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WESSA Friends Groups & Affiliates Caring for the Earth in your community

WESSA is one of South Africa's oldest membership-based, non-governmental organisations and for over 90 years has played a key role in the conservation of our country, helping to ensure sustainability for present and future generations through environmental action; education programmes; and human capacity development to empower individuals and communities to make sustainable choices. Friends Groups and Affiliate members make a valuable contribution to the work WESSA does in the areas of conservation and education as well as strengthening the environmental movement by networking and actively working in communities at a grass roots level.

About Friends Groups: The Friends Groups concept is a WESSA initiative which began in the Western Cape in the early 1980s. In 1985, the 'Friends of Nature Areas' project was established with the objective of involving the public in safeguarding natural resources and working with the owners or managing authorities towards this end. At first, the scheme focused only on nature reserves but later became a widely used model applied to any area that needed protection and support, including historical heritage sites.

Friends Groups affiliated to WESSA encourage collaborative citizen efforts in caring for the Earth. Friends are volunteers who band together to conserve, rehabilitate or prevent inappropriate developments in natural or semi-natural areas or places of special interest. These areas can be large formalised nature areas or small informal pockets of terrestrial and/or aquatic environments in various states of conservation worthiness.

WESSA has years of environmental experience and can help provide networking opportunities plus exposure through channels such as: newsletters; national publications; the WESSA membership web portal; Facebook pages and other social media channels. Affiliation allows an affiliated Friends Group or organisation to use WESSA's name and logo on signboards, websites and other materials such as letterheads and brochures. This can help raise the profile and credentials of the group, which assists with fundraising efforts.

Affiliation to WESSA of independent environmental groups or organisations: Independent, environment-based, non-profit organisations with the same or similar aims as those of Friends Groups may become affiliate members of WESSA, thus strengthening the conservation movement. Groups caring for monuments, sites of historical, archaeological or cultural importance, and other similar, community-based initiatives may also apply to become affiliate members.

The cost of affiliation is as follows:

Option 1: R 650.00 per annum (with quarterly print copy African Wildlife & Environment)

Option 2: R 380.00 per annum (with quarterly digital African Wildlife & Environment)

WESSA Friends Group and Affiliate members also qualify for:

- Use of the WESSA Friends Group or Affiliate member logo
- Newsletters and activity newsflashes.
- Members of affiliates can sign up as free WESSA supporters to receive newsletters and newsflashes about events and activities. They also qualify for a reduced WESSA group rate should they wish to become full WESSA Members.