

Two South African Cyclists Embark on Cross-Country Ride to Raise Awareness, Funds for Endangered African Animals
Bike & Saddle Eco-Tour Company Partners with Big Life Foundation in Portland-to-Portland Trek

PORTLAND, Ore. – On July 1, 2015 the world lost one of its beloved characters, Cecil the lion, shot and killed in Zimbabwe by a trophy hunter from the United States. One year to the day, two cyclists from **Bike & Saddle Eco-Active Trips and Holidays**, based in Cape Town, South Africa will embark on a journey from Portland, Oregon to Portland, Maine in support of Big Life Foundation — a conservation group whose mission it is to protect endangered species, including lions.



Big Life Foundation

“Last fall I happened across some of [Nick Brandt’s stunning photographs](#) of Kenyan wildlife for Big Life, and they were so arresting, I knew in that moment we had found a mission that makes sense for our Company,” said Gustav Erlank, president and co-founder of Bike & Saddle and EcoMiles. “We are humbled to have the opportunity to help raise money through our partnership and see this as a legacy project for us personally.”

The Journey

Beginning July 1 in Portland, Oregon, Gustav Erlank and Susanne Holste will bicycle through Portland, across the Tilikum Bridge, and head east, ultimately reaching the “other” Portland in Maine. The map and timeline will be flexible, and at times meandering, through less populated regions of the northern and middle states. The couple will carry a Big Life Foundation banner, and blog throughout their journey to commemorate the kick off of the EcoMiles Program and its commitment to donate one dollar for every mile its guests cycle, hike or paddle to Big Life Foundation.



*Erlank & Susanne Holste,
Bike & Saddle, Eco-miles
Founders*

Guests can follow along with [TrackMyTour](#), and donate on the different legs — or the entire 4,000 miles. The couple hopes to raise at least \$44,000 for Big Life’s operations in East Africa. \$4,000 directly as a result of their own sweat equity and an additional [\\$40,000 through co-sponsorships by the public](#).



Big Life Ranger Team in Kenya

“We’re extremely grateful for Bike & Saddle and the EcoMiles Program, which will support Big Life’s operations in East Africa protecting endangered wildlife and wild lands,” said Kim McCoy, executive director of Big Life Foundation USA based in Portland, OR. “For context, \$4,000 dollars could support two wildlife rangers for eight months across the Amboseli-Tsavo-Kilimanjaro ecosystem. With

more than 40 outposts, 13 vehicles, tracker dogs, and aerial surveillance covering roughly 2 million acres of wilderness, we need all the help we can get.”

Along with [TrackMyTour](#), Erlank and Holste’s journey can be tracked throughout the 4,000 miles trek across the United States on its [Facebook page](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#) handles along with its website: [Eecomiles.org](#). The couple hopes their actions will inspire others to [donate to Big Life Foundation during their journey](#), or ride for a cause with Bike & Saddle. The EcoMiles Program has the potential to rally the active travel market and the active traveler around conservation tourism and contribute in a very meaningful way to preserving our natural heritage for future generations.

“A truly healthy world demands we understand how every aspect of our natural and social world interlocks – and by protecting the interests of both wildlife and people, we act responsibly in ensuring a sustainable future for our children and their children,” said Erlank.

About Big Life Foundation

Big Life was co-founded by photographer Nick Brandt and [award-winning conservationist](#) Richard Bonham in September 2010. Since its inception, Big Life has expanded to employ hundreds of local Maasai rangers in the wilderness in the Amboseli-Tsavo-Kilimanjaro ecosystem of East Africa. The anti-poaching teams work to protect 2 million acres of land. For more information, please visit [biglife.org](#).

About Bike & Saddle

Bike & Saddle is Africa’s leading [eco-active](#) travel company that runs tailor-made, fully supported & one-of-a-kind, cycle, walking & hiking and kayaking trips across Southern Africa, Africa and the Indian Ocean. The company provides luxury, handcrafted active-holidays that blend the best in hospitality with iconic biodiversity, scenic splendors, rich culture and invigorating activity. For more information, visit [bikeandsaddle.com](#).

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