Conservancies in the Mudumu North Complex
The mission of the MNC

To work together to rehabilitate and manage the area’s fauna and flora, and guide the development of tourism and resource use for social, cultural and economic benefits through collaborative management of conservancies, community forests and national parks.

What is a conservancy?

- A gazetted area of communal land where residents can now add income from wildlife and tourism to traditional farming.
- Most income from conservancies is obtained as cash, whereas most farming income is in kind, as food.
- Wildlife has increased as a result of its new-found value in conservancies.
- The value of natural resources and conservancy land is now greater than before.
- The conservancy and its resources are managed by a group of people elected to serve the interests of its members.
- A forum is provided through which developments and services can be planned and delivered in an integrated fashion.
The Mudumu North Complex (MNC) is a cluster of conservancies, community forests and state protected areas in eastern Caprivi that cooperate in the management of wildlife, forests and other natural resources. The MNC aims to accomplish goals greater than any smaller unit could achieve on its own.

The Complex consists of the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conservancies</th>
<th>Community Forests</th>
<th>Protected Areas</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kwandu</td>
<td>Kwandu</td>
<td>Babwata NP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mashi</td>
<td>Lubuta</td>
<td>Mudumu NP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayuni</td>
<td>Masida</td>
<td>Sobbe</td>
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The MNC covers 3,400 square kilometres on either side of the Kwando River.

Representatives of conservancies, community forests, the traditional authority, non-government organizations and public service agencies form a management body to implement joint activities for managing wildlife, fire and forest resources.

The most valuable natural resources are derived from the Kwando River and its fertile floodplains and riparian forests, which attract charismatic wildlife such as elephant, buffalo, hippo, crocodile, red lechwe, lion, leopard and cheetah.

A BACKGROUND TO THE MUDUMU NORTH COMPLEX

The heart of the MNC – from both a geographical and natural resource perspective – is the Kwando River which flows from Angola, through Namibia and on to the border of Botswana in the south. To the west of the Kwando lies the Bwabwata National Park, while the four conservancies (Kwandu, Mayuni, Mashi and Sobbe) and Mudumu National Park lie to the east of the river. The whole complex is in the Caprivi Region. The Kwandu conservancy falls in the Kongola constituency while Sobbe, Mashi and Mayuni fall in the Linyanti constituency.

Wildlife populations in eastern Caprivi declined considerably in the 1970s and 1980s due to poaching by local people, the South African Defence Force and government officials. Species such as Giraffe, Black Rhino and Eland became locally extinct. In response, the then Directorate of Nature Conservation cracked down on poaching. Although incidents of poaching diminished, local residents became hostile to conservation officials because of the uncompromising conduct of the anti-poaching officials. An employee of the postal services was once ambushed by armed people who mistook him for a conservation official!

In 1990, staff of Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation (IRDNC) consulted traditional leaders to develop new approaches to conservation that would involve communities in decision making and
which would provide them with benefits from wildlife. A community game guard programme was established to stop poaching and give residents some control over wildlife. A socio-ecological survey conducted in 1992 by the new Ministry of Wildlife, Conservation & Tourism and IRDNC also helped to dismantle barriers between conservation officials and local people. When asked during the survey about their development aspirations and attitudes to wildlife, residents responded by saying that they wanted wildlife, but that they also wanted policy changes to allow them to benefit directly from wildlife.

Attitudes towards conservation have improved significantly since those early beginnings almost 20 years ago. When new legislation in 1996 made provision for the establishment of conservancies, several communities began to form their own conservancies so that they could obtain legal rights over wildlife and tourism from which they could earn income. As a result, Mayuni and Kwando conservancies were established in 1999, Mashi in 2003, and then Sobbe in 2006. The new Forest Act in 2001 enabled communities to form community forests to provide rights of ownership over forests and other natural resources, and this led to the registration of Kwando, Lubuta and Masida community forests in 2005.

The other components of the Mudumu North Complex had more formal origins as areas under state protection. The Mudumu National Park was proclaimed in 1989, long after people living there had been moved away following an outbreak of tsetse flies in 1945. Before 2007, the western part of the Kwando Core Area of Bwabwata was part of the Caprivi Game Park (which had been proclaimed in 1963), while the eastern, so-called Kwando Triangle had never been proclaimed. This all changed in 2007 when the newly named and aligned Bwabwata National Park was gazetted to extend state protection all the way eastwards to the Kwando River.

