

NATIONAL PARKS BOARD

POLICY STATEMENT¹

**FUTURE MANAGEMENT OF NATIONAL PARKS AND
OTHER PROTECTED AREAS**

1. INTRODUCTION

Following intensive discussion and deliberation on the future identification, protection and management of national parks and other protected areas, the National Parks Board has decided to submit the approach outlined below to interested parties for comment and further discussion.

Far from seeking to be prescriptive, the Board hopes to stimulate debate towards finding a generally acceptable model for the future control of the country's protected areas in the best common interest.

We trust that this will initiate an inclusive discussion involving all state as well as non-governmental agencies with an interest in the conservation of our natural assets and in particular our national parks and other protected areas.

2. PREMISE

In developing the present discussion document, the National Parks Board identified a number of factors that could be decisive for the future control of national parks and other protected areas, in particular:

- the constitutional framework within which national parks and regional protected areas will be managed will in all probability be characterised by decentralisation: it is accepted as a basic premise that there will be three tiers of government, each with specified legislative and other functions
- the control of national parks and other protected areas will, in common with the functions of nature and environmental conservation, probably be a matter of common interest subject to concurrent jurisdiction, with certain exclusive jurisdiction being conferred on regional governments

¹ Approved by the National Parks Board at its meeting of 9 September 1993.

- financial constraints, taking account of the socio-economic situation of many South Africans, will impact on the extent to which the state (whether at national or regional level) will be able to provide financial and other support to national parks and other protected areas
- the role of tourism in general and ecotourism in particular, both as a foreign exchange earner and in the domestic market, will grow in importance
- South Africa has an important role locally as well as in the context of the international community in environmental and nature conservation in general but in particular in the identification, protection and management of protected areas reflecting the country's unique and rich biodiversity. Accordingly, internationally accepted guidelines and norms would also have to be observed by South Africans
- the control of national parks and other protected areas must be conducted within a context of partnership, involving all important state as well as non-governmental actors as well as the communities in whose vicinity the national parks or other protected areas are located
- a management structure that is legitimate, effective and representative must be installed to ensure
 - that the management of national parks and other protected areas enjoys the support of the population at large
 - that the country's important ecosystems and unique natural features are identified, protected and managed in keeping with international norms, thus ensuring their survival for present and future generations.

3. **FRAMEWORK FOR THE CONTROL OF NATIONAL PARKS AND OTHER PROTECTED AREAS²**

Based on the foregoing premises, the following concept framework for the future control of national parks and regional protected areas is envisaged:

- i) The national constitution stipulates that the management of national parks and other protected areas shall be a topic of common interest dealt with concurrently by the national parliament and the regions. Accordingly both can pass and administer legislation on specified aspects such as detailed in par (ii) and (v) below.
- ii) The role of the national parliament is to perform, either in its own right or via a National Parks Board (as the case may be), the following functions:
 - * entering into international treaties
 - * formulating national policy for national parks and other protected areas
 - * applying a classification system for all national parks and other protected areas in conformity with international norms
 - * proclaiming new national parks
 - * ratifying the proclamation of other protected areas (to enable the latter to qualify for central aid)
 - * enforcing the law
 - * undertaking research
 - * funding and managing national parks
 - * providing financial and other support for other protected areas
 - * undertaking all other activities associated with the management and control of national parks.
- iii) The foregoing functions where appropriate, as well as giving advice to the central government, are undertaken by a National Parks Board provided for by legislation.
- iv) The respective regions could each institute a similar regional conservation board executing the following functions (as set out in par v) within regional context.

- v) The role of the regional legislatures is to perform, either in their own right or via regional conservation councils (as the case may be) the following functions:
- * formulating policy for regional protected areas within the framework of national policy
 - * managing regional protected areas as well as national parks committed to their care by the National Parks Board
 - * proclaiming regional protected areas and advising on the proclamation of national parks
 - * collaborating with other regions in regard to the control of protected areas
 - * advising the regional government on regional protected areas
 - * providing financial and other support to regional protected areas
 - * enforcing the law
 - * undertaking research
 - * undertaking all other activities associated with the management and control of regional parks.
- vi) The composition of the National Parks Board and regional conservation boards should meet three prerequisites: legitimacy, expertise³ and representativeness. This would entail, inter alia, that the boards should enjoy public and political support and that their composition and activities should be characterised by a high level of expertise. Provision should also be made for inputs by regional conservation boards in the National Parks Board, and possibly vice versa.⁴

³Specialists from disciplines such as finance, conservation, tourism, and socio-economics.

⁴Proposals will be formulated in consultation with other interested parties.

- vii) The existing status and management of national and other protected areas would remain unaffected, with the proviso that the national and regional governments may in due course on the advice of the respective national and regional conservation boards agree to other arrangements.

4. POLICY ON DELIMITATION OF REGIONS⁵

The National Parks Board has taken note that the Commission for the Delimitation of Regions has highlighted the Kruger National Park as one of the "problem areas" for further investigation. The National Parks Board has taken a view on this question which it proposes to convey to the Commission and other interested parties.

- 4.1 The preceding management framework as approved by the National Parks Board provides that the future control and management of national parks and other protected areas will be in the hands of national and regional authorities on the basis of distinct and defined areas of jurisdiction. Certain protected areas which qualify in terms of international guidelines as national parks - such as the Kruger National Park - should be managed by The National Parks Board. Whilst the National Parks Board would be competent to delegate if it so wished certain aspects of the management of a national park to a regional government, the national control of national parks such as the Kruger National Park should remain inviolate.
- 4.2 The Parks Board is not involved with the political process but has taken note of moves to allocate the Kruger National Park to the Eastern Transvaal or the Northern Transvaal. The Parks Board however supports the initial proposal of the Delimitation Committee, namely that for management purposes the Kruger National Park be regarded as an indivisible entity at the national level. This standpoint also pertains to all other national parks.

⁵ Consensus was reached on this policy at a meeting chaired by an official of the NRDAC that was held on 20 September 1993 at which RDAC regions F and G and officials of the National Parks Board were present .

4.3 The Parks Board cannot express a judgement on the desirability or otherwise of the Kruger National Park being divided into two parts for electoral purposes. This is an exclusively political question and as such outside the Board's jurisdiction. The Board however believes that the following guarantees should be given to officials employed in the Kruger National Park:

- * Their right of unrestricted access to public facilities of their choice must be safeguarded. This implies freedom to use facilities such as schools, hospitals and clinics as dictated by considerations of convenience and location.
- * Their freedom of movement must be safeguarded. This implies the freedom to move to neighbouring regions regardless of the region to which they have been allocated for electoral purposes.

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CAPE TOWN
12 September 1993