



LUKE STRUGNELL PICKS UP THE REINS

With the Endangered Wildlife Trust's intention of moving its headquarters to Pinelands in Modderfontein, the organisation has entered into an agreement with Heartland to make Luke Strugnell available to manage the Modderfontein Reserve from a conservation point of view.

Luke began his tenure in Modderfontein at the beginning of February. His first task was to familiarise himself with the area with the intention of drafting a management plan for the Reserve.

Among his plans is to institute work parties for which he'll be recruiting help from students and members of the Conservation Society. He is also pinpointing – with the help of GPS co-ordinates the location of invasive vegetation that needs urgent control. The work already done by Ken England, John Cruickshank and Robbie Vermont in identifying these plants and their location will aid Luke in his task.

Luke's background includes working with the De Wildt organisation at Alldays near the Botswana border where he captured, tagged and relocated carnivores. He also spent in the Lowveld specialising in carnivores. More recently he has worked "a few years" with the EWT in the Wildlife and Energy Interaction Group Power (looking at the impact of power lines on birds, and minimising it). On relinquishing his post at EWT the organisation declared: "We are very sad to say farewell to Luke Strugnell our EIA - Senior Field Officer, colleague and 'tallest man in the world'. Although Luke will be staying with the EWT, taking up an Estate Manager's position at Modderfontein, we will miss him. Luke, we wish you well in your new position"

Pom-pom battle begins

Luke Strugnell has had a team of 22 workers in the Reserve spearheading the fight against the pom-pom weed which had begun a rampant invasion last year.

The programme began in February and called for teams of two people, one of whom would cut the flowers/seed pods from the plants and bag them and the other to follow on with a herbicide treatment approved by the EWT. The bags of flowers/seeds are sealed and incinerated. Luke is working with the Little Gnome teams and Moses Dhlamini, both of whom are already contracted to work in Modderfontein.

A foreman was appointed to ensure the efficiency and efficacy of the operation.



Luke Strugnell and friend pictured in Zambia

Robinia in his sights

Luke has also initiated a programme to evaluate a new product for the control of robinia (*Robinia pseudoacacia*).

"The new product is being compared to an existing product that is known to work," explains Luke. "The existing product is a Garlon and diesel mix and it is effective simply sprayed onto the base of the stem, no cutting is required!"

"We sprayed 10 trees with this, 10 were marked and left alone as a control, 10 were sprayed with

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From the April evening meeting, your Society will revert to the Modderfontein Town Hall where it will be warmer during the winter months.

In the meantime, we owe the SA Emergency Care Fire Training Centre a very big "THANK YOU" for hosting our meetings over the past several months. The enthusiasm and friendship displayed by Jan Liebenberg, Mark Moir and the team has been absolutely remarkable. The MCS values your contribution and friendship.

Luke Strugnell

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the new chemical at 1% concentration, the next 10 at 2% and the next 10 at 3%. The idea is to follow up on these and to see what works the best.

"We also did five foliar treatments using a new product that is apparently safer than Access. These trees have been marked and we will follow up on the effectiveness."



Robinia – tagged control and sprayed examples

It is essential that the tagged plants must not be cut, pulled out or disturbed as Luke will be following up over time to see what works the best.

The Conservation Society welcomes Luke and wishes him a long and fulfilling period in Modderfontein. "We look forward to working with Luke," says Chairman Ellen van Dongen. "I believe that our development plans have been given a welcome boost by his appointment."

AGM REAFFIRMS YOUR COMMITTEE

The Modderfontein Conservation Society's committee was re-elected *en bloc* at the AGM held at the SA Emergency Care Centre on St Patrick's Day – 17 March.

Forty two members were present. There were no nominations for new committee members.

The meeting was preceded by a talk on the Environmental Impact Assessment process by Vici Napier of Strategic Environmental Focus.

Chairman Ellen van Dongen presented her report which gave a comprehensive overview of the myriad activities and hard work undertaken by the committee over the past year.

Thanks

Ellen thanked all those who had given so much of their time and effort. She also thanked the sponsors of various projects: AEL Mining Services, Heartland and Printers of Distinction who had sponsored the very successful 2011 calendar; Honorary Life Member Ken England for the water colour paintings he supplied for use in the calendar; Top Turf for their sponsorship of our photocopying needs; The Bedfordview and Edenvale News for their support in bringing news of the Society's activities to the public and AEL Mining Services for its sponsorship of the Annual Earth Day children's event.

