

The case for the Mandara Mountains International Peace Park

by

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Abstract

The Mandara mountains are the home of numerous ethnic groups who have over the centuries developed forms of mixed agriculture that have continued to sustain high population densities in the face of raiding and other threats from states based in the surrounding plains. The demonstrable sustainability of the montagnard way of life is unfortunately associated with extreme poverty. Average incomes are still less than US\$1 a day. In this situation, we suggest, Mandara communities' remarkable socio-cultural capital constitutes an investment that can, in conjunction with elements of the natural environment, be mobilized to support low impact eco-cultural tourism in the context of an International Peace Park.

Besides the participation of local and national authorities, the involvement of Mandara mountain peoples is a necessary and integral part of any such development. This will require a sensitive, anthropologically informed, approach to local communities. Only a pro-poor approach can render eco-cultural tourism viable since it is the montagnards' crafts, agriculture, and lifeways that constitute the primary resources capable of attracting national and international tourist clientele. However, montagnard experience of the wider world has since pre-colonial times been for the most part unpleasant and marked by exploitation. Grassroots involvement, with specific educational and formational goals, is a prerequisite for sustainable development – whether or not tourism forms part of that development. And tourism may, for the foreseeable future, be less important than development for tourism.

Introduction

Since Nicholas David's retirement at the end of 2001 we have become more and more concerned to offer thanks to the many Cameroonians and Nigerians amongst and with whom we have lived and worked over the past two and a half decades. We do this in part by making the results of our work available to them – whence for example our www.Sukur.info website – and partly by attempting to contribute to the development of peoples on both sides of the international border who remain among the poorest of the poor. It is this second concern that led us to the idea of an international peace park in and at the feet of a part of the Mandara mountains. This would not be a peace park like the vast majority of the over 190 other trans-boundary peace parks in the world (Ali, S.H. [ed.] 2007). Here it is not charismatic quadrupeds and birds that constitute the main attraction, but humans who have carved their sustainable lifeways on the very mountains. Neither is the peace park, like so many, intended as a means of achieving peace. Rather it is like the first such park – Waterton-Glacier Peace Park located on either side of the western Canadian and United States borders – intended to celebrate peace.

On the occasion of the withdrawal of Nigerian Armed Forces from the Bakassi Peninsula on August 21, 2006, following the successful implementation from Lake Chad to the Bight of Benin of the Greentree agreement between Nigeria and Cameroon mandated by the International Court of Justice, Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo stated:

We have set a lesson for Africa and the world. We have shown that it is possible to resolve a difficult border problem without war and unnecessary loss of lives and property. We have shown the value of understanding, accommodation, tolerance, discipline, negotiation, dialogue and commitment to peace. ... History will remember us all for opting for peace...(http://www.nigerian-mission.ch/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=18&Itemid=36)

We argue that portions of Borno and Adamawa states and parts of the adjacent Mayo Tsanaga and Mayo Sava departments in Cameroon are particularly deserving of special protection, treatment and status.

