

# Community upliftment in the Associated Private Nature Reserves



*'And at some invisible turning in his path, a feeling for the beauty of the wilderness came to dwell forever in his soul' ..... Victor B. Scheffer*

DECEMBER 2006

Compiled by



**SAVE THE ELEPHANTS**

**TRANSBOUNDARY ELEPHANT RESEARCH PROGRAMME**

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# Community upliftment in the Associated Private Nature Reserves

Social responsibilities requiring attention and action such as HIV/AIDS, illiteracy, education opportunities and unemployment are faced every day. These are serious problems in South Africa and more especially so in the rural areas where Tribal traditions and myths abound and where education and communication facilities are limited.

As a large sector of the labour force used in the Private Nature Reserves (just over 1500) comes from such communities, the reserves (Timbavati, Klaserie, Umbabat and Olifants/Balule) have felt a moral obligation towards engaging in the social upliftment of the surrounding communities. This document outlines a breakdown of each of the reserves' contribution towards improving impoverished neighbouring communities.

## TIMBAVATI PRIVATE NATURE RESERVE - Paul White

### **HIV/AIDS PROGRAMME**

The Wild Hope project was initiated via Tanda Tula Safari Camp as a follow on of the HIV/AIDS Awareness Programme started at Constantia Uitsig in Cape Town. Tara Keene, Human Resources Manager of Constantia Uitsig/Tanda Tula has been the driving force behind this programme, supported and directed by Tom Glover, the General Manager of Constantia Uitsig/Tanda Tula.

The support of the respective management teams at Akeru, Kings Camp, Motswari, Tanda Tula, Umlani lodges in the Timbavati together with Olifants River Game Reserve have helped make the Wild Hope project a reality.

The Wild Hope initiative is working to provide an AIDS Treatment Programme which includes an awareness, education and support programme to enable the following services to be catered for by a full time qualified registered nurse with a permanent or temporary clinic:

- Consultation and supply of basic medicines
- Voluntary testing and counselling including on-site CD4 and CD8 testing and counselling
- Environmental health care advice, guidance and education
- Treatment of minor ailments
- Family planning
- Sterilization / circumcision and aftercare
- TB testing

- Pregnancy testing, prenatal care, postnatal care
- Immunization
- Blood tests for malaria
- Condom distribution
- Home based care and advice on care for people living with HIV/AIDS
- HIV/AIDS support groups
- Post-traumatic counselling
- Provision of basic medicines and vitamin supplements

The clinic/clinics can also be utilized as a meeting place for support groups and a venue for ongoing AIDS education and awareness initiatives.

Beckton Dickinson & Company, a medical technology group in New Jersey USA, manufactures and sells a broad range of medical supplies, devices, laboratory equipment and diagnostic products. After visiting the Timbavati and inspecting Tintswalo Hospital in Acornhoek (which is the closest facility for blood tests) they have recommended to their USA headquarters that the company become involved by providing funding, medical and testing equipment as well as assisting in awareness campaigns.

As of 1 May 2006 Beckton Dickinson and Company have committed to providing basic pharmaceutical equipment (e.g.: syringes, bandages etc.) on a regular basis. They have also taken over payment of the full time qualified nurse, sister Zodwa Mathonsi based at Kings Camp who provides health care services to the staff of Akeru, Kings Camp, Motswari, Tanda Tula and Umlani over a period of four days and now attends to the staff at Chi mani mani on the fifth day. According to lodge reports she is respected amongst the staff and has a good relationship with the people she deals with which has enabled her to hold an HIV/AIDS all male conference which was a huge success. Any patients that need to see a doctor are referred to Dr Pierre Hugo, who together with his wife Mia, alternate between Zebenine, Chi mani mani and Tintswalo Hospital in Acornhoek.

Although sister Zodwa's salary is sponsored, the medication she dispenses is not. If someone is tested HIV positive an auto-immune booster pack of pills (R60.00) is issued. The lodges are already contributing towards medication for their staff (up to R1000.00 per month) but subsidy is required if antibiotics, flu medication, painkillers and booster packs are to be issued.

