

African Leadership Seminar: 'People and Conservation'

30th June 2007 - 7th July 2007

**Limpopo Province, South Africa and south-eastern
Botswana**



***A Report prepared for the Welsh Assembly Government by
the International Centre for Protected Landscapes***



**Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government**



Why is there such disparity between the richness of biodiversity and the impoverished social and economic circumstances of the people of many parts of Africa today?

Gareth Roberts
ICPL
July 2007

Ambitious goals for reducing poverty and disease in Africa are unreachable without radical policy changes that make biodiversity and its socio-economic value the foundation for development policies.

Jeffrey Sachs
Head of the UN Millennium Project
Antananarivo, Madagascar
June 2006

I want to encourage everyone in Wales to join in with us in considering what they can do to help make the Millennium Development Goals - to halve global poverty by 2015 - a reality.'

Rt. Hon Rhodri Morgan
First minister -Welsh Assembly Government
Cardiff
September, 2006

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Executive Summary

The '*Madagascar Declaration*' issued in June 2006¹ listed a number of important steps to be implemented by African countries if they are to develop sustainably and address the evils of poverty, malnutrition and disease. High on this list is '*conserving Africa's most important biodiversity by expanding and strengthening protected areas' networks*'.

The Madagascar Declaration is just one of a series of pronouncements since the Millennium that have recognized a new role for protected areas in addressing global environment and development issues. This reflects a global sea change in the conceptualisation of protected areas that has emerged over the last decade out of a wider recognition of the inter-dependence of human welfare and conservation. The notion is already enshrined in international instruments such as the Convention on Biological Diversity and the UN Millennium Development Goals. In the conservation arena in particular, it was strongly endorsed by the Vth World Parks Congress in 2003 and is clearly reflected in the Durban Consensus on African Protected Areas for the New Millennium², which proposes a ten-point action plan to establish a more integrated and effective approach to protected area management that will help to address both conservation and development issues

While international agreements and declarations are an essential part of committing to new approaches that will help to create better futures, they are worthless if not supported by the awareness, capacity and skills on the ground to implement their mandates and recommendations. Herein lies the real challenge.

This Report highlights some of the key, practical issues facing protected area managers in southern Africa today - where protected areas make up over a third of the land area. The Report also describes how, by changing the way in which these areas are managed, and by providing training support to policy makers and senior managers to develop their leadership skills, it is possible to support communities in some of the poorest regions in Africa to improve the quality of their lives and identify and pursue opportunities for economic development and sustainable use of their natural resources. It provides examples of how the natural resources of southern Africa can be harnessed and managed for the benefit of southern African people thereby helping to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

The discussion also reflects on the chronic shortage of leaders and managers employed in environmental conservation work in the region and the fact that opportunities to forge partnerships with politicians, communities and businesses in the management of natural resources is suffering as a consequence. The African Leadership Seminar aims to help redress this situation by raising the profile of the profession, building the knowledge and skills of young African conservationists, and by stimulating and facilitating the sharing of ideas and experiences between individuals, organizations and the countries of the region.

The 2007 Seminar focused on three issues of common interest to protected area managers in southern African countries today. They are issues to do with approaches to planning and management of natural resources which reflect southern African

1 A declaration made on the 29th June 2006 by African Government leaders following an United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) symposium held in Madagascar between 20th - 24th June

2 Agenda for Action, Durban Consensus on African Protected Areas for the New Millennium, Vth World Parks Congress, Durban, South Africa 2003

circumstances and which are widely seen as holding the key to successful management of natural resources in the region:

- Community-based Natural Resource Management;
- the integration of cultural and nature conservation interests, and
- the co-management of resources through partnerships forged between private and public interests.

The ALS reflects a new paradigm in environmental management. It is about integrating people and conservation and finding ways of improving the environment and peoples' lives for mutual and long lasting benefit of both.

The Report concludes with proposals for taking forward the 'People and Conservation' agenda over the next 10 years and lists the positive and tangible outputs of the Seminar.

ICPL
Aberystwyth
September 2007

Foreword

“What has all this to do with Wales?”

In September 2006, Rt Hon Rhodri Morgan AM First Minister of the Welsh Assembly Government launched a Framework for Action on international sustainable development – Wales for Africa. In doing so, he said, *‘I want to encourage everyone in Wales to join in with us in considering what they can do to help make the Millennium Development Goals to halve global poverty by 2015 a reality.’* The International Centre for Protected Landscapes (ICPL) was present at this launch and pledged its support to the Framework for Action.

ICPL, based in Aberystwyth, has been instrumental in developing and delivering training and education initiatives in sub-Saharan Africa for many years. Working in partnership with regional and national institutions, its focus is on building the knowledge and skills base of Africans, in new approaches to the management of their protected areas that both support and enhance natural resources while also promoting sustainable development.

More than 30% of southern Africa's landscapes have protected area status. In Tanzania and Zambia, the figure exceeds 40%. ICPL believes that building the capacity of local people to conserve and manage these protected areas is critically important, not only for the future of biodiversity but also in sustaining and developing the local communities and their economies. Furthermore, it is becoming increasingly evident that with appropriate political support and effective management approaches in place, protected areas can make a major contribution to global efforts to address the UN Millennium Development Goals, mitigate the impacts of climate change, support environmental and food security and develop good practice in local governance.

