

December 2013



Dear Everybody,

Once again **Hammer Simwinga**, the Zambian who carries on our original work, is a hero! As you know he was granted the Goldman Environmental Prize in San Francisco and honored in DC by *National Geographic*. This year he was invited to attend the World Bank conference in Washington DC.

The World Bank conference dealt with the environment, including third world agriculture, water quality, conservation of natural resources, and tourism development. Hammer knows a lot about those urgent issues. He joined our project back in 1994, eventually leading our Community Service Program that offered jobs, training, loans, and agricultural assistance to villagers so they would not have to poach elephants to survive. Since then the living standard, food security, education, and health services in the communities near the national park have increased exponentially.

And even though elephant poaching is again on the rise in Africa, the herds in North Luangwa are safer than in most places. **It has recently been disclosed that funds from the slaughter of elephants have been used to support international terrorism including organizations that have harmed, and continue to threaten Americans.** It is now more important than ever to stop poaching. And that is what we are helping Hammer do in North Zambia - by educating people and creating safe, sustainable, environmentally sound jobs and agriculture.

After the World Bank conference Hammer flew to Atlanta where, on this trip, he found baggage claim before Mary could even get to the airport! He stayed at Mary and Bobby Dykes' house. On previous visits to the US he ate as little American food as possible having been warned that our rich food could kill him. However, on this trip he ate Krispy Kreme donuts and told Mary that her grilled chicken was just like the ones at home - 'right out of the fire'. Upon arriving he exclaimed, "Queen (his wife) said to take a picture so she could see what Mary had in her BIG fridge!". Some friends gathered at Mary and Bobby's to honor Hammer including Ronni Hadley Wharton former Peace Corps volunteer seconded to NLCP for Rural Health. When asked if Hammer had more than one wife as some Zambians do, he answered with a sly grin, "You don't know my wife! One is plenty!"



Then the **University of Georgia** rolled out the red carpet for Hammer. UGA is famous for its agriculture research and work to protect land and streams from nitrogen fertilizers that run off causing oxygen depleted dead zones in streams, rivers and even the ocean. And here comes Hammer who has actually been doing and teaching this type of farming for years, truly organic. Hammer kept up with the professors discussing cover crops and rotations, soil composition, PH and nitrogen levels. Hammer and professors alike were clearly excited about their shared passion. And yet Hammer also wanted to learn how to start a fire with no matches - a very useful skill in the bush.



Dr. Hill explains his nitrogen fixing clover cover crop project.



Hammer at UGArden with Dr. Miguel Cabrera



Hammer, Julia Gaskin & Dr. Dory Franklin at UGA's JPC Research Center

A ZEBRA WITH NO STRIPES: There are many stories that illustrate the success of our anti-poaching model in Zambia. This is one of my favorites. In the 1980's we hired a 15 year old man named Davies Chanda to assist the camp cook. Davies had dropped out of grade seven because he couldn't afford school. He was from a village near Chishala, where the only paying job available for men was the illegal shooting of elephants in the national park. Most of his family and friends were engaged in poaching, but Davies wanted more from life and we were there to give him a chance.

One day Davies rode with me up the rugged, yet stunning Muchinga Escarpment toward the village of Mukungule where we were celebrating the opening of the new 'Wildlife Shop.' There were no grocery or supply stores for miles, and any time a villager wanted to buy matches or soap they had to walk for two days to Mpika. Our project gave a loan and training for 2 men to run the new shop, which would give them a business and provide the villagers a place to purchase essentials without being forced by necessity to trade with poachers.

As Davies and I bumped over the rough road up the escarpment, we saw a small herd of zebras and after we passed, he said to me, "Madam, you saw the zebra with no stripes?"

I lifted my eyebrows. I had seen the zebras, and they all looked normal to me. "Perhaps she was standing in the shadows."

"No, I have seen her before. She has no stripes."

I asked Davies what he thought of the increasing number of elephants who had no tusks? Usually the natural percentage of tusklessness is very low at 5%, but because poachers were shooting only elephants with tusks, the percentage had risen to a third of the Luangwa population.

Davies answered, "A Bemba (tribesman) without his ax is not a big man. That must be what the other elephants think of an elephant without tusks."

Late that afternoon, tired from the grand opening, as we bumped down the escarpment toward camp, Davies said, "There she is Madam." And sure enough, standing next to the track was a female zebra the color of charcoal - with no stripes.

Davies said, "... for myself, I don't know what the world is doing, to make elephants with no tusks and zebras with no stripes."



Delia & Mark: Opening of Mukungule Wildlife Shop



NLNP TUSKLESS MALE ELEPHANT

While Davies was working for us he got a loan from our project for legume and groundnut seeds, and started his own farm. Soon he graduated to raising chickens, which he sold in the village and to the government game scouts. Hammer trained him as an Agriculture Facilitator so that he could teach other farmers. Today, Davies Chanda is building on his success as Hammer's *Farmer of the Year in 2004* and has been elected as a council representative to help solve village problems and to advise their local Minister to Parliament. Mukungule has changed dramatically thanks to our assistance and has shops, a brick school, grinding mills, fish farms, bee-keepers, and many successful farmers using agriculture techniques that would stun university agronomists – all done by people who know the value of wildlife and a healthy environment.

MOBILE CLINIC: Hammer's *Foundation for Wildlife and Habitat Conservation* (FWHC) is partnering with Zambian NGO *Savannah* that is supported by the First Lady of Zambia, to use the Owens Foundation funded Mobile Clinic in remote regions of Northern Zambia and the Muchinga Province. FWHC and *Savannah* will undertake a screening program for non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, high blood pressure and chest infections. These diseases are common and silent killers because of the lack of medical exams in remote villages. In fact, one of the first Zambians to work as our project's Community Service Coordinator died of diabetes when he was only thirty. He had no idea that he had diabetes. These screenings, with a full medical staff in attendance, will be able to detect diseases and treat patients on site. To quote Hammer: "What country lets their people die?"



