

OUR WHY

We believe that everyone can contribute to conservation and therefore our vision is to empower ordinary people to protect nature. The key to conservation is not to do conservation, but to live conservation actively. By creating this kind of lifestyle, we fulfill our purpose of helping humans and nature to live together in harmony.



Many people hold the opinion that only specialists can be conservationists, while we believe that the biggest contributor to conservation is the many small actions by lots of ordinary people – small actions which will result in the preservation of our precious earth for generations to come. The foundation is a starting point, to empower you to live a conservation lifestyle for a better tomorrow.

Key focus areas of the Foundation:

- Wildlife conservation in the Klein Karoo
- Habitat conservation
- Community
- Volunteering

“WE BELIEVE IN A WORLD WHERE HUMANS AND NATURE CAN LIVE TOGETHER IN HARMONY”

OUR ROLE IN CONSERVATION

“... if you realize your unique conservationist role, we are happy, if you are empowered to live a conservation lifestyle, we are blessed, if you are a converted conservationist, heaven!”

Buffelsdrift Game Lodge management realise that the success of Buffelsdrift Game Lodge as a tourist destination is squarely founded on the contribution of the captivating beauty of the Klein Karoo. The foundation was born from this humbling realization and a vision grew to bring harmony between humans and nature. Buffelsdrift Game Lodge, as founder is committed to the Buffelsdrift Foundation as guardian and funder.

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The vision of the foundation is to allow every person to discover their own unique conservation role and purpose and to empower individuals to live a conservation lifestyle. We believe that it is the small gestures and actions, by many, that will cause a ripple effect and save the world for generations to come. We know we have not, and will never completely arrive, but know that no step forward is too small, if we are sure we are taking it towards a worthy dream.

At the Buffelsdrift Foundation, this purpose and vision are built on the following guiding values and principles which are used to keep us focussed and in line with who we are.

Our Principles:

- Everybody is a potential conservationist
- We educate and empower
- We understand first, before we do
- We don't compromise on harmony between humans and nature
- We focus and persevere

Values:

- Integrity
- Accountability
- Humility/willingness to learn
- Quality
- Serving heart

***“WE EXIST TO EMPOWER ORDINARY PEOPLE TO PROTECT NATURE
BY CREATING A CONSERVATION LIFESTYLE AMONG THEM.”***

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HABITAT CONSERVATION



Spekboom Project

We have a specific focus on the Spekboom habitat, due to its abnormal quality of removing approximately 10 times more carbon dioxide from the atmosphere than for instance plants in the amazon forest.

Spekboom

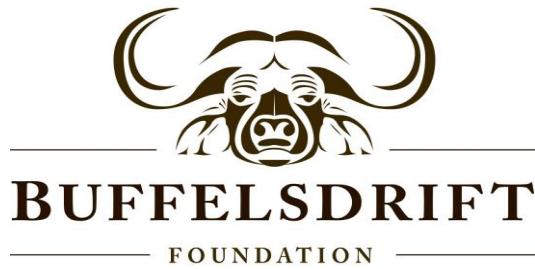
Hectare for hectare, Spekboom thicket is ten times more effective than the Amazon rainforest at removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. One hectare of Spekboom can remove between four and ten tonnes of carbon dioxide per year. Research indicates that pristine thicket areas within South Africa hold more carbon compared to transformed or over-grazed land. Further to this, there are specific plant species that have particularly effective levels of absorption under semi-arid conditions (or sequestration as it is known scientifically). One of the most effective plants is the Spekboom, (scientific name Portulacaria Afra). Buffelsdrift Reserve is rich in spekboom habitat and has launched a project to facilitate the regeneration of previously farmed land and erosion areas on the reserve through the planting of Spekboom. In order to maintain heterogeneity of the area, additional plant species are planted. Over 3900 spekboom trees have been planted over the years to fight erosion, however, with the help of volunteers, this project will expand exponentially.



3900 SPEKBOOM TREES PLANTED



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“Spekboom for everyone initiative”:

We launched a “Spekboom for everyone” initiative to help visiting guests realise the difference they can make through simply planting one. A young Spekboom is a starting point, an opportunity to be part of something with life-changing long-term value. By planting one Spekboom Buffelsdrift Game Lodge Guests eliminate the complete carbon footprint of a flight from Europe to South Africa.

