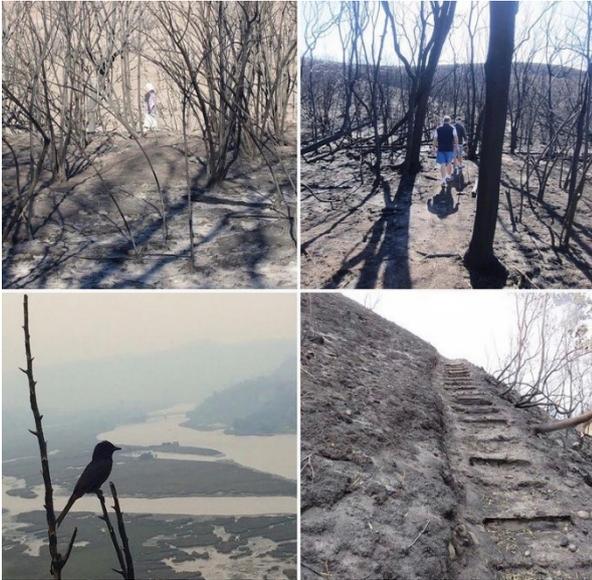


Update...

June 2021

It's hard to believe that this month four years ago our nature reserve was decimated by fire.



The regrowth has been remarkable and the rehabilitation program has been successfully completed, along with the eradication of most of the alien vegetation that sprang up with a vengeance after the fire. All trails are in good condition and eminently walkable.



PRIVATE NATURE RESERVE VERIFICATION & VALIDATION (V&V) PROGRAM

In our last *Update* we mentioned that we had been approached to register our reserve as a “verified and validated” private nature reserve (PNR) via the newly introduced V&V government initiative, which we agreed to. However in the interim there has been a delay in finalising the agreement as many private land owners were put off by some of the prescription that the program introduced, such as the need for a formal management plan with the obligation of an annual update.

In the light of this the board of Trustees relooked their position and after some debate reconfirmed their commitment to the program on the grounds that the benefits of being recognised as a registered PNR are significant. We have always operated according to a formalised environmental management plan (EMP) and are happy to update same on an annual basis. This however will require a revision of the format to fit a national standard “template” which will take some time and effort, but it will ultimately provide the WBPVRT with an updated, formal plan going forward, which will be of great value to new boards in the future, speaking of which....

SUCCESSION – THE NEED FOR NEW TRUSTEES

We have, on numerous occasions, called for new blood to join the board of Trustees and we are repeating the call now as we need one more Trustee to replace Alan Crocker, who no longer lives here, but has graciously continued to serve regardless. He will move to our Professional Advisory board once a suitable replacement steps forward.

We call on some of our younger home owners to join us in a “shadowing” capacity with the aim of assuming management of the WBPVRT in the not-too-distant future, as the current Trustees are soon likely to be moving on, for one reason or another.

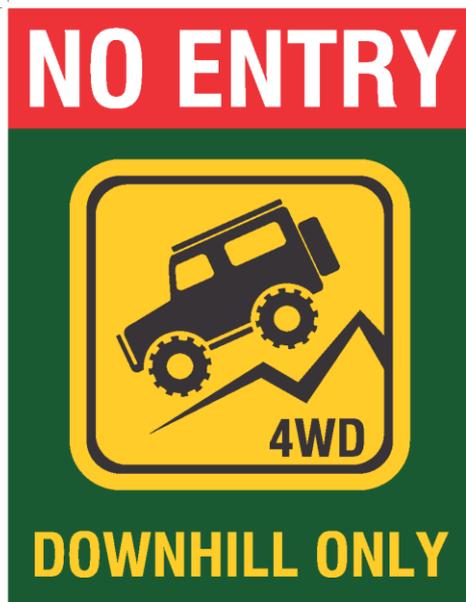
REVISION OF OUR “BURN BLOCKS” MAP

There is reason to believe that the fire of 2017 has altered the fynbos dispersion pattern across the reserve, resulting in the need for a whole new environmental assessment of the area so that we can establish a new “burn plan” going forward, an essential feature in the fynbos cycle.

Being ever aware of the potential risks that these periodic “planned” burns bring, the board, in tandem with the local head of the Southern Cape Fire Prevention Association (SCFPA) have agreed on a revised plan of the “burn blocks”, that includes more numerous, smaller blocks, which will be easier to manage. This will necessitate the addition of a few more fire breaks in strategic areas. The project is planned to proceed soon, so should you see teams working on the reserve, you’ll know why.

EROSION OF FIRE BREAKS

We recently noticed that someone had driven a motor bike or scrambler up the steep hill on the western fire break.



This happened to be just after some good rains, with the result that the spinning rear wheel gouged a rut in the soft soil. The sort of thing that can create soil erosion, which we

strive to obviate on the reserve.

Please be reminded that no two-wheel motorised vehicles are permitted on the reserve. For good reason, only 4x4 vehicles may be driven on the South road and beyond the picnic bench on the 3-Dams road. Please also note that vehicles may only traverse the steep hill on the western fire break in a “downward” direction, so as to avoid erosion. Our new sign will remind you....

CLEARING AND FIXING

Those of you who walk on the reserve would have noticed that a major tree-felling and clearing operation took place in December/January which included widening of some of the fire breaks. This has paid dividends, particularly after strong winds which habitually littered the fire breaks with fallen trees and debris. Thanks to the proactive felling exercise, our fire breaks remain clear.

Fallen trees though continue to be a challenge on the Forest Walk, Bushbuck Ravine and early parts of the Leopard Trail. We appreciate being informed of such obstacles when they occur by some walkers. Please keep doing so, it is a great help.

We had some remarkably warm days earlier this month and hopefully many of you would have enjoyed walking on the reserve which is looking really good at the moment.



By the way, we haven’t forgotten our promise to fix the road at the entrance to the reserve between no’s 28 & 33.

We shall lay two new strips of concrete there as part of the “burn block” clearing exercise, which hopefully will be soon.

CONTACT DETAILS

Should any of you wish to heed the call to join the board of Trustees, or participate in a “shadowing” capacity, please contact me directly: Dion Gaylard 083 253 3715.