



FOUNDATION
GREAT PLAINS
CONSERVING AND ENHANCING NATURAL HABITATS

FROM THE FIELD

LATEST IMPACT UPDATES FROM OUR GREAT PLAINS INITIATIVES

Impact is what we all strive for. A life without meaning is a wasted life and we at the Great Plains Foundation live by this, rising each day to make a difference and to make the best use of our waking hours, so our dreams come true. Our dream is of a time when humans become just one more species in balance with nature, not constantly at war with it. To get there we must do what we can to right the wrongs, but also educate for the future, a time when everyone shares the same instinct, one of taking care of the planet, and we no longer have to worry about flash crowds attacking wildlife, or fossil fuel miners wrenching minerals from her body. In time this will all be replaced by our instinct to do good, to care for and keep our 'home' pristine and sustained. That is what is behind our Foundation and reflected in our quarterly report.

Dereck Joubert,
Chairman of Great Plains Foundation

Q2 IMPACT REPORT | APRIL - JUNE 2023

Over this quarter the Great Plains Foundation has continued its efforts in Biodiversity Conservation and Community initiatives. The restoration of the Sapi Reserve in Zimbabwe has shown progress in biodiversity monitoring and the use of camera traps. Our Female Rangers continue to undergo intensive training and the first cohort are out in the field on patrol and becoming ambassadors to young girls in their communities. Our Impact Through Education initiatives have taken strides forward with Mobile School Clinics in Kenya and hosting our Kids Conservation Education Camps in the ol Donyo area for the first time. Our Solar Mamas in Botswana are installing 100 more household systems bringing power and safe lighting to off-grid families. The sponsorship of teachers continues, and three lucky conservation enthusiasts who have been sponsored to attend Wildlife Conservation Leadership program. Our efforts continue through Big Cats Initiative and Project Ranger supporting organisations in South Africa, Zambia, Kenya and Uganda with grants.

REWILD ZAMBEZI

Restoring the 290,000-acre Sapi Reserve, Zimbabwe

The restoration of the Sapi Reserve in Zimbabwe is ongoing with an increase in wildlife monitoring and infrastructural developments. The monitoring of the collared matriarchs of the 13 elephant herds translocated into Sapi, in addition to the 10 collared resident elephants, remains a priority to the teams on the ground. The team uses Earth Ranger to integrate a variety of data for human–elephant conflict mitigation. This quarter saw the first instance where a herd encroached into a community, we are pleased to report that our response was immediate in turning the herd back to the protected area before any negative impact came to the community.

We received the results of the camera trapping survey funded by ourselves but conducted by WildCRU in the dry season of 2022. This camera trap survey used 100 cameras at 50 stations to capture data on predator distribution and density across the concession. While it focused on predators, it was however able to capture a lot of data on the relative abundance and distribution of the wider mammal community. While the main survey has come to an end, we continue to use camera traps on an ad hoc bases to monitor and build identification profiles for predators as well as other key species, elephants.

Education is at the forefront of the Great Plains Foundation and it has been a busy quarter. The Great Plains ground team hosted students from Chinhoyi University of Technology pursuing a BSc in Wildlife Ecology and Conservation and shared knowledge on elephant monitoring (and the technology involved of GPS, Earth Ranger, AWT and SMART), bird identification, carnivore identification and methods of species monitoring.



REWILD ZAMBEZI

Restoring the 290,000-acre Sapi Reserve, Zimbabwe

“Above all, it was an honour to be in contact with such advanced conservation technology, we are very fortunate to have this opportunity. This will go a long way for the future of conservation. The aims of ongoing projects were well articulated and the fieldwork activities were meticulously executed”.

Admire Chanyandura, Attachment Coordinator from the School of Wildlife and Environmental Sciences at Chinhoyi University of Technology.



The extensive vegetation sampling survey with the aim of establishing an accurate vegetation map continues, with another visit from Mr Mutematemi from the University of Zimbabwe. With each of his visits our team is able to ensure the quality of their data collection and undergo additional training and exercises in the use of ArcGIS, as well as soil sampling. The team aims to produce a final vegetation map in the third quarter.

Extensive development continues at both our Biodiversity Monitoring and Research Camps. We are excited to welcome the first researchers from around the world in the next quarter. Support for Zimbabwe Parks G-Camp continues with the construction of a new operations centre, ablution block, accommodation units, solar and water purification system, a new bridge to provide access across a shallow ravine. The project is ongoing and we aim to complete it in the next quarter. And our team of 10 casuals continue to maintain around 100km of roads in the reserve to allow for patrols and movement.

