

"RHINO ROCK" FUNDRAISER - SYDNEY, 7 MARCH

The idea to support this project in Tanzania germinated after I read about the Sand Rivers Lodge in the Selous in the South African Airways' in-flight magazine last September. I later faxed them for more information, which I put before the Sydney committee for consideration.

Sand Rivers is an excellent and rare example of how a private tourist lodge can set up a totally separate trust fund to protect its last remaining rhinos. At the end of 1995 the founders of Sand Rivers, Richard Bonham and Bimb and Lizzy Theobald, along with Tanzania's director of wildlife and the project manager of the Selous Game Reserve, set up the Sand Rivers Rhino Project.

Currently WWF is working with the rhino project to assess rhino number in the Selous. Although numbers in the early 1980s were around 2000, it is thought only about 100 animals remain today. There are a definite 8-10 in the Kidai area adjacent to the concession area of the camp, possibly the last viable breeding herd (a calf was born last year), and it is these rhinos in particular that we are seeking to protect.

Sand Rivers is presently seeking funds for final construction costs of the Kidai ranger post (they have six game scouts patrolling the area) plus construction of a satellite post on the Sumbadzi River.

Our fundraiser was set up with this aim in mind. It went fantastically well, and we raised a total of \$8,500. \$4,000 of that came from the auction of items kindly donated by our valued sponsors, listed here, without whose support we could not have done so well: Out of Africa, Deeny Kohler-Caporale, Rhinocraft, Richard Farley (Digital Pictures Home Video/Slides), Amarula Cream, Deidre Williamson, Chris McClelland, Julia Salnicki, Tucker Seabrooks, John Raymond, Design Directions and African Safari Magazine

I contacted the Australian distributors of Amarula Cream, the South African liqueur, who were happy to help with a wonderful display, which added a certain African flavour to the night. Not only did they provide our 114 guests with a sampling and miniatures to take home, they gave us six gift packs for our raffle.

I managed to keep overheads such as catering to a minimum. Out of the ticket price of \$35 per person I can honestly say \$30 would have been pure profit. The venue was rather special in itself, the Bayview Yacht Club built over the water at Pittwater, and we danced the night away to music kindly provided at a very reduced rate by our DJ. Much of the food was donated and together with the committee our children helped with the preparation, decorating, waiting / waitressing, and cleaning up. The SAVE T-shirts they wore on the night could have been sold a hundred times over, but unfortunately we were out of stock.

The auction of the 7 night safari (which had a reserve on it of \$4,500) generated considerable interest, although didn't sell in the end. It would really have helped had I been able to secure free air tickets; paying for both land content and air made the prices a little high for the Australian market and would not have left much profit towards the Rhino Project. Perhaps this could be raffled at a later stage.

All in all, I am thrilled with our result. The money will go towards a project where a small amount will make a big difference.

Dee Williamson,
Co-Chairman
SAVE FOUNDATION (NSW Branch)



Jill Madden, Richard Farley (Save the Rhino Intl.) & Deidre Williamson.



The kids assisting at "Rhino Rock".