



Adopt Moreletaspruit/ Neem Moreletaspruit Aan

Newsletter/Nuusbrief 9, Oct/Okt 2013

Change to Structure of Adopt Moreletaspruit

The Facilitation Team of Adopt Moreletaspruit had their first meeting in January 2012. Since then the number of people involved has grown so much that we can now call ourselves the **Adopt Moreletaspruit Forum**. The Forum includes representatives of the CoT Departments of Nature Conservation, Storm Water and Waste Water; various sections of DWA, Friends Groups, Departments of the University of Pretoria, businesses, environmental consultants and members of the public, all with an interest in our rivers and environment and with knowledge and skills to offer.

A **Membership Form** has been drawn up to formalise membership of the Forum.

A small **Facilitation Team**, consisting of Dr Anneli Kuhn (team leader), Adelene Marais (CoT Nature Conservation), Erica van Zyl (secretary), Carol Martin (communication) and Dr Mike Silberbauer (scientific and technical advisor) at present, will function as an executive committee.

Visie, Missie en Doelwitte

Die Fasiliteringspan en Forum het hard gewerk aan die formulering van 'n Visie, 'n Missie en Doelwitte vir **Neem Moreletaspruit Aan**. Dit is op ons nuwe webwerf te sien.

Mission: To create awareness of the value of the Moreletaspruit and its tributaries and to provide an opportunity for the community to volunteer their support and assistance in conserving and improving the Spruit to a state that is an asset to the people of the City of Tshwane.

Adopt Moreletaspruit Forum's New Website

Thanks to Mike Silberbauer we now have our own website: www.riv.co.za/ms

So far it has our Vision and Mission statements, all our previous newsletters, useful maps, the Situational Analysis of the Moreleta Catchment produced by Golder Associates in 2011 as the first phase of Adopt Moreletaspruit, Adopt a River documents by the Dept of Water Affairs and also a link to the MiniSASS website (see below).

MiniSASS Website



MiniSASS (South African Scoring System) is a fairly simple system which can be used by trained school children and Friends Groups to measure the quality of the river water by using the composition of macroinvertebrates (tiny insects) living in the river and is based on the sensitivity of the various animals to the water quality. The Moreletaspruit is now officially on the system and we hope that many groups will do tests and post the results. Go to: www.miniSASS.org

The Workshop: Water in the City of Tshwane to be presented by the University of Pretoria's Water Institute, which was mentioned in the last newsletter, has been moved from the end of October to **23 and 24 January 2014**. The programme will have five themes: Water Research and Collaboration; Water and Urban Development; Water and Dolomite; Water and the Environment and **Showcasing the Moreletaspruit**. It will be free of charge but booking is essential as space is limited. For more information and to book, go to the website: www.up.ac.za/waterup

Creating Awareness through Art

Congratulations to artist Louise Kritzinger of Friends of Faerie Glen Nature Reserve and our Forum who had an installation "Affluence/Effluence" accepted for the prestigious Sasol New Signatures Exhibition and who was also overall winner of the Thami Mnyele Fine Arts Awards with an installation titled "A Pyrrhic Victory". Her work deals with the adverse effects of Acid Mine Drainage caused by the gold mining industry and is aimed at alerting people to the issue. It could equally refer to the pollution caused by all mining, industry, development, and desire for wealth without thinking about the consequences.



In "Affluence/Effluence" water bubbles fountain-like in old red steel drums, representing AMD in old mines while gold sculptures of deformed vegetable shapes hang above them representing greed for gold and wealth which leads to destruction and pollution.



"A Pyrrhic Victory" has a framework based on a mine headgear and 'gold panning' pans filled with polluted water. Suspended above each pan is a bar of plain soap engraved with the name of a gold mining company, the government or the shareholders and it deals with the question of who is responsible for remediation. Art is indeed a very powerful medium for creating awareness!

Ford Motor Company of Southern Africa

During Ford's Global Week of Caring, some of their staff went enthusiastically to work with Friends of Skuilkrans Kopje at the Moreletaspruit between the N4 and Meyerspark Bird Sanctuary, cleaning, removing alien vegetation and planting 50 new indigenous trees to attract birds. Ford also gave the Friends a grant which was used to purchase the trees, a chain saw and brush cutter and also to pay for the removal of large poplars by a professional tree feller. Ford's commitment and contributions are much appreciated!



Friends Groups/ Vriendegroepe

Meeste van die Vriendegroepe het rommelskoonmaakaksies in September gehou.

Vriende van Glossapark Danie van Eeden en sy studente het 'n groot aantal bome, wat deur hom geskenk is, in Glossapark en langs die naby-geleë Village Winkelsentrum help plant.

Vriende van Faerie Glen Natuurreservaat het die hitte trotseer, om Katteklouranker wat bome verwurg, te verwyder.

Friends of Moreletakloof Nature Reserve held a Tree and Pre-rain Flower Walk led by Prof Braam van Wyk which was very well attended and full of interesting information! **He emphasised the extreme importance of fire in June for our grasslands.** The grassland biome contains many other species besides grasses. Hot grass fires never kill grass or the flowers, indeed many of them are 100s and even 1000s of years old. The fires only kill trees and keep them from reproducing too much and becoming too luxuriant and crowding out the grass. The chemicals in the smoke stimulate the pre-rain flowers to send up their flowers,



usually before the leaves. Then they can be pollinated by insects without any competition from long grass and other plants. These flowers are necessary for the ecosystem as they are food for insects after the long winter. Once the ground is disturbed by ploughs and machinery, the flowers NEVER return though the grass will. We must change our perception about protecting trees and have more controlled burning to keep the grasslands intact as this is an extremely threatened biome.

He told us that trees signal – combretums attract insects by sending out white leaves to pinpoint their position for pollinators which will be rewarded by pollen and nectar; the *Dombeya rotundifolia* which is covered in white flowers one day, will have brown flowers the next – to signal to pollinators that they have already been visited.

Why do paperbarks have masses of flowers one year and then none for several years? They are masking. They are heavily parasitised by seed-eating insects so to outsmart them they have a 5 to 8 year cycle. When the insects have reduced after years without food, they suddenly send out flowers again. The trees synchronise their cycles by communicating with each other by chemical signals. There is a lot still to learn about how trees communicate, some even make clicking sounds at their roots!

We saw underground trees which are the oldest land organisms and only found in sub-Saharan Africa. They seem to be immortal as a dead one has never been seen. Only the leaves, flowers and fruits appear on the ground, probably an adaptation to fire.

The general rule to remember the new names for Acacias:

Vachellia have long straight thorns and ball-shaped flowers e.g. *Vachellia karroo*

Senegalia have short curved thorns and flower spikes e.g. *Senegalia caffra*

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The Facilitation Team/Die Fasiliteringspan