



WILDERNESS

S A F A R I S

Our Journeys Change People's Lives

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# Profile of Wilderness Safaris

- 50 lodges in Southern Africa (all in remote areas)
- 20 years in business
- DMC & lodge operating business
- Principal areas Botswana, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Malawi and Seychelles
- Operate many community partnerships (e.g. Damarland, Doro Nawas, Serra Cafema, Vumbura, Duba, Gudigwa, Makuleke, Rocktail etc)
- Developing a “SA Footprint”

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# Involvement with PPT initiative

- WS genuinely committed to making rural areas work
- Flexible in approach
- Use Maputaland Properties as a pilot



# Maputaland Operators Rocktail Bay/Ndumu

- Employ ± 20 people
- Shareholding structure imposed via Human Rights/Wildlife Department
- Nqobela had well over R300 000 in fees etc (feel relationship needed to be deepened) – Mathenjwa much less
- Developed plans to broaden engagement by more activities in community areas.
- Engaged with PPT to assist

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## Activities – Rocktail and Ndumu

- Shore up Trusts that were established to be the recipients of partnership benefits into more efficient entities.
- More proactive and to use of quarterly dividend & innovatively to create other income generating opportunities.

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## Rocktail

- From rental used as part of a bursary and development scheme, which was dispensed by a Trust in a fairly non transparent manner.
- Attempts to change this through a revised constitution, elections etc. marginally successful since from the onset they wanted to run their own affairs but when there were complaints by the community of corrupt practise – (WS and PPT acted but intervention limited in terms of what they can do since use of dividend prerogative of community structure)



## Ndumu

- Attempt to get more benefit to communities by broadening the product base e.g. Sangoma Safaris, traversing across Mbangweni into Tembe (pont), also shore up the Trust created with the Mathenjwa TA in order to get more benefit to people closer to reserve
- Problem Mathenjwa TA situated up on the Lubombos and 21 000 people around the south and western boundary – 16 bed camp. Benefit small esp. from camp with low occupancy
- Activities marginally successful despite accolades from Conde Naste, Tattler and Natgeo re Sangoma performance. Couldn't make it a regular feature
- Venture failed. Responsibility must be borne by all parties.
- PPT facilitators helped with equitable severance conditions with staff, labour unions and tribal council

## Current - Rocktail

- Community Culture and Heritage circuit set up end of last year – cuisine, traditional medicine and health, story telling and other features – Improved to the extent that it was included in activities presented to agents at Indaba this year.
- Trust at Mqobela being structured to make better use of the opportunity where Rocktail will be upgraded in the next two years
- A new dive camp at Manzengwenya – PPT facilitated selection of training of staff and management training for Mqobela staff.
- Mpukane Trust established with PPT ready for registration and to sign legal agreement on a new partnership
- Airstrip upgrade – high cost could not be used – safe landing and exit impeded by forest – community solution with PPT
- Security ? – spate of hijackings 2003 – beef up policing forum which is paid by WS and secure safety of guests

## Overall

- Influence on SA Footprint where properties are very different from Bots, Namibia and Zim.
- SA is not a prime wildlife destination contrary to popular belief.
- New feature of SA brand – partnership and community product

# Difficulties

- In aggregate – problem authorities often – stifle innovative partnership arrangements with community partners
- Beware of NGO sponsored initiative (often lack any business sustainability)

## End note

- Although there have been a number of difficulties programme ends on good
- Functions such as child minding
- Coastal properties are to broaden the range of resort like activities.
- Experience of other operators & their engagement is invaluable

- by Malcolm McCulloch

