

# Centre for Applied Social Sciences



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CONSERVANCY POLICY  
AND  
THE CAMPFIRE PROGRAMME  
IN ZIMBABWE

by

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and  
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March 1997

University of Zimbabwe

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\* A Member of IUCN, The World Conservation Union.

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## **Introduction**

Over the past few decades the term "conservancy" has gained increasing usage in Southern Africa and elsewhere. In Zimbabwe the term has generally been applied to wildlife and habitat management units on private land and as the size and number of these units has expanded calls for a "conservancy policy" have arisen. Focused as they are on commercial farm land, such calls could be held to have little direct relevance for the CAMPFIRE Programme and its operations in communal land. Such a view would however be myopic if not careless. A poorly conceived conservancy policy and cognate legislation could impact negatively on the CAMPFIRE Programme. Conversely, the conservancy concept, properly designed and articulated in policy and practice, has the potential to enhance the success of CAMPFIRE. This discussion paper looks at conservancy policy from the perspective of the Rural District Council (RDC) and communal farmer interests, exploring some of the issues involved and making suggestions on processes which can capitalise on the potential of the concept to benefit CAMPFIRE's constituency.

### **1. Definitions**

Obviously, if a conservancy policy is to be established, one has to be clear on the definition of the term in international circles. It does not appear in the well-known IUCN categorisation of protected areas (cf. Annex 1) and is used loosely in the international environmental literature. For Zimbabwean purposes it is more helpful to examine the use of the term as it has arisen in the Southern African context, particularly in South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe.

#### **1.1 South Africa**

While in most South African provinces game farms are required to be licensed, there is no statutory definition of a conservancy. They are nevertheless a feature of the commercial farming sector in several provinces, being essentially collaborative management arrangements between two or more landowners for economic and ecological purposes. Their legality derives from civil contract between owners rather than statutory mandate. In some instances land set-aside within a private property is also termed a conservancy. The various large private complexes next to Kruger NP (Sabi Sands, Klaserie, Selati, Timbavati) are what might be termed conservancies but are actually private game reserves owned by eco-tourist companies. South Africa thus uses the term in three different ways: co-management regimes, land set aside within a property, and substantial private game reserves.

Provincial Nature Conservation agencies have supported conservancies in order to foster and facilitate wildlife conservation schemes between commercial farmers. In the Free State Province wildlife has been subsidised to conservancies especially where this facilitates species conservation objectives. The Natal Parks Board has promoted a conservancy approach to facilitate water catchment conservation through encouraging groups of farmers to monitor the impact of their land management practices (deforestation, erosion, alien vegetation, chemicals etc.) on the health of river systems. This approach has similarities to Zimbabwe's Intensive Conservation Areas (ICAs). Conservancies in Natal have largely been joint arrangements by neighbouring farmers to maintain sufficient wildlife for aesthetic and recreational purposes. They have not played a significant role as joint units of production but have played a role in conserving species and water catchments and facilitating liaison and co-operation between private and communal neighbours.

## 1.2 Namibia

Since 1968 private landowners in Namibia have enjoyed the right to use and benefit from wildlife on their land, subject to certain conditions. Importantly these conditions included boundary game-proof fencing. Subsequently, economies of scale and the ecology of arid lands resulted in the emergence of conservancies. Individual farmers sought to pool land and financial resources to create larger units where integrated management practices could occur. Government viewed this development positively, and in 1991 the Ministry approved a policy on the establishment of conservancies in Namibia. This policy defined conservancies as follows:

*"A conservancy is a group of farms on which neighbouring landowners have pooled their resources for the purpose of conserving and utilising wildlife on their combined properties. The conservancy concept does not have to be restricted to the commercial farming areas, but can be extended to communal land as well." (Namibia, 1995:2)*

The first conservancy under the policy was established in 1992, and has been followed by the establishment of others on commercial land. The Ministry of Environment and Tourism provides certain extension and inspection services, and the use of wildlife operates under permit to ensure sustainability and good practice. It should be noted that the devolved proprietorship of wildlife to landowners on which this conservancy approach was based has had the following effect in the words of a Ministry policy document:

- "a) improved conservation of wildlife on commercial farms as farmers realised that they could benefit from the game, and*
- b) the development of multi-million Namibian dollar game farming, hunting and tourism industries which not only contribute to the economic viability of individual farms, but play an important role in the national economy, while requiring very little financial and technological support from the State." (Namibia 1995:2)*

Since independence Namibia has sought to extend these demonstrated ecological and economic benefits to farmers on communal land, in many ways replicating Zimbabwe's policy history of extending the wildlife and tourism industry to communal lands through the CAMPFIRE Programme. However Namibia's conditions are different, including the fact that to date lower tier structures of governance in communal lands are not as clearly defined as they are in Zimbabwe. Thus policy has used the conservancy model to create the management context for wildlife and natural resource use in communal lands.

