

MINUTES

eThekwini Biodiversity Forum

14 February 2013

9h00 – 12h00

Paradise Valley Nature Reserve



PRESENT

AJ Smit	AS	Greg Mullins	GM	Nick Liebenberg	NL
Arnia van Vuuren	AV	Heather Cairns	HC	Nomafu Dlamini	ND
Angie Wilken	AW	Jabu Sithole	JS	Nosipho Ndzimbomvu	ND
Avrille Coen	AC	Himansu (Snowy)		Preshine Govender	PG
Barbara Wint	BW	Bajinath	SB	Rashieda Davids	RD
Barry Lang	BL	Jabulani Khoza	JK	Richard Boon	RB
Bheka Nxele	BN	Jean Lindsay	JL	Richard Lundie	RL
Carla Higgs	CH	Jean Rodel	JR	Robert Jamieson	RJ
Clive Walker	CW	Jean Senogles	JS	Roger Uys	RU
Crystelle Wilson	CW	Joan Porter	JP	Sade Moneron	SM
Derek Ruiters	DR	Kate Richardson	KR	Roddy Ward	RW
Di Higginson Keith	DH	Katherine Terblanche	KT	Rosemary Harrison	RH
Duane Constance	DC	Kirsten Williams	KW	Stephanie Reynolds	SR
Errol Douwes	ED	Lilian Develing	LD	Suvarna Parbhoo	SP
Cllr Geoff Pullan	GP	Margaret Burger	MB	Thami Kunene	TK
Cllr Gillian Noyce	GN	Mbali Mntungwa	MM	Wendy Wiles	WW
Graham Cairns	GC	Mel Sammons	MS		
		Natasha Govender	NG		

APOLOGIES

Adrian J. Armstrong, Cllr Billie Prinsloo, Di Dold, George Victor, Judy Mann, Lesley Frescura, Lyle Ground, Reshnee Lalla, Rodney Bartholomew, Sabelo Nkosi, Teddy Govender, Terry Stewart, Wayne Stead.

1.	WELCOME & INTRODUCTION	ACTION
1.1	NG welcomed all and facilitated introductions.	
2	PRESENTATION: <i>Estuarine Conservation - Do We Really Care?</i> – Prof Ticky Forbes	
	TF noted that after leaving the UKZN he has worked mainly on estuarine conservation. TF indicated that, historically, estuaries have been managed to enhance potential human benefit as opposed to improving and retaining estuarine functioning. TF suggested that human impacts to estuaries need to be managed.	
2.1	TF noted that aquatic environments do not receive the same level of conservation attention that terrestrial environments do and questioned why existing management and conservation measures have not had the desired effects on estuaries. Furthermore, the typical methodologies applied to terrestrial conservation, e.g. setting targets for conservation, cannot necessarily be applied to estuaries. TF questioned the validity of past research on estuarine conservation and mentioned the concept of ‘truth decay,’ which is the period of	

