



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

1 JULY 2015 – 31 MARCH 2016

1. Meetings of the Board of Directors

All board meetings took place at the Outeniqua Experimental Farm in George and were attended as shown below:

Name	Surname	19/08/15	14/10/15	2/12/15	10/02/16	13/04/16
Willem	Botha	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Daan	Toerien	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Charles	Basson	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ken	Coetzee	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Andre	Britz	✓	✓		✓	✓
Sandra	Falanga		✓		✓	✓
Kobus	Nel	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fred	Orban	✓	Resigned			
Pauline	du Plessis	✓	Resigned			
Hendrik	Visser			✓	✓	✓
Johan	van der Merwe		✓		Resigned	

The following directors served in the portfolios set out below:

Directors (with portfolio in brackets)	Johan van der Merwe (Agriculture & Mining)	CJ Nel (chairperson of the Kammanasie sector)
W Botha (Chairperson)	C Basson (Community Development & Labour)	S Falanga (chairperson of St Blaize sector)
D Toerien (Entrepreneurial & Economic Development)	H Visser (Spatial Development)	AJ Britz (chairperson of the Towerkop sector)
K Coetzee (Environmental Research)	A Britz (acting in the Education Portfolio)	

2. General overview

One can hardly believe that this is already the fifth Annual General Meeting of the GCBR. The provincial government prescribed that our financial year must coincide with theirs and that is why we have our AGM in May and not in August as in the past.

It has in more ways than one been another exiting year and there have been a number of contributors:

- 2.1 The official designation by UNESCO has brought a new energy as well as a feeling of accomplishment;
- 2.2 The financial contribution by the provincial government created the opportunity for the different portfolios to get actively involved, which you will note from their contributions attached to the annual report;
- 2.3 This financial support enabled the board to increase the book keeping capacity, sustain the secretariat and appoint Wendy Crane as a temporary part time coordinator/project developer as well as covering some of the travelling costs of directors, etc;

to name a few.

Dr Daan Toerien has completed his study on Enterprise Development and Dynamics in the Gouritz Cluster Biosphere Reserve funded by the University of the Free State and The Enterprise Observatory of SA. The GCBR funded the printing of 100 copies to be distributed to specific roll players such as different government departments and municipalities. Should you wish to have the information it can be obtained electronically from Daan, downloaded from the website, or available as a hard copy at R150.00.

Another booklet has been completed by Ken Coetzee on Erosion Control with illustrations. It is in the process of being printed and shall be available soon. This booklet will be very valuable to farmers and other land owners.

Unfortunately we have had some lows (or as nowadays referred to as special challenges) as well but I shall highlight those elsewhere in this report.

3. Projects

There are numerous projects in various stages of completion. Some are ongoing as funding becomes available, e.g. the MicroMBA courses to teach entrepreneurs in simple language how to plan, start up and run a micro business. The War on Leaks, production of Wonder bags, the Jobs for Carbon, vegetable gardens, several school projects such as Keep Fin Alive on shark awareness and the excellent Puppet Show presented to children at schools by the talented Paul and Marina Eilers, are a few other examples. Information on these projects can be found in the reports by the directors as well as those compiled by Steve du Toit and Wendy Crane at the end of this report.

4. UNESCO'S 4th World Congress on Biosphere Reserves

I represented the GCBR at this congress which was arranged by UNESCO from 14 – 17 March 2016 in Lima, Peru. 1021 delegates representing 115 countries attended the congress.

It was an unbelievable experience to mingle with so many people from different backgrounds, cultures and languages with the same goals. It was also good to hear that none of us are alone as we all share the same challenges. It was interesting to learn that the core operational costs of the majority of BR's worldwide are funded by their governments in contrast to our position.

Ample time over tea and lunch breaks provided sufficient time for networking and the sharing of ideas and experiences. Participants split up into several working groups to discuss a variety of subjects with a number of BR's presenting case studies.

BR's with common interests such as Coastal and Island BR's worldwide form groups who can share their experiences and specific programs. The social media and internet make this possible without spending much money.

5. Finances

5.1 Annual Financial Statement

The annual financial statement for the financial year ending at 31 March 2016 has been audited and finalized and approved by the board.

Strict financial management remains a priority and is a cornerstone for future funding applications.

5.2 Support by the Authorities:

It has become clear that BR's are not going to get direct financial support from National Government. This is a matter of grave concern as BR's are assisting government to a large extent to comply with their national and international obligations in terms of the MAB Programme. The Department of Environmental Affairs have, however, made an amount of R500 000.00 available for all SA BR's to launch a combined awareness campaign during the year. The Department was not prepared to hand the funds over to the SA Biosphere Reserve Trust and eventually an agreement was reached to pay the money to the Waterberg BR as their chairman is also the chairman of the SA BR Trust.

