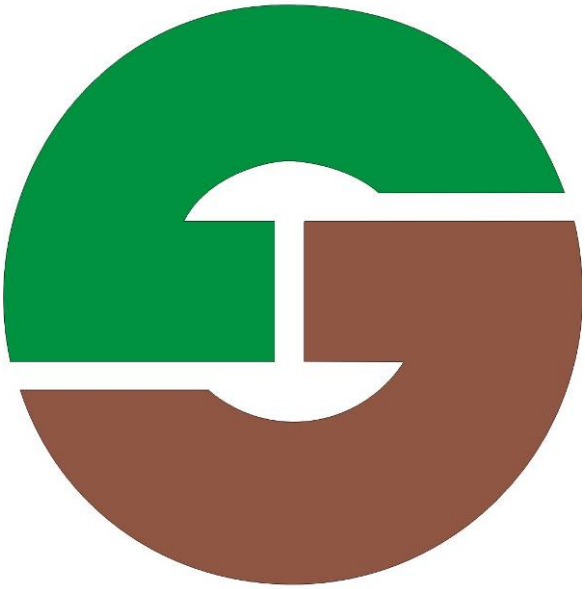
SOIL SCIENCE SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA



NEWSLETTER
No. 93

May 2012

SSSSA COUNCIL/*GVSA RAAD*: 2011-13

President	**Dr D.P. Turner** (ARC-ISCW, Pretoria)
Vice-Pres./*Vise-Pres.*	**Dr P.A.L. le Roux** (UFS, Bloemfontein)
Past Pres./*Oud-Pres.*	**Prof C.W. van Huyssteen** (UFS, Bloemfontein)
Secr. Treas./*Sekr.-Tes.*	**Mr T.E. Dohse** (ARC-ISCW, Pretoria)
Members/*Lede*	**Dr A.G. Hardie** (University of Stellenbosch)
	Prof J.J.O. Odhiambo (University of Venda)
	Ms K. Smith (formerly ARC-ISCW, Glen)
	Dr R. van Antwerpen (SASRI, Mount Edgecombe)

ADDRESS/*ADRES*

P O Box/*Posbus* 65217
Erasmusrand
0165

TELEPHONE/*TELEFOON*

President: 012 310-2597
Sec./*Sekr*.: 012 310-2504

Fax No./*Faksnr*.: 086 555-0149

E-MAIL

theo@soils.org.za

WEB PAGE/-*TUISTE*

http://www.soils.org.za

The SSSSA does not necessarily agree with opinions expressed in this newsletter.
Die GVSA onderskryf nie noodwendig die menings van bydraes tot sy nuusbrief nie.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT/
BOODSKAP VAN DIE PRESIDENT

Dear Colleagues,

SA Journal of Plant and Soil: The Council is pleased to report new positive developments with regard to the publication of the South African Journal of Plant and Soil by the new publishers Taylor and Francis. A contract has been concluded with the publishers that your council believes will be favourable to members, and is expected to produce a publishable journal of high scientific quality. To date 41 manuscripts have been submitted for review with an average time from submission to acceptance for publication of 50 days. This represents an improvement over previous years with the submission process apparently proceeding without too much difficulty. Additional reviewers have been identified and our thanks as a society are extended to the Editor and to the reviewers for their willingness to perform this important task.

A system of auto-reminders has been instituted. This has had initial teething problems and reviewers are asked to exercise patience and restraint while the system is adapted. The Editor informs the Society that the first issue from the new publishers is nearing completion and distribution is expected shortly. The web address of the publishers is www.tandfonline.com while e-mails for information can be addressed to info@tandfonline.com

It remains my task to encourage society members to support the journal and to actively submit your research manuscripts during the year. In this way, your valuable research findings should prove beneficial to our profession and to the well-being of the greater community that we seek to serve.

Your society invited Dr Pieter Haumann, CEO of Grasland Ondernemings, to deliver the opening keynote address at the Combined Congress held in Potchefstroom in January 2012. Dr Haumann introduced his address by pointing to the importance of our acting with integrity in the discipline using knowledge and skills to advance food security and our role as skilled advisors and custodians of the soil resources. He illustrated the address using examples of precision farming technology to better understand natural processes and optimize agricultural production. While concepts of precision farming may imply the application of various levels of technology, they do present new challenges to scientists to work together with producers to understand natural systems and achieve optimum levels of food security. This Dr Haumann described as the “New Research Environment”, one which would conceivably become increasingly important in addressing future challenges. These are challenges that members of our society are encouraged to seriously consider in our future work activity.