The Johannesburg Head Office of the auditing firm, KPMG, has offered to manage the financial aspects of the programme which would give assurance to potential donors that goods and/or monies donated will be monitored and properly accounted for.

Three storage containers which will be situated at various points around the Reserve (Chi mani mani, Motswari and Zebenine) have been donated by Command Security in Cape

Town. The containers will be adapted and fitted for use as clinics and once the control gate has moved the clinic headquarters will be established there.

### **SHAC PROJECT**

An eco-conscious tour operator based in the USA - Eco Africa has offered to promote annual environmental friendly benefit tours for up to 18 selected clients to visit the Timbavati and Cape Town. Their objective is to generate over R700 000 net profit per tour to fund a clinic/clinics in the Timbavati and surrounding areas. Accommodation, meals and the rental of minibus transport will be sponsored both in Cape Town and the Timbavati. The first tour has been named the Shangaan HIV/AIDS clinic (SHAC) Benefit Tour 2007 and the proceeds of this tour will go directly to "Wild Hope" and the growth of this project. Eco Africa is confident that at least one tour could be organised per year, if not more. They are also inviting individual donations to sponsor this cause.

### **OTHER MEDICAL PROGRAMMES AND CLINICS WITHIN THE TPNR**

#### **State/Provincial Clinic**

This is a mobile clinic that visits Chi mani mani once a month. They dispense all medicine free of charge, and refer patients to hospitals or a doctor for more serious ailments. Monthly visits are adequate for patients with minor illnesses.

#### **Mongwawane clinic**

A fully equipped clinic has been set up on Hermansburg in the Southern Timbavati by Mr. Adlkofer. Christine Du Preez the sister who visits the clinic twice a month and who is very involved in other HIV/AIDS work, especially the Hlokomela Home Based Care in Hoedspruit, has managed to develop a good relationship with the staff she sees for treatment. Mr. Adlkofer has made the clinic available to everyone in the Timbavati but sustainable funding for medication still needs to be addressed.

Tara Keene has also arranged for HIV/AIDS training and education of staff at Akeru, Kings, Motswari, Tanda Tula, Umlani Safari Camps and Chi mani mani and bomas have been constructed at Zebenine which are utilized for recreation purposes as well as counselling sessions.

### **EDUCATION**

#### **Timbavati Bush School**

Brian Harris, previous TPNR warden put forward a proposal for a community outreach bush school programme. After meeting with local community leaders and the committee it was felt by all parties involved that children living in areas surrounding the reserve be afforded the opportunity to experience and gain exposure to conservation and environmental education.

Charles de Villiers and family have made the hutted camp with all facilities and equipment on their property (Birmingham) available for use by the bush school to use as a base for conducting the field side of the education programmes.

Four school circuits comprised of nine schools each are targeted (Manyeleti, Cottondale, Greenvalley and Aurthurseat).

Giyani Sibuye is the facilitator of this initiative which runs from Tuesday to Thursdays offering grade 11 pupils (four boys and four girls), selected on academic merit for earth sciences, the opportunity to learn more about nature and its workings. The course covers general conservation discussions on water, energy, soil, photosynthesis, a permaculture garden and other interesting topics. In addition to these discussions, the practical aspects are addressed during the trips to and from headquarters which function as bush drives. The course is finished off with fun activities and the presentation of certificates of attendance.

Each year a scholarship is awarded to two of the bush school graduates who have impacted most on their communities to attend a three week field guide's course at the Southern African Wildlife College (SAWC).

Participating schools are assessed at the end of each year according to the success of conservation and recycling projects that they have implemented at their school.

First and second placed schools are taken on a four day trip to the Kruger National Park (KNP) which grants free entry to the reserve and sponsors accommodation at Skukuza. SAWC sponsors a bus, driver and rations for ten people. TPNR sponsors rations for the rest of the party. A new initiative that will be implemented is to take the runner up schools to Moholoholo for an afternoon visit. TPNR will supply transport in the form of a bus rented from SAWC.