The ‘Protected Landscapes Approach’ offers a management model that has as its key focus the inter-relationship between nature and people. Very often this involves linking poor communities and rich biodiversity, and empowering local people to take on the role of managing these areas. To fulfill this role in the 21st century, protected area managers will need to be receptive to traditional experience and knowledge, acquire new skills and expertise across a wide set of disciplines, learn to work sensitively with local communities, and be able to integrate conservation objectives within national strategies for sustainable development and poverty reduction.

It is ICPL's mission to promote this approach to protected area management and to offer our skills, expertise and experience to assist its implementation. To this end, ICPL, in partnership with the Centre for Environment, Agriculture and Development (CEAD) in South Africa, are jointly responsible for implementing a *‘Darwin Initiative* project on *‘Conservation Management Training and capacity Building in Sub-Saharan Africa’*. One of the key outputs of this initiative has been establishing a distance learning Masters Programme in Protected Area Management (PAM) to be awarded by the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

The African Leadership Seminar (ALS) complements the PAM programme and Gareth Roberts, an Associate of ICPL is primarily involved in developing these links. We were pleased to note that Norman Rigava from Zimbabwe, one of our former students, was one of the delegates who attended the seminar. Norman is an excellent example of the emerging new breed of African conservation leaders to whom we are looking to take

forward the 'People and Conservation' agenda into the next decade. Currently with the Danish Association for International Cooperation as a CBNRM Advisor for Zambia Natural Resources Consultative Forum, Norman was awarded an MSc degree in Protected Landscape Management at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth. His attendance at the ALS – like others from poorer African countries – was only possible with the benefit of funding from the Welsh Assembly Government.

Protected landscapes throughout the world offer a huge pool of knowledge and experience to help us all live more sustainable lives and in harmony with nature. This Report reflects on southern Africa's contribution to that global experience. It draws on the knowledge and wisdom of protected area managers and other leading conservation thinkers in the region who were enabled to come together to share views and seek solutions to some of the most challenging problems facing the 'people and conservation' agenda in southern Africa today.

ICPL is pleased to acknowledge the financial support received from the Welsh Assembly Government and the UK Government through the Defra '*Darwin Initiative*' which enabled its partner, the Centre for Environment, Agriculture and Development (CEAD) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa to host this seminar to which managers and prospective leaders of protected areas from across sub-Saharan Africa were invited.

The African Leadership Seminar in context

The idea of the ALS was first conceived in 2006 as a means of supporting the development of young Africans involved in environmental conservation to become effective leaders and managers. It was prompted by the recognition that there is currently a desperate shortage of people in southern Africa with the educational qualifications, experience and skills to meet this challenge.

The seminar aimed to identify and bring together potential leaders who are well placed to make considered decisions about how African landscapes (its natural resources and wider environment) should be planned, managed and protected into the future. The ALS has already attracted a great deal of interest in the region and looks set to become an annual event.

Two sets of challenges to protected area management have already emerged. The first are specific to the southern African situation and its **regional context**, while the second have to do with the concept of **leadership**.

The main challenges in the **regional context** of southern Africa include:

- the impact of globalisation on agricultural production and the consequences for the very high numbers of people (>80% in some countries) who are dependent on agriculture;
- the high proportion (>70%) of the rural population officially classified as extremely poor and undernourished;
- delays and uncertainties associated with post colonial land restitution in some countries,
- very high proportions of the population (up to 40% in some countries) suffering from HIV and AIDS, and
- the lack of capacity (skilled and trained people) to deal with these challenges.

The challenges of **leadership** are universal, they are to do with issues of personal integrity, transparency, accountability, decision making, and service.

Developing 'leadership' skills and capacity is especially important in the region where traditional colonial attitudes precluded black Africans taking leadership roles. There remain chronic problems of inequality and the lack of empowerment that disadvantage the landless rural poor and women (in particular) in southern African societies. This legacy seems set to continue to impact adversely on public engagement in environmental conservation into the foreseeable future.

Wildlife conservation is becoming a big business in southern Africa today. Private (mainly North American and European) investment in land for the management of wildlife for people to hunt or simply to view, continues apace. There is increasing interest in acquiring agricultural land and hastening its reversion to 'semi-natural' habitat. This benefits wildlife conservation but can impact adversely on local communities who may be displaced and can be alienated as a consequence.

Private investment needs to be harnessed in ways that local landless, disadvantaged people can also benefit. A radical change is required in the way the environment and biodiversity are addressed in national development plans of southern African countries and in the assistance strategies and investments of foreign countries.

Organisations like the United Nations and the World Bank now recognise that conserving Africa's rich biodiversity is fundamental to achieving sustainable development and reducing poverty. Biodiversity in its broadest sense provides clean air and water, food, natural resources, soil regeneration, pollination and other eco-system services – services that everyone benefits from.

Set against this background, participants from across the sub-region were brought together between 29th June and 7th July 2007 to help decide how the 'People and Conservation' agenda should be taken forward over the next 10 years in southern Africa and how the African Leadership Seminar might be developed to align itself to this agenda. Participants comprised protected area managers, policy makers, academics and NGO representatives from the region. Colleagues representing partners and sponsors were also present from the USA (University of Montana) and Wales (ICPL). A list of key contributors to the Seminar is given in Appendix B.

