

# Southern African Institute of Forestry

Delivering a professional service to forestry

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Sawlogs ready for loading and transport to the Sawmill.

## From the President's Desk

### What does the future hold for Forestry in South Africa ?

We were privileged to have Michael Peter , Executive Director of Forestry South Africa (FSA) as guest speaker at the recent Southern African Institute of Forestry (SAIF) Annual General Meeting. Some of you might have missed his address at the AGM on the 20<sup>th</sup> of June 2024. What follows next, is a summary of Michael's talk.

We know Michael as a person who doesn't mince his words and shoot straight! We realized once again that the industry which we are part of and many of us spent almost a lifetime, face many challenges. Michael gave us a glimpse of what happens behind the scenes, and we were encouraged and filled with hope for the future. It came to our attention once again that FSA is fighting the good fight for the industry.

He reminded us that our sector is very-much cyclical in nature and its of such a long-term nature, and that therefore prevailing market conditions at any given time, are a poor determinant of a company's real value. He referred to the economic, political and social landscape in which our Forestry Sector operates.

Michael said that he is glad that he has lived long enough to witness another GNU which gives him as much hope for our country and our children, as we all had shortly after Nelson Mandela became President. The ANC unfortunately did not follow his example and had a different approach to the notion of a rainbow nation and that has caused devastation on our economy and our society and in the process, it has cost the ANC their outright majority.



He said that the time for outdated ideologies is over and that we should learn from and move on from the wrongs from the past. He further said that he believes “those bloody-minded individuals with their reported support from criminal cartels in the transport, construction, mining and energy sector, will also lose steam even faster under the GNU.”

He quoted from an FSA statement 10 years ago : *“With 2014 being an election year it is useful to provide some thoughts on the political landscape in the country. The introduction of the ironically named EFF (given that their policies are the antithesis of economic freedom) offers some benefit to the country, in that it exposes the many Marxists who occupy key Cabinet positions in the current administration and who subtly try to strangle the economy while enjoying all the trappings of power. The Minister of DAFF is a case in point. “*

So while FSA didn't get the drivers nor the timing of the political changes, exactly right back in 2014, they certainly had the sense that it was the beginning of the end of the ANC's political dominance. There are now so many reasons for hope that this GNU, like that of Mandela's in the early days of SA's democracy, will make a meaningful difference in the country's trajectory. Firstly, it enables the President to tap into the knowledge and experience of politicians and strategists from other political parties which is desperately needed, as his own party ran out of ideas years ago.

So now Cyril, for whom I have great admiration as a cunning and bold leader and which I know is contrary to the way the media have portrayed him, is finally able to pull in some clever people from other parties and maybe for the first time in 30 years, we will get Ministers of finance, trade and industry and national treasury, who are not chosen from the ANC's communist and labour partners.

He went further by referring to the problem which FSA pointed out to its members in February 2024, which is that even though we get a new multi-party government, it doesn't get rid of the legions of corrupt and inept civil servants, who can sabotage the national agenda. Here there is good news too, as a GNU also enables the other parties to take on Cabinet positions, Portfolio Committee chairs, and to jointly appoint Directors-General of government departments.

So when we appear before these committees or engage with departments to tell them how poorly the officials in the DWS or DFFE etc. are performing, there will be consequences for those actions, for the first time in 30 years.

He also mentioned that FSA has worked closely with the Presidency, both with the President himself through the PPGI process, *with* Mr Rudi Dicks who heads up the PMO in the Presidency *and* with his Operation Vulindlela team, who have been driving the reforms. They celebrate the excellent progress on reforms in the energy, water, ports and rail and security arenas, among others and planning for the further advancement of these and other reforms which are long-overdue in South Africa.

He admitted that the near collapse of Eskom, severely damaged every sector of SA's economy and some, like the Sawmilling sub-sector in the Industry, were particularly hard hit while FSA had robust engagement with the Presidency.

He believes that thanks to the installation of 7.7 Gigawatts of solar energy in business alone together with the fact that Eskom has genuinely improved the Energy Availability Factor (EAF), suddenly our energy security is no longer a major concern for businesses. This alone will add 3-5% in GDP output per annum in coming years.

The Transnet disaster, *most* acutely felt during the strikes of 2022 lead FSA meetings held every two weeks along with two other private sector individuals with the Operation Vulindlela team in the Presidency, to shape the logistics reforms. In October 2023, Cabinet approved the Freight Logistics Road Map. This has already been effective in cleaning house, by getting rid of the obstructionist C-suite executives in Transnet, restructuring the entity with the establishment of the Infrastructure Manager, Economic Regulator, Transnet Freight Rail Operating Company and TNPA, as separate entities with independent mandates. “There is going to be a challenging transitional period. Fixing ports and rail isn't as easy as addressing the energy crisis *and* many of the problems with our rail system.” Once we get rail and ports right and we will, this will add another couple of percentage points to our GDP.

The bottom line is that the reform agenda has been driven aggressively by the President over the last five



years and it is only going to gain momentum under the GNU. Let's not also forget how he managed to get rid of legions of criminals out of government and his party over the last five years.

Personally, he expressed great faith in the President's abilities and that stems in part, from the fact that FSA has been privileged to peek behind the curtain and even more so, to play a role in supporting several of the national reforms, which he has driven so deftly.

In other good news, 2023 marked the year of the highest amount of State funding that FSA and Industry more broadly, have ever received for forestry R&D. Because of the efforts of Ronald Heath from FSA. DSI gave FSA R35.2m for Forestry R+D, which is the largest amount of Sector Innovation Funding given to any sector. R800m in development financing for forestry came on stream for the first time in 30 years and in large part due to the persistent efforts of Norman Dlamini of FSA.

