

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

1 APRIL 2016 – 31 MARCH 2017

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	13/04/16	15/06/16	10/08/16	12/10/16	7/12/16	08/02/2017
Willem	Botha	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Dick	Carr		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Daan	Toerien	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Resigned
Charles	Basson	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ken	Coetzee			✓	✓	✓	
Andre	Britz	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sandra	Falanga	✓			✓	✓	✓
Kobus	Nel	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Beverley	Boer		Elected	✓		✓	
Hendrik	Visser	✓	✓				

The following directors served in the portfolios set out below:

Directors (with portfolio in brackets)	K Coetzee (Environmental Affairs & Research)	Beverley Boer (Public Relations, Marketing & Tourism)
W Botha (Chairperson)	C Basson (Community Development & Labour)	S Falanga (Chairperson of St Blaize sector)
DR Carr (Vice Chairperson)	H Visser (Spatial Development)	CJ Nel (Chairperson of the Kammanassie sector)
D Toerien (Entrepreneurial & Economic Development)	A Britz (Environmental Education)	AJ Britz (acting Chairperson of the Towerkop sector)

2. General overview

The official designation by UNESCO has made it possible for the GCBR to truly become a member of the biosphere family in the Western Cape as part of the Western Cape Biosphere Reserve Forum where the chairpersons of the four WC BR's meet with the provincial department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning and CapeNature. Then as part of the National Man and the Biosphere Committee we meet with representatives of all the other BR's in the country as well as officials from the National Department of Environmental Affairs and a variety of provincial officials. We also have regular contact with officials from UNESCO, other BR's and entities who work with or are in several ways connected to BR's worldwide.

Steve du Toit applied and was accepted by UNESCO to visit Jeju Island off the South Korean Coast where he attended a weeklong training course for managers in coastal BR's. Total costs were paid by UNESCO.

I was also appointed as a trustee of the SABR Trust to represent the GCBR. This trust was registered to promote cooperation amongst all BR's in South Africa and apply for operational funding on behalf of all SA BR's. Unfortunately a lot more effort must be put into this project to deliver the required results.

3. Strategy Group

As a part of the discussions by the internal Strategy Group under the guidance of Prof Alan Fowler we were able to plan how the GCBR will need to grow structurally to reach its objectives and also how we should attain that. A consequence of these discussions was that Prof Fowler made contact with a Dutch Foundation with whom he had personal contact a couple of years ago. This led to what I simply refer to as a modern day fairy tale.

The DOB Ecology Foundation have visited us in November 2016 and again in February 2017 after they approved our first project proposal to run from 1 March 2017 to 28 February 2018. This fantastic positive leap also brought huge responsibilities and I can assure you that we have spent many hours planning and preparing not only to nurture this relationship but to show DOB

what the GCBR is capable of and to vest a long term relationship to the benefit of both parties.

4. Projects

The first application to DOB consisted of three projects, namely:

- 4.1 a continuance of the Jobs 4 Carbon project in the Van Wyksdorp area;
- 4.2 the construction of an artificial wetland in the De Rust area to purify sewerage effluent to a level where it can be used to grow vegetables;
- 4.3 the strengthening of the GCBR structure whereby Steve du Toit has been appointed as Project Manager for the three projects and funds were made available to obtain a vehicle for the GCBR. Funds for further expansion e.g. the development of the projects for a three year funding proposal is also provided.
- 4.4 Other projects implemented during the year were:
 - 4.4.1 Green Club Project
 - 4.4.2 Extend the Day Lights
 - 4.4.3 Jobs for Carbon
 - 4.4.4 Rietkraal
 - 4.4.5 Alien Cleaning at Bosrivier
 - 4.4.6 #spekkies
 - 4.4.7 Oasis Food Gardens
 - 4.4.8 Kos in die Klein Karoo
 - 4.4.9 Save the Drip
 - 4.4.10 Learning for Lights
 - 4.4.11 Shark & Marine Conservation Puppet Show
 - 4.4.12 Environmental Awareness Workshop
 - 4.4.13 Wonderbag Factory
 - 4.4.14 Citizen Science in Mossel Bay
 - 4.4.15 Tour de Gouritz Bio MTB

4.4.16 Environmental Education Programmes – Herbertsdale and Ruitebos

4.4.17 School's Poster, Booklet and Puzzles

The details of these projects are highlighted in the reports by the portfolio directors and some of the members of the Advisory committee attached to this report.

5. Finances

5.1 Annual Financial Statement

The annual financial statement for the financial year ending at 31 March 2017 has been audited. It has not yet been approved by the Board of Directors which will be considered on the 8th of June 2017 at our next board meeting.

