

COMMUNIQUE

REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON TRANSBOUNDARY CONSERVATION BETWEEN NIGERIA AND CAMEROON

The sixth annual workshop to strengthen transboundary conservation between Nigeria and Cameroon took place at the Channel View Hotel, Calabar from 19th-20th November, 2013. The workshop was attended by approximately 30 participants from both Nigeria and Cameroon including representatives of the National Parks Service, the Federal Ministry of Environment, the Cross River State Forestry Commission, National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency, the National Commission for Museums and Monuments, the Ministry of Forests and Wildlife (Cameroon) and the Program for the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (co-funded by the governments of Cameroon and Germany). Hosted by the Wildlife Conservation Society with funding from the Great Apes Program of the Arcus Foundation, the regional workshop aimed at strengthening transboundary collaboration between Cross River National Park in Nigeria and Takamanda National Park and Korup National Park in Cameroon. Participants reviewed progress achieved since the previous transboundary meeting in 2012, as well as emerging issues, challenges and the way forward. A series of measures for the improved management of these contiguous transboundary protected areas was proposed.

PROTECTION AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

- Cleared and re-establish all national park boundaries with pillars.
- Improve communication and information sharing between Park managers either side of the border.
- Review, revise, and harmonize the protection strategy for Korup, Oban, Okwangwo and Takamanda.
- Improve and strengthen understanding of wildlife laws by judiciary in both countries.
- Improve collaboration with navy, customs and coastguards etc to reduce timber, bushmeat and NTFP illegal trade between Nigeria and Cameroon.
- Increase the number of anti-poaching patrols including joint patrols at Korup, Oban, Takamanda and Okwangwo.
- Promote greater collaboration between government agencies and NGOs.
- Assess the impact of the forest exploitation ban in Cross River State on forest protection and timber market prices.

RESEARCH AND MONITORING

- Investigate options for the creation of habitat corridors in the region to permit the movement of primates and other large mammals.
- Complete a baseline survey of large mammals in the transboundary area.
- Develop a standardized protocol for surveys of bushmeat markets in the transboundary area.
- Create a transboundary website to improve sharing of information.
- Complete land use studies and forest monitoring within Oban and Korup using satellite imagery and GIS techniques.
- Extend research and monitoring to the Oban Division of Cross River National Park, especially transboundary patrols and monitoring.

COMMUNITY CONSERVATION, LIVELIHOODS AND CONSERVATION EDUCATION

- Establish transboundary conservation activities between Korup and Oban.
- Provide additional funds to strengthen conservation education & awareness outreach program in communities surrounding Korup, Takamanda and Cross River NPs.
- In Cameroon, focus livelihood activities to specific target groups in particular hunters.
- In Nigeria, provide additional funding for the training of more hunters in alternative livelihood activities.
- Share experience from Cameroon on the domestication/commercialization of NTFPs with Nigeria.
- Encourage the development of other income generating activities in the support zone communities of the two countries.
- Establish a simple monitoring and evaluation framework for alternative livelihood activities.
- Share lessons learnt from the implementation of collaborative park management in Cameroon with partners in Nigeria
- Improve community infrastructure to increase local support for conservation.

TRANSBOUNDARY CONSERVATION TRUST FUND

- Follow up with the Nigeria-Cameroon Joint Boundary Commission to ensure that the cooperation agreement on the management of transboundary protected areas between Cameroon and Nigeria is signed soon.
- Complete a financial gap analysis of Cross River National Park
- Develop and define a sustainable financing management strategy for the transboundary region.
- Develop a transboundary management strategy document.
- Investigate options for the development of a REDD+ transboundary action plan
- Establish a foundation for financial management of a conservation trust fund.

SUSTAINABLE TIMBER & NON-TIMBER FOREST PRODUCTS TRANSBOUNDARY TRADE

- Develop a formal trade agreement between Cameroon and Cross River State for timber and non-timber forest products
- Develop a legal framework for the transboundary trade in timber and non-timber forest products
- Establish a transboundary trade platform to facilitate marketing operations and coordinate the fight against illegal activities.
- Develop market sites and appropriate infrastructure
- Provide technical and financial support to promote legal timber supply sources
- Encourage reforms to make the legal timber trade more attractive
- Promote the certification of transboundary conservation products.

Participants expressed their appreciation for the opportunity meet and deliberate on these important issues. They agreed that the Chairman of the CRSFC and the Regional Delegate of MINFOF South West Region should meet in February 2014 to constitute joint technical committees to propose a way forward and follow up above mentioned issues.

Calabar, November 2013