

Southern African Institute of Forestry



Delivering a professional service to forestry

*Southern African Institute of Forestry, Postnet Suite 329, Private Bag X4, Menlopark, 0102
www.saif.org.za, saif@mweb.co.za*

NEW YEAR'S WISHES

The President and all the SAIF Branch Representatives as well as the Secretary would like to wish all our members and readers a very prosperous 2020.

NEW START

It is a New Year and beginning of a New Decade with new expectations and challenges and many people have New Year's resolutions which they keep with mixed success.

It also marks the end of a wonderful period where past-president Andrew McEwan served the SAIF as Editor of the Newsletter with distinction over the last few years. We would like to thank him for the excellent quality and interesting Newsletters which he produced primarily with the help and input from of members. Andrew set a high standard to maintain. I trust that you will enjoy the new format and contents of the January Newsletter.

Editor: Braam du Preez

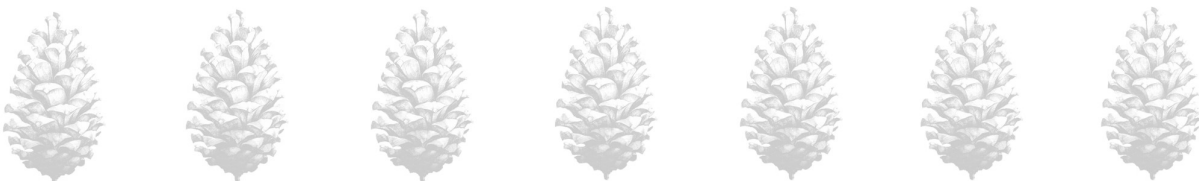
Contents

1. A New Year and New Start
2. Australian Wildfires
3. A South African Conundrum
4. New Editor for Southern Forests
5. Paper Industry invests in alternative use of waste paper
6. SAIF Contact details
7. January Birthdays



Photographer: Maurits Perold | Branch: Mpumalanga | Description: Sun rise in Tzaneen - lets count our blessings!

Another photograph from the 2020 Calendar which will be in the mail to all paid up SAIF members. This photo of the sun shining into a sawmill at Tzaneen and titled "lets count our blessings" was taken by Maurits Perold from the Mpumalanga Branch.

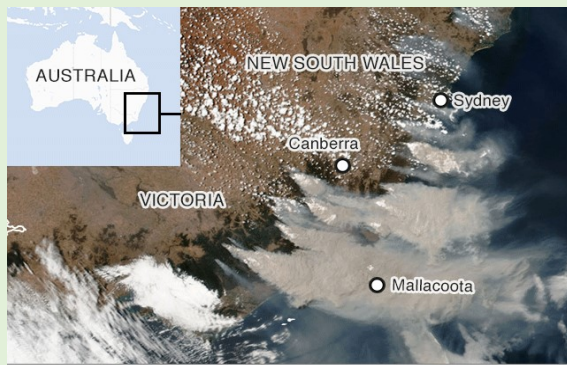


**Article compiled by SAIF President:
Wayne Jones**

Australian Wildfires

Climate change is predicted to have significant impacts across the globe. In the southern hemisphere these are likely to result in a rise in temperature, changes in rainfall patterns and increased frequency of droughts. 2019 was just such a year for Australia where climatic conditions have contributed to the development of uncontrolled wild fires, never before seen, along the eastern half of Australia from Queensland through New South Wales, Victoria and into Tasmania. Dry conditions in Australia's bushland, wooded areas, have made the land ripe for ignition.

Contributing factors include Australia's experience of its driest year on record, with the annual rainfall 40% below the average during 2019. This was also the warmest year on record with the mean temperature 1.52°C above the average. In the last 15 years, Australia has seen eight of its ten warmest years on record. Last year also saw one of the strongest, positive Indian Ocean dipole events on record, resulting in the observed warmer, dryer conditions.



Map of south eastern Australia.



A house burning in Lake Conjola, New South Wales, on New Year's Eve. (Credit: Matthew Abbott for The New York Times).

