

# **NORTHERN REGION CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR THE 2019 AGM & EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING IN DULLSROOM**

## **Finances**

The 2018 accounts for FOSAF NR and the Flyfishing Publications cc accounts for 2018/19 have been circulated to Exco. As the honorary auditor is now 83 we cannot expect him to keep up this service for much longer. The costs are about R550 per annum as he has now retired and only accepts small gifts.

We have about R20 000,00 in our two bank accounts and may have to request additional funding from National by July 2019 unless additional sources of income can be found.

## **Donors**

Millstream continue to be a major sponsor of FOSAF NR for which we are very grateful and in 2018 donated R46 000 towards the running of the Region.

## **Membership**

Membership last year was about 250. The commencement of the club membership scheme has increased this by at least 100 mainly through the decision of the TFFC to make it obligatory for all its members. 25 members of Jacaranda joined but this is expected to increase in 2020. We are still awaiting a decision from DFFA (about 200 members) and Stithians. Haenertsberg have rejected the offer but made a donation in December 2018 of R10 000 instead.

The two small clubs, Sabie and Clarens, with about 20 members each have been approached but appear to be financially constrained.

One of the problems encountered is that most clubs delay the decision until the AGM, and then it is important to ensure that key members of the committee are fully detailed and prepared to sell the concept to members.

## **Legislation**

Have given full support through the media to the NEMBA/Trout issue campaign.

## **Northern Region Projects**

### **FOSAF books**

Sales of books totalled R11000,00 down from R14000,00 last year. A fair number of books have been donated as prizes for flyfishing events.

### **Communications: Website, Facebook & Twitter**

Steady progress was made during the year but and there is little doubt that this contributes substantially to the awareness of FOSAF activities. A replacement is still being sought for Peter Arderne.

### **Yellowfish Working Group**

We continue to send a monthly newsletter to some 360 supporters and also extend the readership by placing a link on Facebook and Twitter. Unfortunately lack of FOSAF funds and a reduction in support from provincial conservation departments has resulted in no further annual conferences being held since 2015.

### **Steenkampsberg Environmental Initiative/GLPE**

The SEI is now defunct and its responsibilities have been taken over in the main by the committee of the Greater Lakenvlei Landowners Association. Although the GLPELA has had

marked success in opposing several prospecting applications in the Dullstroom area, and is currently opposing a new application, they have not been able to halt the illegal WPB Colliery at the head of the Elands River. This is a major concern as the provisions of the water use licence have been completely ignored.

A hearing was scheduled at the Water Tribunal on 16/17 April which would certainly have halted the mining, but the hearing was postponed due to the fact that the DWS submitted their defence affidavit on 15 April, a completely unacceptable act. Rather than wait for the postponed hearing we have contacted the blue scorpions to see if they are prepared to act.

In addition, civil action is planned. To date the coalition handling this matter have spent R120 000 on legal fees and further fund raising is underway to ensure that the civil action can be paid for.

### **Mpumalanga Trout Association**

This organisation continues to function well with about R260 000 in the bank having contributed at least R330 000 to the trout mapping and the legal fees required for the NEMBA and the draft aquaculture processes. The success of the MTA can be ascribed primarily to the Van der Merwe's of Lunsklip. The plan now is to incorporate KZN and Gauteng/Free State/Limpopo into a Northern Trout Association. The 3 trout producers have agreed to join and thereafter we will have to find a person to recruit the large number of KZN trout destinations and other interested parties.

### **Youth education and related issues.**

We have had a year of highs and lows. Our focus on getting involved with schools has been somewhat overshadowed by the pollution and allied problems in the Vaal and Gauteng rivers, catchment areas and impoundments. Without a doubt the way to go for us is to liaise and work with other groups who are already involved in education and also in fly fishing and associated fields thus avoiding possible duplication and our additional manpower/financial expenditure. We have tried delegating responsibilities but we have found that this is not a currently workable solution due to lack of volunteers – even of 'forced' volunteers. Our efforts have also been hampered by the current stagnation of the St Stithians Angling Club. Specifically this is the Boys College club which is/was a major contributor of numbers to our Stithians Flyfishers which is the umbrella organisation founded by the undersigned many years ago. Stithians Flyfishers includes scholars, teachers, boys and girls alumni and is also open to the general public on a vetting basis. Work is underway by ourselves to get the school fly fishing back on its feet and to also incorporate the Girls College. The membership modus operandi of Stithians Flyfishers is thus in limbo but we have taken the decision in the meantime to renew Stithians Flyfishers membership of FOSAF and I will discuss further on membership recruitment in the relevant section at the AGM.

The Jacaranda Club continue to do great work in spreading the gospel and a special thanks to Roy, Cynthia and their team.

We have also been giving talks, field demonstrations and 'e-lessons' to St Stithians several satellite primary and secondary schools in Gauteng and Mpumalanga and in addition working relationships have been forged with many of the major secondary schools in Soweto, Diepsloot, Alexandra and Tembisa as well as with other private schools in the area. We have also been assisting with many of the various schools' matrics' end of year projects.

