

NORTHERN REGIONS CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR THE 2017 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

1. Finances

The 2016 accounts for FOSAF and the Fly Fishing Publications cc accounts for 2016/17 have been submitted to the auditor and are expected to be audited by end-May. As the honorary auditor is now 82 we cannot expect him to keep up this service for much longer. The costs are about R500 per annum as he has now retired and only accepts small gifts. Reserves have now dropped to R20 000 and even with the reimbursement of about R20 000 for the share of membership fees later in 2017 we can expect to run out of funds by April 2018. Please find attached the budget for 2017/18.

2. Millstream & John Grun

Millstream continue to be a major sponsor NR for which we are very grateful. After several years of generous donations from John Grun he has now discontinued this practice. We appreciate the donations he made which were significant amounts.

3. Membership

There was a 17% increase in membership in 2016 compared to 2015 but this was from a low base and we really need to double membership if we wish to continue to carry out meaningful programmes. It is hoped that we will be able to sign up members at the June Expo. Sadly, very few of the people we signed at F3T film showing last year have renewed membership.

4. Environmental Issues

Increased focus has been placed on the pollution and illegal netting of the Vaal by better contact with anglers and guides. This is particularly important with the increase of illegal netting. We have had cooperation from some of the police stations in the area but there is little sign of this type of activity decreasing. Pollution of course remains a problem. Refer also <http://www.fosaf.co.za/read-Current-205.php>.

The mining issue is covered in the SEI report.

5. Legislation

Although this item will be covered by the Environmental Committee, Northvaal has become far more involved in the last year either directly or through the MTA. We are very appreciative of the assistance rendered by the National Chairman, Ian Lax, and by Ian Cox who have devoted much time on the problems originating from the uncompromising attitude towards trout adopted by the aquatic scientists of the MTPA

6. Fly Tying & Flyfishing Expo June 24/25

As the event will be held in the Gauteng area this year the stand will be manned by NR committee and supporters. NR will supply new banners and name tags and will recruit members and sell books amongst other activities.

7. Northvaal Projects

FOSAF Books

Sales declined to R13 000 during the last year and R11 000 is predicted for 2017/18 but there is a good opportunity to sell books at the June Expo.

A fairly large number of books have been donated to various fly fishing events.

Website & Facebook

The website had a further facelift last year. Visits which have reached over 2000 unique visits per month is still below that of comparable sites. FOSAF Facebook and FOSAF Twitter sites are acting as blogs and directing as much traffic as possible to the website. The webmaster has recently initiated a new system of increasing traffic to the site.

It should also be noted that there has been no increase in the monthly fee from the webmaster since his appointment.

As from March 2018 Peter Arderne will cease his duty as secretary to the NR which includes communications and a replacement will have to be found for him.

Yellowfish Working Group.

The final proposal put forward by the Exec committee of the YWG has been rejected by the Exco so a way forward needs to be sought.

SEI (The Steenkampsberg Environmental Initiative)

The Greater Lakenvlei Protected Environment of 14 000 ha. has at last been gazetted. Although landowners were keen to set up similar PE's in the Dullstroom area they had been warned that virtually all the PE's country-wide were merely paper conservancies with little attention being paid to the management by the landowners and their respective committees. However, the GLPE has already elected a very competent chair and committee who must prove to be a model PE before further PE's can be considered.

The bad news is that preparations for an open cast coal mine on the borders of the GLPE commenced at the same time. This activity is illegal but it took a lawyer's letter from the CER and the threat of an urgent interdict by Dr Koos Pretorius' Federation for a Sustainable Environment to halt them. Much of this news has been posted on FB and our website. The SEI is very grateful for the help rendered by the CER and especially by Dr Pretorius. As the environmental NGO's cannot render any financial support as this has already been committed to the infamous Mabola case and Dr Pretorius is already involved in several other cases we must fund the court action ourselves. Appeals for funding have been launched.

The Mpumalanga Trout Association (MTA)

To date R516 000 has been raised since Sept 2015 to fund the NEMBA campaign and about R280 000 remains in the kitty. It appears that KZN have supported the campaign

well in the past, but unfortunately Trout SA report that there is resistance in the Western Cape who are large producers of trout and very little has been contributed by other provinces.

It was pointed out that while a huge amount of money had to be raised to fund the NEMBA campaign, now that a real threat to the environment in the form of mining had cropped it meant that little money was left for civil society to oppose this issue.

Youth issues

NR views this as an extremely important project. Mike Mitchell and I have made very good progress with about 5500 black kids reached in Cosmo City and Diepsloot. More events planned over the year. To limit the costs the team had been able to piggy back on similar road shows.

Succession

A new secretary will have to be found this year as Peter Arderne will resign in March 2018

Chris Williams
Northvaal Chapter Chairman