



MEDIA RELEASE

WILDLIFE COLLEGE HELPS TURN UNEMPLOYED YOUTHS LIVES AROUND

November 2013: Thirty (30) previously unemployed youth proudly bid farewell to the Southern African Wildlife College (SAWC) after completing a 12-month National Certificate in Resource Guardianship. The training programme, which is aimed at helping safeguard Africa's threatened species, is part of a youth development programme initiated by the College, funded by the DBSA Jobs Fund and supported by the Rand Merchant Bank Environment Fund, the Welverdiend Community and the Kruger National Park.

The student's graduation and passing out parade held on 14 November 2013, was both an exciting and sombre affair as it marked not only the end of a year's intensive training but also the beginning of new chapter as these learners take up full time employment in the Kruger National Park.

Mr Qolani Mongwe, the learner representative said, "We came in as young unemployed men with no real future. Today we leave as proud young men committed to saving our wildlife which is under threat. In addition, we now have the means to support our families and help educate our communities about the importance of safeguarding our natural resources." This positive spirit was echoed by Mr Simon Marutha, HR Manager for the Kruger National Park who said that they were ready for the learners and told them to keep motivated and to work towards their goals. Given the calibre of these young men we look forward to having them in our employ until they retire," he said.

The key note speech by Mr Luvuyo Mali, representative of the Jobs Fund, brought home the situation saying that the graduates had a unique position to fill in the workplace now that they had been trained. "This project is an example of what the government is doing to try and help young people to become gainfully employed whilst also underpinning the government's efforts in trying to help curb the rhino poaching onslaught. He encouraged the students to do themselves proud by using the training and mentorship they had received to help support their families, communities and our wildlife.

Both Mrs Theresa Sowry, CEO of the Wildlife College and Mr James Lourens, the students' mentor and instructor, spoke of the truly positive spin off that comes with such an intervention. "These students have experienced personal change which goes way beyond the scope of education," said Mrs Sowry.

As part of this youth development programme, the DBSA's Jobs Fund will support the development of a further 60 unemployed youth to be trained over the next two years at the Wildlife College. The skills development of the students will be further supported by the Kruger National Park and other employers such as Mpumalanga Parks and Tourism Authority and Limpopo Department of Economic Development,

Environment and Tourism (LEDET) who will also help to ensure that all the learners are gainfully employed.

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The Southern African Wildlife College was established in 1996 by the World Wide Fund for Nature in South Africa (WWF-SA) in close cooperation with interested and affected parties in southern Africa, including national and provincial government departments, other conservation agencies and the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

The College is an independent Private Provider of Higher and Further Education which has gained recognition as:

- **A SADC recognised centre of specialization in conservation education, training and skills development**
- **An appointed Institute of Sectoral and Occupational Excellence (ISOE) for its outstanding contribution to skills development and organisational capacitation by CATHSSETA**
- **A DEA approved project for Social and Economic Development (SED) purposed under the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act 53 of 2003 and the Codes of Good Practice on Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment.**

Further information on the Southern African Wildlife College is available on our website:

www.wildlifecollege.org.za

CAPTIONS (3):

(Left) Mr Dumisani Khumalo, Head of Monitoring and Evaluation at the Jobs Fund, congratulates graduate, Mr Dedicate Ndlovu on completing his National Certificate in Resource Guardianship.



The students could hardly contain their happiness on the day of graduation, pictured from left are: Goodwill Sibuyi, Goodwill Ntimana and Qolani Mongwe, the learner representative.



The graduation was the culmination of the first phase of a successful youth developed initiative between the Southern African Wildlife College, the DBSA Jobs Fund, the Welverdiend Community and the Kruger National Park. See at the graduation were (from left) Luvuyo Mali - Jobs Fund, Clive Poultney – Southern African Wildlife College James Jack Manzini – student, Dumisani Khumalo – Jobs Fund and (kneeling) James Lourens – AFRTS Instructor.

