



Waterberg Nature Conservancy Newsletter

Occasionally issued news of interest to WNC members and others in the Waterberg

Number 12, October 2010

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Contact the Waterberg Nature Conservancy through Heidi Carlton

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John Miller, Chairman
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Newsletter items by John Miller
unless otherwise attributed.

WNC Annual General Meeting

Date: Wednesday, 17 November 2010

Venue: Farmers Hall, Vaalwater

Time: 2:30 pm

Guest Speaker:

Phetole Manyama: A Control Strategy for Pompom Weed

Phetole will talk to us about Pompom weed, what it's doing to our grasslands, and why it is important to eliminate it. He'll tell us about the Early Detection and Rapid Response (EDRR) programme and its current projects. We'll hear about plans to control Pompom weed and how we can and should be involved.

Phetole works in the division of Early Detection and Evaluation of Invasive Alien Plants of the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI). He was a Regional Coordinator in the EDDR programme and has recently been appointed at the Deputy National Coordinator for the EDDR programme. He is responsible for the early detection and rapid response activities and the scientific assessments of the impact and threats of invasive alien species on the environment.

AGM Business:

Chairman's Report

Financial Statement

Policies

Honorary Members

New Motions

Election of Executive Committee

Tea Break

Executive Committee Election Results

Open Discussion:

Who are we?

What goals should we pursue?

How to attract new members?

Project ideas?

Speaker ideas?

Cash Bar and Light Supper at Very Reasonable Prices

RSVP to Heidi Carlton by Monday 15 November 2010

(contact details at left)

NOTE THAT THIS IS THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

PLEASE MAKE A SPECIAL EFFORT TO ATEND.

Nominations Open for the Executive Committee and Any Motions for the AGM

We are accepting nominations for the 2011 Executive Committee. We'll be voting at the AGM, but you must get your nominations to us 30 days before – by Monday, 18 October. E-mail your nominations as well as the acceptance by the nominee to Heidi.

We will be electing at least three, but no more than eight ExCo members. Class A

members have five votes each. Class B and Class C members have one vote each.

To be eligible to vote, you must be at the meeting and your annual dues must be fully paid. Heidi has sent out invoices over the last several months and most of you have indeed paid. Sorry to say, however, there are still about 15 of you who haven't paid. I ask that you do so not only in order to vote at the AGM, but to support the Conservancy. For all of our activities, we rely completely on annual dues. The dues are not high, and have not been increased for some time now.

Note that any motion you may want to make for consideration at the AGM must also be submitted to Heidi by Monday 18 October.

WNC New Members

A warm welcome to new members Maya and Jan Oosterhoff. Their Leopard Leap Lodge is located about 50 kilometres from Vaalwater, on the Lephale road.

In 2002, the Conservancy had 24 members. In 2008, there were 40 members. Now we are 63 members, and with your help, we can continue to grow. Think about your neighbours and friends who might be interested. We will provide them with full information, and invite them to join. Let us know.

WNC Honorary Members

I am very pleased to announce that the Conservancy is paying tribute to three Waterberg residents by making them Honorary Members.

Charles and Nina Baber. The Conservancy recognizes Charles' life-long involvement and leadership in many aspects of the Waterberg. Specialising in Bonsmara cattle, he has been a successful farmer since 1949. When Charles married Nina in 1961, he embarked on a collaborative farming enterprise in which Nina's record-keeping of the Bonsmara herd contributed considerably to the success of the farm. Charles has been involved in local conservation and tourism activities, both of which reflect a great pride in and promotion of the Waterberg. While Charles is renowned for his local knowledge, hospitality and sense of humour, Nina has served as a most gracious hostess to many international visitors. As a fourth-generation resident, Charles' personal insights into Waterberg history never fail to delight and enlighten, and his Farm Tours conclude with tea with Nina and lively and informed conversation

Anna Merz. The Conservancy recognizes Anna's successful work since 1982 in leading efforts to save the black rhino in Kenya. She is the author of the best-selling book *Rhino: At the Brink of Extinction* as well as the autobiographical *Golden Dunes and Desert Mountains* about her world travels and conservation work. Anna's continued involvement with the Lewa Wildlife Conservancy in Kenya and the International Rhino Foundation are testimony to her enduring devotion to the cause. As the Waterberg is increasingly a target for rhino poaching, it is timely that we salute Anna's early recognition of the poaching threat in Kenya and consequent security initiatives she took there.

