



FGASA News: March 2023



FGASA Updates March 2023:

Hey {{ contact.FIRSTNAME }}, we're almost at the end of March and 2023 is speeding by faster than ever. We held our first Executive Committee meeting of the year; all the Directors of the Board and Regional Representatives joined us to chat about all things FGASA. Importantly, there are a few key areas FGASA will be focusing on in the coming months.

FGASA is inviting as many Lodges as we can to join us for an information and engagement workshop aimed at creating an open dialogue between FGASA and Field Guide employers to speak about the importance of guiding standards and FGASA's position within the field guiding and safari tourism industries. We've openly invited as many Lodge Owners and General Managers as possible to join us in this initiative as a commitment to the continual enhancement of Field Guiding standards and guided safari experiences.

Finally, we're going to be focusing quite a bit on our methods of communication with all our members. We are creating group specific and targeted ways of communicating with our members to ensure that you all get correct and reliable information from FGASA as and when you need it.

Lastly, we are going to be updating our website to make it more accessible, easier to navigate and allow any member or visitor to the site immediate access to the information that they need.

FGASA Calendar March and April 2023

March

Tuesday

28

FGASA
Meeting
with
Lodges

Friday

31

SGOTY 2023
Nominations
close

April

Wednesday

5

FGASA
Info
Evening

Thursday

13

National
Exam
sitting
registration
closes

In the News



Expanding the FGASA footprint in Southern Africa

Recently our Managing Director, Michelle du Plessis, was invited to attend a conference in collaboration with FGASA endorsed training provider, [Homestead Skills and Technical Education Academy](#), in Namibia. We attended the conference to expand the existing FGASA footprint in Namibia, strengthen existing relationships across borders and help with setting the gold standard of guiding within the country.

Namibia is vast and diverse, from the



FGASA invited to participate in market research for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

It was both a huge honour and privilege to be invited to a roundtable discussion on invitation from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The roundtable's aim was to determine a way forward for tour guide training, development, and benchmark standards within the country. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is expanding its large, tourism-based footprint and like many other countries across the world a high standard of guiding is expected, be that in wilderness or

seemingly desolate dunes of the Namib Desert to the rugged and untamed [Skeleton Coast](#) (the only coastal desert in the world) and further east to the rich biodiversity of [Etosha National Park](#). The cultural and natural heritage of the world's least populated country is often overlooked and untapped in terms of tourism potential.

FGASA is honoured to play a role in strengthening the existing collaborations with endorsed training providers, international partners, and with the Namibian Government in structuring and developing recognised qualifications, standards of education and professionalism within the culture guiding and safari tourism industries.

We hope this will result in continued positive and strong relationships between FGASA, the [Namibian Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture](#) and the [Namibian Tourism Board](#). Watch this space for more updates as the exciting new initiative starts to unfold!

urban areas.

FGASA is a household name in Africa, one synonymous with exceptional guide training and a reputation for producing gold standard nature, marine and cultural guides. We were chosen by the roundtable as a benchmark association in terms of guiding in Africa.

We were invited to participate as a guide training provider and contribute to the development of guiding standards and education within the country. Our input was mostly with regards to regulation of guiding in South Africa, the qualification structure, how training is conducted, how guides progress in their careers, and how various categories of guides work within the tourism industry.

We are both excited and pleased to have been a part of such an initiative and hope to be more involved and deliver further assistance to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as they undertake the setting up of guide registration and training within the nation.



March: the month for women and wildlife

March is the month of women and wildlife, with World Wildlife Day falling on the 3rd and International Women's Day following on the 8th, what better way to celebrate and show our appreciation than have a closer look at some of the ladies that have achieved highly in their wildlife careers!

One of FGASA's most sought-after and difficult qualifications to attain is the Professional SKS (Special Knowledge and Skills) Dangerous Game certificate ([SKS DG](#)). This certificate recognises a guide as having specialist knowledge and advanced skill when it comes to leading trails and bushwalks through reserves and areas where we typically find high profile or potentially dangerous animals such as elephants, hippo, lions, leopards, buffaloes, and rhinos.

For a little context as to the requirements needed to even attempt an SKS DG qualification as follows; a minimum of FGASA Professional Field Guide, FGASA Professional Trails Guide, recognised wilderness First Aid level 2 certificate, [Cybertracker](#) 'Tracker 3' certificate, and a valid ARH certificate as well as completing the SKS DG shoot. From there candidates need to enroll for the qualification and pass their theory with a minimum of 75%. That's the easy part!

It takes years of experience, training, and study to complete this qualification and it requires 100% commitment! FGASA is proud to have two female members who have achieved their SKS DG qualifications, Noelle van Muiden ([Tchagra Trails](#)) and [Julie Bryden](#).

Both Noelle and Julie qualified together in the same assessment and make no mistake; this is a HUGE achievement for any guide.

Read more about Julie and Noelle's experience below!



Read Julie's story here

"In 2009 when I started leading wilderness and backpacking trails across the diverse landscapes of the Kruger national park, I found a truth. It was that the strength of my spirit is defined by how much time I spend in the presence of true wilderness"

[Read more](#)



Read Noelle's story here

"Achieving the Special Knowledge and Skill Dangerous Game (SKS DG) Qualification was important for me as a walking guide because it shows a skill level and dedication to your craft that is unparalleled..."

