



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

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### Autumn Newsletter 2018



The Moreletaspruit seen gushing through the trees at the location of the river crossing leading to the concrete path. The river crossing structure was washed away in the process, but restored by City of Tshwane (CoT) Nature Conservation with repairs paid for by the FFGNR.

Autumn of 2018 was blessed with exceptionally high rainfall in the FGNR and rest of Pretoria. March, also known as Water Month, saw the highest rainfall figures since 1996. Over 280mm was measured in the eastern suburb of Garsfontein. It rained persistently on 22 March, with the Moreletaspruit reaching its highest during the early morning hours of 23 March. The FGNR was soaking wet as the Moreletaspruit breached its banks, inundating the floodplain and taking away the river crossing on the western side of the reserve. Two weeks later a heavy downpour on 11 April saw the flooding event repeated due to the soil being saturated from all the rain during March.

Paradoxically, while the high rainfall is welcomed, it also comes with a downside, because of the way infrastructure is designed in our cities, coupled with irresponsible human

### Herfs Nuusbrieff 2018



'n Buiteband het tydens die vloed in Maart met die rivier afgespoel en in die vloedvlakte te lande gekom. Die wandelpad was ook op 23 Maart onder water.

behaviour. The storm water that flows into the Moreletaspruit comes from the rain that falls on every pavement and road surface connected to the storm water system via the culverts found between pavements and roads. Therefore every single pollutant that ends up in the storm water system, be it a cigarette butt flicked from a car window, a cool drink bottle dropped on the pavement, or a drop of motor oil from a car, ends up directly in the river, completely unfiltered. Equally, sewage can easily find its way into the storm water system due to manholes being located on pavements. In South Africa (unlike Europe) the sewage and storm water are two separate systems, each with their own separate pipes. Sewage goes to treatment plants where the water is treated to acceptable quality before being released back into a river system, whereas storm water, unfortunately, goes directly from a road to a stream or river. Given the current state of affairs, one could say that our rivers are being treated as open dustbins.



Proudly affiliated to the Wildlife  
and Environment Society of  
South Africa and Adopt  
Moreletaspruit Forum



Die vloede wat in die Moreletaspruit afgekom het, het groot massas plastiek en ander gemors meegesleur. Baie hiervan het teen die walle en oewer van die Moreletaspruit opgeëindig en versprei oor die vloedvlakke van die FGNR. Hierdie rommel hou nie net 'n gevaar in vir diere wat daaraan kan verstik of verstremel raak nie, maar ook vergiftiging soos plastiekitems opbreek in kleiner deeltjies. Hierdie klein plastiekdeeltjies eindig op in ons damme en later ook ons watersuiweringsaanlegte, waar water gesuiwer word tot dit van genoegsame gehalte is vir menslike gebruik. Tans bestaan die tegnologie om hierdie mikrodeeltjies plastiek uit die water te verwyder nie in Suid Afrika nie, dus is daar alreeds plastiek in ons drinkwater teenwoordig. Sulke klein plastiekpartikels word ook beskou as bron van endokriene ontwrigtings- hul boots natuurlike hormone (veral estrogeen) in die liggaam (mens of dier) na en meng in met die liggaam se proses om hierdie hormone te reguleer. Dit kan allerlei liggaamlike funksies aantast, soos die metabolisme, groei, nierfunksie en die voortplantingstelsel.



'n Verskeidenheid plastiekvoorwerpe het tydens die vloed uitgespoel: baie plastiekbottels, huishoudelike items soos skoene, speelgoed, snuifboksies, verkrummelde polistireen verpakings en verflenterde plastieksakke. Van die groter items het 'n matras en buiteband ingesluit.

Dit is moontlik vir elkeen van ons om 'n direkte verskil te maak om hierdie tendens teen te werk: let eerstens op alledaagse gebruiksitens, deur bv. onnodige en oorverpakking te vermy, glas te koop eerder as plastiek, op te hou om strooitjies en enkelgebruik plastiekprodukte te koop of gebruik. Hou op om tandepaste of gesigseep met mikrokorrels vir afskilfering te koop. Hierdie korrels is in der ware klein plastiekballetjies wat besig is om 'n groot omgewingsprobleem te word, tot so 'n mate dat

party lande begin het om dit te verban (sien YouTube skakel:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uAilGd\\_JqZc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uAilGd_JqZc)).

