



# Gauteng Province

## South Africa

On the 13<sup>th</sup> March 2011 was the First Africa Scout Day in which the Gauteng Scouts participated. The focus this year was on the environment. It was held at Delta Park and Delta Park scout Camp Ground. There were 110 scouts and three commissioners who got together for Africa Scout Day. The troops that attended and helped were: Adiero, White Horse, Rivertrail, 1<sup>st</sup> Discovery, Florida Sea Scouts, Jan Smuts, 1<sup>st</sup> Edenvale (girls and boys), 1<sup>st</sup> Randburg, Fairlands, 1<sup>st</sup> Halfway House, 37<sup>th</sup> Springvale, 1<sup>st</sup> Craighall, 1<sup>st</sup> Rosebank and North West District Rovers. These troops came from 7 districts around Gauteng. Five first class scouts used the activities to complete their environmental service projects.

The most prevalent comment was the fun the different troops had while working together on a big project. It was quite different to not compete against other troops.

Three projects were run on the day:

1. **Fund the Fence** was an initiative started by Adiero troop to plant a hedge along the back of Delta Park Camp Ground to increase security. We asked that people donate R25 for a meter of hedge so that we

could plant *Carrissa macrocarpa* which is an indigenous plant that produces an edible fruit and has thorns for security.



This project was a great success and we managed to raise R7 500 of the R7 800 needed (Delta committee covered the rest) and so the planting went ahead. Large donations came from Sandton district, parents of Adiero, Jan Smuts and Honeydew troops and the Garden Shop. On the day about 80 scouts participated in the Fund the Fence project.

We started by digging a trench so that we could loosen the hard soil for the plants to establish themselves quicker. This took a long time as we had to dig 250m. Thankfully one of the parents had a hole digger and he managed to make about a third of the required holes. The planting then began, 250 plants spread over 270 meters, as well as giving each plant compost and fertilizer to help them grow.

Then came the watering and this also took a large amount of time as 270m requires a large amount of water. Watering was done by hose pipe and by a relay system with scouts carrying water bottles to plants further away.

Finally the job was done and it looks like a great hedge will soon develop to provide security for Delta camp ground especially as we had great rain for two days after the planting

2. The second project was the " **feathering**" of alien trees in the bird sanctuary. Florida Sea scouts tackled this project and they made a significant impact with the feathering and poisoning of trees as well as the cutting down of black wattles.

The trees were feathered instead of cutting them down as there were many birds nesting in the trees and Delta park did not want the birds disturbed. Once the alien trees have died and the birds have gone the trees will be cut down and indigenous trees planted in their place. We heard after the day that we will be able to get indigenous trees donated from the city council to plant both in the bird sanctuary and the camp ground.



3. The third project entailed the weeding of a large patch of natural grassland of an invasive verbena. We had some cubs who took on this project in the morning as well as some scouts from Jan Smuts who spent an hour there in the afternoon. This was hard, hot work as the verbena had to be pulled up and carried to the edge of the grassland. Unfortunately, being a grass land there was no shade.

At lunchtime we had a talk by one of the conservation officers at Delta Park about alien trees and plants and the reasons for doing the jobs we were doing. Thanks to everyone who helped out for making this day a success and getting together just to have fun. We had a badge made to celebrate the day and they were much in demand. A very different badge indeed.

Gauteng province will be participating in Africa scout day every year. We will select a different conservation area each year from different parts of the province and take on projects to benefit the conservation area.