

Perceived benefits and sacrifices of a community resource management area in Ghana



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Introduction



- Community residents living around protected areas support conservation if their livelihoods are met (Karanth & Nepal, 2011)
- Protected areas can and do mitigate biodiversity loss, protect ecosystems, contribute to human well-being and reduction of poverty, generate tourism opportunity and are recognized as a component for achieving future sustainable development (Murray, 2007)
- Tourism is an economic generator that is often compatible with the aims of a protected area (Gead, Mair & Taylor, 2000)



Wechiau Community Hippo Sanctuary



Research Context

- Founded in 1999 to satisfy government pressure to protect hippos
- Chiefs denied government advocacy for a National Park (Sheppard et al, 2010)
- Recently gained CREMA status
- Partnerships with Calgary Zoo and NCRC
- Predominantly Muslim community
- Sanctuary management board comprised of various levels of chieftaincy and key community members



Methods

- Were granted permission from the Paramount Chief and his sub-Chiefs to conduct our research while on their land
- Community café setting
- Small focus groups occurring simultaneous in the same space
- Intentional segregation – to separate power and gender hierarchies
- Focus group discussions sometimes required use of a translator



Sample

- The sample size was approximately fifty people including WCHS Tour Guides, Rangers, Management Board Members, and Grade 6 students within the sanctuary



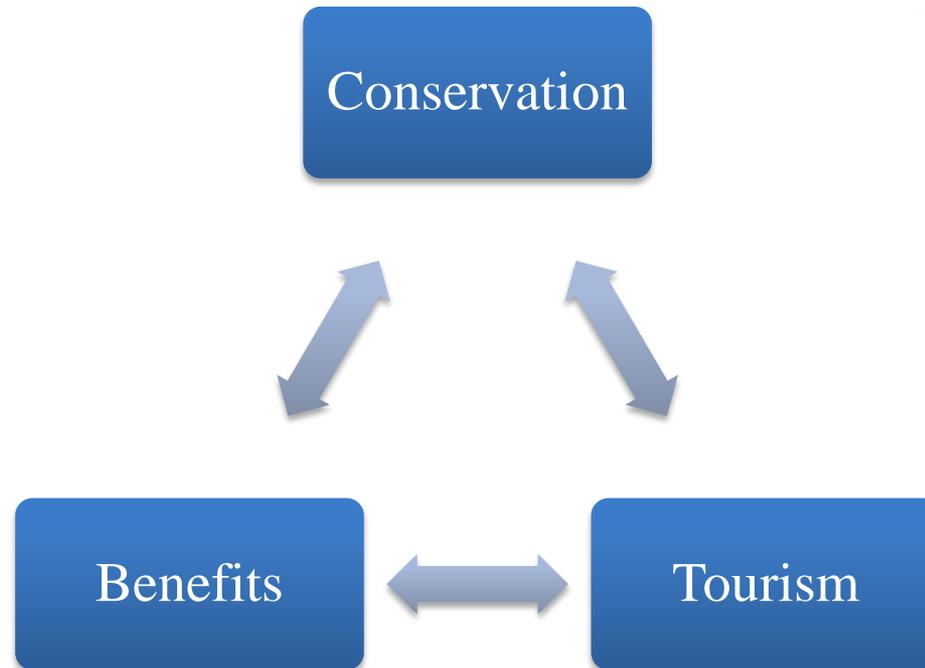
- Representation from young and old, male and female

Data Analysis

- Two researchers undertook data analysis by developing individual coding systems
- Coding matrixes were compared to ensure inter-rater reliability
- A second stage of analysis was conducted to group similar thematic areas into broader categories



Results



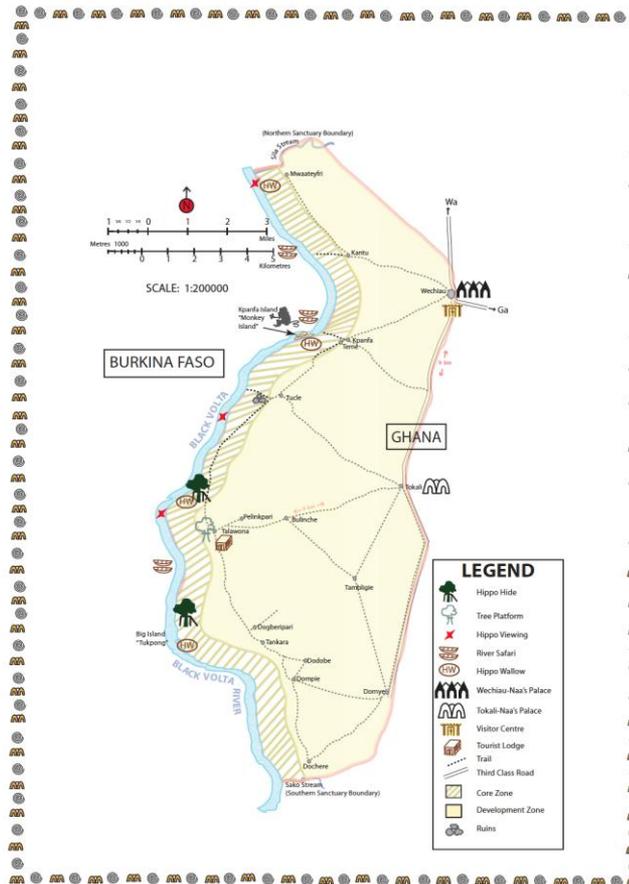
“I put all my energies into the sanctuary because I believe in the benefits of the sanctuary” - Park Ranger

Key Sacrifices

Relocation

“My family was living at the land near the hippo hide and we had to relocate” – Grade 6 Student

“Some communities had cultural ties to their land and had to relocate” – Sanctuary Guide



Restrictions

- Farming
- Hunting
- Timber extraction
- Oyster harvesting
- Fishing
- Bush fires

“We used to use timber to build house but now we have to use other stuff” – Park Ranger

Key Benefits and Sacrifices

Livelihoods

- Alternative direct and indirect livelihoods created as a result of the Sanctuary

“The sanctuary provides women with employment through shea nut harvesting, this now provides them with greater income” - Woman from Sanctuary

Loss of Livelihoods

- Sanctuary restrictions created loss of certain livelihoods

*“We used to cultivate crops along the river where soil is fertile, now we have to farm where soil is not”
– Member of Management Board*

Key Benefits

Infrastructure

- Infrastructure improvements as a result of the Sanctuary include: boreholes, schools, solar lights, clinics, and roads
- *“People used to drink water from dams, now we drink clean water from boreholes. It has decreased waterborne diseases in community members” – Sanctuary Management Board*



Key Benefits

Conservation

- Protection of Hippos and other biodiversity



Community Change

- Leaving a legacy for future generations
- Pride, unity, and partnerships



Linkages to a Canadian Context

- Be clear and explicit with messaging. Also involve the local community in the development and delivery of messages
- If you engage the community and they receive benefits they are much more likely to support the protected area and be able to articulate those benefits



Conclusion

- Knowledge mobilization techniques were varied, layered, and culturally relevant and thus effective.
- Community identified a clear connection between conservation of hippos – tourism – benefits.
- Nearly every community member interviewed reiterated that the benefits greatly outweighed the sacrifices.
- Further research should be done targeting community members who do not receive direct benefits from the Sanctuary.



References

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