



AFRICA

## WILDERNESS FOUNDATION AFRICA

Wilderness Foundation Africa works from its base in South Africa to protect wildlife and wilderness in partnership with local communities. Whether it is direct action anti-poaching in the field, large landscape wilderness management, or developing rising young leaders from disadvantaged communities for a career in conservation, Wilderness Foundation Africa has 45 years of results.

The Foundation was established in 1972 by conservation pioneer Dr Ian Player, who led the team that saved the white rhino from extinction in the 1960's, an action-legacy that the Wilderness Foundation continues today, working against wildlife crime and combating the rhino poaching crisis.

*"We envisage a world that has sufficient intact natural ecosystems and wilderness areas that are valued and effectively protected for the benefit of all species."*

## SPECIES

### FOREVER WILD | PROTECTING ENDANGERED SPECIES

Wilderness Foundation Africa's Forever Wild Conservation Programme was developed in response to the rhino poaching crisis and has been active through the Rhino Protection Initiative. In 2013 the Programme was expanded to include lion, leopard, elephant and shark conservation initiatives as they represent key species symptomatic of the challenges facing the environments in which they live.

A summary of current projects is as follows:

- **Forever Wild Rhino Protection Initiative.** The initiative primarily provides logistical and operational support for conservation and law enforcement agencies responsible for rhino security. It is also involved in raising public awareness of the rhino poaching crisis and manages a Rhino Anti-poaching tip off line. Key activities include vehicle support, rhino rescue support, dog support, air support, intelligence gathering and specialist support, rhino syndicate investigations, as well as Eastern Cape Rhino DNA and tracking support.





## AFRICA

- **Wildlife Operations Group.** The Wildlife Operations Group is a multi-agency partnership whose overarching objective is the reduction in the incidence of and the successful prosecution of wildlife related crime. This will be achieved through a multi-disciplinary approach which includes: research and development; training; support investigation and operational activities in order to meet the objective. Current projects include an Unregulated Ports & Estuaries study, as well as assisting the EC Parks & Tourism Agency with risk assessment for their parks.



- **Rhino Horn Demand Reduction Campaign.** The demand for rhino horn in Asian countries remains one of the main driving forces behind the escalation in poaching of rhinos in Southern Africa, with more than 80% of illegally trafficked rhino horn passing through Vietnam either for local use or for export to other countries, such as China.

In response to this, the Wild Rhino demand reduction campaign utilizes three separate yet cohesive components to educate and engage Vietnamese youth on the issue of rhino poaching. The overarching goal of these components, namely the **Wild Rhino Competition**, the **Youth Ambassador Awareness and Education Campaign**, and the **Rhino Ranger Super Hero Campaign**, is to incite passion for conservation, whilst motivating these young people to not use rhino horn. In addition, they are encouraged to assist in saving the rhino by becoming vocal ambassadors for the cause in their communities. The demand reduction campaign, which has been active in 11 participating schools in Ho Chi Minh City since the launch of the first Wild Rhino Competition in 2014, has reached about 15 000 Vietnamese youth directly, and nearly 1 million youth indirectly through campaign and youth ambassador social media activities.





## AFRICA

**Ian Player Black Rhino Legacy Project.** This project, in honour of Wilderness Foundation Africa's founder the late Ian Player, aims for the establishment of a breeding group of black rhino (*Diceros bicornis bicornis*) under joint custodianship with Wilderness Foundation Africa, Caleo Foundation, Sanbona Wildlife Reserve, Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism agency and South African National Parks. This important project aims to contribute to the survival of this sub-species that has been seriously depleted within its home range of South Africa and Namibia.



**Forever Wild Elephant Conservation Initiative.** Approximately 100 000 elephants are being poached in Africa per year. Populations of elephants, especially in southern and east Africa that until recently showed promising signs of recovery could be at risk due to the recent surge in poaching which is feeding the illegal ivory trade. The Forever Wild Elephant Conservation Initiative aims to support organisations already actively working to conserve elephant populations in Africa.

We support the Mali Elephant Project, managed by the WILD Foundation. Funding provided to the Mali Elephant Project has contributed to the purchase and deployment of extensive communications systems, vehicles, and trained government foresters to provide necessary protection to the elephants in this area.

**Forever Wild Lion Conservation Initiative.** Lions have vanished from over 80 percent of their historic range and currently exist in only 28 countries in Africa and one country in Asia (India). Presently the main focus of the Forever Wild Lion Conservation Initiative is to support organisations with active lion conservation and research projects. The Greater Limpopo Lion Project is a research project aiming to provide the required information to improve lion conservation management in south-western Mozambique and provide the informational basis with which to secure a viable lion meta-population in the Greater Limpopo Lion Conservation Unit of South Africa, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. Wilderness Foundation Africa's support of this research project has allowed the research unit to procure tracking collars required to monitor and study the lion populations in this research project.







