



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

27 AUGUST 2014 – 30 JUNE 2015

1. Meetings of the Board of Directors

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

Name	Surname	22/10/14	3/12/14	18/02/15	15/04/15	17/06/15
Willem	Botha	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dick	Carr	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Charles	Basson	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ken	Coetzee	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Andre	Britz	✓	✓		✓	✓
Pauline	du Plessis	✓	✓		✓	
Kobus	Nel	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fred	Orban			✓		✓
Daan	Toerien		✓	✓	✓	✓
Johan	van der Merwe					✓
Hendrik	Visser					

The following directors served in the portfolios set out below:

Directors (with portfolio in brackets)	Johan van der Merwe (acting since June 2015) (Agriculture & Mining)	CJ Nel (chairperson of the Kammanasie sector)
W Botha (Chairperson)	F Orban (Public Relations, Marketing & Tourism)	S Falanga (acting as St Blaize sector chairperson)
D Carr (Deputy Chairperson)	H Visser (co-opted in June 2015) (Spatial Development)	P Du Plessis (chairperson of the Langeberg sector)
K Coetzee (Environmental Research)	A Britz (acting in the Education Portfolio)	AJ Britz (chairperson of the Towerkop sector)
C Basson (Community Development & Labour)	D Toerien (Entrepreneurial & Economic Development)	

2. General overview

In more than one way the GCBR has made significant progress during the past financial year. The directors have gained good experience and understand their roles much better. The GCBR is fortunate to have very able, willing and knowledgeable technical committee members who support the board with excellence.

The GCBR is, for the first time, in a position to pay small salaries to a secretary and bookkeeper. Unfortunately the board is not in a financial position yet to appoint a fulltime co-ordinator and project developer. This is becoming more pressing by the day to enable the organization to grow. Currently the GCBR is still relying heavily on volunteers assisting with these duties. Almost all the people involved with the GCBR have their own day jobs and careers to pursue.

Luckily the biosphere reserves in the Western Cape have huge support from the provincial government and the department is assisting in many ways. I shall revert to this matter later in the report.

During the 2014 AGM it was requested to include a short synopsis by each director highlighting the activities of the portfolios during the past year. This request has been adhered to and you will find these reports at the end of the report. Kindly note that some of the directors were only co-opted recently or are currently acting in their respective portfolios.

3. UNESCO designation

It is a privilege to report that the GCBR was designated by UNESCO on 8 June 2015 at the annual meeting of the ICC. We have received almost a hundred messages of congratulations with accompanying media coverage on a national basis. This also led to a TV insert on the Jobs for Carbon project in Van Wyksdorp which was broadcasted on Morning Live on SABC 2.

We wish to thank everyone who assisted with this process and all those who supported us. Your belief and comfort helped the team to persist in what they believe.

4. Finances

4.1 Annual Financial Statement

The annual financial statement for the financial year ending at 30 June 2015 was not finalized in time for the last board meeting on 19 August 2015 and will only be approved at the next board meeting to be held on

14 October 2015. The financial statement has been finalized now and it will be discussed during this AGM.

It remains a priority for the board to keep a strict eye on the financial management of the GCBR and the bi-monthly reports consist of entries of every project separately to ensure that no overspending of budgets occurs.

4.2 Support by the Authorities:

Constant efforts to gain financial support from National, Provincial and Local Authorities are continuing.

Although progress have been made by all the biospheres on a national basis to strengthen relationships with the National Department of Environmental Affairs the department has not made any effort to offer financial assistance to biospheres. This is in contradiction of their undertaking contained in the international treaties signed by government on the Man and Biosphere Programme. During a workshop in Pretoria the biospheres in conjunction with DEA and other role players compiled a national strategy for biospheres. Much was attained but the department would not agree to provide funding. A MoU was signed with the DEA by all BRs nationally.