At present we do not need specific funding for these projects as we are working in alliances where the other parties have already invested in same. We do have the Chair of Rotary Sandton as probable back-up for our project funding as/when required. We are very aware as per

'Finances' section above, we need to make plans well before middle 2020. We will draw up a business plan for EXCO's prior approval once the dust has settled and we see a clear way forward. We are allied with Mike Mitchell's connection Eco Culture and also with Rand Water's Water Wise and their programmes.

We have several youngsters from the townships and informal settlements who we are taking once every month or so for local fly fishing and fun on the sections of unpolluted streams in the area and also at the St Stithians dam. One very promising young lady, Sanele Buthelezi, who is an environmental activist in Soweto, shows huge potential, character and enthusiasm and we hope she can progress up the fly fishing ladder and who knows, possibly join our NR Committee in the future.

### **River health**

FOSAF NR has been updating the Vaal Crisis on a monthly basis in the YWG newsletters, our last one being this month April. Please refer to same for the nuts and bolts. For the past year, ourselves and our allies have been pressing for immediate Government remedial action and we as well as other lobbyists have called for a State Of Emergency to facilitate quick direct funding by Treasury. The President has been made well-aware and the pressure is on him to deliver. The crux of the matter is that SANDF funding has 'dried up' and they are unable to continue their valuable work.. R341 million has belatedly been allocated specifically for the SANDF but is not yet paid. Municipal management already state this allocation will be used by them to cover 'all sorts of problems' as they deem fit - not just water! The mind boggles. Expert advice is that well over one billion Rand dedicate solely to water will be needed just to plug all the emergency gaps in the mid Vaal Sewage Pump Stations and Waste Water Treatment Plants.

FOSAF NR have in the past year forged alliances with SAVE, ARMOUR, Heal The Hennops, Eco Culture, Greenpeace and with the Federation for a Sustainable Environment. FOSAF NR have been vociferously present at many meetings held by the ANC, DWS, DEA, COGTA and Emfuleni Local Municipality on the Vaal Crisis. The undersigned has represented FOSAF as well as SAVE (on which he is now an EXCO member) in the media including on Carte Blanche and in a one-on- one interview with Sputnik Ratau, the DWS spokesperson, on Classic FM. In addition the undersigned represented FOSAF and testified at the SA Human Rights Commission Of Enquiry on the Vaal Crisis. There is no doubt that interest group pressure and media coverage has exposed the rot and broadcast the problems to the nation. Even the fly fishing naysayers and flat-earthers, mainly with vested interests, have ceded that the Vaal and environs are in a catastrophic mess. Some of the guilty parties are being brought to court by SAVE in a couple of weeks on 15 May. SAVE's work and aim is for all parties from municipal management through to COGTA, DWS, DAFF and DEA right up to the Presidency are to be held responsible and accountable and to face the consequences of their malfeasance in court. This also includes court orders laid against individuals in these sectors..

The mid Vaal hotspots, namely the Leeukuil, Rietspruit and Kliprivier confluences with the Vaal, continue to pump about 350 million litres of raw sewage a day into the river. All the good work of the SANDF to date has now been unravelled by lack of/misplacement of fresh SANDF-allocated funding. The E. coli, cyanobacteria and other germs/bacteria continue uncontrolled way, way over acceptable maximum limits for humans. Unabated discharges of plastic, chemical and abattoir discharges are also of critical concern. Large entities such as Sasol are now also being held accountable for their clandestine pollution.

It is refreshing that nowadays many of the general public as well as various organisations are contacting us for information on fly fishing, the Vaal and also on our youth education programmes. But we still have a long way to go.

We would also like to acknowledge and thank the many unheralded anonymous whistle blowers who have provided us with substantiated facts on corruption and inefficiency and also on wilful and illegal river pollution and dumping. Unfortunately the majority of the local police do not act on any formal complaints/reports we have lodged with them.

### **Succession**

We have still to appoint a vice-chairman and find a replacement for Peter Arderne.

### **Sundry**

Please diarise the Outdoor Fishing Festival to be held at Cradle Moon Lodge, Cradle Of humankind to be held over 28/29 May 2020. FOSAF will be represented there.

Peter Arderne has kindly invited the Northern Region committee and families for a fly fishing and 'bonding' weekend at Middelpunt the weekend of 21/23 June this year. Many thanks for the kind gesture and we all look forward to a relaxing and entertaining time!

Many thanks to all my Northern Region team for all the hard work and support you have given this year. Difficult but challenging times for us all. Thanks go to Stuart and Liz for all the work and backing they have given me and for guiding me along the way in Secretariat matters. We wish them all the best for their future in the Western Cape. A special thanks to Peter for his unstinting work, wisdom and backing to hold our Chapter all together. Thanks also to Vicki for keeping our books in order and for always being willing to help us out whenever needed. Our thoughts are always with Bill Mincher who is progressing well in his recovery from illness. Thanks to Ilan, National EXCO and all members for your tremendous support, efforts and camaraderie during both pleasant as well as some gruelling times over the past year. We wish the incoming committee all the best for the coming year.

**Chris Williams**  
**Northern Region Chapter Chair**