

# Witvlei Travel Guide

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EXPLORING A VITAL PLACE IN NAMIBIA

2024

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# FOREWORDS

## WITVLEI TRAVEL GUIDE



Martina Hasheela Fikameni  
Witvlei Village Council

Witvlei has been my home since 27 November 2023, and will be until February 2025. That is why I am very pleased with the travel guide developed by Suni e.V.

Namibian and German organizations in the field of education need to continue strengthening their support for one another and explore more opportunities in both education and travel guidance. I am delighted to see this travel guide, which will help attract more tourists and provide visitors with greater knowledge of Namibian traditions and culture.

This is also a way to open more business opportunities for the Witvlei community and surrounding farmers.

Witvlei, 17.2.2025



Patricia Ndjavera  
Chairwomen of Suni e.V.

Witvlei was a home to me for many years during my early years of teaching. Therefore, I was very happy that our motivated team of Suni e.V. members have put together this extraordinary travel guide about one of my favourite places in Namibia.

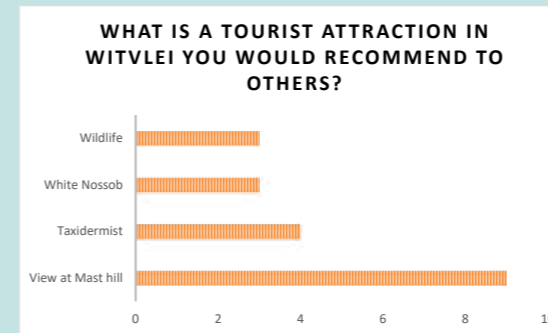
As a German-Namibian organization in the field of education Suni e.V. develops unusual methods to teach others. In this travel guide experts from Witvlei give us an inside into their village and community. We have put this inside into perspective and shared it with others.

I am proud of my team for developing this travel guide. And I shout out to everybody visiting Namibia: Come and see for yourself. Discover the unseen places and enjoy the local perspective.

Gobabis, 10.1.2025

A local perspective

We have asked 15 people from Witvlei ...<sup>1</sup>

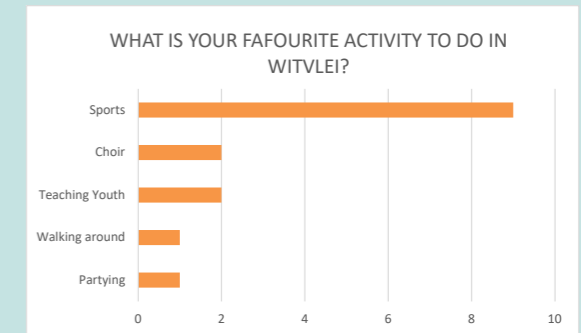


### What do you love most about Witvlei?

The river side / People are social with a humble life style / The quite and easy life / I love the vast open spaces and natural scenery. / Children and church / Weather / When the White Nossob river is flowing / It's picturesque view from the mountain top and I love taking evening walks along the river. It's so soothing, relaxing and calms the nerves / The weather and it's community / The people, since it's us that make up this small village, that has no job opportunities, but we still survive and maintain its existence. / Quiet, peaceful / Close to Windhoek / It is a peaceful place and you save a lot due to less facilities.

### What would you advise female travellers when visiting Witvlei?

It is perfectly safe. Women support women. One will never get lost. Everyone will know where you stay and always check on you. / You are Welcome! / Keep covered - mosquitoes are real / Enjoy! / They should pack hats, sunscreen and shades.



### How would you describe Witvlei in one sentence?

A small village with social people with a humble life style / Unique and vibrant / Witvlei is a small scenic village. / Witvlei mama a calm place no violence / It's a small dusty, cold in winter and in spring it's very rainy village / Witvlei is an amazing place to be. / Our village in the middle of Windhoek and Gobabis / Witvlei is a place where only the strong, hard working survive. / It's is a crime free village, one can walk alone at night in the streets / Home away from home. / Quiet and friendly society. / It is a flexible place to live in.

### What should visitors know about the history of Witvlei?

That it was used by the whites during the war and it was a place elephants would come to drink water. / How Damara & Namas where relocated from their home lands to stay in one place and called it Witvlei and built abbatoir to create job opportunities. / It is a rich history that played a role in shaping Namibia's independence.

<sup>1</sup> / This survey was completed by with typeform.com. Of the 15 participants nine were female and nine were teachers at NCS. The participants were between 62 and 18 years old.

# WITVLEI IN OMAHEKE REGION IN NAMIBIA

Witvlei is a village in the Omaheke region in the eastern part of Namibia. Omaheke means “sandy” in Otjiherero. The Omaheke Region is one of the 14 political regions of Namibia. It is a vast region with a total land surface area of 84 612 km<sup>2</sup> which comprises 10.3 percent of the country’s land surface. Omaheke has a population of approximately 102 881 people, which comprises 3.3 percent of Namibia’s population. The settlement of Witvlei is situated in the Okorukambe constituency directly on the Trans-Kalahari Highway, one of the most important highways in southern Africa. Located between Gobabis, the main administrative centre of the Omaheke Region, and the capital Windhoek, Witvlei serves as a transport hub and community centre for the surrounding residents. With a population of 2633, Witvlei is governed by a five-member local council.

The Nossob Combined School, the Witvlei Police Station, Witvlei Post Office, and the Witvlei Clinic are the most important government buildings in the village.