He went further "Then we finally got the DFFE to put the Western Cape and Cat B and C plantations out on tender, which again happened by leveraging the Presidency through the PPGI. I am sorry that the late Jaap Steenkamp from SAFCA, Nthuthuzelo Ponoyi from MTO and Themba Siyolo from PG Bison, never lived long enough to see this, as they were tireless supporters of our efforts on this critical issue, as was Roy Southey from Sawmilling South Africa."

Through our efforts in the PPGI, the Presidency also declared commercial crimes to be priority crimes, they established the National Priority Committee for Extortion and Violent Crimes, in which Francois Oberholzer from FSA was appointed to serve from its inception. This also led to the establishment in February of this year, of the Joint Initiative on Crime and Corruption (JICC) between business and government, also led by the Presidency.

This along with the establishment of a R56m forensic analysis centre between business and the Hawks, among other initiatives, is having a significant impact in reducing organised economic crimes.

On the private sector front, we have through the PPGI, seen over R30Bn invested by SAPPI, MONDI, PG Bison and others, which if I was a forester who was concerned about my future in this country, would put

my mind immediately at ease. This is fixed capital formation, not hot money which flows into our stock exchange, and which can leave at the press of a button.

He continued, "There is so much more good news. I could go on about our incredible empowerment successes as a sector, the fact that we now have as many women entering the sector as men and so many other things to celebrate as a sector and as South Africa, but my time is limited. So, I would encourage you to get a hold of our FSA Annual Report and visit our website, which Ronald and our comms team have transformed into a world-class source of information."

"So good people, there is great cause for celebration and hope for our country. When I was looking back over our reports to our members over the last decade, I realised that I ended each report by saying that I had never been more optimistic about the country's future!"

Also, most of the things we fear, never materialise, so what is the point in wasting your life obsessing about them and reducing your opportunity to be happy.

He further stated that perhaps he has also been inspired by Jan Smuts, who when asked while he always wore a smile when engaging with the devastated people in Europe, in the aftermath of the terrible first world war, he replied, "I smile because it gives hope to people who have lost everything and I also smile, because it makes me feel better too".

Michael ended off by wishing all in attendance everything of the best for the AGM and like to take this opportunity to thank the SAIF on behalf of the industry, for maintaining the credibility of our profession and that of our tertiary education and research institutions.

Please note that this is not a verbatim version of the talk presented by Michael but an effort to provide those who didn't have the opportunity to attend the AGM.

*The SAIF value the support and partnership with Forestry South Africa and wish Michael and his team at FSA all the best for fighting the good fight for the forestry industry in South Africa.*

## The Rob Thompson Column

### Welcome to the Forestry Profession Olympics!

By now, all of you would have had some insights into the spectacle they call the 2024 Paris Olympic Games.

You would have been (choose appropriate adjective) mortified, fascinated, horrified, sickened, inspired, confused, delighted, by the opening ceremony.

You would have witnessed France usurping the previous record, set in Dunkirk, during the Second World War, for the greatest number of small vessels carrying the maximum number of people. This time round they fortunately weren't being shot at or bombed, most likely because old national adversaries were all now in the same procession on the Seine and had to act sort of friendly towards each other. Come to think of it however, a little aggro between conflicting nations on the Seine would hardly have been noticed, given the unprecedented textual layers of the opening proceedings.

Talking of nations, you would have also picked up that there are sooo many countries that you have never even heard of!

Luckily, it seems that they had enough boats unless they were doing loops on the Seine in a sort of riverine Uber-service maneuver. "Ah, Don't worry Turkmenistan, we'll be back for you right after Nauru! You'll get a discount rate 'cause there's only two of you!"

Apart from all of the opening ceremony shenanigans, the really fascinating thing about the Olympics is the array of varied skills that thousands of participating athletes bring to the arena.

From being able to place an arrow between the eyes of a fly from 100 meters away, to literally being able to deadlift insane weights above head height, pause, smile, and replace said weights gently back on the ground, without fracturing a spine or bursting a spleen. This all takes years of practice, pain and dedication and to any normal mortal, these athletes appear to be one of a kind supreme beings. But are they really? They are certainly fit and trained to purpose which many of us envious onlookers are not, but nevertheless, we ought not to sell ourselves too

short. So welcome to the Forestry Profession Olympics!

All of our forestry profession opening ceremonies would have been conducted in depth, during our tertiary training, and I guess, the less said about that the better, in many cases. The Paris Opening fades into insignificance when compared to the antics of certain forestry students in the far distant past, (note: I emphatically don't include myself in this debauchery), and no doubt, current students are establishing similar experiences upon which they will reflect in another age to come.

Moving rapidly on into the working environment, our Olympic forestry contingent certainly faces an array of diverse and challenging "events". These require a special level of fortitude and skill to overcome and conquer successfully.

If we look at the "forestry games" just over recent years, Forestry Olympians have had to, and continue to contend with, a varied and dynamic schedule:- burning chip mills, raging forest fires, tragic loss of life in-service, changed seasons, the harshest of climatic conditions, market upheaval, mill breakdowns, explosions, corporate financial stress, escalating timber theft, supply chain breach, fraud, cost increases, political turmoil, pest outbreaks, tightening certification standards, inflation, land claims, community unrest, strike action, rail collapse, road degradation, Port service collapse, PBS permit restrictions, environmental pressure, restrictive legislation, limited expansion, load shedding, water restrictions, exchange rate fluctuations, and many more if I only took the time to list them. Compare this array to the mere 32 events that the athletes are tackling at the Paris Olympics!

