



**the detea**

the department of economic  
development, tourism and  
environmental affairs  
FREE STATE PROVINCE

## **OFFICIAL OPENING OF KOPPIES DAM NATURE RESERVE**

25 September 2012

A month long tourism programme, packed with exciting activities to showcase the beauty and the uniqueness of the Free State is coming to an end with the official opening of Koppies Dam Nature Reserve. This 4 800 hector reserve was established in the year 1976 and is situated 12 km east of the town of Koppies in Fezile Dabi District.

Koppies Dam Nature Reserve is popular during festive seasons for picnics and because of its other special features, people come to the reserve for activities like fishing, game watching and bird watching. In this reserve, animals like Buffalo, White Rhino, Gemsbok, Waterbuck and Springbuck to mention but few can be found.

Since the beginning of September, different districts within the province have been visited to explore and experience different tourist attractions. The journey began in Lejweleputswa District with the launch of tourism month and Phakisa Motor Extravaganza with the aim to market this facility as an international sporting facility.

Lejweleputswa, was followed by a visit to Thabo Mofutsanyane. This eastern part of the Free State, particularly Clarens and Golden Gate is known as the jewel of tourism. The visit included attraction points such as the wetlands at Memel Seekoei Nature Reserve, a visit to one of the highest lodges in the Drakensburg Mountains at Witsieshoek Hotel, the scenic view of the Sentinel Peak, which looked more like a little Switzerland with Drakensburg Mountains covered with snow.

The stopover at Dinosaur Park as the latest internationally recognised archeological discovery cradle of mankind. Still on the eastern part of the Free State, there is Basotho Cultural Village, Sterkfontein Nature Reserve for a game drive and finally Lionsrock Big Cats Sanctuary situated in north east of Bethlehem. The area is 1242 ha and is home to a rich variety of game species including 89 lions, 2 cheaters, 2 tigers, 2 caracals and 2 hyenas, 20 Springboks and 8 Ostriches.

The journey of tourism month continued to Mangaung Metro Municipality where guests visited the Observatory to watch stars and planets. Then it was the Gariep Dam, where 1000 steps were taken down the dam wall and a boat cruise which shows that even though the Free State does not have a sea, people can still enjoy water activities. From there it was Philipolis van der Post Museum with Labyrinth, which is believed to have healing powers and can reduce the person stress level if they pray before walking on it. The Oldest church and jail in Philipopolis were also visited.

This eye opening and exciting journey will end at Koppies Dam Nature Reserve on the 29th of September from 9h00 when the MEC for Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (DETEA), Mrs Mamikie Qabathe will be officially opening 10 new fully furnished wooden chalets. The work in Koppies Dam includes the new chalets, the following elements got upgraded: 2 staff houses, 1 entrance gate, electricity, erection of fence and ablution blocks on shoreline.

Guests will have the opportunity to race through the 20 km dam on powerful powerboat for exhilaration and fun.



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Coupled to the official opening is the familiarisation tour on 28 September. Different places of interest around Fezile Dabi District will be visited in an effort to make Free Staters realise that, what they need is right here and the media is invited.

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