

# Field Report

## NAM-PLACE / UNDP Field Assessment: Greater Fish River Canyon Landscape

03 – 08 September 2012



*LMC meeting @ Konkiep park*



*Klein Karas – Women Sewing products*



*Naute Game Park Rangers*



*Fish River View Point dumping site*

Team:

**UNDP:** Martha Mwandingi and Talvi Ndevaetela

**SPAN:** Nick de Vos and Rosalia Ileka

**NAM-PLACE:** Michael Sibatani, Jonas Heita and Nelao Haimbodi

*Compiled by: Jonas N. Heita, Landscape Specialist, NAM-PLACE*

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## 1. Introduction: UNDP / NAM-PLACE Field Assessment and Monitoring

As per the requirements and implementation guidelines, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) conducts field assessment in-order to assess and monitor the implementation of GEF funded programmes in the country. The field assessments enable UNDP to gain first-hand information and to understand the dynamics of project implementation and subsequently provide guidance. As a result, a combined UNDP / NAM-PLACE field assessment for the Greater Fish River Canyon Landscape (GFRCL) was conducted from the 03 – 08 September 2012.

### 1.1 What is NAM-PLACE?

The Namibia Protected Landscape Conservation Areas Initiative (NAM-PLACE) is a project of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET), hosted under the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA). NAM-PLACE aims to lift barriers for the establishment of a large scale network of protected landscapes in the country. The project goal is to ensure that “Namibia’s Biodiversity and Ecosystem Values are conserved and to provide a framework for Sustainable Benefit flows at Local, National and Global Levels”. The main objective of the project is to ensure that land uses in areas adjacent to existing Protected Areas (national parks) are compatible with biodiversity conservation and sustainable development goals. The Greater Fish River Canyon is one of the five (5) Landscapes established under this concept.

### 1.2 The Greater Fish River Canyon Landscape (GFRCL)

The GFRCL comprises of two National Parks (/Ai-/Ais and Naute Game parks), 3 Private nature reserves, Commercial and resettlement farms (*figure 1*).

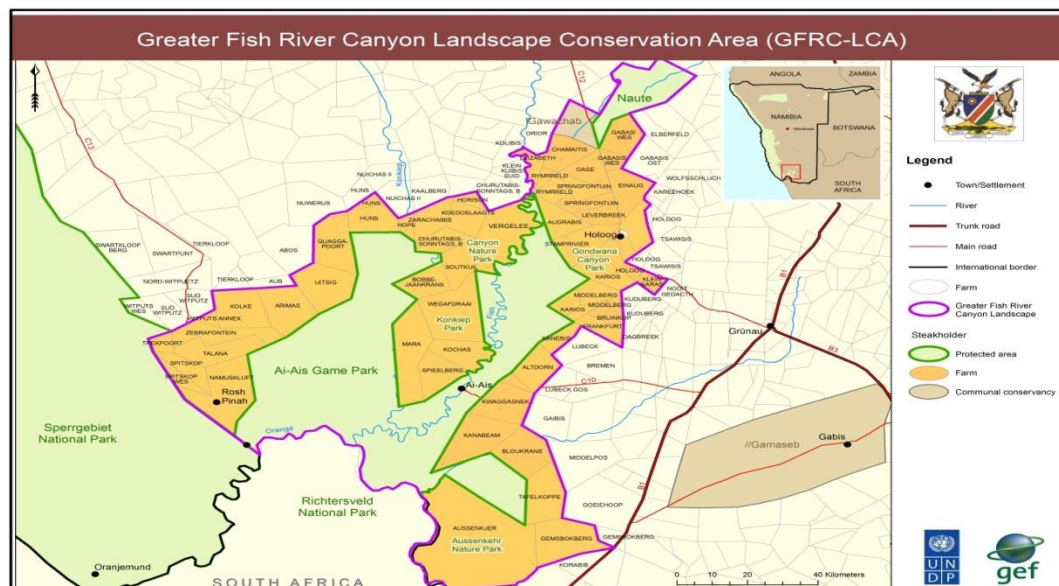


Figure 1: The Greater Fish River Canyon Landscape (GFRCL)

## 2. Field Assessments:

### 2.1 Meeting: Klein Karas Community Representative - Keetmanshoop

On Tuesday, 04 September 2012, the team met with Mr. Lazarus Kairabeb, the representative of the Klein Karas Community in Keetmanshoop, who doubles as the Secretary General of the Nama Traditional Leaders association.

