

Millstream Muddler - Spring of 2017

Africa

*When you have acquired a taste for the dust
and the scent of our first rain,
You are hooked for life on Africa,
and you will not be right again.
Until you catch the setting moon
and hear the jackals bark,
waiting in the dark.*

unknown

Two years have passed since the last edition of the Millstream Muddler hit the press. With the advent of Facebook and the increased demand for instant news, prioritizing the Muddler has been challenging. And although Facebook meets the demand for general day to day news it does not always convey the “feel” of Millstream, so here we are....

“The Royal Coachman”

There have been a number of changes to Millstreams board since 2015. Your new Chairman is Danie Brink, a longstanding owner at Millstream, a Civil Engineer and Director of Jones & Wagener Engineering and Environmental Consultants. Jeremy Williams, a Quantity Surveyor, shareholder and C.E.O. of Digital Matter. Although a relatively new owner at Millstream he has been visiting the farm as a guest of owners for many years and is a passionate fly-fisherman and avid cyclist. Keith Elliott, has a MBL, is a consultant and Co-owner/Director of Tony Ferguson Weightloss SA and UpForIt.co.za, and is a dedicated fly-fisherman. Last but not least Andrea Kellett, Owner and Managing Partner of Thrive, a company that assists organisations with Seta compliance and benefits. Andrea is a Professional Nurse and has a BCom (Business Management) and although not a fly-fisher she has a passion for the ethos of Millstream and all it stands for.

We thank them in advance for taking up the call to assist management and the existing directors - Geoff Taylor, Steve Briggs and Hedley Adams, in ensuring that Millstream not only remains one of the top Fly-Fishing destinations in South Africa, but also keeps up with modern trends, while at the same time adhering to the traditions that make Millstream the special place it is.

“Vertical Emerger”

The RCI OSCAS awards for 2015 were held in March 2016 at the O.R Tambo Premier Hotel. Millstream was again positioned in the Top 5 Gold Crown Resorts (small resort category) and much excitement ensued when Millstream again won the award. Maria Thomo (Housekeeping supervisor) had been nominated for an RCI RADA award and the excitement reached fever pitch when she won. Adding to the already joy filled atmosphere,



Jackie was nominated and won the General Manager of the year award. A number of prestigious awards for Millstream all in one year



The 2016 RCI OSCAS awards took place in March 2017 at Sun City. Petros Pula (Farm supervisor) was nominated for a RADA award and attended the function at Sun City with us - quite an experience for someone who has never ventured much further than Nelspruit.

Millstream once again attained scores that put us in the top 5 of the “Small” Gold Crown Resorts but a 5th year as top resort was not to be. We are however, still very proud that we achieved a place in the top five of the ‘Small’ Gold Crown Resorts.

It is due to your constructive input and comments that we are able to maintain and upgrade the resort, so please take the time to complete your guest comment card survey. Remember we have, in the interests of forest preservation, decided to no longer give out comment cards on arrival. Instead they are now sent to your email address via Survey Monkey once you check-out. Please ensure that you have updated your e-mail address on check-in at the Resort reception.

If you experience any maintenance or other issues that need attention during your stay please contact the office while you are on the farm or let us have that information before you leave, so that we can attend to the problem as soon as possible or at least before the next guests arrive.

“Woolly Bugger’s” Woe’s

Speeding on the Farm

“Free Range Children roam this Farm”

25 Kilometers per hour is the speed limit.

It could be your child out there!

Gate fees

Whilst Gate fees did not increase in January 2017 they will regrettably increase to R185 per vehicle per week as of the 1st January 2018.

Please remember that in the interest of removing the risk associated with holding cash at the gate you cannot pay for your gate fee at the entrance, all gate fees are collated and charged at reception.

It is imperative that you give the gate controller the correct information i.e. the correct cottage number, name of the guest you are staying with, or in whose name the booking is made.