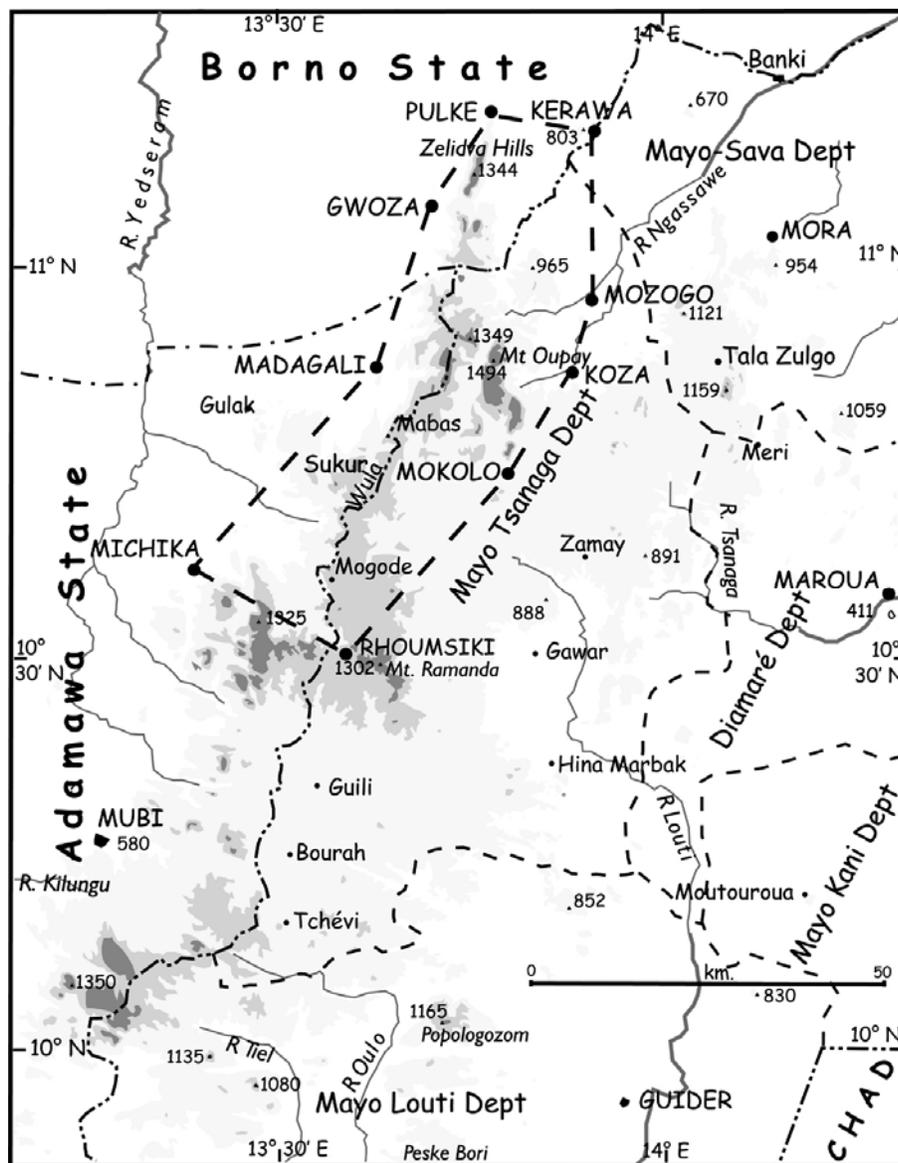


Figure 1. The Mandara mountains, showing Nigerian states and Cameroonian departments, and with the area of the proposed park indicated. Contours at 2000, 3000 and 3500 feet with spot heights in meters.

The region and its cultures

The Mandara Mountains are a rugged, low altitude, mountain range that straddles the international boundary between northeastern Nigeria and northern Cameroon. We are concerned here primarily with the northern and western portion of the Mandara mountains, including the adjacent inselbergs and borders of the great plains of Borno and Lake Chad, and particularly with the area that contains the Mandara range's highest peaks – Oupay and Ziver – and finest natural and cultural sites. This all lies within an area delimited by the border town of Kerawa, first capital of the Mandara pre-colonial state, and, preceding clockwise, the towns of Mozogo, Koza, Mokolo and the village of Rhoumsiki in Cameroon and Michika, Madagali, Gwoza and Pulke in Nigeria (Fig. 1).

Over many centuries this region's numerous montagnard ethnic groups have dealt with Sudanic states of the plains. They have survived raiding and trading, 19th century jihad, 20th century German, French and British colonization and administration, League of Nations and United Nations mandates/trust territories, and eventual incorporation into the independent nations of Cameroon and Nigeria. Despite world financial crises, locust-caused famines most recently in the 1930s, at times brutal policies of taxation and resettlement, limited transport, health, and education infrastructures, and the impacts of Islam and Christianity, these communities have maintained themselves and, over the decades, increased their numbers – to a far greater extent than their standard of living. They provide excellent models of sustainability under objectively adverse circumstances.

The World Wild Life Fund is interested in the region because:

While the Mandara Plateau Mosaic ecoregion has a long history of intense human use and habitation, its ecology is little known and poorly understood. The area is important because it contains a number of rare and endemic plants with affinities to the East African Mountains and the Highlands of Ethiopia. The dry forests of the Mozogo Gokoro National Park and Mayo Louti Forest Reserves [in Cameroon] ... at one time harbored important populations of antelope and other large mammals but these have now been largely extirpated. Threats to biodiversity here include heavy grazing, unsustainable collection of firewood, and frequent burning (http://www.worldwildlife.org/wildworld/profiles/terrestrial/at/at0710_full.html).