As the team was scheduled to meet the Klein Karas community the same afternoon, Mr. Kairabeb mainly gave an overview about the community, which he represents on the Greater Fish River Canyon Landscape Management Committee.

Mr. Kairabeb mentioned that:

- The Klein Karas farm is 9 334 ha
- The Farm is registered as a cooperative
- Klein Karas has a population of about 91 people
- There are 9 households, and
- Only 31 people currently live on the farm



- Most importantly, Mr. Kairabeb highlighted Klein Karas requires a business plan to guide the community, as means to solicit funding in-order to implement the identified projects

Furthermore, Mr. Kairabeb stated that the main objective to set up the Nama Traditional Leaders Association is to mainstream Socio-Economic development for the Traditional Leaders and the Traditional Communities they represent.

He explained that, in the past, traditional leaders were somewhat reluctant and unwilling to coordinate with one another in-order to implement government initiatives for the benefit of the larger communities. Hence, the decision to establish the Nama Traditional Leaders Association was a necessity and forms a neutral and unified body, which represents the interests of all traditional authorities in the region.

### 2.2 Naute Game Park and the Naute Dam

The next stop was the Naute Game Park (affectionately known as the Naute Recreation Game park) which inhabits the Naute Dam. The Naute Game park was proclaimed in 1988, but since then, there has been very little progress both in terms of park management or recreational activities. The park inhabits the Naute dam which provides water for the Keetmanshoop township as well agricultural plantations (mainly dates and grapes).

The team met, the park Rangers (Tommy Mwashekuna and Daniel Kalenda - inset) who provided information about the park and highlighted the following:



The park has seen very little development over the years and for about 4 years there was no single staff member residing there, and now, the park only has 3 staff members.

Nonetheless, there are notable improvements in the form of routine patrols, continuous monitoring through the incident book monitoring system, fence repairs and law enforcement

However, the park rangers mentioned that they were not happy with the mismanagement or rather no management of the Naute dam recreational area. In the past, the recreational area was within the park boundaries and was managed as such, with routine clean ups and law enforcement.

The recreational area was de-proclaimed as part of the park sometimes in 1996 and since then the mandate to manage it was withdrawn from MET to the ministry of lands / the Karas regional council. To date, it is not clear who is responsible for area.

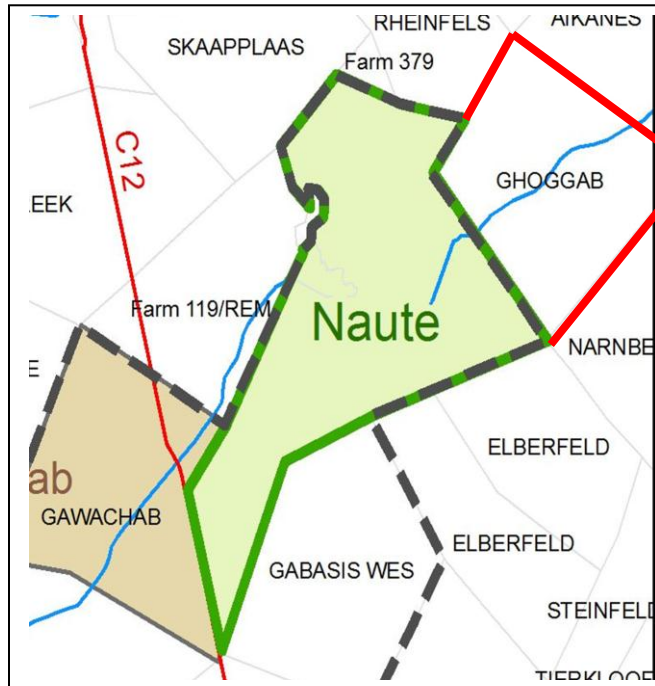
With the jurisdiction dilemma and the withdrawal of MET's mandate to manage the Naute recreational area, the public took advantage and to date, people come and braai without any control whatsoever. As a result, the area has been turned into a dumping site and unacceptable litter (inset) and human waste are the greeting sightings for the recreational area. A lot of litter also ends up in the dam.



NAM-PLACE has is on the verge of finalizing a park management plan for the Naute Game Park and one of the recommendation is to re-proclaim the recreation area as part of the National Park. Once that is accomplished, MET will then be accountable, and the park staff will resume the management of the area again and manage it on conservation, tourism and sustainable development principles.

