



Quarterly Newsletter – June 2022, Volume 1

Grabouw Development Agency – Update on Projects

The Grabouw Development Agency (GDA) was established in 2020 and made operational in March 2021. Since then, the GDA has identified many potential projects to drive job creation and economic growth in the Elgin and Grabouw valley. However, the focus is on 3 projects.

In the first project the GDA has identified an unused shed that will be transformed into workshops and small offices to be used by small businesses in the informal settlement that is currently operating from garages and living rooms. The aim is to formalise these businesses and to grow them into employment vehicles. The entrepreneurs will receive training in key areas of business including marketing, financial management, human resource management and leadership. A proposal for funding has been submitted to a variety of potential financiers and construction should commence in due course.

The second project is the development of an informal settlement mall on an open piece of land in the heart of the informal settlement. This development will assist the community of Grabouw to shop where they live and save substantially on travel expenditure to the current center of the town. The land identified is large enough to also allow for the development of a sports complex that will serve the youth. The informal settlement has a dire lack of sport facilities and hence young talent is not being identified and nurtured.



A third project involves developing an alternative land utilisation plan for the forestry land in the valley that has mostly been neglected during the last decade. Some of this land can be reforested while other areas can help to contribute to additional farming activity, especially the development of empowerment projects to assist farm workers and the unemployed. Some of this land also needs to be cleared due to alien vegetation infestation and should then be returned to Cape Nature or can be used by a similar tourism and conservation focused institution.



Housing remains a massive challenge across South Africa, and it is no different in Grabouw. The population of the town has exploded in the last decade. With the previous census in 2011, the population of Grabouw was 30,337 and it is now estimated to be more than 160,000. No town has the capacity to deal with such a large increase in population. It is therefore crucial to focus on housing in the region that will not only increase the tax base of the municipality but also create an environment where people can live in humane conditions and contribute towards the tax base of the municipality. This remains a societal challenge and will require the co-operation of all levels of government, business and the community. The GDA is working on completing a housing survey to understand the demand and ability to develop new housing in TWK.



Over and above these projects the GDA is also involved in improving the recycling in the town but also from the farming community and businesses in the region. This includes waste separation at the waste disposal site and waste collection from the township that is currently largely ignored from a re-cycling perspective.

Tourism remains a sector that can create many job opportunities in a short space of time and hence the GDA has been working on several projects to promote Grabouw and Elgin as a tourism hotspot. This includes the tourism awareness container at Peregrine Farm Stall, working on a 1 ticket cycling route and a cycle route from Somerset West to Elgin. So watch this space!



Elgin Valley – tourism hotspot.

City Nature Challenge in the Overstrand 2022

The City Nature Challenge took place at the end of April. Nature Lovers ventured into natural landscapes for 4 days, armed with cameras and cellphones. People took photos of every possible plant and creature from their gardens to the streets, and from the coast and mountains to the rivers and lagoons.

Everybody participated enthusiastically, which led to the Overstrand ending second in Southern Africa with almost 20 000 observations and third for number of species logged (2 300 after the Garden Route's 2 500). The Overstrand was also third in terms of participants – 258.



Disa tenuis – Photo Magriet Brink.



Argiope australis – Photo Magriet Brink.



Erica leucotrachela – Photo Magriet Brink.

The next big challenge is the Great Southern Bioblitz from 28 to 31 October 2022, visit www.greatsouthernbioblitz.org for more information.

How to survive the cold winter days....

Reptiles regulate their body temperature through thermoregulating. This means basking in a warm area to heat up and moving to a cool area to cool down. So how do reptiles survive during the cold winter months when there is limited sun and heat?

In South Africa reptiles do not go into hibernation during the winter months as our winters are very mild. Instead, they try to conserve energy by limiting their movements and slowing down their metabolism.



Mole snake.

Snakes may seek shelter in caves, holes, under rock or logs, in tree stumps or underground. On a warm winter's day snakes may sneak out of their hiding spots to soak up the sun.

Tortoises begin to search for a place to overwinter towards the end of May. During the cold winter months, they will shelter in holes in the ground or sites among rocks or under logs, where they dig themselves in or under, with only the shell being visible. They will however also sneak out on a sunny day.



Angulate Tortoise.



Southern Rock Agama.

Reptiles are adapted to survive fires that occur in fynbos. Tortoises lay their eggs during the springtime, eggs then hatch in late autumn, therefore escaping summer fires. Even if adult tortoises are killed by summer fires, their eggs will hatch safely, when winter rains soften the ground. Snakes and lizards also lay their eggs in summer that will hatch in autumn. If fires however occur outside of the natural season and burn in winter they can have a harmful impacts on reptiles. The natural fire season for fire in fynbos is December to March.

Meet a Kogelberg Biosphere Champion – Jackie Jakobs

Jackie Jakobs was born and bred in Kleinmond and loves her little hometown. When she was younger her dad used to take her hiking, swimming and on various adventures in nature. At that age Jackie said she did not really understand the reason behind his relationship with nature and how important that relationship between man and his environment is.

All that changed when she received the opportunity to be part of an Environmental Education project in Kleinmond run by WWF-SA office in Kleinmond. She was part of the Eco-Tourism project and got the opportunity to learn about the plant life and animal life. To learn about the Kogelberg area has put her father's love for nature into perspective.

Jackie joined the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve Company in 2021 as the youngest Director to use the opportunity to educate youth from the local community about the Biosphere. Jackie is part of the youth ministry at her local church which aims to upskill and create opportunities for young people. Since she "rediscovered" her love for nature the group now regularly goes on hikes, participate in coastal clean-ups and volunteer at local eco-club organizations.



Jackie Jakobs.



Her heart has, is and will always be about helping people – specially to create access to education and growth opportunities. This is why she chose to study a BA degree with psychology and sociology as majors. Jackie's dream is to have all the young people growing up in her community to become confident and active contributors to their future and the sustainability of their community, town, and nation. Yes, this may seem like an impossible dream but if just one life has been touched and changed for the better and is doing the same to another – it has already exceeded the 'none'.



Jackie doing a guided hike .

Jackie is also part of Sisonke Enviro Tours. The members are qualified and registered tourist guides. They will be running guided tours in the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve and adjacent areas.

First aid Training for Wildlife

The Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve Company (KBRC) recently hosted a training course on wildlife first aid and rehabilitation in Betty's Bay. The course ran over two days and was presented by Michelle Watson from Wildlife Rescue South Africa.

Michelle is one of only a handful of certified wildlife rehabilitators in the country, certified by the International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council. The training covered topics like basic wound management, hydration, emergency first aid, rehabilitation procedures and release criteria. It also included practical components.



The KBRC wants to assist wildlife during natural disasters like fires and flooding and is therefore bringing together a team of volunteers and equipment to be able to respond.



Participants attending the course.

For more information:

Contact Corlie Hugo at admin@kogelbergbiosphere.org.za

Website: www.kogelbergbiosphere.org.za

Facebook: Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve Company