

# Southern African Institute of Forestry



Delivering a professional service to forestry

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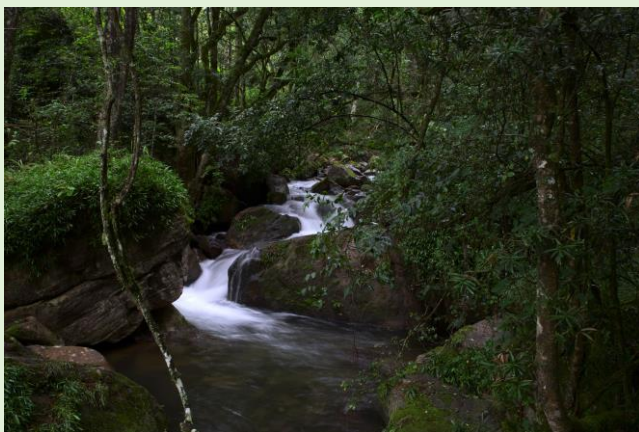
## From the President's Desk

### "Have we lost our critical thinking ?"

We have all probably heard the following phrase before, "You get what you measure" which is a good starting point for critical thinking. I think we would all agree that we as natural scientists and foresters should never lose our "critical thinking" and analytical minds and always evaluate and assess whether we do in fact focus on the real issues which should lead to greater effectiveness and efficiency and reaching our / company objectives.

All scientists including the behavioural scientists are aware of the value and importance of statistical data, which include both the gathering and use of statistical data to test hypotheses which would enable us to make sound decisions. Despite this notion, I cannot help thinking of a warning issued by my dad many years ago when he suggested the degrees of comparison for "lies" namely : *lies, damn lies and statistics*. It is very unlikely that you will find this in any dictionary or in literature, but it does however act as a word of caution that we should be careful how we interpret, use and apply statistics.

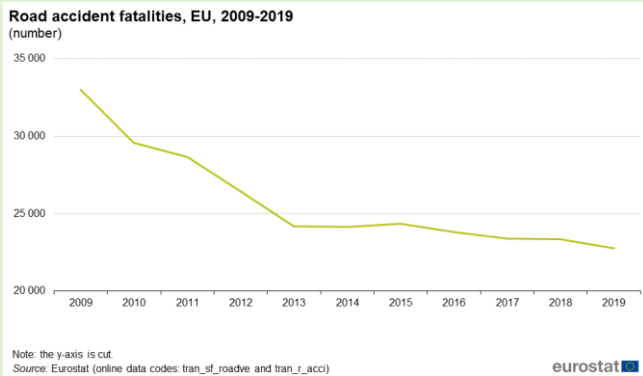
The Minister of Transport proudly announced the findings of a report titled "*South African Fatal Crashes in Context*" issued in December 2021. He made mention of several statistics which came out of this report. After a search on the Internet, I managed to find the report which does include some interesting and very relevant statistics. Let me first state it upfront namely that the accident and in particular the fatality statistics for South Africa, is no laughing matter and is indeed a very serious issue which should receive our very urgent attention.



SAIF Calendar February 2022 : Photographer: Robin Hull-KZN Branch : "Injasutu Yellowwood Forest"

