



Owens Foundation for Wildlife Conservation, Inc.

SPRING 2018

Dear Everybody:

(Delia) I've learned not to argue with a goose about Spring.

All winter, every night, I watched the long line of elk moving through the snow toward the cabin. The winter fell harsh and relentless, and even forage in the valleys proved sparse. The herd, mostly females and last spring's calves, found the moldy horse hay we had discarded and piled outside the barn. A winter's feast. A winter so severe, blizzards blanketed even the inside of the barn with snow.

I must admit that as the long months passed, I deemed more and more of the hay too moldy for the horses. I'd throw a bale or so in a sled and pull it out to the small meadow outside the cabin. And then watched from the window until the silent dark line of elk flowed from the trees across the whiteness to the hay. Feeding wild animals can interfere with the Nature of things, and is not often recommended. But I noticed, that in very severe winters, all across the west even the most hardened ranchers find lots of hay too moldy for their horses. And more elk stealing through the winter bleakness into barnyards.



As the ice became a bit mushy, I watched in trepidation as deer crisscrossed the ponds. I'd wondered if they had any instinct about melting ice. Certainly, they didn't tap the surface as I would. Then, it happened. One morning as I watched a female with her two yearlings approaching the middle of a pond, the ice broke through. All three of them fell into the freezing water. They beat at the ice with their forelegs, but it shattered in front of them, preventing a foothold. I couldn't think of any way to help them. They must have reached a shallow spot, because suddenly they propelled themselves with their hind legs onto the ice and scampered across to safety. Next year, I'm putting up a sign: THIN ICE!!!

Finally, the geese came -- way too early in my opinion. They kept flying around the snow-covered wetlands and frozen ponds, promising Spring in a loud ruckus. One day there was a tiny spot of bare ground -- the snow melted off by a weak and sickly sun and ten geese claimed it as their own with wild flapping about. Then the next day a cold wind blew in more snow, and the geese huddled in bumpy, feathered piles. But of course, they knew more than I -- much more than weather.gov -- and ten days later green grass sprouted everywhere and fifty geese here, thirty geese there, more down yonder -- raised the roof with their infamous Spring uproar.



All of this in a meadow that ten years ago had no water or geese, no moose, or ducks or turtles or frogs, bears or bluebirds. No hope of ruckus. No celebration of Spring. Thank you for helping us restore and protect hundreds of acres of wildlife habitat. To fight against the trapping of wolves and for the conservation of grizzly bears. To restore our natural resources as part of our national heritage and pride.

IDAHO AND WOLVES: (Mark) Recently, before the spring snows melted, I tracked a pair of wolves who returned to a valley (nameless to protect the wolves). The male shadowed the female, stepping in her footprints so precisely that at first I thought a single large male had made the tracks. But the male deviated from the female's tracks for a few feet before returning to her trail. My heart soared, knowing that the male was courting her and that they might den in this valley: An area where more than sixteen wolves have been trapped, snared and shot (in less than ten years) since the federal Department of the Interior returned the management of wolves to this state's officials because the recovery goals of 150 wolves statewide had been reached. They decided that 150 wolves was a sufficient number in a state with the largest wilderness area in the lower forty-eight states. This is not a viable population. The goal was politically set, having nothing to do with the biological needs of the wolves as a species.



Wolves take the weakest elk and deer keeping the herd healthy and prevent those herbivores from over grazing and over browsing their habitats as happened in the Yellowstone - Teton ecosystem where most of the gray wolves were exterminated by the 1930s. (Between 1883 and 1917 more than 100,000 were killed for bounty in Montana and Wyoming). After the wolves were removed, large areas of Yellowstone were so overgrazed they could no longer support elk, buffalo, and deer. Wolves and their prey co-evolved over hundreds of thousands of years, and if wolves 'kill off all the elk and deer' as is often claimed, they would have 'eaten themselves out of house and home' and gone extinct long ago. In areas around the Yellowstone-Teton ecosystem where predators have been 'extirpated' mule deer and elk populations are being infected with chronic wasting disease.

Claims by state officials that wolves kill "...hundreds of millions of dollars of domestic stock annually" are grossly exaggerated: Data on predator depredation cited on the USDA website confirm that less than 1% of the total mortality suffered by livestock in any one year is due to wolves, whereas deaths from respiratory ailments is often as high as 45%.

Claims that wolves are a threat to humans are grossly exaggerated: In North America only one human has been reported killed by wolves in the past 250 years and only three have been injured in that same period; and none of these cases has been confirmed beyond doubt. Data from Scandinavia, reported by wildlife researcher Dr. Joel Berger, are similar to those of North America. In short, a human has a far greater chance of being struck by lightning than being killed or injured by wolves.

And yet Idaho's officials are promoting the near extermination of wolves from the state's landscape using hunting, trapping and snaring, the latter even outlawed by most African states. When we left Africa we thought we had left wire snares behind because we were headed home to a more enlightened society. We could hardly have been more wrong.

We have supported litigation by *The Center for Biological Diversity* against Idaho Fish and Game in an attempt to force them to alter trapping laws and to redesign traps so that those set for wolves cannot catch other non-target species. We are working with *The Nature Conservancy*, to secure a Forest Legacy Easement on another 100-acre parcel heavily used by grizzlies and surviving wolves. We are also visiting some trap lines in an attempt to monitor incidental 'taking' of threatened and endangered species. For more information on the wolf issue please: Watch the Lords of Nature available at Amazon; online at the *Aldo Leopold Foundation* website, or *Predatordefense.org* website.