The Western Cape Provincial Government lead by Minister Anton Bredell succeeded in allocating an amount of R350 000.00 to the GCBR from their midterm budget reallocation. This was paid to us during March 2015 and must be spent before 31 March 2016 because it was too late to spend the money during the 2014/15 financial year. The department is in the process of paying the allocation for the 2015/16 financial year which we should receive during September. This is a windfall within the same financial year and therefore the GCBR had to provide a separate budget for this money. The decision was to spend the bulk of these funds on two projects, namely the development of a hiking trail along the banks of the Gourits River and a project on alien eradication by converting the biomass into economic commodities. The balance will be spent among a few portfolios. This is a significant step forward for the GCBR and a feather in the cap of the provincial government.

The provincial department also afforded the Western Cape biospheres the opportunity to address the municipal managers of all the municipalities at their Min May Tech meeting in Worcester. It was disturbing to learn how little the managers knew about biospheres.

On the municipal front the progress has been disappointingly slow. The one light in the tunnel has been the Hessequa municipality who has managed to grant the GCBR the R30 000.00 pa for the past couple of years. The Mossel Bay municipality has agreed to make R40 000.00 available to the GCBR during the previous financial year under rather strict conditions but the money has not been coming forth yet.

The board shall make a special effort to interact with all the municipal councils within our domain to inform them of the roll of the biosphere and to discuss matters of mutual interest and how we may assist each other based on the three pillars of the Man and Biosphere Program.

4.3 National Biosphere Trust Fund

Due to the designation of the GCBR the company is now a beneficiary of the trust and entitled to take its rightful position as trustee. The trust has not made any real progress in obtaining funding but has been acknowledged by both the Western Cape government and the national DEA.

5. Projects

Several projects are under way. 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 chairman's report.

6. Members' meetings

Three members' meetings were held. Meetings were relatively well attended and interesting topics were discussed. More may be read in the report by AnneLise Vlok attached to this chairman's report. She is doing an excellent job for which we are all thankful.

7. Promotion

7.1 The first in a range of posters have been completed and distributed. The first is a generic introduction to the GCBR. The second is underway and mainly aimed at school children who are very important as they are so susceptible to being educated on the environment.

7.3 A fresh brochure will also see the light in the near future.

7.4 No progress has been made with SANRAL to obtain consent to put up signs at all the entry points to the GCBR domain on National and Regional roads. The negotiation is still undertaken by the Western

Cape Biosphere Reserve Forum with strong support from Ruida Stanvliet.

8. Strategy

After the DEA&DP paid the first allocation to the GCBR which put the company in a position to allocate funding to the various portfolios and have some operational funds available the need for proper strategic planning became critical. Planning started immediately but due to full programs a strategic session was scheduled for 19 and 20 July 2015 at Towerland near Herbertsdale. The session was attended by all the directors as well as a strong contingent of technical committee members. Professor Alan Fowler did an exceptional job to guide us to formulate the first steps towards a practical and implementable strategy for the GCBR for the period of 2015 to 2020. Attached you will also find a document called "The Organisation in a Nutshell" which is a brief description of what transpired during the strategic session. You are welcome to use this document as a flyer to explain to others what the GCBR stands for and what it aspires to be. A follow up session followed after the board meeting on the 19th of August 2015. At this last session a small group of five people were mandated to compile a document outlining the steps to implement the strategy in practice.

9. Rietkraal Nature Reserve

Pieter Coetzee of Assegaay Bosch Ranch Pty Ltd has five farms near Van Wyksdorp which he made available to the GCBR to enable the GCBR to declare a contract nature reserve with CapeNature. One of the properties is donated to the GCBR and the remaining four are made available at a very reasonable price. The GCBR has made a submission to the Lesley Hill Succulent Karoo Trust to purchase the four properties. The application has been approved by the Trust in principle and the GCBR is currently awaiting the approval by CapeNature to establish a contract nature reserve. Hopefully a final submission will be made to the Trust during September 2015.

The contract nature reserve will be managed by the GCBR and the company shall be entitled to utilise all five properties for various purposes relating to best practises, research and education.

10. Registration of Trademarks

The provisional registration of the logos of the Gouritz Cluster Biosphere Reserve and the Jobs 4 Carbon has been done and we are awaiting the final registration.

