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AP3893: TENDER NUMBER 17/2024: RE-ADVERTISEMENT ROUND 3: IMPACT ANALYSIS OF THE INTRODUCTION OF LARGE PREDATORS IN THE KAROO NATIONAL PARK

Location:

[KAROO NATIONAL PARK](#)

Post Date:

[2025-02-04 11:45:00](#)

Closing Date:

[2025-02-13 12:00:00](#)

Contact Person:

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GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

During the 1970's South African National Parks (SANParks) explored the possibility of establishing a National Park that would be representative of the Nama Karoo Biome. This was in response to a campaign launched by the South African Nature Foundation (SANF) and funded through the commissioning and sale of special art stamps depicting the fauna and flora of the Great Karoo. SANParks eventually decided to establish the park near Beaufort-West and in support, the Town Council of Beaufort West donated 7 209ha of communal land, to the North-West of the town, for this purpose. The KNP was proclaimed in 1979 and the SANF subsequently purchased additional land with the result that the KNP currently covers just under 90 000 ha with a perimeter of 176km. The rest camp was opened in 1989.

The KNP straddles the Great Escarpment and, with an elevation ranging from 850m to 1 300m above sea level, it is representative of both the Lower Karoo as well as the Upper Karoo. Both below and above the Great Escarpment the park is situated on the Beaufort group of rocks that were laid down between 280 and 240 million years ago when Southern Africa was still part of Gondwana. A large variety of amphibians and reptiles lived in this plant and water-rich area with its mammal-like reptiles making the Karoo paleontologically famous. About 60 million years after the Beaufort sediments were laid down, the entire area was covered with a 1,5km thick layer of lava, which was also being forced between the sedimentary layers of the Beaufort rocks to form dolerite sills. As the dolerite was more resistant to subsequent erosion, the unique flat-topped hills of the Karoo, bordered by this dolerite sills, was formed.

This geological characteristic, combined with the harsh climate of the Karoo, led to a unique range of shrubs interspersed with some grasses. The rainfall in the KNP ranges between 100mm and 500mm per year with an annual average of 200mm. Precipitation is dominantly in the form of summer thunderstorms with some winter rainfall being possible from cold fronts coming in from the West. The winters are frosty and chilly with

temperatures dropping below 0°C with some snow on the mountains and summer temperature can rise to up to 40°C.

The KNP has a wide variety of endemic wildlife with 58 mammal species, more than 200 bird species and a range of reptiles (including 18 snake and 5 tortoise species). Some of the antelopes include the largest herd (500 animals) of endangered Cape Mountain zebra and there are black rhinos as well as the endangered riverine rabbit.

As is evident by the names of two rivers, the Leeu River and Gamka River (respectively Afrikaans and San for “lion”) and the town Leeu-Gamka (hence, a tautology) at the convergence of these two rivers, lions were indigenous to the Karoo. After an absence of about 170 years, lions were reintroduced in the KNP on 10 November 2010 when eight lions were translocated from the Addo Elephant National Park. The decision to re-introduce the lions was taken in order to restore the natural functioning of the predator-prey balance in the ecosystem as well as to ensure that all historically occurring species are once again conserved in the park. In addition, the expectation was that the lions would add to the tourism attractiveness of the KNP and entice visitors to stay longer than the common one night *en route* between Cape Town and the interior. At that stage it was expected that the lion carrying capacity of the KNP would be somewhere between 15 and 20 lions.

However, most male lions disperse when they reach adult age and prides move and disperse when competing with others for food or mating. In circumstances where there is no fencing and no other land-uses between reserves, this phenomenon presents fewer risks to communities, however, in small reserves such as the KNP, immediately bordered by communities, the challenges are more arduous. If unchecked, lion populations can increase by 22% per annum resulting in an insufficient prey-base to support the increasing population or social pressure between the individuals. This, in turn, compounds the risk of the lions escaping from the reserve.

