

Southern African Institute of Forestry



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Delivering a professional service to forestry

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Editorial

More questions than answers

The current year (2026) has not even reached the end of its first quarter, and we already experienced several local and international events which directly and indirectly affect the Forest and Forest products industry in South Africa and all of our lives.

All of us are waiting with abated breath what the final raise in the price of diesel will be. The outlook doesn't look good and the under recovery hovered around R10-00 per liter and expectations of an increase of higher than that. A high diesel price will obviously directly affect the cost of agriculture and forestry operations negatively. On top of the anticipated huge price increase, there are also concerns regarding the weakness of the Rand against major currencies as well as the availability of diesel.

Would this be the first time that we as South Africans and more specifically the forest and forest products industry, face similar major issues and challenges? Most probably not.

This is now the time to look for the silver lining on the proverbial dark cloud and look for the potential opportunities in the crisis. This is also a time when cool heads are required in order to steer us through these troubled waters. Forestry as a long-term investment and industry with several inherent risks could actually lead by example.

We are privileged to have competent and innovative leaders in the industry and organisations who can guide us. We are also very privileged to still have with us stalwarts, amongst them Georg and Klaus (see photo), who both contributed greatly to build and shape the South African forestry industry. We still have access to them and can tap into their knowledge and experience.

Let's seize the day and do our best :“Carpe diem”!



Two forestry legends, Georg von dem Bussche & Prof.Klaus von Gadow, meet at Diepwalle Forest

(Photo supplied by Georg von dem Busche)



From the President's Desk By Bruce Talbot

The thing with trying to do forestry on a small sphere travelling at 107 000 km/h in an elliptical orbit around a heat source is that there are inevitably going to be problems.

These problems are without doubt exacerbated by converting geologically stable fossilized hydrocarbons to atmospheric gasses at a rate of 38 thousand million metric tonnes per year – but even more so, by fighting over them. Through the root network, word has spread that parts of KZN experienced the driest February in 40 years. This was alarming for a couple of reasons, firstly, we had finally gotten sediment traps for an FSA sponsored research project installed and were rubbing our hands in expectation of the quantities of data that would soon be flowing our way, and secondly, I well remember the drought 40 years ago, it was one that really strained agricultural and forestry communities, the extent of which hasn't been experienced in the midlands since. The abundance of rain we have gotten used to has been very positive for tree growth, but is perhaps tapering off for this cycle, and our expectations with it.

But for now, climate is perhaps not the biggest challenge, markets remain suppressed and industries are tightening their belts in the hope of seeing this through. In the SAIF, we are all dependent on the economic success of our industries, whether as direct employees, service providers, or in education or other support functions. On top of that, Mr Trump's foray into Iran, sets the cat amongst the business pigeons, with rocketing fuel prices, market insecurity, and a general tendency amongst investors and financiers to drop everything and grab onto bullion, which may have other advantages for our country as a gold producer, but undermines stability, trade and investment. This is in addition to Mr Trump's personal dislike of us in particular.

It was therefore with some satisfaction that we heard that Dr Dirk Laengen, who head's up Mondi's global fibre sourcing, was willing to present the keynote address at our upcoming SAIF AGM on June 18th. Please diarise this date as Dirk will be sharing his considerable experience in sailing stormy seas, having taken up his position just shortly before Mr Putin decided that he needed more lebensraum, which prompted Mondi's exit from Russia and effectively removed a considerable chunk of the European timber supply chain from the equation.

That, together with the introduction of the EUDR requirements, and a number of other triggered calamities impacting European and global supply, have ensured that Dirk should have enough material to keep us entertained for at least forty minutes.

When global disruption is the order of the day, some solace can perhaps be found in sticking to a plan that ensures that longer term aims and objectives are targeted and that the daily, weekly and monthly activities continue to be carried out in contributing to that. One of the important things not to lose sight of in challenging times is the need for betterment, and part of that betterment is research. This year sees the conclusion of a large 3-year research initiative, facilitated by FSA and the DSTI, one that has addressed issues broadly across the industry. The point of bringing this up

here in the concluding paragraph, is simply to provide a heads-up of the Forest Science Symposium (FSS) that will be held in Stellenbosch on the 23-25th of November 2026. This is always a flagship event for the SAIF and we, together with FSA and the University of Stellenbosch are fully involved in making sure that it once again serves its role in bringing together researchers and practitioners in ensuring that the latest results are widely discussed and disseminated. We look forward to seeing many of you in Stellenbosch in November.

