

ConsEnt

Alumni Profile pages



Matthew Danckwerts

Wildfire forensic investigator, MJ Danckwerts Consulting (Pty) Ltd

- Matriculated at St. Andrews College, EC in 2013
- Graduated BSc ConsEcol in 2018
- Completed MSc in Fire ecology @ Stellenbosch University

Wildfires are an important ecological phenomenon, but also pose challenges for humans. I offer agricultural & environmental consulting services, with a focus on fire ecology and grazing systems. I specifically focus on forensic veldfire investigations and preparing expert reports for legal disputes (litigation). I also conduct research part-time.

Words of wisdom

Do what interests you, and the rest will work itself out later.





Monique Wilckens

Wildlife and Landscape Project Co-Ordinator, WWF Namibia

- Matriculated at Namib High School (Erongo, Namibia) in 2004
- Graduated BSc ConsEcol in 2010
- MSc Agric in Entomology in 2012

As the Wildlife and Landscape Project Co-Ordinator, I currently co-ordinate with various conservation projects. i.e. Combatting Wildlife Crime, Sustainable Wildlife Management and Community Based Natural Resource Management. Work entails report writing, financial reconciliation, attending conferences and tracking rhinos and elephants in the field.

Words of wisdom

Life is full of detours, embrace them and you will succeed. Also, Excel is your FRIEND – the more proficient you are in excel the easier work becomes.



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Amber Smith

Junior Environmental Specialist, SIZA (The Sustainability Initiative of South Africa)

- Matriculated at Rhenish Girls' High School, Western Cape in 2014
- Graduated BSc ConsEcol in 2020

My role as an environmental specialist is to provide technical assistance in environmental compliance within the South African agricultural industry. My work is centered around the four cornerstones of the environment within SIZA namely: Soil, water, energy/materials/waste and biodiversity and ecosystems. These cornerstones are in alignment with course work that is offered within the Conservation Ecology Curriculum

Words of wisdom

You are braver than you believe and stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think." - WINNIE THE POOH



Monique Van Zitters

Environmental Science Intern
WWF-SA

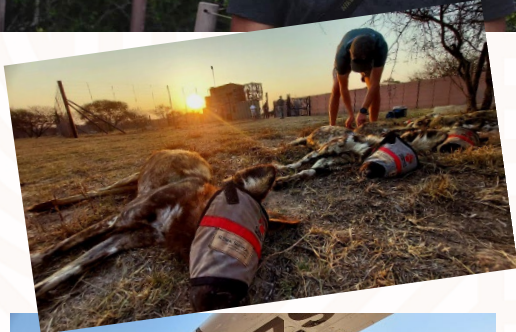
- Matriculated at Cape Academy of Maths, Science & Technology, Western Cape in 2014
- Graduated BSc ConsEcol in 2018
- Completed a MSc (2021) in Conservation Ecology

My research entailed evaluating rehabilitation along the Berg and Breede rivers. Currently, I assist with conducting monitoring and evaluation of WWF-SA's environmental initiatives.

Words of wisdom

Never let your circumstances dictate your path. Dream big, have faith, work hard and always believe in your abilities!





Eugene Greyling

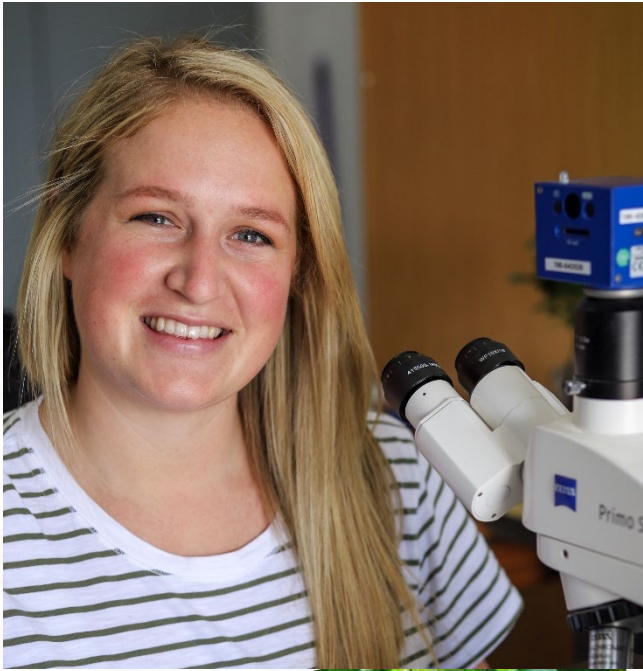
Carnivore Conservation Field Officer, Endangered Wildlife Trust