Combined these factors contribute to the likelihood, size, and frequency of wildfires , since warmer air sucks away moisture from trees and soil, leading to dryer land. The more trees and vegetation that burn, the more carbon dioxide (CO₂) is released into the atmosphere, resulting in a loss of natural carbon sinks, such as the trees. Australia's wildfires have released 350 million metric tons of CO₂ into the atmosphere. That's roughly 1% of the total global carbon emissions from 2019. The more CO₂ that is released, the warmer conditions become raising the risk of increased fires.

Wildfires are becoming more common across the globe from California in the north to Indonesia in the east and Brazil in the south. With a record- breaking number of fires that plagued the Brazilian Amazon during the latter half of 2019 a total of 2.5 million hectares were burnt or destroyed.

Similarly, South Africa experienced its own huge wildfires during 2017 and 2018 in the southern Cape that destroyed a combined total of approximately 125 000 hectares of



land, infrastructure and livelihoods with significant loss of life. The impact of the 2018 fires alone was estimated at R 3 billion.

Since the start of the Australian bushfire season in September 5.9 million hectares have burned and at least 27 people have died. It is estimated that a billion animals have perished with ecosystem recovery set to take many years. Hundreds of thousands of people have been evacuated from eastern state cities and over 2 000 homes have been destroyed.

With climate change a reality, preventing and managing wildfires within the landscape remains a complex and multilayer process. Understanding and managing urbanisation and land use within these natural ecosystems requires careful planning, investment in technologies and human capital to safe guard lives, livelihoods, ecosystems and infrastructure.



An example of the resulting devastation and destruction.

A South African Conundrum by Rob Thompson

South Africans comprise an interesting nation.

In the face of a high migratory trend we are prone to regular introspection and compulsive comparison. We question our worth and standing against information received from across the globe via all media modes and expend excessive energy obsessing about the perception that we are far worse off here than anywhere else. *How can I get into Australia? Can I get a UK Passport? Phew . . . check out the corruption this side . . .* and then we go on holiday.

In typical South African fashion Gautengers head southwards creating dense concentric enclaves extending outwards from the core of Hartenbos, whilst Capetonians either go to ground or find solitude in the temporary desolation of Gauteng and the northern reaches of the country. For most “*dop and chops*” are the order of the day whilst for some, this change in routine and geographical location frees up some head space for objective contemplation and analysis.

In my case, the journey led to my usual haunts in the now very arid Central and Klein Karoo Regions. Surely the Karoo is always arid? Well yes, but you should see it now!

Persistent climate change denialists should spend some time in these areas to experience the immense changes that have manifested in the past decade.



What was once a sheep mecca (who hasn't heard of Karoo lamb?) is now a barren wasteland with less than a quarter of the original collective flock on the land. Even the ubiquitous Spekboom succulent plant is dying off in some places! Seeing generally hardy Bontebok and Springbok being hand fed formulated feed pellets given lack of nutritious grazing also certainly makes an impact on the most resilient of psyches.

A homeward route via the Eastern Cape into the, fortunately, more moist Free State revealed beautiful sandstone scenery, lush vegetation, well manged farms and . . . absolutely trashed towns. I use the word trashed with purpose. Around 2 km before reaching these small country towns one encounters windswept plastic against every fence and bush along the roadway. Upon nearing the boundary of the town, the municipal landfill invariably appears right in the path of the prevailing wind directions with little or no visible management in process. Enter the town itself and one sees the effects of economic and rural decline. Sprawling informal housing on the outskirts penetrating the formal boundaries and overall general neglect. Case in point was the town of Steynsburg showing alarming signs of rapid decay. Houses and buildings abandoned and ruined, roads in poor condition with a generally desolate air about town.

Further along, the more touristy areas of Clarens and Golden Gate National Park illustrated the positive effects that a robust (tourist-driven) economy, interactive management and favourable climate can achieve. What a paradox and all within a few hundred kilometres.

Listening to the world news over the car radio, whilst processing these travel observations, added further dimension and a distinct conundrum to my ongoing introspection . . .

