



Friends of the Liesbeek River

Creating an awareness of the river, to rehabilitate, enhance and conserve it and its environs.

Winter 2012 <http://fol.org.za> Visit the website...there is so much more to see there!



LETTER FROM THE COMMITTEE

Dear Friends,

Thank you to all the members and guests who attended our AGM on the 5th June, 2012. More than 30 members and visitors joined us in the Envirocentre at Valkenberg.

After Trevor Hughes presented the Chairman's report on the highlights of the year, Grant Irlam gave a professional overview of FOL's finances. This was followed by a great presentation by Jason Mingo, the Liesbeek Maintenance Project Manager. His talk on "Growing Banks, Investing in the Future" was extremely informative and explained a number of issues. Phil McLean's display in the foyer of all the plants that we can plant on the banks of the river, kindly lent to us by the Kirstenbosch Garden Centre, as well as all those unwelcome invasive aliens that we are removing, made certain we were well-informed.

Afterwards everyone gathered for a chat and enjoyed a lovely spread of refreshments kindly donated by The Wild Fig, The Courtyard and River Club. Thank you Di and Trevor for organizing and laying out the lovely spread.

The committee has gained a new member: Debra West. We warmly welcome Debra to the committee and look forward to her knowledge of plants and their propagation to help the work done on the river.

Warm regards,

The Committee

DROPPING TEMPERATURES, RISING WATERS:



The bank of the Liesbeek River flooded due to heavy rains on the 7th of June (above) after having been cleared of alien vegetation in April this year (below)



Dropping Temperatures, Rising Waters, *cont'd*

The onset of winter sees the Liesbeek River rejuvenated through the flushing rains brought by the cold front systems. As the temperatures decrease, we are wary of the rising water levels along the river. This became quite apparent on the 7th of June, with the river bursting its banks for the first time this year. Thanks to the efforts of the Liesbeek Maintenance Project in conjunction with the Kadar Asmal River Cleaning Project, the banks cleared of alien vegetation in the lower reaches of the river, naturally burst and flooded.

In the upcoming months, Cape Town is likely to receive more rain and we ask that all our Friends keep a watchful eye on the river, and please alert the Liesbeek Maintenance Team, via our manager Jason, of any potential obstructions in the river (i.e. fallen trees, blocked canals etc.).

You can easily post comments and report problems on our Facebook page
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/friendsoftheliesbeek/>

BACKWASHING YOUR POOL: FILTERING OUT THE UNCERTAINTY

While the last thing on any of our minds at this moment would be swimming in our own pool, we thought it may be worthwhile educating our Friends about the uncertainty that seems to exist around the discharge of water from backwashing the pool.

According to the City of Cape Town by-law relating to stormwater management, under section 4(b), "No person may, except with the written consent of the Council and subject to any conditions it may impose-...discharge from any place, or place onto any surface, any other substance other than stormwater, where that substance could reasonably be expected to find its way into the stormwater system..." and stormwater is defined as "...water resulting from natural precipitation and/or the accumulation thereof..." .

Therefore it is illegal to discharge backwash from your pool into the stormwater system, and we would ask if you could please share this information with any people you may know who have a pool. However, it is also not good practice to backwash into the sewerage system since waste water treatment works are already overloaded and are adding to the volume of poorly treated water that goes back into Cape Town's rivers.

Backwash water should be 'treated' on site and returned to the pool. Simply by holding backwash water in a tank (a 400 litre tank will suffice) for about 4 days or so will settle all the suspended solids so that water can then be returned to the pool. This is right thing to do and is a simple solution requiring only a small investment, and obviously some space to house the tank.

FOL offers this as a sustainable solution because it prevents water containing pool chemicals from being discharged into rivers, and it also saves water (about 1500 litres per month if you backwash once a week).

It takes 32,5 billion litres of drinking water to fill the estimated 650 000 swimming pools in South Africa. The Western Cape accounts for about 91 000 of these swimming pools.

