



## ABI in the Overberg

### Members and Partnership Meeting

Held on Wednesday 15 May 2019

Church Community Hall, Elim

### MINUTES

1. Welcome:

Cornie Swart, ABI Chair, opened the meeting. He was pleased with the great attendance and welcomed everyone with a reminder of ABI's overarching goal: *To foster biodiversity through sustainable and integrated socio-cultural-, economic and environmental development in the Overberg*, and its 5 objectives namely the 5 'C's:

1. *Convene members for any purpose deemed necessary by the Association*
2. *Communications and servicing of the membership*
3. *Generate, gather, collate and share data and information*
4. *Conceptualise new approaches, programmes, projects and activities*
5. *Source capital and cash, financing and funds for approved projects*

He urged everyone to participate in the discussions and to continue to work together in the "ABI way".

Pierre Apollis, Chair of the Elim Overseers Council, welcomed everyone on behalf of the Elim Community.

Those present introduced themselves giving their names and the organisations they represent.

2. Present

Alliston Appel	Agulhas National Park
Andre Uys	Overberg Agri
Angela Wain	Bhungani Farm, walker Bay Fynbos Conservancy
Angelo Aplon	Overstrand Fire Services
Anthony Wain	Bhungani Farm, walker Bay Fynbos Conservancy
Attie van Breda	Elim Overseers Council
Carla Ackerman	Space
Chris Kriel	Agriabout magazine
Chris Whitehouse	Phillipskop Mountain reserve
Cornie Swart	Agri Western Cape
Daniel Basubas	University of Otago, New Zealand
Doulene Els	Gansbaai Tourism
Duncan Clews	Camphill Farm Community
Elmarie van Rooyen	Breede Gouritz Catchment Management Agency
Esna Swart	Flower Valley Conservation Trust
Ester van der Walt	Overberg Distrik Landbou Vereniging
Gerhard van Deventer	Sandberg Fynbos Reserve
Gill Gimberg	Klein Swartberg Conservancy
Georgina Hamilton	Bodhi Khaya

Grant Jephtha	WC Dept of Agriculture LandCare
Heather D'Alton	Flower Valley Conservation Trust
Hedrig Slabig	Cape West Coast Biosphere Reserve; Botsoc
Kirsten Watson	Flower Valley Conservation Trust
Letty-Ann Möller	Radio Overberg 101.8fm
Lesley Richardson	Flower Valley Conservation Trust; ABI Co-ordination
Lily Upton	Grootbos Foundation
Lindsay Madden	Heilfontein Farm, Tesselaarsdal
Louise Wessels	Greater Overberg Fire Protection Association
Mick D'Alton	Nuwejaars Special Management Area
Mike Dormer	Flower Valley Conservation Trust
Mike Fabricious	Walker Bay Fynbos Conservancy
Odette Curtis-Scott	Overberg Renosterveld Conservation Trust
Ora Laubscher	Suidernuus
Pierre Apollis	Elim Overseers Council
Rachel Fleener	Otago University, New Zealand
Reinette Rathbone	Stanford Hills
Rezelle Els	Private
Rob Gimberg	Klein Swartberg Conservancy
Roger Bailey	Flower Valley Conservation Trust
Ross Kettles	Nuwejaars Special Management Area
Rulien Volschenk	Overberg District Municipality
Sean Privett	Walker Bay Fynbos Conservancy; Grootbos Foundation
Stanley Engel	Flower Valley Conservation Trust
Stephen Smuts	Napier Mountain Conservancy; Southern Overberg Botsoc
Thilivhali Murivhami	Walker Bay Fynbos Conservancy
Tierck Hoekstra	CapeNature
Vanessa Barends	WC Dept of Agriculture - Agricultural Economics
Vivienne Daniels	Elim Overseers Council

#### Apologies

Abdul Aziz Jacobs	Director: Infrastructure Services, Cape Agulhas Municipality
Annette Theron	
Carla Wood	Table Mountain Fund
Chris Martens	The Fynbos Trust
Deon Wasserman	Manager: Streets and Stormwater, CAM
Estelle van Dyk	Chair, Overberg District Agriculture Association
Francois Kotze	Overberg District Municipality
Gerry MCGovern	Private
Glenda	Gansbaai Tourism
Hermanus Zass	EPWP: Overberg Regional Coordinator
Jan Coetzee	Land Programme, WWF-SA
Kerry Maree	Table Mountain Fund
Nicola Jenkins	Consultant
Rupert Koopman	CapeNature
Sheldon Seconds	Cape Agulhas Municipality
Stephan Muller	Director: Infrastructure and Planning, Overstrand Municipality
Stephanie Midgley	Climate Change Specialist
Tertius Carinus	Manager: Park Planning & Projects; SANParks
Wessel Swart	Landowner

