



FRIENDS OF PILANESBERG

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

**SEDIBA**

July, August & September 2019

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**Letter from Editor**

**July to September 2019**

**Lauren Gunn**

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Dear friends

Can you believe that we are into the last quarter of the year already! Three months left of 2019! The best part is that it is now spring! I am so happy, this is my absolute favourite time of the year. The promise of new beginnings, warmer weather and rain to settle the dust. I did not realize how much I loved this time of year until we went to the September work party. Myself and a friend travelled up together, aircon on, windows closed... there was a small amount of rain on the way up, enough to wet the roads and keep the wipers moving. We arrived at the main entrance of Manyane and, as you do, promptly opened the windows. The amazing smell of rain on the veld hit us and at exactly the same time both of us took a deep breath in and let out a collective sigh. You could feel the tension of the weeks before leaving the car and both of us just smiled. **NOTHING BETTER!**

We are continuing our feature of the invasive species we are tackling in the park. This month we are focusing on the Jacaranda which will flower over spring and summer making it very visible and the Queen of The Night of which we removed plenty over the last few work parties. A reminder, 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. Again, 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".

We are in for a busy second half of the year with the Batlhako Hide rebuild. Exciting times ahead 😊

Warm regards,

Lauren



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Committee Contact Info

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**Chairman**

Warren Best

Cell: +27 82 554 8525

Email: [fopschairman@gmail.com](mailto:fopschairman@gmail.com)

**Pilanesberg Special Projects**

Paddy Coombe-Heath

Cell: +27 82 459 4339

Email: [lindys1@worldonline.co.za](mailto:lindys1@worldonline.co.za)

**Secretary**

Kerry-Anne Hare

Cell: +27 76 447 1119

Email: [secretaryfops1@gmail.com](mailto:secretaryfops1@gmail.com)

**Treasurer and Compliance Officer**

Lampies Lamprecht

Cell: +27 83 652 7410

Email: [fopscompliance@gmail.com](mailto:fopscompliance@gmail.com)

Or [treasurerfops@gmail.com](mailto:treasurerfops@gmail.com)

**Sediba Editor**

Lauren Gunn

Cell: +27 82 376 6719

Email: [fopsnews@gmail.com](mailto:fopsnews@gmail.com)

**Fundraising & Work Party Assistant**

Roland White

Cell: +27 83 227 1273

Email: [rolandw@mweb.co.za](mailto:rolandw@mweb.co.za)

**Social Media & Potokwane Tents**

Debbi Adcock

Cell: +27 83 408 1898

Email: [fopsmedia@gmail.com](mailto:fopsmedia@gmail.com)

Notes:

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!

We do welcome input from any members who have a feature, a story or interesting information to add. Please send any submissions to [fopsnews@gmail.com](mailto:fopsnews@gmail.com) for consideration.



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*Special Project Weekend Report- Pilanesberg*

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**July 2019**

**Paddy Coombe-Heath**

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Hi Folks,

For his time of the year 49 people is incredible.

We had 4 youngsters came up with Rob Rose-Williams and 5 new members. Welcome to Gary and Anje friends of Lampies and Anine Lamprecht. Then Sue Temple and Vanya Murray, Tony Bridger and Raimo Salkin.

There were also 10 people from Bushveld Mosaic staying in camp. This all added up to a very full camp. But everything ran very smoothly. The weather was great, but got a bit chilly on Sunday morning.

Projects: Let's start off with the Iron Age Site. Trevor was over the moon, he had 11 workers including himself. I believe they had a ball and got a lot done.

Then we had been asked by the Parks board to clean up the direction cairns. Six teams went out and went in different directions. This means we covered a lot of ground. The object was to do the main roads first then spread out. We managed 30 cairns in the morning, great work guys. The bases around the cairns had over the years built up with sand and so started the grass growing. This meant the rocks on the base were no longer doing the job it was designed to do. This was to keep the bigger animals from rubbing themselves on the cairns. The clean-up was certainly needed, in some cases more than others. The teams also trimmed branches hanging over the road on route. This was very hard work, lucking the weather was not too hot.

All in all, a great weekend with the Jaffle competition on Saturday evening being a big success. 1<sup>st</sup> place went to Trevor Ketler, in second place were the 4 youngsters, which made them very happy and in 3<sup>rd</sup> place were Roland and Kerry.

Well done to all the participants.

Well until next time go well and see you there.

Regards.

Paddy.



