Mountain Zebra and Camdeboo Protected Environment Declared

The Minister of Environmental Affairs, Edna Molewa, on Friday, 31 March 2016, declared the Mountain Zebra-Camdeboo Protected Environment, in terms of the National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act (NEMPAA), 2003, in Proclamation No. 39891 of 2016.

The Proclamation also gazetted the regulations conferring powers and duties to the Management Authority responsible for the Mountain Zebra-Camdeboo Protected Environment, in terms of the NEMPAA.

The Mountain Zebra-Camdeboo Protected Environment (MZCPE) is located between Camdeboo and Mountain Zebra National Parks in the Eastern Cape. The Corridor Project is a joint partnership between SANParks and the Wilderness Foundation with funding from the Critical Ecosystems Partnership Fund. The vision for the future is ultimately to protect a huge diversity of plant and animal species within the corridor.

The Mountain Zebra-Camdeboo region is a mountainous area dominated by the grassland biome, having been identified as one of the top three priority grassland areas for protection. This biome is one of the three biomes (Grassland, Nama-Karoo and Indian Ocean Coastal Belt) least protected in South Africa. This will not only assist in the conservation of the endangered Cape mountain zebra, it will contribute to the conservation of the recently identified Sneeuberg Centre of Endemism, part of the Amatole-Sneeuberg Montane Belt. The idea is to create a single conservation area over 120km in length and including up to 520 000 hectares of land under conservation, to be accomplished in the main by public/private partnerships.

In this proclamation, 67 landowners with land totalling 268 428 hectares have been included in the declaration of the Protected Environment. More landowners have indicated their willingness to sign up during Phase Two of this project. The Protected Area will be managed by a Landowners Association.

Declaration of the Protected Environment will contribute significantly to achieving Medium Term Strategic Framework Outcome 10 (Protected areas) targets and will enhance the integrity and improve conservation outcomes within the region, while at the same time broadening opportunities for socio-economic development.
Compliments received

Addo Elephant National Park
- I have attached a photo of a lady by the name of Jeanette, unfortunately I forgot to get her surname. Jeanette was at our ablution block in the camp area three times a day to make sure that we have a clean area to shower/bath etc. When not there she was with her co-worker up at the guest cloakrooms making sure that this area was just as clean and tidy for the day visitors who were mainly tourists from outside of South Africa. It was a pleasure to use both these facilities and I would like to thank Jeanette and her co-worker for their good work. The other staff are all helpful and friendly – especially the man who are always eager to offer their help to the campers to pitch their tents or help with the caravans – it’s a tiring job after a long drive and we always welcome these men who are prepared to help. Not many of the other Parks have men willing to help in the camps.
- We had a brilliant time at Addo Park and thoroughly enjoyed ourselves.
- During January and February, on a road trip to the Cape, we visited Addo Elephant and Karoo National Parks and were delighted SANParks was doing so much in keeping the roads and facilities in such good repair.
- At Addo, we had the feeling of pride of work in the ablution block which had toilet rolls strategically placed, each with a small branch from a thorn tree in the centre, for decoration – a nice touch.

Karoo National Park
- When we addressed the staff, they listened attentively and gave good advice.
- The ablution block at the picnic sites at Karoo, plus the swimming pool, were pristine.
- My wife and I recently visited your resort and were extremely impressed with the excellent condition of the property.
- We stayed in Unit 26, which was very clean and tidy. We are long-time Wild Card members and being retired, we travel and visit SANParks resorts around the country and have seen some well looked after, and some not so well looked after. Congratulations to you and your staff for such a well-managed resort. Probably one of the best we have been to.
- Your reception staff were friendly, welcoming and helpful. All in all, it was a pleasure to stay at Karoo National Park.

Mountain Zebra Park
- I was recently visiting the Mountain Zebra National Park and was staying in the caravan park. On Sunday 03 April 2016 a little girl that was also staying in the Park had an accident and fell from her bicycle and was badly injured. Two of your members went absolutely out of their way to assist with the little girl. They were Mbuvelo Kima and Thembi La Magadu. I would like to bring it under your attention as these two gentlemen really exceeded in their duties towards guests to the Park and need to be acknowledged for that. They assisted in the care as well as to report the incident to Reception whom responded by offering their help to the campers to pitch their tents or help with the caravans – it’s a tiring job after a long drive and we always welcome these men who are prepared to help. Not many of the other Parks have men willing to help in the camps.
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Welcome to the Regional Office

Zukisa (Zuki) Tize, is the new Office Administrator/PA to the Regional Manager (intern), based at the Port Elizabeth regional office.

Zuki replaces Lindiwe Vilakazi, who has since been appointed as PA to Addo Elephant National Park Manager, Mzwandile Mjadu.

Join us in welcoming her and we trust she’ll learn a lot and enjoy her year with us.

Environmental Monitor programme developing talented human capital

Being an armed Environmental Monitor (EM) for the Addo Working for the Environment (WFE) projects guarding and ensuring the safety of teams in the field was only a stepping stone for the young, career-driven Luyanda Dyusha to sharpen his conservation skills.

He requested to be transferred from the Addo Working for Ecosystems project to the Monitoring and Compliance Coordinator’s office in the Frontier Cluster as it would allow him to improve his knowledge in the field of compliance, auditing and health and safety management.

Luyanda says, “Health and safety is an exciting and one of the fastest-growing sectors in South Africa and transferring over to the compliance department allowed me to learn how to conduct safety audits, improve my computer skills, GPS management and report writing. My vision is to complete my qualification in Samtrac to become a qualified H&S auditor in the future.”