3,300KM PATROLLED BY RANGERS

100 CAMERA TRAPS RECORDING PREDATOR DATA

100km OF ROAD MAINTAINED

62 LEOPARDS IDENTIFIED

RHINO PROJECT

Protecting endangered rhinoceros through security and monitoring

As always, the monitoring of rhinos continues to be our priority, with our ranger teams working around the clock patrolling their wards vigilantly. The Rhino Monitoring team has been hosting the first cohort of Female Rangers this quarter and ensuring that training and knowledge development continues with all aspects of the work that we do here at Great Plains Foundation. There has been an increase in opportunities to share knowledge and skills and we are proud of the way that our team continues to grow and develop.

A significant increase in our patrol hours and distance covered was seen this quarter showing the increasing effort that our teams are able to take on with our growing and developing teams, together with the systems that support them.



FEMALE RANGERS

Training and hiring Female Wildlife Rangers from local communities

Our Female Rangers are soaring forwards with all ladies now having passed their driving licenses and spending extended periods of time in the field. The first cohort of Female Rangers were able to put their new knowledge to the test during inhouse training with our Biodiversity Monitoring team, diving into the science side of biodiversity monitoring and surveys. The second cohort of Female Rangers begin their Field Guide Course in August, a month intensive training in the bush on all things wildlife behaviour, tracking, ID and more.



This quarter also saw our Female Rangers supporting Communities Living Among Wildlife Sustainably (CLAWS), WildCRU's Trans-Kalahari Predator Programme and CONNECT to conduct a camera trapping survey for large carnivores in and around some of our operational areas in the Okavango Delta system. The survey consisted of 80 cameras in total covering an area of approximately 320 square kilometres and was conducted over a 10-week period. This provides critical information for connectivity at a larger landscape level and assists with long-term monitoring in the area.

We always welcome collaboration like this as it not only contributes to ongoing conservation work around us but also provides great opportunities for our teams to upskill and interact with other conservation professionals. We look forward to further collaboration and work placement opportunities with these organisations for our female rangers and other employees.

A number of our team were lucky enough to receive training from Dr. Emily Bennitt from the Okavango Research Institute (ORI) on the use of R, a programming language for statistical computing and graphics, which is used to analyze data that is collected by all of our field teams. We cant wait to show you some of the skills that we learnt and the awesome maps we are creating depicting some of our animal movements.



CONSERVATION ROOTS

Planting indigenous trees for ecosystem restoration, food security and carbon sequestration

Conservation Roots has outgrown its Kenya borders and has spread into Botswana with the first 467 indigenous fruit trees planted in the communities bordering the Okavango Delta to support food security. The 467 trees were donated to the Okavango Community Trust to be planted in key areas of the communities, with 33 remaining to be planted during our Great Plains Kids Camp Refresher next quarter.

In Kenya this quarter the Conservation Roots team have been busy working with the local communities and primary schools to boost awareness of the value of trees for ecosystem restoration, soil protection, shade and soil bank strength to reduce flooding. The team have hosted the Wildlife Clubs of schools in both the Maasai Mara and Amboseli communities Great Plains partners with, planting 515 trees within the school grounds. The team continue to plant in ecosystems and this quarter had the highest number of donated trees so far.



380 TREES
 PLANTED IN ECOSYSTEMS



1,617 TREES DONATED TO COMMUNITIES

515 TREES
 PLANTED IN 17 SCHOOLS



TOTAL TREES PLANTED: 28,074

COMMUNITY

Education • Empowerment • Welfare



CONSERVATION EDUCATION KIDS CAMP

Educating the next generation of leaders, the future is in their hands

Educating the next generation in all things ecosystems and biodiversity protection is essential when looking at long-term ecosystem health. Great Plains has been running Kids Conservation Education Camps for years in Botswana and we are excited to launch our first Great Plains Kids Camp in Kenya in 2023.

Great Plains has been running residential Kids Conservation Education Camps for years in Botswana that bring local children into the Selinda Concession for a 3-night immersive stay. We are excited to announce that in April 2023 we launched our first residential Great Plains kids camp.

Great Plains also continued its long time sponsorship of the Maa Trust's Conservation Holiday Camp for 30 students and 45 parents/guardians from communities in the Maasai Mara to learn about Elephant-friendly Kitchen Gardens and Tree Planting.



