

FRIENDS OF DIE OOG NEWSLETTER MARCH 2009



Die Oog Arbor Day 30 April 2009 at 17.30

The Friends of Die Oog are holding a Die Oog Arbor Day and Tree Planting Ceremony on Thursday 30 April 2009 at 17.30 in the Biodiversity Area at Die Oog. It is planned to plant several silver trees, protea repens and other shrubs in the Biodiversity and Fynbos Areas to improve the biodiversity and make the areas more attractive. Lindy and Mike Luger (we held several AGM's in their house next to Die Oog) donated R700 for the improvement of Die Oog before they emigrated to Australia. It is planned to plant some shrubs or trees in recognition of the enormous contribution that both Lindy and Mike made to the Friends of Die Oog and to conserving of Die Oog for posterity. We are hoping that Lindy and Mike's parents, who both live in the Cape, will be able to come and plant a tree. Clifford Dorse who is now the Head of Biodiversity in the Department of Nature Conservation of the City of Cape Town has also kindly agreed to plant a tree and speak on "Conserving Nature Reserves and Greenbelts in the City". Clifford Dorse spoke at the first AGM and has been of great assistance to the Friends

Provisional Programme for Die Oog Arbor Day

Introduction and Welcome Chairman

Address Clifford Dorse "Conserving the Nature Reserves and Greenbelts of the City"

Planting of Shrubs and Trees Clifford Dorse, Jean Luger, Evelyn Smith, Rev Robert Smith

Refreshments Wine, fruit juice and snacks

All Friends of Die Oog and their families are warmly invited and it is hoped as many as possible will attend. This will be the only occasion this year (other than the AGM) for Friends of Die Oog to meet and for members of the Committee to get to know the different individual members of the Friends.

Membership and Finance The membership of the Friends is now just over 100 and new members are always needed. We were particularly pleased to welcome Patrick, Melissa and Kai (2y) Williams who now live in 5 Lake View (Lindy and Mike's old house overlooking Die Oog). The finances of the Friends of Die Oog are relatively healthy thanks to the many generous donations received this year and the approximately R8,000 raised from the sale of notelets by Poll and Malcolm Pearce. The Vice-Chairman Brian Gripper recently turned 80 and his family and Friends donated R2,150.00 in his honour. We have sufficient funds to enable us to employ the gardener Siby once a week for the rest of the year.

Pond Weed at Die Oog The Hornwort (*Ceratophyllum demersum*), duckweed (*Lemna gibba*) and a green-yellow algae have grown quite fast in the last few, hot weeks and have caused concern to quite a few Friends and visitors. The weeds however have brought considerable benefit including the 20 or so yellowbilled ducks that now appear to have taken up permanent residence at Die Oog. The water quality has also improved and the oxygen saturation has now reached 90%. We are obtaining advice from the Department of Nature Conservation as to what, if anything, should be done about the weeds. In previous years the growth of weed has decreased considerably during the Winter months.

Birds at Die Oog. The pair of dabchick (Little Grebe) produced six beautiful, minute chicks all of which have survived so far. Their nest, that was very near the weir, provided a golden opportunity for photographers. A pair of yellowbilled ducks produced 11 ducklings but only one has survived. The red knobbed coots and moorhen busily chase each other around Die Oog, The reed cormorants that nested on the island have all left and the cattle egrets that come to roost have increased. The squadrons of sacred ibis which arrive just before dusk are spectacular and one darter is to be seen most nights. One possibly injured spurwing goose spent some time hiding in the reeds but has not been seen recently.

The Friends of Die Oog thank Cotton Properties for once again generously sponsoring this newsletter

Sale of Notelets of photographs of Die Oog This has been a great success and a new set of notelets is in preparation with photographs of some of the birds to be seen at Die Oog. These will be available and on sale at the Friends of Die Oog Arbor Day and from Poll and Malcolm Pearce (021 715 8666)

Repair of the dam wall A grant of R50,000 was obtained from the Ward Allocation of the City for the repair and an order has been placed with Streetscape. This should prove aesthetically acceptable and make the wall and path safe. The grant does not cover another section of the wall that is crumbling nearer to Farmsedge and an application for a grant-in-aid has been made to the Protea SubCouncil.

The Gate A new more powerful magnet and automatic locking system has been installed and the gate should remain closed from 19.00 to 07.00 without any seasonal change. We must once again thank Brian Gripper who installed the original "Gripper Gate" and we hope it won't be vandalized.

The Seasonal Wetland Working for Wetlands have again turned up trumps and teams from Jenny's Landscaping have spent another two or three days this year removing the aliens that have regrown.

New Constitution and Registration of the Friends of Die Oog as a NonProfit Organisation The new constitution was submitted to the Department of Social Development in Pretoria and has been approved with a few minor amendments. It is hoped that an NPO number will be granted soon. The official registration of the Friends has a number of advantages (a) establishing the bona fides and probity of the Friends of Die Oog (b) official registration and an NPO number is required by many grant-awarding bodies (c) the Friends can then issue certificates for the relief of tax on donations. It does however (a) impose duties on the Committee and require quite a lot of work (b) require the appointment of designated office-bearers (c) require the safe keeping of financial transactions and a minute book.

Future of the Die Oog Nature Reserve and the Friends of Die Oog. We are very grateful to the Parks Department of the City of Cape Town who continue to weed-eat, collect all the garden rubbish cut down and remove trees and repair the fence on request and are most cooperative. The good news is that the Parks and Nature Conservation Departments have recently been getting together to make plans for the long-term care of places such as Die Oog that have not as yet achieved Local Nature Reserve status. The Friends of Die Oog in the meantime continue to bear the main responsibility for the maintenance and improvement of the Die Oog Nature Reserve

We hope all the Friends of Die Oog and their families will come and help celebrate Die Oog Arbor Day on the 30th April and all that the Friends have achieved in the last 5 years.

Dennis Davey (712 1314) Chairman
Brian Gripper (712 1645) Vice Chairman
Colin Hancox (715 5161) Website
Alwyn Lubbe (715 6213) Senior Warden

Cleone MacMillan (712 2266) Secretary
Wendy Madsen (715 9473) Liaison
Pauline Pearce (715 8666) Education
Jennifer Stewart (715 2195) Membership