MINUTES

eThekwini Biodiversity Forum
16 August 2012
9h00 – 12h00
Paradise Valley Nature Reserve

PRESENT

Aarnia van Vuuren	AV	Kate Richardson	KR	Phillip Zuma	PA
Alice Thompson	AT	Katherine Terblanche	KT	Vuyiswa Radebe-Thabethe	VR
A.J. Smit	AS	Kerina Singh	KS	Rashieda Davids	RD
Basheshile Thusi	BT	Khumbu Luthuli	KL	Reshnee Lalla	RL
Bheka Nxele	BN	Kirsten Williams	KW	Richard Boon	RB
Bheki Mdletshe	BM	Lesley Frescura	LF	Rodney Bartholomew	RB1
Billie Prinsloo	BP	Lettie Coskey	LC	Robert Jamieson	RJ
Chris Metherell	CM	Lyle Ground	LG	Roger Uys	RU
Crystelle Wilson	CW	Lilian Develing	LD	Sabelo Nkosi	SN
Derrek Ruiters	DR	Mabel Watts	MW	Shannon Farnsworth	SF
Doug Burden	DB	Mkhanyise Cele	MC	Rosemary Harrison	RH
Ed Granger	EG	Natasha Govender	NG	Suvarna Parbhoo	SP
Geoff Pullan	GP	Nkuli Hadebe	NL	Terry Stewart	TS
Jabulani Khoza	JK	Nosipho Ndzimbomvu	ND	Thami Kunene	TK
Jean Lindsay	JL	Noyoliso Nketo	NN	Warren Botes	WB
Jean Senogles	JS	Peron Amein	OC		

APOLOGIES

Corinne Winson, Errol Dowes, Gill Noyce, Johann Vermeulen, Jabu Sithole, Kevin Collett, Margaret Burger, Teddy Govender

1.	WELCOME & INTRODUCTION	ACTION
1.1	NG welcomed all and facilitated introductions.	
2	**PRESENTATION – ARNIA VAN VUUREN, BIRDLIFE SOUTH AFRICA - GIVING CONSERVATION WINGS**	
2.1	AvV presented information about Birdlife South Africa (BLSA). She acknowledged that Crystelle Wilson and Lesley Frescura had both contributed to the presentation. AvV noted that the organisation is 90 years old and was founded on 22 June 1922. It is the world's largest partnership of conservation organisations – that strives to conserve birds, their habitats and global biodiversity and work with people towards the sustainable use of natural resources. Birdlife in each country runs programmes based on their needs and available resources. BLSA has 6000 members and includes elected officers, council members, CEO - Mark Anderson, professional staff members in all provinces and citizen scientists. Within Birdlife Port Natal (BLPN), the local branch, all the members are volunteers. Activities undertaken by BLPN include club outings, bird watching in forests, berg and the sea,	

