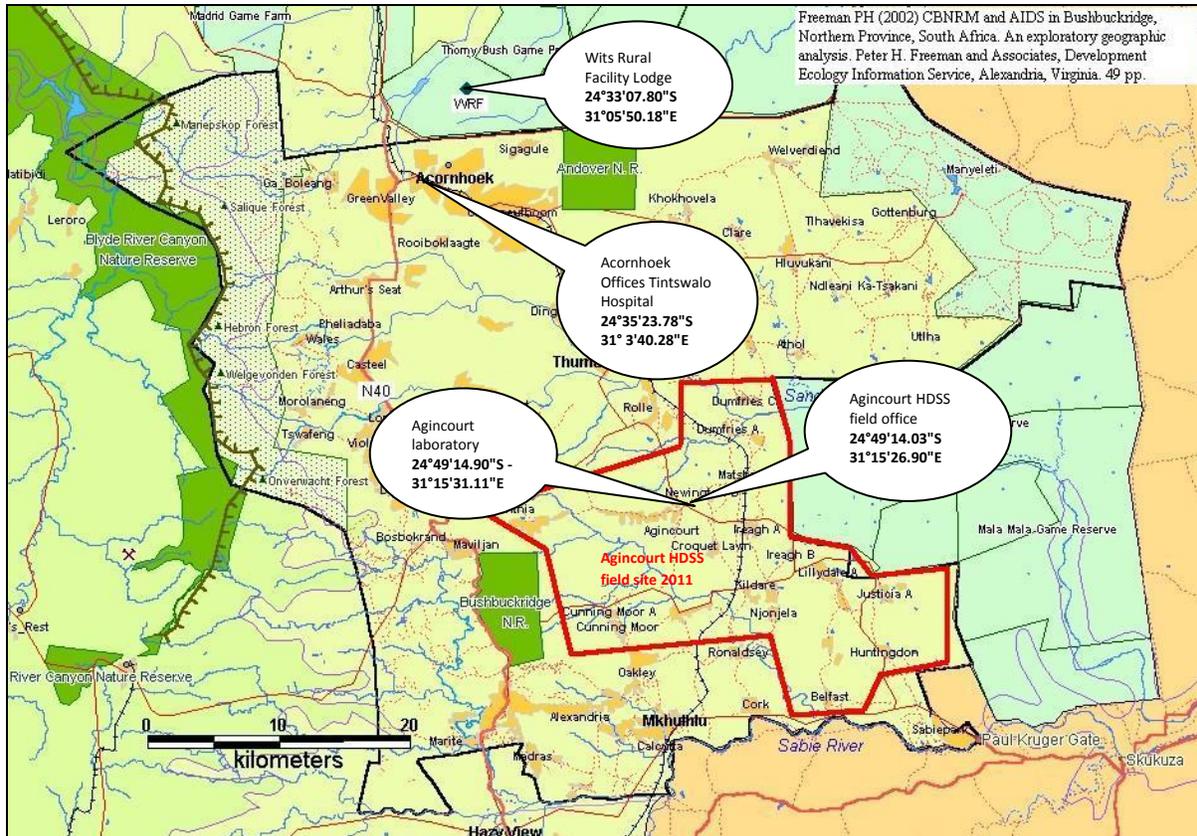


About the MRC/Wits Agincourt Unit

The MRC/Wits Agincourt Unit is a research unit of the University of the Witwatersrand under the school of Public Health. Established in 1992, it lies in the rural sub district of Bushbuckridge in the Mpumalanga Province of South Africa. The unit has three main offices - the Johannesburg office is situated in the Wits Medical School and 500km away the main research office is based in Tintswalo Hospital in the small town of Acornhoek, and 45km away from Acornhoek is the field site office and research laboratory in the small village of Agincourt.

