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To All Gauteng Conservancies

At the request of one of GCSA's founding conservancies, we have compiled the following document, answering queries put to their chairman regarding the activities and running of the GCSA. We are now circulating it to all Gauteng conservancies for their member's information. Should any questions arise from the perusal of this document, please feel free to send them to me, the Chairman of the GCSA, my committee and I will do our best to answer them.

The GCSA committee as elected at the last AGM in 2009 - Next AGM ... August 2010

Ivan Parkes - Chairman
Joan du Toit
Anne Mearns
Reg Humphrey
Jeanne Koekemoer
Louise Bosman
Bob Dehning

Adhok non- voting members who have or are assisting the above committee
Kathy Oliver - Secretary
John Wesson,
Cheryl Dehning
Aldie Casewell - who is assisting with the symposium - Cullinan Conservancy.

Note:

Any member of a conservancy may contact the GCSA committee if they would like to attend a committee meeting - although they will not have 'voting' rights.

All Conservancies are informed of the AGM and are asked to send representatives of their committee and inform their conservancy members of the AGM and any of them may attend such a meeting.

A conservancy may propose a member of their committee or conservancy to represent them on the committee or at a meeting.

• **How has the GCSA contributed to our conservancy, or region, in the past year?**

GCSA is available to assist or advise any conservancy should they request assistance. With respect to Conservancies in your region assistance is always available from the office and when John took over as the GCSA representative for your area, he contacted the conservancies in the area offering assistance where required.

- **The GCSA has been involved and assisted with the following:**

The committee and a few other volunteers from conservancies have manned displays at:

Yebo Gogga – 5 days (+ 2 days setup) October - GCSA has participated for the past 4 years

Interacting with educators and learners (of all ages and ethnic backgrounds), and encouraging interest and awareness in conservation. Encourage schools to form conservation areas.

Contacts made with Curators, parents, Wits Alumni etc - around 6000 visitors over 5 days

Sasol Birding Expo: Johannesburg Zoo (May) - GCSA participated 2009 & 2010

3 day display (Shared stand with WESSA)

Public of all ages, mostly birders but also parents and children.

Sammy Marks, Environmental day (2009) various NGOs organisations participated

GCSA , Tree Society and WESSA shared large tent supplied by Cullinan Conservancy

Gardenex & Green Living 2010 – representatives from GCSA assisted NACSSA at this very busy Fair. This proved to be very beneficial for the Association as some good contacts were made and a lot of public exposure was received.

Displays / talks to explain conservancies and encourage participation – as well as help establishing new conservancies:

Hartbeesfontein – conservancy open day – display, tree walk,

Cullinan conservancy – fun run event

Mount Carmel Conservancy – Nelspruit – new conservancy

Klipriviersberg conservancy – New conservancy - number of trips to meetings

Glen Austin Conservancy – number of visits to help with formation

Korsmans – assisted in successful start up of this important, (it incorporates the Korsman's Bird Sanctuary) conservancy on the East rand.

Nyani Conservancy – assisting in getting this conservancy active again

Office currently assisting a person in the Mnandi area, who is keen to start a conservancy

Frog Awareness / monitoring

Project drew much attention to state of frog populations and encouraged formation of conservation areas.

Frog educational material – printing – funded by GCSA – major attraction to children and used for environmental ed at schools.

Frog counting in Cullinan,

Number of school groups taken on environmental educational outings - Encouraged awareness of conservancy movement .

- **What support has come from the GCSA?**

We have five area representatives in Gauteng who are available at all times to help out the conservancies in their areas, should the conservancies feel that the assistance they are receiving is not adequate they can always contact the Chairman

with their concerns. The office operates every week day between 8 and 12 answering, or redirecting all queries.

What does the GCSA set out to achieve?

The establishment of new conservancies, and maintaining those already registered, as the only sustainable alternative for conservation in our region as echoed by NACSSA, working on a higher level;

Contribute to and support NACSSA to promote conservancies on a national level.

Provide a constructive networking platform on which people with the same aims and objectives can share ideas and help each other.

The GCSA Aims are listed on the website.

- **What are the membership fees used for?**

The membership fees are used to fund the operational and administrative costs of the Association as follows:

Details of annual expenditure is available to all members at the AGM or on request from the office.

Printing and publications:

Display material, posters,

GCSA education publications,

Conservancy handbooks and membership information - Producing, maintaining and updating

Materials for use at displays and available for all conservancies to assist with formation of a conservancy and to advertise / promote conservancies.

(Generally funded by registrations fees but occasionally some outside sponsorship is received.