Seminar aims

Participants agreed at the outset that the ALS should aim to:

- Inform decision-makers in the Southern African conservation sector about new thinking in relation to people and conservation, so promoting concerted movement towards more people-centred philosophies and methodologies;
- Encourage the development and introduction of policies and management practices which are sensitive to, and take account of, the critical nexus between local communities and conservation;
- Provide a basis for ensuring that research and professional training are responsive to the particular challenges faced by the African conservation sector; and
- Build a Southern African network for sustaining the dialogue which is initiated at the Seminar, both across international boundaries and between conservation leaders, researchers and training bodies.

Seminar themes

The discussions centred around three themes and posed the following questions:

Community-based Natural Resource Management – *'Where are the benefits and why are there so few success stories'?*

Cultural Heritage – *'How do we integrate cultural heritage into the mainstream of conservation thinking'?*

Co-management – *'Is this an idea whose time has come'?*

The discussions were helped by visits to iconic conservation sites in Botswana and South Africa. The Northern Tuli Game Reserve (Botswana) and Mapungubwe National Park (South Africa) form part of the Limpopo/Shashe Transfrontier Conservation Area established in June 2006 following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between Zimbabwe, Botswana and South Africa. This was followed by a short stay at the Waterberg Biosphere Reserve and Lapalala Wilderness area comprising over 400 000 ha of privately owned land, incorporating a national park, provincial nature reserves and community conservation land. **Annex A** provides further information about these venues.

Seminar objectives and links to other work

The primary objective of the Seminar was to contribute to, and strengthen a 'People in African Conservation Movement'. This movement is still very much in its infancy. The Seminar is part of a long-term process of advocacy and facilitation intended to promote multinational collaborative learning and to build the kind of integrated, people-centred and trans-disciplinary approach to wildlife conservation desperately required in Africa. This responds directly to the recommendations of the Durban Consensus on African Protected Areas for the New Millennium (*op. cit.*).

It complements other initiatives such as the Protected Area Management Programme now being offered as a post-graduate masters' degree by distance learning, at the University of

KwaZulu-Natal. Developed by the Centre for Environment and Agricultural Development (CEAD) at the University in partnership with the International Centre for Protected Landscapes (Wales) and with funding from the UK Government's 'Darwin initiative', this course is unique in that it offers learning opportunities to in-post protected area managers from across sub-Saharan Africa.

Although the ALS and the PAM Masters' programme were developed separately, they clearly complement each other and consideration is now being given to making it a requirement that all PAM students attend the ALS at the outset of their studies. The hope is that post graduate PAM students will in turn commit to becoming mentors and tutors for new students. Because the PAM programme is delivered through distance learning, it is also very important that candidates get an opportunity to network and to exchange ideas and experiences with their peers and with other professionals (practitioners and policy makers) in the region.

The proposal is that the week-long seminar should become an annual event on the conservation calendar in southern Africa, and be hosted by a different country in the sub-region each year. In this way the profile of each country in the southern African region can be raised in turn and the collective expertise and experience of the ALS participants brought to bare on sharing and addressing conservation issues of common and local (to the host country's) interest.

The involvement of delegates from Europe and North America offers the opportunity to take a wider perspective on matters to do with people and conservation and to broaden our collective learning, understanding and networking in an international context.

Seminar expectations

In response to a request from the co-ordinators to delegates to declare their expectations of the seminar the replies received were typically:

“How do we deliver tangible benefits to poor rural communities?”

*“How do we ensure that public expectations of what conservation can deliver are realistic?
and*

“How do we get the politicians to take notice and get involved in conservation efforts?”

What is implicit in this feedback is high level of frustration among protected area managers and an acknowledgment that things are not working as they might. When the replies were further analysed it became evident that:

- Community-based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) as an approach is faltering;
- cultural heritage and environmental conservation are proving difficult to integrate.
- we are failing to get conservation into the mainstream of political debate and market its benefits effectively; and
- conservation interests in southern Africa need to network together more effectively, share good practice and confirm preferred conservation management approaches.

Themed discussions

Theme 1 - Community-based Natural Resource Management

The origin of Community-based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) as an approach to environmental conservation was in the 1960s post-colonial southern Africa, when private landowners were for the first time given rights to manage and benefit from wildlife on their land. However, it was not until the late 1980s and 90s that the principles of the approach began to be applied to communal lands, largely in an effort to address the wholesale poaching of rhinos, elephants and other wildlife on which many rural populations formerly survived.

CBNRM is anthropocentric in approach and has often been labelled 'community conservation'. It is in sharp contrast to earlier conservation strategies which were biocentric and sought to reserve places for nature and to separate humans from other species ('fortress conservation') The philosophy underpinning CBNRM is that '*conservation goals should be pursued by strategies that emphasise the role of local residents in decision making about natural resources*'.³

It is widely acknowledged amongst conservation leaders, practitioners and researchers that community-based natural resource management (CBNRM), as currently practised, is not achieving its desired outcomes. The region is littered with failed initiatives, frustrated communities and equally frustrated conservation staff.

CBNRM was supposed to help :-

- establish local institutions which focused on the management of conservation resources;
- generate capital and income from conservation based products and activities such as fuel-wood, fibre, tourism and hunting;
- facilitate equitable distribution of capital and income to communities and individuals living within or adjacent to conservation areas;
- demonstrate that the conservation of natural resources is a socially and economically sustainable and attractive land use option for local communities;
- increase the area that is formally conserved;
- increase tolerance of the impact of wildlife on other land-use practices;
- reduce poaching;
- re-introduce wildlife into areas where it had become depleted, and help conserve wildlife for future generations.

