

PROCEEDINGS

WOSA 4 Conference

DRAKENSBERG GARDENS KZN

25-27 January 2019

WILD ORCHIDS SOUTHERN AFRICA



Registered as a public benefit (PBO 930050871) and non-profit (141-119 NPO) organisation

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Note: Detailed location data of indigenous orchid and endangered species sightings presented at the Conference have been removed from the papers in these Proceedings as a precautionary measure. Should you require access to this information please contact the respective speakers.

Opening Address WOSA 4 Conference – Gooderson’s Hotel

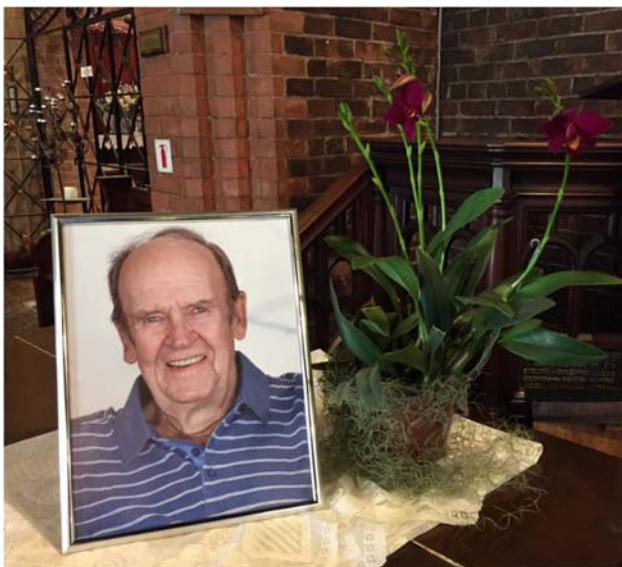
Karsten Wodrich

Good afternoon everyone and a warm welcome to WOSA 5.

Thank you to everyone that has made the trip to attend the Conference.

I think it’s fair to say that 2019 has been a difficult year – not only did we have upheavals from an economic point of view but in June last year we also lost the founder, stalwart and key executive member of Wild Orchid Southern Africa Bill Mincher.

In 2014 Bill brought to life what we can now consider a world class conservation organisation Wild Orchids Southern Africa and he was the driving force behind the organisation right to the end.



Bill Mincher – founding member of Wild Orchid Southern Africa

It has been a difficult seven months since then as the new executive and non-executive committee had to take over the task of organising this conference and coming to grips with the many aspects of what Bill did for WOSA.

WOSA’s aim is to bring the general public, the hobbyist orchid grower, the professional orchid nurseries and the academics together with one united

goal – the conservation of our almost 500 species of indigenous orchids. As a result of that the academics and hobbyists alike now have a forum to present their research at the annual Wild Orchids Southern Africa Conference.

We intend to keep the momentum going that Bill created and we had a discussion session yesterday morning that serves to finally formalise the creation of independent WOSA chapters in the various provinces – so that conservation can continue on the ground where it is needed.

We have in the past year had quite considerable interaction with the public – amongst other things dealing with the widening of the N2 that was potentially threatening a large colony of *Satyrium coriifolium* in the Cape. This fact was brought to our attention by a concerned member of the public.



Satyrium coriifolium along the N2 highway

The owners of a Nature Reserve in Vaalwater invited WOSA to do an orchid survey and look into the propagation of *Eulophia angolensis*. These interactions have highlighted a definite need for WOSA chapters as it is very difficult for the WOSA executive to deal with issues for example in the Cape or KwaZulu Natal without on the ground representation there.

Behind the scenes the court case regarding the conservation of the Albertina Sisulu Orchid came to a head and Andrew Hankey will be reporting on that in his talk tomorrow morning.



