

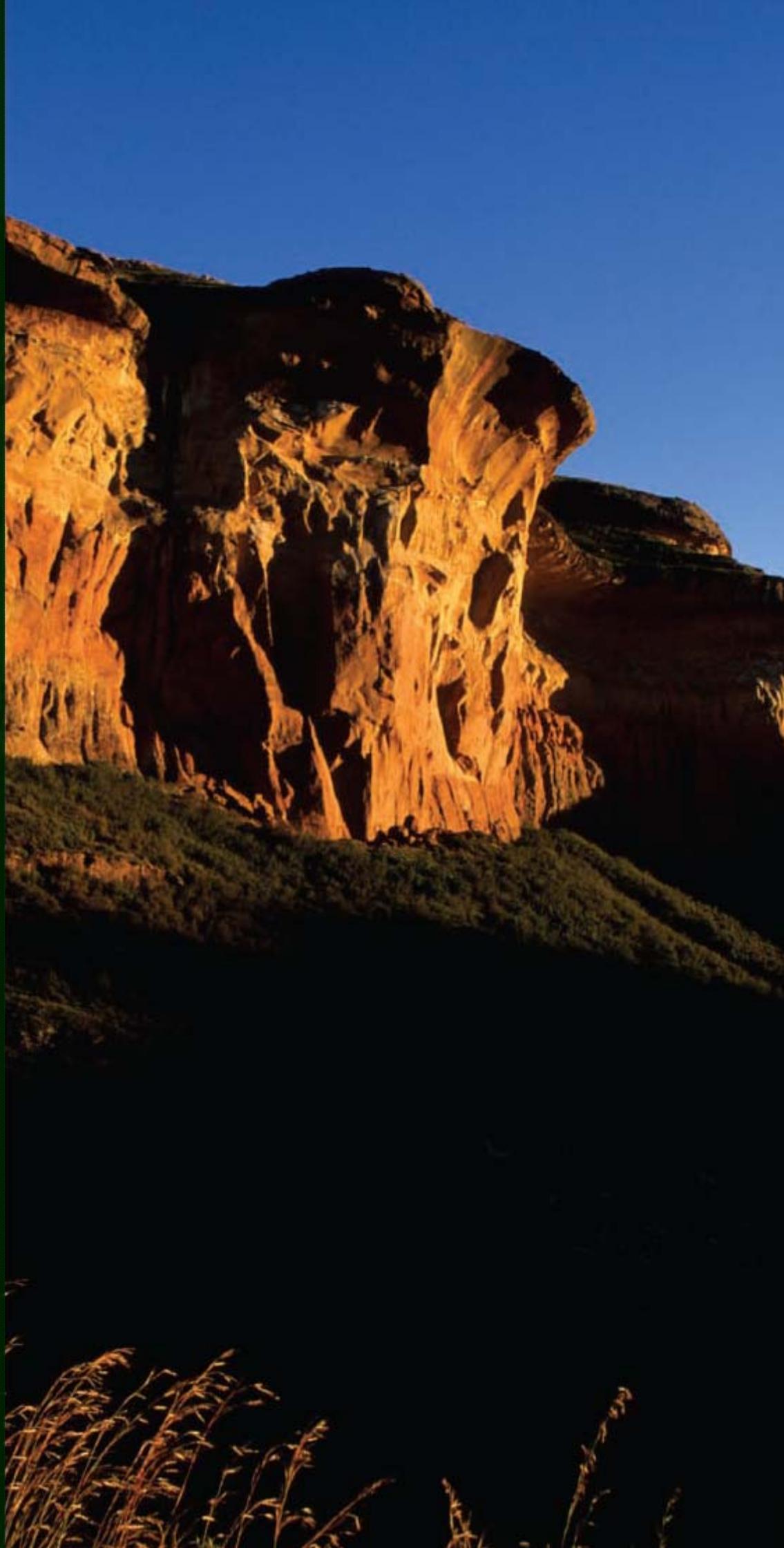


South African
NATIONAL PARKS

Golden Gate Highlands National Park

Park Management Plan

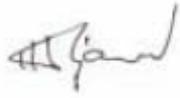
For the period
2013 - 2023





Section 1: Authorisation

This management plan is hereby internally accepted and authorised as required for managing the Golden Gate Highlands National Park in terms of Sections 39 and 41 of the National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act (Act 57 of 2003).



Mr Johan Taljaard
Park Manager: Golden Gate Highlands National Park

Date: 01 November 2012



Dr Nomvusulelwa Songelwa
Senior General Manager: Operations

Date: 01 November 2012



Mr Paul Daphne
Managing Executive: Parks

Date: 01 November 2012



Dr David Mabunda
Chief Executive: SANParks

Date: 05 June 2013



Mr K.D. Dlamini
Chair: SANParks Board

Date: 10 June 2013

Approved by the Minister of Water and Environment Affairs



Mrs B.E. E. Molewa, MP
Minister of Water and Environment Affairs

Date: 05 September 2013



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Glossary

Balanced scorecard	The performance management tool used by SANParks to ensure feedback and effective implementation of various management objectives
Bioregion	A region defined through physical and environmental features, including watershed boundaries and soil and terrain characteristics. Bioregionalism stresses that the determination of a bioregion is also a cultural phenomenon, and emphasises local populations, knowledge, and solutions
Cultural heritage	The physical objects and intangible attributes of a group or society that are inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations. Cultural heritage includes tangible culture (such as buildings, monuments, landscapes, artefacts, rock art, stone tools, residential areas and stone walls), intangible culture (such as folklore, traditions, language, music, sacred sites, and knowledge), and natural heritage (including culturally-significant landscapes, paleontological sites and biodiversity).
Desired state	The overall conditions of the park (across the full V-STEEP range) that stakeholders desire
Endemism	Unique or confined to a specific place or area
Geology	The scientific study of the origin of the Earth along with its rocks, minerals, land forms, and life forms, and of the processes that have affected them over the course of the Earth's history.
Mission	An articulation of the Vision that describes why the park exists and its overall philosophy on how to achieve its desired state
Objectives hierarchy	The objectives for a park, with the most important, high level objectives at the top, cascading down to objectives at finer levels of detail, and eventually to operational actions at the lowest level
Palaeontology	The study of the forms of life existing in prehistoric or geologic times, as represented by the fossils of plants, animals, and other organisms.
Vision	A word "picture" of the future, or what the stakeholders see as the future for the park
Stakeholder	A person, an organ of state or a community contemplated in section 82(1)(a); or an indigenous community contemplated in section 82(1)(b) of NEM:BA
Vital attributes	Unique or special characteristics of the park, the determinants of which management should strive to protect, and the threats towards which management should strive to minimise
V-STEEP	The values (social, technological, economic, ecological and political), used to understand, with stakeholders, the social, economic and ecological context of the system to be managed, and the principles / values that guide management. These are used to develop a broadly acceptable vision of the future
the Act	National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act (Act 57 of 2003)
the Guidelines	DEAs Guidelines for the development of a management plan for a protected area in terms of NEM:PAA (Cowan & Mpongoma 2010)

Acronyms and abbreviations

1	BSC	Balanced scorecard
2	CARA	Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act (Act 43 of 1983)
3	CDF	Conservation development framework
4	CSD	Conservation services division
5	DEA	Department of environment affairs
6	EE	Environmental education
7	EIA	Environmental impact assessment
8	EMP	Environmental management plan
9	EPWP	Expanded public works programme
10	GGHNP	Golden Gate Highlands National Park
11	HIA	Heritage impact assessment
12	HR	Human resources
13	ISCU	Invasive species control unit
14	IDP	Integrated development plan
15	MDTFCA	Maloti Drakensberg Transfrontier conservation area
16	NEM	National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998)
17	NEM:BA	National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (Act 10 of 2004)
18	NEM:PAA	National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act (Act 57 of 2003)
19	PM	Park manager
20	REVPAR	Revenue per available room
21	SANBI	South African National Biodiversity Institute
22	SANF	South African Nature Foundation
23	SANParks	South African National Parks
24	SDF	Spatial development framework
25	SSC	Species of special concern
26	SSR	Senior section ranger
27	TFCA	Transfrontier conservation area
28	TMDM	Thaba Mofutsanyana district municipality
29	TPC	Threshold of potential concern
30	WfW	Working for water



Lists of figures, tables and appendices

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Figure 1: Park organogram

Figure 2: High level objectives

Tables

Table 1a: Estimated annual operational costs for year 1.

Table 1b: Estimated annual tourism costs for year 1.

Table 1c: Estimated annual total costs for year 1.

Table 2: Estimated replacement value of the existing infrastructure and any new infrastructure required with the estimated annual maintenance budget for the existing and new infrastructure.

Table 3: Provision for replacement of various categories of minor assets, based on the original purchase price

Table 4: Summary of once off establishment costs

Table 5: Summary of the annual and once off operational costs (based on actual expenditure) required to fully implement the activities in the management plan over the next five years.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Declarations

Appendix 2: Alien species:

Appendix 3: Stakeholder consultation report

Appendix 4: Zoning

Appendix 5: Maps

Executive summary

The first management plan for the Golden Gate Highlands National Park (GGHNP) required in terms of Sections 39 and 41 of the National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act (Act 57 of 2003 as amended) (NEM:PAA) was submitted to, and approved in part, by the Department of Environment Affairs (DEA) in 2008 (SANParks 2008).

This first review of the management plan builds on the foundation of the first plan and addresses its inadequacies. The layout of the plan follows the format provided in the guidelines drawn up by the DEA (Cowan & Mpongoma 2010) (the guidelines) while also incorporating the adaptive planning process adopted by South African National Parks (SANParks). Local municipalities, the district municipality and other organs of state as well as other stakeholders were consulted as required (Appendix 3). Relevant aspects of local authority plans were considered in the compilation of the plan.

The plan serves as a reference to the management and development of the park in its current and envisaged future form with information on the background, biophysical context, desired state, management and programmes at strategic and operational levels.

This management plan will come into effect following the approval by the Minister in terms of section 39 of NEM:PAA on a date specified by the Minister and is intended for a timeframe of 10 years after commencement unless it is replaced earlier by a newly approved plan. SANParks will review this plan no later than six years after the commencement date.

The plan follows the DEA guidelines and contains the following sections for this plan:

- **Section 1** provides for the required authorisation
- **Section 2** provides a record of the legal status of the park, descriptions of its context as well as relevant local, regional, national and international agreements
- **Section 3** sets out the framework of legislation, national policies, SANParks structures, policies, guidelines, practices regarding management
- **Section 4** describes the consultation process followed in the preparation of this plan
- **Section 5** presents the vision, purpose, values, principles and attributes considered in developing a desired state for the park and provides the high level objectives as basis for the management programmes contained in the rest of the plan
- **Section 6** outlines the zoning plan
- **Section 7** describes access to and facilities
- **Section 8** summarises the expansion and consolidation strategy
- **Section 9** sets out the concept development plan
- **Section 10** provides a strategic plan with objectives, programmes and activities with cost estimates. Monitoring and evaluation are integrated into the actions
- **Section 11** contains detailed costing of the programmes

Appendices to this plan contain further details such as proclamations, co-management areas, legislation and policies.



Section 2: Legal status

2.1 Name of the area

The Golden Gate Highlands National Park was proclaimed in Government Notice 599 of 13 September 1963. A full list of declarations is included as Appendix 1.

2.2 Location and Extent

Golden Gate Highlands National Park (GGHNP) is situated in the north-eastern Free State between 28°27' S - 28°37' S and 28°33' E - 28°42' E between the towns of Clarens and Phuthaditjhaba. (Appendix 5: Map 1). It lies in the foothills of the Maloti Mountains in the Rooiberg range. The current extent of the park is 32,758.35 ha, including the old QwaQwa National Park in the north and east. The park extends between the towns of Clarens (20 km) and Phuthaditjhaba (40 km) on the R712 provincial road that meanders through the middle of the park. Other nearby towns are Bethlehem (60 km), Fouriesburg (50 km), Kestell (60 km) and Harrismith (75 km). To the south the park borders on Lesotho (Appendix 5 Map 1).

2.3 History of establishment

The park represents a rich cultural history and diversity spanning the early Stone Age people, San, Basotho and early European settlers. It is also an important Anglo-Boer war and rock art painting site. In 1962, the then Provincial administration of the Orange Free State purchased land around the popular picnic site at Golden Gate to support the creation of the first national park in the Free State. With the transfer of this land to the control of the then National Parks Board, an initial core area of 1,792 ha, which included the farms Glen Reenen, Wodehouse and Melsetter, was proclaimed as the Golden Gate Highlands National Park on 13 September 1963.

During that same year the Glen Reenen rest camp was developed by utilising old farm buildings as tourist accommodation. Thirteen rondavels and a camping area were soon added. During 2003 and 2004 the Glen Reenen rest camp was expanded and upgraded to its present status of 31 economy and semi-luxury tourist accommodation units. During the late sixties construction on the Brandwag rest camp, known as the Brandwag Hotel began. The Brandwag chalets, with 35 semi-luxury tourist accommodation units, were completed in 1968 and the Brandwag main complex, with 35 luxury hotel rooms, was completed in 1972. The Brandwag main complex was upgraded and opened in 2010 as the new Golden Gate Hotel under SANParks administration which offers various facilities from hotel (55 luxury rooms) and chalet accommodation, a restaurant, snack lounge, sport bar, conference and banqueting venues.

In 1981 the park was enlarged to 6,241 ha when the farm Noord Brabant was proclaimed and added to park. In 1982 the old Gladstone administration building and information centre was completed, but unfortunately the complex burned down as a result of lightning and in the process the entire park's archives were destroyed. The new Gladstone administration building was completed in 1988. The Wilgenhof environmental education centre was opened in the early eighties and new dormitories were added in the late eighties. During 1988 and 1989 the park was further extended to 11,630 ha, with the proclamation and addition of another eight farms, which extended the park's boundaries to border QwaQwa National Park in the north and east, as well as the Kingdom of Lesotho in the south. During 2003 and 2004 another two rest camps were added to the park's tourism facilities, namely the Highlands mountain retreat with eight luxury tourist accommodation units and the QwaQwa rest camp with 24 economy tourist accommodation units.

On 21 November 2008 the QwaQwa National Park (95 properties) were included in the park increasing the park to its current size of 32,690 ha.

Internationally the GGHNP is part of a transboundary protected area, the Maloti Drakensberg Transfrontier conservation area (MDTFCA). The MDTFCA was formalised as a result of a treaty between the Republic of South Africa and the Kingdom of Lesotho and a Bilateral coordination committee, of which SANParks is an active member, coordinates and manages the MDTFCA on a bilateral level. SANParks is also a signatory to a memorandum of agreement between the different implementing agencies on the South African side and a member of the South African national coordination committee that coordinates and manages the MDTFCA on a national level. The main objectives of the MDTFCA focuses on coordinating efforts across boundaries towards more effective conservation of natural and cultural resources, whilst improving livelihoods, in the bioregion.

Other parts of the MDTFCA have World Heritage Site status, and an initiative is under way to extend this status to include GGHNP. The MDTFCA is a co-ordinated conservation initiative by Lesotho and South Africa, focusing on a region that provides a range of ecosystem goods and services to local households as well as to people outside the region. The GGHNP is of international significance as a learning and demonstration site with excellent education and awareness opportunities. It can enhance tourism growth by bringing together tourism operators from Lesotho and South Africa to increase benefits to the people of both countries.

A 20-year strategic plan for the MDTFCA with the first 5-year action plan was the most important outcome of the past five years planning phase of the MDTFCA that was funded through the World Bank. Presently the MDTFCA is in its first 5-year action plan and SANParks, through GGHNP, plays an active coordination and management role in operationalising of the MDTFCA 5-year action plan.

GGHNP is also the find site of the world's oldest dinosaur eggs with embryos after the discovery of a cluster of 200 million year old *Massospondyllus* dinosaur eggs in the park. Research is ongoing and several other clusters of similar eggs have been discovered. A world-class interpretive centre that will tell the story of the African dinosaurs is in the planning stages.

Apart from its considerable paleontological, geological, cultural and biodiversity value, the park forms the watershed between the Vaal and the

Orange River systems, contributing to quantity and quality water, via the Lesotho-Highlands water project and the Tugela-Vaal transfer scheme, to the Gauteng region and into the Orange River system. As such, the park is part of the most important water catchment in Southern Africa, namely the Maloti Drakensberg catchment complex. Approximately 30% of the total water supply of Southern Africa is produced by this catchment complex. Therefore the majority of the biodiversity programmes in the park focus on water in the landscape and the processes and drivers that will ensure the ecological integrity of the area. The physical features are shown in Appendix 5 Map 2, while land tenure and expansion is shown in Appendix 5 Map 6.

2.4 Co-management agreements

There are currently no areas of private land included in the park by contractual agreements or any co-management agreements.

2.5 Highest point

The highest point in the park is Ribbokkop (2829 m, 9281 ft) (Appendix 5: Map 2).

2.6 Municipal areas in which the park falls

The Thaba Mofutsanyana district municipality (TMDM) integrated development plan (IDP) recognises Golden Gate Highlands National Park as one of the local municipalities within the district municipal area, namely Golden Gate. The TMDM also recognises priority issues in its IDP under five themes, namely infrastructure and services, economic development and job creation, social welfare, institutional development and good governance and community participation. In relation to the park, priority issues under each of these themes are identified where mutual influence and cooperation can result in positive enhancement of respective aligned programmes and initiatives, e. g. tourism development, safety and security, environmental management, water, increase revenue base, industrial and skills development. In other areas, or in areas of possible conflict, cooperation to find amicable mutually beneficial outcomes is fostered, e. g. development planning, land reform and disaster management. SANParks, through the park, continues to engage with the TMDM, as well as the two neighbouring municipalities of Maluti a Phofung and Dihlabeng, in its endeavour to strengthen relationships and efforts to contribute to development strategies, especially in the theme of economic development and job creation. Engagement also focuses on impacts on the park and opportunities to mitigate that.



2.7 International listings

GGHNP forms part of the Maloti Drakensberg transfrontier conservation area (MDTFCA). Other parts of the MDTFCA have World Heritage site status, and at some stage application will be made to extend this to include the park. This programme is a co-ordinated conservation initiative by Lesotho and South Africa, focusing on the Maloti Drakensberg mountain range on the international border. This strategically significant 700 km long alpine and montane region provides a range of ecosystem goods and services to local households as well as to people outside the region.

2.8 Biophysical and socio-economic description

Appendix 4: Map 2 details the physical features of the park, while Map 3 lays out the surrounding land use (including park expansion, discussed in Section 8).

2.8.1 Climate

The Maloti Drakensberg mountain range is one of only five areas in southern Africa where annual rainfall exceeds evaporation rates. The park is characterised by summer rainfall, temperate summers and cold winters. The rainfall season stretches from September to April with a mean annual rainfall ranging from 1,800 mm to 2,000 mm. Summers are cool with the possibility of thunderstorms; winters are cold with occasional snow, which adds to the scenic beauty of the area.

2.8.2 Topography, geology and soils

The park lies between 1,892 m and 2,829 m above sea level. It is underlain by rock formations representing the upper part of the Karoo sequence in South Africa which is interrupted by dolerite dykes and sills. Recent alluvium and scree covers the valley floors while scree also covers the mountain slopes. The following sequences of geological formations are visible, namely: Molteno formation, Elliot formation (mudstone), Clarens formation (sandstone) and Drakensberg formation (basalt) dating back to 195-210 million years ago.

The park is best known for its geological, geomorphological and palaeontological heritage. It has a very rich geology divided into five formations, consisting of four sedimentary formations (Tarkastad, Molteno, Elliot and Clarens (ormations) and one igneous formation (Drakensberg formation) that dates back to 195-210 million years ago. Especially the Elliot formation is rich in dinosaur fossils and researchers have discovered a cluster of six dinosaur eggs with embryonic skeletal material in the bottom half of five of these eggs (Reisz *et al.* 2005).

Grab *et al.* (2011) highlighted the diversity of sandstone geomorphological phenomena, many of them rare and 'unique' to the region. Not only are these landforms of aesthetic interest to tourists, but they also provide microhabitats for biota. Thus, conservation of biota requires associated conservation of geo-environments where they are established. For the most part, the sandstone landforms are a likely product of surface lithological reactions to a regional climate characterised by pronounced multitemporal temperature and moisture shifts, recently and in the past.

2.8.3 Hydrology

The park is situated on the watershed between the Vaal and the Orange River systems, contributing quantity and quality water, with the Lesotho-Highlands water project and the Tugela-Vaal transfer scheme, to the Gauteng region and into the Orange River system. As such, the park forms part of the most important water catchment in Southern Africa, namely the Maloti Drakensberg catchment complex. Approximately 30% of the total water supply of Southern Africa is produced by this catchment complex. The Little Caledon River, which drains towards the Orange River and Gariep Dam, and the Klerkspruit River, which drains towards the Wilge River and Vaal Dam, both rise from the park. Ground water, which is sourced by means of seven boreholes equipped with water pumps, is also utilised for domestic use by tourists and staff in the park. Patches of high altitude wetlands exist in the park and the conservation thereof is of international importance.

2.8.4 Flora and fauna

Appendix 2 provides lists of alien species occurring in the park as well as the areas most affected.

Vegetation

The park falls in the Grassland Biome of South Africa and represents the Drakensberg grassland bioregion and the Mesic highland grassland bioregion. Five vegetation types are recognised Grassland (Mucina & Rutherford, 2006):

- Eastern Free State sandy grassland;
- Basotho montane shrubland;
- Northern Drakensberg highlands grassland;
- Drakensberg-Amathole Afromontane fynbos;
- Lesotho highland basalt.

The Eastern Free State grassland is an endangered vegetation type and the Basotho montane shrubland vegetation type is classified as vulnerable with only 2% of both these habitat types conserved in the park and the Sterkfontein Dam reserve. These two vegetation types, together with the Lesotho highland basalt grassland, are considered to be poorly protected and to have a high conservation urgency rating (Mucina & Rutherford, 2006).

Expansion of the park could add four vegetation types (northern afrotemperate forest, Drakensberg Afroalpine heathland, uKhahlamba basalt grassland and Eastern Free State clay grassland). The latter is very poorly protected (<1.3%) and in very urgent need of conservation.

The largest plant families in the park are the Poaceae (55 genera) as well as the Asteraceae (51 genera). The grasslands in the park are flat, slightly undulating terrain with streams and rivers and are dominated by *Eragrostis* species, *Tristachya leucothrix* and *Themeda triandra* with an herb layer dominated by Asteraceae. The Northern Drakensberg highlands grassland is a mountainous region with steep slopes and broad valleys dominated by short sour grasslands and patches of *Protea* woodland. The Afromontane fynbos is restricted to the sheltered ravines and gorges where moisture level is maintained and the vegetation is protected from fire. The plateaus high ridges of mountains are separated by deep valleys with a *Passerina montana* dominated scrubland and smaller scrubs such as *Chrysocoma ciliata*, *Pentzia cooperi*, *Themeda triandra* and *Festuca caprina*.

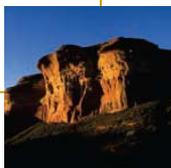
Fauna

The checklist of mammals includes 12 species of mice, 12 carnivores, and eight antelope species. A total of 171 species of birds have been recorded, eight frog and toad species, and 21 species of reptiles including the sungazer or also known as 'ouvolk' (*Cordylus giganteus*) that is endemic to the Grassland biome and has been re-introduced in 1990.

The park is also a breeding site for vultures, especially the endangered (Anderson, 2000) bearded vulture (*Gypaetus barbatus*). Two other red-listed bird species in the park are the grass owl (*Tyto capensis*) and the bald ibis (*Geronticus calvus*).

A relatively high number of 117 species of beetles (Coleoptera) representing 35 families were recorded on above-ground portions of *Leucosidea sericea*.

The grey rhebuck (*Pelea capreolus*) and mountain reedbuck (*Redunca fulvorufula*) were already present when the park was established whereas the eland (*Tragelaphus oryx*), blesbok (*Damaliscus pygargus*), black wildebeest (*Connochaetes gnou*), springbok (*Antidorcas marsupialis*), zebra (*Equus burchelli*) and oribi (*Ourebia ourebi*) were introduced.



2.8.5 Palaeontology

Numerous fossils have been found in the park. An important paleontological discovery dating back to the Late Triassic (200-230 million years ago) consisting of dinosaur fossil eggs with foetal skeletons inside were recently discovered in the park (Reisz *et al.* 2005). This put the park in the international limelight and can play an important role in the marketing strategy of the park.

