



OGATO Newsletter October 2013

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1. From the Chair

Dear fellow guides and members

Tourist Guides and Tour Operators alike face increasing pressures ranging from economics to competitors to the pace of marketplace change. As always, the “back to basics” approach remain Key to success in selling Off-road tours, such as having well developed and sustainable destination products, good skills in delivering quality tourism services, a friendly and helpful attitude to tourists and the industry and by improving visibility to the prospective market.

We as a collective Off-road Guiding community should be concerned about the low visibility of Off-road destination products and services. An example of this was evidenced when OGATO joined Tracks-4-Africa stand at the Getaway shows. Only a few brochures were provided by our members for the Getaway show, and it was concerning that so few actual off-road destination products were being promoted. Promoting our skills and services is important, but not to the detriment of advertising actual destination trips. i.e. without a destination, it's only as good as an aircraft company advertising the top mechanic, and not the place they are flying to. Another example is that the same scarcity applies when scanning Outdoor magazines for Off-road tours. So how do we change this? Can “we” perhaps do with some expert and financial help?

The main allocation of state funding for Tourism, some ~R800m per annum is entrusted to one entity, namely SATOUR, and besides developing the tourism strategy, most of that goes to overseas tourism marketing of SA. There are no sales targets or obligations linked to this allocation and the effectiveness measurement used by Government is tourist arrival numbers. To crown it, this mainly translates into sales for the large bus tour companies. If anything, too little investment is applied for developing the Micro destination product. At the recent parliamentary sessions we introduced the discussion on Government and or Business assisted funding and



expert services to empower micro tour operators and self-employed guides, to develop and package niche destination products, and to help guides and more tour operators to become “visible” to all the local and international destination marketers. This could bring about work for many more than the single coach with one guide and 80 tourists. While the concept was introduced, we are still at the infancy of developing this vision and getting support for it, but bear in mind that each one of us has an obligation to invest in developing and marketing our destination products, and to ensure that we create sustainable tourism.

Solid progress is being made with our number one priority task, the Off-road qualification (a Skills Program at this stage – see the article by Will Jansen in this edition) and we wish to thank the facilitator Johan Grobler, Will Jansen (our Director on NOW/ORCSA), and the training sub-committee headed up by Faan Gerber. They have worked around the clock and have leveraged the work done by the original SME team comprising Alan Goodway, Tinus Botha, Peet Hendricks, Dave van Graan and Jaco Venter. OGATO also raised awareness in the parliamentary sessions that Government must attend to the “shifting sands” of qualifications, as no industry can survive the ongoing level of change.

On a personal front, Helen and I had the amazing privilege of visiting Turkey during July, and walking in the streets of ancient cities of Troy, Efese, Olympos, Thermessos (I saw the ancient church of the Corinthians!), Side, Kekova, and the Troglodytes and 19 underground cities nearby Cappadocia, certainly brought a new perspective of how important sustainable use and preservation of natural and cultural heritage is to future travelers. What particularly stood out for me is how the various sectors of guiding community work together for the benefit of all. They thrive on weaving the niche expertise of several Guides and Micro Operators into a single package whereby the tourist can have a more dynamic tailored experience. Essentially, a Tour operator can easily and quickly assemble a tour comprising many diverse micro components.

Back on the local front, OGATO is also bringing a new focus on our committees to amongst other, create greater capacity for work. We wish to express our sincere appreciation and thanks to Mr. Nigel Wilshire (Regional Vice Chairman) and his wife Denise, who stepped down after serving in various roles for 4 years on the Gauteng committee. Over the next three months Mr Faan Gerber will be assisting the Gauteng Committee on-site with business as usual matters as well as with the recruitment and appointment of a new regional vice chairman. Please nominate appropriate members for this important role and or send in your CV for consideration. Looking at the wider picture of SA we wish to become more visible and active in Kwazulu-Natal region, and also invite local members from that region to respond with nominations for a committee.

Lastly, “Working together” with all interested and diverse entities of the Off-road community, is what will ultimately enable us to succeed with self-regulation, and in keeping our beloved off-road venues and trails open. Best wishes Hugo.

National Chairman



2. Report on Parliamentary Tourism Summit - Compiled by Chris McDuling

Held in the Goeie Hoop building, on the 17th & 18th September 2013.

Tourist Guides representatives that attended;

J.J. Pieterse, Cape Tourist Guides Association [CTGA] Chairman.

H. Potgieter, Off-road Guides and Tour Operators Association [OGATO] Chairman .

C. McDuling, CTGA and OGATO Co-opted member.

J. Howard, TUSA Exco Member. Presented on the need for Unionisation of the Tourism Sector.



JJ Pieterse, Hon Dr Gomele (Summit Chairperson) and Hugo Potgieter at the parliamentary sessions.

Specific presentations as per the attached programme are available on the following link:-

<http://www.pmg.org.za/report/20130918-second-committee-tourism-summit-2013-4>



Hon Dr Gomele and the Hon Minister M van Schalkwyk, at the parliamentary sessions.

The opening address by the National Minister for Tourism is summarised well on this link:-

<http://www.timeslive.co.za/politics/2013/09/17/tourism-a-key-player-in-job-creation-van-schalkwyk>

Specific points made by the Minister that guides could take note of in deciding on where to target your own customer focus:-

- At any given time 75% of all tourists in South Africa, are South Africans. Therefore there is now a major focus on domestic tourism and a key component to future planning.



- China is considered as the highest potential growth potential for South African arrivals. They are currently our 4th biggest Tourism customers.
- There is currently no air corridor from Southern Africa to South America, no “South to South Corridor”. South Africa must establish this for ourselves to become the air access hub between these regions.

General note on the 2 days attending the Summit

This forum was extremely difficult to bring to the fore specific issues which affect guides and micro operators. The discussions are all on a strategic level and do not easily lend themselves to attend to individualistic challenges. Statistical facts and comments that are backed up with researched data are needed to drive home requests for assistance, adaption of legalities or specific focus on issues. Compared to the rest of tourism, Guiding is in the dark ages with information and statistical analysis for their own sector. Serious work needs to be done to establish facilities for the Guiding sector to be measured and analysed so that quantifiable claims can be made and taken to task. The lack of easily accessible and workable information is a symptom and an indication of the fragmented state that guides still find themselves in.