- Matriculated at Dubai English Speaking College, UAE in 2016
- Graduated MSc Conservation Ecology in 2023
- Completed a BSc (2019) and BScHons (2020) in Biodiversity & Ecology

My work focuses on carnivore fieldwork and monitoring undertaken by the EWTs Carnivore Conservation Programme. It entails performing and advising on the monitoring and relocation of carnivores, as well as community consultation, maintenance and development of partnerships, reporting, and a wide variety of other interesting and challenging tasks.

Words of wisdom

- Become a Chief Curiosity Officer in your own right – always remain passionately curious and you'll never stop learning.
- Strive to be an entrepreneur of hope.



Annika Pienaar

Soil Ecologist
Nemlab (Pty) Ltd

- Matriculated from Die Hoërskool Brandwag, Kariëga, Eastern Cape in 2009
- Graduated BSc ConsEcol in 2015
- Completed MScAgric (Nematology) *cum laude* in 2016 and PhD Nematology in 2020

I currently work as a soil ecologist at an agricultural lab, analyzing the effect of different organisms (nematodes, mycorrhizae, insects, etc.) on agricultural crops. I am passionate about finding a balance between agriculture and conservation in my work.

Words of wisdom

Find your own small way of leaving the world better than you found it.





Gulu Bekker

Western Cape Technical Crop Protection Manager
RealIPM (Biological Crop Protection)

- Matriculated at Cradock High School, Eastern Cape in 2006
- Graduated BSc ConsEcol in 2010
- Completed a MPhil Environ. Man. (2012) and PhD (2019) in Entomology

My work entails supporting farmers with information regarding pests and diseases in the fruit industry, to help them make environmentally sound decisions. Part of my job is to research and develop new biological control products to commercialize, to support the agricultural industry to farm more sustainable.

Words of wisdom

A good network is invaluable.





Katharina von Dürckheim

Scientific Advisor
Peace Parks Foundation

- Matriculated at German School Cape Town in 1993
- Graduated MSc ConsEcol in 2011
- Graduated MBA Stellenbosch Business School in 2017
- Graduated PhD ConsEcol in 2021

In partnership with SU and the Peace Parks Foundation, I set up Wildlife Free to Roam (WFR), a postgraduate research programme focused on connectivity conservation and wildlife corridors in Africa.

Words of wisdom

Know yourself & what motivates you, because then your work becomes a passion, not a job.



Gail Morland

Junior lecturer

Namibia University of Science and Technology

- Matriculated at Windhoek High School, Namibia in 2007
- Graduated BSc ConsEcol in 2012
- Completed a MSc (2015) in Entomology and currently working on a PhD

I currently lecture undergraduate courses in the Natural Resource Management degree program. I also supervise a few Work Integrated Learning students and co-supervise a masters student in Entomology.

Words of wisdom

Always be the over-achiever, because people notice!





Craig Galloway

Sustainable agriculture researcher
Trace & Save

- Matriculated at Queen's College, Eastern Cape in 2006
- Graduated BSc ConsEcol in 2010
- Completed a MSc (2012) and PhD (2017) in Conservation ecology

I do research on farms, assessing the sustainability of farm systems. This allows us to identify opportunities for improvement. We then assist farmers to develop and implement strategies which will contribute to more sustainable food production. An important aspect of sustainable agriculture is biodiversity management.

Words of wisdom

Live grateful – it is our choice to be grateful for what we have, rather than to focus on what we don't have.