In most instances CBNRM has not been achieved because of:

- poorly developed and co-ordinated governance institutions;
- a lack of willingness on the part of government to delegate and share power with communities;
- confusion about the role of local communities in the management of natural resources;
- lack of management and administrative capacity within government;

³ Fabricius, C and Koch, E, (eds) with Magome, H and Turner, S, (2004), 'Rights, Resources and Rural Development: Community-Based Natural Resource Management in Southern Africa, Earthscan Publications Ltd: London.

- highly bureaucratic CBNRM management systems that are confusing;
- the complexity and confusion created by the number of organisations (government, private sector, NGOs, local stakeholder groups etc.) involved in CBNRM processes;
- differing perceptions amongst players about CBNRM, its intention and its outcomes;
- unrealistic expectations about what can be achieved;
- changing value systems (subservient to western styled consumerism);
- the “economic colonisation” of prime communal land for wildlife conservation by the political and economic elite, dis-empowering and disenfranchising local residents in the process, and
- the diversion of benefits through theft, fraud and corruption.

Maxi Louis, Norman Rigava and Drummond Densham led the discussion on this theme discussion which had a strap line – *'Where are the benefits of CBNRM and why are there so few success stories?'* The analysis concluded that the following factors were critical in accounting for the lack of success:

- 1 Although many countries in southern Africa have over many years adopted policies and legislation that embrace the CBNRM approach, some of these policies are outdated and /or deficient.
- 2 A lack of integration of policy and legislation is also recognised to be a common problem and that even where policies and legislation were in place their implementation was on occasions erratic, inconsistent or minimalist.
- 3 A lack of a clear vision and direction in what CBNRM might achieve is also very evident in many countries in sub-Saharan Africa.
- 4 Limited community access to protected areas resulting in limited understanding as to how the benefits that could result from improved community access should be managed and controlled.
- 5 Increasing conflict between communities and conservation managers as rural populations and 'protected areas' grow in size.

The key challenges (questions) facing CBNRM are deciding:

- How to move from a *'protectionist'* to a *'use-to-serve'* natural resource management approach that allows local communities to sustainably manage and realise the full value of these resources?
- How to manage the complexity that is inherent in the CBNRM process?
- How to strengthen governance systems in ways that help empower local communities?
- How to reward local community management efforts with tangible benefits that accrue to those communities?

The key needs (answers) are for:

A simpler and better integrated policy and legal framework which will help facilitate local community discussion and participation, and better leaders, innovative thinkers and people

with creative ideas.

Action centered conservation leadership is required to facilitate and support this process. These leaders will need to have the necessary management skills to:

- package and promote CBNRM as a process that will deliver benefits to local communities;
- ensure political buy-in to this approach
- build relationships and establish trust amongst participants
- ensure that there is the capacity (a critical mass of skills) to support the process and deliver outputs
- ensure that community engagement is on the basis of local needs and that incentives exist to encourage local participation (bottom-up)
- devise innovative ways to facilitate community participation;
- ensure that local communities are engaged on the basis of finding solutions rather than reiterating problems (their solutions and their problems);
- recognise and incorporate local and traditional knowledge when designing management plans;
- recognise when designing management plans that every situation is unique;
- focus on stakeholder interests and conflict resolution.

Skills alone are not enough. Innovators and creative thinkers are also needed.

CBNRM needs to be redefined or re-imagined so that it is not only seen to be exclusively about the conservation of wildlife biodiversity. It has also to be about access to and conservation of water, energy and natural resources. It is also about jobs, economic opportunities and health. It is about sustainable development in its widest sense. Kofi Annan, the former leader of the United Nations speaking in Johannesburg in 2002 challenged us to consider 5 aspects of sustainable development, - **w**ater, **e**nergy, **h**ealth, **a**griculture and **b**iodiversity - in an integrated way. Our emerging conservation leaders would do well to recall the acronym WEHAB to remind us of all 5 aspects that need to be integrated.

We also need to understand better the concept of community. It is not simply a group of people living in one geographic place. It is also a group of people who are bound by a common interest, issue or problem. Furthermore, local decisions taken about any of the 5 WEHAB aspects can have international environmental consequences.

Current concepts and practices in natural resource management are often poorly understood. Education and awareness raising is a critical part of the process.

Rural communities often lack self confidence. They frequently find it difficult confirming their priorities and in developing ideas about natural resource use into meaningful economic opportunities. Very few have the prerequisite business skills to take forward projects successfully.

We need to ensure political support for the process. However, while ensuring political buy-in we need also to guard against the process being hijacked for personal political gain. We need to ensure that natural resource management rights and responsibilities are devolved as far as possible to local communities and linked to sound land tenure arrangements.

We need to measure the success of CBNRM not simply in biodiversity conservation terms

but also in terms of social welfare and economic development.

Building on the framework and ideas above we need to package CBNRM as an attractive process and product. Some of the key ingredients of successful marketing include best practice, leadership development, education and skills creation, the diversification of the economy, prioritizing and satisfying community needs, managing expectations, benefit sharing, constituency building, and partnership forging.

The three key solutions to successful CBNRM are:

1. Developing a widely understood and supported vision for sustainable natural resource management with communities at the centre.
2. Securing the political support and resources to make the implementation of CBNRM realistic, and
3. Training leaders to be excellent project managers. CBNRM plans are complicated projects demanding a wide variety of management skills.

