

# **NORTHVAAL CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR THE 2016 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

## **1. Finances**

The 2015 accounts for FOSAF have been submitted to the auditor and the Fly Fishing Publications cc accounts for 2015/16 will be handed over to him in late April. The new honorary auditor is reimbursed partly through a R550.00 donation to the SPCA and also through a gift voucher worth R350.00 for undertaking this work. This arrangement is purely a temporary one and within the next two years we will probably have to find a new auditor.

FOSAF Northvaal & Flyfishing Publications cc is funded from book sales (approx. R14000), a very generous grant of R40000 from Millstream in 2015, donations amounting to R11000 from John Grun and loans from the FOSAF investment account. As Millstream paid 14000 towards the MTA fund in 2015 and will be debited with a further R4000 by the MTA later this year, this sponsorship to FOSAF might be reduced this year.

In 2015 FOSAF Northvaal paid an amount of R65000 towards the NEMBA fund (Culverwell) and this plus funds needed to keep the chapter functioning resulted in the FOSAF investment account being reduced to R96000.

## **2. Millstream & John Grun**

As noted above Northvaal is very appreciative of the grant/donations from these two sources. In particular Millstream's donation.

## **3. Membership**

Northvaal membership has dropped again in 2015/16, and this trend in terms of numbers and funding might continue while the recently established Mpumalanga Trout Association (MTA) membership increases.

## **4. Environmental Issues**

In the Trout Triangle the Steenkampsberg Environmental Initiative appears to be making progress and active action is being taken against two miners holding a mining right and a prospecting right respectively. In both cases these actions will end up in court and we have confidence that we will win both cases.

The pollution of the rivers such as the Vaal continues unabated and this has a major impact on yellowfish, other indigenous fish populations and the local biodiversity. Another growing threat is the illegal netting taking place on virtually all the rivers which often commences as subsistence activities but soon develops into commercial operations which are completely unsustainable.

## **5. Legislation**

Although this item will be covered by the Environmental Committee, Northvaal has become far more involved in the last year either directly or through the MTA. While other provinces such as

the Western Cape and KZN have established working relationships with their provincial conservation agencies the once friendly relationship between the Mpumalanga trout industry and the aquatic scientists in the MTPA has broken down completely despite repeated efforts by MTA/FOSAF to arrange meetings. In the last few weeks colleagues of the aquatic scientists have realized that this position is untenable and are doing their best to re-establish the relationship with a meeting being arranged for mid-March.

## **6. Northvaal Projects**

### FOSAF Books & Card collection

As expected sales dropped from R20K in 2014/15 to R14K this financial year. A fairly large amount of free stock was supplied as prizes at festivals, clubs and similar events and also together with orders to reduce the retail price. Stock at PSD was pulped to avoid being charged storage fees but we still hold at least 6 years stock at PSD and at Bill Mincher's house.

### Website & Facebook

The website which received a major facelift and was launched on 12/01/2015 has proved very successful with the FOSAF Facebook and FOSAF Twitter sites acting as blogs and directing as much traffic as possible to the website.

At this stage we are still looking for a replacement for the secretary to take over this responsibility for these media. It should also be noted that there has been no increase in the monthly fee from the webmaster since his appointment.

### Yellowfish Working Group.

The YWG conference in June 2015 cost us R879,00 which was primarily made up with travel and accommodation costs for a meeting in KZN. Most provincial and other department officials find that they can no longer claim for YWG conference expenses. For this reason in 2014 and 2015 we held our conference the day before the start of the SASAQs conference to reduce travel costs and this has worked well. However, in 2016 the SASAQs conference will be held in Skukuza and this is no longer convenient. It has therefore been decided that rather a conference we will hold a workshop with a number of leading members to determine whether the YWG has a role to play and if so how this should be managed and resourced. This will be in August month at St Stithians College in Randburg. As this could cost between R5000,00 and R10000,00 we will need to try and find a sponsor.

### SEI (The Steenkampsberg Environmental Initiative)

We believe that the Greater Lakenvlei Protected Environment will be declared within the next month or two and in anticipation of this a GLPE Landowners Association has been formed, a committee elected and a constitution adopted. The committee has sent a letter to the Acting Chairman of the MTPA requesting that he approach the MEC in question to urge him to sign off the declaration. Once this is done the SEI can set about forming new PE's throughout the Dullstroom plateau.

Also encouraging is the fact that the DMR is now reviewing the 2011 request to set aside 200 000 ha of the Steenkampsberg in terms of Section 49 of the MPRDA. This will give the SEI team at least a 3 year period to form further PE's in the area.

As FOSAF Northvaal has been working closely and supporting the MTPA in this project it has now been proposed to the MTPA that there must be a resolution to the impasse between the trout value chain and those MTPA officials who are creating problems for the trout industry before any further input from FOSAF at the SEI level can be expected.

#### The Mpumalanga Trout Association (MTA)

In response to the problems faced by the trout value chain this association was formed in July 2015 of which FOSAF Northvaal is a member. The MTA is a division of Trout South Africa. The Northvaal secretary was asked to act as honorary secretary for the MTA. It is hoped that once the MTA has taken over the task of self-regulation this work will be undertaken by a professional secretary.

One of the more important functions of the MTA is fund raising and since August 2015 it has raised over R300 000 in order to pay for the mapping of the trout areas (where trout occur) and for the services of the TSA's legal team.

#### Flyfishing Tuition And Education for Our Youth.

The new Chairman of Northvaal has been very active in this field in conjunction with other clubs and instances.

#### Succession

Chris Williams was elected as the new Chairman of Northvaal and as such replaced Peter Mills who resigned in early 2015. The new Chairman and Committee thank Peter very much for all his hard work and commitment over the years.

Many thanks also to my ongoing Northvaal Committee comprising Bill Mincher, Peter Arderne and Geoff Taylor for their continued efforts and support. In particular Peter's often unheralded work on the written and social media as well as organisational aspects of Northvaal continue to prove invaluable. Thank you Peter.

**Chris Williams**  
**Northvaal Chapter Chairman**