Administration costs:

Telephone, copying, faxing, printing

Registration of conservancies and follow up on information for renewal of certificates;

Producing and maintaining up to date printed materials for promoting and assisting conservancies

Correspondence and liaison with GDARD

Correspondence with municipalities

Certificates of registration of a conservancy

Certificates iro annual Meerkat awards etc.

Conferences/ Symposia e.g. the NACSSA conference; GCSA symposium – Aug 2010

EIAs - assisting conservancies with information and expertise and moral support

Working on EIAs on a provincial level,

Working on stewardship program, roll out possibilities and alternatives,

Occasional subsidising travelling costs of some committee members requested to attend meetings out of the region or where a high cost is involved

- **What services are rendered by the GCSA to conservancies?**

Presentations where requested; assistance with comments on EIAs; maintaining the conservancy register; ongoing liaison with GDARD; establishing and maintaining links with other NGOs; workshops; annual awards; submission of conservancies and

individuals into various Conservation awards i.e. Mail & Guardian Greening, SanParks Kudu awards, Mama Tshepo etc.

Library of Environmental and educational books, DVDs and materials available to all members, maintained at the office; Newsletters; part time secretary; Website access (especially if conservancy not able to have one of their own); Expertise of members of the association regarding – Frogs, Trees, Birds, Town Planning, Wetlands etc.

Opportunity for individual conservancies to be part of the professional Birding route being set up and maintained by the SA Bird Society.

Act as the main organizational body both regionally and then nationally and internationally through NACSSA. Conservancies are not the responsibility of the GCSA to run. They are individual organizations that have the support of the GCSA if needed or requested provided they are members. If they choose not to be members then they must not continue to use our contacts, resources etc for their own advancement etc and we should officially distance ourselves in writing from them and notify all NGOs etc of this fact.

- **What changes for us if we are paid-up members (or not)?**

DE REGISTRATION, REMOVAL FROM MAPS AS A LEGITIMATE REGISTERED CONSERVANCY. LOSE THE SUPPORT OF THE ASSOCIATION AS A SUPPORT BASE,

If not a member:

No longer part of the official government recognised Association, will become an individual or self sustained smaller entity, which could end up lacking the credibility and support of a larger official Association or collective voice as expressed through GCSA and NACSSA and its supporting organisations

If a member:

Access to others organisations and entities for assistance in various facets of conservation and education.

Part of a large community of 'voices' in environmental conflict.

How many conservancies are paid-up?

To date for 2010 25 conservancies

Due to economic pressures not all conservancies are in a position to make payment but are certainly showing willingness etc by supporting and continuing to support the GCSA be it through whatever means possible. The main objective is "CONSERVATION" I have always said – why keep people as members if they don't really support what we do? This removes the need to spend energy doing what we are doing right now i.e. trying to justify what we do every day?

Payment of membership fees is the method of confirming agreement of the joining member to an organization i.e. it officially shows agreement to and ties the conservancy and binds them to the rules and regulations of the organization.

At the founding meeting of the GCA now GCSA – it was agreed on an arbitrary amount of R500 per anum and it was also agreed that should a conservancy be unable to find the funds to pay this membership the committee would consider this amount waived for any amount the conservancy was able to pay as it was felt that

encouraging the establishment of conservancies should take priority over the collecting of membership fees. However only fully paid up conservancies have the right to vote at the AGM or any other GCSA meeting.

It must also be noted that while some conservancies have a large membership there are others which do not. It is too impractical to have a membership fee based on a conservancy's member base – as this would mean some conservancies would pay much more than R500 and others much less – hence the decision when the association was formed to opt for R500.

- **How is the GCSA accountable to its members, and who determines where resources and effort are spent?**

The committee is elected by members of the conservancies and are thereby given the duty to manage the association, within the bounds of the constitution and good accounting practices.

All these procedures are set out in the constitution of the association as set up by the founding members of the Association.

The accounts of the organisation may be perused at any time, and are presented at the AGM for final approval. At any of the Conservancy and committee meetings there is a statement of accounts tabled.

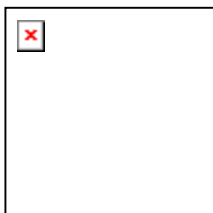
Resources are used as necessary and in accordance with good constitutional and accounting practices to promote, sustain and maintain the association.

If a conservancy feels they need clarity on where funds are distributed they can request a copy of the financial report as at the last meeting.

Therefore the GCSA committee is held accountable to its members (conservancies) within the bounds of the constitution to which they are all signatories as members of the association.

If conservancies need assistance with a project they can approach various organisations for assistance and funding – that is up to the conservancy. They can also approach the GCSA and NACSSA for assistance on projects. – this can then be voted upon by the members of the organisation and/ or committee if there are funds available for consideration

Regards



Ivan Parkes