



ANNUAL REPORT

2017

GEORGE ADAMSON WILDLIFE PRESERVATION TRUST
For the board directors of the Suzuki Rhino Club

Working plan for the
Mkomazi Rhino Sanctuary for 2018

28th February 2018

Dear Board of Directors of Suzuki Rhino Club,

It was very good to see the ambassadors in Mkomazi last week as well as a director of the SSRC. A busy time and I hope that the ambassadors were able to get a good sense of the project from the perspective of field work and achievements.

We are very grateful for the long history that we have with SSRC – thank you all so very much. Thank you also very much for hosting us at the SSRC dinner at the Rotterdam Zoo. It was a very good and interesting evening and it was nice to have the link up again with the zoo, from the old days of George and Joy Adamson to our work with Dr Aart Visser.

Please find attached our target operating budget for 2018 and we are grateful for the opportunity to present this to the board for consideration:

- a) Mkomazi Rhino Sanctuary General Operating Costs
- b) Mkomazi Rhino Sanctuary Capital Equipment and Special Projects
- c) Summary 2018

As always, from the overall 'ideal world' target budget we have once again extrapolated a suggested amount in support of the Rhino Sanctuary for the SSRC column, based on your generous donations of last year 2017. And of course we make no assumptions on this very generous amount but as we are already in to 2018, we felt it would be sensible to budget based on these figures.



Mkomazi Rhino Sanctuary – General

The figures from 31st December 2015 for this sub species of black rhino gave an estimate of 890 throughout the world. There are approximately 130 rhinos in Tanzania. Based on these estimates, the Mkomazi Rhino Sanctuary (MRS) rhinos therefore represent nearly 25% of Tanzania's black rhinos and so the Mkomazi population continues to be incredibly important not just to the country but also to this fragile species. Thank you for your support in helping us protect this endangered species on the ground.

After a huge conservation effort, numbers have crept away from the brink of extinction but are still at perilous levels and it's a matter of great importance to TANAPA that they bring these numbers up again. We also understand that the Serengeti rhino population is doing well and TANAPA are working with Rian and Lorna Labuschagne.

However, the recent good news about rhino conservation in East Africa are the latest figures from Kenya which are taken from a recent independent survey. This shows that there apparently are over 1,000 rhinos (not the estimated circa 600 which was previously thought) in Kenya. It is good to be proved wrong sometimes. Kenya started putting in fenced rhino sanctuaries in the 1970's and we followed their example. This has helped to prove the efficacy of their methods. Kenya however is at a stage where they can look at fencing complete parks and releasing rhinos in to these much bigger fenced areas. We do feel that fenced sanctuaries are the best method as this time in some areas and TANAPA are working on these plans, as long as these areas are able to be expanded if there are no other areas with a similar fenced system in place to translocate surplus animals in to.

We are also really pleased that TANAPA have said that they too will be building rhino sanctuaries in Tanzania using our sanctuary as a template. In a meeting yesterday with the Mkomazi Park Warden, they advised that they will start soon on the first stage of the construction of their own rhino sanctuary which is terrific. This is going to be in the north of the park as both a conservation project but also along their tourist circuit. This leaves the MRS as a breeding sanctuary with security uncompromised.

With the upgraded fencing system of the MRS, the equipment and plant machinery out on duty, personnel actively working in and outside the MRS, the aircraft flying, the tracker dogs on patrol, the SmartParks sensor network system and rhino horn transmitters and possibly some technical security enhancement we do hope that we are getting more up to date to counter the threats that we will face in the future and that we will have an intensively monitored sanctuary. This is not quite bringing it in to the virtual world, but it means that we can use available and affordable technology for the good. We thank SSRC for their contribution towards these advancements.

Bearing in mind that the MRS has not – yet – been the subject of a major attempt by poaching gangs, we are well aware that this status will probably not hold in to the future and we continue to look at new technology that will alert us of any illegal activity close to the MRS and from which we could form an appropriate response. It is vital that Mkomazi's continuing high levels of security be maintained in order to prevent poaching attempts. We will continue to manage and oversee the many disciplines of the daily operations of the MRS. We will work with TANAPA to continue to keep all systems in good shape to ensure the rhinos are secure and breeding. With 29 animals, the Mkomazi population is an integral part of Tanzania's efforts to breed and recover numbers of black rhino.