2.8.6 Cultural heritage

The park has a rich diversity in cultural heritage spanning the Middle and Late Stone Age, San, Basotho and early European settlers. Sixty-five cultural heritage sites have been recorded in the park, all of which have GPS coordinates, short descriptions and photographic images on system. A process is underway to determine significance of selected sites with the aim to develop site specific management plans that would address issues of preservation and accessibility for tourism purposes. The renowned Basotho Cultural Village, with its living cultural museum that offers interactive museum tours, is in the park. Also part of the Basotho Cultural Village is an open air restaurant specialising in traditional Basotho cuisine for events and group functions, an amphitheatre for living cultural events that includes traditional choir and dance competitions, a shop that offers local arts and crafts products and a conference and restaurant complex. The Klerksvley National Heritage Site that is also in the park is to be developed into a living cultural museum.

2.8.7 Social context

The park can play a major role in contributing towards poverty alleviation in the region. The park is situated in one of the poorest parts of South Africa, The Eastern Free State is a presidential nodal point due to the prevailing high levels of poverty and unemployment. In recent years the park made significant contributions in this regard through SANParks' expanded public work programme (EPWP), Working for water (WfW) programme, Working on wetlands programme and Working on fire programme. These new infrastructure developments and rehabilitation programmes created literally thousands of temporary and numerous permanent employment opportunities in the park and the region. Procurement for these projects also boosted the local economy.

During the 2007-2010 years the total expenditure associated with the park amounted to R160 million of which the economic impact as a result of the multiplier effect in the Eastern Free State amount to approximately R400 million. During the first five months of the 2011/2012 financial year 88.62% of the total procurement spent by GGHNP, which amounts to R13.3 million, was spent on BEE compliant companies of which the majority are in the Eastern Free State. The park's staff establishment has 252 permanent posts and in the 2011/2012 financial year the park also provides 233 temporary jobs through the mentioned poverty alleviation projects.

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Section 3: Policy framework

SANParks, like all protected area management authorities, is subject to the constitution, legislation, international agreements, national policies and government priorities. Section 41 of the NEMA:PAA requires that management plans be located within the context of a Coordinated Policy Framework (CPF), with SANParks complying with a first CPF developed in 2006. This CPF is currently being revised and will be updated in 2013 (SANParks in preparation). Until updated, the current CPF will remain in force.

The CPF will provide the information required by the DEA guidelines for management plans (Cowan & Mpongoma 2010). This document will summarise the institutional, ecological, economic and social environment for park management and includes:

- (1) An introduction to the management plan requirements of the NEM:PAA, what it means for stakeholders, and the corporate provisions SANParks has made to comply with NEM:PAA.
- (2) SANParks as an organization: including its organisational structure, vision, mission, biodiversity values and performance management system (by means of the balanced scorecard), and its approach to strategic adaptive management.
- (3) Policies and guiding principles:
 - a) Finances and commercialisation;
 - b) Tourism;
 - c) Zoning system in parks;
 - d) Stakeholder relationships;
 - e) Management to maintain biodiversity and ecosystem processes;
 - f) Risk management;
 - g) Safety and security;
 - h) Cultural heritage resources;
 - i) Resource use;
 - j) Research.

SANParks policies are guided by its vision and mission statements. As a public entity, SANParks is committed to act in pursuit of transformation of South Africa's society in support of entrenching South Africa's democracy. And as such, this policy framework is open to public review by stakeholders.

The planning cycle for management plans in SANParks is 10 years, although programmes and costing will be revised at a more regular basis, normally every five years but more often if needed.

Park Organogram

Figure 1 shows a condensed organogram reflecting the current staffing for the park. However, this organogram will be updated later in 2012 to reflect new positions needed with the upgrading of as well as new infrastructure.

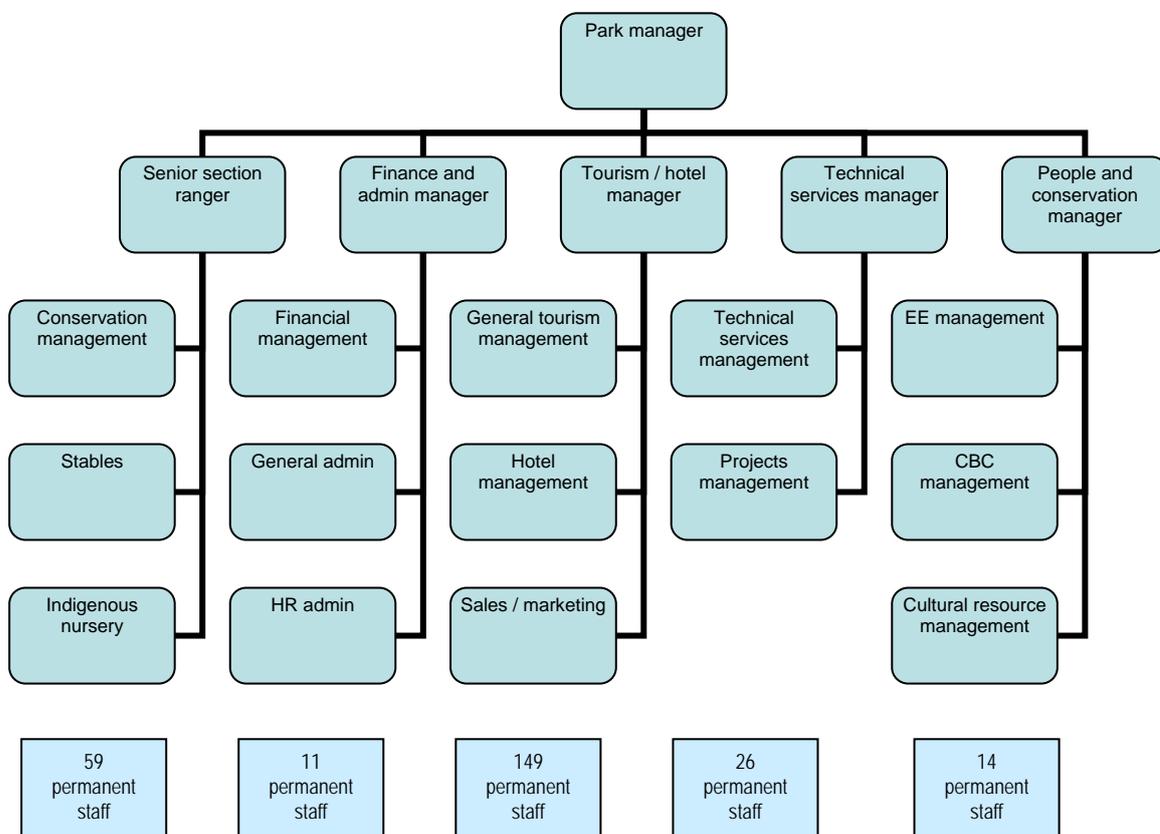


Figure 1: Golden Gate Highlands National Park Organogram (260 staff)



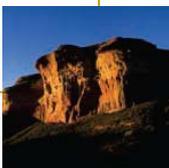
Section 4: Consultation

SANParks recognises that parks must serve societal values and that they need to be part of and interrelate with the broader landscape and socio-economic context within which they are situated. The goal of the park within the public participation process is to work directly with stakeholders to ensure that the stakeholder concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered. Therefore stakeholders, both interested and affected, were included in the revision process of the park management plan by notifying them of participation processes through mechanisms suitable for the different stakeholder groups. These processes provided the opportunity for input from all stakeholders within reasonable timeframes, with the emphasis on sharing of information and joint learning. Processes also aimed to recognise all knowledge, indigenous, ordinary and expert, as well as the diversity of values and opinions that exist between stakeholders. Feedback was provided on the outcome of the processes to stakeholders which demonstrated how their inputs were captured and considered in the decision making process. The commitment to the incorporation of public opinion into this plan is rooted in the parks' management activities and is therefore geared towards promoting conservation values (and society's connection with those values, as also outlined in the NEM:PAA) and promoting this goal in part, by engaging the broader context in which the park is situated. The adaptive planning process that was followed was designed to (a) help stakeholders express opinions and values in a structured way, (b) to use the opinions and expressed values to formulate a vision for GGHNP, and (c) to translate the vision into management objectives that reflect the values as expressed by stakeholders.

The development of the desired state, vision and mission for GGHNP was guided by a stakeholder workshop held in June 2009 (GGHNP Adaptive planning for a desired state, report 2009). The hierarchy of objectives and zoning workshops took place over the period 21 to 23 September 2009. To allow review of the plan a public meeting were held at the Golden Gate Hotel in the park on 15 February 2011 (details given in Appendix 4 and in a separate stakeholder participation report).

To facilitate consultation a Park Forum has been established to provide a platform for communication and participation of stakeholders. The establishment and activities of the forum are guided by terms of reference. Formal meetings of the forum take place on a quarterly basis and report back meetings to the broader mandating constituency (Park Forum plenary) take place twice a year. Detail of the stakeholder participation process with relation to the review of the management plan is recorded in a stakeholder participation report attached as Appendix 3.

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Section 5: Purpose and mission

5 Introduction

NEM:PAA requires that the park be managed in accordance with purpose for which it was declared, The purpose of the park is not specified either in the original gazetted declaration nor any subsequent addition (Appendix 1). Hence SANParks will manage the park in accordance with the vision and objectives hierarchy that was derived through consultation with stakeholders, as set out in this section.

5.1 Vision

The vision for a park is an inspirational statement designed to provide a picture of the future, to answer the question of 'where do we want to go?' The following vision statement captures the range of inputs from the stakeholder consultation meeting:

A park as part of a wider functional land use mosaic in a changing world, will strive to:

- *Deliver sustainable ecosystem services;*
- *Maintain of examples of natural and cultural heritage of the region;*
- *Provide learning opportunities;*
- *Act as a motivational demonstration site for managing the natural environment;*
- *Promote sustainable use through responsible tourism and facilitation of socio-economic benefits.*

The above is to be achieved through collaborative teamwork for the benefit of all.

5.2 Operating principles

The corporate operating principles (CPF in prep) are supplemented by the park's operating principles that meet the specific needs of stakeholder values, particularly focusing on their desire for sustainable natural and cultural resource use. The operating principles below reflect the values of individuals in that the park stakeholder group (particularly stemming from the June 2009 public participation workshop):

1. Biophysical and ecosystem functionality (including threatened species) is the foundation on which all ecological, social and economic systems ultimately depend, whereas we recognise that the conservation sector has historically ignored social issues to its detriment.
2. Promoting livelihoods in, around and beyond the park is seen as cardinal to achievement of park goals. Target creation of a diversity of opportunities.
3. Working in teams, building bridges and partnerships, building an overlapping (even sometimes fully shared) rationale, and learning-by-doing are also believed core to goal realisation, even more so in the wider landscape context.
4. Recognising and further understanding the various connections of people to the land will assist us greatly in our mission
5. Wilderness notions, 'sense of place', re-finding our 'roots in nature', 'exploring the creation', and recognising the restorative and healing qualities of natural landscapes are important values which should be maintained and could even be further developed in the "Expanded Golden Gate" context.
6. Promotion of accountability, and the understanding of its appropriate usage in the context of uncertainty and hence humility and learning-by-doing, in the management of social-ecological systems
7. We recognise and promote the important interrelationships between the cultural landscape, history and heritage in the park and its linkages to livelihoods, biodiversity conservation and sense of place, wilderness character and spiritual connections to the landscape.

5.3 Vital attributes

Listing the vital attributes of a park is an important step in the objective setting process as it identifies the fundamental purpose(s) of conservation management for a particular park. The following vital attributes have been identified as making the park unique, or at least very special in its class. In this way the management plan is customised in its fullest local extent, without detracting from some of its more generic SANParks functions. The vital attributes of the park can be summarised as follows:

1. Strong cultural history / living culture.
2. Strong geological, geomorphological and paleontological history with excellent learning opportunities (dinosaur eggs; high rainfall and low temperature ecosystem).
3. Key catchment position of the main river systems of South Africa and the associated ecosystem services.
4. Capacitated MDTFCA node with strong potential as a learning and demonstration site in changing times.
5. Capacitated and promising education and awareness opportunities.
6. Scenic beauty (including snow), wilderness / spiritual / aesthetic opportunities with freedom to walk / hike.
7. Valuable biodiversity site.
8. Significant contribution to local economy and livelihoods (win-win with Clarens in the west and recognisable contribution to impoverished Qwa Qwa area to the east).
9. As a change agent plays a catalyst role in enabling mechanisms to transfer opportunities from the advantaged affluent node on the western side of the park to the historically disadvantaged presidential node (former Qwa Qwa homeland area) on the eastern side of the park.
10. Value as tourism / marketing hub (related especially to landscape and enabling infrastructure and proximity to three urban centres).

The general threats to maintaining the park's desired state include a concern about safety and security and crime situations, vandalism, littering as well as the current poor trends in the national economy and the influence it will have on local economy, funding of projects and job security. Inappropriate development, poor land use, alien species infestation and practices unfriendly to cultural heritage were also listed as concerns. Although the MDTFCA is seen in a very positive light changes in leadership, capacity, institutional culture and breakdowns of relationships and collaborations were listed as concerns.

5.4 An objective hierarchy for the park

Following the adaptive planning process, these vital attributes were used to construct an objectives hierarchy, with high level objectives cascading down to finer levels of detail, ending with specific operational or management strategies. Figure 1 represents the highest level objectives in the park's objectives hierarchy, which form the basis for prioritisation of management issues. They are explicitly derived from the park's Mission and Vision. The high level objectives focus first and foremost on sustainable ecosystem and cultural heritage management, and then on providing benefits to its users that do not negatively impact on the parks resources. The final high level objective is an enabling objective that makes the attainment of the other objectives possible through best practice management of the park's human resources. Objectives lower in the hierarchy are presented in Section 10.

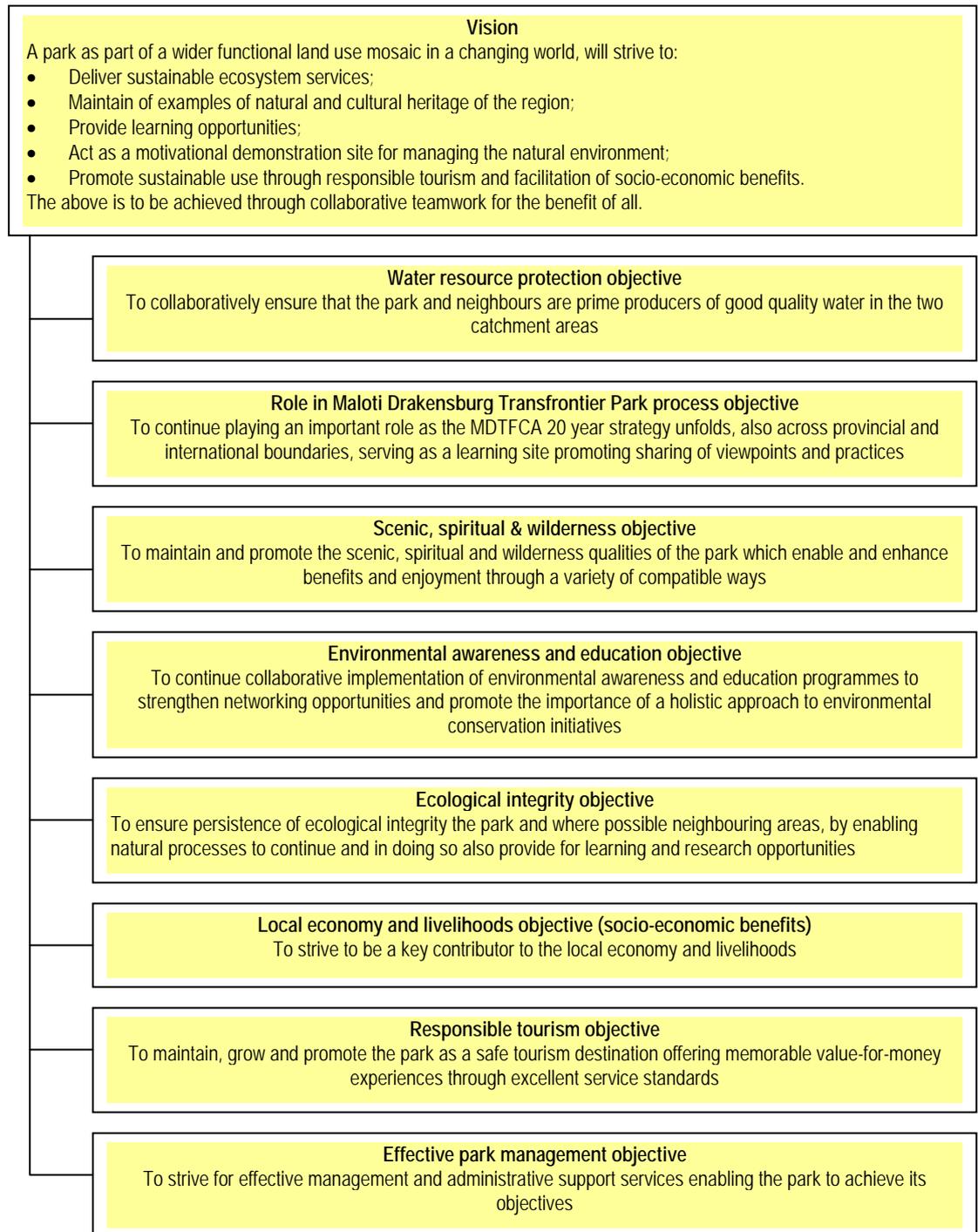


Figure 2: Eight highest level objectives in the objectives hierarchy of the Golden Gate Highlands National Park.

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Section 6: Zoning plan

The primary objective of a park zoning plan is to establish a coherent spatial framework in and around a park to guide and co-ordinate conservation, tourism and visitor experience initiatives. A zoning plan plays an important role in minimizing conflicts between different users of a park by separating potentially conflicting activities such as game viewing and day-visitor picnic areas whilst ensuring that activities which do not conflict with the park's values and objectives (especially the conservation of the protected area's natural systems and its biodiversity) can continue in appropriate areas.

The zoning of Golden Gate Highlands National Park was based on an analysis and mapping of the sensitivity and value of a park's biophysical (including detailed vegetation and soil mapping), heritage and scenic resources; an assessment of the regional context; and an assessment of the park's current and planned infrastructure and tourist routes / products; all interpreted in the context of park objectives.

In addition to internal use zoning, the zoning plan also describes how the park interacts with the processes which control land use and activities in the Buffer Zones around national parks (e.g. Spatial Development Frameworks (SDFs) and municipal Integrated Development Plans (IDPs)). The Buffer Zones identify the area within which activities such as land use change may have an influence on the park (current and future extent), describe responses at a strategic level, and serve to define the buffer zone in terms of the DEA policy on buffer zones for national parks and the SANParks buffer zone policy.

Overview of the use zones of Golden Gate Highlands National Park

The summary of the use zoning plan for Golden Gate Highlands is shown in Map 4. Full details of the use zones (including high resolution maps), the activities and facilities allowed in each zone, the conservation objectives of each zone, the zoning process, the park buffer zones (detailing park interaction with adjacent areas) and the underlying landscape analyses are included in Appendix 4:

Remote zone:

This is an area retaining an intrinsically wild appearance and character, or capable of being restored to such and which is undeveloped and roadless (although limited unimproved management tracks are allowed). There are no permanent improvements or any form of human habitation. It provides outstanding opportunities for solitude, with awe inspiring natural characteristics with sight and sound of human habitation and activities barely discernable and at far distance. The conservation objective is to maintain the zone in a natural state with no impact on biodiversity pattern or processes. Existing impacts on biodiversity either from historical usage or originating from outside the zone should be minimized. The aesthetic / recreational objectives for the zone specify that activities which impact on the intrinsically wild appearance and character of the area, or which impact on the wilderness characteristics of the area (solitude, remoteness, wildness, serenity, peace *etc.*) will not be tolerated. In the park, remote areas were designated in the rugged mountain areas in the western and south western areas of the park. The zones were designated to include landscapes with high environmental sensitivity and value.

Primitive Zone: The prime characteristic of the zone is the experience of wilderness qualities with access controlled in terms of numbers, frequency and size of groups. The zone has wilderness qualities, but with limited access roads (mostly 4x4) and the potential for basic small-scale self-catering accommodation facilities or small concession lodges (which would generally have more sophisticated facilities). Views of human activities and development outside of the park may be visible from this zone. The conservation objective is to maintain the zone in an almost completely natural state with little or no impact on biodiversity processes, and very limited and site specific impacts on biodiversity pattern. Existing impacts on biodiversity either from historical usage or originating from outside the zone should be minimized. The aesthetic/recreational objectives for the zone specify that activities which impact on the intrinsically wild appearance and character of the area, or which impact on the wilderness characteristics of the area (solitude, remoteness, wildness, serenity, peace etc) should be restricted and impacts limited to the site of the facility. Ideally visitors should only be aware of the facility or infrastructure that they are using, and this infrastructure/facility should be designed to fit in with the environment within which it is located in order to avoid aesthetic impacts. In GGHNP, primitive areas were designated to buffer Remote areas from higher use areas and activities outside the park (especially on the southern boundary), as well as to protect most of the remaining sensitive areas (such as large sections of what was QwaQwa National Park) from high levels of tourist activity. Almost all highly and moderately sensitive environments that were not included within the Remote zone were included in this zone. Primitive areas were also designated in valleys with relatively low environmental sensitivity to allow access to remote areas as well as to contain the infrastructure required for management and tourist activity in these areas (e.g. trail huts and access roads).

Quiet zone: This zone is characterised by unaccompanied (or accompanied under some circumstances) non-motorised access, where visitors can walk or cycle and experience nature without the intrusion of any form of motorised transport. Visitor numbers and density are higher than in the primitive zone and contact between visitors is frequent. The conservation objective is to maintain the zone in a generally natural state, with the proviso that limited impacts on biodiversity patterns and processes are allowed in order to accommodate park recreational and tourism objectives.

The aesthetic/recreational objectives for the zone specify that activities which impact on the relatively natural appearance and character of the area should be restricted, though the presence of larger numbers of visitors and the facilities they require, may impact on the feeling of “wildness” found in this zone. The major change in the 2009 zoning update has been the significant extension of Quiet Areas to promote additional non-motorised access to areas around existing access points in the Glen Reenen, Brandwag and Mountain Retreat areas, as well as to allow for future development of non-motorised access to areas around the QwaQwa cultural village and day visitor site.

Low intensity leisure zone: The underlying characteristic of this zone is motorised self-drive access with the potential for self-catering accommodation units in small basic camps without facilities such as shops and restaurants. Facilities along roads are limited to basic self-catering picnic sites with toilet facilities. The conservation objective is to mitigate the biodiversity impacts of the relatively high levels of tourism activity and infrastructure that are accommodated within this zone through careful planning and active management, and to ensure that both the negative effects of the activities and infrastructure are restricted to the zone, and that the zone is maintained in a generally natural state that is in keeping with the character of a protected area. The aesthetic / recreational objectives for the zone specify that although activities and facilities will impact on the wild appearance and reduction of the wilderness characteristics of the area (solitude, remoteness, wildness etc) is inevitable, these should be managed and limited to ensure that the area still provides a relatively natural outdoor experience. Low intensity leisure areas were designated in the current game viewing loops, around current accommodation and other associated infrastructure outside of the main camps, and along existing public access roads where they form part of the park road network. Provision was made for the expansion of game and landscape viewing activities in lowland sections of the park by identifying four potential areas of low environmental sensitivity and value which could contain future road networks. Provision has been made for a linkage between the Wilgenhof area of the park and ‘Little Serengeti’ in order to facilitate a future circular route within the park. However, detailed feasibility studies would be required to determine if this is practical and financially and ecologically viable. The major provincial road cutting through the park is in the low intensity leisure zone, but its current intensity of use contradicts the nature and intent of the zone.



High intensity leisure zone: The main characteristic is that of a high density tourist development node with amenities such as shops, restaurants and interpretive centres. This is the zone where more concentrated human activities are allowed and is accessible by motorised transport on high volume transport routes. The main focus is to ensure a high quality visitor experience, however the conservation objectives still require that the high levels of tourism activity and infrastructure that are accommodated within this zone are planned and managed to minimize the effect on the surrounding natural environment, and that the zone must still retain a level of ecological integrity consistent with a protected area. The aesthetic/ recreational objectives for the zone specify although the high visitor numbers, activities and facilities will impact on the wild appearance and reduction of the wilderness characteristics of the area (solitude, remoteness, wildness etc.) is inevitable, these should be managed and limited to ensure that the area generally still provides a relatively natural outdoor experience. In the park, high intensity leisure areas were designated around the Gladstone to Glen Reenen section of the park incorporating most of high density tourist and administrative facilities. Additional High Intensity Leisure areas were designated at the Basotho Cultural Village and the day visitor site.