Despite its failings, CBNRM is still widely considered to be the most appropriate model for natural resource management in southern Africa.⁴ However, the benefits of the CBNRM process are not widely appreciated. This in large part, explains why political support for this approach has sometimes been faltering and the resources needed to back it up have not been forthcoming. The lack of success stories also reflects the paucity of good conservation leaders and competent project managers to champion the cause of CBNRM. This is what the African Leadership Seminars aim to address.

⁴ See also Child, B, (2004), 'Parks in Transition: Biodiversity, Rural Development and the Bottom Line', Earthscan Publications Ltd: London.

Theme 2 - Cultural Heritage

In 1992 UNESCO accepted that World Heritage should not be limited to the protection of wildlife and the world's natural monuments but should also reflect the diversity of living cultural places, natural sacred sites and cultural landscapes. This landmark decision reinforced the growing recognition of outstanding linkages between nature and culture, people and places, and between the intangible and the tangible. New challenges have since emerged with the recognition of the importance of maintaining nature/culture linkages in the wider landscape and a broadening of the definition of 'heritage'. These challenges were discussed at the World Parks Congress in 2003 (Durban, South Africa) and at an international conference on 'Linking Universal and Local Values: Managing a Sustainable Future for World Heritage' convened by UNESCO, in 2004.⁵

A major step towards an integrated concept of natural and cultural heritage was the merging of the natural and cultural criteria in the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention in February 2005. A unified set of criteria had been being requested by expert groups since 1998 (UNESCO, 1999).

The second of the seminar themes considered these issues and focused on how to integrate 'cultural heritage' into mainstream conservation thinking.

As African nations emerge from their colonial past, the cultural heritage of the indigenous people of southern Africa is taking centre stage. Cultural heritage is seen as critical in confirming identities and re-awakening awareness in value systems, 'lost' histories and in re-invigorating traditional cultural practices. Many of the iconic artefacts and associations with this heritage are to be found in areas set aside for nature conservation. This makes them important not only for their biodiversity conservation but also because they embrace sites of cultural and historical significance within and adjacent to protected areas, which need to be managed in conjunction with nature conservation interests. Conservation agencies are not only custodians of these sites; they have also become the *de facto* custodians of the cultural history attached to them. As a result, cultural heritage is becoming a key consideration in conservation and tourism thinking and planning.

Zanele Khena, Gareth Roberts and Rob Fincham led these discussions which began with a presentation on the Mapungubwe National Park by Matsima Magakgala, the Northern cluster Manager for SANParks. The Mapungubwe Park is a World Heritage Site and is defined by UNESCO, primarily as a cultural landscape. It contains numerous San rock art sites, many in superb condition, and it contains the remains of a sophisticated Bantu settlement, Mapungubwe Hill, which predates the famous Zimbabwe ruins. It also contains spectacular landscapes and an abundance of wildlife. Mapungubwe epitomizes the challenges currently facing conservationists in South Africa. Over and above the normal challenges of conserving wildlife there is also cultural conservation considerations covered by legislation including the South African Heritage Resources Act and the World Heritage Convention Act. The Mapungubwe site is subject to multiple land claims under the restitution procedures many of them tentative and prompted by expectations that the National Park status will generate numerous jobs and economic opportunities for both the land claimants and local communities.

Within the context of managing cultural heritage in Mapungubwe and at other important cultural sites, concerns about the 'commodification' of cultural heritage arise. Conflict

⁵ Rössler, M. 2004. Managing World Heritage cultural landscapes and sacred sites. *Linking Universal and Local Values: Managing a Sustainable Future for World*

exists between those whose primary need is to protect and respect cultural heritage and those who want to derive tourism revenue from it. It is widely acknowledged that the main 'management challenge' at Mapungubwe and similar sites in southern Africa is to protect against the commercialization of culture (history, tradition, ancestry, social norms and artifacts) and to recognise that some cultures are very vulnerable, sensitive to external influences and need to be afforded protection.

Suggestions to meet this challenge include the need to:-

- recognise that, ultimately, it is the right of the custodians of culture to decide whether their culture should be exploited commercially or not, and to what extent this might happen, and with what conditions;
- avoid mass tourism and focus on the quality of the experience rather than the quantity;
- avoid intrusive tourism (for example, direct access to people's homes) and rather recreate experiences in a museum/visitor centre;
- ensure that the custodians of culture benefit from the attention their culture receives;
- ensure that the custodians of culture are intimately involved in its interpretation and presentation;
- ensure that censorship of the both the interpretation and presentation of culture by all parties (including the custodians) is avoided;
- ensure that the way a culture is presented to others is well managed. While this requires policy guidance and legal direction, every circumstance will be unique so desist from over-regulation;
- ensure that the interpretation of cultural heritage focuses more on the story (the narrative) and less on artifacts.

The visit to Mapungubwe highlighted the problems that arise when disputes occur about whose culture is being promoted (for example, in Mapungubwe it appears that the Bantu culture is being promoted at the expense of the San). Managers need to ensure equity applies. There needs to be increased awareness amongst all parties (tourists, custodians, managers) on how to promote, and interpret cultural heritage.

It is widely recognised that bringing cultural and wildlife interests together has the potential to greatly increase diversity and richness of the tourism experience. It is not a question of whether to integrate these interests but rather how to do it. To ensure this happens effective partnerships need to exist between state conservation and cultural heritage agencies.

