



# SANParks Honorary Rangers

Volunteers in support of conservation

## K9 Project Watchdog

[www.sanparksvolunteers.org](http://www.sanparksvolunteers.org)  
Established 1964

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## Die Voortrekkers

Care packages for the K9 unit, human  
and dog alike



### Who are “Die Voortrekkers”

The Voortrekkers is a cultural organisation promoting the Afrikaner history and the Afrikaans language. The ethos of the Voortrekkers is in our History, our Language and our Christianity.

The Voortrekkers was started more than 80 years ago. In all that time no money was received from government, be it the NP led government or the ANC

government. The Voortrekkers has always been an organisation that was and is financially independent.

The Voortrekkers is a voluntary organisation. No office bearer, be it an officer in a commando or the leader of the Voortrekkers, receive any remuneration for their service.

We, however, rely on the kindness of corporates and individuals, when we require help with specific projects, which we feel is of national importance.



By getting involved in this project we believe we honour our country by supporting those fighting to protect our wildlife.

### **K9 Project Watchdog**

Project Watchdog is an initiative of the SANParks Honorary Rangers that has been in operation for the past 7 years. Up until the end of 2018 it was only operational in the Kruger National Park (KNP). As of the 28th November 2018, it officially became what is termed a National Project (NP). The project with the new designation of NP means that it is now able to operate officially in all SANParks reserves that have canines operating in them.

The background to Project Watchdog in the KNP can be discussed briefly as follows:

- In order to combat and prevent the increase in rhino poaching in the KNP, SANParks has strived to convert the Ranger Corps into a dedicated Anti-Poaching Unit.
- Through this, SANParks is continuously investigating options to increase and improve the detection and arrest rate of armed poaching suspects.
- One approach identified was the introduction of canines into the KNP.
- These dogs can be trained to track poachers in the field, detect firearms and ammunition and wildlife products that may enter or exit through the KNP.
- In 2012 the first 3 Belgian Malinois were placed in the KNP.
- This led to the formation of the first K9 tracking teams.
- These teams used tracker dogs deployed by helicopter or vehicle throughout the KNP.
- In late 2012 a second approach was initiated.

- The introduction of 3 fox hounds to “Man Track” as a small core pack (unassisted by a handler) was introduced and evaluated.
- The early successes of the Malinois resulted in a donation of a further 8 tracking dogs in 2013.
- By the end of 2018, the KNP had 60 dogs.
- A need for a training centre in the KNP was found to be crucial for the sustainability of the dogs.
- Through donors a centre was built and handed over officially to SANParks in October 2015.
- Aim of the K9 centre – To bring dogs back for retraining and evaluation, and certification. To offer general support of K9 in the KNP. And finally, to act as Anti-Poaching Reaction from the unit to Ranger Sections to assist in rhino poaching operations.
- The centre was initially donated by the US Embassy, Buffet Foundation & Peace Parks Foundation.
- The centre is managed by Mr. Johan de Beer who is the K9 manager in the KNP.
- In 2015 the SANParks Honorary Rangers (SHR) were asked to adopt the centre. This adoption of the centre meant that the SHR assisted and supported SANParks in the running of the K9 centre. This assistance was in the form of various activities.

Duties include the following:

- Kennel management (Includes maintenance and cleaning)
  - Care of the K9 in the kennels on weekends
  - Maintenance of gardens
  - Fundraising
  - Other duties
- All work done in Project Watchdog is done via an APPROVED Wish List system. This means that all requests for donations, duties, activities are done through this system. All the items are approved by the Joint Liaison Committee in SANParks.
  - Examples of items on the wish list are the following:
    - Dog food store
    - Equipping K9 clinic, medical equipment and trauma kits
    - Obstacle course
    - Training/lecture centre
    - GPS harnesses
    - Helipad at the K9 centre for SANParks helicopter
    - Mobile kennels

With Project Watchdog becoming national as of the end of 2018, it means that the reach of the K9 Project Watchdog National Project (K9PWNP) will include all the other parks that have canines in their parks. Included in the 60 dogs in the KNP, the following SANParks National Parks will be included into K9PWNP. These parks are included due to them being rhino parks and areas where visitor safety is required.

- Addo Elephant National Park
- Karoo National Park
- Mapungubwe National Park
- Marakele National Park
- Makola National Park
- Mountain Zebra National Park
- Table Mountain National Park

The inclusion of these 7 additional parks into the K9PWNP means that the project now has a further 25 canines. This brings the total number of canines in the project to 85. The scope of the work of K9 Project Watchdog is such that it is to include the 85 canines and their handlers.

The needs, challenges and issues around these 25 new dogs within the project will be determined and included into the 60 in KNP. The successes in the KNP with Project Watchdog will be taken to all these 7 parks newly under the project, and through this improve the support to these canines and their handlers.

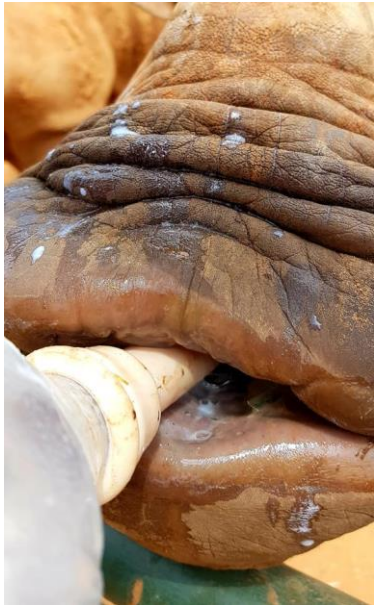
These working dogs in SANParks are contributing immensely to anti-poaching operations and through K9PWNP we intend to increase their effectiveness through our support. The K9 in the KNP is a game changer and 90% of all captures of poachers is related to the K9 and its handler. This is a huge benefit to the rhino and elephant conservation effort. The effectiveness of the K9 in KNP has shown the need to have these K9 and their handlers. By supporting the K9PWNP we intend to continue our support of these K9 warriors.