Fisonge WATERSHED & CONSERVANCY

HAMMER NEEDS A NEW TRUCK: Many thanks to those of you have already donated towards a new truck for Hammer. We have raised more than \$7,000 but we need more to provide Hammer with practical, dependable transportation to the remote villages most in need of assistance. In the village of **Fisonge** only one out of 20 women can read and write... yet they have the last old growth forest containing large trees in the area. Poaching is an easy addition to their meager diet. Hammer is trying to help these people improve their quality of life, stop the slash and burn agriculture AND save this forest and its critical watershed. He has secured 5,000 hectares of forest land for protection in the Fisonge Watershed. We must get him TO this area to assure success for the people and wildlife.

LAND USE SURVEY: We and Hammer have always emphasized sustainable small industries, appropriate technologies, and low-impact agriculture in the delicate environments near the national park. Unfortunately, some countries, for example China, are going into remote areas of Africa and developing multi-million dollar industries and agriculture to benefit themselves with no regard to the long term effects. Mpika is experiencing this commercial development that will increase the number of migrant workers and employ environmentally destructive practices. This will have a negative impact on living standards, resource allocations, and social life of the people: increasing potential HIV infection rates, land abuse and pressure on wildlife populations. But Hammer has a plan...

The government of Zambia has little understanding of the density, distribution, and occupations of the villagers in these remote regions. Hammer is undertaking a large scale survey of the people and using GIS mapping to clearly illustrate the reality on the ground and recommend to the government conservative based development that is best for the local people and all of the natural resources.

HAMMER'S NEW WEB PAGE: Delia's twin brother, Bobby Dykes has volunteered again and designed a new web page for Hammer. Delia's niece and namesake Delia Dykes designed a new logo for Hammer (right). There are frequent updates from Hammer posted on his site. Go to www.fwhc.net and give Hammer a hand and **LIKE** his web page on Facebook. Thanks!



AMERICAN NORTHWEST: Meanwhile, there has been a conservation victory in the **Yellowstone National Park**. As we have told you before, in the 1990s the use of snowmobiles in the national park had increased to 2,000 per day roaring across the remote snowy peaks and valleys. This created disturbance to wildlife, a dramatic increase in air pollution, and a negative impact on the natural soundscapes of one of our most treasured national parks. Park Rangers had to wear gas masks because of the high concentrations of carbon monoxide. In 2009 the use of snowmobiles in the park was limited to 318 per day. Yellowstone's latest environmental impact statement requires the use of machines that adhere to higher standards that reduce air pollution and noise levels. We hope that in future authorities will continue to decrease snowmobile use and impact in Yellowstone.

IDAHO: The first snows have come to the mountains of Idaho, so the bears have snuggled down for their winter sleep – or so I thought. Mark usually cautions me not to feed the birds too early in winter or the food will attract the bears. But Mark was riding his horse through elk herds in Wyoming, so I poured out a generous helping of wild bird seeds into the large feeder on our deck.

The next morning before dawn I heard a commotion on the deck. I crept to the window and looked out. A small black bear was sitting on his backside, legs straight out, holding the feeder on his lap, and spooning up fistfuls of seeds. Eventually the feeder turned over, spilling the remains, so he knelt down and lapped them up. Now and then he looked at me in the window as he smacked and licked his lips. At sunrise, he strolled across the deck, jumped down, and sauntered into the woods. No doubt, I will see him in the spring.



As always any progress we make depends on you. There are elephants and bears, and many smaller creatures on two continents that are safer because of your support. There are children going to schools you built, patients going to the mobile clinic, men and women working at legal, sustainable jobs you provided. These people are not shooting elephants.

Thank you for all you do.

Cheers!

Debi and Mark

HOW TO HELP

- **NEW EMAIL OR POST ADDRESSES:** **Please** advise us any changes in your contact information as soon as possible. It saves money and makes us 😊!
- **\$ TO THE OFWC FROM AMAZON PURCHASES:** Go to the OFWC webpage www.owens-foundation.org and go to the bottom of the homepage and click on the AMAZON link and continue with your shopping. That's it! Five percent of your purchase automatically comes right to the OFWC. It is the easiest way to support conservation and it mounts up in a hurry.
- **DONATION BY CREDIT CARD:** Can be made at www.owens-foundation.org via **DONATE NOW BUTTON** or by calling Tammy Johnson (678-648-1267). Three percent of your donation goes to the credit card company for processing fees. You will be asked for the security code on your credit card as an added level of protection for you.
- **FOREIGN CURRENCY DONATIONS:** Must be made by wire transfer, US dollar money order or check - or by credit card (see above for online donations). Thank you for the extra effort!
- **NORTH LUANGWA TOURISM:** Have the experience of a lifetime AND help people and save wildlife by choosing North Luangwa for your safari. See www.owens-foundation.org
- **LEGACY PLANNING:** Touch the future. Include the OFWC in your Estate Planning.
 - **Will, Living Trust or other plan:** Name the OFWC as a recipient of a fixed amount or a % of your estate.
 - **Annuity or Life Insurance Policy:** Designate OFWC as the beneficiary.
 - **Retirement Plans:** Designate OFWC as a beneficiary of all or a percentage of your Retirement Plan.
- **MATCHING DONATIONS:** Some companies match employee and retiree donations to 501(c) (3) nonprofits such as the Owens Foundation. Multiply your giving and empower conservation.