

**NEWSLETTER NUMBER 5
SEPTEMBER 2009**

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Your comments and suggestions are welcome. Please forward them to the contact details provided at the end of the newsletter.

Please see Page 2 regarding an important meeting on Monday, 12 October 2009 to discuss the priorities and events for 2010 .

Klipriviersberg Conservancy logo launched at tree planting



The Klipriviersberg Conservancy gave its new logo its first public airing at the tree planting ceremony held in Suideroord on Saturday, 5 September 2009.

In celebration of Arbour week, which ran from 1 to 6 September, the Klipriviersberg Conservancy hosted a tree planting event at which four indigenous *Celtis africana* (white stinkwood) trees donated by Johannesburg

City Parks were planted along Columbine Avenue in Suideroord near Columbine Square and directly opposite the Sasol garage.



The trees were planted by invited guests who included Ward Councillor Anne Boxall, and our sponsors Thaba ya Batswana for the preparation of the logo and the Dignity Boards, Afrisam for the preparation of the holes and Johannesburg City Parks. Representatives from the Klipriviersberg Conservancy, the Klipriviersberg Nature Reserve Association, the Suideroord Community Forums, SOJO Business & Tourism and Miss Earth South Africa also assisted with the planting of the trees.



The planting of these trees is considered to be an important event at this stage in the life of the Klipriviersberg Conservancy as it signifies the beginning of a new life which needs to be cared for and nurtured, like our environment, for the sustainable benefit of future generations.

The logo has been carefully designed with only a few elements to create a feeling of openness and space – something which is being protected and promoted throughout the area of the conservancy.



The **brown wave** represents the Klipriviersberg and the specific tone of brown that fades from a dark to a lighter reddish brown to represent the typical rocks that are found in the Nature Reserve and surrounding areas. Furthermore it also represents the unique geological history and flow of lava which has become the foundation rocks of the Klipriviersberg Hills which were also used to build the many historical ruins found within the hills and area.



The **blue wave** is placed under the brown one and symbolizes the Klip River that flows through the Conservancy and also our interest to protect the river and its associated wetlands. The river rises in the heart of Johannesburg Central Area and passes through Soweto and along the southern boundary of the Conservancy to feed into the Vaal River to deliver drinking water to some of Gauteng’s major municipalities and the economic heartland of the country.

The **green wave** on the edge of the blue wave signifies the wetlands and grasslands found throughout the area. The wetlands play a vital role in the creation of life supporting ecosystems which can be of great value to people and to wildlife. The biodiversity and associated ecosystems of the grassland biome **need** to be sustained and secured for the benefit of current and future generations through the establishment of biodiversity corridors linking important facets of the natural environment together.



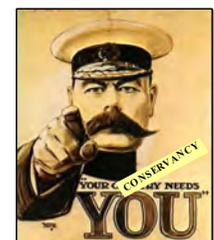
The **letter “V” with the green leaf** attached to it represents the thorns and leaf of the *Ziziphus mucronata* commonly known as the “Blinkblaar Wag-n-Bietjie” or Buffalo Thorn tree. It symbolizes the commitment of the Conservancy to the protection of indigenous plants and trees, many of which have a special significance and play important roles in the social, medicinal, cultural and economic realms of local populations. The shape of the letter “V” made by the two thorns at the nodes also indicates appropriate value-adding development, growth and progression. The thorns are considered to be important in local culture because the one that faces backward represents where we have come from and the one facing forward denotes where we are going.

Have Your Say In The Management Plan For The Conservancy

Following the various presentations and workshops that have been held, many ideas and suggestions have been put forward for the Management Plan for the Conservancy.

We need to establish what are the priority projects and activities that the Conservancy should focus on. Your assistance is required to identify what is important.

Please join us in an open meeting to discuss the projects and programmes for 2010.



We therefore have great pleasure in inviting you to an open meeting at Mondeor High School Auditorium, Beauval Avenue, on Monday, 12 October 2009 at 18h30.

