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**NOVEMBER 2003**

## **From the EXCO:**

Southern African Society of Aquatic Scientists (SASAqS) Conference 2004:

The conference will be held during the first week of July 2004 in Midrand, Gauteng. The theme of the conference is "Water Act at the crossroads: How to make the science-government-society partnership work." The first circular will be sent out towards the end of November 2003.

## **In Brief:**

### ***Cyanobacterial review update: 2000-2003***

**Compilation of an email address list for all those individuals/ organizations active in the field of cyanobacterial (=blue-green algal) research and/ or management.**

I am in the process of updating the review of information pertaining to Cyanobacteria in SA since the 2000 report that I prepared for the WRC. The review is scheduled just ahead of the first meeting of the international Cyanonet group that is to be convened under the UNESCO banner. The mailing list 'original' Toxic Algal Forum (WRC) of a few years back is mysteriously no longer available, so I am compiling a new one in an effort to appeal for new information required for the review. There are odd bits and pieces of important work being done in this field - the existence of which we need to document.

Anyone wishing to supply me with information regarding their work in this field, or simply wishing to have their details incorporated in the SA-CYANONET database, should contact [cyano@dhec.co.za](mailto:cyano@dhec.co.za).

With thanks and kind regards,

Bill Harding

### ***The 2nd Dams and Development Forum and an Options Assessment Workshop***

These workshops were held in Geneva recently (Sept 22nd-26th). The meetings were hosted by the UNEP Dams and Development Project (DDP) who are dedicated to continuing the work initiated by the World Commission on Dams (WCD). South Africa was well represented by members of DWAF, the Development Bank of Southern Africa, Ninham Shand, the Environmental Monitoring Group, FRU, amongst others. The work that has been

done so far by South Africa in furthering the principles of the World Commission on Dams and contextualizing the strategic priorities arising from the Commissions work is considered by the DDP to be a "model national initiative". Brian Hollingworth (Development Bank of Southern Africa), Liane Greeff (Environmental Monitoring Group), members of DWAF and the rest of the coordinating committee should be congratulated on their efforts. The third South African multi-stakeholder forum is to be held in Durban at the end of October (2003). Further information on the Dams and Development Project can be found at the web site ([www.unep-dams.org](http://www.unep-dams.org)) - this includes Fact Sheets on (amongst other topics) the South African and SADC initiatives. Details concerning the multi-stakeholder forum can be obtained from: Brian Hollingworth ([brianh@dbsa.org](mailto:brianh@dbsa.org)) who holds the Chair of the SA multi-stakeholder initiative on the WCD. Alternatively contact Liane Greeff of the Environmental Monitoring Group ([Rivers@Kingsley.co.za](mailto:Rivers@Kingsley.co.za)).

Heather Malan

## **Funding Announcement:**

### ***University Of Natal - Wetland Rehabilitation***

Wetlands have been destroyed and degraded in South Africa over a period of many decades. The loss of these ecosystems has come at a huge price, since wetlands provide many direct and indirect benefits to individuals and society. In recognition of the social, economic and ecological benefits provided by these systems, wetland protection has gained momentum in South Africa, and this country has embarked on a massive programme of wetland rehabilitation. Although several wetlands have been rehabilitated over the last two decades in South Africa, these have not been evaluated to determine the success of rehabilitation. There is a lack of local research to document the processes underlying the degradation of wetlands (e.g. factors causing the advancement of erosion gullies into wetlands), and such understanding will provide a sound basis on which to choose an appropriate means of rehabilitating individual wetlands. There is furthermore, a lack of protocols and guidelines for prioritising wetlands in terms of the functions that they provide to society, and of their need for rehabilitation.

The present project on Wetland Rehabilitation is the first in a programme envisaged in South Africa by the Water Research Commission, details of which can be viewed on the WRC website <http://www.wrc.org.za/>. Reasons for initiating and operating a national wetland research programme are also related to the management needs of government departments for:

- Information on wetlands and their properties, particularly resource use and economic values,
- Information on the reaction/response to specific interventions and pressures
- Methodologies on how to implement certain practices
- Guidelines on how to manage wetland areas
- Trained human resources
- Monitoring and reporting programmes
- Evaluation of rehabilitation actions
- Coordination and technology transfer

The existence of a cooperative research programme will therefore greatly enhance the ability of government departments to implement their responsibilities and obligations. The wetland rehabilitation research programme has been structured around projects in the following key areas:

1. Prioritisation of wetland areas for conservation and rehabilitation
2. System Rehabilitation
3. Methodologies for rehabilitation
4. Synergy with other programmes
5. Institutional arrangements
6. Performance auditing

Funds are available to support postgraduate researchers at the Masters and PhD levels, including research funds and an annual maintenance stipend. Also included are funds for fieldwork and participation in meetings inside South Africa. Dissertation projects must complement the project goals described above. Funds are also available to support postdoctoral students with a background and interest in wetland ecology, hydrogeomorphology and wetland restoration/rehabilitation (including bioengineering). Some expertise in the following areas would also be valuable: assessment of wetland goods and services, wetland functional assessment, sustainable utilization of wetlands, systems thinking approaches, hydrological and ecological modeling and GIS.

The three key tasks of the incumbent would be to:

- Supervise masters and honours level projects in the primary areas of expertise,
- Conduct research within, and manage a sub-component of, the Integrated Research Programme on wetland rehabilitation
- Publish in peer-reviewed journals.

Funding is available as of January 2004, and the duration of funding is currently limited to a maximum of three years.

For further details or an expression of interest, please contact Professor Fred Ellery, School of Life and Environmental Sciences, University of Natal, Durban.

E-mail: Ellery@nu.ac.za

Telephone: (031) 260 1278

Fax: (031) 260 1278

## ***FRU-UCT: Rehabilitation of Riparian Zones***

A new three-year WRC funded project titled, "**The nature and rehabilitation of alien invaded riparian zones**" began in April this year, housed in the Freshwater Research Unit at UCT. The aims of the project are to:

1. Identify riparian plant communities of undisturbed and invaded riparian zones in Western Cape rivers, and describe their species.
2. Ascertain if each invasive species occurs in one or more specific longitudinal and lateral riparian vegetation zones.
3. Ascertain the impact of commonly used clearing methods on the physical and chemical status of the riparian soils, through field and laboratory measurements.
4. Monitor the early stages of recovery of indigenous vegetation in situ after clearing.

A salaried position is available for a full time field/laboratory assistant. The successful candidate should possess an B.Sc (Hons) and be interested in soil or earth science, fluvial geomorphology, geology or some related discipline. This is a capacity building position with the opportunity to register for an MSc working on the soils collected during the project

(aim 3). The terms of this are negotiable and will be tailored to meet individual requirements. Interested candidates should send their CV's with a letter of motivation to Karl Reinecke (reinecke@botzoo.uct.ac.za) requesting further information.

Karl Reinecke  
Freshwater Research Unit  
Zoology Department  
UCT  
Tel +27-021-650-4634  
Fax +27-021-650-3301

## **SASaQs News Contributions**

*All contributions to SASaQs News are encouraged. We aim to disseminate aquatic related matters to all members as well as advertising available employment opportunities, courses, postgraduate bursaries, post-doc positions and fellowships in aquatic sciences. All information must please be sent to Victor Wepener ([vw@na.rau.ac.za](mailto:vw@na.rau.ac.za)) before the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month.*

**Please visit the Society website on [www.dwaf.gov.za/iwqs/sasaqs/](http://www.dwaf.gov.za/iwqs/sasaqs/) for updates on SASaQs matters.**