

ABOUT WILDERNESS SAFARIS

Wilderness Safaris is an ecotourism company and tour operator dedicated to responsible tourism in Africa, operating a portfolio of some 60 camps/lodges, with safaris in eight African countries: Botswana, Kenya, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Our wildlife, marine and cultural safaris in remote, pristine wilderness destinations are specialised, educational, explorative and fun. Working through the travel channel, we offer our guests private access to nearly three million hectares (seven million acres) of Africa's finest wildlife reserves.

Wilderness Safaris is fiercely committed to protecting the planet's precious natural and cultural resources. We view responsible, nature-based tourism as the most effective and practical vehicle to ensure the sustainability of African conservation today.

WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO

- The environment is at the heart of our beliefs and values. Our quest is to come to understand the wilderness better, to respect it, to care for it and to share it with our guests.
- We are serious about what we do and believe fully in our vision of contributing meaningfully to African conservation.
- Our vision is encapsulated by "the 4Cs," a concept that suggests that our organisation aims to be truly sustainable by committing to the four dimensions of Conservation, Community, Culture and Commerce:
 - **Conservation** is divided into **Environmental Management Systems** – i.e., building and managing our camps/lodges in the most eco-friendly way possible, and **Biodiversity Conservation** – i.e., the understanding, management and protection of the wildlife and ecosystems with which we are involved.
 - **Community** is all about the people at the heart of our business: **Internal Community** – our staff across all our regions, and **External Community** – comprising the rural communities that either own the land on which we operate or live adjacent to these areas.
 - **Culture** is a multifaceted element that governs respect for the culture of all employees as well as the remote rural communities surrounding the conservation areas.
 - **Commerce** deals with our ecotourism offerings and products and is perhaps the most critical element to sustainability in the modern world.

WILDERNESS BLUEPRINT – THE 4Cs

1. Conservation

Conservation is divided into two sections:

Environmental Management Systems concerns all aspects of our business. From our offices and flying operations through to how we build and manage our camps/lodges, we strive for the lowest possible carbon footprint to ensure a minimal negative environmental impact. To this end, we have established Group Environmental Minimum Standards (GEMS) that specify how we develop and operate our camps/lodges. We perform biannual environmental audits on the camps/lodges to ensure they maintain these high standards and to identify where we can improve.

Our GEMS include:

- **Monitoring & Reducing Carbon Emissions** – When building new or refurbishing existing camps/lodges we are converting to solar power as the primary energy source, thus reducing emissions substantially. In 2014, we had 12 solar powered camps/lodges (seven 100% solar- and five 50% solar-powered), and a further 12 camps/lodges on smaller solar systems that power each guest unit independently. Our emissions of carbon dioxide dropped by 9% to 15 835 tonnes in 2014, compared with 17 412 tonnes in 2012.
- **Efficient Water Usage** – By installing our own purified water systems at our camps/lodges, and thanks to strong support from both guests and staff, we reduced our bottled water consumption per bednight by 51% in 2014. By doing so, we have cut down on vast amounts of plastic waste going into landfills, with less than one 500ml plastic water bottle used per guest per night in most camps/lodges. In water-stressed areas like Namibia and the Central Kalahari Game Reserve in Botswana, we manage our water consumption carefully, even harvesting rainwater at Kalahari Plains Camp.
- **Waste Water** – Across Wilderness, 40% of our camps/lodges are situated in areas with high water tables or near rivers. In these situations, we have installed above-ground sewage treatment plants (STPs) that treat the water naturally with bacteria to ensure that there is no contamination of either ground or surface water.

Biodiversity Conservation covers the understanding, management and protection of the wildlife and ecosystems with which we are involved. Where relevant, we help to protect these (through anti-poaching), promote the reintroduction of indigenous species, and rehabilitate natural environments through vegetation management. In addition, we support research projects that enhance the understanding of our areas.

A number of examples:

- The reintroduction of threatened species into areas of their former range (e.g., white and black rhino into Botswana).
- Growth in the populations of threatened species that in some cases has resulted in favourable changes in their IUCN Red Listing status (e.g., loggerhead turtle and green turtle, South Africa).
- Enhanced understanding of threatened species that has resulted in improved management of the species either *in situ* or in external areas where they are of pressing conservation concern (e.g., roan antelope and lion).
- The confirmation of surviving conservation corridors linking sub-populations of key species (e.g., elephant, zebra, wildebeest and wild dog movement studies).
- Easing of human-wildlife conflict (e.g., Seronga Human-Elephant Conflict study).
- Establishment of biodiversity (e.g., aquatic biodiversity surveys) and population baselines (e.g., wildlife monitoring and aerial surveys).
- Removal of artificial and human-related causes of wildlife mortality and ecosystem rehabilitation (e.g., anti-poaching units in Zimbabwe and North Island vegetation rehabilitation in Seychelles).
- An understanding of the potential impacts of ecotourism-related activities (e.g., off-road driving study).

