

THE ECOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT.

An experiment in creating a network of National Parks

- ECOSYSTEMS covering all areas of the globe. It can be defined as interaction between the abiotic, biotic and climate processes. BIODIVERSITY of the biotic component is a measure of life on earth. Biodiversity is also a measure of ecosystem health.
- HUMAN development is based on RESOURCE use. Development took place through various stages of land use intensification. Ecosystem use is interwoven with CULTURE, each influencing each other. The ever increasing impact on biodiversity, ecosystems and culture is destabilizing these natural processes and reducing biodiversity.
- PROTECTED areas are vital for ecological sustainability and climate change resilience serving as nodes in our ECOLOGICAL infrastructure network. This natural infrastructure is largely free and so often unnoticed or UNAPRECIATED. The above gave rise to the idea of ECOSYSTEM SERVICES.
- ECOSYSTEMS SERVICES consists of the following: Provisioning, Regulating, Supporting, Cultural, and Preserving.
- National parks focus on the conservation of large natural ecosystems and BIODIVERSITY for the BENEFIT of PEOPLE and other forms of life.
- As a form of LAND USE, parks must be embedded in their regional ECOLOGICAL and CULTURAL environment. SADC's national park system needs to be expanded to fully embrace the diversity of the country's ecological and cultural heritage.