It is hoped that the western part of the Caprivi State Forest (also known as the Caprivi Forest Reserve) will join the MNC at some stage. Although the area has been signposted as a state forest for many years, it has yet to be declared a legally protected area.

In 2005, recognizing that all these neighbouring conservation areas along the Kwando River shared several objectives and were largely interdependent, various stakeholders met to explore the possibility of some form of joint management. The result was the formation of the Mudumu North Complex – a broad management area where agreed issues and problems would be managed collaboratively.

- THE KWANDO RIVER: CENTREPIECE AND LIFELINE

Few rivers anywhere in the world function like the Kwando. Its catchment in eastern Angola is a flat, sandy landscape, and most of its tributaries meander or seep their way through broad marshlands that extend several kilometres on either side of the main channel. The river therefore never flows quickly, and its seasonal floodwaters only reach Namibia during early winter, some months after heavy summer rains have fallen upstream in Angola. The seasonal floodwaters also linger, inundating the surrounding floodplains in Namibia throughout the winter. By contrast, the neighbouring Zambezi and Okavango Rivers are also recharged by rain in Angola, but their downward flows are much quicker, with floodwaters arriving in Namibia in midsummer and soon disappearing downstream.

Most nutrients and particles washed out of the surrounding soils by rainwater are trapped in floodplain vegetation long before the Kwando enters Namibia, and its waters are thus remarkably pure and clear. The Kwando comes to an end in the Linyanti Swamps, which form much of Mamili National Park. The swamps are really a delta because the flow of water is slowed and blocked by the Linyanti Fault, which is a ridge that runs north-east to south-west. In this, and several other aspects of its environmental and hydrological functioning, the Kwando/Linyanti is very similar to the famous, nearby Okavango Delta.

Within Namibia, the Kwando meanders across a broad floodplain valley, in places up to 10 kilometres wide. Much of the valley consists of marshlands, grasslands and riparian forests which are watered by the river
and rainfall, but fed with nutrients that have accumulated in the valley’s sediments over tens of thousands of years. The Kwando valley is thus a swathe of nutrient (and water) wealth to which livestock and wildlife are attracted. Most importantly, the waters of the Kwando and its rich pastures are productive during winter when the surrounding woodlands and grasslands are parched and where no surface water is available.

Most of these surrounding woodlands grow on Kalahari Sands which are comparatively deficient in nutrients. The majority of trees are broad-leaved, dominated by such species as the Red Syringa, Angolan Teak, Zambezi Teak, False Mopane and smaller, shrubby Silverleaf Terminalia), various Combretum species and Baphia massaiensis. Little water is held by the porous sands. Pastures are thus comparatively unproductive for both livestock and wildlife, although localized omurambas or interdune valleys and small pans offer better grazing and browse, since their soils are more clayey and fertile. Camel Thorns and Leadwoods characterize the lower-lying valleys and pans.

Compared to other areas of Namibia, the MNC has a very high diversity of animals and plants, as shown in the map. At a local scale, this is because of the many habitats found in and around the Kwando’s riverine environment. Species that typically favour wetlands (such as Lechwe, Hippo and Saddlebilled Storks) thus live right alongside others that occur only in dry woodlands (for instance, Impala, Eland and Black-collared Barbets). The high levels of biodiversity are also due to the broader Caprivi and MNC environment being much more tropical than elsewhere in the country. Many species that are common further north in Africa thus occur in Caprivi, but are not found further to the south or west. Examples are Reedbuck and Banded Snake-eagles.

As described below, wildlife has only assumed high value quite recently. Before that, most animals were considered nuisances or only useful in a pot. Plants, by contrast, have provided people living with a wealth of resources for thousands of years. Some are used daily by most people, such as grazing and browse for livestock; reeds for walls around homes; and wood for building and fuel. Other plants are harvested less frequently, depending on when they are available or needed, for example Sour Plums and water lily bulbs for food, and Silverleaf Terminalia for medicinal uses. Grass and palm leaves are harvested for making baskets which are dyed using extracts from the bark of Bird Plum trees (or muzinzila). People have recently begun using Devil’s Claw, and the conservancies issue permits for the harvesting, marketing and transporting of these plants. Each permit costs N$15, which goes directly to the conservancy fund. Kalahari Melon seeds are also harvested.

