



Wes-Kaapse Provinsiale Parlement Western Cape Provincial Parliament IPalamente yePhondo leNtshona Koloni

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The Standing Committee on Environmental Affairs and Development Planning, having undertaken an oversight visit to the Rocherpan, Cederberg and Lamberts Bay Bird Island Nature Reserves, on 9 and 10 February 2015, reports as follows:

Delegation

The delegation consisted of the following members:

Mr RB Lentit (Chairperson)
Adv LH Max
Mr M Mnqasela
Ms CF Beerwinkel
Ms T Dijana

1. Introduction

CapeNature's tourism vision is to establish a differentiated and leading brand of products in outdoor nature-based tourism across the Western Cape for all to enjoy.

This vision will be pursued by CapeNature to provide opportunities to the public to interact in the Cape Floristic Kingdom in an environmentally responsible and sustainable manner.

The purpose of the visit was therefore to gain an understanding of the biodiversity and conservation issues linked to the Rocherpan, Cederberg and Lamberts Bay Bird Island Nature Reserves as well as its impact on economic growth and tourism in the West Coast area.

2. Overview of the visit

The Committee conducted an oversight visit to the Rocherpan, Cederberg and Lamberts Bay Nature Reserves. The visit commenced at the Rocherpan Nature Reserve where Members were accompanied by officials on a tour of the reserve. Similar tours were undertaken at the Cederberg and Lamberts Bay Nature Reserves that culminated in a meeting at Lamberts Bay Bird Island Auditorium, where CapeNature briefed the Committee on their performance per Programme during the first two Quarters of the 2014/2015 financial year, outlining budget vs actual expenditure. Further briefings included a presentation on conserving the water factories of the Western Cape with specific reference to invasive alien plants. Socio economic development interventions such as job opportunities, environmental education and youth development were highlighted as well as the economic impact of tourism on the West Coast region.

3. Findings

3.1 Rocherpan Nature Reserve

- 3.1.1 Rocherpan is a coastal nature reserve that lies 25km north of Velddrift on the Cape West Coast, and consists largely of a seasonal vlei.
- 3.1.2 Rocherpan was established as a nature reserve (930 hectares in size) in 1966, and the adjacent section of the Atlantic Ocean was declared a marine reserve in 1988 (150 hectares in size).
- 3.1.3 The development of Phase Two of the Rocherpan Nature Reserve is currently in progress where several self-catering units are in the process of being constructed.
- 3.1.4 The construction contract has been awarded to Bambana Management Services and the contract value equates to R9 426 251.64. This project has created employment opportunities for 16 people from the local area.
- 3.1.5 The total tourism income for the Nature Reserve for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 December 2014 amounted to R305 872.

3.2 Cederberg Nature Reserve

- 3.2.1 The Cederberg was proclaimed a wilderness area in 1973. A reserve of about 5 250 hectares was established in 1987 to prevent the extinction of the area's namesake: the Clanwilliam Cedar Tree. Over several centuries, these trees were felled for construction activities and telephone poles. Frequent fires also ravaged the species to the point of near extinction. CapeNature works with partners and volunteers to plant cedar seedlings in the mountains to ensure the conservation of this species.
- 3.2.2 CapeNature is currently in the process of constructing six self-catering chalets, a new ablution facility, new stores and a new office. This construction will be completed by the end of March 2015.
- 3.2.3 The construction contract has been awarded to Build A Way Contractors and the contract value equates to R7 602 712.92.
- 3.2.4 The total tourism income for the Cederberg Nature Reserve from 1 April 2014 – 31 December 2014 amounted to R1 692 038.00.

3.3 Lamberts Bay Bird Island

- 3.3.1 Bird Island lies approximately 100m off the shore of Lambert's Bay on the Cape West Coast. It offers visitors a rare opportunity to see the blue-eyed Cape Gannet up close. Bird Island is one of only six sites world-wide where Cape Gannets breed, and it is the only breeding site easily accessible to the public.
- 3.3.2 The island is connected to the mainland via a breakwater. It is an important breeding and roosting site for seabirds. The island also boasts a well-situated gannet lookout where visitors can get close to the birds to observe them.

4. Recommendations

The Committee RECOMMENDED that CapeNature:

- 4.1 Embarks on a rigorous marketing campaign, showcasing their facilities, while promoting and focusing on healthy living and family life.
- 4.2 Ensures that all people of the Western Cape are encouraged to make use of their Reserves and facilities.

RB LENTIT, MPP

**CHAIRPERSON: STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND DEVELOPMENT
PLANNING**

DATE: _____