Personnel

The MRS is run on presence and activity. We need continual presence in the right place and activity in the right place. Over the next year, all personnel (security team, rhino tracker team, fence maintenance teams x 2, mechanics and tracker dog handlers) will continue their working duties according to the normal systems and protocols. As always, we will continue to support their salaries. We have evacuation insurance and ambulance support for the managers and machine operators and we cover staff medical costs. We now bring in specialist mechanics on a piece-work basis to repair the plant machinery. More personnel have been employed. The commitment to monthly salary payments is therefore considerable.

TANAPA continue to support the salaries of the security team, including their three TANAPA rangers who now operate in the MRS. This is working well and is a good example of cooperation between the two organisations. One of these rangers is based full time at the tracker dog unit. We are in discussion with TANAPA about the recruitment of security for the MRS, as we would like to continue along the lines of the original set up which was established by our former (now deceased) Chairman, Brigadier General Hashim Mbita, to recruit ex-serving personnel with distinguished serving records.

The second fencing team is working well and have been trained up by the Instarect technicians so they are now working hard and have formed a tight unit. This new team do use their initiative but if they are unsure about anything, they are confident enough to ask for advice. The original fence team continues with their normal duties of fence repair and replacement. The trackers are working well and gain a visual sighting of every single rhino every day or two. The tracker dog handlers are taking the dogs further afield on general patrol and wherever the dogs go, the area is cleared of commercial meat poachers for quite some time. We obviously have to be very careful in bringing in more staff and there are only a certain number of people that we can employ. Our employees are carefully chosen and we

feel that they are trustworthy but we have to keep it very tight and it takes time to find the right men for the job who will last the course in a remote place like Mkomazi. Also every time a new employee joins, such as the new fencing crew, it takes time for them to settle and for us to feel comfortable with them.

Over the next year, we will continue with the fence upgrade (Stage Two) and we are now heading towards completion of the worst section of the fence rebuild. We also need to build roads up the four hills on which we will be placing the towers for the sensor network system so will have to employ a road gang to do this with a foreman. We are planning for the tracker dog unit to continue with their patrols of the MRS line and peripheral area and they will also cover a wider area.

Fuel and Engine Oils

As the bulk fuel requirements are continuously increasing, we will endeavour to find the funding for this from another source. It is a heavy-duty commitment but the machines are out almost continuously with the increased number of personnel and rhino.

Equipment / Maintenance / Spares

Protection of the rhinos and the park's wildlife is all about having infrastructure in place. Having the big plant machinery out and working is a very necessary part of it and we are working on the development of this infrastructure together with TANAPA, investing in it and bringing it back from years of degradation and poaching. You can't effectively protect, maintain and patrol these huge areas without maintaining and constructing roads and tracks, and covering the movement of wildlife. The physical presence of people working out in the field on infrastructure, maintenance, the aircraft flying daily, ongoing activity and a close link up with the Government wildlife authorities and communities will hopefully result in better protection all round.

Thank you SSRC for the continued support towards the workshop, the maintenance, spares and equipment. It is this that is the heartbeat of this operation. With the increase in rhinos and personnel, the requirements for the useage and general maintenance of the big machines and project vehicles has also increased. The heavy plant machinery has either been over the workshop pits continuously with big repairs taking place or working out in the field. On any given day, the workshop has four or five different jobs going on. Somehow the mechanics keep on top of it all and, as abovementioned, we bring in specialized technicians from Arusha for the heavy-duty plant machine piece work repairs. Our old Scania water tanker engine has been overhauled, two Landrover engines have been overhauled, the JCB rear axle has been overhauled with an old and broken axle cannibalized into one, the Bulldozer has had track bolts and rollers replaced and overhauled and the Grader now has proper brakes for the first time in 20 years and we have managed to stop all the leaking from the rear drive trains. Even every tool donated by SSRC is in constant use.

We are very grateful for the donation of the motorbikes. Two were immediately put on active duty in the MRS, pulling out (with great relief) the Yamaha bikes. The drivers and bikes provide non-stop activity inside and outside the MRS, moving personnel and equipment and everything is going so much quicker with things getting fixed faster. These motorbikes are

extremely economical and much more so than someone driving a vehicle, the riders on the bikes have much greater situational awareness.

