



LEGODIMO NATURE RESERVE IS SITUATED ON THE BANKS OF THE LIMPOPO RIVER. IT IS A PART OF THE TULI BLOCK IN THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<b>Editor's Letter</b>	1
Feature: Poaching on Legodimo	2
News	3
Projects Article	4
<b>Volunteer's Corner</b>	5
Staff Page	6
And Finally...	7



The volunteers taking some time to show some love for our oldest tree...

## Editor's Letter

It is **SPRING TIME!!**

This is one of the best times of the year at Legodimo Nature Reserve.

The long, cold and grey winter bush opens up to reveal new life and the bright green promise of new vegetation. This is the time of the year where everyone is happy, it is not too hot and it is not too cold!

This period of Spring will only last for a few weeks before it starts getting really hot, so the

Legodimo team took action and celebrated the South African Arbour week. This is during the first week of September and the whole nation focuses on planting new trees

and plants.

We took advantage of this week and got busy with all our plant related projects...

I hope everyone has a good September, even though for some it signals the start of winter...

Remember: without winter, it will not be possible to appreciate Spring.

Happy Nature Greetings,

*If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant; if we did not sometimes taste of adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome." ~Anne Bradstreet*

# Feature: South African Arbor week

Arbor Day originated in 1872 in the United States territory of Nebraska. Mr. J. Sterling Morton, a newcomer to the treeless plains of Nebraska, loved the beauty and benefit of trees. He persuaded the local agricultural board to set aside a day for planting trees and encouraged participation in the event by publishing articles on the value of trees for soil protection, fruit, shade and building. Mr. Morton's home, known as Arbor Lodge, was a testament to his love for trees and so inspired the name of the holiday; Arbor Day. Within two decades Arbor Day was celebrated in every US State and territory, and eventually spread around the world.



This tree is called a Large leaved rock fig, *Ficus abutilifolia*.

This tree actually grows on rocks. It has the ability to send its roots so far down, that the roots simply grow over the rock and down to the water.

The seeds mainly get distributed by birds eating the fruit and dropping the seeds via faeces



In South Africa, Arbor Day was first celebrated in 1983. The event captured the imagination of people who recognized the need for raising awareness of the value of trees in our society. Collective enthusiasm for the importance of this issue in South Africa inspired the national government, in 1999, to extend the celebration of Arbor Day to National Arbor Week. From 1 to 7 September every year, schools, businesses and organizations are encouraged to participate in community "greening" events to improve the health and beauty of the local environment and propose a green future for South Africa.

This year, the Legodimo team joined in. We focused on all our plant and tree related projects. We did a lot of Tree Wrapping maintenance, where we go around all our previously wrapped trees and ensure that they are still protected. We have removed and burned piles of Alien Plants and we also tried our new biological methods. Our Greenhouse was completely "Spring"-cleaned and is now ready for action in the rain season. We will aim to enlarge our efforts every year...



# News - - - - -

## Poaching Update

We have had reports back from the Botswana Defence Force, that they have arrested one person and are still looking out for others. We, The Legodimo Team, have been doing anti-poaching patrols once a week, but we always find more snares. It has lessened and our presence in the Northern part of the reserve is making a difference.



## Big Cat

We spotted this Leopard on our way to a local village. She was so well camouflaged by her surroundings that we nearly missed her...thanks to G with his eagle eyes!

## Jannie's Birthday

**This month we celebrated Jannie's** birthday. Jannie is a local man who has been working with us since the project started. This year Jannie had his **FIRST BIRTHDAY EVER!** Yes, Jannie has never had a birthday party, simply because he does not know when he was born. So, we created a birthday for him - 5 September- during Spring, the best time of the year.



Happy Birthday Jannie!

# Project Article: Mathathane Primary School

When it comes to conserving a wilderness, all efforts can render useless, if the surrounding people do not contribute. We have realised the fact that we will have to create awareness of our conservation efforts in the local communities. By creating awareness and appreciation for nature, we are gaining a whole generation of future conservationists.

So, once every two months, the Legodimo team sets off to a local village to interact and visit the local Primary School.



This month our volunteers were treated to performances of traditional African dances. These dances are part of the culture of these kids, and this is the way that they remember and pass on their customs and traditions.

We are currently busy with a project in the Mathanthane Primary School... watch this space.

# Volunteer's corner



*This story was written by Michele Chiacchio from Naples, Italy.*

Allora, sono partito per Legodimo ad inizio agosto 2010 con la certezza nel cuore che avrei finalmente scoperto l'Africa, un'esperienza che ho sempre voluto fare...arrivato lì mi sono ricreduto: non ho scoperto l'Africa...ho scoperto il Mondo e me stesso. È stata l'esperienza più bella e importante della mia vita. Ho viaggiato parecchio, ma fino ad ora nessun viaggio mi aveva aperto gli occhi su quanto fosse bello il mondo e la vita.