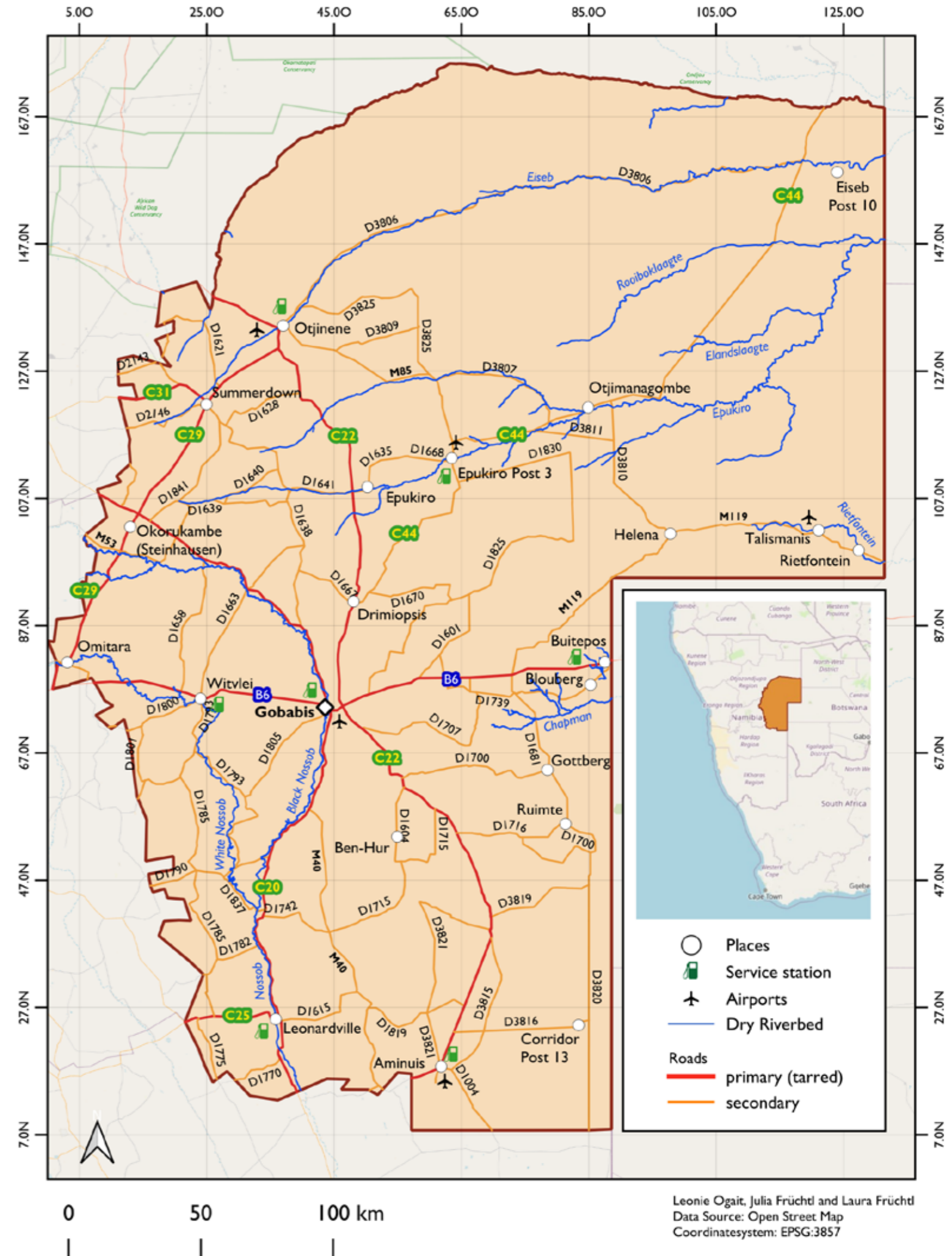
In addition, the small community has a variety of stores and shebeens, a cattle auction site, a taxidermist, a service station, and a soccer stadium.

The Mast Hill above Witvlei is famous for its magnificent views. Witvlei, like many places in the Omaheke, struggles with high rates of unemployment and land issues. However, with a vibrant civic life and a wide range of activities, Witvlei is a place worth discovering.