We are also constantly planning new structural improvements. On site, we are manufacturing the huge steel towers for the SmartParks sensor system that we are installing in the MRS and this has involved a considerable amount of welding.

Work will continue over the next year, with the heavy plant machinery out constantly, not only supporting the new fence upgrade but also with the tractors and trailers supplying water, collecting browse and moving equipment; the bulldozer continuing with the 50m cleared line around the peripheral MRS fence line; the JCB and bulldozer will also go out to the dam we are building in a joint project with TANAPA; the new Scania bringing in water (our sincerest thanks to SSRC for supporting this project - and this is covered in the 'Water' section below); roads will be cleared and constructed going up the mountains for the sensor network towers; and the Grader will be cleaning the MRS fence line. We are more busy than ever. The welding is massive and non-stop, most especially on the new MRS fence cantilevers now being made out of steel as the old wooden ones kept rotting and dropping, so we are welding the metal ones on to the 2inch metal posts. We are also making metal housings for all the equipment and we will have to construct on site more towers for the sensor network system.

The Suzuki Jimny is doing very well based at the tracker dog unit for emergency response, fully meshed and converted to take the dogs and handlers. The Grand Vitaras continue to be wonderful road cars, although they have to crawl along at 50kms an hour because of the speed restrictions and traffic police around every corner.

It was absolutely wonderful to stare at the quads in the Nimag yard. The amount of work and management that can be done cannot be quantified.

Security. Mkomazi Rhino Sanctuary Fence. Infrastructure and Maintenance.

The daily general repair work continues with the original fence maintenance team. We have to keep the old fence in top condition for obvious security purposes until such time that the fence upgrade is completed. This upgrade is a long slow arduous and labour-intensive job. We estimate that the upgrade will take another three to four years. The fence maintenance team are constantly fixing the old fence and doing the cantilever repairs and keeping it holding strong. They carry out the general replacement of fence posts and also the on the spot repairs and keep the fence operating in the bigger sections. We have gone into more detail about the fence upgrade in the Special Projects section.

As always, our mobile teams check the entire fence twice a day on foot. This ensures that they do not miss any problem or potential problem. Repairs are undertaken on the spot and there is always a stock of fence posts and wire in the stores for major repairs. Fence repair teams also slash the grass to keep the line clear and check for any animal or human footprints. Every time the fence repair team go out, their presence and patrols provides additional security and observation.

The internal fence line has now been completed and the two rhino bulls have been separated,

each in to their own section. This fence construction project also took a long time for many reasons but is now finished. The fence line was cleared by hand, bulldozed, graded, cleaned and then the fence post holes were dug, strainer posts put down, interim posts put down, heavy duty internal access gates put in and then the wiring and electrification was put in place.

The peripheral MRS fence line is also being cleared back with our bulldozer, adding another 50 metres for both observation and to act as a firebreak. This will continue over the next year as it is a massive undertaking.

Internal MRS tracks will continue to be opened up and maintained over the year. The trackers use these internal tracks on a daily basis and their maintenance is therefore a priority as it helps towards the safety of the trackers who are always on foot.

The majority of the firebreaks will have to be recut after the rains. With those internally and externally to the MRS, small thorn trees will have to be taken out or de-stumped.

We are discussing an expansion to the MRS using the improved fence technology. This could be adjacent to the section that holds the Czech and UK rhinos as they are breeding so well and three bad rainy seasons resulted in less than optimum vegetation. We have to consider all breeding options and this needs a lot of advice and discussion. We will also put a new security outpost in this new section

Solar Power, Electrical Power

With thanks to Pepijn Steemers, the voltage on the fence continues to be just below 10,000 volts which is a massive improvement and we are installing this system for each security outpost.

Over the next year, we are planning upgrade of solar power, such as boosting the power to the MRS main entrance gate, charging systems and putting new panels in the tracker outposts so that they have a more reliable system. We also want to put more lighting in for them. The controllers do burn out and the monitors go wrong, but generally we are in good shape for a few months although there will of course be the usual requirements.

