



CELEBRATING THE FIRST 25 YEARS OF MUTINONDO WILDERNESS (1995 TO 2020)

Welcome to celebrating our first 25 years at Mutinondo!

This is a perfect time to contemplate, celebrate and cherish the fact that it was 25 years ago (23rd August 1995) when Mike and Lari put their tent up at Mutinondo. The spirit of enjoying many Mutinondo memories started with David and Christine Moffat's visit earlier this year, they are Mutinondo's most frequent "flyers" having returned over 20 times. David is also considered Mutinondo's God-father especially during the Zimbabwean landgrab attempt (1998-2002). We can't emphasise enough how much we have appreciated all the special people who have visited and so often returned to Mutinondo over these past 25 years, the beauty and peacefulness of Mutinondo is a celebration in itself and a pleasure shared is a pleasure (at least) trebled.

This can't be called Mutinondo's birthday since the granite rocks (inselbergs) are 1 to 1.6 billion years old and the miombo woodland developed over 8,000 years ago! Two of the most recent flags to note Mike and Lari's first 25 years as custodians of this magical place are:

A. A MAGNIFICENT MURAL ON THE RECEPTION BY QUENTIN ALLEN

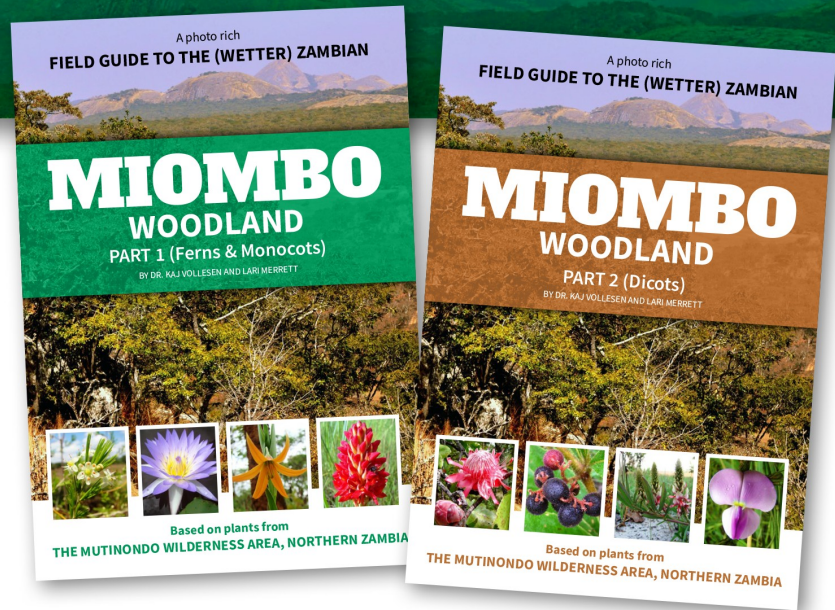


B the completion of a set of 2 books entitled *A PHOTO RICH FIELD GUIDE TO THE WETTER MIOMBO WOODLAND* by Dr. Kaj Vollesen and Lari Merrett, these contain descriptions and photos of over 1630 plant species found within the Mutinondo Area. (SEE FLYER PG 2)

These are available from: Mudpackers, Greens and Grain, Bookworld Pinnacle or online (Lusaka); Kerry Mac Farlane/Ntanda Ventures (Chingola); Sally Greyvensteyn (Mkushi); Paddy and Jay Fisher in Solwezi/Kalumbila. International outlets include: <http://www.silverhillseeds.co.za/> (Africa); <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Photo-Wetter-Zambian-Miombo-Woodlands> (UK); <https://www.mikeparkbooks.com/quicksearch/all/miombo> (UK, Worldwide except Africa).

MIOMBO WOODLAND

This compilation of photographs, collections and expertise gathered over the past 25 years describes the miombo woodland, the threats it is facing and contains descriptions of 143 families, 611 genera and 1634 species found within the Mutinondo Wilderness Area of northern Zambia.



It is a prime cornerstone to the appreciation of the impressive diversity of the wetter miombo woodland which is essential to publicise, particularly in the light of the ever increasing pressures and destruction being wrought on this woodland in Zambia and the sub region.

By being written by a lay-person (Lari Merrett), together with a leader in African dry lands plant taxonomy (Dr. Kaj Vollesen), it is a very useful information and identification resource for conservationists, botanists and nature lovers who want to learn more about the magnificent miombo.

The book contains 1022 pages and is divided into two (2) parts.

In addition to the descriptions of the ferns and monocots, part 1 includes: a detailed Introduction by Dr. Paul Smith of the Botanic Garden Conservation Institute; an inspirationally charged Foreword by Noah Zimba of the Zambia Institute of Forestry; a comprehensive introduction to Mutinondo Wilderness and its botanical background, and a 51 page photographic key.

Part 2 contains the descriptions of dicots. For ease of reference the complete scientific and common name indices for both parts are colour coded and included in the back of each.

Species descriptions include habit, height, flower colour, key characteristics (underlined>, distribution, habitat, altitude and flowering time. Of the 1634 species descriptions, 1618 are accompanied by 3 to 8 photographs each (of the balance, 9 descriptions have 2 photos each, 2 are with only one and 2 are lacking). The family and genera descriptions include only the key characteristics for each.

Photos within the photographic key in part 1 are mostly arranged in colour order of distinctive flowers, fruit, leaves and thorns. These are all divided into the following habits: ferns; sedges and grasses; creepers, climbers and lianas; herbs and subshrubs; trees and shrubs.



For more information please contact Lari, larimerrett@gmail.com

A CELEBRATION FOR THE 25 YEARS AT MUTINONDO will be held in the form of a fun
RUN, CYCLE, SWIM AND HIKE IN THE FOREST FOR THE FOREST!!! - 16th to 19th October 2020!

All proceeds from entry fees will go directly to the promotion of fuel-efficient woodstoves in the Mpumba chiefdom.
 all standards and ages - Flyer to follow!

For

ENTER AND BOOK NOW, SPACES LIMITED TO 50 ONLY: info@mutinondoambia.com

At last Lari is fulfilling her longtime wish to hike across the Luangwa Valley to Mfuwe and back, with a small group (of mostly scouts and porters!) on 29th August

As a light over-view of these 25 years, we share some photos and memories using 25 categories, just 25 pages long!!!:

- | | |
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1. LOOKING FOR A LODGE SITE. (1995)

While waiting for our land application to be considered by the Mpika District Council Mike and Lari spent six weeks camping and hiking from a temporary base in Mafone dambo, to get to know the area, and to look for the best site for the lodge. They were accompanied by two guides appointed by Chief Mpumba, Paul Saili who knew the area like the back of his hand and Mark Ngosa. It was a very simple life – where to walk and what to eat!



2. CONSTRUCTION OF THE LODGE, ROAD AND AIRSTRIP

This wouldn't have been possible without the abundant local skills and materials.