Please do not take a wild guess, if you're unsure ask the gate controller to check the arrivals sheet or contact reception.

Guests wishing to pay for their gate fees in advance of the host (owner) settling the account are more than welcome to do so, but are asked please to bring their gate permit with them so that it can be signed off as having been paid, by the duty manager.

"Tellico Nymph"

Despite vehement protestations from Jackie, (her mantra, "technology will get in the way of your relaxing break") a network of Wi-Fi boosters has been installed at various points on the Farm. All cottages now have WiFi connectivity but it is accepted that, as is want with all things techie, there will be glitches, Wi-Fi outages etc. from time to time due to both weather and technical breakdowns.

The Wi-Fi works on a satellite and is therefore not the fastest line speed in the world, (streaming may be a challenge!!) but you should be able to send and receive mails etc. (which it should be noted will interfere with your holiday!!)

Previously when Wi-Fi was only available at the Recreation centre it was a free service. However (for the new and improved way to ruin your holiday) you are now required to pay for this service. Data vouchers with a password and username can be purchased from reception during office hours.

A word of warning for those that are technologically challenged:

Please ensure that your AUTOMATIC UP-DATES ARE SWITCHED OFF on your device before you log on or you could use 500Mb in a few minutes.

"RAB's"

2018 Millstream Calendar-Important please note:

WEEK ONE in any year starts on the 1st WEDNESDAY in JANUARY of that year! Please check the calendar on the Millstream website (www.millstreamfarm.co.za) or contact the Resort (013 253 9911/10) regarding the dates of your week/s in 2018.

Occasionally owners do arrive for their week on the wrong date. An excellent way to avoid this is to call the resort in advance and ask us to verify your occupation dates. This will not only ensure that you arrive on the correct dates, but also assists us in the deployment of resources.

If you own a floating/modular week the date on your levy statement is the correct occupation date. (Not necessarily the week number as this changes year to year and the week reflected is the original week in the 13 week module calendar.)

Check-out times!

The cleaning ladies are responsible for two cottages each. In light of this, it is essential that you adhere to the **10am check-out** time please. Getting two 10 sleeper cottages ready by 14h30 for new occupants in 4.5 hours is quite a challenging task.

AGM for 2017

Millstreams A.G.M. held on the 3rd of August was attended by the "usual suspects" – they must really enjoy the snacks!!

We hope this is an indication that the members are happy with the way the resort is being run and therefore feel there is no need to attend the meeting and express their views.

If you didn't receive the notice of the AGM please contact the resort on reading this and make sure we have your correct e-mail address.

Fishermen's "Tippets"

Note from the Secretary of the Mpumalanga Trout Association (MTA):

There has been little progress on the mapping and permitting issues as no further meetings have been held with the authorities regarding these matters. As you are aware FOSAF/Trout SA are opposing certain sections of the draft Aquaculture Development Bill as they appear both impractical and unconstitutional. Similarly, we are also opposing the recently published draft NEMLA Bill (National Environmental Law Amendment Bill) for the same reasons.

On related matters regarding mining in the Trout Triangle, the team opposing the preparation for an illegal open cast coal mine in the Lakenvlei area between Belfast and Dullstroom were extremely grateful for the MTA's donation of R20 000,00 towards the legal costs. The mining has been halted but the miner is still determined to proceed and will probably approach the Water Tribunal to have the suspension on the water use license lifted. This action will be opposed and if this fails court action will be required.

Fishing Returns Year on Year to 31st August 2017

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017
Stocked	7434	6965	11182	9943
Caught	8484	7575	7592	8751
Killed	1586	1427	1443	1363
Returned	6898	6148	6149	7310
% Permits Returned	65.4	71.3	68.5	73
Ave.No.Fish Caught/Rod	7	6.4	6.7	7.5
Rods Fishes	1215	1189	1139	1162

A reminder that Millstream falls well within the "Green Zone" of the "accepted" Trout Stocking Area of Mpumalanga and although we are required, at this stage, to apply for permits annually we do not foresee any difficulties in the immediate future. What is of concern is that the provincial authorities are still pushing to have Trout declared "invasive" As part of the Trout value chain it is important that Millstream continues to support both FOSAF and MTA and that we assist in safeguarding the industry supply chain.