Andiamo con ordine! Devo riconoscere che appena arrivato mi sono subito scoraggiato perché c'erano più di 30 persone e quindi pensavo che sarebbe stata **l'ennesima vacanza di socializzazione, in cui tutto si fa tranne stare un po' da soli a riflettere** (obbiettivo primario per me). Poi, però, grazie ad un'abile strategia, tutti i **partecipanti erano smistati nelle riserve confinanti e quindi l'affollamento non si avvertiva più**. Ogni giorno è stato diverso dagli altri, mai due volte la stessa cosa, tante belle persone (alcune più di altre) e soprattutto la Natura, non quella a cui siamo abituati in Italia. Era una Natura viva, possente, che ti faceva sentire una nullità a confronto. La settimana a Mapungubwe è stata forse la migliore della vacanza, un posto sublime...Ma poi le persone che c'erano, magnifiche, gente con normali interessi con cui si può instaurare un discorso serio senza essere costretti a parlare di calcio e varie. Il giorno del mio compleanno sono stati amabilissimi tutti, dopo avermi portato su una collina e aver cantato "tanti auguri" mi hanno anche dato dei regali e una torta...li amo.

Ora sono di nuovo in Italia, ma so che tornerò. L'università sarà solo un trampolino di lancio per l'Africa...Io DEVO tornare, devo andare a riprendermi il mio cuore che è rimasto nel bush. Quindi quando mi chiedono qual è il mio sogno io rispondo: finire l'università e trasferirmi nel bush con le persone più belle del mondo...Unica **nota negativa: il cibo...certo per un italiano è sempre un trauma, ma con un po' di pazienza e collaborazione si è risolto anche quello!!!**



Tim Unger, Vanessa Rothe and Michele. You could always find these three giggling about something...



Andreas Jensen, Michele, Sonia Farmer and Sam— fighting the battle together.

Gautier Sigg, Michele and Tim Unger. Showing us what they are made of in the Greenhouse.



# Volunteers Arriving:

We look forward to having all of you here at Legodimo Nature Reserve.

Good luck with your preparations and enjoy your trip!

Julia Blom

Hana Barnes

Will Hertzman

Pauline Lecaque

Cedric Gendreau

# Volunteers departing:



Michele Chiacchio

Catriona MacDonald

Oliver Godfrey

Mario Savona

Gautier Sigg

Thank you all for your contributions toward our project! We will miss you loads and loads!

Stay in touch!



Mario Savona

Tristan Lochon and Steve Markham



Loman Perroud and Floris Westheim



Hana Barnes, Rachel Kilby, Tim Unger and Vanessa Rothe



Axelle Bourneuf

Tom Schiller, G, Mieke, Marcel Stoehr, Rachel, Pam, Hannah Osborn, Floris Westheim, Tristan Lochon, Loman Perroud and Steve and Annalies Markham.



# Staff page

*Here is your Legodimo team...*

Left in this picture is me, Mieke Prinsloo. I am the Desk Officer and I deal with all the preparations, questions or concerns a volunteer may have, before and during placement.

Next to me is my husband, Gerrit Prinsloo. He is the Director of the project and he is your go-to man with anything concerning Nature.

Both of us grew up in South Africa and have a major passion for Nature Conservation.



Meet Rachel Kilby. She was born in the UK, she studied and got a degree, then she left for the Amazon jungle. Rachel has spent the last seven years working on the Projects Abroad Peru Conservation project.

This is the person you want next to you in a dangerous situation, she has impeccable “staying calm” skills and can handle anything from bugs to passport problems. Rachel joined our project as **Conservation Assistant** and we wouldn't give her away for anything in the world.



This is Sam. Our very own research co-ordinator. Sam studied Nature Conservation in Cape Town and then worked at Mapungbwe National Park during 2009.

Sam joined us in February and has proved to be a very valuable asset to our team. Not only does she get the job done, but she is always ready to make you laugh or brighten your day.



Andrew Jackson, our newest recruit. Andrew also studied Nature Conservation in Cape Town and has an immense passion for plants and literature.

Andrew joined us as a temporary staff member, but proved himself a million times over. Now we have asked him to stay and continue spreading his magic through the project.



# Photos in month



Snare Removal with Sam

It is not often that we get such a good picture of owls. This is a Barn Owl.



African sunset



Bushmen paintings



Rachel caught a white bellied sun-bird



Kids in Mathathane waiting for sweets....



The Limpopo River border crossing

## And Finally...

September was a beautiful month and from now it can just get better.

Thanks to everyone who keeps in touch - we love hearing from you!

Please remember to send me any comments or suggestions.

Please, old volunteers – send me your VOLUNTEER STORIES and photos of you in Legodimo.

Have a great month, stay in touch and be safe.

Lots of Love

Mieke Prinsloo and the Legodimo Nature Conservation team

xxx