Sadly, most of MNC’s valuable Angolan and Zambezi Teak timber resources have been lost to logging (particularly during the 1960s and 1970s) and to the intense fires that rage so frequently in north-eastern Namibia. The hottest fires occur where grazing pressures are low, which leaves lots of dry grass as fuel. As a result, large numbers of mature timber trees have been killed by fire in the state protected areas of Bwabwata National Park and the State Forest where there is little grazing.
As important components of the MNC, the Lubuta, Kwandu and Masida community forests have played significant roles in adding vegetation to the suite of natural resources now managed and owned by people in the area. As a result, people are more aware of the need to conserve these resources and to guard against their depletion in the short term. The harvesting of plants is therefore better regulated and an improved fire management strategy has been developed to have more frequent but ‘cooler’, less damaging fires.

The numbers of most wildlife species are stable or increasing, and their abundance in this small area of Namibia is made clear by their estimated numbers within the MNC:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Animal</th>
<th>估计数量</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baboon</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black-backed Jackal</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buffalo</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burchell’s Zebra</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bushpig</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Duiker</td>
<td>9,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crocodile</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elephant</td>
<td>5,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hippo</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impala</td>
<td>1,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kudu</td>
<td>1,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Lechwe</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roan Antelope</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Side-striped Jackal</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steenbok</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tsessebe</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vervet Monkey</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warthog</td>
<td>400</td>
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In addition, it is estimated that there are 100 or fewer of the following: Sable, Southern Reedbuck, Eland, Giraffe, Blue Wildebeest, Sitatunga, Bushbuck, Lion, Leopard, Spotted and Brown Hyaena, Cheetah, Caracal, Serval, Civet, Wild Dog, Cape Clawless and Spot-necked Otters. These estimates come from Rowan Martin’s report compiled in 2006, entitled *The Mudumu North Complex: wildlife co-management in the Kwando Area of the Caprivi; a study for the Ministry of Environment & Tourism and the Management Committee of the MNC*.

To bolster game numbers and reintroduce locally extinct species, the Ministry of Environment & Tourism and non-government organizations have helped reintroduce wildlife into the conservancies and national parks. The following animals have been released into the MNC since 2005: Kudu – 26, Blue Wildebeest – 132, Giraffe – 64, Sable – 37, Eland – 142, and Impala – 69.

These animals have settled and are breeding successfully. Many are also secure enough to move from the protection of the parks into the communal lands. Blue Wildebeest, Giraffe, Sable and Zebra had been extinct in the area, and it is hoped that their successful re-establishment will pave the way for Black and White Rhino to be reintroduced. Black Rhino occurred along the Kwando River until 1971 and the last White Rhino were recorded in the late 19th century.

Over 450 bird species occur in the area. There are many spectacular species, such as Skimmers, Yellow-billed Storks, and Goliath Herons.
The formation of the Mudumu North Complex provided a new approach to natural resource management, and this was the first time in Namibia that such a mix of stakeholders – public servants, traditional leaders, conservancies, community forests and non-government organizations – joined forces to cooperate in managing protected areas and adjoining communal land. One of the Complex’s initial steps was to arrange for the Kwandu, Mayuni, and Mashi conservancies to share anti-poaching and game monitoring responsibilities. Measures were also taken to cooperate in the management of wildlife and forest resources, and for conservancies and community forests to consider merging.

As wildlife began to increase, incidents of human-wildlife conflict also began to rise. Predators and elephants often entered the conservancies from the Bwabwata and Mudumu National Parks, and the management of conflicts thus required cooperation with the park managers. The park staff stood to gain because cooperation with conservancies could lead to reduced poaching. Fire was another issue that affected everyone and required some form of cooperative management. Fires set in conservancies often spread to the parks, making it difficult for the staff to develop their own fire management regimes.

