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## Report for the period 1 December 2011 – 29 February 2012

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*Figure 1: KRCA Exhibition at the 2012 J&B Met, Photo by: J Cooper 2012*

### James Cooper

Site Manager  
Kenilworth Racecourse Conservation Area  
Biodiversity Management  
Cape Town Environmental Education Trust  
Tel: 021 700 1843  
Fax: 021 700 1847  
www.krca.co.za  
E-mail: [krca@goldcircle.co.za](mailto:krca@goldcircle.co.za)



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## Invasive Alien Species (IAS) Management

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The Site Manager has almost completed the densities and presence of the various Invasive Alien Species present in Precinct 4, after which densities will also be determined for certain sections of Precinct 3.

Table 1 gives a breakdown of the species cleared this period.

**Table 1:** Invasive alien clearing actions

Species	Management Blocks	Number of days
<i>Leptospermum scoparium</i> (Tea tree)	4A1, 4A2	5
<i>Acacia saligna</i> (Port Jackson)	4A1, 4A2, 4A5, 4A6	12
<i>Xanthium strumarium</i>	4A1, 4A2	2
<i>Sesbania punicea</i>	4A1, 4A5, 4A6	8
<i>Cestrum laevigatum</i> (Inkberry)	4A5	2
<i>Populus xcanescens</i> (Poplar)	4A5, 4A6	5

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## Nursery Management and Plant Propagation

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During this period limited work was undertaken in the nursery and on plant propagation. Table 2 gives a breakdown of plant species that have been propagated in the nursery since December. General nursery maintenance continued with cleaning, weeding and stocktaking being executed throughout January. In addition, previously propagated vygies, due for planting in the Greenford Estate, were planted out into larger pots.

Plants are still not being propagated for rehabilitation but instead for the landscaping of Greenford Estate, Phase 2. A plan for all the current stock still needs to be developed, which would include provisioning for the requirements of the EE Garden. Going forward the propagation activities will be reserved for endangered plants, commercial production and for the development of the various EE Garden zones.

**Table2:** Propagation records

Species	Number propagated
<i>Psoralea pinnata</i>	800

### Conversion to a small-scale commercial nursery

In line with the plans to propagate and sell indigenous plants to the public, during this period the KRCA team showcased our plants at the J&B Met, and we ran a small sales endeavour for fundraising. For the fundraising effort, a single species of plant (*Leucadendron levisanus*) that had been propagated in our nursery, were sold at R20-00 each. The sales were relatively successful and the community members that purchased were enthusiastic about the prospect of a local indigenous nursery. The business plan is still due to be drawn up and presented to the EAC. Further market research is still to be undertaken in this regard.

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## Seed Collection

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It is important to collect and store seeds for use in future rehabilitation and landscaping projects. This also ensures that there are seeds available should there be an unforeseen ecological disaster. Future rehabilitation on site will use seeds rather than propagated plants. Seeds have been collected during other work activities and according to the APO. Seeds have been collected from the following species:

1. *Wachendorfia spp.* (Management Block 4A2)
2. *Berzelia abrotanoides*
3. *Leucadendron levisanus* (Management Block 4A2)
4. *Watsonia barbonica*

In addition, seeds, soil and leaf litter were collected from Management Block 4A2, for post-fire rehabilitation efforts. A large amount of seed processing was done during this period, whereby seed was cleaned and separated from other plant material in the collection, and then stored properly (largely for *L. levisanus*, but for all the species listed above). Seed collection will continue, as and when different species begin to set seed.

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## Visitors, Environmental Education and Communications

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This period is normally relatively quiet in terms of community activities and environmental education, due to the school holidays. As a result, the focus of EE during this period has been standardised programme and worksheet development. One school programme was run with Greenfield Girls' Primary School to celebrate World Wetlands Day; the 26 learners thoroughly enjoyed this programme, which included various experiments, discussions and investigations. The highlight of this programme was the wetland dipping activity in which learners catch and identify wetland creatures to evaluate the health of the wetland (Figure 2); during this activity they spotted Marsh Terrapins and caught Cape Galaxias and a number of aquatic invertebrates.



**Figure 2:** Learners from Greenfield Girls' Primary School doing a wetland dipping activity in the dam in the EE Garden.

We had a guided walk with 30 people (focussing on ecological burns and the biodiversity of the site) on 4 February; a talk for 36 people by Tony Rebelo and James Cooper about the importance of ecological burns on 7 February; and the Valentine's Day guided walk and picnic for 12 people in the centre of the reserve (Figure 3).



**Figure 3:** Community and Friends of KRCA purchasing plants and biscuits (left), and enjoying a Valentine’s Day picnic (right).

KRCA has been focussing on raising awareness and marketing the conservation area, and as a result we hosted an exhibition at the J&B Met on 28 January 2012. The event organisers gave us an area in which to exhibit, and we had a stand with various live animal displays, as well as stuffed animals, plants, posters and photographic material (Figure 4). We intend on hosting more such exhibits at future events held on site, as well as arranging displays at local libraries.