Issues that were raised and pertinent comments from these.

- **The issue of the Tourism Bill was raised**, allowing for a comment that it was not well advised where in the process the document was and neither was the document itself easily available.

The Content Advisor for the Portfolio Committee on Tourism Dr Khuzwayo directed us to the following sites for information and for the latest finalised Tourism Bill document.

<http://www.polity.org.za/article/sa-statement-by-the-parliament-of-south-africa-portfolio-committee-on-tourism-adopts-the-tourism-bill-with-amendments-25032013-2013-03-26>

<http://www.pmg.org.za/report/20130517-tourism-bill-briefing-deputy-minister-national-department-tourism>

<http://d2zmx6mlqh7g3a.cloudfront.net/cdn/farfuture/OkUsPfvK4QBYV-smNkzaZX3AyKzqvye9LqyyCaT6NA4/mtime:1364458104/files/bills/130328bill44b-2012.pdf>

- In the presentation “Aligning the Tourism Industry to the Presidential Infrastructure Plan”, it was noted to the presenter Mr Nakooda that there was ample mention of job creation, but that it seemed that ‘job retention’ was not a focus and in fact was not mentioned once in the presentation. Was the subject catered for in the Presidential plan? It was felt that if issues are not specifically stated then they tend to not get attention.

It seemed that there was a miscommunication because the actual question was not addressed and although it came up again in other forums there was no specific mention of ‘job retention’ in the final summation of the 2



day summit. The fact that many tourism workers do not have enough work, have part time employment, or piecemeal work that has to be supplemented with other incomes makes this a pertinent issue for guides. It is also an issue which TUSA needs to address for all Tourism Workers. We will attempt to take this matter further.

- In a discussion on Heritage Sites, there was a concern raised from the floor that site guides are sidelined by other guides who bring guests to their facilities then take the people around themselves instead of handing the guest over to the site guide. There was some confusion regarding the categorisation of guides as well.

We had the opportunity to clarify Tourist Guide categories, and then the Cango Caves was cited as an example of a place where guides handed over their guests to site guides and it was a value added experience. We reinforced the fact that Guiding had to be a value adding experience in line with the fee that was being charged, or it would not survive, but at the same time we stressed that the concern raised was a direct indication and a symptom of there not being enough work for guides as a direct result of marketing strategies which do not cater for directing customers to a guided experience. Rather the National norm is to focus on self-drive tours first and that there was no known international framework for South Africa's destination marketers to sell an individual guide and micro operator on an international platform.

It was suggested to the Director General Arts and Culture, Mr Xaba, that the role of Tourist Guides was underestimated, and that Heritage sites, especially the lesser known ones, cannot survive without the micro operator and tourist guide to bring visitors to the sites. We asked him to consider how long Robben Island would stay in operation if you had to take away the ferry? Because for many Heritage sites, the guide and Micro operator served as their ferry. Rather than implement a "heritage levy" which was raised by one of the speakers, it was suggested that resources are put into assisting guides to secure enough business so that heritage sites can become commercially viable and self sufficient.

In the final summation of this session, the issue of marketing strategy and focus was not mentioned, but several marketing stakeholders from different facilities and regions came and invited us to work with them. We have started following up.

- The "Mzantzi Golden Economy Strategy" was used with statistics and strategies of how and where to grow tourism within the arts and culture sector.
- Guides should familiarise themselves with this document and what it is proposing.

This afforded the opportunity to ask if there were stats available to gauge the positive impact of the guide and micro operator on the informal sector of arts and culture. There was thought to be none, and neither was there specifically thought about the guide as a catalyst to grow and stabilise the start-up and survivalist business and community project. This gave us opportunity to reinforce that the guide and micro operator has the capacity to put together a varied and personal experience which is unique and has the capacity to include arts, culture and heritage sites, which due to not being commercially viable for larger groups, cannot be utilised by larger or more formalised groups.

- Sadly the Honourable Marius Fransman was ill, precluding us from probably one of the most important topics which is affecting tourist guiding in South Africa at the moment- "Partnerships in promoting international Tourism". We will be suggesting that South Africa's guides collectively take a theme to focus on every year – this could be our launch theme.



- The issue of capacity for Municipalities to meet their Tourism growth mandate as part of local economic development was spoken about, and it was generally felt that there were many who were not just meeting their targets but that they didn't even have targets. The solution it was felt was in training up municipality representatives in Tourism.

We put forward the notion that the same result would be where schools that had body corporate that were not able to uplift their schools were marginalising their own learners due to their incapacity, so too will the scenario stay the same with the Municipality multi tasked official. Instead why not use what is available already by including the Tourist Guide and Micro operator in strategies which have failed in the past simply because they have not included this missing link. Fast track by growing existing service providers into broader areas and rather stimulate sales through these industry focussed existing channels with supported international marketing.

No mention was made of our suggestions in the summation, but rather the notion that Municipalities have to be given training on Tourism was put forward.

- In the presentation on Tourism environmental actions, green tourism and the knock-on effects that are both positive and negative, were raised. This is definitely an area which will have to receive a concerted effort from every single tourism stakeholder as it has massive impact on our Tourism image and marketability moving forward.

There was a statement made by Mr Lukey in his presentation that there was scope for environmental impact assessments [EIA's] to be done on a Pro Bono basis. We enquired if this would include 4x4 tracks and trails and there was a definite negative response, but on further discussion, this was followed up with a statement that if the facility was linked to tourism growth and could be shown to impact positively on local economic development, then it would be considered for a pro bono case.

We have also approached Mr Lukey to advise and assist Guides in becoming more knowledgeable and being able to enjoy the benefits that are to be had with a favourable carbon footprint and being able to exchange and work with carbon credits. Mr Lukey is publishing a book on the topic and he has left the door open to us for discussions with Guides. We will be taking this further.

- The presentation by Jeremy Howard of the Tourism Union of South Africa [TUSA] was preceded by a presentation of Tsogo Sun of how they are helping emerging guesthouses to establish themselves as formalised business. Jeremy presented a well-balanced reasoning of why Tourism must become unionised and that the benefits by far outweigh the fears of a radical and politically motivated environment which is the image that is carried over by the word "Union".

