

**KING KONG:
Scoping in on the Curious Activities of the
International Monkey Business**

**KONG: Part Six:
The Road to Tayna 1**

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“[There is] too strong of a linking of funds to geographic areas without adequately linking them to existing governance regimes. Specifically, this led several observers to characterizing the landscape grants as “pork” for the conservation movement with minimal CARPE ownership by national governments.”--The Weidemann Consortium, 2006

The Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund International gets a lot of mileage out of Dian Fossey. Today their web site hosts original photos of Dian Fossey working in the field at Karisoke, the research station Fossey built in Rwanda. DFGF-I has plans to expand and market the Dian Fossey name worldwide, an entire industry in the making, all mapped out in terms of market share and “protected” primates. There is even a photograph showing Dian Fossey’s grave in Rwanda.

But Dian Fossey would be turning over in that grave if she knew that the little old lady in Iowa who donated twenty bucks to gorilla conservation through today’s Fossey Fund was getting scammed.

Putting the sordid, sensational, and squalid (his) story of “conservation” in the Great Lakes Region of Central Africa under the monkey scope, CARE International’s foray into the environmental scene in Uganda has remarkable similarities to the Conservation International, CARPE and Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund International landscape projects in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) today.

One can argue that the Road to Tayna began in little Mgahinga Gorilla Park, in 1993. The Hanged Man and the Mwami of our series both had remarkable tales to tell, but only the Congolese Mwami lived to tell his. Meanwhile, in 2004 USAID was telling Congress

another story altogether—a story contradicting the press releases, propaganda and outright lies propagated by wildlife organizations in and around Virunga National Park and the CARPE landscape partners in pork.

For our international readers, the terms “pork” and “pork barrel” refer to government excess in spending that benefits the constituents of a politician or some private entity. The term originated on U.S. slave plantations where the slaves were given the dregs of slaughtered pigs—what remained in the “pork barrel.”

The “pork” terminology gains new meaning when we examine and comprehend the DFGF-I “Pigs for Profit” program from the Tayna Conservation area.

The Weidemann Report

In a telling memo written in December 2004, Robert Hellyer—USAID Mission Director for DRC—wrote to the USAID Africa Bureau in Washington regarding the Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE), the “principal vehicle for United States participation in the Congo Basin Forest Project.”

“Of the more than 60 million people that live in the region,” Hellyer wrote, “about 22 million are located in urban areas. At present rates of population growth, the region is expected to contain 150 million people by the year 2025. Population density is on the whole quite low, with a regional average of 14 persons per square kilometer.”¹

There it is. Buried in the February 2006 Annex of the supporting documents for the report of the Weidemann Consortium—an evaluation of the CARPE program in Central Africa—is the admission that the rationale of “overpopulation” was bogus. For all the satellite sensors, the population control programs, the hand wringing by UNESCO and Conservation International and Fauna and Flora International and Richard Leakey’s ranger-training operation called Wildlife Direct—the alphabet soup of BINGOs and DINGOs gathering like hyenas for the kill around the perimeter of Virunga and Kahuzi-Biega National Parks—“the population density is on the whole quite low.”²

Robert Hellyer elaborates on the global demand for petroleum and timber, and on the adverse impacts of human populations in a landscape—Congo—where “it is in the self-interest of the United States government” to support “sustainable development” in the region. Hellyer confirmed that CARPE and USAID are not interested in the Congolese people, or even biodiversity protection, but only in the interests of the United States.

¹ Cover Memorandum for the Central African Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE) FY 2005 Annual Report Submission from USAID/DRC Mission Director Robert Hellyer to AA/AFR Lloyd Pierson, December 17, 2004

² John Pielemeier et al, Mid-Term Assessment of the Central African Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE), Final Report, The Weidemann Consortium, February 2006.
http://carpe.umd.edu/resources/Documents/search_categories/year-2006/

How many of the claims of the BINGOS—the big conservation NGOs—are real and how many public relations? They all claim community partnerships and sustainable development, but what is the situation for the people on the ground in Central Africa?

The centerpiece of our KONG series and the framework, upon which all of the deceptions can be displayed, is the Tayna Gorilla Reserve.

Tayna Gorilla Reserve (RGT)

The Tayna Gorilla Reserve is located some 50 kilometers west of the spine of the Great African Rift Valley and the “spooky”—in the words of Chicago Tribune reporter Paul Salopek—Virunga National Park (VNP). Salopek’s trip in 2000 from Mgahinga National Park in Uganda to the Virunga National Park in Congo found a “spooky, derelict national park that (had) doubled as a battlefield for nearly two years.”