Southern African Institute of Forestry - AGM Guest

Presentation: Dr. Dirk Längin
Thursday 18th June 2026 at 13:00
(online - registration required)



Disruptive Times: International and regional wood supply in the context of geopolitical crises and climate-change driven vectors- A European-centric perspective



Focus on Forestry 2026 🌲

📅 21–23 April 2026

📍 Karkloof Country Club – Howick

Final countdown to Focus on Forestry 2026



FOCUS ON FORESTRY 2026
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Other Upcoming Events



THE GATEWAY TO AFRICA'S TIMBER TRADE
9–11 JUNE 2026
Gallagher Convention Centre | Johannesburg | South Africa

WoodEX for Africa

Visit the website for more information <https://ischp26.co.za/>. Or contact Prof. Brand Wessels, Associate Professor in Wood Science at Stellenbosch University | T: +27 21 808 3319 | Cell: +27 (0)83 778 0517 E: cbw@sun.ac.za



The 9th International Scientific Conference on Hardwood Products, Stellenbosch, South Africa, 8-11 Sept 2026

The 9th International Scientific Conference on Hardwood Products (ISCHP) will be hosted by Stellenbosch University in South Africa. This will be a joint conference with the Wood Quality Modelling Working Party (IUFRO 5.01.04) where there will also be parallel sessions related to wood quality modelling. The conference will be between 8-11 September 2026.

The ISCHP conference is a well-established event where attendants will have a chance to interact with colleagues from all over the world working on hardwood products and processing research. This time ISCHP will be joined by the Wood Quality Modelling working group from IUFRO, which is an excellent fit for hardwood products research. The previous ISCHP conferences were held in Canada (2007), France (2009), USA (2011), Italy (2013), Canada (2015), Finland (2017), The Netherlands (2019), and Portugal (2024).

Keynote speakers at the event will include prof. Holger Militz (Georg-August-University, Germany), prof. Alexis Achim (Université Laval, Canada), prof. Alfredo Dias (University of Coimbra, Portugal), prof. José Nivaldo Garcia (University of Sao Paulo, Brazil), prof. Gregory Nolan (University of Tasmania, Australia) and prof. Dave Drew (Stellenbosch University). Apart from the stimulating interaction with colleagues, attendants can enjoy the scenic town Stellenbosch, surrounded by several mountain ranges and more than 200 wine estates. Early bird registration will close on 31 March 2026. South African and SADC attendants will receive a special discount.

Visit the website for more information <https://ischp26.co.za/>. Or contact Prof. Brand Wessels, Associate Professor in Wood Science at Stellenbosch University | T: +27 21 808 3319 | Cell: +27 (0)83 778 0517 E: cbw@sun.ac.za



The Rob Thompson column

Field notes from a mature stand.

Warning....Baby Boomer inputs loading. Overly sensitive readers are advised to move onto the next article ...now! (Note: Written by someone who still reverses a stick shift bakkie without a camera).

Think of this as a site inspection note left on the bonnet of your vehicle by an older colleague who has walked a few more kilometres, planted a few more hectares, and survived more “once-in-a-generation” crises than many of the readers hereof.

(Oh, and by the way, just why is your bakkie standing idle and unmanned at the side of the road? Be advised that HR and HS would like a chat).

With the globe now again in crisis, the forestry industry under economic duress, and many of us wondering where the next liter of diesel is coming from, I got to thinking (even more than usual).

I write this with affection, mild concern, and a sense that something important is quietly going wrong in the environment we inhabit—not just the one with trees, rivers, and soils, and a rampant orange crested cuckoo, but the one inside our heads.

Forestry practitioners understand environments. We assess risk instinctively. We know when a site looks productive but is actually fragile and vulnerable. Our current environment looks efficient, connected, and convenient but the moment you scratch the surface you realise that it’s a bit like that shallow soil site you once tried unsuccessfully to plant eucalyptus on.

We are faced with environmental degradation, biodiversity decline, overpopulation and pressure on land and water, global conflict streaming live to our pockets, medical advances that keep us alive but oddly unfit and devices that promise connection whilst quietly hollowing out our attention and mental acuity. Nevertheless, many of us wander through this landscape, without curiosity and as if it has no impact on our physical health, judgement, or mental alacrity.

In forestry, that kind of optimism usually ends with a write-off and / or an intimate encounter with a disciplinary panel.

Don’t get me wrong. I am not anti-technology. I enjoy a good map layer as much as the next guy and I even

appreciate WhatsApp, particularly when it tells me that the finance meeting has been postponed. Somewhere along the line however, technology, or “the tool”, has started to give the orders and we want to follow along blindly.

I see colleagues qualified to fly drones, analyse data electronically, and attend three virtual meetings simultaneously, yet struggle to read a hard copy written report (sans memes and cursor-controlled text flow) longer than a page, or tackle a complex problem without a keyboard.

Forestry has always been a creative profession. Judgement, intuition, creativity or responsibility cannot be outsourced to an app no matter how expensive the subscription. We owe it to ourselves to find a healthy balance between the electronic and neural interfaces.

In the industry we often speak about biodiversity-loss in our landscapes. Monocultures are risky. They simplify systems. They collapse under pressure. That said, many of us live in our own mental monocultures. We draw from the same news sources, same opinions, same online outrage cycles, same recycled thinking. In other words, a mono-echo chamber that deeply influences our thoughts and actions.

Social media has replaced curiosity with conformity and creativity with performance. Everyone is very certain, very vocal, and very similar.

As forestry practitioners we should know better. Diversity of species, ideas, and perspectives is what keeps systems resilient. If we allow ourselves to be shaped by algorithms designed to influence, we ought not to be too surprised when our internal ecosystem feels degraded.

These days we are living longer than ever, which is really wonderful. OK yes, I know that this point is arguable but bear with me for the sake of the article!

