



FGASA News: September 2023



FGASA News and Updates:

Hey {{ contact.FIRSTNAME }}, spring 2023 has brought us some wild weather, exciting news and, of course, the long awaited return of our migratory birds. We have been busy travelling the country attending various regional meetings, hearing our members' questions and suggestions. We still have a few more coming up, be sure to check out our events calendar here to see when the FGASA Regional Meeting will be held in your area. We'll also be holding our FGASA Annual General Meeting in October, if you'd like to be involved and participate in the meeting as well as to hear about FGASA's future plans then be sure to join us on 24 October at 11am. We will make the online Zoom link available to you all closer to the time. Make sure to check our events calendar on the website as well as our Facebook and Instagram accounts for regular updates.

As the end of the year draws closer so we begin to cast our eyes towards 2024 and first up is Safari Guide of the Year. We are extremely excited to announce that we have secured another five-star location for next year's competition to be held in the Waterberg region of South Africa. We are buzzing with the prospect of exploring various parts of South Africa and put next year's finalists to the test! Watch this space for nominations!

FGASA Calendar

October

Monday 2 FGASA Regional Meeting Madikwe	Wednesday 4 FGASA Regional Meeting Pilanesberg	Saturday 7 FGASA Regional Meeting Gauteng	Friday 20 FGASA Online Exam Registration closes
Tuesday 24 FGASA Annual General Meeting (AGM)	Friday 27 FGASA Online Exam Sitting	Sturday 28 FGASA National Written Exam Sitting	

Click below to view the FGASA calendar on the website.

[FGASA Events](#)

In the News



Make Your Voice Heard: The Green Paper on the Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa

FGASA as an organisation has deep connections to the tourism sector in South Africa and positive working relationships with both the Department of Tourism (NDT) as well as the provincial Registrars for the NDT.

As professionals within the tourism sector, it is our responsibility to uphold and develop tourism within the country, after all, none of us would be here were it not for tourists.

The NDT gazetted the "The Green Paper on the Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa" for public comment before the new policies come into place. We as FGASA want to ensure that this reaches as many of our members, friends and industry stakeholders as possible. It's important for us

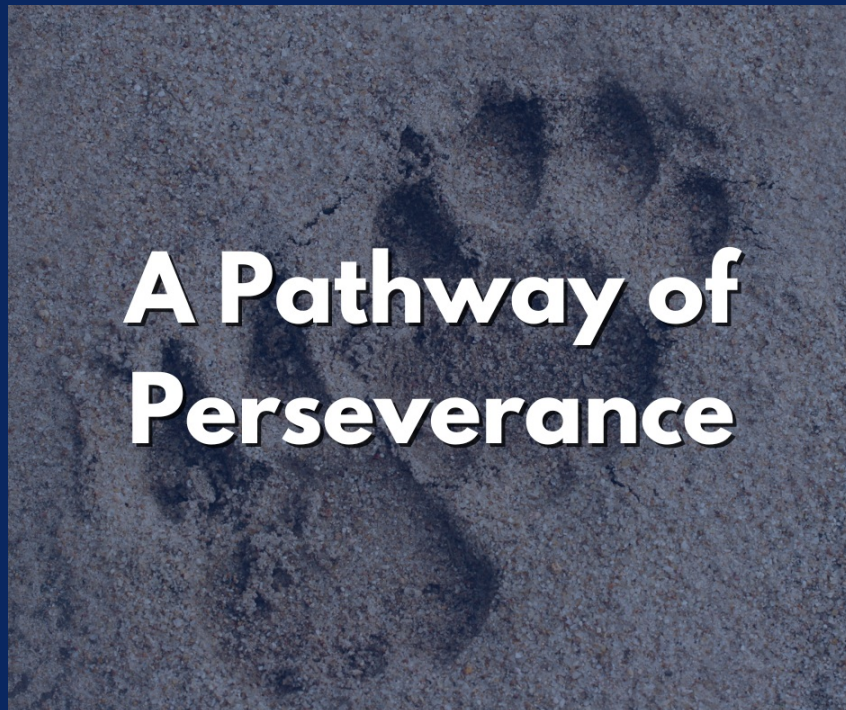
all to contribute to the development of tourism in South Africa.

We would like to invite you all to send through your comments to us at FGASA so that we may present a formal submission for comment as a united front in delivering feedback to the NDT. As key role players in the tourism sector we believe that, together, we can make a difference where it matters most and assist with growth and development.

Send through your comments to Michelle on md@fgasa.org.za. For more information on 'The Green Paper on the Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa' and the professionalisation of the tourism sector in South Africa you can have a look at what the Department of Tourism has planned and proposed by visiting their website [here](#).