How does it work?

Spekboom branches are harvested and cleaned, compost is prepared in a plant container and the spekboom branch carefully placed inside the container. Then these young spekboom are placed in our own greenhouse so they can develop their own root system before it is transferred to the specially made elephant dung plant containers. These containers are specially made at Buffelsdrift Game lodge from our own elephant produced dung. Combining it with some soil and mixed with special wood glue, the containers are then shaped and dried before the spekboom branches are transferred. These spekboom are then placed in our look out Lounge area for visitors to take and plant it, neutralizing their carbon footprint created traveling to us. This initiative enables ordinary people to be part of conservation and creating a ripple effect towards a better tomorrow.

Please see video: ***Spekboom Project***
<https://bit.ly/3iuFt5m>

Goal:

To enable visitors to achieve a net zero carbon-emissions by balancing a measured amount of carbon released with an equivalent amount offset.

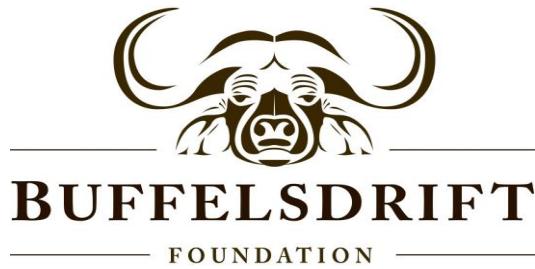
Challenges:

The challenge is to locate suitable and available land for spekboom plantations. Planting spekboom can be expensive and the plant grows slowly. It also means that we must take a leap of faith, converting income producing land into something that creates long-term value.

Strategy:

- To locate and reserve land for spekboom plantation in the local area.
- To promote the positive effects of spekboom on your land and the value it holds.
- By offering the opportunity to every visitor to plant a spekboom before leaving Buffelsdrift Reserve.

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Opportunity:

To fix the ecosystem instead of being just a victim of global warming, we can be part of a solution and setting an example the rest of the world can follow. For us, this is the opportunity to change mind-sets, and that anyone can be part of the solution by just one small action.

Seed Ball Project

We realized the importance to protect and conserve our habitat in the Little Karoo and therefore took another step in the right direction introducing our “seedball project” to visitors joining our Bush Safaris at Buffelsdrift Game Lodge. Our Foundation believes that everyone can be conservations and decided that an opportunity for guest to “plant” trees while on a safari would be to create benefit towards the environment, giving back to nature while enjoying nature.

How does it work?

The Vachellia Karroo (Doringboom) is a medium size tree, known in the Little Karoo and in the Southern part of Africa. Seed pods are cut from the tree and then harvested. A fine combination of soil and dirt are sifted to create the perfect texture. The seeds are then mixed with the soil and compost. For the next step, we created our own device to mix the soil and seeds with water to create the seedball. The mixture is placed into the device (tube) and when turned on a fine spray of water is added. As the rolling and turning process continues the seed causes the dirt mixture to attach around them turning into small mud balls. More soil is added to help them get dry and solid. When on Game Drives, guests now have the opportunity to play a conservation role by throwing these seedballs into the veld. Then nature goes its way and the seeds have everything they need to grow into full size trees.

Please see video: ***Seed Ball Project***

<https://bit.ly/3umhHy1>

“PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT AND YOU WILL PROTECT LIFE”

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WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

Conservation is an ethic of resource use, allocation, and protection. Its primary focus is upon maintaining the health of the natural world, habitats and biological diversity. South Africa is home to some incredible wildlife species, and it is our opportunity to protect them by living a conservation life.

At Buffelsdrift Game Lodge this means, that we act with a conservation mindset. Our guides are trained to think conservation and to educate all visitors to think conservation as well.

Cheetah Conservation



We actively contribute to grow and strengthen the genetic pool of the cheetah population in Southern Africa. We are privileged to be associated with the world-renowned EWT (Endangered Wildlife Trust) and through EWT we are the proud custodians of two cheetahs. The purpose of having these cheetahs is to let them roam freely and breed. The offspring will then be relocated to other reserves to ensure a clean and strong bloodline which prevents inbreeding and the extinction of the cheetah. The cheetahs are collared with VHF (Very High Frequency) devices, to enable the tracking of the cheetah for research purposes.