Honorary membership entitles Charles and Nina Baber, and Anna Merz to life-long free membership in the Conservancy, our great respect for their accomplishments, and our personal pleasure that they live with us in the Waterberg.

Saddle-billed Stork - First Time in the Waterberg

Dean van Heerden reports that while hunting on his Koshari Game Ranch in May of this year, he came across a Saddle-billed Stork, and was able to take this picture, below. Kobus Pienaar (Limpopo Department of Environment) says that this makes a bit of history. This was the first confirmed sighting in the Waterberg. Kobus said that the only other Saddle-billed Stork he had heard of in the Waterberg was a pair that was seen at Nylsvlei in the early 90s.

Here's what Wikipedia has to say about this bird: *The Saddle-billed Stork breeds in forested waterlands and other floodlands in tropical lowland. It builds a large, deep stick nest in a tree, laying one or two white eggs weighing about 146g each. It does not form breeding colonies, and is usually found alone or in pairs. The incubation period is 30-35 days, with another 70-100 days before the chicks fledge.*

This is a huge bird that regularly attains a height of 150cm (5 feet) and a 270cm (9 feet) wingspan. The male is larger and heavier than the female, with a range of 5.1-7.5 kg, the female is usually between 5 and 6.9 kg. It is probably the tallest, if not the heaviest, of the storks. Females are distinctly smaller than the males. It is spectacularly plumaged.

The head, neck, back, wings, and tail are iridescent black, with the rest of the body and the primary flight feathers being white. The massive bill is red with a black band and a yellow frontal shield (the "saddle"). The legs and feet are black with pink knees. Sexes are identically plumaged except that the female has a golden yellow iris, while the male's is brown. Juveniles are browner grey in plumage.

They are silent except for bill-clattering at the nest. Like most storks, these fly with the neck outstretched, not retracted like a heron; in flight, the large heavy bill is kept drooping somewhat below belly height, giving these birds a very unusual appearance to those who see them for the first time. To experienced birdwatchers on the other hand, this makes them easily recognizable even if seen from a distance.

The Saddle-billed Stork, like most of its relatives, feeds mainly on fish, frogs and crabs, but also on small birds and reptiles. They move in a deliberate and stately manner as they hunt, in a similar way to the larger herons.

Has anyone else seen this bird in the Waterberg?



Coming Soon: Rain in the Waterberg

As this is written, there's not been a drop of rain so far this season in the Waterberg, but we must be patient. The SA Weather Service issues regular long-term forecasts on a rolling three month basis and Richard Wadley has summarised the latest forecast for our area follows:

- **October/November/December 2010** – La Niña conditions prevail; reasonable expectation (>40%) of better than average rainfall; possibly below average minimum temperatures but above average maximums – i.e. **wetter and warmer than normal**.
- **November/December/January 2011** – some chance (~35-40%) of above average rainfall; both minimum and maximum temperatures may be below average – i.e. **more or less normal conditions expected**.
- **December/January/February 2011** – high probability (~50%) of below average rainfall; both minimum and maximum temperatures most likely to be below average – i.e. **cooler and drier than normal**.

The science for this comes from Cobus Olivier who does research for the SA Weather Service. If you'd like to receive his regular forecasts, you can get on his distribution list by writing him at cobus.olivier@weathersa.co.za.

Waterberg Roads News

by Richard Wadley

Based on information obtained from the Limpopo Department of Roads & Transport and the consultants involved, here's what I've learned:

R33 from Modimolle to Vaalwater: The good news is that the contract to reconstruct and refurbish the remaining 50km from Modimolle to Vaalwater has been awarded. Work is due to commence very shortly and is due for completion within 18 months. Further phases of this overall contract, currently in the planning stage, include the 80km stretch from the N11 at Marble Hall to Modimolle; and the 50km stretch from Vaalwater past Bulgerivier to the Thabazimbi turn-off. The work is to include refurbishment of the R33 through both Modimolle and Vaalwater towns. The emphasis on reconstructing the road via Bulgerivier rather than the new R33 direct to Lephalale is due to the fact

that the culverts and bridges on the old road have a load rating approved for very heavy loads, whereas those on the new road do not.

