



SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

"Hunting provides the principal incentive and revenue for conservation.
Hence it is a force for conservation."

World Conservation Force Bulletin

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Report on the CAMPFIRE Workshop in Zimbabwe

On 17-18 November 2014, I attended a workshop in Zimbabwe generously supported by Dallas Safari Club through Conservation Force. The workshop was titled *CAMPFIRE: Towards the Development of a New Elephant Management Plan and Policy*, but the discussions and recommendations went further and touched on the effectiveness of the CAMPFIRE concept and its relationship to tourist hunting. We told you a bit about this workshop in our January bulletin, but here we present a more complete report on the workshop and its outcomes.

Day 1, 17 November 2014

The workshop's first day focused on a range of presentations aimed at identifying issues and developing recommendations for Zimbabwe's national elephant management plan workshop held on 2-4 December 2014. The CAMPFIRE workshop was not organized in response to the US trophy import suspension, but from time to time the suspension's impact on CAMPFIRE districts and revenue was noted with concern.

Broad Participation: Workshop attendees included representatives from the main district councils involved in tourist hunting (called "producer" districts); representatives from the Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZimParks) and Ministry of the Environment; representatives from NGOs, including WWF-Zimbabwe and SCI; two safari operators; and others interested in elephant management in CAMPFIRE areas. Rural district councils (RDCs) have been criticized by the USFWS, but I witnessed RDC representatives and coordinators advocating for their wards and local communities, not for their councils or

DATELINE:
Zimbabwe



Regina Lennox
Staff Attorney

themselves. Accordingly, the workshop encouraged broad participation and allowed a range of CAMPFIRE stakeholders to have their voices heard. **Official Welcomes:** George Pangetti of SCI welcomed participants and noted that tourist hunting is critical for Zimbabwe and CAMPFIRE, which he called a "livelihood program." Mr. Pangetti noted that the US trophy import suspension negatively affected an SCI auction hunt on behalf of CAMPFIRE, causing a \$45,000 loss. He pointed out, "That is only one animal. This is why it is so important to allow the imports of elephant into US and Europe. We do not want to fail." Mr. Pangetti's introduction highlighted the importance of updating Zimbabwe's national elephant management plan in a way that will work for Zimbabwe, but that will also be internationally accepted.

Ministry Presentation: Deputy Director of the Ministry of the Environment Tanyaradzwa Mundoga began by describing some of CAMPFIRE's successes. He recognized that CAMPFIRE districts receive significant income (of over \$2 million per year) from tourist hunting and that the program provides direct and indirect benefits to districts and local communities, including building projects and greater food security. But Deputy Director Mundoga also recognized CAMPFIRE's "many" challenges. He said the Ministry is planning to evaluate the CAMPFIRE program going forward and will "compare notes" with successful CBNRM programs in Namibia for inspiration.

Workshop Objectives: Mr. Jonga, Director of the CAMPFIRE Association, identified the workshop objectives: to identify issues and develop recommendations for the national elephant management

plan workshop. Although workshop participants sometimes became side-tracked in discussions, Mr. Jonga and facilitator Dr. Edson Gandiwa brought the focus back to this goal. At the end of the workshop (and the end of this report), participants identified a range of issues and ideas for effective elephant management in CAMPFIRE areas.

ZimParks Presentations: ZimParks' Principal Ecologist first presented on the population status of Zimbabwe's elephant as of November 2014, before the 2014 preliminary survey results were released. Among other things, he identified threats to elephant conservation including: habitat loss, poaching, land use conflicts, human-wildlife conflict, Zimbabwe's large and costly ivory stockpile, and the US trophy import suspension. Notably, these same threats were raised repeatedly in group discussions, especially the concerns



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related to land use and human-wildlife conflicts. Zimbabwe's growing human population is expanding geographically and encroaching into elephant and wildlife habitat. The result is increased human-wildlife conflict. Zimbabwe's 2015 elephant management plan must address and adapt to this situation, which is likely to worsen as the human population continues to grow.

Next, Zimbabwe's Chief Ecologist

presented on CITES, explaining the convention's framework and the requirement for quotas. I was surprised that many (if not most) of the RDC and CAMPFIRE coordinators were not familiar with CITES and did not understand its impact on the quotas for elephant and other wildlife. Workshop participants recommended improving ZimParks-CAMPFIRE coordination and communication, which seems necessary given this example of a lapse in communication and training. ZimParks participated extensively in the workshop, so it seems likely enhanced communication will be a positive outcome of the workshop.

RDC Reports on CAMPFIRE Performance: Each district representative presented on CAMPFIRE performance, including revenue allocation, offtake from poaching and problem animal control (PAC), elephant quotas and utilization, and departmental strength. One of the workshop's best outcomes was this data-sharing, which demonstrated CAMPFIRE's benefits. Each district presented on the revenues generated primarily by tourist hunting (mainly elephant hunting) and distributed to communities and RDCs. The amount distributed topped \$5.3 million. Districts participating in the workshop reported that they share this revenue in **at least** the minimum percentages required, such that **at least** 55% of this revenue is directly distributed to local communities. Each district representative also described numerous projects sponsored by wards and RDCs.

