

APPENDIX 1

Adaptive Planning for Marakele National Park Management Plan First Public Participation Meeting

10 May 2006

Transcript of meeting for comment by stakeholders

Facilitator: Prof Kevin Rogers
University of the Witwatersrand

The facilitator introduced the Adaptive Planning Process as stipulated by Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism norms and standards for National Protected Area management. He explained how this process would provide the first round of information on stakeholders' perspectives on a desired future state for Marakele National Park. SANParks staff would use this information to draft objectives and a management plan for Marakele that matches both stakeholder desires and SANParks' mandate. This first draft plan would be circulated to stakeholders and again workshopped with them before the end of July 2006. The plan would then be submitted to DEAT for approval. Once approved it would form the basis of management decision making for 5 years before being reviewed in accordance with the DEAT norms and standards. Annual reviews of performance will also be discussed with stakeholders, through their Park Forum, during the five year term of the management plan.

This document represents the outcome of the first stakeholder (public participation) meeting for Marakele National Park under the new Protected Areas and Biodiversity Acts. The section headings match those of the designated Adaptive Planning Process.

ADAPTIVE PLANNING FOR MARAKELE NATIONAL PARK

A vision for the private/public partnership

We are proud stakeholders in the Waterberg Biosphere Reserve (WBR), with Marakele National Park as a "jewel in the crown". WBR is a preferred adventure eco-tourism destination rooted in inclusive and honourable public/private partnerships. As partners we promote community participation and empowerment to balance economic and social development with conservation of our ecological and cultural heritage.

A vision for Marakele National Park (SANParks) in the partnership

We promote the wise, efficient and integrated management of the biodiversity of Marakele to maintain, or repair, a wilderness character, and associated benefits to regional economic, social and educational development.

□ Biodiversity refers to the species diversity, habitat (structural) diversity and diversity of ecosystem processes.

Context for the management of Marakele National Park

The range of legal, ecological, social and economic facts, conditions, causes and surroundings, that define the circumstances relevant to a problem provide the "context" for all decisions and are therefore important elements of any decision making environment.

- A regional Integrated Development Plan that is focussed on tourism, agriculture and mining.
- There is a good range of relevant legislation (e.g. Protected Areas Act, Biodiversity Act, National Environmental management Act, Water Act etc.) to guide decisions.
- Compatible adjacent land use and existing tourism infrastructure.
- The Waterberg Biosphere Reserve that is registered with IUCN.
- Many and varied existing contractual agreements between parties.

- The park ecosystem is currently fragmented by public roads and different land holdings.
- There are few poor quality internal roads that cater more for the 4x4 than sedan driver.
- A diversity of tourism infrastructure external to the park caters for the upper and lower income eco-tourist market. There is much less available for middle income tourists.
- A poor previously disadvantaged community contrasts with other stakeholders.
- The Park and Waterberg Biosphere Reserve present wilderness potential within easy reach of a major market, Gauteng.
- The fence bordering the park presents a “hard” boundary with potential private partners.

Values/ Principles to guide operations and decision making

Our values are the principles we use to evaluate the consequences of actions (or inaction), to propose and chose between alternative options and decisions. Values may be held by individuals, communities, organisations or even society. A group’s values must reflect the values of the individuals in that group.

- We have mutual respect for cultural, economic and environmental differences within the partnership.
- Recognising that ecosystems and biodiversity are complex, and that we will seldom have all the information we want to make decisions, we adopt a “learning by doing” approach to their management.
- We have a culture of honesty, cooperative sharing of expertise, and of empowerment and advancement of all parties.
- Clear definition of each stakeholder group’s expectations, and how we balance the distribution of costs and benefits, helps us avoid conflict.
- We keep our expectations and the distribution of costs and benefits within the partnership explicit, transparent and within biodiversity constraints.

Vital Attributes of the National Park and Greater Marakele

The few most important characteristics/properties of the system to be managed are its “vital attributes”. They may be may be technical, ecological, legal, historic, social or economic.

