



SANParks Honorary Rangers

Indaba 2010

May 11th to May 15th 2010



Photo 1: Golden Gate Hotel, venue of the 2010 Indaba against the magnificent backdrop of a sandstone cliff

Preamble

The SANParks Honorary Rangers 2010 Indaba took place from May 11th to May 15th in the Golden Gate Highlands National Park (GGHNP) with its spectacular mountain scenery. The three major players that make these events possible supported the Indaba again this year:

- SANParks, which not only offered the 2010 Indaba organising committee all of the available accommodation and other amenities to select from, but also offered the usual 40% discount for accommodation and free use of meeting venues.
- The other major participant, without whose support we would face serious financial constraints, is our dependable sponsor SASOL. Their generous annual sponsorship ensures that organising committees can maintain low costs and thus keep the annual Indaba affordable to Honorary Rangers.

As honorary rangers we record our appreciation for these generous contributions from both SANParks and SASOL and accept it in gratitude as a motion of confidence in our organisation's successful endeavours.

- And finally, no Indaba could ever be a success without the wonderful support and commitment of Honorary Rangers nationwide. Their loyalty as such should be recognised and applauded.

The Indaba was seen as an opportunity to showcase the GGHNP - not only for the recent upgrade to the tune of R27 million to the Golden Gate Hotel and chalets, but also for its natural attributes. It was therefore decided that the Indaba programme should focus on an important attribute of the park. Choosing between geology, palaeontology, biodiversity, cultural and historical heritages, water catchment, wetlands and management interventions was not easy, but the committee eventually settled on geology and palaeontology. This turned out to have been a good choice. Geologist Dr. Gideon Groenewald was approached to present a course on the geology of the park and palaeontologist Prof. Bruce Rubidge agreed to give the keynote address during the gala evening.

Financial Implications

A fact not always appreciated is the out of pocket costs for Honorary Rangers to attend Indabas. We did some rather subjective calculations in order to ascertain their contribution to the 2010 Indaba. The out of pocket cost to the 237 SANParks Honorary Rangers to attend the Indaba was approximately **R 439 383** (R 204 140 of which was for the account of SANParks).

The GGHNP is centrally located in South Africa, but despite this some Honorary Rangers had to travel long distances. In total they travelled approximately **249 054 km** (this is not an exact figure as Honorary Rangers from different regions were clumped together). Approximately **R 199 243** was spent on fuel and, again, the figure is an approximation based on the distance travelled x fuel price (which was put at R8, 00/l) divided by 10. The cost of meals and *en route* accommodation was not included in the calculation.

Fuel costs		R 199 243
Accommodation at GGHNP cost them:		R 162 105
To attend various events:		
Gala evening	R 24, 960	
Basotho evening	R 13, 500	
Potjie evening	R 8, 500	
Courses	R 14, 575	
Indaba attendance fee	R 16, 500	R 78, 035
TOTAL		R 439 383

Looking at the expenses incurred by Honorary Rangers to attend Indabas, the existing NEC philosophy to request organising committees to make Indabas as affordable as possible is a sound one. As this report is written, the final costs for the 2010 Indaba have not been finalised. However, some of the surplus will be passed on to the Bushveld region to assist with the 2011 Indaba, with the remainder going to GGHNP to enable the vulture educational and information centre and hide at the vulture restaurant to be completed.



Photo 2: Eugène Joubert, of the organising committee for the 2010 Indaba, receives the SASOL cheque of R 66, 000 from Brian Philips

Organising the Indaba

Although the KwaZulu-Natal region originally mooted the idea in 2007 of having the 2010 Indaba at the GGHNP, Janssen Davies, Chairperson of the National Executive Committee, suggested that KZN region should team up with the regions of Free State and the Vaal Triangle.

This was an excellent idea. It not only allowed the work load to be shared, it provided an opportunity for Honorary Rangers from three regions that would normally not have had any ties to work together towards a joint objective. In the process a wonderful camaraderie developed and lasting companionships were formed. As one of the organising committee members remarked at the conclusion of the Indaba... "we as the organising committee have become as close as a family". The idea of combining regions to organise Indabas is one well worth pursuing as it no doubt contributes to the *esprit de corps* of the movement.

Over a period of two years the organising committee met on average every quarter, with meetings normally convened at GGHNP. At the first meeting an Executive Committee was elected consisting of Jan de Wet, Chair (KZN); Eugène Joubert, Secretary (KZN); Koos Vorster, Treasurer (KZN); Des Bothma, member (Free State); Div Bosman, member (Free State); Lodewyk Kritzinger, member (Vaal Triangle) and Johan Taljaard, Park Manager, GGHNP. The responsibilities for the Indaba were divided amongst the three regions, with KZN accepting responsibility for the administrative activities (registration and finance); Free State for organising the various courses (and with Des Bothma being the liaison person with NEC); and Vaal Triangle for all the evening events and catering.