Our appreciation as a society is expressed to Dr Haumann for giving of his vision for our scientific discipline of soil science and for providing his leadership insights in its application to agricultural production. Thank you!

David Turner
(012 310-2597; dturner@arc.agric.za)

EDITORIAL/*REDAKSIONEEL*

One of the nice things about the SSSSA is that there is still excellent interaction between some of the older members and our newest recruits, often at congresses or other workshops. Many officially retired members are still active in the field, either commercially or for their own interest, and their experience is always useful.

For our older members, here is a photo from the “good old days”, where Theo van Rooyen is standing in a soil pit and holding discussions with Theo Dohse, Johan van Rooyen and Trevor Botha.

If any members have photos like this, or any other interesting photos or documents from our history, I would be delighted to publish them in the newsletter and on the website.

Feel free to send me anything that you have.

Regards,

Garry Paterson
(012 310-2601; 083 556 2458; garry@arc.agric.za)

COUNCIL MATTERS/*RAADSAANGELEENTHEDE*

It seems that in the last couple of newsletters, some of the new members were inadvertently omitted. Apologies if names have been missed.

New Members: we welcome the following new SSSSA members:

Full Members: E. Mashimbye, F. Phasha, D. Elephant, V.M. Ngole, T. Aphane, L.L. Qongqo, S. Mashego, A. Mulidizi, R.A. Adeleke, L.T. Mupondi, C.P.J. Fourie, S.J. Bekker, K. v/d Westhuizen, D. van Zyl, J.M. Putter, L. Strydom, M.N. Wasserfall, F.H. Knight, H.G. Mohgwe, M. Lesesa, F. Botha, G. Gwasira, W.T. Jackson, K.R. Barichievy.

Associate Members: J. Erasmus, S.S. Thongo, A.L. Jack, I. van Huyssteen, T.N. Mukhwevho, W.E, Oosthuizen.

Student members: J.F.N. Smith, F. Geldenhuys, W. Greaves, T. Mugwedi, P.P. Phongola, R.J. Erasmus, M.L. Mmolefe, M.J. Molepo, M.L. Pretorius, S.P. Khuzwayo, K. Khoetlizi, Mnr H.P. Cloete, Miss M.N. Dama, Mr L.B. Dinko, Mnr S.G. Jacobs, Mnr J.J. le Roux, Miss S.M. Maile, Miss P.C. Mashau, Miss M Monkwe, Ms L.N. Muelelwa, Mnr D. Myburgh, Miss P.V. Nekhwalivhe, Mr T.D. Nhlapo, Ms L.C. Nkoala, Miss M.E. Ramaila, Mr K.A. Rapheeha, Miss M.J. Ratlabala, Miss L.S. Santho, Mnr A.A. Smit, Mr M. Tinnefeld, Mnr I.P. van der Westhuizen, Mnr C.F. Wessels

SOIL SCIENTISTS OVERSEAS/*GRONDKUNDIGES OORSEE*

Prof Giel Laker het 'n 8 week lange besoek aan Kalifornie gemaak, onder andere om daar te wees vir die geboorte van hulle tweede kleinseun. Baie geluk aan die familie.

Gerhard Nortje, from the SA Subtropical Growers Association in Tzaneen (gerhard@subtrop.co.za) reports on a recent visit to Turkey.

The 8th International Soil Science Congress was held at the Altin Yunus Hotel in Çeşme - Izmir, Turkey, from the 15th to the 17th of May 2012. The theme for the Congress this year was "Land Degradation and Challenges in Sustainable Soil

Management". The Congress was organized by the Department of Soil Science and Plant Nutrition of Ege University's Agricultural Faculty. The Congress also hosted the 6th International Conference on Land Degradation (ICLD).

For this 8th International Congress more than 1200 abstracts were received from 54 countries, of which 239 were chosen for presentation as seminars and 413 for posters. Eventually, 57 countries attended or participated in the Congress. The Congress was organized to discuss issues on land degradation and challenges in soil management. Interactions among soils, land degradation and desertification were discussed. The importance of soil for a better environmental quality and food security was also stressed in the three-day congress. Poster and oral presentations covered a large range of subjects, including computer modelling, digital mapping and new techniques and technologies used in data mining, decision making and other related fields.