A joint management approach involving people in different places is of particular value since fires often spread over wide areas. Farmers in the MNC have also been encouraged to adopt an ‘early burn’ fire strategy which reduces the chances of intense, destructive wildfires. Early fires burn smaller areas and thus also increase biotic diversity by creating a mosaic of habitats. The MNC programme is probably the largest communal area fire management system in Africa.

**Fire management**

While fire has moulded savanna woodlands naturally in the MNC over thousands of years, the high frequency of intense fires now set by people in winter causes severe degradation, especially for woodlands in Bwabwata National Park and the State Forest. But other resources of direct value to people are also lost, including timber, grazing and thatching grass. Conversely, a lack of fire in areas heavily grazed by livestock has led to bush encroachment.

The management structure of the MNC is headed by a Senior Decision-makers’ Forum, which represents all the key stakeholders. Reporting to the Forum is the Management Committee, while the Technical Support group is made up of government and non-governmental organization staff and various donor-funded support projects. Several working groups have been formed to address specific issues. The Law Enforcement group provides a platform for tackling crime on a broad front, while the Enterprise group explores initiatives to market the whole area for tourism and to promote the commercial harvesting of indigenous plant resources. The Zonation and Land-use group works to optimise each zone and was responsible for the creation of wildlife corridors in three conservancies along the Kwando (see below). The Monitoring group collates information collected by individual units within the MNC into an integrated reporting system. The most important management activities in the MNC are:
**Game Monitoring Unit**

While localised species such as Reedbuck and Hippo may be managed within a conservancy, others that range widely – such as Elephant, Red Lechwe, Roan and Sable – are best managed as one population along the Kwando River. Responses to problems caused by Elephants need to be coordinated and consistent throughout the area. In addition, the reintroduction and translocation of valuable game requires intensive monitoring and law enforcement. The Game Monitoring Unit of the MNC consists of Ministry of Environment & Tourism staff and one game guard from each of the conservancies, while technical and financial support is given by non-government organizations. The unit monitors game using telemetry and provides communication linkages across the MNC that help to reduce poaching, monitor the status and progress of reintroduced game and limit problems caused by Elephants and Hippo. The Unit also creates linkages between local residents and the management structures of the MNC.

**Monitoring**

Joint management requires effective monitoring, which is largely achieved through the use of the ‘Event Book’ system. The system covers natural resources, enterprises, finances and even institutional aspects to document the distribution of benefits, the numbers and purposes of meetings, employment and training. Community game guards patrol their conservancies throughout the year to monitor game movements, livestock movements, reintroduced game and problem animals. They also help with fire management and the provision of water points. Community resource monitors, who are all women, guide conservancy residents on sustainable harvesting of resources and also monitor the harvesting of plants used commercially. In addition, they keep records of events such as fires, floods and harvesting that may affect harvests in the future.

The MNC also has its own local-level data archiving system where data from each conservancy’s Event Book is aggregated with data from the ‘Incident Book’ monitoring systems used in the two parks. Annually the MNC undertakes a game count with participants walking along defined transects. This event is part of a large ground-based game count that covers much of Caprivi each September. These data provide information on the trends of wildlife over the longer term and also provide some information on game numbers in the Complex. In addition to this, game guards in the participating conservancies undertake a monthly game count on foot along a single defined transect and the Mudumu Park staff undertake a quarterly vehicle-based game count along the road that runs parallel to the Kwando river.

One of the most valuable aspects of the MNC is that it forms part of a wide expanse over which animals can move freely. The only significant barriers are the rivers (which only impede certain species) and disease control fences along the border between Bwabwata and Botswana. This map shows the locations of three elephants as they moved in and out of the MNC over a period of two years. Each locality was transmitted via satellite to a receiving station. This information was kindly provided by Mike Chase, who runs the project *Elephants Without Borders.*
Zoning and wildlife corridors
In Kwandu, Mayuni and Mashi wildlife corridors have been established so that game in the hinterland has easy access to grazing and water along the Kwando River. People may harvest plants in the corridors, but no cropping or human settlement is allowed. The corridors are part of a zoning programme to make maximum use of the potential of different areas and to minimise conflicting land uses. In an unprecedented move that won him an award as Namibian conservationist of the decade in 2007, Chief Joseph Mayuni moved himself and his people from the floodplains to less fertile land to free the area for tourism development. Headmen from the Ngonga sub-Khuta also agreed to the formation of the wildlife corridors as a consequence of the game introductions. The move was made possible by the provision of water away from the river, and the MNC is now looking to facilitate the provision of more water. Other farmers could then move from areas where human-wildlife conflicts are common to places where farming is easier.

