

CAMPFIRE: A utilitarian approach to wildlife conservation

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The Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) is an approach to development and conservation in Zimbabwe. The aim of the programme is to restructure the control of Zimbabwe's countryside, giving people who live on the land alternative ways of utilising their natural resources. CAMPFIRE is an indigenous approach to wildlife management which emerged in the mid-1980s through the recognition that, as long as wildlife remained the property of the state, no one would invest in it as a resource and its long term future was in jeopardy. Since the mid-1970s, Zimbabwe has allowed private landowners to claim ownership of the wildlife resource on their land and to benefit from its use. Under CAMPFIRE, people living in the communal lands, which represents over 42% of the land surface area in the country, can claim the same right of ownership. Conceptually, CAMPFIRE includes all natural resources, however, to date its focus has been upon wildlife management in communal areas, particularly those adjacent to National Parks, where people have to live with the costs of having wildlife in the area. Since its inception in 1989 CAMPFIRE has engaged more than half a million people in the practice of managing wildlife and reaping the benefits of using wild lands.