30  **KIDS**
FROM 16 SCHOOLS ATTENDED OUR FIRST
KENYA KIDS CAMP

SOLAR MAMAS

Bringing safe light and power to off-grid communities

Our Solar Mamas have had an exciting quarter receiving – receiving 200 new Household Solar Systems to install as well as further practical training from the Solar suppliers Insele. Mike from Insele led a session with the Solar Mamas on the challenges the ladies were facing with the systems and taught them how to use multimeters and soldering irons. The Solar Mamas continue to check in on the beneficiaries of the 600 families who are benefitting from the Solar Mama business so far in rural off-grid households in Botswana.



“My Solar System is so helpful it has really changed our lives”

Solar Mama beneficiary in Gudigwa Village.

**100 MORE SOLAR SYSTEMS
 INSTALLED IN OFF-GRID
 HOUSEHOLDS** 

**TOTAL SOLAR
 SYSTEMS INSTALLED
 BY SOLAR MAMAS:**



500 

MOBILE SCHOOL EYE CLINIC

Bringing regional and international medical experts to remote communities

Eyesight is an important element to progressing in education, and often there are school children with eyesight challenges that can be solved with spectacles or medicine but access to the medical clinics is not possible. In April, the Great Plains Mobile Eye Clinic for schools spent two weeks going around 31 schools in Kenya screening school kids' eyes.


The main challenges faced by communities are the distance to travel from remote schools and communities to the regional eye doctor, and the availability of specialist paediatric glasses for kids. The Great Plains Mobile Eye Clinic for Schools bought the regional eye doctors from their clinics to the schools and also flew in a Paediatric Optometrist expert from South Africa with specialised spectacles for the youth.

The Mobile Eye Clinic managed to screen 1,602 school kids on a variety of eyesight and also provided medicine to those with infections to prevent further problems from developing.



1,602     

SCHOOL KIDS EYES SCREENED ACROSS

31 SCHOOLS    

SCHOOL FOOD PROGRAM

Emergency support for nutritious meals to schools to boost attendance and performance

The Great Plains School Food Program continues supporting schools with nutritious meals to boost school attendance and performance. Education is the key to the future. Ingredients to cook 972,664 nutritious meals for 50 Primary Schools in Kenya have been distributed, supporting 16,632 school kids with a nutritious meal every day.

We caught up with the schools who were supported for Term 1 to see the impact of the program and here's what we learnt:

“The food in the school has really changed the life of the children in a big way. The following indicators have been noticed in school: great improvement in attendance, participation has improved resulting in better results, health of the kids has improved and there is a happy society.”

Daniel Kishanto, Secretary of Mbirikani Group Ranch.

“We thank Great plains Foundation for the best support of the food program. The number of learners from Early Childhood Development Education classes increased from 40% to 100%, a positive deviation of 60%. The children in school are now improving in both health and performance in class”

Samuel Meng'oru, a Great Plains Sponsored Teacher.



978,964 MEALS SUPPORTED ACROSS
51 PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KENYA
 TOTAL MEALS SUPPORTED: **2,595,308**

CONSERVATION EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIPS

Sponsoring education of young enthusiasts into conservation careers

Great Plains has sponsored the studies of 3 conservation enthusiasts to enrol in a 2-year Conservation Leadership Program with Kenya Wildlife Trust. KWT is dedicated to three of Kenya's most important ecosystems: Greater Mara, Laikipia and Amboseli-Tsavo, and recognise that empowering those living within the wildlife areas will ultimately be the ones protecting the ecosystem, and focus on raising Kenya's next generation of home-grown conservationists. Great Plains supports this mission and has sponsored three students (2 males and one female) to attend the Wildlife Research Training Institute.



**3 STUDENTS SPONSORED
TO STUDY CONSERVATION
LEADERSHIP
PROGRAM
WITH KWT**

COMMUNITY FARM SUPPORT

Supporting a farm cluster to boost yield and reduce human-elephant conflict

Great Plains supports the “Ghando Cluster” farming project in Eretsa Village in Botswana. The Ghando Cluster is a project where 80 farmers joined together to create a large area of fields to make it easier to protect crops from elephants and plough more efficiently, with the objective of higher yield and less crop lost to wildlife. Great Plains donates a tractor to plough and seed for 190 hectares of farmland belonging to 29 farmers. The tractor is used to plough in the ploughing season in December and January, with the main harvest being in April and May. Thanks to the Great Plains support, 29 farmers were successful in generating 7,853 kilograms of produce for harvest, ranging from millet, cowpeas, sorghum, jugo beans and groundnuts.



