Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to support rangelands, the main topic of this year's Forum.

In addition, there were a number of related presentations, by:

- * **Ibo Zimmermann:** Synergy between student training, participatory research and community service contributing

A reasonable support base already exists for the activities of PPWG. This includes a germplasm collection of 40 cultivars that has already been established by the UFS on a farm outside Bloemfontein, numerous farms with well-established cactus pear plots in the vicinity of Bloemfontein and bursary funding for specific postgraduate projects on cactus pear. Furthermore, Prof Wijnand Swart, a group member, is also the Sub-Saharan representative of the FAO International Network for Technical Cooperation on cactus pear, known as CACTUSNET-FAO.

towards natural resource management

- * **Axel Rothauge:** Rangeland resources assessment with satellite imagery: an operational tool for national planning in Namibia
- * **Pieter Krone:** Support by extension services to "affirmative action" and newly resettled farmers
- * **Hartmut Koelling:** Resting of rangelands in the northern communal areas, and a number of practical sessions, during which scientists had the opportunity to interact with practitioners and to demonstrate their experimental / monitoring methods.

An executive summary will follow as soon as the proceedings have been published.

2. On 6 and 7 August 2003, the Agricultural Scientific Society of Namibia held its 10th bi-annual congress in Windhoek, with the topic: "Namibian Agriculture in a variable and changing climate", with special significance to rangeland managers. One guest speaker, Dr Bob Scholes, addressed Congress on "Climate change and Namibian agriculture", while the other, Dr P Stoermer, addressed Congress on "Ozone depletion and protection".

In addition, there were presentations on drought monitoring (Dr Louis du Pisani), the potential of camels in Namibia (Carol Reuter), genetic characterization of indigenous goat breeds (Jacque Els), the Namibian Lamb Meat industry (Diane Mueseler), two contributions on strategic

marketing (Samuel M'Bai), horticultural production (S Burger), sensory properties of *Tylosema esculenta* (Diane Mueseler), the influence of stocking rate and cattle frame size on bush density and grass species composition (Bessie Bester), grass species response to fluctuating rainfall (Ben Strohbach), bush density data analysis (Marina Coetzee), an update on the Bush Encroachment Research, Monitoring and Management Project (Nico de Klerk) and how to write research proposals and to get

them funded (Axel Rothauge), as well as four separate contributions giving feedback on BIOTA = Biodiversity Monitoring Transect Analysis in Afirca (Hans-Juergen Buss, Ute Schneiderat, Ute Schmiedel, Thomas Falk).

These contributions emphasize the importance of sustainable rangeland management to Namibian agricultural producers, 90% of whom depend on natural rangelands. A summary will be submitted as soon as the proceedings have been published.

East Africa

Important information from Uganda

There are two professional organisations that are engaged in grassland, forage and livestock development activities, research and information dissemination.

The Uganda Pasture Network (UPANE) was established in 1987. Prof E N Sabiiti is its Chairman. Membership includes scientists, policy makers, farmers and students. They

meet to discuss issues in pasture research and livestock production. They also organise seminars and field days for farmers. The next meeting is planned for Dec 2003 and it will be a field day for farmers in the Peri-Urban Dairy Production systems.

Another is Uganda Animal Production Society which was formed a few years ago and addresses livestock nutrition and production. Membership is similar to those in UPANE except this tends to emphasize scientific approaches.

The next issue will focus on Kenya and Tanzania.

Send news items for the various regions, to the addresses below:

Eastern Cape

Wiseman Goqwana, wgoqwana@ufh.ac.za

KwaZulu-Natal

Richard Hurt, info@mvelo.co.za

North West

Franci Jordaan, francij@potch1.agric.za

Gauteng

Marike Trytsman, marike@veld.agric.za

Western Cape

Annelene Swanepoel
annelenes@elsneburg.com

Mpumalanga Highveld

Anneke Engelbrecht
anneke@laeveld1.agric.za

Mpumalanga Lowveld & Eastern Limpopo

Mike Peel, mike@frieden.agric.za

Limpopo

Cornelius van der Waal,
corwaal@mweb.co.a

Free State

Ibe Oosthuizen, oosthib@sci.uovs.ac.za

Namibia

Axel Rothauge, arothauge@unam.na

East Africa

Prof Elly Sabiiti, esabiiti@agric.mak.ac.ug

Regional representatives have not been identified for: **Northern Cape**, **Mozambique**, and **Zimbabwe**. If anybody from these areas would be prepared to co-ordinate news from their region, please contact the editor Graham Peddie, peddie@dunrs.kzntl.gov.za