As a result of the increase in transactions, as you will note from the number of projects undertaken by the GCBR, it has been necessary for us to increase our bookkeeping capacity.

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

5.2 Support by the Authorities:

Contributions by the National Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) was once again tabled at a recent meeting between the National Minister and Provincial Ministers and/or MEC's and the Western Cape Provincial Government recently requested us to formulate suggestions as to what is necessary and how can it be done. Although we don't have high hopes for a short term solution to the problem, we still believe that progress will eventually be made. However, we cannot rest on our laurels and keep on working on innovative methods to increase our operational funds.

The provincial government has again indicated that it will contribute R200 000.00 per BR for the current financial year for which we are grateful.

Hessequa municipality stands out as the only municipality that has supported the GCBR financially since inception in 2011. Mossel Bay has financed one project in their municipal area. From the other municipalities we still do not get any support at all. Our attempts last year to visit the municipal structures in order to enhance collaboration was unsuccessful mainly because the local government elections were scheduled for August. A renewed effort shall be launched in the near future.

5.3 National Biosphere Trust Fund

The SABR Trust did not meet expectations during the past year and at the last meeting in March it was decided to replace the trust with a non profit company. A new leadership was also elected in an attempt to revitalize the entity.

6. Gouritz Enterprizes Pty Ltd

As part of the strategy group discussions we realized that we cannot indefinitely rely on donations for operational funds and need to follow another route. A for profit company known as Gouritz Enterprizes Pty Ltd was registered with the GCBR as the sole shareholder. The idea is to find opportunities to do business from which profits can be derived. These profits will be paid to the GCBR to build up an unbound fund which can used as the need arises. #Spekkies is the first of these projects – read more in Luami's report. This is in line with the workshop discussions in Lima at the 4th World Congress of Biospheres and several other developments on social enterprise worldwide.

7. Promotion

We are all waiting in anticipation for the availability of the schools poster. They say all good things take time and we know that Mary and her team will make a major impact on the children.

The long awaited brochure is available and almost out of print again! It is informative and good looking.

8. Members' meetings

Four members' meetings were organized and well attended. Many interesting topics were again presented. More information is given by AnneLise Vlok in her report. These meetings are not only very informative but also affords the opportunity to network, strengthen old ties and form new friendships.

9. Acknowledgements

All of you, our loyal members, for your support

Pieter and Hanna Coetzee – for the many contributions they make and what they have put into the Van Wyksdorp Development Institution

CapeNature who remains a special partner

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 – DOB Ecology, the TMF, Hessequa municipality, The Garden Route Casino Community Trust who are making our projects possible.

Wendy Crane, AnneLise Vlok, Steve du Toit, Susan Botha, Jan Vlok, Alan Wheeler, Mary Carr, Alan Fowler and Karin Coetzee also deserve a special thank you for the good work during the past year.

The Directors and all other members of the advisory committee

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

A special word of thanks to Daan Toerien and Sandra Falanga who served as directors. Both assured me of their availability to assist when and where we may need their inputs.

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

WF Botha

Chairman

Report by: Dick Carr

Portfolio: VICE CHAIRPERSON

- Chaired (and hosted) two Kammanassie Protected Area Advisory Committee (PAAC) meetings – CapeNature partnership.
- Participated in the Breede-Gouritz Catchment Management Agency (B-GCMA) Visioning Workshop. This workshop used the expertise of the various participants to develop a situation model reflecting the present and expected outcomes of water extraction on the environment. Facilitated by Myles Mander.
- Attended CIC meeting in October.
- Participated in a Honeybush tea workshop and the inaugural Honeybush tea Community of Practice meeting. The development of best practice guidelines for the wild harvesting of *Cyclopia*.
- PDT meetings with DOB and subsequent workshops. Team leader for “Land & Landscape” strategic project planning.
- Authorised various payments from the GCBR budget.
- Manned the GCBR stall at the KKNK.
- Developing a Cape Mountain Zebra (CMZ) conservation project in partnership with CapeNature. The purchase of land for the GCBR with donor money. Range expansion for the Kammanassie and Gamkaberg CMZ populations, which make up two-thirds of the world’s CMZ gene-pool.

Report by: André Britz

Portfolio: EDUCATION

The Green Club project

Environmental Education is one of the focal areas of UNESCO’s Man and Biosphere programme. The Gouritz Cluster Biosphere Reserve (GCBR) has therefore adopted an active stance towards engaging youth – as tomorrow’s leaders – in influencing public opinion, perceptions and behaviours towards a healthier planet.

