

## **Media Release - 18 June 2003**

<< back >>

### **BOULDERS GETS AWARD FOR WHEELCHAIR-FRIENDLY BOARDWALK**

THE wheelchair-friendly boardwalk at the Boulders penguin colony near Simon's Town has helped earn the Cape Peninsula National Park and SANParks a national award for providing access to people with disabilities.

The Rob Filmer Awards are hosted annually by Eco-Access, the country's leading environmental/disability organisation. Filmer, a former conservationist with the former Transvaal Provincial Administration lost his sight and experienced renal failure through diabetes.

"SANParks has earned this special tribute due to its commitment and cumulative efforts to make most of its twenty national parks accessible to all visitors regardless of their physical, sensory and mental ability," said award presenters, Rob and Julie Filmer.

According to SANParksTourism Director, Glenn Philips, the accommodation facilities at most national parks have been converted to enable access by the mobility impaired, while many other destinations now have ramps, firm pathways, accessible ablutions and other enabling features.

"The elevated 220m boardwalk at the Boulders penguin sanctuary which forms part of the Cape Peninsula National Park is particularly innovative as it enables people with disabilities to view the birds at close range," says Gavin Bell, CPNP southern area manager.

This innovation, together with other SANP initiatives such as the PPC Cement-Discovery Trail at Addo Elephant National Park, the disability pages on the SANParks website, and the annual SANParks-sponsored visits for school children with disabilities were widely acclaimed by the awards adjudicators.

"While we have achieved much during the past year, there are still many ongoing challenges ahead to ensure that the parks are truly accessible to all people in order to truly become the pride and joy of all South Africans," says Chris Patton, SANParks tourism manager.

"This is further being realised at the Cape Peninsula National Park with the installation of a boardwalk around the Silvermine Dam, enabling people with disabilities to enjoy the popular Silvermine trail," says Bell.

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