

## Conservancies – the sustainable alternative

Daily, in South Africa, one is faced with the loss of vast tracts of land, green belts and important green spaces in cities and towns. In many cases essential green corridors for all types of wildlife are being lost in man's quest to utilise every remaining piece of open space. This is coupled with inadequate resources and expertise to manage such areas. This short-sighted attitude, along with in many cases, lack of political will, necessary funding, lack of staff and loss of expertise is amplifying the problem. More and more one hears of the need for alternatives to be put in place, to ensure that there will be "A world worthy of our children" in time to come.

The viable alternative is the establishment of Conservancies in all provinces, thus adding to the existing 750 plus conservancies today, covering over 3 million hectares throughout Southern Africa.

**The National Association of Conservancies and Stewardship of South Africa (NACSSA) would like to welcome Moepel Conservancy as our most recently registered conservancy.**

In registering with NACSSA your conservancy members became part of a diverse and caring group of landowners, residents and other land users with the shared aim of managing their natural resources in an environmentally sustainable manner, without necessarily changing the land-use of their properties. In short it has no red tape or hidden agendas, no direct state involvement, but provides the platform for all residents of a special area to conserve for posterity.

The importance and advantages in belonging to a registered conservancy:

- The conservancy name and logo is a recognised movement which espouses certain norms and standards of operation. The logo is a registered trademark;
- Owners, land users and other stakeholders that have agreed to pool resources and work together to achieve sustainable usage and conservation objectives as set from time to time in their management plan;
- Identifying the natural resources in a geographical area that are worth protecting.
- Creating functional projects and activities for promoting the community and conserving resources in a planned manner, supported widely by residents who are positive and involved;
- Visible leadership shared amongst residents, and possible some specialists, who communicate openly and contribute unselfishly for the greater good of all the members;
- Harmony and mutual respect among the different population groupings who trust each other through fairness and caring rather than indifference and exclusion;
- A positive experience of the natural features such as clean roadsides; well maintained facilities, flourishing indigenous plants, improved security, proudly preserved historical features and tourist-friendly services and signage; and
- Positive attitudes from local public and other service providers who are aligned with the value of a positively inclined community.

Conservancies are encouraged to form partnerships with other organisations like EWT, Birdlife SA, Rotary clubs, Friends of Free Wildlife and WESSA. A number of conservancies have strengthened this

relationship by becoming affiliated to WESSA. In fact NACSSA has been a WESSA affiliate for a number of years.

On behalf of NACSSA we welcome MOEPEL CONSERVANCY on board and congratulate Ken and his team on the initiative and may this be the start of building a strong conservancy presence in the region.

John Wesson

Chairman