

# Southern African Institute of Forestry



Delivering a professional service to forestry

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## From the President's Desk

### What is the World Coming to?

Thank you very much for some positive response to the previous newsletter including the question whether we have lost our critical thinking. We are surely living in uncertain times and as the Chinese put it "interesting times" and we face numerous challenges but so did the people we were before us.

On a recent visit to the Novelquip factory / workshop in George owned by Helgaard Steenkamp, son of the late Jaap Steenkamp , I saw the following very interesting quote from Henry Ford (1863- 1947) " Thinking is the hardest work there is, which is probably the reason so few engage in it". I also saw another from the famous car designer and builder "When everything seems to be going against you, remember that the airplane takes off against the wind, not with it." (inspirationBoost.com). These two quotes from a wise person like Henry Ford are as valid today as they were almost 100 years ago when he expressed these views.

I also heard this interesting quote from a lady at a recent meeting which I attended, namely a quote from the founder of modern-day Dubai, Sheikh Rashid who was asked about his country and how he would perceive the future. He replied as follows: "My grandfather rode a camel, I ride a Mercedes, my son ride a Land Rover , and my grandson will ride a Land Rover, but my great grandson will ride a camel again". He was asked why he said that to which he replied "Hard time create strong men, strong men create easy times.



SAIF Calendar March 2022: Photographer: Roger Poole from KZN Branch: "Lady Beetle on *Acacia mearnsii*"



Easy times create weak men, weak men create difficult times. Many will not understand it, but you have to raise warriors not parasites” (Roland Francis, Sept. 2021). This is certainly food for thought and might also be applicable in our days and our part of the world.

Little did we know that we might soon face a situation where we will have to consider riding camels or maybe in our South African context, transport on horseback or other modes of transport if the petrol price indeed reach the horrific price level envisaged by some economists around R40/ liter!

On a recent work-related trip to Malawi at the end of 2021, it struck me once again 25 years since my previous visit, that our perception of poverty in S.A. certainly differs a lot from that in Malawi. During field trips, I noticed the very neatly cultivated lands and asked what implements they used to plough them. I soon learnt that almost all of the fields were prepared doing hoeing by hand.



Neatly prepared field at the end of the dry season in preparation for the new planting season

What was also evident during my short visit to this friendly heart of Africa, was the use of bicycles as modes of transport ranging from single seater bicycles, to passenger bikes carrying one seated passenger at the back and even “freight carriers” transporting anything from huge bags filled with freshly picked mangos, to supplies like firewood and even livestock! This proves once again that “Where there is a will there is a way”.

Yes, indeed there are motorised taxis just like back home in South Africa but many persons rely on bicycles for their daily transport and where distances are shorter, they walk from one place to another. We have definitely become very reliant on road transport in South Africa.



Early morning traffic in the town of Kasungu with only bicycles & no other vehicles visible

The “prophets -of doom” (realists?) say that we should prepare for more power load-shedding which might extend to until now uncharted territory and even a Stage 10 (12 hours with power and 12 hours without power on a daily basis), was mentioned this past week. We will then really face an energy crisis comparable to that of 1973 and even worse as to the best of my knowledge we at least had uninterrupted power supply then. This would certainly resemble a situation of “doom and gloom”! There is no doubt that the South African economy will suffer severely and the forest and forest products industry will not be spared under such circumstances.

Some of the biggest inventions and innovations however were born out of need during times of crisis when people were supposedly down and out. A crisis certainly calls for “out of the box” thinking and foresters are known just like farmers, as people who can come up with a plan and rise to the occasion! Perhaps we will then be forced to sit down and think again/ think more as we might have more precious time on our hands than usual when we often conveniently use the excuse “I don’t have time to do this and that” . It might incidentally also just give the earth which we call “home” and its resources some much needed rest from over-exploitation and suffering under the heavy burden placed on its resources.

Back to the people of Malawi: It was evident that the people in the country-side (rural areas) had very limited resources and lived in relative poverty. Despite this, we can learn from them that they were friendly, hard-working and God-fearing people. If you have not seen the movie “**The boy who harnessed the wind**” which was mostly filmed in the Wimbe Trading post in the Kasungu Province, I would like to strongly recommend that you watch this striking movie!