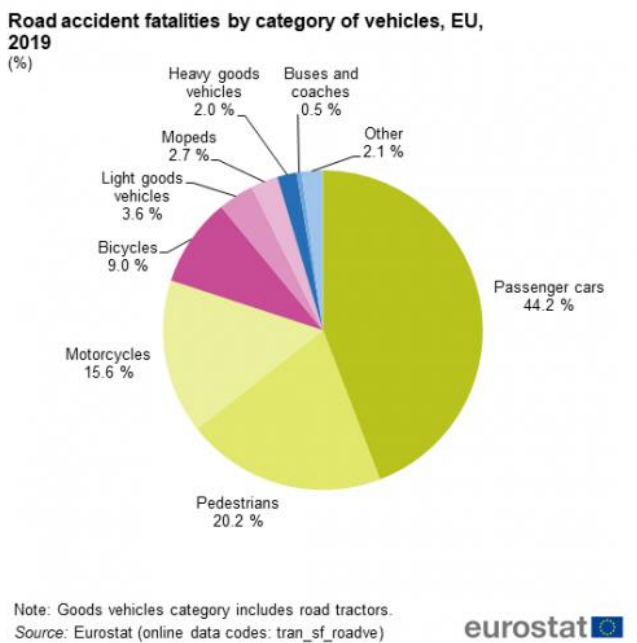


One only need to search a little more and look at similar studies done in other parts of the world. If one look at the statistics for Europe, it is interesting to note that according to the report (Eurostat) , Vehicle Accidents decreased markedly between 2009 and 2019 and likewise also road accident fatalities .



**Fig 1:** Road Accident fatalities, EU, 2009-2019

The study then zooms in on the road accident fatalities by category of vehicle in 2019 which is shown below.



**Fig 2:** Road Accident fatalities by category of vehicles, EU , 2019

Passenger vehicles account for the majority of road accident fatalities at 44%, followed by Pedestrians at 20%, motorcycles (16%) and bicycles (9%) etc.

Clearly when looking at the trends and considerable decrease in fatalities as can be seen in Graph 1, the respective EU countries must be doing something right which in turn points to a focus on the right issues and using the statistics optimally to address the issues.

When looking at the SA report again, it is interesting to note that “the aim of the study and report is to provide input to road safety programmes regarding the type of vehicle which is involved in fatal crashes.” It further states that the “National Road Safety Strategy research into situational conditions of crashes (time of day, weather, other vehicles) need to be conducted which should feed into road safety guidelines”. There is a lot of focus on the “type of vehicle” involved in accidents and go into detail on Vehicle category (similar to the EU study), Vehicle make, -model, -description, -colour, -age, -ownership as well as person type & combinations of the above.

The report certainly contains interesting and some useful statistics. When the Minister however emphasize some statistics such as that White coloured Toyota Hilux vehicles were the “major culprits” regarding fatal accidents one start to frown upon and question about his and his Department’s ability to see the proverbial forest for the trees . Do they measure and focus on the more important issues like driver behaviour at all ? If we don’t consider the context and just blindly follow and apply these statistics, forestry companies should immediately sell all their white Toyota Hilux LDV’s (bakkies) and replace them with pink or purple(safest colour) bakkies of another “less risky” make. That would be unthinkable for most of us foresters!

The AA offer some advice on the carnage on SA roads “Current road safety initiatives are simply not working, our country won’t reduce fatalities within the current framework, and much, much more can and must be done to correct this situation which in our view amounts to an annual national disaster”. The AA says South Africa committed itself to the international target agreed at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ministerial Conference on Road Safety held in Stockholm, Sweden in February 2020 to reduce road fatalities by half by 2030 as part of the worldwide 50BY30 Campaign. Based on the current trajectory this will not be achieved.

The bottom line is that we should all be very careful on what we measure and how we portray and use statistics often with good intentions and not erase our ability to critically evaluate what we read especially in the media.

**Sources:** Road Traffic Management Corporation: “SA Fatal Crashes in Context (Dec.2021)”; Eurostat Accident Stats report (<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php>) ; “Road Deaths Blight S.A.” : AA Report



## Meet the Members of the Current SAIF Council

Over the next few months , a member of the current SAIF Council will be introduced to the readers . There is no better person than our long serving stalwart lady and National Secretary Corine Viljoen to start off this series .



Meet: CORINE Henriëtte Intsia Viljoen, National Secretary of the SAIF

### 1. Something about yourself?

I was born in Papua New Guinea where my dad was stationed as a forester in the then colony of The Netherlands. I was christened "Intsia" derived from the most important tree (*Intsia bijuga*) of the country.

