



**WNHA NEWSLETTER**  
**JANUARY 2014**

**Our Mission Statement**

**“To engage in the conservation, rehabilitation and protection of the natural environment in the Wakkerstroom area”**

**AGM DECEMBER 2013**

Despite the fact that we had an inspirational speaker, Angus Burns, the AGM was poorly attended. (There were also beers and boerie rolls to be consumed by the WNHA members – remember this for next year!) This is disappointing for the committee, as we put in a lot of work during the year and it is an opportunity for the committee and members to communicate with each other.

The committee has been asked to relook at the AGM and possibly include more of a social/outings based programme. Watch our facebook page and newsletters for more information.

Sadly, other than Daphne Pyott, no one new has come forward to serve on the committee. As it stands, the executive committee consists of myself (Graham Mellor), Rupert Lawlor, Sean Pyott (acting Chair and Treasurer), Daphne Pyott (Secretary), Kristi Garland and Vusi Sibiya (co-opted). Rupert and I have both been on the committee for six years and would like to make way for new committee members. We all feel that for Sean to be both Treasurer and acting Chairperson is too much to take on.

We are definitely looking for “new blood” so if you think you can add something to the WNHA in any way

or you are not too sure how you can become more involved, please contact the committee.

**PROTECTED ENVIRONMENT**

As mentioned in the last newsletter, progress in declaring Wakkerstroom a Protected Environment continues. Much time is spent by the WNHA and the members of the WPEMC on this subject. Our thanks go to all involved, as it is a tedious business.

The WPEMC is working on identifying the ownership of various properties within Martinus Wesselstroom boundaries. If you own or lease a property, please can you contact Kristi on 0832270128 or [kristi.garland@birdlife.org.za](mailto:kristi.garland@birdlife.org.za) with your stand/erf number, name and ownership status. Please note this committee is not getting involved in rates and payments or current lease agreements. Their focus is just to identify municipal and privately owned properties for the declaration of the Protected Environment.

The WPEMC hope to finalise the Management Plan and submit it to the Pixley ka Seme Municipal Council by midyear, allowing the remainder of the year to deal with any objections. It will then be sent to the province for gazetting.

**VLEI NEWS**

New projects are starting in January at the Vlei. By now, we are sure you would have seen the new walkway which requires protection. A cattle grid will be



placed at the entrance to wetland reserve so preventing cattle from using the walkway. We are also putting up new signage at the entrance, as the existing is looking rather faded.

We will be painting the “Kruger” bridge. As you know this is an historical bridge, a national monument and a lovely bit of old steel engineering and construction. Here’s how you can be involved – what colour do you think the bridge should be painted? Send your comments and suggestions by **Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> January** for consideration to [ghm@wakkerstroom.info](mailto:ghm@wakkerstroom.info) / [rupert@lawlor.co.za](mailto:rupert@lawlor.co.za)

Lastly a new picnic shelter is to be built. This will be at the site of the old shelters (long since burnt down), but will be as fire proof as possible. The benches and table will be of precast concrete and a whole lot more comfortable than the old metal ones there at present. All this will be financed by a donation from Kangra Coal. We thank them for their continued support.

**COMMUNICATIONS WITH MUNICIPALITY**

We have this year contacted the council regarding the rubbish dump and await their response. Similarly with the many missing STOP signs and lack of painted lines on the tarred roads.

This is actually out of our sphere of responsibility; however it is a serious problem, accidents waiting to happen. We would encourage the Wakkerstroom Tourism Association to also pursue this matter.

**INFORMAL SETTLEMENT**

The WNHA has formally written to the council about this matter. Copies of this letter are available on our facebook page as well as on request from the committee.

**SOCCER**

The season recommences this month; however we are still waiting for the new fixture list.

We will be calling on our soccer side to help with some projects this year. Possibilities are helping with a clean up on National Wetlands day, assisting the Bird Club with alien plant eradication and helping Kristi Garland with her project monitoring water quality below Esizamaleni.

### **SHIRTS AND CAPS**

These are now on sale at **THE CROW'S NEST**. Please support this fundraiser.



### **EDUCATION**

The Grasslands Environmental Education Project (GEEP) received some good news over the festive season. Schools from across South Africa and in particular North West, Free State, Mpumalanga and KZN entered the Spring Alive Art Contest and in December the final results were released. With over 300 entries from 8 African countries, Kristi is really happy with the results. In the three age categories, South Africa took four of the nine places (2x2nd place, 1x3rd place and a 1st place). These winning entries were received from schools in the North West Province. We look forward to seeing what the 2014 season brings to South Africa. More details will be released as the year progresses.

As mentioned in the Soccer report, Kristi will be working with the team on monitoring a section of the Uthaka River using the miniSASS programme. This programme is used to monitor the health and measure the general quality of the water of a river. By recording the presence of macro-invertebrates or small animals living in the water and using their sensitivity to water quality as a bench mark, one can

determine the condition of a river. Please note that miniSASS does not measure the contamination of the water by bacteria and viruses and does not determine if the river water is safe to drink.

There are an additional four sites in and around Wakkerstroom that will also require monthly monitoring. If you would like more information or would like to go out with Kristi, please contact her directly.

### **FINANCE AND MEMBERSHIP**

The finances were presented at the AGM and require no further comment here. It was agreed at the AGM, that the annual membership fee for a family, be increased from R200 to R220 for the year 2014. This is the first increase for two years and we implore members to please renew their membership soon. Those who attended the AGM will understand that your money is well administered and usefully spent.

### **FIRE**

There still remains a lack of knowledge regarding fire problems, burning of fire breaks etc. We encourage those who are interested or who could be affected by wild fires, to join the Seme Fire Protection Association. The contact person is Johannes Deacon, mobile number 083 650 2564. The membership fee last year was R250.00.



We have been in contact with the Working on Fire Awareness Officers, at a provincial level, over the last few months and were recently informed that they will be running awareness campaigns in the village and surrounds during 2014. Please watch our

facebook page and newsletters for more information.

### **CONTACTS AND BANKING DETAILS for the WNHA**

Sean Pyott 082 455 1910 [WNHAFin@gmail.com](mailto:WNHAFin@gmail.com)

Rupert Lawlor 083 227 9020 [rupert@lawlor.co.za](mailto:rupert@lawlor.co.za)

Graham Mellor 083 267 9396

[ghm@wakerstroom.info](mailto:ghm@wakerstroom.info)

Bank : FNB

Account name : WNHA

Account number: 6207 4355 134

Branch number : 270543

(If required add two zeros to the end of this number)

### **MEETING DATES**

At our first committee meeting in January the dates for the rest of the year were set. Please note the change in **day - Saturday mornings @ 10am**. Daphne will circulate a reminder and the venue for each meeting 3 weeks before the date. All members are welcome to attend and we encourage you to do so.

8<sup>th</sup> March at BirdLife South Africa

10<sup>th</sup> May

12<sup>th</sup> July

13<sup>th</sup> September

November TBC

6<sup>th</sup> December AGM



**Please contact us if you have any suggestions as to new projects or fund raising ideas that we can investigate.**

**We need and value your input and feedback.**