ZAMBIA: We are happy to report that because many of you have given so generously, we have been able give Hammer more funds this quarter to boost his loans, agricultural assistance and training in Mukungule area. That is where our community support work began in 1985-86. In those days, many of the men and some women poached elephants or other wildlife to make a living. Now, fewer do so because they have other options – beekeeping, farming, milling, basket-making and carpentry.

However, Hammer Simwinga reports from Zambia that poaching has increased in the some areas around North Luangwa National Park, as rural people are becoming more desperate for food, natural resources and education. On the positive side, Hammer has made great progress with the Mukungule Community Nature Conservancy, with assistance from Tikva Grassroots Empowerment Fund, which protects a rare old growth woodland ecosystem while providing conservation education to many villagers.

Hammer's report: FOUNDATION FOR WILDLIFE & HABITAT CONSERVATION - Activity brief

Program: Advocating for Wildlife Habitat and Rural Livelihood Improvement

Objective: To Empower communities to sustainably manage their Natural Resources

Chiefdoms	Protected Area	Current activities being undertaken
Mukungule Chiefdom Target villages: Kaluba Chilyaba Chobela Mukungule Chishala	5,080 Households in Kaluba Community	1. Livelihood Activities Training of 120 project in Small business entrepreneurship Crafts and weaving using forest products Small livestock production Vegetable production Post-harvest crop management training Capacity building Training of 22 executive committee members in; Leadership skills training Marketing and Record keeping Organization development
		2. Wildlife AND Habitat Protection Supporting local initiatives to protect/preserve important community conservation areas Promoting small family forest reserves Promoting agro-forestry activities – tree planting Promoting community forest monitors (regular forest monitoring trips-guards)
Chikwanda Chiefdom Target: Chikwanda Chiefdom Royal establishment and the Development Trust	Earmarked Area for protection 800 HA in Nachikufu village	Supporting the Chikwanda Chiefdom Royal establishment to secure and protect Nachikufu heritage site and its pristine forest. 1. Livelihood Activities Conducting village and stakeholder meetings Formation of village conservation committees Small livestock production Vegetable production Post-harvest crop management training
		Sustainable Development projects Supporting solar and wind energy projects Creation of Community Nature Conservancy at Nachikufu heritage site



CHICKENS: FWHC has purchased 100 breeding stock of local chickens for distribution (fed on natural farm waste) promoting healthy protein diet in the rural community. FWHC has also ordered an egg incubator to promote small scale organic egg production in Mpika: to assist project beneficiaries in rural communities to promote

rural protein diet and increased incomes (cottage hatchery to sustain the chicken rearing project).





Nachikufu Ecosystem and Natural History Project: FWHC is supporting Chief Chikwanda to create and conserve and protect a community wildlife habitat near the historic Nachikufu National Heritage Site near Mpika. It covers a corridor of land that was at one-time home of our ancestors, the Bushmen [San] and a pristine forest corridor of wildlife that freely moved from the Luangwa valley, The Great Nachikufu Caves, is boarded by South Luangwa National park on the South, the Luangwa National forest on the west and, and the Luambe National Park on the south West, and the North Luangwa National Park on the North. The Muchinga escarpment, which runs from South East to North East forms a natural eastern boundary of this national heritage.

Nachikufu vicinity has some of the best sites for domestic tourism for locals running on low budgets. Above pictures show “Hammer” and his friends on one of his regular forest monitoring trips to the area.

Cement Bricks for Construction save the forest and land degradation. Zambia is losing about 250,000 to 300,000 hectares of forest each year. One of the drivers of urban deforestation is charcoal (wood fuel) and fire cured mud bricks. FWHC, using the Owens Foundation grant funds, has purchased a brick making ram press that uses only gravel and cement to make building blocks. This cottage industry has provided a permanent job for two youths. It is also an environmentally friendly method of making building blocks. There is no need of cutting trees to build fires to cure mud bricks for building and construction work in the community

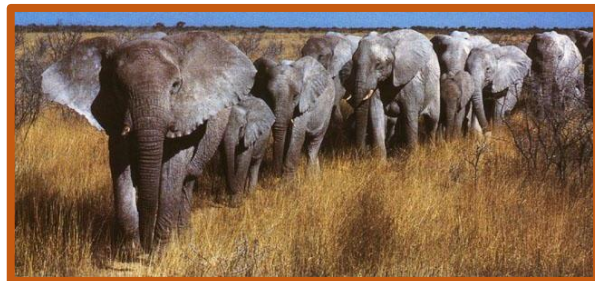


Again, there are reports of **elephant sightings** where they have not been seen for many years. We will keep trying to conserve these wondrous creatures and the land on which they live. Thank you for your never-ending support! It will not work without you.

Cheers,

Delia and Mark

Delia and Mark



- **AMAZON DONATIONS:** Designate the OFWC as your **Amazon Smile Charity** and a percentage of every purchase you make generates free money for conservation. It does not cost YOU a penny.
- **NEW EMAIL OR MAILING ADDRESS:** Please advise any changes in your contact info. It us saves money!
- **DONATION BY CREDIT CARD:** You can donate online at www.owens-foundation.org via the **DONATE NOW** button on the HOME page. You will be asked for the ‘security code’ on your card. This is for YOUR protection. 3% of your donation goes for credit card processing fees.
- **SUPPORT OUR NATIONAL PARKS & WILDERNESS LANDS:** Write your representatives asking for continued strong support for our dwindling wilderness and wild creatures. Your advocacy counts.
 - <https://house.gov/representatives/find/> or call (202) 224-3121 (Congress and Senate info)
 - https://www.senate.gov/reference/common/faq/How_to_correspond_senators.htm
 - **Write President Trump:** 1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW, Washington, DC 20500 or call (202) 456-1111 – or email: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/contact/>