



Tourism Magazine

EXPLORE

SEKHUKHUNE DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

External Newsletter | Quarter 4 | May 2025



AFRICA TRAVEL INDABA EDITION

Executive Mayor
CLLR. MINAH BAHULA



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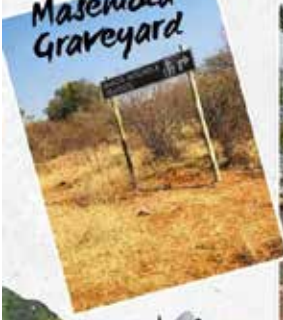
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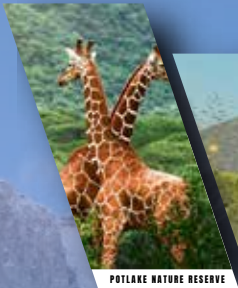
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Sekhukhune was King of the Marota people (known as Bapedi) who originated from the Bakgatla of the Western Transvaal



The De Hoop Dam is a gravity dam on the Steelpoort River, near Burgersfort, Limpopo



Manche Masemola, a teenage convert to the Anglican Church in Ga-Marishane, came to prominence after her death in 1928



A statue of Chief Nyabela (1883) stands guard at the Mapoch Caves near Roosenekal; erected on behalf of the Ndebele Nation as a token of peace, goodwill and unity



Mission and Vision

Vision

A leader in integrated economic development and sustainable service delivery

Mission

Providing a democratic and accountable government;

Promoting inclusive and egalitarian economic transformation;

Promoting a safe and healthy environment

Fostering community involvement and stakeholder engagements

Strengthening institutional capacity

Promotion of social cohesion

About the District

- Sekhukhune district Municipality (SDM) was established in December 2000 and is situated within the south east of Limpopo province, about 300kms north of Johannesburg.
- It is bordered by Gauteng province to the south, Mpumalanga province to the east as well as Waterberg towards the West. Sekhukhune is relatively accessible with the use of its relatively extensive road network system.
- It is characterised by scattered pattern of human settlement and contains a large number of rural villages (roughly 740) with both limited economic infrastructure opportunities and services of a reasonable standard.
- Overall, it covers approximately 13 264 KM2 with only 5% of the district's population estimated to live in urban areas.
- Sekhukhune District municipality contains four local municipalities (LM) namely; Fetakgomo Tubatse, Elias Motsoaledi, Makhuduthamaga and Ephraim Mogale. There are 121 wards in the district namely: Makhuduthamaga (31); Fetakgomo Tubatse (44); Elias Motsoaledi (30) and Ephraim Mogale (16).

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EDITORIAL



A LICENSE TO EXPLORE OUR NATURALLY PROGRESSIVE DESTINATION

By Lemson Moropjane, Editor-In-Chief, Explore Sekhukhune Magazine

Welcome to the debut edition of *Explore Sekhukhune*, a travel and destination promotion magazine that invites you to discover the hidden gems of one of South Africa's most exciting, diverse, and culturally rich regions - Sekhukhune District. This magazine is not just a publication; it's your gateway to experiencing the heart and soul of our community, heritage, and adventure-filled landscapes. We are proud to present *Explore Sekhukhune* as the definitive guide to our district, offering insights into the unique experiences that await you here in Africa's Friendship Kingdom.

Sekhukhune District is a region steeped in history, natural beauty, and untapped potential.

From the awe-inspiring wildlife and rugged mountains to the rich cultural heritage that pulses through our communities, Sekhukhune offers a truly authentic African adventure. With this magazine, we aim to provide not only a window into the experiences that make Sekhukhune exceptional but also an invitation to explore and discover the wonders of this dynamic district.

The *Explore Sekhukhune* project was born out of a vision shared by our local tourism stakeholders during preparatory meetings for the Africa Tourism Indaba. As discussions unfolded, the consensus was clear: we needed a platform that would promote our district as a must-visit destination, not only for domestic travellers but also for international tourists seeking an

authentic African experience. After much brainstorming and testing of potential names, *Explore Sekhukhune* emerged as the perfect fit. It's action-oriented, inviting, and speaks directly to our mission: to inspire exploration and open the doors to an unforgettable adventure in Sekhukhune District.

Our magazine is more than just a guide—it's a celebration of the people who make tourism in Sekhukhune a vibrant and thriving industry. The Sekhukhune Tourism Association is at the heart of this effort, and it's through their tireless work that we are able to bring the safari dreams of travellers to life. These are the men and women who inspire new ideas, fuel future adventures, and ensure that every visitor experiences the best that Sekhukhune has to offer.

Tour operators also play a crucial role in this journey. As featured in our pages, they offer invaluable insights, practical advice, and tailor-made packages designed to help you create the perfect itinerary. Whether you're seeking a thrilling safari, a cultural exploration, or a peaceful retreat into nature, our tour operators are the experts who will ensure that your time in Sekhukhune is nothing short of extraordinary.

Sekhukhune District is a village-based municipality where the majority of tourism attractions are still in their early stages of development. However, these attractions are carefully aligned with our district's heritage tourism positioning, ensuring that visitors can experience the deep cultural roots and rich history of the land. This magazine serves as the perfect vehicle to showcase these products and services, drawing attention to the innovative and forward-thinking tourism offerings we are developing.

In addition, *Explore Sekhukhune* is strategically aligned with the upcoming Africa Travel Indaba, a key tourism marketing event that will see our district take centre stage. The recent success of the Gauta BMX trio, who captured the imagination of the nation with their epic ride from Burgersfort to Cape Town, has placed Sekhukhune District firmly in the global spotlight. Their journey has brought national recognition to our district and has shown the world what

Sekhukhune stands for: resilience, community spirit, and a relentless drive to succeed.

We will continue to use such high-profile moments to elevate Sekhukhune as a top-tier tourism destination, and *Explore Sekhukhune* will be at the forefront of this effort, acting as both a marketing tool and a platform for tourism-related businesses. Our goal is simple: to increase tourist volumes, encourage longer stays, diversify the geographic spread of visitors, and improve seasonality patterns to make Sekhukhune a year-round destination.

The beauty of *Explore Sekhukhune* lies in its inclusivity. This magazine is a space for everyone involved in tourism to come together and share their stories. From routes and accommodations to hospitality facilities and cultural experiences, we have created a platform where every voice is heard, and every tourism business is given the opportunity to shine. Tourism is everyone's business, and as a municipality, Sekhukhune District is committed to making sure that everyone has a seat at the table.

As we look ahead, *Explore Sekhukhune* will continue to evolve, growing into a quarterly publication that offers expert insights, trusted travel advice, and the latest news from the tourism industry. Our editorial process will be led by the Sekhukhune District Communications Team, ensuring that every edition is packed with valuable content for both industry professionals and travellers alike.

I invite you to explore our world through this magazine, whether via our PDF and web-based editions or the hardcopy version. With each turn of the page, you will find inspiration, practical information, and an invitation to explore Sekhukhune's natural wonders, cultural treasures, and adventurous spirit.

Let us explore Sekhukhune together. Join us on this journey of discovery, as we share the beauty, warmth, and welcoming spirit of Africa's Friendship Kingdom with the world.

Lemson Moropjane

Editor-in-Chief (Head of Communications)

Explore Sekhukhune Magazine

WELCOME

TO SEKHUKHUNELAND

By Cllr Minah Bahula, Executive Mayor, Sekhukhune District Municipality



We welcome you to experience the adventure, the culture, and the warmth of Sekhukhuneland, Africa's Friendship Kingdom.