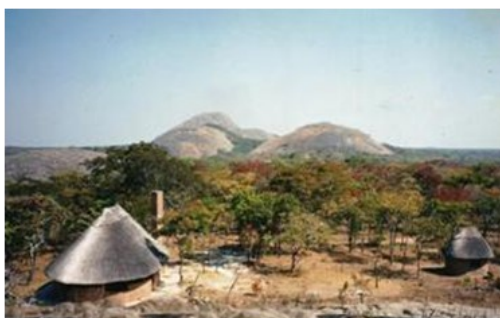
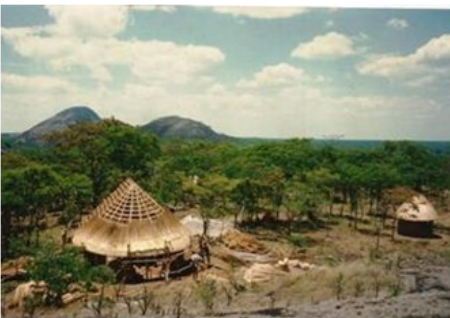


Building started in August 1995, the road took 3 months using 30 employees and an old ODA road design. This entailed clearing a 5 meter track through the bush in the rains by digging around the tree roots so the weight and height of the tree pulled its own roots up, ditches of 1/2 m width and depth were then dug along each side of the track and the soil was thrown onto the "road" to contribute to its camber. The bricks were made on the site to begin with, and then we found it more efficient to buy from the skilled brick makers in the village. Poles were obtained from Shiwa and Serenje, timber from Katongo Kapala near Danger Hill, and some was sourced locally. The airstrip was cleared by hand by Bright Banda and Fred Kawina's group from Spoon's village. Fred and his team still slash and maintain the Mutinondo driveway each year. When we arrived in the area, the quality of craftsmanship was impressive, all of the doors, door frames, window frames and furniture at Mutinondo have been made in-house, by father and son team Dixon and Peter Chilufya.

3. COMPARISONS AND CHANGES OVER THE YEARS

The most conspicuous is the tree growth around the buildings: e.g.

The Nsaka
Early days:



Now:



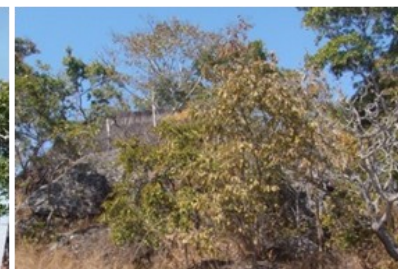
The outside dining room and



Harry's Bar, then and.....



Now



There have been several versions of bridges crossing the Musamfushi River:



Soil embankment



Swing bridge of tree trunks



Eucalyptus poles



Thick Euc. planks on a bus frame

In 2015, due to the lack of use and cost of maintenance and licensing , the **airstrip** was closed:

2004 Cleared by hand

2005-2015 Open

2020 Regrowth

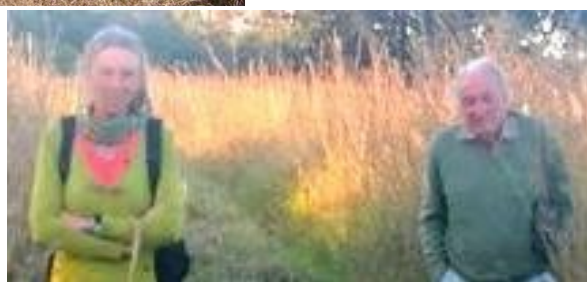


Thatching:

At the beginning of building Mutinondo lodge, we were told to expect the thatch to last up to 20 years! Mwila our original thatcher had been trained by Overseas Development Agency in Mpika, his brother Sampa has since taken over from him. The photos on the left show the two and a helper after finishing the first roof (shop and workshop store room), which is still fully in tact and functional after 25 years, just looking a little weathered (like the Mutinondo owners! - see below!!)



Lari and Mike
2002 and
2020



4. CLIENTS

Mutinondo continues to attract a wonderful array of clients whose support is of course the pulse of Mutinondo - enabling it to still be alive and kicking after 25 years. We all really appreciate your interest, support, kindness and friendship which has always been so special and raises the spirit of this beautiful place immensely and making life at Mutinondo such a pleasure.



Our visitors have not all arrived the conventional way, some have arrived by foot from Luangwa Valley, others have walked or cycled in from the main road having taken public transport,. Mutinondo accommodated the African Odyssey Rally of classic cars between Kilarni RSA and Nanyuki Kenya in 2006. One couple (geophysicists, Drs Richard and Beth Kahle) arrived on a tandem with a trailer en route from Cambridge to Cape Town in 2013/14! Clients thoroughly enjoyed the horse back riding which had to be stopped due to the maintenance, challenges. More and more guests are bringing there own bikes and more and more are enjoying running and cycling along the old horse tracks, some have brought their paragliders! Swimming and canoeing in the croc-free rivers is also special!

5. CRITTERS GREAT AND SMALL.



Our staff and the scouts on patrols assure us that the number of animal sightings are increasing. Recently herds of eland, sable and roan antelope have been seen and recorded fairly close to the lodge and a number of bushpigs and warthogs have been sighted too. The most recent lion was heard in July (over the long weekend), a couple of males had killed 3 of the Chief's cattle before we heard their calls slowly fade away as they returned towards the Luangwa Valley. The hyena is a common evening call across the river from camp and leopard remain as elusive as ever. Bushbuck are heard and seen more frequently around camp. In 2014 Frank Willems noticed tadpoles with seemingly much longer tails than normal, swimming in seepage areas on lodge rock. They have now been identified as being the tadpoles of a new species: *Ptychadena mutinondo* (aka Frank's frog). Another record of note from the past was that of wild dog seen on our access road 17/8/2004. (Frog and leopard photos by Frank Willems)

6. COLLEAGUES AND CO-WORKERS:

The backbone of Mutinondo is its staff! Thank you everyone for being such a major part of the creation and care of Mutinondo.



1998: (identified) **Luka Chuma**, Beenwell Nkhowani, Fighton Chilelwa, Clement Bwale, Bright Kantini Boniface Banda, Mike, Paul Saili



2003: Kennedy Mapule, Peter Chilufya, Consence Kaluba, Clement Bwale, Christopher Batani, Guinea Mambwe, Joseph Chisenga jnr, Chris Saili, Beenwell Nkhowani, Diwell Bwale, Boniface Banda, Joseph Chisenga snr., Dickson Chilufya, David Chomba



2014: Loftine Kalonde, Bornface Mwila, Peter Chilufya, Christopher Batani, Humphrey Mapule, Briam Chuma, Harrison Yoram, Joseph Chisenga snr., Isaac Senda, Gibson Chuni, Victor Kunda, Joseph Chisenga jnr., Julian Enjies and Steven Batani



2019: Peter Chilufya, Harrison Yoram, Moses Ndeke, Christopher Batani, Gibson Chuni, Joseph Chisenga jnr., Kennedy Mapule, Steven Batani, Vic-



2020 (from left to right): Of the 9 people employed at Mutinondo, everyone does all the required camp work, and each specialises or excels in various tasks: **Kennedy** joined 25 years ago (1995, with a 3 year sabbatical working in Mkushi- driver, chef, mechanic- usually able to find and or fix anything!), staff motivator, driver, cell phone bookings and communications; **Peter** joined his father Dickson to learn carpentry under him in 1998 - together they did all the woodwork and roofs seen in the lodge, he is also a guide and waiter; **Christopher** joined in 2002 - senior staff motivator, driver, chef and responsible the non office part of Mutinondo; **Joseph** our builder also joined in 2002. Kennedy's younger brother **Humphrey** arrived at Mutinondo in 2005 - and is now chef, senior staff motivator, driver, bookings, communications, book keeping, attended a computer course at Mechanics for Africa in Ndola; **Brian** (chef, waiter and assistant builder) and **Victor** (chef, waiter and guide) were employed in 2008; **Moses** 2009 and **Gibby** 2012 - both are guards, waiters, camp cleaners and assistant builders.

