

# Media Release: Kruger National Park celebrates Arbor Day with communities

17 September 2018

The Kruger National Park (KNP)'s GM, Community Liaison and Land Claims, William Mabasa handed over 120 indigenous plants to the people of Phameni Village on behalf of Management today, 14 September 2018; outside Numbi Gate as part of the Arbor Day celebrations and also concluded the activities for the SA National Parks Week in the KNP.

"With the theme forests and sustainable cities, the tree handover at Phameni Village today assists us with implementing the greening of the villages bordering the Park whilst strengthening relations with them. This is as another way of promoting community based conservation initiatives amongst our stakeholders so that they can also play a meaningful role in the environmental conservation".

Various role players, including the local municipality, traditional council, People and Parks, Rand Water, South African Weather Services, Inkomati Usuthu Catchment Management Agency, government departments e.g. DARDLEA gave messages of support, encouraging community members to value the trees and what they offer. Villagers were also urged to plant these indigenous trees in their backyards to boost their health as the trees could provide roots, twigs and bark for the soothing and healing of many common standard ailments.

"Mabasa encouraged the beneficiaries to regularly check on the trees' progress as they would have planted something that would serve as accessories in their area such as shade, fresh air, soil protection and wind reduction".

The Park engages with community forums and other relevant committees to build capacity and assist local communities to come up with ideas, develop and implement sustainable greening projects in their communities. These types of projects are part of the government's expanded public works programme; which form part of the KNP's broader strategy for economic empowerment and social responsibility line-up aimed at communities around the Park.

The trees of the year (common and rare) were also planted to symbolise the Arbor Week celebrations; and stakeholders who attended the handover each received an indigenous tree. The celebrations in the KNP will continue throughout the month, with planting of more trees in the local communities bordering the Park.

## ***Issued by:***

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