



PO Box FM 648, Famona. Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

Welfare No: W/O 30/94

NEWSLETTER 14 / MAY 1997

1 - MATOBO CONSERVATION SOCIETY WINS NRB MERIT AWARD

At a function held in Gwanda on 15th May, the Society was awarded a Certificate of Merit Award by the Department of Natural Resources, in recognition of the conservation work, and projects initiated, in the Matobo Communal Area. This is an annual event, and we are proud to have our work recognized in this manner.

2 - ROCK ART BROCHURE

Shell Zimbabwe has offered to fund the re-printing of this brochure.

3 - MATOBO NATIONAL PARK BROCHURE

A visitor brochure has been prepared, with drawings supplied by Mrs Mary Friend, along the lines of the Rock Art Brochure. Again, SHELL ZIMBABWE have generously agreed to sponsor the production. We hope that printing will take place in the near future, and that the brochures will soon be available to all visitors. The brochure details facilities within the park, places of interest, a route map, and matters of interest.

4 - LITTER BAGS

The litter bags that have been generously prepared and donated by PROCON SALES have been delivered and will shortly be available to all visitors to the park at Sandy Spruit Gate. It is hoped this will encourage visitors to collect their litter, rather than discard it along the way, and then dispose of them in appropriate rubbish bins.

5 - REPORT ON THE LUMANE TREES

Members of the society have visited the site of our tree planting exercise held in January this year, and are pleased to advise that only two, of the approximately 80 trees that were planted, have not survived. These were two small pod mahogany trees, so it is not that surprising. The rest seem well settled with new growth evident.

However, the real test will come in the hot dry period from mid-August through to November. We are appealing to members to offer their assistance with monitoring of the trees during this period. The local residents have undertaken to water the plants regularly, but we should show our continued interest by visiting frequently. It is therefore proposed that a representative of the society visit the site every week-end during this period (it can be part of a general picnic in the Lumane Valley or a visit to Diana's Pool) and we are therefore appealing to our members to volunteer their services. If the response is good, it will only be for one visit. Please write in to the society, or advise Mrs Mary Friend during our next function.

7 - NEXT EVENT

WHERE	Social trip to Mineral King Farm
WHEN	Sunday 15 June 1997
MEET	at Churchill Arms Hotel 11:00am for 11:15am departure
WHO	All members and friends
WHAT	Bring own lunch, deck chairs, drinks. Braai available. Don't forget your hat!
WHY	A social outing with potential black eagle viewing.

This visit is to the farm owned by Mr J Sullivan, which is a sub-division of the Mineral King farm situated in the Maleme valley, upstream of the dam. Access is obtained through Sandy Spruit, along the western side of the Circular Drive, turn right down the Scenic Drive to Maleme (a dirt road), and right off this road as marked. Essentially, follow the Matobo Hills Lodge sign posts until leaving the park, at which point you take the left-hand road, as marked.

We will be seeking free access into the park for this event, so please bring this newsletter and Society badge with you so that National Parks Staff at Sandy Spruit can facilitate your passage. At the same time, please respect the fact that we are being given free entry only so as to travel to the Mineral King farm, and members found elsewhere in the park, having gained free entry, will be fined by the Parks staff.

We are hoping to have a member of the Black Eagle Survey with us to explain the nature of their study, and discuss the fascinating aspects of this great bird. We are also hoping that Mr Ngoni Chiweshi of the Ornithological Research Unit of DNPWM will be able to attend to bring us up to date on the conservation work being done by the unit.

8 - REPORT BACK

Our visit to Mtshabezi dam was the most successful outing yet, with around 65 people in attendance. The Chairman spoke after lunch on the botany of the hills, and in particular about the area in which the dam is situated. For interest, the dam is 82% full, with 8,9m to go before it spills - so hopefully next year we will be able to see this happen. The dam's catchment received between 750mm (30") and 1000mm (40") of rain this past season, which, following last year's 1500mm (60") explains the rapid rise of the waters. Major tributaries are still flowing.

A special vote of thanks must be recorded for Mrs Mary Friend who organised the whole event, and we hope to see our many new members (and old !) at the next function.

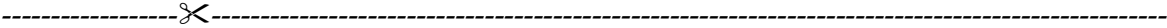
9 - PARK AND MUSEUM FEES

Your Society is continuing to press for the rationalisation of the collection of Park and Museum fees. The Matobo Committee is insisting, as we have argued for some time now, that all fees should be collected at the point of entry, and consequently, you can expect, in the near future to be able to pay your Museum (Caves) fee, firewood charges, picnic costs and others all at the same time as your entry fee.

It would seem that the two departments, let alone the two ministries, are unable to conclude this matter, and we welcome the intervention by the Matobo Committee.

10 - INTERPRETIVE CENTRE

Discussions are under way for the construction of an Interpretive Centre at Sandy Spruit gate.



SUBSCRIPTIONS!!!



Members subs fall due on 31 July. Please help our administration by settling your account early - details are provided below. Please detach this note, complete the details below and return to the treasurer.

SUBSCRIPTIONS!!!



- Individual/Family \$60
- Special/Pensioner \$30
- Corporate \$200
- Life \$600

NAME -
CASH / CHEQUE \$
CHEQUE NO
CATEGORY
MEMBERSHIP NO

*** Please advise of any change of address ***

