

The Dedicated Service Award of the SAIF: Corine Viljoen

In many ways, Corine can be considered the face of the SAIF and has been secretary since 1991 (25 years). When someone wants to know something about the Institute, she is the “go to” person; she is known by all in the forestry industry and has an incredible knowledge of the South African “forestry family”.

Born into a forestry family and raised between trees, gives Corine credibility as a member of this forestry family. She has a warm smile, lovable personality, is well organized, always available (even when family crisis looms) and has an exceptional love for the Forestry Industry. She keeps a firm hand on council by ensuring we stick to the constitution and provide good services to members. While most members know her as the SAIF contact person, council without Corine can achieve nothing. In other words: she is the spill around which the SAIF evolves. She is always looking for new benefits to our members, attending meetings of other associations, forums etc. and do active marketing for forestry.

Without a person such as Corine, the SAIF would not have survived the last 25 years and be such a well-respected organisation. With this award, we want to show Corine our sincere appreciation for all the hours, sweat and mountains of dedication. We admire you!



2016 SAIF Scientific Writing Award of the SAIF: Gert van den Berg

The 2017 scientific writing award is presented to Gert van den Berg. It is awarded for a series of journal articles he has produced. The first is titled ‘Estimates of genetic parameters and genetic gains for growth traits of two *Eucalyptus urophylla* populations in Zululand, South Africa’. It was published in Vol 78 of the 2016 issue of Southern Forests: A Journal of Forest Science. This paper was one of a series of papers forming his PhD thesis.

Gert has another paper that will be published in Vol 79 of Southern Forests, titled ‘Genetic parameters and genotype by environment interaction of *Eucalyptus grandis* populations used in intra-specific hybrid production in South Africa’, and another accepted ‘Realised genetic gains and estimated genetic parameters of two *Eucalyptus grandis* × *E. urophylla* hybrid breeding strategies’. Well done to Gert on this great body of work!

In the photo, Gert stands with SAIF President, Hannel Ham, after receiving his award.



Transition in forest uses demands change in approaches

IUFRO Spotlight #57

"The portfolio of goods and services from forests is now very different to that two decades ago; yet there is a disconnect between the institutional framework and these new forms of forest use, leading to efficiency, equity and legitimacy deficits," said Dr. John Innes, Dean of the Faculty of Forestry at the University of British Columbia, Canada.

The changes – from forest planting and forest harvesting and operations, to forest use and forest products – occur at different levels. Today, forests produce a complex array of products from forest ecosystem services to timber and bio-products. Market values are increasingly being attached to forest ecosystem services and this is changing the value systems associated with forestry.

Dr. Innes is coordinating a Task Force set up by IUFRO – Resources for the Future: Transformation in Forest Use – to better understand those changes. "Globalization, population growth, resource scarcity and ecological degradation are all influencing forest use," he said.

"For instance, a growing middle class requires more forest products accessible through global supply chains. At the same time, these supply chains are threatened by, and contribute to, resource scarcity and ecological degradation," he said. "In another example, policy makers have identified forest products as important to climate change, so new products have been developed to meet the climate challenge.

"Both these examples have explicit implications for forests and are transforming forest use, yet the institutional response has been slow and inadequate in dealing with these drivers," he said.

Dr. Innes further noted that humans now value, in monetary terms, the full breadth of forest ecosystem services including non-market values and that now we also view forests as feedstock for the bio-economy.

"These are distinct and relatively nascent changes in our relationship with forests," he said. "For many Indigenous communities across the globe, the changing relationship with forests has been dramatic – particularly as they engage in the forest sector as market participants.

"Valuation of forest ecosystem services can run counter to holistic Indigenous values; but valuation also affords protection by adequately recognizing, quantifying and integrating these values into decisions, and policy makers can consider the full costs of their decision. These values in the past were typically ignored," Dr. Innes added.

The Task Force will seek to generate insights about the pathways that can be adopted to encourage a sustainable transformation in forest resource use.

It will identify institutions, governance structures, policies and instruments that can help policy makers and stakeholders address problems and capitalize on opportunities brought about by rapid change and describe the potential benefits and implications from them in terms of equity, effectiveness and efficiency.

It will also develop recommendations for forest research institutions to build understanding for, and implementation of, those various tools to support successful transformation in forest use.

