



FRIENDS OF PILANESBERG

Non-Profit Organization Fund Raising Number: 006-421 NPS

SEDIBA

November 2015-January 2016

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Letter from the Editor

November 2015 to January 2016

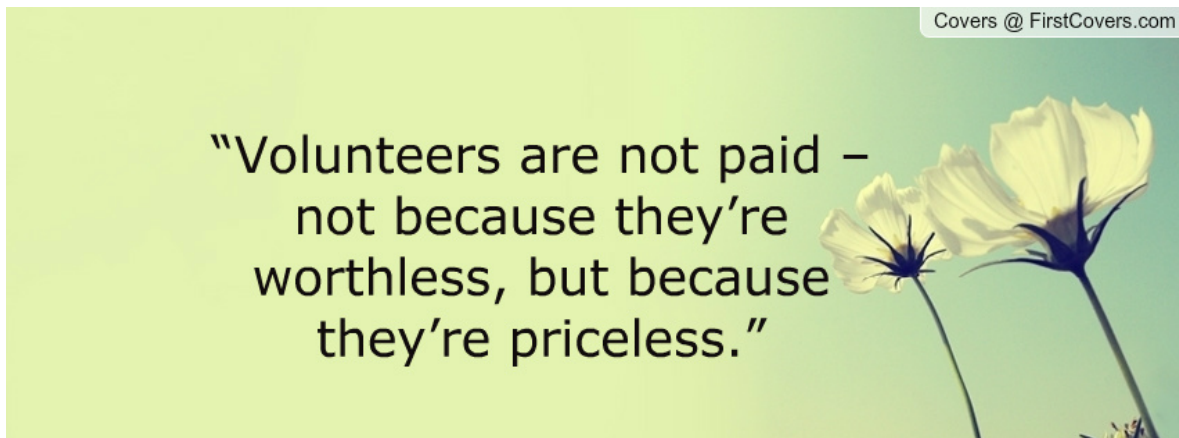
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Kerry-Anne Hare

Dear friends

Well, the rain has been bucketing down outside here in Jo'burg, and I'm appreciating every drop, praying that our beloved park is getting some too. It has been a dry few months in Pilanesberg and I'm tired of feeling like a silly emotional woman every time I visit a waterhole where the hippos can no longer fully submerge themselves. Let's hope this is the end of the drought.



We say farewell once again to a trying year and welcome the new one with fresh hope and open arms. I ummed and ahed so much over this editorial, wishing to start the year on a positive note, in spite of all the silliness going on around the country. It has been a tough one to write, because it is hard to be positive when we have lost 3 precious rhino to poachers in the first few weeks of the year. A fourth, Shannon, who initially survived the attempt on her life eventually succumbed, but not for lack of trying on the vet's part. Some of us were lucky enough to be around when the vet checked her, and bore witness to the dedication of her companion Elizabeth, who seemed determined to try to protect her during the process. We were thrilled to see that Shannon actually walked on her cast and at least we learnt something in the attempt to save her.



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But, although we've suffered these losses, the CPU soldier on, working around the clock to protect these placid animals and if it weren't for them we would have lost a few others, some of whom have only narrowly escaped. We hope that they will make a full recovery. Perry Dell has kindly allowed me to include her reports on the attempted poachings in this Sediba for the interest of those who did not see them on Facebook. CPU, FOPS salute you and we look forward to continuing our role in encouraging visitors to the park. We will start the year on a determined note come hell and hopefully higher water.

Wishing you all a safe, peaceful and prosperous 2016

Regards

Kerry-Anne

Poaching hits the Pilanesberg! By Perry Dell



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In the opening month of 2016 the poachers have hit the Pilanesberg National Park really hard.

3 Rhinos were shot at, and killed, for their horns. Of these, one was a female Rhino!

It is a most horrific scene to witness and truly heart breaking, as these animals are such gentle giants with no means of protection against poachers with high calibre rifles.

Another 3 Rhinos were shot at, but have luckily survived the attempts on their lives.

Dr Gerhardus Scheepers had his work cut out in treating the Rhinos and hopefully they will recover 100% to survive another scary day in the wild!

In the photos you will see the bullet wounds and even the trajectory of the bullet as it narrowly missed the Rhinos 2 leg bones (fibula and tibia) in 2 of the cases.

The other Rhino's wound is a shoulder wound which is a lot more problematic as the bone has been hit as well.

Pilanesberg NP is not part of SanParks, and relies heavily on the Pilanesberg Wildlife Trust for funds to assist in the Rhino poaching scourge.

90% of veterinary and helicopter costs are covered by the PWT.

