

THE WATERBERG MEANDER VOL 1

Limpopo | South Africa | www.waterbergmeander.co.za



HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

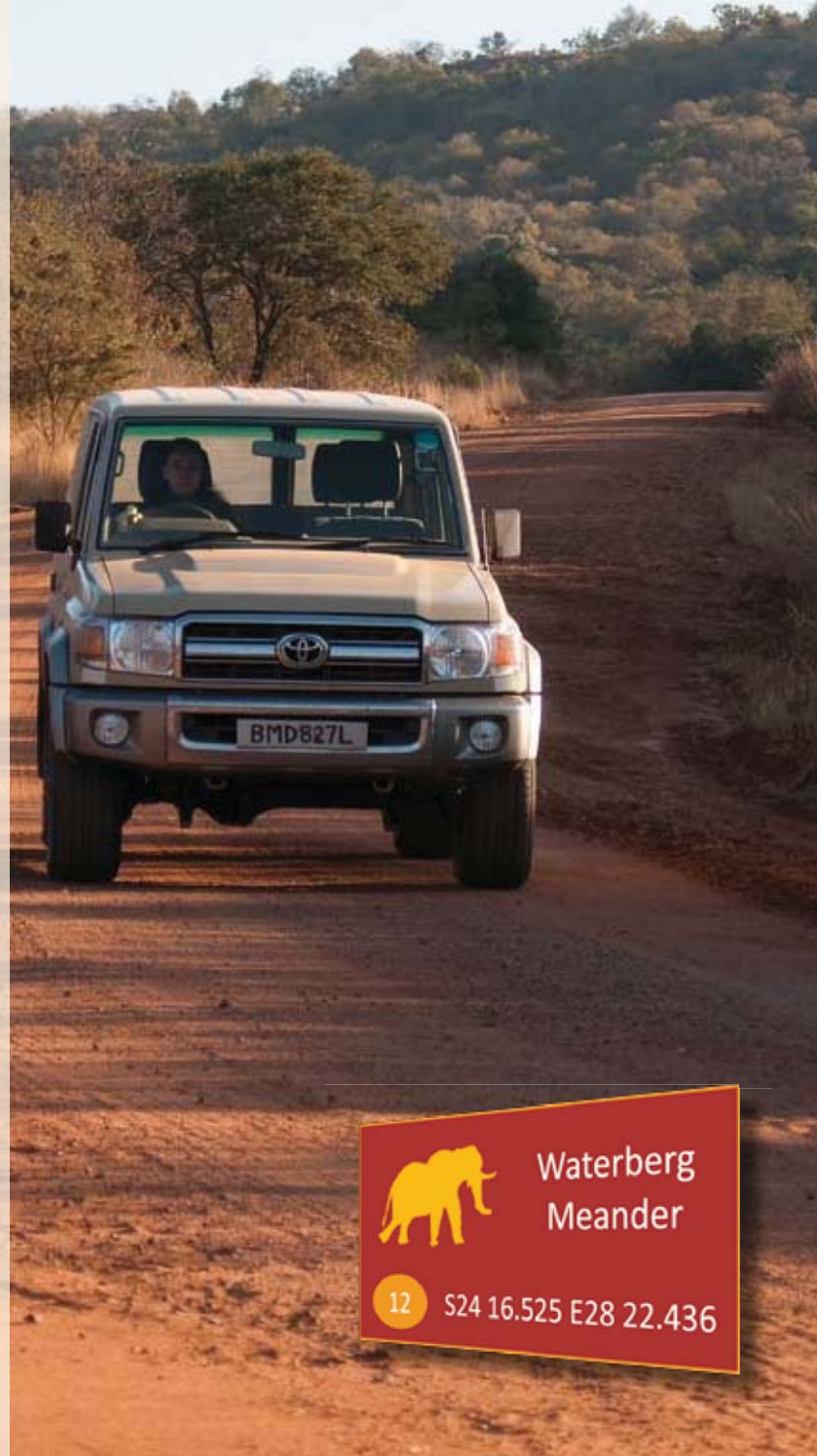
The Waterberg Meander guides visitors through the vast and scenic wilderness of the Waterberg Biosphere Reserve and surrounds. It showcases prime tourist attractions within the area, exposes a series of community linked projects and provides a rich informative self-drive tour of historical, geological, cultural and environmental sites along the route.

The brochure starts with a map of the route, an introduction to the Waterberg Meander and an overview of the Waterberg as a wildlife and cultural destination. This is followed by three sections: a series of 13 community linked projects along the route; a series of 22 sites of interest along the route; and advertisements for commercial tourism as well as arts and crafts businesses within the area.

Each of these aspects of the route is colour coded and accompanied with detailed maps. The brochure is completed by information on the birding hotspots within the area and an overview of the Waterberg Biosphere Reserve.

All road junctions along the route, as well as all community linked projects, sites of interest and commercial businesses, are numbered and marked on the maps. The GPS co-ordinates of all road junctions and sites of interest are also provided, both on the signage and on the maps in the most common format (hdd mm.mmm). The position of the sites of interest sign posts relate to a good position on the public roads from which these scenic or historic sites can be viewed. They should under no circumstances be construed as an invitation to enter private property or explore areas away from the public roads.

The maps can be printed or downloaded from the Waterberg Meander & Biosphere Reserve website for your convenience. Additional information regarding the sites of interest in the form of a voiceover is available on CD or downloadable from the website.



www.waterbergmeander.co.za

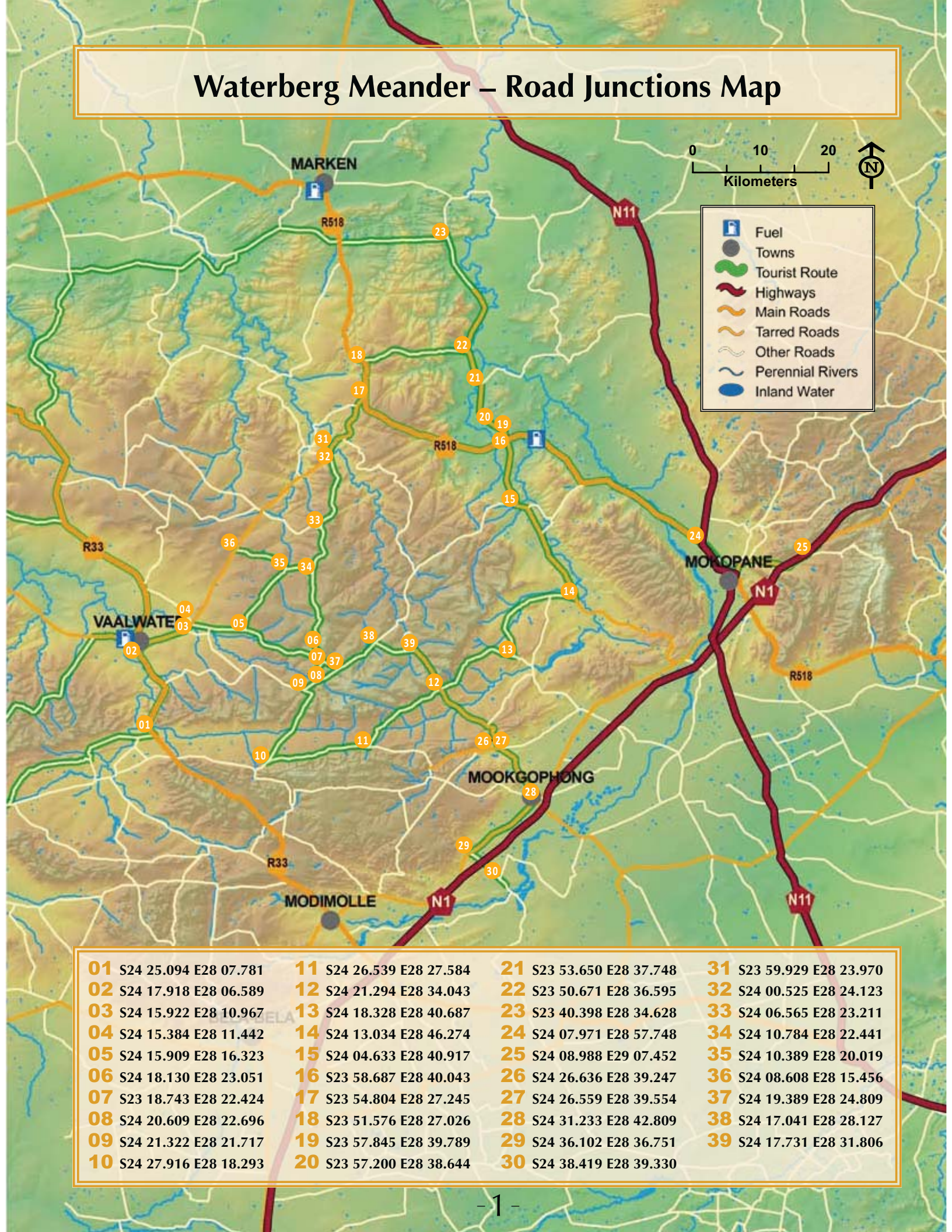
sample of road sign



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Waterberg Meander – Road Junctions Map



- Fuel
- Towns
- Tourist Route
- Highways
- Main Roads
- Tarred Roads
- Other Roads
- Perennial Rivers
- Inland Water

01 S24 25.094 E28 07.781	11 S24 26.539 E28 27.584	21 S23 53.650 E28 37.748	31 S23 59.929 E28 23.970
02 S24 17.918 E28 06.589	12 S24 21.294 E28 34.043	22 S23 50.671 E28 36.595	32 S24 00.525 E28 24.123
03 S24 15.922 E28 10.967	13 S24 18.328 E28 40.687	23 S23 40.398 E28 34.628	33 S24 06.565 E28 23.211
04 S24 15.384 E28 11.442	14 S24 13.034 E28 46.274	24 S24 07.971 E28 57.748	34 S24 10.784 E28 22.441
05 S24 15.909 E28 16.323	15 S24 04.633 E28 40.917	25 S24 08.988 E29 07.452	35 S24 10.389 E28 20.019
06 S24 18.130 E28 23.051	16 S23 58.687 E28 40.043	26 S24 26.636 E28 39.247	36 S24 08.608 E28 15.456
07 S23 18.743 E28 22.424	17 S23 54.804 E28 27.245	27 S24 26.559 E28 39.554	37 S24 19.389 E28 24.809
08 S24 20.609 E28 22.696	18 S23 51.576 E28 27.026	28 S24 31.233 E28 42.809	38 S24 17.041 E28 28.127
09 S24 21.322 E28 21.717	19 S23 57.845 E28 39.789	29 S24 36.102 E28 36.751	39 S24 17.731 E28 31.806
10 S24 27.916 E28 18.293	20 S23 57.200 E28 38.644	30 S24 38.419 E28 39.330	



Introduction

For those of us who have the privilege to call the Waterberg ‘home’, it is a stunningly beautiful part of South Africa. One is being continually refreshed and uplifted by an inspiring sense of open and unspoilt space, big skies, compelling views and an unmistakable closeness to nature. The investment in conservation in the area over the last 25 years has been nothing short of remarkable, and the area’s designation in 2001 as a UNESCO biosphere reserve seems merely to confirm the long held belief that this is a truly special corner of our beautiful country.

