



WNHA NEWSLETTER –

March 2013

Our Mission Statement

“To engage in the conservation, rehabilitation and protection of the natural environment in the Wakkerstroom area”

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our AGM for 2012 was held in December at Wetlands Country House and Sheds. Our thanks to all at Wetlands for hosting the AGM. It is an exceptional venue and we were well looked after by the management. The meeting was very well attended and our thanks to those who supported us.



The proceedings began with the U/19 soccer side “Abacaphuni” entertaining us with some song and dance out in the beautiful gardens. Vusi Sibiyi, the team manager, then thanked us for our sponsorship of the side, which is in the third year. It was clear from his eloquent speech that our sponsorship has made a difference.

The meeting proceeded with the main items being the chairman’s report and the election of a new committee:

- Rupert Lawlor - Chairman
- Sean Pyott - Treasurer
- Diana Osborne - Secretary

Committee members - Moira Anderson, Kristi Garland, Andre Steenkamp, Vusi Sibiyi and Graham Mellor.

Rupert has held the position of Chairman for some years now and this will be his last year. Graham Mellor too, has given a lot of time to WNHA affairs for many years and this will be his last year. **So we need new blood.** Please feel free to contact either Rupert or Graham if you are keen to get involved. It is essential that there is continuity and then, new ideas.

BEHIND THE SCENES

As you might know the WNHA, together with the Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA) and the Wakkerstroom Protected Environment Management Committee (WPEMC), have for many years now been trying to move forward with the Protected Environment status for the Wakkerstroom area. There have been some holdups at Council level. We have in the last week received the official support letter from the Dr Pixley ka Isaka Seme Council. MTPA will be the directors of this declaration procedure. This is tremendously important for the area in terms of conservation and fundraising for conservation projects. We have to be patient however as the formalities could take another 6 months or so to complete.



VLEI NEWS

The gravel walkway, recently built, was slightly damaged by recent rains. This has been repaired at no cost by NABA INVESTMENTS. Our thanks go to them.



The funding from the Telkom Foundation has been received. This was to be used for the new boardwalk. The rebuilding will commence near the start of winter once water levels recede.

Funding from Savmore Colliery is still available and the plan is to use this to construct a viewing platform on the west side of the Amersfoort Road. This will be accessible from the normal car park for the WOW and Beck Hides.

Mpumalanga Working for Wetlands, which falls under SANBI (South African National Biodiversity Institute), contacted the WNHA late last year and offered to do 500 metres of fencing for us at their cost. We identified a section on the north side of the vlei starting close to the Amersfoort Road. This work was completed early this year. They have indicated that they will do more fencing for us this year. We are in the process of identifying the area most in need of new fencing. Our thanks go to SANBI for this assistance.

FIRE

Time flies, so maybe it is time to start thinking about the upcoming veld fire season. We did send out a circular in May last year with fire preventative and fighting tips. If anybody would like this re- sent, please contact us or alternatively download the document from our facebook page.

Remember there is an organisation called the **Seme Fire Protection Association**. If you are a smallholder or farmer it might well be worth joining this association. The Seme FPA has been addressed by Martin Bolton of **Working on Fire**. This is a government funded programme that trains teams of fire fighters for different areas. The good news is that they are at presently looking at training a team for the Wakkerstroom area.

A team consists of 22 fire-fighters, 3 crew leaders and 1 driver. The teams are fully equipped and their salaries are paid for by the programme. They do however require an office, toilet facilities and a fax machine and a suitable **vehicle**. They provide their own container for storage.



They are available for fire fighting, creating firebreaks, fire protection, alien plant clearing, etc. The team can be booked by contacting the FPA Fire Marshall. Each team is given an area to cover with a 50km radius.

Working on Fire hope to have a team in Volksrust and another in Wakkerstroom within the year, thus we need to give a lot of thought as to how we are going to provide a vehicle for them. Any help or suggestions will be most welcome. If you require any further information on this please contact Andre Steenkamp at BirdLife South Africa Wakkerstroom Tourism and Education Centre – details below.

UNDER 19 SOCCER TEAM

The current season is nearly at an end and the team is lying in sixth place on the log having won 14 games, lost 9 and drawn 2. This is an encouraging position for them and with two games to go we hope that they can move up a place in the log.

SHIRTS AND CAPS

Please remember that WNHA branded golf and T shirts and caps are for sale at Wakkerstroom Trading. They are good quality items and are a fund raising exercise, so please support us.

e- TV

On New Year's Day, e-TV had a slot on Wakkerstroom and the WNHA, on a programme called Kaelo (stories of hope). Kaelo is a regular feature on e-TV, highlighting work done by the Telkom Foundation. It was great coverage for our town and vleis. We have received a complimentary copy of the episode. Watch this space for details of when we will be showing it for those who missed it on TV.

MEMBERSHIP

The 2013 subscriptions are due and notices have been sent out. Please remember to pay your subs, so that we can continue to finance our activities. Subs per family are only R200.00.

Some members deposit cash or cheques into the bank -the bank charges on this are very high, so please try and avoid this. Rather pay by electronic transfer or give the cash to one of us below.

BANKING DETAILS

Bank : FNB

Account name : WNHA

Account number: 6207 4355 134

Branch number : 270543 (if required add two zeros to the end of this number)

Please contact us if you have any suggestions as to new projects or fund raising ideas that we can investigate.

We need your input and feedback

COMMITTEE CONTACT DETAILS

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DATES OF MEETINGS FOR 2013



5th April

7th June

2nd Aug

4th Oct

29th Nov

@ 16h30

BirdLife South Africa
Wakkerstroom Centre

8th Dec AGM details to be advised

Remember to join our face book page. We encourage you to post your sightings and photographs of the area during your stay or adventures.

