



Waterberg Nature Conservancy Newsletter

Occasionally issued news of interest to WNC members and others in the Waterberg

Number 14, May 2011

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www.waterbergnatureconservancy.com

John Miller, Chair
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Newsletter items by John Miller unless
otherwise attributed.

Next General Meeting

Date: Thursday, 9 June 2011

Venue: Vaalwater Rivier Oord

NOTE NEW VENUE!

Two km past the Spar on the old Ellisras Road, turn left.

Time: 2:30 pm

Guest Speaker: Clive Walker

The Limpopo River: From Source to Sea

**Natural and Human History
from the Juskei River in Braamfontein, Johannesburg
to
Xai-Xai, Mozambique on the Indian Ocean**

Cash Bar and Light Meal

**RSVP to Heidi Carlton by Tuesday 7 June 2011
(contact details at left)**

WNC New Members plus English and Afrikaans – An Experiment

In an effort to encourage a wider participation of Waterberg residents in the Conservancy, we are trying an experiment in our Newsletter. We've put some of Newsletter items in Afrikaans, starting here and now.

**WNC Nuwe Lede
plus
Engels en Afrikaans – 'n Eksperiment**

In hierdie uitgawe van die WNC Nuusbrief sal sekere van die artikels ook in Afrikaans verskyn. Dit vorm deel van 'n poging om 'n wyer groep mense in die Waterberge te bereik asook deelname en lidmaatskap aan die WNC te bemoedig.

'n Hartlike welkom aan Astrid Basson, 'n Waterberg Distrik Munisipaliteit se Raadgewer. Astrid is woonagtig in Lephalale.

Ons fokus op allerlei bosveld aktiwiteite soos privaat reservate; toerisme; wildsplase, jag; kommersiële landbou; natuurbewaring en navorsing; omgewings opleiding en klein sake besighede. Indien jy aan enige van jou vriende of bure dink wat sou belangstel in die WNC, laat weet ons sodat ons hulle van al die nodige inligting kan voorsien en nooi om aan te sluit as 'n lid.

Aan al ons getroue Waterberg lesers wat ons nuusbrief ontvang en nie lid is nie; sluit asseblief aan.

Gedurende die afgelope maande het julle praatjies gemis oor Son Energie (Philip Calcott); die Bateleurs . 'n nie-winsgewende omgewings vlieg organisasie (Avroy Shlain en Justin Bass); Waterberg geskiedenis (Richard Wadley); Indringer en Uitheemse plante (Phetole Manyama); Lapalala Wildernis Skool (Anthony Roberts); Parasiete (Peter Oberem) en somer baie meer.

A warm welcome to Astrid Basson, a Waterberg District Councillor. Astrid lives in Lephalale.

We reflect a variety of bush activities . private reserves and private homes, tourism operations, game ranching, hunting, commercial agriculture, conservation research, environmental education, small business. Think about your neighbours and friends who might be interested. We will provide them with full information, and invite them to join. Let us know.

For those of you in the Waterberg who are receiving this Newsletter but are not Conservancy members, please join us. In recent months, you've missed presentations about solar power (Philip Calcot); the Bateleurs, the non-profit environmental flying organisation (Avroy Shlain and Justin Bass); Waterberg history (Richard Wadley); Invasive and Alien Vegetation (Phetole Manyama); Lapalala Wilderness School (Anthony Roberts); Parasites (Peter Oberem); and much, much more.

Photos, Photos, Photos

We need your photos for the Conservancy Newsletter.
Good photos, interesting views, unique pictures . please share!

Here's a July 2009 photo that Dean van Heerden's planted camera captured of Brown hyena puppies at their den at Koshari Game Ranch.



Stories, Stories, Stories

We need your stories, articles, essays, announcements for the Conservancy Newsletter.
Good stories, interesting articles, relevant essays, timely announcements . please share!

Upgrade of the R33

From a couple of different sources, including Richard Wadley, here's the story about our beloved R33.

