

**Capacity building and improved management in  
Umgeni Valley Nature Reserve in KwaZulu-Natal  
through development and implementation of the  
Protected Area Management System (PAMS)**



Final Report – July 2013



The project commenced in December 2011 with a planning phase. The following members of the Game Rangers Association of Africa (GRAA) have been the implementation team for the duration the project:

Ms Jan Phelan	Project leader
Mr Peter Thomson	Project coordinator
Mr Wayne Lotter	PAMS advisor
Mr Harold Thornhill	
Ms Marita Thornhill	
Mr Drummond Densham	
Mr Chris Galliers	

The Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa (WESSA) team is:

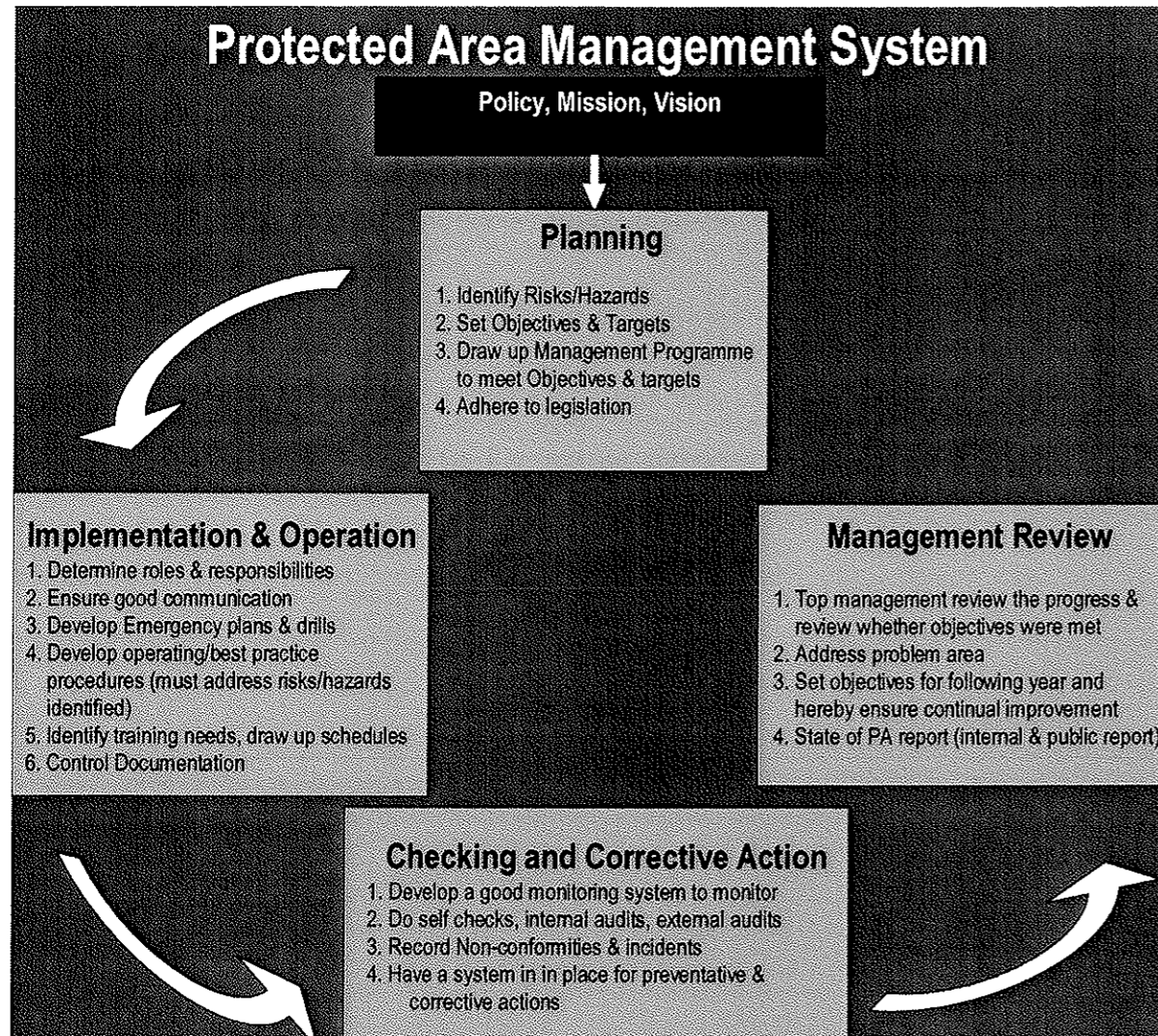
Mr Gary Clark	Regional Manager KZN
Ms Shari Cade	Education and Reserve Manager, Umgeni Valley Nature Reserve
Ms Heather Ducasse	Tourism and Hospitality Manager, Umgeni Valley Nature Reserve

