

Kgaswane Mountain Reserve

Vision and policies

April 2010

Introduction

The Kgaswane Mountain Reserve is situated to the south of the town of Rustenburg with the Municipal boundary adjoining the park. The topography is broken with steep cliffs, especially on the western and southern boundary. There are numerous steep cliffs and gorges. The area is very important as a catchment area and the high altitude vlei is a significant biological feature.

The high conservation value of the Reserve has necessitated the development of a document which will guide management in their broad strategic decisions and this document is seen as serving this purpose. It must be seen as the first broad plan which will set the long-term direction of the Reserve. It will need operational guidelines and procedures to be drawn up and formally adopted by management for it to become more operational. However those are seen as subsequent steps to this broad framework.

Vision

It is recognised that Kgaswane Mountain Reserve has a number of important attributes, these include:

- An important catchment area with a significant wetland, the largest in the Magaliesberg (possible Ramsar site)
- Good hiking area
- Supplies good clean water to the leaving the Reserve rivers
- Only significant public area of the Magaliesberg range open and accessible to the public
- High biological value
- Scenic value
- Nucleus for expansion

- Forms part of the Magaliesberg Protected Natural Environment (MPNE)

- It has some archaeological and cultural value, but this has not been fully explored
- Probably has good potential for adding to economic activity in the area
- Game conservation area
- An area for conducting environmental education and research
- Pivotal area for conservation, expansion, access etc.
- From this a vision was developed, namely:
 - ***to contribute to the socio-economic well being of the people of the region through appropriate management of the wetland, its associated catchments and surrounding natural environment and allow for controlled nature-based out door activities.***
- This vision incorporates the essence of the reserve within the context of the North West Parks and Tourism Board.
- From this vision a number of key objectives were identified which would form the basis of prioritising management activities within and around the reserve. These objectives are:
 - ***to ensure a supply of high quality water;***
 - ***to maintain the scenic beauty and integrity of this area of the Magaliesberg;***
 - ***to conserve biological diversity and natural processes and preserve the cultural and archaeological heritage;***
 - ***to allow public access for***
 - ***environmental education and research;***
 - ***out door nature based experiences;***
 - ***to increase the land area managed under the above objectives;***
 - ***to more fully integrate the Kgaswane Mountain Reserve with the surrounding community and to contribute to the local economy;***
 - ***to manage the area in a cost effective way and strive to at least achieve operational sustainability; and***

- *to maintain populations of rare or endangered species.*

It is recognised that the Kgaswane Mountain Reserve forms part of the Magaliesberg Protected Natural Area (MPNA) and therefore all efforts will be made to integrate the Reserve into this area; by being an active participant and member of any management body of his MPNA and to ensure its' goals and objectives are implemented where relevant and appropriate.

These broad objectives are then translated in operational policies for different aspects of the management of the Kgaswane Mountain Reserve.

OPERATIONAL POLICIES

1. Natural resources

Ecological management

Vision

The ecological management will focus on the conservation of biological and genetic diversity and the maintenance of the dynamic natural processes to ensure environmental stability and to enhance the visitor experience.

Policy

Where necessary and appropriate the natural resources will be used in a sustained and responsible manner in line with the key objectives of the reserve.

Operational guidelines

Soil

Most of the soils of the Kgaswane Mountain Reserve are highly erodible and management actions will be directed at reducing erosion and intervening where necessary to reduce accelerated erosion arising from bad planning and designs of infrastructure.

Reclamation will be directed primarily at those areas which pose the greatest threat to any one of the key objectives for the Kgaswane Mountain Reserve.

Water

The functional integrity of the wetlands and surrounding catchments will be maintained to ensure an optimum yield of high quality water from the Kgaswane Mountain Reserve.

Vegetation

The flora will be managed so as to maintain biological and genetic diversity and where appropriate manipulated to ensure that the key objectives of the Kgaswane Mountain Reserve are met.

Burning

Fire will be used to achieve the objectives of the Kgaswane Mountain Reserve and specifically those set for vegetation and game management and water production.

It will also be used to keep fuel loads of the vegetation low so as to reduce the risk of uncontrolled fires. Firebreaks and other fire control measures that may be required by law will be implemented where necessary and appropriate.

Alien plants

It is recognized that alien plants are a significant part of the South African landscape and eradication may not always be feasible, however alien vegetation still occurs at low densities in the Reserve and therefore priority should be directed at eradicating them especially those species which impact most significantly on the key objectives of the Kgaswane Mountain Reserve and which can be controlled within budget limitations.

Herbicides

Management efficiency can often be increased with the use of herbicides, however these should only be used after thorough screening and evaluation.