The VNP landscape encompasses 790,000 hectares (1.95 million acres) of rich equatorial swamps, plains that rival the brawny savannahs of the great South African Kruger Park, and steppes that merge into the Mountains of the Moon snowfields of the Rwenzoris. Lava plains old and new flow down slopes of volcanoes and buffer the last refuge of the king of the volcanoes—the inspiration for the mythical KONG—the embattled mountain gorilla.

This is a land that once formed the cradle of civilization, but humans here are also fighting a losing battle for survival. As we noted in KONG: The Hanged Man (http://coanews.org/tiki-read_article.php?articleId=1964), in recent years hundreds of thousands of refugees—mostly women and children—fled west from Rwanda into Virunga’s forests and were hunted down and slaughtered by Rwandan and Ugandan forces. The mapping agencies, the money, the scientists, the humanitarians and family planners, and the crooks on the run all followed the doomed humans.

The Tayna Gorilla Reserve is the flagship Community Conservation Program of the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund International (DFGF-I). As DFGF-I boasts on their website, it is “a program that empowers local people to protect and preserve their heritage.” The claim is repeated in a jungle of press releases published as independent news,³ in lavish reports, fundraising campaigns, and expensive, glossy, full-color brochures.³

However, there is a damning indictment of DFGF-I published in the Annex of the Weidemann Report. Comments by Jefferson Hall, the former Assistant Director of the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) Africa Program, caution that DFGF-I is totally incapable of managing the Tayna conservation landscape or the CARPE conservation project at Kahuzi-Biega.

“In the Maiko-Tayna-Kahuzi Biega Landscape, the Landscape Lead,” Hall notes, Conservation International “has *no implementing activities on the ground or presence in*

³ www.gorillafund.org

the Landscape or the country.” (emphasis added) Hall characterizes the DFGF-I as a sub-recipient whose involvement will cause conflict. He notes that DFGF-I does not have a cooperative agreement with CARPE or the experience or capacity to take the Landscape Lead. Hall recommended that activities on the ground should be a prerequisite for Landscape leadership.⁴

It seems that both WCS and DFGF-I were inexperienced and incapable, but went ahead with their program anyway. Were Hall’s comments based upon predatory competition for funding, or was WCS supporting the Mwami’s claims that Tayna was in shambles? Were the hyenas of the conservation clique breaking ranks, now that the prey was down?

The ecology of the Democratic Republic of Congo is certainly worth protecting, but in terms of dollars spent and pressure put upon the humans that share the land, at what cost? Home to endangered human primates and their endangered relatives—the Grauer’s gorillas, the chimpanzees and another twelve species of non-human primates—there are more than eighty species of mammals in the Tayna forested area, including elephants, leopard, buffalo and the rare okapi. It is an achingly vibrant and beautiful landscape.

This area, especially north of Lubero District, could probably feed all of Africa—certainly all of DRC. This countryside of stunning vistas is the most fertile in the world. While we were perched on hills that roll 2500 meters above sea level into verdant valleys, our eyes feasted on virgin timber and cultivated fields. Beautiful women wrapped in colorful fabrics tended to maize and tethered their goats in grasses that ringed the family plots. Chronological time may have marched forward, but these villagers have been living the same lifestyle for hundreds of years. It is one of the most breathtaking landscapes on earth.

It is also drenched in blood. At this writing—July 2007—there are 700,000 internally displaced people struggling to survive in North and South Kivu—CARPE Landscape 10—*and the security situation is deteriorating.*

The Paper Trail to Tayna

Members of the United States Congress should read the 127 plus page Weidemann Report. Beyond accusations of the ubiquitous pork, it fries the bacon of the BINGOs and DINGOs and their chief funder, USAID.

The Weidemann Report described the initial design and scope of CARPE as “insufficient” for the undertaking. Policy coordination is/was assessed to be “dispersed across a confusing array of U.S. Government and NGO organizations whose efforts were very unevenly implemented in scope, scale, and geographic focus.”⁵

⁴ Annex H: Partner comments on draft assessment Mid-Term Assessment of CARPE II, John Pielemeier et al, Mid-Term Assessment of the Central African Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE), Final Report, The Weidemann Consortium, February 2006; http://carpe.umd.edu/resources/Documents/search_categories/year-2006/

⁵ Weidemann Report, p. 9

Washington D.C. is described as “isolated” and landscape partners “cut off” from each other and Washington and even from the structures of power in DRC. In other words, Washington hasn’t got a clue what is going on in Central Africa as far as results from dollars spent in the human misery and conservation sectors. No surprises there—given the black hole of dollars that vanished with Hurricane Katrina and the absence of accountability at home.