7. CONDOLENCES

The following very special members of staff who played extremely important roles in the development and success of Mutinondo are now the late, and are still greatly appreciated and sadly missed.



Harry Kaluba: the most gentle and conscientious and very skilled builder who led in the creation of all the original Mutinondo buildings (except the reception) between 1995 and his death from recurrent malaria in 2002. Apart from the amazing buildings, he is also remembered by a road called Harry's Road as well as Harry's bar. Mutinondo trained his sons in building who have since left.



Boniface Banda: bush chef extraordinaire who could produce delicious meals regardless of the circumstances and availability of ingredients (when he wanted cranberry sauce, we made Mfungo jelly), without an oven he presented delicious Christmas roast Turkey and ham, with all the trimmings cooked in our tin bath, he had trained 27 bush chefs before joining us at Mutinondo (1995) and was the seed of all the magnificent meals produced by the array of competent chefs who have followed in his footsteps since his retirement at the end of 2007.



Mumbi Ndeke: was an inspiring transition from "King" poacher (which means lion and elephant were part of his prey) to conservationist. In 2006, as you see from this photo, his muzzle loader blew the thumb and finger off his right hand making it impossible for him to fire guns. He then joined the Mpumba Conservation Society, whose Chairman, Leonard Bowa recommended him as a Mutinondo scout. This subsequently proved too taxing as HIV started to become apparent., He then succeeded in becoming a very accomplished horseman and rider, taking over the head groom position within 11 months of being introduced to the riding section of Mutinondo. He fought HIV with admirable determination, growing and eating plenty of fresh greens at Mutinondo and insisting to work, despite obvious health problems. Sadly in those days not enough was known and he didn't "qualify for ARVs", he died of AIDS related meningitis in August 2009.



David Chomba: a true gentleman in every sense, as well as being part of the clan who buries the chiefs, one of the last true talking history books of the area. His contributions towards Mutinondo right from the beginning were great, these included his knowledge of the area's history as well as about the local plants and their uses. He was also an excellent guide thanks to his previous poaching and portering skills. He died of throat cancer in September 2009.

8 CONTRIBUTORS



Lizanne and Klaus



Quentin Allen



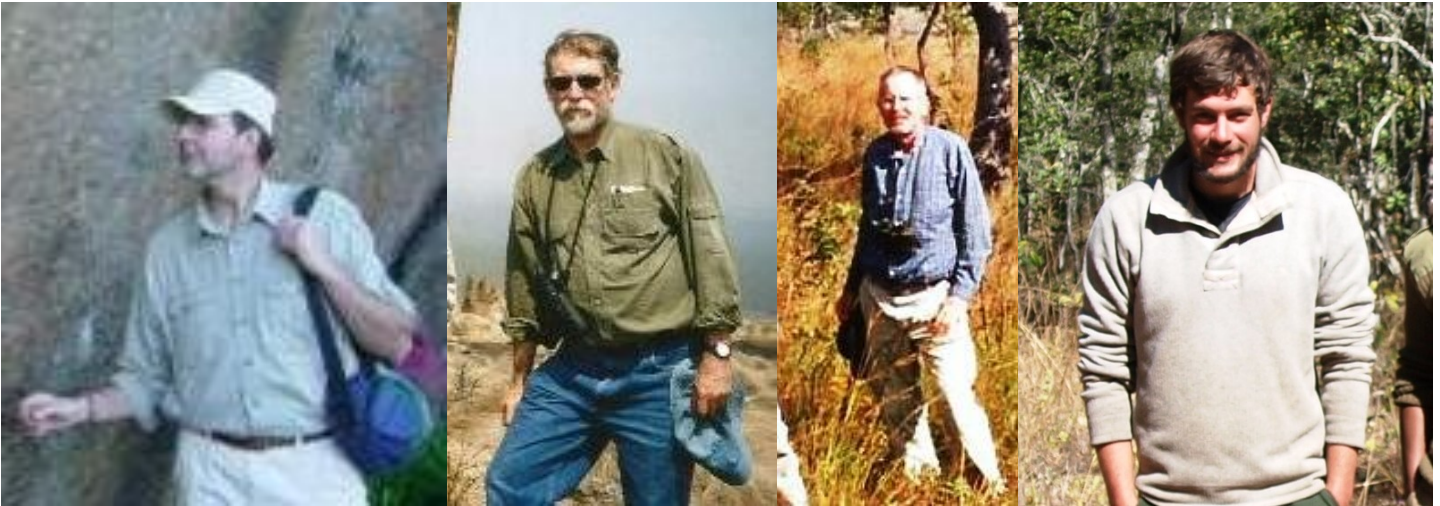
Steve Robinson

Over the years Mutinondo has had numerous contributors towards making it what it is today. For example: Pete Leonard, Karl Beel, Lizanne Roxburg, Frank Willems and many other birders of note have built a substantial birdlist of 362 species; Quentin Allen and Steve Robinson recorded the magnificent views by paint and camera respectively and promoted Mutinondo through their stunning artwork and exhibitions.



Over the past 6 years the (rather too many!) managers have all contributed towards Mutinondo. For example: **Julian Enjies** designed and executed the wonderful signs along the paths, **Frank Willems** and **William van Niekerk** contributed hugely towards the inventories of species in the area, **Jeff Ives** got Mutinondo into booking and payment online (with the help of William, and **Inge** introduced us to the wonderful accountants Kabinga! Thank you everyone!





