

Land-use planning strategy document

Landscape 3, Lopé–Chaillu–Louesse Zone 3010007, West Waka ERZ, Gabon

July 2008

1 Introduction

To the west of Waka National Park, lies a block of forest of approximately the same size as the park that is allocated in sustainable management logging concessions. The forest is the same very hilly and humid forest as in the park and in many areas still supports significant wildlife populations. There are no permanent settlements in the zone. Effective management of the zone is critical for the adjacent National Park because 1) the zone includes parts of the watersheds of both the Waka and the Ikobé rivers, 2) logging roads provide easy access to the park buffer zone and park limits, facilitating access by hunters, 3) Waka National Park on its own is too small to protect key species like forest elephant over the long term.

Over the past three years, WCS has conducted a number of field missions in the area to identify the different stakeholders involved, evaluate the pressure of commercial hunting and catalyze development of a management plan for the area that focuses on managing hunting and limiting impacts on the adjacent National Park. A preliminary system of barriers and patrols has been established, protecting a key area closest to the National Park. A wider plan has been proposed and is being updated following significant changes in the management personnel of the two logging companies in the area.

The rest of this document presents an outline of the strategy for achieving effective management of the zone, closely following the CARPE/USFS guidelines provided.

2 Identify and Define Roles of Planning Team

2.1 Roles and responsibilities pertaining to planning process of lead NGO staff clearly defined.

- WCS Country Director (Joe Walston) is responsible for overall strategic direction and liaison with CARPE.
- WCS Landscape lead (Malcolm Starkey) co-ordinates field activities and manages the sub-contracts with MBG and IPACC.
- WCS' Assistant Director for External Relations (Romain Calaque) is charged with liaison with the Gabonese National Parks Agency (ANPN), particularly the Cellule d'Amenagement, and managing the sub-contract with RAPAC.
- The WCS Project Manager for the Waka zone (Franck Lepemangoye) is charged with implementing all field activities relating to the land-use planning process in the zone and working with the National Park Conservateur and local representatives of the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Forests.

2.2 Additional staff hired as needed, and/or any tasks contracted to partner organizations.

- Comparative surveys of botanical diversity and forest habitat type necessary for micro-zoning have been sub-contracted to Missouri Botanical Garden (MBG)
- RAPAC will facilitate a landscape-level meeting of the forestry company aménagistes, national park Conservateurs, local authorities and local population representatives that will include this zone.

2.3 Roles of non-lead NGOs clearly defined.

The MBG and RAPAC non-lead NGOs have specific and clear missions for this zone:

MBG – conduct baseline botanical surveys to describe patterns of species richness and endemism in the park and its buffer zone to inform the micro-zoning plan.

RAPAC will facilitate a meeting including this zone, but will not conduct any specific activities in the field.

3 Information/Data Gathering

3.1 Physical

3.1.1 Boundaries of the zone delineated.

- The logging concessions in the zone have been physically delimited by the companies and shapefiles of the limits exists. The zone currently follows these limits very closely.

3.1.2 Identify topography, water courses, unique physical features

3.1.3 Maps/satellite imagery compiled

- Shapefiles of watercourses, roads, forestry concession limits, park boundaries and data from wildlife/human impact surveys have been compiled.
- A 90m resolution raster elevation map is available.
- The area is extremely cloudy and there are few recent satellite images sufficiently clear to be useable.

3.1.4 Boundaries of existing legal extractive concessions mapped and their status noted.

- Maps of concessions attributed as of 2007 are available (see www.finances.gouv.ga)
- The IFL concession (french-owned) is active and has signed a Convention Provisoire d'Aménagement et Transformation (in October 2004). They underwent a major change management in 2007 when the local management staff were replaced by a sub-contracting company of Malaysian origin. This also led to a significant turnover in local staff.
- The EGG concession has been closed, however it is not yet entirely clear whether it has been returned to the state (Retour au Domaine, according to local representatives of the forestry ministry), integrated with the neighboring IFL concession (which the latest maps from the government imply) or simply abandoned for the time being. The situation is being investigated at both headquarters and at a local level.

