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September should be National Forestry Month

By Hannel Ham

September is traditionally associated with spring, arbour week and Heritage Day. Although it is only the third month in the year with 30 days, September means seventh. The birthstone is sapphire (blue), the flower an aster with Virgo and Libra as Zodiac signs. Historically, September is also a month of mixed emotions.

Grammatically, spring is a very special word. Not only does it qualify as a homonym (words with the same spelling but different meaning), but can be used as different parts of speech (verb and noun). As a verb it symbolises arise or originate from something, move or jump suddenly. Spring as a noun indicates the season or a device (elastic or coil) that can be pulled and pressed but will return to its original form.

This year we will celebrate arbour week from 1 to 7 September. The national common tree of the year is *Ziziphus mucronata* (hairy buffalo-thorn), while the rare or uncommon tree is *Euclea pseudobenus* (ebony tree). Secretary Day is on 6 September and part of arbour week, so let us plant a tree to commemorate our colleagues by greening the environment.

Heritage Day, 24 September, is on a Sunday this year. The aim is for South Africans across the spectrum to celebrate the diversity in cultures, traditions and beliefs in a wider context of a nation that belongs to all the people. Although various political events are organised, heritage is synonymous with Braai day. Again, the general public celebrates Forestry without realising that firewood is an essential source of energy and building block for social interaction.

In short, we celebrate trees throughout the month of September. From the blossoms on trees that indicate beauty and new beginnings, planting of indigenous trees to firewood (dead trees) symbolising friendship and fun. Therefore, let us celebrate not only arbour week but also September National Forestry Month!

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SAIF-NCT Night Run and Ride – tonight!

Good luck to all participating in the annual and ever popular SAIF-NCT Night Run and Ride at Baynesfield Club. It takes place this evening!

Registration is from 17h00–18h00 and the ride and run setting off at 18h15.

There are 5, 12 and 20 km ride, run and walk options as well as a supervised 2 km kids ride

Food and refreshments will be on sale.

The Distinguished Forestry Award of the Southern African Institute of Forestry: Prof Jolanda Roux

Prof Jolanda Roux has been awarded the “Distinguished Forestry Award of the Southern African Institute of Forestry”.

Prof Roux has focused her work on the diseases of native and introduced trees, particularly on the African continent. She has a passion for advancing tree health and human capacity on the continent and has initiated collaboration with forest scientists in numerous countries in Africa.

Her research has resulted in the description of more than 70 novel fungal species, particularly from South Africa and the rest of the African continent. A number of these species include important fungal pathogens of commercial plantation trees, as well as trees important to rural communities.

Prof Roux has published more than 150 articles and trained many students in the field of forest health, and she is highly rated in the scientific community (H – factor > 20).

She has received numerous awards locally and internationally, including the Queen’s award of the Commonwealth Forestry Association:

- Outstanding young Researcher award, University of Pretoria, 2002.
- First runner up: South African Department of Water Affairs and Forestry – Women in Forestry Research Award, 2007.
- Southern African Society for Plant Pathology: Applied Plant Pathology Award – 2011
- Chinese Academy of Forestry (CAF) honorary guest Professor – 2011
- Commonwealth Forestry Association – Queens Award, 2011

- Department of Science and Technology (DST), South African Women in Science Award, “Distinguished Young Woman in Science” 2011.
- National Science and Technology Forum (NSTF) award for Outstanding Contribution to Capacity building in Science, Engineering, Technology and Innovation, 2012.
- University of Pretoria, Exceptional Achiever Award, 2014
- IUFRO (International Union of Forestry Research Organizations) Scientific Achievement Award (SAA), 2014

It is through the work and passion of people such as Prof Roux that the South African forestry industry has a world-renowned status in championing tree health and in practically applying new knowledge generated to keep our plantations healthy. We would like to express our appreciation of her work in South Africa, through the awarding of the Distinguished Forestry Award to her.