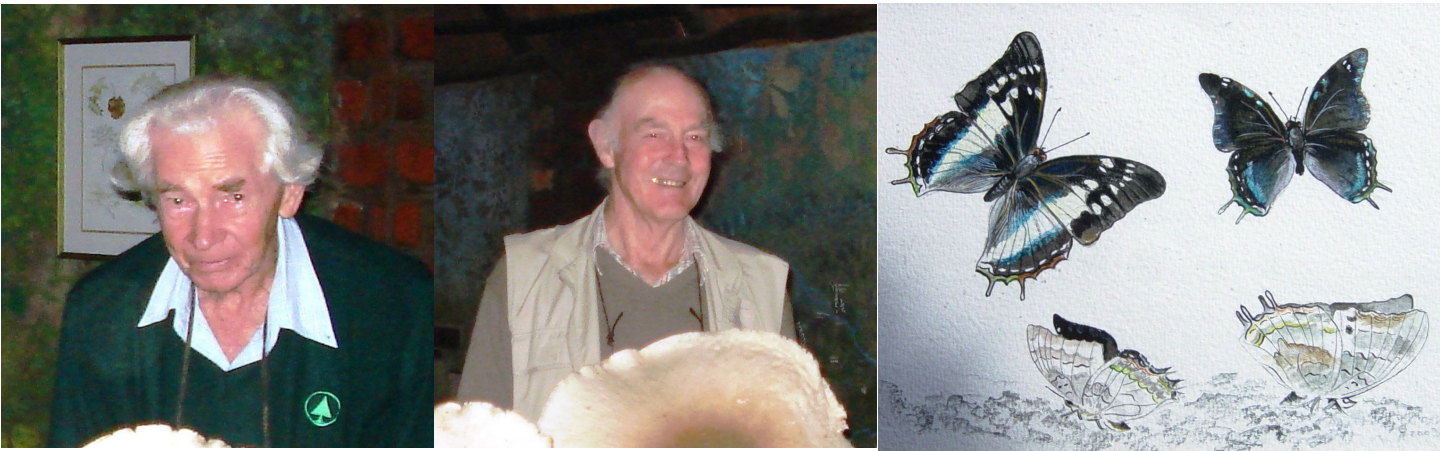
Larry Barham

Stuart Marks

Helmut Shroeder

William van Niekerk

Larry Barham put Mutinondo on the archeological map by bringing a group of students from Liverpool University to collect and study the artifacts and rock art found in the area; Stuart Marks instilled an essential respect for the human face of poachers and poaching in the area, his good and often humorous coaching, publications and research made our lives in the bush far less stressful than it would have been. He continues to be the obvious go-to for advice for all community/conservation projects in the area; Helmut Schroöder was another of Mutinondo's Godfathers who, like the American Commercial attaché and David Moffat protected us and Mutinondo from illegal land grabbing attempts by Tazara Corridor and a group of Zimbabwean farmers. During the last couple of years whilst both visiting and working at Mutinondo, William van Niekerk has compiled an impressive inventory of the invertebrates found at Mutinondo totaling about 688 of which 283 are different species of butterflies. One of these species is *Charaxes mutinondo* which is a tribute to the huge amount of time, energy and passion Collin Congdon and Ivan Bampton spent collecting and studying eggs, larvae, and butterflies at Mutinondo.



Ivan Bampton and Colin Congdon and a painting of the *Charaxes mutinondo* by Quentin Allen

The flora of Mutinondo and the amazing support from the following deserve a very special mention. To date the number of plants identified within the Mutinondo Area is in excess of 1700. This is thanks to the Kew Botanic Africa drylands team, particularly Kaj Vollesen who co-authored the Miombo Woodland book with Lari.

Kaj Vollesen

Jo Osborn

Mike Bingham

Paul Smith and Jonathan Timberlake





About 16 new plant species have been recorded to date, some are featured in photos above. (left to right)

Emeilia Mayense, *Crepidorhopalon mutinondoensis*, *Streptocarpus* sp. *Plectranthus* sp., *Mikaniopsis* sp. *Haumaniastrum* sp. *Lindernia* sp.

9. CREATURE COMFORTS



1995 - this living area complemented the little tent Lari and Mike lived in. A gas freezer was a welcome addition after 2 years without refrigeration. The first tent rotted after about 3 years which meant an upgrade which was even big enough to put beds into. Icy baths in the river were replaced by a "bushdush/hand filled shower" or bucket baths and then in 2001 an amazing hand built bath was built in Mulombwa chalet.



After the second tent was flattened when the protective thatch roof collapsed on it, Mike and Lari lived out of suitcases in vacant chalets until they moved into the little campsite room which was originally built to be the campsite reception. From there they moved to a staff house and then thanks to the closure of Lari's jewellery business in 2009, her workshop was converted into a house with a bathroom in 2014 for the various managers. It is now a very comfy place for Lari to live. Before moving to Lusaka in 2015 Lari and Mike even added a satellite TV, this is now with Mike in Lusaka. The veggie garden was resurrected this year.

Over the years Mike and Lari were fortunate to get away often to visit family in New Zealand, South Africa and England and also enjoyed Croatia, Zanzibar, Tanzania, Malawi, Kenya, Madagascar, Turkey, Uganda, Rwanda, Botswana, Namibia and other parts of Zambia for some sailing, bird watching, golf, seafood, cycling and various celebrations.



10. COMMUNICATIONS



In 1995 communications consisted of a twice monthly visit to the post office and farmers shop in Mpika (100 km away). The land lines in Mpika hardly ever worked but the postal system to and from Mpika worked extremely well. In 2002 Charlie Harvey insisted that we joined the Bushmail network. This was an email system linked to a short wave radio which transmitted emails at about 250 bytes a minute (on a good day). It worked brilliantly for bookings and cost USD1000 per year. Unfortunately as other options developed this service slowly died out and Mutinondo had to replace the short wave aerial with a satellite dish and internet. It is incredible that one can (usually) have full access to everything online whilst sitting in the middle of nowhere (for just over twice the cost of Bushmail). Occasionally this does fail and fortunately there is scant cell phone coverage from various hills which acts as a good backup.

11. CULTIVATION AND COMMUNITY FARMING ACTIVITIES



Whilst waiting for the Mpika District Council to approve the land application Mike and Lari got involved with farmers' input distribution, soya bean outgrowers and bought the old ZCCB shop in Mpika which they opened as a farmers' shop. These ventures were a good way to find out more about the area and meet many members of the community, but due to battles with accountability and government controlled prices of crops, were not successful businesses. Soya bean outgrowers and farmers' shop continued until 2004.

12. COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTIONS



Mpumba Natural Resources Conservation Society, overseen by the Mpumba Conservation Trust, was set up in conjunction with Mutinondo, WWF Washington and Mano Consultants; Mutinondo hosted football and netball coaches from UK together with donated kit to teach at schools. Mutinondo sponsors Chongololo clubs in the area and welcomes local schools to experience the wonderful Wilderness. In July 2008 Mutinondo hosted a one week birding guide course held by Valery Schollaert and funded one teacher from each school to attend. Mutinondo was instrumental in getting Bsweet to start their bee keeping activity in Chief Mpumba's area.