The Western Cape Provincial Government only managed to pay the second tranche to the GCBR towards the end of 2015 and we have requested an extension until October 2016 in order to spend the funds wisely. We are still awaiting their reply.

One of our major challenges is the provincial department's decision to cut the allocations to all four BR's with 43% from R350 000.00 pa to R200 000.00. I discussed the matter with the department and lodged a written request on behalf of the Western Cape Biosphere Reserve Forum to revisit their decision.

We did again send our request for funding to all the municipalities within our domain. We have been informed verbally that Hessequa

will again transfer the requested R30 000.00, but apart from that we only received one further reply from Prins Albert stating that they cannot contribute.

The board have decided to visit each municipality to highlight the advantages of collaborating with the BR and affording the municipalities to indicate their needs. A positive and meaningful meeting was held with the councillors and senior staff of Hessequa Municipality. We expected the elections to take place in May and will have to wait now until August to continue this process.

5.3 National Biosphere Trust Fund

Dr Ruida Stanvliet has embarked on a project in collaboration with Pierre Heistein, an economist, to compile a report on the value of BR's. In short this documentary will try to show what would not have happened if the BR was not in existence. This will be an excellent tool for the trust when lodging applications for funding but will equally be a way to raise awareness and showcase BR's in general.

6. Members' meetings

The three members' meetings were well organized and attended. Many interesting topics were presented. AnneLise Vlok gives more information on her attached report. She has the ability to find some amazing presenters for each meeting.

7. Promotion

The second poster mainly for schools is in the pipeline and should be ready for distribution soon. The third will probably be aimed at the agricultural environment.

The revised brochure is overdue and hopefully AnneLise and Jan Vlok can somehow find the time to finalize it. They have our sympathy!

8. Strategy

As reported at the last AGM a group of five people were mandated to compile a document outlining the steps to implement the strategy in practice. This proved to be a much more difficult job than the five of us, Steve du Toit, Wendy Crane, Jan Vlok, Charles Basson and I, envisaged. We have been able to tap from the knowledge and expertise of Prof Alan Fowler, a specialist in the field of philanthropy and funding mechanisms of NGO's.

It has become clear that in order to sustain an entity such as the GCBR the company must have an assured income stream of between R2m and R3m per annum. A portion of this may come from provincial and local governments and corporate entities, but the bulk will have to come from investments in profit making companies. This view was also shared at a working group session on economics in BR's during the world congress. The strategy group is focusing on a few possibilities and as soon as enough progress has been made we shall share those possibilities with our members.

9. Rietkraal Nature Reserve

The four properties sold to The Leslie Hill Succulent Karoo Trust have been transferred to the WWF and Alan Wheeler from CapeNature is currently arranging for the necessary documentation to be drafted for the appointment of CapeNature as the managing agent on behalf of the trust. As soon as that is in place CapeNature will sign an agreement with the GCBR to attend to the management on behalf of CapeNature.

The fifth property will be donated to the GCBR as soon as we have been successful with the registration of the GCBR as a PBO, which is in process.

10. Registration of Trademarks

We have not received the final registration of the logos of the Gouritz Cluster Biosphere Reserve and the Jobs 4 Carbon but we are aware that it takes 12 to 15 months

11. Acknowledgements

Our loyal members

Sponsors – for refreshments at members' meetings

Pieter Coetzee – for making the Rietkraal properties available for sale to the LHSK Trust at such a special price. He also undertook to donate the largest of the Rietkraal farms to the GCBR as soon as we have received our registration as a PBO from SARS

CapeNature and WESSA – without whom the GCBR will be a bird with a broken wing

Other Government Departments – such as the Western Cape Department of Agriculture for the use of their facilities at Outeniqua and Oudtshoorn Experimental Farms and the Western Cape Department of Environmental Affairs & Development Planning for their support and financial contributions

Our funders – the TMF, the Eden DM, Hessequa and Mossel Bay municipalities, the EU, DEA, the FHR and WC DEA&DP who are making our projects possible

Wendy Crane, AnneLise Vlok, Steve du Toit, Susan Botha, Jan Vlok, Anita and Alan Wheeler, Mary Carr, Alan Fowler, Cobus Jordaan and Karin Coetzee also deserve a special thank you for their enthusiasm in fulfilling specific duties

The Directors and all other members of the technical committee

The host of other partners who support and encourage us on a daily bases

A special word of thanks to Johan van der Merwe, who served as a director for a short while. He assured me of his availability to assist when and where we may need his inputs.

