

NORTHVAAL CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR THE 2015 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

1. Finances

The 2014 accounts for FOSAF and the Flyfishing Publications for 2014/15 will be submitted to the new auditor by the end of March. This will be temporary arrangement and we cannot expect him to continue for more than 2 or 3 years. As he has retired from the profession he cannot accept payment but we will make a donation to a charity of his choosing.

FOSAF Northvaal & Flyfishing Publications cc is funded solely from book sales (approx. R20K), a very generous grant of R38K from Millstream in 2014/15 and donations amounting to R11K from John Grun and loans from the FOSAF investment account. No monies are received from member's subs or from Affiliate subs in the Northvaal area, but the Northvaal secretary's stipend was reduced in October 2013 to contain expenses.

2. Millstream & John Grun

As noted above Northvaal is very appreciative of the grant/donations from these two sources.

3. Membership

Northvaal membership dropped again in 2014, this time by 9% despite the fact that many of the flyfishing fraternity recognise that FOSAF do good work. What is again disturbing is the reluctance of club officials to get involved in FOSAF or to attend our meetings and/or serve on the Northvaal committee.

4. Environmental Issues

In Mpumalanga we are very concerned about the increasing impact of mining and particularly the threat to the 'Trout Triangle' and hence our participation in the SEI (see under 'Projects'). In addition the steady increase in pollution of our main yellowfish rivers, particularly the Vaal and the collapse of the River Health Programme in most provinces is most disturbing.

5. Legislation

This item is to be covered in a report by the Environmental Committee.

6. Northvaal Projects

FOSAF Books & Card collection

Sales were slightly higher than expected coming in at R20K with PSD contributing most of this with a special offer to the book stores on Favoured Flies (mainly to Exclusive Books) while our sales to tackle stores dropped appreciably. It is unlikely that book sales will exceed R10K in the

coming year and there is some concern whether PSD will survive more than a couple more years on account of their declining sales for all the stock they carry.

A large amount of stock of the FOSAF Guide was sent for pulping but we hold at Bill Mincher's store and my own garage probably another 6 years of stock of all our FOSAF titles. A fair amount of stock has been donated for use as prizes at festivals and similar events.

Website & Facebook

The website received a major facelift at the end of 2014 and was launched on 12/01/2015. Generally this has been recognised as a major improvement but this involved far more work than originally anticipated, primarily because of the inclusion of the FOSAF Guide. Total cost was R8000 which is R1000 above the original quote. We can possibly make further changes such as the inclusion of the Trout Zones when these are finalised

It remains a matter of concern that with a few exceptions little material is contributed apart from Northvaal sources.

Within the next year we will have to decide what to do with the website and Facebook. Unfortunately this media must be maintained on almost a daily basis and the current administrator does not see that this will be possible for more than the next two years.

Yellowfish Working Group.

We have booked the Champagne Sports Resort in KZN for the conference on Sunday 28 June one day ahead of the SASAQS conference as we did in 2014. This may be our last conference as attendance has been gradually declining over the last 5 years. In addition Peter Mills will be resigning as chairman and it will be extremely difficult to find a replacement of his calibre and commitment.

The cost to FOSAF of the 2014 conference was R2100 which was primarily made up of the transport to Thaba Nchu and accommodation for the chairman and secretary.

We are very concerned about the small scale commercial fishery which will commence operations at Vanderkloof Dam this year and will include gill netting. Discussions have been held with Dr Aidan Wood of SA Recreational Anglers Association, and who will probably represent the YWG at the proposed Vanderkloof Forum. It has to be accepted that the issue has been highly politicised as it is a State initiative in the Phakisa Project. All we can do is to try and ensure the pilot project takes certain ecological principles into consideration when it comes to target and non-target species.

SEI (The Steenkampsberg Environmental Initiative)

In May 2014 the intention to declare 14 000 ha of mainly montane grassland and wetland the Greater Lakenvlei Protected Environment was gazetted. Then last month the application by the landowners of the GLPE was signed and sent to the MTPA (Parks Board) who in turn will present it to the MEC for signature. There is some apprehension at the MTPA as their CEO has been suspended and the new MEC who has replaced Ms Pinky Phosa (who was environmentally friendly) is said to be highly political. At the same time one of the new PE's declared last year and closer to Wakkerstroom is already under attack from a well-connected Indian miner and great pressure is being applied at both State and Provincial level to permit them to proceed.

Should our GLPE be finally declared it will at least give a major boost to the SEI project and will give encouragement to other landowners on the Dullstroom plateau to sign up for similar PE's. However, we must not lose sight that this is a very time consuming and expensive process with the miners doing their best to sabotage the process.

In the last year there have been additional applications for prospecting licences, all of which have been opposed and a couple have been withdrawn by the applicants. At this stage none have received their prospecting licences. At the same time we and our allies have lodged 3 appeals against the issue of a mining licence for an opencast coal mine on the border of the Lakenvlei and this case might still end up in court. Similarly action is being taken against a company prospecting for diamonds in the same Lakenvlei area and whose operation was halted by the DWA several years ago after intense pressure by the SEI.

What is highly irritating is the lack or slowness in response from the DWA, DMR and similar State and provincial departments we contact, sometimes repeatedly.

Succession

Northvaal will attempt to find a replacement for Peter Mills who has resigned as chapter chairman but as yet there are no likely candidates. Also I will be resigning as secretary within the next 2 – 3 years.

Peter Arderne
Acting chairman & secretary.