

Section III: Institutions and Approaches to Conservation Discussion and Comments

DISCUSSANTS

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DISCUSSANT COMMENTS

William Ascher, Duke University: Amy Vedder did an excellent job of pointing out that there are different objectives in different organizations. GTZ of course has a broader mandate for development in general, so it's bound to have quite a number of different objectives that it has to balance in practice. Wildlife NGOs obviously have a narrower agenda; it doesn't make it a better or worse agenda, but it is narrower. I think the last point Amy made about sharing information about objectives really needs to be underlined, because if there are conflicts, you have to be able to separate the wheat from the chaff. What are the real conflicts? What are the real differences in objectives in co-managing a protected area as opposed to some of the fears of people behaving badly because you don't know what they are doing? If these sorts of endeavors are to be successful, people have to be up front about the objectives of the organization. We know that these objectives are selected by mandate, by membership, by strategy, by funding considerations. They have many different sources and they are all legitimate.

Andrew Noss, Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS): The Sangha River region, because of its socioeconomic context, must be one of the most difficult places in the world to effect nature conservation, particularly conservation with community development. Within this context, facing military uprisings, local riots, logging company

opposition, irregular funding, and so on, the achievements of the conservation organizations and projects are indeed remarkable. The reason for their success must result in part from the commendable long-term involvement of particular individuals and institutions in the region.

The following points are challenges that conservation continues to face and that organizations must address in order to achieve their objectives:

Immigration. Employment of any kind, or the rumor of employment, draws immigrants to the region. This is true of conservation projects as well, which hire guards and administer local development activities. What can conservation projects do to limit immigration? Such prohibitions have ethical implications, and are difficult to enforce. A side-effect of immigration, to be avoided by conservation organizations, is the perception (true or not) that outsiders are hired as park guards, for example.

Funding. Long-term funding is essential for the sustainability of conservation efforts, as current donor funding will not last forever. The development of trust funds is a promising tool. Can a percentage of current donor funds for projects be dedicated to the trust fund, as a condition of implementing the project, for example? Can taxes levied on logging and mining activities be incorporated into the same type of fund? Can tourism revenues be incorporated too, as with the Committee for the Development of Bayanga (CDB)? Can regional development activities and expenditures be consolidated through such a conservation and development fund?

Economic History. The historical experience in the region is one of cycles of resource use. In this context, local people see conservation projects as one more temporary boom to be exploited but one that will pass. How can conservation education programs address these attitudes and beliefs?

Economic Diversification. Engagement in economic activities varies not only by ethnic group in the region, but within ethnic groups among communities. In 1994 the BaAka of Gbabongo and Lindjombo were mainly hunter-gatherers trading for agricultural products. The communities of Mossapoula and Yandoumbé depended on logging and the conservation project, those of Kundapapaye were primarily agriculturists, and those of Belamboké farmed and were involved in diamond mining. Individuals also switch among activities over time. Given this socioeconomic diversity, at what level can development activities be developed? Activities must differ at least at the village community level, as the Comité de Développement de Bayanga is doing.

Communication. How should conservation projects communicate with individuals involved in illegal activities? It is possible to collect information from diamond miners, snare hunters, and net hunters within the park by visiting their camps. But there are ethical issues in collecting such information. Does such communication imply that compromises will be made, that boundaries and the park's attitude toward illegal activities are flexible? Or is the miner and snare hunter's fear justified that the park personnel only collects such information to in turn expel them from the park?

Ecological Monitoring. How can local people be involved in ecological monitoring? For example, if BaAka net hunters are included in the park's efforts to monitor wildlife populations and the activities of other hunters, perhaps their involvement will increase their sense of ownership/tenure/use rights over these same resources, and develop long-term conservation interests in these resources.

Paul Elkan, University of Minnesota: Concerning the issue of multiple use orientation versus traditional park management strategies: Amy Vedder stated that wildlife conservation is a major priority. I would like to comment on a common goal: conservation. The papers presented here suggest that we have to evaluate our perception of conservation and articulation of objectives. Is conservation our common goal? Is there miscommunication or a difference of what we regard as an acceptable level of ecological degradation?

Concerning details and decision-making in the field: we are faced with difficult decisions based on values. There is a question of ethics in our social science and anthropological work. If one is associated with specific people and privy to information regarding a conservation project, how are they ethically tied to the local community? If you have information, for example, on elephant poaching how do you behave as a scientist versus as a member of the community? At the base of decisions taken as a strategy we need to resolve discrepancies between social and natural scientists on these issues. It is obvious that there are strong feelings about where conservation is going in general.

Uwe Klug, GTZ: I worked for five years in eastern Zaire. It is a very different situation from the Sangha Region due to higher population pressures on the park. Yesterday we had a wonderful description of stakeholders active in the region. Today we shared perspectives of what is going on in the projects and what some key biodiversity issues are. The question now concerns all these stakeholders. What are the proposed strategies of the different projects to integrate the stakeholders in policy-making and decision-making? Dzanga Sangha

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has a trust fund; this is a first step toward going beyond the donor-driven strategy in the region. What is the opinion of other organizations represented here about this strategy?