D972/D574 from Vaalwater to the R518 (Kloof Pass-Marken road): The current roadworks on the 2.9km stretch of road north from the Sterkstroom turn-off (outside Caesar's Bush Palace) comprise Phase 3 of the refurbishment of this road. The first two phases (Vaalwater – 24 Rivers turn-off; and 24 Rivers – Sterkstroom) involved re-sealing of the tar and were apparently completed over the last three years. The present work involves draining and re-building the short section of road across a clay-filled wetland. Although to the casual eye, there appeared to be nothing seriously wrong with this piece of road, the consultants were of the view that this major exercise was necessary. It is scheduled for completion by the end of October. There is no timeframe for the next phase, which should go at least as far as the Dorset/Sondagsloop crossroads, as it depends on availability of funds.

Residential Developments

I've been trying to update information about residential developments in the Waterberg. It's not easy to get straight answers from some developers nor to get any real answers from the appropriate Limpopo office. Nevertheless, here's a summary that is not far from accurate, but should still be used with caution.

Four projects are either recently on the market, quite actively in the process of marketing and construction, or with final provincial approvals in hand – Tholo Bush Estate, Nyathi Eco and Wildlife Estate, Sable Hills Eco Park, Sabili Safari Lodge and AirPark. Together, these four plan 426 stands on over 8,316 hectares.

Three projects are awaiting final provincial approvals – Mangweni Private Game Reserve, Tau Country Lodge, and Thaba Meetse I. 214 stands in total.

There is one project with provincial approval for several game species, but its intentions for residences and a lodge are unclear – Ceasars Bush Palace.

Eight projects are either dormant or with their applications withdrawn – Thaba Lesodi, Nieuw Gelderland, Kudu Canyon, Mokolo Wilderness Estate, Vaalwater Extension (between Spar and 4-way stop, on the west side of the road), Shamburu Private Reserve, Kololo, Thaba Meetse II.

That leaves five projects for which I've been unable to get good information – Rock Lodge, Sterkstroom Private Reserve, 24 Rivers Private Reserve, Tamboti River Private Game Reserve, and the project next to the curio shop outside of town on the road to Modimolle.

If you have corrections or additions to this information, please let me hear from you.

Dorset Community Police Forum Fundraising Ball Saturday, 9 October

It's not too late to accept this open invitation to support Dorset Community Day
(which will be held on Saturday 4 December).

Your contribution will also help supply police vehicles with community radios.

And, you'll enjoy a special evening.

Dorset Community Police Forum Fundraising Ball

Saturday, 9 October, 7:30 pm

Mpatamacha Thatched Hall

Formal Black Tie

R500 per couple

Prizes to be auctioned on the night

Cash Bar available

Three course dinner

Music – Bit of Everything, DJ

Only 15 couple tickets remaining!

Purchase tickets at Bush Stop Café

or

Call Taryn at 083 452 9855 or Ant at 083 456 1874

WNC Website - Under Construction but Live and Ready for Visitors

Our website is available for viewing, thanks to Kelly Abrams – www.waterbergnatureconservancy.com. Take a look. We are busy adding a lot more content. Please let us hear your suggestions as to graphics and content.

WNC Community Support

Bursary: We have established a bursary programme to support a Matriculant from any Waterberg secondary school who chooses to pursue his or her education at the tertiary level in a field related to nature conservation, environmental protection, or tourism management. For the 2011 academic year, we are accepting applications from now until January 2011.

Charitable Organisation and Conservation Projects: We are now accepting applications from local charitable organisations and conservation projects for WNC support to their causes. Members are encouraged to identify worthy projects and invite them to apply.

Basic information and an application form for these WNC initiatives are available from Heidi Carlton.