The most famous escapee from the KNP was probably Sylvester the Lion. Sylvester, then three years old, escaped from the KNP and, after attracting the attention of the whole country, was only captured after 24 days. During this time Sylvester travelled approximately 371km and had been spotted a mere 4 times in the search, ran unknown close encounters with people, killed 27 sheep, 1 kudu and 1 Nguni cow. However, on his return, the other male lions in the park made it very difficult for Sylvester and he escaped again within a matter of months. After being rounded up, he was relocated to a reserve bordering the Addo Elephant Park where he bonded with two females. Nevertheless, the incentive for lions to escape remained with flash floods lifting the fences in dry riverbeds and burrowing animals undermining the integrity of fences creating opportunities for predators to leave the area. Hence, it is not strange that, in 2019, an escaped lion was traced to about 42km from Sutherland which is situated 300km from the KNP. In

September 2020, seven lions, who escaped from the Karoo National Park, were killed by rangers. There are currently only 10 lions, one male and nine females in the KNP and eight of them are collared. This substantially reduced the incentive for lions to escape, enhance monitoring as well as the likelihood of escapees being captured.

Agriculture is a very important part of the economy of the Karoo. In 2019 primary agriculture contributed 12,5% to the economy of the Central Karoo District and, almost more important, 24,1% of total employment in the district could directly be traced back to primary agriculture. Nearly all new employment opportunities are created in, or on the base of, the Agricultural sector. The predominant agricultural activities in the Central Karoo are characterized by livestock production; mainly sheep, goat, cattle and ostriches. Animal-based agriculture makes up more than 60 percent of farm income in the Central Karoo.

Interestingly enough, the unique combination between climate, geology and plants described above, has an impact on the sensory characteristics of the meat produced in the Karoo. This uniqueness has led to "Karoo Lamb" / "Karoo Lam" being the first South African Geographic Indication (GI) to be included in South African GI Register.

For various reasons farming in the Central Karoo is under threat. These reasons include new technology (e.g. meat produced in bioreactors, Fourth Industrial Revolution (4th IR) material technology), Climate Change, social pressures, policy change and more. To understand these trends, in 2021 the WCDoA commissioned a diagnostic and design evaluation to investigate the future of farming in arid areas. The evaluation report indicated a number of opportunities for future development pathways, but it is also clear that some of these pathways are mutually exclusive. For instance, the generation of renewable energy through solar or wind undermines the very characteristics or 'sense of place' which attracts tourism, lifestyle relocation and the desert economy. In the case of the KNP there is a clear conflict between its conservation, biodiversity and tourism objectives and the impact of roaming predators on farming in the area.

In an area of roughly 30 km outside the fences of the Karoo Park there are 811 farm portions (Excluding the KNP itself) of which 729 are in the Western Cape Province and 82 in the Northern Cape Province (see a map of the area in Annexure A). As most farms normally consist of more than one farm portion, it is unclear how many farms can be found in this area. However, the farmer's associations in this area will be able to provide more clarity on the farms and the farmers. Further to the above it should be noted that farmers closer to the park might have different opinions from those further away.

Over the past decade conflict, between the KNP on the one side and farmers and other players in the economy on the other, has been developing. Various arguments and

solutions were from both sides, but no scientifically based analysis has yet been concluded.

As this conflict is an example of the trade-offs that need to be considered in developing a future economy of the Karoo, the WCDoA intends to use this as a case study of how to find a mutual beneficial solution to conflicting socio-economic opportunities.

SUBMISSION OF DOCUMENTS

All bid documents must be downloaded from Casidra RFQ/Tender portal and cannot be provided by email or in hard copy.

TENDERS:

Sealed tenders, endorsed as indicated in the bid document, must reach **Casidra** SOC Ltd at their Head Office, 22 Louws Avenue, Southern Paarl, placed in the bid box available at Reception.

FAILURE TO PROVIDE ANY OF THE COMPULSORY DOCUMENTATION AND PARTICULARS MAY RENDER THE BID INVALID.

PLEASE NOTE:

Documents must be bound as **Casidra** will not take responsibility for any information that is lost due to unbound submissions of tenders.

CLOSING DATE AND TIME: THURSDAY; 13 FEBRUARY 2025; STRICTLY AT 12:00.

All queries should be referred to Supply Chain at tender@casidra.co.za with the subject heading as **"AP3893: TENDER NUMBER 17/2024: RE-ADVERTISEMENT ROUND 3: IMPACT ANALYSIS"**



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