

This is the **FOSAF National Chairman's 2019/20 Annual Report** presented to and adopted by a virtual electronic Executive Committee Meeting (Exco) held on 10 June 2020:

INTRODUCTION

This report is written at a time when the world faces difficulties on so many fronts. COVID 19 has kept most of us in a lockdown of one category or another, severely disrupting the economy, health and social fabric of our country. As a result, our AGM and face to face Exco had to be postponed. Hopefully we will still be able to get together in the Cape once this current turmoil has passed.

It's my privilege to present this overview to FOSAF's members, leadership, partners and stakeholders. The report will as usual, follow our strategic framework.

EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT:

The State:

Our court application against DEA is nearing the final stretch of the legal process. The parties heads of argument have been filed and once certain additional requirements have been attended to the matter can be set down for a hearing. In the current situation it is uncertain when this case will be heard but we will keep all our stakeholders informed of developments. It is important to repeat that our legal team are acting *pro amico* and for this we are extremely grateful.

The Aquaculture Development Bill which had been tabled in Parliament in 2018 did not make it through the legislative process and eventually lapsed. As far as we are aware DEFF have not re-tabled the bill and instead it is now the subject of discussions between the sector and the Minister. This arose out of an audience with the then newly appointed Minister, at which we were able to present the sector's concerns and reservations. At this stage it's hard to know exactly where things stand. However, the sector has been clear that the ADB in its current form will not result in the development and growth of the sector. The discussions have centred on how the sector can make a contribution to much needed of development, jobs and growth of the economy. Hopefully a more pragmatic approach will emerge that allows for a win-win.

FOSAF continues to be a member of Trout SA and through it Aquaculture SA. Through these organisations we as a relatively small group of active flyfishers have been able to stay in touch with key developments affecting flyfishing interests. We have registered as I&APs with various Departments and parliament which ensures the receipt of vital information when this goes out as part of public consultation processes. One serious challenge is that we often receive late notice which affects our ability to respond effectively.

Our participation in TSA and Aqua SA continues to facilitate assistance from and access to national commodity based and business formations like AGRI SA, AGBIZ and BUSA. TSA plays an important role in Agri SA's Commodity Chamber which allows for much influence and lobbying. Our policy-based approach has meant that our rational thinking is appreciated and endorsed by many partners and other stakeholders we interact with

It is important to recognise the huge contributions of all those people and organisations who have kindly donated and invested money and time in support of the trout value chain. We could not do what we have achieved without their support for which we are extremely grateful. We will continue to keep you informed about our progress in these matters.

One other important development centres on the draft freshwater fisheries policy presently being finalised by DEFF. FOSAF made a submission urging a more pragmatic and sustainable approach to some of the ideas (particularly around gill nets) evident in the circulated draft. We are led to understand that this policy will find its way to NEDLAC for debate and consideration by the end of June. We have requested and received an undertaking that we be kept informed of progress in this regard.

Despite some antagonism and lack of mutual trust, FOSAF remains committed to dealing constructively, honestly, transparently and frankly with government in the interests of flyfishing stakeholders. While we do not always see eye to eye with them, I am certain that our contributions are nevertheless valued and welcomed by those in the official agencies we engage with.

Public:

FOSAF continues to manifest a regular presence on the internet and social media platforms. Peter Arderne's indefatigable spirit and energy keep things ticking over effectively. How he manages to ensure that his countrywide team of reporters stay in touch and provide a regular flow of stories and reports, is a testament to his fortitude and persuasive abilities. Our thanks must go to him and Andrew Vester (our webmaster) as they ensure that FOSAF continues to maintain a visible presence. Despite Exco's best efforts we have been unable to find a team of young people to take over the enormous amount of work Peter gets through. The Yellowfish Working Group (YWG) Newsletter and regular news updates as well as the Fly of the month feature continue to be well received.

Last year I spoke about the many flyfishers and other people out there who have addressed a range of community-based water and environmental issues and programmes like: the pollution and sewerage issues in the Vaal and Crocodile catchments/systems and elsewhere; the litter and other solid waste clean-up and river health, education and fishing programs for young people; various research initiatives; community based flyfishing ventures; and riparian zone rehabilitation and protection initiatives. All these programmes require dedicated individuals to be there regularly to do the slog work as well as forward sighted leadership.

People like Chris Williams and Peter Arderne who work on behalf of FOSAF and the YWG, together with a range of allies, keep us updated on an almost weekly basis. Peter's work in the Steenkampsberg and the Greater Lakenvlei Protected Environment, aimed at the protection of a critical catchment and the "trout triangle", which ironically underpins an important biodiversity conservation and ecosystem protection initiative. This complementary set of symbiotic land uses represents a real win-win for the broader area and our country, something the purists find hard to stomach. However, without the support of other NGOs and FOSAF these important initiatives would founder.

As I said last year all South Africans are custodians of and right holders to a sustainable future that must hold government, the para-statals and big business to account for the way in which our natural heritage is used, ostensibly, for the broader good. Sadly, some of the positive developments we saw over the few years appear to be backsliding. Peter's work, that of Andrew Fowler and the NFFC and many other clubs, continue to shine a light and set a positive example of what can be done in the face of so much negativity.