Rhino Poachers Arrested First Court Date was World Rhino Day

If you haven't heard the news (and I'm piecing this together from several news sources), 11 people were arrested for their alleged involvement in killing hundreds of rhinos, sawing off their horns, and hiding the bodies: Dr. Karel Toet (Nylstroom Animal Clinic and Limpopo Wildlife); Mariza Toet (Nylstroom Animal Clinic and Limpopo Wildlife); Dr. Manie du Plessis (Nylstroom Animal Clinic); Dawie Groenewald (Out of Africa Adventure Safaris in Polokwane); Sarette Groenewald (Out of Africa Adventure Safaris in Polokwane); Tielman Erasmus (professional hunter); Marthinus Pronk; Nardus Rossouw; Leon van der Merwe; Paul Matomela. They are all out on bail ranging from R5,000 to R1,000,000. Their next court appearance is scheduled for 11 April 2011, more than six months from now! (Whatever happened to those 24 hour courts that seemed to work so well during the World Cup?)

It is ironic and quite satisfying to note that their first court date was on World Rhino Day, 22 September. I've heard no more about the helicopter pilot(s) unless he is one of those named above, but I myself have twice seen a helicopter with its registration number intentionally covered flying low over our property.

According to Dr. John Ledger, writing in the Spring 2010, Number 4 issue of *Environment*, there have been no rhinos poached in Swaziland since 1992. "Why? Strong deterrents, like a mandatory five years in jail plus another two if the convicted poacher cannot refund the full market value of the rhino including the value of the horns; the Non-Bailable Offences Act, whereby anyone arrested on a suspicion of involvement in a rhino crime is refused bail; mandatory confiscation of all vehicles, guns and equipment used during the committing of an offence under the Game Act; and granting rangers the right to search and arrest suspects without warrant and, in performing their duties, to shoot to kill in life-threatening circumstances, with immunity from prosecution. What is South Africa waiting for?"

A Rubbish Story

by Anne Scotting

I don't know how many of you have visited the landfill site (the dump) in Vaalwater lately, or even in the past. Historically it was a disaster zone. Until last year it was a 'free-for-all' site, with children running all over it, donkeys wandering around, and people picking over the "spoils" to see what they could salvage. People living in the vicinity of the dump were ill and children who took time off from school to go there also became ill. Not a pretty set of circumstances.

In 2009 one Charles Bjaloane Malesela wrote a grievance letter to the health inspector, subsequent to which he was assisted by the local Municipality and the Police Commissioner to get hold of the right people. There was an article published in the Limpopo Beat, in July 2009, about his story and successful plea.

Charles is now employed by the Modimolle Municipality and, with assistance from Isaac, manages the site. The site is now fenced, and different areas are demarcated for different waste types – agricultural waste, general waste and recycling. On Fridays, a truck collects the sorted glass/tins/paper/plastics, hauling it all away for proper recycling. YES, RECYCLING has arrived in Vaalwater.

I believe that everyone should make every effort to support this initiative. It is a rare occurrence these days to find

someone who tries to make a difference. In achieving what he has, Charles is helping to keep the environment clean and enable himself and others to make a bit of a living. I take my hat off to him.

For our part, all we've done was to buy a couple more bins and separate bottles/glass, tins/cans, plastics and papers. When they are full we run them to the dump. How difficult is that?

Lodges around the Waterberg can make a huge difference in this respect. All it takes is a run to town with loaded bins. This will also keep the use of burn pits to a minimum.

Please support this and make a difference.



Charles and Isaac





What is the Difference between the Waterberg Nature Conservancy and the Waterberg Biosphere Reserve?




Understandably, this question keeps coming up. The information below was first published in our November 2008 Newsletter, and has been updated now. As a founder member of the Waterberg Biosphere Reserve, the Waterberg Nature Conservancy shares virtually all the values and objectives as the Biosphere, but with a clearly different constituency, mandate, structure, operation, and activities.

