



Waterberg Nature Conservancy Newsletter

Occasionally issued news of interest to WNC members and others in the Waterberg Number 1, April 2008

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Note from the Editor

This newsletter is an experiment. It will be distributed when there is news to share and when the editor has time and energy, but of course I need your help. Please let me hear from you with

- Your ideas for short items, like the ones in this issue or for long stories, perhaps an entire issue devoted to one topic;
- Your ideas about a specific conservation/environment topic, which could be short or long. For instance, how to control the Pompom weed, an opinion about elephant culling, the conservation aspects of our businesses of eco-tourism, hunting, game ranching;
- Your submission of a complete item, ready for publication;
- Your feeling about a wider distribution of this newsletter.

John Miller, Editor and Chairman, equus@equus.co.za

Who We Are

Since 1989, when three large landowners in the Melkrivier area (Lapalala Wilderness, Touchstone Game Ranch and Kwalata) joined together to promote conservation matters, the Waterberg Nature Conservancy has grown to nearly 50 members. We own and operate eco-tourist establishments, hunting operations, game ranches, and our own homes in the bush. We are people with a great interest in nature conservation and the natural environment – locally in the Waterberg, nationally in South Africa, and around the world. We collectively own thousands of hectares of land and our businesses provide employment for hundreds of people. In the next issue, we will provide some numbers that show our strength.

A Note about Sam Osman

As most of you know, Sam Osman suffered a terrible horse riding accident on 8 March 2008. After several difficult weeks in intensive care, she is now at a rehabilitation facility in Pretoria. Dean van Heerden and Sam's mother Val have been at her side throughout, and Sam and Dean's young daughter, Leah, has been an occasional visitor. We join so many others in expressing our deepest concern and our most fervent wishes for Sam's recovery.

Meetings and Events

General Meeting of Waterberg Nature Conservancy

Date: 18 June, Wednesday

Venue: Waterberg Academy, Vaalwater

Time: 2:30 for 3:00 pm

Waterberg Planetary Festival

12-19 August, Tuesday through Tuesday

Info from Philip Calcott 014-755-4425; palcott@gmail.com

Joining the Conservancy

If you are a member, encourage your friends and neighbours to join. If you are not yet a member, consider joining us. We offer meetings, workshops and outings that are educational, instructive, relevant and fun. Future meetings will deal with the invasive Pompom weed, water resources and conservation, and opportunities for waste recycling. We intend getting experts to talk to us about the African wild cat, cheetah and other fauna. In the fire season, we will continue to advise of daily fire risks and the location of fires, sending requests for assistance.

In addition to continuing our vigilance regarding inappropriate or unauthorised property developments in the area, the WNC is active in representing the community in matters such as municipal property rates policy and the condition of roads in the area.

On these and other matters, the more members and land the Conservancy represents, the stronger will be our voice. Contact Glynis Brown for further information, and to join.

Paying Your Dues

The Conservancy is not endowed with great wealth. All we have are our annual membership dues, this year pegged at R550 for full members. Much of what the Conservancy does is on a voluntary basis, but there are expenses for administration, for meeting venues, for guest speakers, for our support of worthy projects. If you haven't paid your 2008 dues, please do.

Roads

We watch with dismay as the condition of our roads continues to deteriorate. As we welcome the rainy season each year, we know well that the road repairs during the previous months will not survive the rain, again. Parts of some of the tar roads are seriously affected, but virtually all of the gravel and dirt roads suffer terribly, with predictable consequences for all of us. We intend to strengthen our efforts to get action from the responsible public agencies.

For roads in towns and townships, maintenance is the responsibility of the municipality.

Construction of new roads and maintenance of major bridges is the responsibility of the Roads Agency Limpopo (Pty) Ltd, an entity of the Limpopo Department of Roads and Transport.

For most of the general road maintenance problems that we confront, however, it is the Department of Roads and Transport itself that is responsible – graveling, grading, culverts, drainage, small bridges, signage, adjacent bush clearance, etc.

As a Conservancy, we will bring our concerns to the attention of the Department. Members may also want to communicate directly with the department's senior manager for the Waterberg District, Mr. Lefawane. He can be reached at 014-718-2300 or 082-806-2687. Please tell him you are a member of the Waterberg Nature Conservancy.

Residential and Commercial Developments

There is a proposal for a new residential/commercial development in Vaalwater. The site is on the west side of the road between the town and the Spar Centre. Some of it is now occupied by Waterberg Implements. Further information is available from the developer's environmental consultants, Lokisa Environmental Consulting in Pretoria (012-346-7655; lokisa@lokisa.co.za).

Property Rates

The Modimolle Municipality intends to issue its final policy and new rates in July 2008.

Waterberg Environmental Centre/Museum

The Waterberg Environmental Centre/Museum ceased to operate at Melkrivier on 31 March 2008. The property is now owned by the Matabane Community Property Association.

The Living Museum tours to the rhino, however, continue as usual. Daily at 15h00, Tuesday to Sunday. Closed on Mondays. Contact Conita Walker on 082-969-8331 or 014 755-4484.
