

ALEX VAN DEN HEEVER

Alex spent his formative years growing up on a cattle farm in the Western Cape, South Africa. After completing his studies in Marketing and Business Management, he joined the world-renowned Londolozi game reserve in 1995, as a game ranger. At Londolozi, Alex worked as the environmental manager, presented for the marketing team and conducted specialised safaris.

Alex's greatest fascination is traditional skills of animal tracking. He has dedicated much of his life to learning the ancient skill, eventually qualifying as one of a handful of tracker assessors in 2004 – the youngest ever to achieve this feat. During the last decade, Alex's commitment to tracking has afforded him the opportunity to track jaguars in the Amazon jungle, bears in California, grizzlies and wolves in Montana and the famous black-maned lions of the Kalahari. All of these adventures are experienced with his long-time friend and mentor, Renias Mhlongo.

Alex is the founder of Nhlayisa Power Supply, a company which develops fortified foods for rural markets and bulk feeding. See www.power-supply.co.za

His dream to establish a tracking school started when he was paired with Renias Mhlongo as his tracker at Londolozi. In 2010, Alex with encouragement and support of Mrs Gaynor Rupert founded the Tracker Academy – the first school of its kind in Africa. Tracker Academy stands as a training division of SA College for Tourism which operates under the auspices of the Peace Parks Foundation. See www.trackeracademy.co.za

In addition to his conservation work, Alex has worked as a facilitator for Vulindlela Transformational Services conducting diversity training. Here he led courses aimed at facilitating a better understanding between black and white people working in corporate South Africa.

Alex and Renias continue to work together in the bushveld, as well as to conduct motivational presentations in South Africa and abroad. Their inspirational presentation, *The Power of Relationships*, has relevance for both local South African as well as international audiences. Alex is married and resides at Londolozi Game Reserve, Mpumalanga in South Africa.

RENIAS MHLONGO

Renias Mhlongo was born in a mud hut in what is today the greater Kruger National Park. The Mhlongo family sustained themselves on the land by growing vegetables, tending cattle and hunting small game. Renias, almost as soon as he could walk, was sent out to tend the family's cattle herd. He is one of the last people to be raised in the original traditions of a Shangaan hunter-gatherer.

During forced removals of Apartheid regime, Renias and his family were sent to a settlement called Dixie. Without any formal education, he was forced to seek work at a game reserve as a labourer. In 1984 he became a tracker at Londolozi - thereby putting to use his exceptional skills as a naturalist. Over the next 25 years Renias played a major role in habituating the world-famous leopards of Londolozi.

Renias has conducted tracker training workshops in South Africa, Brazil, Kenya and North America - teaching people the traditional skills of trailing animals. In addition to his extensive experience with African animals he, with Alex, has tracked animals all over the world. Using his tracking skills Renias has also conducted small mammal surveys for game reserve owners in South Africa. In 2010, Renias became a founder member of the Tracker Academy. See www.trackeracademy.co.za

Renias has travelled internationally, and in so doing has touched many by the gracious manner with which he teaches people about African wildlife, culture and philosophy. He is a natural story teller. He taught Alex the art of humorous storytelling, which comes out strongly in their motivational presentation, *"The Power of Relationships"*. During their inspirational presentation, Renias provides personal insights to relationship building, as well as to tell a few stories, which he does in his mother tongue, Tsonga, and which Alex translates for the audience.

Alex and Renias have presented "The Power of Relationships" in South Africa, Kenya, Australia, the USA and England.