

Living in a Finite Environment (LIFE) Program, Namibia

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Namibia: Setting the Stage

- ◆ Arid country with frequent droughts
- ◆ A largely rural population, highly dependent on natural resources
- ◆ Inequitable land distribution and ownership



Strategies for an Improved Economic Base

- ◆ Diversify economic activities to dampen the impacts of recurring droughts
- ◆ Develop wildlife-based tourism
- ◆ Retain more of benefits at local level
- ◆ Form locally-based conservancies



Importance of Tourism

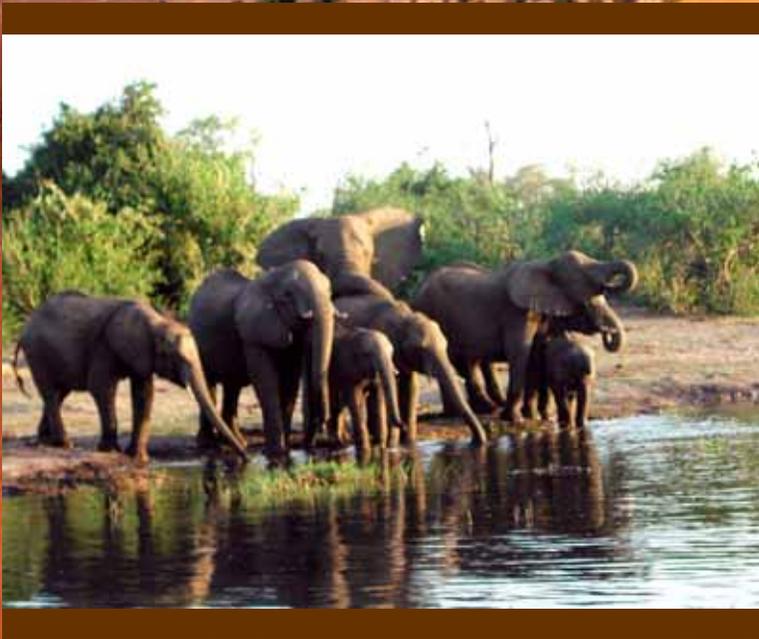
- ◆ Tourism is Namibia's third highest contributor to GDP
- ◆ Wildlife tourism diversifies livelihoods
- ◆ Historically, locals were excluded from most tourism benefits



Threats to Wildlife and Habitat

◆ Threats

- Drought
- Heavy Poaching



◆ Consequences

- Wildlife numbers dropped dramatically in 1980s
- Impacts to tourism enterprises and ecosystem stability



USAID Objectives in Namibia

- ◆ 1993 – USAID begins funding community based conservation: LIFE Program
- ◆ Supports initiatives to decentralize and improve quality of life for rural Namibians
- ◆ Addresses rural development, democracy & governance, sustainable NRM
- ◆ Multi-phase project will carry through to 2009



Overview of LIFE



- ◆ Increase income and other benefits retained at local level through sustainable NRM
- ◆ Support establishment of conservancies that are empowered to make decisions on NRM and other development activities
- ◆ Improve resource base through sustainable NRM



Living in a Finite Environment

◆ Stakeholders

- Namibian Government
- WWF-US
- Local partners

◆ Approach

- Technical assistance
- Grants
- Direct implementation
- Support for policy & legislative changes



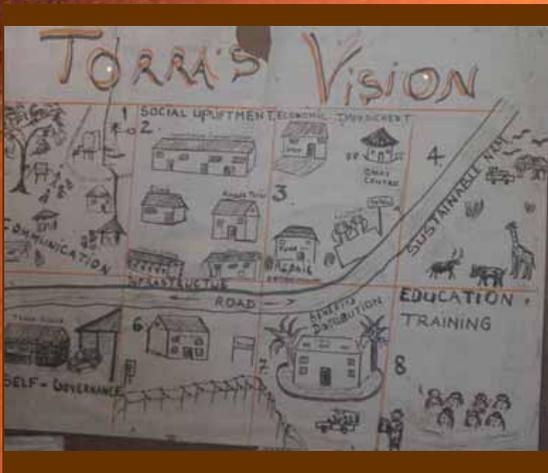
Support to Conservancies

- ◆ Institutional development
- ◆ Establishing joint venture partnerships
 - Photo tourism and trophy hunting
- ◆ Developing community-based tourism enterprises
 - Campsites
 - Traditional villages
 - Craft production and sales
- ◆ Establishing NACOBTA



