



Working Dogs for Conservation Final Report to International Elephant Foundation 2016

CDDNA Phase 2: Establishing a Community of Elephant Guardian Dogs

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2) Conservation Needs Addressed by Project

The Conservation Detection Dog Network for Africa (CDDNA) was launched in 2010 with participation from canine programs in Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, Congo, D.R. Congo, and South Africa. A pan-African review of conservation detection dog programs showed high variation in program success with some functioning effectively and others faltering or failing entirely. A lack of veterinary capacity, insufficient infrastructure, and the need for technical support to enable tracking and container searches were highlighted as barriers to success and program growth. Nevertheless, most programs expressed an intention and/or need to grow to address threats to elephants and other species in the landscapes where they work.

3) Goals and Objectives

In 2016, we launched a three year program to institutionalize the CDDNA and solidify a conservation detection dog community in Africa. Bringing together this first generation of conservation dogs, handlers, and partners, will benefit elephant conservation by improving law enforcement, streamlining canine programs' efficiency, and making canine programs ethical and sustainable.

Specific activities for 2016 include three primary areas: 1) production of capacity building videos focused on training techniques for dogs in Africa for conservation 2) the launch of a site-to-site learning program (where dog teams and handlers in Africa can visit and share knowledge and techniques between sites); and 3) initiation of a conservation working dog certification program for Africa. Finally, we are transitioning to every other year Summit workshops.

4) Actions Taken to Achieve Objective

Activities in 2016 include three specific products: 1) production and completion of training videos which include training dogs in various scenarios and how to properly conduct daily and special veterinary checks. Raw videos have been shot in the field and being edited into instructional format, with narrations, graphics, etc. This activity is ongoing and will be completed by March 2017. The videos include tracking

training, more specialized veterinary care, and basic welfare and kennel care. Other training, veterinary and welfare videos will continue to be produced based on requests and needs of canine programs, and all will be made available online. 2) Site visits between programs in Africa. Malawi Police Canine Unit will be visiting Conservation South Luangwa Canine Team in early November, 2016 and Conservation South Luangwa and North Luangwa Conservation Project canine teams will be visiting Kruger National Park canine tracking teams in December 2016 and in February 2017. 3) Conservation working dog certification programs are being developed for southern Africa through Endangered Wildlife Trust, Working Dogs for Conservation and The American Society of Canine Trainers. Handlers in Zambia's Conservation South Luangwa Canine program received the first certifications in Africa in late 2015. We will also be working with partners and programs to continue Working Dog Summits, which provide face-to-face training and professionalization of the conservation detection dog community in Africa, every two years in Southern and Eastern Africa.

5) Activities that Differed from Original Proposed Actions

We developed and produced more training and veterinary videos than we planned for, focusing on African handlers in African landscapes as well as welfare, kennel upkeep and veterinary videos from Africa and international experts and see the need for on-going videos being produced for distribution. We are encouraging more site-to-site exchanges among programs and realize that logistics and short staffing, busy schedules and lack of infrastructure are impediments to quickly enabling these exchanges. A by-product of our work with organizations and groups across Africa is the increased awareness and interest in conservation working dog programs. We are witnessing the positive ripple effects of having conservation working dog programs sharing techniques for and information on elephant and other endangered wildlife protection as well as providing deterrence for poaching.

Where programs lack reliable internet access, we are copying information to hard drives and mailing or couriating information covering critical veterinary protocols, training methods, videos, and certification standards, to individuals and programs asking for help. Within the Network, individuals are reaching out to new programs and offering assistance

and expertise, time and resources to help close the gap between large and small programs and therefore effectively covering more of a landscape in need of elephant and wildlife protection. In Tanzania, the Ruaha conservation working dog program frequently reaches across the border to Zambia for information on veterinary practices (and the relationship has even expanded to assistance in mapping animal movements). In Congo, programs have asked for support for veterinary and welfare practices, and in South Africa so much interest in training and veterinary support has been expressed that a formal conservation working dog support position with Endangered Wildlife Trust was developed (funded by US Fish and Wildlife Service).

