

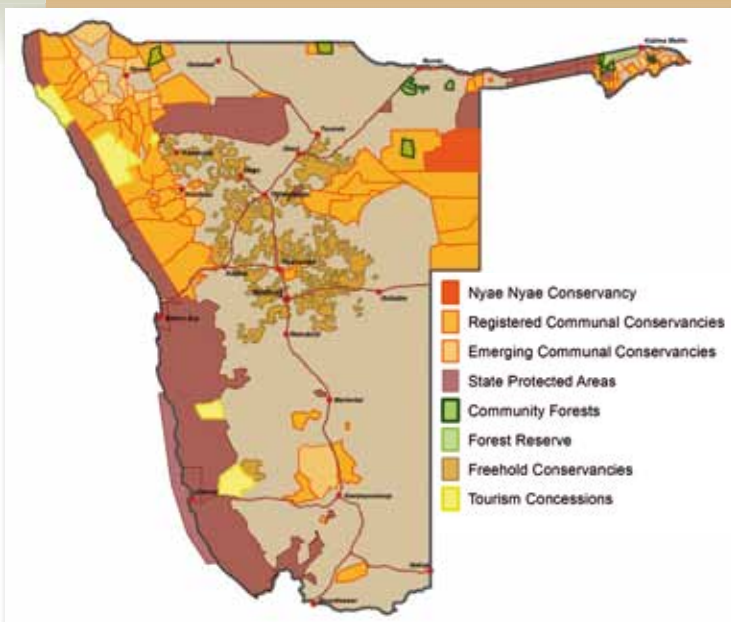
Living with wildlife –
the story of **Nyae Nyae Conservancy**



Nyae Nyae – Ju/'hoansi for 'the place without mountains, but rocky'



Living with wildlife – the story of NYAE NYAE CONSERVANCY



A CONSERVANCY IS...

- a legally registered area with clearly defined borders and a constituted management body run by the community for the development of residents and the sustainable use of wildlife and tourism
- managed by a group elected to serve the interests of all its members
- a place where residents can add income from wildlife and tourism to traditional farming activities
- a place where wildlife populations increase as they are managed for productive gain
- a place where the value of the natural resources increases, enhancing the value of the land
- a forum through which services and developments can be channelled and integrated
- zoned for multiple uses to minimise conflict and maximise the interests of all stakeholders

Conservancies
enable development and conservation over large areas...

MILESTONES AND SUCCESSES

- 1981** – an NGO that over time evolves into the Nyae Nyae Development Foundation of Namibia is formed to support the community
- 1994** – the Nyae Nyae community begins the process to register as a conservancy
- 1996** – policy changes allow communal area residents to benefit from wildlife and tourism by forming conservancies
- 1998** – Nyae Nyae Conservancy is registered in February, becoming the first communal conservancy in Namibia
- 1998** – the Nyae Nyae Conservancy office is established at Barakka
- 99-05** – each year, wildlife is re-introduced into the conservancy, including springbok, red hartebeest, gemsbok, eland, kudu and blue wildebeest, with a total of 2,200 animals being introduced
- 2001** – an annual game count is started in Nyae Nyae
- 2002** – the Event Book monitoring system is implemented in Nyae Nyae
- 2003** – the conservancy office is moved to Tsumkwe
- 04/05** – a large game-proof camp is erected to manage the remaining Nyae Nyae buffalo population and avoid contact with livestock
- 2005** – the Nyae Nyae Trust is formed
- 2008** – black rhino are re-introduced into the conservancy
- 2008** – an application is lodged with the Ministry of Environment & Tourism to extend the borders of the conservancy to include the village of N'homa
- 2011** – an application is lodged with the Ministry of Agriculture to register Nyae Nyae Community Forest, having the same borders and management structures as the conservancy

