



ECOTRaining
SOUTH AFRICA
Pioneer and Leader in Field Guide and Nature Training

YOUR LIFE ALTERING CAREER CHOICE

28 Day Trails Guide Back-Up

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THE LESSONS LEARNED FROM NATURE ARE MANY - THE IMPORTANCE OF A BEETLE

Who can do this course? Anyone!

The aim of this course is to develop and practice skills pertaining to backing-up and leading walks in dangerous game country. It is conducted in a different, wilder area and therefore provides a more authentic Field Guide experience. The majority of the time on this Trails Guide Back-up course is spent exploring the wilderness on foot. This course gives grounding to conduct bush walks in big game country and has an emphasis on safety.

This course is not only available to Field Guides. It is open to anyone who wants experience or opportunities of walking in a wilderness area and improving personal skills. Skills gained on this course can be used anywhere by anyone. The course content is the same for everyone, regardless of existing qualifications. However if a FGASA Back-up qualification is what you want after you will have to attain a full FGASA Level 1 before coming on the course.

Learners will be expected to show leadership and decision-making skills and that they are responsible and accountable for their actions in the field. Learner participation in the care of the camp, equipment and vehicle will be expected. Learners will be expected to pay attention to the needs of fellow learners and to work in teams at times.

EcoTraining is a FGASA endorsed training provider and therefore is accredited by THETA. This means our courses adhere to THETA standards. THETA is the Tourism and Hospitality and Sport Education Training Authority of the South African government. These are the two bodies responsible for regulating standards within the guide training industry in southern Africa. For this course only, we will assist you by registering you for FGASA, THETA and eventually DEAT. (DEAT – Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism).

The course is structured to maximize the practical experience of our learners in the bush. Each day allows for maximum amount of time spent in the bush interpreting wildlife encounters and the general ecology while enjoying oneself. Activities alternate between driving and walking with the emphasis on walking.

Lecture time follows after brunch, which involves lectures and discussion on the subject of the day. (see list below). This is followed by time for self study for the learners.

Course Location - Kruger Park Makuleke Camp

Our Kruger Park Makuleke Camp is situated in the 24 000 hectare (59305 acres) Makuleke concession in the far northern and most remote part of the Kruger National Park. The area is characterized by great biodiversity and a human history reaching to the remote past. This concession is ideal for trails guide courses as it is sparsely populated with only 3 concessionaires present. The large concentrations of big game make it an ideal venue to practise your newly acquired trails guide skills. Accommodation is in safari tents on wooden decks covered with thatch in the shade of nyala trees. Each unit has a veranda overlooking the bush and an en-suite bathroom with a flush toilet, shower and basin. Most of the animals that are found in the Kruger Park can be viewed in the concession. Large herds of buffalo and elephant are not uncommon and the birding in this incredible part of the Kruger Park is unsurpassed. This camp is also unfenced in order to allow free movement for the animals in their natural environment.

Course Location - Mashatu Camp

Our Mashatu Camp is located in the land of Giants in the Tuli reserve of Botswana bordering South Africa. Tuli forms a key part of the proposed **Greater Mapungubwe Transfrontier Conservation Area**. It is an area of outstanding natural beauty with majestic rocks, diverse vegetation, abundant wildlife, a profusion of birds and a rich archaeological heritage and spans over 25 000 hectares.

The Northern Tuli Game Reserve, on the confluence of the Limpopo and the Shashe rivers, in the easternmost corner of Botswana, is the collective name for several privately-owned game reserves including the Mashatu, Ntani and Tuli Game Reserves, covering all the land north of the Limpopo River.

EcoTraining's accommodation facilities and game reserves are authentic, with as little clutter to dilute the relationship between nature and our learners as possible. We want them to co-existence, when sleeping we want learners to hear elephants browsing on leaves and nightjars call right outside the tents at night. EcoTraining stands for an honest, comfortable and safe experience. **It's all about the bush...**

Meals

- Wake-up to tea/coffee with biscuits and fresh fruit
- Enjoy a cooked breakfast, with cereals and fruit for brunch
- In the afternoon indulge with a few light snacks
- A balanced, warm plated meal finishes off the day for dinner

Daily Programme

A typical daily programme at the camp follows a routine of rising early, usually before sunrise, enjoying a hot beverage and rusks while listening to the bush waking up. Then you will depart on an outing on foot into the wilderness led by fellow students with instructors backing-up.

The outings are flexible in the areas you will be walking however the emphasis will always be on encountering big game on foot. The outing could start with a drive to a new area for a walk exploring new wilderness. It could be a follow up on lions roaring during the night. It could also be following up of fresh elephant tracks learning how to trail the animal. The options are endless!

Learners return to camp in the late morning for a hearty brunch followed by a power point lecture on the subject of the day. Study and rest time follows with a light lunch before departing on an afternoon activity. Once again led by fellow students.

Afternoon outings may include a return night drive to view the smaller nocturnal animals and birds. If such, the lead guide (student) will be driving with the instructor close at hand for advice.

Dinner and stories about the days encounters will be discussed round the campfire before preparing for the following days adventures.

The emphasis is on practical day-to-day experiences while walking in the bush. The daily outings will always include walking but are flexible in terms of subjects and will focus on fellow students special interests which will include animal tracks, tracking, birds, ecology and general game viewing.



Course Content

- Introduction to Trails Guide course
- Navigation & orientation
- Tracks and tracking
- Walking in dangerous game country
- Situational awareness
- Approaching dangerous game on foot
- Dangerous game knowledge & behaviour
- Animal behaviour
- What a Trails Guide carries in a backpack
- The role of the back-up
- Post incident management
- Birding & bird identification
- Historical human habitation
- Shot placement
- Rifle handling for dangerous game
- Guiding ethics
- Weapon handling, safety & ballistics
- Wilderness concept
- Radio procedures
- FGASA Rifle Handling and Back-up Trails Guide qualification opportunities
- Tests and evaluations
- Possible 2 day navigational hike and sleep-out

Tests and assessments

- 1 x Theory test (end course)
- 1 x Field observation
- 1 x Scenario (approaching dangerous game)
- 1 x Navigation & orientation test
- Course activity preparation (throughout course)
- Hospitality – Boma dinner assessment
- Rifle Handling & Safety assessment
- FGASA Trails Guide Exam (where applicable)
- FGASA Advanced Rifle Handling Assessment (where applicable)
- FGASA and EcoTraining Back-up assessment
- FGASA and EcoTraining Lead assessment

Course Rates

Please contact enquiries@ecotraining.co.za for more information.

Rate includes:

- Qualified & Experienced Instructors
- Lectures
- Game drives
- Walks
- Accommodation
- Meals
- Tea, coffee and cordials
- Further details on request or registration

