



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: DRAFT SCOPING REPORT

**PROPOSED ENVIRONMENTAL EXPERIENTIAL CENTRE AT BORDJIESRIF,
TABLE MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK**

1 INTRODUCTION

South African National Parks (SANParks) is proposing to establish an environmental ‘experiential’ facility in the Table Mountain National Park (TMNP), which until recently was named the Cape Peninsula National Park (CPNP). SANParks and TMNP’s primary objective is to expose the park to a greater number of children, especially those who would not otherwise have the opportunity. SANParks’ philosophy for introducing people to National Parks and the environment is to move away from formal ‘education’ and focus on the ‘fun’ and ‘experience’ elements of the learning opportunity.

SANParks first formally proposed the establishment of an Environmental Experiential Centre at Bordjiesrif in May 2002. At the same time, it was decided that Buffels Bay Recreational Area should be upgraded to accommodate users of the picnic facilities at Bordjiesrif. SRK Consulting (SRK) was appointed by SANParks to manage and co-ordinate an integrated planning process and to undertake the required Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and public consultation process for both Bordjiesrif and Buffels Bay.

The study commenced with the compilation of a Site Analysis Report. This report identified opportunities and constraints for the development and upgrading of the Bordjiesrif and Buffels Bay areas. A number of specialist studies were undertaken to

inform the analysis, including geotechnical, vegetation, archaeological and visual assessments

Then, in March 2003, SANParks requested that the professional team put the project on hold while internal decisions were made regarding the project and the Park’s environmental education policy and strategy.



Figure 1: Location

During this review process, TMNP conducted an internal re-evaluation of the proposed project. It was agreed that three conceptual proposals (around the central theme of environmental education) and the 'no-go' alternative should be evaluated as viable alternatives in an EIA process. Furthermore, it was agreed that the applications for the Bordjiesrif and Buffels Bay projects should be separated, as these no longer required the same level of assessment.

Consequently, a new Application and Plan of Study for Scoping for Bordjiesrif were submitted to the Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning (DEA&DP) on 09 February 2004.

2 APPROACH TO THE SCOPING STUDY

The proposed development constitutes the following activities listed in terms of the EIA Regulations¹ namely:

- (1) The construction, erection or upgrading of –
 - (e) marinas, harbours and all structures below the high water mark of the sea
 - (m) public and private resorts and associated infrastructure.

The EIA process stipulated in the Regulations is divided into a number of phases, the first of which is a Scoping Study. The Scoping Study is being undertaken in accordance with the EIA Regulations and the revised Plan of Study for Scoping.

The key objectives of Scoping are to:

- Identify any additional stakeholders (besides those already registered) and inform all stakeholders of the proposed activity, new alternatives and the EIA process;
- Provide stakeholders with the opportunity to participate effectively in the process and identify any issues and concerns associated with the proposed activity;
- Identify any additional alternatives and screen out unsuitable alternatives;

- Identify any additional potential impacts and environmental issues that may require further investigation in an EIA;
- Ensure that the issues and concerns of stakeholders are accurately recorded and reflected in the Scoping Report and taken forward into the EIA.

3 SITE SELECTION

Various sites for the proposed TMNP Environmental Experiential Centre were considered during an internal evaluation. This evaluation was informed by other broader planning initiatives already undertaken for the TMNP, most importantly the Cape of Good Hope Nature Reserve Development and Management Plan (1990) and the more recent Conservation Development Framework (CDF) (2001).

The Reserve Development and Management Plan highlights the role the Park has to play in wilderness education and proposes the development of an educational facility at Bordjiesrif.

In the CDF, the Bordjiesrif area is designated as a "low intensity leisure zone" and the site has been classified further as a "Mixed Leisure Use" site.

Mixed-use sites are sites that have "...potential to enhance their current role, existing facilities should be rehabilitated and upgraded and investigations carried out into possible new facilities that enrich the visitor's experience and enhance the sites carrying capacity." (CDF: 2001, 43).

Additionally, an internal SANParks workshop was held in 2002, in which 13 possible sites (not all of which are located in National Parks) for development of a central education facility were identified in the province. During this process **Bordjiesrif** and **Geelbek** were ranked as the most suitable sites. Bordjiesrif was finally selected by SANParks as the most appropriate site for development of a central education facility.

¹ G.N. No. R1182, September 1997. Promulgated in terms of Section 21 of the Environment Conservation Act 73 of 1989.

4 PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND ALTERNATIVES

The proposed Environmental Experiential Centre facilities will be required to accommodate educational groups of up to 60 children. The EIA will assess the *No-Go* alternative and three different alternatives use facilities:

- Provision of facilities for *day visitors* only;
- Provision of *temporary overnight* facilities (campsites or semi-permanent tents); and
- Provision of *permanent overnight* facilities.