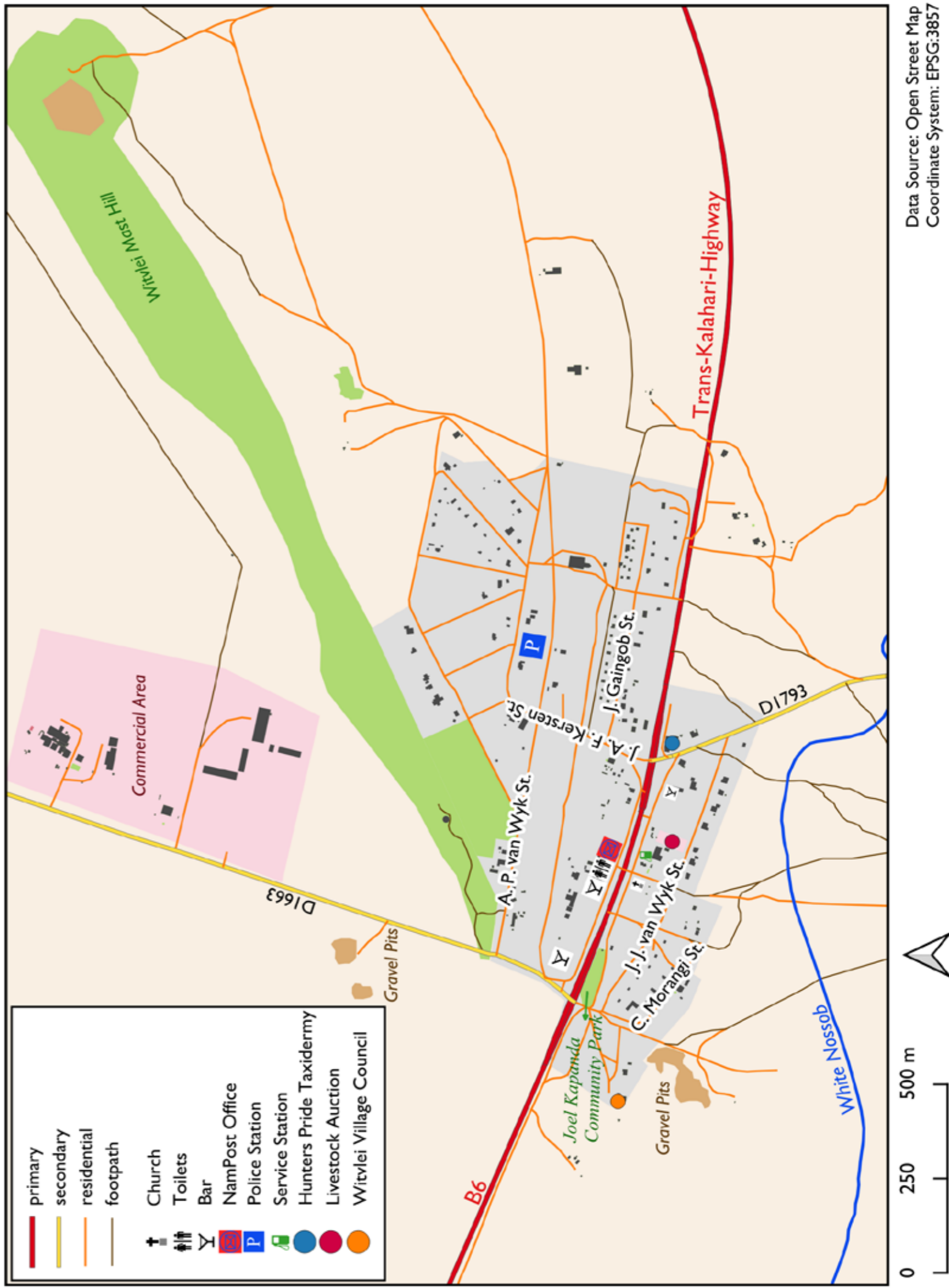
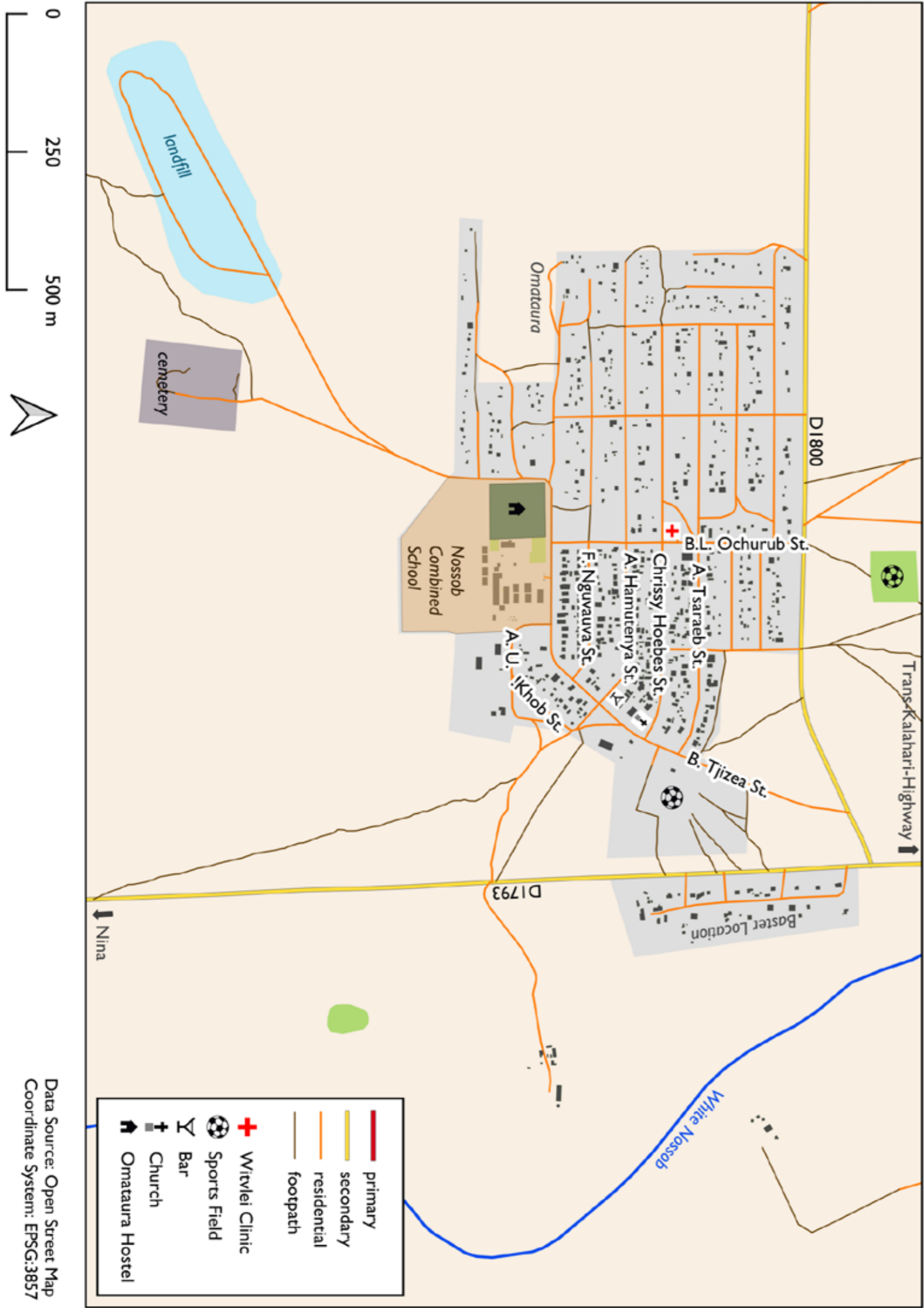


Photo: Lydia Shipopyeni Witvlei, 2024

Literature references: Namibia Statistics Agency (2023) Omaheke region. <https://census.nsa.org.na/omaheke-region/> (Accessed: June 1, 2024)



Leonie Ogait, Julia Früchtl and Laura Früchtl  
Data Source: Open Street Map  
Coordinatesystem: EPSG:3857



# HISTORY OF WITVLEI

*“We should tell our own story.”*

*Patricia Ndjavera, 2025*

The name Witvlei originates from Afrikaans. “Wit” means white, whereas “vlei” refers either to a depression in the ground that is (temporarily) filled with water or a salt pan. Originally, the name of the village in Khoekhoegowab was !Uri !Khubus, which means “white well” and has the same meaning as Witvlei. In Otjiherero, however, the name is Omataura, which means “to cut through to create a path.” The San were the first inhabitants of Namibia and of what is now the Omaheke Region and the area around Witvlei. Their presence has been evidenced in the form of rock engravings 16 km south of Witvlei on the Freiheit Ost farm, as well as on the farms Klein Witvlei and Margaretental east of Witvlei. The rock engravings on Freiheit Ost show human figures, animals such as kudu, ostrich, eland, elephant, and giraffe, as well as tracings of feet, and have yet to be dated by the National Museum of Namibia. At the turn of the 18th century, new inhabitants, mainly Mbanderu, OvaHerero, and Tswana, settled in the area around Witvlei.

From the 19th century on, conflicts between Nama, OvaHerero, and Mbanderu are documented. Witvlei (formerly spelled Witvley) is first mentioned in written documents as the site of a battle between OvaHerero and Nama in 1864.

From 1884 onwards, the area of today’s Namibia became occupied by the German Empire, starting at the coast in the area of today’s constituency !NamiḽNús. This is where the “Meilenschwindel” took place, in which the German Heinrich Vogelsang, agent of the German merchant Adolf Lüderitz, fraudulently acquired land from Oorlam Captain Joseph Frederiks II. The German rule over the territory, called “Schutzgebiet” (protection area), was punctuated by numerous rebellions, which culminated in a campaign of German reprisals.

After the genocide of OvaHerero, OvaMbanderu, Nama, Damara, and San communities from 1904-1908, German settlers occupied the land which was now a German colony called German South West Africa. German-speaking people settled in the area around Witvlei.

