

RECOVERY OF SOUTH MURCHISON FALLS NATIONAL PARK PROGRAMME

REPORT ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF WAIGA RANGER POST



July 21st 2019

Background

A significant part of the Recovery of Murchison Falls Programme is expanding Uganda Wildlife Authority's (UWA) conservation and law enforcement capability into the largely unprotected regions of MFCAs. For over five decades and before the programme started, the 3000km² area south of the River Nile was ignored by law enforcement, conservation investment and tourism. However, it was Southern Murchison that once hosted the largest number of mega-herbivore per km² in Africa. The 14,000 elephants and other wildlife species were decimated by six decades of intense and sustained poaching and conservation neglect in what was prime habitat.

A key strategic theme of the recovery programme has been to expand protection, conservation and tourism from 3% of the park, to over 30%. Significant success has already been achieved. UWA and UCF have already expanded protection across large areas of southern Murchison, challenging significant poaching pressure along the way. Mupina, Bulaya, Bugana and Got Labwor Ranger Posts have already had an incredible impact with permanently based anti-poaching teams providing protection across large areas of important habitat, stimulating a significant wildlife recovery. The ranger posts mentioned are largely focused in the 'Heart of Murchison' almost parallel to the River Nile. The effort now is expanding capability 20km south of Mupina and Bulaya, supporting Got Labwor and the newly constructed Rabongo Hills Ranger Post.

The Waiga River is the only permanent river in the south-west of the park, a stronghold for many of the remaining 500 elephants in the dry season and other wildlife in the area, including lions.

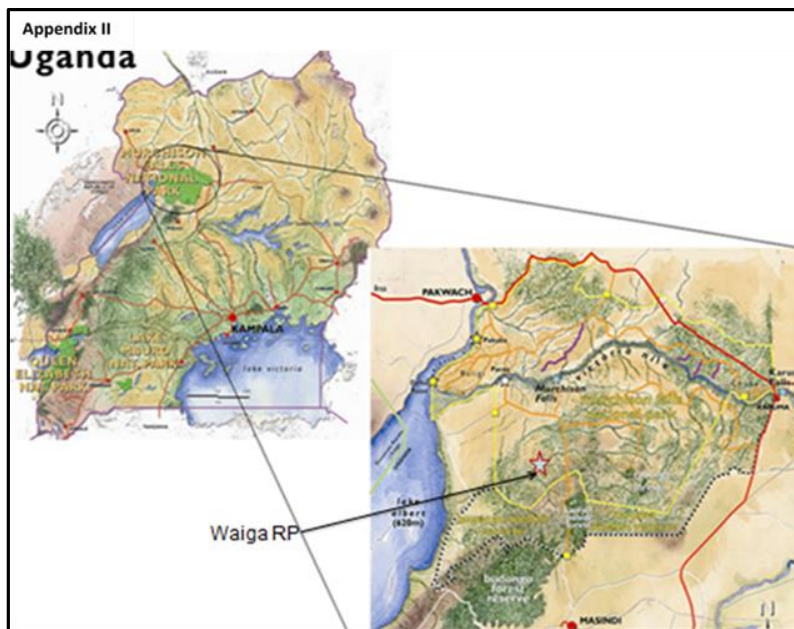
Unfortunately, the region borders Bulisa and Biso communities where community poaching pressure is high. Waiga ranger post is the sixth ranger post supported by UCF in the south west of Murchison and will be the command post for the region.

Location

The site of Waiga ranger post was found and confirmed in February 2018.

Waiga ranger post is located about 8.5 km from Masindi-Paraa road at the Wairingo and Waiga river confluence. The (approximate) GPS co-ordinates of the area are: 36N 0349297; UTM 0228288 which is a few meters from the Waiga River. The area is considered to be good habitat for elephants and other wildlife due to being the only permanent water source in the region.

Below is the sector map of the Murchison Falls National Park showing the site of Waiga.



