



FRIENDS OF FAERIE GLEN NATURE RESERVE (FFGNR) VRIENDE VAN FAERIE GLEN NATUURRESERVAAT (VFGNR)

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Summer Newsletter 2017

As many users of the FGNR may be aware, the City of Tshwane (CoT) has implemented a ban on dogs at the FGNR from 1 January 2017. This follows after a small notice, stating their intentions, were put up by the CoT at the entrance in August 2016.

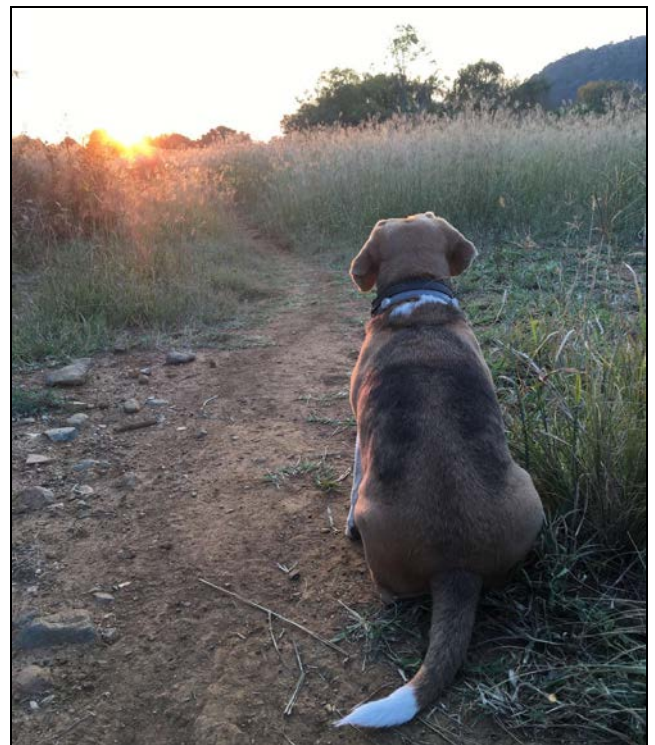
Dogs on leashes have been allowed in the reserve for decades in terms of a direction under the CoT's by-laws on public amenities, even when it was officially proclaimed as a nature reserve, as published in the provincial gazette in June 2014. The CoT has apparently banned dogs because section 44(1)(f) of the Nature Conservation Regulations under the 1983 Transvaal Nature Conservation Ordinance states that no domestic animals may be introduced onto land used by the Gauteng provincial administration. Even if this ordinance is applicable, it allows for domestic animals to enter the FGNR with a permit, however, no permit system has been put in place.

The FGNR was proclaimed under the National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act, 2003 (Act No. 57 of 2003), although its administration has been assigned to the CoT. According to the Act, the managing authority (CoT) can manage the reserve by means of internal rules and municipal by-laws. Activities should only be prohibited should they have an adverse effect on the protected area. This provision provides for conditions to be determined for any dog or other pet to enter a nature reserve. Clearly it does not require the prohibition of dogs.

In addition, the CoT conducted no public participation process before banning dogs. It claims to rely on a 2004 strategic environmental assessment and a 2009 environmental impact

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assessment, yet dogs were only incidentally considered in both those studies. There was no notice to the public that those studies would lead to the banning of dogs. Both studies accepted that dogs have a low environmental impact if controlled and both studies recommended that dogs could continue to be allowed. The matter of allowing dogs in the reserve was also not considered in the public participation process leading up to the declaration of FGNR as a nature reserve in 2013, and no appropriate notice of that process was provided to the public.



Has the sun finally set for dogs and their owners from enjoying the FGNR? With FGNR being the last safe and spacious natural area within the confines of the busy suburbs of Pretoria East, it would definitely impact on the quality of life of both dog and owner alike.



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Moreletaspruit Forum



The big issue is (and always has been) that many people do not keep their dogs on leashes as required by the by-laws, and the CoT has not enforced leashes. The FFGNR has tried to engage with the CoT to resolve the problem of ill-disciplined dog-walkers, suggesting that a permit system, similar to that implemented in the Table Mountain National Park, be implemented to obligate dog-walkers to follow the on-leash rule and proper etiquette. Members of the public would then play an instrumental role in reporting permit holders who do not obey the rules, which could lead to the revocation of an individual's permit. Unfortunately, feedback has been less than satisfactory and a formal letter written by the FFGNR towards the end of 2016, requesting that the CoT first conduct a public participation process before making a decision on the fate of pets in FGNR, has remained unanswered to date.