190 HECTARES 
PLOUGHED SUPPORTING 29 FARMERS
GENERATING 7,853 KGS
 **OF PRODUCT FOR HARVEST**

BIG CATS INITIATIVE

Granting funding to NGOs across Africa specialising in Big Cat Conservation



Big Cats Initiative Grantee

PITTRACK K9 ANTI-POACHING UNIT, SOUTH AFRICA

PitTrack was excited to have finally received permission from SANBI to work with the lion bone samples. The first stage of the imprinting process is putting a piece of the new contraband in its raw form with contraband they are already imprinted on in the same pipe, for example ivory. The K9s recognise the previous contraband and indicate but also pick up the new contraband scent. This stage needs to be repeated and is then followed by placing lion bone only in a clean stainless-steel pipe. These first two stages were completed this quarter. From the pipes they will move the training onto bags, vehicles, structure searches and field searches. Bags, vehicles, and structure will be of importance as lion bone is trafficked and stored in these environments. PitTrack is pleased to report that the adult accredited K9s were able to quickly imprint on the lion bone because of their extensive experience. The sub-adults K9s are moving at a steady pace and are also now fully imprinted on pangolin scat as part of a parallel project.



Big Cats Initiative Grantee

UGANDA CONSERVATION FOUNDATION, UGANDA

Uganda Conservation Foundation (UCF) received a grant from the Big Cats Initiative (which was matched by Global Conservation) to study Kidepo National Park's small lion population. They are pleased to report that they have received formal permission to begin study. The veterinarian who will lead the effort is undergoing his introduction to the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) in Murchison Falls and Queen Elizabeth National Parks and then will be posted to Kidepo. Also, this quarter UWA and UCF's work in Murchison Falls National Park was celebrated in an article in The Guardian. The teams constructed a massive "snare mountain", showing all the snares and "bear traps" collected in Murchison Falls National Park over a 12-month period.

Big Cats Initiative Grantee

CONSERVATION LOWER ZAMBEZI, ZAMBIA

Conservation Lower Zambezi (CLZ) is a non-profit organization committed to the protection of wildlife and the sustainable use of natural resources in the Lower Zambezi in Zambia in collaboration with Zambia's Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW). CLZ was a passed Project Ranger Grantee and is now a Big Cats Initiative grantee in support of their conservation of the Lower Zambezi Valley. It is estimated that there are approximately 60 lions in the Lower Zambezi National Park and surrounding game management areas. According to reports from CLZ partners there has been a recent regional increase in trade of big cat skins—making lions and leopards in the area a potential target. BCI's grant to CLA supports Community Scout patrols, aerial operations, and the DNPW Operations Centre. Successes from this quarter include the arrest of 5 illegal miners and the disruption of 7 poaching camps.



PROJECT RANGER

Granting funding to NGOs across Africa specialising in anti-poaching



Project Ranger Grantee

ANTIPOACHING & TRACKING SERVICES, ZIMBABWE

ATS' rhino anti-poaching efforts have been successful in the second quarter of 2023. The clearing vegetation has made it easier to visually spot rhinos from the air and on foot, and the team are on track to report good figures for the biannual audit with the Zimbabwe Parks & Wildlife Management Authority (ZimParks). The team recorded two rhino deaths, but both were ruled natural causes. One rhino was badly injured in a snare, but vets attended the scene, and the animal is recovering well. In terms of the K9 Unit the dogs are performing very well, particularly in the night raids and a notorious meat poacher was arrested and sentenced thanks to their efforts.



PROJECT RANGER

Granting funding to NGOs across Africa specialising in anti-poaching

Project Ranger Grantee

WILDLIFE FORENSIC AND GENETICS LABORATORY OF THE WILDLIFE RESEARCH & TRAINING INSTITUTE, KENYA

This Project Ranger grant provides support to the Kenya Wildlife Forensic and Genetics Laboratory. The Laboratory was established in part to examine seized bushmeat samples from across to provide DNA evidence against suspected poachers. The Project Ranger grants is directly supporting the laboratory to enhance its analytical capacity through the procurement of sequencing services, basic equipment, and laboratory, to support field enforcement teams by providing evidence bags to ensure evidence integrity and capacity building for first responders at the scene of a crime. Between April and June, the forensic analysts at the Laboratory performed DNA analysis on 78 unknown samples that were part of a backlog of evidence and received 128 new samples from hotspots across the country for a total of 206. In addition, their forensic analysts attended 31 court cases containing exhibits from samples analysed in the prior quarter, showing the importance of testing and clearing backlogged samples in helping court cases against suspected poachers to progress.



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