

**Name:** The restoration of the existing Trim Track at Hillside Dams Conservancy.

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

**Objectives:** to restore the old Trim Track at Hillside Dams Conservancy. Includes identifying the track and its facilities as well as restoring these or replacing where necessary.

#### **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**

In the light of the financial situation in Zimbabwe we are looking at practical assistance from companies and individuals with various skills and interests. It must be emphasized that the appeal is being made on behalf of the general Bulawayo Community, all of whom should be able to derive some benefit from the project - it is necessary that the outcomes are inclusive.



**Old sign to Trim Track near Moffat Avenue Entrance**

A detailed Site Management Plan has been drawn up (Burrett 2007). This document provides 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 proposal forms part of the overall plan.

The purpose of this document is to appeal for assistance in restoring the old Trim Track which was once a feature on the east bank between the Upper and Lower Hillside Dams. This formally consisted of a gravel running track which skirted around the kopjes with periodic exercise pints and facilities at points along the route. This points where formally marked with signs to

indicate the type of exercise at each point. At some of these there were actual facilities – usually bars or obstacles etc. At the start of the track there was also a route map and the necessary statement about users doing so at their own risk. It was not supervised and was a stand-alone facility once erected.

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



**One of the old metal facilities of the Trim Track**

- 1. advice on what we can do in terms of recreating this Trim Track – what is the best route (taking account that some of the track is still in use as paths), the nature of exercises that can be erected and revamped from what is there and suggestions as to alternative tracks for different users (age, gender and other users such as mountain cyclists, joggers, walkers)**
- 2. Recreating this old track or a revamped version. What nature of surface?**
- 3. Restoring the workout points in terms of facilities and relevant signage at these points.**
- 4. Erection of a sign indicating the track and its options near the start would be desirable. We believe that this should be at Moffat Avenue entrance to the Conservancy area. IF feasible a second sign should be erected at the carpark off Banff Road to encourage people to come from that direction and from the tearoom.**
- 5. Thoughts on how to bring in the mountain cyclists. Can they use the same track or must we create an alternative.**
- 6. Assistance with the creation of the alternative routes if seen as necessary.**
- 7. NOTE signage to the Trim Track elsewhere in the area is subject to a different donor proposal and is not necessary in this case.**

Our estate manager will be available to discuss with the donor what needs to be done and to assist with anything that is required both before and during the work. We will see to subsequent maintenance issues. We envisage advertising this option at the various schools and to hold periodic family oriented social activities at the track.

All assistance will be suitably acknowledged and companies will be able to use this for purposes of advertising or addressing issues of corporate responsibility. Signage with company logos at the start and on the intermediate points would be suitable.

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