Human-wildlife conflicts
An increase in wildlife unfortunately leads to more human-animal interactions, some of which are conflicts that can cause losses of lives, livelihoods and goodwill towards conservation and wildlife. While recognizing that the conflicts are best managed locally in conservancies, the MNC has encouraged conservancies to use similar approaches to the problem. The measures taken can then be compared to see how they work in different circumstances, and lessons from one conservancy can be applied in others.

The biggest problems are crop damage by elephant and hippo and livestock losses to hyaena, leopard and crocodile. A variety of tactics are used to deal with conflicts, ranging between making loud noises and fires to chase animals away, to the use of ‘chili-bomb’ deterrents, the removal of individual animals that are particularly dangerous, and the payment of compensation for certain losses.
The potential of using chili to deter elephants was piloted in Kwandu. Farmers now grow the chili, which is mixed with elephant dung to make the ‘bombs’ that are lit when elephants approach crops. It is also used for ‘hot fences’ when chili-soaked rags are strung along fences around crops. Many farmers in Kwandu, Sobbe and Mashi (and in Zambia as part of cross-frontier collaboration with the Sesheke West Resource Board) have been trained in the use of chilis. Aside from deterring elephants, the chili farming initiative brings cash incomes to those who grow it.

The Human-Wildlife Conflict Compensation Scheme was piloted by Kwandu and Mayuni to relieve the burden on individuals affected by wildlife. The scheme covers damage to crops by elephants, stock killed by predators and even funeral costs for deaths caused by wild animals. Compensation is paid at set rates, the conservancy covering half the amount and IRDNC the remainder. Full payments will be made by conservancies once they earn sufficient income. Only members of conservancies can benefit and measures are in place to prevent abuse of the system. For example, livestock must be kraaled at night, no compensation is given for livestock killed within a national park and losses must be reported within three days. The scheme has been so successful that it is now used by many other conservancies elsewhere in Namibia.

**Agriculture**

Innovative approaches to cultivation and range management have been introduced in the MNC. The Conservation Agriculture programme aims to improve the quality and yield of crops by mulching crop stalks into the ground after the growing season, adding manure prior to planting, and ensuring that the nutrients are focused around the roots of new seedlings. Many farmers have adopted the approach. By increasing the lifetime productivity of fields, the rate at which virgin land is cleared and indigenous woodlands are lost will be reduced. This will also be helpful in areas where soils suited to cultivation are limited, and where people have moved their homes and fields to leave habitats and corridors for wildlife.
Holistic Range Management techniques are being implemented in all the conservancies. Cattle that belong to different individuals are combined into large herds that are then rotated between planned grazing areas. This leads to the establishment and growth of more perennial grasses, and to more organic matter on the surface and in the soil itself. The use of herders to accompany the large cattle herds also reduces the chances of predators taking stock.

Prior to the formation of the four conservancies, most of the local economy was based on farming, and the use of natural vegetation for food, fuel and building materials. The only cash incomes came from some jobs of teachers, nurses and a few other locally employed public servants, and a handful of small, retail shops. Other cash was obtained from pensions and remittances provided by family members working in Katima Mulilo and other centres of financial activity in Namibia.

The value of incomes obtained through the conservancies has risen sharply over the past 10 years, as shown in the graphs for each conservancy. Cumulatively, about N$3.7 million was obtained in 2008 by the four conservancies. Most income has come directly to the conservancies from concession fees paid for trophy hunting and from joint venture agreements for the sharing of profits earned by tourism establishments. In addition, significant incomes are earned by the salaries paid to conservancy residents who are employed by lodges and campsites. Ninety-nine people worked in full-time jobs for the four conservancies in 2008.

While trophy hunting and tourism (lodges, camp sites and craft sales) have provided the great majority of revenue in recent years, the value of meat distributed to residents has also been significant. For example, the meat from own-use hunting and trophy animals was worth about N$550,000 in 2007 and N$390,000 in 2008.

