



Newsletter 7, January 2024

AGM

The minutes for the AGM held on 8 November 2023 are available on the Friends of Moreleta Kloof website. The new committee consists of Faan Grundlingh (chairperson), Jeannie du Plessis, Rouxne Botha, Leroy Smith and Rosemarie Hannweg. Congratulations to our new members! We look forward to serving Moreleta Kloof in this new term.

Friends' Membership

A new voucher system will be introduced for members of Friends' groups from January 2024. The vouchers will replace the credit card-sized laminated membership cards issued previously. Each member will receive six vouchers, which the member must print and hand in as payment when visiting one of the following nature reserves:

- Rietvlei Nature Reserve
- Groenkloof Nature Reserve
- Wonderboom Nature Reserve
- Faerie Glen Nature Reserve

The staff at the pay point will mark the voucher off and the voucher will be recorded as having been used. Members can choose which reserves they wish to visit and are no longer restricted to two free visits to each reserve.

The member can bring any 3 other people with, not restricted to family members nor a specific number of adults and children. Depending on which reserves are visited, the value of these vouchers can add up to R1704.

Another new feature is that the vouchers are valid for 12 months from date of issue.

Invasive Plant Species Hacks

We are pleased to report that we have had a large number of people volunteering their time and energy in 2023 to the Invasive Plant Species Hacks. We wish to express our appreciation to all the volunteers, thank you so much for taking the time out of your busy schedules to contribute to your community!

We will continue to work every Wednesday morning, the second Saturday of the month and some Sundays. Please look out for our notices on Facebook and from this email address. We welcome any assistance we can get. Come spend the morning with us and experience the Reserve in way you never have before, while contributing to the upkeep of this beautiful green space in your community.



Figure 1: A team of volunteers stops for communal tea, coffee and snacks during a morning of invasive species removal.

Biocontrol

We released more Pompom thrips on 14 December 2023. We are happy to report that the thrips is spreading well in the Reserve. These small insects may not kill the plants but it does reduce the flowering and seed load and thus helps slow the spread of this invasive plant, allowing us to have a better chance of eradicating this plant from the Reserve.



Figure 2: Pompom thrips in the various life stages

The cochineal beetles which were introduced to help with the breakdown of the prickly pear plants is doing very well now that the weather is warmer and we are noticing it on many of these cacti.

We are extremely grateful for the experts who have already contributed their time and effort to help us release the correct biocontrol agents correctly and effectively. We will be making contact with experts regarding biocontrol of some of the other invasive plants.

The River Starts Here!

WaterCAN is kindly continuing with sponsoring water testing kits. We are continuing with the water testing in the reserve on a regular basis. A map of the results is available on www.watercan.org.za/map/. The results show that the water in the reserve is not safe to drink. We urge members of the community to report any sewage spills on SewerBlockages@tshwane.gov.za.

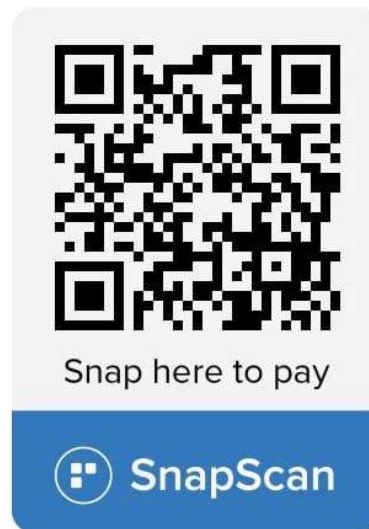


Figure 3: WaterCAN Testing

We will also be continuing with assessing the water quality with MiniSASS and SASS testing.

Maintenance

Volunteers are constantly hard at work with maintenance and repairs in the reserve with very limited resources. If you are in any way able to assist the Friends in this regard, please consider supporting us via SnapScan or contact us on the contact details below. Tax certificates can be arranged for any donations over R1000 and paid through WESSA.



The Ostriches

After the introduction of a male ostrich to the Reserve we were extremely pleased to see a successful ostrich chick was born towards the end of last year. He was often sighted with his parents, and we were pleased to see the male appeared to be a very doting father. Unfortunately, we haven't seen the youngster in a while and we fear he may have perished. However, we are excited to see renewed attempts from these birds in the future and we look forward to future successful chicks.



Figure 4: Mr Ostrich and chick

Upcoming Events

Please keep a look out on our Facebook page and notice boards for upcoming events;

- Saturday, 17 February: Invasive Plant Species Hack

For more information please feel free to contact Faan at 083 325 1704
or Jeannie at 082 927 4673.

Be the light in dark places, when all other lights go out.

J.R.R. Tolkien