Treasurer Tricia Llewellyn presented the financial report for the year and indicated that the Society is in a sound financial position.

After the close of the meeting, members enjoyed a cheese and wine spread arranged by Keith Martin, Janet Brodrick and John Clark.

See back page for committee list.

"If a tree falls in the woods, and there's no one there to hear it, how will the Environmentalists react?"

Ria made them laugh & made them cry

Top field guide trainer Ria Milburn took a record audience of some 150 people on an inspirational trip through southern Africa at the Modderfontein Conservation Society's January meeting held for the first time in the Thornhill Manor main hall.

It was an emotion-charged talk which was designed to motivate people to take a whole new look at what makes life tick, and how nature provides the classroom in which all life's lessons may be learned.

Knowing what a wonderful draw card Ria is, the Society had to alter its venue for her presentation because the SA Emergency Care Centre would not have been big enough to cope.

A FGASA-accredited field guide and training instructor, Ria is also one of the country's top motivational speakers. She has years of close encounters with the African bush that have resulted in her learning lessons about the joys and tragedies of nature and best of all, she loves sharing them with others, and does so with passion.

"Nature is our classroom," she says. "It answers many questions about life and how we live it: What is life? How did diversity and evolution come about? Why does my life seem meaningless? Where do I fit into the scheme of things?"

This presentation is a guide to happiness, freedom and contentment.



MODDER FILM PROJECT TAKES OFF

An ambitious project to produce a film about Modderfontein – past and present – has been initiated by committee member Keith Martin.

Keith holds the 'heritage portfolio' and, as such keeps a watching brief on developments in Modder that impact on historical aspects of the village. Your Society has approved a grant of R5 000 towards getting the project off the ground.

A working committee has been formed with the objective of finding ways and means of making a movie which would not only record the past, but look at Modder as it is today and where developments will take it.

Filming began early in January in order to document the demolition of houses at 9, 11 and 13 Antwerp Avenue. Three phases of the demolition of No 11 are shown above. It is planned to record the re-construction of these houses inside the 'Heritage Precinct' near prestigious Franz Hoenig Haus. "This process will underline the community's commitment – and Heartland's willingness – to work towards the preservation of Modder's rich past," says Keith.

Filming is being done by Vincent Cox of the Film and TV Department of Humanities at Wits University. Vince plans to use this project as an exercise for some of his students. "We will involve some talented young people in the project," he says. "It will enhance the learning experience and capabilities of some of the 2011 intake. It may also help us source some government funding for the project."

A storyline is being drafted and, from this, a script will be written that is expected to portray Modderfontein as a fascinating place with a heritage foundation that will provide a solid base for exciting developments into the future.

How you can help

The film project committee is keen to involve the community in the film project. As a starter, there is a move afoot to gather Modder memories and memorabilia. If you have items of historical interest – be they of commercial or social significance, Sally Hogan, who is assembling a database of artefacts and memories, will be very pleased to hear from you.

Also, Sally needs help in her endeavours so if you have some spare time, knowledge of and a love of this wonderful area, step forward and get involved in this exciting and stimulating project.

There are other areas where help is needed: "If anyone has a spare office with a telephone where we can store artefacts and paperwork, we'd love to hear from you," says Sally. "As we need to collect a database of knowledge before we can move the project forward, storage space and a facility where we can sort and log material is a high priority."

Funding is also an issue. "While we have received an initial modest sum from the Modderfontein Conservation Society, we still need a whole lot more funding to see this project through properly and professionally," says Keith Martin. "We would like any residents who can help with funding or finding funds to get involved."

"Contributors and contributing enterprises could be acknowledged in the body of the film and/or given a credit," says Vincent Cox. "The bigger the contribution, the bigger the credit, all within reason, subject to negotiation, and hopefully Modderfontein related."

"Another way of helping out would be for local folk with appropriate skills or knowledge to come forward," concludes Keith. "Areas of expertise can include script writing, storyboarding, production planning, financial planning and even archiving."

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Editor or the Modderfontein Conservation Society.