Jeremy very clearly put everyone at ease with the manner in which he expressed himself and the ideals of TUSA, most of which are the same as those which were a reflection of what the previous speaker from Tsogo Sun had carried over. Responsible Tourism, Ubuntu, and good business practices.

It was made very clear that TUSA is about collective bargaining and good business practices. That there is no political alignment and that the mandate of TUSA is to ensure a proactive and healthy working environment for the Tourism Worker to ensure growth, job creation and stability in Tourism. His presentation and the comments that he made were all unchallenged.



- In the Tourism Route Development as a catalyst for Community Involvement presentation it was said that it is imperative to have routes which link systems of tourism attraction, but that every effort is made to include the communities in these areas in the gains of tourism.

It was raised that no specific strategies for growing and using tourist guides as a catalyst for developing routes and for including communities on these routes has ever been seen. Once again the missing link, the tourist guide and micro operator, is being ignored. This is at the expense of the poorest communities, and the most out of the way places, who need the tourism uplift the most, but who find it the most difficult to have access.

We were approached by Prof Thandi Nzama who gave the presentation and is the Head of recreation and tourism department at the University of Zululand to take the discussions from this Summit forward. We have also been approached by Open Africa and the Sustainable Tourism Partnership Programme. We have set appointments to finally complete the cycle in the value chain by fully including and capacitating the Tourist Guide with the many routes that are already in place.

Footnote to all Tourist Guides and Guide Representative bodies

The decisions that get made at macro levels are the decisions that determine where the focus for government will be put. Currently the focus is all on regulating guides and there is virtually no understanding of the challenges that there are for guides. Because there is a lack of understanding, and no knowledge of the challenges, then no resources are allocated to address issues.

Government will only liaise and negotiate with a formalised, industry recognised, and Nationally constituted representative body. While this is not in place we will only be able to have limited representation on Regional levels, and that is drowned out to no voice at all on a National level.

- On the 21st October there will be a Nature Guiding Seminar which will lead into the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations [QCTO] meeting that takes place on the on the 22nd October and will be discussing a body which will regulate aspects of Tourist Guiding, which possibly could be a proactive step towards a Nationally recognised body. However, this will be once again through a regulating function, and this is through regulating the guiding qualifications and learning. It is up to every single guide to see to it that we are not just regulated, but that the regulation creates reasonable, achievable standards and opportunity. The body which is being proposed can also not just have a regulating function but must also become the National body which addresses the Strategic needs of Tourist Guiding that is currently almost non-existent.
- The Tourism Business Council of South Africa [TBCSA] has arranged a Tourism Summit which is now labelled 'The Summit' and will be held on the 14th and 15th October in Sandton. It costs R1500 per delegate. Who will be there to put forward the case for the tourist guide?

Chris McDuling



3. Update on the Off-road Guide Skills Programme – By Will Jansen (OGATO's representative on The NOW/ORCSA Board)

To clarify the different components, I am going to start with the qualification **scenarios**

1. A “**qualification**” is normally 120 credits
2. Then there is a “**Skills Programme**” which varies from 0> credits
3. Then you have the “**Unit Standard**” (US), which ranges between 5 and less, to 15 or more credits.

A **qualification** is made up from a set of skills programmes or a group of Unit Standards, equalling 120 credits.

A **Skills programme** is the same concept, made up by a group of US, or sometimes a single US

A **Unit Standard** consists of a defined Purpose, a range statement, Specific Outcomes with assessment criteria as well as Essential Embedded Knowledge and critical cross field outcomes.

In order for us to move forward with the training aspect of the Off-Road Guide in the quickest possible time frame, ORCSA, on behalf of OGATO, developed a Skills Program, based on information received from OGATO and other Role-players, and registered this program with Cathsseta. The facilitator, Johan Grobler, has with the approval of Government (CathSSeta/ETQA, QCTO) managed to register the skills program in a very short period of time.

On completion, Off Road Guides will receive a minimum of 42 Credits on a NQF Level 4.

ORCSA and OGATO will now continue to participate in the development of a full occupational qualification for the Off Road Guide. This process might take a bit longer (up to two years), but once registered, guides can complete this qualification as part of their continuous development process (CDP).

Currently we are finalising the assessment process for the guides who have completed the Masazane course. Please Note however that:

- The Masazane course had no credits as it was not a CathSSeta accredited course; therefore there are no learning credits that can be carried over to complete the Skills Programme. The registrar has made it very clear that there will be no RPL allowed as none of any of the material or course done by Masazane was accredited. There is also no associated US registered for that particular course.



- To be legible for the Skills Programme from the start as a new guide, or for the assessment if you have already done either the Masazane, or a Culture or Nature Guide's course, there are pre-requisites to be adhered to:
 - US 254 135
 - US 377 201
 - Fire Fighting (Level 1)
 - First Aid 1 (level 1)
 - PDP
- For the Masazane certificate holders it is therefore necessary to have a complete Assessment Process done, to evaluate, measure and assess the guides against the new Skills Programme.

The training sub-committee of OGATO has been working around the clock and has taken all the previous SME proposals, any other information and the suggestions from the CathSSeta and proceeded with a combined US framework to establish the Skills Programme.

These US have all been registered and can't be changed, so there is no point in re-writing them, but as a combination it creates the Skills Programme for the Off-Road and Overland Guide.

The next level of development now lies in the hand of the ETQA and the SETA to give ORCSA the go ahead in the finalisation of the Skills Programme.

This programme will be tested and analysed and when it is finally assessed will it become available as a blue print for the training service providers.

The next step is to select Service Providers and they will only be appointed by CathSSeta (via OGATO's letter of recommendation) after all requirements are met. These requirements, which are being finalised by CathSSeta, will not be negotiable and will be made available as soon as it have been approved by Cathsseta. These requirements are mainly to ensure that only service providers with Tourist Guiding experience and who are subject matter experts facilitates the program to ensure we provide well equipped, highly professional and knowledgeable Off-Road Guides to operate within the Tourism marketplace.

Then the training for the members will begin, firstly focussing on the assessment process and then expanding the full learning programme of this Skills Programme. For further queries please contact Will Jansen.

Will Jansen

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4. The current position of the National Off-road Workgroup (NOW) / ORCSA - by Johan Grobler.

