



LEARNING THROUGH NATURE

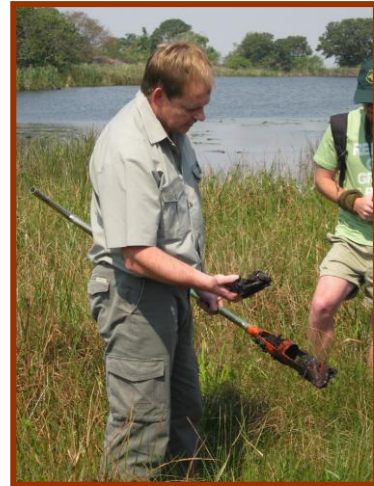
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NEWSLETTER - DECEMBER 2011

Hello Everyone,

We are pleased to report that **LEARNING THROUGH NATURE** has had a busy six months since you last heard from us.

UNISA continues to keep us busy and have been requesting our expertise in new aspects. This has included practical ecosystem studies, e-tutoring in Animal Studies, and writing of a new module in environmental education.



Prof. Brown looking for mottles in wetland soil

A most enjoyable year was spent tutoring the first year students at the Pietermaritzburg campus each Saturday morning in Plant Studies, Animal Studies and Conservation Development.



Third year students after a forest ecosystem study at Umhlanga Rocks

After writing the new module on Fundamentals of Conservation (replacing Conservation Development) we are looking forward to seeing the final product which will be the study guide for 2012.

We are committed to developing in learners of every age a sense of wonder, joy, fun, inspiration and creativity. We encourage learning through practical activities in natural and cultural settings.



UNISA students visit the museum

Jeanette Stewart
Environmental Education Specialist



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At the beginning of the year **LIMA RURAL DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION** sought our assistance in the re-accreditation and writing of learning programmes they wish to present through Services SETA. We are at the final stages of this process and are awaiting compliance before moving onto the next phase. It has been a sharp learning curve and there are a number of people that gave freely of their assistance. Many thanks to **Debbie, Louise, Kelly, Nici, Tammy and Angela** for answering so many questions, providing advice, gathering information and helping with writing of the learning materials. A big thank you goes out to the patient people at **Services SETA** too. In due course Lima will also be offering short skills development course through Agri SETA.

Appreciation of the Night Sky

The **Appreciation of the Night Sky** programme started with the viewing of the **lunar eclipse** at the Howick High School on Wednesday 15 June. About 30 people gathered at 20:30 just as the earth's shadow was being cast over the moon.

The other venue used was the home of Carol Dalling on her farm "Ultima Thule" A number of people attending were regulars and it is so encouraging to see the number of children who have been bitten by the bug and are well on their way to being amateur astronomers.

Special bookings were made by Cowan House and the Gert Maritz Land Service group as well as the Dutch Reformed Youth group. Unfortunately the latter 2 groups were not lucky with the weather but thanks to Jeremy's ability and willingness to go to Plan B he presented a slide show of the moons of the planets of the Solar System.

A note here – school sport's grounds are perfect places from which to view the night sky.

On these nights, which were one of the frostiest in the Midlands in a long while, we would like to thank **Ruth, Colin, Harry, Jeremy, Mark and Carol** for their enthusiasm and help.



Cowan House children lining up at Mark's telescope

Fun on the Farm



LEARNING THROUGH NATURE invites children 7 – 15 years of age to join in with creative activities and fun and to connect with nature

DATES – 3, 4, 5 and 6 **JANUARY** 2012 (every day or any day)

TIME – 08:00 - 12:30

COST – R65.00 per child per day.

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During the winter holidays the children enjoyed getting up close and personal with pigs and different grasses at Dovehouse Organic Farm



The December issue of the **MEANDER CHRONICLE** will see that last article being published by **LEARNING THROUGH NATURE**. This year the themes were to encourage teachers and parents go as far as the playground and beyond where a wealth of resources are waiting to be used.

An achievement is that **LEARNING THROUGH NATURE** has been included on the database of service providers on the **KZN Wildlife** database.

The assessment work with the **Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa (WESSA)** has continued. This has involved assessment of portfolios of evidence for candidates attending the Environmental Educators Courses run by SustainEd as well as some Eco-Schools portfolios. What wonderful work the Eco-Schools projects does and schools are eager to gain their next certificate, Green Flag and even International Flags. **LEARNING THROUGH NATURE** has done trips to St Nicholas School, Ixopo and Mtunzini for Eco-Schools.



The St. Nich's Eco-Schools project assessment team

SustainEd are developing learning programmes through LG SETA on environmental practices. **LEARNING THROUGH NATURE** has made application to register as an assessor for these courses and looks forward to being part of this new initiative.

Training of new tour guides in association with **DRUM BEAT ACADEMY** had continued at a slower pace as we are waiting on the verification of scope for Level 4. Level 2 Site Guide training continues usual as well as training for people studying new provinces.

Best wishes to everyone for a wonderful 2012.

Jeanette

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Environmental Education Specialist