

4.3.7 River Section 7 (Violsdrift)

4.3.7.1 Integrated Concept Proposal

Numerous campsites, targeting traffic off the N7/B1 main route, utilise these section of the river for recreational paddling, half day trips, and as the start for multi day river trips. As providers of accommodation these establishments benefit substantially from the river, yet these benefits are not shared with other landowners or resource managers.

Due to the popularity of this river section, and the high levels of utilisation and transformation, it is recommended that this river section, from the bridge to the start of NNR (Swissroll Rapid) be managed as an open-river section, with minimum need for permits and control measures other than the minimum standards required by the industry regarding safety standards.

Morning and afternoon trips can be offered from most of the campsites, as well as shorter trips out of these campsites. These trips can be guided or self-guided. (Refer Figure 24.)

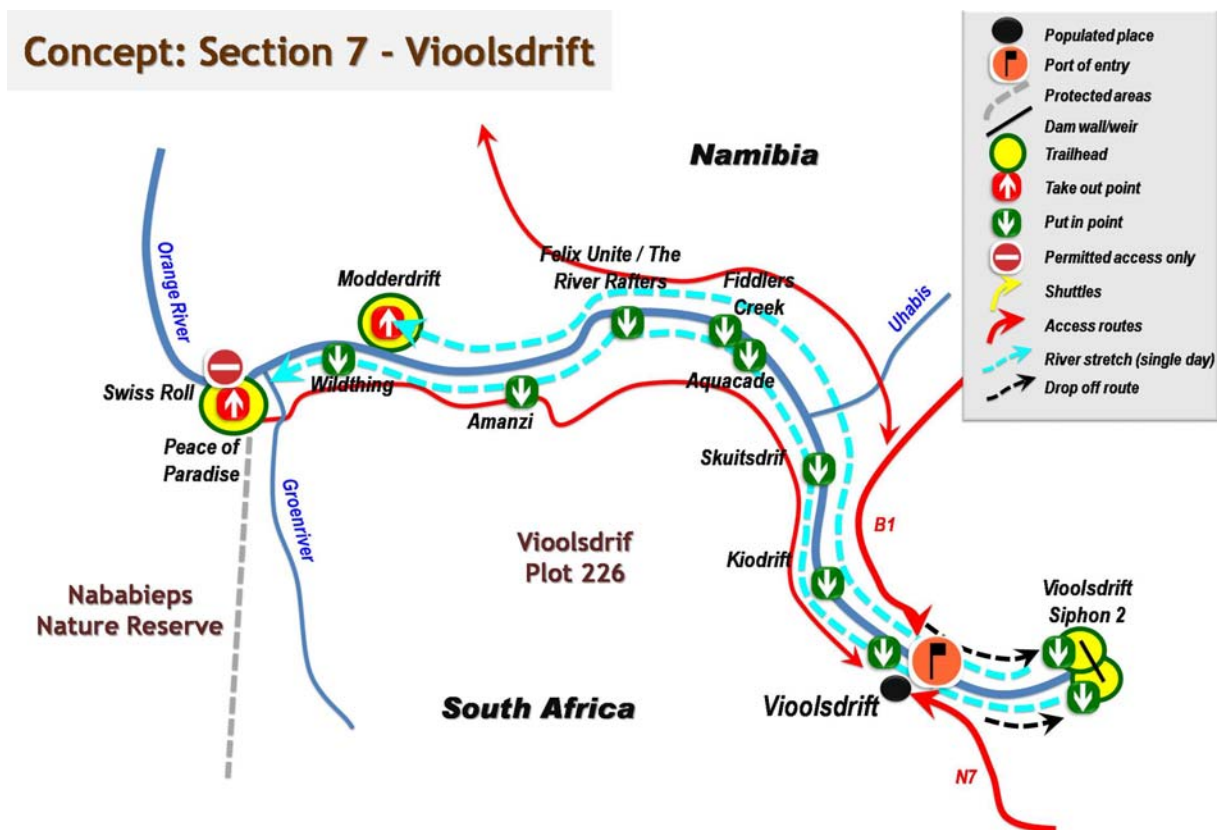
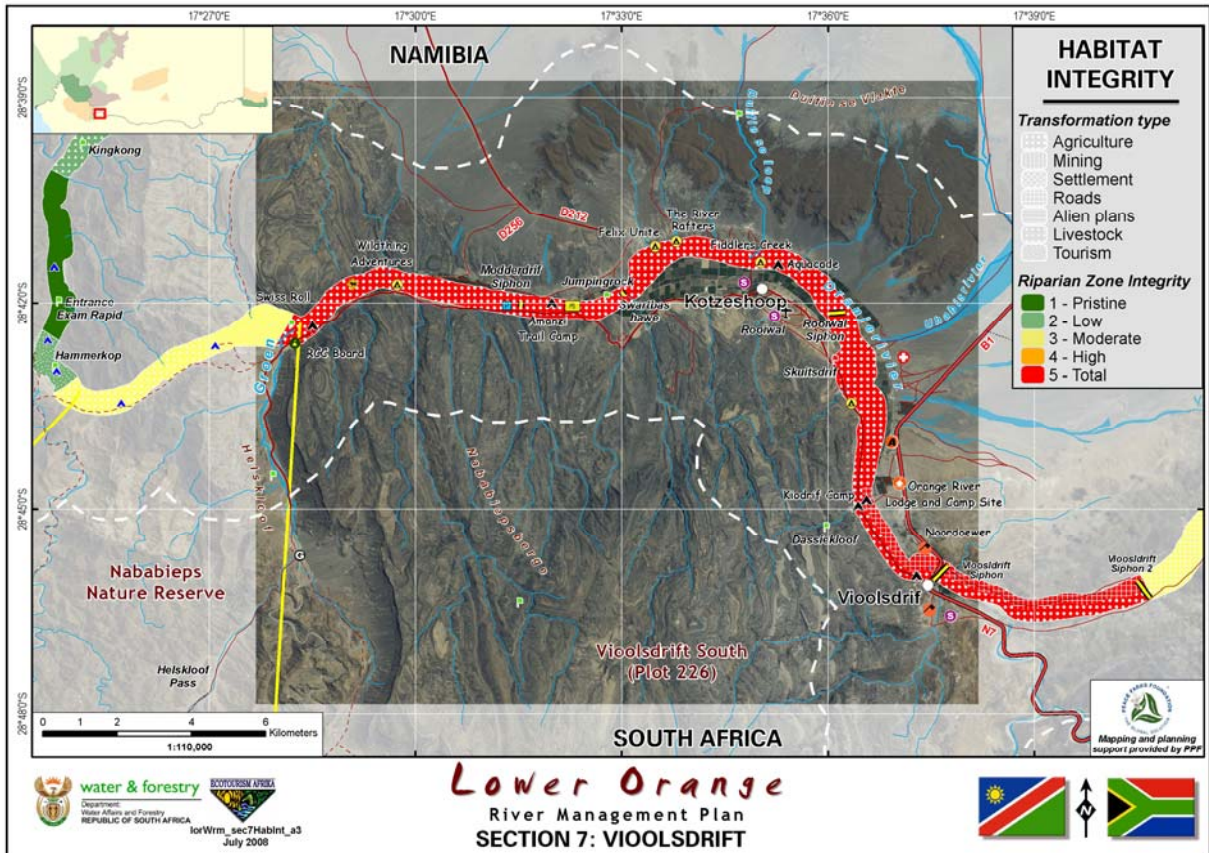


Figure 24: Integrated Concept Proposal, Section 7 (Violsdrift)

4.3.7.2 Sensitivities

Due to the total transformation of this river section as a result of irrigation farming, and the infrastructure required to support this form of agriculture very little environmental sensitivity exists. However sensitivities do exist regarding uncontrolled access to the properties and farms. This can only be overcome by having a river register with strict adherence to the requirements. (Refer Map 87.)



