

GREAT LIMPOPO TRANSFRONTIER PARK JOINT MANAGEMENT PLAN

*Executive Summary
and Synthesis of
Recommendations*



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GREAT LIMPOPO TRANSFRONTIER PARK

JOINT MANAGEMENT PLAN:

JOINT POLICY AND MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

Executive Summary and Synthesis of recommendations

1. INTRODUCTION

The synthesis of the recommendations included in the Joint Policy and Management Guidelines for the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park (GLTP), excludes all the background information, legal frameworks, historical perspectives and physical descriptions. These are all adequately captured in the original document. The aim of this summary is to present a synthesis of the policy and management recommendations within a concise frame of reference. The reader of these should have sufficient information to be able to understand the basis for and the content of the recommendations. Titles and order match the original document for the sake of easy reference. Paragraph and page numbers are supplied in parentheses with each heading in this text.

2. FUTURE ADMINISTRATION OF THE GREAT LIMPOPO TRANSFRONTIER PARK (6.2/44)

A Joint Management Board (JMB) must be established to ensure the appropriate handling of matters of mutual concern to the component parks and the Harmonisation of policies and procedures. The SADC Protocol on Wildlife Conservation and Law Enforcement (1999) and the International Treaty, expected to be signed by the three governments in 2002, provide the legal and political framework within which the JMB must function. The composition and responsibilities of the JMB are as follows:

Composition – 12 members

- a) Two from each of the National Implementing Agencies of the Parties;
- b) One from the national institutions responsible for borderline control of the Parties;
- c) One appointed as deemed fit by each of the Parties.

Responsibilities –

- a) Periodic revision and implementation of the Joint Management Plan for the Transfrontier Park.
- b) Determine mechanisms for administering funds received specifically for the Transfrontier Park;
- c) Identifying financial needs and sourcing such funds as are required to achieve the effective implementation of the Joint Management Plan;
- d) Establish committees as may be necessary;

Provide reports to the Ministerial Committee. With reference to (d) above the JMB must identify the joint concerns/issues requiring permanent or project Management Committees. They must identify members from their ranks to chair these and to ensure continuity and close liaison with the JMB. Country members of the various management committees will be responsible for conveying information to and from their committees. In addition to this the JMB must also look beyond the boundaries of the GLTP and ensure the integration of its aims and objectives into appropriate structures and institutions, particularly Water Catchment Authorities.

3. ZONATION (8.2/54)

The establishment of management zones is common practice within natural resource management regimes. It becomes even more appropriate when natural areas accommodate a diversity of activities such as the marriage of wildlife management and tourism plant development and operation.

Recommendation

- ❖ The management zones at the interface between the Kruger (KNP) and Limpopo National Parks (LNP) be harmonized.

4. RIVERS AND WATER RESOURCES (8.2/54)

The Revised Protocol on Shared Watercourses signed by SADC Heads of State on 7 August 2000 refers. Appropriate institutions must be established between States with shared watercourses. The physical position of the GLTP relative to the hydrology of the eastern seaboard of southern Africa makes this aspect extremely significant. In addition to this the poor land use management of the catchments upstream of the GLTP make this possibly the single largest threat to its biological integrity.

Recommendations

- ❖ The JMB must position the GLTP as a key role player in appropriate catchment and land use management institutions.
- ❖ Research, monitoring and management of aquatic systems within the GLTP and relevant catchments must be consolidated.
- ❖ Research, monitoring and management of terrestrial issues with an influence on the integrity of aquatic systems must be orientated to contribute towards providing appropriate data.

5. ARTIFICIAL WATER POINTS (8.4/62)

The injudicious placement and use of artificial water points can have significant long-term negative impacts on biodiversity conservation objectives. Very careful consideration and environmental impact assessments must thus precede the use of use of this wildlife management tool.

Recommendations

- ❖ No new artificial water points must be established within 10 km of the boundary of a neighbouring park unless permitted by the JMB.
- ❖ Integrated environmental management procedures must be implemented in the assessment of potential impacts in the planning and development of any new artificial water points.