We submitted a Freedom of Information Act request (FOIA)⁶ to USAID in January 2007, asking for a partial evaluation of Tayna that has not been answered. No independent party has *ever* evaluated the program at the Tayna Center for Conservation Biology (TCCB). The Mwami on the run insisted that CARPE had evaluated the horrible conditions in villages and at the “university.” Just six sentences into the Weidemann Report we ran headlong into the Monkey Smuggler of our series and the vindication of the Mwami’s Tale told to us in Goma in 2006.

“Meetings in Goma DRC and the team’s initial travel itinerary to Kahuzi-Biega were organized by Patrick Mehlman, Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund program director. Unfortunately, due to heavy rains, those travel plans had to be cancelled.”⁷

In fact, Patrick Mehlman of DFGF-I and Carlos Bonilla of Conservation International prepared the only existing written evaluation of the project at the Tayna Gorilla Reserve. The CI Final Report to USAID CARPE was written in December 2006 and revised by Mehlman for Conservation International (CI) in May of 2007. The report summarizes activities at both Kahuzi-Biega and Tayna Conservation areas. Graphs, charts and maps take up much of the content. There is one very small photo of the TCCB “university” from a distance, which reveals the tops of buildings. But it was all done by the Monkey Smuggler and his partners at Conservation International.

Our Congolese conservation insider had warned us that the grant writers, the biologists, the evaluators and the accountants were all the same people—the conservation clique—but we couldn’t believe there was no oversight or accountability.

Kahuzi-Biega and Tayna are two distinct parts of CARPE landscape No. 10, described in the Mwami’s Tale of our series. Was Tayna ever on the CARPE evaluator’s agenda? Does it matter? Kahuzi-Biega was not evaluated either, unreachable by the Weidemann team due to “heavy rains.” Millions of dollars lost in the jungle, and those promised roads never delivered.

Both projects are largely funded by USAID, with money filtered through CARPE, Conservation International, Pfizer Corporation, UGADEC and other “conservation”

⁶ FOI- 074/07

⁷ John Pielemeier et al, Mid-Term Assessment of the Central African Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE), Final Report, The Weidemann Consortium, February 2006; http://carpe.umd.edu/resources/Documents/search_categories/year-2006/

entities.⁸ USAID contributed \$5,496,104 to Conservation International over a period of three years through CARPE, and \$2,804,449 went to Tayna and the TCCB “University.”⁹

However, Patrick Mehlman’s report says the “total amount of USAID CARPE funding for Conservation International for the reporting period was \$4,678,286.”¹⁰ Mehlman’s numbers conflict with numbers in the Weidemann Report. Notably, DFGF-I contributed \$131,580 as “match funding,” meaning some sort of trade and not actual dollars, and Pfizer Drug Company donated \$425,000 worth of “medicines” through DFGF-I. At Tayna we saw chemical sterilization drugs with the Pfizer label. The U.S. Congressional Gorilla Fund threw another \$283,000 into the pork barrel. The Jane Goodall Institute provided leveraged funding of \$634,988 from USAID and its own coffers.¹¹

Readers of this series will recall that Clare Richardson, CEO of DFGF-I, was the “expert witness” at U.S. government hearings on the Congressional Gorilla Fund.

In another play on numbers, Conservation International repeats the \$2.8 million figure, but adds another \$1 million from the Global Conservation Fund. Costs for TCCB infrastructure were estimated at \$500,000 with labor contributed by “hundreds of villagers.”¹² In our interview with Pierre Kakule at the DFGF-I compound in Goma, Kakule told us that the bricks for the project were made by the orphans.

Readers need to download the FLASH presentation included with this story for a close-up look at the “infrastructure” at the Tayna Center for Conservation Biology. The pile of bricks, manufactured by the orphans, is now overgrown with weeds.

