

## **George/Sedgefield Branch** **Newsletter July 2012**

Dear WESSA members and Friends of the Environment,

Sadly, we commence with 2 obituaries. It is always sad to say goodbye, and our farewell to Lee, our Treasurer of 10 years is no exception.....

### **LEE RYDING 1939 – 2012, a Tribute – Lynne Thompson**

Lee Ryding, treasured Treasurer of the WESSA George / Sedgefield Branch, slipped away peacefully after a short illness on 16 July 2012. Lee will be sorely missed by her husband, Mike, their children Janet and Daniel and their families as well as the many friends and the societies in which she was actively involved.



Lee was born in New Zealand and after qualifying as an accountant, set off to see what the world looked like. Her first trip took her on an adventurous 1000 km trip up the Amazon. Her next destination was Canada and after a skiing injury, she set off for London. From there on to Johannesburg where Lee met her husband, Mike and travels continued in tandem. On moving to Durban they were involved in the activities of the Air Scout Troop in Cowies Hill where Lee also started evening adult education classes in literacy, sewing and first aid.

Mike and Lee retired to George and Lee became actively involved in her love for people, animals and the environment. Lee committed herself conscientiously to her chosen causes with

conviction, but always with diplomacy and grace. Lee acted as Financial Director on the Board of the Mount Hope Hospice, was involved in the Parish Council of St Mark's Cathedral and acted as honorary treasurer for the George WESSA Branch for 10 years. Lee, a true lady, touched many lives with love, help and friendship.

\* \* \* \* \*

### **THE TINY GIANT – 1939 - 2012**

Elisabeth [Liz] Ginn [née Knowles] married Peter Ginn in 1962, and moved to Zimbabwe where Peter had taken up a teaching post at the Peterhouse Private School. Here she took a great part in the life of the community including starting and running an X-Ray department at the Marondera General Hospital for 12 years. She later started and ran another department at Borradaile Cottage Hospital near Marondera in the 1990s.

Two of their children, Linda and Charles and their families now live in the USA, while the eldest, Kathleen, is in Great Britain.

Liz was diagnosed with breast cancer in February 2004, just after moving to George from Zimbabwe. She has battled breast cancer metastases for over 8 years. Given 6 months to live in 2005, she was miraculously healed of liver metastases towards the end of that year. Following this healing, she was led to volunteer to work as a director of Mt. Hope Hospice. This organisation has been able to help many sufferers from terminal cancer and is much appreciated by those that it has helped in their cancer battle. She resigned from the director's board towards the end of 2011 as the cancer took a stronger hold.

The 8 years of her courageous and victorious struggle have been a shining example of Christian faith and love, touching and changing the hearts of so many around her. She is survived by her husband, Peter, their three children and five grandchildren. Liz will be fondly remembered by all whose lives she touched.

An extract from David Kingwill's obituary.

### **Saturday August 18 – 10-12h00** **Whales and Dolphins of Mossel Bay**

South African as a country is known for its amazing wildlife, and the marine species found along our coast are no exception. Some of our

local residents include Indo-Pacific bottlenose and humpback dolphins, as well as long-beaked common dolphins and of course the stunning whale species that frequent our coastline during their annual migrations.



But can you identify these lovely creatures as easily as you could a springbok or lion? The answer may be “yes” if the species is a Southern right or humpback whale and most people that frequent or live by the coast would have been lucky enough to see a pod of bottlenose dolphins surfing in the waves. What about a humpback dolphin or a Bryde’s whale? Would you know one if you saw it?

Join the WESSA George/Sedgefield branch for a talk about the whale and dolphin species found in Mossel Bay, how to identify these beautiful creatures, some of the threats they face and the current research conducted by Bridget James of Department of Zoology and Entomology, University of Pretoria in collaboration with Oceans Research.

Venue – Film Hall (Room 003), NMMU: George Campus (Saasveld) George. Directions: inside the gates take the first road right. The road leads past the dining hall to parking on the right hand side. Walk into the building past the security office on the left and the nurses station on the right. Donation of R10 for non-WESSA members

**Thursday, 23 August - Mark Dixon will speak on his windfarm monitoring.**

A Lakes Bird Club event.

Hear more on an alternative source of energy and the associated problems.

