



GRASP

Newsletter

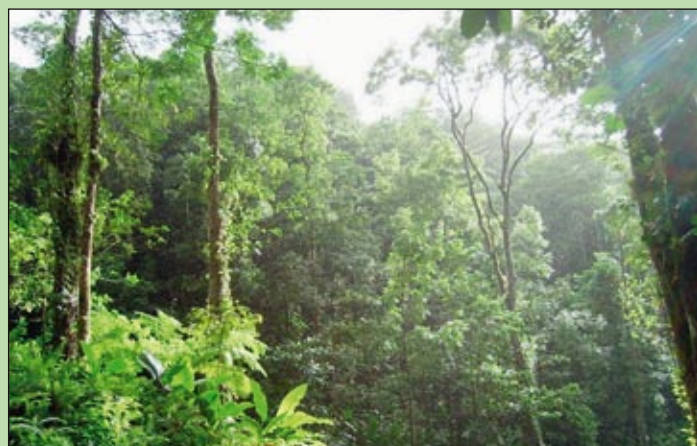
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Save the apes to stop climate change

The logic is simple: to save the apes, we must save their habitat. The correlation between areas of high carbon and the distribution of great apes is striking, though not surprising considering that great apes inhabit tropical rainforests and woodlands. Ape habitat comprises two of the planet's three 'green lungs' – the tropical forests of Africa and SE Asia, and the focus of GRASP's activity. Fear of climate change has brought the ecological services that these forests provide us to the fore. As a result, there is a growing sense of urgency in efforts to slow deforestation.

But forests are more than just trees, and apes are not just important because they are interesting and intelligent social mammals. Let us not forget that primates also perform a service to the planet. They are keystone species in their habitat, principally because they disperse the seeds of the next generation of trees in their droppings. This role as seed dispersal agents means that the forests need the apes as much as these species need the forest. The valuation of ecosystem services of forests should, on this basis, also recognize and value the role played by keystone species in those ecosystems. Each germinating seedling growing out of a frugivore's droppings can be thought of as an 'ecological event'; the old-growth carbon stocks we are measuring today (and the forest products being made into rattan chairs, garden furniture and hardwood paneling) are a result of such events that happened centuries ago. Thus, if we are to benefit from 'permanence' in carbon sequestration, we must enable conditions for such events to continue - we need to protect the 'gardeners of the forest' – the apes and elephants and other seed dispersal agents.

This is not, of course, just about saving charismatic mega-vertebrates. About 50 % of all known species live in tropical forests, or more correctly, play a role in the ecology of tropical forests. And these forests play a pivotal role in sequestering and storing carbon. Moreover, losing these forests doesn't just mean an absence of their role as climate regulators. Forest destruction and degradation accounts for nearly a fifth of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions – much more than the transport sector. Cutting down forests is a double loss because the process adds to the



New GRASP Partners!

The Aspinall Foundation and the Humane Society International - Australia were admitted to the Partnership during the last meeting of the Executive Committee on 2-3 May 2007.



very problems we need the forests to help solve. Forests store carbon not just in the wood of the trees, but in the soil – especially in tropical forests growing on peat swamps, which release centuries' worth of stored carbon if they dry out. Thus, protection of fauna as well as flora must be a part of forest management for carbon (and, of course, other ecological services).

In December 2007, GRASP will hold a side event at the 13th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Among the items to be discussed by the signatory governments are the new regulations to reduce GHG emissions, which will come into effect after the first period of the Kyoto Protocol ends in 2012. Unfortunately, the Kyoto Protocol and European Emissions Trading Scheme do not recognize carbon credits for avoided deforestation, and make it very difficult for afforestation or reforestation schemes in developing countries. As a result, economic pressures to exploit forests are many times greater than efforts to conserve them, and so illegal and unsustainable logging and the conversion of tropical forests to agriculture continue to threaten these biodiverse habitats and their role in maintaining climate stability. Ironically, one of the measures being touted as a means of reducing carbon emissions – using bio-fuels instead of fossil fuels – is exacerbating the destruction of forests by making it more profitable to convert them to growing oil palms or other crops for bio-fuels.