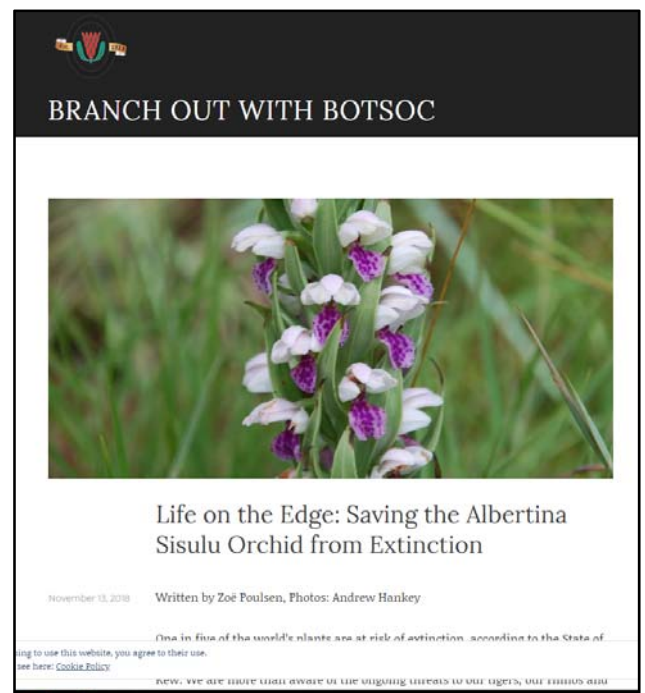
The interaction with government departments will now need to be intensified as that will be key to having the area in which the orchid grows proclaimed a reserve or incorporated into the Walter Sisulu National Botanic Garden. Unfortunately, both high level stakeholders that we have had discussions with, the former Minister of Environmental affairs and last week the Mayor of Mogale City passed away and that process of interaction with these persons has to start afresh with the new minister Barbara Creasy and the new Mayor of Mogale City.

In the past year Duncan McFarlane has put a phenomenal amount of work into completing species write-ups to accompany the picture gallery on our website. These are currently in the process of being proof read and published in alphabetic order. The ultimate aim is to make our website a one stop reference site for our indigenous orchids.

At the same time the Orchid Map project managed by Prof Craig Peter has been integrated into the species

descriptions on our website. This has now made it unnecessary to update orchid species locations – there are automatically pulled in from OrchidMap in real time. Currently the OrchidMap database comprises of 7760 records and it is being updated on a daily basis by botanists and the public alike.

Public awareness is also being increased by use of the print publications and radio. This is part of what Bill called the process “to engender a real interest in indigenous orchids which will render them valuable and worthy of protection.”



Post on the Botanical Society of Southern Africa website

A further development in the last year is that WOSA is forging alliances with a number of other conservation orientated organisations which include the Sugarbush Ridges Coalition between the Proteadale Conservation Association, Black Eagle Project Roodekrans and Wild Orchids Southern Africa. There are also plans to form a closer tie with Wildlife & Environment Society of South Africa or WESSA. These associations are aimed at pooling resources and giving the organisations more credibility – especially so when it comes to fighting the conservation cause.

From WOSA's side we would again like to thank Jimmy and Enone Pauck for hosting WOSA 5 in KwaZulu Natal again – more out of necessity after

pricing arrangements with the planned conference venue in Dullstroom came to a head last year. Julie and Richard Braby – thank you to both of you and your team for doing the pre-conference orchid spotting and sorting out the two outings.

We are looking at alternative locations for the next Conference so that we allow a wider audience access to that as well and at the same time looking at an area where it is possible to view some of our epiphytic orchids which we have not seen at the last 4 conferences.

There are also plans afoot to invite international speakers for the next Conference to speak on Conservation related topics from an international perspective.

We would like to thank each of the presenters for once again providing excellent content and, in so doing, giving us a programme line-up that continues to draw people to the conference year after year. We are most appreciative of the research that is being conducted at the Universities and presented at the conferences. The important contribution and selfless sharing of knowledge by all presenters, whether from the academic sector or orchid enthusiasts, must be acknowledged and applauded. It is safe to say: any country would be proud of the programme content we present at our annual conferences.

In terms of the WOSA 5 Conference that we are kicking off this afternoon our theme for the conference is "Something for everyone". The programme is put together with exactly that in mind – from the academic side of things through to finding out which orchids grow around the KZN Highway areas. Just bear in mind – where you are now likely to know what to look out for it does not allow you to slam on the brakes on the highway when you see a yellow flash of the flowers of *Eulophia speciosa* next to the highway!

And on that subject, I would like to announce hot off the press from Catharina Wilfinger – that we have a new epiphytic orchid species previously considered exclusively terrestrial.



Eulophia speciosa now also grows on palm trees in KwaZulu Natal!



We now have to go back to the books and change all the species habit descriptions.

Proof again that our indigenous orchids never cease to amaze.

So, without further delay I would now like to hand over to Marinus Kort who is the chairman for the first speakers session this morning.

Karsten Wodrich – President

25 January 2020