



ORGANIC SHEA BUTTER PROCESSING PLANT BACKGROUND

Calgary Zoo Conservation

- As one of Canada's leading zoological and conservation organizations, the Calgary Zoo is committed to addressing conservation issues both locally and internationally.
- Launched in 2003, the Calgary Zoo's Centre for Conservation Research (CCR), specializes in using science to help save species that are at risk of extinction nationally or globally. This is done in various ways such as conceiving and conducting innovative research studies, providing financial support for community conservation projects and contributing scientific expertise to other researchers, governments and industry. The two areas of focus are:
 - Species Reintroduction
 - Community Conservation

WECHIAU COMMUNITY HIPPO SANCTUARY

- WCHS is a 34 km stretch of riverine forest, floodplain, and Guinea savannah woodland along the Black Volta River. It is divided into two zones, Core Zone (off-limits conservation zone, home to at least 226 plant, 237 bird, 50 mammal, 32 reptile and 9 amphibian species) and adjacent Development Zone, consisting of wooded savannah interspersed with 17 settlements (4 different tribes) and farmland.
- WCHS was the first community led large mammal sanctuary in Ghana, managed solely by Chiefs and local people
- The WCHS encompasses a multi-sectoral approach including major elements of scientific study and bio-monitoring; conservation of an endemic species, bio-enterprise and eco-tourism concepts; land management; and economic diversification for the local communities.
- Benefits of the WCHS include increased hippo population, decreased poaching, higher bird biodiversity, return of wildlife to the area and improvements to the local quality of life - new schools, safe drinking water, residential lighting, livestock watering holes, paved roads and employment.

- Since 1998 Calgary Zoo has provided technical, financial and operational support for the WCHS.

Two revenue streams

- 1) Ecotourism
 - Revenues from eco-tourism have covered operational costs of the sanctuary since 2004 with staff salaries and tourism infrastructure maintained by the Sanctuary Management Board through visitor fees alone.
- 2) Shea Butter Cooperative (est. 2008)
 - For generations, women have harvested shea nuts in a traditional way without negative environmental impact. Since 2008, they have been able to benefit economically from selling their raw, organic nuts on the international market
 - Construction of the Shea Processing Centre was completed in December 2015. It is Ghana's only organic and largest hand-crafted shea processing centre, and festivities to officially launch the facility took place in Wechiau on August 22nd, 2015.
 - Currently over 1,600 women members of the organic harvesting cooperative, with hope to integrate up to 4,750 women by 2016. The processing centre itself will provide employment to 150 trained staff.
 - Each member receives an organic 'bonus' of 20% on total sales, while the Sanctuary Management Board of Wechiau receives a 10% premium from total annual purchases to be applied to Hippo conservation objectives.

Shea Nut Harvesting/Processing

- Called the Tree of Life in Ghana
- Comes from nuts of karite trees that grow across the dry sahel region from Senegal to Sudan
- Nuts fall from trees during the rainy season and are sorted, washed, dried and shells removed. The nuts are then ground, roasted and milled into a paste. The mixture is then boiled and let cool into blocks ready for shipment.
- Shea is both edible to be used in cooking, but mostly used for cosmetic purposes.