Whilst some muscle conditioning is always an asset, the forester must have a primary and inherent ability to apply critical and scarce soft skills and tact to the most difficult of situation. This lesser-known fact is just that...a fact. Foresters over the years who did not grasp this, and did not hone these scarce skills, are now participating in completely different arenas, well divorced from forestry.

Diplomacy, patience, care, and empathy are very often the skills most appropriately suited towards dealing with a particular forestry circumstance.



If an athlete in Paris is found wanting in a particular skill, the inevitable outcome is immediate elimination from further participation. In the foresters case, active in-service honing of the deficient skill is the requirement on the assumption that that forester actively understands and wishes to remain a forester for the duration. Fortunately, most foresters worth their salt choose that path and adapt skill sets to suit. Our industry is bearing the fruits of this tenacious trait and the overriding willingness to adapt. Of course, harder, technical skills, are also critical in the forestry games.

Just as the archer ensures that she draws her string back to the exact ready position, each time, every time, so do successful foresters ensure that they do the right thing right, first time, every time. Unlike the few weeks' duration of the Paris games, with medalists announced immediately on conclusion of each event, our forestry games are protracted over decades, and more, requiring current care lest future loss occurs.

A mis-planted cutting now, leads to a wasteful windthrow later. A poor capital investment now, leads to a financial loss later. Hard-skilled silviculturalists, harvesting specialists, planners, GIS specialists, certification foresters et al are therefore forwarded as key athletes in these games and without which forestry would lose all relevance as an industry.

The Paris 100m sprinter will put everything into the few seconds it takes to traverse that distance, well knowing that success, or not, will be revealed immediately on finishing. The forester understands that that which s/he starts may never be complete within her lifetime, but that future generations will experience her success, or not.

The Olympic Blitzbokke team enters the arena as a composite and cohesive unit, each player knowing what must be done when, and the particular contribution to be made, within the overall time specified. A hard but regulated contest ensues, with one team declared the clear winner, based on most points scored.

Team Forestry is a disparate and irregular construct. Serious competition occurs within the team and outside contenders are often difficult to identify and engage. Natural and human dynamics significantly

impact the forestry arena, and a referee or oversight function is not always easily apparent or applicable. Participants are obligated to make up their own rules and terms of engagement to multiple and complicated factors being encountered.

Skills are literally developed in play. There is no end whistle. There is no end. Forestry is a continuum with participants regularly entering and exiting, new futures conceptualized and reconceptualized, rewards and losses pave the irregular route we travel, with nothing guaranteed barring the knowledge that what we do is important enough to do well.

The compliant and careful forester never receives a medal in the Forestry Olympics. The reward lies in our industry sustainability and the satisfaction of knowing that one has contributed significantly thereto.

So, as you watch the Paris Olympics unfold over the next few weeks, take note of the dedication of the athletes, admire their fortitude, tenacity and courage, whilst all the while extrapolating those attributes into the construct of a successful forester. You are most certain to observe some similarities as well as experience the stimulation to adopt and adapt some of the attributes you may currently lack. All this said, be sure to curb any expectation of a medal. That's not going to happen.

Your reward will be the simple euphoria of a job well done.

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## **Unlocking nature's blanket: the crucial role of mulching in forestry management**

Africa Biomass Company (ABC) has been a pioneer in developing biomass processing equipment and products such as wood chips, biofuel, and mulch in both the agriculture and forestry industries of South Africa and sub-Saharan Africa over the past two decades.

In recent years, the increasing frequency and severity of wildfires have highlighted the critical need for proactive measures to manage fuel loads in areas prone to these devastating events. Plantation owners and land managers seek innovative strategies to minimize wildfire risks while promoting sustainable land management practices.

An increasingly popular approach is mulching, which

nurtures soil health and significantly reduces plantation fuel loads.

### **SO WHY MULCH?**

#### **FIRE BREAKS & PRESCRIBED BURNS**

Mulching creates internal and external fire breaks, which helps to reduce the spread and intensity of fires in plantations. Mulchers can quickly clear areas and create breaks, thus improving fire suppression effectiveness. Prescribed burns play a crucial role in plantation management, and mulchers can assist by preparing areas for these burning operations.

#### **FUEL LOAD REDUCTION**

Fuel loads, accumulations of dry vegetation and debris, are the primary fuel source for plantation fires. In plantations, these fuel loads can accumulate rapidly, especially after pruning operations, escalating the potential for catastrophic fires. Foresters must manage these fuel loads effectively to create defensible buffer zones, safeguard ecosystems, and protect lives and property.

#### **SOIL TEMPERATURE REGULATION**

Mulch acts as a natural insulator, regulating soil temperature by shielding it from extreme heat or cold. This temperature moderation helps create a more stable environment for plant and tree roots, reducing the risk of heat stress during hot weather and protecting against frost damage during colder periods. By maintaining optimal soil temperatures, mulching supports healthier plant growth and overall ecosystem vitality.

#### **MOISTURE CONSERVATION**

By covering the soil, mulch reduces direct exposure to sunlight and wind, which are primary drivers of evaporation. This retained moisture is crucial for sustaining plant health, especially during dry periods, as it ensures a more consistent and adequate water supply for plant roots.

#### **WEED SUPPRESSION**

Mulch can inhibit the growth of weeds by blocking sunlight to the soil surface, preventing weed seeds from germinating, and competing with desired plants for nutrients and water. By suppressing weeds and conserving moisture, mulch reduces the need for weeding – saving time and labour costs for forest

management.