Marble Hall . Modimolle: The tender has been awarded and the planned completion date is February 2013.

Modimolle . Vaalwater: The tender has been awarded, construction has commenced, and the planned completion date is August 2012. Note that the contractor is hoping to complete this work by the end of this year 2011. Wouldn't that be nice.

Vaalwater . Lephalale: The original intention was to re-build the old Vaalwater-Lephalale road via Bulgerivier. Tenders were issued and proposals received, but the tender has now been withdrawn . because Sasol has shelved its Mafutha coal to liquid project at Steenbokpan until perhaps 2030. And this road would have had a link to a new

Steenbokpan road. So instead, the Department has decided to refurbish the 'new' Vaalwater-Lephale road and is due to issue tenders to this effect in April. The difficulty with this decision is apparently that the new road was never designed to carry the heavy duty traffic now using it (the structure of the road, not just its surface). So perhaps its refurbishment will be as severe as that on the road to Modimolle.

Waterberg Books

You might be surprised to know just how many publications focus on the Waterberg. We are not marketing these books in any way, but take a look at our website page on Publications of Interest .

<http://www.waterbergnatureconservancy.com/#Waterberg%20Books>

Dorset Community Police Forum

Working together for a safer community+
by Ken Cowie

The Dorset CPF was established to form a partnership between the police and the local community in order to promote communication between the two bodies. All persons who live and work within the Dorset Station area may participate in any activities and meetings of the CPF.

The four sectors, Melkriver, Saamtrek, Gedenk, and New Belgium, report regularly to the executive committee. The committee meets monthly to discuss and act on any problems pertaining to police matters. There is no doubt that over the last year there has been a reduction in crime due, we trust, to better communication between the police and the community.

It has been noted that the Telkom line 014 755 3659 at the Dorset station operates infrequently. The following contact numbers will be advertised on signboards at various important intersections and can be used now.

Captain Mokonyane – 082 414 2012
Constable Stan Mokeola – 073 706 0501
Warrant Officer Sumbane – 082 414 6658

Under the chairmanship of Ant Baber, the CPF raised money in 2010 by organising a well-attended Black Tie Ball and Auction at Mpatamatcha. Funds were raised for communication improvements . the purchase of three radios for police vehicles, two for Dorset and one for Vaalwater. Letters written to the Limpopo chief of police by the Dorset CPF chairman were instrumental in securing two much needed 4x4 vehicles for the Dorset police to help them with their patrol duties.

The final function of the year was the Community Fun Day, also supported by the money raised at the Ball. Held at Melkriver Primary School, over 500 people attended and were entertained by five-a-side soccer, races, a jumping castle and various cultural activities provided by the four schools in the Dorset area.

This year the CPF will have another Community Fun Day and more fund raisers to ensure the impetus of the Forum carries on and the communication between the police and local Community improves even more.

Vaalwater Community Forum

by Richard Wadley

We are fortunate, in the Vaalwater district, that there are several non-governmental, voluntary organisations that devote their energy to addressing matters of general concern to the community. The Conservancy is one such organisation; others include the Waterberg Welfare Society, the Transvaal Agricultural Union and the Waterberg Biosphere Reserve. In addition, there are several private institutions and governmental bodies that serve the community: the schools, churches, clinics, the police and the local and district municipalities.

However, there are also many issues in the area that urgently require attention, for example: water supplies; waste and sewerage management; roads maintenance in Vaalwater/Leseding and in the surrounding district; education and training of school-leavers; economic development and job creation; social welfare; security; the beautification of Vaalwater; electricity supplies . and so on. While each of the various parties listed above is active in addressing one or more of these aspects, there has historically been little communication or co-operation among the different players. This has led to a poor understanding of the work being done by others and of the challenges facing local authorities. It has also meant that some

efforts might have been more successful if they had been both better informed and better co-ordinated.

Late in January of this year, a group of concerned citizens organised an informal meeting of representatives from every institution, community group or local authority they could think of. The objective was to test the communal appetite for the creation of an umbrella body that would try to assist in focusing the most appropriate talents and resources on each of the major issues requiring attention.

