

Community, Conservation & Resource Management

The beauty of Three Tree Hill lies not only in its sweeping mountain views and abundant wildlife, but also in its deep connection to the surrounding landscape and community. We believe these places deserve to be cared for, and our day-to-day decisions reflect this through practical resource management, local partnerships, and our long-standing Fair Trade Tourism certification.



Through local employment, skills development, community partnerships and practical resource management, we aim to operate our business responsibly while supporting initiatives within our region. Detailed policies, reports and information about our programmes are available on our website.

The following provides an overview of some of these activities.

Our Team

Three Tree Hill employs its team primarily from Hambrook Village, approximately 8 kilometres from the lodge. Hambrook is a predominantly isiZulu-speaking rural community within the Bergville district of KwaZulu-Natal. Many team members joined the lodge with limited formal hospitality experience and have developed their knowledge and skills through ongoing workplace training. Training includes hospitality service, leadership, technology, health and safety, and operational procedures. Regular team meetings provide opportunities for discussion, operational feedback and participation in community projects. Annual performance and development reviews help identify future training requirements and professional development opportunities.

Education Programmes

Three Tree Hill works alongside Botshabelo UpliftED, a Johannesburg-based non-profit organisation, to facilitate teacher training programmes for educators and principals working in rural Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres. According to Botshabelo UpliftED, the programme currently includes approximately 65 centres, 45 principals, 45 teachers and around 3,200 children. Training includes practical workshops together with educational resources and learning materials.

Through the Legacy of Grace SA initiative, established in collaboration with a former Three Tree Hill guest, financial assistance has also been provided towards the establishment and development of an Early Childhood Development centre within the Maloti-Drakensberg region. Further information about these programmes is available on our website.

Conservation

Three Tree Hill borders Spioenkop Game Reserve, a protected 6,000-hectare reserve managed by Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. Guests may explore the reserve on guided walks, where wildlife including rhino, giraffe and zebra can be observed in their natural habitat. In addition to the reserve entrance fees paid by visitors, a portion of the Community & Conservation Levy is allocated to conservation projects within and adjacent to the reserve. These projects may include the removal of invasive plant species, habitat management, field ranger equipment support and other conservation activities undertaken by partner organisations.

Small Business Incubator

Three Tree Hill's Small Business Incubator provides mentorship, practical guidance and market access to local entrepreneurs developing small businesses. Support is provided on a project-by-project basis and may include business planning, skills development or operational assistance, depending on the needs of each participant and the resources available.

Resource Management

We continually review our day-to-day operations to identify practical ways of managing water, energy, materials and waste within the lodge.

Examples include:

- Solar water heating and a solar power system with battery storage that supplements the lodge's electricity supply.
- Rainwater harvesting and the reuse of laundry grey water, where appropriate, for irrigation.
- Eggshells and coffee grounds returned to the soil in our vegetable garden.
- Used tea bags repurposed as firelighters.
- Energy-efficient lighting, appliances and timers installed throughout the property.
- A solar cooker and traditional Wonderbag cooking methods used for selected dishes, including our homemade sweet potato bread.
- Seasonal fruit, vegetables and herbs grown on the property for use in the kitchen, where available.
- Procurement from South African suppliers and local businesses where practical and available.
- Cleaning products and guest amenities selected to be paraben-free, with concentrates diluted on site to reduce packaging.
- Organic kitchen waste, cardboard, coffee grounds, tea leaves and egg cartons composted or reused where appropriate.
- A flock of free-range indigenous chickens that consume suitable kitchen scraps and provide eggs for the lodge kitchen.
- Refillable glass water bottles, insulated flasks for guest activities and reusable beeswax wraps used in place of selected single-use plastic products.
- Menus featuring regional ingredients and traditional South African flavours where possible.

African Safari Collective

Three Tree Hill is a founding member of the **African Safari Collective**, a collaboration of independently owned lodges that share marketing resources while maintaining their individual ownership and identity. Guests staying at participating lodges for five nights or more may qualify for a 5% accommodation discount under the Collective's current booking programme.



Fair Trade Tourism Certification

Three Tree Hill has held **Fair Trade Tourism certification** since 2011. Fair Trade Tourism is an independent certification programme for tourism businesses operating in southern Africa. Certification is assessed against published standards covering areas including fair working conditions, fair purchasing practices, equitable benefit sharing, and respect for human rights, culture and the environment.