At a young age we settled in South Africa, and I grew up on a forestry plantation, DR de Wet, near Sabie. I have very fond memories of my childhood -living on a plantation and having the freedom of playing in the forest, fishing with my dad, catching bats, tadpoles, and butterflies. This established my love for nature.

I am married to Deon, an architect and we have been blessed with three children who are now all happily married, and we have six beautiful grandchildren which we adore.

### 2. How did you get involved in the SAIF?

In 1991 Council decided that SAIF required a more permanent structure for their administration due to the increased workload. At that stage, the administration was done by the very efficient father-daughter team of

Dr.Diek and his daughter Nelleke van der Zel.

After a job interview, I was appointed and trained under the watchful eye of Dokdiel.

My father, Henk van der Sijde, was then the Editor of the SA Forestry Journal and again we made a father-daughter team for many years.

### 3. If there was anything you could change, what would it be?

It would be great to have an executive officer on board. I really admire the council members who spend a lot of their time (which they normally do not have) on institute matters.

### 4. What is your vision of the Institute?

It will be wonderful if we can reach the one thousand membership mark. It will enable us to play a greater role in the forestry industry and to have an executive officer.

### 5. What are your favourite past times and hobbies?

Spending holidays at our National Parks, birding, gardening, crafting, painting, shopping, and enjoy spending time with my grandchildren.

## Obituary : Dr. C De Ronde

We mourn the death of one of our very senior SAIF members namely Dr. Neels De Ronde who sadly passed away at the end of January 2022.

Our hearts go out to his wife Nettie and daughter Harja on the loss of a husband and a father.



The way many of us will remember Neels explaining fuel loads and under-canopy burning to foresters.

A more comprehensive Tribute to Neels appears later in this Newsletter.



## NURTURE. GROW. THRIVE.

Forestry and arboriculture in the UK is booming. However, the sector is facing extraordinary challenges, particularly due to the growing skills shortage. As an Institute, we are committed to maintaining high professional standards across our sector and encouraging new entrants to join. With this in mind, our **Nurture. Grow. Thrive.** campaign launched yesterday to inspire more people to join us and begin their journey towards chartered status.

To help launch the campaign, we recently caught up with Tom Coates MICFor, Head of Wood Purchasing at EGER (UK), who shared his experiences of being a Chartered Forester. This is the first of several planned member case studies aimed at highlighting the vibrant and varied sector we work in.

### Reminder: Subscription Renewal for 2022

If you have not already done so, please take a moment to renew your membership online via the Members' Area. Late subscription payment increases administration costs and reduces the resources spent on improving the Institute.

<https://www.charteredforesters.org/who-we-are>



## XV WORLD FORESTRY CONGRESS

Building a Green, Healthy and Resilient Future with Forests  
2-6 May 2022 | Coex, Seoul, Republic of Korea  
Vol. 8 / December 2021

The World Forestry Congress originally scheduled for 2021 but postponed due to Covid-19 travel restrictions, will now take place from 2-6 May 2022 in Seoul, Republic of Korea


The theme of the XV WFC is *Building a Green, Healthy and Resilient Future with Forests*. Under this overarching theme, there are six sub-themes which will address the most important current issues concerning forests and the products and services they provide

Website : <http://wfc2021korea.org>

The XV World Forestry Congress Secretariat will provide financial support to enable active participation by all regions, countries, and stakeholders in the Congress. Recipients will be selected with priority given to those from low- and middle-income countries and the selection process will aim to achieve geographic balance, giving due consideration to women and youth.



Korea Forest Service

Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

## XV WORLD FORESTRY CONGRESS

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The XV World Forestry Congress will take place from 2 to 6 May 2022 in Seoul under the theme "Building a Green, Healthy and Resilient Future with Forests" to further develop the outcomes of major global events scheduled before the Congress, including the Rio Conventions' Conferences of the Parties, the IUCN World Conservation Congress and the UN Food Systems Summit.

## Are we seeing the wood for the trees?

By Rob Thompson

As experienced foresters observing a plantation or forest, we would generally have a wider and more informed perspective as to what we are seeing, compared to the more limited perspective of a person not versed in matters forestry.