Overview of the special management overlays

Special management overlays which designate specific areas of the park that require special management interventions were identified. Three areas were designated:

Special conservation areas – *Olinia-Podocarpus* forest, Plateau grassland and Wetland / drainage line vegetation: These three sensitive habitat types were identified for special protection in order to reduce any potential loss and to prioritise rehabilitation work in these areas.

Summary of the buffer zones around the park:

This section describes how the park interacts with the processes which control land use and activities in the buffer zones around national parks (e.g. SDFs and IDPs). The buffer zone section identifies the area within which activities such as land use change may have an influence on the park (current and future extent), describes responses at a strategic level, and serves to define the buffer zone in terms of the DEA policy on buffer zones for national parks and the SANParks buffer zone policy.

The current extent of the park is included in a conservation focused category in the land use maps included in the SDFs of the local and district municipalities in which the park is located. These SDFs are the spatial components of municipal IDPs. The park interacts with the appropriate local government processes such as SDF and IDP development on an ongoing basis as part of the bioregional programme, in order to ensure that issues such as appropriate development of buffer zones around parks are also incorporated into proactive land use planning instruments such as SDFs and IDPs.

The park buffer zones shows the areas within which land use changes could affect a national park. The zones, in combination with guidelines, will serve as a basis for a.) identifying the focus areas in which park management and scientists should respond to EIA's, b.) helping to identify the sort of impacts that would be important at a particular site, and most importantly c.) serving as the basis for integrating long term protection of a national park into the spatial development plans of municipalities and other local authorities. In terms of EIA response, the zones serve largely to raise red-flags and do not remove the need for carefully considering the exact impact of a proposed development. In particular, they do not address activities with broad regional aesthetic or biodiversity impacts.

Golden Gate Highlands National Park has three Buffer Zone categories (Map 6). The first two are mutually exclusive, but the final visual / aesthetic category can overlay the others.

Priority natural areas: These are key areas for both pattern and process that are required for the long term persistence of biodiversity in and around the park. The zone also includes areas identified for future park expansion. Inappropriate development and negative land-use changes should be opposed in this area. Developments and activities should be restricted to sites that are already transformed. Only developments that contribute to ensuring conservation friendly land-use should be viewed favourably.

Catchment protection areas: These are areas important for maintaining key hydrological processes within the park. Inappropriate development (dam construction, loss of riparian vegetation *etc.*) should be opposed. Control of alien vegetation and soil erosion as well as appropriate land care should be promoted.

Viewshed protection areas: These are areas where development is likely to impact on the aesthetic quality of the visitor's experience in a park. Within these areas any development proposals should be carefully screened to ensure that they do not impact excessively on the aesthetics of the park. The areas identified are only broadly indicative of sensitive areas, as at a fine scale many areas within this zone would be perfectly suited for development. In addition, major projects with large scale regional impacts may have to be considered even if they are outside the Viewshed protection zone.

Current status and future improvements:

The current park use zonation is based on the same biodiversity and landscape analyses undertaken for a conservation development framework (CDF); however certain elements underlying the CDF such as a tourism market analysis are not be fully incorporated into the park use zonation. A full CDF will be developed for Golden Gate Highlands National Park within the current update cycle. Remote areas will be investigated for possible formal declaration as Wilderness Area in terms of Section 22 of the PAA. Additional special management overlays which designate specific areas of a park that require special management interventions (e.g. areas requiring rehabilitation and specific management from a cultural heritage perspective) will also be identified.



Section 7: Access and facilities

In accordance with the guidelines for the preparation of management plans (Cowan & Mpongoma 2010) Section 7 provides information on the current access to the protected area, access controls, air fields, visitor and administrative facilities, commercial activities, community use and servitudes.

Access points and restrictions

Road access to the park is via the R712 provincial road that runs through the park. Check points are located at the eastern gate (Qwa Qwa) and western gate (Clarens) but, as this is a public road, access is unrestricted. Restrictions on activities within the park are in place through the zoning plan (Section 4 and Appendix 2). All visitors must check-in at the Glen Reenen or Golden Gate Hotel reception and be issued with an official entry permit. Before leaving the park, overnight guests must check out.

Airfields and their restrictions

The park has no airstrip. The closest active runway is located 60km from the park in Bethlehem. SANParks makes use of helicopters for management purposes and there are helicopter landing zones close to the Hotel and the Gladstone Administrative Offices. Occasionally visitors access the park by helicopter, using the SANParks landing zone. However visitors who do intend using this method must get prior permission from park management.

Visitor facilities

The tourism facilities in the park provide a total of 458 beds. The largest is the Golden Gate Hotel and chalets, with curio shop, restaurant, snack lounge, sport bar, conference and banqueting venues which accommodates 244 people. Besides the hotel all other facilities are self-catering. The Glen Reenen rest camp, with petrol station and shop, has 94 beds as well as camping facilities for 270 people. One of the original farmhouses, Noord Brabant House, has been refurbished to accommodate six people. The Mountain Retreat was designed built to combine minimal visual impact offers with magnificent views over the landscape. It can accommodate 24 people. The Basotho Cultural Village offers overnight accommodation for 72 people, combining comfortable facilities with a cultural experience. A special feature of the park is the Wilgenhof environmental education centre in which can accommodate 92 participants in education programmes. The Ribbok hiking trail has capacity for 18 hikers. A gravel and tar road network totalling 120 km provides tourists the opportunity to explore the park.

Administrative facilities

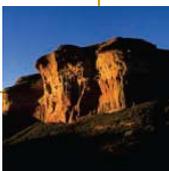
The main administration block, the Gladstone administration centre, is situated next to the main public road through the park. Members of staff are housed at Gladstone, Glen Reenen, Golden Gate Hotel and Chalets, Alma, Witkrans, Eerste Geluk, Annashoop, Heuweltop, Honingkloof, Brakvlei, Korfshoek en Basotho Cultural Village. For staff there are recreation facilities and a shop.

Commercial activities:

Commercial activities include mainly nature-based tourism conducted by SANParks. Activities available to visitors include; self-guided game viewing, guided and self guided walks to various spectacular view points, bird watching, vulture restaurant (where carcasses are provided for vultures), museum tour and cultural route, hiking, abseiling, horse riding, canoeing, tennis and picnicking.

Community use

Agreements with local communities on use of natural resources will be developed in future in accordance with NEM:PAA and regulations (see Section 10), but none are currently being implemented. The vulture conservation project and restaurant provides a means of engaging with communities, offering them a means of disposing of unwanted carcasses



Section 8: Consolidation strategy

The expansion and consolidation of the park is in line with the national strategic objective (DEA 2005) of expanding South Africa's protected area system. The expansion and consolidation programme are also informed by SANParks policy regarding land inclusion (SANParks 2006; Knight *et al.* 2009), and the National Protected Areas Expansion Strategy (DEA 2008) and the three year rolling land acquisition plan. It is important to note that this three year plan can change due to the availability of funds, willing buyer willing seller concept and the negotiation process.

The inclusion of 95 state owned properties (that comprised the former Qwa Qwa National Park) in November 2008, saw GGHNP expand from 11,460 ha to its present 32,758.35 ha, all proclaimed national park. As part of this expansion a land restitution case was also inherited. Presently the restitution settlement offer is being finalised by the Regional land claims commissioner and it is envisaged that the matter will be settled by the end of the 2011/12 financial year.

With the park situated in the Maluti Grasslands, one of the 42 identified priority conservation areas, the parks expansion has been highlighted by the National Protected Areas Expansion Strategy (NPAES) (DEAT 2008).

The ideal expansion footprint covers an area of 113,000ha that could be realised through international, private and communal cooperative conservation agreements. This would include a diversity of habitats to mitigate possible climate change impacts, restore and enhance the ability of the Orange-Vaal River catchments to maintain production of sufficient high water and align with the MDTFCA project strategy and action plans. The expansion and consolidation objectives can potentially be met through:

- Inclusion of about 20,000 ha along the Lesotho border through contractual arrangements with the communities of the Witzieshoek communal areas, including the Bakwena and Batlokwa traditional authorities and the transfer to SANParks of 2,100 ha of state land situated between GGHNP and the Lesotho border. This would provide a valuable link with the protected areas of KwaZulu Natal..
- A 21,800 ha westward expansion towards Clarens to include important eastern Free State clay and sandy grassland vegetation types (estimated to cost R110 million if the land were to be purchased).
- A northern and north-eastern expansion into farming and communal lands to add a further 40,000 ha. This could be largely through contractual agreements rather than purchase. The land has been extensively transformed, leaving only isolated untransformed patches, and is therefore a lower priority for inclusion.

Given limited land acquisition budgets over the next five years land purchase will not be contemplated. The expansion programme will be limited to negotiations towards (1) the inclusion of the state land and (2) a contractual arrangement with the Bakwena and Batlokwa traditional authorities. There are no current proposals for inclusion of any other land on a contractual basis, but SANParks is open to approaches from neighbouring land owners in this regard.

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Section 9: Concept development plan

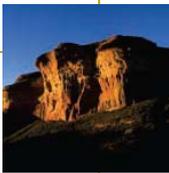
Planned new developments over the next planning cycle include:

- A fully funded project to build a dinosaur centre within the Glen Reenen high intensity use zone.
- The construction and renovation of new staff housing, made necessary by the recent amalgamation with the QwaQwa provincial nature reserve (previously the QwaQwa National Park)..
- Upgrading of a radio repeater system, required to allow quick communication in response to fire or security threats.

These developments are subject to the availability of funds. Any new products or activities developed in future will follow the zonation and nature based responsible tourism principles, as well as all legal requirements governing development.

The locations of these developments are shown in the infrastructure map, Appendix 5, Map 7.

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Section 10: Strategic plan

10 Introduction

Sections 3, 4 and 5 of this plan outlined the policy framework, the consultation process and development of a mission and high level objectives for the park. In this section the goals and higher level objectives of the park are developed into lower level objectives and sub-objectives and finally into operational actions. In this way decision-making, even at the operational level, can be traced all the way back to the core values and inputs from stakeholders on which they have been based. This approach conforms to the requirements of the NEM:PAA, the NEM:BA, SANParks policy, and ratified international conventions.

Programmes of implementation, developed as outlined above, form the strategic plan for this planning cycle, are arranged under the following headings:

- Bioregional.
- Biodiversity.
- Tourism.
- People and conservation.
- Effective park management.

Each programme is presented as follows:

- **Programme name:** A name describing the programme
- **High level objective:** Stating the overall goal of the programme
- **Background:** Overview of intent, guiding principles, description, outcome, research and monitoring and risk (all where applicable)
- **Tables:** Outline of objectives, initiatives and management actions within the scope of the objective with an indication if the programme is once off, continuing or conditional on the availability of resources. These tables have the following headings:
 - **Initiatives or objectives** The various initiatives or objectives, derived from the hierarchy of higher level objectives, which make up each programme.
 - **Actions:** The actions necessary to achieve the objective.
 - **Responsibility:** The SANParks person, section, department, division or unit responsible for implementing the action.
 - **Indicator:** A measure whereby the achievement of the objective can be evaluated.
 - **Timeframe:** An indication of when the action is likely to be completed (indicated by year over the planning cycle).
 - **References:** References to relevant programmes, lower level plans (LLPs) or other documents.

10.1 Bioregional

10.1.1 Role in Maloti Drakensburg transfrontier protected area process

High level objective:

To continue playing an important role as the MDTFCA 20 year strategy unfolds, also across provincial and international boundaries, serving as a learning site promoting sharing of viewpoints and practices

The purpose of this programme is to position SANParks at GGHP to continue playing its important role within the MDTFCA as the 20-year strategy unfolds, also across provincial and international boundaries, serving as a learning site promoting sharing of viewpoints and practices.

Internationally the GGHP is part of the MDTFCA.

The MDTFCA was formalised as a result of a treaty between the Republic of South Africa and the Kingdom of Lesotho and a bilateral coordination Committee, of which SANParks is an active member, coordinates and manages the MDTFCA on a bilateral level.

SANParks is also party to a memorandum of agreement between the different implementing agencies on the South African side and a member of the South African National coordination committee that coordinates and manages the MDTFCA on a national level. The main objectives of the MDTFCA focus on coordinating efforts across boundaries towards more effective conservation of natural and cultural resources, whilst improving livelihoods, in the bioregion. SANParks, through GGHP, plays an active coordination and management role in implementing the action plan.

BIOREGIONAL/TRANDRONTIER PROGRAMME					
Purpose: Continue playing an important role as the MDTFCA 20-Year Strategy unfolds across provincial and international boundaries					
Objectives	Actions	Responsibility	Indicators	Timeframe	Reference
To align the park management plan with the MDTFCA strategy and action plan.	Participate in the RSA national coordination committee and the bilateral coordinating committee.	PM, SSR	Minutes of meeting	Ongoing	MOU, Plans for MDTFCA
	Implement actions outlined in MoU as set out in MDTFCA five year action plan for phase II of the MDTFCA.	PM	PMBSC/ KPAs	Ongoing	
	To monitor progress and evaluate the parks' contribution to the MDTFCA action plan	PM	Annual Report	Ongoing	
To promote co-learning with partners through providing opportunities, sharing expertise and creating opportunities for learning.	Participate in and facilitate work groups aimed at providing best practice principles.	PM, SSR, TM.	Working Group Minutes	Ongoing	
	To coordinate and align actions amongst various agencies	PM, SSR, TM	BSC	Ongoing	
	Promote and enhance bioregional opportunities for conservation planning through leveraging partnerships with conservation agencies, local, provincial and national government, adjacent communities, non-government organisations and other parties	P&C, PM	Meeting minutes and reports	Ongoing	
	Implement best practice principles.	PM, SSR, TM	Best practice guidelines.	Ongoing	Relevant LLPs
	Identify and list learning opportunities	P&C	List of opportunities	Year 1	
	Assess and evaluate effectiveness	PM	MDTFCA assessment report	Year 5	



Objectives	Actions	Responsibility	Indicators	Timeframe	Reference
Mainstream biodiversity into land use planning and decision making.	To plan strategically in collaboration with relevant local, provincial and national authorities, within or affecting the park.	PM, P&C	IDP, SDF	Year 2	
	To comment on land use change and development applications within the buffer zone and adjacent urban areas.	PM	SANParks comments submitted	Ongoing	

10.2 Biodiversity

10.2.1 Water resource protection

High level objective: To collaboratively ensure that the park and neighbours are prime producers of good quality water in the two catchment areas

The purpose of this programme is to: (1) development of a programme to monitor water quality and flow in the rivers, (2) restore wetlands and (3) survey baseline information on the wetlands.

Although the rivers are situated in the upper catchment area, and are therefore little influenced by external factors, there are reasons for concern regarding the state of the river systems. These are:

1. Flow alteration with in stream impoundments in the Little Caledon River within the park,
2. Water quality, especially the occasional sewage spills from the treatment plant servicing the Golden Gate Hotel and satellite accommodations into the Little Caledon River,
3. Alien biota such as the rainbow trout *Oncorhynchus mykiss* invasion from downstream hatcheries and alien plants such as the willow tree *Salix babylonica*, and
4. Developments and land use that may lead to erosion in the drainage lines within the park (Russell 2009).

Various wetlands occur in the park which function to purify water, regulate stream flow, recharge and discharge ground water, control erosion and support characteristic wetland biota. However, the park has exceptionally steep slopes and dispersive soils which are susceptible to erosion. Erosion disturbs flow patterns, and negatively affects wetland functioning. The major erosion concern in the park is along the Klerkspruit, Braakvlei, Spelongken, Noord Brabant, Heuweltop, Blesbok and Oribi Loop wetlands. Erosion is exacerbated by paths created by domestic stock, which result in channels that confine and concentrate water flow, eventually leading to headcut erosion. This, combined with the dispersive soils and high rainfall, resulted in significant erosion.

In some wetlands, erosion gullies with active headcuts lower the water tables and caused sedimentation. Erosion accelerated by human activities is also evident and include exposed soil after alien clearing, inappropriate fire regime (especially accidental fires originating outside the park), and overgrazing. Deposition of sediments in wetlands is also of major concern in the park.

The disruption to water movement through the wetland has a significant impact on the vegetation of the wetland, for example desiccation allows terrestrial plant species to invade.

Past farming activities have also altered the vegetation of a substantial portion of the wetland through the complete removal of natural wetland vegetation. Grazing management both past and present has adversely affected both fauna and flora in the wetland ecosystem.

Among the species of special concern in the wetlands are the IUCN Red listed grass owl *Tyto capensis* and bald Ibis *Geronticus calvus*. Their habitat is currently threatened due to habitat degradation. Restoration of these wetlands will ensure persistence of these species.

WATER IN THE LANDSCAPE PROGRAMME					
High level objective: To collaboratively ensure that the park and neighbours are prime producers of good quality water in the two catchment areas					
Objectives	Actions	Responsibility	Indicators	Timeframe	Reference
To follow the guidelines for the design of national water resource quality monitoring programmes	Initialise the development of an additional SANParks monitoring programme for quality and flow of rivers.	CSD, SSR	Monitoring programme	Year 2	
	Update spatial distribution maps and evaluate the effects of alien vegetation clearing on the quality and flow of rivers	CSD, SSR, ISCU and CSD	ISCU report	YEAR 2	
To mitigate threats to water resources and restore wetlands and catchment areas in GGHP	Restoration of wetlands situated within GGHP.	PM, SSR, ISCU, CSD	Progress reports	Ongoing	Restoration LLP; rehabilitation plan; best management practices.
	Monitor the change in flow and quality of water delivered as a result of the wetland restoration	SSR; ISCU	Monitoring reports	Ongoing	
Collect baseline information on wetlands.	Reconnaissance survey and assembly of plant communities in the wetlands	SSR;SS	Survey report	Year 1 and ongoing	
	Population assessment and monitoring of identified species of special concern in wetland habitats	SSR; SS	Assessment report	Year 2 and ongoing	



10.2.2 Ecological integrity

High level objective: To ensure persistence of ecological integrity the park and where possible neighbouring areas, by enabling natural processes to continue and in doing so also provide for learning and research opportunities

This objective, which aims at ensuring persistence of ecological integrity the park, includes four programmes: alien and invasive species control, fire management, species of special concern and wildlife management. These programmes will in future be aligned and prioritised according to the SANParks corporate framework for biodiversity monitoring which guides the structure and development of the biodiversity monitoring system (BMS) (McGeoch *et al.* 2011). The BMS will strengthen the monitoring component of ecological integrity objective, which is currently inadequately developed and resourced.

10.2.2.1 Alien and invasive species management

The purpose of this programme is to prevent entry and control invasive alien species to reduce their distribution, abundance and impacts, thereby maintaining the integrity of the indigenous biodiversity of the park. In accordance with Clause 76 of NEM:BA the programme includes monitoring the area of infestation, as well as the past and current efficacy of the various control measures. This programme links strongly with the water in the landscape programme in the park as about 7% of the annual flow of South Africa's rivers is unnecessarily lost to the use of water by invasive alien woody plants (Hoffman *et al.* 1999). Numerous invasive alien species occur in the park (Appendix 2). Control operations commenced in 1996, and in November 2003 SANParks-ISCU initiated the current alien plant management programme, funded by working for water. The following methods were used over the past five years:

- Chemical control, use of herbicides in accordance with Fertilisers, Farm feeds, Agricultural Remedies and stock Remedies Act (No 36 Of 1947)
- Mechanical control, hand pulling or hoeing in sparse stands under conditions where seedlings are easily removed from the soil, (Conservation of Agricultural Resources ACT 1983 (Act 43 of 1983)

The use of these methods brought about a significant reduction in the densities of alien plants now, compared to five years ago.

SANParks has a legal obligation to control and eradicate weeds and invader plants in terms of CARA. The control and eradication strategy is therefore based in the list published in terms of the CARA and the associated regulations as well as the invasive species identified in the park. DEA is currently in the process of finalising an alien invasive species list to be published in terms of the NEM:BA. SANParks acknowledge that as soon as this list has been gazetted the park will have to comply with section 70 to 77 of the NEM:BA. SANParks will align the alien species control and eradication programme accordingly.

There is currently no indication as to when the control plan is to be completed; in fact it is likely to continue in the foreseeable future because seeds of several species spread into the park from external sources.

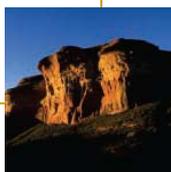
ALIEN AND INVASIVE SPECIES PROGRAMME					
Purpose: To control and to prevent the entry of invasive alien species, and to monitor the extent of infestation and the efficacy of control measures in accordance with Clause 76 of NEM: BAA					
Objectives	Actions	Responsibility	Indicators	Timeframe	Reference
To determine the extent and impact of existing and potential alien plants within and on the periphery of the park.	Update the management Unit clearing plan for the park.	ISCU; SSR	Updated pan	Year 1, ongoing	ISCU strategic pan; WfW LLP.
	Developing a monitoring system for emerging alien plants	ISCU; SSR	ISCU self assessment and field inspection reports	Year 1 and ongoing	CARA, SANParks Biodiversity Monitoring System
To develop a prevention and control strategy for Alien Plant Control and to monitor its effectiveness	Prioritise alien plant control activities to current available budget, including follow-up operations.	ISCU; SSR	Progress reports	Year 1, ongoing	
	Establish a rapid response team and capacity for dealing with emerging alien plants	ISCU; SSR	Progress reports; MUCP	Year 1, ongoing	
	Identify and develop partnerships to address alien plant control on a landscape level	PM,, CSD	Partnership agreements	Year 1, ongoing	
	Monitor and evaluate the efficacy of prevention and control programmes	ISCU;	Evaluation reports	Year 1, ongoing	
	Secure further funding for alien pant control programme shortfall.	PM	Funding secured where possible	Year 1, ongoing	

10.2.2.2 Fire management

The purpose of the fire programme will be to maintain the natural, cultural and biodiversity components of the ecosystem whilst protecting life and property within the park. Fire is one of the major ecosystem drivers and is vital for ecological processes that influence the landscape. It is considered one of the tools that managers possess to actively influence the dynamics of grassland ecosystems. Fire is a natural phenomenon in the region, and the flora and fauna of the region are adapted to a natural fire regime. What constitutes a natural fire regime, however, is debatable. The shift from a natural fire regime to production-orientated fire regimes (intended to maximise livestock production, but often too frequent and at inappropriate times), including an increase in unplanned fires, may have resulted in local extinction of species whose life-cycles are out of synchrony with the unnatural fire regime. Ecosystem functioning, including hydrology, soil nutrient dynamics, and soil erosion are also sensitive to fire regime.

Fire in the GGHNP is caused primarily by humans, either in a planned (management fires, arson fires) or unplanned (runaway planned fires) manner. Fires from lightning strikes do occur, but are generally localised and infrequent. The management of fire, both planned and unplanned, requires significant financial and human resource investment.

Maintaining complete fire records and monitoring the impact of fire are an important part of the programme. The current fire management plan for the park, developed in 2006, is under review in the light of new understanding and SANParks objectives, and needs to be integrated with the fire management plan for the MDTFCA. The new fire management programme will be based on historical fire records and guided by park specific management objectives. A fire monitoring component will be implemented. The safety component focuses on participation in fire protection associations and the maintenance of firebreaks are key components of the programme.



