



MEDIA RELEASE

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EDUCATION, DEDICATION AND COMMITMENT ARE KEY IF CONSERVATION IN AFRICA IS TO SUCCEED

December 2015: As the year draws to a close, the Southern African Wildlife College's (SAWC) students were once again recognized for their achievements. The Higher Education and Training (HET) Wildlife Area Management Qualification students, who hail from nine countries including Congo Brazzaville, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Zambia, celebrated their graduation in a ceremony that honoured their dedication and commitment to conservation and their studies.

Following the welcome by the SAWC CEO, Mrs. Theresa Sowry the students were addressed by Mrs. Annelize Steyn, Head of Academic Compliance and Quality Management; Guest Speaker Professor Bimo Nkhata, Director and Associate Professor of the Water Research Node at Monash University South Africa together with Mr. Nathaniel Simayumbula the President of the Student Representative Council (SRC). Professor Nkhata, who is one of the alumni of the first Wildlife Area Management Programmes offered at the SAWC in 1998, highlighted how education is vital to achieving success. "I am without doubt a living testimony to the value and power of education that enables us to build our futures to progress and become leaders in organizations, communities, business or government and in the field of conservation. I also want to emphasize to the new graduates that graduation is but one amongst the many steps you will have to take in life. Having faced various difficulties myself, I want to assure you that the road is not easy. Your future will be both exciting and trying, but ultimately success will depend on your determination and commitment to this noble cause," said Professor Nkhata

Mrs. Steyn cemented the notion of how education holds power as she highlighted the importance that the graduates held within the conservation and tourism industry. "Conservation is a dynamic field and to stay current and relevant, the College continuously innovates and adapts its training to reflect these changing needs. In so doing, it continues to play a pivotal role in equipping a new generation of conservation managers with the skills needed to deal with the local challenges each country in the region faces. Conservation in Africa is changing. We, as Africans, need to take responsibility; we need African solutions for African problems. By continuing with the education of future conservators and managers, we have taken up this responsibility, and strive to ensure not only the quality of training but the quality of students going back to their workplaces," she added.

Mr Simayumbula echoed these sentiments. “There is no doubt Africa’s natural resources need to be protected and conserved.” He also acknowledged the people that make everything possible. “I would like to strongly recognise and express our appreciation for the role played by the College’s donors and our sponsors. We thank you for your kind-hearted financial support, which has accorded most of us with the tremendous privilege of studying at this institution. What you have given us is more than a donation; it is a chance to improve our future, our families and the future of conservation. Rather than just being grateful for the opportunity and funding, we promise to use the knowledge we have gained to redefine our roles in the management of Africa’s natural resources,” he added.

During the graduation ceremony, five students were awarded for their outstanding achievements and hard work during the year. The awards went to Justice Mafumba - Best Financial Management Student, Francis Chitsa - Best Animal Studies Student, Lovison Ncube - Hans Hoheisen Award for the Best Protected Area Management Student, all of whom are from Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management; Maybin Mwansa from Zambia Wildlife Authority - Rosie Sturgis Award for the Most Improved Student and to Dirk Pienaar from Ae!Hai Kalahari Heritage Park, Kgalagadi TFCA - WWF South Africa Award for the Most Outstanding South African Student.

The top two Distell Foundation Awards for Best Student Overall were awarded to Francis Chitsa from Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management - Higher Certificate in Nature Conservation and Leadership (Cum Laude) and Justice Mafumba from Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management - Advanced Certificate in Transfrontier Conservation Management (Cum Laude).

The much-anticipated Southern African Wildlife College Trust (SAWCT) scholarship awards went to three students from the Higher Certificate class namely Francis Chitsa (Zimbabwe), Dirk Pienaar (South Africa), and Sambiana Limbani (Zambia). The scholarships awarded will enable these students to continue their studies at the SAWC where they will complete the Advanced Certificate programme.

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Malcolm Douglas, Wildlife Area Management Qualification Programme Manager (front centre) and Annelize Steyn, Head: Academic Compliance and Quality Management (front centre) are pictured with the Higher Certificate graduates: Nature Conservation: Conservation Implementation and Leadership (top) and with the Advanced Certificate graduates: Nature Conservation: Trans-frontier Conservation Management.



During the graduation ceremony, five students were awarded for their outstanding achievements and hard work during the year. Pictured are from left: Justice Mafumba - Best Financial Management Student and Best Student Overall in the Advanced Certificate in Trans-frontier Conservation Management (Cum Laude) , Francis Chitsa - Best Animal Studies Student and Best Student Overall in the Higher Certificate in Nature Conservation Implementation and Leadership (Cum Laude) and Lovison Ncube (far right) - Hans Hoheisen Award for the Best Protected Area Management Student, all of whom are from Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management. Maybin Mwansa from Zambia Wildlife Authority was awarded the Rosie Sturgis Award for the Most Improved Student. (Absent from photograph) - Dirk Pienaar from Ae!Hai Kalahari Heritage Park, Kgalagadi TFCA who was awarded the WWF South Africa Award for the Most Outstanding South African Student.



Lesley Richardson (left) Chairperson of the Southern African Wildlife Trust (SAWCT) together with Countess Sylvia Labia, Founder Trustee presented the much-anticipated SAWCT scholarship awards to Francis Chitsa (left) – Zimbabwe, and Sambiana Limbani. - Zambia (Absent from photograph - Third recipient, Dirk Pienaar from South Africa)