

Editors Column

It's a new year!!! We are excited about 2013 and the challenges that it will bring. We, at Black Crystal, see 2013 as a year of growth for us as a company and personally for our employees and partners. We will continue to fulfill our mandate of “**caring for the environment beyond today**”.

In this first issue of the year we look at Wetlands and the importance in conserving them. We will reflect and look forward to celebrating significant regional and international environmental dates in February and March.

We look back to December 2012 when Black Crystal was honored to partner with Unilever and the City of Harare to commemorate National tree Planting Day.

We report (proudly) that one of our ongoing projects: REDD+ is now eligible for carbon trading and financing. The project is the largest one of its kind in the world and its aim is to reduce deforestation whilst providing income for local communities and providing sustainable benefits for all concerned

We have included some conservation and recycling tips that you can use in your day to day lives and details of a new eco product that can help reduce deforestation.

We welcome your comments and environmental contributions which you may kindly send to The Editors on:

infor@blackcrystal.co.zw

Thank you and happy reading!



Environmental Consultants
Caring for the environment beyond today

Black Crystal Consulting is one of Zimbabwe's leading reputable companies offering a quality service in environmental and socioeconomic consultancy services. Black Crystal Consulting believes in **caring for the environment beyond today** to ensure that biodiversity is maintained and that natural resources are not depleted for the next generation to come.

Black Crystal Consulting (Pvt) Ltd
1 Fairbairn Drive
Mount Pleasant
Harare
Phone: +263 4 334261 / 291 5265

Unilever and Black Crystal Commemorate National Tree Planting Day 2012

In commemoration of the National Tree Planting Day, Unilever and Black Crystal collaborated with The City of Harare and planted 100 trees at the Glen Norah Park in Glen Norah, Harare. The event was attended by City of Harare officials who included the Deputy Director of City of Harare, Mr Mutisi, Mr Duri, who manages the park, Ms Takura Pwiti, Human Resources Manager for Unilever and Ms Mellissa Mudombi and Ms Wimbisio Simbi from Black Crystal and students from Greatstride College (which is located only a few metres from the park). Among the students was the current Head girl, Gladys who recited a appealing poem on the importance of trees.

The indigenous tree species planted included the 2012 'Tree of the year' the Red Mahogany together with, African Wisteria, White Stinkwood and the Apple leaf, also known as the Rain Tree. The new trees will green the park and be enjoyed by the Glen Norah community. The trees will be a source of shade to people who visit the park and a habitat for some of the different species that are found in the park.



Representatives from Unilever, City of Harare, Black Crystal and Greatstride College

During the ceremony, Mr Mutisi pointed out that the planting of trees was very important and needed to be carried out in more parks and more frequently in Zimbabwe throughout the year. Ms Pwiti reiterated on the need for more trees to be planted and how Unilever was excited to be part of this tree planting initiative. Ms Mudombi emphasized the need for the community involvement in manning and managing the park and planting more trees in the future. The event reflected the seriousness the involved organizations place on their social responsibility towards their communities.

Commemorate World Wetlands Day

The Zimbabwe World Wetlands Day National Event will be commemorated on Friday, 1st of February at the Boyle wetlands in Bulilima District in Matabeleland South which is 70km North of the Plumtree road. The exciting news for Zimbabwe is that the Ramsar Secretary General will be visiting Zimbabwe during this period and will be present at the National Event.

For further information on the National Event please contact the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Management, Veronica Gundu, Telephone: +263 (04) 701681/5.

LOGZ Zimbabwe – New Eco Product

LOGZ is a new eco-friendly fuel manufactured in Zimbabwe using the waste by-products (mainly sawdust) from the furniture manufacturing industry and a few additives to create eco-friendly logs (firewood) that do not emit smoke. LOGZ has a burn time of approximately 2.5 – 3 hours, providing a long term sustainable solution to reducing the cutting down of trees for use as firewood. LOGZ is distributed through LAKAS Products in Southerton. You can also purchase them at SPAR.

Please contact Terry Bailey on +263 772 401 015 for more details.

Did You Know?

- A computer that runs for 24 hours a day uses more power than an energy-efficient refrigerator. So turn off your home and office equipment when not in use.
- Fix defective plumbing or dripping taps. A single dripping water tap can waste up to 803 liters of water per month which in turn increases your bill when City of Harare provides

Legislation Corner

Legislation in place for conservation in Zimbabwe includes the following Acts:

- The Environmental Management Act
- The Parks and Wildlife Act
- The Water Act
- The Forestry Act

These acts are implemented by various agencies and authorities in Zimbabwe. These include the Environmental Management Agency, the Forestry Commission and National Parks and Wildlife Management Authority.

Conservation Tips – Energy Saving

- Turn off lights when not in use.
- Don't open the oven door too often to check food condition as each opening leads to a temperature drop of 25°C.
- If your computer must be left on, turn off the monitor; this device alone uses more than half the system's energy.
- Avoid putting hot or warm food straight into the fridge
- Don't leave the fridge door open for longer than necessary, as cold air will escape.
- When using a washing machine, always wash only with full loads using optimal quantity of water and the timer facility to save energy.
- Use hot water only for very dirty clothes and always use cold water in the rinse cycles as it not only helps preserve your clothes but also uses less energy.

What are you doing to help conserve?



It's so easy to complain about the world around us. But it's just as easy to care and make our neighborhood a better place. Doing simple things can make us a better guardian of the environment, dropping litter in the bin, printing double-sided, using reusable shopping bags, unplugging appliances at the wall when they're not in use, watering your garden early in the morning or evening when there is less evaporation and taking shorter showers by a minute or two everyday. Let's conserve our wetlands as well by not dumping waste in them as they help purify water. What will you do, that's easy and doable? Remember, your contribution counts and inspires others to care.

