



FRIENDS OF PILANESBERG

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

SEDIBA

February - April 2016

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Letter from the Editor

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Kerry-Anne Hare

Dear friends

My sincere apologies for the late publishing of the latest two Sedibas- we have yet again been impacted by crime, as the gentleman who usually uploads these for us had his laptop stolen, along with our login details. We decided it made sense to upload both at the same time, once we had retrieved our login details from the host company.

We were very sad to hear of the death of one of our CPU dogs, Dexter, as a result of a suspected snake bite. He is, of course, a huge loss. Our sympathies go to his handler Kobus, and the rest of the CPU.

We had a busy few months at the end of Summer, with the usual maintenance of hides, cairns, verges etc. of primary importance after the rain. The dam levels still aren't what they should be, but we had enough rain to get the grass to grow to a decent height, and just sufficient to ensure that the vegetation in the Iron age Site has started shooting. Grrrr...



As Winter has approached, we've had the usual small work parties, but have nevertheless accomplished a fair amount. We had an extra work party to facilitate the building of a useful shelter in Potokwane Camp. As many of you are aware, until now we had no communal shelter when it rained. This forced us to retreat to our tents and sometimes to simply pack up and head home. At least the new structure will provide a place for us to gather on these occasions and will also give us some much-needed shade on hot Summer days



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We have all been thrilled by sightings of the babies in the park. There are a number of young giraffe and leopard around, providing some great sightings, and the baby elephants are playful as ever. I've just had news of 4 new cheetah cubs, thanks to Rain, so I'm sure that we will be blessed with more amazing sightings in the coming months.

We are currently looking into upgrading our website. It certainly needs a facelift- holding thumbs that we'll be able to get things up and running by the New Year. And here's hoping that the Sediba headaches have been resolved for now...I look forward to seeing you all at the AGM on Saturday 15 October.

Regards

Kerry-Anne



Thanks Kobus Pienaar for the photograph



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Committee Contact Info

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Chairman

Warren Best

Cell: +27 82 554 8525

Email: chairman@fops.org.za

Pilanesberg Special Projects

Paddy Coombe-Heath

Cell: +27 82 459 4339

Email: pilanesberg@fops.org.za

Alternative contact for Pilanesberg work parties:

Dennis Cooke

Email: Dm.cooke@iburst.co.za

Kgaswane Special Projects

Buks van der Walt

Cell: +27 83 320 2268

Email: kgaswane@fops.org.za

Treasurer

Mark Viljoen

Cell: + 27 82 773 8855

Email: mark@jvms.co.za

PR/Fundraising

Roland White

Cell: +27 83 227 1273

Email: pr@fops.org.za

Email: rolandw@mweb.co.za

Borakalalo Special Projects

(No work parties until further notice)

Buks van der Walt

Cell: +27 83 320 2268

Email: bora@fops.org.za

Sediba Editor

Kerry-Anne Hare

Cell: +27 76 447 1119

Email: Sediba@fops.org.za

Facebook profile: Fops Sediba

Secretary Memberships & Special Interests

Bronwyn Fell

Cell: +27 83 294 5971

Email: secretary@fops.org.za

FOPS phone: 082 464 3064



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Tents

–
A reminder that it is only Lindy who organises tent bookings, (and not Bronwyn/ secretary) so please ensure that you contact Lindy, preferably on her Cell: +27 82 890 0534

Please note: Only paid up, current FOPS members may use the tents on the basis of ONE TENT per membership. You may not book all 3 tents for yourself and friends who are not members. If you can't remember if you renewed your membership, contact Bronwyn (secretary@fops.org.za) to check.

The FOPS tent area is part of the Golden Leopard concession and FOPS have to adhere to the rules and regulations set, so pitching additional tents/roof top tents/caravans NEXT to the FOPS tents if you want more space may result in FOPS losing the use of the area & tents, and therefore a valuable source of income. Please don't think because Lindy isn't there when you arrive and pitch your additional tents that the FOPS committee does not get advised of this, as we do each time. NOR can you 'arrange' with Lindy to do this when booking your tent.

If you need additional accommodation when you book a FOPS tent, make arrangements with reservations to book a camp site adjacent to the FOPS tents.

Reminder of HOW TO BOOK:

- Call LINDY– Cell: +27 82 890 0534 to enquire if the date you would like is available & book the date with her at a rate of R200 per tent per night
- Email proof of payment to coombeheathglenda@gmail.com. Reference: membership number & tents. Banking details same as membership, and on the website.
- Please call Lindy to check that she has received your proof of payment, and that booking is CONFIRMED.

Please do not assume your booking is confirmed just because you sent an email, or paid into the account. Please be considerate – if you book a tent, and cannot make your booking please tell Lindy a **minimum of one week (7 days)** prior, so we can notify other members that it is available.

Tents are self-catering and not serviced. **Please clean them after your use.** Any problems or breakages please report to Lindy after your weekend.

NB: Please be careful- DO NOT leave valuables in the tents. Rather keep these items on you or out of sight in your locked vehicle- during a recent burglary, a tent window was



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slashed and valuables were stolen while the occupants were visiting friends in the adjacent tent.