The promulgation of the 1996 Nature Conservation Amendment Act provides that:

*"any group of people residing on communal land and which desires to have the area which they inhabit, or any part thereof, to be declared a conservancy shall apply to the Minister of Environment and Tourism ... ("conservancy" means any area declared a conservancy in terms of section 24A(2) (ii) - notice in the Gazette giving boundaries)." (Namibia 1996:4)*

Thus, through application to the Minister to have their land designated a conservancy a community can acquire the authority necessary under Namibian wildlife legislation to manage and utilise wildlife and natural resources within the designated conservancy area. The group's membership must be listed and be structured as a conservancy committee, served by a conservancy constitution. The key institutional ingredients are:

... membership; constitution; designated boundaries; administrative and financial competence; sustainable management and utilisation objective; accountability; transparency. The Minister retains regulatory oversight and ultimately may use such external sanctions as withdrawal of recognition, amendment or withdrawal of conditions.

### 1.3 Zimbabwe

There is no statutory definition of a conservancy but, under prevailing property law and wildlife legislation, commercial farmers have legally constituted themselves as conservancies under civil contract. A catalyst in this process was the objective of DNPWLM to develop a translocated breeding nuclei of black rhinos in Zimbabwe. This objective led to commercial farmers rapidly negotiating common property arrangements with their neighbours to establish rhino conservancies. Further, given land use economics, persistent droughts (especially 1991), and emerging wildlife-based production systems some conservancies rapidly developed towards becoming substantial private sector-based enterprises. Several properties have been amalgamated into a single management complex to enable more effective management, utilisation and protection, of some or all natural resources in that area. The rights and privileges, duties and obligations, of conservancies vis-à-vis the state are not coded nor clearly understood at present, giving rise to calls for a Zimbabwean conservancy policy and cognate legislation.

To date the conservancy concept in Zimbabwe has been applied only to commercial land. In this context one definition has been provided by the study conducted by Price Waterhouse and published by the Save Valley, Bubiana and Chiredzi River Conservancies. This definition merits extensive quote:

*"The term Conservancy can be applied to any number of properties which are amalgamated into a single complex in order to enable more effective management, utilization and protection of some or all natural resources in that area. In the case of the lowveld Conservancies, they are developed on the principle that in arid regions, rangeland resources need to be managed at a larger scale than individual farms, in order to cope with a variable and unpredictable environment.*

*The Conservancies under consideration are all managed in terms of agreements between the members, although the content of these agreements varies according to the aims of the members. The main focus of the Conservancy agreements is cooperative management of the wildlife resource. However, this focus can also be extended to cooperative business ventures between Conservancy members."*

(Save Valley, Bubiana and Chiredzi River Conservancies, 1994:2)

The Conservancy constitutions are built around four main principles (Du Toit 1992:298):

- a) That internal fencing is limited, in order not to divide a Conservancy into compartments, and thereby interfere with the natural movement and breeding of animals.
- b) In the event that a Conservancy property passes into the hands of an agency whose land use and wildlife management practices are not consistent with the Conservancy's, that property will be excised from the Conservancy, and Conservancy assets retrieved.

- c) The members are jointly responsible for meeting recurrent management costs.
- d) Management of the Conservancy wildlife is based on sound scientific principles.

The Conservancy developments are motivated by the need for:

- e) Greater economic and ecological resilience in the face of drought.
- f) More efficient and sustainable use of key resources in the areas, by virtue of the greater diversity, biomass and mobility of wildlife populations in the larger, unfenced area.
- g) Spreading risks.
- h) Resource management at a more appropriate scale.

