

Progress report to the International Elephant Foundation

Construction of the Punu Rii Ranger Post



A partnership between the
Uganda Conservation Foundation and the Uganda Wildlife Authority

Executive Summary

Conservation through action

Wangkwar and Tangi valleys have been experiencing high levels of armed poaching. Poachers are taking advantage of rangers not being permanently based in regions due to the limited infrastructure and inadequate human resource capacity.

UWA and UCF developed a plan to regain control of the Wangkwar valley, starting with the construction of the Puna Rii Ranger Post, including a 6 man ranger accommodation block, and a converted container unit that can house additional rangers or the mobile ranger unit (an elite group) as they pass through the area. The facility also includes two showers and latrines, and rain water catchment units on both buildings. Finally the Ranger Post has solar power units installed for basic lighting and supporting communications.

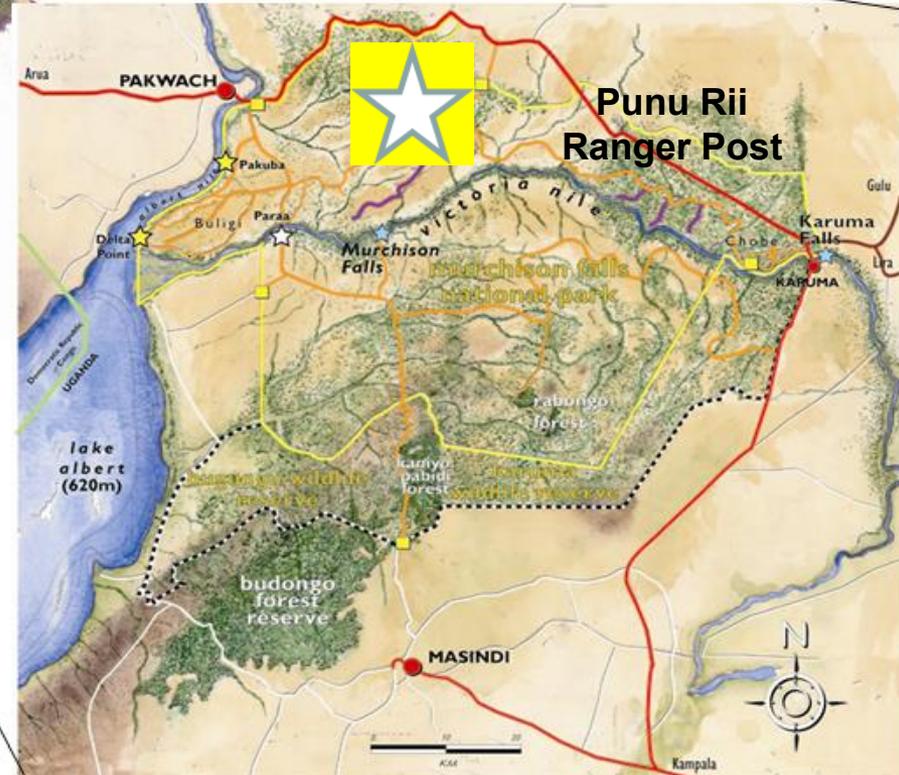
Having to build ranger capability in the area is a prerequisite to ensure that a foundation of protection, law enforcement and development can occur. From Puna Rii – regular patrols are launched and traditional poacher routes and prime hunting areas are now protected.



Punu Rii Ranger Post, Wangkwar



Uganda



Construction of Punu Rii Ranger Post, Wangkwar

Conservation through action

UCF, with funding from IEF/the Legacy fund contracted Bundu Thermal Services to construct a six man ranger accommodation at Punu Rii, Wangkwar region of MFCA.