Water

With the increase in rhinos and personnel, the supply of water to the MRS has almost doubled. Thank you to SSRC for contributing towards the overall costs of the new Scania water tanker. After talking to contacts in Dar, where there might have been one or two suitable vehicles (but difficult to supervise on the rebuild) we found a dealer in Arusha. A mechanic who has worked on the older Scania as a contract mechanic for many years and is well known to us, went to look at it and it did seem suitable. The trader agreed to respray the cab and chassis and make sure it was in decent, basic working order. We then employed the mechanic to remove the single axle and put in instead a double axle and double differential on at the back, along with spring suspension (instead of air suspension). This work including installation of new differentials, new propeller shaft, brake servos and linings. A complete set of new tyres were then fitted. A local engineering works made a 25,000 litre tank complete with taps and a ladder to fit on the back. The Scania was taken over to their yard and the tanker was

fitted directly on to the chassis using U bolts. The inside of the water tank was then painted with anti-corrosive rubberised paint by specialist painters who were sent in by the company that provided the paint. This was expensive but worth it. The tanker was then painted on the outside in their yard. The end result was impressive. The Scania looked brand new and was fit for purpose. The driver went to Arusha to collect it and drive it back to Mkomazi. Once in Mkomazi, the Scania only had minor snags (the tachometer wasn't working and the water temperature gauge wasn't working). These were soon rectified and it has been running extremely well in Mkomazi since arrival. It drives like new. It is very powerful, brings in more than twice the amount of water than the old Scania was able to bring in during one trip, it can be run once a day and there is a five hour fill time at the Mkomazi NP Zange HQ. Fortunately, the well at the TANAPA HQ at Zange holds up very well and levels have only shown a very small drop (even at the end of the dry seasons). The policy is to maintain all the water storage tanks at the base camp to a high level at all times.

With now three recent bad rainfall seasons in a row, the tanks are not being supplied from the water catchment areas so the benefit of this new Scania has been fantastic. It is a bit heavy to use in the rainy seasons because of the conditions of the road, so the road is having to be done up in several places nearer Zange (which is a nuisance as it is so far away) but this is demand led by the drivers where they feel they need to get the road in better condition as with that weight, it will sink in if there is a shower. It is a fantastic and timely piece of equipment – thank you for your support of this.

In the future we might have to look at building another water storage tank.

The old Scania has now had an engine rebuild in Mkomazi. Now it is able to be used as a back-up if water levels get low or in the event of an emergency but also it is now increasingly being used with the tanker body off for lighter duties such as collecting lucerne and horse pellets from the border which had to be brought down from Kenya to supplement the feed of the UK / Czech rhinos.

TANAPA have put in a solar water well at Kifakua along with a 100,000 litre water tank on top a hill next to GAWPT's old security outpost. The idea is to pump this water to supply the security outpost. We are also in discussion with TANAPA about pumping the water (once the well and pump are working properly) to the southern end of the MRS in the future so that there will be access to water in this remoter area, and this could help with overall water supply. This water is quite brackish so it could also be used for mud wallows.

After the success of the siting and construction of a small dam in an area called Norbanda, which was instrumental in bringing the elephant back to the north of the Park again, another joint project is underway to construct a seasonal water pan in the Park for the elephant herds and other wildlife of the Mkomazi National Park / Tsavo National Park ecosystem. We deployed the plant machinery and operators for this initial work of piling up soil some distance away from the dam to form the dam wall, digging the four metre deep trench and then together with TANAPA carting the piled up soil back from a few kilometres away. Once the dam wall has been built and packed, TANAPA will bring in a bulldozer to deepen and widen the water collection area.

Babu's Camp is now moving to a new location, overlooking the valley leading up to Observation Hill and Dindira Dam with a terrific panoramic view. This should give its guests great game and bird viewing. We are helping out by creating a water hole in front of their mess and we will construct a ditch behind the camp between two gullies so that when rain water comes down the hillside it drains off into the gullies rather than into the camp.

Communications

The communication system is working well and over the next year, new radios will always be needed. Batteries are an ongoing necessity. With the new teams working, we keep having to hand out more radios and more batteries and will continue to do so. Three radios also have to be replaced.

The VTC radio system was worked on by SmartParks to try to give them 3G but now there is 3G in Gonja town so we will investigate if we can use the VTC system to pick up 3G for ourselves at Kisima.