In 1915, during World War I, German South West Africa was invaded by the Western Allies in the form of South African and British forces. The German Empire lost its colonies, and the League of Nations, the predecessor of the United Nations, transferred the mandate for the territory of then South West Africa (today Namibia) to the Union of South Africa after World War I ended. The influx of Afrikaans-speaking farmers in the area of Omaheke took place under the occupation of the South African Union. From 1916 on, Witvlei had a postal agency called Gross-Witvley. In 1926, the Witvley Periodical Court was established.



Native Stock Brands were issued by the South African government to locals so they could mark their large livestock such as cows. Some of the corresponding documents, such as the “Native Stock Brands Register” from 1931, have been preserved. The register shows that in 1930, over 20 locals were registered by name as cattle owners with their own brand for livestock in Witvlei.

Witvlei became a station on the railroad line that connected Windhoek with Gobabis in the 1930s.

Impoverished South Africans resettled in the Omaheke around Witvlei, followed ten years later by Angolan Boers, so that by the 1950s there were already 700 registered farms in the Omaheke. As throughout Namibia, apartheid also prevailed in

Witvlei under South African occupation. People who were classified as “white”\* lived in the “town,” whereas people who were classified as “non-white” were settled in the so-called “location” (today Omataura) on the southern side of the Trans-Kalahari Highway, far from the road and the stores. Additionally, Nama and Damara people were relocated from other places to Witvlei’s location. This distribution is reflected in the townscape of Witvlei today. It is the reason for the different settlement patterns. Witvlei’s role in the independence struggle has yet to be researched. After Namibia’s independence in 1990, the composition of the population in Witvlei changed. With the newfound freedom to move within Namibia, people from other parts of the country settled in Witvlei.

\*At this point, the terms “white” and “non-white” describe the political positions of people within the racial segregation system of apartheid under South African occupation in the area of today’s Namibia.

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# GEOGRAPHY & CLIMATE

“Witvlei lies in one of the world’s largest continuous sand bodies.”

Vernon Malumani

Witvlei is situated at latitude 22° 23′ 60″ South and longitude 18° 28′ 60″ East at an altitude of 1448 m. Situated in the Kalahari Basin in eastern Namibia, in the Omaheke Region, Witvlei lies in one of the world’s largest continuous sand bodies. This area is characterized by semi-arid savannahs, sandy soils and flat bushland, covering the entire Omaheke. The characteristic red sand, which builds up the vast overgrown dunes of this landscape, is the most prominent sediment. Beneath this sediment are large groundwater reserves and fossil groundwater. The geographical location of Witvlei means that the inhabitants must face the challenges of a dry climate and limited water resources.

Rain-fed agriculture is not very reliable due to the poor soil quality and fluctuating rainfall. Due to a lack of water and fertile soil, the Omaheke is considered unsuitable for arable farming. Agriculture in the area around Witvlei is therefore largely based on extensive livestock farming, which is adapted to the difficult climatic conditions. Witvlei is surrounded by commercial farms such as Klein Witvlei, Okatjirute, Okatjirute Ost and Westerwald 2. The dry river Nossob flows through Witvlei. It

carries water at irregular intervals and causes flooding after heavy rainfall. Overall, rainfall in Namibia is very low, highly seasonal and usually falls between November and April.

The main rainfall months vary throughout the country, in the Omaheke region it is usually January. The total rainfall in Witvlei is only 300-350 ml per year. Between May and October there is usually not a single drop of rain in Witvlei. The average maximum temperature is 32-43 degrees Celsius, and the average minimum temperature is 4-6 degrees Celsius. During the day in summer, it gets over 40 degrees Celsius. However, the temperatures fluctuate greatly within a day, with cool temperatures in the morning, heat in the midday and afternoon, a balmy evening and a cold night. In winter, temperatures still reach 20-25 degrees Celsius, but may drop at night below 0 degrees Celsius. For visitors these high temperature fluctuations in Witvlei might be challenging.

Since the 1990s, rainfall in Namibia has decreased because of climate change. In Witvlei, this is noticeable in the form of increasing heat, more droughts, and years with extremely



Photo: Hans-Peter Baumeler, aerial view of Witvlei from a small airplane, 2018



Photo: Hans-Peter Baumeler, river bed of the Nossob, 2018



Photo: Annika Hoffmann, Witvlei Bridge, 2024

low amounts of rainfall. Scientists predict that there will be an average temperature increase of 2.6 to 3 degrees Celsius in the Omaheke by 2060. Currently, the Kalahari is warming significantly faster than the global average.

The Nossob is a dry river in the Kalahari in south-eastern Namibia, south-western Botswana and north-western South Africa. Its name in Khoekhoegowab is *ǀnuse !ab*.

The Nossob rises as the White Nossob not far east of the Namibian capital, Windhoek. North of Leonardville, it flows together with the Black Nossob which rises east of Okahandja.

The Nossob stretches over a length of 740 kilometers. It only carries surface water every few years. The Nossob is fed by the dry rivers Auob and the dry river Klein Nossob.

The Nossob River leaves Namibia and forms the border between Botswana and South Africa in the Kgalagadi Transfrontier National Park. It flows into the dry river Molopo in South Africa, which then flows into the Orange River, which is the only permanent river in central and southern Namibia.



Photo: Barbara Scharfbillig, White Nossob from the Witvlei Bridge, 2016

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# FLORA & FAUNA

“The vegetation and wildlife in the vicinity of Witvlei includes an amazing variety of species.”

Leonie Ogait, 2024

## Vegetation

The vegetation in the vicinity of Witvlei primarily consists of savannahs and bushland. Characteristic plant species include various types of acacias, such as the camel thorn acacia (*Acacia erioloba*) and the black thorn acacia (*Acacia mellifera*). These belong to the legume family (Fabaceae) and are known for their ability to survive in arid environments. They do this by either shading their trunk bases with wide canopies or by driving roots so deep that they reach groundwater at about 100 meters depth. These trees not only provide shade and protection for wildlife but are also an important source of fodder. In addition to these adaptations, some plant species also have defence systems such as the growth of thorns against predators, for example the camel thorn acacia. Additionally, there are grasses (Poaceae), such as species of the genus *Stipagrostis*, also known as steppe grasses. These grasses, as well as shrubs like the marama bean (*Tylosema esculentum*), are adapted to the seasonal rainfall patterns and form the basis for the grazing areas of livestock.



