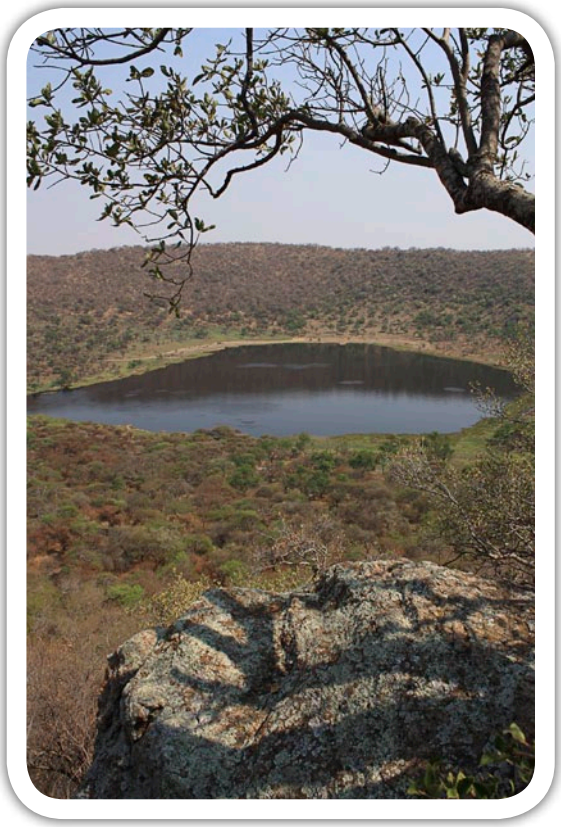
Heritage-biodiversity link celebrated at historical site

The historical Tswaing Crater Museum outside Pretoria served as the venue for the Biodiversity and Heritage Seminar held earlier on 17 September. The event, with the theme 'Biodiversity is life – biodiversity is our life' was organised jointly by the Department of Water Affairs, the Water Research Commission (WRC) and Ditsong Museums of South Africa. All of the speakers pointed out that South Africa's biodiversity should be regarded as just as important as the heritage of the nation's different cultures, and that all people should be able to enjoy the country's rich natural resources with sustainability in mind. During the event the WRC publication, *The Journey of Mma Tshepo*, about the life and work of social activist Tshepo Khumbane, was also launched.

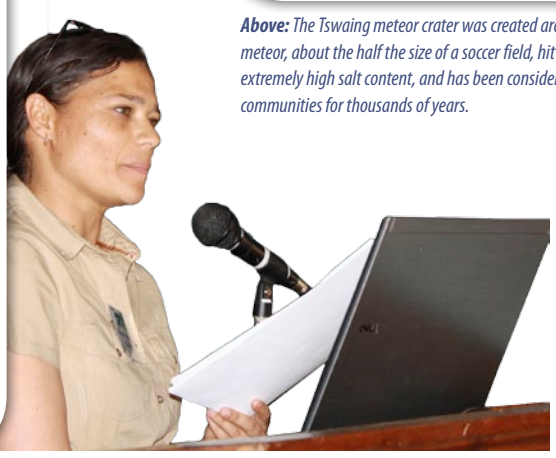
Above: *Delegates were treated to a tour to view the Tswaing meteor crater. Leading the tour was Julia Barns (with yellow T-shirt).*

Left: *Social activist Tshepo Khumbane addresses the crowd following the launch of the book on her life.*



Above: *The Tswaing meteor crater was created around 200 000 years ago when a meteor, about the half the size of a soccer field, hit the Earth. The crater lake has an extremely high salt content, and has been considered a holy place by indigenous communities for thousands of years.*

Left: *Traditional healer Japhta Semenya demonstrates how roots and other plant material are collected from the area around Tswaing. Healers often come to pray at the crater lake, while the salts from the water are used for medicinal purposes.*



Left: *Keynote speaker Eleanor McGregor, Director: Conservation at the Gauteng Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.*

All photographs by Lani van Vuuren