6) Outcomes for Elephants, Wildlife, Habitat and Human communities

The ultimate measure of our success is the number of elephants saved across all working dog programs in Africa. Unfortunately, no system exists for capturing these numbers from K9 law enforcement, but the indicators that do exist are encouraging. We track the law enforcement outcomes from our partners in elephant range states and in 2016 the dogs helped their handlers identify contraband associated with 42 different poaching suspects, which led to 23 arrests, the confiscation of 18 guns and significant seizures of ivory. While ivory is the principle focus of the anti-trafficking work, the dogs' presence has benefitted other species as well, with multiple species of bushmeat and mukula wood (an illegal hardwood) also seized. Currently we are training the dogs to also find pangolin scales and spotted cat skins as part of their detection repertoire, and we are also training them to track poaching suspects from crime scenes and detect articles of evidence along the way. All of these activities will have ancillary benefits for elephant conservation, because the same syndicates often deal in higher volume and more frequently traded items (like hardwoods) in addition to, or even in association with tusks. What's more, the addition of tracking will lead to better evidence gathering and investigations, better intelligence, and more prosecutions.

The sharing of methods and techniques will also help law enforcement teams react to rapidly changing smuggling methods. For example, when poachers focus on new target species or new ways of trafficking ivory (ground in milk cartons, for example), the entire

Network needs to respond quickly by training and supporting work on emerging target species and trafficking methods.

7) Problems Discovered in 2016

Logistical, veterinary, and training problems plague many programs with conservation working dogs. Those programs that lack funding, risk assessment capacity, or flexibility face devastating outcomes when a dog falls ill, is injured, or has a minor medical issue that is exacerbated by handlers not recognizing that prevention or immediate attention could avoid larger problems.

Several programs we have engaged with are seeking to improve, and many are making progress, but a lack of adequate leadership or transparency at the governmental level limits the progress of others. There are issues related to who retains ownership of dogs, of equipment, and lack of ability to maintain new training and handling techniques improve, kennel infrastructure, and overall welfare. We have encountered challenges with endemic disease in many programs, where tick and mosquito born diseases require twice-daily health checks for the dogs and very observant kennel care, which is often lacking. We have also experienced challenges with trypanosomiasis prophylaxis treatments, as many dogs experience localized pain and swelling after injection of the prophylaxis and are therefore unable to work for several weeks, hampering training, work and programs. Working through the Network, and by bringing in additional partners, we have managed to successfully treat multiple dogs' with trypanosome infections, and we are making steady progress finding prophylaxis with less severe side effects.

Another issue hampering disease detection and treatment is the lack of trustworthy laboratories where blood samples can be quickly analyzed. SNAP kits and other rapid identification methods would be helpful for remote programs, but where that is not possible, government laboratories limit many programs in their ability to detect and treat disease.

8) Measures of Success

The arrest and seizure numbers above highlight the efficacy of K9 enforcement. Here, we

highlight the impacts of the IEF-Funded network on the efficacy, efficiency, and sustainability, of the Network partners and their ability to protect elephants. One of the most important measures we have noticed as our shared Network grows, is the number of people, organizations and programs that have reached out to us and our partners or neighboring organizations to gather information, share resources and offer expertise. From our Summit workshops in 2015 and the networking that occurred during these workshops, we have been asked to partner with Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) in building a formal training, international oversight and certification process and outreach throughout South Africa (EWT received a USFWS grant to support their work there). Programs in Malawi are working through the Network (with financial support from WD4C and USFWS) to build closer relationships and observe functioning programs in Zambia, and in Zambia, programs there want to visit the excellent tracking program in Kruger National Park. We encourage and support these exchanges among and between programs.

9) Next Steps

We will continue to help build networks across Africa with special training, veterinary and welfare videos, training support, assistance in establishing certifications for regions and help programs visit other programs where they can gain experience and build rapport. As we build relationships with more programs and projects, our ability to expand and deepen the Network will grow, as it becomes self-sustaining.

Elephant poachers are increasingly poisoning carcasses to avoid detection by vultures and other scavengers, so as mentioned earlier, we are adding wildlife poisoning protocols to handling dogs near carcasses and will explore the ability and risks of adding evidence and poison dogs to teams in southern and East Africa. Because the risk to all scavengers is so high, especially vultures, as well as to humans, birds, water systems, and the cascading effects of poison on all life, we are prioritizing training for veterinary support for exposure to poisons used by poachers. We plan to work with Endangered Wildlife Trust on materials and video to help canine handlers protect their dogs and assist contaminated areas and wildlife.