The PWT also supports the Rhino Protection Unit (RPU) by making funds available for all their equipment and training needs that are deemed necessary.

The PWT relies on fundraising projects, curio sales in the Park, and donations to make assisting the PNP possible.

Many thanks to those that support us!! You make the work we do possible.





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Rhino with bullet wound follow up treatment. By Perry Dell

This Rhino was spotted a couple of days ago and she was limping really badly. We are not sure what caused this really large wound right next to the bullet wound which we treated a while ago.

After immobilising her we could see that the old wound is clean, and has healed. However, the same leg has a huge hole as well as a broken 'ankle'.

The damage could be from another Rhino or Elephant, or something else, we cannot tell unfortunately.

Dr Gerhardus Scheepers treated her as much as was possible in the field, but the damage is quite severe.

The Rhino is not able to put weight on her leg, and we will probably have to get specialized help for her.



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Injured Rhino - 3rd treatment. By Perry Dell

Yesterday, Dr Johan Marais of Saving the Survivors came through to the Pilanesberg to assist us with treating Shannon (we have named the Rhino now!) Also joining us was Dr Gerhardus Scheepers who had treated Shannon on the 2 previous occasions.

As you may be aware, Shannon's injury is the result of a botched poaching. Though the poachers managed to shoot and injure Shannon, she obviously got away! But not unharmed.

Saturday 6 Feb we treated Shannon for another very severe wound (besides her bullet wound that we treated 2 weeks ago) that could be from another Rhino or Elephant. Or possibly as a result of the bullet, where further damage resulted as time went on...

After Dr Scheepers had darted Shannon on foot to immobilise her, treatment was started in earnest. Her little Rhino friend, Elizabeth, still ever present...like she was on Saturday too....

Shannon's wound definitely looked worse than it did on Saturday, and after cleaning the wound it was treated with L- Mesitran (medical grade honey), which has remarkable healing properties. Dr Marais then did X-rays to determine the extent of the fracture in Shannon's leg. It was concluded that a cast was necessary.

The mobile X-ray you see being used here is extremely expensive, but necessary in situations like this one where it is impossible to move the animal to a proper medical facility.

Before applying the cast, the wound was covered with silver microbial gauze that has antibiotic and anti-bacterial properties to help heal the wound and prevent infection. Splints were applied to the cast to add



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support to the leg. With all the work completed we rolled Shannon into an easier position for her to get up from, and watched her from a distance. Elizabeth (her friend) immediately came to check on her and encouraged her to get up.

We were overjoyed at Shannon's progress, and the ease with which she got up and walked (a little uncomfortably but better than with the broken leg).

I will keep you posted on Shannon's progress, but please note that this is a first for all of us. Though we do the best we can, Shannon might not make it if the injuries prove to be more than she can deal with and beyond our treating capabilities.

Thank you very much to Dr Johan Marais and Saving the Survivors for coming to Shannon's aid, and to our assistance!

Both Saving the Survivors, and the Pilanesberg Wildlife Trust rely on donations to make the work we do possible!

Thank you to all who support us.

Thank you also to the awesome team that was present on the day. Your support, dedication and passion are very much appreciated.





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Farewell Shannon....By Perry Dell

It is with the heaviest of hearts that we report Shannon's death. Until her death, Shannon was seen grazing and moving around with her cast intact, and her faithful companion Elizabeth at her side.

Vet, Dr Gerhardus Scheepers did a post-mortem on Shannon. After removing the cast to check for infection and cause of death, he determined that she had had an embolism, either through her heart, or through her brain. The cast was still fully intact.

There are no struggle marks where Shannon fell. She died instantly, without pain or anguish. Elizabeth was with Shannon till the end.

When Shannon was treated for her extensive wounds the Vets cautioned that she was still at risk. Yet we all hoped and prayed that she would overcome the odds. That is our nature.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for the incredible support and well wishes for Shannon



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and Elizabeth. It makes a huge difference to know so many care.

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Thank you also to Saving the Survivors for your support and passion. We are indebted to you.

To the poachers that are responsible for this heinous and senseless death, and the death of all other animals you so cruelly kill....look at what you've done. How do you justify your actions? This is your legacy. You will be haunted for these atrocious deeds.