Millstream Otter Project – brief summary of findings to date (5 May 2016). By: Rowan Jordaan University of Pretoria.

Fieldwork on the otter project on Millstream Farm started in October 2015. We originally set out to place Trail Cameras in areas of high otter activity (latrines, pathways between water bodies etc.) as well as set traps in similar areas in order to catch the otters. Upon capture, otters were to have a VHF transmitter and a Time-Depth Recorder (TDR) implanted into them by a veterinary surgeon. At the same time other samples were to be taken such as blood, fur clippings and whiskers. We expected to only find African (Cape) clawless otters (*Aonyx capensis*) on the farm and not Spotted-necked otters (*Hydrictis maculicollis*). This was based on the limited knowledge on the latter species which has not been studied intensively. Due to differences in size, only clawless and not Spotted-necked otters would be tagged.

In the first few days I found evidence of both species on Millstream. I was able to intensely observe and record Spotted-necked otters

as they foraged in various waters and weirs. This was extremely exciting because there is no other area, to our



knowledge, in the country where this can be done. This provides the opportunity to determine certain diving characteristics (dive duration, recovery times etc.) for this species which has not been done before. Both species were regularly seen on trail cameras. To date I have managed to catch and tag two African clawless otters (male and female) and three Spotted-necked from which I have managed to get whiskers samples from two.

From careful analysis, I have determined that there are most likely two groups of clawless otters that use Millstream as part of their range. These otters however do not use Millstream exclusively and move off the property moving both upstream and downstream.

From observations there appear to be two groups of Spotted-necked otters on Millstream. One group occupies the lake, weirs and ponds while the other seems to occupy Wordsworth, Tintern, Coleridge and Solitary Reaper and Crystabel. There is again evidence of groups moving off the property. I don't know if these are family groups (mom and dad and pups) or coagulations of unrelated sub-adults that stay together to forage in groups.

Preliminary results from the Nitrogen Stable Isotope analysis of the whiskers of the caught otters suggest that the clawless and spotted-necked have a similar diet. Further analysis in the lab will hopefully reveal the percentage of prey items in the diet (such as crab and trout). It was expected that Spotted-necked would be feeding on more trout than the clawless (who should mostly eat crabs) but this does not seem to be the case at the moment but more samples and more work is needed to be done in the lab before this can be confirmed. From personal observations, I have seen the Spotted-necked feed almost exclusively on crabs but I have seen them chase trout and I am sure that they do eat trout. This could occur when the trout are in shallow water or are perhaps in a weakened state due to warm water temperatures or after a bad catch-and-release.

I would like to thank you though for allowing me to do this work on Millstream and for being so patient while I do so! Millstream is a beautiful place for so much potential for ground-breaking research!

Fish Tagging and Predator Research by: Marie' de Vos University of Pretoria

You might remember the young lady sitting in a shade-netted car or sheltering from the elements behind a rock or tree next to Lake Coleridge in 2016 and then at the Weirs in 2017. Sometimes this person would appear from the reeds covered in thistles and mud – a modern day Yeti. It was all in the name of science – endeavouring to unravel the relationship between trout and their predators.

Many of you had to suffer through my recited mantra “Have you heard about the tagged fish research ...” more than once, but for those of you who haven't, here is a brief overview of the research that has been taking place on Millstream. During late winter to early spring of 2016, 300 trout bound for Lake Coleridge were implanted with radio frequency identity tags (RFID tags), allowing us to individually identify fish with the aid of a scanner. I scanned fish landed in Coleridge for tags and anglers were asked to release tagged fish – in this way catch-and-release records were constructed

for individual fish, allowing me to calculate estimates of fish survival and recapture probabilities. A similar process was followed in two of the weirs during winter 2017. We also did field searches for predator droppings in the hopes of recovering tags from fish

eaten by predators, but no tags were found despite extensive searching and scanning of droppings.

