

Friends of Socotra

Conference and Annual General Meeting

14 - 16 September 2007

Ghent University and Botanic Garden

Present: Diccon Alexander, Double Negative; Lisa Banfield, RBGE; Heidi Cant, Socotra Karst Project; Sue Christie, NIEL, UK; Peter De Geest, Socotra Karst Project; John Dickson; Isabelle Diericke; Roderic Dutton, Durham University, UK; Kristyna Dvorackova, Mendels Univ. Ag & Forestry; Eagle, Abdul R; Tomas Holik, Mendels Univ. Ag & Forestry; Michael Laumanns, Speleoclub Berlin, DE; Alessio Mastroianni, Univ. Rome 'Saplena'; Hugh Morris, St Andrews, UK; Miranda Morris, St Andrews, UK; Petr Nemeč, Mendels Univ. Ag & Forestry; Dana Pietsch, Univ Tuebingen; Rowan Salim; Edoardo Scepi, Univ. Rome 'Saplena'; Dirk Uandorpe, Socotra Karst Project; Kay Van Damme, Ghent University, BE

Apologies: Camille & Thierry Sergeant, John Shipman, Hana Habrova, Wolfgang Wranik, Sabina Knees, Tony Miller, Martin Corrie, ony Harris, Richard Porter, John Farrar, Wolfgang Schneider, Ingo Strauch, Julian and Nelly Paxton, Nick Jeffries.

Presentations:

Dana Pietsch – Yemen's National Environmental Day activities on Socotra in 2007:
Soil conservation in Homhil

Thomas Holik - Conserving Biodiversity of Socotra Island via Improved Food
Security through Plant Cultivation

Petr Nemeč and Kristyna Dvorackova - Restoration of Flagship Woodland on
Socotra Island - MAB biosphere Reserve.

Michael Laumann and Peter de Geest – Socotra Karst Project – Booklet

Edoardo Scepi - Developmet of a Decision Support System for the conservation
of the Biodiversity of Socotra and a test case on the survival of *Dracaena
cinnabari*.

Roderic Dutton – Environmental Education Project

Rowan Salim – Beekeeping on Socotra

Miranda Morris – Progress on FoS on Socotra

*Abstracts of presentations will be available on the website and in the next edition of
Tayf.*

Discussion Session:

1. Edinburgh Exhibition. The Exhibition went well, but has not been moved to other sites and is being dismantled. It may still go to Liverpool, but they are currently

appealing for funding to mount it. A Soqatra Folk Museum is being developed on the island – is there enough of an Exhibition left for this to be a final home?

2. Newsletter. A prolonged and detailed discussion about the importance of having the Newsletter and means of getting it produced was held. This is the main benefit for Members and it is vital that it be produced on time. It has three roles: keeping FOS members in touch with what's going on, keeping Soqotrans on the island and in the Gulf informed, and educating children (and adults) on the island.

The 2006 edition was completed and sent to SCDP in October of 2006 and has yet to be translated, printed and sent out.

- Roderic to pursue Tayf 4 with SCDP staff.
- Kay to pursue with the Minister when in Sana'a in October.
- Tayf 4 must be available by mid October or we will translate with FoS contacts.
- Tayf 5 deadline for articles is 15 December, ready for translation in mid January.
- SCDP will be given a defined period to check the Arabic before printing.
- Future issues may be translated and printed in the UK.
- We may need to translate Tayf 4 and produce, with Tayf 5, in the spring.

Distribution is also a problem and was discussed exhaustively. People going from here should take them out when going. From Sana'a Ali Salem can pick them up and take to Soqatra.

3. Sewing Machines Project. 6 (six) machines were issued to the Local Council of the Haidobh District for distribution and this was done very badly; the second time round 6 (six) were issued to a woman's co-operative in Hadiboh, and 10 (ten) were issued to the Local Council of the Qalansiyah District (and so far seems to be properly done) to the western region.

4. Finances and Possible Projects A discussion of a number of possible projects for FoS support was held. FoS now has some £6000, which must cover the Newsletter, but leaves some funds available for projects. Funding was agreed for:

- Soil erosion project – fencing and trialling protection measures – up to £500 maximum. Dana Pietsch to organise.
- ***Public Library – Rent and DVDs of all BBC wildlife programmes. £1000 rent and Diccon to arrange DVDs at lowest possible cost.***
- FoS Soqatra Representative Costs for emailing. Agreed to cover his costs for providing information to FoS.

Discussion of other projects indicated that there may be opportunities for support in the future, but that they are not now at a suitable stage (integrated cooking, Folk Museum).

5. FoS future. There are now 18 FoS members on Soqotra and this could increase. We have an active local rep (Ali Salim Sowqer). Tayf is the main benefit, and it is appreciated, so its absence is a distinct disadvantage. All agreed that there is still a valid role for FoS and that we should continue, along the lines discussed, with the Newsletter and Projects, plus scientific meetings.

Friends of Soqotra Annual General Meeting

Present – Peter de Geest, Dirk, Miranda Morris, Hugh Morris, Kay Van Damme, Abdel Malek Eagle, Roderic Dutton, Kiccon Alexander, Sue Christie, Lisa Banfield, Rowan Salim, Dana Pietsch, John Dickson

1. **Apologies** – as above
2. **Minutes of the Fourth AGM**, 9 September 2006. Approved.
3. **Matters Arising.** New Chairman to discuss with the Minster an annual FoS and SCF meeting.
4. **Annual Report.** The Fifth Annual Report was approved.
5. **Treasurer's Report & Annual Accounts.** Approved. John was thanked for his hard work over the years as Treasurer.
6. **Election of Executive Committee and Officers.** Existing Officers and Committee members were thanked and commended on their work. The following were nominated as below and elected by acclaim:
 - Chairman – Kay Van Damme (Sue, Roderic)
 - Vice Chairman – Miranda (existing)
 - Secretary – Rowan (Miranda, Hugh)
 - Treasurer – Hugh (Roderic, John). Hugh to be added as a signatory to the account and John F removed.
 - Membership Secretary – Roderic (Sue, Hugh)John Farrar will continue to do the Website and Sue the editing of Tayf.
Lisa and Dana agreed to join the Executive. David Thain has not been contactable and is deemed to have resigned.
Sue to do a 'job description' for each of the Officers.
7. **Appointment and Remuneration of Auditors.** The new Treasurer to arrange suitable auditor.
8. **Any Other Business.** None raised.
9. **Date of Next Meeting.** 6-7 Sept 2008 in Brno Czech Republic. 2009 in the Gulf.