	<i>Waterberg Nature Conservancy</i>	<i>Waterberg Biosphere Reserve</i>
<i>Objectives</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fauna, flora and wilderness areas, historical sites, river systems and natural heritage sites; awareness of environmental issues by way of education, research, sustainable utilisation and tourism; upliftment, education and needs of Waterberg residents; legislation or other measures affecting the Conservancy and its members; dealing with government departments, other authorities and the public generally. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNESCO's Man and Biosphere programme; environmental conservation; fauna, flora, and cultural history; strategies for the sustainable utilization of the natural and cultural resources of the area; job opportunities, education and training programmes; tourism potential and information network; scientific and technical support service; local, provincial, national, and international institutions; stakeholders.
<i>Association Type, Dues, and Membership</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voluntary association. Annual dues: R550 for land owners; R150 for other supporters; R50 for non-profits, charities, schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 21 non-profit; Forum of 30 stakeholder groups (one of which is WNC), 50% private sector, NGO, community, 50% government; one of 531 biosphere reserves in 105 countries.
<i>Boundaries</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No borders or boundaries, but encompasses what is commonly regarded as the Waterberg Mountain region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demarcated region, in review, encompassing majority of what is commonly regarded as the Waterberg Mountains.
<i>Stakeholders and Constituency</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 65 members; over 185,000 hectares; over 1000 employees; private reserves and homes, tourism, game ranching, hunting, agriculture; research, education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provincial government departments of environment, education, agriculture, and land development; district and local municipalities; communities living within and on the fringe of the Biosphere; NGOs, WNC, and others.
<i>Structure</i>	Chairman, Executive Committee, and Secretary/Treasurer.	Chairman, Executive Committee, and four subcommittees.
<i>Activities and Operation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> four meetings per year; conservation issues (e.g., elephant contraception, invasive and exotic plants, groundwater in the Waterberg, rhino poaching, etc.); community issues (e.g., municipal rates, proposed developments, roads, Waterberg history, etc.); management of SMS Fire System; support for bursary, community project, conservation project; Newsletter and conservation news. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> stakeholder groups; national and provincial Man and Biosphere programs; support to Integrated Development Plans, Spatial Development Framework; EIAs, land claimants, Waterberg Meander route, eco-tourism, community owned and operated tourism ventures (i.e., Telekishi)

**Wait, there's more in this Newsletter.
Learn a little about some of our members.**

Scroll on to Member Profiles.

Company	Contact	Contact Numbers	Email	Web Address	Brief Description
Ant's Nest and Ant's Hill Bush homes	Tessa and Ant Baber	014 755 4296 / 014 755 3584 / 083 287 2885	reservations@waterberg.net	www.waterberg.net and www.ridingsouthafrica.com	Ant's Nest and Ant's Hill are private bush homes in the magnificent malaria-free Waterberg. Enjoy fabulous horse riding safaris, guided bush walks or game drives on our privately owned property. Suitable for families, riders, honeymooners or just good friends travelling together
Driehoek Feeds / Voere	Janneman van der Merwe Karel van Vuuren Hanlee van der Walt	014 755 4370 • 014 755 4211 • 083 273 2743	Janneman@driehoek.co.za and info@driehoek.co.za •	www.driehoekfeeds.co.za and www.equusfeeds.co.za •	With over 20 years experience in milling, Driehoek Feeds manufactures a wide range of products. With a committed team of expert nutritionists, Driehoek Feeds has become a leader in the highly specialised Game Feeding industry. Driehoek has also recently launched the new Equus Range of horse feeds which compare to the highest international standards. For Cattle, Game, Poultry and other farm feeds, Driehoek combines research and science with value for money in every bag!
Jobedi Game Reserve 	Sharin	014 755 3993 / 086 612 9937 / 073 280 8670	game@jobedi.co.za	www.jobedi.co.za	Tucked away deep in the Waterberg Mountains is a private retreat. A purposely well kept secret set in a vast landscape of rocky terrain blessed with lush vegetation and scenic vistas of breathtaking beauty which lends itself to an abundance of peace and tranquillity. We offer self catering units and camping and are the only reserve in the area offering self drive game drives.
Kgama Eco-Ranch (Pty) Ltd 	Steven Klagsbrun	012 362 2280 (office) 012 362 5982 (fax) 083 450 7510	steven@kdv.co.za		Conservation – Fauna and Flora – Ecological enhancement. Selected hunting opportunities.
Kololo Game Reserve 	Elize Oosthuizen	014 721 0920 / 014 721 0080 / 014 721 9910	admin@kololo.co.za	www.kololo.co.za	Kololo Game Reserve is situated in the heart of the Waterberg biosphere: A malaria-free area, home to a large variety of game makes Kololo a perfect safari destination. Visit neighbouring reserves and view the Big 5 - lion, leopard, elephant, rhino and buffalo, or enjoy a sneak preview over the fence, from the comfort of your chalet at Kololo.
Kwalata Wilderness CC 	Reinhard Heuser	014 755 4104 / 014 755 4249 / 082 414 5622	reinhard@kwalata.com , caroline@kwalata.com ; office@kwalata.com ; werner@kwalata.com	www.kwalata.com	Our company's main activity is hunting. Kwalata consists of 13 000ha. Kwalata boasts 4 of the Big 5 and numerous plains game species and birds.
Where the real Africa begins!					

