



PEOPLE & PARKS programme

4th People and Parks Conference:
Richards Bay 2010

CONFERENCE REPORT



environmental affairs

Department:
Environmental Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Directorate: Protected Areas Planning and Development



environmental affairs

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Environmental Affairs
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This report presents an overview of the fourth People and Parks Conference held in Richards Bay from the 29th August to the 1st September 2010.

The conference included detailed presentations and discussions by invited guests, community representatives and government officials. This report has been prepared so as to provide a summary of this content in a user friendly and informative way. Content has been taken directly from presentations and speeches and summarized where appropriate. The aim of this report is to provide a detailed account of the conference proceedings to support an ongoing engagement with the learning's of the event. Conference content has not been interpreted, simply presented in a user-friendly manner.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

BBBEE	Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment
CEO	Chief Operations Officer
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBNRM	Community Based Natural Resource Management
CBO	Community Based Organizations
CPA	Community Property Association
CRDP	Comprehensive Rural Development Programme
DEA	Department of Environmental Affairs
EPWP	Expanded Public Works Programme
ICCAs	Indigenous and Community Conservation Areas
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
IUCN	The World Conservation Union
KZN	KwaZulu Natal Province
LEDET	Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism
LHWP	Lesotho Highlands Water Project
MEC	Member of Executive Council
METT	Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool
MINTEC	The Ministerial Technical Committee
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPTA	Mpumalanga Parks and Tourism Agency
NARYSEC	National Rural Youth Service Corps
NBF	National Biodiversity Framework
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NHTL	National House of Traditional Leaders
NPAES	National Protected Areas Expansion Strategy
PoWPA	Programme of Work on Protected Areas
RLCC	Regional Land Claims Commission
SALGA	South African Local Government Association
SANBI	South African National Biodiversity Institute
SANParks	South African National Parks
SRPP	Social Responsibility Policy and Projects
UNDESD	United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development
WfW	Working for Water Programme

Executive Summary

The 4th National People and Parks Conference, organised by the Department of Environmental Affairs, was held at the University of Zululand, KwaZulu Natal Province from the 29th August to the 1st September 2010. The conference aimed to take stock of progress since the 2008 conference in Mafikeng, as well as to reconfirm the centrality of the People and Parks Programme in the national transformation and development agenda for the Biodiversity Sector. Delegates were welcomed to Richards Bay by the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Zululand Prof Fikile Mazibuko and the Mayor of Umhalthuze Local Municipality: Mayor Zakhele Mngayi. Conference proceedings were opened by the honourable Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs, Ms Buyelwa Sonjica and His Majesty, King Goodwill Zwelitini.

The conference covered a broad range of issues with a view to celebrating and showcasing success stories for future replication, as well as identifying concerns in the existing programmes and sharing lessons learnt as a means for addressing the remaining challenges. Strategic partnerships were acknowledged through the signing of the Kids in Parks Memorandum of Understanding between Pick 'n Pay, the Ministry of Water and Environmental Affairs, the Ministry of Basic Education and SANParks. The conference also launched the National Co-Management Framework. Most importantly, however, the conference provided a platform for People and Parks stakeholders to engage with ongoing programme concerns.

The conference proceedings are summarized under six broad headings:

1. People and Parks Programmes in a South African context;
2. People and Parks Programmes in an International context;
3. Community concerns regarding People and Parks Programmes;
4. Five thematic areas aimed at improving People and Parks Programmes;
5. Site visits to People and Parks Programmes in KwaZulu Natal;
6. The way forward.

1. People and Parks in a South African context

The conference opened with a series of presentations outlining the context within which People and Parks Programmes take place. The Honourable Minister, Ms Buyelwa Sonjica, and the Honourable Deputy Minister, Mme Rejoice Mabudafhasi, outlined details of the governments transformation agenda on biodiversity and conservation and the history of the People and Parks Programme. Presentations were also made regarding the need for linkages between the national agenda for people and parks, and the national agenda for basic education, rural development and land reform, and fundraising. The Chief Executive Officer of SANParks provided

a summary of the interrelationships between people and parks in his presentation 'healthy people, healthy parks'.

These presentations were followed by an overview of strategic partnerships relating to the People and Parks Programme, namely a look at the role of education in conservation by an advisor to the Minister of Basic Education, Ms Linda Chisholm; and an exploration of strategic funding partners with presentations by Mr Gareth Ackerman – Chairperson of Pick n Pay, and Professor Nevhutanga – Chairperson of the National Lotteries Board.

