



2021

ANNUAL REPORT





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LETTER TO THE READER

2021 has been a year of true resilience and determination for GCC. As a company we've felt more extremes than ever before, on both sides of the pendulum. Positively, we've adapted our approach to the Future Rangers Program with schools shut down for the majority of the year. We've innovated by launching our Careers in Conservation Youtube series which ensures we can still deeply impact youth, even if remotely. Our App continues to strengthen under development, and we look to launch our pilot year with select partners in 2022. Our team has grown and diversified with the hiring of new local talent in South Africa. Even through lockdown parameters, we've been able to continue building partnerships, and expanding our footprint across the greater Kruger region.

But this year has had immense challenges. Our supporters, staff and board have been there through some of the hardest times yet. The long term economic effects of CV19 stunted GCC's growth trajectory, forcing us to make tough decisions and run leaner than ever before. A violent car crash in August took its toll on me personally, requiring a number of months of recuperation. Through all of these hardships, the GCC family has stayed strong and committed to our mission. To all the amazing people who've stuck with us through these arduous times, I am sincerely grateful and humbled.

As we look to the future, we're focused on prioritizing GCC's financial standing and sustainability model. It will require out-of-the-box thinking, innovation, and strategy. All components which we have on this wonderful team. We've endured. We've persevered and grown. And now it's time to rise, once more.



Matt Lindenberg

GCC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



GCC& COVID



The world changed drastically with the emergence of COVID-19. This has given us a unique chance to reflect on the underlying causes of human conflict with the natural world, and why going back to ‘business as usual’ in conservation is simply not an option. While COVID-19 exposed weaknesses within the standard approach to conservation (a dependency on tourism and external funding, low government priority, neocolonialism, operating independent of other sectors, etc.), it also highlighted opportunities where conservation can pivot and improve its approach. More than anything, this pandemic has caused a shift: a shift in priorities, a shift in our actions, and hopefully, a shift in urgency. And we are renewed in our approaches to run this race stronger in better ways.

Although 2021 was a hard year in many ways, we have a very clear picture of how we need to proceed and have formed a strategic plan to move forward (detailed below). If we can work together in conservation to diversify livelihoods, prioritize indigenous voices and needs, create stronger collaborations, and prioritize and finance conservation on a global scale, we’ve got a really solid start to the global impact we aim to make. It begins with an understanding that our survival is inextricably linked to a thriving natural world, and we must take this opportunity that COVID-19 has presented and do better.

STRATEGIC APPROACH



After 10 months of preparation, we launched our strategic plan in January, 2021. The development of this plan was made possible through the Morgridge Accelerator Program (MAP) and facilitated by GCC Board Member Ellie Milano, bringing together different internal and external stakeholders to formulate our approach. As 2021 unfolded, we used our strategic plan to serve as our “North Star” when making decisions, especially difficult ones. While our guiding principles remain the same, at times we adapted our approach based on restraints such as CV-19 restrictions, funding limitations, and staff capacity. Our strategic plan provided guidance, direction and clarity. Our guiding principles are as follows..

Global Conservation Corps employs its core strengths to approach conservation solutions from a holistic and long-term sustainability perspective. GCC believes that conservation solutions lie with the local communities adjacent to wildlife and wild places, and that the only way to truly achieve sustainable conservation is to partner with those communities and enable them to become the guiding force for conservation solutions.

As a conservation organization, we seek to protect wildlife and conserve wild places.

As an education organization, we understand that youth need to be not only engaged in environmental and conservation education, but also connected to opportunities and inspired to see themselves in the solution.

As a technology organization, we have the capabilities to create powerful digital environmental education platforms that help enable learners to unlock their potential, document success and build careers.

As a media organization, we shed light on local heroes in conservation, providing a new narrative for youth bordering protected areas, encouraging them to pursue careers in the greater wildlife economy. We invest in media which highlights and elevates local voices on an international scale to drive large-scale systemic change.

