



Greetings and Welcome

It's hard to believe that we have come to the end of another busy year. 2009 has been an exciting twelve months for the African Safari Lodge Foundation (ASLF) – we believe we have made excellent progress in many arenas and look forward to the challenges and opportunities that 2010 will bring.

With the 2010 FIFA World Cup™ on our doorstep, the opportunities for marketing our region to the rest of the world have never been better – and we look forward to welcoming the thousands of football fans to Southern Africa, as well as the long-term benefits that 2010 promises to deliver. In this newsletter we focus on the work done by the ASLF in Namibia, and as per usual any comments or feedback you'd like to give us would be most welcome. Email: sandra@asl-foundation.org



*Etendeka
Landscape*

The ASLF in Namibia

The ASLF has been involved in Namibia since 2006, when it was requested by stakeholders in the Kunene region to advise on the restructuring of a successful lodge operation in the Etendeka area.

The involvement has since

expanded to provide tourism concession support to a total of five key projects as well as a range of other initiatives.

Ed Humphrey, the ASLF's Executive Director in Namibia says, 'Our major focus has been supporting rural

Inside this Edition:

The ASLF in Namibia	1 – 4	The Etendeka Concession	7 - 10
The Hobatere Roadside Concession	5 - 7	Historic Signing Ceremony in Massingir	11

Continued ...



View of Popa Falls from the new community concession in Bwabwata National Park

communities with acquiring high value tourism rights inside of protected areas under the Namibian government's new and innovative National Policy on Tourism & Wildlife Concessions on State Land (2007). Thereafter, the ASLF is assisting communities with procuring private sector development and operating partners to operationalise these concession rights'.

He says that concession support initially started in one just one area – Etendeka, but has now expanded to four other areas – Hobatere (two concessions), Khaudum National Park (one concession), Bwabwata National Park (one concession).

He continues, 'The ASLF has also undertaken strategic studies such as a tourism development plan for the Kunene concession areas, which include Palmwag, Etendeka and Hobatere. We have also assisted Namibians involved in supporting pro-poor tourism to attend regional and international conferences and knowledge exchange programmes'.

He says that major challenges in the beginning were initially influenced by the lack of policy, but this was approved a year after the ASLF became involved. 'Since 2007 the major challenge has been building policy implementation capacity within the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET) and awareness of the policy among communities, tourism private sector and other partners'.

In terms of running operations,

the day-to-day work of the ASLF includes a number of activities such as planning and process management together with the MET concession unit, communities and private sector. It also involves detailed site level tourism planning for individual concessions. Contract negotiation and drafting is also important, as is the facilitation of agreements between private sector and communities. The ASLF is also involved in providing transaction advice to MET, private sector and communities.

Humphrey states that the Namibian government has shown a great sense of commitment to the work being done in this part of the world. 'Government is clearly committed to empowering rural communities through awarding them tourism concessions in protected areas – this principle is enshrined in the concession policy and underpins all the ASLF's interventions. The implementing unit within MET has embraced this element of the concession policy, and have welcomed the assistance provided by ASLF'.

He points out that the only major pitfall has been reconciling the urgent needs of rural communities and field staff of MET, with the realities of a bureaucratic structure. Humphrey says, 'procedures are essential but sometimes result in delays in approvals, the award of concessions, and the associated contracts, and can be quite frustrating for all concerned'.

We are on the Web!

Visit us at:

www.asl-foundation.org

Continued ...

There have been a number of major successes in Namibia over the past few years. Humphrey says, 'We are certainly pleased with the progress made and our main successes include the completion and implementation of the Kunene concession area tourism development plan; the fact that we have supported 3 lodge concession applications for communities, which were thereafter approved by the Minister. We have also played a role in supporting the conclusion of a groundbreaking deal between three communities bordering Khaudum National Park and Namibia Country Lodges, for the development and operation of two new camps in the park. This has been a major victory.

Although Humphrey says that there has been notable success, the impact will only be felt by communities in years to come. 'The ASLF's work to date has focused on supporting communities to acquire long-term high value tourism rights. In most cases direct community benefits will only be felt in the next 24 months, but they are expected to be substantial, including the creation of around 200 new rural jobs, and generation of more than N\$2m annually in concession revenue for communities and the state.'



*Waterhole in Hobatere
(Andy Thompson)*

He also says that that dealing with the lack of tourism experience across the various projects in Namibia is a challenge. 'The ASLF incorporates capacity building and mentorship in all of its activities – training is provided on the job while working through real practical situations such as during tourism planning, reviewing private sector proposals, deal negotiations and contract drafting. ASLF has provided training and supported knowledge exchange programmes for the MET concession unit staff, private sector representatives, NGO staff and representatives of communities receiving concessions', says Humphrey.

