



Media Release: October 2012

Contacts: Claire Warneke, Wilderness Foundation: info@sa.wild.org

Melanie Hill, The WILD Foundation: melanie@wild.org

Tracks of Giants collar deployed on jumbo

An elephant collar which travelled with the Tracks of Giants team throughout the 5,000 kilometre, 20 week journey through six countries earlier this year has been deployed on an elephant along the Kwando River in the heart of the Kavango-Zambezi (KAZA) Transfrontier Conservation Area (TFCA) where elephants are known to move across international borders.

The epic Tracks of Giants expedition culminated in the handover of the GPS-linked elephant collar to Botswana-based non-profit organisation, Elephants Without Borders (EWB) on Monday, September 03 this year. The collar was carried by the Tracks of Giants team throughout the journey in order to help raise awareness of the need for corridor and transfrontier park conservation.

In early October this year, Elephants Without Borders (EWB) conducted a large-scale field operation, deploying collars on 20 elephants and three giraffe in northern Botswana. During the exercise, the Tracks of Giants collar was successfully fitted to a large, healthy bull which is thought to have a wide range throughout the area. The bull, now known as “Tracks”, was sighted amongst a herd of 17 mature bulls and was darted from a helicopter. “He went down in a perfect location under a large acacia tree, so he was well shaded and kept cool. After the collar was attached, the tranquiliser was reversed and he awoke in a few short minutes, took a moment, slowly turned and strolled off to meet his herd. The entire exercise went very smoothly and quickly,” says Kelly Landen of EWB.

Information from all of the elephant collars deployed will be collated by EWB for its research into “population status and spatial ecology of large herbivores in northern Botswana”. The research aims at providing new and valuable information on the population status and movements of large herbivores throughout northern Botswana. It will culminate in locating and conserving the key habitats and migration corridors that wildlife need to survive.

“We’re very proud to have been part of the Tracks of Giants expedition and are looking forward to working with the team on the continuing adventure,” says Landen. She and Dr Mike Chase guided the Tracks of Giants team through Chobe and the Linyanti Floodplain in Botswana during the middle leg of the expedition.

According to specialist wilderness guide, photojournalist and naturalist Ian Michler, who was a core member of the Tracks of Giants team, “EWB was my Giant of the trip. The last few days of the kayak sector in Botswana ended in a multitude of magnificent elephant sightings – family herds or groups of bulls around almost every bend!”

“Now that the expedition component of Tracks of Giants is done, the most significant challenge is about to begin,” says Michler.

In the months to come, the two core members of the team, Ian Michler and Ian McCallum will be processing and laying out all the conservation, wildlife management, community and ecotourism issues encountered along the route. This will culminate in a book and documentary film which is anticipated to be ready in time for the next World Wilderness

A Voice for Wilderness

International Wilderness Leadership (WILD) Foundation • U.S.A. non-profit #23-7389749
717 Poplar Ave ■ Boulder, CO USA 80304 ■ Tel: 303-442-8811 ■ Fax: 303-442-8877 ■ www.wild.org

Congress in October, 2013. The data gathered from the deployed collar, and the team's interviews with EWB will be a fundamental part of the final products.

The collar deployment was supported by The Wilderness Foundation (SA) and The WILD Foundation (USA), NGO sponsors of Tracks of Giants expedition.

Follow the Tracks of Giants on:

Twitter: www.twitter.com/tracksofgiants

Facebook: www.facebook.com/tracksofgiants

Website: www.tracksofgiants.org – read the personal stories of the trailists via their blogs on Tracksofgiants.org

Photos: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/thewildfoundation/>

Notes:

Tracks of Giants' goals are: to promote a greater awareness of corridor and transfrontier park conservation; to advocate a greater understanding of the human-animal interface; to highlight sustainable human-animal relationships across Southern Africa; to encourage a review of education and research perceptions concerning current environmental issues; to provide an ongoing platform to feature southern African conservation challenges, potential long term solutions, and the ecological leadership required to address them.

Ian Michler: Ian Michler is a top specialist wilderness guide, photojournalist and naturalist, and has lived and worked across Africa for the last 22 years. His feature articles, diaries and blogs documenting the major conservation challenges facing Africa are well known to readers of the award winning magazines, Africa Geographic and Africa Birds and Birding. He is also the author of seven natural history and travel books on various African countries, does ecotourism consultancy work for both the private and government sectors, and has worked as a researcher and field coordinator on various natural history television documentaries for international broadcasters. Prior to his life in the wilderness, he spent almost eight years practicing as a stockbroker in Cape Town and Johannesburg. Ian is presently based along the Garden Route in South Africa where he is co-owner and manager of Invent Africa www.inventafrica.com, a specialist safari company that runs trips to 15 countries across Africa.

Ian McCallum: Ian McCallum is a medical doctor, psychiatrist, writer and a specialist wilderness guide. A co-founder of the Wilderness Leadership School in the Cape of Good Hope in 1983, he has subsequently written two anthologies of wilderness poems, Wild Gifts (1999) and Untamed (2012), a novel – Thorns to Kilimanjaro (2000) and more recently, the award winning Ecological Intelligence – Rediscovering Ourselves in Nature (2005). An adjunct professor at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, he is the writer/poet for the Dylan Lewis Untamed Exhibition currently on display at the National Botanical Gardens in Cape Town. He is presently a director of the Wilderness Foundation where he heads up the Academic and Leadership projects portfolio. He is a former rugby Springbok fullback.

The Wilderness Foundation: The Wilderness Foundation believes in sustainable social intervention projects, and the power of the wilderness to dissolve ethnic and economic inequalities and forge one path toward social and environmental sustainability. The Foundation is a project-driven conservation and leadership organisation, which aims to encourage, plan and protect wild lands and wilderness, uplift the knowledge and lives of citizens and stimulate an environmental ethos among current and future leaders. The Wilderness Foundation envisages a world that has sufficient intact natural ecosystems and wilderness areas that are valued and effectively protected for the

A Voice for Wilderness

International Wilderness Leadership (WILD) Foundation • U.S.A. non-profit #23-7389749
717 Poplar Ave ■ Boulder, CO USA 80304 ■ Tel: 303-442-8811 ■ Fax: 303-442-8877 ■ www.wild.org

benefit of all species.

The WILD Foundation: [WILD](#), based in Colorado (USA) and working internationally for 35 years, is the heart of the global wilderness movement. WILD's work is promotes and demonstrates *Nature Needs Half*, a science-based and common-sense vision where humans and nature share the planet so that large natural areas - land and water - are of sufficient size and interconnected so that they can continue to provide the life-supporting "ecological services" that assure both human health and prosperity, and a bountiful, beautiful resource of wild nature. Working across cultures with communications and field projects; with communities, the private sector, and governments on improved law, policy, and practice for wild nature; WILD is also the founder and steward of the World Wilderness Congress, the world's longest-running public conservation program. [WILD10](#) is in Spain in October 2013.

A Voice for Wilderness

International Wilderness Leadership (WILD) Foundation • U.S.A. non-profit #23-7389749
717 Poplar Ave ■ Boulder, CO USA 80304 ■ Tel: 303-442-8811 ■ Fax: 303-442-8877 ■ www.wild.org