	presentations and social events. Through the Birds in Reserves Partnership (BiRP), members who participate in bird-watching in reserves complete a Reserve Status Feedback Form to collect information on birds and their habitats within reserves.	
2.2	AvV further explained that: • Conservation is the primary reason for BirdLife South Africa's existence. Birds are visible and mobile and are thus good indicators of ecosystem health. • By conserving birds, the broader environment can be monitored and conserved. • Birding tourism, community-based conservation and education – everything is geared towards achieving bird conservation goals. Goals are targeted at three levels: – threatened species, – threatened habitats, and – biodiversity conservation in general. BLSA seabird funding was used for programmes aimed at the reduction of by-catch and the project was successful. The BLSA Save Our Seabird (SOS) Festival is held annually at the V&A Waterfront and Iziko Museums in Cape Town. This year the festival will run **from 8 - 14 October 2012.**	
2.3	AvV also provided the following information: • The bird of the year is the African Fish Eagle. • BLPN are monitoring a number of different birds, including camera monitoring of Black Sparrowhawk at the Botanical Gardens. • Secretary birds are prominent in grasslands and are not doing well. Transmitters have therefore been installed. • The Important Bird Areas (IBA) programme is an initiative that aims to conserve a network of sites critical for long-term survival of certain species. SA has 101 global IBAs and 21 regional IBAs. There is only one IBA in Durban, namely, the Barn Swallow site at Mount Moreland.	
2.4	RD queried, in light of the fact that the Secretary bird was under threat in grasslands, why there was only one IBA in Durban. LF responded that a number of criteria must be fulfilled for an IBA to be established, including that the species must be globally threatened, have a restricted range and have significant bird populations.	
2.5	LC queried how the swallows were doing at the airport. LF noted that a lot of work was done at the airport with respect to swallows. Many swallows had moved to other areas, but the reasons for the move are inconclusive. The first year the airport opened, the swallows seemed unfazed.	
2.6	BN queried whether any information on threats was collected during avi-tourism activities and whether this information was provided to the landowners. LF responded that the guides do feed back such information to the avi-tourism manager who then takes it further.	
3	**Updates from Natural Resources Division (NRD) by Vuyi Radebe**	
3.1	VR reported on the Monkey Business workshop that was held on 5 July 2012. The workshop was successful given the high level of interest shown by attendees. A student form UKZN will be doing a study on the impacts of urban development on monkeys. VR mentioned some of the facts noted about monkeys, including that they do not attack people, some people feed monkeys and the visibility of food at homes attracts them. VR added that tolerance of monkeys and feeding stations are also being explored.	
3.2	VR noted that since the workshop, a number of actions have been initiated, including, the incorporation of Monkey Awareness to September Events, linking up with Monkey Helpline, involvement with the EKZNW Primates group – Advisory Forum, school projects, linking with CROW to get a post-grad student to do further research on vervets, an interview on Radio	

	Hindvani (91.5 Hz) and follow up workshops.	
3.3	VR provided details of the events PLC will be hosting in September, as attached below (Page 7)	
3.4	VR reported with respect to the fishing issues in uMdloti that a report will be produced with facts as to the reasons why fishing is not allowed in certain areas at uMdloti beach. This report will be made available to fishermen once it is completed.	
3.5	VR noted that a Conservancies Open Day will be held on **29 September 2012** to acknowledge work that has been done by people within conservancies. Conservancies will be allowed to display banners and posters on the day. JL noted that BLPN and Botanical Society will be there.	
4	**Updates from Natural Science Museum (NSM) by Kirsten Williams**	
4.1	KW provided the following updates from the NSM: • Thola 2011/2012 - the latest edition of their magazine is available and copies were made available for everyone at the meeting. • Durban Natural Science Museum Novitates - Butterfly Monograph - the Durban Museum Novitates has been re-launched as the "Durban Natural Science Museum Novitates". Edition 33 is a butterfly monograph of Clive Quickelbergs work. Clive was a former staff member at the museum. Anyone wanting a PDF of this can contact David Allan at the Museum. • The Museum celebrated its 125th year on the 23 July 2012. A celebration was held on the 31 July 2012 at which the new DNSM Novitates was launched. • Rhino Poaching Display Launch - a new temporary display will be launched on the 27 September 2012 (not 26th as per advert on back of Thola). The launch will be by invitation.	
5	**Updates from Environmental Planning and Climate Protection Department**	
5.1	RB provided an update on the appeals process with respect to the inclusion of D'MOSS into the Town Planning Schemes, where appellants are challenging the constitutional right of Local Government to undertake environmental work. The city is opposing the appeal and is being supported by the City of Cape Town and the national Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA). In doing research the eThekwini legal team discovered that the split zoning process failed for technical reasons, whereby the split zoning was advertised before final council decision was obtained. Officials of EPCPD intend to implement the rezoning process again, but will wait for the Courts decision in November.	
5.2	RD noted that at the previous forum held in February, JL requested that EPCPD compile an information sheet on the importance of indigenous trees. RD reported that in response to that request, Ecofile 5 on Indigenous Trees was compiled and includes information on basic tree biology, ecosystem services provided by trees, threats to indigenous trees, legal protection of certain trees, important events celebrating trees, national trees of the year up to 2020, measures/projects being implemented by EPCPD to protect trees and forests and practical tips on protecting indigenous trees. RD mentioned that a generous amount of copies were available at the forum and encouraged attendees to distribute them as necessary. Electronic copies can be requested from RD at davidsr@durban.gov.za.	
5.3	RD also reported on the Grassland Fire Management Workshop that was hosted by the EPCPD in conjunction with Metro Fire and Working on Fire. The workshop, held on 14 July 2012 in Alverstone, was very well received with 58 people attending, including private landowners, conservancies, consultants, officials and local councillors. The workshop included information on the importance of grassland conservation, legal requirements surrounding the ignition and management of fires, complying with the fire index, preparing and maintaining fire breaks, burning best practices, requirements for getting permission from Fire and Emergency Services and necessary equipment and resource requirements. The professional Working on Fire team did a live grassland burning demonstration and an	