In addition, there are several aspects to the conservation rationale for the Conservancies:

- i) Their potential for contributing to the conservation of endangered species.
- j) Their potential to make a general contribution to wildlife conservation by making a larger and more natural range available, especially for large game species.
- k) Their potential to contribute to soil and water conservation, and thereby assist in the recovery of degraded ecosystems in the Lowveld.
- l) Conservancies afford the opportunity to plan beyond the colonial boundaries of properties which often fragmented natural ecological areas.
- m) Single landowners on restricted properties often cannot achieve the economies of scale necessary for a big game wildlife enterprise.
- n) Conservancies would significantly add to the tourist destinations available in Zimbabwe, especially in the south east and west of the country and therefore help create sufficient product for a viable regional industry. (Save, Bubiana and Chiredzi River Conservancies 1994:2-3; Wildlife Working Group 1996:25)

#### **1.4 A Working Definition in the Zimbabwean Context**

From the discussion above certain generalisations can be made:

- a) Motivation for the establishment of conservancies in all three countries include ecological, economic and managerial objectives.
- b) A fundamental characteristic in all instances is that a conservancy is a collaborative institution, involving two or more land and natural resource owners/users. It is in effect a co-management or partnership agreement between recognised proprietors serving both private (individualised and collective) and joint ends.
- c) An important implication of b) above is that the term should not be applied to utilisation or conservation enterprises under single and sole management. A farm or a ranch which on its own includes wildlife or

tourism in its production and management regime is not *per se* a conservancy because the collaborative institutional component is absent. Wildlife and tourism enterprises on discrete farms or ranch units may well require policy attention, but the issues involved should be approached separately from any consideration of conservancy policy.

- d) While the conservancy policy has largely been applied only to commercial and private land to date, there is no intrinsic reason why it cannot include other tenure categories, as the Namibian example shows. Indeed the economic, ecological and managerial rationale for conservancies (cf. (a) above) implies that it can be effective across tenure categories in a number of combinations. (cf. section 3 below.)

With these generalisations in mind, we recommend that discussion on conservancy policy in Zimbabwe should proceed with the following definition:

**A conservancy shall be defined as a contractually legitimated co-management entity which involves two or more recognised land and resource authorities formed for the use and conservation of natural resources on land under their jurisdiction.**

We emphasise that this is a working definition for policy debate and recognise that a formal legal definition could require elaboration. For the purposes of this paper with its focus on the CAMPFIRE programme it is important to note that this working definition creates the possibility for formal participation in conservancies by RDCs.

## **2. Background Issues for Conservancy Policy in Zimbabwe**

### **2.1 Land Use Based on Wildlife Tourism**

Wildlife as a land use has been established in both the private (commercial) and communal (RDC) land sectors of Zimbabwe over the past decade. This has been the outcome of a policy which empowered local land owners (private) or holders (communal) to manage and utilise their wildlife. In the communal setting positive conditions have been provided by: proximity to protected areas, and existent habitat and resources combined with low human population densities. In the commercial setting proximity to state protected land has not been as significant. Rather, the critical condition has been the potential productivity and profitability of wildlife in comparison to cattle, especially in the drought prone semi-arid areas. Management and capital is considered better applied to wildlife than livestock.

### **2.2 Land Use and Natural Region (NR)**

Carrying capacity of communal areas is closely correlated with Natural Region, with higher capacity in NRs II and III than NRs IV and V. The existence of irrigation schemes in dry regions effectively create areas like NRs II and III within the broader classification. NRs IV and V are characterised as severe risk regions for crop production and high risk for livestock production beyond the very extensive. In the commercial sector the drier the region the larger the unit of production. This recognises the tendency for crop production to give way to rangeland management as rainfall drops. The extensive ranches characteristic of NRs IV and V are of a scale suitable for wildlife production. A conservancy between several such units produces habitat of a sufficient scale to sustain extensive and diverse wildlife populations, especially 'big



game'. These economic and ecological considerations dictate that conservancies are more likely to arise in NRs IV and V, as at present.

However it should not be assumed that the right conditions for a conservancy can only be found in NRs IV and V. Market proximity and/or specific tourism features could make a conservancy in NRs I - III the most economically productive form of land use in specific circumstances. One can envisage this, for instance, near Harare (NR II) or in Nyanga (NR I). This indicates the weakness of using natural region categories as the sole criterion for the determination of the location of conservancies. These categories are broad-brush divisions of the Zimbabwean landscape for analytic and general descriptive purposes. They are insufficiently disaggregated for detailed planning and mask the micro-ecological variation which exists in each of them. It would be unwise for conservancy policy to use these categories as substantive criteria on their own. Policy should rather be based on a principle which situates conservancies where they are the best form of land use, economic and financial, for a given micro-environment in terms of economic, ecological and managerial criteria.