- There is a diversity of stakeholders, each of which brings knowledge and expertise to the partnership but SANParks is recognised as being able to provide particular skills in conservation and tourism.
- Marakele is an important element of the IUCN recognised Waterberg Biosphere Reserve and falls within a South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) recognised biodiversity hotspot.
- Eco-tourism provides a long term economic option in the region. There is currently a good diversity of adventure tourism activities and infrastructure based on both cultural (pioneer country) and resource (wildlife and outdoor) markets.
- A mountain massif that provides a large altitudinal range, a wide-open-space visual aesthetic and associated biodiversity within a short distance. Many headwater streams arise within the park.
- Vital biodiversity attributes include the vulture breeding colonies, wild dogs (20% of the Southern African metapopulation is conserved in Marakele), cycads, and a very wide range of vegetation types from Kalahari bushveld in the lowlands, to fynbos elements on the mountain.
- The area is malaria and bilharzia free and located near a large regional market (Gauteng).

Determinants of Marakele vital attributes

A determinant is a factor or process that ensures the persistence of a vital attribute.

- A local topography that presents a spectacular and undeveloped massif.
- High ecological integrity of the diverse landscapes and vegetation types.
- A regional land use that is highly compatible with biodiversity and National Protected

- Area conservation.
- Good tourist flow from regional, national and international sources.
- The core conservation area is a declared National Park and is within a SANBI recognised biodiversity hot spot.

Threats to Marakele vital attributes and determinants

Threats are factors within, or outside, a partnership that undermine its values and inhibit the pursuit of the vision. Threats are also factors or processes that inhibit ecosystem determinants or vital attributes.

- There is currently a low level of trust among partners and lines of communication, accountability and decision making between partners are poor.
- There are currently no established “rules of the game” for a private/public partnership.
- There is no clear, agreed upon economic model for either the Marakele National Park, or Waterberg Biosphere Reserve, making it difficult to assess the economic viability of the park or potential tourism products.
- Development within Marakele, and its surroundings, is currently proceeding without proper guidelines. Regional guidelines are being developed but must still be implemented.
- Marakele does not currently seem to be delivering tourist expectations, particularly in respect of being a big five Park. Poor roads also contribute to tourist dissatisfaction.
- There is no clear strategy for conservation of Marakele itself, or for its role in the Greater Marakele Region. It is therefore difficult to; (1) judge the biodiversity constraints for development, (2) provide the basis for effective biodiversity management (including management of elephant and predator populations and alien species), and (3) define cost/benefit relationships of resource sharing among partners.
- The possible expansion of mining activities along the southern park boundary.

SANParks Management Objectives for Marakele

Objectives should be aimed at overcoming threats to ensure the persistence of vital attributes and/or their determinants. We can recognise objectives that promote the private/public partnership and those that relate to SANParks’ mandate to conserve biodiversity, and promote sustainable use of a National Protected Area.

Partnership objectives

- Build trust and promote equitable empowerment across the private/public partnership.
- Catalyse explicit understanding and decisions on the distribution of costs and benefits of resource sharing among partners under different management (especially boundary) scenarios.

Biodiversity objective

- Manage a national biodiversity hotspot to maintain its wilderness character and deliver agreed ecosystem goods and services to our constituency.

Infrastructure and development objectives

- Develop and apply an economic model for Marakele that is appropriate to its biodiversity characteristics and is explicit in its consideration of the distribution of costs and benefits within the private/public partnership.
- Develop and promote tourism products and infrastructure appropriate to this model and its biodiversity constraints.

Response to external threats objective

- Support partners in conserving the biodiversity and wilderness qualities of the Waterberg Biosphere Reserve while achieving our national biodiversity custodianship mandate for Marakele.

Close of meeting

As the meeting drew to a close the facilitator was asked what needed to be done to make sure that action was taken and progress was made. Kevin confirmed that he would send out a transcript of the meeting within a week and reiterated that SANParks would use this to draft a management plan for everyone's consideration. He also pointed out that if the result was to be a true private/public partnership it would be up to each and every partner to make sure it worked. It would have to be a team effort and we cannot expect one partner to take on the full burden of responsibility.

NB: The full Marakele management plan which SANParks staff developed in response to this one day adaptive planning workshop can be found on the SANParks website at http://www.sanparks.org/conservation/park_man/. It was welcomed by stakeholders at the second stakeholder meeting as a very constructive way forward for a participative private/public partnership.