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GOVERNMENT NOTICE**Water Affairs and Forestry, Department of***Government Notice*

- 1057 National Water Act (36/1998): Invitation to submit written comments in terms of section 110 on the proposed construction of Phase-2 of the Olifants River Water Resource Development Project and Environmental Impact Assessment relating thereto

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GOVERNMENT NOTICE

DEPARTMENT OF WATER AFFAIRS AND FORESTRY

No. 1057**28 October 2005**

INVITATION TO SUBMIT WRITTEN COMMENTS IN TERMS OF SECTION 110 OF THE NATIONAL WATER ACT, 1998 (ACT 36 OF 1998) ON THE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF PHASE-2 OF THE OLIFANTS RIVER WATER RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT RELATING THERETO

The Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry intends constructing the government water works as contained in the Schedule hereto.

In terms of section 110(1)(b)(iii) interested parties are invited to submit written comments on the proposed water works and the environmental impact assessment by 31 December 2005. Comments must be submitted to the Director-General, Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, Private Bag X313, Pretoria 0001; Fax: 012- 336-7399 and marked for the attention of Mr. O J S van den Berg, Manager: Options Analysis North.

SCHEDULE ON THE PROPOSED PHASE 2 OF THE OLIFANTS RIVER WATER RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (GOVERNMENT WATER WORKS) AND SUMMARY OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

A. PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF THE SCHEME

Water requirements in parts of the Limpopo and Mpumalanga Provinces are expected to increase significantly due to new and proposed developments in the region. Whilst extensive mining of platinum group metals being the main economic driver, there are also severe social needs for water.

The focus of this project is the middle parts of the Olifants River Catchment and extends into the upper parts of the Mogalakwena and Sand River catchments. It includes the towns of Mokopane, Burgersfort, Steelpoort, Jane Furse, Polokwane and Lebowakgomo.

The preferred scheme, as selected by the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, in consultation with the Limpopo and Mpumalanga Provincial Governments, for

which an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) has been undertaken, comprises the following infrastructure as also shown on the attached map:

□ **Sub phase 2A**

The construction of the proposed De Hoop Dam on the Steelpoort River, some 35km to the south-west of the town Steelpoort.

Some technical details of the dam are summarised below:

Crest Length	1 050 metre
Full Supply Level	915 metre above sea level
Dam Height	81 metre
Maximum Water Depth	67 metre
Total Inundation Area	1 690 hectares
Storage Volume	347 million m ³

The construction of three gauging weirs on the Steelpoort River, one upstream and one downstream of the De Hoop Dam and one near the confluence of the Steelpoort and the Olifants Rivers to provide monitoring information to assist in the management of De Hoop Dam and abstractions at the town of Steelpoort.

The realignment of a section of 25 km of the provincial road between Steelpoort and Stoffberg (the R555) around the dam basin.

□ **Sub phases 2B and 2G**

The construction of a 70 km long bulk pipeline, associated pump stations, balancing dams, off-takes and reservoirs from Flag Boshielo Dam mostly along the D2015, D885 and P18 roads to the farm Pruissen, located to the south-east of Mokopane. This will be upgraded later by construction of a second parallel pipeline (sub phase 2G)

❑ **Sub phase 2C**

Construction of an abstraction weir on the Steelpoort River, pump station and desilting dam near Steelpoort town

❑ **Sub phases 2D, 2E and 2F**

The construction of a 120 km long bulk pipeline, associated pump stations, balancing dams, off-takes and reservoirs from the town of Steelpoort, along the R37 (between Burgersfort and Lebowakgomo) past Atok Mine to the existing Olifantspoort Weir. Implementation will be optimised by integrating existing infrastructure with the proposed works.

- ❑ The construction of a 23 km long bulk pipeline, associated pump stations, balancing dams, off-takes and reservoirs from the proposed De Hoop Dam to Jane Furse to supply potable water for communal water supply on the Nebo Plateau. An approximate route for this pipeline has been determined, but must still be finalised. This pipeline is most likely to be constructed by the Sekhukhune District Municipality.