The executive of the organising committee consisted of the following persons:



Jan de Wet, Chair;



Eugène Joubert, Secretary;



Koos Vorster, Treasurer;



Des Bothma, member;



Div Bosman, member;



Lodewyk Kritzinger, member;



Johan Taljaard, Park manager;

Photo 3: Collage of members of the executive of the organising committee

From the outset SANParks, in the person of Johan Taljaard, showed total commitment to the 2010 Indaba and provided valuable input and guidance in the decisions taken by the organising committee. All the GGHNP staff members were friendly and constantly provided assistance and answered our many queries efficiently. It was clear from the outset that we all were resolute that the 2010 Indaba was going to be a success.

The committee approached the Boland and Johannesburg regions (which had previously organised Indabas) and useful advice was received. André van der Merwe, NEC Vice Chair, and Alison Esterhuysen, Chairperson of Johannesburg region, attended a committee meeting and, with the wisdom born of hindsight, could warn us of pitfalls.

Although all the accommodation available in the GGHNP was offered to the committee, it was decided, based on attendance figures from previous Indabas to only request the chalets at Golden Gate Hotel and the accommodation at Glen Reenen, as well as Brabant House. As back-up, a number of rooms were also reserved

in the Golden Gate Hotel, which turned out to be a blessing as we could accommodate some Honorary Rangers who decided very late to also attend.



Photo 4: Some of the organising committee members during a meeting at GGHNP

The Courses

Three courses were presented from Tuesday to Thursday - GGHNP geology, nature photography and a GGHNP orientation course. Both the geology and photography courses proved to be popular and were repeated in order to allow Honorary Rangers an opportunity to attend both (which many did). The geology course was presented by Dr. Gideon Groenewald and the photographic course by Mr. Johan van Rensburg. Participants complimented both courses, but it was the geology course that really caught everyone's attention. Especially after Prof. Rubidge's address during the gala evening, a participant that also did the geology course said that a whole new world had opened to him - a sentiment many attending the Indaba shared.

Excursions

The excursion to the hydro-electric scheme in an enormous manmade cavern at the Sterkfontein dam left people speechless. People who participated in the GGHNP excursion found it informative to see the area of the previous Qwa Qwa National Park that has now been legally added to increase the size of GGHNP to 34, 000 ha.



Photo 5: The mushroom rock of Clarens Formation sandstone, above Glen Reenen Rest Camp

Geology Course

I will not try and repeat Dr. Gideon's course but would like to share with you in layman's terms some of the interesting aspects he covered. In short he told us that the sandstone of the Clarens Formation was deposited in an extensive sand desert covering much of southern Africa, the result of a period of drought that lasted 80 million years. But how did this desert come about?



Photo 5: Dr. Gideon Groenewald explaining the dynamics that formed the GGHNP landscape



Photo 6: Gideon holding a rock from the Elliot Formation in which dinosaurs' eggs were found.

With the breakup of Gondwana, 450 million years ago, the Antarctic collided against a piece of Gondwana that was to become Africa. The collision of these continents led to the formation of a Himalaya type of mountain range from East London to Cape Town, known to geologists as the Cape Mountain Belt. The mountain range was approximately 12 km high with the resulting rain shadow causing the desert condition in the Karoo basin. This 'Clarens Desert' was part of a giant Sahara-sized sand sea stretching perhaps thousands of kilometres in all directions into Zimbabwe, Botswana and Namibia.

Water from the glaciers that formed in the ice-capped peaks of the Cape Mountain Belt fed Karoo lake systems similar to the Okavango Delta in Botswana. Evidence has been found of five inland deltas formed in the Karoo basin. One of these inland deltas was located in the Bethlehem, Clarens and Harrismith area. Apart from sediments, these rivers also carried boulders from the mountain range and deposited them in the Karoo basin. After a period of approximately 300 million years, at the beginning of the Jurassic period (190 million years ago) the Cape Mountain Belt in the south was worn away and the Karoo basin filled with sediments reaching a thickness of 1, 000 m. With no ice collecting on the peaks of the Cape Mountain Belt, the rivers feeding the Karoo swamps dried up. Prevailing winds started to pile the sands into huge dunes that swept across the Karoo plains.

Fossil remains confirm that from 260 to 251 million years ago mammal-like reptiles thrived on the vast floodplains of the meandering rivers in the Karoo basin. The rocks of the Elliot Formation bear witness to a major mass extinction that occurred around 206 million years ago, one of five mass extinctions through the eons which made 96% of species living at the time, extinct.

About 183 million years ago with the breakup of Gondwana, the earth crust cracked open and huge volumes of basaltic lava repeatedly flowed out over the Clarens Desert, covering virtually the whole of southern Africa (the Karoo basin) to a depth of 1, 600 m. In GGHNP it is possible to identify individual lava flows and also volcanic ash deposits that took place over a period of 2 million years. These lava flows are known as the Drakensberg Group.

With India breaking away from southern Africa at Durban, rainfall suddenly increased to several thousands of millimetres per year, causing huge river systems such as the early Orange and Thukela Rivers to erode the rocks sculpting the landscape. Remnants of the Drakensberg Group form the caps on the flat topped mountains so typical of much of the Karoo and Free State landscape. But, that is enough said on GGHNP's fascinating geology.