Pride Mudavanhu

Researcher (Entomology)

Agricultural Research Council; Stellenbosch University (Research- Associate)

- Matriculated at Hartzell High School in Mutare, Zimbabwe in 2000
- Graduated BSc Agric. Hons – Crop Science (UZ) in 2004
- Completed MSc (2009) & PhD (2012) in Entomology

My research spans a range of topics in entomology including integrated pest management, biological control of alien invasive weeds & evolutionary physiology. The focus is aimed at understanding implications for pest management, biological invasions and biogeography under global climate change and human-induced disturbances.

Words of wisdom

What do you practice? 'coz what you practice, you're surely gonna get good at! E.g. is it joy, peace, happiness, worrying or complaining?



Willem Briers-Louw

Wildlife Biologist

Ivan Carter Wildlife Conservation Alliance, Mozambique

- Matriculated at Paul Roos Gymnasium, Western Cape in 2011
- Graduated BSc Cons Ecol in 2015
- Completed a MSc Cons Ecol in 2017



I am a wildlife biologist currently working in the Zambezi Delta in central Mozambique under the Ivan Carter WCA. In August 2018, 24 lions were reintroduced into the delta – the largest lion reintroduction to date. My main responsibility is to monitor this population on a daily basis, by helicopter and vehicle (in the dry season). My work also entails monitoring all other wildlife species, collecting data by means of collaring and tracking, camera trapping, aerial counts, etc.

Words of wisdom

Run your own race – don't compare yourself to others



Kevin Wallace

Course coordinator
Tropical Biology Association, UK

- Graduated BSc Zoology at Liverpool University, UK, in 2000
- Completed a MSc (2008) in Conservation Ecology
- Completed a PhD (2012) at Imperial College London, UK

I work for an NGO. Organize and lead MSc level month-long field courses in Africa and South-East Asia. Inspiring this generation of conservation ecologists to take on the challenges that face the Tropics.

Words of wisdom

Passion, enthusiasm, determination and collaboration





Nkululeko Nyangiwe

Animal Production Scientist
Eastern Cape Department of Agriculture

- Matriculated at Wongalethu High School, Eastern Cape in 1993
- Graduated BSc Animal Science in 1999
- Completed a MSc Vet. Sc. (2007) and PhD (2017) in Entomology

I am an Animal Researcher and my work focuses on biology, ecology and control of external parasites of domestic animals. Climate change and other factors contribute to range expansion of ticks and re-emergence of pathogens, so my research provides knowledge on current status of these pests so that there is improved tick control strategies.

Words of wisdom

Try and progress with your work and keep going even if you make mistakes.





Ancois de Villiers

Researcher
Association for Water and Rural Development
(AWARD)

- Matriculated at Belville High School, Western Cape, in 2006
- Graduated BSc ConsEcol in 2010
- Completed a MSc (2013) in Conservation Ecology and MSc (2015) in Environmental Anthropology

We develop and facilitate social learning processes for capacity development on climate change adaptation in the Olifants River Catchment, and inform climate change policy. Our work helps to build the climate literacy of farmers, civil society, and government officials that allows ecological processes to become more “meaningful” within the context of their livelihoods for the resilience of the whole socio-ecological system.





Kate Wilson née Spies

Research & Monitoring Management
Garamba National Park, DRC – African Parks

- Matriculated at Peterhouse Girls, Zimbabwe in 2004
- Graduated BSc ConsEcol in 2012
- Completed a MSc (2015) in Conservation Ecology

My work entails the management of a small team of research assistants to monitor the key species in Garamba National Park, including elephant, Kordofan giraffe and chimpanzees. Our work gives Park management a measure of the effectiveness of law enforcement and social sustainable development activities.

Words of wisdom

Make the most of your time at University and develop your practical and work experience, especially between semesters.