All staff involved in the various activities carried out in the management of the reserve were included in the WESSA team and participated in development of the PAMS where it was relevant to them.

In consultation with all participants, a project plan and time-based programme was developed during December 2011.

The first phase of the project was a PAMS orientation course conducted by the PAMS originator, Mr. Wayne Lotter, over the three days January 9 to 11, 2012. All GRAA and WESSA team members attended this course, as well as five members of the GRAA not involved in this project. These members were invited to join the course in order to develop protected area management systems capacity within the GRAA. Each participant received a comprehensive PAMS manual.

Work on development of the PAMS began in February, following the procedure in the figure below.



Responsibility for each section of the project was allocated to specific members of the team, who received payment, while the rest of the team assisted on a *pro bono* basis in order to gain experience. All preparatory work and follow-up was done *pro bono* and records have been kept of both paid and unpaid work. Members of the WESSA team, with relevant support staff, have been involved in all sections.

Sections completed to date are as follows:

1. POLICY – Based on the WESSA corporate mission and vision statements, the detailed objectives of all activities carried out on Umgeni Valley Nature Reserve were examined in order to develop a new Policy Statement to guide management of the reserve. This Policy Statement was subsequently submitted to and ratified by the WESSA Board. Concurrently the scope of the PAMS was documented as is required by the Standard, and also confirmed by the WESSA Board.

2. AVAILABLE INFORMATION – All available information about Umgeni Valley Nature Reserve was collected, collated and catalogued. Information ranged from staff organograms and individual job descriptions through maps, reports and other biophysical data to details of corporate activities and procedures.
3. BASIC AWARENESS OF PAMS – A Powerpoint presentation and explanation of PAMS and its implications was given to all members of Umgeni Valley Nature Reserve staff. This was done in several sessions to cater for different sections, time commitments and languages.
4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – An evening meeting was convened to inform all neighbours of Umgeni Valley Nature Reserve and other stakeholders about the development and implementation of PAMS and to discuss the implications and possible concerns of this group. Twenty-two people attended and a report was compiled.
5. ASPECT AND IMPACTS REGISTER – This is the first step in the planning phase of PAMS and is essentially a risk identification and mitigation analysis. The outcome is a comprehensive list of all operations and activities that take place in the protected area (from animal and habitat management through infrastructure development and maintenance to visitor services), a scored evaluation of their potential impacts and a scored evaluation of current control or mitigation measures to manage those impacts. The scores are compared in order to evaluate the effectiveness of current management of each impact and to prioritise future action. The register was completed to be used in determining detailed objectives and targets for the area.
6. OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS – Based on information from the Aspects and Impacts Register, outcome-based objectives and action-based targets were developed for each significant aspect. Programmes for achievement of each objective, with allocation of responsibility and, where possible, budget and time frames were also developed.
7. RESOURCES, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES – All job descriptions (in the form of Key Performance Indicators, as done by WESSA) for more senior staff of Umgeni Valley Nature Reserve were obtained and examined in respect of achievement of objectives and targets. Where appropriate, amendments were proposed in the light of the implementation of PAMS. The Regional Manager KZN was appointed to be the management representative responsible for ensuring the implementation of PAMS and provision of required resources, as well as reporting to top management in WESSA. The functions of PAMS Co-ordinator, who will be the PAMS champion for the nature reserve, was assigned to the Education and Reserve Manager.

8. COMMUNICATION – All forms of communication, both internal and external, used at Umgeni Valley Nature Reserve (from radio and telephonic contact through notice boards and instructions to meetings and correspondence) were listed, with details of responsibility, purpose, target, frequency and recording. A number of changes aimed at improved communications in several fields were identified.