The Waterberg is best known as a bushveld wildlife destination with a wonderfully wide range of species and habitats on offer. In reality, however, very few people manage to experience the vastness of the Waterberg or its most scenic aspects as the area is served primarily by a complex and seemingly obtuse network of dirt roads where visitors are likely to get lost. For this reason, the Waterberg Meander has been created by the Waterberg Biosphere Reserve to guide, not only self drive visitors, but also guests at our many safari lodges through the area.

The meander route and brochure enable visitors to enjoy the visual landscapes whilst having at their fingertips a range of environmental, geological, historical and archaeological information which are referenced by a series of sign-posted sites along the route. Together this will bring to life the ecology of the area, the ancient structure of the topography, the culture and the intriguing and sometimes tragic history of its people.

This brochure leads the traveller around the current 350 km route, with numerous shorter options, encircling the south, eastern and northern escarpments, and meandering across a sizeable portion of the Waterberg plateau. There are also links to Nylsvlei and Makapans Valley in the east.

A subsequent edition will include routes that cover the entire biosphere reserve and surrounds, including the western areas around Marakele National Park and Mokolo Nature Reserve. Your comments on this brochure and suggestions for the next are most welcome.





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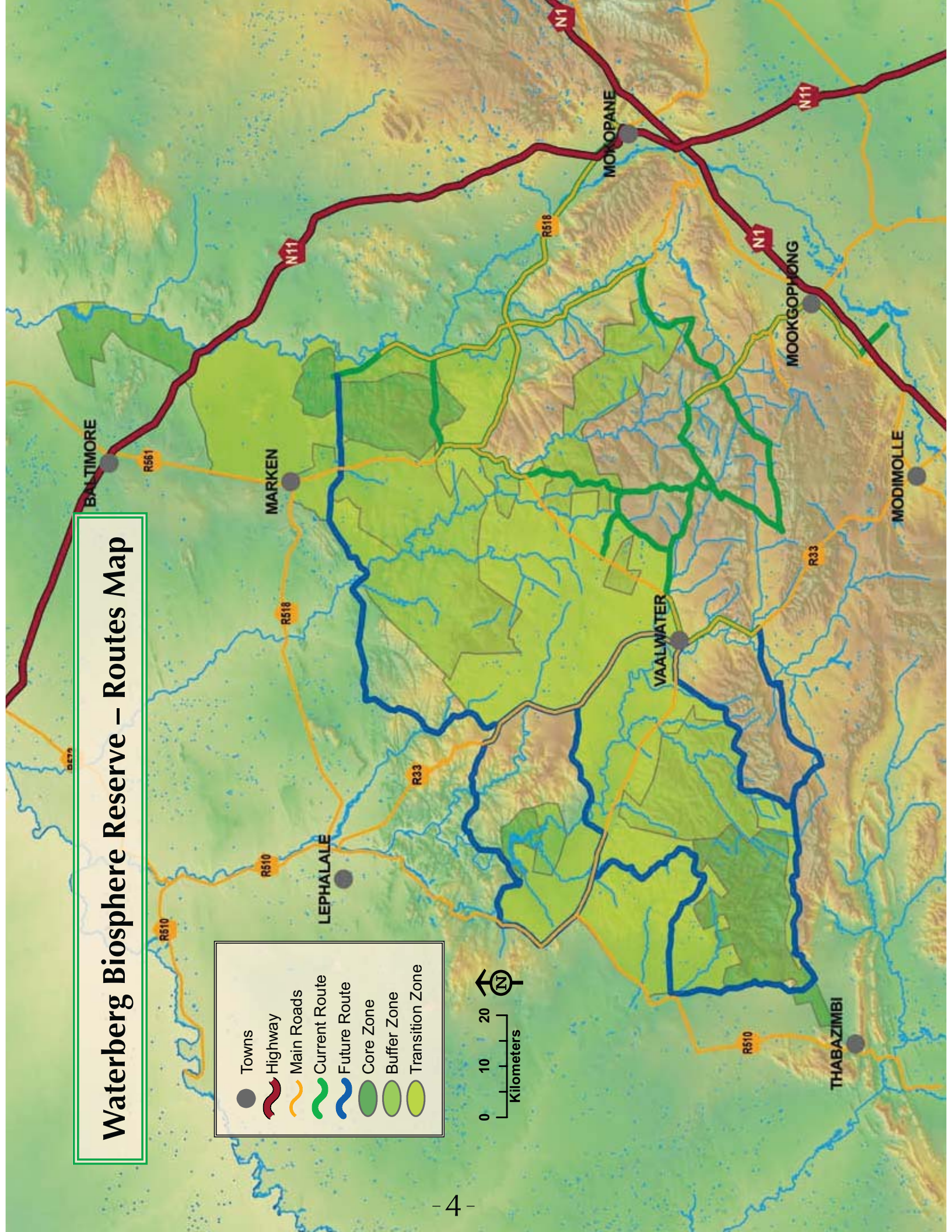
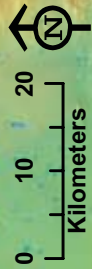
The creation of the Waterberg Meander by the Waterberg Biosphere Reserve has been sponsored by the EU-funded Limpopo LED (local economic development) program and the Waterberg District Municipality. As implementing agent, the Waterberg Biosphere Reserve has used the opportunity to address one of its most enduring challenges: how to ensure that the existence of the reserve benefits communities and stakeholders that were previously disadvantaged and who are not major landowners within the reserve. Hence, along the route a small number of community-owned and operated tourism businesses have been assisted in terms of infrastructure and training, while several of individuals have been trained as site guides or bird guides. In addition, a few of businesses fostering community linked local arts and crafts have been supported, as have operations specialising in youth development and environmental education.

Success in these endeavours coincides with the core objectives of the Waterberg Biosphere Reserve, which include not only goals of conservation but also those of sustainable economic development, environmental awareness and uplifting the poor.

Dr Rupert Baber
Chair, Waterberg Biosphere Reserve



Waterberg Biosphere Reserve – Routes Map



The Waterberg Plateau

home to the Waterberg Biosphere Reserve

Discover the Waterberg – one of the world’s last unspoilt wilderness areas

The Waterberg Biosphere Reserve is a magical part of South Africa which is easily accessible from Africa’s industrial powerhouse, Gauteng. It is very old, and yet a very new place too. With its unique history of sparse human settlement, it has been perfectly placed to reinvent itself, following the dawn of democracy in South Africa, as a stunningly beautiful and highly significant conservation area.

The Waterberg answers every nature lover’s dreams: wide open spaces with a rare wilderness quality, the romance of true bushveld, close encounters with some of Africa’s most charismatic and unusual wildlife, and a riot of biodiversity. Add to this some of the most pristine river systems in southern Africa, rich cultural and archaeological diversity, and a myriad of opportunities to explore on foot, horseback or open topped vehicle, and you have one of the most amazing eco-destinations in the world. To top it all, the Waterberg has a mild climate and is malaria free.

Brief History of the Waterberg – and why it is still so empty

The close proximity of the hominid-rich site at Makapan Valley suggests that our earliest ancestors could have been frequent visitors to the Waterberg many thousands of years ago. Archaeological evidence of human activity in the Waterberg stretches back as far as the Middle Stone Age. However, the Waterberg was never heavily populated. And so it has remained. The first rock art in the area may be no more than one thousand years old, while the first farmers only appear to have settled on the high Waterberg plateau in the 11th Century. Iron Age pottery of the Eiland style, dating from the 11th to the 16th Century, is abundant in the Waterberg but only in open parts of the river systems that were most suitable for crop growing. During the Late Iron Age (c. AD1700) Nguni speakers settled in hilltop villages, such as that on Malora Hill near the Palala River, but evidence suggests that such settlements were sparsely distributed. While the area came to be dominated by