(You can download a handy resource book on sustainable living from http://www.capetown.gov.za/en/EnvironmentalResourceManagement/Documents/Smart_Living_Handbook_Eng_FULL%20VERSION_4thEd_2011-05.pdf)



'Stop the Spread' is a programme of WESSA (The Wildlife and Environment Society of SA). It aims to raise awareness of and inspire action against the invasive alien species that are threatening our biodiversity and life support systems. It does this through interactive promotions; accessible resources such as booklets and pamphlets as well as working with organisations and individuals to increase their participation in managing and controlling invasive alien species.

We hope you will engage with us on the pressing problem of the spread of invasive alien species in South Africa.

<https://www.facebook.com/StopTheSpread>

For more information on getting involved in or establishing a Friends Group, please contact Nina on 033 330 3931 or e-mail wessamembers@wessa.co.za

WESSA are also on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/WildlifeandEnvironmentSocietyofSA>

SAYING GOODBYE TO SPECIAL FRIENDS:



David Nyathela



Ntobeko Dyani

During the last months we have had to say goodbye to two of our team members on the Liesbeek Maintenance Project, David Nyathela and Ntobeko Dyani.

David has returned to his family in the Eastern Cape and to work with his brother. We hope the experience he has gained while working along the river serves him well in his future. We thank him for his dedicated service along the river with the project.

Ntobeko was offered a manager internship position with the horticultural unit in the Public Works department. We are happy to see Ntobeko move on to bigger things, and thank him for all his hard work, time and enthusiasm he showed for the project. We wish him all the best and good luck.

JOIN THE WORKSHOPS ON THE LIESBEEK

All workshops take place on a Thursday from 15h00 to 18h00 and include a practical component in the first hour, and a structured discussion for the remainder of the time. If you want to participate in your sector or any other areas please RSVP to secretary@fol.org.za or phone 0216715385 or 0846618264 for more information.

Sector 1:

Kirstenbosch Drive to Paradise Road 31st May 2012

Sector 2:

Paradise Road to Sans Souci Bridge 2nd August 2012

Sector 3:

Sans Souci Bridge to Albion Springs 30th August 2012

Sector 4:

Albion Springs to Belmont Bridge 13th September 2012

Sector 5:

Belmont Bridge to Rosebank Station 20th September 2012

Sector 6:

Rosebank Station to Settler's Drive 4th October 2012

Sector 7:

Settler's Drive to Two Rivers Urban Park 18th October 2012

INDABA

Saturday 10th November 2012

The final workshop of the year will draw up a comprehensive general strategy for the Friends of the Liesbeek and clear, measurable objectives that specify what we want to achieve on the Liesbeek. These objectives will become the core of our Liesbeek Management Plan.

STARKE AYRES HELPING OUT:

We extend a big thank you to the staff and management from Stark Ayres, who donated a number of plants to the Liesbeek Maintenance Project for planting along the river. We appreciate your support and look forward to working with you in the future.

WORKSHOP ON THE UPPER LIESBEEK

A successful workshop was conducted on the Liesbeek on 31st May, 2012. Residents, FOL members and Cllr Elizabeth Brunette met on the bank of the Liesbeek at Riverside Road. The following points were raised:

- A list of plant species and where one may purchase these plants should be made available to residents living along and within close proximity to the river. This list would need to take into account the fact that the river flows through various different types of vegetation types and the plant list should reflect this.
- Recognized and agreed upon was the fact that the White Ginger Lily (*Hedychium coronarium*) is a problem and there is a willingness to help remove it from the banks of the river. Concerns were that the ginger was acting as a bank stabilizer and offering a barrier for security and privacy along the river. Also noted that in this area the property boundary lies in the middle of the river and therefore the involvement of property owners is both compulsory and important in the removal of ginger.
- It is essential that provision is made for replanting to be coordinated with removal of plants. Bare banks erode, provide easy growth for unwanted plants and look unsightly.
- Particular effort needs to be made to connect with, and involve, residents who live along the river in order to encourage their participation / support. This is something with which the residents can help in talking to neighbours.
- When the Liesbeek Maintenance Project Team is going to work in the area, a note can be dropped in the letter boxes of houses adjacent to where the team will be working before the event.
- Work on the banks needs to be estimated in terms of cost-effectiveness before work is commenced. The banks need to be managed in a sustainable and cost-effective way.
- Residents wish to feel safe and secure in their surrounding environment. Therefore, large bushes or vegetation which would offer cover to unwanted behaviour and to criminal activity is something that would need to be considered for future planning and planting.