Existing security outposts, uniforms, consumable supplies

We will continue to maintain the existing security outposts and continue to tailor two sets of uniforms per person for all sanctuary personnel. Boots are purchased from Arusha and we will aim to buy two pairs of new boots per person.

With the inclusion of Kilo Tango security outpost now inside the MRS (before it was on the outside), and with the fence being able to be controlled (switching on and off) from the main entrance gate security post, we can now man the outposts with just two men in each place. This makes way for other outposts to go in, increasing presence in strategic places.

Veterinary

Another 70 flags were added in the tracker dog camp area. They were placed as a secondary line to the existing flags on the road networks leading in to the camp to try to reduce the amount of tsetse being brought in to the camp, attracted to the hot engines of the vehicles. Then more flags were placed in an extra circumference around the camp itself and a tertiary line was placed in addition to two other lines along the exercise / training area. We will continue to keep these flags maintained, every two months or after every rain. TANAPA support these endeavours.

We have been cautiously making moves to manage the future breeding of the zoo-bred and 'wild' populations and it will have to be done carefully and slowly. Each one is so precious and, as you well know, it has taken so much effort and funding to get them to Mkomazi and to keep them safe. And we are very grateful to SSRC for this. The management, safety and protection of the individual rhinos that came from zoo situations and how they react to each other in the MRS has been paramount in the past and will have to continue being paramount in to the future. The decision to move Eliska was a major and considered decision between everyone involved in her translocation and adaptation to Mkomazi and we felt that the bull Monduli was docile. We have made decisions before and they have worked and many new calves have been born as a result. With what happened to Eliska, we have all taken this very

badly and it shows that even though we know these rhinos well, there are hidden character traits that are obviously still unknown. Before we make any decision of this kind, we really run it through with experienced rhino vets and managers but ultimately not everything goes according to plan. However, in the future we will still have to make breeding decisions as the rhino population expands as we are a breeding sanctuary and we can't just sit on our hands and do nothing. Incidents such as this has happened before on Borana and Lewa in Kenya but they are isolated incidents. But in our small sanctuary it just underlines the fact that in the long term as the rhino population expands, so must the MRS itself. This will obviously need to take into account the resultant increase in security and other issues that will arise.

Tracker Dog Unit.

The dogs are now being brought up to the MRS fence line for patrols and other patrols have taken place over an increasingly wider area, starting with the plains to the west of the MRS and then to the area behind the base camp, which is notorious for commercial meat poaching gangs. They now cover an area from Kamakota to Ndea to the Kisiwani boundary area and there have been numerous arrests of commercial meat poaching gangs by TANAPA with thanks to these tracker dog patrols.

The dogs and handlers received training, which was a really good week for both the dogs and their handlers and it got everyone back on their toes again.

Will Powell, who is a tracker dog trainer in Arusha, has also visited our unit and brought his knowledge to bear on operating in the field in Tanzania. He then held a dog handler summit at his kennels and we sent two of our handlers to attend it. The tracker dog handlers and dogs need regular training and care and we are grateful too to Will for bringing us under his professional operation. He has also kindly taken in our dogs whenever they need intensive medical care, vaccinations or treatments.

The Suzuki Jimny does well and it is wonderful that any situation can now be reacted to rapidly.

One TANAPA ranger is posted to this unit full-time.

We have decided against putting in a large perimeter fence as the dogs now have special toys to play with on exercise provided by Will Powell.

Over the next year they will continue their patrols on the MRS fence line and in the wider park.

Aircraft.

When the aircraft is in use, the aircraft patrols back up the security not only of the MRS but of the entire National Park as well. The aircraft will continue to be used for back up to the security for the MRS, all the general surveillance, back up to anti-poaching patrols for the whole Park especially the northern section, all the drying up water pans in the Park, the tracker dog camp, carrying of equipment and personnel, resupply of remote camps and rapid response to situations in the field. We can help fly to support TANAPA's efforts in the field. Aircraft maintenance has to take place now in Nairobi as the Arusha facility has closed down,

so this involves massive logistics and delays on inspections and paperwork. Procedures are always changing. Over the next year, I think I will have to bring in (as a consultant) the ex-manager of the maintenance facility who used to look after the aircraft, and who is now retired. He helped us in the past for years as the maintenance provider, and I do feel he is best placed to help us out with the new regulations and all the paperwork to keep us compliant. He is so specialized and it saves us endless trips to Dar es Salaam which detract from field work.

