

## **Kalahari Plains Camp – response to continued allegations**

July 2010 – Wilderness Safaris, in response to press releases and postings in the social media space containing unsubstantiated and inaccurate allegations regarding our presence in the northern Central Kalahari Game Reserve, would like to put the following on record:

- 1) We are a supporter of Botswana. This support is based, inter alia, on the following:
  - a. Their commitment to building conservation-based economies, as attested to by Botswana winning the 2010 World Travel and Tourism Council's 'Stewardship' Award, recognising the work done in protecting the Okavango Delta Ramsar Site;
  - b. The strength of democracy in the country, a fact attested to by manifold independent and objective global reviews of governance. Two such organisations are the Mo Ibrahim Foundation ([www.moibrahimfoundation.org](http://www.moibrahimfoundation.org)) and the World Peace Foundation ([www.worldpeacefoundation.org/africangovernance.html](http://www.worldpeacefoundation.org/africangovernance.html));
  - c. The independence and transparency of the judiciary, a fact attested to by the successful court challenge in 2006 by the Bushmen of the Kalahari on decisions made by the government.
  
- 2) We believe that tourism is a critical component of Botswana's economy, but more importantly is the most effective means by which economic growth is meaningful for ordinary people. Our reasons for this belief are as follows:
  - a. Tourism is officially the second largest contributor to GDP, behind mineral extraction and ahead of agriculture and pastoralism;
  - b. The impact of tourism on employment is significant in remote areas of the country. For example, approximately 60% of people in northern Botswana are employed in some form of tourism;
  - c. The importance of tourism has been highlighted during the recent recession which saw significant impact on the diamond industry in particular, with mine closures, job losses, decline in foreign currency earnings a feature;
  - d. Tourism very effectively up-skills individuals and provides a significant source of revenue for rural communities. To use Wilderness as an example, we employ approximately 1600 in our camps across seven southern African countries, more than 85% of which are from the communities adjacent to the remote areas in which we operate. In addition, we operate a number of successful joint venture tourism projects with communities, the formal engagement model ranging from equity stakes to revenue sharing agreements, to direct lease and traversing fees. In all cases 'community-centric' employment is implemented by the camp.

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- 3) In remote areas we believe that our model of ecotourism, predicated around Conservation, Community, Culture and Commerce, is one of the most appropriate and significant in terms of being able to make a difference in the aforementioned spheres. We believe we are at the forefront of responsible ecotourism in southern Africa and have pioneered a number of seminal approaches and models that have at their heart the intention of making a difference to Africa. This belief is based on the following:
  - a. Our track record in southern African countries like Namibia, where we have entered into ground-breaking joint venture partnerships with previously marginalised rural communities and that have resulted in the genuine and meaningful involvement of these communities in tourism. As mentioned above, this takes a number of forms and ranges from equity stakes to revenue sharing agreements, to lease and traversing fees and always uses a community-centric approach to employment, training and skills transfer.
  - b. The independent recognition of the merits of our different engagement models by academics, NGOs, peers and consumers. This recognition is borne out in numerous published papers and case studies of Wilderness Safaris and particular camps and communities and also in a number of reputable and rigorously evaluated awards in responsible tourism by organisations such as the United Nations Development Programme. More at: <http://www.wilderness-safaris.com/about/awards.jsp>

With direct regard to our camp in the northern Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR) the following is important to note:

**How did we obtain the opportunity to develop the camp in the CKGR?**

- 1) The CKGR is a game reserve and has been open to tourism for more than a decade with more than 36 campsites for public and overland safari company use spread throughout the reserve but with greatest concentrations in the north. See map in Appendix 4.
- 2) We won the opportunity to develop and operate a low-impact, 10-tent camp at a site in the northern CKGR (21°29'10.00"S; 24° 0'32.00"E) in an open, public and transparent tender process (Tender No. PR 18/4/1/08 VII; tender advertised in late 2007 and awarded mid-2008).
- 3) On winning the tender we commissioned a comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) as required by law in Botswana. This EIA included a full examination of the socio-economic setting and a thorough examination of cultural and tribal history and occupation of the CKGR including specific focus on the nearest Bushman community at the village of Molapo (21°58'0.65"S; 23°55'48.96"E) more than 50km away in a straight line distance. The borehole at Mothomelo (22°49'56.44"S; 24° 9'47.91"E), drilled in 1992 and used by the government to provide water to the Bushmen in the CKGR, was also considered. This borehole is located 150km away from the site of the camp in a straight line distance, or nearly 300km along existing tracks.

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- 4) We then set about developing the camp and engaging with the broader community under the Terms of References (ToR) issued by the government and outlined in both the tender and the management plan for the CKGR. Using this framework, staffing of the camp has been conducted in a transparent process. Under the guidance of the District Commissioner of Ghanzi, the district adjacent to the CKGR and under which auspices it falls, 28 candidates were chosen for hospitality training at Wilderness Safaris' training school in the Okavango Delta in early 2008. Of these staff 17 were Bakgalagadi and 11 Basarwa, both groups of which had their origins within the CKGR. Following the initial training the successful applicants were then deployed to existing Wilderness Safaris camps in Botswana for further practical training before moving to Kalahari Plains Camp in the CKGR.

**Should we have proceeded in opening a camp in the CKGR considering the background to the area?**

1. We support the Government's initiative to expand and diversify their tourism footprint in the country. The Government White paper has targeted growing tourism from 9% to 18% of GDP;
2. The area on which the existing site is located is in the northern sector of the CKGR and on the boundary of the core traditional area of the Kgei Bushman clan (as agreed to by this clan in the third management plan for the CKGR), who have traditionally been based at Molapo. Guest activities, such as game drives, focus on the area north and west of this, particularly in the public access area along Deception Valley. The original site awarded in the tender did fall inside this core traditional area of the Kgei and was moved to the present location as a result. We acknowledge that the airstrip constructed for the camp does fall inside of this core territory;
3. These core territories of the various Bushman clans in the CKGR were at one stage regarded as Community Utilisation Areas (CUZs), a fact that was recognised in the Third Draft Management Plan and which is the only plan agreed to by and between the communities residing in the CKGR. It has been proposed by these communities as a starting point for negotiations. It should be noted that the terms of reference for tendering for the site were issued on draft four of the management plan which did not recognise any CUZ. It should also be noted that we operate camps in other CUZs in northern Botswana where we pay the relevant communities a lease and traversing fee in addition to following a community-centric employment and upliftment policy;
4. We felt at the time of tendering that the matter under dispute was over access to water and that this was a matter between the Government and the Bushman Communities.

**What are Survival International's expectations of, and allegations against, Wilderness Safaris?**

It is now obvious that Survival International is using Wilderness Safaris as a pawn in an attempt to pressure the government to accede to their terms. We have attached their only formal expression of expectations of Wilderness Safaris as Appendix 1. This is in the form of a letter from Survival International director Stephen Corry to Wilderness Safaris CEO, Andy Payne, on 19 March 2010.

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**Should Wilderness Safaris provide water to the Bushman Communities in the CKGR?**

1. Wilderness Safaris is in the business of building sustainable conservation economies, with ecotourism the economic engine or catalyst for those economies. The provision of water to a widely scattered Bushman community in a 5 million hectare (12 million acre) area is beyond our capacity. Wilderness Safaris is not a water utility and its business model is not robust enough to carry this responsibility.
2. Wilderness Safaris has never ever contemplated taking on this responsibility and had this been in the tender ToR we would definitely not have submitted our application.

