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inquiry about the Monavale Vlei Wetland Restoration project

Dorothy Wakeling <cosmo@yoafrica.com>

2 May 2022 at 18:44

To: ~~Dorothy Wakeling <cosmo@yoafrica.com>~~, ~~Promoveo <promoveo@zo.co.zw>~~, ~~Aimasey Dora <dora.aimasey@gmail.com>~~, ~~titimotomamacha <titimotomamacha@gmail.com>~~, ~~Samuel Mumbiro <samuelmumbiro@gmail.com>~~, ~~Dorcas Mumbiro <dorcas.mumbiro@gmail.com>~~

Dear Dora

Accidentally, I sent the previous email with all the attachments without giving you an update on Monavale Vlei since the work undertaken during the Small Grants Programme. The attachments are mostly research and not photographic. We have many thousands of photos and video clips but more on biodiversity and vlei school visits. Attached is a Pecha Kucha talk which I put together a while back which shows our work on Monavale Vlei and historical perspective.

The wetland outreach to other wetland communities in Harare from the Monavale Vlei work by The Conservation Society of Monavale (COSMO Trust) and BirdLife Zimbabwe together with other residents organizations was too big to manage so it was agreed to form an umbrella organization, Harare Wetlands Trust (HWT), in 2016. The original organizations continue their work and form part of HWT.

COSMO Trust continues to manage and preserve Monavale Vlei and has undertaken a number of litigation interventions since 2015 to prevent development on a portion of the wetland which is privately owned. The owners had originally agreed to sell to BirdLife Zimbabwe but after 12 years of hoping to receive the funds offshore they applied to the authorities to develop cluster housing in the wetland and this was contested by the community. Monavale Vlei (34 ha) is the restored area within the overall Monavale Wetlands Ramsar Site (509 ha). COSMO Trust won its cases and is in the process of negotiating to purchase this 34ha and hopefully a wider extent of the wetland. We cannot discuss this further and prefer this remains confidential at this point but will be seeking funding to purchase the wetland and will require support to obtain the funds.

Meanwhile over the years COSMO has continued with its wetland awareness walks for schools, university students and other interested parties. The BirdLife Zimbabwe monthly walks, which are open to the public, continue. The COSMO Kids Club was not able to meet during Covid lockdowns but will meet again shortly. The Vlei Scout is still employed by COSMO and he records the birds and animals 5 days a week and raises the alarm if any untoward activities are noticed. He takes the walks and is very knowledgeable on the Vlei birds and other aspects of the wetland.

Together with experts we have increased the list of plants, including indigenous and exotic invasives, from 120 plants up to 202 plants. This is an ongoing exercise.

The bird count is up to 246 different species.

Much more work can be done on naming invertebrates.

Earlier this year, The Environmental Management Agency (EMA), invited COSMO to assist them with the creation

of restoration of wetlands guidelines. Our input refers to the restoration of the headwater wetland ecosystems of Harare and these speak to headwaters throughout the country.

The Government of Zimbabwe has recently published National Wetland Policy, National Wetland Map and National Wetland Guidelines, which includes restoration of wetlands. HWT assisted EMA with the formulation of these documents and as these are live documents there are opportunities to continue influencing the Policy, Map and Guidelines.

The Monavale Management Plan has been distributed to more than 10 Community Organizations adjacent to wetlands with whom HWT has been engaging so that they can develop their own management plans to suit their requirements. Any wetland restoration in these areas will be guided by the Monavale Vlei restoration programme.

I shared the 2 MSc theses on the impacts of cultivation on a portion of Monavale Vlei before restoration and 9 years later after restoration showing that the restoration efforts were successful.

Restoration (ongoing removal of regrowth of invasives) has been on hold during the litigation years. Restoration of the streams will be necessary. We envisage restoring all the wetlands of Harare and all the streams and rivers in the city too – hoping they will be healthy headwater wetlands with their biodiversity retrieved and intact. As these are grassland wetlands and streams they are naturally treeless. Trees dry up such wetlands. Most trees seen in these grassy headwater wetlands have come from disturbance through cultivation and development and are choking these waterways in some areas.

There is much more but enough for now.

We at COSMO are very excited about the opportunity to be part of the Urban Nature Atlas.

With kind regards

Dorothy Wakeling

Conservation Society of Monavale Programme Manager

Harare Wetlands Trust Wetland Awareness Coordinator

From: Dorothy Wakeling <cosmo@yoafrica.com>

Sent: Monday, 02 May 2022 16:15

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Subject: RE: inquiry about the Monavale Vlei Wetland Restoration project

https://www.zimbabweflora.co.zw/speciesdata/location-display.php?location_id=77

<https://www.bing.com/images/search?q=birdlist+monavale+vlei&qvvt=Birdlist+monavale+vlei&tsc=ImageHoverTitle&FORM=IGRE>

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 **PechaKucha Where Does Harare's Water Come From.pptx**
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