



Honorary Ranger completes epic 6 000km cycle

By: Fayroush Ludick

Wayne Bolton, the SANParks Honorary Ranger at Addo Elephant National Park, who cycled 6 000km over 80 days, linking 19 national parks, received a hero's welcome when he returned to his "home" park on 13 February 2016.

Adventurer extraordinaire, Kingsley Holgate, was among the group of people who had gathered to welcome Wayne home. The atmosphere was electric as SANParks employees and Honorary Rangers, family, friends and the media anxiously awaited his arrival shortly after midday. A loud cheer erupted as the group of rangers who escorted him into the park came marching into sight, followed by Wayne and a group of about 30 cyclists who joined him on his last 24 kilometres.

The 49-year-old Bolton departed from Kruger National Park on 28 November 2015, leading his **One Land Love It** Expedition 2015. His support crew was headed up by his wife, Nikki, along with their two children, Daniel (22) and Laura (19), who cycled some of the way with Wayne. Nikki's father and Wayne's parents completed the support crew.

Wayne was cycling to connect ordinary South Africans to the National Parks, and to connect each park in a symbol of unity. To this end, he carried with him a "Scroll of Unity in Conservation", which he had a representative from each park along his way sign – as their commitments to the land and natural heritage. The two main goals of the expedition was to spread awareness and raise funds for conservation – with all funds raised going to the SANParks Honorary Rangers anti-poaching initiatives and Care for Wild, a rhino orphanage near Nelspruit.

As a show of support at a number of parks, employees took to their own bicycles either to accompany him into their park, or drive out with him. Nardus du Plessis, Augrabies Section ranger, showed his support by joining Wayne on a 20km cycle on his pre-dawn exit from the park. Samuel Tompies, Karoo Section Ranger, and Mark Khuun, Field Ranger, escorted Wayne and his daughter to the park as they entered the Frontier Region. At Camdeboo, Nick de Goede Park Manager and Lungile Kulu, Field Ranger, met the cyclists outside Graaff-Reinet and rode into the park with them, as did Mountain Zebra National Park's

Section Ranger, Greg Bond, as they neared their second last park.

Speaking at Addo upon his return, Wayne said, "I cannot adequately express my appreciation and gratitude for the phenomenal welcome our team has received. It is overwhelming and humbling, and will remain a highlight, not only of the expedition, but of all of our lives as well. Thank you for all the touches, which did not go unnoticed. It is our privilege to be associated with you."



Cyclists accompany Wayne Bolton as he completes a 6000km cycle expedition ending at Addo Elephant National Park.



Dries Engelbrecht (Regional General Manager – Frontier) signs a Scroll of Unity as a commitment to the land and natural heritage campaign.



Amongst other national parks, Wayne Bolton stopped at West Coast National Park.



Garden Route National Park employees welcome Wayne Bolton during his 80 days of cycling national parks.