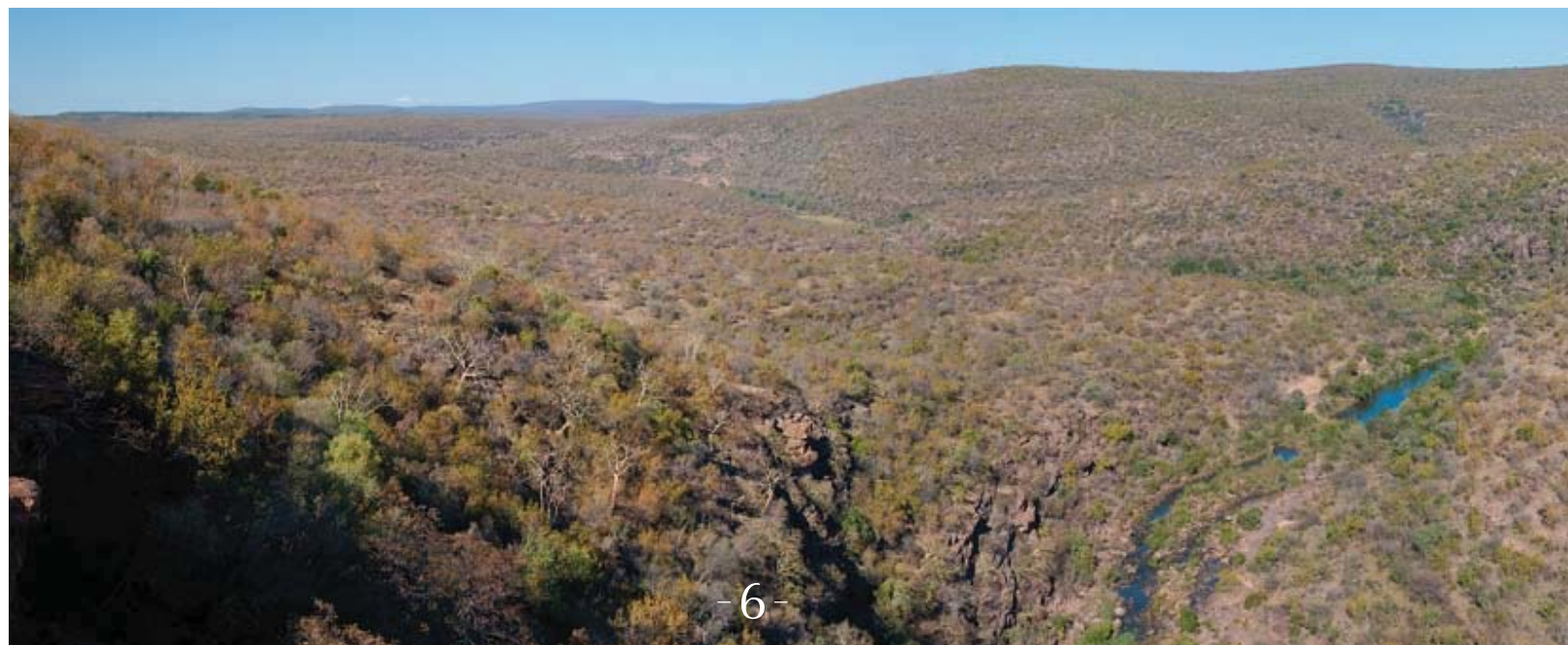


the Pedi in the 18th Century, it appears to have been largely a sanctuary to which people fled periodically whilst under threat, rather than an area for sustained and widespread settlement.

The Waterberg was also settled late by people of European origin, of which there were fewer than 200 resident even as late as the early 20th Century. This mountainous region was difficult to penetrate and cultivating a living from the nutrient-poor sourveld was always precarious. The northern parts of the Waterberg, with its fevers and tsetse flies, were indeed some of the last areas to be settled by whites in South Africa. Today the Waterberg still remains sparsely populated with a single town, Vaalwater, on the plateau. Despite rich deposits of coal, iron ore and platinum beyond its periphery the Waterberg plateau itself is devoid of any major mineral deposits. This, together with its unsuitability for forestry, has meant that the Waterberg has avoided any large scale development or habitation that could have otherwise detracted from its natural beauty or wilderness quality.

Ancient wilderness landscape, unsurpassed scenic beauty

The Waterberg can best be described as a large 'inverted saucer' stretching from Modimolle and Mokopane in the east as far as Thabazimbi and Lephalale in the west. Within the central core is a vast basin plateau dissected by numerous rivers, principally the Mokolo which rises in the southern hills and the Palala (Lephalala) which rises in the south-east. The plateau that makes up the Waterberg consists of a thick sequence of conglomerate and sandstone that has been reliably dated as approximately one thousand nine hundred million years old – about half as old as the Earth itself. Although the rivers that brought the sediments that became the rocks of the Waterberg have long since disappeared, they are known to have been fast running and shallow. They flowed from the north-east into a sea or large lake where southern Botswana is now. No fossils have been found in these rocks as they were formed before hard-bodied life forms had even evolved. The red colour of the Waterberg rocks is due to iron oxides and provides us with the earliest evidence on earth of the presence of free





oxygen in the atmosphere – an essential requirement for the development of oxygen-dependent life.

This ancient landscape remains unspoilt to this day. In the form of the southern, eastern and northern escarpments, it provides some of the most scenic outlooks in South Africa. The southern escarpment consists of a continuous series of buttresses, rising from the valley floor in majestic order like sentinels on perpetual guard. The eastern and northern escarpments are more varied and in many ways more dramatic. Towards the east, the towering peak of “Hanglip” dominates the landscape, while further to the north a series of sheer cliff faces, amphitheatres and rocky outcrops, all in deeply-hued red sandstone, form one of our country’s most spectacular landscapes.



On top of the plateau the scenery is less dramatic but provides a sense of vast open space. The area is also graced with some of South Africa’s most pristine rivers, particularly the Palala, whose wilderness quality is unparalleled. Where else can one hike for miles without encountering another human being, drink clean water from the river (while avoiding the crocodiles), chance upon a finfoot or explore rock art in a setting that has barely altered since it was first created? A corollary to the unspoilt nature of the visual landscape in the Waterberg is the low level of light pollution in the night sky. Astronomers familiar with the South African scene agree that the Waterberg is one of the most perfect sites in the country to view the wonders of the universe.





Conservation in the Waterberg – a remarkable success story

The San rock art in the Waterberg portrays a rich biological diversity of animals such as the red hartebeest, eland, elephant, rhinoceros, kudu and giraffe. Sadly from the 1850s the vast wildlife resources of the Waterberg were decimated by European hunters, to the point where very few species remained by the turn of the 20th Century. However, the manifest difficulties of sustaining a living from agriculture in the Waterberg set the scene for an unprecedented conversion of land to conservation and game farming over the last 25 years or more. Today practically all species that we know to have occurred here have been successfully reintroduced.

This transformation has been largely driven by the private wildlife and tourism sectors, but the state has also played a significant role through the creation and ongoing expansion of Marakele National Park. Vast areas of conservation land have been reassembled, including reserves such as Welgevonden, Lapalala Wilderness, Entabeni, Dinaka and the newly created Greater Mokolo Nature Reserve. The Motse and Molekwa communities, recent recipients of land in the Waterberg through the land restitution process, have also expressed their intention to create large unfenced areas dedicated to conservation and eco-tourism centred on the Moepel Farms and other areas north of the Palala River. Such foresight suggests that perhaps many of these significant conservation properties will one day become further consolidated into one of the largest private/public sector reserves in southern Africa. Indeed, the transformation of the Waterberg into a wildlife area built on a series of intact ecosystem blocks would fulfil the vision of General Jan Smuts who advocated the creation of a massive national park stretching from the Palala River in the south to the Mogalakwena River in the northeast and the Limpopo River in the west. It is no accident that renowned conservationists such as Eugene Marais, Clive Walker, Dale Parker, Paul von Vlissingen and Anna Mertz all made their homes in the Waterberg.

A treasure trove of biological, archaeological and cultural diversity

Although the Big Five are readily encountered on certain reserves, the Waterberg's strength as a wildlife destination lies in the opportunities afforded to visitors of seeing a much wider range of species in a relatively short time. In particular you are likely to see white rhinoceros, sable, gemsbuck, reedbuck and eland more easily than elsewhere. The Waterberg is also home to several rare, endangered or threatened carnivore species, including wild dog, brown hyena, aardwolf, honey badger, leopard, African wild cat, serval, African striped weasel and African civet. Other rare mammals include roan, tsessebe, Sharpe's grysbok, aardvark, black rhino, hippo, pangolin and a healthy population of thick-tailed bushbaby.

Over two thousand plant species grow in the Waterberg, with many beautiful



flowering trees, shrubs and bulbs between the months of November and February. There is also a great array of bird species. Almost half of the 400 birds found in the Waterberg are resident all year round, including the largest colony of Cape vultures in the world. A rich diversity of butterflies, other insects and reptiles can also be easily seen. Visitors interested in the finer details of the natural world will be interested to know that three species of flat lizard are endemic to the Waterberg, and that certain areas of the central plateau have the highest recorded density of snakes anywhere in South Africa!

This amazing biodiversity is complimented by a platform of varied cultural and archaeological heritage. Dispersed throughout the Waterberg, but particularly along the Palala River, a rich array of rock paintings clearly reflects the advanced level of the San people's religious beliefs. Images portrayed include a variety of abstract designs, circular dances and numerous animal species. Apart from San rock art, the Waterberg is also rich in farmer rock art of the later agro-pastoralists who predominantly used white pigments applied by hand, in contrast to the multi-coloured brushwork of the San. Pottery shards, grinding stones and other artefacts as well as the extensive remains of walled settlements attesting to human activity from the 11th Century onwards can be viewed by any willing traveller, as can some homesteads and churches built by the earliest European settlers.

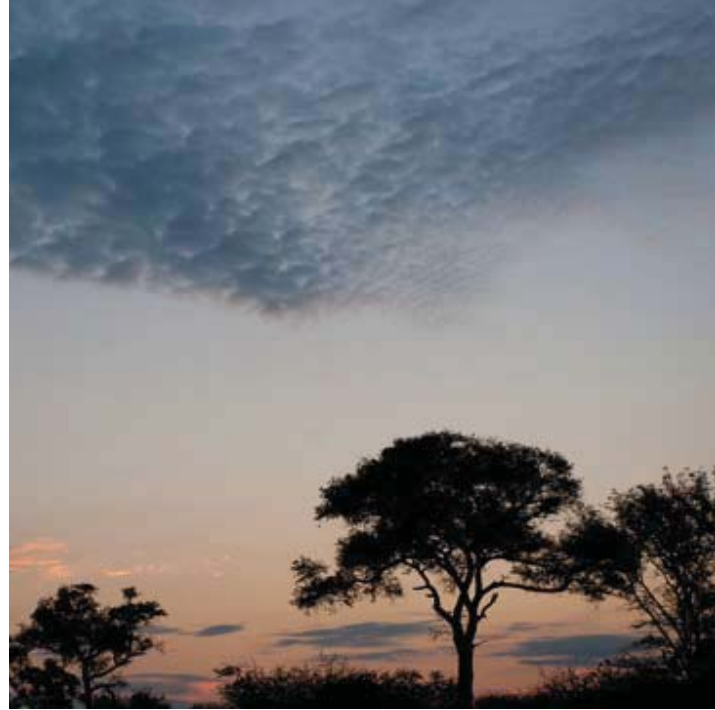
Some of the descendants of early inhabitants and pioneers can still be encountered in the Waterberg, many of whom continue to practice traditional skills in pottery, art work, agriculture or conservation. Waterbergers are renowned for their hospitality and sense of community, all vital traits for people living in isolated and perilous circumstances, and it is these attributes which are so effectively used in the tourism industry today. Visitors to the Waterberg often comment on the relaxed atmosphere and how they are openly welcomed into the daily goings on of the community at large. Whilst the descendants of European pioneers typically embraced the new tourist-orientated economic landscape, a range of opportunities to visit and stay with African rural communities in their own authentic settings have also now been developed along the Waterberg Meander route in an attempt to augment a visitor's cultural experience further.