FIRE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME					
Purpose: Manage fire in a way that maintains natural, cultural and biodiversity components of the ecosystems within the park, whilst protecting life and property.					
Objectives	Actions	Responsibility	Indicators	Timeframe	Reference
Develop and update an integrated fire management plan for the GGHP	Update fire records for the park and surrounds	SSR	Complete records	Ongoing	
	Align the park's integrated fire management plan with MDTFCA strategic fire management guidelines	CSD; SSR	Fire management plan	Year 3	MDTFCA five-year action plan
	Develop and implement a fire monitoring system for the park, including fire management TPCs.	SSR; CSD	System developed	Year 1 and ongoing	
	Identify research needs and initiate projects (<i>i.e.</i> effect of fire on wetlands)	CSD; PM	Research projects initiated	Year 2, ongoing	
To implement appropriate fire regime within the park	Develop a plan for fire management to include spatially defined burning schedules.	SSR; CSD	LLP developed	Year 2	MDTFCA integrated fire programme
	Implement burning schedules.	SSR	Progress reports, individual reports on fire incidents	Year 1, ongoing	
Prevent and suppress wild fires	Determine location and extent of all firebreaks within and around the park	SSR	GIS Layer	Year 1	
	Develop and implement fire break programme	SSR, Working for Fire	Completed fire breaks	Year 1, ongoing	
	Enter into agreement with fire protection associations and adjoining land owners where applicable.	SSR	FPA agreement	Year 1, ongoing	
	Actively participate in the Greater Bethlehem fire protection association.	SSR	Incident call out report	Year 1, ongoing	

10.2.2.3 Species of special concern

The purpose of this programme is to prevent local extinction of any species on the IUCN's (the World Conservation Union) global critically endangered or endangered species list, and to put in place appropriate monitoring and conservation efforts of other species of special concern in the park. To conserve the biodiversity in the park it is important to understand the species and habitats that contribute to the ecological integrity of the ecosystem. Golden Gate Highland National Park has several species restricted to the region, often with life history requirements extending beyond the boundary of the park. In addition the park has a history of human induced disturbances (e.g. fire management and

poaching), that may impose significant threats to the persistence of many species of special concern. The species of special concern programme needs to be aligned with all other biodiversity programmes. Habitat preference and fire tolerance for faunal and floral species (i.e. *Oribi Ourebia ourebi* and *Protea* species) should be a key consideration when following the burning programme, as fire can alter their biological and physical environment (Daemane 2006). It is important to align GGHNP's species of special concern management programme with co-management and contractual agreements by revisiting existing and establishing new agreements with stakeholders and affected parties where appropriate.

SPECIES OF SPECIAL CONCERN PROGRAMME					
Purpose: To prevent local extinction of any species, and to implement appropriate monitoring and conservation of identified species of special concern.					
Objectives	Actions	Responsibility	Indicators	Timeframe	Reference
To define the conservation status of species of special concern through evaluation of distributions, abundances and threats.	Gather historical information to construct appropriate species lists and habitat requirements.	SSR; CSD	SSC register	Year 2, ongoing	Historical records
	Extract abundance and demographic information where possible making use of formal and informal surveys	SSR; CSD	Ranger reports	Year 1, ongoing	
	Define TPCs for SSCs by collating available information and engaging with relevant experts	PM; CSD	TPCs developed	Year 3	
To ensure the persistence of SSC by reducing identified threats and by taking their needs into account in other management programmes.	Describe threats to species of special concern	CSD; PM	Threats identified and described	Year 3	Water in the landscape programme
	Align the specific species requirements to management actions, by developing a management plan for species of special concern	PM; CSD	Plan with specific guidelines developed	Year 3	
To guide the management of SSC through collaborative research and monitoring.	Develop an integrated monitoring programme which addresses the conservation status of SSC	CSD; PM	Monitoring programme developed	Year 3	
	Develop and implement an integrated research programme that addresses the conservation status SSC	CSD; PM	Research Programme developed	Year 3	
	Inform and provide feedback to park management, relevant stakeholders through research reports and summarised recommendations	CSD; PM	Research reports	Year 3	
	Implement the bearded vulture monitoring and conservation programme	SSR	Annual reports	Ongoing	



10.2.2.4 Wildlife Management

The purpose of this programme is to focus on simulating ecological processes, aligning wildlife management with other management actions, record genetic integrity and contribute to the regional persistence of species. It is the policy of SANParks to as far as possible restore the diversity of species that were present in historical times, provided that habitat conditions have either remained adequate or can be rendered adequate through rehabilitation measures. Most large mammals that historically were resident in the park and region are currently present. The park therefore does not require substantial restoration of large mammal communities. However, several species in the park may be captured for introductions to other areas in the MDTFCA.

Key anthropogenic influences that will greatly affect wildlife species' dynamics are the fire policies and illegal activities; grazing by livestock (through interspecific competition) and poaching. Other management actions such as wetland restoration and the provision of carcasses at the vulture restaurants may have undesirable consequences particularly for rare and specialized species. Wildlife management thus needs to be strongly aligned with other management programmes.

SANParks follows the conservation paradigm that acknowledges the flux of nature and importance of spatio-temporal patchiness and habitat heterogeneity in maintaining biodiversity. Consequently the concept of 'carrying capacity' has given way to one that considers the dynamic equilibrium and change inherent within such complex systems. This is particularly relevant in the park, given that maintenance of constant levels of herbivore numbers on the landscape may lead to degradation of the vegetation communities. In the GGHNP case, wildlife management will focus on mimicking ecological processes, ensuring the generic integrity of species, aligning wildlife management with other management actions, record genetic integrity and contribute to regional persistence of species

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME					
Purpose: Focus on simulating ecological processes, aligning wildlife management with other management actions, record genetic integrity and contribute to the regional persistence of species.					
Objectives	Actions	Responsibility	Indicators	Timeframe	Reference
To restore and maintain the wildlife species assemblages typical of the Golden Gate region by mimicking the ecological processes that were most likely playing out in an unconstrained landscape.	Develop proposals for species removals (including extra-limital species) and introductions following the wildlife management procedure	CSD; SSR	Developed proposals	Year 1, ongoing	
	Sample the genetic integrity of selected species (especially black wildebeest)	CSD; SSR	Records	Year 3	

Objectives	Actions	Responsibility	Indicators	Timeframe	Reference
To manage wildlife effects on biodiversity values through inducing spatial and temporal variation in wildlife use of landscapes by restoring the spatial limitations of the landscape on wildlife dynamics	Develop management guidelines to minimise effects of different programmes on wildlife management (e.g. fire, restoration, SSC)	CSD; M	Management guidelines developed	Year 2	
	Consolidation of land and possible re-alignment of fences	PM; CSD	Land restitution process completed.	Year 3	
To manage wildlife effects on biodiversity values through inducing spatial and temporal variation in wildlife use of landscapes by restoring the spatial limitations of the landscape on wildlife dynamics	Develop management guidelines to minimise effects of different programmes on wildlife management (e.g. fire, restoration, SSC)	CSD; PM	Management guidelines developed	Year 2	
	Consolidation of land and possible re-alignment of fences	PM; CSD	Land restitution process completed.	Year 3	
To manage lag- and spill-over effects of wildlife management on human-wildlife interactions through implementing damage animal control pro-actively and re-actively	Identify, define; and research mechanisms and drivers of problem animal concerns as well as response plans	CSD; SSR	Science report and response plan developed	Year 3	

10.2.3 Sustainable and natural resource use

One of the purposes of protected areas is to provide for sustainable use of natural and biological resources (NEM:PA Sections 17 and 41f). SANParks resource use policy emphasises the conservation of South Africa’s biodiversity and cultural heritage as the primary purpose of the organization but also acknowledges the tangible, intangible, direct and indirect values of resources to different stakeholders and the potential of resources in protected areas to contribute to human well-being. Hence, the policy encourages a co-management approach to natural resource use, and emphasizes the importance of contributions by stakeholders at local, national and international levels to decision-making. Thus SANParks evaluates opportunities for resource use in national parks in consultation with stakeholders. Where resource use takes place it is subject to Section 7 of the NEM:PAA Regulations for the proper administration of special nature reserves, national parks and world heritage sites whereby:

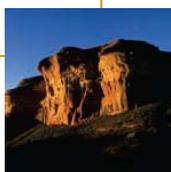
“A management authority must before the end of June of each year submit a return to the Minister in

respect of the use of biological resources for the preceding financial year detailing-

- a) the number of licenses, permits and agreements granted to entered into in respect of the use of biological resources;*
- b) a description of the biological resources used;*
- c) the quantities of the biological resource harvested;*
- d) the income generated by the harvesting of biological resources;*
- e) the conservation status of the biological resources exploited.”*

No current ongoing programme for resource use in GGHP exists. Consideration is being given to developing a project for the use of thatching grass. The project will address the following criteria:

- Need for short, medium and long term objectives.
- Projects need to be set up to learn with a scale of increasing complexity.
- There should be long funding cycles.
- The project has to be monitored and reported on to establish and maintain the process of learning by doing.



SUSTAINABLE NATURAL RESOURCE PROGRAMME					
Purpose: Strive to ensure that the park continues to contribute towards providing access and benefits to communities in a sustainable manner, based on sound environmental principles.					
Objectives	Actions	Responsibility	Indicators	Timeframe	Reference
To identify and understand how the park could provide access and benefits	To identify projects taking into consideration ecological and socio-economic dimensions.	P&C officer, CSD	Inventory of projects	Ongoing	
	Review the resource use lower level plan	P&C officer	LLP document	Year 1	Viability report, resource use policy
	Prioritise sustainable resource use projects in GGHP	P&C officer	Reports, permits	Year 2 ongoing	LLPs on Resource use, cultural heritage
	Implement priority sustainable resource use projects	P&C officer	Project reports	Year 2, ongoing	
	Develop implementation plans	P&C officer	Implementation plans	Year 2, ongoing	
	Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the resource use programme	P&C officer and rangers	Annual Report to Minister	Year 2, ongoing	

10.3 Tourism

High level objective

To maintain, grow and promote the park as a safe tourism destination offering memorable value-for-money experiences through excellent service standards

The purpose of this programme is to find a balance between providing products and activities for the appropriate use, appreciation and enjoyment by visitors while having minimal impact on the conservation and biodiversity assets that make the park special.

The vision for sustainable tourism in the park is to become a tourism destination within South Africa and the MDTFCA context that provides for the needs of visitors, enhances the visitor experience and maintains a good balance between tourism, heritage and biodiversity conservation.

Strategic and targeted promotion and marketing can influence visitor awareness, numbers and length of stay. This is a vital component in attracting more visitors to visit, stay over and experience the park. Secondly, promotion and marketing communicates the message of the conservation of cultural and biodiversity assets to the broader public.

The conference facilities at the Golden Gate Hotel provide an added attraction to expose visitors to the park. The conferences are attended by substantial numbers of black participants, many of whom return to the park as tourists.

The integration with existing tourism structures on a national and regional level could further boost promotion and marketing opportunities. Tourism in the Eastern Free State is built around a number of towns, features and products that include amongst others the following:

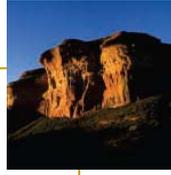
- The Maloti Drakensberg Route: collaborative venture between South Africa and Lesotho to enhance tourism growth across international and national boundaries so as to bring together tourism operators from both countries and increase benefits to the people of the region.
- Free State Tourism Authority has been mandated to promote and market tourism in the province.
- Local, district and provincial tourism initiatives are strengthened through GGHP and its famous Brandwag Buttreff as the attraction and emblem.

SANParks has embarked on tourism in the park to generate income for the organisation in support of the conservation of biodiversity and cultural assets while affording tourists the opportunity to enjoy the nature based products and activities. Secondly SANParks wants to boost local economic development, through providing jobs, contracting certain services thereby stimulating the establishment of small and medium enterprises (SMME's).

Because of its wide range of tourism products the park is expected to play an important role - through the tourism academy - in training and capacity development of tourism students from the local communities.

It is not envisaged at this stage, that the park will be able to achieve financial sustainability in the next planning cycle. SANParks will subsidise the shortfall.

TOURISM PROGRAMME					
High level objective: To maintain, grow and promote the park as a safe tourism destination offering memorable value-for-money experiences through excellent service standards					
Purpose: To find a balance between providing products and activities for the appropriate use, appreciation and enjoyment by visitors while having minimal impact on the conservation and biodiversity assets					
Objectives	Actions	Responsibility	Indicators	Timeframe	Reference
To maintain and improve current tourism experiences and supporting facilities to a high service standard to generate income for SANParks	Maintain and improve essential services (food and beverage, housekeeping, gardening, conferencing, trade, horse rides, hikes, drives) in accordance with SANParks standards initiative	Tourism managers	Income to cost ratio, client feedback, Compliance with SANParks standards growth in income per room, growth in occupancy, growth in REVPAR, food and beverage spend, conference spend	Ongoing	Infrastructure maintenance, environmental management
	Maintain staff training to implement the tourism programme and deliver quality products and services	Tourism managers	Training programmes attended	Ongoing	
	Ensure staff are capacitated to communicate relevant information to visitors	Tourism managers, P&C officer	Shared information, handovers, marketing	Year 1 and Ongoing	
	Carry out surveys and encourage usage of guest questionnaires and electronic feedback systems	Tourism Managers	Guest responses	Ongoing	
	Continually assess and improve on tourism products and services within the park to ensure value for money	Tourism managers	Guest responses	Ongoing	



Objectives	Actions	Responsibility	Indicators	Timeframe	Reference
Diversify and package products to accommodate various market segments	Conduct needs analysis	Tourism managers	Reports	Year 1	
	Separate different products available in the park and identify specific interest groups.	Tourism managers, regional marketing	Inventory of products	Year 1	
	Package products where applicable and market it to specific interest groups	Tourism managers,	Product packages, brochures	Year 1	
	Increase the number of black visitors to the park	Tourism managers	Visitor statistics	Ongoing	
To improve visitor experiences by enhancing existing products and developing new ones.	Review existing activities	Tourism managers	Report reviewing activities	Year 1	
	Identify new initiatives for introduction.	Tourism managers	Feasibility report	Year 1	Environmental education
	Implement prioritised initiatives.	Tourism managers	Number of participants growth in income	Ongoing as per schedule	
To promote awareness of the tourism experiences to a diversity of users and stakeholders through appropriate marketing	Use all available media and marketing forums, covering a diversity of audiences and stakeholders for awareness programmes	Tourism managers, regional marketing manager,	Attending specific meetings, articles on park in local media, regional marketing strategy, marketing plan	Year 1	Stakeholder cooperation
	Use SANParks week to introduce and market tourism experiences in GGHNP	P&C, Tourism Managers	Roomseeker statistics	Annually	

10.4 People and conservation

The People and Conservation section in the park has co-responsibility with park management for two broad spheres identified as overall objectives for the park. These are heritage and conservation constituency building and, although other sections in the park are also involved, they are dealt with under this section.

10.4.1 Cultural heritage resource

The purpose of this programme is to manage and sustain the significance, authenticity and integrity of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage resources within the park.

In accordance with the National Heritage Resources Act no 25 of 1999 the cultural resources programme aims to development a heritage management plan for proper management of heritage resources.

Access by visitors and local communities, interpretation, risk mitigation and monitoring of the state of the sites are important components of the management plan.

A significant risk to the cultural heritage sites is that of damage by unsupervised visitors to the easily accessible sites, particularly those that are near the provincial road. There is a need to find ways to protect these sites. There is also an urgent need for background research, especially to collect oral history relevant to the sites before it is lost.

CULTURAL HERITAGE RESOURCE PROGRAMME					
Objective: To collaboratively conserve and sustain the cultural heritage assets and associated benefits					
Purpose: To manage and sustain the significance, authenticity and integrity of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage resources within the park.					
Objectives	Actions	Responsibility	Indicators	Timeframe	Reference
To promote research on the cultural heritage significance of the park	Support ongoing research projects	P&C officer, Social scientist	Registered research projects	Ongoing	NHRA
	Implement feasible recommendations from research reports	P & C pficer; Social scientist	Implemen- tation plans	Ongoing	
Develop a cultural heritage Resources management plan	Update the current data base of cultural resources	P&C officer	Updated Inventory	Year 2- 4	Existing Inventory
	Record the oral history of the GGHP	P&C officer	Report	Ongoing	NHRA, SANParks guidelines, policy
	Determine priority list for sites of significance	P&C officer, Cultural heritage manager	Declaration document	Year 1 to 3	
	Determine sites of national importance on the data base and have them formally declared	P&C officer, Cultural heritage manager	Declaration document	Year 2-4	
	Develop and review site specific management plans for prioritised sites.	P&C officer, Cultural heritage manager	Site manage- ment plans	Ongoing	
	Develop and implement routine monitoring and reporting systems on the status of sites	P&C Officer, Cultural heritage manager	Report	Ongoing	
	Support ongoing research projects	P&C Officer, Social scientist	Registered research projects	Ongoing	NHRA
	Implement feasible recommendations from research reports	P & C Officer; Social scientist	Implemen- tation plans	Ongoing	



Objectives	Actions	Responsibility	Indicators	Timeframe	Reference
To promote and implement responsible tourism and other activities associated with cultural heritage sites	Identify sites that are suitable for cultural heritage tourism	P&C officer, SSR, tourism manager	Inventory of sites	Year 1 and 2	NHRA, SANParks Guidelines, Policy
	Develop an interpretation plan for tourism related cultural heritage sites	P&C officer cultural heritage manager	Interpretation document	Year 3	SANParks Guidelines, Policy
	Develop a guideline document for community access and benefit opportunities (<i>i.e.</i> visits to initiation places, fertility caves, sustainable use of medicinal plants)	P&C Officer cultural heritage manager	Guideline document	Year 1 and 2	NHRA, SANParks Guidelines, Policy

10.4.2 Geological and paleontological resources

This purpose of this programme is to address one of the primary motives for the declaration of the park, namely the unique and spectacular geological formations. There is a particular need to promote appreciation and the understanding of these formations, especially the interactions between geology, landscape, microclimate and the biota of the park. The programme also aims to develop guidelines to management and risk mitigation.

GEOLOGICAL AND PALEONTOLOGICAL PROGRAMME					
Objective: To document, conserve and appropriately promote accessibility in understanding and appreciation of the rich geological, geomorphological and paleontological assets of GGHP and its surroundings					
Objectives	Actions	Responsibility	Indicators	Timeframe	Reference
Document the geological, geomorphological and paleontological assets	Identify zones of geological and paleontological importance.	CSD	Research report	Year 2	
	For each zone of importance, identify ecological and social risks, and spatial linkages.	CSD	Research report	Year 2-3	

Objectives	Actions	Responsibility	Indicators	Timeframe	Reference
Conserve and promote accessibility to the geological, geomorphological and paleontological assets	Develop conservation guidelines for areas of high geological and paleontological importance	Park management	Annual report	Year 1	EE & tourism programme
	Provide relevant and appropriate information, education and awareness on palaeontology, with specific reference to the discovery of the dinosaur eggs	P&C officer	Annual report	Ongoing	
	Evaluate, inform and revise the geological and paleontological programme through collaborative research and monitoring agreements	CSD; Park manager	Annual report, research reports	Ongoing	



10.4.3 Environmental awareness and education

High level objective

To continue collaborative implementation of environmental awareness and education programmes to strengthen networking opportunities and promote the importance of a holistic approach to environmental conservation initiatives

The purpose of this programme is to build constituencies by knowledge transfer and awareness creation amongst people in support of SANParks' conservation endeavours by playing a significant, targeted and effective role in promoting a variety of educational learning opportunities and initiatives. The People and conservation section in the park will continue to focus attention on youth development and environmental education learning opportunities in order to build a conservation constituency for the future. As a national park that should be preserved for the future, all issues pertaining to the core business of the park in relation to environmental education should be researched on a continuous basis. This will include the capacitating and training of staff within the specialist areas of the variety of the programmes. External evaluation of the environmental education learning opportunities and programmes that are presented in the park will be done by means of an evaluation feedback form that will be supplied to all groups.

In the park there are a range of environmental education (EE) and awareness programmes, activities and initiatives that contribute to local and other educational development. The Wilgenhof EE Centre is a 92-bed facility where two to five day overnight EE programmes are presented. The themes of the programmes are built around lenses on a highland environment and are all strongly linked to the national school curriculum. The programmes are supplemented by outdoor activities like abseiling, canoeing, guided walks and horse riding.

The special partnership programme Kids in Parks is hosted on an annual basis where presently 500 children and 20 teachers per annum, from previously disadvantaged areas around the park, visit the park. The international eco schools programme is implemented in all schools that have participated in the Kids in Parks programme, thereby providing a follow-up programme for continuity. Calendar Day events are celebrated annually together with schools, communities and other relevant departments to enhance and strengthen the awareness of people on the environment.

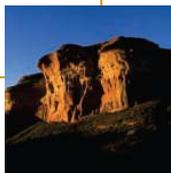
Educational day programmes for school groups and other special interest groups are designed according to the need of groups and presented on a regular basis.

Teacher development is conducted through one day workshops, where park resources are introduced to strengthen and enhance education programmes. At these workshops the curriculum is linked with biodiversity conservation through the development of simple but effective hands-on resources. Youth development programmes are strengthened by involving unemployed youth in skills development and learnership programmes, as well as guiding and adventure activities that create employment possibilities.

The Imbewu programme facilitates knowledge transfer through elders from the community, who are familiar with the skills, knowledge, values and norms that are relevant to the local culture and community life. The elders influence and motivate the youth by being leaders and role models. A media centre with computers is available promote opportunities for the children of staff members to become computer literate.

There is also a yearly sleep-over environmental education programme for children of staff at the Wilgenhof Centre. Special interest groups e.g. university students, religious groups or clubs that make use of the Wilgenhof facilities receive inputs on environmental awareness.

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS AND EDUCATION PROGRAMME					
High level objective: To continue collaborative implementation of environmental awareness and education programmes to strengthen networking opportunities and promote the importance of a holistic approach to environmental conservation initiatives					
Objectives	Actions	Responsibility	Indicators	Timeframe	Reference
To review existing park-based programmes and identify new programmes that specifically capitalise on strengths and opportunities	Review the lower level plan	P&C officer	Reviewed LLP	Year 1	Existing LLP
	Review and update existing EE programmes	P&C officer	Report	Ongoing	EE policy, documents
	Develop new programmes as required	P&C officer	Programme	As required	
To strengthen outreach projects for local communities and other target groups	Review and update awareness and outreach projects	P&C officer	Programme	Ongoing	
	Implement awareness and outreach projects.	P&C Officer	Schedule	Ongoing	
To sustain collaboration with various partners on projects and programmes.	Implement Imbewu programme	P&C officer	Report	Ongoing	Business Plan
	Implement Eco-Schools	P&C officer	Report	Ongoing	
	Implement Kids in Parks programme	P&C officer	Report	Ongoing	
	Implement junior ranger programme	P&C officer	Report	Ongoing	
	Teacher development programmes	P&C officer	Report	Ongoing	
	Provide opportunities for tertiary education and co-learning, aligned with park information and knowledge	P&C officer	Report	Ongoing	



10.4.4 Local economy and livelihoods

Overall Objective:

To strive to be a key contributor to the local economy and livelihoods

This objective implies that the park will strive to be a key contributor to the local economy and livelihoods. It includes three programmes: sustainable natural resource use (covered in 1.2), stakeholder relationship building and local socio-economic development.

10.4.4.1 Stakeholder relationship building

The purpose of the programme is to promote a conservation ethic, through developing healthy community relations with all relevant stakeholders, in order to forge strategic partnerships that are important to ensure the long-term sustainability of the park. To facilitate this programme a park forum has been established. The forum functions to provide a legitimate platform to communicate with stakeholders about the park, to ensure participation of stakeholders and facilitate constructive interaction between the park, surrounding communities and other stakeholders. The establishment and activities of forum are guided by terms of reference. Formal meetings of the forum take place on a quarterly basis. In addition to the park forum a stakeholder engagement plan and stakeholder database will be developed. The park forum consist of nine portfolios for which representatives are elected from a park forum plenary that represents more than 45 institutions and organisations, including different spheres of government, neighbouring communities and other interest

STAKEHOLDER RELATIONSHIPS PROGRAMME					
Purpose: To promote a conservation ethic, through developing healthy community relations with all relevant stakeholders, in order to forge strategic partnerships that are important to ensure the long-term sustainability of the park.					
Objectives	Actions	Responsibility	Indicators	Timeframe	Reference
To nurture cooperative relationships with all park stakeholders	Development of a stakeholder engagement Plan	P&C officer, P&C manager, marketing & communication manager	Stakeholder engagement plan	Year 2	
	Update stakeholder database	P&C officer	Stakeholder database	Year 1	Stakeholder Database
	Strengthen new and existing relationships between conservation agencies, government, adjacent communities and other parties	P&C officer, Park management	Meeting minutes and reports	Ongoing	

Objectives	Actions	Responsibility	Indicators	Timeframe	Reference
To maintain a functional park forum	Provide guidance, administrative and logistical support to ensure that the park forum and park forum plenary remains functional	P&C officer	Meeting minutes	Ongoing	
	Develop a monitoring and evaluation tool to assess effectiveness of Park Forum	P&C officer P&C manager	Report	Year 2, ongoing	

10.4.4.2 Local socio-economic development

This purpose of this programme is to contribute effectively towards local economic development, economic empowerment and social development in communities and areas adjacent to the park. The contribution of the park to local socio-economic development will in turn contribute greatly to the continuous conservation and preservation of the park for future generations. By doing so the local communities will be able to continue to take ownership of the park and embrace its existence. The park works together with local government to form part of the IDPs) participating in government programmes (WfW, EPWP *etc.*) that contribute to local skills development, supporting learnerships, implementing needs related training programmes and by creating business opportunities.