(Photo: Prof Steve Verryn, past chair of the Gauteng branch, hands over the award to Jolanda)



The 45th International Forestry Students Symposium

By Tatenda Mapeto

130 forestry students, 32 countries, six continents and tons of youthful energy are just but a snippet of the broad spectrum with which we can use to describe the recently concluded forestry students symposium. Hosted as a collaboration by student associations from the five tertiary institutions offering forestry programmes, the theme of the symposium, "Forestry in a diverse environment: **SIYAPHI** (Where to from here), encapsulated the character of the event, the South African forestry industry and South Africa. Starting in Stellenbosch with a pre-symposium component for a third of the participants who wanted to acclimatise before the official opening at the Nelson Mandela University in George, the symposium tour followed the coastal route from the 28th of June to the 17th of July and finally ending in Pretoria at FABI. That was just over 3000 km of driving, yet it wasn't just about being on the road.

The symposium's official opening ceremony was broadcasted to a global online audience of approximately 6 000, parts of the ceremony made it to the South African National News (check it out on YouTube) and the message on young people standing tall in an era where forestry is now about much more than planting and cutting down trees resonated with the students. A dialogue on the role of youth in the global forestry landscape capped the beginning of the two week journey and probes on what the students think is their role and how they think they can achieve that role livened conversations whose outcomes are now being prepared into articles for the local and global forestry audience. **Cont on page 3.**

Pictures below: IFSS delegates on the last day at Affies High School Pretoria, Xhosa fighting sticks that came in handy when hiking and the IFSS 2017 logo. Pictures by Shyam Lopchan



IFSA 2017 cont.

(Cont. from page 3) As the tour moved on, a range of educational components (cultural, academic etc.) showcased the South African landscape. From engagements on indigenous afrotemperate forests, fire management in forested landscapes against the backdrop of the Knysna fires, saw timber plantations and sawmills in the Eastern Cape, forestry research in South Africa, pulpwood production and processing, the Kruger National Park (where all the charismatic big 5 put on a show and came out in numbers) and finally FABI where the Deputy Minister graced the closing ceremony with relief that all students were still alive and well after 3000km. At the end of the symposium a dialogue on the students' perspective on the South African forestry landscape was facilitated, particularly with an angle on opportunities and strategic guidelines to capitalise on these opportunities. The feedback was incredible and again a popular article will be published. The momentum of the symposium continued with some students attending the ICFR 7th Forest Science Symposium (18–20 July) to present their work and also to network.

This symposium would not have been possible without sponsors and also hosts from the various entities visited. Even more so as South African forestry sector students we realise that we are privileged to be in an enabling environment. Thank you to our:

- **Platinum sponsor:** Fibre Processing and Manufacturing Sector Education and Training Authority (FPM SETA)
- **Gold sponsor:** Department of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF)
- **Silver sponsors:** Southern African Institute of Forestry, Sawmilling South Africa, MTO Forestry, Forestry South Africa, Rance Timber, George Municipality, Eden District Municipality, SAPPI, MONDI, SAFCOL, Steve Biko Foundation, FABI, ICFR, Nelson Mandela University Science Faculty, STIHL
- **Bronze sponsors:** NCT, Husqvarna, IFSA, Merensky Timber

Appreciation to individuals who gave unwavering support to the students also goes to;

General Bheki Cele (Deputy Minister DAFF), Ms Felleng Yende (FPM SETA), Ms Irene Mathabela, Mr Nkosi Motsamai and Mr Churchill Mkhwalo (DAFF), Professor Quinton Johnson, Professor Josua Louw and Ms Alet van Tonder (Nelson Mandela University) and Professor Mike Wingfield (FABI, University of Pretoria).

Much can be said about the proceedings of the International Forestry Students Symposium and more pieces of writing will still come, however beyond the reporting is the momentum our local students have gained in ascertaining themselves as sustainable future leaders in the South African and global forestry landscape.

KZN Branch Raising Awareness of Forestry Careers

By Sally Upfold

Five members of the KZN branch of the SAIF; Wayne Jones and Lelethu Sinuka (Sappi), Simon Ackerman and Sally Upfold (ICFR) and Mmoledi Mphahlele (Mondi), took part in a recent careers evening at Maritzburg College School in Pietermaritzburg. Attended by a large number of pupils and parents, the event provided an excellent opportunity to market the forestry profession and raise awareness about the many routes into a career in forestry. Apart from exposing pupils to a diverse array of career options, the purpose of the event was also to motivate and inspire them, build relations with the community and enhance pupils' understanding of the working world. There was keen interest from the pupils, and the SAIF group used tertiary institution brochures (Nelson Mandela University, Stellenbosch University and UKZN), company banners and branded giveaways plus the new forestry explained website (www.forestryexplained.co.za) to raise awareness and discuss various career options in the sector. Maritzburg College were highly appreciative of the SAIF's contribution and this will become another annual event on the branch's calendar.



