

Conservation, Conflict and Peace in Eastern DR Congo

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Conserving the Peace Project

Title: Conserving the Peace: Integrating Conflict-Sensitivity into Conservation Interventions in the Albertine Rift

Partner: Conservation Development Centre (CDC)

Field Partners: WCS, WWF, CARE

Funder: MacArthur Foundation, Environment Canada

Duration: Oct 2005 – Mar 2009



Rationale...

- Conservation is inherently conflictual – about access to /control over resources
- What does this mean in conflict-prone or conflict-affected areas? How can you ‘do’ conservation differently?
- Drawing from humanitarian / development work on ‘do no harm’ and ‘peace and conflict impact assessment’
- Early questions re. ‘Peace Parks’
- Not criticising!

Project Goal & Purposes

Goal:

To promote biodiversity conservation and livelihood security in conflict-prone areas of the Albertine Rift

Purpose:

To minimise the risk of conservation NGOs and programmes exacerbating conflict situations, and to enhance the safety of staff through the integration of conflict sensitivity into project planning and implementation.

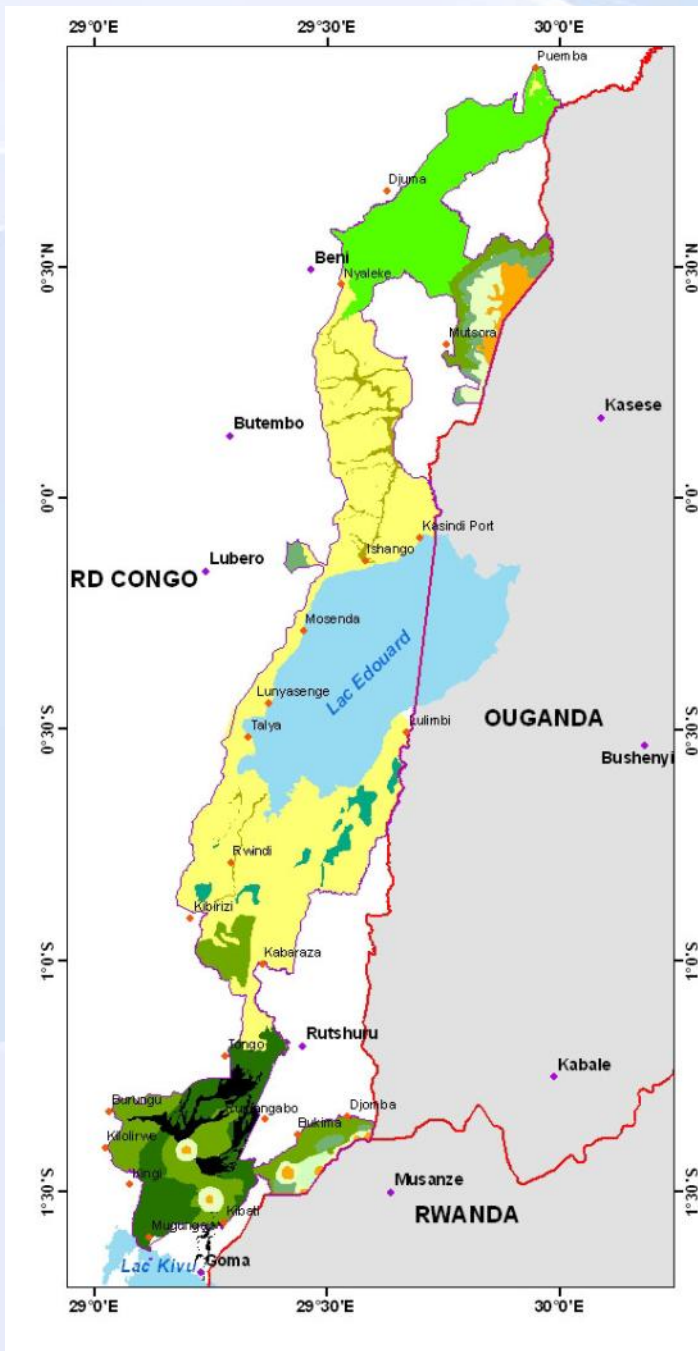
Activities

- ‘Conflict Sensitive Conservation’ (CSC) Manual
- Applied research
 - Virunga NP (DRC)
 - Kahuzi-Biega (DRC)
 - Queen Elizabeth NP (Uganda)
- Capacity building
 - Conflict analysis
 - Conflict sensitive analysis
- Communications, outreach



Intro to Virunga

- Africa's first national park – Albert NP 1925, PNVi in 1969, WHS in 1979
- Also probably most biodiverse park on continent
 - 800 km² of different natural habitats – from savannas to lowland forests, to glaciers
 - More bird & mammal species than other parks
 - Endemic species, including the mountain gorilla
 - In 1960s, record biomass levels, greater than Serengeti
- Also important to local livelihoods – ecosystem goods & services (water, agriculture, fuel)
 - E.g. Population around Rwenzori mountains derive 35% of annual income from forest products
- Also site of near-constant conflict since 1994, when it became a WHS in danger
- Threats: population growth, encroachment, settlement, illegal fishing, poaching, charcoal



Types of conflicts in & around Virunga

- Between armed groups
- Inter- Intra-Institutional
 - Between services
 - Between NGOs
 - Within PA authorities
- Between PA authorities and population / groups
 - Access to resources: Fishing, deforestation, agriculture lands
 - Benefit sharing
 - Human-wildlife conflicts
- Within communities
 - Benefit sharing



Examples from Virunga

- Between armed groups
 - FARDC vs. CNDP
- Inter- Intra-Institutional
 - ICCN vs. other public services (Army; Fisheries authorities)
 - ICCN vs. NGOs (conservation, development, humanitarian)
 - Between NGOs (over conservation approaches)
 - Within ICCN (Illegal fishing; Revenue sharing b/w park & headquarters)
- Between PA authorities and population / groups
 - Access to NR: Illegal fishing, charcoal, farm land
 - Benefit sharing – tourist receipts; development benefits
 - Elephants, gorillas in crops
- Within communities
 - Different ranger salaries; Different development benefits

Key Questions

- Not just how NR linked to conflict, but how are conservation actors involved?
- How do the different types and levels of conservation-related conflict link?
- How can we build upon this knowledge to help conservationists undertake CSC?

Example: Nyakakoma fishing village

- Conflicts over illegal fishing
 - b/w ICCN & pop'n
 - w/in ICCN
 - b/w public services
- Among causes
 - Lack of organisation of fishery
 - Poor collaboration b/w services
 - Absence of fishing materials
 - All underpinned by institutional weakness, poverty, insecurity
- Among consequences
 - Decline in fisheries productivity
 - Formation / support of armed groups
 - Community conflicts (thefts)



Example: Nyakakoma fishing village (2)

- Role of conservation actors
 - PA Authority: Contributor; weak enforcer
 - Some partners: uncoordinated, undermining each other
 - Other partners: resolve conflicts, build peace
- Links between different types/levels of conflict
 - Institutional - community
 - Armed groups - Manipulate insecurity for illegal activities
 - Illegal activities reinforce insecurity



What can conservationists do?

- Apply a conflict lens to their work
 - Recognise they are peace/conflict actors
 - Identify, prioritise, and analyse conflicts; identify entry-points; design or adjust activities accordingly; screen for further conflict impacts
- In Nyakakoma:
 - Mixed patrols; Service meetings; Census

BUT...

- Manage expectations – cannot be ‘conflict proof’, always trade-offs
- Situation changes so quickly, so CSC is a continuing process