	information pack was provided to all attendees. Based on the positive feedback and enthusiasm shown by attendees, the eThekwini Municipality intends to host the workshop on an annual basis in the future.	
5.4	RJ commented that both the fire management workshop and the Ecofile on Indigenous Trees are fantastic.	
5.5	A landowner commented that he attended the fire management workshop and soon after burned the grassland on his property. He mentioned that the information provided at the workshop was extremely helpful.	
5.6	MC introduced a new publication produced by the EPCPD, *Biodiversity Crimes in the eThekwini Municipal Area*. He noted that the publication lists activities that are prohibited without authorisation and which constitute an offense if undertaken. Various authorisations that are required relative to certain activities are listed and the document provides important contact details	
5.7	LG reported on the recent eThekwini Council approval for the extension of municipal funding to the Giba Gorge Environmental Precinct (GGEP) Section 21 Company. One of the key outcomes of this extension of funding is the postponement of the landowner referendum to determine the continuation of the Special Rating Area (SRA). This will allow the EPCPD to continue its investigations into alternative funding models to allow the pilot project to be extended without overburdening partnering landowners or the Municipality. The new date for the SRA referendum will now be June 2014. This extension of funding will not affect the landowner funding contribution proportion, which has been pegged at the current amount for the next two years. The GGEP will continue to manage the SRA in terms of best practice methodology and to achieve the goal of maintaining this unique and critically important environmental area for the benefit of people and nature.	
5.8	NG reported the following with respect to land acquisition: properties acquired in the 2011/2012 financial year are Ptn 1 of Erf 1256 New Germany and Ptn 4 of Erf 1394 New Germany. Gerald Clarke and Natasha Govender will undertake the process to rezone these properties for conservation purposes. Council authority has been obtained for all properties to be acquired in the 2012/2013 financial year.	
5.9	NG noted that she has taken over the proclamations process from Cameron McLean and will therefore be providing feedback in this regard. NG mentioned that the proclamation of Roosefontein has been further delayed due to issues with the endorsement of survey diagrams. These are now being seen to, but this will result in a delay of approximately 3 months. Diagrams for Paradise Valley and Silverglen nature reserves are being finalized. DR added that the proclamation process of Roosfontein has not advanced much due to the issues around property registrations. For the other 10 reserves, a series of workshops were held, including two meetings at each reserve. Progress is therefore being made on these reserves.	
5.10	RU queried whether the EPCPD had considered a different model to secure environmentally significant areas. He made an example of where land could be purchased and resold with e.g. minimal development rights and compulsory management. RU added that this model has been investigated and proven to be a successful way to secure vulnerable areas. NG noted that the acquisition of properties by EPCPD is only used as a last resort and where an owners development rights are completely removed i.e., no development would be permissible. In instances where developments rights were intact (even if only a minimal area), other tools, like the registration of a Non-User Conservation Servitude would be used to secure the environmentally significant portion of a property.	