2021 MILESTONES

JAN

- * MFF Fellowship Review
- * Interview with Anton Mzimba

FEB

- * GCC Debuts Voices of Nature Podcast

MAR

- * Southern African Wildlife College Partnership
- * GCC Launches Careers in Conservation

APR

- * Earth Day
- * GCC and Africa Foundation Partnership

MAY

- * Sustainable Mag Collaboration
- * Combating COVID-19 through Digital Education

JUN

- * RiNo Week
- * Rhino Poaching Update

JUL

- * GCC Digital Manager and Family Visit South Africa

AUG

- * Sibusiso Vilane: Everest Mountaineer Highlighted in Careers in Conservation
- * GCC Kicks Off App Training

SEP

- * Mahlale High School Game Drive
- * World Rhino Day with Coq en Pate at Mahlekisana Primary School
- * GCC and Hoedspruit Reptile Centre Visit Salani Primary School
- * GCC X Elephants Alive Elephant Collaring Partnership

OCT

- * GCC Announces IBM Partnership
- * GCC Executive Director Matt Lindenberg Visits U.S. Team

NOV

- * Giving Tuesday 2021
- * Careers in Conservation on Local Radio

DEC

- * Winos for Rhinos
- * Careers in Conservation Expo

OUR PROGRAMS



Future Rangers

The first 8 months of 2021 saw the schooling system in South Africa continue to stay shut down due to CV-19. This made it nearly impossible for us to reach our students in a consistent manner, and our team formulated a new approach to impacting our learners, while still maintaining the same vision:

Systemic change around natural resource decision makers to create pathways for careers in conservation while enabling passionate, engaged local youth in conservation.

In exploring our strengths, we continued to pursue three impact pathways;

- 1) Values** - Improving local perceptions around the value of nature and wildlife
- 2) Benefits** - Increasing tangible benefits from, and reducing barriers to nature/wildlife (through experiences, access, employment, etc.) that community members have access to
- 3) Scale** - increasing or amplifying the impact of environmental education programs globally, particularly around values and benefits

Careers in Conservation

Our first breakthrough of 2021 stemmed from preliminary research conducted in 2019 that highlighted a lack of knowledge in youth about conservation employment opportunities. The majority of youth living along the Kruger National Park have a very limited idea of what jobs and careers exist in the neighboring reserves and national parks. Instead, many youth leave the Mpumalanga and Limpopo Provinces to seek employment in larger cities, causing a “brain-drain” and lack of emerging youth being paired with local jobs.

We created a Youtube series titled Careers in Conservation which tells the stories of local conservationists, who originate from the communities which we serve. The entire production is told in the native language of Xitsonga, and shot by a local production team, hosted by new GCC team member, Mbhoni Mzamani. For our initial pilot series, we filmed 11 episodes; ranging from professions of chefs, bird guides, K9 handlers, & field guides to name a few. Each episode ranged in length from 5-8 minutes, and is supported by a careers page which details the exact qualifications one needs to pursue that career, along with any scholarship resources. We shared the videos throughout our geographic reach and partner nonprofits, along with having the episodes playing in the largest malls along the Kruger National Park. We estimate around 100,000 people across the region were reached by our videos over the course of 2021.

Mobile Learning Classroom

Our second innovation was a mobile learning classroom. The classroom was funded through a crowdfunding campaign, allowing us to purchase 14 Acer chromebooks and associated software. COVID restrictions permitted small gatherings of students, which allowed us to conduct lessons in the local schools. We used a number of curriculum, videos and online games to teach our students about wildlife, the natural world, and careers in conservation. We also used the mobile learning classroom to conduct anonymous surveys to measure programmatic success over time. In particular, this was useful with our partners from Save the Snakes and Hoedspruit Reptile Centre. We conducted baseline surveys with students, capturing attitudes, knowledge and behavior towards reptiles. Once baseline data was captured, we brought in live snakes to the schools, conducting powerful experiential learning for the students. After the activities were completed, we ran another follow up survey on the laptops. The mobile learning classroom allowed us to effectively measure a positive change in the way reptiles were viewed, how to handle snake bites, and increased awareness of how reptiles bring value to the ecosystems.

