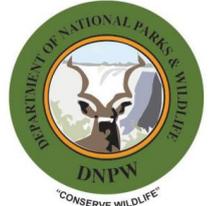




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**PRESS RELEASE:  
WORLD'S FIRST CARBON NEUTRAL PARK FROM OPERATIONS ANNOUNCED IN LOWER  
ZAMBEZI NATIONAL PARK, ZAMBIA**

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USAID-funded Community Forests Program (CFP) implemented by [BioCarbon Partners \(BCP\)](#), in partnership with the Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW), and [Conservation Lower ZAMBEZI \(CLZ\)](#), are proud to announce achieving the world's first carbon neutral national park from operations in Lower Zambezi National Park, Zambia. Following on the announcement of the global climate agreement at the [Paris Climate Conference \(COP21\)](#), this development dovetails with the carbon-conscious future that this global agreement heralds.

A carbon neutral national park generates no greenhouse gas emissions from its own operations, those of its partners and concessionaires. Inspired by efforts to achieve carbon neutral national parks from operations in the USA and UK, this Zambian initiative aims to show Zambian private sector tourism leadership, and their solidarity with those calling for global climate action. Tourism is the world's largest service sector industry, so this development is a powerful example of tourism operators taking responsibility for the emissions they directly generate, and how this sector can become a force for change if more operators participate in emissions reductions efforts.

In Lower Zambezi National Park (NP), every single tourism concessionaire based in the NP participated, and even lodges based on the outskirts of the park, funded the carbon neutrality of all the conservation management operations by DNPW and CLZ in 2015. In addition, the operators offset the emissions of tourism lodge concessions in the National Park for the 2015 calendar year. Operators went the further step of offsetting their head offices in Lusaka, Zambia's Capital. Private sector operators voluntarily funded this milestone from their own internal revenues despite the fact that tourism suffered from a downturn in Zambia, and other parts of Africa in 2015. A number of participating lodges are also investing heavily in renewables and purchased greenhouse gas (GHG) credits from the Lower Zambezi REDD+ Project to offset their unavoidable emissions associated with lodge, office and Park operations. Tourism operators purchased REDD+ Verified Carbon Units (VCUs) at premium above average prices to send a statement to the global market that REDD+ VCUs are valuable due to their multiple co-benefits, including biodiversity and poverty reduction.

This achievement illustrates the Zambian tourism sector's commitment to going the extra mile to influence the global tourism market by taking carbon-conscious tourism sustainability practices seriously. These small tourism businesses have created an example for how global businesses in any sector can help build a market for emissions reductions projects that conserve forests and support community livelihoods. This effort shows that climate responsibility and initiative can begin at any level.

The methodology used for carbon neutrality assessment followed that prescribed by international organizations. The method employed an assessment of 2015 emissions from lodges, head offices, staff travel and even food production emissions to feed clients and staff. Certain activities causing emissions were then avoided. For example, some lodges converted to using sustainably produced eco-charcoal ([www.eco-charcoal.com](http://www.eco-charcoal.com)). Lodges also worked to improve energy efficiency, for example solar power investments which reduced generator use. After this, the remaining emissions from tourism and conservation operations and fuel use in the park were offset using VCUs from the [Lower Zambezi REDD+ Project](#) (supported by the USAID funded CFP). Each year, the operators' carbon footprint will be assessed for intended onward continuation of this carbon neutrality and improvement of the emissions reduction strategy. In 2015, operators committed to the 'Copper' level of neutrality which covers lodge, office and park conservation management emissions. Silver and

gold levels include airline flight emissions (domestic and pro-rated international), and platinum includes offsetting all airline emissions even if a tourist to Zambia visits destinations which are not linked to Lower Zambezi NP. The aim is to strengthen the scheme over time and provide lodges and clients with a pathway to achieving higher levels of emissions reductions not generated in the park, but related to travel to the park. Mr. Grant Cummings of Chiawa and Old Mondoro Camps, who purchased the largest GHG credit amount in 2015, stated that: “The Lower Zambezi National Park is a world class tourism and conservation product. The operators are truly committed to this area, and to going the extra mile to run responsible, and sustainable products that contribute to Zambia’s position of offering some of the most fantastic and unique tourism experiences in Africa.”

Fourteen lodges participated in this effort, of which six lodges are located in the park: [Chiawa Camp](#), [Old Mondoro Bush Camp](#), [Anabezi Camp](#), [Mwambashi River Lodge](#), [Sausage Tree](#) and [Potato Bush Camp](#). Impressively, lodges in the adjacent Chiawa Game Management Area, such as [Chongwe River Camp](#), [Chongwe River House](#), [Kasaka Lodge](#), and [Tsika Island](#), [Baines River Camp](#), [Kanyemba Lodge](#), and [Royal Zambezi Lodge](#) partnered in the effort, even though some are not directly dependent on the park on a commercial basis. This further highlights the emissions reductions and conservation commitment of these operators. Mr. Kampamba Kombe, the Acting Director General at DNPW, added: “This innovative achievement not only supports conservation and poverty reduction activities around the Lower Zambezi National Park, but also aims to promote Lower Zambezi National Park as a world class wildlife tourism destination”.