A partnership between the GCBR and the Landmark Foundation (LMF) is spearheading the formation of *Green Clubs* in disadvantaged schools. These clubs 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. Built around 4 pillars, the programme endeavours to achieve its outcomes by transferring SKILLS, imparting KNOWLEDGE, changing ATTITUDES, and instilling VALUES.

The GCBR-LMF partnership embarked on this approach in March 2015 with the Vanwyksdorp Primary School (Kannaland Municipality) as a pilot project and built it

out during this past year, 2016 -2017, as a model for other schools in the GCBR domain, with very limited funds wisely spent.

We introduced the Green Club project at the Herbertsdale School on 12 August 2016, with a hike to a nearby koppie and a waste management program. The Green Club was established during May 2017. We also introduced the Green Club project to Ruitersbos Primary during April 2017 and will roll it out in the near future. The Garden Route Casino Community Trust made funding available in support of our outreach to these two outlying rural schools in the Mossel Bay district. Gondwana Game Reserve also support and is a partner involved in these two projects.

Van Wyksdorp Primary School- Extend the Day lights –

18August2016

Pieter and Hanna Coetzee handed over the EXTEND THE DAY LIGHTS on behalf of JOANNE LONSETH, WASHINGTON STATE USA on the 18thAugust'17. These lights are solar powered, and are to the benefit of the learners that don't have electricity at their homes, to study in the evening.

We also unveiled the banner of the Green Butterflies at the occasion.

iALA Conservation Program

Iala is an International Academy for Leadership through Adventure.

The academy is run as a one year course aimed at bridging the gap from high school to varsity. It is based in Stilbaai but the "classes" travel through South Africa. The outdoor adventure is aimed at developing leadership, transferring life-long skills and empowering the students with practical knowledge, and through the travel experiences, new values are instilled. The program is environmentally conscious. The GCBR involved LMF and connected them to the iALA program.

This year a Leopard and predator awareness program was introduced as it has become more defined. Landmark Foundation brings to the gap year program the value of Leopard conservation and its critical place in the preservation of biodiversity.

IALA, launched a cycle tour, "Berg 2 Baai" from Herbertsdale via Rooiberg Lodge and Riversdal to Stilbaai. We want to build this into an annual event, with a focus on environmental programmes at every overnight point.

We would like to thank iALA for the opportunity to engage with these young adults and influence their decisions.

Van Wyksdorp Development Institute

We hosted a workshop between the Board of Directors of the VWI and delegates from the GCBR, to discuss the future relationship between the two organisations as collaborative partners.

Human resources

The facilitation team is comprised of Andre Britz, GCBR Director of Environmental Education, and Monica Vaccaro, Landmark Foundation Coordinator of Education Programmes.

Thank you

We would like to thank Landmark Foundation for being a collaborative partner in our Education Portfolio and for their continuous commitment to the environment and our planet. Thank you to the principals and teachers of the schools and to Jan Heenop (iALA) for the opportunity to work with the students. Also a word of thanks to all our partners, Annemarie Gebhardt, Katrien Opperman, James Blignaut, Pieter and Hanna Coetzee, Gondwana Game Reserve, Garden Route Casino Community Trust, Landcare, Glenwood House Karoo Challenge and Rooiberg Lodge.

Report by: André Britz

Portfolio: TOWERKOP SECTOR (ACTING)

Jobs For Carbon Project

The overall aim of the Jobs for Carbon project was, *“To improve the rural economy and ecosystem health and resilience of the Little Karoo by developing carbon farming as a sustainable use of natural Spekboomveld.”*

The project had three objectives, including:

1. Restore natural vegetation on degraded thicket land through planting spekboom (*Portulacaria afra*).
2. Create sustainable employment for marginalised rural communities in land restoration work and carbon farming.
3. Develop carbon sequestration as a potential alternative income stream for land users through carbon farming.

The project objectives were broadly achieved, and certain targets were substantially exceeded.

The project target of restoring 300 ha of spekboomveld was exceeded. Some 812 ha was initiated into a process of restoration through the project, either through replanting with spekboom or through the exclusion of grazing animals (or both). The plantings show above average survival in comparison to other localities.

The objective to develop three working teams comprising vulnerable people was achieved. The goal of creating three entrepreneurs to lead these teams was partially achieved with one person showing good leadership. However, there were sixty success stories. The human, social and institutional capital that has been built through the project is a key outcome that offers significant potential for securing and expanding the beneficial outcomes of the project on a long-term basis.

The Jobs for Carbon project received visits from a number of official delegations.

A European Union delegation visited the management team, the teams and the planting sites during the period 13 – 14 October '16.

Myles Mander, an independent auditor, visited the region to interview J4C team members and public representatives on 19 October and 11 November '16.

