

The Link: Environmental Issues and Heritage De Rust and the Environment

De Rust holds a “special place” for Environmental Diversity in the Klein Karoo. In order to show the link between the Environment and Heritage in De Rust the following are a number of the key issues:

The De Rust Koppie

There may be thousands of koppies in the Klein Karoo, but the De Rust Koppie is one of the most exceptional in this region – particularly if you have a keen interest in plant life.

Ancient History of the Koppie

*The De Rust Koppie forms part of the foothills of the Swartberg mountain range and whilst hiking along the koppie you will see round pebbles scattered all over. These pebbles along with a mixture of clay and sandy soil is better known as “**Enon Conglomerate**” which has its own ancient story to tell of a fast flowing river that deposited this material in a lake more than 200 million years ago. **This is indeed an “Ancient Hillock.”***

The Habitat of the Koppie is unique. One can spend a whole day strolling along the Koppie and find up to 300 plant species. ***Many of these plants are unique to the Koppie and are found nowhere else on earth.***

Animal Life

There was a time when the Koppie was rich in animal species like tortoises and small game such as steenbuck, duiker and hare. Unfortunately, most of these have been poached by human intruders.

The View

Looking at the spectacular views from the Koppie the Swartberg mountain range dominates the North view with the Meiringspoort Gorge providing access from the Klein Karoo to the Great Karoo via the N9 National Road leading to Prince Albert and Beaufort West. In addition, the Kamanassie Mountains are in the South with magnificent views on all sides.

Conserving Our Heritage

If we do not conserve our “Heritage” and protect a “special environment” such as the Koppie its unique plants will also be lost, just like the animal life. Litter and alien plants and a special feature of De Rust will be lost to both residents and visitors.

Some Conclusions

Nature is a “Key Component of Heritage” and cannot be separated by the other Heritage Issues either in De Rust or elsewhere. In order to protect this special aspect of both De Rust and its immediate environs it is critical to recognize some of the reasons why the Village is becoming increasingly popular as a tourist destination as well as “new residents.”

***Credits: Brochure “Guide to De Rust Koppie” - Sponsored by the Oudtshoorn Municipality:
Background information by Jan Vlok and MarinaEilers***