GGHNP Orientation Course

The GGHNP orientation course was presented on Thursday. John Taljaard, Park Manager introduced all the intricacies of the park, focusing on its amazing attributes (see it listed in the preamble) to the socio-economic challenges facing the park (it being located between one of the most affluent communities in South Africa on its western border (Clarens) to the 800, 000 impoverished people living in Qwa Qwa in the east).

NEC and Chairperson's Meetings

The NEC meeting took place in the Eland room in the Golden Gate Hotel on Friday morning, followed by the Chairpersons meeting on Friday afternoon in the same venue. The main points on the agenda for the afternoon meeting were mainly administrative. André Vosloo tabled several documents for approval; the

amendments to the constitution and memoranda of understanding with SANParks. These were passed without dissenting votes.

André van der Merwe handled the financial statements and reviewed the financial reports as received from the regions. As with previous meetings, the importance of submitting reviewed financial reports on time was stressed. Two very worthwhile and well motivated projects in the region of R5 million each submitted by Honorary Rangers were not awarded sponsorships from the Lotto, because a few regions failed to submit their audited financial reports. André confirmed that he was following up the request to find a bank that would be willing to offer the Honorary Rangers the best deal regarding banking expenses. He then handed each Chairperson a printed copy of the 2009 Annual Report, and a vote of thanks was passed for a sterling piece of work.



Photos 6 and 7: Members of the NEC and regional chairpersons during their meeting chaired by Janssen Davies.

Des Bothma and Judy Boucher handled their respective reports on statistics and a summary of the annual reports. Both complained that statistical reports were slow in reaching them.

Janssen Davies spent time explaining the roles and responsibilities of National Executive Committee members. He stressed that he expected everyone to pull their weight and be available for all NEC meetings. If there were any of the candidates that had doubts that they would not be able to cope, his advice would be to withdraw their nomination. He and André Vosloo explained the election process. Janssen then gave each of the 13 candidates an opportunity to briefly introduce him or herself and inform the meeting what experience and expertise they would be bringing to the table.

Evening Events

During the Indaba we had an evening event every night from Wednesday. The event on the last evening (Saturday) will be discussed separately.

On Wednesday evening we had a 'Bring and Braai' at the Glen Reenen caravan park. A marquee tent was erected earlier in the day and provided welcome shelter when the valley floor became cooler as the evening progressed. There were a few hitches but all in all the evening was spent greeting old friends and renewing acquaintances. Ambiance and good fellowship of the evening set the tone for events during the rest of the week. On the Thursday evening we were served a delicious blesbok venison potjie prepared by SANParks staff. Des Bothma shot the two blesbok donated by HR Buks Meintjies. The good spirits from the previous evening prevailed. All agreed that it was not as cold as the previous evening, however this could be due to the copious volumes of Old Brown Sherry being consumed!

Friday evening

The annual quiz on the Friday evening was, as usual, the mini-highlight of the activities that lead up to the Indaba meeting and gala dinner. The venue for the event this year was the Basotho Cultural Village. The quiz was followed by a traditional Basotho meal (beef stew, pumpkin and samp ['stampmielies']) while Basotho ladies in colourful dresses entertained us with their dancing. The truly delicious meal was a fitting way to end a pleasant evening.

Clive Webber has had a series of break-ins and in the process lost his computers, photographs and copious nature notes representing a lifetime's work. At the request of John Brankin, Quinton Coetzee, our traditional quizmaster, stepped in and prepared this year's quiz. John Brankin spent most of a worrying Friday sorting out the electric supply, screen, lights etc. His efforts paid off and the quiz went without a hitch.

The quiz this year should have been between two SANParks staff teams and two teams of Honorary Rangers. Unfortunately SANParks could only field one team, which meant that the three other teams were made up of Honorary Rangers. The defending champion quiz team from KZN / Free State was one team, with the two others consisting of 'volunteers'.



Photo 8: The auditorium filling up with expectant Honorary Rangers.



Photo 9: Clive Webber and Quinton Coetzee with last minute decisions



Photo 10: The two arbiters, George Smith and John Elford



Photo 11: The SANParks team: Joep Stevens, Johan Taljaard, Vanessa Strydom, Chris Patton



Photo 12: The Mixed team (north / south): Louis Lemmer, Jenny Lodge, Div Bosman, Willie Engelbrecht



Photo 13: The 'Blue Bulls' team: Alison Esterhuysen, André vd Merwe, Mauro Marchioro, Eddie Bronkhorst



Photo 14: KZN / Free State team: Des Bothma, Koos Vorster, Eugène Joubert, Ellen Abel

The questions prepared by Quinton were, as to be expected, original and educational. They focused on animal and plant life and the type of questions put to the competing teams were always similar.



Photo 15: Quiz master Quinton Coetzee



Photo 16: The audience enjoying every minute

With points being deducted for wrong answers, some of the teams were wary, but others remained impulsive with quick guesses that got punished! From the start it was clear that it was going to be a tussle between the 'mixed team' and the SANParks team with the 'Blue Bulls' and 'KZN / Free State' teams not really making headway. Eventually it was Chris Patton's knowledge of birds that allowed the SANParks team to romp home with almost twice as many points as the 'Mixed team' that came in second. The defending champions had a dismal evening coming in last. Congratulations to the SANParks team who, with this win, have taken the trophy for only the second time in the history of the quiz.



