INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE IS KEY TO LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT – LANDSCAPES MEETING
Editor’s Notes

Since inception, the NAM-PLACE Project has been involved in numerous activities across the five landscapes they manage. They are namely Mudumu (Zambezi region), Greater Fish River Canyon (!Karas Region), Greater Sossusvlei (Hardap region), Greenbelt Windhoek (Khomas) and Greater Waterberg (Otjozondjupa region).

All the five landscapes are faced with challenges of breaking barriers in management of biodiversity and creating a harmonious living between humans and wildlife across different land-use, a task that the project has taken to heart.

In this first edition of landscapes conservation Newsletter, it is with excitement that as the project we get to share our achievements, challenges and some education of what we do. The mandate is not the easiest to attain but with such a dedicated team and stakeholders, it has been manageable.

Read about the highlights from the landscape conservation meetings and AGM’s that were held earlier this year. Landscapes, some under new management, are hard at work implementing resolutions and working towards a fruitful 2014.

The Mudumu landscape started the year on a high note, commissioning two of the important projects in the Zambezi region. Read about the Nkasa Rupara bridge and patrol camps in the Mudumu Landscape and how they bridge the social and economic divide among the people and wildlife. Some of the programmes envisaged by the project need intervention with neighbouring countries through Transfrontier Conservation Areas (TFCA’s) to attain high level of success by launching the National Policy on Protected Areas’ Neighbours and Resident Communities MET reiterated, the continued impact of landscape involvement and opportunities that are available for the communities in the future.

While paying attention to the activities on the programme, we cannot ignore the rise of wildlife crime within the country, the subject that the Ministry of Environment and Tourism take seriously. Plans are underway to launch the two programmes in the second quarter of 2014, with the hope that interventions will send strong message to illegal hunters. Before the implement of these programs, we remind you about the plight of the rhino and why we should protect them from illegal hunting.

Enjoy our read.

And for any information related to the publication and news covered, contact our Communication Consultant.

M. Kandume
**Landscapes meeting seasons kicks-off!**

The NAM-PLACE project held a marathon of Annual General Meetings for three landscapes in February. From the Southern extreme of the Orange River, right through to North East of Zambia it was not work as usual. Landscape Management Committees were hard at work in efforts to close off the activities of 2013 to make way for the new challenges for the 2014. So what are the highlights for the AGM’s?

Greater Soussuvlei Landscape – Game will be set free when fences are put down. Farmers have agreed to the exercise and very corporative on advancing biological diversity management in the desert

Greater Waterberg Landscape – NAM-PLACE is ready to support plans and activities that address biodiversity and reduction of human-wildlife conflict in the landscape. Okamatapati and Oosnhi Conservancies are scheduled to hold their AGMs during the first half of this year, 2014.

Mudumu Landscape – Clamping down on the illegal activities that are overcrowding improved parks management of wildlife and biodiversity. Awareness programme for the landscape will be implemented to educate school children on environmental and anti-poaching matters.

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The existence of the camps is not only restricted to the use as law enforcement stations in the park. They are also meant to serve as central information points, distribution of aid and for other social programmes. Government can use the camps to mobilise the nearby communities towards achievement of National Development Goals.

The construction of patrol camps complements other law enforcement initiatives in the region that has seen the reduction in the number of elephants killed illegally in the region from 78 in 2012 to only 38 in 2013. A number of related arrests have also increased since 2013.

Most important after the handover of these camps to the conservancies, are elements of sustainability and management of the camps. As highlighted by Mr. Uri Matundu, the landscape specialist from NAMP-LACE, the conservancies should take responsibility in ensuring that the camps remain in respectable condition. They are important for social development in the area.

The Minister of Environment and Tourism, Honourable Uahekua Herunga, opened the bridge on 29 March 2014 at a ceremony which saw the presence of stakeholders who expressed gratitude at how their concerns are taken into consideration by the regional and national leadership. As is customary, the Minister urged the community to guard the bridge jealously and use it for the benefit of the conservancy. The people and businesses should benefit equally and should not be used as a corridor for illegitimate and unprogressive activities that undermine development in the conservancy.

At the same event, the Honourable Minister officially launched Management and Development plans of Bwabwata, Mudumu and Nkasa Rupara National Parks. Deputy Director for Northeast Region, Cletius Makeko, Chief Control Warden of Zambezi Morgan Saisai and Chief Control Warden of Kavango East and Kavango West Regions Evaristo Nghilai received the plans from the minister. The plans will guide the improved management of the three parks.