### 3. Presentations

All presentations are available on the ABI website: [www.agulhasbiodiversity.co.za](http://www.agulhasbiodiversity.co.za)

#### 3.1. **Conservation Agriculture in the Overberg - Andre Uys, CEO, Overberg Agri**

Andre's presentation provided the global context for food security and food production in South Africa and in the Overberg. He emphasized that sustainability is

key when the world is experiencing an exponential growth in population, where there was a paucity of arable land and where the impacts of climate change were increasingly being felt. There was enough food in the world to feed everyone but it was not always in places where needed. Other important points for the future of agriculture are the roles of technology and of the consumer, the latter driving the demand for change towards more ethical production. He highlighted the early adoption by Overberg farmers in the 1970s of conservation farming principles. The latter focused on minimum disturbance of the soil, crop rotation and year-round soil cover for the conservation of the environment, soil and water. This was now accepted practice in the region, having made a significant difference to yields and the economics of farming in the Overberg. He highlighted the important role of the water supply from the Theewaterskloof Dam to the Overberg.

#### Discussion:

Illegal ploughing of virgin veld in the Overberg was raised by Odette Curtis who asked what could be done to reverse this trend. Andre said that the decision to plough was driven by economic incentives. He agreed that the agriculture and conservation sectors need to address this issue together with farmers being brought closer into forums such as this one to be part of the debate and the solution. Chris Kriel of AgriAbout magazine said that the media plays an important role and offered to assist through his publication.

Mick D'Alton spoke of the impact of the increase in grazing lands which reduces the natural areas with an accompanying increase in spraying which has an effect of natural fauna. Andre agreed that we need to think more long-term about the impacts of such agricultural practices. He said that Overberg Agri was considering a proposal to bring in support for farmers around these issues to conserve nature within a production landscape. Cornie added that there is legislation on these matters that needs to be adhered to. Ethics and safety in food production are also essential in the modern food supply. He said that audit and certification systems already exist which most farmers who export need to sign up to, such as Global Gap. Mike Fabricious suggested that a way be found to audit and certify landowners who followed best practice guidelines. Odette said that the changes in practice are more likely to come from the ground up and not from the top down.

Lindsay Madden raised the issue of food waste and that education of the consumer in this regards is critical. The notion of a "Best by" date needs to be re-thought to help reduce food waste.

Alliston Appel expressed concern about the impact of mechanization on the number of people living on farms. He felt attention should be given to the wellbeing of those who were now compelled to move into town because of changes in employment on farms.

### **3.2. A Water Fund for the Overberg? Lesley Richardson, ABI Co-ordination**

Lesley described the opportunity that ABI and its stakeholders have to set up a Water Fund in collaboration with The Nature Conservancy. The aim is to help secure the Overberg's water supply for the long-term. The process includes an Eligibility Phase for which ABI has now received seed funding from The Nature Conservancy. During this Phase the threats to water security will be identified through consultation with the users and the producers of water. The potential will be assessed of securing funds to support nature-based solutions to deal with the threats. There was unanimous support for ABI to pursue this project through its Co-ordination Unit which is housed in Flower Valley Conservation Trust.

### **3.3. The BGCMA and a Catchment Management Forum for the area - Elmarie van Rooyen, Breede-Gouritz Catchment Management Agency (BGCMA)**

Elmarie described the role of the BGCMA. She suggested that ABI should consider setting up a Catchment Management Forum which is a less formal structure than a Water Users Association under the BGCMA. Such a Forum can achieve alignment and promote common goals for water management in the area. Currently there is no BGCMA structure in the ABI area. There was unanimous support for this idea to be investigated as part of the Overberg Water Fund feasibility study.