Thank you for the privilege to serve as chairman of your company.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'WF Botha' with a stylized flourish at the end.

WF Botha
Chairman

Report by: Daan Toerien

**Portfolio: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND
ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

All biosphere reserves recognized by UNESCO and falling under the Man and Biosphere Program should pursue the goal of sustainable development. This presupposes identification of the enterprises present in biospheres and investigation of their dynamics. During the period under consideration the Economic Development and Entrepreneurship portfolio undertook an analysis of enterprise development and dynamics in the 16 towns of the Gouritz Cluster Biosphere Reserve (GCBR). All formal enterprises were identified and enumerated. A host of findings were made that should in future be useful in planning sustainable development in the GCBR.

The research was a collaborative effort and was undertaken with financial and other support from the Department of Environmental Affairs and Development of the Western Cape, the Centre for Environmental Management of the University of the Free State, and the Enterprise Observatory of South Africa.

Report by: Charles Basson

Portfolio: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND LABOUR

War on Leaks

- A previously funded War on Leaks type project in Bridgton managed to fix leaks/broken taps or pipes in approximately 150 households.
- This project in the Ou Lokasie was replicating the processes of the previous project, where workshops on water saving and other conservation-related topics were given to communities in this project. A team of community members, who were capacitated through the previous project, did household surveys to ascertain the status of the pipes and water connections, whereafter these were fixed by the same people, while showing the households how to fix minor leaks themselves in future. Whilst this was ongoing, community workshops, capacitating the households to understand the importance of water and how to save water, were given.
- No leaks / broken taps or pipes / water related challenges were identified or reported in 59 of the surveyed 210 households. All documented challenges were fixed.
- A limited number of households had more challenges than anticipated, and in 3 cases full toilet systems had to be bought and installed. In one case a 93-year old woman had running water in her house for the first time since 1962 – the volunteers paid for some major repairs (in the bathroom) from their own pockets.
- Four awareness raising workshops were held, to which all the households were invited. These workshops capacitated the participants to understand the water cycle, the scarcity of water, the reason for “paying for water” and the relationship that water has with climate change (very basic!). Informal feedback (after the workshop and by the volunteers when visiting the households after their taps have been fixed) indicated that the most of these households are aware of the water usage and have indicated that they understand why leaks have to be fixed – not by the municipality, but by themselves.

Wonder Bags

A number of funding opportunities resulted in 3 projects related to Wonder Bags

TMF: Mitigating Climate Change through “wonder bag” manufacturing, ensuring community inclusivity in conservation

- Four workshops on Climate Change capacitated members of the identified communities (Rose Valley / Ou Lokasie) to understand climate change and the impact thereof on society (and themselves...). During these workshops wonder bags were introduced as a climate change mitigation tool, and other topics, such as water saving and waste management also contributed to their understanding of their responsibility to mitigate against climate change. Attendees received wonder bags to take home and use, and follow-up visits to some households showed that these bags are indeed used.
- Furthermore, a group of 4 women were capacitated to manufacture 100 Eco Bags. Their production costs decreased dramatically as they became more

proficient in making these bags, and the team leader was capacitated to calculate costing and make changes in the production line. Two sewing machines were bought for this group of women who are currently in the process of developing a SMME, utilising the skills gained through this project. Through this, they will be able to enter into the green economy by manufacturing more wonder bags, market it and sell it.

- Feedback from most of the people who received wonder bags, were positive. Benefits of using these bags for cooking were communicated to a team who randomly visited households who received bags.
- A significant drop in electricity usage, fire wood and paraffin usage was reported during these visits.
- Work on manufacturing the wonder bags started off very slowly. Ladies were paid per day and not per bag, which pushed up production costs. After workshopping “costing” with the team leader and significantly changing her production line, the ladies worked faster and smarter, making the manufacturing of the bags more cost effective
- Synchronising manufacturing of the wonder bags with the execution of the workshops proved more difficult than expected. To mitigate, some of the workshops were held before there were enough wonder bags to give to the attendees. In those cases, visits to the households, taking the wonder bags to them, were done – and additional awareness raising was done informally through these visits

FHR

- We are currently in the process of replicating the above in other areas
- Twelve workshops will be done by mid June: De Rust (2), Oudtshoorn (3), Shoemanshoek, Spieskamp, Matjiesrivier, Volmoed, Dysselsdorp, Mossel Bay and Stilbaai
- The same manufacturing group is busy making wonder bags
- Another group from de Rust has been employed – both will manufacture 500 bags each
- The Trademarked Wonder Bag Company has partnered with us – the bags are now trademarked, bar coded, and comes with a recipe book. DIY kits were purchased which makes the production costs significantly lower than the previous project. Wonder bag did a visit and workshop with the manufacturing teams explaining and demonstrating quality control. Check out their website for a nice article.
- Quality of wonder bags is excellent, and production has been increased due to healthy competition between the two groups.