QUICK FACTS

Region: Otjozondjupa

Size: 8,992 square kilometres

Approximate population: 2,300

Main language: Ju/'hoansi

Date of registration: February 1998

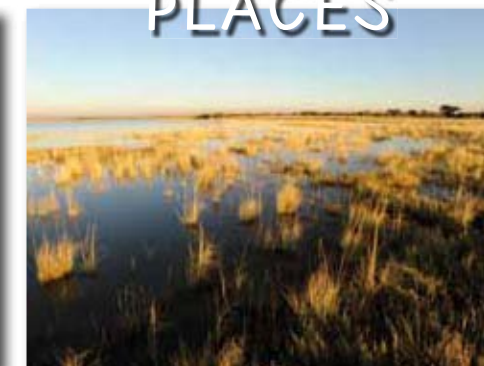
NYAE NYAE offers an enchanting mix of

PEOPLE



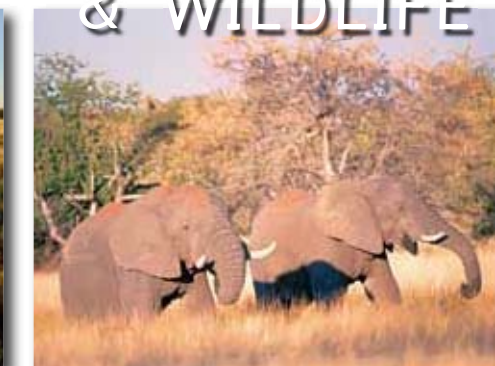
interesting cultures and dynamic communities committed to sustainability - people living in Nyae Nyae share a common vision for managing their area and its resources

PLACES



vast, diverse and spectacular landscapes – Nyae Nyae Pans, bushland, magical baobabs... a healthy environment diversifies economic opportunities and drives economic growth

& WILDLIFE



charismatic, free-roaming wildlife – elephant, lion, leopard, wild dog, diverse plains game, abundant birdlife... wildlife generates a variety of benefits for local people

people are living with wildlife, are managing natural resources wisely and are reaping the benefits...

A LITTLE HISTORY

Prior to Namibia's independence in 1990, communal area residents had few rights to use wildlife. Wild animals were often seen as little more than a threat to crops, livestock and infrastructure, as well as community safety. Ground-breaking legislation passed in the mid-nineties laid the foundation for a new approach to the sustainable use of natural resources. By forming a conservancy, people in communal areas can now actively manage – and generate benefits from – wildlife and other resources in their area, encouraging wildlife recoveries and environmental restoration. While a conservancy is a natural resource management structure, it is defined by social ties. Conservancies unite groups of people with the common goal of managing their resources. Today, over 60 communal conservancies embrace one in four rural Namibians, underlining a national commitment to both rural development and conservation.

Nyae Nyae is the oldest, as well as the second largest conservancy in the country, covering close to 9,000 square kilometres. Most of the 2,300

residents are from the Ju/'hoansi ethnic group, a sub-group of the San. Historically, the Nyae Nyae area occupied by the Ju/'hoansi stretched into Botswana in the east, north beyond what is today Khaudum National Park, south to the settlements of Eiseb and Gam and west beyond the settlement of Aasvoëlnes. Today, Botswana creates the eastern border of the conservancy, while to the south, west and north, Ondjou and N#-a-Jaqla Conservancies and Khaudum National Park adjoin Nyae Nyae, and in turn border onto other conservancies to form a huge contiguous conservation landscape.

The long process to mobilise, unite and support the Nyae Nyae community in forming a conservancy in a sense already began prior to Namibia's independence. In 1981, what is today the Nyae Nyae Development Foundation was formed to support the community in development and resource management. By the time the conservancy legislation was passed in 1996, the Nyae Nyae community was well placed to register the conservancy, which was gazetted in early 1998.

San or Bushman? Both terms have a slightly derogatory origin. Bushman originates from the Dutch word *bosjeman* - an outcast who lives in the bush. San comes from the Nama 'saa', referring to poor people without cattle. While the Regional San Conference of 1993 adopted San as the official term, Bushman has also lost much of its negative connotation and today is taken to refer more to the great environmental knowledge and bush skills of the San.



RESOURCES AND ATTRACTIONS

Conservancies
are living landscapes...

The **culture** of the San is legendary, an often idealised icon of a balanced existence within the natural environment. The San have superb hunting skills and 'bush knowledge'. Their keen perception and understanding of the environment has allowed them to live in inhospitable ecosystems such as the Kalahari for countless generations. Nyae Nyae is rich in archeological artefacts and recent finds indicate a presence of people from the Middle Stone Age. It seems likely that the ancestors of the Ju/'hoansi have roamed across the area for thousands of years and their traditional knowledge and skills have great value.



stalking through African wilderness with a band of hunters, meandering through the veld gathering food, huddled around the evening fire watching traditional dances... the San culture has the power to inspire in us a search for a more harmonised existence

Today, most people in Nyae Nyae no longer live an active hunter-gatherer lifestyle and find themselves very much in a state of cultural transition and social change. Yet wonderful living museums make the past accessible again – for both visitors and a new generation of San no longer in touch with their heritage. 'Keeping our culture alive for our children is one of the most important aspects of the living museum' says Komtsa Daqm, a museum guide.