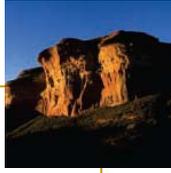
SANParks needs to keep up and expand its reputation as a reliable and meaningful vehicle for such government expenditure with major opportunities presenting themselves in the next planning cycle being related to alien plant clearing, wetland rehabilitation and infrastructure development. The establishment of appropriate and ongoing monitoring indicators and criteria requires expansion beyond the EPWP projects and research. The intention is to sustain existing programmes and make adjustments as informed by the context of the park. Important risks to this programme relate to a reliance on external funding.

The poverty relief teams in GGHNP are involved with Working for water (alien plant clearing), Working for wetlands (wetland rehabilitation), Working on fire (fire fighting teams deployed in park), infrastructure upgrade and development (constructing new tourism facilities and maintenance) and continuous training initiatives that are undertaken for park employees as well as unemployed community members in skills development training in registered career courses.

Several small community businesses are supported by facilitating processes with other organisations for the sake of encouraging and enhancing local economic empowerment, eg. support of small community businesses by linking them to exhibition opportunities, outlets and further development and support in different partnerships (Thaba blinds grass factory, adventure activity guides, *etc.*), use of small local businesses for catering, cultural group dancing and cultural instrument displays and support to Basotho Cultural Village that is an initiative managed by the Free State province supporting community initiatives by utilising their expertise and products to promote the Basotho culture.

In adherence to SANParks' procurement policy, procurement for GGHNP is done locally, within the Thabo Mofutsanyana District as far as possible, and focused on broad based black economic empowerment. During the first five months of the 2011/2012 financial year 88.62% of the total procurement spent by GGHNP, which amounts to R13.3 million, was spent with BEE compliant companies of which the majority are in the eastern Free State.

The park's staff establishment has 252 permanent posts and in the 2011/2012 financial year the park also provides 233 temporary jobs through the mentioned poverty alleviation projects.



LOCAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME					
Purpose: To strive to ensure that the park continues to be a key contributor to the local economy and livelihoods.					
Objectives	Actions	Responsibility	Indicators	Timeframe	Reference
To promote, support and advocate collaborative partnerships, employment and learning opportunities that enhance livelihoods across several sectors of the economy	Review of lower level plan (LLP)	P&C officer	Reviewed LLP	Year 1	Existing LLP
	Continue engagement with the Free State Department of sports, arts, and culture to conclude the agreement between the two parties regarding the management of the Basotho Cultural Village.	Park manager, P&C officer	MoA	Year 1-2	
	Identify and support small local businesses through procurement	P&C officer, Tourism manager	Inventory of identified opportunities	Ongoing	
To be a key contributor to local and regional economic growth	Update the supplier list of the park	Park Manager	Supplier List	Ongoing	
	Procure from local and regional suppliers	Park manager	Preferential procurement report	Ongoing	
	Identify opportunities for job creation	P&C officer, Park manager	Report	Ongoing	
	Record economic contribution of the park to the local economy.	Park manager	Procurement Reports	Ongoing	

10.5 Effective park management

High level objective

To strive for effective management and administrative support services enabling the park to achieve its objectives

This enabling high level objective, which entails striving for effective management and administrative support services, includes six programmes: environmental management, risk management, financial management and administration, human capital development, infrastructure maintenance and safety and security.

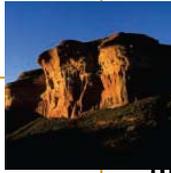
10.5.1 Environmental management

The purpose of this programme is to set clear guidelines for the management of environmental impacts and resource use. Proper management of development and operational activities within the park can only be achieved through appropriate planning tools and effective controls. A number of management tools are being used to develop and manage the park in a manner consistent with the relevant legislation and the SANParks policy framework. These key tools and controls used by the park forms the basis of an environmental management framework.

The Minister of The Department of Water and Environmental Affairs has, in terms of section 24(2) of the National Environmental Management Act, 107 of 1998 (NEMA), identified activities that may not commence without authorisation from the competent authority. NEMA is of general application throughout South Africa and relevant provisions therefore apply to the GGHNP. Further to the provisions of NEMA, the park will develop standards of best practice to guide all operational activities that may have an impact on the environment cause harm to the environment.

These activities will include any new infrastructure development that is not listed under NEMA; as well as general maintenance. The development of best practice standards will be guided by the precautionary principle. The precautionary principle states that if an action might in the absence of a scientific consensus that harm would not ensue, the burden of proof falls on those who would advocate taking the action.

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME					
Purpose: To reduce external threats and pressures, and limit impacts of surrounding land and resource use on biodiversity conservation within the park.					
Objectives	Actions	Responsibility	Indicators	Timeframe	Reference
To ensure compliance with environmental legislation and best practice principles for all management activities in the GGHNP	Make all new environmental legislation available to park management.	SSR	Updated environmental legislation and best practice principles available	Ongoing	
	Review and develop a set of best practice principles for identified activities as required.	SSR	Best practice principles developed	Ongoing	Zoning plan; fire management guidelines
	Conduct internal scoping of all activities that may potentially impact on the environment and ensure that EIAs and HIAs are conducted where required and that EMPs are developed to guide activities	SSR	Compliance as required	Ongoing	Zoning plan



10.5.2 Risk management

The management of business risk is regarded by SANParks as an integral part of management across all business operations. In line with corporate governance best practices and as per PFMA requirements, the Board of SANParks has formalised the risk management processes by adopting a corporate risk management framework. The main aim is to instil a culture of corporate risk management and risk ownership being practised as the responsibility of all. This will provide SANParks with a comprehensive understanding of all identified risks and their potential impact on the achievement of objectives - thereby creating a good basis for effective management of those risks that are assessed as exceeding the risk appetite of the organisation. For the park, visitor safety has been identified as a major risk, and the focus will be on exploring specific interventions to mitigate this risk.

RISK MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME					
Purpose: To ensure that emerging issues of risk, that can jeopardise the achievement of park (and SANParks' corporate) objectives, are timely identified and assessed in terms of possible severity.					
Objectives	Actions	Responsibility	Indicators	Timeframe	Reference
To establish and maintain effective, efficient and transparent systems of risk management	To identify and assess risks for all business operations in the park	Park manager	Risk register	Year 1	
	To develop responses to address and prevent or mitigate issues of risk.	Park management	Risk response plan	Year 1	PFMA, OHS Act, NEM:PAA NHBC reg's <i>etc.</i>
	To monitor effectiveness in terms of the risk response plan and improve as needed.	Park management	BSC	ongoing	
	Identify and develop interventions to ensure visitor safety	Park management	Visitor safety risk mitigation plan	Year 1	

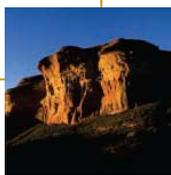
10.5.3 Human capacity building

The park strives for the effective management of human capital through the recruitment and selection of highly qualified individuals to meet the strategic objectives of the organisation. We seek to promote lifelong learning within the organisation by implementing a skills development programme informed by a skills audit. The park furthermore seeks to maintain a healthy workforce within a supportive environment, and specific objectives include inculcating a sense of wellness, to maximise work performance and to develop an institutional culture that is sensitive to the needs of those in need of help. Transformation will be enhanced by implementing the employment equity plan and ensure the attainment of the set equity targets.

The park has an establishment figure of 252. Each employee has set goals in terms of defined individual development plans. These development plans are based on the individual's training needs as agreed upon by the employee and his / her supervisor.

The use of the SETA's for funding the training will be explored both at head office and park level. A work place skills development plan is also produced for the park every year as required by legislation. This is coordinated at head office level, with input from the park and the employment equity forum. Most of the staff is involved and encouraged to make inputs into the plan.

HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME					
Purpose: To ensure good human resource management and implement best practices in managing and understanding HIV and AIDS and associated diseases					
Objectives	Actions	Responsibility	Indicators	Timeframe	Reference
To ensure the park attracts and retains the most suitable human capital	Implement the corporate selection and recruitment policy	HR admin officer	Procedures followed for appointments	Ongoing	SANParks recruitment and selection policy
To implement the performance management system	Promote awareness and ensure that category C and up have signed balance scorecards	HR admin officer, Park manager	Balance scorecard documents	Ongoing	
To implement plans and skills development strategies to meet the strategic goals of the organisation	Conduct skills audit, develop skills plan and conduct training interventions	HR admin officer	Training plan in place, % of employees trained, and of budget spent on training	Ongoing	GGHNP training plan
	Develop human capital in the fields of conservation, social ecology and ecotourism through the internship programme	HR admin officer	Implementation of internship programme	Annual	
	Develop human capital in the field of ecotourism by introducing tourism experiences to learners	Tourism Manager	Learner groups addressed	Ongoing	
	Enable staff to keep abreast of trends in conservation and the tourism industry to positively influence practises in the park.	HR admin officer, SSR, tourism manager	Affiliation to relevant bodies, attendance of meetings	Ongoing	
To ensure EE targets are met	Establish EE forum, design EE plan and fill vacancies as per EE targets	HR admin officer, park manager	Vacancies filled	Ongoing	EE report submitted
Implement workplace health care programmes which focus on preventative physical and mental health care	Conduct Aids awareness workshops	HR admin officer	Workshops, attendance	Ongoing	Corporate HIV policy
	Provide private facilities at all areas within the GGHNP to enable employees access to ICAS	HR Admin Officer	Facilities, reports	Ongoing	
	Invite professionals to the GGHNP to promote awareness on OHS and mental health issues	HR admin officer	Attendance registers	ongoing	
	Commemorate all events related to wellness (e.g. AIDS day, world blood donor day, days of activism on non violence against women)	HR admin officer	Attendance registers, invitations	Ongoing	



10.5.4 Financial management and administration

SANParks' budget policy follows the zero-based approach, which implies that every category must be critically assessed, evaluated and supported by an approved business plan. Once budget amounts have been determined for a category, it needs to be compared to previous years and any variance in excess in excess of budget guidelines must be motivated and explained. The budget period is for one financial year starting on 1 April and end on 31 March the following year. Annual budgets should be compiled in accordance to budget guidelines and instructions issued annually by SANParks corporate finance division.

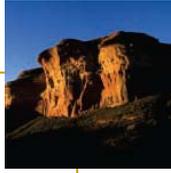
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION PROGRAMME					
Objective: To collaboratively conserve and sustain the cultural heritage assets and associated benefits					
Purpose: Effective budget management and growing revenue					
Objectives	Actions	Responsibility	Indicators	Time-frame	Reference
To attain effective financial management of the GGHNP	Ensure less than 1% variance on cost of operations	PM and HoDs	Statements with <1% variance	Ongoing	Financial systems
	Ensure sound financial management of special projects - WfW, WfWet, WoF	PM, SSR, ISCU project manager	Budget targets achieved	Ongoing	Project business plans
To grow revenue (Including alternative sources of revenue)	Identify new and align existing business opportunities within the GGHNP with the commercialisation programme of SANParks.	PM and HoDs	Opportunities identified in line with policy. New income streams	Ongoing	Commercialisation strategy
	Identify possible external funding to supplement current income streams	PM and HoDs	Funding proposals submitted	Year 1, ongoing	Partnership contracts signed
	Develop support mechanisms and procedures for the park to receive grants and donations.	PM, Financial manager	Mechanisms, procedures in place	Year 1	
To ensure financial accountability and align financial management systems	Facilitate an annual independent audit of GGHNP financial records	PM, Financial manager	Audit report	Ongoing	
	Facilitate access to audited statements by the public	PM, Financial manager	Audited statements available to the public	Ongoing	
To improve the management of financial resources	Prepare accurate and realistic annual budgets in consultation with management team that are in line with the SMP objectives	PM, Financial manager HoDs	Annual budgets prepared	Ongoing	Annual budgets
	Provide monthly financial reports timeously by cost centre	Financial manager	Financial reports prepared	Ongoing	

10.5.5 Information management

Management of the park requires that the appropriate data and information is collected, maintained and made readily accessible to staff responsible for all aspects of management.

Such data is not only essential for formulating effective long-term management objectives, plans, programmes and systems, but also for educating and informing residents associations, user groups, local authorities, provincial and national decision and policy makers, international organisations and aid/donor agencies.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME					
High level objective: To implement best practices in the field of records and information management					
Purpose: To establish and then maintain a database of park information					
Objectives Initiatives	Actions	Responsibility	Indicators	Timeframe	Reference
To develop and implement a records management and file plan for the park in accordance with SANParks policies and procedures	Review the existing records management and file plans within the various areas of the park, and implement a single file plan	PM	Draft records management and file plan	Year 1	(Act no. 43 of 1996 as amended)
	Implement the GGHP records management and file plan	PM, Admin	Records and documents filed into plan	Ongoing	Corporate file plan and policy
	Ensure appropriate access to park files and records in accordance to corporate records management policy and guidelines.	PM, Admin	Access procedures recorded and implemented	Ongoing	Corporate file plan and records management policy



10.5.6 Infrastructure

The purpose of this programme over the next planning cycle will be on the upgrading and maintenance (day to day and scheduled) of existing infrastructure. Infrastructure in the park consists of facilities in support of conservation (such as management roads and tracks, office facilities, staff housing, fences, bulk services, workshops and stores) and tourism (such as tourist roads and tracks, walking trails, office facilities, staff housing, bulk services, lookout points, hides, picnic site, and tourism accommodation). These facilities enable staff to execute the respective duties towards achieving the park's objectives and providing a tourism product at the best possible standard.

The product development strategy, applicable legislation and limitations of the zoning system will guide new infrastructure development. Infrastructure must be developed and maintained in accordance with all applicable legislation, policies, standards and codes. Maintenance must be undertaken in a cost effective manner. As far as practicable incorporate good, cost effective environmental design, use low maintenance designs and material, and utilise existing roads and tracks and disturbed sites and to limit green field developments.

All current infrastructure in the park is listed in Section 7: Access and facilities.

INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAMME					
Objective: To upgrade and maintain the existing infrastructure and development new infrastructure, all of which are in support of conservation and tourism in the park.					
Objectives	Actions	Responsibility	Indicators	Timeframe	Reference
To ensure that infrastructure at GGHP is maintained to a desirable state	To compile an inventory of all infrastructures in the park, assess construction types and determine extent of maintenance needed.	Technical services manager	Inventory	Year 1 and ongoing	
	To document the scope of work for each maintenance need in accordance with the relevant specifications.	Technical services manager	Scoping documents	Year 1 and ongoing	NHBRC Building and SANS 0142 Electrical regulations
	To prioritise maintenance needs and develop a five year maintenance plan for the park.	Technical services manager, PM	Maintenance plan, annual schedules	Year 1 and ongoing	
	To implement the five year maintenance plan according to the annual maintenance schedules	Technical services manager	Monthly and Annual reports	Ongoing	
	To assess progress, revise annual maintenance schedules and evaluate standard of work.	Technical services manager, PM	Annual report	Ongoing	

Objectives	Actions	Responsibility	Indicators	Timeframe	Reference
To ensure that all mechanical and electrical equipment is maintained to a desirable state	To compile an inventory of all mechanical and electrical equipment in the park, determine maintenance schedules of each and list service providers.	Technical services manager	Inventory	Year 1	
	To develop an annual maintenance schedule for all equipment.	Technical services manager	Annual maintenance schedule	Year 1 and ongoing	OHS Act, SANS 0142 Electrical regulations
	To implement the annual maintenance schedule.	Technical services manager	Annual maintenance schedule	Ongoing	
To develop and implement a product development strategy to guide the systematic development of conservation and tourism infrastructure in the park.	To develop a product development strategy for the park	Park manager	Development strategy	Year 1	Zoning plan
	Prioritise initiatives and projects to be implemented	Park manager	Priority List	Year 1	
	To identify possible mechanisms and partnerships to realise identified product development.	Park manager	Agreements	Year 1	
	Implement the product development strategy	Park Manager	New products developed	Year 3	

10.5.7 Safety and security

The purpose of this programme is to provide a safe and secure environment for both our visitors and SANParks employees, and to ensure that the area integrity of the natural and cultural resources of the park is maintained in a sustainable manner. At a broader level, the plan must ensure that tourist perceptions are maintained in order to protect the brand and reputation of SANParks and SA Tourism industry at large.

Owing to the interlinked nature of cross-border issues and broader safety and security, these components may be integrated into the MDTFCA safety and security programme. The programmes developed and stated in the strategic safety and security plan are guided by various acts including the following: National Environmental Management Act 107 of 1998, NEM: Protected Areas Act 57 of 2004, NEM: Biodiversity Act 10 of 2004, Criminal Procedure Act 51 of 1977, Occupational Health and Safety Act 85 of 1993, Basic Conditions of Employment Act 3 of 1997, National Veld and Forest Fire Act 101 of 1998.



SAFETY AND SECURITY PROGRAMME

Purpose: To provide a safe and secure environment for both our visitors and SANParks employees, and to ensure that the integrity of the natural and cultural resources of the park is maintained in a sustainable manner.

Objectives	Actions	Responsibility	Indicators	Timeframe	Reference
Achieve and maintain high standards amongst all staff in the park, focusing on training, equipment, motivation and discipline.	Review relevant safety and security plans.	SSR	Reviewed plans (immediate action drills; standard operating procedures; evacuation plans; incident management guidelines)	Ongoing	Immediate action drills; standard operating procedures; evacuation plans; incident management guidelines
	Develop and implement a radio communication system (hardware and procedure) for proper communication.	SSR	Communication system in place.	Year 3	Regulations
	Train staff in area integrity management, conservation guardianship, and readiness to react to emergency situations.	SSR	Training records	Ongoing	Strategic safety and security plan
	Assess readiness of staff.	SSR	Audits; drill procedures	Ongoing	IDP's
Improve overall park safety through interactions with external role players	Align the safety and security activities to accommodate collaborative operations with external partners, e.g. MDTFCA bi-lateral safety and security working group, SAPS, SANDF.	SSR	Safety and security plan	Year 2 and ongoing	
	Conduct regular patrols to ensure that area integrity is maintained.	SSR	Safety and security plan, incident reports	Ongoing	
	To actively participate in various external safety and security related forums	SSR	Minutes	Ongoing	Inter agency and bi-lateral agreements

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Section 11: Costing

In line with the legal requirements, the programmes of implementation to achieve the desired state have been costed.

Guiding principles

- Responsibly manage the allocation of budget, revenue raising activities and expenditure;
- Ensure solid financial management support the achievement of the objectives of this plan;
- Compliance to the Public Finance Management Act as well as SANParks financial policy and procedures.

Using the zero based budgeting approach a funding estimate was derived based upon the activities in this management plan. When estimating the costing the following items were considered:

- Those costs and associated resources which could be allocated to specific activities and which were of a recurring nature;
- Those costs and associated resources which could be allocated to specific activities but which were of a once-off nature;
- Unallocated fixed costs (water, electricity, phones, bank fees *etc.*);
- Maintenance of infrastructure;
- Provision for replacement of minor assets, (furniture, electronic equipment, vehicles, *etc.*); and

Recurring costs

The total directly allocated recurring cost (including staff, travel and supplies and tools) is estimated at R35,945,003 for 2013/2014. Table 1 shows annual recurring operational costs for each of the programmes,

Table 1: Estimated annual operational costs for year 1.

Programmes	Estimated costs (R)	Percentage
Tourism	17 133 268	47.7%
Infrastructure	6 484 644	18.0%
Fire	3 062 231	8.5%
Water in the landscape	2 868 227	8.0%
Safety and security	1 423 432	4.0%
Wildlife management	1 035 702	2.9%
Finance & administration	881 073	2.5%
Environmental Education & Interpretation	846 270	2.4%
Human capital development	613 663	1.7%
Stakeholder Relationship	352 320	1.0%
Species of special concern	272 236	0.8%
Cultural heritage	271 570	0.8%
Local Socio Economic Development	164 261	0.5%
Sustainable resource use	141 891	0.4%
Bioregional / transfrontier programme	130 219	0.4%
Environmental management	109 311	0.3%

Risk management	92 949	0.3%
Geological and paleontological programme	61 737	0.2%
Total Operations	35 945 003	100%

Once off costs

In addition to the above there is a further once-off cost estimated at R 254 750 000 over the next five years (see Table 2).

Table 2. The estimated once off cost of the various programmes.

Activity	Estimated budget
Infrastructure programme	R 254 750 000
Total	R 254 750 000

Unallocated fixed costs

The unallocated fixed costs for 2013/2014 are R 7,097,631

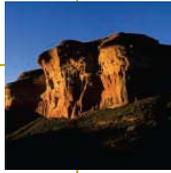
Maintenance

A breakdown of the infrastructure, both existing and new with their replacement value and an estimate of the ongoing annual maintenance for 2013/2014 is provided in table 3. The projected maintenance for existing infrastructure is estimated at R 3 530 149 in 2013/2014.

If the new planned infrastructure is developed it will add a further R 3 884 688 (at 2013/2014 rates) onto this annual maintenance budget, increasing it to R 7 414 837. The maintenance requirement was calculated as a percentage of the replacement value.

Table 3 Estimated replacement value for existing infrastructure and new infrastructure with the estimated estimated annual maintenance budgets for existing and new infrastructure.

	Estimated replacement value			Estimated maintenance		
	Existing (R)	New (R)	Total (R)	Existing (R)	New (R)	Total (R)
Buildings	146 153 330	269 770 000	415 923 330	2 104 608	3 884 688	5 989 296
Roads and tracks	53 727 690	0	53 727 690	1 118 353	0	1 118 353
Trails	429 300	0	429 300	8 586	0	8 586
Fencing	6 678 000	0	6 678 000	133 560	0	133 560
Water system	938 100	0	938 100	18 762	0	18 762
Electricity	1 261 400	0	1 261 400	0	0	0
Sewerage	0	265 000	265 000	0	0	0
Other	7 314 000	0	7 314 000	146 280	0	146 280
Total	216 501 820	270 035 000	486 536 820	3 530 149	3 884 688	7 414 837



Replacement of minor assets

With many of the vehicles being leased along with the computers, this will significantly reduce this requirement as these items are expensive and require frequent replacement. To calculate the replacement provision, the cost price of the assets was divided by the estimated useful life. SANParks applies certain standards in this regard. The estimated asset value for various categories based on their original purchase price and the estimated budget required annually making provision for their replacement. as presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Provision for replacement of various categories of minor assets, based on the original purchase prices.

Asset type	Asset value (R)	Provision for replacement (R)
Computer equipment	330,799	116,882
Firearms	7,278	771
Furniture	950,622	143,951
Machinery and equipment	1,182,373	179,045
Office equipment	481,211	72,869
Vehicles and watercraft	14,582	2,208
White goods	197,187	29,860
Total	3,164,053	545,587

Summary

It is estimated that the Park will require an annual operating budget of R42,328,662 for 2013/2014, increasing to R53,438,960 in 2017/2018. In addition to this amount the Park will also require R254,750,000 for once off costs to build/upgrade new infrastructure. A summary is presented in table 5.

Table 5. A summary of the annual and once off costs (based on actual expenditure) that is required to fully implement the activities in the Management plan over the next five years.

	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/017	2017/2018
Recurring management costs	R 42 328 662	R 44 868 382	R 47 560 484	R 50 414 113	R 53 438 960
Once off management costs	R254 750 000				
SANParks budget for GGHP	R 38 444 828	R 40 751 518	R 43 196 609	R 45 788 405	R 48 535 710
Deficit	R 3 883 834	R 4 116 864	R 4 363 876	R 4 625 708	R 4 903 251

The deficit can be broken down as follows:

- An amount of R 1,763,834 to cover the current maintenance shortfall;
 - R 1,070,056 is required for buildings;
 - R 593,828 is required for roads;
 - R 99,950 is required for fences.
- An amount of R 2,120,000 to appoint additional personnel;

Implications:

Should the park be unsuccessful in securing the amount of R 3,883,834, then the following programmes will be affected.

- Infrastructure: The park will not be able to maintain the current infrastructure to a high standard.
- Tourism: The park would not be able to appoint additional tourism personnel. This will affect the management of the Hotel.



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Appendix 1: List of proclamations

List of proclamations and status of land, Golden Gate Highlands National Park

Name of the Area, Declaration Date, Gazette Reference

Government Notice 259 / Government Gazette 599 of 13 September 1963 declared the following land to be part of the Golden Gate Highlands National Park under the National Parks Act, 1962:

The farms, Wilgenhof No. 698, Golden Gate No. 521, Wodehouse No. 328, Glenn Reenen No. 1361 and Melsetter No. 327.