Many people seem surprised that longevity requires effort and a distinct need to recognize and avoid factors leading to a moribund existence. Medical intervention cannot override the effects of sitting all day, never lifting anything heavier than a cell phone, eating like a veld fire, and sleeping badly and calling it “normal”. In forestry terms, this would



be the same as expecting herbicide to replace good site preparation.

Movement matters. Strength matters. Time outdoors matters. The human body is not designed for permanent office life, even if your office has air-conditioning and decent coffee. (As an aside...and take it from a Boomer, good coffee remains the elixir of life!).

Your health, as per a good stand, needs active management.

We all work in landscapes under increasing pressure. More people...oh so many people...more demand...less room for error...oh, so little room left! Truth be told however, many of us behave as if responsibility for this pressure lies somewhere else, the government, the industry, overall society, or (as Boomers are often accused of) the next generation.

Forestry practitioners generally don't have the luxury of blame. If a compartment fails, it is definitely not the trees' fault. Stewardship is personal. Continuous. Sometimes it's boring but always necessary.

The same applies to our wellbeing, values, and professional integrity. If we openly and actively "own it"...others will follow.

Add the threat of a return to load shedding, global conflict, economic uncertainty, political instability, fuel price hikes, and a constant stream of bad news, and it's no wonder that people feel unsettled.

In the indigenous forest or plantation, when visibility drops, you stop. You take a bearing. You don't rush blindly downhill just because your phone tells you to. Why is it therefore that many respond to uncertainty by consuming more noise, more scrolling, more opinions, more outrage and clearly mistaking stimulation for insight?

Mental clarity requires silence, reading, reflection, and the occasional long walk without earbuds even if it feels uncomfortable and scary initially.

So, what is the message from this slightly weathered forester living in a conflicted stand? :

- Own your health like you own your own compartments
- Protect your attention. It is more valuable than data
- Read properly. Create often. Write occasionally. Think Slowly
- Move your body in real landscapes, not just between Meetings

- Maintain your own standards and bearing , regardless of trends.

Our current environment will likely not destroy you dramatically. It will wear you down quietly, politely, and incrementally, until one day you wonder where your energy, creativity, and judgement disappeared to. Forestry practitioners, of all people, are well equipped to recognize this.

I was drawn to write this not from a position of nostalgia. It is not anti-progress. It is simply a reminder that sustainability and your survival start with you, the individual.

If we cannot manage ourselves with care and foresight, we have no business claiming to manage forests for future generations.

Now, if you'll excuse me, I'm going for a walk, without my phone, before someone schedules another online meeting that really could have been an email. (...Oh, and move this bakkie out of the road, we have a front-end load loader incoming!)

FIVE WAYS SOUTH AFRICA'S PLANTED FORESTS POWER THE ECONOMY

JOBS • COMMUNITIES • SKILLS • CIRCULAR ECONOMY • BIODIVERSITY

CLICK ON EACH SECTION TO DISCOVER THE FORESTRY SECTORS CONTRIBUTION

SOUTH AFRICAN FORESTRY GROWING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Commercial forestry is more than growing trees. Across South Africa, planted forests support livelihoods, strengthen rural economies and provide renewable solutions for a low-carbon future.

- 1 CREATING SUSTAINABLE JOBS**
Supporting 150 000+ jobs and livelihoods across the entire value chain.
Mostly in rural areas, providing stable income where economic opportunities are limited. The sector also indirectly sustains contractors, small growers, transport operators and local suppliers.
- 2 STRENGTHENING RURAL ECONOMIES AND INCLUSIVITY**
Forestry is a vital economic backbone in many rural communities.
Partnering with communities, government and industry to stimulate local economic activity. Through skills training, enterprise development and local procurement, forestry helps small businesses grow and access global markets.
- 3 GROWING SKILLS AND THE YOUTH**
Forestry invests in training, bursaries, internships and learnerships.
These skills are transferable across many industries, strengthening South Africa's wider workforce and creating future entrepreneurs.
- 4 POWERING A CIRCULAR ECONOMY**
Forestry is a leading example of a renewable, circular bioeconomy.
Harvested trees are replanted for future generations, while their products are renewable, recyclable and provide sustainable alternatives to fossil fuel based materials. Innovation across the value chain helps reduce waste and maximise the value from every tree.
- 5 PRESERVING NATURAL HABITATS**
Over 20% of forestry landholdings are preserved as natural habitats.
These areas protect biodiversity, wetlands, indigenous forests and grasslands. Growing trees also absorb and store carbon, supporting climate resilience and a lower-carbon economy.

GROWING JOBS • STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES • SUPPORTING A SUSTAINABLE LOW CARBON FUTURE



Final opportunity to nominate candidates for SAIF Awards for 2025/26

The Distinguished Forestry Award

Purpose:

The purpose of the award is to give recognition to those contributions to or the application of forestry in Southern Africa, which have been individual and outstanding. This is the highest award given by the Institute.

Criteria:

Award will be made for pioneering and consistently outstanding achievement in a forestry-related field in Southern Africa. In order to be judged as outstanding, the achievement should meet the following requirements:

- measure up to international standards
- reveal innovative thinking
- be of great benefit to the forestry community
- enhance the status of the forestry profession

Eligibility:

The award is open to any person.