### **2.3 Land Tenure**

Secure tenure is the bedrock of sustainable resource use, including conservancies. Tenure over the land is fundamental but also tenurial niches related to specific resources (e.g. wildlife, forest products, water, minerals) can be recognised. A conservancy in our definition is basically an association of tenurial units. In Zimbabwe, the classic tenurial classifications are private (large and small scale, and resettlement farmers), communal (RDCs are land authorities) and state land holdings. State and communal tenure involves central and local governmental authorities and the latter must also accommodate the legitimacy of customary authorities. It is possible to conceive a conservancy involving a single tenurial category, or any combination of them.

### **2.4 Equity Considerations**

Zimbabwean policy has been to maintain the tenurial classifications mentioned above. At the same time, however, it is a policy imperative that the issues of equity and indigenisation be addressed. These are pervasive policy issues and any consideration of conservancy policy cannot afford to ignore them. Current Government approaches reveal a concern about socio-economic equity focused at two levels: (a) access by communal farmers to land; and (b) access by an emerging indigenous elite to land and capital.

There are inherent tensions in the simultaneous resolution of these two concerns. Land reform and the transformation of large commercial holdings into small holdings may reduce opportunities for black elite entry into the large-scale commercial sector. It may also reduce the viability of the land holdings concerned and thus worsen the lot of the indigenous investors. Indigenisation, if focused solely on black elite entry to the large scale agricultural, wildlife and tourism sectors, will not adequately address the equity issue, even if popular with powerful pressure groups.

These contextualising macro-policy issues have an important bearing on the development of any conservancy approach. Currently Government manifests an ambivalence regarding the concept. While it is recognised that conservancies may be a sound land use, the current racial composition of their participants means that

Government is ambivalent about supporting conservancies unless they address the dual equity issues, land reform and indigenisation, outlined above.

The land reform issue centres on resource endowment as well as ownership. The private farmer has more resources and more secure tenurial rights. The core of this issue revolves around the socio-political acceptability of having substantial land tracts under the control of a small elite juxtaposed to a subsistence smallholding communal peasantry. What can conservancies do to help the majority of rural people meet their basic needs? Conservancies cannot be islands of sustainable development but must also address the challenge of considering the need for wider participation in the process, costs and benefits. Where a conservancy is situated solely in the commercial sector a significant opportunity cost is the acceptance by the communal people of the exclusive access of a few farmers to conservancy resources. Skewed ethnic participation within conservancies means there can be no multiracial middle class alliance acting as an effective constituency to encourage conservancy development.

Unless public and political perceptions of conservancies as a device inhibiting larger scale equity and indigenisation imperatives are changed to a perception that conservancies can be an approach contributing to their resolution, it is unlikely that any viable and durable conservancy policy will be forthcoming. While this paper attempts no detailed list of prescriptions to achieve this we do make the following observations:

- \* Participation in conservancies on large-scale commercial farm land must be significantly indigenised. *Per se* this falls in the realm of indigenisation and land policy rather than conservancy policy but it must be recognised as an enabling condition. The substantive economic, ecological and managerial arguments remain and are of as much importance to the black elite as they are to white elite. There are practical problems to be faced. These include the fact that significant investment is presently being made through loss of earnings, restocking, fencing, etc. This is often being done in recognition of the future prospects and because of the lack of viability with cattle.
- \* The greatest potential in the conservancy approach to address equity issues will arise, however, when it is applied across tenure categories. As conservancies are created which involve contractual relationships of benefit and responsibility between, for example, commercial and communal farmers, linkages of mutual benefit are put in place which instigate a process to ameliorate inequity.
- \* CAMPFIRE programme objectives stand to gain by the creation of such trans-tenure category conservancies where ecologically and economically viable zones provide the potential to enhance opportunities for small-scale farmers to collectively enter large scale wildlife and tourism enterprises. Many of these farmers are in areas rich in resource capital, and properly orchestrated conservancy involvement could mean for them an indigenisation in the wildlife and tourism industries which goes beyond that of an entrepreneurial business elite.

