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Editorial

Who doesn't want a clean healthy environment, with robust functioning ecosystems, and where the millions of fellow species with which we share this planet can live and thrive? Who also doesn't want a strong vibrant economy with lots of well paying jobs and prosperity for all? Perhaps our underlying motives and values aren't all that different after all.

Why then is there so much conflict around development and the protection of the natural environment in the Garden Route? The problem of course, which is the same one that has undermined biodiversity conservation or indeed any form of environmental protection since before these terms were thought of, is the age old short versus long term interests and decision making. Invariably (but with some noteworthy and encouraging exceptions) when push goes to shove it is the short term gains of jobs and profits benefiting the few that wins the day, and it is our natural environment and long term benefits for the many that loses out. Bulldozers over blommertjies. Reconciling the short term and long term needs of society is the biggest challenge facing our natural environment and the other forms of life with which we share the planet. Yet reconcile this difference we must. Our very long term survival, and certainly our health and prosperity, is at stake.

This is no easy task, particularly given the need for decision makers to justify their positions and actions to an electorate every five years, and especially in a country like ours where there are so many pressing social requirements to address. There is no silver bullet, sustainably managing our environment is a complex and vexing challenge and will continue to be. But there are things we can do. Here are a

couple of them.

The conservation community needs to proactively and pragmatically work out and clearly communicate what they want, rather than only reactively objecting to what they don't want. Biodiversity conservation is about space, about land and water, and having enough of it for viable populations of plants and animals to live, reproduce and die, and to form ecosystems that can supply clean water, attenuate floods, bind slopes and sustain fisheries (to name but a few of the ecosystem services we derive from biodiversity). While all land is or could be important for conservation, some bits are much more important than others. We need to explicitly identify which are the most important, spatially at fine resolution on a map. Such a map must paint the picture across the landscape of what it would take to meaningfully conserve biodiversity in the region. So what do we need on such a map?

We need to identify a system of core areas that contain representative samples of all the biodiversity of the region (and some of these core areas need to be big if we want to sustain eagles and elephants). We need to identify those areas and systems that form our critical natural capital in the region, like the catchments, wetlands and river systems that supply our towns with water, and the scenic natural landscapes that sustain our tourism economy. And we need functional corridors linking core areas across landscape and climatic gradients, east to west and catchments to coast.

Corridors are particularly important if we are to sustain natural ecological processes over an ecologically or evolutionarily meaningful length of

time (decades and centuries), and especially important given the increasing effects of climate change. With climate change the distributions of plants and animals are shifting, they need corridors of intact natural habitat to move along and into. It is likely that 100 years from now it will be a somewhat different suite of plants and animals that form the ecosystems that supply us with clean water, attenuate floods, bind slopes, and sustain what fisheries we have left by then (etc.). We need to ensure that we keep every opportunity to increase our chances of having healthy functional ecosystems in future. Maintaining functional corridors will help us do that.

A map containing these things must be produced at a fine scale so that it is meaningful at a cadastral or sub-cadastral level, relevant for making decisions about individual properties. It must be produced using the best available science and be free of narrow colloquial self interests. It would identify which areas are critical that must under no circumstances be compromised, which areas are of value and that may need to be restored, and importantly which areas are not that important for conserving biodiversity where controlled development can take place. We don't have a choice of where our areas of high biodiversity importance are but we do have a choice of where to build our houses. We need space and careful planning to accommodate both.

We call these maps "fine scale biodiversity plans". Getting to the final products is going to be difficult involving tough choices and compromises that will certainly not please everyone, but once formulated should go a long way towards overcoming some of the polarization and conflict around development currently happening.

There is space for more development in the Garden Route (whether there is enough water is another question), there will be pressure from people for more homes along our coast for the foreseeable future, and the building industry is an important contributor to the local economy and does create much needed jobs. But development that compromises our most important areas for biodiversity must not take place. It is for us as conservationists to identify these areas (along with areas appropriate for other land uses) and once identified, to defend them vehemently. The corollary is also true, when there is a development application for a piece of land identified in the fine scale biodiversity plan as not that important for conservation, it should not be objected to it on biodiversity grounds. Rather the proponents should be engaged with towards ensuring that the opportunities for benefiting biodiversity in built environments that do exist are realized to the full (indigenous plantings, rehabilitation of open spaces, water saving measures, energy efficient design, etc.).

