



## **Student/Intern/Volunteer Packet**

**Rhino Mercy**

**Transfrontier Africa**

**Olifants West Nature Reserve**

March 23, 2019

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## Student/Intern/Volunteer Packet

### Part 1: General Camp Information

Africa provides an ever-changing environment, power failures, water and fuel shortages, temperature fluctuations, and other uncontrollable/unplanned situations do occur. You will need to remain flexible, understanding, and good-humored. “African time” can be difficult and frustrating for those who are used to a very structured life, so this is something to keep in mind!

Once you arrive at the reserve, your general care pertaining to the purpose of your stay is the responsibility of Transfrontier Africa and its trained staff who aim to provide you with all of your daily needs generally accepted as reasonable, to keep you out of harm’s way, and to support you in your activities. In exchange, we ask you to attend to your work punctually and to behave consistently in ways that reflect well upon your sponsoring institution, Transfrontier Africa and their staff, and Rhino Mercy.

It is hoped the information contained in this document will be of some use to you and enhance your experience in Africa.

The Project takes place on the Olifants West Nature Reserve, a sub-region of the Balule Nature Reserve in Greater Kruger National Park. The Olifants West Nature Reserve is approximately 16 kilometers from Hoedspruit.

The camp was newly built earlier this year following a move from the project’s former home within the same reserve. The camp consists of **basic but functional** accommodation in chalets, an open air lapa/communal area, kitchen and open air yet private bathroom.

The camp is an ‘open’ camp, which means that the local wildlife/dangerous animals can move freely through the camp, should they choose to do so! The local elephants are particularly stubborn or curious depending on which way you look at it and have caused for some exciting times in camp! They have been known to damage facilities, in particular to the plumbing. This

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information is not intended to alarm you but to make you aware of the realities of life in a purposely designed open bush camp environment.

The suggested packing list below should help with deciding what to bring to the camp. All clothing should conform to game management/industry standards (be of neutral color, safari shirts, shorts, trousers or t-shirts) No bright colors, such as football shirts should be worn when out in the bush). If you are unsure about anything on this list, please ask for clarification prior to arrival.

### **Clothing:**

- Hat
- Sunglasses
  
- Warm Jacket / Fleece (seasonal)
- Waterproof Jacket (seasonal)
- 4 x Shirts (durable and of neutral-coloration. Green or khaki)
- 2 x T-shirts
- 4 x Pairs shorts (green or khaki)
- 1 x Pair trousers (green or khaki - seasonal)
- 4 x Pairs socks
- Comfortable Walking Boots
- Sandals (for in camp)
- Gloves and Beanie (seasonal)
- Watch
- Underwear
- Sleeping clothes to suit
- Head torch/torch (with spare batteries)

### **Toiletries:**

- Shampoo
- Sunscreen

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- Soap
- Toothbrush
- Hairbrush
- Toothpaste
- Mosquito repellent
- Towel
- Personal toiletries (e.g. razors, deodorant etc.)

**Required:**

- Water bottle
- Day pack
- Binoculars

**Recommended:**

- Camera (with spare batteries and memory card)
- Small personal first-aid kit (plasters, tweezers, analgesic tablets etc.)
- Reading book
- Plug-adaptor (South African 3-point 'round' plugs are used)
- Battery charger if recharging is required
- Positive attitude!

During your time in camp you will be provided with at least 3 meals per day. You will also have access to drinking water. Any snacks, treats or alcoholic/soft beverages will need to be purchased at extra cost. These can be purchased from Hoedspruit town when visiting. To cover any additional expenses including occasional dining at restaurants while off the reserve we suggest that volunteers consider having access to approximately R1,000 per week of your stay. ATM/Banking locations are available in Hoedspruit.

Volunteers will be expected to launder their own clothes while in camp and will be able to do this using the facilities at their chalet.

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There are a number of First Aid trained staff in the camp and on the reserve. If you feel unwell or require medical assistance, please make the staff aware. There is an accident/incident book maintained in camp in which the details of any accidents will be recorded.

In the case of a medical emergency, treatment can be sought at the hospital in Hoedspruit, which is approximately 16 kilometers away. Should you require access to private medical care, this can be accessed in Tzaneen which is approximately 120 kilometers northeast of the reserve.

