

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
FERNKLOOF NATURE RESERVE (FNR) ADVISORY BOARD (FAB)
HELD AT ELECTRICAL BOARDROOM, ONRUSRIVIER
ON TUESDAY, 19 SEPTEMBER 2014 at 09:00**

1. Welcome, Attendance and Apologies

Present: Duncan Heard (DH) [in the Chair], Estelle Spaarwater (ES), Glynis Van Rooyen (GvR), Heloise Fortune (HF) [PA-Onrus Office], David Beattie (DB), Andrae Marais (AM) [Cape Nature], Anthony van Hoogstraten (AvH), Neville Green (NG) [Biodiversity Manager – Overstrand Environmental], Lee Burman (L.Bn), Linda Griffiths (LG), Bob Hill, Prof John Verster, Geraldine Gardiner, Dianne Marais

Apologies: David Beattie (DB), Cllr Kari Brice (KB), Liezl Bezuidenhout (LB)

Absent without Apology: Johan Du Toit (JD) [Law Enforcement], Muthama Muasya (MM)

Welcome: The Chairperson welcomed everyone present and thanked the BOTSOC members for attending and their interest in the management of FNR.

2. Confirmation of Minutes for the Meeting of the FAB held on 20 May 2014.

2.1 Confirmation of Minutes and Public Availability

The previous minutes had been circulated per e-mail to all members. The minutes were accepted by all.

HF confirmed that the minutes were placed on the official Overstrand Municipal website as well as the intranet for public access. Minutes are also placed in a library file for public scrutiny.

H. Fortune

2.2 Comments from Council on FAB Minutes dated 20 May 2014

NG: no comments from Council due to a number of postponements on the minutes, once the matter has been dealt with, Council will provide feedback. DH noted that the reason for the long postponement of the agenda items was due to FAB dealing with the review of the draft Fernkloof Integrated Management Plan.

N. Green

3. Matters Arising

3.1 Fernkloof River

The board was provided with a report on the Fernkloof River by Geraldine Gardiner. LG introduced Bob Hill, Prof John Verster, Geraldine Gardiner and Dianne Marais (BOTSOC Chairperson) to FAB.

Prof John Verster gave a presentation on the Fernkloof River, a seasonal river that originates in the Kloof above the FNR visitor's kiosk. During the rainy season it naturally runs down the Kloof and its water then drains into the ground through the alluvial fan that lies across the FNR gardens and across which the Fernkloof Village development was built just outside of the reserve. Many years ago a weir was placed across this river and water was diverted through a stopcock into a canal to the Mossel River to avoid excessive water flowing across the FNR gardens in winter. Any excessive water flowing from the Fernkloof River as well as the mountain catchment above the gardens during winter is causing flooding on certain properties in the Fernkloof Village during winter. A drainage canal that was installed on the

border of the FNR at the time of the Fernkloof Village development has by all accounts been placed at too high a level and does not drain away much water into the municipal storm water system. Recently the municipality took the decision to ensure that the Fernkloof River water is permanently diverted to the Mossel River in order to reduce flooding of the Fernkloof Village properties. Nevertheless, the affected Fernkloof Village properties still experience flooding during times of heavy rainfall.

Prof John Verster proposed, based on the work he commissioned from Derek van Rooyen, a Geological engineer, to put in an underground drainage trench and pipe (~2 metres below the surface) and running east to west across the lower FNR gardens area – or alternately a lined dam could be constructed in the same area. The pipe or dam will then drain into the underground storm water system in the Fernkloof Village. The trench and construction could cost approximately R 100 000. This proposal has the full support of the Board of Trustees of the Fernkloof Village. The Trustees have advised that they would make a financial contribution as has Prof John Verster. He mentioned that it is only the Overstrand Municipality that needs to come the party.

DH advised that as the proposed work to be undertaken was situated in a watercourse and within a declared protected area, an EIA process would have to be undertaken to obtain Environmental Authorisation for the proposal. This EIA process could also cost approximately R 100 000 as some specialist studies would be required.

FAB undertook to consider the proposal made and to make a recommendation to Council. The non-FAB participants then left the meeting after which the proposal was discussed at some length and the following recommendation was made by FAB.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL – 2014 (1)

Response to: Fernkloof Estate seasonal flooding of properties – Fernkloof River Drainage Mitigation Proposal by resident Prof. John Verster:

Cognizant of the fact that a clearly incorrect decision was made in the past to develop Fernkloof Estate (Precinct Eight) with certain residential properties on the Fernkloof River alluvial fan drainage area with inadequate drainage mitigation, the FAB would support a proposal that would alleviate flooding problems in the estate but not at the cost of seriously disrupting the ecological/hydrological functioning of the Fernkloof River drainage area or Fernkloof Nature Reserve.

The proposal by Prof John Verster appears, on the face of it, to be a workable solution; however the FAB would only give it their full support if it was also supported by an Environmental Authorisation under the most recent applicable legislation that result from an appropriate Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process with relevant specialists' inputs. This EIA should also assess the desirability of the diversion of river water from the Fernkloof River to the Mossel River.

The question of the Municipality assisting with funding towards such a mitigation project is however not a matter on which the FAB can make a recommendation, however the FAB would be strongly opposed to dedicated municipal FNR management funding being used towards this purpose as it would have a devastating effect on an already grossly inadequate FNR operating budget.

3.2 Workshop to market Fernkloof Internationally

DH: The workshop has been postponed until 20 February 2015 due to the fact that it clashes with the Fernkloof Flower Festival and that they are still trying to get sponsors.

D. Heard

3.3 Amendment of By-laws relating to FNR and FAB

NG: No progresses yet have been occupied with the FNR IMP and WFTC programme. He will make progress in this quarter with the by-laws of FNR.

