



AgulhasNPark eBulletin



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Water and Sustainable Development

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Celebrating World Water day

World Water Day was declared an international day in 1992 by the United Nations General Assembly and was first celebrated in 1993. Each year, World Water Day highlights a specific aspect of freshwater. Under the theme 'Water and Sustainable Development', the year 2015 provides an important opportunity to consolidate and build upon the previous World Water Days to highlight water's role in the sustainable development agenda. What could a global water goal lead to? Healthy people, increased prosperity, equitable societies, protected ecosystems and resilient communities through universal access to safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene, improving water quality and raising service standards; the sustainable use and development of water resources, increasing and sharing the available benefits; robust and effective governance with more effective institutions and administrative systems; improved water quality and wastewater management taking account of environmental limits; and reduced risk of water-related disasters to protect vulnerable groups and minimize risks. (SOURCE: www.dwa.gov.za, www.unwater.org)



Agulhas Working for Water project focuses on rehabilitation

The Agulhas National Park is fortunate to have an excellent Working for Water (WfW) project actively rehabilitating the natural environment. When it was formed in 1998 the WfW worked on areas not yet proclaimed as part of Agulhas National Park. Rehabilitation is an important focus of the park and is achieved through alien plant management and wetland rehabilitation. From humble beginnings the project today employs 21 contractors and 252 beneficiaries of whom 204 are women, 211 'youth' and nine disabled individuals.



Working for Water team members take part regularly in special programmes as part of their Social Day and community outreach commitments, as is the case here during *Weed-buster Day* in the Heuningberg Nature Reserve on October 17, 2014.



Connecting to Society

Training an integral part of Working for Water

Various operational and social training courses form part of the Agulhas Working for Water project to equip people for their daily tasks in the workplace. The courses raise the skills of those involved enabling them to apply for better jobs within the project and even elsewhere. The courses include: Herbicide Applicator; three levels of First Aid, two levels of Health and Safety; Chainsaw Operator; and Peer Educator. Social training is linked to celebrations like World Environmental Day, Mandela Day, the Vehicle Safety Campaign, Women's Day, Arbour Day, Weed-buster Day, Substance Abuse Day and World Aids Day. The Social Days and Training include aspects of drama, role-playing and dance to provide the necessary interaction required for team building. The participants are treated to refreshments and lunch on such days. The most challenging training has to be that of Chainsaw Operator as the health and safety of the team is at risk when operating the chainsaw and brush cutter for the first time.



Chainsaw operator training in the Rhenosterkop area

Anna a budding entrepreneur

Anna Michels started as a contractor with the Working for Water project in 2005. She attended school until Grade four. Her initial challenges in life were to believe in herself and overcome a low self-esteem. After 10 years with the Agulhas Working for Water project she is now a confident, accomplished and respectful member of the community. The training she received equipped her with the skills and knowledge to stand out as an entrepreneur. Her community involvement also includes working with the youth and the social problems they face at home. She enrolled for Abet classes at the Bredasdorp Community Learner Centre to improve her education. She inspired five youth members of her team to do the same. Agulhas WfW donated 11 computers to the Bredasdorp Community Learner Centre as part of its community outreach programme.



Rhenosterkop back road before and after 2014



**Vleihuisie before and after 2014
Soetendalsvlei lies behind an exposed Vleihuisie**



Wilmine an administrative kingpin

Wilmine Cupido celebrated 10 years of service in the Working for Water (WfW) Project in August last year. She started in the WfW Project on August 9, 2004, when the offices were still situated at Bergplaas. Wilmine soon adapted to her new working environment under the guidance of the then Project Manager, Thys Ahrends. Wilmine is in charge of the daily administrative functions of the project and is at present responsible for the accurate reporting on the nearly R13m annual budget for the project. Through the years she received training in Excel, Health and Safety, First Aid, Snake Handling, Minute-taking, Conflict Management and many other courses to equip her for her duties to assist her in supporting management and the work force. In 2009 she received the award for Best Project Administrative Assistant in the then ISCU Unit, today known as Biodiversity Social Projects.



New Section Ranger for Agulhas National Park West

Lindsay Lewis (28), a *Bolander* by birth, has been appointed as the new Section Ranger for ANP West and will be based at Waterford. He worked for the Invasive Species Control Unit at Table Mountain National Park (Cape Point) before joining Cape Nature at De Hoop Nature Reserve in 2012 as a Marine Ranger.



Stanley Engel was appointed as the new Agulhas Working for Water Project Manager as from January 2015 after four years as Assistant Project Manager and three months acting Project Manager.



Amphibians

Amphibians are currently the most threatened class of vertebrate on earth, with 32% of species Red Listed as Critically Endangered, Endangered or Vulnerable. In South Africa, the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) aims to address a growing need for the involvement of the non-governmental sector in frog conservation. This will be done by implementing specific conservation actions to address direct threats to amphibian species and protect critical amphibian habitats; supporting relevant research projects focused on critical knowledge gaps in amphibian conservation; and by raising awareness regarding amphibians in a South African context. Although small and seldom seen, frogs are important in many ways: amphibians are crucial in the food-chain through their role as both predator and prey. They consume vast numbers of insects (including pests and disease vectors such as mosquitoes) and provide food to a wide range of animals. As tadpoles, they have an important function in keeping waterways clean by feeding on algae. They are good bio-indicators, due to their two-phased life cycles and sensitive skins. The fact that one third of all species are threatened should be an important warning to humans that our global environment is in jeopardy. Some species provide important human medicines from skin secretions. **“Leap” Day for Frogs on February 28** (SOURCE: A year of special days 2015. Sharenet, 2015).



