



# GRASP

# Newsletter

Issue Number 1, May 2003

## Great Ape Survival Project - A WORKING PARTNERSHIP

**G**RASP is a partnership, designed to allow UNEP, UNESCO, the wildlife-related conventions and non-governmental organisations to join forces in helping 23 range states to conserve endangered great apes species and their ecosystems. Since the beginnings of GRASP 18 months ago, we have supported 13 projects and workshops, conducted missions to 16 range states, launched our activities including a strategy as a WSSD Partnership in Johannesburg, and raised resources of almost \$ 1.3 million from public and private donors.

Most important of all, we have gradually expanded the initiative to embrace 21 GRASP Partners, including all the key conventions and NGOs with a stake in great ape conservation.

The crisis threatening the very existence of ape species or populations represents a clear and present danger. We have to act quickly, as the report prepared for GRASP by UNEP GRID ARENDAL and UNEP-WCMC last September illustrated when it predicted that on current trends only 1% of orang-utan habitat, and 10% of African ape habitat, would survive intact in less than 30 years' time. It has been essential to cut some corners in GRASP, and to act as a pioneer in tackling the crises by collective effort.

Some important issues, including the governance of GRASP, have had to take second place while we built up a critical mass and established GRASP as a "working partnership". Now that GRASP is up and running, we have turned our attention to the framework of governance and rules, which any established body needs for longer-term success. Over the last three months we have held a series of brainstorming decisions with partners in London, Nairobi and Washington, combined with an email consultative process. One of the main outcomes was a full SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis of GRASP and an agreed summing up of the "added value" which GRASP brings to great ape conservation. The main elements of "added value" are:

- \* integrate sustainable development into great ape conservation
- \* engage 2 UN bodies and 4 Multilateral Environmental Agreements
- \* operate at a regional scale and fill gaps left by individual NGOs
- \* stimulate standardized quality national plans
- \* bring together stakeholders for efficiency and learning
- \* address cross-border issues
- \* raise great apes up the political agenda in donor and range states
- \* access new additional funding — public and private
- \* influence policy, e.g. World Bank
- \* quality branding
- \* scientific and technical assessment of the status of the great apes
- \* tactical intervention at the political level, e.g. ape smuggling cases
- \* potential for a Great Ape Conservation Trust Fund

The brainstorm process also established task forces (TFs) covering:

- \* GRASP interim constitution
- \* fundraising principles
- \* key-elements for National Great Ape Survival Plans
- \* GRASP planning process
- \* GRASP inter-governmental conference at end of 2004
- \* communications with partners

### Annelisa Kilbourn UNEP Global 500 Laureate, 2003

We are pleased to announce that Annelisa Kilbourn has been posthumously awarded the UNEP Global 500 Award for her outstanding contribution to wildlife conservation. As many of you will know, Annelisa died tragically in November of last year in Gabon whilst she was conducting her research for Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)'s Field Veterinary Program. Her vitally important work in the field of Ebola and great apes will never be forgotten, and tellingly Annelisa herself will always be remembered by those who knew and worked with her.



A. Katerer

*GRASP Brainstorm Participants. Standing: Sarah Mundy (UNEP/GRASP), Tim Johnson (UNEP/WCMC), PJ Stephenson (WWF Int.), Tom Butynski (CI), Rob Hepworth (UNEP/GRASP), Melanie Virtue (UNEP/GRASP), Andy Plumpton (WCS), Will Travers (Born Free), David Jay (GRASP Technical Team), Stanley Johnson (Consultant). Kneeling: Annette Lanjouw (IGCP), Ian Redmond (GRASP Technical Team), Mark Attwater (UNEP/GRASP), John Hutton (FFI), Eve Abe (GRASP Technical Team), Matt Woods (UNEP/GRASP)*

GRASP intends to seek the views of all partners in drafting the task forces' documents. Of course, in order to solicit useful inputs, it is necessary to have a draft on which to comment. Thus the working groups were charged with developing first drafts of these documents, which are now being circulated among all GRASP partners and other interested parties, for their inputs. The results of the brainstorming will also be keenly felt in the future organization of missions and follow-up work in range states where it is vital for GRASP to deploy the right partners in each country. We are also redoubling our fundraising efforts, and our efforts to engage with other compatible projects such as the Congo Basin Forest Partnership. Key events over 2003-04 should include the publication of a Great Apes Atlas, launch of a small grant scheme and the major inter-governmental conference planned at the end of next year.