SAOBC / LOTTO

- More funding was secured in partnership with SAOBC who received Lotto funding
- We will start with workshops in 6 communities (2 visits each) in July/August
- Spekboom will be added to this mix – households will be given spekboom to plant at the first visit. Only those who looked after this spekboom will receive wonder bags at the second visit.

Challenge: to help the companies grow, and looking at innovative ways of selling wonder bags. Marketing it at Business Chambers and other forums.

REPORT BY: Ken Coetzee

PORTFOLIO: ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

Erosion control handbook

Due to the widespread soil erosion in the GCBR, much of it related to ostrich farming in the past, it was proposed to the Directorate that a simple erosion control booklet be prepared for distribution to all landowners in the GCBR. The proposal was supported and the booklet was prepared, using photographs to illustrate erosion control methods.

The booklet has been submitted for printing of the first 1000 copies and we expect to take delivery shortly. Funding was made available from DEADP for the production of this important guideline.

Alien plant eradication guideline booklet

Similarly, in the GCBR we have a growing problem with the unchecked spread of invasive alien plants. The production of the booklet is still in the planning stages but we have a great deal of support from the local members of the Botanical Society and an ardent supporter for alien plant control who is also heading up an awareness campaign regarding alien plants in our area. This booklet should be published by the end of 2016.

Rietkraal nature reserve

Basic preliminary guidelines for the management of the GCBR's recently acquired nature reserve were prepared as an aid to more intensive management planning in the near future. Conditions on the reserve were evaluated and aspects like soil erosion, alien plant control, road management, boundary fencing, signposting and security were considered. The guidelines will hopefully be expanded into a full management plan in the near future.

Promotion of the objectives of the GCBR

This is an ongoing effort with all of our private game farming business clients. In the preparation of our management plans for game introduction we try to influence landowners to take a more ecologically acceptable approach regarding the management of their land. More than 15 game ranches have been consulted in this way during the latter part of 2015 and so far in 2016. In many cases specific guidelines are provided for the required habitat management issues.

REPORT BY: Hendrik Visser

PORTFOLIO: SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT

1. Introduction

The main objective of this Portfolio will be to compile a Spatial Development Framework Plan for the Biosphere Reserve (the whole geographical area). The question is: Why a SDF for the GCBR and why does the GCBR need it? People, economic activity, social needs, infrastructure and natural resources are not evenly distributed across the geographical area of the GCBR. These geographic variations are not incidental but these variations and forces impact directly on economic growth, social justice, and the ability of the natural environment to support human activities now and in the future. Sustainable development outcomes require an integrated cross-sectoral approach to managing land and resources at the local level. This is much easier to achieve in practise with a clear set of principles and policies that provide a spatial framework for co-operative governance and streamlined decision making.

The SDF for the GCBR will be a long term planning instrument, which is to be reviewed every five years and needs to be adjusted as other municipal SDF's are amended or reviewed. The GCBR SDF is intended to be broad-scale. This means that the GCBR SDF will not for example provide answers about what to do or not to do on an individual cadastral unit or site.

2. Purpose of the GCBR SDF

The purpose of the GCBR SDF will be to:

- be the spatial expression of the objectives of the GCBR
- provide guidance to local IDP's and SDF's as far as the objectives of the GCBR is concerned
- help prioritise and align investment and infrastructure plans of provincial and national departments
- increase predictability in the development environment, for example by establishing "no go", "maybe" and "go" areas for development, and
- redress the spatial legacy of apartheid in conjunction with the local SDF's.

3. The way forward

The Provincial Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning (DEADP) have already been contacted to assist with the drafting of a SDF for the GCBR. They are prepared to assist, not financially necessarily, but with the process.

The following actions will now be taken:

1. The drafting and submission of a motivational report to DEADP for financial assistance and the appointment of a service provider;
2. The collection of the Integrated Development Plans (IDP) and SDF's of the various local municipalities within the geographical area of the GCBR. These documents will serve as the base documents from where the GCBR SDF will be compiled.

The following documents have been collected that would serve as base documents for the SDF and will be handed over to the service provider as soon as he/she is appointed for the drafting of the SDF:

1. The Biodiversity Sector Plans for the Hessequa and Mossel Bay Municipalities (2010)
2. The Western Cape Provincial Spatial Development Framework
3. The Mossel Bay Spatial Development Framework
4. Department of Water Affairs and Forestry's Gouritz Water Management Area
5. Western Cape Bioregional Planning Manual
6. Eden District Spatial Development Framework

The GCBR SDF will take as its starting point the goal of sustainable development. The GCBR SDF will adhere to the principles and policies of the WCPSDF and their view that development is only acceptable and in the public interest if it is socially equitable, economically viable and environmentally sustainable.

