

April 2005

Dear Everybody,

The cougar - more shadow than mountain lion - stalked silently across the new-fallen moonlit snow, his body slung low-down between his shoulder blades. Near the creek bank he froze, head slightly erect, ears pinned back. For so long he could have been an imagination. With a mind of its own, his tail flicked back and forth as though in time with a metronome. Across the creek four White-tailed deer, heads low against the cold, walked along a well-used trail toward the opposite bank.

The deer should have bedded down by now, but the wind had picked up, so they were headed for the shelter of the cedar marsh. Big mistake. They often jumped the creek at the grassy narrows where the big cat waited, and as his prey neared the ford, he stilled his tail. Sensing something, the deer stopped, too. And even the wind dropped, as though darkness held its breath. Frozen in time and space, the scene was a snapshot photograph of this winter's night.

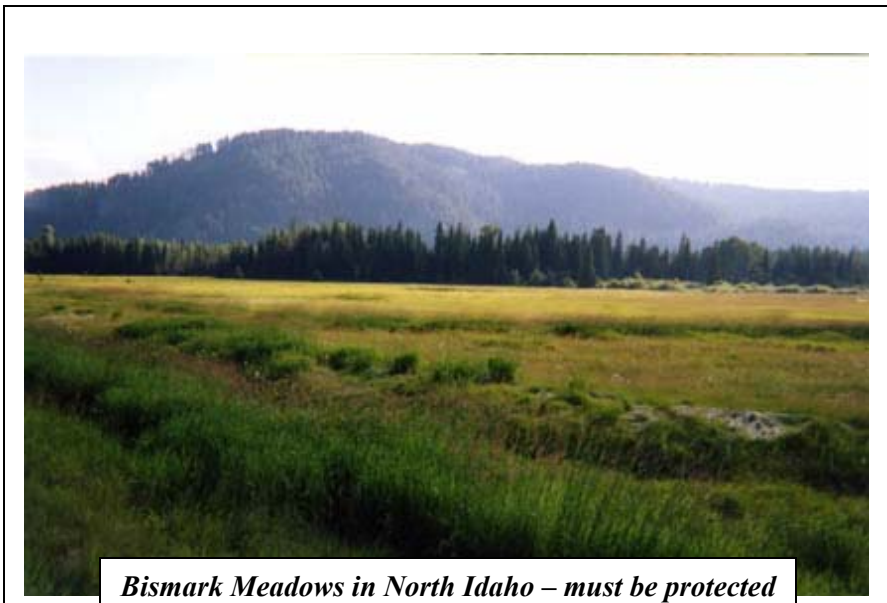
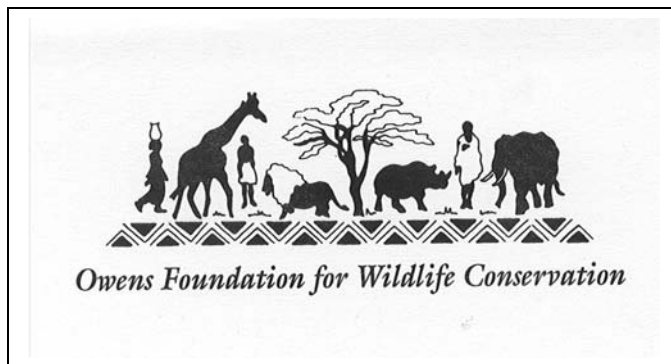
And then the lion launched himself across the creek, his long tawny body a blue-black blur as he soared, reaching out his paws. The lead deer bolted sharply to its left - too late. The snow exploded around the tumbling cat and his prey. And then three deer ran back across the meadow as the cougar began feeding.

By the time the lazy winter sun peeked over the mountain the next morning, the lion was gone -- no doubt draped across some southern exposure with a full belly. But of course he had left his tracks behind, and even the shallow depression in the snow where he crouched to wait, the marks left by his twitching tail. Each flake of disturbed snow was a syllable, each track a word, and taken together they told the story of a life and death struggle eons old, a struggle that has, over time, combed the fittest of the fit out of the flotsam of cougar and whitetail gene pools. Natural predation is essential to keeping any wildlife population healthy and must be allowed to continue.

For the next four days we watched bald eagles, coyotes, crows, and magpies quarrel over the remains of the deer while elk and moose trafficked to and fro across the marsh. A marsh that only five years ago was a dried, stomped and over-grazed creek bottom. All we had to do was give a little land back to Nature, and let her alone while she straightened her dress. In return she has given us a growing community of wildlife, and a rising water table to slake our thirst.