Obviously there is a lot of research potential here. However there is already a wealth of geographical, anthropological and other data on the Mandara mountains and its peoples, though Cameroon has attracted far more researchers than the Nigerian sector of the proposed park (see e.g., Boutrais et al 1984).

In a boulder-strewn and often spectacular mountain landscape, sandy granitic soils, relatively higher rainfall, and cooler temperatures have been expertly exploited by the montagnards who have transformed their rocky environment by ubiquitous terracing of slopes on which they cultivate a richly elaborated range of sorghums and millets, besides legumes, tubers, and other crops of both African and exotic origins. Even in the most densely populated regions where fields rarely lie fallow and chemical fertilizers are virtually unused, "The mountain farmers have perfected an effective agricultural system which is suited to their specific environment, maintains soil fertility and would seem difficult to do better. When rainfall is normal, they cover their own food requirements and earn modest incomes." (Hallaire 1991:238).

Combined with the raising of livestock – focusing on bulls and small stock necessarily kept in stalls during the growing season – management of trees and shrubs that approaches gardening, limited cash-cropping primarily of cotton and groundnuts and various combinations of craft production and

seasonal labor migration, this system maintains population densities that can exceed 200 people per square kilometer at production energy costs of less than a quarter those of Euro-American agribusiness.

The beauty and interest of cultural landscapes produced by centuries of montagnard effort have been recognized by UNESCO which in 1999 listed Sukur as Nigeria's first World Heritage site, the first cultural landscape to be so recognized on Africa. Sukur, an ancient center of iron production and trade, is located across the border from spectacular volcanic plugs in Kapsiki territory around Rhoumsiki. The scenery is magnificent, and while mammalian wildlife is limited, there is a rich avifauna and a fascinating botany.

Montagnard farming is sustained by vigorous local crafts, and among the Mafa and several other societies, there are casted specialists. While the smelting of iron ore in a unique form of furnace is nowadays undertaken only in the form of re-enactments, smiths produce a full range of tools, weapons and ornaments. Brass casting is practiced by Kapsiki. Potters, often the wives of smiths, manufacture high quality terracotta wares for utilitarian, social and ritual purposes. Cooking pots, beer jugs, large water storage pots, and other types of pots are produced for local use, and sold in regional markets and beyond. Many types of craft products including basketry, made by women and/or men depending upon ethnic affiliation, are produced in every household, and while the mud domes of traditional rooms are often formed by semi-specialists, most of the remarkable compound architecture is built by family members.

This thriving modern material culture is complemented by an equally flourishing cultural life that looks back to prehistoric roots in the Neolithic and Iron Age of Central Africa. About five hundred years ago remarkable stone-built monuments – the so-called DGB sites – were being constructed near Koza on the flanks of the Oupay massif, at 1449 m. the highest point of the mountain chain. Containing a variety of unexpected and entirely indigenous architectural features, they are on the Cameroonian list of candidates for World Heritage status. Our recent research suggests that they may have served as rain and fertility shrines during the catastrophic droughts of the 15th and 16th centuries that resulted in the drying of the southern half of the Lake Chad basin (David 2004 and David in press [and J. Maley's contribution to that monograph]).

These and later integrative institutions did not inhibit the development of a kaleidoscopic array of local cultures. Amongst other manifestations, including a remarkable musical tradition (!!ref), these maintain varied and often photogenic ceremonial cycles – bull and harvest festivals, the initiation of young men, and the like – while jealously retaining a degree of independence despite the partial integration of traditional structures of authority into the modern states (Sterner 2003). These are, in brief, the reasons why we believe that the designated zone is worthy of special recognition as one or more protected areas or parks, in which the sustainable lifeways of its peoples are appropriately celebrated and displayed to the world.

Towards sustainable development and eco-cultural tourism

What would be the consequences of designation as an international peace park? We suggest that while this would not lead, at least initially, to a substantial influx of tourists, the kinds of development associated with such an aim are desirable in themselves. That is the lesson of Sukur where significant improvements in infrastructure, especially roads and electrical plant (if not supply!), have occurred in the nine years since designation as a World Heritage site.