## AFRICA

**Forever Wild Leopard Conservation Initiative.** Although leopards are not considered endangered in a global context, nationally they are considered to be threatened with extinction in the medium term. Habitat loss is the main factor threatening the future survival of healthy leopard populations in South Africa. The Forever Wild Leopard Conservation Initiative therefore aims to support organisations already working on the conservation of leopard populations in South Africa.

In 2016 a three year Memorandum of Agreement was finalized and signed between Wilderness Foundation Africa and the Cape Leopard Trust in order to support their leopard anti-snaring project in the Boland study area of the Western Cape. The objectives of this project are: investigation into illegal hunting with snares; production of material for directed awareness and education programmes; and the design and monitor of appropriate interventions and advocate for their execution.

## SPACES

### PROTECTED | RESTORED | CONNECTED

The conservation projects pioneered, supported, or managed by Wilderness Foundation Africa focus strongly on protected areas. Protected areas play a critical role in supporting biodiversity conservation, and are an essential element in a comprehensive plan for reducing poverty and supporting economic development. Wilderness Foundation Africa continues to actively expand its existing conservation networks, ensuring that protected areas and reserves are well managed, and provide benefits for their surrounding communities.

The conservation projects focus on the following key areas:

- Establishment, development and management of new protected areas
- Wildlife corridors: Concept development and implementation
- Management support to private and public reserves and national parks
- Ecosystem rehabilitation and restoration initiatives

A summary of current projects is as follows:

- **Plains of Camdeboo Private Nature Reserve.** The 8 827 hectare Plains of the Camdeboo Private Nature Reserve, established in 2009, is situated in the Great Karoo region of the Eastern Cape Province. The primary aim of the reserve is to conserve, and where necessary, restore the natural landscape and its constituent habitats, species, ecological process and cultural heritage. The land is being restored through indigenous planting and prevention of soil erosion, and indigenous animal species have already been reintroduced to the area.
- **Ecosystem Restoration Project.** Wilderness Foundation Africa coordinated and managed thicket restoration on 74 hectares of degraded land, known as Robert's Haven, in the Baviaanskloof Mega-Reserve from 2009 to 2016. Planting activities were aimed to restore the degraded ecosystem while



## AFRICA

also creating employment within the nearby Cambria community. The goals of the project were thus highly relevant, both ecologically and socially. Spekboom (*Portulacaria afra*) is a dominant species of the natural vegetation of this area, i.e. Valley Thicket, and is an ecosystem engineer. Restoration at Robert's Haven thus focussed on re-establishing the abundance and distribution of this species where it had been severely reduced by previous agricultural activities.



- **The Northern Cape Land Protection and Protected Area Expansion project.** This project is focussed on conserving the unique vegetation of the Succulent Karoo Biome in the Northern Cape, unique not only on a national but international scale. The aim is to assist the Northern Cape Province in implementing its Protected Area Expansion Strategy and securing land through the implementation of Biodiversity Stewardship and Land Purchase. The project is funded by WWF South Africa through the Leslie Hill Succulent Karoo Trust (LHSKT).





## AFRICA

- **Facilitating protected area expansion within the City of Cape Town.** Cape Town's globally renowned biodiversity is under constant threat due to the ever increasing development footprint of the city. It is therefore critical to proactively conserve as much of this biodiversity before it is too late and Protected Area Expansion activities within Cape Town are guided by the Biodiversity Network (BioNet). The main focus of this project is to obtain property valuations, drawing of Surveyor-General Diagrams, Title Deed restrictions, etc., for a 315-hectare unregistered state land erf in the City of Cape Town, which contains Critically Endangered Kogelberg Sandstone Fynbos and is surrounded by the City of Cape Town's Steenbras Nature Reserve. A Surveyor-General (SG) Diagram is needed as part of the process to ensure that this property is formally conserved under the Protected Areas Act.
- **Securing the Contermanskloof Core Botanical Site.** The aim of this project was to formally secure at least 107 hectares out of a potential 119 hectares of Critically Endangered Swartland Shale Renosterveld and Core Botanical Site on Welbeloond Estate, Kliprug Farm, within the City of Cape Town as part of the larger, Contermanskloof cluster conservation areas.
- **Roodeberg Rehabilitation Project.** South African National Parks and the City of Cape Town acquired the 242 hectare Roodeberg properties located above the suburb of Capri overlooking the Noordhoek wetlands, for consolidation into the Table Mountain National Park (TMNP). The properties were infested with invasive alien vegetation and some inappropriate structures including upper and lower dam walls on the watercourse which flows from the Roodeberg to the City of Cape Town land below where it forms part of the City's stormwater management system. The lower dam wall straddles the TMNP – City of Cape Town boundary and steps need to be taken to remove the dam walls and to restore the natural watercourse.