	<p>time it takes for research to become invalid. TF stressed that scientists need to challenge previous studies that were undertaken and to conduct new research that is in keeping with the current threats to estuaries</p> <p>TF added the following key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ranking of estuaries creates a perception in the minds of people that lower ranked estuaries can be seen as “sacrificial”. This has exacerbated the degradation of those estuaries with lower rankings. • Estuaries are being destroyed for various reasons, such as infilling, construction of causeways, tampering with estuarine mouth dynamics and using estuaries as conduits for wastewater discharge to the sea. TF stated that all these impacts can be avoided. • Estuarine boundaries need to be defined in order to identify the extent that needs to be protected. • One of the negative impacts to some estuaries is artificial breaching • Reserve determinations are often undertaken for estuaries, however, these are either incorrectly applied or tend to be overlooked. <p>TF noted that the St Lucia estuary is the largest estuarine system in southern Africa, contributing approximately 60% of estuarine area of the sub-tropical region and 90% of protected estuarine area nationally. A century of uMfolozi flood plain agricultural development exacerbated by 60 years of mouth manipulation and a sequence of below average rainfall years from 2002 – 2010, culminated in the unprecedented drying up of the estuarine lake. At the same time, the separation of the St Lucia and Mfolozi mouths, a policy dating back to 1952, meant that the previously dynamic shared mouth, driven by the seasonal flow of the uMfolozi remained closed in the case of St Lucia and was manipulated in the case of the uMfolozi. The isolation of the uMfolozi and closure and shrinkage of St Lucia resulted in a decline of estuarine nursery function and one example of an impact is the decline in the inshore prawn fishery and disruption of the life cycles of estuarine dependant migrant fish. TF noted that Nicolette Forbes has been instrumental in changing the approach to managing the St Lucia estuarine system and implementing the iSimangaliso Authority’s 2011/2012 management strategy in partnership with Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, which allowed the two systems to reconnect. This has resulted in numerous positive impacts on estuarine functioning and biodiversity.</p>	
2.2	<p>AvV queried what the estuarine ranking system is based on. The rating system is based on a study that was undertaken by Jane Turpie <i>et al</i> (2002), namely, <i>Assessment of the conservation priority status of South African estuaries for use in management and water allocation</i>.</p>	
2.3	<p>NL queried what the impacts of sand mining on the Umgeni Estuary are. TF responded that disturbance of the estuarine floor (bottom sediments) would impact the organisms that live there i.e., benthic fauna, thus impacting the food webs of the system, change the nature of sediment and render it unstable. Sand mining also has impacts on the distribution of sediments down-stream. This results in a loss of sand to beaches and results in eroding coastlines. Furthermore, trucks used in sand mining operations also affect riparian vegetation, leak oils, disturb habitats and are a source of noise pollution.</p>	
2.4	<p>MB noted that the Umgeni estuary has white mangroves growing all the way to the Bird Park and these trees are encroaching on the mudflats and the number of birds has decreased. MB queried whether this is due to artificial breaching. TF responded that the mangroves established themselves prior to maintaining the open mouth. In order to maintain the</p>	

