



Friday the 1st of February 2013, is already on us!

We have been favoured with the use of the old farmers' hall at Vaalwater, presently occupied by the Waterberg Academy. The hall can comfortably accommodate 200 supporters and is situated on the turn-off to the right towards Lephalale, just after passing through Vaalwater.

This building has a great tradition and has served the Vaalwater community for decades.

After a short relapse the Academy is now in charge and making use of the premises fully.

The GPS co-ordinates are as follows: S 24 17 06 50 and E 28 06 06 60.

We have decided to only **start proceedings at 10 am**. to allow people travelling from afar enough time to get there safely and comfortably. The upgrading of the road between Vaalwater and Modimolle is nearly complete but we suggest that visitors allow themselves at least an hour's driving time from Modimolle to Vaalwater and a few minutes extra for welcoming refreshments before we start.

We have the privilege of Dr Ruper Baber, presently chairman of the Waterberg Biosphere Reserve, welcoming visitors to the Waterberg.

We expect the day to be one which inhabitants of the Waterberg and visitors alike will remember with appreciation.

We expect to attend to the following matters on 1 February:

- 1 A recap of the conservation aims and challenges in the Waterberg.
2. Introduction to the different organizations involved in conservation in the Waterberg.
3. Presenting certificates of appreciation in lieu of the outstanding and selfless conservation work done by such pioneers as the late Andries Pearson and the late Charles Baber, and then Clive and Conita Walker who we hope to have the privilege of having with us on the day.
4. We are also inviting people in the various government structures which may be inclined towards assisting some of our endeavours.

5. In view of the devastation caused by the huge wildfire which consumed the greater part and more of Marekele in September 2012 we have invited Sanparks to share their philosophy on conservation with us. Dr Mabunda is running on a tight schedule around that time and have suggested that his senior executive, Mr Paul Daphne, address the Forum in his stead.

The newly appointed manager of Marakele, Mr Johan Taljaard, will be accompanying Mr Daphne on the first of February. That day being Mr Taljaard's first day in office.

6. All organizations actively involved in conservation, even elsewhere, will also be invited and we hope that they will be present.

7. Due to a Cabinet kgotla at that time ministers Marthinus van Schalkwyk and Pieter Mulder whom we had hoped to have present will not be able to attend. Negotiations with the Limpopo Government to have one or more MEC's of the appropriate departments present, are ongoing.

8. A contingent of the Bela-Bela High School will present one or two song items.

9. Mr Bruce Lindsay, acting head of the Waterberg Academy, will have a few minutes on the podium to address us on the Academy's involvement with conservation and its newly acquired international recognition as an ecoschool.

10. We are affording writers from the Waterberg the opportunity to exhibit some of their writings and to interact with visitors.

11. On this occasion a senate will be nominated / elected from trustees of the Waterberg as a management body to take the Forum's business forward.

12. **Proceedings will start promptly at 10 am.** and are expected to conclude after 1 pm. with a short break for refreshments before 12 am.

We hope for a full complement of true conservationists to come and enjoy the morning with us. Admission will be free.

This is an opportunity for every person who is vividly aware of what Earth is coming to under pressure of man to become practically involved in help saving this wonderful part of our country.

None of us are in a position to do anything about the diminishing ice-caps of the poles or about the decimation of rain forests but everyone now has the opportunity to make an important contribution to the conservation of the Waterberg where a critical mass of conservation-minded stakeholders are already involved.

We look forward to seeing you all at Vaalwater on the first of February at ten o'clock sharp.