Once we have identified the important areas across the landscape, we must take action to make sure they get protected. This means making sure that the areas themselves get appropriately managed (invasive species control, fire management, etc.), and that they don't get compromised by conflicting land uses and activities. It also means growing the support base by raising awareness and making them relevant to as wide a cross section of our society as possible, and in realizing tangible benefits to people from these areas. And benefits here can be from a clean steady supply of water and erosion control, to recreational opportunities or actual jobs and income generation.

The role of NGO's is critical in this and cannot be overstated. Statutory conservation agencies or other authorities are important and have a vital role to play, but their actions will only ever be able to go so far, and their wheels of change tend to turn slowly. State managed statutory protected areas are also only ever going to be a part of what's needed to conserve biodiversity across the landscape, particularly the vitally important corridors needed to sustain ecological processes. NGOs across the world have always been at the forefront of conservation action and innovation. South Africa and the Garden Route is no exception. If we are meaningfully to reverse the decline of biodiversity and step up the sustainable management of the area, it's going to take anyone and everyone interested in doing this to work together.

NGOs play a vitally important watchdog role, in assisting our public officials and holding them accountable, but also in taking local action on the ground and broadening awareness and support. The work that the Nature's Valley Trust has done and is doing with the Salt River project is a very good example of this, and for which those involved should be wholeheartedly congratulated and encouraged. It takes passionate competent people as well as funding, and the more of both the better! We need more of this type of local action. Much more.

Andrew Brown
Garden Route Initiative Coordinator

Status of Projects

2005 has been a successful and fulfilling year. The Nature's Valley Trust is firmly established and accepted as an environmental body on the Garden Route which has made a difference in terms of raising awareness, rising to environmental challenges and staying in touch with current trends and practices taking place in the various environmental arenas. It would appear that as we complete one project, new projects arise out of this, illustrating the dynamic and progressive nature of our work. This exciting upward spiral and the Trust's willingness to take up challenges has not detracted us from our original aims, objectives and core focus area. Rather, it has enriched our perspectives on the true value of Nature's Valley and all it offers.

★ **Coastal Fynbos and the Brenton Blue Butterfly:** In August, Dave Edge arrived with three very special parcels. Having established, through setting up the ant traps, that we do in fact have the required species of ant on the Fynbos Reserve, Dave 'planted' three Brenton Blue larvae on the *Indigofera erecta* (their host) plants. We now sit and wait in anticipation for the 'larvae' to grow wings and fly. Close monitoring will be taking place over the next few weeks and, if this introduction method is successful, Nature's Valley will, yet again, feature in the media.

Mike and Sharron Vincent visited the Fynbos Reserve in September to film an insert for 50/50 and this will be screened at the end of November. In the October 2005 edition of Africa Geographic, there was a short insert about the reintroduction.

During November, Dave will be bringing a further 30 larvae to the reserve.

Partnerships: Cape Nature, Green Trust and WWF-SA, Dave Edge, Professor Roy Lubke, Bitou Municipality, South African National Parks (SANParks), Willing Workers in South Africa (WWISA)

★ **The Phyl Martin Park:** We are presently updating the interpretive boards in the Park in readiness for December and we hope that you will enjoy a quiet moment there.

The Interpretive hut is being prepared as well and, if anyone has any suggestions or items which would add value to this, please let us know. Please feel free to visit the hut at any time during the day. Michael and Ina Perlman have kindly given a collection of the most beautiful shells, on long loan, for the little museum which, over time, will be labeled.

Partnerships: Bitou Municipality, Nature's Valley Ratepayers' Association (Open Spaces Committee)

★ **The Salt River:** So much has happened around the river over the past few months and the Salt River now has three projects running concurrently:

- Research: The six temperature monitors which were installed by Ferdy de Moor have been replaced and ongoing monitoring of the temperature of the system continues. Over time, we will be able to plot the temperature variations in the river and determine whether these are brought about by climate or water abstraction. Ferdy's research project, once initiated, will look at the effects of this on the invertebrates in the river as well as other external factors which may impact on the insects. In addition, rivers on either side of the Salt River will be investigated to confirm whether 'our' special insects are found there or not.
- Several other school groups, including Wittedrift Primary, have visited the Salt River and done the Jurassic Trail with Martine.

