

Media Release

Wednesday 29th September 2010

DEDEA SPENDS R2, 25M IN ONGELUKSNEK NATURE RESERVE

The Department of Economic Development and Environmental Affairs (DEDEA) has been spent about R2, 25 million to renovate the Onguleksnek Nature Reserve at Matatiele in Alfred Nzo District Municipality (ADM).

The success of this nature reserve, which is a catalyst for economic development, poverty alleviation and employment creation in the region, has been realised through involvement of the community in the management of parks. The community has been instrumental in the functionality of the reserve through providing horses for guiding, fresh produce supply, and infrastructure and trail maintenance.

The MEC for Finance, Economic Development and Environmental Affairs Mr Mcebisi Jonas visited the Ongeluksnek community as part of the Eastern Cape Executive Council Outreach Programme in the ADM. Addressing the community, MEC Jonas commended the way the community has been proactive in preserving the nature reserve through working with the department.

“The project is very exciting as it brings new perspective whilst setting an encouraging precedence in the overall environmental management of the parks. In most instances the functionality of the nature reserve relies heavily on the external parties rather than the community itself. So we are encouraged by these new and positive developments. This work vindicates the view we have had that key to bringing solutions to the problems facing the parks and the surrounding communities is in the integration of communities in the activities of the nature reserves. Linked to this is the need of identifying other areas of involvement other than the all important economic development, these include areas like the existing culture of surrounding villages, the indigenous knowledge which will contribute in improving lives overall beneficiation by the communities”, says Jonas.

Among the key deliverables of the project include the:

- Fencing of 4km to enclose the reserve entrance;
- Renovation of unused sandstone homestead ruins, to provide offices, ablutions, parking, water supply, gatehouse and a controlled entrance to the protected area via a stock grid;
- Renovation of a 3 bedroom self catering guest lodge, with solar lighting, gas supply for geyser and kitchen (fridge and stove), bedding, fully equipped kitchen, fireplace and veranda;
- Construction of a bushcamp in the Jordan valley with covered boma, water supply, comfortable ablutions, hot showers and shaded campsites;

- New reserve entrance gate above Motseng village, providing access to the northern portion of the reserve and controlled access to the bushcamp;
- Trail development, mapping and clearing of over 8km, with signage and markers;
- A website and marketing collateral for marketing;
- Training of over 100 workers and local people in basic Occupational Health and Safety, HIV awareness, , hospitality, hands-on construction skills, horse care, financial literacy, fire fighting, environmental awareness, guiding and tourism basics;
- Rehabilitation of 5km of access road and rebuilding of an extensive stream crossing / bridge to allow access to the bushcamp area for tourists and reserve management.

The Nature Reserve is managed by the Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency – a DEDEA public entity mandated to manage all provincial protected areas and destination marketing with the objective of promoting and developing the tourism industry.

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Note to the editor:

Department of Economic Development and Environmental Affairs (DEDEA):

DEDEA strives for building a province where all her people share the benefits of sound environmental management, sustainable development and economic growth.

DEDEA's mission is to provide strategic leadership in developing a people-centred, equitably shared, green economy through effective programmes, strategic partnerships and responsive services.

Issued by:

Department of Economic Development and Environmental Affairs (DEDEA)

Contact:

Sixolile Makaula

Communications Manager

Tel: (040) 69 3299

Cell: 072 751 5001

Sixolile.makaula@deaet.ecape.gov.za

www.dedea.gov.za