

MINUTES

eThekwini Biodiversity Forum

17 November 2011

9h00 – 12h00

Paradise Valley Nature Reserve



PRESENT

Andrew Whitley	AW	Jo Boulle	JB	Richard Boon	RB
Avrille Coen	AC	Kerina Singh	KS	Richard Winn	RW
Busi Mlambo	BM	John Forbes	JF	Rob Jamieson	RJ
C Booth	CB	Kirstin Williams	KW	Rodney Bartholomew	RB
Caroline Apollos	CA	Kumbuzile Luthuli	KL	S Smit	SS
Crystal Naidoo	CN	Lettie Coskey	LC	Sabelo Nkosi	SN
Derrek Ruiters	DR	Lilian Develing	LD	Shoni Makhwedzha	SM
Errol Dowes	ED	Lynne Thompson	LT	Suvarna Parbhoo	SP
Gillian Noyce	GC	Margaret Burger	MB	Terry Stewart	TS
Graham Cairns	GC	Natasha Govender	NG	Thami Kunene	TK
Heather Cairns	HC	Nick Liebenberg	NL	Trafford Petersen	TP
Jabu Sithole	JS	Nomafu Dlamini	ND	Warren Botes	WB
Jabulani khoza	JK	Rael Huges	RH	Wayne Stead	WS
Jean Lindsay	JL	Rashieda Davids	RD		
Jessica Brislin	JB	Reshnee Lalla	RL		

APOLOGIES

Jean Senogles, Geoff Pullan, Jeanne Tarrant, Lesley Frescura, Martin Clement, Roger Uys.

1.	WELCOME & INTRODUCTION	
1.1	NG welcomed and thanked all for attending despite the bad weather. Noted that it was the last meeting for the year.	
2.	PRESENTATION –Update On COP17 by Jo Boulle	
2.1	<p>JB noted the following with regards to the upcoming 17th Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP17) to be hosted by Durban:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The UNFCCC have already arrived in the city to commence pre-COP17 events, however, in 10 days time the balance of the people attending the conference will arrive in the City • The eyes of the world will be on our City • There will be many events taking place around city, including business and NGO meetings and events • Most of the accommodation in Durban is fully booked. 	

	<p>JB noted that for the COP17, the eThekweni Municipality is involved in providing or implementing the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City services • Transport for delegates • Accommodation • Green volunteers • Marketing and communication • Greening of COP17, including developing a methodology for ecological foot printing and greening the International Convention Centre (ICC) • Tourism • Community Ecosystem Based Adaption (CEBA) initiative to offset carbon footprint • Forums • Toolkit for business • Visitors charter • Information on accreditation • Promoting efficient waste management • Climate Change Learning Exchange - EPCPD partnership with MILE • eThekweni Municipality is also involved in Local Government engagement, where Local Governments from around the world are lobbying to play a more important role in COP17. The key agenda of Local Government is looking at how to bring climate change adaptation onto the agenda. It is acknowledged that mitigation has its place, but in the local context there is a greater need to adapt and work towards getting ecosystems to be more resilient and able to provide the vital ecosystem services. The Local Government Convention will take place from 2/12 - 4/12. <p>JB noted that the Mayor, Mr James Nxumalo, has become a key champion for climate change and has even agreed to use an electric bicycle. The UNFCCC has recognised the Buffelsdraai Reforestation project as lighthouse project and will be profiled at a special event, at which the Mayor will be presenting the project.</p> <p>JB mentioned that the EPCPD has undertaken the following communication projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newsletter and website • Information sheets and posters • Presentations • Media – press releases, interviews and educational material • Climate Change Response Expo • Green event guideline • Creative art response • Publications – <i>Durban, a climate for change</i> • Schools engagement – WESSA • Green tours showcasing the City’s climate change adaptation and mitigation projects. 	
2.3	<p>GN mentioned that she and other people have made small packets from used magazine pages. These small packets have been branded with details on the COP17 and have been made available to shops and chemists for use instead of alternative packaging. Tellers have also been informed about the COP17 during the distribution of the recycled magazine packets.</p>	
3.	PRESENTATIONS – Municipal Projects	
3.1	Rael Hughes presented details on the Municipal Working on Fire Programme.	

