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0651 BUBBLY

Foster urgently needs funds to survive

This is a special message from your Chair. The message is simple: financially, FOSTER is going under, owing to dwindling income and increasing costs. We need your donations to keep us afloat.

Our income from membership fees and donations – the funds we use for routine management of the

reserves – is not keeping up with our costs. This is alarming.

The reason for this is that FOSTER has inherited over the past few years two new and demanding tasks, namely the management of the Cape St Francis Nature Reserve (the one to the east of Cape

St Francis) and the maintenance of the fire access routes established after the Feb 2016 fire. The first task is the mandate of Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency (ECPA) and the second is the mandate of the Kouga Municipality. Neither organization has the capacity to adopt these mandates, at least for the next few years.

In the interim FOSTER is committed to the two tasks, maintaining the fire access routes. However, to do this we need to raise R100 000 per year from our members. What can be delivered in return is extraordinary cost-effective management. At R400 per hectare per year, our costs are minuscule compared to the average cost of R8 000 per hectare per year for privately owned, state-owned fynbos reserves in the Cape in 2009 (the figure has more than doubled by now).

Let's imagine what will happen to our reserves if members should FOSTER no longer be able to continue with its mandate. The fynbos in the fynbos will become overgrown and littered; the fuel load will become augmented with invading rockland; fire access routes will become impassable; and there will be a steady increase in poaching, especially illegal grazing and bush dwelling. It won't be safe to live in the reserves.

It's not kidding. We at FOSTER have responded to all of these threats on various occasions over the past two decades.

Please, please tell us to approach the Kouga Municipality as the land owner of most of the reserve system – for our funding needs. We have been to many meetings and sent countless messages, to no avail. The shift to a DA government has made no difference whatsoever. Our recent attempt to get

Letter to the community from FOSTER chairman

the KM to maintain the fire access routes has come to naught. We may have to wait many years before the KM develops the capacity to assist us in maintaining the fire access routes.

I would like to elaborate upon our dealings with the Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency, which is responsible for managing Cape St Francis Nature Reserve. Suffice to say the response has been unhelpful.

What about fund-raising events as a source of income. Well, to be honest, our experience is that in most cases the returns do not justify the effort required of our committee members, all volunteers. For example, a 2016 golf day, with 100 players on stage, yielded a paltry R12 000. We now have a December slot for a Golf Day; this is likely to raise much more. However, and importantly so, we use the money raised by these events to fund capital projects (e.g. fire access routes), fire access routes and not routine management.

To conclude: In all likelihood, the decline of our precious green spaces will impact negatively on property prices and increase our vulnerability to natural disasters. We the people of the Cape St Francis should support this. And for those of you, wherever you live, who cherish our beautiful places where nature has primacy, donate, and donate generously and regularly. And please, renew your membership and encourage others to join FOSTER. We need your money but we will spend it wisely.

You have my word.
Kindest regards
Prof Richard Cowling,
Chairman, FOSTER

Easter egg hunt at the Resort



St Francis Tigers beat Greenbushes



Eco kids learn about 'nasties' on the beach

A big group of Eco kids gathered earlier this month at Grammy's Pool to learn about caring for our planet and ways that kids can make a difference though saving water.

Kids had three hours of non-stop fun. They learned about the three R's, recycling, reusing and reducing and marine pollution. The workshop was run by Geanne Darke, who introduced the kids to making eco-bricks and exciting projects around recycling.

The group then went on a little beach cleanup and collected all the "nasties" as well as some items for art. Burce Cuneen ran the fun art part of the class.



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