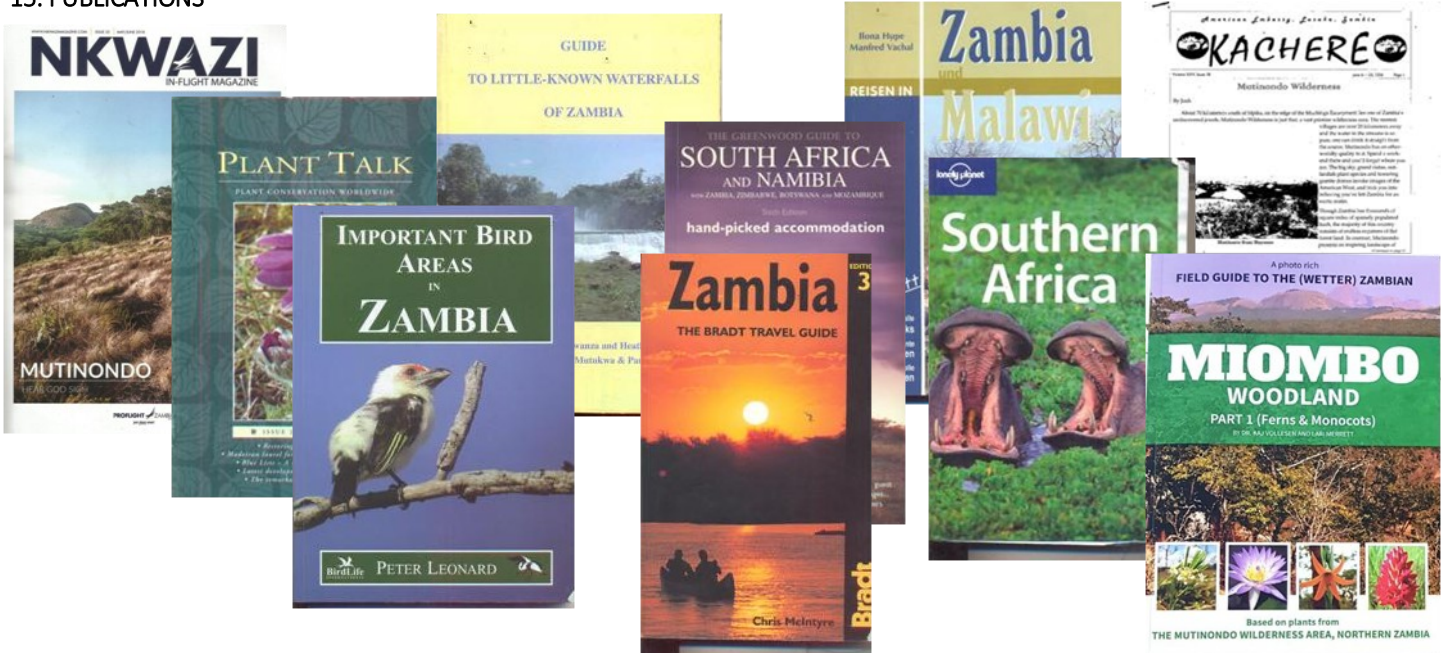
1995 Mutinondo hosted a meeting for **His Royal Highness Chief Mpumba** and headmen to introduce the concept of the investment, consequently there have been several meetings held at the lodge to discuss the poaching problem in the area. Mutinondo now employs Village scouts to join DNPW scouts on patrols in the area. Hopefully the future plans for the Community conservation area will give alternative income opportunities to the local hunters. Recent growth in demand for long hikes at Mutinondo proves what good guides, porters and assistant guides ex poachers are. Their bush skills are second to none, ensuring the safety (and fun) of the guests.

14. OBTAINING 99 YEAR TITLE



14 year title was obtained 01/10/1999 after nearly losing the area to a group of Zimbabwean farmers, and 99 year title was eventually secured on 27/05/2012 after a Zambian based cartel tried to block it! Thank you to Anti-corruption Commission and all the individuals who assisted in re-enforcing the law during these very worrying times.

15. PUBLICATIONS

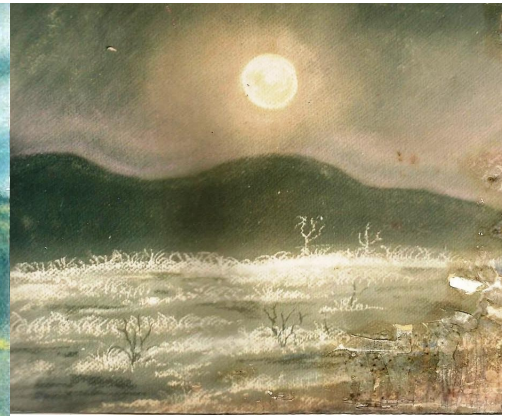
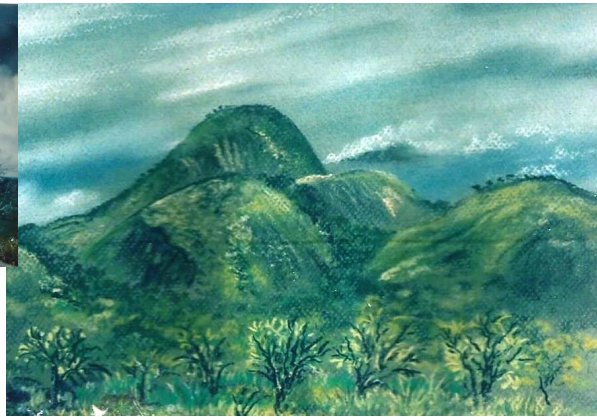


Mutinondo has features in the above publications as well as articles in other publications such as *Zambian Traveler*, *African Geographic*, *National Geographic*, *Africa Birds and Birding* and research for various thesis have been carried out at Mutinondo.

16. CREATIVITY, DESIGN AND CRAFTSMANSHIP



Quentin Allen has adorned Mutinondo with unique murals, maps, chitenge designs and much much more. Much of the wood work was designed by Mike and crafted by Dickson Chilufya and his son Peter.



Paintings of Mutinondo by
Quentin Allen



Ryan Chibowo contributed hugely towards the crafts at Mutinondo, turning our waste paper, old boxes and plastic bags into jewelry boxes and recycled paper cards, beautifully decorated by collage from glossy magazines left by clients. He could put his hand to anything, he made our staff chitenge shirts, made all of the napkins and table cloths, painted the sign (which got knocked down by a truck), made snakes out of bottle tops, cut the tops off savannah bottles to make our tumblers and so much more. Tragically he got run over by a train 20/01/2011.



Lari designed the Mutinondo logo, made silver and gold jewelry, cut stones on a converted singer treadle sewing machine and trained **Simon Mutambo** to help produce stock for the lodge shop and other outlets. (together with her Mpika based jewelers).

17. THE SPECIAL AND THE SPECTACULAR

Mutinondo and the surrounding area encompasses thousands of hectares of woodland. This amount of woodland is enough to influence and regulate the region's rainfall and temperatures. This is one of the last remaining places on earth which has miles and miles of beautiful miombo woodland!!!



Within this incredible expanse of woodland and associated inselbergs, dambos and evergreen forests, an extraordinary array of species live and interact with each other. For example, without the woodland, the array of fungus, insects, birds and dambos would be lost. The woodland regulates the flow of water into the dambos which in turn hold water in these huge natural sand filters, slowly releasing the content into the Zambezi River basin throughout the dry season. A continual and regulating stream of effects and dependencies flow throughout the woodland between all aspects and inhabitants of the area creating a very healthy holistic environment for all. Below are just a few of the magnificent creatures, fungus and plants which coexist within this special area:



Goliathus ablosignatus

Eulophia latilabris

Termitomyces titanicus

??

