

# MINUTES

EThekweni Biodiversity Forum  
26 November 2015  
9h00 – 12h00  
Paradise Valley Nature Reserve



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## IN ATTENDANCE

Aerisha Ramkalawan	AR	Geoff Pullan	GP	Nomafu Dlamini	ND
Angie Wilken	AW	George Victor	GV	Nompilo Buthelezi	NB1
Arnia van Vuuren	AvV	Gerald Clarke	GC	Paige Potter	PP
Barry Lang	BL	Gillian Noyce	GN	Paolo Condotti	PC
Basheshile Thusi	BT	Hugh McGibbon	HM	Philip Rotz	PR
Bheki Mdletshe	BM	Jabulani Khoza	JK	Phumelele Moroka	PM
Billie Prinsloo	BP	Jenny Loughlin	JL	Preshen Banwari	PB
Carla Petersen	CP	Jone Porter	JP	Refilwe Mofokeng	RM
Clive Walker	CW	Justin Saunders	JS2	Rob Jamieson	RJ
Crystelle Wilson	CW	Kate Richardson	KR	Rodney Bartholomew	RBa
David Allan	DA	Kholosa Magudu	KM	Sfanele Ntuli	SN
David Green	DG	Lee D'Eathe	LD	Tarrin Nel	TN
Denise Koch	DK	Mark Liptrot	ML	Terry Stewart	TS
Derek Airey	DA	Menzi Nxumalo	MN	Thabiso Cele	TC
Dina van Niekerk	DvN	Natasha Govender	NG	Thami Kunene	TK
Esmeralda Ramburran	ER	Nick Liebenburg	NL	Tony Wint	TW
Fatima Moolla Alli	FM	Nokuphila Buthelezi	NB		

## APOLOGIES

Warren Friedman, Martin Gardner, Jean Senogles, Preven Chetty, Di Higginson Keith, Lesley Frescura, Reshnee Lalla, Roger Poole, Ed Granger, Jo Douwes, Nikara Mahadeo, Bart Forkens, Survana Parbhoo, Adrian Armstrong, Richard Boon, Cameron McLean and Lyle Ground

1	WELCOME & INTRODUCTION	ACTION
1.1	Natasha Govender (NG) welcomed all and facilitated introductions. Apologies were noted as above.	
2.	PRESENTATIONS	
2.1	<b><i>Walking the Aller River: A tale of sadness and hope</i> by Mark Liptrot of UThekwane Conservancy</b>	
2.1.1	<p>NG introduced Mark Liptrot and Hugh McGibbon from uThekwane Conservancy to present on the findings of their walk along the Aller River.</p> <p>Mark Liptrot (ML) thanked NG for the opportunity and stated that the walk was part of the uThekwane Conservancy Forum’s ‘Take Back Our Rivers’ campaign to improve river health in eThekweni and the biodiversity and ecosystem services our rivers provide. He also informed the meeting that there is a need to gauge river health, identify the problems, develop corrective actions and train permanent river custodians to keep the rivers pollution and invasive alien plant free.</p> <p>ML informed the meeting that he conducted the walk together with Preven Chetty. Hugh McGibbon provided transport and logistical support. He also added that they had a backup team which included SAPS constables. ML shared photographs showing their finds and highlighted that most areas where there were “No Dumping” signage the illegal dumping problem was mostly found. Problems identified included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treated and untreated sewage found in the river</li> <li>• High alien plants infestations</li> <li>• Illegal dumping</li> </ul> <p>ML stated that they took samples for miniSASS testing and presented the results which showed the poor water quality of the river. Hugh McGibbon highlighted difficulties around providing support to the team, i.e. keeping the team refreshed and ensuring that they can be located while on the walk.</p> <p>He informed the meeting that they observed 36 species of alien plants, recognised 68 indigenous tree species, 46 species of butterflies and 41 bird species were seen or heard. He further stated that this was by no means an accurate biodiversity survey of the area as they merely made brief notes of what they saw or heard.</p> <p>ML recommended that sewer servitudes are regularly maintained and highlighted the need for cooperation with all stakeholders within the catchment. He concluded by stating that the Aller River catchment has a potential to be a tourist attraction and source of income for the surrounding communities.</p> <p><b>Contact details: Mark Liptrot at <a href="mailto:mark@afripack.co.za">mark@afripack.co.za</a></b></p>	
2.1.1.1	RJ commended the team who did the walk and stated that this might be these sorts of initiatives may provide the impetus required for doing something about the poor state of rivers in Durban.	
2.1.1.2	ML emphasised that the problem is accessing these rivers due to high levels of invasive alien plant infestation and the potentially dangerous nature of the more secluded areas	