## Meet the Members of the Current SAIF Council

Over the next few months, one member of the current SAIF Council will be introduced to the readers.

**Current President of the Institute Braam du Preez**



Family Photo: Leonora, Braam, Desirée & Andries

Braam was born in Graaff-Reinet, schooled in Port Elizabeth and went to study Forestry at Stellenbosch University graduating in 1981 and thereafter completed 2 years military training.

He started his forestry career at the Tsitsikamma Region of the Department of Forestry as Assistant District Forest Officer under the late Louis van Zyl who was succeeded by Eric Droomer where he was exposed to a variety of activities. During this period he met his future wife Desirée who completed her BSc. Forestry degree in 1987 majoring in Forest Management & Conservation.

After 5 years in Humansdorp & P.E an opportunity arose as District Forest Officer: Drakenstein in the Western Cape Forestry Region in Cape Town and after that followed a period as Area Manager for SAFCOL Boland. During this period he was privileged to work under mentors like Angus Wilson and Georg von dem Bussche. He completed his career in commercial forestry at MTO Forestry as Forestry Risk Manager first at Jonkershoek and later in George until early retirement in 2017.

A new season in life followed as consultant and thanks to experience gained with both managing veld- and forest fires as well as fire investigations opened opportunities as fire investigator. He even tried his hand at part-time lecturing at NMU (George Campus) and Stellenbosch University. He is currently working on contract at PG Bison as Risk Forester three days per week.

This also resulted in having slightly more time available for volunteer work such as at the local Neighbourhood Watch and volunteering at Parkrun events and obviously participating in the activities of the SAIF first at Branch Level and then nationally. Other interests include camping, hiking and mountain biking.

## National Water Week 2022

**National Water Week takes place from 20- 26 March 2022. Water and Sanitation launches National Water Week**

DWS sets the ball rolling on the National Water Week and water month activities in the N-West. The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) launched its National Water Week and water month activities to be celebrated in collaboration with government departments, district municipalities, private companies, academia, and community members in the North West Province. Under the theme: *“Groundwater- making the invisible, visible”*, the National Water week and water month collaborative activities will respond to the current and future water challenges the Province is facing.

On behalf of the NW DWS Provincial Head, Mr Chadwick Lobakeng, the Director of Water Services Support, Mr Lebogang Bogopa announced the public education and awareness activities that will be conducted throughout the province and pleaded with all stakeholders particularly the media to participate in advocating for water that must be protected, conserved and used in a sustainable manner as South Africa is a water-scarce country. He indicated that the Department continues to support all water users including Water Service Authorities that supply communities with water and emphasized that Municipalities have to acquire technically skilled personnel to ensure that water is supplied to all in a sustainable manner. This is an issue that also received prominence in the recent National Water and Sanitation Summit.

In the midst of all water challenges and as per Minister of Water and Sanitation Mr Senzo Mchunu issued a directive to launch more water and sanitation forums in the Province.

Mr Sputnik Ratau added that during the recent Water Summit held on the 18-19 February 2022, the Minister called on all stakeholders to maintain active and sustainable partnerships. *“Already South Africa is a water-scarce country and chronic factors such as climate change, population growth and water pollution have also exacerbated the current water challenges and this should encourage water users to continuously employ wise water use in their everyday activities”*, he said.  
<https://www.gov.za/>

## Rob Thompson Column March 2022

### The Black Swan's secret.

In the short space of time between me submitting the February newsletter article, to now, Russia decided to invade Ukraine, in what has turned out to be the largest, and most destructive military assault on the European continent since World War 2.

Given the reach of the internet and social media, one can literally follow the invasion convoys, resultant battles, shelling of cities, Mig dog fights, and evacuation columns real time and see first-hand the devastation and misery being wreaked on the country and its populace.

The tentacles of this new war are far reaching and are gradually spreading across the globe in unexpected and unprecedented guises. Whether we like it or not, we will all ultimately be affected, one way or the other, despite being thousands of kilometers away from the front lines.