6	**General**	
	Kate Richardson, Bat Interest Group KZN - Small Wind Turbines 'Halve' Bat Numbers	
6.1	KR mentioned the issues associated with small wind turbines producing 50kW of energy. She referred to a study that was written that contains anecdotal evidence that small wind turbines do result in bird and bat mortalities. Some owners that have wind turbines on their properties have shut down their turbines for this reason. The study only looked bird flights. There was little effect on the flights, but there was an increase in the number of bird hits. KR added that wind turbines should not be erected within 25 m of bat flight routes and highlighted that there are no such areas in eThekwini Municipality. While shutting turbines off at dusk could reduce the risk of bat hits, there is often a lack of compliance with turbines being left on.	
6.2	KR enquired as to who was responsible for erecting a turbine on the Mnini municipal building within 200 m of a roosting site. NG offered to find out an report back to KR. It was noted that Derek Morgan from the Energy Office was aware of this turbine.	NG
6.3	RJ queried whether adding mesh to turbines could solve the problem. KR responded that mesh would greatly reduce the functionality of the turbines and would reduce the energy output. Adding mesh to turbines would therefore not be feasible.	
6.4	RJ queried whether a cylindrical turbine may achieve safer results for birds. KR responded that a major problem with the 'science' of wind turbines is that ideas that work in Europe do not always work locally.	
6.5	GP queried whether work was being done with the energy office.	
6.6	BP noted that turbines need to be erected in high wind areas and queried whether wind in such areas would not be uncomfortable for bats and would therefore be excluded from their flight paths. KR responded that the exact flight paths are not known. All that is known is that they migrate and there is no actual data on all possible bat flight paths. KR added that an Environmental Impact Assessment is only required if turbines are large and not when they are small. This poses a major problem to bat conservation and the regulations need to be looked at more closely and amended accordingly.	
6.7	LF mentioned that bird's migratory routes have been used for centuries so it will take a while for them to change their routes if turbines are in their paths.	
6.8	It was requested that KR's email address be included in the minutes should anyone wish to get additional information: *Kate Richardson, Bat Interest Group, ejrichardson@worldonline.co.za.*	
	Alice Thompson, Earthlife Africa eThekwini - Harbour Expansion & Back-Of-Port Plans	
6.9	AT of Earthlife Africa provided information about the proposed harbour expansion, back-of-port and Dug-out Port plans. She noted that the plans would have serious impacts on the Durban Bay sandbank, which is the only marine dominated sand bank in KZN, an important fish nursery and 62 endangered birds frequent the area. Earthlife Africa is opposed to the proposal and in terms of the Bonn Convention, South Africa is bound to protect this habitat. The area is at a critical tipping point.	
6.10	AT explained that an Environmental Impact Assessment was undertaken in 1999 for the Phase 1 westward extension of the Port, however, the project did not get approval due to the potential loss of habitat for juvenile fish. Furthermore, dredging would potentially separate the remaining banks from the mangroves and lead to the destruction of the National Heritage Site. Other Phases include Maiden Warf and Dug-out-Port. The proposal is includes a huge expansion of the Port by eight times, which would result in eight times as many trucks, containers and waste as well as upstream and downstream degradation. AT added that international trade is excessive and the economy should rather be localised. AT added that the Back-of-Port plans will have huge impacts on Biodiversity. Land will be	

