



## RECORD OF 13<sup>TH</sup> QUARTERLY NETWORK MEETING

8 JUNE 2016 – MATATIELE

### 1. WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Chairperson Sinegugu Zukulu welcomed all present – please refer to attached attendance register.

Participants represented a range of research and academic institutions including CSIR and universities, DWS, DEDEAT, DRDAR, ECPTA, and members from local, regional and Lesotho NGO offices.

The focus theme for this session is *research collaboration*, with Dr Francis Kuriah from WSU as the guest chair for the research agenda item.

### 2. APOLOGIES

Received from SANBI; MDTP; Local Municipalities of Matatiele, Ntabankulu and Elundini; some officials from DWS and DEDEAT (although reps were present).

### 3. PREVIOUS MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

The previous minutes were adopted as true reflection. Matters arising included:

- a. Siya Mthonjeni from DEDEAT regional office reported that the NEMA regulations revision workshop was held in Mt Ayliff in late May, with very good attendance, and that a further session was being arranged for the third quarter on compliance in response to requests from that workshop.
- b. Feedback on the fracking situation will be given under 'updates' item later
- c. A renewable energy workshop is being hosted by DEDEAT on 22 June in Cedarville.

### 4. UPDATES

- a. **Lawrence Mulangaphuma from DWS national office** provided an update on the Umzimvubu Resource Quality Objectives project: Eastern Cape consultant Sherman Colloty and Associates has been appointed, and will work in collaboration with Rhodes University. The consultant is aware of UCPP and will make contact to collaborate. The forum extended appreciation to Lawrence for all his effort in ensuring that the catchment is being assessed, and that UCPP is respected as a regional voice and contact point.
- b. **Erna Kruger from Mahlathini** provided an outline of the *Amanzi for Food* programme, which supports stakeholders to link with climate smart agricultural production strategies. This includes access to resources, training and practical support, assisted by Rhodes University. Also provide training on in-field rainwater harvesting techniques which help to support effective climate-smart agriculture. Programme provides training for trainers and career advancement, and can be accessed via [www.amanziforfood.co.za](http://www.amanziforfood.co.za) and [info@amanziforfood.co.za](mailto:info@amanziforfood.co.za)  
Erna also presented an outline of the **VLSA (Virtual Livelihood SA)** which provides an internet based learning and exchange protocol for soil and water conservation practitioners. They acknowledge that we already have an internet flooded with information, and VLSA is trying to sort relevant information and make it real and accessible.  
Q: what level of qualification does the Amanzi for Food training provide?  
A: It can be included as an elective within a Diploma in Agricultural extension studies.
- c. **Nicky McLeod from ERS gave an update on the shale gas exploration application EC295ER by Rhino Oil & Gas:** The shale gas exploration application scoping report has been released, and recognised UCPP and the Matatiele area as providing a strong and united voice in opposition to the proposed activities, and that a

social license may not be obtained by the applicant. ERS and CSA were praised by members for driving this stance, and helping people understand the risks of this leading to fracking.

UCPP is a part of and supported by Frackfree SA, a national coalition of civil society groups united against shale gas and coal bed methane production through hydraulic fracturing. A whats app group for the Matat situation keeps willing individuals from actively opposed organisations abreast of progress and meetings, and is linked with the nation FrackFree SA group. Please let Nicky know if you want to be on the Matat what's app group.

**UKZN student Gugulethu Tshabalala** is undertaking research on community perspectives via a web based survey and requested willing participants to allow access to their email addresses for this.

Siya Mthonjeni indicated that the SEA for the Karoo has been released, and DEDEAT head of IEM (Integrated Environmental Management) Mr Gerrie Pienaar will co-ordinate a response from the E Cape. The report can be accessed via the [www.frackfreesa.org.za](http://www.frackfreesa.org.za) website.

- d. **Gerbrand Nel from Conservation SA** gave an update on the Meat Naturally programme, which involves building on communal herd and rangeland improvements with regular auctions to generate income, showing how livestock can contribute to rural people's livelihoods and, through proper management, to restoration of rangelands. Some successful outcomes of DEA NRM programme employing ecorangers to assist with range management. Several million realized for over 600 households from local auctions. Next one at Mzongwana on 15 June.

Q: who employs the ecorangers, are they local, are they accountable to stock associations?

A: currently employed through DEA EPWP, yes all local, and they do work in conjunction with stock owners.

Q: can you help us over the border in Lesotho with this concept?

A: Yes! Mme Sissie Matela explained that ERS is working through GIZ and Ministry and Water in Lesotho to assist with such a project in Mokhotlong area; Gerbrand indicated that MNP can provide auction support once communities are organised through ERS support.

Q: who is the market / buyers?

A: local speculators come to village auctions, and also buyers from abattoirs e.g. Meadow Meats. MNP acts as a neutral facilitation agent.

## 5. RESEARCH COLLABORATION – PROGRESS AND FURTHER THEMES

Sinegugu introduced Dr Motebang Nakin from WSU Resilience unit as the guest chairperson for this session. Dr Heidi Hawkins requested if her students could be shifted up on the agenda (from item c to a) as they had to leave for field work. The proceedings here thus differ from the agenda. Presentations were made as follows (summaries here, copies of PPTs on the Umzimvubu website under MEETINGS/13<sup>th</sup> Qly June2016).

