

February
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Bulletin

Official newsletter of the Overstrand Municipality

WATER FIGURES CONFIRM COOPERATION

GOOD RAINFALL NOT ENOUGH TO BREAK DROUGHT

It seems as if residents and visitors to Greater Hermanus supported Overstrand Municipality's water-saving campaign exceptionally well during December.

Over the summer holiday period, the level of the De Bos dam dropped by 4,4 percent only as opposed to the drop of 11,4 percent experienced in the same period last year. This remarkable achievement can be ascribed to favourable weather conditions, the utilisation of boreholes as supplementary source and the impact of water-saving measures.

In expressing her thanks for everyone who contributed to these good results, Mayor Nicolette Botha-Guthrie said she counts on continued support and undertakes to bring about relief as soon as the water situation returns to normal.

The new year started with soft, penetrating rain. Rainfall of 25 mm was recorded on Monday 3 January 2011 at the municipal offices in Hermanus and this followed on a total of 35.5 mm recorded in December 2010.

Unfortunately it did not have a huge impact on the De Bos dam due to the fact that since the drought, the soil has not been sufficiently saturated yet.

According to Mr Rian Rust, who keeps updated records on rainfall statistics at the municipal offices, the 498 mm of 2010 is way below the average rainfall of 640 mm per annum, but still higher than the 494.5 in 2000, 464.1 in 1988 and 365.7 in 1973!

He hopes that this year's rainfall will be comparable to the 1005.8 mm recorded 60 years ago in 1951.

The municipality's water-saving task team will be meeting on 20 January to evaluate the latest developments. At this stage, indications are that the first level of saving rates will have to be maintained.



MAYOR LAUDS UNIFORMED OFFICIALS

Overstrand's sustained programme of friendly albeit firm law enforcement during the holiday season is paying off. According to the Director of Protection Services, Mr Neville Michaels, the past season has been one of the quietest yet as far as law enforcement is concerned despite the fact that the area's towns and beaches saw a huge influx of visitors. Amongst others, some 25 000 people spent the New Year's weekend on our beaches and more than 3 000 litres of liquor were confiscated (and returned to the owners after their visits to the beach). No-one drowned on a Blue Flag beach. On New Year's Eve, fireworks were well managed and on the roads, the visible presence of officers contributed to orderly road usage. At an in-house parade on Thursday 6 January which was held in the Overstrand Civic Centre, Mayor Nicolette Botha-Guthrie congratulated members of the Protection Services Directorate on handling the recent holiday season so successfully. She also thanked the other officials who ensured smooth service delivery in the course of December for their hard work.

FUTURE HOLDS HUGE CHALLENGES

The future holds huge challenges for Overstrand Municipality, but the organisation has the ability to continue along the road to success it has forged in the course of its first 10 years of existence.

Despite many fears to the contrary in 2000 when the boundaries of the new municipality were determined, the area has been united as a solid entity where the sum of the four unified municipalities proved to be far greater than that of its parts.

With its aggregated resources, the

municipality was able to invest some R1 billion in the upgrading of infrastructure over the past 10 years, with the past four years alone seeing an investment of approximately R740 million.

This upgrading programme is highly necessary since a recent survey indicated that Overstrand has a backlog of R2,5 billion in infrastructure. At the meeting of the Municipal Advisory Forum in November, it was announced that the municipality will attempt to eradicate this backlog over the next 25

years. This will require a capital budget constantly maintained at R100 million per annum – a feat which is to be accomplished by way of a concerted effort to save on operational expenses.

The focus will be on the delivery of basic services and particular attention will be paid to expanding the municipality's capacity with regard to water and electricity provisioning, solid waste management, housing, roads, storm water drainage and environmental management.

Human potential is the municipality's

most valuable asset and not only will particular attention be paid to the development of the personnel corps, but the community's capacity will be built upon too. The efforts of the countless organisations and individuals who are already making a difference in their communities are hugely appreciated.

One of the first developments to be accommodated will be the expansion of the council at the time of the next elections to 25 - 13 ward and 12 proportional members.

SPEAKER TO TAKE CARE OF MATTERS IN WARD 3: In view of the coming municipal elections, the seat left vacant by the resignation of Cllr Allan Berry will stay vacant and no by-election will be held. For the rest of the current council's term the Speaker, Cllr Anton Coetsee, will take care of the ward and lead ward committee meetings. He can be contacted through the municipal offices in Stanford. Leave was taken of Berry at the November council meeting. As a lawyer of profession, he played an important role in the appeal process against council decisions. He is emigrating to the United Kingdom to take up a career opportunity.

TOURISM IMPACT MEASURED

Overstrand Municipality released the results of its most recent Tourism Business Barometer survey on 2 December 2010 at a meeting attended by almost 90 stakeholders in the tourism industry.

This survey is an attempt to measure the impact of tourism on the Overstrand economy on an annual basis in order to determine trends and developments regarding the economic impact of tourism.

Mayor Nicolette Botha-Guthrie said the survey will provide a clearer picture and much needed statistics for planning purposes and will help to gauge whether the tourism industry is growing or regressing.

