GAUTENG WETLAND FORUM

CONSTITUTION

(Revised 2010)

1. NAME

The organization shall be known as the Gauteng Wetland Forum (GWF), hereinafter referred to as the "Forum".

2. VISION

To effectively conserve and manage wetland ecosystems in the Gauteng Province.

3. MISSION

The Gauteng Wetland Forum aims to work consistently towards an effective and integrated conservation programme of wetlands and associated ecosystems; as well as the rehabilitation of degraded wetlands.

4. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims and objectives of the Forum are to:

a. Promote amongst all stakeholders and society awareness and understanding of wetlands, their importance, role and function as part of the environment, and the factors that affect them;
b. Embark upon a pro-active educational and training programme for all stakeholders and to inform society of the importance of wetland protection;
c. Support and facilitate community based wetland management;
d. Advance the integrated planning and co-operative governance with respect to the management, use, conservation and protection of wetland resources in Gauteng;
e. Contribute to the development, implementation and enforcement of relevant local, national and international conventions, legislation, policies, guidelines, regulations and standards;
f. Facilitate the dissemination and sharing of information between the various role-players on the Forum, as well as the general public;
g. Identify priority areas for research on wetlands;

h. Develop and maintain a database of all wetlands for the province of Gauteng;

i. Provide advice/technical input on proposed activities that may impact on wetland ecosystems where and when necessary;

j. Identify opportunities to increase the effectiveness of the Forum;

k. Act as a watchdog by continuously monitoring threats to wetlands ecosystems and facilitate the necessary action by the parties to address the threats;

l. Establish sub-committees / task teams to work on specific actions.

5. DEFINITION OF A WETLAND

The ecosystem-type of primary concern of the Forum is wetlands. The Forum recognizes that a range of definitions are valid for a range of contexts. These include the one used in the Ramsar Convention, and that in the South African National Water Act (36 of 1998) viz.:

- The Ramsar Convention defines wetlands as: "area of marsh, fen, peatlands or water, whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt, including areas of marine water the depth of which at low tide does not exceed six meters". (Ramsar Convention 1971: Cowan, 1995).

- The South African National Water Act (Act No 36 of 1998) defines wetlands as: "land which is transitional between terrestrial and aquatic systems, where the water table is usually at or near the surface, or the land is periodically covered with shallow water, and which in normal circumstances supports or would support vegetation typically adapted to life in saturated soils".

6. MEMBERSHIP

6.1 Eligibility

Any person, organization or government department who subscribes to the objectives of the Forum may apply for membership. Membership is not restricted, and is open to any stakeholder, including but not limited to the following:

a. All government agencies at national, provincial and local level whose mandate and /or responsibilities relate to wetland systems;

b. All civil society organizations whose concerns align with those of the Forum; and

c. Communities linked to local wetlands.

6.2 Responsibility of Members

6.2.1 In order to achieve the objectives of the Forum and considering the Forum's commitment to reaching its goals, GWF members should as far as possible attend all meetings;

6.2.2 Regular attendance by members is not only important for the Forum to obtain valuable input from its members, but is also essential if the GWF is to achieve its strategic objectives. Members or organizations failing to attend scheduled GWF meetings not only inhibit the Forum from being able to perform its functions, but such conduct is also contrary to the fundamental principle of co-operation with all stakeholders, which is essential for the effective function of the Forum;
6.2.3 Should any member not be able to attend a GWF meeting, they shall be responsible for sending their apologies to the Chairman of the next meeting and arranging for an able replacement to attend that meeting in their place or send feedback to be read out by Chairperson;

6.2.4 Members tasked or delegated to undertake actions at the GWF meetings are responsible for ensuring that such action items are undertaken and that feedback is provided to the GWF at the next meeting. Should such members not be able to provide such feedback at the next meeting, their nominated replacement shall be responsible for providing such feedback. Alternatively, they may also provide such feedback in writing to the Chairperson of the next meeting, no less than five (5) working days prior to the next meeting;

6.2.5 Although secretarial duties of the Forum will be assigned and dedicated to a member each and every member of the Forum has a responsibility to share information with other members of the Forum on issues or topics relating to the Forum, as well as any other information which is in the interest of the Forum or which may assist in reaching the strategic objectives of the Forum;

6.2.6 Members will be required to renew their membership annually in response to a notice circulated to the full membership list of the Forum. The primary means of communication with the membership will be via e-mail, and renewal is intended to limit the accumulation of old and non-functional addresses.

6.3 Liability of members

6.3.1 The Management Committee (ManCo) reserves the right to refuse membership, or to lay down conditions regarding membership;

6.3.2 If at any time after the acceptance of a member it appears that he/she has been accepted under a misrepresentation or mistake, the ManCo shall have the power to cancel such membership. The person whose acceptance is thus cancelled in terms of this clause shall cease to be a member of the Forum;

6.3.3 On the acceptance of a member, the secretary of the Forum shall notify such a person, and he/she shall be entitled, to a copy of the constitution, rules and resolutions of the Forum;

6.4 Fees
No membership fees will be applicable.

7. MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (ManCo)

The business of the Forum will be conducted by a Management Committee (ManCo) whose members will be elected by the Forum at an Annual General Meeting. The ManCo will compromise of an odd number of no less than 7 members, and ideally 15 members in total, and strive to be representative of the Forum's membership as a whole. An up-to-date schedule of ManCo members, with assigned portfolios will be on file by the Secretary.

