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Introduction

Spring brought some much-needed rainfall and we were very fortunate not to receive any heavy downpours. Most of the rain that fell in the last three months has been soft and gentle.

The onset of spring brought the fishing experience out of the doldrums, allowing fisherfolk to have some exciting fishing. Insect hatches have been abundant, and on the dams, there have been a few occasions where the water looks like it is boiling from all the fish activity.

Late September and October was a tricky period in the hatchery. We experienced sudden drops in the water level and spikes in the water temperatures. Simon and John were careful of feeding the fish too much. If the fish are fed too much, their metabolic rate increases and they use up more oxygen, which can cause fish in the lower ponds, to die from oxygen starvation. Fortunately, we have two water pumps that spray water into the ponds where fish are stressing. The jets of water cool the water temperature slightly, but most importantly they oxygenate the water. With a very stringent feeding programme and timely intervention with the water pumps, there was a minimal loss of fish.

Our two processors of smoked trout products have been really busy with their own product lines, which has meant a delay in getting our own smoked trout into the freezer. We should have a freezer full in time for the festive season.

The big project of the year, S6, was finally completed in November. Work started on this project at the beginning of May. A working time of nearly seven months! The finished result is definitely worth all the effort.

In the Winter Newsletter I reported on the presence of illegal miners east of Finsbury's boundary. Recently, a dawn raid was conducted on their location.

As we head into the busy festive season there are some reminders that I would like to add to this newsletter. Road safety on the estate and access through the Spekboom gate (first gate) are included.

We look forward to seeing you here.

Donald MacCrimmon

S6

This is the third newsletter which has included a report on S6. The Autumn newsletter covered the early stages of the project, the Winter newsletter gave details on progress and now I can share the final outcome. The crossing is complete and the pool has filled up. The majority of the water is flowing through the culverts under the crossing and up through the “chimneys”, while a smaller amount of water is flowing over the top of the wall. The purpose of this design is so that the pool has a mechanism that allows silt to pass through and not settle in the pool during normal flows. If we are aware of big floods coming then we are able to open the culverts beforehand and allow the water to flow straight through and prevent major silt build ups.



Illegal miners

A joint operation between the local SAPS K9 unit and Whiskey Creeks private security took place in the early hours of 22 November on the illegal mine workings east of Mount Formosa. Jimmy was also involved in the operation; his role was an observatory one from a distance to make sure that none of the illegal miners escaped westwards towards Finsbury.

Two illegal miners as well as their equipment were taken away by SAPS. While we applaud the efforts of SAPS, Whiskey Creek private security and numerous other individuals, we will continue to be aware of this threat and monitor the area.

While walking in the mountains please remain vigilant, don't approach any suspicious person/s and report in to management as soon as possible.

Road safety

As we head into the festive season and expect the estate to be very busy, it is useful to be reminded of good driving behaviour on the estate.

The speed limit on the estate is 30km/h, but please bear in mind that some of the corners and water crossings require a much slower speed. The wildlife, walkers, cyclists and roads will appreciate it.

The speed limit on the access road between the two gates is 40km/h.

On your journey to and from the estate it is advisable to still avoid the R36 between Lydenburg and Machadodorp. The R540 from Belfast through Dullstroom to Lydenburg is the better option, but exercise caution as there are potholes on the road.

Spekboom gate

As a reminder for the first gate and its workings I have included this item in this newsletter.

The code is sent via Whatsapp before your arrival and if the code changes during your stay you will be sent the new one via Whatsapp. The code is usually changed weekly on a Wednesday morning. If we feel that the code has been compromised in some way then it can be changed on any day.

If, for some reason, the provided code does not work there are other options available for access and egress.

The options are:

- 1- Phone the Majubane gate (013 004 0935). Patrick or Percy will be able to open the gate remotely for you.
- 2- Phone the office (013 235 4024) or the manager's residence (087 550 1432) and someone will be able to open the gate remotely for you.
- 3- If you are unable to phone due to the network being down because of load shedding then you can also log onto the Spekboom gate Wi-Fi network. The password is Gate@001. Send a WhatsApp to Donald (063 012 2313) and the gate will be opened remotely.
- 4- It is also possible to order a remote through the office. Please email don@finsbury.co.za to order a remote.

Please note that it is up to members to provide their guests with the code. Do not share the code with contractors. Contractors are given a separate code that only works weekdays between 06:00 and 18:00.

Mount Anderson Catchment Nature Reserve

Duncan Ballantyne, the reserve chairman, continues to spearhead the process of regularising the status of the greater reserve. Whiskey Creek have also generously contributed legal aid to this endeavour. The process has taken much longer than anticipated, but it is still on track. We are planning to have all the required documentation ready next year for submission to the provincial authorities.