#### **SOIL NUTRIENTS & STRUCTURE**

Organic mulch decomposes slowly over time, releasing nutrients into the soil. These nutrients nourish tree roots and other plants, fostering their growth and well-being. As organic mulches break down, they enrich the soil with organic matter, enhancing soil structure, aeration, and drainage. This fosters a healthier environment for the growth of trees and other vegetation.

#### **EROSION PREVENTION**

Mulch acts as a protective layer over the soil, reducing erosion caused by wind and water. This is especially crucial on slopes or areas prone to erosion, as it helps maintain soil stability and fertility.

#### **COST EFFICIENCY**

Mulching can be more cost-effective than traditional clearing methods since it eliminates the need for hauling and disposing of debris and reduces the need for herbicides.

#### **DEDICATED FORESTRY TEAM**

ABC's dedicated forestry team offers customized under-canopy mulching solutions tailored to your plantation's unique requirements. We prioritize safety and sustainability in every project by leveraging

Mulching nurtures soil health and reduces plantation fuel loads cutting-edge equipment and environmentally friendly practices. By integrating mulching as a fuel load reduction strategy, you mitigate fire risks and contribute to a healthier plantation ecosystem.

As part of our contracting fleet or available to purchase, Serrat mulchers have demonstrated their effectiveness in numerous forestry plantations. Their efficient operation is time and cost-effective.

With ABC as a trusted partner, you can confidently manage your plantation while promoting environmental stewardship and achieving sustainability goals.

**By:** Francois van Zyl, ABC Forestry Specialist  
**Source:** [WoodBiz Magazine – April 2024 \(page 22 – 24\)](#)

## Talking Timber webinar - 8 August - Exterior Applications for Timber



Great news! Our next *Talking Timber* webinar is set to take place on **8 August 2024 at 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM**. The topic will centre around Exterior Applications for Timber.

Proper exterior treatments protect timber from environmental elements such as UV radiation, moisture, and temperature fluctuations. This reduces the risk of rot, decay, and warping, thereby extending the lifespan of the timber. Exterior applications such as sealants and treatments can provide a protective barrier against insects, termites, and fungal infestation. This helps maintain the structural integrity of the timber and prevents costly repairs and replacements. Additionally, exterior applications can enhance the natural beauty of timber, highlighting its grain and texture.

*Also, good news, the webinar is assessed by the South African Institute of Architects as a **Category One CPD activity and will count for 0.15 points.***

The speaker line-up is as follows :

Tim Rypstra- University of Stellenbosch

Mariette Cooper- TimberLife

The webinar is brought to you by :

- Sawmilling South Africa
- Rothoblaas South Africa
- The York Timbers chair at the University of Pretoria
- Stellenbosch University

Direct any queries to : [ferdinand.hassan@tuks.co.za](mailto:ferdinand.hassan@tuks.co.za)

For more details, please contact :

[samantha-choles@m.mediaportal.co.za](mailto:samantha-choles@m.mediaportal.co.za)

## She is Forestry Webinar 1 August 2024



SHE IS FORESTRY WOMEN IN FORESTRY 2024			Webinar Sponsor FORESTRY SOUTH AFRICA			Webinar Hosting Sponsor			Design Sponsor mondi			2024 Webinar Programme 1 August 2024 - 10h00 to 13h00		
Item	Description	Timing	Item	Description	Timing									
OPENING	Webinar Opening Webinar Host - Ruthelle Mkhigila, She is Forestry SA Director Julia Rees, She is Forestry SA Director Webinar Facilitator - Sarah Meyer, Forestry South Africa - TPWG Coordinator	10h00	SESSION THREE	Video - Entrepreneurship in a Forestry Context Panel Discussion Beryl Traore, Sappi Southern Africa - Social Impact Lead Hazel Banda, SAPCOL - GM Transformation & Enterprise Development Julia Raluse, York Timbers - Group Training & Development Manager	13h00									
	Introducing the Keynote Speaker Ruthelle Mkhigila, SAPCOL - Environmental Practitioner & She is Forestry SA Director	10h10		Confem break sponsored by FSA - 13h30 to 13h45										
	Keynote Speaker Ferdinand Hassan, Forestry & Agriculture Training Organisation (FATO) - Director Thank you Marengqa Leshe, Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment - Chief Director (2) State Forest Management & Post Settlement Support & She is Forestry SA Director	10h15 10h30		She is Forestry SA: Resounding Contribution to the Forestry Sector & Forestry Product Value Chains Sponsored by NCT Forest Nella Mankali, She is Forestry SA Director	13h45									
KEYNOTE SPEECH	Video The Impact You Make - Video Ruthelle Mkhigila, SAPCOL - Environmental Practitioner & She is Forestry SA Director Break-o-buddy: This Year's Campaign Julia Rees, Dargis Poles - Owner & She is Forestry SA Director	10h40 10h45	AWARDS	Resounding Contribution to Forestry Research Award Sponsored by MTG Irene Mathabela, DFFE - Deputy Director: Sector Liaison & Capacity Development & She is Forestry SA Director	14h00									
	Video The Impact You Make - Video Ruthelle Mkhigila, SAPCOL - Environmental Practitioner & She is Forestry SA Director Break-o-buddy: This Year's Campaign Julia Rees, Dargis Poles - Owner & She is Forestry SA Director	10h40 10h45		Small-scale Forest Enterprise Award Sponsored by Mondi Nonhlanhla Buthelesi-Ooverwacht, Sharnwei Consultancy - CEO & She is Forestry SA Director	14h15									
	Video The Impact You Make - Video Ruthelle Mkhigila, SAPCOL - Environmental Practitioner & She is Forestry SA Director Break-o-buddy: This Year's Campaign Julia Rees, Dargis Poles - Owner & She is Forestry SA Director	10h40 10h45		Why it is Important to Celebrate our Students Nonhlanhla Mankali, NCT Forestry - Research Scientist Undergraduate Award Sponsored by Sappi Postgraduate Award Sponsored by SAPWA	14h35 14h45									
SESSION SEVEN	Panel Discussion Marengqa Leshe, NCT Forestry - Public Relations & Comms Julia Rees, Sappi Southern Africa - Administrator HR Zabile Ngqweni, University of Stellenbosch & FAMA - Masters Student Zandile Mkhisi, SAPCOL - Machine Operator Introducing this Year's Forestry Role Models - Videos 3 & 4	11h10 11h20 11h30	SESSION EIGHT	Webinar Closing Makhosazana Mavimbela, Forest Sector Charter Council - Executive Director & She is Forestry SA Director	13h00									
	Panel Discussion Marengqa Leshe, NCT Forestry - Public Relations & Comms Julia Rees, Sappi Southern Africa - Administrator HR Zabile Ngqweni, University of Stellenbosch & FAMA - Masters Student Zandile Mkhisi, SAPCOL - Machine Operator Introducing this Year's Forestry Role Models - Videos 3 & 4	11h10 11h20 11h30		Video										
	Panel Discussion Marengqa Leshe, NCT Forestry - Public Relations & Comms Julia Rees, Sappi Southern Africa - Administrator HR Zabile Ngqweni, University of Stellenbosch & FAMA - Masters Student Zandile Mkhisi, SAPCOL - Machine Operator Introducing this Year's Forestry Role Models - Videos 3 & 4	11h10 11h20 11h30		Video										