Government Notice 26 / Government Gazette 188 of 13 February 1981 declared the following land to be part of the Golden Gate Highlands National Park under the National Parks Act, 1976:

The remaining extent of the farm Noord Brabant No. 282.

Government Notice 1249 / Government Gazette 11381 of 1 July 1988 declared the following land to be part of the Golden Gate Highlands National Park under the National Parks Act, 1976:

The farm Spelonken No. 738.

Government Notice 214 / Government Gazette 14579 of 19 February 1993 declared the following land to be part of the Golden Gate Highlands National Park under the National Parks Act, 1976:

The farms Wonderhoek 1698, Diepkloof, 1720, Zaphira 1251, Zaphira 876, the remainder of Kallieskraal 78, subdivision 1 of Kallieskraal 78, Snowhills "A" 153, the remainder of Rhebokkop 518, remainder of Snowhills 711, remainder of Malima 621, Altcar 1875, General Will 623, Rondawelkop 1864.

Government Notice 1239 / Government Gazette 31619 of 21 November 2008 declared the following land to be part of the Golden Gate Highlands National Park under the National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act, 2003:

Ninety five farms in the Bethlehem and Harrismith Divisions (formerly comprising the Qwa Qwa Provincial Nature Reserve).

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Appendix 2: Alien species

Extent of Infestation by alien species

According to the annual plan of operation (APO) base line data for 2009 the total area (ha) invaded with alien plants is an estimated 4645.38ha with 1258.49ha under initial and 3386.89ha under follow-up control. Although this plan refers largely to the management of invasive alien plants, attention needs to be given to other alien species especially the large numbers of domestic animals in the park (Appendix 2, Table 1).

Appendix 2, Table 1: Detailed list of invasive alien plants recorded within the park

Botanical name	Common name	CARA status[#]
<i>Acacia dealbata</i>	Silver wattle	2
<i>Acacia decurrens</i>	Green wattle	2
<i>Acacia mearnsii</i>	Black wattle	2
<i>Acer negundo</i>	Box elder	3
<i>Agave americana</i>	American agave	2
<i>Ailanthus altissima</i>	Tree of heaven	3
<i>Anredera cordifolia</i>	Madeira vine	1
<i>Argemone mexicana</i>	Yellow-flowered Mexican poppy	1
<i>Arundo donax</i>	Giant reed	1
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Creeping thistle	1
<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	Spear thistle	1
<i>Cotoneaster pannosus</i>	Silver leaf cotoneaster	3
<i>Datura innoxia</i>	Downy thorn apple	1
<i>Datura stramonium</i>	Common thorn apple	1
<i>Eucalyptus camaldulensis</i>	Red river gum	2
<i>Eucalyptus sp.</i>	Eucalyptus (species to be confirmed)	
<i>Fraxinus americana</i>	White ash	3
<i>Gleditsia triacanthos</i>	Sweet locust	2
<i>Ipomoea purpurea</i>	Morning glory	3
<i>Ligustrum lucidum</i>	Chinese wax-privet	3
<i>Melia azedarach</i>	Syringa	3
<i>Nicotiana glauca</i>	Wild tobacco	1
<i>Opuntia ficus-indica</i>	Sweet prickly-pear	1
<i>Pinus elliotii</i>	Slash pine	2
<i>Pinus patula</i>	Patula pine	2
<i>Populus alba/canescens</i>	White poplar	2
<i>Populus deltoides</i>	Match poplar	2
<i>Populus nigra var. italica</i>	Lombardy poplar	2
<i>Populus x canescens</i>	Grey poplar	2
<i>Prunus armeniaca</i>	Apricot	
<i>Pyracantha angustifolia</i>	Yellow fire thorn	3
<i>Quercus robur</i>	English oak	3
<i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i>	Black locust	2
<i>Rosa rubiginosa</i>	Sweetbriar	1
<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>	European black berry	2
<i>Salix babylonica</i>	Weeping willow	2
<i>Salix fragilis</i>	Brittle willow	2

Botanical name	Common name	CARA status [#]
<i>Solanum mauritianum</i>	Bug weed	1
<i>Solanum pseudocapsicum</i>	Jerusalem cherry	3
<i>Ulmus parvifolia</i>	Chinese elm	3
<i>Xanthium spinosum</i>	Spiny cocklebur	1
<i>Xanthium strumarium</i>	Large cocklebur	1

[#] CARA refers to species listed, by category, in the Conservation of Agricultural Resource Act (Act 43 of 1983), and regulations as amended in 2001

Appendix 2, Table 2 Alien species listed in the park (excluding plants)

Species	Common name	Assumed severity of impact
<i>Salmo trutta</i>	Brown trout	Unknown
<i>Oncorhynchus mykiss</i>	Rainbow trout	Low
<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	Indian myna	Low
Domestic animals and livestock:	Cats	Unknown
	Cattle	Unknown
	Dogs	Unknown
	Donkeys	Unknown
	Geese	Unknown
	Goats	Unknown
	Horses	Unknown
	Pigs	Unknown
	Sheep	Unknown

Appendix 2, Table 3: Description of the parts of the park that are infested with the most important invasive alien species.

Species	Common name	CARA status	Area of infestation	Priority 2009-2013	Threat
<i>Anredera cordifolia</i>	Madeira vine	1	Staff village	Removal	
<i>Argemone mexicana</i>	Yellow-flowered Mexican poppy	1	Staff village and Alma	Removal	Expanding in natural habitat, threat to indigenous flora
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Wild morning glory	1		Removal	Expanding in natural habitat
<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	Spear thistle	1	Staff village and Gladstone	Removal	Expanding in natural habitat
<i>Cotoneaster pannosus</i>	Silver leaf cotoneaster	3	Camping site	Follow-up treatment	Water extraction in the Klein Caledon
<i>Datura innoxia</i>	Downy thorn apple	1	Staff village and Qwa Qwa section	Removal	Expanding in natural habitat
<i>Datura stramonium</i>	Common thorn apple	1	Staff village, Qwa Qwa section	Removal	Expanding in natural habitat
<i>Eucalyptus camaldulensis</i>	Red river gum	2	Staff village	Removal	Water extraction in the Ribbokspruit.



Species	Common name	CARA status	Area of infestation	Priority 2009-2013	Threat
<i>Ligustrum lucidum</i>	Chinese wax-privet	3	Staff village	Removal	Possible seed dispersal by birds
<i>Pinus patula</i>	Patula pine	2	Gladstone (near Ribbokspruit river bank)	Removal	Water extraction in the Ribbokspruit
<i>Populus nigra</i> var. <i>italica</i>	Lombardy poplar	2	Brandwag staff residence	Removal	Water extraction in the Klein Caledon
<i>Populus x canescens</i>	Grey poplar	2	Gladstone	Removal	Water extraction in the Ribbokspruit
<i>Salix babylonica</i>	Weeping willow		Brandwag near the entrance	Removal	Water extraction in the small wetland area
<i>Quercus robur</i>	English oak	3	Picnic site	Removal, (thatched shades suggested)	Water extraction along the Klein Caledon river
<i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i>	Black locust	2	Staff village	Removal	Possible dispersion within the park
<i>Rosa rubiginosa</i>	Sweetbriar	1	Staff village	Removal	Possible dispersion within the park
<i>Xanthium spinosum</i>	Spiny cocklebur	1	Staff village	Removal	Possible dispersion within the park

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Appendix 3: Consultation process

All the stakeholders that registered during the 2006 management plan revision process were informed (via e-mail and telephonic) of the intention to review the park management plan during the 2009/2010 financial year.

Stakeholders had the following opportunities to register as interested and affected parties.

Mechanism to register	Description	Date
1. National registration	At SANParks Head Office via e-mail, fax, telephone, post or via the internet	From 01/04/2009
2. Local registration	At Golden Gate Highlands National Park. Registration forms were available at reception and were distributed by staff.	From 01/04/2009
3. Registration at meetings	Stakeholders were able to register at the desired state workshop and the public day.	02-03/06/2009 and 15/02/2011
4. Media advertisements	Registration in response to advertisement in two local newspapers: - The Eastern Free State Issue (English); - Vrystaat (Afrikaans).	03/02/2011 03/02/2011

Eleven new stakeholders registered and were added to the park stakeholder database, bringing the total to 129.

The desired state workshop took place on 2 and 3 June 2009 and involved a range of stakeholders and SANParks specialists in the development of the desired state which entails drawing up a vision for the park supported by the high level objectives.

Activities	Description
By invitation:	Park management, certain SANParks specialists and Park Forum members were invited.
Desired state workshop	The workshop took place on 02 and 03 June 2009 at the Wilgenhof Educational Centre in Golden Gate Highlands National Park.
Attendance:	<p>Thirty-six participants (13 Stakeholders and 23 Staff members)</p> <p>Representing the following constituencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South African Police Service; • Bluegumbosch conservancy; • Traditional Council; • Department of Agriculture and Land Affairs; • DTEAA; • Maloti Drakensberg Transfrontier Project; • District Municipality; • Municipality; • University of Free State; • Park Forum; • SANParks.

The hierarchy of objectives and zoning workshops took place over the period 21 to 23 September 2009.

Activities	Description
Invitations Park management and certain SANParks specialists were invited.	
Hierarchy of objectives and zoning workshops	The workshops took place on 21, 22 and 23 September 2009 at the administration building in Golden Gate Highlands National Park.
Attendance:	Sixteen SANParks staff members participated representing the following departments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks division: Golden Gate Highlands National Park and regional management; • Conservation services division: scientific services (Savanna ecosystem unit), people and conservation and park planning and development units.

Focus group meetings were called with constituencies that are essential or had a keen interest in the Park Management Plan process.

Management Plan process.

Group	Purpose	Attendants	Date
Park forum	To discuss the draft hierarchy of objectives.	Fifteen participants (nine SANParks staff members) and 23 comments were recorded.	04/11/2009

Stakeholders were invited to attend a public day where the draft management plan was discussed.

Description	Date
Advertisements were placed in the following local newspapers: 'The Eastern Free State Issue'(English) and 'Vrystaat'"(Afrikaans).	03/02/2011
A3 Posters, advertising the public day were placed at the following public places: Bethlehem – Public library and the mall; Clarens - Two shops; Qwa-Qwa - Information centre and the public library; GGHNP – Gladstone, Golden Gate Hotel, and Glen Reenen;	03/02/2011
Copies of the management plan, for viewing, were placed at: Phuthaditjhaba – Information centre and public library Bethlehem - Information centre and public library Clarens - Information centre and public library Harrismith - Information centre and public library Fouriesburg - Information centre Paul Roux Information centre and public library	03/02/2011

The public meeting was held at the Golden Gate Hotel in Golden Gate Highlands National Park on 15 February 2011. Thirty three stakeholders attended and 27 comments were recorded.



Appendix 4: Zoning

1. INTRODUCTION

The primary objective of a park zoning plan is to establish a coherent spatial framework in and around a park to guide and co-ordinate conservation, tourism and visitor experience initiatives. A zoning plan plays an important role in minimising conflicts between different users of a park by separating potentially conflicting activities such as game viewing and day-visitor picnic areas whilst ensuring that activities which do not conflict with the park's values and objectives (especially the conservation of the protected area's natural systems and its biodiversity) can continue in appropriate areas. A zoning plan is also a legislated requirement of NEM:PAA, which stipulates that the management plan, which is to be approved by the Minister, must contain "a zoning of the area indicating what activities may take place in different sections of the area and the conservation objectives of those sections".

The zoning of Golden Gate Highlands National Park was based on an analysis and mapping of the sensitivity and value of the park's biophysical (including detailed vegetation and soil mapping), heritage and scenic resources; an assessment of its regional context; and an assessment of the park's current and planned infrastructure and tourist routes/products; all interpreted in the context of park objectives. This was undertaken in an iterative and consultative process. This document sets out the rationale for use zones, describes the zones, and provides management guidelines for each of the zones.

In addition to internal use zoning, the zoning plan also describes how the park interacts with the processes which control land use and activities in the Buffer Zones around national parks (e.g. Spatial Development Frameworks (SDFs) and municipal Integrated Development Plans (IDPs)). The Buffer Zones identify the area within which activities such as landuse change may have an influence on the park (current and future extent), describe responses at a strategic level, and serve to define the Buffer Zone in terms of the DEA Policy on Buffer Zones for National Parks and the SANParks Buffer Zone Policy.

2. RATIONALE FOR USE ZONES

The prime function of a protected area is to conserve biodiversity. Other functions such as the need to ensure that visitors have access to the park, and that adjoining communities and local economies derive benefits from the area, potentially conflict with and compromise this primary function. Use zoning is the primary tool to ensure that visitors can have a wide range of quality experiences without compromising the integrity of the environment.

Further, people visit a park with differing expectations and recreational objectives. Some people are visiting a park purely to see wildlife as well as natural landscapes. Others wish to experience intangible attributes such as solitude, remoteness, wildness, and serenity (which can be grouped as wilderness qualities), while some visit to engage in a range of nature-based recreational activities, or to socialise in rest camps. Different people have different accommodation requirements ranging from extreme roughing it, up to luxury catered accommodation. There is often conflict between the requirements different users and different activities. Appropriate use zoning serves to minimising conflicts between different users of a park by separating potentially conflicting activities, such as game viewing and day-visitor picnic areas, whilst ensuring that activities which do not conflict with the park's values and objectives (especially the conservation of the protected area's natural systems and its biodiversity) can continue in appropriate areas. Use zones serve to ensure that high intensity facilities and activities are placed in areas that are robust enough to tolerate intensive use, as well as to protect more sensitive areas of the park from over-utilisation.

3. PARK ZONING SYSTEM

SANParks has adopted a dual zoning system for its parks. The system comprises:

- a) Visitor use zones covering the entire park, and
- b) Special management overlays, which designate specific areas of a park that require special management interventions.

The zoning of Golden Gate Highlands National Park is shown in Map 4, and summarised in Table One.

The zoning process and its linkage to the underlying environmental analysis

The park use zonation plan is a lean version of the conservation development framework (CDF). The park use zonation is based on the same biodiversity and landscape analyses undertaken for a CDF. However, certain elements underlying the CDF may not be fully incorporated into the park use zonation. In particular, the park use zonation plan will usually not incorporate elements such as a full tourism market analysis. Typically the park use zonation approach is applied in smaller and developing parks such as Golden Gate Highlands National Park, though the long term objective is to have a full CDF for all parks.

The zoning for Golden Gate Highlands National Park was underpinned by an analysis and mapping of the sensitivity and value of a park's biophysical, heritage and scenic resources. This analysis examined the biophysical attributes of the park including habitat value linked to detailed vegetation mapping (in particular the contribution to national conservation objectives), special habitat value (the value of the area to rare and endangered species), hydrological sensitivity (areas vulnerable to disruption of hydrological processes such as floodplains and wetlands), topographic sensitivity (steep slopes), soil sensitivity (soils that are vulnerable to erosion) and vegetation vulnerability to physical disturbance. In addition, the heritage value and sensitivity of sites was examined (including archaeological, historical and current cultural aspects). The visual sensitivity of the landscape was also examined in order to identify sites where infrastructure development could have a strong aesthetic impact. This analysis was used to inform the appropriate use of different areas of the park, as well as to help define the boundaries between zones. The zoning was also informed by the park's current infrastructure and tourism products, as well as the regional context (especially linkages to neighbouring areas and impacts from activities outside the reserve). Planned infrastructure and tourism products were also accommodated where these were compatible with the environmental informants. These were all interpreted in the context of the park objectives. This was undertaken in an iterative and consultative process.

Map 5 shows the relationship between the use zoning and the summary products of the biodiversity and landscape sensitivity-value analysis. This indicates that in this park it was possible to include most of the environmentally sensitive and valuable areas into zones that are strongly orientated towards resource conservation rather than tourist use. Table 2 summarises the percentage area of the park covered by each zone, as well as the percentage of the highly environmentally sensitive and valuable areas (defined as areas with values in the top quartile of the sensitivity value analysis) that are in each zone. Approximately 75% of the park is covered by zones that are strongly conservation orientated in terms of their objectives (*i.e.* remote, primitive and quiet), with just under 24% being in the most strongly conservation orientated zone (remote). The correlation between the spatial distribution of environmentally sensitive habitats and the conservation orientated zones is strong in this park, with the Remote zone containing 44% of the highly sensitive habitats even though it covers around 24% of the surface area. Conversely, the strongly tourist orientated high intensity and low intensity leisure zones cover approximately a quarter of the park yet contain less than 7% of the most sensitive habitats.

Remote Zone:

Characteristics:

This is an area retaining an intrinsically wild appearance and character, or capable of being restored to such, and is undeveloped and roadless. There are no permanent improvements or any form of human habitation. It provides outstanding opportunities for solitude with awe inspiring natural characteristics. If present at all, sight and sound of human habitation and activities are barely discernable and at far distance. The zone also serves to protect sensitive environments from development impacts and tourism pressure.

Visitor activities and experience:

Activities: Access is strictly controlled and on foot. Groups must be small, and can either be accompanied by a guide or unaccompanied. Several groups may be in area at the same time, but if necessary densities and routes should be defined so that no signs can be seen or heard between the groups. The principles of "Pack it in Pack it out" must be applied.

Table 1: Summary of Use Zone Characteristics

Zone	General Characteristics	Experiential Qualities	Interaction between users	Type of Access	Type of activities	Type of Facilities	Conservation Objectives	Biophysical Conservation Objective	Aesthetics and Recreational Conservation Objective
REMOTE*	Retains an intrinsically wild appearance and character, or capable of being restored to such.	Solitude and awe inspiring natural characteristics	None to very low	Controlled access, only on foot for visitors	Hiking in small groups	Established footpaths where erosion may be a problem. Essentially undeveloped and roadless	Maintain the zone in as near to a natural state as possible with no impact on biodiversity pattern or processes. Existing impacts on biodiversity either from historical usage or originating from outside the zone should be minimized.	The zone should be kept in as near to a natural state as possible with no impact on biodiversity pattern or processes. Deviation from a natural/pristine state should be minimized, and existing impacts should be reduced.	The area should be kept in a natural state, and activities which impact on the intrinsically wild appearance and character of the area, or which impact on the wilderness characteristics of the area (solitude, remoteness, wildness, serenity, peace etc) should not be allowed.
PRIMITIVE	Generally retains wilderness qualities, but with basic self-catering facilities (concession facilities may be more sophisticated). Access is controlled. Provides access to the Remote Zone, and can serve as a buffer.	Experience wilderness qualities	Low	Controlled access. Accompanied or unaccompanied. Foot, 4x4 vehicles	Hiking; 4x4 drives; game viewing; horse riding	Small, basic, self-catering; or limited concessions with limited numbers (concession facilities may be more sophisticated); 4x4 trails; hiking trails	Maintain the zone in an almost completely natural state with little or no impact on biodiversity processes, and very limited and site specific impacts on biodiversity pattern. Existing impacts on biodiversity either from historical usage or originating from outside the zone should be minimized.	The zone should be kept in an almost completely natural state, and deviation from a natural/pristine state should be small and limited to restricted impact footprints. Any facilities constructed in these areas, and activities undertaken here should be done in a way that limits environmental impacts. Road and infrastructure specifications should be designed to limit impacts.	The area should be kept in a natural state, and activities which impact on the intrinsically wild appearance and character of the area, or which impact on the wilderness characteristics of the area (solitude, remoteness, wildness, serenity, peace etc) should be restricted and impacts limited to the site of the facility.
QUIET	This zone allows non-motorised access to areas which generally retain a natural appearance and character. Access is not specifically controlled.	Wide range of activities; relaxation in a natural environment	Moderate to high	Unaccompanied non-motorised access. Mainly on foot, no-motorised access to specific facilities.	Hiking; walking; rock climbing; where relevant non-motorised aquatic activities; bird watching; possibly mountain biking and horse riding.	Hiking trails; footpaths; management tracks; bird hides. Ablution facilities may be provided in high use areas. No accommodation; and no tourist access by vehicle.	The zone should be maintained in a generally natural state, with the proviso that limited impacts on biodiversity patterns and processes are allowed in order to accommodate park recreational and tourism objectives.	The zone should be maintained in a generally natural state, but some deviation from a natural/pristine state is allowed. Infrastructure should only be allowed within a restricted development footprint, and infrastructure, especially paths and viewpoints should be designed to limit the impacts of large numbers of visitors on the biophysical environment.	The zone should retain a generally natural appearance and character, and activities which impact on this should be restricted. In particular visitors are not allowed motorised access to this zone. It is however recognized that the presence of larger numbers of visitors and the facilities they require, may impact on the feeling of wildness found in this zone.
LOW INTENSITY LEISURE	The underlying characteristic of this zone is motorised self-drive access with basic facilities. The numbers of visitors are higher than in the Remote and Primitive Zones.	Comfortable facilities in a relatively natural environment.	Moderate to high	Motorised self-drive access.	Motorised self-drive game viewing, picnicking, walking, cycling; rock climbing; hiking; adventure activities.	Facilities limited to basic picnic sites; ablution facilities; information/education centres; parking areas. Small to medium (incl. camping) rest camps with basic facilities. Low spec access roads to provide a more wild experience.	Maintain the zone in a largely natural state that is in keeping with the character of a Protected Area, mitigate the biodiversity impacts of the relatively high levels of tourism activity and infrastructure that are accommodated within this zone through careful planning and active management, and ensure that the negative impacts of the activities and infrastructure are restricted to the zone.	The zone should be kept in a largely natural state. Deviation from a natural/pristine state should be minimized and limited to restricted impact footprints as far as possible. However, it is accepted that some damage to the biophysical environment associated with tourist activities and facilities will be inevitable.	The zone should be maintained in a largely natural state from an aesthetics point of view. Although it is inevitable that activities and facilities will impact on the wild appearance and reduce the wilderness characteristics of the area (solitude, remoteness, wildness etc), these should be managed and limited to ensure that the area still provides a relatively natural outdoor experience.
HIGH INTENSITY LEISURE	The main characteristic is that of a high density tourist development node, with modern amenities, where more concentrated human activities are allowed.	Comfortable and sophisticated facilities while retaining a natural ambiance	High	Accessible by motorised transport (car/bus) on high volume transport routes, including delivery vehicles.	As above. Additional sophisticated infrastructure. Larger, organised adventure activities (orienteeing, fun runs). Dining at restaurants.	High density tourist camps with modern amenities. Footpaths, transport systems, accommodation, restaurants, curio and refreshment stalls; education centres. High volume roads.	The zone needs to be managed to ensure that the overall objectives and purpose for proclamation of the park are not compromised by the very high levels of tourism activity and infrastructure that are accommodated within this zone. Activities and infrastructure in this zone should be managed to ensure there is a minimal effect on the surrounding natural environment.	The zone must retain a level of ecological integrity consistent with a protected area. The greatest level of deviation from a natural/pristine state is allowed in this zone, and it is accepted that damage to the biophysical environment associated with tourist activities and facilities will be inevitable, however no activities or infrastructure should be allowed which compromise the overall objectives and purpose for proclamation of the park.	The area should be managed to provide a relatively natural outdoor experience. Although, it is inevitable that the high visitor numbers, activities and facilities will impact on the wild appearance and reduce the wilderness characteristics of the area (solitude, remoteness, wildness etc), the aesthetics of the zone still need to be maintained in a sufficiently natural state to ensure that the overall objectives and purpose for proclamation of the park are not compromised.

*Wilderness areas need to be investigated and officially designate

Interaction with other users: There is no interaction between groups. The numbers of groups within the area will be determined by the ability to ensure that there is no interaction between groups.

Conservation objectives of the zone

The conservation objective is to maintain the zone in as near to a natural state as possible with no impact on biodiversity pattern or processes. Existing impacts on biodiversity either from historical usage or originating from outside the zone should be minimised. The zone should be managed within the following specific objectives:

Biophysical environment: The zone should be kept in as near to a natural state as possible with no impact on biodiversity pattern or processes. Deviation from a natural/pristine state should be minimised, and existing impacts should be reduced.

Aesthetics and recreational environment: The area should be kept in a natural state, and activities which impact on the intrinsically wild appearance and character of the area, or which impact on the wilderness characteristics of the area (solitude, remoteness, wildness, serenity, peace etc.) should not be allowed.

Facilities:

Type and size: No facilities are provided. Should overnight facilities be required to serve this zone, these should be placed in the adjoining zones.