Unfortunately, South Africa was only represented by one soil scientist. This was a real disappointment for me. The middle-eastern countries like Iran, Iraq and Turkey were very well represented. Other countries that were represented included the USA, the UK, Malaysia, Kazakhstan, Russia, Italy, Greece, Spain, Portugal, Pakistan, Japan, Austria, Argentina, Brazil and China. Other African countries represented at the Congress were Nigeria, Kenya, Egypt and Ghana.

The almost total absence of South African soil scientists at this and other international congresses was referred to by Prof. Giel Laker in his 2003 review paper (SA Plant and Soil, 2004) where he said the following: "The participation of South African soil scientists in international congresses of organizations like the International Soil Conservation Organization (ISCO) was almost non-existent" for the period 1978 to 2003. This despite the fact that South Africa was described in the November 2011 FAO report as having some of the most serious soil degradation in the world.

Dr. Yusuf Kuruçu, Chair of the Congress, in his opening message, said the following: "We are losing our vital resource, namely soil, biomass and water through desertification. The effect of this water and soil degradation is becoming extremely dangerous. We have seen the results for many years in many countries of the world. Food shortage is now becoming a more important problem, not just for a few countries these days, but for all countries of the world". Turkey and many other middle-eastern countries suffer from severe soil degradation like erosion and soil crusting. They also do not have a lot of useable water as much of their water can be classified as "hard water" and their rainfall is very erratic, similar to South Africa. The above-mentioned problems of erosion, surface crusting and sub-soil compaction are very true also for South Africa. Turkey, however, has an active integrated soil protection and rehabilitation programme which includes the Government, NGOs and Universities.

I was blessed to be part of this International Congress. My abstract was accepted and my paper submitted for presentation entitled "Impact of off-road driving by game drive vehicles on soils, in an area in the Kruger National Park, South Africa". It had very interesting responses and was also specially emphasized in the closing summary of the Congress for which I am really proud. Since 2001, when off-road driving (ORD) was made official in South Africa, the practice has increased dramatically with no thought for the damage done to our soils and the ecology.

Sub-soil compaction, surface crusting and erosion are problems that are increasing in our protected areas at an alarming rate due to the impact of ORD and other environmental impacts of tourists. Over the last six years of my research in protected areas like the Kruger National Park, I have not come across one area where severe sub-soil compaction, erosion or surface crusting does not exist. The consequences for soil resilience, vegetation growth, wildlife and sustainable protection of wildlife are clear.

A highlight of the Congress was the field excursion which gave us the opportunity to see soils which are not at all similar to any soils in South Africa. Izmir has a typical Mediterranean climate which is characterized by long, hot, dry summers and mild to cool, rainy winters (typical climate of the Western Cape), but the soils differ greatly. I would like to take this opportunity to encourage South African soil scientists to participate in future international soil science congresses, as communication with international soil scientists is essential in tackling the problem of soil degradation worldwide.

The 5th Global Workshop on Digital Soil Mapping

Die International Union of Soil Sciences (IUSS) se werksgroep oor "Digital Soil Mapping " se twee jaarlikse Global Workshop het hierdie jaar in Sydney, Australië plaas gevind. Die afgelope Werkswinkel in April 2012 was die werksgroep se 5de byeenkoms met die tema "Digital Soil Assessments and Beyond...".

Die werkswinkel het bestaan uit 2 dae van intensiewe opleiding in die geostatistiek en beginsels van "Digital Soil Mapping". Die 2 dae opleiding het plaasgevind op die 4de en 5de April 2012 en is aangebied deur Budiman Minasny en Brendan Malone van die Universiteit van Sydney.

Vanaf die 10de tot 13de April 2012 het die konferensie plaasgevind, wat 'n veld ekskursie op die 12de April ingesluit het. Tydens die werkswinkel is 83 referate en 20 plakkate gelewer. Die veld ekskursie was na die Hunter Valley, waar gekyk is na die toepassing van Digitale Grondkarterings tegnieke.

Die baie suksesvolle en leersame werkswinkel is bygewoon deur **Jasper Dreyer** van die Noordwes Universiteit, **George van Zijl** van die Universiteit van die Vrystaat en **Willem de Clercq** van die Universiteit Stellenbosch. George van Zijl het 'n referaat gelewer met die titel "Rapid soil mapping under restrictive conditions in Tete, Mozambique" en Willem de Clercq 'n plakkaat met die titel "Mapping the soil water infiltration characteristics of a small catchment based on the sediment character of the topsoil samples."

