

Southern African Institute of Forestry



Delivering a professional service to forestry

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Contents:

1. **From the President's desk : "Ten Tips from Scientists who have spent months in Isolation"**
2. **Looking forward and upward**
3. **Rob Thompson : "A re-calibration or point of no return?"**
4. **Kilombero Valley Teak Company Limited (KVTC) by Irvine Kanyemba (CEO : KVTC)**
5. **Bridging the Gap between Theory and Practice for the Young Forester**
6. **SAIF Contact Details**
7. **Birthdays**
8. **Books**

From the President's desk

Ten tips from scientists who have spent months in isolation

Across the globe, billions of people have been confined to their homes, only leaving for essential services. As of the 26th March 2020, South Africa went into a 21-day lockdown to curb the spread of the novel coronavirus, which causes the disease COVID-19. For many people, the thought of 21 days spent at home may seem like a dream, however, for others it may not be quite so enjoyable. People who enjoy their daily routine, for instance going to the office, interacting with colleagues, getting out of the house, exercising and seeing friends has all come to a standstill for the next 21 days, and may be extremely stressful and discouraging.

As foresters, isolation is not a new concept to us. Part of the job requires us to live in remote areas with little interaction, where shopping may only occur once a month. However, we have always had our jobs, the trees and the natural environment to keep us busy. What we are facing today, though, is isolation at a different level. Here we have ten tips from scientists who know all too well what it's like to be completely isolated for long periods of time.



Photograph from the 2020 Calendar taken by Philip Fischer from Mpumalanga Branch : "Starting the Breakdown"



One such scientist is Carmen Possnig, an Austrian physician. Possnig spent a year conducting research on the effects of isolation in humans at the Concordia Research Station in Antarctica, used by the European Space Agency in order to simulate life in space. The Concordia Research Station is situated in the barren Antarctic desert where air temperatures remain below freezing throughout the year and for many months of the year the sun does not even rise. It was found that Possnig and her colleagues all experienced irritability, insomnia and mood swings, thought to have been brought about by the extreme isolation and harsh climate.

So how do we stay motivated and productive during this lockdown period?

1. Have a schedule

By planning your schedule each day ahead of time one can avoid monotony and it will help you stay motivated to keep working hard.

2. Be tolerant

Cady Coleman, an astronaut and chemist who has been on three space missions and has spent a year at the International Space Station, emphasized the fact that often you “can’t pick your team, and spending any time wishing your crewmates were different is a waste of time”. So just remember that if you’re stuck in a house with roommates or your mother-in-law just remember that everyone is stuck in the same stressful situation, so remain tolerant and remember to be patient and help one another.

3. Take it one day at a time

When you find yourself in a dull mood or lose all motivation to continue being productive for the day, try breaking up the challenge into more manageable tasks, and this may rebuild your confidence to eventually accomplish the said challenge.

4. Keep in touch

Reach out to your friends and family and motivate one another. Additionally, it is important to keep in contact with your work colleagues, as this isolation period may be a good time to think of new ideas to present in the work place.

5. Care for something besides yourself

Get stuck into the garden! Try growing and caring for a plant or use this opportunity to spend more time with your pets.

6. Let go

An American physician, Sheyna Grifford, spent a yearlong research mission in the Hawaii Space Exploration Analog and Simulation (HI-SEAS), located on the slopes of Hawaii’s Mauna Loa volcano, in order to simulate life on Mars. When one is so isolated from the world and from your loved ones, you may feel helpless should anything happen to those you can’t reach. “My crewmates and I have spoken about how one of the hardest aspects of being isolated and confined isn’t what you can’t do for yourself while inside your bubble, but rather what you can’t do to help the world *outside* the bubble,” says Gifford.

It is therefore important to realize that one must try let go of the things you cannot control and focus on the things you can control right now in the present.

7. Find a hobby

Maybe you’ve always wanted to learn a new language? Well this is the perfect time to start and Duolingo is the perfect App for beginners and those that just need a refresher course. One can also spend more time cooking, reading, playing music, practicing an instrument, playing games or drawing. These tasks may help you destress. It may even be that you have a few unfinished projects around



the house, such as a painting, that you now have the time to get stuck into and complete before getting back to work full time.

8. Get moving

Just because the gyms are closed and we can no longer go for a jog or take our dogs for a walk does not mean we must stop moving. Sports such as yoga, Zumba or Pilates can be done in the comfort of your own home. However, if you're looking to get your heart pumping try creating a circuit in your garden or in the house, with sit ups, push-ups, block jumps and skipping. It's important to keep moving in order to destress and to keep healthy.