4. Meeting with Hessequa Municipality

The meeting that took place in October with the Hessequa Municipality highlighted the fact that the municipality is prepared to sign the Memorandum of Agreement. The municipality will see this relationship with the GCBR as part of its strategic long term planning process which is currently under way.

The municipality would like to extend the MOU in order to make the Biosphere reserve a partner in its long term strategic planning and therefore associate itself with the principles of biosphere planning.

The municipality invited the GCBR to liaise with the people responsible for specifically environmental education at the municipality in order to launch educational programmes in partnership with the GCBR.

REPORT BY: André Britz

PORTFOLIO: EDUCATION

The Gouritz Cluster Biosphere Reserve (GCBR) invited Landmark Foundation during March 2015, to participate in an education program on the Jobs for Carbon Project. Van Wyksdorp Primary School was chosen for this pilot project.

This collaborative partnership, as consulted with Landmark Foundation and adopted by the GCBR, forms part of Landmark Foundation's Green Projects, which aims to establish "Green Clubs" at schools. The establishment of these clubs will form an important part of changing communities and their attitude toward the environment, working with a small group of learners within a school will grow and expand outward into the community and into the environment.

The program will endeavour to achieve its outcomes by transferring SKILLS, imparting KNOWLEDGE, changing ATTITUDES and instilling VALUES.

The GREEN BUTTERFLIES are in their second year. The principal, Mr Danvil Esau, is keen on continuing with the green club as he has seen the value it has brought to the school. Teams were set up, on an annual two day year planning camp, 17-18 March 2016. The aim of this annual camp is to introduce the new incumbents (all the grade 6's) to the green club as well as to plan the year ahead. We use the WESSA Environmental Calendar to plot down all the environmental days onto the year planner.

The teams focus on clean bathrooms, media centre, information boards, waist control and recycling, botanical garden, food gardens and greeters.

The learners of the future have become considerate to each other and the environment.

10 SEPTEMBER 2015: ARBOR WEEK PLANTING SPEKBOOM AT VAN WYKSDORP PRIMARY

There was an unveiling event at the school that marked the strengthening of the partnership between the GCBR and Landmark Foundation. We make a difference in children's lives. The learners, teachers and guests planted 200 spekboom and 9 olive trees.

18 SEPTEMBER 2015: FOOD GARDENS

Food gardens were set up at Van Wyksdorp Primary School. Each class got its own section of the food garden to be planted with vegetables of their choice.

19 SEPTEMBER 2015: RIVER CLEAN UP DAY

The grade 5, 6 and 7 learners were taken on a 14km walk, from Van Wyksdorp to Bosriver and back. They collected 300kg of waste.

25 SEPTEMBER 2015: IALA STUDENT CAMP

The International Academy for Leadership through Adventure (IALA) did a camp at Oudewagensdrift. The education team assisted with four presenters in different environmental fields, to do presentations.

8 OCTOBER 2015: SCHOOL AT CALITZDORP

Visited a school near Calitzdorp, spread the spekboom message and did some spekboom planting.

20 NOVEMBER 2015: GLENWOOD HOUSE SCHOOL

Glenwood House School visited Rooiberg Lodge on their GKC. We did a collaborative day with Glenwood and Van Wyksdorp Primary.

24 NOVEMBER 2015: GCBR FORUM MEETING

The Green Butterflies did a play at the Forum meeting. The play focused on recycling, waist control and how to keep our environment clean.

12 DECEMBER 2015

We brought the Story Team Puppet Show to Van Wyksdorp, to be part of a school function.

The education team was also part of the development of the puppet show written and acted by Paul and Marina Eilers. It was launched at the J4C end of the year function, 5 November 2015.

REPORT BY: André Britz

PORTFOLIO: TOWERKOP SECTOR

JOB FOR CARBON (J4C) dominates everything in this sector. The project has moved along very well and exceeded many expectations. The project is on track and 103 000 plants have been planted. We were very lucky with the rainfall; this has helped us to plant an area where the plants cannot be watered.

Training goes on at J4C, members were trained in First aid and Health and Safety, level 2. Members were also trained by local, successful partners in the community of Van Wyksdorp. The subjects included how to be a successful citizen in your community and bring about change.