Not only is the diversity incredible (to date: over 1700 species of plants including over 112 different species of orchids, 362 species of birds and 688 invertebrates of which 283 are butterflies) but the landscape is breathtaking. Everyone who visits this area becomes enchanted by its beauty!



18. COMPANIONS

The horses were all just great fun for everyone, including staff and visitors.....but like all of us they too have expiry dates.....
The first 4 horses arrived at Mutinondo 28th October 1997 (date of the failed coup attempt)



Zambuka, the clown who was loved by everyone (put down after damaging himself in a panic attack in the truck when being transferred to the Lusaka house 20/12/2015 -21 yrs); **Cloudy** was an ex Namibian desert horse who introduced many of the children guests (and the odd raven!) to riding (lived until 7/12/2015 when melanoma got into her spinal cord so Paddy and Neil kindly put her down at +-28 years).



Bushy (died of a twisted gut 10/2011 -24 yrs); **Sonny Boy** (heart failure 18/9/2004 +-25 yrs). Both the most noble horses and leaders.

25/10/2003 **Crystal** and **Jumping Jack Flash** arrived at Mutinondo



Crystal a robust and spirited Arab cross Boereperd until Feb. 2009 when she died of CROD (Chronic Respiratory Obstruction Disease) and related complications +-12 yrs, **Jumping Jack Flash** lived up to his name probably due to issues with his back and adults considering his complete change in character when given to a child (died in Lusaka, much loved by Zazy 8/3/2015 +-28 yrs)

2/11/2004 another 4 horses were brought to Mutinondo:



Kite another noble gentleman and ride leader (15/2/2016 of *Epizootic Lymphangitis* +-25 yrs); **Swanford** a stunningly beautiful, well bred thoroughbred who was just showing a fun character before being shot by poachers on 23/9/2005 +-12 yrs.



Jet Cruise - such a character, we never really did work him out before he died—possible from a snake bite 8/8/2006 +-16 yrs); **Poko-huntus** was rescued from being put down at the age of 4 because she had turned nasty after being handreared by her previous owner, she was so intelligent but not dependable for guests to ride so was given to Patrick in Lusaka.



Northern Minstrel also a well bred thoroughbred, but didn't do well at Mutinondo before being diagnosed and dieing of *Trypanosomiasis*/sleeping sickness 10/2011 -16 yrs. **Zebadee** - a rejected police horse (our first name for him was ZP1!) and perfect trekking horse until he was killed by a lion in 10/2010 -11 yrs.

During these 18 years, the extra dimension which these horses gave to Mutinondo was irreplaceable but keeping them healthy (and alive!) was a challenge and to this day Lari feels she let them down with her lack of veterinary skills. It was almost impossible to get a vet to visit although they were all wonderful with assisting by email. It was much easier to take blood to the vet than get horse to vet or visa versa. Each horse died from a different cause. Initially Sinkobo (*Dermatophilus congolensis*) was a huge problem, so were 5 day bouts of high temperatures which were never identified. Maybe this was Mutinondo and the surrounding areas saying that this is not the right place for domestic animals. Already many of our neighbour's livestock are suffering from illness and loss of life.



2010: Kite, Zebadee, Minstrel, Ceswa, Poko, Jack, Zambuka, Bushy, Flame, Spirit and Cloudy

Not only did our horses give everyone a huge amount of pleasure (and worries and heartache), so did our lovely dogs:
 Past:



Stella, (snake bite) Karla (dip or snake bite) and Jack (snake bite) -all from LAWS



Missy (top left) from LAWS –kidney failure
 Max from Lusaka house -biliary
 Chuck and Rox and Rex from LAWS now in Lusaka with Mike
 Jock wandering spirit dog!



Present:

Happy - aka Mercedes from LAWS.

Thank you to Lusaka Animal Welfare who do an amazing job rescuing and homing an incredible array of very special dogs! All are unique and great fun to have.

19. CELEBRATIONS



Celebrating 2000 on Mayense!



Plenty of Happy Christmases!



.....And birthdays and some weddings too.....

20. CHALLENGES

Mutinondo had 2 attempted land grabs, 2 armed robberies and Lari and Mike together with Lari's sister Jan had a nasty illegal on-slaught on the family farm in Chingola. Mike had major back problems and finally surgery in 2005, Lari snapped her achilles in 2014 and had both her dislocating arms fixed in 2015 and 2017 respectively. The plan was for Mike and Lari to be happily retired since 2015, but due to management and other problems Lari was pleased to return to Mutinondo. We plan, God laughs..... :-)

21. CURRENT SITUATION AND CONTINUITY

Mike now enjoys life in Lusaka as well as doing an excellent job shopping and arranging shipping of supplies, spare parts etc etc for Mutinondo whilst Lari is the "girl in the office" at Mutinondo, rebuilding local staff to become more proactive in the running of the lodge,. The years and depth of the Mutinondo team is excellent, the newest member of staff at Mutinondo joined in 2012!



Father and Son Dickson and Peter Chilufya—carpenters; present builder Joseph Chisanga jnr and assistants Moses, Gibby and Brian

The sons of the original Mutinondo builder and carpenter have continued with their parents' skills, the upgrades in the campsite proves this. 4 of the 7 campsites now have shelters, a block of 4 new showers have been added, the old ones have been rebuilt, 2 new toilets (loos with views!) have been added and the 5th is being rebuilt. Comparison of old and new shower block above!

COVID: Thanks to the greatly appreciated support from local residents, Mutinondo has so far survived a very weird 2020. So far we have been very lucky, and salute those in far worse situations throughout the world. It is certainly a time to make the most of what one has, right here and now!!! Let us hope that we all remember what we have learnt during this time.

The 4 night/5 day hike to the Mutinondo River waterfalls on the western escarpment of the Luangwa Valley to the east of Mutinondo has proven to be a very popular option for those wanting an isolated break away from the rest of the world. Where else can you hike for 5 days and not see another person apart from your guides? It is a life changing experience!!!



22. THE MAGIC - scientific evidence!

Mutinondo's peace and quiet, 10.000 hectares of pristine woodland, sparkly clean drinkable river water, endless cut and signed tracks through uninhabited bushscapes, and the freedom to roam, offers visitors an escape from the stress and disturbing news which is intruding more and more into the "normal" way of life. The connection between physical and mental health with the need to live amongst trees and natural surroundings is becoming more researched and appreciated. Eco-therapy is being heralded as the obvious solution to mental imbalances, there is no dispute that we need trees for oxygen and a clean and secure water supply.

Research in New York State proves:

Exposure to forests and trees:

- boosts the immune system
- lowers blood pressure
- reduces stress
- improves mood
- increases ability to focus, even in children with ADHD
- accelerates recovery from surgery or illness
- increases energy level
- improves sleep

And the the National Health has proved that recovery from operations when trees are in site of the patient improves the rate and quality of recovery.

