



Agenda
Dargle Conservancy AGM
19 May 2010
18h00 for 18h30
Tanglewood Country House, Dargle

1. Welcome

Committee, membership, friends and special guests Jim and Liz Taylor and Kevin McCann.

2. Apologies

3. Obituaries:

Over the last year we have seen the passing of a number of folks in our community that were conservancy members or great supporters of its endeavors. We remember the following for their support of the conservancy:

- John King
- Jane Griffin
- Ron Wedderburn

<I know there are some that I have forgotten please add>

4. Acceptance of the Minutes of the Previous AGM

Proposer:

Seconded:

5. Chairman's Report

5.1 Introduction

Talk about the effects of the global economic recession has dominated news during 2009 and the first quarter of 2010. When we look at this through the global environmental filter in the simplest terms of '*good news and bad news*' we see:

The good news is that on a global scale, as a species, because humans had less money to spend on consuming resources this had the net result of delaying Ecological Overshoot Day (the day that planet goes into ecological overdraft – when we have consumed the total resources that the earth can generate in one year and go into ecological overdraft).

The bad news is that despite the massive global hype around financial losses experienced and resultant knock on effect of job losses etc we only delayed this by 2 days!!!

In 2008 World Overshoot Day fell on 23 September and in 2009 it fell on 25 September. Ecological Overshoot basically means that, at the current level of global consumption, we need 1.4 Earth's to sustain the earth's current human

population and at the extreme, based on the consumption of the *average* American, we need 5 Earths.

The reality is that we only have this one earth! So the option of continuing this sort of consumption is not an option. The stark reality is that most of us in this room consume at the level of the average American. To think that this level of consumption will not affect global climate is pure denial.

The direct connection between global consumption and global climate change is an undeniable fact and yet how much do we as the well educated and well read know about this?

5.2 Membership Programme – Talks, Walks and Events

Climate change and sustainability change has been a dominant theme for our ongoing membership educational programme. Huge thanks go to Nikki Brighton for sourcing the documentaries that have been incredibly enlightening and well attended. A summary of these are:

- 11th Hour
- Kiss Your Gas Goodbye
- Power of Community
- Age of Stupid

It has not totally been about climate change and in support of our Dassie Reintroduction programme we have had guest speakers who have given talks on:

- Forests in the Mist – Meyrick Bowker
- Wildlife Conflict Management – Tim Snow

As well as talks from interesting local people such as:

- Cycling in the Himalayas – Bridget Ringdahl
- Bio-mimicry – Claire Janisch

We have a very good turnout at and excellent feedback from these film shows and presentations, however, it is a concern that the majority of support is from folks outside of the Dargle who travel as far as from Nottingham Road to attend these evenings. I realize that many may be nervous about travelling at night however folks I really would like to encourage you to support this programme. Apart from the value gained from the presentation or film show it is a great opportunity to get to know other members in the community that you would not normally meet.

If there are any specific (appropriate) issues that you would like to learn more about please do not hesitate to let any of your committee members know.

A very big thank you to Barend and Helen Booyesen who have been offer guided walks in their section of the Dargle Forest. These take place on the 1st Thursday morning of every month and are followed by tea in the garden of Kilgobin Cottage. These have been well attended and through donations to the Conservancy have raised R450.00 - up to the end February (2009 – 10 financial year end). The walks received great editorial in the Meander Chronicle thanks to Nikki.

5.3 Environmental Education

The committee decided that given the excellent work and achievements of the Midlands Meander Education Project programme it would be better to support a small increase in our donation to the MMAEP rather than to invest in additional farm worker and farm school outings. Our annual donation was increased from R6000.00 to R7000.00. The MMEAP is working in both Dargle farm schools.

5.4 Dassie Reintroduction

In 2009 KZN Wildlife announced its catalogue for its annual game auction which included 58 Dassies from a population in the main Ntshondwe Camp in Ithala Game Reserve. The Conservancy successfully bid on 40 dassies at R20 000.00. In addition to this the cost of transport is added resulting in a total budget of R30 000.00.

The reintroduction of Dassies at R750, 00 per fury bundle alone does not constitute a sustainable plan, not even if we were planning to 'harvest' offspring and sell them!! Therefore 2 strategies were necessary:

- To find a financial partner that could share the financial burden and the benefits. Graham Griffin of the original Dargle Farm came on board as a 50% partner in the cost of the Dassies, which would be introduced into a prime site on his farm which once sustained a thriving population.

Regular follow ups to the release site indicate that the population has settled and colonized a fairly large section of the habitat. A Crowned Eagle has been spotted on a number of occasions which on one hand is a concern for our fledgling colony and yet excellent news on the other hand.

