



Volunteers and Staff on a visit to Mapungubwe...

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EDITOR'S LETTER

Dumela Conservationists,

The month is April and the environment is green!

We have had some interesting rainfall patterns over the last few weeks, winter is supposed to be starting and we are drenched by the rain that was expected in January! The seasons are changing, the effect of global warming is becoming more apparent as time goes on, and we all have a responsibility to do our best in preventing more damage to Nature.

Thank you to all of you who take the environment and the Natural world seriously, without you our efforts would be fruitless. We all have to work together to keep this earth as healthy as possible.

I want to encourage everyone who is not yet a member of our Facebook group: Projects Abroad South-Africa/Botswana Conservation-The Official Group (<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=310049952190>) to become a member. Or please add me as a friend "Mieke Prinsloo" and I will invite you to the group. This is a platform for all to take part in active discussions about Conservation and activities on Legodimo Nature Reserve. Please email me if you have any suggestions or ideas on how to improve the group.

Please remember that the newsletters are all for previous, current and future volunteers and that you have the right to speak your mind and make your opinion heard so please don't hesitate to contact me!

All the best, keep on conserving,
Mieke Prinsloo



Mieke Prinsloo

Waterhole

The Legodimo Conservation team has started a new waterhole. The location of this waterhole is very important. We are building it in an area more North in the reserve, because winter is nearly in full swing so we will need more waterholes to manage the activities of the elephants.

Right: Volunteers digging the new waterhole



A few hundred years ago, elephants would migrate very far during the dry season (winter) in search of water, this migration gave areas that were destroyed by the elephants, time to regenerate. Today there are so many fences around, huge herds of elephants can't migrate anymore and this causes a lot of pressure and impact on specific areas with specific vegetation.



Also, the only (almost) permanent source of water within the reserve is that of the Limpopo River, at the southern border of the reserve. Thus, we build new waterholes, in order to keep the elephants from destroying certain areas. Watch this space for the progress of the waterhole...

Left: Elephant having a bath at one of the waterholes filled from a borehole

Swimming pool

We have created a little cover for the swimming pool, now you can swim at any time of the day without being burnt by the harsh African sun.



Highest point

This month we climbed to the very top of Legodimo. It is quite a challenge to climb up all the way to the top, but proudly, all the volunteers managed to get to the very top.

Barn owl

We spotted this Barn Owl sitting in a tree.....



Staff: Sam

Sam spent her childhood in Cape Town and studied Nature Conservation at Cape Peninsula University of Technology. Her passion for nature started at a young age with a love for wild open spaces, nature and animals. Sam first came into contact with the Legodimo Conservation Team during 2009 while doing her practical studies at Mapungubwe National Reserve. She graduated December 2009.

Sam started working at Legodimo Nature Reserve in February 2010 and holds the position of Research co-coordinator. She is responsible for student projects and all research initiatives.



1. You have just finished three years of studying Nature Conservation, what has been your motivation?

The bush has always had a special place in my heart. Ever since I moved to the city I have been trying to get back to the bush, I decided that a qualification would be my best bet.

2. How are you experiencing working with volunteers and working on Conservation at the same time?

I find it very rewarding to share this important role with people who have the potential to spread the word of Conservation around the world

3. Do you think that humans are doing enough to save Earth?

No, we can do a lot more. I believe that all humans have a responsibility to do their part to take care of the Earth, as it is the only home we have and it's beautiful.

4. Where do you see yourself in ten years?

Living in the bush.

5. What is your favourite project?

Hmm... there are so many, it is hard to choose. I feel that one of the most important things that we are doing on Legodimo, is tree wrapping. This prevents Elephants from "ring-barking" trees, causing the tree to die, which is leading to local extinction of certain tree species.

6. Did you ever think that you would be working in the wild open bush?

Yes, I always thought that 😊

7. What advice would you give to someone who wanted to get involved with Nature Conservation?

You need to have a passion for nature and realise that you are never going to have an extravagant life, but a rewarding one.

8. And lastly, what is your favourite animal and why?

I have lots of favourite animals, my favourite favourite? Must be a horse.

Tips for living on Legodimo

- The most important thing to remember when you are living in the bush, is to respect the wildlife.
- Elephants have an easy recipe.
- Always be very very quiet. Elephants have extreme hearing abilities, sometimes they can even hear your heart beat.
- At night elephants have the same level of eyesight as humans. So if you are calm and relaxed, they won't even see you.
- There will always be a staff member with you. If you keep still and stay very quiet, your chances of getting a good sighting is increased dramatically.
- Never shine a flashlight in an elephant's eyes and never take a picture at night with your flash function on. This can make them angry.

Volunteer's Corner

Written by Ingrid Herbelin from France, she was here for 3 months

Bonjour aux anciens, nouveaux et futurs volontaires !

Je m'appelle Ingrid, j'ai 22 ans et je vis mon rêve en étant dans une réserve naturelle africaine !

Legodimo porte très bien son nom, c'est un coin de paradis dans un monde où le stress et le pouvoir sont maîtres !

On vit au milieu du bush avec pour seuls voisins des singes, des écureuils, des geckos, des éléphants, des hippopotames, des crocodiles, Brian le porc-épic... je peux continuer longtemps comme ça tellement la biodiversité est exceptionnelle ici, on s'en met plein les yeux !

On vit au rythme du soleil : quand il rayonne on peut faire la lessive, recharger les batteries de nos appareils photos et prendre de magnifiques photos !

Je suis restée trois mois ici et je pense que cela m'a changé. On apprend à vivre en communauté avec les moyens du bord, sans technologies poussées, on réapprend à vivre simplement. On apprend beaucoup sur la nature qui nous entoure, sur les volontaires qui viennent des quatre coins du monde et aussi sur nous-mêmes.

Alors que j'écris ces quelques lignes, il ne me reste plus que deux jours à passer dans « le paradis fait pour mon esprit » et je pense que se sera très dur de revenir à la civilisation autant pour le côté technologique qu'humain. En effet quand on vit 24 heures sur 24 et 7 jours sur 7 aux côtés de mêmes personnes des liens se créent, ça sera très dur de dire au revoir. Je suis tellement chanceuse d'être ici ! J'agis pour sauvegarder la biodiversité, c'est tellement mieux d'être sur le terrain, en contact direct avec la nature.

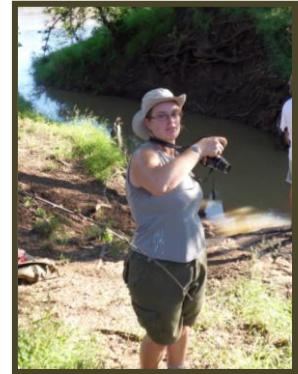
On est encadrés par une équipe ultra compétente, je suis très impressionnée par leurs connaissances.



J'espère revenir un jour dans ce paradis car une fois qu'on y a goûté on ne peut plus s'en passer...

Vis tes rêves avant de rêver ta vie...

Ingrid HERBELIN,
Française
d'origine Normande, l'Afrique est née en moi...



Above: Ingrid