



BWINDI MGAHINGA CONSERVATION TRUST



Annual Report for the Financial Year 2006/2007

PICTURES OF SUPPORTED ACTIVITIES

Gorilla in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park



Handcraft selling



Morine and Rusilla in school uniform



Potato growing



Bee Keeping



Tree Nursery



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LIST OF ACRONYMS

BMCT	Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation Trust
CARE	Cooperative Assistance & Relief Everywhere
LCSC	Local Community Steering Committee
MBIFCT	Mhahinga and Bwindi Impenetrable Forest Conservation (former name of BMCT)
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
REPA	Rights Equity and Protected Areas
UWA	Uganda Wildlife Authority
VS&LA	Village Savings & Loan Associations

FOREWORD

Welcome to the 2006/07 annual report of Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation Trust (BMCT). The year was marked by two reviews, one commissioned by the World Bank and another by the Board of BMCT.

The results of the World Bank - MBIFCT Project Performance Assessment Report (2007) and the 10-year review report of BMCT by the Conservation Development Centre, Nairobi (2007) confirmed that operationally BMCT is on the right track. The World Bank report commented that “the cumulative effect of the Trust’s community development grants, especially the participatory process of awarding grants, has made a substantial contribution to local awareness and commitment to park protection.” It is this awareness that will, over the long-term, ensure the parks remain protected and viable habitat for the mountain gorillas and other endangered species. I am therefore grateful to the past and present stakeholders, funders, partners and staff who have contributed to this success story.

During the year the Endowment Fund grew despite the volatility in the world economy. It grew at an impressive rate of 11.4% - well above the investment target of 7.5%. This Fund income provided the majority of the funding for the BMCT’s project activities

Meanwhile the Trust is maximizing the value of its endowed funds, via such means as investing gratuity savings into short-term high value investments like fixed deposits and treasury bills. In this regard I commend the Finance Committee and Trust Administration Unit for complying with best practices in management and use of BMCT finances and assets

BMCT has made a difference to 7,941 beneficiaries in the past three years by supporting different small scale projects that contributed to poverty reduction. Participation among the females was fairly high with 55.4%.

This year 79 income generating activities were implemented by local communities with support from the BMCT compared to 45 from last year, an increase of 75.5%. These included potato, tree and pea growing; goat, sheep and pig rearing; beekeeping, handicraft making, live hedge planting and Village Saving and Loan Associations. BMCT continued to support Batwa activities and bought uniforms and other school materials over 803 Batwa pupils in the year.

The BMCT is fortunate to be able to support on-going project activities through income generated from our endowment fund. However the Trust recognizes that it is financially prudent to have a diversified revenue base. Also, as the population in the area expands rapidly, pressures on the protected areas are once again increasing. Thus there is a need that the Trust expand its work over and above the levels previously provided. In response to these needs the Trust plans to expand its fundraising activity, in order to provide a higher service level to the local communities, and solidify long-term protection of Bwindi and Mgahinga parks. We are planning to implement proactive fundraising as part of our annual planning efforts, with the initial assistance of a fundraising volunteer advisor.

BMCT encourages a partnership approach to solving conservation and development challenges. We acknowledge and appreciate CARE ‘s contribution of Ug. Shs. 45,000,000 for the Problem Animal Management, Batwa Empowerment and Village Savings & Loan Associations under a joint initiative between CARE International and BMCT.



Moses Mapesa
Chairman,
Trust Management Board

WHO WE ARE

The Bwindi and Mgahinga Conservation Trust (BMCT) was established to protect Mgahinga Gorilla and Bwindi Impenetrable National Parks, two critical forest habitats which provide a home to half of the world's remaining population of mountain gorillas in Southwestern Uganda. Through its successes the BMCT is setting new approaches and standards through promoting community development for conservation.

The BMCT was the first conservation trust in Africa established by the Global Environment Facility after the 1992 Rio Earth Summit.

When the BMCT was founded in 1995, less than 300 mountain gorillas lived in the two protected areas. Thanks to significant conservation efforts the population has gradually increased and today stands at approximately 340 in Uganda.¹

However threats to this amazing species still continue. Poaching, possible transmission of human viruses, insecurity in the Great Lakes region and intense farming around the protected areas continue to take their toll on the gorilla population and habitat.

OUR VISION is to conserve the biodiversity and ecosystem health of Mgahinga and Bwindi protected areas in harmony with the development needs of the surrounding communities.