EcoRestore

**A Decision Support System for the Restoration of Degraded Rangelands-
Anuschka Barac Klaus Kellner -School of Environmental Sciences and Development:
Botany Division Restoration Ecology
Potchefstroom University for CHE
Potchefstroom**

The *EcoRestore* Decision Support System (DSS) is based on case studies of technologies and approaches that have been researched and applied by farmers, scientists and rangeland managers over the short and long-term, in order to restore degraded rangelands or combat problem woody species and alien species encroachment and thickening in southern Africa.

EcoRestore consists of two databases, *Grass Expert* (restoration of bare and denuded areas by means of active or passive intervention technologies) and *Bush Expert* (control of bush encroachment by means of chemical, mechanical, manual or biological control technologies). *Grass Expert* mostly includes South African case studies, whilst *Bush Expert* currently consists of Namibian case studies, but seeing that it is still in the process of development, the database will be expanded in the near future, including case studies of South Africa and probably other southern African countries as well (i.e. Botswana and Zimbabwe).

The challenge of this DSS is to optimise the exchange of knowledge concerning these practices that have been applied previously and disseminate it to as many land users as possible, in order to serve as future rangeland restoration management applications. The system thus serves as a user-friendly consultation and decision making tool, which

aids the land user in choosing the most appropriate restoration technology, taking into consideration the environmental conditions and financial constraints of the land user concerning the problem being experienced.

Currently two versions of the *EcoRestore* DSS are available:

- The on-line version that is already available on the internet and can be freely accessed via the following address: www.puk.ac.za/EcoRestore
- The CD-ROM version. This version is available in a package including the CD as well as a user's manual, but however needs to be updated regularly, either by means of an updated CD-version of the DSS or from the on-line web-version. The CD-version is an ideal tool for those land users/ agricultural extension officers that do not have access to the internet.

This project (particularly the *Bush Expert* component) is carried out in close collaboration with the Namibian Ministry of Environment and Tourism, which together with the National Department of Agriculture of South Africa are the main funding parties. The Potchefstroom University for CHE is responsible for the development and administration of the project as a whole.



For any general queries concerning the *EcoRestore* Decision Support System or on how to obtain the CD-ROM version, please contact one of the following administrators at the PU for CHE:

Prof. Klaus Kellner : Tel: (018) 299-2510/
Fax: (018) 299-2509/ Cell: 082 569 6145

plbkk@puknet.puk.ac.za

Ms. Anuschka Barac : Tel: (018) 299- 2499/
Fax: (018) 299- 2503/ Cell: 083 696 2011

plbasb@puknet.puk.ac.za

COMPLETE YOUR JOURNAL AND BULLETIN COLLECTION!!

The Administrator has found several boxes of journal and bulletin back issues. So now is your chance to fill in the gaps on your bookshelf. The list below gives an idea of what is available, although two other storerooms have yet to be investigated. Postage is not included but will be worked out based on how much you buy. Some issues are very rare, and only one or two are left, so orders will be treated as first come, first served. Email admin@gssa.co.za, fax 033 390 3113 or phone Freyni on 083 256 7202. Invoices will be supplied with all orders.

BULLETINS

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		19 (2)	R 15.00	9 (1)	R 15.00
		19 (3)	R 15.00	9 (3)	R 15.00
		2 (1)	R 15.00	9 (4)	R 15.00

JOURNALS

Vol (Issue)	Price
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1 (3)	R 15.00
1 (4)	R 15.00
10 (1)	R 15.00

SPECIAL PUBLICATIONS AND SUPPLEMENTS

Vol (Issue)	Price	
1991	R 15.00	Proceedings of the First Valley Bushveld/Subtropical Thicket Symposium
1992	R 15.00	Prestige Farmers' Days Proceedings 1991-1992
1993	R 15.00	Proceedings of the First Developing Areas Symposium
1995	R 15.00	Second Developing Areas Symposium: People, Rangelands & Development
1996 Dec	R 15.00	Proceedings of the Second Valley Bushveld Symposium
1991 (1)	R 10.00	Bedford Farmers' Days
1991 (2)	R 10.00	Dundee Farmers' Days
1996 Sept	R 15.00	Proceedings from a Symposium on the Science of Free Ranging Animals