7.1 Composition of Management Committee (ManCo)
The committee shall consist of the following office bearers:
• Chairperson
- Vice-Chairperson
- Secretary
- Executive Members with the following composition (numbers in parentheses indicate number of representatives on the Manco):
  - Department of Water & Sanitation (DWS) (2);
  - Gauteng Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (GDARD) (2);
  - Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DFF) (1);
  - Department of Environment Affairs (DEA) (1);
  - South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI & Working for Wetlands) (1);
  - Non-government Organisations (NGO) (1);
  - Independent (1 or more);
  - Local Authority (LA) (2)

The positions of Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Secretary shall be an NGO; however, should a suitable candidate for the position of Secretary not be found from the NGO sector any other nomination for Secretary will suffice;

7.2 Election of Management Committee
7.2.1 The ManCo shall be elected at a meeting of the Forum where a quorum is present as defined in Clause 9.
7.2.2 In order to vote at an AGM election a member shall have attended at least two (2) meetings during the year excluding an AGM;
7.2.3 Nominees will be elected by either a secret ballot or a show of hands, whereupon a majority vote will be required in order for the nominee to be voted into position.

7.3 Nominees
7.3.1 Any nominations for positions on the ManCo must comply with Clause 7.1 above
7.3.2 A nominee shall have been a member of the Forum in the preceding year and attended the majority of the Forums meetings;
7.3.3 Each nominee shall accept the nomination and be available to serve in that position for the period to which they are nominated.

7.4 Period of Service
7.4.1 Each position will be for a period of two (2) years;
7.4.2 A member of the ManCo may be nominated and voted in to serve for another term of office, however, no office bearer may serve more than two (2) consecutive terms i.e. four (4) years on the ManCo;
7.4.3 If no alternative candidate is available for election, the candidate may be re-elected for a third or subsequent term at the next AGM election;
7.4.4 In the event of a nominee serving a third term on the Management Committee, the ManCo shall endeavour to find a suitable candidate to serve on the committee.

7.5 Responsibility of the Management Committee (ManCo)
7.5.1 It is the responsibility of the ManCo to ensure that the aims and objectives as outlined in clause 4 are fulfilled;
7.5.2 The Management Committee shall meet at least four times during year.
8. TERMINATION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS (Manco)

8.1 Any member of the ManCo absenting himself, without leave of the committee, for more than two consecutive meetings of which due notice has been given, shall cease to be a member of the ManCo.

8.2 In the event of any member of the ManCo ceasing to be a member of the committee, the ManCo shall have the power to co-opt a member for the balance of the term. The Secretary shall then inform the members of the Forum of the development.

8.3 Any member, representing one of the core organizations whose employment changes during their term of office, shall relinquish their position on the ManCo unless his new job description is relevant to their current function on the ManCo and a suitable vacancy exists on the Committee.

9. QUORUM

The quorum at a Forum meeting shall be all the members attending the meeting irrespective of the total membership provided that:

a) A notice of the meeting had been circulated at least 21 days in advance, AND
b) There should be at least 15 members in attendance.

10. MEETING

10.1 General Meeting
   10.1.1 A General Meeting of the Forum will be held in alternate months;
   10.1.2 A quorum for any meeting where voting needs to take place will be as defined in Clause 9.

10.2 Annual General Meeting (AGM)
   10.2.1 The Annual General Meeting of the Forum shall be held annually at the first meeting of the calendar year; this meeting will generally be held in February;
   10.2.2 Written notice of the AGM will be distributed by the Secretary at least 21 (twenty-one) days prior to the meeting and shall contain:
      a) Details of the nominees of the vacancies on the Management Committee;
      b) Proposals concerning the business of the Annual General Meeting.

10.3 Special Meeting
A special meeting shall be convened by the Secretary as directed by the Chairperson or the ManCo, or at the written request of not less than ten (10) ordinary members of the Forum, in good standing. Not less than twenty-one (21) days' notice shall be given in writing stating clearly the purpose for which the meeting is being convened.

11. MINUTES & CORRESPONDENCE

11.1 The Secretary shall keep a record of all Forum and ManCo meetings, particularly of decision taken, action points, and parties responsible for action. These records shall be certified
correct by the Chairperson at the following relevant meeting. The Secretary shall distribute the agenda within 14 days of the following meeting;

11.2 All correspondence shall be distributed by email;
11.3 Forum meeting minutes shall be circulated within a month of the meeting.

12. DISSOLUTION

The Forum may be dissolved on a 60% majority vote at a Forum meeting, with notice of such item on the agenda having been communicated to the membership no less than 21 days prior to the meeting. On dissolution of the Forum, the ManCo will be responsible for the satisfactory winding up of all Forum affairs within a period of 6 calendar months.

The Constitution of the Gauteng Wetland Forum (GWF) was approved at a meeting of the Forum on:

Place:  

Endangered Wildlife Trust

Date:  

25 February 2011

GWF Chairperson  

Mphareku Bismarck Madzam

Signature  

[Signature]