3.2 Ecological

3.2.1 Key wildlife resources

- No systematic surveys of wildlife abundance have been undertaken in this area, but data from field patrols and from adjacent Waka National Park provides basic information.
- The lack of systematic surveys in this area is not currently a barrier for management planning. However, conducting a systematic program of surveys will be an important part of the implementation plan.
- Small mammals, reptiles and invertebrates are extremely poorly known. This is not critical information for the current process of land-use planning and we do not foresee conducting any targeted surveys of these taxa as part of the CARPE program.

3.2.2 Wildlife migration corridors

- This zone is the western buffer zone of Waka National Park. There is undoubtedly movement of wildlife, particularly elephants (for which Waka National Park is too small to support on its own) though these have not been studied in detail.

3.2.3 Rare and under-represented plant communities

- Historically, this is one of the areas of Gabon where there has been least botanical collecting, and it is poorly known.
- MBG have conducted one major field mission in the corridor (Leal, 2006) undertaking systematic surveys of plant biodiversity in relation to climatic factors, as well as several missions of more general ethnobotanical collecting. Several rare and unusual species have been found. One and perhaps two more missions are planned (probably in year 4), this will provide sufficient data to evaluate predictive models of the areas of the highest species richness and endemism. MBG will provide a synthesis report highlighting the areas of the zone known or most likely to harbor rare and unusual plant communities.

3.3 Socio-economic context

3.3.1 Identify villages, foot paths, transport routes, key economic centers within and around the landscape, agricultural activities, hunting/fishing areas, areas of subsistence level timber extraction.

- Surveys were conducted by Bouanga (2006) and Abitsi (2006,2007). There are no permanent villages in the concession, but a number of hunting camps and three camps for logging company workers. The management changes in IFL and the closure of EGG have rendered this data out of date and new data is being collected using RRA techniques.
- Data from these studies is being compiled for inclusion in the draft management plan and will be presented in the stakeholder meetings with IFL to be organized in Q4 2008.

3.3.2 Identify all stakeholders of the zone (including populations outside the zone).

- The stakeholder list is being compiled from the studies mentioned above.
- Whilst there are no villages in the zone, a sector of the population of Fougamou (local administrative center) is an important stakeholder since they use forestry roads to access their homes on the right bank of the Ngounié river.

3.3.3 Identify those resources and regions of the zone utilized for subsistence purposes vs. larger commercial trade.

- The entire zone is allocated for commercial logging in Sustainable Management Concessions (CFAD).
- Commercial and subsistence hunting and collecting of NTFPs occurs in the north of the zone and near the logging camps.

3.4 Government management authority presence on landscape and capacity to play role in planning process.

- MINEF is represented by its Cantonment in nearby Fougamou and Provincial Inspector in Mouila.
- Following the retirement of the first Conservateur there is not currently a Conservateur for Waka National Park, nor any other government park staff. We expect a new Conservateur to be named in Q4 of 2008. As an interim measure, the ANPN has made available members of its Cellule d'Amenagement to represent the government. This is on a punctual basis and workplanning has to take account of that.
- The Ministry of the Interior is represented by a Sous-Prefet of the District d'Ikobey, and the Prefet of Fougamou. Their implication is essential, particularly for all questions relating to the park buffer zone, and both have demonstrated considerable willingness to support the land-use planning process. The Sous-Prefet does not currently have a vehicle and due to lack of communications is currently based in Fougamou, instead of Ikobey park.

4 Creation of a Public Participation Strategy

4.1 Identify those stakeholders that must be included in process; Interested and affected publics.

- A stakeholder analysis was conducted by Bouanga (2006) but needs to be updated following the changes of management in both the IFL and EGG logging companies.
- Be that as it may, the primary local stakeholders to include in the process are:
 1. The logging company owners and aménagistes
 2. local authorities, especially Ministry of the Interior and Ministry of Eaux et Forêts
 3. the village of Egono (from where many of the commercial hunters in the zone originate.
 4. logging company employees.

- The most significant elites from the zone must also be included (probably via their local representatives).
- The majority of the area is uninhabited, so there are few other stakeholders. However, over the course of the planning process other stakeholders are likely to arise or be identified. This strategy will therefore be revised as necessary.

4.2 Prioritize which stakeholders should be engaged earliest; based on current activities that pose existing threat to key resources.

- Given the relatively small number of stakeholders in the area, and the difficulties of reaching the zone, the local stakeholders should be engaged essentially simultaneously.