The Task Force also convened a roundtable of leading global experts from government, industry, academia, NGOs and Indigenous groups in Dehradun, India in April of this year to further discuss the sustainable transformation of forest use. A book elaborating on the outcomes of that roundtable is expected in the near future.

The Task Force on the transformation in forest use future is one of several established by IUFRO to advance knowledge under five research themes in accordance with the IUFRO 2015–19 Strategy.

The five themes are: Forests, Soil and Water Interactions; Forests for People; Forests and Climate Change; Forests and Forest-based Products for a Greener Future; and Biodiversity, Ecosystem Services and Biological Invasions.

Task Force website: <http://www.iufro.org/science/task-forces/transformation-forest-use/>

Safcol's Fanie Botha Hiking Trail

The Fanie Botha Hiking Trail is situated in the Sabie area in Mpumalanga. It is located on the Drakensberg escarpment and provides hikers with marvelous views over a variety of landscapes far below. Some highlights on this delightful trail includes Lone Creek and Mac Mac Falls, both national monuments, Mount Moodie and Mac Mac Pools. There are six hiking huts namely: Ceylon Hut, Maritzbos, Stables, Mac Mac, President Burger and Graskop hut.

Each hut has 24 bunkerbeds, hot water (solar geysers) no pots and pans, undercover braai area firewood and toilets. Ceylon and President Burgers hut have electricity and hot water, Mac Mac hut has no shower while the rest have a shower. Ceylon, Maritzbos, Stables, Mac Mac and Graskop huts have LED lights and solar geysers except the Mac Mac hut.

The Fanie Botha Hiking Trail has various trail options ranging from 2 to 5 nights, having ratings from easy, moderate or difficult. The trails can be started from the Ceylon Hut, Graskop or President Burgers Hut. For more enquiries or bookings please contact ecotour@safcol.co.za, or www.safcol.co.za or 013 754 2724.



The Mac Mac hut



The Ceylon hut

Show us the evidence for climate change

The National Science and Technology Forum (NSTF) is pleased to announce that Professors Bob and Mary Scholes will present on climate change. This is an interactive discussion on this critical matter.

Professor Robert Scholes is one of the top 1% of environmental scientists in the world. He is recognised globally as a leading researcher within environmental science, systems ecology, savannah ecology and global change. He is also one of South Africa's few National Research Foundation A-rated scientists. In 2015, Prof Scholes received an NSTF-South32 award for his contribution to science over a lifetime.

Prof Mary Scholes holds a Research Chair in Systems Analysis at the University of the Witwatersrand. Her research activities focus on systems analysis of a variety of disciplines including soil fertility, food security and biogeochemistry in savannas, plantation forests and croplands. She is recognised globally for her work. In 2009, she received an NSTF Award for Research Capacity Building.

The discussion will include what is the evidence for climate change, how is it expected to affect southern Africa, at what rate is climate change expected to take place, and does human activity contribute to climate change? What evidence is there? The date is Friday, 17 November 2017 at Emperors Palace Convention Centre, Gauteng. To register please click <http://www.nstf.org.za/df-registration-form/climate-change-evidence-emperors-palace-convention-centre-kempton-park/>

SAIF and other upcoming events

- **Biomass Harvesting for Energy:** one-day short courses: Richards Bay, PMB, Ugie & Knysna. 08 to 14 November 2017. Contact Andrew McEwan andrew@cmo.co.za or 083 676 5668

The SAIF mourns the passing of the CEO of the Habitat Council

Marie-lou Roux, the CEO of the Habitat Council, died on 29 September 2017 after suffering a hip fracture on 20 September. Her memorial service took place during October in Somerset West. The SAIF is a member of the Habitat Council. The Habitat Council is a national consultative umbrella NGO which works to prevent environmental harm in the build & natural environment by promoting ethical environmental management and sound environmental legislation, preserving biodiversity and natural resources and combating pollution.

A home for big and small

By Rob Thompson

The other day I became embroiled in a discussion pertaining to the merits (or not) of zoos. Is there still a place and function for keeping captive animals outside of their natural environment? Should we not be rather observing animals in their natural habitats?

