

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2015/16

Details on most of the items reported here can be found in our website <http://www.foster.org.za>

Preamble

FOSTER is 25 years-old this year. Back in the early days, the pioneers of "Friends" (as it was called then) included **Henry and Gwen Brown, Vera Wellman, Val and Phil Glass and Shirley and Richard Cowling**. Soon after, we were joined by **Dave Bowmer**, a stalwart who kept the organization afloat during a rough period in the late 1990s. In 1996, we published our vision for a system of nature areas in the Greater St Francis region¹. This was the SCOSS that **Des Green** championed with so much vigour and commitment.

In the early 2000s, FOSTER recruited **Lilian Baker, Ian Benfield, John le Roux**, and in the mid 2000s, **Chris Cowling, Helmie Tilders and Joan Brady**, all of whom have made outstanding contributions to achieving our mission. Emily Buchanan and the late Dave Fish joined more recently; both have served FOSTER with distinction.

Our Committee has swelled in 2016. Welcome to **Jal Rigaard, Jenny Rayment, Debbi Hudson, Garry Milford and Susan McGarvie**. This infusion of energy and innovation is good news for FOSTER.

Committee members

Membership and responsibilities are as follows:

Richard Cowling	Chair; Proclamation; Events
Lilian Baker	Treasurer; Outreach
Dave Bowmer	Reserve management
Joan Brady	Secretary; Membership and marketing; Events
Jal Rigaard	Marketing; Infrastructure
John Elliot	Fire management; Events
Jenny Rayment	Fund raising; Events
Debbi Hudson	Fund raising; Events
Garry Milford	Fund raising; Events
Susan McGarvie	Fund raising; Events

Associate members

Chris Cowling
Al Brady
Emily Buchanan
Shirley Cowling

¹ Kruger LM and Cowling RM 1996. St Francis Coastal Open Space System (SCOSS). Management Plan. IPC Report submitted to Friends of the St Francis Nature Areas.

Fundraising

Lilian Baker reports: We would like to reiterate that FOSTER is registered with SARS as a public benefit organization, in terms of section 30 of the income tax act. ***Donations made to us are tax deductible.***

We continue to benefit from generous donations from supporters, despite the hard times; over the past year (since our last AGM) ***we attracted donations totalling R122,490***, which **included** donations of ***R80,350*** for the **FOSTER Fire Prevention Fund**. SANTAM donated R50,000 and the CSF Civic Association donated R25,000 to this fund. Members supported the fund in the amount of R5,350. Special thanks are due to the following donors who have donated amounts in 2015/16 of R500 or more:

Anonymous	Hogan Wines
Birkett, B. and M.	Horne, E. and E.
Brady, A. and J.	Jordaan, L. and E.
Briscoe, T. and A.	Kritzinger, J. and A.
Buchanan, E./Ritchie, R.	Le. Roux, J. and L.
Burman, E. and D.	Lincey, M. and J.
	Maingard, M.
	Mol, W.
Buy, P.	Rayment, J.
Cicognini-Horak, P.	Rigaard, F. and J.
Clohessy, D. And C.	Roos, Z.S.
Coultas, B. and J.	Saloojee, R. and M.
Cowling, R. and S.	Savage, I.
CSF Ladies' Tea Club	Shellard, L. and E..
CSF Minimarket	Smith, R. and G.
De Waal, I.	Swart, P.
Fish, D. and J.	Talevi, G..
Gammie, K. and H.	Watts, D. and F.
Gennrich, M.	Wilson, J. and B.
Goulding, R.	
Grundling, H. and A.	

Funds raised at FOSTER events are reported on in the next section.

Projects and events

Fun Run

Lilian Baker reports: FOSTER again hosted the ever popular ***FOSTER Fun Run*** – held on the 28th December last year - which ***attracted 320 entrants***. ***The event*** grossed R31,018 and ***netted an amount of R19,780***, after expenses.

Golf Day

Garry Milford reports: The Golf day was a huge success and the golf committee was congratulated on the smooth running of the day and the prize giving. We raised a nett amount R30,720. The golf committee will be available for another such event next year.

Walk on the Wild Side

Lilian Baker reports: Generous ***funding from two anonymous donors*** enabled the Walk on the Wild Side ***project to continue*** during 2015 and 2016, with an amount of R800 still left in the kitty. The principle objectives of the project remain the same.

During 2016, Lilian concentrated on local pre-primary and primary school learners. So far, **102 learners and six educators participated in 3 excursions** on the Walk on the Wild Side trail. Another 3 excursions have been booked for the last school term, in which over 100 learners and 10 educators are expected to participate. These trails have also been used, inter alia, for annual Womens' Day walks and the FOSTER Fun Run. Residents and visitors to Cape St. Francis use the trail daily.