- ❑ The provisional construction schedule, based on projected growth in water requirements in the different parts of the project area, is as follows:

Sub phase	Start construction	Completion
2A	2006	2010
2B	2007	2009
2C	2007	2009
2D	2010	2012
2E	2013	2017
2F	2013	2015
2G	2014	2016

B SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENTS (EIA)

During the Environmental Assessment: Scoping Phase, six key issues were identified which needed to be further assessed and clarified. Technical studies by specialists, including a study on strategic considerations, were commissioned to better understand the issues and associated impacts. A seventh key issue has arisen during the assessment process, viz. that of cooperative governance.

A summary of the key issues are presented below:

□ Impact on quantity and quality of river flows.

The proposed dam will reduce the annual flows in the Steelpoort River by approximately 63%, yet will have little significant impact on the quantity of river flows in the Lower Olifants River. The 63% reduction in the Mean Annual Runoff (MAR) is due to high flows being retained in the proposed dam. The base flow in the Steelpoort River will be higher after commissioning of the proposed dam, thanks to the regular releases to meet the requirements of the Reserve and existing legal users

□ Aquatic and terrestrial ecology.

The loss of Sekhukhuneland Centre of Plant Endemism Mountain Bushveld vegetation habitat has been identified as a significant impact that will require mitigation. Off-site mitigation in the form of establishing a conservation area has been recommended.

Aquatic impacts, although of some significance, may be improved and negative impacts could potentially be mitigated within the same off-site mitigation site as recommended for terrestrial ecology.

- Long-term sustainability and water demand management.

There appears to be potential to improve the efficiency of all water users within the Middle Olifants River Catchment. A demand management strategy within the Middle Olifants Catchment should be developed.

- Capacity of the receiving environment.

The potential influx of people during the dam construction period could have an impact on the available services, as will the anticipated influx of people due to associated mining developments.

It is recommended that National, Provincial and Local Government must continue to give attention to upgrading facilities and services in the area to ensure that the anticipated widespread benefits, due to the boost in the regional economy from mining, are realised.

The existing health-care services in the project area is inadequate and will require intervention.

Another important service that is needed in the project area is improved domestic water supplies for the many communities that currently lack adequate services.

- Minimising construction related impacts.

Construction activities result in a range of impacts that are common to most construction sites. Potential impacts include dust and noise, increased traffic, the influx of people, social ills, crime, the development of informal trading areas, unnecessary destruction of valuable flora and pollution of the soil and water resources.

Careful planning of construction camps and activities in relation to the surrounding environment, as well the implementation and monitoring of the Environmental Management Plan can lead to the adequate mitigation of these impacts.

□ Land acquisition and compensation.

The proposed De Hoop Dam basin will affect 15 private landowners, of which two are Communal Property Associations and the balance, individual commercial farmers. The realigned R555 is also a factor as the potential noise impact on existing game and eco-tourism enterprises, particularly at the tail end of the dam, will potentially be significant.

Approximately ninety graves have been identified in the dam basin and it is likely that more will be located during construction. This will require an appropriate programme of exhumation and reburial in terms of current legislation.

A large number of cultural heritage and archaeological sites have been identified within the dam basin. A number of these sites have been identified as requiring further excavation and mapping in accordance with the National Heritage Resources Act.