In response to a call from the Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism in 2005, a self-regulation strategy and implementation framework for the off-road sector in South Africa has been developed based on extensive work and consultation conducted since 2005.

There are 5 key objectives of the off-road regulation strategy and includes:

- To minimise environmental impacts and ensure environmental sustainability
- To stimulate off-road tourism
- To increase socio-economic benefits
- To create appropriate linkages between and within the sector and Government
- To achieve the strategy through self-regulation within an appropriate legal framework.

This strategy scope covers:

- Off-road sector vehicles including 2-wheel, 3-wheel and 4 wheel vehicles e.g.
 - 2x4 and 4x4 vehicles
 - Quadbikes
 - Motorbikes
- Inland (i.e. not beach, but privately owned track, trails, off-road training facilities, etc.)
- Recreational use on private, public and government owned land
- Sensitive areas – both recreational and other use in sensitive areas.

The strategy activities are grouped into focus areas under each objective:

- Sensitive areas
- Driver & Rider competence
- Off-Road Guiding
- Trails & Trucks
- Tourism development
- BBBEE/ Transformation, community involvement and upliftment

The Norms and Standards accepted by Government broadly cover the following requirements:

1. Off-Road specifics for all trails and tracks
2. Environmental Management Plan for trail and track operations
3. Trail and Track Environmental Audits
4. Specification of the regulatory function of the representative body and its structure
5. Accredited, trained off-road environmental Assessors
6. Access control for driver and rider competency
7. Trail and track safety and rescue services
8. Driver competency requirements and training

The Norms and Standards were developed under NEMA and were signed off by the National Minister. These provide for their legal application and adherence is required under law. Currently a Parliamentary process is followed for the necessary approval and/or amendments to legislation where applicable.



For drivers and riders, the sanctioning process will include initial informal steps, and finally resulting in the formal rescinding of competency and ultimately recourse to the law. Currently unit standard training is conducted by registered service providers which meet the basic minimum requirement for obtaining and issuing of the Driver Competency Certificate. Please note that by completing this training on a voluntary basis prior to the legalisation of the DCC could be an advantage to those who wait for the DCC to become compulsory.

For trails and track owners, the regulatory function will entail the accreditation and assessment of trails and tracks, to ensure that they have the necessary checks and balances in place to ensure that all vehicles, persons and activities in such areas adhere to responsible principles and practises.

For off-road Tourist Guides that operates and is unregistered and unqualified, the challenge will be to complete registered off-road guiding training and register with the appropriate institutions.

NOW was transformed into a NPO called ORCSA (Off-Road Council of South Africa) whose Board of Directors represents all roll players in the off-road industry. ORCSA is a representative and regulatory body that was established to fulfil the requirements of self-regulation.

Since January 2013 ORCSA and its Board of Directors have made a huge step forward in the process of transforming the off road industry into a self-regulatory industry. Apart from the day to day management of the Company the Board of Directors has also:

- Reconciled financial reports
- Restructured the Company to become more streamlined and financially more viable. This ultimately led to the Termination of the CEO's service due to operational requirements.
- Building Relationships with all associations e.g. AAWDC, SANOTA, OGATO, Government etc. A new Board of Directors have been appointed under the Chairmanship of Salo De Swardt with Johan Grobler, Lachlan Harris and Will Jansen as Executive Members. SAROOF is in a process to nominate their representative to the board.
- ORCSA is currently in a process to receive Proposals from interested parties to establish strategies, implement and manage an effective communication strategy. Any interested party that wants to become involved on a voluntary basis is welcome to contact Johan Grobler on 082 411 7132
- Finalized the financial Year end and scheduling of the Annual General Meeting on the 12th October 2013. Orcsa also invites any interesting party in the off road industry, to join their constituencies and become actively involved as each affiliate will have the opportunity to nominate their representatives for this AGM.
- Support and rendered assistance to associations as per agreement e.g. developing a qualification for off road guiding(OGATO), discussions with the Trail and Route owners to roll out a pilot program to create a public request platform and conduct trail audits.
- Finalising the demarcation of what the Government has indicated as been eco sensitive areas
- Strengthen ORCSA's functional strength.
- Scheduled the AGM (*Editor: The Date is being moved out to give all entities more time to get ready, a change which is fully supported by OGATO*) followed by a strategic planning session after the AGM.

ORCSA and its Board of Directors are committed to their objectives and looking forward to substantial progress before final implementation in 2014.

For any further information Johan Grobler can be contacted on 082 411 7132.

5. *"Stunning Ethiopia"* by Dave van Graan

Many people have asked which country do I think is the most beautiful and interesting in Africa?



When I mention Ethiopia and tell people what a beautiful country it is, I am met with blank stares. Most uninformed people believe that it is a desert ravaged by famine and dying children, but to the contrary it is mostly green with maize, wheat, barley and teff fields as far as the eye can see. The Ethiopians keep a lot of cattle, sheep, goats, chickens and donkeys.

Two of the best known National Parks are Bale Mountain National and Simien Mountain National Park.

There are many animals and birds that are endemic to this part of Africa.

Some of these endemic animals are the gelada baboon, simian wolf, menelik bush buck, mountain nyala, wilia ibex and African wild ass. Endemic birds such as rouget's rail, blue-winged goose, black-winged love bird, yellow-fronted parrot, thick-billed raven, white-collared pigeon are well sought after by the birding community.



Ethiopia has a rich and age old history and is even mentioned in the bible.

Places like Axum with its tall stelae and its connection with the Queen of Sheba, Lalibela where the well-known monolithic rock hewn churches have been in use for more than 1000 years and the large number of monasteries scattered all over the country. It is believed that the Ark of the Covenant is housed in one of these monasteries.



Ethiopia is home to the well-known and one of the oldest hominid fossils ever discovered – Lucy that was discovered in 1974 by Donald Johanson. The story goes that when Donald entered the camp, the song “Lucy in the sky with diamonds, a song written by the Beatles, John Lennon and Paul McCartney in 1967 was playing on the radio, hence the name. No visit to Ethiopia will be complete if one has not visited the National museum in Addis Ababa and see Lucy.