Fauna

The objective is to foster a diverse range of large game species at limited carrying capacity to manipulate the vegetation structure and composition and to supplement the scenic beauty of the Rustenburg Nature Reserve. However this will be achieved within the overall objective of water production.

Carrying capacity

The carrying capacity of the area will be allowed to fluctuate according to feedback from monitoring, however an upper limit of 8ha per Large Stock Unit (LSU) will be placed on the herbivore population. This will be allocated to the following feeder categories in the following percentages.

Mixed feeders	25%
Bulk Feeders	35%
Selective feeders	40%

No limits are set on the browsers, as they are seen as self-regulating and move beyond the Kgaswane Mountain Reserve boundaries.

Species composition

The Kgaswane Mountain Reserve is an important hiking area and because of this dangerous game will be kept to a minimum. Leopard do occur in the area and have not been a problem, this will be allowed to continue. Further introductions of game species will be considered against their role in the achievement of the goals and objectives of the reserve.

Problem animals

Some animals, after continued contact with humans, may become problems. The warden will deal with these issues on a case-by-case basis, but in line with any relevant Board Policies.

Introductions and translocations

Any introductions of indigenous species must ensure they do not carry any disease or genetic incompatibility which may impact on existing populations and must be done with the authorization of other Departments.

Domestic animals

No domestic animals will be permitted to reside in the reserve. Staff may be allowed their own domestic animals provided these do not pose any threat to or compete with the indigenous wildlife. Visitors may not bring pets into the Reserve because of the threats or problems they may pose to wildlife or visitors.

Horses for riding purposes may be permitted but subject to the warden's approval. They may not be allowed to freely graze or wander in the Reserve.

Monitoring

Monitoring of all components of the system (fauna, flora, climatological data, fire, erosion, water etc.) is essential in order to measure the effectiveness of, and if necessary adapt, management actions as well as provide an ecological/economic audit of wildlife and natural resource use.

Use of Natural Resources

Wildlife based tourism (especially outdoor nature-based experience) is the prime form of resource use, however consumptive use of natural resources will be allowed from time to time in order to contribute to financial sustainability, social benefits or ecological requirements.

2 Zonation

Vision

The Kgaswane Mountain Reserve will be zoned so as to accommodate the different objectives.

Policy and guidelines

The natural resource base, including geology, topography, soils and plants provides the basis for determining the zonation of the Kgaswane Mountain Reserve.

From this an initial zonation was determined which was then adapted to the specifics of the physical attributes and administrative considerations of the NR. This identified three broad zones, these are:

Special areas.

These are areas of a sensitive or critical nature where human impact should be minimized. No roads, tracks or trails are permitted and only controlled pedestrian traffic allowed. No other permanent structures are permitted.

Low use areas

Minimal development is permitted and this is restricted to roads, tracks, trails, vistas and hides. These however should be minimized and EIA's would be required for any earthworks.

Medium use areas

Areas suitable for more extensive development within the limitations of the reserve and its objectives.

Development sites

Specific sites must be identified before development is permitted and a thorough EIA conducted, these would then be identified as development areas within the Medium use areas.

Concession areas

Certain areas within the above categories may be used by concessionaires within the Kgaswane Mountain Reserve. These would be reserved for these concessionaires and their guests, for which additional fees, above the normal entrance fee, could be levied.

The physical location of these areas is identified on the map attached.

It is recognized that many developments have occurred in the Kgaswane Mountain Reserve in the past that are inappropriate within this zonation and reserve objectives. These include the office complex and surrounding developments (campsites, day use area, staff houses and workshops) as well as the entrance road. It would be foolish to move these now but no extensions should be allowed and any further development must be moved to one of the identified areas. Monitoring of the impact of these developments should be initiated, especially the liquid waste.

3 Private Sector

Vision

As a general principle the North West Parks and Tourism Board encourages private sector involvement in the Kgaswane Mountain Reserve in all aspects that can be handled in a cost-effective manner and which meet with the North West Parks and Tourism Board's quality standards.

Policy

Any opportunities which are made available to outside parties should be done in the most appropriate manner and in line with the Board's policies and procedures.

Development and operational guidelines

Any opportunities which may arise in the Kgaswane Mountain Reserve for outside parties to participate should be advertised as widely as possible to ensure the following is achieved:

- Job creation is a priority and preference will be given to those proposals which maximize both the number and quality of jobs that will be developed.
- Investment in infrastructure, staff development and other social benefits is maximized.
- Financial return to the Kgaswane Mountain Reserve is commensurate with the

opportunity.