Again, much fun has been had by all. We will be taking any willing children to the Salt River in December, so please keep this in mind (see attached holiday programme).

- The IUCN Netherlands (Tourism Micro Fund) is funding the Eco-Guides project. This project is proving to be more and more exciting and viable as it progresses. The 'guides' have been conducting a market survey which has produced very encouraging feedback and the business plan which has been produced looks extremely promising. Eighteen of the guides have begun their training and, during December, will be offering 'Development Guide' trails for anyone wishing to have a guided experience of the Valley's surrounds. The guides will operate out of the Nature's Valley rest camp, and we would encourage you to make use of their service and provide them with any of your own insights so as to broaden their knowledge. Please give feedback, either directly to them or to me, so that we can provide a really wonderful experience for those visiting our area.



- CEPF (Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund) provided the funding for the Stakeholder Engagement project. Dr Shakti Malan was the consultant through this and the findings have been both enlightening and beneficial. What has yet again been reiterated is that it is vital when working on environmental issues to constantly take cognizance of the political and socio-economic aspects of the area. Shakti has produced a list of actions out of discussions with Salt River stakeholders and a forum has been established. We will be carrying the recommendations and actions forward and investigating alternatives to certain chemical use on some properties along the river. The stakeholders have, generally, illustrated a willingness to work within parameters which will not be to the detriment of the Salt River system.
- A further project is in the pipeline but, should funding be forthcoming, will only begin implementation later in 2006. This involves the training of farm workers and owners on invasive species management and the training of local entrepreneurs in furniture making utilizing the removed wattle.

Partnerships: South African National Parks, Albany Museum, Bitou Municipality, Salt River users, Cape Nature, Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, Willing Workers in South Africa, River Health Programme, NC-IUCN, CEPF, Kurland Park, CoastCare, Storms River Adventures.

★ **Community awareness projects:** The *Fisher's Friend* launch was held during October at the Angling Club in Plett. Excellent presentations were given by Rhett Bennett and Ryan who are doing research with Orca (see pg). Their discussions focused on reef fish and the possibility of restocking marine areas with specific indigenous fish species (those which utilize estuaries as nurseries), bred under



captive conditions and released into estuaries. CoastCare will begin distributing the packs shortly along our coast.

The booklet which Chris Sinclair has been working on about the **history of the Nature's Valley** is about to go into print. These will be available in December at a nominal cost. We hope that this will inspire everyone to provide more stories and more pictures so that we can, in time, piece together a really rich picture of the Valley's past.

CoastCare's new **interpretive boards** have been erected at the estuary, the parking area and at the shop and we feel sure that you will enjoy looking at these when you visit the Valley. They are beautifully illustrated with interesting, concise information.

Partnerships: South African National Parks, Nature's Valley Ratepayers' Association, ORCA, CoastCare, Cape Nature.

★ We have received our certificate confirming the registration of the **Nature's Valley Urban Conservancy** and draft management plans have been distributed to members for comment. This will be carried forward during December when members are more likely to be in the Valley.

Partnerships: Cape Nature

★ We have been busy with various **environmental education projects**, all of which are proving beneficial and enjoyable to those involved and participating. A new outdoor classroom has been established utilizing the shell midden site on the eastern side of the Groot River estuary and this should prove to be fascinating for all. During December we will be offering various outings for children to the outdoor classrooms and we hope that you'll allow your little ones some time with us to explore (see attached holiday programme).



The first year of the **Tsitsikamma Eco Schools** project is drawing to a close, with schools having submitted their portfolios for assessment. We wait with baited breath to see who will be handed the Eco Schools green flag.

During November, The Craggs and Coldstream Primary participated in the end of year **Adopt-a-Beach** camps in Nature's Valley. This is a wonderfully exciting time for the children, with competitions, fantastic prizes and a fun-filled weekend. Our

grateful thanks to The Craggs Elephant Park, Ocean Safaris, ORCA, Stormsriver Adventures and African Ramble for donating the wonderful prizes and to Michael Johnson for donating the food for the weekends.