The Agincourt HDSS field site in the Bushbuckridge District Municipality, Ehlanzeni Municipality, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa



Visa Entry Requirements

Requirements for entry into South Africa differ from country to country, and are subject to change. Always make enquiries before travelling to South Africa. A yellow fever vaccination certificate is required from travelers coming from a country in which a risk of yellow fever transmission is present (Africa, Latin America etc.).

Transport arrangements

OR Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg is served by many international airlines. Upon arrival at OR Tambo International there are various options of getting to the rural Agincourt offices - through Hoedspruit's Eastgate, Nelspruit's Kruger Mpumalanga International (NOT Nelspruit airport...), Skukuza airport in the Kruger Park itself or Phalaborwa airports, or by car. Hoedspruit Eastgate Airport is the smallest but closest airport to WRF with two daily flights. Phalaborwa is about 1.5 hours drive from WRF. Nelspruit and Skukuza are the most convenient if you want to go straight to the Agincourt HDSS fieldsite. All airports have car hire company offices. To get to our Johannesburg offices, you can catch the Gautrain to Park Station and then the Parktown Gautrain bus which will drop you directly outside Wits Medical School. The Gautrain and the Gautrain bus run frequently and a Gautrain card can be bought at the airport.

For visitors who have requested airport transfers to our rural offices, we will arrange for an Agincourt unit vehicle and driver to meet you upon arrival at the Hoedspruit, Phalaborwa or Nelspruit airports. Note that the costs of transfers will be charged to your project budget. **It is preferred that all visitors hire a vehicle as the unit does not have spare**

vehicles for visitors. The unit can assist with hiring a vehicle with costs charged to your project. There is a daily shuttle from Tintswalo Hospital to the Agincourt Offices leaving at 8.30am and leaving Agincourt from 16.00pm. Note that there are no public transport options from any of the airports to Agincourt, Acornhoek or Wits Rural Facility. Timbavati Safari Lodge can arrange a transfer should you stay there.

Most vehicles are stick shift in South Africa. If you require an automatic car, allow extra ordering time as one will need to be ordered specially, and will also cost more than a stick shift. We drive on the left side of the road. International licenses are accepted for the duration of a tourist visa – if you are coming for more than 3 months, it is advisable to obtain an International Drivers License prior to your arrival in South Africa.

Here is a detailed map of Wits Rural Facility, the Agincourt HDSS site and Acornhoek <http://www.agincourt.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/map-hazy-agin-acorn-wrf-hoed.pdf>

A note regarding traffic police

Traffic police are common in South Africa. Unfortunately bribery is a problem and sometimes they target tourists. It is illegal to pay cash to any traffic official. If a traffic officer stops you and you have not committed a traffic offense (if you have, then you will need to pay the fine at a magistrates office or a police station and ask for a receipt at your own convenience i.e. you can ask for a ticket), make sure that you call the officer by his or her name and tell them that you are going to phone the corruption line 082 451 7044 or 013 755 1988.

Staying at Wits Rural Facility

Most of our visitors stay at Wits Rural Facility - website <http://www.wits.ac.za/placesofinterest/2939/wrf.html>, phone +27 15 793 7500 and email wrfreservations@radioactivewifi.co.za. Accommodation at WRF is comfortable, self catering and 15km from Acornhoek, on a beautiful former game farm. There are two accommodation sites – one at the WRF Lodge that is accessed over 3km of dirt road, and the other at Caravilla, which is close to the tar road but has fewer accommodation options. There is no public transport from Wits Rural Facility so please take this into account when planning your visit. There are no mosquito nets over the beds, but there are insect screens over the windows. There is no aircon. Bring a torch.

Staying at Timbavati Safari Lodge

It is possible to stay about 6km away from WRF at a lodge called Timbavati Safari Lodge timbavati@mweb.co.za or <http://www.timbavatisafarilodge.com/> or +27 15 793 0415. This is slightly more expensive and more isolated than WRF, but has catering. It also has a pool, restaurant and bar. There is also no public transport available although they can arrange airport transfers. There are mosquito nets over the beds, but no aircon. Bring a torch.