CONGRATULATIONS

"On Thursday 10 September 2009 at the prestigious **Mail & Guardian Greening the Future Awards 2009** - Gauteng Conservancy & Stewardship Association were presented with a certificate for being a finalist in the Environmental Best Practice in Not-for-Profit Organisation Category. The category was strongly contested with the award going to the World Wildlife Fund entry - GC&SA did well to be in contention against such formidable competition. **"Together we can make a difference"** Keep up the good work fellow conservationists". Ivan Parks, Chairman GC&SA

Protected Area Expansion Strategy for Gauteng Province (GPAES)

The importance of protecting the natural environmental assets is being recognised by the Gauteng Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (GDAD previously GDACE) and the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) who are to prepare a 20-year Protected Area Expansion Strategy for Gauteng Province (GPAES). This project will:

- Summarise the various biodiversity conservation efforts in South Africa and in Gauteng, and motivate how protected areas and the expansion of the protected area system will make significant contributions to securing biodiversity into the future.
- Establish a high-level 20-year Vision and determine the 20-year Strategic Outcomes that are relevant for the Gauteng context. These will form the high-level strategic framework within which protected area expansion efforts can be implemented, monitored and improved upon in the next 3-4 years.

The Conservancy has established contact with GDAD and has requested an opportunity to become involved in the preparation of the strategy. In addition, the area of the Conservancy has been put forward to the Department for consideration in the rolling out of the Biodiversity Stewardship Program. This will include the identification of key areas in the Conservancy which need to be protected through carefully prepared management plans resulting in agreements between landowners and the state regarding the protection of these important areas and financial and technical assistance for landowners.

Trees Could Be The Ultimate In Green Power



Plugging into tree power is not just a dream, although powering a lamp is not yet possible (Image: Tim Robbets/Stone/Getty)

Shoving electrodes into tree trunks to harvest electricity may sound like the stuff of dreams, but the idea is increasingly attracting interest. If we can make it work, forests could power their own sensor networks to monitor the health of the ecosystem or provide early warning of forest fires.

Children the world over who have tried the [potato battery](#) experiment know that plant material can be a source of electricity. In this case, the energy comes from reduction and oxidation reactions eating into the electrodes, which are made of two different metals – usually copper and zinc.

The same effect was thought to lie behind claims that connecting electrodes driven into a tree trunk and the ground nearby can provide a current. But last year Andreas Mershin's team at [MIT](#) showed that using electrodes made of the same metal also gives a current, meaning another effect must be at work. Mershin thinks the electricity derives from a difference in pH between the tree and the soil, a chemical imbalance maintained by the tree's metabolic processes.

Practical power

While proving that trees can provide a source of power is a significant step, a key question remains: can the tiny voltage produced by a tree be harnessed for anything useful?

Trees seem capable of providing a constant voltage of anywhere between 20 and a few hundred millivolts – way below the 1.5 volts from a standard AA battery and close to the level of background electrical noise in circuits, says [Babak Parviz](#), an electrical engineer at the University of Washington in Seattle. "Normal circuits don't run from very small voltages, so we need ways to convert the small voltages to something that is usable," he says.

His team has managed to obtain a usable voltage from big-leaf maple trees by adding a device called a voltage boost converter. The converter spends most of its time in a kind of stand-by mode as it stores electrical energy from the tree, periodically releasing it at 1.1 volts.

To provide that periodic wake-up call, Parviz's team developed a clock, also powered by the tree, which keeps time by tracking the quantum tunnelling of electrons through thin layers of insulating material. It operates at 350 millivolts and uses just a nanowatt of power.

Parviz thinks trees could power gadgets to monitor their own physiology or their immediate surroundings, for ecological research. And, he adds, as electronic components continue to shrink and require less power, it is possible tree electricity could one day have a wide range of uses.

Green power race

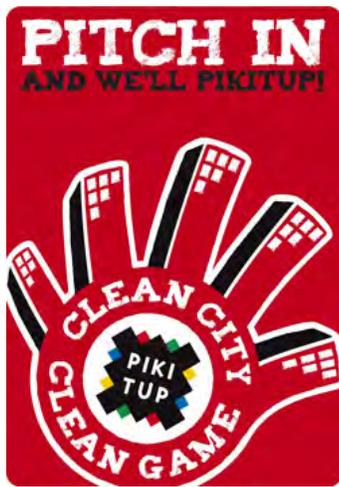
Parviz's team isn't the only one trying to harness the tiny voltages trees can provide. [VOLTtree Power](#), a company based in Canton, Massachusetts, patented a tree-powered circuit in 2005, says the company's CEO, Stella Karavaz.