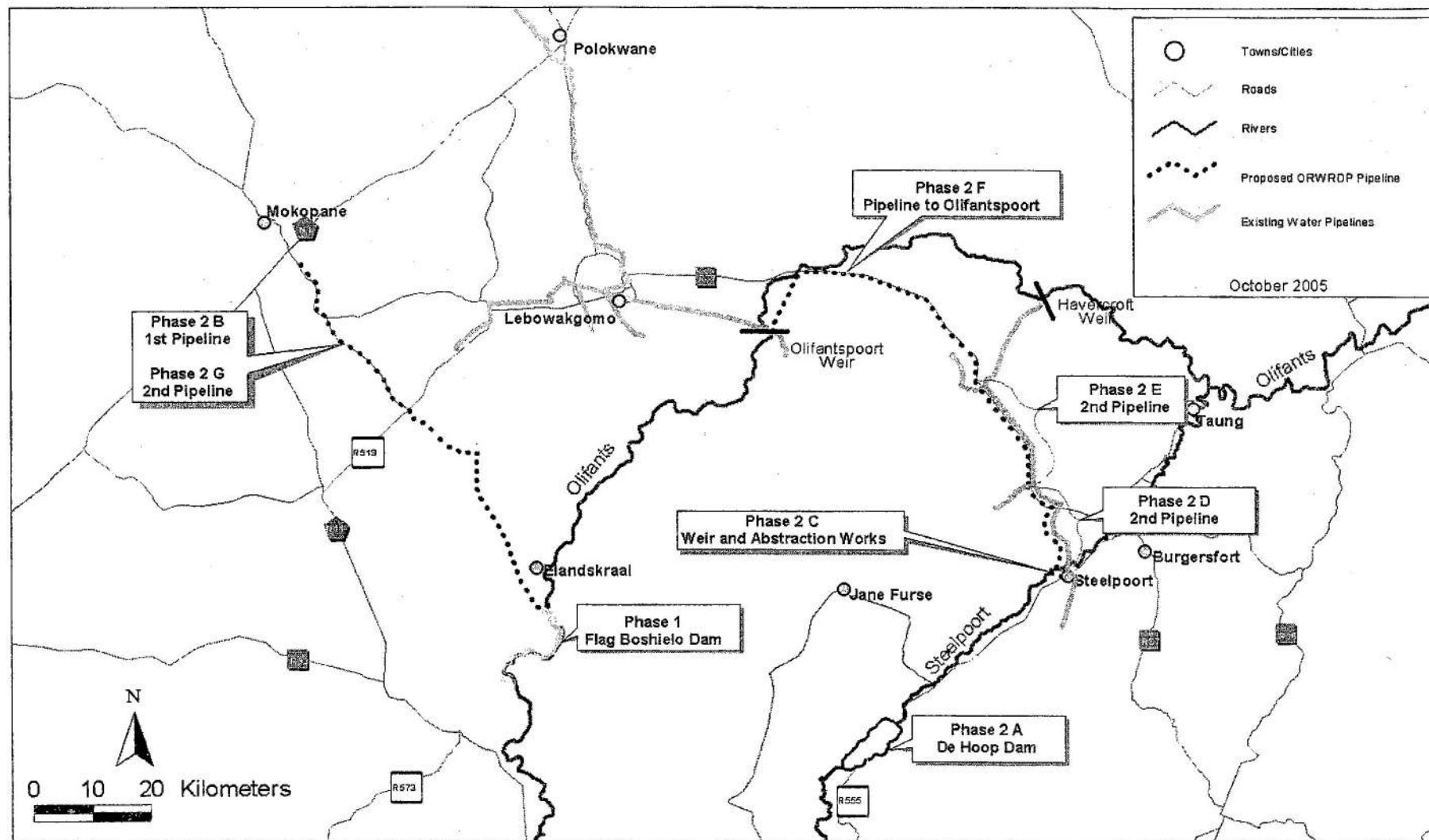
□ Cooperative Governance.

This issue concerns cooperative governance, between different spheres of government, within the different spheres of government, and within single government departments, in order to ensure successful implementation of mitigation measures.

Besides securing water for social and economic development, positive impacts of the proposed project are the employment opportunities (for dam construction, operation of the bulk infrastructure and employment on current and future mines), that will bring added benefit to the region and its people.

The detailed environmental specifications contained within the Environmental Management Plan will be implemented by the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry and its appointed contractors.

An EIA report was lodged with the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism to obtain project authorisation in terms of the Environment Conservation Act (Act 73 of 1989). The particular application was registered as 12/12/20/553.



Olifants River Water Resources Development Project :
Layout and phasing of proposed infrastructure