Die mikrovesels in sintetiese klere (bv. polar fleece) hou soorgelyke nadele vir die omgewing in. Daarom is dit beter om eerder katoen en ander natuurlike vesel materiale te dra. By die huis moet herwinning toegepas word en slegs nie-herwinbare items moet in die munisipale vullisdrom beland wat dan na 'n sorteringsterrein geneem word. Neem die sypaadjie aan in die straat waar jy woon; moenie toelaat dat gemors in die straat of sypaadjie in die stormwaterdrein beland nie en kyk gereeld of daar nie iets ingerol of ingewaaie het nie. Dit gebeur dikwels dat mense hierdie stormwaterdrein as 'n asblik gebruik, deur doelbewus gemors daarin te druk. Rapporteer alle rioelmangate wat oorloop so spoedig moontlik, al is dit nie in jou eie straat of buurt nie. Die stadsraad kan gekontak word by (012) 358-9999/080 111 1556; of per e-pos by [customercare@tshwane.gov.za](mailto:customercare@tshwane.gov.za). Waterlekkas kan gerapporteer word by [Waterleaks@tshwane.gov.za](mailto:Waterleaks@tshwane.gov.za). Onthou om altyd te vra vir 'n verwysingsnommer.



Vrywilligers Vincent van de Wiel en Thomas Mtsweni het die groot plastiekvloed aangepak. Daar is steeds heelwat gemors in plantegroei langs die Moreletaspruit vasevang.

Die VFGNR het ingespring en begin skoonmaak langs die rivier. Ons bedank elkeen wat gehelp het om gemors op te tel. Meer as 60 sakke rommel is tot dusver opgetel. Daar is egter nog heelwat plastiek langs die rivier en onstellig genoeg ook altyd gemors te vinde langs die wandelpaai. Ons doen 'n beroep op elkeen om nie verby 'n stuk gemors te loop sonder om dit te verwyder nie. Sterk, geel munisipale vullissakke is beskikbaar by ontvangs vir diegene wat vinnig in hul eie tyd 'n bydrae wil lewer. 'n Mens hoef nie te wag tot Mandeladag om 'n verskil te maak nie.



Vincent van de Wiel het ook die klein bruggie oor die stormwatervoor langs die groot riviervaderlandswilg herstel.

One way to determine the general health of our local rivers and streams, is by conducting a MiniSASS (Stream Assessment Scoring System). MiniSASS is a simple bio-monitoring technique that uses the presence of macro-invertebrates as indicators of the health of a river. Certain macro-invertebrates are more sensitive to pollution than others, thereby acting as indicators of poor river health if they are absent.

On Monday 26 March a MiniSASS was hosted in FGNR in celebration of Water Month by the Adopt Moreletaspruit Forum (to which the FFGNR is affiliated), in collaboration with the Walter Sisulu Environmental Centre in Mamelodi and CoT. Learners from various schools in the catchment learnt all about MiniSASS, with four professional SASS practitioners offering their time for free to demonstrate the process. After samples were taken by the SASS practitioners, everyone participated in identifying the invertebrates in flat white trays. Samples from two different sections of the Moreletaspruit were taken. The scores were 4.85 and 5.75 respectively, meaning that the river ranged from being in a critically modified and very poor condition to a fair condition. One has to take into account that there are at least seven points in the reserve where storm water pipes connect to the Moreletaspruit and each storm water outlet can have a significant impact on the river health.

On the topic of invertebrates, the FFGNR hosted a scorpion walk on Saturday 21 April, guided by scorpion ecologist, Armin du Preez. The walk was well attended by young and old alike, although the youngsters must be credited for sniffing out the scorpions! None of the scorpions found in the FGNR



The school learners gathered around before having lunch, while Adopt Moreletaspruit Forum members explained the MiniSASS process and the importance of recycling.



A school learner peering over the sample tray with a magnifying glass, looking for tiny invertebrates hidden among the organic debris. Sometimes these tiny creatures can only be observed if they move around.



Scorpion guide, Armin du Preez, expertly holds a *Uroplectus triangulifer* to avoid being stung. This particular species, although very small (4-5 cm) and non-toxic, has a painful sting. The species can be identified by the black hands, forearms and dorsal line.

are considered to be medically important, meaning they are not poisonous, although some could administer a painful sting. Some of the smaller local scorpion species may be encountered in our homes, such as *Uroplectus triangulifer* and *Pseudolychas ochraceus*. They do not pose a threat, although care should be taken to avoid being stung, which could cause a painful burning sensation. They should be removed carefully and placed back in a quiet place in the garden, preferably among some rocks or pebbles where they are able to hide.

Die FGNR is ryk aan 'n verskeidenheid dierspesies nie, maar veral ook plantspesies. Die reservaat maak deel uit van die sogenaamde Bronberg Berg-bosveld (Bronberg Mountain Bushveld), 'n glysde krities bedreigde ekosisteem. Een van die groot bedreigings is indringerplantegroei. Op Saterdag 9 April het die VFGNR 'n indringeridentifiserings-uitstappie aangebied vir diegene wat meer wou uitvind oor watter indringers in FGNR voorkom, asook hul eie tuine. Baie van die indringers wat al goed gevestig is in die FGNR het ontsnap uit tuine, soos bv. *Lantana camara*, jakaranda (*Jacaranda mimosifolia*), Japanese liguster (*Ligustrum japonicum*) en die maksering (*Melia azedarach*), om net 'n paar te noem.



