

FOSAF NORTHERN REGION CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR THE 2023 PERIOD

1. Finances

Northern Region bank balances are in a healthy state as at April 2024 with R14K in the current account and R22K in the savings and investment accounts. This is mainly due to the continued and generous sponsorship by Millstream. Earlier in 2024 R38K was donated to the Greater Lakenvlei Protected Environment to assist with the legal fees payable by this body in order to appeal the renewal of the water use licence to the WPB Colliery which is in the heart of the Dullstroom trout fishing area.

2. Membership.

Both the DFFA and TFFC again participated in the club membership scheme where at least 50% of the club membership must join to qualify. The members then pay R170,00 instead of the R360,00 annual fee. In 2023 this brought in R39K to national funds.

As mentioned, before we are failing to attract new members amongst the young who are taking up the sport. In addition, very few amongst the FFA (competitive flyfishers) appear to be joining FOSAF and it took almost 4 months to persuade them to place a link to the FOSAF site on the FFA site.

3. NR Committee

The committee comprises Chris Williams (chairman), Andy Lawler (vice chairman) Peter Arderne (secretary), Vicki Arderne (bookkeeper) Jade dos Santos, Jonty Scott and Martin Rudman

4. Northern Region Projects

a. Books

Although sales of books to angling stores virtually ceased a fair number are supplied to FOSAF members at the discounted prices. Such sales accrue to the National account.

b. Communications: Website, Facebook & Twitter

The upgraded website which was launched in January 2022 has been well received and the images on the home page were replaced in late 2022 to give the site a fresh look. Use is made of Facebook and our Twitter page to publicise the content on the site.

c. Yellowfish Working Group

Newsletters were sent to the membership until early 2023 but this has ceased due to lack of information and the YWG exists only in name as no annual conference has been held since 2015 due to lack of funds and lack of interest from the provincial departments. At the same time a wealth of valuable information and past research is available on our

site.

NR also supports the annual donations made by National since 2020 to the “Save the Sandfish” project. In addition, we suggest that National look closely at the proposal that one or two yellowfish flyfishing stillwaters be developed in the Cederberg.

d. The Vaal River Crisis.

NR chairman Chris Williams is also a member of the SAVE committee. As such he is involved in the litigation process against the Minister of Water Affairs & Sanitation and the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries & Environment regarding the fast-worsening quality of water in the river and the rapid spread of hyacinth and water lettuce. SAVE is assisting with the use of weevils and hoppers for the biological control of these weeds. However, the problem will only be resolved when the many municipalities discharging raw or only partially treated effluent into the Vaal from their water treatment plants become compliant.

e. Mpumalanga mining crisis.

Opposition to mining, especially in the Trout Triangle is led by a consortium comprising mainly the Greater Lakenvlei Protected Environment Landowners Association (GLPELA), but well supported by environmental NGOs and some of the flyfishing destinations. Although considerable success has been achieved in opposing applications for prospecting/mining in the last 7 years the WPB Colliery at the head of the Elands River continues to cause extreme damage to the environment. In September 2023 the DWS renewed the water use licence for this mine. The GLPELA has successfully lodged an appeal against this renewal and a hearing at the Water Tribunal will take place in June 2024. Although the GLPELA expects the WT to rule in their favour and thus halt the mining permanently the problem of getting the badly damaged site satisfactorily rehabilitated will probably remain a challenge.

f. The Northern Trout Association.

This organisation which is strongly supported by Northern Region was launched as the Mpumalanga Trout Association in 2015. More recently it incorporated the provinces of KZN, Free State, Gauteng and Limpopo and together with FOSAF is a member of Trout SA. Whereas FOSAF aims to represent the interest of all flyfishers the NTA is focused on the production of trout. Most of the funding for the mapping of the trout zone in 2015 was sourced from the then Mpumalanga Trout Association. Unfortunately, the recruitment of members from the provinces outside Mpumalanga remains poor. A major problem facing the Mpumalanga members is that an

annual permit is required for stocking trout in this province, even in the area in which it was agreed with the provincial authorities that stocking trout may be permitted. Not only has the cost of these permits been increased significantly, but there have been a number of delays in the last two years in the approval of repeat permits which has damaged the hospitality industry. Both the NTA and FOSAF contend that in fact no permit should be required for stocking in an agreed trout area. Once agreement is reached between FOSAF/NTA and the DFFE regarding the future status of trout the matter will be taken up with the MTPA.

Chris Williams.
Northern Region Chairman.

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