Photo: Leonie Ogait, Camel Thorn Acacia (*Acacia erioloba*), Witvlei, 2024



Photo: Annika Hoffmann, Darkling Beetle, from the family Tenebrionidae (*Alogenus cavifrons*), Witvlei, 2024



Photo: James Sharp, Sociable Weaver (*Philetairus socius*), Kalahari, South Africa, 2014





Photo: Tim Hartelt, Springbok in the Kalahari, Omaheke, 2024

## Wildlife

The wildlife in the vicinity of Witvlei includes both resident and migratory species. Common mammal species include antelopes such as kudus and oryxes, which have adapted to life in bushy areas. Springboks and impalas, on the other hand, prefer open areas. Besides these large mammals, one can find white-tailed gnus, Burchell's zebras, and warthogs in the Witvlei area. Some of these mammals are also found on and near roads, so drivers must exercise special caution on all Namibian roads, including those around Witvlei. Additionally, smaller mammals such as the black-backed jackal and small duikers, as well as various rodent species like the dassie, can be found. Namibia has the largest number of cheetahs in the world, of which 75% do not live in protected areas but on commercial land. The area around Witvlei has a medium and high density of cheetahs. Sightings of this endangered cat of prey are regularly documented on farms around Witvlei.

Besides mammals, several reptiles are also found in the Witvlei area, such as the common barking gecko, which is noted for its distinctive sounds.

Another class of vertebrates present in large numbers and variety are birds. These include both native species and migratory birds that visit the region seasonally.

Native species include, for example, the weaver bird, speckled pigeon, and the marabou stork. The birdlife includes birds of prey such as the martial eagle and various falcon species that hunt in this area, as well as smaller species that feed on insects and seeds. Each summer migratory birds from the Northern Hemisphere come to Namibia to find optimal breeding and feeding grounds. These include species such as the lesser spotted eagle, the red-backed shrike, and the European roller.

Besides vertebrates, there are also numerous invertebrate species, including nematodes, solifuges, termites, beetles, scorpions, and many insects.

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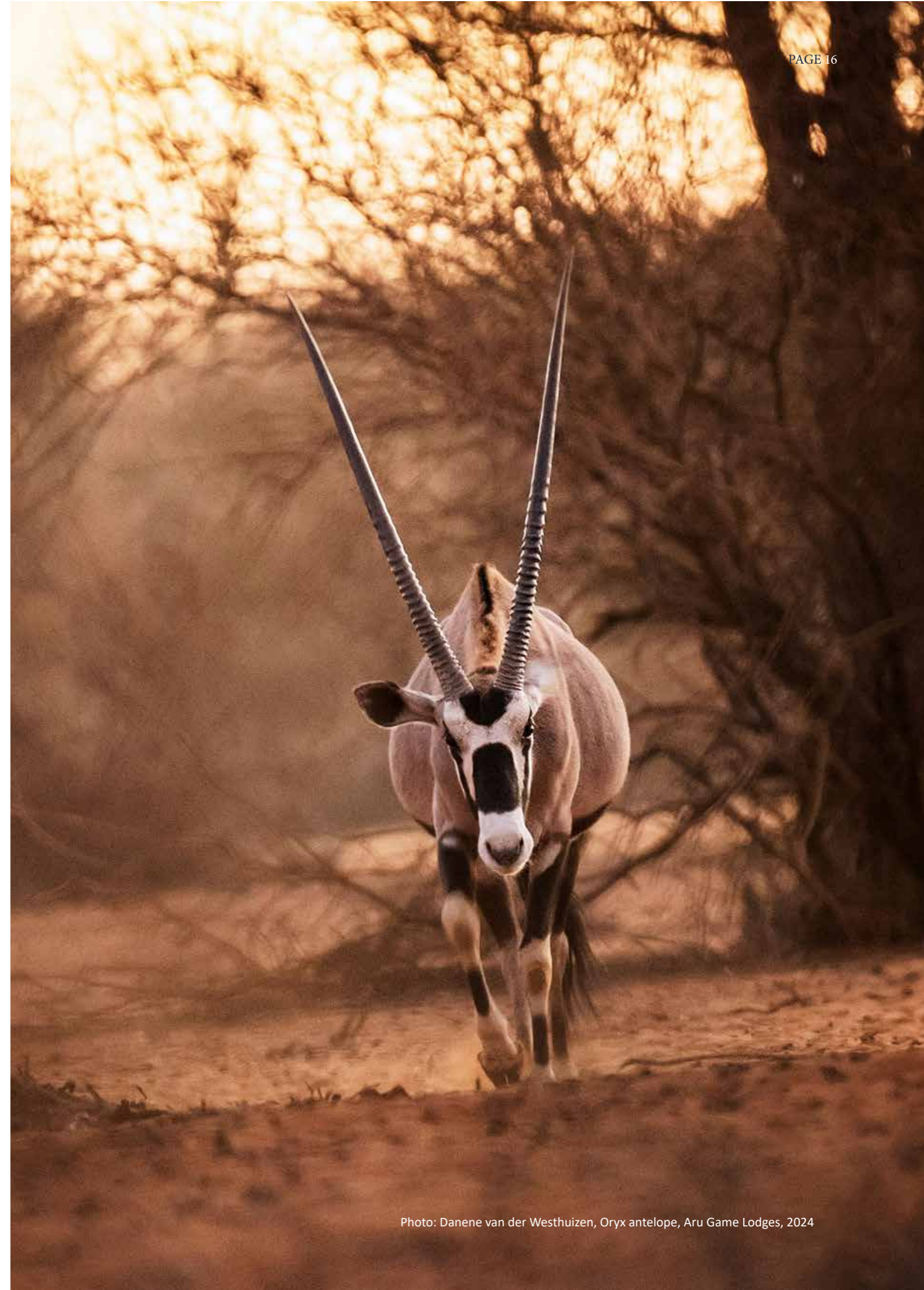


Photo: Danene van der Westhuizen, Oryx antelope, Aru Game Lodges, 2024

# INFRASTRUCTURE

*“Witvlei is located on the B6, a Namibian national road, called Trans-Kalahari Highway.”*

*Vernon Malumani, 2024*

Despite its small size, Witvlei has a basic infrastructure that serves the needs of its residents and people travelling through. This includes facilities for daily needs such as stores, a clinic for basic medical care, the Witvlei police station, a post office, an accommodation, and a gas station. West of Witvlei there is an airport for small aeroplanes at latitude N -22.4053 and longitude E 18.4592. The airport has two runways and the ICAO airport code FYWI.

The Nossob Combined School with a boarding home and two private kindergartens are located in Witvlei. The soccer stadium in Witvlei is well attended on match days. Beside from the Trans-Kalahari Highway, no other tire roads exist in Witvlei. Gravel or sand roads are common.

The mobile phone reception in Witvlei is very good with MTC Namibia or TN Mobile. MTC offers a separate tariff for guests from abroad. Next to the petrol station, there is an ATM that accepts debit and visa cards. You can also pay by e-wallet, a payment system on your cell phone.

