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Local DSC Chapter raises over \$500k for Conservation

Led by a Live Auction Lot for a Rhino Custodianship, DSC South Texas raises RECORD-BREAKING funds

San Antonio, TX April 1, 2023: What began as an Annual event with the promise of being one of the largest and most successful yet, turned into a RECORD-BREAKING night for Conservation at this year's DSC South Texas Annual Gala, held on Saturday, April 1 at Pedrotti's Ranch. While exact numbers are still being calculated on the total amount raised by this event, one single live auction lot had a story to tell, backed by Donors with a heart of giving led by their foundation's focus on "preservation of tradition and history, animal conservation and education of youth for generations to come in these three focus areas."

As Mr. Warne Rippon of Buffalo Kloof describes: "As the euphoria rolled at the South Texas Dallas Safari Club chapter banquet in San Antonio on April 1, I felt my hair stand up like only once ever before. Almost 25 years after starting on the Buffalo Kloof rewilding mission, I begun to realize that my team's work had finally started to get the recognition it so deserved."

On Saturday night a female black Rhino custodianship along with a relocation experience was auctioned at the South Texas DSC Chapter for \$500,000 - half a million dollars! A new record and the highest amount ever paid and raised for, protection, and range expansion of the sacred Black Rhino and for any other species for that matter. This should and no doubt will receive global recognition in the very near future, and it humbles me to see the work that our team has done is beginning to receive worldwide recognition."

As the already successful night rolled to Auction Lot #11, silence fell on the vivacious crowd as the Buffalo Kloof video started. The description of the item in the program read: "Be a part of conservation history! Buffalo Kloof Conservancy, responsible of the largest Black Rhino translocation program will be offering this rare and special opportunity to be a custodian to a proven producing adult female Black Rhino.

Along with this custodianship the highest bidder will get to take part in the 2nd largest Black Rhino translocation set to take place between September 2023 and September 2024. This is a once off and once in a lifetime opportunity that only a handful of people have ever experienced, and there is no doubt that it will touch you to the bone. This extraordinary experience is available for a group of maximum 6 people. Your contribution will go towards protection and range expansion for Black Rhino on Buffalo Kloof. Today Black Rhino remain a critically endangered species, along with their habitat under continued serious threat. This highlights how vital range expansion is for black rhino."

As the bidding opened, it was clear there was a group in attendance on a mission to ensure they were that part of Conservation History mentioned in the description. Bidding quickly surpassed \$100k, then \$200k, before concluding at \$500k to Ms. Shannon Ralston and the Ralston Family Charitable Foundation. Created in memory of Shannon's mother,

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Laurie Ralston, the foundation's focus and mission closely parallels that of Dallas Safari Club and many of Ms. Ralston's family and friends were in attendance at the event when her bidding secured a part of conservation history in the making!

Currently one of the largest and most active Chapters in the Nation, the DSC South Texas Chapter covers most of Central and South Texas, encompassing the Texas Hill Country and areas northeast toward Austin as well. While it's annual event is a success in hunters and conservationists "putting their money where their mouth is," the record-breaking success of this event and the impact of the funding this purchase provides is nothing short of history in the making. As Mr. Rippon states, "It is the hunting chapter of South Texas DSC that put up its hand, to support black rhino conservation. Buffalo Kloof's successes in its Black rhino program is virtually unrivalled when it comes to inter-calving rates of our Black Rhino females. If it wasn't for hunters support, we would go back to when we discovered Buffalo kloof in 1998, there wasn't a living creature on it, today its proudly home to approximately 10,000 mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and fish."

The undeniable fact surrounding this event (and all those hosted around the country to raise money for hunter advocacy and wildlife conservation and preservation of the lands they inhabit) is, as Mr. Rippon states, "the hunting community protects and conserves its valuable wildlife and through sustainable utilization and we help feed the communities and people on the planet." Regardless of what side of the coin you fall on, the fact remains that there is not another demographic in the world that donates as much of its OWN money to protecting and conserving the very species they consume and the lands they inhabit to ensure future generations will be able to do the same. " It's time for hunting-based conservation organizations to think outside the box and maximize more efforts to work hand-in-hand with non-hunting based organizations to blend each other's narratives about wildlife conservation. Hunters are the true conservationist that care for the world's wildlife, especially endangered species, and DSC South Texas proved that at this grand event," said Blake Barnett, host of DSC's Trailing the Hunters Moon television series and Director of DSC South Texas.

If you are interested in learning more about DSC South Texas and it's mission, vision and values or would like to get involved as a Member of the Chapter, you can visit their website at www.dscouthtexas.org. For further information on Buffalo Kloof, visit <https://www.buffalokloof.co.za/conservation/>. Photos available upon request with captions included.