Kayla Geenen

Science Officer

Global Vision International, Limpopo (Karongwe Private Game Reserve)

- Matriculated from Milnerton High School, Western Cape in 2011
- Graduated BSc (Hons) Biodiversity and Ecology in 2015
- Candidate for MSc (current) in Conservation Ecology

My work entails teaching volunteers/interns, monitoring wildlife, making management recommendations and overseeing data collection and research output. Our research focuses on wildlife conservation, wildlife monitoring and habitat restoration ensuring that a small fenced reserve remains ecologically balanced. This contributes towards a better understanding of wildlife behaviour and habitat utilization.

Words of wisdom

Dream bold and go for it.





Francois Retief

Project Manager, *Fauna & Flora International*

- Matriculated at Hoërskool Overberg, Western Cape in 2009
- Graduated BSc ConsEcol in 2013
- Graduated MSc ConsEcol in 2016

I manage the conservation project focused on re-establishing the management of **Southern National Park in South Sudan** post civil war. My work entails managing ranger operations, developing infrastructure and managing biomonitoring activities all whilst working closely with various stakeholders. Whether it is working with communities or biomonitoring activities, most of the work I do is related to my undergraduate BSc degree BSc in Conservation Ecology.

Words of wisdom

A career in conservation can be very challenging but if your heart is in the right place it can be very rewarding.



Samantha de la Fontaine

District Ecologist

Northern Cape Department of Environment and Nature Conservation

- Matriculated at High School Carlton-van Heerden, Northern Cape in 2003
- Graduated BSc ConsEcol in 2010
- Completed an MSc (2013) in Conservation Ecology

My work includes assessing EIAs and biodiversity permit applications. It also involves interpreting and synthesizing scientific information for e.g. policy development. All of the above-mentioned is done in order for the Department to carry out its mandate, that is, to ensure the conservation of ecosystems, ecosystem services and sustainable resource use and development.

Words of wisdom

Believe in yourself & never compare yourself to others.





Danielle Cronje

Environmental Officer
Garden Cities non-profit company

- Matriculated at Brackenfell High School, Western Cape in 2011
- Graduated BSc ConsEcol in 2016
- Accredited Facilitator

As an Environmental Officer at a new town developer my focus is spread over various fields of environmental compliance, conservation management, rehabilitation, research and development and environmental education. We link social development with environmental challenges.

Words of wisdom

Don't give up! It might seem hard now, but you will harvest the fruits of your labour (even if it takes an extra year!)





Liam Cogill

Project Manager
Ecoguard Biosciences (Pty) Ltd

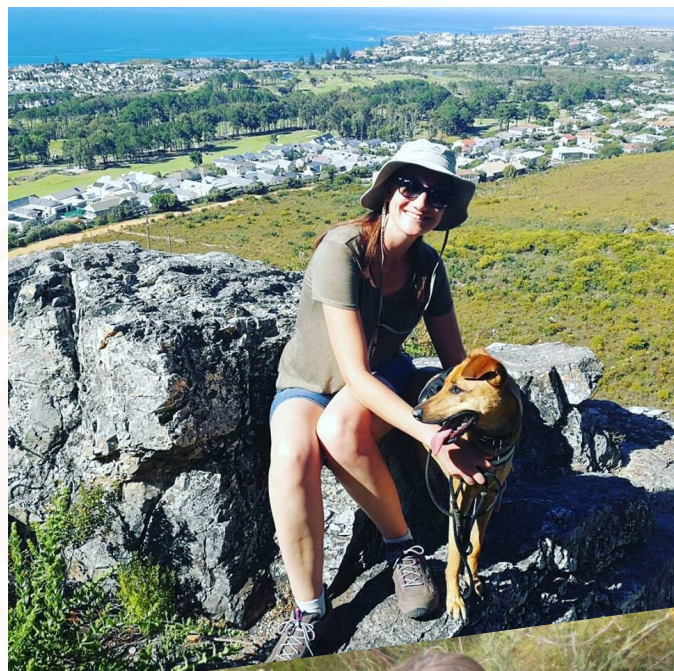
- Matriculated at Brackenfell Highschool, Western Cape in 2010
- Graduated BSc ConsEcol in 2014
- Completed MSc (2019) in Conservation Ecology

My work includes the development and registration of more environmentally compatible herbicides for the control of invasive alien plant species. These herbicides are developed through extensive field trials, research and working closely with farmers, governmental organizations (such as WfW), and private stakeholders across the country.