On behalf of UNEP, I would like to thank all parties for creating GRASP. We look forward to continuing our work with you.

*Robert Hepworth, Deputy Director, UNEP/DEC*

## How can the great apes survive?

The great apes are becoming extinct. Some animals have naturally small populations, others have declined but recovered, but our closest relatives, right now, are on a one way trip. Frequent news stories and statistics shock us with the immediacy of this fate, but the trend has been known for a long time, and it isn't changing. Many individuals and organisations have laboured hard, raised substantial funds, researched, lobbied, set up ecotourism projects, worked with local communities ... so many efforts to halt the decline of ape populations in Africa and Asia. It hasn't worked.

All our endeavours over the past two decades have not been enough to stop, let alone reverse this trend. That is why we need something new, and that is why we have GRASP.

From the moment I heard about the proposal, the logic seemed unavoidable. If we were trying everything we could think of, what more could we do? We could bring together all the like-minded people and organisations under one unified strategy, and make the whole more than the sum of the parts. This would have many additional advantages for awareness, fundraising and efficiency. Having the initiative under the UNEP banner was obviously essential for the necessary neutrality and authority.

Since Born Free started working with GRASP this is what we have tried to do. To help bring together all the NGOs, the range states, and the donors, so that we can all pull together! Ian Redmond and Dr Eve Abe of the GRASP Technical Support Team (TST) have visited 16 countries so far and met with a wide range of stakeholders. As the work and reputation of GRASP grows and as more and more partners join in, it not only becomes easier to arrange these trips successfully, but also to stimulate co-ordinated action plans.

Visiting range states is only the start of the TST's work. The follow-up takes many forms, be it encouraging a Focal Point who has enthusiasm but lacks experience, lobbying for a formal response to UNEP, or keeping stakeholders informed of developments. It also involves supporting (along with UNEP Nairobi's coordination team)

the organisation of National Great Ape Survival Plan (NGASP) workshops. These have been held already in Kinshasa, Brazzaville and Yaounde, and arranged by Conservation International in Abidjan and Conakry. More are already in the pipeline.

Having attended the strategy workshop in Nairobi this January, I had a glimpse of the vision, a glimpse of what GRASP is becoming. With many prominent people offering not just support but real involvement, the partnership looks more and more like a united front. And having read the reports from the National Great Ape Survival Plan (NGASP) workshops, I can see that the grassroots action is also falling into place. For the first time since we began with GRASP, the ambitious plans seem achievable, and for the first time since I started working in ape conservation the slide towards extinction no longer seems inevitable.

*Will Travers, Born Free Foundation*



M. Attwater

## UNESCO, UNEP and the Great Apes

The partnership between UNESCO and UNEP concerning GRASP was officially recognized at the World Summit for Sustainable Development last September in South Africa. By joining UNEP in this endeavour, UNESCO's long-term interest in promoting conservation of great ape species has been reaffirmed. In fact, UNESCO's commitment to protect these species is shown by its initiatives concerning preservation and conservation of natural heritage — such as in the case of the World Heritage Convention and of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme.

There are great ape populations living in areas recognized by UNESCO as Biosphere Reserves and World Heritage Sites. These populations are widely studied within the framework of long-term projects, such as in the case of Taï Biosphere Reserve and World Heritage Site (Côte d'Ivoire) where Boesch and Boesch-Achermann's team have conducted research on the chimpanzees. In addition, UNESCO itself has also been sponsoring and coordinating research programmes, such as its collaboration with the European Space Agency for the "Surveillance of Gorilla Habitat Project" in World Heritage Sites of the Democratic Republic of Congo. UNESCO fully recognizes the importance of these projects, not only for their academic value, but also for the promotion of conservation through the involvement of local populations in sustainable and income-generating activities. This integrated approach is promoted by UNESCO's educational programmes and public awareness-building campaigns. One example is the Regional Post-graduate Training School on Integrated Management of Tropical Forests [or "ERAIFT" in French]. Launched in 1999 at the University of Kinshasa (DRC), ERAIFT is training a new generation of professionals with a holistic approach to conservation and management of tropical forests. Other aims of the school are to train students to collaborate with local communities, improve the conditions for the local population and to work for sustainable development.

