



19 September 2018

Youth tackle hot topics on World Rhino Day

Start

The Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) recognises the critical role that young people have to play in conservation, as the guardians of our future. With this in mind, the EWT will be running its annual speech and poster contest for schools on World Rhino Day, 22 September 2018.

South Africa's rhinos are in crisis and the EWT believes that the youth can play a key role in helping to save them. This annual event, made possible by the MyPlanet Rhino Fund, invites Grade 10 learners from schools in areas that are high risk for poaching activities to prepare speeches and posters on a topic relevant to the rhino crisis. Now in its fourth year, the contest was initially held in Mpumalanga in 2015 and has subsequently taken place in the Waterberg region in Limpopo each year. This year, participants have three options to choose from:

- Preparing a speech on the topic: “You are chosen to attend the 2019 CITES Conference of the Parties. You have been requested to give a speech to the CITES member countries on the value of rhino to you as a South African youth. What will you tell them? In your speech please tell us why rhinos are important to you and explain what CITES is and why you feel the international community should help South Africa save them from poaching.”
- Preparing a speech on the topic: “The Endangered Wildlife Trust Wildlife in Trade Programme has a project called ‘Kopanang’, meaning come together. This project aims to bring communities and nature reserves together – how would you achieve this goal? In your speech please set out the importance of wildlife, why wildlife crimes must be stopped, and what activities you will do or would like to do to help under this project.”
- Designing a poster on the topic: “What rhinos mean to you/why you love rhinos.”

Twenty schools from the area are participating.

Mashudu Makhokha, Director of Lapalala Wilderness School where the contest is hosted, says: “The contest has a huge impact on the participants, as it deals with the perception amongst local communities that biodiversity does not deliver tangible socio-economic benefits, particularly to the poor. It is through this competition that communities see social upliftment and empowerment of the younger generation to attain critical thinking skills and get involved in solving real issues like rhino poaching. The incentives are greatly appreciated by all participants since our province is one of the poorest provinces in the country, often with limited resources for teaching and learning. These opportunities close the gap of lack of proper uniforms, lack of study aid and lack of access to technological equipment.”

While the contest offers valuable prizes in the form of laptops for the winning speakers, enhancing their educational opportunities, the real prize is the engagement around these critical conservation topics. The participants go on to become ambassadors for rhinos in their local communities, speaking out against poaching, and acting as eyes and ears on the ground.

The EWT has a long track record of tackling rhino poaching, and first established a targeted Rhino Conservation Project in 2010. The EWT has taken a multi-faceted approach with multiple interventions along the rhino poaching chain. These approaches include the provision of detection and anti-poaching dogs to key locations, such as airports and reserves; community engagement and awareness raising; patrol optimisation technology to improve detection and enforcement; capacity building through training for law enforcement officials, rangers, and other stakeholders; and policy engagement.

End

About the Endangered Wildlife Trust

The Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) has worked tirelessly for over 45 years to save wildlife and habitats, with our vision of being a world in which both humans and wildlife prosper in harmony with nature. From the smallest frog to the majestic rhino; from sweeping grasslands to arid drylands; from our shorelines to winding rivers: the EWT is working with you, to protect our world.

The EWT's team of field-based specialists is spread across southern and East Africa, where committed conservation action is needed the most. Working with our partners, including businesses and governments, the EWT is at the forefront of conducting applied research, supporting community conservation and livelihoods, training and building capacity, addressing human-wildlife conflict, monitoring threatened species and establishing safe spaces for wildlife range expansion.

A beacon of hope for Africa's wildlife, landscapes and communities, the EWT is protecting forever, together. Find out more at www.ewt.org.za

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