Even the forestry industry is not immune to the fall out. Timber emanating from Russia and Belarus has been declared conflict timber by certification bodies (FSC and PEFC). On top of the trade sanctions imposed on this timber, it also therefore loses its certified status. Major paper producers have, as a result, stopped imports from Russia. Countries such as Finland, will now have to look further afield to replace the timber that they depended on Russia so heavily for. Sanctions and counter sanctions are causing oil and fuel costs to rocket. Two weeks ago, we were complaining when we were talking R21/liter but it is not too far-fetched to start contemplating the impact of R40 / liter. So ok, we might make do by travelling less in our personal vehicles, but, have we really considered the impact on our imports, exports and long distance road haulage?

Paper manufactures' profit margins will drop significantly considering that 20%+ of production cost goes into energy. Lower profit margins mean restricted pulp buying, which means in turn, restricted raw material (timber) sales...and it goes without saying

that every leg of the supply chain will in turn face its own and specific escalating costs. Overall timber / timber product vessel availability may be impacted on given the restrictions on access in and out of Russian ports. Already the port pulp inventories in Chinese ports are building up again (remember this happening at the peak of the pandemic) and is likely to continue given reduced movement of the product. Less pulp movement means more of a bottleneck between pulp producers and the raw material producers, with further chain reactions down to you, me the labour force and arguably the resource itself.

Whilst I do see myself as a "glass half-full" type of person, I must admit that the events over recent years and months have made it difficult not to imagine a leak in that glass! I had always thought that Black Swan events were outliers that occasionally popped out from the reeds and disappeared from view again, just as quickly. Who would have thought that unbeknownst to us, they were breeding surreptitiously in those dense, inaccessible reeds, and were conspiring to emerge in a stream of cygnets (look it up) that would ultimately form a literal flock of adult and robust Black Swans intent on causing carnage. To name a few, we've had a global pandemic, major extreme weather events, widespread looting and citizen defense units springing up, major fire destruction of key Port infrastructure, poor rail service delivery, collapse of State governance, widespread water and electricity outages and now a major European war...and it's 2022 people! Quite surreal!

Commodity prices have surged on the back of the sanctions on Russia, particularly palladium and coal. The dollar price of coal literally doubled overnight and continues to gain ground. It takes a lot of effort to not imagine the perceived leak in my glass getting bigger when I think of how things could have been had we now had a first-class rail network, world-class port services and a well maintained road network, ready and able to capitalize on the commodity and timber product windfalls that have, and are likely to continue, to come our way.

Fortunately however, when overhearing a conversation between some students at the school at which my wife teaches, the glass half-full guy suddenly came back to life! Like the little boy in the dyke in Holland, I was able to plug the leak with a sudden epiphany (as opposed to a finger).

One group of students was excitedly telling another group that they were off on an excursion into Europe during the next school holiday, to which a solemn, but clearly insightful individual in the other group responded with..."Oh shame!".

Suddenly South Africa did not seem like such a bad place to be after all.

We have special skills and positioning that make our stay here quite palatable, specifically when seen in context of the current global fall out. Our inherent sense of humour in the face of the incredulous, resoluteness in the face of political folly, resignation to the fact that our lights do go off...regularly, acceptance that traffic regulations are merely guidelines, common liking for the smell of braai-lighters in the morning (or any other time for that matter), ability to instinctively detect patches of road between the potholes, sincere thankfulness that our afternoon thunder storms are not incoming artillery salvos and extensive geographical distance between us and the closest potential nuclear warhead detonation, all contribute towards making this place simply fantastic.

Yes, we have to deal with Black Swans but we can and we will.

One positive thing that this latest flock has taught us, is to be grateful for the good things that we do have. In contrast to millions of others elsewhere, we still have the opportunity to flourish personally and professionally. In fact, just as is illustrated by the commodity boom, a little known fact about Black Swans is that they lay golden eggs and hide them in the most unlikely of spots. With some perseverance, no doubt a great deal of frustration, an inordinate energy expenditure, many missed turns and overcoming feelings of angst and gloom,

certainly there to be found. Once discovered, an egg makes all the aforementioned so well worthwhile.

