

**FACT SHEET ON MAPUNGUBWE NATIONAL PARK**

- The Mapungubwe National Park was previously known as Vhembe Dongola National Park. It is situated 60 km west Musina and 230 km north east of Polokwane, the capital town of Limpopo Province.
- The park comprises the Mapungubwe Cultural Landscape and the Mapungubwe World Heritage Site. It is also located at the confluence of the Limpopo and Shashe Rivers.
- Declared a National Heritage Site in December 2001, the park was listed as a World Heritage Site in July 2003. The Mapungubwe National Park covers an area that is well over 28 000 hectares.
- The name Mapungubwe means a place of the stone of wisdom. (Ref: Dr M. Motshekga, Kara Heritage Institute, Hatfield, Pretoria).
- Until its demise at the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century AD, Mapungubwe was the most important inland settlement in the sub-continent and extended over an area of about 30 000 sq kilometres on either side of Limpopo and Shashe Rivers.
- The Mapungubwe National Park is positioned on the international borders of Botswana, Zimbabwe and South Africa. It is envisaged that the park will eventually form part of a Trans-Frontier Conservation Area shared by the three countries.
- It is the only geological defined cultural landscape in the region that includes a full set of successive stages in the early history of this process. Its nomination completes an historical triangle from Mapungubwe to Great Zimbabwe and Khami that continues to influence African society today.
- International contacts with Islamic traders on the east coast, who were part of a larger Indian Ocean network, led to African gold and elephant ivory, as well as animal hides and hippo ivory, being worked and exchanged for glass beads and ceramics that derived from as far a field as the Indo-Pacific region, including India, Indonesia and China.
- The park represents an area with exceptional cultural and natural values. Over the years, it has retained the following values:
  - Exhibition of vital interchange of human values, between 900 and 1300 AD in southern Africa - on developments in technology, and town planning.
  - Exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilisation which has disappeared from the Limpopo/Shashe area
  - An outstanding example of a type of architectural and technological ensemble and landscape which illustrates a significant stage in human history and;
  - An outstanding example of a traditional human settlement and land-use which is representative of a culture that became vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change.
- The Mapungubwe National Park landscape has outstanding botanical, ecological, geological and geomorphologic merit, with a range of vegetation types associated with the outcrop of cave sandstone, baobab trees, Karoo fossils and ancient rocks nearly three billion years old.
- It provides a sanctuary to endangered large mammals, such as the black and white rhinoceros, wild dog, and the continent's flagship species, the African elephant.
- The famous Golden Rhino along with artifacts, glass beads and pottery was unearthed from Mapungubwe

National Park and is evidence of the capabilities of the people of that time in both mining as well as art.

## **TOURISM PRODUCTS AND ACTIVITIES AVAILABLE IN THE PARK:**

### **❖ LEOKWE REST CAMP:**

Leokwe is the park's main rest camp and is situated in a valley flanked by sandstone ridges. The theme of the camp is based on the rich history of the area and the design is derived from the typical Venda village.

Facilities offered in the rest camp include:

- A reception complex with a swimming pool, kitchen and a small convenience store.
- 14 x 2 bed cottages with open plan kitchens
- 2 x 4 bed family cottages with open plan kitchens.
- 2 x 2 bed cottages with a shower and toilet for the physically disabled persons.

### **❖ LIMPOPO FOREST TENTED CAMP**

- Situated within the riverine forest of the Limpopo River, this tented camp offers spacious rooms and outdoor areas. It will cater for 16 people and has 8 x 2 bed self catering units available.
- It also has 7 Semi-Luxury Forest tents with 2 bed bedrooms, a kitchen, shower and toilet.
- It has a One Semi-Luxury Forest tent; 2 bed-bedroom, a kitchen and shower and toilet for the physically disabled

### **❖ TSHUGULU LODGE**

- This luxury lodge sleeps 1 x 14 in the guest lodge with 6 x bedrooms, a bath, en-suite swimming pool and an exclusive eco-trail.

### **❖ VHEMBE WILDERNESS TRAILS CAMP**

- Based on the successful wilderness trails offered in the Kruger National Park, the Vhembe Trails Camp is situated on the perimeter of the important Mapungubwe Valley.
- Trailists will have the opportunity to explore the rich archaeology of the area on foot with a guide and will visit the famous Mapungubwe where the Golden Rhinoceros was found. Visitors will be based at the camp for the duration of the three day trail. The camp can accommodate 8 people- 2 persons per unit with own ablutions.

The entrance to the Mapungubwe National Park is situated on the Musina-Pondrft Road. There is a viewpoint that offers a breathtaking view of the Limpopo-Shashe Rivers confluence; there are tree-top walks that allow visitors access to the Limpopo River and a bird hide at Manoutswa pan. A newly developed road network allows access to sedan vehicle to all the sites mentioned above.

**The facilities at Mapungubwe National Park will be ready for occupation mid-August 2004.**