Our maintenance team has kept the trails well-pruned, the boardwalks in a good state of repair and the reserve free of alien regrowth and litter. The team has also maintained the signage. **Grateful thanks to Dave and the team.**

FOSTER would especially like **to thank Ms. Lesley Moore** of Talhado Childrens' Haven for supporting the project by transporting learners from Talhado Childrens' Haven to and from the Walk on the Wild Side trail and supplying the learners with refreshments after the walks. The **staff at the SANCCOB Penguin Rehabilitation Centre** greatly enhanced the learners' experiences of the trail with talks on African Penguin conservation.

The **FOSTER intern**, a local Sea Vista lad called **Dawie Cupido**, **continues to play a very active role in the educational outreach programme**, and led three excursions on the Walk on the Wild Side trail during 2016. Dave Bowmer took scores of beautiful photographs, some of which are displayed on the FOSTER website.

Marketing and membership

Joan Brady and Jal Rigaard report:

At the end of 2015 we had 200 members, a little less than our 2014 total. We currently have 192 members paid up for 2016. Our thanks again go to all the existing members who renewed their membership, to new members who joined and especially to those who responded to our appeals with generous donations. Every membership and donation is significant.

Electronic newsletters have been going out quarterly and we have regular publicity in the local media who are very supportive and happily publish news, notices and photographs for us.

Our website **www.foster.org.za** has been revamped and now makes provision for a video and photo gallery. Please contribute to this. The website is regularly updated with **the latest newsletters**, reports on various local issues, information on upcoming events. We have received **good feedback from users.**

Jal has enthusiastically taken over posting of news and information on our FOSTER **facebook** page. He regularly posts videos from the camera trap with appropriate information snippets, which are hugely popular, and encourage interaction from our followers. Page likes increased from 185 to 297 between Jan and Sep. The Jan/Feb fire attracted a lot of interest. Most followers are female and between 45 and 64 years old.

A Youtube account has been created, and the four **wildlife videos** from our camera trap, posted thus far, have **attracted 316 views.** These will soon be available on our website. Thanks to **Chris Cowling** for managing the trap.

Reserve management

Dave Bowmer reports:

FOSTER maintains the Irma Booyesen Flora Reserve, the Seal Bay Nature Reserve, the Seal Point Nature Reserve and the Cape St. Francis Nature Reserve, which together comprise approximately 330 ha of indigenous vegetation. FOSTER's **core management tasks are the removal of alien regrowth, the maintenance of the path network (including litter removal), the maintenance of reserve signage, maintaining the newly-expanded and upgraded system of firebreaks**, and keeping the roads through the Irma Booyesen Flora Reserve and in the Cape St. Francis Nature Reserve accessible for fire and other emergency services.

Special Projects within the network undertaken since the 2015 AGM included 1) the creation the **Des Green Memorial Trail** in the Irma Booyesen Flora Reserve, including infrastructure and signage 2) the **creation of new firebreaks, the upgrading of existing firebreaks and the removal of alien regrowth** and flammable vegetation after the fire, including gates and signage, and the **creation of two new paths** for accessing the heavily used "sunset rocks" in the Seal Point Nature Reserve. In total an amount of **R169,000** was used in the reserves, which amount was made up of R8,000 for the Des Green Trail (including materials, labour and signage), R83,200 for the network of firebreaks (including equipment hire, cartage, labour, signage and gates) and R7,000 for the new Wild Side paths (including materials and labour). **General maintenance cost amounted to R70,800.**

The **Seal Point Nature Reserve** has been kept free of rooikrans and castor oil bush, and the trail system and boardwalks within the reserve have been regularly cleaned and maintained. Two paths have been cut from Queen of the West Boulevard down to the rocks, which are also regularly maintained.

The trail network within the **Irma Booyesen Flora Reserve** has been maintained and kept free of litter, and the firebreaks cleaned. The "**Walk in the Woods**" trail has proved popular with locals and visitors, and Dave often accompanies parties of hikers on excursions.

The trails in the **Seal Bay Nature Reserve** have been maintained and weeds, dubbeltjies, alien regrowth and litter removed. The lawns at the Shearwater Drive car parks have also been kept trimmed and sprayed for weeds.

An amount of **R4 130** has been spent on replacing and **upgrading signage** in the reserves, and also obtaining new signage for the three gated entrances to the Irma Booyesen Flora Reserve. Eric and Este Stewart donated the 14 direction signs for the Des Green Memorial Trail, which were re-purposed by St. Francis Bay Signs.

In order to raise awareness of the **species-rich flora** in the reserve network, Dave regularly places floral displays at **Trade Wind Cafe** during Spring.

Thanks to Dave and his team for looking after our reserves in such a hugely effective and efficient way.

We look forward to **suggestions from our members about reserve management activities**. Please contact Dave or Richard.

Fire management

Fire management has focused on ensuring **access for emergency vehicles via firebreaks** and **reducing fuel loads by removing regrowth of the invasive rooikrans**. A stimulus for these activities was the Jan/Feb fire and the funding for fire hazard reduction that this event attracted. Thus, **the entire firebreak system** in the Irma Booysen Flora Reserve **was upgraded and extended**. In the Cape St. Francis Nature Reserve, a new firebreak was created between Da Gama Road and Shearwater Drive, using a TLB.