It is time to save another piece of pristine wilderness before it is gobbled up by real estate development: The Bismark Meadows, near Priest

Lake, Idaho are some of the most beautiful wet meadows we have ever seen. And they are critically important spring and summer range for grizzly bears and other wildlife of the nearby Selkirk Mountains. We are trying to help raise the \$1.8 million needed to save this remarkable wilderness resource, and we have the offer of \$300,000 to start, IF we can find someone else to match that. Please, this is really important, help us if you can, and tell others before we lose this unique wilderness heritage. Thank you so much.

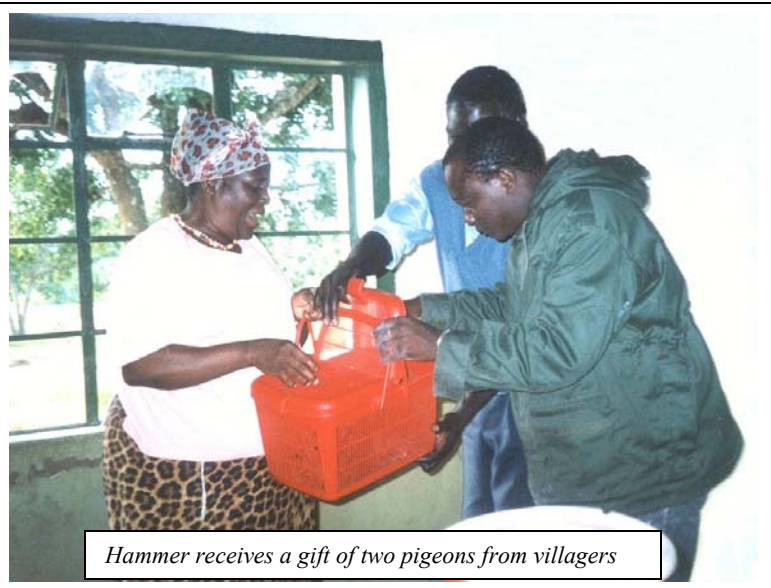


Bismark Meadows in North Idaho – must be protected

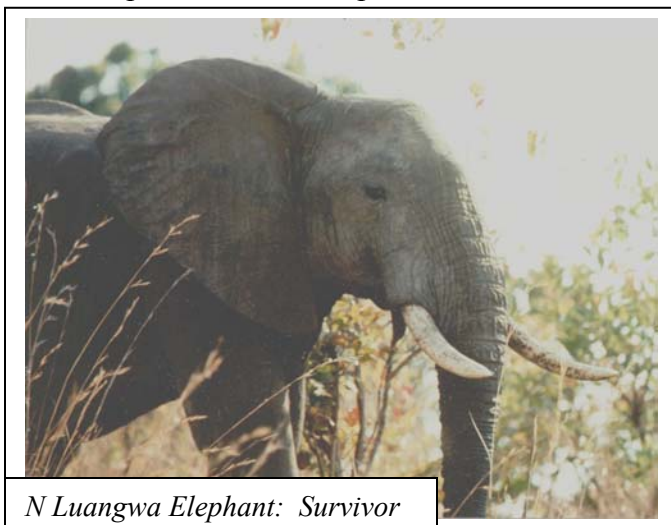
Photo credit: Vital Ground Foundation

From North Luangwa: We are overjoyed at Hammer and Moses' progress with the programs we started in Zambia almost two decades ago: One of their latest is growing chili peppers to ward off hungry elephants.

When we first went to North Luangwa in the mid 1980's, poachers had killed so many elephants that none dared come near the villages; the Park's population had declined from more than 17,000 to a mere 1,300. Children living in settlements as close as ten miles from the boundary of NLNP had never even seen a living elephant. Crop-raiding elephants were not a problem then because there weren't many crops, or elephants. But with the success of our project and the continuing work of Hammer and Moses' team (aided substantially by UK based *Harvest Help*), as well as that of *Frankfurt Zoological Society*, the elephants are beginning to recover and hundreds of people are now growing more and better crops. And a few elephants wander near sunflower fields and start munching -- a lot of sunflowers.