Willem de Clercq, Jasper Dreyer, Budiman Minasny en George van Zijl by 'n profielgat in die Hunter Valley.

AWARDS/TOEKENNINGS

SSSSA Gold Medal

.

Prof Alan Bennie (UFS) and **Prof Chris du Preez** (UFS) were awarded the prestigious **SSSSA Gold Medal** for their outstanding scientific contribution to Soil Science in South Africa on 19th January 2012 at the Combined Congress 2012 Gala Dinner in Potchefstroom.

SSSSA President Dr Dave Turner presents Prof du Preez (left) and Prof Bennie (right) with their gold medals.

SSSSA Congress Awards

From the Potchefstroom Congress, congratulations to the following authors whose presentations received awards:

Best Paper: ***CF Olivier, A Rozanov, A Botha & AG Hardie*** – "Chemical degradation of biochar"

Best Poster: ***AH Meyer, J Dames & J Wooldridge -*** "Correlation between glomalin and chemical properties of apple orchard soils".

Best Paper (author under 30 yrs): ***JJ van Tol, M Hensley, PAL le Roux*** – Pedological criteria for estimating subsurface lateral flow in E horizons in South African soils"

SA Journal of Plant and Soil

The SSSSA award for the Best Soil Science Article published in the South African Journal of Plant and Soil in 2010 went to former ARC-ISCW (Soil & Water Science) Researcher **Dr Hester Jansen van Rensburg** for her article entitled "Evaluation of the Effect of Soil Acidity Amelioration on Maize Yield and Nutrient Interrelationships using Stepwise Regression and Nutrient Vector Analysis", co-authored by Dr Danie Beukes and Prof Andries Claassens from the University of Pretoria. This is the second year running that Hester and Danie have won this award – *congratulations!*

CONGRESSES/*KONGRESSE*

COMBINED CONGRESS

The next Combined Congress will in all likelihood be held in KwaZulu-Natal in January 2013. Dr Albert Modi will be Chairman of the Congress Committee and as soon as the final decision and arrangements have been made, members will be informed and information will be placed on the website (www.combinedcongress.org.za).

OTHER MEETINGS

International Seminar on Practising Sustainable Resource Management and Agriculture in Research and Extension, 10-13 September 2012, University of Stellenbosch. The Seminar is intended to provide opportunities for exposure to innovative research in a wide variety of disciplines such as agriculture, forestry and related fields in managing renewable green resources. The goal of the Seminar is to present and discuss analytical studies based on specific research projects, and to go a step further by stating explicitly the sustainability objectives and the sustainability success criteria applied in specific projects.
Contact Address: Prof. Theo Kleynhans (**tek1@sun.ac.za**). Tel: 021 808-4755

Soils in Space and Time. 30 September – 4 October 2013, Ulm Danube, Germany. The programme is available from the conference website at **https://iuss-division1.uni-hohenheim.de/.** "Soils in Space and Time" is one of the key issues documenting the variability of the pedosphere. Soils are variable but all of us have a limited experience. Therefore it is of utmost importance to exchange knowledge from time to time and from place to place. Division I was established by IUSS pedologists working in related fields of soil morphology, genesis, geography and classification who combined to join their efforts in order to improve and communicate their knowledge. Especially the dynamic Commissions Paleopedology and Pedometrics can add new methods and findings to improve our work. This is especially also due to the working groups which feel related. This is the first divisional conference so everybody should try to use the options given. Join us and make the new experience.

7th International Conference of the Urban Soils Working Group, SUITMA, of the International Union of Soil Sciences. Nicolaus Copernicus University of Torun, Poland. SUITMAs (Soils in Urban, Industrial, Traffic, Mining and Military Areas) are one of main components of urban ecosystems. They are very diverse and heterogeneous, and fulfil primary functions of utmost importance. SUITMA 7 is held in the UNESCO World Heritage city of Torun, famous for its gothic architecture. A one-day pre-conference tour (Northern Poland red brick gothic castles), two-day mid-conference field tour (18 & 19 September 2013) will be offered in the Kuyavian-Pomeranian Province and a post-conference tour (20 - 23 September 2013) will be organized in Poland and Czech Republic, with not only soils but also interesting social parts (visiting breweries) included in the programme, finishing in Golden Prague, the Czech capital, to address issues related to urban and industrial soils of Central Europe. We will be very pleased to invite you to participate in SUITMA 7 to share your ideas and experience for the benefit of urban communities and SUITMAs. For more information visit the conference website: **www.suitma7.umk.pl** or email Przemyslaw CHARZYNSKI, Chairman of SUITMA 7: **suitma7@umk.pl**. You are also welcome to join SUITMA 7 group on Facebook to be instantly informed on news and updates concerning the conference.