The vast, mostly unfenced Nyae Nyae **environment** retains a strong wilderness atmosphere, which is enhanced by the fascination of the San culture. Located on the western rim of the Kalahari Basin – the largest accumulation of sand in the world – much of Nyae Nyae is covered by wind blown sands. Areas of rocky ground retain seasonal surface water in the so called 'pannetjiesveld' (area of many pans). Here the Nyae Nyae Pans become a very important wetland after good rains. Nyae Nyae is generally flat, varying between 1,100 and 1,200 metres above sea level. The Aha Hills in the far south east of the conservancy create the only real topographical variation.

Huge baobabs punctuate the savanna woodland and create a sense of ancient Africa. Rainfall in Nyae Nyae is low and unpredictable, with an annual average of around 450 millimetres. The harshness of the environment is increased by high temperatures and extremely high evaporation. However, the water table is close to the surface, generally lying between two and 25 metres. All these environmental factors contribute to interesting habitat variations and the highest biodiversity found in the communal areas of the Otjozondjupa Region.



a seemingly endless world of bushland and pannetjiesveld, dotted here and there with the magical shapes of baobabs and brought to life by the mere expectation of seeing game, by the calls of lion and hyaena at night – and by the light tread of the first people

Since the establishment of conservancies, **wildlife** numbers in communal areas have rebounded from historic lows prior to independence. Nyae Nyae is one of the last refuges of the African wild dog in Namibia and the only place in the country where all of the Big Five occur – elephant, black rhino, lion, buffalo and leopard. Other mammals include giraffe, eland, kudu, blue wildebeest, roan, gemsbok,

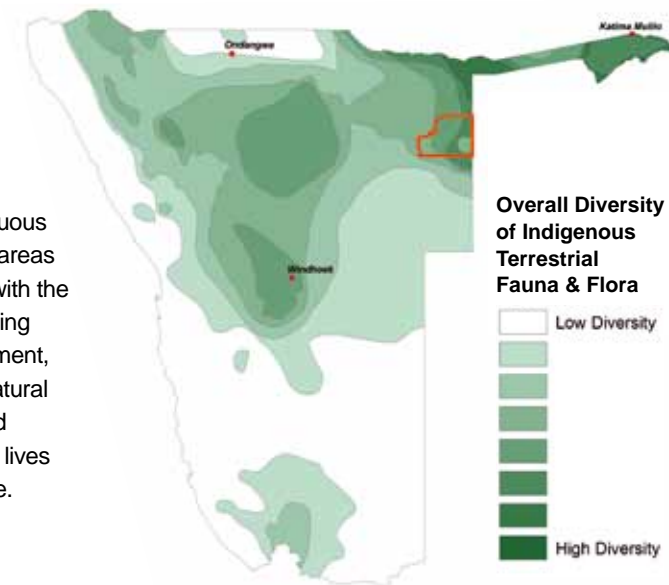


hartebeest, springbok, duiker, steenbok, warthog, spotted and brown hyaena, cheetah and jackal. More than 200 bird species have been recorded in the conservancy. Birding around the seasonal Nyae Nyae Pans is spectacular after good rains, when more than 10,000 waterbirds of over 80 species gather here, including great painted snipes, flamingos, wattled cranes and breeding slaty egrets. The area has been designated an Important Bird Area by Birdlife International and is eligible for Ramsar Site status.

Nyae Nyae is also rich in flora, and over 100 species of edible plants are utilized by the San. Huge baobabs are the most distinctive feature of many landscapes, but many other plants are of interest and importance, including manketti, leadwood, terminalia, false mopane and a variety of acacia trees, as well as devil's claw and Kalahari melon.

Around Nyae Nyae... The nearby Khaudum National Park is known especially for its numbers of elephant and roan, as well as for its wilderness flair. Both Nyae Nyae and Khaudum form part of the Kavango Zambezi Transfrontier

Conservation Area (KAZA). The initiative links five countries and is one of the largest contiguous conservation areas in the world, with the aim of facilitating wildlife movement, conserving natural resources and improving the lives of rural people.