11. A few words of gratitude

Our loyal members

Sponsors

Pieter Coetzee

CapeNature and WESSA

Other Government Departments – such as the Western Cape Department of Agriculture for the use of their facilities at Outeniqua and Oudtshoorn Experimental Farms and DEA&DP

Wendy, AnneLise, Steve, Susan, Jan, Anita, Mary, Annemarie and Karin

The Directors

I need to convey a special word of thanks to those directors who have resigned and are not available for re-election. They are Dick Carr, Fred Orban and Pauline du Plessis who have enterprises which need their full attention. They are still available to assist and for that we are also grateful. They have done a splendid job as directors.

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

WF Botha

Chairperson

Report by: Dick Carr

Portfolio: Deputy Chairperson

Man and Biosphere meetings.

Attended the MAB meeting in September 2014 hosted by Koegelberg BR. Presented talk on the J4C project and gave an up-date of the revision of the domain map presented to UNESCO

Attended the BR Forum meeting on the evening prior to the Koegelberg MAB meeting.

The March 2015 meeting was not attended because DEA failed to book the flights to and from the meeting.

Website

Approached FAQ to host the website and provide some pro *bono* services to the GCBR. Attended a training session with other members of the Board at FAQ regarding the management of the website.

De Rust Eco Festival

Succeeded in getting the De Rust and Kammanassie Farmers Unions to sit around the table to discuss the problems of alien plants and their effect on their water resources. This then later led to a panel discussion at the Eco Festival where there was further in-put from invited specialists in hydrology. The farming community will continue to be encouraged to take an active part in alien vegetation management.

Valuable Aliens Project

Joined Steve du Toit in the research and development of a business plan for converting alien biomass into a commercial product.

Rietkraal

Joined other members of the Board on the first visit to Rietkraal.

Research

Completed a questionnaire for a PhD student, Chu Van Cuong, relating to the Delphi process of biosphere reserve assessment.

Report by: Daan Toerien

Portfolio: Economic Development and Entrepreneurship

Four presentations were made at members' meetings: Albertinia (March 2014), Ladismith (May 2014), Mosselbaai (August 2014) en Oudtshoorn (November 2014). The presentations were based on the lessons learned from a study of all the towns of the Free State.

A process was started in 2015 to identify and classify all the formal business in the Gouritz Biosphere. The process has been completed in five towns - Calitzdorp, Ladismith, Barrydale, Swellendam and Albertinia – to date. In regards with a four more towns - Montagu, Heidelberg, Riversdale and Stilbaai – the basic information has been collected and classification is in process.

The basic data from Prins Albert, De Rust, Uniondale and Groot Brakrivier is being collected.

The information empowers the Biosphere to compare towns and subdivisions in regards to entrepreneurship.

Report by André Britz

Portfolio: Education (acting)

Educational activities started with a weeklong student camp with IALA, International Academy For Leadership through Adventure on the farm Oudenwagensdrift during September 2014.

We visited Oakdale Agricultural School at Riversdale and hosted Glenwood House School, as part of the Glenwood House Karoo Challenge, at Rooiberg Lodge in November 2014. The GCBR DVD was screened at both occasions, with a presentation of about twenty minutes. With Glenwood House we also planted 45 Spekboom.

During March we started, as part of the Jobs 4 Carbon (“J4C”) project, a Carbon Educational project with the Van Wyksdorp Primary School. We paid attention to the ecological role of Spekboom, identifying familiar plants in the veld and archaeology.

The grade 6 and 7 learners were taken on a camp at Rooiberg Lodge during May 2015, where they also planted 60 Spekboom. This same group was taken on an educational visit to Stilbaai on 26 June 2015.

A green club, “Green Butterflies”, was established at the Van Wyksdorp Primary School, with a committee of learners to run it with the help of the teachers and J4C members. The focus at the school is to establish a food garden at the school and begin a waste management programme.

The pilot project with the Primary School in Van Wyksdorp is seen as a way to enhance the good work that is being done in this community by the Jobs 4 Carbon project and spreads the message of environmental conservation to the children as well as the adults. It is seen as a step towards duplicating the concept into other areas where the GCBR intends to engage in integrated rehabilitation projects.