Ms Tumi Seboka, a representative for the Minister of Rural Development and Land Reform, completed the series of presentations on understanding contextual issues by outlining the Department of Rural Development and Land Reforms Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP). In doing so, Ms Seboka outlined the relationship between the CRDP and Outcome 7: 'Vibrant, equitable and sustainable rural communities and food security for all'. The presentation aimed to contextualise the People and Parks Programme in relation to rural development strategies, and in particular, in relation to two principle components of the department's rural development strategy, namely their rural job creation model and the National Rural Youth Service Corps concept.

These presentations outlined the importance of understanding and addressing contextual issues such as poverty, food security, capacity building, traditional knowledge, scientific knowledge, climate change, governance, politics and fundraising. These issues all impact directly on the success of People and Parks Programmes as they determine the context within which the programmes are implemented. Without co-ordinated and sustainable responses to contextual issues, programmes will struggle to achieve their overarching goals for conservation, poverty relief and a vibrant and healthy rural socio-economic and ecological landscape.

2. People and Parks in an International Context

Two international guests, Mr Ashish Kothari from the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and Ms Refiloe Ntsohi from the Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Culture in Lesotho, were invited to the conference to share learning's from People and Parks projects around the world. These two presentations provided an international context regarding the global significance of People and Parks type programmes, and highlighted some of the challenges and successes of these programmes internationally.

Mr Kothari's presentation outlined international trends in indigenous and community conservation areas (ICCAs). He noted the important work that has been done in South Africa with regard to developing sound People and Parks Programmes.

Mr Kothari's opening remarks highlighted the need to add "by the people" to the People and Parks slogan "conservation for the people, with the people". He outlined that such additional emphasis would further encourage an understanding of community based conservation as being about more than simply co-management,

but also including conservation activities by communities capacitated to take responsibility for conservation on their own – within their communities as well as on claimed land.

Mr Kothari's address focused on outlining some of the most important principles governing community conservation areas and partnerships, providing examples of successful community conservation areas from around the world, looking at the international significance of community conservation areas and assessing the status of community conservation areas internationally.

Ms Refiloe Ntsohi representing the Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Culture, Lesotho, presented a case study outlining the history of protected areas and their management in Lesotho. The presentation looked at land use practices in Lesotho, and the extent to which traditional livelihood choices influences the interaction between people and protected areas in Lesotho. The presentation concluded with a summary of lessons learnt from efforts at developing protected areas able to respond to community concerns in Lesotho.

3. Community concerns regarding People and Parks Programmes

Community representatives from all nine provinces convened in the afternoon before the conference opened to table their concerns relating to People and Parks Programmes. Each province presented a list of concerns. The concerns varied according to regional governance and funding trends, as well as the individual experiences of different communities. Community representatives convened again on Day 2 of the conference, and took a decision to formally present their concerns to the conference.

The decision for community representatives to present their full list of concerns to the conference delegates was a solution to the growing levels of frustration amongst community representatives at the absence of the Minister of Rural Development and Land Reform. The concerns were presented by the National Steering Committee Chairperson, Mr Mhlaba, during Plenary Session 3 on Day 2. The following issues emerged as being the most pressing concerns affecting all provinces:

- **Funding** – with a particular emphasis on resources to support the operation of community representative structures in each province, and resources to support community based initiatives.
- **Land Reform** - with a particular emphasis on the slow rate of land reform processes and the need to fast track title deed processes following the settlement of land claims.
- **Co-management** - with a particular emphasis on the need for equal partnerships in co-management arrangements.
- **Job creation and beneficiation** – or more specifically the lack thereof.

- **Transparency** – with a particular emphasis on the need for more regular communication from government departments outlining the details of decisions taken affecting People and Parks Programmes.
- **Commitment** from government to follow through on promises made; and
- **Capacity Building** – with a particular emphasis on long term capacity building to support a holistic range of subjects, including financial management, legal issues and conservation science.

Representatives from each provincial management authority responded to the concerns raised by Mr Mhlaba. The responses referred to specific issues raised by each province, as well as some general remarks regarding the process of working together with communities on People and Parks Programmes. Each province expressed their concern regarding the issues raised by Mr Mhlaba on behalf of communities, and agreed that there are many problems that both communities and government structures need to address. Some examples were given of instances in which concerns have been successfully dealt with, but overall there was a commitment to continue to work towards improving the People and Parks Programmes.

