

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
FERNKLOOF NATURE RESERVE (FNR) ADVISORY BOARD (FAB)
HELD AT ELECTRICAL BOARDROOM, ONRUSRIVIER
ON FRIDAY, 26 FEBRUARY 2016 at 09:00**

1. Welcome, Attendance and Apologies

Present: Duncan Heard (DH) [in the Chair], David Beattie (DB), Anthony van Hoogstraten (AvH), Neville Green (NG) [Biodiversity Manager – Overstrand Environmental], Linda Griffiths (LG), Cllr Kari Brice (KB), Heloise Fortune (HF) [PA-Onrus Office], Muthama Muasya (MM), Glynis Van Rooyen (GvR), Estelle Spaarwater (ES), Lee Burman (LBn).

Apologies: Liezl Bezuidenhout(LB) [Senior Manager–Overstrand Environmental].

Absent without Apology: Edward Fisher (EF) [Law Enforcement], Andrae Marais (AM) [Cape Nature].

ACTION: NG will follow up and provide feedback with regards to Law Enforcement not attending FAB meetings.

Welcome: The Chairperson welcomed the members of the board to the 1st meeting of 2016. The members whose term has expired has been renewed and the reappointment letters were distributed and accepted.

2. Confirmation of Minutes for the Meeting of the FAB held on 30 October 2015.

H. Fortune

2.1 Confirmation of Minutes and Public Availability

HF confirmed that the minutes were made available to the public.

The minutes were accepted.

2.2 Comments from Council on FAB Minutes dated 30 October 2015

K. Brice

KB noted that there are no comments from Council.

3. Matters Arising

3.1 Amendment of Bylaws and the Re-declaration of the Fernkloof Nature Reserve:

N. Green

NG reported that the description of the reserve's boundaries will depend largely on the completion of the Management Plan and the submission thereof to Council with an executive decision concerning the final boundary. The body of the text relating to general rules and regulations is still being adapted from the NEM:PAA regulations. NG commented that he would like to finalize this process soonest as they are currently dealing with a lot of problems along the coast that should be dealt with in terms of the bylaws.

NG and DH have not been able to meet due to crisis management situations since December.

ACTION: NG and DH to arrange a meeting to discuss the amendment of the bylaws.

3.2 Provincial By-Pass Road & Stanford Trunk Road Upgrade By-pass:

N. Green

NG reported that the Draft and Final Scoping Reports were produced by SRK Consulting. Good comments were received from Cape Nature. The Environmental Section commented on the fact that most of the legislation pertaining to fire, waste management, air quality and the NEM:PAA regulations referred to in previous comments had been ignored by the consultants. Furthermore, impact assessment was largely aimed at the residential area and not at the nature reserve and its users. SRK acknowledged the inputs and stated that the comments would be addressed in the EIA phase. AvH requested a copy of the Environmental Section's comments on the by-pass road.

NG commented that there has been no further communication concerning the upgrading of the Stanford Trunk Road. LBn commented that with regards to de-proclamation of the nature reserve ; the Stanford Trunk Road has never been through such a process and that a final survey route of the road was never submitted. She commented

that whichever route they go they are going to take a substantial portion of FNR. NG commented that he will follow up if the Stanford Trunk Rd will cross the boundary of FNR.

ACTION: NG to forward the Environmental Section's comments on the Provincial By-Pass Rd to AvH.

ACTION: NG will follow up with Hanneen v/d Stoep and Dennis Hendricks with regards to the Alignment & Boundary of the Stanford Trunk Road.

4. Administration

4.1 FNR Integrated Management Plan (IMP) Progress

N. Green

NG reported that the revised document that was due at the end of November was returned to Overstrand in February 2016. Alterations requested in the last revision of the document were mostly implemented. The document that was returned to the EMS section still contained alignment faults between amendments to the text and the action tables at the back of the document. He reviewed the document and attended to discrepancies. One reference to the properties that are to be added to the FNR still needs to be amended (7/11 site which is not adequately described). The document will be sent to Withers Consulting for insertion of the photographs and the document will then be submitted to the Director Infrastructure & Planning prior to submission to Council. Copies of the document will be circulated to Board Members once the final draft with photographs has been received. DH commented that the document should be left as is without the photographs as it makes it easier to email the document. FAB agrees.