This meeting, which was very well attended, enthusiastically supported the creation of what is now called the Vaalwater Community Forum (VCF); and mandated it to take the lead in co-ordinating initiatives to resolve some of the most important concerns of the community.

Since then, an *ad hoc* committee of the Forum has held several working meetings, the purpose of which has been to task specific individuals (drawn, where appropriate, from among the representative organisations) with specific objectives.

These are still early days, but already, a Vaalwater Chamber of Commerce (Sakekamer) has been re-established; progress is being made to eliminate the proliferation of ugly signs that mar the entrances to the town; constructive discussions have been held with both local and district municipalities and with Eskom; and work is being done to enhance the concept of the Waterberg as an attractive tourist destination. It is important that this initial momentum be maintained; that the VCF quickly delivers tangible evidence of the benefits that can be achieved through co-operative action; and that the community as a whole comes to believe that this voluntary, non-political, grouping really is there for the benefit of everyone. We have a great deal of work to do in the months ahead, but the early enthusiasm, commitment and support from everyone involved has been hugely encouraging.

Rhino poaching reveals sad tale of collapse in Limpopo parks agency

by Crispian Olver, November 2010
Director of Linkd Environmental Services

Last week the country was shocked by fresh news of a further 18 rhinos killed by poachers in Letaba Ranch. Letaba is one of the parks managed by the Limpopo province. The 18 rhinos come on top of a total of 261 rhinos poached to date this year, a dramatic increase on the total of 122 killed last year, and 83 the year before. Poaching appears to be escalating out of control, driven by criminal syndicates in SA and the far east. But the story has another side to it.

Rhinos are a good indicator of conservation management, and their successful conservation in SA has for many years been raised as evidence of our excellent conservation standards. We manage approximately 90% of Africa's remaining rhinos. This latest revelation points to a worrying reversal, which will undermine SA's global reputation. Importantly the carcasses that were found were not recent. Reports vary, but it appears that most of the rhinos had been killed over the last few years, and for a protracted period the killings went undetected. This indicates that on the ground conservation monitoring at Letaba is not taking place.

Large animals such as rhinos need dedicated and regular monitoring. This is usually done by means of inspections, remote tracking and occasionally aerial surveys. The national Department of Environmental Affairs cites on the ground monitoring through foot patrols as the foundation of government's strategy for cracking down on poaching. This is in addition to working with local communities, dealing with criminal syndicates in the cities, SADC regional cooperation and working through Interpol to track cross-border crime and illegal goods.

What is clear from a number of reports is that bread and butter conservation management functions are not being performed at Letaba Ranch. There are too few staff, who are poorly motivated, with inadequate budgets and declining capital infrastructure. There is no management plan for Letaba. Highly placed conservation officials have simply admitted that there is no conservation management at Letaba Ranch.

This is symptomatic of the broader collapse of conservation management across all of the 35 nature reserves managed by the Limpopo Province. Last year the management of Limpopo's parks was taken away from the Limpopo Tourism and Parks Board because of mismanagement. The parks now sit with the Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (LEDET), which is itself under-resourced and understaffed. Conservation has been seriously underfunded in the province for many years, with funds going to politically far more important health, welfare and education. This is compounded by financial mismanagement in the Department, with R450 000 unauthorised and wasteful expenditure in the previous financial year, leading the Auditor General to issue a disclaimer (the strongest possible sanction from the AG!).

There are also serious staffing problems. The Department has a 48% vacancy rate in its environmental division, and a very high attrition rate of 30% of filled posts. At the same time staff expenditure makes up 82% of their budget. There is little funding left for maintaining fences, vehicles or park facilities. All crucial for well run parks. The Department can provide very little information about the status of protected areas and their management plans, indicative of poor

monitoring and conservation planning.