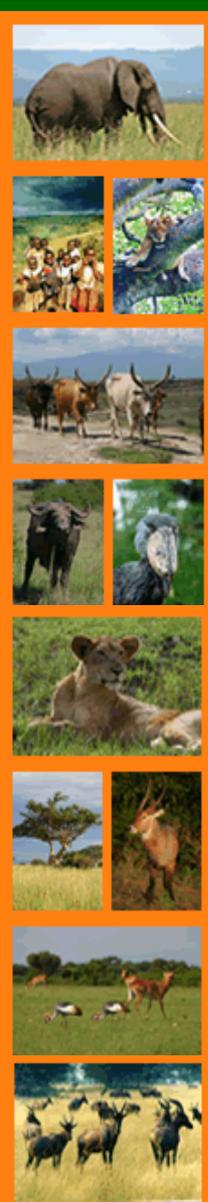
The station comprises of the following:

- Six man main block
- 12 man converted container
- Two loo and two shower rooms
- Two x 10,000litre tanks for rain water harvesting.
- Solar power

Construction work is going on as it was planned and the building is in its final stage of completion. Painting work is going on as well as fixing the doors and windows, guttering for rainwater harvesting tank has been done as well. We are optimistic that the station shall be complete and ready for handover to UWA before Christmas.



Construction work in progress

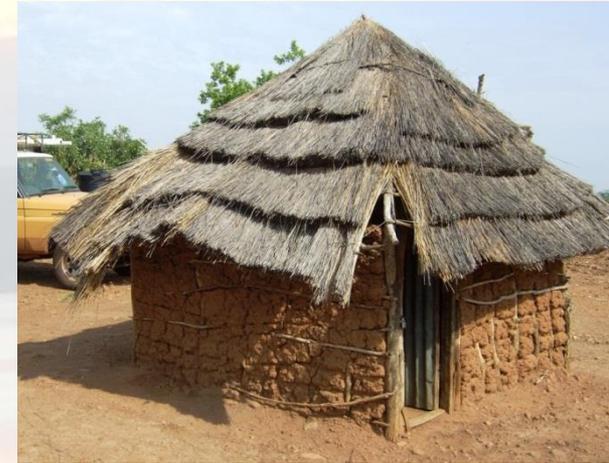


Infrastructure – why it's so important

Conservation through action

There has been no infrastructure in this area since the 1970's despite the area being the core for a large number of wild animals in northern MFCA. Rangers have been demotivated in being deployed there for a number of months with no proper shelter.

Two small mud huts were built by UWA in Wangkwar at Punu Rii to be used as surveillance base by the rangers at the height of elephant poaching. The huts were in a poor and unsafe state to live in.



Not any more. UCF with funds from IEF and other donor funders supported the building of a permanent structure in the area. The permanent block will host 6 rangers who will be permanently stationed at Punu Rii. Rangers shall patrol Wangkwar region, removing snares, metal traps and other illegal activities.



More accommodation for the mobile rangers

Conservation through action

With experience and success of establishing accommodation for elite rangers at Semanya in Pakuba, Delta region, UCF decided to construct a similar modified containerized accommodation at Punu Rii in Wangkwar to house the mobile ranger unit as they pass through the area.

The modified container was installed by local contractor- Lemax Buga and will accommodate up to 12 rangers. Same facility will be used by monitoring and research team.



A fully converted shipping container

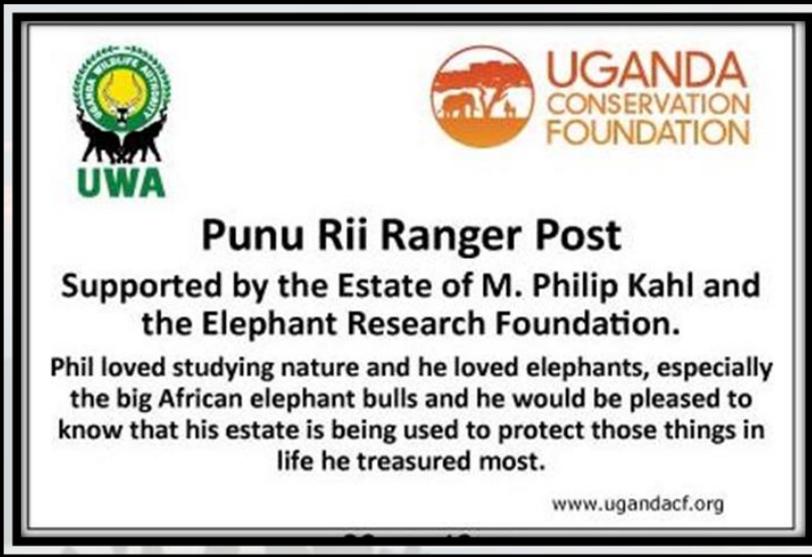
Now both Semanya and Punu Rii Ranger Posts will be able to accommodate the mobile ranger force when it is active in the area. It is important they too 'have shelter' when they are not on operations.