Together with two dog-walkers who are CoT ratepayers, the FFGNR have launched court proceedings to set aside the prohibition on dogs at the FGNR. We are waiting to see how the CoT responds before applying to court to compel the CoT to allow dogs in the interim. Many thanks to Carlos da Silva SC (advocate) and Findlay and Niemeyer (attorneys) for their willingness to act for the FFGNR on very reasonable terms.

Op 'n meer positiewe noot het Pretoria en meeste ander dele van die land uiteindelik goeie reën ontvang, na die ramspoedige droogte van die vorige 2015/2016 somer, wat gelei het tot die verklaring van baie provinsies as rampgebiede.



'n Oorsig van die droë landskap in die FGNR, soos gesien vanaf die Faerie Glen Koppie, ongeveer 'n week nadat die vuur, wat op 6 Oktober 2016 uitbreek het, oor groot dele van die koppie beweeg het.

On 7 November last year, water was released from the Sterkfontein Dam near Harrismith in the Free State at a rate of up to 70 cubic metres per second into the Nuwejaarspruit, feeding the Wilge River, travelling 287km to reach the Integrated Vaal System (IVS). The Vaal Dam, which is one of 14 dams within the IVS, supplies around 12million people in Gauteng with water, including the country's major industries. Heavy rains during the second weekend of January 2017 within the Vaal catchment, resulted in the capacity of the Vaal Dam to increase by 3.9%. More rain has fallen since then and currently the Vaal Dam is 63.3% full. The average dam levels across the country stands at 58.9%.

Pretoria receives 72% of its water in bulk from Rand Water, originating from the IVS. The rest we get from our own fountains, boreholes and treatment plants. In August last year, the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) instructed a 15% curtailment on urban water use, which led to less water pumped to water reservoirs in Pretoria, further resulting in water restrictions. Unfortunately, many Pretorians ignored these restrictions, which led to the CoT issuing fines to transgressors. In December, around 40 residents were fined, most of who reside in the east of Pretoria, Centurion and Laudium.

Although above-normal rainfall is expected for most parts of the country for the remaining months of summer, the South African Weather Service cautions that we are not out of the woods yet. The DWS warns that it could take two to five years to recuperate from the drought and there is no sense of security until the Vaal Dam reaches 70% capacity. The DWS will re-evaluate the country's water

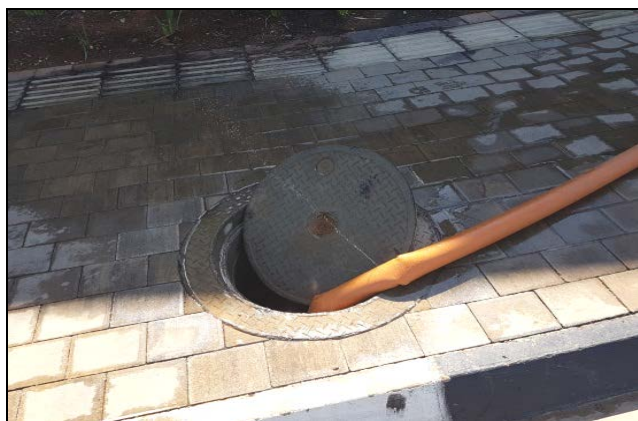


Dieselfde landskap, etlike weke later, nadat 'n paar goeie reënbuie in Oktober uitgesak het. Die veerkragtigheid van die plantegroei is merkbaar, ten spyte van die lang droogte.

situation in May. In the meantime water restrictions are still applicable. Residents within the CoT can report water transgressions to (012) 27-2111 or (012) 358-2111 or e-mail complaints to customercare@tshwane.gov.za.

Met dié dat die land se waterbronne onder druk is, kan dit as katastrofies beskou word wanneer waterbesoedeling plaasvind. Baie van die waterbesoedeling wat plaasgevind het gedurende die droogte (en steeds plaasvind), kon vermy gewees het. Residensiële inwoners, besighede en die stadsraad laat steeds toe dat besoedeling in stormwaterstelsels beland wat reguit in ons plaaslike spruite en riviere vloei.