On the eve of 20 October'16 we had our end of the project function at Rooiberg Lodge. This was also attended by our manager from WESSA.

The Jobs for Carbon project, phase 1, ended on 21 October'16.

Apart from harvesting and planting spekboom, the teams also harvested olives at Mount Rouge and Blue Sky Organics. We started with Jobs for Carbon, phase 2, on 6 March'17.

Rietkraal

Erosion Training at Rietkraal

The Jobs for Carbon workers, 45 people, received a two day training course at Rietkraal in erosion management. The course was presented by Ken Coetzee, director of Environmental Affairs. They created hollows that act as water traps. Mulch was placed in each basin. They also rehabilitated some gullies. Ken indicated that with a little more reinforcement of the methods learnt the teams would be in a position to undertake this type of work on their own. Materials were supplied by CapeNature.

Fencing at Rietkraal

The Board approved the use of funding from Environmental Affairs budget for fencing at Rietkraal. We made use of some of our skilled Jobs for Carbon workers to upgrade the eastern, southern and western fences of the Rietkraal reserve.

Alien Clearing at Bosrivier

We trained 6 Jobs for Carbon workers to do alien (sisal) clearing at one of our planting sites at Bosrivier. We donated the sisal as fodder to a local cattle farmer.

#spekkies

A nursery has been set up and the team has already planted more than 6 000 spekboom cuttings. The offcuts from the cuttings that were planted on the planting sites were used to make the plants. We also helped with the preparations, transport and marketing of the #spekkies.

We send two Jobs for Carbon Workers to be trained in pottery to make and run a kompot factory in the future. Storage was hired in Van Wyksdorp to store the kompots and to set up the factory at a later stage.

GCBR and Oasis Food Gardens - Church Ground

We signed contracts with Cassidra, on behalf of Landcare, for irrigation systems at the church ground and Oasis. The works/goods, are part of the Western Cape Department of Agriculture and Land Reform programme for the Klein Karoo. We installed two reservoirs and the irrigation systems. The assets were handed over to two of the Jobs for Carbon members on the 10th March '17. The food garden will be managed by Jobs for Carbon members and members of the Community to produce healthy food for the community.

Kos In Die Klein-Karoo

Kos in die Karoo is a sister project of KOS EN FYNBOS which runs in the George area.

Kos en Fynbos is a groundswell movement initiated by members of the George community in 2014. It aims at creating a community that is independent, self-sustained, creative, loving and sharing, a community that desires to improve themselves and their environment by taking the first steps in creating that change. Food, water and waste are the key elements totally interwoven in changing the environment people live in.

KOS IN DIE KAROO is a project aimed at Van Wyksdorp residents, to teach the Jobs for Carbon team members and the community, to create their own food gardens. The launch of the KOS IN DIE KAROO took place on Friday 23rd September in a gathering of community members of Van Wyksdorp interested in food gardens. During the presentation the core values and “spirit” of the project were explained. Four coordinators of KOS EN FYNBOS from George were able to give personal accounts of their involvement with the project and the importance of food gardens. They inspired the community to become self-sustaining and to look after their environment. There was a very good turnout considering the size of the town.

KKNK GCBR Stall

We saw the KKNK as a very good opportunity to showcase the work of the GCBR. On request, the Board approved and pledged its support to us to proceed with arrangements for a stall at the KKNK. The stall was managed by two of our star workers from Jobs for Carbon, directors and members. We donated three #spekkies as decorations on the *Praat Saam* stage. These three were auctioned at the end of the festival with *Die Burger Children Fund* as beneficiary.

Thank you.

We would like to thank our collaborative partners who helped us to make things happen in practice on the ground in the Towerkop Sector. We take the opportunity to mention the following institutions and persons, Western Cape Department of Agriculture, Landcare, Oasis, Mount Rouge, Blue Sky Organics, Kos en Fynbos, N.G.Kerk Van Wyksdorp, Liz Eglington, Monica Vaccaro and Gert Laubscher.

Report by: Charles Basson

Portfolio: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND LABOUR

Save the Drip

A small grant (R20 000.00) from Eden Municipality was spent to repair leaking pipes, taps, toilets and all other leaks in 110 houses. Two communal water taps were also repaired (the leaks at these communal taps were on average 1000 litres per day).

23 houses were installed with new toilet cisterns using 3 litres only.

This is an ongoing project to monitor the water usage.

Learning for Lights

85 squatter shacks was fitted with motorcycle batteries and 2 meter strip lights, to provide clean, safe light power for students to do their homework.

The project is continually monitored.

Wonderbag Factory

Two groups of women, from Oudtshoorn and De Rust, was assisted to set up informal factories to manufacture 2 250 wonderbags, providing employment for 8 women for 8 months.