Manuel Thuret, APFT: I worked for the APFT in Ouessou in 1997 with GTZ, NNNP, ECOFAC acting in the region. I have three main points I would like to share. About the social effects of conservation in peripheral areas and the difficulty of acquiring accurate information: ethnographers are very concerned about conservation because people are directly linked to the environment. We did a quantitative study on products brought to and shipped out from Ouessou which included fifteen interviews with elephant poachers in the area. We studied some of the repressive aspects of the meat trade as perceived by the local population. Our work was carried out with local assistants due to caution of the subjects about giving accurate quantities and details. The Ministry of Water and Forests announced that they were able to stop the export of meat from Ouessou. This was considered a great feat. The consequences can be seen in anecdotes such as those told by students who finance their studies with money gained through the traffic in bushmeat. The management of village exploitation—is it sustainable or unsustainable? In my opinion, what is unsustainable is exploitation such as that of the forestry concessions and mines. Sometimes I am a bit taken aback by the attitude of some conservation projects which permit such activities in buffer zones, but do not allow the practice of traditional activities such as hunting and gathering by local populations. We should occasionally re-pose the question: for whom is conservation of the ecosystem intended? I think this is an important question.

DISCUSSION AND COMMENTS

Richard Ruggiero, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: Empowerment of local populations is pointed to as an important step in sustainable use. It is a good first step but it is insufficient, because frequently you just have a different group of exploiters using the resource. Unless you have a conservation ethic in the group, it is likely to result in unsustainable exploitation. For example, well-paid employees first build houses in Ouessou or Brazzaville. Just restricting use to local people isn't sufficient. We produce a product. That product is conservation, and unless we do our job well we won't have resources left.

Steve Gartlan, World Wildlife Fund: We have to distinguish between the terms sustainable and rational. Sustainable means for the

long term. Rational is very different. In exploitation of trees for commercial exploitation, rational behavior is complete deforestation. Rationality is not the same as sustainability.

Laurent Somé, BSP/CARPE: What is the involvement of the Ministry of Water and Forests in the work being done with the international conservation organizations? I sense that in Congo, the work done in the Ndoki area is under the responsibility of WCS and the government of Congo. I would prefer that it is the government of the Congo and WCS. Management should be under the forestry department administration. That's my vision. It's not evident what the nature of the cooperation between WCS and the government is now in Congo.

Richard Ruggiero, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: That's a good question. Under normal circumstances we have personnel from the ministry who are deeply involved in the project. In fact, there is currently a person from the ministry who is basically running the day-to-day operations of the project. A portion of what is needed to assist the government in conserving resources lies at the institutional level. A goal of the project is to assist in institution-building. I cannot truthfully say that there has been a great deal of progress, but we certainly agree that it is essential and that this conference can facilitate the process.

Allard Blom, World Wildlife Fund: Two logging companies are working in the Dzanga-Sangha Reserve area. One had problems and was eventually kicked out of CAR. In CAR there is a buyer's market for sustainably-logged products. One of the two companies approached the Dzanga-Sangha project to help, since they had a green buyers' group. Economically driven conservation is the best solution. Most of the protected areas were created where there were already logging companies.

Steve Gartlan, WWF: Local people are being hired to carry out the monitoring program, but this is difficult because once you start with local people and make promises it's impossible to renege on them. This is an important consideration when developing project evaluation strategies.

Richard Ruggiero, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: We don't manage the wildlife, we leave the animals alone in the forest. People are the ones who need to be managed. We, as natural scientists, need to learn more about social concerns to help us deal with these issues. Development on one end and conservation on the other. As human



Galago sp. (Illustration: Bernardin Nabana)

populations increase we will have to deal with the “d” word: development. With people easily moving from one area to another, it is important that the development effort occurs in areas that do not exacerbate conflicts between wildlife and people.

Steve Gartlan, WWF: There is a demand in the western world for African resources. Speaking independently of WWF, sustainable development is worse than a paradox. It is a contradiction. Development implies growth and change; you can have sustainable systems, but not growth systems. As it is stated, substantial development cannot be achieved. There is a lot of preaching about stabilization of levels of agriculture that are acceptable, but it is actually not acceptable to the local people. I believe the main problem is that we are preaching sustainable development when the western world is continuing its rampant consumption of resources from the developing world. Until the west changes its ways we cannot expect Africa to do more than pay lip service to sustainable activity.

Audience Member: Is it possible to sustain species diversity and to allow human populations to sustain activities? There appears to be a conflict between uses and present plans for development. With the current amount of logging, road building, and agro-industrial development, it appears as if it is either going to be biodiversity or traditional use.

Steve Gartlan, WWF: The size of logging concessions and their numbers are increasing. We are now looking at the possibility of consolidating logging operations. Our goal is to raise 20-35 million dollars for a trust fund to cover recurrent costs for management of protected areas. Funding for management of protected areas will not come from within Cameroon, so we must find solutions from outside.

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