The Continuous Service Excellence Award to the Forestry Industry

Purpose:

The purpose of the award is to give recognition to individuals at all levels through the forestry industry in Southern Africa for excellence in their field of expertise and to reward efforts towards continuous improvement

Criteria:

Awards will be made for continuous excellence achieved in forestry practice. In order to be judged as outstanding, the achievement should include:

- high impact in terms of rands saved or earned
- application of sound principals
- Sustainability of the improvement
- Innovation and applications possibilities
- Dedication to and energy applied in the implementation of the charged project

Eligibility:

The award is open to any person actively engaged in the forestry industry

Forester of the Year Award/ Floating Trophy

Purpose:

The purpose of the award is to annually recognise **individuals** who have made an outstanding contribution to forestry practices, or have improved the reputation of forestry in South Africa through their individual operational actions. The award aims to recognize foresters for a specific forestry practice or action, as opposed to cumulative achievements. The award aims to recognize operational foresters whose achievements might not always be noticed at a national level, due to their lack of exposure.

Criteria:

The Award will be made for application of an economical, social or environmentally positive innovation or practice (plantation or natural forests) in the area of general forestry in Southern Africa.

Examples of achievements by an individual which could be judged as outstanding, include the following areas :

- A new tool, machine or method to carry out forestry work
- Providing outstanding service to a surrounding community
- Show excellence in a particular environmental situation
- Commit an act of bravery during forestry duties
- Other specific circumstances which warrant a nomination

Eligibility

The award is open to all SAIF members.

Scientific Writing Award

Purpose:

The Scientific Writing Award aims to give recognition to the work of young and deserving students or researchers, within the field of forestry. Through this award we want to promote forestry as a profession through visibility to a wider scientific and international target audience.

Criteria:

In order to be judged as outstanding, the candidate should meet the following requirements:



- Published at least one article in Southern Forests: A Journal of Forest Science
- Be of high academic and scientific standard (international writing standards)
- Bear a clear relation to the field of forestry
- Be innovative (novelty research) and of sound methodology
- Results should have been made available to the scientific community and other stakeholders

Eligibility

Any student who is currently studying towards an Masters or Doctoral degree, or has obtained such degree in the field of forestry. The award is open to any student or part-time student registered at a recognised University.

The Dedicated Service Award

Purpose:

The purpose of the award is to give recognition to members of the Institute for continuous and dedicated service to the SAIF over many years.

Criteria:

Award will be made for excellent and dedicated service in one or more of the office-bearing positions within the Institute over a period of not less than five years. In order to be judged as outstanding, the achievement should meet with the following requirements:

- five or more years of service as an office-bearer
- above average dedication and integrity as an office bearer
- promotion of the interest and status of the Institute

Eligibility:

The award is open only to Institute members

The Merit Award

Purpose:

The purpose of the award is to give recognition to the work of young and deserving students within or outside the field of forestry in order to promote the forestry profession in Southern Africa and its visibility and interest to a wider and important target audience.

Criteria:

Awards will be made for outstanding final-year graduate projects, post-graduate projects or theses somehow related to the field of forestry. In order to be judged outstanding, the achievement should meet with the following requirements:

- be high academic standard
- bear a relation to the field of forestry
- be innovative and sound methodology
- results should have been made available to the scientific community and other stakeholders

Eligibility:

The award is open to any student or part-time student registered at a recognized University, Technikon or other tertiary educational institution in South Africa.

All members of the Institute are welcome to submit nominations in each of the categories. Please note that eligibility for some of the award types are limited to members of the SAIF only e.g. the Dedicated Service Award while others like the Merit award are open to members and non-members.

Please submit the name of the nominee accompanied by a short motivation to Intsia Kriel at saif@mweb.co.za by no later than 30 April 2026.



Reading the Tree Rings

By [Eric Seeger](#) and [Greg Kahn](#)

Part 1



Closeup of a 183-year-old table mountain pine from George Washington National Forest, Virginia. © Greg Kahn

Editorial photographer [Greg Kahn](#) specializes in finding the small details that reveal a larger theme in the stories that he shoots. One of his ongoing pursuits has been finding scenes and subjects that show the intersection of climate change, science, nature and people. That brought him to become fascinated with dendrochronology, which is the science of understanding a tree's history through its rings (check out "History in the Rings," an article in *Nature Conservancy magazine's* recent Issue 1, 2026). <https://www.nature.org/en-us/magazine/>

Through this passion project Kahn met scientists who are finding centuries of historical weather data stored inside trees. By reading the rings, and examining tree cells under microscopes, they can see evidence of rainy years, periods of drought, bug infestations, forest fires and even the aftermath of volcano eruptions.

"I end up looking at a lot of scientific papers, skimming them over, seeing if something sparks an interest," says Kahn. He first came across a few papers on dendrochronology in 2019 and was struck by their specificity—their ability to depict events occurring in specific years. The interest stuck.