We received a three day visit by a delegation of the EU. This went hand in hand with our J4C end of year function. We hosted the J4C end of the year function at the Rooiberg Lodge on the 5th of November 2015. The function was a huge success and was attended by 104 guests, who included delegations from: the EU, DEA, RRRG, GCBR, WESSA, the press, the Education portfolio, Landmark Foundation, Landowners, special invited local residents, the management of J4C, two learners as members of the Green Butterfly environmental club and the workers. This function, and the coverage in the press, especially on SABC2 and RSG, created a lot of attention on the J4C project and the GCBR as a whole. J4C also received a visit by a delegation from DEA; they were very well received and extremely impressed with the work done.

The project stopped on 11th December 2015 for the Festive Season. We resumed activities on 18th January 2016. Due to the heat, we are proceeding with the preparation of thousands of holes to be planted when the rain season starts. J4C planted 8 445 spekboomies around the Olive Factory at Mount Rouge.

Food gardens

The GCBR signed contracts with the N.G. Kerk at Van Wyksdorp and Oasis Community Projects for a period of 5 years. We now have a J4C food garden which was planted with onions and potatoes. We also went into partnership with a local farmer, who gave us land to plant our surplus onions. The onion seedlings were a donation from Klein Karoo Seed. We harvested about 2 tons of onions from the land we rented from the church and trained 8 people to preserve some of the onions. We will sell these preserved products to the community and tourists in our area.

Rietkraal

The Rietkraal properties have been approved by the Lesley Hill Succulent Karoo Trust legal services and were purchased by WWF. We entered into talks with the local Sympathizers, "Friends of Rietkraal" to help the GCBR with eyes on the ground, to become part of the management and to create pride in our domain.

Towerkop Sector and Jobs for Carbon donated 200 spekboomies to the KOS EN FYNBOS project in George.

REPORT BY: Sandra Falanga

PORTFOLIO: ST BLAIZE SECTOR

My highlights of the past year were:

- The formal designation of the GCBR by UNESCO. It gives me a great kick to know that I 'live and work' in a biosphere.
- The 2015 Shark week programme, run in 10 of Mossel Bay's primary schools was pure pleasure. It was a real treat to deal with an efficient & knowledgeable service provider in local Shark Conservationist, Esther Overbeeke, with outstanding support from Mossel Bay Municipality and of course, the kids are a real joy.
- Motivated with enthusiasm for their plant treasures, but little knowledge, the Dana Bay Conservancy pulled off a real feat by publishing their 'Flora of Dana Bay Conservancy' booklet and then they presented the booklet with pride to Mrs Marie Ferreira, Mossel Bay's mayor.
- Pure delight is the only way to describe the magic of being at Kruisrivier-Wes Primary school at the foot of the Swartberg and being totally entranced by the superlative Spekkies puppet show.
- There are several individuals and community groups in Mossel Bay, making things happen in their own quiet way. Many of them are volunteers. One can only be grateful for their contributions.
- Within the greater Southern Cape every CREW trip was a highlight.
- Being part of a BR with an interesting and varied team pioneering its way in the early stages after its official birth is truly a privilege.

Awareness

Distribution of GCBR posters and informing all and sundry of the existence, aims and objectives of the GCBR with the delightful news to those who do, that they now "Live and Work in a Biosphere Reserve"!

Important meetings

- Gouritz Reserve Determination Study. Feedback session re assessments of and recommendation re available water reserves and management action of some of the rivers and estuaries within the GCBR. Some of the evaluations and datasets used for recommendations were thought to be insufficient and require longer term monitoring to establish a realistic status of a river course. Another cause for grave concern is the ecological status rating given to Little Brak estuary of 'Declining' – yet in terms of management options a 'No intervention' is recommended.

- Alien Invasive Species workshop – DEA roll out of NEMBA implementation. South African Green Industries Council has been providing training sessions across the country and the Garden Route is waiting with bated breath for its turn.
- Proudly presenting Mossel Bay Mayor with the 'Flora of Dana Bay Conservancy' booklet with Dana Bay Conservancy.

Education – schools

- Shark Week with shark conservationist, Esther Overbeeke of 'Keep Fin Alive Campaign' at ten Mossel Bay Primary Schools. General Shark Week support and to link to Esther's Sharks and Ocean message an introduction re water conservation was done by using the GCBR DVD "It's Everybody's Business" whereby the existence and extent of the GCBR explained. The funding came from the Mossel Bay Municipality who assisted with much of the arrangements and liaison with the schools in a most helpful and friendly manner.
- Obtaining funding of R40 000.00 via the Garden Route Casino Community Trust for the GCBR and Esther Overbeeke to continue with Shark & marine awareness and ocean safety. A puppet show, aimed at pre-school and early primary school learners, is being developed with this funding.
- Doing background research, procuring an artist, followed by negotiations, to develop a GCBR Schools' Poster.

