

Media Release

## First trail runners join the Big 5 for inaugural Mapungubwe Transfrontier Wildrun® 2016

Cape Town – 23 May 2016: Strict instructions, “Run as a herd, stick together, keep your eyes open, the rangers will be at the front and the back – listen to them,” marked the start of the first ever Mapungubwe Transfrontier Wildrun® through Big 5 territory in Southern Africa, which saw a group of 37 intrepid runners and rangers traverse the Limpopo-Shashe basin over three days, covering 92km of the Zimbabwe, Botswana and South African conservation cooperative called the Greater Mapungubwe Transfrontier Conservation Area.



Put together by South African trail event organisers Wildrunner with the support of Boundless Southern Africa, the inaugural Mapungubwe Transfrontier Wildrun® took place from 13 - 15 May 2016. Following elephant paths and game trails, this groundbreaking safari-on-the-run event took runners through Maramani community lands and the Sentinel Ranch in Zimbabwe, across the Shashe river onto the savannah of Botswana’s Tuli Game Reserve, and over the ancient Mapungubwe citadel in South Africa’s Mapungubwe National Park.

marketing communications strategy • public relations • publicity • social media • events • marketing materials • advertising

Unit E3A Westlake Square, 1 Westlake Drive, Tokai, Cape Town, 7945, South Africa

Tel: 021 404 0608 / 082 551 1101 | [www.catalystcommunications.co.za](http://www.catalystcommunications.co.za)

Vat No: 438 023 0567 | Company Registration No: 2004/122184/23

Highlights along the way saw runners crossing the mighty Limpopo & Shashe Rivers, running through magnificent riverine forests, passing huge Baobab trees, seeing rare Khoisan rock paintings, dinosaur fossils, and covering kilometers of ancient elephant trails etched into stone. Runners came across abundant wildlife, including elephant, zebra, antelope, giraffe and crocodiles. Fresh lion and leopard spoor kept everyone vigilant, but the rangers ensured the safety of the group at every turn.



At the core of the event was the desire to support cross-border conservation efforts by leaving a tangible benefit to the rural communities in the area, unlocking future tourism benefits while reducing the pressure on the natural resources. “Zimbabwe’s Maramani Community is essential to the success of this venture and in turn they are the largest beneficiaries – from employing camp staff, to growing vegetables for the event, we are sourcing 95% of our logistical support and suppliers from Zimbabwe rural communities,” says Wildrunner events director, Owen Middleton.

At the heart of the event is Boundless Southern Africa, an organization focused on transfrontier conservation area tourism marketing in Southern Africa. “The incredible landscape of the Greater Mapungubwe Transfrontier Conservation Area provides a unique trail running experience in a pristine natural environment, with rich conservation, historical and cultural aspects,” says Roland Vorwerk, Marketing Manager, Boundless Southern Africa. “Boundless donated over half a million Rands worth of camping equipment to the Maramani Rural Development Council to further unlock this areas cross border potential”



marketing communications strategy • public relations • publicity • social media • events • marketing materials • advertising

Unit E3A Westlake Square, 1 Westlake Drive, Tokai, Cape Town, 7945, South Africa

Tel: 021 404 0608 / 082 551 1101 | [www.catalystcommunications.co.za](http://www.catalystcommunications.co.za)

Vat No: 438 023 0567 | Company Registration No: 2004/122184/23

“This event was the result of two years of hard work by Wildrunner and Boundless, to unlock the intricate relationships between the three countries and the reams of red tape required to comply with conservation and customs requirements,” comments Middleton.



“We are so grateful to the plethora of government officials from all three countries who worked with us to unlock this iconic primal running experience. Without the support and cooperation of customs, landowners, community leaders and conservationists, including Sentinel Ranch, Shalimpo & the Tuli Game Reserve, the team from Mapungubwe National Park this event could not have happened.”

With challenges that include wilderness bushveld, wildlife encounters, rugged & hilly terrain, heat and remoteness, the event is not for the faint-hearted. Groups of runners ran in a herd format and were led by experienced game rangers. A group of volunteer Honorary Rangers set up refreshment stations at various points each day, where the participants could fill up their water, fuel up on potatoes, biscuits, nuts and sweets, or even enjoy a cup of tea.

**marketing communications strategy • public relations • publicity • social media • events • marketing materials • advertising**

Unit E3A Westlake Square, 1 Westlake Drive, Tokai, Cape Town, 7945, South Africa

Tel: 021 404 0608 / 082 551 1101 | [www.catalystcommunications.co.za](http://www.catalystcommunications.co.za)

Vat No: 438 023 0567 | Company Registration No: 2004/122184/23

The Mapungubwe Transfrontier Wildrun® is a full-service event, with runners carrying only what they need for each day's run. "In camp, participants are housed in their own private tents and treated to showers and toilet facilities, a hilltop gin bar, delicious food made over an African fire and the privilege of sitting around a campfire under a star studded African night sky," says Middleton.

"We've had an awesome experience this year, proving that running through Big 5 game territory across three countries is possible, and now we're really looking forward to what will most certainly be a capacity event in 2017."

To find out more about this unique African running experience, please visit:

<http://www.wildrun.com/event/mapungubwe>

Hashtags: #Wildrun #ExploringWildplaces

## **ENDS**

Issued on behalf of Wildrunner by Catalyst Communications:

Contact Chace Brand, 072 095 6718 [chace@catalystcommunications.co.za](mailto:chace@catalystcommunications.co.za)

Wildrunner Contact: Tamaryn Middleton, 021 821 9898, [tamaryn@wildrunner.co.za](mailto:tamaryn@wildrunner.co.za)