Travel insurance

Please ensure that you have the relevant travel insurance and that you provide someone in the unit with an emergency contact number. We very seldom have emergencies, but best to be prepared.

Currency and banking

Rands (ZAR) and cents. ***Please ensure that you bring some rands in cash when you visit Agincourt*** as the nearest bureau de change is 35km away in the town of Hoedspruit. Most stores do accept major credit and debit cards, and you can draw cash from various ATMs in the town of Acornhoek. However, should you want to buy small items such as cold drinks or snacks especially in the Agincourt HDSS fieldsite, you will need cash in rands. The following banks are available in Acornhoek: ABSA, Nedbank, First National Bank, African Banking Corporation, Standard Bank, Post Office Bank.

Phone communication

The country dialling code is +27. The phone number of the main office in Acornhoek +27 13 795 5076 and the switchboard is open 08h00 – 16h30.

It is best to arrive at the unit with a cell phone that works in South Africa. The easiest place to obtain a cell phone and a SIM card that is registered in South Africa is at the airport since in order to register a SIM card you have to give proof

of residence and the airport understands the requirements of foreigners much better than cell phone dealers in Acornhoek do. Get the MTN or Vodacom network.

Internet

There is internet connectivity at our Acornhoek and Agincourt offices. You will need to arrange with our IT support for your laptop to be registered on the network - contact itayi.adam2@wits.ac.za. Let him know what project you are working with and who your contact person is at the unit. At Wits Rural Facility, **you will need to pay for a password and user name for the duration of your stay** - arrange directly with WRF on +27 15 793 7500 or wrfadmin@radioactivewifi.co.za or wrf@global.co.za. You can also arrange internet access at OR Tambo airport by purchasing a modem and airtime. It is easy to top-up airtime in Agincourt and Acornhoek, although there is nowhere to buy airtime at Wits Rural Facility. There is no internet at Timbavati Safari Lodge.

Electricity

The South African electricity system is 230V and 50Hz and the holes are three pin round. Our plugs look like the picture below – please bring appropriate adaptors. Staff do not have adaptors and they are hard to find in this rural area.



We have 'load shedding' in South Africa. These are rolling black outs that last about 2 hours each at various times of the course of the day. Sometimes they are daily, and sometimes we go weeks without such blackouts. They are scheduled, but sometimes the schedules are difficult to come by/not followed.

Language

The main language of communication in the unit is English, and the local language in Agincourt is Shangaan, closely related to xiTsonga.

Weather conditions

The area normally receives about 860mm of summer rain per year. It is hot from September to April, and cool to cold from May to August.

Clothing

Bring one jersey and a raincoat or umbrella in summer. In winter temperatures can drop to about 6°C in the evenings. WRF has swimming pools at the lodge and at Caravilla, and Timbavati Safari Lodge also has a pool, so bring a swimming costume. Wear sensible shoes as the terrain is nearly all sandy with very little paving. Bring walking or running gear as WRF provides perfect opportunities for both activities. If you are going to meet community leaders, bring smarter clothes (for females a skirt/dress) - otherwise dress code is casual.

Before you travel to Agincourt Health and Population Unit

- Contact the Agincourt Unit Administration on ngoni.ngwarai@wits.ac.za or floidy.wafawanaka@wits.ac.za and provide your travel and visit itinerary.
- Find out from the Administration unit any specific instructions and requirement instructions applicable for International visitors.
- Make sure you pack all medication you may need, and just in case, please pack medicine for diarrhea and vomiting (not common as our water is potable – amongst the top 5% in the world, but sometimes people do get bugs)
- Talk to your own doctor about malaria prophylaxis, but do bring long sleeves and trousers for the evening, and mosquito repellent.