N. Green

3.4 Provincial By-Pass Road & Stanford Trunk Road Upgrade

DH: The EIA process on the Stanford Trunk Road is ongoing and EMS submitted comments and LBN submitted comments on behalf of FAB and the Bird Club.

DH: The Provincial Hermanus By-Pass Road road proposal has been cancelled as a regional road study did not consider it a necessary.

D. Beattie/ N. Green

4 Administration

4.1 FNR Integrated Management Plan (IMP) Progress

NG: FNR IMP has been finalized and OSM is busy with the advertisement process. The advertisement will go out by end of October. DH: The FAB members can approach Heloise for a copy of the finalized FNR IMP. The last chance for any comment will be when it goes out for public participation. The stakeholders should register and provide comments before the due date.

4.1.1 Hermanus Astronomy Centre and future of the Rotary Drive Lookout Point

NG noted that the Astronomy Club will have an open day where they invite people to go and have a look at the alternate site at Water Works Preekstoel area (proposed by the EMS) for an Astronomy Centre and to experience the stars from that point.

Regarding the FAB concerns that the Astronomy Centre will still be pushed through at the Rotary Drive Lookout Point, DH reminded that the FAB that the Management Plan did identify the area as a development node which required proper planning and upgrading/consolidation with sustainable proposals for the already transformed area footprint. Furthermore, one must bear in mind that the vegetation is Critically Endangered Sandstone Fynbos and that any extension of the developed footprint in such a legally classified 'Threatened Ecosystem' required an appropriate EIA process. The existing impacted area on this ecologically sensitive mountain top area within this vegetation type is already unacceptably high and extensively impacted by disturbed areas, vehicle roads, track and paths developed without the necessary planning in the past. Future development at the development node needs to minimise the existing impacted area, determine the maximum type of facilities that can be accommodated at the lookout point to enhance the visitor experience, the reduction/closure and rehabilitation of surrounding disturbed areas and the hardening of acceptable paths/tracks to prevent further impact and erosion of the natural substrate.

N Green

4.2 FNR 2012/13 Budget

NG presented the 2014/2015 operational budget to the FAB and provided each member with a copy. The FAB expressed their deep concern at low budget amount that is completely inadequate to manage FNR effectively.

NG also explained the planned FNR Burning Programme for the new year and the partners involved

which are as follows; FPA, OSM, CN, WOF(FFA), ODM and ESKOM.

NG will present the Veld Age Mosaic Map to FAB at the next meeting.

N. Green

4.3 FNR Management Reports

NG suggested an internet Dropbox for the FNR management reports for FAB to access. FAB supported the suggestion. NG will use the FNR IMP actions points for reports.

N. Green

5 Standing Items

5.1 Enforcement

DH mentioned that Neville Green / Dean Gardiner had not represented the EMS at the past two FNR Security Forum meetings. He noted that it is critical for EMS to be present at the meetings to promote and ensure the effective communication and co-operation with the various enforcement agencies towards more effective compliance monitoring.

It was noted that meetings should be scheduled so that they not clash with NG's MFMA course dates.

NG informed the board that they should phone the control room regarding any vandalism or Galpin Hut issues.

DH: It was requested that EMS submit an enquiry to Director Neville Michaels informing him that Johan du Toit has not been attend FAB meetings and to ask him why Johan du Toit has been assigned to attend FAB meetings, how does he fit into the Fernkloof scenario as he is from Gansbaai.

N. Green

As a result of the proposal presented by Prof. John Verster and the resultant FAB discussion, sufficient time was not available to deal with the following points on the Agenda. As there were no further urgent issues to be discussed at this point, the following agenda items would stand over till the next meeting scheduled for 28 November 2014.

The meeting adjourned at 12:45.

5.2 Hoy's Koppie

Will be discussed at the next meeting

N.Green / D. Heard

5.3 Ecological Issues

5.3.1 Baboon Electric Fencing

Will be discussed at the next meeting

L. Bezuidenhout / N Green

5.3.2 Burning of Coastal Corridors

Will be discussed at the next meeting

L. Bezuidenhout

5.3.3 Event Applications

Will be discussed at the next meeting

N Green

5.4 Research

5.4.1 Research Applications

Will be discussed at the next meeting

N. Green

5.5 Land and Infrastructure

5.5.1 Fernkloof Village Drainage Report

Will be discussed at the next meeting

N. Green

5.5.2. Scout Camp Lease

Will be discussed at the next meeting

N. Green

5.5.3 Replacement of Signboards

Will be discussed at the next meeting

N. Green

5.6 Klein River Estuary Management

Will be discussed at the next meeting

L. Bezuidenhout

5.7 Report from Hermanus Botanical Society

Will be discussed at the next meeting

L. Griffiths

5.7.1 MoA with Overstrand Municipality i.t.o. FNR

Will be discussed at the next meeting

N. Green

5.7.2 Accuracy of Signboard in FNR Gardens.

Will be discussed at the next meeting

M. Muasya / L. Griffiths

5.7.3 Nursery

5.7.3.1 Indigenous plants for Municipal use for Rehabilitation Purposes.

Will be discussed at the next meeting

N. Green

5.8 Reports from Cliff Path Management Group

Will be discussed at the next meeting

D Beattie

5.8.1 Upgrade of Piet se Bos Area-Progress

DH: The amphitheatre is off and the rehabilitation of the wetland will go ahead, the board did not support the restaurant but it is still on.

N. Green

6. General

6.1 Grotto Parking Embankment (BAR)

DH noted that FAB did put in a recommendation.

D. Heard

7. Date of Next Meeting:

28 November 2014