

Community Conservation, Inc.

2014 Winter/Summer Newsletter

29 Years of the Community Baboon Sanctuary, Belize



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Kirk Loy, an independent Documentary Producer, who worked on a video of the Community Baboon Sanctuary 20 years ago, approached CC Director Rob Horwich about the possibility of working together on a video about the progress of the Community Baboon Sanctuary in Belize. The video would highlight CC's the Community Baboon Sanctuary as CC's first project, but it would also highlight the legacy of this first project and the direction it led CC and Horwich to pioneer various concepts of community conservation in 14 countries.

Horwich and Loy planned the project and began researching the current status of the Community Baboon Sanctuary and what was happening in Belize. Getting the footage they hoped for made their whole trip a busy time – meeting local Belizeans on schedule and following a general schedule for the filming. It was also both exciting and strange for Horwich to see many friends and acquaintances after so long. Some young men introduced themselves to Horwich since they had been young children many years ago.

The first day the crew followed



Kirk Loy records Dr. Horwich in conversation with CBS guide Robert Pantin

Robert Pantin an old friend and experienced guide as he and others from the CBS museum shepherded a large crowd of tourists from cruise boats to see the howler monkeys. The guide lectures over the years have become very sophisticated since the guides have learned more, sometimes from scientists studying aspects of the sanctuary. After seeing and hearing the howlers, the tourists visited the museum with exhibits that had recently been redone by Dr. Jon Lyon with help from his students of Merrimack College in Massachusetts. Dr. Lyon was a co-founder of the CBS along with Horwich and the late Fallett Young.

The video crew then went to Rancho Dolores to see how the Spanish Creek Wildlife Sanctuary was doing. They did not expect much since there was some very controversial events that had transpired between the Government of Belize and the communi-

ties and NGO co-managers. As expected, the office was closed, but they interviewed a member of the co-managerial group to learn more about the disappointing politics going on. They also visited the Mayan cemetery there and the falls at Big Falls.

The Second day the crew visited

the offices of NGOs in Belize City for interviews before hiring a small aircraft to take a flight to get an aerial view of the Community Baboon Sanctuary, Gales Point, and the Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary.

On the third day, the crew took a tourist launch to Cay Caulker to get video of important Belizean places in which to set the video. They also interviewed Ellen McCray who is a member of FAMRACC (Forest and Marine Association of Cay Caulker) that co-manages the land and sea sanctuary, to hear more about the politics of how the co-management system was being dismantled by the government.

The fourth day, the crew drove to Lamanai, a Mayan temple that is an important aspect of Belize. On the way back they met Osmany Salas in Burrell Boom for an interview. Osmany was an old

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Community Baboon Sanctuary

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friend of Horwich who had been the Executive Director of the Belize Audubon Society while it was still managing the Community Baboon Sanctuary. Osmany received his MS from the University of Michigan and is an expert on co-management in Belize.

The following day, the crew left the CBS area and headed to Belmopan and the Capital to take the Hummingbird Highway to the Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary where Horwich, Dr. Fred Koontz and Ernesto Saqui had carried out the translocation of 5 groups of 62 howler monkeys from the CBS to the Cockscomb Basin. They met Ernesto Saqui and his wife, Aurora, who now own and manage a tourist hotel and herbal walk in Maya Center just outside of the wildlife sanctuary. They drove in to see if they could locate any of the introduced howlers and learn from Saqui how successful the reintroduction was. Saqui noted that the population had probably tripled and some groups were moving close to Maya Center. The population is probably about 300-500 monkeys today.

The next morning the crew drove to Silk Grass to meet Terrence Salam, a member of the community group co-managing the Mayflower Bocawina National Park. His interview confirmed the others about trouble with the current Minister of Forestry. Despite having no help, the Friends of Mayflower Bocawina were managing the park on money collected from entrance fees.

The video crew drove back to the Community Baboon Sanctuary where they visited Flowers Bank to talk with Reuben Rhaburn about the cohune oil industry he was engaged in. That evening Horwich could prepare his lecture for the next day. The lecture was attended by villagers from the CBS, students from a US University, and members of APAMO and umbrella organizations for co-managers of protected areas. Horwich interviewed Jose Perez of APAMO and Jesse Young, the head of the Women's Conservation Group that manages the CBS.

The last morning, Horwich, exhausted by the whirlwind schedule, said goodbyes to the CBS and its residents. Loy, working until the very end, took videos of Horwich as he entered the airport to return home. He and Horwich are currently working to create a script and video which should be finished in about a year. Burrell Boom for an interview. Osmany was an old friend of Horwich who had been the Executive Director of the Belize Audubon Society while it was still managing the Community Baboon Sanctuary. Osmany received his MS from the University of Michigan and is an expert on co-management in Belize. ♦

Ankasa Tano CREMA, Ghana

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Ankasa. In attendance were representatives of the 12 participating villages including some Chiefs and or members of their councils. Additionally, other WAPCA staff, including WAPCA Director, Jeanne Marie Pittman, were in attendance to help in coordinating the workshop. There were also members of the Ghana Wildlife Division, a local law enforcement man, and a man residing in the Ivory Coast who worked with villages there to protect similar forests and primates across the Tano River on the border of the two countries.

