

ANNOUNCEMENT

MARCH 2026

COMMUNIQUÉ: APPOINTMENT OF LCA PROTÉGÉ CEO

It is with great excitement and confidence that the LCA Board announces the appointment of Dereck Milburn as the LCA Protégé CEO, effective 1 April 2026. Following a thorough recruitment process, we are delighted that Dereck has accepted this position.

Despite being in the process of relocating to Pretoria, Dereck will nevertheless attend the Annual LCA Council Meeting in March, where he will engage with the Board and the broader LCA community. Having already met with the Board and several colleagues, he feels very much part of the team.

The Protégé role is designed to guide us into “chapter two” of the LCA – a renewed phase centred around youth leadership development and an African-led dialogue, advancing innovative approaches to nature conservation across the continent and globally. While advancing this vision, the LCA will remain firmly rooted in hands-on biodiversity protection engagements, staying connected to on-the-ground realities that are core to the LCA’s DNA.

With the view to position the LCA for the future, which will be reflected in the forthcoming nominations for new LCA Board members, it has nevertheless been agreed that three of the founding members of the LCA, i.e. Ian Cockerill, Sabine Plattner and I, will remain on the Board. Howard Buffett, also a founding member, has been nominated to serve as an associate member. This, to ensure that the collective institutional memory and foundational ethos of the LCA are retained during this period of transition.

On behalf of the LCA and its friends, we warmly welcome Dereck and wish him every success and fulfilment in his new role.

Chris Marais
LCA CEO



Chris

ABOUT DERECK



With 19 years of experience in conservation and ecotourism, Derek Milburn has held a range of consulting and leadership roles within NGOs and other environmental sectors. His career is driven by a deep commitment to unlocking the conservation potential of Africa's protected and unprotected areas, while fostering community empowerment and preserving natural and cultural heritage.

Dereck has led the development of management plans for over 25 provincial reserves in South Africa along with development plans for private and government owned conservation areas across Africa. He also has a keen interest in the execution of effective Public Private Partnerships in Protected Areas for the benefit of local communities.

Dereck is passionate about the development of the next generation of conservationists and has functioned as a mentor for various tourism and conservation areas in the last decade.

His field experience is equally substantial – Dereck has led some of the most complex wildlife rescue missions and has overseen the successful translocation of over 400 elephants, rhinos, lions, and other key species. He also brings extensive expertise in tourism product development, conservation planning, and implementation.

Dereck has built NGOs from the ground up, guiding them through all aspects of corporate governance, strategic and operational planning, fundraising, and HR management. He thrives in capacity-building environments and firmly believes that conservation careers should be accessible to anyone with the passion to pursue them.



The LCA thank all our patrons and associates for their ongoing support and dedication to biodiversity protection in Africa.