Wetlands and Conservation

Wetlands can be classified as areas of land that are saturated with water for all or most part of the year and the soils of these habitats are shaped by water. Wetlands include swamps, marshes, lakes and rivers, wet grasslands, peatlands, oasis, estuaries, deltas, tidal flats, near-shore marine areas, mangroves, coral reefs, salt pans and man-made sites such as fish ponds, rice paddies and reservoirs.

Because of their unique composition, wetland areas are highly productive ecosystems. These damp, soggy areas, when healthy, are among our planet's most diverse and varied habitats supporting a wide spectrum of plant and animal species, more so than most other habitats. Like a giant natural water filter, these wet, spongy soils trap the sediment and particles in polluted water allowing clean, fresh water to pass through. This unique filtering process ensures the availability of good quality water in large volumes and form part of critical catchments feeding into major water ways and rivers. By recharging groundwater, wetlands also help prevent flooding and slow down erosion.

Unchecked urban and rural development and encroachment on wetland areas is causing destruction and in many instances, irreversible damage to our environment. We, as civil society, will be negatively affected by these impacts in years to come if we do not take a stand to protect and conserve these irreplaceable natural resources. 90% of the world's population lives in close proximity to wetlands. Wherever possible, damaged wetlands should be restored and rehabilitated and conserved by ensuring their wise use.

It is positive to note that towards the end of 2012 the government gazetted the Declaration of the Protection of Harare Wetlands covering 26 wetland areas. In the face of ongoing Wetland destruction, let's hope these new laws are regulated and enforced. In addition Zimbabwe has put forward applications for 7 Ramsar sites to be adopted and we are awaiting notification of these. Exciting news for Zimbabwe and we shall update you on the progress.

Visit: www.environmentafrica.org

E-mail: info@environmentafrica.org

This article is courtesy of the Environment Africa

Black Crystal, Carbon Green Africa and REDD+

Forests, including our savanna woodlands, play an important role in carbon sequestration as they are significant sinks for carbon dioxide. But these vital green areas are under serious threat from agricultural expansion, reliance on wood as fuel, poverty and population growth. So, there is a need to maintain as much tree cover as possible and still take into account the needs of rural people.

Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD+) is an activity that is now eligible for carbon trading and financing. REDD+ creates economic value for the carbon trapped in standing, living trees. A key part of REDD+ is woodland conservation and sustainable management. The mechanism will provide an economic incentive for rural communities and governments to practice good management of the natural resources (including wildlife) which should reduce some of the economic drivers of deforestation.

Black Crystal Consulting have been working as technical advisors to Carbon Green Africa on an extensive REDD+ (Reduced Deforestation and Degradation + Biodiversity loss) project in northern Zimbabwe. The project aims to reduce the level of deforestation in four communal lands by generating an alternative income for rural communities through the sale of Carbon Credits. This year the project has received its CCBS (Climate Community Biodiversity Standard) and VCS (Voluntary Carbon Standard) validation. This REDD+ project is the largest in the world and only the second one of its kind in Africa.

Black Crystal is now listed in the Green Africa Directory. Visit <http://www.greenafricadirectory.org/listing/black-crystal-environmental-consultants>.

Did you know?

The 'standby' energy consumption of televisions, home theater equipment and stereos is equivalent to that of a 75 or 100Watt light bulb running continuously

Recycling Tips (DIY)

It is important for us to recycle as many of the items that we use daily as possible. Here are some easy ideas that you can try.



A glass chandelier.

This is a great idea for recycling bottles. With different shades of colour and shapes of bottles, the combinations are endless of what you can make.



Herb pots

Use bottles to grow herbs in while adding a little décor to your kitchen.

Important Environmental Days

Throughout the year there are days set aside to commemorate various environmental and conservation issues around the world. In this issue we look at the days in the month of February and March.

World Wetlands Day is celebrated internationally every year on 2 February. It marks the anniversary of the signing of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Convention) in Ramsar, Iran in 1971. It was first celebrated in 1997. Since then

government agencies, NGO's and community groups have celebrated the day by undertaking actions to raise public awareness of wetland values and benefits and promote the conservation and wise use of wetlands.

The theme for 2013 is "Wetlands take care of water". The Ramsar Convention calls for the conservation and sustainable utilization of wetlands, to stem the progressive encroachment on and loss of wetlands now and in the future, recognizing the fundamental ecological functions of wetlands and their economic, cultural, scientific and recreational value.

World Pangolin Day is celebrated on the third Saturday of February every year. You can follow this initiative on Facebook, www.facebook.com/WorldPangolinDay. This year it falls on the 16th of February. One of the organisations who are championing for the protection of the Pangolin, which is listed as a specially protected animal is the Tikki Hywood Trust. Visit www.tikkihywoodtrust.org

Africa Environment Day, also known as **Wangari Maathai Day** after Dr Maathai, from Kenya, because of her contribution to environmental awareness in Africa especially in afforestation and reforestation. It has been celebrated on the 3rd of March yearly since the year 2000. This day was set aside to raise awareness of the pressing environmental challenges facing the continent.

World Water Day is held annually on 22nd of March to focus attention on the importance of freshwater and advocating for the sustainable management of freshwater resources. The theme for this year is 'The Year of Water Cooperation'.

World Meteorological Day is commemorated annually on or around March 23rd in celebration of the World Meteorological Day's establishment on that date in 1950. The theme for 2013 is 'Weather and Climate: Engaging Youth'.

Lastly for this edition is **Earth Hour**, an initiative that started in Australia, in 2007 when 2.2 million homes and businesses turned their lights off for one hour to make their stand against climate change.

Earth hour is celebrated annually by switching off all appliances for an hour world wide from 8.30pm to 9.30pm on 23rd of March. Visit www.earthhour.org