The school projects were all collaborative projects with the Landmark Foundation, where we put our expertise and resources together on behalf of Environmental Education.

Special thanks to Annemarie Gebhardt, Monica Vaccaro, Danvil Esau, Katriena Opperman, teachers and others who assist, to make this portfolio work.

Report by: Ken Coetzee

Portfolio: Environment and Research

Intensive game farming development continues to increase in the GCBR, with approximately one application per month for high value extralimital game passing through Conservation Management Services and Cape Nature for risk assessment. The most popular species currently are sable antelope, blue wildebeest (golden colour variety) and springbok (copper colour variety). The demand for disease free buffalo projects continues.

A trip was undertaken at the invite of the Botswana University and Botswana Conservation to deliver a presentation on the risks of extralimital game introduction for game ranching. The paper presented outlined some of the procedures and mitigations that are used in the Western Cape and the GCBR, using risk assessment methodology that was jointly devised in the GCBR by game farmers and Cape Nature.

An erosion control and veld rehabilitation information booklet was prepared in preparation the GCBR farmers (erosion) days planned for later in the year.

A basic preliminary framework for the practical management aspects of the GCBR's recently acquired Rietkraal Nature Reserve was prepared after a brief field evaluation.

Renewed concerns about the relentless spread of "new" alien plants, particularly Cacti, requires action in the GCBR. Farms in the Riversdale, Ladismith, De Rust, Prince Albert and Uniondale districts were identified as areas of concern. With the support of the Environmental Portfolio director, the Mantis Project has been launched by a private individual to raise funding for increased awareness about the threat of alien plants. We are jointly working on an information booklet on alien plants specifically for the GCBR area.

Report By: Charles Basson

Portfolio: Community Development and Labour

Klein Karoo National Kunstefees; trained 5 workers to harvest Spekboom cuttings. 500 Spekboom cuttings were made for an environmental display. The cuttings were either planted or given to festival goers.

Outreach Programmes

Eco Schools Programme.

Conducted a meeting with teachers at Scheeperskraal Primary School in the Kammanassie. Discussion centered on the Eco Schools Programme and the school's portfolio for 2014. This school has been participating in the programme for the past 3 years. Other schools in the area are also part of this initiative.

Dysseldorp Environmental Group.

Initial discussions with community leaders to start Green Programmes in the town. A top priority is litter management. This project is going to create jobs in the community and create a sense of well-being in the town with the beautification of the environment. It will improve health as the litter is not only an eyesore but also a health risk.

Oudtshoorn Tourism Transformation Mission

Met with Sam Misemengo to discuss tree planting and greening projects at Rose Valley, a new informal housing project in Oudtshoorn. The trees will be planted in people's gardens and they will take responsibility to maintain and grow the trees. Trees are donated by CapeNature and me and the project will also be monitored and supported by myself. The project creates a sense of well-being in the town with the beautification of individual personal space.

Book Study Group.

This project has just started and consists of 8 members studying Daan Toerien's book - Taming Janus – Technology, Business Strategy and Local Economic Development. The purpose of this group is to empower and enlighten the participants in thinking about entrepreneurship in a new way and with better tools to succeed in their personal ventures.

War on Leaks

In 2014 January the War on Leaks Project was started in conjunction with WESSA students under the GCBR supervision. The project was funded by the Table Mountain Fund and the Oudtshoorn Municipality. The project was a pilot project to fix leaks in people's homes

Project leader tasks included:

Setting up partnerships with CapeNature and Oudtshoorn Municipality.

Selection of project team

Survey of 800 houses in a variety of suburbs

Site inspection of leaks

Analysis of the costs involved in the repair of the leaks and order supplies

In partnership with CapeNature a workshop was developed on saving water and I co presented 3 workshops to community members

Lobby Oudtshoorn Municipality to support this work financially

Conduct an awareness campaign door to door

Seven workers were recruited to do the work under the supervision of the project co-coordinator. Sincere thanks goes to John Komanasie of the Oudtshoorn Municipality for the assistance of a qualified plumber, tools and materials to repair the leaks and technical assistance.