### 3. Typology

We have previously noted (section 1.4 d) that the conservancy approach can and should be applied across tenure categories. A variety of tenure contexts or combinations of them are possible. In this section we provide a brief discussion of possible types and combinations. Further elaboration by example is provided in section 4.

## **1 Private Owners**

The best known examples are Save, Chiredzi River, Bubiana, and Gwaai River. All these are in NRs IV and V and share some common characteristics:

- 3.1.1 They are all mutual arrangements between private land-owners primarily concerned with running economically and ecologically sound wildlife-based businesses;
- 3.1.2 They all share boundaries, more or less, with communal or state land;
- 3.1.3 They all depend on a supportive DNPWLM policy related to purchase of live animals from the national estate or other private wildlife owners. For example, Save Conservancy plans to stock their area and intend to raise substantial funds for that purpose. Would DNPWLM sell them wildlife and under what conditions?
- 3.1.4 The majority are involved in the national rhino protection strategy.
- 3.1.5 A historical perspective must be maintained. Buffalo present a case in point. Save Valley's last buffalo were culled (by Government) in the mid 1980's through FMD control. At the time, the landowners were promised (by Government) that they would have preferential access to buffalo if, and when, that became an issue again.

## **3.2 Private / Communal Conservancies**

The Save Valley Conservancy (SVC) has proposed a structure which would formally bind the conservancy with its communal neighbours. Five RDCs have resolved to establish a Joint Management Committee (JMC) and collaborate with the SVC Committee in a Joint Working Committee. This type of private/communal conservancy management is discussed further in section 4.

## **3.3 RDC (communal) / RDC (communal) Conservancies**

There are many examples where two or more RDCs implementing CAMPFIRE could establish a conservancy linking their projects. Inyanga North and Mudzi RDCs have a joint project in the Rwenya river area; Mudzi, Rushinga, and UMP RDCs collaborate in the Mazowe river area. Potentially, there are many examples where the boundary between RDC CAMPFIRE projects requires joint management and planning. A conservancy framework could usefully bind wards on either side of an RDC boundary into a joint management regime. Each RDC would legitimate the conservancy by delegating some managerial authority to a joint management unit.

## **3.4 RDC (communal) / State Conservancies**

Taking the example of the Kariba lakeshore and more particularly the Sengwa river, it is possible to imagine DNPWLM, Binga and Kariba RDCs establishing a joint management plan. Such a plan might be a sub-set of a lakeshore management plan. Examples are many as effectively all planning of protected and communal area boundaries could be considered. This is probably unnecessary but the contested buffer zones between parks and communities could be considered co-management/conservancy zones. Several other examples can be given. Bulilimangwe RDC is interested in exploring the possibility of designating some of the resettlement ranches in the district as conservancies and linking them with its CAMPFIRE programme and private sector initiatives in the district. Small state managed protected areas like Tuli,

Chiredzi and Chipinge Safari Areas could link with adjacent communal (RDC) areas. Precedent actually exists with the Dande and Malapati Safari Areas where, although these are state lands, the DNPWLM has allowed benefits to be appreciated by CAMPFIRE communities.

### **3.5 State / Private Conservancies**

This is a further combination which can be considered. Given the new statutory fund status of DNPWLM, arrangements between the parks estate and conservancies can now be envisaged. Some linkage between the Chipinge Safari Area and Save River Conservancy might serve a mutual collaborative goal. This also applies to Forestry Commission land and the Gwaai River Conservancy.

### **3.6 State / Private / Communal (RDC) Conservancies**

An example is that of the Maliangwe Trust which owns land adjacent to both Gona re Zhou and Chiredzi RDC. These three land authorities need to communicate and plan together to avoid conflicts over land use, as well as cost and benefit allocation. Should all three parties evolve a plan which incorporated joint land or wildlife use then that would serve as a form of conservancy incorporating all three land classifications and their respective management authorities. The possibility of linkage between the Save Conservancy, Chipinge Safari Area and Chipinge RDC (communal) land is a further practical example.

