



Adopt Moreletaspruit/ Neem Moreletaspruit Aan

Newsletter/Nuusbrief 12, Aug 2014

Protecting our Rivers and Wetlands

South Africa has very good laws and regulations for protection of our water and environment contained in the DWA's Water Act of 1998, the DEA's National Environmental Management Act (NEMA), regulations for Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA's) by GDARD (Gauteng Department of Agriculture and Rural Development) and the City of Tshwane's by-laws. Members of the public are encouraged to take an active interest and to familiarise themselves with at least the basic principles so that they can alert the authorities if a development is planned, or already in progress, which would have a negative effect on water or the environment.

- The area within 32 metres of the bank of a river, stream or wetland or within the 1:10 year flood line, whichever is the greater, is protected and any activities which impact on this area may require an EIA or at least a Basic Assessment.
- A Water Use Licence (WUL) is required for: any activity which impedes or diverts the flow of water in a watercourse; discharging waste into a water resource; altering the bed, banks, course or characteristics of a water course. These activities could, for example, include building gabions or bridges.

The trouble is the lack of compliance monitoring and enforcement of environmental laws. Many people who are aware of environmental violations do not know what to do about them and therefore the authorities are not always alerted. Citizens also lose faith when their pleas for action seem to be ignored.

There is a reporting mechanism, operated by an independent operator for the DEA:

The National Environmental Crimes and Incidents Hotline 0800 205 005 which has been in existence since 2005 but has not been widely enough publicised.

All complaints to this hotline will be referred to the correct authority and followed up. These reports are also collated, counted and published annually by the DEA so this contributes to a more accurate picture of environmental rights violations in South Africa. With better data it is hoped that the government will be encouraged to invest more funds in compliance monitoring and enforcement of environmental laws.

Please also report violations along the Moreleta to the CoT Nature Conservation, the DWA at 0800 200 200 as well as to the Adopt Moreletaspruit Forum.

Faerie Glen Nature Reserve and **Colbyn Wetland Nature Reserve** were officially



declared to be Nature Reserves by the MEC for GDARD on 25 June 2014 and thus they now have additional protection which is excellent news!

Die **Colbyn Vleiland** is baie belangrik omdat 'n groot deel daarvan uit veen (peat) bestaan. Die Colbyn veenland is ongeveer 7000 jaar oud. Op die foto links hou Piet-Louis Grundling 'n blokkie veen vas terwyl 'n vrywilliger 'n stuk daarvan saampers wat aantoon dat veen 'n groot hoeveelheid water bevat. Veen is vogtige

organiese materiaal en bevat ongeveer 33% van die aarde se koolstof en 10% van die aarde se vars water.



Faerie Glen Nature Reserve has a large diversity of trees and flowers as there are various habitats both on the Bronberg and in the grassy plain below. In mid July, red hartebeest from Groenkloof Nature Reserve and young zebras and impala from Moreletakloof were relocated to Faerie Glen Nature Reserve. For the meantime, dogs may still be walked but only on a leash because of the game. A new dog-walking trail is being developed on the east side of the reserve.

Gabions at Transnet Pipeline in Moreletakloof: These gabions were built for Transnet in 2012 without the proper procedures being followed. On behalf of our Forum, Erica van Zyl, our secretary, has written a letter of intent to appeal the Environmental Authorisation granted by the DEA in July 2014 as the work done is not up to standard.

Nominations for the Board of the Limpopo Catchment Management Agency (CMA)

Thanks to the alertness, dedication and communication skills of Erica van Zyl (pictured right next to the Moreleta in Derdepoort), the Moreleta Apies Pienaars Rivers Forum (MAP) nominated very strong candidates for the CMA Board.



Beskermheer/Patron

Die bekende ekonoom, **Dawie Roodt**, het ingewillig om as 'n beskermheer vir die Neem Moreletaspruit Aan inisiatief op te tree.