Theme 3 – Co-Management

Co-management is an approach to managing natural resources that involves forming partnerships between conservation agencies, communities, businesses and other interests. It is gaining increasing interest in southern Africa as a means of securing conservation objectives particularly in areas where communities are substantial stakeholders. Co-management is also being advocated as an alternative to traditional top-down approaches to conservation that are no longer seen to be appropriate or workable solutions for southern Africa. The concept of collaborative or co-management is still a relatively new one for South Africa. Like all new concepts the ideas and the language are “fuzzy”, the application is fraught with difficulty and its implementation is largely unsystematic. To date, examples of success are few and far between and there remain weaknesses in governance arrangements as some struggle with trying to understand the concepts and their management and policy implications.

The discussion on co-management began with two presentations: the first by Khulani Mkhize, the CEO of Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, and the second by Dr Hector Magome, the Executive Director of Conservation Services in SANParks. They both have considerable experience of co-management and were invited to share these. In the presentations and the subsequent discussions the following key issues emerged.

Although co-management is widely understood to be essentially a management partnership whose character will depend on specific circumstances, there remains a lack of appreciation of the potential scope of such partnerships at present in South Africa.

There already exist policy frameworks and legislative environments which allow for management partnerships in South Africa. Particularly useful are the National Environmental Management (NEMA), Biodiversity Protection and Protected Areas Acts and the Memorandum of Agreement between Department of Land Affairs (DLA) and Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT). More problematic is deciding how and when to use these policy and regulatory instruments to strengthen management partnerships.

The seminar considered that co-management partnerships are first and foremost needed in circumstances where there is a need to help:

- respect existing rights, and ensure social equity;
- build on relationships underpinned by mutual trust;
- establish clear accountability, responsibility and performance parameters;
- determine how communities and local stakeholders participate; and
- build capacity in the management process.

There are uncertainties surrounding the type of management systems that might be used in these circumstances. Dilemmas can arise if, for example, joint management boards are established in areas where ill-equipped stakeholders are suddenly required to take on decision making roles about issues they know little about, or if, by default 'conservation practitioners' assume management responsibility under the auspices of directing the partnership. The reality is that each circumstance will be different and the approach adopted needs to be sensitive to, and take proper account of, local dynamics.

There is ample evidence that while co-management partnerships are desirable they can greatly increase the cost of delivering projects. It is unfair to expect conservation interests

to pay entirely for the increased cost of co-management and creative ways of financing and or absorbing these increased cost needed to be found.

As partners share the responsibilities of management, the equitable sharing of benefits that result from management actions is equally important. Problems can occur if unrealistic expectations about what revenue conservation and associated activities will generate are promoted.

In most instances, management partnerships between local community stakeholders and conservation agencies prove to be non starters. Local communities often lack technical capacity on conservation issues and conservation agencies regularly lack the social and economic skills to engage effectively and generate revenue. Capacity building or joint learning needs to be an explicit component of the co-management package.

African countries are increasingly demanding that protected areas pay their own way and public funding is slowly being withdrawn. Conservation interests need to promote the case for public investment in such areas more effectively and argue that if society wishes to see land set aside for conservation then society, through government, needs to contribute towards the cost of its management. The funds generated through tourism and other revenue streams will never be sufficient to support management and development activities. However, when considered in the wider context of providing ecosystem services (biodiversity, clean water, clean air etc) then it can be shown that conservation and protected areas more than pay for their way. The seminar agreed that it was necessary to package and market wildlife conservation far more effectively, to make it an option that is seen to be readily attractive, particularly to politicians.

The 'People and Conservation' agenda over the next 10 years

The African Leadership Seminar concluded with a discussion led by Dr. Nicky Shongwe and Yolán Friedmann on what were considered to be the main considerations that would dominate the 'people and conservation' agenda over the next ten years.

There is consensus that we are at a cross-roads with the impact of global warming and natural resource depletion affecting us all. Decisions about approaches to environmental conservation and natural resource management have reached a critical point. There is an urgent need to put conservation and specifically the 'people and conservation agenda' at the top of the political agenda. 'Conservation interests' need to review their positions too and question whether some of the past ideologies of protectionism and exclusion to which they have long been wedded should now be quickly binned. There is also a need to forge relationships with new partners – bankers, economists, social scientists, marketing agents and literally and figuratively to pull down the fences between us. Conservationists need to learn how to better connect with politicians and be more receptive to accommodating community and other interests.

Though economic systems might vary from country to country in the region it is important that environmental conservation is adequately catered for within these contexts. It is heartening that the concept of a global ecosystem supplying goods and services that form the foundation of the global economy, is now widely accepted. Protected area managers have to take advantage of this and position themselves center stage as custodians and stewards of this ecosystem – informing public policy, facilitating the preparation of management and implementation of plans and policies, and educating and advocating more sustainable ways of living and managing natural resources.

During this re-positioning exercise, conservation managers will need to champion not only the interests of environmental conservation but also those of people who may perceive that wildlife conservation deprives them of access to natural resources from which they can benefit economically. We need to champion their cause because without the active support of the public conservation will not happen. This will require managers to become better communicators, setting aside technical approaches and helping people to learn about and care for their environment.