2. Community

A central tenet of Wilderness Safaris is that: "People are the heart of our business." There are two important elements to this C.

Internal Community speaks to our staff – 'the Wilderness Family'. They are a vital link between the business and you – our guests – as well as other patrons and partners. As such, we recognise our people as the company's most important asset and therefore need to ensure they are fulfilled, rewarded and act as a valued ambassador for our company. Training, health and safety are core elements of this strategy.

External Community focuses on our neighbours, the rural communities that either own the land on which we operate or live adjacent to these areas. We endeavour to engage with these communities in an honest, mutually beneficial and dignified manner and thus aim to deliver a meaningful and life-changing share of the proceeds with these partners. More than 70% of our staff are drawn from these remote and rural communities and thus form part of both Internal and External Communities.

We engage with our local communities in a number of ways:

- Our Children in the Wilderness programme
- Various formal community partnerships
- Preferred employment of local community members
- Preferred use of local suppliers of goods and services
- Development of various community and social welfare projects

We are able to measure our progress by recording our investments into projects or communities, positively impacting over 13 577 people in 2014 alone.

Joint Ventures and Community Partnerships

Wilderness has a number of joint ventures with communities, whereby we build and run a camp/lodge in a community-managed area, sharing the profits with the community. Wilderness currently has six camps/lodges in Namibia, three in Botswana and one in South Africa involved in ground-breaking joint community ventures; there are plans to create more. The communities involved in these ventures have seen a 50% increase in revenue in their respective areas.

The aims of the joint ventures are:

- To create high-income, low-impact sustainable tourism ventures
- To train members of the local community in all aspects of tourism
- To create immediate employment in a high unemployment area
- To uplift the local area financially and socially
- To allow local wildlife numbers to increase and stabilise

3. Culture

Culture is an important dimension of Wilderness. We endeavour to respect the culture of all employees, as well as the people whose lives we touch, which includes the remote rural communities surrounding our conservation areas. Respect for the various ethnic groups and their cultural heritage is promoted in all activities and throughout the business.

This is reflected in:

- A healthy social environment in camp/lodge
- Area-appropriate camp/lodge design, décor, entertainment and meals
- Respect for traditional rights within and surrounding the conservation area
- Communication of the area's traditional culture to guests and staff

Wilderness offers various cultural activities as part of a guest experience. The specific cultural activity depends on the country as well as the specific cultural group related to the camp/lodge. The aim of the cultural tourism experience is to ensure authenticity and learning without exploitation. Almost all the Wilderness camps/lodges offer some form of cultural tourism and/or education relating to the local culture and history of local communities.

Examples of Activities and Culture

- Traditional Evenings – Guests can experience local culture through dancing, singing, storytelling and eating local foods. In some instances, dinner menus are announced in the local language.
- Design and Décor – Where possible and practical, we attempt to use traditional architecture, building methods and materials in camp/lodge design and construction, as well as local artefacts.
- Cultural Visits – Where a local community is accessible to the camp/lodge, village tours are encouraged and organised, with the permission of the community, of course.

4. Commerce

Commerce deals with our ecotourism offering and is perhaps the most critical element to sustainability in the modern world. We can only make a difference in Africa if we are doing well. If our business is profitable, based on sound business principles and on solid moral principles, then we can make good on our promise to make a difference.

The Commerce C is what gives us the resources to move forward under the other three Cs. Without a viable business model, we cannot justify investing in the areas in which we operate. By the same token, even if there is a viable business model, we cannot justify operating in an area or location unless we can make useful contributions and interventions in the other three Cs.

We believe the single most important achievement by Wilderness to date is to have built a sustainable business model that does not compromise its environmental principles and which, through jobs, training, skills, careers, adjusted horizons and hope, provides a realistic alternative to Africa's challenges. The fact that we have been able to achieve success in our business while remaining environmentally responsible since 1983 is a boon.

Our Product Offerings

Wilderness Safaris

- Premier Camps
- Classic Camps
- Adventures Camps
- Explorations – Adventurer and Discoverer
- Wilderness Air

The Wilderness brand is therefore the expression of our vision:

To be Africa's leading ecotourism organisation, creating life-changing journeys in order to build sustainable conservation economies and inspire positive action.

MORE THAN JUST A SAFARI

At Wilderness Safaris, our delight is to share the wild places of Africa with our guests, while our ultimate goal is to help make a difference to Africa, its people and its wildlife. As a guest, you are already helping us to make a difference. At least 5% of Wilderness' gross profit (before taxation and depreciation) is spent on conservation efforts.

