

State of Conservation of the Mana Pools National Park, Sapi and Chewore Safari Areas, World Heritage Property (N302) (Zimbabwe)

1. Executive Summary

The development by Vine Properties has complied with Zimbabwe's Environmental Impact Assessment requirements. The campsite is not yet operational as verified by the verification committee that visited the site and made an assessment. The verification team also noted that the site does not have adverse negative impacts on wildlife movement since it does not hinder the free movement of animals to and from the Zambezi River.

The revision of the draft Management Plan for the World Heritage property with involvement of all stakeholders has not been completed due to lack of funds. However, an elephant management plan for the Zambezi Valley elephant range has been formulated which will aid management in protecting not only the keystone species, but all other wildlife species in the area.

In 2014, aerial surveys of the Zambezi Valley elephant range, and the nation's other ranges, were carried out to determine the standing wildlife stock. Work is still underway on the feasibility of reintroducing black rhino into the world heritage property. Issues of poaching remain a concern and therefore efforts are underway to manage poaching in the area before reintroducing the species.

The Government of Zimbabwe has stated that no mining activities will be permitted in rivers in the World Heritage Property to preserve its natural state. Furthermore, there are no planned developments in the site.

Monitoring and law enforcement efforts have been strengthened in the World Heritage Property. Mana Pools Anti-poaching Strategy and Action Plan which was developed through a stakeholder participatory workshop that convened from 30 March to 02 April 2015 at Chirundu Safari Lodge forms the basis of strategies adopted and implemented to curb poaching in the area.

2. Response to Decision 38 COM 7B.97

2.1 Implementation of mitigation measures at Vine Camp site

- a) The Lodge at Vine Camp is not yet operational: final touches are being made to the tented chalets in preparation for its opening. This therefore means that there has not been any business conducted on the site and the issue of occupancy can therefore not be confirmed.
 - The owner of the property highlighted that the lodges will have a maximum visitor occupancy of 24 guests with each of the 12 chalets housing 2 guests.
 - The Parks and Wildlife Management Authority Area Manager for Mana Pools confirmed that no clients have come to the camp so far and that all operations were being carried out within the stipulations of the lease agreement and the Environmental Impact Assessment.
- b) The chalets are spaced out with a minimum of 30meter distance between them. This therefore allows passage for animals to and from the Zambezi River
 - There are no fences blocking animal passage to and from the Zambezi River.
 - There is very minimal disturbance to the vegetation in the area since the developer has integrated trees into the plans of the campsite.
- c) The campsite shall operate entirely on solar power to minimize its carbon footprint on the World Heritage property.

2.2 Survey of Key Wildlife Species

In 2014 aerial surveys of the Zambezi Valley elephant range, and the nations other ranges, were carried out to determine the standing wildlife stock. Work is still underway on the feasibility of reintroducing black rhino into the world heritage property. Issues of poaching remain a concern and therefore efforts are underway to manage poaching in the area.

2.3 Proposed developments in World Heritage Property

There are no plans to have any other developments in Mana Pools National Park. Since 2010, there have been no new building put up in the World Heritage Property and any structures that were introduced were semi-permanent structures as per ZPWMA regulations.

The Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority Board has also resolved to focus on strengthening operations on existing developments rather than introducing new developments and that any new developments be confined to the periphery of the World Heritage Property to minimize disturbance of the site.

2.4 Draft Management Plan

The revision of the draft Management Plan for the property as a whole has been hindered by lack of funds therefore has not been completed. The process requires wide stakeholder consultation and participation. Meanwhile, the property is being managed on the basis of the draft Management Plan and the Park Plan.

2.5 Dialogue with Zambia

The State Party of Zimbabwe has been engaging Zambia on strategies that could strengthen protection of the Outstanding Universal Value of Mana Pools National Park, Sapi and Chewore Safari Areas World Heritage property as demonstrated by the following:

- a) Joint Operations Command (JOC) meetings which are held regularly between security agents from both Zimbabwe and Zambia addressing any issues of concern about the property
- b) A bi-lateral meeting held on the Mana-Pools/Lower Zambezi Trans -frontier Conservation Area that is to be set up and a Memorandum of Understanding is currently being drawn up.

3. Other issues/updates

3.1 Mining in the Chewore River

The Government of Zimbabwe has clearly stated that no mining will be allowed in Rivers in the World Heritage sites and has maintained that stance. To this end

Government has used various initiatives/platforms to reiterate its “no mining” policy, notably through the “SAVE Mana Campaign”.

The State Party of Zimbabwe has also learnt that the planned copper mine for Lower Zambezi National Park in Zambia has been reversed and that there will be no mining to be carried out in that area.

3.2 Anti-poaching Strategy and Action Plan

A Mana Pools Law Enforcement Strategic Planning Workshop was conducted involving stakeholders in the World Heritage Property and a Strategy document was produced. This document shall be used to strengthen law enforcement and also to source funding for all law enforcement operations in the area.

An elephant management plan for the Zambezi Valley was developed in 2015 through a consultative process with stakeholders.

The key components in the Anti-poaching Strategy and Action Plan include: Law enforcement, Infrastructure, Equipment and Access, Monitoring and Data analysis and Stakeholder collaboration. Below is an update on the implementation of the anti-poaching strategies:

3.2.1 Progress

i) Patrols Strengthened

Strategic deployments are being carried out in the in the Park through collaboration with stakeholders. Equipment which includes vehicles and other field equipment have been secured through assistance from development partners.

Strategic positioning of patrol rangers has been done to hot spot areas mostly around permanent water. These include Kanga, Mafuku, Chiuye, Rukomechi, Nyamahwani, Kasawe, Man’ain’ai, Mazunga, Sore Sore, Matrench and Chitake areas. These hot spots are constantly monitored

There is now a permanent presence of rangers at Chitake, Rukomechi, Mazunga and other areas.

Coordination of patrols is being done from Nyakasikana Camp. This has seen a reduction in poaching cases in the area.

In Chewore /Dande, day or local reconnaissance, extended clandestine, reaction/contact strategic roadblocks are operated. Day and local reconnaissance patrols are intended to gather information on vegetation, wildlife and illegal activity. Extended clandestine patrols are aimed at widening ground coverage to gather more detailed information on the terrain, local populations and poaching indicators. Joint patrols are also carried out in collaboration with other law enforcement agencies such as the Zimbabwe Republic Police and the Zimbabwe Defence Forces.

ii) Stakeholder collaboration

A Steering Committee to implement the Mana Zambezi Anti-Poaching Strategy has been constituted and this has improved coordination and communication as well as assisting in the creation of strong linkages with some potential donors.

iii) Infrastructure, Equipment and Access

Some of the key activities identified in the Mana Pools Anti-poaching Strategy include improvements to main access roads and other internal roads to facilitate ease of deployments of rangers. The clearance of road networks also acts as a fireguard for the protected area through inhibiting the spread of wild fires throughout the park. The rangers on patrol also check the internal and periphery roads for poacher spoor and other illegal activity. The periphery roads are regularly patrolled so as to curb any illegal activities.

iv) Monitoring and Data Analysis

Data at Chewore is managed through SMART (Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool) which allows for tracking and management of law enforcement effort. Officers at the Mana Pools/ Sapi/Chewore World Heritage Site have also undergone training to improve law enforcement effort and monitoring.