

# LOWER BREEDE RIVER CONSERVANCY TRUST



Annual Information Meeting  
Witsand  
20 November 2021



# Meeting format & protocols

- There will be four main presentations by different presenters.
- Due to limited time, questions should please be held over until all presentations are completed.
- Questions should deal with matters arising from the information presented.
- Any questions remaining unasked or unanswered at closing should be sent to

[info@breede-river.org](mailto:info@breede-river.org).

# Meeting topics



## Part 1 *(Peter Müller)*

- Quick overview of 2020 / 2021
- Reminder of our mission and purpose
- Board and organization chart
- What we do for you and the estuary
- Threats to sustainability of a healthy estuary
- Update on the EMP and BREAf

## Part 2 *(Lester Coelen)*

- Financial report

# Meeting topics

*...continued*



## Part 3 (*Peter Müller*)

- Monitoring & Compliance : By-laws
- Water Hyacinth
- Pont & Malagas  
Public Launch Site

## Part 4 (*Jason Oxley*)

- Conservation activities and challenges
- Environmental Education and communication

Questions and closing

# Highlights ... and ... Lowlights



## Highlights

- + Maintained good relationship with authorities
- + Tripartite Service Level Agreement with Hessequa and Swellendam Municipalities renewed to 30 June 2024
- + Rainfall patterns improved dam levels and freshwater inflow
- + Improved MLRA compliance (DFFE operations)
- + New Trustee appointments
- + Boat upgrades
- + New website
- + Newsletter overhaul
- + SAMSA Aids to Navigation project
- + SANHO bathymetry (riverbed mapping) project



# Highlights and Lowlights ...contd.

## Lowlights

- Boating behaviour has worsened
- Decreasing cooperation by public (illegal dumping, development etc.)
- Lack of capital for fleet replacement
- Human Resources (staff) challenges
- Covid-19 disruption

# What is the LBRCT



- It is a Trust, registered in 2000, and is a NPO / PBO.
- Currently three Trustees, with another four awaiting Letters of Authority from the Masters Office.
- Trust operates in terms of an SLA with the two Municipalities
- Field operations are managed by a Supervisor.
- Oversight by a Management Committee and the Trustees, who are volunteers and receive no financial compensation whatsoever.
- Staffed by (paid):
  - 1 Senior Ranger/Supervisor
  - 2 full-time Rangers
  - 2 part-time Rangers
  - 2 student interns for Conservation
  - 1 office Administrator