In die 2016 Lente nuusbrieff het ons gerapporteer dat diesel vanaf 'n kragopwekker by die Menlyn winkelsentrum op 'n onaanvaarbare wyse in die Newlandspruit en Moreletaspruit beland het. Dit het weke geneem om skoon te maak en die ekologie van die Moreletaspruit is erg benadeel deur hierdie plaaslike ramp. Vroeg in Desember het nog 'n ramp dieselfde area getref deurdat 'n chemiese middel, vermoedelik 'n vloeibare vorm van swaeldioksied (SO₂), vanuit 'n tenk in die stormwaterstelsel gepomp is vanaf die nuwe Menlyn Maine Central Square winkelsentrum. Hierdie chemiese middel moes verwyder word deur 'n vragmotor wat gevaarlike afvalstowwe kan vervoer, maar is in plaas daarvan in die stormwaterstelsel gepomp. Dit is ironies dat 'n ontwikkeling wat hulself bemark as die eerste 'groen stad' in Afrika, so optree teenoor hul plaaslike omgewing, 'n area wat hulle eintlik behoort te koester en te versorg. Die munisipaliteit se Omgewingsbestuurdienste- en Natuurbewaringsdepartemente het die insident ondersoek en 'n finale verslag sal nog uitgereik word.



Die chemiese middel is, helder oordag, onwettig in die stormwaterstelsel gepomp vanaf 'n tenk in die keldervlak van die Menlyn Maine Central Square winkelsentrum.

While pollution is directed into storm water systems all over the city, the amount of water run-off from pavements and roofs is also increasing due to urban development. A large volume of this water eventually makes its way through the FGNR via the Moreletaspruit. As this volume of water has increased over the years, it has also led to erosion and scouring of the riverbanks. This has caused the FGNR's wooden bridge foundations on the banks of the eastern side of the Spruit to become exposed over time.

The FFGNR became concerned that the foundations would cave in and cause the collapse of the bridge. We therefore consulted with our engineer members and drew up a plan of action to move the foundations further away from the riverbank and to place extra support in the extended span of the bridge. This work was done during October 2016 and completed within a week by a contractor appointed by the FFGNR. At the same time the walking surface of the bridge was overhauled, mostly reusing the existing planks. We would like to thank everyone that offered their help and expertise. A special thanks to Michael Horn for drawing up the designs and checking on the contractor's work during the construction process.



The bridge seen from the eastern bank of the Moreletaspruit, without its walking surface, during the repair process.

Plaaslike inwoners wat dikwels langs die Moreletaspruit en ander dele van die reservaat gesien word, is likkewane. FGNR is die tuiste vir beide water- en kliplikkewane. Die reservaat se likkewane was besonder bedrywing hierdie afgelope Januarie, nadat verskeie komplekse en woonareas langs die reservaat gerapporteer het dat hierdie groot reptiele hul persele binnegedring het. Ons bedank CoT Natuurbewaring dat hulle die reptiele verwyder het en terugbesorg het aan FGNR.

‘n Mens kan bespiegel oor hoekom die likkewane dan uit die reservaat sou beweeg. Een moontlike antwoord kan lê by hoeveelheid beskikbare kos. Die likkewane is baie aktief in die somer, wanneer hulle genoeg kos moet vind en eet sodat hulle reserwes kan opbou vir die winter, wanneer daar nie baie sonenergie beskikbaar is om hul metabolisme te dryf nie.

Veral die kliplikkewaan is opportunisties, deurdat dit ‘n groot verskeidenheid prooi sal verorber, insluitend ‘n verskeidenheid insekte, duisendpote, voëls, eiers, skilpadjies, klein soogdiertjies en selfs aas. Die waterlikkewaan se dieet sluit ook paddas en krappe in. Hierdie groot reptiele kan langer as twee meter word en likkewaanmannetjies kan tot 15kg weeg. Ongelukkig word hierdie reptiele se habitat al hoe meer beperk en besoedel, en word hulle ook doodgemaak vir die mutimark.



Hierdie likkewaan is op 3 Januarie in die Glenfields kompleks aan die reservaat se oostelike grens deur CoT Natuurbewaring gevang en teruggeneem na FGNR.

