



## Newsletter: June 2011

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# EARTHDAY CELEBRATIONS SPOTLIGHT WATER AND WASTE

In celebration of International Earth Day on 22 April, the Modderfontein Conservation Society (MCS) hosted some 100 children from six local eco schools to a fun-filled day in the Modderfontein Reserve.

Sponsored by AEL Mining Services and organised and co-ordinated by Pat van Nierop of the MCS, the day was structured by Liezl van Lingen, Regional Coordinator: Gauteng for the WESSA/WWF Eco-Schools Programme.

Rand Water's Water Wise Education Team came to the party in full strength with a team that laid on a full programme of events designed to make enviro-learning fun.

The day's activities included, among others, instruction on climate change, the need to conserve water and how to use it wisely.

Kate MacEwan from the Bat Interest Group enthralled her young audience with a slide presentation and the arrival of Kelly Westhof, Miss Earth South Africa Ambassador 2010, was a big surprise and a special treat for the youngsters.

Kelly taught the children a simple song containing enviro-messages such as save water and pick up your litter. They joined in with tremendous enthusiasm.

The River Rangers were again enthusiastic supporters of the day and entertained the kids with a talk.

Everything was organised to be environmentally friendly and to produce minimal waste. Even the lunch packs were made up in bio-degradable paper bags and comprised fruit and cheese, tomato and lettuce in a freshly baked whole-wheat roll. All organic waste was carefully collected with the idea of using it as fodder for a worm farm. Plastic drinking cups were collected separately for recycling.

The Gauteng Department of Agriculture and Rural Development sponsored the buses that transported the kids.

The day ended with the Rand Water team – including that fun character Manzi – leading the kids in the traditional end-of-function "Water Dance" where everyone makes a promise to save water.



*Kelly Westhof, Miss Earth South Africa Ambassador 2010 was a big hit with the kids*



*Students from Bovett Primary School in Alexandra gather round the main sponsor's banner.*

*Rand Water's Victor Hlungwani lays down the ground rules in the amphitheatre.*



**Look deep into nature, and then you will  
understand everything better.**

**-Albert Einstein (1879-1955)**

# REEDBUCK RESCUE BY NICE NEIGHBOURS

Four members of the Wood family, and two grooms, gave up a morning of their time in the dramatic chase and capture of a reedbuck that had escaped from the Modderfontein Reserve just before the Easter holidays.

Daughter Claire looked out from her cottage in Linbro Park at 06:30 and had difficulty in believing that she was seeing a pair of horns dimly through the rising blanket of mist. Throwing on a jacket and shoes, she ventured out and verified that there was a fairly large antelope at the bottom of the garden.

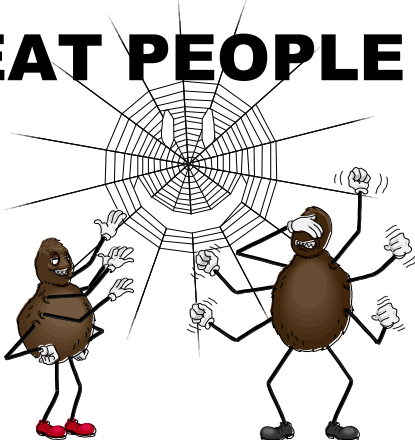
As the buck was heading towards the N3 highway, Claire was concerned for the animal's safety. "I called for our grooms, Ephraim and Peter who came running to see what the excitement was about. Between us – and with help from my Dad, Gary, in a Land Rover – we gave chase." The action spread over the best part of a kilometre of ground with the animal leading its pursuers a merry chase through rain-soaked bogs until it was cornered in a culvert where the grooms managed to get a halter over its horns and placate it.

Meanwhile, Mom, Gwen, had got hold of chairman Ellen van Dongen and reported the incident. Ellen arranged for iMvula Security's Fournier Venter who looks after the security of the Reserve to meet the Wood family at their home and try to assist. By the time he arrived, the reedbuck had been captured and contained in a horsebox. It was then transported back to the Reserve where it was released.

