

PROGRAMME FOR THE SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES CAMEROON – SOUTH WEST REGION (PSMNR-SWR)

ECO-TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN MOUNT CAMEROON NATIONAL PARK



its international airport. Mount Cameroon is the highest mountain in West and Central Africa (4,070 m). The park stretches from evergreen lowland rainforest at the Atlantic coast through sub montane and montane forest to alpine grassland near its summit. It is a biodiversity hotspot with many endemic flora and fauna species. It is an active volcano erupting with numerous craters, crater lakes, caves, lava flows and ash fields. It presents a fascinating, diverse and astonishing landscape, ideal for hiking tours. It enables to discover the richness and beauty of its flora and fauna.

Mt Cameroon is a unique point of observation for elephants, chimpanzees, drills, Preuss' monkeys and bush bucks. It has an important bird diversity and is an interesting place for bird watching. The mountain is a good spot to enjoy beautiful views of the night sky and stars. The area around Mt Cameroon hosts a number of additional attractions of natural, cultural and historical value including the beautiful beaches at the coast side. With this unique natural heritage and outstanding beauty Mt Cameroon National park hosts an important eco-tourism potential. However this potential is under-leveraged. Lack of tourism infrastructure, planning, organization and marketing inhibited MCNP from fulfilling its tourism potential.

Approach of PSMNR-SWR

In this context in 2014, PSMNR-SW commissioned a study to define Mt Cameroon National Park Ecotourism strategy to define ecotourism development with a focus on trekking as the core tourism product. An eco-tourism programme was integrated to the MCNP management plan in the same year. In 2017 an eco-tourism development and management plan was elaborated by PSMNR-SWR with the support of African Wildlife Foundation. The plan sees significant ecotourism development potential in the Park due to its natural assets, and proximity to Douala, the economic hub of Cameroon, and the coast. The plan develops also perspectives how the

Tourists desiring an experience above the skies are hiking to behold some of the beautiful geographical features on the mountain.

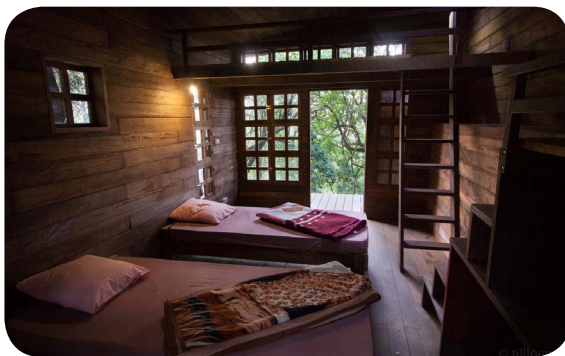
Background

The Mount Cameroon National Park (MCNP) was created with support of PSMNR-SWR in 2009. It is located in the South-West Region of Cameroon, 65 km from the economic capital of Douala and

adjacent communities could further benefit from eco-tourism; so far their benefits are limited to opportunities for local guiding and porting. The Eco-tourism Development Plan recommends developing a diversity of potential experiences to enlarge the current ecotourism landscape from a sole trekking destination and to offer other nature-based, wildlife, activity and adventure experiences (construction of a canopy walkway, mountain biking, chimpanzee trekking, further development of wildlife sighting, astronomy, horse riding, and organization of executive meetings).



Fako-Mountain Lodge situated at 2.850m altitude, on the main hiking trail from Buea to the summit offers great panoramic views.



Interior of a tourist cabin in Mann Spring Lodge at the edge of forest and savannah.



Elephants close to Bomana Lake.

Achievements

- PSMNR-SWR support MCNP to promote the eco-tourism potential during the race of hope, a major event, and during other occasions. A number of promotion material in form of professional photos and video documentaries have been produced and a website developed (mountcameroonnationalpark.org).
- PSMNR is supporting the park also in the organization of local tour operators for guiding and porting as well as in trail development and management.
- Two complete trekking eco-lodges on the Mountain, one at 2850 m a.s.l., Fakomountain Lodge, and one at 2300 m a.s.l. at the edge of forest and savannah, Mann Spring's lodge were built. Both lodges offer great panoramic views. PSMNR-SWR further built Mt Cameroon National Park headquarter and a developed a design for the future Discovery Centre, where the natural history and attractions of the park shall be made accessible in a pedagogic manner to a wide public including school pupils.
- Each lodge has six firm cabins for visitors, between 7 and 10 tent platforms, on restaurant and bar, toilets and showers as well as accommodation facilities and kitchen for guide and porters, eco-guards and the lodge operator. All facilities are powered by solar energy.
- Both lodges are operational since 2017 and managed by PSMNR under a temporary management contract with a local organization. It is foreseen to tender them out as a concession under a Public Private Partnership (PPP).

For more information

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