Whilst there are obviously compelling arguments both for and against the concept of zoos, I base this article on the premise that zoos do perhaps serve a necessary function in exposing those people who may never have the opportunity to travel, to creatures that they may never encounter in nature.

So what? How does this have relevance in a forestry newsletter?

Well, another argument in favour of zoos is that given the real and tangible onset of global warming and the resultant rapid change in environments being experienced across the globe, notwithstanding Trump's contrary assurances, these facilities may contribute as genetic repositories of various sensitive species.

Get with it already...how does this link to forestry?

As in the case of zoos, commercial forestry has always been subject to a great deal of conjecture, but given the nature of the readership of this newsletter, I don't need to go into the details thereof. With modern forestry management procedures, we can be proud of the biodiversity that occurs in and on our planted areas.

The Pietermaritzburg city environs (and many other towns and cities) are surrounded by corporate and municipal commercial forestry enterprises. Recently, many residents have been mentioning the vast array of not so common birdlife that is now frequenting gardens. Similarly, insect life and reptilian life is becoming quite abundant and interesting. Just last evening my wife discovered a stalk-eyed fly in the kitchen which we delicately caught and ventured outside to release. On the release journey into the garden, we came across a juvenile red lipped herald snake hunting flying ants (termites).

The African Goshawk that uses my bird feeder as its daily dove hunting venue (and leaving me with heaps of feathers to clean up regularly) provides us with great pleasure (less so for the doves). Two resident fish

eagles with huge territories are seen regularly over the house and every so often provide that cry that is so totally African.

A shrike that we have spent years feeding mealworms has taken to serenading us from 2.30 every morning lest we forget to feed it breakfast. Possibly inconsiderate from its part, but we would not have it any other way. Fruit eating bird species have multiplied at our feed table and provide endless entertainment with their frenzied feeding antics.

Yes, the influx of unusual species could be attributed to the dry conditions forcing migration for food, however we cannot rule out the premise that these creatures must have first established themselves in the nearby environs in order to facilitate such searches further afield. Our managed natural forestry corridors on all estates is highly likely contributing to the well-being of creatures caught up in a human maelstrom of development and habitat destruction.

Perhaps the species preservation in and on well managed commercial forests are indeed presenting a plausible argument for well managed zoos? At least in the case of commercial forestry areas we provide natural habitats and a degree of freedom of movement whilst zoos offer more contained protection. The real challenge is for people to start to realise the important functions of the creatures hailing from these areas. How do we slow the inexorable development pathway and engender an interest in natural offerings that are fortunately still abundant in places?

How do we get people to take an interest in, and respect the creatures they encounter daily? How do we get them to keep a look out for the smaller creatures and understand that these are just as, if not more, interesting than the big five, and they occur right where they live!

Seeing wanton habitat destruction in and around the city is often heart breaking, however, I suppose no one said it would be easy! It is what it is. Human development and encroachment is inevitable. As forestry practitioners however, we have the means and the tools to educate and create awareness. That is something we have to do.

Whilst the tipping point approaches at a rapid pace, foresters certainly can contribute towards its slowed pace.

Timber construction: Finance, carbon tax and the green economy (Part 1)

By Jennifer Rees (www.ecologhomes.co.za)

Timber construction is a traditional, yet modern method of building sturdy structures that are both pleasing to the eye and can play a profound role in mitigating greenhouse gas emissions. It offers the homeowner and property developer in the know an environmentally intelligent building option that has been tried, tested and has performed exceptionally well over centuries.

“70% of the developed world’s population lives in timber frame houses,” remarks Werner Slabbert, Managing Director of Eco Log Homes. “This includes the USA, Canada, Scandinavia, Europe, New Zealand, Australia and Japan,” he adds.

“Timber construction brings tremendous value to all players along the value chain, right from the forestry sector through to the homeowner. Timber homes offer incredible design flexibility, quick construction time, excellent insulating properties, a highly competitive strength-to-weight ratio, legitimate consideration for the environment, and are built to last,” comments Slabbert.

While the myriad benefits offered by timber construction are becoming better known to both the trade and the public, there remain a few misperceptions around this building methodology that fuel the misunderstanding that building with timber is far less accessible than it really is. Among these is the notion that accessing finance to build a timber frame home or structure will not be easy, if not impossible.