Witvlei is surrounded by commercial farms which, apart from cattle breeding, are mainly active in the tourism sector. There is a farmers' association, which organizes activities in the Witvlei Farmers' Association Hall.

Moreover, you can find clubs and small restaurants - such as the Chill Out Bar Witvlei. Ziegi's Accommodation is the best-known hotel in town and has an attached supermarket. Furthermore, coal is produced in Witvlei in a coal kiln.



Photo: Hans-Peter Baumeler, train station in Witvlei, 2018

## Water & Power Supply

The water supply in Witvlei is stable and is provided by the state provider NamWater via a groundwater supply. Its water supply system consists of four boreholes. These are between 31.1 m and 60 m deep and pump water into a 1000 m<sup>3</sup> concrete underground storage tank from where it is transferred into the network system. The supply is provided either via a house connection or via communal taps.

The electricity supply in Witvlei is provided by NamPower. Witvlei has a network of streetlights and a stable power supply. You will need three-pole plugs for electrical appliances.



Photo: Lydia Shipopyeni, Witvlei post office, 2024

## Trans-Kalahari Highway

Witvlei is located on the B6, a Namibian national road that forms part of the Trans-Kalahari Highway or Trans-Kalahari Corridor (TKC). The TKC passes through Namibia, Botswana and South Africa, connecting to the Maputo Corridor, which leads to Mozambique. Both highways thereby connect the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. Through the Trans Kalahari Corridor Management Committee, the smooth transportation of goods between the three TKC countries is coordinated. In Namibia, the TKC is predominantly a single-lane road.

Witvlei offers long-distance drivers the opportunity to refuel, shop, and spend the night. At the junction of the Trans-Kalahari Highway with the D1793 in the centre of Witvlei, you can take minibuses and cabs to the west towards Windhoek and to the east towards Gobabis.



Photo: Lydia Shipopyeni, Trans-Kalahari Highway, 2024



All three photos: Lydia Shipopyeni, police station, clinic & service station in Witvlei, 2024

### Police & Fire Department

Witvlei has a permanently manned police station. The Witvlei police station shares a police car with the Omitara police station 57 km away. Due to the high unemployment rate, petty crime is higher than in other places. People who are not familiar with the area are advised to only walk at night in a group with a local.

There are frequent bush fires in the region around Witvlei. The town has a fire engine and the nearest professional fire department is in Gobabis. The surrounding commercial farms have a voluntary network of mutual support in case of bushfires.

### Witvlei Clinic

The Witvlei Clinic is permanently staffed by a nurse. She manages the provision of retroviral therapy, vaccinations, and initial psychiatric treatment. Pregnant women are cared for, and family planning advice is provided at the Witvlei Clinic. Nevertheless, the infant mortality rate in the Omaheke is the highest in the country.

The nearest hospital is 50 km away in Gobabis, the administrative capital of the Omaheke region. There you will also find private dentists and paediatricians.

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# NOSSOB COMBINED SCHOOL

*“Nossob Combined School is a unique place where tolerance for diversity is upheld and promoted.”*

*Niklas Mukungu Kakero, 2024, principal of Nossob Combined School*

*“I like the way Witvlei is quiet and everyone is friendly here.”*

*Rachel, 2024, learner at Nossob Combined School*

The Nossob Combined School (NCS) is a state-run comprehensive school with an attached boarding school in Witvlei. There are currently over 1000 pupils and 44 teachers at the school. Nossob Combined School officially opened its doors in 1974 as a primary school. The name Nossob was derived from the Nossob River which passes through the Witvlei village.

The first principal of the school was Mr. Tataus !Hoab with two teachers and three classrooms. In 1975 Ludwig Ochurub was appointed as the second principal of the school. He managed the school till 2000. During this time, the hostel was built in 1992 by the German Farmers' Development Committee to cater for the surrounding farmworkers children. Upon his retirement Tsabo Radiphuti was appointed as the 3rd principal and served until her death on 23rd February 2009.

Pijoo Nganate succeeded in 2010 as the 4th principal. In 2012 Mr. Nganate was appointed as the special advisor of the Governor of Omaheke Region and later became Governor himself. He was succeeded by Ben Capro Gaingob, who died during the Corona pandemic. The current principal is Niklas Mukungu Kakero.

Over the years, the school has grown both in terms of infrastructure and learner population. It has modern telecommunication plus an information centre, which includes the computer lab. The school covers pre-primary education up to Grade 11. Principal Kakero is supported by three heads of department.

School starts at 7:00 am and ends depending on the grade. The Omataura hostel currently accommodates 360 children. The dormitory is supported by the local farmers' association and is equipped with a canteen kitchen and dining hall. In addition to the dormitories for girls and boys, there is a toilet and wash house, as well as accommodation for international volunteers who support the school on a voluntary basis. The NCS is always looking for committed people who have fun and professional experience in working with children and young people.

A debate club, a netball and soccer team as well as an athletics team are just some of the activities the school provides for its learners. The school organizes regular events and has a school choir that is well known beyond



Photos: Lydia Shipopyeni, Nossob Combined School in Witvlei, 2024

Witvlei. The staff and learners both exhibit the spectrum of Namibian population with a representation of different language groups. Latter fact makes Nossob Combined School a unique place where tolerance for diversity is upheld and promoted.

The NCS is supported internationally by the Deutsch-Namibische Entwicklungsgesellschaft e.V. and works together with the German-Namibian association Suni e.V.

### International Volunteers at Nossob Combined School



The Nossob Combined School accommodates international volunteers and is always looking for enthusiastic people to join their team. This page shows the accommodation for volunteers at Omataura Hostel.

The school also takes part in a German-Namibian exchange programme for teachers with the German-Namibian association Suni e.V.



The contact person for international volunteers is Vernon Malumani (vernonsinvula@gmail.com), who is a volunteer coordinator since 2010.

Photos: Lisa Noonga, Volunteers from Suni e.V., Witvlei, 2024  
Barbara Scharfbillig, Volunteer house at Omataura Hostel in Witvlei, 2023

# POLITICS & ADMINISTRATION

*“Witvlei is a calm place.”*

*Selma Gaingos, 2024*

Witvlei is the district capital of the Okorukambe constituency, one of seven constituencies in the Omaheke Region. The Omaheke is one of 14 Namibian regions and its governor is Pijoo Nganate. The governor is the political representative of the government in the region. The constituency chairman is Rocco Nguvauva. Both belong to the South West African People Organization (SWAPO).