Liaison/facilitation/funding

General liaison, support and funding conservancies Fransmanshoek (nursery equipment, water tanks), Dana Bay indigenous flora booklet), St Blaize, Hartenbos (equipment and water test kits, Hartenbos estuary), Midbrak Conservancy/Rate payers (bat & owl boxes, signage, hiking trail)) and entities such as SAPREC (funding), Oceans Research (acoustic tracking equipment), Bartholomeu Dias Museum (Ethno-botanical garden maintenance, invasive alien plant clearing, equipment to deal with marine animal strandings and rehabilitation), Pinnacle Conservation interns (marine signage and brochures), Southern Cape Herbarium (data collection & vegetation surveys within Mossel Bay). The majority of this fuelled by volunteer community power!

Plastic pollution in the ocean

An info graphic was produced and distributed to businesses operating in the Dias beach/Voorbaai area, highlighting the scourge of plastic pollution in the ocean.

Participation

- Support for and participation in endeavours by WESSA and the Botanical Society of SA on the Garden Route.
- Active liaison with the Southern Cape Herbarium to pursue data capture of local flora.
- CREW is a partner of the GCBR. The Southern Cape group, essentially citizen scientists, are exceptionally productive monitoring IUCN threatened plant species all over the greater Southern Cape, feeding the data through to SANBI. Not only

does this assist with valuable information to keep South Africa's redlist up to date, local interns and up and coming conservationist are provided with unexpected opportunities to up their skills, early alerts re both the good and the bad are widely communicated to the conservation community (examples: erosion, emerging plant invasions, plant poaching, successes in exit areas), for timeous interventions, but also for well-deserved pats on the back. Any (much needed) financial support to this group and a new vehicle would be a brilliantly wise investment. Every CREW field trip is a highlight.

Report by: Wendy Crane

Projects

The Jobs4Carbon Project which seeks to rehabilitate degraded veld by planting Spekboom, has continued to provide employment for 60 people in Van Wyksdorp. The project has harvested and planted more than 100 000 spekboom cuttings to date. More than 9600 person days have been generated this year.

In connection with Jobs4Carbon: J4C generates many spinoffs, a few examples are:

1. A new project entitled “Unlocking a Spekboom-based Economy in the Klein Karoo” has commenced, with funding from the Table Mountain Fund of R645 000 over 3 years. This project builds on Jobs4Carbon through mapping, capacity building and developing institutional models for carbon trading. This will build a stronger base so that the J4C can be replicated in other areas – Calitzdorp being one. We are currently working on a new potential funding opportunity for the expansion of Jobs4Carbon– from the International Climate Initiative Supporting Climate Change Mitigation and Biodiversity Projects (German Government). A concept proposal is currently being prepared.

2. The Spekkies puppet show – a very creative puppet theatre show on the theme of spekboom and land degradation was developed by Marina and Paul Eilers. The show was rolled out to 10 primary schools across the Klein Karoo, reaching 761 learners. It has been very well received by all. The teachers were impressed since the puppet story; the full colour guides (“SpekkiesGids”) as well as the work sheet that was handed out link well with what they do in the curriculum with the grade 4s. The show is short, nippy, to the point and full of variety with many different characters and lively music to keep the learners attention.

3. We have had quite a lot of media coverage associated with J4C including on national radio and TV and regional newspapers which helps the GCBR increase its public profile.

Other projects:

War on Leaks – which seeks to reduce preventable water losses and water waste resulting from leaky taps in township households. This very successful project started in 2014 and has continued in Oudtshoorn with funding from TMF (R30 000). 207 households were audited, leaks assessed and costed. Repairs were completed on 110 houses: leaking taps, broken pipes, washers, toilets. 25 toilet cisterns were replaced with 3 litres capacity vs. 9 litres capacity which saves 6 litres at each flush. These activities employed 5 local residents (including 3 youth) and provided 110 person days of work. War on Leaks will now expand to De Rust with funding from Eden DM (R20 000).

Mitigating Climate Change through Wonder bag manufacturing, funded by TMF (R30 000) and the Foundation for Human Rights (R200 000) in Oudtshoorn and De Rust townships. Focus is on raising Klein Karoo communities’ climate change

awareness, introducing mitigation measures and Wonder bags enterprise development. Implementation of this project is in full swing, with 2 community-based women's factories now producing 1000 Wonder bags. (On display at the AGM - GCBR members are encouraged to purchase!)

