

THE
DIAN
FOSSEY

Gorilla Journal

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Daily Protection | Scientific Research | Educating Conservationists | Helping Communities

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Young Umusaruro and all mountain gorillas will benefit from our new Ellen DeGeneres Campus in Rwanda, which will be a hub for conservation in the region.

Building the future of conservation *Our new home grows*

By Tara Stoinski, Ph.D.
President and CEO/Chief Scientific Officer

Here at the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund, we are anticipating that 2021 will be our most exciting and significant year yet, with the opening of our Ellen DeGeneres Campus in Rwanda ushering in a world of new opportunities for gorilla conservation.

Even though 2020 presented everyone with enormous challenges, we continued our gorilla protection in the field every single day of the

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The walls of our future are rising



The Cindy Broder Conservation Gallery will be the main public space at our Ellen Campus, with interactive exhibits about the gorillas, a journey back to Dian Fossey’s world and an inside look at our work.

It’s an exciting time at our Ellen DeGeneres Campus in Rwanda, as construction continues toward our planned opening later this year.

After about two years of work, we’re seeing all our ideas literally coming out of the ground, from walls and roofs, to trees that were planted last year.

The Ellen Campus will be the permanent headquarters of our activities in Africa and a gift to the future. Its mission is to inspire and educate upcoming generations of conservationists in Africa and to help tackle the conservation challenges of the future, while also ensuring the survival of the gorillas and their important forest home.

The multi-acre facility will include classrooms, research areas, meeting spaces, a library and housing for visiting students and scien-

tists. It will triple our educational space and give us five times more lab space than we have now. One of the most exciting aspects will be our new Cindy Broder Conservation Gallery, which will include an interactive public exhibit, a theater, café and gift shop, all open to the public.

A journey through conservation

Our public exhibit will take visitors on a unique gorilla conservation journey and is divided into five sections:

1 Ellen’s Welcome. A video from Ellen DeGeneres will explain how she came to be the lead supporter of the new Campus and provide an inside look into how the facilities were built.

2 Dian’s World. This immersive experience will carry visitors

into Dian’s world in the forest, including photos, artifacts from her cabin, reproductions of her scientific journals, audio and video recordings and more.

3 Gorillas and You. Gorillas are similar to us in so many ways. This part of the exhibit will show how, from their family life to their anatomy.

4 Modern Conservation. Here visitors will learn about the complexities of successful conservation in our times, from direct wildlife protection to science, community and education efforts. And we’ll show in detail how the Fossey Fund does all these things.

5 Conservation and You. Like Dian Fossey, each of us can make a difference and this part of our gallery helps point the way. ■

Women grow in construction

While Rwanda is known for its gender equity and recently broke its own record for the number of women in government, women are still under-represented in the construction field. At our Ellen Campus, we aim to change that and have female supervisors, female bricklayers and even female heavy equipment operators.

The women working on the site have also come together to form a women's group, where they can support one other through on-the-job training, financial decision making and other professional and personal issues.

The women in this group are "paving the way" for their daughters and sisters, says Martine Dushime, a member of the project's leadership team and a quantity surveyor on the project.

"You're going to be able to say after this project that 'I know someone who is a woman who does construction,'" she says. ■



Martine Dushime, below left, is a surveyor and leader on the project. Other women are heavy equipment operators.



This month we celebrate International Women's Day and Women's History Month in the United States. Above, women play a key role in the construction of our Ellen Campus, where our goal is to have a 35% female work force and 35% female leadership on the project.



We measure the impact of the construction each month, using five goals. Above, totals from December 2020.

We're all about our impactful mission of helping people and saving gorillas, so it was a natural idea for us to come up with specific goals that we want to accomplish and measure while building our new home.

Working with our construction firm — MASS Build — we identified five key areas of impact. We call them our "Five Es" and each month we take a close look at how well we've advanced each of them.

1 Economy. We're committed to investing in the communities and people surrounding our new home through job creation and local construction techniques and purchases.

To date the construction has employed more than 500 local community members and added more than \$6 million to the Rwandan economy.