LIVELIHOODS AND DEVELOPMENT

Conservancies empower rural people...

With a national population of around 30,000 the San constitute less than two percent of the total Namibian population and have the lowest per capita income of all language groups in the country. Many communities rely on a variety of support and are challenged by social disintegration, alcohol abuse and poverty. Only around 15 percent of San in Namibia have resource utilisation rights to land. The literacy rate is low at around 20%, with school attendance at only half the national average. The few opportunities for formal employment are thus further inhibited by limited levels of formal education. The San have negligible representation in government and the Ju/'hoansi are one of only two out of



Harvesting of devil's claw for the health industry is practiced widely, providing income to around 300 to 400 harvesters. Craft production has become an important source of income for both men and women, with over 300 craft producers in the conservancy. While the men concentrate on producing traditional implements such as bows and arrows, women create exquisite ostrich egg shell jewellery and other beautiful items. The G!hunku Crafts shop, located next to the conservancy office, is a superb local outlet for these crafts.

The C44 gravel road provides access for visitors to the area, connecting Tsumkwe with the B8 tar road between Grootfontein and Rundu in the west, as well as the Dobe border post leading to Botswana in the east. Four wheel drive is needed beyond the gravel road, both within Nyae Nyae and to access Khaudum, or when proceeding into Botswana.

Nyae Nyae facilitates access to diverse training and capacity building, empowers individuals, especially women, to actively take part in decision-making, as well as instilling a renewed sense of pride in cultural heritage

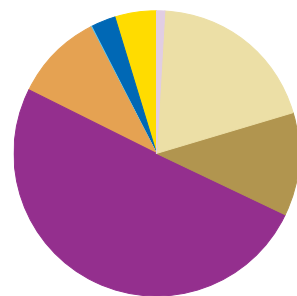
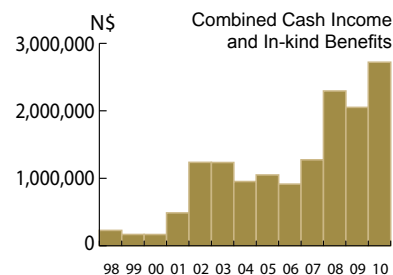
the conservancy is enabling a range of new livelihood options for its residents, including tourism, craft production, hunting and indigenous plant harvesting, all of which enable the Ju/'hoansi to utilise their traditional knowledge and skills

the six San traditional authorities who have received official recognition. All this is the result of many years of marginalisation.

A variety of development initiatives by both government and non-government organisations over the last 30 years have attempted to move the San into modern society. Schools and health facilities have been developed, permanent water points have been established and livestock herding and gardening have been promoted. These activities have had a large influence on San culture. The Nyae Nyae Conservancy has returned natural resource user rights to the Ju/'hoansi community. San traditionally live in small groups in a democratic society that has never been structured into typical tribal leadership systems. Each group has a home ground or *n!ore* with exclusive resource use rights. Around 40 settlements are spread throughout the conservancy.

Tsumkwe, originally a *n!ore* water source, was established as the administrative centre of the area in 1959. An area of 30 square kilometres around Tsumkwe is excluded from the conservancy. The small town is the only place to buy goods and provides access to a combined school, a clinic and other government facilities and services. The nearest

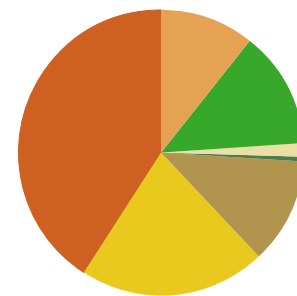
hospitals lie outside the conservancy at Mangetti Dune and Grootfontein. There are five primary schools in Nyae Nyae and Ju/'hoan speakers participating in the Village School Programme have access to schooling in their mother tongue.