People are an important part of any ecosystem. Without healthy and secure communities around our protected areas, the areas remain under threat from encroachment. The BMCT uses a unique approach of conservation through community development to achieve its mission. We work to improve the quality of life in surrounding communities by providing education, health services, vocational training and sustainable resource use skills in this impoverished and the most densely populated region in Uganda.

In this region the indigenous forest people, the Batwa, have been historically marginalized and discriminated against. Projects to improve livelihoods of the Batwa are a specific strategic focus of the BMCT.

OUR MISSION is to foster conservation of biodiversity in Mgahinga and Bwindi through investment in community development projects, grants for research and ecological monitoring, funding park management and protection, and programmes that create greater conservation awareness.

¹Uganda Wildlife Authority Annual Report 2005-2006

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

Prior to establishment of the BMCT, Bwindi Impenetrable and Mgahinga Gorilla National Parks were subject to constant depletion of their resources – illegal hunting of wildlife, indiscriminate cutting of timber and firewood, overgrazing, and human and animal conflicts between wildlife and farmers on the borders of the forests.

Since the establishment of the BMCT, the communities around the park have come not only to realize the importance of these protected areas, but also to benefit from them in the form of more secure and sustainable livelihoods.

The BMCT's first projects concentrated on the provision of infrastructure services, such as schools and health centers. As our work in the region progressed and the government assumed more responsibility for these activities, we realized that we could have more impact through focusing on conservation of the landscape and livelihood improvement. Current priorities include providing people with a secure economic future through sustainable agricultural crops as well as alternative income generation, and increasing the tree cover outside the protected areas.

Over the years the BMCT has introduced settled agriculture to the nomadic forest dwelling Batwa tribe; provided training in sustainable land use, crafts making, and animal husbandry, provided scholastic materials for 803 (411 boys 392 girls) Batwa children among others; built health clinics and schools for the poorest and most underserved communities; implemented sustainable natural resource use and management techniques such as soil and water conservation; increased land unit productivity; and introduced new revenue-generating enterprises such as fish farming and mushroom growing, livestock rearing, potato growing, beekeeping, handicraft making to 7,941 beneficiaries. Participation of females in economic activities were slightly higher with 55.4%.

In order to address wildlife–human conflict caused by crop raiding, BMCT has established live hedges as a natural and environmentally sustainable animal deterrent.

As communities surrounding the parks have thus become more economically secure, healthy and educated, there is an increasing understanding of the benefits of the parks, and a decrease in the pressure on park resources. As a result, gorilla numbers have risen.

HOW WE WORK

While the mission of the BMCT focuses on biodiversity conservation, we see mend women and communities as part of the landscape. Thus we arrived at our unique approach - integrating community development and conservation to strive for both healthy and secure human populations and protected areas. Our strategic objectives give guidance to programme implementation.

This balanced approach has enabled the BMCT to achieve important conservation gains for the endangered mountain gorilla at the same time as improving the livelihoods of the people in the surrounding communities. Through this approach the BMCT achieves long-term, sustainable change.

Ecological monitoring and support to park management are necessary components to the on-going health of the protected areas. BMCT partners with experts at the Institute of Tropical Forest Conservation and the Uganda Wildlife Authority in their delivery of these services.

We are community-based and participatory. The BMCT works with local communities to ensure their direct participation in decision-making for more effective conservation. Projects are implemented based on needs the communities themselves have identified. The BMCT initiated a unique mechanism for community involvement through the establishment of the Local Steering Committee. These are people who are elected by their community, and who take responsibility for project selection and monitoring. LCSC members act as a link between the Trust and the communities they represent. BMCT provides these community members with leadership and skills training. They are involved all the way through project implementation, so that there is local responsibility and accountability for the success of projects. BMCT is community based and uses participatory approaches.

We collaborate with many partners including local and international NGOs, community based organizations and government agencies, to pool resources and capture the strengths of individual partners in achieving common conservation and development goals

THE TRUST MANAGEMENT BOARD

Financial and policy matters of the BMCT are governed by a voluntary Board comprising of a broad spectrum of conservation stakeholders and community members. Only those members noted as trustees are voting members.

