



Communication from the NSCF Hub

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News from Michelle

This week I attended a meeting at the Department of Science & Technology for all the SA Research Infrastructure projects that are being implemented. These meetings are held every six months and they are very useful because it is an opportunity for the managers of these large projects to discuss some of the challenges we are facing at a high level, and for the DST to discuss some of their own challenges. Since our last meeting in February, the DST has a new Minister (Mrs Mmamoloko Kubayi Ngubane) and of course all government departments have had budget cuts. It's still not quite clear how either of these new developments will impact on the NSCF but we hope for the best.

One of the interesting ideas that was presented at the meeting was the need for all the Research Infrastructure projects to start working on assessing the Return on Investment or the Cost-Benefit-Analysis for the projects. In other words, government is asking what they get in return for the funding that they are investing in the infrastructure projects. The natural science collections are always struggling to justify investment / existence and I believe that it will be very useful for us to do this exercise – I think that we will be surprised at the actual benefits provided by the collections. It's not just about financial returns, but the equations and assessments consider things like social benefits, cultural effects, future benefits, and something that we will have to work on understanding – non-use or existence benefits. We will discuss how to go forward with this when the NSCF Co-ordinating Committee meets in September.

Outreach & Communication Working Group

The first Outreach and Communication Working Group met in July at SANBI, Pretoria. The Meeting was chaired by Prof Hamer in the absence of a working group coordinator and dealt with issues such as tracking current activities and outputs produced by institutions, and agreeing on areas that the working group will focus on . The next meeting is scheduled for November.



Tour of the National Herbarium by Outreach & Communication Working Group members, 17 July 2018

News from Audrey - Collections Management Working Group

The collection management and conservation national meeting was held in the Eastern Cape where SAIAB, our host, went out of their way to make us feel at home, thank you. We were able to visit the incredible collections from the three institutions in the region; as well as brace the chilly weather taking a tour to the N2 fossil site at Waterloo Farm.

While still on the high, a week and 2 days later, 7 working group members (both for data and collection management) left for the SPNHC + TDWG conference in New Zealand where they are networking and giving presentations about South African collections. Greetings from the cold windy Dunedin.



Working group members attending their second meeting at SAIAB, Grahamstown, 8 and 9 August 2018

Albany Museum - New Curator of Entomology and Arachnology



The Albany Museum Department of Entomology and Arachnology recently received a new curator after Dr John Midgley moved to the KZN Museum early in 2017. Terence Bellingan assumed duties at February of 2018 after concluding his doctoral studies through Rhodes University. Whilst studying, he held a bursary from the Centre for Invasion Biology (C-I-B); he received a travel award for a presentation at the C-I-B Annual Research Meeting in 2015, and in 2016 was awarded the Best Presentation Award at the 19th congress of the Entomological Society of Southern Africa. His research interests include cicadas, flower flies and aquatic entomology. Terence is also extremely passionate about teaching and the dissemination of entomological knowledge and in the short time at his post has already engaged with local school learners of various ages, and students at Rhodes University. He has joined the NSCF Collections and Curation Working Group and has already contributed to two meetings of this group.

For loans or other collections enquiries, he can be contacted at T.Bellingan@am.org.za



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