- Conservancy & Household Income**
 - Craft Sales
 - Campsites & Cultural Tourism
 - Joint Venture Tourism
 - Veld Products
 - Shoot & Sell
 - Live Game Sales
 - Trophy Hunting
 - Other
- Other Benefits**
 - Own-Use Hunting Game Meat
 - Trophy Hunting Game Meat

The people of Nyae Nyae today survive on a complex mix of livelihood activities. Veld food and occasional hunting still supplement other food sources, while livestock herding and small scale gardening are becoming increasingly important. The conservancy itself, as well as related natural resource use activities, provide employment and other benefits. The conservancy has paid for the development of numerous boreholes and distributes individual benefits each year, including annual cash payments, meat from trophy and own-use

- Conservancy Expenditure**
 - Jobs
 - Running Costs
 - Capital Developments
 - Social Benefits
 - Cash Payments
- Other Benefits**
 - Household Meat
 - Private Sector Jobs



The Tsumkwe Country Lodge, located in the town, is currently the only fixed tourism accommodation. While it does not have a formal relationship with the conservancy, lodge activities include village visits to the living museums at Mountain Pos and Dou Pos, with income going directly to the villages. Another excellent cultural experience, the Living Hunter's Museum, is located at //Xa/oba village along the track to Khaudum and includes a campsite. Wilderness campsites are also located at Makuri, Djxokwe and Kremetarkop and, although underutilised, provide nearby villages with some income.

Trophy hunting is currently the biggest source of income for the conservancy and also provides important employment. The area has yielded superb trophies and is considered one of the foremost big game hunting concessions in Namibia.

Nyae Nyae has received a lot of attention from local and international film teams and photographers, and the conservancy has received income from filming and photographic fees, although guidelines for these activities need to be improved and enforced.

Benefits to the conservancy and its members come from a variety of sources. Sources and amounts vary from year to year, depending on factors such as agreements with private sector partners, and market fluctuations. The pie chart shows the main benefit sources in 2010.

The conservancy spends money and provides community and individual benefits in various areas. Areas and amounts vary from year to year, depending on factors such as conservancy income and priorities. Private sector jobs are created through agreements with private sector partners. The pie chart shows the main expenditure and benefit areas in 2010.



MANAGING NATURAL RESOURCES

Conservancies facilitate sustainability...

Nyae Nyae is divided into four areas for management purposes. The **management structure** includes the conservancy board, made up of representatives of each area, as well as the paid positions of chairperson and conservancy manager. The board focuses on appointing the management committee and manager, as well as on strategic planning. The management committee consists of a minimum of five members, including the conservancy manager. It appoints staff, supervises performance and makes short term decisions. Employees include 14 rangers, a CBNRM field officer, three water team staff, a craft trainer, a craft shop coordinator (funded through shop income), a devil's



the Nyae Nyae Conservancy provides vital structures for managing the communal natural resources of the area in a way that enhances development and ensures sustainability

claw coordinator, an agriculture coordinator, an office administrator and a cleaner. Annual general meetings are attended by village representatives, the board and the management committee and are used to decide on benefit distribution, elect board members and the chairperson, approve annual budgets and work plans, as well as deliberate on strategies or programme amendments. The conservancy office is located in Tsumkwe and integrates G!hunku Crafts. The office is owned by the conservancy, which also owns two four-wheel drives. Conservancy funds are spent on running costs, community development and individual benefit distribution. The funds are managed by a trust administered by the Nyae Nyae Development Foundation.

Activities... The conservancy is based on the traditional Ju/'hoansi *n!ore* land management system, which was recognised by government in 1991. Members have the right to hunt approved game within their *n!ore* on foot with bow and arrows, spears or bird traps. Hunting is reported to the *n!ore* owner and records are submitted to conservancy rangers and the Ministry of Environment & Tourism (MET). The conservancy has been zoned for a variety of land uses, including hunting and tourism.

