

AFRTS ACQUISITION

August 2013 - Since its inception, the Southern African Wildlife College has contracted the services of African Field Ranger Training Services (AFRTS) to conduct its field ranger training across the African region. Recognized as one of the leading field ranger training outfits in Africa the training has included basic, un-armed, armed and special skills – anti-poaching training both on and off-site.

More recently, as the SAWC's training partner, AFRTS has been instrumental in supporting the College's Wildlife Guardian Programme aimed at helping curb the current rhino poaching crisis in South Africa.

Given the scope and depth of field ranger training provided by the College, and for which AFRTS were being contracted, the College and AFRTS recently entered into a business agreement whereby the College has acquired AFRTS. The acquisition was made possible by the trustees of the Southern African Wildlife College Trust (SAWCT) who agreed to extend a loan to the College. In terms of this purchase, the College aims to strengthen its capacity by building on the AFRTS brand and expanding its scope of training to a wider client base whilst also ensuring that this acquisition contributes to the long-term financial sustainability of the College.

This also means that the College will now have a dedicated Field Ranger Training Unit run by Ruben de Kock and his experienced team to address to training needs across the region and help to further address the threat of poaching. In bolstering what is now an in-house offering, the College has also been asked by the International Rangers Federation to take the lead in developing training material in consultation with various experts to standardize and professionalize ranger training across the region. This is particularly relevant given the current Rhino poaching onslaught in South Africa and the growing elephant poaching crisis in the rest of Africa.

A large amount of AFRTS's time and capacity will help address the training needs identified via a wide ranging training needs analysis recently conducted by KfW on where the critical needs of the industry lies as well as the needs already identified by conservation organisations such as SANParks.

The AFRTS team comprises Ruben de Kock, Marianne de Kock, Wouter Combrink, Martin Mthembu, Robbie Green, James Mashoshi, James Lourens and Bongu Sabata