Mr. Moses Mapesa:	Trustee and BMCT Board Chair Executive Director, Uganda Wildlife Authority
Mr. Frank Karake:	Trustee, Hotelier and Tourism Consultant
Mr. Caleb K. Tumwesimire:	Trustee and Local Community Representative Chairman, Kayonza Tea Growers Factory
Mr. Richard Sebagenzi:	Trustee and Local Community Representative Teacher
Ms. Mary Tushemereirwe:	Trustee and Local Community Representative School Headmistress

Dr. Alastair McNeilage:	Trustee, Director, Institute of Tropical Forest Conservation, Mbarara University
Mr. Achilles Byaruhanga:	Trustee, Executive Director, Nature Uganda
Mr. Justus K. Tindigarukayo:	Trustee, Commissioner, Ministry of Tourism, Trade and Industry
Ms. Karin E. Lind	Trustee, Natural Resources Management Sector Manager, CARE Uganda
Mr. George Serunjogi:	Principal Finance Officer, Ministry of Finance
Ms. Ketrach Katunguka	Principal State Attorney, Ministry of Justice
Mr. George Serunjogi	Principal Finance Officer, Ministry of Finance

THE YEAR IN REVIEW:

Integrating Conservation and Community Development 2006/ 07

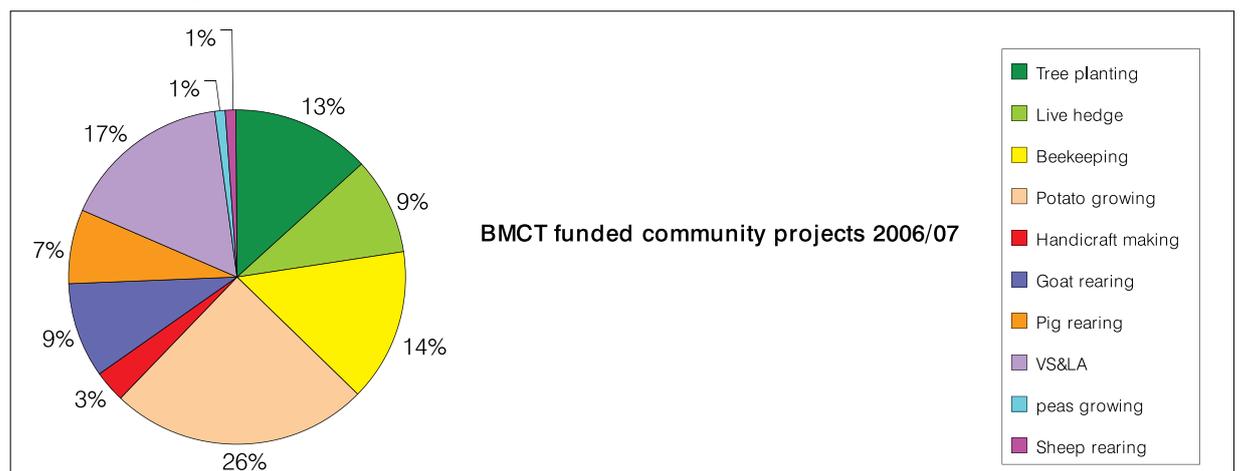
Enhancing awareness of the value of conservation and of ecological services provided by the Bwindi and Mgahinga Conservation Areas.

Building the trust of the local communities, and gaining their understanding of and support for conservation, is the foundation for ensuring the lasting protection of these ecosystems. Without this awareness, there is no basis upon which to implement sustainable resource management programmes.

Our initiatives included a combination of education and public information. We worked closely with schools, and also with the broader community to ensure our message had the most impact possible.

Results

- Worked with the school system to hold conservation awareness seminars. Over 800 pupils and 60 teachers attended these 18 seminars.
- Produced and distributed 2,700 calendars with conservation messages.
- Created a topographical display model of the Bwindi Forest. This helps enhance the geographic and conservation learning experience for students and visitors.
- Used alternative education, such as drama and dance, to teach the benefits of conservation in areas where illiteracy is significant. Over 4,000 people attended, including 3,000 youth.



Increasing the capacity of local communities to manage park and forest resources in a sustainable manner.

Once communities understand the benefits of conserving natural resources, they need the tools and skills to be able to do so effectively. The BMCT is dedicated to poverty reduction and livelihood improvement through the provision of vocational training, education, literacy training, and sustainable resource management training. We want to ensure there are reliable and consistent income sources for all working members of the community, including women and other groups traditionally disadvantaged.