There is a Moshi maintenance facility who might be able to help out in the future, but otherwise we will have to base the maintenance out of Nairobi. The Moshi facility might well getting their own Cessna 206 and once that is acquired, they would have to put the 206 on to their AMO which would enable them to include our 206 as a special case for maintenance – that would be wonderful but it is just in discussion at this time.



Rhino Sanctuary Special Projects

a) New Fencing Upgrade

This is going well and the fencing contractor (Instarect Ltd) is heavily committed to this enormous challenge. We have now commenced on Stage Two of the rebuild. The first 10kms of fencing (Stage One) is in great shape, tidied up, stronger and a much better defence barrier against illegal human encroachment. It held up well and we decided to go to a 5-strand cantilever instead of a 4-strand cantilever which gives a greater lateral extension which is much harder to get over. Stage Two is now underway with nearly two thirds of the first section now completed and work has just now started on the final third of this section. But we must say it is a very long slow task. We are adding in an extra line of wire to fill a gap in the strands around the entire fence because of a design fault in the early days of construction in the 1990's. However, we have now ended up with a 20-strand fence (which includes the cantilever) that is much stronger, much safer and also looks much more formidable. It even held up against a buffalo trying to break in.

All the wooden cantilevers have been taken out because they were always dropping and rotting with rusting bolts and they have now been replaced with metal cantilevers. These are made on site at the base camp and then welded on to 2inch metal posts. The new insulators are much stronger and they don't break apart like the earlier softer insulators did. They also don't permit entry of rain which causes shorting in the rainy season. These insulators also hold the wires better. Insulators were initially placed on the positive wires and are now placed on all of them

The Instarect team have now pulled back and returned to Kenya, having trained our guys and now we have our own team in place under their own team manager. When we come to put the electricity into the new fence, we will bring their guys back because we are trying to get the whole fence wired in to a series configuration rather than a parallel configuration for pin-pointing in a much more accurate way where the alarms go off. Fences for some reason have minds of their own and highly trained electricians are of no help and they doesn't understand them at all. It takes a serious fence contractor a long time to get the whole thing working properly. Why this is so well, it is not easy to work out. Meanwhile another smaller team is

constantly going around tightening up cantilevers, reinforcing broken poles on the old fence that hasn't been replaced yet. This team are a hardworking professional gang.

Our next plan is to complete the Stage Two section and move on to Stage Three which will be done in two sections. We will then extend the length of two other sections with a new separate alarm system.

b) Rhino Horn Transmitters on the Sensor Network System

There is so much to say on this system and SmartParks are much better placed to give the technical side to the report and plans for the next stage.

This system is now also being applied to horn implants for the rhinos. The small sturdy rhino horn transmitters which work on the triangulation system are designed and manufactured and one is fitted. It gives a reading every few minutes and is a huge benefit.

More towers need to be in place to expand the system. We have also discussed this with TANAPA as Dr Macha will work with Dr Morkel on this.

All the towers, the boxes to hold the equipment, have been fabricated or assembled on site and we look forward to improving this technology as it develops. We will also have to manufacture new towers and bring in a labour gang to construct roads to the tops of the mountains where the new towers will be placed.

Internet of life are to be highly commended for both pioneering the SmartParks system (now a prize-winning system), writing the software and making it all work. The same system has been installed in Akagera National Park in Rwanda and we understand it will be installed in another national park in Tanzania and other parks are showing interest in this off-the-grid system and we are very proud to have played a part in the pioneering this technology in the African wildlife world.

c) Movement of rhinos to areas of optimum vegetation as well as for breeding purposes

The habitat of Mkomazi National Park and the Tsavo ecosystem in general has a very high carrying capacity (in terms of density) for black rhinos, far exceeding those of southern Africa. With a rich diversity of favoured food plants and vegetation cover based on rich volcanic soils with a bimodal rainfall pattern, the rhino densities recorded by Goddard in Tsavo (including MNP) in the 1960s indicate densities typically one order of magnitude higher than those that could be carried by most rhino conservation areas in southern Africa. If, in the future, the Africa-wide poaching crisis can be substantially reduced, it may even be possible one day to have free-ranging rhinos within Mkomazi National Park but outside the MRS as there is a huge area of superb black rhino habitat. However, this seems like a very distant spot on the far horizon at present. Therefore, at this stage, fenced sanctuaries are one of the most important methods of protecting and breeding rhino.