Sophistication of facilities: No facilities except self carried portable tents. Guidelines for washing, ablution and cooking must be defined according to the “Pack it in Pack” it out principles. Camping is permitted only at designated sites.

Audible equipment and communication structures: None.

Access and roads: Public access is non-motorised. Vehicular access and parking is provided in the adjoining primitive zone. Established footpaths may be provided where erosion risks occur. Where necessary, unimproved management tracks are allowed within this zone.

Location in park:

In the park remote areas were designated in the rugged mountain areas in the western and south western areas of the park. The zones were designated to include landscapes with high environmental sensitivity and value.

Primitive Zone:

Characteristics:

The prime characteristic of the zone is the experience of wilderness qualities with the accent on controlled access. Access is controlled in terms of numbers, frequency and size of groups. The zone shares the wilderness qualities of wilderness areas and remote zones, but with the provision of basic self-catering facilities and access. It also provides access to the remote zone and wilderness area. Views of human activities and development outside of the park may be visible from this zone.

This zone has the following functions:

- It provides the basic facilities and access to serve wilderness areas and remote zones.
- It contains concession sites and other facilities, where impacts are managed through strict control of the movement and numbers of tourists, for example if all tourists are in concession safari vehicles.
- It serves as a buffer to the fringe of the park and other zones, in particular wilderness and remote zones.
- It serves to protect sensitive environments from high levels of development.

Visitor activities and experience:

Activities: Access is controlled in terms of numbers, frequency and size of groups. Activities include hiking, 4x4 drives and game viewing. Access is controlled either through only allowing access to those with bookings for specific facilities, or alternatively through a specific booking or permit for a particular hiking trail or 4x4 route. Several groups may be in area at the same time, but access should be managed to minimise interaction between groups if necessary.

Interaction with other users: Interaction between groups of users is low, and care must be taken in determining the number and nature of facilities located in the area in order to minimise these interactions.

Conservation objectives of the zone:

The conservation objective is to maintain the zone in an almost completely natural state with little or no impact on biodiversity processes, and very limited and site specific impacts on biodiversity pattern. Existing impacts on biodiversity either from historical usage or originating from outside the zone should be minimised. The zone should be managed within the following specific objectives:



Table 2 Summary of the percentage area of the park covered by each zone, as well as the percentage of the highly environmentally sensitive and valuable areas (defined as areas with values in the top quartile of the sensitivity value analysis) that are in each zone.

		Zone as a percentage of park area	Percentage of highly sensitive areas that are in the zone
Golden Gate Highlands National Park			
Conservation orientated zones	Remote	20.8	42.5
	Primitive	54.6	48.9
Tourism orientated zones	Quiet	0.9	2.1
	Low Intensity Leisure	17.8	3.4
	High Intensity Leisure	6.0	3.1

Biophysical environment: The zone should be kept in an almost completely natural state from a biodiversity perspective, and deviation from a natural / pristine state should be small and limited to restricted impact footprints. Existing impacts should be reduced. Any facilities constructed in these areas, and activities undertaken here should be done in a way that limits environmental impacts. Road and infrastructure specifications should be designed to limit impacts.

Aesthetics and recreational environment: The area should be kept in a natural state, and activities which impact on the intrinsically wild appearance and character of the area, or which impact on the wilderness characteristics of the area (solitude, remoteness, wildness, serenity, peace etc.) should be restricted and impacts limited to the site of the facility. Ideally visitors should only be aware of the facility or infrastructure that they are using, and this infrastructure / facility should be designed to fit in with the environment within which it is located in order to avoid aesthetic impacts

Facilities:

Type and size: Facilities are small, often very basic, and are distributed to avoid contact between users. Alternatively, facilities designed for high levels of luxury, but limited visitor numbers can be accommodated here (e.g. controlled access private camps or concession sites).

Sophistication of facilities: Generally facilities are small, basic and self-catering, though concession facilities may be significantly more sophisticated.

Audible equipment and communication structures: None.

Access and roads: Vehicular access to facilities is limited to low-spec roads, often 4x4 only. Tourist and game viewing roads are 4x4 only. Established footpaths are provided to avoid erosion and braiding.

Location in park:

In the park primitive areas were designated to buffer remote areas from higher use areas and activities outside the park (especially on the southern boundary), as well as to protect most of the remaining sensitive areas (such as large sections of what was QwaQwa National Park) from high levels of tourist activity. Almost all highly and moderately sensitive environments that were not included within the remote zone were included in this zone. Primitive areas were also designated in valleys with relatively low environmental sensitivity to allow access to Remote areas, as well as to contain the infrastructure required for management and tourist activity in these areas (e.g. trail huts and access roads).

Quiet zone:**Characteristics:**

This zone is characterised by unaccompanied non-motorized access without specific access control and permits. Visitors are allowed unaccompanied (or accompanied) access, mainly on foot, for a wide range of experiences. The main accent is on unaccompanied non motorised access. Larger numbers of visitors are allowed here than in the Primitive zone, and contact between visitors is frequent. It is important to note that this zone may have different interpretations in different parks, and the CDF documentation for each park should specify the objectives for that park. Thus, in some instances horses and mountain bikes could be accommodated. This zone can also provide non motorized access within low and high intensity leisure zones, away from vehicular access roads.

Visitor activities and experience:

Activities: Hiking, rock climbing, bird watching, self guided constructed trails and walks.

Interaction with other users: Interaction between groups of users is frequent.

Conservation objectives of the zone:

The zone should be maintained in a generally natural state, with the proviso that limited impacts on biodiversity patterns and processes are allowed in order to accommodate park recreational and tourism objectives. The zone should be managed within the following specific objectives:

Biophysical environment: The zone should be maintained in a generally natural state, but some deviation from a natural / pristine state is allowed. Infrastructure should only be allowed within a restricted development footprint, and infrastructure, especially paths and viewpoints should be designed to limit the impacts of large numbers of visitors on the biophysical environment

Aesthetics and recreational environment: The zone should retain a generally natural appearance and character, and activities which impact on this should be restricted. In particular visitors are not allowed motorised access to this zone. It is however recognized that the presence of larger numbers of visitors and the facilities they require, may impact on the feeling of wildness found in this zone.

Facilities:

Type and size: Hiking trails, footpaths, bird hides. No accommodation. Ablution facilities may be provided in high use areas. Heritage structures may be used for recreation purposes.

Sophistication of facilities: Where provided these should be basic.

Audible equipment and communication structures: Allowed, but should be managed to retain a relative level of solitude.

Access and roads: Essentially pedestrian access, but in certain parks, horse and Mountain bikes can be accommodated. Pedestrian only, or in some cases cycles. No access for tourists by vehicle. The only roads are two wheeled management tracks.

Location in park:

The major change in the 2009 zoning update has been the significant extension of Quiet areas to promote additional non-motorised access to areas around existing access points in the Glen Reenen, Brandwag and Highlands Mountain Retreat areas, as well as to allow for future development of non-motorised access to areas around the Basotho Cultural Village and day visitor site, as well as around the proposed Alma Precinct.

Low Intensity Leisure Zone:**Characteristics:**

The underlying characteristic of this zone is motorised self-drive access with basic facilities. The numbers of visitors are higher than in the remote and primitive zones. Relatively comfortable facilities are positioned in the landscape retaining the inherent natural and visual quality which enhances the visitor experience of a more natural landscape. Access roads are low key, preferably gravel roads and / or tracks to provide a more wild experience. Facilities along roads are limited to basic self-catering picnic sites with toilet facilities. In some parks, large busses and open safari vehicles are not permitted.



Visitor activities and experience:

Activities: Self drive motorised game viewing, picnicking, walking, cycling, rock climbing, hiking, adventure activities.

Interaction with other users: Moderate to high

Conservation objectives of the zone:

The conservation objective is to maintain the zone in a largely natural state that is in keeping with the character of a Protected Area, mitigate the biodiversity impacts of the relatively high levels of tourism activity and infrastructure that are accommodated within this zone through careful planning and active management, and to ensure that both the negative effects of the activities and infrastructure are restricted to the zone. The zone should be managed within the following specific objectives:

Biophysical environment objectives: The zone should be kept in a largely natural state. Deviation from a natural/pristine state should be minimized and limited to restricted impact footprints as far as possible. However, it is accepted that some damage to the biophysical environment associated with tourist activities and facilities will be inevitable.

Aesthetics and recreational environment objectives: The zone should be maintained in a largely natural state from an aesthetics point of view. Although it is inevitable that activities and facilities will impact on the wild appearance and reduce the wilderness characteristics of the area (solitude, remoteness, wildness etc), these should be managed and limited to ensure that the area still provides a relatively natural outdoor experience.

Facilities:

Type and size: Picnic sites, view sites, information centres, ablution facilities, parking areas, education centres etc. Small (including camping) camps of low to medium density 25-35 beds. Additional facilities can include swimming pools. Trails for 4x4 trails can also be provided. Day visitor site are not placed within the camps.

Sophistication of facilities: Self contained units with bathroom facilities. Camp sites will include ablution facilities.

Audible equipment and communication structures: Cell phone coverage in vicinity of camps. Code of use for cell phones and radios required to retain relative level of solitude.

Access and roads: Motorised self drive sedan car access (traditional game viewing) on designated routes which are preferably gravel roads. In some parks, large busses and open safari vehicles are not permitted. When busses are permitted, some roads should be designated as accessible to self drive only. Roads are secondary gravel tourist roads or minor game viewing roads.

Location in park:

Low Intensity Leisure areas were designated in the current game viewing loops, around current accommodation and other associated infrastructure outside of the main camps (such as Highlands mountain retreat and the Alma Precinct), and along existing public access roads where they form part of the park road network. Provision was made for the expansion of game and landscape viewing activities in under-developed lowland sections of the park by identifying four potential areas of low environmental sensitivity and value which could contain future road networks, without compromising the conservation mandate of the park. Provision has been made for a linkage between the Wilgerhof area of the park and ‘Little Serengeti’ in order to facilitate a future circular route within the park (rather than requiring visitors to return back along the same route). However, detailed feasibility studies would be required to determine if this is practical and financially and ecologically viable. The major provincial road cutting through the park has been moved from high intensity leisure to low intensity leisure in order to avoid linear zoning. However, while it remains a public through-road it is likely that the useage will remain closer to ‘high intensity’ than to ‘low intensity’ in nature, and will contradict the nature and intent of the zone.

High intensity leisure zone:**Characteristics:**

The main characteristic is that of a high density tourist development node with modern amenities such as restaurants and shops. This is the zone where more concentrated human activities are allowed. As impacts and particularly cumulative impacts are higher, such facilities should be placed on the periphery of the park. Staff not directly associated with tourism facilities should be accommodated outside of the park if possible. All industrial type facilities such as laundries, abattoirs, maintenance depots and workshops should ideally be located outside of the park within suitably zoned adjoining urban or rural areas. Accessible by motorised transport (car / bus) on high volume transport routes. More concentrated activities occur than in than low intensity leisure.

Visitor activities and experience:

Activities: Traditional game viewing routes with associated more sophisticated infrastructure, sight seeing at tourist destinations, picnicking, walking, cycling, rock climbing, hiking, adventure activities (orienteering, fun runs), activities associated with amenities, such as dining in restaurants.

Interaction with other users: High

Conservation objectives of the zone:

The zone needs to be managed to ensure that the overall objectives and purpose for proclamation of the park are not compromised by the very high levels of tourism activity and infrastructure that are accommodated within this zone. Activities and infrastructure in this zone should be managed to ensure there is a minimal effect on the surrounding natural environment. The zone should be managed within the following specific objectives:

Biophysical environment objective: The zone must retain a level of ecological integrity consistent with a protected area. The greatest level of deviation from a natural/pristine state is allowed in this zone, and it is accepted that damage to the biophysical environment associated with tourist activities and facilities will be inevitable, however no activities or infrastructure should be allowed which compromise the overall objectives and purpose for proclamation of the park.

Aesthetics and recreational environment objective: The area should be managed to provide a relatively natural outdoor experience. Although, it is inevitable that the high visitor numbers, activities and facilities will impact on the wild appearance and reduce the wilderness characteristics of the area (solitude, remoteness, wildness etc.), the aesthetics of the zone still need to be maintained in a sufficiently natural state to ensure that the overall objectives and purpose for proclamation of the park are not compromised.

Sophistication of facilities: Moderate to high density facilities. Self catering and catered. These camps have modern facilities such as shops and restaurants.

Audible equipment and communication structures: Cell phone coverage in vicinity of camps. Code of use for cell phones and radios required to retain relative level of solitude.

Access and roads: The zone is highly motorized including busses and delivery vehicles on designated routes which are often tarred. Care must be taken to distinguish between roads that serve as high access delivery routes to camps, link roads between camps, and game viewing roads to minimise conflict between users.



Location in park:

In the park, high intensity leisure areas were designated around the Gladstone to Glen Reenen section of the park incorporating most of high density tourist and administrative facilities (Glen Reenen rest camp and campsite, Golden Gate Hotel & Chalets, Wilgerhof EE centre, Gladstone administrative centre). Additional high intensity leisure areas were designated at the Basotho Cultural Village and the day visitor site. The major provincial road cutting through the park has been removed from high intensity leisure in order to avoid linear zoning. However, while it remains a public through-road it is likely that the useage will remain closer to 'high intensity' than to 'low intensity' in nature, and will contradict the nature and intent of the zone.

Overview of the Special Management Overlays of Golden Gate Highlands National Park:

Special management overlays which designate specific areas of the park that require special management interventions were identified. Three areas were designated (Map 4):

Special Conservation Areas – *Olinia Podocarpus* Forest, Plateau Grassland and Wetland / Drainage line vegetation: These three sensitive habitat types were identified for special protection in order to reduce any potential loss and to prioritise rehabilitation work in these areas.

4. THE PARK BUFFER ZONE

This section describes how the park interacts with the processes which control land use and activities in the buffer zones around national parks (e.g. SDFs and IDPs). The buffer zone section identifies the area within which activities such as landuse change may have an influence on the park (current and future extent), describes responses at a strategic level, and serves to define the buffer zone in terms of the DEA policy on buffer zones for national parks and the SANParks buffer zone policy.

The current extent of Golden Gate Highlands National Park is included in a conservation focused category in the land use maps included in the SDFs of the local and district municipalities in which the park is located. These SDFs are the spatial components of municipal IDPs. The park interacts with the appropriate local government processes such as SDF and IDP development on an ongoing basis as part of the Bioregional Programme, in order to ensure that issues such as appropriate development of Buffer Zones around parks are also incorporated into proactive land use planning instruments such as SDFs and IDPs.

The park bufferzones shows the areas within which landuse changes could affect a national park. The zones, in combination with guidelines, will serve as a basis for a.) identifying the focus areas in which park management and scientists should respond to EIA's, b.) helping to identify the sort of impacts that would be important at a particular site, and most importantly c.) serving as the basis for integrating long term protection of a national park into the spatial development plans of municipalities (SDF/IDP) and other local authorities. In terms of EIA response, the zones serve largely to raise red-flags and do not remove the need for carefully considering the exact impact of a proposed development. In particular, they do not address activities with broad regional aesthetic or biodiversity impacts.

The Golden Gate Highlands National Park has three buffer zone categories (Map 6). The first two are mutually exclusive, but the final visual/aesthetic category can overlay the others.

Priority natural areas:

This zone aims to ensure the long term persistence of biodiversity, within and around the park, by identifying the key areas on which the long term survival of the park depends. This includes areas important to both biodiversity pattern (especially reasonably intact high priority natural habitats) and processes (ecological linkages, catchments, intact hydrological systems, etc.). This does not imply any loss of existing rights (e.g. current agricultural activities or legal extractive biodiversity use such as fishing), but rather aims to ensure the park's survival in a living landscape.

Priority natural areas include areas identified for future park expansion as well as reasonably natural areas of high biodiversity value which are critical for the long-term persistence of biodiversity within the park. These include adjacent natural areas (especially high priority habitats) which function as an ecologically integrated unit with the park, as well as areas critical for maintaining ecological links and connectivity with the broader landscape.

Development guidelines:

Inappropriate developments and negative land use changes (such as additional ploughing of natural veld, development beyond existing transformation footprints, urban expansion, intensification of land use through golf estates etc.) should be opposed within this area. Developments with site specific impacts (e.g. a lodge on a game farm) should be favourably viewed if they contribute to ensuring conservation friendly land use within a broader area. Guidelines applicable for the catchment protection section would also apply to these areas.

Catchment protection:

These are areas important for maintaining key hydrological processes (surface and groundwater) within the park.

Development guidelines:

Within these areas inappropriate development such as dam construction, loss of riparian vegetation and excessive aquifer exploitation should be opposed. In addition, the control of alien vegetation, the control of soil erosion, and appropriate land care (e.g. appropriate stocking rates) should be promoted.

Viewshed protection:

These are areas where developments could impact on the aesthetic quality of a visitor's experience in a park. This zone is particularly concerned with visual impacts (both day and night), but could also include sound pollution.

Development guidelines:

Within these areas any development proposals should be carefully screened to ensure that they do not impact excessively on the aesthetics of the park. The areas identified are only broadly indicative of sensitive areas, as at a fine scale many areas within this zone would be perfectly suited for development. In addition, major projects with large scale regional impacts may have to be considered even if they are outside the viewshed protection zone.

3. CURRENT STATUS AND FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS:

The current park use zonation is based on the same biodiversity and landscape analyses undertaken for a Conservation Development Framework (CDF); however certain elements underlying the CDF such as a tourism market analysis are not be fully incorporated into the park use zonation. A full CDF will be developed for Golden Gate Highlands National Park within the current update cycle. Remote areas will be investigated for possible formal declaration as Wilderness Area in terms of Section 22 of the PAA. Additional special management overlays which designate specific areas of a park that require special management interventions (e.g. areas requiring rehabilitation and specific management from a cultural heritage perspective) will also be identified.

4. REFERENCES

Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism. 2003. National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act (Act 57 of 2003). Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Pretoria.

SANParks. September 2005. Sensitivity-Value analysis Manual. Unpublished. SANParks, Pretoria.

SANParks. November 2005. CDF Planning Manual. Unpublished. SANParks, Pretoria.



