



FRIENDS OF PILANESBERG

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

SEDIBA

April, May and June 2019

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Letter from Editor

April to June 2019

Lauren Gunn

Dear friends

MacMillan Dictionary defines the phrase "Blood, Sweat and Tears" as a lot of effort and hard work. Many think that this phrase originated with Sir Winston Churchill in a speech in 1940 regarding the hardships to come with fighting world war two. The reality is that this phrase came from the bible, however Churchill has been accredited with coining this phrase into every-day life. For FOPS we can accredit this to Roland White during one of our recent work parties.

You might now be thinking, Oh my goodness, blood.... sweat.... Tears! Why on earth would I join a work party for this?

Inevitably there is blood, the bush is not for sissies. There will be the odd thorn tree scratching you while road clearing or working the Iron Age Site. When you look at the scratches later, after a well-deserved shower you will say to yourself, wow that was a good day's work!

Sweat, yes, there is sweat, lots of it... the reality is, you are in Africa where the summer temperatures soar past the 30's before 9 a.m. in the morning. So... you sweat from the heat, from the hard work and you really do sweat when an elephant is walking towards your car and you are reversing as fast as you can.

Tears – well we cry, a fair amount. Mostly laughter around the camp fire, we have a lot of funny people in our FOPS family. Or pain when someone accidently stands on your hand while holding a ladder. Unfortunately, there are also tears of sadness and heartache. This quarter we lost another of our long-standing members, Victoria Bennett in May. Our thoughts are with her family, she will be missed.

Personally, the blood, the sweat and the tears are well worth the warm and fuzzy feeling of being part of a family that puts so much back into our beloved park!

We are continuing our feature of the invasive species we are tackling in the park. This month we are focusing on the Lantana which we removed in the May work party and the Syringa which will start blooming in Spring. 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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While I was putting the finishing touches to the newsletter we had the devastating news that one of our FOPS stalwarts, Chalkie, had passed away after a very brief illness. To say Chalkie will be missed is an understatement as he clearly touched so many lives. Below are a few quotes from Facebook. RIP big man! Our thoughts are with your family at this sad time.



"Chalkie. We will miss you forever. Bob and myself are so privileged to have worked with you. And traveled, and been so many places together. Will always forever be in our hearts. Bob and I are so glad we got to see you in February at Fops. You Will be sorely missed by all and everyone. Thanks for the good times we had together. Never to be forgotten"

"Thank you for all your touching words & thoughts for my brother Barry. It's comforting to hear how much he was loved & cared for. Living in Cape Town I did not see Barry too often but when we did catch up, I loved his stories about the bushveld & his compassion for fauna & flora.

A gentle soul, who didn't deserve the raw deal he got in life. My dearest brother, gone too soon, may you be safe in the arms of your angels. Until we meet again. Love you Barry"

"An absolute shock to hear of this sad news. A man of true integrity, respect from all who new him, a friend and peacemaker, his love of the bush are just a few qualities that has set him apart. Chalks, I will miss you. We have spent over 20 years together at FOPS and you will never be forgotten. Prayers for you and your loved ones left behind. Bon Voyage"

"A truly good man. I can't say that the campfire will be quieter without you, but it will surely be sadder. Rest in peace my friend, your memory lives on. Our most heartfelt condolences to family and friends"

"RIP Chalkie my old friend. We were friends for over 25 years. Please know that your work in the park was never in vain and it will continue . We FOPS members will continue with YOUR work. I will miss our drive's together. Just the 2 of us as we did so many times. Your spirit will always be with me around the fire. Your friend Hugo."

"This was the nicest man, person, anybody could ever meet in life! He was quiet, yet had an amazing sense of humor when you spent some time with him. He was always willing to work hard. Never shy to throw a helping hand in. A gentle Giant is the simplest way of explaining Chalks. You will be forever missed buddy! I will fondly remember the quiet chuckles we would have around the campfire, till late into the night. I'm not sure Fops is going to be the same without you? 😊

MAY YOUR SOUL REST IN PEACE!"

