

Minutes of the quarterly eThekweni Biodiversity Forum meeting May 2010

Date: 06 May 2010

Time: 09h00 – 12h00

Venue: Paradise Valley, Durban

Attendance: Errol Douwes (ED), Natasha Govender (NG), Jean Lindsey (JL), Lesley Frescura (LF), Darren Green (DG), Derrek Ruiters (DR), Jabu Sithole (JS), Barry Lang (BL), Margaret Appleton (MA), Kate Richardson (KR), Kirstin Williams (KW), Jessica Brislin (JB), Mpume Sithebe (MS), Rodney Bartholomew (RBW), Graham Cairns (GC), Heather Cairns (HC), Sue George (SG), Pieter Botha (PB), Jean Senogles (JS), Lynne Thompson (LT), Greg Mullins (GM), Chantal Motilall (CM), Jabu Sithole (JS), Vusi Mkhize (VM), Sabelo B. Nkosi (SBN), Nkuli Hadebe (NH), Di Dold (DD), Manisha Maganlal (MM), Larry Singh (LS), Darren Green (DG), Viloshanie Reddy (VR), Richard Winn (RW), Roger Uys (RU), Peron Amein (PA), Mzekelo Madikane (MM)

Apologies: Debra Roberts, Jo Boule, Richard Boon (RB), Alistair McInnes, Cameron McLean (CM), Reshnee Lalla, Alison Young, Geoff Pullan, Gillian Noyce, J.E. Granger, Jeanne Tarrant, Terry Stewart, Di Higginson, Ahmed Thandar, Sue Shafto, Fran Lewis, Ticky Forbes, Nicolette Forbes, Adrian Armstrong, Johann Vermeulen.

1. Welcome and Introductions

NG welcomed all and facilitated introductions.

2. Presentation: Darren Green from Knight Piesold talking about talking about the Plant Rescue and Rehabilitation Plan for the Western Aqueduct.

DG presented on the work that Knight Piesold were doing around the rehabilitation plan for the Western Aqueduct. Discussion was raised about the grass species that were being planted during rehabilitation exercises. RW and RU warned about the potential to introduce species that are non-indigenous to Durban and the danger that poses to indigenous species. JS congratulated DG and Knight Piesold on embarking on this project, accepting that even though there may be numerous caveats associated with rehabilitation work, this is still better than leaving areas disturbed by development without any sort of rehabilitation plan. DG agreed that more research needs to be conducted around rehabilitation of grassland habitats and that input from members of the forum is a crucial step forward. LT queried about the next step for this particular rehabilitation project and stressed the need to educate the land owners in the surrounding areas of the importance of growing indigenous plants species and said that the only way in which projects such as this can work is if community members are involved and educated.

3. Presentation: Jabu Sithole from SANBI's Early Detection of Invasive Alien Plants Programme talking about a new species invading aquatic systems.

JS gave a short presentation about *Sagittaria platyphylla* (Delta arrow head) - a new species invading aquatic systems/water bodies in Durban. She noted that this species is also invading Krantzkloof

Nature Reserve. JS requested that members of the forum contact the Early Detection of Invasive Plants programme if they see this species anywhere in Durban.

4) Presentation: Larry Singh from the Isipingo Island Institute talking about some of the work they have done with respect to alien invasive clearing and dune rehabilitation in and around Durban.

LS spoke about the work that the Isipingo Island Institute has been involved in the past couple of years around invasive alien clearing, dune rehabilitation and anthropogenic litter clean ups in beaches and estuaries along the Durban coastline. DD congratulated LS on the work that he and his team have done and continue doing. Concern was raised over the amount of litter in the estuaries and beaches in Durban and the potential source(s) of this litter.