At present, international tourism is virtually non-existent anywhere in Nigeria. Although Sukur is now receiving more visitors (though these are numbered in the low hundreds rather than thousands per year), the majority are Nigerians or Nigerian-based expatriates. On the Diamaré plain in Cameroon, Maroua offers a limited tourism infrastructure, but its hotels and guides cater much more to visitors to Waza National Park and to big game hunters than to hikers and others who might enjoy the Mandara mountains. While bus tours occasionally pass through Mokolo and stop off for half an hour at the Djingliya artisanal cooperative, the contribution of tourism to the local economy is best gauged by the fact that the latest statistics on “tourism” in Cameroon available on the web relate to 1995 when under a quarter of a million non-residents visited the country for an average of 2.06 days, far too short a period in which to visit the Mandara mountains (even if Cameroon remained capable of maintaining a functioning internal air transport system). The tourists who in any one year visit Rhoumsiki, the most “developed” tourist site in the mountains number only in the low hundreds. Far fewer participate in locally advertised treks through the Mandara mountains.

The development of a form of eco-cultural tourism that can help sustain Mandara mountain communities requires international, trans-national, national, and local action and initiatives. We treat each of these below, focusing on the situation at the local level, with which we are most familiar and best qualified to comment.

International aspects

As already mentioned, Nigeria and Cameroon accepted the World Court decision relating to their common boundary and a Nigeria-Cameroon Mixed Commission peacefully and cooperatively implemented the ruling. Sukur was declared an UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1999 under the category of 'Cultural Landscape'. More recently the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) has been involved in the context of its Africa 2009 program in the University of Calgary's excavations and a subsequently planned (but as yet unrealized) program of conservation, partial restoration and “mis en valeur” of the DGB monuments. It is also involved in conservation at Sukur.

It should be added that visa requirements for international travelers to Cameroon and especially to Nigeria appear designed to discourage tourists who do not already have contacts within either country. The deplorable state of many roads in both countries is a similar disincentive as is, in Nigeria, the appalling failure of the national electricity grid to supply power. International tourists require relative ease of access to, and movement within, countries, and at least moderate levels of comfort at a reasonable cost. Neither Nigeria nor Cameroon at present satisfies these prerequisites, and the recent (April 2008) parliamentary ratification of the Paul Biya dictatorship in Cameroon may act as a further disincentive. It follows that a particular aim should be to stimulate tourism by nationals of the two countries.

Trans-national aspects

The establishment of a trans-border Mandara mountain park within which visitors from either country could freely circulate would indeed transform tourism in this area to the benefit of both nations. At the same time the creation of such a trans-national zone would by itself stimulate development, making it easier for locals to move back and forth across the border between ECOWAS and Central African states in order to access specialist facilities and markets.

Even during the former border dispute, there was active and friendly interaction across the frontier at all levels, from administrators attending each others' national holidays to formal and informal trade and social interactions. These provide the context of regional and local cooperation needed for the

development of an attractive eco-cultural tourism package. Recent construction of a track accessible to motorcycles (and hopefully soon four wheel vehicles) from the plain south of Sukur up steep slopes to the Cameroonian plateau village of Rhoumzou is one example of several local trans-border initiatives in this area. It is of course true that any such zone of (relatively) free movement across international frontiers generates administrative and legal challenges – which the bureaucracies of both countries have ample resources to meet.

National aspects

There already exist in Nigeria and Cameroon the administrative institutions at the national, state/provincial, and local government levels required to develop and implement policies regarding tourism. In Nigeria these include the Nigerian Commission on Museums and Monuments (NCMM), the Nigerian Tourism Development Corporation, State Arts Councils, Tourism Boards, and community associations of various kinds. Sukur's inscription as a World Heritage site has brought together a number of principal stakeholders including the Federal government represented by the NCMM and the NTDC, by the Adamawa State Agency for Museums and Monuments, and other state agencies, by Madagali Local Government, and the Sukur district and community, as well as the United Nations Development Program in the area of poverty alleviation, the private sector and educational and research institutions.

