

Going off the beaten TREC to raise rhino awareness

Since the start of the poaching epidemic in 2008, South Africa has lost over 1 600 rhinos - a figure that, despite much effort, increases daily. According to research done by the World Wildlife Fund, rhino poaching in South Africa increased by 3,000 percent between 2007 and 2011, with 2012 proving to be a record breaking year in terms of rhino deaths.

“Sadly, while we all read the headlines about the increasing number of rhinos being poached, few people realise the challenges facing those on the frontlines with thousands of kilometres to patrol with little to no idea of where the poachers plan to hit next. The poachers currently have the upper hand – they know when, they know how, and if need be they’ll just come back another day,” explains Gaye Corbett, one of the owners and Chief Financial Officer of Tintswalo Safari Lodge.

It was with this in mind that Tintswalo Safari Lodge has come to form The Rhino Extreme Campaign (TREC). The initiative is designed to increase awareness of the massacre of the rhino population in Southern Africa, while simultaneously offering support to those field rangers on the ground protecting rhinos from poachers in the nearby Manyeleti Game Reserve and Western Kruger National Park, in partnership with the Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa (WESSA) and Game Reserves United (GRU).

As part of the project, Tintswalo Safari Lodge’s Head Ranger, Fritz Breytenbach, will be embarking on a 1,000km walk through the two game reserves to raise further awareness of the plight of the rhino.

“People always speak about walking the talk and that is exactly what I am aiming to do, over 1,000kms of bushveld,” says Breytenbach. “And it is my hope that others will join me on my walk by either contributing sponsorship or committing to doing part of the walk through one of the packages that Tintswalo has put together.”

Through the walk, as well as various other activities such as the sponsored corporate walks, TREC is aiming to raise enough money to reduce poaching by 50% in the next 3 years in the reserves around Tintswalo Safari Lodge.

If walking isn’t your thing, you can still support TREC and Breytenbach by following the ranger via a variety of social media platforms such as [Facebook.com/TREC1000](https://www.facebook.com/TREC1000) and [@Trec1000](https://twitter.com/Trec1000) on Twitter.

"Through TREC, Tintswalo Safari Lodge is committed to not only raise funds for the protection of rhino populations in Manyeleti and surrounding reserves, but to raise awareness amongst all South Africans. The situation is such that if we don't do something now, soon the only rhino anyone will be able to see will be in a zoo or a storybook," concludes Corbett.

For more information about how you can become a TREC sponsor, contact TREC directly on +27 15 793 9015 or email them at trec@safari.tintswalo.com. If you would like to sponsor the campaign contact Yvonne@tintswalo.com or call 082 602 3042.

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