Wide range of places to stay and things to do

From exclusive safari lodges to intimate home stays and inexpensive self drive explorations, the Waterberg has it all. There are five star boutique lodges catering for those national and international visitors who seek fully guided close encounters with the "big five". For those preferring a self-drive wildlife setting away from dangerous game, well furnished and inexpensive self-catering lodges are available. These destinations also offer hiking and cycling in a safe environment. Throughout, hospitality, attention to detail and quality service prevails.

One speciality of the Waterberg is the "bush home" stay, where visitors are welcomed into a local home as exclusive guests and their holiday safari is tailor-made to their specific needs. Another speciality is horseback





safaris: the Waterberg is home to the oldest and largest cluster of internationally renowned horseback safari destinations in South Africa. Exploring the bush on horseback is both unique and exhilarating, and the Waterberg offers not only excellent riding country but also close encounters with wildlife and numerous other adventures on horseback.

As mentioned earlier, hunting has occurred in the Waterberg for hundreds of years, and this pastime continues today on a wide range of hunting properties. Recreational hunters seeking trophies of the “big five” or one of the impressive antelope species are well accommodated, whilst the Waterberg is also a favourite amongst local “biltong hunters”. The difference today is that hunting occurs within a sustainable framework, and is indeed one of the main drivers of the growing wildlife industry in the Waterberg.



One of the benefits of the Waterberg Meander is that visitors are not limited to the confines of a particular reserve or lodge when visiting the area, but are able to experience the wilderness, scenic beauty and rich diversity of the area when driving along back roads that are all but deserted. Much wildlife is also encountered. These endless miles of empty roads are also the perfect setting for mountain bike or geo-caching adventures.

Finally, a new and growing tourism product in the Waterberg is cultural tourism, where opportunities are offered for visitors to engage with, learn from and in some cases work with local communities in authentic rural settings. A new generation of bird and site guide is being trained to guide visitors through the landscape and provide detailed information on particular birding, cultural or archaeological sites.



Come and recharge your senses

The essence of a visit to the Waterberg is the chance to slow down and absorb the natural beauty of a landscape uncluttered by noise, buildings or pollution. Breathe clean air and gaze across vast open spaces, take in the delicate play of light on the rolling hills and hear the natural sounds of the bush penetrate the silence.

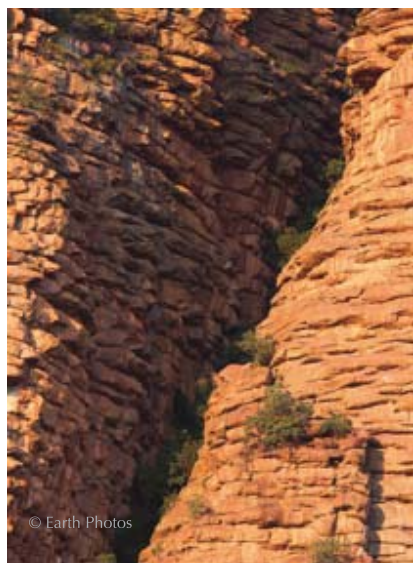
Experience the drama of a thunderstorm or the brilliance of the crystal clear night sky. There is a primordial need for mankind to reconnect with nature, to feel the ancient rhythms of a timeless landscape and to recharge the senses. The Waterberg welcomes you.



Future directions: challenges and opportunities

The granting of UNESCO Biosphere Reserve status to large swathes of the Waterberg plateau is recognition of the area's environmental importance and conservation potential. The future of the conservation revolution in the Waterberg lies in the outcome of a number of potentially conflicting processes. On the one hand, the demand for unfettered wilderness spaces will continue to grow as humans experience the ever increasing pressures of industrialization and wealthy individuals find opportunities to invest in conservation. On the other hand, many people are looking for an inexpensive form of access to this beautiful place, and while the possibility of owning a second home in a dense residential estate might satisfy this demand, the potential damage of this type of development to the Waterberg's wilderness "sense of place", unless done with extreme sensitivity, is quite alarming. The possibility of Eskom routing its high voltage electricity distribution network from the new power complex near Lephalale across the Waterberg plateau could conceivably, in our opinion, have a devastatingly negative effect. It might be argued that the government has the responsibility to create and enforce the necessary strategic environmental management plans that will protect the core environmental and tourism assets of the area while also setting out development nodes, but time is running out.

At the same time, the Waterberg is in danger of being seen by many ordinary citizens as an island of wealthy privilege where the value placed on wildlife and biodiversity is greater than that placed on confronting unemployment and poverty. The challenge is to ensure that local people benefit from the growing tourism industry. Similarly, it would be disadvantageous for the Waterberg for the large areas of conservation land claimed under the land restitution process to retreat from eco-tourism or tourism imperatives. These new custodians must be embraced within the Biosphere project and empowered to ensure the successful stewardship of this precious land. By visiting the Waterberg and supporting responsible local tourism, you will be assisting in this process.



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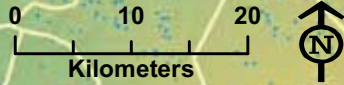
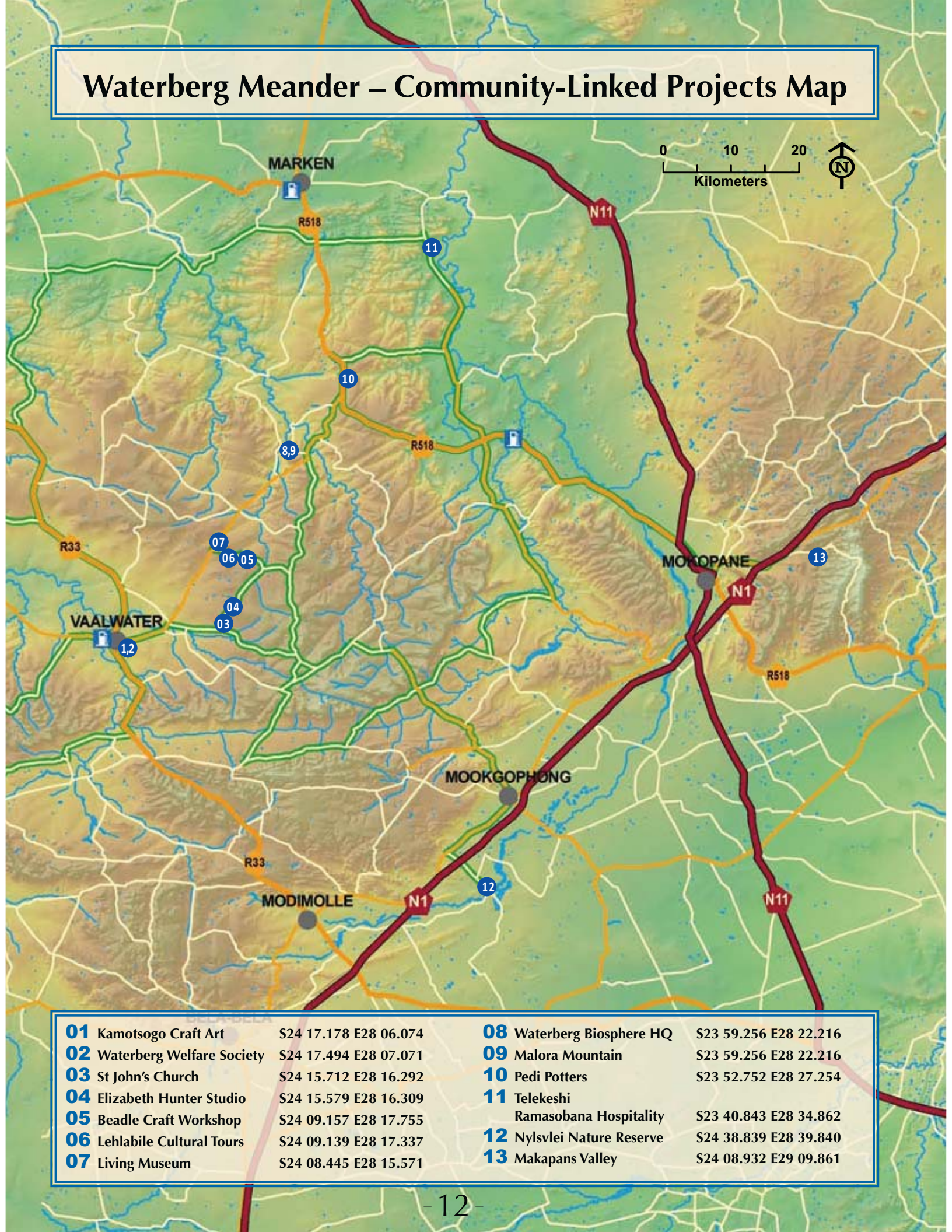


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Waterberg Meander – Community-Linked Projects Map



01 Kamotsogo Craft Art	S24 17.178 E28 06.074	08 Waterberg Biosphere HQ	S23 59.256 E28 22.216
02 Waterberg Welfare Society	S24 17.494 E28 07.071	09 Malora Mountain	S23 59.256 E28 22.216
03 St John's Church	S24 15.712 E28 16.292	10 Pedi Potters	S23 52.752 E28 27.254
04 Elizabeth Hunter Studio	S24 15.579 E28 16.309	11 Telekeshi Ramasobana Hospitality	S23 40.843 E28 34.862
05 Beadle Craft Workshop	S24 09.157 E28 17.755	12 Nylsvlei Nature Reserve	S24 38.839 E28 39.840
06 Lehlabile Cultural Tours	S24 09.139 E28 17.337	13 Makapans Valley	S24 08.932 E29 09.861
07 Living Museum	S24 08.445 E28 15.571		



1 Kamotsogo Craft Art

Kamatsogo Craft Art, originally established in October 2006 as an empowerment project of The Clive Walker Foundation, is a social investment plan creating employment opportunities, transferring skills and empowering women through the production, marketing and sales of uniquely hand crafted products. Craft is seen as one of the most important means for unemployed people to learn skills and enter into the world of mainstream tourism and enterprise development. Kamatsogo's aim is to contribute to the meaningful improvement of lives, families and the local community.