*Shannon...you now walk in that great space in the sky where no harm can reach you, and your pain is in the past. You taught us so much, and we want to thank you for that.
Farewell gentle one...*

"The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated..." - Gandhi



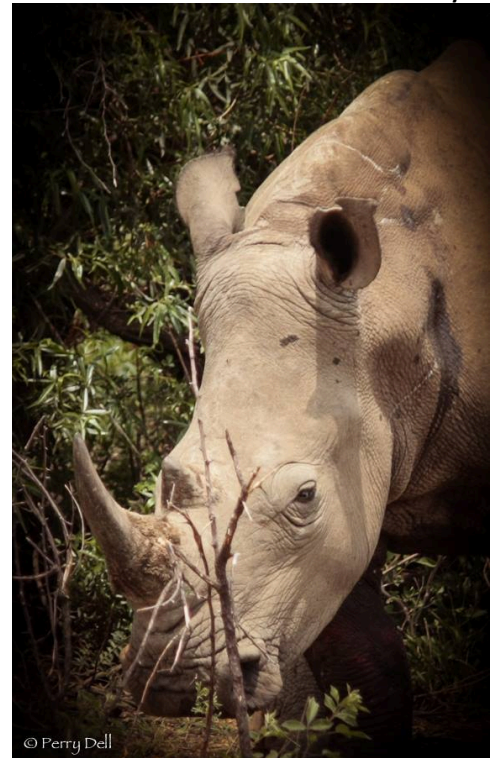


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2 Rhino bulls shot and Injured. By Perry Dell

After hearing 2 shots in the Park, the Rhino Protection Unit went to investigate and found 2 Rhinos with bullet wounds.

Maxillo-facial specialist from Saving the Survivors Dr Gerard Steenkamp, and Vet Dr Gerhardus Scheepers from Zodiac, were called in to treat the 2 Rhino bulls.

Both Rhinos had bullet wounds that accounted for the 2 shots heard...The one has an entry and exit wound to the face and he was treated for these. The bullet only just misses his eye...we are hoping the damage to the eye will not have long term consequences, and that his vision will not be affected.

X-rays were taken to determine any internal injuries as well.

The bull was given antibiotics and the wound cleaned before being treated with L Mesitran - medical honey. It was decided that this bull needed go to an unknown location where he can get the necessary treatment to aid his recovery. He left for his new home yesterday. We have named this bull "Tlotlo" which means respect.

Please respect Rhinos, and other animals who do not have a voice of their own. They have rights too.



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The 2nd bull we treated was a young lad ... probably about 2 years of age. He had a wound to the leg and once again the bullet left the body!

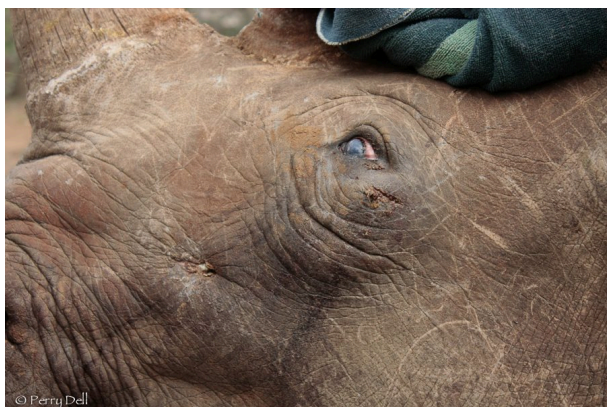
X-rays were done and it was determined that no bones were damaged. He was also treated with antibiotics, wounds cleaned, and L-Mesitran was applied. We have named him Keitumetse which means "I am thankful" in Setswana...

Once all the work was done, the young lad was woken up and released to go his own way.

Thanks again to Dr Steenkamp and Saving the Survivors for responding and treating both Rhinos. The work you do is priceless and your passion is appreciated.

Also to all the RPU's that reacted so fast to get to the animals and preventing them from being slayed. We appreciate your dedication and we thank you sincerely for the work you do.

To all that assisted on the day, thank you too.



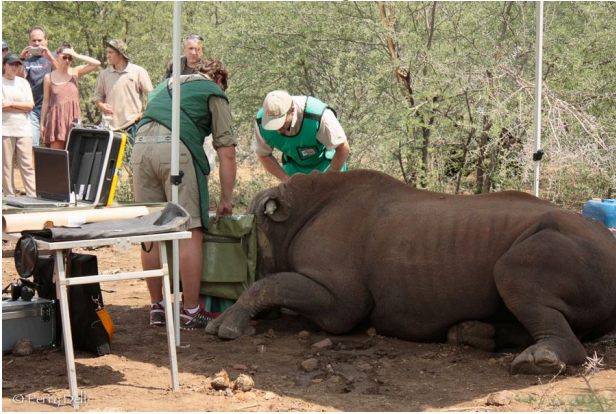


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Sediba Editor

Kerry-Anne Hare



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Tents

A reminder that it is only Lindy who organises tent bookings, (and not Bronwyn/ secretary) so please ensure that you contact Lindy, preferably on her Cell: +27 82 890 0534

Please note: Only paid up, current FOPS members may use the tents on the basis of ONE TENT per membership. You may not book all 3 tents for yourself and friends who are not members. If you can't remember if you renewed your membership, contact Bronwyn (secretary@fops.org.za) to check.

