

October 2003

Dear Everybody:



The trail wound around the mountain in the Northern Rockies. It was only 14 inches wide. On my right side the precipice dropped several hundred feet across a rocky shoal to a stand of trees. From there the mountain fell several thousand feet to a valley of wild meadows and streams. My horse, *Stormy*, stepped slightly off the track, kicking up rocks that cascaded down the slope, tumbling out of sight.

Instantly I nudged her with my boot, moving her closer into the mountainside. I would have hugged the bold, broad slip-face if I could have.

The peaks of the Selkirk, Cabinet, and Purcell mountain ranges marched in every direction as far as we could see. Ancient glacial lakes dotted the valleys and towering spruce and cedar crowned the summits. Mark had called a moose into our camp that morning. Now we were looking for bears, elk, cougars and mule deer: conducting a reconnaissance for wildlife habitat.

The switchbacks of the trail were rocky and uneven. Every few hundred feet a large bolder or fallen tree lay across the path. Rather than stepping over the deadfall, *Stormy* decided on her own to jump high over the obstacles, landing half off the trail on the other side.

“Bear tracks!” Mark called from ahead. “See em?”

“I don’t know. My eyes are closed.” I answered.

“What’s wrong? This is a great trail.”

“Yeah, right.” At that moment the trail turned straight down the mountain. This was too much for *Stormy*. Her feet began sliding and skidding. (Mother – don’t read this part.) She whirled up slope, but lost her footing. I leaned toward the mountain trying to help her keep her balance, but she fell forward. I was thrown against the saddle horn and her neck. All I remember is hitting the ground with a huge gray mare squirming next to me. She writhed around; I leaned into the slope trying to avoid her. Miraculously, she jumped to her feet, completely missing me. I lay in a heap as Mark dismounted and rushed up to me. Except for some major bruising, I was unhurt. (I considered faking unconsciousness so Mark would call for a helicopter evacuation.)

We decided that *Stormy* was not ready for trail riding. So, balancing on this steep rocky perch, Mark transferred my saddle to the packhorse, and I rode him safely down the mountain.

We take these risks in order to access habitat that must be conserved. Sadly, it appears that one of the wolves that visited us last year was killed. Its radio collar was located after it was cut off and damaged with a screwdriver. Such heartbreaks drive us to find safe haven for these animals. We have located some amazing property that is essential for wildlife by both expanding existing protected areas but also to link critically important safe zones to allow the flow of animals from one area to another thus protecting genetic diversity. One special piece is 920 acres of untouched wilderness surrounded by national forest that is crucial habitat for grizzly bears and all other wildlife. I sure wish you would buy it and put it in conservation easement, so I would not have to ride that trail again! Seriously, one of the most essential measures for conservation in our country is to purchase these parcels and protect them from development. We can provide details for various financial and tax break opportunities. We greatly appreciate any help that you can offer.

Meanwhile, the progress in North Luangwa is unprecedented. Our team has succeeded in expanding and developing the village assistance programs beyond our fondest dreams. While UK based *Harvest Help* provides support for agriculture, we continue support for small business, education and health programs. Hammer and Moses have sent us photographs of the new school and grain storage building in Chilyaba village; the Kaluba honey harvest from the scores of beehives; the new sunflower oil press in Nkomba; and school supplies from

Owens Foundation members. There is a picture of Hammer Simwinga, the Zambian we left in charge of the village programs, on his motorcycle donated by Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands.

Through a grant from *The Williams Family Foundation*, we have funded training courses for Traditional Birth Attendants, who are qualified in midwifery, family planning, AIDS prevention, nutrition, clean water, childhood development and first aid. Often they provide the only health care for miles. We have also funded

an assistant for Hammer and Moses so they can expand the village projects. A new generator airs conservation videos in remote villages and allows office work when the unpredictable Mpika electricity comes and goes.

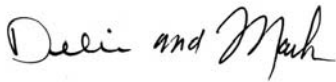
Elephants are safe; the poaching has not started again because the local people have legitimate jobs and income. The national park is so secure that Frankfurt Zoological Society has reintroduced black rhinos that were completely shot out of North Luangwa by poachers in the 1980's. Special game scouts protect them around the clock. Introducing rhinos into this area would have been unthinkable before we began our project.

