

De Hoop Leads the Way in Tourism PPPs



Situated on the legendary Whale Trail, just three hours' drive from Cape Town, the 36 000 hectare De Hoop Nature Reserve was the perfect choice for a PPP. Famed for its rich biodiversity, the De Hoop Marine Reserve offers some of the best whale-viewing in the world, with 40% of the global Southern ^{Right} Whale population coming to the bay to breed each year. And now, there is diverse range of accommodation to match – from campsites and rondavels to mid-range family bungalows and even luxurious seclusion on the Vlei. A PPP was signed between Cape Nature and the private De Hoop Collection early in 2009. Things have moved rapidly since then, with the tourist resort opening its doors to visitors in December 2009.

The development

A creative and diverse development, the project has entailed the upgrading and refurbishment of 30 guest houses (not all complete yet) and 21 staff houses – each with individual features. Assuming the architectural style of the area, some of the accommodation resembles the original fishermen houses, and others oldworld sandstone and thatch farm houses, while the majestic gabled Melkkamer Manor House, which has stood empty and derelict for the past five years, will soon become a luxury five-star getaway. Other features will include a wedding venue, cooking school, deli, and shop. So far, R22 million has been spent by the De Hoop private partner, including start up costs.

Spin offs to the local communities

A key feature of the PP is the inclusion of the local community – from permanent to temporary employment. Currently 46 staff have been employed and trained in the hospitality industry. Approximately 80- 100 people will be employed full time in the future, with 20-30 casually employed. Similarly, building and construction work has been by local contractors, employing approximately 45 people on average.

The De Hoop project has seen the rejuvenation of a national heritage site to the benefit of the local community, the local government and local business alike. With the final Concession Agreements signed on December 2009, the partnership is on track to continue building on a solid foundation for conservation, tourism and local economic development in the Western Cape.