
Greater Kruger Environmental Protection Foundation NPC (“GKEPF”)

Chairman’s Report - 2016

On 11 September 2015 representatives from SANParks and the Kruger National Park (“KNP”), The Peace Parks Foundation (“the PPF”), The Worldwide Fund for Nature, SA, nine private nature reserves within the Joint Protection Zone (“JPZ”) and Twin Cities Mozambique met at the Foxhole, Skukuza. The purpose of the meeting was to consider the effects of environmental crime and to set in motion a strategy to co-ordinate the efforts of all to counter the poaching epidemic and environmental crime facing the region.

All of the parties share a joint vision for the protection, preservation and welfare of endangered species within the KNP and the Protected Areas adjacent to the KNP, comprising State owned, Community owned and privately owned land, including but not limited to: the KNP itself, Manyeleti Nature Reserve, Balule Nature Reserve, Kapama Nature Reserve, Klaserie Private Nature Reserve, Sabi Sand Reserve, Selati Nature Reserve, Timbavati Private Nature Reserve, Thornybush Game Reserve, Umbabat Private Nature Reserve and Twin Cities Mozambique – which together comprise the Joint Protection Zone (“JPZ”).

The current escalating levels of, specifically rhino, poaching within the KNP and the adjacent nature reserves, jointly comprising the JPZ, was tabled and discussed. It was agreed that a co-operative effort by all role players would be required to combat and stem this scourge.

At this inaugural meeting consensus was reached on the following objectives and initiatives:

- The formation of Alliances with reputable organisations such as the CSIR, PPF and WWF;
- The development of alliances with and amongst neighbouring Provincial and Private Reserves to assist in keeping the poacher out of the Greater KNP;
- To develop Unity of Command, Simplistic Co-operation, a Focus on Vulnerable Assets, Intelligence Driven Operations, Law Enforcement and Prosecution;
- To operate within the prescriptions of the Law. In particular Criminal Law, Labour Law and the Environmental Management Act.
- To maintain an understanding of the Mozambique conduits.
- To nurture co-operation and sharing of expensive skills and assets not affordable to single entities – such as Training Centres (Canine, and advanced human skills development), and Hardware / Technologies e.g. electronic tracking devices, gate scanners, air space control, radar, laser and optometric-electronic systems;

- To further develop strategies for social upliftment programs in the communities adjacent to and within the JPZ;
- To form a joint alliance with one another to achieve the desired objectives; and
- The PPF and the private reserves committed to provide joint funding of an initiative to roll out these agreed objectives and initiatives.

During the year many targets were set and have been successfully met. In order for this achievement there has been co-operation, effort and commitment from all of the role players.

The first step was to formally organise the alliance partners into a formal structure and so the Greater Kruger Environmental Protection Foundation was formed and established as a Non Profit Company. A board of directors was appointed with representatives from amongst the parties involved. During the period following the initial meeting at Skukuza and 21 November 2016, GKEPF has held seven board Meetings to guide and develop the process to achieve the objectives.

In co-operation with the KNP and SANParks, GKEPF employed, with effect from 1 June 2016, its first Director of Operations, Col (ret.) Otch Otto, whose responsibility it is to implement the objectives and initiatives agreed upon. Otch joins GKEPF from full time employment with SANParks where he was Mission Area Manager, Special Projects in KNP conducting counter poaching operations. The Company is very fortunate have a man of this experience and calibre to spearhead the GKEPF initiatives. GKEPF has established its operational base at the Southern African Wildlife College (“SAWC”) where Otch Otto is both stationed and accommodated. This has been achieved through the incredible co-operation between the SAWC who have made facilities, services and premises available and funding from the PPF for infrastructure. This infrastructure includes on site accommodation for Otch Otto as well as an Operations Room, storage facilities and a hangar. The SAWC also assists GKEPF with certain administrative facilities. Otch is supported by Julie Bryden in GKEPF Operations Support. In the true spirit of co-ordination and co-operation Otch was working actively for GKEPF well before his formal date of employment while he continued to assist and support SANParks and KNP after that date.

