

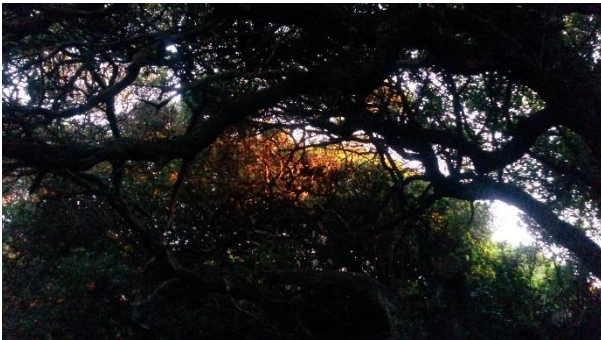


## A WALK IN THE FAIRY FOREST

Are there fairies in the forest? Of course there are. Whale Coast Conservation knows just where to find them.



Piet se Bos is a narrow strip of coastal milkwood forest remaining between Grotto Beach and the expanding urban development of Voëlklip in Hermanus.



As the sunlight faded the group of fairy fans entered the forest for a guided walk.



Sheraine van Wyk, WCC's Eco Learning Manager (third from right) introduced the group to the ecology of the protected milkwood forest. Frank Woodvine (second from right) added his considerable expertise.



In the fading light Sheraine and Frank showed the group a rehabilitation project by the Cliff Path Management Group of a former picnic spot. Fast-growing camphor trees (centre) provide shelter for slower growing milkwood saplings. Rehabilitation is severely hampered by invasive grasses.



Sheraine explained how forests spread and regenerate either vegetatively or by seed. Branches may bend or break and sprout new life. Saplings may remain static in growth for many years until a tree falls and provides the space and sunlight for the saplings to thrive.



A six-year-old examined a leaf by torchlight.





Lanterns lit the way until ...



... what was that spotted in the distance?



There they were – fabulous forest fairies.

Whale Coast Conservation certainly knows how to make magic.