- It contributes to the overall Vision, Goals and Objectives of the Reserve.
- All other things being equal, opportunities should be made available to local people.

- **4 Marketing/awareness**

- **Vision**

- Kgaswane Mountain Reserve offers many opportunities and benefits. These should be marketed as widely as possible and the environmental benefits of the Reserve communicated to as wide an audience as possible.

- **Policy**

- As a general principle, those that benefit the most pay the marketing cost.

- **Operational Guidelines**

- Marketing/awareness is split into four broad categories, these are:
- promoting awareness of the benefits of the natural environment and its systems; this is primarily seen as being done through environmental education. The NR can play an important role here but it is recognized that partnerships with other parties is an important component of this;
- marketing of business opportunities to the private sector that arise from the NR. This is seen as the function of the Kgaswane Mountain Reserve and the Warden in particular, subject to Board policies and procedures;
- the marketing of the individual tourist facilities. This is borne by the party who runs and manages these facilities, and;
- marketing of the Kgaswane Mountain Reserve and the area as a 'destination'. This is seen as a joint responsibility of the individual stakeholders in the reserve, the Kgaswane Mountain Reserve and local, provincial and National tourism marketing authorities and initiatives.

- **5 Infrastructure**

- **Vision**

- The Kgaswane Mountain Reserve will ensure that the conservation related infrastructure will be developed and maintained by the Kgaswane Mountain Reserve

within the prevailing financial constraints.

•Policy

- The Warden will ensure that the conservation infrastructure is developed and maintained in the Reserve. Standards and quality will be set according to budgetary constraints and needs. It is realized that an EIA is required for all developments, however when reference is made to an EIA under this section it is seen as a more comprehensive one than may otherwise be necessary.

•Operational and development guidelines

- All developments are to comply with the standards set for the different zones. All developments require the CEO's approval before they can be implemented.

•Gates

- All gates will be controlled by the warden and at least one gate will be available for the public to enter the Kgaswane Mountain Reserve.

It is recognized that other gates may be allowed but the party/ies benefiting from these must pay the full costs and they must be managed and maintained to Kgaswane Mountain Reserve standards.

•Roads

- It is recognized from the objectives of the Kgaswane Mountain Reserve that the area is primarily for nature based activities and therefore the road network should be minimized and restricted to allow vehicle access to some strategic points as this is not seen as an outdoor nature based activity. Some tracks are required for emergency access to some areas and for management purposes.

- The Kgaswane Mountain Reserve will provide and maintain a suitable road network to meet this objective.

•Services

- Services such as electricity, phones and water should be confined to the periphery or on present facilities. Any new additional services beyond the current network and which are not peripheral will not be permitted without a thorough EIA which must aim to reduce impacts, especially those which will detract from the objectives or vision of the Kgaswane Mountain Reserve.

•Radio Communications

- The warden may require a two-way radio system for efficient park management. Any other radios must comply with licensing and other regulatory requirements. Any repeater stations must be comply with EIA conditions and formal agreements must be entered into with the North West Parks and Tourism Board.

- Visitor Facilities**

- The Kgaswane Mountain Reserve will supply some visitor facilities in line with the objectives of the area to enhance the visitor experience and understanding of the natural environment. These will be subject to funding being available and an EIA.

- Waste disposal**

- Where possible waste should be sorted for recycling and removed from the Nature Reserve. All other waste to be disposed of in an environmentally responsible manner and close monitoring of pollution and other effects is critical, especially of the water resources. EIA's for all developments are to look closely at waste processing and subsequent monitoring for all developments.

- A comprehensive waste management plan with procedures must be developed and implemented for the Kgaswane Mountain Reserve.

- Fencing**

- The Kgaswane Mountain Reserve will be adequately fenced in the most cost effective manner to ensure assets are protected and losses minimized and environmental damage kept to a minimum.

- Sitting of visitor accommodation**

- Any accommodation for visitors must be located within the relevant zones, it must comply with EIA requirements and should be peripheral especially if it has a large impact.

- **6 Tourism**

- Vision**

- Outdoor nature-based tourism will form the basis of Kgaswane Mountain Reserve's tourist product, with due regard to the other Reserve objectives.

- Policy**

- The Kgaswane Mountain Reserve offers the only substantial area of the Magaliesberg accessible to the public. It is recognized that it is a sensitive fragile environment where

other objectives are important. The town of Rustenburg offers a wide range of activities to the public and the Kgaswane Mountain Reserve is therefore seen as an area where nature based outdoor tourism is the primary focus. The facilities made available to the public will therefore focus on this theme.