**Should Wilderness Safaris engage with Survival International on this issue?**

1. The answer is No. The threatening tone of the letter received on 19 March 2010 and which is included in Appendix 1 does not invite engagement, cooperation and contribution. The threat that Wilderness Safaris will become the target of a public campaign as a result of a dispute between the Government of Botswana and certain communities of the Central Kalahari Game Reserve represented by Survival International is invalid and we do not intend dealing with an entity which engages on this basis – the tone is: “we know you are nice guys who try to do a good job but if you do not comply we will threaten you because you are dependent on public goodwill and thereby exercise more pressure on the government”.
2. The irony of Survival International’s confrontational approach is that a solution becomes more and more difficult to achieve.
3. We as a business stand by all our values, we are proud of our track record. We believe, and have entrenched this in our business model, that you can do well by doing good, that giving back is a measure today and that the sustainability platform is the extremely comfortable foundation of our organisation. Can we improve? Yes. Every day.

**Are the allegations of misuse of water, displacement of Bushmen and seizing of land accurate?**

Absolutely not.

- 1) **Alleged displacement of the Bushmen:** The right to operate an ecotourism camp from this location was acquired in a transparent and public tender process for which submissions were invited by the Botswana Government. Several companies submitted bids for the two sites put out to tender in the CKGR. After a rigorous assessment process (including an Environmental Impact Assessment, standard procedure for such tenders within Botswana’s protected areas), rights to operate at both sites were granted to two commercial operators. Based on the merits of our technical proposal, Safari Adventure Company won the tender for the site of Kalahari Plains Camp. We have since developed the site in line with this accepted technical proposal and within the legislative framework of Botswana. There is no question of access to land being prevented in any way whatsoever. As mentioned above, the Bushmen are entitled as a result of a high court ruling of 2006 to reside within the park and

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many do in fact do so. The existence of a camp in no way influences this and the closest settlement to the camp – Molapo – more than 50km in a straight line from the camp, continues to exist. Access to any land within the CKGR is in no way whatsoever prevented by the existence of Kalahari Plains Camp.

- 2) Response to allegations of misuse of water at the expense of the Bushmen:** The allegation that Kalahari Plains Camp uses water profligately at the expense of the Bushmen and somehow prevents access to water by the Kalahari Bushman communities is simply not true. The closest habitation to the camp is more than 50km away in a straight line distance.

We have indeed drilled a borehole on the site of the camp. Fresh water is not freely available within the Kalahari however, and as a result of the total dissolved solids in the aquifer, the borehole used for the camp water supply has a salinity level higher than the sea and is unfit for human or animal consumption (see appendix 3). This water is nonetheless used for the camp's high volume water requirements such as the laundry, guest showers and the swimming pool. A reverse osmosis process is used to produce around 400 litres of potable water per day from this source. In addition we also have the capacity to capture 150 000 litres of rainwater from the innovative camp roofing design and use this for drinking water after first filtering and purifying. This drinking water is supplemented by daily round trips of more than 100km to a public borehole north of the camp at Matswere.

The camp consists of 10 tented rooms and is very conservative when it comes to fresh water usage, encouraging both guests and staff to be frugal in its use.

The acquisition and usage of water at Kalahari Plains Camp therefore is conducted without impact on the Bushmen.

### **What is Wilderness going to do moving forward?**

1. Our interactions with the Government of Botswana and their (unpublicised) actions to date have convinced us of their political will to address the issues in the CKGR. This is a view shared by Ditshwanelo: The Botswana Human Rights Centre. Recent press releases from this organisation on the matter are available at:  
23 July 2010: [http://www.ditshwanelo.org.bw/press\\_2010-july23.html](http://www.ditshwanelo.org.bw/press_2010-july23.html)  
3 June 2010: [http://www.ditshwanelo.org.bw/press\\_2010-june03.html](http://www.ditshwanelo.org.bw/press_2010-june03.html)
2. Beyond the above, we will continue to work with the government to determine a positive outcome for the country and also for the communities of the CKGR. Our involvement has to date led to direct consultation between the Minister of Environment, Wildlife and Tourism and the majority of Bushman communities in the CKGR barring one notable exception which, for reasons that are unclear, declined the invitation to interact. This is more than Survival International has been able to achieve or even attempted to contribute to a resolution within the CKGR.