Environmental Awareness Workshop

An Environmental Awareness Workshop was developed and rolled out to 30 communities in the GCBR. This workshop topics included water, climate change, rubble and waste.

Other

- Spekboom was planted at three public buildings
- Meetings, discussions and workshops were held to make the GCBR a practical, workable organization in communities.

Report by: HENDRIK VISSER

Portfolio: SPATIAL PLANNING

1. A Western Cape Biosphere Workshop was attended on the 2nd of August 2016 where the Specifications for Biosphere Reserves Framework Plans were discussed in order to provide the specifications and purpose of such a framework plan:

The purpose is:

- (a) Provide a spatial vision for the biosphere reserve that strives to balance economic, social and environmental considerations;
- (b) Promote implementation of land use planning principles (e.g. spatial sustainability, efficiency, spatial resilience);
- (c) Assist with the coordination, integration and alignment of provincial and municipal land use in the rural areas;
- (d) Address specific economic, social, natural or unique features;
- (e) Provide spatial implementation of the UNESCO requisite zonation pattern of a biosphere reserve; and
- (f) Identify programmes and projects.

2. The Spatial Development Framework Plans of the 8 local municipalities that falls within the GCBR domain are currently either in process of amendmend or revision of a new plan. These framework plans must be adopted with the new generation IDP's and be finalised by end of June 2017. In order to start with the framework of the GCBR spatial plan these SDF's should be scrutinised and used as the base of the GCBR plan. Concept draft plans have been received and will be used for the compilation of the spatial plan.
3. The Eden District Municipality is currently in process of compiling a new SDF for the Eden region. Task team meetings have been attended by the GCBR and the GCBR is registered as an Interested and Affected Party of this process. The Eden SDF will form a strategic part of the spatial plan of the GCBR's plan and to take the spatial plan forward, this Eden SDF needs to be finalised.
4. A new project in order to compile the SDF has been identified as a priority project for the GCBR :

Compilation of a Biosphere Reserve Spatial Plan for the GCBR (new project starting in 2018)

Implementation of this project will take place by the incorporation of the 8 local municipalities' Spatial Development Framework Plans as well as the two District Municipalities' Spatial Development Framework Plan within the spatial plan of the GCBR. The objective and goals towards biodiversity planning within each of these local domains should be represented within the spatial plan.

Report by: Beverley Boer

Portfolio: PUBLIC RELATIONS, TOURISM AND MARKETING

- Marketing through pre-arranged meetings with Western Cape Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport, to introduce the GCBR. Follow up meetings and workshop with Dias museum management to introduce GCBR and proposed additional marketing platform through the museum as popular local, national and international contact point. Attendees: M Mrubata (Museum Manager), B von Schutz, A Marx.
- Assisting the department / museum to assess and then compile a proposal for the registration of the Dias museum Botanical Garden, the Natural Fountain, the Munro hoek Cottages, the Malay Graves and the Field Garden as part of the Cape Nature Stewardship program. The first phase proposal is for a Conservation Area – the flexible option with no defined period of commitment (includes conservancies). Ongoing.

- Delivered the Women’s Day presentation at Dias Museum Mossel Bay and discussed the role of females in the biosphere, with the focus on food gardens and worm farming as entrepreneurial initiatives.
 - Four worm farms and one tray of vegetable seedlings were donated to school to initiate their project. Attendees: St Blaize Primary School learners, Teachers, DAFF representatives, DAC representatives, Museum management, members of public.
- Assisted in coordinating the World Fisheries Day presentation in conjunction DEA and DAFF in Mossel Bay. The talks and workshops were presented on behalf of the GCBR. The presentation topic was: “Ocean and Coastal pollution from domestic and industrial activities have a great effect on the fishing stocks”. Attendees included local fishing community, fishing companies’ representatives, TNPA, DAC, DAFF, learners from Mossel Bay schools.
- Planned and coordinated fire awareness training on behalf of the GCBR, at shelter for street kids in response to the veld fires which were affecting all during that period. Formal training was provided by BSD Consulting (Pieter Zaayman). Awareness included short course on first aid. Sessions were attended by 17 participants from shelter.
- Planned and coordinated the GCBR stall for the Dias festival (with assistance from Luami Zondagh). Undertook GCBR marketing, general environmental awareness, encouraged new members to sign up, sales of products from GCBR projects. Various GCBR members worked shifts to man the stall over this period.
- Involved the Mossel Bay branch of Social Welfare by providing training to kids in the Agape Street Kid programme to assist at the stall. This informal training involved soft skills in personal presentation, communication, marketing skills, etc. The 2 kids involved over the 3 day period are proud wearers of their GCBR T-shirts and are using the GCBR education materials to continue “Morning Talks” at the Agape centre.
- Compiled GCBR specific and related articles for local newspaper publishing. Example: Articles for GCBR Forum meeting, Women’s day, Fisheries day, Agape training, etc.
- Ongoing collaboration efforts with Thembelani Thanda (Fynbos Enterprise) regarding worm farm project. 4 Completed worm farms were delivered to 2 primary schools in Mossel Bay as part of the schools greening projects. The learners were tutored on worm farm management and use thereof; including the subsequent worm tea and compost that can be used to generate income for the schools.
- Ongoing discussion sessions with Joshua Davis from Growing Hope food gardens. Growing hope has set up 100+ community food gardens in Mossel Bay and approached the GCBR to look at possible partnerships.