[Read more](#)



Good news story: offering MORE to the community

We were honoured to have been invited by the [More Field Guide College](#) to attend the first round of field guiding student assessments over the weekend. [More Field Guide College has undertaken the initiative to upskill and provide training](#) and learning opportunities to bright, young, and passionate community members living on the peripheries of South Africa's iconic reserves. Not only does this initiative provide much needed access to education but it also empowers these promising young individuals with the

skills, training and experience needed for success in the safari tourism and conservation industries.

The level of training and professionalism imparted to the students was evident in the assessments. The students guided with passion and commitment, spoke to what they knew and overall provided an exceptional safari experience relative to their training and skill level. These individuals are the future of guiding in Southern Africa, and for us as FGASA to be a part of supporting these training initiatives means that we can continue to create a better and more inclusive industry that only ever promotes the high standards of guiding tourists and guests to Southern Africa have come to know.



Join us for an Info Evening on sustainability and conservation!

Hosted by DR. Louise Swemmer, a social and conservation scientist working for SANParks in the Kruger National Park. We'll chat about community conservation approaches, sustainability and how good relationships between people and the park are key to protected area sustainability.

Members attend free
R50 each for friends.
5 April | Starts at 17:30
Venue: FGASA Office, The Farmhouse, Hoedspruit
RSVP Louise: marketing@fgasa.org.za

FGASA Info Evening: community conservation and sustainability in the Kruger National Park

The upcoming Info Evening on 5 April promises to be an insightful look into how community conservation approaches benefit protected area conservation against the backdrop of sustainability. We've invited [Dr Louise Swemmer](#), a social and conservation scientist working with [SANParks](#), to speak about the focus of her work in the [Kruger National Park](#). "Positive societal relationships are needed for protected area sustainability" says Lousie.

The bulk of her work focusses on developing positive relationships between local communities and the Kruger National Park, the opportunities and challenges of keeping wild places wild, generating income for operations and growth, as well as balancing the interests of all involved stakeholders. It's a massive task that requires expertise and experience. April is a month focussed on sustainability and we thought it would be the perfect time to take a deeper dive into the important work being done within and around South Africa's largest national reserve.

If you'd like to attend our next Info Evening please hit the button below and send through your RSVP!

RSVP



I am FGASA

We've had a great response to our #IamFGASA campaign so far and have really loved all the awesome stories you've been sending through. One that struck us came from an Instagram user named Keryn ([@rangerkiwi](#)), a young passionate guide, originally from Zambia. Read Keryn's story below.

"Hi, I'm Keryn, but most of you know me as Kiwi. This is my good news story and how my love for wildlife and guiding has played a big role in my health and healing.

I started my guiding journey in 2017 and absolutely fell in love with it. I ended up back home in Zambia just as the pandemic started, and my health took a turn in the months to follow. After months of doctors' appointments and tests, I finally got diagnosed with a chronic illness known as Lupus in March/April of 2021. I was told to avoid sun exposure and stressful or strenuous activities. And that basically meant that guiding was not going to be in the cards for me. When I started to feel a bit better, I got an office job, and it wasn't the worst, but it wasn't my passion.

People asked me if I would ever guide again, and I honestly didn't think I would. That was one of the hardest parts of getting sick. Believing that I might never get to do what I'm passionate about again. So, I decided to push myself because I could not imagine never being able to guide again. With lots of love and encouragement and a great support system, I finally decided to give it a go. I've only been back in the industry a few months now, but I couldn't be happier.

My love for guiding and nature has helped me stay determined to keep going despite what doctors may say. For the first time in the last few years, I feel like I am getting my life back, and I'm feeling stronger and healthier. It is so important to do what you love. I will not allow a diagnosis to stop me. It may have slowed me down a bit, but each day I get to go out and show guests this wild world is proof to me that I can do anything I set my mind to.

I am a field guide with a chronic illness, I am a force of nature, and I am unstoppable. #Iamfgasa

I hope that my story can encourage others to keep pushing to reach their dreams and goals. I also hope that I can help raise awareness for people living with lupus and other invisible illnesses.

You are capable of anything!"

Remember to share your #IamFGASA stories with us! Tag us on Instagram or Facebook and use #IamFGASA. You can also send your stories through directly to marketing@fgasa.org.za. We love hearing your guiding success

stories!



Safari Guide of the Year: nominations are drawing to a close

We're nearing the finish line as far as the nomination period for [Safari Guide of the Year](#) goes. We have received some truly exceptional nominations for this year's competition, it is going to be quite a challenge for our judges to decide who will make this year's top five finalists.

Of the nominations we have also seen a significant uptake in the number of women nominated. We're hoping to see some of the ladies going through to the top five for their shot at being crowned Safari Guide of the Year.

As Safari Guide of the Year 2019 runner-up Margaux Langley says, "As a previous participant, I cannot stress enough that this is not a show of power, and that you are not competing against anyone other than yourself."

The competition is a chance to be thanked by the industry for the huge efforts great guides put into their careers, a chance to learn from field guiding legends and mentors as well as a place to develop new friendships.

Remember to send through your nominations before 12:00am on 31 March 2023! Click the button below to download the nomination form.

[Nomination form](#)

© 2023 Field Guide Association of Southern Africa

FGASA
The Farmery, Zandspruit, Hoedspruit
1380
marketing@fgasa.org.za



This email was sent to {{ contact.EMAIL }}
You received this email because you are registered with Field Guide Association of Southern Africa

[Unsubscribe here](#)



© 2023 Field Guide Association of Southern Africa