I 0) Human Interest Story

In Zambia, where we work with two programs and have gotten to know communities and have long-term relationships with the scout-handlers, we are privy to many anecdotes and stories of the scouts and dogs as well as people in communities and how they perceive the canine programs. While people are used to village dogs, they are used to seeing dogs as predator alarms, scavengers and territorial protectors of property. They are used to seeing dogs with disease, injuries and abuse.

When we bring large, well-fed, groomed and cared for dogs into these African communities, most people are astonished by these animals that look little like the dogs they are familiar with. This difference alone seems to instill some respect, or sometimes fear. Over time as the scouts, long-time members of local communities, develop deep relationships with the dogs and learn to not only handle but also to love these dogs, they become advocates and defenders of the program and their canine colleagues.

When Godfrey, an excellent handler working with Conservation South Luangwa, worked his dog, Chai, in a village several hours away, he and Chai searched a house where the woman who lived there told Godfrey that she didn't want to eat bushmeat because she heard that dogs were finding bushmeat and she didn't want the dogs to smell her stomach and arrest her.

I I) Summary of Progress and Results < 500 words

We are building an Africa-wide network to improve conservation working dog programs across the continent by building and sustaining an open, inclusive culture where best practices and new technologies are available to everyone. Where programs and projects are limited by various factors, we hope to connect administrators, trainers, handlers and support staff to help each other strengthen capacities across programs rather than just inside projects. The Network is on the path to becoming a self-sustaining entity where organizations and individuals make connections and offer expertise as they gain it.

By identifying needs and challenges found generally across programs, we can address specific issues. Training solutions in one region are often needed in another region. Veterinary practices and medicines used by one program with specific protocols may well save dogs across the continent. We support transparent training, best practices, and work to broadcast information to the widest possible audience. The Network's culture is one of offering information to all who want or need it.

As programs gain expertise, they can become certified and increase their own training capacity. Across regions, certification processes will develop to address needs for detection, tracking and other canine disciplines. Not only will this improve handling and welfare practices, it will help improve canine handling culture and standards across Africa.

We will continue to expand the Network, bringing in International experts to raise technological capacity and exchange ideas globally. We will remain flexible in developing materials and focus to best address needs regionally that affect elephants and other wildlife, such as wildlife poisoning by poachers. We are committed to helping improve conservation working dog projects and programs.

Because many conservation working dog programs operate remotely and have inconsistent or infrequent training opportunities with international or regional experts, it is important to support and implement the development of certification standards across regions and Africa. Certification allows programs to access to training standards by which programs can effectively and safely operate. This also begins to develop a common language within and between programs regarding training excellence and deepens Network connections. Because best practice training methods have changed radically over the past thirty years, many programs are still working under older techniques, 'breaking dogs' and ignoring welfare issues. This is not only detrimental to their working dogs' performance, it is in many cases, severely inhumane and costly.

Programs with poor and outdated training methods may have many dogs, often breeding dogs under poor conditions and working dogs with insufficient drive, exacerbated by veterinary issues such as sores (laying on cement floors), endemic insect-borne diseases and equipment failures (ill-fitting collars, vests, etc.). These programs can benefit from the Network in myriad ways, observing positive reward training and its impact on dog performance, better equipment and even better ways to transport and treat dogs in heat and long deployments. Simply exposing some handlers and programs to better methods, infrastructure and welfare practices may be enough to instigate improvements, and certification standards will ensure improvement.

I2) Summary in 50 words

Building a conservation working dog network in Africa means bringing people together to elevate the practice, training, welfare and veterinary support necessary for excellent canine programs in Africa. We work inclusively and openly to offer support and information to anyone interested in improving working conservation dog performance and welfare.

I3) All organizations associated with project

International Elephant Foundation, Lee Richardson Zoo, Seneca Park Zoo, the Friedman French Foundation and WD4C supporters are donors for these activities. Partner organizations include American Society of Canine Trainers, Zambia Carnivore Programme, Conservation South Luangwa, North Luangwa Conservation Project, Endangered Wildlife Trust and Lilongwe Wildlife Trust.