9. Focus on the mission

Our ultimate mission over the next 21 days is to beat this coronavirus. You may not be involved in coronavirus disease research, vaccine development or be a nurse or doctor in the front line, but it takes the cooperation of an entire country and in this case the entire world to combat this disease. Staying home, washing your hands regularly and helping one another is the only way we will complete the mission successfully.

10. Find the good where you can

Don't forget that there is still good news out there and don't surround yourself with constant sad or negative news. Remember to remain positive and keep your spirits high.

(smithsonianmag.com)



Please Note : SAIF AGM : Postponed indefinitely , pending developments re. COVID -19 measures.

Looking forward and upward:

Many of us who will be reading this Newsletter will ponder over the question namely when or even whether we will see loved ones and dear old friends again (soon) and how the current COVID-19 crisis will affect the Forest and Forest Products Industry and obviously each one of us personally.

We can find comfort in the Aaronic blessing in the Book of Numbers in the Bible:

Num 6:24 The LORD bless you and keep you;

25 the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;

26 the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. (ESV)

There's a popular **Chinese proverb** that says: "The best time to **plant a tree** was 20 years ago. The second best time is now."



Pine cuttings at Ezigro Karatara Nursery ready for planting



Rob Thompson's Food for Thought **A re-calibration or point of no return?**

Please forgive me for the content of this article. You must be tired of the "C" subject by now, but, it is rather difficult to ignore given what we are all currently going through. I don't even have the excuse of "no time to come up with an article" thanks to lock-down, so here goes regardless...

Last month, I explored the "Butterfly Effect" and rather naively suggested that cause and effect are generally quite distant in terms of time. The onset, and hitherto unprecedented global ramifications of Covid-19, in a period of less than 6 months, has certainly turned that premise totally onto its head. The short time that it took for the virus to transfer to humans, spread and cause a global lock-down was phenomenal. I steadfastly maintain however, that the dispatch of the unfortunate caterpillar described in the previous article, played absolutely no role in the voracity of the onset of the crisis we all now face.

Could it be that we are experiencing Mother Nature deliberately re-calibrating her critical balance?

Previous articles have seen me adopting a rather uncharacteristically negative stance towards the worlds' tipping point. I have been suggesting that we have passed the point of no return given that the tempo of our collective resource-wasteful habits, have surpassed the Earths' ability to replenish such. Perhaps that view was premature? The Earth has, after all, survived six catastrophic extinction events and rebounded each time with wonderful new life structures, held on course by complex interlinked natural systems. It follows from this performance trend, that the Earth is likely to be able to withstand current human pressure, albeit by means of a Contingency Plan.

Fed up with her clear, and obvious, although indirect warning, of imminent catastrophe being ignored (global warming), has Mother Nature resorted to a more direct approach, this time on a microscopic level, in the form of a minute virus, spreading rapidly through humankind as a means to call us to action? Simplistically stated:- ignore this call and die or alternatively take heed, change your ways, and survive.

It certainly feels as if the world is being shaken and rotated in much the same way as one does with a Garmin GPS device in order to calibrate its' position in relation to the satellite array. Mother Nature is seemingly encouraging leaders to take note of the damage they are allowing by perpetuating their habit of resolutely ignoring what really matters and focussing in on self-aggrandisement and enrichment.

So...are we being given a second, and arguably final chance, to re-boot, defragment and set a new course? For our children's sake and their offspring's sake, we simply have to believe this to be the case and act accordingly.

All told therefore, we are bound not to make light of the human tragedy unfolding, but should embrace the responsibility of working at identifying the many positives unfolding, and building on those as we enter an uncharted, and most likely, exceptionally challenging recovery phase.

Existing sound organisational structures surviving the pandemic are likely to play an important and leading role in the aftermath given the foundational support and stability they offer. Lock-down has emphasised the necessity of shared support. As forestry practitioners, we are most fortunate to be



associated with many robust forestry organisations able to navigate industry specific routes through the economic storms that we will certainly encounter. On the human side of forestry, we, as members of the SAIF, should recognise the critical role we can also play going forward ... more so than ever before.

This is, after all, definitely the time to establish the SAIF as a relevant and important support structure to forestry practitioners caught up in a taxing recovery phase. It behests us, as responsible practitioners, to create easily accessible platforms to share experiences, swap ideas, provide information, identify opportunities and create an inter-organisational camaraderie to assist us through difficult times. Let's go beyond merely being an association and develop support provision and professional input into industry and personal recovery. Now is the time to offer our services to our fellows rather than wait to be asked. Every contribution will matter. We must never underestimate the power of collective support and we will be needing this.