Accessing finance to build a timber home

According to the Institute for Timber Construction South Africa (ITC-SA), “Major South African banks have the same approach to financing a timber frame home as they do a brick and mortar home. If the applicant qualifies for a bond in line with the financial institutions’ basic credit requirements and the structure is built according to all national building standards and regulations by a qualified timber frame builder, you will get a bond to build or buy a timber frame home.”¹

“Timber frame building is one of the three building types – alongside brick and mortar, and steel frame building – that are included under the National Building Regulations as pre-approved building methodologies, each with its own SABS standard, and that are approved by all concerned authorities,” says Slabbert, adding, “Timber construction in South Africa is specified for under the South African National Standard (SANS) 10082, which governs timber frame buildings.”

According to Wimpie Potgieter, Property Asset Management Head at FNB, “FNB finances timber frame homes or timber homes built in accordance with the National Building Regulation SANS 10082 as per any other conventional structure built in accordance with national building regulations. However, confirmation from a registered engineer (engineer’s certificate) that the structure is built in accordance with the code is required.”

“The application procedure for applying for a bond to build or buy a timber home or structure is thus exactly the same as applying for the same on a brick and mortar structure. The only exception is that an ITC-SA membership certificate, denoting the builder’s competence in the practice of timber frame construction, as well as a registered engineer’s certificate confirming that the structure has been built to standard, will need to be provided,” says Slabbert.



Valuating a timber frame home: overcoming obstacles

When it comes to accessing finance to buy an existing timber frame home, there are a few obstacles that can hinder the endeavour. “Timber home valuation should be as standard as evaluating any other type of home, but given the current market share of timber construction due to its exclusivity, it is not surprising that there is some room for improvement,” Slabbert comments. “Some of the challenges faced when having a timber home valued include the fact that many people do not understand the construction method, know how to identify the attributes of a home built in strict accordance with SANS 10082, or appreciate the difference between a high-value timber structure versus a low-value structure, like a Wendy house,” he explains.

“But these challenges are easily overcome with the help of a professional body like the ITC-SA, who can provide an inspector qualified to evaluate an existing timber home to ascertain whether or not it has been built to standard. Further to this, the ITC-SA can also provide a list of registered timber frame builders and engineers that understand, and are competent in their professions in relation to, timber frame building,” Slabbert assures.

Local authority requirements

According to Jacques Cronje of Jacques Cronje Timber Design, “The timber frame building system in South Africa [...] is recognised by the National Home Builders Registration Council (NHBC), lending institutions, insurers and local authorities.”²

“With timber construction and the local authorities, it’s business as usual as compared with any other construction type. In this case, a homeowner will need to ensure that the plan for the build specifies SANS 10082. Local authorities across South Africa will approve and pass a timber frame home, but they must of course be shown to be compliant with the necessary regulations,” comments Slabbert.

“The only situation where one might lawfully experience any resistance regarding building a timber home would be in the case of a housing estate, where there may be an architectural committee in place to dictate construction design and materials. This is usually done in an effort to maintain the overall aesthetics of the estate,” says Slabbert, adding, “Likewise, when considering building a timber home, it’s also important to have a similar approach and consider how the structure will fit in with its environment; a log home in the city centre, for example, will not only look out of place, but the return on investment over time may be quite limited, given the contextual misfit.”

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November 2017 birthdays



03-Nov	SALE G.	15-Nov	HORRELL I.L.
04-Nov	BAINBRIDGE W.R.	15-Nov	WEBB R.J.
04-Nov	LOUBSER C.H.	16-Nov	SWART C.W.
04-Nov	TITI L.	19-Nov	RUKOVO E.
05-Nov	JALI S.P.	20-Nov	ISMAIL R.
07-Nov	MATAKALA N.	20-Nov	NQETO A.
08-Nov	VON BENEKE D.	21-Nov	DOVEY S.B.
09-Nov	CHAWOTA V.J.	22-Nov	PREVOST M.J.
11-Nov	GOWER L.	26-Nov	KEET S.
12-Nov	GEVERS R.	28-Nov	CHIRWA P.W.
12-Nov	ROBERTS J.C.	29-Nov	LANE J.S.
13-Nov	MATTHEUS R.	30-Nov	LINDE B.J.

Newsletter compiled by Andrew McEwan