Thank you!

Conservation through action

As a thank you and recognition for the donation. UCF has ordered for the fabrication of a metallic acknowledgement plaque in commemoration of this generous support. The plaque recognises the Estate of M. Philip Kahl and the Elephant Research Foundation.



The Uganda Wildlife Authority is extremely delighted with the support from Phil and the Elephant Research Foundation. The support has led to the establishment of a 6 man ranger accommodation.

The Conservation Area Manger, MFCA Tom Okello, believes the construction of the ranger station in the region makes UWA mission of 'conserving for future generation' a reality. Rangers are to be deployed immediately and take action to recover and protect the region.

The Ranger Post will be opened by the Ministry of Tourism's Commissioner of Tourism, James Lutalo and UCF supporter Leslie Carvell.



Intelligence guided patrols

With the WILD LEO project fully operational in MFCA, UWA and UCF will monitor all patrolling and prosecution information and data. This will include metrics on the number of patrols in Wangkar region, incident encounter and arrest rates, percentage of successful prosecutions and elephant observations



Dr. Andrew Lemieux, a US trained criminologist has trained over 80 rangers how to collect evidence of illegal activities using a digital camera with an integrated GPS unit. Among the trained rangers, four of them were given special attention and more days of training and qualified as analysts. The analysts are responsible for data management and crime mapping.



WILD LEO greatly welcomed by UWA

Conservation through action

WILD LEO Project has produced patrol coverage and illegal activity maps for different sectors of the park. These reports are shared with the Conservation Area Manager, Warden of Law Enforcement, Warden of Monitoring and Research, and Head Ranger. It is used for management decisions concerning ranger allocation, community outreach, patrol strategy, and is useful for monitoring ranger performance. For annual operation plans, this helps identify where resources should be focused and which problems threaten the protected area's wildlife.

WILDLEO is having a tremendous impact in law enforcement, the project is greatly welcomed by both senior and junior UWA personnel's. Nelson Guma, conservation area manager of QECA commented thus *'I am intrigued by this report. The spatial distribution of poaching in the park is a clear indication that there is still a lot of work to do. We are committed to containing illegal activity in the PA. This management system is a good measure of performance of staff in the park...*