Ethiopia consist of what is called the Ethiopian highlands where most of the farming activities occur and where most of the people live. The highlands receive lots of rain all year round. The third highest peak in Africa is found in the Simien Mountains National Park called Mount Ras Dashen and is 4620 m above sea level. This area is known for its healthy population of lammergeyer and Wilia ibex. The images that most people remember is the desert areas around the highlands but this dry area is scarcely populated by tribes that lived here for centuries and are fully adapt to make a living in this arid, dry country side.

While the rest of the Christian world changed from the Julian calendar to the Gregorian calendar in 1582, the Ethiopians did not make the change. This means that Ethiopia is 7 years and 8 months behind the rest of the Christian world. One often sees advertisements from the Ethiopian tourist companies inviting one to visit Ethiopia and be 7 years younger.

The Ethiopians also use a different measure of time, the same as Kenya and Tanzania. They measure time in 12 hour cycles starting at 06:00 and 18:00. This means that their 08:00, is our 02:00.

When making reservations it is a good idea to ask what time measure they are using. It can be very embarrassing for the guide if you would arrive with your group for some activity and you are late.

There are 70 different languages spoken in Ethiopia but the most important ones Amharic and Tigrigna which descends from Ge'ez, the ancient language of ancient Axum.



The Blue Nile begins at Lake Tana and eventually joins the White Nile in Khartoum. Not long after flowing out of Lake Tana it cascades over the 45m high rock face to form one of the most spectacular waterfalls in Africa. Some people remember the fall by its western name – Blue Nile Falls but it is correctly called Tis Abay, meaning “Smoke of the Nile”. Further down-stream one crosses the Nile where it flows through kilometre deep gorge called the Blue Nile gorge.

The two main religions are Islam and Christianity with the majority belonging to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

Ethiopia should be on the list of countries of all serious travellers as it offers so many unique experiences and sites. Go forth and conquer. *Dave van Graan*



6. Report on the Gauteng GETAWAY Show : 30, 31 AUG TO 1 SEP 2013 - by Faan Gerber



Photo by Lizette Swart

Introduction

As with the CT show T4A once again hosted OGATO as our major sponsor. We were not really aware of what to expect in terms of visitors to the show and in particular to the T4A OGATO stand.

Aim

Our aim at the show was to promote Off-road Tourism and to represent all accredited OGATO guides, in doing marketing for them.

Delivery

We have already in April this year addressed all guides to prepare brochures for the GT show. Sadly only the following members/guides responded and gave us brochures to be handed to the visitors at T4A OGATO stand:

The 4x4 Safari – Anton Ferreira.

Isibonela Adventures - Alan Goodway

Roads to Roam & Dual Purpose Adventures – Lizette Swart.

AILU Self Drive Safaris.

Andre's Tours and Travels – Andre Taljaard.

4 X 4 Explorer.

Boswa Survival – Mike van Dyk and Herman Roos.

Phumba Services – Mike van Dyk.

Mpisi – Karen Chiole and Duncan Kenney.

Personally I would like to thank them for participating. Especially those guides whom visited us at the show:

Lizette Swart.

Alan Goodway.



The following guides helped at the show with the manning of the stand:

Mike van Dyk – thank you for the long hours, it was great meeting you and to work with you!!!

Will Jansen – Not only for the help, but also for the market research you have done.

Nigel and Denise Wilshire – Denise thanks for being the nodal point for deliveries and also for both of you helping at the stand.

I handed out over 2000 packages of brochures: meaning if you only send me 200 brochures, yours were out with the first 200 packages. This was a total surprise to me; it was OGATO's first time at the GT Getaway, and the T4A stand was cooking!!!

It was very busy at times

Lessons Learned:

1. The best way of distributions of our Guide's brochures is as package. It makes it significantly easier to handle. These packages must be pre-packed prior to the show.
2. Impartial members must man the stand. i.e. It is imperative to "in Principle" being prepared to support all guides via the stand and not only your own product. But we would really like to see more guides visiting the stand and showing your support for what we are doing on your behalf.
3. More guides must give brochures, how do you explain you represent the off-road guides but you only hand out ten brochures? Well, it was five more than in CT, so well done!!! But come-on, we need more marketing of actual Off-road destination products.
4. Our OGATO pull-up banner is a show piece. Thanks to T4A who sponsored it. We need more posters/banners for future events.

I wore my OGATO branded shirts every day as part of introducing our Off-road guide wear. I had to brag!!! These will soon become available on a wider scale. Watch this space.

The bumper stickers were also very popular!!!

Conclusion

We really enjoyed supporting you!!! This was a great three days, and I promise we are going to do more of this. Watch the space in the forum.

This is a must; we must look at other outdoor shows and represent you.

I AM GOING TO PEST YOU FOR INPUTS FOR OUR NEXT CAPE TOWN AND GAUTENG SHOWS IN 2014

Faan



7. Tracks4Africa at Getaway Show Johannesburg - by Karin Theron



Tracks4Africa once again participated in the Johannesburg Getaway Show over the weekend of 30 August. This year OGATO shared their stand and both were very happy with the number of feet stopping at the stand. Working together was definitely beneficial to both parties.

According to Johann Groenewald of Tracks4Africa it always amazes them to realise how many people are familiar with the brand. "We often get people just coming by to say hallo and to make sure that they have all the latest T4A products. One woman was very nostalgic and just wanted to thank us for an excellent product. According to her they toured 37 000

The T4A stand was extremely popular and busy

km last year all over Africa and thanks to Tracks4Africa they had a place to sleep every night. She also told us about the most beautiful waterfall which they 'found' in Tanzania thanks to T4A. The place was so beautiful that they decided to change their plans and camp at the waterfall for four days."

According to Johann the latest version of their GPS map (**T4A GPS Maps – Traveller's Africa 13.10**) which was just released, covers 774 010 km of fully routable roads, which is a 7% increase on the previous version. The new version also has a 6% increase in accommodation listings and places to eat and drink as well as a 2% increase in Points of Interest.



The show hosted over 260 travel, outdoor and adventure brands which were complimented with workshops and fun for the whole family. With almost 20 000 feet passing through over three days, the Coca Cola Dome was buzzing with activity.

Karin

Bessie Brand (middle) and Karin Theron (right) of Tracks4Africa with some visitors.