Challenges

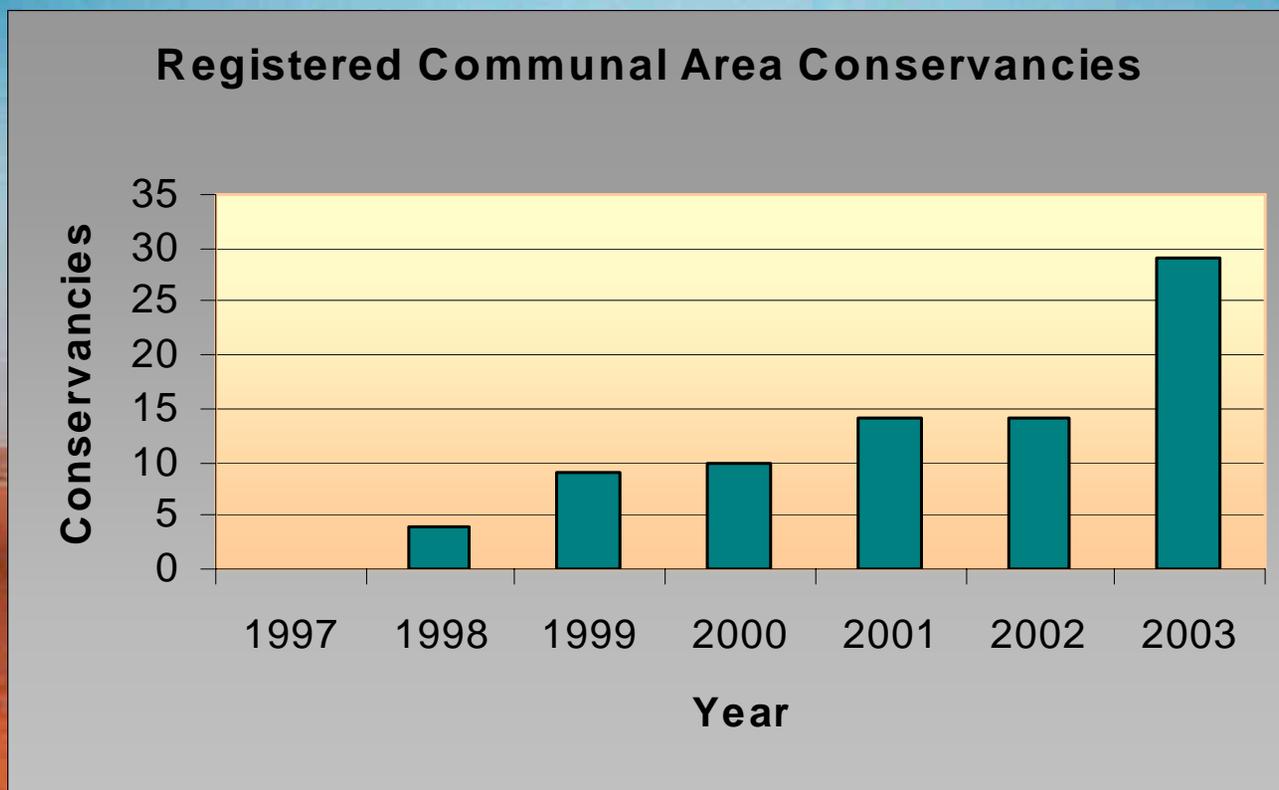
- ◆ Avoid elite capture of benefits and ensure continued local input to decision-making
 - Conservancy management plans
- ◆ Build local capacity to engage in tourism
 - Policy reform to secure access to prime tourism sites



- ◆ Develop understanding of market, build business skills, link enterprises to markets
 - Targeted support to local NGOs