# Our Mission

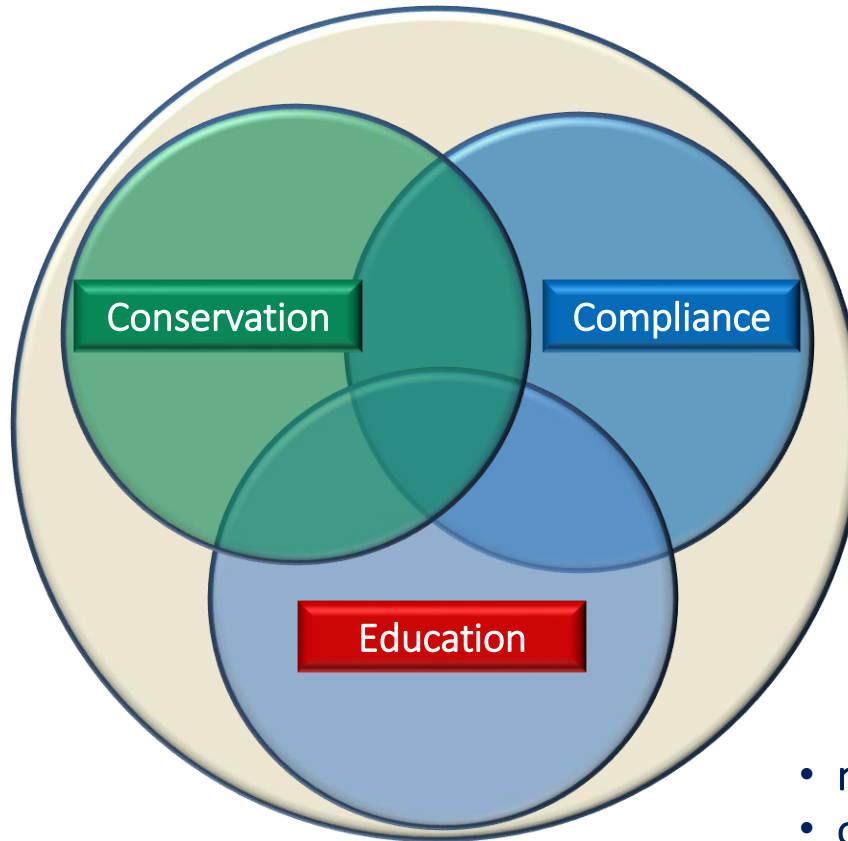


The mission of the LBRCT is to conserve and protect, in a sustainable manner, the natural resources and living species in the biologically and ecologically sensitive Breede River Estuary and its adjoining land areas, and also to promote safe and lawful recreational use.





# LBRCT functions



- monitoring
- observation
- reporting
- transfer of knowledge

# Board of Trustees



## Retired

- Rupert Bellairs
- Trevenen Barry

## Current

- Lester Coelen
- Neil McMurray
- Peter Müller

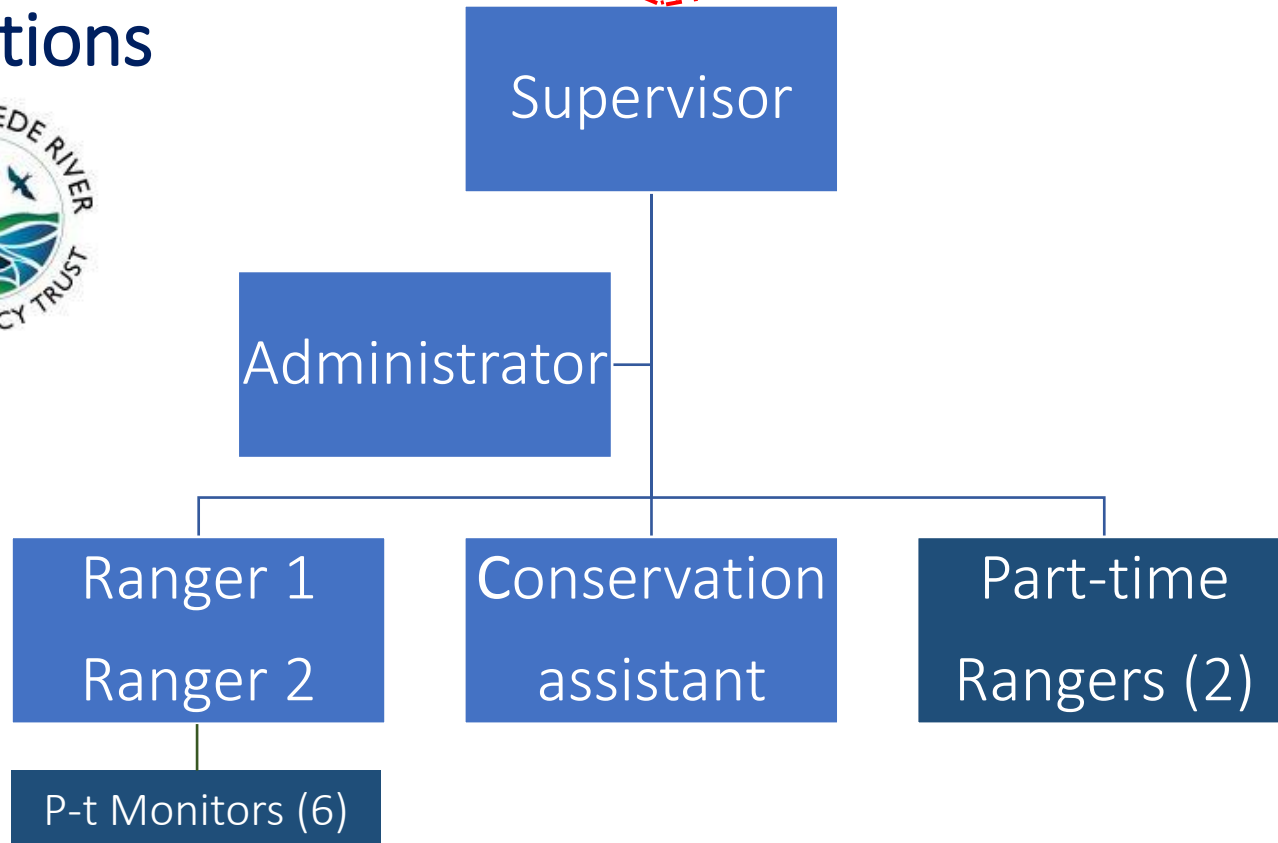
## New Appointments *(subject to confirmation from the Master's Office)*

