

DARGLE CONSERVANCY

Committee Meeting Minutes · 8th of December 2015

Present: Nikki Brighton, Brenda Grant, Gugu Zuma, Ashley Crookes, Brandon Powell

Nature Reserve M.C.F.

Nature reserve has been proclaimed (see last set of minutes. The MCF allocated the DC R10,000 for Nature Reserve legal fees. The money was not required as first thought and the MCF may ask for it back.

NB

Dassie Relocation

Nothing further.

x

Alien Plants

DUCT donated herbicide has been issued to DC Members and keen river caretakers Ashley Crookes, Howard Long, Carlene Bronner, Mike Beresford and Andrew Anderson.

NB

Liaison with the K.Z.N.C.A. & Other Conservancies

The KZNCA has been very helpful on the reedbuck poaching issue. They will be bringing up the issue with Dr Mabunda of Ezemvelo Wildlife. The DC has donated R500 to towards the creation and maintenance of their website and the service it is providing.

x

Living Local

Nothing further.

x

Committee Tasks & Portfolios

Nikki Brighton – Chairman – 083 473 3074
chairman@dargleconservancy.org.za

Ashley Crookes – Vice-Chairman & Wildlife Sightings – 082 460 1815
vicechair@dargleconservancy.org.za

Brandon Powell – Secretary – 082 657 1518
secretary@dargleconsevancy.org.za

Robin Barnsley – Treasurer – 083 307 1212
treasurer@dargleconservancy.org.za

Brenda Grant – Development Secretary – 082 853 7815
development@dargleconservancy.org.za

Gugu Zuma – Education 063 104 5046
education@dargleconservancy.org.za

ALL

AC and NB will be managing the DC Facebook page.

We are delighted to welcome our newest DC committee member, Lynne Garbutt. Lynn will be taking over as DC Treasurer from Robin Barnsley who will fulfill a new role as Agricultural Liaison (via email)

Finance

Bank Balances for December 2015

Current account: **R13 060.25**

Call Account: **R59 695.21**

NPO Documents: We need to send a tax certificate to SARS. Robin is in discussions with Kevin Culverwell regarding this.

Out of the R5000 Contingency Fund R2000 went to FrackFree which we all agree is of huge logistical and practical benefit to the DC Members in light of recent events (see below.)

R500 has been donated to Ezemvelo for their new website and an extra R400 was paid to YMLP to cope with heavy email traffic during the campaign against Oil and Gas Exploration in the Midlands.

R1000 was raised for the DC and donated by members Éidín Griffin & Brandon Powell from their art exhibition at the Crabapple Chapel.

R1200 was raised for the DC and donated by DC members Carl Bronner, Karen Edley and Simon Pearse from Simon's Mongol Derby talk at Old Kilgobbin. Very many thanks to the all three of them.

Nikki proposed that we use the windfall of R2200 towards create activities in a local school facilitated by Eidin Griffin. All were in favour of this.

Lynne Garbutt will take over the books from Pam Smit in 2016. We are grateful for Pam's contribution and thrilled to have Lynne on board.

Communications

NB & BP to put together a Newsletter for the end of January.

NB
BP

Membership Programme

Neville van Leylveld has approached CROW to ask that the Dargle be considered for CROW release sites.

AC will be showing the films *Chasing Ice* at St. Ives and *Unearthed* at Tanglewood in the new year.

Andrew Anderson is organising for Post-Graduate Students from England to come and study the Dargle's Samango Monkey troop. Andrew will liaise directly with relevant landowners.

AC

Development Monitoring

A new chicken farm is going ahead and has been approved through the proper legal channels and adjudicated by the firm Terratest: Environmental Authorisation for the Expansion of the Ndiza Poultry Facility, Dargle (DC22/0044/2014) on PORTION 32 OF THE FARM MIDDLE BOSCH NO.897, DARGLE.

BG

Membership & Recruitment

Welcome to our new members Kim Goodwin & Lara Kirsten, Matthew le Cordeur & Nicole Schafer. These keen new members are over the hill in the Lidgetton Valley. We would also like to welcome new members Lynne Garbutt & Isabel Verwey who live on the Hebron road. Lynne has agreed to join the DC committee in the prized role of treasurer.

ALL

Education

On Thursday 10th of December GZ will be taking a number of Nxamalala ladies to the Mpopomeni Garden and is to get a quote for a taxi to take them there. Her Enviro Club is to have a short meeting on Sunday and she is to run a holiday Club in the forthcoming holidays for Three Days and comprising of 1. A Grassland Day 2. A MiniSASS on the Dargle River and 3. A Wetlands Day. Twenty five children will be invited and given a simple lunch – GZ can claim expenses from the DC afterwards.

GZ

The DC gave R10,000 to the MMEP last year who worked at all of the schools in our area. Pat McKrill gave brilliantly received snake talks and demonstrations at all three of our schools.

Through MCF, N3TC provided R3000 to fund Forest Excursions for local school children from Dargle, Corrie Lynn and Lions River Primary Schools.