In September the Adopt-a-Beach groups took part in the **International Beach Clean-up Day**, visiting Keurbooms, Central and Robberg beaches where they collected a total of 81,5kg of rubbish, made up of 2 996 items of which 1014 were cigarette ends.

Partnerships: SANParks, WWISA, CoastCare, DEAT (Dept of Environmental Affairs and Tourism), WESSA (Wildlife & Environment Society of South Africa), WWF-SA

NVT News Bites



GARDEN ROUTE FIRES

Most of you will know of the frightening fires which burnt in our area for a few weeks in October and November. At this stage, it is estimated that 30 000 hectares of montane vegetation was burnt, most of which was fynbos. Fantastic efforts by the local Fire Protection agencies, SANParks, the Bitou Fire Department, Forestry and Mountain to Ocean ensured that there were no injuries and no serious damage to property. Firefighters fought round the clock for four days, tackling the various fire fronts which seemed relentless. There was a brief respite during this time when welcome rain fell but the relief was short-lived. Smoldering areas soon flared up and, again, the firefighting teams were back and busy.

Residents of Covie were evacuated from the village and many concerned Covie families were housed in the Church Hall in Nature's Valley for a night. However, the resident ladies of Nature's Valley rustled up a feast and ensured that our neighbours were well fed and comfortable.

Congratulations and thanks are due to all those who stepped in to assist, including the many people who brought food and drinks to the firefighters.

The good news is that in the next few years we will all be able to experience the regeneration of the fynbos and the recent excellent rains after the fire should ensure that it will be truly beautiful.

AND FROM THE SUBMLIME ... TO THE RIDICULOUS



At the end of August, Storms River experienced some enormous seas, with some of the chalets at the restcamp having to be vacated (this photograph shows the extreme sea conditions). These were the highest seas experienced since the mid 70's when some of the chalets were washed away.

Global warming experts have predicted that globally, over the next several years, strange weather conditions will be experienced world wide, including more fires, higher seas and generally strange weather patterns.

A recent article from a WESSA (Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa) highlighted some interesting facts

"The Western Cape has experienced two of the driest years on record. Is this a sign of climate change or is it just part of the normal cyclical weather pattern?"

The bottom line is that our planet is getting warmer and rainfall patterns are changing. The world is warmer now than at any time in the past 1 000 years. Global mean temperatures have risen 0,6°C since 1850. Glaciers are retreating and there is a constant rate of rise in sea level. Temperature trends in the Western ape reveal an appreciative warming over the past three decades Scientific investigations have led to conclusions that the Western Cape and the western part of the Northern Cape are most at risk from this projected climate change. The Western Cape is likely to be both warmer and drier, with the effects diminishing from west to east. Winter rainfall will be less and summer rainfall more – but mainly in the east. Rainfall will become more irregular and possibly of greater intensity,, with more frequent storms and flooding By 2050, mean temperatures will have increased by 1,5°C at the coast and 2 - 3°C inland of the coastal mountains.

A sobering statistic is that 97% of the rivers in the Western Cape are classified as threatened to highly threatened Water is already a limiting factor to the region's economic growth ... Decreased water in rivers equated to increased impacts on wetlands and estuaries. Estuaries face both warming and drying, yet they play a critical economic role in terms of fisheries alone. Sea levels are already rising, resulting in salt water intrusion into coastal fresh-water aquifers. Coastal erosion is occurring, revealing the folly of development too close to beaches.

A warmer and drier climate will lead to the progressive decline in species numbers in both the Fynbos and the Succulent Karoo, which are globally recognized as biodiversity hotspots and account for some 13 200 plant species. In addition, the increased carbon dioxide in the atmosphere acts as an aerial fertilizer for fast growing trees and thus promotes the growth of invasive alien species. This results in increased use of subterranean water and also increased fuel loads that result in devastating fires. It goes without saying that the risk, as well as the frequency and intensity of fires, will increase It is possible that up to 55% of the Fynbos biome will have been lost by 2050.

FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

"THE ULTIMATE GOAL IS FOR THE TRUST TO BE SUPPORTED BY A REGULAR, ANNUAL COMMITMENT FROM THE MAJORITY OF PEOPLE WHO LOVE NATURE'S VALLEY"

Please note that NVTrust t-shirts (for children and adults), golf shirts, caps, phases of the moon posters, tidal posters, gift tags and special days calendars are available from the Nature's Valley Trading Store.

