



TROPICAL PLANT EXPLORATION GROUP (TroPEG) -CAMEROON

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Report on the North West Regional Wildlife Service’s Coordination Meeting Held in Esu, Zoa Sub-division on September 1, 2015

By

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This meeting started at 9.30 am with the main participants being Staff of the Ministry of forestry and Wildlife (MINFOF) in the North West Region. The Conservator of Kimbi-Fungom National Park, Conservator of Mbi Crater, Conservator of Kagwene Wildlife Sanctuary, and a host of forestry chief of post, and game guards were the main participants. This meeting was also attended by staff of the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) based at Kagwene, hunters around Kimbi-Fungom National Park (K-FNP), and Sainge N. Moses of Tropical Plant Exploration Group (TroPEG) Cameroon. This meeting which has been coined as “Task Force” is monthly rotary among Conservators, Forestry chief of post, game guards, and the chief of Wildlife in the region.

The main objective of this meeting was to discuss ways forward for the new K-FNP:

1. Preserve wildlife resources in the K-FNP.
2. How to handle problems, and challenges of the new National park.
3. How to handle destruction of plant and wildlife resources.
4. Secure vegetation and wildlife habitats.
5. Increase revenue generated from the park.

6. Involving the local population in park management.
7. Involving local NGO's and researchers in park activities and management.

Six Months work covered in the Kimbi-Fungom National Park (K-FNP)

The K-FNP is only six months ago since it was created by a Prime Ministerial decree number 2015/0024/PM of 3 February 2015, and a conservator was appointed to managed the park in March 2015.

So far, a rapid wildlife assessment survey has being carried out particularly in the Kimbi section of the park. During this survey, the area was divided into four compartments': The Kimbi, Sabougeda, Menchum extension, and Nkang.

The following results were realized after surveys:

Biodiversity

Too much grazing in the park causing wildlife to fled, however the park is rich in diversity as a strange predator was recorded during the survey. This species looks like a hyena but it's not a Hyena. The local population called it Kora, In Esu, it's called Olie. It eats its prey alive and live in caves. This species is found in the Kimbi-Fungom National Park to the border to Nigeria. Other species of wildlife recorded in the park are lions, Cheetah, Hyena, Kora, some species of wild cats, 2 varieties of chimpanzee, a strange variety of gorilla, many species of monkeys, Buffalo's, a small population of giraffe, and many species of birds. A strange species of parrot was recorded in the park, and many vultures observed in the vicinity of the Dombu ranch. The park has a rich diversity of plants giving its different vegetation types and habitats.

Students on Internship

So far this park has received students on internship from University of Dschang, and Buea. At the moment, a researcher and PhD student (Sainge Nsanyi Moses) is trying to do an in-depth study on the plant diversity of the park. This study is part of a bigger picture of his dissertation on the Vegetation Patterns of the Cameroon Mountains, with preliminary funding from the Rufford Small Grant Foundation.

Television Covered

The Cameroon Radio Television (CRTV) team visited the park to cover its touristic potentials.

Headquarter

The Headquarter of the park is at Kimbi. Kimbi is a small village on the ring road between Lake Nyos and Misaje. There is no power in Kimbi but the park office has a solar panel from the former Kimbi Wildlife Sanctuary (KWS) which is not working at the moment. Thus power is a major constraint. However, to the Fungom extension of the park, the closest village to the park boundary is Esu which is about 24 km to the park. Esu is a small village with power, water, 3 communication networks and internet.

Transportation

Presently, the park has only one bike, all the bikes from the former KWS are bad. Thus, this makes transportation very difficult.

However, this area is accessible on bikes and 4WD Hilux in the rainy season. In the dry season it's accessible on bikes, bush taxis, and 4WD Hilux. The Fungom extension leads to Fura-wa sub-division via river Katsina Alah to south eastern Nigeria. Standby canoes are at the banks of the river to cross villagers, park users, tourist, and person's going to Nigeria.