"In the last decade, there have been so many discoveries through dendrochronology," he says. "For example, I read a paper about Genghis Khan (no relation, maybe)—they surmised he was able to extend his kingdom because of a heavy rain period

visible in tree rings, which gave his forces more food and mobility. That blew my mind. We've all known tree rings for counting age, but now it's taken to the next level."

His photographic exploration of dendrochronology has taken Kahn to forests across the country that are experiencing the effects of human-made climate change: Maryland (sea-level rise), Montana (beetle infestation), Virginia (fire and biodiversity protection) and California (drought and fire). He has also visited dendrochronology labs at universities in New York and Arizona to see the deep science that unlocks the history hidden inside of trees.



Maryland's Eastern Shore was the first place Kahn—who is based in the Washington, D.C., metro area—visited after becoming interested in dendrochronology.

He tries to bridge the gap between papers, charts, and data, and then show it visually in rings and real-life scenes. With that idea in mind, a member of Maryland's Forest Service brought him to this ghost forest of loblolly pines. As the sea level rises in the area, saltwater pushes farther upstream in these coastal areas, resulting in widespread tree die-offs and leaving behind ghostly white tree trunks.

In Maryland, the state forest service worker took Kahn to a forest that had died from saltwater intrusion. The worker used a special drill to cut a thin core sample from a dead loblolly pine (seen on the right side in this photo below). Then they went to a forest of healthy trees for another sample (seen on the left). The series of narrow rings in the dead tree show growth that suddenly slowed down until the tree eventually died. That gives researchers an idea of when saltwater started reaching this area.





Photo showing samples of loblolly pine (*Pinus taeda*) taken from two forest sites

“The difference in banding and growth rings was stark—perfect for a first example,” Kahn says.

Kahn went there to understand how researchers use dendrochronology. The center, Kahn says, has thousands of samples from all over the world, many of them used to build “drought atlases.” These atlases are centuries-long records of wet and dry periods. By cross-referencing tree data like age, location and ring patterns, researchers like Cook begin to develop a view of weather activity through history and around the planet. “It was overwhelming—a microscopic to macro view,” Kahn says.



CEO of one of South Africa’s oldest companies calls it quits

Bianke Neethling (Daily Investor) : 20 March 2026



The CEO of York Timber Holdings, Gabriël Stoltz, has announced his resignation after nearly four years at the helm. His successor has not been selected.

Established in 1916, York Timber is South Africa’s largest solid wood processor, specialising in the production of lumber and plywood. It was listed on the JSE in 1946, making it one of the oldest companies on the exchange. It currently has a market cap of around R900 million.

On Friday, 20 March 2026, York Timber informed shareholders that Stoltz will be resigning from his role as CEO and an executive director at the company at the end of March.

Stoltz previously served as the company’s chief financial officer (CFO) and executive director from 2017. He was appointed to interim CEO in July 2021, and made the permanent chief exec a year later.

“During his tenure, he has served the company with distinction, first in his capacity as CFO and most recently as CEO,” York Timber said. “The board extends its sincere appreciation to Mr Stoltz for his leadership, unwavering commitment and significant contribution to York during his tenure as both CFO and CEO.”

“Under his stewardship, the group has navigated a complex operating environment while strengthening its strategic positioning for the future.” York Timber said Stoltz has played a pivotal role in advancing the business, acknowledging the lasting impact of his leadership on the organisation and its stakeholders.



The FABI INSPIRE Open Air Laboratory Officially Opened



The FABI INSPIRE (Innovation Africa Stress Physiology & Infection Research Experiment) Open Air Laboratory was officially opened at a ceremony on 11 March. Located on the Innovation Africa @UP campus, this 10ha site is planted with *Eucalyptus grandis*, *Eucalyptus dunnii*, *E. grandis* clones and *E. grandis* x *E. dunnii* seedlings. The primary aims of this experimental site will be to monitor the growth and responses of the *Eucalyptus* trees planted on the site to various factors including drought stress as well as the effects of insect pests and pathogens. Dr Ofentse Mathibela has been appointed to establish and run the facility with the first plants placed in the ground in December 2025. The establishment of the INSPIRE Open Air laboratory was made possible with support from the Hans Merensky Legacy Foundation, Merensky Timber, Mondi and Sappi and the University of Pretoria. The facility will foster collaborative research projects between different faculties at the University of Pretoria, partners from other Universities (currently Stellenbosch University and the University of the Witwatersrand) as well as forest industry collaborators.

A ribbon cutting ceremony was officiated by Hans Merensky Legacy Foundation Executive Chairperson, Prof. Khotso Mokhele, University of Pretoria Vice-Principal: Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Education, Prof. Sunil Maharaj, FABI Director Prof. Bernard Slippers, Stellenbosch University's Prof. David Drew and Dr Ofentse Mathibela. The project was inspired by and is the sister site of the University of Stellenbosch's EucXylo programme IMPACT Open Air Laboratory established at a site on the Lourensford Estate and will enhance research collaboration between the two Universities.