6. INVASIVE ALIEN PLANTS (8.5/63)

This global threat to biodiversity conservation is very relevant in the GLTP with the numbers of invasive alien plants (IAP) species increasing exponentially. The close correlation between this and land use management in adjacent water catchments indicates the need for integration into catchment management institutions and strategies with the aim of curtailing the spread of and eventually eradicating these organisms.

Recommendations

- ❖ The JMB must facilitate the compilation of a holistic and cost-effective strategy aimed at combating the spread and elimination of existing IAP and preventing the introduction of new species.
- ❖ The above strategy must take cognisance of existing work within the GLTP and indicate how it is to influence the situation beyond its boundaries.

7. FIRE MANAGEMENT (8.6/67)

Fire is one of the most important components of the African savanna ecosystem, whether this is natural or anthropogenic. It is thus one of the most effective tools for wildlife management. Its use and application have gone through a number of iterations in the history of conservation management with the latest trend being the application of a *laissez faire*/point-ignition approach.

Recommendations

- ❖ The annual fire management program (including both the burning of fire breaks and blocks) for the areas within 10 km of common boundaries must be presented timeously to the JMB.
- ❖ Communication networks must be established between the most appropriate levels of staff to address any runaway fires that might cross a common boundary.

8. WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT (8.7/69)

The bulk of conservation or wildlife management strategies are aimed at the habitat of the target/relevant species. The maintenance and/or simulation of natural processes are generally sufficient, particularly over vast areas such as the GLTP, however it is always necessary to apply strategies to particular species. The latter generally requires the manipulation of numbers and distribution through the application of reductions, translocations or introductions. The African elephant is of particular note because of its ability to proliferate and to negatively impact its home range within confined areas, even as large as the GLTP. It thus requires special attention. Others that require special attention are threatened species that require particular protection strategies, and others whose numbers are declining.

An aspect that requires special mention is that of the sustainable consumptive utilisation of wildlife resources. This is a conservation strategy appropriate in Africa but which has drawn significant criticism from developed countries. For the GLTP to be accepted by the local communities affected by its establishment and existence, the JMB must address this issue proactively and aggressively.

Recommendations

- ❖ A joint elephant management policy must be developed with those populations whose home ranges are distinct to a park being managed according to that park's management plan.

- ❖ Threatened species are to be managed according to the SADC Protocol on Wildlife Conservation and Law Enforcement, 1999.
- ❖ No alien organisms may be introduced to the GLTP, whether at species or sub-species level. DNA testing must be used to clarify disputes.
- ❖ Research and monitoring techniques must be coordinated and data shared to facilitate the establishment of a common database.
- ❖ A mutually acceptable panel of independent scientists must resolve disputes regarding consumptive utilisation quotas.
- ❖ Sound research must precede the re-introduction of species to ensure habitat suitability, genotype similarity and disease and parasite status. It must also be ensured that adequate infrastructure exists to facilitate the reintroduction and that appropriate monitoring protocols are in place to measure the success of the operation. Approval must be obtained from the Conservation Committee of the JMB.
- ❖ The reintroduction of elephant from the KNP to the LNP must be carefully considered relative to the removal of the international boundary fence between South Africa and Mozambique. If large numbers are to be translocated as currently suggested, then the fence should remain until the animals have settled into the area. However, if the fence is to come down, then the animals should be allowed to move across of their own accord.
- ❖ The circumstances within which individual animals may be destroyed must be well articulated and understood by the management of each park. Internal policies in this regard must be established and observed, but where incidents occur on the boundary between parks, local communication networks must be used to deal with the situation at the lowest appropriate level.
- ❖ The consumptive utilisation of any natural resource within the boundaries of the GLTP must be preceded by adequate research and accompanied by appropriate monitoring protocols with accurate capture and storage of data. JMB approval must be sought, particularly in the light of the comments made in the introduction to this section.

9. VETERINARY ISSUES (8.8/77)

The interface between wildlife and domestic livestock is characterised by the transmission of animal disease one-way or the other. Some are endemic and thus considered part of the natural system, while others are alien and still others emerging, re-emerging or novel. Irrespective of their categorization the potential impact on the livestock industry requires these issues to be well managed and monitored. International boundaries simplify such management and monitoring and thus the potential removal of the existing boundaries between the three participating countries implies careful consideration of the veterinary implications.