The following responses emerged as being important to all protected area management authorities:

- **Dialogue** – emphasis was placed on the importance of continuing dialogue between community structures and protected area management authorities.
- **Support for community structures** – management authorities recognised the importance of supporting community structures and raised concerns about how to ensure the necessary financial resources and capacity building support are made available to communities.
- **Job creation** - it was noted that many jobs have been created through People and Parks Programmes, but it was also conceded that more jobs are needed.
- **Intergovernmental co-ordination** - management authorities recognised the need for more effective intergovernmental co-ordination, particularly with the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform.
- **Post settlement support** – it was agreed that additional resources are needed to ensure post settlement support programmes are successful.
- **Strategic interventions** – Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency outlined the need for People and Parks Programmes to have a clear vision, an implementable action plan and adequate resources to be successful.
- **Leadership and accountability** – it was agreed by all management authorities that strong leadership and accountability structures in both government and

community structures is important for the success of People and Parks Programmes.

4. Five Thematic Areas

Five thematic areas were identified as being critical to the success of People and Parks Programmes. These themes were expanded from the thematic areas identified in Mafikeng (2008) in an attempt to include a broader range of issues affecting the co-management of protected areas. The five areas identified were:

1. Strengthening of the protected area network.
2. Rural development in the context of protected areas.
3. Land reform and co-management of protected areas.
4. Capacity building, awareness and education for co-management.
5. Sustainable financing mechanisms and partnerships for conservation.

The thematic areas were tabled by the Department of Environmental Affairs and on Day 3 conference delegates separated into five groups to discuss them in detail. The discussion groups were representative of a range of People and Parks stakeholders, including community representatives and government officials from all provinces, members of Cabinet (Deputy Minister), members of the KwaZulu Natal Provincial Legislature and representatives from non-governmental organizations and international organizations.

These parallel sessions focused on unpacking what has worked, what has not worked, and what actions need to be taken to find a way forward for each thematic area. Discussions were wide ranging, including individual experiences and broader learning's. These discussions were then summarized and presented to the rest of the delegates on the final day of the conference. These actions make up the beginning of the framework for a plan of action for the People and Parks Programme 2010.

5 Site Visits to People and Parks Programmes in KwaZulu Natal

Following the thematic discussion breakaway groups, delegates were given the opportunity to visit three of KwaZulu Natal's best examples of People and Parks Programme initiatives. These included visiting iSimangaliso Wetland Park, Nselweni Bush Camp, and Somkhanda. The purpose of visiting these sites was to see successful examples of co-management agreements between communities and protected areas. The visits were intended to offer inspiration and best practice learning to the delegates. Delegates were given an opportunity to ask questions to community representatives benefiting from the agreements and to the park officials.

Information sharing and a tour of each site's tourist attractions were made allowing delegates to learn while enjoying the offerings of the protected areas.

6. The Way Forward

The conference was closed by a detailed response to the conference discussions by the honourable Deputy Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs, Mme Rejoice Mabudafhasi. The honourable Deputy Minister introduced her concluding remarks by noting three important achievements of the fourth people and parks conference:

1. Clear presentations of **community concerns** and frustrations regarding the slow pace of implementation of People and Parks Programmes;
2. **Site visits** to three people and parks projects in KwaZulu Natal to share learning's with all delegates from successful People and Parks Programmes and demonstrate the value in sharing best practice learning across provinces;
3. **International best practice** presentations to assist delegates to locate their challenges and successes in relation to a broader international context.

The honourable Deputy Minister noted the importance of proactively engaging with community concerns and protected area management concerns. She also highlighted the importance of the five proposed thematic areas discussed during the conference as being crucial to the success of people and parks issues.

Based on these concerns the honourable Deputy Minister presented on behalf of the Department of Environmental Affairs a list of commitments to this conference and the communities who await its results with keen interest:

1. To work towards the promotion of **healthy and sound relations** amongst all the parties to the People and Parks Programme as in communities, the government and the agencies and individual parks.
2. The **mobilisation of resources** (including financial) to help unlock the many blockages that have frustrated the best efforts amongst the parties.
3. To build a strong and people and parks **structures** (for coordination and implementation purposes) at all levels to ensure the meaningful engagement and participation of parties in all activities based on the principles of corporate governance and respect for each other's roles.
4. To further explore the model of **community support** that was presented by Mpumalanga during the conference as a best practice for community support and

engage all other provinces with a view to sharing Mpumalanga's best practices and adopting broad guidelines for supporting communities. Once adopted, the National Department of Environmental Affairs will be charged with the responsibility of monitoring the implementation of the guidelines.

5. To build on the successes of the **Kids and Parks** programme and mainstream it within the broader People and Parks Programme.
6. To undertake nationwide **feasibility studies** within the protected areas.
7. To use **Resource Africa's** theatre team as ambassadors of the People and Park brand and for the purpose of popularising it within parks communities and nationally.
8. To convene a national **People and Parks Coordinating Forum** constituted by the National Department of Environmental Affairs, the Community Representatives Executive Steering Committee and Provincial Departments and Agencies.