Venue – 14h30, St Francis Church Hall, Sedgefield

Non-members R 10

**Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> September**

**Interpretive Tours of Minwater**

Join Louis Jordan for a close up tour of "Minwater" a private nature reserve 24km southwest of the town of Oudtshoorn in the

*foothills of The Gamka Mountain, Klein Karoo (Little Karoo), between the Swartberg and Outeniqua Mountains. It is a rough, mountainous region which includes high hills and a big plateau. From the high ground one is rewarded with breathtaking views of the Eastern Klein Karoo and surrounding mountain ranges. Minwater is adjacent to the Gamka Mountain Nature Reserve.*

*Louis waxes lyrical in his interpretation of the veld.... “On the breakfast menu in the veld at Minwater on the 15th of September: Milk bush, spekboom (bacon tree), sausages, bread bush, botterboom (butter tree) and tea bush!*



*While you are enjoying these, a number of animals will be hiding away quite close to you in such a manner that on close scrutiny only some body parts will be visible: Pig tail, elephant foot, baboon ear, rabbit tail, ox tongue, ostrich neck, agama foot and mouse nipple! And what is on the menu for the animals? Rabbit food, tortoise food, ostrich food and buck food!”*

*But you will have your picnic to make you happy!*

*Thea & Louis have generously offered a special tour for WESSA members and readers of this Newsletter.*

*The morning tour will be for those less able to walk any large distance whilst the afternoon tour will be a little more active.*

*The numbers are limited to 30 per group. These interpretive tours are usually charged at R300 per person, but WESSA members will be charged only R150 whilst for non-members it will be R200.*

***Response has been limited so far – I urge you to book before 19<sup>th</sup> August and pay***



***before Friday 25<sup>th</sup> August.***

## **Garden Route Botanical Garden's Moriarty Environmental Centre receives a sustainable refit**

As part of WESSA's national USAID-funded Stepping up to Sustainability project, WESSA in George is developing a sustainability commons at the Garden Route Botanical Garden by retro-fitting the Garden Route Botanical Garden's Moriarty Environmental Centre. The Centre will become an education hub for demonstrating green technologies and presenting information on sustainable practices. So far they have looked at energy-efficient lighting solutions, under-counter water heaters and solar ovens. They also hope to demonstrate other sustainable technologies, such as the shack-pack solar panel for charging cell and radio batteries, and do-it-yourself skylights. You are invited to go along and learn about the technologies they have been introducing to reduce their carbon



footprint.

Lorraine McGibbon at the Moriarty Environment Centre

## **Stepping up to sustainability Programme Share your green choice photos and videos with us!**

By now you have probably read or heard about WESSA's national Stepping up to Sustainability project funded by USAID. We want to know about the choices you are making towards sustainability and we are inviting you to take photos and videos of your current sustainable practices and share them to contribute towards growing the momentum of more sustainable lifestyles on our collective sustainable journey! Email your pictures and videos to [sip85took@photos.flickr.com](mailto:sip85took@photos.flickr.com) to have them uploaded onto the WESSA/USAID Stepping Up to Sustainability photo and video website.

You can view the album at

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/steppinguptosustainability>

## **Blue Flags for the Garden Route**



As you may be aware, Eden and SanParks are jointly applying for a Blue Flag in Wilderness.

“Vernon Gibbs-Halls (Eden District Municipality), The Municipal Manager of Knysna, Ms. Waring, and Mr. Ted Knott (National Blue Flag Co-Ordinator for WESSA) recently discussed possible Blue Flag accreditation of various points in Knysna. Ms. Waring has indicated that Knysna Municipality are very excited at the prospect and will make efforts to ensure the necessary funding for the registration process.

The Blue Flag programme has introduced a new dimension to their programme, that being the accreditation of BLUE FLAG MARINAS and we were toying with a few ideas to get Thesen island, or at least, a part of it, accredited as such. This will add immense value to the conservation objectives of the estuary.

The second site we identified was the Brenton-On-Sea Beach. Much of the infrastructure is already there and again it will add immense value to tourism and the receiving environment.”

## **Owl boxes available from NMMU**

From Stefan Hattingh – the Owl Man, more properly titled Lecturer, School for Natural resource Management.

„We have many owl boxes at Saasveld. I am prepared to sponsor a few to put up at factories in the Industrial area. There are a few barn owls going into buildings, triggering alarms. I am sure they are in desperate need of nest boxes. However, I do not have the time to find factory owners that are keen on putting up a box. I want to find 2 or 3. Once this is a success I will do a write-up to get more involved.