Despite the plethora of institutions, it remains questionable to what extent they are individually and collectively capable of delivering services in a focused and timely manner. For example, a 2006-2011 Conservation Management Business Plan for the Sukur Cultural Landscape had still not been formally adopted nor the site officially commissioned in April 2008, some 15 months after important conservation work should have been carried out under the plan by the NCMM.

Local initiatives

There already exist in the region a vast variety of institutions and individuals whose dispersed activities could productively be mobilized and integrated into a broader park context. For example, the Sukur Development Association was founded in 1976 and in 1992 established the Sukur 'Mini-Museum' with the support of the Adamawa State Arts Council. A second structure was built in 1996 with traditional 'furnishings' incorporated. A local man employed by the Arts Council of Adamawa State as 'interpreter/guardian' later attended a course on museum management at the National Museum at Jos, subsequently becoming one of the first two NCMM guides to the site. One objective of the Sukur Management Plan is to “develop strategies for sustainable eco-tourism activities”. One such activity is the widely promoted Yawal festival which since 2003 has 'attracted prominent sons and daughters, government officials, experts from UNDP and visitors from far and near' (ref !!!). The Belgian Ambassador attended Yawal in 2008.

In Cameroon tourism has been longer but scarcely better established. A guest house already existed at Rhoumsiki in the 1970s and tourists can still visit the chief, a smith's forge, consult a diviner, and visit a traditional house. Rhoumsiki remains a tourist destination, and a local entrepreneur has built up a reputable tour company which now operates throughout Cameroon. The 'route touristique' through the Cameroon Mandara includes a visit to Mabas (iron smelting furnaces, charming houses and a fine view over to Nigeria) and a stop at a privately run motel in Mokolo, and the craft shop at Djingliya (simple accommodation available) run under the auspices of a Catholic mission. Local women also make baskets, pottery and other craft products, some of a non-traditional “tourist art” nature. Some initiatives, for example a weaving cooperative at Gousda, fail but are nonetheless signs of a healthy entrepreneurial spirit even if, on that side of the frontier, there is far more reliance on European and NGO capital investment and expatriate personnel.

Other initiatives have been taken independently by communities and even by individuals. The people of the Ziver massif, once hostile to outsiders, now supply soft drinks and bottled beer from Mokolo to thirsty trekkers. However visitors must engage local guides in order to avoid sacred sites and the wrath of locals – sometimes enforced by bows and arrows. Near Mokolo, on the main road from Maroua, Dokwaza, an enterprising master smith (David et al. 1988), built a 'traditional' Mafa furnace and performed 'mini-smelts' for tourists. And there are many other examples ... but nothing that links these initiatives in a larger framework. The network of paths – hiking trails already built and often superbly engineered – remains to be discovered.

The necessity of a 'pro-poor' approach to development

In order for development that includes eco-cultural tourism to succeed, enabling montagnards to remain in their mountains while enjoying a better and sustainable standard of living, a 'pro-poor' approach is essential (Ashley, Roe and Goodwin 2001). Pro-poor tourism generates net benefits for the poor that may be economic, social, environmental or cultural. A set of six principles characteristic of pro-poor tourism has been identified. Here we address the two that are most critical, *participation* and *holistic livelihood*, and suggest how they might be realized in the Mandara mountains.

Participation implies that “poor people must participate in tourism decisions if their livelihood priorities are to be reflected in the way tourism is developed. Education and mobilization of village communities is essential and must be tackled with sensitivity to cultural norms.” Thus for example meetings with chiefs, ward heads and elders, male *and* female, are a prerequisite to any and all forms of cooperation. Montagnard communities have suffered a long history of exploitation and are sensibly skeptical of proposals from beyond their hills.

Holistic livelihood means that “the range of livelihood concerns of the poor – economic, social and environmental, short-term and long-term – needs to be recognized. Focusing on cash or jobs is inadequate.” The Sukur Development Association comprises men and women living at Sukur who continue to live by farming, as well as Sukur practicing a variety of jobs and professions in nearby towns and in cities elsewhere in Nigeria. There may be differences of opinion about what is best for Sukur, but the wishes of those living there generally have priority. Comparable associations are widespread in the region. In Cameroon every jurisdiction, rural and urban, has locally elected councilors. Consequently, elders living on the mountain slopes as well as educated younger people living in new settlements below may come together to discuss tourism strategies acceptable to all concerned. These will include respect for and protection of traditional ways and sacred sites, the formation of local guides, masons and conservators, the upgrading of rest houses, and other supplemental forms of local employment for men, women and children. None of this can be achieved in a heavy-handed, top-down manner.