### **3.7 Conservancies as a Mechanism of Refining CAMPFIRE Policy**

DNPWLM has granted appropriate authority to some 26 RDCs. Less than a quarter of the communal land under these RDCs could be considered viable wildlife habitat. Were a conservancy approach adopted which focused on strategic management zones a more supportive management framework might be fostered. For example, the three wards in western Dande under Guruve RDC's appropriate authority might form a conservancy which had clear institutional rights and obligations. In addition, through the Dande Safari Area, DNPWLM could be a conservancy partner. Many examples exist, another being the relationship between Tsholotsho and Bulilimangwe. An early attempt by these two districts to run a joint CAMPFIRE scheme was thwarted, partly because the two districts are in different provinces. A conservancy approach might be a way of softening hard administrative boundaries in order to achieve optimal management units from an ecological and financial perspective. The DNPWLM could use this approach to secure a positive and instrumental role in refining CAMPFIRE policy, as it could oversee a clear devolution, separation, and balance of powers between central, RDC, and community levels within the programme. This may be the way to proceed, rather than granting authority to single wards and villages. The conservancy would be a middle structure between village/ward, and RDC. This could also be a mechanism for rationalising safari concessions and ward boundaries.

## **Some Concrete Zimbabwe Examples**

### **4.1 Save Valley Conservancy (SVC)**

There are several ways by which neighbouring communities could have a real investment in a private conservancy e.g.:

- a) DNPWLM grants wildlife translocated to conservancies as an equity investment on behalf of communities.
- b) Private sector grants communities a benefit in return for share of costs. There are several ways this could happen, perhaps the most profound would be where communal or resettlement land was invested by the landholders into the conservancy. This would make communities full shareholding participants rather than neighbouring joint-venture partners.
- c) Donor grant funds buy wildlife from state/private sector for a community to invest in a neighbouring conservancy.

The SVC proposed option c) by which a donor grants funds to stock the conservancy with wildlife as an equity investment, in perpetuity, for the communities. A legal Trust would hold the equity and receive an annual dividend (interest, benefit) from the conservancy. SVC has presented such a proposal to neighbouring communities through their 5 respective RDCs. The RDCs would raise funds to buy wildlife through their trust structure and thereby the communities would have "ownership" of wildlife and be full co-management parties.

Some apparent constraints in the Save proposal are:

- d) Donors may be reluctant to make a grant to communities which also benefits the private sector despite the fact that communities and private sector request it partly because of the lack of viable alternatives.
- e) Donors want central government support for the idea which, without a policy guideline, is hard to secure.
- f) The SVC proposal addresses equity in regard to local communities but not participation by indigenous private landowners in the conservancy.
- g) There is no national forum through which the SVC can constructively work through the policy process.

While central government seems pressured to indigenise conservancies, RDCs seem more concerned to empower communal neighbours. At present, the major stakeholders in regard to private sector conservancies appear to be: the commercial farmers; the communal farmers; the RDCs; indigenous business interests; and the DNPWLM.

In regard to facilitating the policy process it must be recognised that since the DNPWLM attained Fund status it is now both a regulator and an interested party. How far this might preclude DNPWLM from being an 'honest broker' is unclear. Further, who actually represents the indigenous business interests?

For communities various participation permutations are possible (e.g. gate / bed levies etc.) but only "ownership" of conservancy wildlife or land would give them a substantial equity stake. Some communities, particularly the resettlement areas around the SVC, could put land into the conservancy and thereby gain a substantial participation but this

would probably not be possible for all neighbouring communities. The SVC might consider granting communities benefits from a designated specie (e.g. buffalo or elephant). In the case of the rhino, a protected specie, the DNPWLM, could possibly facilitate this. To be financially viable the SVC needs to invest in wild stock and therefore they must either secure loans, or a grant through the community trust. If the SVC borrows they will have to pay interest which reduces their ability and obligation to fund the Trust. Although levies could help they would not give the communities (RDCs) real ownership and the conservancy would resemble a "parks and neighbours" type programme of the Kenyan model, where the neighbours have little say in terms of management.

## **4.2 Mavuradona Wilderness**

The Mavuradona wilderness provides an example where a RDC set aside communal land for the conservation and sustainable use of wildlife. The initiation of the project involved collaboration between the local authority and commercial farmers. The structure is not formally collaborative but commercial farmers have access to the management structure of the RDC. Muzarabani RDC has also recognised the vested interests of communal neighbours resident in Guruve RDC. Whereas a formally structured conservancy would have direct representation of the two RDCs and the commercial farmers this has not occurred as the wilderness area is wholly within Muzarabani RDC. Should the commercial farmers of Guruve RDC contribute land that would constitute the basis for a co-management, or conservancy approach. The lesson perhaps is that neighbours may be beneficiaries and pay some conservation costs, but are not the primary managers as they do not have land, or animals, in the conservancy. However, because Muzarabani's animals might wander onto neighbours lands they have a right to some beneficiary status.