The project is now completed and can be hailed as a success for all concerned. There is every reason to believe that it is going to be replicated in other areas of Oudtshoorn and towns within the GCBR domain. Funding to accomplish this has been applied for.

De Rust Eco Fees (23- 28 June 2015)

Partnered as a volunteer to Susan Delpport (organizer of the festival) to undertake the harvesting of cuttings and preparation for the field session of Spekboom planting on the De Rust Koppie. A lecture on Spekboom and the harvesting and planting of the plant was conducted by me, followed by a guided visit to the Koppie and planting of Spekboom. This is an ongoing project and further sections of the Koppie are planted during each festival.

It is accompanied by awareness raising in the Blomnek township of the need to preserve and protect the fragile and environmentally valuable site such as the De Rust Koppie

This is accomplished by meeting with the community and by engaging assistance from the community to do the planting.

Report by: Fred Orban

Portfolio: Public Relations, Marketing and Tourism

Profiling the GCBR

The past number of months has been spent mainly on endeavouring to find the right and effective structures to market the GCBR.

It must be realized that at certain levels people know what the purpose and benefits of a Biosphere Reserve are and what the long term benefits are to both communities and the natural environment. These are very often passion driven people.

The majority of residents, inhabitants, visitors and even members of a Biosphere Reserve do not have the faintest idea what all the fuss is about or what the benefits are to them. Our species have become disconnected with the earth and the benefits that a healthy environment offers.

The strategy therefore that has been adopted during the past few months is to establish a marketing policy that will be clear and will be easy to implement and apply.

At present a selected committee is consulting with a Marketing Consultant to establish an effective direction, marketing will include hard copy material, media releases and angles, radio programs, social media, web site marketing etc. The first of a series of posters have been printed and distributed throughout the domain to municipal offices, tourism bureaux, co-ops, guest houses and several other places. Work on a poster aimed at schools is currently being designed for distribution later this year.

Projects for the future

Planning of hiking trails and MTB activities, under the banner of the GCBR. These plans are in the discussion phase as effective planning could not take place without the funding to support the experts needed to assist in these projects.

Added by Wendy Crane

The GCBR has recently entered into an agreement with Mossel Bay Municipality, aimed at promoting and marketing the GCBR especially in the St Blaize sector. The Municipality is providing financial assistance (R40k) for this purpose. We are also developing a partnership with events management company Tri-Sport to hold a flagship 4-day mountain bike tour aimed at raising awareness about the GCBR. The first tour is provisionally planned for March 2016.

Report by: Cobus Nel

Portfolio: Kammanassie Sector

Profiling and Representation of the GCBR

Have found a new participant (local farmer) who would like to be part of the ongoing Spekboom planting initiative that is going to take place between Oudtshoorn and Carlitzdorp.

Distribution of the GCBR posters in the Oudtshoorn area – Municipal offices, Library, Tourism office, several guest houses and the Agri Klein Karoo offices.

Promoting of the GCBR at all levels of interaction.

Project Involvement

Promote the keeping of breeding ostrich pairs in smaller camps (0,25 hectare) and the practice of record keeping. This instead of large breeding groups in large camps (several hundred hectares), without any method of record keeping. This is both an economic and environmental initiative.

The record keeping helps the farmers to know what their productivity is and smaller camps allow for the degradation of smaller areas of veld whilst very large tracts of land can be rehabilitated.

Working with one participating farmer at this stage.

Actively involved in the tender process for the mapping of the area between Oudtshoorn and Carlitzdorp for the Spekboom Planting Initiative.

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 financially in order to appoint a service provider to compile the SDF.

The following actions will now be taken:

- 3.1 The drafting and submission of a motivational report to DEADP for financial assistance and the appointment of a service provider;
- 3.2 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.

4. Budget Implications

The estimated amount that would be required for the compilation and drafting of the GCBR SDF will be in the vicinity of approximately R 700 000. This will basically cover the service provider's costs. The amount of R 10 000 of the current budget will be used to cover the costs incurred for the collection of the data sets from the various municipalities.