### Speakers

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<b>Keynote Speaker</b>	<b>Panel Host</b>	<b>Awards Speaker</b>	<b>Webinar Host</b>
 Ferdinand Hassan Forestry and Agriculture Training Organisation Director	 Ruthelle Mkhigila Forestry South Africa Communication Consultant	 Irene Mathabela NCT Forestry Research Scientist	 Sarah Meyer Forestry South Africa TPWG
<b>Panelists</b>	 Marengqa Leshe NCT Forestry PR & Communications	 Julia Rees Sappi Southern Africa Administrator HR	 Zabile Ngqweni University of Stellenbosch & FAMA Masters Student
 Zandile Mkhisi SAPCOL Machine Operator	 Hazel Banda SAPCOL GM Transformation and Enterprise Development	 Beryl Traore Sappi Southern Africa Social Impact Lead	 Julia Raluse York Timbers Group Training & Development Manager
<b>Chairperson</b>	<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Secretary</b>	
 Ruthelle Mkhigila Environmental Practitioner	 Julia Rees Dargis Poles Owner/Director	 Irene Mathabela Department of Forestry, Fisheries & the Environment Deputy Director: Sector Liaison & Capacity Development	 Marengqa Leshe Department of Forestry, Fisheries & the Environment Chief Director Forestry Operations
 Nonhlanhla Buthelesi-Ooverwacht Sharnwei Consultancy CEO	 Makhosazana Mavimbela Forest Sector Charter Council Executive Director		

Register in advance for this webinar:

[https://us06web.zoom.us/join/register/WN\\_zl-pKwQzMRv-7FidUcZlWpg](https://us06web.zoom.us/join/register/WN_zl-pKwQzMRv-7FidUcZlWpg)



## Back to Lowveld (Part 2)

Personal notes from a sentimental Journey

11 – 26 May 2024

By Georg von dem Bussche

After a rest at the tree framed Pafuri picnic site along the river Barbara drove us safely back through Venda. We had visited the Pafuri region before, but it is always a new fascinating natural experience. Are we going to be there again in two years' time??? We hope.

**Friday morning** at 6:30 we meet Nina and Craig again for the walk around the "koppie". At one point Nina and I took a long road into the veld to visit an amazing baobab. We also walked past a young fever tree forest. It was a wonderful walk. 10,4 km. Then a relaxing dip in the warm pool, where we chatted as usual to the friendly campers. Then a deserved rest at rondavel No 42 and later another plunge in the warm water. The warm water dips gave us not only tremendous pleasure but also restored our bodies and mind. It was quite wonderful, and we understand what a restoring and beneficial effect the time in hot water pools can have. We will have to do it again.



The fever tree forest

**Saturday:** A quiet day at the resort, even though we visited the Citrus Spence again for a healthy lunch and in the evening a braai with grilled sandwiches. This time the monkeys stayed away. Probably after I had shot at them a few times with a catty.

**Sunday (Pentecost):** We were invited to attend the church service at the camp. We sung happy NG Kerk songs and the retired dominee gave a very

meaningful sermon. The contact with the campers, mainly of the Afrikaans background, was always friendly, supportive and enriching. We also became good friends with Nina and Craig, who we hope to see here later in the year to resume our enjoyable walks.

**Monday 20<sup>th</sup> May:** Early morning walk with our new friends again around the koppie and again to the big baobab.



