

Letters to the Editor



Kaoko destruction

AFTER a silence of nearly one year we have decided to inform you again about the tourism situation in Kaokoland and other related matters.

The destruction on all levels is getting more intense every day. One of the biggest contributing factors are the two articles that were published last year in *Get-away*, a magazine for tourism in SA. Extra car tracks, fire places, rubbish and a direct interference with the lives of local people are but a few serious problems. Is there any control to determine the number of cars entering the area and do the authorities know whether these visitors follow the basic rules? The answer on both questions is a definite NO. If they knew the answers they would have reacted a long time ago.

To draw people into a sensitive area like Kaokoland without control is fatal. Is there any control and if so by whom is it enforced? Who gives Mr Joubert the right to have 'his route' proclaimed as an official 4x4 route?

Promises of proclamation

are not enough. Constructive planning on all levels is required to save this area. Are you, as a Namibian, satisfied that this unique ecosystem gets trampled by cars? Is it acceptable that the people of this area get exploited and disgraced by people who do not care for them, but see them most of the time as primitive and lazy?

If the government does not take a positive attitude towards the future of this area, very soon you might find that the so-called 'last wilderness' has changed into the lost wilderness. There is no doubt in my mind that no senior official in the department of Wildlife, Conservation and Tourism knows what is going on in Kaokoland. Did any of them visit the area in the past three years to get a detailed picture or were there any reports submitted that spelled out the danger signals? What happened to the reports that were submitted by this writer? Not even one was answered. To visit a place like Epupa is not enough and to fly into the Skeleton Coast does not serve any purpose.

An even more sensitive subject is the Skeleton Coast. It is well known that this big

area is open to one safari company only and that all other operators have no chance to go in there.

Why does one company have the privilege to make money out of an exclusive area while other operators who can give the same service are neglected? We more than once offered to stay within all rules applicable to this area and also to pay concession fees. Why can people from this country not visit the area just because it is too expensive. There are operators in this country who can give the same service at half the present fly-in price. To allow two or three operators in the area can only mean more money for tourism in this country. Why the blatant favouritism? The right to enter the area certainly cannot belong to one person only and if that is the case then the system in this area is corrupt.

As a taxpayer of this country I am certainly entitled to know what concession fees are paid yearly for this big area.

Is the present concession still valid? It was clearly stated in early 1991 that the concession would be terminated on 31 December 1991 and thereafter it would be decided what to do with the

area. After six months it is still the same operator. What is happening to honesty and integrity?

What is the present state with regard to the western part of Kaokoland being declared as a nature reserve area?

Why do the authorities openly allow the wide-scale smuggling of liquor in Kaokoland (and other areas)? For a group of tourists to encounter drunk people at villages cannot be to the advantage of tourism in this country. Is this smuggling within the law of the country?

The public have the right to know what is going on when it comes to matters of general importance. This beautiful country belongs to all Namibians and we certainly have a right of entrance into certain areas, especially when there is more than just the one option available.

Why does everybody at the moment close their eyes to the problems of Kaokoland? Is it ignorance or what is the problem?

Your comments as a reader are appreciated. It can only help for better understanding if a senior official in the department can give us objective and concise answers to these problems.

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Stop slaughter

I UNDERSTAND there are plans for another mass slaughter of seals this year in Namibia and that last year