Photo 17: Traditional dances being performed



Photo 18: Guests enjoying the excellent meal



Photo 19: Janssen and Linda enjoying themselves



Photo 20: Enoch Moyane, Doreen Malabela and Millard Mdhuli, all from the Lowveld region

The Annual General Meeting (Indaba)

The Annual General Meeting (Indaba) took place on Saturday and took up most of the day. In contrast to the usual lunch packs served during lunch breaks at AGM's, Gabriel Motsosi (Tourism Manager) and his staff treated participants to a scrumptious sit down meal of lamb stew and rice.

After a brief welcome and the normal preliminaries, Janssen invited Johan Taljaard to welcome the participants to GGHNP on behalf of SANParks, which he did with enthusiasm. Johan quickly highlighted the attributes of the park and the challenges facing management, especially those of a socio-economic nature. The audience was impressed by his grasp of the situation and was left with a feeling that the park management was in good hands.

SANParks presentation

Glenn Phillips, Managing Executive, Tourism and Marketing, was then offered an opportunity to present the SANParks presentation. He held the audience captive with his detailed report on the activities of SANParks (a shortened copy attached). He informed the meeting that SANParks has embarked on a major product development boost in several of its national parks. The organisation's efforts in product upgrades are informed by new industry trends which focus on environmentally friendly products as well as value for money in the product offering.

He also said that, compared to trends in the hospitality industry, SANParks has had a fantastic year with an overall occupancy of 73, 3%. The unit nights sold were 531,018 compared to the 521,018 sold in the previous year. Phillips said in terms of 'camp person sold' an impressive 675 392 were sold against the previous year when only 604, 900 were sold. Another important fact was that SANParks efforts to transform the national parks visitors' demographics were continuing to yield good results. The number of Black visitors to parks has grown to 406,085 - an impressive 17, 5% increase from 345 559 from the previous financial year.

He said that from a financial perspective, despite the unfavourable global economic situation, SANParks recorded a good growth in tourism income. In the 2008/09 financial year a total of R532, 459 million was recorded in comparison to R598, 512 million recorded in the 2009/10 financial year.

Chairperson's Report

In his Chairperson's report, Janssen Davies addressed the Honorary Rangers with his usual motivational speech covering various relevant issues (a copy of his PowerPoint presentation is attached).

- He started off with a quote from an anonymous source... "We do not volunteer for money, fame or personal gain, but purely to make a difference where we can;"
- He pointed out that in recruiting applicants we should be sure that they have a passionate interest and be willing to walk the second mile, to contribute to our movement's endeavours;
- He stressed that we as Honorary Rangers should take note of the seriousness of the onslaught against the rhino population in South Africa, not only in private sanctuaries but also in national parks, quoting figures used by the Hon. Buyelwa Sonjica, Minister of Water Affairs and Environment in a recent press release. He urged the Honorary Rangers to financially support SANPark's efforts in its counter poaching programme.

In reporting back on our movement's performance during 2009 he mentioned that the SANParks Honorary Rangers have again shown that they are a valuable asset to SANParks - a sentiment echoed by Glenn Phillips in his address. Their total financial contribution towards SANParks during 2009 was R 26,7 million; this was up from R 21,9 million in 2008.

- **Projects**

Honorary Rangers were involved in 185 projects during 2009, including the following; assistance with the new main gate at the Addo National Park, organising birding events, training of KNP guides, assistance with game capture, planning and collecting funds for a vulture information centre and hide in GGHNP; cleaning up heritage plaques in KNP, running bush camps, TMNP visitor safety, involvement in hacking parties to remove alien invasive species; providing and guarding penguins nest boxes on Dyer island; providing baboon proof dustbins, elephant hall duties at Letaba, anti-poaching fund-raisers, Lebombo trail maintenance, providing

equipment such as hand radios, erection and maintenance of bird hides, public displays and other fund-raising events. In 14 regions there are rosters for weekly duty in their affiliated parks.



Photo 21: Flanked by Glenn Phillips and Tabs Naudé Janssen Davies delivers his opening address to the Indaba



Photos 22 and 23: The audience listening attentively to Janssen Davies's opening address



Photo 24: With Johan Taljaard finalising his welcoming speech, with André van der Merwe and André Vosloo, the two vice-chairs elect, in pensive mood

Photo 24: Joep Stevens, General manager, tourism and operations, SANParks, with HRs Eric Makondo and Willie Maluleke listening to the presentations.



Photo 25: Johan Taljaard, Park Manager, welcoming HRs to GGHP



Photo 26: Glenn Phillips, Managing executive: Tourism Development and Marketing, SANParks, delivering his address.

- **New regions**

With four new regions inaugurated (Midrand, Bontebok, Virtual HRs and Kalahari) during the Indaba, the total now stands at 30. When Janssen pointed out that, except for the Richtersveld and Namaqua National Parks; all other national parks were serviced by local Honorary Ranger regions, he had an immediate response from the floor. West Coast region offered to look after Namaqua National Park and the Boland region after Richtersveld National Park. The meeting showed their appreciation for these gestures with spontaneous applause. Janssen encouraged the two regions to make contact with the park managers and influential people in and around these parks with a view to establishing regions to serve these parks.

