



Women from the Grass and Reeds project in Wakkerstroom making mats and bags from locally harvested grasses and reeds to be sold to local tourists.

BLSA has already been involved with two of the project sites for a number of years. In Mpumalanga, Wakkerstroom is conserving an important wetland and grasslands and is well known for its birding. B&B establishments have sprung up around the town and more than 300 beds are on offer to cater for the growing influx of tourists. However, the local black people have seen little of this economic growth bettering their community, and their role in the wetland has been insufficient to properly support their livelihoods.

In Gauteng, the Klipriver wetland system originates from the central business district of Johannesburg, meanders past the old goldmines of the Witwatersrand, across Soweto, then via the Vaal River to end in the Vaal Dam. The Klipspruit Wetland in Soweto, a tributary to the Klipriver, is heavily polluted and subjected to the effects of industry and the extreme poverty of the people who live along its banks. Informal settlements have been established on the banks of the wetland for years, and on any given day you will see people bathing, feeding and slaughtering their livestock,

discarding waste, and children playing and being baptised on its banks. The objective at this site would be to work with the multiple stakeholders, both in the area and in government, and to develop strategies to rehabilitate the wetland. Through creating a powerful civil voice, the local people will ensure that the community is heard and empowered during the rehabilitation planning and implementation. Simultaneously, community awareness and environmental education will be delivered to local schools. Ultimately, the rehabilitated wetland will provide a safe and healthy area that can be used for recreation and income generation through tourism.

The third project site is the Chata community and forest belt, which is situated on the Amatola Mountains in the Eastern Cape. BLSA is partnering with a local NGO, Border Rural Committee, who have been working with the Chata for seven years. BLSA aims to develop positive links between local people's livelihoods and the conservation of the indigenous forest and, more specifically, the endangered Cape Parrot. The project aims to develop the

PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES

- To promote sustainable natural resource utilisation to improve people's livelihoods and to help achieve BirdLife South Africa's conservation objectives.
- To create jobs and develop skills, particularly within the previously disadvantaged communities, by adding value from birds and the habitats they occupy.
- To educate and create awareness among landowners and any community representatives who determine land uses.
- To create awareness at local and national government levels of the value of linking IBAs to people's livelihoods.
- The CBNRM Programme's role is to train local people and create the skills necessary to develop sustainable livelihood activities linked to an IBA that is managed by the community in partnership with local authorities.

Chata community's skills and resources so they too can benefit from avitourism, and to create initiatives to enhance their livelihood security while simultaneously enhancing the habitat and food source of the Cape Parrot.

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