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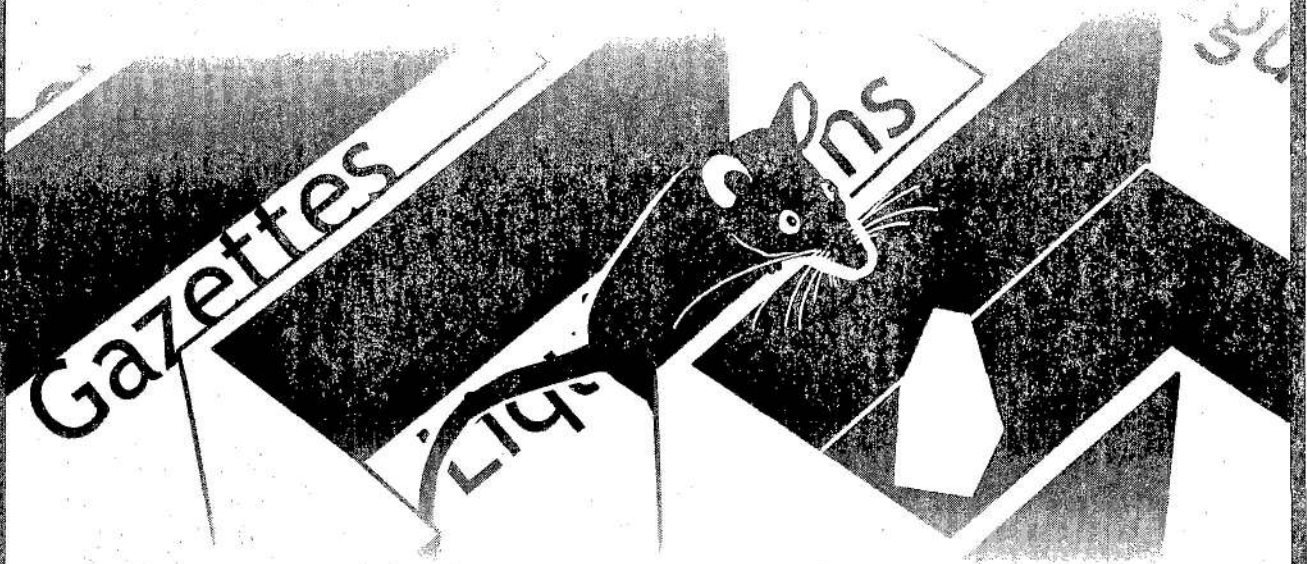
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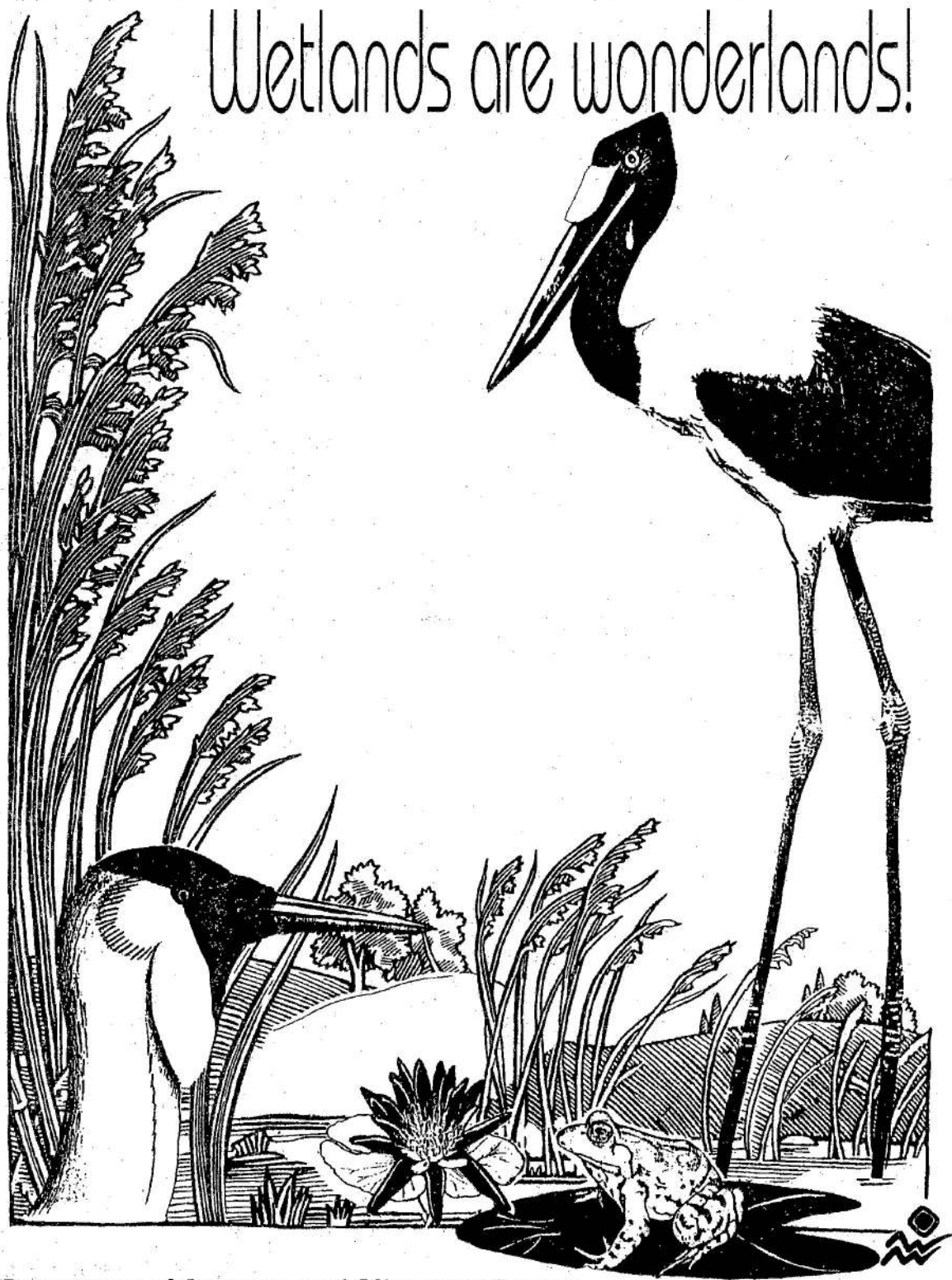
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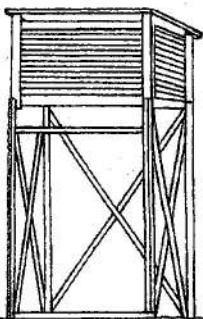
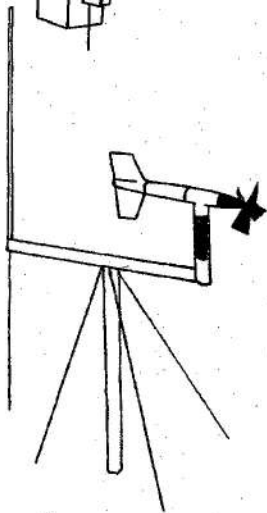