Appendix 5: Maps

Map 1: Regional context

Map 2: Physical features

Map 3: Land tenure and expansion

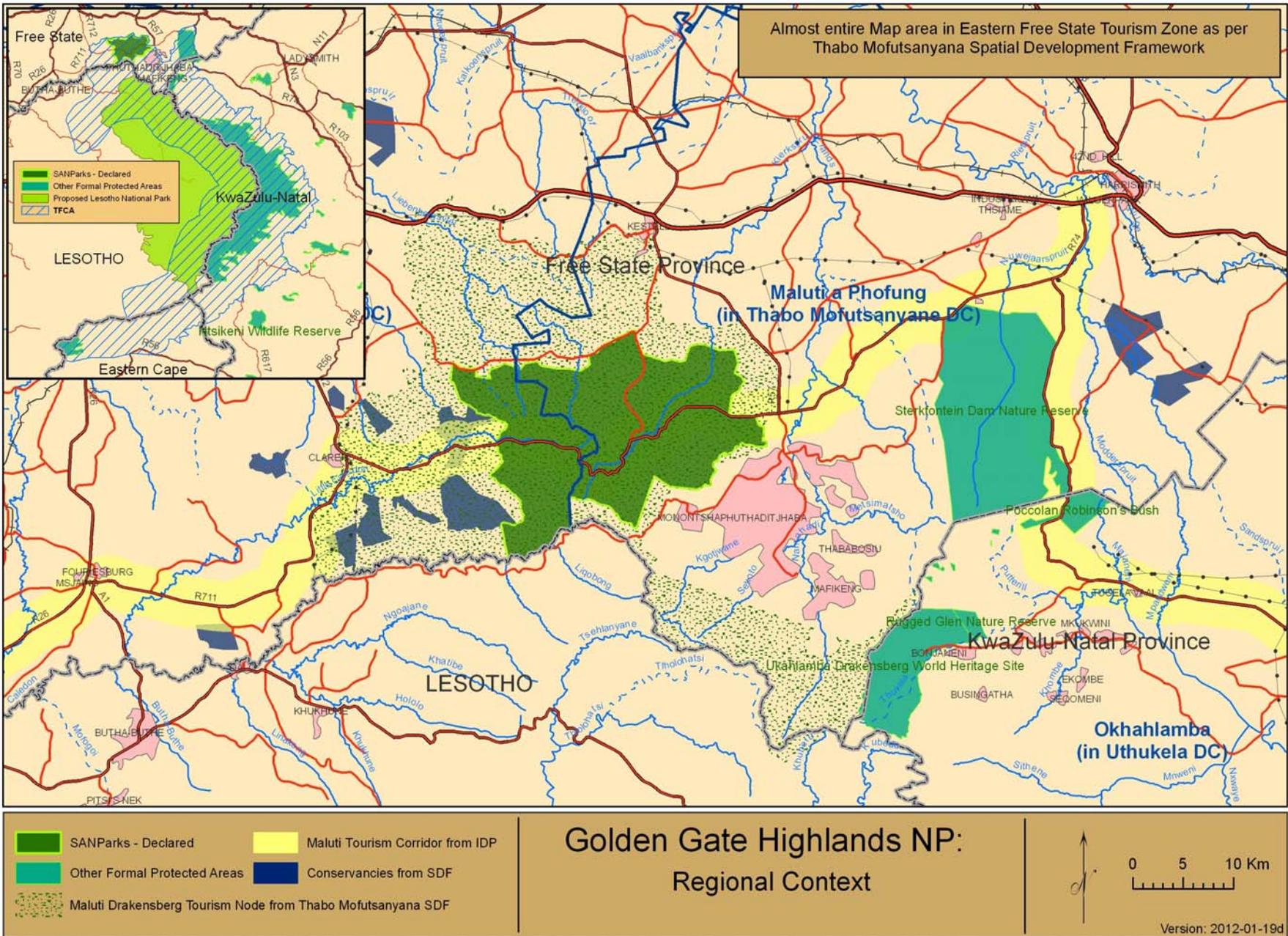
Map 4: Zoning

Map 5: Zoning and sensitivity

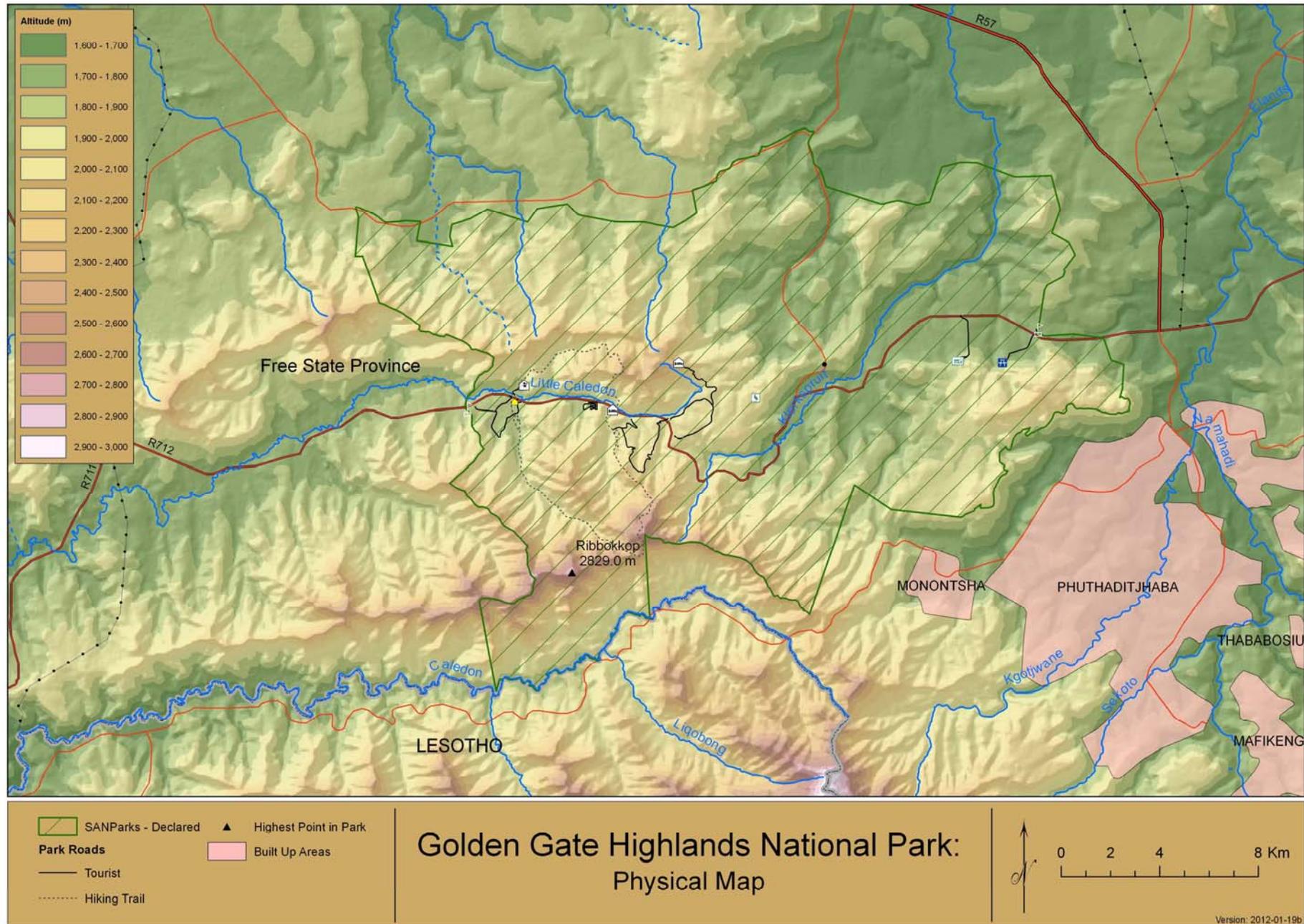
Map 6: Buffer zones

Map 7: Infrastructure

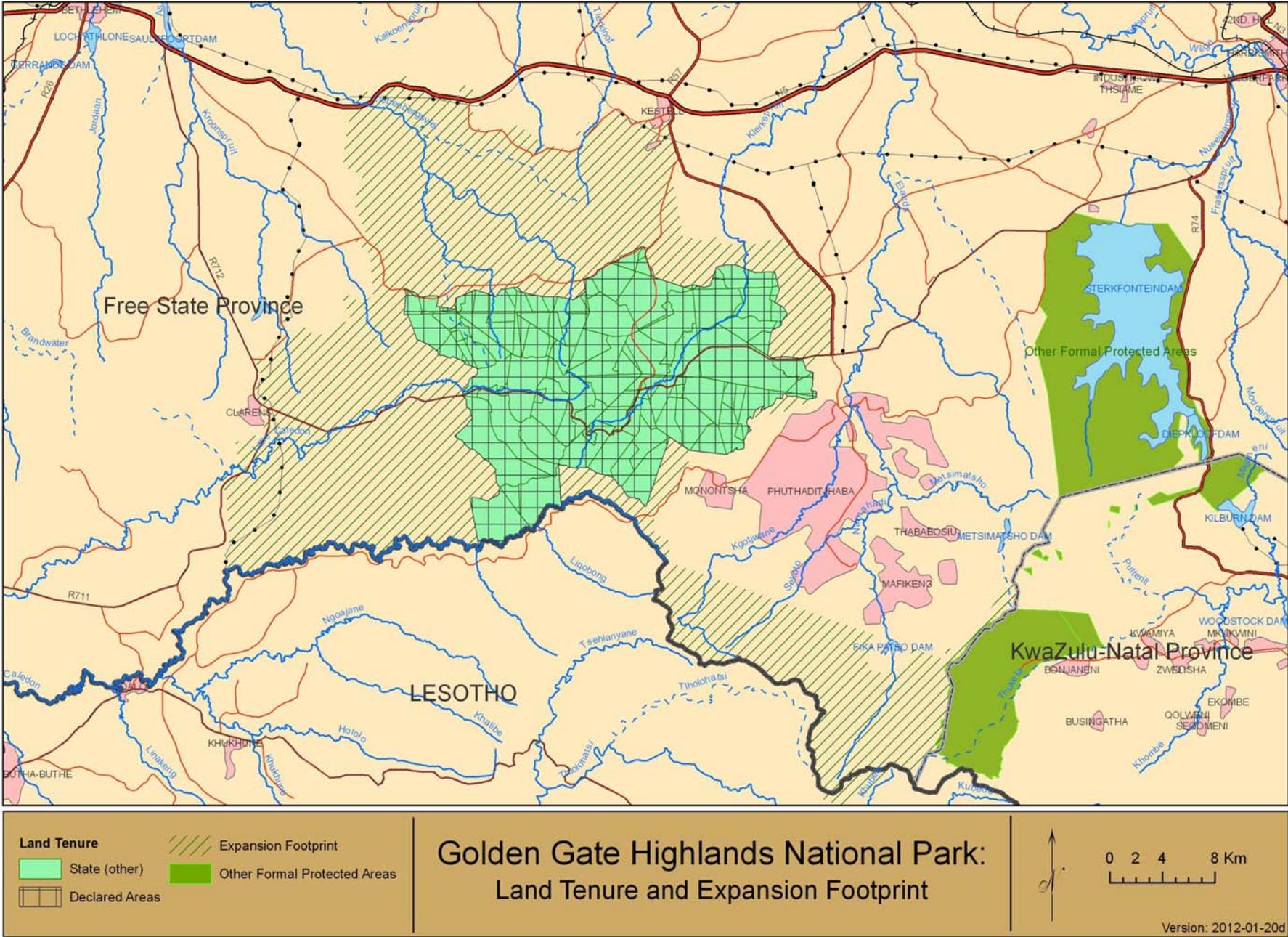
Map 8: Vegetation



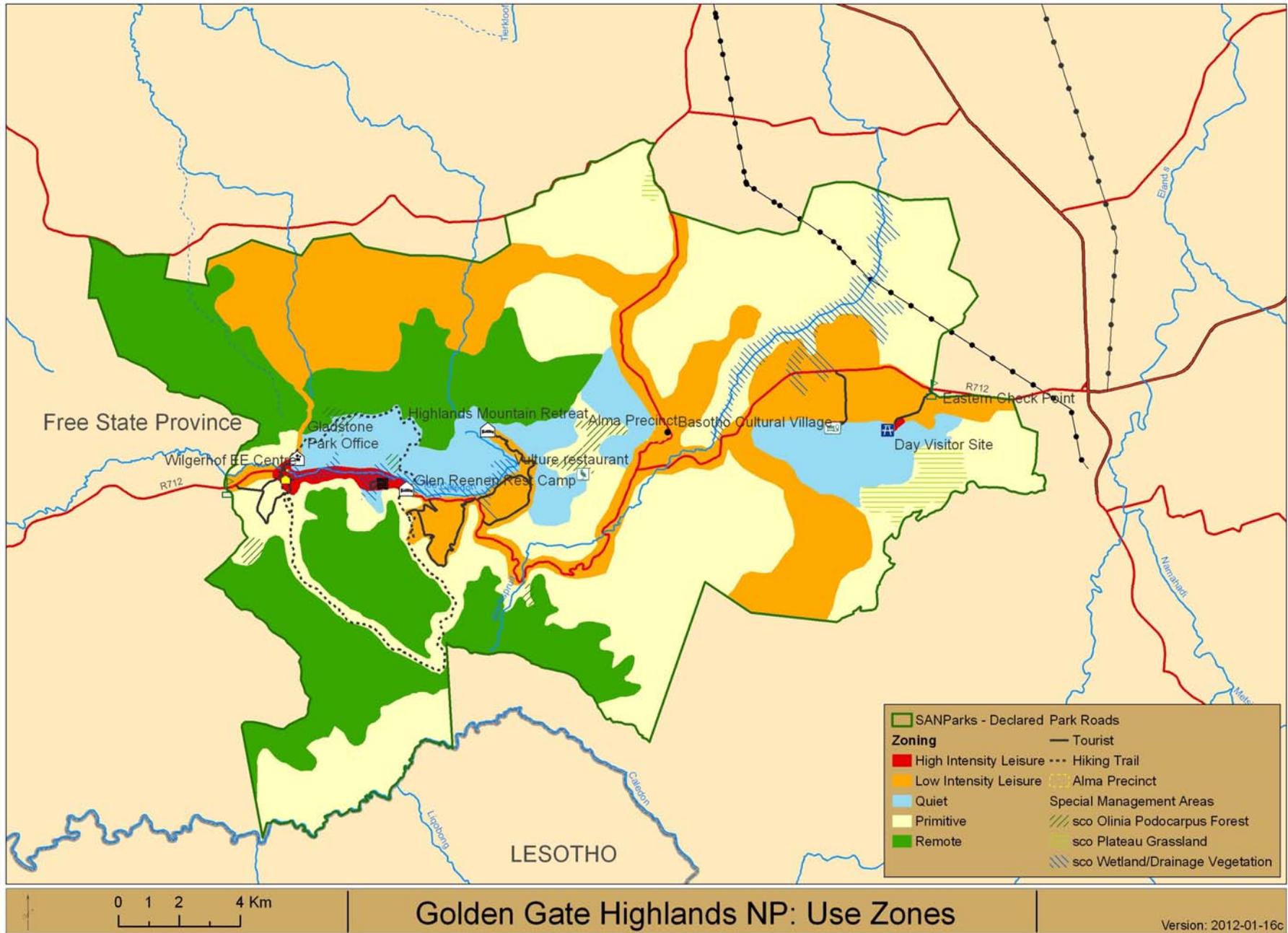
Map 1: Regional context



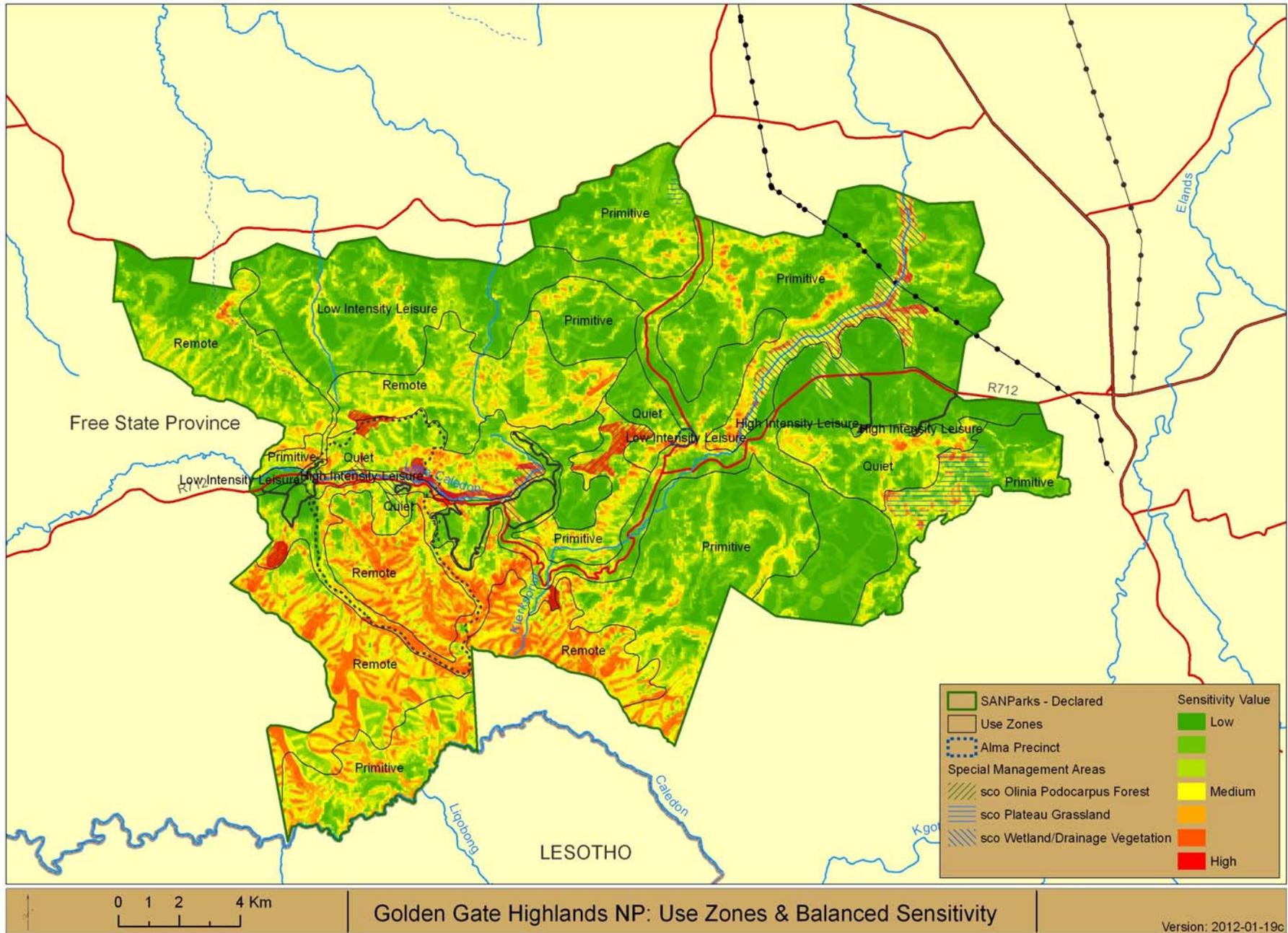
Map 2: Physical features



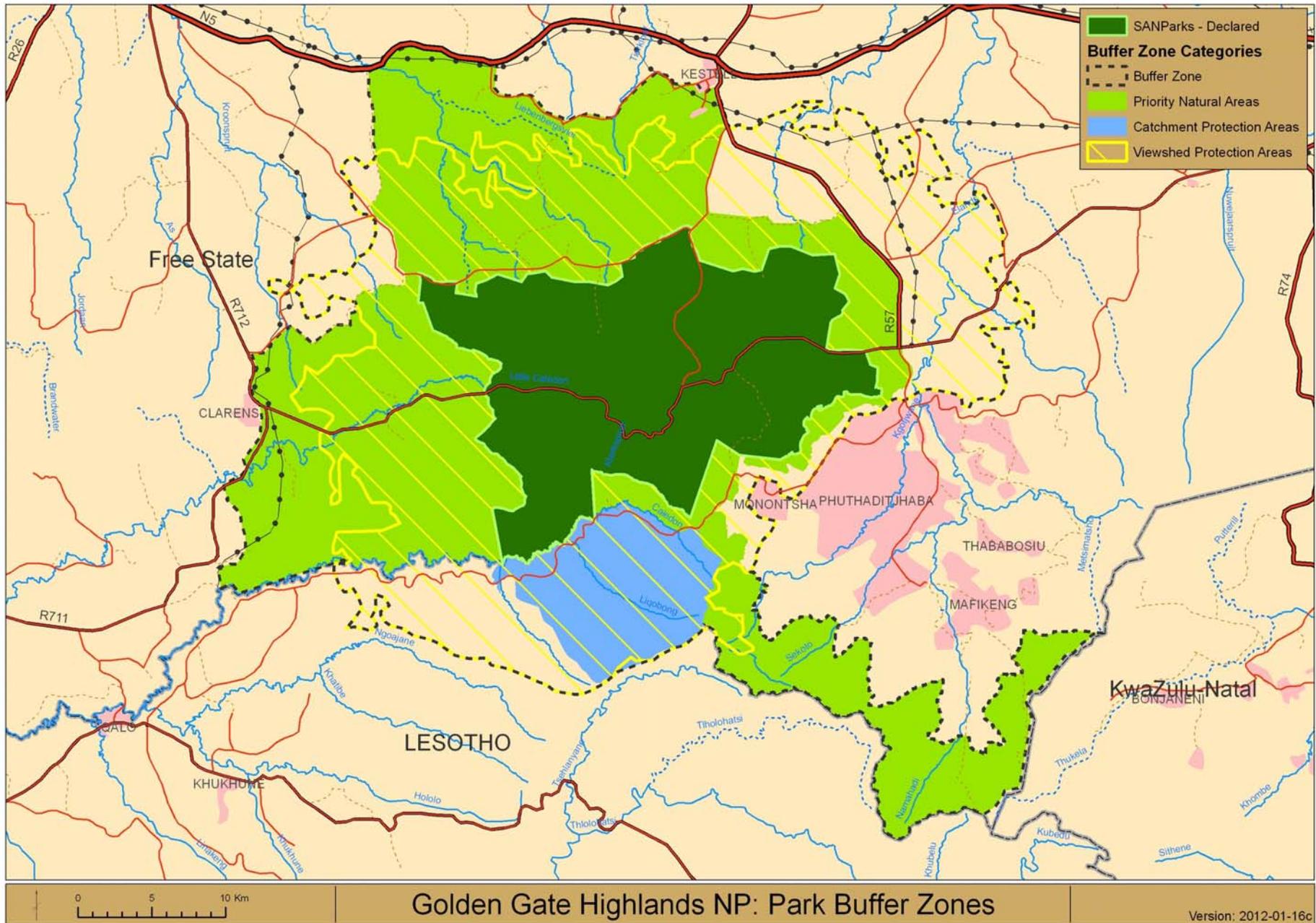
Map 3: Land tenure and potential expansion



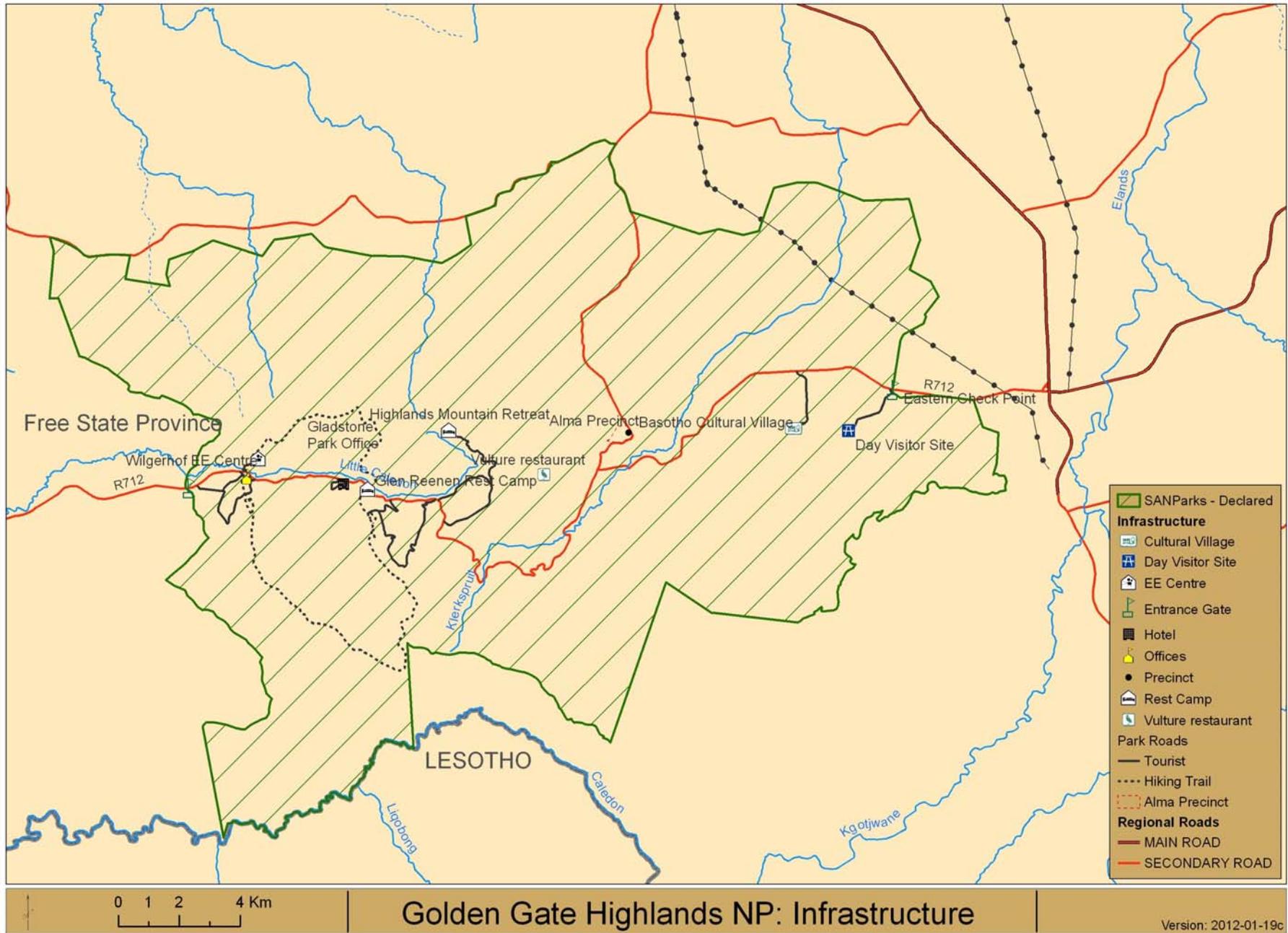
Map 4: Zoning



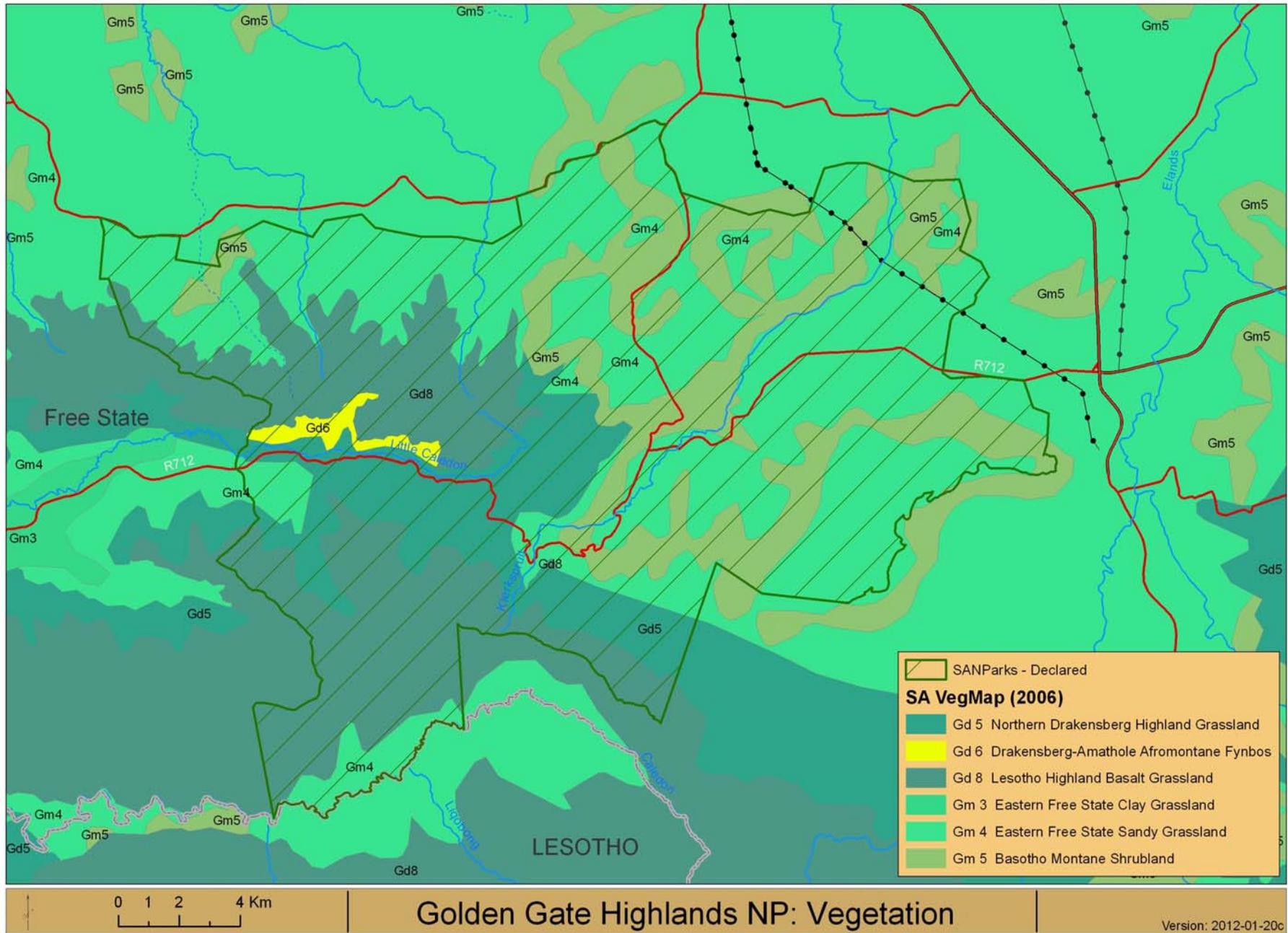
Map 5: Zoning and sensitivity



Map 6: Buffer zone



Map 7: Infrastructure



Map 8: Vegetation