"We are deeply grateful to the Woods for their swift and positive response to this situation," says Ellen. "Their action saved this poor animal which was lost and in serious danger from traffic on one of the country's busiest highways."

There are still two or three reedbuck known to survive in the Reserve, along with naturally occurring species such as grey duiker, mongoose, otters and other small mammals.

## SPIDERS DON'T EAT PEOPLE ...



... is the title of our JUNE 23 illustrated evening talk at the Modder Town Hall when two of the country's foremost spider buffs give a presentation about the huge variety and curious habits of these fascinating creatures.

Astri Leroy is the speaker, her husband John is the photographer. Together they make a formidable team and will help you discover the amazing world of spiders.

"While many folk view spiders with a degree of trepidation, some of us admit to downright fear of these tiny creatures" says Astri. "There's no better way of overcoming these emotions than knowing more about 'the enemy'." With her considerable powers of persuasion, Astri may even have you falling for these loveable creepy crawlies.

"All spiders are predators, catching live prey, usually insects, and killing them with their venom," she points out. "Spiders cannot eat people so there is no point in biting us. It is only when they are severely provoked that they will do so."

Spiders are found everywhere – ask your children – so knowing more about them will help you to understand why they are here and what they do in the greater scheme of things.



Claire Wood with grooms Ephraim Moyo and Peter Ndlovu at the culvert where the reedbuck was captured.

**Other diary dates.**  
Remember Pam & Robbie's annual quiz on 21 July.

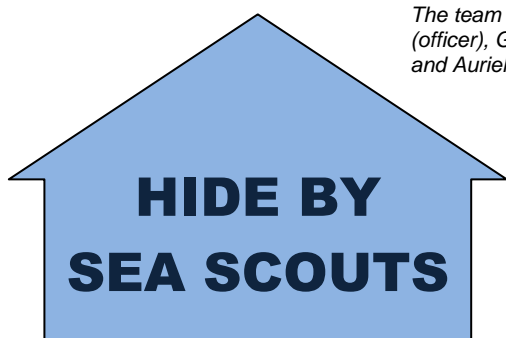
### Very good news:

• Luke Strugnell talks about "Managing Modder: Modderfontein Reserve - EWT's involvement and plans" on 15 September.

• Geoff Lockwood on 17 November on "Birding Changes in Gauteng"



*The team takes a brief break. They are: Roberto Da Costa (officer), Christopher Hamman (officer), Gareth Watt (officer), Michelle Morrow (project leader), Luke Sorour, Robyn Brown and Auriel Wise*



**M**ichelle Morrow and a team of scouts and cubs from 3<sup>rd</sup> Kensington Sea Scouts recently worked their fingers to the bone building a new hide at Blue Crane Dam.

Team leader, Michelle, was aiming to complete 40 hours of community service as part of the programme leading up to achieving the Top Award of Springbok Scout. She was guided and assisted by Gareth Watt who has been involved in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Kensington group for 25 years. The entire effort was arranged and co-ordinated by Norman Doak, MCS committee member and a past Group Scouter of the same group.

Michelle was required to originate the project, design the hide, prepare a motivation and budget and motivate a team to help her with the construction and erection of the hide. In order to keep the hide rustic and as unobtrusive as possible, it was built of bamboo screens. The raw materials were sourced in the Modderfontein Reserve where the screens were made up and transported to the site of the hide.

Strong poles were sunk into the ground to form a basic framework and the screens were then bolted to the frame. "This was a good design feature," notes Norman. "It means that if a portion of the hide deteriorates at any time, the particular frame can be replaced quite easily rather than having to do a whole side." Wooden seats and book rests were added as a final touch.

Reaching the site of the hide required the construction of a temporary bridge over a drainage ditch. "The building of a more permanent bridge is likely to be the subject of the next scout project to be tackled in the Reserve," says Norman.

### Modder film project

## **Resurrection Ground takes shape**

April and May saw the foundations of the three houses demolished in Antwerp Avenue being re-laid at their new site at the entrance to the Franz Hoenig Haus property in High Street which Keith Martin has dubbed, very appropriately, The Resurrection Ground.

