



## **Report on the NDC Fieldtrip to Stulwane**

**27 September 2023**

### **Objective of the day**

The key purpose of the day was to provide a space for members of the Northern Drakensberg Collaborative (NDC) to share experiences in the field towards consolidating the partnership's key themes / working groups. Since the field trip was initiated by a session at the Emmaus community hall, there was also opportunity for team members of the MAPWAPS project (full title: Mapping woody invasive alien plant species and their impacts in strategic water source areas) to provide input as they wanted to use the opportunity to update NDC members.

The event was attended by the following organisations: African Conservation Trust (ACT), WILDTRUST, Mahlathini Development Foundation, Institute of Natural Resources (INR), Agricultural Research Council (ARC), Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife (EKZNW), Endangered Wildlife TRUST (EWT), KZN No-till Club, Expanded Fresh Water and Terrestrial Earth Observation Network (EFTEON), University of KwaZulu-Natal's Centre for Water Resources Research (UKZN-CWRR), Maluti-Drakensberg Transfrontier Programme (MDTP) and community members from AmaZizi, AmaNgwane and AmaSwazi.

Apologies were received from representatives of Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE), University of the Free State (UFS), Northern Drakensberg Nature Reserve, Peaks Foundation, WWF, Conservation Outcomes and the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS).

### **Summary of the field trip**

*Prepared by Hlengiwe Hlongwane (Mahlathini Development Foundation)*

#### **Introductory session**

On the 27<sup>th</sup> of September 2023, there was a Northern Drakensberg Collaborative engagement in Emmaus Hall, with different stakeholders from different organisations working in the Uthukela catchment, and a field visit to Stulwane to see the work Mahlathini DF. The day started with introductions, then a presentation from Stellenbosch PHD and master's students, Liam and Thandeka, working on the MapWaps project, which is a project that is in the Uthukela catchment (and other catchments in SA) that is funded by the WRC and maps out woody alien invasive species (Wattle, Gumtrees and Poplar) and estimate their water impacts in strategic water areas, as well as their economic impacts. This project will run from the 12<sup>th</sup> -26<sup>th</sup> of October in the Uthukela catchment and those interested to join the work are invited to do so on these days.

A presentation from Mahlathini DF by Temakholo Mathebula followed, which gave an idea or an image of who Mahlathini is, how it works and what it does, from establishing learner groups, doing farmer-led experimentations, collaborations, and relationships in the areas MDF works in. An Ecological map created with the communities pointing out water natural resources such as water sources, grazing lands, wetlands, other key areas that need intervention such as erosions, alien plants, etc. was used as an example of the processes that MDF go through with farmers. The presentation then got into more detail about what came out from the discussions that MDF-WRC had with the two communities (Ezibomvini and Stulwane), which included the identification of key areas, their importance, interventions required, and stakeholders involved, and then the outcomes of those

discussions and plans made which is the community working together voluntarily to clear pollution and invasive alien species and doing Restorations. There was also a brief description of the other work that MDF does, such as the water access projects, CA and its principles, livestock integrations and organic intensive home gardening.



*Figure 1: Presentation From MDF, by Temakholo Mathebulo.*

### Restoration Site Visit

After the two presentations, the meeting moved to Stulwane, starting off at the Restoration site, where there are brush packs built to reduce the erosion, restoration of vegetations and run off pans to measure and compare run off between bare soil and soils with grasses/vegetation. Lizzy Buthelezi, an MDF eco champ explained to people when they started working on the restoration site, how it looked like before, how they built the brush packs and tools used to make contours, and the purpose of it.



*Figure 2: Restoration site Visit in Corstone.*

### Water Access Work

From the Restoration site, we went to the protected spring, on our way there, seeing and having small discussions about the ditches by the road that were dug by the community for the new water access project. At the protected spring, people were impressed by how natural the spring was kept after protection and the ditch/contour that was dug above the spring to prevent the spring water from getting contaminated by run offs. The new water project was further explained, that extraction is to be done from two streams and reticulated down to two sections of the stulwane community for multi-purpose use, following the laws around water and its extractions.



*Figure 3: Visit to the protected spring in Stulwane.*

### CA and Homestead Food Gardening

From the spring and water access, the day was closed off by visiting the Msele household to see the CA and intensive homestead gardening components. There was a table set up, next to Nelisiwe Msele's Tunnel displaying fresh produce, seedlings made by one of MDF farmers to show the homestead food gardening component, eggs produced in the household also by a farmer to show the poultry component, fodder grasses samples (black oats, tall fescue and white oats), bales and bail making machine to show the livestock integration component, the animal drawn planter, Mbilis and dry maize to show the CA trials component.