Please be mindful that the project runs on a very limited budget and all resources such as firewood, water, electricity and Wi-Fi access are limited. Resources in the bush are precious and should be used with this in mind; at times it may be necessary to temporarily ration the use of basic resources.

As part of the day-to-day activities of some staff in camp may be required to take part in urgent reserve management activities which may not be suitable for volunteers to take part in. Please remember that during your time in camp, the staff have a responsibility to ensure your health and safety which may mean that you cannot always accompany them in the day to day duties and please do not take this personally.

As part of the additional activities by some staff, there is a highly trained specialist breed anti-poaching dog on camp. You will be given a briefing about the dog and the amazing work he does. Please be aware that he is not a pet and you should not attempt to treat him as such. He is highly trained to assist in the detection of crime and poaching.

SIGNED THIS \_\_\_\_\_ DAY OF \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_\_\_\_

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 FULL NAME (Please Print)

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## Part 2: Personal Code of Conduct

### General Provisions

**Attitude of Respect toward People and the Environment.** At all times, treat with respect all people of the world, all languages, all cultures, all religions, local and other customs, histories and folklore, and the indigenous natural environment. All activities should be conducted in such a manner as to cause the least possible damage to the environment and encouragement should be given to remove litter, including cigarette ends and bottle tops, thus improving the environment.

**Avoidance of Discriminatory Action.** At all times refrain from any discriminatory, abusive, insensitive or irresponsible action and promise to act fairly in the event of any dispute or conflict.

**Avoidance of Substance Abuse.** At all times refrain from and avoid substance abuse, smoking in inappropriate areas, or use of any narcotic drug.

**Adherence to Dress Code.** Undertake to dress appropriately at all times, which should consist of items from the published packing list and be of neutral color, when out in the bush/field. Revealing clothes are not appropriate in camp or out in the field.

**Statement of Reliability and Responsibility.** Undertake to be on time, reliable, honest, conscientious and tactful.

### Specific Provisions

**Code of Conduct.** All participants are obligated to abide by the rules of the camp and adhere to the spirit of the project. If for any reason an individual compromises the experience of the group or any individual, the individual can after suitable warning, counseling and following

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the disciplinary process, be withdrawn from the project and be returned home. No refunds in this case will be issued and any additional cost incurred will be at own cost.

**Behaviour.** Participants are to behave in a manner that is not offensive to staff, fellow volunteers, visitors. Behaviour must be conducive to team work and communal cooperation.

**Dress.** We request that you dress in a suitably appropriate manner to the task or activity at hand. We require participants to not dress in a revealing and scantily clad manner which may be by reasonable assessment, found to be of an offensive nature.

**Jewelry.** We advise that participants to not bring high or sentimental value items such as jewelry. Due to the nature and environment of the general activities and tasks carried out on a day-to-day basis, the wearing of jewelry is not advised from a health and safety perspective.

**Language.** English is the recognized and preferred language used. No language that is indecent and or offensive to others will be accepted.

**Drugs.** The possession or use of narcotics and other recreational drugs is against the law. Participants suspected of breaking this rule could be withdrawn from the project and sent home if found to act in contradiction to this law. We advise participants to advise management pre or on arrival of any scheduled prescription drug usage, preferably accompanied by a doctors' note or prescription, especially in the treatment of life threatening cases.

**Alcohol.** Participants wishing to use alcohol in the camp must do so with sensibility and act in a responsible manner as to not be offensive to others in camp. No intake of alcohol is allowed during working hours. The legal age for purchase and consumption of alcohol is 18 years of age in South Africa.

**Upholding the good name of the project.** No conduct will be permitted that will bring yourself or the project into disrepute, nor involve any other employee or volunteer in any behaviour that might amount to disrepute or be considered to be defamatory in any way. If your

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behaviour is found to be detrimental to the project you are involved with, you may be asked to leave immediately without compensation.

**Staff/Volunteer Relations.** The project neither allows nor encourages volunteers to develop personal relationships with general project staff and personnel. This would not promote a good working environment and could result in the dismissal of the staff member.