The municipal administration in Witvlei consists of five councillors with a chairperson and a deputy chairperson. Together, the councillors look for investors, take care of the local infrastructure, compliance with regulations, the allocation of settlement land,

and the economic development of the village. SWAPO is the strongest party on the local council - as well as in the Namibian parliament. Other parties in Witvlei are the United Democratic Front Namibia (UFD), Popular Democratic Movement (PDM), and the Landless Peoples Movement (LPM).

In addition to the Witvlei Municipal Council, the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare, the Ministry of Adult Education, and the Community Health Care Services Namibia are also based in the village.

Photo: Lydia Shipopyeni, Witvlei village council, 2024



# ECONOMY

*“In Witvlei agriculture is taken seriously.”*

*Michael Sibeso Kimwe, 2024*



Photo: Lydia Shipopyeni, taxidermy in Witvlei, 2024

## Cattle Farming

The Omaheke Region is known as “Cattle Country”. Agriculture in the Witvlei area is largely based on extensive livestock farming, which is adapted to the difficult climatic conditions. The surrounding commercial cattle and tourist farms are the largest employers of the Witvlei population.

But there are also shops, shebeens, and small businesses like Namchar, a charcoal company based in Witvlei. Witvlei is also known for its Kapana, which is sold alongside the Trans-Kalahari Highway.

On a regular basis, cattle auctions are organized in Witvlei. Karoo Ochse Namibia holds auctions on the last Thursday of the month, where local farmers come to sell cattle. There are also activities organized by the Witvlei Farmers’ Association.

Witvlei Meat was established in August 2006 and was an internationally renowned abattoir in Witvlei, employing up to 100 people on occasion. In 2007, Witvlei Meat received export approval as an EU beef export abattoir and processing company. In 2014, the business had to close due to competitive difficulties, which led to a wave of redundancies that can still be felt in the village 10 years later.

## Taxidermy

Hunter’s Pride Taxidermy is one of the most renowned taxidermists in Namibia. Located in Witvlei, their skilled professionals expertly prepare, stuff, and mount animal skins to create lifelike representations for display or study. Their work has been exhibited numerous times and visits can be arranged by appointment.

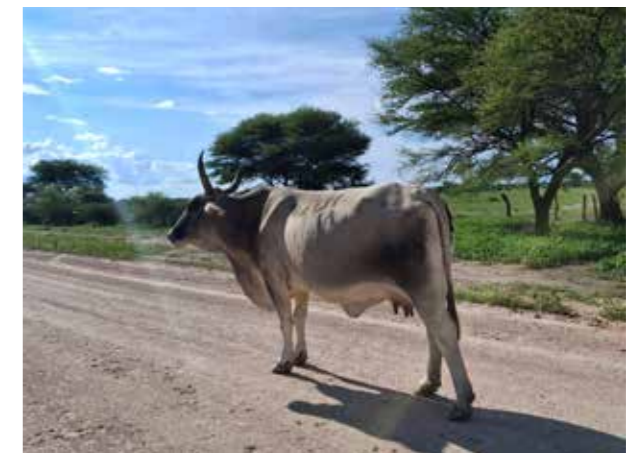


Photo: Barbara Scharfbillig, Omaheke cattle, 2025

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# RESIDENTS OF WITVLEI

*“Try and engage with the community at large. People from Witvlei are really fun.”*

*Martha |Oxurus, 2024*

## Languages

3.02 million people live in Namibia; 102,881 of them in the Omaheke Region. Approximately 12,271 people live in the Okorukambe constituency, with Witvlei as its district capital. In the 2023 census, 2633 residents were reported in Witvlei. Out of the 2633 people, 50% identified themselves as female and 50% as male. The average household size of the constituency is 3.3 persons. That means that Witvlei is home to 2.5% of the total population of the Omaheke Region. Almost half of the residents of Witvlei are children.

Namibia has 11 national languages and one official language: English. A variety of languages are spoken by the inhabitants of Witvlei. Khoekhoegowab and Afrikaans are the most important languages in the village. Khoekhoegowab is one of Namibia’s national languages and belongs to the Khoekwadi language family. It is a language with distinctive click sounds, that are marked in writing with the letters !, |, || and †. It is spoken by Nama, Damara, Hai||om, and Topnaar communities. Afrikaans is also one of the national languages. It belongs to the Indo-German language family and has its roots in the Dutch of the 19th century. It was one of the official languages under the South-African Apartheid occupation before independence and is therefore often a language of communication for older generations. Nevertheless, Otjiherero and the eight Oshiwambo languages are also used by parts of Witvlei’s population. Members of the San communities living in Witvlei speak in the different San languages such as Ju|’hoan or Naro.

The languages of instruction at the Nossob Combined School are Khoekhoegowab and English. English, as the official language of Namibia, can be used by visitors for communication in Witvlei.



Photos: Evita Leis & Barbara Scharbillig, four residents of Witvlei, 2024 & 2025



## Religion

Most people in Witvlei are Christians and belong to one of the four churches in the village: the Catholic Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN), the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa (AFM) and the Seventh Day Adventist Church. The ELCRN runs its independent parish in Witvlei since 1964. All four church communities offer masses on Sundays and public holidays and enable participation in parishes and religious events. Some offer choir activities, bible studies or women groups.



All three Photo: Annika Hoffmann, churches in Witvlei, 2024





Photo: Evita Leis, volleyball game at the Nossob river bed, 2024



Photo: Annika Hoffmann, Chicken Chip + Vibe Bar, 2024



Photo: Quinton Witbeen, Nossob Football Club, 2024

Cultural activities

The Nossob Combined school has a cultural group for the San communities and a Khoekhoe-ǀaes cultural group. They perform dances and sing on cultural events in Omaheke Region. Once per year Witvlei hosts a cultural festival with traditional activities and food. The German-speaking carnival society OSKA organizes a carnival in Witvlei every two years.

Sports

Witvlei offers a variety of sport activities. At the stadium the best-known soccer club in town is the Nossob Football Club, which plays in the Omaheke Football Region in the Amended League. The soccer club has a strong youth section, but no women's team. Instead, there are two netball teams for women: one with teachers from the Nossob Combined School and one with residents of Witvlei. Athletic competitions are coordinated by the Nossob Combined School. Additionally, horse races take place in the area during winter. On the surrounding farms professional hunting is practiced. In their free time people also play volleyball at the river bed or enjoy a game of pickleball.

Witvlei—a social hotspot

On average, the population of Witvlei has a low income. Many former farmworkers from the surrounding farms settle in Witvlei. Therefore, Witvlei has a large group of elderly residents who only receive the state pension of N\$ 1400 as income.

