

Mokala National Park expands with addition of two properties

South African National Park's (SANParks) newest national park, Mokala National Park in the Northern Cape has added two important properties Lilydale and Valschfontein as part of its park expansion programme.



SANParks managing executive of parks, Paul Daphne said that with the inclusion of the two properties, Mokala is now 28 151ha. This achievement was marked with a fence cutting ceremony at the Valschfontein section of the park.

Daphne said Mokala National Park was established in 2007 as an alternative to the Vaalbos National Park, which was the subject of a land claim. This event marks the realisation of a commitment that SANParks made to the Northern Cape Government at the time of the land claim and subsequent loss of the Vaalbos National Park. Mokala National Park has immediate plans to focus on rectifying the park's inefficient shape and the separation of the park into two sections.

A priority for SANParks

According to Daphne since the year 2000, SANParks has added a total of 558 897ha to the national parks system. The government and SANParks accounted for 54% through direct acquisition, donors acquired 21%, contractual inclusions of private land a further 11%, and the transfer of other government land 15%.

"In order to achieve its national mandate of conserving representative samples of South Africa's different ecological landscapes, the establishment of ecologically sustainable parks remains a priority for SANParks. In this regard, the expanded park offers a diversity of vegetation types characteristic of this area of the Northern Cape, ranging from rocky koppie vegetation through Acacia lowlands," said Daphne.

"The expansion will allow the animals to roam freely between the east and west of the park and visitors will also be exposed to more animal movement. This can only lead to increased visitor numbers and make the park more sustainable and we are very excited about the dropping of this fence as it signifies the seriousness with regards to our mandate as SANParks of increasing the national conservation estate," he concluded.

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