Source: [FABI](https://forestry.co.za/); Taken from : <https://forestry.co.za/>

South Africa's Paper Recycling Rate Climbs To 63.3% from 60% in 2024



Through paper mills and a nationwide network of collectors – including small recycling businesses and informal waste pickers – around 1.2 million tonnes of paper and paper packaging are diverted from landfill each year and returned to the recycling loop, where they are used again to produce new paper products such as packaging and tissue. Marking Global Recycling Day, the Paper Manufacturers Association of South Africa (PAMSA) says that while this progress reflects the growing role that consumers play in keeping recyclable materials in circulation, there is still significant room for improvement. “Unfortunately, a substantial volume is still ending up in landfill or the environment due to poor waste separation and recycling habits,” says Samantha Choles, communications manager for PAMSA.

Office paper and paper packaging, such as cardboard boxes and grocery bags, are both widely used and highly recyclable, making them key to improving South Africa's recycling rate. “We really want to encourage people to put cardboard boxes and paper bags out for collection by informal collectors,” says Choles. “If these materials are placed in wheelie bins, they often become dirty and wet, making them far more difficult to recover and recycle.”

PAMSA also appeals to businesses, schools and home to help improve the recycling of office paper. “Put containers at printers, desks and in classrooms to make it easier for people to recycle,” advises Choles.

“By making a few simple changes at home, work and school, consumers can help ensure that paper products get a second life instead of ending up in landfills, which are rapidly nearing capacity.”

Every tonne of recycled paper saves around three cubic metres of landfill space. If baled, the recovered material would cover the equivalent of 218 football fields or 154 rugby fields, fill 1,438 Olympic-sized swimming pools, or stretch 1,797 kilometres if laid end to end – roughly the distance from Cape Town to the Kruger National Park.



Three simple ways to recycle more paper

1. Know what can be recycled

- Items such as office paper, cardboard boxes, cereal boxes, magazines, newspapers as well as milk and beverage cartons can all be recycled.
- Very wet or dirty paper products, tissues, nappies, and laminated paper should be disposed of as general waste.

2. Keep paper separate, clean and dry

- Paper and cardboard should be kept separate from wet or food waste so they remain suitable for recycling.
- Remove plastic windows, tape, staples or other non-paper components where possible before recycling.

3. Support local recycling systems

- Consumers can place recyclables out for neighbourhood collectors, use municipal recycling programmes where available, or drop materials off at recycling centres or shopping mall recycling points.

According to PAMSA, small actions by millions of South Africans can make a significant difference.

“Every cereal box, cardboard box or office document that is separated for recycling helps keep valuable fibre in the production loop,” says Choles. “By building simple recycling habits, consumers can help South Africa continue improving its recycling rate.”

For more information on how to recycle paper, visit www.pamsa.co.za.

Source: PAMSA



Taken from Forestry South Africa Website

<https://www.forestrysouthafrica.co.za/2026/02/20/>

THE ROLE OF FORESTS IN THE PROVISION OF ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

Forests, both indigenous and planted, provide an array of ecosystem services, these include:

- **Capturing carbon:** Carbon dioxide (CO₂) is taken up by the trees' leaves and converted into oxygen (O₂), which is released, while the carbon remains locked away in the trees' wood, even after the trees are harvested.
- **Erosion prevention:** Tree roots create networks in the soil that binds it, reducing erosion.
- **Water filtration:** Trees act as water filters, removing impurities and reducing the risk of flash flooding.

Forests also provide **social and economic services**, including agroforestry, ecotourism, recreation, traditional medicines and forest products.

PLANTED FORESTS & BIODIVERSITY

While planted forests do not contain the levels of biodiversity found in indigenous forests amongst their trees, only 70% of the forestry landscape is planted. The rest is mainly natural areas - managed, monitored and maintained by the forestry sector. This includes:

- 64 000 hectares **indigenous forests**
- 171 197 hectares of **grasslands**
- 59 000 hectares of **water bodies**
- 12 000 hectares of **fynbos**

all preserved within the forestry landscape.

FORESTRY SOUTH AFRICA
www.forestrysouthafrica.co.za

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City Nature Challenge 2026



City Nature Challenge 2026

Cities around the world collaborate to share observations of nature in the 2026 City Nature Challenge.

Why participate?

There is nature all around us! Knowing what species are in our city and where they are helps us study and protect them, but the **ONLY** way to do that is by all of us – scientists, land managers, and the community – working together to find and document the nature in our area.

By participating in the City Nature Challenge, not only do you learn more about your local nature, but you can also make your city a better place – for you and other species!

Dates: April 24 – April 27, 2026

Taking pictures of **WILD** plants and animals. (Wild means that it wasn't put there, and is not being taken care of by people.)