After arrival

Enjoy your stay – South Africans are very hospitable and are interested in meeting visitors. In Acornhoek and Agincourt there is not much security risk, but as with any international travel, take adequate security precautions. Do not wear ostentatious jewelry, do not go into dark alleys, don't give lifts to strangers. **DO** go out for dinner, **do** see if you can add some time to your itinerary to visit the nearby Kruger National Park or go on a night drive in a private game reserve and

do enjoy South African hospitality. Most people are happy if you take photos, but generally ask first if the photo is of an individual. It is fine to take photos at community events or other similar situations, except for funerals and weddings. Here is a link to some interesting people and restaurants in the Bushbuckridge area
<http://www.everytrail.com/guide/art-and-craft-guide-mpumalanga-lowveld-south-africa>

Tourist information

You can call Kruger National Park on +27 12 428 9111 or visit the internet site www.krugerpark.co.za. The best place to contact for night drives is 1 Africa Safaris in Hoedspruit +27 15 793 1110 or on their website www.1africasafaris.com.

Food/Shopping

We don't do filter coffee – bring a small press if you are a caffeine addict – but you can buy filter coffee in Acornhoek Pick and Pay (signs of a society in transition). Try rusks which are hard biscotti you dip in your coffee. Biltong is more delicious beef jerky. Try pap (grits) and various stews – chicken, beef – at roadside stalls in the villages. There are very good restaurants in the Hoedspruit area as it is a tourist haven. Sleepers in Hoedspruit does good breakfasts, Upper Deck and Wildebees Lapa in Kampersrus do more Afrikaans cuisine. There is an Ethiopian and a Pakistani restaurant in Acornhoek and try the various local restaurants that do the local pap and stew in Acornhoek and Agincourt.

BUSHBUCKRIDGE SHANGAAN

Greetings

1st person – Uvuxeni (*uhvooSHEHnee*) Good morning
 2nd person – Ahe (*aaYEH*) Ahe
 1st person – Mi njhani (meenJAHnee) How are you
 2nd person – Hi pfukile, mi njahni nwina (*hip fourKEEleh, meen jaanee NWEEnah*) I am fine and you
 1st person – Hi pfukile (*hip fourKEEleh*) I am fine

When leaving

Person leaving – salani kahle (*salaanee KASHleh*) Stay well
 Person staying – famba kahle (*faamba KASHleh*) Go well

Common sentences/words

Yes - eya (*ehya*)
 No – ee (*eh eh*)
 How much does this cost? I mali muni? (*ee MAAlee MOOnee*)
 It is hot today. Ka hisa namuntla. (*kaah HEEsah naaMOOntlah*)
 It is cold today. Ka titimela namuntla. (*kaah teeteeMEHlah naaMOOntlah*)
 What is your name? Hi wena mani? (*hee wehnah MAAnee*)
 How old are you? U na malembe mangani? (*oo naa mahlehmbah mahnGAHee*)
 What is this called in Shangaan? Lexi xi vuriwa yini hi xichangana? (*Lehshe she vooreewah yeenee he sheshanGAAnah*)
 How do you say “.....” in Shangaan? Leswi u swi vula njhani “.....” hi Xichangana? (*Lehswwee oo swee volah NJAAnee*)
 “.....” he sheshangaana
 Eish – (*aysh*) – oh dear, I am with you in this, poor me

SOUTH AFRICAN ENGLISH

Now now – in a very short time
 Just now – wait a bit
 Plaster - bandaid
 Nappie - diaper
 Bakkie – pick up truck
 Robot – traffic light
 Rusk – a less sweet and bigger biscotti
 Boot – trunk of the car
 Jersey – sweater/jumper
 Takkies – sneakers
 Koki - marking pen
 Cap – baseball hat
 Blinds – shades
 Gauze – window screen/window netting
 Biltong – more delicious beef jerky
 Baby grow – Onesy
 Cot – crib
 Dummy – pacifier
 Rubber – eraser
 Marmite – like Australian vegemite
 Anchovy paste – delicious fish paste for your toast
 Cold drink – pop/soda
 Garage – filling station
 Petrol –gas
 Toyi toyi – protest march