### **What has been accomplished so far?**

Since inception in 2002, 82 bush school programmes have been completed. Two camps for school principals have been hosted. Most of the principals of the targeted schools have attended at least one bush school programme. Members from a correctional facility have also been accommodated.

### **Students going further**

Dineo Chiloane, 2002 winner attended a course in Natural Resource Guardianship at the Wildlife College and obtained the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) level 2 certificate in 2004. In 2006 Dineo was employed at the TPNR to gain practical experience. Charles de Villiers, a Member, paid Dineo's salary and will fund an additional amount for her to study further at the Southern African Wildlife College in 2007.

Raperd Nyathi and Joel Mathebula, (2003 and 2004 most-promising-bush school-scholars respectively) attended a three week field guide's course at SAWC and are presently awaiting sponsorship to attend the new six month game ranger course at the SAWC in

2007. Paul Levey, another Member has indicated that he would be interested in sponsoring one of the two students and another Timbavati member could sponsor the second one.

### **TPNR STAFF TRAINING**

- All the Field Rangers have Rifle handling competency certificates in terms of the Firearms Control Act.
- Virtually all staff has completed a Level 1 First Aid course.
- Two Field Rangers have completed a Field Guide course and have a FGASA level 1 certificate while a third Field Ranger has completed the course but is yet to write the FGASA exam.
- Seven Labourers have attended a brush cutter and chainsaw course.
- The TPNR are committed to training their staff and this will be an ongoing process.

### **Other issues being addressed by TPNR**

Timbavati management source and utilize staff from local communities for temporary and short term employment to assist with bush clearing, fencing and erosion control. Local thatchers rather than companies are used for building operations within the reserve.

Timbavati Private Nature Reserve has been approached by the South African College of Tourism in Graaf Reinet to help in the placement of six female students from previously disadvantaged backgrounds. The graduates of a years' course in Small Accommodation Establishments Operations are looking for placement within lodges to gain further practical experience or full time employment. Umlani and Gomo Gomo have expressed an interest in helping.

### **Taxi service**

A black owned taxi has the sole mandate of transporting staff to and from the Reserve via CCG and Chi mani mani for leave periods.

### **COMMERCIAL LODGES**

#### **Ngala**

The Africa Foundation which is the community skills and development part of CC Africa manages and co-ordinates most of the community work done by Ngala and other CC Africa lodges around the country. Donations left by guests are then put back into various projects within the communities in and around respective reserves and guests visiting the lodge are taken on village tours to see what their donations have provided. Lotus Khosa is the person in charge of Ngala Lodge and provides tours into the community on Thursdays and Fridays. In addition to this Ngala hosts conservation lessons for primary school children once or twice a week depending on lodge occupancy. The rangers and trackers give presentations on animals, fauna and flora and then finish the morning off with a general game drive and a meal.

## **Tanda Tula Safari Camp**

As part of the Wild Hope initiative, a secondary income generating project overseen by Dominique Waddle has been implemented at Tanda Tula. This project encourages employees to use their creative talents to create items which are sold both locally and abroad. There are currently 14 staff members involved in the project who use their talents to make items such as embroidered bed and table linen, woven table ware, hand crafted wooden snakes, beaded jewellery and other items. A percentage of the proceeds are put back into the project to purchase equipment such as beads, thread, fabric and needles. Recently a sewing machine was purchased. The project provides a secondary income for the employees to better support their families outside of the Reserve, as well as providing a percentage of the profits made from these sales to the Timbavati HIV Assistance Programme in effect promoting a community that supports their own HIV initiative.

This initiative hopes to have a wider reaching effect, by providing the opportunity for both co-workers and family members outside of the Reserve to get involved and learn new skills, thereby combating unemployment.

Eckson Ndlovu a qualified Senior Tracker was recently sponsored by the lodge to participate in a tracking workshop held in Yosemite National Park USA by the International Professional Trackers Association for two weeks. Clothes and spending money was covered by the sponsorship as well as the facilitation of visas, passports etc.