	protected mangroves, you need to breach the estuary. During 1987 floods, debris and tree foliage were being trapped by the bridge, which put the structure at risk. The municipal policy was then to pull out the mangroves in order to protect the bridge, but TF thinks this policy no longer exists. TF suspects that the mangroves will continue expanding as long as mouth is kept open.	
3	PRESENTATION: <i>Water Conservation Initiatives: eThekwini Water and Sanitation – Preshine Govender</i>	
3.1	<p>PG noted that she is part of the Councillor Liaison & Community Education Section within the eThekwini Water and Sanitation Department. The key focus areas of the Education Section is to provide support to the Municipality as a whole; co-ordinate and manage special projects; provide education to communities and create awareness around water efficiency.</p> <p>PG noted that in KZN, water requirements in coastal areas exceed assured supply. There is a high likelihood of water restrictions, which has resulted in the commissioning of the Trans Caledon Tunnel Authority (TCTA) to implement Springrove Dam. However, Springrove Dam will not be sufficient to satisfy the demand for water and the construction of Springrove Dam has not started. eThekwini Municipality thus needs to implement further water demand management measures and is also investigating the feasibility of the use of treated effluent (recycling).</p> <p>PG presented on the water conversation projects being undertaken by the eThekwini Municipality Water and Sanitation Department, which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New stepped tariff. • Forced repairs of plumbing. • Consumer Education - Door to Door Campaign: trained Community Service Agents (CSAs) visit customers selected based on arrears amounts and consumption rates (GIS linked); Community awareness campaigns on water use reduction and hygiene; (have appointed three actors who deliver messages to communities using drama) • Community Outreach Programme / Councillor Interaction – community meetings, outreach programmes, exhibitions, radio programmes. • Schools Programmes - Learners are selected as ‘water detectives’ to do monitoring and reduce consumption. In 2012, 150 schools (45 000 Learners) participated in the programme. Bi-annual student conference (140 schools in eThekwini Municipality across all races and in all districts) and visits to treatment works tours also conducted. • Training programmes – Raising Citizens Voice (to empower citizens to hold local government accountable about their rights); Professional Development Teachers course and experiential learning program for Environmental Health students from the Durban University of Technology, who require theoretical and practical knowledge of water and sanitation issues. • Debt Relief Programme. • Installation of flow limiters - households only get the amount of water they are able to pay for. • Installation of roof tanks. • Water amnesty. • Inter-Departmental Support Programmes. • Interim services to informal settlements with the operation of ablution blocks through the management of caretakers - 350 caretakers employed since 2010, 250 Informal settlements (about 87500 people) now have access to free sanitation services eThekwini Municipality. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In rural areas, eco-friendly dry sanitation urine diversion toilets have been installed that allow for on-site disposal of human waste, without any water needed to transport waste to a sewage treatment works. 	
3.2	<p>JS queried who is responsible for repairing ablution blocks in community areas. PG responded that the assigned community development officer, in charge of on-site management, would repair ablution blocks.</p>	
3.3	<p>It was noted that urine diversion toilets are not being used in Molweni. PG responded that these toilets have two vaults and once one is full, the householder has to remove the composted waste contents and bury it on site. Many householders do not want to do that and there is a need to change people's perceptions.</p>	
3.4	<p>RJ noted that currently 35% loss of water is due to leakage and theft and queried what percentage of remaining water is being used by industry and what percentage is used for domestic purposes. RJ noted that he is interested to see the volumes of water that could be saved if communities and residents followed good practises. He added that it is obvious that dry toilets are the way to go, given the problems with blocked sewerage pipes and effluent going into rivers and streams. He also queried how to deal with kitchen waste/grey water. PG responded that there are presently studies being undertaken on the reuse of grey water. Water from washing machines cannot be used in the garden due to pathogens. PG added that at the moment the focus is on addressing rural and peri-urban water conservation issues, but there is an obvious need to move towards the urban context to address grey water and rainwater harvesting.</p>	
3.5	<p>RU queried what is being done in terms of education on catchment management, including better agricultural practices, grazing and ploughing. PG responded that the Green Health Programme mapped critical areas to be considered in terms of invasive alien plants within catchments. AJ added that there is a Payment for Ecosystem Services Programme working with stakeholders in the Upper uMgeni catchment to influence agricultural practices and improve biodiversity. PG offered to get more information on catchment management initiatives and feed back to the forum.</p> <p>For more information on catchment management initiatives, the following Coastal, Stormwater and Catchment Management Education officers can be contacted: <i>Nosipho Khanyile 031 311 7727 or Mpume Gumede 082 3401 967.</i></p>	
3.6	<p>AJ queried whether communities are being educated on water supply and biodiversity. PG responded that her department has partnered with Umgeni Water and other stakeholders in doing education on stream clean-ups, wetland awareness etc. PG added that biodiversity issues also need to be addressed.</p>	
4	Updates from Natural Resources Division (NRD)	
4.1	<p>NL noted that he is a Conservation Officer based at the New Germany Nature Reserve. He stated that NRD started a project called <i>Monkey Business</i>, which stemmed from a lack of policy for dealing with problem animals. The project started in October 2012, with a public meeting to ensure broad stakeholder involvement. There was a good response, especially from the Tongaat community, who initially wanted to cull the monkeys. The project is looking at doing a population study/analysis on monkeys.</p> <p>NL noted that the Draft Animal Control Policy that was compiled by NRD has been sent to eThekweni Municipality Legal Department for comment. Once legal comments have been</p>	