In all there are serious concerns about the state of conservation management in the province. Conservation experts point to a steady erosion of performance and collapse of critical conservation functions. In terms of a recent review of conservation effectiveness across all South Africa's parks, Limpopo scored the lowest in terms of HR capacity, generation of own income and law enforcement. Clearly there is something seriously amiss in the Department.

But does this matter? How important are the parks in Limpopo?

In fact Limpopo's parks are an extremely valuable part of the overall conservation estate in SA. The northern Drakensberg escarpment contains some unique grasslands and indigenous forests, with rare plant and animal species found nowhere else. It is a strategically important water catchment which feeds the farms and ecosystems of the lowveld, and is important for climate change adaptation. The Wolkberg and parks like it are unique wilderness areas that support the province's tourism industry. The Limpopo parks include 29 different ecosystems, many of which have been identified as vulnerable and threatened.

As a country we simply cannot afford to lose such an important part of our conservation estate. There is a clear case for national intervention to save these reserves and protect what biodiversity is left.

Part of the problem is that we have too complex a conservation system, inherited from the apartheid era separation into state forests, mountain catchments, national, provincial and local reserves. Today we have 15 different conservation management agencies operating in South Africa. A recent management review found that four of these management authorities are seriously underperforming. A further four management authorities are showing signs of severe distress. The lack of effective conservation in these areas means that we are at risk of losing the nature reserves managed by them. Only five management authorities can be said to be performing adequately to well, and even these are showing some signs of distress.

So the problems of Letaba Ranch are in fact symptomatic of the broader state conservation sector (despite some excellent examples such as SANParks, Cape Nature and Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife). This poses serious questions and challenges to our environmental authorities. How do we fix such a pervasive set of management and financial problems? And what can be done now to limit the scale of the potential loss?

One answer seems glaringly obvious. The country simply cannot afford the existing number of conservation agencies . both in terms of their financial overheads, as well as the demands of separate management systems. Underperforming Provinces and government departments are particularly ill suited to conservation functions. Government should seriously consider rationalising these into fewer agencies, with the attendant economies of scale, less fragmented biodiversity management and increased presence and influence. There are many successful examples of single national agencies in Africa, as well as in the US and Latin America . we should give a single agency serious consideration.

At the same time there are some fairly simple remedies that can make a big difference . for instance allow parks agencies to retain the revenue they earn, creating an effective incentive to build own revenue and decrease reliance on the state. We must also recognise the value of properly funding conservation. Without adequate management and funding we reduce the immediate benefits of clean air, water and species diversity that parks provide. And we will have little to pass on to future generations, whose natural world is already seriously threatened by climate change. The time for decisive action to fix the system is now.

Maps and Photography of the Waterberg

by Richard Wadley

The production of topographic maps and aerial photography for the whole country is the responsibility of an old Government agency with a new name: the **Chief Directorate: National Geo-spatial Information ("NGI")**, (previously known as the Directorate of Surveys and Mapping), in the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform. The offices of the NGI remain where they've been for many years: Rhodes Avenue, Mowbray, Cape, off De Waal Drive.

Every decade or so, since the first imagery of the Waterberg was collected in 1955, the Government has contracted with someone to undertake an airborne photographic survey of the region. The resulting photographs are corrected for distortion and used (among other things) to produce the 1:50 000 scale topographic map sheets. Whereas in the past, the photography comprised a series of generally West-East oriented strips along which a string of overlapping individual photographs was taken, the advent of digital photography has resulted in each strip now being a continuous digital image of essentially undistorted imagery. Moreover, the imagery is now in colour, instead of in black-and-white as in the past.

