



24 HOURS, 373KM MTB CHALLENGE: CROSSING THE WORLD'S OLDEST DESERT

“Old Dogs for WILD DOGS”

In December 2018, four Grandmaster cyclists (over the age of 60) will be taking on the challenge to raise funds for the Cheetah Conservation Fund. This is a drive to raise funds for a CCF initiative that is looking at the prevalence of human wildlife conflict in the Otjozondjupa and Omaheke regions in Namibia. Early research has surfaced the presence of African Wild Dogs in the area (the most endangered large carnivore in southern Africa) and a long-term research project is required to establish the exact status of Cheetah, African Wild Dog, Leopard and Brown Hyena in the areas. To this end it is critical for CCF to establish a more permanent presence in the area, both for research and community development work, building capacity in natural resource and wildlife management in addition to conservation livestock management practices to improve livelihoods and reduce human wildlife conflict. As in other successful communal conservancies, over time vast landscapes and multiple use areas have been established, opening up habitat for wildlife to thrive and coexist with people.

Len le Roux, the oldest of the group and a founder of the Desert Dash in 2005 has done the event 7 times. With more than 60 years of cycling under the belt he is the most experienced Dasher of the group, and he will ensure that the team paces themselves and keeps headed towards the coast. Len has completed the Cape Epic, Sani2C, and the Kalahari Challenge amongst other rides. Len is a co-founder of the Rosing Conservation Trails, the Namibian Environmental Education Network and has supported CCF in the past. He is currently the Managing Director for Synergos, a



global nonprofit that's deepening trust and collaboration to solve complex problems of poverty and create opportunities for individuals and communities to thrive.

Dr. Vincent Shaw, Chief Executive Officer of HISP (Health Information Systems Program, a global network of people, entities and organizations that design, implement and sustain Health Information Systems. As a network, HISP globally follows a participatory approach to support local

management of healthcare delivery and information flows, and was established by the Department of Informatics at the University of Oslo. Vince has been riding a bicycle for 55 years now. In his youth he rode at provincial level track and road, but since then has settled into a more sedentary routine of weekend single track with a dual suspension bike. He is a veteran of about 5 Cape Argus's, an Epic, a 4-person Desert Dash and 2 2-person Dash's. As the youngest in this team Vincent's role will be to make sure everyone has their false teeth and helmets in place before setting off on each stage.

Andreas (Andy) Brückner, as Director of NamibRand Nature Reserve and Treasurer of GreenSpace has been cycling for years. He has completed 7 Cape Argus Tours, 5 Desert Dashes and the grueling Otihavera, Wine2Whales and Kalahari Challenge. With his interest in tourism Andy might well find himself being the team tour guide, catering manager, and chief cook and bottlewasher.

Ecki Fryer, comes from a family steeped in the outdoors, and as a geologist has spent over 30 years in the field, mostly in the Kunene Region (Kaoko & Damaraland), but also elsewhere in Namibia, Angola and Zimbabwe. He did his MSc mapping the structural geology of the Ugab River, camping in the Ugab on his own for half a year. Through his sons' interest in MTBiking an interest in the activity was revived, taking him back to his first second-hand Raleigh bicycle that he bought for R10 in 1975, that gave him endless hours of pleasure, riding tricky tracks in his mother's garden. Ecki has completed 5 Desert Dashes, and as the strongman in the team he will be tackling the difficult stages and "breaking wind" up front.

Read more on the Cheetah Conservation Fund Website about how you can help this cause <https://cheetah.org/event/ccf-ride-for-wildlife-the-desert-dash/>