- Bi-weekly beach clean –ups coordinated together with Oceans Research. The GCBR coordinates the community and lifesaving clubs participation and also provide the gloves and some of the plastic bags.
- Assisting the Mossel Bay Municipality and business with an assessment of the amount of polystyrene being disposed by businesses in the Mossel Bay area. The data collection is necessary for the justification of the purchase of a polystyrene compressor. Three tons per month is suggested to be a feasible volume to substantiate the acquisition of such a compressor. In process with submissions to municipality.
- Creating continuous awareness of the GCBR at community level by coordinating, providing breakfasts and providing transport to members of public to attend the Gouritz Forum meetings.
- Marketing during the KKNK event, this brought about some great interest from other like-minded organisations to get involved with the GCBR.

Report by: Ken Coetzee

Portfolio: ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

My main concerns still relate to the lack of progress in general with rampant alien plant control and soil erosion control throughout the GCBR.

In our business we have assisted numerous game ranches in the GCBR with the introduction of additional game species. The bottom has dropped out of the market for colour variations of wild game that were popular until the end of last year and now farmers are looking to diversify in rare game which remain relatively lucrative. We continue to carry out the risk assessments required by Cape Nature to introduce extralimital wildlife species such as roan antelope, sable antelope, waterbuck and blue wildebeest. There is also a new trend towards improved genetics in locally indigenous species like bontebok, eland, kudu and red hartebeest.

Game ranching for tourism continues to grow in the GCBR area and we have prepared risk assessments for the introduction of elephants, lions and cheetah, all of which will be kept in captivity (specific camps up to 1000ha in size) for the sake of tourism. One tourist game property is looking to expand its operation by establishing a conservancy that will link it all along a river to connect with the Gouritz River. This has tremendous potential for both nature conservation and tourism in the area.

The demand for building sand in the area has also kept us busy with impact assessment reporting. This demand will increase because not just any sand will do, only a specific type can be used with consequences for the protection of undisturbed habitats, particularly in the lowland coastal area in which there are numerous habitat types which are already under threat from human activities.

REPORT BY: Sandra Falanga

PORTFOLIO: ST BLAIZE SECTOR

Holding the fort on the following fronts:

Networking

via active contact, support and attending meetings or function when possible: Botanical Society of SA, WESSA, the various Conservancies in Mossel Bay, Oceans, Southern Cape Weed Forum, CREW, Sasol Solar Car Challenge, Keep Fin Alive, Dias Museum, Mossel Bay Municipality, Southern Cape Herbarium, Radio SFm, Garden Route Casino Community Trust.

Shark & Marine Conservation Puppet Show

The roll out for the pre-school English version is in full swing. Done with passion and fun by Keep Fin Alive.

Awaiting the approval of funding for the Afrikaans rendering to Grade 6 learners.

Funding obtained for GCBR from the Garden Route Casino Community Trust

Tour de Gouritz Bio MTB R250 000.00 – spread over 3 years

Environmental education programmes in Herbertsdale and Ruitersbos – R41 500.00

GCBR schools Poster, Booklet and Puzzle – R35 000.00

General Marketing Participation

Stalls at Annual Dias Festival Mossel Bay and at the KKNK in Oudtshoorn.

Sustainable Lifestyle Awareness

Contributing 'GroenDoen' (Greening) tips for the radio station Sfm which is based in Hartenbos.

Punting

SAGIC training to combat Alien Invasive Species and setting structures in place for the NEMBA regulations which has become effective.

Zeroing in on the scourge of plastic.

Wishlist for DOB and other funding

The wishlisted projects all dovetail on multiple levels of community engagement, benefitting conservation, livelihoods, tourism, education and so on.

1. Support for CREW (SANBI) citizen scientists within the GCBR to capture data relating to redlisted species. Comprising a vehicle, fuel, subsistence allowance & support to implement management actions to ensure sustainable conservation.