Action to reduce GHG emissions could, if they result in an increase investment in tropical forest management, also help achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The poorest 1.2 billion of the world's population depend directly on forests for their livelihood. The required improvement in infrastructure for creating a system of monitoring and protecting forests instead of destroying them would result in employment opportunities, from which many would benefit. The Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change, published by the British Government last year, concluded that "Curbing deforestation is a highly cost-effective way to reduce emissions". It estimates that investing several billions of dollars per year in protecting forests would be the cheapest way of significantly reducing global carbon emissions. This is not, however, instead of developing low carbon technology and curbing other emissions, but an immediate action that could buy some time for new technologies to come into play. It is GRASP's intention to ensure that some of this investment also achieves the objectives outlined in the Global Strategy adopted by signatories to the Kinshasa Declaration in September 2005.

(continued on page 4)

IT equipment helps GRASP Focal Points do their job

In April, with the help of Innocent Garakumbe at the International Gorilla Conservation Programme in Kampala, GRASP was able to provide our Ugandan Focal Point, Moses Mapesa Wafula at the Ugandan Wildlife Authority, with seven GPS units and a printer that will allow his team to collect geo-referenced data on great ape habitat, population size and distribution.



Stephen Ebai Takang (left), Focal Point for Cameroon, receiving a photocopier from Bernard Fosso, WCS

Since April, the GRASP Technical Support Team has also provided IT equipment to a further four range state Focal Points, bringing the total number of recipients to nine, and counting. This project, as the technology transfer component of the GRASP European Commission grant, aims to equip every GRASP Focal Point with IT resources to the value of USD 3,500.



Fidelis Odiakaose Omeni, Focal Point for Nigeria, with his new computer

In Nigeria, Focal Point Fidelis Odiakaose Omeni took receipt of a full suite of office equipment from Andrew Dunn of the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS). His computer, printer, scanner, digital camera, power surge protector and memory stick were all supplied from Abuja, whilst the new binoculars and GPS units were sourced from the United Kingdom. WCS also

played a key facilitation role in Cameroon, supplying Focal Point Stephen Ebai Takang with a photocopier and various accessories in June.

More recently, we are pleased to report that with the help of Boubacar Diarra at the IUCN Dakar office, Ndeye Sene Thiam, Focal Point for Senegal, has received several items – including a laptop and digital camera with the express purpose of having the flexibility to track chimpanzee movements and distribution in the field.

It is heartening to see different members of the GRASP Partnership working together to ensure that the communication needs of the range state Focal Points are met.

Chris Wright, Born Free Foundation, GRASP Technical Support Team

GRASP and CITES Technical Mission to SE Asia

The GRASP and CITES Secretariats conducted the second technical mission to Southeast Asia 23-28 April 2007 to Thailand and Cambodia to study the illegal trade in orangutans as agreed in CITES Resolution Conf. 13.4. Both countries had reportedly been receiving significant amounts of illegally traded orangutans. The team visited facilities reported to be in possession of orangutans that had been illegally imported such as Safari-World type entertainment/zoo complexes, and met with officials from agencies responsible for the enforcement of the Convention and national law. The full mission report can be found on-line at: <http://www.unep.org/grasp/Partners/biodiversity.asp>

Launch of Report:

The high-impact, United Kingdom funded, report "Last Stand of the Orangutan, State of Emergency: Illegal Logging, Fire, and Palm Oil in Indonesia's National Parks" was published in February 2007. It is available online at: www.unep.org/grasp



Secretariat updates

Since the last newsletter, the Secretariat has been busy with various activities, including a CITES technical mission, UNEP mission to DRC, Paris Meeting of Donor Countries, and publication of an orangutan report, all highlighted in this issue. Meanwhile, some other activities include:

