

Update...

August 2019

It is time for another *Update*, our last for the current financial year.

SHADE

Those of you who have walked on the south side recently will have noticed the new “shade sail” over the picnic bench at the top entrance to the Fynbos trail.

We elected to go the sail route as, while it provides an effective shade cover, it was the least visually obtrusive



option and it is modern, lightweight yet strong enough to withstand the strong winds that can blow up there.

It has a 3x4m span and is positioned to provide optimal protection from the **midday summer** sun. The area surrounding the table has also been cleared to accommodate a couple of chairs for larger groups.

WORK-IN-PROGRESS

We are busy repairing (and in some cases upgrading) the South road between the water tanks above No.1 and our western boundary, abutting the Wedlake “Fairhills” property which has been quite badly eroded since the fire. This will include concrete strips in places



and the shoring up of the area leading down to the fire-break which was in particular need of repair.



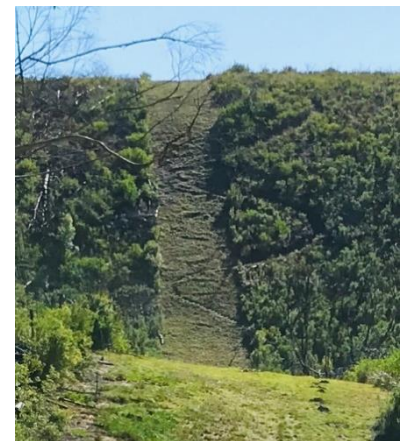
Please note that the road remains a 4x4 track and is not at all suitable for two-wheel drive vehicles. As agreed some time back new signs are to be installed at the entrance to the Trust land to emphasise this. These will be installed this coming week.



WALKING TRAILS

We had a couple of requests to re-open the “short-cut” from the top of the Leopard trail which leads down the steep western fire-break heading south to re-join the 3-Dams road.

This is currently being done by the PGS team as they built the original path a few years ago. There are 160 new steps to lay, apart from clearing the bush in the two loops that abut the fire-break. As we only have the team once a



fortnight we hope to have this finished by the end of the month, or early September.

Thank you to those who keep us informed about fallen trees blocking the paths. It is unfortunately something that will be with us for some time yet, as the fire-damaged trees will continue to fall after heavy rain and strong winds.

ALIEN CLEARING

Just as we thought we were on top of our alien clearing program, a new invasive plant was identified – the Barbados Gooseberry, which, according to the pundits, is an extremely aggressive invasive plant, which we need to eliminate. Evidently it propagates so readily

that it has to be removed and burned and not simply dumped, which adds to the challenge. Fortunately we have people who will do this for us.

Please keep an eye out for this plant and let us know should you also spot it in our area.

Wikipedia tells us that “Although *Pereskia aculeata* is edible and of high nutrition quality, being an alternative to conventional food, this plant is a **declared weed** in South Africa where it does **extensive damage** to forest areas by smothering **indigenous** trees. Infestations occur in forest canopies and are difficult to remove.



The plant has a tendency to form large, impenetrable clumps and the spines on the stems make control of large infestations difficult. The plants can regrow from leaves

or pieces of stem. One specimen that had infested a tree had its stems cut at the base, but after four years the 'dry' stems of the *Pereskia* that fell from the tree still set root and regrew”.

NEIGHBOURS

We have developed a good working relationship with the Nirvana team on the other side of the Sanral road reserve on our N/W boundary. According to the powers that be, WBPNT and Nirvana are exemplary in terms of alien control, however the same cannot be said of our other two neighbours, Fairhills and Riverside Lodge, who continue to default on their responsibility to clear their areas of aliens. As we have reported so many times in the past, we have had several engagements with various parties regarding these two properties to no avail. Evidently the situation is now squarely in the hands of the DEA (Dept. of Environment) and we can but wait and see.

In the meantime Sanral are about to clear their second area abutting our N/W boundary, near the top gate on the Rheenendal road, having successfully cleared the area adjacent to the north side of our estate.

PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY BOARD (PAB)

As mentioned in recent minutes of the WBPNT management meeting two of our four PAB members are retiring from the board, Mike Cameron and Zane Erasmus. Their contribution over the past has been much appreciated and their professional advice on occasion has assisted significantly in maintaining the reserve in a pristine condition. Our sincere thanks to you both.

With their departure we welcome our two new PAB appointees:



Jon Rutherford, who has a Phd in Agricultural Sciences and brings with him a life-time of experience in environmental management and expertise. He also has a personal interest in our estate since his daughter Tessa Cairns and family moved into no. 53!

Our other new PAB member is Deon van Zyl, well known in the area for his tireless efforts in environmental management, fire prevention in particular. He is currently chairman of the SCFPA (Southern Cape Fire Prevention Assoc.) and is well connected with local authorities and environmental specialists.



We look forward to working with them in the years to come. One of the first projects we shall be jointly tackling is an updated 5-Year Environmental Management Plan which is part of our on-going mandate.

SPRING IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER

Right now it is a cascade of yellow, soon it will be a kaleidoscope of colour. Enjoy the trails and picnic sites and remember to let Jenny know if you see anything that you feel needs attention, simply WhatsApp her (0833247783)

