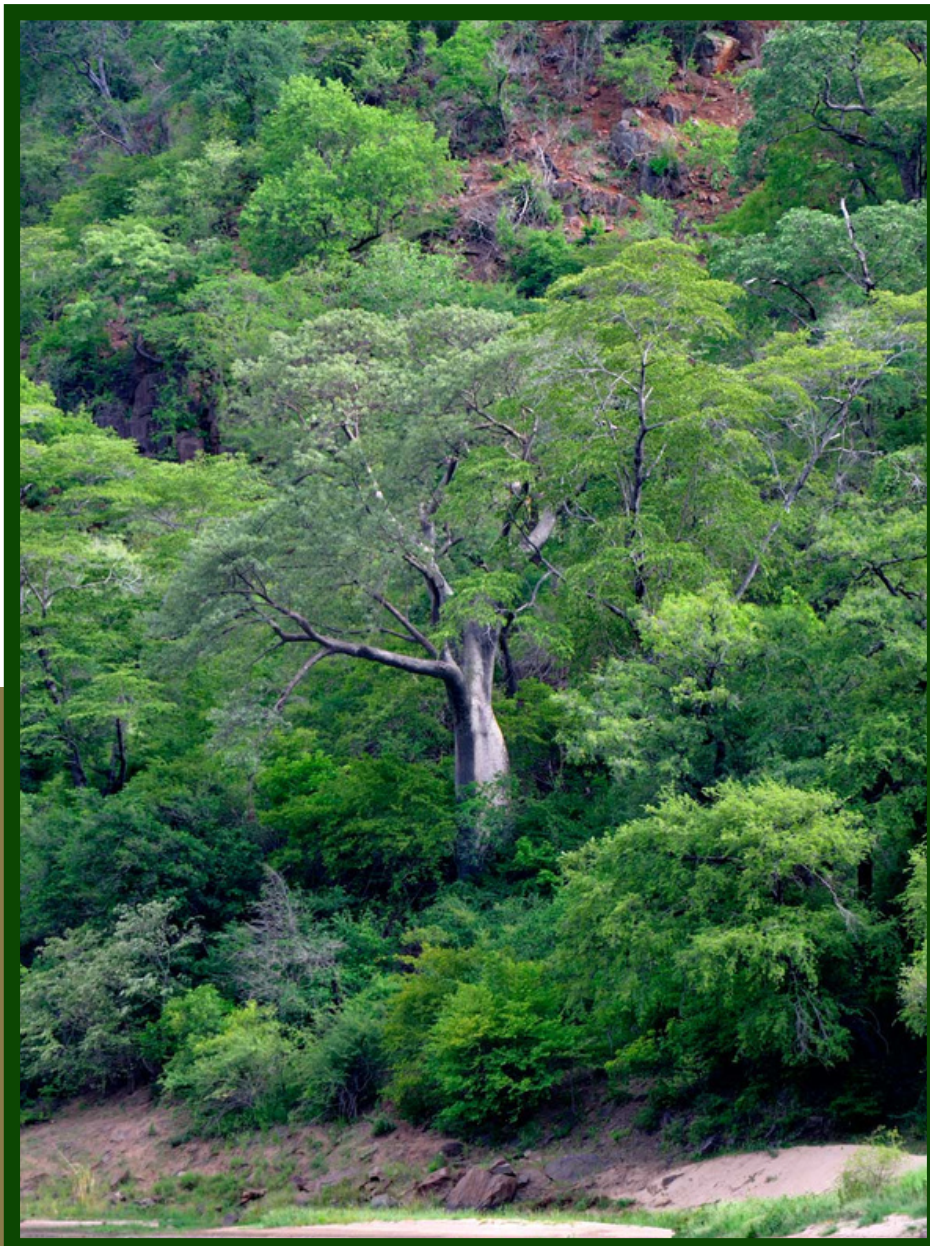

GAME RANGERS

INTERNATIONAL



BUSH TELEGRAPH

RUFUNSA | VOL. 5



#WeAreAllRangers
www.gamerangersinternational.org



Photos taken in Rufunsa GMA by Gary



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ABOUT RUFUNSA

RUFUNSA GAME MANAGEMENT AREA

The Rufunsa Conservation Project commenced in 2019 to support the Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW) in the resource protection of the Rufunsa Game Management Area (RGMA).