Australia was (and is still) literally on fire. Climate change and high fuel loads have led to an unprecedented national disaster in the land of our rugby and cricket opponents. A sobering fact is that 1 billion animals are estimated to have perished to date in fires spreading across hundreds of thousands of hectares with no signs of abatement. America and Iran are squaring up to each other with fingers hovering above the launch buttons of ballistic missiles. Zimbabwe, immediately to our north, faces extensive starvation given mismanagement and drought. A further 1.7 billion people are expected to populate this planet before 2030 . . . and Eskom has resumed load shedding!

The conundrum . . . ? Well we have severe challenges at home but it would appear that everywhere else has similar or worse!

Where does that then leave me?
Back in the office, not wanting to become too productive too soon after my holiday, but needing to look busy, I read a paper in the Southern Forests Journal of Forest Science (November 2019 edition) written by Palesa Mgaga and Mary Scholes entitled: "Does tertiary education in South Africa equip professional foresters for the future?" Do yourself a favour and read it when you get the chance . . . it's really interesting! It might also provide you, as it did me, with some clarity and perspective to assist in dealing with the above conundrum of finding worth and place here or elsewhere.



The authors explore the concept that forestry has gone beyond simply managing trees and has advanced towards achieving requisite stakeholder and biological ecosystem outcomes in an ever-changing environment. It is a profession that requires ongoing learning and adaptation. With the forestry profession persistently seen as a fall-back or poor cousin to more auspicious careers, for instance in medicine or engineering, a lot of work is required by industry and academic institutions to attract practitioners who want to contribute meaningfully and wholly towards managing a sustainable resource scientifically and professionally. I guess the challenge is to endorse the positive role that the forestry practitioner plays and the true worth of the career.

Most of the readers of this article are forestry practitioners who have already totally embraced the career decision they have taken. Consider for a moment your advanced environmental understanding and skill-set in the context of the observations made herein of our environmental reality. Climate change, population pressure, human conflict, waste management, environmental degradation and distinct requirement to manage sustainably in a world of depleting resource.

As forestry practitioners we have knowledge, insight and ability to contribute meaningfully towards all of these. Our skill set transcends the mere production of timber. Our profession has turned us into environmentalists. Environmentalists are few and far between meaning that we ought to be proud of the unique contributions being made and use every opportunity to coach

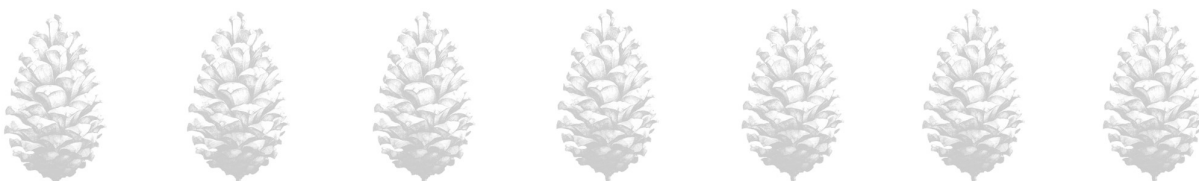
others as to how to tread lightly in a space that is rapidly becoming inundated.

There is no way to escape this. Either here or elsewhere, inherent environmental degradation is the fixed trajectory of the world. It makes sense to me to contribute meaningfully towards positive change, at home.

Appointment of Dr. Hannél Ham as Editor in Chief of Southern Forests Journal

The SAIF would like to congratulate Dr. Hannél Ham, past president of the SAIF who has served the Institute and industry with distinction in the past, on her appointment as Editor of the Southern Forests Journal.

Dr Ham will be responsible for evaluating manuscripts, managing peer reviews and communicating with the authors and publishers (NISC). She will amongst others also be responsible for the management of the online system, periodic reviews of the Editorial Board, evaluating and inviting scientists and leaders in their field to participate and become members of the Editorial Board. She will also work to maintain and improve Journal ratings. Hannél needs our support and we wish her well with this new challenge.



Beyond the box:

Paper industry invests in research for viable alternative uses for waste paper

JOHANNESBURG – December 12, 2019

More than 12 million tonnes of paper and paper packaging have been recovered in South Africa for recycling during the past decade. The overall paper collection rate in 2018 of 71.7% is comparable with the most successful countries globally.