Goal:

Buffelsdrift Game Lodge want to ensure the existence and increase of free-roaming cheetah population in their natural habitat and to contribute to the genetic variation of free-roaming cheetahs.

Challenge:

Despite all the projects conserving the cheetah bloodline, there are still many other challenges to overcome. The biggest challenge is habitat destruction due to farming and development. Cheetahs, like all other large predators, are heavily persecuted by livestock farmers. To conserve habitat for species such as the cheetah are a massive challenge to overcome.

Meta population reserves are small and can only accommodate between two to thirty cheetahs. They, therefore, must be managed to ensure genetic integrity, to prevent inbreeding. We prevent inbreeding by means of exchanging cheetahs to other Meta population reserves. Wild cheetahs are particularly susceptible to translocation complications, especially when subject to stressful capture. Currently, for every ten transfers, you unfortunately, lose one cheetah.

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Strategy:

Our main focus currently is

- To relocate Cheetahs between Meta population reserves to prevent inbreeding.
- To increase the resident range of Cheetahs in South Africa through reintroductions into free-roaming fenced reserves.
- To educate tourist and volunteerism about this magnificent predator, who can easily become compromised without active conservation efforts.

Opportunity:

This project offers the opportunity to be part of the research of free roaming cheetahs. It is necessary to understand demographic responses (e.g. the cheetah's dietary response to new habitats and prey response to the introduction of the cheetah) of predator and prey in closed systems. Monitoring this species in closed systems allows for a better understanding of how cheetahs behave in fenced reserves. This contributes to improved cheetah management and to establish the minimum requirements for sustaining cheetahs on smaller fenced reserves.

Please see video: **Cheetah Conservation**
<https://bit.ly/3Da1Q9z>

Elephant Conservation

Goal for Buffelsdrift

Buffelsdrift Game Lodge aims to educate visitors about this magnificent unique specie, enabling people to come close to this gentle giant and during the visit learn to understand the circumstances endangering the specie, as well as the reality of challenges surrounding the size and devastation caused by the elephant.

Challenge for Buffelsdrift

The elephants need to be managed twenty-four hours a day by trained rangers. The elephants eat a lot of food that must be bought monthly. The elephants also easily cause harm to the sensitive habitat it roams during their daily walks.



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Opportunity for Buffelsdrift

- To give the elephants a second chance of life, because their parents were killed by poachers.
- To give people the opportunity to come close to the elephants and experience the incredible gentle giant from up close.

Strategy for Buffelsdrift

To educate people about elephants and make them aware about the dangers of poaching.

Lion Conservation



After two years of intense preparation, we became custodians of three young lions in January 2018. The first project on the list was to relocate the three young lions from a farm in the Western Cape to Buffelsdrift Game Lodge with the help of Cape Nature. The cubs, two females (already sterilised) and one male, were approximately nine months old at the time. The cubs were welcomed at Buffelsdrift Game Lodge on Wednesday the 4th of January 2018 at their new large camp, not far from the Buffelsdrift Game Lodge tented camp, from where the lion's spectacular roar can sometimes be heard.

The decision to move the three lions was based on the fact that the lions were born at a farm where the breeding of lions is strictly prohibited by Cape Nature. A mistake occurred with the infertility precautions and the lions were born with no certain future. Buffelsdrift Game Lodge assisted Cape Nature to find a home for these lions whose future was not certain.

Goal:

To give carnivores that have previously been abused, injured, abandoned or had no certainty about their future a permanent home and to make their health our priority.

Challenges:

Habitat destruction and human-lion conflict have led to a catastrophic drop in wild lion numbers in Africa, declining from around 50,000 in the 1950s to around 20,000 today. In recent years the number of lions in South Africa has been increasing but not for reasons that promote the conservation of lions. Currently, lions are bred or in

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captivity for petting, human interaction or canned hunting. The challenge is to promote sanctuaries that are truly contributing to conservation and where there is no petting, human interaction or breeding in captivity and where the welfare of the animals is a priority.