The products are contemporary in nature but draw on African/Indigenous aesthetics and cultures. This provides much needed local craft for the tourism market.

We are hoping to continue providing external training (subject to available funds) in multiple crafts and small business development skills.

Tamsin Hill, Co-founder & Director
Shop 3, Spar Centre, Vaalwater
083 490 8583 – 014 755 4020

2 Waterberg Welfare Society (WWS) Visitor Centre at Timothy House



The Waterberg Welfare Society was founded in 2000 primarily to provide help and support to those individuals infected and affected by the pandemic HIV/AIDS. Timothy House was built in 2006 to accommodate the growing programme for orphans and vulnerable children as a response to the youth development programme of the Waterberg Welfare Society. The visitor



centre offers an interface between the public and the work done by the WWS, as well as serving as an exhibition space for local arts & crafts including work of young clients of Timothy House.

Zachariah Sekhu | Mary Stephenson
014 755 3633
Mon-Fri 08:30-17:00

3 The Church of St John the Baptist at 24 Rivers



This beautiful small church, built with Waterberg stone and a thatch roof, is located on a position of the farm Twenty Four Rivers. The desire to build a church was that of E.A. Davidson, his wife Molly, and her two aunts, Katherine and Edith. The architect was no less than Sir Herbert Baker who is famously known for having designed the Union Buildings in Pretoria, among many other notable buildings. By 1902 the church was holding services and was consecrated on the 15 July 1914.

The church is today a living testament to the pioneering spirit of these early settlers and is a spiritual haven to many of their descendants and the new Waterbergers who worship there. A gem of cultural and spiritual heritage, visitors are most

welcome to view this non-denominational church throughout the week and to attend service on Sunday mornings at 9:30 am.

services : Shane Dowinton @ 073 430 2827
guided tours : 073 481 5304

4 Elizabeth Hunter Studio



Elizabeth Hunter is a descendant of the pioneer Davidson family of Twenty Four Rivers and lives and works on the farm, which dates back to the late 1800's. Elizabeth is one of a growing band of highly talented artists who have made the Waterberg their home and draw inspiration from the community and the landscape just as Pierneef, Naude and Coetzee did. Elizabeth works in oils and watercolours, combining a gift in both landscape, rural scenes and an increasing love of portraiture. Liz provides art classes to young people at Timothy House on a weekly basis.

Her work may be viewed at her studio which she has restored in the old E.A. Davidson Memorial Farm School which is situated near the Church of St John the Baptist. An opportunity to meet her in person, view and discuss her art and heritage is by appointment only. Art works for sale.

Elizabeth @ 083 368 9158

5 Beadle Craft Workshop & Shop

Working together to uplift the community through employment.

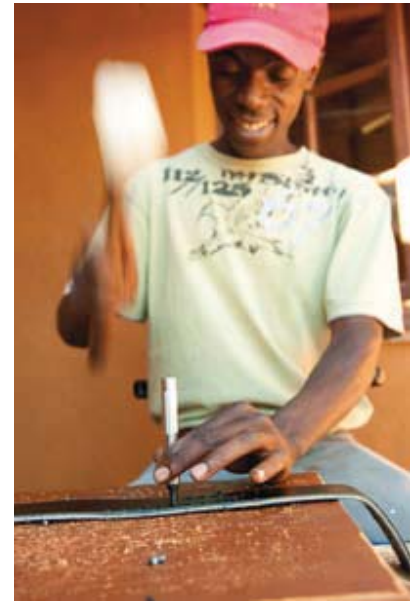
Established in 1998, Beadle is a community upliftment project that currently employs eleven individuals full-time from the Triple 'B' Ranch farm community of 50 families. Our vision is to help the rural community improve their livelihoods through skills training and sustainable employment. Skills training in leather craft, bead work and embroidery is given inhouse to an extremely high standard. To date 40 crafters have received training, with one individual now running his own craft business in Lephalale.

The crafters of Beadle make beautiful leather and beaded products at the strawbale workshop on the farm. Here, you can watch how an exquisite pair of beaded sandals or a braided gun case is made from raw materials. Our emphasis is on quality; therefore we use carefully selected leathers, both South African and imported, and the best rocaille seed beads imported from the Czech Republic. The recent range of hand embroidered bed linen is now also available.

The adjacent visitor centre displays the 130 year history of the Baber family in the Waterberg, the farms changing farming practices and lives of the local farm community. Essential oils produced on the farm are also for sale and on request visitors can tour the distillation facility and vermicomposting project.

Refreshments and light meals can be enjoyed in the pleasant herb garden.

Tanya - Rosina @ 014 755 4002 - 073 434 2815
Wed-Sat 7:30-16:30 - Sun 9:00-14:00
www.beadle.co.za





6 Lehlabile Cultural Tours

Four prominent elderly women from a local working game, essential oil and cattle farm, Triple B Ranch, established the Lehlabile Cultural Tours in 2005 by opening up their traditional style Pedi homes to visitors.

Martha Mosima, Anna Mojadibodu, Miriam Moabi and Sophia Mokau personally conduct the tour giving visitors a great insight into local lifestyles, food, décor, song and dance, and oral history. Tours start with a viewing of the community crèche and school, moving through the village and ending with an optional lunch in a traditional Pedi homestead.



Martha @ 014 755 4000 - 073 480 7418
Mon-Fri 11:30-13:00

7 Waterberg Living Museum at Walkers Islands



The Museum's activities will range from guided and self-guided tours, on-grounds and outreach environmental education programmes for school children and adults alike. The Museum will also

support and actively pursue ecological, biodiversity and scientific research, and will serve as a showcasing platform of knowledge to the public.

The Museum will provide a safe, natural environment for wild animals that have been unable to survive in a totally wild state due to illness, injury or being orphaned. The Living Museum's success in rehabilitation and raising orphaned rhino is legendary and the legacy will continue through this Living Museum.

Currently, the animals that can be viewed include cheetah, wild dog and black rhino. Other facilities that will be developed in the future include the Clive Walker Art Gallery, a library, archives room, functions room, curio shop and herbarium. A special feature will be the Livingstone Lounge where Explorer Club members and visitors alike can meet and enjoy a selection of teas, coffees, fine wines, light meals and other licensed refreshments.

Conita @ 082 969 8331
The Clive Walker Foundation NPO 017- 735
ahwalker@intekom.co.za
Wed-Sat 15:00-17:00

8 Waterberg Biosphere Headquarters

The Headquarters of the Waterberg Biosphere Reserve are housed in the Old Melkrivier School which was originally located on a portion of the farm 'Muisvogelkraal'. This historic landmark is



perfectly positioned to provide offices, housing, conference facilities, training centre and an information centre for visitors, students, school children, new landowners, government NGOs seeking information about the Reserve or the Waterberg Meander. Serves as a base for 'tour guides' for birding & visits to Malora Hill.

073 480 7392
Tue-Fri 9:00-17:00 – Sat 9:00-13:00



9 Malora Hill, Lapalala Wilderness

Malora Hill is situated in the 36 000 ha Lapalala Wilderness, a private reserve and an important rhino sanctuary. The site lies to the south of the Palala River in isolated splendour providing 360° views of the bush-clad valleys and surrounding hills.

Access along a footpath from the west reaches firstly the 18-19th century saddle site and then a further path takes one to the 17th Century summit site.

The 6 ha surface of the Malora Hilltop site is characterised by extensive and well-preserved stone walling. Features also include an isolated monolith near the centre of the settlement, several middens, house and grain bin foundations, and upper and lower grinding stones. The hilltop has been cleared of excessive vegetation.

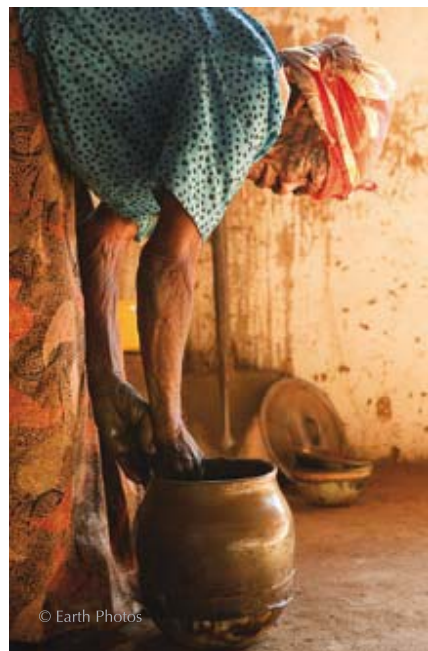
Bookings to this tour have to be made in advance. Each tour is conducted by a qualified site guide.

Biosphere Headquarters @ 073 480 7392
tour : 3 h - 4-8 people

10 Pedi Potters

The art of pot making in the Waterberg goes back hundreds of years as revealed by extensive archaeological research conducted over the past two decades. This ancient craft performed by the women of past cultures is a key element in the building blocks of today's archaeology knowledge, throwing light on who they were and their passing.

Here in the Waterberg on the farm Rhenosterfontein (Rhino fountain), an 80 year old 'Pedi' woman continues the age old tradition of pot making with the assistance of her daughter & grandchildren. Anna Moshede collects the natural clay, moulds the pots, decorates and fires them in a ground oven adjacent to their Pedi-styled home. Additional styles have also been taught and a mobile kiln



used to fire pots.

A variety of pots for sale and the opportunity to meet Anna is possible. Ablutions are available.