SANParks has a limited budget, due to the huge financial pressures on the organisation. The fight for the rhino and elephant is a difficult battle, and the need for assistance will always be there. Assistance in any form is of huge importance to K9 Project Watchdog.

Support from organisations is crucial.

Support will be of great significance. Why support the K9 Project, one might ask? One reason is that this project is potentially the most visible of all the projects. Everyone has an affiliation with a dog in some form or another. This gives people a personal link to the dogs and their influence in anti-poaching. On a media level its impact is huge. A sponsor can get great mileage out of such a sponsorship, such as:

- Acknowledgement as a sponsor to the project.
- Media exposure (Facebook, magazine articles, etc.)



- Hands-on involvement with the sponsorship, meaning we decide together with you how and where best to get involved.
- Continual feedback on your contribution.
- We will also consider any other requirements.

What is important to realise is that the contribution, whether cash or kind, will go directly to the identified area. 100% going directly back to the K9's and conservation of our wildlife.

### **Care for Wild – Rhinos**

The result of poaching is often seen in the press and on TV, but what few people see is, what happens to the orphans when the parents are killed for their horns. This is where Care for Wild comes in. They look after the baby rhinos until they can be set free in the KNP again.

The “Renoster” team of one of our Voortrekker commandos has adopted a baby rhino, named Arthur. Arthur has been inducted as a Voortrekker with his own uniform as well. He will receive recognition for milestones he receives as he grows up.



Voortrekkers have in previous occasions visited CfW to clean the cages and deliver care packages. During 2018 the Voortrekkers has collected R100,000+ from all Voortrekker commando's country wide, which was donated to CfW.

### **What do we want?**

We would appreciate any monetary donations which will enable us to help the K9 unit. Any other donations will also be appreciated.

The K9 unit, although they are part of SANParks, are reliant on donations, they do not receive any financial help from SANParks.

If you wish to donate equipment, medicine etc, it will be appreciated, but remember that medicine have expirations dates, as well as any dry dog food.



As for dog food, the K9 unit uses a specific brand of dogfood which has been found to be the best for the working dogs of the K9 unit.

The Voortrekkers of Polsslag commando is going to the Park in August 2019 to assist with maintenance, cleaning and upkeep of the K9 unit. We are taking approximately 30 high school Voortrekkers.

We are also looking for sponsors to pay for the children's accommodation and transport to and from the park for the 2 nights. Any Voortrekker adults going will pay for themselves.

The accommodation for the children is approximately R 23,000.00, the 13-seater bus is approximately R 2,200 per day plus insurance. We would appreciate any donation to help us help the K9 unit.

### **Equipment required**



Uniforms/protective clothing for the dog handlers are also in short supply. These include pants, shirts, hats, socks and boots. For the dogs the wish list includes GPS vests for tracking purposes. Arms and ammunition will also be welcomed, as these dog handlers

and dogs are often confronted by armed poachers.

### **Corporate involvement**

Any corporate wishing to get involved is more than welcome to contact us. We believe that a visit to any of the centres, K9 and/or CfW can be a very good teambuilding exercise.

### **What the Voortrekkers and Polsslag commando are doing**

As with the rhino project of 2018, we have once again started a campaign with all commandos where we are currently distributing cans to be filled with change. These funds will once again be donated, this time to the K9 unit.

We (Polsslag commando) are also creating boxes for each child in our commando to be filled with sweets, toiletries, etc. for the dog handlers as an early Christmas present. As part of this initiative we are also doing a “Sakkies vir Brakkies” Bags for Dogs, some treats for the dogs in the K9 unit.

From the 2nd Saturday in March Polsslag commando will host a Farmers Market once a month. 50% of these funds will also be utilised for the K9 project.



### **What will we do on our tour?**

On day one we will leave at 4 o'clock the morning to enable us to visit CfW at around 10:00 the morning. We will clean the rhino cages and feed the babies. By 14:00 we will leave to travel to Pretoriuskop camp in the KNP, where we will spend 2 nights. The K9 unit is in that area of the KNP. The first day in the KNP we will spend at the K9 unit cleaning the cages, doing general maintenance etc. We will also visit parts of the park not normally accessible to the general public. We will return on the 3rd day.

### **Conclusion**

We would like to thank you in advance for any and all support from you and your company. The Voortrekkers will not receive any benefit from any of the monies donated to us, except for accommodation and transport; all the money will be utilised by the or for the K9 unit.

### **TAX Incentive**

As the Voortrekkers are not registered to enable donors to claim donations for tax purposes, we have partnered with the Afrikaanse Toekomstrust (ATT). Any donations can be made to the Voortrekkers via the ATT. The ATT will then forward any funds to Polsslag commando for this project. Dr Danie Langner, leader of the Voortrekkers is also a director of the ATT. Dr Langner is also the managing director of the FAK.

### **Contact Us**

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