• ECONOMY OF THE MNC •
The sources of income and total value in N$ obtained by the four conservancies over 10 years.
Trophy hunting in the MNC is based on quotas determined from the results of annual game counts, and monitoring by the conservancy game guards and the MNC Game Monitoring Unit. The quotas are approved annually by the Ministry of Environment & Tourism. Species hunted include Baboon, Buffalo, several common game species and some rare species such as Sable and Roan (one every two years across the entire concession), and Elephant, Lion and Crocodile. Hippos are hunted occasionally for traditional ceremonies. Income from the trophy hunting is shared between the three conservancies – Mayuni, Mashi and Kwandu – that have jointly held the quota for several years, but meat is kept by the conservancy where the animal was shot. The conservancies have a good working relationship with the hunter who has also provided assistance to social programmes in the conservancies.

Tourism in the MNC is largely based on attractions provided by wildlife. Before the conservancies were established, lodges were developed on communal land with little recognition of the rights of the people living locally. And despite having to cope with the problems caused by the wildlife that tourists wanted to see, local residents gained little from tourism. Conservancies now provide communities with concession rights for lodges and campsites, which means that tourism operators must negotiate some form of rental or other payment in recognition of their use of communal land and its wildlife resources. In the MNC most lodges work well with the conservancies and have accepted the need to develop some form of joint venture. A tourist hub at Kongola is being developed to promote tourism, to provide information to visitors and local residents, and to encourage the development of secondary enterprises such as a fresh produce market and the Mashi craft market.

**Successes and challenges**
The Mudumu North Complex is developing into a successful example of collaborative management of land and natural resources by local communities and the public service, with support from non-government organisations. A major strength of the MNC is that joint management was driven by demand since its member units shared common problems and realized that solving problems required cooperation with neighbours. Collaboration was facilitated by the conservancies, since

The way in which incomes were spent by the four conservancies. For example, about half of all income went to private sector salaries in Mashi and Mayuni, while most of Sobbe’s income was distributed as household meat. Kwandu spent significant amounts on running costs and the salaries of people employed by the conservancy. Funds used to pay salaries to conservancy staff, running costs, capital developments and cash payments to members were all derived from hunting concession fees and royalties from joint venture agreements which are paid directly to the conservancy funds.
local communities then shared some of the conservation objectives of the neighbouring state-run national parks. Furthermore, the conservancies were able to enter into discussions with government knowing that they had management authority over the wildlife on their land. There was no risk, therefore, of being disempowered by government.

While collaborative management developed because it was needed, its maintenance requires that participants uphold productive cooperation. This requires good communication between stakeholders. Other line ministries active in the area and the Regional Council must be informed of the MNC’s activities and initiatives so that they are not undermined by the uncoordinated planning of other activities. Above all, sound technical ability, management and infrastructure needs to be established and maintained in each of the MNC’s components.

The increasing populations of wildlife demonstrate that most species have high value, and that they are accepted by local residents. However, the growing number of human-wildlife conflicts is cause for concern, and further innovative measures will need to be developed to counter losses caused by wildlife. In addition, there is an urgent need to find ways of reducing the number of elephants in the area. Valuable riparian woodlands are being destroyed at an alarming rate by the concentrations of elephants attracted to water and food along the Kwando River during the dry winter months. The loss of browse in the dry woodlands as a result of rampant burning causes the elephants to focus their feeding on the riparian vegetation to an even greater extent.

Although community forests and conservancies cooperate in many respects, there is no longer reason to keep these management units separate. Each has strengths to offer which should be combined for the benefit of all. Principally, community forests have legal control and ownership over a much broader range of natural resources than conservancies, while conservancies can contribute high value wildlife and tourism and longer management experience.

Antelope horns are encased in sheaths cut from PVC piping (being prepared here by game guards) to protect them from injury when in holding pens.
Kwandu Conservancy

The conservancy covers an area of 190 square kilometres and has a population of about 4,300 people, mostly Sifwe and Mbukushu speaking. Across the Kwando River to the west is the Bwabwata National Park while the Kwandu Community Forest partially overlaps the conservancy from the east.