Non-foresters would likely see the area from a number of perspectives largely driven by the viewers individual points of reference. A pretty natural area perhaps with potential for a picnic or a hike? A place where undesirables can lurk, concealed and ready to pounce. An excellent place to establish a housing estate? A hinderance that ought to be cleared to make room for a mall or factory site or something perceived as more progressive than an “unused” natural area ... chemical storage perhaps or how about a land-fill?

Conversely, trained foresters would inherently evaluate the condition and age of the tree species in the stand, appreciate the value and applicability of the timber resource, identify the presence of natural factors placing the stand health at current or future risk, assess the suitability of the site itself for the resource growing thereon, and understand clearly the greater sustainable purpose of the natural system under observation.

Effectively we are seeing the “wood for the trees” which others don’t and which analogy leads to me to conclude that we ought to be recognizing and extending this useful and inherent insight or trait, to other aspects of our daily lives and interactions. Far too often we find ourselves falling into the trap of seeing only the greenery but ignoring the underlying value.

The above concept was suddenly brought home to me earlier this week when we hosted a tree planting ceremony and workshop for small scale timber growers in the Richards Bay area. After two years of COVID restrictions, the hunger for direct interaction was palpable as vehicle after vehicle arrived at the venue carrying attendees.

A casual onlooker may have wondered what the hype was all about. After all, these people farm on minute areas seldom extending beyond 2 ha in size. Why would they bother to attend a workshop? Surely they should be focused on establishing better enterprises from which to earn a living? On reflection however, the reality is that these small growers are consciously taking charge of their lives and in a small but meaningful way, are utilizing their environment to better their circumstances and in turn those of the greater community. Collectively they form a powerful force of timber growers and their contribution towards strategic timber supply and the economy must not be underestimated. Their planted stands may not be aesthetically pleasing, or big, but they do provide well for a multitude of purposes. This is a group of people who, despite the difficulties they encounter daily, are effectively self-sufficient and are making a positive contribution on many fronts.

We need to see the “wood for the trees” and recognize and celebrate the efforts of our small growers.

In an earlier article, I shared the sentiment that despite being a forester, I am now totally over rain, rain and more rain. Many colleagues and associates are feeling the same way. Accessibility to compartments and felled timber is nigh on impossible. Our mills run behind schedule regularly due to poor accessibility to timber. The mud adherence to logs imports silica to the chippers causing down time and delays as knives are sharpened and repaired. Roads become impassable and general operating conditions are miserable and highly taxing. We bemoan the onset of rampant weed growth and complain about revenue loss and increased costs.

We fail to realise however, that even as trained and experienced forestry practitioners, we are also susceptible to falling into the trap of not seeing the “wood for the trees”. Yes, the rain is a hinderance and interrupts our immediate production plans, but, not enough time is afforded to considering and appreciating the longer term benefits of an improved ground water-table, full dams, strong stream flow, the environmental benefits of this.



flush, and improved volume yield. A more holistic approach is called for, which, I must admit, is often quite challenging to adopt.

Of course you all see and watch the daily news, most often comprising bad or depressing, yet highly saleable, stories of doom and gloom. If it's not Parliament burning down, it's seismic blasting along our pristine coastline. Then the decay and decline at our critical Ports is thrown in for good measure together with the extensive looting, corruption and rampant State capture by crooked politicians as an added bonus. All this is rounded off with a good dose of spiraling police service decline, uncontrolled crime and GBV. We become engrossed in these reports using our infinite social media connectivity to further trawl the depths of the ongoing depravity for nuggets of angst and despair. Adding to this the omnipresent pandemic, and are all set to regress into a dark world of uncertainty and anguish with no recourse but to fight back by complaining and crying foul, which is the route that too many of us choose by default.

Things are certainly bad out there, and in many instances, nothing short of terrible. People are having to put up with traumas and injustices well beyond any reason and it is not difficult to understand the rising feelings of helplessness.