- **Balanced score card objectives**

Continuing with our movement's performance during 2009, Janssen went on to review the balanced score card objectives. Only two of the five score card objectives could be achieved the past year.

- **Objective 1:** to increase the HR numbers by 10 % - achieved. The number increased by 10.9% to 694, with an additional 298 applicants bringing the total to 992.
- **Objective 2:** to increase historically disadvantaged individuals members to match the local visitor profile which presently stand at 24.7% - unfortunately not achieved. Only 174 (17.5%) of the required 245 HDIs were recruited.
- **Objective 3:** to increase overall contribution to SANParks by 10% -, as mentioned above, achieved as a whopping 21.6% increase was contributed by the Honorary Rangers!
- **Objective 4:** to increase junior rangers by 15% - also not achieved. Only 8.9% joined the ranks of the junior rangers. They now number 490 to the 450 in 2008.
- **Objective 5:** to increase environmental education by 10% - not achieved. Only increased by 3%.

Only four regions managed to reach the balanced score card objectives and he announced KwaZulu-Natal as the **2009 REGION OF THE YEAR** with a total contribution of 152%. KZN region achieved the following increases:

- Members 45%;
- HDIs 14%
- EE 78%

Janssen rallied the meeting and encouraged members to diligently pursue the challenges presented by the three scorecard objectives not achieved:

- Transformation should receive priority attention with the active recruitment of HDI members;
- Attention to be given to the junior rangers movement, especially in regard to recruiting and developing a clear strategic direction;
- And finally to give more focus to environmental education.

All of these issues would also be discussed at the strategy meeting planned for August, 2010.

2009 REGION OF THE YEAR – KZN



Photo 27: Honorary Rangers from KwaZulu-Natal shortly after their region was awarded recognition as Region of the Year.

It was no great surprise when Janssen announced that the **Project for 2009** was the (annual) Sunset Serenade of the **Counter Poaching and Ranger Support Services national project**. In the 10 years of organising the event they have raised more than R 2 million. Fittingly Margaret Stafford was awarded a silver merit award at the gala evening for her contribution towards organising the Sunset Serenades over the years.



Photo 28: Margaret Stafford receiving a silver merit award from Glenn Phillips and Janssen Davies

Various other NEC and national project reports were tabled, all of which you will be able to read in the minutes of the meeting.

Future Indabas

The 2011 Indaba will take place in the Kruger National Park at Letaba and Addo National Park will be the venue for the 2012 Indaba.

Election of the National Executive Committee

One of the final matters dealt with at the Indaba was the election of members to serve on the National Executive Committee. Janssen Davies (National chairperson), André Vosloo (Vice Chair-south) and André van der Merwe (Vice-Chair north) were elected unopposed, which can be considered a motion of confidence. The other members elected are Des Bothma, Piet Andjelkovic, Mike Lodge, Judy Boucher, Cedric Hapgood-Strickland, John Brankin and Grant Coleman, with three new members Kendel Janson, Louis Lemmer and Eugène Joubert.

Newly elected National Executive Committee for 2010 / 2011



Photo 29: Back row: Des Bothma; Piet Andjelkovic; André Vosloo (Vice-chair – South) Janssen Davies, (National Chair); Louis Lemmer, André van der Merwe (Vice chair – North) Mike Lodge; Eugène Joubert; Front row: Judy Bouwer; Cedric Haggood-Strickland; Kendel Janson; Taboureux Naudé (SANParks), John Brankin; and Grant Coleman

Gala Evening

The venue was filled to capacity for the gala dinner on May 15th. We were honoured by the presence of Glenn Phillips, Managing Executive; Tourism Development and Marketing; Joep Stevens, General Manager: Tourism and Operations, both from SANParks. Johan Taljaard, Park Manager and his departmental heads were also among the guests. Other invited guests were Her Majesty Queen Mathokoana Mopedi, the Executive Mayor for the Thabo Mofutsanyana District, and Councillor David Lengoabala, also from the Thabo Mofutsanyana District.

Des Bothma was the eloquent master of ceremonies. Jan de Wet, chair of the organising committee, welcomed all warmly.

Keynote Address

The keynote speaker for the evening was Prof. Bruce Rubidge - director of the Bernard Price Institute for Paleontological Research at Wits. His talk was entitled "***Our future depends on our past - South Africa's remarkable fossil record and its relevance to us today***". As an authority on the formation of the Karoo Basin and the evolution of its fauna, especially the mammal-like reptiles, he was the ideal follow-up after Dr. Gideon Groenewald's course on the geology of GGHP and its environs.



Photo 30: Prof. Bruce Rubidge, who gave the keynote address.



Photo 31: Part of the audience at the gala evening.

In his interesting talk Prof. Rubidge stressed that the very earliest life forms are preserved as fossils in the rocks. Photosynthesising bacteria evolved very early in the story of life; there is chemical evidence that they were present on Earth 3 800 million years ago. The oldest rocks to contain visible signs of their presence are those from Barberton. South Africa is furthermore uniquely fortunate in having the most complete record of land-living vertebrate animals for a period of more than 80 million years, stretching from about 260 to about 180 million years ago. The evolution of plants and animals, especially the origin of dinosaurs and mammals, are well preserved in fossils found in South African. South Africa also has probably the best record of the origin of hominins.

