

RECENT PROGRESS AT CECIL KOP NATURE RESERVE

Construction

A 6,3 kilometre game fence, 2,4 metres high, has been erected. Included in this is a three-hectare paddock, approach road and car park. Inside the paddock, a boma which can be divided into five sections was constructed. The dam wall was widened by building a 170-metre stone wall on the northern aspect, and at the eastern end a kiosk/toilet is under construction. Water, electricity and a telephone have been installed. The car park below the dam wall was raised by the addition of eight hundred loads of soil. A wrought iron gate depicting the species of animals that will be in the Reserve was built and donated by Eastern Districts Engineering. An A-frame hut was donated by the Timber Promotion Council and is used as a ticket office.

Game Stocking

In the last six months the following species of game were introduced. They were supplied by, or under the auspices of, the Department of National Parks and Wildlife:

Wide-lipped rhinoceros	4
Waterbuck	2
Zebra	2
Eland	4
Wildebeste	3
Elephant calves	3

The numbers will be made up to four or six animals to provide viable breeding units. It is also recommended that fifteen impala, six sable, twelve nyala and six warthog be introduced.

The rhino were donated by the Natal Parks Board, and the Lions Clubs of Salisbury raised \$1 000 towards the cost of transport. Thirty duck were trapped by Dr. Jarvis of Mcllwaine National Park and they are doing well on the dam. They are attracting other birds, and the waterfowl population has increased to 46 at the last count. Species include pochard, red-billed teal, white-faced duck and Egyptian geese. The impact all these animals have on the habitat will be watched closely.

Finance

The total cost of fencing Stage 1 was \$7 408. The Conservation Trust provided a grant of \$3 000 towards this sum, and the remainder was raised by donation, proceeds of two stands at the Manicaland Agricultural Shows, cake sales and raffles. The business houses of Umtali also responded with cash or kind.

Because it was felt necessary to use 2 800 m of pig-wire as dog-proofing along the Murambi boundary, the cost of fencing per 100 m was \$117,58, an additional expense of \$37,54 per 100 m. In future pig-wire will not be used as it is felt that high-strain wire set at 8 cm intervals up to a height of one metre will be just as effective. Present cost of fencing is estimated at \$133,00 per hundred metres.

Further donations for specific projects have been made by the Mashonaland Branch of the Society (\$500 for the erection of an elevated viewing platform), by the National Council of the Society (\$600 for covered viewing areas), by the Lions Club of Umtali (\$300 towards construction of bomas). The Jaycees and Interact have both donated \$100, and a dance was held recently which contributed \$225.

The Society charges an entrance fee of 50c per adult and 25c per scholar. Season tickets are also available. In the last five months the Reserve was visited by 2 275 adults and 1 939 children.

Running costs

Five staff are employed on a permanent basis to carry out routine maintenance of the fence, patrolling of the area, collecting admission fees, supplementary feeding, and so

on. This number is increased when major development is undertaken.

Other expenditure includes the cost of supplementary foods for the animals undergoing boma-training and for feeding at the edge of the dam to attract animals in the late afternoon.

Further activities planned

The area to the east of the dam wall has been set aside for future development in the form of open-air classrooms, an elevated viewing platform and a small car park for incapacitated people.

The Society envisages the Reserve stretching from Kingsley Fairbridge Memorial at Adams Barracks, with the Umtali Heights road connecting across the ridge to the security road to give the city an unparalleled scenic route. We therefore intend to ask the Municipality for more land adjacent to the leased area. On the southern side of the present fence there are small portions of woodland that are heavily snared and dogs frequently get caught. There is also illegal woodcutting: by fencing this could be controlled. It is intended to allow the public to walk their dogs in some of these areas. Developing these areas as a recreational zone at relatively little cost will have immense public relations value.

General comments

There is no doubt that the public have responded enthusiastically to this project and that a Nature Reserve within the city boundary has captured their imagination. Despite the war situation, they have donated generously towards its development, and by their continued support have given this Branch of the Wildlife Society confidence in the future of the fauna and flora of this country.

DAVID BURNETT, Chairman, Manicaland Branch.

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