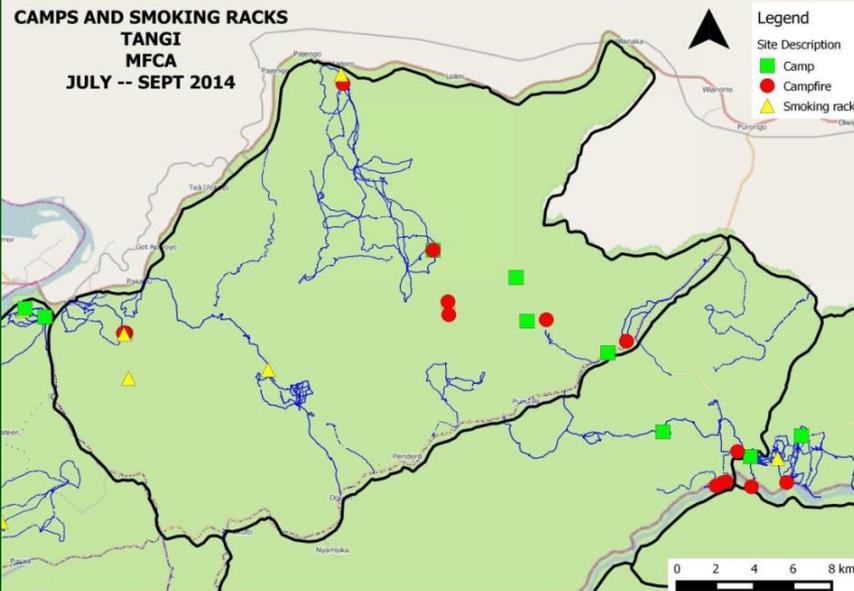
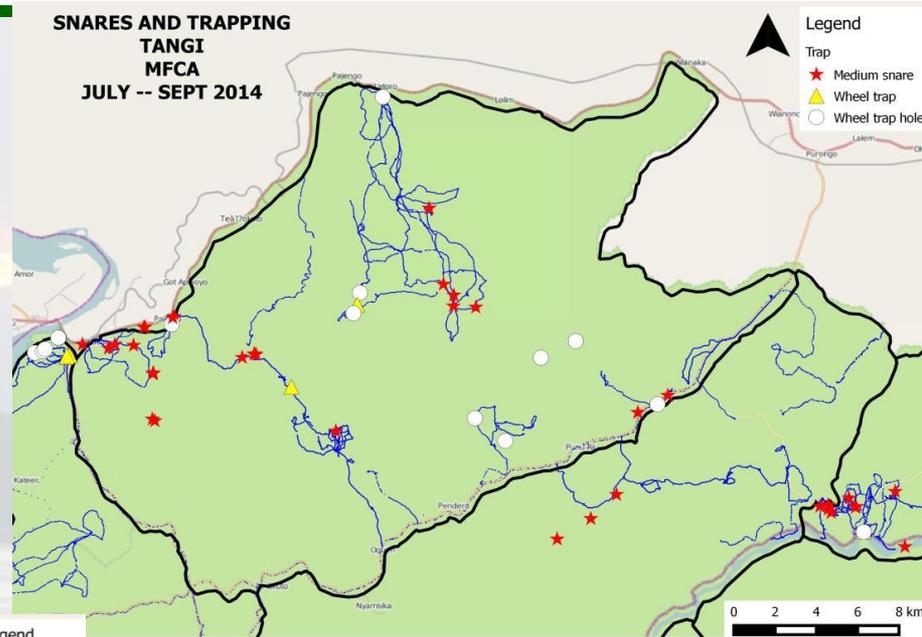
Conservation through action

Knowing how much the rangers can do once they have the tools will enable us set targets for them and monitor reduction in levels of illegal activity. The geo - referenced photographs of illegal activities undoubtedly provide overwhelming evidence in prosecution that have resulted in tremendous convictions. I have found the map of spatial distribution of illegal activities generated by this system useful in planning patrols especially level of activities according to management sectors'



Illegal activity maps of Tangi and Wangkwar valley

The cameras provide geo-referenced photographs of illegal activities that provide overwhelming evidence during prosecution in court. Higher level of successful prosecutions have been achieved in Gulu and Masindi courts since the introduction of WILD LEO project.



From January to end of October 2014, 220 suspects have been arrested in MFNP for committing wildlife related crimes. 197 were successfully prosecuted and convicted in Gulu and Masindi courts, 13 are still undergoing prosecution and 10 were cautioned and released by UWA management.



Expected impact

Conservation through action

- Large scale reduction in poaching pressure
- Removal and destruction of existing snares, traps and poacher camps.
- Reduction in elephant mortality and injuries
- Improved elephant management in the region
- Field intelligence used to efficiently and effectively identify, monitor and counter poacher groups
- Evidence based patrol
- Improved prosecution and sentencing rate.



Thank You!

Conservation through action

On behalf of the Uganda Conservation Foundation, we take this opportunity to express our sincerest appreciation for your contribution/support to save not only the remaining elephants in Uganda but other wild animals. Because conservation of one specie leads to conservation of others in the same region.



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