



BR&RA NEWSFLASH 22 July 2023

BR&RA were privileged to be included in the **Inaugural Multistakeholder Co-Ordination Forum discussing the Biodiversity Economy Node envisaged for the Addo – Amathole region**. The event was organised by SANParks, the Department of Forestry, Fisheries & the Environment, the Global Environment Facility, Eastern Cape Parks & Tourism Agency and Wilderness Foundation Africa.

The core concept driving the initiative is the move from seeing conservation as a “fence-and-exclude” process to one of inclusion. It recognises the importance of the social and economic factors determining the value and possibility of long term, sustainable conservation. Sustainable wild harvesting of plants, cultivation of indigenous plants under pressure, clearing invasive alien plants, hunting, associated game meat industries, game farming, and conventional commercial farming, all form part of the complex picture.

Why our region?

This “Albany Thicket” region of the Eastern Cape is one of the most bio-diverse areas in our hugely bio-diverse country. We also have high levels of unemployment and consequent poverty. We have been identified as one of three “nodes” for the development of an economy based essentially on our bio-diversity. The other two “nodes” are the environments around the Kruger National Park and the Isimangaliso Wetland Park in KZN.



And Bathurst?

We really are the centre of this universe! We are situated in the heart of Albany Thicket, surrounded by a still largely intact commonage, close to a magical little Nature Reserve, within easy reach of numerous private protected areas, and hosting a diverse farming community. In the context of this new national initiative, we have a real opportunity to solve many of our problems and to develop a future-focused view of ourselves without disowning any of our rich historical heritage.

Elizabeth Milne