Micro MBA – A very interesting new initiative. We sponsored two people (including one of our board members) to complete a Training of Trainers course in Micro MBA. This is an accredited programme aimed at aspiring micro entrepreneurs. They are now qualified to offer Micro MBA programmes in the GCBR domain and act as facilitators/mentors to budding entrepreneurs. One person has already benefited from this service, and a number of others are in planning stage. (Members who have ideas about potential suitable candidates are welcome to let us know)

With funding from Mossel Bay Municipality (R40 000), we launched a collaboration with Esther Overbeeke, a sharks conservation campaigner, through the “Keep Fin Alive Campaign” which held a road show to 10 primary schools around Mossel Bay, reaching ca 1200 learners. A new campaign on marine plastics pollution has also been launched. Posters and flyers for both campaigns have been circulated. The 3rd and final element now being planned is a ‘citizen science’ effort to involve members of the public in intertidal organism research run by Oceans Research. This involves a few public meetings/workshops on different beaches on Saturdays to empower the public on how to recognize, appreciate and conserve the intertidal organisms. (More details in today's bullet presentation “Walking under the Rocks”)

New projects planned:

De Rust Community WaterWise Project - New project designed and proposal developed and submitted to GEF Small Grants Programme (R791 500). If approved, the project will have 3 elements: (1) War on Leaks in Blomnektownship, (2) building an artificial wetland using bulrushes and *Phragmites* to clean effluent from Blomnek, and (3) developing sustainable vegetable gardens using irrigation water from the wetland.

Olive Branch Youth Project – A new project proposal is under development to establish a youth skills development centre in Vandyke Dorp, for submission to Services SETA. Focus will be on building environmental and life skills, and olive industry related skills.

Report by: Steve du Toit

Portfolio: WESSA

Jobs for Carbon

Over the last year, the Jobs For Carbon project has been gradually transforming the lives of more than 60 families in the Van Wyksdorp area. The mapping of degraded spekboom veld was successfully completed by Jan Vlok and 5 willing land owners have committed portions of their properties to long term rehabilitation through the planting of spekboom.

Harvesting and planting of spekboom began in earnest during early 2015 and by the end of the planting period in March 2016 more than 105 000 cuttings had been taken and re-planted. Due to various factors, including favourable rainfall, selecting the correct habitat, and careful harvesting and planting methods, more than 95% of the plants have survived. GCBR is most grateful to the European Union and Department of Environmental Affairs, which are funding the project.

Biomass to Value added products

The conundrum of what to do with the millions of tons of invasive alien plants that are choking rivers in South Africa continues. The Department of Environmental Affairs' funded "Biomass to value added products" project is investigating various suitable products that can be manufactured from IAP biomass. While electricity is an obvious, but highly complex product, other more feasible options are also being investigated. "Compots" are being produced by a company in Barrydale; as part of a pilot phase, these compots contain spekboom from the Jobs for Carbon project and the combination will shortly be available. Another pilot project is the manufacture of a wood gas generator, currently under production in De Rust and George.

Report by: Annelise Vlok

GCBR Forum/members meetings – 3 meetings (including the AGM of 2015)

- AGM at Oudtshoorn Proefplaas near Oudtshoorn - 25 August 2015
- Forum meeting at Rooiberg Lodge near Van Wyksdorp – 24 November 2015
- Forum meeting at Community Hall in Still Bay – 16 February 2016

A total of 10 presentations on a variety of topics relevant to the GCBR area were presented at these forum meetings. The 2015 AGM was an eventful meeting, celebrating the designation of the GCBR and the success of the Jobs for Carbon and War on Leaks projects. The SABC footage about the designation of the GCBR and the Jobs for Carbon project which was broadcast on National TV was shown at the AGM. At the Van Wyksdorp Forum meeting, the Green Butterfly Club of the Van Wyksdorp Primary School presented a play to raise awareness on waste issues and recycling. This was a true delight. This was followed by a Spekboom planting event where all the attendees planted spekboom cuttings at a site near the venue.

Each of the meetings attracted new people who have not attended any of the previous meetings. The GCBR Forum meetings provide a platform to institutions, researchers, project managers, etc. to inform the stakeholders about projects, research, initiatives or programmes that are taking place within the GCBR domain. The positive spin-offs from these meetings cannot be measured, as it is in the networking, knowledge-building and information-sharing during and afterwards that the value and strength of the meetings lie.

We are really grateful to Pieter and Hanna Coetzee of Assegaaybosch Ranch for sponsoring the catering at the Van Wyksdorp Forum Meeting and to DEA&DP for providing funds to the GCBR to be able to cover the costs of the other two meetings as well. Thanks to all who have assisted in making these meetings possible and memorable events.