



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

19 JULY 2011 – 30 JUNE 2012

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

Six meetings were held as set out below:

Date	Venue
2 August 2011	Eden District Municipality, George
27 September 2011	Eden District Municipality, George
22 November 2011	Outeniqua Experimental Farm , George
24 Februarie 2012	Assegaaybosch, Vanwyksdorp
26 April 2012	Outeniqua Experimental Farm , George
28 June 2012	Garden Route Game Lodge, Albertinia

The following directors attended the above meetings:

Director	No of meetings attended
W Botha	5
D Carr	6
K Coetzee	5
H Hill	4
M Murriss	4

V Gibbs-Halls	5
H Muller	4
C Taute	0

2. Resignations

Chris Taute resigned during December 2011. This left the board of directors with a vacancy in one of the most important portfolios being Community Development and Labour and many efforts were made to identify and contact a suitable replacement director to be co-opted. On 26 April 2012, Charles Basson agreed to be co-opted on the board of directors to give some momentum to this portfolio. He has since then done exceptional good work with limited financial support and infrastructure.

During May 2012, Henry Hill resigned as the director for the Economics and Spatial Development Portfolio. The board accepted his resignation and resolved not to co-opt a director in his stead because it was so close to the next annual general meeting.

3. Logo

Evergreen Designs designed a number of variations from which the directors accepted the logo which we thought was the most appropriate. Unfortunately the board did not realise at that stage how persistent Wendy Crane can be and eventually accepted a revised version of the logo. We do, however, are of the opinion that the amendment to the logo as requested by Wendy makes good sense and will hopefully serve us well.

4. Appointment of chairpersons for sectors

It has been a more difficult task than initially anticipated to find eager, willing and knowledgeable persons to take up this task. After much deliberations and discussions with candidates it was agreed by the board and the candidates, that the first chairpersons will be appointed for a twelve month period in order to give them the opportunity to find their feet. We are grateful for the fact that Kobus Nel accepted the appointment for the Kammanassie sector and André Britz for the Towerkop sector. We have not been able to identify, convince and appoint chairpersons for the remaining two sectors.

5. Workshop

On the 26 October 2011, a workshop was attended by the directors as well as representatives of several Government institutions and private individuals.

The workshop was facilitated by Dr. Daan Toerien and several aspects of the GCBR structure was discussed. Specific attention was given to the roles of the directors and the technical committee as well as the composition of the technical committee. The report is available.

6. Appointment of technical committee

The members of the technical committee were appointed and as the need arises further extensions to the committee are made. The members of the technical committee are providing very useful information to the board. Most of the members of the technical committee attend the meetings of the board and although they do not have voting rights they fully participate in the discussions.

7. Appointment of co-ordinator and TMF funding

When the project to develop the capacity for the Gouritz Cluster Biosphere Reserve was approved and funded by the Table Mountain Fund (TMF), the board appointed the very able and capable Wendy Crane as the project developer. The project stretches over a three year period and is fully on track. The full value of the project is R350 000.00.

8. Member's meetings

Three members' meetings were held on 11 October 2011 in Oudtshoorn, on 6 March 2012 in Riversdale and on 29 May 2012 in Mossel Bay. All these meetings were very well attended and interesting topics were introduced by extremely knowledgeable speakers.

9. Awards event

CapeNature invited the GCBR to partner their prestigious Annual Biodiversity Awards Event held at the African Sky Hotel in Oudtshoorn. The GCBR will play a more significant role in this event from 2012, but still in partnership with CapeNature.

10. Application to UNESCO

With the help of many people including Steve du Toit, AnneLise Vlok, Vernon Gibbs-Halls, Jan Vlok and Wendy Crane a comprehensive application for official recognition of the Gouritz Cluster Biosphere Reserve was compiled and sent to the National Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) to be lodged with UNESCO. This application was supported by both the relevant Provincial Departments of the Western and Eastern Cape as well as numerous municipalities and SanParks. Several barriers had to be overcome and unfortunately we do not know whether we have been successful. I am

very proud to be associated with the people that have devoted so much time and energy in preparing the documentation and trying to comply with all the requests thrown at them with almost impossible deadlines.