Cllr Minah Bahula

Executive Mayor
Sekhukhune District Municipality

It is with great pleasure and pride that I welcome you to Sekhukhuneland, a vibrant and exceptional region named after the great Warrior King Sekhukhune, owing to the unbroken lineage of powerful and courageous leaders who have shaped our history and culture. As we open the pages of this debut edition of *Explore Sekhukhune*, we invite you to discover the essence of a land where heritage, adventure, and natural beauty meet in perfect harmony.

Sekhukhuneland is not just a destination; it is a living story. A story written in the blood, sweat, and spirit of our ancestors who fought valiantly to preserve our way of life. It is the Kingdom of Friendship, where visitors are welcomed with open arms and hearts. As you journey through our district, you will not only explore breathtaking landscapes but also immerse yourself in a rich tapestry of culture, history, and tradition. Here, every corner of our land is a treasure waiting to be discovered, whether through the enchanting allure of our game reserves, the serenity of our majestic mountains, or the charm of our bustling communities.

This magazine, *Explore Sekhukhune*, is more than just a guide to our beautiful District; it is a celebration of the people who make tourism in Sekhukhune thrive. It is a tribute to the men and women of the Sekhukhune Tourism Association, whose unwavering dedication brings the safari dreams of travellers from around the world to life. Their commitment fuels the spirit of adventure, ensuring that every journey through Sekhukhune is nothing short of extraordinary.

We are proud to feature tour operators who play a crucial role in crafting unforgettable experiences for visitors. These experts offer invaluable insights and practical advice,

helping you design the perfect itinerary that allows you to fully experience our district's geo-diversity. Whether you seek thrilling safaris, cultural encounters, or scenic explorations, our tour operators are your trusted partners in creating adventures that will last a lifetime.

In the pages of this magazine, you will find expert advice, insider tips, and stories from the heart of Sekhukhuneland. As we aim to grow *Explore Sekhukhune* into a quarterly publication, we will continue to offer valuable information from trusted specialists in the tourism industry. We will ensure that every edition serves as an indispensable companion for travellers and industry professionals alike, promoting the development and growth of Sekhukhune as a top-tier tourism destination.

Tourism is not just about visiting new places; it is about creating lasting memories, building bridges between cultures, and contributing to the development of our communities. Sekhukhuneland is committed to using tourism as a tool for growth and poverty alleviation. We believe that as we showcase the beauty and potential of our land, we also uplift our people and build a brighter future for all.

Let us remember that tourism is everyone's business, and together, we will work to make Sekhukhune the top destination in Limpopo. It is through the power of tourism that we will reduce poverty, increase opportunities, and create a legacy that future generations will cherish.

Thank you for choosing to explore Sekhukhuneland. We are confident that your journey here will be filled with discovery, excitement, and connection. Let Sekhukhune become not just a place on the map but a destination in your heart.

MUNICIPAL

MANAGER'S OVERVIEW:

Mr Meshack Kgwale



The Sekhukhune District Municipality have a full understanding of tourism development as key pillar and cornerstone sector to enhance economic development. In the financial year 2024/25, the municipality identified the need to review the existing Local Economic Development Strategy with an intention to produce a plan that is credible, implementable and carries meaningful impact to our local economy through catalytic projects. The reviewed LED strategy, that was approved by Municipal Council in October 2024, reduces some struggles to package and attract strategic investments to implement catalytic projects that have potential to reduce triple challenges and to empower local entrepreneurs. The strategy reflects key challenges and generates views that can produce key outcome-based interventions.

Chapter 5 of this strategic document covers tourism development which its objective seeks to enhance the development of the sector through the value addition and promotion of local resources and activities.

The tourism development, as a strategic intervention number 5, have three key pillars that guide tourism strategy in the district.

- Infrastructure development to enhance tourism destination in the various tourism attractions and exposes the quality and value of offerings.
- Enforce marketing, promotion, and advertising of district tourism development.
- Address barriers to seamless travel and connectivity to tourism asset base.

The municipality is taking advantage of the major tourism areas such as the Kruger National Park and many other key attractions in Mpumalanga and the nearest districts, which are essential for tourism growth as corridors of travel with our district. Hence, the LED strategy identified six tourism clusters that resonate with the building blocks for tourism development. They include the Family & Recreation cluster, Business & Events cluster, Sport & Wildlife cluster, Cultural & Heritage cluster, Safari and Hunting cluster, and the Special Interest cluster.

We can therefore do more to attract both the domestic and international travellers by emphasising these clusters through the broader biodiversity, cultural diversity, scenic beauty, and range of tourism products, and making it easier for tourists to travel through the provision of good tourism routes and road connectivity. The areas of interest identified to be visited include Flag Boshielo & De Hoop Dams, Schuinsdraai Nature Reserve, Mantrombi, Potlake Nature Reserve, and the Maleoskop Resort and Conservancy. Other key tourism products that have been discovered

and celebrated entail the GautaBMX Trio, Ndlovu Youth Centre, Setsong Africa Tea estate, Sekhukhune United FC, and many other heritage centres like Mampuru II statue, Tjate, Fort Weber, Manche Masemola grave site, Tisane, Echo cave, Shoe cave, Mapoch heritage, etc.

The Fetakgomo Tubatse SEZ (FTSEZs) is also key tourism growth point specifically for the District and the Province. The development of Fetakgomo Tubatse SEZ plays a role in strengthening external linkages to and from the district, and in making communities more mobile. In addition, the growth point area is associated with mining activities along route R37 (Dilokong Corridor) and the Upgrading of Informal Settlements Programme (UISP) should be utilised in this regard which would drive economic growth. The mining belt along the Dilokong Corridor (R37) between Lebowakgomo and Burgersfort would enable downstream beneficiation of minerals and would drive industrial activity in the area.

Jane Furse area is another key growth point as the envisaged institutional headquarters for Sekhukhune District Municipality. In this regard, all district government functions will be consolidated within the Jane Furse Node. The business area in Jane Furse holds the bulk to economic activity within the Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality. The identification of investment-ready land will be essential for the development and construction of municipal offices and sector departments. The decision to locate the District Municipality in Jane Furse will provide substantial growth impetus for the area and the progress is at advance stage.

Ephraim Mogale along route N11 and Fetakgomo Tubatse along R37 (Dilokong Corridor) are identified as Freight Hubs. The priority is the N11 corridor which traverses the western parts of the district linking two District Growth Points: Marble Hall and Groblersdal. In addition, this has to be prioritised in order to strengthen the SDM's external linkages northwards towards Mokopane, Lephalale and Botswana; and southwards towards Middelburg and Msukaligwa, where after it links up with routes N17 to Eswatini (formerly known as Swaziland) and N3 towards Durban (eThekweni). Key activities along Dilokong Corridor and

Phalaborwa Corridor are key towards the development of the district. The east-west the route effectively extends the Moloto Corridor from City of Tshwane to Kwaggafontein and then through Groblersdal and Jane Furse right up to Tubatse/ Burgersfort. Activities such as mining, agriculture, and tourism need to be linked which will potentially open the economy to new opportunities.