In 2014, the only major employer, Witvlei Meat, was closed. As a result, over 100 workers in the village lost their jobs. In addition, many farmworkers from the surrounding area lost their jobs during the corona pandemic and moved to Witvlei. Many of them came with their livestock. However, large livestock such as cattle, donkeys or goats are not allowed to be kept in the municipality area. This results in another problem, as people who lost their employment on a farm often cannot afford to lease pastureland for their livestock. This leads to conflicts regarding the supply of livestock.

Overall, the community is struggling with high unemployment and the associated socio-economic problems such as low purchasing power, a lack of economic growth, petty crime, and a lack of prospects for young people. To address this there are several programmes in place such as the youth division of the local Football Club.

Witvlei boasts an engaged and thriving population, warmly welcoming newcomers to participate and become active members of the community.

*“Witvlei is full of peace!”*  
*Andries, learner at*  
*Nossob Combined School, 2024*



Photo: Annika Hoffmann, stadium Witvlei, 2024



Photo: Quinton Witbeen, Nossob Football Club, 2024

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 Namibia Statistics Agency (2023). Population. <https://census.nsa.org.na/population/> (Accessed: June 21, 2024)



# SIGHTSEEING & TOURISMS

*"I would suggest watching the sunset from the mountaintop. It's so beautiful."*

*Martha |Oxurus, 2024*

## Travelling to and from Witvlei

Witvlei is a place well worth a visit. The main attraction in Witvlei is the Witvlei Mast Hill, often referred to as "the mountain". It's a place where locals meet with friends. They climb up, relax, enjoy their sundowner or have a picnic.

Witvlei is located in the Kalahari, one of the most biodiverse and beautiful biospheres on our planet. Therefore, there are many commercial tourism farms in the area. Photo tourism, hunting tourism, glamping, and camping are offered around Witvlei, attracting a wide variety of international guests and offering job opportunities. The rock engravings on the Freiheit Ost farm 16 km south of Witvlei bear witness to the settlement of the region by the ancestors of today's San communities and are of cultural significance for Namibia.

This small, quiet and beautiful village offers visitors an insight into the everyday life of Namibia that is denied to the package tourist. The best way to dive into this experience is by connecting with locals. The stadium, the auctions, choir events or church services are great places to meet with locals and make new friends. Dare to take the journey. Get to know the place and its inhabitants. Explore Witvlei!

Self-driving visitors have no problem navigating to and through Witvlei. Safe parking is offered at the service station along the Trans-Kalahari Highway or at the accommodations.

Transport within Witvlei is based on private cars and donkey carts. There is no public transport within or to Witvlei. The train station is closed.

At the junction of the Trans-Kalahari Highway and the D1793 in the centre of Witvlei, you can take minibuses and taxis west towards Windhoek or east towards Gobabis. They normally depart from one of these two locations and pass through Witvlei. You can call a driver you know and ask them to leave space for you in the car and pick you up in Witvlei. To find a driver, use referrals from friends.

Photo: Hans-Peter Baumeler, Witvlei Mast Hill, 2018



# IMPORTANT CONTACTS

Witvlei Police  
Tel: +264 (0) 62 57 0002

Witvlei Fire Brigade:  
Tel: +264 (0) 62 57 0375

Witvlei Clinic  
cell: +264 (0) 81 39 05 433

Nossob Combined School  
P.O. Box 55 Witvlei, Namibia  
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P.O. Box 5, Witvlei, Namibia  
Tel: +264 (0) 62 57 0375  
secretary.witvleivc@iway.na

Nossob Football Club  
Cell: +264 (0) 81 36 59 429

Hunters Pride Hunting & Taxidermy  
Cell: +264 (0) 81 29 87 504  
huntpride@iway.na

Karoo Ochse Namibia  
Tel: +264 (0) 62 56 2721  
karoo@mweb.com.na  
www.karoo-gobabis.com

Halfway Service Station  
Tel: + 264 (0) 62 57 0311  
Cell: + 264 (0) 81 12 74 445

## Accommodation in Witvlei

The Broeihuis Guesthouse  
Tel: + 264 (0) 62 57 0311  
Cell: + 264 (0) 81 12 74 445  
diebroeihuis@yahoo.com

Ziegies Accommodation  
Cell: +264 (0) 81 30 08 906  
e-mail: ziegies@iway.na  
www.ziegies.com

## Accommodation on farms outside of Witvlei

West Nest Lodge  
info@westnestlodge.com

Kameeldoring Glamping & Guest Farm  
samalan@icloud.com

Okambara Elephant Lodge  
www.okambara.de

Ombe Guest House and Safari  
ombe-safari.com.na

# ABOUT US

*"It was amazing working with all these different people from Namibia and Germany to design the Witvlei Travel Guide"*

Leonie Ogait, 2024



Leonie Ogait

Leonie is a teachers student for Biology and Geography and a research assistant at Trier University. She is part of a German-Namibian exchange for educators. She visited Witvlei in July and August 2024 for the first time. Leonie researched the Fauna and Flora of Witvlei. Her favorite place in Witvlei is the dry river bed.

Vernon S. Malumani

Vernon works for the Namibian Ministry of Education and is a Grade 8 and 9 Mathematics teacher at the Nossob Combined School. He is the volunteer coordinator of the German-Namibian association Suni e.V. He loves to watch soccer or athletics competitions at Witvlei Stadium.

Lydia N. Shipopyeni

Lydia was a grade 5 teacher at the Nossob Combined School until 2024 and was part of a German-Namibian exchange for educators. She has taken most of the photos in this publication. Her most beloved photo motive in Witvlei is the mountain view.



Niklas M. Kakero

Niklas is the principal of the Nossob Combined School in Witvlei. He came to Witvlei in 2014 and is the principal since 2023. His favorite places are at home and at the school.

Lisa Noonga

Lisa is a teacher at the Nossob Combined School and has lived in Witvlei since she was a child. Her favourite place in Witvlei is Mast Hill, where she always takes a walk to relax. She also loves the riverbed with its nice sand because it feels like being at the beach.

Tinana Matjila

Tinana Matjila has been working as a Chief Executive Officer for the Village Council of Witvlei until 2024. She loves to show guests Witvlei's charcoal kiln.

Barbara E. Scharfbillig

Barbara is the managing director of the German-Namibian association Suni e.V. and has been visiting Witvlei regularly since 2010. Her favourite memory of Witvlei is seeing the White Nossob River flood the bridge.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## Disclaimer

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Discover the hidden gem of Witvlei, a vibrant community nestled in the heart of Namibia's Omaheke Region. This travel guide offers an intimate glimpse into the daily life of Witvlei's inhabitants. Whether you are drawn to its unique location or the promise of adventure in its scenic surroundings, Witvlei invites you to experience a side of Namibia that few travellers get to see.