

# Mountain gorillas *vs* indigenous Batwa pygmies:

## Unintended consequences of conservation

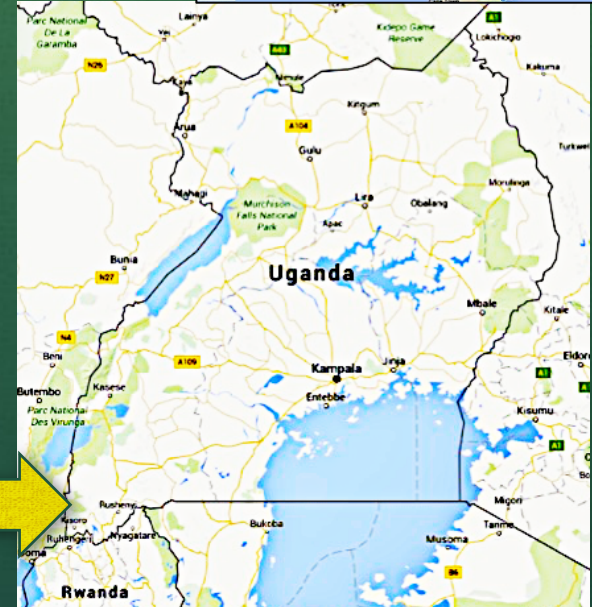


All photos © Wendee Nicole, unless otherwise credited  
Founder & Director Redemption Song Foundation, [www.wendeenicole.com](http://www.wendeenicole.com)

# Overview of today's talk

- People & the environment: conflict vs. coexistence
- Mountain gorillas & the Batwa in SW Uganda
- Redemption Song Foundation
- How you can help

Bwindi Impenetrable (where I live)  
Part of the Albertine Rift, cradle of humankind



# 1994: A Plea for Help

There are thousands of people dying. The Batwa pygmy tribe was evicted [from their rainforest home] ... and I need your help to resettle them.

- Bishop Livingstone Nkoyoyo to Diane Stanton, 1994



# The Batwa or “Twa” forest people

“The heart of their culture, traditions, beliefs and wealth swept away.”  
- UOBDU



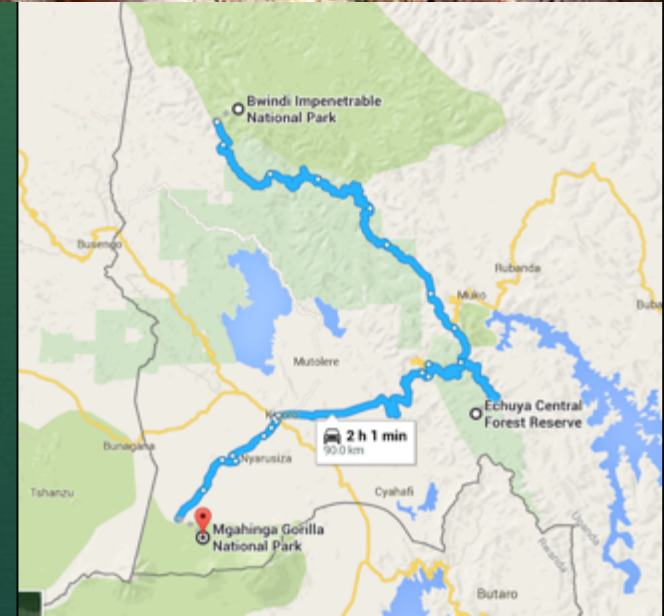
- Original inhabitants of east-central African rainforest (indigenous)
- Hunter-gatherers
- Would trade with Bakiga outside the forest
- Didn't engage in agriculture – not the cause of forest destruction
- <1% of Uganda population

# Three years earlier 1991

- To save mountain gorillas and encourage tourism, Uganda created Bwindi Impenetrable Nat Park, Mgahinga Gorilla NP & Echuya Central Forest Reserve



- Evicted the Batwa at gunpoint
- Eliminated former rights of all locals, Batwa and Bakiga, to enter forests to hunt, gather forest products