It is therefore, against this background that the municipality is committed to enhance tourism development through the following value-added projects:

- Development of heritage sites.
- Link all heritage and cultural establishments with maps and coordinates.
- Development of outdoor activities.
- Establish a Mega-Conservation Cluster
- Development of Game Drives & Game Viewing routes.
- Development of hunting routes.
- Develop De Hoop Dam site with activities such as camping, waterborne, etc.
- Establish family recreation such as picnic areas, resort facilities and sporting activities.
- Establish tourism information centre across the district.
- Facilitate the provision of signages.

These projects will have significant impact on our local communities and economies with additional benefits of job creation, cultural preservation, infrastructure development increase in tax revenue, community development. Therefore, we appeal to various key stakeholders such as organised businesses, tourists, government agencies. We appeal and lobby tourism operators, investors to commonly understand the district's needs and concerns. Building strong and effective partnerships and collaboration will produce successful and sustainable tourism development in the Sekhukhune District Municipality.

Meshack Kgwale

Municipal Executive Manager
Sekhukhune District Municipality

GAUTA BMX

– AUDACIOUS RIDE FROM SEKHUKHUNE TO CAPE TOWN



How three young dreamers from Limpopo turned a wild idea into South Africa's most inspiring cycling story

When three boys from the rural heartland of Sekhukhune saddled up on their humble BMX bikes and pedaled out of Riba Cross in Burgersfort on April 2, 2025, no one could have predicted what was about to unfold. Fifteen days, 1,700 kilometers, and millions of online views later, *Gauta BMX* became not just a story - it became a movement.

From TikTok to Twitter, from WhatsApp statuses to national primetime news, the trio's journey gripped the hearts of a nation and inspired an outpouring of support that turned them into instant folk heroes. This wasn't just a bike ride. This was *Sekhukhune's golden moment*.

Born to Ride – The Boys Behind the Pedals

Karabo Mokoo (21), Gauta Mahlakwane (22), and Maxwell Ndou, all hailing from the valleys and villages of Fetakgomo Tubatse Local Municipality, were driven by more than just the thrill of the ride. Their mission was bold: to inspire the youth

of their communities, raise awareness for drug-free living, and establish a cycling club that could one day produce Olympic talent.

The idea was hatched during a trial ride on New Year's Eve 2024, when the trio cycled from Leboweng to Mbombela. "That's when Cape Town became the dream," Karabo recalls. "It was crazy. But we believed."

From Burgersfort to the Bay – The Ride of a Lifetime

Covering up to 150 km per day, often with no water, no backup vehicle, and no confirmed accommodation, the boys' journey echoed the spirit of old-school adventure riding. But soon, the public caught wind.

Social media turned their story viral. South Africans, moved by their grit and audacity, opened their hearts—and wallets. Sponsorships rolled in. Huawei South Africa sent gear. Red Bull stocked them with energy. Jacaranda FM put their story on the airwaves.

Along the way, they were greeted by supporters, community leaders, and even mayors. MEC for Sport, Arts, and Culture Jerry Maseko called them "true



ambassadors of hope and resilience," urging the nation to back them as they pedaled toward the Mother City

A Movement is Born – The Legacy of Gauta BMX

Much like the biblical Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, these three refused to let obstacles consume them. They rode with faith, and that faith has sparked a revolution in Sekhukhune.

Sekhukhune District Executive Mayor Cllr Minah Bahula has announced the **Executive Mayor's Cycling Indaba**—an ambitious new initiative to institutionalize cycling across the district. The goal? To launch cycling clubs in every village and position Sekhukhune as *South Africa's emerging Bike Safari destination*.

There's even talk of partnering with Roads Agency Limpopo to install a landmark billboard on R37 that reads: **"Welcome to Burgersfort – Home of Gauta BMX: From Riba Cross to Cape Town"** The unveiling? Set for May 2, 2025.

More Than a Ride – A Symbol of Rural Renaissance

Their ride wasn't just about kilometers—it was about knocking down the walls of limitation. "We didn't even have bottled water on Day 1," Gauta reflects. "But by the end, we were welcomed like legends."

What they've ignited is bigger than sport. It's about *reimagining rural dreams*. Their success has emboldened communities, inspired a youth movement, and changed perceptions

about what's possible when you dare to dream from the dusty roads of Limpopo.

Ride On, Dream Big

Gauta BMX is a triumph of human spirit over circumstance, a celebration of youth resilience, and a bold reminder that greatness can rise from anywhere. From Riba Cross to Cape Town, these three young men didn't just ride for themselves - they rode for a generation.

And now, come to Sekhukhune where the entire district rides with them on their wave of success.



THE OLDEST HOME OF HUMANITY



Sekhukhune District is not just a place of natural beauty; it is one of the oldest homes of humanity, rich with archaeological treasures that span millennia. The District is home to a wealth of sites, including the renowned Bushmen Rock Shelter, Echo Caves, Hlako Heritage Site in Ga Tisana, and many other archaeological locations that have witnessed the rise of modern humanity. It is a land that whispers the stories of our distant ancestors, offering an unparalleled experience for archaeologists and curious travellers alike.

One of the most captivating sites in Sekhukhune is the Bushmen Rock Shelter, located just off the Platinum Stream Tourism Route (R36, R37, and R555) in the charming town of Ohrigstad. This shelter is a living testament to the region's significance in the story of humanity. Situated near Echo Caves, it holds the distinction of being over 120,000 years old, preserving evidence of some of the earliest human existence on the African continent.

The journey to the Bushmen Rock Shelter, just a short drive from the R36 road that links Sekhukhune to the famed Kruger National Park,

offers more than just a scenic view. It is a literal gateway to the past, providing archaeologists with crucial insights into the lives of ancient hunter-gatherer societies. The shelter, perched atop the majestic escarpment, spans over 8 meters of archaeological deposits, each layer revealing the mysteries of humanity's development over time.

Inside the shelter, visitors can explore an array of stone tools, organic material, and the awe-inspiring rock art that adorns the walls—art that vividly depicts the daily lives, hunting scenes, and wildlife of the ancient Bushmen. These paintings serve as one of the earliest known forms of symbolic communication, providing a glimpse into the deep connection between humans and their environment.

Since 2014, joint archaeological teams from France and South Africa have been meticulously excavating the site, offering fascinating revelations about the behaviors and lifeways of early modern humans. The preserved organic materials—bones, plant remains, and even tools—are crucial in helping scientists reconstruct the diets, social structures, and environmental conditions faced by our ancient ancestors.

The work done at the Bushmen Rock Shelter is not just academic; it is an exploration of identity. For communities such as the ZF Mgcawu District in the Northern Cape, a visit to the shelter became a transformative experience, as they connected with their heritage under the guidance of leaders like the late Executive Mayor JJJ Olyn and Khomani San leader Oom Petrus Vaalbooi. It's a journey that allows today's youth to walk in the footsteps of their ancestors, reconnecting with their ancient roots.

Adjacent to the Bushmen Rock Shelter, the town of Ohrigstad adds another layer of history to the region. Established in 1845 by the Voortrekker leader Hendrik Potgieter during the Great Trek, Ohrigstad carries both colonial and indigenous significance. The town is not only a historical marker but also a reminder of the intersection of different cultures, where indigenous communities such as the Bapedi and San lived long before the arrival of colonial settlers.

Though Ohrigstad's colonial past includes the Battle of Phiring (1852) and the establishment of a pivotal Voortrekker settlement, it also holds indigenous stories of resilience, spirituality, and survival, including those of the Bapedi people and their rich heritage. The town itself is a tribute to cultural exchange, with stories of perseverance stretching back to pre-colonial times. Ohrigstad's 180th anniversary offers the perfect occasion to reflect on the deep history and interconnectedness of the region's people.