## **4.3 Game Farms and Wilderness Sites**

Some commercial farmers may set aside land for wildlife and call it a conservancy. Some game farms may have specially protected zones within them for the security of rare species and call them conservancies e.g. a rhino conservancy within a game farm. This could also occur on RDC/communal land as is already the case in Gatshe Gatshe and the Sanyati areas where the RDCs have designated land as wild land for an eco-tourist use. This does not fit our working definition of the term, and in our view (cf. 1.4.c above) such arrangements should have another name to avoid terminological confusions.

## **4.4 Kariba Lakeshore**

The Kariba lakeshore encompasses several land authorities - DNPWLM, Kariba RDC, Kariba TC, and Binga RDC. DNPWLM has responsibility both for protected land and for the lake recreational zone. In addition the Zambian authorities also have a substantial legal stake. The establishment of the combination authority under the Town and Country Planning Act is an attempt to formalise a planning and management mechanism to lock the Zimbabwean authorities into a co-ordinated planning system.

At a more micro level the DNPWLM shares several riverine boundaries with communal areas. These can be conflict zones between artisanal and recreational fishing. In addition these rivers are also habitat for crocodile populations which will nest on both sides of the river. It would be possible to see these rivers (e.g. Ume, Sanyati, Sengwa etc.) as conservancies, where the conservancy exists to bring DNPWLM and the local

authorities together into a joint management structure for the specific purpose of ensuring collaboration for managing the use of riverine habitat.

The example of Lake Kariba could introduce the concept of an international conservancy area to avoid conflicting resource use practices between different countries. Thus the 'trans-frontier' parks are examples of what could be a conservancy approach. However, issues of scale and the intricacies of integrated management and benefit flows leads us to doubt the viability of trying to make the entire Kariba/Zambezi area a conservancy as we have defined it. The challenge in this case would be more a concern for co-ordination and control than joint financial enterprise.

### **Government's Role in the Conservancy Policy Process**

The concept of conservancy, as has been defined here, would be a powerful management tool for developing collaborative synergy between land authorities (state, private, communal) and creating integrated units of management. However, policy in relation to conservancies and the CAMPFIRE Programme is only an aspect of the overarching wildlife policy which defines the relationship between "responsible" and "appropriate" management regimes.

Government needs to manage policy as a process, not a centrally-driven event, facilitating a wildlife-based economy as much as regulating it. Structural change and policy review characterise the present situation, driven by DNPWLM's restructuring, fund status and government's equity policy which might make contest and conflict inevitable. However, by managing policy as a process in a transparent and accountable way DNPWLM cannot be altered.

The National Parks Department should be clear of its own role in each phase of the policy process, particularly the implementation. Previously DNPWLM was the responsible authority and manager of all wildlife but since the 1975 Act (amended 1982) it has used its authority to grant "appropriate authority" status to the private and communal tenorial sectors. The precise nature of that relationship requires some evaluation of, *inter alia*, the following policy components:

- a) **Extension**. Should the Department develop a "community conservation" branch to facilitate and manage its collaborative activities and relations with the private and communal sector?
- b) **Regulation**. Which activities and actions by "appropriate authorities" require permission still being granted by the "responsible authority" (e.g. exports, translocations, trophy quotas, exotics, protected species etc.)? What methods would be most effective and efficient in managing the regulatory role (permits, licenses, permissions, oversight, inspection, etc.)?
- c) **Monitoring**. What information needs to be exchanged between the "responsible" and "appropriate" authorities related to wildlife status and management? As DNPWLM is the agency accountable for all wildlife at the level of the state, what monitoring information does it minimally or optimally need?
- d) **Enforcement**. DNPWLM must be able to police its own estate and rules and regulations and also be in a position to assist the "appropriate authorities" in the discharge of their own enforcement requirements.
- e) **Control**. DNPWLM must have a capacity to protect the public from wildlife when necessary. While "appropriate authorities" have to accept, in many cases, the

management of this problem, ultimately DNPWLM is likely to continue to have a role in this issue.