Words of wisdom

Work hard, Play hard – in that order!





Corlé Jansen

Stewardship Coordinator
Conservation South Africa

- Matriculated at Parel Vallei High School, Western Cape in 2007
- Graduated BSc ConsEcol in 2013
- Completed a MSc (2016) in Conservation ecology

I work in community stewardship in the Northern Cape. My work entails the implementation of conservation agreements between Conservation South Africa and commonage farmers to promote sustainable land-use and livestock farming.

Words of wisdom

Conservation is such a uniquely unpredictable field to work in – filled with new challenges and adventures.





René Gaigher

Researcher
Stellenbosch University

- Matriculated at Hottentots Holland High, Western Cape in 1998
- Graduated BSc ConsEcol in 2004
- Completed MSc (2008) and PhD (2013) in Conservation ecology

My work includes research, supervision of postgraduate projects, interaction with industry partners and undergraduate teaching. I focus on biodiversity conservation in human-modified landscapes, using arthropods as indicators of ecological integrity. This research feeds back into land management to help integrate conservation and human activities, and to maintain resilient landscapes.

Words of wisdom

Do what you love and everything else will follow.





Anel Olivier

Priority Species Monitor
Wildlife ACT

- Matriculated at Bloemhof Girls High School in 2010
- Graduated BSc ConsEcol in 2015
- Graduated MSc (2018) in Conservation ecology

The aim of my work is to monitor priority wildlife species (mostly classified as endangered species) on different reserves throughout Zululand. I am currently based at Somkhanda Game Reserve, a successful land reclaim site, where keeping a weary eye on animals such as elephant and wild dog is of utmost importance to prevent and manage human-wildlife conflict with surrounding communities.

Words of wisdom

Passion, patience and perseverance is all that's needed, but always allow yourself to be humbled by nature.



Pascale Swanepoel

Wildlife Coordinator
Sanbona Wildlife Reserve

- Matriculated at St Cyprian's School in 2004
- Graduated BSc ConsEcol in 2008
- FGASA levels 1 (2009), 2 (2010), 3 (2013) and Trails Guide (2013)
- Completed MSc (2019) in Conservation Ecology

My work entails much of the administrative part of conservation, including applying for permits, helping write reports and placing orders. However I also partake in collecting data for research, assist with game capture and other field work where necessary. It isn't a job with a distinct description as being part of a small team means helping where you can.

Words of wisdom

Only through hard work, dedication and passion can dreams be achieved.



Lana Müller

Operations & Research Manager
Cape Leopard Trust

- Matriculated at DF Malan High School, Western Cape in 2003
- Graduated BSc ConsEcol in 2008
- Completed a MSc (2011) in Biodiversity and Sustainability at Leiden University, The Netherlands

I'm currently doing research on leopards in the Cederberg and working with farmers to mitigate human-predator conflict to ensure the long-term survival of leopards in the Western Cape. I am also part-time involved with a lion monitoring project in Kenya where I work closely with the local Maasai communities engaging them in various conservation activities.

Words of wisdom

“There is no elevator to success, you have to take the stairs” – Unknown





Marco Pauw

Part-time lecturer

Academy for Environmental Leadership SA

- Matriculated at Hoërskool Stellenbosch, Western Cape in 2004
- Graduated BSc ConsEcol in 2008
- Completed MSc (2011) in Conservation Ecology

I collect data on vegetation and install research instruments such as weather stations for long term monitoring to determine the drivers and trajectories of environmental change in the arid parts of South Africa. This information feeds into Government's policies regarding climate change and environmental management.

Words of wisdom

The ability to work with others is as important as the ability to do the work.





Mia Vermaak

Assistant Manager for Entomology Collection
Iziko South African Museum

- Matriculated at Hoërskool Jan van Riebeeck in Cape Town in 2010
- Graduated BSc ConsEcol in 2016
- Completed Msc in Entomology in 2019

I manage the Entomology collection by preserving & protecting current collection, processing new specimens into the system with cataloguing and digitization as well and assisting with research and exhibitions.