2.1.1.3	GN queried whether the results and recommendations of their survey were provided to the municipality. PC responded and stated that this is a pilot project conducted with the aim of replicating it on many rivers in eThekweni Municipal Area and the information can and will be made available. He thanked the team for their hard work and HM for the logistical support.	
2.1.1.4	LD commended the team and added that he has been working on the Palmiet River catchment for three years and stressed the importance of partnerships in order to address the numerous problems.	
2.1.1.5	NG thanked ML for the good work and emphasised the importance of having passionate individuals who are willing to be part of the solution.	
<b>2.2</b>	<b><i>The role of naturally functioning ecosystems in improving in-stream water quality in urban areas: Kholosa Magudu</i></b>	
2.2.1	<p>NG introduced Kholosa Magudu (KM), a Masters student from the University of KwaZulu Natal, to present on her research on the role of naturally functioning ecosystems in improving in-stream water quality in urban areas.</p> <p>KM thanked NG and informed the meeting that her study is on the role of naturally functioning ecosystems in improving in-stream water quality in urban areas and added that the study focussed on the eThekweni Reforestation Programme.</p> <p>KM gave background to her study and the eThekweni Reforestation Programme. She highlighted the importance of functional riparian habitat in overall ecosystem conditions and the ecological restoration of degraded systems specifically in relation to ecosystem services. KM informed the meeting that for the purposes of the presentation she will focus on the Stobel Warehouse fire incidence that impacted on the Umbilo River that occurred in February 2014 as a case study to show how nature recovers from disturbance.</p> <p><b>Aims and objectives of the study</b></p> <p>KM informed the meeting that the aims of her study were to monitor the biological water quality using mini-SASS and diatom based indices as response measures of afforestation impact on a river system, to assess the condition of the river system using the index of Habitat Integrity, and to measure the effect of land use on the ability of the river system to restore itself.</p> <p><b>Method used</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water quality monitoring and ecosystem condition assessment</li> <li>• Mini-SASS (aquatic invertebrates)</li> <li>• Index of Habitat Integrity (IHI) focus on riparian</li> </ul> <p><b>Sites selected</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Black Mhlasini in Buffelsdraai</li> <li>• Molweni River in Kranzkloof</li> <li>• Umbilo River with a focus on Paradise Valley</li> </ul> <p>KM informed the meeting that she will focus on the Umbilo River for the purpose of the presentation. She further reminded the meeting about the Stobel fire that led to chemical spillage into the Umbilo River.</p>	

	<p><b>The findings and discussions.</b></p> <p>She stated that she sampled in February 2014, immediately after the fire incident. She then presented the comparison of the mini-SASS scores across Umbilo river from July 2014 to April 2015.</p> <p>KM stated that the results show that when comparing the scores across sampling points, improved water quality is observed immediately after the Paradise Valley Nature Reserve. She raised concerns that this was unexpected as one would expect that because it is conserved area, it will have improved water quality.</p> <p><b>Contact details: Kholosa Magudu Email: <a href="mailto:maguduk@gmail.com">maguduk@gmail.com</a></b></p>	
2.2.2.1	ML queried if the research was on-going. KM responded that the study was on-going and further explained that it is part of her Masters project. She added that once data has been verified, she will publish it for public use and for further monitoring.	
2.2.2.2	TS queried about the exact points in Paradise Valley where KM took samples for mini-SASS. KM responded and indicated where she took samples along the Umbilo River. TS and KM agreed to take further discussions during the tea break about where TS thought there were flaws in the sampling for the study.	
2.2.2.4	NG thanked KM for sharing her study findings with the Forum.	
<b>3</b>	<b>Updates from various municipal departments</b>	
<b>3.1</b>	<b>Updates from the Durban Natural Science Museum (DNSM) – David Allan</b>	
3.1.1	<p>David Allan (DA) informed the meeting that he was requested to provide updates because Kirstin Williams and Leigh Richards were away.</p> <p><b>GO-WILD Mobile Museum:</b> DA reported that the Mobile Museum has been travelling to various schools within the Municipality. He informed the meeting that education officers take volunteers with them when they visit schools. The mobile museum is both an effective aid to support formal education and a tool to develop interest, knowledge and understanding of life and environmental sciences to the widest possible audience. The Go Wild Mobile Museum makes it possible for museum resources to reach under-served and outlying areas by visiting schools and communities throughout eThekweni Municipality offering both curriculum-linked and public education programmes.</p> <p><b>Biodiversity Seminars:</b> DA informed the meeting that on the 4<sup>th</sup> of November 2015, Shane McPherson presented at the last Biodiversity Seminar and his presentation was on <b>“Urban Ecology of the Crowned Eagle in KwaZulu Natal”</b>.</p> <p><b>6<sup>th</sup> Ntombela – Player Annual Lecture:</b> DA reported that the Durban Natural Science Museum hosted the 6<sup>th</sup> Ntombela-Player Annual Lecture on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of September 2015 and that the guest speaker was Professor Leon Claessens of the Department of Biology from the College of the Holy Cross in the United States of America. His presentation was titled <b>“New insights from Durban’s Dodo: lessons from an icon of extinction”</b>. He added that the presentation was based on the work they have done using high-resolution three-dimensional laser surface-scanning techniques which helped to understand this species better.</p> <p><b>Monthly water bird counts:</b> DA informed the meeting that Durban Bay monthly bird counts have begun and it is in its 17<sup>th</sup> year this year. He also added that Transnet has commissioned a study on</p>	