The archaeological landscape of Sekhukhune is further enriched by the heritage of its villages, such as Phiring, home to the Bapedi Ba-Dinkwanyane people. Their rich agricultural prowess, spiritual traditions, and resilience in the face of adversity serve as a living legacy that continues to shape the region's identity.

Phiring stands as an embodiment of the enduring spirit of its people. Despite historical

persecution, including forced relocation under King Sekhukhune I's rule, the community of Phiring has thrived, cultivating both its agricultural wealth and cultural richness. It is a testament to the Marota people's resilience, who, under the leadership of figures such as Kgoši Johannes Dinkwanyane, overcame great hardship to forge their path and preserve their traditions.

Today, the community of Phiring remains a model of agricultural success, demonstrating the ability to balance commercial and subsistence farming while maintaining a deep connection to its cultural roots. As custodians of their heritage, the people of Phiring continue to inspire neighboring communities with their commitment to sustainable farming practices and cultural preservation.

For those with a curiosity for history, archaeology, and culture, Sekhukhune District offers a truly unique destination. From the ancient walls of the Bushmen Rock Shelter to the resilient communities of Ohrigstad and Phiring, the region invites travellers to explore the very heart of human history. Whether you are an archaeologist eager to uncover the past or a traveller in search of rich cultural experiences, Sekhukhune presents a journey of discovery.

As you walk through the paths of our distant ancestors, you are not just exploring the past; you are uncovering the foundations of humanity itself. Come to Sekhukhune District and witness the oldest home of humanity—where every stone, every rock, and every trail tells the story of who we are, where we came from, and where we are going.



ERHOLWENI CAVE: SHELTERING DIVERSE CULTURES

Exploring the Historical melting pot that shaped Sekhukhuneland

Burrowed in the picturesque Roossenekal, Elias Motsoaledi Local Municipality, Sekhukhune District, eRholweni Cave, famously known as Mapochs Caves, is a remarkable cultural and historical landmark that continues to captivate visitors. This ancient site, with its deeply ingrained connection to the region's diverse cultures, offers an inspiring narrative, rooted in resilience, solidarity, and the unyielding spirit of the people who once sought refuge within its protective walls.

The Battle of Mapochs Valley and Its Historical Significance

The Mapochs Caves are not merely geological formations but a living and fascinating evidence to the tumultuous history of the region. These caves became a sanctuary during the 1883 Mapochs Valley Battle, where AmaNdzundza-Ndebele, under King Nyabela, alongside their allies, including the Mokwana and Mahlangu clans, provided refuge to Kgoši Mampuru II. The caves stand resilient as a symbol of unity, sheltering those who sought to protect their heritage against overwhelming external forces.

The caves themselves are well-preserved, maintaining the original conditions from the 1883 battle, offering a rare window into the past. Visitors can explore these majestic rock formations, reliving the story of how the indigenous groups came together to defend their freedom and preserve their cultural heritage.

A Cultural Gathering Place: The King Nyabela Commemoration

A cornerstone of cultural significance in Roossenekal, eRholweni Cave is also the site for the annual King Nyabela Commemoration, a poignant event held every December 19th since 1979. This commemoration honors the legacy of Ingwenyama Nyabela, the Ndebele king

who showed remarkable solidarity by sheltering Kgoši Mampuru II. The event has become the oldest continuously celebrated cultural event in both Sekhukhune District and Limpopo Province, bringing together locals, visitors, and descendants to pay tribute to the strength and unity of their ancestors.

For over four decades, the King Nyabela Commemoration has not only celebrated the courage and cultural heritage of the AmaNdzundza-Ndebele and Bapedi but also provided an annual moment of reflection, unity, and pride for the entire community. The commemoration plays an essential role in preserving and promoting local heritage, attracting those interested in understanding the complex and diverse cultures that have shaped Roossenekal.

Past and Present: A Symbol of Heritage and Unity

Roossenekal itself is a town that tells a multifaceted story — one that brings together the histories of the AmaNdzundza-Ndebele, Bapedi, and Voortrekkers. With its rich cultural past and diverse influences, the town has become a symbol of both conflict and cooperation. At the forefront of efforts to preserve and share this heritage is Pastor Marcus F. Basson, a passionate local heritage custodian who has worked tirelessly to document the history of the region. Pastor Basson's work, which includes collecting antique artifacts from the region's past, has led to the vision of creating a community-based museum in Roossenekal to house and display these invaluable treasures.

Among Pastor Basson's prized artifacts is an 1896 British military bayonet, which carries with it a poignant inscription from its original owner: *"To my son, while we are fighting the British (Kakies) with our blood and sweat to build a nation, may*

this be your light and protection." This artifact and others, including a 1906 bullet belt and a spear, provide a tangible connection to Roossenekal's layered history, from its military battles to its cultural milestones.

These relics highlight the complex history of Roossenekal, which has been shaped by indigenous groups, the Voortrekkers, and colonial powers alike. Roossenekal's importance as a crossroads of diverse histories adds a rich layer to the heritage tourism experience, offering visitors a chance to explore how these narratives have intertwined over centuries.

A Town of Promise and Potential

The preservation of its cultural heritage offers a pathway toward transformation. With a population of approximately 32,000, Roossenekal is primed for growth through tourism, with cultural and historical landmarks like eRholweni Cave standing as beacons of hope for the future.

The town's proximity to the newly completed De Hoop Dam further enhances its potential as a tourist destination, offering recreational activities like hiking, fishing, and camping, which complement the cultural tourism centered around the Mapochs Caves. With its annual Yellow Arum Lily Festival and the historical significance of Mapochs Caves, Roossenekal has the foundation for a thriving tourism-driven economy.

In the heart of Roossenekal, eRholweni Cave stands as a reminder of Africa's strength, resilience, and solidarity. Whether as a commemoration site, a historical landmark, or a future cultural hub, the cave and its surrounding areas invite all who visit to engage with the past, celebrate the present, and look forward to a prosperous future — rooted in the strength of Africa's diverse cultures.

Visit Roossenekal, and journey through the pages of African history, where nature and culture intertwine at the Mapochs Caves.



EMBRACING BIODIVERSITY AND NATURAL HERITAGE

Celebrating the Yellow Arum Lily Festival in Sekhukhune

In Sekhukhune District's diverse landscapes sprouts a vibrant and ecological marvel that deserves its moment in the global spotlight — the Yellow Arum Lily. With its striking golden blooms gracing the rocky terrains of Roosenekal and the undulating slopes of Leolo Mountain, the Yellow Arum Lily has become both a symbol of Sekhukhune's unique biodiversity and a beacon of hope for its communities.

Every November, these precious blooms are celebrated in a festival that honors the deep-rooted connection between nature and culture, as the Yellow Arum Lily Festival unfolds in Roosenekal, transforming the district into a natural haven and cultural showcase. With its unmistakable yellow petals, this endemic flower is as much a part of Sekhukhune's legacy as the hills and rivers that shape its landscape.