NOTE:

Bulletin 6(2) Featuring Sourveld Farmers' Days Proceedings from Amsterdam, Dohne & Kokstad

WORKSHOP ANNOUNCEMENT

Timber Plantations: Impacts, Future Visions and Global Trends

Date: November 13, 2003
Time: 10 am - 4.30 pm
Venue: MPB Auditorium, Nelspruit

Guest Speaker List:

Prof. Dr. Denis Goldberg
Special Advisor to Minister of Water Affairs
and Forestry
*Tree Growing as and element of Economic
Transformation, Reconstruction and
Development*

Prof. Braam van Wyk
University of Pretoria, Botany Dept.
The Value of Grasslands

Dr. Guy Preston
WWF
*Risks Associated with the Cultivation of
Invasive Species*

Wally Menne
TimberWatch S.A.
*Report back from GFC - Global Forest
Congress - Are Plantations and Forests
Compatible?*

Richard Spoor
*A Legal Framework which allows
Corporations to Externalize Costs*

Morne Lizamore
DWA
*Water Stress in South Africa and its Impact on
the Timber Industry*

Dirk Versfeld
Consultant
Forestry Alternative for Rural Development

David Lindley
Mondi Wetland Project
Wetland Trends in the Forestry Industry

Nhlanhla Mswili
Swaziland
*Timber Plantations and the Impacts on rural
people*

Bryan Ashe
Earthlife Africa: *Community Forestry*

George Dor
Jubilee 2000
*Ecological Debt - Reparations for Damage
by Industry, Mining, Dams and Monoculture*

Industry Representative
The Future of Forestry in South Africa

For more information contact:

*Philip Owen - Tel: 013 7335267
Cell: 082 6369129
E-mail: owen@soft.co.za*

*Wally Menne -
Cell: 082 4442083
Email: plantnet@iafrica.com*

Best practices and innovative approaches to sustainable biodiversity conservation and management in the semi-arid western rangelands of the North West province:

Case studies from the Molopo district

The Desert Margins Program (DMP) has been developed in response to a recommendation made to the international research community at UNCED (United Nations Conference on the Environmental Development) to consider contributions for the implementation of the three International Conventions on Biodiversity, Climate Change and Desertification. This program will address alternative land use activities, whilst simultaneously promoting parallel activities encouraging alternative

livelihoods. Not only does the focus of the DMP fall within the vision of The Strategic Plan for South African Agriculture, but it also falls within the scope of Agenda 21 and the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA-Act No. 107 of 1998) both of which the NW Province is a signatory.

Hence, the aim of this study and participation by the NW Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Environment will be to evaluate changes in biodiversity in different

land use strategies (evaluating current changes due to historical management practices) and management by using vegetation surveys and by using selected bio-indicators. Outputs expected by the NW DACE in this DMP/GEF multidisciplinary stakeholder participation project are:

1. Establish the processes/environmental parameters that maintain the biodiversity in the study area, as well as those that cause land degradation.
2. Determine the impact of various land use practices on the biodiversity of the study area.
3. Enhance effective exchange of information and collaboration between stakeholders.
4. Address best sustainable natural resource management practices, including alternative livelihood practices.

Three land-use types, within the Molopo area were identified:

- Molopo Nature Reserve
- Commercial areas-good farming practices ("conservation farmer")
- Communal areas (extreme opposite of good commercial areas)

The following has been achieved by the NW DACE:

Completion of experimental lay-out of study, approval of the project by management, NW DACE, approval of the project by the Western Region Forum, NW DACE Extension Services, approval of the experimental lay-out by PU for CHE (with special reference to ants as bio-indicators to complement vegetation surveys over a mini-veld potential gradient within three land-use types), co-operation with extension officers and specialist from NW DACE Field Services, Western Region. Communication and inputs from CSIRO, Australia, regarding experimental lay-out of project (using ants as bio-indicators to complement vegetation surveys), communication, co-operation and participation from farmers regarding surveys to be performed on their farms, as well as from the NW Parks Board regarding surveys to be performed in the Molopo Nature Reserve. A student is working on the project (using ants as bio-indicators). Furthermore,

base-line funding has been secured and made available from the NW DACE.

