

NORTHVAAL CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR THE 2013 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

1. Finances

The 2011/12 audited accounts for Flyfishing Publications cc were circulated in mid-2012 and the 2012 accounts for FOSAF Northvaal have been submitted to the auditor.

Our total reserves in the FOSAF Money Market and the Flyfishing Publications Investment Accounts have declined from R230K in Feb. 2012 to R218K this year. This is mainly due to the sharp drop in book sales and the increase in expenses on the SEI project and general travel costs. The budgets for FOSAF Northvaal and Flyfishing Pubs cc are attached.

2. Millstream

Once again we must single out Millstream for their very generous support of Northvaal. This very successful and well managed destination in Dullstroom continues to help us finance many of the projects that Northvaal undertake.

3. Membership

Despite the publicity given to the SEI and FOSAF's efforts to resolve the NEMBA issue there appears to be, with a few exceptions, very little appreciation in the flyfishing industry for the hard work done by FOSAF. Much more attention is given to festivals, which venue is 'hot' and what flies are working rather than the far less glamorous issues related to the future of flyfishing in SA.

This is an old and tired issue but if not addressed will lead the slow downfall of FOSAF. A focus on clubs is clearly not working and the fact that there are few benefits associated with membership is a serious kink in our armour. A complete new model is required and a refocus of what FOSAF aims to achieve.

4. Environmental Issues

In Mpumalanga we are very concerned about the increasing impact of mining and particularly the threat to the 'Trout Triangle' and hence our participation in the SEI (see under 'Projects').

5. Legislation

It is doubtful whether the NEMBA or its supporting regulations with regard to alien fish will be resolved soon. There are a number of queries regarding this matter after the last report from the environment committee. It is hoped that some of the questions will be answered during the course of the AGM.

South Africa is known to have good environmental legislation although it must be said that both NEMBA and NEMPAA are poorly drafted pieces of legislation. Be that as it may, the interpretation and implementation of legislation by the various Government Departments leaves much to be desired. The RHP is all but defunct and the fishing licensing system is poorly managed if at all. If FOSAF is to contribute to proper fisheries management we need to put more effort in this arena.

6. Northvaal Projects

Favoured Flies Card Collection.

This project, supervised by Geoff Taylor, was taken on to provide a benefit for paid-up members in the absence of a new book this year. For the last 10 years a new FOSAF book has been offered at a much reduced price as a benefit to members.

In November Geoff's team produced the "Mayfly Collection" of cards which was a significant improvement on the 2011 Collection. However, in view of the limited interest for this type of product and the high cost per unit the print run was restricted to 100 units and these were used mainly as gifts for website contributors and affiliate members.

Fly of the month project

Bill Mincher is working on a new concept which may be put forward as a proposed project at a later stage but as yet we have little detail of this.

FOSAF Books

The downward trend in sales continues with only R35K in total forecast for the 2012/13 year. Sales through tackle shops has dropped significantly, but fortunately sales through PSD appear to have picked up in response to the price reductions. Attempts have been made to market through several websites but this has met with no success.

Website

At the moment we are recording about 200 – 300 unique visits per week and there appears to be a small but steady climb in these figures.

Although this is considered a national project there is still a lack of input from other chapters.

Yellowfish Working Group.

This is also considered a national project and Northvaal believes that its achievements do much to enhance the image of FOSAF, particularly among conservationists, aquatic scientists and researchers.

The 2012 National Conference was held in Stellenbosch on 15 April primarily to give members in the Western Cape and neighbouring provinces the opportunity to attend, and to focus on the progress of the rehabilitation of the Cederberg streams. The proceedings were produced and distributed.

The 2013 conference will be on the Vaal close to Deneysville at the Vaal Streams resort. Although its proximity to Gauteng and the attraction of a choice flyfishing resort should guarantee good attendance it is apparent that many provincial and state institutions are increasingly loathe finance their employees' attendance. In view of the alarming

deterioration of our waterways, especially those where our indigenous fishes are found, this is an unfortunate trend.

SEI (The Steenkampsberg Environmental Initiative)

This organisation was formed in May 2011 in response to an increase in the number of prospecting licence applications, mainly by smaller miners, in the Trout Triangle. FOSAF Northvaal has entered a coalition with EWT, Birdlife SA, EEPOG, Mpumalanga Wetland Forum with the objective of supporting Mpumalanga Parks Board (MTPA) in eventually having at least 200 000 hectares of the Steenkampsberg from just south of Belfast to north of Dullstroom declared a "Protected Environment". The first step in the formal process was taken in August when the MTPA submitted a Section 49 application to the DMR to exclude this area from prospecting/mining for at least 3 years.

It now appears that for reasons of their own the DMR in Witbank have failed to forward the Sec. 49 application to the Minister. In response to this the SEI, supported by the Mpumalanga is urgently working on a much smaller 17 000 ha area comprising most of the vulnerable Lakenvlei wetland with a view to having this gazetted within 12 months a "Protected Environment" and then expanding from this base.

In the meantime the SEI has to fight an increasing number of applications, mainly from smaller miners with little experience. Virtually all these applications are fatally flawed and supported by very poor work by the consultants. This is probably due to the fact that the DMR do not have the capacity to evaluate these applications and in any case seem hell bent on supporting each and every application in the face of very well argued opposition. The move towards 'Protected Environments' may alleviate the problem to a certain degree, but the only long term solution is for the State to proclaim large tracts of higher rainfall grassland as 'No Go' areas for mining. This was promised over a year ago and the NGO's provided their input but as yet nothing more has happened.

Despite the efforts of the SEI to protect the Steenkampsberg it is sad to report that a number of landowners cannot be bothered to assist. For example the team carrying out the assessments are constantly being delayed by landowners who do not honour appointments and others who cannot produce a simple quarter page affidavit because "they are too busy". On the other hand we do appreciate the regular donations made by a FOSAF member, John Grunn towards this project

Other

Northvaal is also responsible for supplying content to the FOSAF page in 'Flyfishing' magazine every second month and material for the first emagazine, 'Flyfishing Tails' which appeared as a monthly issue in 2012 and will switch to a quarterly issue this year.

We were invited to participate in the Fly Fishing Expo which was first scheduled for April 2012 and then postponed until October and then cancelled entirely, probably due to lack of support.

Estimated allocation of time to projects etc in 2012

SEI : 30%
Website: 25%

YWG: 25%
Book sales: 15%
Other: 5%