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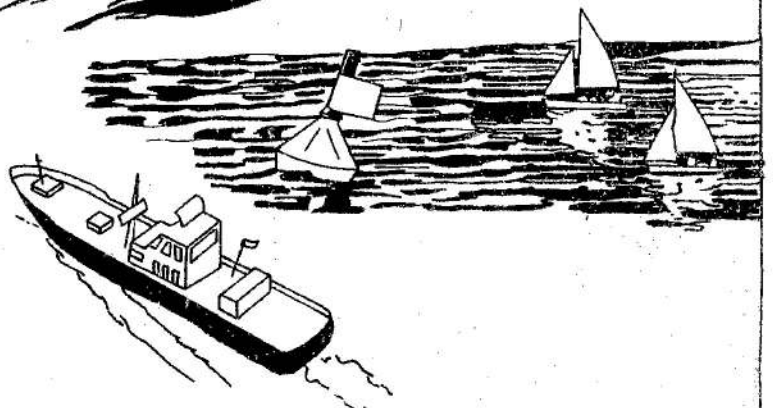
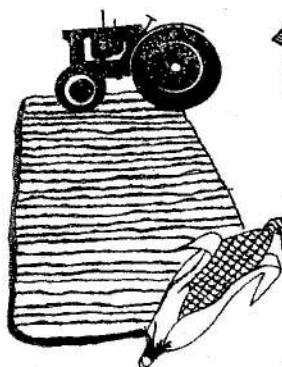
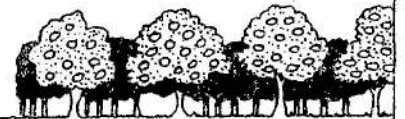
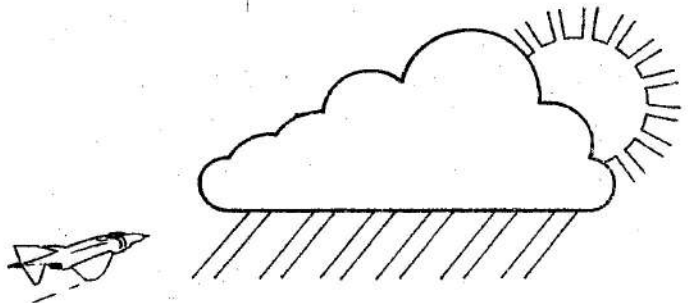


Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism

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