	considered, the Draft Policy will be distributed for stakeholder comment. Stakeholders will include the SPCA, Monkey Helpline, Durban Metro and the Biodiversity Forum.	
4.2	RU commented that there is more value in studying how to manage primates and the impacts they have than studying their numbers. He noted that it would be a good idea to look at the habitat of the animal (organism) that you are studying in order to get a better understanding of it.	
4.3	NL noted that he is involved with an interesting project at the New Germany Nature Reserve, where the African Reptile Keepers Association is doing a study on Black Mambas, including micro-chipping in order to get data on populations and distribution etc.	
5	Updates from Natural Science Museum (NSM)	
5.1	<p>KW noted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The NSM will be partnering with the South African Association for Marine Biological Research (SAAMBR) and the Royal Society for the 2013 Seminar Series. Seminars take place on the first Wednesday of every month, and the venue will rotate between the Durban Natural Science Museum, uShaka Marine World and the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The NSM will host a display on climate change, including photographs of people who are doing positive climate change related projects. Anyone wishing to nominate a project for inclusion may contact: <i>Immie Mostert at Immie.Mostert@durban.gov.za</i>. The Rhino display can still be viewed at the Durban Natural Science Museum. 	
6	Updates from Environmental Planning and Climate Protection Department (EPCPD)	
6.1	RB provided an update on the appeals process with respect to the inclusion of D'MOSS into the Town Planning Schemes, where appellants challenged the constitutional right of Local Government to undertake environmental work and that the eThekweni Municipality should have undertaken in terms of the KwaZulu-Natal Planning and Development Act, 1998 (No.5 of 1998), and not the Town Planning Ordinance, 1949 (No.27 of 1949). A court hearing was held on 14 November 2012. Judgement was passed two weeks prior to the forum and was a good outcome for the eThekweni Municipality. There has since been an application for leave to appeal to the Supreme Court of Appeal. RB noted that in the case of the split zoning project, Council had previously asked the High Court to set it aside due to procedural flaws.	
6.2	It was queried whether the properties for which the conservation zones have been set aside would be rezoned again in future. RB responded that only smaller groups of carefully selected properties might be rezoned.	
6.3	It was queried whether Town Planning Schemes are available on GIS. All GIS information for eThekweni Municipality, including, zonation data, may be accessed from the eThekweni Municipality website: http://citymaps.durban.gov.za/internetwebsite/index.html	
6.4	<p>LD noted that indigent people from Inchanga have called her to notify her on issues and impacts occurring on D'MOSS. She queried who may be contacted at Council with these issues. RB responded that Pam Ramnarain (<i>Email: Pam.Ramnarain@durban.gov.za, Tel: 031 031 311 747</i>) of EPCPD can be contacted to log a complaint, which will then be investigated and relevant action will be taken.</p> <p>RD to also circulate key contact numbers of various eThekweni Municipal Departments dealing with issues and complaints.</p>	RD
6.5	Proclamations: The survey of Roosefontein is complete and the notarial and management agreement is being finalised by EKZNW. This will then be submitted to the City Manager for signature after which EKZNW together with EPCPD will initiate the various public participation processes. The survey diagrams for Paradise Valley have also been completed and this proclamation will be initiated by EKZNW. A meeting was held with NRD, EKZNW and	

