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This report is based on the activities undertaken by the Liesbeek Maintenance Project (LMP), from the period of the 1st to 28th February 2023. The LMP is a project established by the Friends of the Liesbeek (FoL) organization and seeks to maintain and enhance the ecological integrity and public interest of the Liesbeek River and its surrounding environs.

SUMMARY

- This month's plan of actions (POA)s were planned for the lower reaches in Mowbray (see attached POA) however, adjustments were made to accommodate emergency tasks or amendments in the work plan owing to rainfall. As a result, tasks were conducted in Newlands, Mowbray and Observatory controlling annual weeds and collecting the green biomass in various Ecological Support Infrastructures (ESIs) along the Liesbeek environs.
- Over 270 refuse bags were collected during the LMPs team regular litter runs on Thursdays. Throughout the month there were frequent sewage surges polluting the Liesbeek's lower reaches promoted to
- Zanele Mthanganya was promoted to Supervisor of the intern project.
- The NQF LEVEL 2 Environmental Management Practices course commenced in February with interns attending two classroom based learning sessions.
- The Polyphagous Shot Hole Borer (PSHB) discovered last month has affected approximately 100 trees, mostly Box Alders, English oak, London planes, and Erythrina species and some Poplars following a rigorous survey.

HIGHLIGHTS AND CHALLENGES

- Approximately, 80% percent plus of the POA was completed during the month, barring rain affected days or amendments to the POA. The team still continues to work diligently to meet set targets.
- PSHB surveys resulted to the immediate actioning of GPS mapping all PSHB infested trees. FOLs LMP team were integral to the process, and thereby also received first hand PSHB training on site.
- Unfortunately, pollution was rife in February and countless interfacing with the CoCT led to acting out contingency plans albeit slow paced.
- The lower reaches were flooded in Observatory and affected some private properties

INFRASTRUCTURE MAINTENANCE

Key to February's POA was the conducting of ESI maintenance in Newlands (Paradise Park - Sans Souci), Mowbray and Observatory controlling Wild ginger (*Canna sp.*), Vines, annual weeds and collecting the green biomass from the various maintained Ecological Support Infrastructures along the Liesbeek environs. The last remaining stands of *Lythrum salicaria* were cleared in Rondebosch and Observatory.



ABOVE:: An example of the before the Wild ginger clearing, standing thick at an estimated half a hectare on both river banks (Photo: Mncekeleli Klaas, 2023).



ABOVE: An example of the after Wild ginger clearing in Mowbray (Photo: Mncekeleli Klaas, 2023).



ABOVE: Weeding and watering of the Mandela Day site during February (Photo: Aphelele Ntla, 2023).



ABOVE: Clearing of the Lower Mowbray and Rosebank commenced in late February (Photo: Anita Vetman, 2023).