The FOPS tent area is part of the Golden Leopard concession and FOPS have to adhere to the rules and regulations set, so pitching additional tents/roof top tents/caravans NEXT to the FOPS tents if you want more space may result in FOPS losing the use of the area & tents, and therefore a valuable source of income. Please don't think because Lindy isn't there when you arrive and pitch your additional tents that the FOPS committee does not get advised of this, as we do each time. NOR can you 'arrange' with Lindy to do this when booking your tent.

If you need additional accommodation when you book a FOPS tent, make arrangements with reservations to book a camp site adjacent to the FOPS tents.

Reminder of HOW TO BOOK:

- Call LINDY– Cell: +27 82 890 0534 to enquire if the date you would like is available & book the date with her at a rate of R200 per tent per night*
- Email proof of payment to coombeheathglenda@gmail.com. Reference: membership number & tents. Banking details same as membership, and on the website.*
- Please call Lindy to check that she has received your proof of payment, and that booking is CONFIRMED.*

Please do not assume your booking is confirmed just because you sent an email, or paid into the account. Please be considerate – if you book a tent, and cannot make your booking please tell Lindy a minimum of one week (7 days) prior, so we can notify other members that it is available.

Tents are self-catering and not serviced. Please clean them after your use. Any problems or breakages please report to Lindy after your weekend.

NB: Please be careful- DO NOT leave valuables in the tents. Rather keep these items on you or out of sight in your locked vehicle- during a recent burglary, a tent window was slashed and valuables were stolen while the occupants were visiting friends in the adjacent tent.



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Attending Work Parties

Please remember that FOPS only operates in the parks at the INVITATION & APPROVAL of the Parks Board, so there is a procedure to follow:

ONE WEEK BEFORE THE WORK PARTY:

1. *CALL or SMS the RELEVANT work party co-ordinator ie. Pilanesberg – Paddy or Dennis to check that there is space and to have your name added to the list.*

2. *Provide your vehicle registration and number of people attending*

3. *CONFIRM your arrival time – remember FOPS has to adhere to the gate times in the parks. So if you are not going to make the gate closing time, special arrangements need to be made at the discretion of the work party co-ordinator. So please try to be in the park by the gate closing time on the FRIDAY.*

4. *DO NOT email the day before a work party, please – always give notice and confirm that they have your name on the list at the gate.*

5. *To send an email to TENTS (Lindy) or to book a tent for the weekend at Manyane, or to send an email to SECRETARY (Bronwyn) **DOES NOT BOOK YOU FOR WORK PARTIES**. You can only book with work party co-ordinators.*



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Special Project Weekend Reports- Pilanesberg

November 2015

Paddy Coombe-

Heath

Hi Folks,

Well, we had a bit of a bad turnout with only 24 people attending. The weather was great, nice and warm, but dry. There was no rain to speak of, but this was good for the Iron Age Site- there was no grass to speak of either. This meant that Trevor could get on with the clearing of the bush. Not just Trevor, all his slaves were there to do the work too. The place is really opening up, almost to what it was a long, long time ago. You can now almost see the wood from the trees.

Then, Makorwane hide: The guys painted the hide with Waxsol and also repaired parts of the fence.

Then, a group of us went to the other side of the park near Bakubung, which has been a bit neglected. First we cut back the bush at the Lengau Dam lookout point (this was very overgrown), then we tackled Ntshwe drive. Ntshwe was also pretty bad so we got stuck in and cleared about 1 km, starting from the Kubu Drive end.

I must say it looks drivable now.

Lenong hide: At last it is complete, except for a small bit of painting which we will do next month. This job has taken nearly a year, but it was worth it. The donor is happy and we are happy, so it's a win-win situation.

Well next month is the last work party of the year, and the Christmas party. Hope to see you there.

Until then, go well.