DH asked NG to read the description of the Hermanus Astronomy Centre: NG commented that it is under the heading E. Development Applications. The paragraph that has been changed read as follows;

E.1 Development Applications

The development of infrastructure on FNR is subject to regulation by the NEM: PAA as well as the provisions of the IMP with respect to the zoning plan, which specifies the areas in which specified activities may or may not take place. Internal developments are driven by the ecological infrastructural and tourism development needs of the Nature Reserve. As a public institution, Overstrand Municipality occasionally receives external development applications which have to be evaluated against the provisions of the IMP zoning plan and applicable regulations. Two current examples are the proposed construction of the Hermanus Astronomy Centre and the Provincial Bypass Road.

E.1.1 Astronomy Centre

The development proposal by the Hermanus Astronomy Club includes an observatory equipped with telescopes and a small amphitheatre for the presentation of educational classes and talks on astronomy. An in-principle decision, subject to regulatory processes, was taken by the Overstrand Council on 1 September 2009 to lease a portion of Erf 243 Rotary Drive to the Hermanus Astronomy Club for the construction of the Astronomy Centre. The Council Decision remains in force until reviewed or annulled within a formal process. The In-Principle decision issued by Council for the leasing of a portion of the nature reserve to the Hermanus astronomy centre, however, is subject to the following applications:

- i) A consent use application in terms of the Overstrand Wide Zoning Scheme of 2014;*
- ii) Basic Assessment and Environmental Authorisation in terms of the NEMA EIA Regulations 2010;*

Both processes must take cognizance of the relevant provisions of the 2012 NEM:PAA Regulations for the Proper Administration of Nature Reserves and require full public participation prior to the matter being referred to Council for a Decision.

NG commented that in other words the decision by council can only be overturned by another council decision. The comments on the astronomy centre taken without any EIA processes must now go through two application processes with public participation before council can make a decision whether they will accept it or not. He noted

that this is the formal process that council has to follow. DH commented that the tourism development plan should make cross reference to the zoning plan.

4.1.1 Hermanus Astronomy Centre

N. Green

NG reported that this issue has still not been dealt with. Additional capacity to take care of operations (Tracy Sampson) will be available from 1 March for three months to assist with various projects on the reserve, which will allow him to deal with this issue. LG asked NG to explain who Tracy Sampson is. NG commented that Tracy Sampson is the IA Manager for the Working for Water (WFW) Programme. He commented that WFW is going through a rough patch at the moment. Staff movement's are currently happening within WFW. DH requested NG to provide feedback with regards to the future of the WFW programme at the next meeting. NG commented that he will follow up but is unsure if anyone is certain of the future at this stage. FAB agreed to keep the item on the Agenda.

4.2 FNR 2014/15 Budget

N. Green

NG reported that the Environmental Section had to cut their budget by R 250 000.00 to finance the repairs on fire equipment and vehicles after the fires in the past season.

The alien vegetation management budget was cut by R 150 000.00.

The maintenance of buildings budget was cut by R 70 000.00.

The herbicide budget was cut by R 30 000.00.

Furthermore, the alien vegetation management programme was due to be implemented by December. Finance stopped the process and EMS was eventually referred to the Working for Water Tender for implementation. This has caused delays. The Mossel River Bridge has been in the hands of AB Civils for a number of months. The bridge designs and what the engineering companies and suppliers can provide on tender do not match. The project has been placed on hold for now. The budget is being restructured at present to deal with shortfalls, but Fernkloof should not be affected. The Fernkloof Store will go ahead. He will give the figures once the budget has been restructured.

4.3 FNR Management Reports

N. Green

Staff Capacity:

- Mr. Leon Steyn (Environmental Specialist) retired in September, and the Biodiversity Conservation Manager and Senior Environmental Manager had to take over his duties. Fernkloof lost the support of the GMC Reserve Maintenance and Monitoring team as well as the baboon monitors in the last quarter of 2015 as the Working for the Coast and GMC projects came to an end. The Reserve was thus left with one Field Ranger (D. Gardiner) and one Coastal Ranger (M. Henn) in the period from September – November.
- Coastal monitors were appointed in early December under the Working for the Coast programme. These staff members patrol the entire Hermanus Coastline under the management of Michael Henn. They are eyes and ears people. They take water quality samples, on the lookout for illegal structures they also attended to the people who were feeding the dassies. They patrol from Klein River to Fisherhaven. The coastal monitors have ID cards to identify them.
- The 'Fernkloof Rangers' (Tourism LED staff) was on duty during this period, but complaints were received from BOTSOC concerning their services.

