



FRIENDS OF PILANESBERG

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

**SEDIBA**

January and February 2021

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**Letter from Editor**

**January and February 2021**

**Lauren Gunn**

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Dear friends

We started this year with lots of wonderful well needed rain for most of January. Some might say a bit too much; all our dams were filled up and most of them overflowing. The walkway to the Mankwe hide was under water, the bridge at Makorwane dam was like a waterfall. The vegetation took advantage of all this water and the grass grew really tall, making game viewing a little bit harder, it also took over Potokwane and a few of the walkways to the hides. It just meant more work for us, which is never a problem with all the wonderful enthusiastic members we have. Much of the January and February work parties were dedicated to clearing.

Then, the "month of love" arrived and was marred by tragedy. On the 6<sup>th</sup> of February, Kobus, a long-standing member of the Rhino Protection Unit was killed while on patrol. As I did not know Kobus well at all, I have taken and slightly edited the following statement from the Pilanesberg Wildlife Trust's Facebook page:

*"Sadly, Pilanesberg lost a true wildlife warrior and nature lover yesterday morning. While out on patrol, Kobus Marais of the K-9 unit and 2 other RPU staff, were laying a track for Kobus's K9 patrol dog. Unbeknownst to Kobus a very thin, poor conditioned lion was probably lying in wait.*

*The RPU staff attempted to get the lion off Kobus when he was attacked but their efforts were unsuccessful. The lion was shot and sadly Kobus succumbed to his wounds.*

*The Rhinos have lost a true friend and conservation has lost a warrior. Kobus was loved by all the staff in the Pilanesberg. He was a kind and compassionate person.*

*To Lottie Marais, his wife, we express our most heartfelt condolences. We are so, so sorry for your tragic loss. Also, his family and all the friends. You are all in our thoughts.*

*Kobus, you have left a void in so many lives and you will be greatly missed. Thank you for your contribution. You paid the highest price. May you rest in peace dear friend."*

And then at the end of the month one of our female Rhinos was poached leaving her calf orphaned. The little calf, who has been named Annie, was taken to The Rhino Orphanage and after many weeks of struggles is doing well. Such an unnecessary, heartless murder of a de-horned Rhino!

I am hoping that for March and April I won't have tears in my eyes as I write and will be able to report happier news!

Warm regards, Lauren



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Committee Contact Info

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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](mailto:fopsnews@gmail.com) for consideration.



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**08 - 10 January 2021**

**Paddy Coombe-Heath**

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Hi Folks,

A very small work party with only 25 people. We had 2 cancellations and 1 newbie – Wim van Schie.

We started off with 3 projects and ended up with lots more.

Road clearing on Thlware and ended up clearing direction cairns as well. We did all the cairns along Tshwene and then half of Thlware.

Mankwe hide walkway was a disaster, terribly overgrown, it is now wonderful, clean, cleared and sprayed. Then clearing on Wimbledon Bridge, only half, but one side is now open.

Batlhako Hide, lots of poles needed to be put up again and a couple of other things, which stretched into Sunday. Then they cleared all the cairns along Tlou Drive.

As I said, stretched into Sunday, we went out and stuck all the loose tiles down along Tshwene.

The couple of days before Work Party we managed to remove five Pom-Pom weeds on Hippo Loop, cut out a lot of Verbena as well, removed two big Pride of India, one by the Pilanesberg Centre and one on Thlware and a Lantana. Then we stumped one rather large Syringa at Wimbledon Bridge.

Until next time,

Regards.  
Paddy.



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**05 – 07 February 2021**

***Paddy Coombe-Heath***

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Hi Folks

A good turnout considering the weather. 31 people, 1 new member – Michelle Louw and 10 non-residents.

There were five projects:

Iron Age Site was very overgrown, but they managed to do a lot. No spraying as it was too wet so they cleared the pathways and tidied up.

Road clearing – three teams, one down Mankwe Way, one down Maruleng and one first went to cut out Pom-Pom Weed at Hippo Loop and then finish off road clearing at Thlware.

The camps were split into two parts, one at Manyane; the tents were cleared up and grass was cut by Golden Leopard, and it looks a lot better. The other team was at Potokwane, cutting the grass and fixing the electric fence, a fire break was also cut as well as general clean up. Potokwane looks like a new pin.

We did battle with water as the tanks were not filled, but eventually made a plan and we had enough. They were filling the bowser which only had 500 litres and it took five trips to half fill the tank!

Until next time,

Regards.  
Paddy.

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**North West Parks Board**

**North West Province**

**Republic of South Africa**

**PLEASE BE ON THE LOOKOUT and REPORT: POM POM WEED!**



**POM POM WEED IS A HIGHLY INVASIVE ALIEN PLANT AND A THREAT TO GRASSLANDS**

**Should you see this plant PLEASE take note of the LOCATION and report to park control centre at 014 555 1606.**

**Your assistance is appreciated**



**Thank you**

**Park Manager**

Partnering with Stakeholders to Provide World Class Wildlife Experience in a Malaria Free Environment.  
Board of directors: Dr. M Masike (Chairperson), Ms. R Sekgeile, Ms. K Maruping, Ms. M Lamola, Mr. T Kupa,  
Mr. M Feliti, Adv. ST Kholong, Mr. M Lebelo, Prof. S Taole, Mr. I Kgokong (ex-officio)