Preliminary analysis of data is showing some interesting similarities and differences between Coleridge and the Weirs – a larger proportion of the stocked fish was angled in the weirs (63% of the individuals) than Coleridge (55%). A larger proportion of the angled individuals were caught for a second time in the weirs (51%) compared to Coleridge (29%).

I also recorded daytime visits of cormorants, fish eagles and otters to these waters and whether or not they were observed catching fish. Fish eagles visited Lake Coleridge on 50% of the days during the study, and caught fish on 28% of their visits. White-breasted cormorants also visited Lake Coleridge 50% of the days, and caught fish on 22% of their visits. Otters were observed on 34% of the days and caught fish on 5% of their visits, however crabs were caught during all visits. Predator visitation rates differed greatly between Coleridge and the two weirs. Fish eagles were only seen on 8% of the days, and white-breasted cormorants were seen only once. Neither fish eagles nor white-breasted cormorants were observed catching fish in the weirs. Otters seemed to prefer the weirs to Coleridge, visiting on 51% of the days, but still only once were they observed catching a fish. The observational side of the study is however not comprehensive as night-time observations could not be made and otters are regularly also active at night. Furthermore the size of the dam seems to play a role in fish vulnerability to different predators – the smaller weirs likely being most vulnerable to otter predation, while dams with jetties receive more pressure from feathered predators

Initial computer models are indicating high survival probability for stocked fish, a compliment to the conditions at Millstream as well the anglers who released the fish. The initial models are however showing low chances of recapturing fish, and capture probability decreases over time – this seems to point towards what anglers over the ages have come to know: fish learn to evade capture.

I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank the Millstream-team and every angler who contributed to this research as without you the study would not have taken place. Millstream is a truly wonderful place and as an avid angler once said “Fish come and go, but it is the memory of afternoons on the water that endure”.

The Dams & Road repairs.

Lake Crystabel

The work on Lake Crystabel's dam wall was completed in 2015. The wall itself has been fenced off, to prevent game from feeding on it and trampling the downstream face. The wall can be accessed via the V formation in the fence next to the locked gates on either end of the wall. Please re-clip the chain across the “V” entrance as some animals have learnt to use this entrance but then get stuck on the inside of the wall. It took nearly three seasons for Crystabel to start overflowing again, but finally in December 2016 we received a substantial downpour in the catchment area near the gate and the dam started to spill for the first time since 2014. This has helped



PHOTO: ARANTXA

maintain the levels of Wordsworth water which depends on flow from both Tintern and Crystabel to keep it full during the winter months.

Roads

Ongoing road repairs have taken place during the last two winters and we think we have finally got on top of the worst of the damaged strip roads. Nearly a kilometer of strip road (one side) has been replaced during the last two winters as well as a further 300m of paving having been laid around the Reception area. The replacement of strip roads will continue to be a part of our yearly maintenance program, but we hope that the amount of strip road needing to be replaced will be reduced, as in the last 5 years we have added welded mesh reinforcing to the concrete and our treatment of the surface has improved showing less wear over time.

“Mrs. Simpson’s” Snippets

“Black Chenille” and other wonderful improvements.

General maintenance continues in all of the cottages. We have replaced all the carpets in cottages 16 to 19 and anticipate replacing the carpets in cottage 8 later this year. We also tackled two leaking upstairs showers in cottages 2 and 3, and are currently treating the external wooden window and door frames on all cottages.

Earlier this year all cottage chimneys were swept and vacuumed and those that have cowls, were greased.

