



# The Wild Trout Association

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## Newsletter – May 2018

My word, the last newsletter was in May 2016! Time goes by with a dash of speed and two successful festivals later, planning is underway for the 2019 event.

As with all things earthly, circumstances change with almost predictable regularity as does corporate policy, from time to time. Accordingly, Epsom will no longer be the main sponsor for the event. Down the years, the immense contribution kindly orchestrated by Martin van Riet must be acknowledged with gratitude by both participants and the Wild Trout Association. Winter fleeces and a copy of the WTA fly fishing guidebook, a tome that has grown to 190 pages, were received by each of the participants! Additional copies of the guidebook were also printed and sold to generate funds for the WTA. A sincere word of thanks to Martin van Riet for having taken us aboard way back in 2011, a period of 7 years. This followed a period of no sponsorship subsequent to abandonment by Bell's and which in retrospect, was indeed, a blessing in disguise.

Another significant change is the weather that has changed for the better leaving our mountains leaking. The streams and the rivers have run well since late January and are still running well for this time of year. Thin water has been history for a while and fat water has been the norm for mid to late summer. In fact, it was so fat and rainy on the second day of this year's festival that resulted in no fishing at all on that day. Nonetheless, participants were well occupied listening with rapt attention to Peter Brigg's address with his take on fly fishing. "There are no experts in fly fishing" said Brigg "as there is always something new to learn". How right he is! Gareth Webster followed with an erudite account of his fly fishing experiences in the world of competitive fly fishing and appropriate tackle use. The weather abated the next day and allowed folk back onto the water followed by the last day where they were blessed by the best weather of the festival. In general, the fish stock, both trout and yellowfish, has bounced back in the aftermath of the drought and we'll soon be deafened by the "there are only small fish to be caught" dirge.

I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome Tenahead Mountain Resort, under the guiding hand of Ashley Bruigom and Haylee Jones, resort management, to the Wild Trout Association. This welcome development adds an additional 2,5km of small stream water to the high altitude options for visiting enthusiasts. This. To quote Ed Herbst, "Lilliputian water" ranges from 2462m to 2515m above sea-level, almost as high as the Upper Kloppershoekspruit on which Loch Ness is located at 2555m above sea-level but which extends upstream to 2585m above sea-level. These two beats are the highest fly fishing opportunities in South Africa, only surpassed by higher-lying streams in neighbouring streams Lesotho.

The Department of Environmental Affairs ignores far more pressing issues such as raw sewage being dumped into rivers throughout the country but continues its anti-trout campaign. The most recent steps taken by FOSAF was to address the parliamentary Portfolio Committee for the Environment. This plus hundreds of hours work behind the scenes by the legal team costs money and we, the WTA, can hold our heads up high by way of having contributed R120 000 to the "war chest" over the past four years. This amount has been generated by festival fees and the auction held during the event. Accordingly, our sincere thanks to the participants, auction item sponsors and auction buyers all of whom have played their part in addressing the threat to the sport and the industry. More importantly, thanks to members without whose waters, we would not have been able to "festivalise".

Last but not least, the day permit selling point transition from Walkerbouts to the Rhodes Info Centre has gone well although there are still visiting fly fishers who are unaware of the development but who soon learn how things work nowadays! Congratulations to Margie Murray who is doing a sterling job.