A pro-poor approach to tourism has the potential to enable montagnards to continue to live in the mountains, rather than relocating to the plains to be nearer roads, schools and health centers, or to the towns in the region. This 'descent from the hills' began forcibly in colonial times and has continued since independence in 1960. Such downward migration has environmental as well as social consequences. “When the people move down, the soil follows”, as a Cameroonian member of their national assembly told us, and there are deleterious environmental consequences. But resettlement is slowed or even reversed by the building of health care centers and primary schools in hard-to-reach mountain villages, and the construction of dirt roads accessible by motorbikes and pickup trucks, all already in progress in some areas. Such roads also provide better access to markets, offering direct and immediate economic benefits. The well established system of terrace agriculture can potentially be augmented with income generated from an approach to tourism that enables and requires farmers

and artisans to become teachers of sustainability, and of traditional skills and knowledge. For indeed the North and the West have much to learn from these inhabitants of the South.

The lesson of Sukur

In 2004 when we returned to Sukur for the first time since its inscription as a World Heritage Cultural Landscape we worried that it would be overwhelmed with tourists. Instead we found that the road from the main highway to the base of the mountain had been graded, a bridge put in and connection to the national electricity grid commencing. Trucks, cars and motor cycles (okadas) ferried people and goods between the foot of the mountain and the market for a fee within the means of many mountain dwellers who are spared the seven kilometer return trek. Tourists, with the exception of Nigerian school and college groups, were and remain few and far between.

We had not realized World Heritage status would bring together a number of stakeholders with the ‘common goal of developing sustainable tourism around Sukur.’ In addition to the stakeholders mentioned already the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has played an important role in local development. Its task, in conjunction with state and local government, has been to alleviate poverty by provision of social amenities (health worker training, wells, training, etc.).

During recent visits to Sukur we found that paved road and electricity have reached the base of the mountain. A new primary school and an additional building for the earlier one have been constructed on the mountain. Two wells were dug by locals with UNDP funds. At the base of the mountain a Sukur entrepreneur has built the 5-chalet Sukur Tourist Haven with a large room suitable for small conferences. And while we were at Sukur the editor-in-chief and northeast bureau chief of Total Magazine International, Abuja, plus the secretary to Adamawa State Commission for Museums and Monuments, and a representative of Tourism Projects Consult visited. They interviewed the Hidi of Sukur and ourselves.

In our original peace park proposal we focused on tourism as a means for developing the region. We did not realize that an internationally recognized designation such UNESCO World Heritage Site (or an international peace park) would bring with it access to multiple “new funding sources for sustainable development.” Hence, in the case of Sukur, infrastructure and social amenities development has preceded tourism. With the example of Sukur in mind we are now of the opinion that local development of worthy areas fostered by their designation as parks, in this case hopefully trans-border, is a far more potent engine of economic and social progress than tourism. The synergy of interaction across what remains as one of the most unambiguous African frontiers – between ECOWAS states and those of Central Africa – is in this case likely to be hugely important.

The peace park and sustainable internationalization: the role of universities

Besides advocating the case for park creation, it has been our concern to remind our Nigerian and Cameroonian colleagues, and similarly bring to the attention of those in Canada that the area of the proposed park is one particularly suited to research in the sciences and social sciences. The environmental and social variety within the region, which contains for example representatives of three of Africa’s four indigenous linguistic phyla, is immense, and in the area of flora and fauna poorly established. There remains a great deal of work to do in geography, geology and hydrology, among other hard sciences. The region’s varied 20th century history began with German colonization followed by British and French mandates. These were associated with contrasting legal and administrative traditions that have to some extent been maintained as models by independent nation states. This constitutes a social scientist’s dream laboratory for comparative research.

The University of Calgary is not alone among Canadian universities in including among its faculty a good number with substantial involvement in national and transboundary parks, conservation, wildlife and park management and sustainable tourism, in addition to others with expertise and experience in the affected region. We have approached almost twenty and they have, with one exception, expressed interest. This might take the form of their conducting research directly related to the park, but is more likely to involve one or more of the following, all of which would be best undertaken in collaboration with African colleagues:

- supervising Canadian graduate students researching on park-related topics,
- training African graduate students,
- upgrading the qualifications of African professionals,
- acting as consultants to institutions involved in park development, and
- arranging multidisciplinary field trips for students.

