



# KOGELBERG BIOSPHERE RESERVE

*Nature for Life*

## CHAIR'S REPORT FOR 2021

MIKE DU TOIT



March 2022

On 24 December 2021 we sadly lost a fellow director and dear friend. I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude for everything Alfra Cox did over the years to assist those in need and in our combined efforts to address poverty and the ills that accompany it. Alfra dedicated her working life to assisting others. In the latter years she established a non-profit company known as Crafting Hope with the objective of empowering young women. This organisation continues to operate in Grabouw with one of her daughters at the helm. During the hard lock down and for months after, it was Alfra who was at the forefront of managing food parcels and soup kitchens in Grabouw, feeding literally hundreds of people who were so terribly affected by the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns. The Grabouw community and our organisation has lost a true hero and a very dear friend. R.I.P dear Alfra.

In November 2017 I gave my first chair report for the KBRC. I recall it well. Time has flown and a lot has happened since then.

Despite the difficulties encountered I feel the effort from all involved has been worthwhile. We certainly do have a long way to go but I believe a significant amount of progress has been made. It is now so vital that the challenges and moments of doubt are addressed head on so as not to lose the momentum.



# CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

for 2021

THE FOLLOWING THREATS TO THE INTEGRITY OF THE KBR ARE UNFORTUNATELY AT THE FOREFRONT OF WHAT KEEPS THE KBRC DIRECTORS BUSY.

**FIRES.** Over the past 4 years we have witnessed over a third of the KBR burnt by uncontrolled wildfires, much of these areas being in the core of our Biosphere and threatening species due to the frequency of these fires.

**INVASIVE ALIEN VEGETATION.** This threat emanates particularly from state-owned land that has fuelled the fires and added to the challenge of containing wildfires.

Poaching. This is mostly in our marine component but increasingly we see this is also taking place on state-owned land that is not being actively managed.

**LAND INVASION.** Over a 1 000 ha of state-owned property has been grabbed within the last 12 months. If left unchecked there is no reason not to believe this strategy of acquiring property will keep spreading throughout the BR where a further 5 000 plus ha of state land lies unmanaged or even properly monitored.

**SAFETY AND SECURITY.** This is spurred on by lawless behaviour on state-owned property where the tenant is absent. The increase in resources being spent by the private sector to safeguard one's life and assets is an indication of the dire situation the entire community is facing. Not to mention the fear of repercussions if one openly objects or seeks legal assistance.

**POLLUTION.** The vast majority of the KBR falls within a Strategic Water Source for the City of Cape Town. A R10-billion fruit industry also lies within the boundaries of the BR. The level of water pollution is steadily increasing as informal settlements grow and homes are built where there are no services supplied or regulations being enforced.

And finally, the **CITY OF CAPE TOWN'S GROUND WATER ABSTRACTION PLAN.**



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## How the KBR is actively seeking to address the challenges:

- Seeking funding for organisational and operational costs.
- Being more inclusive.
- Implementing the MAB (Man and the Biosphere) Strategy and Action Plan.
- Making more effective our working relationship with our municipalities.
- Funding the BR awareness campaigns via digital marketing and other platforms.
- Getting buy-in from the private sector.
- Seeking solutions to assist with combating land invasions.
- Producing a report in 2023 to UNESCO that shows progress.
- Building and development compliancy.

## Our partners who can assist us with our challenges within our landscape are many and include amongst others:

- Grabouw Development Agency NPC
- Conservancies within the BR
- Groenland Water Users Association
- WWF South Africa
- Cape Winelands BR
- The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
- LoveGreen Communications
- Contour Enviro Group
- Government agencies, DEADP, CapeNature, municipalities.

It is up to us to keep on engaging with them, constantly looking for opportunities to collaborate to lighten the load of the challenges we have.



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## In conclusion

Our greatest asset/strength is our landscape and the natural resources it provides. We must protect it.

Our greatest weakness is our lack of inclusivity. We must create the appropriate narrative for all and socialise it.

Our greatest opportunity is the spin offs from protecting our landscape. We must remove the obstacles that prevent us from doing it.

Our greatest threat must be the lawlessness created by poverty and hunger. This will be dealt with if we achieve the above three.

To my fellow directors and Corlie Hugo (Contour Enviro Group), I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for all you do to keep this show on the road.

Thank you all very much!

**MIKE DU TOIT**

**Chair: Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve**



## CONTACT US

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