

RIDING FOR HORSES

“Riding for Horses is a non-profit company with the aim of healing earth with horses, promoting awareness of the relationship with ourself, the environment and those we share it with.”



In the last Sporting Horse issue we had been planning to ride from South Africa to Germany, but as you all know the current Rhino situation in South Africa, actually Africa, is in a state of crisis and we feel very strongly about this and believe there is more support needed at the moment. As a result, in April this year Riding for Horses decided on its next expedition.

“Rhino Knights – Horses for the Horn of Africa”! We will embark on a 10,000km journey with our horses through the countries of Southern Africa starting in May 2013 for the plight of the Rhino. Knights were mounted warriors fighting for a cause, in this case the cause is Rhino conservation. Recently we had a meeting with Yvette Taylor from The Lawrence Anthony Organization (TLAEO) whom we have joined hands with for this Rhino initiative. Lawrence Anthony, author of the recent bestseller “The Last Rhino” was very involved in conservation and since his passing in March this year his organization is keeping up the good work. Geoff and Doreen from Edu Wild work in conjunction with TLAEO, and their mission is to ensure that the environment and wildlife are left in the capable hands of future generations of informed, conservation conscious citizens of the world. Edu Wild shoots wildlife & environmental programmes and will be documenting the Rhino Knights campaign through southern Africa!

We have also been in regular contact with conservation icon Dr. Ian Player who saved the White Rhino from its extinction in the 1950's and 1960's. Dr Player, who lives 10km from us in the KZN midlands, is currently helping us with our Rhino Project. He truly is a remarkable man and it is an honour to be in his company. We were seriously considering closing down our Equine Outreach Project which we started in 2008 in the former

Transkei. With the current world economic situation, sponsored funds and product have become extremely difficult to raise. We had been planning a documentary film shoot for the Equine Outreach Project with Stuart Merson Davies from In Sync Productions from Johannesburg and a photographic shoot with Tracy Robertson from Cape Town. We had seen Tracy's work in a recent Sporting Horse issue and got in touch with her because of it. With her pictures we are aiming to create a calendar for sale to raise more funding and support for the project! In Sync Productions and Tracy Robertson Photography kindly donated their time to our project but at the beginning of June it didn't look like we were able to actually follow through with it! Three days before departure with big hopes and our nerves stretched thin, we had a final meeting with a potential sponsor – Epol. In the meeting we put our hearts on the table and thankfully Epol came to our rescue! Their sponsorship made the documentary film shoot and photographic shoot possible along with caring for around 300 horses and we are very grateful for their support!

The week spent at our Equine Outreach Project on the Wild Coast, with cameraman and photographer was a major success!

Tracy captured and experienced our challenges firsthand, highs and lows whilst on our mission helping equines in the rural and impoverished communities of South Africa. The project includes equine health clinics (deworming, vaccinations, tick and disease control, medical treatment, wound care) and social and economic upliftment. We offer education and skills development aimed at developing empathy which builds healthy relationships between self, others and our environment. We are planning to produce an educational DVD of the basics of horse care and handling to be distributed in rural areas of South Africa. We travelled together with our two horses Roan and

The Rhino Knights Campaign is a journey with horses throughout the countries of Southern Africa to emphasize the plight of the Rhino.

When: Starting May 2013 – September 2013
Travelling in the winter months is kinder on the horses, fewer diseases, lower temperatures and a minimal threat of African Horse Sickness.

Why: Wildlife and conservation is a concern of Riding for Horses and the current Rhino crisis needs support. The Rhino Knights campaign is a Riding for Horses initiative to raise awareness and funds for Rhino conservation along with our current project which is in its initial stages and will be released soon.

How: Horses and Rhinos share a similar evolution and physiology. The horse is known to bridge gaps between cultures, languages and races. Travelling with 4 horses and a support team from South Africa 10,000km through Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and back to South Africa. The aim is to document and educate on Rhino and Wildlife conservation along with travel, culture and horsemanship in each country travelled through.

Route: The route is still under discussion as we research the different countries for people and places of interest and set up interviews with conservation characters and high profile individuals on route.



Himba and our ridgeback Pula, into the heart of the former Transkei, to the land of the AmaXhosa people, where equines are still a way of life. We had decided to take Roan and Himba with us to educate and teach the community, showing them a different way, and how horses can be with the correct care and handling. Roan and Himba are smaller horses like the horses of the rural Transkei and were perfect for the task. The day of arrival we settled at our base, the Haven Hotel situated in the Cwebe/Dwesa Nature Reserve. The first day we rode out to the Hobeni Community to do a presentation and educational talk at the Hobeni School. The Chief of the area along with his counselor joined us for a few km's on horseback to show his support of our project. At the Chief's home we received the horses, donkeys and mules of the Hobeni Community for treatment such as deworming and wound care.

The following day we travelled to the Bulungula Backpackers and their surrounding community. We covered a distance of about 20km's on horseback and on the way swam the beautiful Xora River. Tracy, our fearless photographer actually waded chest deep into the freezing water to get some photographs of us swimming the river! At Bulungula Backpackers a large number of horses, donkeys and mules arrived for deworming, wound care and other treatment. On day three we made our way through to the Cwebe Community, just outside the Cwebe/Dwesa Nature Reserve. The Cwebe community members actually amazed us, seeming caring and interested in the wellbeing of their animals. A step in the right direction ...! The challenges are endless for the horses, donkeys and mules out here. Living conditions are harsh and their owners lack of skills and resources results in neglect and often abuse! The photographs taken by Tracy Robertson capture the moments lived and experienced. The film footage is currently being edited

and we are hoping to have the completed documentary aired on South African Television this year some time.

In September this year we have a castration program set up at our Outreach Project. Former State Vet of this area of the former Transkei, Gordon Adams and some of his colleagues have agreed to donate their time and expertise to this. Ciplavet will be donating Pegamax dewormers to this program as well.

We have finished writing our book on our journey around South Africa and it is in it's final stages. Writing this has been quite a process How do you squeeze 581 days of experiences into one book? We will be publishing an E-book and a coffee table book soon!

If anyone is interested in supporting Riding for Horses initiatives please get in touch with us on isabel@ridingforhorses.co.za! Keep following us on our Facebook page "Riding for Horses" or our website www.ridingforhorses.co.za

Stay well & happy!
Isabel and Lloyd

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