RGMA is an area of 300,000 hectares (800,000 acres) on the eastern boundary of the Lower Zambezi National Park (LZNP). This GMA provides an important 'buffer' for the LZNP and acts as an essential corridor between the Luangwa and Zambezi eco-systems. RGMA is a crucial Transfrontier Area being the international border between Zambia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique.

GRI have entered into an agreement between DNPW, the Mburuma Community Resource Board (CRB), the Mphuka CRB, the Mpanshya CRB and Conservation Lower Zambezi (CLZ) for the resource management and community development of this important eco-system through the engagement, training and operational support of 20 new Community Scouts from the area – 10 GRI and 10 CLZ scouts who are now mobilised and are operational in the field in RGMA and the eastern portion of the LZNP. GRI received donor support for this project from the Charlie Ross coordinated group of the Janotta/Pearsall Family, Gary & Veronica Silberberg, Geoff Tennican and Jennifer Durning, Mark Headley and Chris Pehl, through the Endangered Species Fund.



Map of Zambia showing the Rufunsa GMA on the Eastern boundary of the Lower Zambezi National Park

CEO'S MESSAGE

RUFUNSA GAME MANAGEMENT AREA

The Rufunsa Game Management Area is a vital piece of wild space which supports Lower Zambezi National Park in Zambia and the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Mana Pools in Zimbabwe. GRI has been supporting Rangers in Rufunsa for the past three years, working in partnership with the Department of National Parks and Wildlife, Conservation Lower Zambezi and the local communities to safeguard this area for future generations.

This year, GRI launched its community outreach programme in Rufunsa; empowering communities to live alongside wildlife in a sustainable way. The impact of this community support was demonstrated earlier this year during the rescue of Chikumbi, a 4 month old elephant orphan. This rescue was only possible due to the community coming together to support GRI and give this young elephant a second chance at life. I hope you enjoy reading about the amazing work that has only been made possible by the generous support of the Jackson Hole Community.