Map 87: Habitat Integrity, Section 7 (Violsdrift)

4.3.7.3 CDP

Historically, this section of the river served as the start for the most utilised section of the river, the Richtersveld Section. However, the popularity of the trips and the volumes experienced over peak periods has necessitated a re-planning of the role that this river section plays. The lack of benefits to the Northern Cape DTEC, and the Richtersveld Community, World Heritage Site Authority, and SANParks, as well as uncontrolled access to these areas, together with the requests from the APA members for better control of the industry’s use of this high value river section, culminated in this concept for the Violsdrift section of the river in relation to the Richtersveld section.

Conceptually this section of the river will be managed as an open section, without any specific concession opportunities, with the only restrictions being that all guest access to the river be recorded, albeit from the individual camps along the river, or from the trailheads at the Violsdrift Syphon 2. To provide additional support to the controlling of the border it is recommended that guests are restricted to the shore of the country of origin and that the principle of “country of entrance, country of exit” be enforced. To assist in this it is advised that each country develops trailheads to serve as put-in points, and as take-out points.

On the Namibian side the put-in point should be located at Violsdrift Syphon 2, linked to the previous river section’s take-out point. The take-out point for this section should be at Modderdrift since this is very last

accessible point before entering the controlled access area for the Richtersveld section of the river. This provides a total river distance of 24km from put-in to take-out point. A distance that should suffice for half and full day trips for the existing commercial operators.

Mirrored on the South African side, the Vioolsdrift Syphon 2 trailhead would serve as put-in point, however, the take-out point would be at Peace-of-Paradise, the boundary of the NNR. This would enable 28km of paddling for these guests. Once again this should suffice for half and full day trips for operators on this side of the river. Operators along this section of the river should agree to a standard for allowing access, vessels, guiding, interpretation etc. No access to the properties should be allowed. (Refer Map 88.) Below Table 7 summarises the full day distances of Namibia and South Africa:

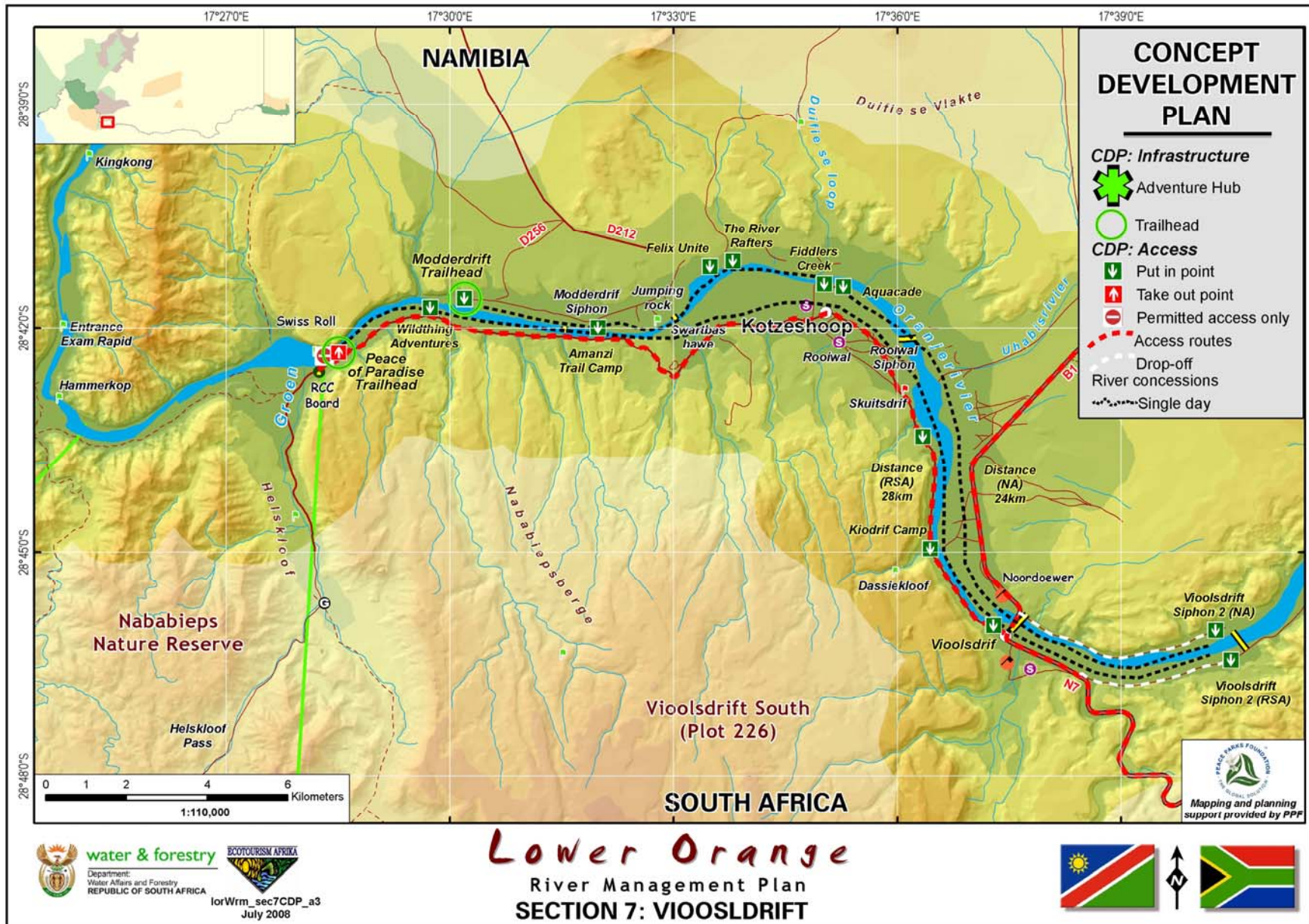
Table 7: River Distances, Section 7 (Vioolsdrift)

Section	Product	Activity	From	To	Km	Total distance
7	a. Day paddles (NAM)	Rafting	Vioolsdrift Siphon 2	Nuwe Modderdrift	24.00	24.00
	b. Day paddles (SA)		Vioolsdrift Siphon 2	Swiss Roll	28.00	28.00

4.3.7.4 Requisite Actions

The following actions are required to ensure that the CDP for this river section can be achieved:

- Develop a river access record keeping system;
- Develop a standard for river use for this section of the river;
- Negotiate and develop trailheads at respective places; and,
- Conclude a revenue sharing agreement with the relevant property owners.



Map 88: CDP, Section 7 (Vioolsdrift)

4.3.8 River Section 8 (Richtersveld WHS)

4.3.8.1 Integrated Concept Proposal

As custodians of resources deemed internationally significant, the Richtersveld Community as resource manager, together with DTEC as the manager of the NNR, currently receive no benefit from the use of the river section from Swissroll Rapid to Aussenkehr.

Four protected areas are included in this river section; NNR; the Richtersveld WHS (Cultural Landscape); Richtersveld National Park (RNP); and ANP, which highlight the importance of this section of the river from a conservation perspective. As the section that is currently most utilised, this section of the river is economically very important to the river industry, yet it faces the most challenges, environmentally, operationally, and practically.

It is recommended that this section be used by a limited number of concessionaires, each focusing on a different sector within the market. It is envisaged that this differentiation will enable a broadening of the market, but also enable control over demand by limiting supply. Current utilisation patterns show peaks associated with holidays and long weekends, with huge numbers of users, often exceeding carrying capacities and environmental thresholds, resulting in low quality experiences and environmental degradation, as well as problems with pricing and sustainability.