- Andrew Crawford
- Geoff Brownell
- David Rogers
- Giles Buswell

# Trustees

Brownell	Buswell	Coelen	Crawford	McMurray	Müller	Rogers
Business	Legal	Treasurer	HR	Deputy Treasurer	Govt. & Municipal	Comms.

## Operations





# Real threats to sustainability of a healthy estuary

- Freshwater flow reduction (droughts, agriculture, commercial and domestic use)
- Sedimentation (poor farming practices upstream, boat wakes and serious floods)
- Pollution (sewerage, fertilizer, chemicals, plastics, run-off and industrial discharges etc.)
- Over-fishing and excess bait collection
- Habitat destruction
- Boating pressure

Some of the above are beyond the authorities' control, but every effort should be made to ensure compliance with those that are within it.



# Reckless breaches of environmental regulations

- Unapproved property development and construction
- Unauthorized excavation and earth moving
- Indiscriminate and unauthorised reed cutting
- Dumping of above into estuary = prosecutable offence
- Bait bed plundering
- Salt marsh trampling

All of the above are within the authorities' control and are prosecutable offences, some of which carry fines of up to R500 000.



# Estuarine Eco Health Index



Category	Health Index Description
A (91 - 100)	Unmodified / natural
B (76 -90)	Largely natural / few modifications
C (61 75)	Moderately modified
D (41 60)	Largely modified
E (21-40)	Highly modified
F (0 - 20)	Critically/extremely modified

Estuary	Health Score %	Category*
Breede	78	B/C ( B )
Berg	64	C ( C )
Duiwenhoks	72	C ( B )
Goukou	69	C ( B )
Gouritz	61	C ( B )
Zeekoevlei	26	E ( E )

Bracketed Category\* = desired & attainable state

# Estuary Management Plan (EMP) update



## Institutional arrangements:

Essentially:-

- DEA&DP have responsibility for biodiversity (health)
- Municipalities have responsibility for recreational use
- DFFE responsible for MLRA – done very little

Status:-

### **2020**

- Province sign-off and Implementing Agent appointed by DEA&DP

### **2021**

- Implementation work commenced (see TOR's)

# Estuary Management Plan (EMP) Implementation - Terms of Reference



## **Part 1: The refinement of the institutional framework for the Breede River Estuary Advisory Forum.**

## **Part 2: The optimisation of the Breede River estuary value and use.**

- water based recreational activities (boating, swimming, kite surfing, etc.) for incorporation into municipal bylaws;
- estuary conservation zones (e.g. bait sanctuaries, sensitive aquatic vegetation, etc.) for consideration in municipal, provincial and national planning and management tools; and
- Tourism facilities/features, e.g. public launch sites, parking areas, beaches, Pont, etc.;



## **Estuary Management Plan (EMP)**

### **Implementation - Terms of Reference ... *contd.***

- Develop a spatial plan depicting the use of terrestrial space, including developed areas, recreational areas, conservation areas and other unique features within the Estuarine Functional Zone;
- Assess the carrying capacity, in terms of the number of vessels that can operate at any given time;
- Assess the current bank erosion along the Breede river estuary, and provide recommendations on appropriate restoration and stabilisation practices on the Breede River estuary;
- Complete an analysis of the current extent of alien invasive species (AIS) (terrestrial and aquatic) along the Breede River estuary and the evaluation of best suited solutions for removal of AIS;

## Proposed representation on BREAF

- Various Directorates at the Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning (DEA&DP)
  - National Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (DFFE): Oceans and Coasts
  - Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), Breede - Gouritz Catchment Management Agency (BGCMA)
  - Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD)
  - Western Cape Government: Department of Agriculture