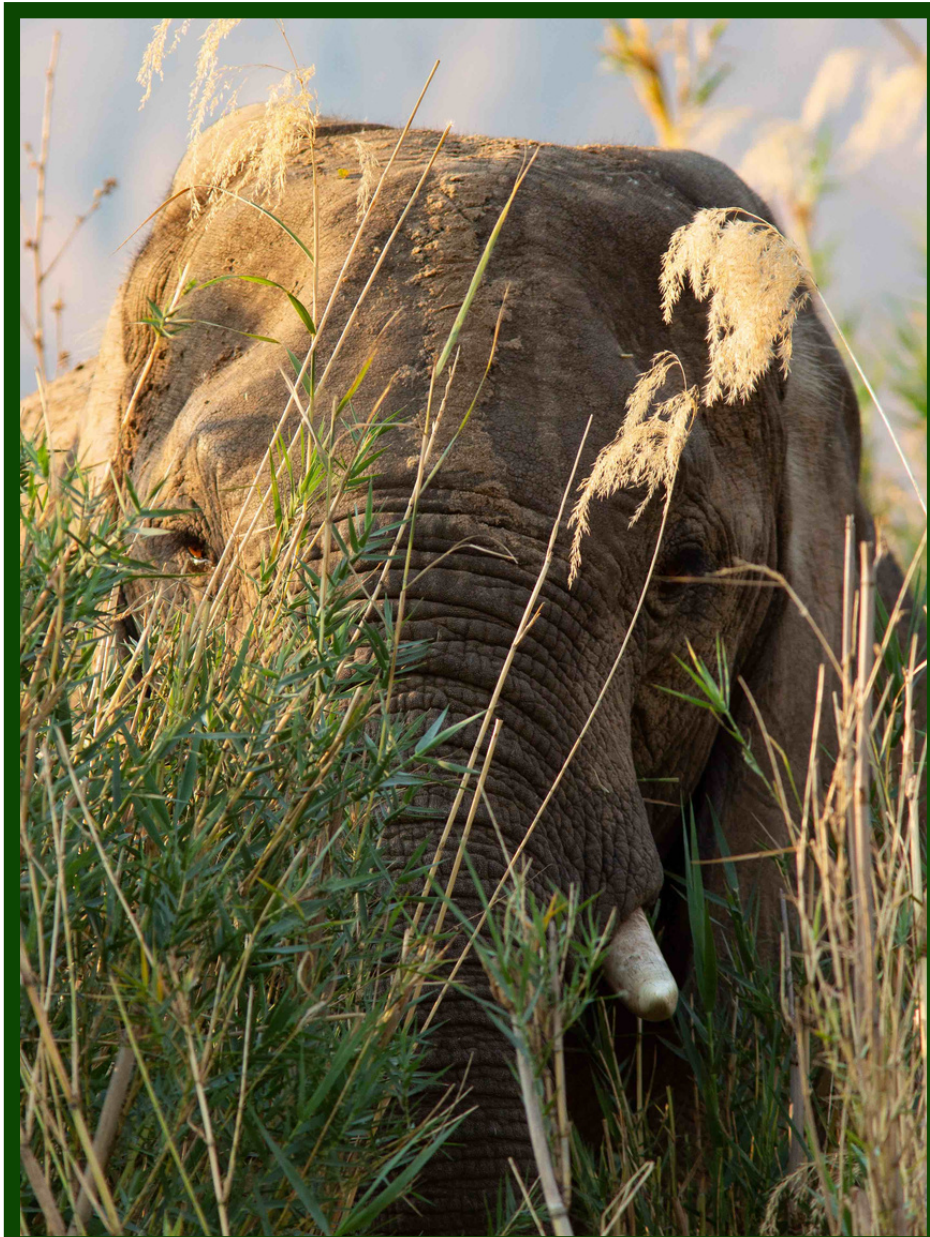
BY JONATHAN CHURCHER, CEO



EMPOWERING RANGERS AND LOCAL
COMMUNITIES TO CONSERVE NATURE

GAME RANGERS

INTERNATIONAL



WILDLIFE RESCUE PROGRAMME

Rescue
Rehabilitate
Release



Keeper Martins did an amazing job reassuring Chikumbi and offering water and food

CHIKUMBI'S RESCUE

A 4-MONTH-OLD ELEPHANT CALF IS RESCUED WITH THANKS TO COMMUNITY CARE GIVERS!

In the afternoon of 12th August, Stephen Tembo was driving his motorbike in the Rufunsa region of Luangwa when he came across a herd of over 300 elephants. This is not an unusual occurrence in this area, where elephants move in very large numbers (as we witnessed first-hand) and due to certain parts of the landscape, the elephants and people must share the same roads and pathways, with the river on one side and the mountains on the other. Unfortunately, this causes an elevated level of human-elephant conflict (HEC) as these large herds move along the villages causing damage as they go. Stephen avoided the elephants and returned the way he had come, only to be confronted with another 'super herd.' He found shelter in Chikumbi Village as the herd passed but noticed a very small elephant amongst a group of bulls towards the back of the herd. She was calling out for her mother, but none of the elephants took notice of her and they left her alone as she slowed up. She moved through the village screaming and disoriented until Stephen called for help and a few men came together. They caught her and tied her to a tree with a soft rope around her back leg.

Rufunsa has been an orphan elephant hotspot over the years due to its geography – here Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Zambia all meet, divided by the Zambezi (Zim-Zam) and Luangwa (Moz-Zam) Rivers. These country borders are very porous, and a lot of illegal activity takes place across them, including wildlife crime (poaching and trafficking). In addition, with the high level of human-wildlife conflict, this area has historically created more orphaned elephants than anywhere else in Zambia (we have responded to 16 rescues in this area to date). With this history many people in this area are familiar with Game Rangers International and our elephant rehabilitation work. Using the Orphaned Elephant Hotline number (which has been promoted through stickers in the region) Stephen called in the rescue and our team immediately started connecting all the necessary personnel, most importantly the Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW), with Rapheal, our Resource Protection manager based in Rufunsa, who sent officers to the village to check on the elephant and provide support until we could arrive. Our locally based Community Outreach Ranger, Crispine, worked with Stephen and Rapheal to ensure the calf was cared for most appropriately overnight before our team could arrive (it is a 7-hour journey from Lusaka).



Just after Chikumbi was gently secured, Keeper Martins spends time reassuring her and caring for her while they wait for the Vet to arrive.

Following our instruction, the carers wrapped cloth around the restraining rope to minimise the risk of 'rope burn,' and whilst tying her may not seem a pleasant option, in such a case it is quite necessary to prevent the elephant from disappearing into the bush altogether as there was no suitable enclosure to hand. The Community Ranger, Obrian, was stationed with her and ensured she was brought browse and fresh water throughout the night. We were so impressed with the level of care given to this little elephant, particularly when so many interactions between people and elephants here are negative as they both strive for the same resources.