11. Website

GCBR hope to be able to launch the new website within days rather than weeks. We wish to thank Pieter Coetzee for sponsoring the development of the new website as well as Vernon Gibbs-Halls, AnneLise Vlok and Wendy Crane for their contributions. We express hope that many more people will contribute to the website in order to make it a very useful marketing tool.

12. Man and the Biosphere (MAB) workshop and Sustainable Living Festival

The GCBR was represented by Dick Carr at the workshop and festival from 28 September to 1 October 2011 in Hoedspruit and the Kruger National Park. Apart from gathering useful information it was also good to use the platform to introduce the newest biosphere reserve in South Africa and network with others regarding the management and funding of biospheres.

13. Video

The renowned filmmaker, Neil Curry offered his expertise and services on a expenses only basis to compile a DVD on the importance of fresh clean water for the survival of us and the environment. He has been working on the DVD for several months now and is currently busy with the editing. The distribution of this DVD is very important and must be done by suitably experienced people who are able to talk on the subject.

14. Value-added products from alien vegetation

The GCBR has embarked on a project to co-ordinate the eradication of invasive alien vegetation in conjunction with other role players. The most important aspect of this project will be to develop value-added products from the biomass. We have had initial discussions with ChemCity (an affiliate of Sasol Ltd) to assist us with the technical expertise to develop the products and compile the necessary business plans for potential entrepreneurs. ChemCity also has an incubation program in terms of which they provide technical assistance to entrepreneurs for a period of 18 months to establish their businesses.

In order for this huge project to be successful we need to establish good working relationships with landowners, the working for water and fire programs as well as municipalities and existing entrepreneurs making compost, fire wood or any other products.

Representatives of ChemCity will visit the area on 7 and 8 August 2012 for a number of site visits and further discussions on structuring the project.

15. Matters that need urgent attention

15.1 Marketing

The success of the GCBR depends to a large extent on the visibility of the organization. The only way of doing that without a huge budget is to enrol more members, involving the tourism bureaux in the different towns, making use of newsletters being sent out by municipalities with their monthly statements, contacting agricultural unions, chambers of commerce and involving schools.

15.2 Funding

We need to keep putting pressure on municipal, provincial and national spheres of government to commit themselves to fund basic administrative capacity to enable us to play a meaningful role in meeting our objectives.

We shall continue to apply for funding of specific projects as the opportunities arise. The success of the projects in which we are currently involved will afford us the opportunity to prove that we can spend money wisely while making a difference to sustain the environment.

16. A few words of gratitude

I wish to thank a number of persons and businesses for their contributions during the past year and who have not only made it possible to get through the year, but actually made it a pleasant and joyful experience. Thank you for your inputs and contributions.

16.1 The members, who have supported us through out the year and have largely contributed to the success of our meetings.

16.2 The directors and chairpersons of the sectors, who have committed themselves to the cause during the past 12 months without being compensated for any expenses they needed to incur or for any time spent on behalf of the GCBR.

16.3 The members of the technical committee, who are so passionate about their work and often displayed such eagerness to further the objectives of the GCBR.

16.4 Mary Carr, who offered to assist with the minutes and is doing so very ably.

16.5 AnneLise Vlok, who has made a huge contribution with so many arrangements with regards to venues, finding money for refreshments, speakers and too many other things to mention.

- 16.6 All the municipalities, companies, institutions and private individuals for hosting our board and members' meetings and other contributions through donations.
- 16.7 Pieter Coetzee, who sponsored the website and made a number of other contributions.
- 16.8 Wendy Crane, who is so enthusiastic about her work.
- 16.9 The TMF, who have not only funded the development of the GCBR but acts as a true partner.
- 16.10 Willem Smith, who has always been available to assist us and for the work done with regards to getting the legislation promulgated in the Western Cape.

WF Botha

Chairperson