The money trail is huge and complicated, but we would need accountants and whistleblowers from ENRON to sort it out, or maybe the black magic of the Defense Contracts Audit Agency, which has already completed an audit on DFGF-I—the “proprietary” audit that remains classified.¹³

On February 10, 2006 we asked the Jane Goodall Institute about JGI’s work in the Tayna and Kahuzi Biega areas. Africa Program director George Strunden answered (3/3/06) that JGI received \$1 million in USAID for eight areas in Eastern DRC. We then asked JGI to clarify, e.g., programs and levels of JGI funding in the field in eastern DRC in 2003, 2004 and 2005. After repeated inquiries an email arrived on May 31, 2006. The answers to our questions were non-answers, obtuse and evasive.

⁸ UGADEC is the *Association Union Gorilla Conservation for Development in the East of DRC*.

⁹ John Pielemeier et al, Mid-Term Assessment of the Central African Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE), Final Report, The Weidemann Consortium, February 2006; http://carpe.umd.edu/resources/Documents/search_categories/year-2006/

¹⁰ CI Final report to USAID CARPE (FY 03-06)

¹¹ Ibid

¹² <http://web.conservation.org/xp/frontlines/people/06230602.xml>

¹³ Conversation with Congressman James Oberstar’s Office, March 2007

“All of our funds go toward our fieldwork,” responded Nona Gandelman of JGI. “It is our only focus in this area. We assess what’s needed to do the job, and then we do it, based upon approved budgets from our funders. Our budgets are targeted to get the job done.”

The current CARPE cycle runs for seven years, and USAID is required by law to do periodic evaluations. Weidemann Associates were hired to evaluate the program under something called RAISE ICQ. “This 5-year funding cycle began on September 29, 2004. The IQC ceiling is \$20 million,” says the Weidemann website.¹⁴

For a part of a \$20 million, five-year evaluation pie, Weidemann Associates flew a four-person assessment team to DRC under the USAID RAISE PLUS IQC task order. The team arrived in early October 2005. Three U.S. based members read a bunch of “key” documents and prepared some “key assessment questions” for “key actors” before they landed in... Congo.¹⁵

The team reportedly interviewed representatives of all U.S.-based CARPE partners, but later opined that 2-4 hour meetings were not sufficient or adequate, and so they e-mailed “key assessment questions” to each partner organization; two CARPE partners did not respond.

The questionnaires make interesting reading: the CARPE partners challenge and openly castigate competing member organizations—a bunch of hungry BINGOs and DINGOs after the same piece of USAID funding.

Hyenas Gathered for the Kill

U.S.-based members of the Weidemann team traveled to Congo and were joined by the fourth member—“a local area specialist”—on October 29, 2005. They spent one week in Kinshasa, and flew to Gabon—with meetings in Libreville and site visits to CARPE Landscape 2. During week three, they flew back to Kinshasa and then to Goma, where they split up “to maximize their resources and time.”

The team leader focused on the Virunga landscape by traveling to Rwanda (Kigali, Ruhengeri, Volcanoes National Park), and then back to the southern region of the Virungas Park in DRC. Other team members flew to Epulu, DRC, to assess “progress” in the Ituri landscape, and then flew to Beni, North Kivu, where they met with commercial loggers and CARPE partners. Returning to Kinshasa they drafted some conclusions and recommendations for CARPE officials.¹⁶

¹⁴ <http://www.weidemann.org/RaisePlusLimitedScope.htm>

¹⁵ John Pielemeier et al, Mid-Term Assessment of the Central African Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE), Final Report, The Weidemann Consortium, February 2006; http://carpe.umd.edu/resources/Documents/search_categories/year-2006/

¹⁶ John Pielemeier et al, Mid-Term Assessment of the Central African Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE), Final Report, The Weidemann Consortium, February 2006; http://carpe.umd.edu/resources/Documents/search_categories/year-2006/

Let's get this straight: a team of three U.S. consultants—with one Congolese “area expert”—reads some “key” reports stateside, and then flies into the war-torn Congo—chewing on a \$20 million pie. So they land in Kinshasa, stay at luxury hotels, fly to Gabon—more luxury hotels in the most expensive country in Africa—fly to Gamba in Shell Oil slave country down south, fly back to Kinshasa, fly to Goma, jump to Kigali, email a questionnaire—and go nowhere near Tayna or Kahuzi-Biega because it's raining?