A NEW FUNDING STRATEGY AND CHALLENGE

What are the challenges we face?

The issues and challenges facing the NVTrust over the next few years were discussed at Trustees meeting in September. Current trends clearly indicate that we will be facing enormous development pressures, with over 1 000 houses planned for The Crags and surrounds. This, in turn, leads to the impact of increasing use of Nature's Valley, of pollution and, a key issue, of water supply. The Salt and Buffels rivers which currently provide most of the water for the existing properties in the area are extremely small and vulnerable systems. There is real concern that these systems will not be able to sustain the proposed developments. The NVTrust, in partnership with other local bodies, will need to tackle challenges such as this if we are to ensure that our surrounds and river systems are protected.

How can the Trust afford to address these challenges?

At our Trustees meeting, funding was obviously one of the topics on our agenda. In order to grow as an effective and active conservation body, funds are necessary to implement projects and to participate in processes to ensure that we fulfil our mission: *"To preserve the environmental integrity of Nature's Valley and its surrounds"*.

Over the past five years we have relied on the generous support of our members to fund our various projects and running costs. Most of these funds have been generated through our annual fundraising events in December. However, the victories which have been achieved and the past five years have resulted in an increasing level of outside interest in the Trust and we are now sourcing funds from conservation funding agencies. Our list of supporters include; The Green Trust, WWF-SA, IUCN and CEPF. We intend to expend greater effort on sourcing project based funding and will work hard next year to submit applications to appropriate funding agencies.

What the Trust represents and has and can achieve.

The Trust today represents a vehicle and an opportunity to maintain Nature's Valley as a model of sensitive development on the Tsitsikamma coast. The annual report for 2004/2005 includes an update of projects and activities. It is a strong reflection of what can and will in future be achieved by a small, independent and agile organisation with the right motives and with the will to succeed.

We are challenging the Nature's Valley community to continue to support the Trust and to broaden our donor base.

As a celebration of our 5th Anniversary we are offering our loyal supporters the opportunity to participate in a campaign to take the Trust to even greater heights.

It is a first come first serve basis.

Guy and Kim Hayward have already snapped up a Golden Brenton Blue.

The van Hasselts are the first family to claim a Golden Otter.

All participants will be invited to a celebration in December. This innovative, exciting event will replace our annual auction fundraiser.

WE ARE OFFERING :

THE PLATINUM COLLECTION :

Underpins the philosophy that sustainable conservation measures require dedicated, long-term commitment.

5 Platinum Brenton Blue categories:

R15 000 to be donated each year for three years by 5 individual funders or 5 syndicates;

10 Platinum Otter categories:

R10 000 to be donated each year for three years by 10 individual funders or 10 syndicates;

15 Platinum Whale categories:

R5 000 to be donated each year for three years by 15 individual funders or 15 syndicates;

THE GOLDEN COLLECTION

Represents innovation, delivery, results and dedication.

10 Golden Brenton Blue categories

R15 000 to be donated by 10 individual funders or 10 syndicates;

15 Golden Otter categories:

R10 000 to be donated by 15 individuals or syndicates;

20 Golden Whale Categories:

R5 000 to be donated by 20 individuals or syndicates;

THE SILVER COLLECTION

Symbolises the power of broad based community support and the importance of strength in numbers.

- 20 **Silver Brenton Blue** categories
R3000 to be donated by 20 individual funders or 20 syndicates;
- 25 **Silver Otter** categories:
R1000 to be donated by 25 individuals or syndicates;
- 30 **Silver Whale** Categories:
R500 to be donated by 30 individuals or syndicates;

JOIN THE CAMPAIGN !

The Nature's Valley Trust is delivering on its mission and vision. It has grown into a vibrant, exciting organisation. Join the campaign, make an individual contribution or even better widen our support base and contact your family, friends and neighbours and form a syndicate.

When you have decided if what category to choose, Platinum, Gold or Silver, please send an email or the donation form below, to Julie Carlisle indicating your commitment.

Our goal is to secure full support for all the categories by the end of the year. As individuals and syndicates join up we'll keep you informed of the progress and the targets reached in each group.