2 Environment. Our construction relies on eco-friendly "local fabrication" design techniques that keep our environmental footprint small. Local fabrication involves hiring locally, sourcing region-

ally, providing training, and thinking about every design decision as an opportunity to invest in the dignity of the communities we serve. We are also restoring former agricultural land.

3 Equity. Our 30% female construction workforce promotes gender equity in the field of construction, and we are also striving to maintain a 35% female leadership team.

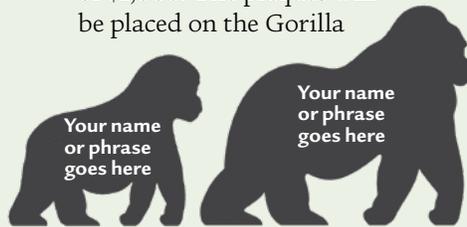
4 Education. Workers on site are given training in fields such as masonry and carpentry, increasing their future employment opportunities and adding to Rwanda's skilled work force. We've also hired local artisanal craftspeople who are teaching their crafts to others on site.

5 Emotion. Through conservation classes we offer to the 600-plus workers at the site, we hope to create gorilla ambassadors who take their new knowledge back to families and communities. ■

Become a Gorilla Champion and help us build our new home

As we look to celebrate the completion of our new Ellen Campus this year, we invite you to become a part of Fossey Fund history. As a Gorilla Champion, your

generosity will be commemorated with a 5-inch plaque for a gift of \$500 or an 8-inch plaque for a gift of \$1,000. The plaques will be placed on the Gorilla



Champions Wall at the Sandy and Harold Price Research Center at the campus and will offer an opportunity to include your personal commemorative message.

To purchase your plaque today, visit our website at gorillafund.org and follow the link to our Gorilla Champions page, or contact Shari Henning at shenning@gorillafund.org. Quantities are limited. ■



New scientists and interns at work

There are two exciting new additions to our scientific team in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC): Dr. Frederik Van de Perre and Dr. Constance Fastre. Each has an impressive background in conservation research and management.

Frederik is a specialist in biodiversity and has already conducted research in DRC, studying patterns of biodiversity and carbon storage as well as small mammal diversity. He will conduct biodiversity research at our Nkuba Conservation Area in DRC.

Constance is also an expert in biodiversity and has worked on conservation projects in several parts of the world. She'll play a special role at our Nkuba station, focusing on communications as well as scientific research, and sharing stories about life in the area.

Youngest intern at Karisoke

We now have our youngest intern ever serving at our Karisoke Research Center in Rwanda. Nicolas Kwizera is a recent high school graduate from the Sonrise Secondary School, where he participated in our environmental club, while studying physics, chemistry and math.



Nicolas Kwizera

He then volunteered to work at Karisoke, and our staff was impressed by his commitment and positive attitude, says Felix Ndagijimana, Fossey Fund director of Rwandan programs and Karisoke.

As an intern, Nicolas is working on several of our community outreach programs, including our kitchen garden and animal husbandry projects, while also developing our nature club tree nursery project.



Biodiversity specialists Dr. Frederik Van de Perre and Dr. Constance Fastre have joined our scientific programs in DRC.

Below, secondary students are now a part of the Fossey Fund's "building a future" strategy in DRC.



DRC secondary students attend internships

Last fall, we invited eight secondary students to join us for a month-long internship at our Nkuba base in DRC.

The students, who are from the Walikale secondary school agroforestry program, worked in several areas with us, including our biodiversity program, gorilla and surveillance programs, and our community engagement programs.

"This new internship program is part of the Fossey Fund's 'build the future' strategy," says Urbain Ngobobo, director of the Fossey Fund's DRC programs.

"We train young people in biodiversity conservation to support and enable the next generation of African scientists. Our base in Nkuba is a natural laboratory for research and a center for mentoring young researchers at the start of their careers." ■



Nzeli has lived in 11 different groups so far, and our field staff have monitored her life with great interest.

Gorilla Nzeli

A female with unusual moves

Although silverback gorillas get a lot of attention, females are incredibly interesting to observe, especially because they are faced with a lot of choices about where to live when they reach maturity.