A regular feature of the JPZ landscape are the Command Centre meetings headed by Otch Otto between the role players where issues of joint relevance are discussed, coordinated and actions formulated. These meetings are integral to the intelligence sharing and form the crucible for the development of new and effective techniques to combat environmental crime. The development and roll out of the joint information sharing platform CMORE enables all of the role players to be fully and almost instantaneously apprised of criminal incidents and intelligence thereby enabling teams to act and react with increased speed and efficiency right across the JPZ. Various reserves within the JPZ have, during the year, commissioned their own Operations Rooms where sophisticated equipment supports this program. GKEPF has established its own website www.GKEPF.org. GRU Wing continues to operate within the GKEPF stable with its Jabiru aircraft under the competent leadership of Wynand Uys <http://gamereservesunited.co.za>.

During the year a significant milestone was reached with conclusion of the agreement between SANParks, the Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Authority (“MTPA”), the PPF and GKEPF in terms of which security for the Manyeleti Nature Reserve, which is currently under the management of the MTPA, is improved. In terms of this agreement PPF have agreed to provide funding for the implementation of actions, namely fencing, to supplement and improve security in the Manyeleti Nature Reserve. GKEPF will provide services to monitor the additions, improvement, repair and sustained maintenance of sections of this new boundary fence and support of law enforcement activities within the reserve.

Challenges which are currently underway include control of the airspace and the plethora of entry and exit points within the JPZ. Concerted efforts have been, and continue, to be made to upgrade the gates throughout the region. Improvement to our intelligence networks continue to be a critical success factor as well as the effective prosecution of environmental crime.

The company, which has a September 30 year end is well funded and financially sound. Application has been made to the South African Revenue Services (“SARS”) for registration as a Public Benefit Organisation.

Initiatives for the coming year include, inter alia:

- The baselining of all of the various social upliftment programs currently being operated by the GKEPF alliance partners and thereafter to analyse areas for co-operation, proposals for economic activity in disadvantaged areas and to identify symbiotic relationships between conservation and the communities. This process will further our objective to further develop strategies for social upliftment programs in the communities adjacent to and within the JPZ;
- To further strengthen our situational awareness over the ingress and egress of people to and from the JPZ and to develop sophisticated MALA – Movement Access, Location and Air Space controls and/or to monitor this; and
- To analyse, test, develop and possibly implement sophisticated technical opportunities to combat environmental crime, support environmental protection, security and high value asset management in the JPZ.

In conclusion, it is appropriate that we record our thanks and sincere appreciation to the persons and organisations who have contributed to making GKEPF the success it is:

- **SANParks** for their cooperation and support in all matters affecting the operations of GKEPF;
- The PPF with its commitment to joint funding with the private reserves has played a critical role in the establishment of GKEPF. This support has been extended into capital projects at Manyeleti and the establishment of infrastructure at the SAWC and elsewhere;
- The **SAWC**, through Ms Theresa Sowry and her team, has provided invaluable support to GKEPF;

- The **Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa (WESSA)** continue to play an active role in the support of GKEPF and GRU Wing. WESSA has provided a vehicle for use by the GKEPF operations.
- The **private nature reserves**, for their funding commitments, and their managers for the active role they all play to support the GKEPF initiatives within the JPZ;
- To the professional advisers to GKEPF:
 - o **Bowman Gilfillan Inc.**, through Mr Rob Hare, have provided, pro bono, all of the legal services required for the establishment of GKEPF as a non-profit company. In addition, the professional services necessary to make application to SARS for Public Benefit Organisation Status; and
 - o **PwC (Chartered Accountants) South Africa** who have agreed to act as auditors of the company at reduced rates applicable to selected non-profit companies;
 - o **Twin Cities and Morrison and Morrison** who have designed, constructed and implemented the GKEPF logos and web site free of charge; and
 - o **Tim Parker of Game Ranch Management CC** for his dedicated support.

Last, but not least, I would like thank the Directors, especially Phil Biden vice chairman, who have all actively supported and provided invaluable input for the establishment and good governance of GKEPF.

Thank you.

John Braithwaite
On behalf of the Board
25 November 2016