	Wayne Stead presented details on the Municipal Working for Ecosystems Programme. Andrew Whitley presented details on the Municipal Reforestation Project.	
4.	Updates from Natural Science Museum, Kirsten Williams	
4.1	KW noted that various activities will be undertaken at the Natural Science Museum for the COP17, including hosting a temporary display and viewing of climate change documentaries free of charge.	
5.	Updates from Natural Resources Museum	
5.1	NG queried if anyone from the Natural Resources Division (NRD) was available to provide updates. No updates were available.	
5.2	LT stated that it is rather disappointing that there are no updates from the NRD.	
5.3	It was reiterated that it is very important that individuals from NRD are present at the Biodiversity Forum meetings and are able to report back on relevant issues such as the animal control policy. RB responded that the Council does not have an animal control policy in place; however, there is an initiative to establish one. NRD will take the establishment of this policy forward.	
5.4	It was reported that Springside Nature Reserve is doing well with the youth programme. However, the person conducting the programme has indicated that she is not prepared to continue without a public liability programme being put in place by the NRD. TP responded that indemnity agreements are put in place at schools before the learners come to the reserve. The youth programme coordinator needs to get a Memorandum of Understanding in place with the NRD. TP added that in order to conduct a trial or tourism programme one needs to be accredited. Certain EPCPD staff members have completed the course and acquired the necessary accreditation.	
6.	Updates from EPCPD	
6.1	PRESENTATION –eThekweni Municipality Nursery Audits 2011 by Rashieda Davids	
4.1.1	RD presented the details of the Nursery audits as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EPCPD undertakes biennial audits of Municipal nurseries for compliance with CARA and NEMBA in terms of invasive alien plants (IAPs). • Nursery audits were undertaken in 2005, 2006, 2007, 2009, 2011. • Ten nurseries audited in 2011, namely, 3 at Botanic Gardens, Bridgevale, Randles, Farewell, Hillary, Amamzimtoti, Silverglen and Buffelsdraai (not municipal managed but part of the Buffelsdraai reforestation project). • Audit Report compiled and presents the findings of audits at ten municipal nurseries. RD noted the objectives of the audit which include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To assess compliance with the requirements of the CARA and the NEMBA. • Make recommendations to improve compliance. • To add to the trend of best practices. • To ensure that nurseries delivering a service to the public showcase best practices. Key comments that were made in the audit include:	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most species identified were self seeded from parent stock. • IAPs were evident on boundary fences and adjacent properties of most of the nurseries. These adjacent properties are in most cases not being used or managed and have high IAP infestations. • There is a recurring problem of easy transferring of seeds, resulting in the establishment of IAPs on adjacent nursery premises. <p>The general recommendations made in the audit included that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A generic IAP Management Plan must be compiled that can be implemented at all municipal nurseries. • Additional funding may be required for effective IAP eradication and control • It may be advisable to conduct annual audits of nurseries rather than biennial audits to ensure that progress made is not lost. • Many adjacent properties infested and pose a threat of seeding to nurseries • Property owners must be informed to comply with the relevant legislation. Landowners failing to control IAP are to be reported. • Collaborative management of nurseries and adjoining properties may be a solution to the ongoing infestation. • Potting soil should be suitably sterilized and plant bags inspected for IAP seedlings prior to being distributed. • Listed IAPs growing in decorative pots should be destroyed and substituted with indigenous alternatives. • Despite their aesthetic appeal, large categorised trees must be eradicated in terms of CARA and NEMBA. <p>RD concluded that while it is evident that some improvement has been achieved in terms of IAP control at all of the nurseries, in order to be fully compliant with CARA and / or NEMBA, a great deal of further effort needs to be employed. The EPCPD in process of compiling collaborative IAP EMP with NRD.</p> <p>For more information, please contact the Errol Dowes (031 311 7952) or Rashieda Davids (031 311 7171).</p>	
4.2	PRESENTATION – Environmental Rates Certificates by Rashieda Davids	
4.2.1	<p>RD mentioned that in terms of eThekweni Municipality Rates Policy (2010/2011) , an Environmental Rates Certificate may be issued if, as per Section 7.15.4 of the Rates Policy, if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Municipality considers the land to be environmentally sensitive, e.g. it forms part of the Durban Metropolitan Open Space System (DMOSS)</i> • <i>The land is zoned for conservation purposes or an environmental servitude has been registered in favour of the Municipality over the environmentally sensitive area; and</i> • <i>The landowner, with the assistance of the Municipality, prepares and implements an approved management plan aimed at protecting and improving the local environment.</i> <p>RD noted that her understanding is that the objectives of the rates certificates include providing incentives for conservation, to facilitate collaborative management of DMOSS and to ensure long term protection of privately owned DMOSS through the application of</p>	