• A concern was raised regarding flooding and the effects of flooding on bank erosion. Trying to find ways of reducing and/or prolonging the run-off from stormwater drainage was mentioned as a key point to address the impacts of flooding.

• Mention was made of the plight of the Bishops court Village Liesbeek Garden for future funding. Agreed that the call for assistance needs to come from the Bishops court Village Association and then for surrounding residents' associations to come together and source a plan for the future of the garden.

In closing, the people involved in the workshop were happy to be involved in the planning process of the river, and expressed the need for a concise plan to be drawn up and made available for those living in and around the river. The plan should consist of an overall plan for the river and specific plans for each reach of the river, especially on how and what to replant.

Outcomes

1. A holistic plan to manage and rehabilitate the river needs to be drawn up, and all stakeholders need to be approached to develop the plan.
2. Information regarding owners and their responsibilities needs to be gathered.
3. Owners and other role-players need to be informed regarding the environmental principles on managing and rehabilitating the river.
4. Communication between all stakeholders needs to be frequent and open.
5. A comprehensive planting list needs to be drawn up for this section of the river.
6. A replanting program needs to be implemented as soon as possible.
7. Homeowners and developers along the river need to be informed regarding building regulations, especially regarding hardening of surfaces and dumping of building materials.
8. The Bishops court Village Park needs to be acknowledged as a community park which is an asset to everyone from the community.

The way forward

- This workshop was the first to be conducted and definitely served as a valuable learning tool for all the stakeholders.
- The next step is to organise more workshops and build upon what was learned in this one.
- Feedback will be given to all the stakeholders and the reports will be circulated to all participants so that the information collected can be verified.
- A follow up meeting will be set up and more people contacted.

WARD ALLOCATIONS WISH LIST

The Liesbeek runs through a number of Wards. Please take the time to identify projects that could be asked for and let us know. You can send your ideas to secretary@fol.org.za or directly to your ward councillor.

WARD ALLOCATION PROJECTS 2013/14

Subcouncil 20 is preparing early for the ward allocations Capital and Operating funds for the next financial year 2013/2014.

Examples are local ward based projects: traffic calming, road maintenance/ upgrade, upgrade/maintenance of footpaths, upgrade/maintenance of parks, replacement of street lights, upgrade/maintenance of sports fields or public open spaces.

Kindly identify and submit projects you would like to have addressed for Wards 53, 57, 58, 59, 62 by the **Closing date of 17 August 2012.**



Planning to Protect:

Look after what we still have and rehabilitate as best as we can.

‘The first rule of rehabilitation is to avoid the damage in the first place! It is easy, quick and cheap to damage natural streams. It is hard, slow and expensive to return them to their original state. Usually we are not capable of returning anything approaching the subtlety and complexity of the natural system. For this reason, the highest priority for stream rehabilitators is to avoid further damage to streams, especially streams that remain in good condition.’
(Rutherford et al. 1999.)

Funding in the past has seldom been allocated to rivers in good condition because it was felt that they would look after themselves, and that priorities should lie elsewhere, where damage is most visible. However, we now have ample evidence that healthy rivers, or healthy river reaches within a larger river system, require active management to ensure they remain in good condition. River scientists and others are now calling for a re-think on our priorities for river management, with a stronger emphasis being placed on the lower-cost option of protecting rivers before they deteriorate. The principle of ‘protect first, restore second’, should be the first consideration before undertaking restoration planning. It is sensible to prevent rivers within the catchment, or other river reaches, from becoming degraded to the same extent as those requiring restoration.