In-addition, NAM-PLACE facilitated the acquisition of farm Ghoggab #127, which borders the part to the South eastern side. The preliminary assessment concluded that the farm is essential for MET's strategic plan and long term objectives.

At present, Naute Game Park is one of the smallest National Parks in the country. In-addition, the park is completely closed off to the public and does not generate any revenue for MET and the Namibian government at large, albeit the operation and maintenance costs debited against the state on a monthly basis.



Farm Ghoggab #127 is about 12 000 ha and it is very strategic in the sense that the Lowen river, which feeds the Naute Dam (inside Naute Game Park) cuts through this farm. In such a dry environment, the river is a vital linear oasis and provides not just fresh water, but offers a variety of micro habitats and a huge stock of fodder for wildlife species.

It is a well-known fact that the southern part of Namibia is very dry with exceptional low rainfall and over the years many livestock farmers went bankrupt due to low livestock productivity.

It is also an undoubted fact that in such a hostile environment, tourism benefits outweighs livestock farming, a component under which Naute Game Park is extremely underdeveloped.

Frankly, Naute Game Park has been relegated from a potential socio-economic driver and biodiversity conservation sanctuary, to a mere hunting camp for traditional festivals. The acquisition of the new farm opens a new window of opportunities, with regard to game translocations, tourism and infrastructural development as well as new employment prospects. In the past, mega fauna such as Black Rhino were reintroduced to boost the park values, but the high value species died due to (among others) lack of fodder and confined home ranges, elements that have been enhanced after the successful purchasing of farm Ghoggab.

In-addition to the Naute dam recreational area, NAM-PLACE is faced with the task of assisting MET with the gazettelement and incorporation of farm Ghoggab as part of the Naute Game Park.

### 2.3 Hobas Tourist Camp

Hobas is one of the tourist camps within the /Ai-/Ais game park and forms the entry point to the famous Fish River Canyon Viewpoint.

At Hobas, the main aspect of concern to the landscape is the poor waste management or rather the lack thereof.

Hobas has a campsite, which as other tourism facilities within protected areas is managed by the Namibia Wildlife Resorts (NWR), which generates considerable amounts of waste.



Since ever, Solid waste is simply dumped at a dumping site. In the past an homemade incinerator was built at the dumping site to burn combustible waste (papers, plastics and card boxes).

However, the team identified that the incinerator is clogged up by bottles and cans, non-combustible items that were also thrown into the incinerator; hence it is no longer effective and does not serve the purpose it was designed for.

Since the project inception, NAM-PLACE has identified waste management as a major concern within landscapes and implementation of proper waste management systems has become a priority.

#### **2.4 Fish River Canyon View Point**

The team proceeded to the Fish river View point, which, together with /As-/Ai shots springs are the main tourism attraction for the Greater Fish River Canyon Landscape.

The View point was facilitated by the Strengthening of Protected Areas Network (SPAN) and since the /Ai-/Ais game park forms part of the /Ai-/Ais - Richtersveld Transfrontier Conservation Area (ARTFCA), the view point was inaugurated by the both the Namibian and South African Ministers of Environment in 2010.





The design for the Fish River Point is impressive and has compressive information boards explaining the canyon’s rich history & surrounding areas.

However, the ablution system is not working, much to the dismay of the thousands of tourists visiting the area annually. The toilets have been closed since the inauguration of the facility by the two (2) Ministers for Namibia and South Africa in 2010 (more than 2 years).

The non-functionality of the toilets at the Fish River view Point has been identified as a major concern to all landscape stakeholders as the canyon is the main attraction to the area. Although, progress has been slow, the upgrading of the toilets appears on the GFRCL budget and work plan for 2012.

## **2.5 The Klein Karas Community Co-operative**

The Klein Kars Community is the only traditional / rural community in within the entire landscape. The community has started the process of registering itself as cooperative, which will enable them to structure and organize themselves better. Registration as cooperative will aid many aspects such as opening a bank account, applying for funding and most importantly, they will be subjected to auditing and accountability.

The cooperative is a community based initiative as the resident families strive to organize themselves and engage in socio-economic projects in-order to improve their livelihoods.

