



Addo Elephant



South African
NATIONAL PARKS



Camdeboo



Garden Route



Karoo

Frontier Times



Mountain Zebra

March

2017



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Protected Environment stakeholder participation open

Interested and affected parties have until 13 March 2017 to provide comment and/or input on the Draft Management Plan for the Mountain Zebra Camdeboo Protected Environment (MZCPE).

The MZCPE Landowner's Association is in the process of creating their first management plan for the MZCPE, aimed at guiding the future management of the protected environment for a period of ten years until 2027.

The protected environment is situated between Graaff-Reinet, Nieu-Bethesda, Cradock and Pearston. Its purpose is to maintain the landscape in terms of its scenic, biodiversity and landscape value through collective action by the private landowners and to protect the area from detrimental developments. The protected environment was officially proclaimed by the Minister of Environmental Affairs on 1 April 2016, involving 65 landowners and spanning an area of 286 343ha.

In terms of the National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act No. 57 of 2003 (NEM:PAA), interested parties are required to register in order to participate in the process. This can be done by accessing the MZCPE website at www.mzcpe.co.za/Management or by post to Ms Bronwyn Botha (Buffer Zone Co-ordinator) - P.O.Box 349, Graaff-Reinet, 6280 or 071 272 5784 or Bronwyn.botha@sanparks.org.

An electronic version of the management plan is available on the MZCPE website www.mzcpe.co.za/Management. The plan can also be viewed at the following locations:

Cradock Public Library, J.A. Calata St, Cradock
Masizame Library, Cradock
Horseshoe Public Library, Parsonage St, Graaff-Reinet
Kroonvale Public Library, Akasia St, Graaff-Reinet
Pearston Public Library, Main St, Pearston
Middleburg Public Library, corner Van Reenen and Church St
Kwa-Nonzame Public Library, Cetyiwe Street, Middleburg
Camdeboo National Park
Mountain Zebra National Park

Written comments are to be submitted either electronically or by mail, to Bronwyn Botha by 13 March 2017 via her details above.



Message from Dries Engelbrecht, Regional General Manager

We recently concluded three public sessions in Graaff-Reinet, Cradock and Pearston on the Draft Management Plan of the Mountain Zebra Camdeboo Protected Environment. By all accounts, it appears as if there aren't any major changes needed before we submit it to the Minister of Environmental Affairs at the end of the month, which means we'll be one step closer to getting it off the ground. In the meantime, arrangements are progressing well for the inaugural Roof de

Karoo mountain bike traverse starting at Mountain Zebra National Park, crossing private property and ending in Camdeboo National Park starting on 24 March. So far we have 15 teams entered into the event.

This weekend we welcome 412 athletes and their families and supporters to Addo Elephant National Park as they participate in the Addo Elephant Trail Run – either the 100 miller, 76km or 44km trail run. This is the largest field yet at the race – with nearly 100 more entries than last year. A total of 19 countries are represented, and to say that the organisers are thrilled is an understatement.

Our weekends this month sure are busy, as the annual Camdeboo Birding Weekend kicks off on 17 March and is in support of the Honorary Ranger programme. This will be followed in October by the interschools birding weekend.

Getting the younger generation into our Parks is always a sign that we are moving in the right direction – educating them about conservation is imperative if we are to ensure the sustainability of our natural resources. Judging by the number of learners who have been passing through our parks over the past month or so – with Kids in Parks having gone through Garden Route National Park and now active in Camdeboo, as well as the commencement of a new group of Junior Rangers in Karoo National Park, our future sure looks bright!

Compliments received

Addo Elephant National Park

- The Spekboom Tented Camp is wonderful and I would love to stay there again.
- I have been to Addo several times in my life and it just keeps getting better! The staff is amazing, the facilities are great and the game viewing is fantastic!
- William at Kabouga needs a pat on the back for his friendliness, kindness and professional efficiency! Your lady on the front desk, Zinhle, was extremely helpful as was Caitlin, as the friend I had with me was always complaining about 'things' not supplied for kitchen use, but they both gave us exactly what we needed. I didn't ask for a specific Safari Tent, but was delighted to be in the same one as in 2003. The cleaning ladies were always so friendly and helpful. Thank you!