2. An Urban Conservation Initiative. Support to obtain a status quo on Mossel Bay's open spaces and, development and implementation of a management plan. This to include the St Blaize Trail, some erven with lowland Fynbos remnants, the Diosma reserve, kloofs, the arid Karroidrenosterveld slopes.
3. Estuaries. Project support to improve the river health. Three river forums exist for the Hartenbos, Klein Brak and Groot Brak estuaries. All facing challenges. Minor estuaries are ignored, but in dire straits.
4. Sustainable Science and Technologies. Promote, demonstrate, develop, permanently display clever, accessible, affordable technology available to communities to aid sustainable living. Water harvesting & saving, grey water systems, power options, product which embrace earth friendly choices. Stimulating and rewarding school participation in the annual Science Expo for schools & collaboration with the Centre for Excellence (Beverley Boer).
5. Plastic. A targeted approach to identify audiences within producers, consumers, mitigators to curtail an insidious tsunami wrecking devastation under our noses.

Report by: Wendy Crane

Portfolio: PART-TIME CO-ORDINATOR AND PROJECT DEVELOPER

Project: Unlocking a Spekboom-based Economy in the Klein Karoo

This project builds on the Jobs4Carbon Project, through mapping, capacity building and developing institutional models for carbon trading. A study on carbon economy systems and opportunities has been completed and findings published in a technical report. Following the publication, two workshops were held for dissemination and learning purposes. The first on 7 November was aimed at Vanwyksdorp landowners participating in Jobs4Carbon. The second was aimed at professionals in the field and was held on 9 November in Oudtshoorn. Both occasions provided an opportunity to share the report findings and discuss options for the collective marketing of carbon from spekboom-restored properties as well as other conservation agriculture approaches.

Project: Citizen Science in Mossel Bay

The GCBR organised a series of "*Walking under the Rocks*" beach workshops. This was a 'citizen science' effort to involve members of the public in learning about intertidal ecosystems and organisms – the species that live between the two tidal levels. In partnership with Oceans Research, four Walking under the Rocks sessions were held and they have grown in popularity: 21 May in Gouritsmond (13 participants), 4 June in Stilbaai (25 participants), 18 June in Tergniet (>40 participants). The final event was held on 16 July.

Strategic partnership exploration

Across 2016 the GCBR has engaged in a dialogue with DOB Ecology, a private philanthropic foundation in the Netherlands, with a view to developing a medium to long-term strategic partnership. A dialogue paper was prepared for this purpose, setting out a potential agenda focusing on programme and organisational development needs of the GCBR. Following a very successful 4-day exploration visit in November, the GCBR was invited to submit a funding proposal for two projects for implementation in 2017: Jobs4Carbon in Vanwyksdorp and De Rust Wetland WaterWise. A grant of ca R4 million has been secured for this work. Prospects for a medium to long-term strategic partnership with this foundation are also favourable. A planning process has commenced to define the overarching programme goals and results areas the GCBR will commit to over a 15-year timeframe. Within this overarching programme framework, a medium-term (3-year) funding proposal will also be developed. Target date for completing the initial proposal is September 2017. A programme development team has been formed comprising 14 people, combining Board and Advisory Committee members and external experts.

Report by: Annelise Vlok

GCBR Forum/members meetings – 4 meetings (including the AGM of 2016)

- AGM at Diaz Museum, Mossel Bay - 10 May 2016
- Forum meeting at Môreson, Barrydale – 16 August 2016
- Forum meeting at Calitzdorp Wine Cellar, Calitzdorp – 15 November 2016
- Forum meeting at Community Hall in Boggomsbaai – 14 February 2017

A total of 20 presentations on a variety of topics relevant to the GCBR area were presented at these forum meetings.

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.

An average between 65 – 70 people attended each meeting.

We are very grateful to DEA&DP for providing funds to the GCBR to be able to cover the costs of the meetings. Thanks to all who have assisted in making these meetings possible and memorable events.

Report by: Steve du Toit

Portfolio: DOB PROJECT MANAGER

Synopsis of 2016 / 1st quarter 2017 activities:

The first phase of the GCBR flagship project Jobs for Carbon was successfully completed in November 2016. The project received a clean financial audit and an excellent independent review of activities and outputs. The main results included rehabilitation of more than 300 hectares of degraded spekboom veld commenced through the planting of spekboom cuttings. 60 people were employed for the field work and received comprehensive training and capacity development throughout the project. Jobs 4 Carbon is a good example of partner-driven projects that will shape the future of the GCBR. Special thanks to the EU; National Department of Environmental Affairs; Rhodes Restoration Research Group; WESSA, land owners, numerous GCBR members, and the broader Vanwyksdorp community for making the project so successful.