The first step was to explain what a CREMA was and how it could be formed. Government staff made presentations followed by a presentation about WAPCA by Pittman and a presentation by Horwich on how other communities are protecting their forest and wildlife around the world. Then the second step was to discuss how the local CREMA would work. Then the approximately 30 participants created the CREMA, elected officers to manage the CREMA and named the CREMA, the Ankasa Tano CREMA. As part of the workshop, the participants made a short day trip into Ankasa National Park led by David Osei and Wildlife Division staff.

A number of occurrences boded well for the success of this CREMA. The participants elected a Chief of one village who was already enacting conservation actions in his village. Secondly, this new leader contacted Osei the day after the meeting requesting that they meet to get the CREMA started in actions. ♦



**David Osei and Wildlife Division staff
talk to CREMA members at Ankasa National Park**

CC Initiates Project at Gishwati National Forest, Rwanda

CC Director Rob Horwich accompanied Peter Clay, a great ape specialist to help the Forest of Hope Association protect Gishwati National Forest in western Rwanda. Although Rwanda is mainly famous for its mountain gorillas and Virunga Park where Diane Fossey did her studies, Gishwati was once the largest protected area in Rwanda. Due to general neglect and political problems, it had dwindled down to 900 hectares. A revived future for Gishwati occurred in 2007, when Rwanda President, Paul Kagame and Ted Townsend, founder of the Great Ape Trust in Iowa, pledged at the Clinton Global Initiative in New York City to transform Gishwati into a national conservation park and proposed a 50km corridor to connect it and its chimpanzee population to the much larger Nyungwe National Park to its south. This revitalization program, with a substantial budget accomplished a great deal but came to an abrupt halt in 2011 with the dissolution of the Great Ape Trust due to financial problems.



Thierry and Peter address community members at the village of Mubuga

A group of interested Rwandans, unwilling to let the project die, established the Forest of Hope Association (FHA) to maintain the progress that had been established and to manage and protect the Gishwati forest that was expanded to over 1400 hectares. After a meeting with Peter Clay who had worked for the Great Ape Trust and who had known Horwich through his research on apes at the Lincoln Park Zoo, they wrote a proposal to the Margot Marsh Biodiversity Foundation which funded a modest amount to start CC's role in the project.

During June 2014 Horwich and Clay worked with Thierry Aimable Inzirayineza, FHA coordinator, in a series of meetings and workshops to ask the communities for help in protecting Gishwati. Using the field tested method developed by CC, the trio first addressed a meeting of local leaders of the sectors and cells within Rutsiro District which surrounds the Gishwati forest. They then addressed five community meetings of villagers at Mubuga, Kinihira, Bitanga and Nyagahinike villages. In total they addressed over 500 villagers who discussed and responded with positive responses from all of the meetings to help protect Gishwati forest. One idea that emerged from the meetings was that community members might use the Umuganda practice to volunteer to work with the community guards that they selected to work with FHA to protect the forest.



Thierry at Nyagahinike Meeting

Umuganda is the concept in Rwanda that developed before colonialism to promote community service throughout the country. At the community meetings, Clay, who has a long history working in Rwanda, stressed to the villagers that this was an opportune time to create a group to work with the government because the government of Rwanda is currently passing a law to create a new Gishwati-Mukura National Park composed of the current Gishwati Forest and the Mukura Forest of over 3400 hectares that would eventually include a corridor between the two areas.

A workshop was then held for 23 representatives of those village areas. After welcoming the participants, the FHA coordinator summarized FHA accomplishments. Then Horwich gave a presentation of community projects and the benefits communities receive from their native forests and from forming community organizations. Then participants listed the strengths that the com-

munities receive from their native forests and from forming community organizations. Then participants listed the strengths that the com-

Gishwati National Forest, Rwanda

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munities have to protect Gishwati forests. In the last workshop exercise, four small groups were formed to discuss two ideas: 1) where community forests could be formed on public or community lands as buffers to Gishwati forest and 2) what steps could be taken to form community groups to help the government and FHA to protect the Gishwati forest. The general consensus from the workshop participants and from the larger community meetings was that groups would be formed within five village areas surrounding Gishwati that could meet on a continual basis. Eventually a federation of these village groups could be formed in the future. The workshop laid the foundation for further action and a commitment to form village groups. ♦



