



# GRIPOA

Goukou River Property Owners Association

## NEWSLETTER

November 2023



## THE ORIGIN OF GRIPOA

In the Stilbaai area of the Western Cape, the Goukou River estuary spans over 250 hectares and stretches 19 kilometers long. Over 70% of South Africa's approximately 300 functional estuaries close periodically. An estuary open permanently, such as the Goukou River estuary, supports a more diverse range of marine and estuarine species than one that is open temporarily. Therefore, the permanently open Goukou River estuary is of importance, because it represents a relatively rare estuary type in South Africa. Additionally, among South African estuaries, the Goukou River estuary is ranked 32nd in terms of conservation importance and ranked Highly Important by the recent National Biodiversity Assessment, 2018.

The environmental importance of the Goukou River estuary prompted the establishment of a group to support the preservation of the river and its surroundings. In Stilbaai, the Goukou River Property Owners Association (GRIPOA) is composed of a community of farmers and lifestyle owners. As their location along the Goukou River makes them uniquely situated, the members of GRIPOA are interested in conservation and want to preserve the quality of life they enjoy. The main purpose of GRIPOA is to work with relevant bodies and authorities to conserve and enhance the river and its aquatic life, as well as to protect and extend members' rights related to the river's use and conservation. Consequently, GRIPOA plays a vital role in managing the Goukou River estuary.



# GRIPOA'S IMPACT

GRIPOA continues to participate in the Goukou River Estuary Management, resulting in decisions taken by the team having positive impacts on both nature and property owners.

As part of its most recent collaboration, GRIPOA contributed to the Goukou River Estuary Estuarine Management Plan's 2023 – 2027 first draft, which included two proposals that were neither beneficial to the environment nor owners of properties along the river. In the draft, private land next to the river was proposed to be open to the public. As part of the proposal, all fences along the riverside of the property should have been removed, and five meters up from the river, the property should have been made accessible to the public. Following GRIPOA's continued input and concerns, the proposals were successfully opposed.

With respect to the proposals that were opposed, the 5-meter contour line is no longer an effective tool for determining the Coastal Management Line. In determining the Coastal Management Line, 50-year, 100-year, and even 200-year flood lines will be taken into consideration. In order to ensure this engagement occurs, site-by-site investigations will be conducted. Furthermore, the fencing will also be inspected in time and can be left up to a certain point, even to the low water mark, if the owner has justifiable reasons to do so. The fencing will therefore not be arbitrarily removed.

Through the establishment of the above positions, the Goukou River Estuary Management Plan 2023 - 2027, which will be published in the Government Gazette, emphasizes the protection and health of the estuary over public access.



**Goukou River Estuary,  
Still Bay, Western Cape**



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