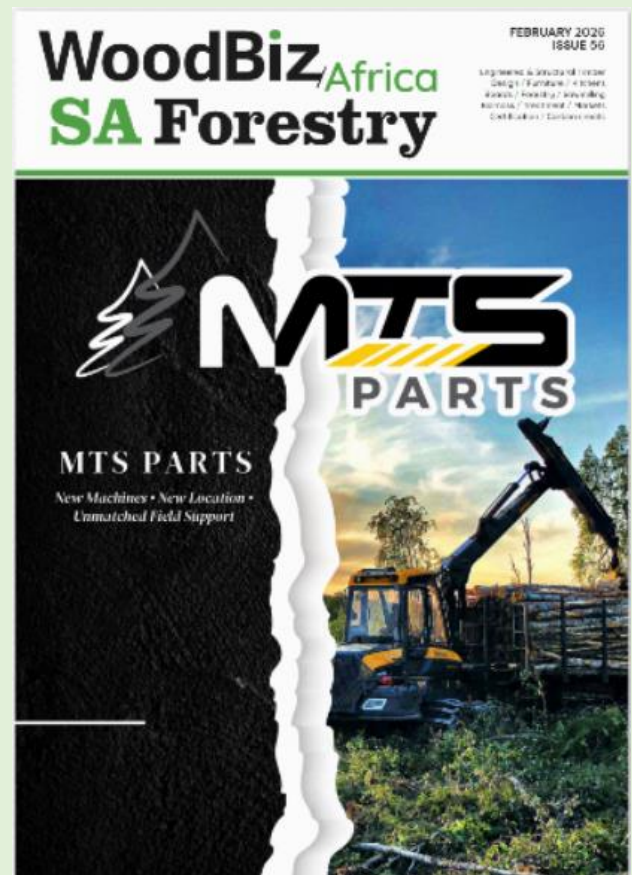
April 28 – May 10, 2026

Uploading observations and identifying what was found.



<https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/city-nature-challenge-2026>

WoodBiz Africa & SA Forestry Newsletter Issue 56



Forestry South Africa



For the latest Forestry News, visit the Forestry in South Africa website :

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



15th Fire management Conference/fEs2026



**5th Fire in the Earth
System conference**

Dates: 4-6th November 2026
Kruger Park, South-Africa

Pre-and Post conference excursions
(2-3/7-10th November 2026)

**FIRE DYNAMICS & FIRE RISK
MANAGEMENT**

**FIRE EFFECTS ON ATMOSPHERE,
BIOTA, SOIL & WATER**

**FIRE IN SOCIETY
(SOCIO-ECONOMIC,
HISTORICAL, GEOGRAPHICAL
& POLITICAL PERCEPTION)**

**POST-FIRE LAND
MANAGEMENT APPROACHES**

**NELSON MANDELA
UNIVERSITY**

**TERRA
ENVISION**

**South African
NATIONAL PARKS**

Website: www.firecongress.eu
Any questions please email to:
organizing.committee@terraenvision.e

Provisional Program

Sessions, session chairs, titles and session abstracts

DAY 1

Session 1: Integrating science and practice to guide fire management in natural systems

Chairs:

Izak Smith - +27 82 940 4404 - izak.smit@sanparks.org

Tercia Strydom – +27 73 505 3365 -

tercia.strydom@sanparks.org

Description: Fire is a key driver of many ecosystem patterns and processes across the globe, and it is therefore an essential component of natural and protected areas. However, inappropriate fire regimes—whether too frequent, too infrequent, or occurring outside ecologically appropriate seasons—can lead to ecological damage, while unplanned wildfires can threaten property, livelihoods, and lives.

Session 2: Soil degradation & wildfire

Chairs:

Artemi Cerda - +34 696 32 03 15 - artemio.cerda@uv.es

Description: Increasingly severe wildfires are escalating challenges for land managers, researchers, and policymakers in many parts of the world. “Normalising fire in the landscape” is considered a key strategy for reducing fuel loads and increasing awareness among local residents and stakeholders. This session examines the ways in which traditional and Indigenous knowledge supports the management of fire-susceptible landscapes.

Session 3: Living with Fire: Place-Based Practices for Managing Fire-Prone Landscapes

Chairs: Bryan Yockers - +1 918-760-6129 -

yockfire@gmail.com;

Linde Egberts - +31 624 23 34 64 -

L.Egberts@cultureelerfgoed.nl

Description: Increasingly severe wildfires are escalating challenges for land managers, researchers, and policymakers in many parts of the world. “Normalising fire in the landscape” is considered a key strategy for reducing fuel loads and increasing awareness among local residents and stakeholders. Traditional and Indigenous knowledge systems contribute valuable, place-based approaches to reducing fuel loads in fire-prone areas, including the use of prescribed burning, grazing regimes, and context-specific water management. This session examines the ways in which traditional and Indigenous knowledge supports the management of fire-susceptible landscapes. We invite contributions from researchers and practitioners that analyse the circumstances under which such knowledge can meaningfully inform and enhance fire-risk management.

Session 4: One-minute Poster presentations

Chair: Saskia Keesstra - +31 624 53 15 20 -

Saskia.keesstra@gmail.com

Description: All poster presenters get the opportunity to introduce their poster topics to the audience in a one-minute verbal presentation in preparation for the dedicated poster session on day 2.



DAY 2

Session 5: Dedicated poster session

Description: Posters are displayed, and authors of posters interact with conference delegates Session 6: Expo and Demonstrations Description: Exhibitors and wildfire service providers display and demonstrate their products.

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Description: Exhibitors and wildfire service providers display and demonstrate their products.

