



FRIENDS OF PILANESBERG

Non-Profit Organization Fund Raising Number: 006-421 NPS

SEDIBA

January, February, March 2019

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Letter from Editor

January to March 2019

Lauren Gunn

Dear friends

Happy 2019 everyone, here's wishing you all a fantastic year ahead.

At the beginning of a new year these words are spoken over and over again, I sometimes wonder why we all think that just because a new year has started it will be better than the last... technically it really is just the start of a new day.

In the earliest times, human beings calculated time by observing the periods of light and darkness that alternated continuously. Farmers of early civilizations could not calculate the perfect time to plant their crops. Crop planting is an activity that is closely linked to the seasons, and the first calendar was not based on the durations of seasons. There were many different versions of the calendar over time, however in 1582 Pope Gregory XIII made a few changes to the then Julian Calendar and developed the Gregorian Calendar. By the 20th century, the calendar became the standard calendar in Europe. Today, it is the most widely used calendar in the world.

If it was not for the development of Calendars January the 1st it would just be another time that the sun rose after the dark. So therefore, every day should start with the same hope that a new year always starts with.... It will hopefully be better than the last!

The first 3 months of 2019 have been eventful

Early in January we got news that one of our long-standing members, Mike Pursey, was diagnosed with cancer. Sadly, he passed away on the 19th of February. The news came as quite a shock as we had spent a wonderful work party with Mike and Lesley in December. He will be sorely missed,





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In March we also lost another long-standing FOPS member, Big Eberhard, fondly known as the big man with the big heart. He will also be sorely missed,

In park news the rains have been good and the dams are full, this has also rejuvenated all the flora and there is almost no sign that we even had a fire in September last year. There are babies all over the park it is awesome to watch the new life.

So far, we have had less rhino poaching's than this time last year, lets hope this is a sign of things to come!

Eskom blessed us with load shedding again this quarter, with some people experiencing up to 8 hours without power! However, when on a work party weekend this makes no difference... we have no power in Potokwane anyway ☹️... so we are used to it!

In March we had the Lada team join us for the work party.... They put a fantastic video together of the weekend which can be viewed here

https://www.facebook.com/100008527510847/videos/2050491961911701/?id=100008527510847&epa=SEARCH_BOX. There is also a great report on their experience later on in the newsletter.

Work parties are getting busier and busier each month with new members at every work party, a great sign for a fantastic 2019 in the park!

We have started putting together a feature of the invasive species we are tackling in the park and will focus on 2 plants we have been removing each quarter. This month we are focusing on the Pom Pom and the Purple Top. At the end of this newsletter there is information on each plant. I have kept this to a single page per plant so you are able to print and keep it with you when visiting. If you do see any of these in the park please advise any of the committee members with either GPS co-ordinates if possible, or a location with the road name and closest cross road or landmark. Please do not get out of your car and attempt to remove any of these plants yourself, some of these have special removal techniques to prevent seeding.... Also, as you know, "you may encounter dangerous animals".

Here's looking forward to waking up on each new day as if it was a new year, minus the hangover of course!

Warm regards

Lauren

P.S. Again - I have used a lot of pictures in this newsletter – thanks to everyone who contributed either via WhatsApp or allowing me to "steal" from Facebook!



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As from our next work party, you will be able to book the tents in POTOKWANE on WORK PARTY weekends. The following rules will apply:

- The window period to book is from 8 am on the Monday before the work party weekend until 8 p.m. on Wednesday night. If any tents are available after that period then it works on a first come first serve basis
- There will be a cost of R50 per tent for the weekend. This money is to be paid in cash on the weekend
- The tents will be available on a rotational basis so as to give everyone a fair chance of making use of the tents
- POTOKWANE tent bookings are to be made with Debbi on 083 408 189 8 only during the window period.

YOU STILL NEED TO CONTACT PADDY TO BOOK YOUR WORK PARTY SPOT



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Special Project Weekend Report- Pilanesberg

January 2019

Roland White

Hi Folks

Work Party Report, 5th January 2019

1. Manhours

2/1/2019	4 members	20 hours
3/1/2019	7 members	35 hours
4/1/2019	23 members	138 hours
Total		193 hours

2. Weather.

In the preceding three days, approximately 140 mm fell throughout the Park. As a result, there is plenty standing water, and dams are filling.