But...are we all actually seeing "the wood for the trees"?

Are we becoming too far engrossed in the media portrayals and not far enough into potential outcomes and actions that we can control? Are we being driven to complain and become dejected, as first option, rather than, like the example set by our small growers, use what we have fully and get on with it to make a difference? Are we too focused on the story telling to take notice of and contribute further towards the underlying positive results?

Inspired people, or those who have seen "the wood for the trees", are currently moving more and more towards "doing it for themselves" having understood that reliance on compromised authorities and institutions is not always optimal.

That said, there is ever more vocal and legal pressure

being placed on wayward authorities and organisations, by ordinary people, to account for their actions and bring them to book. People are becoming far more outspoken and are submitting substantiated claims against those who have done them wrong with some landmark successes having been recorded. Long may this proactive approach continue.

Environmental awareness is growing. Unprecedented rain and heat events are bringing home the reality of global warming and people are contributing more towards, and subscribing to, productive environmental awareness and amelioration programmes. In my own neighbourhood people are walking their dogs in the evening whilst simultaneously collecting litter along their route. Beach and river clean up campaigns also attract multitudes of volunteers. Municipalities are ever so slowly being forced to comply to their mandates of service delivery in the face of citizens mending water provision and sewage plants themselves. Long standing potholes are being repaired by local businesses and verges and parks maintained by local residents. Whilst these actions may seem obtuse in the eyes of say a first world citizen, many of us have seen the "wood" behind the greenery and are actioning change. Distinct proof of one particular positive result of such actioning is the seismic exploration vessel sailing away from our coastline, homeward bound, even as I write.

In the wake of the pandemic is a swath of IT innovations and remote access protocols that have made massive positive inroads into social interactions, savings on travel, lessening of environmental impact and hygiene improvements. When last did any of you suffer from a common cold or flu or travel an excessive distance merely to meet for half an hour? Seeing beyond the devastation of the pandemic is a world of change and opportunity, not easily reachable, but certainly worthwhile for those who consciously decide to embark on that journey.

Did I notice some hint of acquiesce in the demeanour of our President during the recent State of the Nation speech?



This is a man who knows that much of the citizenry are holding his establishment to account for the dire situation in which they find themselves. He knows this because they are actively telling him by word and in actions. If we were not doing this the rot would continue unabated.

What is left up to us is to ensure that more and more people look beyond the leaves and see the “wood” where the real value of the forest tree lies.

We have started and I don't think there is any stopping of this process. There is hope and there is certainly enough high value “wood” for all to share once our collective actions begin to make their mark.

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**The SAIF would once again like to express its gratitude for the continued support and sponsorship to all the companies who contributed to the 2022 Calendar.**

### **STIHL Main Sponsor of the SAIF Calendar and Photo Competition.**



STIHL SA in Pietermaritzburg

#### **STIHL in South Africa**

Stihl has been a presence in South Africa since 1996, when the first STIHL subsidiary on the African continent, Andreas Stihl (Pty) Ltd, was opened in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal with Dave Hutton as General Manager.

The company cemented its roots in the country in 2002, when it invested half a million rand in Pietermaritzburg, buying land in the Campsdrift area where a new warehouse and office block were established and opened by Mr Hans Peter Stihl.

Today, STIHL (pronounced 'steel') is distributed across the country through a network of specialist dealers who advise customers on STIHL products and appropriate applications, and provide expert after-sales service. All STIHL products are imported to South Africa.

The company in South Africa is managed by Hayden Hutton (General Manager), an authority on the chainsaw and power tool business.

#### **STIHL Roots in Germany**

The STIHL company was founded in Germany in the 1920s by engineer Andreas Stihl, who developed a revolutionary engine-driven two-man saw. Today, the company has developed over 1800 patents through its extensive research and development laboratories. STIHL is the world's largest-selling chainsaw brand.