Fencing material for 12 benchmarks in the Molopo Nature Reserve and for three commercial farms, has been transported to remote sites in the Molopo area, NW Province. Six survey sites (three good veld condition and three poor veld condition) and 2 benchmark sites (one good and one poor veld condition) has been selected on three commercial farms (land use 1) and three communal villages (land use 2). Eighteen survey sites (nine good veld condition and nine poor veld condition) and six benchmark sites (three good and three poor veld condition) have been selected in the Molopo Nature Reserve (land use 3). Each benchmark site has already been erected. On the commercial farms, different cattle, goat and game management systems are represented.

The vegetation surveys that will be done are the following:

- Grass production and quality
- Species composition, veld condition and basal coverage
- Bush Counts
- Seedbed studies

Data analysis and interpretation will be performed by the following steps:

- Species information from the plots will be directly conveyed from the MONITOR to the personal micro-computer.
- The various data sets will be analysed, with the additional data, in CANOCO and ISPD.
- Ant data will be analysed with the PRIMER programme, and with CANOCO.
- The effect of management practices on the veld condition, herbaceous production, seedbed, bush density and ant biodiversity will be compared between sites within a land-use type at the poor and good veld condition extremes, as well as across land-use types. This will be brought in connection with the data of the

- benchmark plots. Tendencies within and between different land-use practices will be studied quantitatively.
- Possible tendencies and responses will be explained by incorporating the additional information and data in the analyses.

- Additional data will be evaluated on grounds of availability, significance and reliability.

For more information contact: M Coetzee

**P/Bag X804, Potchefstroom, 2520
Tel: 018 299 6704 - Fax: 018 297 7135**

THREAT TO THE WILD COAST OF SOUTH AFRICA

from the Bishop of Umzimvubu

Sir, My diocese encompasses two areas of great natural beauty in South Africa, the Drakensberg mountains and the Pondoland Wild Coast.

The Wild Coast is exceptional, having remained "undeveloped" and therefore unspoilt. Of the half-dozen waterfalls in the world that cascade straight into the ocean, three are found along this coast. It has been recognised as one of 25 global botanical "hot spots", with more than 180 species found nowhere else. The relatively small Mkambati Nature Reserve on this coast contains 23 waterfalls and a colony of over 60 endangered Cape vultures in the Msikaba Gorge.

It should be proclaimed a World Heritage site. The South African Government recognises its value and intends declaring the Pondoland Wild Coast a national park. At the same time, it is agreeing to a bid by an engineering consortium to build a toll road of motorway standards through the area. It also appears that it will sanction sand-dune mining for titanium by an Australian company.

While sustainable development is welcome, this bid should be opposed on environmental, social and moral grounds. A road of this dimension (80m in width) will inevitably be environmentally destructive, with

subsequent deforestation and erosion. It will desecrate a quite unique part of the world. It will cause great disruption to the local communities who have requested the upgrading of existing roads, thereby providing access to hospitals and tourist centres. A motorway will benefit the engineering and trucking industries and not the local people.

The engineering consortium has now told the South African Government that it cannot run a toll road profitably unless the Government pays an anticipated R 1.5 billion (£ 120 million) for two bridges required to span the Msikaba and Mtentu gorges. One, over a mile long, will be the longest in Africa south of the Sahara.

If the South African taxpayer is to pay, the road should be built where the people want it and not where an engineering consortium can make money out of it.

A British engineering company has been commissioned to design the bridges. Its chief bridge consultant has been to South Africa at least twice, the route has been surveyed and is in advanced stages of preparation.

I still hope that the South African Government will turn down the proposal. If, as seems likely, it accepts it, I hope that no British capital, either from the private or public sector, is used in the building of this road.

Yours faithfully,
GEOFFREYUMZIMVUBU,
PO Box 644,
KOKSTAD, 4700 SOUTH AFRICA.
mzimyubu@futurenet.co.za

HIGHWAY IMPERILS PRISTINE WILDERNESS

*from Michael Dynes
on the Pondoland Wild Coast,
26 July 2003*

ONE of Africa's most pristine wilderness is threatened by plans for a £500 million highway that could ruin habitats unique to the continent.