***IUSS Global Soil C Conference*,** 3-7 June 2013, Madison, USA. The IUSS Global Soil Carbon Conference is an IUSS Division, Commission and Working Group conference that focuses on soil C in space and time, soil C properties and processes, soil C in relation to soil use and management, and the role of soil C in sustaining society and the environment. All

Divisions, Commissions and Working Groups will have a special symposium highlighting and summarizing what is known about soil C in their soil science sub-discipline. It aims to become a soil science intra-disciplinary conference focusing on a highly topical issue: soil C. Each Commission and Working Group will have about 30 to 45 minutes to present their work. It will be done in plenary and no separate sessions are planned in order to exploit the full benefits of the intra-disciplinary approach.

8th International Symposium on Plant-Soil Interactions at Low pH (8th PSILPH) will be held at University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore, India: Please visit www.8thpsilph.org.in for symposium details. The 8th PSILPH will provide a forum for the exchange of knowledge, information and ideas among scientists dealing with different aspects of agriculture and agro-ecology of acid soils. The 8th PSILPH continues the discussion on acid soil issues started in Canada in 1987, followed by subsequent symposia in USA (1990), Australia (1993), Brazil (1996), South Africa (2001), Japan (2004) and China (2009). The major theme of the 8th PSILPH will be "Understanding Plant-Soil interactions at Low pH for Enhanced Crop Productivity".

6th International Nitrogen Conference (N2013), 18-22 November 2013, Kampala, Uganda. www.N2013.org. Theme: Just enough N: Perspectives on how to get there for "too much" and "too little" Regions. Contrasting access to reactive nitrogen (Nr) has led to either its excessive use in the production of food and energy, resulting in numerous negative ecological and human health consequences, or in inadequate access that consigns such regions to unsustainable agricultural production, land degradation, and food and nutritional insecurity. Scientific and socio-economic studies continue to be conducted in both scenarios so as to identify Nr issues and solutions, novel approaches and policy support for implementation of the solutions, and priorities for further research and development. N2013 will provide a platform for sharing the state of knowledge on the impact of too much or too little use of Nr on the nitrogen cycle, human health and ecosystems in the different regions of the world. It will declare its position on the use of external Nr sources in stimulating increase in food production and rural development, while taking into account prevention of its negative impacts for "too little" regions. Convener: Mateete Bekunda, African Nitrogen Centre (mateeteb@yahoo.com). Host: National Agricultural Research Organisation, Uganda. Contact: Crammer K. Kaizzi (kckaizzi@gmail.com).

IUSS Commission 3.6 Salt-affected Soils Conference

Utilization and protection of halophytes and salt-affected landscapes", 4-6. September 2013, Kecskemét, Hungary. The IUSS Commission 3.6 Conference will be an open international conference focusing on utilization, improvement, mapping and protection of halophytes and salt-affected soils, fields and landscapes. The sessions will cover such topics as ecology of salt-affected landscapes; new results on salt-affected soils including spatiotemporal changes, mapping and relationship with groundwater properties; furthermore research related to sustainable agriculture on these types of soil; and sustainable use of halophyte plants. Besides plenary sessions, a poster presentation session and field trips introducing the typical saline/sodic natural and agricultural landscapes are also included in the program. The conference will foster continued discussion among researchers all over the world who investigate issues of salt-affected soils and saline/sodic

landscapes (lagoons, lakes, marshlands, grasslands, etc.) by 20 minute long presentations. More information is available at

http://members.iif.hu/tot3700/salinityconferencehungary2013.html

SASSO/SAGO

The first workshop this year was in Gauteng, where wetland soils were studied, including on soils granite in Midrand, on dolomite in Irene and on shale/quartzite near Rayton.

