

Milnerton Racecourse Conservation Area
MONTHLY EMS REPORT

MRCA ✘ **EMS**
Conservation

REPORT No.: 34

PERIOD: Feb - March 2010

DATE: 24 March 2010

CONTRACTS MANAGEMENT

1

- ✘ On the 5th and 8th of Feb the Rietvlei CCT team assisted in clearing of the firebreak around the perimeter of burn block 2. CCT also assisted with the control burn held on the 9th March 2010

INVASIVE VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

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- ✘ No invasive alien clearing was done during this period however a follow up needs to be done clearing *Acacia saligna* (Port Jackson) and *Acacia cyclops* (Rooikraans) within the Northern and Southern Conservation Areas.
- ✘ Spraying of Kikuyu grass is another ongoing task within both conservation areas and a clearing operation will be undertaken once the grass is green again.

FIRE MANAGEMENT

3

- ✘ On the 9th March the control burn was executed at Milnerton Racecourse Conservation Area burning 4.2ha within burn block 2. The fire was cooler than the 2008 burn and was aided by the North Westerly winds on the day. The burn commenced at 12h30 due to weather constraints and continued for approximately 40mins. Due to high grass fuel load and the dryness of the vegetation the burn was a success.



REHABILITATION

4

- ✘ After the burn it was observed that the laterite track which leads into burn block 2 did not burn even though it was vegetated. On going experimentation will be undertaken to determine the best course of action to follow.



INFRASTRUCTURE MANAGEMENT

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- ✘ **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:** No vandalism or other damages noted.
- ✘ **Toilet:** The Real Landscapes toilet at detention pond 3 needs maintenance & it appears that it has not been cleaned for a while.
- ✘ **Boardwalk:** KR has ordered planks to replace the broken area of the boardwalk as well as extra to future maintenance.
- ✘ **Gold Circle railings:** During the control burn on the 9th March a section of the wooden railings burnt. These areas have been measured and KR has ordered the material needed.



FAUNA MANAGEMENT & OBSERVATIONS

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- ✘ On the 3rd March a bird count was executed within the Northern and Southern Conservation Areas. All species identified were loaded onto the CCT database.
- ✘ On the 9th March before the burn a drive count was done in a northerly direction of burn block 2 in order to chase all the Cape Grysbok within the area out before the burn commenced. A total of 4 Cape Grysbok were chased out of the area.
- ✘ On the 9th March after the control burn a juvenile Cape Grysbok was found within the non burnt vegetation. It was sexed as male and still had its dried umbilical cord attached to its naval. The animal was placed in a sheltered area and monitored. The next day it was no longer at the original site indicating that it was likely that it was reunited with its mother during the night.
- ✘ Past fauna **sightings** have been uploaded onto the CCT database. Daily sightings are uploaded upon site visits of MRCA.
- ✘ A fauna survey was executed for a period of 10 days utilising three Trap Array trapping systems. These were checked every morning and evening of the survey. The survey proved to be very successful. Some species are still being identified after which the information will be loaded onto the CCT database thereby adding to the growing MRCA species list.
- ✘ Three white mallard ducks were present within pond 4. They seem quite tame and have their wings clipped.





BIOLOGICAL MONITORING

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Vegetation:

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



Zantedeschia aethiopica



Geranium incanum



Chrysanthemoides monilifera

- ✘ On the 4th March the three transects (Grass, Rhus and Restio vegetation structure) were monitored and plants identified every 0.5m along a 20m transect using the drop point method. Table of species listed below.
- ✘ Fixed point photography has been taken of Burn Block 2 after the fire as a regrowth monitoring system.

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.



March 2008
No water



March 2009
Slight increase in water levels



March 2010
Drastically increase in water levels

Measured in cm	Wetland 1 (Southern Conservation Area)				Wetland 2 (Northern Conservation Area)			
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2007	2008	2009	2010
Jan		114	76	67		31	34	47.5
Feb		61	46	44.2		1	12	29
Mar		53	28	25		0	0	13
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	

Water levels have dropped drastically within Wetland 1 in the Northern Conservation Area and therefore most of the bird life has migrated to the Southern Conservation Areas water bodies.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

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- ✘ On the 8th of March a letter drop was done to neighbouring residents at La Camargue and shopping centres with the assistance of CCT staff. This was to inform them on the control burn which would be executed the following day and as to why the burn was happening. Posters were also hung up along the palisade fence down Grande National Boulevard and Sandown Crescent to inform member of the public.
- ✘ A public meeting was held by Cape Flats Nature on the ## March in which Milneron Racecourse Conservation Area and the Diep River Corridor CCT management plans were to be discussed. He the public got the chance to highlight their thoughts about these two non-proclaimed Nature Reserves.

GENERAL INFORMATION / OBSERVATIONS / MEETINGS

9

- ✘ Nothing to report

ITEMS TO BE ADDRESSED IN THE UPCOMING MONTHS

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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
✘ Monthly bird count	✓	Ongoing
✘ Re-evaluate need for repairs to the pathway in the Northern Area	✓	Jan 2010
✘ Draft 6 month APO	✓	Jan 2010
✘ Preparation for burning Block 2	✓	Feb/Mar 2010
✘ Drive count of Grysbok	✓	Feb/Mar 2010
✘ Fauna Survey	✓	Feb/Mar 2010
✘ Fauna Survey	✓	Feb/Mar 2010
✘ Environmental Education	¼	April/May 2010
✘ Address Kikuyu & clearing of woody alien plants		April/May 2010
✘ Replant owl box		April/May 2010
✘ Eradicate cats and mallard ducks		April/May 2010
✘ Final Grysbok capture and relocation operation.	¼	May/June 2010
✘ Measurement of inundated areas requiring boardwalks.		July 2010
✘ Replacing of Gold Circle Wooden railings		2010