As the rhino population grows in the long term, a discussion has taken place on fencing an area adjacent to the section that holds the UK and Czech zoo-raised rhinos who are breeding extremely well so they have a larger range. This would be in an area of optimum vegetation and should be close to existing security outposts, close to the tracker dog unit and in an area that can be well protected. We need to discuss this concept in depth and need input and advice on each of the various options.



Vocational Training Centre

It was very good indeed that some of the board of directors of the SSRC were able to visit during February with the ambassadors.

The VTC is in good shape. The grass has been planted throughout the grounds, hedges and small brick walls put up to cope with the heavy rain on the plot. The carpentry section especially is able to make furniture for the school and for sale to other missions, schools and individuals. The advent of the secondary school section as well has added to both the number of students (fee paying) and the atmosphere of learning in the school in general.

I have resigned as Chairman which gives me more freedom to help the VTC. I can monitor it on a regular basis with an emphasis on automotive work and the car maintenance section.

We are still keen on looking for support for dormitories for the girls, and also to support the food growing initiative that Father Matthias is working on. He is planning on securing a plot down by Lake Kalimawe where he plans to grow rice and maize for the school to be more self-sustaining. With the dormitories, we would like to raise funds to build more dormitories for the girls and make adjustments to the existing dormitories and systems. A site has been chosen to both construct and fence the proposed dormitory buildings.

The bulk food donated by the SSRC has been kept in the VTC's stores – this needs to be bought again at this time of year when it is cheap.

The last year students spent time out in the “field” on practical assignments and they seem to have been well placed and are enjoying it all. There are some good teachers and they have to be encouraged to stay so teacher salaries do need to be looked at as many well qualified teachers seek the bigger positions in the larger towns and cities. Dedication can only go so far.

The assessment done has raised the possibility of support coming in through other foundations which is good news.

We do feel that the RC Diocese of Same and Father Matthias are doing a good job. He has

brought a sense of discipline to the school, he has tidied up the grounds, paid attention to rain fall and rain flow and drain off and the secondary school is underway with a good number of students enrolled. It is also very well equipped with thanks to SSRC. In many ways it really is up with our expectations.

The RC Diocese are showing a greater sense of ownership and getting on with the tasks in hand. There are needs on every level, it needs tweaking on quite a few aspects, but these projects always need more money. But Father Matthias has vision and plans to make sure that if any funding comes through, he knows what to spend it on. It is a growing and improving school and it is gaining in reputation. With the two year course, it takes time for students to build up. The students coming in to the secondary section cross over to the VTC section and this is good progress.

We can now stand back for a while and think we will be far more useful in the background just keeping an eye on a few things without the internal politics of what is going on, especially if there are other NGOs coming in that will have more time to deal with this.

Overall, we are pleased that the school has become part of the RC Diocese of Same. They are certainly a professional and organised institution within Tanzania and responsible for a considerable amount of education throughout the country. The VTC is run it as a multi-denominational school and children of all faiths are welcome. We hope that within a couple of years, with some serious and targeted input, this neat little place will become both popular and in demand, but also a serious technical training centre as more and more parents are looking to get their children in to work.

We have a busy 2018 ahead. Mkomazi has developed well with increasing wildlife numbers and elephant herds with thanks to TANAPA's management and protection. The dam at Norbanda has been a success and the new dam being constructed in the Supabowl will hopefully add to this success and hopefully numbers of elephants coming in to water sources that are protected. The MRS is doing well, so are the wild dogs. Babu's Camp is being re-sited in a wonderful place which will hopefully attract more tourists to the park, as will the TANAPA small rhino sanctuary. And relations with TANAPA are as good as ever. We have been to Dar recently for meetings with our trustees, and they are fully on board and committed.

Continuity equals ongoing success and we are grateful and privileged that SSRC have stood the course of time to get the project this far. Thank you all so very much.

Tony Fitzjohn
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