Attending Work Parties

Please remember that FOPS only operates in the parks at the INVITATION & APPROVAL of the Parks Board, so there is a procedure to follow:

ONE WEEK BEFORE THE WORK PARTY:

1. *CALL or SMS the RELEVANT work party co-ordinator ie. Pilanesberg – Paddy or Dennis to check that there is space and to have your name added to the list.*
2. *Provide your vehicle registration and number of people attending*
3. *CONFIRM your arrival time – remember FOPS has to adhere to the gate times in the parks. So if you are not going to make the gate closing time, special arrangements need to be made at the discretion of the work party co-ordinator. So please try to be in the park by the gate closing time on the FRIDAY.*
4. *DO NOT email the day before a work party, please – always give notice and confirm that they have your name on the list at the gate.*
5. *To send an email to TENTS (Lindy) or to book a tent for the weekend at Manyane, or to send an email to SECRETARY (Bronwyn) **DOES NOT BOOK YOU FOR WORK PARTIES.** You can only book with work party co-ordinators.*



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Special Project Weekend Reports- Pilanesberg

February 2016

Paddy Coombe-Heath

Hi Folks,

After January's turnout I was very impressed. We had almost double the number of people, 27 to be exact. It should have been 32 but some had to cancel. The good thing was, we got a lot of work done. We had a new and interesting project. The Pilanesberg Wildlife Trust, asked us to assist with a bit of fund raising. There was a challenge by Makanyane Volunteers to beat their effort in raising R10 000, so we took up the challenge. The ladies, 5 of them, went to Pilanesberg Centre and did fundraising. We eventually beat their total by nearly R1000. So, well done F.O.P.S. and thanks ladies. I know it's a horrible job, but you did it well.

Then, some of us tackled the Iron Age Site. More clearing was required. Trevor got advice from a lady who is a chemical distributor. She suggested a new herbicide, which we tried out. This stuff is supposed to last up to 3 years. If it works, praise the Lord. Can you imagine only having to do Iron Age Site duty every six months? RIGHT!!

Bathlako parking area just needed a few repairs to be done, but it was old damage, thank goodness. We desperately need poles in order to do final repairs there.

Two teams did road clearing- one along Nkakane and the other on Letsha. Letsha needs more attention, but that can wait until next time. Oh, and then 3 guys went into Manyane where they moved the old pole stands, which were a bit dangerous, especially at night. They also replaced a couple of electric globes which had blown.

But all in all, it was a good weekend.

That's it until next time. Go well.



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Regards,

Paddy

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March 2016

Paddy Coombe-Heath

Hi Folks,

We had another good turnout with 25 people. Again, there were 3 cancellations, but it happens, work comes first. We welcomed Eberhart Oelman and Joey back to the family after a 2 year layoff. Nice to see you again. At this time of the Year, when everything is growing, we need to be pruning our big garden. This means more road clearing. Two teams went out. One team went down Mankwe way from the red rocks side and worked their way back. It's a long road. Believe me. Then Letsha- we needed to finish what was started last month. Both of these jobs were hard work and very hot work. Bathlako was nearly complete after the last time but again we ran short of poles. Next time?

Last but not least, we tackled the Iron Age Site. Again, brush cutting and more spraying was required. We were told that this new herbicide takes a while to work, so we wait in anticipation and with bated breath. This stuff is very expensive, so it had better work.

But again, a lot of work got done and a good time was had by all. That is what it's all about.

That is all from me until next time, go well.

Regards,

Paddy





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Thanks Heather Byrley for sending in these photographs of the Bathlako team.

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April 2016

Paddy Coombe-Heath

Hi Folks,

Well done everybody. We had 26 people, let's keep it up. There were two cancellations. We missed the guys who were a bit over-eager and went up the weekend before the work party. That is why we have a calendar guys...anyway, these things happen. Welcome back after your sabbatical of nearly 2 years, Peter and Zika Bennet.

Two youngsters decided to try out the work party. They were Ryno Venter and John DeBruin. Time will tell if they really enjoyed it as much as they said they did. We look forward to having you around in future.

We had a few projects, as usual. I'll start with the Iron Age Site, where we did the same old stuff. The spraying we did in February does not appear to be doing what it is should ie. killing the Sickle Bush! Trevor is investigating.

Rathlogo hide parking area was looking a bit overgrown, but the guys sorted that out quickly. The area is now looking well-maintained.

Next, we needed to do the Geological sites and direction cairns. Two teams went out. One went down Dithabaneng and the other down Tshwene, up along Tshukudu E'Ntso and back along Tlou Drive. Alien vegetation was included in the deal, namely Lantana and Syringas. It was a long day, but the weather played a big role. It was perfect for working in.

Lastly, Tau link was very overgrown so one team went out armed with a chain saw and plenty of other tools. They did a fantastic job. At least you can drive down there properly without dodging the trees that were growing over the road.

It was another super work party. There was good hard work, great company and a couple of lovely braais on Friday and Saturday nights.

Well done all, until next time. Please CHECK the calendar.

Regards,

Paddy



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A few extreme gardening pics, taken by me in March