Part of the beauty of this story is the linkage between the Lower Zambezi NP—a stunning world-class area of global biodiversity significance in the Lower Zambezi-Mana Trans-frontier Conservation Area—and a REDD+ project in the same ecosystem. [BCP](#) manages the 100,000 acre [Rufunsa Conservancy](#), as part of the [Lower Zambezi REDD+ Project](#), which acts as a direct buffer zone to the vulnerable 60 kilometer boundary of the Lower Zambezi NP. The Park is threatened by activities like poaching, illegal logging and illegal charcoal production.

The Lower Zambezi REDD+ Project is independently verified to the [Verified Carbon Standard \(VCS\)](#) and validated to the [Climate, Community & Biodiversity \(CCB\) Standards](#). The project is the first in Africa to have achieved triple gold validation to the CCB Standards for being designed to deliver exceptional benefits to community, biodiversity and climate change. The funds raised by the REDD+ project are reinvested into conservation security; land management (fire management, anti-poaching roads, infrastructure, communications); carbon accounting, intensive community based livelihood projects, and support to DNPW and the Forestry Department. According to Mr. Ian Stevenson, CEO of CLZ: “Since the project’s inception, BCP has enhanced conservation management in the vulnerable northern boundary area of the Park, where a significant amount of threat to the park emanates from, working jointly with DNPW, CLZ and other partners.”

Hassan Sachedina, BCP’s Managing Director added that: “The achievement of the first carbon neutral park from operations in the world is significant. This broad-based partnership will hopefully pave the way for other parks and tourism operators in the world to become carbon neutral, raising the bar of what “eco-tourism” means. Moreover, it shows that if small family-owned businesses in Africa are taking responsibility for their emissions, it should inspire the confidence of Fortune 500 companies to invest in developing the carbon markets through projects with significant conservation and poverty reduction co-benefits”.

Corporates wishing to purchase bulk REDD+ offsets from Zambia, please contact: Juraj Ujházy, Enterprise Development Coordinator, at [juraj@biocarbonpartners.com](mailto:juraj@biocarbonpartners.com).

Individuals and small businesses can purchase Lower Zambezi offsets directly through [Stand For Trees](#) website.

### **Partner Lodges achieving Copper Level Carbon Neutrality:**



*Chiawa and Old Mondoro Lodges* - The Cumings Family own and run one of Africa's finest safari operations with their two sensational, multi-award winning camps - Chiawa Camp and Old Mondoro which pioneered safaris in Zambia's Lower Zambezi National Park. Each of these safari camps offer an authentic experiential safari, where the focus is on the bush, the river, the wildlife, and you. Both camps offer a unique haven of warmth and hospitality, dedicated to making your safari dreams come true whilst protecting the wildlife and habitat of what has become one of Africa's "bucket list" safari areas. [www.chiawa.com](http://www.chiawa.com)



Anabezi is very excited to work with BCP on this conservation initiative, protecting the habitat on the borders of the park is critical in protecting the areas we utilize and from which we benefit. We hope that by the Lower Zambezi National Park becoming carbon neutral from operations that we will set the benchmark for a broader type of conservation within National Parks and Wildlife areas. [www.anabezi.com](http://www.anabezi.com)



**MWAMBASHI**  
RIVER LODGE

Mwambashi River Lodge is one of the oldest camps in the Lower Zambezi and one of the safari world's best-kept secrets. Situated in the heart of the National Park, a truly unspoilt wilderness area, Mwambashi combines comfort - cold drinks, Cordon Bleu meals and roomy en-suite tents - with the quintessential bush experience: game drives, bush walks, fishing, photo boat cruises and canoeing or enjoying a cold drink in camp watching elephants literally within touching distance. [www.mwambashiriverlodge.com](http://www.mwambashiriverlodge.com)



Sausage Tree and Potato Bush camps are the epitome of bush chic offering a civilized approach to a true bush experience with lavish attention to detail. These exclusive safari camps, voted number one on the BBC Holiday Programme's 'Ten Best Luxury Destinations', specializes in the very best game viewing with the highest international standards in luxury and service. Sausage Tree and Potato Bush have been investing in making their operations as environmentally friendly as possible and are proud to be part of making the Lower Zambezi the world's first carbon neutral park from operations. [www.sausagetreecamp.com](http://www.sausagetreecamp.com) and [www.potatobushcamp.com](http://www.potatobushcamp.com)