### **2.5.1 Identified Projects for NAM-PLACE support**

Through its programs, the NAM-PLACE project, with support from the Landscape Management Committee (LMC) has identified the need to support the Klein Karas community to uplift existing socio-economic projects. The projects were identified via a consultative process with the community as well as a ground verification / field assessment. As a result, the following projects are insight for NAM-PLACE support:

### **2.5.2 Women solar powered – sewing project**

At present, women among the Klein Karas community partake in a sewing activities. They community has 2 old fashioned, hand driven, manual machines which they use to make the following products:

- Traditional dresses



- Cooking aprons
- Table cloths
- Curtains and
- Fixing their own clothing

However, NAM-PLACE has identified that the current production of the sewing products is very small and the main attributing reason is that the current machines are very limiting, both in terms of quantity and also the type of designs one could make. Materials are also limited.



Regardless of the limitations, it is very encouraging that Klein Karas women continues with sewing activities and impressive products were found during the NAM-PLACE field assessment.

NAM-PLACE ideas are as follows:

- i. Purchase solar – driven sewing machines
- ii. Install sufficient solar power for the sewing machines
- iii. Scout for machines that will allow the Klein Karas women to do more designs then the current machines
- iv. Enable higher production and introduce items in high demand which allows for easy marketing + selling e.g school uniforms
- v. Present the community’s project to the Karas Regional Council and hopefully enter into a contract agreement with a certain school for them to purchase their uniforms from the Klein Karas community at win-win pri
- vi. In-fact, the regional council could subsidize the uniforms, making it a win-win for both the community and the identified school.
- vii. The reason why school uniforms are emphasized is because of the permanent demand, unlike other products, which may be somewhat difficult to sell.



### 2.5.3 Gardening project

The community started gardening project some years back, with a bit of external funding, but the gardening could not flourish due to technical problem. A drip irrigation system was installed, however the underground water in Klein Karas contains a high percentage of calcium, which simply clogged up the irrigation pipes.



*Drip irrigation, clogged up by calcium*



*perseverance to produce food*

The following remedies can counter the calcium clogging:

- ✓ Calcium filter at the water pump to prevent the calcium from the entering into the pipes (cleaned regularly)
- ✓ Bigger pipes (diameter) to allow the calcium to pass through without clogging up easily
- ✓ Different watering system (hose pipe, watering can etc)

Most importantly, the gardening project is aimed at creating a supply chain of vegetables to tourism establishments in area. In-fact, through the landscape concept, the landscape management committee members have committed to buy the Klein Karas community's produce, should the gardening produce succeed. Gondwana has 3 lodges in the area and Namibia Wildlife Resorts has 2, both of which are committed to buy the produce.

However, the challenges of such gardening cannot be overlooked, and from the beginning NAM-PLACE will recommend the less complicated vegetables for gardening, which requires less gardening knowledge and less likely to fail. The objective would be to have the community master 2 or 3 vegetable types as opposed to trying everything.

#### **2.5.4 Cultural village / Information centre**

The Klein Karas community is right on the margins of the road from Grunau to the Fish river canyon viewpoint, which is the main tourist attraction in the area.

As a result, the community has started renovating one of the old buildings in efforts to convert it into a cultural village combined with an information centre. The idea is that, the tourists transiting to the fish river viewpoint would then make it a stopover to buy some traditional curios and learn about the rich history and traditional norms of the community.

Once again, NAM-PLACE would then use the Landscape platform to assist the community with marketing and informing tourists via lodge bookings about the cultural village / info centre when driving by.

In-addition, the Klein Karas Community could also offer traditional dances, songs and storytelling to tourists from nearby lodges.

### **2.5.5 Small stock farming (Goats and Sheep)**

The community is also farming with small stock (mainly sheep and goats) which are vital for the livelihood (income, school and hospital fees, protein etc) and they mostly require assistance with marketing.

### **2.5.6 Klein Karas Business Plan**

As a result, NAM-PLACE has identified the need to formulate a business plan for the Klein Karas community. In principle, the business plan can be used as a tool to access funding in-order to effectively manage the identified projects sustainably. An external consultant has already been identified to complete the Business Plan for the community.

