

Getting strict about school outings

Some important issues – please read carefully.

It has come to the attention of Environmental Education Service Providers, such as ourselves, that the Western Cape Education Department wants to implement much stricter regulations regarding school outings. This, we understand, is in response to the poor performance of many schools and learners, especially in the areas of numeracy, literacy and writing.

We were also informed that the Department wants to restrict school outings to only two per learner per year to ensure minimal disruption of school time and to maximise school teaching time.

Discussions with Department

Given the above, environmental education service providers have been in contact with the department since late 2010 to discuss the way forward. It was made clear that we will have to work much closer with the Education Department and educators to ensure quality learning within the curriculum.

In addition, we, as service providers, will need to co-ordinate our efforts and activities more efficiently so as to avoid duplication and overlap. We will also need to ensure that the time spent on outings is used appropriately with effective, curriculum based programming. In other words, outings must not waste valuable teaching time!

Our plans going forward

We, at the Mike Woods Environmental Education Centre, want to assure our teachers that we will do our utmost to meet these needs and concerns. We also encourage educators to engage with us and, through evaluation and feedback, to ensure that we provide quality outings.

To this end, a short assessment form will be handed to all educators on arrival, with a request that they complete and return it to us.

Please assist us in this so that we can better our standards and ensure valuable and worthwhile excursions to the Helderberg Nature Reserve.



Mike Woods

Environmental Education Centre Helderberg Nature Reserve



2011 The International Year of Forests

The United Nations has declared 2011 as the *International Year of Forests* in order to raise awareness of forests and to strengthen sustainable forest management and conservation. Its goal is also to strengthen the sustainable development of all types of forests for the benefit of current and future generations.

The motivation

Forests are an integral part of global sustainable development. According to World Bank estimates, more than 1.6 billion people depend on forests for their livelihoods. The forest product industry is a source of economic growth and employment, with global forest products traded internationally in the order of \$270 billion.

However, the harsh reality is that

our forests are facing extinction, primarily through agriculture and over-harvesting. Other contributing factors are lack of knowledge and empathy, greed and the impact of poverty.

These facts, disturbing as they are, also provide an excellent opportunity for schools to make use of this information in their education curriculum.

How the EEC plans to assist

In support of this International Year of Forests, the Mike Woods Environmental Education Centre will play its role in supporting schools with educational programmes and the dissemination of information.

The Centre is also planning to make this the theme of its 2011 Environmental Exhibition later in the year (*more information overleaf*).

Special Days, Weeks & International Years 2011

(2011 is also the International Year of Chemistry)

For details please see the enclosed chart. The EEC has programmes and a wide range of resources to help you celebrate the environmentally related special days. Do contact them for further information.



Year of Forests Exhibition

In celebration of the International Year of Forests, the Education Centre will again host an environmental exhibition. During the month of August, our centre will be transformed into a “magical forest” with insightful information about this important habitat.

The Exhibition will address issues such as Forest Conservation, Forest Ecology and Threats to and the Value of Forests. It will also highlight the role

learners can play in conserving our forests – a very important aspect of conservation. Learners will be given the opportunity to participate in a hands-on experience and investigate many different facets of a forest.

The morning programme will last approximately 3 hours. Eco-Clubs and youth groups are welcome to visit the exhibition in the afternoon.

Please note: Booking is essential. Therefore to be part of this hands-on experience to discover the amazing world of forests, please contact the EEC.



World Water Day: 22 March 2011

The EEC has programmes and resources to help you celebrate this day. Do contact us.



Youth, Urban Nature and GIS Schools Programme

Since its introduction in 2009, eight high schools have participated in this programme which links with the Grade 10 and Grade 11 Geography curriculum and provides learners with a practical GIS and GPS experience to support the theory presented in the classroom. Practical work is done in the nature reserve and the results fed back to the Reserve Manager.

After completing the programme, an educator from Macassar High School had this to say: “The lesson was interesting, practical and very educational. The learners got the opportunity to be in a relaxed atmosphere and to learn without them even realising it!”

For more information contact Elzanne Burger at the EEC.



Eco-Schools Programme

Showing the way forward

2010 was a very busy and successful year for the Eco-Schools in the Helderberg Node. It was a great encouragement to see the learners’ enthusiastic participation in various projects. These include Food and Fynbos Gardens, an Eco-Library, an outreach project to a neighbouring school and much, much more.

The efforts put into these projects ensured that all sixteen schools were successful in obtaining their Eco-Awards. Congratulations!

The Eco-Schools Programme, and the resultant awards, have proved that the way forward is showing schools how to link environmental learning and



Arbor Day gifts from Umnqophiso Pre-Primary School

management with the curriculum.

2011 promises to be exciting as the schools in their fourth year of this programme will be going for GOLD!!

For further information, contact Freya Brett, Node Co-ordinator, on ☎ 021 852 8831. Email address: helderberg.ecoschools@telkomsa.net



Marine Programmes at Kogelberg Nature Reserve

In 2009 Kogelberg Nature Reserve launched a Sandy Shore Educational Programme and since then 5 Schools and 391 learners participated in it.

Its aim is to educate youth about the variety of unique coastal creatures,

their ability to survive in and near the sea and how they interact with each other. They also learn the importance of conserving our coastal ecosystems and to appreciate nature through interactive and fun activities.

The Sandy Shore programme is available for Pre-School, Foundation and Intermediate Phases, while the Rocky Shores Programme is available for Intermediate and Senior Phases.

For more information or to book, please contact Elzanne Burger at the MWECC on 021 852 8831 email: hnr.eec@telkomsa.net

Please note: Rocky Shore programmes can only take place at low tide and are dependent on weather conditions as no indoor facilities are available.

Bus Project



Through generous sponsorship, the Bus Project (HEEP) was able to provide transport for 2 100 learners (39 buses), on outings to such places as the Helderberg Nature Reserve, Two Oceans Aquarium and Butterfly World.

For those schools that cannot afford transport, please contact Freya Brett on ☎ 021 852 8831 or via email: helderberg.ecoschools@telkomsa.net

The Mike Woods Environmental Education Centre is a project of the Friends of the Helderberg Nature Reserve 062-777-NPO

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