In 2015 we embarked on an upgrade of the carports. The new carports provide a higher percentage of shade coverage and more protection against hail. They are slightly wider and have a higher clearance but most importantly they do not have the center support poles allowing much easier disembarkation from vehicles. The carports at cottages 2, 3, 5, 6, 10 to 19, 21, 25, and 26 have been constructed which leaves us with 9 to complete. We hope to complete the remaining carports by the middle of 2019.

For a number of years Management and the Directors have searched for a suitable replacement for the plastic patio table and chairs. They had to be light, preferably stackable, durable, and comfortable enough not to require cushions (as these would be left outside, get ruined and need to be frequently replaced, incurring additional costs to the shareholders).

After three years with very little or no success crunch time arrived when the company manufacturing the plastic furniture being used closed down. So we had to find an alternative.



Fortunately a new aluminum product came on to the market. “Alli-brown” light, reasonably comfortable, weather and UV resistant. It is expensive in comparison to the plastic but a great quality product. To date we replaced the patio furniture at cottages 1, 2, 4, 10, 16, 19 and 20 to 26.

Fleeing Damsel

Ritha de Langa, our Front office and housekeeping manager, after three years with Millstream found “Love” in Cape Town and up and left us in June this year. We wish her all the best with her new venture. We have engaged the services of Kennedy Sithole, a man with extensive hotel and franchise experience to fill the position. We hope he will have a long and successful career with Millstream.

Thando, our Mobile Masseuse, took time off to further her studies so was not available for a large part of 2016 and early 2017, but is now back fulltime. She has put together a range of new treatment combos. So don’t forget to enquire about them when making bookings for treatments. We also have gift vouchers available should you wish to spoil your significant other or any member of your family. For bookings contact the office on: 013-2539911/10.

Power outages & Inverters

Should you find that, after thunderstorms or periods of continuous high winds, your stove/oven and the plug points are not working (except the plug below the Microwave), this could mean that the resort is experiencing an Eskom power outage and hopefully your inverter has automatically kicked in. Please feel free to contact Reception to confirm this.

To prolong the life of the inverter batteries please take note of the following:-

- Switch off all non essential lights,
- Restrict the opening of the fridge (take two beers at a time!!)
- Avoid boiling the kettle unless absolutely necessary - as this appliance has a very high power usage.

In the “Coch-Y-Bondhu”

Steve’s “Olive caddis”.

Dumisani Mtsweni our Environmental Officer has been with Millstream for just over a year and a half. He is responsible for veld monitoring, erosion control, game counts, alien plant removal etc. To find out more about Millstream’s habitats and species, join him for his Saturday morning walk. Summer walks start at 8am, autumn and winter walks at 9am. Please book at reception to avoid disappointment. If no prior bookings are made Dumisani may not be available on the day.

Flower and bird photo albums are available on Millstreams Facebook page. Steve has loaded over 100 flower photos with botanical names (and common names where available). You do not, we repeat you **DO NOT** have to join Facebook to look up the albums, simply type Millstream farm Facebook onto your phone/computer web search and our page should come up. If not you may have to type in our website address www.millstreamfarm.co.za and click on the Facebook icon. Look for “photos” click (you may have to click “See All”) and click on flower album or whichever album you would like to look at and ENJOY!

Off the Farm

Should you have guests in your party who do not fly fish, there are several other activities in the area which might be of interest:

The Dullstroom Bird of Prey Centre:

There are flight displays everyday at 10h30 and 14h30 except on Tuesdays or if the wind is too strong. Located about 1.5 Kms from Millstream on the right of the R540 this is a wonderfully educational family outing and the Centre deserves your support.

Highland Gate Golf Estate: (087 287 4653)

Should your fishing prowess be less than you thought or maybe the fish are “off the bite” and you think a round of golf might be more successful – Highland Gate is where you should be.

Clay Pigeon Shooting: (083 443 4567) Greg Williams
The shooting range is located on Field and Stream farm on the Tonteldoos road.