	<p>invertebrates and birds in relation to the Pier 2 Development.</p> <p><b>For more information contact: Kirstin Williams at <a href="mailto:Kirstin.Williams@durban.gov.za">Kirstin.Williams@durban.gov.za</a> /David Allan at <a href="mailto:David.Allan@durban.gov.za">David.Allan@durban.gov.za</a></b></p>	
<b>3.2</b>	<b>Updates from the Environmental Planning and Climate Protection Department (EPCPD)</b>	
3.2.1	<p><b>Restoration Ecology Programmes:</b> Nokuphila Buthelezi reported that the Working for Ecosystems programme has resumed after the successful appointment of WESSA as an implementing agent. The appointment of an implementing agent for Working on Fire has also been finalised. NP indicated that the herbicide assist component linked to this programme is on-going and should anyone require herbicide support, Bheka Nxele or Rael Hughes can be contacted.</p> <p><b>For more information contact Bheka Nxele at <a href="mailto:Bheka.Nxele@durban.gov.za">Bheka.Nxele@durban.gov.za</a></b></p>	
3.2.2	<p><b>Durban Invasives Website update:</b> Carla Petersen (CP) gave an update on the Durban Invasives Website <a href="http://www.durbaninvasives.org.za/">http://www.durbaninvasives.org.za/</a>. She reported on the distribution trends for the top five sighted species in eThekweni Municipal Area. These species are <i>Parthenium hysterophorus</i>, <i>Campuloclinium macrocephalum</i>, <i>Triplaris americana</i>, <i>Furcraea foetida</i> and <i>Lilium formosanum</i>.</p> <p>No sightings were recorded in the south assuming that: 1) people were not reporting sightings within those areas or 2) these plants on the website's target list, specifically, do not grow in the south of Durban.</p> <p>CP also reported that the Water Hyacinth Guideline Document and the General Invasive Alien Plant Control Guideline Document are publicly available and can be collected from EPCPD office.</p> <p><b>For information please contact Carla Petersen via email at <a href="mailto:Carla.Petersen@durban.gov.za">Carla.Petersen@durban.gov.za</a></b></p>	
3.2.2.1	<p>LD queried what happens after an invasive plant has been spotted and reported on the website. CP responded and stated that the team is sent to verify and remove the plant and then monitor the area. This Early Detection and Rapid Response approach allows one to reduce the proliferation of invasive alien species by detecting and controlling their infestations, before they become too widespread.</p>	
3.2.3	<p><b>EThekweni Municipality Reforestation Research Partnership Update:</b> NB informed the meeting that the Reforestation Research Partnership is underway, 12 students are currently enrolled and the last meeting with the students will be held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December 2015 at Kranzkloof Nature Reserve.</p> <p><b>For more information contact Nokuphila Buthelezi via email at <a href="mailto:Nokuphila.Buthelezi@durban.gov.za">Nokuphila.Buthelezi@durban.gov.za</a></b></p>	
<b>3.3</b>	<b>Updates from the Natural Resources Division – Kenneth Mabila</b>	
3.3.1	<p><b>Forest of Remembrance Launch report back:</b> Jabulani Khoza (JK) tendered apologies for Kenneth Mabila who could not make it to the meeting. He informed the meeting that the Forest of Remembrance in Adams Mission was launched by the MEC on the 4<sup>th</sup> of September 2015 as part of Arbor Week. Over 100 indigenous trees were planted.</p>	
3.3.2	<p><b>Environmental Management Inspectors (EMI):</b> JK informed the meeting that four Environmental Management Inspectors have been trained within the Natural Resources Division pending the final</p>	