**Patrol camps in Mudumu North and South are launched**

The handing over of the patrol camps to Sobbe, Mayuni, Mashi and Kwanand conservancies in Mudumu North is seen as one of the milestones in curbing crime in the area. The construction of the Mudumu North and Mudumu South Patrol camps was prioritized by the Mudumu Landscape Management committee during the formulation of the landscape 5-year Strategic Management Plan in 2012 due to criminal activities such as illegal hunting of elephants that occur in the area.

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**Opening of Nkasa Rupara Bridge**

The bridge became the third access bridge into the park and conservancy. The constructions of these bridges were made after long deliberations and hard work, the bridge that serves as access into Nkasa Rupara National park and Wuparo conservancy was completed and opened for public use. The community had previously built a convenient but not strong wooden bridge, that was not safe for cars, cattle and people to use. On many instances, tourists travelling to and from the Nkasa Lupala lodge would narrowly drive through or land in the water flowing through. As a result, safety was compromised and businesses around the Nkasa Rupara National Park suffered increasing losses in profits.

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Ten reasons to save the Rhino

1. Rhinos are critically endangered. At the turn of the 19th century, there were approximately one million rhinos. In 1970, there were around 70,000. Today, there are only around 28,000 rhinos surviving in the wild. Three of the five species of rhino are “Critically Endangered” as defined by the IUCN (World Conservation Union). A taxon is classified as critically endangered when the best available evidence indicates that it meets any of a range of pre-determined criteria. It is therefore considered to be facing an extremely high risk of extinction in the wild. The Southern subspecies of the white rhino is classified by the IUCN in the lesser category of being “Near Threatened”; and the Greater one-horned rhino is classified as “Vulnerable”; even this is considered to be facing a high risk of extinction in the wild. In 2014, some of us are lucky enough to be able to travel to Africa and Asia to see them in the wild. In 2024, when our children have grown up, will they still be able to see wild rhinos?

2. Rhinos have been around for 40 million years. Rhinos have been an important part of a wide range of ecosystems for millions of years; we must not let them join the dodo in extinction.

3. Humans have caused the drastic decline in numbers. Poachers kill rhinos for the price they can get for the horns (used for traditional Chinese medicine, for high-status gifts in Vietnam and for quack cures invented by criminal syndicates to drive up demand); land encroachment, illegal logging and pollution are destroying their habitat; and political conflicts adversely affect conservation programmes.

4. Rhinos are an umbrella species. When protecting and managing a rhino population, rangers and scientists take in account all the other species interacting with rhinos and those sharing the same habitat. When rhinos are protected, many other species are too, not only mammals but also birds, reptiles, fish and insects as well as plants.

5. Rhinos are charismatic mega-herbivores. By focusing on a well-known animal such as a rhino (or, to use the jargon, a charismatic mega-herbivore), we can raise more money and consequently support more conservation programmes benefiting animal and plant species sharing their habitat.

6. Rhinos attract visitors and tourists. Rhinos are the second-biggest living land mammals after the elephants. Together with lion, giraffe, chimpanzee and polar bear, the rhino is one of the most popular species with zoo visitors. In the wild, rhinos attract tourists who bring money to national parks and local communities. They are one of the “Big Five”, along with lion, leopard, elephant and buffalo.

7. In situ conservation programmes need our help. Protecting and managing a rhino population is a real challenge that costs energy and money. Rhino-range countries need our financial support, and benefit from shared expertise and exchange of ideas.

8. Money funds effective conservation programmes that save rhinos. We know that conservation efforts save species. The Southern white rhino would not exist today if it were not for the work of a few determined people, who brought together the 200 or so individuals surviving, for a managed breeding and reintroduction programme. Today, there are some 20,405 (as at 31 Dec. 2012) Southern white rhinos. With more money, we can support more programmes, and not just save rhino populations, but increase numbers and develop populations. The Northern white rhino subspecies may just have become extinct, but it is not too late to save the rest.

9. Many people don’t know that rhinos are critically endangered. Not just that, but how many people know that rhinos also live in Asia? Or that two species have just one horn? Or that the horn is not used as an aphrodisiac? We have even heard some people say that they are carnivores. If people do not know about these amazing animals and the problems they are facing, how can we expect them to want to do something to help save rhinos?