A Global Treasure with Local Roots

In November 2024, the Yellow Arum Lily Festival took center stage as one of Limpopo's most anticipated events, drawing visitors, community members, and ecotourism enthusiasts to witness the blooming beauty of the *Zantedeschia Petlandi* and *Zantedeschia Jucunda* — the two distinctive species of yellow arum lilies native to Sekhukhune. These lilies are not just botanical wonders; they represent the unique biodiversity that defines the natural heritage of Sekhukhune, making the region the only home of these endemic species in the world.

Sekhukhune has all the bragging rights when it comes to this particular biodiversity, as it stands as the sole region globally where these lilies naturally thrive. As the birthplace of the Yellow Arum Lily, Sekhukhune's bragging rights are

now officially recognized on the international stage, with the festival positioning this district as an ecotourism destination in its own right.

A Celebration of Cultural and Ecological Legacy

The 2024 Yellow Arum Lily Festival, hosted in Roosenekal on Saturday, 30 November, served as a powerful reminder of the interconnectedness between culture and nature. The festival, spearheaded by the Limpopo Tourism Agency (LTA) in partnership with local stakeholders, celebrated the ecological significance of these lilies and their role in Bapedi heritage. In 2020, King Thulare III of the Bapedi Kingdom officially declared the Yellow Arum Lily as the Bapedi Ancestral Flower, solidifying its place in the hearts of the people and recognizing its symbolic role in Bapedi praise poetry and cultural practices.

The festival, which spanned an entire week starting from Sunday, 24 November, offered a vibrant lineup of activities that brought together not only the local community but also tourism professionals, environmentalists, and culture enthusiasts. Through engaging community events, traditional music, dance performances, and educational exhibitions, the festival cultivated social cohesion and a shared appreciation of the natural heritage that the Yellow Arum Lily represents.

The Ecological and Economic Impact

The ecological significance of these lilies cannot be overstated. They thrive in the Leolo Mountain ranges and the rocky terrains of Roosenekal, two regions that are rich in unique geographies and biodiversity. These areas, with their pristine landscapes and distinct ecosystems, provide the ideal habitat for the



Yellow Arum Lily, which blooms only once a year, making its appearance in November a truly anticipated natural spectacle.

Dr. Phophi Ramathuba, Premier of Limpopo, praised the Tourism Thursday campaign in celebration of the Yellow Arum Lily as a uniquely Limpopo icon. She highlighted the festival's role in promoting ecotourism and creating hope for the local communities, particularly in Leolo and Roosenekal, where the lily's presence is both a source of pride and economic opportunity.

A Vision for the Future

As the 2024 Yellow Arum Lily Festival came to a close, it was clear that the legacy of the Yellow Arum Lily was in good hands. The festival, which celebrated its ecological and cultural



importance, has grown over the years to become a cornerstone of the region's tourism calendar, drawing locals and international visitors alike. With its natural beauty and cultural richness, Sekhukhune continues to prove that it is much more than a geographical location — it is a living example of how biodiversity, heritage, and tourism can work hand-in-hand to drive economic growth, cultural pride, and environmental sustainability.

As the festival sets the stage for future generations to enjoy and protect the Yellow Arum Lily and other natural wonders of Sekhukhune, it remains a testament to the resilience and rich cultural identity of the Bapedi people, who honour these lilies as living symbols of their enduring connection to the land.



MAFULO A MATALA TOURISM ROUTE

WHERE THE WILDERNESS WHISPERS AND THE GREEN LAND CALLS

In the heart of Limpopo's Sekhukhuneland, where rolling hills meet vast valleys and wildlife roams free, a new route is calling the curious, the wild-hearted, and the family-bound traveler. It's called *Mafulo a Matala*, meaning "animals grazing on green land," and it's a journey for anyone drawn to the untamed African wilderness, its scenic treasures, and authentic cultural encounters.

The *Mafulo a Matala* Route is Sekhukhuneland's answer to the soul-stirring need for space, nature, and adventure. Winding through serene landscapes dotted with heritage-rich villages, rugged terrains, rivers, dams, and reserves, this route connects nature-based tourism with cultural authenticity.

Whether you're a wildlife photographer, an angler, a thrill-seeking 4x4 driver, or simply a nature lover seeking calm walks and scenic picnics, this route has something for you.

Flag Boshielo Dam & Schuinsdraai Nature Reserve – The Crown Jewel

Begin your journey at the Flag Boshielo Dam and Schuinsdraai Nature Reserve, the premier natural attractions on the route. Schuinsdraai, the largest reserve within Ephraim Mogale Local Municipality, is a water-based playground for families and nature seekers. The reserve's diverse birdlife, riverside camping, and fishing opportunities make it ideal for lazy weekends and thrilling game drives.

Don't miss the Tambotie Ridge Wildlife Reserve within Schuinsdraai, where you can enjoy nature tours, encounter native fauna, and marvel at sweeping views of the Olifants River as it snakes through the reserve.

Wildlife & Adventure – A Playground for Nature Enthusiasts

Adventure seekers will find their paradise along the *Mafulo a Matala* route. Several lodges and bush ranches offer guided wilderness hikes, quad bike trails, 4x4 adventures, and even bow hunting in designated zones.

The terrain is made for exploration: rocky mountain faces, deep bushveld paths, and game-rich reserves invite guests to experience the African outdoors on foot, horseback, or behind the wheel of an all-terrain beast. And if you're seeking quiet time? Enjoy meditative walks, serene riverside picnics, or gentle birding in peaceful valleys.

Cultural Crossroads Along the Route

Site 1: Setšong Tea Crafters – Sip, Learn, and Connect

In Ephraim Mogale, discover the Setšong Tea Estate, where indigenous tea-making traditions come alive. Visitors are invited to experience tea-making sessions, attend high tea events, and appreciate the preservation of local tea species. It's a tranquil pause, rich with aroma and cultural immersion.

Site 2: Schuinsdraai Nature Reserve – Nature in Full Display

As mentioned, this is the biodiversity hub of the region—ideal for nature tours, game drives, and relaxing by the dam with a fishing rod in hand.

Site 3: eRholweni Heritage Site – History Carved in Stone

Venture into Mapochs Valley in Elias Motsoaledi Local Municipality and walk through the



legacy of the Mapochs War of 1883. The eRholweni Heritage Site tells the intertwined story of the Ndzundza Ndebele and Bapedi people through heritage caves, trails, and interpretive tours that bring the past to life.

Site 4: Bantwane, Bapedi and BaKopa Decoration Themes – Living Art Forms

Explore traditional artistry and architectural brilliance by visiting homesteads adorned with vibrant Bantwane, Bapedi, and BaKopa decoration themes. Hosted by communities and artists, this experience is an immersion in colour, identity, and craft.

Site 5: Prof Conrad Tsiane Traditional Heritage Surgery – A Healing Heritage

For the culturally curious and health-minded traveller, a visit to Prof Conrad Tsiane's Traditional Health Surgery in Ephraim Mogale provides an introduction to the philosophy of African Traditional Medicine. This site forms part of a special interest medical tourism attraction gaining attention from health-conscious visitors.

Site 6: Ndlovu Youth Choir – Where Music Meets Hope

No journey along *Mafulo a Matala* is complete without a stop at the Ndlovu Youth Choir Centre. Known globally for their show-stopping performances and inspirational journey, visitors may catch a rehearsal (when they're not on tour) and explore the Ndlovu Medical Centre, where music, health, and hope converge.

A Route That Offers It All

Mafulo a Matala is a rare blend of eco-tourism, adventure travel, and cultural heritage. Families can unwind in nature, while thrill seekers tackle rugged paths and heritage lovers follow the footsteps of warriors, healers, and artists. This is not just a route—it's an invitation to discover Sekhukhuneland in all its layers.