Staff

The K-FNP is managed by a Conservator. Since March 2015, the Conservator has been assisted by a lone game guard, and two forestry chief of post (Forestry chief of post for Kimbi and Zoa). At the time of this meeting, we got information from the Regional Delegate of Forestry and Wildlife in Bamenda that 3 game guards have been appointed by the government of Cameroon to assist the Conservator in the proper management of the park.

Since this park was created only six months ago, it still does not have an actual running budget since it was created at a time when the annual budget had been drawn. Thus, it still faces the problem of staff, office equipments, transportation, logistics, etc.

Challenges

The challenges of this new park definitely are enormous. This entails that the Regional Delegate, Conservator, Chief of post, game guards, students on internship, researchers, etc have to go an extra mile to bring the park to a lamp light.

It's at this point that we are seeking your expertise on how we can overcome these challenges.

- Do a detailed study on the biodiversity of the park: Mammals, Birds, Reptiles, Amphibians, Insects, Plants, and Fungi

- Do a detail tracing of the park boundaries.
- Solve the cattle grazing problem in the park
- Ways of managing the park via trans-boundary illegal activities.

Potential Strategy to Address some of the Park Challenges

1. Grazing in the park

Two types of grazing were recorded: Permanent and Temporal grazers

Potential Strategy

- Identify all grazers in the park
 - Identify key grazing areas in the park
 - Sensitization meetings with all grazers
 - Regular patrols (law enforcement by park guards) to identify grazing sites
 - Consideration of alternatives
 - Search for funds to accomplish these activities.
 - A project proposal for the creation of grazing lots around the park in collaboration with relevant stakeholders (MINEPIA, MINENDEP)
 - Convention between MINFOF and Grazers
 - Convention between MINFOF and Councils
 - Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between MINFOF and research institutions.
- #### 2. Trans-boundary illegal activities in the Park

Types of trans-boundary illegal activities in the park are:

- Illegal poaching by Nigerians
- Illegal timber exploitation by Nigerians supported by some Cameroonians
- Illegal Non Timber Forestry Products (NTFP's) supported by some Cameroonians
- Illegal fishing.

As a solution to this,

- The park entails to increase its number of law enforcement operation (Coup de poing) via regular patrols of park guards.
- Organized cooperative groups that will control the collection and sales of NTFP's
- Identify the different NTFP's collected in the area and rank them

- Identify domestic poachers, fishermen, timber dealers, and NTFP's gatherers. After identifying them, educate them on the forestry and wildlife law, help them do other income generating activities, and informed them on the values of their biodiversity.
- For trans-boundary illegal person's, organized a regular mixed patrol to trap them.

Some of the above points may be an alternative way for generating funds for the park, as sales of ceased items will be carried out then after.

Tracing of park boundaries should be carried out in collaboration with other stakeholders. During this exercise an encroachment survey will be carried out where farms will be classified base on size, age, crop type (permanent and temporal crops) and extend of farm into the park. After the encroachment survey, a restitution meeting will be held with the different stakeholders, and possible recommendation drawn.

3. Bush Fire

- To solve the problem of irregular bush fire in the dry season, bush fire prone areas will be identified.
- Sensitization against bush fire will be carried out.
- Implementation of the National strategy against bush fire will be strictly followed.
- A park specific bush fire strategy will be developed.

With the above constraint and challenges, we thereby valorized the following projects to help make our new park known for research, tourism, and park management.

- Request for a study to trace the boundaries of the park.
- Request for a biodiversity survey of the park (Mammals, Birds, Reptiles, Amphibians, Plants, Insects, and Fungi (Mushrooms))
- Request for a study to evaluate the value of NTFP's in the park
- Enhance the establishment of a convention between MINFOF, Councils, and other partners with the goal of promoting ecotourism.
- Set up a project for the convention of poaching that will train and integrate hunters of the area in legal image captures of wildlife of the park.

Done in Buea

September 5, 2015