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Dedicated to the 'Art of Green'

**Tel: 011 606 2521 E-mail: topturf@topturf.co.za
Visit www.topturf.co.za**

Tell us about it

If you've changed your phone number or address, please remember to tell Membership Secretary Robbie Vermont about it. We'd like to stay in touch, but can't unless we know where you are. Also, if your membership status changes, please let us know. Membership categories are:

- Individual
- Family
- Senior single (over 60)
- Senior couple (over 60)

MODDERFONTEIN CONSERVATION SOCIETY Programme of events: 2011				
April	Saturday	09	07:30	Walk in the Nature Reserve
	Sunday	24	07:30	Walk in the Nature Reserve
	Thursday	28	19:30	Tess Rainer tells: "What BIOMIMICRY can do for us"
	Tuesdays	all	08:00	Walk in the Nature Reserve – John Clark 082 509 9856
Contact: Keith Martin (h) 011 608 2864 (c) 082 450 4003				
May	Saturday	07	08:00	Walk in the Nature Reserve
	Thursday	19	19:30	Tony D'Almeida tells all about indigenous gardening
	Sunday	22	08:00	Walk in the Nature Reserve
	Tuesdays	all	08:30	Walk in the Nature Reserve – John Clark 082 509 9856
Contact: John Clark (h) 011 454 1801 (c) 082 509 9856				
June	Saturday	11	08:00	Walk in the Nature Reserve
	Thursday	23	19:30	Astri & John Leroy assure us "Spiders Don't Eat People"
	Sunday	26	08:00	Walk in the Nature Reserve
	Tuesdays	all	08:30	Walk in the Nature Reserve – John Clark 082 509 9856
Contact: Patricia Llewellyn (h) 011 882-4114 (c) 082 497 9241				
July	Saturday	09	08:00	Walk in the Nature Reserve
	Thursday	21	19:30	Pam & Rob's annual quiz
	Sunday	24	08:00	Walk in the Nature Reserve
	Tuesdays	all	08:30	Walk in the Nature Reserve – John Clark 082 509 9856
Contact: Robbie Vermont (h) 011 608 2693 (c) 082 800 3704				

- **Saturday and Sunday walks** leave from the Nature Reserve gates in Ardeer Road at the advertised times
- **Tuesday walkers** meet in the CSIR parking area opposite the gates to the Nature Reserve
- **FOR ALL WALKS, BE THERE AT LEAST 15 MINUTES BEFOREHAND**
- **Charges:** Visitors pay R10 for walks and R20 for evening talks; members pay R10 for evening talks

YOUR COMMITTEE				
Name	Portfolio	Home phone	Cell phone	Office phone
Ellen van Dongen	Chairman	011-462-3067	082-813-9611	011-606-0843
Pat van Nierop	Vice Chair	011-882-4392	083-326-6838	
John Clark	Tuesday walks	011-454-1801	082-509-9856	
Norman Doak	Community liaison	011-608-2537	082-447-9293	
Robbie Vermont	Membership	011-608-2693	082-800-3704	
Patricia Llewellyn	Treasurer	011-882-4114	082-497-9241	
Keith Martin	Heritage	011-608-2864	082-450-4003	
Janet Brodrick	Speaker liaison	011-453-3910	072-679-6461	
Peter Ewen	Reserve development	011-608-4043	076-377-3263	
Daryl Fuchs	Technology		083 395 0778	
Carol Sherwood		011-443-4114	082-906-5794	
Rajen Reddy			071-686-0631	011-709-8726
Stephen Burrow		011-608-1134	082-444-5467	011-501-2000
Sally Hogan		011-608-3089	082-291-8084	

SUBS ANONYMOUS

Who was the bright spark who paid his/her subscriptions directly to our account but did not say who made the payment? It was an amount of R90.00 indicating that the subscription was for an "Individual" category. C'mon, own up. We'd like to send you a receipt and membership card.

PHOTO GALLERY

Some smaller Modder creatures



Left: Bees in an old pipe

Right: Tadpoles in a pool – photo: Ken England



Below: Two skinks in a standoff confrontation for territory.



Above: Caterpillar
Below: Crab Crossing

photo: Lesley Rae
photo: Lucia Cowan



Dung beetles in the Reserve photo: Robbie Vermont