Citizen Science Project of the Water Research Commission (WRC)

The leader of the Adopt Moreletaspruit Forum, Dr Anneli Kuhn, serves on the Reference Group for this citizen science project. The aim is to integrate civil society all over the country, and indeed across our borders, into the management of our water resources. If citizens' knowledge of water resources is improved, their greater understanding and insight will empower them to interact with the authorities and co-manage their resources in a more meaningful way. Monitoring, recording and reporting of the state of local river and catchment health can be done by citizen scientists with no formal scientific background by using the miniSASS method and uploading the results to the geospatial database: www.minisass.org - this way a picture of the health of all our rivers can be built up much faster than if it were left to the authorities alone.

MiniSASS bio-monitoring involves disturbing the bottom of the river, collecting small invertebrates in a net and then identifying them and giving them a score. The larvae, crabs, snails, worms etc are scored according to how sensitive they are to pollution. More information is available on the miniSASS website: www.minisass.org

Our Forum will arrange a MiniSASS training session for interested Friends and other groups, including schools, towards the end of September and you are invited to let us know if you would like to take part. Please contact moreletaforum@gmail.com and indicate whether you can do the training during the week or only on a Saturday.

Another Citizen Science Project, run by the Animal Demography Unit of UCT requests citizens to send photos of animals and plants in the wild (this can also be the wildlife along our urban rivers) to their virtual museum: <http://vmus.adu.org.za/>

These records help them to understand the distribution of species, how they are impacted by humans and what action is needed to protect them. See also the ADU website: www.adu.org.za for ideas on how you can help save our biodiversity.

First Year Civil Engineering Students from UP will be doing practical work along the Moreleta after their exams in November. Friends Groups were invited to submit projects for consideration and are reminded to submit their proposals by 18 August to moreletaforum@gmail.com

Alien Vegetation Removal and Tree Planting Partnership

Danie van Eeden of Wild Route Environmental Consultants and a founder member of our Forum has partnered with Wildlands Conservation Trust, a KZN-based NPO which works to conserve biodiversity and has a project to train young 'treepreneurs' to grow indigenous trees from seed and then exchange them for food and other goods. Once the required authorisation has been obtained, Danie will assemble a team, with funding from the DEA, administered by Wildlands. They aim to remove most of the alien vegetation along the spruit and plant trees, grown by the 'treepreneurs' where needed. Other companies have also sponsored trees which will be planted at Gauteng schools. The public is invited to nominate any rural or other schools which would like trees planted.

Friends Groups/Vriendegroep



Vriende van Faerie Glen Natuurreservaat het 'n voëluitstappie gelei deur Koos Pauw (links) in Junie gehou en bied op 6 September om 09:00 'n boom uitstappie aan, gelei deur die Dendrologiese Vereniging.
Vriende van Brookside Meander het in Julie uitheemse indringer plante verwyder (regs).



Friends of Serene Valley held clean ups in June and July and will have another clean up on 9 August at 11:00.

Vriende van Moreletakloof het die publiek op 19 Julie genooi om te kyk hoe voëls gering word. Hein Bantjes en sy medewerkers het gedemonstreer hoe om dit te doen en vertel waarom dit belangrik is.

Vriende van Colbyn Valley het in Junie 'n uitstappie gehou om na die veenland te kyk.

Environmental Special Days and Weeks

September 1 – 7 National Arbour Week, and the whole of September is Arbour Month

September 15 – 20 National Clean Up Week

October 5 – 9 – National Weed Buster Week

Contact Details/ Kontak-besonderhede

DWA: Gauteng Region – Tel 012 392 1362. Email: RakgothoT@dwa.gov.za

CoT: Nature Conservation – Tel: 012 358 1510. Email: AdeleneL@TSHWANE.GOV.ZA

Adopt Moreletaspruit Forum – Email: anneli.kuhn@gmail.com - Tel 012 472 0069 or 083 750 2873. Secretary of the Forum: moreletaforum@gmail.com

Website: www.riv.co.za/ms

Facebook Group – Adopt-a-River Moreleta

The Facilitation Team/Die Fasiliteringspan