The big baobab

**Tuesday, 21.5.:** A very special day. We left Tshipise early for Mapungubwe via Mussina. A beautiful sunny morning again. The autumn colours of the bushveld are pleasing. West of Messina the mopane veld takes over with baobabs of all imaginable sizes dotted in between. After we entered the gate of the famous park the vegetation changed drastically. The area is flat with kloofs breaking the terrain down towards the river. Nearly all trees are either debarked, gnarled, pushed over and many baobabs look sad with debarked bulky stems; so full of scars that it is a wonder that not all have died yet. Driving through rocky gullies towards the river the landscape consists of fascinating eroded sandstone features, rugged surfaces and clean straight breaks as if cut with a giant knife. Dense tree vegetation frames the mighty Limpopo valley with only a narrow silvery stream of water gliding towards the east. We travel close to the river between nyala and anna trees interspersed with damaged baobabs. Game viewing is so far restricted to one elephant in the distance only, a few impala (*rooibokke* is a much more descriptive name) and groups of Zebra, sheltering under shepherd trees, which have been spared by the elephants, while mopane bushes have been stunted to ugly features with a few lonely but beautiful butterfly leaves. I describe the vegetation in detail to make the reader of this brief travel log aware of the folly of mankind to allow the innocent elephants, forced to come to this "UNESCO International Heritage Site" to destroy the



valuable biotope surrounding the historical site. Fauna a plenty consisted of herds of cattle, which had crossed the river to feed on the sparse grass vegetation. I was told that originally a fence along the river prevented elephants and cattle from Zimbabwe and Botswana to cross the river, but after it was damaged but a flood it was decided not to rebuild it again. That caused the influx of elephants and cattle, and the subsequent damage to the vegetation and the selected trees.

The rest place, above the confluence of the Sashe River with the Limpopo, marking the corner, where South Africa meets Botswana and Zimbabwe, is a welcome site for a rest and a restoring lunch. We walked up to the viewpoint and enjoyed the memorable panorama. Driving back, we turned in towards the Leokwe camp, where rondavels, hidden behind vegetation along a picturesque rockface, represent the rest camp of the park. Very secluded, beautiful setting; but it must be lonely there, which some people will cherish.



Confluence of Limpopo and Sashe

At the gate I chatted to two young Polish tourists. I asked them (politely though) how the war affects their lives. They confessed: "terrible" and added "this could lead to a third world war". These remarks made me aware in what a peaceful environment we live here at the tip of Africa, while the rest of the world is partly in turmoil and millions of innocent people suffer.

After the visit of this impressive site (messed up by people again) we experienced another highlight of our journey. A visit to Ludwigslust and a heart – and memory warming chat with our friends Tuba and

Rheta van der Walt. Tuba manages a 10 000-ha wildlife farm, which stretches from the tar road down to the Limpopo River, while Rheta as a botanical scientist has published books on grasses, flowers and now fungi and lichen occurring along the Limpopo valley.

The meeting was special not only because I met Tuba forty-four years ago already, when he was a Venda speaking forester at Tate Vondo (a holy forest for the Venda people), because we share a close friendship for our late friend Willem de Villiers of Entabeni.

Much later our son Julius, my late brother Toffy and their wives but also my god-son Boris and his friend were able to come together here at Ludwigslust for a hunt with me. Later, I also joined Julius and his son Georg hunting there with our hunting friends, the Kromhout's. Tuba and I talked about old friends, while Barbara was shown by Rheta the stunning paintings of flowers, grasses and butterflies (created by her sister) and the garden around the homestead under a mighty baobab. Which can best be described as an oasis. This get together was over-whelming for us thinking back to our many years we lived in the "Verre Noord".

The trip home was an eye-opener for Barbara, when we drove through the centre of Musina, which reminded her of her visit to Cairo many years ago. The multitude of people sitting, walking, standing, gesticulating, selling and shopping made us aware of the other, worrying, side of South Africa. - Driving back to Tshipise through the multi-coloured wooded bushveld we saw the statue like Tshipise "koppie" reaching above the trees in the glowing evening sun.



The Tshipise "koppie"



# Green Planet Initiative 2050™

## The Significance of agroforestry practice

# AGROFORESTRY

The incorporation of trees or shrubs with other crops and/or livestock using at least one of the many types of integration.

### Types of Agroforestry

#### Shelterbelts, Hedgerows

One or more rows of closely spaced trees and/or shrubs planted at the right angles to protect crops, soils, animals, and buildings from wind pressure. Utilize along fence lines or as buffers.

→ Enhance crop yields, reduce wind erosion, shelter livestock and crops, capture water runoff and nutrients, improve irrigation efficiency.

#### Alley Cropping

Planting of rows of trees and/or shrubs to intentionally create alleys where crops are produced.

→ Income diversification, marginal land improvement, shelter livestock and crops, and improve wildlife habitat.

#### Timberbelts

Multiple rows of trees planted for environmental benefits and production. Create buffers between urban areas and agricultural activities.

→ Enhance crop yields, wind protection, soil conservation and wildlife habitat.

#### Silvopasture

Integrating trees, forage, and the grazing of animals in a mutually beneficial way.

→ Improve overall productivity and long-term income due to the simultaneous production of tree crops, forage, and livestock. Increases carbon sequestration.

#### Integrated Riparian Management

Area along each side of specific natural water areas in which vegetation management and protection are required to protect water quality and wildlife habitat.

→ Protects water quality, provides wildlife habitat, enhances resiliency to floods and droughts.

#### Forest Farming

Different from wild harvesting, the management of crops under a managed tree canopy. Intentionally uses vertical space and a specific microclimate to cultivate crops.

→ Extra income and diversification, high-value products, ecologically responsible way of managing invasive species.