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/publication/un-desa-policy-brief-80-forests-at-the-heart-of-a-green-recovery-from-the-covid-19-pandemic/>

<https://www.upwithtrees.org/news-events/news-and-updates/how-trees-affect-our-health-and-wellness/#:~:text=From%20another%20health%20standpoint%2C%20trees,childhood%20obesity%20up%20to%2020%25.>

<https://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/90720.html>

<https://nhsforest.org/evidence-benefits>

23. THE MAGIC - culturally and spiritually!

Mutinondo visitors never cease to surprise with new gems of fascinating information. Recently it was pointed out (thanks Lynette!) that Mutinondo Wilderness 31°15' to 31°21' shares its longitude with some pretty impressive and powerful features:

the Great Pyramid 31°08' 13"

the Great Sphinx of Giza 31°08' 81"

the Nile 30°05'59" to 33°

Murchisen Falls 31°41' 07"

Lake Victoria almost on the junction of 31 degrees and the Equator

the Rift Valley 28°46' to 34°48'

Zimbabwe Ruins 30°55'53"

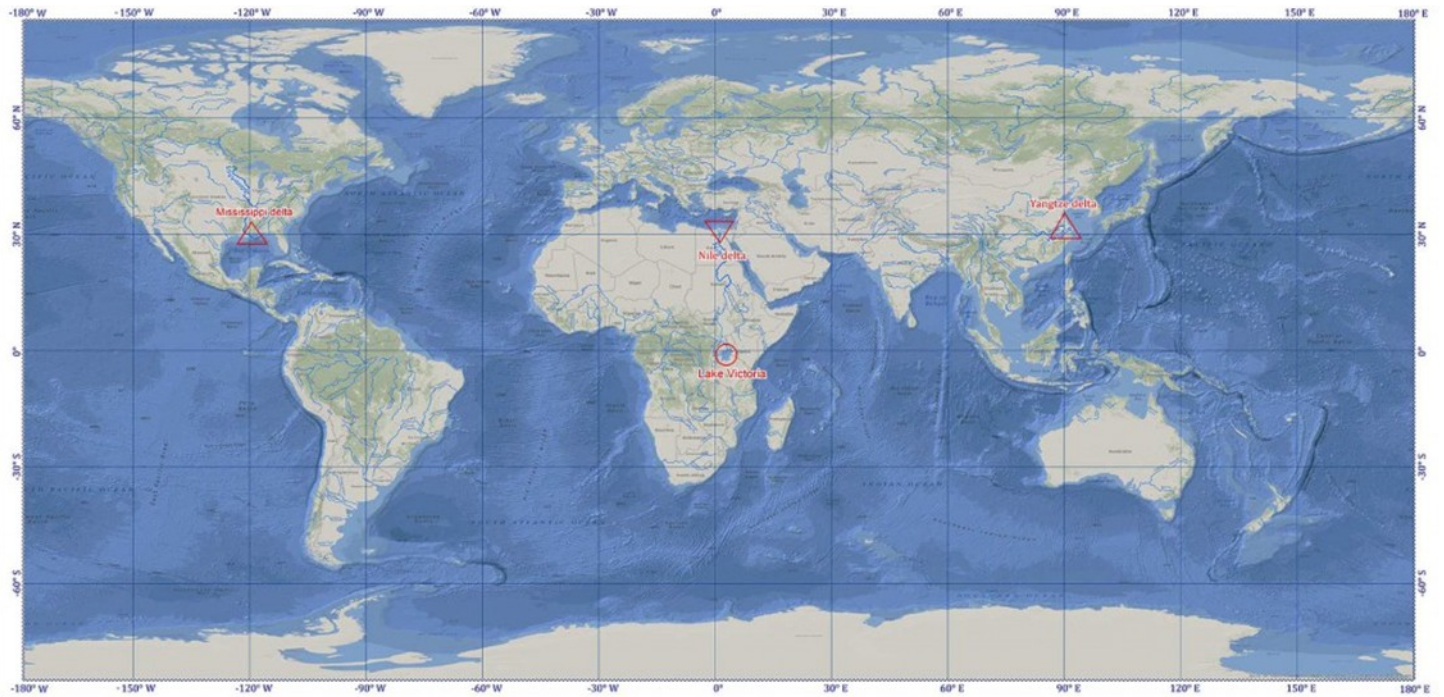
Timbavati 31°18'49"

The 31 degrees longitude is also known as: Nilotic Meridian, the Great Pyramid Meridian, Zep Tepi - Line of First Time



"Both the Egyptian & African traditions converge on one conclusion: the **Nilotic Meridian is sacred beyond comparison** because it represents the beginning of time **when lion gods walked among men.**"

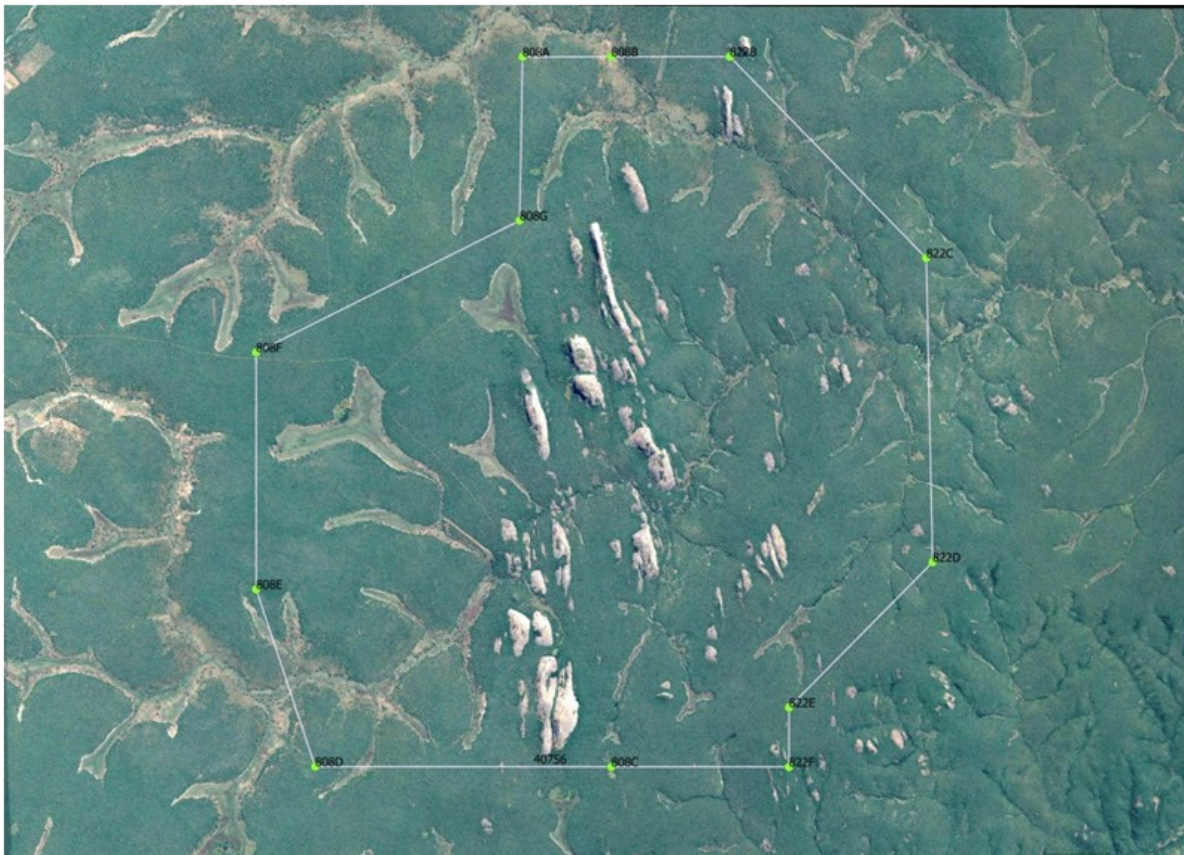
The 31 degree Meridian was the original Longitudinal equator, China and France then claimed that it went through Beijing and Paris respectively and published their maps accordingly. In the late 19th Century Greenwich was made the official ZERO Latitude line.



