

PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT

Vision: "To engage in the conservation, rehabilitation and protection of the natural environment in the Wakkerstroom area."

Mission: "We intend to put our Vision into effect by conserving Wakkerstroom biodiversity through a biological inventory, land protection, ecological management of natural heritage, maintenance and education "

ROAD FORWARD

To mark the 25th anniversary of the WNHA, the committee decided this year , to go back to the original " how's and why's " of the association and to see whether we are still meeting the objectives as set out many years ago.

We then set up five projects as to the "How do we make our vision and mission a reality"

- 1. Data base for conservation planning and project review.*
- 2. Controlling alien vegetation within Wakkerstroom area.*
- 3. Monitoring of environmental pollution, with specific focus on litter.*
- 4. Implementing a WNHA Ambassador programme.*
- 5. Co-ordination of interested groups.*

Progress in these areas has been positive and extremely rewarding, although the road is still long and windy. These project progress reports will be part of our AGM newsletter.

In order to promote WNHA we have produced a new marketing flyer outlining our Vision, Mission, Projects and Sponsorship Drive to replace existing WNHA signs that will allow for sponsors own branding. On the reverse side of this flyer we have produced a village map, highlighting all hides, selected landmarks and outlining the proposed protected environment area. This will be an added benefit to visitors, giving details on how to get to these hides. We will also be erecting a number of directional signs to the wetland entrance gate.

We are working closely with all other associations and bodies within the area and meet on a regular basis to look at broad issues that can and do impact on this village. As part of these discussions we are looking at improved heritage and tourism signage that also covers street and stop street signs. Yes, some say that it is the responsibility of council, and it certainly is, but past experience has shown that it does not always happen!!! For this reason we believe that we cannot sit back and do nothing!!!

The slow pace of the approval, for the application declaring Wakkerstroom a "Protected Environment", is of great concern.

The ongoing mining applications which if unchallenged will have lasting impact on our water resources and environmental sustainability.

There is a total lack of municipal understanding and support of infrastructural maintenance. This covers: sewerage, village dump, digging up of water pipes, dumping of soil, roads, signage, together with a total disregard for the importance of tourism growth for increased job opportunities.