Regards,

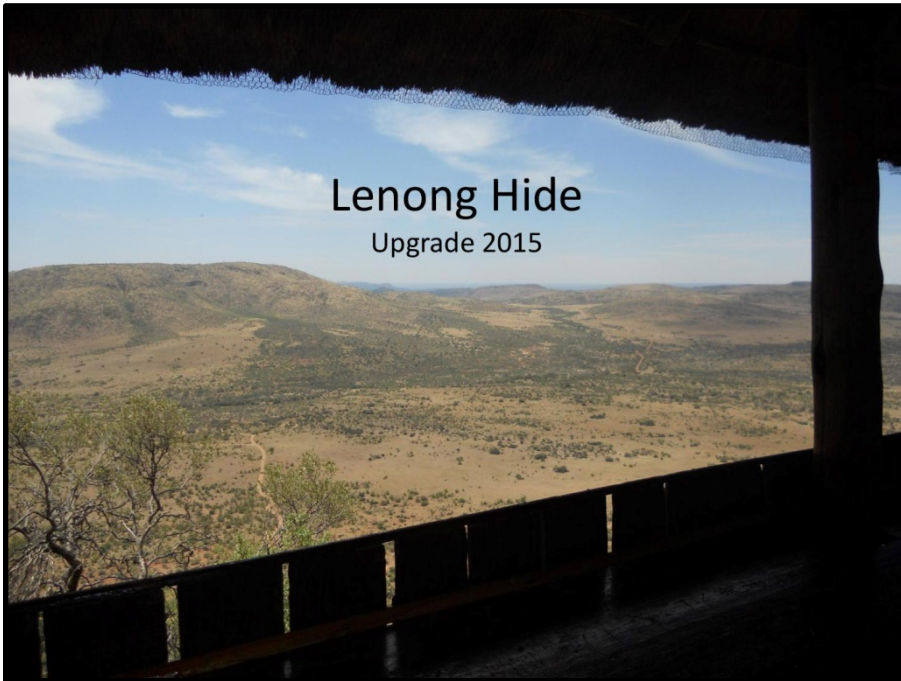


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Paddy

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Thank you to Carol Cellier for putting these pictures together

December 2015

Paddy Coombe-Heath

Hi Folks,

Well, Christmas arrived and so did 38 people, which was great. We only had 1 cancellation.

Again, top of the list was the Iron Age site, the same old stuff- cutting back and spraying. The lack of rain is starting to become a serious issue. The park is very dry and most of the dams are looking a bit shabby. But the good news is that there is still very little regrowth of grass in the Iron Age site, or anywhere else for that matter. So the team up there managed to get a lot done, as far as clearing is concerned.

Three teams went out to Bathlako, Makorwane and Mankwe hides. Makorwane needed another coat of Waxsol as well as the usual repairs to the fence, as did the other 2 hides. All of these repairs were required as a result of elephant damage.



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Thanks to Kobus Pienaar for the pictures. Mankwe fence looks good as new.

Another team did further road clearing along Ntshwe.

Then, Lenong hide: At last, after a full year, we did the last bit of painting of Waxsol, and it is finished. I think that we (more than anybody else) are happy and relieved that this project is finally complete. It was a job well done.

Last but not least, a few of the ladies stayed in camp to prepare for the Christmas party. The place looked great. There was only 1 parks representative in attendance- Khaya Nontanunu, but that was fine. The food and the atmosphere were great. There was no rain, which was a bonus. Just a quick thank you to all the guys who helped make the evening a success. And it WAS a great success. Well, that was the end of the year, and now we look forward to the year ahead.



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I want to wish one and all a great Christmas and a prosperous New Year. A special thank you goes to all who helped make 2015 a good year.

Have a wonderful festive season and hope to see you all in 2016.

Regards,
Paddy

January 2016

Paddy Coombe-Heath

Hi Folks,

A bit disappointing with only 15 people attending, but I can understand with finances as they are, it's not easy. We had 2 cancellations, because of the ANC birthday bash at Sun City, but nonetheless it was a good weekend for working. So what if it rained cats and dogs, we needed the rain. Anyway, welcome all of you to 2016! May it be a good year for everyone.

Right, most of the people went to the Iron Age site. WHY??? Because Trevor was back, of course! I need say no more. A small group tackled the hides. First on the list was Rathlogo. The place was looking a bit shabby and the fence needed a bit of T.L.C. which it got. We also cleared up and repaired the walkway to the hide. Next, we went up to Makorwane and fixed up a bit there. Thereafter, the team took some poles up to Bathlako to do some repairs on that side. We are going to need a bigger team to fix that fence. We'll save it for next month.

Our resident electrician, Steve van Graan went and checked all the electric fences at Potokwane and the Iron Age site. All was fine in both places.

*That's it from me until next time.
Go well.*

Regards

Paddy



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Fun Photographs



Photographs sent in by Robbie Thomas Young.

Thanks for the lovely photographs, Robbie 😊





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The following photographs were supplied by Alison Moolman. Thanks so much for giving me permission to use them, Alison 😊



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