DAY 3

Session 7: Global Fire Management Strategies Across Biomes: Sharing Knowledge, Shaping the Future, Reducing negative fire impacts

Chairs:

Paolo Fiorucci - +39 348 46 10 407 - paolo.fiorucci@cimafoundation.org
Navashni Govender - +27 846 25 20 06 - navashni.govender@sanparks.org

Description: A conference session exploring fire management strategies and policies from around the world. As landscapes and ecosystems continue to face increasing wildfire risks, the need for collaborative learning, adaptive management, and cross- biome knowledge sharing has never been more important. This session brings together experts, practitioners, policymakers, and researchers to showcase lessons learned from diverse biomes — from savannas, grasslands, and Mediterranean systems to forests, wetlands, and arid environments. Participants will gain valuable insights into how different regions approach fire prevention, mitigation, ecological fire use, and policy development.

Session 8: Adapting fire management to a hotter and drier planet

Chairs:

Pete Fule - +1 928 853 8284 - pete.fule@nau.edu

Description: This session focuses on practical ways to adapt fire management to warming climate. Examples could include community engagement, infrastructure adaptation to climate change in different environments/pyromes, or fire regime implications of species shifts. Presentations will meet the Congress's goal of promoting the interplay between science and management.

Session 9: Proactive vs Reaction fire management

Chairs:

Hannes van Zyl - +27 72 27331692 - Hannes.vanZyl@mandela.ac.za;
Sam Msweli - +27 76 0541001 - Samukelisiwe.Msweli@mandela.ac.za

Description:

- Session invites an open conversation on the balance between proactive and reactive fire management in a time of increasing fire risk
- Many practitioners recognise the potential benefits of proactive approaches for communities and ecosystems, with science highlighting the importance of planning ahead
- At the same time, real-world constraints such as limited budgets, capacity challenges, public resistance, and climate change can make it difficult to move beyond reactive, crisis-driven responses
- We welcome talks that explore these tensions, share practical experiences, or highlight innovations and lessons learned across different contexts
- Presentations may draw from science, policy, technology, operational experience, or traditional knowledge.

Session 9: Miscellaneous

Chairs:

Trevor Abrahams - +27 825 57 5069 - trevor.abrahams@wofire.co.za
Linton Rensburg – +27 825 08 0990 - linton.rensburg@wofire.co.za

Description: Abstracts that do not fit into any other session will find a home here.

Registration:

Fee category	South African participant
Full registration	250.00 € (5,000 Rand)
Full registration student	150.00 € (3,000 Rand)

For details about the event please visit:

<https://firecongress.eu/>

@Tiaan Pool : NMU George Campus Contact details : Tiaan.Pool@mandela.ac.za



SAIF Contact Details

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Southern Cape	Dr. Tatenda Mapeto	southern-cape@saif.org.za
Western Cape	Dr. Justin Erasmus	western-cape@saif.org.za
DFFE representative	Vacant	



The following SAIFmembers celebrated their birthdays in March



MARCH BIRTHDAYS

02 Mar	KAREN KIRKMAN	20 Mar	IZETTE GREYLING
04 Mar	BRUCE BREEDT	21 Mar	STUART CHRISTIE
08 Mar	ALMUTH HAMMERBACHER	21 Mar	KWANELE MAPHALALA
11 Mar	DEREK MTOLO	22 Mar	NAVESH NAIDOO
12 Mar	KEITH LITTLE	23 Mar	ROGER POOLE
13 Mar	TEMBA VILANE	24 Mar	ARNULF KANZLER
17 Mar	IVAN MUIR	25 Mar	FARAI BEPETE
18 Mar	SPHIWE MFEKA	26 Mar	ANTON DE BEER
18 Mar	COERT GELDENHUYS	30 Mar	JOEL CELE
19 Mar	SPHIWE MFEKA	31 Mar	SCHALK JACOBS
20 Mar	ANDRE NEL		



The following SAIF members will be celebrating their Birthday in April



APRIL BIRTHDAYS

08 Apr	MICHAL BRINK	22 Apr	POLLA DU PLESSIS
08 Apr	LEM LE ROUX	24 Apr	MICHIEL BRITZ
11 Apr	MARK NORRIS-ROGERS	24 Apr	ANDRE DE WET
13 Apr	GEORG VON DEM BUSSCHE	25 Apr	MIKE HUNTER
16 Apr	BRUCE TALBOT	25 Apr	SHARMANE NAIDOO
16 Apr	REVOCATUS MUSHUMBUSI	26 Apr	JAMES VAN ZYL
17 Apr	MAARTEN GROBBELAAR	26 Apr	PHILLIP TSHIDZUMBA
19 Apr	GARY OLSEN	27 Apr	THEUNISSEN RABIE
20 Apr	NIC MOSTERT	28 Apr	MICHELLE SCHRODER
21 Apr	MIKE WINGFIELD	28 Apr	TRACY LE ROUX
21 Apr	ERWIN LOUW		

The SAIF would like to wish every member who celebrated their birthday in March and those who will celebrate their birthday in April a very Happy Birthday and congratulations with reaching another milestone.

Thank you for your continued support, contributions and God bless for the next year ahead.





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

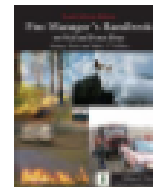
Non members: R500



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: salif@mweb.co.za.

