



Free State Heritage Resources Authority

**HERITAGE FREE STATE: ANNUAL REPORT –
1 APRIL 2008 TO 31 MARCH 2009**



From left to right: N Thabana, AJ Roodt, KA Sekhabisa (Chairperson), CM Twala, LS Moloji



Ms K A Sekhabisa

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

It is my pleasure to present to the Member of the Executive Council, Mr. MB Sesele, the annual report highlighting the activities of Heritage Free State, the Provincial Heritage Resources Authority.

Heritage Free State came into being in terms of the provisions in the National Heritage Resources Act, Nr 25 of 1999. Although it still faces many challenges, the Free State Provincial Heritage Resources Authority is now well established and in our view, renders an important service to heritage in the Free State Province.

The year 2008/2009 has seen the PHRA involved in issuing numerous permits relating to heritage resources in the province and, in a few instances, the body has taken a stand against parties contravening the Act. Generally, the perception is that heritage in the Free State is in good hands.

A number of challenges remain. The funding of activities remains difficult, due to a shortage of funds. The secretariat also requires the services of staff that are trained in the field of heritage, and therefore a challenge of capacity is also experienced. During the year 2008-2009 two appointments were scheduled with the MEC, but due to unforeseen circumstances these meetings did not materialize.

The Council of Heritage Free State remains committed to safeguarding, declaring and developing the heritage resources of the Free State for the benefit of all.

ACTIVITIES OF HERITAGE FREE STATE

The Council of Heritage Free State consisted of the following people during the period under discussion:

KA Sekhabisa (Chairperson)

AJ Roodt

CM Twala

Kgosi LS Moloji

ZL Henderson

DJ Moroka

N Thabana

SJ Monyobo

The Council with regret received the resignations of Dr ZL Henderson, Me DJ Moroka and Mr. SJ Monyobo. In all instances these resignations dealt with work-related circumstances. The Council members are employed elsewhere and invest their time in council activities without remuneration. A small honorarium is paid to members for attending meetings.

The following activities were undertaken during the year:

Council Meetings

Council meetings were held on the following dates, usually once a quarter

30 May 2008

08 August 2008

06 March 2009

20 March 2009

Permit Committee Meetings

Permit Committee meetings were held on the following dates, usually on a monthly basis:

08 April 2008
15 May 2008
10 June 2008
08 July 2008
08 August 2008
12 August 2008
09 September 2008
14 October 2008
28 October 2008
11 November 2008
09 December 2008
10 March 2009

Grading and Declaration Committee

The following members were seconded by the Council to serve in this committee and specifically look at nominations for declaration, grade them, check as to whether they are of provincial significance and then advise the Council on the findings whether to declare or not.

1. K A Sekhabisa
2. C Twala
3. Morena L S Moloji
4. Z Henderson (Resigned)
5. K Tlhapi (SAHRA)

Meetings

17 July 2008

25 November 2008

25 March 2009

Representation on SAHRA Council Meetings

The Free State Provincial Heritage Resources Authority was represented at the SAHRA Council Meetings by Councillor SJ Monyobo, who was directly seconded by the MEC to do so. Reports in this regard were presented to the council.

Three meetings were attended by Mr. Monyobo. The most important issues relating to the Free State include the following:

- Declaration of Vredefort Dome as a National Heritage Area is put on hold.
- Amalgamation of SAHRA provincial offices with the PHRAs.
- A memorandum of understanding is proposed with the Traditional leaders.

Special Events and Activities

A strategic planning meeting was held on Friday, 11th April, to map out the future direction of Heritage Free State's activities. Key objective areas that were discussed include: awareness, conservation, marketing, intergovernmental relations, research and sourcing funds and knowledge exchange. Challenges of capacity and funding have, unfortunately, only allowed limited progress in respect of the proposed milestones.