	<p>conservation servitudes.</p> <p>RD reported that from the 36 applications for rates certificates made since 2008, only nine applications satisfied all requirements and have thus enjoyed rates reductions. EPCPD has recently compiled generic EMP currently being rolled out to all holders of rates certificates. The eThekweni Real Estate Department has agreed to apply automatic rates reductions of vacant land that falls within DMOSS, based on the proportion of property within DMOSS and any conservation servitudes being present. This is expected to come into effect from July 2012.</p> <p>For more information, please contact the Richard Boon (031 311 7877) or Rashieda Davids (031 311 7171).</p>	
4.2.2	<p>HC queried which open spaces are included in the Parks audit. TP responded that In selecting the parks they first had to understand what a “park” is. The PLC maintains various categories of council owned land which, are broadly labelled as “parks”. These include the land around sports fields, gardens around council buildings, playgrounds, public commonages and formally landscaped, visitor orientated features such as Japanese Gardens and the Botanic Gardens. This audit targeted those parks which fulfilled the following 3 criteria:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Those which have been formally landscaped; 2. Those that are located in high profile public areas; 3. Those which fulfil some ecological functions. For example riparian corridors, genetic reservoirs or roosting sites. <p>By choosing landscaped parks a link is made with the Municipal nurseries which provide the plant material used in the landscaping. This is a logical progression from the ongoing annual nurseries audit and creates a beginning and end user feedback loop that promotes overall best practice. By choosing high profile, public areas, the desired outcomes (compliance with IAP legislation) can be showcased and hopefully will spur a greater public awareness for responsible landscaping. Many public parks, no matter how manicured, provide sanctuary and a thoroughfare for many species of small fauna and bird life. A case in point is how much bird life is to be found in the Durban Botanic Gardens. These species often act as vectors in the spread of IAP’s and it would be ecologically desirable to minimize the potential for this by ensuring that such parks are “weed-free zones”.</p>	
4.5	<p>JL queried when the next parks audit would be undertaken. RD responded that it will be done in 2012. JL requested that RD update BF once the next audit is complete.</p>	
4.3	<p>CN reported the following on the Sand Mining Rehabilitation - Municipal Grassland Restoration Project on behalf of Lyle Ground of the EPCPD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Department of Mineral Resources (DME) mining right / permit application process has a requirement for DME to set aside R 30 000 to R 80 000 (depending on sensitivity of the site) for either (a) refunding the applicant once proof of rehabilitation at the end of the operation is provided for (b) utilisation by DME for rehabilitation of sites which have not been rehabilitated by the mining operator. • This process seems to be flawed in that there are no examples, where these funds have been utilised for sandmine rehabilitation. As such, the EPCPD is looking to unlock these funds in order to facilitate the rehabilitation of current and future mining sites within eThekweni Municipality. • This will be done by assessing the practicality and required methodology through a hands on attempt at rehabilitating 1.5ha of grassland on municipal property using 	

	<p>R 30 000. Desktop investigations into alternative methods will be done to detail what further work can be done with maximum amount of R 80 000.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Ngongoni Grassland site, which was severely impacted by sand mining, was identified as the suitable rehabilitation site, in the Harrison Flats/Cato Ridge area. Hydroseeding was the only identified method available under R30 000. A service provider has been appointed and the site has been hydroseeded. The site will be monitored on a weekly basis for germination rates, percentage coverage. Signs of erosion etc. • A yearend report will be drafted detailing the methodology and apparent success of the rehab undertaken at this site. Depending on the outcomes, this will be used to either motivate for DME to release funds to appoint a suitable long term implementing agent or to motivate to increase the figures if the pilot project shows that rehabilitation is not possible for the prescribed amounts. 	
5.	CONCLUSION AND CLOSE OF MEETING	NG
5.1	<p>NG thanked all for attending and closed the meeting.</p> <p>NG will send out a full listing of dates for 2012 Biodiversity Forum meetings in January 2012.</p>	