The purpose of the meeting was to convince more stakeholders to participate in future surveys.

The survey revealed amongst others that a large number of accommodation establishments expe-

rienced a drop in visitor numbers during winter 2010 because the World Cup caused the regular visitors to stay away and the soccer fans had different itineraries. However, most businesses are fairly confident that winter 2011 will bring more guests because the World Cup tournament helped to allay a lot of fears with regard to tourism safety in South Africa.

According to the survey, the most effective form

of marketing for businesses in the tourism trade is "word of mouth" with electronic media or websites growing in importance. Tourism offices were also singled out as valuable marketing aids for accommodation establishments and restaurants.

For more information and involvement in future studies, contact the Director of Local Economic Development, Mr Solomzi Madikane, at 028 313 8066 or per e-mail at ledsec@overstrand.gov.za



CONCERTS IN FEBRUARY

South African born Zoë Beyers (violin) is currently touring South Africa, and on Tuesday 15 February she, accompanied by Francois du Toit on the piano, will be playing works of Bartók,

Ludwig van Beethoven, Claude Debussy, Sergei Prokofiev and Pablo de Sarasate. On Friday the 25th and Sunday the 27th, the Italian Zappa Mainolfi cello and piano duo will return to Hermanus on request. What's more: On Saturday morning, the 26th, they will offer master classes to willing students!

Book at Bellini on 028 312 4988 and direct enquiries to René du Plooy on 082 940 4238.



Photo: Liezel Botha

CAN'T WE SIMPLY COEXIST?

This visit Pringle Bay's baboon troop paid the beach made many a holidaymaker realise that these guys are an integral part of the Overstrand ecosystem and an exceptional tourist attraction. According to Overstrand's environmental manager, Liezl Bezuidenhout, it is possible to coexist peacefully with the baboons, who penetrate residential areas in search of food, by keeping the doors and windows locked when not at home, making use of the special problem-animal resistant refuse bins to dispose of kitchen refuse, preferably not having fruit-trees or vegetable gardens on one's property, refraining from feeding the baboons or putting food out for them and not leaving food on outside tables without supervision while busy doing something else inside. Do not attempt to shoot the baboons or set the dogs on them. Cooperate with the baboon monitors and contact the 24-hour control room on 028 313 8111 if you spot baboons on or near your property.

THE ECOLOGY OF FYNBOS

In the first of a series of articles on our biosphere, **Dr Neil Fairall** sketches the ecological background to the vegetation unique to our region.

If one looks at fynbos vegetation at landscape level, one of the first things to catch the eye is the variety. It comes across as multi-coloured with shrubs varying in structure from low to high.

Variety is one of the features of fynbos, and this is caused by a complex interaction between environment and climate, which varies according to the scale we are dealing with. The geology, too, is a determining factor, especially as far as soil type, depth and moisture status is concerned. This is further influenced by slope, aspect and climate.

Fire is a natural and normal phenomenon in fynbos, which flourishes where fires are present and stagnates when it is prevented. The season in which the fires occur, whether following on a wet or dry period or whether being followed by a wet or dry season,

as well as the heat of the fire contributes to the interaction which, in turn, determines the vegetation present at any point in time.

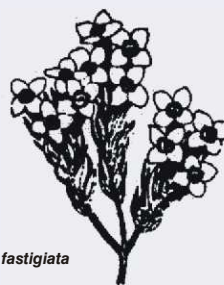


Leucadendron gandogerii

The heat of the fire and the smoke enable certain fynbos species to germinate and without this trigger, germination will not occur and seed will gradually decay as a result of age or be consumed by insects. The heat of the fire is determined by the type of combustion, in other words a point source or a front fuelled by a strong wind.

Over the course of time, a succession of species can also be witnessed. Accordingly, smaller types in the undergrowth are the first to ger-

minate and grow but disappear later when the shrub layer causes too much shade. Bulbs will also only grow after a fire and do not flower where the brush is old and dense.



Erica fastigiata

A further aspect that influences the succession of plants is the fact that the shrub layer is comprised both of types that are killed by the fire and propagate by way of germination and others that stem from rhizomes who survive the fire.

If one takes all of these factors into account and calculates the various

ways in which they can be combined, it is obvious that fynbos vegetation will constantly vary over time, yet remains unaltered over huge areas. The scale on which the interaction occurs and the intervals between events are the determining factors in this instance.

If a fire burns across a huge expanse, it burns unevenly due to the variation in environmental features and the varying strength of the wind. This results in islands of veld being left unscathed which, at the time of the next event, will contain more flammable material, thus resulting in a more intense, cleaner fire. This variation is cancelled out over a long period of time and the veld as a whole remains the same, despite the fact that it could have changed at any particular point in time.

In the next delivery, I will attempt to explain how these characteristics of fynbos are utilised in veld management and why management on a small scale proves to be so difficult.

VERKIES U DIÉ NUUSBRIEF IN 'N ANDER AMPTELIKE TAAL?
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