The business plan will focus on, but not limited to the following:

- 1) *To review different project models and assist the community to decide on the most appropriate project to be prioritized;*
- 2) *To assess the institutional arrangements, identify capacity building needs of the community;*
- 3) *To ensure financial sustainability of the community;*
- 4) *to identify opportunities for investment, and make recommendations as to how such investments can be realized*
- 5) *to ensure that such opportunities are effectively addressed using the limited resources; and*
- 6) *To assess access to the market for the products produced.*

## **2.6 Aussenkehr Nature Park**

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of September, the team started with the filed assessment of the Aussenkehr nature park, which also forms part of the Greater Fish River Landscape.

The team had a thorough discussion of the Greater Fish River Canyon Landscape boundaries and the respective stakeholders (inset).

Aussenkehr nature park is about 100 000 ha (one hundred thousand hectares of land), but only land connected to the orange river is used for irrigation



The owner of Aussenkehr nature park has sub divided the farm into different management zones. The area to the banks of the orange is used by different investor companies on a concession basis for irrigation agriculture.

Aussenkehr produces some of the highest quality grades of Grapes and dates, which destined for Europe and Asia.

In total irrigation companies, employ about 3 000 employees permanently and about 4 000 bringing the total to about 7 000 in during the harvesting season.

However, many more flock to Aussenkehr with the hope and landing jobs, others come with their families and others are there for business. Shebeens and kapana. As a result, a total of 25 000 can be found during harvesting season and an enormous squatter camp is testimony (inset)



## 2.7 /Ai-/Ais Hot Springs and Resort

Well known for its natural hot springs, /Ai-/Ais offers a wilderness and unique aesthetic experience to holiday makers. The landscape is also famous for the 84 km hiking trail which starts at Hobas (the fish river view point) and exits at /Ai-/Ais. The hike is done from 4 – 8 days, depending on the speed and explorative quest.



*Hikers complete the 84 km hike*



*the team enjoying the /Ai-/Ais pools*

### 2.7.1 Baboon problem

The resort is faced with a challenge of baboons who swamp the resort from sunrise – sunset. The baboons jump around on the roofs, causing damages in the process. Baboons grab tourist items from the camp sites almost every day and many tourists have lost their items to baboons. There was also an incident where a baboon grabbed a baby and luckily dropped it after the mother timely reaction.

There is a lack of communication with regards to relaying precautionary information to first time visitors about the baboons. Another challenge is the varying attitudes towards the presence of baboons at the resort:

- Some tourists view the baboons as a spectacle and are amused
- Employees have gotten used to the baboons and sometimes feed them

NAM-PLACE will try to assist the resort by finding out what remedies or mechanisms are effective for baboon control.

## 2.8 GFRCL Landscape Management Committee Meeting – Konkiep Nature Park



*Landscape Management Committee Meeting held @ Konkiep park.*

The Meeting was well attended and two (2) of the landscape stakeholders attending the LMC meeting for the first time.

## **2.9 Gondwana Nature Park**

The last stop was the Gondwana Canon Nature Park. Gondwana Nature Park comprises of a number of old sheep farms that were successfully converted into a nature park.

The old sheep farm employed about 6 herders between them, but now, Gondwana has about 80 employees spread between the 3 lodges in the area. In essence, Gondwana seems to be a leader in the following:

- ❖ Socio-economic development
- ❖ Restoration and Biodiversity conservation
- ❖ Solid waste management (recycling)
- ❖ Waste water management (loan watered with recycled water)
- ❖ Organic waste (food) incorporated into the economic cycle as food for pigs, which are then slaughtered for ham and other products
- ❖ There are no dumping sites (whatever you take in, is taken out)



*Recycling with pigs*



*Artistic work displays the rich history*

### 3. Conclusion

The trip went very well and was very educational and offers an opportunity to understand the dynamics of the NAM-PLACE project as well the challenges and opportunities ahead.

The following components were identified as priority for NAM-PLACE intervention:

- ❖ Waste Management (/Ai-/Ais and Hobas dumping sites)
- ❖ Klein Karas Community (Business Plan + Socio-economic projects)
- ❖ Fish River View point toilets
- ❖ Re-proclamation of the Naute Recreation as part of the Naute Game Park
- ❖ Gazettement of the new Park Boundaries to incorporate the new farm

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Jonas Heita

**Landscape - Environmental Specialist**

Namibia Protected Landscape Conservation Areas Initiative (NAM-PLACE)

Ministry of Environment and Tourism

3rd Floor Capital Center, Levinson Arcade

Private Bag 13306, Windhoek

Namibia

Tel: 061-2842727 Fax: 0886517290

Cell: 0812537642

