



SANParks Honorary Rangers and Mokala rangers with Wayne Bolton at the handover of anti-poaching equipment in Mokala.

Rhino warrior cycles 6 000km

After cycling 6 000km between South Africa's national parks for his "One land – love it" initiative, SANParks Honorary Ranger Wayne Bolton managed to raise a total of R150 000 for the fight against rhino poaching.

Bolton recently handed over anti-poaching equipment valued at R70 000, a portion of the funds raised, to the Diamantveld region of SANParks Honorary Rangers (SHR) at the Mokala National Park.

SHR Chairman Louis Lemmer lauded Bolton's efforts, saying he showed the true spirit of voluntarism which is so integral to the success of the SHR movement.

Bolton's journey by mountain bike, supported by his family, was specifically aimed at helping counter-poaching

initiatives through the SHRs and Care for Wild Africa, a rhino orphanage.

Bolton was motivated to embark on this fundraising effort after questioning whether or not he had done enough to contribute to the sustainability of the environment.

"We are very aware of the sobering reality that we could see the extinction of the rhino in our lifetime," said Bolton at the handover in Mokala, speaking on behalf of his family. "We don't want to stand by and say we did nothing."

As Bolton arrived at each park along his journey, the *Scroll of Unity in Conservation* was signed by SANParks rangers who, like many South Africans, committed themselves to doing their part to conserve South Africa's natural heritage.

Last year, the Bolton family joined their

sponsors and supporters to hand over the scroll to John Adendorff, conservation manager of Addo Elephant National Park.

Bolton's journey took just over two months, and presented many tests of the spirit.

Bolton overcame sunstroke and dehydration, long stretches of road, being chased by warthogs, and close encounters with trucks and traffic officials along his journey.

Upon handing over equipment to Mokala park manager, Deon Joubert, Bolton reiterated the necessity for people to stand up and act against rhino poaching.

"If we can't stop the poaching and imminent extinction of rhinos, what hope do we have of conserving other endangered species for future generations?"

New routes for true 4x4 connoisseurs

Off-road enthusiasts visiting the Mokala National Park can now enjoy two brand-new 4x4 routes that opened this past December. The 4,5km Mellifera and the 3km Merakeng loops have challenging sandy sections so no sedans or 2x4 vehicles are allowed on these routes. In addition to the existing network, these loops between Mosu and Lilydale will offer visitors additional roads to take in the park. While there are some areas that can only be accessed by 4x4, most tourist routes can be done with a sedan.

Mokala park manager, Deon Joubert, says the new routes offer an additional activity for guests. Anyone making use of them are required to obtain a permit from either Mosu or Lilydale reception before commencing. By using these roads, "visitors make use of a 'primitive' or less-developed area in the park and one of the requirements is controlled access," says Joubert.

Mokala is known as the park where endangered species roam, and apart from ticking them from your list, you can also go on guided game drives, walks and bush braais. Catch-and-release fishing is allowed at three spots along the Riet River. However, a 4x4 is also required to access these sites.

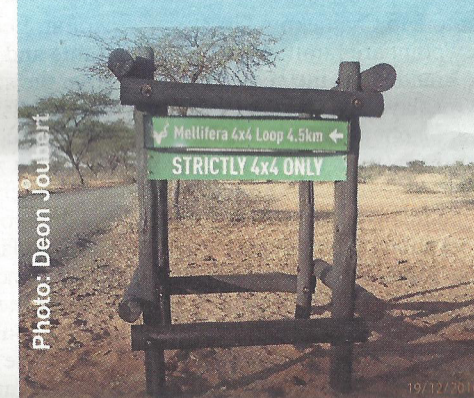


Photo: Deon Joubert