Happy hunting!

## **International Day of Forests**



### **Live high-level event**

#### **Inspire for the Future – The Role of Forests in Ensuring Sustainable Production and Consumption**

Join the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) and IUFRO World Congress 2024 | Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) at a high-level panel discussion to celebrate the International Day of Forests 2022 under the theme "Forests and sustainable production and consumption".

Today the world is facing unprecedented challenges, with climate change being among the most pressing of all. These challenges threaten the well-being of people and nature, and call for immediate action to develop innovative and creative solutions that set the world on a path to peace and prosperity on a healthy planet.

At this event, a high-level panel will discuss how forest-based innovations, resource efficiency, forest-based products and ecosystem services can contribute to a sustainable lifestyle and accelerate a shift towards more sustainable consumption and production. These efforts help to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, health, wellbeing and a transition towards low-carbon and green economies.

**March 21, 2022**

**15.00–18.00 GST/12.00–15.00 CET**

**Online and at the Swedish Pavilion, *The Forest*, Expo 2020, Dubai**





### Key messages

**The forest sector generates jobs for at least 33 million people, and forest products are used by billions.**

It is estimated that more than half the world’s economic production [i.e. GDP] depends on ecosystem services, including those provided by forests. More than half the total world population is estimated to use non-timber forest products to support their well-being and livelihoods.

**Forests are essential for planetary health and human well-being.**

Forests cover nearly one-third of the Earth’s land surface and provide people with goods such as timber, fuel, food and fodder, help combat climate change, protect biodiversity, soils, rivers and reservoirs, and serve as areas where people can get close to nature.

**Sustainably using forests will help us move to an economy based on renewable, reusable and recyclable materials.**

Wood can be used for diverse purposes, with lower environmental impacts than many alternative materials. Wood used once can be reused and recycled, thereby extending its life and further reducing its material footprint.

**Expanding the use of forest products contributes to carbon neutrality.**

Science and innovation are producing exciting new products from wood and trees, including textiles, foods, construction materials, cosmetics, biochemicals, bioplastics and medicines. Replacing less-sustainable materials with renewable wood and tree-based products can reduce the carbon footprint.

**Sustainable wood is an essential material for greening cities.**

The building and construction sector is responsible for almost 40 percent of energy-related greenhouse gas emissions globally. Innovation is making it feasible to use more wood in tall buildings and other than many

other construction materials, and provides good insulation.

**Forests are vital for sustaining food production.**

Forest ecosystem services – such as the maintenance of biodiversity, climate regulation, water and soil quality, and pollination – are essential for sustainable agrifood systems and feeding a growing global population. In addition, more than three-quarters of rural households worldwide are estimated to harvest wild foods from forests and other environments.

**More action is needed to halt deforestation and degradation.**

The world has lost 420 million hectares of forest – an area bigger than India – since 1990, and deforestation continues at about 10 million hectares per year, due mainly to agricultural expansion. Managing forests sustainably can help reduce deforestation and degradation, restore degraded landscapes, and provide people with jobs and renewable materials.

**Choose wood products from legal and sustainable sources.**

Consumers can contribute to the sustainable use of forests by choosing wood products with labelling or certification confirming that they come from legal and sustainable sources.

<https://www.fao.org/international-day-of-forests/key-messages/en/>

### Human Rights Day : 21 March 2022



## International Day of Forests – 21 March 2022

The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 21 March the International Day of Forests in 2012. The Day celebrates and raises awareness of the importance of all types of forests.

By promoting forests' sustained survival, we ensure our economy, ecosystem, and species also continue to thrive. The day promotes Sustainable Development Goals where forest-dependent communities can continue to grow and come out of poverty.

