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The SAIF – A wrap for the year!

By Hannel Ham

December is a time to reflect on the past year, summer holidays, family time and excitement for the new sparkling year knocking at the door. Council members are working pro bono (voluntary), but meet three times a year to attend to SAIF matters and strategic decisions aimed at improving our offering to members. At the recent council meeting (14 November) held in Johannesburg, the following matters were discussed:

- On 17 May 2018 the SAIF will celebrate its 50th birthday. Council is planning various exciting events throughout the country, but more details to follow in the January newsletter. The SAIF is a non-government (NGO) and non-profit organisation (NPO) serving its members. Finances are healthy and we received a clean financial audit in July 2017. Unfortunately, there are always members that are in arrears. Council extends a sincere request to members to please pay membership fees timely.
- Andrew McEwan is driving the development of the Continuous Professional Leadership. This will be coupled with a web-based member database that can be updated by members. Hannes van Zyl is assisting in his capacity as webmaster. A pilot test will begin January 2018 in the Southern Cape and run the entire year. Letters will be sent to all the Southern Cape members with more detail. Please contact Braam du Preez or Andrew McEwan for more details.
- Sally Uphold is responsible for printed media. This includes new handbooks and communication between council and the Chief Editor (Andrew Morris) of Southern Forests: a Journal of Forest Science. Sally and Andrew



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are committed to present the electronic submission system of the journal in the near future. Two new handbooks (Silviculture and Forest Timber Transport) are in the planning phases. A questionnaire on the vehicle of future publications (electronic, hard copy etc.) will be circulated early 2018 amongst members. I want to encourage members to give feedback and assist council.

- The photo competition for the 2018 calendar is completed. It will commemorate the 50th birthday of the SAIF and send out in January 2018.
- Council is still committed to the scientific members and communication between the SAIF and SACNASP. The process of registering Forestry as a separate discipline was successful and will be implemented after publishing the changes in the Government Gazette.
- All branch chairs are committed to have active social media interaction. Please visit the Facebook page (The Southern African Institute of Forestry (SAIF)), our new Twitter handle is @SAInstForestry, and the website www.saif.org.za. For more information, please contact Sally Uphold.

The SAIF is only as strong as its member's commitment. I want to encourage members to send any questions, complaints, compliments or suggestions to Corine (saif@mweb.co.za) or myself (hamh@basicr.co.za). Please visit our website (<http://saif.org.za>) regularly for updates. You are also welcome to send new information that we can publish on the website to Corine. I also want to encourage members to update contact details with Corine.

A warm thank you to all the loyal members. You made the SAIF the success it is today! May you have a good summer holiday filled with laughter and well deserved rest.

The Dedicated Service Award of the SAIF: Peter Gardiner

Mr Peter Gardiner retired in June 2017 as Group Natural Resources Manager of Mondi Plc and Mondi Ltd (South Africa). Peter has made an outstanding contribution to not only forestry in South Africa but also globally.

His dedication and his worldwide networking has been extraordinary and indeed legendary. He has always had such foresight into sustainable forestry both in Mondi SA and on the global stage that he is a household name in many countries. He has worked tirelessly contributing to the HCV Resource Network, as well as with influential organizations such as WWF, WRI, WESSA, Silver Taiga and Forest Dialogue.

Highly significantly, Peter has seen ways forward to integrate forestry not just with other cropping systems but also with the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem function. This is a legacy he leaves for future generations and something of which we can all be very proud.

Closer to home, Peter pioneered and encouraged sustainable forestry through development of large-scale ecological networks – set aside natural land and systems between timber compartments. This led to the instigation of the Mondi Ecological Networks Programme at Stellenbosch University, which received the NSTF/Green Matter Award from the Minister of Science and Technology in 2016.

Peter is nominated due to the enormous contribution to putting South African forestry on the world stage. Also, his leadership in future-proofing forestry globally will continue to inspire new generations of foresters and conservationists for years to come.



Winners of the SAIF Photo Competition, sponsored by Stihl

Stihl generously sponsored the first three places in the SAIF 2017 photo competition. Over 50 entries were received. Each branch nominated an independent judge to select the top photos. The top three photos have won prizes from Stihl, while the top 14 photos have been used to compile our 2018 calendar, which was made possible with additional support from Forestry South Africa, Mondi, MTO Lowveld and ANCO Engineering. Members will receive a calendar in the post soon. To receive the calendar, please make sure that your postal address is up-to-date, and you have no membership fees outstanding.