Over a period of 310 to 182 million years ago, the glaciers finally all melted, leaving a vast inland water body extending across South Africa and neighbouring regions known as the Karoo inland sea. During this time simple land plants were making their first appearance on Earth. These plants evolved rapidly in the wide range of new habitats the terrestrial environment had to offer and soon colonised the large deltas along the northern margin of the Karoo Sea, where they grew in extensive swamps. In these swamps, dead vegetation accumulated faster than it could decay, and thick accumulations of peat formed, which were ultimately converted to coal.

South Africa is internationally famous for its rich record of therapsid synapsids (mammal-like reptiles), which record the evolutionary development of mammals from reptiles. In Photo 30, Prof. Bruce is holding the skull *Hipposaurus*, a therapsid mammal-like reptile from the Karoo. The most abundant herbivores of the Permian were members of the group known as anomodonts. The most primitive forms are known from South Africa.

Presenting Awards

The highlight of the evening was when Janssen Davies gave recognition to those Honorary Rangers who have excelled in their obligations to the movement (see appendix 3). Three lifetime conservation certificates were awarded, one posthumously. Recipients were Francois van Rooyen (West Rand); Tienie Leonard (Wilderness) and Chris Briers (posthumously, Pretoria). Seven silver and 13 bronze certificates were awarded. Unfortunately not all recipients of certificates were able to attend the evening.

Recipients of silver awards



Photo 32: Willie Engelbrecht



Photo 33: Des Bothma



Photo 34: Jan de Wet



Photo 35: Vito Viglietti

Another well deserved recognition for service to the organisation was when Janssen Davies was awarded a platinum certificate. This award came as a surprise to him.



Photo 36: Janssen Davies receiving his platinum certificate from Glenn Phillips, André Van der Merwe and André Vosloo



Photo 37: Janssen's reaction on hearing that he was awarded the platinum certificate for his contribution to the SANParks honorary ranger movement



Photo 38: Janssen expressing his appreciation on receiving the platinum certificate.



Photo 39: Janssen announcing the winners of the quiz



Photo 40: The winning team from SANParks, Glenn Phillips, Joep Stevens, Johan Taljaard and in front: Chris Patton and Vanessa Strydom

As a gesture of appreciation two non-honorary rangers, Taboureux Naudé and Linda Davies each received a bouquet for their support to our movement.



Photo 41: Tabs Naudé and Linda Davies receiving bouquets

Fundraising and a New Indaba Tradition

In a magnanimous gesture, Grant Jameson (former Chairperson of Johannesburg region), presented the SANParks Honorary Ranger movement a bronze statuette of a San hunter. He suggested that the statuette be auctioned at the gala dinner and that the funds raised go towards the rhino anti poaching campaign run by SANParks. In handing over the statuette at the Indaba he suggested a minimum amount of R20 per person to allow participation in the “bidding process”. An excellent suggestion by Janssen was that whoever won the “bid” should return the statuette to the next Indaba to repeat the fundraising effort. In doing so a tradition has been born / initiated at the gala evening. Almost everyone present participated and most donated more than R20 per person to participate in the auction.

Brian Phillips did brilliantly as “auctioneer” and R4 400 was raised for the rhino anti-poaching fund with much merriment. Elza Bothma, Des’s wife eventually won the ‘trophy’. As women tend to do, Linda Davies had another good idea - to christen the person depicted in the statuette. At the next Indaba the organising committee could arrange for a competition to find a name for the young man. In the meantime he will be known as ‘The Nomad’, seeing that he will be travelling to various parts of the country.



Photo 41: The bidding in progress for ‘The ‘Nomad’



Photo 42: Eugéne Joubert handing over ‘The Nomad’ to Elza Bothma who won the bidding.

In Closing

The overall experience of the Indaba was that the event was well organised and well executed. The organising committee received a spate of congratulatory letters. In turn the organising committee wish to thank each and every person who had a hand in this Indaba of 2010 - well done ladies and gentlemen, you did the HR Corps proud!

**Eugéne Joubert,
Secretary - Organising Committee**

APPENDIX 1:

NEC CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2009

GOLDEN GATE HIGHLANDS NATIONAL PARK
SATURDAY 15 MAY, 2010

WHY WE VOLUNTEER

It's not for money, not for fame
It's not for any personal gain
It's just for the love of nature
To make a difference where we can
It's just to give up of thyself
That is something you can't buy with wealth

It's not for medals worn with pride
It's just for the feeling deep inside
It's the reward deep in your heart
It's feeling you have been a part
Of helping others far and near
That is what makes us volunteer

Anonymous

THE MAGIC HR FORMULA

INTEREST + PASSION + ACTION = RESULTS

Move volunteers with an interest in conservation and a passion for our National Parks to action, and wonderful results will be achieved

THERE ARE TWO CONSTRAINTS:

- DEPENDENCY – expecting someone else to make it happen
- ENTITLEMENT – nobody owes us anything. We do what we do because it is the right thing to do

STRATEGIC SELECTION AND RECRUITMENT OF HRs

- COMMITMENT = WILLINGNESS TO SERVE
- ABLE = ABILITY TO BE "USEFUL"
- SELECT NEW MEMBERS WHO ARE BOTH "WILLING AND ABLE"

RHINO POACHING

Rhino poaching is reaching alarming figures. The Hon. BUYELWA SONJICA – MINISTER OF WATER AFFAIRS AND ENVIRONMENT –made the following available on 4/01/2010; Quote....