**NOTE – Parts 1 – 8 were completed by mid-year, Parts 9 – 15 were completed in the second half.**

9. LEGAL REGISTER – This proved to be a challenging aspect of development of the PAMS for UVNR. Ideally, the Legal Register should consist of a list of all legal instruments pertaining to the running of the protected area, with detailed notes under each of the relevant sections, cross-referenced to the management activity to which they refer. This then becomes the first-principle reference point – in management of the protected area there has to be total compliance with the law.

The list drawn up consisted of 64 pieces of legislation. Each of these instruments is complex in its own right and often there are cross-references within and between them. An initial analysis reduced the list to 13 Acts of primary importance and these were examined in more detail in respect of the relevance of their requirements to identified management activities at UVNR. Annotation will continue.

(It is worthy of note that neither Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife nor the national Department of Environmental Affairs has such a register. Both said they would welcome production of one. This is a potential project in its own right)

10. EMERGENCY PLANS – PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE – All potential emergencies which could occur in UVNR were identified and listed. In collaboration with relevant staff, for each of these a comprehensive action procedure was developed, detailing appropriate responses, staff responsibilities, equipment requirements, contingency funding, emergency services contact details, reporting and review procedure and preventive actions following investigations.
11. STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES – The PAMS and WESSA teams collaborated in considering all activities carried out at UVNR and in drawing up detailed Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for each activity requiring consistent and comprehensive written procedures.
12. TRAINING NEEDS ANALYSIS – Potential training needs for staff to competently carry out their responsibilities at UVNR were listed. Staff evaluation forms, applicable to each individual employed at UVNR, were developed to facilitate

analysis of post skills needs and individual skills availability and deficits. This allows for skills needs to be matched to training requirements and for a logical programme to be developed.

13. DOCUMENTATION AND DOCUMENT CONTROL – All documentation carried out at UVNR was reviewed and listed, together with current management and storage protocols. These were then grouped and ordered according to responsible sections and individuals and in terms of short and long-term management, storage, retrieval and archiving. A Document Controller was identified and protocols outlined.
14. MONITORING SYSTEMS – All aspects of UVNR management requiring monitoring were identified and listed. For each of these detailed procedures were developed, together with operating procedures, recording, analysis and reporting formats.
15. RECORDING OF NON-CONFORMITIES AND INCIDENTS – This is the first step in the Checking and Corrective Action phase of PAMS. A register for recording all untoward incidents and non-conformities (non-fulfilment of requirements) in respect of laid-down SOPs and/or as a result of other activities was developed. This includes determination of cause and of corrective and/or preventive actions and a follow-up system, as well as allocation of primary and secondary responsibility.

This concluded the first three phases of PAMS – Planning, Implementation and Operation, and Checking and Corrective Action. All detailed documentation was recorded electronically and delivered to UVNR on CDs.

**In that the project commenced after preparation of budgets and allocation of funds for the 2011/2012 financial year, implementation of the PAMS was constrained by lack of money during 2012 and it was agreed that a period of time would be necessary to allow for effective action. To this end, the completion of the project was extended to mid-2013.**

On May 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> members of the GRAA team and the WESSA team carried out an internal assessment (internal audit) of the implementation of PAMS. During this assessment issues requiring attention were identified and documented as non-conformities and recorded in the appropriate register. A report was prepared by the GRAA team and delivered to the WESSA team.

Following this, the UVNR Education and Reserve Manager held a meeting with members of WESSA Top Management to apprise them of the situation and to seek their support for improvement in the allocation of resources to support PAMS.

On July 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Mr Wayne Lotter, the PAMS Advisor, carried out an independent external assessment (audit) on behalf of the GRAA and the PAMS Foundation to examine the system developed for UVNR and the effectiveness of its implementation. A report was produced by Mr. Lotter and delivered to the GRAA and WESSA teams.

To complete the project, the second METT evaluation is to be carried out by Wildlands Conservation Trust for comparison with the evaluation done before the project commenced. In view of the problems encountered by WESSA in putting the PAMS into practise it is recommended that this assessment be delayed until the end of the year (see discussion below).

## **COMMENTS AND CONCLUSIONS**

During the planning phase of the proposed project by the GRAA to introduce PAMS as a management system of choice in the MPAH programme a number of potential sites were considered, most of them associated with the national Biodiversity Stewardship Programme being managed in KwaZulu-Natal by Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.