Peter talks with villagers at Bitanga

Catalyzing Community-based Conservation Around the World

Top Right: (Ghana) Members of newly formed CREMA and WAPCA Director Jeanne Marie Pittman congratulate newly elected CREMA officers

Bottom Right: (Rwanda) Horwich and Thierry address community members in Kinihira

Below: (Belize) Loy records a lecture by Robert Pantin to cruise ship tourists



Belize Government Threatens to Destroy Successful Co-Management System

On Horwich's return trip to the Community Baboon Sanctuary to look at its current progress, it was important to look at the CBS's most important legacy. When the CBS was initiated in 1984-5, the concept of modern community conservation was not yet recognized. Horwich's research at that time turned up no models to help develop the CBS. In its development, Horwich and Lyon worked hard to advertise it in Belize in order to help the communities develop tourism. This led eventually to other communities interest in involvement in conservation and tourism, and eventual conservation contagion throughout the whole small nation of Belize.

As a result, some communities directly tried to create similar community sanctuaries and other communities began to think about how they could do similar things. Ultimately 14 communities, lobbied the Government of Belize (GoB) to create protected areas both on land and sea, adding 62,000 hectares of new protected areas. This was the indirect legacy of the CBS.

Belize was a world leader in co-management. Shortly after gaining independence in 1981, the new nation of Belize began creating additional protected areas and they depended on the Belize Audubon Society (BAS) to manage the protected areas because the government didn't have the resources. BAS was to become the leading conservation in Belize. Thus in 1982 they started managing Belize's protected areas beginning a successful co-management system.

Later, as communities lobbied the government to create nearby protected areas and when communities were invited to be co-managers, community co-management became government policy. It was a very democratic system devolving power to communities to manage their own areas. Thus for over 30 years Belize had functioned with NGO and CBO co-management with no problems.

However, with the discovery of oil, the government and the Minister of Forests, Fisheries and Sustainability began to put pressure on the Indigenous NGO SATIIM that was co-managing the Sarstoon-Temash National Park to allow drilling for oil within the National Park, which was essentially illegal. This seemed to trigger an uneasy relationship between NGOs and communities and the Government Ministry. A new contract was promoted by the government and the NGOs, communities and APAMO, an umbrella organization attempted to negotiate for a better contract. The GoB then leveraged their power holding the co-manager community hostage, restricting the co-managers from receiving any funding if they didn't sign the unfair contract that would give the government power to do what they wanted with the protected areas.

Thus far, many of the NGOs have signed the contract and many communities have resisted. Two indigenous co-managers SATIIM and Itzamna have been removed by the government as co-managers. SATIIM and some of the Mayan communities have resisted and won some legal battles, with the courts stating that the Mayan communities have a right to these lands as their homelands.

The dismantling of a co-management system that had been working for 30 years was sad to see. The people and communities that had worked so hard to protect their lands for the country of Belize, with little support from the government are now being disregarded by the Minister. What is saddest is that Belize, an innovator and early pioneer of a successful co-management system for its protected areas is now dismantling it. The people we interviewed for the video about this situation spoke with one voice and the GoB is not listening. ♦



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Ghana Communities Create Ankasa Tano CREMA to Protect Peat Swamp Forests

For the past year David Osei of West African Primate Conservation Action (WAPCA) has been having meetings with a dozen villages on the southwestern border of Ghana with the Ivory Coast, helping them to protect some of Ghana's last coastal forests. He has helped them to form some teams to patrol these forests to protect them from encroaching loggers and hunters. Even though these peat swamp forests are flooded much of the year and are difficult to move in and log, loggers have begun to target them since they are Ghana's last forests.

These peat swamp forests are an important ecosystem with species that can tolerate flooding annually and partially. They are also one of the last refuges of two critically endangered primates that are endemic to southwestern Ghana and southeastern Ivory Coast, the rolaway mon-



CREMA members and WAPCA staff visit Ankasa National Park

key and the white naped mangabey. A third monkey, Ms Waldron's red colobus monkey is now thought to be extinct although there is a remote chance that may still exist in the Ivory Coast wetland forests. The primate community in these forests includes Geoffroy's black and white colobus, the olive colobus, the lesser spot nosed guenon and Lowe's guenon that are endemic to the upper Guinean forest of West

Africa.

CC's Director Rob Horwich made a trip to Ghana in March to help these Chiefs and their villagers to create a government sanctioned community managed area or CREMA (Community Resource Management Area). Although the lands below to the local Chiefs, they decided to work with the government program. David Osei's work had been laying the foundation for helping villagers in western Ghana to create a CREMA and Horwich had been invited to help in the process.

The three day workshop was held at a local hotel owned by Frenchman, a local Ghanaian who was president of another CREMA of villagers that works to protect the Ankasa National Park which is close to the peat swamp forests and has some of the same species of rare primates. The workshop was coordinated by WAPCA with help from staff of the Wildlife Division based at

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