



Early year Centre-based programmes...

During the first three months of the year 2020 the school was off to a fantastic start. We were visited by three fee-paying schools, four community schools and one tertiary group. Approximately 300 future Conservation Champions enjoyed and benefitted from our environmental education programmes. The Covid-19 struck the country and we were forced to close the school in April and it remains closed until further notice. This has offered us the opportunity to develop new teaching avenues and approaches to ensure our messages have continued, as our Director explains...

“The Lapalala Wilderness School (LWS) has built up a deserved reputation for the essential work we do to help our children and young adults discover the value of biodiversity in our natural world and our place within it, and to identify and nurture Africa’s future conservation champions. Environmental Education courses should not be regarded as a luxury but rather as a vitally important component of education of all our children with the message that the health of people is intimately connected with the health of the environment. All our citizens must understand and support the need to conserve water catchments, wetlands, and the many species of plants and animals which receive far too little attention, such as the pollinators so essential for food security.” **Mr Mashudu Makhokha LWS Director.**



What we've been up to during Covid-19 lockdowns...

Whilst all of our programmes have been put on hold during the COVID-19 Lockdown, with every indication that we will not be able to open again with our residential courses soon (until further notice), the following activities happened during these lockdowns.

- Our savvy Environmental Educators have secured opportunities to continue with awareness and Environmental Education programmes on the community radio stations near their respective homes.

Purpose of the broadcasts: Awareness about environmental issues for the radio audiences of all ages.

TOPICS discussed: Educational programmes based on nature conservation, cultural heritage, sustainable development, impact of mining, local economic development issues, environmental and health issues, climate change (global warming and weather extremes), growth of human population and problems of over-population, COVID-19 awareness, career guidance, community announcements of environmental calendar dates, and also featuring quizzes and headline news.

Aims: To raise awareness and promote conservation of wildlife (fauna and flora) to the young and old community radios listeners in South Africa.



Takalani Ndongane (Environmental Educator teaching at Nzhelele FM, Venda).



Johannes Monyeke (Environmental Educator teaching at Waterberg Waves, Vaalwater).

We delivered Face shields & Facemasks...

Personal protective equipment has become an important and emotive subject during the current coronavirus (COVID-19) epidemic. Most of our community schools emphasised that they have only received equipment for teachers and there is currently no indication on when PPE will arrive for their learners or not. LWS donated face shields to 30 community schools (special thanks to Ford Wildlife Foundation for the donation in kind). These PPEs are helping to fight the spread of the pandemic in Waterberg, Limpopo.



We delivered booklets to community schools...

No other skill taught in school and learned by school learners is more important than reading. It is the gateway to all other knowledge. If learners do not learn to read efficiently, the path is blocked to every subject they encounter in their school years. Many thanks to PACE an education programme by TUSK for donations in kind of booklets, posters and career guides which will enhance reading skills of the learners.



Centre-based activities...

On 24 – 28 August 2020 we hosted Centurion Academy, our first group since the outbreak of the pandemic and the course was a success with very high standards of safety and COVID-19 protocol compliance. The feedback we got from their head of department was impressive, highlighting that we have exceeded their expectation of COVID-19 compliance at LWS. This has given us an opportunity to review our preparedness of operating under the new normal going forward as the centre.



Study Camp in full swing...

On 06 October 2020 LWS welcomed 18 Grade 12 learners for a supporting learning camp from Moepel High School (which is found close to the east gate of the Reserve). The camp will ensure that all learners are well prepared and motivated ahead of their most important final examinations. LWS is delighted to offer all the necessary support to ensure that these learners can successfully complete their schooling career with ease. We hosted the learners for a duration of a month at our centre.



Rhino Lives Matter...

For the 5th year in a row. LWS and EWT hosted a World Rhino Day competition. Although the 2020 competition was reduced to 20 children from 10 schools, the standard was high. This year's topic was: "What are the social, political and economic impacts of rhino poaching in South Africa?" The future conservation champions were asked to present their arguments and possible solutions to the impacts and challenges we face in the battle against rhino poaching. There is no doubt that the participation of these young people in the competition is a great way of starting a conversation in the local communities about rhino poaching and biodiversity conservation.

The names of the top four and the prizes they received are as follows:

1st prize-John Chauke (Leseding Secondary School, Vaalwater), Brand new HP Laptop.

2nd prize-Sikalo Mmatshwene (Lemetja Secondary School, Ga – Dipere Village), Voucher for school Uniform for R3,000.

3rd prize-Ephraim Pontsho Ramashita (Nkgoru Secondary School, Ga – Nkgoru Village), Voucher for R2,000 for study aid material.

4th prize-Fortunate Maphuthi Malope (George Langa Secondary School, Marulaneng Village), Voucher for R1,500 for stationary materials.

Special thanks to My School My Village My Planet, Waterberg Rhino UK, Endangered Wildlife Trust, Waterberg Nature Conservancy, Waterberg Biosphere Reserve, Tintswalo Lapalala, Ford Wildlife Foundation for the generous support to make the event a success.





A SPECIAL THANK YOU... Lapalala Wilderness School would like to send a special message of thanks to all of its donors and supporters. Without you, our wilderness school would not be able to reach and teach as many young minds about our natural world as possible. Thank you for your support and enabling us to change the world, one learner at a time.



Newsletter Compiled by : Johannes Monyeki

Photos taken by : LWS staff