Most females leave their natal groups, as they seek out the best place to find a mate and raise their young. And some females do this several times over their lifetime. These moves generally occur when two families come together and interact, providing females with opportunities to assess whether they want to leave.

Female Nzeli, who is 34 years old, is one adult female who continues to surprise us with her moves, which are quite frequent, interesting and unusual.

Nzeli has lived in 11 different groups so far. Even at her current mature age, Nzeli continues to

change groups. In December 2019, she joined silverback Urugwiro's group, but a few months later our trackers reported she was no longer in that group and not seen in the vicinity. There were no signs of interactions with other groups.

Then, two weeks later, she appeared in another group we monitor, Kureba's group. Again, there were no signs of any interactions among groups.

We don't know where Nzeli was during those two weeks, whether she was alone or temporarily with a lone silverback.

But our trackers as well as other gorillas were happy to see her again. Dominant silverback Ishavu seemed especially excited at Nzeli's arrival and was showing off with displays. Nzeli quickly became integrated into her new group.



The best of many surprises

Nzeli's best surprise came on Nov. 13 last year, when she gave birth to her latest infant. Though we don't know for sure who the father is, Nzeli made a smart choice joining Kureba's group, because her former group later disintegrated. So Kureba's group is a good place to raise her new infant.

This is her first time living in Kureba's group, but she already knows some of the group members, including the dominant silverback as well as female Akamaro. Both originated from the historic Pablo's group, where Nzeli lived for 12 years, though Akamaro was too young to remember her from then.

But they met again in 2014, when both were together in Isabukuru's group for a few months. Ishavu was only 6 years old when

Nzeli has given birth nine times, but only three of her offspring are still alive. She's shown here with her latest, born in November 2019.

Nzeli left Pablo's group but it's possible he does remember her.

Nzeli's frequent moves may have something to do with her unfortunate luck as a mother, in addition to her independent personality.

She has given birth nine times, but only three of her offspring are still alive. So it seems she is still trying to succeed in that way.

Our trackers and researchers are monitoring this latest stage of Nzeli's life with great interest, as it gives us insight into gorilla society, variability among individuals, and the importance of female choice in gorilla social dynamics. ■

Visit our new online store

The Fossey Fund store is here for you!

Grab our latest gorilla gear, support a great cause and look good doing it!

Check out our latest releases including our

- I ♥ Gorillas onesie and
- black long-sleeve dri-fit shirt.



When you purchase from the Fossey Fund store, 100% of net profits support our ongoing protection efforts!

Visit our store at store.gorillafund.org/

Future

Continued from page 1

year. And construction proceeded with only short breaks and adjustments for COVID-19 precautions. The gorillas continued to thrive, as did our staff and programs.

With the approaching opening of our new home, I admit I feel a bit like Dian Fossey in 1967, starting something amazing, wonderful and exciting.

Dian started out with two humble tents in the forest and wrote in "Gorillas in the Mist" that she never dreamed they would one day become a leading international research center.

But now, five decades later, we are so excited about the impact our new home will have on the future of conservation, not just for gorillas but for their critical forest habitat, for the people who live in the region, and for generations to come.

In addition to all of the above, we are celebrating Women's History Month and International Women's Day in March. It is such a privilege to work with the amazing women who follow in Dian Fossey's footsteps, whether in the field protecting gorillas, doing scientific research or organizing community programs.



Tracker Pelagie is one of our female trackers in Rwanda, in the field every day to protect the gorillas. Our field staff continue to follow special precautions throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Please stay tuned to our website and social media as the opening of our Ellen Campus approaches (see page 2 for more about the Cindy Broder Conservation Gallery).

Because of you, Dian Fossey's work has now continued for more

than 50 years, and mountain gorillas did not go extinct as Dian feared. As we embark on the next 50 years of this work, we hope that you will join us and become a part of our new home as a Gorilla Champion. (See page 4 for details). ■

Thank you to our Platinum Corporate Sponsors for their extraordinary support in 2021

Our Platinum Corporate Sponsors, listed below, are among our most important supporters.

They each play an important role in providing significant support that helps sustain our crucial programs every day.



Celebrating 25 years in Atlanta. Thank you.



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