The theme for each International Day of Forests is chosen by the Collaborative Partnership on Forests. The theme for 2022 is "**Forests and sustainable production and consumption.**"

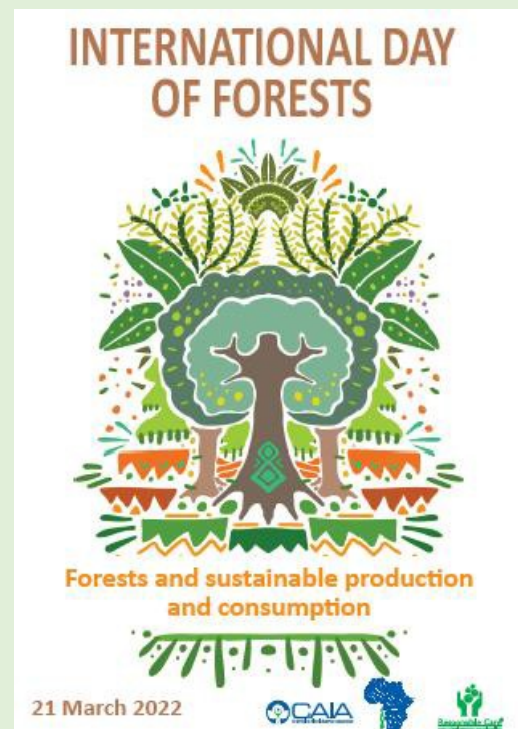
Responsible forestry requires attention to sustainable, efficient, and effective practices that have the lowest environmental impact and yield the greatest social and economic benefit, while producing an array of renewable and versatile end products.

### Forestry Facts from a South African perspective

1. South Africa is a lightly forested country with a plantation area of about 1,27 million ha or about 1% of the total South African land area. Most of South Africa's forestry plantations are located in Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal. Other plantations are spread across the Eastern Cape, Limpopo and the Western Cape.
2. The South African forestry industry employs about 160 000 people which also includes the pulp and paper industry, sawmilling, timber board and timber mining.
3. The forestry sector is significant for our economy and is responsible for 11% of the country's agricultural GDP and 5% of manufacturing GDP.
4. The forest products industry also ranks among the top exporting industries in the country.
5. South Africa has an amazing biodiversity with more than 1 700 tree and shrub species. Some are threatened, and 47 species are protected.
6. National Arbour Week is celebrated every year around the first week in September, to promote the planting of indigenous trees.
7. Commercial forest plantations meet most of South Africa's demand for wood, making the country mainly self-sufficient with regard to timber requirements.

8. Plantations of exotic species are commercially successful and cover about 1,2% of arable, agricultural land.
9. There are three main types of trees that grow on commercial South African plantations: pine (44%), Eucalyptus (44%) (also known as blue gum) and wattle (12%).
10. The plantation forests of South Africa use just 3% of the country's total water resources. Irrigation is seldom utilised in forest plantation management, but this means that rainfall needs to be higher than 750 mm per year in areas where commercial forestry is practised.
11. The commercial forestry industry in South Africa is committed to sustainable forest management and follows strict environmental codes of practice in all plantations and processing activities. Specific species of trees are planted, harvested and replanted in sustainable rotation. This process ensures that there are trees at various stages of maturity, ready to harvest for generations to come.

*"Forests are the world's air-conditioning system – the lungs of the planet – and we are on the verge of switching it off."* – Prince Charles



## Forestry South Africa publishes its Pests and Diseases Annual Report for 2021

The conclusive 20-page FSA Pests and Diseases Annual Report is testament to the collaboration, commitment, expertise and dedication embedded within the Forestry Sector. These attributes are particularly encouraging when tackling the threats posed by pests and diseases, as it is only through sector-wide collaboration, that we can respond quickly and effectively and find cost-effective solutions. This comprehensive report showcases the FSA funded research that often goes unnoticed but provides a front line of defence for the whole sector.

*“By summarising the research efforts in this way, Forestry South Africa (FSA) members will not only see how their money is being effectively spent but understand the leverage it gives the sector when applying for additional research funding, specifically from government”, explains Ronald Heath, FSA Director of Research and Protection. “We will always need to search for new and improved measures to combat the threats to the sector. Knowing that our sector can produce research of the highest calibre through collaboration, often involving international partnerships, fills me with confidence that our sector is suitably capacitated for the future.”*

The report provides an overview of the research being conducted by the Eucalyptus Pest and Pathogen Working Group, Sirex Control Consortium, the Wattle Rust Working Group and the Timber Industry Pesticide Working Group (TIPWG). While there is a lot to celebrate, including the depth of research expertise found within the South African Forestry Sector, the report paints a stark picture on several fronts.