**Figure 4:** The KRCA exhibit at the J&B Met 2012.

In addition, our website was featured in a gardening feature in the Home Weekly section of the Sunday Times (26 February 2012).

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## Ecological Burns

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Management is still awaiting the burning permit. There was a delay with the application with air pollution control, which resulted in the application not going through sub-council in February as hoped. The ward councillor, Cllr Kempthorne, has been contacted and made aware of the fact that this an urgent matter and he will push through the remaining process at the next sub-council meeting on the 23 March. The burn will take place on a suitable day in the first 2 weeks of April. The KRCA Field Rangers and Kadar Asmal team have completed the clearing of *Searsia lucida* in block 4A3 and are one third of the way with block 4A1 (Figure 5). The density of 4A2 is much less than these blocks and work will be completed before the burn. Extra assistance may be sought from Gold Circle to remove the cut vegetation using one of their trucks.

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## Flora Management

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Every Friday the Kenilworth CREW (Custodians for Rare and Endangered Wild flowers) group has been undertaking the pre-burn vegetation monitoring. Two permanent monitoring plots of 10m×20m have been set up in management blocks 4A1 and 4A2, with the densities and canopy cover of each plant present in the block being captured. The group still need to establish a monitoring plot around the *Erica vertisillata* and *E.turgida* plants found in 4A2. This has been a fantastic activity with about 10 people attending every Friday (Figure 6).



Figure 6: The FKRC plant monitoring team at work in the field.

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## Faunal Management

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Early in January, a Brown Water Snake was captured in one of the ground floor kitchen facilities in the main Gold Circle building; and relocated back to the reserve. During the J&B Met, a mole snake was captured in the Met tent, and relocated into the reserve. A canary chick was handed in by the grounds staff, and an attempt to rehabilitate the bird was made, it had however sustained injuries and therefore passed away. A call from a resident in Wynberg was received, and a large male Western Leopard Toad (Figure 7) was collected and relocated to Youngsfield Military Base – the closest, secure natural habitat and breeding ground. A complaint about birds attacking people in the Tote was received at the end of this period.



Figure 7: Male Western Leopard Toad that was relocated to Youngsfield Military Base.

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## Fundraising

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In January we executed our first paid for education programme, which generated R140-00. With the assistance of the Friends of KRCA, we also ran a fundraising week around Valentine’s Day, during which the sale of plants, biscuits and a picnic, generated R929-00 in funding for equipment for our environmental education programmes. A budget, based on the needs of our education programmes, has been drawn up for the use of these funds.

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## Conservation Compliance

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During this period a number of conservation compliance issues arose. Regular patrols were carried out, to ensure that the preparation and break-down of J&B Met were satisfactory. A fence patrol was carried out in Management Block 4B, during which it was observed that a part of the fence was missing and litter dumping, had occurred. A number of reserve patrols were also carried out. Signage was made and erected on the fences between the infield and the reserve, with the hopes of minimising littering and entrance into the reserve. The main gates into the reserve from the infield were locked and repaired, in order to prevent prohibited access during the Met. During the J&B Met, regular reserve patrols, hospitality compliance inspections and monitoring for fire and fire hazards were performed. No compliance issues were noted on the day, and it is felt that the new venue for the after-party is far better than before. The biggest problem we continue to struggle with is the large amount of litter and waste that is left after the event (Figure 8).



**Figure 8:** Ongoing litter issues during and after the J&B Met 2012.

On 22 February 2012, another stock pile of tortoise shells was discovered in the conservation area (Figure 9). There were approximately 38 Parrot-beaked Tortoise shells and two Marsh Terrapin shells. The age of the shells varied, with many of them being relatively fresh. None of these shells appeared to be tortoises that had been previously caught in the KRCA tortoise monitoring programme, although a number of them were too badly damaged to identify. It is as of yet undecided as to what action should be taken in this regard.



**Figure 9:** Recent evidence of continued tortoise poaching activities within the boundary of the reserve.

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## **Other Activities**

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The volunteers have continued their tireless efforts at Youngsfield, and our team provided assistance wherever possible. A student who has volunteered with us previously, spent four days volunteering his time in December, gaining valuable experience in the field of conservation and contributing greatly to our team. As approved by the EAC, the KRCA People and Conservation Officer (Skye Marks), assisted with the administration of the Cape Town Environmental Education Trust (CTEET) from mid-January to the end of February. The team performed litter-picking on various dates after the J&B Met, as a result of the large amounts of litter that had not been cleared from site.

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## **Staff**

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During this period there were some considerable changes in the staff complement on site. Until the end of 2011, staff consisted of a Site Manager, People and Conservation Officer, two Field Rangers and three students. The students completed their contracts at the end of December, and therefore as of 2012 were no longer a part of the staff complement. With the start of 2012, the new CPUT Student, Nicholas Botha, started his practical training year with us. On 6 February, Ntsikelelo Baba (Field Ranger), resigned from his position as he had been offered an alternative position; however in the first week of March he was reinstated on a short term contract. On 1 February, KRCA got four contract labourers through the Kadar Asmal Project, while this was previously meant to be for a period of three years, their contract length is now unknown.