

November 2010 Dear Everybody:

**ELEPHANTS:** Among the miombo woodlands on the edge of the Bangweulu Wetland in the northern reaches of Zambia lies the village of Kakundushi in Chief Chitambo's chiefdom. On the doorstep of Kasanka National Park, Davy Kunda, Boas Mwila, Steward Nkandu and nine other poachers recently declared to their Chief that they wanted *"to give up poaching and join the conservation efforts."*



The chief's representative wrote: *"The problem is that these people need more than just skills, as skills without capital or input would not take them anywhere and thus [they] would still go back to poaching in order to [make] ends meet."* That is the salient point of our entire conservation philosophy and our project model.



It does no good to ask a man not to shoot an elephant if shooting elephants is the only way he can feed his children. The village work we have supported for 24 years has provided environmentally sound, sustainable agriculture (thus food assurance), small business development, education and health programs and has nurtured human and wildlife communities, including elephants. Poaching is on the rise in much of Africa during these tough economic times but **for nearly a quarter of a century, together we have lifted the spirits and hope of some of the most remote and destitute peoples of Africa and their neighboring wildlife.** In so

**doing, life in these areas has literally been reborn. People and wildlife have been given another chance.**

The production of peanuts in Kaluba Village, once one of the most notorious for poaching in the 1980s and early 1990s, is now so successful that Hammer is introducing the production of peanut butter there! Years ago when we were researching lions and brown hyenas in the remote Kalahari Desert, the *Jiff* many of you kindly shipped us kept us from starving. Now it will be made in Kaluba and distributed from there to other areas. Hammer writes: "The small cottage industry will create both employment and a huge market outlet for groundnut [peanut] farmers in the area." He also intends to get the peanut butter certified as organic!

#### More good news:

- The school in Chilyaba, which the OFWC funded, has more than 600 students. Attendance is up to 80% from 2%.
- We have helped Hammer secure 3 new grants.
- The USA Ambassador grants coordinator said that Hammer's work is #1 of the seven grant recipients.
- A grant has increased bean seed availability to villagers, improving food security, sources of protein and increased income of farmers.
- We continue efforts to conserve some tribal land as nature reserves.
- Hammer is teaching environmentally sound agricultural techniques so that land will be better protected and continuing production into the future. *Project villagers: Photo by John Antonelli*



#### We must continue expanding our model community conservation program. **WE NEED FUNDS FOR:**

1. The Mobile Clinic: fuel, maintenance, technical staff, and medical supplies.
2. Agricultural program: new vehicle, fuel, seeds, oil presses, workshops for processing peanut butter and honey.
3. Small industry support: training for carpenters, millers, oil press operators, beekeeping, etc.
4. Support for Hammer: salary, truck fuel/maintenance, improved communication (radio, phone email).



#### ON WOLVES AND WOLF RECOVERY:

Last summer wolves could be legally hunted in the NW US for the first time since being declared an endangered species in 1974. In November I was riding *Shadow* on a back road in Idaho when I saw a portable CD player dangling from a fallen tree. Hunters had used it to broadcast the cries of dying rabbits and coyotes to draw wolves so they could be easily shot – from the road, which is highly illegal. I followed their boot prints in the snow as the hunters followed the tracks of *Dusk* and *Willow*, of the local wolf pack. For the several years we had watched these two wolves with their pups as they romped and

played, unafraid. But almost immediately after the hunting began they disappeared and we rarely heard them howling. Would they survive?

The federal government's decision to down-list wolves so that they could be hunted was, in our opinion and that of many other conservation scientists, flawed: The recovery goal of ten breeding pairs each in Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming was based on wolf studies in Alaska, an insular population on Isle Royale, Michigan, and some other studies remote from the Lower 48 states which are outdated. New studies are needed before we decide that wolves should be down-listed. The current decision was also based on a questionnaire circulated by the US Fish and Wildlife Service among field biologists, many of who questioned the objectivity of the questionnaire and how ten breeding pairs could constitute a viable population in each state. Models by some population biologists and wildlife population geneticists suggest that this number should be much higher. As many of you know, this down list decision was challenged and overturned in federal court, and the hunting of wolves, at least for this year, has been halted.

We played a small role in that: I wrote an opinion for use in litigating the case to continue the federal listing of wolves as a protected species; and we have helped secure thousands of acres of habitat for wolves and other species. Wild lands and wild species are under such intense pressure from human activities, and now climate change, that we must all advocate for human population control, for the immediate switch to a clean alternative energy base, and for the protection and restoration of critical habitats in order to heal the ecosystems that support all species, including our own. We would do well to remember that Nature sustains our economy, not the other way around. Much more is at stake than jobs and a comfortable living, as important as these are to our quality of life in the near term.



### HABITAT PROTECTION

In the Northwest we are planning phase two of a major wetland restoration that will finally recover almost a thousand acres of prime habitat for an entire wildlife community, including wolves and grizzly bears, and ensure the water supply for a nearby human population as winter snowfalls diminish and summers get hotter and drier due to climate change. We are also working with sister organizations and federal and state agencies to identify and protect additional wild lands. To date we have directly or indirectly helped facilitate securing more than 20,000 acres of critical habitat in the Northwest. As always, we need your continuing help.

We need help in purchasing parcels of wildlife habitat outright, or securing them with easements for the protection of wolves, grizzlies, moose, elk and more. One parcel is forested mountainside overlooking a sweeping river valley. Another is nestled in the mountains next to a marsh and is an important source of water for the marsh. Still another is a cross-section of a valley with beautiful views of the mountains. Any of these parcels could be an investment, but most importantly an investment in the Earth; your opportunity to save one of nature's vanishing treasures. If you want details of any of these or other available conservation properties please contact our office. (*Address below*)

The earth changes and nature adjusts; we will lose some species and save others. It is important not to feel hopeless and defeated, because only the hopeless are truly defeated. Please help us conserve as many of our remaining wilderness treasures as we can in the US and in Zambia. We looked up one morning early this spring and there, across the meadow, lying at the edge of the forest, were *Willow* and *Dusk*, the alpha female and male. Their survival was like a warm wind out of the mountains above. They are safe for now. We must strive to keep them that way.

As always, thank you for your support of our efforts to protect wilderness, and all who live there.

*Mark and Dee*

### YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

1. Donate to the Owens Foundation for Wildlife Conservation by check or at our web site home page – look for the **DONATE NOW** button.
2. Write to your Congressmen and the Secretary of Agriculture to tell them that you do not want your taxes spent using poisons, toxic gases or aircraft to kill wolves. Mr. Tom Vilsack, US Secretary of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue, Washington, D. C. 20250
3. Support candidates and legislation who support clean alternative energy and green industries. Your vote is a powerful tool.