

FOSAF CHAIRMAN'S 2014/15 ANNUAL REPORT

INTRODUCTION

Once again it's my privilege and duty to report to FOSAF's executive, membership and other external stakeholders on our activities, challenges and achievements during the past year.

EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT:

State:

As reported in previous years, we have continued our engagement with the DEA (in particular it's Biosecurity Unit), the Provincial Conservation Agencies and DAFF around the impact of the NEMBA AIS lists and regulations with particular reference to trout. The promulgation in August last year of the lists and regulations left trout off the lists by agreement. This was to allow for a mapping process to ascertain "where trout are" and the further discussion of a conditional exemption framework for trout which entails a self-regulation approach **with** entities registering with DAFF. At this stage this is an in principle agreement with the details still to be finalised. The principles agreed see trout listed as invasive category 2 for areas where they do not occur and protected areas. At this stage we have almost finalised the mapping process. Feedback on the maps is awaited. However, much more importantly we are waiting for DEA's feedback on the draft framework sent to them months ago.

Our work on these issues is bearing fruit and I believe that we have reason to optimistic that a reasonable and practical solution will be found. As always the devil is in the detail and we are now faced with further areas of challenge in new legislation that seeks to impose restrictive approaches despite government's undertaking to create an enabling environment. We remain steadfast in our demand that the regulatory framework must continue to be consulted upon in an open and public manner as required by both the Constitution and NEMA. We will continue to keep you all posted on further developments.

Public:

FOSAF's website has been renovated and the new look has received positive feedback. Our involvement with the NEMBA AIS campaign has raised our profile enormously. In addition many fishing websites and fora engage in debate on the campaign and related issues keeping us in the public eye. As the old adage goes: "There is no such thing as bad publicity." I am aware that we have been criticised (by a few of our members) for the robust manner with which we have engaged with some sections of government. However, what most do not realise is that we were left with little option given the attitudes and refusal to engage openly **that** we were faced with.

In my view we have been successful because we would not back down and because we have stuck to our principles and policies. That we have rallied such huge support for these and our campaign speaks volumes.

Nevertheless, we do need to continue to develop FOSAF's communication with members and the public. Thus far our website, Facebook, Flyfishing magazine, the Tippet, have been useful channels, but we have to find a way to get through to the public in a way that grows FOSAF, its support base and membership.

We continue to participate in Trout SA and this association has bolstered our NEMBA campaign. It has also added to our credibility. Our combined efforts together with other aquaculture players to bolster recognition for the value chain is also proving effective and meaningful.

Anglers:

As noted in previous reports, the Tippet is well regarded. I continue to receive positive **feedback** about it. Our thanks are again due to Stuart and Liz Tough who put in all the hard work to get it published and circulated.

INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT:

EXCO

As in past years the EXCO have not met since the previous meeting. We did however also have one teleconference. Given the cost of convening EXCOs this modus operandi remains reasonably effective. We do need to try and ensure more regular communication and I had hoped that the website might assist in this regard. We will again need to discuss ideas in this regard at the EXCO. Stuart and Liz and of course Peter Arderne continue to keep us all in touch and their efforts are highly appreciated. During this year's EXCO we will be reviewing some of our objectives and approaches and flowing from this we will also need to assess our other needs and requirements as well as the annual budget.

Chapters

Full chapter reports will be forthcoming at the EXCO **but** I will briefly note some observations:

Eastern Cape: I was once again privileged to attend the EC AGM in November 2014. Brian Clark continues in the Chair and it is safe to say the Chapter is in a healthy state with most of their clubs staying on board and some re-joining. The Chapter must be thanked for their assistance with the mapping exercise by both collating available information and checking the maps and paying for the capture of old references and data that improved the range of information available enormously.

Northvaal: We note the resignation of Peter Mills who has been at the helm of this chapter for many years. We thank him for his long dedication to both the Yellowfish Working Group and to FOSAF and wish him well. Peter Arderne is the acting chairperson. We once again note his outstanding work on the Steenkampsberg environmental project. His help on the mapping process is also much appreciated.

The Western Cape: Leonard Flemming continues to serve as Chairperson of the WC Chapter and has now also assumed leadership of the CPS. The Chapter has had a difficult task navigating the relationship between the CPS and Cape Nature. This has not been easy given the pressures of the ongoing NEMBA situation. Nevertheless Leonard continues **to** offer support to Cape Nature, in line with FOSAF's policies and principles, by showing leadership in facilitating activities in support of aquatic biodiversity conservation efforts.

KZN: Jim Read has been a stalwart of FOSAF in KZN. The Chapter committee is active and well supported. It continues to try and engage with EKZNW and other

stakeholders despite the fact that the freshwater fishing liaison committee has become defunct. We have heard good news that some clubs in the region are again growing. However, a few clubs remain vulnerable.

Free State: Dirk Human has also resigned as FOSAF representative for the Free State. We understand his wish to engage in other activities and thank him for his efforts over the years. The struggle to achieve significant buy-in from the various fly-anglers and clubs in the province continues and we will need to find a suitable person/s to run with this difficult task.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE

Dr Bill Bainbridge despite health issues continues to lead this committee. Much of the focus has been on the NEM:BA process which is reported on above.

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Peter Arderne remains a magnificent ambassador for FOSAF and flyfishing. He has a remarkable ability to persistently pester regional fishing reports and other material out of seemingly unwilling or reticent correspondents. We thank him for his tireless efforts.

CONCLUSION

Once again special thanks are due to Stuart and Liz Tough for their efficient commitment in managing FOSAF, the AGM and the EXCO and our travel arrangements and logistics. Their efforts are appreciated.

Thanks are also due to:

- Our Auditors for AFS. John Webber who stood down as honorary auditor must also be thanked for his many years of commitment to FOSAF;
- our President Andrew Levy and vice-presidents Tom Sutcliffe and Bill Mincher for their wise counsel when its needed;
- the rest of the EXCO for their on-going support and commitment.

I think it is important to once again thank the wives and partners of EXCO members for sharing their significant others with us and holding the fort in their absence on FOSAF business. Perhaps we could find a way to recognise them in some way.

Last year I bemoaned the fact that FOSAF appeared to “struggle to get through to fly anglers with a meaningful and significant message”. The impact of our NEMBA campaign has changed this. How we build on this is our challenge going forward.

Many years ago when I first encountered FOSAF I made the observation that if flyfishing did not meaningfully contribute to our emerging new South Africa we would become irrelevant. I am heartened to be able to report that FOSAF does indeed in many ways play a meaningful role as a civil society organisation. Our projects make a difference and our principles and policies have stood us in good stead. This EXCO will review our objectives and whatever comes out of this process will hopefully imbue us with fresh purpose and drive to take us forward.

FOSAF Chairperson
13 March 2015