Financial support may be sought from the United Nations Institute for Training and Research and a great variety of other sources.¹

Our present proposal is an outgrowth of 24 years research in the Mandara mountains and is designed to institutionalize that internationalization. It seeks to reunite within the peace park context peoples whose shared heritage has been obscured by 20th century political divisions, while at the same time contributing to their economic wellbeing. It could also have significant impact on the academic communities of those Nigerian and Cameroonian universities besides our own that decide to take part, linking their efforts in a new and newsworthy context, and ensuring that enrichment of the international education experience is extended to many more students in Africa and in Canada.

The transfer of responsibility

We have been working in and around the northern Mandara mountains since 1984 and arguing for the creation of a Mandara international peace park since 2002. The reactions of a wide range of respondents from Cameroonian ministers to Nigerian academics to local chiefs and friends and acquaintances in many villages have been positive. Our proposal is not regarded in either country as unwelcome foreign interference. Accordingly, at the end of a short field season in January-February 2007, one of us (ND) spent several days in Yaoundé visiting ministries and promoting the proposal. This is now being taken seriously in Cameroon, and a colleague at the Ministry of Culture assures us that they intend to strike a committee.

The March 14th presentation on which this paper is based represented our first public lobbying in Nigeria. Unfortunately an inquiry into the management of the National Commission for Museum and Monuments, still incomplete at the time of writing, deprived us of the support of a natural ally. Similarly, the disallowance by an Electoral Tribunal of the Adamawa State gubernatorial election followed by postponement of the rerun left us without established interlocutors in Yola and at many levels in the state government. Although, as we leave the country in late April, we will be seeking to find federal support in Abuja, it is clear that expatriates can do very little more, and that unless Nigerian others take up the task, the prospects for a Nigerian park component are poor to nonexistent. So let this paper conclude with a call for others to take over the initiative.

¹ As for Canadian funding possibilities, funding for the package would be sought through the International Community-University Research Alliances in Partnership with the International Development Research Centre. As of 2007 this was offering a maximum grant of \$400,000 for each of 5 years of which half would go to appropriate "Community Partners" in the developing countries and half would be used by the Canadian institution for infrastructure and the funding of its faculty staff and students. Thus the development of Nigerian and Cameroonian committees that met the requirements of a "community partner" would be critical at least from the Canadian perspective. I should however state that there is no guarantee that this program will continue although I have been reliably informed that good proposals are likely to be entertained.

If you, whether individually or as a group, accept this challenge your lobbying must include stakeholders/actors identified in both countries in the following categories:

- 1) local communities: at least 26 ethno-linguistic groups within the delimited area reside in villages and small towns with their own traditional chiefs, elected leaders and community associations,
- 2) local governments: Adamawa and Borno State Local Government Areas and districts within them; Departments of Mayo-Sava and Mayo-Tsanaga and their sub-prefectures and cantons,
- 3) the private sector: local businesses, tour operators, transport providers, hotels, tourist camps, etc., not necessarily based within proposed park boundaries,
- 4) NGOs and other civil agencies: the UNDP, craft cooperatives, development projects, missions,
- 5) regional authorities: Adamawa State (including the state university at Mubi) and Borno State; Cameroon's Extreme North Province, both with subsidiary agencies (tourism bureaus, museums, arts associations, health services, etc.)
- 6) federal and national authorities: Nigeria's National Commission for Museums and Monuments, its parent Ministry of Tourism and Culture and others, the Federal University of Technology, Yola and the University of Maiduguri; in Cameroon several ministries including Planning, Culture, and Tourism and their subsidiary agencies.

To bring the message to all these institutions and groups is a daunting task, but one that can change many lives for the better and open up a fascinating but little known part of Africa to the world. It is apparent to us that the members of the Borno Museum Society and the readers of its Newsletter constitute the intellectual elite of Maiduguri and its university, and that individually and collectively you are a force to be reckoned with. We leave the Nigerian park proposal in your hands. Your action or inaction will decide its fate.

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