

ALUMNI EMS

Reconnect **Revitalise** Reinvest **Rediscover**

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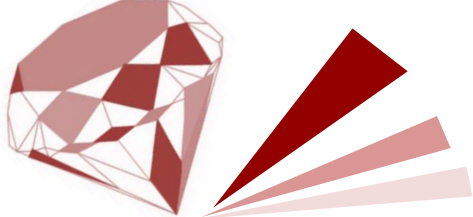
**MUT Nature Conservation alumni lead
conversations on World Wildlife Day**

Sithembile Nkosi: Conversationist and lecturer at the MUT



Having produced over 42 000 alumni across the three faculties, MUT has a wealth of knowledge and expertise to empower current students and the world. The department of Nature Conservation has made great advances in graduating students for the Master of Nature Conservation exposing students to very advanced knowledge in nature conservation at a time when climate change is wreaking havoc globally.

Recently, MUT Radio hosted its very own alumni who are now conservation experts to discuss and unpack strategies required for the world to recover key species and restore the ecosystem. The alumni experts alluded to World Wildlife Day as South Africa's opportunity to celebrate the beautiful and varied fauna and flora. A day was dedicated on raising awareness on the multitude of benefits to humans who protect and conserve wildlife. The one-hour panel discussion was facilitated by Sithembile Nkosi, a passionate conversationist who is a lecturer at the MUT's department of Nature Conservation. Giving a background to the field of nature conservation, Nkosi thanked the heavens for Nature Conservation as according to her it is the only discipline that was given to humankind by God.



"World Wildlife Day is a very significant day aligned to the sustainable development goals to save biodiversity. Around 8000 species of flora and fauna are endangered due to human activities such as trading in the black market with close to 30 000 species on the verge of extinction not only in South Africa but globally," said Nkosi.

Taking it home, Nkosi reiterated the role of ordinary Umlazi citizens in preserving nature citing everyday human mistakes such as littering which end up polluting the rivers. Polluting rivers not only river species but also exacerbate the prevailing water challenges in communities, said Nkosi.

A look into the history of Nature Conservation

Nomcebo Kunene, MUT class of 2005



Nomcebo Kunene, MUT class of 2005 an avid protected area development and biodiversity stewardship expert participated in the panel of alumni to commemorate World Wildlife Day with the MUT communities. Kunene traced the history of nature conservation back to the early days when human beings co-existed and lived in harmony with nature. "South Africa is the third mega country in terms of having rich biodiversity even back in time chiefs had the responsibility to educate communities against excessive hunting and consumption of totem animals. Introduction of controlled access to nature led to forceful removal of people from their land creating a lot of resentment as communities felt excluded from wildlife," said Kunene.

The key message from Kunene was that human beings have and are still dependent on conservation for survival which makes conservation of biodiversity important for everybody. She cited three important reasons why people must preserve nature: "Conserving nature is important as it contributes to wildlife memory in ensuring posterity for future generations; nature conservation protects the environment from the effects of climate change; and it also contributes to human health through harvesting medication from natural resources to fight diseases.

Kunene further commented that there are many benefits to nature conservation but challenges such as insufficient allocation of resources towards management of protected areas and others outweigh the successes. "The major challenge for biodiversity is the competition between





conservation and the mining sector leading to environmental degradation. Unfortunately, there are government policies that are not in favour of protection of certain species. Illegal extraction of natural resources, rhino poaching, wildfires, invasive alien plants are but some of the many challenges faced by nature conservationists. On the positive side, there is a lot of transformation and diversity in the nature conservation sector in South Africa with the inclusion of women in management and leadership positions as well as increase in number of black students registering and graduating with nature conservation qualifications. Also, the government is implementing several programmes to promote rural economy opening opportunities for ordinary citizens to benefit from conservation,” concluded Kunene.

Oscar Mthimkhulu talks on the impact of civilisation on nature

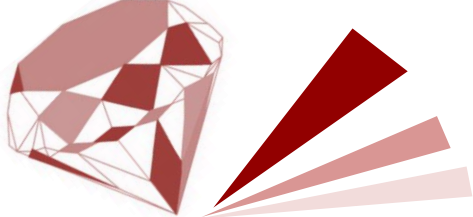
Oscar Mthimkhulu, class of '96



Oscar, class of '96 is the chief executive officer of Sabi Sands Wildtuin provided expert knowledge to highlight the impact of civilisation on wildlife and key species during the World Wildlife Day events at MUT. Mthimkhulu raised concern about the pace at which civilisation is prioritised at the expense of wildlife and environmental dilapidation. “Every human being is a beneficiary of the wildlife whether you are in rural, township or urban dwelling. As part of World Wildlife Day, we need to share our knowledge so that people understand how nature functions. Nature conservation is an interconnected system in which humans play a major role. As people, we all need to start where we are with preserving our biodiversity so that we do not rob ourselves and future generations of the many benefits that wildlife brings to our livelihood. For an ordinary person from Umlazi Township, it is important to understand that even the water we drink comes from the environment. Development is good for communities but might be harmful to the ecosystem if it is done without environmental assessment and authorisation. Illegal harvesting of natural resources such as rhino poaching are some of the challenges that all South Africans need to fight against,” said Mthimkhulu.

Masinga's water-saving solution showcased on World Water Day

Kudos to MUT Alumni and MUT experts who came to draw attention to the water crisis in our country and to raise awareness about the global water crisis on World Water Day. MUT alumnus Thembinkosi Masinga unpacked how each citizen can contribute to the sustenance of this precious resource and how MUT Alumni are providing innovative solutions to curb water scarcity and related environmental challenges facing the country. Talking on MUT radio in



commemoration of the 2022 World Water Day which focused on the importance of groundwater, alumni experts and MUT researchers agreed on the fact that water is more precious to humans than oil and gold. There are no alternatives to meet the need for water, unfortunately, South Africa is a water-scarce country.

The water scarcity and the threats of a looming Day Zero called for a shift in mind for MUT alumni water experts. Quite worrisome is the fact that irresponsible human acts such as burying waste and discharging pollutants into the soil affect the supply of groundwater. Masinga is among MUT alumni at the forefront of solutions to counter the water supply challenges.

He appealed to MUT Radio listeners and the community at large to take responsibility for the preservation of water as a precious resource for both humans and wildlife.

Masinga shared his decades of experience in water management which saw him establish his company Kingdom Power. An innovative idea that Masinga has patented is set to transform the concept of a toilet in the 21st century and beyond. AirFlush is a toilet flush system that only uses air to flush. According to Masinga using Airflush saves up to 70% of water and reduces water bills. The Airflush innovation is available to a variety of clients such as commercial and residential properties, marine, buses, railways, and aerospace. It is set to protect the environment and mitigate the threats of global warming.

Thembinkosi Masinga, class of '99



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