Her firm is using energy harvested from trees to power sensors that monitor temperature and humidity inside forests. Earlier this year the company trialed a [wireless sensor network to detect forest fires](#).

Devices that lose water the way trees transpire through their leaves could also be used to supply power, according to [Michel Maharbiz](#) at the University of California, Berkeley. His team recently showed that evaporation from simulated leaves can act like a mechanical pump, and that the effect can be harnessed to provide power.

(Acknowledgement: New Scientist (www.NewScientist.com.) 10 September 2009 by [Colin Barras](#) from <http://www.newscientist.com/article/dn17767-trees-could-be-the-ultimate-in-green-power.ht>)

Illegal Dumping - time for the red cards to be shown!



The City of Johannesburg has initiated a major campaign to address illegal dumping. There are 1150 illegal dumping sites which have been identified throughout the city area and these are costing the City approximately R200m per year to clean up. The campaign will include education, awareness and law enforcement initiatives which are aimed at changing the behaviour of citizens regarding dumping, littering and cleanliness.

In addition a waste separation project has been initiated in 60,000 homes and businesses as a pilot project.



The Conservancy has been approached on a number of occasions regarding illegal dumping and welcomes the initiation of this program.

Members of the Conservancy in living in Johannesburg are encouraged to assist by reporting and sending photographs and details of perpetrators of illegal dumping and littering to the numbers shown above - 011 712 5200 or 011 375 5555. In addition, reports can be sent through to the Ward Councillors to initiate immediate response from a dedicated unit of the Johannesburg Metropolitan Police Department. The Ward Councillors' details are as follows:

- Ward 54: Cllr Anne Boxall - AnneBoxall@joburg.org.za or 072 393 5233
- Ward 23: Cllr Paul Smit - paul.a.smit@mweb.co.za or 082 330 9732



In the Midvaal area, residents are encouraged to contact the following Ward Councillors:

- Ward 5: Cllr Rob Jones - 082 410 5633
- Ward 7: Cllr Malcolm Hack - malcolmh@midvaal.gov.za or 083 625 9250

A further option is to note down the details of the vehicle including its colour and number plate, details of the illegal dumping such as where it occurred and the date and time. This information can be sent to the Gauteng Conservancy & Stewardship Association (GC&SA) at: P.O. Box 1552, Walkerville, 1876 or e-mail to conservancies@conservancies.org.

Membership

Sponsorship

Two critically important methods of communication have been identified, these being the establishment and running of a website and this newsletter.

Anyone who wishes to sponsor either one or both of these would be welcome. Your logo and recognition for such sponsorship will be prominently displayed.

Membership currently stands at 264. It is important to increase the number of members and that we reach as many people as possible within the area of the Conservancy.

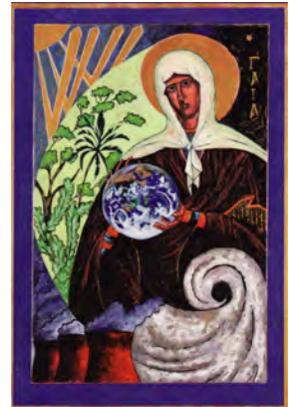
For this reason please forward this newsletter to anyone who you feel should be informed and become part of the Conservancy. Contact details for anyone who wishes to become a registered member with the Conservancy are provided at the end of the newsletter.

Anyone who is already receiving this newsletter and wishes to be recognised as a member of the Conservancy is asked to contact Clem Kourie and request an application form to be sent to them. A database of members has to be established and certain information as to be provided. Your assistance will be greatly appreciated.

Alberton & Brakenhurst Methodist Church: "Season of Creation"

The Alberton & Brackenhurst Methodist Church is rounding off a sermon series which has looked at the important role that members of the church can play looking after our natural environment. The six week series has included small group discussions regarding biodiversity, land, water, climate change, need not greed, and caring for God's creation. Details of the leader's guides for the discussion groups can be found on their website at <http://www.barriers.co.za/content/bible-study-guides>.

The Church and many of its members have also become members of the Conservancy and are keen to become active participants in addressing conservation and environmental issues.