Residents began discussing issues of human-wildlife conflict in 1996 and then decided that forming a conservancy could bring benefits from wildlife rather than only losses. The conservancy was registered in December 1999 and supported with donor funds until 2003 when it became financially independent, largely as a result of income from the shared trophy hunting quota with Mayuni and Mashi. Kwandu operates the Bum Hill campsite in Bwabwata National Park. Wooden decks at the campsite offer guests spectacular views out over the Kwando River. The conservancy also plans to develop a lodge, a traditional dance centre and a sawmill which will provide it with higher income from the sale of timber. Nineteen jobs have been created by the conservancy. Meat and cash benefits are divided among the six village areas. The nursery at the conservancy office supplies seedlings to schools and the chili-growing demonstration plots show farmers how to grow chilies and use them to deter elephants.

Kwandu Conservancy
PO Box 8075, Katima Mulilo
Telephone: 066 252518 or 252666
Mayuni Conservancy

Mayuni was established with very strong support from Chief Mayuni who has been a strong driving force for conservation in the area. The conservancy was registered in 1999, by which time it had negotiated to share the income of the existing Susuwe Island Lodge. The conservancy borders the Bwabwata National Park along the Kwando River, covers 151 square kilometres and has a Sifwe and Mbu Kushu speaking population of approximately 2,400 residents. A campsite on the eastern banks of the Kwando River is operated by the conservancy as a joint venture with Susuwe Island Lodge. The conservancy also has its own Nambwa Camp on the western banks of the river and within the Bwabwata National Park. It also shares income from the Mazambala Lodge and from the joint trophy hunting quota with the Kwandu and Mashi conservancies.

Twenty one people already work for the conservancy. Cash benefits are distributed to each of three village areas, where the funds are administered as needed. Other cash benefits are provided to the traditional authority, schools, youth groups, cultural and social support activities, and to farmers directly affected by wildlife conflicts. Meat is provided to community members from ‘own use’ hunting quotas. There are plans to provide vulnerable children with financial support, to develop another primary school and to explore more income-generating activities that will continue to benefit its members as a whole.

Mayuni Conservancy
PO Box 8011, Katima Mulilo
Telephone: 066 252518
Mashi Conservancy

The conservancy was named after the False Mopane tree and the Mashi River, which is the local name for the Kwando River. It covers an area of 297 square kilometres and has a population of about 3,900 people. Sifwe, Mbukushu and Mbarakwena are the predominant languages. The Mudumu National Park lies to the south while there is a safari hunting area in Botswana across the Kwando River. The traditional leadership and some local residents started to cultivate interest in forming a conservancy in 1998. Mashi was subsequently gazetted as a conservancy in 2003.

Income is earned from the joint hunting concession with Kwandu and Mayuni and a joint venture agreement with Namushasha Lodge. Mashi is negotiating with other lodges within the conservancy to establish similar joint ventures. Eighteen jobs have been created in the conservancy. Meat and cash benefits have been distributed to each of the four village areas, while other income has been used for road maintenance, support for schools and to establish a fish farm.

The management committee believes that poaching is still prevalent because members do not perceive that they are benefiting adequately from the conservancy. The committee would also like to see more training for residents to enable them to participate in the tourism industry, and has plans to operate its own campsite and several traditional villages. There is a further hope for Mashi to obtain a concession in the Mudumu National Park which would considerably boost its income.

Mashi Conservancy
PO Box 8061, Katima Mulilo
Telephone 066 252 108
**Sobbe Conservancy**

Sobbe Conservancy is situated in the woodland hinterland of the Kwando River. It borders the Mayuni Conservancy and the Mudumu National Park and partially overlaps with the Lubuta and Masida Community Forests. The conservancy covers 404 square kilometres and has a population of around 2,000, mostly Sifwe speaking people. It was registered in October 2006.

Incomes are obtained from trophy hunting and hunting for own use, and members are involved in craft making and sales. Twenty jobs for community members have been created by the conservancy. Cash benefits are distributed to individual members and to the traditional authority. Representatives in each area ensure that meat is equally distributed. Sobbe is starting conservation farming as well as supplying water points for wildlife. Members have a particular interest in improving rangeland management in the conservancy.

Sobbe Conservancy  
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