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BOOST FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Stop press!! We have just been informed that several of WCC's environmental education projects have been approved for funding by the **National Lotteries Commission (NLC)**. These include the anti-litter campaign that we'll launch next month (see later in this newsletter) and our ongoing Youth Environment Programme. We are most grateful for the trust the Commission has in WCC's ability to deliver on projects.

MARINE MOLLUSCS ECO-ADVENTURE

Monday 6 February
 Grotto Beach
 17h30 – 19h00
 Booking essential (20 max)
 Adults R100, Children R50, families R250
 Proceeds go to environmental education.
 To book contact Anina on either 083 242 3295 or anina.wcc@gmail.com.

Who doesn't love beachcombing at low tide and perhaps collecting a few mussels for supper – with the appropriate licence, of course? And not during the recent algal bloom or 'red tide' affect them and other filter feeders like mussels?

And what about those little mobsters of dead jellyfish on the beach – the plough snails?

How on earth do they know where to find the washed-up jellies?

MARINE MOLLUSCS

How do plastics, micro-plastics and other marine litter affect life in the intertidal zone?

Grotto Beach • Monday 6 February • 17h30

Adults R100, children R50, families R250; proceeds to environmental education
 Booking essential: 083 242 3295, anina.wcc@gmail.com

Come on an adventure with us and look more closely at these molluscs and, while we're there, we may just spot that genius of marine Mollusca, the octopus.

If the algal bloom is still evident we'll have some fun in the bio-luminescent surf as well and talk a bit about how the light is produced.

We'll also give thought to how our litter affects marine creatures. Can we change hearts, minds and habits to reduce the litter that ends up in the ocean?

RENOSTERVELD CONSERVATION

Speaker: Dr Odette Curtis
 Tuesday 21 February
 17h30
 The Green House, R43, Vermont
 No booking required, R20 donation to environmental education



**CONSERVING HABITATS:
RENOSTERVELD**



Tuesday 21 February 2017
The Green House
 17h30 - 18h30
 R20 donation to environmental education

Guest Speaker

DR ODETTIE CURTIS

To the casual observer Renosterveld looks grey and boring, but get up close and a wondrous world of flowers becomes evident. Renosterveld is also one of the most endangered types of habitat. Only about 5% now remains, mostly on private land - which makes conservation particularly challenging.

Whale Coast Conservation is delighted to welcome Dr Odette Curtis, Director of the Overberg Renosterveld Conservation Trust, who will describe the challenges she faces in trying to conserve the remaining fragments of critically endangered habitat.

THE BIG CLEAN CAMPAIGN

Every year Hermanus scores among the top towns for the contender of Cleanest Town. But we are not perfect. In a letter to the Hermanus Times, Hermanus got a big onion from a number of overseas visitors staying with Mr Ian Helby. I quote:



One thing our visitors commented on frequently was the amount of cigarette ends about, both in the town and on the beaches. One of them said that Hermanus was a big ashtray, and they were right if you look around. Outside restaurants, at street corners,

on the beaches and at the Beach Bar, there are butts everywhere. Maybe we do not notice it so much, But overseas people are very conscious of these things.

No, we are indeed very conscious of it. Whale Coast Conservation has designed and manufactured attractive cigarette butt bins that we will be installing across the Hermanus central business area, thanks to generous funding from the **National Lotteries Commission (NLC)**.

Our research has shown that In Hermanus smokers throw down about 28 million butts every year. None of these filters biodegrade naturally. They are in fact toxic waste and an environmental health threat. The chemicals trapped in the filters leach out into water. The poisons collect in the bodies of marine and freshwater animals. The toxins gradually move up the food chain until we eventually eat those animals and swallow the poison.



Manufacture of the butt bins (and the similar doggy doo bag dispensers) provides employment for a local person. However, there have been worrying incidents of vandalism and theft of the bins in public places.

Mindful of the huge impact that all litter has on the environment we are focusing on this aspect of conservation in an awareness campaign "**21 Days for Change**" that was inspired by **White Shark Projects**.

Our anti-litter initiative will launch on Wednesday 1 March with an event at the municipal banqueting hall. It will highlight some of the issues around litter, waste and the consumer society.

Please pop in for a chat and a cup of tea – on the house. While you are there you might be interested in joining in the fun lessons for school children about how we can all help to achieve a healthier environment.

Our campaign mascot is the Southern Right Whale *Eubalaena australis* and our aim is to do our little bit to help bring a healthy and safe environment to all creatures living on the

Whale Coast. Eubalaena Joy, Eubalaena Vuyo - Joy to the Whale.