Notably, reported poaching levels were generally low to very low, with several districts reporting zero incidents. Reported poaching varied by region. Districts located near Zimbabwe's international borders, particularly the Mozambique border, reported higher levels of poaching and poisonings. Despite this, total poaching in CAMPFIRE areas averaged only 23 elephant/year.

Reported PAC offtake also varied by region. Overall, approximately 50 elephant are taken as problem animals in a given year – far lower than the utilized hunting quota in these districts of 123 elephant/year on average. But quota utilization levels were surprisingly low in some districts. Based on the workshop

presentations, likely reasons for low utilization include declining trophy quality due to widespread poaching in neighboring countries, inefficient safari operators or local councils, and reduced numbers of tourist hunters as a result of the US trophy import suspension. Inefficient quota utilization cannot be sustained, and it is the responsibility of each district, each safari operator, the CAMPFIRE Association, ZimParks, the Ministry of the Environment, and other interested stakeholders to understand the causes of why the quota cannot be fully utilized and why potential revenue is being left on the table, and to address those causes.

Safari Operator Presentation: During the Mbire RDC presentation, safari operator Miles McCallum of Conservation Force partner Charlton McCallum Safaris gave a private sector view of elephant hunting in a CAMPFIRE area. Charlton McCallum Safaris was one of the first safari operators in Zimbabwe to develop a joint venture with local communities, a model that should be adopted in all CAMPFIRE areas where it does not currently exist. Mr. McCallum emphasized his belief that local communities must receive their fair share of tourist hunting income and must play an active role in the sustainable use of elephant and other wildlife.

Mr. McCallum reported that in 2013, Charlton McCallum Safaris paid over \$349,215 to CAMPFIRE wards and the RDC. US elephant hunters contributed 40% of this total (\$132,870). But in 2014, while a total of \$400,995 was paid to wards and the RDC, the contribution of US elephant hunters dropped to 27% (\$100,800). Unfortunately, other nationals did not pick up the slack, and total income from elephant hunting dropped to 32% of the total (\$118,425). Mr. McCallum noted this as a negative effect of the US trophy import suspension.

Mr. McCallum also reported on the effect of high levels of poaching in Mozambique. His company has observed a decline in trophy quality in this area that is likely due to poaching. Mr. McCallum expressed concern about the increasing use of poisoning, calling it a "game changer" that must be stopped through law enforcement and incentives to local communities to decrease the need to poach.



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Finally, Mr. McCallum expressed his belief that if elephant hunting is cut off completely, such as through an extended trophy import ban, elephant **will not survive** in CAMPFIRE areas. Poor rural communities will not tolerate crop damage, will lose their incentives to turn in poachers (and may join poachers), and will have no reason not to clear fields in areas that are currently wildlife habitat. Mr. McCallum's presentation demonstrated the benefits elephant and other wildlife gain from the increased habitat and protection that is incentivized by safari hunting. Without these benefits, elephant and other wildlife will suffer.

CAMPFIRE Association Presentation: Mr. Jonga presented briefly on the CAMPFIRE Association. He said CAMPFIRE will not survive if the US trophy import suspension continues. Although this was not the workshop's focus, it was the "elephant in the room," and Mr. Jonga cited the suspension's impact on CAMPFIRE for 2014, including a 45% increase in incidents of human-elephant conflict and a sizable decline (57%) in quota utilization due to canceled hunts.

Discussion Groups: At the end of Day 1, the facilitator identified three breakout groups and tasked each with discussing a particular topic: conservation, utilization, and "adding value" to the CAMPFIRE program. The facilitator randomly divided participants into these groups, and then participants broke for the day.

Day 2, 18 November 2014

The workshop's second day began with a recap of Day 1 and a short presentation on the national plan workshop. Then Day 2 focused on breakout groups and group presentations on the issues identified and recommendations developed. This was the "real work" of the workshop, and a list of recommendations is summarized below and available in the facilitator's proceedings, which are posted on our website.

Third ZimParks Presentation: At the start of the second day, the Principal Ecologist presented briefly on the upcoming national elephant management plan workshop. He emphasized the need to develop a new plan with measurable outcomes and "smart" goals.

Discussion Group Reports: Each of the three groups met for over an hour, then reported on the issues identified and recommendations discussed in their respective sessions. I listened to each discussion at different times. It seemed each group eventually talked about the same issues, even though they were given different discussion topics. Concerns about poaching and PAC, trophy quality, quota utilization, and land-use conflicts were germane to conservation, utilization, and CAMPFIRE's future.

The first group was tasked with discussing elephant conservation issues. They identified the following challenges to elephant conservation, among others:

reduced habitat, competition for land, corruption, poaching, a shrinking economic resource base and increase in operational costs, and a decline in elephant trophy quality. They offered several recommendations for addressing the challenges, including: harmonizing Zimbabwe's environmental and conservation statutes, harmonizing land use and wildlife management planning, re-investment and improved reciprocal services to communities, and capacity development within CAMPFIRE sections.