8. Update on Atlantis Dunes in Cape Town

ADORE Update

Sunday, 06 October 2013

Whilst I appreciate that sometimes we do not do enough to keep everyone informed as to the progress ADORE is making I hope that everyone can appreciate that we are volunteers, give our time for free and donate our expenses to the worthy cause of keep the dunes open for sustainable off road driving. Having said this I hope that your respective organisations are keeping you informed and for those who have no club or organisation they can keep up to date via the various forums.

I am very proud of what ADORE committee has achieved proving that as a community the various organisations that are represented on ADORE can work together for the greater good. In the past few months ADORE has.

- Hosted a very successful Mandela Day Charity taking a group of local children into the area and giving them a day to remember. This event was received very well with very positive feedback from the school involved the local councillor and City of Cape Town. We have posted the relevant articles that have been written about this event.
- Hosted a group of local councillors on a day into the dunes giving them an understanding of the area and the activities that take place.
- Hosted senior management from the City of Cape Town Bio Diversity department on their annual visit to the area.

These events increase interaction between the City of Cape Town, local councillors, the local community and ADORE. They have given those who manage this area and decision makers a chance to hear our voice, our views and our vision for the area.

We are currently engaged in a process the City of Cape Town Biodiversity department to formulate the 4x4 rules for the area that will become part of the integrated management, this will mean as a community we will have a say in the area and the way in which there area is managed.

I would like to thank the members of the committee who have given their time, their resources and their commitment to make this process work. We have done so without funding and achieved a working relationship with all role players and The City of Cape Town.

Yours faithfully,

David Ayres:
Chairperson: Atlantis Dunes Off-Road Executive



Update on Atlantis – Continued.....

Extract from

The Tygerburger - Table View, dated 17 July 2013:

GR4 learners in for super fun 4x4 day

The City of Cape Town's Environmental Resource Management and Water and Sanitation Departments, in partnership with Atlantis Dunes Off-Road Executive (ADORE), will be commemorating Nelson Mandela's life-long fight for human rights by hosting a Mandela Day 4x4 charity event on Friday, 19 July.

Some 20 Grade 4 learners from Pella Moravian Primary School will be attending this fun and educational day. The event will focus on the area's unique and irreplaceable biodiversity, as well as give the learners a first-time experience of 4x4 rides and sand-boarding activities.

ADORE, the sponsor of the event, has also committed to a significant contribution towards the funding of a new library that will be constructed at the Pella Moravian Primary School.

The charity day will be held at the Atlantis Dunes which ADORE, as a body that incorporates representatives from various 4x4 organisations around the Western Cape, uses as a recreational area. The area is not naturally vegetated and is mobile, meaning that no ecological damage will be done through these activities. It is situated in the area of the proposed Witzands Aquifer Nature Reserve.

This nature reserve itself covers over 1 750 ha of land, conserving vital areas that are necessary for the healthy functioning of the underlying aquifer, which supplies potable water to the Atlantis, Mamre and Pella communities. Critically endangered vegetation species such as the Atlantis sand fynbos is also conserved.

► For more on the city's nature reserves, visit www.capetown.gov.za/naturereserves.

Further questions and clarification can be obtained by directing enquiries to witzands@gmail.com

1. Entry only with a valid permit
2. Entry times between 06:00 and 19:00 in summer, 07:00 and 18:00 in winter
3. Entry only with a basic competency certificate or accompanied by a guide
4. Drive within the demarcated area
5. No fires on the sand
6. Do not drive over indigenous vegetation
7. No urination or defecation (may not be 4x4 related)
8. Maximum speed - 45km/h

The following guideline is also being drafted: Be considerate towards other dune users (may require some exploration of possible rule regarding circulation within the dunes, or mandatory buggy-whips)

Update on Atlantis – Continued.....

Extract from the ECONOMIC, ENVIRONMENTAL & SPATIAL PLANNING —
Environmental Resource Management – the Greater Atlantis Area – North Region
Quarterly Report: July - September 2013, refers:

1.1. Highlights Biodiversity.

□ On the 19/07/2013, the Environmental Resource Management and Water and Sanitation Departments in partnership with Atlantis Dunes Off-Road Executive (ADORE) held a successful Mandela day 4X4 Charity Event at the Atlantis dunes.



Photo by B Sutherland, with Bruce Jenkinson in the foreground.

□ The Sub-council 1 members visited WANR during the reporting period. The members were accompanied by Elzette Krynauw (Senior People and Conservation Officer, North) presented with an introduction of the area by C Mc Kie and J Charles (AWS Manager).

□ The members were then taken to experience the unique environment of the dunes, transport through the dunes was provided by the ADORE members, who generously gave up their time and vehicles.





9. Membership

Important Notice:

Only members that are paid up before end of February each year will qualify for the T4A benefits. The file goes to T4A early in March.

- Thanks to all members who renew their membership. We appreciate your on-going support.
- Membership fees are payable annually in January.

Membership fee for 2013: R250-00

Registration fee (once-off for new members), for all regions will be R70-00.

Optional: To order a set of 2 magnets for your stickers: add R50-00 to your payment.

Bank Details

Account Name: **OGATO**

Bank: Absa N1 City

Branch Code/Takcode: 632005

Account number: 918 316 9047

Important: After payment, please email your name, surname, payment amount **and your postal address** these details to Treasurer. Alternatively SMS your name, surname, payment amount and address to: 083 309 1615, and we will post your OGATO professional Off-road Guide/Tour Operator membership stickers.

Note: Please retain your proof of payment until you have received your stickers – we may need you to fax this to us if we do not get an SMS from the Bank confirming your payment.

Erika (Treasurer)

Happy Guiding and Operating!

Please let us know what is happening in your area, local news and views.

