



MEDIA RELEASE

ISSUED BY: THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN WILDLIFE COLLEGE

DECEMBER 2014

Grad2014...one of two/with pics

CALL TO COMBINE EFFORTS, CREATE PARTNERSHIPS AND POOL RESOURCES IF CONSERVATION IN AFRICA IS TO SUCCEED

The burgeoning poaching onslaught was the prime topic this year when 48 students from seven different countries across the southern African region graduated from the Southern African Wildlife College's (SAWC's) Higher and Advanced Certificate Programme in Nature Conservation. Addressing the graduates were Mr Werner Myburgh CEO of Peace Parks Foundation and Mr Ernest Mokganedi, Director Transfrontier Conservation Areas, Department of Environmental Affairs; the common theme being the need to combine efforts, create partnerships and pool resources if conservation in Africa is to succeed.

"This is particularly relevant given the increase in wildlife trafficking which threatens to disrupt and collapse fundamental ecological processes. Students graduating from the College will, together with various other stakeholders, be responsible for rehabilitating, protecting and sustaining our wildlife areas in collaboration with local communities. It is vital that the College as our training partner, ensures that the training offered is aligned to the needs of the conservation sector and that the students returning to their places of work in Parks across Africa engage with various stakeholders," said Myburgh.

"The skills mastered at the Southern African Wildlife College place these students, who hail from Namibia, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe, in a very advantageous position. Not only have they been equipped to manage the challenges that lie ahead, they also share a common vision and passion for conserving our natural resources," added Mokganedi. "Of the 18 Transfrontier Conservation Areas across the SADC region, the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park - which includes South Africa, Mozambique and Zimbabwe - is most affected by the scourge of organized poaching. It is up to all the stakeholders including the students operating in these areas to raise awareness, improve conservation effectiveness and promote community benefits; without which conservation and anti-poaching efforts cannot succeed," he said.

This year marked the 17th year that the College has been offering its flagship protected area management programmes designed to help achieve long lasting conservation results across the region. "We are however now facing the biggest onslaught of rhino and elephant with poaching numbers increasing at alarming rates. A collaborative approach to conservation, tourism, community-based natural resource management and responsible resource ownership is needed if we are to realize the value of wildlife and develop the wildlife economy of the region rather than lose what we have to wildlife crime and poaching syndicates who are motivated by greed and wealth accumulation rather than the protection of any one species," said Annelize Steyn, Head: Academic Compliancy and Quality Management at the College.

“The College is actively involved in empowering protected area managers not only with the necessary conservation skills but also with the ability to engage so that long term solutions can be found to help ensure the biodiversity of the region,” she added.

This statement was underpinned by the Student Council President, Mrs Anety Milimo from the Zambian Wildlife Authority when she said, “The class of 2014 is standing on the brink of change. Change is sometimes inevitable but the core fundamentals of conservation remain the same and it is up to each student to meet the challenge by finding his or her cause to help shape the future of conservation. If we don’t rise to the occasion, we will have failed not only ourselves but the generations to come.”

During the graduation ceremony, six students were recognised for their outstanding achievements during the 2014 year. The Rosie Sturgis Award for the Most Improved Student went to Mufaya Mukelabai – Zambia Wildlife Authority; the WWF South Africa Award for the Most Outstanding South African Student was awarded to Salome October - Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency; the Hans Hoheisen Award for the Best Protected Area Management Student went to Rutendo Matowanyika - Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management; Best Animal Studies student was awarded to Masiye Masiye - Zambia Wildlife Authority and Caroline Katsande: Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management was awarded the trophy for the Best Financial Management student.

The two top awards sponsored by the Distell Foundation for the Best Student – Higher Certificate in Nature Conservation: Implementation and Leadership and the Advanced Certificate in Trans-frontier Conservation Management went to Justice Mafumba - Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management (cum laude) and Caroline Katsande - Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management respectively. Katsande did herself proud having achieved two awards this year after being awarded the Best Student in the Higher Certificate Programme in 2013 as well one of the Southern African Wildlife College Trust’s (SAWCT) scholarship awards.

This year’s much anticipated SAWCT scholarships were awarded to three students from the Higher Certificate to continue their studies at the Wildlife College in 2015. The scholarship recipients included Justice Mafumba and Prisca Chirozva both from Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management as well as Salome October for Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency.

Theresa Sowry, CEO of the SAWC, said that apart from the Higher Education and Training students who graduated, over 1500 students were trained across various programmes at the College over the past year. This brings to over 12,000 the number of students trained at this SADC recognised centre of specialization in conservation education, training and skills development.

Ends

Issued by: The Southern African Wildlife College
Direct Line |+27 (0)15 793 7300 | Fax: +27 (0)15 793 7314

Contact: Jeanné Poultney | Marketing & Fundraising
SOUTHERN AFRICAN WILDLIFE COLLEGE
PO Box 2193 | Cramerview | Johannesburg 2060
Republic of South Africa
Tel: +27 (0)11 704 4386 | Mobile Tel: +27 (0)82 45 828 45
Fax: +27 (0)86 670 8687 | jpoultney@sawc.org.za

CAPTIONS – SOUTHERN AFRICAN WILDLIFE COLLEGE CERTIFICATE PROGRAMME 2014 GRADUATION
(Included are 4 visuals)



(1) The Southern African Wildlife College Certificate Programme Graduates of 2014. These students, who are employed in conservation organisations across Africa, will now go back to their places of work to help manage some of the world's most biologically diverse areas.



(2) Pictured from left are award winners, Mufaya Mukelabai – Zambia Wildlife Authority; Salome October - Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency; Rutendo Matowanyika - Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management; Caroline Katsande: Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management, Masiye Masiye - Zambia Wildlife Authority and Justice Mafumba - Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management (cum laude).



(3) It was happiness all round after 48 students graduated from the Higher and Advanced Certificate Programmes at the Southern African Wildlife College. Pictured are some of the students with their Zürich based sponsors, Friends of African Wildlife.



(4) Six female students from the Kavango Zambezi (KAZA) Transfrontier Conservation Area were sponsored by KFW Stiftung via Peace Parks Foundation. Pictured with five of the excited graduates is Mr Werner Myburgh, CEO Peace Parks Foundation.