To see the top three photos before you receive the calendar, please visit the SAIF Facebook page – www.facebook.com/The-Southern-African-Institute-of-Forestry. Images of the prizes donated by Stihl can be seen below and the top three photographers will soon be contacted for prize handover events. The top 14 photographers were as follows:

1. Gauteng – Brett Hurley – Prize: STIHL RE 88 High Pressure Washer
2. KZN – David Hockly – Prize: STIHL HSA 25 Cordless Shrub Shears
3. Gauteng – Izette Greyling – Prize: STIHL SE 62 Vacuum
4. KZN – Mike Hunter
5. KZN – Mike Hunter
6. Southern Cape – Braam du Preez
7. KZN – Mike Hunter
8. Gauteng – Brett Hurley
9. Mpumalanga – Phillip Fischer
10. Gauteng – Izette Greyling
11. KZN – Robin Hull
12. Southern Cape – Barry Muller
13. KZN – Louis Titshall
14. Gauteng – Darryl Heron



Feedback – SAFCOL Forest Industrialisation Conference

By Richard Müller

SAFCOL hosted a Forest Industrialisation Conference (FIC) from 4 – 5 October 2017 at Kempton Park, Gauteng. The purpose of this Conference was to bring together forestry related decision makers and corporate stakeholders from both the public and private sectors to explore the industry status quo, challenges to be addressed and opportunities to be exploited; including alignment to international developments and to create exposure for the industry to the broader South Africa.

Leading into the conference, SAFCOL announced that they want to create a platform for a wood culture in South Africa and greater emphasis should be placed on the value and usage of wood. Now the forestry and forest products industries, through Forestry South Africa, Sawmilling South Africa and many other bodies, like The Wood Foundation, tried exactly that: to promote the growth and use of timber for a number of years. The irony is that these actions were often ill supported by government, even though they were well aware of the contribution that this sector can bring to the country in the form of growing the economy, offering employment and providing a healthy trade balance. So when SAFCOL, the government parastatal, initiated this timber usage promotion by means of the conference, the private industry was delighted and attended it well. The sad reality on the first day of the conference was that it was dominated by youth organisations, labour unions and politicians who used the proceedings as a political platform to promote their agenda and motives and detracted from the purpose of the event.

The conference was broken down in plenary sessions after the opening ceremony and setting the scene, to forestry challenges and opportunities, to processing and technology and to opportunities in the value chain. The initial presentations of politicians and office bearers were characterized by speakers being late for the conference and their speeches were dominated by aggressive behaviour by youth organisations, labour unions and community forums during the allotted period of questions to each speaker. Many delegates were disappointed at this derailment of the conference proceedings. Furthermore, the conference programme quickly fell behind schedule and towards the end of the day it was more than two hours overdue. The technology and the value chain presentations offered some rescue to the conference as delegates were stimulated by the novel technologies and solutions being presented. The topics ranged from use of woody biomass for energy purposes, manufacturing of structural panels to architectural timber solutions. Many of these suggestions may be a little far-fetched for our current skills base and often the economies of scale in South Africa would not justify investing in it. Interestingly, SAFCOL is currently investigating whether to install some of these technologies. Whether this parastatal has the capacity to manage these technologies are to be seen, seeing that SAFCOL has only one sawmill (Timbadola) left and the mill was closed for six months in 2017 due to inefficiencies. It was however positive to see that related government departments such as the Department of Trade and Industry had also committed their support for the proposed developments.

The parallel sessions provided some positive outcomes of the event as it allowed significant interaction by and between stakeholders without any political undertone. There were three parallel breakaway sessions:

- Wood Science Research,
- Education and training, including skills development and
- Small business start-up support, access to finance and markets and business planning

The Wood Science Research formed a sub-committee to investigate the real need for research, to identify who are the role players to do research, what is the level of their expertise and how it can satisfy the research demand. It is not sure if all the breakaway sessions formed similar sub-committees.

Pest update from FABI

Below is an update from FABI on two potential pests to *Eucalyptus* plantations and a renewed request to please keep a lookout for these pests on both commercial and ornamental trees in your area.

