

# The management of the

## MOUNTAIN ZEBRA CAMDEBOO PROTECTED ENVIRONMENT



The MZCPE is managed by the Mountain Zebra Camdeboo Protected Environment Landowner's Association made the management authority by the Minister in April 2016. The Association, like all protected area management authorities, is subject to the constitution, legislation, international agreements, national policies and government priorities of South Africa. The Association is guided by a formal constitution accepted by each landowner/member of the Protected Environment. The constitution includes mechanisms for addressing issues of collective concern and/or management and guides collective decision making.

The constitution works together with the management plan to outline the requirements of the Protected Environment and includes attached policies for more detailed guidance of specific areas of management where required. The Protected Environment does not have the right to interfere with individual landowner businesses, but rather remains the authority of the collective MZCPE Management Plan and its achievements.

The Association is managed by an Executive Committee consisting of a chairman, vice chairman, secretary and a treasurer. This Executive Committee is voted in at the annual general meeting and run a term of two years. Committee members can be re-elected if willing to stand.

The Protected Environment has been divided into sixteen clusters . These clusters make up management units within the Protected Environment and are usually determined by existing farmers associations, conservancies, geographical position or other management considerations. Each term cycle, each cluster elects a representative. The representatives from each cluster, together with the members of the Executive Committee make up the Steering Committee.

The Steering Committee functions as a first port of call for more day to day management decisions of the Protected Environment as a collective when matters needing Association involvement arise and their mandate is only to the management plan and its associated programmes and projects. The Steering Committee functions as a sounding board and responses to any arising discussions are formulated, captured and then shared digitally with all members of the Association for their input.

Should the discussions require decision, the decisions will be cast out for voting from all members and follows the procedures set out by the constitution.

The land management activities within the Protected Environment are guided by a set of Regulations as gazetted with the declaration notice. These regulations are linked to the zonation plan of the Protected Environment.

The primary objective of the Protected Environment's zonation plan is to establish a coherent spatial framework in the protected environment to guide and coordinate conservation, agriculture and tourism and to minimise conflict between these sometimes antagonistic activities. A zoning plan is also a legislated requirement of the NEM: PAA, which stipulates that the management plan must contain "a zoning of the area indicating what activities may take place in different sections of the Protected Environment and the conservation objectives of those sections". During the preparation of the "Intent to Declare" document, landowners were given a chance to zone their properties. The zonation plan currently includes high and low impact zones and activities within each zone are guided by the regulations gazetted for the Protected Environment at declaration in April 2016.

The Association has partnered with SANParks through a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA). The MoA highlights the responsibilities of both parties in the achievement of the objectives in this management plan. SANParks assists the Association with compiling the management plan and assists with the required management plan reviews and amendments. In addition, SANParks also provides technical support and advice when required. A number of the properties in the Protected Environment fall within the buffer zones of the two national parks and therefore this partnership is vital and strategic to aid the two parks with the implementation of SANParks' Buffer Zone Guideline and the national Buffer Zone Policy. While SANParks remains a formal partner committed by a MoA, the MZCPE is partnered with a host of other organisations for a multitude of purposes.

The management plan is built around the ideology that mutually beneficial partnerships can be created to reduce the resource strains to implement projects, especially those that may fall outside of the day to day business focuses of landowners. The partnership approach started off as a novel idea, but over the last management plan term (2017-2022), it has proven to be a useful tool to utilise the mandates (and associated funding and resources) of other organisations to implement specific projects on the ground and in turn, the Protected Environment can contribute to the success of these projects and to conservation outcomes set wider than the local landscape.

Partnerships are ever arising and evolving making the list of partners ever changing. The partnerships are recognised on the MZCPE website and will be incorporated into the Concept Development Plan and relevant programmes under this management plan as they arise over each management plan term. Projects and their associated organisational partners are recognised on the MZCPE Project Register

**Bronwyn Botha**