Anna 073 480 3992
Wed-Sun & public holiday 9:00-16:00

11 Telekeshi Ramasobana Hospitality



'Telekeshi' is a community tourism project situated on communal land adjacent to Masebe Nature Reserve. Nestled at the base of the north-eastern Waterberg escarpment, the site has access to this pristine and inaccessible landscape with breathtaking views & impressive geo-morphological forms.

Features include 1.5 & 3 hour hikes along the escarpment to view Middle Stone Age tools, San rock art, 18-19th century iron age settlement sites and an initiation site. There is excellent birding along the nearby Mogalakwena River and educational visits to a restored wetland as well as donkey tours into the local village can be arranged. There is also a very good example of a classic rock art site close to Telekeshi at Masebe Nature Reserve, to which guided visits can be arranged. The site has a massive overhang and access is gained by an iron walkway. The site is important for it portrays not only rhino and elephant but also feather-like forms, antelope in white, yellow and red, humans in red and a row of at least nine faint humans in a painting 10 m long. The rhino painting is one of six to be found in the Waterberg. The paintings were executed by both the later agriculturalists, the ancestors of the Northern Sotho people and the San (Bushmen).

In addition at Telekeshi cultural dance & oral



histories are offered by trained site guides and members of the co-op. In particular, they can relate the story of a tragic encounter in 1858 between a Boer commando & the Ndebele of Langa on the nearby hill of Magagamatala, the cliff face of which drops a sheer 250 metres into the Mogalakwena River and is easily visible from the visitor centre.

Telekeshi offers simple but comfortable overnight accommodation for up to 16 people (four beds per room) with complete self catering facilities. Refreshments & amenities are also available for Waterberg Meander users. In addition exhibits of the history, archaeology, geology and rock art of the site and its surrounds, as well as of the Waterberg Biosphere Reserve and the restoration of the wetland, are on display. The centre is built in an enchanting traditional Pedi style, with earth covered walls, enclosed courtyards, eco-toilets and ridged thatching. It is decorated using local techniques in patterns of coloured soils and cow dung.

This destination offers a truly memorable and highly educational experience. Apart from its appeal to the Meander traveller, it is ideally suited both for school groups wishing to be exposed to a rich and varied, yet safe, natural setting, and also for local and international groups seeking to do community work in an authentic rural setting where there are tremendous educational and developmental needs.

Malasela @ 083 612 7845
Lindani Game Lodge @ 014 755 4336
lindanilodges@telkomsa.net

12 Nylsvlei Nature Reserve

Nylsvlei is a 4 000 ha reserve lying to the East of the Waterberg between Modimolle (Nylstroom) and Mookgopong (Naboomspruit).

Managed by the Limpopo Conservation Authority, it lies within the largest inland floodplain in

South Africa, covering an area of 16 000 ha when fully inundated. The rich underlying geological formations are responsible for supporting the unique biodiversity of plant and animal life. 104 of the 365 bird species recorded in the Reserve are waterbirds, 87 are breeding and 8 red data listed species breed on the flood plain, which is most important as a nesting and feeding site for migratory birds.

Nylsvlei is truly one of the jewels in the Waterberg crown. A well-appointed self-catering camp, a campsite and a group camp offer accommodation. The Reserve is open to the public year-round from 0600 to 1800 hrs, is malaria-free and visitors may walk or ride bicycles on a good gravel road system. Vehicles have access to a network of roads.

Limpopo Tourism & Parks Board @ 015 290 7339
Marion @ 012 667 2183 - 083 455 1726
friendsnylsvley@mweb.co.za

13 Makapans Valley

The earliest evidence of life in the Waterberg is found at the Cave of Hearths fossil site, a limestone cave in the Makapan Valley along the eastern edge of the Waterberg region. It contains fossil-bearing strata that are about 3 to 2 million years old. Included in these fossils are some of the oldest ancestral remains in South Africa and indicate that an early hominid, *Australopithecus africanus* lived there some 2.8 million years ago.

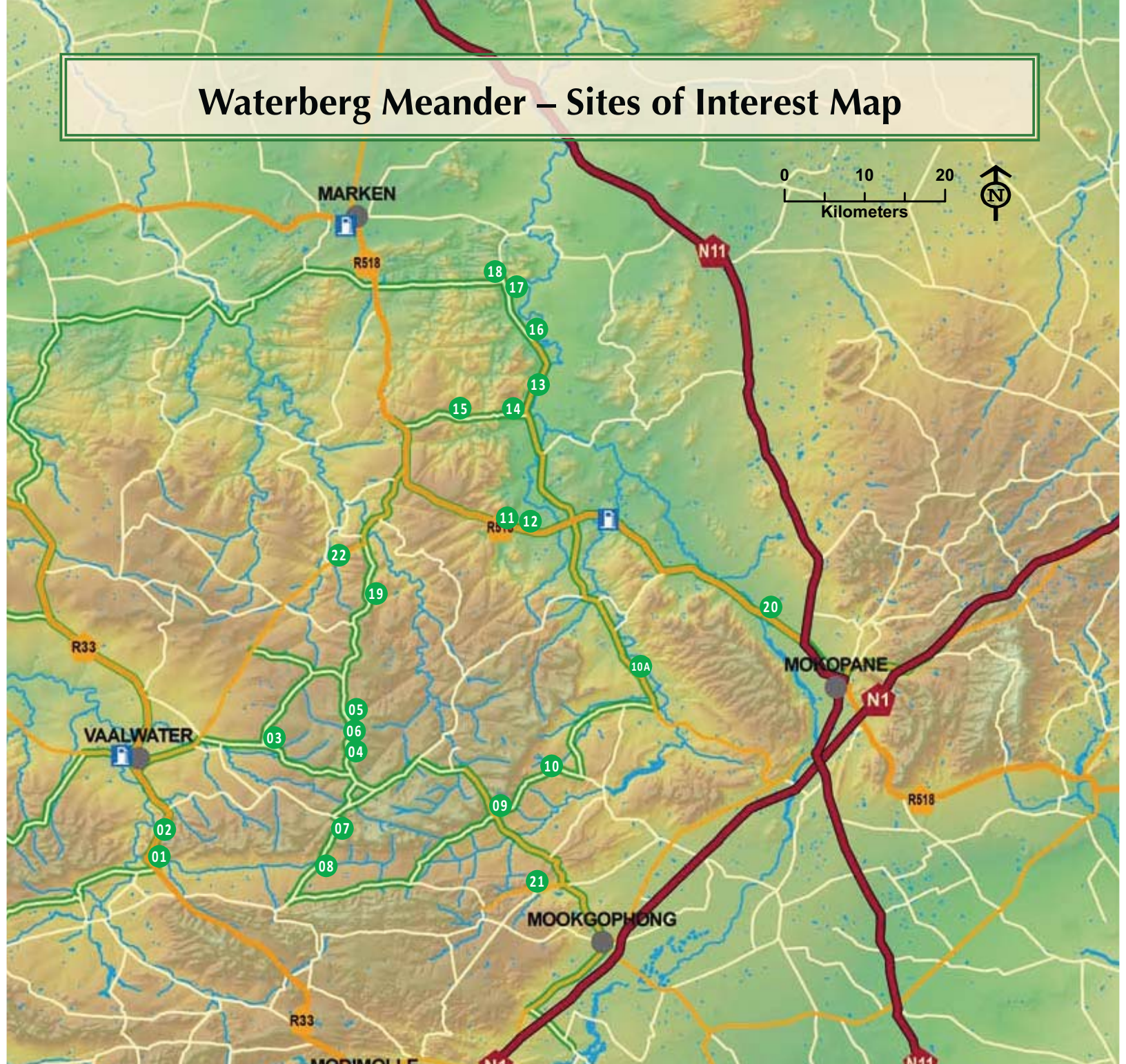


The caves also contain a rich array of fossil mammals providing proof that the Waterberg has always had an immense diversity of life.

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Waterberg Meander – Sites of Interest Map



01 The Seven Sisters	S24 25.094 E28 07.781	12 Kloof Pass	S23 59.373 E28 36.239
02 Skirmish in Anglo Boer War	S24 22.893 E28 08.309	13 Amphitheatre	S23 49.005 E28 36.849
03 24 Rivers: Internment	S24 15.973 E28 16.609	14 Elandskuiling Pass	S23 50.739 E28 35.547
04 Geelhoutkop	S24 16.686 E28 22.824	15 Moepel Wilderness	S23 50.718 E28 30.836
05 Limpopo Highlands	S24 14.114 E28 22.867	16 Waterberg Red Beds	S23 44.648 E28 36.715
06 Open Vistas	S24 15.817 E28 22.710	17 Magagamatala	S23 40.843 E28 34.862
07 Tarantalstraat	S24 22.600 E28 21.821	18 Conglomerate Geology & Sandstone	S23 40.431 E28 34.250
08 The Southern Escarpment	S24 25.824 E28 20.570	19 African Plains	S24 05.094 E28 24.404
09 Bokpoort Pass	S24 21.195 E28 33.938	20 Livingstone Memorial	S24 05.961 E28 54.687
10 Hanglip view	S24 18.155 E28 37.855	21 Eugene Marais	S24 26.990 E28 37.461
10A Hanglip rock buttress	S24 10.340 E28 44.926	22 Rivers & Wetlands	S24 01.988 E28 21.555
11 Mamatlakala	S23 59.126 E28 34.954		



1 The Waterberg – Seven Sisters

The Waterberg Meander route starts here, at the most common entrance to the Waterberg plateau – the Sandrivierspoort, one of only five natural gateways into the hinterland from the south or east, the others being Bakkers Pass to the west, Tarentaalstraat in the south and the Bokpoort and Kloof Passes in the east. Stretching to the west is the iconic view of the “Seven Sisters”, one of the most photographed and painted images in the Waterberg. In reality there are many more sisters – buttresses of the Waterberg massif rising from the flat basin outside the southern escarpment. Here the journey of exploration begins.

of Boer women and children in the vicinity of 24 Rivers, where they had gathered together for safety having had their homes and possessions destroyed. The British forces had had the Tarentaalstraat Pass pointed out to them by a National Scout in the hope of surprising Beyers and his command. The women and children were gathered up and sent to the concentration camp at Nylstroom (Modimolle). By the war’s end 544 women and children had died of disease; they are buried in the poignant commemorative cemetery in Modimolle.