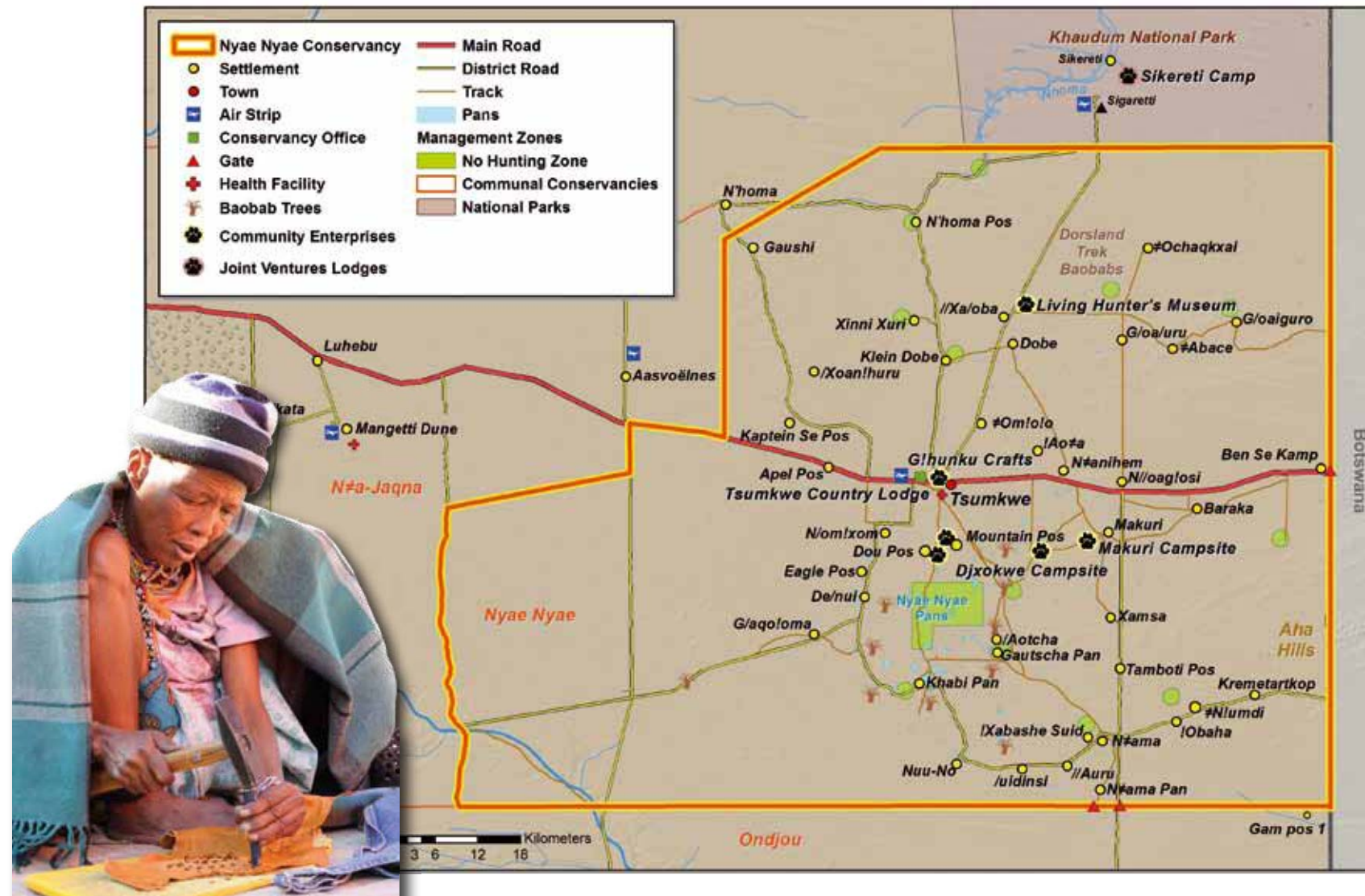
Wildlife reintroductions have significantly boosted game numbers and increased the value of the area for tourism and trophy hunting. An annual game count, done as a simultaneous 'full moon count' at waterholes in the conservancy, is carried out in collaboration with the MET and the support of NGOs. Conservancy rangers also do active natural resource monitoring through the Event Book monitoring system, recording data such as game sightings, human wildlife conflict, poaching incidents, game utilisation and any other data deemed important by the conservancy. All data is aggregated into monthly and annual reporting charts that facilitate adaptive management. Based on the game count and Event Book information, the MET sets annual quotas for using wildlife.

The conservancy is active in mitigating human wildlife conflict. With support from the Nyae Nyae Development Foundation and other NGOs, the conservancy has developed 'elephant proof' water reservoirs for villages, which has reduced conflicts with elephants to isolated problems at gardens. A system of providing financial offsets for losses is being implemented through the National Policy on Human Wildlife Conflict Management. It will be applied by the conservancy with MET assistance.

the conservancy uses a mix of modern technologies and traditional knowledge and skills to enable healthy wildlife populations, a productive environment, and the effective management of natural resources

A grazing management project seeks to ensure sustainable use of rangeland and mitigate the effects of overgrazing. The conservancy has also attempted to address repeated illegal livestock incursions from neighbouring communal areas. The devil's claw coordinator helps with sustainable harvesting methods and the required permit system, as well

as collecting harvests for sale. Further support for the sector is provided by the Centre for Research Information Action in Africa (CRIAA-SADC) and the Millennium Challenge Account - Namibia (MCA). In order to better manage all plant resources of the area, a community forest is in the process of formation, which will be directly integrated with the conservancy.





CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES...

Conservancies
are full of opportunities...

The wonderful mixture of environmental and cultural resources provides largely untapped potential in Nyae Nyae.

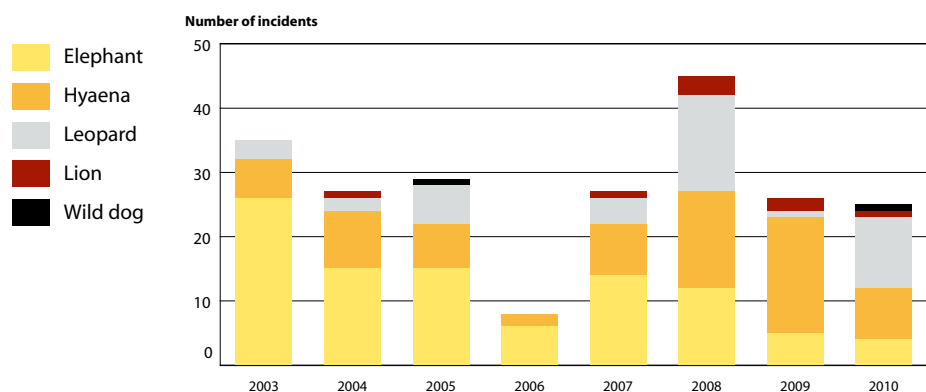
Challenges... The San culture is in a state of transition and is susceptible to external pressures, requiring sensitive and well-coordinated developments. Numerous government and NGO support agencies, with a mix of emphasis on social, religious, agricultural and environmental aspects, are active in Nyae Nyae. A more integrated approach to the various activities can facilitate a broader range of benefits for residents.

Nyae Nyae harbours great potential to overcome the social and environmental challenges that the area seems to face — and the conservancy is the ideal structure to coordinate many of the developments

Human wildlife conflict is a challenge where ever people coexist with wild animals, especially if these include elephants and large predators. The creation of artificial water points has increased the resident elephant population in Nyae Nyae, which poses a threat to the area's woodlands, especially in the vicinity of water. Nonetheless, human elephant conflicts have been significantly reduced through village water point protection measures and water points for game. With increases in livestock, predator problems are also increasing. At least some of these can be mitigated by herding livestock and keeping it in secure enclosures at night. Importantly, predators and elephants are of great value, both to the ecosystem and to tourism, and in the long run the benefits gained from these species should outweigh the costs of living with them. Human wildlife conflicts can be further mitigated through actively enforced zoning that sets aside different areas for wildlife and agricultural uses.



There are many unrealised tourism opportunities within Nyae Nyae, as well as the greater region. The mixture of the iconic San culture and authentic wilderness experiences provides various development options. Interpretation through qualified guiding and excellent information materials can make the complexity of modern San existence and the diversity of the environment accessible to visitors.



Human wildlife conflicts are monitored using the Event Book, indicating trends and improvements, such as reduced elephant conflicts achieved through water point protection measures.

... AND THE FUTURE



four-by-four routes with wilderness camping, serviced campsites near roads but away from larger settlements, luxury lodges and tented camps, high quality local guiding, birding and other special interest tours. Improvements to the current infrastructure in Khaudum, including the state of artificial waterholes, can facilitate the establishment of the Khaudum tourism route while maintaining the area's wilderness appeal. The development of tourism routes through Nyae Nyae and Khaudum into the Caprivi or Botswana can help the area become one of Namibia's primary wilderness tourism destinations.

Hunting forms an integral part of the San culture. Trophy hunting can play a vital role, providing significant income to the conservancy through concession fees, as well as creating employment that utilises

strategic development, sensitive to social and cultural dynamics as well as the environment, can facilitate a bright future for the oldest and second largest conservancy in Namibia