The litter awareness Expo will also go to schools around the Overstrand, supported by funding from the NLC. You can contribute to the campaign by sponsoring a WCC Expo for 300 children in Stanford, Zwelihle, Mt Pleasant, Hawston or Kleinmond at R5,000 per Expo.

In the meantime, we urge all our members to join coastal clean-ups with Antonio da Silva-Swart. These short hikes, collecting litter at the high water mark along our coastline are great fun and so worthwhile. Contact Coastal Clean-up Conservation FB page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/185696485169841/> for details of upcoming hikes.



You will see parts of our coast you have never seen before!

INTRODUCING MORGAN HENDRICKS

Morgan is 10 years old and already a committed environmentalist. Her enthusiasm for nature has earned her the title of WCC's Junior Reporter. We are delighted to have Morgan's take on our activities.

During January Pat Miller, Shirley and I went to Harold Porter National Botanical Gardens with Morgan and mum Tertia to search for the famous *Disa uniflora* up Leopard Kloof. The disas were there, but the hike up the kloof with a few other enthusiasts was even more amazing.

Eagle-eyed Morgan was the first to spot a crab scuttling between ponds carrying a brood of babies under her abdomen. "Those babies were clinging on for dear life", she remarked.



The waterfall was the perfect place for spotting the Disas and a snack break.



Morgan also found a friendly Cape River Frog in the gardens.

Here is Morgan 'Junior Reporter' Hendricks' description of what she experienced:

Looking for the Disas!!!

In the hour we experienced: female crab with babies, group photo, crossed Susan Anne Pryers Bridge, Dr. Pat told us about pink plant sunscreen and lots more.

Then it was up Leopardskloof, with a view of our national yellowwood tree tops. We rock-hopped over a small brown stream, followed the yellow painted arrows up and up and up, climbed steep and sturdy wooden ladders.

Then we finally arrived at the first brown tannin rock pool and extraordinary waterfall, and my very first time seeing a ... RED DISA!!!! Further up, more ladders and 30 more Disas counted by Dr. Pat. I spotted 5, what a thrill!

Welcome to the Team, Morgan.

15 YEARS OF CARING FOR THE CLIFF PATH

The Cliff Path Management Group (CPMG) recently celebrated 15 years of caring for the Hermanus Cliff Path. Chairman David Beattie presented a brief overview of achievements over the past 15 years,

- A total of 11 997 metres (nearly 12 km) of cliff path have been rebuilt, mostly in exposed aggregate concrete, and widened from 60cm to 1.2 metre.
- Much of the path is wheelchair/pushchair-friendly; New Harbour to Protea Road; Mollergren to Kwaaiwater; Voëlklip to Grotto; Hoy's Koppie contour paths – over 9 km in all.
- The cost was over R3.1m funded by private contributions (62%), Overstrand Municipality (36%) and bank interest (2%).
- CPMG is a public/private partnership with the Municipality, with which a Co-Management Agreement was concluded in 2016.
- The coastal vegetation is now largely free of alien plants.
- Five boardwalk bridges have been constructed to enable wheelchair usage and to increase safety.
- Piet-se-Bos paths were upgraded and 4 sections of boardwalk and signage added.
- 25 unobtrusive information boards were erected along the path.
- 800 copies of "The Cliff Path Experience" DVDs were sold and 30 000 information brochures were distributed.
- The Hermanus Biodiversity Walk in town was established as an added feature.



The Hermanus Cliff Path has been acclaimed in numerous local and international newspapers, magazines, and travel brochures as well as on radio and television. It has been recognised as an outstanding tourist asset to Hermanus by several awards.

WCC salutes you and your team, David Beattie.

YOUTH ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (YEP)



All 14 schools that participated in the WCC YEP last year received their certificates of achievement. We are really proud of their wonderful commitment to the programme in 2016. We look forward to even more success in 2017.

BIRDING COURSE

BirdLife Overberg is offering a course on local birds on 4 and 5 March 2017 that may interest our members. The course will focus on conservation in the Overberg region. Roughly 65% of the course contents will focus on regional issues. The course will emphasise the growth of birding tourism, so people working in that industry might want to participate.

[http://www.westerncapebirding.co.za/overberg/events/590/flight for birders course at f ernkloof%2C hermanus](http://www.westerncapebirding.co.za/overberg/events/590/flight%20for%20birders%20course%20at%20ernkloof%20hermanus)

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