2 Skirmish in Anglo Boer War



As you enter the Sandrivierspoort, you are passing through the scene of one of the principal engagements during the Anglo-Boer war between British forces and the Boers under the command of the elusive General Christian Beyers. This remarkable leader was a constant thorn in the British side, up to the end of the war. He had his horse shot out from under him on one occasion and

during another encounter his Bible and notebook saved him from certain death from a bullet to the heart. A single British casualty, Lt CFB Powell, lies buried a short distance into the pass at Mashudu Lodge, although there are other graves in the nearby hills.

4 Geelhoutkop



General Beyers was to fall back to Geelhoutkop, which presents a 360 degree commanding view over the surrounding countryside. What an excellent point from which to monitor the approach of the enemy! Geelhoutkop is named after the yellowwood tree (*Podocarpus latifolius*) which to this day is still to be found there although much diminished in numbers. The cutting and shipment of trees was to become an activity carried out by farmers after the war as post and timber supports in the mines. By contrast, bushveld trees were used in the construction of homesteads and farm buildings, the veld providing a bountiful supply of wood.

An area alongside the current road to the west of Geelhoutkop was used by the early pioneers as a ‘way station’ along the Tarentaalstraat route onto the

3 24 Rivers: Internment



In 1901 the British, who had not been successful in dislodging the Boers at Sandrivierspoort, came upon a group



plateau. Here wagons and oxen could rest after the long haul up the pass. This was generally a cleared area to the side of the main track. The monthly 'trek' to Nylstroom for nagmaal was a vital social and economic event for these pioneer communities.

5 Limpopo Highlands



A short drive north of Geelhoutkop one is afforded a stunning view down the Palala River catchment area. The Palala River is one of the only two rivers in Limpopo sharing similar vegetative geological features [the other being Levhuhu] and is of a very highest water quality in the world. The dramatic change in land use from agriculture to conservation has contributed to this situation. The Waterberg has the distinction of having been referred to as the 'Limpopo Highlands' which, in effect, is what this view confirms.

6 Open Vistas

A short distance along the route to the south, the traveller is afforded wonderful wilderness views west towards Welgevonden Game Reserve and Marakele



National Park. The highest point in the Waterberg (2 088 m) is located in the National Park and amongst those cliffs lives an important Cape Vulture colony. In this region one will find a number of "big five" reserves with well-appointed facilities. In the foreground is the Mokolo River basin which drains the southern highlands. Apart from the Mokolo River there are numerous other rivers and streams that also contribute to this important wetland area.

7 Tarentaalstraat



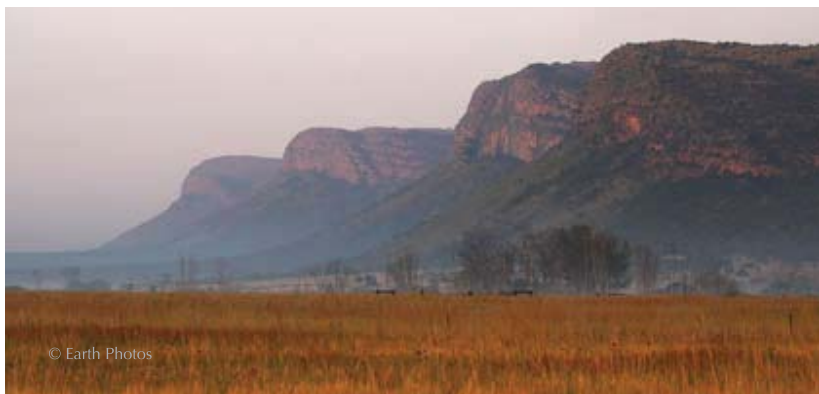
Tarentaalstraat is the third pass into the interior and was used by the early pioneers and settlers. The original pass lay in a parallel kloof to the west, whereas the current Tarentaalstraat itself was only opened in about 1912. This intimate and picturesque pass with clear streams of water running alongside the road and covered in waterbessies is a truly magical place. The sign posted spot is the perfect place to stop and spend some time listening to the tinkling stream and abundant birdlife.

In the pioneer days, heavily laden wagons pulled by up to ten pairs of oxen strained laboriously up or down the pass with a stop-off at Geelhoutkop (altitude 1738m). Before entering the pass, the touleier would crack his whip and listen for a reply, ensuring that no other oxwagon was passing in the opposite direction. It is said that the pass was named

Tarentaalstraat (Guinea Fowl Street), not because of the frequent presence of these birds in the beautiful layered sandstone bush-clad kloof, but rather in honour of the man who discovered it, who had an unfortunately poor complexion. It was up this pass that the British forces advanced in their endeavour to outflank General Beyers' Commando. The old wagon trail is still visible at the head of the pass in the valley to the west of the modern road.

8 The Southern Escarpment

The route now follows the base of the escarpment in a sweeping arc to the north. The mountain chain is almost 200 km long and when one views it from this point, one can appreciate why it presented such an impenetrable barrier to early settlement. The mountain range consists of porous sandstone and

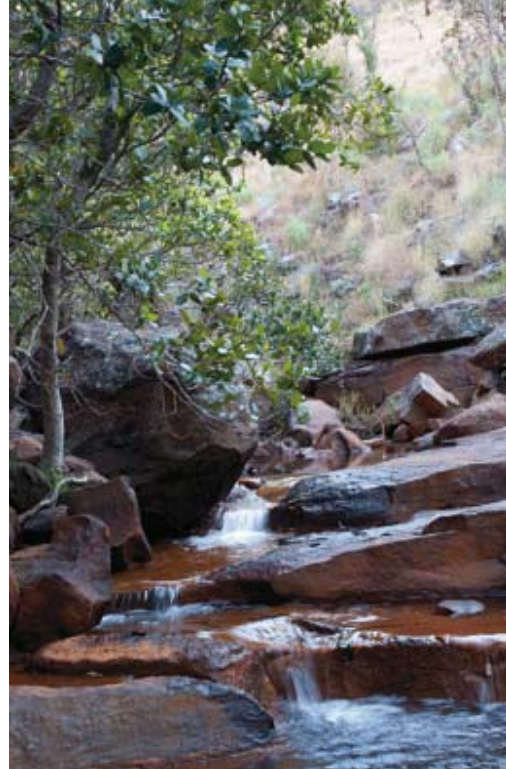


conglomerates and has been reliably dated as being about 1 900 million years old - half as old as the earth itself. Along this route the catchment provides water to the Doorndraai Dam and thence to the Sterkriver, which ultimately winds its way to join the Mogalakwena River (the Nyl) and eventually the Limpopo, as do all four of the Waterberg's main rivers.

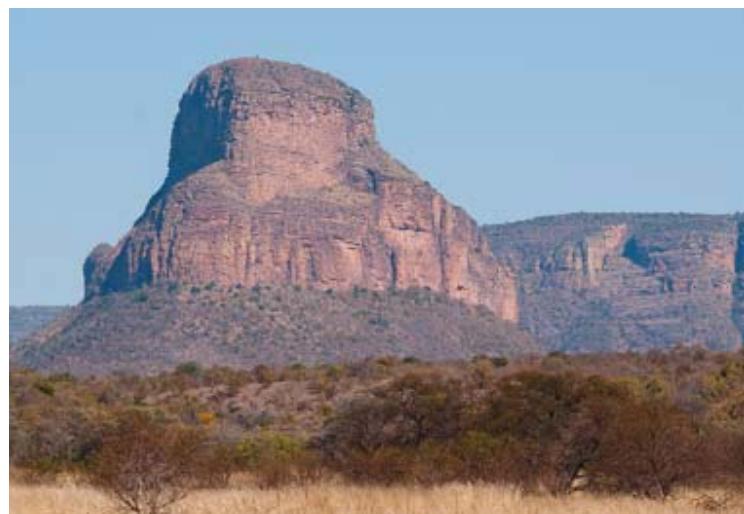
9 Bokpoort Pass

This is the pass that the writer, poet and ethnologist, Eugène Marais, who lived for several years at Doornhoek near Mookgophong, most often used to enter the interior to hunt and to visit. It was at Doornhoek that Marais did his work on termites and baboons; and it was up this pass that he first observed and collected specimens of a cycad which was posthumously named in his honour - *Encephalartos eugene-maraisii*. Presently these very rare cycads are only found in two localities in the Waterberg.

At the top of the pass, where the tar road ends, is the farm Pure Krans, once the home of a colorful farmer and friend of Marais, "Purekrans" van Rooyen, who was involved in many brushes with the law. The source of the Palala River is on the northern slopes immediately west of the top of the pass. As is the case with the majority of passes in the Waterberg, a crystal clear stream runs alongside the road.



10 Hanglip



Viewed here, this stunning outcrop marks the turning point where the mountain range runs north west all the way through to Masebe Nature Reserve. The peak rises to an altitude of 1768 m and was a prominent landmark for early European travellers returning from the Northern frontier. Among them was the 19th Century artist, explorer, prospector and writer Thomas Baines, who recorded the peak in his journal. The route passes through the Entabeni Conservancy below Hanglip. Drivers are free to pass through, but must stop at the control gate and for the 5km transit should respect the speed limit and should not alight from their vehicles.



11 Mamatlakala Village

The first of 26 community villages to be found within the present boundary of the Waterberg Biosphere Reserve, is situated at the base of the impressive man-made Kloof Pass. Mamatlakala is a typical rural village in a former Bantustan where, despite the pastoral setting, a very low proportion of household income is generated from the land. Migrant remittances, old age pensions, child



support grants and local formal and informal non-agricultural employment make up the vast proportion of local incomes, but these are safe and healthy environments for bringing up children, spending time between job searches and ultimate retirement. The villages extend in a continuous line through to Masebe, bounded by the mountain range in the south west and the Mogalakwena River in the north east.