Chongwe Safaris is one of the oldest and most reputable companies in the Lower Zambezi, operating a collection of top lodges: Chongwe River Camp, Chongwe River House, Kasaka Lodge, and Tsika Island. Two camps are located on the confluence of the mighty Zambezi and Chongwe Rivers: Chongwe River Camp & Chongwe River House; a stunning house crafted by renowned architect Neil Rocher. Kasaka is a 20 bed tented camp offering an authentic and memorable safari experience. Set in the middle of the Zambezi River, Tsika Island is approximately 30 - 35 km upstream from the park boundary. Tsika Island was purposely built to offer guests an exclusive bush camp experience, allowing max 7 guests at a time. Tsika Island is a true partnership with the nearby village which retains ownership of the island. [www.chongwe.com](http://www.chongwe.com)



Baines' River Camp, a family owned and run safari lodge situated in the Game Management Area adjacent to the Lower Zambezi National Park, is passionate about all aspects of conservation. Whilst offering services with as little impact on this fragile ecosystem as feasibly possible, we are proud to be included in this pioneering project to offset the pressures of human impact on Zambia's pristine natural heritage.

[www.bainesrivercamp.com](http://www.bainesrivercamp.com)



Royal Zambezi Lodge, a spacious but intimate privately owned lodge, situated in Zambia on the banks of the mighty Zambezi River just minutes from the Lower Zambezi National Park and directly opposite Zimbabwe's famous Mana Pools World Heritage Site. Royal offers the ultimate in luxury and cuisine while enjoying and participating closely in the sights and sounds of the African wilderness.

[www.royalzambezilodge.com](http://www.royalzambezilodge.com)

### Contributing Partner:



Carved out of the African bush, Kanyemba is a wonderful getaway in the Lower Zambezi, only two and a half hours from the capital city of Lusaka. Kanyemba is renowned for its great atmosphere and vibe, the staff, the surrounding nature, expert guiding, and breathtaking scenery, along with its renowned cuisine. Catering for a maximum of 20 guests, Kanyemba Lodge is built of natural materials, and the chalets blend in perfectly with the surroundings, providing extreme comfort in the warmer months and a very high level of privacy. Each

evening guests are treated to Kanyemba Lodge's famous cuisine under the branches of a giant wild Mango Tree. With a distinctly Italian influence, our team of chefs will wow your palate at the same time as the "Kanyemba Chorus" of hyena, frogs, and of course the odd lion, will wow your mind.

[www.kanyemba.com](http://www.kanyemba.com)

### Lower Zambezi REDD+ Project Implementing Partners:



BioCarbon Partners (BCP) is a Zambian-based social enterprise, which develops and manages long term forest carbon projects in Zambia. Current focus of BCP is on implementing REDD+ projects in greater Zambezi-Luangwa ecosystem in Zambia. BCP has certified Zambia's first pilot REDD+ demonstration project known as the 'Lower Zambezi REDD+ Project' (LZRP) to CCBA triple gold standards (validation) and VCS verification; the first project in Africa with these

certifications. In addition, BCP is proud to partner with USAID/ZAMBIA in the implementation of the Community Forests Program (CFP). This innovative program that includes will verify a minimum of 700,000 additional hectares (ha) across three Provinces in Zambia in Luangwa Valley region. BCP has begun selling VERs from Zambia to international clients and is on a path to a sound financial footing supported with strong technical expertise, investors and international partners.

[www.biocarbonpartners.com](http://www.biocarbonpartners.com)

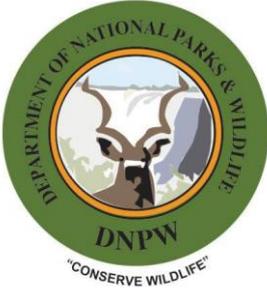


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prevention and humanitarian assistance. [www.usaid.gov](http://www.usaid.gov)



Conservation Lower Zambezi is a Zambian non-profit organisation committed to the conservation and sustainable use of the local wildlife and natural resources of the Lower Zambezi. CLZ focuses on three areas of work: a) wildlife protection – assisting Zambia Wildlife Authority (DNPW) anti-poaching patrol deployments and training as well as supporting a local Community Resource Board Village Scout unit; b) environmental education through outreach in schools and visits to our CLZ environmental education centre; and c) supporting local community development projects, especially human wildlife conflict mitigation. CLZ operates in the same ecosystem as BCP and the two entities have been collaborating on law enforcement and management of the area. [www.conservationlowerzambezi.org](http://www.conservationlowerzambezi.org)



The Department of National Parks and wildlife (DNPW) is mandated under the Zambia Wildlife Act No. 12 of 1998 to manage and conserve Zambia's wildlife; its national parks and game management areas, which cover 31 percent of the country's land mass. DNPW endeavors to integrate the wildlife policy with economic, environmental and social policies to ensure effective contribution to sustainable national development. BCP and DNPW collaborate closely in the implementation of REDD+ activities adjacent to protected areas. [www.zambiatourism.com](http://www.zambiatourism.com)

*Disclaimer:* This Press Release is made possible by the support of the American People through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the responsibility of BCP and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.