On arrival the next day our team stabilised the calf further, providing her with essential electrolytes and the reassurance she needed. It was reported she only laid down briefly since her rescue due to all the activity and the strange environment she found herself in. She could not relax, and was in desperate need of some rest. It was apparent that she had lost body condition with her hip bones prominent and cheek bones sunken, indicating dehydration and malnutrition – she must have lost her mother a few days earlier. Whilst it is hard to understand what caused the separation, we do know that mother elephants do not easily leave their young and there is a high level of poaching in this area. We estimate she is only 4 months old, so her mother's milk is vital for survival at this stage. Despite being such a young, milk dependent calf, we immediately noticed her well-developed control and proficient use of her trunk as she drank water and browsed ferociously. She is demonstrating fierce independence despite her loss and trauma, and we are hopeful for her emotional and physical recovery.

The following day, after an 8-hour drive Chikumbi finally arrived at the Elephant Nursery at the GRI - Wildlife Discovery Centre in Lusaka National Park, where she quickly followed Martin out of the trailer and walked straight into a stable. It was the early hours of the morning and a chilly 7°C on arrival, almost 10°C cooler than where we had come from, so Martin quickly put blankets on her which she tolerated very well. She accepted some more electrolytes and quickly settled herself for a 3-hour long sleep, which is exceptionally long for an elephant, but clearly very much needed!

She was named 'Chikumbi' (Chi-koom-bi) after the village community who rescued her and cared for her so attentively. The name means "rain cloud" in the local language of Nyanja, and here the start of the rains is something hugely celebrated, offering hope and prosperity.

Whilst our Rescue Team (Rachael and Keeper Martin), focused on supporting Chikumbi, Chrispine and Jon (GRI – Chief Executive Officer) spent time thanking the community and reinforcing the messaging of reporting injured or abandoned wildlife as well as any conflict concerns so our teams can support them where they need it most. There was a formal presentation of Mealie Meal for the helpers and many words of gratitude expressed both ways. With thanks to the support of Jackson Hole Community, GRI is developing a permanent presence in the Rufunsa Game Management Area in partnership with Conservation Lower Zambezi to provide increased law enforcement presence and vital Community Outreach support to safeguard this area of incredible natural beauty and vibrant wildlife.



Jon and Chrispine showing appreciation to the community who rescued Chikumbi



Rufunsa, the orphaned elephant, was rescued in this area at just 3 months old in 2010 and now he is wild and free at 12 years, 4 months old!

Rufunsa decided to leave the Release Herd and joined Chamilandu and Mutaanzi-David, in the wild. Rufunsa sticks close to Chamma and follows her around the Kafue National Park. She is still his matriarch and he can learn a lot from her about life in the wild.

The little group do not venture too far away from camp and can be seen on occasion, especially during this hot, dry period where the bush is sparse and they come to the Nkala river to drink.

GAME RANGERS

INTERNATIONAL



COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAMME

Engage
Educate
Empower



Children take part in International Vulture Awareness

CHRISPINE TEMBO

RUFUNSA GMA'S COMMUNITY OUTREACH RANGER

As Community Outreach Ranger for Rufunsa GMA, Chripine Tembo is responsible for training and equipping teachers to deliver environmental education, presenting a weekly conservation-themed radio show, empowering women's groups with sustainable livelihoods and mitigating human-wildlife conflict.

"I have lived in Rufunsa GMA all my life. I developed an interest in conservation when I was at school, and after completion, started working with the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) which later changed to COMACO.

I applied for the role of Community Outreach Ranger with GRI because of the passion I have for wildlife and my understanding of conservation and coexistence between man and wildlife.

My vision, like GRI's, is to have a sustainable planet where man and nature co-exist in harmony.

My job is to conserve, protect and preserve nature for future generations to come. I am supporting women with income-generating projects to reduce reliance on the illegal wildlife trade and am working with 21 schools in the area to initiate weekly conservation clubs for primary school students. Us, we are going – it is the future generations who need to learn and be able to teach others.

Human-Wildlife Conflict is a major concern in this area. My goal is to raise awareness of various mitigation strategies to help protect their crops and livestock and to support communities with clean drinking water to reduce reliance on drawing water from the rivers.

Chripine Tembo,
GRI's Community
Outreach Ranger
for Rufunsa GMA



GRI delivered simultaneous conservation awareness activities across all three of our landscapes in partnership with countless other conservation partners around the globe in celebration of International Vulture Awareness Day.