SAIF and other upcoming events

- **IUFRO 125th Anniversary Congress.** 18–22 September 2017, Freiburg, Germany. <http://iufro2017.com/registration/>
- **SE Asia Tree Health Conference 2017.** 1 – 2 November 2017, Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia. 2017SEATH@gmail.com.

Audit and act!

By Rob Thompson

As anyone who works within an FSC Certified organisation, or owns a certified timber farm knows only too well, this status is subject to regular internal and third party audit. High environmental and sustainability standards have to be maintained, with practiced management protocols measured against established certification council principles and procedures. The organisation that I work for has just come through a third party FSC audit and I can attest to the pressure that staff are placed under (or rather place themselves under) particularly in the run up to an audit.

Current practices are checked and then double checked. Questions are asked as to who the auditors will be. Speculation runs rampant as to what they are going to be like. What are they most likely to focus on? What are their specialities and interests? Gradually an image is conjured up of a psychopathic, take no prisoners type personality, specially trained in subterfuge and intimidatory tactic in a black ops facility somewhere deep in Afganistan. Field and office staff alike, start to eye their available sick leave and plan the onset of an acute viral infection just short of the audit date.

That is....until a practice run is done in field. There is nothing like an imminent third party audit that allows one to see one's own plantation and methodology through the eyes of another person. Operations become exposed, warts and all, and one is able to easily assess progress that has been made (or not). FSC certified organisations, worth their salt, and managing according to the correct principles, have certainly progressed immensely since the formal inception of FSC in South Africa, some 20 plus years ago. My experience has been that, albeit an effort to maintain FSC standards, the principles applied generally comprise responsibilities that simply have to be performed by any responsible and accountable land custodian. Physically applying them makes all the difference and over the years one can certainly see the positive effects of sound custodianship on South African timber plantations.

As it turned out, our 2017 FSC audit was a really positive experience. Pragmatic and experienced auditors guided our organisation in arenas requiring some tensioning and openly acknowledged those areas in which we excel. Findings made were well considered, and fair, and time periods allowed for corrective action, manageable and practical. Management discussed proceedings after the audit and I observed once again the real sense of ownership that personnel have over their responsibilities. This transcends FSC. It is an ownership that has evolved over the years within forestry practitioner rankings across all manner of forestry organisations and continues from strength to strength. Sustainability principles are becoming instinctive and part and partial of our very core. The pressures that we have been put under over the years to manage sustainably and responsibly, have certainly borne fruit. We can feel proud but never complacent!

Perhaps it is this sensibility then, that makes it so difficult to accept the wanton wastage and mismanagement of resources commonly encountered outside of our forestry boundaries?

This very weekend, returning from a visit to a plantation facility in the KZN Midlands, we drove through the aftermath of the commemorative Mandela Marathon run earlier on in the day. I use the word "aftermath" consciously. A run to celebrate the life of South African icon Nelson Mandela sadly left the countryside awash with kilometre after kilometre of plastic water bags, gel casings and other detritus. Where was the respect for the environment? A high wind was casting these leftovers into adjoining fields and properties well out of the reach of any clean-up crew when and should they follow up. Why were no litter disposal protocols set by the organisers? Why was the weather not considered or predicted with commensurate catch bins or designated and controlled disposal areas established? Most importantly....why did the runners not know any better?

I saw the biggest grey rat that I have ever seen in my life, a month ago, when walking on the pavement two blocks away from my city based office complex. It was foraging from the very ripe content of two week old garbage bags left outside in the midst of a municipal workers strike. The garbage removal service was clearly not functional due to strike action and yet businesses and residents were still placing new bags on top of old bags adding to the prevailing stench and breakdown in hygiene. Why do they not know any better?

