



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

15 AUGUST 2012 – 26 AUGUST 2013

1. **Meetings of the Board of Directors**

Five meetings were held as set out below:

Date	Venue
24 October 2012	Far Hills Hotel, George
24 January 2013	Outeniqua Experimental Farm , George
13 March 2013	Far Hills Hotel, George
15 May 2013	Far Hills Hotel, George
24 July 2013	Outeniqua Experimental Farm , George

The following directors attended the above meetings:

Director	No of meetings attended
W Botha	5
D Carr	5
K Coetzee	5
C Basson	5
V Gibbs-Halls	3
H Muller	4

M Carr	4
F Orban (since March)	2

2. Persons co-opted

During the past year Fred Orban was co-opted as the director with the portfolio: Tourism and Marketing and Pauline du Plessis was co-opted as chairperson for the Langeberg Sector.

3. Awards ceremony

A very successful awards ceremony was held in conjunction with CapeNature at the Garden Route Game Lodge on 30 October 2012 where Dr Kas Hamman delivered the keynote speech.

It was decided at a board meeting that it has become important to compile a combined set of criteria against which all nominees can be measured to ensure that the GCBR and CapeNature judge candidates on the same basis. It was further resolved that the awards will be awarded on a bi-annual function which in itself will contribute to the prestige of the ceremony.

4. Structure of the GCBR

Initially the view was held that we should gain more practical experience before we tamper with the existing structure. Different arguments were raised at board meetings as well as during a workshop on this topic. It became evident that the chairpersons are finding their feet in their respective areas where they are doing very good work in the communities around them. The time has come to have them elected to the board officially as provided for in the Memorandum and Articles of Association.

A few more practical changes are proposed which will be discussed later during this AGM.

Getting a dedicated secretariat going is of the utmost importance if we really want to make an impact.

5. Application to UNESCO for official recognition

A number of people have really put their hearts into getting all the necessary documentation to the UNESCO offices in Paris, France after the initial failure by the National Department of Environmental Services to do so in time for the adjudication. DEA missed the deadline, but we have in the meantime received confirmation from Paris that they will decide on our application during

March 2014. A special word of thanks to all those who worked so hard at short notice to ensure every document is where it is supposed to be!

6. Projects

Numerous hours have been spent by a few to ensure that we pursue every opportunity to obtain funding for projects within the GCBR domain. It is a privilege to report that progress has been made. To mention a few:

- 6.1 the TMF project is in the second of its three years;
- 6.2 UNESCO has awarded almost R400K towards the Why Honey? Project with which Riaan Bosch is busy;
- 6.3 we have just been notified that the funding for the Jobs for Carbon project has been approved. Wessa will act as project leader with the GCBR and the Rhodes University assisting. The project is worth € 589K over a 3 year period and we still need an additional 20% contribution;
- 6.4 too many smaller projects to mention are being undertaken in which CapeNature plays a pivotal roll;
- 6.5 the efforts to find a sustainable use for alien vegetation is also pursued on a continual basis but this will take a few more years. There are so many roll players and the logistics are a nightmare. The conversion of alien biomass to energy seems to be the route to follow.

7. Western Cape Biosphere Workshop

An interesting workshop was arranged by the provincial government at Malgas where all the biospheres were present as well as other roll players. Fruitful discussions were held and the GCBR was represented by Dick Carr, Charles Basson and myself. The idea of forming a Western Cape Biosphere Forum and a provincial or national trust fund for biospheres were amongst the topics. Further discussions are currently taking place. It was good to learn from the experience of others and to hear that we are all facing the same challenges.

8. Members' meetings

Three members' meetings were held on 30 October 2012 at Gouritsmond, on 26 February 2013 in Oudtshoorn and on 28 May 2013 in Stilbaai. As always these meetings were very well attended and interesting topics were discussed. There was a request that we try to make the members' meetings more interactive and although we have not succeeded completely we shall strive to do so more in future. It is very important to get feedback from

members on the work being done by the board and technical committee as well as aspects which members think more attention is needed.

9. Website

Although the website is up and running and members are contributing we need more people supporting the website. Thank you for those who have been contributing during the past year. We need to make use more often of the social component though by way of Facebook entries and Tweets. Members are requested to enter good and bad experiences within our domain which will trigger further discussions. We trust that Fred Orban's involvement through the marketing portfolio will assist Vernon with this task as we cannot expect Vernon to drive this tool alone. The impact of social media is huge and we may not under estimate the value of bringing our message across.

10. DVD launch

We have arranged a function where the DVD produced by Neil Curry will be shown to mayors, municipal managers, representatives of tourism bureaux, prominent businesses and the media. This function will be held at Pinnacle Point on 30 August. The DVD will be made available at a cost of R75.00 in an attempt to defray our costs. The DVD has been entered at a film festival in Sondria in Italy and was elected as one of the finalists to be decided upon at the end of October. It is of a very high quality and the feed back of those who have seen it is very positive.

The aim with the function is not only to introduce the DVD but to a large extent to promote the GCBR and attract businesses and corporate entities to join the GCBR. We see this as the first step to get these entities to contribute financially to sustain a proper secretariat for the next few years. It is, however, proving to be more difficult than we thought to get business interested in the operations of the GCBR.

Our efforts to put pressure on provincial and national spheres of government to fund our administration have been fruitless to date. We shall maintain the pressure. To a certain extent we have been successful in obtaining funding from the Hessequa, Mossel Bay and Eden Municipalities, but this support was still for specific events and not on a sustainable basis as we need it. We are unable to appoint even one staff member to run the much needed secretarial services.

11. A few words of gratitude

It is once again necessary to thank a number of persons, municipalities and businesses for their contributions during the past year. Without your goodwill

and financial support we would be unable to host any events. We salute you for that.

- 11.1 The members, who have supported us throughout the year and have largely contributed to the success of our meetings. Thank you for the support.
- 11.2 The directors and chairpersons of the sectors who work very hard and spend many hours for which they are not compensated, even for any expenses, to help make this dream a reality. They all have to make ends meet in their jobs and/or businesses. I can assure you that each and everyone of them have made a significant contribution during the past year.
- 11.3 The members of the technical committee, especially the few that attend all meetings and assist the board so ably. Without their good advice and information of matters on ground level the board would not be able to operate properly.
- 11.4 AnneLise Vlok, for arranging the interesting talks at every members' meeting and all the other contributions she makes.
- 11.5 The municipalities, companies, institutions and private individuals for hosting our board and members' meetings and other contributions through donations.
- 11.6 Again Pieter Coetzee, who has always been willing to assist us whether financially, by making land or his facilities available at Assegaay Bosch or Rooiberg. We know it comes at a cost for you and we really appreciate it.
- 11.7 Wendy Crane, who spends so much more in time and effort than what she is compensated for.
- 11.8 The TMF, for their continued support without which we would not have been as far as we are currently.
- 11.9 Willem Smith and the Western Cape Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning for their support although we would prefer a little more tangible support.
- 11.10 Wessa and specifically Steve du Toit who is working almost under the radar. The work he is doing to promote the GCBR and initiate and help to compile project proposals on our behalf goes largely unnoticed. Thank you Steve for the long hours you put in.

Members, I thank you for the privilege to act as chairperson of this company.

WF Botha

Chairperson