In the past, conservation programmes and policies have tended to be implemented with minimal public consultation. Though this 'fortress' approach resulted in a gradual increase in the land under state, private sector and community conservation, it proved divisive, alienated local communities and did little to stem the loss of biodiversity. The view is that in future, more time must be spent at all levels in securing consensus and influencing what is to be done and how it is to be done - from the activities of the smallest farmer harvesting wood to the position held by negotiators in the international global warming debate.

Building capacity among conservation agencies is possibly the top priority. It has been estimated that within the USA approximately 80% of their conservation staff are within 5 years of retirement. Southern Africa has a similar problem with too few people with the necessary skills being recruited and trained to plan, manage and protect our environment into the next decade. There is also a mismatch between training providers and conservation 'industry' needs with a preponderance of biodiversity training being offered at the expense of social science skills training now required, especially if this sea change to the more anthropocentric, Community-based Natural Resource Management approach to conservation management is to succeed.

The African Leadership Seminars are about capacity building. It is likely that the support of state sponsors to the Seminars will need to continue but already one can show that the seminars and associated training programmes such as the Protected Area Management Masters' degree (CEAD/ICPL) are producing managers of the highest caliber, with the qualities and skills to lead African conservation safely into the next decade.

Seminar outcomes

The Seminar concluded that there had been a broad consensus on the way forward and on the challenges that lie ahead. Despite the difficulties experienced in delivering the CBNRM approach it is still worth pursuing. There are several good news stories too. The Lapalala Wilderness experience and the establishment of the Waterberg Biosphere Reserve is one where a clear vision and strong leadership has overcome adversity to provide one of the best examples of CBNRM and one that could prove to be an exemplar for other areas.

It was recognised that the apparent teething problems in integrating biodiversity and cultural heritage conservation needs more time to be resolved. Tracking the progress of the experiences of Mapungubwe and similar initiatives would be helpful in informing best practice. Sharing information with so many experienced protected area managers from such a range of southern African countries was very worthwhile and prompted a call for the network to be maintained. ICPL has committed to help in this and a shared bulletin board is being established where delegates from this and future Seminars can share views, keep in touch on progress, and contribute to protected area research and practice.

Securing the support and contribution of politicians to ALS goals is always going to be problematic. The help afforded by the Welsh Assembly Government and the DEFRA Darwin Initiative is readily appreciated and acknowledged. Copies of this Report will go to them and hopefully, with their support, receive wider publicity. ICPL will certainly promote the ALS and is pleased to learn that a commitment to host a 2008 African Leadership Seminar has already been made by Zambia.

We wish the ALS every success and remain hopeful that its contribution to the Millennium Development Goals in southern Africa will become increasingly self evident and supported by statesmen and women in the continent and elsewhere.

Annex A Places visited

The Limpopo – Shashe Transfrontier Conservation Area

On 22 June 2006 a Memorandum of Understanding was entered into by Botswana, Zimbabwe and South Africa signaling the three nations' intent to establish and develop this transfrontier conservation area. This was the culmination of many years' intricate negotiations.

The concept of establishing a transfrontier conservation area around the confluence of the Limpopo and Shashe rivers dates back to an initiative by General J C Smuts who decreed in 1922 that some farms along the banks of the Limpopo River be set aside for the Dongola Botanical Reserve. The primary aim of this Reserve was to study the vegetation and assess the agricultural and pastoral potential of the area. This idea was transformed into the Dongola National Park in the 1940s when the results of the study showed that the area was not suitable for human habitation and that it could best be used as a “*wildlife sanctuary for the recreation of the nation*”. It was during this time that the idea of linking the sanctuary with similar conservation areas in the then Bechuanaland Protectorate and Southern Rhodesia was first mooted.



Figure 1: Confluence of Shashe and Limpopo Rivers

In Botswana, land to be committed to the Limpopo/Shashe TFCA encompasses the Northern Tuli Game Reserve (Notugre). On the South African side, the land committed to the TFCA comprises a complex mosaic of private land, state-owned land and national parks. South African National Parks (SANParks) with the assistance of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), De Beers Consolidated Mines Ltd, the National Parks Trust and Peace Parks Foundation, has since 1998 been involved in land purchases to create the Mapungubwe National Park. This park forms the core area of South Africa's contribution to the TFCA and covers 25 800 hectares. A major advance in the consolidation of the core area was made in 2002 when De Beers, a world leader in the diamond trade, and SANParks signed an agreement whereby properties owned by De Beers would be integrated into the core area.

The potential area that Zimbabwe can commit to the TFCA is the Tuli Circle Safari Area covering an area of 41 100 hectares. This area is contiguous with the northern end of Notugre and has no physical barriers to impede the movement of wildlife. There is also potential for incorporating portions of the Maramani Communal Land into the area of the proposed Limpopo/Shashe TFCA.

The TFCA is being developed in phases, as it will not be possible to acquire all the properties simultaneously. The initial phase could link Notugre with the Tuli Circle Safari Area and also with the still-to-be-proclaimed Vhembe/Dongola National Park. A common characteristic of the areas that will constitute the TFCA is the low and erratic rainfall (an average of 300 mm or 10 inches per annum) which, together with the frequent cycles of drought and poor soils, makes the area extremely marginal for agriculture and ideal for wildlife conservation.