<https://www.stihl.co.za/>

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### **Forestry South Africa**



### **Representing the Forestry Industry**

<https://forestryexplained.co.za/>

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## HOGSBACK

### A WORLD OF BEAUTY AND TREES

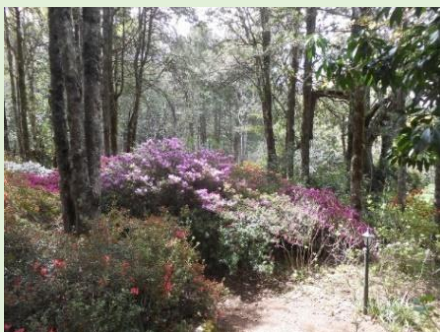
By Georg von dem Bussche

Hogsback in the Eastern Cape is known for the colourful Azaleas in October and the special Rhododendrons and other flowering trees and bushes like Magnolia, Camelias and many more, introduced from all over the world. – It is a unique experience to see the whole mountain village in flower. The Azalea nursery “Mistlea” is a festival of colours. So beautiful, that anyone with a sense for beauty should see it once in her or his lifetime. It is the same amazing experience as seeing the Taj Mahal or the Mona Lisa at the Louvre.

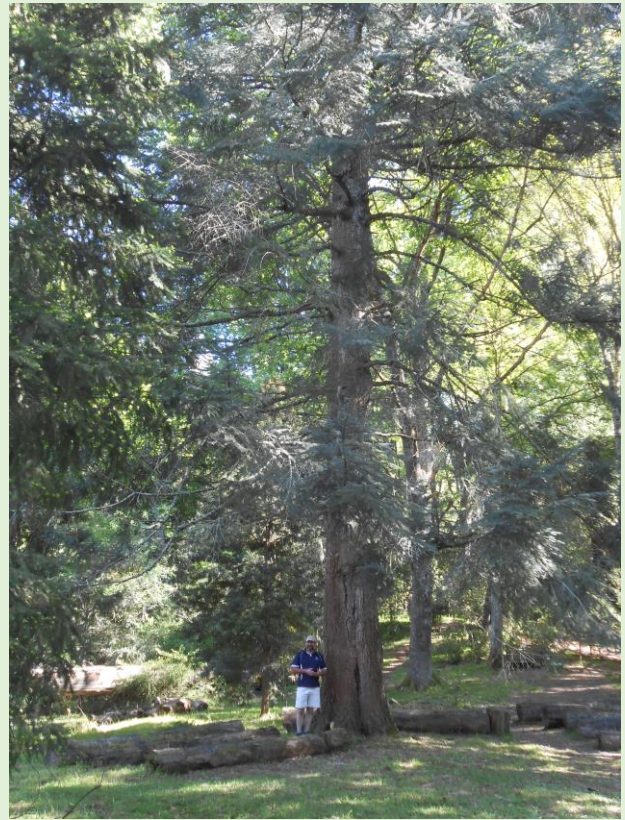


The Hogsbacks

For tree lovers there is more to admire. Around every corner you are surprised by the tallest Coastal redwoods (*Sequoia sempervirens*) and near the forest station, now managed by the Amatola Forest Company (AFC), wonderful Water oaks (*Quercus nigra*) can be admired. –



Azaleas at Mistlea



*Abies religiosa*

A selection of most impressive trees can be found at the Arboretum, just below the forest station, which is also maintained by AFC with the enthusiastic support of the local garden club. – The majestic *Abies religiosa* (Holy fir) is next to a few specimens of Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) which produces the world renowned Oregon pine timber. Many trials have been established with Douglas fir in South Africa (refer to R.J Poynton’s book: Tree Planting in South Africa, Vol.3: Other Genera – a book every tree lover should have) over the years, however the Southern Hemisphere seems not to be conducive to the tremendous growth potential this species shows in the Northern Hemisphere, like so many other conifers of the genus *Pinus* and *Picea*, just to mention a few. – The two giant Coastal redwoods at the Arboretum have probably been photographed often before. –

The greatest surprise was however a Sierra redwood (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*) next to a Coastal redwood with a pink Azalea at their feet at a private estate high above the village. –







Coastal Redwood



Sierra redwood left next to a Coastal redwood

Once you have fully appreciated the flowering beauties and the introduced giants you should spend a day walking in the famous Hogsback indigenous forest, which is still managed and guarded by the forestry section of the Department of the Environment, Forestry and Fisheries.