Recommendations

- ❖ The standard of monitoring must be lifted to internationally acceptable standards and must be coordinated between the participating parks. The current facilities at Skukuza may be used as a benchmark and centre for data storage until similar facilities exist in GNP and LNP.
- ❖ The JMB must give urgent attention to the acquisition of funding for the establishment of veterinary facilities and the training of staff.

- ❖ Capacity at Skukuza will be made available to assist wherever necessary until adequate capacity has been created in the GNP and LNP.
- ❖ The movement and keeping of livestock through the GLTP will only be permitted according to strict regulations including appropriate quarantine and disease screening procedures.
- ❖ The movement of unprocessed products from cloven-hoofed animals through the GLTP will only be allowed according to strict veterinary and customs regulations.
- ❖ No domestic cats will be permitted in the GLTP and a program to eliminate those currently in the area must be established and implemented.
- ❖ The ownership of domestic dogs within the GLTP will only be permitted subject to very strict control measures, i.e. registration and vaccination. Negotiations regarding sterilization must be entered into.
- ❖ Domestic equids may be introduced for management and tourism purposes subject to annual vaccination against African Horse sickness.
- ❖ Upon the return of Tsetse fly and *Trypanosomiasis* surveillance of the infected areas must commence immediately. Country specific policies must then be implemented.
- ❖ The transportation of game must be done according to the minimum standards as set by the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS Code 0331).
- ❖ Research requirements may be fulfilled from outside the GLTP but must be carefully coordinated by officials of the constituent parks.
- ❖ The JMB must compile a policy for the compensation of livestock death due to the implementation of veterinary control measures.
- ❖ All individuals owning livestock within the GLTP must be made aware of the necessity of reporting unexplained deaths of livestock, and the dangers of consuming the meat of such animals. The possibility of training these people to gather basic scientific data must also be investigated.
- ❖ A process of gradually reducing the number of livestock within the LNP must be introduced together with the development of alternative land use policies.

10. ECOTOURISM (9.2/83)

The association between protected areas and their availability to tourism activities is well established in Africa with the KNP being one of the most sought after wildlife destinations. From a management agency perspective this is seen as a means to justify the existence of a protected area and conservation as a legitimate form of land use producing socio-economic benefits for the adjacent communities. It is recommended that the GLTP be positioned as one destination accommodating a diverse range of visitor experiences within the theme of 'something for everyone'. It is hoped that this will expand the visitor base and extend the length of stay.

Recommendations

- ❖ The GLTP management agencies work closely with the tourism industry within an iterative process whereby the industry defines potential initiatives and the agencies measure these against a framework of sustainability.

- ❖ The JMB establish a Tourism Committee with the immediate brief to compile a strategic plan to address transit roads, plan products to match markets, outsourcing, private sector community partnerships and other relevant issues.
- ❖ The strategic plan must address the need for a shift of emphasis in the GNP in order to compete successfully with the existing Victoria Falls/Hwange/Kariba focus.
- ❖ The JMB need to facilitate the harmonization of tourism related regulations such as entry fees, speed limits, travel times, etc.
- ❖ Attention must be given to tourism activities other than self-drive that may require border crossings, e.g. guided walking, canoe, horse, camel or elephant back trails and balloon safaris.

11. INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT (10.1.2/91)

Infrastructure within the GLTP refers to that which serves management and tourism needs, i.e. transport (road, rail and air), access control, accommodation, power and water supply/sanitation and fencing. Existing infrastructure is focused on the needs of the individual parks with that within the KNP being most developed, followed by the GNP and then the LNP which has very little.