Hammer receives a gift of two pigeons from villagers



N Luangwa Elephant: Survivor

While crop raiding by elephants is severe in some areas it is an over-simplification to say that all villagers hate elephants. In our experience, many NL people view elephants as part of their heritage, and are happy to see them near their bomas again. Of course, they cannot afford to lose a field of maize to them, but beekeepers and chili peppers are helping to solve that problem without killing elephants or starving villagers.

Farmers in Tanzania solved their elephant 'problem' by planting chili peppers around their gardens. One man painted his fence with a mix of diesel fuel and chilies, and another set off tin-can-diesel-pepper bombs when elephants appeared. It worked! The elephants avoided the crops. With a grant from you through the Owens Foundation, Hammer is

helping people near North Luangwa plant chilies. Everybody wins: Villagers eat the chilies, and sell them at market, and the elephants go back to eating mopane trees – albeit with a long runny nose.

We are also supporting continued training and loans for more beekeepers (bees also chase away hungry elephants), supplying *Traditional Birth Attendants*, and installing more sunflower seed presses. We are paying the salary of Maureen Sikaumbwe, the Small Business Director for the *North Luangwa Wildlife Conservation and Community Development Project*. With your help Hammer and company continue helping villagers improve their lives while conserving their elephants and other wildlife. In fact, this model of promoting wildlife conservation through sustainable rural development is being replicated in many other areas of Zambia. But because money is always tight, we can only plan piecemeal, from grant to grant. Our goal is to set up an endowment for Hammer and for others applying this model; a fund they can count on from year to year. If you can, please help us help them - and in so doing - save the elephants and people.

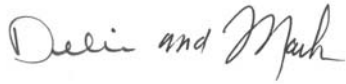
We close by remembering two dear friends, His Royal Highness Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands and American humorist, Johnny Carson. The world has lost two great conservationists and we have lost dear friends. Both men were willing to help in anyway. We will never forget them.

Prince Bernhard was one of our first donors in support of our lion and brown hyena project in the Kalahari Desert in Botswana. He flew to our remote camp in the desert and encouraged us in our work. He never faltered from that day until his death in December. He was always ready to help. We will cherish our

memories of him - his hearty laugh, his honest and intelligent way, his unswerving dedication to conservation. It was our great honor and pleasure to have been a small part of his time on earth.

Johnny was likewise a most special supporter. He was generous with his time and his talents - offering us repeat television appearances on his *Tonight Show*. During a break in one show he handed us a check that became the very first donation to the Owens Foundation. His unfailing support lifted us up and eased the load over these many years. He will be greatly missed and well remembered.

We count each of you as special friends as well. With love, and thanks from all the creatures of North Idaho and North Luangwa.



Mark and Delia

ADVOCACY INFORMATION: *LETTERS COUNT AND DO MAKE A DIFFERENCE:* for more information on the items below, please see our website (owens-foundation.org) or call our office.

1. **IVORY BAN:** Please contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or your home country CITES representative, and the CITES secretariat (address below) and ask for a complete ban on the commercial trade in ivory. Without a market, poachers will not be encouraged to kill elephants for their tusks.
 - **CITES Secretariat:** 15, Chemin des Anemones -- Case Postale 456, CH-1219 -- Chatelaine -- Geneva, Switzerland. PHONE: 4122-979-9139-40, FAX: 4122-797-3417, EMAIL: cites@unep.ch
 - **U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service** -- 4401 North Fairfax Drive, Room 432 -- Arlington, Virginia 22203
2. **SILVER MINES & THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT:** As we told you in our last *Dear Everybody*, we have been fighting the *Rock Creek Silver Mine* which had been tentatively approved in the Cabinet Mountains Wilderness of Montana, even helping to develop a film to highlight this impending wildlife and environmental disaster. Thanks for writing our representatives protesting the *General Mining Law of 1872* that facilitated this mine and the undeniable impact it would have on one of the most pristine watersheds left in the west. After a strong effort by many conservation groups, the courts have ruled against the *Rock Creek Mine* citing the mine's effect on grizzlies and other wildlife based on the *Endangered Species Act*. This is wonderful news, however, we expect *Revett Mining* to appeal this decision, so please contact your representatives urging strong support for the continuation of the *Endangered Species Act* and demand that there be no mining in protected wilderness areas.
 - **For Address Info:** Write - *The Office of the Clerk of the US House of Representatives/US Capitol* -- Room H154 - Washington, DC 20515 -- PH: 202-225-7000, or email for info www.clerkweb.houses.gov or email directly through the following link: www.house.gov/writerep
 - **President George Bush**, The White House - Washington, DC 20500 Email: president@whitehouse.gov
3. **DIAMOND MINES/LIONS/BUSHMEN/ IVORY TRADE - IN THE KALAHARI:** Please write the government of Botswana stating that you cannot visit Botswana until it stops the hunting of threatened populations of Kalahari lions, diamond mining in the *Central Kalahari Game Reserve*, trading elephant ivory, and dislocating Bushmen.
 - **The Honorable FG Mogae**, President of the Republic, Private Bag 001, Gaborone, Botswana
4. **FULAZA SCHOOL:** We built a 2-room school in Fulaza village in the 90's. It needs expanding to provide education above 4th grade. Also needed is a brick house for an upper level teacher. The villagers provide labor but need \$15,000 for concrete, roofing, windows and doors. Some of these villagers used to shoot elephants but stopped after we assisted them with jobs and a school. Help us educate their children to be conservationists for the future protection of North Luangwa.