- Garden Route Municipality
- Overberg District Municipality
- Swellendam Municipality
- Hessequa Municipalities
- CapeNature
- South African Maritime Safety Authority (SAMSA)
- South African National Parks (SANParks)
- Buffeljags Besproeiingsraad / Irrigation board
- Witsand Inwonersvereniging
- Witsand Residents Association
- Witsand Ratepayers Association
- Breede River Stakeholders Association (BRSA)
- Centre for Estuarine Research & Conservation (CERC)
- Kontiki Property Owners Association
- Infanta Ratepayer's and Resident's Association (IRRA)
- Malagas Residents Association (MRA)
- Slangrivier Community
- Lower Breede River Conservancy Trust (LBRCT)
- Kiteboarding, Paddling Association
- Witsand Nature Reserve Trust
- Witsand Association for Commerce and Tourism
- Witsand Breërivier Boot Hengelklub
- Witsand Angling Club
- Witsand Hengelklub
- Farmers on the East bank of the river

Representation	No.	%
National & Provincial	10	28
East Bank	16	46
West Bank	5	14
All (CapeNature, SAMSA, SANParks, LBRCT)	4	12
Total	35	100





# Financials



## Lower Breede River Conservancy Trust

11-Nov-21

### Receipts and Expenditure Account

For the year ended 30 June 2021

Details	June 2021	June 2020
<b>Receipts</b>		
Boat Licences - Net	1 002 282	855 263
Municipality Grants		
Hessequa	330 000	330 000
Swellendam	350 000	343 125
Net Interest Received	20 399	45 392
Other Receipts - Donations	1 688	5 896
	<u>1 704 369</u>	<u>1 579 676</u>