- A GRASP brainstorming meeting took place 30 April -1 May 2007 in Nairobi to take stock of the Partnership's direction and to deliberate on several areas of focus to help improve implementation of the GRASP Programme of Action.
- The third GRASP Executive Committee meeting was held at UNEP headquarters in Nairobi on 2-3 May 2007. Topics of discussion included: future directions of GRASP, the next GRASP Council Meeting, elections of the Scientific Commission, and development of a business plan and monitoring and reporting mechanisms. Minutes of the meeting are available online at: http://www.unep.org/grasp/Meetings/executive_committee_meetings.asp
- The Partnership published a GRASP Activity and Finance Plan, launched at the Paris Donor Meeting (see article on page 3) and available on-line at: http://www.unep.org/grasp/Meetings/Donors_meetings.asp
- Carbon Forestry: UNEP and UNESCO representatives met with Malaysian officials from the Sabah Forestry Department (SFD) and private carbon companies in Paris May 29-30 2007 to discuss and identify innovative financing mechanisms and sustainable forest management practices. GRASP Chief Consultant Ian Redmond also attended the World Bank Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) Meeting, in Paris on 19 July 2007 to discuss carbon financing and explore possibilities for directing carbon funding towards great ape conservation priority sites.

GRASP Scientific Commission is Established

GRASP welcomes the 11 members of the newly established Scientific Commission: Sri Suci Utami Atmoko, Christophe Boesch, Tatyana Humle, Inza Koné, Mark Leighton, Dieudonné Musibono, Fiona Maisels, Eric Meijaard, William Olupot, Liz Williamson, and Chair Serge Wich.

The work of the Scientific Commission will include providing sound scientific advice to the GRASP partnership and the monitoring of great ape populations and habitats as an indicator for conservation success. Furthermore, as funding and needs arise, the Scientific Commission will conduct studies of alternative conservation strategies and investments to improve conservation effectiveness.

Climate Change and Great Apes: GRASP Patron Speaks Out

On 31 May 2007, Prof. Richard Leakey, in collaboration with GRASP Partner the Orangutan Foundation, spoke at the London Royal Geographical Society on the subject "Climate change and the future of Great Apes. Can anything be done?" The event was well attended by both members of the public and conservationists alike. The



Prof. Richard Leakey speaking at the RGS

lecture caused a great deal of press interest with articles published the next day in the BBC and many of the UK and international newspapers. All felt that the evening went a long way to putting great ape conservation at the centre of the wider environmental debate.

Mark Attwater - Orangutan Foundation UK

Conservation of gorillas and sustainable livelihoods in the Virungas are among the objectives of a new UNEP initiative to assist the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to sustainably manage its economically important nature-based assets. Virunga National Park in has been at the center of on-going local and regional conflict, especially over natural resources. The new initiative was announced in Paris on 26 October 2007, following a UNEP scoping mission to DRC in September.

UNEP deployed the mission following a request by the DRC Minister of Environment amid mounting national and international concern over the slaughter of highly endangered mountain gorillas and damage to one of Africa's most famous parks. Since the beginning of 2007 at least ten gorillas have been killed, ranger posts have been attacked, and park rangers have been forced to abandon their positions.



Mountain gorillas, DRC

The mission team, including Johannes Refisch of GRASP-UNEP, met with key stakeholders in Kinshasa and Goma, including government, the Congolese Institute for the Conservation of Nature (ICCN), the UN Mission in DRC (MONUC), other UN agencies, and NGOs – many of which are GRASP partners. This mission followed an earlier mission in August led by the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and IUCN to the Virunga National Park. Thus, the GRASP Partnership has been actively involved through both the UNEP and UNESCO missions.

For the Virunga region, the mission recommended:

- Help in mitigating the impacts of the refugee camps bordering or located within the park (in cooperation with UNHCR, WWF and CARE International)
- Implementation of a stakeholder dialogue process on sustainable livelihoods to address the disconnect between projects being delivered by humanitarian, development and environmental actors
- Possible environmental diplomacy on transboundary cooperation between the DRC, Rwanda and Uganda. Transboundary issues include the illegal trade of charcoal and transboundary energy production (oil and methane gas).



Bulengo Internally Displaced People (IDP) Camp, neighboring Virunga National Park, DRC

MONUC has agreed to share information on security matters and illegal activities and has made a commitment to carrying out joint patrols with ICCN park rangers as soon as the security situation permits. The UNEP report suggests that a more explicit reference be made to the monitoring of natural resources in the MONUC mandate and that this be addressed during the review of MONUC's mandate by the Security Council in December 2007.