On a far more macro scale, people across the globe should be building on the positive lessons and experiences of recent months:-

Hygiene and our approach to it is critical. Oft overlooked in the past as a chore to be done when we had the chance, we have come to realise that hand washing and sanitising of common surfaces is a must ... in fact lifesaving! Can we now actually look forward to supermarkets washing and sanitising their trollies regularly and as a rule? Glory be! Do we all need to travel to work each day? For some, working from home or remotely is a newly discovered, tested and distinct possibility.

Are international trips for meetings and conferences really a necessity? Technology is providing real alternatives to travel and organisational structures, the merits of which, we should seriously explore.

We have marvelled at the recent satellite pictures of mega cities clear of pollution, dolphins and other sea life returning to water passages once heavily trafficked by tourists and wilderness areas at peace given limited human throughput. Will global leaders take heed and restrict a wanton return to the chaos that we once viewed as normal and necessary?

Lock-down has taught us about necessity and waste management. We have become accustomed to buying only the essentials (although sometimes exceeding requirement in the case of loo paper) and ensured that we used our purchases fully. We have come to realise that we actually don't need all of the bling and non-essentials that have been integral to our many shopping expeditions previously. Well-paced, carefully selected and essential consumption should be the new order.

Who has really missed the previous consistent, wasteful and inane political posturing of our politicians? During the lock-down it has been refreshing to see politicians and State representatives forced by circumstance into taking real, impactful decisions, and take on the responsibilities behest of their posts. Long may this situation last. Post Covid, may the throwing of tantrums, hardhats and water bottles in Parliament be relegated to the annuals of an unfortunate history, never to be repeated. For that matter, may a future



productive Parliament take heed of the efficacy of nationally broadcast addresses rather than the regularly gathered fashion parade of pontificating politicians that we have gotten used to.

A redefinition of the reality behind the term “ubuntu” is gradually coming to the fore. People in dire and dangerous circumstances unselfishly giving time, expertise, and real support to others in need, rather than the lip service that the term previously attracted. May we all embrace real “ubuntu” and recognise and respect the humanity in all whom we encounter.

There is a dawning of understanding of the composition, function and importance of essential supply chains and services. Farming (including forestry), food, water, electricity, medical services, education and housing have all been highlighted during the current pandemic as essential. Could this pandemic have been the stimulus required for absolute focus on and solving of the Eskom crisis once and for all? Will farming now receive the critical status it so deserves? Will polluted waterways be attended to in earnest? Will sense and financial prudence now prevail pertaining to medical services, housing, the ongoing land question and certain deficient state enterprises? Now is the best opportunity we will ever have to do the right things right (albeit after a multitude of previous false starts!).

Finally, lock-down has taught us what really matters. It’s all about appreciation of people close to us, the importance of good health and the friendship experienced from those we already know and those we are getting to know. Pray that we don’t forget these values once released from lock-down. Here’s wishing you all well during this period. Look after yourselves and appreciate the lessons and revelations that the situation is presenting. After all, it is a “once in living memory” opportunity!

Kilombero Valley Teak Company Limited (KVTC) by Irvine Kanyemba CEO KVTC

Introduction

KVTC was founded in 1992, following a joint Government of Tanzania / Commonwealth Development Corporation (“CDC”) feasibility study into the viability of establishing a sustainable teak plantation in Tanzania. After a detailed evaluation the government of Tanzania granted a land title for 28,000ha of partly degraded woodland in Tanzania for the establishment of a sustainable commercial teak plantation on either side of Kilombero river in Morogoro region.

Almost 27 years after, KVTC has evolved and is now owned by FinnFund and African Sustainable Forest Fund, and managed by Criterion Africa Partners based in South Africa.

From 1992 to 2010, KVTC planted about 8,100 hectares of teak. It also manages approximately 20,000 hectares of mainly indigenous woodland, grasslands and wetlands for conservation purposes. KVTC’s forests have also become a refuge for many wild animals such as lions, various antelope species as well as buffalo.



KVTC has the following certifications:

- ISO 14001
- OSHAS 18001
- FSC Controlled Wood



Forest Management

Compartments were planted in a mosaic pattern allowing wildlife corridors and reducing the impact of plantation establishment on wildlife migration patterns. Nearly 100% of the plantation is under *Tectona grandis*, which is intensively managed for the production of sawlogs under a 20-25 year rotation.

The natural forests occurring in the Kilombero Valley are miombo woodland dominated by *Brachystegia* species. Most of the miombo woodland was historically exposed to uncontrolled wildfires and illegal logging. Since the establishment of KVTC, management practises have been put in place to prevent uncontrolled fires and illegal logging.

