

KNYSNA'S GREEN HEART PUMPING STRONG

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KNYSNA NEWS - Since Pledge Nature Reserve's last report, a lot has happened, not the least of which that the plans for the new office block, environmental centre, ablution block and manager's residence have been refined by CMAI Architects, who are doing this work for the reserve pro bono.

These will now go back to the Knysna Municipality who will be funding them through their Lighthouse Project. This is a fire resistant structure and a new concept for this area.

Weeding

Wednesdays

A small group of volunteers led by trustees Nanna Joubert and Pat Nurse, spend at least an hour of their time on Weeding Wednesdays pulling out some of the millions of alien wattles, rooikrans and Port Jackson that are germinating in the reserve.

We are hoping to get more assistance with labour from the municipality and SANParks through their expanded public works programme, but we will be looking to employ or find a volunteer supervisor to work in the heavily infested areas on steep slopes, so that the "good" plants are not pulled out with the "bad".

At the top of the reserve in the fynbos area, it is fantastic to see how many proteas have seeded and are now growing very well after their fire stimulation.



Pat Nurse (trustee), Jaqui von Ribbeck (Rotary Ann), Nanna Joubert (trustee), Jean Allan (Rotary Ann), Fern Emanuel (Rotary Ann president), and Jill Warne (Rotary Ann). Photo: Supplied

Rotary tree planting

The big event was a Rotary tree planting which took place on 29 March. This current Rotary year has been designated by the international Rotary president from Australia, Ian Riseley as Rotary: Making a Difference. As part of this initiative, it was suggested that every Rotarian worldwide should plant a tree, which would equate to at least 1.2-million trees.

The Rotary Club of Knysna ran with this theme and Rotarian Theo Bohlmann was the man in charge. They agreed that they would plant 160 trees in Pledge in partnership with the Rotary Club from Chatsworth in KwaZulu-Natal.

Much planning went into ensuring the holes were dug, the correct trees for our area ordered, compost delivered, a watering system set up using water pumped from our ponds into storage tanks above the plantings (in case we didn't get enough rain to ensure the survival of the trees), etc.



Bob Allan and Doug Emanuel (president Knysna Rotary).

No raining on this parade!

All was set for the big event with tables for information displays set up around the ponds and snacks and refreshments after the planting. Unfortunately, the weather did not cooperate and the longed-for rain arrived on 29 March!

Luckily Theo and Co had a plan B, which came into effect on Wednesday 28 March. A lot of the trees were planted by Pledge's own labour on this day, leaving some more accessible ones for 29th.

In the rain at 10:00 on the 29th, the contingent of Rotarians from Chatsworth arrived with their families and met up with local Rotary members including the Rotary Anns, together with the trustees and manager Mervyn Crous.



Rotary Anns presidents Fern Emanuel (Knysna) and Merasha Moodley (Chatsworth, KZN).

All in an hour's work

We split up into two groups, the ladies going to plant the trees in Circles in the Forest and the men up the Cape Ash Trail. Within an hour the trees had been planted and many photos taken. There was then time for a change of clothes and a clean-up before we all met up at the Hotel Knysna Log-Inn at noon for all the speeches, presentations and a light lunch, kindly organised by Knysna Rotary.

Most of the reserve's trustees had a chance to talk. Peet Joubert spoke on the history of the reserve and how it had been formed, with provincial tourism Wessa as the founding trustee and also SC Johnson & Son, the makers of Pledge furniture polish. Richard Wilkinson elaborated on the fire damage and plans for the new buildings.

Nanna Joubert spoke on the amazing recovery of the plants in the area and of how many new species she keeps discovering, and Pat Nurse spoke on the fact that 100 species of birds have been recorded in the reserve.

The special thing is that Knysna is the only town in South Africa that has bird species named after it – not one, but three, and they have all been recorded in Pledge.

It is to be hoped that this event will lead to more collaboration between more of Knysna citizens and this very special reserve, the Green Heart of Knysna.

[Read a previous article: Transplant for Knysna's Green Heart](#)

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