5. **GAME SCOUT TRAINING:** We are also raising money to fund advanced law enforcement training for top Game Scouts working in North Luangwa. This training at Mweka Wildlife College in Tanzania will give these officers the skills needed to protect the Park for the benefit of the people and wildlife.



HOW TO HELP

Your donations are **greatly needed** and appreciated. There are no small donations. Every penny is a plus in protecting wildlife, their habitat and the people who live near them. Here are more ways you can help:

SPONSOR A LECTURE: The Song of the Winterthorn, Delia and Mark's third book will be published soon - we'll let you know when! They are offering a professional lecture tour in 2005/2006 for a base fee, plus travel. If you know any organization (including alumni contacts at colleges and universities) interested in sponsoring a lecture or if you need more information, contact Mary Dykes.

MATCHING DONATIONS: Some companies match employee and retiree donations to accredited 501(c)(3) non-profits such as the Owens Foundation. Matching donations multiply your giving and empower conservation. Contact me for more information. Thanks to those who already have!

LEGACY PLANNING: You can touch the future by including the Owens Foundation in your Estate Planning. Because of your caring, generosity and forethought, you can continue your advocacy for conservation far beyond your lifetime. Thanks to those who have already made this important pledge. *Contact me (that would be Mary) for more information on Legacy Planning through:*

- **Will, Living Trust or other plan:** A simple bequest can name the OFWC as recipient of a fixed amount or a percentage of your estate just as you can designate specific family and friends.
- **Annuity or Life Insurance Policy:** Designated as payable to the OFWC.
- **Retirement Plans:** Designate OFWC as a beneficiary of all or a percent of your Retirement Plan.

RECOMMEND A FRIEND: If you know someone who shares our passion for conservation, please introduce them to Delia and Mark's work. Send me their contact details and I will forward information to them. **Our database is confidential.** We do NOT share our donor information with anyone...EVER.

- **To receive conservation updates and/or newsletters by email:** email marydykes@mindspring.com
- **New email or postal addresses.** Please advise - saves dollars to be used for conservation, not paperwork.
- **Donation by Credit Card** can be made at www.owens-foundation.org or by calling me. (3% to CC Co.)
- **Foreign currency donations** must be made by wire transfer, US\$ money order or check or by credit card.
- **Online purchases** via OFWC web page link to www.Barnes&Noble.com generate income for our work.
- **Recycle used Cell Phones:** See our web page link to recycle cell phones at no charge & make \$ for OFWC.

DONATIONS FOR NORTH LUANGWA: Thanks to all who have shipped school & medical supplies to North Luangwa. They are GREATLY needed and appreciated. 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 can use any fabric, thread or sewing notions. **Shipping:** Label medical as *Hygiene Supplies*, school and craft donations as *Education Supplies*. List on the USPS Customs Form as a *Gift* with a low value. Ship USPO surface/no insurance. Use sturdy boxes, w/ 2 strips of duct tape in each direction and overlay edges w/2-inch plastic tape. Use USPO "M BAG" for books at \$1 per pound, 11 lbs minimum and 66 lbs maximum per box. **SHIP TO: NLWCCDP, P.O. Box 450210, Mpika, Zambia**

If you do not wish to receive the *Dear Everybody* please contact me and I will remove your name from our files.

Cheers, Mary Dykes/Administrative Director - OFWC, PO Box 870530, Stone Mountain, Georgia 30087 USA
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