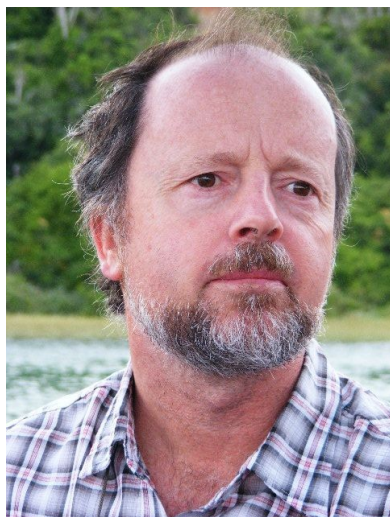




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Charlie awarded the SARChI Research Chair



Charlie Shackleton is one of the recipients of this prestigious award. He holds the chair in 'Interdisciplinary Science in Land and Natural Resource Use for Sustainable Livelihoods'. The other four chairs at Rhodes are in 'Intellectualisation of African Languages, Multilingualism and Education;' 'Insects in Sustainable Agricultural Ecosystems;' 'Critical Studies in Sexualities and Reproduction: Human and Social Dynamics;' and 'Marine Natural Products Research.' The SARChI programme is a national knowledge and human development intervention, led by the Department of Science and Technology and managed by the National Research Foundation.

The Minister of Science & Technology, Ms Naledi Pandor, announced the results of the latest round of awards in the South African Research Chairs Initiative (SARChI) programme. 60 prestigious research chairs have been awarded, in open competition, across the South African university system. Five chairs have been awarded to Rhodes University.

A key criterion for the award of a research chair is that the host university must provide a scholarly environment in which the chair and scholarship can flourish. The five new chairs take to ten the chairs that Rhodes now holds.

The programme was established in 2006 to strengthen scientific research leadership and capacity in South African universities. It aims to create a critical mass of world-class scholars who will train future generations of scholars and graduates to support a South African knowledge-based economy. The funding per chair is R2.5 million per annum, and is intended to cover salaries, postdoctoral fellowships, postgraduate student bursaries, research operating costs, and equipment necessary for the work the Chair.

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Special points of interest:

- May 3rd: International Migratory Bird Day
- May 22nd: World Biodiversity Day
- May 31st: Anti tobacco Day
- June 5th: World Environment Day
- June 8th: World Oceans Day
- July 11th: World Population Day

Catching up with Gosia Bryja in Ecuador



Gosia in the field

“The Waoranj people have had to make a change from a lack of modern ways to embracing... today's world”

Gosia is working on her PhD in Environmental Science under the supervision of Dr. Sheona Shackleton. She has been living in Ecuador since 2007 where she originally came to work as a landscape ecologist and technical director for Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) on the USAID funded project called “Integrated Management of Indigenous Territories”. This is when her adventure with the Waorani indigenous group began.

Gosia says that her fascination with their social dynamics and observing their interactions with the external world made her curious about strategies that conservation NGOs should apply in working with this society. Gosia's research looks at the feasibility of the successful implementation of adaptive co-management initiatives within the Waorani communities.

The Waorani are indigenous people who have been living in the Ecuadorian Amazon for many

centuries. Despite their long history, their period of contact with ‘the modern civilization’ has been very short. Prior to the first peaceful contact in the late fifties, the Waorani lived in seclusion in their vast forests and were avoided by outsiders, rightly so, due to their violent reputation and highly volatile nature. Indeed, they are considered the most violent society known to anthropology. However, in the last few decades, their violent nature and cultural isolation have given way to peaceful and increasingly intensive interactions with outsiders that range from oil companies and the Ecuadorian government to NGOs and tourists.

The Waorani people have had to make a change from a lack of modern ways to embracing the routines and habits of today's world and in this there have been many problems caused such as uncontrolled market integration, excessive dependence on outsiders, social and environmental problems as well as a considerable cultural disintegration.

The Waorani's contacts with the modern world are unavoidable and will continue, and their own vision of life and livelihood choices has changed far enough to render the return to the pristine state of the earlier times very unlikely.

In this context, it is crucial to see if the Waorani's collaboration with external actors can be successful and what needs to be done to enhance the changes of this potential success. Gosia's research study attempts to do this. In order to provide a comprehensive answer to these timely questions, she analyzes both parts of the equation; the Waorani people and their abilities for and attitudes toward collaboration as well as external actors and their perceptions about the Waorani and their own readiness for a challenging and long term commitment to true collaborative processes that can promote the conservation of their natural resources and improvement of their livelihoods.