You can read through the current draft for by clicking the link here: "[The Green Paper on the Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa](#)"

The deadline for comment on "The Green Paper on the Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa" is 31 October 2023. Be sure to make your voice heard as a committed member of the tourism sector, together we can take South African tourism to new heights!



#IamFGASA Good News Story: A Pathway of Perseverance

Becoming a safari guide does not end with passing your theory, practical and finding a job at a lodge. Becoming a safari guide is a career that requires a commitment to a certain type of lifestyle. A lifestyle immersed in nature, surrounded by people from all over the world and that constantly challenges you to learn, grow and develop in skill. It is a career choice that will push you into discovery, lead you to beauty and leave you in constant awe at the intricate workings of our natural world. These are the qualities that determine your success as a safari guide.

This story is about a guide from the Pilanesberg whose hunger for knowledge and passion for wildlife drove him through the challenges that lay in his path. Awongiwe Maqelana, has been guiding in the Pilanesberg National Park for four to five years now, originally from the Eastern Cape, Awongiwe travelled north in search of opportunities. Awongiwe's drive to learn more about nature resulted in a firm decision to undergo an animal trailing assessment. Not knowing anyone able to assess him in the area, he reached out to field guiding legend Alan Yeowart. Alan confirmed he would be able to help with an assessment, but the assessment fee and travel costs involved driving from White River to Pilanesberg would be substantial. Alan suggested that perhaps Awongiwe could organise a group of guides to be assessed, helping

to split the cost and keep it affordable.

However, Awongiwe is both proactive and ambitious. On his own accord, he sourced and booked Makalali Private Game Reserve as a trailing assessment venue, invited a fellow guide, TJ, from Karongwe to join him and informed Alan of his plan. Awongiwe hopped on a taxi, travelled all the way to the Lowveld and conducted his assessment.

We are extremely proud to announce that Awongiwe scored an impressive 95% on his trailing assessment giving him a Trailing Level 3 certification, the next day he was on a taxi back home. When Alan asked if his employer had assisted with any of the costs for their guide actively improving his skills and experience, Awongiwe's answer was 'no,' he had organised and paid for everything out of his own pocket because he is motivated to be a better guide.

With this information in hand, Alan points out something highly significant about field guiding and guide employers. When a guide improves their knowledge and skills beyond the scope of what their employer requires, it makes the guide more attractive to higher profile lodges and risks the guide leaving to pursue other, potentially more lucrative, career opportunities. This fosters a reluctance in employers to promote career development and skills acquisition as it is seen to be a 'poor investment.' While this may be an understandable mindset it does beg the question, why? Why would your guide want to leave and work somewhere else if they are being cared for and paid fairly? Surely all tourism and hospitality organisations want their guests to have the best experience possible under the care of qualified, knowledgeable, and skilled guides?

Alan had only the best things to say about Awongiwe as a guide and as a person. Awongiwe's determination to improve his skills and develop his career trumps all obstacles in his way. His humble and friendly demeanor make him approachable and wonderful to engage with. Awongiwe's motives for upskilling come from his passion for wildlife, his desire to learn more about the natural world around him and his ambition to share this knowledge with anyone lucky enough to be a guest on his vehicle.

We are extremely excited to watch your development as a guide Awongiwe! You are an exemplary example of a FGASA guide and we are here to help you with each step in your career journey. Keep up your ambition and determination, it will only ever lead you down the path of success!



The Lantana Lament

Toxic tendrils creep over disturbed land as webs of root systems colonise the ground beneath them. Bursts of vibrant colour pop against hairy, dark-green leaves, a fireworks display put on by a tenacious weed. Poison berries

glimmer invitingly in the daylight, made plump by a sponge-like intake of water. Competitive as ever, nearby botanical species are quickly eliminated by thirst and substrate corruption. Many beautiful things do little to disguise their danger, they will advertise it with bright contrasting colouration. This should have been considered when *Lantana camara* was removed from its native habitat in South America and brought to Europe as an ornamental, living decoration for garden enthusiasts. It did not take long for this species of Lantana to spread throughout the world. Of the recorded 150 species of Lantana, only a few are considered safe as only a few are considered dangerous and even deadly.

No one is too sure when or how *Lantana camara* arrived in South Africa, but records of it date back to 1858. It was first noticed due to mysterious deaths of both livestock and people. Additionally, there was a decrease in both animal and botanical biodiversity noticed in areas choked by *Lantana camara*. More than a century later it was confirmed that *Lantana camara* was the responsible party. Not only are the berries fatally poisonous to all mammals including humans, but their hair covered, thorny stems and leaves cause skin irritation, rashes, and welts.

