

**MEDIA RELEASE - November 27, 2003**

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**AFSAAL PICNIC SPOT DESTROYED BY FIRE - KNP**

Kruger National Park has launched an official investigation into the fire, which destroyed the popular Afsaal Picnic Spot in the Kruger National Park on the evening of November 22, 2003.

At around 22:00, one of the supervisors of the facility who lives nearby saw the fire and investigated but, as flames had already enveloped the two buildings, there was nothing he could do, other than notify the site's operator, Jock Concessionaire, and the local rangers.

Rangers and the concessionaires responded immediately and managed to prevent the fire from spreading to the nearby thatched lapas. It is believed that the fire started in the kitchen area and then spread to the other parts of the building. The exact cause of the fire will be determined when investigations are completed.

The picnic spot, which was built in the 1980s is a popular gathering area for visitors to the park and is situated between Skukuza, Berg en Dal and Pretoriuskop rest camps. The facility was operated by the Kruger National Park until 2001, when it was transferred to the same concessionaire that operates the Jock Concession.

The estimated cost of reconstruction is around R1,2 million. This includes demolishing the old buildings. The new buildings will be completed during mid-2004. Presently the site has been sealed off and temporary facilities will be installed as soon as possible.

Said Kruger National Park Acting Director, Mr Josias Chabani: "As we know that Afsaal is a popular stop-off point, we regret the inconvenience this has caused to our guests and will endeavour to repair the facility as soon as possible".

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