



## Newsletter 8, 2024

We have been very busy since our last newsletter with many activities, such as alien hacks, water testing and interesting walks.

We've had a rock walk, a scorpion walk, two bird walks at sunset, an information day and an Eco Day with a mini stream assessment scoring system (MiniSASS). Thank you to Noloyiso Mbiza, Elané Joubert, Piet-Louis and Althea Grundlingh, Leon Badenhorst and Prof Adam Bumby for assisting us with the various activities.



## Invasive Plant Species Hacks

We get together every Wednesday morning to work on the removal of the alien invasive plants. If you wish to join us, please contact us on the numbers at the end of this newsletter.

The monthly Saturday and Sunday hacks are well supported. Look out for our posters on Facebook or on the emails that are sent out. Our next Saturday hack is on 13 April, consider joining us as there are large areas that need to be cleared.

We also had a group of Adcock Ingram employees, scholars from Cornwall Hill High School and an environmental club joining us to assist with the invasive plant removal.

Thank you very much to all the volunteers that join us on a regular basis.



## Biocontrol

We are very excited with the number of new biocontrol agents that we have been able to introduce into the reserve. While these biocontrol agents won't solve the problems, they will certainly help slow down the spread of the plants.

We released more pompom thrips that we received from the Agricultural Research Council (ARC) on 14 December 2023. We are noticing the thrips all over the reserve and they appear to be reducing the flower formation on the pompom weed.



In February we received cochineal biocontrol agent from the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment (DFFE) for both prickly pears and queen of the night. The cochineal was placed on prickly pears in 13 different sites in the reserve. We don't have a huge problem with queen of the night, but we were happy to introduce the cochineal.



On 16 February we released some lace bugs and tortoise beetles on some of the cat's claw creeper in a small area in the reserve. The bugs and beetles, supplied by the ARC, affect the leaves of the plant and this then slows the growth of the creeper.



The DFFE supplied a consignment of pink lantana mites in March. We have noticed the mites in the reserve previously, but hopefully this will help increase the mite population.

In April the DFFE will also be supplying a biocontrol for bugweed and we will try to establish a site with these weevils.

We are extremely grateful for the experts who have already contributed their time and effort to help us release the correct biocontrol agents correctly and effectively. We have made contact with other experts regarding biocontrol of some of the other invasive plants.



## The River Starts Here!

We are very blessed that the water quality of the spruit is in a relatively good state, but this something we have to continue to monitor.

On 2 February we used the water testing kits that were sponsored by WaterCAN (water community action network) to test in four places along the stream. It still indicates that the water is unsafe for consumption. Please remember to report any sewage spills on [SewerBlockages@tshwane.gov.za](mailto:SewerBlockages@tshwane.gov.za).

On 24 February we held an Eco Day in the reserve. Noloyiso Mbiza of the Department of Water and Sanitation assisted with a MiniSASS. Piet-Louis and Althea Grundlingh demonstrated the importance of the wetlands.



On 2 March Elané Joubert led the full SASS. *“According to the SASS results the Rademeyerspruit is seriously modified. Compared to the previous survey, an increase in results were observed, meaning an improvement.”*

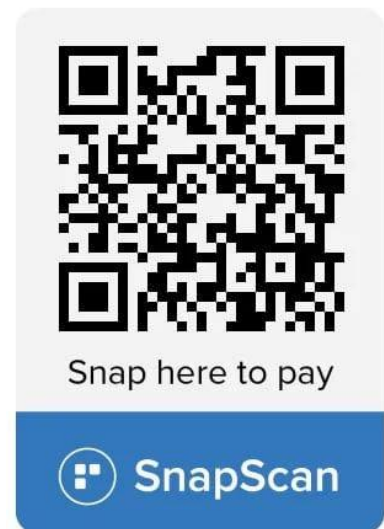
The Friends would ultimately like to be able to do our own MiniSASS assessments and other water tests. To

enable us to do this we require some equipment. If you are able to assist us to sponsor one or more of the following items, it will be greatly appreciated:

- MiniSASS Kit R1 800
- Clarity Tubes R1 600
- Velocity Plank R900
- Precautio E.Coli Tests R50 each
- Water Testing Meter R24 560



Please remember that if you are in any way able to assist the Friends with the running of the reserve, consider supporting us via SnapScan or contact us on the contact details below. Tax certificates can be arranged for any donations over R1 000 and paid through the Wildlife and Environmental Society of South Africa (WESSA). Thank you to those wonderful people that keep supporting us.



## **Friends' Membership**

We've had a very positive response to people signing up to become Friends of Moreleta Kloof Nature Reserve. If you have not yet done so, please consider supporting us by joining.

A new voucher system was introduced for members of Friends' groups in January 2024. The vouchers will replace the credit card-sized laminated membership cards issued previously. Each member will receive six vouchers, which the member must print and hand in as payment when visiting one of the following nature reserves:

Rietvlei Nature Reserve  
Groenkloof Nature Reserve  
Wonderboom Nature Reserve  
Faerie Glen Nature Reserve

The staff at the pay point will mark the voucher off and the voucher will be recorded as having been used. Members can choose which reserves they wish to visit and are no longer restricted to two free visits to each reserve.

The member can bring any 3 other people with, not restricted to family members, nor a specific number of adults and children. Depending on which reserves are visited, the value of these vouchers can add up to over R1 700.

Another new feature is that the vouchers are valid for 12 months from date of issue.

## Upcoming Events

Please keep a look out on our Facebook page and notice boards for upcoming events:

- Saturday, 13 April – Invasive Plant Species Hack
- 26 - 29 April – City Nature Challenge
- Sunday, 28 April – Invasive Plant Species Hack
- Saturday, 11 May – Invasive Plant Species Hack
- Saturday, 25 May – MiniSASS
- Sunday, 26 May - Invasive Plant Species Hack

For more information, please feel free to contact Faan at 083 325 1704 or Jeannie at 082 927 4673.

*Anything else you are interested in, is not going to happen if you can't breathe the air or drink the water. Don't sit this one out. Do something. You are by accident of fate alive at an absolutely critical moment in the history of our planet.*

**Carl Sagan**