## **Umlani**

Umlani has expressed a commitment to career guidance and community upliftment in various ways.

The first candidate of the tracker apprenticeship programme was Jimmy Mathebula who after undergoing tutorship coupled with practical work experience is now qualified and permanently employed at Umlani. The lodge is hoping to be able to continue with this programme in the future.

Umlani camp has consistently been involved in career guidance training of both junior and senior school attendants. The camp holds mentoring programmes in conjunction with SAWC for these children who spend a day shadowing lodge chefs, trackers, rangers, etc. The children are given a meal, the opportunity to interact with international guests and to experience the lodge industry and its workings.

Umlani, together with Gomo Gomo and Tanda Tula has expressed a willingness to accommodate two students who have qualified from SAWC by giving them the opportunity to gain practical work experience whilst looking for permanent employment within the reserves.

Umlani has also agreed to participate with the tour operator Eco Africa in donating a percentage of bed night profits to the SHAC programme.

Contributions to New Life Day Care Centre and Pfunekani Crèche in Acornhoek provide mealie meal on a rotational basis with other lodges such as Gomo Gomo and Motswari as well as individuals, McFarlane's, and Alan McSmith.

Umlani also takes part in the "bring a girl child to work" National project where they host female students at the lodge for the day and expose them to career opportunities within the lodge industry

## **INDIVIDUALS**

### **Frank and Shirley Ann Beretta**

Landowners of Beretta farm contribute to the Beretta primary school originally started by Franks' father Val. The Beretta school is responsible for the education of just over 1100 pupils. Frank organised a group of doctors visiting from the USA to hold free clinics at the school providing immunisations and general health check-ups. The Beretta's continue to support their namesake in whatever way they can.

### **Charles de Villiers**

Charles de Villiers, landowner of Birmingham, has made the hutted camp with all facilities and equipment on their property available for use by the bush school. Charles pays Dineo's salary and will fund an additional R60 000 for her to study Nature Conservation at Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) or Natural Resource Management at SAWC.

### **Wilderness Encounters - Brendan and Sheri Schmickl**

A mother and daughter from Florida, USA made use of Wilderness Encounters' transfer services, requesting a visit to a rural school. Beretta Primary School in Acornhoek was chosen. 15-year-old Brittany Young and her mother were so touched by what they saw at the school that Brittany went home and began raising money, determined to bring water to the school. Wilderness Encounters was asked to manage the funds and execute their use. About 6 months later Brittany sent \$10,000. Additionally, Wilderness Encounters' safari guest, Maraday Wahlborg of Denver, USA raised nearly \$4, 000.00. Together, these funds have been used to drill two wells, one of which provides a strong water supply for the school including its vegetable and flower gardens. Existing ablution facilities have been made functional again and the remaining funds have been used to purchase school desks and chairs as well as a fax machine. Other projects to uplift the school are in the pipeline but are dependant on sponsorship and donations.

## **OTHER**

### **Southern African Wildlife College**

The SAWC have a memorandum of understanding with the Timbavati that provides bursaries in the form of a 3-week Field Guiding course for promising graduates from the bush school as well as various courses for TPNR staff to further their studies. The College is also a supporter and contributor to the Pfunekani and New Life Day Care Centre feeding programme.

### **Ringetani Community Project**

Lodrick Manyathele heads up this project by training children in traditional dance. The children perform for guests at various lodges all over the area but specifically Bateleur Wilderness Safaris, Motswari, Tanda Tula, and Umlani in the TPNR. The dancers range between the ages of 8 and 17 and all attend school full time during the week. The project meets the needs of the families by providing food and clothing or by directly taking care of the payment of school fees. The lodges pay for the dancers to perform for their guests and donations by guests go a long way to contributing funds. Lodrick also gives guided tours of the community village he has helped set up and provides a traditional experience right down to the food.

Ringetani has just received a small business subsidy which will enable him to draw up a proper business plan to further the project's objectives and have a wider impact within the community.