Regular filming has been undertaken to document the demolition of the properties. The storage and removal of the bricks, stone and corrugated iron and fittings to the new site, and the reconstruction of the homes has also been filmed.



*Demolition of No 7 Antwerp Avenue starts (above) and reconstruction begins in High Street (below)*



# EWT ANNOUNCES RELOCATION TO MODDERFONTEIN

The Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) is to relocate its head office to the Pinelands Office Park at Modderfontein.



Some of the pine trees that give the Pinelands site its name

This move was announced at the end of May by Yolana Friedmann, CEO of the EWT who expects the Trust to be installed in its new location and fully operational by July.

“This incredible support from Heartland and AECI builds on a partnership forged in January 2011 when the EWT and Heartland entered into an agreement for the joint management of the 275 ha Modderfontein Conservation Park,” says Yolana. “This site is a critical 'green lung' in the heart of Africa's largest, and most developed city. There is much work to be done over the next few years as we work together to remove alien invasive species from the site, reintroduce indigenous vegetation and wildlife, construct bird hides and walking trails and establish the park as a conservation site. Our new head office is situated within 2 km of this park.”

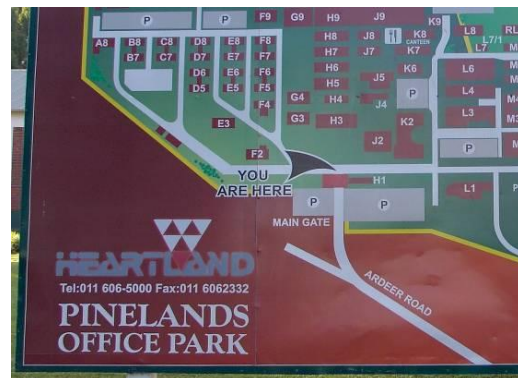
According to the EWT, Heartland has offered the organisation office accommodation for an initial period of five years free of any rental. “In time, when AECI is in a position to sell the building, we will have right of first refusal to purchase,” says Yolana. “This will secure the

EWT's head office in perpetuity and provide stability in a property market that is likely to see much change in Gauteng over the next 20 years or so.

“In addition, the joint venture of Aveng GLTA, Boitshoko and Moseme, the current occupant of our new headquarters building, has donated to us the furniture, fixtures and fittings, security, communications and IT infrastructure which they have been using while occupying the building. “We are thrilled at the sizeable donations being made to the Trust that will enable us to invest valuable resources in our conservation activities and make a smooth and seamless transition into our new, fully furnished and functional head office in July 2011.

Yolana points out special considerations in relocating to the Pinelands site include the fact that it is situated nearby a future Gautrain station. “We will be able to make use of public transport, as we strive to reduce our own carbon footprint and assist our staff and colleagues with lower cost access options,” she says. “The new offices are also well positioned between Pretoria, Johannesburg, the OR Tambo International Airport and with easy access to all major freeways.”

She expressed the EWT's regret at leaving its current head office site at the Johannesburg Zoo. “The EWT has operated from the Gold Fields Environmental Centre on the north side of the Johannesburg Zoo, in a facility provided free of charge to us by the zoo, for over 25 years and it is with some sadness that we will be bidding farewell to our leafy home and our friends at the zoo. However, the Johannesburg Zoo facility has ultimately become inadequate not only for our size, but also for the scale of our work and the range of our activities. Heartland, on behalf of AECI, has offered us this new home for our head office that is more than adequate for our current needs and will also comfortably support our future expansion.”