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Compiled by Georg von dem Bussche : January 2022

## Tribute to Neels de Ronde

Wildfire stalwart, mentor and friend, Dr Neels de Ronde, passed away on 26 January 2022 at the age of 80 years.

After receiving his Forestry diploma in 1964, he spent several years in Forestry Management before specialising in forestry research. During this period of his career, he embarked on his speciality namely controlled burning under tree canopies. This later expanded to wildfires in general. He resigned from the Department of Forestry for a second time in 1996 to pursue a fulltime career as a controlled fire consultant. He had several high court appearances as a specialist in wildfire spread modelling.

Dr De Ronde travelled widely in his capacity as wildfire behaviour specialist and did extensive work in Portugal, Spain and Italy. Keen to share his expertise he accepted a part-time lecturing post at Saasveld Forestry College tutoring specifically the BTech (Forestry) students.

During his travels abroad, he formed a strong friendship with Dr Johann Goldammer of University of Freiburg in Germany. Together they formed the Global Fire Monitoring Centre (GFMC). With Dr Goldammer, he co-authored “Wildfire Investigation: Guidelines for practitioners” and as editors published “Wildland Fire Management Handbook for Sub-Sahara Africa”.

In 2020 he published his first “E-book ‘Taming the wildfires on the Garden Route of South Africa’, of which Fire and Rescue International is currently publishing a chapter per magazine, as per special arrangement with Dr De Ronde.

Neels was a man of many talents and an accomplished artist working mainly in water and oil paint on boards. His landscapes are very popular. At the time of his death; he was busy with a book on the classification of bird habitats.

He will be sorely missed by the South African forestry and wildfire fraternities. Our deepest condolences to his family, friends and colleagues.

**Sources:** Fire & Rescue International Newsletter ; The South African Forester by Prof Brian Bredenkamp, Spikes Joubert

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FEBRUARY 2022 BIRTHDAYS	
AZWIANEWI MAKATU	STEPHAN CRAFFORD
WILHELM DE BEER	JOLANDA ROUX
ARTHUR DAUGHERTY	TJEKETSI TJEKETSI
COLIN DYER	WAYNE JONES
WILLEM HOLLESTEIN	GAVIN SCHAFER
NICKY JONES	NIGEL PAYNE
ROBIN HULL	COLIN SMITH
JACOB KOTZè	TIM ROSS
JOHAN NEL	PETER DAY
TATENDA MAPETO	OWEN PETERSEN
PETER KEYWORTH	PETA HARDY
ANDREW McEWAN	JEREMY CARR



# The Southern African Institute of Forestry

## Handbook order form

The Southern African Institute of Forestry publishes three industry specific handbooks.

I would like to order:

### South African Forestry Handbook

Price: SAIF members: R400

Non members: R500



### Fire Manager's Handbook on Veld and Forest Fires

Price: SAIF members: R300

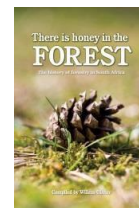
Non members: R400



### There's Honey in the Forest

Price: SAIF members: R100

Non members: R150



International orders must contact the Secretariat for a quote due to currency and postage fluctuations.

A bulk discount of 10% applies on orders of 10 or more copies.

Price includes VAT and postage **(within SA)**

I am  a member  non-member of the SAIF.

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<b>Email address</b>	

**Bank details: Nedbank Retail Park Branch code: 169745 Account: 1697009913 Account name: SAIF**

**Fax order and proof of payment to: SAIF Secretariat fax 086 689 6430 or email saif@mweb.co.za.**