5. Conclusion

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.

Report by: Johan van der Merwe

Portfolio: Agriculture and Mining (acting)

1. GCBR spekboom mapping Project – Invitation tenders were send out to 5 companies and only one company tendered. Casidra decided to re-issue the tender - aim to receive more than one tender – to be more transparent.
2. GCBR -Jobs for Carbon food security project as well as Oasis food security project (Vanwyksdorp) assisted with the project writing and is busy facilitating the process for securing the funding needed for these projects.
3. Ostrich Bio Infrastructure (LandCare Project) Farming with ostriches in a more sustainable way. Participate in the process with cape nature and

environmental affairs together with GCBR members to streamline applications for Farmers.

4. Allocated GCBR R27 000-00 funding – Food security gardens, discussions are taking place on where the funding could be spent, to create the most impact.

Report by: André Britz

Portfolio: Towerkop Sector

Most of my time was spent on Jobs for Carbon and the successful implementation of this pilot project. It started during October 2014 with a function with a delegation from the EU at Van Wyksdorp. The recruiting of the supervisors and team members was done during December 2014 and January 2015. Training of the teams started in February 2015. The teams were deployed on 11 March 2015.

We took the supervisors to the Biosphere Awareness Event in Wildernes, with some Spekboom for demonstration and distribution.

We worked with and visited landowners on an ongoing basis.

I represented, or was a member of the GCBR and J4C teams who hosted several delegations at the Jobs for Carbon project.

I also undertook several onsite visits to Rietkraal Property with different delegations, to purchase it on behalf of the GCBR.

Raising awareness activities have included:

- Giving presentations on several occasions.
- The screening of the GCBR DVD on several occasions.
- Posters and brochures were distributed all over the Towerkop sector.
- Brochures were also distributed to lots of visitors to the Rooiberg Lodge.

I did an SABC News interview regarding the registration of the GCBR as a biosphere reserve by UNESCO and the J4C project.

Report by: Pauline du Plessis

Portfolio: Langeberg Sector

1. Battle of the Driffies

The planned bridge and road, crossing the Gouritz River at Middeldrift, has not been halted yet. Hamman Oosthuizen, agricultural economist from OABS Development, Dr Johan Neethling, a private consultant and Tielman Roos, an attorney, are

assisting with the last appeal. We need some urgent last inputs to stop this project that has more negatives than positives for the community and the environment.

2. Aloe Symposium

The annual Aloe Symposium at Albertinia was attended on 12 June 2015 where I was invited to where I was invited to introduce the GCBR and its activities to the participants. The impact of the GCBR in the Aloe Ferrox Region was seen as extremely import by the Aloe Council members; therefore I was immediately invited to become a member of the Aloe Council. The regional GCBR representative in the Langeberg region was seen as a key position for future initiatives amongst the two aloe factories and the local aloe tapper communities, as well as the broader Albertinia farming communities.

3. Herbertsdale Craft Group

The GCBR and its importance were introduced to the members of the Herbertsdale Craft Group and assistance was offered with networking, as well as regular mentorship visits.

4. Gouritz Heritage Trail

Wendy Crane, Chris Carr, myself and two other hikers test-walked the first day of this trail. A follow-up hike of the second day of the trail has already been planned for the immediate future.

5. GCBR Introductory Visits

A number of places where visited where the GCBR was introduced and posters and pamphlets distributed. The list of places is as follows: Renew Karoo Nursery in Prins Albert, Riversdale Library, Swellendam Tourist Office, Klipfontein Primary School in Albertinia district, and various endurance rides in Oudtshoorn, Albertinia, Kammanassie and Bredasdorp.

Report by: Steve du Toit and Wendy Crane

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Jobs for Carbon

This flagship project of the GCBR is a catalyst changing people's lives in the community of Van Wyksdorp.