**Expectations and conditions of stay.** As an intended reiteration, Africa provides an ever-changing environment, power failures, water and fuel shortages, temperature fluctuations, and other uncontrollable/unplanned situations do occur. You will need to remain flexible, understanding and good-humored. “African time” can be difficult and frustrating for those who are used to a very structured life, so this is something to keep in mind! Once you arrive in Africa, your care is the responsibility of Transfrontier Africa and its trained staff who aim to provide you with all of your daily needs, to keep you out of harm’s way, and to support you in your activities. In exchange, we ask you to attend work punctually and to behave consistently in ways that reflect well upon Transfrontier Africa and their staff.

### Disciplinary Provisions

**The following infractions are cause for verbal warnings or if deemed appropriate by the Camp Director termination of the student:**

- General bad conduct
- Poor punctuality
- Laziness
- Failure to attend an activity without just reason
- Minor breach of safety rules
- Minor damage or misuse of Company property
- Being rude, unfriendly or disrespecting local customs
- Discrimination in any form
- Defamation of character

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**The following infractions are cause for immediate termination:**

- Academic, professional, or personal dishonesty
- Failure to adhere to an instruction from staff, mentor or other designated supervisor
- Theft
- Drinking on duty (or between activities) where you could endanger yourself or someone else as a result
- Malicious damage to Company property
- Assault
- Serious breach of safety rules
- Under the influence and/or in possession of drugs

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### Part 3: Camp & Field Rules

#### Rules Governing Equipment Use

All staff and interns will organize an equipment list, which they will sign and hand into Craig Spencer or his designee.

An inventory will be drawn up of all equipment, books and vehicles in camp. Staff and interns must sign out all equipment, books and vehicles on a daily basis. Such equipment may include: GPS, Cyber Tracker, Tape Measure, Flags, Micro Scale, VHF Receiver, Yagi Antenna, Camera Traps, Hand Held Radios, Books, and vehicles etc. All will be returned to the office at the end of the day, cleaned, plugged into charger, placed on shelves, with a level of organization maintained.

All staff and interns will place a deposit on the equipment utilized. Charges will be dependent on equipment replacement cost.

#### Rules Governing Facilities Use

Sundays will involve the cleaning of camp and vehicles by interns and volunteers as allocated by the cleaning rotation.

The kitchen, bathroom and other communal areas will be cleaned on a daily basis, as allocated by the rotation.

All chalets will be kept clean and tidy, on a daily basis by the current resident.

Non-staff members will not be permitted to enter the camp kitchen unless attending to cleaning duties as required by the KP rotation schedule. Staff will organize and prepare, breakfast, lunch and dinner for all in camp. Fridge and freezer-space is reserved for essential

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food and camp supplies. Interns and volunteers will not be granted access to the fridge and freezers for their personal food and drinks.

Lights out will be at 10pm. This is to enable to preservation of crucial camp resources and to respect the natural surrounding which everyone is entitled to enjoy.

Everyone in camp should aim to conserve the very limited resources available such as firewood, water, solar power, and LPG.

Food should not be kept in chalets to prevent wild animals from trying to gain access to chalets.

As a reiteration, when in the field, all interns and volunteers must be dressed to comply with the industry norms and standards (khaki and / or green). Sensible shoes and a hat will be worn at all times. Cloths must be neat and clean.

**Rules Governing Vehicle Use**

Number of people per vehicle will be determined by vehicle type but is generally limited to three (3) persons – Driver plus two.

All interns will sign a contract, place a deposit and pay a daily rental charge for vehicle usage.

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## Part 4: Student & Volunteer Project Management Standards

### Rules Governing Project Management

Every Friday, each intern will meet with Craig Spencer and his designee in the office, for evaluation and project progress.

Every Saturday, an intern or staff member will present their project to the camp. In the afternoon all members will walk to Double Dam for a workshop and discussion session. Volunteers can identify tree species, birds and general wildlife. Tracks will be explained and ‘hot’ conservation issues will be discussed.

All interns and staff will fill in and file data sheets on a weekly basis.