Northern Tuli Game Reserve (Notruge)

Within the TFCA in Botswana is the Northern Tuli Game Reserve. It comprises an association of private landowners who have agreed to remove the fences that separate their properties and to jointly manage wildlife resources. Notugre presently embraces 36 farms with a combined area of 70 000 hectares. It is renowned for its Tuli elephants, the largest elephant population on private land in Africa. The establishment of this TFCA will considerably expand the range of land available to this population. Notugre is also a conservation success story, given its abundant wildlife today which was virtually non-existent in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Notugre is also a tourism success story with a number of lodges and tented safari camps. Included in this is the development of community/private sector partnerships in tourism focused developments.



Figure 2 Elephants at Tuli

Mapungubwe National Park

Mapungubwe is home to the famous Golden Rhino – a symbol of the power of the King of the Mapungubwe people who inhabited the Limpopo River Valley between 900 AD and 1300 AD; at the time the largest kingdom on the subcontinent.

The Mapungubwe Cultural Landscape, which follows the protected area footprint, was proclaimed a World Heritage Site in July 2003 and it was proclaimed as a national park in 2004. The Mapungubwe site is significant as it is here where the evidence of the oldest modern capital city in Southern Africa with over 5,000 inhabitants living there at its peak (*circa* 1,100 AD). Considering the location of the capital, their way of life and their level of development, it is indeed a significant and historic legacy worth preserving.



Figure 3: Mapungubwe Hill

Mapungubwe National Park is currently developing its infrastructure. A 40-bed main rest camp, a wilderness trails camp, a tented camp and campsite, game-viewing hides, a lookout point at the confluence, a day-visitors' facility and an entrance gate has been constructed. A tourist road network was also constructed, the main archaeological sites rehabilitated and prepared for tourism, newly acquired farmland restored to its natural state, the park fenced in preparation for the reintroduction of game, and staff housing built.



Figure 4 Visitors to a cultural site at Mapungubwe

The Waterberg Biosphere Reserve

Waterberg Biosphere Reserve is situated within the Bushveld district in the Limpopo Province of South Africa. The Waterberg, as the name implies, serves as a water reservoir for this arid region. It is an area consisting of low mountain ranges and escarpments with poor soils and a relatively low level of economic activity. The vegetation is dominated by different veld types, which are characteristic in mountainous savanna areas.

Some 77,000 people live in the biosphere reserve, which covers an area of about 400,000 hectares. The area has been inhabited over hundreds of thousand years and is one of the most important San Rock Art areas in South Africa. Tourism is the major source of income. However, people also practice cattle raising, crop production and are increasingly switching over to game farming for eco-tourism.

The biosphere reserve concept helps strike a balance between the pressures of the tourist industry, the need to generate direct benefits to the local communities and the conservation of the natural assets. Attaining this balance is the goal of the Waterberg Biosphere Reserve Committee which was set up after a five year consultation process with all stakeholders concerned. A series of technical action plans have been elaborated among which environmental education programmes play an important role, led by the Lapalala Wilderness School.



Figure 5 Lapalala Wilderness School

Waterberg Museum

The Waterberg has a long history of human occupation and if one is to include the early Hominids, then its history spans more than a million years. This museum features the San (Bushman) from the late Stone Age through to the Iron Age people who built settlements in this area approximately 150 years ago. The exhibits also include the modern day Pedi people who are an integral part of the vibrant fabric that makes up the human element of the Waterberg. The diverse cultural history of the original occupants, although studied by scientists and researchers, is barely known to the general public.



Figure 6: Melora Mountain - a cultural site in the Waterberg

Rhinoceros Museum

The Rhinoceros Museum is housed in the renovated old Melkrivier Primary School (built in 1935) situated in the Waterberg Mountains of the Limpopo Province. This Museum is the first of its kind anywhere in Africa and highlights the evolutionary history, biology, habitat, distribution (past and present), the trade in rhinoceros products, relating art and literature and those people who have actively contributed to the conservation of the rhinoceros.

Living Museum

The Living Museum is an integral extension of the Waterberg Rhino Museum and is situated on 90 hectares of, largely, unspoiled bushveld just across the road from the main centre. As this project primarily accommodates species that may never be rehabilitated sufficiently to be safely released back into their natural habitat the objective is to give visitors the opportunity to observe these animals, up close and personal, for the sole purpose of education. Amongst the residents are two black rhinos.



Figure 7 Feeding orphaned Black Rhino

Lapalala Wilderness

Lapalala Wilderness, in the mountains of the Waterberg, was founded in 1985 by Clive Walker. In 2001 it was proclaimed as a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO. Originally 19 different farms, it was consolidated between 1981 and 1999 by Clive and Dale Parker, the first private owners of black rhino in the world. It remains a privately-owned nature reserve 36 000 hectares in extent. 88 kilometers of clear, natural rivers run through bush-covered hills and craggy ravines.



Figure 8: Lapalala river in the Waterberg Biosphere Reserve



Figure 9: Clive Walker (right) at the ALS

The reserve is home to animals such as rhino (both white and black), buffalo, hippo, crocodile, leopard, baboons and many sorts of antelope. The ecological mission of Lapalala Wilderness is to conserve and maintain the biodiversity of the reserve, especially the unspoiled river frontage, while providing a sanctuary for the breeding of endangered animals, in particular white and black rhino.

Lapalala is an educational centre which has gained international recognition for the outstanding contribution it has made to enriching the lives of thousands of children through a greater knowledge and understanding of nature, wildlife and cultural heritage.

Annex B Key Contributors to the African Leadership Seminar

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"Wisdom is like a baobab tree; no one individual can embrace it."
The Baobab Society