### **Transboundary Elephant Research Programme**

Elephant research is involved in community education as part of the four pillar philosophy of Save the Elephants (STE) grass roots programme. STE recognise that the best potential ambassadors for elephants are the people with whom they share their land.

The first environmental awareness programme was held at Birmingham (Charles de Villiers) in September 2006 with the following objectives in mind:

- Create awareness of the research being carried out by the project.
- Educate and provide a conservation experience in the student's first language so that no information is lost in translation.
- Utilise the traditional knowledge and skills of local individuals thereby contributing to a more community based ethic.

The Transboundary Elephant Research Programme plans to host an additional four programmes next year depending on funding.

The target group is children between the ages of 10 and 12 who have yet to make their subject choices. Funding for the first educational programme came from the Phyll Gower trust and is administered by the Wildlife and Environmental Society of Southern Africa (WESSA). The Umbabat Private Nature Reserve has provisionally agreed to sponsor up to R58 000 to cover additional educational programmes. A percentage of these funds will

be used to do general maintenance and improvements to the bush school where these programmes are hosted as well as supplementing the income of a part time helper to assist with the educationals.

Bowen Island library in Vancouver has offered to sponsor books for a community library/resource centre and Stuttaford Van Lines has agreed to transport all reading material free of charge to South Africa. Universities and Technicons will be approached for the donation of computer based educational course material. Larry Zimmerman, a long standing supporter of Transboundary Elephant Research Programme has agreed to donate computers to the resource centre. Furthermore the project hopes to sponsor and mentor a suitable candidate to become proficient in vegetation monitoring whilst furthering his/her studies. Transboundary Elephant Research Programme supports the existing Wild Hope Project by offering basic computer skills training and sewing lessons to interested Tanda Tula staff members.

## **KLASERIE PRIVATE NATURE RESERVE - Colin Rowles**

### **CHILDRENS ECO TRAINING**

A full description of this highly successful project is provided in the attachment titled "Children's Eco Training" (Appendix B).

### **HIV AIDS AWARENESS PROGRAMME**

During the past three years and at regular intervals the Klaserie Private Nature Reserve Management presents HIV awareness seminars which are attended by approximately 220 resident staff members within the Klaserie Private Nature Reserve.

The subjects discussed at the seminars and the various presentations that are made are arranged and co-coordinated by Mrs Christine Du Preez in collaboration with the Reserve Management. Subjects such as HIV AIDS and nutrition, testing procedures, symptoms of HIV AIDS and STD, how to prevent contracting HIV AIDS, destigmatising HIV AIDS victims, abuse against women and children and basic HIV AIDS counselling.

Voluntary testing and counselling is provided by qualified nursing staff and counsellors at the various seminars.

The Reserve management provides the venue for the seminars as well as all logistical support, lunch and transport to the 220 attendants at each seminar.

## **PRIMARY HEALTH CARE CLINIC**

A primary health clinic was established at the Reserve Head quarters in 2004. The clinic was fully equipped and provided with basic medication resultant from a generous donation by a Johannesburg based medical doctor. The clinic provides primary health care to all the Reserve residents and is run by Mrs Christine Du Preez and her assistant.

Since the inception of the Timbavati Bush School KPNR has donated R52 000.

## **UMBABAT PRIVATE NATURE RESERVE - Marius Fuls**

The Umbabat Private Nature Reserve (UPNR) intends to support the children's educational programme run by Transboundary Elephant Research Programme in 2007. Paul and Linda de Luca have sponsored trees and seedlings for the Transboundary Elephant Research Programme educational

The UPNR has donated R10 000 to the Timbavati bush school.

The UPNR continues to seek partnerships and collaborative opportunities to bring skills and social upliftment to the Umbabat staff.

## **OLIFANTS/BALULE RESERVE COMPLEX - Mario Cesare**

Mario Cesare and his wife Meagan have identified crèches in the area that lack basic amenities such as toilets, food subsidies and water availability. To date the sum of R30 000 has been spent sinking a borehole at LVK Crèche in Acornhoek.