Building of a 340-mile toll road from Durban to East London, along South Africa's largely undeveloped eastern seaboard, is to begin in December and will take a year.

Controversy has erupted over the proposal to lay a 65-mile swath of concrete across the Pondoland Wild Coast, home to 180 plant species found nowhere else.

Environmentalists say that some of the species date to prehistoric times before the Earth's continents separated. Many have yet to be catalogued and new ones are being discovered all the time. The Pondo Bushmen's tea tree, the rarest tree in South Africa, has survived in the remote bushland for millennia. Botanists believe that there are no more than 400 specimens, some thought to be more than 1,000 years old. The four lane road would put a corridor 80 yards wide through the region's renowned grassy plains, rivers and forests which roll down to a coast where sandstone formations have created spectacular cliffs, gorges and lagoons.

The Eastern Cape provincial government seems to back the scheme. However, Enoch Godongwana, the Minister for Economic Affairs and Tourism, added a racial dimension to the controversy after insisting that "only a few whites" in the nearby town of Kokstad were "creating a fuss" over the road. Many black residents in impoverished townships to be bypassed by the road fear that they will be deprived of passing trade.

The Wild Coast is the graveyard of numerous of sailing vessels. It is also a dirt-poor area with a reputation for lawlessness where families scratch a living from the land.

Critics say that the road will do nothing to alleviate the poverty while backers say that it will help to transform the Eastern Cape into a tourist revenue earner. The proposal by the

Wild Coast Consortium, a group of South African engineering firms, has been accepted in principle by the National Roads Agency and is awaiting the go-ahead from the Government, despite the virtual absence of public consultation.

The scheme would entail two new bridges over the Mtentu and Msikaba gorges, two of the most breathtaking vistas in the South African countryside. Halcrow, a British engineering firm, has been commissioned to design the crossings. The Right Rev Geoffrey Davies, the Bishop of Umzimvubu, who has been leading the campaign to get the toll road scrapped, said: "South Africa must not sacrifice a spectacular coastline in the name of economic development. Future generations will shake their heads in disbelief at our negligence if we allow these unique gorges to be bridged." Mike Sutcliffe, Durban city manager, who has expressed reservations of routing the road through the Pondoland wild Coast, said: "There still needs to be more investigation into the route. National government is compelled to involve local government in decisions of this nature".

Your Campaign
Your Heritage

the WILD COAST
is in
DANGER

A Call
To Action by
Reality

**JOIN THE CAMPAIGN -
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someone else who cares**

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- If you would like to help with administration...phone us!

**YOUR HERITAGE IS IN DANGER OPPOSE THE
MINING OF THE WILD COAST AND THE
PROPOSED DESTRUCTIVE ROUTE
AND TOLL OF THE N2 HIGHWAY
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spreek vanself

Lusern



Kultivars

Die volledige pakket. Dormansie-klasse vir hooi, asook beweiding

WEIDINGSTIPE (SEMI-DORMANT: KLAS 5)

PAN 4546 - Goeie alternatief vir SA Standaard

- Geskik vir gebiede met koue winters, asook die winterreënstreek.
- Kan strawwe beweiding verdra.

NOTA: Tref die nodige opblaas voorsorgmaatreëls wanneer lusern beweï word.

WEIDINGS-EN HOOI TIPE (INTERMEDIËR DORMANT: KLAS 7)

PAN 4764 - Uitstekende Hooiopbrengste

- Dubbeldoel kultivar, goed aangepas vir al die produksiestreke met koue winter.

HOOI TIPES (NIE-DORMANT: KLAS 8)

PAN 4860, PAN 4821 EN EUREKA (NUUT)

- Wyd aangepas. Uitstaande stabiele hooioproduksie.

(STERK NIE-DORMANT: KLAS 9)

PAN 4961 EN PAN 4965 - Spesialis Hooi Produceerders

- PAN 4961 presteer besonder goed in streke met matige winters in die warm droë areas (bv. Noord Kaap).
- PAN 4956 is baie goed aangepas vir al die warm produksiegebiede.



PANNAR

Breek Die Grense Van Prestasie

VIR INLIGTING KONTAK:

Willie Venter: Greytown (033) 413 9500 • infoserve@pannar.co.za
Webruimte: www.pannar.com