"To say i was shocked and stunned on hearing this sad news would be an absolute understatement. On our journey through life we are blessed with meeting a handful of people who totally enrich it, Chalkie was one of them. He was a true gentleman and a true friend. He was a stalwart of FOPS and also one of the guys we turned to when establishing VULPRO, i owe this guy so much i could never pay him back. Today theres a hole in my heart ,ive lost a buddy"



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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 for consideration.



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Special Project Weekend Report- Pilanesberg

April 2019

Paddy Coombe-Heath

Hi folks,

The weather on Friday was a bit dodgy, we had 30 mm of rain on Friday night. I think that had something to do with some of the 6 cancelations we had. But none the less we still had an impressive 45 people, all a bit nuts I think. We still had enough people to fill 6 work details.

Our condolences to Chalkie for the passing of his mom.

Top of the list - Batlhako hide: The guys erected a view point so that you will still be able to see the dam after they close the hide, while we build a new one. This will happen shortly, not now. We are waiting for the sand to level the ground in the view point.

Potokwane: There were 4 guys who stayed in camp mainly to build a roof over the new wash up sinks. The one toilet was not working as it should, so that was also repaired.

The flood gate going into the E.E.Z. near the staff houses was choked up with debris so, at the request of Steve Dell, 6 guys went down to clear it.

Two teams did road clearing.

1 team went along Letsha and down Kubu drive. The other team did Motlobo and Thlware. These roads were very overgrown and we found a lot of LANTANA, 8 to be exact and a lot of pride of India. There was also Pride of India around P.C. a total of 6 plants. They had managed to hide themselves for a long time but we found them.

Then lastly the Iron age site: This has been a pain for everybody for a long time. Trevor was very disappointed when he only had 6 people to help him on Saturday. Then on Saturday evening by general consensus it was decided that a roster would be kept and if available 10 people every W/P would work the Iron Age site. This means you won't be doing it the whole time and spreading the happiness. We will start this in May.

But a wonderful weekend for working weather wise and I think a good time was had by all...all but Trevor.

Well until next month go well and drive carefully.

Regards,
Paddy



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May 2019

Paddy Coombe-Heath

Hi folks,

This was the biggest turnout to date. There were 55 people in attendance, this included 3 newbies namely. Vallon and Bailey Kupferberg and Nick Inward. Welcome the newbies and we hope to see you again. We also had another newbie, who is actually an oldy, Jan Cooke who was back after a layoff of nearly a year, welcome back Jan. Jane Fleming came along with Jan, she might become a member. There was also 1 cancelation.

This meant lots of people to find work for, so here goes.

The big project was Batlhako lookout point. There were 16 people who went there. There was lots of sand to build up the floor of the view site, 6 cubic meters to be exact. They also cut a fire break around the fence and generally cleaned up the place. It is looking good.

The Iron Age Site. Trevor and his 8-man team went and did battle there. The same old stuff cutting and spraying.

The Direction cairn at Tshwene and Kgabu was restored to its former glory, at last.

Then 2 teams did road clearing. The one team went down Potokwane and along Tilodi to clear the road and across the dam wall. The bull Hippo was not happy with that, so Bruce called off work and went elsewhere.

The other team went down Maruleng starting at the junction of Kgabu. This was very overgrown as it has not been done for a long time, but it is looking good now.

Then a couple of guys did some weeding at the tents, mainly to dig out the paper thorns. The place is looking better but not perfect. Will have to spray come summer time.

Lastly Saturday afternoon everybody was invited to go up to Lenong hide, Jan Cooke wanted to spread the ashes of her husband Denis there and we planted trees in his honour. Everybody from the W/P turned up and had drinks and snacks with Jan. Farewell Denis Cooke, and thank you Jan.

Well on that hectic note all in all a good weekend.

Until next time go well and drive safely.

Regards,
Paddy.



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June 2019

Paddy Coombe-Heath

Hi Folks,

This W/P was a lot more manageable with only 35 people. We did have 6 cancelations and 1 new family John and Jenny Livock, welcome to you. They seem to be very keen, we also had a newbie who was a member many years ago, Rosemary Cromarty good to have you back.