## Lower Breede River Conservancy Trust

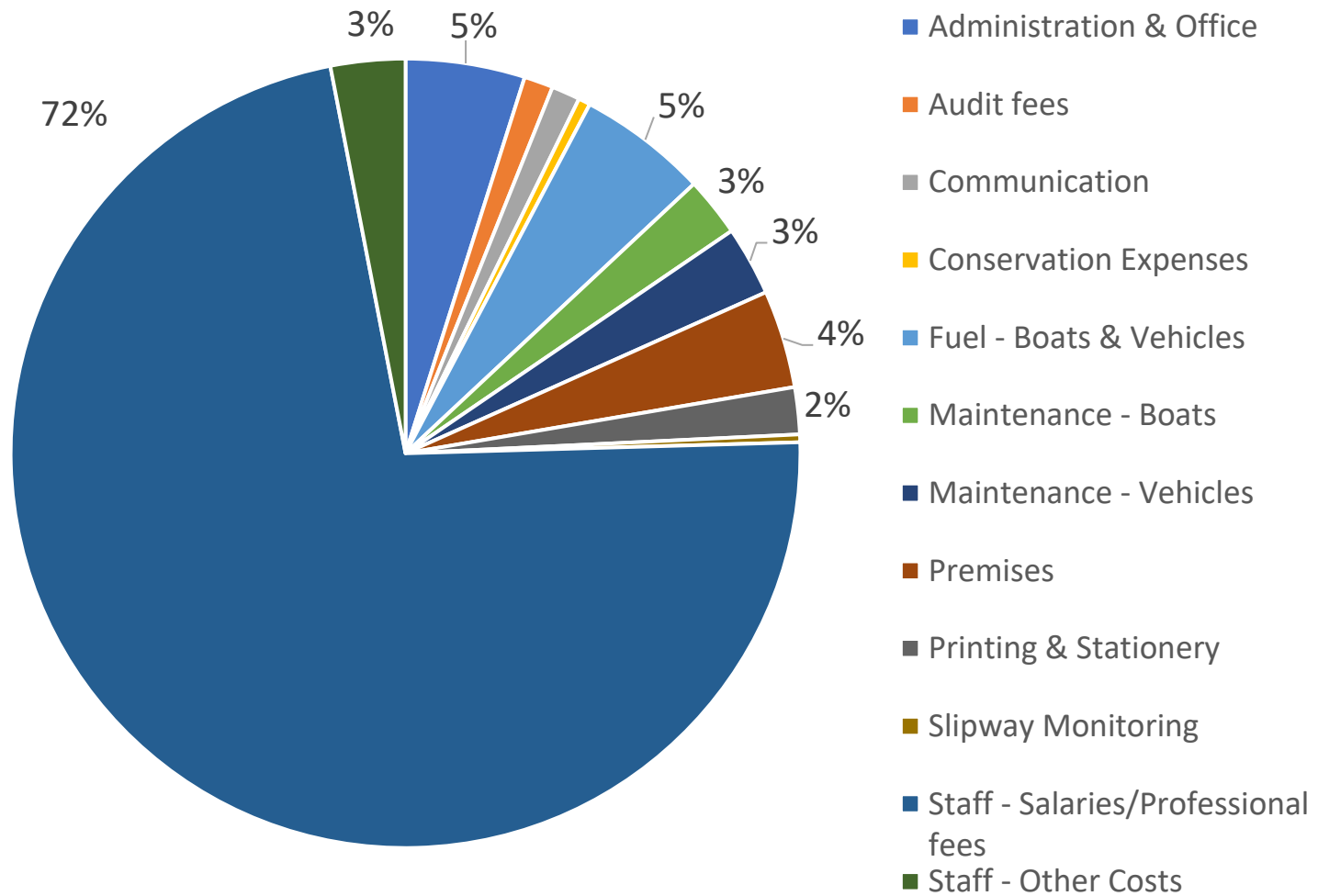
11-Nov-21

### Receipts and Expenditure Account

For the year ended 30 June 2021

Details	June 2021	June 2020
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Administration & Office	86 695	92 873
Audit fees	21 170	22 180
Communication	20 716	16 370
Conservation Expenses	8 641	33 743
Fuel - Boats & Vehicles	94 285	95 354
Maintenance - Boats	43 145	33 011
Maintenance - Vehicles	50 404	41 110
Premises	71 099	105 683
Printing & Stationery	34 165	26 196
Slipway Monitoring	5 640	87 279
Staff - Salaries/Professional fees	1 285 400	1 325 354
Staff - Other Costs	54 206	75 120
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	1 775 566	1 954 272
Capital Expenditure - W/off	14 113	175 752
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	1 789 679	2 130 024
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>(Deficit) for Year</b>	<b><u>(85 310)</u></b>	<b><u>(550 348)</u></b>

# Expenditure by type – y/e June 2021





# Lower Breede River Conservancy Trust

11-Nov-21

## Balance Sheet

As at 30 June 2021

Details	June 2021	June 2020
<b>Fixed Assets</b>	2	2
<b>Current Assets</b>	233 390	318 059
Cash in Banks and on Hand	592 151	647 303
Less Funds held In Trust-		
Friends of the Lower Breede River conservancy Trust	(385 831)	(363 789)
	206 320	283 514
Accounts Receivable	27 070	34 545
	233 392	318 061
Less Current Liabilities	(79 050)	(78 409)
	<b>154 342</b>	<b>239 652</b>
<b>Represented by -</b>		
<b>Accumulated Fund</b>	<b>154 342</b>	<b>239 652</b>





Compliance



# Monitoring & Compliance

## Main duties in terms of the Municipal SLA:

- **Boating:**
  - Ensuring boat operation adheres to all regulations prescribed by the By-law
  - Check licences (boat, skipper, fishing & bait collection)
  - Safety of all river users
  - Ensuring minimum damage to the environment is caused by boats and their skippers
- **Environment:**
  - Monitor pollution and water quality
- **Land use:**
  - Ensure all building/alterations and soil disturbances are authorised
- **Development:**
  - unauthorised plot clearing (EIA's), unapproved plans, building distances etc.



# Monitoring & Compliance

## Most common transgressions:

- **Boating:**
  - Ignoring “safe distance” regulations
  - Excessive wake generation
  - no skippers’ tickets; no COF’s; unsafe behaviour
- **Fishing:**
  - no licences; bag limits exceeded; under-sized fish; bait bed destruction; and night fishing
- **Environment:**
  - illegal dumping; unapproved septic tanks; damage to, or destruction of, protected species’ habitat; no alien invader control
- **Development:**
  - unauthorised plot clearing (EIA’s); unapproved plans; building distances, etc.