RGMA Community Outreach Ranger, Chripine Tembo facilitated an informative and engaging vulture-themed conservation lesson at Luangwa Primary School for children from Chidada and Ludaka Communities. In addition to learning about the ecological importance of scavengers, the children enjoyed word searches, quizzes and colouring in pictures of different species of vultures.

Meanwhile, his counterpart Brian Bulongo delivered vulture awareness to a crowd of approximately 5,000 spectators at our Itezhi-Tezhi Youth Tournament, while BirdWatch Zambia joined us at the Wildlife Discovery Centre in Lusaka National Park to facilitate an emotive presentation and provide visitors with memorable educational activities.



Women's Leadership Programme

USAID INTEGRATED LAND AND RESOURCE GOVERNANCE PROGRAM

WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP AND EMPOWERMENT

Community Outreach Manager, Britius Munkombwe, and RGMA Community Outreach Ranger, Chrispine Tembo, attended the USAID Integrated Land and Resource Governance Program (ILRG) Women's Leadership and Empowerment (WLE) Training of Trainers course. The training was based on the USAID ILRG developed manual for promoting effective women leadership in community natural resource management in Zambia. It also focused on fostering self-confidence and building socioemotional/interpersonal skills that will support women to navigate gender barriers in their households and communities and to engage in local natural resource governance. Following the training, Britius and Chrispine were awarded full competency certificates and were officially recognised as WLE trainers, expected to deliver leadership skills training to women in CRBs, CFMGs, cooperatives or any other CBNRM structure in their areas of operation and to mentor women in leadership. To complete the training, Britius and Chrispine will train selected Village Action Group members and Women's Groups over the next 6 months, before reconvening in Lusaka for a final workshop in January.

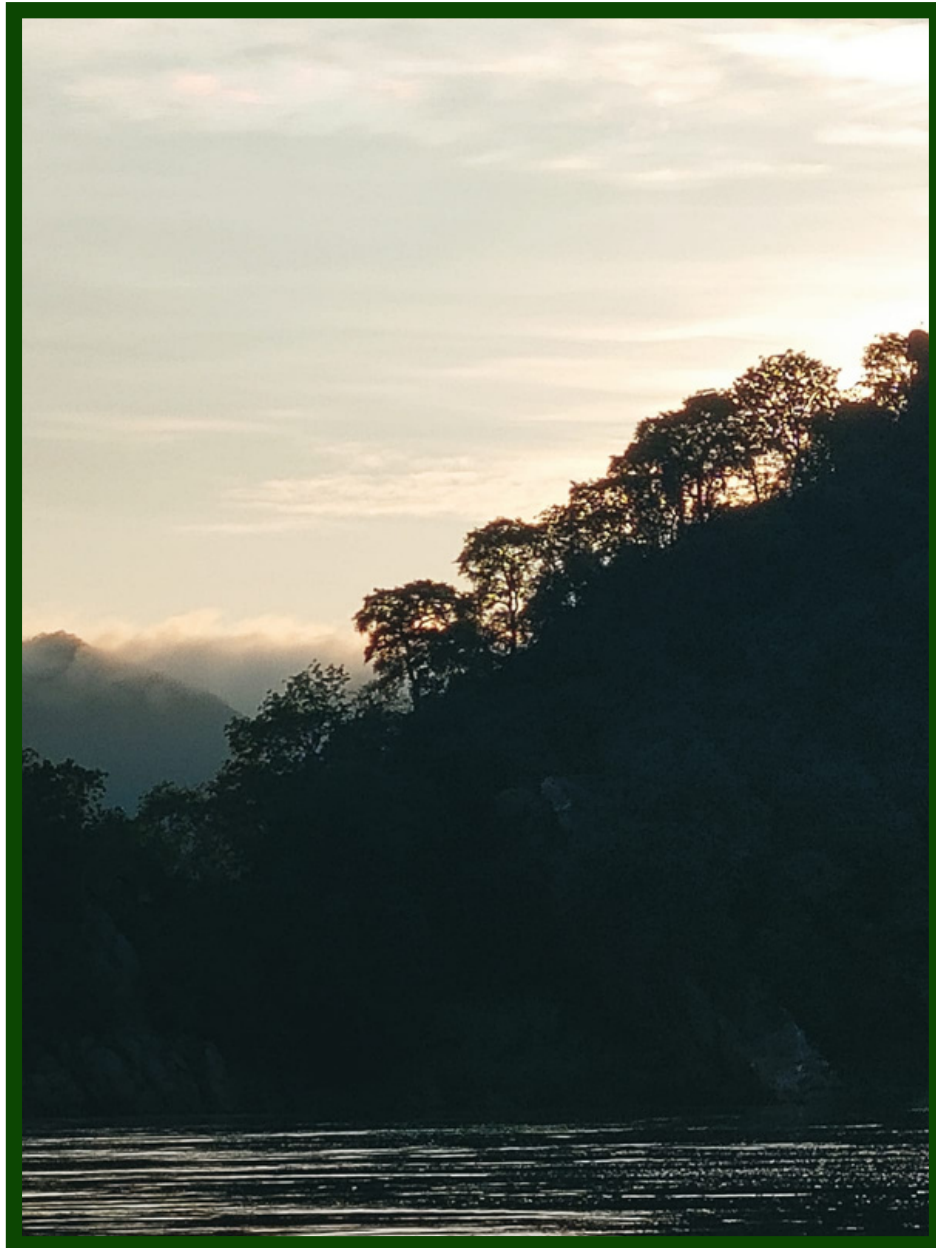
"This training was so beneficial to all those that attended, and we owe our gratitude to GRI management for allowing us to be part of this incredible training and for all the logistical support given to us. The knowledge gotten from this training will be shared with all those that may have an interest in wanting to learn, particularly our fellow GRI staff." said Britius Munkombwe