The proposed activities will capitalize on UNEP core strengths in terms of convening power, coordination, political advocacy, law, assessment and diplomacy. The first phase, for which UNEP has announced 300,000 USD in start-up funding, will run to March 2008 and include immediate legal support to the government, mobilization of funding, support for the UN Country Team, and the convening of the a Virunga stakeholder forum. Additional phases of the strategy will include a post-conflict assessment (phase 2) and increased environmental capacity building within the ministry (phase 3). The full UNEP Mission to DRC report is available on-line at: www.unep.org/grasp/docs/UNEP_report_DRC_mission.pdf

GRASP meeting of donor countries and agencies

The room was filled beyond capacity at this meeting on 25 October 2006 where government, private sector, NGO and range state representatives were presented with the recently released *GRASP Activity and Finance Plan*. The meeting was co-chaired by H.E. Henri Djombo of the Republic of Congo, and Nobel Laureate Prof. Wangari Maathai presented the keynote address. Executive Committee Chair Moses Mapesa of Uganda presented the range state perspective, while Serge Wich, Scientific Commission Chair, briefed participants on the status of great apes. The meeting offered potential partners a valuable opportunity to learn more about the work of the Partnership and explore means of becoming involved. Meeting documents and final report can be found on-line at: http://www.unep.org/grasp/Meetings/Donors_meetings.asp



Prof. Wangari Maathai giving keynote address

Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) – The Gorilla Agreement



A legally binding agreement on gorillas was negotiated by nine of the ten gorilla range states, and various NGOs and IGOs in attendance at this special CMS session held 22-24 October 2007. The final *Gorilla Agreement* was signed at the close of the week on 26 October by ministers from the Central African Republic and the Republic of the Congo. The agreement will come into force when there is one further signature or accession. The agreement will help conserve and restore gorilla populations and their habitats to a favorable conservation status, primarily by establishing or reinforcing coordinated transfrontier activities or projects. While CMS will provide the Secretariat of the agreement they will do so in close cooperation with GRASP. The agreement will provide the legal teeth to support the conservation and sustainable development programme of GRASP, and the GRASP Scientific Commission will form part of the agreement's technical committee. Each range state will nominate a focal point for the agreement, and GRASP focal points could fill this role. The final agreement is available online at: <http://www.naturalsciences.be/science/projects/gorilla>

This week-long series of synergetic meetings 22-26 October 2007 was hosted by the French government at the National Museum of Natural History in Paris and also comprised meetings of the Francophone Society of Primatology, and of the Congo Basin Forest Partnership, marking the facilitation hand-over from France to Germany.

UNEP exchanges letters with Ramsar

The Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and the Executive Director of UNEP exchanged letters confirming a commitment to greater collaboration on the conservation of great ape habitats in wetland sites during the 24th Session of the UNEP Governing Council, at a GRASP event on 6 February 2007. As a first joint project, GRASP and RAMSAR are producing a documentary film on the Petit Loango site in Gabon.



Achim Steiner, UNEP Executive Director, and Peter Bridgewater, RAMSAR Secretary General

Save the apes to stop climate change (continued from page 1)

The GRASP Scientific Commission compiled a list of 94 priority sites across Africa and Southeast Asia which would, if managed well, ensure the survival of every species and sub-species of great ape (as well as countless other species and vulnerable communities of forest-dependent people). As carbon markets develop, there will doubtless be thousands of forest and woodland sites worldwide being better managed with carbon finance. This in turn, will create more jobs for local people measuring and monitoring forests. This will help alleviate poverty and stimulate sustainable development in a way which is compatible with the health of the forest. GRASP seeks to ensure that among the first sites to benefit in this way are the 94 priority ape sites and is currently drawing up a shortlist of pilot site most suitable for rapidly developing their carbon potential. Carbon trading should meet strict standards, such as those developed by the Climate, Community and Biodiversity Alliance. This would attract immediate investment in managing forests for the benefit of local communities, biodiversity conservation and the planet.

