

Echo Champs Bergville Report

Introduction

The Bergville Echo Champs began their work in November in the Ezibomvini area, focusing on clearing alien plants, particularly *Lantana camara*, rehabilitating gullies, and packing stone lines to prevent soil erosion. This month, their efforts were directed towards planting grasses, including Tall Fescue and Ngongoni. This report outlines the work completed, progress made, challenges faced, and proposed solutions.

Progress and Work Done

The team completed 14 stone line packings within seven days. They planted grass at the base of the gully to stabilize the soil. However, one of the main challenges is uncontrolled livestock grazing. Community members allow cattle to roam freely, leading to further gully development.



The pictures above showing Majali demonstrating planting after catchment has occurs

Planting Update:

At the Ezibomvini site, we planted tall fescue on four stone-line packings, starting from the top. These areas were planted due to soil catchment observed over time. Other sites were not planted as no soil catchment occurred there. The decision to start with four areas was to assess whether the plants would grow under three days of irrigation, given the current lack of rainfall. We did not want to plant all sites without certainty, especially as the weather has been extremely hot, with no rainfall at all.

To address this, the team experimented by planting grass on four of the stone line packings, starting at the top. They used Tall Fescue, an annual grass that grows quickly and self-seeds, enabling it to expand. Unfortunately, due to insufficient rainfall, three of the planted areas have dried out completely. To mitigate this, they irrigated the four stone line packings for three days to ensure the grass could establish itself.

Additionally, the team worked on a large gully near the Sibiya homestead in Ezibomvini, which continues to erode. Their goal is to use poplar branches to construct brush packs to trap soil at the top and middle sections of the gully. Later, they plan to plant grass over these brush packs. Over time, as the poplars establish and receive adequate water, it will contribute to erosion control and land restoration, even under current dry conditions.



The pictures above showing planting of lespedeza

Community Meeting Discussion – 5th December 2024

Location: Ezibomvini Village, under the largest tree used for community gatherings

Facilitators: Nomvelo and Luck Hlongwane

Purpose: Addressing the control of livestock grazing in rehabilitated areas

The meeting aimed to update the community and encourage collaboration in the rehabilitation efforts, including gully restoration, erosion control, and alien plant clearing.



The pictures above showing the meeting at Ezibomvini under the tree

Regarding the meeting held at Ezibomvini, hosted by Echo Champs, there were not many details shared. The meeting addressed one primary issue: livestock interfering with their work. This occurs as people use the area as a pathway to grazing land.

Unfortunately, the meeting lasted only 10 minutes due to poor attendance, with only six community members present. The Echo Champs raised concerns about livestock trampling the stone-line packing as they pass through to the grazing land. They requested community members to cooperate by keeping livestock away from the areas where they are working.

Additionally, the Echo Champs plan to arrange a larger meeting next year, ensuring everyone is invited. This will allow the community to learn more about the work being done in the mountains and how they can contribute to protecting it. During this meeting, the community members acknowledged the issue and agreed to change the livestock pathway to avoid interfering with Echo Champs' efforts.

Key Points Discussed:

- **Luck Hlongwane:** Emphasized the importance of community cooperation in protecting the rehabilitated areas. Livestock owners were urged to avoid allowing cattle to graze in areas under restoration, as this hampers progress and exacerbates erosion issues. He suggested creating alternative pathways for livestock to access grazing areas without interfering with the rehabilitated sites. The goal is to restore indigenous plants and grasses, ensuring sustainable grazing resources for livestock, especially during winter.
- **Nomvelo:** Highlighted the team's efforts to plant grasses aimed at replenishing grazing lands with fresh, healthy vegetation. She encouraged community members to take collective responsibility for environmental stewardship and share ideas for achieving long-term sustainability.
- **Mr. Madondo:** Commended the team's dedication and stressed the value of collective action in rehabilitating the land. He urged the community to support these efforts, emphasizing that the positive results would benefit everyone.

Conclusion

The Bergville Echo Champs have made commendable progress despite the challenges posed by uncontrolled livestock grazing and limited rainfall. The meeting demonstrated the importance of community involvement in achieving sustainable environmental goals. Moving forward, collaboration between the team and the community will be critical to the success of the land rehabilitation project.



The picture above showing brush pack blocking the wall of the galley

SODI_2116ZA311

SODI!

Attendance Register

DATE: 05 December 2024

VILLAGE: Ezibomini

WORKSHOP: Ucho Champs Community meeting

	Name	Surname	Gender	Age	Cell No	Signature	Comments
1	Shwayibane	Zikode	M	64		T. ZIKODE	
2	Nomvelo	Zikode	F	20	063 576 4862	N.A. Zikode	
3	Mbonjeni	Mazibutse	M	21	072712 0551	<i>[Signature]</i>	
4	Nokwinda	Dladla	F		072 506 91 66	<i>[Signature]</i>	
5	Adhele	Mthethwa	M			<i>[Signature]</i>	
6	Thembinkosi	Sibiya	M			T. E. S	
7	Johanna	Hlongwane	M			<i>[Signature]</i>	
8	Lizy	Dlamini	F		072 9166789	<i>[Signature]</i>	
9	Phelani	dloda	M			<i>[Signature]</i>	
10	Nelive	Dlamini	F			<i>[Signature]</i>	
11	Busisive	Zikode	F			X	
12	Kolani	Hlongwane	M	52	063 083 0562	Z. L. Hlongwane	
13	Zodwa	Zikode	F	59	071 131 7796	Z. L. Zikode	
14							
15							
16							
17							
18							
19							
20							

NOTE: In signing participants agree to having their photographs taken and videos and other media shared.