# AFRICA

## PEOPLE

### NATURE | NURTURE | FUTURE

We seek to deliver holistic skills development and education interventions that harness the healing power of nature, to equip vulnerable youth to be economically active and environmentally responsible citizens.

At the core of our interventions are carefully developed physical and psychological wellness programmes which aim to provide specific support to the participants as they complete the employability, skills development or vocational training aspects depending on which project they are enrolled in. Furthermore, Wilderness Foundation Africa has seen just how powerfully young people respond to spending time in wilderness areas and based on their long history of using the healing power of nature for personal and social transformation, the Foundation has integrated various levels of Wilderness Trail activities into each of the main holistic intervention projects.

Through our Youth Development Programme and related projects, young people are empowered to become financially independent entrepreneurs and breadwinners for their families-drawing on the opportunities presented by the growth of the eco-tourism industry in South Africa. A summary of current projects is as follows:

**Pride Trails.** The Pride trails were developed to fulfil the need for a one-day environmental education outreach programme among disadvantaged youth from urban and rural areas. The various Pride trails scattered throughout natural areas in South Africa introduce approximately 2 000 previously disadvantaged, primary and senior learners to a one-day, entry-level outdoor experience every year. The experience has been proven to help stimulate the learners' interest in their immediate natural environment and concern for its preservation and conservation.

The Pride trails are all led by young, voluntary guides from the surrounding communities whose leadership skills are identified and nurtured through relevant training in guiding, safety and environmental issues. The Pride trails are also used as a tool in the Siyazenzela courses conducted by Wilderness Foundation Africa.





## AFRICA

- **Imbewu Trails.** The Imbewu trails project facilitate three-day wilderness experiential trails throughout the year with school learners from disadvantaged communities in the Nelson Mandela Metro and around the Addo Elephant National Park. As with all of Wilderness Foundation Africa's outreach initiatives, Imbewu, which means 'seed' in isiXhosa, aims to provide education about the environment as part of youth development. These trails aim to connect the youth to their cultural-environmental heritage and senior Xhosa rangers from the Addo Elephant National Park assist with the guiding of the trails.

Due to the healing power of nature, and the effect that wilderness has on a person, wilderness trails also play a very important part of the selection process of the Umzi Wethu training courses.



- **Siyazenzela Training Courses.** Siyazenzela (meaning "We are doing it for ourselves") training courses are run as a four-week short term project with facilitation on the following focus areas: Emotional & Social Wellness; Occupational & Financial Wellness; and Physical & Environmental Wellness. The courses are aimed at previously disadvantaged youth between the ages of 18 and 26. Youth participating in the Siyazenzela project gain job preparedness skills whilst also developing personal insight and understanding of themselves. WFA trains 120 youth every year.
- **Siyazenzela Plus Training Courses.** Siyazenzela Plus selects outstanding youth from the Siyazenzela leadership and livelihoods project and provides them with access to short-term accredited skills training opportunities. These courses are on average 6 to 8 weeks, with a target of 48 youth trained per annum. Skills include that of Table Attendant, Barista and Assistant Chef.







## AFRICA

- **Umzi Wethu Training Academies.** The Umzi Wethu model is a social development and intervention programme for displaced and socially vulnerable youth (those who have lost one or both parents, are child headed households or live in households with no formal income). It draws on opportunities presented by gaps in various sectors including the hospitality and eco-tourism industry in South Africa, training chefs and conservation rangers.

The Umzi Wethu (meaning “Our Home”) youth development training courses not only provides accredited training for previously disadvantaged youth, but also incorporates the following innovative elements: (1) a mentorship support programme; (2) access to wellness, group and individual counselling and psychological support; (3) assist the students with a paid internship placement and supporting them in securing jobs post training.

A total of 309 students have successfully completed an Umzi Wethu training course since 2006.



- **Green Leaf Kitchen.** Through Wilderness Foundation Africa’s Youth Development projects, excelling Umzi Wethu graduates are given the opportunity to develop specific entrepreneurial skills through the experiential setting of the Foundations successful SMME initiative, the Green Leaf Kitchen.