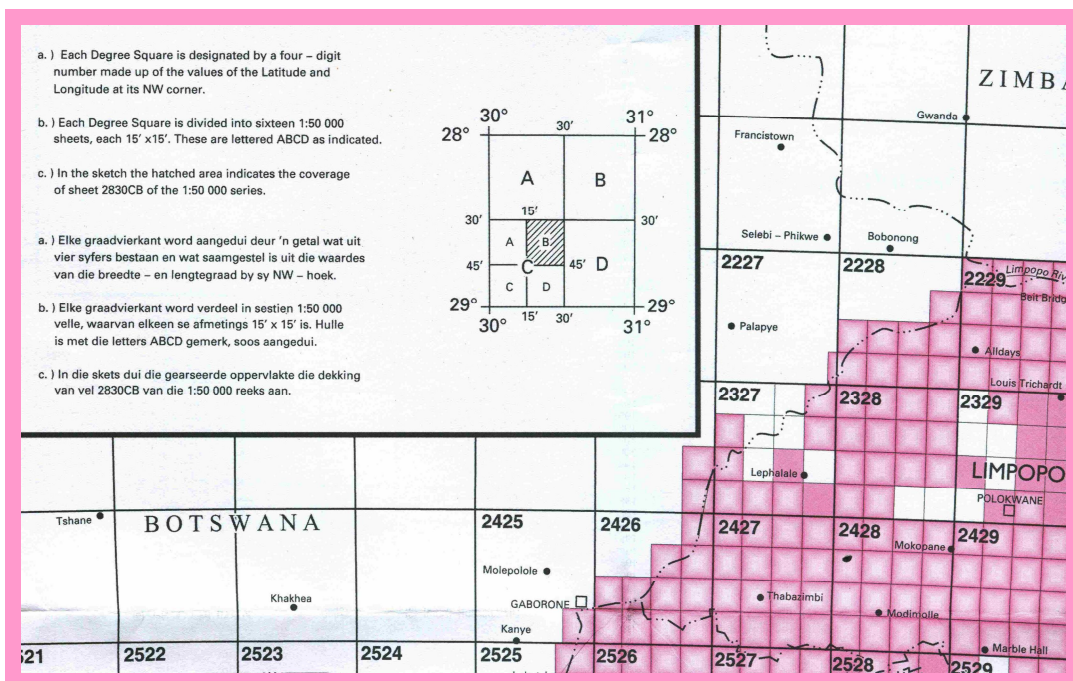
The most recent photographic survey over the Waterberg Plateau was made in 2008. A set of new 1:50 000 topographic

map sheets based on this survey was published in 2010.

Both the aerial imagery and the maps can be ordered on-line, or by fax/letter directly from the NGI; the service is cheap and efficient, its reliability being dependent on the Post Office. In order to inform the NGI precisely which area you would like to purchase, you need to define the latitude/longitude (i.e. GPS) co-ordinates of the area. Alternatively, you could provide the GPS co-ordinates of a point, like a lodge, and request coverage for specified distances to N, S, E, and W of that point. For the imagery, you can also request a particular scale to which it should be enlarged. As an example, I recently ordered a single image covering an area of approximately 3.5 x 5.0 km (1750 ha) at a scale of 1:5 000; the sheet measures about 1.1m x 0.8 m, and was posted safely to me in a tube about ten days after payment and cost exactly R100 including VAT!

In addition to ordering imagery as ~~hardcopy~~ you can acquire it from the NGI virtually free in digital format . but you would need to also have some (free) software to enable you to open the imagery. Printing the imagery other than on standard A4 paper requires access to specialist printers.

The 1:50 000 topographic map sheets are defined as ~~quarter-degree squares~~ there is an index map that helps you to determine which map sheet(s) you need. A portion of the index map that covers the Waterberg region is shown here.



Vaalwater, for example, (GPS co-ordinates South 24° 17q11+; East 28° 06q07+), falls within the quarter degree square sheet 2428AC Vaalwater.

Although the imagery can *only* be ordered directly from the NGI, the 1:50 000 topo sheets . as well as maps of many other types and scales . can be purchased from the Government Printer's offices in Pretoria; or from the only authorised private agency, Maps for Africa, in Johannesburg (where of course you pay for the speed, assistance and convenience . and opportunity to look at other maps and books).