Many GRASP activities, like sanctuaries and eco-tourism projects, also fulfil these tasks by including the participation of local populations. Biosphere Reserves are home to great apes sanctuaries and rehabilitation centres as well as ecotourism initiatives. Among the many examples, an excellent one is the long-term research project on orang utans in the Tanjung Puting Biosphere Reserve (Indonesia) which also includes rehabilitation projects for ex-captive individuals (e.g. formerly at Camp Leakey, now in the nearby Lamandau Nature Reserve) and eco-tourism programmes coordinated by the Orangutan Foundation International — another GRASP partner. The participation and the well-being of the local population is key to the success of conservation efforts undertaken by GRASP — as is shown by initiatives like TACARE of the Jane Goodall Institute, another GRASP partner. However, it is important to remember the situation of great ape populations which are often affected by civil unrest and are forced to move to neighbouring countries. This confirms the need to consider the conservation of these species across boundaries for political and legal reasons, in addition to the continuity of their habitat. Therefore, UNESCO aims to use its experiences in transboundary cooperation to tackle issues concerning both the well-being of local communities and the fulfilment of the ecosystem approach for conserving the great apes. A tool implemented by UNESCO is the transboundary Biosphere Reserve which allows for the common management of conservation of biodiversity and for the promotion of cooperation at the political level. Transboundary cooperation requires the involvement of many different partners and therefore UNESCO sees the participation in the Great Ape Survival Project as a great opportunity for peace-building around a common idea: the conservation of the great ape species.

*Sami Mankoto, UNESCO*



For more information on UNESCO's activities related to GRASP please visit: [www.unesco.org/mab/](http://www.unesco.org/mab/)

## GRASP — The Human Dimension

Right from the start GRASP has been rooted in a need not only to save the great apes but also their forest and mountain habitats, which provide livelihoods for many poor people in Africa and SE Asia. The need to link the welfare of humans and wildlife is a central objective of the Partnership. It is one of the key criteria for selecting projects for GRASP support, such as the International Gorilla Conservation Programme (IGCP)'s programme for conserving mountain gorillas and Afromontane forest, and Bristol Zoo Garden's bushmeat educational project in Cameroon. It is a key criteria in developing National Great Ape Survival Plans. It will inform our future efforts to encourage responsible ape ecotourism. It is demonstrated in our efforts to promote cooperation with the World Health Organization and others in understanding and countering the dreadful effects of the Ebola virus in both human and non-human primates in Africa. It will influence our future education and promotional efforts, which will include a major new documentary on great apes and indigenous people in Central Africa. Several GRASP partners have a proud track record in joining up concerns for people with conservation of wildlife. The Partnership benefits from this experience and will continue to give strong emphasis to the "human dimension".

*Robert Hepworth, Deputy Director, UNEP/DEC*

## GRASP Sponsors

UNEP and the GRASP Partnership would like to thank the following sponsors for supporting GRASP:

UK Government (FCO and Defra)  
Norwegian Government  
Britannia Airways  
Dorling Kindersley  
Six Continents Hotel Group  
People's Trust for Endangered Species

## GRASP Information

If you would like information about GRASP's activities, the following information and documents are available by request:

- \* DR Congo, NGASP preliminary report
- \* Cameroon NGASP Report
- \* Congo Brazzaville NGASP Report
- \* GRASP Brainstorm Summary
- \* GRASP Draft Interim Constitution
- \* GRASP Draft NGASP Structure
- \* GRASP Draft Fundraising Principles
- \* GRASP Draft Work Plan
- \* GRASP Technical Support Team Interim Report
- \* GRASP 2002 Up-date

Please contact Melanie Virtue at [melanie.virtue@unep.org](mailto:melanie.virtue@unep.org) for details.

## GRASP Partners

### Intergovernmental bodies

UNEP, including the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) and UNESCO.