You can take this one step further by making a donation to one of our non-profit partners:

- **The Wilderness Wildlife Trust** funds projects addressing the needs of existing wildlife populations, seeks solutions to save threatened species and provides education and training for local communities. As an independent entity, the Trust supports a variety of wildlife management, research and education projects throughout Africa. The relationship between Wilderness and the Trust is symbiotic: The Trust is involved financially in the projects, while Wilderness contributes logistically in terms of human resources and equipment. Be that as it may, the Trust's mandate complements ours: To make a difference to Africa, its wildlife and people.

www.wildernesstrust.com

- **Children in the Wilderness (CITW)** is a life skills educational and environmental programme that focuses on the next generation of rural decision makers, developing environmental leaders who are inspired to care for their natural heritage so that they become the custodians of these areas in the future. By exposing the children to their wildlife heritage, CITW aims to create a network of learning sanctuaries that uplifts and cares for our children and conserves our planet.

The programme hosts rural children in southern Africa on annual camp/lodge and Eco-Club educational programmes where it teaches children the importance of conservation and strives to instil a passion for the environment so they become the custodians of these areas in the future. The children spend three to five nights in Wilderness Safaris and partner camps/lodges with the camp/lodge programme covering topics such as wildlife, conservation, health, HIV/AIDS awareness, nutrition, life skills, geography, geology, arts, crafts and theatre.

A new addition to the programme has been the introduction of school Eco-Clubs. These clubs take place at the rural schools, follow a structured curriculum and, depending on the region, take place weekly or monthly. Eco-Clubs give all learners who are interested in the environment a chance to meet, learn, discuss and expand their knowledge of environmental issues. Through Eco-Clubs, CITW reaches more children in the communities and on a more regular basis. Children participating on the Children in the Wilderness camps/lodges are selected from these Eco-Clubs. Environmental projects and tasks are earmarked and organized in cooperation with the community members and teachers. The children are encouraged to participate in the planning process and come up with their own ideas in order for them to take ownership of their clubs and the projects. The Eco-Clubs are increasingly providing positive community development while reaching a wider community. Projects to-date have included indigenous tree nurseries, collage competition raising environmental awareness and reforestation projects.

Further, an Eco-Mentor Training programme aims to develop local community members and Wilderness Safaris camp staff by upgrading their teaching skills and their environmental understanding and enabling them to better implement school and village environmental projects and initiatives. This project assists in addressing the critical teaching skills shortage in environmental education in southern Africa. Since many mentors come from the same communities or villages as the children, they are excellent role models who in effect restore a sense of hope to the children, allowing them to see a future for themselves.

Throughout the programme, CITW aims to develop leadership values amongst the participants, so as to create leaders who are inspired to care for their legacy and can show others the way. www.childreninthewilderness.com

Wilderness Safaris has partnered with **Pack for a Purpose** (a non-profit organisation) is another way of making a difference to the lives of children by using any available space in your luggage – no matter how small – to donate supplies to the communities you visit. Many Wilderness camps/lodges and the needs of the local community schools are listed on this innovative site: www.packforapurpose.org. By bringing stationery, sporting goods, such as deflated soccer balls and educational books, you can make a big difference in these remote rural villages. Pack for a Purpose has received a determination from the Internal Revenue Service that it qualifies as a charitable organization under code section 501(c)(3). All contributions to Pack for a Purpose are fully deductible.

Other ways you can make a difference while on safari in Africa:

- We are striving to cut down on our use of plastic; as such, a Wilderness water bottle will be given to you to use during your safari. There are water coolers in all our camps/lodges, which provide purified, filtered water that is perfectly safe to drink.
- Be aware of taking long showers – water is precious.
- Using the same towel for a few days saves water. Be conservative with your laundry requirements.
- Use Wilderness toiletries and amenities as we endeavour to use environmentally sound products only.
- Use electricity sparingly.
- Please be aware of the environmental impact of any curios you wish to purchase. For example, porcupines may have been killed so that you can purchase their quills. Wilderness curio shops are careful about their products and are safe to buy from.

FINALLY ...

Keep up to date with any or all of your favourite camps/lodges by checking our **News and Blog** section on the Wilderness website – or you can subscribe by RSS feed to have them delivered straight to your inbox. You may upload a gallery of photos should you wish. <http://www.wilderness-safaris.com/blog>

Please feel free to share your experiences with us and with others on our blog site. Here you can review the camps/lodges you stayed at and upload a gallery of photos. <http://twitter.com/wearewilderness>

Keep in touch with us by following us on our **Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Google+** pages. Here you will get stunning photos, and exciting updates of our latest sightings, projects and other news.

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