The official launch of iSpot was held at the Kenilworth Racecourse Conservation Area on the 14th of June. Initiated by SANBI, iSpot is a website providing a platform for the public and citizen scientists to share and document Southern Africa’s biodiversity, thereby contributing to SANBI’s conservation and species database. iSpot opens up an avenue for the average person to contribute (through the uploading of photos) interesting encounters with various animal, plant and even fungus species. A great feature about iSpot is the ability for your sightings to be either identified and/or confirmed by professional and citizen scientists alike. It is a perfect tool for those situations where your guide book doesn’t have the answer or you don’t have a guide book for the particular sighting. Photos from your garden to the wilderness of our protected areas, of alien to endemic species, common to rare, all are welcome on iSpot. To join simply visit <http://www.ispot.org.za> and all you need is your email address and camera at the ready!

INNOVATION WANTED

Perhaps you have a new idea on how to tackle one of the many problems along the river? If you do, feel free to contact the Liesbeek Maintenance Project Manager Jason at jason@fol.org.za, he is more than happy to receive suggestions from our members and even meet you along the river to discuss any problems. Jason can be contacted on 0846618264 for information, comments or queries.

Thank you ABAX for sponsoring the LMP manager.



Thank you Tuffy! Refuse bags are regularly donated and one day’s work on the river a week is sponsored by the company.

Cape Otter Researcher calls for Otter Spotters in South Peninsula

The Peninsula Otter Watch was developed to collect information on where otters are in the Cape, and it is currently in full swing with numerous sightings being recorded by residents in all parts of the Peninsula. Unfortunately there has also been sad news of otters being killed on our roads. In the last 6 months, otters have been killed on both Liesbeek Parkway and Kommetjie Road, highlighting the danger otters face when on the move and therefore the need to understand the spatial ecology of these animals. Other events including the recent sewerage spill in Clovelly wetlands also pose a risk to otters, yet the full extent of the impact on populations is not yet known. The otter project hopes to find this out in the course of the next few years. Please report sightings to Nicola Okes, or upload your information online at www.nicolaokes.co.za or phone 082 961 9082.

See Nicola's blog at <http://nicolaokes.co.za/>

67 MINUTE MANDELA DAY CELEBRATION IN PARADISE PARK NEWLANDS



Please join the Friends of Paradise Park for 67 minutes on Wednesday 18 July in Paradise Park, Newlands for a special community "Switching on the Lights" Celebration and programme of events in celebration of Mandela Day.

Visit the FoPP on Facebook – search for FoPP or Paradise-Park-FoPP/263428990396759

Residents Association website:

www.newlandsresidents.org.za/community/community_FOPP.html

OCEAN SENTINELS AND AVIAN ARCHITECTS

In partnership with UCT's Centre for Open Learning, the Animal Demography Unit is presenting two courses over the next few months.

The first is called Penguins as Ocean Sentinels, and involves lectures at UCT on the early evenings (17h30-19h30) on Thursday 16 August, Tuesday 21 August, Thursday 23 August and Tuesday 28 August.

Avian Architects is about weavers, and takes place on Thursday 27 September, Tuesday 2 October and Thursday 4 October.

Full details of both courses are reachable from http://www.ched.uct.ac.za/continued/public_courses/

See ADU's excellent sites for info on animals, plants and lots more.

<https://www.facebook.com/animal.demography.unit>

ENVIRONMENTAL FLOWS:

It is possible to identify, through a scientific assessment process, the environmental flows required to maintain rivers, including their floodplain and estuarine environments, across a range of river health levels, at varying levels of risk to the health of environmental assets. Also, a scientific process can be used to assess the trade-off, if any, between meeting environmental needs and the needs of other riverusers. Ultimately, the decision to implement a particular environmental flow regime is a social one, because it requires a decision to be made regarding the desirable level of river health, and the acceptable reliability of water supply or amenity to other users of the river and its water.