Representatives of a Netherlands family trust (“DOB”) visited the Jobs for Carbon field teams in 2016 and were sufficiently inspired by their work and what the GCBR is achieving that DOB is currently funding a second phase of the Jobs for Carbon project. Jobs for Carbon attracted interest from various other groups, including Provincial Environmental Affairs (the “Eco-Invest” reports), Wits Business school, and Leeds University. The latter institutions are currently using the project as an example of social entrepreneurship, and adaptation and development co-benefits respectively.

DOB is also funding the construction of a wetland adjacent to the De Rust waste water treatment works. The wetland will scrub excess chemicals from waste water, which will then be used to irrigate a micro-farming enterprise for emerging farmers.

Report by: Luami Zondach

Portfolio: #spekkies

#spekkies has gone from strength to strength in the last 12 months. Having started as a small idea of selling spekboom cuttings in pots to the public in order to create awareness and promote the Jobs for Carbon project, #spekkies has become a project in its own right within the Gouritz Cluster Biosphere Reserve structure.

Beginnings

Discussions and planning regarding the #spekkies product began in early 2016, however the roll out of the first prototypes was only around mid March of 2016. The early planning for #spekkies was focused on a partnership with a cancer support PBO, with distribution focused on a prominent South African grocery retail franchise. This option however did not come to fruition, and it became clear that the GCBR would need to carry the established momentum on its own for the foreseeable future. The relationship and communication channels with the PBO remains good and is still considered an option should the opportunity arise.



First prototypes of #spekkies



Second prototype - PBO partnership

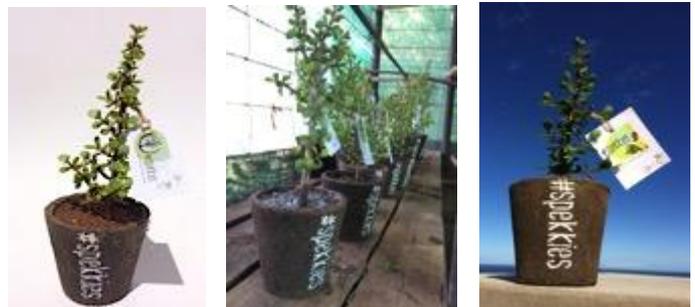
#spekkies Enterprise development

The partnership with the cancer support PBO would have seen the product branded and marketed under the logo of that organization. With the move away from the partnership towards a solely-GCBR product, a new name and logo were developed: *#spekkies* (keeping the “healthy people, healthy planet slogan from the initial prototype). The name “*#spekkies*” represents the GCBR’s attitude about spekboom and what it stands for: “spekkies” being a term of endearment for *Portulacaria afra*, a seemingly unassuming shrub that, through its unique and proficient carbonstoring abilities has the potential to significantly reduce atmospheric carbon and by so doing help with the fight against climate change!

The hash tag (#) follows the customs of social media, whereby it indicates a *word or phrase used to identify messages on a specific topic* - the topics in this case are climate change, community upliftment and ecosystem restoration (to mention but a few!).



The final #spekkies logo



The final product – spekboom in a biodegradable (compot) pot

#spekkies - Marketing and roll out of first orders

#spekkies were promoted on a small scale locally through existing relationships. A few sales were made, however it was towards the end of November 2016 in which the largest order for #spekkies was received. By advertising through cold-calling telephone calls and emails, the large nursery franchise “Stodels” (in Cape Town) was reached. The nursery loved the product, and immediately wanted a sizeable order in time for their Christmas catalogue. This allowed for just under a week for the production and delivery of 600 #spekkies to five different Stodels branches across Cape Town.

Despite the challenge for time, transport and production, the order was delivered on time and successfully. The product has fared well, and Stodels anticipates placing a second order shortly.

After the Stodels order other sizeable and retail orders include Jakkalsvlei Wine Estate, The KKNK (GCBR stall – all #spekkies were sold out) and The Green Shed (in Wilderness).

#spekkies –Product development and future plans

Small scale retail and direct sales continue for #spekkies. The focus currently is around the marketing and promotion of the brand on social media, along with renewed cold-calling marketing campaigns to new retailers.

The product continues to develop in popularity, and to-date between 800-900 #spekkies have been sold. The manufacturing has proven a successful and well managed area on its own, with the Jobs 4 Carbon teams once again proving their weight in gold: manufacture happens timeously, and quality is impeccable – even when there is no field/senior manager present, the teams produce quality products time and again.

#spekkies is another testament to the strength and capability of the GCBR team, and we expect even greater achievements for the enterprise over the next 12 months.