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**August 2019**

**Roland White**

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1. **Attendance**                      42 members
  2. **Manhours**                      Total of 252 hours
  3. **Weather.**                      No rainfall over the three days of the Work-party, but very overcast on Thursday and Friday. Saturday was clear. Fire in the Potokwane Block has burned all around camp, but the firebreaks stopped any fire in camp. Temperatures Friday and Saturday averaged 24°C, going up from 8°C start. Easy working conditions.
  4. **New Members.**
    - Dawson Brandon
    - Greg.
    - Roberto.
    - Hilton and Jason Ross.
  5. **Tasks.**
    - **Saturday 3/8/2019**
      - **Batlhako Hide – 10 members.**
        - The existing hide was demolished, and all redundant material moved to NWPB Workshop redundancy yard.
        - Site was re-measured and marker tape laid out for excavation by Parks Board in the course of the Month Park Officials have been briefed on progress and requirements.
        - Water levels are still higher than hoped. We don't see the levels dropping anytime soon, so have adjusted the plans to suit.
      - **Road / Cairn Clearing – Ntshwe – 7 members**
        - G6 (Sefara Drive) was cleared. The crew then cleared Along Sefara Drive, Nare Link, finishing at Ntshwe / Kubu intersection. A long drive.
      - **Malatse Hide – 10 members**
        - Repairs to the gate at Malatse Dam. This was a job noted in an HO report.
        - A sliding gate bottom roller with a thread bar support has been fitted as a pulley, and we will monitor this to see if it is a better solution than the current pulleys, which wear quickly.
        - General cleaning and maintenance in Malatse Hide and Car Park, including clearing wash-out from the bottom of the gate. I suggest that this gate is removed, cut back +/- 100mm to allow better clearance of future wash-out, and refitted. Not an urgent job but put it on the list.
        - A tidy up road-clearing effort southward along Dithabaneng, back to the intersection with Potokwane Link. Dithabaneng north of Malatse was driven by RW, and is not bad, but could do with some attention.
      - **Lenong Drive – 8 members.**
        - Road clearing up Lenong, focusing on the paved section, but finishing at the viewpoint.
        - The Armco Barrier supports have been burnt out in last year's fires. These can be replaced in a later work-party.
      - **Hippo Loop – 7 members.**
        - Direction Cairns – Hippo Loop
        - Marker – Mankwe Hide
        - Impromptu fire break around Mankwe Hide



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**September 2019**

**Roland White**

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- 1) **Attendance** 56 members
  - 2) **Manhours** Total 384 hours
  - 3) **Weather.** No rainfall over the three days of the Work-party, easy working conditions (bar the mud at Batlhako Site). Temperatures Friday and Saturday averaged 24°C, going up from 3-4°C start.
  - 4) **New Members.**
    - Dinu Baby
  - 5) **Tasks.**
    - **Batlhako Hide – 19 members.**
      - Three panels on the Western edge of the car park had been damaged, and were repaired.
      - The support beams on the hide were fitted.
      - Two cactus plants on the ridgeline South of the hide were poisoned and left in situ.
      - Once Batlhako tasks were done, some of the team moved to Rathlogo Hide to do an inspection of the supports. Some of the cross members are broken, but the main issue contributing to the Hide instability is the settling of the foundations supporting the uprights, particularly underneath the hide entrance. Nothing much can be done about this until winter, but in the interim, we should brace the supports. This is ideally done now before the water levels rise any further.
      - A Queen of the Night behind the hide was poisoned.
    - **Tilodi Dam Wall markers – 13 members**
      - Marker posts on each edge of the road across the dam wall were fitted (old posts were removed where necessary).
      - Road clearing was done from Tilodi site towards, and including, Potokwane (west leg).
    - **Makorwane Hide – 13 members**
      - The hide was repainted with Waxol, and is looking very good again.
      - Small repairs inside the hide were done.
      - Around 11 Queen of the Night plant on the ridge-line South East of Tshwene pan were poisoned.
    - **Iron Age Hide – 11 members**
      - On-going spray and clear work was done.





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**Common name:**

Jacaranda

**Scientific name:**

Jacaranda mimosifolia (Bignoniaceae)

**Alternative common names:**

Blue Brazilian; blue jacaranda; Brazilian rosewood; fern tree (English); jakaranda (Afrikaans)

The best-known city tree in Johannesburg and Pretoria – a deciduous or semi-deciduous tree up to 22m high with a rounded, spreading crown. Dark green, hairy, finely divided and fern-like leaves which turn yellow in late autumn or winter. Attractive mauve-blue to lilac or rarely white, tubular flowers produced in pyramidal sprays at the ends of usually leafless branches, flowering from September-November. Oval, flattish, woody green capsules about 60mm long, which turn brown and split open after about a year to release numerous flat, winged seeds. It invades savanna, wooded kloofs, rocky ridges and river banks.



**Additional Info**

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

South America (north-west Argentina)

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

CARA 2002 – Category 3 NEMBA – a. 1b in Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, Mpumalanga and North-West. b. Not listed for urban areas in Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, Mpumalanga and North-West. c. Not listed within 50 metres of the main house on a farm in Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, Mpumalanga and North-West, for trees with a diameter of more than 400 mm at 1000 mm height at the time of publishing of this Notice, provided such trees are located outside riparian areas. d. Not listed elsewhere.

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

Common throughout Mpumalanga, Limpopo, Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal Provinces.

**Why is it a problem?**

Competes with and replaces indigenous species. Dense stands along watercourses are likely to reduce stream flow.



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**Common name:**

Queen of the night

**Scientific name:**

Cereus hexagonus

**Alternative common names:**

Blue cereus, Tall columnar cactus, Cacto columnar, Lady of the night



Queen of the night is a treelike cactus that grows like a candelabrum with a short thick trunk from the top of which it sends out cylindrical shoots which as soon as they have room rise straight upwards in fluted pillars up to 15 metres height. Such a plant with pillars rising side by side and almost touching one another has a curious resemblance to an organ with its pipes and thence its name organo. It forms a trunk 30-40 cm in diameter usually branching near the base.

**Additional Info**

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

- *Southern America*

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

*NEMBA Category 1b*

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

*Limpopo Province*

**How does it spread?**

*By birds and water*

**Why is it a problem?**

Bird-dispersed seeds have resulted in the spread of the cactus into the savanna of the warmer and arid parts of South Africa, where it reduces the carrying capacity of land by preventing livestock and game to shelter under shade trees during the hottest parts of the day.

**What does it look like?**

Leaves: No leaves, only many stems. Flowers: White flowers. Fruit/seeds: Pale red fruit, (20 cm) long.

**Does the plant have any uses?**

It is grown in gardens and its fruits can be eaten, dried or made into a juice.