4.3 Describe how to engage with different groups

- Engagement will be via individual meetings with each stakeholder group, followed by larger meetings to establish the common objectives for inclusion into the management plan.

4.3.1 Identify willingness of various extractive concession holders to engage in landscape planning process.

- The ownership of IFL have demonstrated a willingness to collaborate. However they have also subcontracted the exploitation to a Malaysian company which whom communication is difficult (language barrier). Further, a lack of transparency in the the division of responsibility between the two groups is . As a result, both need to be engaged simultaneously.
- The EGG company has recently pulled out of the area and has little interest or willingness to re-engage at this point. Its concession may have been taken over.

4.3.2 Create a process for conflict/dispute resolution between interests/stakeholders.

- The CTG (Comité Technique de Gestion) and Comité Consultative de Gestion Local will be the key forums for resolving disputes between local populations and logging companies on the one hand and the National Parks on the other.
- OAB-ITTO principles suggest that all companies undertaking sustainable forest management should create a local consultation mechanism to identify and resolve conflicts. We will lobby IFL to put this into practice and provide technical support as to the composition and functioning of the mechanism.

5 Creation of Strategy for Formal Recognition of Plan

- The plan will be a conceptual document that will be validated by the different actors at a stakeholder meeting.
- Certain aspects of implementation, notably location of séries de conservation, village territories and location of infrastructure will be formalized in the logging company's management plans which will be submitted to MINEF for approval.
- Other specific aspects of implementation (for example organization of anti-poaching, monitoring surveys and partnerships between the villages and the logging companies) will be formalized in one or more MoU's between the different actors involved.

6 Creation of Vision and Objectives for the Zone

- The Government of Gabon's vision for the zone is set out in the Code Forestier and National Parks law, both of which specify the need for sustainable management, support to local communities and limited environmental impacts.
- An initial draft of specific objectives will be defined following a stakeholder meeting to be held in Q4 of 2008.

7 Identify Management Micro-Zones and Associated Objectives and Guidelines

- Four main types of micro-zones are projected: séries de conservation (set-aside areas), hunting zones for logging company workers, village zones (not applicable in this case as there are no villages) and production zones.
- The location of the key logging camps in the zone will define the areas reserved for hunting by employees. WCS has been lobbying government and the concessionaires to ensure these areas are outside the national park buffer zones.
- MBG will produce a map of the concession indicate areas of known or probable high biodiversity, this will be combined with the logging companies' information on timber value as a basis for discussions about the location of the 5% set-aside areas in the concessions.
- Once data is available, micro-zones and associated objectives will be defined in one or more stakeholder meetings including the logging companies, the national park administration, the forestry ministry, local authorities (Ministry of the Interior), employee representatives and local populations. Preliminary meetings will be held with each group to define the zones.

- A significant challenge to management is that people from the quartier of Foug-amou (local administrative center) that is on the right bank of the Ngounie drive through these concessions to reach their homes. This means that a simple exclusion policy for cars that do not belong to the logging companies will not be practical. Rather a system of barriers with a 'whitelist' of people permitted to pass will be necessary.

8 Elaboration of Implementation Plan for the Zone

- An updated proposed hunting management plan (position of barriers, roads to be closed, definition of zones for hunting by workers etc) will be produced following a field mission in Q3 of 2008 to update the information following the management change in the logging companies. It will be presented/ revised/ validated at the stakeholder meetings in Q4 2008 and refined based on follow-up fieldwork and meetings.
- A draft implementation plan for the séries de conservation will be developed based on the stakeholder meetings in Q4 2008 and refined based on follow-up fieldwork and meetings.

9 Creation of Monitoring Plan for the Zone

- A framework for measuring and evaluating progress towards objectives and the execution of different planned activities will be developed following a logical framework approach. The indicators, means of verification and responsibility for execution remain to be specified. This will be undertaken following the stakeholder meetings that will define the vision and objectives for the zone.
- A demonstration of the use of MIST software for monitoring impacts will be conducted in 2009.

References

- Bouanga, E. (2006). Projets parks and people. rapport préliminaire de l'étude extensive 2004-2006. Technical report, WCS Gabon/Boston College.
- Leal, M. (2006). The biodiversity of west waka. Technical report, Missouri Botanical Garden.