



OLLI cyclists arrive at the Camdeboo National Park

GRAAFF-REINET | ABERDEEN — On Sunday morning, February 7, the OLLI cyclists arrived at the Camdeboo National Park in Graaff-Reinet.

One Land-Love It (or OLLI) is an initiative of the Bolton family from Port Elizabeth, who have teamed up as an ordinary family to cycle 6 000km over 80 days between all 19 national parks managed by South African National Parks (SANParks).

Funds raised will go to caring for orphaned rhino calves and counter-poaching initiatives. Father Wayne Bolton is the chief cyclist, and he has been joined for some of the cycle legs by his children, Daniel (22) and Laura (19).

Laura is the spokesperson for the rhino orphans and is "very excited to be part of this journey of joint custody for my future and our heritage".

Wayne's wife Nikki, her father and Wayne's father have acted as the support crew tracking Wayne around the country, carrying spares and preparing communities for his arrival.

All funds raised will be distributed to the SANParks Honorary Rangers and Care for Wild Africa, a rhino sanctuary near Nelspruit.

The SANParks Honorary Rangers are volunteers who work daily to enhance the sterling work done by full time rangers and staff in

SANParks. Proceeds will go towards procuring counter poaching equipment for these men and women on the ground.

Care for Wild Africa is currently caring for 25 orphaned rhinos. Each rhino costs on average about R10 000 a month to maintain and rehabilitate. These orphans are raised with the minimum of human interaction required to be able to release them back into their natural habitats with the appropriate relationships amongst themselves.

Last weekend the OLLI group were in the Karoo, and two of Wayne's friends, Dave Pattle and Andrew Stewart, joined him for the last few legs from the Karoo National Park near Beaufort West. On Saturday the trio rode from Beaufort West to Aberdeen, where they were accommodated at Pagel House.

As has happened at most stops on their journey, the accommodation was provided at a greatly reduced rate, for which they were very grateful. On the way to Aberdeen, the cyclists were met by a lady who they refer to as the "Karoo Angel". Marina Grimbeek, the sister-in-law of a friend of the Boltons, had set up a roadside picnic for the men at a lay-by 35km from Aberdeen. She provided coffee, tea and rusks for the group, as well as Wayne's favourite treats of chocolate

milkshake and dry wors! The men were very touched by this Karoo welcome.

From Aberdeen the men rode to the Camdeboo National Park, where Park Manager Nick de Goede, and Ranger Lungile Kulu joined Wayne 12kms from the Park gate and they cycled together alongside the National Park. Also cycling were Wayne's daughter, Laura Bolton, who had driven ahead to the Camdeboo Park. A group of Rangers cheered them in at the entrance to the park where Wayne explained the purpose of One Land Love It and expressed his appreciation for the role that SANParks plays in protecting our natural heritage. He also referred to the fact that he has had to cycle a great distance to draw attention to the importance of that natural heritage, but that they, the Rangers, are perfectly placed to make a difference each day by virtue of the positions that they hold. He mentioned that as South Africans we rely on them to protect the integrity of our parks and appreciate all the effort that goes into them doing so. Very welcome refreshments were arranged by Rosemary Scheepers and the OLLI Team enjoyed interacting with the staff and finding out more about Camdeboo.

The cyclists' next stop was the Mountain Zebra National Park at Cradock, from where they will to their final destination, Addo Elephant Park, where they plan to arrive on 13th February.

After nine weeks on the road, Wayne had experienced many difficult days, but also has had his faith in humanity restored with the willingness of ordinary people to help and support his efforts. "The worst stretch was the 260km trip from Up-

ington to the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park and then back to Upington, in temperatures over 50 degrees" said Wayne. The 480km on corrugated dirt roads from Alexander Bay to Richtersveld also proved to be something of an uncomfortable ride.

A huge boost to the initiative's fundraising was a black tie dinner held at the Sun International at the Boardwalk in Port Elizabeth, where a staggering amount of R130 000 was raised. As Wayne has cycled through the country, he has spoken about the needs of SANParks and in particular the endangered rhinos, spreading awareness as well as raising funds.

When asked what he has missed most while on his journey, he replied that it is to have free time to relax. One regret is that despite visiting all the national Parks, he has not had time to relax and enjoy them. He explained that a strict routine is essential for an undertaking such as this, and is up at 3am every single morning. It is amazing to realise that Wayne only started cycling seriously just over a year ago!

One amusing tale involved the glitches that sometimes occur when following a GPS for directions. He ended up in peak traffic on the N1 south, coming out of Johannesburg, and found himself at a toll plaza.

Despite the fact that there is no rate given for bicycles, as they are not allowed on the road, he was asked to pay a toll. Just after that he was pulled over by a traffic officer who told him he should not be on the road! When Wayne explained about his tour, the officer proved to be very sympathetic.



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