### a. Overview presentations from Stellenbosch, UWC and UCT:

- i. **Nolubabalo Kwayimani, University of the Western Cape, M.Phil:** has GreenMatter sponsorship under Integrated Water Resources, undertaking study with supervision from Dr Hawkins, exploring effects of different grazing management practices and land use on infiltration and run off.
- ii. **Zander Venter, UCT Ph.D:** making use of *rePhotoSA* technology which provides access to historical imagery for fixed point and aerial/ satellite photographs. Found 69% of rangeland in study area suitable for extensive grazing, 8.7% under invasive alien plant cover, and 4.7% degraded. Undertaking grazing trials of continuous vs holistic management, supplemented with online survey of grazing management practices. Can be contacted on [grazingresearch@uct.ac.za](mailto:grazingresearch@uct.ac.za)

- iii. **Monde Rapiya Fort Hare M.Sc.:** being undertaken on same farm near Cedarville, with topic very similar to Zander but focussing more on animal productivity through monitoring carcasses.
- iv. **Vanessa van Niekerk, M.Sc. Stellenbosch:** exploring measurable differences in soil nutrient behaviour under different treatments / management conditions.

Short feedback session provided an opportunity for UCPP practitioners to ask questions and make inputs and suggestions to the students. Several technical and procedural queries were discussed, and it was suggested to Monde to rather exclude the use of the word 'exploit' when referring to natural resources, as it can have negative management connotations. Use 'manage' rather?

- b. **Introduction by guest chairperson:** Dr Francis Kuriah, WSU, outlined the topics to be presented from WSU's perspective.
- c. **Overview of UCPP research needs and why these links are being made:** Mme Sissie Matela, from ERS, gave an overview of the type of implementing work happening in the upper catchment, and the need to get research findings fed back to practitioners and communities, so it benefits them and makes a difference. WE need more hard scientific evidence as well as social and economic research.
- d. **WSU inputs:** Dr Motebang Nakin introduced WSU students who are focussing on climate change:
  - **Siphumle Cathy Ngqumshe is doing an M.A.** exploring how communities understand climate change. Participants in meeting suggested that Cathy share the survey structure and questions with those UCPP partners who are willing so that they can be properly targeted and the research fully appreciated. The purpose of the research must be clear, not just research to gain a qualification. The outcomes should assist rural communities to gain knowledge about climate change and adaptation strategies.
  - **Gcobisa Bili is also pursuing M.A,** and researching the socio-economic impacts of land restoration practices. Feedback was that her topic is enormous and she should narrow down the questions through a serious review of the methodology.
  - Sinegugu also suggested that the students link with the District climate change committee and strategy.
  - .....missed something here!
- e. **CSIR perspective:** Dr Phumza Ntshotsho indicated that CSIR, as a research partner to DEA's NRM programme, is trying to identify critical success factors. She is trying to extract success stories for DEA programme, and said that observations in the area have already showed some amazing findings for replication from three case studies.
- f. **Dartmouth college links:** Aimee Ginsburg is co-ordinating the South African 'leg' of the Dartmouth college African Foreign Study programme. Dartmouth is based in the USA, and aims to link research and practise through supporting existing projects. 16 students and their supervisor, Prof Michael Cox, will be in Matatiele from 20<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> September, to provide research assistance as 'capacitated outsiders' to contribute to UCPP projects, and pull together information where needed through data processing. They will hopefully extend into Lesotho in the future, and see alot of synergy linking with local students.
- g. **Conservation SA links:** Dr Heidi Hawkins's **M.Sc. student Nompandolo Mgwali** presented her work linked with CSA's rangeland management and restoration at Mvenyane and Motseng. Lots of variables include slope, season, stocking rates, fire, rainfall, climate etc. Some interesting restoration findings emerging, which Phumza indicated an interest to know more about.

**h. Way forward with research collaboration in the catchment:**

- Dr Nakin committed WSU colleagues to supporting UCPP research needs on an ongoing basis, linking the wider research community and community of practise in the catchment. Dr Ndhleve re-iterated the need to ensure that research makes a difference to people living in the area.
- Those interested in forming and joining a research group under UCPP agreed to meet at 2pm at CSA offices to discuss a way forward.

**6. ANY OTHER MATTERS, ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS**

- a. Stewardship agreement training for 25 people happening in Matatiele through Conservation International's Conservation Stewardship Programme on 22 and 23 June.
- b. Dartmouth college group will be visiting from 20<sup>th</sup> September for a week, to establish a hopefully long term research support relationship with UCPP.
- c. UCPP research group being considered (as above).
- d. No feedback on SPLUMA training from Elundini: Nicky to follow up.

**7. NEXT MEETING**

Members agreed on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> September to allow CSIR, DWS and others to link up with the Dartmouth group's visit: they are arriving late on the 20<sup>th</sup> with briefing and research commencing on the 21<sup>st</sup> til 26<sup>th</sup> in Matatiele, then down to Wild coast for a week.

Sinegugu thanked all for their participation and travel efforts. Meeting was closed with traditional unch served by local caterer.