The “commercial logging” stop in Bena was with ENRA, a company (and plantations) owned by the family of warlord Jean Pierre Bemba, which ships finished mahogany furniture and parquet floors to Belgium. There is a cooperative CARPE project with ENRA on logging concessions which involves the Wildlife Conservation society (WCS).¹⁷

The evaluation team missed the remote villages and people who most needed the light of truth shined upon their situation—and the validation or refutation of the conservation claims about helping them. The spotlight instead was on the minions of KONG, the logging, the volatile Virunga Park, Ituri, Rwanda and other areas of most importance to USAID and multinational interests. No one visited the interior villages.

The Weidemann Report criticized the linkage of funding to specific geographic “landscapes” without “accountability to the village governances” which signed over the land in the first place. We would later confirm this and find that—like the hapless villagers in recent Greenpeace reports who traded salt for vast tracks of virgin forests—the villagers in the CARPE program traded land for “universities” and “health clinics.”

The 2004 CARPE partner report of Conservation International indicated simple goals had not been attained—less than 50% of the Mwamis had either been reached or supportive of the project and “at least” 300 children were directly attending education activities. A grand total of two typewriters and supplies were delivered to each of 8 UGADEC projects.¹⁸ CI noted that Tayna had “enough infrastructure and equipment for land-use planning,” but as we would witness at the end of the road, there was nothing that could by any stretch of the imagination grant “university” status to TCCB.

In a sad indictment of priorities, 3000 human samples of fecal material were analyzed for worm infestations and compared against GORILLA samples. This study was done to protect the gorillas from human worm infestations and not the other way around, as any humanitarian might expect. ONLY the people who participated in the study were treated for worms. The scientific results “examined that the gorillas living closest to humans have the highest rates of infestation.” Never mind the humans!

¹⁷http://carpe.umd.edu/resources/Documents/SI_Ituri_ForestryInventory_TechnicalRpt_Sept2006.pdf/not_available_lang?set_language=en&cl=en

¹⁸ CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL, Maiko Tayna Kahuzi-Biega Landscape, 3/1/2004.

CI specifically singled out DFGF-I as having “some staffing and equipment but [this is] insufficient for effective management.”¹⁹

It was in 2004 that the Mwami on the run sent correspondence after correspondence to DFGF-I and CI, pleading that someone, anyone, do something about the deplorable conditions at the reserve. (See Kong Three: The Mwami’s Tale: http://coanews.org/tiki-read_article.php?articleId=1911.) Meanwhile, CI reported enough money for “at least seven international conferences are (sic) attended by upper staff members.”²⁰ The CI report corroborates what our conservation expert told us about Congolese never being invited to attend international conferences. That privilege is reserved for the elite staff of the BINGOs and DINGOs.

How much money is spent on elite conferences for career specialists from the U.S. and Europe? Here’s how the money comes around, and comes back around.

In responses to a U.S. Congressional inquiry of September 2006, USAID outlined some conferences and expenditures. In FY 2005 there were 3,909 USAID personnel sent to 1,479 events; in FY 2006, there were 1,513 USAID personnel sent to 1,029 events.²¹

Some fourteen USAID people attended one week-long conference in Toronto on AIDS in the summer of 2006. USAID reported “estimated” travel costs at \$75,000, conference fees at \$14,000, and salary expenses of *around* \$34,300.²²

That’s \$123,300 exclusively for USAID staff, at one posh conference, and there were 2,508 conferences attended by USAID personnel (2005-2006) all over the world. Then there are the thousands of technical, conservation, mapping and “humanitarian” conferences for other agencies, programs and business sectors like CARE, ESRI and GRASP—the Great Apes Survival Project.

In FY 2006 the total amount spent by the USAID and its agencies and offices on conferences—including general support, programming, staff salaries, travel and other associated costs—was \$7,139,550; and in FY 2005 it was \$8,939,525.²³

For all the money pumped into the Tayna project, for all of the glossy brochures produced by the DFGF-I, the luxury conferences, the cocktail parties, the National Press Club luncheons, the celebrity endorsements, for all the new entities, organizations and alliances continually being created to ostensibly address the crucial issues—the results for the Congolese people are underwhelming.

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ http://carpe.umd.edu/partners/workplans/ci/CI_Monte_Alen_wkpln_fy04_3rd_wksht_Maiko_wkpln.pdf.

²¹ Questions for the Record Submitted to Lisa Fiely, USAID Chief Financial Officer by Senator Coburn, U.S. Subcommittee Federal Financial Management, Government Information and International Security Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, September 14, 2006.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

“The DFGF-I project completed two radio broadcasts per month; two television broadcasts per quarter; and one brochure pamphlet per quarter” for conservation education efforts for the Congolese.²⁴

And they gave out nineteen pigs in the DFGF-I “Pigs for Profit” program.

