

Update...

December 2021

A quick *Update* before everything shuts down for the festive season. It's been a trying year for all of us, let's hope 2022 brings with it some welcome relief from the constraints of Covid that we have all got used to, that international travel resumes and friends and family can once again visit, with all the benefits that will bring to our local businesses.

Paul's Garden Services (PGS) HAS A NEW NAME

As of 1st January PGS will be called LB Garden Services as Lee Blasich, current part-owner, has acquired total ownership of the company.

All current employees will be retained and it will be "business as usual", with the welcome addition of a supervisor, who will take an active role in planning and monitoring the work to be done.

This is an encouraging development as it could be the solution to our succession concerns in terms of on-going maintenance, as, despite many requests, we still have no new volunteers to join the board of Trustees. Time will tell.

A PLAGUE OF TICKS



As we mentioned in our last *Update* we have a plague of ticks on the reserve and those of you who have been walking the trails over the past months will have experienced this directly. It is most unfortunate and something we have no control over other than by keeping the walking paths cut as often as our budget and resources allow. Last week all but two

of the firebreaks that form part of our trails network had a one metre path cut and by next Tuesday the balance will be dealt with as well. It's the best we can do.

In the meantime it may be an idea to remind ourselves of some pertinent facts regarding ticks

(courtesy *Wikipedia*).



"Ticks locate potential hosts by sensing odour, body heat, moisture, and/or vibrations in the environment. Some ticks attach to their host rapidly, while others wander around searching for thinner skin, such as that in the ears of mammals. Depending on the species and life stage, preparing to feed can take from ten minutes to two hours. On locating a suitable feeding spot, the tick grasps the host's skin and cuts into the surface."

A habitat preferred by ticks is the interface where a lawn (walking trail) meets the forest, or more generally, the ecotone, which is unmaintained transitional edge habitat between woodlands and open areas. Ticks like shady, moist leaf litter with an overstory of trees or shrubs and, in the spring, they deposit their eggs into such places allowing larvae to emerge in the fall and crawl into low-lying vegetation. The 3 meter boundary closest to the lawn's (trail's) edge are a tick migration zone, where 82% of tick nymphs may be found."

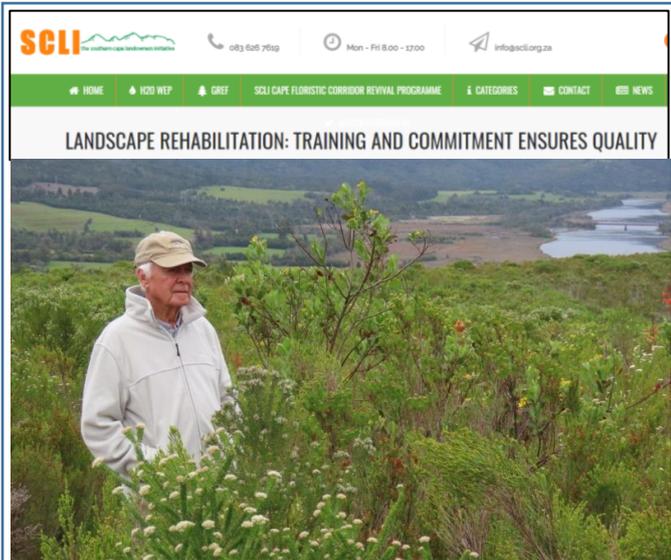
Ticks are implicated in the transmission of a number of infections such as African tick bite fever, however not all ticks in an infective area are infected with transmittable pathogens and both attachment of the tick and a long feeding session are necessary for transmission of these diseases to take place. Thus, tick bites often do not lead to infection, especially if the ticks are removed within 36 hours".

Encouraging, however we strongly advise that you take adequate care and check your shoes and legs several times during a walk...

SOME RECOGNITION FOR OUR EFFORTS....

For the full article recently published by Cobus Meiring of the SCLI (Southern Cape Landowners Initiative), go to:

<https://www.scli.org.za/landscape-rehabilitation-training-and-commitment-ensures-quality/>



Photograph: Dion Gaylard & Westford Bridge Conservancy. The area formerly under dense invasive alien plants was rehabilitated back to a full bouquet of Coastal Fynbos. Following the 2017 Knysna wildfire disaster, the Westford Bridge Conservancy, bordering the Knysna River, invested considerable resources in ensuring that the conservancy reverts back to indigenous Fynbos, and staff members attended several training workshops hosted by SCLI on how best to deal with the control and eradication of invasive alien plants. Today, Westford Bridge Conservancy, under the management of Dion Gaylard, is an environmental and alien invasive species eradication success story.

SANRAL – An on-going battle...

Since the very early days of Westford Bridge various Trustees over the years have battled, mainly in vain, to get SANRAL (SA National Road Agency) to keep their area free of alien vegetation and to cut and maintain a firebreak along their boundary with ourselves. On occasion, after much effort, they would oblige, but since the recent restructuring of the department, this has become seemingly impossible to arrange.

In the meantime the alien vegetation on ERF 12610, (on the Northern boundary with Westford Bridge, just above plot 55 and leading west towards the Rheenendal rd) continues to flourish and is becoming a significant fire hazard. We clearly cannot let this growth continue so the Trustees of the WBPNT have decided to have it cleared of aliens at our cost. To do this we are engaging

with “Alien Busters”, a non-profit organisation conceived and run by a Brenton-on-Sea family who are dedicated to alien eradication in our area. (Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/alienbusters/>)

Among the many benefits of using a team like Alien Busters are:

- They are experienced in alien control having been operating locally for the past 3 years
- They are professionally managed and properly supervised on site
- They are transported to and from site, together with all water, herbicide and tools, all of which they provide and is included in the cost
- They wear clearly identifiable “vests”.
- And above all, being a non-profit operation, they come at a price substantially lower than any of the contractors we have employed to do such work in the past.

Based on the results of the SANRAL exercise we shall certainly plan to include them in our on-going alien clearing program for the WBPNT in future.

We wish you and your families all a safe and joyful Xmas and a productive new year filled with happiness and positivity...

The WBPNT Board of Trustees