Less availability over peak periods should force users to utilise alternative periods, similar to the supply policies utilised by SANParks for trails such as the Otter, and the Wilderness Trails within Kruger National Park. Limiting supply has resulted in increased demand over a longer period, enabling improved and enhanced guest experiences, as well as higher prices and increased financial sustainability.

To facilitate border control issues it is recommended that these multi day trips be offered only from the Namibian side since the logistical support, re-supply points, emergency exits and take-out points are all on the Namibian side. Shorter trips (2 days) can be offered from Noordoewer to Sjambok Rapid, while longer trips, 3-4 days depending on vessels and river flow levels, can be offered from Noordoewer to Klipneus Island at the start of the Aussenkehr farms.

Due to the presence of a track along the middle section of this river section, from Sjambok Rapid to Rudi's/Seven Pillars Mine, limited logistical support can be provided, yet ideally this section should mainly provide wilderness style camping along the river. To enable better control it is recommended that predetermined campsites be identified and allocated to individual concessionaires, who will be responsible for maintaining these sites, removing all waste, and minimising environmental impacts associated with camping such as firewood collection.

Emphasis should be placed on interpretation of the region's rich natural and cultural heritage, evident from the high level of protection status within this section of the river, as well as the river and its associated ecosystem.

Trailheads should be established at Modderdrift in Noordoewer, close to the sandstone cliffs, and close to Klipneus Island at the start of the Aussenkehr farms, with a take-out point at the Sjambok Rapid re-supply point. The trailhead points should have ablutions, waste management facilities, as well as orientation information, while the Sjambok take-out can be more basic. These trailheads can also serve as central facilities to host the River Registers, logging all guests getting onto, and exiting this river section.

Income generated from these river concessions should contribute equitably to the conservation efforts of the agencies responsible for managing the protected areas, Nababeep, Richtersveld, Noordoewer farms, and Aussenkehr. This could be calculated as a percentage of turnover, or a fixed fee, paid by the concessionaires, and then divided according to the percentage of shoreline managed. (Refer Figure 25.)

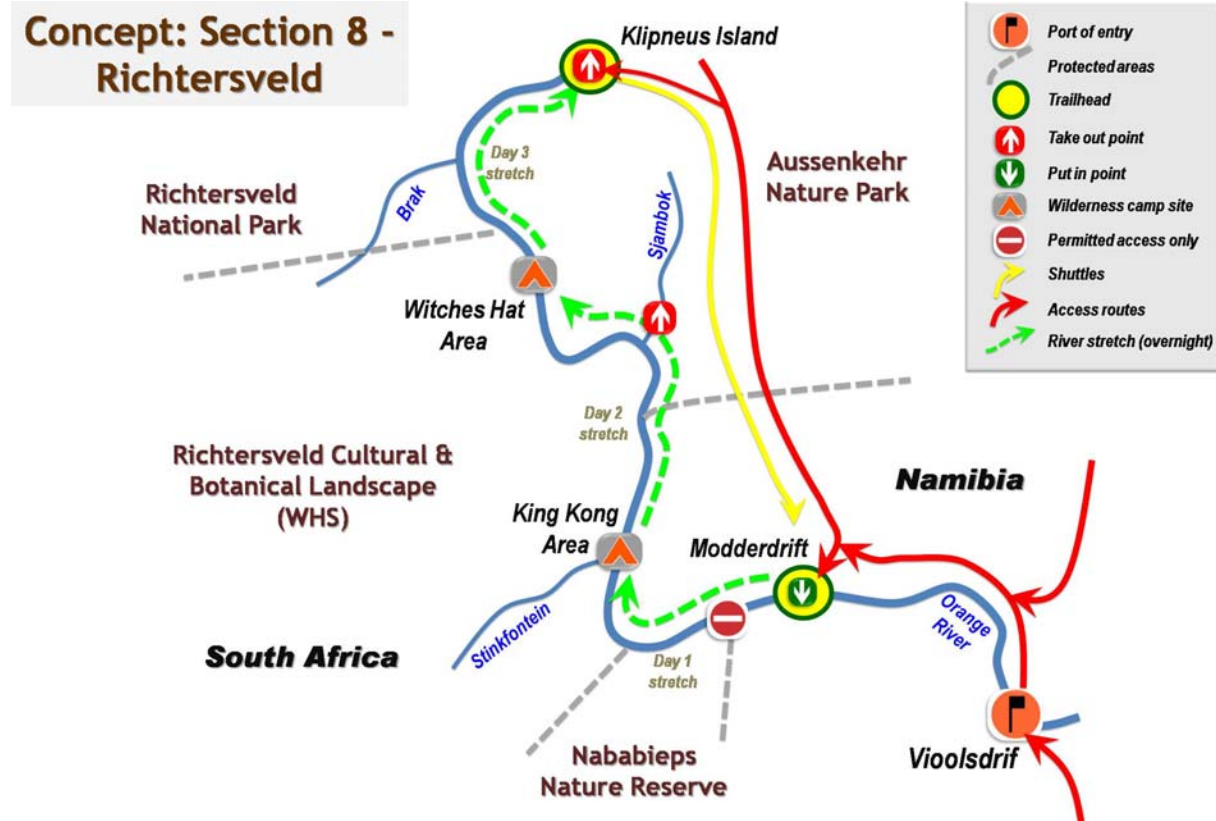


Figure 25: Integrated Concept Proposal, Section 8 (Richtersveld WHS)

4.3.8.2 Sensitivities

Despite being the most utilised river section, this section has numerous sensitivities ranging from environmental and social to economics and management. As a river section characterised by exceptional scenic beauty, a sense of wilderness, and tranquility, several aspects detract from enhancing these, and include mining, livestock farming and uncontrolled tourism access.

These detractors could be controlled since most of this river section falls within formal protected areas, inclusive of the NNR, Richtersveld WHS, RNP, and ANP. Only the small portion of land from Noordoewer to the southern boundary of the ANP is not formally proclaimed. Due to the rugged nature of this unproclaimed and unprotected land very few land use options other than ecotourism exist, yet effort should be made to formally protect this section as well.