Recommendations

11.1 General (Including waste management)

- ❖ A strategic assessment of planned infrastructure development not associated with the conservation and ecotourism objectives of the GLTP is required to assess potential opportunities and conflicts.
- ❖ As far as possible, new permanent infrastructure must be located on the periphery of the GLTP, rather than within the Park.
- ❖ Where possible infrastructure on common borders must be combined.
- ❖ Developments, particularly those associated with tourism, must conform to the zonation of the immediate area.
- ❖ Any infrastructure development must take place according to integrated environmental management principles and procedures within which the following must be considered:
 - ◆ Buildings to blend into local landscape.
 - ◆ Development design to include natural features.
 - ◆ Plant material to be collected and stored from sites to be used in subsequent landscaping.
 - ◆ Potential visual impact must be considered.
 - ◆ Applicable building and safety standards must be applied.
 - ◆ Water and energy saving and waste management must be emphasized.
 - ◆ An environmental management plan for both construction and operation of developments must be compiled and approved at the appropriate level before construction begins. This is to include regulations for the movement and accommodation of workers.

- ◆ Sites must be completely cleared of building rubble and rehabilitated after completion of the construction phase.

11.2 FENCES (10.2/94)

- ❖ Fences are a management tool that will be used as little as possible in the GLTP in order to facilitate the free movement of wildlife and visitors.
- ❖ The presence of Bovine Tuberculosis in KNP determines that a fence parallel to the Limpopo is required until the disease can be eliminated.
- ❖ Fences required for access control must accommodate and/or consider wildlife movement and management requirements.
- ❖ Fence maintenance is the responsibility of the agency upon whose land it is located.
- ❖ The portions of fence for which approval has been granted for removal may be removed as soon as it is sensible to do so. Person/s given responsibility for coordinating this operation must liaise closely with the security and conservation sectors to ensure that both are satisfied with the planned removals. (Figure 10.1 on page 98)
- ❖ In order to retain indicators of the international border between South Africa and Mozambique it is recommended that the cemented fenced poles be left in place when the rest of the fence material is removed.
- ❖ All fencing material removed must be stored safely to prevent its use for poaching and to facilitate reuse elsewhere in the GLTP.
- ❖ The JMB must facilitate the acquisition of funding for the construction of fences.
- ❖ While funding for the removal of the KNP/LNP fence is to be supplied by KfW employment opportunities must go to the people living in the LNP.

12. LOCAL COMMUNITIES (11/101)

The communities that live in close proximity of the GLTP and associated conservation areas are characterised by high levels of poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, a lack of basic infrastructure and disruptive socio/economic dynamics complicated by previous political circumstances (civil war in Mozambique and apartheid in South Africa). They survive on unreliable subsistence agriculture and the harvesting of natural resources, particularly wildlife. The development of the GLTP gives hope for economic growth in the region and the provision of opportunities for employment, training, improved infrastructure and other benefits. Unfortunately the engagement of affected communities requires long deliberate and transparent communication processes and these currently lag far behind. The flow of tangible benefits to these people and their support for the initiative is a crucial determinant of its sustainability and the following recommendations must be viewed in this light.

Recommendations

- ❖ The JMB and management of each park must ensure that communities have meaningful participation in policymaking, development planning and management in the GLTP to ensure that:
 - ◆ communities have preference in employment opportunities that arise from GLTP developments,

- ◆ skills development opportunities relative to the above are made available,
 - ◆ entrepreneurial training is provided,
 - ◆ capacity is built to facilitate the forging of joint venture opportunities, and
 - ◆ there is a sufficient flow of information between role players to alleviate fears and ensure the understanding of plans and processes.
- ❖ In order to facilitate the above the JMB must ensure that appropriate community liaison structures are established and maintained by the constituent parks.
 - ❖ The pace of development must be adjusted to enable the necessary consultative processes to take place to gain the acceptance and support of the local communities.
 - ❖ Community access to the harvesting of natural resources in the GLTP must happen within the framework of the relevant park policy and at levels that do not exceed sustainability. It is also essential that the relevant research and monitoring accompany such utilisation.
 - ❖ Cultures previously disrupted by the formation of international borders must now benefit from the Transfrontier philosophy.
 - ❖ GLTP staff who interacts with affected communities must have the relevant training, i.e. conflict resolution, process facilitation, information dissemination and language proficiency.
 - ❖ Preferential access should be given to affected communities with reduced rates for school excursions and organized community groupings.
 - ❖ Communities who previously lived within the borders of the GLTP must be allowed free access to sites of cultural or traditional significance.
 - ❖ The JMB must facilitate alternative land use options for affected communities such as the rehabilitation of abandoned irrigation schemes.
 - ❖ The JMB and park management must promote and facilitate the movement of visitors to cultural attractions offered by communities outside the GLTP.