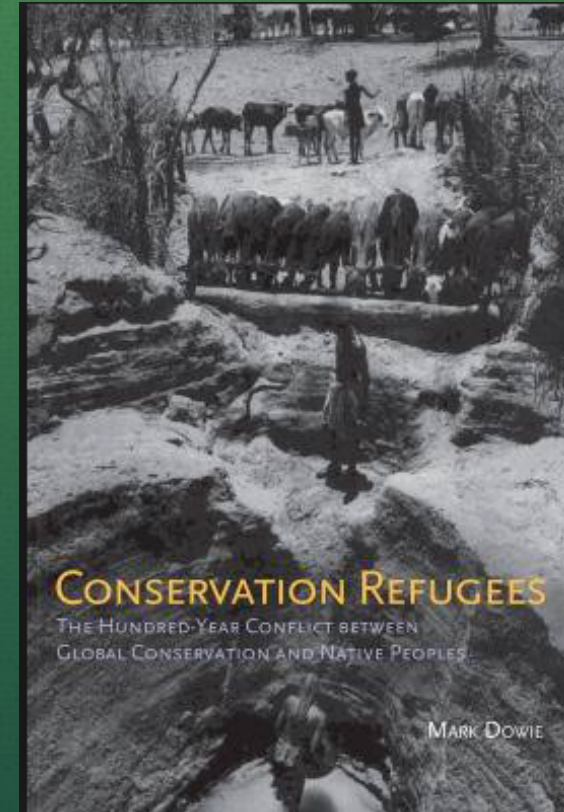


# “Conservation Refugees”

- Evicting people for conservation has occurred on every continent (except Antarctica)
- US: in 1800s, Awaneechee Indians removed from ancestral lands in California to create Yosemite NP
- Estimated 14 million people evicted in Africa
- In 1991, the Batwa were given no land or compensation, and faced new diseases (HIV), vulnerability to alcohol addiction, discrimination

“[E]viction inevitably forces adults into intractable poverty, alcoholism, and prostitution, leaving their children with malnutrition, disease, and death.”

- Mark Dowie



# Tragedy of the Commons

- Proposed by Garrett Hardin in *Science*, 1968: People will always selfishly take advantage of a commonly-used resource (pasture, ocean, forest)
- Led either to assigning monetary value to nature (Payment for Ecosystem Services) or “Fortress Conservation”
- Is it always true?



Photo by Matt Lavin, Creative Commons License

“Ruin is the destination toward which all men rush, each pursuing his own best interest in a society that believes in the freedom of the commons. Freedom in a commons brings ruin to all.”  
– Garrett Hardin, *Science* 1968

# Lin Ostrom: Power to the People

Turned Hardin's theory on its ear:

Trust leads to cooperation

- She saw local/indigenous people sustainably managing natural resources - without governments. How could this be?
- She determined how people's livelihoods & conservation can work in harmony: "Trust" leads to cooperation.
- Won the Nobel Prize in Economics in 2009



Photo by International Land Coalition under a Creative Commons license from Flickr.com

# Lin Ostrom:

## A champion of empowering local people

- Design Principles: People need to have a voice in making, changing & enforcing rules of resource use.
- Local people, closest to the resource, will solve their problems if higher-level governments don't interfere.
- Her research led to “decentralized” conservation management in countries around the world: giving decision-making power to locals.



Photo by Harini Nagendra

# Mongabay Special Reporting Initiative

[PERU](#)[SOUTH AMERICA](#)[AFRICA](#)[UGANDA](#)[GREEN](#)[ENVIRONMENT](#)[INDIGENOUS PEOPLES](#)[REDD](#)

## Prize exploring the next big idea in rainforest conservation announced

16th November 2013 / [Mongabay.com](#)

*Mongabay.org, a non-profit that aims to raise awareness about social and environmental issues relating to tropical forests and other ecosystems, has announced the first winner of its environmental reporting prize its Special Reporting Initiative (SRI) program. The prize sought proposals to explore the question of what's the next big idea in tropical biodiversity conservation. After a two-month application window and a month of deliberations, this week an independent panel of journalists and tropical forest specialists selected environmental journalist Wendee Nicole as the first recipient of the Mongabay Prize for Environmental Reporting.*

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\*terms and conditions apply



From Houston

# Ostrom Research on Batwa in Uganda

- Makerere University Prof. Abwoli Banana – who studied as a scholar under Ostrom – found that when Batwa people lived in the forest, illegal harvesting was lower than where Batwa were not present
- The Batwa self-monitored the forests, and poaching by outsiders was reduced.



# Bwindi Impenetrable Forest

A UNESCO World Heritage Site



Nat Park area just 128 mi<sup>2</sup> (Yellowstone 3500 mi<sup>2</sup>)



Batwa live in extreme poverty at park edge



Hard border between park and outside



World pop of mountain gorillas 880, half in Uganda

[www.RedemptionSongFoundation.org](http://www.RedemptionSongFoundation.org)

# Between 1994 - 2014

- Diane Stanton and Dallas Episcopal churches helped Batwa with Uganda churches for 2 decades
- Dr. Scott Kellermann, medical missionary surveyed the Batwa in 2000
  - Found 40% children dying before 5
  - Life expectancy 28 vs. 48 Uganda's gen pop
  - 18% infants died within a month
- Kellermanns:
  - Founded Bwindi Community Hospital in 2003
  - Created Batwa Development Program in 2008