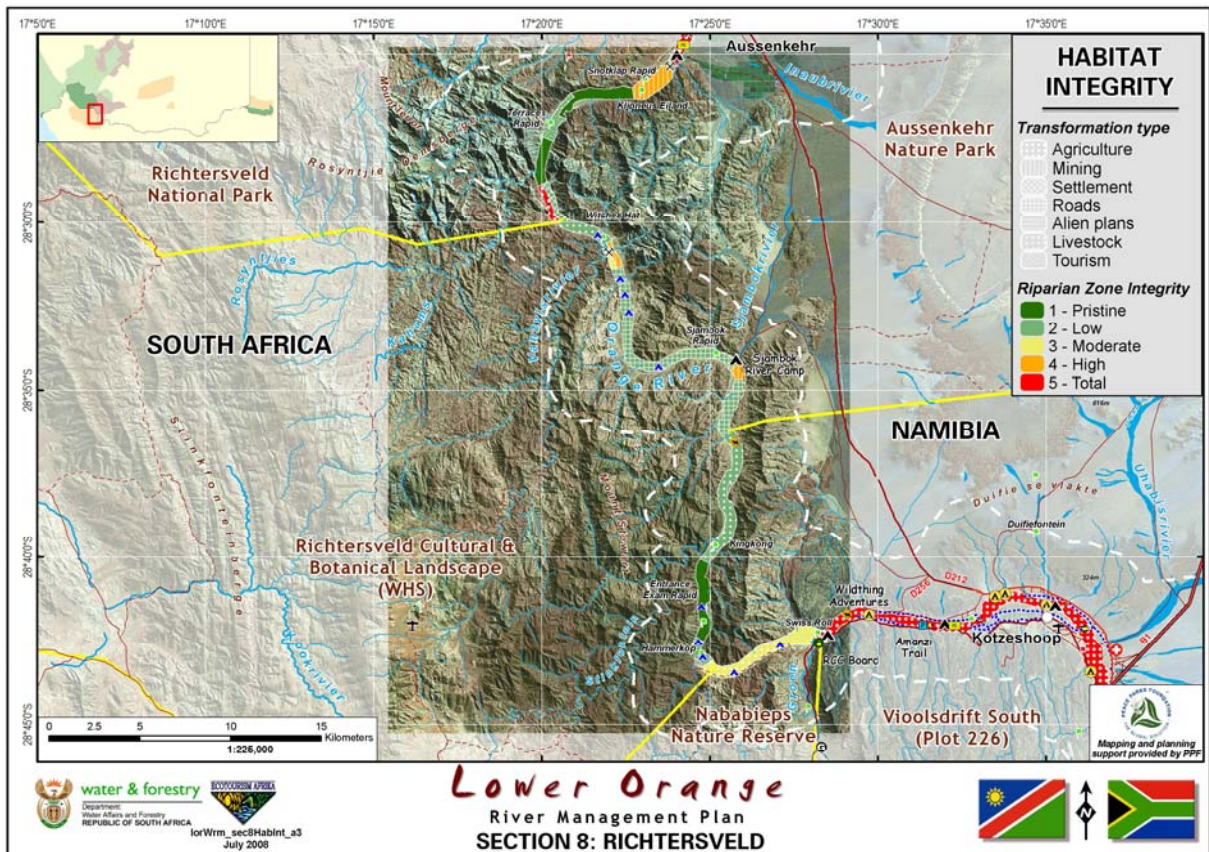
Ecologically linked, yet managerially divided, the differences in management styles and approaches between the authorities tasked with managing these individual portions of land create problems regarding aspects such as control and impact across the international boundary. These problems can be addressed by formally adapting the core area of the TFCA to include the entire area from Noordoewer to Sendelingsdrift.

Currently, the contributing landowners receive little or no benefit from the river use, other than the establishments offering access points or take-out opportunity. This has created a degree of animosity between the Richtersveld Community and operators. Additionally, difficulty associated with logistics and support on the South African side has created concerns from the police and immigration authorities. This sensitivity must be addressed, and thus it is recommended that this section of the river only be operated from the Namibian side.

Concerns have also been raised by the river industry stating that the uncontrolled access to this river section negatively impacts on the viability of business ventures, despite their willingness for control measures, fair competition and concessioning.

Most of this river section is characterised by areas that are relatively devoid of negative impacts, with only a few bits being pristine. The resupply point at Sjambok rapid, the mine and its supporting infrastructure within ANP adding the only negative impacts. Due to the protection status of the surrounding land, and the use of conservation as land use option, these impacts should be well managed.

Camping within the King Kong area should be wilderness based, while the presence of the mine and access road in the Witches Hat area could allow for limited logistic support. However, to differentiate this river section from the ARTP section, both in experience and product, it is recommended that these river trips all be wilderness style camping, rather than formally developed camps, contributing to, rather than detracting from the wilderness character of this river section. (Refer Map 89.)



Map 89: Habitat Integrity, Section 8 (Richtersveld WHS)

4.3.8.3 CDP

In an effort to address the sensitivity regarding the lack of benefits to the contributing landowners in an equitable manner it is recommended that this section be managed as a concession area, with a maximum of three operators, each targeting a distinct sector within the market. A revenue sharing agreement must be concluded between the Northern Cape DTEC; the Richtersveld CPA as owners as well as the Richtersveld World Heritage Authority and SANParks as managers; the owners of ANP; and the riparian property owners of the land between Noordewer and Aussenkehr.

To control access the use of concessioning, as well as river registers should suffice. The concessionaires will strive to ensure that only permitted and authorised guests get access to the river section, while the river register will enable verification of authorised guests, and trace the origin or access point of illegal users.

These control measures will significantly increase the viability of the concessions as commercial operations and business ventures, despite the negative impact that it could have on some current operators.

It is proposed that all the overnight stops be preselected and allocated to a specific concessionaire, who will be responsible for maintaining the integrity of the site, by removing all waste and providing appropriate facilities, such as portable toilets and showers, tables etc.

To maximise the sense of isolation it is recommended that the concessionaires develop a departure roster with the operator utilising the furthest campsite departing first, and the rest following in sequential order, thereby reducing the need to pass another group along the river. Psychologically this enhances the sense of isolation. (Refer Map 90.)

The river safari product should begin with an orientation and safety briefing at the Modderdrift Trailhead (refer Map 91), before embarking on the first day's paddle of 15.5km. During this relatively short paddle the group dynamics, fitness levels etc. can be ascertained and guests will have sufficient time to get used to the paddle and pace of the river. The overnight stop for the first day will be within the King Kong area (refer Map 92), on the Namibian side of the river, with the strategically placed so that they are not visible or audible from each other.

The second day entails a longer paddle, once again with a staggered start, via the Sjambok Rapid (refer Map 93), totalling 21km on the day, ending in the Witches Hat area (refer Map 94), with a similar layout to that of the previous overnight stop. The third day on the river will entail a 19.5km paddle to the take-out close to Klipneus Island (refer Map 95), before returning by shuttle to the starting point at Noordoewer, whichever one was used for the specific market group.

Undertaken in this way, the fears that were raised by the current operators can be addressed, access to this popular river section controlled, and the huge seasonal peaks flattened through strict control of group sizes. Environmentally, socially and psychologically this will improve the quality of the river experience, and thereby increase its viability and sustainability. Limits to group sizes and availability have been seen to be an effective management tool with several trails such as the Otter Hiking Trail retaining its popularity despite strict control of group size and availability.

Below Table 8 summarises the daily distances for the three day river safari:

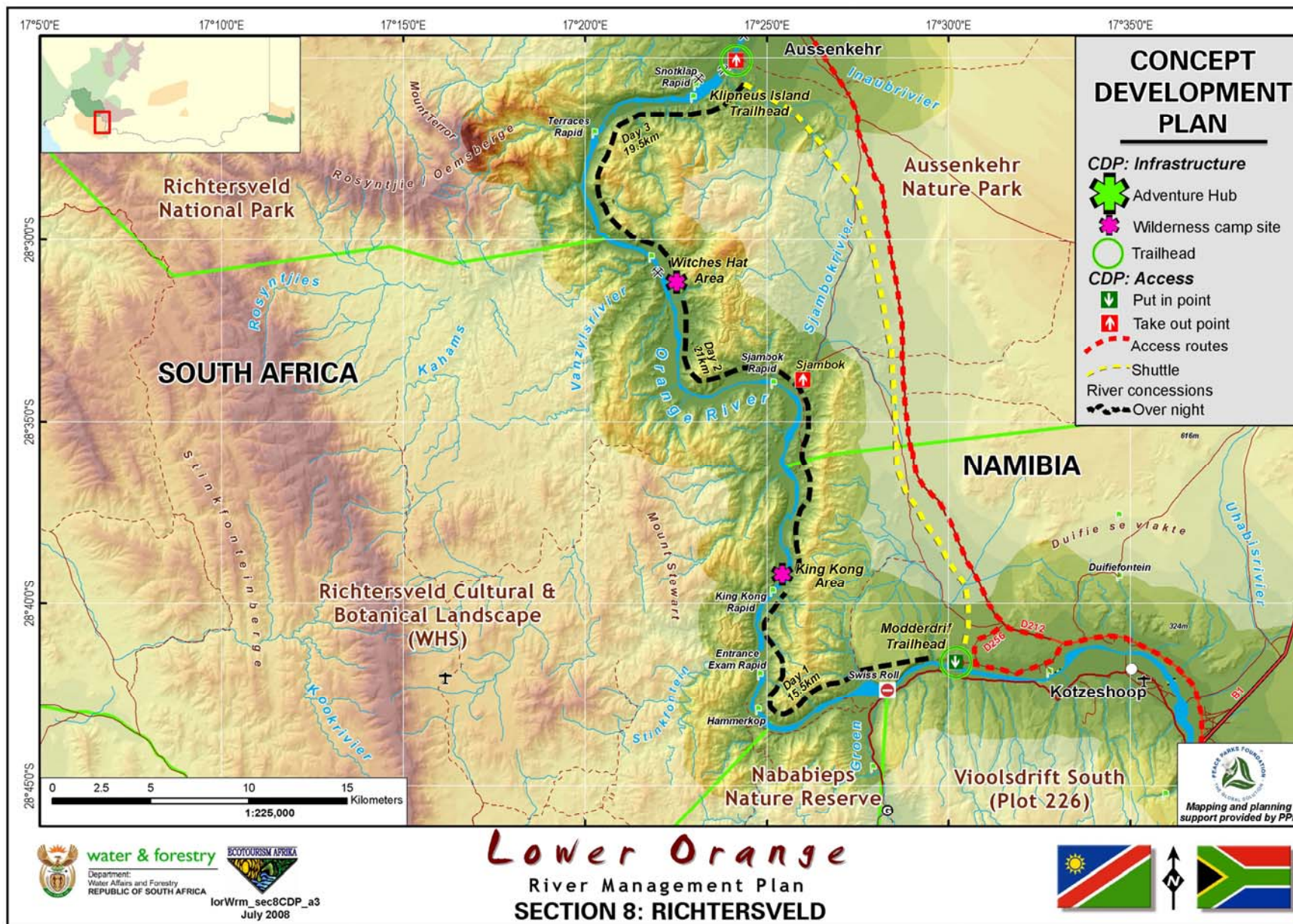
Table 8: River Distances, Section 8 (Richtersveld WHS)

Section	Product	Activity	From	To	Km	Total distance
8	a. Three day river safari		Modderdrift	King Kong	15.50	56.00
			King Kong	Witches Hat Area	21.00	
			Witches Hat Area	Klipneus Island	19.50	

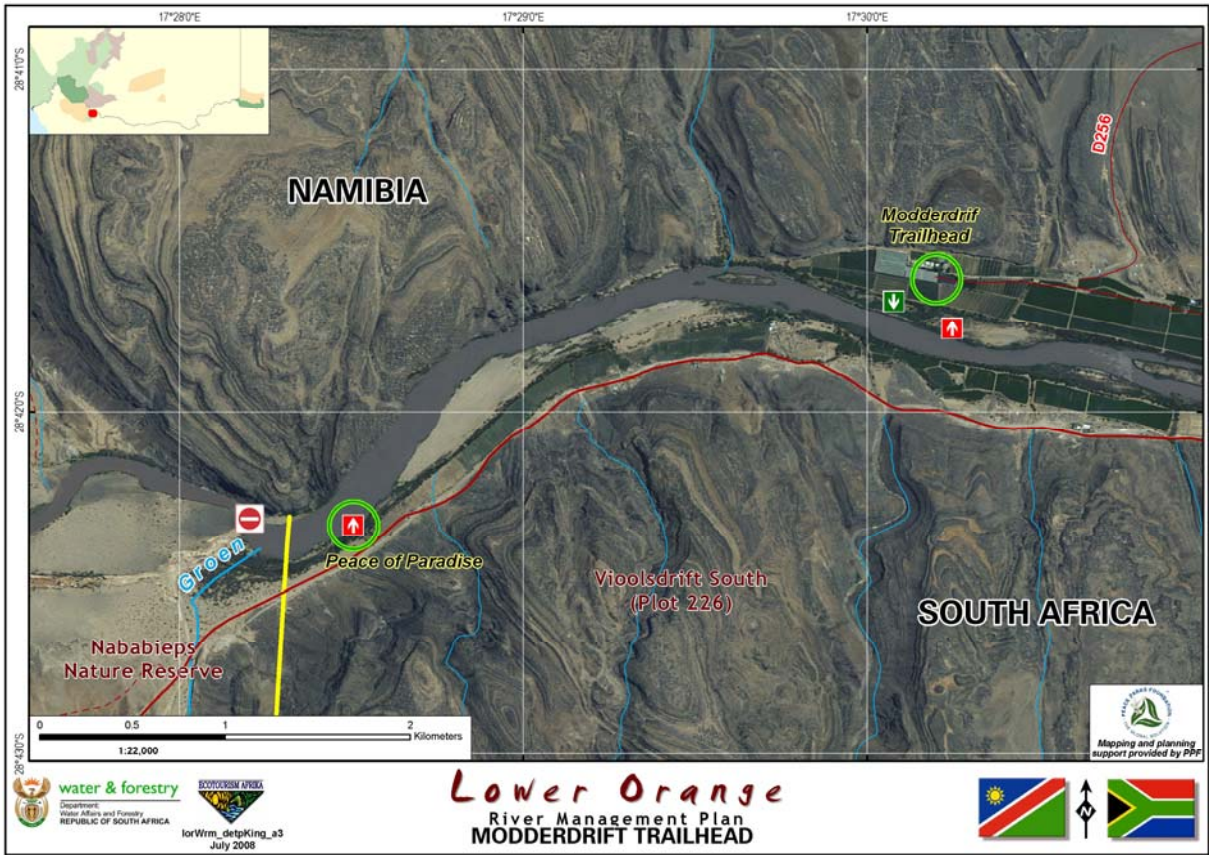
4.3.8.4 Requisite Actions

The following actions are required to ensure that the CDP for this river section can be achieved:

- Discussions with the respective landowners regarding access to and use of land for the requisite developments e.g. trailhead at Modderdrift; Klipneus Island; wilderness camp sites etc.;
- Ensure that access beyond Peace-of-Paradise is restricted;
- Packaging of this river section as three individual concessions; and,
- Conclude a revenue sharing agreement with the relevant property owners.



Map 90: CDP, Section 8 (Richtersveld WHS)



Map 91: CDP, Section 8 (Modderdrift Trailhead)



Map 92: CDP, Section 8 (King Kong Wilderness Camp Site)



Map 93: CDP, Section 8 (Sjambok Emergency Take Out)



Map 94: CDP, Section 8 (Witches Hat Area Wilderness Camp Site)



Map 95: CDP, Section 8 (Klipneus Island Trailhead)

4.3.9 River Section 9 (Aussenkehr)

4.3.9.1 Integrated Concept Proposal

Even though this river section is heavily impacted on by agricultural, mining and settlement activities, the section can be used, albeit limited, for single day river trips, or as a connection between the high value areas of the Richtersveld and ARTP. The Trailhead at Klipneus Island, which serves as the take-out for the Richtersveld section of the river, should serve as the put-in for this section, allowing the entire section to be available for use, yet restricted from accessing beyond Gamkab Gate.

Currently, three different camps utilise this section of the river, and as the region diversifies its agricultural base to include tourism products, increased pressure will be on the river to support this diversification of income streams.

An agreement must be concluded with the relevant landowner for securing the access at Klipneus Island, the site for the trailhead for this section of the river. (Refer Figure 26.)