# Patrols:

July 2020 to June 2021



Type of patrol	Number of inspections
Inspection of boats on the river	452
Inspection of boat at slipways	2351

## Fines and warnings:

Type of transgression (2019)	No. of warnings*	No. of fines issued*/**
No fishing permit	2	0
No observer while skiing	1	1
No prescribed safety equipment onboard	0	2
No red flag	1	0
Operating a power boat without being registered or licensed	68	0
Operating a power boat without skippers	0	1
Reckless behaviour	4	0
Skiing with no observer	5	0
Trolling	2	0
Underage operating boat without supervision	1	0

\* cumulative figures for the period 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021

\*\* Fines issued to repeat offenders

## Safety & Licence Inspections 2019 - 2021





# Fines and warnings:

Type of transgression (2020)	No. of warnings	No. of fines issued */**
No fishing permit	0	0
No observer while skiing	0	0
No prescribed safety equipment onboard	0	0
No red flag	2	0
Operating a power boat without being registered or licensed	36	0
Operating a power boat without skippers	0	0
Reckless behaviour	0	0
Skiing with no observer	1	0
Trolling	1	0
Underage operating boat without supervision	0	0

\* cumulative figures for the period 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021

\*\* Fines issued to repeat offenders

# Joint Compliance Operations

- **5 – 6 September 2020**  
Operation Phakisa; DFFE and SAPS  
Marine Living Resources Act
- **13 – 15 November 2020**  
Operation Phakisa; DFFE and SAPS  
Marine Living Resources Act
- **12 – 14 February 2021**  
Operation Phakisa; DFFE and SAPS  
Marine Living Resources Act
- **17 – 21 March 2021**  
CapeNature Operation  
Marine Living Resources Act  
Night fishing ban
- **2 – 5 April 2021**  
CapeNature Operation  
Marine Living Resources Act  
Night fishing ban





Hyacinth





# The Water Hyacinth problem



- 2017: Established Aquatic Weeds working group with Swellendam Municipality, DEA, DWS, CapeNature and others...
- Main source of Breede infestation is just below Bonnievale
- Decision to tackle problem from top down to Malagas
- Helicopter spraying plus ground teams for chemical control 2017 - 2020
- Sites identified for biological control - three locations between Area 1 and the N2
- Although National (DEA/DWS) have a budget, no takers for task team contracts
- Best hope for removal is heavy rain



Pont





## Malagas Slipway



Conservation



# Projects at the LBRCT

- Water Quality Monitoring
- Alien Invasive Vegetation Monitoring
- Monthly bird counts
- Marine mammal sightings and strandings
- Sponsor an Owl Box
- Beach and Estuary clean-ups
- Fishing line & Cigarette bins



# Water Quality Monitoring

- Monthly water quality runs - DWS
- Permanent probes at 2 sites
  - Upriver – Matjieskloof
  - Downriver – Rooiwalle
- Temporary probe at 21 sites (Mouth to Malagas Pont)
  - Salinity
  - Temperature
  - pH
  - Dissolved Oxygen
  - Turbidity (Secchi depth)



# Alien Invasive Vegetation

→ Still ongoing

Flushing of the system, public efforts, and an increase in salinity have improved this issue

→ Alien species that occur at the Breede:

- Black Wattle
- Rooikrans
- Port Jackson
- Parrot Feather
- Blue Gums
- Water Hyacinth





# Monthly Bird Counts

- Breede Estuary is important for many water associated species.
- Migrants during summer in high numbers
- Highest diversity in summer
- Lowest diversity in winter
- Noteworthy sightings:
  - Terek sandpiper
  - Cape vultures
  - African fish eagles
  - Great crested grebes





## water & sanitation

Department:  
Water and Sanitation  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



## environmental affairs

Department:  
Environmental Affairs  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



AFRICAN PENGUIN  
& SEABIRD SANCTUARY



UNIVERSITEIT  
iYUNIVESITHI  
STELLENBOSCH  
UNIVERSITY



Two Oceans  
AQUARIUM  
CAPE TOWN SOUTH AFRICA



CapeNature



OVERBERG  
CRANE GROUP



Western Cape  
Government

Environmental Affairs and  
Development Planning

BETTER TOGETHER.