Currently KVTC produces just over 40,000m³ of sawlogs per annum. This is a small volume in cubic meter terms, but the value of a teak sawlog is more less 5 times that of a pine sawlog. This volume will continue to increase given that the last first rotation plantings were established as recent as 2010.



Processing Operations & Markets

An industrial complex was established in 2009 about 35km east of Ifakara town. This is made up of a wetmill, drying kilns, a drymill and a value added mill. Six more independent sawmills have been established adjacent to KVTC's industrial complex. These sawmills get all their sawlogs from KVTC.



About 90% of KVTC's sawn timber is exported to India and the remainder is sold within East Africa and also to Vietnam. The value added mill produces edge laminated panels, decking, flooring, doors and mouldings which are sold entirely within East Africa. The sawmills that buy teak logs from KVTC export most their sawn board to India and small volumes to North Africa.

Social and Economic Impact

KVTC employs about 330 people directly and another 300 through its contractors. KVTC has an outgrower program with more than 700 participants that have established just over 1,500ha of teak. This is expected to reach about 2,000ha and supply KVTC with about 15,000m³ of sawlogs per annum. KVTC has a well established CSR program that supports villages surrounding its land holding through a Social Fund which provides an annual contribution for mainly infrastructure development in the villages. Villages are rewarded for reporting of any illegal activities on KVTC land.



Bridging the Gap between Theory and Practice for the Young Forester

Cost of starting a harvesting operation

Capital Required

Significant Capital Investment including sourcing , deposits and Financing for Equipment : Mechanised Operation can easily cost >R10m before you have harvested 1 ton / m³.

Variables in your operation

Some of Variables include :

- APO –Actual tree size versus planned
- Market changes and demands for various products
- Roadside timber / depot / shorthaul distances
- Relocation costs of equipment and the impact on productivity
- Staff accommodation challenges and distance to the operation
- Loading: Road / Rail / depots and managing demand for products
- Weather: Summer and winter compartments
- Roads: Forward planning and roads budget

Understanding the Cost Implications :

- Fuel consumptions due to lack of roads: skidding distance / shorthaul distance
- Availability of parts: Local and imported
- Stock holding of parts: New and discontinued equipment
- Customer service from the dealers and their operating hours
- Downtime of equipment and the cost implication on production
- Electronic technician and Alison Dock
- Lack of experienced forestry trained technical personal at the equipment dealers

- Calculating the repayment amount of an HP agreement
- Cash flow: Monthly income and expenditure
- Managing and understanding the constant changes in your monthly income
- The cost of leaving timber infield or on a depot
- Stock advances –loaning money against timber depreciating in value due to moisture loss T
- Transporter companies are often the last signature on your cheque and you have no control over this

Bridging The Gap:

- Modernisation has resulted in mechanisation which requires a higher level of technical skills training.
- Every operation is unique and will have it's own challenges.
- No operation is perfect as it involves human behaviour.
- Contractors and growers don't always have the same interpretation of the rules: team work is crucial !
- For a young forester to be successful, passion for your choice of career is essential.
- A career in forestry should not be considered a job but a **lifestyle**.
- Young foresters should therefore be required to spend sufficient practical time with a contractor in his operation before being promoted to any form of contracts manager or plantation manager.
- Contract managers are ultimately responsible for the contractor's performance

Adapted from presentation to NMU Advisory Board Meeting on 5 February 2020 by Phillip Hall (Forestry Plant & Equipment)

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Birthdays – April 2020



BIRTHDAYS: APRIL 2020			
LONG L.	Apr-01	WINGFIELD M.J.	Apr-21
EDWARDS M.B.P.	Apr-02	EDELSBACHER J.	Apr-21
BRINK M.P.	Apr-08	DU PLESSIS S.P.G.	Apr-22
LE ROUX P.J.	Apr-08	VAN DER MERWE J.	Apr-23
CLAASEN I.E.	Apr-09	BRITZ M.	Apr-24
NORRIS-ROGERS M.	Apr-11	DE WET A.	Apr-24
VON DEM BUSSCHE G.	Apr-13	HUNTER M.	Apr-25
DENISON N.P.	Apr-14	NAIDOO R.	Apr-25
BRONKHORST A.	Apr-15	VAN DER DUSSEN A.	Apr-26
KING T.D.	Apr-15	VAN ZYL J.	Apr-26
GROBBELAAR W.M.	Apr-17	RABIE J.T.	Apr-27
OLSEN G.J.	Apr-19	PHILLIPS T.D.	Apr-29
MOSTERT N.	Apr-20		



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.

Name	
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Postal address	
Contact number	
Email address	

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