Regards

Hugo Potgieter



[TBCSA: Media release refers:](#)

Statement by the office of the Minister of Tourism, Mr Marthinus van Schalkwyk, on the occasion of the speech delivered at the Public Lecture; North West University Potchefstroom Campus, as part of World Tourism Day 2013 Celebrations

Tourism and Water: Protecting our common future

Before I make a couple of remarks about the theme of today's lecture, let me first ask you a question. Let's assume that there are a few of you here from Pretoria and after this event you must drive back home which is about 180 km. If your car only has fuel to cover 100km's of the journey, who here would hit the road knowing very well that they will definitely run out of fuel and end up being stranded? But then, how inexplicable is this: What I do not understand is why, collectively, we are willing to consume the earth's resources at a much faster pace than the earth can regenerate? Why are we willing to borrow from future generations if we know we are depleting resources at a rate that will land our children and their children in trouble? Why is this generation using more water, consuming more electricity and dumping more waste than they are entitled to, knowing very well that the next generation will be paying the price? Last year, globally, we consumed about 1.5 times the natural resources that the earth can regenerate. Stated differently, by August last year we had already consumed about as much as the earth was able to replenish during the whole year. This year, again, we will use up resources equivalent to about 1.5 planets. But we only have one planet. So, we are passing the buck to those who will inhabit this earth after us. But sooner or later, because we are borrowing from the future, resources will dry up, pollution will accumulate beyond a critical point and livelihoods would be dramatically impacted. Simply put, we will bankrupt the next generation.

Consider, for example, the average carbon footprint of a South African. What is regarded as sustainable, or manageable from an environmental perspective, globally, is about one tonne of carbon dioxide emissions per person per year by 2050. However, in South Africa, each of us, on average, emit about 9 tons of carbon dioxide every year. Globally, the average is just over 4 tonnes per person per year. But we know there are simply not enough carbon sinks, for example forests, to naturally sequester these emissions. If we were to continue to pollute in this way, the global temperature is bound to increase by more than two degrees Celsius over pre-industrial levels during this century. And then we will breach critical ecological tipping points beyond which damage becomes irreversible.

Many of the natural resources on which we depend in the tourism economy will then become depleted at a much faster rate. It may be through the loss of species, the bleaching of coral reefs or other biodiversity impacts, sea level rise and coastal erosion, the spread of vector-borne diseases such as malaria and cholera, drought and land degradation, loss of food security, and so on. In short, if we continue to borrow from the future at the current rate, we will kill off, among others, the future reservoir of natural resources that we need for sustainable tourism growth.

The same applies to water as many touristic activities depend very directly on water, not least golf courses, rivers and lakes, pools and spas, irrigated gardens and hotel guest rooms. For others the dependence on water is indirect, for example tourism activities that depend on fauna and flora, a moderate climate, and so on. In the UNEP Green Economy report it is estimated that the average tourist consumes about 300 litres of water per day, with so-called luxury tourists consuming more than 800 litres per day. This should be compared to the consumption of, on average, only 240 litres per day in affluent European households. In



poor communities the average daily consumption – often next door to luxury resorts – can be a fraction. In this context, it is tough to justify, for example, the estimated 9.5 billion litres of water required to irrigate golf courses around the world every day. Of all the water on earth, only 3% is fresh water that we can drink. The rest is seawater. Of this fresh water, 5/6ths are frozen. This leaves humankind and the eco-system with only 0.5% of all water to continue life on earth. Humankind's cut of this 0.5% needs to be shared amongst households, consuming about 10%, industry and power generation consuming 20%, and agriculture 70%. Exacerbated by rapid urbanisation, water reserves are often not where they are needed most.

Consequently, it already presents a binding constraint on the growth of cities and economies in many parts of the world. If we use too much, pollute too much, or use water inefficiently, sooner or later water stress kicks in, people go hungry and eco-systems collapse – along with the downfall of health and sanitation, economic development and tourism. Here, in this part of the world in the Northwest province, the predicted increase in frequency and intensity of heavy rains, prolonged periods with no rain and generally more unreliable rainfall patterns, threaten the integrity of vital wildlife tourism offerings. We are particularly vulnerable to water stress in Africa, and especially in southern Africa.

By 2020, between 75 million and 250 million people are likely to experience water shortages as a result of climate change. In combination with increased demand, this will adversely affect livelihoods, freshwater fish resources and agricultural production. In some countries, yields from rain-fed agriculture could be reduced by up to 50% in the next decade. And at a societal level, community and inter-state conflict over water resources is already a reality. It is already a headline geopolitical issue. This underlying conflict potential is exacerbated by post-colonial arrangements which are generally not conducive to mitigating conflict or competition over water resources.

Consider, for example, the fact that almost 40% of Africa's international borders are demarcated by river channels and basin watersheds, and that most major rivers traverse national boundaries. These resources are sensitive to even moderate reductions in rainfall as are predicted to occur in many places across Africa. Not only will increased scarcity of water resources threaten the sustainability of hydro-electric power generation, irrigation, agricultural production, fish stocks, food security, transport and industry, and tourism activities, but it could also contribute to an increase in inter-communal and inter-state migrations and tensions.

A key challenge and opportunity in Africa is to use trans-boundary water resource management to reduce conflict potential, to enhance peace-making by opening new avenues for dialogue, and to promote regional integration. The UNEP Green Economy Report modelled the massive gap between global water supply and water withdrawals. They projected that, if current inefficient water use had to continue along a business-as-usual path, water demand will overshoot supply by 40 per cent in 20 years' time.

Our best efforts to improve water productivity and to increase supply, for example through recycling, the construction of dams and the introduction of desalination plants, will close less than half of this gap. What will be required is massive new investment in more efficient water infrastructure and water management, water-policy reform. This will include appropriate water pricing and allocation, and the development of new technology, for example, to increase the productivity of irrigated agriculture.

Programme Director, what stands clear, is that the nexus between energy, climate, water and food will shape the future landscape for tourism. But let's be clear on this: When we address this challenge our mind-set should not be one of competition between tourism and the environment.



The relationship between tourism and the environment, including water, is first and foremost one of dependence, not competition. Tourism depends on these natural resources, or it will die. But that is not the complete story. The dependency also runs in the other direction. The sustainability of many natural resources – think for example of national parks, natural heritage sites, marine protected areas or botanical gardens – depends very directly for its survival on the income generated by tourism. Investing in tourism is therefore critical to sustaining biodiversity and eco-system conservation.

I would like to conclude. In dealing with the tourism-water challenge, we should be flexible and pro-active in our planning and continuously integrate the latest scientific findings and practical experience. We must learn to expect the unexpected, and continuously ask ourselves how new evidence of climate change and water stress will impact the tourism sector, and how each of us can contribute to reducing emissions and water consumption. In hotels this may involve retrofitting water-saving technology in rooms, switching to grey water to irrigate golf courses, educating consumers, collecting rainwater or reverting to indigenous landscaping. These low-hanging fruit are mostly negative cost options, meaning that they save costs over time; they have short payback cycles.

