



what's new?

tree tagging

As reported in our last newsletter, we carried out our first Ecoglen educational initiative with the tagging of two each of ten of the indigenous shrubs/trees to be found within the Ecoglen conservancy.

The shrubs/trees had been previously identified by CTMM Nature Conservation, represented on the day by Richard Ndlovu who was on hand to point out specimens of the various species. The Chateau Glen Body Corporate sponsored the cost of the exercise and were represented by Johann Laubscher, who is also a member of our Exco .

Ecoglen members as well as members of the Exco participated in the event which took place on the 21st of January. An enjoyable couple of hours was spent wandering through the conservancy identifying and tagging the specimens and learning something about each species. Some photos from the day are shown here, others are available for viewing on our web site. <http://www.ecoglen.za.org/html/conservation.html>

In keeping with our education initiative we are featuring one of the indigenous shrubs/tree species in a new regular feature in the newsletter "Conservation Corner" (where in each edition we will provide information regarding the fauna and flora of Ecoglen). Additional information on the selected shrub/tree as well as the other species tagged will be available for viewing and download from the web site over the coming weeks.



Richard Ndlovu of CTMM Nature Conservation applies a tag.



Johann Laubscher, Ecoglen Exco member and representative of the Chateau Glen Body Corporate - sponsors of the tagging exercise -, next to a tagged White Stinkwood .

ecoglen flooded

A severe thunder storm on the 28th December 2006 resulted in one of the biggest floods through the Ecoglen conservancy in recent years.

The South African Weather Service reported rainfall of between 80 - 100 mm in less than an hour over parts of the eastern suburbs. This put both the Waterkloof and Moreleta spruits in flood and damage was caused to both the infrastructure and environment within the conservancy.

Our recently implemented reflection points turned out to be not so peaceful on the day with all three concrete benches being flattened by the floodwaters. In one instance a concrete supporting leg was completely washed away, giving some indication as to the intensity of the flood. The perimeter fencing was also damaged in places with the worst damage being experienced at the Malabor Road gate where the fence was pushed over.

Erosion has been previously identified as one of the issues needing attention within the conservancy. The December flood aggravated this situation, with severe scouring of the river-bed, riverbank and flood plain being evident after the flood [see photo on next page, additional photos are available at http://www.ecoglen.za.org/html/flood_pics.html].

The floodwaters also brought large deposits of debris, ranging from dead trees and wood to plastic bags and other household rubbish. Clean up operations are still continuing,



money matters

membership

Unfortunately membership renewals have been slower than expected this year with less than 50% of existing members having paid their fees at time of going to press. Being dependent on membership fees and donations, it is vital that we get the fees in as soon as possible so that we can continue our work in enhancing the conservancy. So once again we encourage both lapsed and current members to renew their membership before the end of June. Second reminders will be sent out shortly.

On a more positive note: following the street braai and a membership form mail drop by one of the estate agents in the area, Martina van Riet, 13 new members have been recruited and we would like to take this opportunity of welcoming them to Ecoglen.

donors

Once again the generosity of our members and the residents has been evident since our last newsletter and we take the opportunity to thank the following donors for their additional contribution to Ecoglen's finances:

Colin & Jane Patterson
Bruce & Margot Barnetson
Johan & Marita Opt'Hof
Jeanne Van Eeden

Together they have donated over R1500 which will be put to good use on our many projects.

our annual appeal - mind the gap!

At the end of last year we launched our annual appeal for additional funds to help complete the first phase of the concrete pathway in the Moreleta reserve. We borrowed the phrase "Mind the gap!" from the London underground as it is a warning we also have to issue to our members due to the incomplete construction of the path in some places.

Unfortunately, despite the generous contribution of some of our members, the response was not what we had hoped for! It seems that most of our members appear not to mind the gap! Which is a pity because the completion of the pathway is intended to extend the usability of the conservancy.

We are therefore appealing to members [lapsed and current] yet again to support us in this initiative by making a donation. Remember that Ecoglen is a registered Public Benefit Organisation and as such is able to issue donors with a receipt that SARS will accept as a deduction against tax [SARS allows claims of up to the greater of 5% of taxable income or R1000 per taxpayer per tax year].

Donations can be paid directly into our account using your surname and initial as the reference.

