

OPENING OF CANNON INTERPRETIVE BOARDWALK

ADDRESS BY ROGER VOYSEY

It is my pleasure to address you on this most beautiful day, in these magnificent surroundings What an exciting time for Leisure Isle.

I am sure you will agree that Steenbok Nature Park and Kingfisher Creek are looking magnificent and without doubt the best ever.

How did this come to be?

It all started in 1995 nearly fifteen years ago. Before then it was an airstrip and then a golf course without any particular attractive features. Many farsighted Islanders took the initial step at that time to establish the Park by putting in place the basic infrastructure which is still evident today. This included the timber pole fencing, entrance pergolas, mown areas, spike and signage.....all made possible by a donation from Rowland and Leta Hill Trust, and from the support of Islanders who gave generously over the years with their time and money. Many of those involved with the initial initiative are still around to day and some of you are here this afternoon. Well done to all of you for your wonderful efforts.

I then move to 2004 when another group of enthusiastic residents decided to create a new wave of activity. This time it was Gardening at Leisure, the local garden club, who provided the initial funding to start the development process. Year by year since then the Club has continued to channel a

significant part of its income to what we now call the Steenbok Nature Reserve.

Three and half years ago LIRA concluded a significant joint management agreement with Knysna Municipality with the stated objectives of nurturing and protecting, in perpetuity, the environmental heritage of this beautiful area. Our special thanks to Clive Nuns and Ivan van Wyk on the great support of the Parks Department and their efficient and willing service. Recent pruning of the gum trees is an example of a job well done.

Following inception of the Municipality agreement many individuals (far too many to mention by name) and a number of businesses have contributed time and money to transform this area. Rowland and Leta Hill Trust came to the party again and we have received meaningful support from Knysna Tool and Hire, Action Ads, Web 2 Solutions, Timber Village, Sassenheim Estate, Inso Aluminium (who recently donated our magnificent new information display unit), Blue Water Construction and Forest Farm. It would be remiss of me not to make special mention of the many generous donors of the Northern Shores Development Foundation who two years ago contributed over half a million rand to fund the infrastructural items such as brick pathway, access boardwalk to the seawall and irrigation.

And finally Canon CWD who came forward earlier this year with a massive sponsorship of R60000. This amount has enabled us to develop this

Boardwalk as an educational feature, (I might add a necessary part of a Nature Reserve) and has also provided funds to complete in recent months the finer details of the overall development plan. To Terry MacLintok and Hanno Rein, directors of Canon I offer my grateful thanks for the public spiritedness of your Organization.

On behalf of all those involved, I am proud to state that the footprint of those passionately favouring preservation and nurturing of special areas of Knysna's natural environment, is now firmly imprinted on the northern shores of Leisure Isle. With the application of ongoing 'tender loving care' the retention of this Reserve as one of the special jewels of Knysna is now assured.

To those who have and are helping in practical ways, including our faithful gardeners Johnny & Alfred, and those providing financial support, not to forget Knysna Municipality and LIRA, we thank you. We are now able to recognize support for the Reserve with the creation of Friends of Steenbok Nature Reserve. I commend to all those who love and use this magnificent facility to register your support by joining Friends of Steenbok Nature Reserve.

I now call upon our Mayor Mrs Eleanor Beau-Spies to open the Canon Interpretive Boardwalk and to launch Friends of Steenbok Nature Reserve.