

# Training of 30 new SANParks armed field rangers completed

South African National Parks (SANParks) has 30 new armed field rangers after a passing-out parade held on 23 November 2012 at the Weltrac Training Centre, situated in the Welgevonden Game Reserve near Thabazimbi in the Limpopo Province. The 30 graduates are part of SANParks environmental monitors from Kgalagadi, Mokala, Addo Elephant and Kruger National Parks.



Antionet van Wyk, SANParks general manager for Infrastructure and Special Projects, said the main reason for training the field rangers is to complement the parks existing staff for area integrity management in various national parks. They will be a support to conservation staff and perform duties that will enable SANParks field rangers to attend to critical functions such as law enforcement.

The keynote address was given by Johan Kruger, technical manager at Kgalagadi National Park. "We are very proud of our new graduates and their eagerness to build on their skills portfolio. We encourage them to be the change that they want to see in our country's heritage, the National Parks."

## Guarding tourists and researchers

The rangers in Kgalagadi National Park will be guarding the Biodiversity Social Project teams from dangerous animals. They will further assist in guarding tourists at the bush camps from dangerous animals. In Mokala National Park eight of the rangers will be deployed to assist the existing field ranger corps in their day to day patrolling responsibilities, which includes rhino monitoring posts. The other four will be used to guard Biodiversity Social Project teams from dangerous animals.

The Kruger National Park rangers - of which four are female - will be deployed under Scientific Services to assist with monitoring activities related to vegetation and animals. They will also be used as field guards to protect scientists from dangerous animals. In Addo Elephant National Park the rangers will be used to guard Biodiversity Social Project teams and assist in manning rhino observation posts.

"The passing-out of these armed field rangers will step up the crime fighting ability against poachers and give invaluable

support to the men and women working on the ground," said Van Wyk.

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