The private sector is also showing keen interest in the various projects, something which is of great interest to the ASLF. He says, 'The concessions that the ASLF are currently supporting are in areas with high tourism

Continued ...

potential, and proven private sector demand. Numerous companies have expressed an interest to develop and operate lodges in these areas. It is expected that private sector will develop and operate the new tourism products on a build, operate, transfer basis over an agreed concession period.'

He says the tourism potential of the various concessions is unparalleled and reckons that the unique landscapes of Namibia will be a major draw card for tourists to the area. However, he says because of the lack of infrastructure, capital, and expertise, more private sector partners are needed to help develop and operate tourism lodges and activities in national parks or on

other state land that has high tourism potential.

In terms of the future, the ASLF is excited about the prospects. Humphrey says, 'We look forward to the provision of on-going support to the MET concession unit in awarding tourism concessions inside protected areas to rural communities; we also aim to undertake strategic studies and interventions in support of the above activity (such as tourism plans, review of policy in practice etc.). One of our main aims is strengthening of capacity in the MET concession unit, rural communities and private sector through mentorship, on-going support, knowledge exchange programmes and training.'



*Chief Haraseb & Chief Muzuma
reaching agreement at Hobatere
(Andy Thompson)*

Tourism Focus

With an extensive background in both tourism and working with communities, Maxi Louis is very involved in a number of ASLF projects in Namibia. She says that although things have taken some time to get off the ground in terms of the various projects, she is encouraged by the progress that has been made and is also greatly encouraged by the community response to the work being done. She says, 'Dealing with the communities is a great pleasure when looking at the overall process. Although some of the aspects are daunting for them, particularly when it comes to the various bureaucratic steps involved. The communities are extremely positive and are excited about the possibilities in terms of development. What's also important to note is that the traditional authorities are generally conservation-minded and very supportive'

In terms of tourism target markets, the main market used to be predominantly German, but there is also now a focus on British, North Americans, Italians and French, and of course the local South African traveller, with a penchant for adventure, is still a big supporter of Namibia as a tourism destination. 'We are focusing on promoting the landscapes and experiential travel, aimed at the second-time visitor' says Louis.

Continued ...

The Hobatere Roadside Concession

The Ehi-rovipuka conservancy is a large community conservancy (197,655ha) situated to the west of Etosha National Park. On the 16th October 2008 Ehi-rovipuka conservancy formally applied for a tourism concession inside the Hobatere area for the purpose of developing and operating tourism accommodation facilities. The specific area applied for was the Hobatere Roadside Concession (4,974ha). The application also requested the granting of traversing rights inside Etosha National Park for the purpose of conducting guided activities from the accommodation facilities.

On 8th the Minister of Environment and Tourism approved the award of Hobatere Roadside Concession to Ehi-rovipuka conservancy. Subsequently a draft head concession contract was prepared and presented to the conservancy, regional MET personnel and other stakeholders for comment.

It is the intention of Ehi-rovipuka conservancy to identify a development and operating partner to help them operationalise the concession rights. This will be done through an open, competitive tender process that will be held once the head concession contract with MET is signed.



View over Hobatere Roadside area

(Andy Thompson)

A Brief History

The Hobatere area was for many years set aside as a cattle-free area by the then Damara Representative Authority. In 1987, this Authority leased it out for trophy hunting. After independence, the area became a photographic tourism concession managed by MET.

Both the ≠Khoadi //Hôas and Ehirovipuka conservancies have made claims to benefits from the Hobatere area. ≠Khoadi //Hôas conservancy

is felt to have legitimate claims because of Hobatere's location south of the veterinary cordon, but also due to historical use of the area by the predominantly Damara community currently resident in the conservancy.

However, given the movement of wildlife (including predators) from Etosha National Park, through Hobatere and into Ehirovipuka conservancy, it is equally important for the residents of this conservancy to benefit from the area.

After expiry of the current concession rights in 2007, MET transferred tourism rights over the current lodge operation to the ≠Khoadi //Hôas conservancy, which in turn agreed to retain the incumbent operator on an operating contract. Contracts for these arrangements have been prepared with help from the ASLF, and are awaiting

Continued ...

approval by MET before they can be signed.

In 2009 MET also agreed to grant concession rights to Ehi-rovipuka conservancy. On 16th October 2008 Ehi-rovipuka presented its concession application to the MET concession committee and on 8th September 2009 this application received approval by the Honorable Minister. A draft head concession contract was thereafter prepared with help from ASLF, however further planning is required to confirm the traversing arrangements inside Etosha National Park before it can be signed.

It is expected that Ehi-rovipuka conservancy's head concession contract will be concluded and signed before the end of 2009, following which tender procedures and documentation will be prepared and implemented, also with help from ASLF.

Conservancy and Activity Rights

Under the draft head concession contract between MET and the conservancy, a number of rights are being granted to the conservancy, including the right to develop and operate a lodge of 30 rooms; the right to develop all support infrastructure and the right of access to the existing Hobatare airstrip.