- The Kgaswane Mountain Reserve must also rely on income from visitors to contribute significantly to the Reserves operating costs. Reserve user fees will therefore be levied to achieve this goal. Differential rates may be payable for different times, seasons and products, these will be agreed to from time to time by the CEO after recommendation by the warden.

- Operational guidelines**

- The warden will ensure as many opportunities as possible are developed so as to ensure the Kgaswane Mountain Reserve is enjoyed by the public and that user fees are levied and collected for the products offered.

- Visitor control**

- Visitors may need to be regulated to ensure impacts on the natural environment and on the experience of other Reserve users are not compromised. Regulations will be drafted to ensure the warden can achieve this, if necessary these may need to be approved by the Executive Council of the Province. The warden will make recommendations in this regard from time to time.

- Visitor carrying capacity**

- Within the respective zones the visitor numbers should be regulated to ensure that environmental impact is kept within acceptable limits and visitor experience, within the objectives for the Kgaswane Mountain Reserve, is maximized. The need may arise where management needs to mitigate impacts. This must be done with cognizance of financial limitations.

- **7 Community and social**

- Vision**

- It is recognized that the Kgaswane Mountain Reserve forms part of the local community and in principle the reserve should be integrated into this community while recognizing wider national and international responsibilities.

- Policy**

- Within the framework and objectives of the Kgaswane Mountain Reserve the community should be accommodated. This can be achieved through the following

mechanisms;

- **Environmental education**

- This should be actively encouraged especially in the context of the natural benefits of the reserve to society. Where possible partnerships should be established with role players and interested parties to ensure this occurs.

- **Research**

- Research will only be permitted via formal agreements and subject to registering of any projects. Investigation of the archeological and cultural aspects of the Kgaswane Mountain Reserve is seen as a high priority so that base line information is available to assist with planning and EIA's.

- **Other**

- Where appropriate and necessary the Kgaswane Mountain Reserve should interact with interested parties via their elected representatives and establish for where use of the Kgaswane Mountain Reserve can be discussed and if deemed necessary policies amended.

- **8 Management**

- **Vision**

- Management of the Kgaswane Mountain Reserve should be achieved through efficient use of resources in the most cost effective manner, while systems are implemented where control, planning and continuity is possible.

- **Policy**

- The warden is charged with the overall responsibility of the ecological, human resource, tourist and financial management of the Kgaswane Mountain Reserve within the Boards policies and procedures. This will be carried out under the policies of this document and within the social environment in which the Kgaswane Mountain Reserve exists.

- **Operational Guidelines**

- The warden is to ensure operational plans and procedures are in place which will ensure the Vision, Objectives and Policies defined in this document are indeed implemented. If performance cannot be achieved then remedial action must be recommended, this may include the enlisting of other Board resources. The operational plans and procedures must ensure continuity between wardens.

- **Management control and efficiency**

- A system of monitoring and recording all aspects of the reserve must be established by the warden so that control can be exercised and management improved.

- Reserve Assets**

- All Board assets are to be adequately protected and maintained in working order and used only to contribute to the Vision, Goals and Objectives spelt out in this document. Any relevant Board policies and procedures must be adhered to.

- Human Resources**

- The warden will ensure all North West Parks and Tourism Board staff are employed according to the policies and procedures laid down by the Board from time to time. A respectful efficient working environment must be created for all staff, both Board and others, working in the Reserve.

- Funding**

- The funding of the reserve developments and operations will be sourced in accordance with the needs of the respective benefiting parties.

- Any private sector initiatives or developments must be funded from their own sources.

- Financial management**

- The Kgaswane Mountain Reserve will strive to cover its funding requirements from income it derives from activities arising from its assets or from donors and Government grants. This income must be used by the Kgaswane Mountain Reserve to offset operational and development costs associated with the management and development of these assets in an environmentally responsible and financially prudent manner but in line with the Boards policies and procedures.

- **9 Land**

- Vision**

- The area of land administered under the objectives incorporated in this document should be maximized.

- Policy**

- Agreements should be entered into to ensure as much land as possible is managed under

the guidelines and objectives spelt out in this document.

•Operational Guidelines

- Before any fences are removed between the Kgaswane Mountain Reserve and other land the following items need to be agreed to:
 - ownership and use of game is formally agreed;
 - fencing costs and standards are agreed;
 - traversing rights on different landowners properties are agreed;
 - management of the area must be agreed including standards, costs and policy;
 - the land use must be defined and if necessary limited to that defined in this document;
 - ownership of land is maintained by the individual parties.

The Rustenburg Kloof area along with the southern cliff faces of the Magaliesberg are seen as priority areas for incorporation into the Kgaswane Mountain Reserve.