With schools closed due to COVID, GCC continued to leverage 2021 as an opportunity to hone in on where we could be the most useful to the communities and nonprofits we partner with on the ground. We took a step back to work with our community liaisons and school-based stakeholders to determine our problem statement, and identify our strengths as an organization, and our partners' strengths.

As schools are opening back up slowly, GCC is leaning into our strengths, and rolling out this new approach to Future Rangers, thanks to our amazing team including Lefa Malapane, Promise Mkhathshwa, Mbhoni Mzamani and Mr. Ernest Hlati.

Rangers

Due to GCC's support of the Timbavati Private Nature Reserve (TPNR) in 2020, especially with the successful COVID relief food drive, the TPNR did not have large funding gaps in their field ranger unit. We did however, bring 4 groups of guests from overseas to meet the ranger team, where we conducted educational experiences with rangers in the field to learn the importance and value of their profession.

Throughout the year, we created a number of short videos highlighting the value of rangers, along with a Careers in Conservation episode which featured the TPNR's Shepard Maunye. Mbhoni Mzamani spent the day with Shepard, tracking elephants, conducting patrols, and showing the audience what a day in the life of a ranger looks like.

RHINO MAN the Movie

This marks the 6th year of pursuing the dream of telling the ranger story through our feature length documentary, RHINO MAN. Over the course of 2021, we made large strides in getting the film across the finish line. One major highlight included GCC acquiring all rights and ownership of the film, through a buyout from production partner, Friendly Human. This ensures full creative freedom, IP ownership and increased profit upon the sale of the film. GCC also established a for-profit subsidiary allowing greater freedom in the sales process. We were also able to identify multiple sales agencies throughout the US and Europe who've shown keen interest in representing the film. The film is now in the post-production stage, under the careful eye of John Jurko II who has become the film's lead Director. We have also constructed a framework for a social impact campaign which is aimed at raising awareness, funds and support for rangers worldwide.

OUR PARTNERS

STRATEGIC PARTNERS

GCC was able to develop incredibly strong partnerships in 2020 with local implementation partners such as the Southern African Wildlife College and the Africa Foundation, with whom we outreach events, game drives, and educational activities. The Morgridge Family Foundation (MFF) made a transformational investment into GCC, gifting us with a brand new vehicle, along with operational funds for 2 years. Additionally, we worked closely with MFF on strategic and development decisions to become more sustainable as an organization.

BRAND PARTNERS

Our premier Brand Partners include Swiza, Tissot & Garmont. All of these corporations donated a combination of product and financial support to GCC's efforts on the ground, specifically in support of the field rangers at the Timbavati Private Nature Reserve.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

A special thank you to the Spencer, Renehan and Morgridge families for their anchor donations to GCC. These large investments have been critical in maintaining GCC's operations on the ground, and is the cornerstone of our staff's ability to complete our mission at the highest level.



FINANCIALS



On a financial level, 2021 was a challenging year for GCC, along with many other nonprofits and businesses around the world.

We were blessed with dedicated anchor donors and partners that saw us through challenging times.

BEGINNING OF 2021: \$59,525

Income/Donations
Future Rangers: \$75,000
Rangers: \$2,500
General Operations: \$107,025

TOTAL INCOME/DONATIONS: \$184,525

Expenses by Category:
General Operating Expenses: \$67,722
Future Rangers: \$57,438
Rangers: \$1,818
RHINO MAN: \$2,000
Total Expenses: \$128,978

CASH ON HAND AT END 2021: \$115,072

THE TEAM

BOARD MEMBERS & ADVISORS

JOSH LUMSDEN
JUSTIN WALKER
MICHELE SOFISTI
LEE GODOWN
ANTON MZIMBA
JOHN JURKO
ELLIE MILANO
ERNEST HLATI
DAVID RAPER

WORKING TEAM

MATT LINDENBERG
KATE VANNELLI
MBHONI MZAMANI
LEFA MALAPANE
PROMISE MKHATSHWA
REBEKAH WORTMAN
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