And then the Municipal dump caught alight. We awoke in the night to a house full of the smell of burning plastic and the following day a thick, acrid, throat searing smoke, lay dense across the city until midday. Schools were closed and sport activities cancelled. The fire ultimately burnt itself out given the inefficacy of the fire protection capacities applied. Why is this landfill not better managed? Where are the emergency prevention and management protocols? Why the apparent lack of ownership and why does the municipality appear to not know any better?

These three observations from a myriad that we are exposed to on a daily basis. Rampant poaching from within our supposedly protected nature reserves. A bling consumerist society unwilling to scale down consumption to a needs only basis. Urban development in an ad hoc and discordant pattern. Economic disparities fuelling politically based conflict leading to environmental and educational neglect. The list goes on.

I sometimes despair at the neglect that is witnessed daily. I do lament the sustainability tipping point that has to be approaching faster than any of us realise. I have been trained within a sustainable industry and am more aware than others (outside of the industry) of what should be done environmentally. I am inherently my own auditor, constantly evaluating and measuring observations against an ideal world. You, as forestry practitioners, must share the same sentiments, skills and insights? If the answer is yes, then you and I ought to be sharing our "audits" and findings in a quest to spread knowledge and awareness. We should regularly be contributing towards improvements.

I think I'll start with a letter each to the marathon organisers and municipality. Protocol deviations have been observed, corrective actions have to be reported. It's the least I can do.

IUFRO news: Forest tourism can mean billions in economic benefits

Dr. Taylor Stein of the University of Florida in Gainesville believes "that any meeting that addresses the management of the world's forests is incomplete without a focused discussion on tourism."

While there is limited research on the impact of nature-based tourism, Dr. Stein pointed to a 2007 report from the Center for Responsible Travel that said nature-based tourism accounted for 7% of the international tourism market and had a \$77 billion impact on the world's economy.

And, he added, surveys of travelers around the world consistently show that natural attractions (e.g. wildlife) are important reasons for their visits and they value conservation and protection of environmental quality.

For those reasons, natural resource managers require systematic research and up-to-date science to better understand how to best integrate tourism and recreation management into forest management practices, he said.

(The United Nations would seem to be thinking along the same lines as Dr. Stein. The UN has declared 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development.)

Dr. Stein is coordinator of a session on forest tourism to be held at the IUFRO 125th anniversary congress in Freiburg, Germany in September entitled: Nature-based tourism and recreation's role in sustaining forests and improving people's quality of life. He expects it to show that good science is needed to plan and manage for tourism in natural areas.

The socio-ecological system is extremely complex and sustainably planned tourism requires a good understanding of that system, he said.

"Forest managers and policy makers must recognize that quality nature-based tourism planning and management can result in a multitude of benefits. If managers are not even aware of the benefits of recreation and tourism and only see recreation and tourism as a cost – as many managers currently do – then we should not be surprised that managing for tourism and recreation is consistently considered a "new" idea and/or a distraction from "more important" forest management goals such as timber or restoration," Dr. Stein said.

He sees platforms such as the IUFRO Congress acting as a catalyst to bring about a change in thinking. "Meetings like the upcoming IUFRO one can help make this change occur.

"As more forest professionals see tourism and recreation presented at scientific meetings, they will learn that this use of the forest should not be considered a low priority of forest management, but tourism and recreation should receive just as much thought, science, and funding as other forest uses," he said.

"Most natural resource professionals entered their fields to focus on ecology and were not sufficiently trained in the social sciences,

" he said. "I think social science classes should be better integrated into natural resource managers' educations. Specifically, classes on conflict management, collaboration, communications, and recreation management should be required of all natural resource professionals."

He believes the presentations on forest tourism to be made at the IUFRO Congress, will help those professionals realize that "tourism to natural areas provides billions of dollars to the world's economies. It also helps to expand support for forests and the conservation of forest ecosystems and wildlife. And, not unimportantly, it also can empower communities to conserve and use natural areas in ways they decide," he said.

"Another benefit of tourism as a theme for the IUFRO meeting is that we can highlight the diversity of tourism thought throughout the world. Different cultures manage, plan, and think about tourism differently, and IUFRO gives us an opportunity to highlight this diversity.

"For example, several presentations will discuss community-based tourism in Mexico, which often manages its land communally, with the community deciding how tourism will integrate into land management," Dr. Stein said. "This will contrast with community-based tourism research from the U.S. and Europe, which takes a more top-down approach to managing public resources."