Camdeboo National Park

- Great Reception. I will definitely be visiting Camdeboo again. Excellent facilities.
- It is a very beautiful Park and we enjoyed the view at the Valley of Desolation!

Garden Route National Park

- We love Stormsriver and are excited about the upgrades being made. Staff members were professional and helpful and it was a pleasure staying there.
- Check-in was very efficient and the staff members are friendly and very helpful. (Ebb and Flow)
- The ladies at Reception were exceptionally helpful, especially Mrs Rhode. (Ebb and Flow)
- The environment was clean, staff members were friendly and servicing of the unit was done well. (Ebb and Flow)

Karoo National Park

- Nice to have a breakfast included in the package.
- From the moment we entered the gate we were treated very well by all the staff. Everyone is so friendly and helpful. Also the beautiful views and roads. We will visit again soon.
- Loved every minute and will highly recommend it to everyone we know.
- We loved the Salt & Pepper Curio Shop! They have well-stocked products with an excellent selection of gifts at reasonable prices. I especially enjoyed seeing a wide variety of Afrikaans merchandise for sale.

Mountain Zebra National Park

- We cannot fault anything! Wonderful trip.
- The accommodation was awesome. Far superior to what we expected.
- Doornhoek is really top class!
- Our visit to Mountain Zebra was very positive in so many ways. Well done to the entire team from SANParks at Mountain Zebra!



Honorary Ranger training

There could be some new Honorary Rangers (HR) in the making for Camdeboo National Park. This after a training course presented to about two dozen new recruits recently.

Mountain Zebra National Park Honorary Ranger, Dave Smeda, presented to a room full of hopefuls at the beginning of the year. The 24 prospective HR's had never had any training before, and they were joined by two existing HR's.

Camdeboo has six existing members, and the hope is that more will join after the training.

Some of the HR's plans for this year include the annual birding weekend later this month and the interschools birding weekend in October, as well as mountain bike trails and bush camps.



New Junior Rangers for Karoo

A fresh group of 16 Junior Rangers have kicked off their programme with Karoo National Park. The Junior Ranger programme provides a conservation ethos for the youth by mobilising them towards service in national parks. The programme offers structured training that will hopefully inspire the youth to be committed to conservation as it challenges them to be actively involved in local community conservation projects. The Junior Ranger training programme is curriculum aligned.

The Park's Senior People and Conservation Officer, Esna van Zyl, says the Grade seven and eight learners are mostly from the Beaufort West area. They will participate until they reach the end of Grade 10, whereafter they may choose to stay on to offer their assistance to the Park with the new group. From Grade 12, or the age of 18 years, they may apply to join the Honorary Rangers.



World Wetlands Day

The annual World Wetlands Day campaign helps reflect on the significant role played by wetlands in the ecosystem: Wetlands help reduce the impacts of flooding and it acts as a sponge when it rains by holding and releasing water to rivers. They also store carbon, are home to many plants and animals and also provide a sense of place and refuge for birds. They are also important because they protect our shores, absorb pollutants and improve water quality.

The Ramsar site in the Wilderness section of the Garden Route National Park is one of 17 in South Africa. The Wilderness and Swartvlei lake systems are situated on the Cape South Coast and form the core conservation area of the Wilderness section of the Garden Route National Park. The Wilderness system comprises three lakes, namely Rondevlei, Langvlei and Eilandvlei. The site in Wilderness includes a dune system with associated thickets, woodlands, marshes and reedbeds. Important numbers of locally-migrant resident birds as well as staging and breeding birds use the site, which supports 285 native plant species, 32 fish species (several of which use the site as a nursery area) and a diverse marine invertebrate fauna. The lakes provide a major form of flood control.

How can you help protect wetlands?

