

**Milnerton Racecourse Conservation Area
MONTHLY EMS REPORT**

MRCA ✘ **EMS**
Conservation

REPORT No.: 33

PERIOD: Jan - Feb 2010

DATE: 29 February 2009

CONTRACTS MANAGEMENT

1

- ✘ On the 19th Feb CCT assisted in cutting and herbiciding Rhus present within Burn block 2. On the day approximately 10% was removed. The remainder of the Rhus & brushcutting of the firebreak was undertaken with these teams & a Working for Wetlands team on 25, 26 & 27 Feb.

INVASIVE VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

2

- ✘ Spraying of Kikuyu took place as above. The Rietvlei Wetland Reserve team assisted in herbiciding the Kikuyu within Burn Block 2, as well as along the boundary fence of Bridal way resident's houses.

FIRE MANAGEMENT

3

Burn Process:

- ✘ A site visit of Burn Block 2 was held on 26 Jan with Jacques Kuyler as he & his team from the BCA will be assisting with the preparation & conducting of the burn.
- ✘ A follow-up meeting to discuss logistics was held on 29th Jan with Koos Retief & Jacques Kuyler. Burn preparations will commence towards the end of Feb with assistance from Rietvlei & BCA teams.
- ✘ On the 29th Jan a meeting was held with Alvin Randle from Gold Circle where the control burn was discussed. Preparation work within Burn Block 2 was discussed and dates given. Operation on the day of the burn was also highlighted and discussed.

REHABILITATION

4

- ✘ The rehabilitation experiment along the old track within the southern area has not been finished due to the Laterite being too hard to break though manually. Maya Beukes (Kenilworth Racecourse Conservation Area) reported having a similar situation to deal with & utilised a bulldozer with very good results. Rehabilitation of the track will be revisited again in April, after the burn.

INFRASTRUCTURE MANAGEMENT

5

- ✘ **Stormwater outlets:** All outlets are clear of vegetation & open.
- ✘ **Rubbish bins:** CCT to supply additional bins when possible. No vandalism or other damage noted.
- ✘ **Signage & Fences:** A no cycling signboard was ordered and erected on the gate of the Northern Conservation Area.
- ✘ **Toilet:** The Real Landscapes toilet at detention pond 3 needs maintenance & it appears that it has not been cleaned for a while.



FAUNA MANAGEMENT & OBSERVATIONS

6

- ✘ On the 16th Feb a Male Cape Grysbok presumably escaped from the northern conservation area and got stuck between the palisade fencing of the southern conservation area. Royal Ascot security contacted the SPCA who contacted Koos Retief who sent out two of his staff members to capture it. The Grysbok was examined by the SPCA vet and there were no serious injuries. The animal was released into the Rietvlei Wetland Reserve the same day as one Male Grysbok needed to be removed from the MRCA in future.

- ✘ A Cape Grysbok Drive Count was executed on the 18th Feb with the assistance of CCT students, Rietvlei and BCA teams. The northern and southern conservation areas were surveyed twice as the first count was not successful due to the thick vegetation within Burn Block 2. The second count proved to be a success counting four adult males, two adult females and one juvenile (the sex unknown but is hoped to be female). This information will be vital for translocation and introduction of Cape Grysbok within MRCA later on in the year.



- ✘ Past and present Fauna sightings are being captured to be uploaded onto the CCT database.
- ✘ A small fauna survey is currently underway within the northern and southern conservation area using 3 Trap Array monitoring system. One of these arrays been placed within the Restio vegetation structure of the northern section and two within the grass vegetation structure of Burn Block 1 and shrub vegetation structure within burn block 2. This system is ideal for small areas to be surveyed as it targets a variety of small fauna including small mammals, reptiles and insects using pitfall, Sherman and mesh traps. The setting up of the Trap Arrays was executed on the 18th Feb with the assistance of CCT staff and the final Sherman and mesh traps were baited and put in place on the 22nd Feb. The traps are checked every morning and evening and species identified and measured if necessary. The system will be in place until the evening of the 2nd March.



Vegetation:

✕ Vegetation monitoring is on-going. Some of the flowers observed during the last month below:



Monopsis lutea



Orphium frutescens



Athanasia dentata

✕ Fixed point photography has been taken of Burn Block 2 for pre-monitoring references.

Water:

✕ Fixed point photography of the wetlands and dam is carried out on a monthly basis. Photographic comparison of algae between December 09 and Jan and Feb 2010 is provided of the Wetlands within the Northern Conservation Area.



08 January 2010
Drop in water level



26 January 2010
No real water level change



22 February 2010
Drop in water level-algae growth

Measurement of water levels within two wetlands is carried out monthly. Current depths are:

Measured in cm	Wetland 1 (Northern Conservation Area)				Wetland 2 (Southern Conservation Area)			
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2007	2008	2009	2010
Jan		114	76	67		31	34	47.5
Feb		61	46	29		1	12	44.2
Mar		53	28			0	0	
Apr		35	18			0	5	
May		22	37			1	33	
Jun		59	69			51	62	
Jul	123	153	143		82	94	102	
Aug	150+	155	145		101	95.5	107	
Sep	150+	187	161.5		97	101.5	150+	
Oct	150+	160.5	143.5		83	91.5	150+	
Nov	150+	139.5	138		68	77	92	
Dec	135	108	91		52	58.5	69	

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND OUTREACH	8
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- ✘ Environmental programmes for a variety of audiences are currently being compiled highlighting different programmes which are possible at the conservation area.

GENERAL INFORMATION / OBSERVATIONS / MEETINGS	9
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- ✘ An urgent e-mail from Reg de Beer (Sandown Crescent) reporting the Grysbok being trapped in the fence and additional information about the domestic cats within the conservation area was received (16 February 2010). Action need to be further discussed.
- ✘ A complaint was received from Tony Heath (Stable Yard) about litter within the MRCA. A litter cleanup was executed along with the drive count on the 18th Feb.
- ✘ On the 23 February an old carcass of a dead bird (Darter) was found at detention pond 4. Upon closer inspection it was found that the vertebrae of the neck were showing. It is suspected that the bird was preyed upon by a domestic cat.



ITEMS TO BE ADDRESSED IN THE UPCOMING MONTHS	10
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| ✘ Continue with the mapping of individual Red Data species. | ✓ | Ongoing |
| ✘ Commence with completing Review 'Action Items' up | ✓ | Ongoing |
| ✘ Initiate regular path maintenance contract | ✓ | Immediate |
| ✘ Identify ducks in main detention ponds (if seen again) | ✓ | Immediate |
| ✘ Explore species reintroduction in light of aims of ecosystem restoration | ✓ | Ongoing |
| ✘ Re-evaluate need for repairs to the pathway in the Northern Area | ✓ | Jan 2010 |
| ✘ Draft 6 month APO | ✓ | Jan 2010 |
| ✘ Address Kikuyu & clearing of woody alien plants | ✓ | Feb 2010 |
| ✘ Preparation for burning Block 2 | ¾ | Feb/Mar 2010 |
| ✘ Drive count of Grysbok | ✓ | Feb/Mar 2010 |
| ✘ Fauna Survey | ¾ | Feb/Mar 2010 |
| ✘ Final Grysbok capture and relocation operation. | ¼ | May/June 2010 |
| ✘ Road rehabilitation experiment | | April 2010 |
| ✘ Measurement of inundated areas requiring boardwalks. | | July 2010 |