Results:

Seventy-nine community projects were selected for support, providing support and resources towards income generation as indicated below:

- Animal husbandry projects included goat, sheep and pig rearing. All participants were successful in breeding the animals provided, and thus producing larger numbers.

The BMCT also supported organic honey production through the provision of beehives. Forty-one beehives were colonized and are waiting harvest.

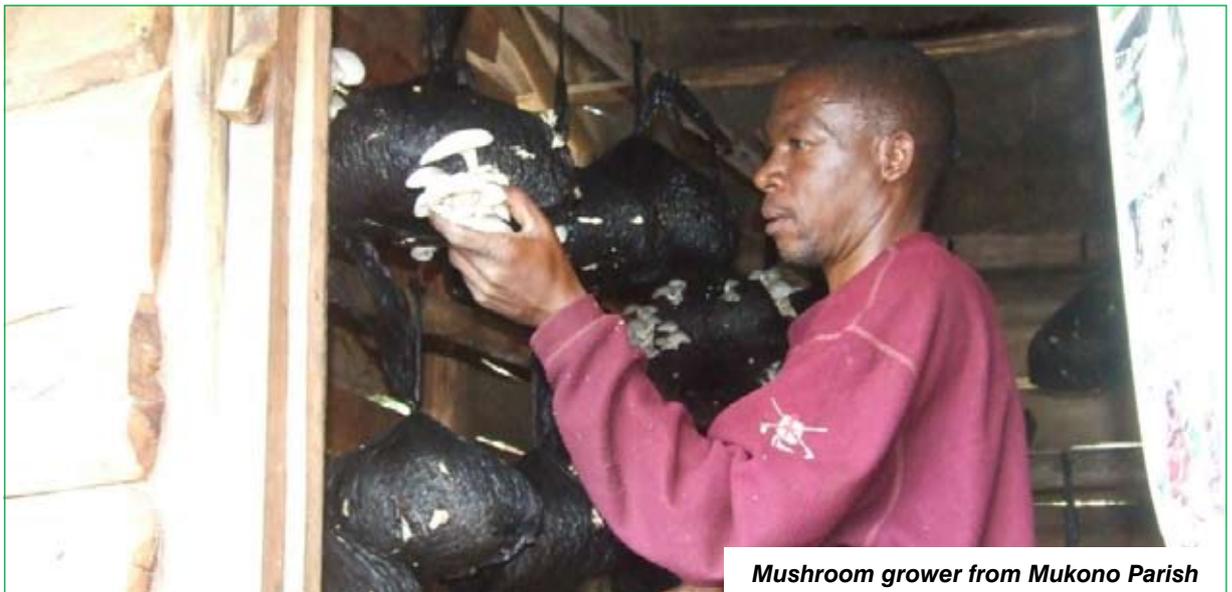
- Farming initiatives included potato, peas, mushroom growing and tree planting. All of the potato and pea crops were successfully harvested. Tourist facilities in the region who previously bought their fresh produce from Kampala, are now being supplied by local producers' e.g. mushroom growers, bringing income into the region and also improving the quality and variety of food choices available to local people.



Potato harvesting by Mabungo Women's group - Kisoro District

BMCT also trained farmers to keep seed for the next planting season, to reduce the cost of buying new seed, and thus providing the farmers with a less costly renewable crop.

- Tree planting resulted in the growth of seedlings that will ultimately provide 273 men and women with firewood and timber which they can sell.
- Mushroom growing started as new venture in the area and has been found profitable.



Mushroom grower from Mukono Parish

- In order to reduce incidents of human and animal conflict, in which wild animals move onto farmland and consume crops; the BMCT supported six parishes to plant Mauritius thorn live hedges to curb crop raiding. These are barriers literally grown from plants and shrubs that are a deterrent to wild animals, thus providing an environmentally low-impact and wildlife-friendly solution to these conflicts. This has enabled border communities to plant valuable crops near the park boundary.

A Problem Animal Management plan was drafted for Kanungu District, which will be replicable broadly. This encompassed solutions such as selective crop-planting to facilitate improved hedge management and alternative income generation to counter-balance revenue from lost crops.