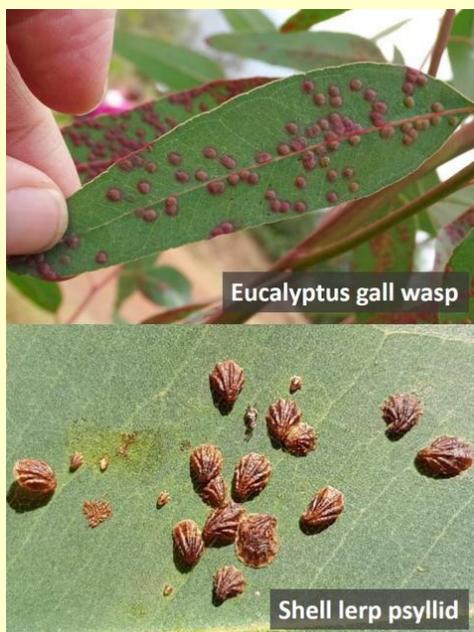
Shell lerp psyllid – *Spondyliaspis* sp.

The shell lerp psyllid – so named due to the characteristic shape of the lerp – is a sap sucking insect, first reported from the Pretoria area in 2014. It has subsequently been found on non-commercial – or ornamental *Eucalyptus* species near Iswepe, White River, Tzaneen and Melkbosstrand in the Western Cape. Most recently however, this pest was found on commercial *E. grandis* trees in Swaziland, an *E. grandis* x *E. camaldulensis* (GC) hybrid clone near Tzaneen, and *E. macarthurii* trees near Iswepe. Although infestations at these locations were low, the incidence of this pest on commercial species raises concern over the potential of this insect to become a pest in plantations.

Eucalyptus gall wasp – *Ophelimus maskelli*

The *Eucalyptus* gall wasp, *Ophelimus maskelli*, is a gall forming wasp, first detected on road side *Eucalyptus* trees in Midrand, Gauteng in 2014. It has since spread to other areas around Johannesburg and Pretoria, and was most recently reported from the Western Cape in the Stellenbosch area. This pest has not been reported from commercial plantations to date.

Early detection of both these potential pests in new areas will greatly assist in assessing their pest status and informing management strategies. To assist in the identification of these pests please refer to the attached photoplates for symptoms and characteristic features and please report any incidences of either of these pests to izette.greying@fab.up.ac.za.



IUFRO World Congress 2019 – Call for Nominations for Awards

The XXV IUFRO World Congress to be held from 29 September to 5 October 2019 in Curitiba, Brazil, provides an opportunity to honour outstanding scientific achievements and contributions to forestry with a range of IUFRO Awards. Members are encouraged to nominate suitable candidates for the various categories of awards as listed below. The deadline for submission of nominations will be 31st August 2018.

SCIENTIFIC ACHIEVEMENT AWARD (SAA)

Up to 10 awards will be given in recognition of distinguished individual scientific achievements within the fields of research covered by IUFRO.

OUTSTANDING DOCTORAL RESEARCH AWARD (ODRA)

One award per IUFRO Division will be given to recognize outstanding individual scientific achievements among young Doctoral researchers within six years after the dissertation and to encourage further work within the fields of research covered by IUFRO.

IUFRO STUDENT AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN FOREST SCIENCE (ISA)

This award recognizes outstanding individual achievements in forest science made by Masters degree students (or equivalent) during university studies or within 3 years after graduation within the 5-year Congress period, in order to encourage their further work within the fields of research covered by IUFRO.

For more info see <http://www.iufro.org/discover/awards/>

SAIF and other upcoming events

- **6 December 2017: SACNASP session.** More information available on the DST website. Go to <http://www.sfsa.co.za/>. Registration is free. SACNASP has been given the opportunity to be part of the Science Forum. SACNASP was allocated two sessions on the 6th of December to discuss two topics:
 - Role of a Professional registering body and its constituent Voluntary Associations in the National Systems of Innovation; and
 - Determining competency of Professional Natural Scientists.
- **7–8 December 2017: Science Forum South Africa 2017** will this year take place at the CSIR International Convention Centre, Pretoria, South Africa. All delegates are requested to register online: <http://www.sfsa.co.za/online-registration/>. The event is organized by SFSA2017.

Of seven headed snakes and other legends...

By Rob Thompson

Everyone has heard of Table Mountain in the Cape Province. Comparatively few people however have heard of Table Mountain in KwaZulu-Natal, albeit that one passes it, not far from Pietermaritzburg, when Durban-bound on the N3.

