

Member & View

News, Ideas & Insights

Conservation Spotlight

Key Partnerships Help Save Critical Ugandan Forests

By Michael Stern and Rebecca Goldstone

Kibale National Park in Western Uganda is home to some of the most loved species kept in Association of Zoos and Aquariums-accredited facilities: chimpanzees, elephants, black and white colobus monkeys, hornbills, hamerkop and crowned cranes, gaboon vipers, cobras, and chameleons. But their habitat is under serious threat. Immediately bordering the park, an ever-growing human population depends on wood for household needs. With more than 95 percent of Ugandan households relying on charcoal and firewood, everyday energy use is a main cause of deforestation, and contributes negatively toward climate change.

Since 2006, thanks to tremendous support from over 30 AZA and World Association of Zoos and Aquariums facilities, the New Nature Foundation (NNF) has partnered with community members around Kibale to protect the forest. Thanks to financial contributions, NNF has continued to expand and grow: last year alone, programs engaged more than 34,000 citizens around Kibale and saved more than 4.3 million pounds of wood. Support has also taken the form of in-kind donations of educational supplies, promotion on websites and social media, and hosting lectures at facilities across the U.S.

NNF's primary goal is to provide the skills, knowledge, and practical solutions that benefit both people and animals and make the projects more successful and sustainable in the long-term. In Uganda, teaching people how to build their own stoves, cook with biomass briquettes, and grow fuel for their families while improving their health and conserving habitats is fostering the sustainable behavioral changes needed to protect Kibale. Our methodology leads to ever-greater wood savings, behavior changes, and habitat conserved. NNF has hosted staff, members and volunteers from several zoos who

© Mark Vibbert, New Nature Foundation

Member View

By the Numbers

CARING for CATS

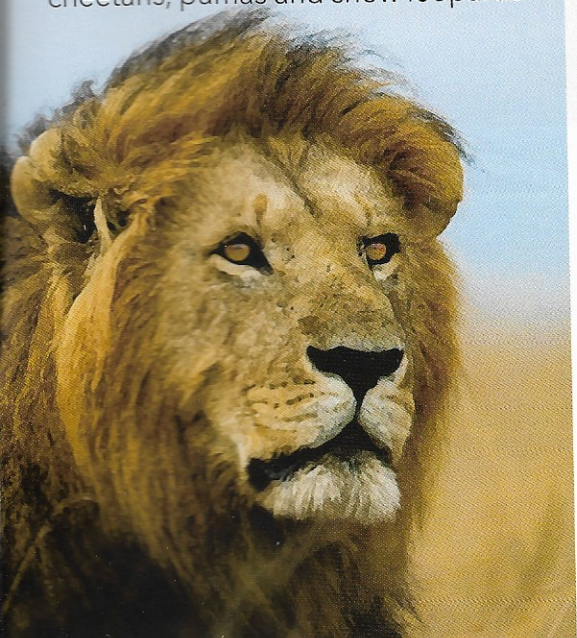
2014 to 2016

135 Association of Zoos and Aquariums member organizations reported spending nearly **\$9.9 MILLION** on field conservation benefitting felids

94% of this these funds were directed to big cat conservation

Per the Captive Wildlife Safety Act, big cats include lions, tigers, jaguars, cheetahs, pumas, leopards, snow leopards, clouded leopards and Sunda clouded leopards

Most funding benefitted tigers, lions, cheetahs, pumas and snow leopards



observed and assisted with various aspects of the project.

Science Centers: Five community museums with the ultimate goal of changing the ways people feel, learn and act toward the forest. The Science Centers teach biology, anthropology, geography and conservation science, as well as general literacy, art and math.

Biomass Briquettes: Vegetable peels, peanut shells, waste paper and bark from sustainably farmed trees are processed into carbon-neutral cooking fuel. Briquettes are traded to people bordering Kibale for the raw materials needed to produce them and sold to those in town who can afford to pay for fuel.