Strategy:

- We advocate against canned hunting, human interaction or petting of lions.
- The welfare of the animals is our highest priority

To have a strong educational

Opportunity:

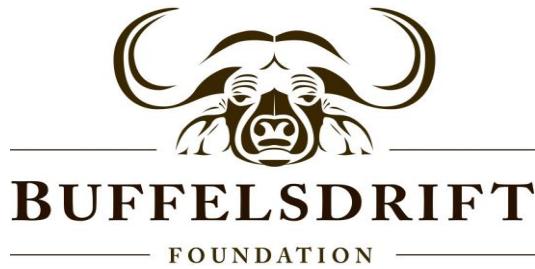
Nearly 200 captive lion facilities exist in South Africa, many of which allow the petting of lion cubs and walking with young lions by tourist. We use this project to educate tourists and the local community and spread awareness of lion conservation and to support ethical tourist trade in South Africa. As we have a strong educational focus, we visit local schools and teach children about conservation.

Meerkat Research



The meerkat or Suricata is a small carnivoran belonging to the mongoose family. Our reserve is home to three wild meerkat families. It is one of the most unique species that occurs in the Klein Karoo. Unfortunately, because of land developing, farming and the lack of knowledge these species have diminished over time. At Buffelsdrift Game Lodge we are dedicated and passionate to learn how these little ones live and operate in their natural habitat. Monitoring these clans provide us with crucial information that help us understand them better and hopefully can help them to survive in the long run. At the end of the day we can make life-changing decisions on scientific evidence collected by monitoring these clans. This kind of research helps us to mitigate the conflict between the meerkat families and farmers and people keeping meerkats as pets.

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Goal:

To understand the way of the meerkat clans in the Little Karoo and to ensure their existence in our area.

Challenge:

Farmers are converting hectare by hectare into commercial farmland at a very fast rate. They do so to increase production and for their financial benefit, this is good for our economic state, but this habitat destruction comes at a cost. The result is that the natural habitats for the little karoo meerkats are disappearing at a fast rate. Meerkats are very sensitive to their habitat and have a very complex way of living. The smallest disturbance can trigger the family to move to a different area. Destruction of the habitat also removes their food source, insects. Farmers use pesticides to protect their crops from insects eating them. By removing insects from the system, you are removing the food source of the meerkat. With continued destruction of natural habitat, the little karoo meerkats will eventually be extinct. The challenge is to educate people and to learn from the meerkats, to promote their role in the ecosystem and how they can help farmers with insect problems.

Strategy:

- To do intensive research on meerkats in the Little Karoo
- To locate meerkat families in local areas and to give locations to farmers
- Working hand in hand with neighboring farmers to protect the meerkat habitat

Opportunity:

We can now, for the first time, learn how the meerkats live and operate in the Little Karoo. With research and scientific evidence, we can make life-changing decisions and even change laws in the long run to protect the habitat for the meerkats. This project offers the opportunity to get the local farming community involved and to be part of something that has long-term value. We could prevent that the meerkat specie becomes endangered in the Little Karoo and to ensure their continued existence before it is too late.

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COMMUNITY OUTREACH



Buffelsdrift Game Lodge is involved in the community by helping a local underprivileged primary farm school. The children in the school come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Community

VREDERUST SCHOOL PROJECT

Community upliftment-as a truly south African foundation and true to the preamble of the constitution of south Africa to "...improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person" the foundation is committed to contributing to the community. Buffelsdrift game lodge has been involved in supporting local education of underprivileged children for many years and is building on this to change lives and to empower children.

The Buffelsdrift foundation is investing back into the local community by the involvement in a local pre-primary school, Vrederust. The school is situated in the valley of Schoemanshoek, surrounded by the beautiful Swartberg mountain range. The children attending the school range from the age 0 – 6yrs and the foundation assist in the daily needs such as food, stationery, toiletries and general maintenance. There are three lovely teachers and about 55 children attending the school during

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week days. School starts early in the morning and every age group have their own education program they follow to prepare them for primary school. Vrederust does not only prepare the children for primary school, but also establishes the importance of routine that helps with stability in their later lives. The teachers prepare three meals a day for all learners and provide them with a safe and stimulating environment where they can learn and play. It is truly a joy for each learner to attend school at Vrederust pre-primary.

Our foundation will find it difficult to support this beautiful project without the continuous support from our sponsors. "We are a community driven organization"

Please see video: **VredeRust School Community Project**
[HTTPS://BIT.LY/3D7oRXO](https://bit.ly/3D7oRXO)

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