- 2005 TO 2008 - 36 RHINO POACHED pa
- 2009 - 104 RHINO POACHED (1:3.5 days)
 - 41 IN NATIONAL PARKS
 - 33 IN PROVINCIAL PARKS
 - 30 IN PRIVATE CONSERVANCIES

- NATIONAL RHINO COORDINATING INITIATIVE led by SANParks

Combating Rhino poaching is a SANParks priority – let all HR regions support this initiative

REPORT BACK ON HR PERFORMANCE DURING 2009

BALANCED SCORE CARD #1

- OBJECTIVE – TO INCREASE THE NUMBERS OF HRs BY 10% p.a.
- ACHIEVED – 10,9% in HRs to 694
 - 13,3% in APPLICANTS to 298
 - 11,6% in TOTAL to 992

BALANCED SCORE CARD #2

- OBJECTIVE – TO INCREASE HISTORICALLY DISADVANTAGED INDIVIDUALS (HDIs) MEMBERS TO MATCH LOCAL VISITOR PROFILE (24,7% in 2009)
- NOT ACHIEVED – 17,5%;
- 174 MEMBERS (71 MEMBERS SHORT)

BALANCED SCORE CARD #3

- OBJECTIVE – TO INCREASE OVERALL CONTRIBUTION TO SANParks BY 10% p.a.
- ACHIEVED - 21,6%
- R 19,2m DIRECT (R14m in 2008)
- R 7,5m INDIRECT (R7,9m in 2008)

TOTAL: R26, 7m (R21, 9m in 2008)

- EXPENSE RATIO – DIRECT
- DIRECT: R 13,9m 52%
- CASH: R 5,3m 20%

TOTAL DIRECT: R 19, 2 m = 72% (64% in 2008)

- EXPENSE RATIO – INDIRECT
- REGIONS R 6,9m 26%
- NEC R 570 000 2%

TOTAL INDIRECT R 7,5m 28% (36% in 2008)

GRAND TOTAL R26, 7m (R21, 9 m in 2008)

BALANCED SCORE CARD #4

- OBJECTIVE – TO INCREASE JUNIOR RANGERS BY 15% p.a.
- NOT ACHIEVED – 8,9%
- 490 MEMBERS (450 in 2008)

BALANCED SCORE CARD #5

- OBJECTIVE – TO INCREASE ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION BY 10% p.a.
- DEFINITION - HR, SANParks & PUBLIC TRAINING and PEAP
- NOT ACHIEVED – 3,3%
- R 2,37m (R2,29m in 2008)

MAJOR MILESTONES DURING 2009

- GREAT INCREASE IN CONTRIBUTIONS BY REGIONS AND MOST NATIONAL PROJECTS – 21,6%
- STRATEGIC DEPLOYMENT OF HR REGIONS
 - 4 new regions formed resulting in 19 of the 21 National Parks receiving direct HR support on the ground from a local HR region - Only 2 National Parks not directly serviced

CHALLENGES

- TRANSFORMATION – RECRUITMENT OF HDI MEMBERS
- JUNIOR RANGERS – STRATEGIC DIRECTION & RECRUITMENT
- ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION – MORE FOCUS
- UNIFORMS – SANParks TO AWARD TENDER AND ARRANGE FOR HRs TO PURCHASE UNIFORMS

THANK YOU TO:

- SANParks H/O EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT
 - GLENN PHILLIPS
 - JOEP STEVENS

- KEVIN MOORE

- SANParks PARK MANAGEMENT in ALL PARKS
- HR SECRETARY – TABOUREUX NAUDE
- HR NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
- NATIONAL PROJECT & REGIONAL CHAIRPERSONS
- ALL HRs
- ALL SPONSORS AND DONORS – ESPECIALLY SASOL
- 2010 INDABA ORGANISING COMMITTEE

2009 REGION OF THE YEAR

- ONLY 4 REGIONS IMPROVED ON ALL BALANCED SCORECARD OBJECTIVES

- WINNER RECORDED THE FOLLOWING INCREASES:

