

Community Conservation Lead- Okapi Wildlife Reserve (OWR) DRC

25-Apr-2021

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DRC

Global Conservation Full-Time

GLOBAL CONSERVATION

Job Description

Location: Epulu, Okapi Wildlife Reserve (OWR), Democratic Republic of the Congo

Reports to: Program Manager (Okapi Wildlife Reserve)

Direct reports: All senior staff in the Community Conservation Department

Start date: July 2022

Purpose

The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) is seeking an innovative and adaptive Community Conservation Lead to deliver a program of community conservation interventions for the Okapi Wildlife Reserve (OWR).

The Community Conservation Lead will be based permanently on-site at the OWR headquarters in Epulu, Ituri Province. OWR's community conservation program is diverse and includes activities both within the Reserve and its 50km buffer zone. Its goal is to ensure communities sustainably benefit from conservation and support the protection of the Reserve's unparalleled and globally significant biodiversity. The OWR presents a challenging yet rewarding work environment in a unique and complex landscape. The Reserve is faced with several threats to its biodiversity, including poaching, wildlife trafficking, mining, illegal logging, in-migration, land clearance and sporadic insecurity from armed groups.

The Reserve's community conservation strategy involves: supporting communities to build institutions to manage natural resources sustainably; empowering indigenous people, incorporating gender-responsive approaches; reducing poverty through sustainable livelihoods; preventing and mitigating conflict; ensuring adherence to social safeguards; and enhancing environmental awareness.

Responsibilities

The Community Conservation Lead will work closely with the Program Manager and Reserve Director to implement OWR's community conservation strategy. They will ensure a community-based approach to the reduction of biodiversity threats in the OWR and its buffer zone.

Leadership and team management

- Build and manage an inclusive and diverse team of capable staff through motivational and performance-based personnel management

- Ensure a community-oriented, collaborative and mission-led work ethic amongst all community conservation team members
- Encourage a culture of participatory learning and adaptive problem-solving so that team members reflect and design effective field interventions that deliver biodiversity outcomes
- As a member of the OWR Management Unit, implement community conservation activities in close coordination with other Reserve departments

Project planning and implementation

- Ensure implementation of the OWR community conservation strategy and associated commitments to donors within budget and on-time
- Ensure project activities build positive relationships with communities, prevent and resolve conflict, and address gender and indigenous peoples' issues
- Work with the Program Manager to ensure that community department workplans are developed with full input from team members
- Ensure accountable, evidence-based and impactful project implementation
- Ensure a rights-based community approach to conservation, including adherence to Free, Prior, Informed Consent principles
- Coordinate closely with logistics personnel on procurement and fieldwork planning
- Ensure timely and accurate budget planning to support activity implementation in coordination with finance personnel
- Iteratively update the OWR community conservation strategy with inputs from communities, team members and partner organizations, as required

Socio-economic research and monitoring

- Collaborate with the research and monitoring department to ensure the robust design and implementation of socio-economic research
- Collaborate with the Monitoring, Evaluation, Adaption and Learning (MEAL) team to support the development and implementation of an integrated MEAL system

External relationships

- Directly engage with and spend time in local communities to facilitate project implementation, build relationships, and communicate conservation messages
- Work with the Program Manager to liaise with OWR partners to enhance the Reserve's approaches with local communities and ensure these are linked to biodiversity outcomes
- Work with the Program Manager to liaise with OWR partners on community development activities to harmonize approaches and avoid duplication of effort
- Represent the OWR community conservation team to donors and government stakeholders, as requested

Reporting and communications

- Provide substantive inputs to regular donor progress reports
- Contribute to fundraising proposals for the community conservation portfolio
- Produce technical outputs such as natural resource management plans, and issue-specific analyses of best-practices and lessons learned
- Generate high-quality visual and written material to support public communications
- Engage with local media, such as radio, to communicate conservation messages

Other

- Maintain strong collaborative working relationships with the Program Manager, Reserve Director, and Deputy Reserve Director
- Conduct any other responsibilities as requested by the Program Manager or OWR management

Qualification Requirements

- A minimum of a Master's degree in social or environmental sciences
- 5 to 10 years' field experience with international organizations in Africa working on community-based conservation and natural resource management
- Experience in managing the delivery of activities funded by large bilateral and multilateral donors
- Proven ability to manage, motivate, and train a team of field personnel
- Proven ability at developing work plans and budgets, implementing MEAL systems, and producing project progress reports
- Proven ability at designing and delivering socio-economic research in international development contexts
- Proven ability to work sensitively with diverse groups of people such as those of different cultures, nationalities and backgrounds
- Knowledge and understanding of logistics and financial management for projects in complex environments
- Excellent written and spoken communication skills in French and English; Kiswahili an advantage
- Strong commitment to wildlife conservation
- Innovative, pro-active, resilient, team-oriented, and ambitious
- Willingness to live in a remote field site with basic amenities in a multicultural environment

How to apply

Interested candidates, who meet the above qualifications, skills and experience, should through the this [link](#) by **May 31, 2022**.

WCS is an equal opportunity employer dedicated to hiring and supporting a diverse workforce. We are committed to cultivating an inclusive work environment and look for future team members who share that same value.