13. LOCAL COMMUNITY AND PRIVATE SECTOR INVOLVEMENT IN GLTP DEVELOPMENTS AND OPERATIONS (12/113)

Already eluded to above is the need for communities to benefit beyond employment opportunities but also through gaining equity share in the GLTP and associated developments. Entrenched within this aspect is the philosophy that conservation agencies need to focus on natural resource management while providing opportunities for the private sector to develop and operate the tourism sector. In addition to this the concept of out-sourcing aspects of conservation management that have traditionally been carried out by the agencies is also gaining ground and could mean greater efficiency in general.

Recommendations

- ❖ The JMB must:
 - ◆ establish criteria for the involvement of communities and the private sector,
 - ◆ facilitate the identification of conservation management aspects that may be out-sourced,

- ◆ facilitate the identification of the tourism development opportunities,
- ◆ and establish and implement a transparent tender and/or bid process with clearly defined criteria for community participation and equity sharing.

14. SECURITY (13/117)

It is envisaged that the establishment of the GLTP will enhance internal security, while border control and the issue of land mines are aspects that require special attention. While there will always be some level of illegal activity a realistic goal is that this will be limited to the extent that it will not negatively influence the conservation management and tourism operations.

Recommendations

14.1. INTERNAL SECURITY

- ❖ Appropriate measures ratified in the SADC Protocol on Wildlife Conservation and Law Enforcement (1999) must be formalized and implemented, together with the harmonization of laws and penalties.
- ❖ The JMB establish a Security Committee with a mandate to achieve the above and to foster cooperation between the three parks.
- ❖ Protocols must be established that will allow for cross-border operations when necessary and radio frequencies must be made available to ensure communication between staff in adjoining parks.
- ❖ Security staff potentially involved in cross-border incidents must be sufficiently trained to ensure they will be able to work well together.
- ❖ A minimum qualification must be applied to personnel employed to carry out security work, e.g. a NQF 2 for South Africa. The Game Rangers Association of Africa may be consulted for assistance on this issue.
- ❖ Staff in key positions must have a working knowledge of Shangaan, Portuguese and English.
- ❖ Standards must be maintained by applying the appropriate level of in service training and retraining.
- ❖ In all parks the component of field rangers must be increased to a level of one person per 30 square kilometers and they must all be appropriately equipped in order to carry out their work.
- ❖ Intelligence networks with external and community linkages must be established together with an accurate system of monitoring both illegal and law enforcement activities.
- ❖ Where possible, the demarcation of areas where communities can harvest natural resources must be investigated as a strategy to reduce poaching pressure and to generate local community support for the GLTP.

14.2. BORDER CONTROL

Border control in a Transfrontier park situation requires the careful balancing of the need to enhance ease of access for bonifide visitors, while not compromising control over illegal activities. With regard to the GLTP the emphasis is on South African and Mozambique due to the long common

border. The South African/Zimbabwean interface is currently not an issue, as the Sengwe Communal area still needs to be addressed. The establishment of peripheral border posts is subject to the entire perimeter of the GLTP being secured.

- ❖ The Security Committee must facilitate the compilation of a strategic plan for the securing of the perimeter of the GLTP and the establishment of peripheral border posts, including country budgets for the building and operation of the required infrastructure.
- ❖ The difference of opinion between conservation and security regarding the northern border fence between KNP and Zimbabwe must be resolved.
- ❖ Until peripheral border posts have been established traffic must be routed through the existing facilities with a temporary facility established at Giriyaondo to enable traffic to flow from the KNP to the Massingir in the LNP.
- ❖ The JMB must facilitate the acquisition of funds for the establishment and operation of the above facility at Giriyaondo.
- ❖ The Security Committee must establish a process of gathering, storing and processing border control intelligence.
- ❖ A protocol for dealing with emergency situation must be agreed upon.
- ❖ A strategy must be derived to address the acquisition/use of the Sengwe Communal Area as a link between the constituent parks.

