

# FROK APRIL 2019 NEWSLETTER

Dear Friends of Kloofendal,

Sorry for this belated newsletter – I have not sent one since January!

## FORTHCOMING WEEKEND EVENTS

Please bookmark our website [www.kloofendalfriends.yolasite.com](http://www.kloofendalfriends.yolasite.com) for future events? As summer has passed and autumn is here, we are offering fewer weekend events.

Sun 5th May 14:00 – 16:00	GOLDMINE TOUR	R70/R60/R50	Rod Kruger
Sun 12th May 8:00 – 10:00	BIRDING	R70/R60/R50	Grant Egen
Sat 25th May 9:00 – 15:00	“One world”	**Free**	Jonathan Leeming*

Special event is Jonathan Leeming’s course “[One world](#)” on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> May, 9h00 – 15h00 – will be for invited guests only. If you would like to be included on the guests list please contact Jonathan Leeming at 082-338-4381

## PRAISE FOR JCPZ

Our chairman Steve Spottiswoode posted the table below in a facebook post. This lists concerns that FroK has with the management of the Reserve. Most of these concerns have been outstanding for years and have not been addressed by JCPZ.

Topic	Standard	Followed?	Independent assessments?
Bush encroachment	Eco Plan	Starting to follow	None
Invasive Alien Plants	NEMBA & Eco Plan	Partly *	None
Lawns	Regular reports	Continual deterioration	None
Paths	Eco Plan	Partly	None
By-laws	Booking forms incorrect	Mostly	Up to the public
Communications	Downwards	Buck passing	None?
Security	None?	Improved	Up to the public
Wetland	Protected area	JCPZ illegally damaging	None
Natural systems	Requires professionalism	Gardening!	None

\* JCPZ is not doing well with Invasive Alien Plants in many areas of Johannesburg

### Table of areas of concern, standards, if they are followed and independently assessed.

He received in response an email from JCPZ with: “I am yet to see one kind word from you except the numerous emails of your complaints.” Here follows some praise and kind words for JCPZ.

Thank you for the controlled block burn last year in accordance with the Ekotrust management plan. The sections of veld that were burnt in a controlled burn are in good shape with fresh grasses and wild flowers.

Thank you for cutting back some of the trees and shrubs that have been taking over and smothering the grasses near the stream at the main entrance.

Thank you for recent and previous work by JCPZ on controlling declared Invasive Alien Plants (IAPs). Thank you for appointing a person this year to supervise work in the Reserve, including IAP control.

Thank you for stopping the mowing of the flat area on the right of the entrance gate. Wild grass and other flowering plants have started to grow in abundance. We look forward to the grasses taking over from the weeds that have been plaguing this area. This situation should improve year by year. Thank you also for changing to the use of lawn mowers this year in some areas where brush cutters were used and had cut too deep in previous years.

We have seen that one of the interns has been working on maintaining paths that have been damaged by recent storm-water runoff. Thank you.

We have seen positive results from the additional security personnel stationed at the entrance and at the parking area. They have been searching people for alcohol and turning them back. They have also stopped groups making noise and breaking by-laws, both in terms of electronic music and disturbing the ambiance of the Reserve such as preaching or singing at full volume. We are glad to be regularly communicating with the security personnel on the ground.

We are happy to note that Reserve management has been communicating actively in WhatsApp groups dealing with dogs in the Reserve and with Invasive Alien Plants.

Thank you for installing palisade fencing between Quail and Zircon Streets and the Reserve.

We have received reports of dogs chasing, injuring and killing buck. Thank you for working very hard to block holes in the boundary fences. Thank you for making it clear that dogs will not be tolerated in the reserve. Reserve staff and EPWP workers have been patrolling regularly and have worked hard to seal any holes in the fence. A few passionate dog lovers have been taking care of dogs in and adjacent to the Wilgespruit Fellowship grounds. We hope that dogs will be kept out of the Reserve permanently.

The small wetland has healthy growth of River Pumpkin (*Gunnera perpensa*) and Bullrushes (*Typha capensis*), indicative of good quality water entering the wetland.

Last, but not least, thank you for the facilities, especially the lapas, clean braai area and toilets in the Amphitheatre area.

Thank you also for the support given to the Friends of Kloofendal on the JCPZ [web site](#).

Thank you again to Ward 85 Councillor Sonja Meyer for your support.