Alien Vegetation Management

- The programme was complete with respect to quotes for services when the Finance Department stopped the procurement process. EMS has been referred to the Working for Water tender for implementation. Procedures are currently under way to appoint the WFW contractors.

Fire Management

- The burning of blocks in Voelklip and Mount Pleasant was delayed due to wild fires and damage to fire equipment.
- A three day fire risk assessment was planned for the entire Overstrand area to finalise fire maps and to complete fire proposals, but only 1 day in the Hangklip – Kleinmond region could be implemented due to administrative requirements which had to be attended to.
- Planning meetings with adjacent landowners have been held with Greater Overberg Fire Protection Association. Firebreaks have been cut in priority areas. Additional planning is taking place for the protection of the Hemel & Aarde valley in collaboration with Southern Right and Hamilton Russel Vineyards.
- DB commented that WFTC is busy trimming on the cliff path and all of the cuttings are thrown back into the bush. He is concerned that this is becoming a fire hazard with the vagrants hiding in the bushes. NG commented that capacity is a big problem. NG commented that he can be informed of any illegal hideouts. DH suggested that OSM should publish an article asking people for assistance in reporting squatters. DB will also ask the eyes and ears group to report illegal hideouts to him and he will inform NG.

Building & Infrastructure Maintenance

- The renovation of the Fernkloof Store will receive priority attention as from 1 March. Bid Specification committee meetings will be arranged to launch the procurement process in March. Arrangements are being made for the management of the renovation process (Scorgie and Associates).
- The Mossel River bridge procurement process failed due to Supplier and Design problems. Delays in this process as well as budget cuts have affected implementation of maintenance projects. The programme will be brought on track in March.
- The toilet structure at Galpin Hut was maintained in the last quarter of 2015.
- Minor damage was sustained to signs and bridges during the wild fire in December. Structures will be repaired in March.
- Hiking trails and firebreaks have been cut open.
- Several signs are required on the reserve. These will be procured in March.
- There are several broken benches on the Reserve. Works orders were placed in December, but the material has still not arrived.
- A shelter has been erected behind the Reserve Management office for the containment of refuse bins.
- A mock fence will be erected between Fernkloof Village and the main gate.

Management Agreements

- Hermanus Hacking Group Agreement still in place.
- Draft agreement for the CPMG has been reviewed. Has to be submitted to Legal Services for comment.
- Draft MOA has been submitted to BOTSOC for discussion.
- Draft MOA with the parties for the management of the Hermanus Golf Course Wetlands is in an advanced stage of negotiation.
- No progress thus far with amendment of the BOTSOC leases agreement.
- Discussions underway with Hemel & Aarde Valley farms, Vogelgat & Cape Nature and GOFPA concerning fire management
- AvH commented that the Hermanus Scout camp will be applying for extension on their lease.

DH thanked NG on behalf of FAB for his detailed report.

4.4 World Heritage Expansion

D. Heard

DH reported that Guy Palmer has resigned. They are in the process of talking to CapeNature to take over the

initiative. Jennifer Gouza was supposed to give feedback in January already. He will follow up in the course of the week. He will contact Chris Martens of CapeNature to take the matter further.

5. Standing Items

5.1 Enforcement

N. Green

NG reported that there was an attack on a Hiker in early February 2016. The person did not contact the control room or the SAPS and did not open a case.

The Coastal Monitoring Team and Law Enforcement have implemented a number of patrols in the coastal portion of the reserve and have evicted and fined 6 persons in three illegal shelters. These shelters were removed. Other informal sleeping sites are being monitored.

Meetings have been held with the Tourism LED component concerning the job descriptions for the 'Fernkloof Rangers'. Patrol routes have been allocated. There was discussion concerning the changing of work schedules for the Rangers to patrol later on in the evening. It appears that this will not happen. Law Enforcement have committed to patrolling the reserve from 17:00 to 19:00.

D. Gardiner fined several of the Walker Bay Radio Flyers for illegal parking on Rotary Way. This followed altercations in September to December and warnings not to use non demarcated pathways. This sparked correspondence and complaints at Mayoral, MM, Director Levels and response to the complainants. NG formalised a draft protocol for the management of Remotely Piloted Aircrafts. The protocol still has to be completed.

5.1.1 Scramblers above sport grounds

Signs

LG commented that the scrambling in the reserve is continuing in the week and on weekends as well. She noted that Law Enforcement does not know what to do with regards to the scramblers. She will contact NG in future.

NG: This issue will also be dealt with by developing boundary signs in March.

DH asked NG to patrol the area to look for signs of scrambling.