It is a very impressive mountain, or flat topped mesa, with very steep surrounding sandstone crags. Of special geological interest are the glacial striations or chatter marks that are visible in the stone surfaces on the summit. Botanists also are wanted to elbow the geologists out of the way to access the pristine grasslands and the endemic botanical specimens found only on the mountain top.

Views from the summit (around 923 m high) of the Msunduzi and Umgeni Rivers are spectacular as well as that of Nagle Dam.

Whilst information pertaining to the history of the mountain is hard to come by, local legend abounds with apparently corroborated accounts of giant seven headed snakes that eat intruders as well as the houses that they have attempted to build. Everyone seems to have known the chap who was eaten! It's a different guy in each case.

Stories of a tribe of cannibals having once resided on the top and regularly foraging amongst the surrounding local population for their protein requirements are also told. Cannibals having been displaced at a point in time, the mountain allegedly took on the role as a defensive outpost for tribes-folk under attack from others with dubious and unwanted intent.

A mysterious mist that descends and causes the disappearance (of the permanent sort) of individuals who happen to be present at the time is yet another integral part of local folklore that tends to relegate mountain visits to a very low priority ranking on the "to-do" lists of the locals.

On a number of occasions I have been fortunate enough to participate in an organised annual trail run that starts at the base of the mountain, climbs up the singular steep access path, circumnavigates the top and descends again to base. The route takes one through a number of biomes ranging from extensive grassland to wetland through to forest and scrubland. A fountain (always seen flowing), natural caves, strange depressions or sinkholes and some beautiful rock formations all add to the intrigue of this beautiful place.

Once a thick mist did descend rendering visibility to not more than a metre and I must admit that my mind did all

sorts of gymnastics in terms of remonstrating against my seemingly poor judgment and lack of respect for local legend. Fortunately multi-headed snakes and flesh dissolving vapours were having an off-day and we all survived to tell the tale.

The most astounding feature however, is the complete absence (barring the runners) of any human form on the summit. A few head of cattle sent up the path to graze unattended on the top make their presence known occasionally but apart from this, there is absolute silence and lack of human activity. On the other hand, surrounding the mountain, and very visible from the vantage points at the top, are literally thousands of houses, huts and developments, indicating an extensive population present and close by.

Do the legends keep the people away?

What power does this mystical mountain have to have been able to preserve itself in such a pristine form, literally over millennia, in the face of an ever expanding human onslaught?

Will it retain its mysticism in years to come and continue to defy man and his quest to develop and alter?

As forestry practitioners we cannot rely on legends and mystical creatures to protect our land holding environs. These protective elements have to be replaced by sound sustainable management protocols, the adoption of certification where applicable, the physical practice of sustainable forestry and an inherent and genuine calling to be responsible land custodians. Not an easy task and certainly not as romantic as an article of this nature makes out.

A visit to a place such as Table Mountain every once in a while does however, endorse the reality and importance of that which we do.

We all have our go-to places to relax and recharge. With the festive season just around the corner, many of you will be visiting your own special places once again. Make your visit count. Draw as much therefrom as nature presents to you. Allow the environment to reach deep inside of yourself and provide better understanding of the mechanism of life's complexities and interdependences.

Most importantly avoid the seven headed snake and rather wait for the mist to lift before venturing outside!

Have a wonderful and safe festive season!

Become Part of the Web, Show Your Face and Start to Twitter

By Sally Upfold

While some of us remain determined not to succumb to today's electronic and social media "hype" – increasingly global trends suggest that, irrespective of age, race and gender, people are using tools such as Facebook pages, Instagram and Twitter accounts, Linked in profiles and webpages. This is to try to stay abreast of the exponential increases in both speed and volume of information "out there", as well as to ensure we "stay connected" and informed. If you want to know what is happening around the globe and stay abreast of breaking news whether economic, political, sporting or environmental – you need to use social media.

Digital trends for 2017 (www.wearesocial.com/special-reports/digital-in-2017-global-overview) indicate that social media use increased by 20% in 2016, particularly the use of Facebook (the world's most popular social platform for the past decade). Nearly 2.8 billion people around the world now use social media at least once a month, with more than 91% of them doing so via mobile devices. Social media use has grown 21% year-on-year, with almost half a billion new users signing up during 2016. Facebook increased its global footprint by 363 million monthly active accounts in 2016, and more than one billion people now use Facebook every day. Similar stats exist for WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, and Instagram. More than one-third of the world's population – 2.5 billion people – now access social media services via mobile devices each month, a figure which grew by 581 million in the past year alone. To put this in perspective, roughly 8% of the world's population started using mobile social media in the past 12 months, at a rate of more than 18 new users every second. So, in the time it takes you to read this sentence, more than 100 new users will have started using mobile social media.