The photos show good examples of gleying. In the first photo (below), the camera is looking vertically down onto the floor of the soil profile pit, and the dark, vein-like lines are actually the edges of prismatic structural units, occurring from a depth of approximately 1 m.

In the second photo (below), the G horizon (from approximately 700 mm) has blueish tints, along with mottling. This is especially evident in the inset photo.

All interested parties are invited to attend future workshops. For more details, contact Johan van der Waals (082 570 1297; johan@terrasoils.co.za).

FROM NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY: SOIL SCIENCE SUB-GROUP IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL GEOLOGY DEPARTMENT (PW van Deventer)

Jasper Dreyer joined the Soil Science sub-group in January, being responsible for lecturing first and second year students. Alida Slabbert joined the sub-group in February as a Research Assistant, being responsible for coordination and administration of the NRF-funded and other research projects.

The Soil Science sub-group of the Geology Department of North-West University, in conjunction with various industrial partners (indicated below) and NRF-THRIP, launched the following research projects in January 2012:

Project Title	Vegetation establishment on various mine tailings and soil structure assessment on rehabilitated tailings
Description	The project involves the identification of suitable trees and alternative grass as well as other species for different substrates (growth mediums i.e. tailings materials) in order to improve soil quality indicators such as soil structure, as well as biodiversity of vegetation on tailings dam facilities. Pot trials will be used to assess different species and growth mediums.
Responsible Person	Piet van Deventer
Industrial Partner	Fraser Alexander Tailings

Project Title	Soil chemical and biological drivers, that influence soil algal and *Cyanoprokaryote* growth
Description	By understanding the triggers of the presence of *Cyanoprokaryotes*, the processes of succession can be understood and their contribution to landscape function regeneration determined. The algae can provide significant surface strength to landscapes with unnatural geometry. The project aims to determine whether *Cyanoprokaryotes* can provide surface strength to landforms that are eroded by wind, water and gravitational processes by artificially culturing and establishing the algae on mine waste materials, such as tailings.
MSc student	Tanya Orlekowsky
Industrial Partner	Agreenco

Project Title	Nitrogen fixation of legumes in different growth mediums
Description	The project involves the evaluation of the contribution of different legumes that fix atmospheric nitrogen in mine tailings substrate, to improve the long-term sustainability of rehabilitation projects. Support factors, for example nutrient uptake in the substrate, especially the availability of nitrogen in plants may drastically decrease maintenance costs whilst improving sustainability of rehabilitation projects.
PG MSc student	Michael Seiderer
Industrial Partner	Agreenco

Project Title	Investigation of the effects of particle size variations and moisture content on the penetration resistance of a gold tailings disposal facility
Description	Penetration resistance is known to affect hydraulic re-mining. The project aims to determine the influence of particle size distribution and moisture content on the penetration resistance of selected gold tailings dam facilities situated in the Stilfontein area.
Hons. student	Gloria Dube
Industrial Partner	Geotron Systems, Fraser Alexander Tailings

Project Title	Quantification of gamma ray probing/surveying for resource estimation and uranium migration on gold tailings dam facilities
Description	The project aims to quantify the uranium resources on gold tailings dam facilities (TDFs) by measuring natural gamma radiation. As disequilibrium between uranium and its daughter products is known to affect the correlation between natural gamma radiation and the uranium concentration, this facet will also be investigated. Migration of uranium from the oxidized zone to the un-oxidized zone of a TDF will also be quantified.
MSc student	Jaco Koch
Industrial Partner	Geotron Systems, Fraser Alexander Tailings

Project Title	Hydrological impacts of gold tailings dam facilities on a given drainage system
Description	The project aims to determine the influence of seepage from gold tailings dam facilities (TDFs) on a drainage system with special reference to salinity, heavy metals and acid mine drainage on soils, plants and surface water. The results from this investigation will be used to compile a detailed rehabilitation and management plan, with a focus on hydrological guidelines, which can be used as a preventative tool for future development, as well as the establishment of criteria for rehabilitation specifications for current drainage systems contaminated by TDF seepage.
MSc student	Alida Slabbert
Industrial Partner	Mine Waste Solutions

Project Title	The effect of seepage pollution from gold mine tailings on vegetation change
Description	???
Hons. student	Dawid Malo
Industrial Partner	Mine Waste Solutions

Project Title	Soil and plant pollution due to seepage from a gold tailings dam facility