## ECOLOGICAL MANAGEMENT IN KLOOFENDAL

Kloofendal Reserve is looking lovely after the various new initiatives in the reserve by JCPZ, namely block burning and cutting down invasive trees at a start of dealing with the bush encroachment which is prevalent in Kloofendal.



Pictures from the distant past show that Kloofendal and its surrounds was mainly a grassland with scattered trees, such as is shown in the [1941 Aerial photo](#) obtained by Rod Kruger and shown on the [FroK Maps page](#) alongside a recent google earth picture.

Fires, a natural phenomenon on the Highveld, have been kept out of the reserve, resulting on grasses dying back on itself due to the accumulation of old dead grass on top of it over the years, suffocating new growth, so trees have moved in in a big way! Even though forests (thickets in various areas) are generally viewed as nice, the Highveld (Bankenveld, technically known as Roodepoort Reef Mountain Bushveld) should, as it was in the past, be mainly grassland. It is amongst the grasses where all the biodiversity is found, the variety of grasses and flowering herbs and shrubs is just wonderful, as can be seen from Dr Jan van Wyk's "Imaged list of wild flowers in Kloofendal" where over 300 species of flowers are depicted, each photograph taken in Kloofendal! Most pictures were taken in the grassy parts of the reserve, mainly the fire breaks, which are areas next to neighbouring fences, to protect the houses from being burnt in the case of a fire in Kloofendal.

There are also firebreaks crossing the reserve, to ensure that the whole reserve does not go up in flames if a fire does happen.

Block burns are controlled burns, where certain blocks are burnt. End of last year JCPZ managed some block burning, some people were scared when at night the fire flamed up again

It was remarkable how gorgeous the veld looked just a few weeks after the burns, first the little veld flowers and then the new, lush, green grasses appeared, the buck were often seen grazing there! So many of our animals feed on grass, such as termites, which in turn are eaten by certain ants, lizards, birds, mongoose, thick-toed geckos just to mention some.

	
<p>November 2018 after a burn– lush growth, lots of biodiversity</p>	<p>Regrowth of Ouhout after JCPZ cutting and poisoning stumps November 2018</p>

JCPZ's other initiative was cutting invader trees (*Leucosidea sericea* or Ouhout), part of the thicket near the wetland and near the Kloofendal main entrance. The trees were cut down and poisoned (demarcated with blue dye). The poisoning did not work as can be seen from the tree stumps growing new shoots, which since January have really become pretty big shoots by now. It was recommended by an experienced ecologist, to repeatedly remove the new growth, every two or three months, thereby cutting off the tree's food supply (the leaves producing sugar by photosynthesis) so the trees will eventually die.

Unfortunately this simple advice has not been followed. We hope that it will still happen as the Ouhout is regrowing with a vengeance.

The White Stinkwood hybrid which grows in thickets amongst the Ouhout were not cut, they were simply burnt. This was successful in that the bark peeled off and the tops of many of them are dead, but there is lush regrowth from the bottom.

The area which was previously in shade is now in sun, so the various sun loving plants are emerging, some indigenous ones, unfortunately many alien invaders which need to be removed to prevent them flowering, seeding and propagating themselves as these invaders do so successfully!

So, all interesting to see what happens in the succession of the various plants, but serious invaders such as Bugweed, Inkberry, Forget me nots do need to be removed so that the indigenous plants occupy the new sunny areas.

## ANIMALS IN KLOOFENDAL - PROBLEMS

### (i) Dogs in Kloofendal

Over the last few months there has been a huge problem with dogs harassing the animals in Kloofendal, in particular concern is that they have been killing buck (Mountain Reedbuck are endangered! The grey duiker is pretty special too), Scrubhare, dassies and probably birds such as Guinea fowl too. The Snare patrol WhatsApp group has been very helpful alerting JCPZ and residents when dogs have been seen in the reserve, but the dogs were just impossible to catch! Through efforts of JCPZ and the community the problem seems to have been solved, so far, for the last

two/ three weeks, so a big thank you to those people all involved! Perhaps some dog owners were not aware of the terrible impact that their dogs had in the reserve on the wildlife there!

(ii) Introducing animals into Kloofendal

We have had inquiries as to animals from the reserve going into gardens of properties neighbouring the reserve. The animals which obviously came from the reserve need to go back there, so the correct procedure is to contact JCPZ manager of Kloofendal ([Phillip Mkhombo cell 071-220-3696, tel 011-760-9143](#)) to ask for assistance towards returning the animals into the reserve.