But the mapping continued and the socioeconomic data was stored, analyzed, assimilated, and summarized in a 2004 document summary written specifically for CARPE “partners” and “work plans” in the Tayna-Kahuzi landscape projects. What is telling is that the document has been removed from the CARPE website since the beginnings of our investigation became public. However, we have hard copies of the 2004 summaries found through this Google search, which has also vanished from the web:

http://www.google.com/search?q=cache:knekD85enHcJ:carpe.umd.edu/partners/workplans/ci/CI_Maiko_Tayna_Kahuzi_Biegawkpln_fy04_w_budgt.pdf+IRM+kakule&hl=en&gl=us&ct=clnk&cd=1&client=firefox-a

We do know that data was collected for gorilla and chimp distribution, and GPS coordinates for villages were charted and stored. GPS data points described “anthropogenic disturbances” and “socioeconomic baseline data” on population centers, demography, resource use, and “illegal extraction” using “IRM participatory mapping techniques.”²⁵ The “participatory mapping” of IRM, as we already pointed out, is a scandal of intellectual property theft.

Again, this now occult report came out in 2004 at the same time that the Mwami of our series charged through correspondence after correspondence that the Mbingi orphans were not being fed, and that there was no money to pay staff at the university, and that promises made to villagers were not kept.

In July 2004, Mwami wrote a letter directly to Clare Richardson of DFGF-I.

“RGT (Tayna) is currently in a structural crisis as a result of the management methods practiced by DFGF-I here in Congo. The member associations have lost respect for the structures of UGADEC²⁶ as a result of DFGF-I’s activities, which include diverting funds, suffocating innovations and encouraging elitism... there is a tribal bias to the development projects undertaken by DFGF-I, to the detriment of those areas rich in primate species. The true chiefs and landowners have been excluded from the management of the project, and not one has been placed on the office staff.”

²⁴

http://carpe.umd.edu/partners/workplans/ci/CI_Maiko_Tayna_Kahuzi_Biegawkpln_fy04_w_budget.pdf

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ UGADEC is the *Association Union Gorilla Conservation for Development in the East of DRC*.

And the mapping went on and on, and GIS data was flowing into the databanks under the heading of “socio-economic” data. The “pictures, aerial photographs, demarcation reports, and GPS points of positions” were duly reported in 2004, but the Mwami was ignored, and finally he was driven from his village by the henchmen of Pierre Kakule.

What Comes Around Comes Back Around

The Annex of the Weidemann Report is more fodder for understanding the predatory competitions at play as the BINGOs and DINGOs fought for their share of the conservation kill in the CARPE landscapes.

The African Wildlife Fund (AWF) took “exception” with the Weidemann Report suggestion that “None of the implementing partners are reporting on indicators 1.3 and 1.4,” which are intermediate benchmark indicators of progress on project goals.

“It is true that only in year three have we been in a position to adequately address these intermediate results, but we are now achieving results for these (intermediate reports) and will be reporting on these in the FY06 annual report.”²⁷ AWF turned its homework in very late.

Conservation International attacked AWF, miffed that it was not singled out for praise in the disposition and distribution of sub-grants. “(With regard to) the assessment that only AWF has had success with sub grants to NGOS, we would like to call to your attention the fact that CI has provided significant sub grants to local NGOs such as TCCB [Tayna], the community organizations under UGADEC and Vie Sauvage [a conservation DINGO] using international implementing NGO partners such as DFGF-I as technical and administrative hubs on the ground.”

CI was very unhappy with the assertion that CI was “virtually not present in the region.” Their sputtering winded response is almost indecipherable, but seems to confirm that “what (criticism) comes around comes back around.”

“On several occasions we explained that CI’s approach to limit its staffing growth is the result of a global institutional strategy that primes the work with partners and the building of local capacities through significant funding transfers rather than the unsustainable expansion of its own operative structures. This approach is consistent with addressing the concerns stated elsewhere in the report about limited capacity building for local institutions, as well as their financial and institutional sustainability.”²⁸

²⁷ Comments by Adam Henson of African Wildlife Fund, Annex H: Partner comments on draft assessment Mid-Term Assessment of CARPE II, John Pielemeier et al, Mid-Term Assessment of the Central African Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE), Final Report, The Weidemann Consortium, February 2006;

http://carpe.umd.edu/resources/Documents/search_categories/year-2006/

²⁸ Annex H: Partner comments on draft assessment Mid-Term Assessment of CARPE II, John Pielemeier et al, Mid-Term Assessment of the Central African Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE), Final Report, The Weidemann Consortium, February 2006;

CI soon enough stated huffily that “the landscape approach has limited local buy-in and fits awkwardly with existing local management structures.”