	rezoned for logistics including residential areas. AT noted that she has a copy of the plan.	
6.11	BP commented that perhaps it is now too late to raise issues as Council has already agreed to a budget of R 230 million for acquisition of properties for this project. AT responded that it is not too late as the stakeholder process is currently taking place. AT noted that the project cost would be in the region of R250 billion and would result in 130 000 jobs at a cost of R1.5 million per job. There should be more cost effective ways to generate jobs.	
6.12	SN commented that the Biodiversity Impact Assessment branch of EPCPD had brought the negative Record of Decision from the 1999 EIA to the attention of National Department of Environmental Affairs. However, the final decision will be up to them. The application was made by Transnet and not eThekwini Municipality and an objection to the project has been noted.	
6.13	GP commented that Transnet feel that they have rehabilitated the harbour and have therefore satisfied the requirements of the 1999 Record of Decision. The old airport was sold to Transnet for the Dug-out-Port, which means that the project was approved. A project plan must be produced before a public stakeholder process can be undertaken and can be revised through the public process. The Clarewood community have few people still living there due to the industrial nature of the area and it cannot be reverted to a residential area. AT responded that the reason the area has deteriorated so much is due to illegal business being undertaken in the area.	
6.14	LF queried whether any buildings in the area have been assessed for their heritage value. It was responded that buildings with heritage value will be looked after.	
6.15	LD mentioned a proposal for a road from the Port to Cato Ridge. AT responded that she is aware of a plan to develop a link road from the Port to the N2 and from the Dug-out-Port to the N2.	
6.16	It was requested that AT's email address be included in the minutes should anyone wish to get additional information: *Alice Thompson, Earthlife Africa eThekwini, alicetho@ispace.co.za.*	
6.17	JL queried whether EZEMVELO had any concerns with chameleons at the Dug-out-Port. RU responded that the Pickersgill Reed Frog does occur at some sites in the proposed area. GP added that it looks like government will go ahead with the plans and we need to get the best deal for the environment.	
6.18	TS queried what habitat creation has been undertaken by Transnet as per the 1999 Record of Decision. SN responded that no creation has been done and one cannot recreate sandbanks.	
6.19	NG offered to include the Harbour Expansion & Back-Of-Port Plans as a standing item of the Biodiversity Forum agenda.	**NG**
	Other general items	
6.20	JL mentioned that she has been working on a document to summarise Environmental Laws for the last two years. Added that the EPCPD seems to be able to produce documents in the matter of months and requested that EPCPD compile this document, which should include one page on each relevant Act. This document could be used by Councillors, environmentalists and the general public. RB agreed to take the request to the next management meeting and provide feedback once a decision has been made.	**RB**
6.21	JL mentioned an event to be held on Sat 18 that all are welcome to. Trafford will be one of the speakers, a student will talk on monkeys, there will also be a talk on Iphithi Nature Reserve and Paul Seaman will discuss the implications of D'MOSS in the Outer West.	
6.22	BP mentioned that the Ward Committees will be held on Sunday and will be the last opportunity to make input in the IDP. She encouraged people to go to meetings and get recognised.	

6.23	RJ reminded attendees of the Indigenous Plant Fair that would take place on 1st and 2nd September, at Munies Sport Ground, next to the Botanical gardens. RJ invited volunteers to assist at the fair.	
7	**Meeting closure**	
7.1	NG thanked all for attending and closed the meeting.	

DATE	EVENT / ACTIVITY	LOCATION	ORGANISERS
1-2 September	Botanical Society – Indigenous Plant Fair & Orchid Show	Durban Botanic Gardens	Martin Clement
3 September	Arbor Week Launch Revisit on last year tree planting sites to promote tree care and additional planting of new ones. Alien clearing where applicable	Ruth First Highway Umgeni road , near MACRO.	PLC (Vuyi, Jabulani and Suren)
5 September	Arbor Week: Green blitz inner city greening project (all managers hands on)	All PRC Managers: M4, South of Umgeni Activity: Tree pruning,	Martin and Preggie
7 September	Arbor Week Guerilla gardening Sutton Park community garden project Living Legends memorial tree planting programme launch at Sutton Park	Preggie, Garth and Martin to champion this activity Partnership with scouts	Garth and Martin
8 September	LIVING LEGENDS	ICC	PRC Unit
10 September	Literacy Week Green therapy and enabling gardening Greening project for the elderly and physically challenged	Burman Bush Physically challenged schools, elderly homes and scouts.	Vuyi
14 September	Keep Verulem Beautiful	Preggie / Ramu	
15 September	Int Coastal Clean-up Week	Partner with EKZNW	Sbu
18 September	Post COP 17 Seminar in the INK and Umlazi schools		
21 September	HERITAGE DAY: Natural Resources		
22 September	Walk-a-Mile (International Save the Rhino Day)	uShaka to Amphitheatre	PRC Unit
25 September	Enviro Expo	New Germany	Sbu / Vuyi
29 September	Conservancies Open Day	Westville Park	Vuyi
30 September	Youth Camp	Sandra, Garth and Vuyi	Hillcrest
30 September	Hugh Masekela	DBG	Martin Clement