Not only is this plant particularly vicious in its anatomy, but it is also a vicious and prolific invasive species that adapts well to a range of different climactic conditions. *Lantana camara* has developed copious colonies across South Africa having spread across six of the nine provinces from its first discovery in the Western Cape. The species has advanced rampantly north and eastward, it edges the boundaries of our rivers and reserve fence lines. *Lantana camara* is particularly good at establishing itself on disturbed land, land that was once farmed, overgrazed, mined, or used in a way that dilapidated the original natural integrity of the earth.

It has been proven by peer reviewed academic research that *Lantana camara* has a significant impact on water quality, the biodiversity of invertebrates and restricts indigenous pasture making it difficult for grazing or mixed feeding animals to access food. Additionally, the weed grows in thick, prickly clumps under trees, along water sources and fence lines, making near impenetrable thickets altering animal movements and ecology in certain areas.

The weed's range continues to extend and is edging ever closer to some of our most important protected areas. By South African law, any landowner that encounters *Lantana camara* on their properties are obliged to control and remove it, this however, is easier said than done. To get rid of the plant, both intense mechanical and chemical control methods are used. The plant must be chopped down to its base in the soil, all sticks, leaves, flowers, and berries should be burnt, and a strong chemical poison painted over the remaining stump for absorption into the root system to ensure there is no coming back. The roots should also be removed (and burnt) and the soil rehabilitated to make way for indigenous species to return.

As FGASA members we are all custodians of the natural world committed to preserving it for our own benefit and the benefit of future generations. *Lantana camara* is ticking ecological timebomb, and it is our responsibility to control and remove it for the conservation of our natural heritage. Huge thanks to Greg Kietzman for bringing this to our attention. We would love to get involved in removal efforts and assist in gathering volunteer groups to help more.



F.R.O.G. Supply Co. Your one Hop Safari Shop!

The thriving Facebook group, [Facebush Recruitment](#), renowned for its success in safari-hospitality recruitment, has likely crossed the radar of many. However, for those who haven't yet ventured into this corner of the internet, a visit to Facebush Recruitment is highly recommended. The creators behind this group have embarked on a new venture, expanding their reach to supply premium quality gear tailored to safari lodges and guides. This endeavor aims to elevate the guest experience by adding a durable and sophisticated touch of luxury to the quintessential African safari adventure.

Founded in 2022, [Facebush Rugged Outdoor Gear \(F.R.O.G.\)](#) is committed to equipping lodges and guides with top-notch, professional, and comfortable gear. Whether it's ensuring that sundowner drinks remain cool and refreshing with their canvas coolers, providing protective dry bags and ponchos shielding valuables during primitive trail experiences, offering spotlights for night drives, or furnishing essential travel gear, binoculars, and bush kitchen kits, F.R.O.G. has all your safari needs covered.

FGASA is always looking for ways to continuously support our valued members, we are currently collaborating with F.R.O.G. to bring you exclusive discounts on premium gear for guides. [Click here to sign up for the F.R.O.G. newsletter](#) and receive all the benefits straight to your inbox, and don't forget to explore the F.R.O.G. Supply Co. website, where you can peruse their online showroom.



[F.R.O.G. Supply Co Website](#)

FGASA Jobs and Products

FGASA is always looking out to help our members find their ideal career paths in tourist guiding, nature guiding, tourism and hospitality, have a look at some of the jobs currently available in the industry:



Mask Expeditions

Mask Expeditions is looking for their next adventure-loving field guide with a passion for travel! Mask Expeditions is an adventure travel company specializing in small group safaris. They offer a variety of exciting adventure tours – including walking, hiking, cycling and specialist game viewing safaris. Hit the button below to apply.

Apply here



Sunway Safaris

We are currently looking for young, dynamic individuals with strong personalities and the ability to work under the pressure of client demands. We will consider both experienced tour leaders and newly qualified guides...

Apply here



Cadenz Electric

Cadenz Electric stands as a beacon of innovation, fusing cutting-edge electric motorcycle technology with a steadfast commitment to wildlife preservation. For more information feel free to contact Jethson at Cadenz Electric on: jethson@cadenzelectric.co.za and check out their [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages!

Cadenz Electric



F.R.O.G. Supply Co.

The creators behind the hugely successful Facebush Recruitment group on Facebook have embarked on a new venture, expanding their reach to supply premium quality gear tailored to safari lodges and guides. Visit the F.R.O.G. Supply Co website for more and check them out on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

F.R.O.G. Supply Co.

FGASA Mentor Space



Trails Guide Mentored Hours

Jack Hutchinson, Professional Field Guide and Trails Guide Mentor is offering his time and knowledge to help all the aspiring Trails Guides out there! Join Jack to gain needed hours, encounters, and receive one-on-one mentorship:

- The mentored trails include:
- Accommodation
 - Food
 - Rifle and ammunition
 - Two mentored walks

Price: R1500.00 per person per night

WhatsApp: (+27) 72 145 7538
Instagram: [@bearded_trailsranger](#)

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