Description	The project involves the determination of current status quo with respect to salinity seepage onto land adjoining a gold tailings dam facility (TDF). The following factors will be considered: the nature and extent of the impact; the impact of salinity on the soil in the area; the impact of salinity on the palatability of grasses and grazing land; projected medium to long-term improvement due to the cessation of mining related activities (in particular the deposition of tailings material in the area); as well as geochemical modeling of long-term seepage from a TDF.
Hons. student	Melani van der Merwe
Industrial Partner	Mine Waste Solutions

News from University of Pretoria

Eyob Tesfamariam reports that their research group has succeeded in obtaining funding from the WRC (R600 000 per year for the next three years) for a project entitled "**Quantifying the fertilizer value of wastewater sludges for agriculture**". They have also discussed the project with East Rand Water (ERWAT) who have agreed to add another R300 000 per year for the next three years. The project commenced this year. Eyob is the project leader, working together with Prof John Annandale and Dr Chris de Jager.

Soil Classification Working Group

Under the convenorship of Freddie Ellis (fe@sun.ac.za), the Soil Classification Working Group met in Potchefstroom after the Combined Congress in January. They will be holding a field workshop in KwaZulu-Natal in July to look at aspects of organic topsoils. Many of the members of the Group have been tasked with writing revised horizon definitions, and there is definitely progress being made towards the next version of the Soil Classification book.

HUMOUR

You Know You're Living in the Year 2012 when:

Your reason for not staying in touch with family is because they do not have e-mail.

You have a list of 15 phone numbers to reach your family of three.

Your grandmother asks you to send her a JPEG file of your newborn so she can create a screen saver.

You pull up in your own driveway and use your cell phone to see if anyone is home.

Every commercial on television has a web site, facebook or twitter address at the bottom of the screen, plus numerous apps.

You buy a computer and 3 months later it's out of date and sells for half the price you paid.

Leaving the house without your cell phone, which you didn't have the first 20 or 30 (or 60) years of your life, is now a cause for panic and you turn around to get it.

Using real money, instead of credit or debit, to make a purchase would be a hassle and take planning.

You just tried to enter your password on the microwave.

You hear most of your jokes via e-mail instead of in person.

You get an extra phone line so you can get phone calls.

You disconnect from the Internet and get this awful feeling, as if you just pulled the plug on a loved one.

You get up in the morning and go online before getting your coffee.

You wake up at 2 AM to go to the bathroom and check your E-mail on your way back to bed.

You're reading this and nodding and laughing.

Even worse, you know exactly who you are going to forward this to.

SOIL SCIENCE SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA: MISSION

The SSSSA is a scientific society, which, in the interest of its members, promotes the advancement of soil science and soil technology as well as the responsible practising thereof by its members with the view to the long-term sustainable utilization of the environment in the interest of the community.

Aims

1. Promotion and protection of the professional status and prestige of soil science as a science and career.

2. Promotion and extension of the society.

3. Promotion of the standard of training of soil scientists and technologists.

4. Creation of opportunities for the free exchange of ideas on soil science and technology.

5. The obtaining and dissemination of knowledge, information and ideas having relevance to soil science by means of discussion and publication.

6. Promotion of contact between the society and other bodies with common or similar interests, both within South Africa and overseas.

GRONDKUNDEVERENIGING VAN SUID-AFRIKA: MISSIE

Die GVSA is 'n wetenskaplike vereniging wat in belang van sy lede verbind is tot die bevordering van grondkundige wetenskap en tegnologie, en die verantwoordelike beoefening daarvan deur sy lede met die oog op die lang termyn volhoubare benutting van die omgewing in belang van die gemeenskap.

Doelstellings

1. Bevordering en beskerming van die professionele status en aansien van grondkunde as 'n wetenskaplike beroep.

2. Bevordering en uitbouing van die vereniging.

3. Bevordering van die standaard van opleiding van grondkundige wetenskaplikes en -tegnoloë.

4. Skepping van geleenthede vir vrye gedagtewisseling oor grondkundige wetenskap en tegnologie.

5. Die verkryging en verspreiding van kennis, inligting en idees wat op grondkunde betrekking het by wyse van samesprekings en publikasies.

6. Bevordering van skakeling tussen die vereniging en ander liggame met gemeenskaplike of soortgelyke belange, beide in Suid-Afrika en in die buiteland.