Andriette Fourie

DH commented that he did contact her and they are also concerned with the activity. They will give feedback if they encounter any problems.

KB commented that she will table this matter at the next ward committee meeting to find a possible alternative place for the scramblers.

5.2 Hoy's Koppie

N. Green

NG reported that the graves have been repaired. The Operational Services are busy with the engraving of the tombstones. With regards to the Cross on Hoy's Koppie, NG will take this matter up with Michael Henn.

5.3 Ecological Issues

N. Green

5.3.1 Baboon Electric Fencing / Baboon Management Strategy

NG reported that a two – day operation was held to chase baboons out of Voelklip. The operation was largely successful in keeping the baboons at bay for 2 days, but the animals move around from area to area and are raiding the town again.

KB reported that she, Liezl and Dr Phil Richardson had a meeting. He gave a presentation on an electric beam and suggested it for the Voelklip area and the alpha male and female should be collared with a shock or noise vibration system. The entire project will cost under R100 000.00. Dr Richardson will present on Monday 29 February to the MAYCO and Directors. She will be able to provide more feedback after Monday's meeting.

5.3.2 Burning of Coastal Corridors

N. Green

NG reported that this has been delayed due to administrative obstacles. A section is being prepared in Sandbaai at present. Burnt area in Kleinmond shows germination of *Leucospermum conocarpodendron* after 12 months. This should be seen as a success as we have restored the full successional phase in an area which last burned 22 years ago. Coastal burns should therefore be an option in the Fernkloof Nature Reserve and other coastal areas.

5.3.3 Event Applications

N. Green

NG reported that he received an application from BOTSOC for a Fun Run Event – Flower Show. He has not received the event details yet. An application was received from Louis Genade for the training for glider event. It has been approved in consultation with D. Heard. Mr. Genade won the National glider competition in Cape Town. Walker Bay Radio Flyers have applied for the use of several sites on Fernkloof Nature Reserve for gliding purposes.

5.4 Research

N. Green

5.4.1 Research Applications

There are no new research applications.

Barrie Louw (COASTEC) has been assessing vegetation in association with BOTSOC for the report on the Hermanus CBD Relief Road EIA.

5.5 Land and Infrastructure

N. Green

5.5.1 Fernkloof Village Drainage Report

NG commented that he has nothing to report and no contact from Dr. Verster has been received. The item will be removed from the Agenda.

5.6 Klein River Estuary Management

N. Green

Dean Gardiner and Michael Henn take water quality samples in the Klein River Estuary as per the sampling protocol. HF will forward the link to FAB once the minutes of KREF has been placed on the Municipal website. AvH commented that a pollution sign has been put up at the Scout Camp but has been removed.

5.7 Report from Hermanus Botanical Society

L. Griffiths

DH reported that the website for FNR has been upgraded and that there is also a facebook page for FNR. LG showed the pamphlet that the visitors will get and also a booklet explaining the different fauna and flora. She thanked OSM for mowing the gardens. She thanked Jim Sweet and his wife who assisted with the booklet. She noted that the benches that were damaged in the fire have been fixed.

5.8 Reports from Cliff Path Management Group

D. Beattie

NG reported that the Working for the Coast Programme has now trimmed pathways on the Cliff Path. NG also informed all that Major Pienaar's plaque was installed at Kwaiwater in December.

DB commented that they had a request from the NSRI to put up a series of signs along the cliff path to indicate to the tourist where they are. He noted that he will inform the gentleman that more signs are not an option as they already have the signs up with the necessary emergency numbers. He also informed all that a presentation was made to the CPMG by Pierre de Villiers of the Astronomy Society. They would like to put up a scale to scale walk

starting from Gearings Point it will include putting up the sun, moon and all the planets. DH commented that in principle FAB is not against the solar application on the cliff path.

6. General

6.1 Summary Fire Report

N. Green

NG reported that the fire report will have to be provided at the next meeting. He commented that it wasn't a massive area that burnt but he cannot give the hectares yet. DH asked NG to get a veld age map and present at the next meeting.

ACTION: NG to complete the fire report and get a veld age map and present at the next meeting.

6.2 Maintenance of FNR Trails (Piet van Zyl letter)

N. Green

NG noted that Piet van Zyl's concerns were erosion on the trails and the trimming of the vegetation on the trails. He would like to see the vegetation being trimmed upside and not downside. DH asked NG to respond to his letter.

7. Date of Next Meeting:

20 May 2016

19 August 2016

18 November 2016