

Left:
Solar energy in a ranger
outpost

Below:
A ranger in Hluhluwe



installed plug points for charging two-way radio- torch- and GPS batteries. In addition, there was enough money left to purchase: a pair of night-vision binoculars; eight GPS units; 15 pairs of binoculars; one digital camera; six torches, and 22 LED globes to upgrade our old torches (a tip to anyone involved in field work who uses Maglite torches - the LED upgrades are really worthwhile. They give a brilliant beam and really extend battery life!).

The cherry on top was when Abigail Day at SCI announced that she had managed to pull an additional US\$2,000 out of the hat for us. Coincidentally, this was exactly the amount required to buy a solar water heater for one of our new field ranger camps! This has been bought and installed and will lead to big savings on our fuel budget as well as a reduced dependence on fossil fuels.

The funding from SCI and the EAZA Rhino Campaign has been enormously beneficial to Hluhluwe. It has made a very real contribution by providing equipment which is essential to our continued effective anti-poaching and rhino-monitoring work. However, over and above this, it has resulted in a very noticeable improvement to the living conditions and morale of the people who are the backbone of our conservation efforts - our field ranger force, without whom we would now probably only be able to see white rhinos in museums.

It would be remiss of me not to individually thank Cathy Dean and Petra Fleischer at Save the Rhino for all of their help throughout the duration of this project, as well as Abigail Day at SCI's London Chapter for all her hard work and obvious talent in fundraising. On behalf of the rhinos of Hluhluwe, I would also like to thank everyone else who was involved in any way in assisting with this campaign.

Salanikahle - Stay well.

Firearms and solar power - fundraising for Hluhluwe

When I saw an application form back in May 2005 for the EAZA Rhino Campaign (run in conjunction with Save the Rhino) and decided to apply on behalf of Hluhluwe Game Reserve, I had little inkling of how fruitful it would prove to be.

Dave Robertson
Hluhluwe Game Reserven

The most immediate need for the park, in terms of rhino security, was for new rifle safes and camping equipment: the Park is patrolled by field rangers who are based at outposts spread across it. Each outpost, comprising four field rangers, is responsible for patrolling a sector of the Park. There was previously one rifle safe per outpost, in which all four rifles were locked if not in use.

I had long considered storing rifles together a security risk, but there was no funding to purchase new safes. In 2004, the government introduced the new Firearms Control Act. Many of our existing safes were old and did not comply with the act, and there was the possibility that some of our firearms might be confiscated. This would obviously be an untenable situation, as the poachers would still have (mostly illegal) firearms. We were also short of camping equipment, more of which would enable us to spend more time in poaching 'hotspots', and to be active during the most common times for poaching - late afternoon, and nighttime during full moon phases.

I estimated all the equipment would cost €17,000, and I was not very optimistic. But I was overjoyed when I heard that Hluhluwe had been chosen as a beneficiary of the Campaign, and that we would receive the full €17,000. And even more good news was soon on its way. Save the Rhino contacted me to report that the London Chapter of Safari Club International (SCI) would have a fundraising auction to benefit Save the Rhino's fundraising effort for Hluhluwe.

I did not know what to expect, but decided to try to use this opportunity to start a project I had been thinking of for a while: providing solar panels and batteries for lighting and battery charging at field ranger outposts. Five of the outposts in Hluhluwe have no direct electricity supply, and the rangers were reliant on paraffin lamps for light. As several rangers are finishing schooling or other studies, this was obviously far from ideal.

The SCI auction was a huge success, and we received an additional £10,000. This proved to be enough to provide solar lighting to all five of the outposts, as well as one smaller outpost occupied by two fence line maintenance assistants. We also