Globally, in South Africa and in every community we must all do more and act with a greater sense of urgency. Let's adapt where we face the inevitable; to paraphrase the businessman, Brand Pretorius: Let's not wait for the storm to pass, but rather learn to dance in the rain. Thank you.

Ends/ Issued by Ministry of Tourism

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Off road guiding as a Profession – by Dave van Graan

It is sometimes thought that off-road guides are people that could not make it in the real world and decided to abandon ship, but there is much more to these special men and woman than meets the eye.

A favourite saying is, "how they can charge so much money to lead the group as they are on holiday all the time". This comment comes from people that are totally uninformed and have no idea that it is not a holiday at all, but a serious profession. The guides just do their job so well that it looks like a holiday.

The plus points of off road guiding are a lifestyle with plenty of freedom, a respected occupation and an office with a view. It gives you a chance to travel to far-away places, meet other interesting people and guide them safely to the beautiful, far-away places in Africa. Places that the clients normally only know from TV programs.

Off road guides are people that cannot be contained in cities for long and want to work in the "Great outdoors". It sounds so idyllic, but they are people that like to challenge the forces of nature and also the forces of bureaucracy, bad roads, malaria and further more they are sometimes months away from their loved ones. The best of all is that they stay positive, friendly and focused against all odds.

If you are someone that can live in a tent for long periods, handle a lack of home life and any kind of stability then this is the job for you. Not to forget the whining and moaning clients that you occasionally have to live with. Sometimes one gets the feeling that clients forgot that they have signed up for an overland tour out of their own free will and then realised that it was a bad idea and wants the guide to pay for their stupidity by being as obnoxious as possible.



Not everybody can manage this scenario. Off road guides are not He-man or Super woman but they do have special characteristics. They are a special breed of people that must be able to negotiate the group out of deep mud or dig in the hot desert sand or manage sometimes dangerous situations where the authorities are drunk gun toting rebels. The best of all is that the guide does all that with a smile albeit biting on his tongue sometimes.

A seasoned guide will notice when one of his clients suddenly have a change of attitude and the reasons why there is a change, be it low blood sugar, malaria prophylactic side effects or alcohol induced aggression. Not to mention the stupid questions the guides have to answer without making the client look like a fool.



Guides have to be flexible and think on their feet as every new day offers new challenges.

There is only one constant factor in Africa "It will change".

If the scenario on the left does not bother you, you can join a course and start living.

Guides are generally well educated, skilful, motivated and have the ability to get on with the job, unsupervised, dealing with any situation when it arises. This can include tactfully getting some love sick client with a heavy dose of khaki fever out of his/her tent, handling some greedy police men at a road block or trying to keep a client positive after his vehicle has broken down for the tenth time.

Other types of guiding are more activity specific and/or more about the destination than the journey. A few examples of other types of guiding are hiking guides, river guides, site guides at a museum, mountain climbing guides and safari guides to name a few.

Off-roading has increased in the past couple of decades, and is getting ever more popular which in a large part was influenced by the Camel Trophy event, Kingsley Holgate with his well-publicised travels through Africa and all the TV programs such as the popular Voetspore with Johan Badenhorst and 4x4 Roetes with Andre de Villiers and others such as Andrew St Pierre White that have been writing books on 4x4 off road travelling for years. There are also many magazines that have become house hold names for instance Leisure Wheels, Getaway, Weg and SA 4x4 to name a few.

In the case of South Africans it is the fact that Africa has opened up for us after the establishment of the New Democratic South Africa, which was the start of a new travel trend in South Africa. One must not forget that South Africans are in general very adventurous and off road travelling is something that fills a void.

While some commercially built overland capable vehicles are produced, many off roaders consider the preparation of their vehicle a paramount part of the experience. The off road vehicle industry has grown exponentially over the past 20 years. South Africa has significant industries based on making accessories for overland travel. Page through any of the mentioned magazines and it will become clear that our off road industry is healthy and growing.

All off road guides must follow some special training or course which can consist of the following subjects:



Good guiding practices, environmental aspects, logistics, planning a trip, money matters, border formalities, basic marketing, outdoor cooking, navigation, first aid and common diseases in Africa, evacuation of a patient and vehicle, basic survival and negotiation skills. Off road driving techniques courses must also be successfully completed to be able to register as an off road guide.

In Africa medical facilities are sometimes none existed due to the remote places that are visited and for that reason the guide must be able to treat a client or him/herself if necessary. Apart from the normal first aid, it is essential that all off road guides must have a good knowledge of tropical diseases such as malaria, yellow fever cholera and others. All guides should be able to warn clients about scorpions, spiders, snakes and other nuisance insects such as phutsi flies, sand flies.

The registration of Tourist Guides is an internationally accepted practice to assure the professionalism of the industry and to serve the best interest of the tourist. It is the intention to provide the best and most stable future for this vital sector of the industry and to ensure that the tourist enjoys a professional and efficient guiding service.

It is crucial to be a registered guide because not only do you need the training mentioned above but it is illegal to guide without being registered. Most National Parks and Game reserves will not allow illegal guides to enter – can you imagine the embarrassment if you are not allowed to proceed with the tour because you are not a legal guide.



Do the training and get out there. We all have only one life, live it.

I think the words below describe the best how most off-road guides think.

No populace city, with all its varieties of commerce and stately structures, could afford so much pleasure to my mind as the beauties of nature I found in this country. Daniel Boone 1734 - 1820

Regards

Dave van Graan



Notification by tracks4africa

Some changes for the Namibia maps

Namibia renamed the prominent tourist area, the Caprivi Strip on Thursday in a move to eradicate its German colonial history.

The 450km² area popular for its tropical rivers and wildlife is now called the Zambezi Region

Two other towns bearing the names of Germany's colonial politicians were changed to local languages.

Schuckmannsburg in the former Caprivi region was changed back to its original Lohonono.

Harbour town Lüderitz is now called Naminüs - "embrace" in the local Khoisan language.

<http://www.news24.com/Africa/News/Namibia-renames-Caprivi-Strip-20130808>