Efficient Stoves: NNF's adaptation of the Winiarski Rocket Stove is built for little or no cost with local materials. The stoves are made from mud and dung and can be repaired easily when needed.

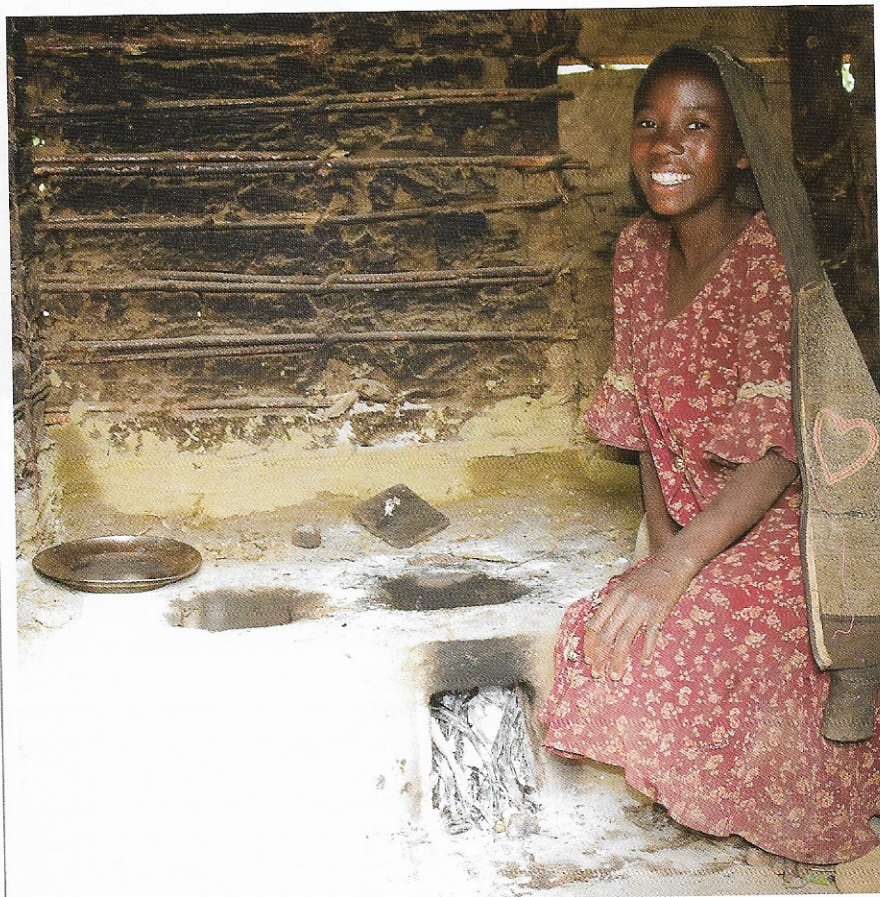
Trees: Fast-growing species (*Sesbania* and *Calliandra*) suitable for planting close to crops are promoted.

Shows, Workshops and Competitions: Solar powered projections of nature films

are shown to large audiences on Sundays, and workshops are routinely held in target villages. Conservation competitions are held annually, including the ever-popular "Efficient Bean Cook-off."

In addition to our work in Uganda, NNF also works in partnership with Denver Zoo in Denver, Colo., to address fuel wood needs in Vietnam and to protect the fantastic and unique Tonkin snub-nosed monkey. Deforestation for fuel wood is a ubiquitous conservation issue, and zoos can make a greater difference for wildlife through more programs like these. We give tremendous thanks to all the zoos who are reaching beyond their gates by supporting field conservation efforts around the world. Your efforts are helping organizations such as NNF ensure that people and wildlife can live in harmony in some of the wildest places on earth.

Michael Stern and Rebecca Goldstone are Founders of the New Nature Foundation.
www.NewNatureFoundation.org



© New Nature Foundation