Belangstellendes wat die indringeridentifiserings-uitstappie bygewoon het staan by die groot bloekomlaning terwyl Louise Kritzinger die verskillende kategorie indringers verduidelik, waarvan bloekombome onder Kategorie 2 val (industriëel).

Natuurlik rus die VFGNR nie op hul louere as dit kom by die uitroei en beheer van indringerplante nie. Op Saterdag 17 Maart, Sondag 15 April en Saterdag 19 Mei het lede van die VFGNR en ander vrywilligers gewoeker om lantana uit te roei teen die berg. Edwin en Vincent van de Wiel, die ysterman pa-en-seun span het ook vordering gemaak op lantana,

luisboom (*Solanum mauritianum*), rooisonneblom (*Tithonia rotundifolia*) en nog 'n verskeidenheid ander indringers gedurende hulle 'buitelug gimnasium' sessies met die VFGNR se boom-poppers.

Die katteklouranker-dames maak nog deurlopend stelselmatig vordering met die katteklouranker (*Dolichandra unguis-cati*) wat besig is om die FGNR se spesiale inheemse woud te versmoor. Ongelukkig is 'n paar dames buite aksie op die oomblik en spanleier Jenny Bester doen 'n beroep op nog hande om hulle by te staan met die taak. Diegene wat belangstel, kontak asb. vir Louise (kontak-besonderhede bo aan nuusbrief).



Theunis Morgenthal (links) en Nick de Villiers (regs) het fluks gewerk om lantana uit te roei op Saterdag 17 Maart, al het die reën uitgesak.

It has been more than a year since the Pretoria High Court set aside the ban on dogs implemented by CoT on 1 January 2018 and declared that dogs are allowed in the FGNR, after the FFGNR, along with two rate-paying dog walkers, launched court proceedings against the CoT's decision. Since then, a dog permit system was put in place, compelling dog owners to adhere to the CoT bylaws on public amenities, of which keeping one's dog on a leash and picking up the excrement is non-negotiable.

Dog permit holders must take note that their current permits will expire on 30 June 2018. Permits can be renewed with CoT Nature Conservation from 1 July 2018. A dog permit fee will be payable from 1 July, with R60 per individual permit (maximum of two dogs) or R120 per family permit (maximum of four dogs). Permit application forms are obtainable from the cashier, or electronically from [NatashaZ@Tshwane.gov.za](mailto:NatashaZ@Tshwane.gov.za) or [admin@fgnr.co.za](mailto:admin@fgnr.co.za). Completed documents must be physically submitted

at the FGNR along with receipt of payment, whereupon the register must be signed as proof that the application was submitted. Old permits will temporarily remain valid during July until the new permits are ready.

Sadly, we pay tribute to Bridget, one of the FGNR's regular visitors. In 2006 Bridget was adopted by her owner, Tienie Cronjé from WetNose Animal Rescue Centre. She was already an adult dog at the time. Tienie instantly fell in love with Bridget and, even though she displayed initial signs of abuse from her previous owner, she soon overcame her fears. Through the years, Bridget enjoyed many, many walks with Tienie in the FGNR, where her social personality ensured that she made a number of two- and four-legged friends. Bridget was put down early in May due to health conditions related to old age. She will be missed by all who knew her. RIP Bridget Gatswaai Cronjé.

There are far too many stray and unwanted dogs and cats in South Africa. Rather than supporting the unethical practices of puppy mills (people breeding animals often in large numbers purely for profit), rather visit your local SPCA or WetNose, where you can find your best friend, already sterilised, micro-chipped, de-wormed, and with up to date vaccinations at a very affordable adoption fee. Visit <https://wetnose.co.za> for more information.

For those reluctant to adopt an older dog, the old saying that you can't teach a dog new tricks, is not true. It is a good idea to take your dog (young or old) for obedience training. The Pretoria Shepherd Dog Club (which has been in existence since 1963) offer training in this regard. For more information, visit [www.pretoriashepherddogclub.co.za](http://www.pretoriashepherddogclub.co.za).



Bridget, after one of her many walks with Tienie in the FGNR.

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

### Geology walk with Prof. Adam Bumby:

When: Saturday 4 August at 10:00

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

Bring along: Hat and water

- R50 payable for non-members

### Arbour Day with the Dendrological Society:

When: Saturday 1 September at 09:00

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

Bring along: Hat, comfortable shoes, water.

Cost: Free

### INVASIVE PLANT HACKS:

When: • Sunday 17 June at 08:00

• Saturday 21 July at 08:00

• Sunday 19 August at 08:00

• Sunday 16 September at 07:30

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

Bring along: Pruning loppers, hand-saw, gloves, hat, working shoes, water.

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

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