Once a year the Reserve holds a Christmas function and takes all staff and children of staff working in the reserve on guided tours enabling them to participate in a wildlife experience.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The staff of the Transboundary Elephant Research Programme (Andrea Webster and Michelle Henley) is thanked for co-ordinating and collating the information kindly supplied by the following people:

Andrew Rossaak - Umbabat Private Nature Reserves

Brendan and Sheri Schmickl - Wilderness Encounters

Brian Masters - Tanda Tula Safari Camp

Charles de Villiers - Landowner - Birmingham

Colin & Janice Rowles - Klaserie Private Nature Reserve

Dominique Waddle - Tanda Tula Safari Camp

Kathleen Hay - Southern African Wildlife College

Lodrick Manyathele - Ringetani Community Project

Lotus Khosa - Africa Foundation - Ngala Lodge  
Marco Schiess - Umlani Camp  
Mario & Meagan Cesare - Olifants/Balule  
Marlene McCay - Timbavati Executive member; Trustee of Save the Elephants  
Michele Pieterse - Timbavati Private Nature Reserve  
Paul White - Timbavati Private Nature Reserve  
Sandy Wilkes - Children's Eco Training co-ordinator in the KPNR  
Sister Zodwa Mathonsi - Wild Hope Project  
Tara Keene - Constantia/Uitsig

## APPENDIX A

### HIV / AIDS Programme in the Timbavati Private Game Reserve South Africa Progress Report 27<sup>th</sup> October 2006.

#### 1. Wild Hope

We received the Section 21 Certificate in Terms of the Non-Profit Act, 1997 (ACT 71 of 1997) from the Director of Non-Profit Organisations in late August. In September a bank account has been opened in the name of "Wild Hope"

#### 2. Beckton, Dickinson (BD)

BD have committed to give us the full cost of Zodwa Mathonsi's (nurse) Salary from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2006. They had intended to provide test equipment etc. to the Tinswalo Hospital in Acornhoek. Tinswalo are not interested!!! Doctors working at Tinswalo namely Mia Erasmus and Pierre Hugo would like to have the equipment there and have committed themselves to try and change the opinion of the Hospital. If this is not successful BD will divert this equipment to our movable container clinics once these are up and running.

#### 3. Zodwa Mathonsi (Nurse)

Zodwa completed a computer course in April to assist her with drawing up tables, graphs and reports for this project. In February 2006 Zodwa organised a "Male HIV Educational Conference" to educate 60 Shangaan men in the Timbavati regarding various HIV issues. The men also received one-on-one counselling after the conference. This has been a major break through as all training up to that point had been given by Female counsellors and trainers.

Zodwa has requested a permanent permit to travel throughout the Timbavati in order to reduce costs. It is necessary for Zodwa to have access to the Hospitals and Clinics in the area and this will assist her. Tara Keene informed her that she would investigate the necessity and possibility of this when she next travels to the Timbavati. Zodwa is currently using a six month permit which is still valid.

#### 4. Containers

Tom Glover has spoken to Command Security regarding the delivery of the 1<sup>st</sup> container to be converted. Command Security confirmed that the Container

would still be delivered however, a date has still not been confirmed. Once the container arrives at Constantia Uitsig, volunteers will be converting the container into a usable clinic. The R30 000 donated from William Berdy will be used to convert at least 2 of the 3 containers donated by Command Security. Funding still needs to be secured to convert the 3<sup>rd</sup> container.

Shaffie Mauwser, the CEO of Command Security has approached Maria Ramos, CEO of Transnet about the transport to Hoedspruit. 2 Sites for the Moveable Clinics have already been identified, agreed upon and committed to by the relevant parties, one each at Chi mani mani and Zebenine Chi mani mani has already started preparing the site for the arrival of the container

Chi mani mani has completed building the site for the 1<sup>st</sup> container and is awaiting the containers arrival.

## 5. SHAC Project

Professor Reece Durham who runs Eco Afrika will be met with Tom Glover and Zinta Stokes in June 2006 to discuss the future of the SHAC Project. Details for the SHAC Tour were confirmed and the first trip should take place in June 2007. The proceeds of this tour will go directly to "Wild Hope" and the growth of this project.

