

The National Park Game

Kafue Trip Grade 9 2018

Summary

This is a role-playing game to demonstrate some of the competing interests at play in the management of a fictitious African national park ("Liloba National Park"). The players take on the role of a given stake holder and have to find a consensual solution for a range of different scenarios.

The Park

The park's name comes from the Liloba river flowing through it. The park contains the Liloba itself (running north), two tributaries, and the adjoining area. There is a large swamp in the south, forested hills to the west, and grasslands to the north.

The Liloba basin has a rich ecosystem with many animals living near the river. Antelope occur predominantly in the plains and often move further north in the wet season. A rare species of small forest elephant inhabits the hills, only occasionally venturing out into the open. The swamps are home to cape buffalo and, along with the river, make for good fishing. Lions and other large predators are rare, but do occur.

The region is the traditional home of the Chilaba tribe. Two of their villages are located inside the park, with a further three on the outskirts. Three lodges in or near the park cater to tourists.

The park is governed by a "park parliament". This represents all stake holders and takes decisions by voting on proposals by its members.

Roles

Each role has a different set of aims, values and priorities. Players should familiarise themselves with the park and their role and think about how they would be likely to act under the given circumstances.

- **Politician** - The politician see not only the park, but the entire country. He wants to get the maximum benefit out of the resources the park offers. He thinks in terms of income for the government, but also needs to remain popular with the voters and credible with outside investors at the same time.
- **Village chief** - The chief is responsible for the local people in the area. He represents their interests and wants to ensure a steady income for them, as well as protecting his peoples' traditions.
- **Conservationist** - He is employed by an international conservation organisation to protect the wildlife and environment in the park. He cares deeply for the animals and wants to manage the park in a sustainable manner. The park rangers are under his command.

- **Lodge owner** - He is a businessman who owns one of the park's lodges. He wants to develop the park touristically. At the same time, he has a strong interest in protecting the animals, because that is what his guests pay to see.
- **Industrialist** - Wants to develop the area economically to make the biggest financial profit possible. Offers jobs to the people and is willing to invest into schemes, but is not particularly concerned about wildlife.

Proceedings

The players are assigned characters, and each character group is tasked with preparing a proposal concerning one scenario. This proposal is then presented to the other players. Once all proposals have been heard, the players are given time to negotiate; to garner support for their own proposals or to undermine proposals they consider damaging to their interests.

The game concludes with a session of parliament. Each proposal is debated and voted on in turn. One speaker from each group is given 1 ½ minutes to give his opinion on the proposal, with the first speaker coming from proposing group. After each group has spoken, the players vote; with an absolute majority necessary to carry the motion. (Players do not have to vote in their groups; for example, the chiefs may be split on whether or not to support the building of the dam.)

Scenarios

- **Build dam.** (*politicians*) The politicians have had the idea that building a dam would be a good investment into the future. It would provide electricity for the whole country and some jobs for the people nearby. However, the proposed site (between the two hilly areas) would mean flooding the Liloba swamps and relocating a village.
- **Extend park.** (*conservationists*) To meet a UN guideline, the conservationists would like to extend the borders of the park. However, they still have to figure out on which side this would be the most profitable.
- **Elephant damage.** (*chiefs*) The villagers of the forest village in the park are complaining that a herd of elephants is wreaking havoc on their crops. The people are pretty upset, and some would like to kill the offending elephants.
- **Hunting villagers.** (*lodge owners*) Villagers to the north of the park have been hunting a lot of antelopes in the last few years, and their numbers have begun to decline noticeably. This means tourists see less game.
- **Mine hills.** (*industrialists*) A cobalt deposit has been discovered in the hills to the west, just outside the park. The industrialist would like to start an open pit mine to get the valuable metal out. This would create jobs for the region and income for the country. However, it would also destroy a significant portion of the elephant forest and chemicals from the mine are likely to heavily pollute water in the area.