Words of wisdom

Never give up. Falling on hard times only builds character.





David Ngadze

Current position: Pre-harvest Technical advisor
Berryworld SA

- Matriculated at Zengeza High School, Harare in 2000
- Graduated BSc Crop Science & Agronomy 2004
- Graduated Applied Plant Physiology in 2013
- Graduated MSc Entomology in 2016

I provide technical advice on blueberry production to blueberry growers which involves frequent direct interaction with growers in field of production. I lead R&D on new Plant Protection Products for blueberries for our group.

Words of wisdom

Do not leave any work for tomorrow, do it now!





Matthys Strydom

Head Academic Programme
Academy for Environmental Leadership SA

- Matriculated at Charlie Hofmeyr High School, Western Cape in 2005
- Graduated BSc ConsEcol in 2009
- Completed a MSc (2012) and PhD (2015) in Conservation ecology

My work entails developing curriculum material, co-ordination of the academic programme, lecturing in topics related to conservation ecology, acting as an environmental consultant and conducting research. My research focus on the population dynamics of invasive alien plants.

Words of wisdom

Work hard consistently. Enjoy everyday.



Jeanne de Waal

Technical Manager
Corteva AgriScience

- Matriculated at AHMP - 2001
- Graduated BSc ConsEcol in 2005
- MSc in Entomology
- PhD in Entomology

Technical advisor for citrus growers throughout South Africa, focused on Pest Management.

Words of wisdom

Take the road less travelled.





Monique Coetzee

Environmental Officer: Waste Policy & Minimization
Western Cape Government

- Matriculated at The Settlers High, Western Cape in 2011
- Graduated BSc ConsEcol in 2015
- Graduated MSc Entomology in 2017

My role involves providing specialist support in the development of legislation as well as awareness programmes that give effect to integrated waste management. Managing and minimizing waste is necessary for conserving our precious environment and something we should all strive to do!

Words of wisdom

Everything you do and go through in life, adds up and shapes you. Therefore embrace excellence in everything that you do.





Carolien van Zyl

Product Development Specialist
Villa Crop Protection

- Matriculated at Jan van Riebeeck High, Western Cape Province in 2003.
- Graduated BScAgric (Viticulture & Oenology) in 2008.
- Completed BScHons (Entomology) in 2009, MScAgric (Nematology) in 2012 and PhD (Entomology) in 2016.

My work entails writing protocols for insecticide field trials across the country and the data analyses of those results. In the field trials products are tested for both their efficacy against a specific agriculturally important pest in a specific crop, as well as testing the product's residual breakdown.

Words of wisdom

Take informed risks, be curious and make sure you enjoy what you do.





HP van Heerden

Environmental and Social Advisor
Scatec Solar Africa

- Matriculated at Hoërskool Upington, Northern Cape in 2003
- Graduated BSc ConsEcol in 2009
- Candidate for MSc (current) in Conservation Ecology

To ensure that the renewable energy company I work for deliver on the commitments and obligations in relation to Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIA) and Socio-Economic Development (SED). Another key purpose of this position is to lead the way in raising awareness and enhancing the position of Scatec Solar as a genuine and strong contributor to sustainability.

Words of wisdom

A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty. – *Winston Churchill*





Alistair Galloway

Sustainable Agriculture Auditor and Coordinator
Ecocert South Africa

- Matriculated at Parel Vallei High School, Western Cape, in 2012
- Graduated BSc in Conservation Ecology in 2016
- Graduated MSc in Conservation Ecology in 2019

I am currently involved in the auditing of farms, processors and exporters in Southern Africa who apply for organic or Rainforest Alliance certification. These operations need to meet specific agricultural, environmental and social standards to be able to achieve certification.

Words of wisdom

Volunteer, volunteer and volunteer some more. Consistency, persistence and kindness will take you far during your university career and life thereafter.

