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South African National Parks' WILD Card a huge success

JUST over a year ago, South African National Parks (SANParks) announced the introduction of a new conservation fee structure. And in addition to this, the implementation of a mechanism that sort to encourage more visitation to national parks and other conservation areas throughout the country.

The new conservation fee structure was implemented subsequent to in-depth research conducted by internationally recognised advisers McKinsey Consultants. It was also established to meet critical conservation objectives.

SANParks is pleased to announce that since its implementation in June 2003, over 100 000 **WILD** cards have been sold, generating R10 million in income. A total of R50 million has also been generated from the changes in the conservation fee structure.

Developed through a partnership with Infinity - one of South Africa's leading loyalty and smart card management companies - the **WILD** Card offers the purchaser heavily discounted rates and special offers at some 2 000 Infinity countrywide.

In essence, the **WILD** Card is a combination of a season ticket to the national parks system, where the card-holder pays a once-off annual fee and thereafter enjoys free access to all 20 national parks in South Africa, and a consumer loyalty programme.

In addition to offering card-holders free entrance to national parks, variants of the **WILD** Card also give visitors the opportunity to freely visit 30-odd Cape Nature Conservation nature reserves and all privately-owned Msinsi reserves in KwaZulu-Natal.

SANParks and its partners believe that the **WILD** programme may soon also include other public conservation bodies in other provinces, and even the conservation authorities of neighbouring countries.

There is also a version of the **WILD** Card intended for international visitors, and for 2004/2005 this product has been made far more flexible than it has been thus far, and also offers visitors far greater utility in terms of such support as a telephonic "concierge" service, roadside motor vehicle breakdown assistance and emergency medical evacuation.

Finally, SANParks plans to introduce within the next few months a product intended to bring the benefits of the **WILD** Card to people from disadvantaged backgrounds who welcome the concept of the card but who genuinely cannot afford even the entry-level card.

This **WILD** Pay & Save Card, as it has been provisionally dubbed, will be made available in partnership with SANParks' People & Conservation Department, and will offer a means of affordable entry to the programme.

A newspaper article recently said that: "...the initiative to produce a **WILD** Card to provide cheaper access to all game parks for citizens is a good thing - so we can all experience the true worth of conservation in our land." It is to extend this initiative to more South Africans that SANParks intends to introduce the **WILD** Pay & Save Card.

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