Company	Contact	Contact Numbers	Email	Web Address	Brief Description
<p>Lapalala Wilderness</p> 	<p>Roger Collinson (General Manager) Wild Revolution; Jessica Babich / Patrick Bonior (PR)</p>	<p>(014) 755-4071 (Lapalala Main Office) 084 404-7800 (Wild Revolution)</p>	<p>roger@lapalala.com info@wildrevolution.co.za</p>	<p>www.lapalala.com</p>	<p>A private reserve that is dedicated to conservation, ecotourism, community upliftment and environmental education</p>
<p>Mokabi Lodge, Moletadikgwa Wildlife Sanctuary</p> 	<p>Lyn and Richard Wadley</p>	<p>014 755 3506 083 609 1425 083 609 1464</p>	<p>yeldaw@mweb.co.za</p>	<p>www.mokabilodge.com</p>	<p>A luxury stone and thatch self-catering lodge set in secluded woodland affords guests a comfortable and tranquil experience in the magnificent Waterberg. Numerous clearly marked and annotated walking trails and mountain bike routes on this private game reserve enable visitors to enjoy the diversity of plant, bird and animal life offered by the unique environment of the Waterberg Biosphere Reserve</p>
<p>M'solosolo Safari</p>  <p>Relax in the heart of the Waterberg biosphere, private but luxury!!!!!!</p>	<p>Dr. Volker and Marita Neemann</p>	<p>014 755 4106 / 083 450 6535</p>	<p>office@msolosolo.com</p>	<p>www.msolosolo.com</p>	<p>Nestled deep in the Waterberg, you enter a quiet, malaria- and crime-free paradise. Your German hosts have been successfully involved in the hunting and lodging business for over 12 years. Activities include hunting trips with a professional hunter, guided walks to bushman paintings, horse riding, clay target shooting, pistol shooting exercises, bird watching or game drives in an open 4x4 vehicle. We gladly organize elephant back rides, visits to the white lion park or a personal touch with rhinos. Longer trips e.g. to the Kruger National or Pilanesberg Park, sightseeing or tours to God's window or Tzaneen can also be organized.</p>

Nkonka Bush Lodge, Nkonka
African Safaris and Idube
Safari Lodge



NKONKA
BUSH
LODGE

PURE WATERBERG MAGIC

Conway and
Becky Volek

082 824 1750,
082 570 8494,
014 755 4170

conway@nkonka.co.za

www.nkonkabushlodge.co.za
www.nkonka.co.za

Under the shade of the bushveld, broad leaved trees, the 4 star Nkonka Bush Lodge, provides guests with an escape to enjoy the true beauty of nature surrounding them. Enjoy the small, intimate nature of the camp on a fully or self catered basis. Informative game drives or walks with our experienced guide, mountain biking and trips to surrounding attractions can all be enjoyed during your tranquil bushveld getaway. There is also the option of a self catered rustic bush camp, which is exclusive to one party at a time, so you are able to enjoy the beautiful Waterberg in the manner you prefer.