## 6. USAID

We are still awaiting a draft Memorandum of Association with Dr. Efthya Vardas - Director of the HIV/AIDS Vaccination Unit at Baragwana Hospital - who would like to assist us with our submission to USAID. Dr Vardas will be travelling to the Timbavati in January 2006 and will do a survey of the area. She would like to publish the Scientific Data of the area to assist with the credibility of the project in order to submit a proposal to USAID.

## 7. Income Generation

The income generation project started off slow but is now moving along very smoothly. The ladies at Tanda Tula are currently making bracelets, embroidery, tablecloths, mats and various other small items. The men are also involved in making mats and wooden items. The project is still very new and it would be great to expand it to their family members as 1 person working in the Timbavati is supporting between 7 and 17 people. This way we can be providing a method

of income generation for those who are unemployed and take some of the burden away from the sole breadwinner in the family. Some of the members involved in this project are now bringing in an additional R1 000.00 per month. A percentage of products sold go directly to 'Wild Hope' to assist with the financial needs of this project.

**Tara Keene**

(HR Manager Constantia Uitsig / Tanda Tula)

## APPENDIX B

### Children's Eco Training in the Klaserie Private Nature Reserve

#### 1. History - to date

The training was conceived and motivated by Sandy Wilkes who is in the employ of a member of the Klaserie Private Nature Reserve, namely Mr. Deon Huysamer. With his assistance the idea was put forward to and sanctioned by the Reserve's Executive Committee.

It was agreed that Deon would over the first year of the development of the programme allow Sandy the time and all else to required to,

- 1) raise the necessary funds
- 2) put the concept into action

A fund raising Art Exhibition, luncheon and Art Auction took place on the day of the Reserve's AGM. The results were an R 98,000.00 net profit. These proceeds were utilised to run an Aids Awareness Programme and to launch the Children's Eco Training, which it funded for the following eighteen months. The training has since been financed by the Reserve with the assistance of donations, both monetary and goods from various companies and private individuals.

The support of Deon Huysamer continued, he allowed his camp and farm to be used as the training venue. He, together with various other owners within the Reserve sanctioned the training of a staff member and the use of a game drive vehicle during the training sessions. The reserve's HQ assisted with the collection and delivery of the children from and to the camps in the Reserve at which their parents were employed. Southern Cross Schools, situated in Hoedspruit allowed Zani Kunz, the coordinator and teacher of their Reach-a-Cross Programme the time to conduct the actual training sessions for both the teachers and the children.

Unfortunately Zani Kunz left the area at the end of 2005. The link with Southern Cross Schools however continued and Leslie Blandy who filled Zani's position at the school took over the 'training' duties.

## 2. Children's Eco Training

### Phase One

#### **The objective:**

To establish an ongoing eco educational training programme that will give adults and children (adults to be trained as trainers to teach children) the opportunity of gaining:

- An understanding of the importance of the interconnectedness between man and his environment
- An understanding of why wilderness areas should be retained in pristine conditions
- A basic environmental education which is supportive of the national educational curriculum
- The opportunity to experience the joys of nature in an environment that will nourish a love for these areas

Phase one has been successfully instituted and is ongoing. The training has been in operation for tow years. There are presently eight trainers, three assistant trainers and 360 registered children attending the training during the four annual school holidays.

## 3. The Trainers

The trainers are employees drawn from within the reserve with the sanction of their employers.

## 3. The Assistants Trainers

Selection comes from students leaving the children's training programme. (Exiting the programme is compulsory at the age of seventeen)

## 4. The Students (Children)

The students between the ages of 6 and 16, are the children of relatives of people employed within the Klaserie Private Nature Reserve. These children live and attend schools in the rural areas of Limpopo and Mpumalanga Provinces.

## 5. Parents/Guardians of the children

In recognition of the importance of parental commitment, the parents are responsible for arranging and paying for their children's transportation to and from the Klaserie Private Nature reserve (Minimum cost of R 30.00 per child).