All participants will be invited to a celebration of this achievement in December. A splendid, one-off celebration that will replace our annual auction fundraiser.

THANK YOU: 2001/2002/2003/2004/2005 SPONSORS

Mr Albertyn, Anderson family, Antrobus Family, Aveng, Barker family, Barnes family, CEPF, CM Bath, GE Bath, Mr Bekker, Biesenbach family, John Blaine and family, Tonie and Tersia Bouwer, Braatvedt family, Mrs Brand, Cape Mohair International, Paolo Cavaleri, GW Cottage, Coetzer family, Coulson family, De Muelenaere family, H. de Clercq, JP & BA Daffue, LW Dekker, Wynn and Tacy Dedwith, Jan and Leni du Plessis & family, M du Toit, Ellison family, Engelbrecht family, Ina Faber & Francette le Roux, Face Adrenalin, Findlay family, Prof & Mrs Firth, Gibson family, P Gilbert, Ginn family, Girdwood family, Mr & Mrs Goeller, HA Graham, Di Grant & family, Grobicki family, Greg Grobler, Alf Gunderson, A J Hamman, Harmse family, Mr and Mrs Harris, RJ Harris, Harry Shires Will Trust, Dalene Heynes, Gordon Hayward, Guy Hayward, M. Hepburn, G Heyns, H. Hover, Ian Hunter, Inkwazi Trust, H Isherwood, IUCN Jensen family, Peter Jackson, Johan Johannson, Judy Johnston, k Kamp, Bob Keeble, Francois and Rachele Kirsten, Klein family, Mr & Mrs Koekemoor, Kotze family, Kriegler Family, Kroon family, Krone Family, Mr W. Kruger, Mr & Mrs A. Kruger, C. Kruyshaar, Kurland Estates, Langton family, Lategan family, Liversidge family, Lyell Family Trust, Johan Malan family, Beefy & Tish Mance, Marchand family, Martin Family, D. Mason-Jones, Di Mackenzie & family, Geoff and Jill McIlleron, Mermaid's Slipper Restaurant, Mitchells Brewery, Mr Mohr, Montgomery family, Mossienes, Mouton family, Mudge family, Myburgh family, Nature's Valley Ratepayer's Association, Nichol family, Patrick and Marina Niven, Jenni Noble, Clive and Colleen Noble, Ochse family, Ocean Blue Adventures, P Oliver, Dr CP Oosthuizen, D Oscrift, Janet O'Sullivan, Roy Parkhurst family, Gordon and Chrystal Paterson, Perlman family, The Peter Vichos Trust, A. Pienaar, A Powrie, G Pretorius, Mr Prinsloo, Quarmbly family, Rae family, Rattray family, Read family, Marty Reddering, Mo Richards, Jane Rosenthal, Dr Smith and family, Staples family, Storms River Adventures, PE Streider, Sturgess family, Taylor family, Thalassa Trust, JB Theron, Le Roex and Timson family, Valentine Family, HJ van der Hoven, Kobus van der Walt, J van Dyk, M L van Niekerk, Ds van Niekerk, Mr Barry Venter, Visser family, van De Pijpekam family, PH van der Merwe, Van Hasselt family, Andrew and Leonie van Hasselt, Greta van Hasselt, van Heyningen family, Van Melle Kamp family, MS van Tonder, Mr van Wyk; P R van Zyl, R H Venter, J B Venter, SF Viljoen, von Holten family, Frans & Marie Wagener, Watt family, Bob Whall & Embroidery Master, Whyte family, Wiswe family, Mr & Mrs Withers, Woode family, MS Woolf, Whitesides family, WWF-SA and the Green Trust



Please either e-mail or fax this form to Julie at nvalley@worldonline.co.za or 044 531 6820 and indicate which category of donation you have chosen below:

Bank details: Nature's Valley Trust, Standard Bank:
Branch: Jan Smuts Branch code: 420 512 for cheques or 004 205 for electronic banking
Account: 001913859