So pack your bags, gather your family, and hit the trail. The green lands are calling. And where the animals graze, the stories begin.



OUR DAMS PREGNANT WITH PROMISE

SEKHUKHUNE'S DE HOOP AND FLAG BOSHIELO DAMS HERALD NEW ERA IN SPORTS TOURISM, YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



In the heart of South Africa's Limpopo Province, the Sekhukhune District is emerging as a powerhouse of strategic water infrastructure with visionary potential. With the twin giants of De Hoop Dam and Flag Boshielo Dam anchoring its hydrological landscape, Sekhukhune is not only securing water security but unlocking new pathways in sports tourism, economic development, and youth empowerment. These dams - monuments of engineering and custodians of life - are, indeed, pregnant with promise.

De Hoop Dam: Limpopo's legacy of 30 Years of Democracy

Situated on the Steelpoort River and straddling the boundaries of Elias Motsoaledi and Fetakgomo Tubatse Local Municipalities, De Hoop Dam stands as Limpopo's largest reservoir. With a full storage capacity of 348.7 million cubic meters, it ranks 13th nationally, symbolizing both strength and scale. Initially built to support domestic water needs and industrial development, particularly mining, De Hoop now carries the promise of becoming a centerpiece for sports tourism and recreational innovation.

Its vast basin, flanked by rugged highlands and open skies, has the potential to host Olympic-grade water sports ranging from rowing and canoeing to open-water swimming and triathlons. The implementation of a Resource Management Plan (RMP) ensures that this promise is not only pursued but preserved—balancing access with conservation, and recreation with regulation.

Flag Boshielo Dam: From Utility to Unity

Located in the Ephraim Mogale Local Municipality near Marble Hall, Flag Boshielo Dam holds 185 million cubic meters of water, making it a vital lifeline in the regional network. Its 2006 expansion served to meet the growing demands of mining and rural communities. But like De Hoop, Flag Boshielo's function is fast evolving. With controlled access guided by its RMP, the dam is poised to become a site for competitive water-based sports, offering untapped potential for everything from jet skiing to dragon boat racing.

A Blueprint for Sustainable Utilization

The Sekhukhune Development Agency (SDA), under a formal Memorandum of Agreement

(MOA) with the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), holds a unique mandate: to manage De Hoop Dam's recreational and tourism development. Empowered by Section 113 of the National Water Act (36 of 1998), the SDA is entrusted with ensuring sustainable use while spearheading investment mobilization and destination marketing.

Underpinning this mandate is the De Hoop RMP—a governance framework that lays out environmental stewardship, zoning strategies, safety protocols, and event guidelines. Crucially, the plan seeks to democratize access through community participation, inclusive infrastructure, and public-private partnerships (PPPs).

Sport as Catalyst: Building the Water Sports Economy

To translate potential into performance, Sekhukhune is investing in sports tourism as a flagship economic strategy. With the Department of Sport, Arts, and Culture as a key partner, the district is planning a Water Sports Hub at both dams, aimed at hosting mega watersport events of national and international stature; stimulating local entrepreneurship through hospitality, coaching, and tour services; cultivating youth talent pipelines for Olympic disciplines; and encouraging health and wellness across communities

A dedicated Sports Tourism Budget Vote is currently in development to fund this bold vision. The SDA's mission: to transform Sekhukhune into South Africa's inland Riviera - a premier destination for aquatic adventure and competitive sports.

The RMPs of De Hoop and Flag Boshielo Dams allow for a diverse spectrum of water-based activities, including Canoeing & Kayaking – fostering Olympic-level talent in paddle sports,

Rowing & Sailing – ideal for team and solo aquatic disciplines, Jet Skiing & Motorboating – attracting speed-based recreational tourism, Sport Fishing – both competitive and leisure angling supported, Open-Water Swimming & Triathlons – harnessing the dams' scale for endurance events, and Dragon Boat Racing – an emerging, globally popular sport with strong cultural resonance.

These activities are more than sports; they are economic levers. From job creation in logistics and coaching to business development in boat rentals and guided water tours, the ripple effects are transformative.

Beyond economics, this initiative is also a social game-changer. Establishing a water sports hub is a gateway to youth development through structured training, scholarships, and future careers, crime reduction through engaging youth in purpose-driven activities, cultural heritage integration through incorporating traditional knowledge of water, fishing, and canoeing, and skills development from lifeguarding to event management and ecotourism entrepreneurship.

As Sekhukhune positions itself on the global sports tourism map, it does so with intention and identity - honouring its heritage while innovating for the future.

Our dams are not just bodies of water. They are vessels of possibility. De Hoop and Flag Boshielo Dams are more than engineering marvels—they are economic corridors, cultural sanctuaries, and athletic playgrounds. In a world where water is often a symbol of scarcity, Sekhukhune is charting a different narrative - water as abundance, opportunity, and connection. Sekhukhune's dams are, indeed, pregnant with promise. The time to unlock that promise is now.



FETAKGOMO TUBATSE SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE

A FUTURISTIC ECONOMIC HUB AND INVESTMENT DESTINATION



Huddled within the rocky elegance of Limpopo's bushveld mining belt lies a bold new vision - a vision that's not only reshaping the economic landscape of South Africa's far north but also redefining the future of industrialisation on the African continent. Welcome to the proposed Fetakgomo Tubatse Special Economic Zone (SEZ)—a futuristic economic hub and investment destination that is poised to turn ambition into action.

With its sights set firmly on sustainable development, innovation, and inclusive growth, this SEZ is emerging as a powerful beacon for investors, manufacturers, entrepreneurs, and international partners.

Limpopo's Leap Into the Future

The proposal to designate Fetakgomo

Tubatse as a Special Economic Zone recently took center stage at a well-attended **public consultation session in Steelpoort**, facilitated by the **Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (the dtic)**. The message was clear: the time to industrialise Limpopo is now.

"The Fetakgomo-Tubatse SEZ must now go beyond just being a concept and become a reality," *Mr. Maoto Molefane, Special Advisor, SEZs, the dtic*

According to Mr. Molefane, this zone isn't just an economic proposition—it's a catalytic transformation. With Limpopo's high unemployment rate and limited industrial diversification, the SEZ promises to spark a much-needed shift toward **job creation, skills development, and broad-based economic empowerment**

Strategic Location Meets Industrial Muscle

Located in the mineral-rich heart of the Sekhukhune District, Fetakgomo Tubatse is already a proven mining and metallurgical powerhouse. The SEZ takes advantage of this natural endowment and established logistics infrastructure—offering access to roads, rail, water, and energy corridors.

The zone's strategic industrial clusters will include:

- Mining Inputs Manufacturing
- Renewable Energy Technologies
- Mineral Processing
- Agro-processing and Agritech
- General Manufacturing
- Aftermarket Automotive Production
- Logistics and Transport Solutions

This cluster-driven approach, backed by global market analysis and local potential, ensures that the SEZ is not just functional—but futureproof.

A Green Industrial Revolution

What sets the Fetakgomo Tubatse SEZ apart is its green DNA. Premier of Limpopo, Dr. Phophi Ramathuba, was unequivocal in her vision for a clean, sustainable industrial future.