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# WILDERNESS S A F A R I S

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## APPENDIX 1: Initial contact letter from Survival International to Wilderness Safaris, 19 March 2010



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United Kingdom  
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info@survival-international.org  
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**We help tribal peoples  
defend their lives, protect  
their lands and determine  
their own futures.**

Andrew Payne  
CEO  
Wilderness Safaris  
P O Box 5219  
Rivonia 2128  
South Africa

19 March 2010

Dear Mr Payne,

### **Kalahari Plains Camp, Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR), Botswana**

We have read with interest about the "original system" you have introduced at Kalahari Plains to convert every 1mm of rainfall into 2,610 litres of water. If you were to make this technology (or some suitable adaption of it) available to the Bushman community of Molapo in the CKGR, it would transform their lives at a stroke, and might well save several of them. We are especially concerned for the elderly, the infirm and the very young, many of whom suffer dreadfully in the dry season.

A gesture of this sort would be entirely in keeping with the ethos and reputation of your company. It would go a long way to resolve any doubts that your clients may entertain about a swimming pool located in the ancestral territory of a people currently deprived of what you rightly describe as "the most precious commodity in the desert."

You may require permission to install the system under the National Parks and Game Reserves Regulations 2000 but this ought not to be a problem. It is difficult to see on what rational basis the Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP) could deny to a community with a legal and constitutional right to live in the Reserve a facility that it has been only too happy to allow to your clients.

If the company is not able to assist the people of Molapo in this way, we believe that the consequent risk of litigation will be sufficient to trigger Paragraph 7.D.11 of the Botswana Stock Exchange's listing requirements. This obliges you to disclose, if

Founded 1969  
Right Livelihood Award 1989  
Survival International  
Charitable Trust  
Registered Charity 267444  
Company registered in England  
no. 1056317  
Registered office as above

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necessary in a supplementary pre-listing statement, the existence of any threatened proceedings which may have a material effect on your financial position. As we can readily confirm from our own experience, any litigation to do with the CKGR is likely to have a material effect on the financial position of all those caught up in it, however unwillingly.

You rightly say that you have located your Camp "in an area in which various Bushmen clans have thrived for centuries." To be precise, you have located it within the traditional territory of a G//anakwe band called the Kgei. The current boundaries of this territory (which the Kgei share with the Tshogo to the south west) were agreed at a meeting in late May 2001 between the Bushmen's organisation First Peoples of the Kalahari (FPK) and the DWNP. Evidence of this agreement was given at the Sesana trial and was not disputed by the Government.

When the Botswana High Court ruled that the Bushmen have a legal and constitutional right to use and occupy their traditional territories, it meant that they have the right to use and occupy all their traditional territories. This includes the land on which the Camp is situated and the surrounding area of which you make use already or propose to make use for game drives.

When FPK became aware in November 2007 that the Government had invited tenders for the contract eventually awarded to your company, it wrote to the DWNP. It stated that the creation of tourist zones on traditional territory was a matter on which the Bushmen "very much want to be consulted, before any contract is awarded". The DWNP did not reply to the letter and no consultations ever took place.

The Government proceeded instead to enter into a lease with your company which, so far as we are aware, makes no provision at all for the constitutionally protected rights of the Bushmen in the area to which the lease relates. The Government simply does not have the legal power to do this, as the majority judgment in Sesana makes clear.

We are not the only people to have criticised the Government's cavalier response to this judgment. In 2008 the UN Human Rights Committee urged the Government (again) to "take all necessary measures to facilitate the enjoyment of Covenant rights by [displaced Bushmen] upon their return."