Firstly, confirming the presence of four new pest species:

1. *Phytophthora insolita* – the pathogenicity of which is unknown and warrants trials to compare it with other *Phytophthora* species associated with eucalypt damage.
2. *Parvosporobolus* like sp. – this novel fungus is part of a family associated with eucalypt canker.
3. *Cinara pinivora* – Giant conifer aphid has been confirmed in the Limpopo and KwaZulu-Natal Provinces.
4. *Essigella californica* – the Monterey pine aphid has been confirmed in Mpumalanga. For both aphid species an assessment of damage, geographic and host distribution and natural enemies will be needed.

Perhaps of more concern, the report highlights the devastating impact the loss of government funding has had on several working groups, perhaps most notably the loss of the National Sirex Control Programme and the reduced monitoring capacity for many of the other

working groups. While Industry has stepped in, with many FSA members bolstering funding to ensure working groups can continue to function - albeit at a reduced capacity, a more sustainable, long-term solution – we hope via the Presidentially-led Public Private Growth Initiative (PPGI) and Forestry Sector Masterplan - needs to be sought if South African forestry is to remain globally competitive and play an influential role in South Africa’s green economic recovery.

The comprehensive report covering 24 pages can be downloaded from the Forestry South Africa website at

<https://www.forestrysouthafrica.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/FSA-Forestry-Pest-and-Disease-Annual-Report-2021-FINAL.pdf>





**Tree of the Month: Dodonaea viscosa var  
Angustifolia – Sand olive – Sandolien**

Dodonaea viscosa is a shrub/small tree native to tropical and subtropical Africa, Australia and India. This evergreen shrub is usually multi-stemmed and normally reaches a mature height between 2-8m tall. In South Africa, it grows well in a wide range of habitats from arid, semi-arid to high rainfall regions and is frost-hardy.

Leaves of this tree are hairless, variable and spirally arranged. They are borne towards the end of branches. The leaves secrete gummy exudate which gives them a shiny appearance. The bark is grey, finely fissured and peeling, revealing a red underbark. It bears inconspicuous pale green flowers without petals from April to July. Male and female flowers are borne on separate trees. After flowering, the tree produces winged roundish capsules which change colour from yellow to reddish pink when mature.

This plant is used extensively to control soil erosion. It is planted as a decorative shrub in small gardens due to its shiny foliage and beautiful pink-red winged fruits. This shrub is also suitable for hedging since it responds well to pruning. It attracts many butterflies and birds to the garden. Since the Sand olive is a small tree, the root system is not classified as invasive. It is both wind and drought resistant.



The Leaves and flowers of Sand Olive



The Characteristic reddish coloured leaves of sand olive



Attractive tree which is very versatile and adaptable

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<b>MARCH 2022</b>	<b>BIRTHDAYS</b>
KIRKMAN KAREN	GREYLING IZETTE
BREEDT BRUCE	CHRISTIE STUART
MASONDO SIPHELELE	MAPHALALA KWANELE
LITTLE KEITH	NAIDOO NAVESH
MULLER BARRY	POOLE ROGER
VILANE TEMBA	KANZLER ARNULF
MUIR IVAN	BEPETE FARAI
GELDENHUYS COERT	DE BEER ANTON
KEYSER VOLLEY	CELE JOEL
NEL ANDRE	JACOBS SCHALK
DE KOCK LOUIS	



# The Southern African Institute of Forestry

## Handbook order form

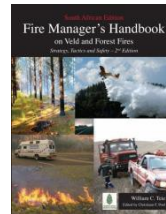
The Southern African Institute of Forestry publishes three industry specific handbooks.

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



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A bulk discount of 10% applies on orders of 10 or more copies.  
 Price includes VAT and postage **(within SA)**

I am  a member  non-member of the SAIF.

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