### International NGOs in the field of great ape conservation

African Wildlife Foundation

Ape Alliance

Born Free Foundation

Bristol Zoo Gardens

Bushmeat Crisis Task Force

Conservation International

Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund (Europe)

Fauna and Flora International

Institute for Tropical Forest Conservation

International Gorilla Conservation Programme

International Fund for Animal Welfare

The Jane Goodall Institutes

The Orangutan Foundation

Pan African Sanctuaries Alliance

The Wild Chimpanzee Foundation

Wildlife Conservation Society

World Wide Fund for Nature

### Environmental conventions

World Heritage Convention (WHC)

Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

Convention on Migratory Species (CMS).

## Afi Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary (AMWS), Conservation Programme, Cross River State, Nigeria. - Project Update, March 2003 -

Afi Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary (AMWS) is situated within the rainforest block in the border region of southeast Nigeria and southwest Cameroon. This region is an international biodiversity 'hotspot' and was identified as one of West Africa's three deforestation hotspots by the EC-funded TREES programme in 1998. Cross River State, by one estimate, contains over 30% of Nigeria's remaining rainforest. AMWS was gazetted from the Afi River Forest Reserve by the State Government in 2002. It is home to the Cross River Gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla diehli*) recognised as the rarest and most endangered subspecies of gorilla with a total population of approximately 250 - 300 individuals. It is also home to the most endangered subspecies of chimpanzee in West Africa (*Pan troglodytes vellerosus*), and the endangered drill monkey (*Mandrillus leucophaeus*). AMWS is also internationally recognised as a BirdLife International important bird area.

A long-term collaborative conservation programme has been built up at Afi Mountain for almost a decade, focusing mostly on gorillas and other endangered primates. In April 2001, the five organisations working to protect the AMWS Cross River State Forestry Commission (CRSFC), Fauna and Flora International, the Wildlife Conservation Society, the Nigerian Conservation Foundation, and Pandrillus formalised their working arrangements, forming the AMWS Partnership. The AMWS Conservation Programme has been developed under this management structure with input from all partners.

Central to the long-term success of conservation efforts at the Sanctuary has been the need for the employment, by the CRSFC, of sufficient staff to manage the Sanctuary. In October 2002 this came into fruition with a team of 10 rangers being employed by the CRSFC. 7 out of 10 new rangers come from the gorilla research staff, some of whom have worked at the Sanctuary monitoring the gorillas for more than five years, and therefore will take with them valuable skills and

expertise to the ranger programme. In January 2003, Fauna and Flora International, on behalf of the partnership, employed an experienced conservation co-ordinator who is working as a technical advisor to the CRSFC, with the aim of building their capacity to effectively and sustainably manage the AMWS. The current aims of the AMWS Conservation Programme are:

1. Building capacity of staff from the CRSFC to manage the Sanctuary effectively;
2. Assisting the CRSFC in the implementation of a sanctuary monitoring and protection programme;
3. Monitoring the Cross River gorilla population inside the sanctuary; and
4. Increasing the support of local communities for the sanctuary.

The project's purpose is to work towards ensuring the effective conservation of the AMWS's full range of fauna and flora. While this requires long-term action, this programme abates the greatest immediate threats — poaching, fires escaping onto the mountain, agricultural encroachment — through improving and targeting protection efforts. It also addresses causes underlying proximate threats, such as the CRSFC's lack of capacity to manage the sanctuary effectively, and low awareness within local communities of the benefits to them from a healthy Afi Mountain ecosystem. Actions include training at all levels for the CRSFC and community representatives with the ultimate goal of withdrawing external assistance; habitat and wildlife monitoring; support for patrols and law enforcement; outreach to communities to address points of conflict and to understand their concerns and the impact of the Sanctuary on their lives; and school education programmes to foster a greater understanding of the Sanctuary's importance. A simple but practical ranger-based monitoring system will produce a steady flow of information on the status of the Sanctuary's wildlife, overall habitat quality and the presence of threats. It will be used to plan, direct and evaluate management activities, such as law enforcement, ecosystem monitoring and community outreach in response to observed threats. Financial resources have been secured for the management of the sanctuary to the end of 2003. Funds are currently being sourced for 2004 and beyond.

*Hazel White, Fauna & Flora International.*

### GRASP Contact Information

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