FOSTER received many commendations for its previous efforts to reduce the fire hazard that Cape St Francis faces. Our intention is to **conduct a controlled, fuel reduction burn** in the Irma Booysen Flora Reserve, but only after the recently burnt veld has recovered.

Responding to development pressures

FOSTER is a member of the Thuyspunt Alliance which is not against nuclear power. However, it is concerned about the significant social, economic and environmental impacts on the greater St Francis Area as a result of the proposal for the largest industrial development in the Southern Hemisphere. The Alliance's stance is to follow procedure by responding as an Interested and Affected Party and by rigorous and scientific interrogation of the Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) for the nuclear power station and the transmission lines. The Chair has provided input on the **Final Draft Report** and the **Final Report** of the EIA for the nuclear power station. No response has yet been received on our submission to the Final Report.

The Alliance has retained an Environmental Legal Adviser to ensure that legal requirements are being met in the entire process. While the Alliance continues to do an enormous amount of voluntary work, it would **benefit from donations to maintain the legal advice**. We urge members to support this good cause. Contact Trudi Malan.

Reserve proclamation

Good progress has been made on this front this year. This progress was underpinned by two factors:

- The appointment of Dr Wentzel Coetzer as Biodiversity Stewardship Facilitator for The Greater Kromme Stewardship (GKS) project. This initiative was established by a group of renewable energy developers along with the St Francis Kromme Trust, in partnership with Conservation Outcomes and the Eastern Cape Parks & Tourism Agency. Conservation Outcomes is an NGO whose mission is to improve the conservation estate via stewardship agreements with the public and private sectors; and to facilitate the effective proclamation of existing protected areas. Dr Coetzer has made excellent progress in coming to grips with the problems faced in entering into a stewardship agreement with the Kouga Municipality. He has also made excellent progress with the proclamation of the hitherto un-proclaimed portions of the Cape St Francis Nature Reserve. He has proposed a Social Economic Development project that will enable FOSTER to employ staff for reserve management at no financial cost. This is being considered by the Committee.
- The change in government in the Kouga Municipality. We have encountered in the DA government a sincere willingness to assist with the securing of the reserves. Discussions are currently underway to reach agreement on the securing the conservation status of the reserves and assigning management oversight.

Financial report

Financial statements (balance sheet and income and expenditure report) for the period 1/3/15 to 29/2/16 are attached to this report.

Thanks to Lilian for her impeccable financial records – much appreciated.

In closing

I am pleased to report on another highly successful year for FOSTER. Many thanks to our committee members for their dedication and hard work. Given the importance of a healthy reserve system to our well being (and the value of our properties), we urge you to donate funds. In return, we will ensure cost-effectiveness, accountability and innovation.

Please stay and enjoy the FOSTER jol, in celebration of 25 years of struggle and success.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "RM Cowling". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

RM Cowling
Chair: FOSTER

FRIENDS OF THE ST. FRANCIS NATURE AREAS			
(FOSTER)			
A Public Benefit Organisation (registered in terms of Section 18A of the Income Tax Act No. 58 of 1962)			
BALANCE SHEET FOR YEAR ENDED 29 FEBRUARY 2016			
Bank balance carried forward for year ended 28 February 2015			R130,391.37
Expenditure over income for year ended 29 February 2016			R39,093.17
BANK BALANCES AT YEAR ENDED 29 FEBRUARY 2016:			
Business Cheque Account First National Bank 62179531598			R18,977.36
Moneymarket Account First National Bank 62179527745			R72,320.84
TOTAL BALANCES:			R91,298.20
SIGNED:	SIGNED:	SIGNED:	
<u>R.M. COWLING</u>	<u>J. BRADY</u>	<u>L.J. BAKER</u>	
CHAIRPERSON	SECRETARY	TREASURER	
31/3/16	31/3/16	31/3/16	

		FRIENDS OF THE ST. FRANCIS NATURE AREAS		
		(FOSTER)		
A Public Benefit Organisation (registered in terms of Section 18A of the Income Tax Act No. 58 of 1962)				
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT FOR YEAR ENDED 29 FEBRUARY 2016				
INCOME				
				R2,700.00
				R86,368.00
				R 200.00
				R3,825.17
TOTAL INCOME				R93,093.17
EXPENDITURE				
				R93,344.39
				R3,358.17
				R1,930.51
				R 525.00
				R11,676.75
				R3,397.34
				R1,428.00
				R 800.00
				R 726.18
				R15,000.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURE				R132,186.34
EXPENDITURE OVER INCOME				R39,093.17
SIGNED:	SIGNED:	SIGNED:
	R.M. COWLING		J. BRADY	
	CHAIRPERSON		SECRETARY	
	31/3/16		31/3/16	
				L.J. BAKER
				TREASURER
				31/3/16