# Assistance with respective organizations and their projects





**CapeNature**

100% GOVERNMENT OWNED AND CONTROLLED



**Western Cape  
Government**

Environmental Affairs and  
Development Planning

**BETTER TOGETHER.**





# Rescue and Rehabilitation

- Trained to stabilize penguins, turtles and other seabirds
- Remove snakes from residential areas
- Report stranded whales, dolphins, turtles and seals.
- Reporting of Avian Influenza
- Two Oceans – Turtle Stranding
- APSS – Seabird Rescues



AFRICAN PENGUIN  
& SEABIRD SANCTUARY





# Marine Mammal Research

- Humpback Dolphins in Breede Estuary
- Marine Mammal sightings
- Collaborative work with DEA
- CFS - determine a trend of how often they're seen
- Recent high mortality of cape fur seals



# Coastal and Estuary Clean-ups

## → Main litter types

- Small plastic pieces
- Cigarette Butts
- Glass pieces
- Packing foam/plastic material
- Fishing related litter
- Plastic bottles

## → International Coastal Cleanup:

- Witsand 31kg
- Infanta 45 kg

## → Nurdles still being found on beaches

## → SpillTech dedicated to nurdle removal in Witsand



**SPILL TECH**®

Responsible Environmental Management



# Environmental Education

## → December Holidays:

- Beach cleanups
- iNaturalist project

## → Educational Signage

- Grunter Bay Salt Marsh
- Bird and Fish Boards

## → Community Education:

- Bimonthly Newsletter
- Weekly informative social media posts
- School talks

## → New look Website: [www.breede-river.org](http://www.breede-river.org)




## Grunter Bay Salt Marsh

An ecological asset under threat!

### What is a Salt Marsh?

A salt marsh is a type of coastal wetland that is regularly flooded and drained by salt water brought in by the tides.

Salt marsh vegetation is sensitive to trampling and takes a very long time to grow.



### What is happening at Grunter Bay?

Increased recreational fishing activity has resulted in:

- Extensive erosion of the mud banks
- Destruction of sensitive vegetation
- Degradation of surrounding wetland

Please **DO NOT** walk on any vegetation or bank edges. Failure to protect this sensitive ecosystem will result in complete closure thereof.

Your understanding and respect is greatly appreciated.

### Why are they important?

Salt marshes provide our environment with many valuable ecosystem services.

They offer habitats for crustaceans, regulate erosion, flooding and stormwater surges, and improve the water quality by filtering pollutants, excess nutrients, and disease causing microorganisms.

Let's help protect this invaluable ecosystem!

Lower Breede River Conservancy Trust  
028 537 1296




### Attention!

Rehabilitation in Progress



Please keep off all vegetation. Walk on foot paths only.




### Attention!









Erosion damage occurring

Please **DO NOT** walk, stand on, anchor boats or place rod holders in the mud banks or surrounding vegetation.

## FISH OF THE BREEDE ESTUARY

In loving memory of Anthony Dos Santos

 <p><b>Spotted Grunter</b></p> <p>These are the most common fish in the estuary. They are found in the mud banks and are very common in the estuary. They are found in the mud banks and are very common in the estuary.</p>	 <p><b>Garrick/Leervis</b></p> <p>These are the most common fish in the estuary. They are found in the mud banks and are very common in the estuary.</p>
 <p><b>White Steenbras</b></p> <p>These are the most common fish in the estuary. They are found in the mud banks and are very common in the estuary.</p>	 <p><b>Elf/Shad</b></p> <p>These are the most common fish in the estuary. They are found in the mud banks and are very common in the estuary.</p>
 <p><b>Cape Stumpnose</b></p> <p>These are the most common fish in the estuary. They are found in the mud banks and are very common in the estuary.</p>	 <p><b>Mullet</b></p> <p>These are the most common fish in the estuary. They are found in the mud banks and are very common in the estuary.</p>
 <p><b>Dusky Kob</b></p> <p>These are the most common fish in the estuary. They are found in the mud banks and are very common in the estuary.</p>	 <p><b>Zebra</b></p> <p>These are the most common fish in the estuary. They are found in the mud banks and are very common in the estuary.</p>

For more information visit [www.breede-river.org](http://www.breede-river.org)