All of our people, across the country, who are engaged in this kind of activity deserve our support and congratulation. These actions belie the elitist labels some officials have used

to besmirch fly-anglers. This is the sort of work that promotes flyfishing and reflects the spirit FOSAF seeks to foster.

Anglers:

The Southern African Fly Fishing Magazine now edited by Ian Cox, Andrew Mather and Andrew Savides has emerged as a wonderful e-publication that continues to provide FOSAF with space and a voice. Tudor Caradoc-Davies' The Mission is another excellent publication that has also offered us support. I urge you to support these excellent flyfishing publications and the many flyfishing talk/chat groups and forums. Communication is vital in sharing ideas, information and debating approaches.

The Tippet has continued despite some difficulties to remain afloat. I am indebted to Bronwyn Konigkramer who has helped with ensuring we get this publication out. Our contributors and prize suppliers deserve our thanks for their support.

Organisations:

FOSAF maintains cordial relations with other flyfishing and angling bodies. The competitive fly anglers of SAFFA remain our allies and we share ideas and mutual interests. They have contributed much innovation and fresh ideas which are important for the development of our craft. SACRAA and SAFTAD as well as SASACC remain bodies we need to engage with from time to time, especially around freshwater angling challenges and interactions with Government at national, provincial and municipal spheres.

These engagements are crucial if we are to work together to find solutions to some of the difficult and multifaceted choices facing our country and its people, particularly with regard to access to, sharing and the use of freshwater fisheries. This appears to be a very emotive subject and FOSAF has relied on our principled approach to guide us in navigating these very tricky waters.

INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT:

Secretariat

As previously reported, Bronwyn Konigkramer has taken over the task of running the FOSAF Secretariat. She has been able to lean on Liz Tough from time to time and for this Liz deserves our appreciation for allowing her "retirement" to be interrupted. Bronwyn has revamped our membership records and is responsible for keeping our books and ensuring you receive the Tippet and membership cards. On behalf of all of our membership I extend our thanks for her efforts.

EXCO

It is with sadness that we note the passing Bill Mincher who led FOSAF and served our organisation in many different ways, the most notable being his dedication and leadership on publications. We have had a number of Telkom conference calls again this year and are about to try a different electronic meeting platform for this next Exco as well as others going forward. These electronic channels provide effective and inexpensive ways of meeting on a virtual basis and for communicating regularly. Emails and telephonic communications have also been a useful way of staying in touch with chapter Chairperson's and other EXCO members.

Once again I also wish to thank our President Tom Sutcliffe and Vice-president Ed Herbst for their ready and wise counsel and inputs from time to time.

CHAPTERS

Chapter Chairperson's have provided written reports. Accordingly, I will not repeat them here given time and space constraints. Check out our website at: <https://www.fosaf.org.za/>.

It remains for me to thank the Chapter Committees under the able leadership of Reg Morgan (and Brian Clark), Jim Read (and yours truly), Leonard Flemming (and now Tudor Caradoc-Davies) and Chris Williams (and Peter Arderne) respectively. It important to note that our Chapters have continued to remain stable and healthy with some growth evident and hopefully this will continue in the year ahead.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE

Andrew Mather has taken over from Bill Bainbridge who led this committee for many years. Andrew and I visited Bill as part of the hand over. Bill continues to provide some input and ideas. We need to ensure that there is representation from all regions on the Environmental Committee so that each region can properly comment on their particular slant or requirements and help share the huge task these issues entail.

COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

Our plans for getting a communications and marketing group of younger committed people somehow never got out of the starting gate during the past year. Exco will need to decide how and whether we can take this matter forward.

CONCLUSION

But for the COVID 19 situation, this year's AGM and EXCO would again have realised my long held wish for FOSAF as a national body that functions nationally and that works in a way that makes it possible for our leadership to meet our members where they are based from time to time.

We had hoped to meet in the Western Cape being kindly hosted by the CPS. Our meeting there is already part-paid for so the postponement is just that, rather than a cancellation. We look forward to the chance to test our skills on the Cape streams and to meet many of our members and fellow flyfishers when this crisis has run its course.

Once again my thanks are also due to our Auditor Prof Swanepoel of A.P. Swanepoel and Co for efficiently and cost effectively producing clear and readable AFS.

I started this report referring to the fact that our planet faces a range of crises. One of the more critical of these is climate change which is impacting the very ecosystems we fish in. As flyfishers we must be aware of the tipping point we face and it is our duty to help make significant change and solutions a reality. We thus have a duty to make a real difference in ensuring our flyfishing waters remain sustainable and viable.

Last but not least, I wish to thanks all the members of the Exco for their on-going support, views and contributions and for their commitment to flyfishing in South Africa, which despite the challenges, still remains one of the best places on the planet to cast a fly.

Thanks for all your support!

Ilan Lax
FOSAF Chairperson
June 2020