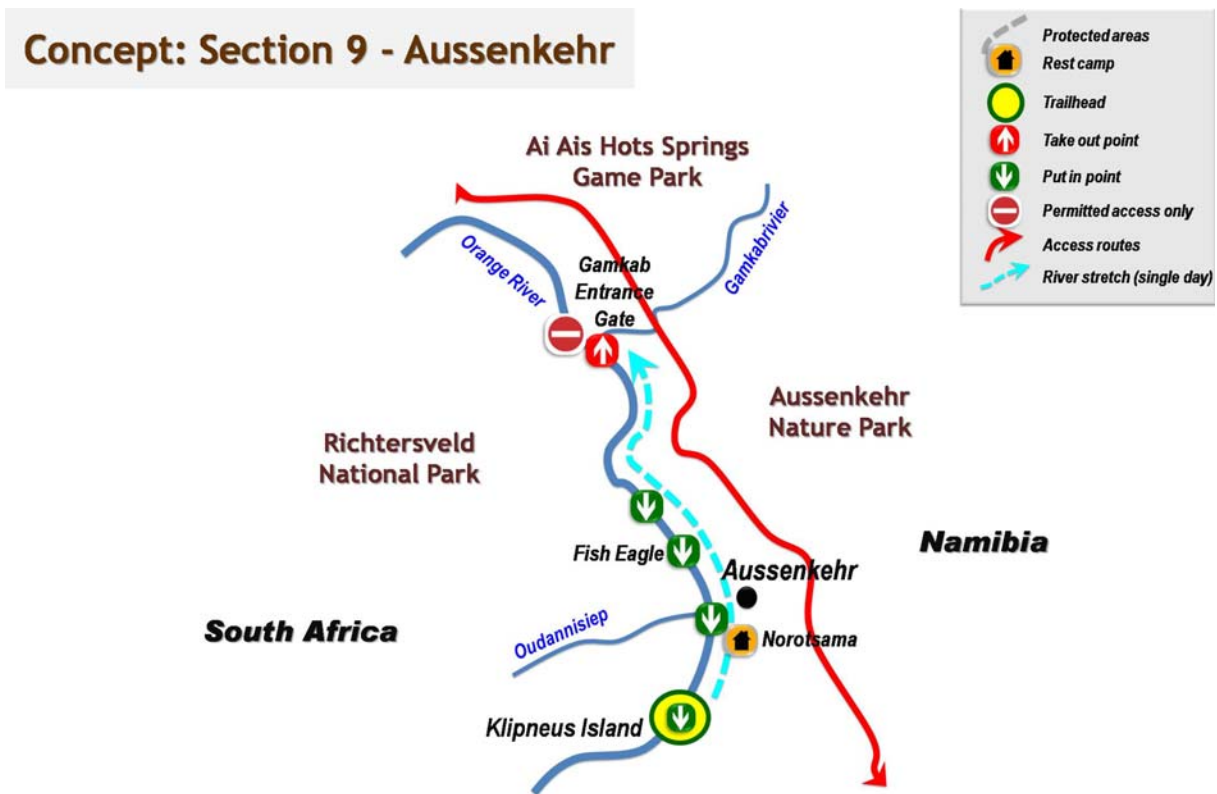


Figure 26: Integrated Concept Proposal, Section 9 (Aussenkehr)

4.3.9.2 Sensitivities

Similar to the Riemvasmaak and Vioolsdrift sections of the river, this section is characterised by a moderate to totally transformed riparian habitat mainly as a result of mining, agriculture, livestock and settlement impacts. Offering a wide variety of river landscapes including absolute xeric pools, pools and ripples, rocky, and braided, this river section can be used to accommodate guests of the various campsites and lodges in the area.

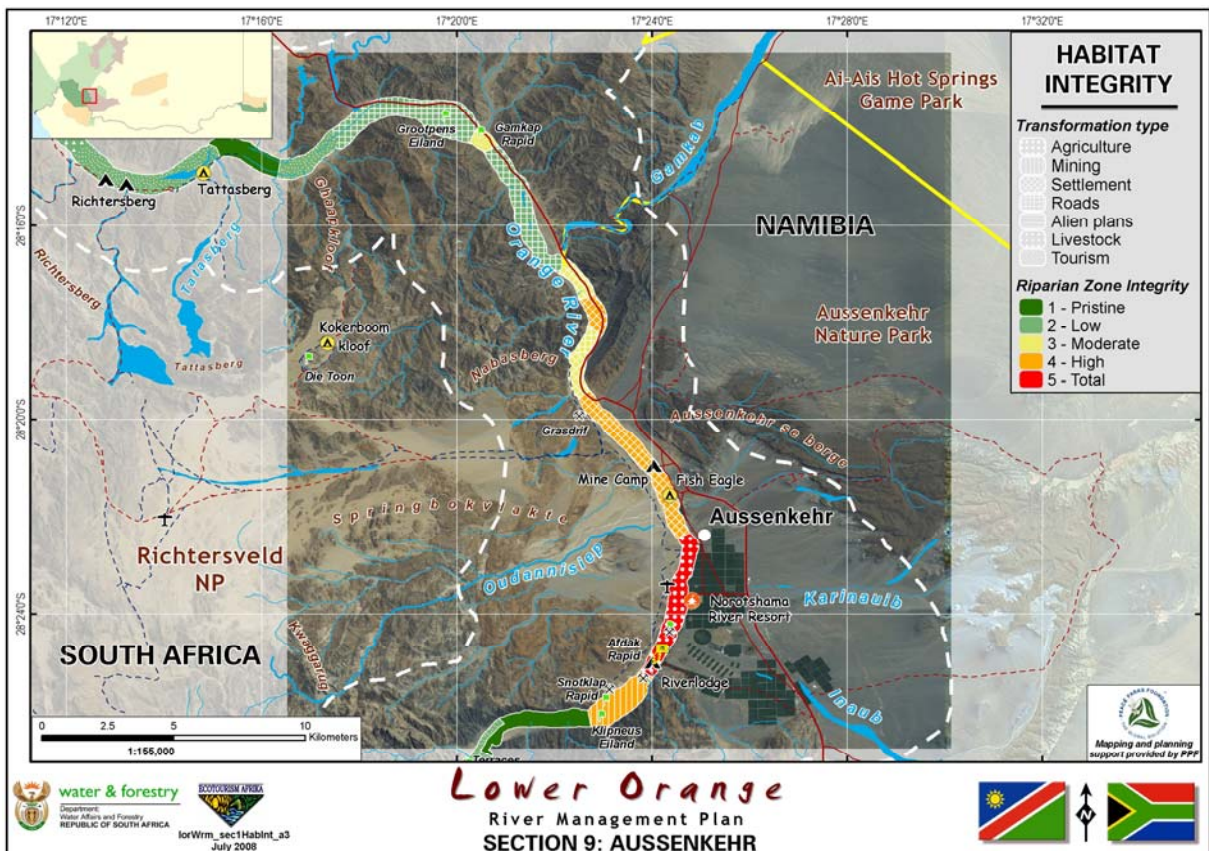
It is proposed that a trailhead be established at the point furthest upstream within this section accessible by road. In this way the maximum length of the river and the maximum diversity within this section can be utilised. This would require an access and development agreement with the relevant landowner.

Due to the current benefits attained by Norotsama Lodge, which serves as the current take-out point for many of the river trips, sensitivities could be experienced, regarding the proposed change to the ending of the previous section and the change in role that the Aussenkehr section would play.

Additionally, it will be necessary to address the benefit to the Richtersveld Community, since they currently do not access the river in this section, yet do impact on, have a responsibility to manage the shoreline and surrounding area. As for the other sections a percentage split should suffice.