Please let me know if you know of places that might be keen and ask them to phone me. We have a deaf community project that makes it for us. Boxes are always available at Saasveld. Cost R300“

Tel: 044 801 5111 Fax: 044 805 6628

Office: 044 801 5028 Cell: 082 493 1298

e-mail: [stefan.hattingh@nmmu.ac.za](mailto:stefan.hattingh@nmmu.ac.za)

\* \* \* \* \*

## **National Biodiversity Assessment 2011**

The recently completed National Biodiversity Assessment 2011 provides an assessment of South Africa's biodiversity and ecosystems, including



headline indicators and national maps for the terrestrial, freshwater, estuarine and marine environments. The NBA 2011 was led by the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) in partnership with a range of organisations, including the Department of Environmental Affairs, CSIR and South African National Parks. It follows on from the National Spatial Biodiversity Assessment 2004, broadening the scope of the assessment to include key thematic issues as well as a spatial assessment. The NBA 2011 includes a summary of spatial biodiversity priority areas that have been identified through systematic biodiversity plans at national, provincial and local level.  
<http://bgis.sanbi.org/nba/project.asp>

\* \* \* \* \*

REMINDER :  
Garden Route Initiative  
FRIDAY 17 AUGUST 2012  
GEORGE MUNICIPAL CONFERENCE  
THEATRE  
10h00-13h00

RSVP : [Gibbs@edendm.co.za](mailto:Gibbs@edendm.co.za)  
Mr. V.M. Gibbs-Halls  
Eden District Municipality  
Planning and Environmental Unit

\* \* \* \* \*

You may remember last month that I implored readers of this Newsletter to utilise the opportunities offered for Public Participation....?

Currently (end July – into August) the second series of Public Participation meetings are taking place pertaining to the Eden Coastal Management Plan. Mossel Bay had a turnout of nearly 40 persons.....



...This was ALL of us in George,  
2 hosts and 4 interested parties !!!!!!!

Have you looked at the Garden Route Botanical garden website recently? It has been recreated and is very informative.  
[www.botanicalgarden.org.za](http://www.botanicalgarden.org.za)

The latest press release from TKAG follows this signature for ease of reprinting.

As always, feel free to distribute this to others who might be interested.

*Regards,*  
*Christine Ridge-Schnauffer*

Honorary Secretary ,  
WESSA George/Sedgefield Branch  
Tel: 044-873-4203 Fax 086 646 5458  
e-mail: [wessageorge@isat.co.za](mailto:wessageorge@isat.co.za)  
[www.wessa.org.za](http://www.wessa.org.za)

<http://www.facebook.com/wessa.eden>

PS ..on a lighter ( ? ) note....  
..... seen recently on a vehicle .....



**Anti-fracking lobby announces new legal campaign to fight government over shale gas mining**

The Treasure Karoo Action Group (TKAG) has refocused its legal strategy in preparation for an all out confrontation with the South African Government to prevent fracking in the Karoo.

In addition the group has concluded agreements with like-minded opposition groups to form a broad alliance in opposition to fracking and will be making an announcement on this during the week.

"We have engaged the well established firm of Cullinan & Associates who will bring fresh thinking and decades of experience to our approach at this critical time in our campaign", said Jonathan Deal, Chairman of the Treasure Karoo Action Group. Last year South Africa's Department of Mineral Resources (DMR) imposed a moratorium on fracking with the aim of implementing a study into the environmental impact of the controversial form of shale gas extraction, which has been banned, or is under moratorium or restriction in at least 150 jurisdictions around the world.

It is anticipated that DMR technical report will be presented to the Cabinet early in August 2012 after which cabinet will make its decision on whether or not to lift the moratorium and allow exploratory drilling.

Companies that have applied to use the environmentally damaging process, include Royal Dutch Shell Plc, Falcon Oil & Gas Ltd. and Bundu Oil & Gas (Pty) Ltd.

Fear that the licenses would be granted were raised when Energy Minister Peters noted during a recent departmental meeting that: "It would be wrong for us to not use the resources that God left us with. This is a blessing that God gives us, and we need to exploit for the benefit of the people" before noting that the people of the Karoo were "going hungry."

"We have been preparing for the moratorium to be lifted for a long time," said Deal.

"Now in the run up to the decision by government we are refocusing our efforts to present a high powered, well prepared legal campaign which we believe will halt the minister in her tracks.

"For this we have selected the best legal minds that we can get to assist us to take this matter to the constitutional court if needs be."

"And we believe we have the support of right thinking South Africans as we move forward."

"We are not deterred by the fact that a number of people may have been influenced by Shell's relentless pro fracking propaganda regarding the size of the gas deposit to the number of jobs that could be created." said Deal. "We also know that Shell has been less than open with the truth about the irreversible damage to the environment that fracking causes and the figures surrounding jobs."

"The Government's dramatic reversal over e-tolling in Gauteng after massive public outcry earlier this year has shown that ordinary people are sick and tired of government riding rough-shod over the will of the people whose lives are most impacted upon by their often ill-considered decisions."

Our message to government is; "if you rule in favour of fracking, under the current circumstances, prepare for a long and costly legal battle as the people who will be most affected fight back".

ends

Issued by TREASURE KAROO ACTION GROUP

Jonathan Deal

natcoordinator@treasurethekaroo.co.za

076-838-5150 or 023-358-9902