Agulhas fresh water life

Limited studies on invertebrates point to exceptionally high diversity of aquatic invertebrates and at least three Red Data Book listed butterflies. This is in contrast to the freshwater fish of which there are only three species of which one is Red Data listed. Of the 15 amphibian species thought to occur on the Agulhas Plain, three species (Cape platanna *Xenopus gilli*, micro frog *Microbatrachella capensis* and western leopard toad *Bufo pantherinus*) are Red Data listed.

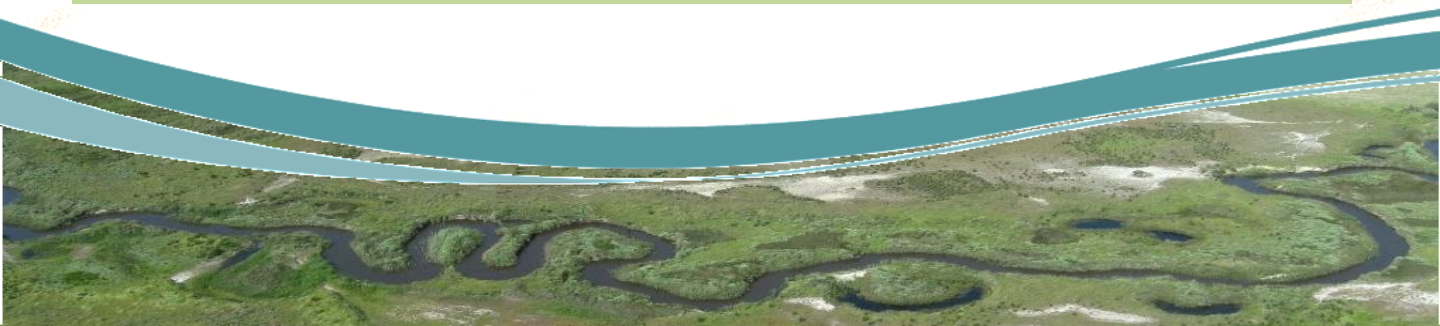


Groundwater a “hidden” treasure of the environment - Nabuweya Noordien (University of the Western Cape)

Whether it is the main source of water supply for towns or potentially responsible for shaping the surface of Mars, groundwater plays an important role in the environment. After beginning its journey as rain drops percolating through the earth and then travelling through underground water systems, groundwater emerges at the surface of the earth, forming entire river systems, springs or sometimes discharges to wetlands. Coastal wetlands are strongly influenced by groundwater systems, as these wetlands tend to be groundwater discharge zones. Wetlands and pans are a common occurrence across the coastal plain of the Heuningnes catchment and is the reason why the Agulhas National Park exists today. Having recently celebrated World Wetlands Day on February 2, it is important to recognise the significant role that groundwater plays in sustaining wetlands during the hot summer months, and the threat that over-abstraction of groundwater poses to the health and conservation of wetlands.



“We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.” – Aldo Leopold



The Salt pans

Most Cape inland salt pans are coastal lagoons that become dry after being cut off from the sea. The term 'pan', used in South Africa, refers to endorheic basins or depressions. It includes salt pans, pans filled due to river flooding, and clay bottomed pans filled by rainfall. Pans may be both temporary and permanent. Salt was the first mineral to be exploited in South Africa during colonial times. Between 1705 and 1713, the traveller and explorer Peter Kolbe reported the discovery of saline pans near Elim and Bredasdorp. The salt pans were reserved as 'Government ground for the *Sout Pan*' by the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC) administration at the Cape. In 1791 they took ownership of these pans and leased them to prospective operators. Harvesting of salt ceased in the 1960s.



Salt production

The production methods were very primitive. Salt was obtained by allowing rainwater, saline pan water and floodwater in a pan to evaporate so that salt could be harvested from the dried salt bed of the pan. Brine from pans was boiled and evaporated in soap pots, holding 45-90 litres, or laid on tarpaulins spread on the ground and allowed to evaporate. Later a system of running brine into a series of shallow ponds on the clay floors of the pan was adopted, allowing evaporation through the heat of the sun. Diluted brine was also pumped from boreholes, wells and trenches sunk into the floor of the pan and then allowed to reduce to saturated brine. Salt was harvested after the removal of the remaining liquid. The salt was then brought out to the washing machines, and tipped into a *koekepan* (trolley), which, moving through a tunnel to another *koekepan*, tipped the salt onto a heap. Different machines ground the salt into either fine or coarse salt. Apparently fine salt was collected on one side of the pan while coarse salt was found on the other. A tractor with a front-end loader loaded the salt onto a truck, which transported it to Gansbaai's fish factories. The belief was that the salt from the pans did not colour fish treated with this salt. The salt was put into 200 pound (90kg) bags and at a later stage in smaller bags.



Saltpan buildings

The buildings at the Salt pans consist of the manager's house and an outbuilding from the 1800s. The factory or processing plant was built in sections with the first section built in 1950. Over time kitchen facilities were built for the workers.

Important dates

Lighthouse birthday	01 March
Southern Tip Day	16 May
Southern Tip Meal & Talk	15 May 2015
Southern Tip Interpretive Walk	16 May 2015
Arniston 200	29-31 May 2015
Arniston shipwreck	31 May



The season has changed -
flowering now!!!!!!