No rainfall over the three days of the Work-party, but very overcast on Thursday and Friday. Saturday was clear.

Temperatures Thursday and Friday averaged 26°C, going up to 34°C on Saturday. Humidity on all days was very high, making Saturday a very challenging day.

3. New Members.

- Marietjie van Zyl (an old member from Bora work-party).

4. Tasks.

- Thursday 2/1/2019
 - Roland, Kerry-Anne, Rob Young and Haley (guests for the day).
 - A large patch of Pride of India (+/- 12 bushes) was cleared out 250 meters South of the junction of Thlou Drive and Thutlwa. Vegetative growth was cut and poisoned, and roots were pulled out as far as possible.
 - A very large (+/- 300 mm trunk) Jacaranda was found at the Eastern end of Ruighoek Dam, in the tree line east of the pan. Robbie Young was at hand to provide rifle support. The tree was cut down, and the stump frilled and poisoned. There is a second tree on the hill line to the South of the dam, approximately half-way up the slope, and directly below the left-hand edge of a rocky outcrop on the ridge-line (viewed from the hide). We felt that we had tempted fate enough with the first tree, and the second tree was left for another day.



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- **Friday 3/1/2019**

- Roland and Kerry Anne, Brian and Barbara, Kyle and Alicia, Chalkie.
- A section of the fence-line at Mankwe Dam was replaced. The fence-line in general was checked and repaired where necessary.
- The view site at Sable Dam was cleared, trimming back a fallen Buffalo Thorn, and pruning a small Sweet Thorn. The barriers at the end of the parking area were tidied up and improved.
- A stand of Tamboti on the middle of the car-park at Tilodi Dam had died and fallen over. We cut up and removed the dead wood and cleared the car park area. Some of the dead wood has been taken to Potokwane Camp as fire-wood. Beware.

- **Saturday 4/1/2019**

- Roland and Kerry-Anne, Chalkie, Kyle and Alicia, Kobus, Andre, Lauren and Kyle (jnr.)
 - Rathlogo Hide.
 - Paving bricks were taken from Potokwane Camp to Site and laid from the end of the concrete apron outside the toilets to the start of the stairs to the hide. This has made a huge difference to the previously muddy area and had many favourable comments from the public. We still need +/- 10m² of bricks to finish the task. Can these be sourced from Pilanesberg please?
 - Three broken uprights on the existing pathway were replaced; new cross-members and droppers fitted.
 - Very uncomfortable working conditions.
- Trevor, Brian and Barbara, Frank and Sarah, Marietjie, Nikki and Simone, Debbi.
 - Hippo Loop.
 - Purple Top was removed from the South West block of Hippo Loop, and into the adjacent re-entrant. The plants were thought to be pre-seed and were pulled out and left in-situ. Visually, the team have done a thorough job, and we only need to keep an eye out for any re-emergence and remove these plants as necessary.
 - Khaki Weed around the tents at Manyane Campsite was sprayed with Round-up. We don't expect that this will kill the tubers. We suggest that physical removal of the weeds be done at every opportunity to try and control the problem around our tents.
- Bruce (rifle), John and Juliette, Ken, John Pitchford.
 - Road Clearing, Thlou Drive, from Ruighoek to Kukama. A small team hampered by a chain-saw that would not work. The road has been well cleared, but a lot more needs doing East of the Kukama Junction.



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5. General.

- i. Potokwane Camp.
 - o The water pressure in Potokwane Camp is very low. Overcast weather limited the battery charging, and the booster pump, solar lights and electric fence were not operational for the entire week-end. The water pressure problem had a big impact on cistern filling times, and during "peak" periods (especially when the camp is full) will mean that the flushing of toilets will be very, very slow. In addition, there is insufficient flow to ignite the gas boilers, resulting in no hot water in the camp.
 - o We strongly suggest that this problem be referred to Pilanesberg Wildlife Trust as a matter of urgency for rectification. I would suggest that the plumbing revert to the old gravity flow system, which worked very well. The fence-line should be put on a separate circuit (panel, regulator and battery) as a critical item. Should it be necessary to use pressure boosting for the urinal (which is of questionable benefit, in my opinion), this should be on a second charging / storage circuit. Isolation / service valves need to be fitted to the 20mm feed line to camp, upstream of the in-line filter.
- ii. Project List.
 - o Wimbledon Bridge is choked with debris up-stream of the structure. This should be cleared as soon as possible (water levels did not allow this on the January work party). A big job that will need a couple of chain-saws and a strong crew.
 - o Rathlogo Hide fencing must be completed, as must the paving. Neither are urgent projects.
 - o Road clearing, road clearing, road clearing. Due to the rains, most roads need attention.
 - o Prickly pear has been seen on Dithabaneng, and Lower Letshwa. Queen of the Night is still south of Thlware, and on the ridge-line south of Tshwene Drive.