Mauritius hedge management

- To ensure that development projects are carried out as effectively as possible, 2,242 beneficiaries of 79 community projects were trained in project management group dynamics, conflict resolution, team work and leadership skills; basic record and book-keeping; and specific project best practices in animal husbandry and agro-forestry. Best practices focused on proper seed and ground selection, appropriate animal housing, and pest and disease control.
- Many people in the region have to walk several days to reach the nearest bank or credit union. In order to encourage people to save money they earn for the future or for re-investment into income-generating projects, the BMCT established 11 Village Savings and Loan Associations. These often provide people with their first opportunity to save money, and thus increase food security and economic choices for poor and marginalized men and women.



Village Savings & Loan Association session

Supporting the operational management of Bwindi Impenetrable and Mgahinga Gorilla National parks.

The BMCT supports the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) to ensure that the parks themselves are well-managed and can effectively support the species which rely on them for habitat. BMCT works closely with UWA to provide conservation input and expertise in park planning.

Results

- BMCT improved the tourist infrastructure in Mgahinga National Park through supporting the construction of a canteen, latrine and parking lot at the foot of Mount Muhabura for tourists undertaking mountain climbing.
- BMCT monitors the performance of the Buhoma Village Walk, a community based tourism initiative, that has increased the variety of tourist activities offered in the area, created synergic linkage between local community and private sector, while also providing members of the local community with an alternative source of income directly linked to conservation.



Traditional healer at Buhoma Village walk site

Improving the livelihood of the Batwa

The Batwa, an indigenous forest-dwelling people, are one of the most disadvantaged in the region. They were expelled from the forest in the creation of Bwindi Impenetrable and Mgahinga Gorilla national parks, and have traditionally been exploited by the majority of the population. The BMCT continues to champion the rights of the Batwa, promoting their education, improving their livelihoods and providing them with the skills and tools for settled agricultural production.



Cabbage Garden for Alivera a mutwa woman

Results:

- The lack of basic necessities, such as supplies and mandatory uniforms, often prevent Ugandan children from attending school. Last year, BMCT provided 803 Batwa children (411 male, and 392 female) in primary schools with uniforms and scholastic materials to enable them to join and attend Universal Primary Education.

- BMCT secured funding from African Orphans Foundation in USA for four Batwa orphans girl who are now attending boarding schools in Bishop's school in Kanungu and Shallom Foundation Nursery and Primary School in Kisoro
- The Batwa are among the poorest people around the two parks. Many are illiterate and not represented in decision-making fora. The BMCT provides them with an opportunity to participate in governance through establishing Local Community Steering Committees (LCSC). These are community-run groups which determine community priorities, provide community sensitization and are a critical information link between remote communities and BMCT staff. BMCT liaises regularly with LCSC members.
- BMCT initiated the development of a Batwa education policy that will enable development partners in the area to support secondary school/tertiary education for Batwa children. This will enable Batwa children to attain higher education and be able to compete for skilled employment.
- BMCT actively pursued securing land titles for the land purchased for Batwa. These are still pending and BMCT continues to lobby District land Boards
- Working in partnership with CARE Uganda, BMCT initiated enterprise development and savings and loans projects in Batwa communities, aimed at securing social inclusion to the larger community and increasing economic choices to promote self-reliance.
- Supported enterprises included, handicraft making, beekeeping, goat rearing, banana management, bean and vegetable growing, through agricultural training and the provision inputs such as seeds, farm implements and beehives. All supported enterprises have taken root and are continuing independently.



Goat rearing project



Handicrafts display

PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

The BMCT works closely with the local governments of Kanungu, Kabale and Kisoro at district and sub county levels, with Uganda Wildlife Authority as well as other NGOs including the Institute of Tropical Forest Conservation, CARE International, African Orphans Foundation, USA, International Gorilla Conservation Program, Nature Uganda, Conservation Through Public Health and United Organization for Batwa Development in Uganda.

BMCT would particularly like to acknowledge the support of CARE Uganda through their Rights, Equity and Protected Areas (REPA) programme and also the close co-operation by the various local governments in the area.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Income	Ug.shs	US\$
Fund contribution	369,034,477	210,877
CARE International	44,967,744	25,696
Rent	7,920,000	4,526
Asset disposal	3,201,300	1,829
Other income	54,326,925	31,044
Total Income	479,450,446	273,972
Expenditure:		
Employee costs	105,271,302	60,155
Administration	64,876,371	37,072
Board and committees	18,246,400	10,427
Batwa assistance	9,833,525	5,619
Community projects	281,222,848	160,699
Total Expenditure	479,450,446	273,972

Average exchange rate for the year was 1US\$ = Ug. Shs 1750