In terms of activities, the ASLF is looking at the right to conduct guided site-seeing and game-viewing drives, guided walks, overnight hikes and bush camping at temporary fly-camps in the concession area as well as conducting guided activities inside of Etosha National Park.

ASLF Involvement

'This concession is the first time that tourism rights are being granted to a non-State entity inside of Etosha National Park. The fact that they are being granted to a neighbouring conservancy is testimony to the government's commitment to re-dress past injustices, current challenges (i.e. in terms of problem animal management), and support conservation beyond the park boundary' says Humphrey.

ASLF has been involved with the tourism planning of this area and the accompanying traversing area in Etosha National Park, supporting the community to apply for the concession rights, assisting with contract preparation, and grant raising for borehole development in the concession area. In the months to come, ASLF will help the community to place the concession on tender and to negotiate a fair deal with the private sector to develop and operate a lodge in the concession area.

Humphrey says, 'It is exciting and very rewarding for ASLF to be involved with supporting this process, which we strongly feel will deliver significant benefits to the State, Ehi-rovipuka conservancy and the private sector.'

Continued ...

The Water Question

The Hobatere Roadside Concession area is known to have very little ground water. Thus before agreeing to award the concession MET commissioned a hydro-geological assessment, which was funded by the ICEMA project. This study revealed that there is a high likelihood of finding sufficient water of appropriate quality to enable the project to proceed. However the assessment recommended that further assessments and drilling is required to confirm this.

To completely remove the abovementioned uncertainty the Ehirovipuka conservancy intends drilling at least one borehole in the concession area for future use by their development and operating partner. It is expected that removal of this uncertainty will result in greater private sector interest in the up-coming tender procedure as well as better quality financial and technical offers and will improve the presence of game in the area and thus improve on tourism.

Community Benefits – Making A Real Difference

If 60 beds and 10 campsites are developed, the concession will require an initial investment of approximately N\$28 million. Annual turnover of some N\$12.4 million at maturity could result in net cash flow of N\$620,000. Some N\$740,000 annually could be generated in concession fees and the operation is expected to sustain around 60 permanent on-site jobs with an annual payroll at maturity of approximately N\$2.47 million (a large part of which would be captured by community members).

This intervention is being supported by MET, the World Bank via the ICEMA project, the Ford Foundation through the ASLF, and IRDNC/ Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation.

Given, the known water shortage in the area, The ASLF has helped the community write up a grant application to ICEMA, requesting for a grant of about N\$650,000 to facilitate the drilling of water in the area.

The Etendeka Concession

The Etendeka area (50,807 hectares) is located on the north western escarpment in Namibia, in a mountainous area called the Grootberg. It is bordered by Palmwag to the west, Omatendeka conservancy to the east, Anabeb conservancy to the north, and Torra and ≠Khoadi //Hôas Conservancies to the south.



*Tourism Planning Team
on the Etendeka
Escarpment
(Andy Thompson)*

Continued ...

ASLF Involvement

The ASLF Team are excited about the possibilities for the Etendeka concession. 'The existing Etendeka Mountain Camp is one of the finest examples of eco-tourism in Africa, and has received a "five desert flower" rating from the [Eco Awards Namibia programme](#) – one of only two ever awarded. As with the HRS area, ASLF's involvement has included the tourism planning of this area, supporting the community to apply for concession rights, and assisting with contract preparation' says Humphrey.

The Etendeka project is trialing a new lodge development model for Namibia that will entail helping the community to finance all the fixed improvements at the existing camp and the new lodge, while the operator finances the moveables and is responsible for covering operational costs at their own risk. ASLF is helping to facilitate the negotiations between the community and the operator, as well as the financing arrangements.

Humphrey says, 'This new approach shall effectively double the community's income from the concession, which is important because this has to be shared between two neighbouring conservancies'.

A Brief History

In 1990, when this concession was initially awarded directly to a private company - the area covered nearly 300 000ha - bordered in the south and east by the veterinary cordon fence, in the north by the Ombonde River, and in the west by C43 road between Palmwag and Sesfontein.

In 1995, the concessionaire voluntarily reduced its size to around 50,000 hectares, by excluding the area between the Ombonde River and the northern foothills of the Grootberg Range (Owen-Smith, 2002). During recent negotiations regarding the establishment of a new protected area in the Kunene region, agreement was reached between the various stakeholders to further reduce the concession area by around 22%. This was done so that neighbouring communities could secure important grazing and settlement areas.

According to Owen-Smith (2002), the concessionaire has been a strong supporter of community-based natural resource management (including paying out a small bed-night levy to his nearby communities) and has maintained good relations with the Herero stock-herders to the north and east.