Umgeni Valley Nature Reserve was chosen for a number of reasons:

- it is an important link in the conservation landscape of the KZN Midlands and a potential Stewardship site,
- it has a history of discontinuous management and no functional system in place,
- it has a high profile in the public arena,
- it is frequented by a variety of user groups, and, significantly,
- it is a recognised Centre of Excellence for scholar and adult education.

Successful implementation of PAMS would ensure improved and effective management and expose the system to a wide audience.

Unfortunately, during 2012 WESSA experienced a serious budgetary crisis. Income from education courses at UVNR dropped significantly as the global financial situation manifested itself in RSA and funds from other sources dwindled. This led to a corporate review of business and other activities and application of severe cost-saving measures. It also had a negative impact on the amount of time and attention available for implementation of PAMS. This is reflected in both the internal and external assessment

reports. Attempts to obtain an improved operating budget for the 2012/2013 financial year, which would have allowed implementation of the most important components of the system, were not successful and the anticipated employment of staff dedicated to reserve management did not happen. Despite submission of a deficit budget, reserve management did manage to achieve break-even expenditure on the allocated funding at the end of the year. Even so, WESSA top management saw fit to consider alternative options for Umgeni Valley Nature Reserve, including calling for public submissions by advertising in the press. We understand that, while a number of ideas and proposals were received, most suggestions were rejected and the *status quo* is likely to remain.

While the critical financial situation is likely to prevail for the time-being, positive developments are that from the beginning of September three interns employed under the *Groen Sebenza* programme will be deployed to assist with running the reserve, that there has been affirmation from WESSA for their continued management of UVNR and that the PAMS processes and baseline information that have been developed are appreciated by senior staff. Partnerships which will facilitate management of the reserve are being explored and improved income generation, particularly from the hospitality facilities at Umgeni Valley, is being pursued. It is hoped that all this will result in growing implementation of PAMS and, in keeping with the PAMS ethos, continual improvement in management of this important protected area.

On the positive side, the inclusion of all UVNR staff in the development of the PAMS has resulted in significantly improved appreciation of team dynamics and personal responsibilities and it can safely be concluded that capacity building was achieved. The understanding and appreciation of PAMS by top management reinforces this assertion.

The GRAA team, largely new to the PAMS process, also learned a great deal and the members are now able to offer their services to develop tailor-made management systems in other Protected Areas. We reiterate our commitment to continual improvement at UVNR and our offer to assist in implementation of PAMS in the future.

#### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Game Rangers Association of Africa, together with the PAMS Foundation, is grateful to the Critical Ecosystems Partnership Fund and Wildlands Conservation Trust for awarding a Small Grant to cover most of the cost of this project. The GRAA team enjoyed working with the UVNR team and thanks WESSA for the encouragement and opportunity to produce the PAMS for this important conservation area.



## BUDGET

The total grant allocated to the project was R 134 500-00.

The first tranche of the CEPF grant, an amount of R 67 257-00, was received on December 22 2011. The second tranche, R 60 525-00, was received on July 25 2012 following delivery of the half-year report.

The total amount received to date is R 127 782-00

To date, expenditure is as follows:

Salaries	5 days @ R 2 500*	R 12 500-00
	55 days @ R 1 880**	R 103 400-00
Travel – orientation course		R 2 748-80
Travel – external audit		R 4 867-48
Supplies		R 410-45
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>R 123 926-73</b>

Balance in hand R 3 855-27

Plus, 3<sup>rd</sup> tranche of CEPF grant R 6 718-00

**TOTAL UNSPENT R 10 573-27**

Outstanding expenditure is expected to be:

GRAA admin costs 55 x R 120 R 6 600

Collating and Printing final PAMS documents R 3 750

**Projected final balance, perhaps about R 223**

Notes - \* Daily fee paid to team member W. Lotter, at agreed rate of R 2 500 per day

\*\* Daily fee paid to other team members at discounted rate of R 2000 per day and with voluntary deduction of R 120 per day to cover GRAA administrative expenses

It should be noted that, over and above the paid days, approximately 100 days of work have been carried out by members of the GRAA team on a *pro bono* basis and goods and services to the value of several thousand Rands covering provision of meeting and working space, travel costs, subsistence, telephone calls, and use of equipment have been provided by WESSA, Umgeni valley staff and GRAA team me