Mr Madondo briefly took the visitors through CA principles as had been previously mentioned in the MDF presentation, showing them the tools that are used in the minimal disturbance of soil principles and showing maize from the trials as result. Then explaining of the use of the tunnel, trench beds and showing the organic fresh vegetables that were harvested are still growing inside the tunnel, the drip irrigation system which allows the use of grey water, a tower garden next to the tunnel, with stone column in the middle to allow the use of grey water as well. People were impressed by the organic



production of vegetables and even bought almost all the vegetables that were displayed such as spinach, Parsley, cauliflower, and spring onion. Following are pictures from Nelisiwe Msele's HH.



*Figure 4: Display of climate smart agricultural practices and products including no-till planter and manual baler*



*Figure 5: Lungelo Buthelezi explaining Mahlathini's climate smart agriculture programme*

### Closing session

Following the sharing of information about climate smart agricultural interventions, there was opportunity for a short exchange around the day's activities before closing for lunch, which was prepared by members of the local community.

## **Appendix 1: Agenda for the fieldtrip**

09h15 Arrival at Emmaus Community Hall

09h30 Welcome and introductions – Zinhle Ntombela and Michael Malinga [20 min]

- Input from Liam Cogill – Introduction to the MAPWAPS programme [20 min]
- Input from Mahlathini – Providing a context for the field trip [20 min]
- Logistics for the field trip [20 minutes]

11h00 Departure for Stulwane

11h45 – 13h15 Field trip (1.5 hours)

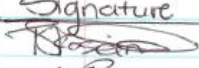
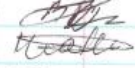
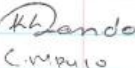
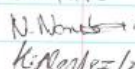
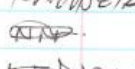
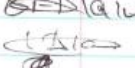


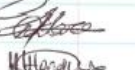
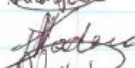

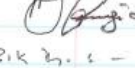

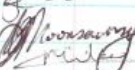

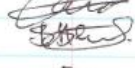




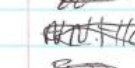
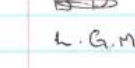







- Visit restoration demonstration & community work
- Visit spring protection and water supply system
- Visit agro-ecology, fodder and conservation agriculture work






13h15 - General discussion [30 min]

13h45 Lunch at Stulwane

15h00 Departure

## Appendix 2: Attendance register

NDC Field visit 28/09/2023			
Name	Surname	COMPANY/Organisation	Signature
Thandeka	Skosana	ARC (Agricultural Research Council)	
Mpendule	Blamini	WILDT RUST	
Nozipho	Mthwalo	Wild trust	
Khetimiso	Zondo	Mahlathini	
Celiwe	Mputo	Mahlathini	
Nikeliwe	Ngubane	Mahlathini	
NELISIWE	MSELE	MAHLATHINI	
Nomfundo	Jali	Mahlathini	
Dumazile	Slatisa	Mahlathini	
Lizzy	Blamini	Mahlathini	
Bawume	Mthwalo	Amazizi	
Machona	Hlongwane	Amangwane	
THOMSON	Zwane	AMANGWANE	
Liam	Cogill	ARC	
Ncamiske	MAHLATHI	ZUMAKHA HOLDINGS	
Hlangiwe	Hlongwane	Mahlathini D.F	
Nicholas	Madondo	Mahlathini Dev foun	
Temacholo	Mathebula	Mahlathini D. foun	
Mbongiseni	Shogwe	Wildtrust	
Ahlan	Ngidi	Wildtrust	
Bonginkosi	BUTHLEZI	MAHLATHINI	
Msoo	NGWENIA	UKZN - CWR	
Simon	Blamini	Mahlathini	
Jeremy	Mosammy	EFTEON	
Carina	Wass	EFTEON	
Sachin	Doorsamy	EFTEON	
MZOSI	CHONCO	ENDANGERED WILDLIFE TRUST	
BENEDICT	NENE	EKZN	
SEBY	MKHIZE	KKZWL	
refel	Sigabane	Egwenes Wildlife	

Name	Surname	Organisation/Company	Signature
Ngobele	Mokazi	Mahlathini Development Fund	
Thandeka	Hlatshwayo	Wild Trust	
Gugu	Hlophe	Wildtrust	
Bongwe	SHABALA	ACT	
Loceactia G.	Miya	AWG	
Sonelline	Hlatshwayo	ACT	