

A contribution to the land tenure and land policy discourse from a wildlife perspective.

“I agree that it is a good idea to attend the Land Tenure workshop and all that I would like mentioned is the obvious - region 5 has no better sustainable land use than wildlife, plus hunting is a foreign currency earner ... this has been confirmed by many ecologists and economist but people need to be reminded. Wildlife needs space and protection so settlement and cattle in wildlife zones does not work!”

Valley Conservancy.

Blondie Letham. General Manager Buby Valley Conservancy.

As I was driving around Malanganani the other day and having seen the abundance of wild life in multiple forms and species I marvelled at the blessing that is ours. Each species of antelope, birds, insects, indigenous tress, grasses and weeds, shrubs and bushes vibrating to a common frequency peculiar to that of the earth which is home to us all. This common vibratory frequency is what makes the earth A LIVING PLANET.

There is one species amongst all of the many that threatens the very existence of them all in the short term and us all in the long term.

That species is man who has been given dominion over all of the species of the earth. Man threatens the very existence of all through his rapidly growing population and the resulting need to accommodate and to feed.

And so Eco systems are destroyed in this expansion drive and need for land at the expense of wild life. Under these circumstances wildlife becomes a problem animal and needs to be managed resulting in the demise of thousands of animals and hectares of habitat.

The preservation of the frequency transmission caught up in vortex points around the earth is vital to the earth's survival as a living planet. This vibratory frequency is missing on planets like Mars. Mars is therefore a dead planet.

What we don't want is for the earth to become the same.

What is the way forward? What is the conservation method which should be adopted?

It seems to me that the preservation of wildlife and land tenure goes hand in hand.

It also seems to me that the past and the decisions that have been made for good and for bad are a light for the future.

What lessons are there in the past for us to learn from?

Option 1.

With regards to Land tenure, the tried and tested course is vested in PRIVATE OWNERSHIP.

Private ownership registered in the form of a TITLE DEED is what developed countries across the globe. It is what turned Zimbabwe into the **bread basket of Africa**.

THE TITLE DEED, proves ownership and opens the door way to the expression of creativity which is etched into the DNA of each and every one of us. If we own something we care for it and build on it. Our creativity is released.

The question that needs to be asked; Is private ownership and the title deed the only way?

No it is not the only way.

Option 2.

The other way is state ownership and a population dependant on the state for an allocation of land to the persons of their choice and food in the times of famine.

This second option, like the first has been tried and tested around the globe and in recent years was adopted by our Government and has been enforced for this past 18 years.

We are now gathered together in a crumbling economy, the bread basket status gone and our wild life and our own very existence under threat. At least for those who have chosen to 'stick it out' in Zimbabwe.

We are gathered together at the Rainbow Towers at a workshop in an attempt to share ideas as we find ourselves in an economic doldrum. The positive part of the workshop is an apparent recognition that option number 2 has failed at least for Zimbabwe and that the answer does indeed lie in solving the land tenure problem.

The question now is do we stick to option 2 and try and add to it by the issuing of leases now suggested to be for 99 years?

For the sake of this paper I will leave the debate on that topic to others. I would rather discuss that which is tried and tested and guaranteed to revive this economy, to create jobs and to once again make Zimbabwe the bread basket of Africa.

Lets talk wildlife and its hope of survival in the decision that we make.

Pre 1950 Zimbabwe had abundant wild life that could freely migrate as seasons dictated. Its value was intrinsic only, while some had value in the protein that they provided.

In the southern lowveld the cattle industry bloomed and wild life became a NUISANCE. They were in competition with cattle wherever there was grazing. They carried tick borne diseases and viral diseases fatal to cattle. Wild life was owned by no one and mass extermination was taken on all over the country for different reasons. Men who participated in the culling operations bragged about being able to stand in one place and shoot enough Zebra as they ran past whose tails would fill the back of a land rover.

Then things changed. The state took control through the Department of National Parks and Wild life Management. Wild life still had no value to the land owners and up until the late 1960's one needed to get an ecologist to asses' populations before one could take off a few animals for personal and staff consumption.

