



**SOUTHERN AFRICAN
WILDLIFE COLLEGE**

VACANCY

K9 Response Officer/ Trainer

K9 Unit: Protected Area Integrity Department

JOB PURPOSE

The Southern African Wildlife College is looking for an experienced, suitably qualified, and enthusiastic Response Officer to join our dynamic and innovative K9 Unit, which falls within our Protected Area Integrity Business Unit. As a centre of specialization, the SAWC trains field staff and wildlife managers for conservation areas across the region. Through testing and ensuring best practice for conservation organizations, the SAWC remains abreast of current conservation challenges. The K9 Unit plays an integral role in this commitment and personifies the College's objectives of best practice and learning by doing (applied learning) which underpins all of our programmes.

The K9 Response Officer will have a strong operational background and an understanding of counter-poaching operations. The K9 Response Officer works with dogs in the field in live operational situations, and must always manage the associated risks to both dogs and handlers. The K9 unit has proved to be a game changer and continues to bolster the College's four-tiered approach to counter poaching, which includes well-trained field rangers on the ground, an aerial support unit and engagement with, and beneficiation of communities. The ability to liaise with all relevant stakeholders and role-players (both internally and externally) regarding the effective training and role of free running tracking and patrol hounds, and their handlers is thus key.

The unit provides operationally competent handlers and healthy hounds that are trained to track, locate, and apprehend poachers within a prescribed conservation area. The successful candidate in this role should be capable of implementing and sustaining a comprehensive training plan (in conjunction with the Dog Master) that includes on-boarding for new handlers and maintenance training for current handlers. One of the primary duties is to evaluate the behavior and disposition of dogs to determine if they are suitable candidates for training. The Response Officer must demonstrate an ability to teach dogs to respond to voice commands, using various techniques, and to prepare dogs for specific tasks such as following human scent identification trails and apprehending poachers. The role requires someone with strong interpersonal skills, capable of working proactively in an environment comprising a diverse set of stakeholders. The K9 Response Officer is expected to demonstrate strong networking skills and be able to build relationships within the working dog and conservation sector industries.

WHY WORK FOR US?

You would be working for a unique College that specialises in conservation education, training and skills development at all levels.

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Recognised as a SADC centre of specialization, which uses applied learning to teach students best practice through practical fieldwork under the guidance of leading experts in the field. The SAWC team is dynamic, flexible, innovative and exciting. Working for us will provide an opportunity for growth, personal satisfaction, and fulfilment. We focus on staff empowerment, individual development, and on building strong relationships. This position is based at the College campus, in an isolated bush environment, some distance away from the nearest town, and would involve some travel to and from the College, and to attend business commitments.

Our K9 Unit is successful, innovative, and a prime example of learning by doing in the field. It has gained great respect within the conservation sector, and has an enviable track record. The training we offer creates handlers and hounds that can continue to make waves and record success within their conservation areas.

DESIRED MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS: The ideal candidate will have

- Matric
- A minimum of a DH-1 qualification from an accredited dog training centre
- A DH-5 qualification would be preferable
- Previous proven dog handling and operational response experience is mandatory
- Previous anti-poaching and field experience is essential
- A valid Code 08 driver's license and,
- Must be a South African citizen or in possession of a valid South African work permit document

EXPERIENCE AND SKILLS REQUIRED:

- Three (3) years of demonstrated experience leading and developing a specialized technical team within any related field discipline (within an anti-poaching or working dog unit would be preferable)
- Proven experience in their ability to maintain operational links with relevant stakeholders throughout the counter-poaching community with regards to keeping abreast of the latest anti-poaching evolutions.
- Passionate about working with dogs, especially within conservation
- Comfortable working with dogs and people
- Personal experience in training dogs and an understanding of dog behavior are essential
- Demonstrate an understanding of the conditioning process (forming) of a young dog between eight (8) weeks and 18 months
- A willingness to work long hours, and to work shifts, including over weekends and holidays
- Proven ability to conduct a human scent identification trail with scent identification dogs
- Ability to utilize tracker dogs to follow a human scent trail
- Strong written and oral communication skills across all levels of an organization
- Demonstrated networking skills and strong relationships within the working dog (or anti-poaching) industry
- Strong interpersonal skills and capable of working proactively in an environment comprising a diverse set of stakeholders
- Ability to meet the outlined physical demands and environmental/working conditions of the position

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- Ability to live and work in an isolated bush environment for up to six (6) weeks at a time
- Experience in programme coordination, adult education or frontline client service would be preferred
- Excellent facilitation skills would be preferable
- The ability to manage different priorities and demands
- An ability to work with people from a range of diverse backgrounds and with a wide range of needs
- Must be able to demonstrate an understanding of how non-profit organizations and research projects work. Previous research and data gathering project work will be an advantage
- Ability to work patiently, persistently and politely with dogs, students, and professionally with other stakeholders, including donors
- Must be able to organise well, work under pressure and work with minimal supervision against set outcomes
- Self-motivated, goal orientated, disciplined and determined to work flexibly within the unique nature of the work
- Ability to work within different teams, but also able to work independently, using their own initiative
- Ability to work independently and to safeguard assets under his/her supervision.
- Must have strong task and deadline orientation

Please ask if you wish to see a full job description or require more information

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS:

It is an operational requirement that all College employees undergo pre-employment integrity testing and submit to random integrity tests. This is a requirement for access and entrance to the College premises which is located within a protected area and as set down by the owner of the land on which the College operates.

To apply for the position, please complete our application form which you can find on our website or using this link, which can be opened on a smart phone, tablet or computer:

[Employment Application Form Link](#)

Applications close on **8 November 2023 at 16h00**. If you are shortlisted we will contact you to ask for more details such as a complete CV, copies of qualifications and written references. Candidates who have not received a response within two weeks of the closing date are kindly requested to assume that their application has not been successful in this instance.

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¹SAWC seeks to promote diversity among its staff and reserves the right to place candidates from within, in line with their transformation and development policy. Where this placement creates a vacancy at a lower level, or benefits communities by providing a full-time or casual employment opportunity, the College reserves the right to then fill this position. The SAWC also reserves the right not to fill this position.

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