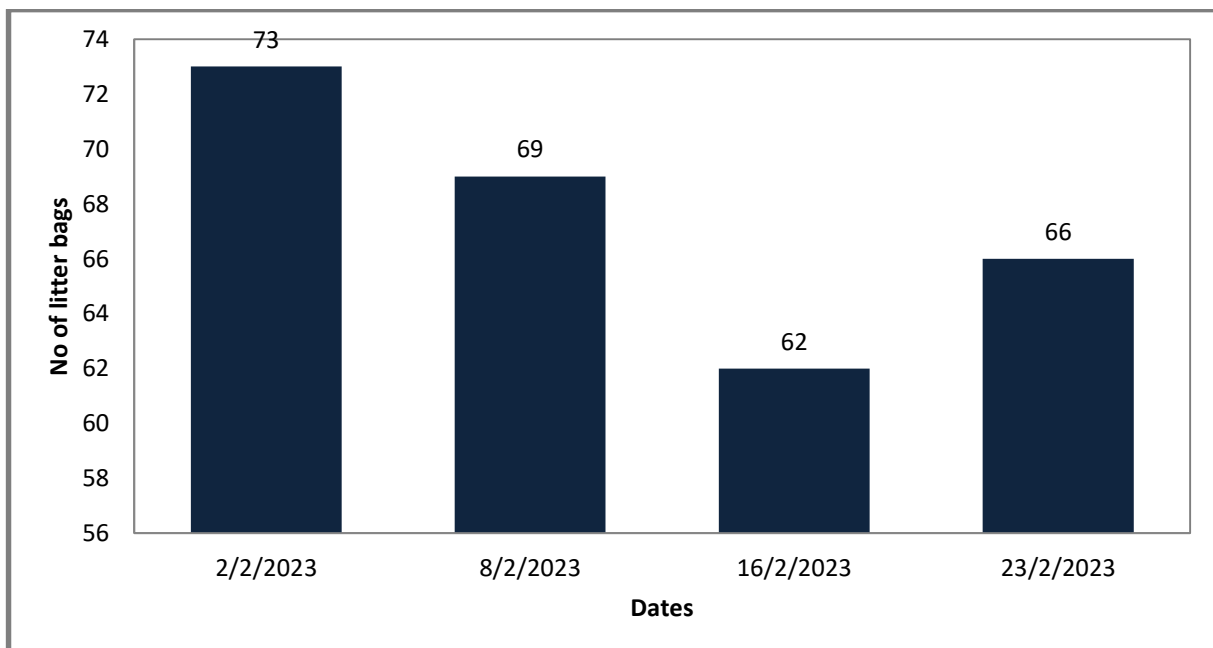


ABOVE: The team clearing weeds in an Ecological Support Infrastructure in Paradise Park (Photo: Mncekeleli Klaas, 2023).

POLLUTION & WEEKLY THURSDAYLITTER RUN ACCOUNTING

The LMP team collected approximately 270 refuse bags from the Liesbeek and its environs in February, a significant difference from January's count of 342 refuse bags collected. This 72 refuse bag difference attributed to the magnitude of a positive impact the LMP team contributes to the water quality, river health at the Liesbeek and directly benefitting communities lower down in the catchment when present throughout the year, but December holidays.

In general, most Water Catchments in the City have been impacted by constant surges of pollution. The lower reaches of the Liesbeek (Mowbray - Observatory) were consistently polluted by daily sewage surges that continued for most of February. From the 09/02/2023 to date the Liesbeek lower reaches continue being polluted by sewage from the storm water outlet opposite the pool in Hartleyvale. Numerous, reports were filed directly with the City of Cape Town (CCT) Water and Sanitation, Pollution Department for investigation. At the time of this report, there was no concrete feedback regarding the mitigation of the surge; however, the CCT department reported to have visited the site, to investigate and report a blocked sewer drain built with an overflow into storm water at the corner of Lower and Main Rd in Obs. Additionally, on the 01/02/2023 browning of the Liesbeek by silt was also reported during the month. Following the investigation, it was determined to be silt laden water pumped out of a storm water culvert from Main on Belmont Road, in front of the entrance to Bishops Prep. Further, C3 reports for rubble dumping in TRUP were submitted. No feedback was received in this regard.



ABOVE 1: The number of litter bags collected from the Liesbeek over a four week period in February.

INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT (SPECIAL PROJECTS)

- a) Surveyed for PSHB from Paradise Park to Newlands and north of the N2 with Paul Barker and the ISU. Over 100 trees have been affected. Mostly Box alders and English planes.
- b) Cleared *Lythrum salicaria* north of the N2 Bridge to the end of the wetlands in front of the Courtyard Hotel) and consolidated the data capturing, including the initial paper work processing thereof.

STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

- a) NQF Level 2 Environmental Practices interns attended their first lessons.
- b) SANBI will train approximately 5 staff members on OHS& First AID training.
- c) Team require small plant operator training.

PLANS FOR NEXT MONTH

- a) Site prep in OBS: Wetland Project (on hold).
- b) Rosebank Canal Maintenance (on going).
- c) Regular litter runs.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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