No Iron Age Site, No Trevor, too bad.

Direction cairns were the order of the day, 3 to repair.

First - Tshwene drive and Tau junction.

Second - Motlobo and Mankwe way junction.

Third - Kubu Drive the Fluoride mine.

Good job the teams concerned.

Road clearing - 2 teams.

Thutlwe Link very overgrown, looks a lot better now.

Then Tilodi Dam wall and the view site. Like new. The Iron age site turn off and up the road was also all cleared and look a lot better.

Just a reminder to you that F.O.P.S. subs are due now please don't forget.

Well until next time go well.

Regards

Paddy.





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Lantana

Lantana camara (Verbenaceae)

Alternative common names:

Bird's brandy; cherry pie; tick-berry (English), gewone lantana; gomdagga (Afrikaans), sumba (Shona); ubukhwebezane (isiZulu), ubutywala bentaka (isiXhosa)

A spreading shrub or untidy scrambler growing up to 2m or higher. Stems usually covered with short, stiff hairs and recurved thorns. Dark green, rough, hairy leaves which are paler below and smell strongly when crushed. Pink, red, crimson, orange, yellow or white flowers in compact, flat-topped heads, often with several colours in one head, appear from September to April. Glossy green fruits which turn purplish-black. Poisonous.



Additional Info

Where does this species come from?

Central and South America.

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?

Western Cape, Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga, Limpopo, North West.

How does it spread?

Seed dispersal.

Why is it a problem?

Competes with and replaces indigenous species. Allelopathic suppression of indigenous species interrupts regeneration processes and reduces biodiversity of natural ecosystems. Dense stands in plantations obstruct access and utilization. Poisonous to humans and animals and responsible for livestock mortalities amounting to millions of Rands every year in South Africa. Reduces the grazing potential of the land.

What does it look like?

General description: An untidy spreading shrub with four-angled stems and often with thorns growing up to 2m or higher. Leaves: Oval, dark green, rough, hairy leaves which are paler below. Flowers: Small, clustered, pink, red, crimson, orange, yellow or white flowers appearing from September to April. Fruit/seeds: Glossy green fruits which turn purplish-black.

Does the plant have any uses?

Used as a garden ornament and for hedging.



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Syringa

Melia azedarach (Meliaceae)

Alternative common names:

Seringa; Persian lilac; bead tree; berry tree; Cape lilac; China berry; China tree; white cedar (English), maksering; sering; bessieboom (Afrikaans), umsilinga (isiZulu)

A large spreading tree growing up to 23m high with reddish-brown, smooth bark. It has serrated dark glossy green leaves which turn yellow in autumn and clusters of purple to lilac flowers which are heavily scented and appear from September-November. Numerous green berries on turn yellow and wrinkled at the end of the season. The leaves, bark, flowers and ripe fruits are poisonous. This tree invades savanna, roadsides, urban open spaces, waste areas and river banks

Additional Info

Where does this species come from?

Asia to Australia; the form in southern Africa is an Indian cultivar

What is its invasive status in South Africa?

CARA 2002 – Category 3 NEMBA – a. Category 1b b. 3 in urban areas.

Where in South Africa is it a problem?

Widespread throughout all provinces in South Africa

How does it spread?

Fruits are spread by birds, other animals, water and human activities

Why is it a problem?

It competes with and replaces indigenous species. The abundant and prolific growth of this species at the expense of the native flora and fauna could have serious consequences for the preservation of biodiversity. Dense stands along watercourses are likely to reduce stream flow. Indigenous birds could neglect the dispersal of indigenous plants as a consequence of their preference for the fruits of this alien species. The effective seed dispersal by water enables this species to invade protected areas far from the parent plant

What does it look like?

General description: A large spreading tree growing up to 23m high with reddish-brown, smooth bark. Leaves: Serrated dark glossy green leaves which turn yellow in autumn. Flowers: Clustered purple to lilac flowers and heavily scented appearing from September-November. Fruit/Seeds: Green berries which turn yellow and wrinkled at the end of the season

Does the plant have any uses?

Birds eat the fruits and it is used as an ornamental and shade

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