10. We all have an opportunity to get involved! You can help raise awareness of the plight of the rhino! The more we do all together, the more people will learn about rhinos and the more field projects we will be able to support. There are lots of fundraising ideas scattered, as well as ways to donate directly to Save the Rhino.

http://www.savetherhino.org/support_us/donate/ten_good_reasons_to_save_rhinos
NATIONAL POLICY ON PROTECTED AREAS’ NEIGHBOURS AND RESIDENT COMMUNITIES IS OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED

The Ministry of Environment and Tourism demonstrated once again the importance of the communities in the management of protected areas in the country when it launched the National Policy on Protected Areas, Neighbours and Resident Communities. The policy that was developed with support from NAM-PLACE Project was officially launched by the permanent secretary of MET on behalf of the Honourable Minister of Environment and Tourism on 28 February 2014 at Okakuojo, Etosha National Park.

The aim of the Policy is to contribute to the improvement of conservation efforts of Namibia’s protected areas, provide greater social equity in accessing benefits from protected areas and stimulate local economic development through creating business opportunities linked to protected areas.

The Objectives of the policy include to define and strengthen the relationship between protected areas, neighbours and resident communities; and to promote management of natural resources with protected area neighbours across larger landscapes, including Transfrontier Conservation Areas (TFCAs) and Transfrontier Parks (TFPs), for enhanced ecosystem conservation and socio-economic development.

The main strategies aimed at achieving the aim and objectives of the policy include: (1) Promoting Socio-economic development and benefits; (2) Integrated park management, zoning and landscape conservation; (3) Building community skills, liaison and communication; and (4) Transfrontier conservation and ecosystem management across larger landscapes.

Speaking at the Launch on behalf of the protected areas neighbours and those living inside, Chief Seth Kooitjie of the Topnaar community said that they are delighted with the policy as it enables governments to engage closely with them in promoting socio-economic development of the people and parks. He further thanked the Ministry of Environment and Tourism and stakeholders in a job well done in developing the policy.

Speaking on behalf of the Honourable Minister of Environment and Tourism, the Permanent Secretary of Environment and Tourism, Simeon Negumbo said that the policy will contribute towards improvement of conservation efforts of Namibia’s protected areas, provide greater social equity in accessing benefits from protected areas and stimulate global economic development through creating business opportunities linked to protected areas.

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Greater Waterberg Landscape

Waterberg gears up towards veld fire management

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Namibia is prone to veld fires, which poses a serious challenge to the national economy through reduction of grazing land which undermines the agricultural productivity and a pillar of national economic in the country. Further veld fires also destroy a range of forestry products which most rural areas rely on for their everyday livelihood. In year 2013 alone, about 70 million hectares of national grazing land was destroyed as a result of veld fires. The Greater Waterberg Landscape (GWL) situated in the central Namibia falls within the highly veld fires prone zone within the national context.

In efforts to address veld fire concerns and curb their effects, an integrated veld fire management approach, drawing and coordinating efforts from different stakeholders has been advocated as strategic move. Community awareness campaigns, precautionary measures such as creation and maintaining of fires breaks and key water points as well as stocking on necessary firefighting equipment and protective clothing all makes up part the integrated fire veld fire management.

In addressing this predicament, the GWL through the Namibia Protected Landscape Conservation Areas Initiative (NAM-PLACE) worked with the Directorate of Forestry of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry offered a 2-days training to more than 30 members of the African Wild Dog, Okamatapati, Otjituuo and Ozonahi communal conservancies, Waterberg Plateau Park, Affirmative and Resettlement Farmers with the GWL. This training aimed at building capacity for veld fires management within the landscape. Topics on fire prevention and suppression were covered during this training.

The Directorate of Forestry offers continuous support to the four communal conservancies through the development and maintenance of fire breaks/cut lines. The further capacitate this landscape, the NAM-PLACE project procured firefighting equipment for the trained stakeholders.