Water quality aspects are a concern, with potential sources of pollution coming from agriculture and settlement. Water quality concerns must be addressed and monitored to ensure that perceptions regarding these concerns are positive rather than negative.

Despite the transformation levels within this portion of the river, the role of water, irrigation and farming within deserts and regional growth must be included in the interpretative material provided to users. This material can be developed in association with the Aussenkehr farms, as well as the Departments of Water Affairs and Agriculture. (Refer Map 96.)



Map 96: Habitat Integrity, Section 9 (Aussenkehr)

4.3.9.3 CDP

As a highly impacted section of the river, the Aussenkehr section will not be able attract guests as a stand alone destination. It is envisaged that this area will be able to accommodate users from the various camps along this section of the river, and expand their options by utilising the Klipneus Island Trailhead as a put-in point and the Gamkab Gate as a take-out point. This would enable half and full day trips totalling 17.5km of paddling, including several rapids. Similar to the Violsdrift section, this river section should be managed as an open river section, only requiring a river register to be completed, logging the point of access and exit. Safety standards must be similar to that agreed to at Violsdrift. (Refer Maps 97 and 98.)

Below Table 9 summarises the distance for this river section:

Table 9: River Distances, Section 9 (Aussenkehr)

Section	Product	Activity	From	To	Km	Total distance
9	a. Day paddles (NAM)	Rafting	Klipneus Island	Gamkab Gate	17.50	17.50

4.3.9.4 Requisite Actions

The following actions are required to ensure that the CDP for this river section can be achieved:

- Develop a river access record keeping system;
- Develop a standard for river use for this section of the river;
- Negotiate and develop trailheads at respective places; and,
- Conclude a revenue sharing agreement with the relevant property owners.



Map 97: CDP, Section 9 (Aussenkehr)



4.3.10 River Section 10 (ARTP)

4.3.10.1 Integrated Concept Proposal

Similar to the Riemvasmaak section of the river, this river section has exceptional access, due to the presence of the main road from Noordoewer to Rosh Pinah. Rather than negatively impact on the river experience, the presence of this road allows for product differentiation, by allowing camps to be serviced, rather than transporting all requisite equipment along with the guests, slowing progress significantly.

Three distinct products are suggested, the first being traditional or classic river trips, the second being a luxury river safari, a safari which utilises lodges along the river, rather than the traditional campsites, and the third fishing charters, providing motorised access to the river for fishing and birding.

It is recommended that an Adventure Hub be developed close to Gamkab gate, consisting of a lodge, self catering chalets, and campsites, as well as facilities for storing, servicing and maintaining rafts, canoes and kayaks.

Facilities for the river camps (refer Figure 27) should be developed at the confluence of the Fish and Orange rivers, as well as at Koukams Island, downstream of Oena Mine, yet should be minimal, enhance rather than detract from the camping experience, and utilise local materials and designs.

Facilities for the luxury river safaris (refer Figure 28) should be developed at Tattasberg; Bo-Plaats and at Nuab. It is recommended that these lodges be based on the local vernacular architecture, similar to that of Tattasberg in the Richtersveld National Park.

For the Fishing Charter Camp (refer Figure 29), it is recommended that the camp be developed at Nuab, close to that of the luxury river camp. This approach will minimise impacts, allow for shared facilities and management, and thereby increase efficiency.

Besides targeting guests from the Gamkab Adventure Hub, guests can also be sourced from Sendelingsdrift, yet this would require guests to cross to Namibia on the Pont, prior to being shuttled to the various put-in points/trailheads along this section of the river. To facilitate access, reduce conflict, and co-ordinate guest activities, it is recommended that only one concessionaire be responsible for all activities.

Undertaken in this way, numerous river trips, of varying lengths, styles and duration can be offered to guests. Recognising the trend for 3 day adventures within the tourism industry, this river section allows for a range of river trips ranging from half day to four day in length.