WLE training held in Lusaka earlier this year

GAME RANGERS

INTERNATIONAL



RESOURCE PROTECTION PROGRAMME

Prevent
Protect
Preserve



The Luangwa River

COMMUNITY SCOUT HOUSING PROJECT

JANEIRO CAMP

GRI in partnership with Conservation Lower Zambezi (CLZ), is constructing four houses for community scouts as well as an office and a checkpoint gate on the route to the Lower Zambezi National Park based at the new camp (Janeiro Camp). So far, the four houses have been roofed and plastered. Meanwhile the construction of the checkpoint gate and office has begun. These houses are specifically for the community scouts at the camp who will not only help with law enforcement and Human Wildlife Conflict mitigation, but also to monitor the entry and exit of people to Lower Zambezi National Park. GRI is grateful for this development and will also contribute by investing funds in radio communication, solar power and SMART equipment.



Janeiro Camp Visit 21st January 2022



The construction of the community scout housing is underway

PATROL TRACKS

Rufunsa GMA Community Scouts and WPOs have conducted 41 patrols in the last 3 months, covering a total of 2255km on foot and vehicle combined. The three team's patrol tracks are shown in the map on the right and are conducted East of the Luangwa River and North of the Zambezi. The teams are split into Mucheni Team, Vundu Team and Ncupe Team.





Smart Training of Community Scouts and WPOs in Rufunsa GMA

MOBILE SMART TRAINING

SPACIAL MONITORING AND REPORTING TOOL

To improve operations based on evidence and field data through adaptive management, GRI conducted a two-day (13th and 14th March) training on Mobile SMART – Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool to Community Scouts and Wildlife Police Officers (WPOs) in Rufunsa GMA. The training was held at Kaunga Farmers Training Centre and was graced by the Area Warden Mr Chongo Puta.

The total of 17 Community Scouts, 2 WPOs and one Support Manager attended the training.

The objectives of the training included:

- To introduce Patrol Officers to Mobile SMART and the devices associated with it
- To demonstrate how to prepare for a SMART patrol
- To demonstrate to Patrol Officers steps on how to start a patrol, make observations, change transport type, pause, and end a patrol
- To show Patrol Officers how to correctly save way points
- To introduce the GPS tracking device, it's use and how to import data from the device to SMART
- To introduce Patrol Officers to SMART data debriefs and to the process of data downloading from the device as well as conducting patrol debriefs.

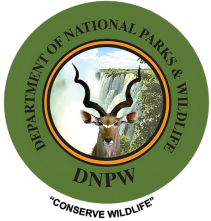
Andrew Mbewe, the SMART technician facilitated the process assisted by the project Manager, Mr Handsen Mseteka. Facilitation methods included power point presentations, flip chart note taking and field practicals for maximum assimilation of the material. After practicals, participants were made to present in order to assess the level of understanding.



Community Scouts and WPOs are trained and then demonstrate their understanding of SMART technology

THANK YOU

THANK YOU TO THE JACKSON HOLE COMMUNITY AND OUR PARTNERS WHO HAVE HELPED MAKE ALL OF THESE INITIATIVES POSSIBLE



CONSERVATION LOWER ZAMBEZI
Working Today to Protect Tomorrow



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