# The Batwa Experience



# Batwa Dance



# Kalehe Village – a Batwa settlement

“We’re living like animals” – one of the Kalehe women



# Kalehe Village

A spirit of despondency & resignation



# Beckham

## An inspiration for RSF



# **RSF Mission:** *Spreading Hope by Growing Healthy Communities and Sustainable Ecosystems*



**ARTISAN CO-OP**  
Handcrafted items made in Uganda. All proceeds benefit RSF and Batwa tribe community development



[www.redemptionsongfoundation.org](http://www.redemptionsongfoundation.org)



*Healthy Communities and Sustainable Ecosystems*

# What I Didn't Know Then

- High levels of violence among Batwa & toward Batwa – child abuse, child neglect, spousal abuse, rape, murder
- Batwa have higher than average HIV rates (up to 40% in a village among single women) – develops into AIDS due to not taking ARVs
- Alcoholism is consuming their lives
- Batwa young women engage in prostitution
- Prejudice and discrimination is common

In other words, I have a lot on my plate!



"Low income people daily face a struggle to survive that creates feelings of helplessness, anxiety, suffocation, and desperation that are simply unparalleled in the rest of humanity."

- Steve Corbett & Brian Fikkert, *When Helping Hurts*

# The Batwa Artisan Coop

- We buy at a fair trade price & resell in the US.
- Funds go to RSF and Batwa community development – they decide (Ostrom)  
So far: Clean water, a bridge, mattresses, household items, education, health insurance
- Estimated 5-fold increase in their income
- We sell baskets online (Facebook page), and at The Woodlands Church Trading Co. Looking for more stores, and marketers to help sell them.



# Kalehe Batwa Projects



# Educational Soup Kitchen



# Child Sponsorship



- RSF initially got 3 Batwa boys who'd dropped from school in boarding school and they're doing GREAT. We took them on Safari as a reward!
- Better school attendance among Kalehe Batwa compared with the year before
- Another organization that used to sponsor all Batwa just dropped Kalehe village completely – We now sponsor all 15 kids (School year is Feb-Nov)
- \$120/year in local school; \$500/year for Bishop's boarding school.



# Before & After



# Before & After



# RSF Future Plans!

1. Build an Educational Fund for Batwa
2. Create a “voluntourism” program - this summer!
3. Plant native trees in Kalehe, and connect with international carbon funding
4. Expand to other Batwa villages
5. Turn the Artisan coop into a social entrepreneurial business
6. Look for a business partner/investor



# Why Should We Care about the Global Poor?



“We willingly walk into the dark, into the face of unimaginable things because of love.”

– Sarita Hartz

- Not everyone is called to be a missionary but... everyone can by donating, volunteering, praying
- Raising the economic status of the poor reduces the chance they will be drawn into violence/terrorism
- Corruption can keep the poor victimized and helpless.
- People of faith are called to help the poor
- Love Wins



# The Power of Love & Hope

"... sometimes it is necessary  
to reteach a thing its loveliness,  
to put a hand on its brow  
of the flower  
and retell it in words and in  
touch  
it is lovely  
until it flowers again from  
within, of self-blessing;"

- Saint Francis and the Sow by  
Galway Kinnell

# How You Can Help

[www.redemptionsongfoundation.org](http://www.redemptionsongfoundation.org)  
[redemptionsongfoundation@gmail.com](mailto:redemptionsongfoundation@gmail.com)

- BUY baskets! ☺
- DONATE via check or card– one time or recurring (RedemptionSongFoundation.org)
- SPONSOR a child's education [Boarding: \$500/yr; Local \$120]
- VOLUNTEER: selling baskets, maintaining an online store, social media, blogging. Or come to Uganda!
- EXPERTS: We're looking for a *pro bono* accountant and lawyer
- MORE INFO: RSF has a website, Facebook page, Youtube channel, Twitter feed (& we need help maintaining them).



"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in. I needed clothes and you clothed me."

-Matthew 25:35-3



# Thank You

[www.redemptionsongfoundation.org](http://www.redemptionsongfoundation.org)  
[redemptionsongfoundation@gmail.com](mailto:redemptionsongfoundation@gmail.com)



Board of Directors

- RSF Donors, Volunteers, Artisan Basket Purchasers
  - Friends & Family
  - The Batwa of Kalehe
  - Kingwood Park High School Orchestra
- Benefit Concert for RSF Apr 1  
Contact Joshua Taylor
- Lonestar College – Kingwood
- Art Gallery Show Jan 2017