Animals from elsewhere must not be released into the reserve for the following reasons:

- They don't belong there
- They might be diseased and can transmit their disease to animals in the reserve
- Kloofendal is definitely not a release place for unwanted pets (rabbits, cats, snakes, lizards, tortoises)
- Animals might actually be declared invaders – we have had some problem birds in the reserve, presently we have a declared invader terrapin, difficult to catch!

If you find an injured, indigenous animal somewhere, or simply an indigenous animal in your house or garden which needs translocation, contact [Friends of Free Wildlife](#) for advice or a translocation permit so that you are legally allowed to transport that animal to a place where it can be released. The Friends of Free Wildlife will be able to advise you where you can release the animal. They can be contacted at [082-561-3681 \(Margi Brockelhurst\)](#)

- (iii) Collecting animals such as scorpions, spiders, insects from the reserve is strictly prohibited! Some endangered animals occur in the reserve, they are not to be removed. Same applies to plants, except of course, for the problem invader plants which are a big problem in the reserve!

## ALIEN INVASIVE PLANTS (IAPs) IN KLOOFENDAL

An ongoing problem! As we have the lovely rains, the invasive forbs and shrubs have come up enthusiastically, flower and seed, and spread, so removing flowers before they seed is important, followed up by digging out the plant.

As mentioned in our January newsletter **INVASIVE PROBLEM PLANT CONTROL**

FroK, representing the community, was informally allocated 3 EPWP workers to work on IAP control every day of the week, for six months with us, as from Monday 7<sup>th</sup> January 2019.

The idea was that we would educate the workers on IAP identification and then how to physically remove them.

The recent rains made it ideal to remove the problem plants before seeding, also break off new shoots of trees which were cut down last year to combat bush encroachment. Our team was supplemented by two new nature conservation graduates, and at times Joburg at Work worker joined us too.

Unfortunately within three weeks our EPWP workers were taken away for grass cutting which, by JCPZ management is valued more than alien invasive plant control ☹️. Sadly JCPZ is able to work on declared invasive alien plant removal only on an ad hoc basis and only on some of the AIP's.

## SCHOOL GROUPS

Our school "hands-on" environmental education for schools runs during the week, information and appointments can be made through the FroK cell 079-693-5608 or landline 011-674-2980

## FROK ECOCLUB

We are very pleased to announce that FROK has a fantastic and affordable Eco Club for children which runs every Saturday from 14h00 – 16h00

We invite families to attend our Themed Adventures, which include; Nature Adventure Walk with a qualified nature guide, Interactive Session with one of our experts and/or a calm, artful afternoon in nature, creating something out of nature. Every 4th Saturday we will be hosting a family afternoon which will include a family quiz.

EcoClub membership applies only to the children, family members are expected to join their children on the activities offered for them on Saturday afternoons. The more activities the member (and his family) joins us in, the more points he/ she will have to add to the Log Book. This Log Book will record all the Nature Experiences attended and count toward the minimum of 20 points required to become a FROK Junior Ranger. Being a FROK Junior Ranger is a very prestigious title and entitles the member to a FROK Certification, Free Entry to our Guided Walks and his/her very own membership badge!

Upon registration the new member is given his/her very own FROK Junior Hat and Log Book.

Membership is only R 200 for the year and is required for participation for the member and his family in the FroK Saturday afternoon FroK EcoClub activities

Saturday FroK EcoClub afternoon events' cost are: R 70 per Adult; R 60 per Pensioner and R 50 per Child.

Children's ages vary from as little as 3 years to 10 years of age and must at all times be accompanied by an adult.

We would very much like to see the family bonding again. Contact Candice 0749440195 for more information.



## FLOWER BOOKLET



Our pocket-sized wild flower booklet is for sale at every FroK event.

Cost R120



## SNARES, SEWERAGE LEAKS, CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES

The Snare Patrol WhatsApp group shares what is all happening in and around the reserve. It is recommended for frequent hikers and joggers in the reserve to be on the Snare Patrol WhatsApp group. If interested to be on it, please contact Steve Spottiswoode at cell 082-558-3158?

Kind regards,

Karin Spottiswoode,

Committee member, Friends of Kloofendal, Cell 079-693-5608, tel 011-674-2980