Lesseyton Imbizo

On the 14th and 15th February 2012 a community Imbizo was held in the community of Lesseyton, in the Eastern Cape. The intention of the Imbizo was to allow students to feed back research results, and also to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS and climate change related challenges in the community. This event forms part of a research project underway in the community, funded by the International Development Research Centre, which aims to understand vulnerability, coping and adaptation practices in the face of Climate change and HIV/AIDS. The Imbizo did not mark the end of the research project, but was rather a milestone in a four year long engagement with the community on these issues.

The Imbizo began with a soccer tournament on the 14th February. Over 100 people arrived to watch and support their teams. Swallows Team from Tabata village won the tournament, and received their prizes the following day at the community meeting. The prize for the winning team was a football and a trophy. All participating teams, and their coaches, received project T-shirts. On the following day, well over 100 people once again arrived to attend a day of dance, music and drama offered by local community groups of all ages, from 6 to 80 years old, and to listen to students report back on their re-

search findings from the previous year. All of the community-led entertainment dealt with issues related to drought, HIV/AIDS and vulnerability in the community.

Perhaps the greatest success of the day was the fact that the elderly and the youth were engaged together in thinking about the challenges that the community faces. The local agricultural extension officer commented that the presence of the youth in discussions about drought and farming was instrumental to creating adults who are interested in agriculture. Teachers from the local primary



traditional dance and singing as part of Xhosa culture and that preserving this culture will mitigate criminal activities and other challenges that the community is facing.



“Such activities keep the children active and are instrumental towards their development”

schools were excited after the event, commenting that such activities keep the children active and are instrumental to their development. Toward the end of the Imbizo, one community member took the opportunity to invite all young and old people in the community to be involved in local groups already established in Lesseyton. She highlighted the importance of



The Green Fund Run



On the 18th March, the third RU Green Fund run was held with a wonderful 500 plus individuals taking part, a figure that had been aimed at since the first time the event was held. The usual number of participants stands around 160 individuals and with a record amount of participants this year, the atmosphere was one of excitement and energy.

The event aims at raising money for the Green Fund, a fund that RU's Vice Chancellor founded to make people more aware of their impacts on the environment and to reduce RU's ecological footprint. For example, the Green Fund aims at introducing a system that allows continuous monitoring of electricity usage by users.

This challenge hopes on getting the RU residences involved in aiming at having the lowest usage of electricity per capita and providing rewards for this position. Plans also ultimately want to have this setup established across departments and in the long term, the whole university.

The Green Fund would also like to address problems and possible miti-

gation methods for things like water usage and recycling, all falling under the umbrella of the ecological footprint.

The Green Fund also aims at making the people that are a part of the Rhodes community aware of environmental issues and ways that they may be able to participate in activities to reduce their impacts on the environment.

It is a lovely incentive to involve a variety of people from the broader Grahamstown community to be made to feel that they too are a part of something that is making a difference in a positive way to the environment and the Green Fund Run is a perfect way of getting everyone involved.

The run had participants of all ages involved from children to current Rhodes students in addition to parents, retired individuals and representatives from different faculties. Nine of the total 17 Divisions and Faculties at Rhodes University took part in the run this year.

The Vice Chancellor pays an amount of R1000 per faculty to the Green Fund for participation in the race. Other people entered individually or in teams and paid an amount of R10 per participant (or an additional amount out of choice given as a donation to the Green Fund).

All those that entered received a piece of Spekboom to use as a batten (if they were running in a relay team) or to simply take home and

plant.

Spekboom cuttings can simply be placed in the ground and will grow from there on in any harsh or dry condition. Spekboom is a succulent plant known for its potential to sequester carbon amounts in the air and therefore handing out clippings of the plant and encouraging race participants to go home and plant their own piece has environmental benefits. Many children were present at the race and were interested to hear why they should plant their Spekboom.

The run is all about having good, clean fun and everyone who took part in the race appeared to be enjoying themselves. To add to the comical approach, a series of

“The event also aims at making the Rhodes community more aware of environmental issues”



limericks, initiated by Prof. Fred Ellery were sent out to the VC, faculties, Divisions, student groups, the town to advertise the Green Fund Run on a lighter note. These limericks added a great deal of spirit and humour to the antipa-

Green Fund Run contd...

tion prior to the run and got many involved. They were a source of chuckles for many too.

