

# **Grant Proposal For Research In South Africa**

## **Abstract**

The research and work that I hope to conduct through this grant seeks to look at the role of international vs. domestic conservation organizations in the conservation of South Africa's wildlife. With the fall of apartheid rule in 1994, the conservation of South Africa's wildlife has opened up to allow for different ideas, resources, and donors from the international community. The purpose of this project is to study what role these international conservation agencies play in the conservation sector of South Africa, and what effect the influx of outside ideas has had on the local communities who live around these conservation areas. The setting for this work will be in Kruger National Park, the largest park in South Africa located in the northeastern corner of the country. The project that I have planned is multi-faceted in design with focuses in both assisted and independent research, as well as service learning, and cultural exploration. I plan to assist Professor Peter J. Rogers with the research he plans to conduct in the region, and then use the knowledge and connections that he has provided for me to conduct my own research. I also plan to do service for the park by organizing and collecting documents in poorly kept archives that will not only assist our research but will also be useful for the park and its staff. I see this as a unique opportunity for me to partake in a hands on learning experience with a very interesting specific focus, working alongside a Bates Professor who can provide me with greater access and expertise concerning conservation in South Africa.

## **Description of Research**

The work that I will conduct with Professor Rogers will continue his research on the different conservation strategies and policies found in Eastern Africa and Southern Africa. Historically, conservation in Eastern Africa, which has largely been influenced by international agencies, has pursued a traditional "preservationist" style of conservation, while Southern Africa has practiced an "active management" approach to conservation allowing for limited sustainable use of certain animal products (like ivory) to increase revenue drawn from conservation (see e.g. Bonner 1993, Heimart 1995, and Mofson 2000). By increasing the revenue brought in from conservation these Southern African countries seek to use conservation as a tool for sustainable development in effort

to uplift the stumbling economies of rural South Africans and help them receive more of the benefit of Africa's highly valuable wildlife. This difference in approach to wildlife conservation was accentuated at the COP 11 meeting of Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species held in April of 2000 in Nairobi Kenya. At the convention a major clash over the issue of the African elephant and the ivory trade was prevented by a last minute compromise between the various East and Southern African states (see attached website for ongoing coverage on CITES).

Our research will explore the differences between these two regions of Africa in conservation practice and theory. The focus will be on the relationship between international conservation organizations and domestic African conservation agents both governmental and non-governmental. Professor Roger's starting hypothesis for the project is "that differences in conservation policy and practice can be explained by the relative strength and influence of the international and domestic sectors in the countries of the two regions." The countries in Southern Africa tend to have more powerful and more numerous domestic conservation organizations therefore the influence of the international bodies is larger in Eastern Africa. Our research will be conducted by integrating participant observation, interviews with different players in the South African wildlife conservation arena, and through document collection and analysis.

After building my skills in research methodology and practice I plan to use what I have learned from the research done with Professor Rogers to pursue my own research on a different subject. My independent research project will focus on the relationship between Kruger National Park and the conservation bodies that oversee it, with the local South African communities that border the fenced in park. Due to the forced displacement of these South Africans with the creation of the park in 1926, and the historical disregard by governmental park officials and conservationists, many local Africans have had negative opinions of the park, and bad relations with park officials (see Social Ecology and South African National Parks 2000). I hope to study how these local Africans view Kruger National Park, how they view the process of conservation in general, and whether or not these beliefs are changing with new initiatives of conservationists to improve relations with these local communities.

Recently Kruger National Park and the South Africa National Parks Board (SANP) have created a new Social Ecology Department in effort to improve relations with local communities. In order to pursue my research interests of local community-park relations I will work with this newly formed Social Ecology branch of the park, with which Professor Rogers' has established connections. Through the Social Ecology Department I hope to interview members of the local communities (like the Makuleke) surrounding the park, people involved with the private game farms around the park, park staff who work in this department, donors to the program, and other stakeholders, as well as observing workshops and meetings put together by this branch of Kruger National Park. I see this element of my project to be particularly exciting because not only will it further build my abilities to conduct social science research, it will also give me a way to connect with and explore different elements of the local South African communities that surround the park.

### **Service Learning**

Another element of my project that is more service oriented is the work that I would do directly for Kruger National Park by compiling and organizing documents in the archives of the park. These documents include administrative park records, scientific reports, governmental reports, and other materials that went into the management plan of Kruger National Park. At the present date the parks archives are completely unorganized, and there is a lack of staff to complete this task. I will conduct the preliminary organizing of the materials in the archives, an important job which may otherwise not be completed. While document collecting is important work for our research, it is also an important task that David Mabunda, the Director of Kruger National Park, has welcomed as it would help the park in organizing its own historical record. This element of my project will help me learn how to read and interpret government documents, which can take some serious training and practice to do effectively.