Contact Details

Chief Directorate, National Geo-spatial Information (NGI)

Rhodes Avenue, Mowbray, Cape

Private Bag X10, Mowbray 7705

Tel: 021 658 4300

Fax: 021 689 1351

e-mail: sales@ruraldevelopment.gov.za

website: www.ngi.gov.za

Government Printer

196, Paul Kruger Street, Pretoria

Private Bag X85, Pretoria 0001

Tel: 012 334 4571

Fax: 012 323 9574

Maps for Africa (Leon Olivier)

354, Jan Smuts Avenue, Craighall, Johannesburg 2196

Tel: 011 787 2751

Fax: 011 501 4739

e-mail: maps4africa@excelnet.co.za

WNC Point People


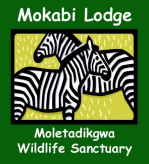


The Conservancy point person is essentially a committee of one (or more if necessary) which pays close attention to a specific issue on behalf of the Conservancy. The point person will be our go-to resource, ready with answers or with ways to find answers. The point person could also head up an "Interest Group" or gather together a few people to help him/her in his/her role, without creating a formal sub-committee. He or she will convey relevant news to the Executive Committee and to full membership at meetings and via the Newsletter. The point person will recommend appropriate actions for the Conservancy to take. Here is a list of subject matter and people:

Proposed Residential and Other Developments in the Waterberg . John Miller
Predators . Shaun McCartney, Conway Volek
Conservation (includes environment, flora, fauna, species) . Shaun McCartney
Waterberg Biosphere Reserve . Kelly Abram
Eskom Power Lines and other Eskom issues in the Waterberg . Richard Wadley
Water Quality and Quantity in the Waterberg . Richard Wadley
Fire in the Waterberg . Richard Wadley
Local Government . Richard Wadley, Anne Scotting
Community Outreach and Upliftment in the Waterberg . Peggy Parham
Alien and Invasive Vegetation in the Waterberg . Wendy Adams
Waste Recycling . Anne Scotting
Community Policing Forum . Ken Cowie
Relevant Activities outside of the Waterberg . Ken Cowie

**Wait, there's more in this Newsletter.
Learn a little about some of our members.**

Scroll on to Member Profiles.

Company	Contact	Contact Numbers	Email	Web Address	Brief Description
Antos Nest and Antos Hill Bush homes	Tessa and Ant Baber	014 755 4296 / 014 755 3584 / 083 287 2885	reservations@waterberg.net	www.waterberg.net and www.ridingsouthafrica.com	Antos Nest and Antos Hill are private bush homes in the magnificent malaria-free Waterberg. Enjoy fabulous horse riding safaris, guided bush walks or game drives on our privately owned property. Suitable for families, riders, honeymooners or just good friends travelling together
Driehoek Feeds / Voere	Janneman van der Merwe Karel van Vuuren Hanlee van der Walt	014 755 4370 014 755 4211 083 273 2743	Janneman@driehoek.co.za and info@driehoek.co.za	www.driehoekfeeds.co.za and www.equusfeeds.co.za	With over 20 years experience in milling, Driehoek Feeds manufactures a wide range of products. With a committed team of expert nutritionists, Driehoek Feeds has become a leader in the highly specialised Game Feeding industry. Driehoek has also recently launched the new Equus Range of horse feeds which compare to the highest international standards. For Cattle, Game, Poultry and other farm feeds, Driehoek combines research and science with value for money in every bag!
Jobedi Game Reserve 	Sharin	014 755 3993 / 086 612 9937 / 073 280 8670	game@jobedi.co.za	www.jobedi.co.za	Tucked away deep in the Waterberg Mountains is a private retreat. A purposely well kept secret set in a vast landscape of rocky terrain blessed with lush vegetation and scenic vistas of breathtaking beauty which lends itself to an abundance of peace and tranquillity. We offer self catering units and camping and are the only reserve in the area offering self drive game drives.
Kgama Eco-Ranch (Pty) Ltd 	Steven Klagsbrun	012 362 2280 (office) 012 362 5982 (fax) 083 450 7510	steven@kdv.co.za		Conservation . Fauna and Flora . Ecological enhancement. Selected hunting opportunities.
Kololo Game Reserve 	Elize Oosthuizen	014 721 0920 / 014 721 0080 / 014 721 9910	admin@kololo.co.za	www.kololo.co.za	Kololo Game Reserve is situated in the heart of the Waterberg biosphere: A malaria-free area, home to a large variety of game makes Kololo a perfect safari destination. Visit neighbouring reserves and view the Big 5 - lion, leopard, elephant, rhino and buffalo, or enjoy a sneak preview over the fence, from the comfort of your chalet at Kololo.
Kwalata Wilderness CC  Where the real Africa begins!	Reinhard Heuser	014 755 4104 / 014 755 4249 / 082 414 5622	reinhard@kwalata.com ; caroline@kwalata.com ; office@kwalata.com ; werner@kwalata.com	www.kwalata.com	Our company's main activity is hunting. Kwalata consists of 13 000ha. Kwalata boasts 4 of the Big 5 and numerous plains game species and birds.