Contractor

Through a tender process, Mutoni construction Ltd, a local construction company, was contracted to build Waiga ranger post.

The contract was signed on 3rd October 2018. Work was scheduled to begin on 8th October 2018 but due to heavy rains and a 16 km track needing to be made, the programme was delayed. UWA's grader was also not available. Construction work started in March 2019.



Until now – this was the ranger post in Waiga - a sector command post in a top ten national park in Africa.

Project Progress

Access Road: There is a new 16km access road to Waiga ranger post site. This road provided UCF and UWA access to the ranger post for the purpose of construction. It will need improvement in the next dry season, including the installation of three crossing points that need culverts and hardcore.

Site Construction:

April 2019, the building had reached roofing stage:



May, 2019 plastering the building. The construction team in Waiga.



Delivered and installed the Waiga gun cabinet

June 2019.



The completed Waiga Ranger Post

Impact

- The presence of Waiga ranger post and its access route has already had an immediate impact with poachers being arrested by UWA rangers and their distribution and movement patterns disrupted.
- Waiga ranger post has boosted the protection in a fantastic habitat for wildlife. Whilst some wildlife is present, it is not in large numbers due to poaching. With Waiga Ranger Post operational, wildlife numbers will grow rapidly.
- Lions have been confirmed in the area, but numbers are low. In a few years Waiga will become a core range for a large pride.
- UCF is taking on the country wide lion programme, bringing projects and researchers together to work closer together. Our ambition is to double Uganda's lion population. Waiga is a prime habitat that will contribute strongly to this ambition.
- A detailed aerial survey is being carried out in early June 2019 funded in part by the International Elephant Foundation. This will provide a strong baseline of wildlife population numbers to use to measure the impact over time.

Next steps:

- Waiga is fully operational and has been handed over to UWA.
- Solar power and Digital Radios will be installed.
- Waiga is now the Command Post for SW MFCA.
- Senior Warden, Musana, has already been deployed to Waiga RP.

Financials:

Recovery of Murchison Falls Programme Waiga Ranger Post 23rd May, 2019 - Completed & Signed off.												
Waiga Ranger Post	IEF / GC	DSWF	Balance from GC	Surplus from Rabongo	Total Raised	Expenses 1	Balance 1	Expenses 2	Balance 2	Expenses 3	Resource 3	Balance 3
Project Lead	900	750			1650		1650	200	1450		1200	250
Tender, M&E, Commissioning UCF	150	150			0	600	0		0		280	0
Car rental	500	200			300	500	-300		-300		400	-580
Fuel	350	150			700		200		200			-200
Accommodation	300	200			500		500		500			500
Food & Water	200	200			500		500		500			500
Communications (PL)	100	100			400		400		400			400
UCF Costs (12% charge)	3600	3000			200		200		200			200
Tent hire x4					6600		6600		6600		6600	0
Construction	22900	19750	4067	5507	0	28496	0	28496	-4768	2		-4769
Ranger Support	200				52224		23728		200	5		195
Signage	300	200			200		200		200	300		200
Solar Power					500		500		500			0
Digital Radios					0		0		0			0
Road construction	500	300			0	264	0		0			0
Total	30000	25000	4067	5507	64,574	29,860	34,714	29,229	5,485	307	8,480	(3,302)
Exchange Rate						3750						
						GC July visit surplus 4,067 Rabongo Surplus 887 Rabongo Surplus 4,620 RMF's surplus covers 3,302 RMF's surplus covers UGX 12,218,188						

The project is complete – we are waiting for additional pictures to be sent. These will be shared as soon as received.

Additional funds were used for the road (\$2000), the gun cabinet (\$1000), initial siting of the ranger post and the road (\$3000) and adding the front metal works (\$1000). Tents were provided to the project for free as they were about to be decommissioned by UCF. Project lead donated one week of time.

Solar and digital radios have yet to be procured and installed.