Then again a change took place.

Ownership of wildlife was handed over to the land owners and wild life populations boomed. They had a value and that value was exploited through the growing Safari hunting industry. Trade in wild life grew. A wild life producers association was formed. Annual game sales were common place. National Parks and Private capture teams were kept busy. Conservancies sprung up all over Zimbabwe. Title deed land owners put their farms and ranches together to form vast areas of conservation.

Zimbabwe was divided up into ICA's (Intensive Conservation areas) Each ICA selected a committee from amongst its farming community whose sole purpose was to monitor the areas use of the natural resources to make sure they were not abused.

That it worked is proven in the results.

Wild life needs a value to survive. Private enterprise and the Hunting Safari industry gave it that value.

Now it is 2018. The future for wildlife is bleak. We have gone back to the pre 1970's where the state has taken control. Hunting is once more dependent on a quota issued by National parks followed by a permit to hunt. Without that quota and that permit wildlife has no value to the producer and the following happens.

Mjingwe Lodge in the Bubiana Conservany built with Foreign Investment when Title deeds were valid and Wildlife producers were masters of their own destiny.







Post 2000 when Title deeds were abolished and the state took control. Wildlife had no value to the producer unless a quota was issued with a permit to hunt. No matter the producer introduced all the animals at his own expense. And so the decay began.







And then finally this in 2017



Where to now?

Safari hunting is on the down ward slope.

We need a change of mind set.

We need to go back to what we know is tried and tested. Title deed ownership of agricultural land needs to be reinstated. It further needs to be offered to all Zimbabwe farmers on resettled land be they A1 or A2 farmers. Title deeds need to be offered to Communal farmers. This will add value to the land and release the creativity in every man and woman.

It will also mean that land can be tradeable on a willing seller willing buyer basis.

We need to look at the intrinsic value of wild life as a substitute to the safari hunting in extensive areas and its protein value in smaller areas. This especially in the arid areas of region 5.

How best can we capitilise on this Intrinsic value to ensure the future of wildlife?

Lets think regions for a moment. It seems to me that Region 5 is ideally suited to wild life and wild life only. Lets think of the once spoken about TRANSLIMPOPO PEACE PARK stretching from Southern Mozambique to the east through the Kruger National park in South Africa and the Gonarezou in Zimbabwe, through the Savi Conservancy, Bubyi Valley Conservancy, Bubiana Conservancy and on

to the Tuli circle following the roaming Limpopo river and incorporating Mapungugwe in South Africa, and beyond along the Botswana border to Hwange National park and Victoria Falls.

Allow me to let my imagination run for a moment.

I imagine the money powers of the world being excited about the establishment of the largest wild life eco system in the world.

The problem of settlements within the boundary of the park would be overcome by Titled Deed ownership of the land.

I Can just imagine the value of the land through a determined drive to achieve the park in the knowledge that it is wildlifes only chance of survival amidst the human population then doubled in size.

I think of the value of the land through Titled ownership to those living within the boundaries of the **Peace Park** and an offer to purchase or to exchange for shares in order to accomplish the proposed park. Those living within the boundaries with Title Deeds could sell at a premium and re-establish them selves else where or remain subject to certain terms and conditions as share holders in the Piece Park. But above all our wild life would be secured for future generations thanks to a tried and tested land tenure system invested in private ownership and the registered Title deed which would facilitate the vision..

I understand that an International Airport is being planned for Beit Bridge. Ther are already several hotels and lodges awaiting the influx of tourists traveling to navigate the park. I seemore hotels and Lodges and golf courses and Casinoes and Elephants and Lion and all the big five and the rest enjoying the freedom of space. And I see Jobs being created and hundreds being employed.

Mine is not the only imagined future for wildlife in Zimbabwe and its neighbors. However failure to dream and to move on ones dreams will lead on to the doom of wildlife as the human populations continue to expand at the expense of ecosystems resulting in the socialist way of thought which in any event is doomed to failure in favour of mans eventual destiny where "each will sit under his own vine."