At the MMEP Annual Awards - International Eco School Status was achieved by Dargle School, who were also awarded Best Garden. Corrie Lynn was given an award for the exceptional leadership of headmistress Thenjiwe Ngcobo and successfully achieving their second Diamond Decade. Lion's River School was awarded a Green Flag for the first time.

Trail Cameras

Gilly Robartes & Brenda Grant are currently in possession of these.

AC

Dargle River

Unfortunately not a great deal of money has been raised by the Dargle River Campaign but we shall push on into the New Year. Part of the effort is awareness raising of the importance of the rivers, so we are not disappointed.

NB

Mr Zuma and his team are to be taken on for two days of follow up clearing, funded by the DC in January.

Constitution Revisions

Nothing further.

X

Gifts

Nothing further.

x

Road Signs

Bongani Mncube from KZN Dept of Transport has responded and the application is in process.

NB

Poaching

The poaching problem is now enormous and the Dargle appears to have overtaken the Karkloof as the hunting ground of choice. Neville van Leyveld is doing a sterling job collecting photographs and information for the authorities. Poachers have apparently been arriving well equipped in bakkies with night lights and guns.

NB

We encourage DC members to report poaching to SA CAN Hotline 083 799 1916

In light of the Reedbuck capture and sale in Lidgetton (at Endebeni Farm, currently managed by Vincent Ramsay) the DC is going to ask Ezemvelo to relook at its legislation regarding the issuing of permits for the capture or hunting of animals. We will request that conservancies are consulted before permits are issued. It appears the people concerned went through the proper legal channels but the numbers of animals were not corroborated by anyone in authority. Tammy Schneideman has been in regular correspondence with EKZNW and received the original permit (using PAIA) which stated that there was a population of 150 reedbuck on the 200ha Endabeni property. EKZNW have told us that if this information is false, there are possibilities to pursue this legally. It is unlikely that EKZNW will do so.

We have been given to understand that bushpig are also being shot in the same area.

The revival of the Annual Game Count in the Dargle has been put forward as one solution to getting a better idea of the game population of the district. Neville van Leyveld and the KZN Hunters Association could be approached. Robin suggested a date during the Winter Holidays would be ideal so that school children could also be involved. Nikki has asked Pat Merrick to facilitate the Lidgetton side (he has agreed) and Gary Kelly and/or Jeremy Barlow to assist with the Dargle side (no confirmation yet)

ALL

Biodiversity Stewardship Programme

Nothing further.	X
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Budgets

<p>Estimated Income for 2015 (Based on 2014): R48 000</p> <p>Proposed Budget for 2015:</p> <p>Speakers: R2 000</p> <p>Education: R13000 (MMEP R10 000 & Nxamalala R3 000)</p> <p>Free me Donation: R1 800</p> <p>Subscriptions: R550 (MCF & KZNCA)</p> <p>Alien Clearing: R10 000 (Mr Zuma + Workshops)</p> <p>YMLP: R1 500</p> <p>Website Hosting: R1 000</p> <p>Post Box: R260</p> <p>Auditors: R1 500</p> <p>Bank Charges: R200</p> <p>Stationary: R1 500</p> <p>Gifts: R2 000</p> <p>Meetings: R1 500</p> <p>River Campaign: R1 500</p> <p>Six Info Boards for Il Postino: R 3 000</p> <p>Contingencies: R 5 000</p> <p>Approximate total: R45 000</p>	X
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Cape Parrots

Nothing further.	X
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Fracking & Unconventional Gas

<p>The Dargle Conservancy has been leading organised and lawful resistance to the application to explore Dargle (and the wider KZN Midlands) for oil and gas. This appears to be the correct stance to take because most of the DC members have given us to understand that they are opposed to fracking and gas exploration in the Midlands and because the DC represents the voiceless biodiversity, fauna and flora of the area and believes that fracking or oil and gas exploration would do irreparable harm to these natural resources and ecosystems.</p>	ALL
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The vast amounts of water alone that are required for oil and gas extraction (should any resources be found) is unfeasible given the current water crisis that is affecting most of South Africa.

NB has been handling much of the organisation and correspondence around this issue and the extent and effectiveness of her hard work should not be underestimated. Thank you Nikki! Through NB the DC is in contact with SLR consulting and all the relevant campaigners, officials and relevant people so that DC members may be kept informed.

The Meeting that was held by Rhino Oil and Gas at the Lion's River Polo Club was a fiasco as far as SLR Consulting was concerned - poor organisation, inadequate venue, large mass of protesting locals and inadequate answers to pertinent questions. The majority of the community appears to be against gas exploration, which may, or may not, lead to fracking.

As the meeting was held by SLR Consulting and the DC only kept its members informed and encouraged them to attend along with everyone else the committee cannot accept responsibility for the puncturing of a tyre of the vehicle the Rhino Oil & Gas's representative arrived in. We advocate a reasoned and legal opposition to this threat.

A further meeting chaired by SLR Consulting is to be held – date to be advised.

Next Meeting Date: Wednesday 10th of February.