In the preliminary stages of the EIA, SRK, in conjunction with the project team, undertook an analysis of the Bordjiesrif site. During this Site Analysis, four potential 'sites' for the location of the proposed facilities were identified at Bordjiesrif. These sites were located in clearings or open areas amongst indigenous vegetation. The Site Analysis was undertaken to determine which of the sites was most suitable for development. Based on the findings of this study, all of the proposed alternatives will be located within the area situated around the tidal pool and extending a short distance to north-west and south-east of the tidal pool.

Although the size and scale of the facilities proposed for each alternative will differ, they will all be located within the same footprint area. The EIA process will assess the "worst case" scenario and assume that the footprint area for all of the proposed alternatives is the entire area, described above.

To date, no specific designs have been produced, although some broad design principles have been formulated based on the SANParks' philosophy of 'Touch the Earth Lightly'. These principles focus on minimising the intrusion and impact on the environment.

The proposed project also provides the opportunity to remove inappropriate existing structures and poorly-sited asphalt parking areas at Bordjiesrif. The tidal pool currently stagnates for a large portion of the year, and the EIA will investigate the possibilities of upgrading this structure to improve flushing.

All of the proposed alternatives would require the following basic facilities:

- Two - four ablution blocks (8 - 10 toilets, 0 - 10 showers and 4 - 8 hand basins);
- A communal centre including a multi-functional space for indoor lessons in inclement weather and the storage of educational equipment (in movable lock-up cupboards);
- A kitchen or basic food preparation area as part of the communal centre, with lock up storage facilities for food;
- A new parking area.

Additionally the Tented Overnight Facility would require:

- An enclosed/ secure refuse storage area;
- Campsites to accommodate about 13 - 21 tents (4 - 6 children per tent and 2 - 4 teachers per tent);
- A storage room for the storage of camping equipment and bags; and
- An overnight facility for a ranger or TMNP official.

Additionally the Permanent Overnight Facility would require:

- An enclosed/ secure refuse storage area;
- Five alcoves / rooms housing either four or eight children (if bunkbeds are provided);
- Two cluster rooms housing six or twelve children (if bunkbeds are provided); and
- An overnight facility for a ranger or TMNP official.

Alternative services will also be considered and the provision of services will aim to emphasise the environmental education theme of the site.

5 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Bordjiesrif is located along the rocky coastline within the Cape of Good Hope Section of the TMNP. The climate is moderate, and Bordjiesrif is generally more sheltered than the rest of Cape Point, which is renowned for its exposure to wind.

A thick deposit of recent windblown (aeolian) sand covers much of the site above the high-water mark and forms an extensive sand dune system, which has largely been stabilised by vegetation. Rock outcrops at Bordjiesrif are limited to quartzitic sandstone bedrock within the intertidal zone. Recent limestone (calcareous sandstone) cliffs are located up slope and to the north west of the site.

The quality of the groundwater is good and flows in a south-easterly direction, towards False Bay. There are no large rivers located in the vicinity of the site. A stream and associated wetland are located in the Buffels Bay valley to the south of the site. A small drainage line and associated seep are located on the northern end of the Bordjiesrif site beyond the existing toilet block.

Large sections of the site are covered in Kikuyu grass but there are few woody alien plants. Immediately surrounding the site the area supports a high number of species and is an area of botanical importance. Around the transformed areas there is a diverse array of plant communities with high conservation value, including a mature thicket of milkwood trees.

In the vicinity of the Bordjiesrif site there are also a number of shell middens and other historical sites which are of conservation and educational value.

The site has a long history of use by various groups, particularly in the 20th and late 19th Century. The site has therefore been substantially transformed and has large areas of asphalt parking, a few existing buildings and a tidal pool.

6 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

Public consultation for the proposed Bordjiesrif Environmental Experiential Centre has occurred in two phases:

Phase 1: Public consultation regarding the previously proposed overnight education facility at Bordjiesrif, combined with the proposed upgrading of Buffels Bay. The issues raised during this phase have been carried forward into this new EIA process, since many of the issues raised are still relevant.

Phase 2: Public consultation regarding the new use alternatives, which include the 'no-go' alternative, a facility for day-visitors only, a temporary or semi-permanent overnight facility and a permanent overnight facility. The upgrade at Buffels Bay and the Environmental Experiential Centre at Bordjiesrif are now being managed as two independent projects and separate public participation processes are being conducted for each project.

