

Dear Everybody,

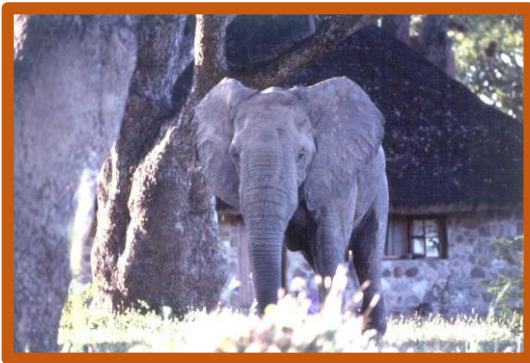
May 2015



AFRICA: TAILS FROM THE TENT

In the Kalahari we had to keep all our pots, pans and leftovers on an eight-foot tall 'Hyena Table' we made with poles. Otherwise, the brown hyenas, jackals, or lions would make off with the whole lot. Of course, that did not completely solve the problem. One night, as we slept, a very sly jackal pushed his nose under the flap of the mess tent (the zipper was always broken) and crawled inside. We awoke to the sounds of fast feet on canvas and rushed out with flashlights to see the sides of the mess tent bulging, first here then there, as the sneaky culprit bounced against the walls trying to escape. Finally, he darted out -- a tin of sardines clamped in his teeth. He stopped when he saw us, and looked calmly in our eyes. Then he peed against the tent wall -- just to make it clear that this tent was his! (And in fact, he continued to visit on a regular basis.)

Once two male lions stepped right into our sleeping tent, only their tails dangling outside. We were in the bed no more than four feet away. We woke to see their enormous looming heads. Like all cats, they kept their escape route mapped with their tails, and fortunately, slowly backed out into the moonlight.



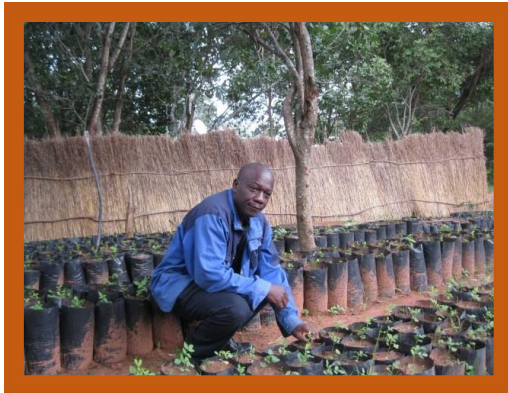
In Luangwa, the elephants took refuge from poachers in our camp and fed on the fruits of the massive Marula trees. To shelter from the heat, we had built stone bomas with very thick thatched roofs. Often the camp males, Cheers, Survivor, and Long Tail, would turn their massive hindquarters toward the roof, and waggle their entire backsides in huge swinging motions to scratch their tails on the thatch. The expressions certainly resembled bliss.



These precious moments, and thousands more, kept us -- and keep us -- going through the heartaches of conserving the wild. There will always be more sad stories than happy ones; more failures than successes. In the early Luangwa days, before we stopped the poaching, we saw more dead elephants -- shot by poachers -- than living ones. But something has to keep you going.

So often it was the people who pumped us up: the villagers who listened when we said there was a better way to make a living than shooting elephants; the children who lived ten miles from North Luangwa but had never seen a living elephant; the chief who thanked us when the first elephant in decades approached their village.

And, of course, Hammer Simwinga, a young man with energy, dedication and intelligence who had no money, but volunteered to work with us until he was qualified for a position in our project. That was more than twenty years ago, and Hammer is still continuing the work. CNN International plans to film him for their program *African Voices*, which features successful Africans who are making a difference. Hammer certainly qualifies.



Hammer with tree seedlings at his nursery and his son Eliza nurturing young trees.

Here are a few examples of Hammer's progress with agriculture this year:

- 30 farmers (20 women, 10 men) were trained in small livestock (chickens and pigs) which provide sustainable, legal protein to villagers but do not harm the environment.
- 13,000 kg of potato seeds were distributed to farmers that will increase their income from agriculture from \$2/day to \$4/day.
- 1,000 native trees were planted by school children to combat deforestation and facilitate crop pollination.
- 500 fruit trees (avocado, lemon, pawpaw, and guavas) were distributed to households.

It only costs \$39.70 to build a beehive, which will greatly increase the income of a family and support crop pollination. Hammer wants to build 500 in 2015, but only has the funds for 50. Such a small amount of money can make such a big difference for villagers and wildlife.

There is more information on the project below, but first as I mentioned, there is sad news.

Hammer fell in love with Queen, and attended her church in Mpika to catch her eye. At first she rebuffed him, but at last they fell in love. Their marriage was the biggest social event Mpika had ever seen. They had four children of their own and adopted two AIDS orphans. Their oldest son Andozile is seventeen. They have 2 younger daughters and a 7 year old son.

