



Welcome to the Sandveld...

The Sandveld Conservancy was founded in April 1999 when a group of 10 farming families decided to conserve and improve the Sandveld ecosystem by working together as a team.

Approximately 80 000 hectares commercial farmland was involved in the beginning. This group realized that by cooperating and good communication a change of attitude could be achieved at all involved people regarding the fauna and flora of the area. Over-utilization of natural resources (e.g. devil's claw) and further reduction of endangered species (e.g. cheetah) were but some aspects urging speedy action. In addition the members wanted to introduce visitors to the hidden wonders of the area.

During the following years much has been achieved by targeting members through study groups on game management, utilization of devil's claw and tourism.

The challenge for Sandveld Conservancy is to harmonize cattle farming (the economic base of its members) with the existing fauna and flora, propagate and / or reintroduce certain plant- and game species, and get more farmers and communities involved.

After four years of hard work a sound foundation has been laid on which we and our children proudly can build on.

To find out more about farming in Namibia, go to

<http://www.agrinamibia.com.na/>
<http://www.cheetah.org/>

People of the Sandveld

The first humans roaming the Sandveld area were the San-people (Bushmen). Some are still living and working on farms in the area. Unfortunately many of their excellent hunting skills and earlier nomadic lifestyle has been lost due to civilization.

Much later, around the year 1800, the Herero tribes with their cattle moved into the Sandveld and drove the San to more arid areas of the Kalahari or used them as workers. Many farm names given by the Herero date back to this time.

With the missionaries arrived the first white settlers in the late 19th century.

Many farms were given out under "grass-license" by government between 1930 and 1947 and were later bought by the lessees if they fulfilled their obligations.

The German Schutztruppe operated a heliograph on the Otjosundu hill during and after the Herero uprising. In the vicinity a cemetery can be found cared for annually by farmers of the area. While erecting a radio repeater station on the hill several interesting utensils and refuse of the troops like tins, bottles and cartridges were found.

Today the commercial farmers consist mainly of German and Afrikaans-speaking Namibians, as well as some Hereros and Rehoboth-Coloreds.

The workers are a cross section of all Namibian groups, Kavango, San, Ovambo, Nama, Damara and Herero.

Characteristic for our conservancy is following comment of two visitors who travelled two weeks on horseback from farm to farm guided by a San worker:

"Seen from the main road the panorama is quite monotonous, flat land with plenty bush and trees.

But when you turn off onto the sand tracks, walk, ride or drive cross country, a completely new perspective opens up and thus a different picture.

The inhabitants are a large attraction to all visitors. Everyone is differently formed by life and cultural background. A clear vision of future is at hand. The people are worldly-wise and capable to communicate and organize in many different ways."

Discussions bolt off like game chased by lions.

Much attention is given to game counts and to reports of the subcommittees (game- and nature-management, tourism and special resources like devils claw).

Meetings are concluded socially with much earned beer and a grill.

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