Resources  
BC Ministry of Agriculture (April 2010) Agroforestry Factsheet: Windbreaks/Shelterbelts, Timberbelts, Buffers. [https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/siteinfo/related-resources-and-industry/agriculture-and-soil/food/agricultural-land-and-environment/agroforestry/100100-3\\_Shelterbelts.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/siteinfo/related-resources-and-industry/agriculture-and-soil/food/agricultural-land-and-environment/agroforestry/100100-3_Shelterbelts.pdf)  
Powell, George (n/a) Agroforestry: Opportunities to Integrate Production, Diversification and Conservation. [PowerPoint presentation]  
BC Agroforestry Industry Development Initiative [https://www.forestinbc.ca/\\_Library/PDF\\_presentation\\_agroforestry\\_0019\\_powell.pdf](https://www.forestinbc.ca/_Library/PDF_presentation_agroforestry_0019_powell.pdf)

**FarmFolk CityFolk**

Forests are crucial for biodiversity conservation, climate change, and maintaining functional ecosystems

## WHY DO FORESTS MATTER?

Forests cover about 31% of the world's total land area, or about four billion hectares

**31%**

Forests are crucial for biodiversity conservation, climate mitigation, and maintaining functional ecosystems

**80%**

Global forest area is now approximately 68 per cent of the estimated pre-industrial level

**68%**

Forests are the largest terrestrial sink of carbon, with intact forest landscapes containing 40% of above-ground forest carbon

**40%**

Forests have been under pressure from global demand for products, agricultural expansion, urbanization, and infrastructure development, leading to biodiversity loss and habitat fragmentation

**80%**

Eighty percent of Earth's land animals and plants live in forests, and many cannot survive the deforestation that destroys their habitats

**80%**

Source: IPBES Global Assessment Report on Land Degradation and Restoration, Regional Assessment for Africa, Regional Assessment for Asia and the Pacific

According to a global assessment of restoration potential, there are more than 2 billion Ha of deforested and degraded land around the world where opportunities for some type of restoration intervention may be realised.

Restoring forests and forest landscapes is an important step in regaining the health and functionality of these ecosystems <https://lnkd.in/dZ2CRB7H>.



United Nations | Department of Economic and Social Affairs | #UNForests #GlobalGoals



1000 year old olive trees, protected by UNESCO in Cyprus



Save the Date : SAIF/FSA Forestry Science Symposium : 26-27 November 2024

Please note that the Registration for the 2024 Forestry Science Symposium is now open.

For more information, please contact Wayne at [Wayne.Jones@sappi.com](mailto:Wayne.Jones@sappi.com) or Ronald Heath at [ronald@forestrysouthafrica.co.za](mailto:ronald@forestrysouthafrica.co.za).

We look forward to welcome you at the Symposium

For More interesting articles related to the Forestry Industry, visit the following websites / online magazines

<https://saforestryonline.co.za>

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

<https://forestrysouthafrica.co.za/fsa-magazine/>

### Interesting facts from FSA : Forestry Explained

#### GREEN DESERTS?

The irony of this myth is that if critics really understood deserts, they'd know that they are actually teeming with life. You just need to know where to look! The same is true for timber plantations.

At the scale of a timber compartment or stand, plantations are **MONOCULTURES**. **BUT** At a **LANDSCAPE LEVEL** they actually contribute to **CONSERVING** biodiversity.

Stands may only have **ONE** species of tree, but there will be **HUNDREDS** of other plants and animals found within them.

Only **70%** of forestry land is planted

For every **1,000** hectares: **700ha** planted, **300ha** unplanted. **50ha** of roads and buildings, **250ha** are conserved.

#### WHAT'S CONSERVED?

Conserved riparian areas\*, grasslands and indigenous forests provide important habitats for flora and fauna and increase water production.

\*A riparian area is the interface where the land meets a river or stream.

As a result, there is a network of wildlife corridors running through plantations.

#### AERIAL VIEW

**CREATED, MANAGED AND PROTECTED** by timber plantation owners in South Africa.

www.forestryexplained.co.za  
Additional Graphics, Vectors by Vecteezy, www.vecteezy.com.

[www.forestryexplained.co.za](http://www.forestryexplained.co.za)



## Top Student Award : Almé Jonker



### Where are you originally from (Town and Province)?

I am originally from Bloemfontein, but grew up in the beautiful Langebaan on the West Coast of the Western Cape.

### How did you hear about or decided to study forestry?

While attending Paarl Girls High School, I was introduced to wood product science as a fallback with inspiration to pursue a career in civil or industrial engineering. After matriculating, I pursued BSc Wood Product Science instead, which quickly ignited my passion for natural forestry. After a while, I changed my major to BSc Forestry and Natural Resources.

### Where did you study?

I studied and graduated at Stellenbosch University

### What are you currently doing?

I currently work as a Forest Engineer in Training at Sappi in Mpumalanga.

### What sort of job would you like to work in the future?

In the future, I would like to work in operations research, data science, planning or mensuration.

### Any advice to scholars considering forestry studies?

Advice to future forestry students out there: As a forestry student, you have the power to shape the future of our planet's forests - never underestimate the impact you can make, and always remember that every tree you plant, every tree you care for, and every decision you make has the potential to leave a lasting legacy.

So, stay curious, adapt to changing environmental conditions, and never stop learning.

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## Top Student Award : Bathandebonke Khumalo



### Where are you originally from (Town and Province)?

My name is Bathandebonke Khumalo I was born and bred in Piet Retief which is a small town situated in Mpumalanga province that is dominated by commercial forestry plantations.