Note that "capacity building" was a theme repeated in each of the working groups, and it demonstrates a need for renewed commitment to CBNRM in Zimbabwe, and in the international community. In the early days of CAMPFIRE, the program was supported by international donors like USAID and a host of NGOs. That support is gone. Yet CAMPFIRE participants greatly need and ask for the type of training and capacity development they used to receive. Rather than grow support for CAMPFIRE and similar programs, actions like the US trophy import suspension are reducing needed income for the human development that is required to ensure effective elephant management and conservation and reduce human-elephant conflicts in the rural areas served by CAMPFIRE. We can hope that perhaps a positive side benefit of the import suspension will be a renewed national and international commitment to CBNRM.

The second group was tasked with addressing utilization. They identified challenges including: inconsistent quotas and inconsistent utilization across districts (i.e., in some areas quotas are not being used while in others, higher quotas have been requested but not awarded); accountability of RDCs; a lack of individual household benefits; and the national association's lack of full control over RDCs and communities. Among other things, this group recommended the setting of minimum trophy sizes per region; better control of PAC offtake and timing hunts to assist with PAC; increasing household benefits and improving local management structures; and building local human capacity. In their discussions, this group suggested potentially elevating the CAMPFIRE

Aaron Neilson and a Zimbabwe elephant taken in 2012.



Association to a government entity so it would have greater enforcement powers.

The final group discussed how to “add value” to the CAMPFIRE program. Among other things, this group identified the following issues and made recommendations to improve the current CAMPFIRE program:

- To increase wildlife security and community sustainability, additional scouts should be trained at the district level, and RDCs should be “trained to train” future scouts by safari operators;
- To address concerns that elephant lives are sometimes valued above human lives, “PAC” should be defined with clearer parameters, taking human life into account;
- To ensure greater parity across districts, ZimParks should set minimum prices for hunts;
- To improve local capacity and address a lack of training, CAMPFIRE coordinators should be better trained by the CAMPFIRE Association and ZimParks;
- To improve a lack of current information, CAMPFIRE coordinators should have access to a database of CAMPFIRE districts and to a designated person at ZimParks responsible for

elephant conservation; and

- To address land-use conflicts, additional community conservancies should be created and elephant relocated to those areas.

Conclusion: The workshop concluded with words of thanks from Chief Chisunga of the Masoka community and Mr. Jonga.

The Bottom Line

The workshop was an important first step. The attendees made valuable and concrete suggestions for the national elephant management plan and identified significant issues that must be addressed for sustainable elephant conservation to flourish in communal areas. It also identified a number of CAMPFIRE’s successes – and concerns. The program is not perfect, but the workshop reinforced the significance of CBNRM in Zimbabwe and the continued need to encourage those who live with wildlife to protect it and sustainably use it for everyone’s benefit.

Looking back a few months later, it seems CAMPFIRE must first address three pressing issues. The preliminary results of the 2014 survey show Zimbabwe has an elephant population of **at least** 82,000. That large population must be balanced with human population pressures, and CAMPFIRE must ensure

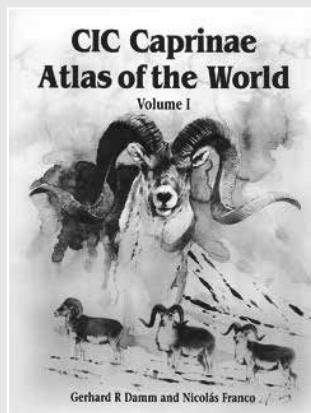
revenue from tourist hunting and other resource uses continues to flow down to local communities and households, to keep the incentives for safeguarding wildlife and natural resources in place. This is how elephant and elephant hunting in CAMPFIRE areas will be saved.

Further, the 2014 survey results confirm that poaching outside Zimbabwe is impacting the Zimbabwe elephant population in the Zambezi Valley, and human encroachment has greatly reduced elephant in the Sebungwe. There are CAMPFIRE districts in each of these areas, and working together with ZimParks, safari operators, and other stakeholders, these districts must be strongly involved in and committed to the management plans for these elephant populations.

Finally, CAMPFIRE faces all these challenges with limited resources and capacity, especially while the trophy import suspension continues. CAMPFIRE must attract the assistance of the USFWS, other countries, international organizations, and NGOs, and must make them realize they have a prime opportunity to “help CAMPFIRE help itself,” and keep CBNRM on track in Zimbabwe for the benefit of its wildlife **and** its people. ■

Another Successful Sheep Show

The Wild Sheep Foundation “Sheep Show” ended January 11 in Reno. It was another successful year for this event. Several auctions for governors’ tags and hunts broke prior fund-raising records. Many new members joined the “Outer Circle,” which will directly benefit Conservation Force. Our Board members were busy at the convention. Shane Mahoney gave the keynote speech on Conservation Night, and emphasized the need for the hunting community to “wake up” and



address current challenges to sustainable use and wildlife conservation. Gerhard Damm presented and signed his newly released *CIC Caprinae Atlas of the World*, the foremost sheep and goat reference book in the world (available from Safari Press). Mr. Damm’s donation of two copies of this master work raised \$9,000 for the Foundation. At the Ladies Luncheon, Chrissie Jackson was recognized for her outstanding success as a hunter and conservationist. ■

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