Queen came to the USA with Hammer to receive the *Goldman Environmental Prize for Africa in 2007*. From the stage at the San Francisco Opera House, before more than 3,000 people, attired in her colorful chitenge, she waved and smiled like a pro. Besides being a great wife and mother, she worked for the project, assisting village women with sewing industries and health care. Being raised by her maternal grandmother – she was always reaching out to help elderly women in need.



In August 2014, Queen became ill and was taken to the nearby clinic. Hammer brought her home and cared for her but she ultimately died suddenly in late January of this year of pneumonia. She was quite literally one of the most kind, calm, and loving persons I have ever known. She and Hammer had such a bond. Hammer and their children have suffered a great loss, and with hundreds of villagers, we will always remember Queen.



Above: Andozile and friend

Now, Andozile is stepping in to help Hammer with the village work. He is a member of the Climate Change Group – young people recognizing our impact on the environment and working to find solutions. And Queen and Hammer’s youngest son, Eliza (7 years old) is raising tree saplings for reforestation. The family is picking up the banner, serving their community and conservation in honor of their mother. She is an inspiration to keep the work going forward.

We have never known such a spirit of determination from so many in an extended community, for so many years, to improve their lives while enhancing the environment. It should be a model for the world.

In addition to working in rural villages on reforestation, crop and livestock improvements, Hammer’s Rural Health efforts also continue as he reports below:

The Foundation for Wildlife and Habitat Project also participated in all the World Health Celebration events such as Universal Child Immunization Week, World’s Health Day, and World AIDS Day. In the last quarter FWHC participated in formulating HIV and AIDS work policies for NGOs in Mpika District.

Hammer reports progress in protecting 5,000 hectares of prime habitat recently acquired for the good of the people and wildlife of North Zambia. As wild as Luangwa may seem, it is still vulnerable to degradation by poor human practices. From Hammer...

The area is a key component of the Luangwa – Zambezi River hydrological system. And is part of the North Luangwa ecosystem that is pristine wilderness and supports some of the largest and most significant wildlife populations in Africa. This Community Forest seeks support and protection in order to preserve its genetic biodiversity and maintain good flow of water into the North Luangwa National Park. It will also be protected from bush fires and deforestation due to human activities.

GRIZZLY BEAR UPDATE – INLAND NORTHWEST:

There is some good news about grizzly bears, still an endangered species. The Owens Foundation assisted the Idaho Fish and Game program to conserve these rare and magnificent carnivores. We donated financial support for radio collars, aerial radio tracking, video cameras, an educational officer, horses and trailer for backcountry monitoring and more. We also helped with fieldwork, radio collaring, tracking bears from horseback and snow shoeing mountain trails to locate collared bears in their winter dens. Now, after twenty years of the recovery project, the Selkirk Mountains grizzly population is increasing at a rate of 2 – 3% a year. This increase has allowed some of the bears to disperse into other areas of Idaho, where grizzly populations are yet to stabilize. This is one of the rare success stories for a population of an endangered species. You helped make this possible.





Last evening, the elk came down to the early-spring meadow for the first time this year. Still looking a bit shaggy in their thinning winter coats, they grazed the blazing new-green grasses. Not many years ago the meadow was dry and dusty. But now restored, it gleams with numerous streams and ponds. Near the elk a small group of white tails browsed on creek shrubs. The elk must have looked enormous and curious to a yearling deer because he sidled closer and closer to have a look. Then a yearling elk noticed the small deer. Slowly they walked within

ten feet of each other. Suddenly, the young elk broke and ran, pronking stiff legged up and down, as they do, head held camel-like in the air. The white tail chased him, darting to and fro. Another young elk joined the fray, then a few adult elk, then most of the deer. Round and round the two species frolicked with the energy spring brings to the earth. Geese flew up, yacking; ducks circled quaking; a few wild turkeys took to the trees. It ended soon. Just a few minutes of random folly in a meadow allowed to breathe. Just a few minutes -- enough to keep us going for a long time to come.

You also lift us up and make the work easier and progress possible. Our sincere thanks for every penny and words of encouragement over every year.

Cheers,

Delia and Mark

UPDATES FROM MARY:

FREE MONEY FOR CONSERVATION! You can elect the Owens Foundation on **Amazon** to be your designated charity. Type **AMAZON SMILE** in the Amazon site search box and find your chance to pick the OFWC. Amazon will donate 5% of any purchases you make to the OFWC. It won't cost you a penny and it generates funds for conservation every time you shop. I LOVE free money! Thank you!

CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Please let us know of new postal or email address. We have experienced some glitches with newsletter mailings. If you notice an error (double posting, etc.), please, let us know. We appreciate your help.

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!

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.

Owens Foundation, P.O. Box 870530, Stone Mountain, GA 30087, www.owens-foundation.org, 678-648-1267