The above policy components generally apply to the overall policy environment related to the management of wildlife outside the Parks' estate of which conservancy policy, as defined here, would be a specific sub-set. DNPWLM could choose to sanction the existent conservancies as legitimate developments based on civil contract and present wildlife legislation, or establish criteria by which they could be sanctioned. Views will differ on how regulatory DNPWLM ought to be or how self-regulatory divisions of the wildlife industry should be.

The model since independence has been to decentralise authority to landowners, with DNPWLM retaining residual right of oversight and regulation. As a Fund DNPWLM needs to reassure the public that its financial interest in the wildlife industry will not jeopardise its conservation imperative. Undoubtedly, there is a leadership role in the entire policy process for Parks', including implementation. For optimal efficiency in realising a common vision on sustainable self regulation the DNPWLM should rely more on positive incentives than on negative sanctions. There should be a clear set of objectives and institutional roles for DNPWLM, producer associations and producers.

The working relationship between DNPWLM, private and communal sectors would not always be hierarchical, between "regulator" and "regulated", but would also manifest aspects of co-operation. Conservancies, as co-management entities, provide the prospect of the country enhancing its conservation status as well as development opportunities through establishing partnerships at a scale conducive to both. By fulfilling two of the objectives enshrined in the Convention on Biodiversity (conservation and sustainable use) the issue remains to address the third objective, socio-economic equity and political acceptability. DNPWLM is therefore challenged to build on the decentralisation process by encouraging co-management regimes. In this process DNPWLM has some distinct strengths: it is the "responsible authority", it has assets (parks estate) and the means (fund status) to contribute positively to the policy process through direct participation in the implementation phase.

With regard to developing a conservancy policy which facilitates the relationship between state, private and communal sectors the following cycle could be borne in mind (Brewer and de Leon 1983):

The process begins with a policy identification phase which identifies the strengths and weaknesses of the present policy in the light of the opportunities and threats presented by the wider ecological, social, economic and political environment. Present policy is centred on devolution of management and authority to landowners (private sector) and landholders (communal sector). This has been successful in establishing positive management incentives, noting that CAMPFIRE manifests some dissonance between the units of authority (RDC) and management (community). Further, DNPWLM may have experienced problems defining its role in the decentralised approach. For example, how much information and regulatory control does DNPWLM need to ensure its overall responsibility? How much of an extension service should DNPWLM provide to the private and communal sectors? How much can it realistically expect to efficiently carry out in these activities, given its resource constraints?

The evaluation of the present policy options for adaptation should be estimated with the full participation of stakeholders. In this estimation phase of conservancy policy, fora should be established to solicit views on the identified policy options. Issues, visions, objectives and models should be debated. It is essential to the public interest that communication is open and consensus a goal and therefore information sharing, mediation and conflict resolution would characterise this phase.



Once the policy options have been estimated the process can move into a selection phase. As many differences and conflicts as possible should be resolved before final selection. Presently, conflict seems focused on the equity issue (communal benefit/indigenisation) and the respective roles of the state, private and communal sectors along a regulatory to self regulatory continuum.

The selection phase establishes the main objectives, incentives, roles and responsibilities of stakeholders in order that the implementation phase can have the best possible chance of success. Lessons should be taken from CAMPFIRE where a great deal of policy estimation has taken place during the implementation phase. Ideally, implementation should be an incentive-led activity, closely monitored in order to adapt the incentive and regulatory aspects. To fine-tune a policy in the implementation phase is acceptable but major changes would indicate failure in the estimation and selection phases.

After a period of time, which in regard to a policy for tourism-based conservancies would be from 5 to 10 years, there should be an evaluation phase, after which the cycle returns to identification of potential improvements, estimation, selection and implementation of any major structural changes felt necessary.

### **Conclusion**

Any policy related to wildlife conservancies depends on a clear definition of the term. The definition given will determine the utility of conservancy as a concept, structure and management tool. If the term is defined too broadly (any wildlife management activity outside the Parks and Wild Life Estate) or too narrowly (a private sector game farm or ranch) then it would lose its pertinence as a specific form of wildlife management. Defined as a co-management entity made of land and resource authorities it can constitute an approach of great significance to the CAMPFIRE programme, particularly when these entities cut across current tenure categories.



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