“The SEZ will also incorporate renewable energy technologies, embracing clean energy to power our industries and protect our environment,” *Dr. Phophi Ramathuba, Premier of Limpopo*

From solar and hydrogen to modern waste-to-energy systems, the SEZ is being built with an eye on carbon neutrality and circular economy principles.

Inclusive Growth and Skills for a New Generation

Dr. Ramathuba also emphasized the importance of local ownership and inclusive participation. The SEZ is designed to be transformative at every level, from enterprise development to education.

Plans are underway to align the SEZ with local TVET colleges and universities, providing skills training, Research and Development hubs, and incubation centers to support youth employment and innovation.

“This is not just about infrastructure and industry. It is about building a future and transforming a historically marginalised district into a driver of Limpopo's economy,” *Dr. Ramathuba*

Investor's Gateway to Tomorrow

For the business traveler flipping through this magazine en route to Johannesburg, Polokwane, or Dubai—the Fetakgomo Tubatse SEZ offers more than just headlines. It offers high-value investment incentives, tax benefits, customised support, and access to African markets through the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

The SEZ is poised to serve not just local demand, but as a regional export base connecting SADC, BRICS, and beyond.

Watch This Space

With feasibility studies completed, business plans validated, and community consultation underway, Fetakgomo Tubatse SEZ is on the verge of official designation. Once approved, it will mark a new era for Limpopo - one where innovation, industry, and inclusion walk hand in hand.

Whether you're a seasoned investor, an aspiring industrialist, or a traveler with a curious mind, this SEZ invites you to witness and participate in one of South Africa's boldest economic reinventions.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Fetakgomo Tubatse SEZ is envisioned as a “City Development” model - a blueprint that merges smart infrastructure, sustainable energy, and integrated economic zones in one ecosystem, setting the standard for next-generation African development.



Welcome to **Sekhukhune**, Limpopo's hidden gem that pulses with cultural pride, breathtaking landscapes, and an ever-vibrant social calendar. This is the land where history echoes through the valleys, where lilies bloom like stories in late spring, and where music, adventure, and tradition fuse to create an unforgettable traveler's escape. Whether you're seeking a soulful cultural experience, high-adrenaline adventure, or just want to dance under the African sky - Sekhukhune delivers. Here's your ultimate guide on **what to do and where to be** in Sekhukhune District.

Honour the Royalty: Kgoshi Mampuru II Commemoration

3rd Week of November – Annually

Start your Sekhukhune adventure by stepping into history. The **Kgoshi Mampuru II Commemoration** is more than a memorial - it's a deep cultural reawakening. Held every November in remembrance of the heroic king who stood defiant against colonial domination, this annual event gathers royalty, historians, and cultural enthusiasts from all walks of life. Expect rituals, traditional regalia, poetry, praise singing, and political reflection wrapped in a sacred communal atmosphere.

WHAT TO DO IN SEKHUKHUNE

Where Heritage Breathes, Mountains Call, and the Party Never Ends

Bloom Season: Yellow Arum Lily Festival

4th Week of November – Annually

As Sekhukhune enters full bloom, the **Yellow Arum Lily Festival** paints the region golden. This natural spectacle celebrates the indigenous *lepelle* lily, a rare floral marvel native to Sekhukhune's wetlands. The festival blends eco-tourism with visual arts, local food stalls, music, and photography—ideal for flower lovers and Instagrammers chasing golden hour perfection.

Party with the People: Mohlaletse Annual Festival

24 December – Annually

Nothing says "home for the holidays" like the **Mohlaletse Annual Festival**. Held in one of the district's most culturally rich villages, this festival is a homecoming celebration where locals and visitors alike dance to the rhythm of Afro-house, kwaito, and traditional beats. Expect a joyous convergence of food, fashion, and local artistry.

Double the Delight: Gae Lapeng Concepts & Mohlaletse Rocks

26 December – Annually

Boxing Day? In Sekhukhune, it's Back-to-Back Bash Day. First, Gae Lapeng Concepts invites you to a stylish garden experience celebrating family, identity, and groove. Later, the vibe turns electric with Mohlaletse Rocks, a music showcase of rising and celebrated Sekhukhune talent. Think cooler-box parties, gourmet pop-ups, and sounds that shake the Leolo mountains.

Roll the Dice, Dance All Night: Thaba Moshate Casino & Nightlife

Burgersfort

When the sun sets, Sekhukhune doesn't sleep - it sizzles. The Thaba Moshate Casino Hotel Convention Resort in Burgersfort is the nightlife heartbeat, boasting elegant lounges, gaming floors, live DJ sets, and late-night dining. It's the perfect nightcap after a day of adventure.



Tee Time: Golf Festivals Across the District

Seasonal Festivals

Groblersdal | Marble Hall | Tubatse Chrome Golf Clubs

Swap your hiking boots for golf shoes and hit the lush fairways of Sekhukhune's top-tier golf clubs. Whether you're a seasoned player or a casual swinger, the **District Golf Festivals** offer spirited competition, luxurious networking, and countryside leisure at its best.

The Endurance of Champions: Makhuduthamaga Marathon

October – Annually

Running in Sekhukhune is not just a sport—it's a journey through soul-stirring terrain. The **Makhuduthamaga Marathon** in October invites athletes to race through the region's undulating beauty, connecting body and landscape with every stride. With distances for amateurs and elites, everyone's welcome to take part in this scenic challenge.

Hiking and Adventure on Leolo Mountain

All Year Round

Trek the sacred **Leolo Mountain**, the spiritual spine of Sekhukhuneland. From hiking and mountain biking to trail running and cultural storytelling with local guides, Leolo is an adventurer's playground and photographer's dream. Sunrise and sunset

hikes promise panoramic views you'll carry home forever.

Wildlife Encounters: Potlake Nature Reserve & Schuinsdraai

Game Viewing, Birdwatching & Safari Picnics

Wildlife lovers, rejoice! Sekhukhune is home to diverse reserves like **Potlake Nature Reserve** and the **Schuinsdraai Nature Reserve**, where you can catch glimpses of zebras, antelopes, and a rainbow of birdlife. Enjoy guided game drives, serene lakeside picnics, and rare species sightings.

10. Sekhukhune Fan Park Experience

Sporting Events All Year Round

Whether it's the World Cup, AFCON, or a Champions League final—Sekhukhune turns sport into spectacle. The **Fan Park Experience** is where locals unite for day-to-night match viewings on big screens with a VIP township flair. Think local DJs, traditional food stalls, fan competitions, and unmistakable Sekhukhune energy.

Sekhukhune isn't just a destination - it's a **celebration of self and soil**. With every month holding something special, your only challenge is deciding when to come. And the best part? Every trip is an invitation to return.

Pack your camera, dancing shoes, hiking gear - and your open heart. Sekhukhune is waiting.

SPORTS TOURISM IN SEKHUKHUNELAND

– FROM FAIRWAYS TO FIGHT NIGHTS

Sekhukhuneland, a region rich in heritage and natural beauty in Limpopo Province, is fast emerging as a sporting tourism destination of note. What was once a dominantly rural district with scenic plateaus and ancestral narratives is now teeing off a new chapter—one where golf, marathons, and international boxing take centre stage. Welcome to the rise of sports tourism in Sekhukhune.

A New Golfing Frontier

Golfers across the country and beyond are beginning to pay attention to the inviting greens of Sekhukhuneland. The Marble Hall Golf Club, nestled in Ephraim Mogale Local Municipality, and the Groblersdal Golf Club, located in Elias Motsoaledi Local Municipality, are both 18-hole gems with potential to host Limpopo's and South Africa's premier golfing events.