- *Planting indigenous plants, especially near a wetland, could increase wetland protection*
- *Not applying fertilisers or pesticides within 25 feet could protect a wetland as this area would serve as a buffer zone*
- *Joining estuary exploration initiatives/talks*
- *Joining clean up initiatives (such as one of many which Knysna's People and Conservation Officer, Nondumiso Mgwenya, hosted during February).*



Kids in Parks

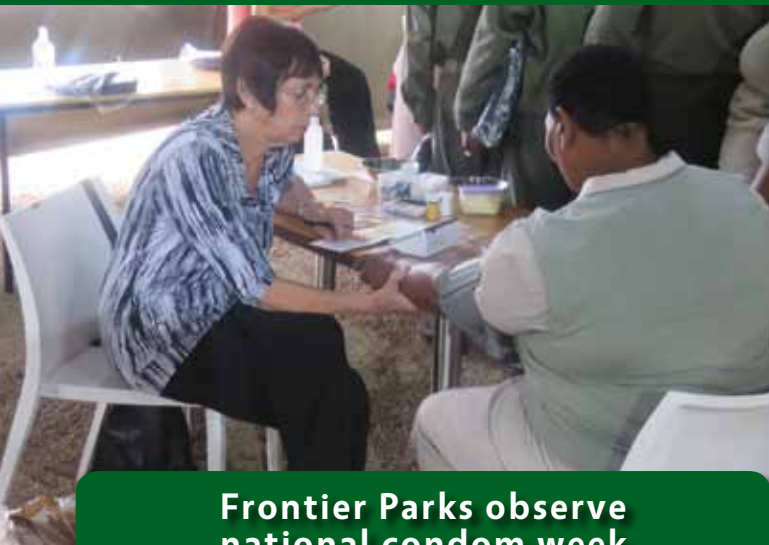
The Kids in Parks programme has become one of a few ways in which learners from underprivileged communities get to visit national parks. For a month every year, 500 local learners take turns to explore the mystical Knysna forest and its picturesque waterscapes.

Garden Route National Park's People and Conservation Officer, Nondumiso Mgwanya, says "We encourage story-telling, forest excursions and learners to explore the Park. Every activity is guided and there's a team of Rangers and Monitors who assist with the programme". This year, the learners came from 12 schools in the area.

Park Manager, Paddy Gordon, says "Such programmes have the long-term objective of exposing youngsters to the protection of the environment. Protection is not only for plants and animals but also for the economy and health of our current and future generations". He adds that through the Kids in Parks Programme, the annual SA National Parks Week campaign every September and other eco-projects with schools, children are afforded wonderful opportunities to explore nature.

The Kids in Parks programme is co-funded by the Departments of Environmental Affairs and Education, Pick & Pay and SANParks.

After concluding their month-long adventure in the Garden Route, the team is now engaging with youngsters in Camdeboo National Park until the end of March.



Frontier Parks observe national condom week

STI/Condom Week is aimed not only at reducing the spread of STI's, but also at curbing the spread of HIV and AIDS in communities and in the workplace environment. In South Africa, STI's remain a big problem, even though most infections can be cured. It is believed the fear of being stigmatised is one of the many reasons why people are reluctant to seek medical treatment for such infections.

The Frontier Region, together with the Wellness Department from Head Office in Groenkloof, Pretoria, took the initiative to commemorate and educate its employees on the risks of such infections. The five day outreach programme started on 13 February at Addo Elephant National Park and visited the various parks in the region.

The Umvuso, Bestmed and Discovery medical schemes conducted screening for HIV, VCT, STI, TB, cholesterol and BMI for its members at the sessions. Representatives from the Department of Health were available to conduct screening on non-medical aid members. A number of employees made use of the opportunities at the different screening stations set up in the venue.

To make the day even more informative, the national Wellness Department brought with them from Pretoria, a group named the "Wellness theatre group" who put on a performance that covered most of the challenging health issues that employees come across and ways in which they can be assisted by the organisation to avoid or face such challenges.



Maintaining the Garden Route

A great deal of maintenance work has been taking place throughout the Garden Route National Park over the past few months.

This includes work done at the Diepwalle Hut, the refurbishment of the incinerator at the Tsitsikamma tip site, facelifts to chalets across three sections of the Park as well as work done on their interiors.