Concept: Section 10 - ARTP River Camps

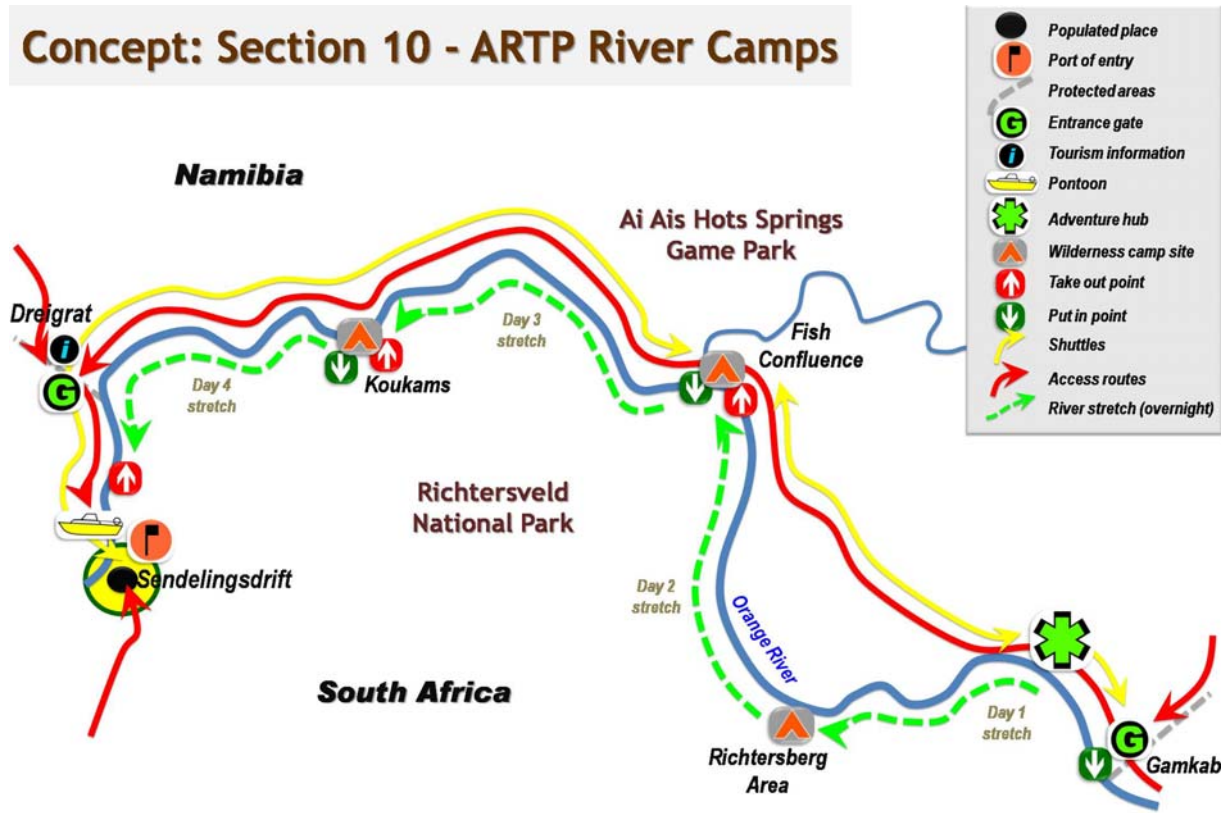


Figure 27: Integrated Concept Proposal, Section 10 (ARTP) – River Camps

Concept: Section 10 - Luxury Camps

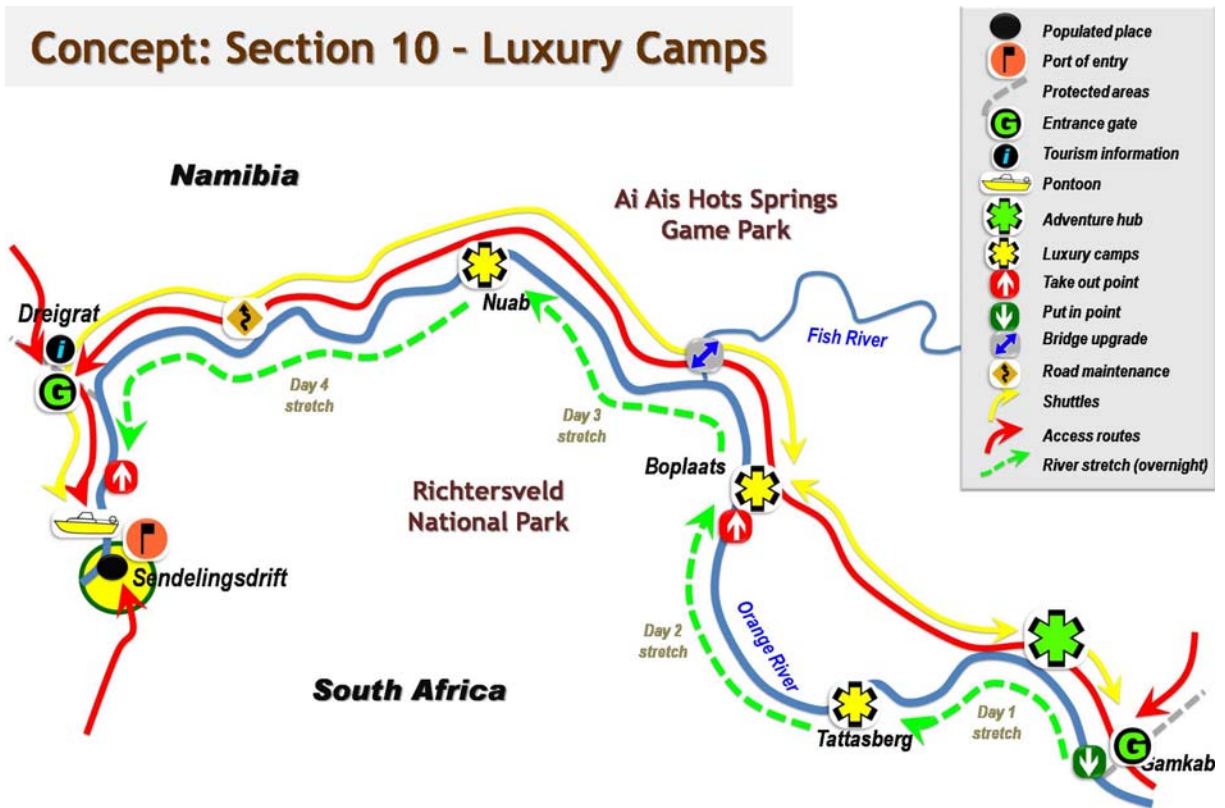


Figure 28: Integrated Concept Proposal, Section 10 (ARTP) – Luxury Camps

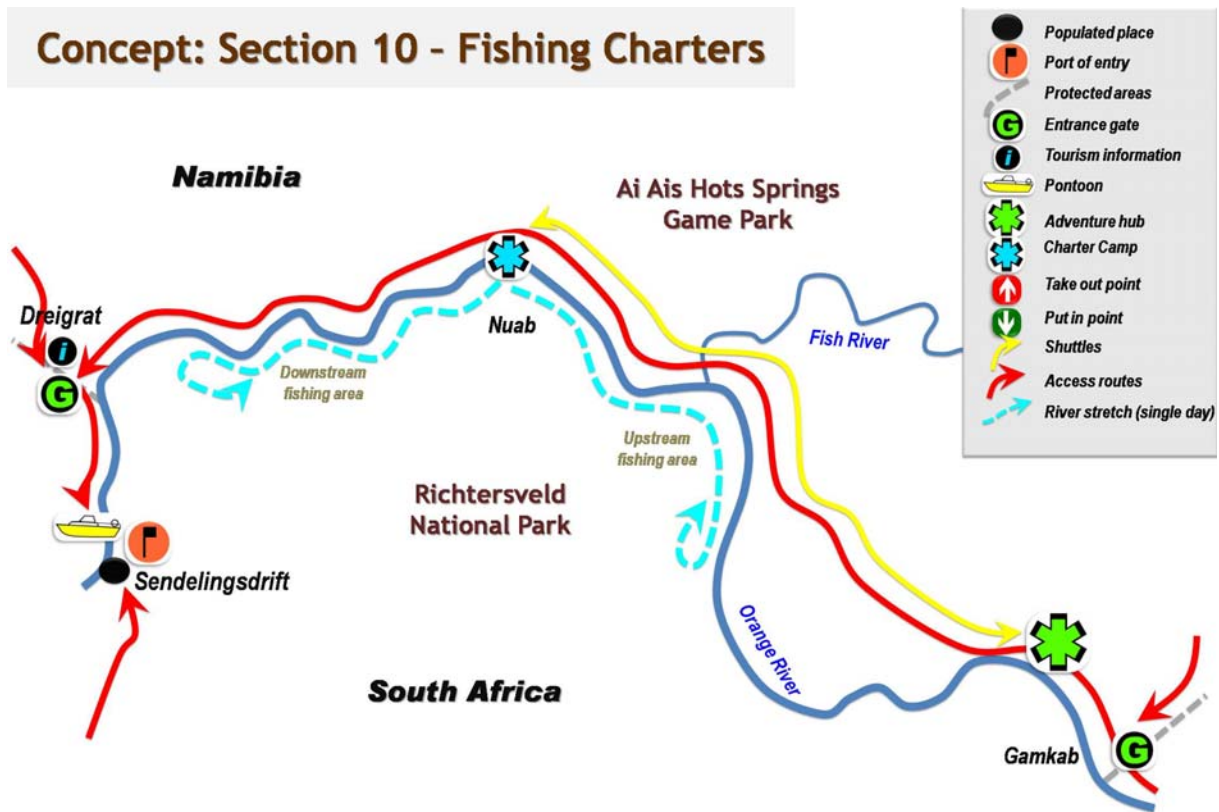


Figure 29: Integrated Concept Proposal, Section 10 (ARTP) – Fishing Charters

4.3.10.2 Sensitivities

This river section represents a microcosm of most of the river landscapes, offering maximum diversity, ideal for ecotourism development. Environmental sensitivities include concerns regarding water quality emanating from agricultural development and the settlement at Aussenkehr.

Despite being within the ARTP, several aspects such as the Rosh Pinah road, mine and prospecting affect the integrity of the riparian habitat, resulting in most of the river being classified as low impacts, yet with the portion below Nuab ranging from moderately to totally transformed, mostly as a result of mining activities both in South Africa and Namibia.

Critical to ensuring ecological connectivity and protecting the last remaining pristine portion of this river section, it is essential that the portion of the river between Gamkab and Tattasberg receive special attention and protection. This portion of the river is the last remaining portion where there are no impacts from roads, tracks, tourism infrastructure or mining activity.

Since this river section falls entirely within the ARTP, sensitivities do exist regarding access control, resource impacts, benefits and finances. Through the ARTP structures, and specifically through agreements similar to those proposed for the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park's financial protocols, it would be possible to address the manner in which the ecotourism potential could be unlocked equitably, with financial benefits to both countries, even though the logistics and access would be undertaken from Namibia. An advantage of this approach is that the Product would be able to draw on the brand awareness of the Namibian Parks, ease of access as a result of the mine road, yet still be able to provide a direct and tangible benefit to the Richtersveld Community.

Due to the presence of mining activities within the ARTP concerns regarding the quality of the guest experience can be raised, yet it is believed that if correctly interpreted and included as part of the cultural