## 6. The Programme

- **For the Trainers and Trainer Assistants (Teachers)**

Training is conducted over three days and takes place 2-3 weeks prior to each of the children's training. During the 'teachers' training the games and projects already developed are explained and the basis of the upcoming children's training is discussed. The trainers add their input and thus the final programme is formulated.

The inspector (from Southern Cross Schools Reach-a-Cross Programme) and a variety of experts on the various subject matters conduct lectures and field training and where necessary excursions to outside venues are arranged.

- **For the Children (Students)**

Training takes place during each school holiday with each child attending a day programme, approximately 80-90 children per day over a four day period.

Each day is made up of lectures, game drives, (where the lecture subject is observed and or demonstrated, drawn and or interacted with), quizzes, projects (both serious and fun), practical demonstration and interactive games. Lectures by outside experts and excursions to educational venues are at times conducted. Children are given a 'home-work' project to be completed and returned at the next training session.

Each child's participation is graded in a variety of manners and marks are given accordingly. The children with the highest annual marks in their respective age groups are treated to a weekend in the Kruger National Park - a highly sort after prize.

When the four annual training cycles have been completed the children advance to a 'higher' grade of the same cycle, namely, Trees and Vegetation; Birds; Mammals and Reptiles; Man's link to and dependence on a pristine environment. New children entering the programme start at a lower level.

## 7. Feedback

### **The Trainers**

The initial reaction and continued enthusiasm of the teachers has been overwhelming. The following are extracts of written comments made by trainers:

'Many thanks to KPNR to give us the time to learn and to teach our children the bush life.....I have been here in the bush a long time but now I have learnt many new things...please do not stop....let our kids learn...'

'I thank you for the children's eco training and giving the chance to teach the children about keeping nature for tomorrow...''

'God, please give me the life because I want to bring a better life and education to the children that are coming for training.'

The trainers have all gained a vast amount of knowledge from the content of the training, the instruction of specialists and outside excursions. One of the trainers was promoted from his position as a 'driver', who collected the lodge requirements to that of 'head ranger' within a year of attending the 'teachers training' and training the children.

### **The children**

The training accepts children between the ages of 6-16. At the end of the first year a group of 16 year olds begged, one with tears running down his face, to be allowed to continue the programme. The concept of 'assistant trainers' was born.

Student registrations in January 2006 reached 360, which is the maximum number that can be accommodated in the present structure.

Attendance figures are high and the competition between the students to obtain 'top marks' is very healthy - the annual prize weekend in the Kruger National Park is most sort after.

### **The Parents & Guardians**

Numerous employers have reported:

- the expressed gratitude of their employees for the training being given to their children

- a higher level of loyalty to, and pride at, being employed in the KPNR
- a happier and uplifted atmosphere amongst the employees
- the pride of parents when displaying various achievements by their children, e.g. Written work, drawing, clay models and other items
- both within the Reserve and in Hoedspruit, Sandy has been approached and thanked by strangers, parents, uncles and aunts for '...what is being done for our children'.

It is the responsibility of the parent or relative of each child attending the training, to arrange and pay transport costs to and from the KPNR.

## 8. Moving into 2007

The growth of this programme, in all respects points to the need of amore 'permanent' and sustaining' base.

The time required for:

- the conceptualisation and the production of training material, games and course content
- fund raising and requests for donations -collection and distribution of donations
- managing and recording expenditure
- coordinating and arranging all training sessions together with all the required vehicles and consumables
- management, layout and content of the 'Klaserie Chronicle' (which keeps owners informed of the training programme, content and advancement)
- assistance at all training session s with both the training and preparation of meals
- Updating and keeping the student records

Is proving to be too much to be accomplished on a 'part-time' basis. For the training to continue at it's present high standard the need for a full time manager, coordinator, teacher was recognised and Zani Kunz will be taking up this position in January 2007.

Various additions and expansions to the programme have and are being planned and will be put into action during the year.

**Sandy Wilkes**

(Children's Eco Training co-ordinator)