

Barberton-Makhonjwa Mountains World Heritage Site (BMM WHS) project summary

- Project initiated locally in May 2006.
- BMML WHS Tentatively listed by UNESCO in June 2008.
- Full-time planning started on 18 mth project in April 2009 but stopped at year end when funds ran out.
- Then behind-the-scenes work by Barberton Chamber of Business & BATOBIC got political & agency support to re-fund the project. Mean time the Geotrail and related projects were completed by Batobic.
- WHS project re-started at beginning of 2016 with a deadline to produce (draft) Nomination Dossier by Sept 2016 (to fit UNESCO schedule)
- Final draft of Nomination Dossier due for submission to UNESCO on February 1st, 2017.
- Main change from 2009: Core area of BMM WHS defined only by geological attributes and values; though important, biodiversity in the BMM WHS does not contribute to outstanding universal values (OUVs) of the site.
- For the purpose of defining the BMM WHS core area, 280 of 350 selected geosites were considered eligible for WHS inclusion. All these have been 'graded for value' by international referee team of geology academics.
- **Result:** only about 30% of high priority and priority geosites occur within the Tentative Listed WHS – within formal Protected Areas (PA)
- Therefore non-PA geosites clusters must be included for the WHS to be fully representative of all BMM geodiversity as defined in the area's Outstanding Universal Values
- This led to an application for the declaration of four non-PA geosite clusters as SAHRA National Heritage Sites. The clusters are referred to as SAHRA localities and in the case of the BMM WHS, they are-Tjakastad, Theespruit, Mooiplaas and the Geotrail.



SAHRA representative, Mrs Heidi Weldon with wildlife ecologist Mr Tony Ferrar and Batobic's programme manager Mr Rekwele Mmatli on October 17th, 2016 during a site visit to the Geotrail, one of the BMML WHS's four SAHRA localities which are to be declared as National Heritage Sites.