A presentation by a private consultant on the establishment of an interactive website was held on 08 October 2008 at the council meeting. It was suggested that tenders should be called for, as stipulated by the various Acts and Regulations. The possibility of having a website developed by the relevant government department has also been put forward. Councillor Roodt developed a motivation for the use of a website, and it is generally accepted that this is the most effective way of reaching the greatest number of people in order to create the heritage awareness that is part of Heritage Free State's strategic vision.

During Heritage Month (2008), Councillors Twala and Sekhabisa were invited to present heritage awareness talks at the various schools in Bloemfontein and Thaba Nchu. These talks were a success and it is hoped that they will be continued in future.

Specialist Studies

Councillor Twala continues to undertake valuable heritage research in the Free State, and has recently completed a pilot study for Thaba'Nchu. Councillor Roodt has been involved in the restoration of St Paul's Church in Thaba'Nchu and has also drawn up a conservation report for the house of Dr James Moroka in Thaba'Nchu, as well as the kgotla of Chief Moroka in Thaba'Nchu. He also developed a set of heritage assessment principles as part of a Master's study that could, after consultation, become part of the PHRA's philosophy.

Heritage Indaba

Heritage Free State organized a Heritage Indaba at Thaba’Nchu on 10 October 2008, at the kgotla of Chief Moroka. The idea was to foster heritage awareness in the greater Mangaung area and specifically in Thaba’Nchu where there are a number of interesting heritage resources that are of national importance. Councillors Roodt, Sekhabisa and Moroka attended the Heritage Indaba along with the facilitator and organizer, Mr. Gabriel Tlhapi of SAHRA. The day was well attended, with a number of prominent members of the community presenting their views on heritage. Local dancers from the Mmabana Cultural Centre provided traditional entertainment. It was generally recognized to have been a successful event. This Heritage Indaba is an annual event organized by the Provincial Heritage Resources Authority.

Moshoeshoe Day Celebration

Heritage Free State was part of the arrangements for the activities that took place on 15 March 2009, in honour of Chief Moshoeshoe.

Without discussing the activities of the Council in detail, it could be noted that the following actions were *inter alia* undertaken:

- Advocate Swanepoel, chief legal advisor in the Office of the Premier, compiled a document explaining the legal process and consequences in terms of the National Heritage Resources Act No 25 of 1999.
- An information leaflet was prepared by the Free State Heritage Resources Authority to assist with awareness not only in the private sector but also in the public sector. The latter sector

owns numerous historical buildings and other places of interest, and it is important that officials are aware of the Act and the role that the Provincial Heritage Resources Authority occupies.

- A number of recommendations for declaration as Provincial Heritage Resources have also been received and these are being reviewed and will follow the established route.
- An important change to the heritage landscape in the Free State is the fact that the provincial offices of SAHRA were incorporated with the Provincial Heritage Resources Authorities from 1 April 2008.
- The Council also decided to impose a fee on the applications for changes to properties older than 60 years or the demolition thereof. The Act does allow for this.
- Chief L S Moloi of the Makholokoe in Qwaqwa wrote a letter to the Premier, Ms B F Marshoff, requesting the intervention of the Council in the development taking place at the Wetsi's Cave in Witsieshoek. A Council meeting was held on 11 December 2008 with the representatives of Makholokoe and developers on the site, to iron out the differences. From this meeting it was clear that there was a lack of consultation between the developers and the Makholokoe. It was therefore agreed that these groups should meet and resolve the differences. Subsequent meetings were held although the Council was not invited. The Council awaits the reports from

these groups.

- An additional staff member, Ms Mina Buffel, was added to the secretariat and we are glad to have her on the staff.

CONCLUSIONS

There is consensus at the council of Heritage Free State that more frequent and direct access to the MEC should be available. The PHRA should report directly to the MEC. Although the existing challenges are acknowledged, the council wishes to request that greater support be received from the Department. These could include assistance with a website, the use of researchers at the Department, as well as a senior official that could intercede for us on a managerial level.

COUNCIL: FREE STATE HERITAGE RESOURCES AUTHORITY



Ms K A Sekhabisa



Mr CM Twala



Mr A Roodt



Mr LS Moloji



Mr N Thabana