### **Connections With My Academic Interests**

I see the research and work that I hope to do in Kruger National Park in South Africa as a great way for me to improve my understanding of African wildlife conservation and the debate over whether to adopt an "active management" style or to use the traditional "preservationist" approach to conservation . As an environmental

studies major with a potential focus in global environmental politics, this research would be a great way to extend what I have learned about conservation and international environmental politics in the classroom at Bates, to the world around me. Through hands-on field research I will not only build skills on how to conduct effective research, but I will also learn more of the realities of conservation in Africa. The research that I would do over the summer is also connected with the research I hope to do in either Uganda or Thailand through study abroad in the fall semester of 2001. In Uganda or Thailand I hope to study different mechanisms and methods of third world development. As conservation and tourism are being used as models of sustainable development in South Africa this fellowship will give me a good background to compare this practice with other methods of development. This topic of third world sustainable development is also the general topic about which I hope to write my senior thesis, so the work I do this summer could potentially be pre-thesis work as well.

### **My Qualifications**

In order to prepare for this research project I am taking an Independent Study with Professor Rogers titled Conservation in a Changing South Africa, I have included a copy of the syllabus with this application. The purpose of this class is to extend what I learned last year in African Wildlife Conservation ENVR 245, to the more specific case of conservation in South Africa. Other classes that I have taken that pertain to the research I would do in south Africa include; POLS 259 Environmental Diplomacy, ENVR 205 Nature in Human Culture, ENVR 202 Introduction to Environmental Studies, SOC 160 Globalization, and ENVR 215 Environmental Ethics. I also am going to take the ANTH s21 Cultural Production and Social Context in Jamaica this coming short term, which is largely based in ethnographic field research and should help me learn how to adjust to another culture and conduct ethnographic work. Other related activities that I am a part of at Bates include; co-head of the Environmental Coalition, RA representative for the Environmental House, active member of New World Coalition and the Outing Club, and community activist in Lewiston-Auburn. My performance in the classroom and in my extracurricular life has been successful, as is evidenced by my becoming a Dana Scholar this fall. For part of the summer before I came to Bates I interned with Bill Wolfe the policy director for the New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club. One of the

largest components of the work that I did for Bill was collecting various documents from the Department of Environmental Protection office in Trenton NJ. This work has given me some experience dealing with large archives, and should be a good background for the document collecting and organizing that I plan to do for Kruger National Park this summer. I also spent the summer after my junior year of high school volunteering at a day care center on the Blackfoot Native American Reservation in Browning MT. This experience has given me some experience living in a culture that is largely different than my own, and should help me adjust to life in South Africa. Lastly, I really want to go on this project and I think it compliments what I learn in my studies, as well as what I am passionate about in life quite nicely.

### **References**

-Bonner Raymond, At the Hand of Man: Peril and Hope for Africa's Wildlife, Alfred A Knopf, New York NY, 1993

-Heimert Andrew, "How the Elephant Lost his Tusks", Yale Law Review 104(6), 1473-1506

-Mofson Phyllis, "Zimbabwe and CITES: Influencing the International Regime" in, Endangered Species, Threatened Convention: The Past Present and Future of CITES, eds Jon Hutton and Barnabas Dickson, London, Earthscan Publications

-Social Ecology and South African National Parks, Visions of Change, Development Communications Corporation, Johannesburg 2000

-Adams Jonathan S. and Meshane Thomas O., The Myth of Wild Africa, University of CA press, Berkely CA, 1996

-information concerning CITES COP11 meeting can be found at [www.iisd.ca/cites/cop11](http://www.iisd.ca/cites/cop11)

### **Proposed Budget Form**

An important note concerning my budget is that Peter Rogers has just received a Student Research Apprenticeship Grant for \$3,000, which will be a helpful base of money for me to complete this trip in South Africa. Yet I am applying for this grant as well because \$3,000 will not sufficiently pay for our trip. So I am requesting an additional \$3,500 from the Phillips Fellowship to help pay for the remaining costs of our trip. The proposed budget then equals a total of \$6,500, which includes a student stipend that is a necessary component of the budget if I am to do this project.

Student Stipend	\$1,500.00
Transportation	
-Plane Ticket (Boston to Nelspruit South Africa)	\$2,100.00 <sup>1</sup>
-Ground Transportation	\$750.00
Lodging	\$800.00
Food	\$800.00
Equipment/Supplies	
-Cell Phone	\$100.00
-Film	\$55.00
Other Costs	
-Translator Gratuities	\$300.00
-Travel Insurance	\$95.00
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>\$6,500</b>

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<sup>1</sup> Quote from Dube Travel 1/15/01