The day ended with a delightfully sunny evening after a festive prize giving was held where individuals and groups

were recognized for dressing up and being colourful and exciting. The goal of involving an array of members from the Grahamstown community for a worthwhile environmental cause was definitely met and a 5km has probably never

been so enthusiastically welcomed by its participants like this one was!

(All photos by E.Ferreira)



New staff appointment: Gladman Thondhlana

By Claudette Muller

Gladman Thondhlana has recently been appointed as a lecturer in the department in association with the Kresge Accelerated Development Programme. After an extensive screening process which included having to present a public lecture on key environmental challenges and how his research and vision could contribute towards understanding these challenges, Gladman was selected by the interview panel as the top candidate for the position.

Gladman attended school in the small town of Chipinge in south eastern Zimbabwe. He completed a BA Hons in Geography and an MA in Environmental Policy and Planning at the University of Zimbabwe. After a brief stint at the University of Fort Hare he decided that Grahamstown was to be his new home where he joined the department in 2009 to tackle his PhD. He lists graduating with a PhD, titled *Dryland conservation areas, indigenous people, livelihoods and resource values in South*

Africa: the case of Kgala-gadi Transfrontier Park, as one of his greatest achievements to date; a goal he had set at the beginning of his academic career.

Gladman decided to apply for the position because it aligned with his long-term career objective of staying actively involved in academia. He believes his experience in community-based natural research management assisted him in obtaining the post and considers his appointment as a great opportunity to deepen his knowledge of his current field of interest.

He has also eagerly accepted the challenge of exploring other spheres of research topics. Furthermore, he expresses that a key issue he intends on wrestling in the near future is the current gap between research and the application thereof. He aims to ensure that future research efforts are employed practically to take on present environmental challenges.

When asked what he

considers to be his best traits apart from his smile, he modestly describes himself as a hard worker and results-orientated person. Gladman is an avid soccer fanatic and spends most of his free time training and keeping fit. He wishes to thank colleagues and fellow students in the Enviros dept and especially his supervisor Sheona Shackleton, who he describes as "a mother," for her on-going support and guidance. "I owe much of my success to her." Congratulations Gladman and best of luck with this new and exciting endeavour!

"Gladman aims to ensure that future research efforts are employed practically to take on present environmental challenges"



Where is Chris Blaine?

Interview by Megan Kelly

What have you been up to since leaving the DES?

I started working for Natural Science Services in Joburg a week after I wrote my last exam in 2007. This is a company focusing on biodiversity and it deals with companies like Sasol, Eskom and Lonmin to name a few. I had to go on lots of field trips being over a couple of weeks or months and was based mostly in Gauteng and Mpumalanga.

What kind of work did this involve?

I did a lot of EIAs and basic assessments in addition to water licenses and public participation issues. My position was a junior environmental scientist and the team I worked with was both caring and excellent at what they did. I realised that I had to follow my passion for finance and resigned from the company.

How did you make the jump from enviros to finance?

I did some JSE exams, which are basic exams covering the functioning of various markets and some accounting, while building myself a network of contacts in the financial services industry. I then met up with Alan Hogg who was the CEO of Moneyweb who offered me a job as a financial journalist. I worked as a journalist covering financial service companies (banks and insurers) and hosted a show on Lotus FM with a fellow Rhodes student, Hilton Tarrant.

So you found your feet in the finance world?

Well, I was offered a job as a Research Associate/Assistant at African Alliance Investment Bank (in the securities division) and started working for them in 2010. It is an investment bank that works primarily out of South Africa. I worked with a team to learn the ropes while I began studying my CFA (chartered financial analyst). A CFA chartered is a qualification for finance and investment profes-

sionals particularly in the fields of investment management and financial analysis of stocks and bonds, etc.

And what are you up to these days?

I still work for African Alliance but I have a dual role in the research team including being an analyst (focusing on New Mauritius Hotels) and a driver of African Alliance corporate access strategy. Here we connect clients with companies they wish to talk to as it can be difficult for asset managers to contact companies once they have conducted research. I definitely think that there is scope to include my environmental background with the financial sector I am currently in, although it does add value to the work I do and the clients I work with. I just have to keep looking for opportunities.



“I think there is scope to include my environmental background with the financial sector I am currently involved in”

James Gambiza appointed to the UNCCD

James has recently been appointed as a member to serve on the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) for the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in South Africa.

In addition he has also been appointed to serve on the National Coordinating Body (NCB) to

oversee the implementation of the National Action Programme (NAP for the UNCCD.

Well done James!



Graduation 2012



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