The Jobs for Carbon project rehabilitates degraded veld by planting Spekboom back into the landscape where it used to occur naturally. It is about veld improvement, environmental restoration and rural employment – and it produces valuable scientific evidence to test the potential for earnings via green or carbon credits in the carbon market. A fully restored landscape is definitely more productive and more resilient to

climate change. A fully vegetated slope is vastly superior to a degraded slope where soil and nutrients are lost through water and wind erosion. Fully vegetated slopes create far less storm water damage, as they retain the water on the landscape longer. All this improves the quality and productivity of the veld. Jobs for Carbon can be the catalyst that reverses the degradation in the Little Karoo and rebuilds our natural capital that was lost over the past century.

Jobs and livelihoods

A major benefit of restoration is job creation. Spekboom re-establishes easily by planting cuttings harvested from healthy shrubs. This labour intensive work can create thousands of jobs in rural communities where degradation has eroded the economic viability of many farms. Ecotourism opportunities and livelihoods improve as the beauty of the Klein Karoo landscape is restored. It can also bring financial returns through carbon offsetting and carbon credits, which can be reinvested in further land restoration.

How does Jobs for Carbon work?

It starts with spatial mapping of potential restoration sites in specific areas

We meet with interested landowners to explain the programme, and those who wish to have their land restored sign an agreement with us

Researchers make a detailed baseline assessment of the carbon stocks on the farm. Harvesting and planting teams then undertake the Spekboom restoration work

We facilitate linkages with carbon markets and other key institutions

The carbon market

Carbon captured by plant growth can be traded as carbon credits via informal or formal carbon markets that exist to help countries and companies to offset their carbon footprints, and so combat global warming and climate change. In South Africa, Spekboom restoration will qualify for carbon offsetting under the carbon tax in the near future. This will stimulate demand for carbon credits in the local market. Jobs for Carbon is positioned to take advantage of this.

The initial phase of this programme (2014-2016) is supported by the European Union and the Department of Environmental Affairs.

The GCBR secured its first carbon offsets contract, with a university consortium led by Cambridge University in the UK. Over three years, the university will be buying the equivalent of carbon sequestered by about 12 ha of restored Spekboomveld to offset the carbon footprint of delegates travelling to its international conference. The revenue we generate from this arrangement will be reinvested in further land restoration.

The Jobs for Carbon Project has generated a fair amount of publicity with various articles in newspapers and magazines, as well as radio and television coverage through SABC. The Western Cape Provincial Government has also expressed keen interest in supporting the initiative under its Eco-Invest Programme which is aimed at

growing the Green Economy in the province.

Building on the ongoing work in Van Wyksdorp, we have secured funding from LandCare (R255k) to undertake a scientific mapping study of potential restoration sites in the Calitzdorp area. We have also secured new funding from the Table Mountain Fund (R645k) to build the capacity and knowledge of local champions that can help to catalyse the Jobs for Carbon project into a longer-term programme in the Klein Karoo. It will also support the development of institutional models for Spekboom-based carbon trading over the next 3 years.

Report by: AnneLise Vlok

CO-ORDINATOR OF MEMBERS' MEETINGS

GCBR Forum/members meetings – 4 meetings (including the AGM of 2014)

- AGM at The Barnyard, Mossel Bay – 26 August 2014
- Forum meeting at Oudtshoorn Proefplaas, Oudtshoorn – 25 November 2014
- Forum meeting in Swellendam Town Hall, Swellendam – 24 February 2015
- Forum meeting at Greenhaven Multipurpose Centre, Great Brak River – 26 May 2015.

A total of 20 presentations (16 long and 4 short) were presented at the forum meetings. After the previous AGM we visited the nearby Mossdustria site to look for some of the threatened flora that occurs there.

The fact that we have been having the meetings in different towns in the different sectors of the domain has resulted in new people attending at each meeting. However, it has also resulted in some meetings not being well-attended (such as the meeting in Swellendam), perhaps because of the travelling distance for some of the regular attendees. I have never had a complaint that a meeting was uninteresting and a waste of time. 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.

Organising the catering for the meetings has always been done with a leap of faith. There has either been someone who has organised funding from the municipality (thank you Hessequa), or members have contributed themselves to covering the costs, or as is now the case, DEA&DP who has provided funding to the GCBR for implementation. Thanks to all who have assisted in making these meetings possible and memorable events.