The activities undertaken to date to canvass public opinion regarding the proposed Bordjiesrif Environmental Experiential Centre are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Key Public Consultation Activities

PHASE ONE: OVERNIGHT FACILITY AT BORDJESRIF AND UPGRADE OF BUFFELS BAY	
Activity	Date
Identification of key stakeholders	August 2002
Advertisement of the commencement of the study	17-18 August 2002
Circulation of Background Information Document (BID)	20 August 2002
Submission of the Plan of Study for Scoping to DEA&DP	04 September 2002
Meeting with Helicopter operators	09 September 2002
Meeting with key NGOs and community based groups	16 September 2002

PHASE ONE: OVERNIGHT FACILITY AT BORDJESRIF AND UPGRADE OF BUFFELS BAY	
Activity	Date
Placement of five onsite notices at different locations	October 2002
Meeting with DEA&DP	14 November 2002
Advertisement of the release of the Site Analysis Report	30 November – 05 December 2002
Release of Site Analysis Report for comment period	02 December 2002 – 14 January 2003
Distribution of an Educators' Survey	08 January – 17 February 2003
PHASE TWO: FOR NEW PROPOSAL AT BORDJESRIF	
Activity	Date
Submit Revised Plan of Study for Scoping	09 February 2004
Distribution of Project Update Document to all stakeholders	10 February 2004
Advertisement	12 February 2004
Finalise Draft Scoping Report (DSR)	4 May 2004
Draft Scoping Report Comment Period	4 May – 7 June 2004
Public Information Sharing Session	25 May 2004
Submit Final Scoping Report to DEA&DP	14 June 2004

IAPs have raised a number of issues and concerns during the public participation process undertaken to date, which have been summarised into the following categories:

- Development of Management Policy and business plan
- Planning Process
- Examination of alternatives
- Visual impacts
- Botanical impacts
- Faunal impacts;
- Impacts on marine environment
- Restricted Access

Those issues, which have been identified by stakeholders or through the specialist studies, that relate to impacts (as opposed to management and process issues) and which will therefore be addressed in the EIA include:

- Botanical impacts;
- Heritage impacts;
- Visual impacts;
- Social impacts;
- Faunal impacts; and
- Marine impacts.

The specialist studies already undertaken during the Site Analysis include:

- Botanical sensitivity analysis;
- Heritage sensitivity analysis;
- Visual precedent study; and
- Geotechnical assessment.

Additionally it is proposed that the following specialist impact assessments be undertaken for the EIA:

- Faunal Impact Assessment; and
- Marine Impact Assessment.

7 FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The key findings of the Scoping Study are as follows:

- SANParks are committed to exposing the wider community and particularly children to National Parks.
- TMNP was selected as one of the most appropriate Parks in which to expose children to a Parks experience in the Western Cape.
- Bordjiesrif emerged as a highly suitable site for the establishment an Environmental Experiential Centre in TMNP at a number of levels of planning.
- The proposed Centre may comprise:
 - a day visitors' Environmental Experiential Centre;
 - a semi-permanent overnight Environmental Experiential Centre; or

- a permanent overnight Environmental Experiential Centre at Bordjiesrif.
- The environment at Bordjiesrif has been impacted to some extent by previous developments.
- Most stakeholders are not opposed to the establishment of an environmental education facility at the proposed site, but some are concerned about an overnight facility and the management of the facility. Additionally some stakeholders have expressed reservations about the background planning to the project.
- The proposed development may result in the following potential key environmental impacts:
 - Botanical impacts;
 - Heritage impacts;
 - Visual impacts;
 - Social impacts;
 - Faunal impacts; and
 - Marine impacts.

8 WAY FORWARD

The Draft Scoping Report (DSR) is not a final report and will be amended based on comments received from IAPs. Further opportunities to comment are indicated below. Copies of the DSR are available for viewing at the following places:

- Buffelsfontein Information Centre
- Simon's Town Library;
- Kommetjie Library;
- TMNP offices, Westlake Square
- SRK's offices

The report will also be available on the TMNP web site: <http://www.tmnp.co.za>



KATE STEYN
Senior Environmental Scientist

The public is invited to review the Draft Scoping Report and send written comment by **10h00 on 7 June 2004**. Comment should be sent to Ms Belinda Breetzke of SRK Consulting:

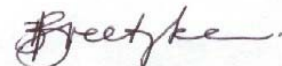
PO Box 6824 **Tel: 021 - 4092400**
Roggebaai **Fax: 021 - 425 4648**
8012 **Email: bbreetzke@srk.co.za**

Upon request, copies of the Draft Scoping report can also be mailed to IAPs at a cost of R150 (incl VAT) and a CD can be prepared and mailed at a cost of R60.

IAPs are also invited to attend a Public Information Sharing Session:

DATE: 25 May 2004
VENUE: SANParks Offices:
Shop A1, Ground floor
Westlake Square
Corner Steenberg Rd & Westlake Drv.
Westlake
TIME: 18h00.

Once IAPs have commented on the information presented in the DSR, the Final Scoping Report (FSR) will be submitted to DEA&DP with a Plan of Study for the EIA for their approval. Issues and concerns identified in the Scoping Study will assist in focussing the EIA and will be used to refine the terms of reference for specialist investigations. The public is therefore urged to submit comment, as this will affect the Final Scoping Report and the terms of reference for the EIA.



BELINDA BREETZKE
Environmental Scientist

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