A presentation on the Conservancy will be given at the Brackenhurst Methodist Church breakfast on 17 October 2009. Further information regarding this event can be obtained from Brian Dawson on brian.dawson@iafrica.com or 082 565 0305. To assist with catering numbers, anyone interested should please notify him by Wednesday 14 October 2009 if you want to attend.

Klipriviersberg Nature Reserve Events & Bird Identification

The Kliprivier Nature Reserve Association organises a number of events at the Klipriviersberg Nature Reserve. This includes guided walks through the reserve as well as special birding walks and taking in sunsets from the tops of the hills. These are held on Saturdays and Sundays and details regarding the different events and when they will be taking place as well as the organisers can be found at www.knra.co.za.

These events are extremely well organised and provide a wonderful opportunity to venture into the Klipriviersberg hills and experience some of the beauty and surprises that the Reserve has to offer.

| BIRD IDENTIFICATION | |
|--|---|
| Cape Sparrow (803) vs. House Sparrow (801) | |
|  |  |
| <p>Although we see a lot of Cape Sparrows in the KNR, we do not see much of the House Sparrow. The Cape Sparrow (Gewone Mossie) is a very common resident and has a very distinctive Black and white (pied) head and breast pattern which has a distinctive white “C” (for Cape sparrow) pattern. Females have a far greyer head.</p> <p>The House Sparrow (Huis Mossie) has a grey cap and a black bib and is slightly smaller than the Cape Sparrow. Females have a white eyebrow and are pale in colouring. This seems to be an introduced species and hence is found more in residential and industrial areas and is far less prevalent than the Cape Sparrow. They have been sighted just outside the reserve in the Rec car park and in the road outside Silent Pool – but not in the reserve.</p> <p><i>Contribution from: Kevin Lavery</i></p> | |

Technical and Professional Assistance Please

In preparing the management plan for the Conservancy we obviously have to compile background data and information regarding the area relating to its history, cultural aspects, biodiversity - that is the people, birds, bugs, beasties and anything else that lives, crawls, walks and flies in the hills, grassy areas and rivers in the area. After all this is what we need to understand in fulfilling our purpose of protecting, promoting and enhancing what we have that makes us so special. Set out below are some of the issues and information that we would be looking for from existing and known reports, research documents, studies and any other sources or resources that can be used.

We would be grateful if you or anyone that you know is able to assist us in preparing and contributing reports, information, maps or plans which can be compiled into the Management Plan. Set out below are some of the topics and issues which we are looking for information on:

- *Current Legislation & Policies - National, Provincial, Local*
- *Physical - Geology & Geomorphology, Hydrology, Soils*
- *Ecological - Veld types and Vegetation, Wildlife (Vertebrates, Invertebrates, Bird lists), Indigenous and Alien vegetation lists, Wetlands, Red Data Species, Biodiversity habitats*
- *Social - Communities, Activities*
- *Cultural - Cultural features, History*
- *Economic - Land Uses, Infrastructure, Economic activities*

If you are able to assist and provide some of the information please contact Andrew Barker.

Funding and Sponsorship

The Klipriviersberg Conservancy does not raise funds through membership fees and requests sponsors and donors to make contributions.

The bank account details are as follows:

***Klipriviersberg Conservancy (Account: 086608584)
Standard Bank The Glen (Code: 00 60 05)***

Please remember that the Conservancy is to be registered as a Public Benefit Organisation and Non-Profit Organisation as soon as possible to enable sponsors and donors to receive tax advantages. As this will take some time to achieve it is suggested that any donors and sponsors who wish to assist should do so by means of a loan to the Conservancy which would later be converted to a donation for tax purposes once the registrations have been achieved.

Newsletter Distribution and Contact Details

The following people can be contacted to provide you with any additional information or to assist you regarding the Conservancy:

Chairman: Andrew Barker - 083 274 4424 or abarker@icon.co.za

Vice-Chairman: Clem Kourie - 082 458 2816 or clemkourie@gmail.com

Hon Secretary/Treasurer: Sue Edwards - 011 680 7367 or edwards@futurejhb.co.za

Should you wish to become a member of the Conservancy please e-mail: clemkourie@gmail.com

Apologies for any cross-posting.

Please forward to your family, friends, neighbours, colleagues and networks.

If you wish to be deleted from our distribution list, please contact us.