Each club offers a distinct golfing experience—rolling fairways framed by bushveld beauty,

tranquil surroundings, and space to exhale. These are not just clubs but community catalysts, poised to drive golf development in townships and rural areas.

Not to be outdone, the Tubatse Chrome Golf Club in Fetakgomo Tubatse Local Municipality is strategically situated within the Fetakgomo Tubatse Special Economic Zone (FTSEZ). With its proximity to mining and industrial investors, the course is perfectly positioned to host high-premier corporate golf experiences and trade-related sports diplomacy events. In Sekhukhune, golf isn't just a game—it's fast becoming an economic strategy.

Marathons That Move Mountains

Runners and sports fans know that Sekhukhuneland isn't only about strokes and swings—it's also about strides. The Makhuduthamaga Marathon, an annual 42.2 km race officially recognised as a Comrades Marathon qualifier, continues to make waves.





Taking athletes through the zigzagging villages of Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality, the marathon fuses stamina with culture, attracting both elite runners and community enthusiasts. Its growing reputation has not only put Sekhukhune on the South African long-distance map, but has also inspired a series of emerging local marathons throughout the district.

This signature race is more than a competition—it's a movement. It nurtures athletic excellence while celebrating the landscapes and stories of Sekhukhuneland. Runners who qualify here often go on to represent the district with pride at national events like the Comrades.

Punching Above Its Weight: Tšate International Boxing

When the bell rang at the Tšate International Boxing Tournament on 11 October 2024, sports tourism in Sekhukhuneland entered a whole new arena—literally. Hosted at the Thaba Moshate Casino Hotel Convention Resort, this electrifying event brought together fighters from Malawi, Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and South Africa.

Promoted by Mama Rocks Boxing Promotions, the tournament featured seven bouts, with both male and female fighters delivering intense battles, thrilling knockouts, and technical showcases broadcast live on SABC 2. Themed around honouring the Bapedi Kingdom, the championship belt was more than a prize—it was a symbol of pride and place.

The success of the tournament cemented the Tšate International Boxing Tournament as a continental fixture in the boxing calendar. It also demonstrated the capacity of Sekhukhuneland to host high-profile international events with cultural significance and economic impact.

Sekhukhune's Sporting Future: A Game Changer

From putting on the green to pounding the pavement, from jabs to jump shots, Sekhukhuneland is becoming a compelling case for sports tourism in rural South Africa. The region's blend of natural landscapes, growing infrastructure, and cultural heritage makes it ideal for a wide range of sporting events—golfing retreats, marathons, boxing tournaments, and beyond.

As the district continues to invest in sporting infrastructure and event hosting capacity, its reputation is growing not just locally, but internationally. The future of Sekhukhuneland is in motion—powered by athletes, anchored by communities, and driven by visionaries who believe in sport as a tool for development.

If you haven't yet set your sights on Sekhukhuneland, now's the time. Whether you're swinging a club, lacing up your running shoes, or ringside with adrenaline in the air - Sekhukhune is ready to host you!

SPORTS TOURISM

THE WORLD COMING TO FLAG BOSHIELO DAM



In October 2027, the heart of South Africa's Limpopo Province will reverberate with the thrill of lines cast and reels spun as the *5th World Angling Championship Games* drop anchor at the majestic Flag Boshielo Dam. Once known as Arabie Dam, this expansive waterbody - renamed in 2001 to honour the anti-apartheid hero *Commissar Marutle Flag Boshielo* - is now set to host one of the world's most prestigious angling tournaments, solidifying its status as a premier global destination for sport fishing, rural tourism, and heritage remembrance.

Located in the semi-arid Olifants River Basin, Flag Boshielo Dam is not just a reservoir of water - it's a reservoir of stories. With a full storage capacity of 185.2 million cubic metres, this second-largest dam in Limpopo has powered agriculture, quenched communities, and shaped livelihoods. Now, it's poised to drive *eco-sport diplomacy* and *rural economic upliftment* through angling.

As athletes from more than 30 nations arrive to compete in the World Feeder Classic and Carp Fishing Championships, they'll also encounter

the enduring legacy of the dam's namesake —Commissar Flag Boshielo. Born in 1920 in Phokwane, Sekhukhuneland, Boshielo was a tireless freedom fighter whose life's journey traversed trade union activism, the founding of *Sebatakgomo*, military training in Moscow, and command of *Umkhonto we Sizwe* in Tanzania. His sacrifice was immortalised not only in the renaming of this dam by President Thabo Mbeki but also in the posthumous *Order of Luthuli in Gold* in 2005.

The Championship Breakdown: 15–24 October 2027

The *Host City: Marble Hall*, and the *Host Resource: Flag Boshielo Dam*, will together stage a tournament that promises more than just tight lines—it offers legacy building, economic ignition, and global spotlighting of Limpopo's potential. With the backing of the South African Sport Anglers and Casting Confederation (SASACC) and alignment with international angling federations, over 165 sport anglers and technical teams will descend upon this scenic African waterway for ten days of strategy, stamina, and sustainability.

The Local Organising Committee (LOC), chaired by the Municipal Manager of Ephraim Mogale Local Municipality, has been hard at work designing an event blueprint that blends *world-class logistics* with *community-rooted hospitality*.

Why Flag Boshielo? Why Now?

What sets Flag Boshielo Dam apart? It's a potent mix of scale, accessibility, and ecological resilience. Surrounded by untamed bushveld, bordered by rural communities brimming with cultural vibrancy, and located within driving reach of key Limpopo tourism corridors, the dam has all the right ingredients to cook up a world championship.

But this is more than a sporting event. It's a rural renaissance in motion.

Economic Prospects

The numbers cast a bright line into the future:

- R10 million+ in expected local economic impact
- Surge in accommodation bookings, transportation, and event-based services
- Boosted trade for local vendors, caterers, and guides
- Youth employment and skills transfer opportunities throughout the event cycle

Global Exposure

The tournament will beam Marble Hall, Ephraim Mogale Municipality, and the Sekhukhune District onto the global tourism radar. Angling aficionados from Brazil to Bulgaria, and Poland to the Philippines, will experience the natural richness of Limpopo—not only through fishing, but also through heritage tours, cultural performances, and traditional cuisine.

Invitation to Anglers and Enthusiasts

To the world's angling elite, hobbyists, and fans: Flag Boshielo Dam invites you to its waters.

Bring your tackle. Bring your team. But also bring your curiosity—about a place where

every ripple carries a story, where *ecotourism* meets *ancestral memory*, and where rural Africa is redefining itself on a global stage.

From feeder setups to legacy structures, the 5th World Angling Championship will also seed infrastructure that lasts:

- A Flag Boshielo Water Sport Hub for future competitions
- A Championship Legacy House
- Enhanced docking and wash bay facilities
- Improved digital and mobile connectivity
- A Flag Boshielo Memorial Precinct to honour the dam's namesake

Beyond the Catch: Building a Legacy

The long-term goal? Establish Flag Boshielo Dam as a permanent anchor for the international angling calendar—where local and global communities converge to celebrate sport, sustainability, and solidarity.

Because here, at the confluence of past and present, is a dam that dares to dream bigger—for its people, for its province, and for the planet's anglers.

Flag Boshielo awaits. Cast your line into history!





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