"Noisy Popper"

About two years ago the first of the new age drones made their appearance on Millstream.
After several complaints from owners and fisherman as well as one or two incidents during which the horses were spooked by these noisy flying machines we took a decision:

DRONES OR UAV's (Unmanned Aerial Vehicles)
ARE NOT PERMITTED
TO BE FLOWN ON MILLSTREAM FARM

About the beasts



August 2015 again saw the game capture trucks roll onto Millstream. A combination of low rainfall during the past two seasons, good birth rates amongst the Zebra and the Blesbuck plus a surge in market prices, particularly of Blesbuck, (The 2013 price was R500. per head and we were now being offered R2000. per head) led us to the conclusion that we should sell off game in 2015 and not leave the capture and sale to 2016 as originally planned. The capture teams took off 55 Blesbuck, 22 Zebra and 43 Springbuck. We anticipate having to take game off again in May /June 2018 as Zebra and Blesbuck numbers are swelling once again. We have an imbalance of male to female Springbuck and the males are spending too much time vying for territory and not breeding. This was evidenced by the poor crop of lambs over the last few years. We may have to take off a few males and bring in a new crop of females so as to introduce new blood to the farm.

Horsy Bits

Battle Axe, a Boerperd cross, who was on the Farm when Jackie and Steve joined Millstream in July 1996 is still with us, a little greyer but still going strong. He has lost a little of the edge off his "Axe" and no longer takes his gallop seriously or at all; but after carrying Millstream guests around the farm for over 22 years he has earned the right to take things a little easy.

A new addition to the Millstream stable is Apache, a 7 year old Appaloosa cross Arab, purchased in April of this year. He has the most delightful piebald markings and a very gentle nature.



Just a reminder: The grooms are there to guide you and when you are on an out-ride you should always stay behind them. They know where and when it is "safe" to canter or gallop. Please listen to the grooms, they are there to ensure you have a safe and enjoyable ride.

A note to our new owners and a reminder to our existing ones. Should you wish to feed the horses. Horse food can be purchased at reception. It should however be noted that when feeding the horses you should not be in the confines of your cottage. They will follow you in.....

Other Minnows

2016/7 Dullstroom Ladies Fly Fishing Festival (DLFFF)

2017 was the 9th Dullstroom Ladies Fly Fishing Festival. As with the previous years it was a spectacular event with 36 entrants (including Jackie – who managed, who knew, to land a 36cm fish) Properties sponsoring dams for this year's event were Walkersons, Brookwood Estate and Millstream.

As always the event organisers and participants are very grateful for the water sponsorships without which this event would not be possible. The funds raised are dispersed between The Diana Institute (Soup kitchen and crèche) Epilepsy SA and the Dullstroom Bird of Prey Centre, with some funds being held back for smaller projects.

For interests sake herewith the breakdown of the funds raised over the last 3 years: 2015 = R36 000., 2016 = R30 000. & 2017 = R31 000.

2017 Dullstroom Bonanza

The other charity event that Millstream sponsors a waters for is the Dullstroom Bonanza, now it its 6th year. This event has capacity for 90 entrants who fish at several other dams in Dullstroom and its surrounds. This year's Bonanza took place on the weekend of September 29-30 & 1st October. Millstream sponsored Solitary Reaper for this event and despite foul weather one skilful angler managed to engage a 48cm brown trout- CAR of course.

It is always very gratifying to see private and corporate owners so willing to sponsor waters for this very worthy cause which raised R85 000. this year.

In Parting....

*The scene is peaceful at the lake,
Where kingfishers & fish eagles their pantry make.
An angler appears seeking trout,
His line flying overhead, in and out, in and out.*

Extract from "Ode to Millstream"
By: Jenny Jordaan

We look forward to seeing you on your next visit to the Farm. Steve, Jackie, Dana, Pheona, Kennedy & the Millstream Team.

This Newsletter with photos and additional articles is also available on our website.

www.millstreamfarm.co.za

 **Gone Fishing**
Be Back At Dark Thirty