This, according to the Paper Manufacturers Association of South Africa (PAMSA), ensures that waste paper is diverted from landfill and recycled into new products. Although 2019 has seen over-capacity of both pulp and paper worldwide, collection rates are still looking good. The global market for waste paper has changed considerably over the past few years and this, plus the local economy's lack of growth, means 2020 is expected to get off to a slow start.

China's stricter requirements for cleaner waste paper imports since the end of 2017 and their ultimate aim of having zero imports in a year or two has meant that 30 million tonnes of waste paper needs to find a new home. As a result, global prices of waste paper have declined significantly, and in some countries, you even have to pay to have your waste paper collected.

These structural changes present both a challenge and an opportunity.

Successful paper recycling in SA

South Africa is in the enviable position of being able to recycle up to 90% of its recovered waste paper locally into paper packaging, serving the agricultural, manufacturing and retail sectors. The challenge – and opportunity – is to develop new uses for recovered waste paper during this economic slowdown, which has led to lower production by South African paper mills that use waste paper as raw material. PAMSA's producer responsibility organisation, Fibre Circle, has earmarked R2 million specifically for research and development of alternate and innovative uses for waste paper.

Fibre Circle is aimed at broadening the scope and use of recovered paper through extended producer responsibility (EPR). Representing manufacturers and importers of paper and paper packaging, Fibre Circle's EPR programme seeks to support the establishment of infrastructure and alternative systems to support the collection and reprocessing of recyclables.

"In line with the circular economy, we have to work together to develop new paper-based solutions to prevent valuable and usable fibre going to landfill and ensure it is turned into value," says Francois Marais, manager of Fibre Circle. "This will require exploring novel material substitutions."

Shortened from original PAMSA article.



SAIF Contact Details

Position	Name	Email	Phone
President	Wayne Jones	president@saif.org.za	033 330 2455
Vice-president	Braam du Preez	southern-cape@saif.org.za	044 874 0682
Past-president	Dr Hannél Ham	past-president@saif.org.za	076 452 5567
National secretary	admin@saif.org.za	saif@mweb.co.za	082 523 8733
SF Journal Editor	Dr Hannél Ham	journal@saif.org.za	076 452 5567
KwaZulu-Natal	Mmoledi Mphahlele	kzn@saif.org.za	033 329 5415
Gauteng	Prof. Brett Hurley	gauteng@saif.org.za	082 909 3211
Mpumalanga	Vacant	admin@saif.org.za	082 523 8733
Southern Cape	Braam du Preez	southern-cape@saif.org.za	082 887 2592
Western Cape	Dr Philip Crafford	western-cape@saif.org.za	021 808 3303
DAFF representative	Tendani Mariba	tendanim@daff.gov.za	012 309 5753

Birthdays – January 2020



Birthdays January 2020			
Ballantyne JR	03	Erwee JJ	18
Mortimer JH	06	Längin D	18
Kotze W	08	Ade ECL	20
Kruger P	08	Dyer ST	21
Roothman D	08	Seele CA	21
Norris CH	09	Burnhams GW	24
Swain T	10	Scriba JH	25
Badenhorst JEF	11	Van Vugt L	25
Odell P	11	Van Zyl L	25
Dobson D	12	Muller RB	26
Versfeld DB	12	Kachale TG	29
Von Buddenbrock PE	13	Mkwalo AC	30
Malan FS	15	Truter PJ	30
Droomer AEP	16	Swart JN	31
Hooghiemstra G	16	Liversage RT	31
Cunningham LR	17		



The Southern African Institute of Forestry

Handbook order form

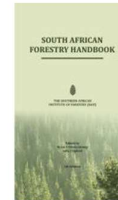
The Southern African Institute of Forestry publishes three industry specific handbooks.

I would like to order:

South African Forestry Handbook

Price: SAIF members: R400

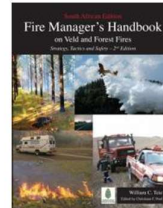
Non members: R500



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	
Company	
Postal address	
Contact number	
Email address	

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 sai@mweb.co.za.