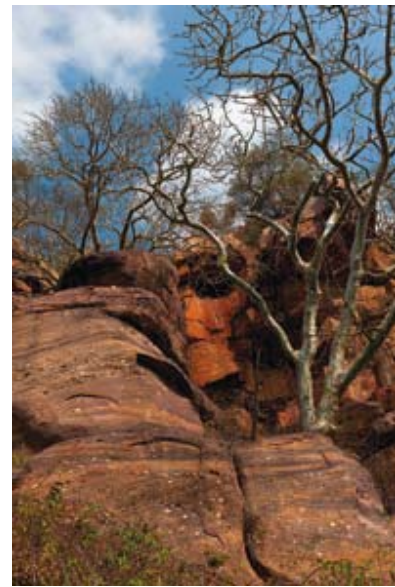


12 Kloof Pass

Here you are afforded a view of the road snaking up the pass. This daunting engineering feat was completed in 1988 and provides the traveler with an intimate view of the internal rock structure of the Waterberg plateau. Be on the lookout: the freshly-cut cliff face provides excellent exposures of the internal structures of the sandstone massif. The combination of nearly horizontal lines and short, arcuate traces on the rock face serves to indicate that the rivers that brought the original sediments to this area almost 2 billion years ago came from a highland to the north-east, on their way to a sea or lake in the south-west.

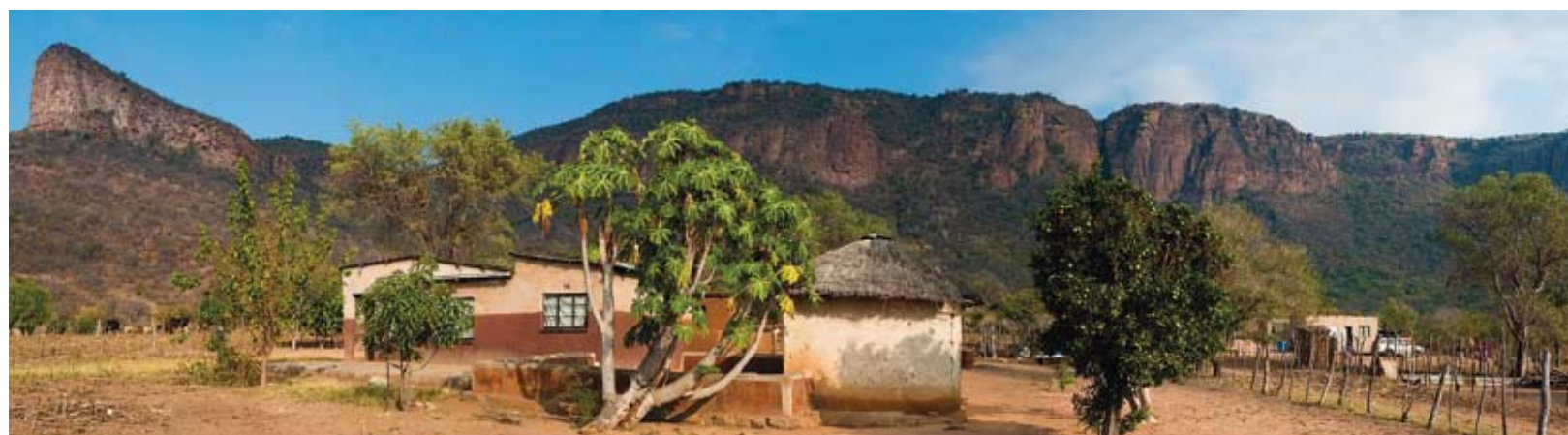
The lines were caused by downstream migration of ripples. (Note that the straight vertical grooves were caused by drills during construction of the pass.)

Exercise caution on this scenic and interesting pass; do not alight from the vehicle except at designated lay-byes as there are numerous blind spots.



13 Amphitheatre

During the rainy season, water may be observed cascading down these impressive cliffs finding a





way to the Mogalakwena River, the stronghold of the crocodile. Jan Christian Smuts, Prime Minister at the time of the Union of South Africa, was desirous of setting aside the entire area between Mogalakwena and Palala Rivers up as far as the Limpopo as a nationally protected reserve.

extreme wilderness nature of this huge block of land where roads and infrastructure do not exist. As part of the Biosphere Reserve's ongoing commitment to rural development, this area is earmarked for community-based rustic, environmentally-sensitive eco tourism development.

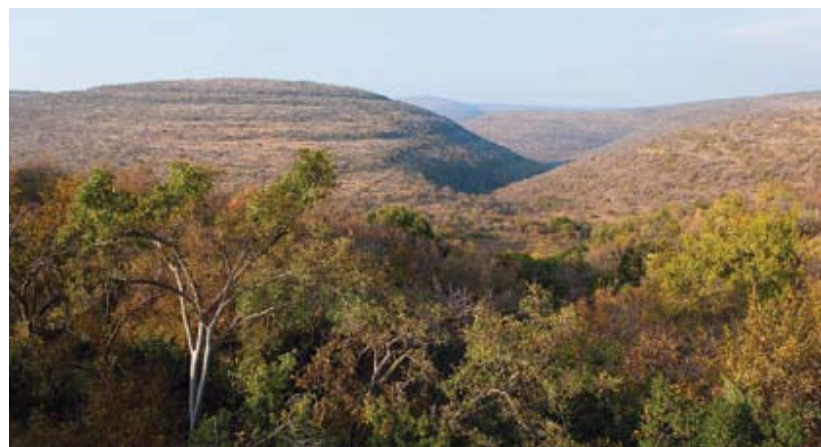
14 Elandskuiling Pass



This little-known pass was established before the Kloof Pass and served farmers and the communities of Bakenberg travelling between the bushveld low-lying region and the interior. It provides excellent views back into the community countryside and further up as the road bisects the 28 000 ha Moepel Wilderness area.

15 Moepel Wilderness

The Moepel Wilderness stretches across an area of 28,000 ha on top of the escarpment. Observe the



16 Waterberg Red Beds

The Waterberg rocks provide us with the oldest evidence on earth of the presence of enough free oxygen in the atmosphere. This enabled rusting of iron to begin to occur for the first time, at around 1900 million years ago. The rusted iron particles trapped in the sandstones of the Mogalakwena Formation caused the red coloration of the rocks – which are called 'red beds' by geologists – and make these rocks so important in understanding the history of our planet. This rock butress (see picture above) provides a striking example.

17 Magagamatala

Magagamatala (1 247m) is the local name given to a large impressive sandstone butress that defines the southern boundary of the Masebe Nature Reserve. The name refers to the green-colored lichen clinging to the 300 metre-high cliffs that tower above the meandering Mogalakwena River.

In 1854, fourteen Boer settlers, under the leadership of Hermanus Philippus Potgieter, were massacred at a place known as Fothane in a region of present day Bakenberg. After the massacre, Chief Mankopane and his followers retreated to the summit of Magagamatala for





© Earth Photos

safety from possible reprisal from the Boers. After various skirmishes, the stronghold was breached in 1858 on two sides, resulting in great loss of life in the ensuing crossfire. Altogether some 800 people died with at least half falling to their deaths off the extreme cliff faces visible from the road.

On the west side of the road, the local Telekishi community has established a visitor centre (page 16) and will provide a guided tour of this historic site.

that have been cemented together. It is formed by rivers flowing at high speed (for example down a mountain slope or during a flash flood), when there is enough energy in the water to transport and tumble large fragments of rock, and deposit them in bends, or along the sides of the river. A formal local community project here involves the collection, sorting and bagging of these pebbles that have been eroded from the conglomerate, and sale to nurseries and landscape gardeners in Gauteng.

18 Conglomerate Geology

19 African Plains



The strikingly flat-topped hill (above) seen from this point is known as Tafelkop and is a remnant of the original floor of the Waterberg plateau with the surrounds having been eroded away over time into the rolling topography bisected by the numerous small streams of the Waterberg today. The Waterberg Group of rocks that make up the plateau is very thick, for example as much as 3000 metres thick under the nearby town of Vaalwater/Mabatlane.

20 David Livingstone Memorial

There are fine exposures of Waterberg sedimentary rocks in this area, especially along the Telekishi Trail. Although sandstone, a rock formed by the deposition of fine river-borne sand, constitutes the main rock type throughout the Waterberg, these lower levels also contain several impressive layers of conglomerate. This is a coarse rock, made up of rounded cobbles or pebbles of varying composition

A national heritage monument marks the site where in 1847 David Livingstone rested in a grove of Ana trees (*Faidherbia albida*); a journey he and his wife undertook from his mission station at Kolobeng in Botswana to Rustenburg and then upwards to present day Mokopane and along the Mogalakwena river. These trees are unique for they occur nowhere else in the Waterberg.





21 Eugène Marais

At this site, the hills to the right are on the farm Rietfontein where Eugène Marais spent many years studying termites. Eugène Nielen Marais first brought the Waterberg and its varied wildlife to the attention of naturalists and scientists through his work there early in the 20th Century. He was a writer, poet and naturalist who spent an important part of his life in the Waterberg.



Marais became fascinated by baboons and started to study them which ultimately led him to writing the books, "The Soul of the Ape" and "My Friends the Baboons". These two books, together with "Road to the Waterberg"

and "The Soul of the White Ant", are his most well-known works. Marais has been described as the first son of the Waterberg for having opened up a window of the wonder and intricacies of the life of the Waterberg's plants and animals.

22 Wetlands & Rivers

The Waterberg may best be described as a large wetland. The Waterberg is a major and the most important catchment area for the Limpopo Basin. Its four large rivers are the Palala, Mokolo, Matlabas (sometimes called Motlhabatsi) and Mogalakwena rivers. These rivers, and those passing close to the Waterberg, are fed by a host of smaller rivers and streams such as the Melkriver, the Blokland Spruit, the Sterkstroom Spruit, the Grootfontein Spruit, the Taaibos Spruit and the Platbos Spruit.

Given that 82 % of South Africa's rivers are currently threatened and 33 % are considered critically endangered, the proper ecological management of this whole region is of utmost importance to thousands of people who are dependent upon the Waterberg's water. At this site the effect of the removal of exotic species, such as eucalyptus (above picture), wattle and poplar can be seen to the east, while to the west this important conservation task is yet to be completed. A government - initiated poverty-relief project, Working on Water, has made a significant contribution to the elimination of thirsty, exotic plants along water courses in several parts of the Waterberg; but much more work remains to be done, including the education of farmers about the adverse impact of these trees.