Mankwe Parking Lot Fence Fixing



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February 2019

Paddy Coombe-Heath

Hi Folks,

Well it seems to be the norm these days, W/P parties with 40 plus people attending. This time 44 people. There were 4 cancellations and 5 non-residents. We also had 1 new member namely Hannes Erasmus, welcome, hope to see more of you during the year.

A wonderful weekend which started off with a rain storm of huge proportions, landing up with 70 odd mm on Friday. Saturday was cool, no rain and perfect conditions for working in.

There were 2 main projects, the Iron Age and repairing Ellie damage at Rathlogo hide. The story of our lives.

The Iron Age was very overgrown as it was bypassed in Jan so a big team went out 12 people, to try and get it back into shape. They did a great job.

Rathlogo also a big team 13. They repaired the fence and did a couple of other little jobs at the hide. A fantastic repair job, well done guys.

Then to finish of the morning some of the guys did clearing of directions cairns and some went to hippo loop to do flowing picking. There we have 2 problems. The verbena and the purple Pom Pom . The Pom Pom is the biggest problem as it is a terrible invader and grows like wild fire. So, you have to cut off the flowers and then burn them. A big problem. The Verbena we can just pull out, hopefully before they start to seed. This problem can turn out to be worse that Lantana, if left unchecked.

Then we had 2 teams doing direction cairns and road clearing. The 1 team went down Mankwe way the other down Tswene drive and along Kggabu. Good job guys
A small team stayed in camp to clean up a bit and to repair the electric fence. We have a couple of Teething problems to sort out in the New camp, which hopefully will be sorted by the next W/P.

But all in all, a great W/P with a great team. A good time was had by all. Well until next time, go well and drive safe.

Regards,
Paddy.



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March 2019

Paddy Coombe-Heath

Hi Folks,

There was a change of people at this W/P. We had 8 families from the Lada Club. Believe it or not they all got there with their Lada cars, only just. This meant we had a huge turnout for the weekend. There were 45 people in total. With this amount of people it was tricky trying to find work for all of them.

The Iron Age Site to the rescue. The site was in dire need of a lot of TLC. The perimeter fence was overgrown with grass and trees, which was impacting on the electric fence, so all the Lada club and then some, went off to rectify this problem, 17 people in total. They slaved away the whole morning and the results were pretty good. At least we can see the fence now.

Then we had the same problem with Potokwane. The new section needed a good fire break done, and the rest of the fence also needed a good tidy up. The ablution block also needed a bit of work done to it. Namely the installing of 2 basins, 1 in 2 of the shower cubicles. Our resident plumber Pieter Swanepoel with his side kick Corrie Van De Merwe did the installation, and good job they did too. I know the ladies will be very happy with a private bathroom. The guys also tidied up the camp in general. The camp is looking a lot neater now. I must just say thanks to Steve and Perry Dell for giving us the new benches for the lapa, they make quite a difference.

Lastly a group went out to the shooting range at Tamboti. The reason for this was two-fold, we had to repair the toilets, Ellie damage again, and then to clear the actual shooting range. This was as you can imagine with all the rain very overgrown, so cut and spray. The story of our lives.

At the end of the day a fantastic weekend was had by all. If not, sorry for you. Well see you at the next work party. Go well.

Regards,
Paddy.



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"FOPS / LOCSA Weekend

March 1-3 2019

After a group invitation from FOPS member Remco, LOCSA members responded with gusto and promptly booked up all the spots available – testament to the adventure spirit and camaraderie of Lada Niva owners !

Everyone couldn't wait for this weekend to arrive, and banter on own dedicated weekend WhatsApp group was pretty normal compared to our regular LOCSA Technical & Social WhatsApp groups i.e. almost non-stop !