<http://www.watercentre.org/resources/publications/reports/a-holistic-asset->

PENINSULA PADDLERS TAKE ON THE CITY'S WATERWAYS

The third annual Peninsula Paddle took place on 3 June 2012. The Peninsula Paddle is an annual Cape Town event held to coincide with World Environment Day each year. It aims to raise awareness of major social and environmental concerns that affect the Cape Peninsula, to highlight the need for rehabilitation, and to encourage communities to change the way in which waterways are utilised. The event attracted the support of councillors from areas through which watercourses flowed.

The City of Cape Town's WasteWise programme, Friends of the Liesbeek, Zandvlei Trust, AfriOceans, Bicycling Empowerment Network, Princess Vlei Forum, Gravity Adventures, South African National Biodiversity Institute, Southern African Young Water Professionals and WESSA were all supporters of the 2012 Peninsula Paddle.

The third annual Peninsula Paddle was led by route pioneers Kevin Winter and Alistair Lee. The paddlers on canoes, kayaks and stand-up paddle boards navigated their way from Muizenberg through a labyrinth of vleis, canals and rivers to Woodstock Beach before entering the Milnerton Lagoon and finishing at the old wooden bridge. It took the paddlers nine and a half hours to complete the 27km route which meandered through nature reserves, light industrial areas, recreational areas, residential estates and marinas.

The paddlers were impressed with the rich variety of birdlife at Zandvlei Estuary Nature Reserve and Princess Vlei but cautiously made their way through the polluted connecting canals between these vleis. Many of the residents who spoke with paddlers along the way expressed their disapproval at some residents who continue to throw rubbish and waste over their property walls into the canal system.

Endurance swimmer, maritime lawyer and environmental campaigner Lewis Pugh ("The Human Polar Bear") joined the group on the final leg of the paddle. He voiced concern about the large number of plastics emitted from storm water drains and rivers into the ocean. Pugh said that these journeyed deep out to sea and were a hazard to seabirds while also being an eyesore. Also joining the colourful flotilla was veteran hard line investigative journalist and Carte Blanche presenter, Derek Watts. The award-winning programme is expected to highlight the plight of Cape Town's waterways in a future episode.

<http://www.capetown.gov.za/en/Pages/PeninsulaPaddlestakeontheCitywater.aspx>

PENINSULA PADDLE



NEW WENDY HOUSE NEEDS FURNITURE



The new Wendy House donated to the LMP team by SABreweries has provided much needed extra space for tools and gives the team a decent space to have meetings. A big thank you to SAB!

To furnish the space we would be glad of donations of furniture such as chairs and desks, shelving and carpets. Any garden tools, watering cans, wheelbarrows and other equipment would also be most welcome.

A new initiative that we would also like to get off the ground is collecting and propagating plants to rehabilitate the river banks. We need mulch, soil, containers and plants and many willing pair of hands that can help. Contact Jason@fol.org.za if you can help.



Friends of the Liesbeek

Membership and donations

Due in January every year:

- Individual R30
- Family R50
- Corporate R150

We also welcome:

- Donations to the Liesbeek Maintenance Project

Our banking details are:
Friends of the Liesbeek
Nedbank, Pinelands
Branch No: 104709
Account No: 2220015645

Please deposit into our bank account directly. New members must enter contact details: address, e-mail and telephone numbers on the membership form available on our website, and send it to secretary@fol.org.za or to our postal address, The Secretary, Friends of the Liesbeek, PO Box 333, Rondebosch 7701, Cape Town, along with a copy of the deposit slip, including reference details (Initials & surnames). Receipts and newsletters will only be posted on request. Newsletters are sent by email.

Friends of the Liesbeek is a registered NPO Public Benefit Organisation ref no 93000280 Non-profit Organisation ref no 56-033

Membership Subscription

Title: Initials: Surname:

First name(s):

Postal Address:

..... Postal Code:

Tel: (Home): (Work) (Cell)

Fax: Email

Please indicate whether you'd like to assist in environmental education, hacking, management, newsletter, research, river clean ups, as well as comments and/or ideas for the Committee to consider:

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