The monitor lizards thrive in the FGNR, because of the ecological diversity of the reserve. On Saturday 12 November 2016 we explored the plant diversity found in FGNR with botanist Petro Lemmer. On this morning grassland walk, we recorded over 70 species of herbaceous and bulbous plants. The area was burnt by means of a controlled fire, conducted by CoT Nature Conservation a month earlier. Although fires may seem destructive, many plants are dependent on them for rejuvenation. The ash from a fire is rich in minerals that promote the growth of grass and wild flowers. Many of the seemingly delicate wild flowers have strong and often woody rootstocks, making them resilient to the harsh Highveld conditions of drought and fire.



Petro Lemmer (middle with broad-brimmed hat) opened up the world of botany to those who attended the walk with her wealth of knowledge on the subject.



A little *Ipomoea crassipes* (leafy-flowered Ipomoea / wildewinde) out in full flower on the morning of 12 November 2016.

Ons kan dit nie as vanselfspekend aanvaar dat die reservaat se inheemse plantegroei beskerm is, bloot omdat dit ‘n natuurreservaat is nie. Inteendeel, die reservaat word bedreig deur ‘n lang lys van kategorie 1, 2 en 3 indringerplante en selfs nog ander wat nie deur die toepaslike wetgewing gelys word nie. Die reservaat sal nie meer so uniek wees indien hierdie indringerspesies oorneem nie. Een van die VFGNR se grootste prioriteite is om kategorie 1 indringerplante uit te wis.

Op Sondag 27 November en Saterdag 10 Desember 2016 het lede van die VFGNR weer hard gewerk om *Lantana camara* teen die Bronberg uit te roei, waar dit al digte stande gevorm het oor baie jare. Hierdie is ‘n kategorie 1 struik, en grondeienaars word wetlik verplig om daarvan ontslae te raak en te keer dat dit versprei. Die struik is toksies vir soogdiere en die vrugte word versprei deur voëls wat dit graag eet.



Some of FFGNR members, who volunteered their time to rid the reserve of *Lantana camara*, resting in the shade after a morning's hard work.

Behalwe vir Simon (geborg deur Tony Moore en VFGNR) het die pompom-dames ook nou begin tyd bestee aan die katteklouranker-infestasië (*Dolychandra unguis-cati*), nog 'n kategorie 1 indringer wat ernstige gevolge vir die FGNR se inheemse plantegroei inhou. Ons bedank graag vir Magdaleen, Engela, Jenny, Senta en Emilie vir hulle bystand met hierdie langtermynprojek.



Engela (left), Senta (middle) and Jenny (right), cutting and poisoning the cat's claw creeper (*Dolychandra unguis-cati*), which has infected the FGNR like a virus and threatens to destroy its biodiversity.

Met die geweldige groot probleem wat FGNR het met indringerplante, is dit belangrik dat daar met 'n plan gewerk word en dat die werk wat gedoen word bestendig is. Opvolgwerk is ook van kardinale belang. Sonder kernlede, Edwin en Vincent van de Wiel, sou die FFGNR nie hierdie funksie so goed kon uitrig nie. Hierdie twee staatmakers kan twee dae van die week gevind word waar hulle werk om 'n wye spektrum indringers te verwyder en terselfdetyd ook gesonde oefening inkyr.



Vincent (left) and Edwin (right) van de Wiel in their working gear to battle invasive plants in FGNR. The pink pompom weed can be seen in the background, which is a category 1 weed, proliferating in summer.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Insect walk with Michael Stiller:

When: Saturday 4 March at 08:00

Where: Meet on the lawn in front of the entrance building

Bring along: Hat, water, comfortable shoes, magnifying glass

Cost: FFGNR members –FREE
Non-members – R50.00

Bird walk with Philip Calinikos:

When: Saturday 11 March at 06:00

Where: Meet on the lawn in front of the entrance building

Bring along: Hat, binoculars, comfortable shoes, water

Cost: FFGNR members –FREE
Non-members – R50.00

Invasive plant hacks:

When: • Saturday 18 February at 07:30

• Sunday 19 March at 07:30

• Sunday 23 April at 08:00

Where: Meet on the lawn in front of the entrance building.

Bring along: Lopper/pruning shears, hand-saw, gloves, hat, working shoes, water.

FFGNR provide: herbicide, tree-poppers

***Please e-mail or SMS if you plan on helping.**

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