Volunteers will be assigned to a research project and will remain on that project for one week. There will be no option to choose and volunteers will be rotated on a weekly basis to provide exposure to all current projects. During this time, interns and staff will educate volunteers in their area of study. In addition, volunteers will assist their week’s mentor, with all data collection, data entry, research and reports in a courteous manner. This is essential for consistency in the research regime.

All staff and interns must submit a written progress report every 3 months.

SIGNED THIS \_\_\_\_\_ DAY OF \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_\_\_\_

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**Part 5: Student & Volunteer Responsibility Confirmation**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (*print name*) affirm the environmental conditions of the research camp offered by Transfrontier Africa (TA) and Rhino Mercy (RM) to the intern/student/volunteer named below. My anticipated arrival date at the camp is \_\_\_\_\_ and anticipated departure date is \_\_\_\_\_.

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (*the undersigned*), intern/student/volunteer, hereby acknowledge that the research camp is an open, unfenced, basic bush camp established in the Olifants West Nature Reserve situated in the heart of Balule Nature Reserve, Greater Kruger National Park, South Africa. I further acknowledge that the camp is unfenced and is situated in an area where potentially dangerous animals, reptiles, and insects roam freely.

I further understand and acknowledge that the camp is situated in a malaria-endemic area and that I have been advised to take anti malaria precautions as prescribed by a medical doctor. I acknowledge that any medical expenses incurred will be my own responsibility and that I have taken out (purchased) a fully comprehensive schedule of insurance during my stay in Africa.

I understand and acknowledge that the volunteer camp is not a “Big Five” lodge; it is a **basic research camp** with no luxury facilities such as swimming pools, air conditioning, bars, or restaurants. I also understand that the toilet and shower facilities are outdoors and basic, but functional.

I understand that I am assisting on a conservation/research project with a small budget. Therefore, I further understand that there is no commercial electricity available. Electricity is provided primarily from the camp solar system and when necessary a gas powered generator. I further acknowledge that the camp needs to conserve energy resources and will abide by staff guidelines that may vary depending on the provision of the sun. I understand that at times there might be a requirement to conserve water and fuel in camp during periods with limited solar exposure as the water supply is also delivered using solar power.

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I further agree to at all times obey any reasonable order, command, demand, or request that may be made to me in the interest of my own personal safety or the safety of others in whose company I may be, at any stage during my stay at the research camp or in the field within the Balule Nature Reserve or any other place in which I am under the supervision of facility staff.

I acknowledge that I will be expected to assist with the routine data-capture and monitoring activities as well as the other objectives of the research project as determined by facility staff and that my approved research proposal will be worked around these routines.

I acknowledge that I will ensure that my research proposal is logistically feasible. I understand that it is my responsibility to ensure that the field component of my project can be completed within the time and available funding and manpower constraints allocated to the project. To ensure this, I agree to consult with the available field researchers in order to submit a well formulated research proposal to my field supervisors prior six weeks prior to my arrival. I acknowledge that I am solely responsible for insuring that my research project is completed within the mutually agreed schedule and that I have been encouraged to prepare contingency plans in the event critical aspect of the research design becomes impractical or otherwise unachievable.

I also understand and acknowledge that during my time at the volunteer camp and the Balule Nature Reserve that there are no guarantees of ‘big five’ sightings. Big five animals include lion, African elephant, Cape buffalo, leopard, and rhinoceros, but this extends to all wildlife. I understand that I am entering a vast ecosystem (1,800 km<sup>2</sup> Private Reserves, 20,000 km<sup>2</sup> Kruger National Park and 10,000 km<sup>2</sup> Limpopo National Park). I understand that animals move freely across these areas as the dividing fences have been removed. I understand that any lack of sightings are likely a result of this freedom of movement of wildlife and as such provides evidence of the efficacy of a large, functioning healthy ecosystem - in contrast to a small, contained, reserve where game can be found on demand.

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I further understand and acknowledge that after arrival should I decide the camp is too basic or otherwise unsuitable for any other reason that I will not be entitled to any refund whatsoever. It is incumbent on the student/intern/volunteer to conduct due diligence on suitability prior to arrival.

SIGNED THIS \_\_\_\_\_ DAY OF \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_\_\_\_

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