

Minutes Workshop Kromme - 3th of May 2012

Attendants:

Shannon Barkes (NMBM), Eric Roux (NMBM), Michiel Pols (Aqua-Terra Nova), Marijn Zwinkels (Living Lands), Tracey Potts (ECPTA), Johan Hamman (Melkhoutkraal), Rob Markham (Eden to Addo), George Ferreira (Heights), Japie Buckle (SANBI-WfWetlands), Hennie Swanevelder (DEDEAT), Bart van Eck (For Elements), Pierre Joubert (GIB), Aad Wubben (Aqua-Terra Nova), Sam van der Merwe (RDEAR), Eberhard van der Merwe (Living Lands), Brenda de Lang (PRESENCE), Lieke Jager (PRESENCE), Dieter van den Broeck (Living Lands)

1. Presentation Marijn Zwinkels: **Background of the workshop**

1st workshop in November: two important issues were identified.

- Focus on action: it was found that there was a lot of knowledge in the area. People were aware of the problems. Focus should be about the next steps.
- Improve communication in the catchment: possibly by starting a catchment forum

Pre results interviews with 30 farmers and land-users

- In the catchment, there are relatively a lot of new farmers. This brought up a discussion of why that is. Possible reasons are that it is hard to survive due to things like, overgrazing, destruction, weed growing etc. Water was identified as an important aspect. This could also be seen as an opportunity for change.
- Lot of farmers were interested in greening and collaboration with other organisations, attending meetings, conservation, forum etc.
- Network analysis revealed that there is very little connection between the people in the area; people only know the people close to them, though some were better connected than others. The group commented on a lack of sense of community; there is one active farmers associations, in Zuurveld left.

2nd Workshop in March with landowners:

- The need to start a “Kromme River Communication Forum” or committee.
- This would provide a place where farmers/landowners could communicate and discuss main objectives and organise further actions -A forum like this would lead to better co-operation between the landowners and WfWetlands, WfWater and other organisations since there is no farmers association representing the farmers’ interests).
- This would soon be necessary anyway (DWA requires a Water Users Association to be established in each South Africa Catchment) (Dieter van den Broeck).
- Some initial issues:
 - Alien clearing is not done in a scientific way
 - Follow-ups are not done on time and sometimes not at all.
 - Communication with WfWater is lacking
- Two farmers were selected as representatives for the new committee:
 - Mr Johan Hamman (Melkhoutkraal)
 - Mr George Ferreira (The Heights)

two important concerns were identified

- Water rights of the farmers
- Importance of improving farmer practices

2. Presentation Bart van Eck, Water Boards in the Netherlands

- Water boards are the oldest democratic boards in the Netherlands and contain college members (30-40 people), from agriculture, cities, nature areas etc. who check on the council about what happens to water and what is spent. Everyone can become member of this college, therefore the influence of different groups changes when the population changes.
- Water boards look at all the stakes and ensure that all measures are being taken. Historically, they were found to be complex to centralize and their knowledge and connection to people of the land too important. Their task is to guard common needs and to connect to people on the ground, and knowledge of the complexity of the system; every effect will have a counter-effect somewhere else.

3. Presentation Pierre Joubert, Gamtoos Irrigation Board

- Nelson Mandela Metro can only just meet their supply demands and looking at different options. They should be involved financially, for government funding has stopped. Quantifying the value of wetlands would allow them to inform NMM how much it will cost per cubic meter to invest in Kromme wetlands. Alana etc. may be of help.
- There is almost no control over water use, everyone has a pump no meter on the pump. The board struggled to get the farmers on the advisory committee.
- Dep. Of Water Affairs is important for the catchment, because they issue levies for water use further down NMM. They should be involved to make sure that things are not duplicated, maybe they could offer consultation.
- In the Gamtoos there's only one big licence for everyone. All water use must be registered, though registration certificate does not give one the right to use water. Now they have to verify registration and issue licences, recognised all legal rights before 1998.
- GIB experience problems transforming into water use association, which are needed to prevent conflicts between users. Associations should be more representative than the current boards. There are legal issues. Associations draw up their own constitutions which comply to a less complex act. They all agreed that votes for people on the board would be according to water right. They still have to generate their own funds. In the Langkloof the boards have to transform into association, they'd like to have only one covering all those boards. According to Japie Buckle, each dam has its own association.

Location of the area of interest

The topic was how to improve communication in the Kromme. There was discussion about the exact area this refers to. It was decided to focus on an area that was named 'upper Kromme' by which is meant the area from heights to Churchill dam. This may be extended in the future. Related issues are fire protection associations and the effects of upstream actions on downstream residences.

