



1st AGM of the South Africa Wetland Society

Wednesday 24 October 2012 at 11am,
National Wetlands Indaba, Klein-Kariba Resort & Conference Centre, Limpopo

No.	Item	Action
1.	Welcome <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Interim Board Chairperson M de Fontaine welcomed everyone to the 1st AGM of the South African Wetland Society. Everyone participating in the National Wetlands Indaba was welcome to attend and participate in the AGM but only paid up members of the Society were eligible to vote. All members who had signed up to the Society by the 23 October 2012 and within the 3 months after the AGM will be given Founding Member status. 	M de Fontaine
2.	Attendance Register <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All members of the society were requested to fill in the attendance register which was circulated (see Appendix 1). M de Fontaine used the opportunity to explain how the proxy vote was to be made. 	All
3.	Apologies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Appendix 2 for a list of apologies. 	
4.	Minutes of the Previous Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Since this was the first meeting of the Society there were no previous minutes. 	
5.	Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Since this was the first meeting of the Society there were no previous minutes. 	
6.	Additions to the Agenda	
6.1	Establishment of Working Groups.	M Hiestermann
6.2	Fundraising and Secretariat.	P Fairall
6.3	National Indaba Support – Role of the Society.	PL Grundling
7.	Annual Report	
7.1	Presentation of the Chairperson’s Annual Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> M de Fontaine read the Annual Report (see Appendix 3). PL Grundling thanked M de Fontaine for his commitment and efforts as Chairperson on the Interim Board. 	
7.2	Adoption of the Chairperson’s Annual Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> G Marneweck, V Vermaak and P Fairall accepted the adoption of the Chairperson’s Annual Report. 	
8.	Financial	
8.1	Presentation of the Annual Financial Report	

<p>8.2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J Taylor (treasurer of the Gauteng Wetland Forum) was co-opted to the Interim Board as treasurer of the Society since the Society was using the Gauteng Wetland Forums bank account. This was an interim solution until the new Board was able to open a bank account in the name of the Society. • M de Fontaine reported that as of 23 October 2012 the bank account of the Society was at R24,250. <p>Adoption of the Annual Financial Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P Fairall, G Marneweck and PL Grundling accepted the adoption of the Annual Financial Report. 	
<p>9. 9.1</p> <p>9.2</p>	<p>Constitution</p> <p>Presentation of the Constitution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M de Fontaine presented the Constitution and described the process of compilation and review with circulation to the greater wetland community for comment over the past year. • The new Board once elected would be able sign the Constitution into effect. <p>Adoption of the Constitution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P Fairall, G Marneweck and PL Grundling accepted the adoption of the Constitution. 	
<p>10.</p>	<p>Election of the Board of Trustees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only members of the Society were able to vote for the Board of Trustees. • According to the Constitution seven Board of Trustees needed to be voted in and members could vote for seven or less nominees. The list of nominees were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Don Cater ○ Craig Cowden ○ Marc de Fontaine ○ Bhuti Dlamini ○ Paul Fairall ○ Piet-Louis Grundling ○ Michelle Hiestermann ○ Nancy Job ○ Gary Marneweck ○ Steve Mitchell ○ Kerryn Morrison ○ Eric Munzhedzi ○ Kate Snaddon ○ Judith Taylor ○ Johan van der Waals ○ Vanessa Vermaak ○ Damian Walters • After counting by independent attendees of the AGM the new Board of Trustees voted by the members of the Society were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Craig Cowden ○ Marc de Fontaine (Secretary) ○ Paul Fairall ○ Piet-Louis Grundling (Chairperson) 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Michelle Hiester mann (Vice-Chair) ○ Gary Marneweck ○ Eric Munzhedzi 	
11.	Discussion of Additions to the Agenda	
11.1	<p>Establishment of Working Groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Advantage to working groups is creating a way for the members of the Society to get involved. Working groups proposed include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Accreditation and Code of Science. ○ Professional Development. ○ Marketing and Fundraising. ○ Communications and Publications. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Important to consider how to handle press releases and a policy will need to be developed around this. ▪ It was noted that only the president can speak on behalf of the Soil Science Society and this is dealt with in the Constitution. ▪ Suggestion to compile reference list of latest WRC reports and other sources relevant to wetlands ○ Membership. ○ Education. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What is the Society's role in influencing government and policy development? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ There is a WRC project addressing how scientists can influence policy. ○ Request for members to make the society aware of opportunities to get involved in policy development. ● What influence will the Society have and how will it handle a conflict topic like fracking? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It would be for the Society to assess the situation and then to formulate an opinion or position about specific issues. 	<p>M Hiester mann</p> <p>New Board</p>
11.2	<p>Fundraising and Secretariat</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fundraising efforts have been held back until the new Board was appointed. ● P Fairall presented the idea of the Froggy Fun Day which would be an Annual Fun Ride opportunity to raise funds for the Society with the aim of getting 40,000 cyclists on bicycles on the same day across the country. ● EWT and Cycle Lab have agreed to support this initiative ● Despite the late notice the aim is to still launch the event this year. A request was made for provincial representatives to drive this initiative. ● Suggestion was made to link the Society and IMCG Secretariat. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Emifula, Terra Soils and Rossouw & Partners have offered 1 free year of running the secretariat through their offices. ○ WETREST would also be willing to combine resources. 	<p>P Fairall</p> <p>PL Grundling</p>
11.3	<p>National Indaba Support – Role of the Society</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Some of the difficulties associated with organising the Indaba have highlighted the potential need for an organising body to support Provincial Indabas. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Organising the Indaba is a lot of work and has become harder over time due to the increased number of delegates 	