	assessment and official appointment by the MEC.	
3.3.3	<b>Working for the Coast Programme:</b> JK reported that Working for the Coast is likely to begin working in December 2015 and over 150 people have been recruited to be part of the Programme.	
3.3.4	<b>Memorandum of Agreement:</b> JK reported that MoA between eThekweni Municipality and eThekweni Conservancies is still being vetted by Legal Services. Once there is feedback, it will be communicated to all stakeholders involved.	
3.3.5	<b>Habitat Assessment and bio-indicators for water quality at Palmiet Nature Reserve:</b> JK reported that Nosipho Ndzimbomvu has been conducting a study at Palmiet Nature Reserve as part of her Masters research and she will be presenting the findings at one of the next Forum meetings.	
<b>4.</b>	<b>General</b>	
4.1	<b>Proclamation of nature reserves:</b> Bheki Mdletshe (BM) informed the meeting that the Roosfontein Nature Reserve has been finally officially proclaimed by the MEC as a formal nature reserve in terms of the National Environmental Management Protected Areas Act thus affording this nature reserve the highest level of protection available in South Africa. He also reported that the proclamation of other nature reserves will be tabled at the next Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife Board meeting at the end of November 2015.	
4.2	<b>D'MOSS Amendments:</b> Gerald Clarke informed the meeting that eThekweni Municipality will begin the process of amending the current D'MOSS at the beginning of 2016. He also informed the meeting that there is a Public Participation Process which will include informing affected landowners and hosting public meetings. GC explained the difference between the public open spaces and DMOSS.  Additional information on the restrictions and controls on DMOSS is attached with these minutes.	
4.2.1	PC raised concerns that D'MOSS in its current form may not ensure continuity and security of important corridors. He then queried if the amendments will include protecting corridors which are important for species. GC responded and stated that D'MOSS is in fact a system of green open spaces incorporating areas of high biodiversity value (private and public owned) linked together in an ecologically viable network of open spaces (which in all iterations has including important biodiversity corridors) and is composed of a variety of habitat types. The latest, still to be adopted, version of D'MOSS is a sector plan and a spatial layer, based on a systematic conservation assessment approach, which identifies key areas which are selected to ensure representation and persistence of biodiversity and the supply of ecosystem services. This too, using the latest conservation planning software, selects areas based on connectivity and ecological importance.	
4.2.2	PC raised concerns that there is reluctance from the municipality's side to enforce D'MOSS encroachment i.e., D'MOSS is encroached on too easily. TS responded and stated that there are challenges in enforcement and some of them are linked to the shortage of human resources.  In addition, it is also important to note that through the EPCPD'S Biodiversity Impact Assessment branch, any application for development on D'MOSS must be commented on by environmentalists within the EPCPD. These applications for development can have a number of outcomes such once a more detailed investigation of the site is conducted to assess the environmental impact of the	

	<p>development. The outcome of this investigation will be either:</p> <p>1) No impacts are expected and the activity may proceed,</p> <p>2) Significant impacts are expected and an environmental assessment prepared by a suitably qualified practitioner will be required in order to fully assess the application. Approval may be subsequently granted with or without condition or,</p> <p>3) The activity is not supported because the impacts are significant and cannot be mitigated.</p>	
4.2.3	<p>After lengthy discussions, it was suggested that a presentation be done to the Forum in February to answer some of the questions about D'MOSS and the upcoming amendments.</p>	
4.3	<p><b>Durban Blue Flag status:</b> Cllr Geoff Pullan informed the meeting that two of Durban's beaches, i.e. Ushaka Beach and Westbrook beach have been awarded Blue Flag status and five more were given a pilot Blue Flag status. Those are: Umhlanga main beach, Umdloti main beach, Umgababa beach, Brighton beach, and Umdloti tidal beach.</p>	
4.4	<p><b>Climate Change Awareness People's March:</b> BM announced that for the upcoming Conference of Parties (COP21) in Paris, cities around the world are coming together and marching to raise awareness about global climate change and the importance of the negotiations. The march to raise awareness in Durban was scheduled for the 29<sup>th</sup> November 2015 at the Suncoast Casino and march towards Ushaka Marine World.</p>	
<b>5.</b>	<b>Close of meeting</b>	
5.1	<p>BM thanked all for attending and on behalf of the EPCPD and sister departments, wished all attendees a safe festive season and the best for 2016.</p> <p>The next Biodiversity Forum meeting will take place on <b>25<sup>th</sup> February 2016 at Paradise Valley Nature Reserve from 9 am to 12 pm.</b></p> <p><b>Biodiversity Forum meetings for 2016</b></p> <p><b>Thursday – 25<sup>th</sup> February 2016 – 9:00 – 12:00</b>  <b>Thursday – 26<sup>th</sup> May 2016 – 9:00 – 12:00</b>  <b>Thursday – 25<sup>th</sup> August 2016 – 9:00 – 12:00</b>  <b>Thursday – 24<sup>th</sup> November 2016 – 9:00 – 12:00</b></p>	