### How did you hear about or decided to study forestry?

The aesthetics and machines used in forestry drew my attention to the industry. When I learnt that paper come from wood, I become fascinated how is this even possible how can something so hard be manufactured into paper, fortunately whilst in high school I attended a career guidance symposium in Mondi career guidance centre, that where I first heard about forestry and relevant subjects to choose in order to pursue a career in the field.

### Where did you study and what are you currently doing?

I am currently doing my first year Forester In Training (FIT) under Mondi in Midlands area with an aid of a Diploma qualification in forestry that I obtained in Nelson Mandela University 2023 George Campus.

### What sort of job would you like to work in the future?

In future I am planning to further my studies to PhD levels and be a manager for operations excellence.

### Any advice to scholars considering forestry studies?

My advice to scholars is, if you enjoy being outdoor, travelling, working with people, resource balancing and logistics-planning, then forestry is a good choice to get someone paying you for a lifetime doing what you love everyday.

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## Book the date! - 14th Fire management Symposium: Registration now open !


Registration for the Fire Symposium is now open! Please follow the link below to register.

<https://forms.office.com/r/2DjiWCM6WR>

The field day (7 November) will include two parts. Our first stop will be at a fire demonstration on a sugarcane farm and the second stop will take us to the Shafton Airstrip where a mini expo will take place.

There are already lively interest in the expo and it promise to be a worth while event to attend on its own. The second day will end with our gala dinner at Halliwell Country Inn.

For more information, please contact Tiaan at [Tiaan.Pool@mandela.ac.za](mailto:Tiaan.Pool@mandela.ac.za)



The Forestry Department of the Nelson Mandela University (NMU) invites you to the 14<sup>th</sup> Fire Management Symposium:

*"Educating and training for effective wildfire management".*

**Date:** 6-8 November 2024  
**Venue:** Halliwell Country Inn, Karkloof region, KwaZulu-Natal province, South Africa

**Background and purpose**  
Globally, effective wildfire management is impeded by a lack of integration between research results, technological development, and efforts by fire managers. In the end, all role-players on the wildfire stage strive to prevent, suppress, and protect the environment, human wellbeing, and assets against wildfire.

This event aims to integrate the efforts of natural resource managers, engineers, fire managers, educators/trainers, and scientists. Through an integrated approach, different role-players will be sensitised about each other's realities, successes, and failures.

Understanding the needs and gaps within organisations involved in wildfire management will open up new avenues that will support the fire management effort.

You are therefore invited to join fire managers and authorities from different disciplines and land uses (Nature Conservation, Agriculture, Disaster Management, Forestry, Local Authorities, etc.) for a range of informative presentations, and exciting networking opportunities.

## 14th Nelson Mandela University Fire Management Symposium



## Congratulations Prof Ben-Erik van Wyk!



Prof Ben-Erik received the prestigious Lifetime Award at the NSTF Awards for his extensive work as a botanist.

Known as the 'Science Oscars of South Africa', the NSTF Awards recognise outstanding contributions to science, technology, and innovation.

Prof Ben-Erik received this award for his contribution as a botanist and an authority on traditional and commercial uses of plants, with numerous books and publications (many of them proudly published by Briza) covering all or most of the socially relevant and commercialised plant species of the world.

Prof Ben-Erik van Wyk is an author and member of Briza Publications CK.



Watch the Youtube video of the Award ceremony : [Prof Ben-Erik van Wyk received Lifetime Award at the NSTF Awards \(youtube.com\)](#)

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<b>DFFE representative</b>	Vacant	

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## July Birthdays



### JULY BIRTHDAYS

03 Jul	STU VALINTINE	22 Jul	NOMVUYISO TSHANGISA
08 Jul	DIRK STAAL	23 Jul	NIC DE WAAL
08 Jul	ROB PALLETT	23 Jul	ANTON KUNNEKE
11 Jul	JACK HUBBLE	24 Jul	PHILLIP McINTYRE
16 Jul	TONY WINTER	25 Jul	DEAN DA COSTA
19 Jul	KAREN EATWELL	25 Jul	ROB GARDNER
20 Jul	MIKE HOWARD	31 Jul	RORY MACK
21 Jul	LUVUYO TYHODA		

## August Birthdays



### AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

02 Aug	LEBOGANG MPHAHLELE	14 Aug	NEELS ESTERHUYSE
04 Aug	GERHARD GOUS	14 Aug	LELETHU SINUKA
05 Aug	EDDIE SCHROEDER	15 Aug	WILHELM BARNARD
07 Aug	WARREN HEATHMAN	19 Aug	NICO ERASMUS
07 Aug	MANDY ALLPASS	19 Aug	DIEK VAN DER ZEL
08 Aug	MARTIN VAN EIJK	28 Aug	LEISEGANG KEN
09 Aug	ANDIE IMMELMAN	28 Aug	FLIC BLAKEWAY
09 Aug	RUTH BEZUIDENHOUT	29 Aug	TERRY NEWTON
12 Aug	JACOB CROUS	31 Aug	JOHN HUGHES
12 Aug	CLIVE MATTISON	31 Aug	STEFAN DU PLESSIS

***Happy Birthday and congratulations to all our members who celebrate(d) their birthdays in July 2024 as well as those members who will celebrate their birthdays in August 2024.***

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## 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.

An extra R50 per book will be charged if we need to courier the book to you.

I am  a member  non-member of the SAIF.

Name	
Company	
Postal address	
Contact number	
Email address	

Bank details: Nedbank Branch code: 169745 Account: 1697009913 Account name: SAIF  
Email proof of payment to: [satif@mweb.co.za](mailto:satif@mweb.co.za).