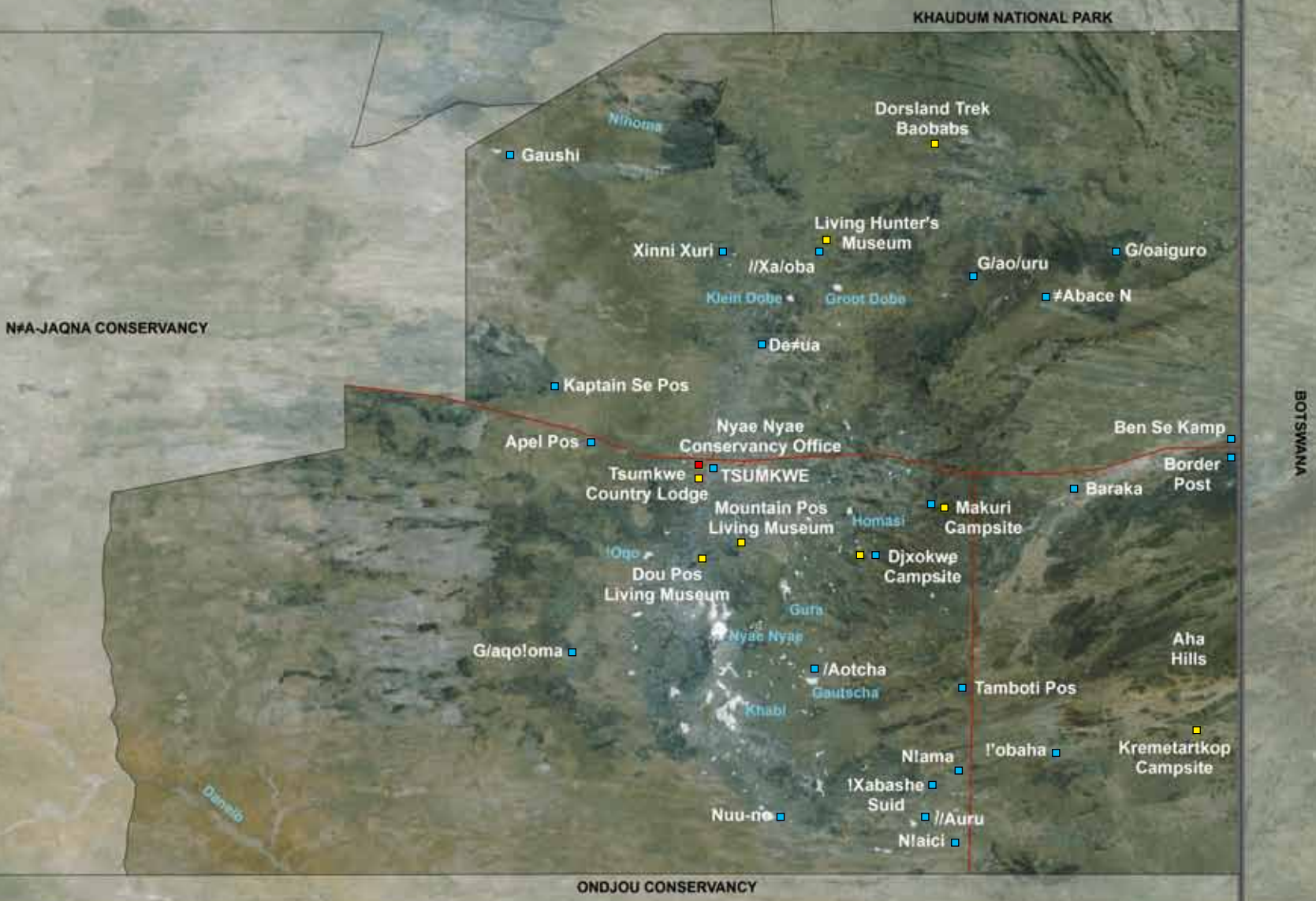
A variety of plans for tourism development in Nyae Nyae exist. These need to be well coordinated and should receive continued input from tourism experts. While the planned developments are likely to fill most current gaps in accommodation needs, it is the interpretation of the products and the enhancement of the areas resources that can unlock the full potential. Tourism products could include well laid-out

traditional San hunting skills. The superb hunting potential of the vast area in conjunction with the San culture creates a unique and very valuable product. Zoning is especially important to maximise the potential of tourism and hunting products and strengthen core wildlife areas and tourism sites.

Developments should work through the conservancy or coordinate with it, as well as working with the Nyae Nyae Development Foundation. Strategic, well coordinated initiatives can unlock the full value of the area's wildlife and natural plant products, the traditional knowledge and skills of the San, and of course both cultural and wilderness tourism, as well as trophy hunting and other forms of sustainable use. Numerous options exist that can enable a bright future for the conservancy.

Come to Nyae Nyae - be part of the future...





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