As usual, there were the difficulties – people getting lost, delayed, Remco having technical issues with his Niva, but everyone made it and by early evening, everyone was comfortable and enjoying a few cold ones. Rules around the Potokwane camp though still need some familiarisation, particularly re the beer can bags and refuse – maybe some were in the toilet when announcements were made, who knows – but I'm sure it will sort itself out with a few more (friendly) reminders.

For the work party on the Saturday morning, the LOCSA group were assigned to clean the Iron Age site and parking area, which I think we accomplished pretty well – this in spite of a few mishaps. It seems wasps don't like the sound or frequency of chain saws and weed eaters, and protested on a few ladies ! Another minor altercation with a chain saw showed that chain saws are The Boss. Respect !

All ended well though, and a very welcome swim in the afternoon was enjoyed by most, as the temperature was north of 35°.

A group breakfast at the Pilansberg Center on Sunday morning, and game viewing rounded off what was another memorable weekend in the bush (...is there any other kind ?). However, what's a Lada Niva weekend without a few more technical issues on the way home. Luckily, these amounted only to some delays and colourful language, and everyone made it home safely.

Thanks to all the LOCSA members who attended – it was another great opportunity for us to network and check each others cars and ideas out.

Thanks also go to FOPS, for inviting us and sharing the bush !

Peter

LOCSA Chairman





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Tall verbena

Verbena bonariensis

Alternative common names:

Purple top (English), blouwaterbossie (Afrikaans).

Tall verbena is a flowering herb with erect stems up to 2 m tall which are noticeably square in cross-section and rough. Leaves are stalkless and clasping the stem at the base, thick textured, strongly veined beneath and the margins are sharply toothed. Flowers are purple, appearing in congested terminal spikes.



Additional Info

- **Where does this species come from?**

South America.

- **What is its invasive status in South Africa?**

NEMBA Category 1b.

- **Where in South Africa is it a problem?**

Limpopo, Gauteng, Mpumalanga, North West, Free State, KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape and Western Cape.

- **How does it spread?**

The seeds are dispersed by animals, wind and water.

- **Why is it a problem?**

It is poisonous to livestock and invades roadsides, disturbed places, moist areas and grasslands.

- **What does it look like?**

Leaves: Leaves are stalkless and clasping the stem at the base, thick textured, strongly veined beneath and the margins are sharply toothed. Flowers: Flowers are purple, 40mm long, in congested terminal spikes. Flowers appear during summer. Fruit/seeds: The small fruit separate into four brown, elongated seeds (nuts or mericarps) when mature.



- **Does the plant have any uses?**

Used as an ornamental plant whose flowers are very attractive to butterflies and bees.

Source: <http://invasives.org.za/#>



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Pom pom weed

Campuloclinium macrocephalum

Alternative common names:

Pompom bossie (Afrikaans)

The pom pom weed is an erect perennial with green stems up to 1,3m high. It dies back annually to a root crown. Pink flowerheads surrounded by purple bracts in compact heads appear from December to March. This plant is native to Central and South America.

Additional Info

- **Where does this species come from?**

Central & South America (Mexico to Argentina)

What is its invasive status in South Africa?

Existing legislation: CARA 2002 – Category 1 NEMBA – Category 1b

Where in South Africa is it a problem?

Grassland regions of Gauteng, Kwazulu-Natal, Limpopo, Mpumalanga and the Eastern Cape Provinces

How does it spread?

It spreads easily by seed, and it can also regenerate from underground rhizomes

Why is it a problem?

It causes serious degradation of the veld, lowering the biodiversity and reducing the grazing capacity by being unpalatable to large herbivores

What does it look like?

General description: A tall erect perennial herb with pink fluffy flowerheads and leaves concentrated on the base of the plant. Bark: Green to purple covered with rough bristly hairs. Leaves: Light green with serrated margins and lance-shaped, becoming small and more distant upwards. Flowers: Pink and are produced in dense clusters at the end of aerial stems, flower-head consists of hundreds of tiny, star shaped florets surrounded by purple bracts. Flowers in late summer during December-March. Fruit/Seeds: Brown, one-seeded achenes.

Does the plant have any uses?

Introduced for ornamental purposes but now a noxious weed



Source: <http://invasives.org.za/#>