Despite there being four conservancies bordering the Etendeka area, it has been agreed that only two receive direct benefits from concessions issued in this area. This agreement was made by all four neighbouring conservancies during negotiations regarding the establishment of the aforementioned protected area. The recommendation was largely due to the area's location north of the veterinary cordon fence, but also due to historical use of the area and the relationship built between the concessionaire and northern community neighbours.

After expiry of the concession rights in 2007, MET transferred head concession rights jointly to the Omatendeka and Anabeb conservancies on an interim basis while the concessions policy was being finalised and further planning being carried out. The communities in turn have agreed to retain the incumbent operator on an operating contract.

Continued ...

On 16th October 2008 Anabeb and Omatendeka conservancies also presented their concession application to the MET concession committee and on 29th June 2009 this application received approval by the Honorable Minister. A draft head concession contract was thereafter prepared with help from ASLF and is awaiting signature by the Honorable Minister. Once this is done, the ASLF shall support the finalisation of an operating contract between the incumbent lodge operator and the two neighbouring communities.



*Etendeka Mountain
Camp
(Dennis Liebenberg)*

The New/Proposed Etendeka Concession

During the tourism planning of this area, which was carried out by the ASLF, the research team initially investigated the Etendeka area with a view to recommending the establishment of several separate opportunities. However due to: a) the area's size; b) access difficulties; c) high visibility of facilities in the vast desert landscape; and d) the existing product being offered; this area could not be further divided. This led to the conclusion that a significant expansion of the existing operation was the only viable option without degrading the area or visitor experience.

Proposed Development

As part of the community's concession application to MET, it was proposed that:

- The current tented camp (8 tents) be upgraded and expanded to 10 tents;
- A new lodge of around 15 rooms be developed;
- That the existing operator be retained to operate the new lodge and upgraded tented camp; and
- That the community will co-finance the lodge development with a view to increase their returns from the concession area

Continued ...

The community has firm commitments from the ICEMA project in MET, as well as from the ASLF for a total of approximately N\$7m in grant funding for these developments.



Typical Landscape - Etendeka
(Ed Humphrey)



Tourism Planning Team at Etendeka
(Bonnie Awarab)



Solar at Etendeka Mountain Camp
(Dennis Liebenberg)



Giraffe at Etendeka
(Andy Thompson)

The New Concessions Policy approved by the Namibian Cabinet in 2007 - What Makes it Unique

Objectives:

- *Enhance and promote conservation*
- *Control and monitoring of commercial activities*
- *To Increase the Economic Value of the Parks*
- *To Promote Economic Empowerment of formerly disadvantaged Namibians*
- *Use concessions to promote sustainable development, poverty alleviation and employment creations*
- *To support the development of capacity, skills and access to capital for Namibians.*

Implementation Progress:

- *Previously little concessions capability*
- *New policy approved*

- *Concessions Unit established*
- *22 concessions*
- *Generates N\$3m per annum*
- *In recent months increased by N\$600,000*
- *Demand for new Opportunities – High*
- *Potential Revenue very high with hunting and tourism concessions – perhaps N\$20m per annum in five years.*

Award Process

- *Tender process*
- *Unsolicited applications*
- *Direct award process.*

Historic Signing Ceremony in Massingir

An historic signing ceremony will be taking place in Massingir, in Mozambique on the 16th of December. The signing ceremony will cement a grant from the World Bank to upgrade the Covane Community Lodge on the Massingir Dam to the value of US\$ 500 000. The ASLF managed to secure an additional US\$250 000 for the project from the Ford Foundation and will be running a training programme focusing on tourism and hospitality in the New Year. The Ministry of Tourism and the Governor of Gaza province have been invited to attend the ceremony. The ASLF will be represented by Steve Collins. The ceremony is a wonderful way to celebrate the successes of the ASLF across 2009.

Background to Covane Community Lodge

The Covane Community Lodge is situated south of the Limpopo National Park, on the Massingir Dam – a 4-5 hour drive from Maputo. The lodge is at the centre of an important tourism route linking the Greater Limpopo Transfontier Park to the lodges of Xai Xai, Inhambane and Vilanculous. The community has full rights to the lodge which is situated with an excellent view of the Massingir Dam and is surrounded by a scenic area rich in bird and plant life. The Covane Community Lodge is in dire need of a reconstruction/refurbishment to bring it up to quality standards and capacity building needs to be improved. The granting of the grant from The World Bank will go a long way to make this lodge a viable tourist destination.

Quote of the Month:

*'One who never travels thinks it is only his mother who is a good cook'
- Kikuyu proverb*

Forthcoming Attractions...

In our next newsletter look out for:

- The ASLF's planned activities for 2010

In Conclusion, we'd like to wish all of you a wonderful festive season and we look forward to working together with you in 2010.

Best Regards

The African Safari Lodge Foundation