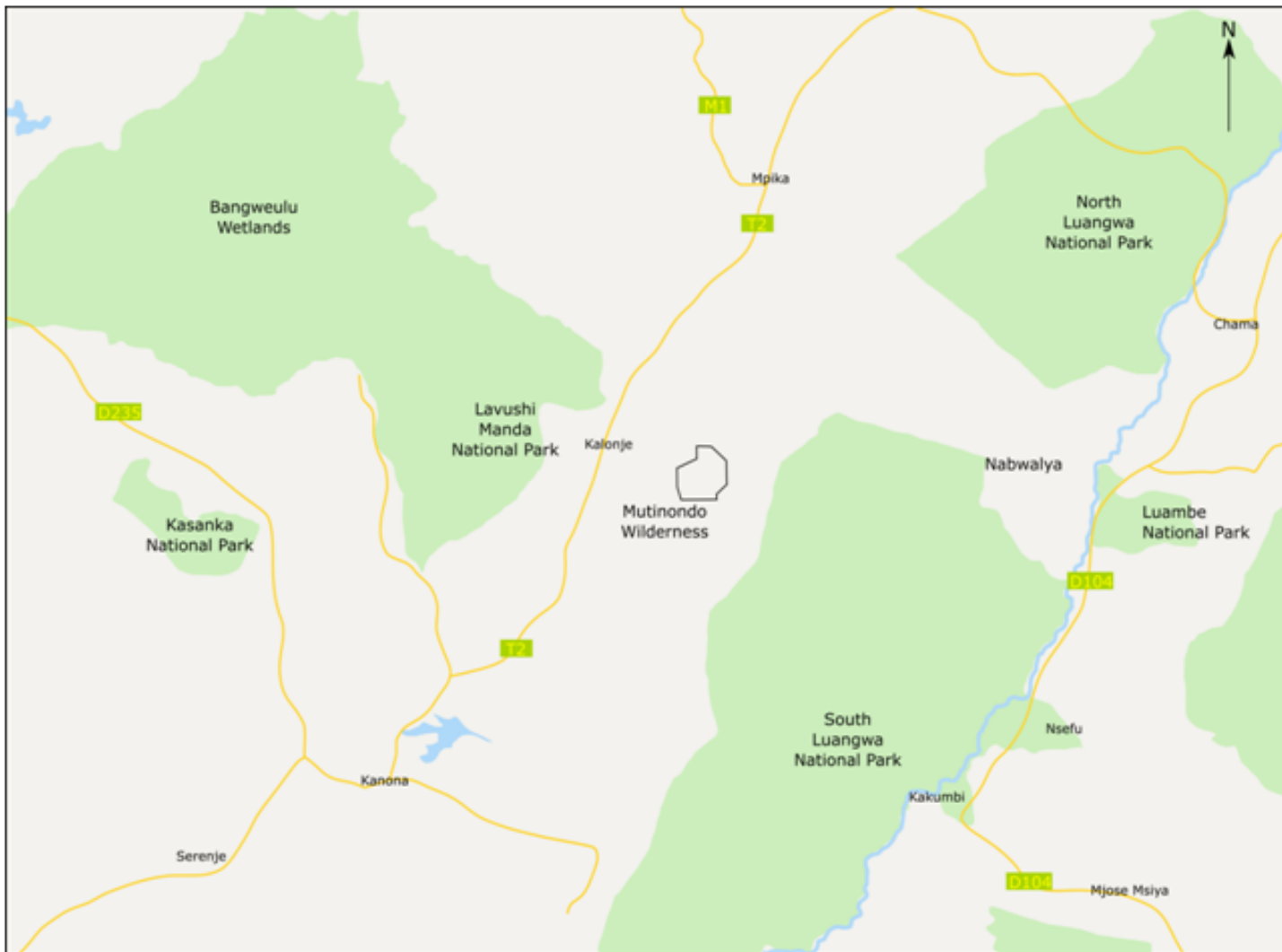
<https://blog.world-mysteries.com/science/the-great-pyramid-earths-natural-prime-meridian/>
<https://toolonginthisplace.wordpress.com/2011/04/06/lions-of-longitude/>

24. COLLABORATION

Back on the ground, some other amazing things have been evolving within and around Mutinondo. Mike and Lari's nephews Paddy and Jay Fisher, have asked that Mutinondo not be sold because it is so special, emphasizing that this amount of pristine woodland is becoming a rarity, and should be protected. If it was sold it could easily end up with people with different priorities for conserving and protecting this very special and spectacular area. Maps below of Mutinondo by Paddy Fisher.



Over the past couple of years conservation organisations and conservation minded individuals have also appreciated the value of the Mutinondo Wilderness and the surrounding woodland. The 8,900 ha of community land to the east of Mutinondo which was set aside for community, based conservation in 2002, was subsequently illegally reallocated to individuals at a later date. These dodgy land deals have been fought by various organisations and the progress that has been made is fantastic. The misled inhabitants have been ordered to return their titles and letters of offer, and will be given other land outside the Chintu Mukulu Conservation Area. Watch this space, already reports and research are being done in conjunction with the community leaders to work out how best the community can now benefit from having this land under their control. Mutinondo looks forward to working with them and the other organisations involved.



This, together with the long time wish and vision of many, is a vital step towards creating a conservation corridor between Luangwa Valley and Lavushi Manda (and possibly Kasanka National Park). This is very possible. Mutinondo has proven that thoughts, dreams and wishes DO happen - if enough time and energy is put into them.

25. CONCLUSION

The original thoughts, dreams and plans to build a lodge in a wilderness were planted in Mike's mind during his involvement with the Ruaha National Park in the 1980s. When he and Lari set out to find the place to do this in 1994, their criteria included: somewhere beautiful, which was uninhabited with remnant wildlife, which they could obtain a 99 year title for. During the journey of making this dream come true, the Mutinondo area has taught and inspired them to do things very differently to many of their original plans - for example to build a dam and flood the incredibly sensitive and biodiverse Musamfushi Dambo - heaven forbid!!

“Our approach to nature is to beat it into submission. We would stand a better chance of survival if we accommodated ourselves to this planet and viewed it appreciatively ” - E.B. White