

Public Watch
20 November 2007

What is Public Watch?

Public Watch is an affiliation of over 150 informed South Africans and international members (current membership) who “watch” law and policy development and governance in South Africa, and aim to ensure that these are informed, ethical and accountable. Public Watch operates primarily through the public participation vehicles provided by government (for example, by attending stakeholder meetings or submitting comments), and acts to alert both the public and key government officials of issues that require redress or attention.

Who started it?

Public Watch was constituted by concerned conservation professionals, but membership is open to anyone, provided they are committed to being fully informed about the issue at stake. It is our mission to be constructive, objective, rational, truthful and well informed, and to represent the concerns of our members.

What is Public Watch currently concerned with?

We may soon expand our interests to other issues of concern, but at present our focus is on the development of the South African draft Elephant Norms and Standards (N&S) published earlier this year by the Department of Environment Affairs and Tourism, and the problems we see within this draft. Captive elephants are not



adequately dealt with, and we see loop holes for cruel and unethical practices that we have evidence are being used in South Africa (e.g. the chaining of diagonal legs of young elephants to subdue them during training, and the use of spiked sticks, to “teach” them to obey the trainer’s commands, see 2006 photos above taken at the EFAF training facility - this facility has also captured young wild elephants from a private reserve for training). In addition to this, many trainers have been killed by the elephants under their command – we need to know why.

How do I join Public Watch?

You email “Affiliate Public Watch” in the subject line to gemsbok@mweb.co.za

What can I do?

Once you have affiliated to Public Watch, we will copy material to you for your information, as well as copies of letters that we are sending to the Minister and other stakeholders. All such letters are sent to you for your approval, before we add your name them. All you will need to do is grant, or withhold, your approval.

What happens if I do not agree with Public Watch’s stance on subsequent issues?

You email gemsbok@mweb.co.za explaining your concerns, and ask to be “unaffiliated” for that particular issue.