The session will highlight research that examines how land management agencies use innovative techniques to incorporate local community residents into tourism decision-making and also, presentations related to sustainable and ethical aspects associated with nature-based tourism and recreation.

(Article from "IUFRO ANNIVERSARY CONGRESS SPOTLIGHT #48" and can be accessed at <http://iufro2017.com/>



Further feedback from the SAIF Council

By Hannel Ham

Changes are evident in everyday life. In order to stay relevant, the SAIF needs to adopt timely to change and constantly revise membership benefits. Therefore, the strategic plan was updated and will be implemented.

We are experiencing a steady decline in membership numbers. This can be attributed to the fact that most of our members are older than 50 years or retiring. A bigger concern is the members that are in arrears and ignoring various emails from Corine. I want to stress the importance to members to please update their membership details and follow up on payments in a timely manner. The SAIF recently became a member of the Dendrology Society. Newsletters will be distributed as we receive them.

As a member you receive the following benefits: hard copy (four issues a year) of the scientific journal (Southern Forests); monthly Wood SA Timber Times magazine (hard copy); reduced prices on practical publications (history of forestry, fire and forestry handbooks); annual calendar; monthly newsletter; annual photo competition prizes for best photos; coordination with SACNASP (South African Council for Natural Scientific Professions); national and branch events; bursaries; webpage and increased social media exposure. The council is working hard to keep these membership benefits up to date and interesting for all age groups. However, any suggestions are welcome.

Future benefits that council is currently investigating are:

- A Continuous Professional Leadership (CPL) system to assist with SACNASP registrations, international accreditation, etc. The CPL is in its final stages and will be rolled out early 2018. A pilot phase will commence late 2017.
- Social media warriors: modern communication channels such as twitter, facebook etc. will be used for general communication. Social media shy members will still be kept up to date.
- Increase awareness of Forestry as a career and to general public as a friendly and green partner.
- Web-based interactive membership database to assist with generating of electronic membership certificates, invoices, notices etc. Members would also be able to update details online.
- New handbooks: Silviculture handbook to be released in 2018 and Timber transport handbook to be released in 2019.
- Extra pages (print) in the Southern Forests Journal and a higher impact number. The online system is also being implemented in the background. Details will follow.
- Register Forest and Wood Sciences as a separate field with SACNASP. Details to follow as soon as we receive feedback from SACNASP.
- An international forestry frame work to improve interaction, bursaries and exchange programs with international forestry associations (Australia, NZ, Canada, USA, Europe etc.). This will also assist with international accreditation.
- But certainly the biggest calendar event that council is planning is the celebration of our 50th birthday on 17 May 2018.

I want to thank all the members for their loyal support without which the SAIF will not survive. Remember the SAIF is for the members by the members. A special word of thanks to all the council members, branch committees, Corine Viljoen and Andrew Morris for continuous support and keeping the SAIF operating.

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September 2017 birthdays

A graphic with the words 'happy birthday' in a playful, multi-colored font. The letters are in various colors including purple, orange, blue, green, and red.

| | | | |
|---------|-------------------|---------|-------------------|
| Sept 01 | MARU K.T. | Sept 19 | FULLER G.M. |
| Sept 01 | POOL C.P. | Sept 19 | POLLARD B. |
| Sept 05 | DUSTAN D.B. | Sept 20 | KRAAMWINKEL E. |
| Sept 07 | STEENKAMP J.C. | Sept 22 | RIJKENBERG N.H. |
| Sept 11 | CLEGG P.A. | Sept 23 | MWAROZVA M. |
| Sept 14 | CHIMPHANGO A.F.A. | Sept 23 | SCHÜTTE C. |
| Sept 15 | NADAL R. | Sept 24 | HARVETT C.G. |
| Sept 16 | DE SWARDT W. | Sept 25 | DLADLA V. |
| Sept 17 | CROFT P. | Sept 25 | MORLEY R. |
| Sept 17 | FLETCHER Y.L. | Sept 26 | VAN VUUREN M.J.C. |
| Sept 17 | WILLIAMS P.D. | Sept 26 | WEIR F. |
| Sept 18 | GODSMARK R.C. | Sept 30 | MARAIIS G.V.R. |
| Sept 18 | HILL M. | | |