



FRIENDS OF PILANESBERG

Non-Profit Organization Fund Raising Number: 006-421 NPS

SEDIBA

September to December 2020

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Letter from Editor

September and October 2020

Lauren Gunn

Dear friends

Happy 2021! Here's hoping it will be a better year all round. We started this year in level 3 lockdown with a few restrictions that are a little bit annoying, however provincial borders and National Parks are still open so it is not all bad! Let's hope we can get a handle on Covid 19 and get back to normal soon.

There is quite a bit to report since my last newsletter... from the FOPS front we have been very busy in the park with an additional work party in September due to our level 2 restrictions and having to keep work party numbers low. We also had our Annual General Meeting in October, which was VERY well attended. I am happy to advise that all committee members agreed to stand for another year. Full minutes of the AGM will be posted on the website in the near future and are available on request to members who would like to read them.

In park news, we unfortunately lost two of the Kruger Bulls. Mavuso was involved in a fight with a younger bull in September and unfortunately succumbed to his injuries. Philane died of old age in October, we were very lucky (or unlucky depending on how you look at it) to spend a bit of time with the old boy in September. We had been to Batlhako, along Moloto and were almost at the end of Nare on our way back to camp when we came across him walking down the middle of the road. After lots of reversing at faster than normal rate on narrow winding roads, he decided to stop and snack on a small bush next to the road, however there was no room to maneuver past him and after what felt like forever, which was probably 20 Minutes, we decided it would be best to turn around and go back the way we came.... An hour-long detour! If I had known it would be the last time we saw him, maybe I would not have been so annoyed! Both these bulls will be sorely missed.

We also unfortunately had 2 of our de-horned rhinos poached in November!

Happier news - In December Rain's two female cubs were relocated to Malawi. This was done in collaboration between The Pilanesberg Wildlife Trust and the Endangered Wildlife Trust and helps to grow the Cheetah populations outside of South Africa. It also assists with diversity of our population in the Pilanesberg as both these females are related to the males in the park. The relocation went well and last reports were that both ladies are doing well in their new home.

I am not one for new years resolutions, however, this year I have "resolved" to change the timings of the newsletter and will be sending this out every 2 months instead of every quarter, or as in 2020 whenever there was news!

Looking forward to seeing you all in the park soon 🐾

Warm regards,

Lauren



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Committee Contact Info

Chairman

Warren Best

Cell: +27 82 554 8525

Email: fopschairman@gmail.com

Pilanesberg Special Projects

Paddy Coombe-Heath

Cell: +27 82 459 4339

Email: lindys1@worldonline.co.za

Treasurer and Compliance Officer

Lampies Lamprecht

Cell: +27 83 652 7410

Email: fopscompliance@gmail.com

Or treasurerfops@gmail.com

Fundraising & Work Party Assistant

Roland White

Cell: +27 83 227 1273

Email: rolandw@mweb.co.za

Secretary

Kerry-Anne Hare

Cell: +27 76 447 1119

Email: secretaryfops1@gmail.com

Sediba Editor

Lauren Gunn

Cell: +27 82 376 6719

Email: fopsnews@gmail.com

Social Media & Potokwane Tents

Debbi Adcock

Cell: +27 83 408 1898

Email: fopsmedia@gmail.com

Notes:

Again - I have used a lot of pictures in this newsletter – thanks to everyone who contributed either via WhatsApp or allowing me to “steal” from Facebook!

We do welcome input from any members who have a feature, a story or interesting information to add. Please send any submissions to fopsnews@gmail.com for consideration.



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04 – 06 September 2020

Paddy Coombe-Heath

Hi Folks,

A small Work Party with only 25 people, due to Covid rules. A few people went up early on Thursday and Friday and did some small maintenance.

Iron Age site – Ken and Mark fixed the energiser, the fence is working again. Three signage poles were down and these were replaced.

A fantastic job was done on the Rathlogo Hide fence. The counterweight was fixed on Fish Eagle Picnic Spot access gate.

Tlou Drive was cleared from The Pilanesberg Centre to Ruighoek Dam.

Fire extinguishers were installed in the Manyane Tents and in Potokwane – with full signage.

In Camp the geysers were reconnected properly and are now working like a bomb. The water tank had a couple of dead critters, Ken drained and scrubbed the tank and it has been refilled. The energiser burnt out and this was taken off site for repairs.

Regards.
Paddy.



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18 – 20 September 2020

Paddy Coombe-Heath

Hi Folks,

1. Manhours

19/9/2020

30 members

180 hours

2. Weather.

No rainfall, hot and dusty.