Its failure to do so has been condemned by the UN Special Rapporteur for Indigenous Peoples, James Anaya, who has recently castigated the Government for its failure to implement the Court ruling and for falling short of the 'relevant international human rights standards'. Following a visit to Botswana last year Professor Anaya found that Bushmen who have returned to the Reserve 'face harsh and dangerous conditions due to a lack of access to water', and called on the government to reactivate the borehole at Mothomelo 'as a matter of urgent priority'. This call has fallen on equally deaf ears, but will be repeated over the coming months.

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With the assistance of their many supporters abroad, the Bushmen have now brought fresh proceedings against the Government to secure access to this borehole. We have reason to believe that if necessary they will mount yet another action to restrain your trespass on their lands.

This would be based upon the fact that, for the reasons we have explained, you are not able to rely upon the lease or contract that the Government has purported to grant, and that you did not obtain the prior agreement of the community at Molapo to the erection of your Camp. Reliance would also be placed on the duty of corporations to respect the internationally recognised human rights of the communities among whom they operate.

The last thing that any of us wants, however, is more litigation. It is enormously expensive and carries huge reputational risks for all those involved. Survival would certainly do all in its power to bring home to prospective visitors the almost grotesque disparity between cocktails by the pool for some, and the desperate search by others for roots and tubers from which to squeeze a few drops of water.

Commercial operators on ancestral land now accept almost as a matter of course that they must negotiate benefit sharing agreements with the people to whom it belongs, and that it is very much in their own interests to do so. We ask you to follow suit, as a matter of urgency. We cannot speak for the people of Molapo, but believe that they are very likely to consent to the Camp if in return they are offered an effective means of collecting and storing rainwater.

I am sorry that I should have had to talk about possible litigation in my first letter to you, but time is short and I wanted you to appreciate the seriousness of our intent. If you would like to discuss matters on a more informal basis, please ring my PA to arrange a convenient time and date.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Corry  
Director

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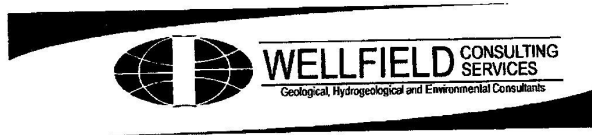
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## APPENDIX 2: Water analysis for Kalahari Plains Camp borehole

09-JUL-2009 12:21 FROM Wellfield Group

TO 5729000

P.002/003



P.O. Box 1502  
Sedika House  
Plot 20691  
Schofio Road  
Gaborone  
Republic of Botswana  
Tel (+) 267 391 2481  
Fax (+) 267 391 2482  
info@wfield.co.bw  
www.wellfield.co.bw

### HYDROCHEMISTRY REPORT

Client : De Wet Drilling  
Sample type : Water  
Date submitted : 07/07/09  
Analysis period : 07/07/09 – 09/07/09  
Analysed by : Wellfield Consulting Services (Pty) Ltd