	EPCPD to finalise the boundaries of the remaining nature reserves and to discuss aspects of the proclamations process.	
6.6	<p>RD provided updates on the Monteseel Joint Management Initiative (MJMI) as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MJMI is an exciting partnership between the EPCPD, Monteseel Conservancy and Working on Fire (WoF). • Partnership established to manage scarp forest and grasslands in the Monteseel area. • An Integrated Management Plan is being compiled with inputs from all stakeholders. • Management actions, roles and responsibilities for implementation have been agreed to by all stakeholders. • The intention is to draft a Memorandum of Understanding to formalise the MJMI. • Partnership includes skills transfer to Monteseel Conservancy through working together with EPCPDs contracted Working on Fire teams doing IAP clearing and fire management. 	
6.7	<p>BN reported on grassland management being undertaken by the Biodiversity, Climate and Green Projects Implementation Branch (BCGPI) of EPCPD. BN noted that the branch is managing various municipal owned sites within the eThekweni Municipal Area and has employed Working on Fire as the implementing agent. Fire is used as a management tool in grasslands and the intention is to do research on the impacts of fire on indigenous grass and tree species. A specialist, Ross Goode, has been appointed by Working on Fire to conduct veld condition assessments and conduct fixed point photography over a three year period, to assess the impacts of fire, including the manner in which woody plants recede through fire.</p>	
6.8	<p>RU noted that fixed point photography is not effective when looking at the recruitment of species and trying to quantify species. Transects are much more useful. ED responded that transects will be used in addition to the fixed point photography.</p>	
6.9	<p>LD queried whether there was a concern with respect to <i>Eucalyptus</i> (Gum) trees catching fire during fire management. BN responded that Eucalyptus trees are a concern as they can cause high intensity fires and take up a lot of water.</p> <p>LD further queried whether BCGPI are liaising with the provincial authorities with respect to the removal of Gum trees along roads. There is a citizen who wants to take down Gum trees, but needs authorisation from provincial authorities. ED responded that the Department of Agriculture are mandated to act on the Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act, 1983 (No. 43 of 1983) and can issue directives in terms of this Act. The person to contact at the Department of Agriculture is Ayanda Goba (Email: GobaA@nda.agric.za) who can advise on issuing of directives to comply with the legislation.</p> <p>RU noted that he has made an observation that Gum trees are wonderful perches for raptors and dead Gum trees do not use water.</p>	
6.10	<p>BN invited Jabu Sithole of SANBI's Early Detection and Rapid Response team to provide an update on the naming of certain invasive alien plants (IAPs) in isiZulu. JS noted that isiZulu speakers find it difficult to name certain plants, especially at schools and certain contractors who mistakenly use the names of indigenous plants for IAPs. SANBI is working with EPCPD, Working for Water and the Department of Water Affairs on naming IAPs without isiZulu names. There has also been an indication that certain English names of IAPs do not reflect the threat these plants pose and may need to be changed, e.g. from Pom Pom weed to Devils armpit. AvV added that one needs to be careful with bad names. In Afrikaans, for instance, negative names could mean something good e.g. when describing strong medicine.</p>	
6.11	<p>KT reported that the EPCPD's revised IAP posters are expected to be ready by the end of June 2013. One sided, A1 size posters will be produced that can be displayed on a wall. One of the posters will include emerging IAPs. IAP flash cards connected to a ring will also be produced.</p>	

6.12	AvV queried whether EPCPD has photos of all species. KT responded that there are a few outstanding and people are welcome to submit photos.	
6.13	HC questioned whether emerging species from the past few years are still considered emerging or whether those have been categorised. JS responded that most of the emerging weeds are to be listed in terms of the National Environmental Management Act, 2004 (No.10 of 2004), but regulations have not been gazetted yet.	
6.14	HC queried what references are available for landscapers who do not know about IAPs. NG responded that the EPCPD posters, IAP information sheets, State of Biodiversity Report and the landscaping guideline are good references. ED added that development applications coming through EPCPD are scrutinised and comment are made on any plants that are listed for landscaping. It was added that there is a national issue with nurseries being non-compliant. NG noted that electronic versions of IAP posters should be made available to landscapers.	
6.9	SB commented that a good taxonomist should be used to confirm the names of the IAPs on the posters.	
7	General	
7.1	KR noted that the Bat Interest Group of KwaZulu-Natal (Bats KZN) will host their annual “bat day” at Shongweni Resources reserve on Saturday, 16 February 2013. Activities will include talks and presentations in the morning and a visit to the tunnel where several species of bats roost. For more information, contact: Brenda Angus on 082 769 3287 or brendaa@scottburgh.co.za.	
7.2	HC commented that there is incorrect contact information in the Greening Durban document. NG indicated that this was communicated with the creators of the publications and will request that the ECOHUB be given a list of the correct contact details.	
7.3	JL referred to the EPCPDs Tree Ecofile that includes the trees of the year. JL raised concern that those indigenous trees are still being lost due to development and construction projects and presented a newspaper article reporting on the loss of a 100 year old <i>Ficus natalensis</i> due to the Engineering Department.	
7.4	JL reported on the Green Hero Award that was initiated by Councillors. The first award has been issued to the late Lynne Thomson, who headed up the WESSA Stop the Spread Campaign.	
8	Meeting closure	
8.1	NG thanked all for attending and closed the meeting. The next Biodiversity Forum will take place on 23 May 2013.	