- To develop an income generating stream. An “Adopt a Dargle Dassie” campaign was proposed and accepted.

Through this project the ‘social’ aims are to:

- Engage the Dargle Community and general public in fund raising via the Adopt a Dargle Dassie initiative.
- Engage the Dargle Community and general public in an education process which will be supported through guest speaker evenings and forest excursions (not to the relocation site at the moment).
- Support lessons on Forest Ecology and Conservation in local schools through the Midlands Meander Education Project who facilitate environmental education in the area.
- Develop a comprehensive database on the subject of Dassie reintroductions that will be available through the Conservancy website.

So far most adoptions have been by your committee so I would like to encourage you all to support this project. I encourage you to log onto the Dargle Conservancy website or speak to any of your committee to learn more about this project and how you can make an adoption.

The financial aims are to:

- Recover the cost of the initial introduction to and reimburse Dargle Conservancy and Graham Griffin.
- Make provision for a possible follow up introduction in 2010.
- Finance the ongoing operational needs of the project.
- Finance a monitoring project in conjunction with the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Going forward:

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the committee and Graham Griffin in particular for a job well done.

The initial implementation of the project has been undertaken and has been a resounding success, there is a lot of work to be done in running the project in all its facets. It is hoped that a member of the community who has time available would volunteer to champion the project and take on the Adopt a Dassie project.

Finally, at the outset we knew that once off introductions do not work and we are following potential sources of Dassies for a follow-up introduction in next spring.

5.5 Development Issues

Possibly due to the global economic woes, there has been little to report on the development front.

Ongoing development issues are:

- a. The low cost housing proposal between Thokans and the Mandela monument on the R103. This is a municipality and local government initiative to provide housing largely for the squatter community from Tweedie next to the N3. The Conservancy has registered as an I&AP, and has submitted comment, largely relating to attention being paid to the aesthetics of the township. It is still going through the impact assessment procedure, however, as it is a government initiative, we can only hope that if and when it proceeds, it is implemented properly.
- b. Highgate Wine Estate at Piggly Wiggly. This is still going through the impact assessment procedure, and the Conservancy has registered as an I&AP, and has submitted comment. Originally 55 houses, plus hotel, health spa facility, wine making factory, stables and an expanded business centre, it has just been reduced to 25 houses and a smaller hotel facility (plus all the other elements).
- c. Lemonwood. This proposal has raised a few concerns, largely based on incorrect speculation, it would appear. Adam Robinson, has set aside 2 ha for the Ndlovu family, long-time residents on Lemonwood, and they will be demolishing the existing shacks and building 5 new houses. These will be

situated higher up the hill, thus constituting less of a threat to the wetland below. Again, the Conservancy has registered as an I&AP, and will be submitting comment.

The Conservancy is represented on the Municipality's LUMS Steering committee, and Integrated Development Plan forum. Any comment submitted by the Conservancy is always based on and consistent with our constitution, in line with the current policies and consistent with the Conservancy's previous dealings with other development proposals.

5.7 Nature Reserve

Kevin McCann, who heads up the Ezimvelo KZN Wildlife's Biodiversity Stewardship Programme, will update the meeting on this project. However For the purposes of this report I am very happy to report that landowners have really risen to the occasion and we are in the stage of sorting out the paperwork for the formal proclamation of a provincial nature reserve. As a conservancy, through championing this initiative, I believe we have made a significant contribution to biodiversity conservation of one of the most rare and threatened ecosystems.

Without willing and forward thinking landowners however this would never have been possible and I would like you to join me in giving these land owners a round of applause.

6. Dargle Nature Reserve Status Report – Kevin McCann

7. Treasurers Report

8. New Business

No new matters.

9. Thanks to outgoing Committee

I would like to extend a very big thank you to the outgoing committee, Graham Griffin, Barry Downard, Nikki Brighton, Clive Shippey and Vaughan Koopman, who have been outstanding in their support, enthusiasm and most importantly delivery.

Early in the course of the year we lost one member from the committee elected at the 2009 AGM and in terms of the constitution the committee co-opted Gill Addison onto the committee to bring our numbers up to 6 members.

10. Election of New Committee

In terms of our constitution we need a minimum of 5 and maximum of 9 committee members. All six outgoing committee members have made themselves available for re-election.

Do we have a proposer for the in favour of reelecting the outgoing committee?
Secunder?

Do we have any further nominations from the floor?

The duly elected committee will meet as soon as possible to elect office bearers.

11. Guest Speaker: Dr Jim Taylor:

“Global warming, climate change and planetary boundaries: What does this mean for us in the Dargle?”

12. General

Thanks and Closure