And there it is again: “the landscape approach has limited local buy-in.”

This is a massive understatement for so-called “conservation” programs involved in a war-torn landscape rife with extreme poverty, unspeakable crimes against women, resource plunder, and death.

Perhaps this explains why frustrated staff at the “university” handed us a plastic bag which contained a stinking, greasy, decaying gorilla hand and a patch of fur from a poached Okapi.

There is no real protection of wildlife in the Tayna Gorilla “reserve.”

Unsurprisingly, CI also slammed IRM, one of the chief mapping agencies. “The contributions from the IRM/Remote sensing activities have been limited and any interpretation of these data without significant ground-truthing would be of limited value.”

Pierre Kakule of DFGF-I told us that IRM had done extensive mapping of the Tayna Reserve when we visited him at the DFGF-I office in Goma. It might be important to mention that while we were there our Bodyguard Rob Poppe was lobbying Kakule for a job to train rangers at Tayna. The obvious question remains unanswered. “Where did all of the information gathered by IRM end up?” What does it mean that the “contributions” from millions and millions of dollars of high-tech mapping “have been limited” and “would be of limited value?”

The National Aeronautic and Space Administration (NASA) lobbied for its share of the conservation kill. NASA complained about “the current precarious status of U.S. satellite assets for monitoring the Congo Basin Forests.” No matter that at least 23 satellites are continuously monitoring the region.

But it was Jefferson Hall of the Wildlife Conservation Society who laid it all on the line for the CARPE partners.

“Our experience of partnership amongst the four lead NGOs (AWF, CI, WCS, and WWF) during both CARPE and other programs has shown that none of these NGOs has the legal and administrative capacity to negotiate and execute USAID subcontracts rapidly. Thus, structuring CARPE according to this proposal would result in delays of a year or more in implementing activities in some of the Landscapes.”²⁹

http://carpe.umd.edu/resources/Documents/search_categories/year-2006/

²⁹ Annex H: Partner comments on draft assessment Mid-Term Assessment of CARPE II, John Pielemeier et al, Mid-Term Assessment of the Central African Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE), Final Report, The Weidemann Consortium, February 2006;

The paper trail alone verified the Mwami's accusations of mismanagement of the Tayna landscape, but it was no substitute for a visual and audio record—the ultimate ground truth to compare against the public relations blitz.

Rather, considering the amount of dollars available for an evaluation of the CARPE landscape and the cost of the Tayna program alone, it is stunning to realize that no one but the BINGOs and DINGOs who receive American tax dollar generated funds has ever taken the time to go to Tayna to find out if anything that is advertised—like community development or university educations—actually happens.

“Our village, Bukonde, is in the Tanya landscape,” said one local source that cannot be identified. “There is no development in our village, no hospitals, no schools, no roads, no transport, and no food.”³⁰ The man explained the need to shoot and eat wildlife to survive.

His story is the story of Congo, since the very beginning, since Leopold.

Kakule first came to Bukonde in 1998, promising the usual: schools, clinics, roads—in exchange for cooperation to protect the gorillas. After years of neglect, unpaid labor, lies and more lies, the people said “enough.” Kakule paid the soldiers, and soldiers came. People were beaten and arrested and hauled off to jail, far-away, in Lubero. The poorest people in the world scraped up enough money to bribe the freedom of their friends and relatives. It didn't take much: soldiers make \$18 a month.

“The Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund wants to have our land and land from the other seven villages in the *Groupement Munzoa*.” He explained. “Pierre Kakule is a very dangerous man. He's exploiting our forests without bringing development. There are a lot of health problems here: malnutrition, diarrhea, malaria, tuberculosis, and other fevers. There are many problems to give birth.”

The many stories about the brutalization and thievery endured by the villagers and the heartbreaking tale of the Mwami compelled us to go to Tayna. It was a risky, expensive, emotional pilgrimage, but it sure cost a lot less than \$20 million.

Next: Hitting the Road and Hitting the Wall

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³⁰ Private interview, Goma, DRC, August 2006.