Ian Redmond, GRASP Chief Consultant

World Primate Safaris supports great ape conservation

World Primate Safaris (WPS), one of the few private sector members of the GRASP Partnership, operates in various developing countries throughout the world. As part of their commitment to the principles of sustainable tourism, WPS donates a percentage of their sales towards the conservation and preservation of endangered primates throughout the world. Thus, at the end of 2006, WPS decided to support the mobile awareness unit of the Sumatran Orangutan Society (SOS). The mobile



© SOS
The Orang-U-Van of the mobile awareness unit, SOS

awareness unit holds presentations and lectures throughout Sumatra in local communities to ensure that people are aware of the threats that face orangutan populations in the wild. For further information please contact WPS at www.worldprimatesafaris.com or SOS at www.orangutans-sos.org

Will Bolsolver, World Primate Safaris

Apes in the News

Rescue of infant gorilla, Ndeze

Ndeze, a female infant mountain gorilla, was orphaned after an attack on the "Rugendo" family on 23 July 2007. She was carried away from the scene by her older brother, and discovered by ICCN rangers who, with help from staff of the Mountain Gorilla Veterinary project (MGVP), retrieved her and brought her to the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund International (DFGFI) shelter for confiscated and orphaned gorillas in Goma, DRC. Although slightly dehydrated when she was found, Ndeze quickly accepted bottled milk. She will be cared for by DFGFI staff in conjunction with the MGVP until she is able to return to the wild. Source: http://www.gorillafund.org/about/press_item.php?recordID=54

The Case for Non-Human Rights

The case of granting a legal guardian to a chimpanzee named Hiasl, representing a larger long-standing philosophical debate on hominid rights, went to court in Austria in March 2007. The judge ruled not to grant legal guardianship ('personhood') to the ape. While apes share over 97% of their DNA with humans and share our capacity for emotion, pain and fear, they have the same legal status as any other object that can be bought or sold. Meanwhile, in Spain, the Balearic parliament agreed in February that apes should be accorded the right to freedom from torture, mistreatment and unnecessary death.

The Kinshasa Declaration on Great Apes

The Kinshasa Declaration now has 54 signatories. The International Primatological Society signed the Declaration on 20 January 2007, and the Jane Goodall Institute signed a week later on 30 January 2007. Spain is the most recent addition, having signed on 22 May 2007.



© Ministerio de Medio Ambiente, Spain
Jane Goodall, GRASP Patron, and H.E. Cristina Narbona Ruiz, Spanish Minister of the Environment

GRASP Japan Activities

The joint efforts of the GRASP Secretariat and the GRASP Japan Committee were rewarded in April 2006 when the Japanese Ministry of Environment expanded its research funding system to include conservation-oriented research of great apes as a project under the umbrella of the Global Environment Research Fund. Funding totaling USD 2,000,000 was received for the fiscal years 2006-2008. GRASP Japan will use the funds for seven conservation-oriented research projects addressing topics such as ape population density and vegetation, monitoring of human daily activities in ape-inhabited forests, pathogen analyses of anthro-poozoonotic diseases, costs and benefits of ecotourism, and experiments of green corridor formation. For further information on these field projects please visit <http://www.grasp-japan.org/en/index.html>

Toshisada Nishida, GRASP Patron

IUCN Best Practice Guidelines Released

The World Conservation Union (IUCN) has recently released *Best Practice Guidelines* for reducing the impact of logging on great apes, and for great ape re-introduction. The guidelines can be downloaded in both English and French from the IUCN website at: <http://www.primate-sg.org/best.practices.htm>

Smuggling route exposed

Following an investigation by Karl Amman and Jason Meir, building on earlier work by the World Society for the Protection of Animals, a well established ape-smuggling ring has been exposed between Cameroon, Nigeria and Egypt. At the 14th CITES CoP in the Hague, Netherlands, in June 2007, Egypt invited the CITES Secretariat to help improve enforcement and capacity building. There remains the problem of what to do with confiscated chimpanzees and gorillas, facilities in Egypt being reportedly inadequate. GRASP partners Pan African Sanctuary Alliance and the Born Free Foundation have offered to advise on returning illegally acquired apes to sanctuaries in their country of origin, and CITES will be undertaking a mission to Egypt at the end of November 2007.

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