Company	Contact	Contact Numbers	Email	Web Address	Brief Description
<p>Lapalala Wilderness</p> 	<p>Roger Collinson (General Manager) Wild Revolution; Jessica Babich / Patrick Bonior (PR)</p>	<p>(014) 755-4071 (Lapalala Main Office) 084 404-7800 (Wild Revolution)</p>	<p>roger@lapalala.com info@wildrevolution.co.za</p>	<p>www.lapalala.com</p>	<p>A private reserve that is dedicated to conservation, ecotourism, community upliftment and environmental education</p>
<p>Mokabi Lodge, Moletadikgwa Wildlife Sanctuary</p> 	<p>Lyn and Richard Wadley</p>	<p>014 755 3506 083 609 1425 083 609 1464</p>	<p>yeldaw@mweb.co.za</p>	<p>www.mokabilodge.com</p>	<p>A luxury stone and thatch self-catering lodge set in secluded woodland affords guests a comfortable and tranquil experience in the magnificent Waterberg. Numerous clearly marked and annotated walking trails and mountain bike routes on this private game reserve enable visitors to enjoy the diversity of plant, bird and animal life offered by the unique environment of the Waterberg Biosphere Reserve</p>
<p>M' solosolo Safari</p>  <p>Relax in the heart of the Waterberg biosphere, private but luxury!!!!!!</p>	<p>Dr. Volker and Marita Neemann</p>	<p>014 755 4106 / 083 450 6535</p>	<p>office@msolosolo.com</p>	<p>www.msolosolo.com</p>	<p>Nestled deep in the Waterberg, you enter a quiet, malaria- and crime-free paradise. Your German hosts have been successfully involved in the hunting and lodging business for over 12 years. Activities include hunting trips with a professional hunter, guided walks to bushman paintings, horse riding, clay target shooting, pistol shooting exercises, bird watching or game drives in an open 4x4 vehicle. We gladly organize elephant back rides, visits to the white lion park or a personal touch with rhinos. Longer trips e.g. to the Kruger National or Pilanesberg Park, sightseeing or tours to God's window or Tzaneen can also be organized.</p>
<p>Nkonka Bush Lodge, Nkonka African Safaris and Idube Safari Lodge</p> 	<p>Conway and Becky Volek</p>	<p>082 824 1750, 082 570 8494, 014 755 4170</p>	<p>conway@nkonka.co.za</p>	<p>www.nkonkabushlodge.co.za www.nkonka.co.za</p>	<p>Under the shade of the bushveld, broad leaved trees, the 4 star Nkonka Bush Lodge, provides guests with an escape to enjoy the true beauty of nature surrounding them. Enjoy the small, intimate nature of the camp on a fully or self catered basis. Informative game drives or walks with our experienced guide, mountain biking and trips to surrounding attractions can all be enjoyed during your tranquil bushveld getaway. There is also the option of a self catered rustic bush camp, which is exclusive to one party at a time, so you are able to enjoy the beautiful Waterberg in the manner you prefer.</p>