7. EMD report backs

a) Town Planning Matters

NG reported on behalf of RB with respect to the Town Planning Matters that the EPCPD is undertaking. The update was as follows:

1. Phase 2 of the Outer West rezoning was advertised in late March. Public meetings took place in April. Deadline for comment was the 7 May, but has been extended to 28 May due to great public interest. The objective of this project is to rezone sensitive environmental feature for conservation purposes and to reduce densities adjacent to these features.
2. Fosaville rezoning in Newlands West has also been advertised and the intention is to try and find a land-use option which benefits the private landowner, environmental protection and the adjacent landowners. A public meeting was held and it appears that the landowners are unlikely to support the proposal. The community is also concerned about the type of residential development that might take place and an increase in traffic.
3. The EPCPD have a project to rezone all our acquired sites, some sites within our nature reserves and a few private properties to environmental conservation reserve. The period for comment has closed and once again we have received a number of objections on legal grounds. We will review the merit of these objections and if they are not valid will we ask Council to adopt the proposed rezoning.
4. The EPCPD have been given an extension on our Roosfontein rezoning and our proposal to integrate DMOSS into the town planning schemes. We will shortly need to get these adoption reports to Council in order to meet statutory deadlines.

b) Mayoral Biodiversity Award

MM informed the forum of the award categories for this year which are: 1) schools; 2) businesses; 3) private (individuals or families) and 4) NGO's. She stated that a call for nominations has been sent out to all the members of the forum.

c) Invasive Alien Species Strategy

ED informed the forum that the invasive alien plants control strategy has been finalised and will be sent to council for ratification.

d) KZN Biodiversity Stewardship Programme

DR was continuing to work on proclamation of selected reserves as part of the KZN Biodiversity Stewardship Programme, Roosfontein being the reserve that is currently being taken through this process.

e) Giba Gorge Special Rating Area

NG reported on behalf of AM as follows:

The Giba Gorge Environmental Precinct has now got a permanent Conservation Management staff compliment (since Feb), headed up by Tuthuka Majola (manager) reporting directly to AM and conservation committee.

Implementation Programmes highlighting all work planned for on a monthly basis, including deliverables and performance indicators, have been distributed to all landowners since February. All of these will be available on the new Giba Gorge website which is due to go live by the end of May. Some of the work done to date includes:

- 1.) Development and updates of Conservation Management Plan (available on website to come: www.ggep.org)
- 2.) Alien plant clearing (bulk of work) in grasslands between M13 and Eagle Rock and in the forest around McIntosh Falls.
- 3.) Construction of two new trails (ongoing) in the main gorge forest and McIntosh and Kirkman falls - details of which will be on website.
- 4.) Soil erosion control on various cutlines and roads.
- 5.) Involvement of schools in River Health Monitoring.
- 6.) Construction of parking area off Longforgen Avenue.
- 7.) Plans to construct staff facilities and visitor ablutions - to allow for school buses.
- 8.) Landowner newsletters distributed and new website content handed over to designer.

8. General

a) Cutting of trees on municipal property

SMW was to raise the issue at the next Natural Resources Management meeting however was not present to report on the outcomes of that meeting.

b) State of Biodiversity Reporting

NG thanked the forum members for the information they have supplied to her for the State of Biodiversity report and informed the forum that the report will be available at the next forum meeting.

Closing and Date of the next meeting:

NG closed the meeting at 12h00 and thanked everyone for attending.

Next meetings: Thursday, 5 August 2010

Times: 9:00am – 12:00pm

Venue: Paradise Valley

Acronyms used in these (and previous) minutes:

AIO	Alien Invasive Organism
BSAP	Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
BSSA	Biodiversity Stewardship – South Africa
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity (Global)
COP 9	Ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (a CBD initiative)
CARA	Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act (Act 43 of 1983)
DAEA	Department of Agriculture and Environmental Affairs (Provincial)
DEAT	Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (National)
DME	Department of Minerals and Energy
D'MOSS	Durban Metropolitan Open Space System
DUCT	Duzi Umgeni Conservation Trust
DWAF	Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (National)
ECO	Environmental Consultant
EESMP	EThekweni Environmental Services Management Plan
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EKZNW	Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife
EM	EThekweni Municipality
EMD	(eThekweni Municipality) Environmental Management Department
EMP	Environmental Management Plan
GGEP	Giba Gorge Environmental Precinct
GHG	Green House Gases
IAP	Invasive Alien Plant
IAS	Invasive Alien Species
ICLEI	International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives
KZN	KwaZulu Natal
LAB	Local Action for Biodiversity
MOSS	Metropolitan Open Space System
NEMA	National Environmental Management Act (1998)
NEMBA	National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (Act 10 of 2004)
NGO	Non Government Organisation
NRB	eThekweni Municipality's Natural Resource Branch
SANBI	South African National Biodiversity Institute (National)
SAPTA	South African Pet Traders Association
SCP	Systematic Conservation Planning
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SOER	State of the Environment Report
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal