

Things are changing - Rapidly!

AS LEADERSHIP FOR CONSERVATION IN AFRICA (LCA) DELEGATES FLY INTO EZEMVELO KZN WILDLIFE'S ITHALA GAME RESERVE

RICHARD COMPTON

If this Leadership for Conservation in Africa's sixth annual congress is anything to go by, a fundamental change in attitude towards conservation on the continent is happening – and quickly!

Delegates from one of the most innovative conservation movements in Africa flew into Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife's magnificent Ithala Game Reserve in Northern KwaZulu-Natal recently to hold its sixth annual congress.

Four charter flights used the tarred Ithala airfield and disgorged 88 representatives from major international and African business, politicians and conservation professionals. By the end of the three-day congress the Leadership for Conservation in Africa (LCA) announced it had set a realisable business target; saving some 20 million hectares of rainforest and select eco-systems in Sub-Saharan Africa by 2020!

SUPPORT

LCA CEO Chris Marais reported that the organisation's business model had already gained 13 African countries as signatories to its membership. In effect such countries had committed themselves to its programme of private/public partnership in identifying and managing select national parks in their respective countries.

"The time has come. Globally, business is becoming particularly serious about the environment; how to protect it in a manner that is driven by responsible and caring business ethics," said Marais.

Essentially, the LCA is a facilitative body representing a vast array



LCA delegates (from left): Mr Ian Cockerill (Executive Chairman Petmin); Mrs Sabine Plattner (Sabine Plattner Africa Charities); Ms Elke Schmid; Mr Leon Jooste (businessman / former Deputy Minister, Environmental Affairs and MP Namibia) on arrival at Ithala airstrip.

of highly influential international business interests, ranging from the Howard G Buffett Foundation, Gold Fields Limited, the Hasso Plattner Foundation, SAP Global, Standard Bank, Petmin and Veolia Water amongst many others.

These comprise LCA boards with trustees comprising representatives of that country's conservation, community and business leadership along with LCA representation. Each Chapter identifies its own national conservation-led

... LCA has targeted the saving of some 20 million hectares of rainforest and select eco-systems in Sub-Saharan Africa by 2020!

Their core motivation as Patrons and Members of the LCA Board lies in the conviction that business and conservation simply have to work together in order to protect Africa's wildlife and conservation heritage.

MODEL

The model entails LCA Chapters being established in each of the African member countries.

project, with the aim of protecting nature and improving the socio-economic position of those communities living in the vicinity of conservation areas.

The respective country's board of trustees sign a two-year agreement with the LCA during which time the LCA has this window of opportunity to raise the necessary seed funding to help support the agreed management plan for running that park – and to find business solutions to enhance the growth and development of each park.

This has already been stamped in a pilot project in the Republic of the Congo where the Odzala Koukoua National Park on the north-western boundary near Gabon is now being managed on this basis. Two more parks in that country (Nouabale Ndoki Park and Konkouati Park) are in the process of being integrated.

BUSINESS

Other national parks in Cameroon, Ethiopia, Senegal and the Ivory Coast have also been identified and agreed to be managed along these lines. By the end of next year the LCA hopes to incorporate some four to five million hectares of nationally-owned parks under its management.

"The LCA provides an inclusive and workable business-driven option to the enduring tensions that exist between these two broad fields of interest; commerce and conservation. This need – to protect what is left of the continent's



Dr. Bandile Mkhize
CEO Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife

Dr. Bandile Mkhize has been one of the principal motivators for the growth and success of the Leadership for Conservation in Africa (LCA) since its inception in 2006. At the very outset Dr. Mkhize was one of the visionaries who embraced the LCA business model and encouraged Mr Marais to run with it.

"This is the way forward. The days when business can come into our continent and extract resources and repatriate the profits offshore leaving little or nothing behind has to be replaced. If we want to save our continent's remaining precious conservation heritage then business must work in a manner that supports this overall goal. The LCA represents a particularly exciting and influential step towards realising this end."

LCA SIGNATORIES

- Burkina Faso
- Botswana
- Cameroon
- Ethiopia
- Ghana
- Ivory Coast
- Liberia
- Madagascar
- Malawi
- Mali
- Mozambique
- Namibia
- Republic of Congo
- Rwanda
- Senegal
- South Africa
- Tanzania
- The Gambia
- Uganda
- Zambia



natural heritage – has taken a very serious and influential foothold in Africa, as you can see by the composition of our members and patrons."

Marais said the LCA business model presents the best solution to the salvation of the African environment: "The many African country signatories bear testament to this statement."



Mr Mothibedi Mothibedi (Managing Director Anglo American Thermal; Coal – Botswana) **Mr Stephen Levetan** (Director Environmental Law; Edward Nathan and Sonnenbergs)

There's so much beauty in this world ...

We protect and nurture what is good and beautiful, may we rely on your support?
EZEMVELO KZN WILDLIFE

Head Office: 033 845 1999 Central Reservations: 033 845 1000
www.kznwildlife.com

Conservationists have much to answer for . . .

AS EZEMVELO KZN WILDLIFE'S CEO APPEALS TO CONSERVATIONISTS TO "WIDEN THEIR HORIZONS"

RICHARD COMPTON

Conservationists have much to answer for when it comes to those problems that have beset game reserves and protected areas.

Much of these a consequence of their historic neglect towards local communities living outside game reserves that has largely ignored their needs and left them in ignorance.

"Conservationists cannot blame anybody else but themselves for the problems that beset protected areas. Most of these problems are a consequence of the attitude of conservationists towards communities."



Dr Bandile Mkhize

Dr Mkhize claimed conservation authorities will always look over their shoulders if they don't play an active role in the reduction of poverty by influencing the policies that pertain to areas in the immediate vicinity of protected lands.

Speaking at the inaugural Maqubu Ntombela/Ian Player Annual Lecture Series at the Durban Natural Science Museum, Dr Bandile Mkhize, CEO of Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife used the plight of Ndumo Game Reserve as an example of this neglect.



One of the great friendships and partnerships in world conservation: Maqubu Ntombela and Dr Ian Player



Maqubu Ntombela



The Maqubu Ntombela Memorial Foundation has been established to pay tribute to Maqubu Ntombela's contribution to wildlife conservation, to honour his memory, to nurture the quality of Africa's young conservationists and restore primal wisdom to its rightful place.

The establishment of the Foun-

areas saw themselves as the only ones who knew what conservation was all about.

"People are at the centre of all human endeavour ... they can conserve or destroy nature. We would like them to work with us in conserving nature, but when they ask us what is in it for them, we must be in a position to answer that question. It is imperative that all stakeholders in this industry should benefit from what is done".

He reminded the 70-odd guests attending the lecture that Conservation could no longer be done for the sake of conservation: "It has to be done in the context of what people do and will do in future ... We conserve for the benefit of present and future generations".

He implored conservationists to help create awareness among communities as to why the environment is crucial for their

foundation, founded by Dr Ian Player, Andrew Ewing and the late Mr Nick Steele was based on a promise made by Dr Player to Maqubu Ntombela, his great mentor and friend.

It is the Foundation's belief that the preservation of traditional knowledge, history and culture has become absolutely vital in Southern Africa. The Foundation is committed to encouraging the youth of today to protect nature and protect our heritage and to support conservation and community-based projects.

There's so much beauty in this world ...

Conservation Partnerships Ecotourism

We protect and nurture what is good and beautiful, may we rely on your support?
EZEMVELO KZN WILDLIFE

Head Office: 033 845 1999 Central Reservations: 033 845 1000
www.kznmwildlife.com

anything when communities are poor and cannot satisfy their subsistence needs."

The "serious problem" of Rhino poaching could also be attributed to conservationist's poor communication with neighbouring communities.

"If we improve our relationship with communities, they can assist us to fight against poachers. We want communities to be on our side ... we should take a wider angle to conservation".

Dr Mkhize said Maqubu Ntombela was a "true pioneer of African Conservation".

"There are numerous lessons that we have learned from Maqubu Ntombela, including the fact that human beings are not separate from the environment they live in.

Human beings are an integral part of the environment. Modern conservation is based on this premise."

It was instructive, he said, that Maqubu Ntombela had built up

such an intimate friendship with Dr Ian Player when such relationships were unheard of in the context of South Africa's racially dictated history: "It's also worth noting is that Maqubu never went to school, but his knowledge of the environment and its different constituents far exceeded that of professors and other scholars who spent years at tertiary institutions".

He was also an example of the great respect that communities had historically demonstrated towards nature.

"We must never make the mistake of thinking that they have no knowledge of conservation ... communities showed great respect for indigenous trees, rivers, wetlands and other things. Some members of the community - and this includes traditional healers, too - in the rural areas have a wonderful way of describing the natural systems that once existed and how these systems sustained livelihoods."

The days were "long gone", when those working inside protected

sustainable survival.

"At every turn conservationists must speak the language that everybody can understand. That language centres on the fact that conservation is everybody's business... it is not the preserve of a few who reside or work within protected areas."

Conservationists were frequently seen as "gatekeepers that stifled development": "The duty of conservationists is to provide alternatives... to say to a developer this cannot be done here because it will harm the environment, but it can be done elsewhere where the effects on the environment will be minimal".

He concluded by appealing to people to harness the good that is within human beings.

"Human beings are part of nature and if they destroy it, they are destroying themselves. Conservation should be used to solve real world problems that emanate from people's behaviour."

Protect our land!



DRAMATIC LAND DEVELOPMENTS OUTSIDE PMB WITH EZEMVELO KZN WILDLIFE

RICHARD COMPTON

South Africans are rapidly waking to the fact that their land can be protected within the broad ambit of conservation, to ensure its environmental and ecological integrity in perpetuity.

In an unprecedented development in KZN some 18 landowners in Mpshini outside Ashburton on the outskirts of Pietermaritzburg, have formally incorporated their collective land holdings into what is classified as a Protected Environment under the Biodiversity Stewardship Programme managed by Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.

The overall size of this Protected Environment amounts to some 600 ha with a strong likelihood that this can be expanded further to include 1500 ha through further consultation with 10 other landowners in the region.

POSITIVE

"Its incredibly positive, it really is. We have received positive feedback from these 10 other landowners who are also interested in incorporating their land into this Protected Environment. All we need now are resources and manpower to make this happen," said Darlene Bond, Chairperson for the Mpshini protected Environment Landowners Association (Mpela). She described the region as a "gem of biodiversity" with owners increasingly keen to prevent their environment from being degraded by threats posed from illegal grazing, poaching, alien plants and incompatible



Darlene Bond (Chairperson of the Mpshini Landowners Association) with Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife's Stewardship facilitator Derrek Ruiters and Mpshini landowner Val Aillsopp

commercial, industrial and cluster residential developments.

KZN IST

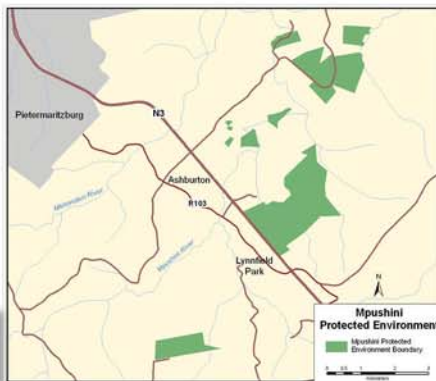
Mpshini represents the first time in KZN (and only the second instance in South Africa) that such a Protected Environment status has been granted. As one of 4 categories within Ezemvelo's Stewardship Programme, Protected Environment is a proclamation that applies to a conglomerate of owners,

involving more than one property, or areas adjacent to existing protected areas.

Ms Bond said while still fragmented this recent proclamation has provided a "huge impetus" for other adjacent landowners to join.

"It has taken some four years for us to get to this stage. But now that we are here the momentum is growing."

... Mpshini represents the first time in KZN (and only the second instance in South Africa) that such a Protected Environment status has been granted



There's so much beauty in this world ...

We protect and nurture what is good and beautiful, may we rely on your support?
EZEMVELO KZN WILDLIFE

Head Office: 033 845 1999 Central Reservations: 033 845 1000
www.kznwildlife.com

This proclamation comes on the back of Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife (Ezemvelo) announcing major accomplishments in their Stewardship programme since its inception in 2006. This includes proclaiming nine new Nature Reserves and three Biodiversity Agreements.

The public's "overwhelmingly positive" attitude was borne out recently when it was announced that more than 65 sites amounting to some 170 000 ha of land in KZN are either in the process or have been proclaimed for some sort of protection under the umbrella of conservation.

VISION

Mpshini already has an established Conservancy, the Lower Mpshini Conservancy, that was established in 2003. Outside of this recent Protected Environment status, a greater vision is unfolding within the community to formalise an Eastern Gateway Biodiversity Corridor that ultimately has a target of some 18 000 ha of land. This was being

driven by another landowner and Chairperson of the Lower Mpshini region Ms Pandora Long. This broader vision incorporates landowners all the way down the Mpshini Valley to the Msunduzi River catchment as far as Bishopstowe.

Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife's Stewardship Programme offers landowners various categories of recognition and protection. These include having land recognised as a Nature Reserve, a Protected Environment, a Biodiversity Agreement or a Conservation Area. Each category offers different levels of commitment by the landowner, protection for Biodiversity and support from Ezemvelo and partners organisations in some cases financial incentives for owners.

VOLUNTARY

In all instances, the agreement between Ezemvelo and landowners is entirely voluntary whereby they retain full title to their land.

Derrek Ruiters, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife's Stewardship facilitator for

the region said Ezemvelo would enter into agreements with landowners where the organisation has highlighted land that holds real environmental and ecological value.

"Mpshini is one such area. It includes the Mpshini River whose five rivulets flow into the catchment of the Msunduzi River catchment. The conservation of all the drainage lines has been considered critical. Aside from the region's hydrology, the diversity of wildlife, grasslands and plants is also particularly worthy of protection," he said.

One of the critical factors underwriting the Stewardship programme was to encourage landowners to pursue economically productive lives on their land, provided that such uses are compatible with the proclamation or registration of that land: "This allows them the ongoing financial capacity to afford to earmark such sensitive land they might occupy for such protection. It also offers them the flexibility to decide what land of theirs can be committed to conservation."