	<p>participating.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It is also difficult to get relevant wetland sponsorships in these tough economic times. ○ For example SANBI needed a BEE certificate for the Bank Account in order to sponsor the Indaba. This is just not possible for most Provincial Forums to organise ○ The question was raised as to who should take on liability if the Indaba makes a loss? Previously private individuals have carried this loss. ○ There is an opportunity through the Society for an organising body to facilitate a schedule of the hosting provinces with a longer lead time of 3 to 5 years in advance. ○ The advantage of this is to have continuity and to pass on learning from one year to the next. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consensus was obtained that the Indaba continues on an annual basis. ● Concern was raised that if the Society takes over the Provincial Indabas that the individuality of the provinces would be lost. The issue proposed is that the Society should play a more supportive role to the Provincial Indabas but as a registered entity may better leverage sponsorship and funds. ● It is important for the Provincial Forums to maintain a strong role and to take full responsibility focusing on the content. ● The Society's focus should be on logistics and support and that is where the secretariat can play an important role. ● The new Board needs to develop a proposal on how this proposal is to work. 	<p>New Board</p> <p>New Board</p>
12.	<p>Next Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The next meeting of the Society will be held at the next National Wetlands Indaba provisionally set for October 2013. 	All
13.	<p>Closure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● M de Fontaine thanked all who attended the 1st AGM and signed up to the Society and invited everyone to join. ● The meeting was closed at 12:45. 	M de Fontaine

Appendix 2: Apologies

Douglas Macfarlane
Mike Cohen
Johan van der Waals
PS Roussouw
Althea Grundling
Bhuti Dlamini
Judith Taylor
BZL Dlalisa
Klaas Oupa Thela
Bill Harding
Kerryn Morrison

Appendix 3: Chairperson's Annual Report

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT TO THE 1st AGM OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN WETLAND SOCIETY HELD AT KLEIN-KARIBA RESORT & CONFERENCE CENTRE ON 24 OCTOBER 2012

Good Morning,

It is an honour and a privilege to be standing here today addressing you all on the occasion of the first ever Annual General Meeting of the South African Wetland Society. What started out as an idea in 2008 has seen us achieve a first in South African wetland history and for this I would like to extend gratitude to those pioneering wetlanders, and in particular Paul Fairall.

Out of Indaba 2011 came the Phase 2 Committee the goal of which was to ensure that the society was established during its tenure. In this regard, I would like to thank my colleagues of the committee for their time and effort in getting us to where we are today. Much "overtime" was spent during the past year and seeing people's commitment to wetlands in South Africa by going above and beyond is indeed an encouraging sign for the society going forward.

So thank you to: Siya Buthelezi, Craig Cowden, Gavin Cowden, Jenny Day, Bonani Dikizela, John Dini, Paul Fairall, Piet-Louis Grundling, Xolani Hadebe, Michelle Hiestermann, Nancy Job, Judith Taylor, Doug Macfarlane, Heather Malan, Gary Marneweck and Vanessa Vermaak.

The society was officially established on Friday the 25th of May this year at the WRC in Pretoria. We have since developed an identity through a logo and a home through a website. Please remember to visit us online, find us on Facebook or follow us on Twitter, the details of which you can find on the flyer in your registration packs.