3. New Members.

Isa Carter

Jonan and Ingrid Kleinhans

4. Guests.

Johan Theunisen (guest of Isa Carter)

Juanita (guest of John Loveland)

5. Tasks.

• **Makorwane Hide.**

- Mesh fencing and shade cloth covers along the walkway were repaired or replaced where necessary.
- New shelving was fitted, and existing supports repaired where necessary,
- Decking planks were replaced where necessary, and new underfloor supports were fitted.
- Some trimming in the carpark was done.
- The hide is looking neat and tidy again. We will need to do a repaint on the outside sometime soon, but not critical yet.

• **Road Clearing.**

- Tshukudu e'Ntsho was cleared from the cairn at Tlou Pans up to the causeway at Makorwane Dam.

• **Rathlogo Hide / Malatse Walkway.**

- The overhead covering at Malatse Bridge walkway was repaired (a new cross piece was fitted, and the mesh re-attached).
- Existing fencing at Rathlogo Walkway was worked on, with damaged structures replaced, loose droppers fastened, and a general tidy and repair of the fencing was done.
- A section of fencing on the Northern side of the car-park entrance was repaired (again, after it was done last work-party), and has since been knocked over (again). We need to reconsider this section.
- Roof sheeting on the hide was fixed using new roofing screws. Reports indicate that a section on the hide entrance is still loose, and needs to be looked at again.



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6. General.

- We had a hand-over ceremony with Ian Cumming, Ed Lemke and Johnson Maoka, where we officially received the donation from Rustenburg Wildlife Society.
- Makanyane Volunteers were on duty in the park on the same week-end as ourselves. Along with their 40 members, there were around 70 volunteers working in the park over the week-end – a remarkable achievement.
- We looked into using the existing solar panel / charge controller / battery set-up from the redundant booster pump as a charging station for our power tools. This seems to be working well. A bit of shelving would finish the job.
- Another member of FOPS has officially joined the OAP ranks, and many thanks to Debbi, Lauren and all of our work-party members for a very special evening on Friday night – it was much appreciated.

- Project List.
 - Rathlogo Hide
 - Fencing must be completed. The fence repairs are on-going, but not urgent.
 - Fit additional bracing and foundations to the underside of the hide. A donation has been received towards this work (R23K), and Ken Loveland will be looking into the foundations as soon as his personal circumstances allow. Hopefully this will be done before the rains start.
 - Malatse Bridge
 - Bridge designs need to be finalised and final costings done. The budget of R40K seems fair for now.

Regards.
Roland



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October 2020

Paddy Coombe-Heath

Hi All

A good turnout with 38 people. The weather was great for working in and the nights were not too cold. There were also some good animal sightings.

WORK DONE:

Iron Age – six people cutting and spraying, just ahead of the rains. The place is looking good!

Batlhako Hide – two benches were put in place and general upkeep, painting, etc.

Rathlogo – repaired the fence again! Running repairs to the roof.

Ruighoek hide – clearing the loops on the lookout points and along the road. The rollers on the gate were replaced.

Camp – completed the signage for the fire extinguishers. Store rooms tidied up and attempted to get the fence going, no luck!

Road clearing:

Dithabaneng – lots of trees needed to be cut off and dragged out of the road. Phiri loop very overgrown as was Korwe link.

Tshukudu e'Ntsho – started at Kubu and nearly all the way up to Tlou drive. A good job.

A very good work party weekend all round.

Thanks

Paddy



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November 2020

Paddy Coombe-Heath

Hi Folks,

A very busy work party with 54 people, one new member and six visitors. Great weekend weather wise, a bit warm for some, but good.

WORK DONE:

Iron Age Site – A good number, 10 people. They got a lot done.

Rathlogo – Replaced a lot of the fence, but did not finish, we need more poles. Looks great so far, a good face lift.

Malatse – Hard hot work! Laying foundations, this meant digging holes, hard work. This is going to look great when it is finished.

Direction Cairn – along Tlou at Tlou Link, this was badly damaged. The structure was finished, all but the top which will be done next time.

Road clearing at Tshukudu e'Ntsho and Dithabaneng, two teams of eight each did a fantastic job.

The tents at Manyane got a makeover. All good so far.

Regards.
Paddy.



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December 2020

Paddy Coombe-Heath

Hi Folks,

We landed up with 58 people.

WORK DONE:

Three road clearing teams –

Thutlwa and Tau routes

Tshukudu e’Ntsho and a bit of Tlou

Tlou dams to Ruighoek hide

Milkweed finished.

Rathlogo big Elephant damage, sent two teams, 29 people. But they repaired all that was needed to be done, A big job to say the least.

Nigel and Wayne went to the Manyane tents and did what they had to.

Roland and Dot went to Lenong to repair the Enviro loo there.

Then a group stayed in camp to prepare for the party, cooking, etc.

The party was very good, enough food and booze for all. A wonderful spread! Well done Pieter and Rolene Swanepoel along with his team Corrie and Hugo.

The only Parks Board person to arrive was Robert Gaoleawane, it was good enough.

Another fantastic party enjoyed by all.

Regards.

Paddy.



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