Name: _____

Address: _____

Erf in Nature's Valley: _____ Tel: _____ Fax: _____

Cell number: _____ E-mail address: _____

Donation Category: _____



2005 Holiday Programme



Activity	Venue	Date	Time	Cost
Forest Birds and everything with Geoff McIlleron	Outside De Vasselot Campsite entrance	19 December	06h30	R10 p/p
Treasure Hunt (children)	Phyl Martin Park	20 December	15h00	R 15 p/child
Church Bazaar Don't miss it!	Church Hall	21 December	18h00	
Sandcastle Competition Great prizes to be won	Beach area at the Nature's Valley shop	22 December	14h00	R 30 p/team
Brenton Walk (children)	Fynbos Reserve	23 December	09h00	R20 p/child
Snakes alive!! Have you ever wondered whether if it's poisonous? What to do during a snake encounter? Or just marveled at their slithery beauty?	Church Hall		15h00	R20 p/p
Christmas Carols	Syndicate lawn		Check not ices	Nil
Forest Birds and everything with Geoff McIlleron	Outside De Vasselot Campsite entrance	27 December	06h30	R10 p/p
Shell Midden Exploration (children)	Lagoon Parking area, Nature's Valley		10h00	R15 p/child
Kiddies Cycle Race Kiddies challenge!! 4km cycle	Lagoon Parking area, Nature's Valley	28 December	08h00	Donation to NSRI
NVRA AGM	Church Hall		18h30	
Hobbit Trail (children)	Outside De Vasselot Campsite entrance	29 December	09h00	R20 p/child
NVTrust Presentation and Urban Conservancy Meeting	Church Hall		20h00	
Triathlon The Valley Challenge We dare you!! 600m swim, 12km cycle, 3km run	Lagoon Parking area, Nature's Valley	30 December	07h00 for 07h30	R50 p/team or individual
Funders Fun Evening Typical Valley-spirit, fun-filled evening with live music	Syndicate lawn (Or in the Church Hall if the weather is not co-operative)		19h00	Lucky draw Bhejane 4x4 Adventures trip: Botswana
Forest Birds and everything else with Geoff McIlleron	Outside De Vasselot Campsite entrance	2 January	06h30	R10 p/p
Amazing Race Fun for the whole family	Lagoon Parking area, Nature's Valley	3 January	08h00	R50 p/team
Salt River Walk For children	Beach area at the Nature's Valley shop	4 January	13h00	R20 p/child

Programmes will be distributed over the holidays, together with SANParks' programme
For more information phone Julie at 044 531 6820 or 082 322 2209

Land Matters

As predicted and expected, developments in Plettenberg Bay have forced developers to look to The Craggs and areas surrounding Plett to provide buyers with their piece of paradise. With this, it is rumoured that, with the existing developments which are taking place and additional pending developments, we could be looking at an additional 1 000 houses or more in The Craggs. What is most concerning is where the water for these developments will come from. Currently, the Salt and Buffels Rivers are utilized by existing properties. However, as we all know, these are both very small river systems and the Salt River is an extremely sensitive system. The Nature's Valley Trust is represented on the Kurland Village housing extension environmental liaison committee and, through this, we are doing our utmost to ensure that impacts to the Salt River are kept to a minimum. We will continue to monitor any new developments and participate in the various environmental processes which will be needed for future developments.

KURLAND VILLAGE HOUSING EXTENSION

The first part of Phase 1 of the housing development, which involved the installation of services, has been completed. With this, the construction of the 'top structures' (houses) has begun for the second part of this phase. Clearly there is much excitement in the village, as residents literally now have concrete proof of their long-awaited abodes being built and are able to witness the progress on a daily basis.

The NVTrust has continued to attend the Environmental Liaison Committee meetings but, sadly and, as we suspected might be the case, the process which is being followed is not ideal. Representation on the committee is not broad enough. In order to address this and, following meetings with the Municipal Manager, we amended the time of the meetings to the evening in the hope that we would achieve better community representation on the committee. This, however, has not been successful and, in fact, attendance at the meetings has dwindled even further, with representatives having family commitments, etc.

Another problem which has arisen has been accountability which was brought up as a key issue by the Municipal Manager. Under the legislative environmental process being followed (National Environmental Management Act), the Municipality is the authority body for this development. However, in this case, the Municipality is also the developer and is thus accountable to itself. This is another 'oxymoron' which we have to tackle to find the best solution.