**3.4. A Tough 2018/19 Fire Season: Lessons learnt – Angelo Aplon, Overstrand Fire Services; Louise Wessels, Greater Overberg Fire Protection Association (GoFPA).**

Angelo and Louise gave an overview of the past fire season, its unusually massive extent of fires (approx 40,000ha) and the severity of the fires. They listed lessons learnt for society, for the Overstrand Fire Services and for the Greater Overberg Fire Protection Association (GoFPA). The risk associated with alien invasive plants could not be over-emphasised. The excellent co-operation within the community was mentioned by Louise.

**3.5. Aliens in my backyard: What can I do? – Stanley Engel, Flower Valley Conservation Trust**

Stanley outlined the elements of the next phase of the ABI-wide Alien Clearing Project (2019-2021) to be funded jointly by the Department of Environmental Affairs, various philanthropic donors and participating landowners. He pointed out the various Acts governing alien species that need to be adhered to as well as methods of managing various species, be they manual, mechanical, use of herbicides and biological control, or fire. The key is to have an integrated plan per property and area. He mentioned that Flower Valley provides support services to landowners to help them to be compliant. Services include planning, drawing up alien control plans and sourcing free herbicide from Government. Of special concern in the area is the spread of new alien species such as “Kangaroo Paw” for which SANBI is providing funds. Everyone was urged to be on the look-out for signs of spread and to notify Stanley so that they can be stopped in their tracks early on.

**4. ABI Membership**

**4.1. Merits and benefits of the landscape approach – an international perspective - Rachel Fleener, University of Otago, New Zealand**

Rachel asked the audience on their definition of a landscape in the context of land management and development. She said it was clear that it depended on who one asks. She then offered the following definition: *“A landscape approach is a multi-faceted integrated strategy that aims to bring together multiple stakeholders from multiple sectors to provide solutions at multiple scales. It can be broadly defined as a framework to address the increasingly widespread and complex environmental, economic, social and political challenges that typically transcend traditional management boundaries”.*

Rachel said the benefits of a landscape approach include access and leveraging of resources, efficient resource use, longer term impacts, political influence, reaching different communities and providing for learning and adaptive management. She described her research into ABI as case study. Tierck Hoekstra mentioned that CapeNature was restructuring its management units into “landscapes”. Rachel requested participation to understand perceptions regarding the conservation and socio economic imperative in the Overberg. Those present agreed that ABI could provide Rachel with their contact details for her to follow up with people individually.

**4.2. Mapping the ABI Partners footprint – Esna Swart**

Esna described the project she is involved in to map the footprint and reach of ABI Members and stakeholders. This would enable everyone involved in ABI to show

their use of resources, their collaboration and their joint impacts. It will assist in applications for funding and help donors to see where action is planned and where there are gaps. She requested co-operation from those present and all ABI members in providing the information she needed. She will be in contact with people individually. Esna is also mapping the distribution of biological control agents against alien invasives in the Overberg for which there are incomplete records.

#### **4.3. ABI Membership - survey - Heather D'Alton**

Heather explained the need for ABI to understand on an ongoing basis the needs and expectations of ABI Members and stakeholders. She asked that everyone complete a short survey which can be accessed online with the following link:  
[www.agulhasbiodiversity.co.za/survey/](http://www.agulhasbiodiversity.co.za/survey/)

#### **4.4. Signing up as an ABI Member**

Everyone was encouraged to sign-up as an ABI member. An application form was available at the meeting and is also available online on the ABI website. Currently membership is free.

#### **5. Any other matters**

Dates of important meetings:

5.1. Alien Biomass Expo – 11 June 2019, Stellenbosch

5.2. Fynbos Forum – 5 - 8 August 2019 in Baardskeerdersbos

For more information, write to [info@agulhasbiodiversity.co.za](mailto:info@agulhasbiodiversity.co.za)

#### **6. Dates of next ABI meetings**

Everyone was asked to diarise the following:

6.1. ABI Members and Partners meeting, including AGM: Wednesday 21 August 2019

6.2. Partners meeting: Wednesday 30 October 2019

#### **7. Thanks and close**

In closing the Chair asked that we remember Piet Human who passed away in January 2019. Piet worked closely with ABI for a number of years advising on the ABI strategy for the Green Economy Theme, and participating in many an ABI submission for funding. He will be greatly missed by the ABI fraternity.

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and participation. He also thanked all the speakers for their valuable contributions.

The meeting closed at 13h40.

#### **Minutes:**

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