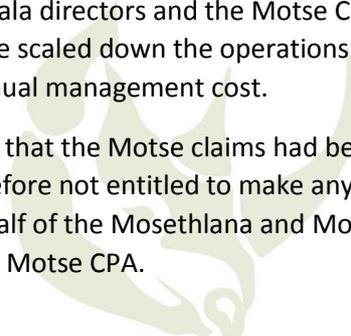


We first became aware of land claims at Lapalala in January 2005, when we were informed that the Motse Community had claimed 13,820 ha (35%) of Lapalala Wilderness. This was viewed by us as an opportunity and we engaged with the community and the Land Claims Commission in an attempt to find a positive solution. Over a period of four years after Lapalala was gazetted on behalf of the Motse CPA (Community Property Association) and much time and money was spent trying to expedite the transfer of land into the community's CPA along with various initiatives to capacitate the claimants and to reach consensus on how to jointly manage the land in accordance with sound ecological principles. Over this period of time, much trust and goodwill developed between the parties, which resulted in a full development plan being submitted to the RLCC (Regional Land Claims Commission). An offer was duly made by the RLCC which was signed and accepted by ourselves, but at a crucial meeting in Pretoria in mid-2009 with the Motse Community and the Chief Land Claims Commissioner at the time, Mr Blessing Mpela, he refused to countersign the offer.

Although frustrated by this disappointment, the claimants and ourselves continued to search for a solution until later in 2009 we were informed that there was no budget for settlement, and the joint partnership deal between the Lapalala directors and the Motse Community would not be supported by the government. At this point we scaled down the operations at Lapalala and reduced staff in order to contain the substantial annual management cost.

Shortly after this we were informed that the Motse claims had been de-gazetted as the Motse CPA was not a legal entity and was therefore not entitled to make any claims. However the land claims were later verified as claims on behalf of the Mosethlana and Mokitlane clans, two of the families that had previously belonged to the Motse CPA.



LAPALALA
WILDERNESS