

World Desertification and World Environmental Days celebration

On the 3rd of June 2016 the Department of Environmental Affairs, supported by the Department Of Agriculture, Forestry And Fisheries hosted the World Desertification Day and Environmental Day by exhibiting and distributing pamphlets, leaflets CA posters, LandCare pens and key holders at the Cottendale Sportsground in Bushbuckridge Municipality – Mpumalanga province. The event was attended by 370 participants. In attendance were Minister of Environmental Affairs, MEC and officials from the Mpumalanga Department Of Agriculture, Land, Rural Development and Environmental Affairs, Chief Monise, officials from the Department Of Agriculture, Forestry And Fisheries, Councillors and ward committee members of the Bushbuckridge Municipality, CPA, Mayor of Bushbuckridge, Tribal authority of Moletele, SANPARKS and surrounding community members from Cottendale, Tulamahashe etc. Miss South Africa 2016, political parties, cultural groups, members of Endeavor and Lamington Community Association were also in attendance.

The Executive Mayor welcomed all the honorable guests and the participants including surrounding communities. He said that they appreciated the presence of the role-players who managed to attend the event. The chairperson of CPA passed some remarks to appreciate that we should not convert our areas into deserts and to appreciate the progress made at Endeavor Limington in terms of infrastructure development. He said Endeavor Limington land claim was about to be concluded and the land given to the owners as the final application exercise was done a few months ago. The secretariat together with the chairperson of the CPA were called to the Office Of Land Claims Commissioner to sign a settlement agreement document so that it could be forwarded to various businesses. The restitution process would be finalized in September as currently they were busy working with the municipality on the Integrated Management Plan which would guide them at the nature reserve on the planning process. However, the discussion document would involve the real owners of the land and adjacent communities. They wanted the game reserve to be people-driven so that its benefit would not only be to the surrounding communities but to the entire world. "We want to see the importance of existing property and in that manner the reserve will be protected against poaching and vandalism. Lastly we would like to thank the surrounding communities for their support," he concluded.

The chairperson of the National People and Community Park team Mr. Mogakala thanked the Minister Edna Molewa for her contribution towards poverty alleviation. He said, "There are a lot of programmes from Environmental Affairs such as Working On Fire, Working For Water etc. which contribute to poverty alleviation and create job opportunities for people, we have now registered a Non-Profit Organization (NGO) and realised that there is a serious need for working together and bringing understanding to members of our community especially those who are adjacent to the nature reserve. Poaching is

a problem and it is very important to capacitate our people and surrounding communities about the importance of conservation, whilst allocating funding for capacity building. "The Minister of Environmental Affairs Edna Molewa said that they were working together with an organization called People and Parks to bring the community of South Africa together. South Africa, as part of the United Nations has signed two agreements on development goals which focus on education, health and environmental issues. She said that they should ensure that those goals were achieved and that our nature was very important. "If the area has a high carrying capacity and livestock that area and soil is carried away by water and becomes hard, there will be no food growing on that type of soil which would lead to land degradation. We should fight against land degradation as our human activities should not contribute to the success of land degradation. We should stop littering along our streams and rivers. Our researches have indicated that they had found small plastics inside the ocean which were eaten by the fish. Plastic should be recycled and processed into products," she emphasized. The Department of Environmental Affairs had contributed R7 billion during the past three years to desertification projects. Madile, Sesete and Retsamaile Primary Schools were chosen and made presentations about desertification. Madile Primary School won the first position and a voucher worth R18000 was presented to them to buy environmental equipment at Makro Nelspruit. The 2nd prize worth R 12 0000 went to Retsamaile Primary School and Sesete Primary School won an R8000 voucher as a third prize.



Learners of Madile Primary School



agriculture,
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Department:
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Learners of Sesete Primary School



The learners of Retsamaile Primary School



DAFF LUSM Resource Audit and Land Care officers at the exhibition.



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