

**NORTHERN REGION CHAIRMAN'S REPORT
FOR THE 2020 AGM & EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

1) **Finances**

The 2019 accounts for FOSAF NR and the Flyfishing Publications cc accounts for 2019/20 have been circulated to Exco for approval. Sales of books have virtually ceased and Millstream's R49 000 pa sponsorship that was originally budgeted has now been withdrawn due to losses of income suffered by the company as a result of the lockdown. Substantial reductions have therefore been made to expenditure for the 12 month period commencing June 2020 but this will still result in a deficit of about R44 000. See the revised budget proposal.

2) **Membership**

Clubs were informed that unless at least half their members joined at the R150 pa rate they would not be eligible for this discounted rate. Both the DFFA and TFFC have renewed their membership with all members paying at the R150 per annum rate. Jacaranda are no longer eligible, but the small Transvaal Fly Tyers Guild joined with 8 of their members paying. Haenerstsberg turned down the offer but donated R5000 to FOSAF National. The two small clubs, Sabie and Clarens, with about 20 members each have been approached but appear to be financially constrained. The Stithians Flyfishers Club is being reactivated this year by Jonty Scott and Chris Williams and it will renew its FOSAF membership subscription.

3) **NR Committee** At the 2019 AGM this was strengthened by the election of 3 new members. The committee now comprises Chris Williams (chair), Peter Arderne (secretary), Andy Lawler, Andy vd Werff, Geoff Taylor, Jonty Scott, Martin Rudman, Mike Biccard, Mike Mitchell and Warren van Tonder.

4) **Northern Region Projects**

a) **FOSAF books**

Sales of books dropped to R900 in the current financial year. A fair number of books have been donated as prizes for flyfishing events or despatched to members who have purchased from National.

b) **Communications: Website, Facebook & Twitter**

This continues to function well, but our website requires a facelift.

c) **Yellowfish Working Group**

The newsletter sent to about 360 supporters has been reduced from monthly to a bi-monthly event. This is posted on the website with links to it from Facebook and Twitter.

d) **The Vaal River Crisis.**

Regular updates are included in the YWG reports above. Northern Region FOSAF/YWG maintain their activism including working with other fishing and environmental groups in particular with the SAVE team. Slow progress is being made and the DEFF and DWS realise

that we mean business by the legal actions already taken and further legal action impending should the Government and Municipalities not play ball by getting sewage and wastewater plants replaced, upgraded and rehabilitated. Government and independent regular water quality reports reflect increasingly-worsening E.coli, blue-green / green algae and other 'canary in cage' counts often way over the acceptable human/fish safety limits. As we regularly stress, continued Governmental ostrich-head-in-the-sand mentality and societal apathy will only lead to further desecration of our fish/fly fishing, environment and communities - with dire consequences.

e) **The mining crisis in Mpumalanga**

Opposition to mining, especially in the Trout Triangle is primarily led by the Greater Lakenvlei Protected Environment but well supported by environmental NGOs and some of the flyfishing destinations. Although considerable success has been achieved in opposing applications for prospecting/mining in the last 5 years the WPB Colliery at the head of the Elands River continues to cause extreme damage to the environment. Despite clear evidence of criminal offences neither the DMR nor the DWS appear to be prepared to take action. Over R250 000 has been spent on legal fees by the opposition group and at this stage another R120 000 will be required in an attempt to halt this illegal action.

f) **Northern Trout Association**

With the inclusion of the Gauteng, FreeState, Limpopo and KZN provinces the Mpumalanga Trout Association has become the Northern Trout Association. This extension of the area has not increased membership as 8 joined from KZN and one from FS while there has been a decline in Mpumalanga. This decline may be ascribed to tough financial conditions with occupancy at destinations down. In addition, there is a perception that little progress has been paid although the upcoming FOSAF court case vs the DEFF should reverse this.

g) **Youth**

Post C-19 virus, we will be targeting schools and youth for FOSAF/YWG membership. Jonty Scott will spearhead this in our region and we will be looking to to develop and work in co-operation with our other Chapters.

h) **Closing**

The Chair thanks the Northern Region Committee for all their hard work and continued support this year. Peter Arderne continues to be our engine room and a special thanks to him. Thanks to Vicky for her book keeping. We remain especially grateful to our members - without your backing our organisation would not exist.

**Chris Williams Northern Region
Chapter Chair**