Monitoring and compliance co-ordinator for the Frontier Cluster, Charl Bezuidenhout, says, “It’s rare to see and find someone as motivated and passionate about his work, which makes it a pleasure to invest time and transfer as much skills as possible over to such an employee.”

Charl says another talent in the department is Environmental Monitor, Emmelia Hobbs, who is responsible for the human resources of over 100 EM’s in the cluster.

SPAR goes wild in the Eastern Cape

A new partnership will see the SPAR Kirkwood Wildsfees - which is one of South Africa’s top six festivals - continue to grow and contribute to community upliftment in the Sundays River.

“We are delighted and honoured that the SPAR group has decided to ‘go wild’ with us for at least the next three years as the naming sponsor,” says SPAR Kirkwood Wildsfees director Jenni Honsbein.
Karoo lion to move to Addo Elephant National Park

A tribute to a brilliant and brave Karoo lion recovery team, who worked tirelessly to track the missing lion down and return him to Karoo National Park.

I was called to fly to Beaufort West on Tuesday 29 March to assist with the tracking and darting of the escaped lion from Karoo National Park – nicknamed “Sylvester”. When I arrived at the satellite location, the wind strength was on the limits to fly and after one or two attempts to find and dart Sylvester it became too dangerous to continue in the air. It is commendable that the Park Manager and his team of field rangers and tracking staff continued to track Sylvester on the ground. So very brave! It became too dangerous to leave a lion in open territory having already caught a cow.

Two days later in perfect weather I returned to the satellite marked area, but Sylvester continued to hide. I landed the helicopter nearby whilst the tracking team, along with the SANParks veterinarian, proceeded to walk through the Valley (“of Death” - ha ha) in an attempt to chase Sylvester out of the bush. What an event it was when Sylvester suddenly arose and fortunately ran away from his trackers with a loud roar which was audible across the valley.

The vet raced up to the helicopter, but by the time he got to me I had just seen Sylvester disappear around a mountain a mile away. We took off and continued to search from the air for another thirty minutes and were absolutely delighted when he spotted Sylvester racing up the mountainside, where he was immediately darted from the helicopter before he had any chance to disappear.

What an “A Team” consisting of the Park Manager, field rangers, trackers and veterinarian, whom I was proud to air transfer to the different locations on the mountain in order to find Sylvester. The team fearlessly chased Sylvester on foot from his hiding place, and once he was darted, they carried his immobilized 240kg mass to a spot from where he could be safely transported back to the Park.

This was a true act of bravery.

Pilot John Huddleston

Kuzuko’s lionesses

South African National Parks (SANParks) will relocate the lion which escaped from Karoo National Park at the end of March to the Addo Elephant National Park (AENP).

The lion will be moved into a boma within an existing 200ha enclosure in the Kuzuko contractual section of the AENP for him to become bonded with the two young females who are currently in the enclosure. The two young females were the cubs that were rescued in Addo Main Camp after their mother was killed by a snake early last year. They survived for about two months on their own and, with the help of the public, rangers were able to rescue them. The CEO of SANParks, Fundisile Mketeni said, “This lion, at three years of age, is still young enough to bond with the two females and ultimately establish himself as the resident pride male”. This option forms part of the Frontier Cluster’s Carnivore Management Plan.

The plan aims to restore or mimic the natural social dynamics of lion behavior, in this case by simulating the dispersal of male lions that would be found in large conservation systems like the two million hectares of the Kruger National Park or the three million of the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park. The lions will then be released into the park to be free-ranging. The fence between Kuzuko and the neighbouring Darlington section of AENP is due to be dropped soon which will then provide the three lions with 60 000 ha over which to roam.

“There is always a risk that this lion may break out again, but this will be mitigated to a large extent by reducing any potential conflict with other males, by placing him in a boma within the existing 200ha boma, and ultimately by establishing him as the dominant male”, said Mketeni.

The combined area of Darlington and Kuzuko is large, with a substantial prey base and only one other coalition of ageing male lions, and hence the pressure on Sylvester will be minimal. In addition, we have an area to the west of the dam to which these males can be retired if necessary. Mketeni, said “We remain committed to our conservation mandate and can give the public assurance that this decision was in the best interests of the animal and conservation. This decision involved consultation with SANParks Park and Regional Management, Scientific Services and Veterinary Wildlife Services.”

Mketeni said that this option was one of several that were considered and was the option with the most benefits for the lion, as well as for SANParks’ broader carnivore management. “We will ensure that the lion is fully integrated in line with our Frontier Region Carnivore Management Plan,” said Mketeni.

“We would like to thank members of the public for their interest in this lion and their continued interest in conservation generally. We attempted to respond to every message we received but eventually abandoned this due to the sheer number of messages received in the last two weeks.”
In support of all sexual violence victims, SANParks employees (men included) were encouraged to don red lips on Friday, 1 and 8 April 2016.

“Survivors of abuse show us the strength of their personal spirit every time they smile.”
Jeanne McElvaney

Once again, in support of sexual assault month (April), SANParks staff participated in the Red My Lips campaign. Red My Lips is an international non-profit organisation that runs a global awareness campaign where fierce and fearless supporters rock red lipstick throughout the month of April to demonstrate solidarity and support for survivors and start conversations with people in their lives. Red My Lips is designed to raise visibility and awareness about the realities and prevalence of sexual violence, while combatting rape myths and victim-blaming.

Red My Lips promotes the idea that: The problem does not lie with tight or revealing clothes, makeup or 'letting your guard down.' The problem lies with one person’s decision to overpower and violate the body and spirit of another. And until this reality is acknowledged and addressed, this worldwide pandemic of sexual violence will continue.