ECOGLEN ASSOCIATION
 FIRST NATIONAL BANK
 ACC. No. 62068840795
 BRANCH 252045

A stretch of riverbank in the Moreleta Reserve showing erosion damage caused by the scouring of the floodwater during the December flood. The loss of vegetation will aggravate the erosion problem during future flooding.



forum

Got something to say about Ecoglen? Ideas on how to improve the area? Something you'd like to share with other members? Drop us a line at ecoglen@global.co.za, we'd like to hear from you.

ecoglen street braai

The Ecoglen Street Braai/Picnic went ahead on the 17th March 2007. The event was for both members and non-members and was considered by all a great success with around 80 people in attendance.

The Exco used the event to showcase our achievements to date and to present an overview of our management plan and the benefits that the Ecoglen conservancy provides to the community.



Although the event wasn't specifically planned as a fund raiser, we did manage to turn a profit, contributing over R1500 to our funds to say nothing of the goodwill generated!

Our thanks go to:

Hilary Silberman, without whose organizational skills the event would never have happened.

St. Alban's College, through the auspices of **George Weetman**, for the loan of the tables, chairs and perhaps more importantly, the braais.

Realty 1, through the auspices of **Letsie Cotzee**, for the provision of some welcome shade, in the form of umbrellas.

The **CTMM** for making sure the grass was cut at the braai site.

And last, but not least, to all the people who attended without whom the event would not have been the success that it was.

walkabouts

Our monthly walkabouts have not been well attended of late and we are planning to make them quarterly in future each with a seasonal theme. If you have any comments or suggestions in this regard please let us know by dropping an e-mail to ecoglen@global.co.za or post to:

Ecoglen
c/o 58 Maldon Road,
Lynnwood Glen, 0081



More photos are viewable at:
http://www.ecoglen.za.org/html/member_s_area.html

seen around

seen something interesting?

Share it with us, send us details of what you saw and where you saw it and we'll let the members know. If you have a photo, so much the better, we'll either include it in our next newsletter or display it on our website gallery. [e-mail to ecoglen@global.co.za].

croc shock!!!



We were shocked and more than a little concerned when reports surfaced in early March of a possible sighting of a 2 metre crocodile in the conservancy!

The animal was glimpsed in the Moreleta reserve just downstream of the Genl. Louis Botha flood attenuation structure (in the area earmarked for a our Otter Program).

Fortunately, the sighting coincided with sightings of a water monitor lizard [leguaan/likkewaan] in the same vicinity.



Water monitor lizards (*Varanus niloticus niloticus*) have frequently been spotted in the conservancy since the area was fenced and pedestrian through-traffic curtailed.

Prior to that, sightings were infrequent and we view the increase in sightings as a measure of the improving environmental health of the conservancy.



The picture above, taken of a monitor lizard in a zoo, gives some indication of how a monitor lizard could be mistaken for a crocodile.

The monitor lizard is Africa's largest lizard and can grow up to two metres in length. Its tail is longer than its body, but unlike other lizards it does not shed its tail as a means of escape. Its main diet consists of fish, crabs and frogs, so to have one in the conservancy indicates a sufficient food source which, as we said earlier, points to a healthy environment.

We'd like to have a photo of 'our own' monitor lizard(s), so if you have been lucky

enough to have snapped one in your travels through the conservancy, please forward a copy as well as details of where the photo was taken, so we can add it to our gallery.

The monitor lizard, and your picture, may be featured in one of our new 'conservation corner' articles, so look out for that in future editions.

conservation corner

As part of achieving Ecoglen's education imperative we have added this new section to our newsletter. The prime idea is to highlight the fauna and flora resident in Ecoglen, as well as to discuss other issues surrounding conservation, rehabilitation and sustainability within the conservancy.

The species or issue discussed will be covered in brief in the newsletter, with more detail being available on our web site.

Because of the recent tree tagging exercise we have chosen one of the indigenous tree species for the inaugural conservation corner. Our chosen species is the Sweet Thorn (*Acacia Karroo*).

The Sweet Thorn is the most common and widespread tree in South Africa. Despite that, the Sweet Thorn is a protected species in both the Free State and Northern Cape provinces.

Being deciduous, the Sweet Thorn looks fairly spartan during the winter months, but in spring and summer its true beauty can really be appreciated. Flowering throughout this period it produces delicate yellow



powder-puff balls along new growth. This makes it fairly easy to identify and has also made the Sweet Thorn popular as an ornamental shade tree in many domestic gardens.

The Sweet Thorn also provides food with cattle and game eating the leaves and the flowers. The flowers of course attract insects which in turn attract the birds that feed on them.

More information is available on the Sweet Thorn and other members of Ecoglen's fauna and flora on our web site at <http://www.ecoglen.za.org/html/library.html>