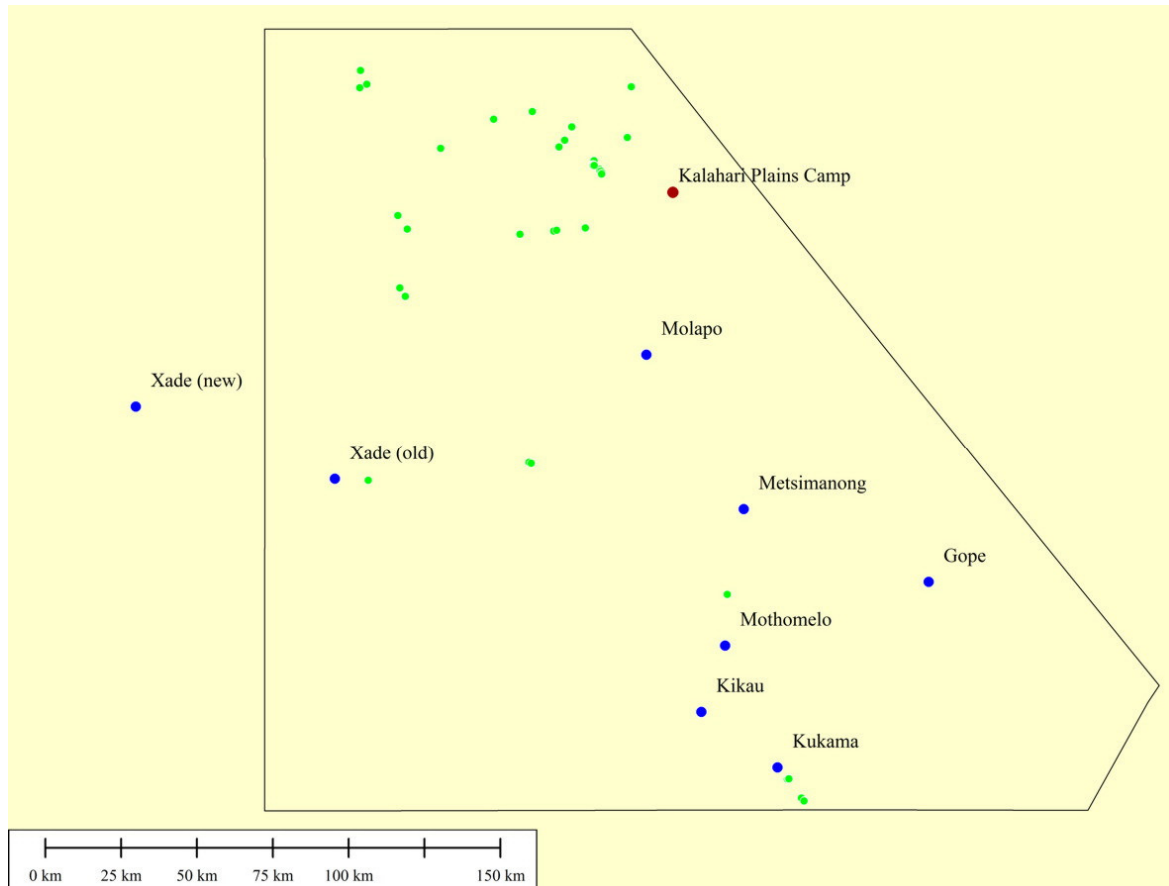
Parameter	Symbol	Kalahari Plains Water Sample mg/L, unless specified	Maximum allowable Botswana Bureau of Standards drinking water limits (Class III)
pH		7.59	5.0-10.0
Conductivity $\mu\text{S/cm}$		32200	3100
Total dissolved Solids (TDS)		26410	2000
Alkalinity mg/l $\text{CaCO}_3$		583	
Total Hardness mg/l $\text{CaCO}_3$		1800	500
Calcium Hardness mg/l $\text{CaCO}_3$		940	
Calcium	$\text{Ca}^{2+}$	376	200
Magnesium	$\text{Mg}^{2+}$	209.15	100
Sodium	$\text{Na}^+$	7143	400
Potassium	$\text{K}^+$	105	100
Iron	$\text{Fe}^{2+}$	0.01	2.0
Manganese	$\text{Mn}^{2+}$	0	0.5
Bicarbonate	$\text{HCO}_3^-$	711.26	
Carbonate	$\text{CO}_3^{2-}$	0	
Sulphate	$\text{SO}_4^{2-}$	980.80	400
Chloride	$\text{Cl}^-$	10397.66	600
Nitrate	$\text{NO}_3^-$	85.58	45
Fluoride	$\text{F}^-$	0.671	1.5

Note: All values in bold format are more than the Maximum allowable Botswana Bureau of Standards drinking water limits.

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**APPENDIX 3: Map of the Central Kalahari Game Reserve showing location of Kalahari Plains Camp (maroon icon; labelled) in relation to existing public camp sites (green icons; unlabelled) and Bushman Villages (blue icons; labelled). Size of the reserve is more than 5 million hectares, an area equivalent to approximately 25% of the 21 million hectare United Kingdom.**



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