

MATOBO



SOCIETY

PO Box FM 648, Famona. Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

Welfare No: W/O 30/94

NEWSLETTER 36 / JULY 2002

1 – MATOBO HILLS WORLD HERITAGE APPLICATION TAKES A MAJOR STEP FORWARD

Mr Albert Kumirai, Chairman of the Matobo Hills World Heritage Application Committee, was recently in Budapest, Hungary meeting with representatives of UNESCO and the World Heritage Bureau (WHB). The Matobo Hills nomination has been selected from 500 applications onto a final shortlist of 30 potential sites and the audit by ICOMOS is expected before the end of the year. The WHB will meet in June 2003 in China.

2 – THE RHODES MATOPOS NATIONAL PARK - THE FUTURE

A number of members have contacted the committee in connection at the recent press articles concerning the Rhodes Estate. Your committee has been greatly concerned, and has discussed the issue with various stakeholders. The Matobo Committee has been public in its condemnation of the proposals, whilst the BPA's Tourism Committee has also elaborated on the damage being caused to the local tourist industry by these constant remarks made in the local press. The local population has not endorsed the views of the Chronicle either. Whilst one cannot be sure of anything in Zimbabwe, it is our opinion that this is merely the expression of a minority group without real support, and consequently there will be no actual change to the Matobo National Park. Responsible authorities have assured us that they are taking the necessary action in this regard.

3 – MATOBO HILLS ECO-CHALLENGE

An Eco-challenge is best described as a triathlon type activity, set against a wilderness backdrop. For some years such events have been held in the Eastern Highlands. Now the Matopos is set to become the latest venue for this high action activity. The race, comprising a 15km hike, 7km canoe (on Lake Mtshabezi) and a 60 km cycle will take place in the Eastern Matopos on 28 July. This first event will be held on one day, starting at 6:00am. Contact D Stephens for details.

4 - MATOPOS 33 MILER CANCELLED

Regretfully the Matopos 33 Miler scheduled to run in April was cancelled. This follows the introduction of a massive \$20,000 fee, over and above entry and vehicle charges, imposed by the DNPWM, as well as the loss of SA competitors and the general poor state of the country. The race has been going on for over 40 years, was a marketing opportunity for the Matobo National Park, and an advertisement for Bulawayo in general. Hopefully it will be resuscitated next year.

5 – ECLIPSE

Your committee has continued to play an active role on both the National Parks and BPA Eclipse committees. It is intended to arrange an MCS Field trip to coincide with the event on 4 December, and the committee is presently evaluating potential viewing sites. It is proposed that members would travel out in the early morning of 4 December. Any members with telescopes should please advise the Secretary.

6 – LITTER BAGS

On request from visitors and the DNPWM, we have had litterbags reproduced. These are available at the Sandy Spruit Park entrance. This has been made available through the generous support of NATPAK.

7 – SUBSCRIPTIONS

Yes, it is the time of the year again. Subscriptions are due once more, and following the mandate of our members at the last AGM, subscriptions will be increased in line with inflation. However, members who need time to settle, or may have difficulty in meeting these costs, should contact the Secretary.

FAMILY / INDIVIDUAL	\$ 500
SPECIAL / PENSION	\$ 250
CORPORATE	\$5,000

Please see overleaf for a remittance advice.

8 - NEXT EVENT

Date	Sunday 18th August 2002
Venue	Mtsheli Dam and Khumalo Communal Lands
Meet	8:15am to leave by 8:30am, Churchill Arms
Travel	All vehicles
Details	Provide own chairs, tables, meals and drinks. Don't forget your hat! Please bring National Parks entry fees with you, \$50 per person

Our next outing is aimed specifically to examine the ornithological richness of the Matobo Hills. Mr Ngoni Chiweshi, Ornithologist, Dept. National Parks and Wildlife Management will accompany us. Ngoni has not only been involved in research, (including the black eagle survey and the Dassie study) but has also been very successful in conservation education in the communal areas.

9 – REPORT BACK

A record number of members and friends attended the last outing, to the Farmhouse. Eighty-four members and friends, excluding children, took part in the outing, enjoying picnicking in the lovely gardens of the camp. Before lunch the group walked to a fine viewing point on the western edge of the farm, and in the afternoon were taken to some superb rock art sites, complete with grain bins in a fair state of preservation.

Mr Johannes Dick, Chairman of the BPA Tourism Committee attended as our guest and spoke to the members following the picnic lunch. His presentation included preparations for the Eclipse, the importance of tourism in the Matobo Hills and the current debate on the future of the Rhodes Estate. Members were able to ask questions following the presentation, which was well received.

10 – BROCHURES

These are now available at the main entrance to the National Park (Sandy Spruit gate).

11 – NATIONAL PARKS REPORTS

From time to time, we receive reports from members, or the public, in which complaints are raised as to the state of roads, facilities etc. We remind members that we have no authority to action these items, though we do forward them to the DNPWM. However, we would advise members to write directly to the Warden, Matobo National Park, and copy the correspondence to us. The warden would welcome this kind of information and we should work through the correct channels.

12 - CONDOLENCES

We express our sorrow at the news of the passing away of Peter Tucker and convey the sympathy of the Society to the family. Peter has been a supportive member of the Society since its inception, and he will be missed at our various outings.

13 – DUIKER RESEARCH

We will include in our next newsletter an interesting article on the Duiker Research in the Matopos submitted by Andrew Bowkett of Marwell Trust Zimbabwe.

14 – RAINFALL

The ink was barely dry on the last edition of the Newsletter, when the heavens opened for a last downpour in mid-April. The welcome and widespread rains measured in excess of 100mm across the Matopos, returning the hills to a hint of summer once more. Streams and rivers flowed again, and a number of trees came into flower and new leaf. The late rains meant that the western hills are 94% of average, the eastern hills 78%, with totals of Western Matopos at 562.5mm (22,5”), and Eastern Hills at 649mm (26,5”).



15 – SUBSCRIPTIONS 2002/2003

Due by 31 July 2002. Changed Address? Please update our records

NAME	ADDRESS
MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY	
AMOUNT Cheque / Cash	
EMAIL	