Brainstorm: when you hear the word Forum, what comes up to you?

Platform to share knowledge, meeting of minds, communication vehicle, info sharing, discussion, debate, creating, interest, binding, expertise, central location, values, sharing, institutionalized, role players, stakes, communalities: people that do the same things, things that are the same, common interests, synergies, problem solving, incentives, network

Existing forums that have influence in upper Kromme

- Fire protection agencies
- Working for Water advisory committee

- Dep. of water affairs (stakeholder)
- Formosa liaison forum
- Zuurveld farmers association (discussion on whether it still exists)
- Suuranys farmer association
- Algoa water study group
- Tourism association
- Counsellors and wards
- Newspapers Kouga express, Our Times
- Nelson Mandela Metro: Green times Cacadu district

Organisation that does not have influence in upper Kromme

- GIB

Mind map presentation

1: Focus of the forum; Rob Markham

The focus should be on sustainable management of the catchment. There were many ideas, though most of them were functions, stakeholders and outputs rather than the focus. Risk management, politics and crime should probably be left out.

2: Functions of the forum; Marijn Zwinkels

- Everyone repeated that the main task should be communication. This may include advocacy and education.
- Doing something: not just talking: what is the forum going to coordinate? Maybe other groups are already doing that.
- Representative of the area towards municipalities etc.
- Raise funds to sustain itself and do things in the catchment
- Link to water users association
- It will not replace Working for Water, farmers association, road fencing,
- It will not have a local mandate of authority (important to keep in mind)

Points raised in the discussion

- There is no body to organise and coordinate sustainable catchment issues.
- Importance of raising awareness: could be done by writing article in local newspaper etc., PR, advocacy, communication of results.
- The forum can grow into more roles.

3: Structure of the forum; Bart van Eck

- Structure must provide value for the people: advising for e.g. farming, research, dissemination of ideas to researchers etc.
- It should have a core group, and a coordinator that is representative of the core group from the catchment. The coordinator organises the agenda, regular meetings etc.
- There should be representatives from the people in the catchment.
- There may be a need for a constitution, depending on size, the process towards a constitution may be complicated, it is important to work out what this process would be.
- Who are the most important stakeholder?
- Structure should make sure that there's expertise in order for it to carry out its functions. Expertise should be in the forum or the structure should allow bringing expertise from outside into the forum.
- Funding in order to finance secretariat, administration and coordination

Points raised in discussion

- A good secretariat is important.
- A centralised venue can be an asset, changing venues often cause people not to show up when they are held too far away. It depends on the distance that people have to travel.

- A champion is really important, but can also be a weak point for when he retires, the whole thing will collapse, so it needs to be elected.
- A constitution will keep it going, make it more sustainable.
- Annual meetings and social events are important not just for the core group.

who needs to be in the forum?

- Core group
- group that needs to be involved
- people that need to be involved
- people that need to be advised

Summary of discussion: Without a major group of stakeholders, that feels that there is a benefit, it won't be possible, but without organisations, they will not accomplish anything. It was agreed that the forum should contain landowners, land users and the organisations that are present now. The different organisations are needed for the forum set-up and organization. Giving structure right from the start will cause less need of those organisations later on, this includes clarity about everyone's roles and responsibilities. There should be people in it who can be representative for catchments for municipality funding, that could be anyone living along the catchments area.

Other important people and organisations

- Emerging farmers
- water users (NMM)
- Department of Water Affairs.
- Dep. of agriculture
- Nature conservation/ ECPTA
- Environmental Affairs
- Tourism associations

Should it be a new or existing forum?

Earlier, Tracie commented that there may be no need for two separate forums, it may be possible to connect the new forum to Formosa Liaison Forum. She now mentioned that there should be representatives from different forums to a new forum. However, Tracie and George agreed that there is no strong existing forum, the farmers organisation does not exist.

Other recommendations from the group

- It needs really good talks and presentation, Interesting talks, understanding of hydrology etc.
- It needs to be kept in mind that farmers need time for this and they're not paid to do this.
- Bringing in knowledge of different sources will increase knowledge in the area.
- Create projects in the area. For this purpose, the forum could consist of core groups and project groups so the group can expand and contract according to needs.
- Field visits.

Other things mentioned

Japie Buckle said he could forward a constitution for wetlands forum as an example. Pierre Joubert said he could not be part of the forum because it is not in his catchment. It would not be the right forum for WfW either. He would be prepared to advise and share things like constitutions.

Final associations with the workshop



positive (3 times), mixed, better than anticipated, hopeful, next step, optimistic, moving forward, opportunity (2 times), start