We can truly declare North Luangwa as a victory. But it is a fragile one. We must keep the village projects expanding out from the park boundaries until they form a fortress of human prosperity around the wildlife. We appreciate your help so much! And so do the villagers; we continue to receive letters from them frequently.

Hammer is special in so many ways, and now he wants to expand his formal education to include wildlife conservation. A biology professor at Berry College in Georgia has agreed to teach him from afar. When Hammer received this news, he wrote: *"Thanks for your mail. I have read it more than six times if I guess right. You are such wonderful people to have come to know. Who on earth in these had[hard] times can sacrifice time and money traveling around assessing and contacting colleges and friends for what will be best for me. For sure aim[I'm] so far here and you know best. I'm excited to be a distance student for Professor Chris Mowry. I promise to work hard, this could be one opportunity which comes once in someones life time."* Hammer, you work very, very hard. And we promise to keep helping you. And so does everybody!

It is great to see good things happening. With your help we will continue to build on these successes.

Cheers,



Delia and Mark

**FROM MARY:** Please advise any change of postal or email address. It saves so much time and money and me! ☺

**\*To receive conservation updates and newsletters by email:** email [marydykes@compuserve.com](mailto:marydykes@compuserve.com)

**\*Donations by credit card** can be made via [www.owens-foundation.org](http://www.owens-foundation.org) or by calling me. 6% goes to the credit card company.

**\*Foreign currency donations** must be made by wire transfer, US\$ money order or by credit card due to new banking restrictions.

**\*Online purchases** through Owens Foundation web page link to **Barnes&Noble.com** will generate income for our work.

**\*Donations by Bequeath:** We can provide details on how estate planning allows you to support conservation far into the future.

**\*Employer Matching:** Thanks for applying for Employer Matching of personal donations. Let me know if I can help.

**DONATIONS FOR N LUANGWA:** Thanks to all who have shipped school & medical supplies to N Luangwa. Still needed are:

**School Supplies:** Crayons, pens, pencils, erasers, chalk, wildlife books & magazines (used are fine.) Paper is too heavy to ship.

**Medical Supplies:** Betadyne, antibiotic ointment/cream, gauze pads & rolls, first aid tape, Band-Aids, sterile latex gloves, antibiotic soap (Dial) ziplock bags. **Sewing Supplies:** Women's groups use any fabric, thread or sewing notions. **Shipping:** Label medical as

**Hygiene Supplies**, school & craft as **Education Supplies**. Customs form: Gift. Ship USPO surface/no insurance. Use sturdy boxes, w/ 2 strips of duct tape in each direction & overlay edges w/ 2-inch clear plastic tape. SHIP: NLWCCDP, Box 450210, Mpika, Zambia

**URGENT!** We join conservationist Jane Goodall and others in demanding the Bush Administration stop undermining *the Endangered Species Act* by allowing trophy hunting, import of hides, pelts and other body parts plus live sale of foreign endangered species for zoo, circus and pet trades. A provision of the ESA allows exception to protection of endangered species in countries having a "plan" that claims it will enhance the survival of a species. It is easy to draft a plan but difficult to make it succeed. Weakening the ESA invites corruption in poor countries that will go for quick financial gain over the long-term health of their wildlife. There are better ways to protect wildlife and benefit local people as our model for NLCP has proven. One Kenyan elephant brings \$10,000 once for killing or sale but \$200,000 a year for decades through tourism. **WRITE:** Peter Thomas, Chief, Div of Management Authority, US Fish & Wildlife Service, 4401 N Fairfax Dr, Rm 700, Arlington, VA 22203. **EMAIL:** [managementauthority@fws.gov](mailto:managementauthority@fws.gov) RE: *Draft Policy for Enhancement-of-Survival Permits for Foreign Species Under the Endangered Species Act*. For more info, contact Mary Dykes/OWFC 770-270-0729, [marydykes@compuserve.com](mailto:marydykes@compuserve.com) or see *How To Help* at [owens-foundation.org](http://owens-foundation.org) Your voice does count!

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[www.owens-foundation.org](http://www.owens-foundation.org), 770-270-0729