14.3. LAND MINES

Due to the various wars that have taken place in and adjacent to the GLTP there are still areas within which land mines and booby traps occur. Besides the obvious impact on local communities this poses significant constraints on the development and operation of the GLTP. The goal is to remove this threat.

- ❖ The JMB must work closely with the DNPWM in Zimbabwe to ensure the GLTP is a recognised stakeholder with the relevant authorities responsible for the removal of the mines in that country, communicating the priorities as identified according to the planned development of the GLTP.
- ❖ The JMB must assist and support the DNPWM with regard to their involvement in the planning for the optimum resettlement of the area between the major and secondary minefields.
- ❖ The potential presence of mines must be taken into consideration in the planning and development of the Sengwe Corridor.

15. CAPACITY BUILDING OF GLTP STAFF (14.1.4/133)

It is essential that the management and operations of the GLTP are harmonized and delivered at comparably high levels of efficiency and effectiveness.

Recommendations

- ❖ The JMB must establish a Training Committee.
- ❖ The Training Committee must facilitate a skills-assessment process and the identification of training needs amongst the staff in the agencies comprising the GLTP.

- ❖ A mentorship program must be established in order to provide on the job experiential training and guidance for middle and senior level staff in the DNAP in Mozambique, and in particular the Gaza province.
- ❖ The Game Rangers Association of Africa may be consulted regarding training issues and proficiency levels.

16. FUNDING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (15/135)

The financial requirements for both the establishment and management of the GLTP and its constituent parks far exceed what the three country's governments can supply, particularly Mozambique and Zimbabwe. Much reliance will have to be made on donor agencies.

Recommendations

- ❖ The JMB form a Funding Committee to facilitate the identification of funding requirements and the coordination of donors and NGOs.
- ❖ The Funding Committee convenes workshops/meetings with donors and NGOs to achieve the above.
- ❖ Donors and NGOs be encouraged to coordinate their efforts in and around the GLTP.

17. IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS (16/137)

It is imperative that the JMB and its Management Committees take this dynamic and integrated management planning process, within which this document is the first step, forward as rapidly as possible. Expectations have been created that require delivery to ensure that the integrity of the initiative is not set back through role-players losing trust. Implementation must be monitored with continuous feedback to all stakeholders.

Recommendations

- ❖ The JMB identifies and establishes the appropriate Management Committees and mandates them to articulate and prioritise management objectives, and to set operational goals within each of these according to a Logical Framework, followed by action plans for each goal.
- ❖ The Management Committees must establish monitoring protocols appropriate to each level of their operational goals and action plans and that these should include clear performance indicators and data collection requirements that are compatible with other relevant statistics and databases.
- ❖ The JMB must establish clear reporting strategies with the Management Committees.

18. REVIEW OF THE JOINT POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

As stated above, the establishment and management of any protected area is dynamic and the management structures and processes used to guide this must also be. The size and immense diversity of cultures, politics, biodiversity, ecological processes within the GLTP and constituent parks emphasize this need. It is thus critical that a dynamic management planning process be entrenched with regular review and adaptations taking place at frequencies inversely proportional to the position of the levels in the management planning hierarchy (i.e. high level – less frequent, lower level – more frequent).

Recommendations

- ❖ This document should be completely reviewed at intervals not greater than three years.
- ❖ The JMB must ensure that development and management continuity is maintained not with standing possible adaptations.

19. FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TFCA (18/143)

Through the adoption and implementation of the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Reserve program it is possible that the GLTP could be the core of a much greater area. Initiatives and plans currently exist in all three countries that will facilitate this expansion and the realization of the full Transfrontier Conservation Area.

Recommendations

- ❖ The Tri-lateral Ministerial Committee authorizes the commencement and planning of the expansion as soon as possible.

The JMB must develop criteria for the inclusion of community and private land into the TFCA and the borders must be objectively defined.