Membership of the society currently stands at 67 Ordinary, 1 Student and 6 Organisation members. I would like to thank those of you who have supported the society through your membership as it will only be through your active involvement that the society will address important wetland issues that our country faces. Please remember that anyone who signs up within the next three months will be granted Founding Member status, something that will live on in the history of the society for years to come. As of today, society membership across all nine provincial forums is as follows:

Eastern Cape – 3%
Free State & Northern Cape – 1%
Gauteng – 51%
KwaZulu-Natal – 28%
Limpopo – 0%
Mpumalanga – 6%
North-West – 0%
Southern Cape – 0%
Western Cape – 10%

Today as the members of the society you have two important tasks to fulfill. The first task is voting for acceptance of the Constitution. The Constitution of the society has taken a couple of years to develop but we believe that what has been produced is a robust and well-constructed document that will guide the society in the years to come. Thank you to all who have contributed to this process. The second task is voting for the first Board of Trustees of the society. I would like to thank those society members who have graciously accepted nomination to stand for election as a Trustee. To those seven Trustees who do get elected we as the members of the society thank you for taking on this responsibility.

The society has a vision to build and promote excellence, professionalism and ethics in the Wetland Community of Practice of South Africa. Its mission is to develop and maintain professional standards and

best management practices of subscribed wetland practitioners in order to promote wetland science, conservation and management through accreditation, collaboration and self-regulation of all its members.

Going forward, I believe that the society will provide the perfect environment in which the issue of accreditation will be discussed, developed and rolled out. Accreditation is something that the wetland community needs and is crucial to the continued protection, management and wise use of our wetland resources. Hopefully issues like the Pan African Parliament experience will become a thing of the past. Therefore one of the first tasks of the new Board of Trustees will be the establishment of the Accreditation Working Group and that within a year to be issuing wetland practitioners with accreditation.

Other areas that will need to be addressed by the new Board of Trustees include: membership, education and training and fund raising, and I am today asking for people from our society membership to offer their assistance with the running of Working Groups for each of these areas.

Please do note that offering your services to the society will not entail endless meetings and extra time. The current committee has been incredibly successful in using email, telephone calls and the odd meeting to get the society to where it is today. So if the Working Groups follow the same model we will certainly be able to achieve a great deal with minimum effort.

Turning now to Indaba 2012, it is the aim of this annual event for those that attend to share information and experiences, to grow the wetland community and to continue to raise the profile of wetlands in our country. It is my belief that the society should play a more supportive role to the nine provincial wetland forums and assist where it can to achieve greater forum functionality. One tool that can assist with this is the Wetland Portal which was created in 2010. The portal aims to promote the provincial wetland forums through a coordinated platform where all relevant information can be shared. Many wetlanders have signed up to the Discussion Forum component of the portal but overall the uptake of the portal by the South African wetland community has been rather slow to date. I would hope that the society can play an active role in getting the provincial forums to use the portal more regularly.

I have a suggestion that future Indabas be housed under the umbrella of the society. The thinking behind this is that whilst each provincial forum will continue to organize and run an Indaba, assistance can be sought from the society. Instead of deciding on next year's host in the last few minutes of an Indaba, I propose that the society should develop a long term schedule for the Indaba with events being allocated to provinces for the next three to five years at least. Other options for discussion around this could be holding Indabas every two years over a full 5 day period. Much food for thought here but the society can play a role in getting these discussions and deliberations going.

As a community of scientists, I urge you to explore new networking technologies such as the Wetland Portal, Discussion Forum, Facebook, Twitter and Live Updates. I myself was against social networking sites but over the past few months I have seen the immense benefits they can bring to a society such as ours.

As I come to the end of my report I would like to reflect on the exciting times that lie ahead for the society. There will be many challenges but these will be overcome and a truly wonderful society will be built through your efforts. But we must also take a moment to recognize wetland colleagues and mentors who have played important roles in our South African wetland history. One such colleague and mentor was Allan Batchelor whose passing recently has left a void in the wetland community. I am pleased to inform you today that the Interim Board has approved Allan as the society's first Honorary Member awarded posthumously. Let us remember that we are here today because of people like Allan.

In closing, I would like to wish the new Board of Trustees all the very best as they start their tenure as the official first Board of the society for a period of two years. We look forward to where you will be taking the society in the next couple of years and as all wetlanders we offer our support as we build the society from its infancy.

I thank you for your time.

Marc de Fontaine
Interim Board Chairperson
Rand Water