These platforms and tools can become nightmares with daily if not hourly friend requests and updates, but they are clearly also now part of communicating in today's world – and the same is true for organisations. If you want to attract new members and highlight your business, value and relevance – you need to use all the marketing and branding tools available to reach a wide range of stakeholders. The challenge is to use them responsibly and effectively!

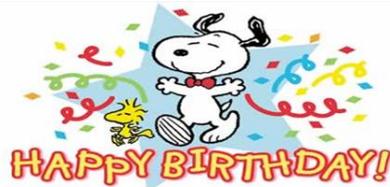
The SAIF is committed to remaining relevant and active in its aim of representing all forestry related professionals, assisting its members to achieve excellence in the practice of forestry, and to promoting growth and sustainability in the industry whilst being responsible custodians of a sensitive environment. We are calling on SAIF members who are active social media users (and perhaps even those who are not) to help raise awareness of the Institute and its activities, and grow its impact and membership, by supporting and using our social media tools. As many of you know, the SAIF has a website (www.saif.org.za) which has recently been revised and currently provides accurate and succinct information on the Institute, its aims and objectives, membership details, events as well as resources and publications. In time – we hope to use it to allow members to update their membership profiles as well as to launch the Professional Development project and possibly provide access to electronic publications and tools. Our monthly newsletters are emailed out and added to the website, and this process is being revised to become more effective. Our Facebook page has been relatively quiet over the last 12 months, but with support from branch representatives, this is becoming more active and hopefully providing current and relevant information – please follow us at www.facebook.com/The-Southern-African-Institute-of-Forestry (SAIF). The most recent addition is a SAIF Twitter feed (@SAInstForestry) – please help us grow the forestry conversation by following us and using the #SAIF. From the amazing selection of photographs submitted for this year's SAIF Calendar competition – we are privileged to work in some very beautiful parts of the country – so why not share your forestry story with us? Next year the SAIF will celebrate its 50th anniversary and to ensure you are part of the exciting programme of events being planned visit www.saif.org.za and start following us on Facebook and @SAInstForestry!

The power of social media lies in its effective, responsible and active use – so if you haven't yet joined the 2.5 billion people using social media platforms – now is the time to "Become Part of the Web, Show Your Face and Start to Twitter!"

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DAFF representative	Tendani Mariba	tendanim@daff.gov.za	012 309 5753

December 2017 birthdays



Dec 01	MORLEY T.	Dec 15	PEROLD M.
Dec 02	VON KROSIGK F.K.	Dec 15	FISCHER P.M.
Dec 02	HEATH R.N.	Dec 16	TAYLOR R.W.
Dec 02	CHAPMAN C.	Dec 18	LOUW J.H.
Dec 03	MONNIG N.H.	Dec 19	MALLOCH-BROWN D.
Dec 05	LYLE G.R.	Dec 20	DAVIDSON W.N.
Dec 05	VERMEULEN W.J.	Dec 20	MOLLER F.A.
Dec 05	JARVEL L.C.	Dec 20	HOCKLY F.A.
Dec 05	MARIBA T.	Dec 20	ACKERMAN S.A.
Dec 06	JORDAN J.L.	Dec 20	LE BRASSEUR J.
Dec 06	JAKAVULA M.G.	Dec 20	ALGERA M.
Dec 09	RETIEF F.	Dec 23	ALAWODE A.O.
Dec 10	ODENDAAL P.B.	Dec 25	STRYDOM H.L.
Dec 10	VIERO P.	Dec 25	DLAMINI C.
Dec 10	RAMNCWANA L.	Dec 29	MAKE F.
Dec 11	MASON M.J.	Dec 30	PANNIFER W.P.
Dec 11	SCHOOMBEE P.W.	Dec 30	HURLEY B.P.
Dec 12	HERRON D.	Jan 03	BALLANTYNE J.R.

Dec 14	ROGANS D.M.	Jan 03	LOUW W.J.A.
Dec 15	THEART G.F.		

Newsletter compiled by Andrew McEwan