

Name: Creation of thatched meeting hall, Hillside Dams Conservancy

Location: Hillside Dams, off Banff Road, Hillside, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.

Objectives: to build a small thatched meeting hall, closed on the windward side near the Lower Dam for use in cultural events and by social and cultural bodies and other bodies.

General Background

The Hillside Dams were once a popular recreational area operated by Bulawayo City Council (BCC). However it has fallen on hard times what with financial difficulties, a lack of vision and application, and several serious criminal incidents. This has resulted in the existing facilities being allowed to deteriorate while the area is now shunned by most local residents.

The entire area, approximately 86ha., has been leased from the BBC by Mungrisdale Marketing (Pvt) Ltd who has conceded the conservancy area to an independent, broad-based Trust, the Hillside Dams Conservation Trust. This non-profit Trust has been tasked with the restoration of existing facilities and developing new, appropriate projects in the area in line with the defined aims of the Trust which place an emphasis on conservation, education and recreational pursuits all within a safe, well-run recreational area aimed principally at the residents of Bulawayo.

The conservancy includes a large section of natural vegetation as well as two dams built amongst the rocky kopjes at the beginning of the Twentieth Century. There are also several gardened sections, including what was once an impressive aloe garden. Several archaeological and fossil sites in the area are of a national, if not international importance. Previously there was a trim track on the east side of the conservancy while several youth organizations once used this area for camping and educational purposes.

Project objectives

While we appreciate the serious financial situation in which we find ourselves in Zimbabwe today, we are looking at practical assistance from companies and individuals with various skills and interests – we are not seeking financial contributions. It must be emphasized that this appeal is being made on behalf of the general Bulawayo Community and not simply ourselves.

A detailed Site Management Plan has been drawn up (Burrett 2007). This document provides some suggestions as to the way forward and sets out the ultimate objectives towards which we operate. It is a long to medium term policy which will be tackled by the Trust as and when the finances and skills are available. The focus of this specific proposal forms part of the overall plan.



Proposed area for the Meeting Room

The purpose of this document is to appeal for assistance in creating a suitable meeting room at Hillside Dams Conservancy. Ideally this should be situated near the car park and tea room at the north end of the property as the necessary infrastructure is still more or less available – electricity, water and security.

What is envisaged is a single open structure – oval or rectangular 12x6m. The basic structure could consist of gum poles holding a thatched roof. It requires a simple concreted floor with

the eastern end closed to provide a wall for protection from the wind and function as a screen for any presentations. At the rear (also closed) it is suggested that there is a simple serving counter. Two plugs connections at either end will be required. Provision for canvas awnings to be rolled down at times should be made for the remaining open sides to be closed off when necessary.

We, the Hillside Dams Conservancy Trust are therefore requesting your help in this project. We seek someone to help us out with:

- 1. The planning and erection of this structure.**
- 2. This would require cement, bricks and other building materials.**
- 3. The provision of the necessary gum poles and thatching.**
- 4. Installation of basic electrical facilities both in the room and from the nearby Tea Room.**

Our estate manager will be available to discuss this matter further with the donor. He will also be able to assist with ideas as to what is envisaged and later overseeing the construction of the facility.

All assistance will be suitably acknowledged and donors/companies will be able to use this for purposes of advertising or addressing issues of corporate responsibility. The facility will be named in accordance with the donors specifications. Signage with company logos and/or dedication plaques inside the building would be most suitable.

If you are able to assist please contact the Estate Manager, Hillside Dams Conservancy, Mr. Norman Scott or Neil Rix 011-402851.