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KIMBERLEY SNATCHES 1ST PRIZE IN SANPARKS PRIMARY SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS COMPETITION

Team effort and a passion for the environment has paid dividends for a group of learners from Kimberley in the Northern Cape.

The pupils from Boitshoko Primary School came out tops today when they snatched the first prize in a national primary schools environmental awareness contest - the Morula Kids Competition.

The competition, now in its second year, is organised by South African National Parks (SANParks). Boitshoko Primary School's entry, an artistic submission titled 'conserve wildlife' was declared a winner during a function held at SANParks head office in Groenkloof, Pretoria.

The team of learners won themselves the grand prize of a trip to the Augrabies National Park. Their winning entry was drawn from dozens of entries received from learners throughout the country. All the winners also received hampers from the leading photographic company, Kodak.

The main aim of the competition, which forms part of SANParks' Social Ecology programme, is to create environmental awareness among children. The contest also seeks to educate learners on the country's national parks system, the services that the system offers and to encourage them to use their creative skills through art to interpret conservation issues.

During this year's contest, learners were asked to answer the question: "Why do we need a national park". They were required to send their entries in the form of essays, poetry, artwork, etc.

The second prize went to the Knysna Christian School in Kysna. They win a trip to Tsitsikamma National Park. And Kgaugelo Middle School from Ga-Rankuwa came third; their prize is a trip to Vhembe-Dongola National Park.

This year was particularly exciting as the competition took place on the backdrop of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. It is the aim of SANParks to reach more children through programmes such as this one as part of the organisation's efforts to invest in the country's future conservationists.

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