GREATER WATERBERG LANDSCAPE’S COMMUNAL CONSERVANCIES

ADDRESSES CONSERVANCIES INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE

The communal conservancies’ portion of the Greater Waterberg Landscape (GWL) makes up the biggest area of the total landscape (85%). This is made up of the African Wild Dog, Okamatapati, Otjituuo and Ozonahi, all which were established in 2005. To date, these conservancies trail behind in the realisation of the aspirations and objectives, a trend attributed to among others, the weakness of the institutional structures. It resulted in the decision by the Landscape Management Committee (LMC) that these conservancies require dedicated interventions in this regard for the landscape to succeed. Among aspects identified for intervention in these conservancies is the need to formally define, constitute, and implement the governance structures of the four conservancies. Activities such as review of the constitutions, development and management plans, regularly holding Annual General Meetings and election of the Management Committee members were among others singled out as the starting blocks of reviving these conservancies.

During the last quarter of 2013, the African Wild Dog, Otjituuo and Okamatapati Conservancies held their Annual General Meetings on 05 December, 21 November and 02 November 2013 respectively. At these meetings, the African Wild Dog and Otjituuo Conservancies successfully reviewed and adopted their amended constitutions and also elected their conservancies’ new management committees to reign for the next three years, with the responsibility of spearheading the development and management of their conservancies.

The new Otjituuo Conservancy Management Committee comprised of the following members, drawn from the general conservancy community, 4 village blocks and 4 Traditional Authorities: Katjiyivi K.; Uzera S.B.; Rukororo U.; Kazengunuru U.; Upingasana U.; Katjiphi V.; Kukunandero U.; Mutjavikua L.; Tjombe N.; Muvangua S.; Mureti M.; and Kaura K. also drawn from the communal conservancies to be nominated from their respective blocks. The African Wild Dog Conservancy Management Committee’s 13 members comprises of Kandinda A.; Tjiami K.; Kaangundue F.; Katjeringo B.; Kavetuna M.; Novengi C.U.; Tjaverua B.; Mberirua T.; Tjombe N.; Mutjavikua L.; Tjombonde S.; Anton T.; with a female gender representation of 30%. Four representatives are yet to be nominated from their respective blocks. The African Wild Dog Conservancy Management Committee comprised of Kandinda A.; Tjiami K.; Kaangundue F.; Katjeringo B.; Kavetuna M.; Novengi C.U.; Tjaverua B.; Mberirua T.; Tjombe N.; Mutjavikua L.; Tjombonde S.; Anton T.; with a female gender representation of 35%.

To ensure that the newly elected committee members grow the competence and confidence in carrying out their respective responsibilities, 3-days capacity development training was offered to these committees during 7-9 March 2014, held at Okatjikona Environmental Education Center in Waterberg. Subjects covered during the training range from Legislations and Policies governing the communal conservancies in Namibia; specific roles and responsibilities of the different conservancy committee portfolios; dispute resolutions; decision making, and records keeping among others.

Participants to the training demonstrated the aspiration of taking their conservancies ahead, further presenting their additional capacity development needs and requesting the supporting institutions to offer continued support.

by Lodika Halueendo

The Windhoek Greenbelt Landscape, located with the Khomas hochland plateau redirekt efforts to avert possible water quality deterioration. The landscape covers an area of about 697 km2, and is about less than 20km from Windhoek, comprising of fifteen (15) freehold farms and Daan Viljoen Game Park, a state protected area and has an estimated population of about 400 people. The WGBL has no municipal, piped water supply and mainly depend on groundwater supply. In addition to a number of dams that supply water mainly for wildlife and livestock, the landscape has a network of ephemeral rivers.

Due to a number of industrial developments and some waste water treatments works upstream of this landscape, the landscape members feared a possible water contamination that would pose a threat to the environment and subsequently compromising the biodiversity and general livelihood within the landscape. With support from NAM-PLACE project, the Landscape Management Committee commissioned an assessment on water quality to inform themselves on the status quo of the situation for informed decisions.

by Lodika Halueendo

Following the completion of this assessment, the WGBL intends to develop and implement a proactive “Water Quality Monitoring and Management System” that will cover continuous sampling and analysis of strategic points within and around the landscape aimed at ensuring that the water quality parameters are monitored and contained within the safe, approved limits as defined by the regulatory authorities and international standards. Once this is realised, the landscape also hopes to participate in the establishment of an “Integrated Water Quality Discussion Forum” comprising of all the relevant stakeholders within the Swakop river catchment. The Landscape chairman described this envisaged plan as a yardstick for checking out on one another to ensure the environment and its resources are safely utilised.

by Lodika Halueendo