A new environmental management plan for the construction phase of the development has been drawn up by Hilland Associates who, we are happy to announce, will be appointing a qualified Environmental Control Officer for this phase of the development.

We will continue to play a role in this development and will keep you updated.



COVIE

We attended a presentation by the appointed consultants, Illiso Consulting, for the Covie development during August. The consultants gave an excellent presentation, outlining the broad approach to the Covie developments. No specifics have yet been decided upon, but stakeholder engagement will take place early in the New Year. The following points were highlighted:

- ? Development of Covie will not take place without financial and logistical support from Bitou Municipality;
- ? Covie has environmental sensitivities and these will have to be made known to National Government to ensure that any housing development is appropriate;
- ? Stakeholders in this area are sophisticated, well-spoken and influential which, generally, can prove problematic. However, in this instance, stakeholders will be relied upon to speak up and influence the way development takes place at Covie.
- ? Covie is an extremely poor community and, broadly speaking, poverty and the environment are viewed as being in opposition. The consultants do not believe that this is the case and both of these factors (the social and natural environments) can dovetail and complement each other.
- ? The Coastal Zone Policy will be their departure point for the development as they will need to work within the parameters of this policy.

- ? The development will also be guided by the IDP (Integrated Development Plan).
- ? Decision making meetings are being held with the people of Covie so that planning can move forward.
- ? The development needs special planning and is highly sensitive.

The Mayor, Euan Wildeman, spoke after the presentation and stated that no-one wants to see the area spoiled in any way. Covie is a tourist attraction and developments will therefore need to be appropriate.

BITOU'S SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

The final draft for the local Spatial Development Framework was presented at a meeting held in November. This process has been an extremely interesting one and an enormous challenge for the consultant who was appointed to draw this up. Mapping has involved many layers, taking into account environmental, social, political and economic spheres of developments and, as such, is extremely complex.

The final draft is, on the whole, in alignment with the Provincial Spatial Development Framework (PSDF), although one big issue remains outstanding. Urban edges are included on the Bitou maps, which is required by the PSDF. However, what is not in alignment is what is permitted outside of these urban areas. Bitou's SDF is allowing for development outside urban edges, with a 'density ceiling' of one residential unit per hectare but this will be determined in each case by the applicable environmental legislation. However, the Provincial SDF only allows minimal construction in ecologically sensitive areas, mainly for educational and ecological purposes.

The SDF documents will provide strong guidelines for developers and authorities alike and, although they will be updated and reviewed every five years, it is vital to the future economy and environment that the final document which is now produced is well thought out to ensure that future developments are appropriately situated and will uphold the Garden Route's 'sense of place'.

The Provincial SDF is expected to be approved at the end of November.

This photograph was taken by Peter Ribton, behind the breakers off Nature's Valley beach.
More proof of why Nature's Valley is just so special!



LOOKING AHEAD TO 2006

2006 already promises to be a busy year. Our Brenton Blue reintroduction, Salt River Eco-Guides, Salt River Stakeholder, various research, community and environmental education projects will be continuing. The challenges which we face will, without doubt, include the ever threatening development monster and its associated impacts on our sensitive river systems and pristine landscapes, in addition to the impacts which pressurize our marine resources. New projects will almost certainly be initiated and we will, possibly and if project funding is forthcoming, be looking at alleviating pressure on the Salt River through the removal of invasive plants and linking this to a community project utilizing the by-product of this.

However, and as always, the Nature's Valley Trust, with your greatly appreciated support, will persevere in its efforts to tackle these challenges within the parameters of our objectives and underpinned by environmental legislation.

Our thanks for your ongoing support.
Please feel free to contact us with any comments,
suggestions or queries.



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NATURE'S VALLEY URBAN CONSERVANCY MEMBERSHIP FORM



Name: _____

Erf: _____

Postal Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Cell: _____

E-mail address: _____

Property Inclusion:	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please send me a copy of the Constitution	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

Signature: _____

Return to: PO Box 230, The Craggs, 6602 / Fax: 044 531 6668 / E-mail: nvalley@worldonline.co.za

With thanks to our partners:



"The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund is a joint initiative of Conservation International, the Global Environment Facility, the Government of Japan, the MacArthur Foundation and the World Bank. A fundamental goal is to ensure civil society is engaged in biodiversity conservation."