All these refurbishments add to the quality of products and facilities for all our guests to enjoy.

Change of MZNP Restaurant Operating Times

Please note that due to operational reasons, the Mountain Zebra National Park Restaurant trading hours have changed to the following:

Open from 11h00 till 21h00 (daily)

Take-away coffee, tea and light breakfast snacks are available at the Shop from 07h15 daily. The Shop's trading hours are from 07h00 to 19h00.

Certain breakfast menu items will be available for brunch from 11h00.

Groups of 10 or more who require a breakfast can book in advance (up to 48 hours before their visit) and discuss breakfast options with the Restaurant Manager. Bookings can be made on mzebrarest@sanparks.org or Tel: 048 801 5712.

Guests who require early departures can order a take-away breakfast pack up to 24 hours in advance from the Restaurant.



New area for day visitors in Wilderness

There are now officially designated areas for day visitors in the Wilderness section of the Garden Route National Park. The move to have designated areas was motivated by a growing number of day visitors to that section of the Park. This year alone, 71 280 day visitors made use of the section compared to last year's 61 770, says Area Manager, Sandra Taljaard. "We have recorded an increase of day visitors as well as campers from 2014 and thus the need to cater for the different needs and expectations of different visitors," she said.

Campers mainly visit the Park for the tranquillity and serenity of the riverside camping sites, whilst day visitors enter the Park for a variety of activities including nature walks, hiking trails, water activities, segways, birding and the sense of place the open access Park offers.

Designated areas have been included to make visitors feel more welcome. They are all within the existing footprint and include the following spots:

- Tarentaal day visitor area (inside the Ebb and Flow Rest Camp)
- Island Lake (in close proximity of the main rest camp)
- Wilderness Lagoon (a picnic spot close to the Touw River Estuary), giving visitors easy access to the beach area which is just across the bridge
- Woodville Big Tree (Forest area, a few kilometres from the main camp)
- Goudveld: Jubilee Creek and Krisjan se Nek (Forest area, a few kilometres from the main camp).

SCM Roadshows

Supply Chain Management (SCM) workshops kicked off in Knysna earlier this week before moving on to Wilderness and Tsitsikamma. Local businesses were in attendance responding to advertisements placed in local newspapers and on the organisation's platforms. Speaking at the events, Garden Route Park Manager, Paddy Gordon, said the roadshow provided an opportunity for the Park to meet local business people and discuss procurement processes with them.

SCM Practitioner, Siya Dyubere, gave an overview of the guidelines governing supply chain in Government. She also went into detail about the Central Supplier Database system, procedures for tender processes and physically illustrated to attendees how the system works.



Welcome to Mountain Zebra

Mzukisi Yakayaka, Mountain Zebra National Park's Technical Officer, joined the organisation on 1 March. We trust he'll have a fruitful career in the Park and organisation.



MZNP starts soccer and netball teams

As part of its Wellness Programme, Mountain Zebra National Park has established soccer and netball teams for staff. As we all know, playing sport plays a vital role in terms of personal, social and health advantages, including the development of self-esteem, fitness, teamwork and better working relationships among staff members.

Both teams are made up of Park staff, temps, BSP and Restaurant staff, with training taking place twice a week.

They've already played friendlies against local teams from the Social Development and Justice Departments in Cradock, and recently against Addo Elephant National Park's teams.



From wild animals to pet care

School and community visits make up a large portion of our People and Conservation staff's duties. While out on some of these visits last year, Karoo's Senior P&C Officer, Esna van Zyl, says it came to their attention that there was a dire need for educating especially the younger generation about pet care. So, after discussions with Beaufort West's local SPCA, the two organisations are now conducting joint monthly visits to various schools in and around town.

The first visit of the year was conducted at St Matthews Primary School. Pictured above is Dr Natasha Burger, currently doing her community service with the SPCA. During her visit, she motivates the youngsters to take their pets to the mobile clinics when they visit their areas, and also informs them about the free services offered by the SPCA. The mobile clinic is run by Dr Burger and her colleague, Dr Kirsten Cole.