▪ MEMBERS	+ 45%
▪ HDI	+ 14%
▪ EE	+ 78%
▪ TOTAL CONTRIBUTION	+ 152%

THE WINNER IS: **KWAZULU-NATAL**

2009 PROJECT OF THE YEAR

- 10TH ANNIVERSARY
- 2 MAJOR EVENTS A YEAR
- MAJOR SPONSORS AND DONORS
- MORE THAN R2m CONTRIBUTED

THE WINNER IS: **SUNSET SERENADE by COUNTER POACHING & RANGER SUPPORT SERVICES**

ONLY 2 PARKS WITHOUT LOCAL HR REGIONS

- RICHTERSVELD
- NAMAQUA
- NEW REGIONS TO BE FORMED IN SUPPORT OF THESE PARKS IN 2010

INAUGURATE NEW REGIONS

- BONTEBOK
- KALAHARI
- MIDRAND
- VIRTUAL HONORARY RANGERS

IN CONCLUSION

“WE MAKE A LIVING BY WHAT WE GET, BUT WE MAKE A LIFE BY WHAT WE GIVE.” - WINSTON CHURCHILL

APPENDIX 2

SANPARKS PRESENTATION BY BRIAN PHILLIPS, MANAGING EXECUTIVE, TOURISM AND MARKETING

With less than a month before the start of the FIFA World Cup in South Africa, the country's body charged with the management of national parks, South African National Parks (SANParks) has embarked on a major product development boost in several of its national parks.

This according to SANParks, Tourism and Marketing, Managing Executive, Glen Phillips, who said the new developments are in recognition of a new generation product outlook in SANParks. "The organisation's efforts in product upgrades are informed by new industry trends which focus on environmentally friendly products as well as value for money in the product offering."

The new developments include the revamping of the Golden Gate Hotel in the Golden Gate Highlands National Park situated in the mountainous eastern Free State. The hotel which previously had 35 rooms now boasts a magnificent 54 rooms. The hotel is now open to the public for bookings. The Mata-Mata Rest Camp in the Kgalaghadi Transfrontier Park bordering Namibia has also been given a major face-lift. The older chalets have been upgraded, the prefabs removed and eight exquisite brand-new thatched chalets have being built and are also opened to the public.

He said, Tankwa Karoo National Park, situated on the southern boundary of the Northern Cape has received a new campsite at Perdekloof, while Agulhas National Park located at the most southern tip of Africa has a new rest camp at Piet se Punt. The heritage Guest house at Piet se Punt also received a major revamp making it one of the modern heritage sites in SANParks stable.

The construction of an Interpretive Centre in Mapungubwe National Park and World Heritage Site is on its final stage with opening expected in September. Mapungubwe is located in the northern part of the country where South Africa meets Botswana and Zimbabwe on the confluence of the Limpopo and Shashe rivers.

In other developments, Phillips said when compared to trends in the industry, SANParks has had a fantastic year. "We forecast 2009/10 to be a flat year, however year end results revealed a 0, 8% growth with an overall occupancy of 73,3%.

The unit nights sold were 531,018 compared to the 521,018 sold in the previous year. Phillips said in terms of camp person sold an impressive 675 392 were sold and the previous saw only 604, 900 sold.

According to Phillips, although a decline was seen in overseas markets, some increases were recorded. He said declines in international arrival were seen from Germany (from 32.0% to 28,4%) United Kingdom (from 13.6% to 13,5%) and Holland (from 11.1% to 10,5%). Increases in the international portfolio were seen with France (growing from 6.9% to 9,1%), while the United States moved from 5,0% to 5,4%.

He said SANParks flagship project, the Wild Card, continues to be one of the most popular loyalty programmes. This year the organisation has sold 105 687 cards."

"It is also important for the industry to note that our efforts to transform the National Parks visitors demographics is continuing to yield good results with the growth in Black visitors growing to 406,085 visitors have visited the parks, this is an impressive 17,5% increase from 345 559 from the last financial year."

He said that from a financial perspective, SANParks also recorded a good growth in tourism income. "Despite the unfavourable global economic situation, SANParks has seen good returns in tourism income. In the 2008/09 financial year a total of R532 459 million was recorded in comparison to R598 512 million recorded in the 2009/10 financial year.

APPENDIX 3

RECEIVERS OF MERIT AWARDS

NOMINEE	REGION	AWARDED
Margaret Stafford	RSS	SILVER
Hans von Gordon	ADDO	SILVER
Cedric Hapgood Strickland	PRETORIA	SILVER
Vito Viglietti	iKAPA	SILVER
Jan de Wet	KZN	SILVER
Des Bothma	NEC	SILVER
Willie Engelbrecht	BOLAND	SILVER
Bill Viljoen	EAST RAND	BRONZE
Lorna Hunt	NYC	BRONZE
Sue Smith	iKAPA	BRONZE
Francois v/d Merwe	LOWVELD	BRONZE
Darien Linnell	LOWVELD	BRONZE
Leslie Coleman	LOWVELD	BRONZE
Danie Smit	PRETORIA	BRONZE
Phillip Venter	PRETORIA	BRONZE
Lynn Hapgood-Strickland	PRETORIA	BRONZE
Alec Cilliers	WEST COAST	BRONZE
Theuns Pienaar	WEST COAST	BRONZE
Etienne Hurter	ADDO	BRONZE
Piet Andjelkovic	BUSHVELD	BRONZE
Janssen Davies	NEC	PLATINUM
Chris Briers	PRETORIA (posthumously)	LIFETIME CONS ACHIEVEMENT
Francois v Rooyen	WEST RAND	LIFETIME CONS ACHIEVEMENT
Tienie Leonard	WILDERNESS	LIFETIME CONS ACHIEVEMENT