**Physical address: Pinelands Office Park, Building K2, Ardeer Road, Modderfontein, 1645**  
**Postal address; Private Bag X11, Modderfontein, 1645**  
**Tel: +27 (0)11 372 3600**  
**GPS coordinates: S 26 05.591 E 28 09.247**

**MODDERFONTEIN CONSERVATION SOCIETY**  
**Programme of events: 2011**

June	Saturday	11	08:00	Walk in the Reserve
	Thursday	23	19:30	Astri & John Leroy assure us "Spiders Don't Eat People"
	Sunday	26	08:00	Walk in the Reserve
	Tuesdays	all	08:30	Walk in the Reserve – John Clark 082 509 9856
	<b>Contact: Ellen van Dongen (h) 011 462 3067 (c) 082 813 9611</b>			
July	Saturday	09	08:00	Walk in the Reserve
	Thursday	21	19:30	Pam & Rob's annual quiz
	Sunday	24	08:00	Walk in the Reserve
	Tuesdays	all	08:30	Walk in the Reserve – John Clark 082 509 9856
	<b>Contact: Robbie Vermont (h) 011 608 2693 (c) 082 800 3704</b>			
August	Saturday	13	08:00	Walk in the Reserve
	Thursday	18	19:30	Allen Versveld – The Urban Astronomer
	Sunday	28	08:00	Walk in the Reserve
	Tuesdays	all	08:30	Walk in the Reserve – John Clark 082 509 9856
	<b>Contact: Rajen Reddy (c) 071 686 0631 or (o) 011 709 8726</b>			
September	Saturday	10	07:30	Walk in the Reserve
	Thursday	15	19:30	Luke Strugnell: "Modderfontein Reserve: the EWT's involvement and plans"
	Saturday	24	08:00	Heritage Walk – Robbie on 011 608 2693 or Keith on 011 608 2864
	Sunday	25	07:30	Walk in the Reserve
	Tuesdays	all	08:30	Walk in the Reserve – John Clark 082 509 9856
	<b>Contact: Stephen Burrow (h) 011 608 1134 or (c) 082 444 5467</b>			

- **Saturday and Sunday walks** leave from the Reserve gates in Ardeer Road at the advertised times
- **Tuesday walkers** meet in the CSIR parking area opposite the gates to the 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 Chairman	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	

**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.

Photocopying by courtesy of TOPTURF for  
 landscaping, irrigation, golf courses and  
 maintenance.

Dedicated to the 'Art of Green'

Tel: 011 606 2521 E-mail: [topturf@topturf.co.za](mailto:topturf@topturf.co.za)  
 Visit [www.topturf.co.za](http://www.topturf.co.za)



## **FreeMe rescues, rehabilitates and releases**

**T**his photograph of a Spotted Eagle-owl was taken by Pam Krzyza of FreeMe, the Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre which was founded in 1997 by Sue Slotar and Merle Jankelowitz who trained under Karen Trendler at ARC in Pretoria. Their aim was to address the considerable need for the care and rehabilitation of injured birds found in urban and suburban environments.

Since then FreeMe has grown rapidly and is the leading bird and small animal rehabilitation centre in Gauteng, and has established a reputation both nationally and internationally.

The organisation rescues rehabilitates and releases orphaned, abandoned, injured and displaced indigenous birds, mammals and reptiles that are brought to its centre in northern Johannesburg. It treats approximately 10 000 animals each year.

FreeMe volunteers have given talks at your Society's evening meetings three or four times over the years. The organisation has assisted us on several occasions when we have had small animals or birds in distress; they have also added to our fauna by releasing rehabilitated animals such as hedgehogs and mongooses in the Modderfontein Reserve.

If you find a sick or injured bird or animal, call (011) 807 6993 or Cell: 083 558 5658 (a/h and emergency). The same numbers apply if you'd like to get involved as a volunteer or to make a contribution.

For more information, visit FreeMe's website at <http://www.freemewildlife.org.za>.

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## **SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE NOW WELL OVERDUE**

Subscriptions were due on 1 March and we're pleased to say that most folk renewed promptly. If you have not yet paid, please do so. Member categories are:

Individual (R90.00) Family (R150.00) Senior single (over 60 – R60.00) and Senior couple (over 60 – R90.00)

Pay by cheque to P O Box 50, Modderfontein 1645 or direct deposit/EFT to ABSA Bank Savings Account, Branch No. 632005, Account No 29976791. Use your name as a reference and fax or e-mail confirmation of payment to 011 608 2693 or [robbiev@netactive.co.za](mailto:robbiev@netactive.co.za) during office hours. This is your last reminder. July 15 is the cut-off date.

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