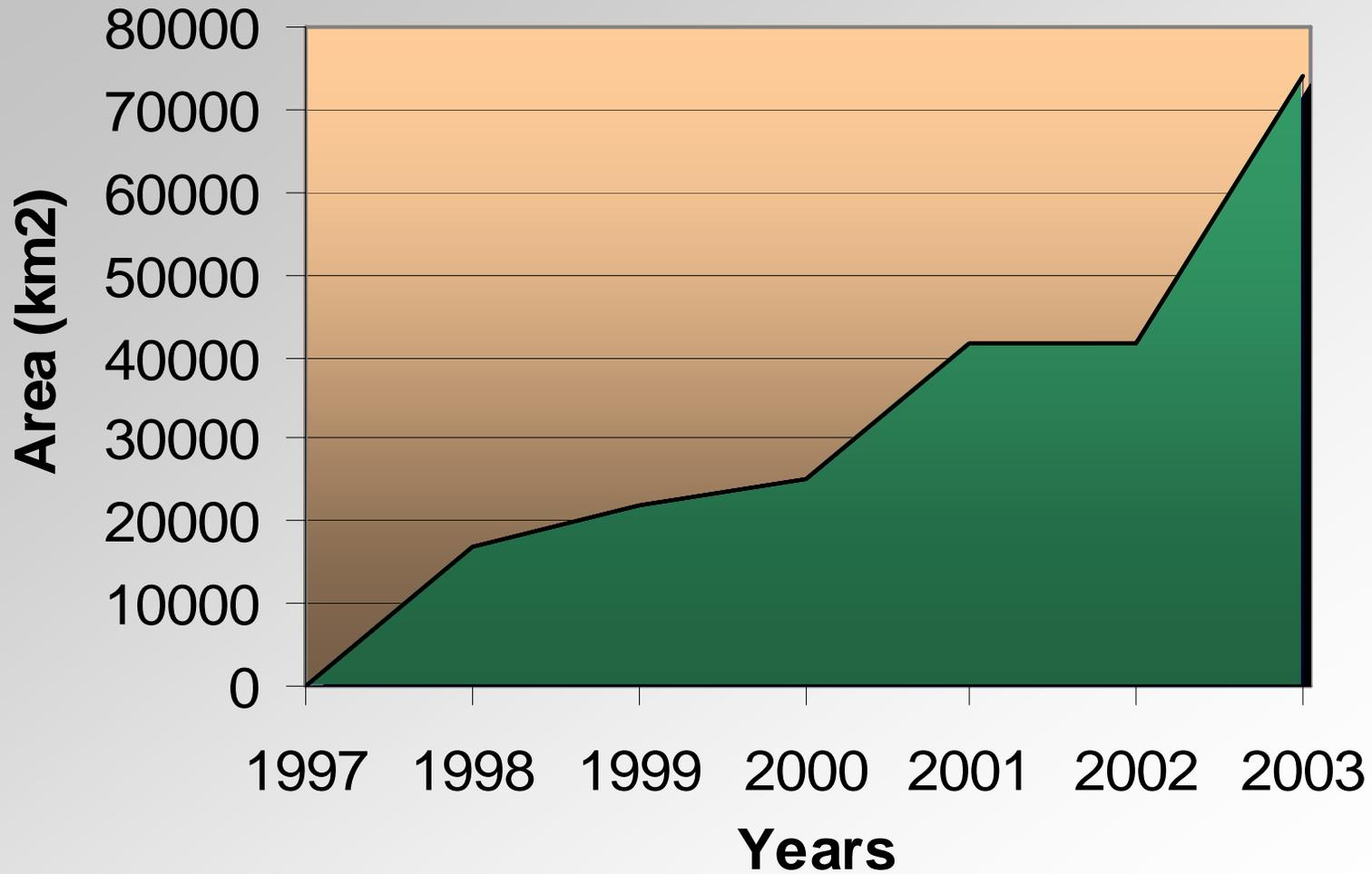
Accomplishments



- ◆ 31 communal area conservancies now exist
- ◆ 10 conservancies near registration, 40 more being formed

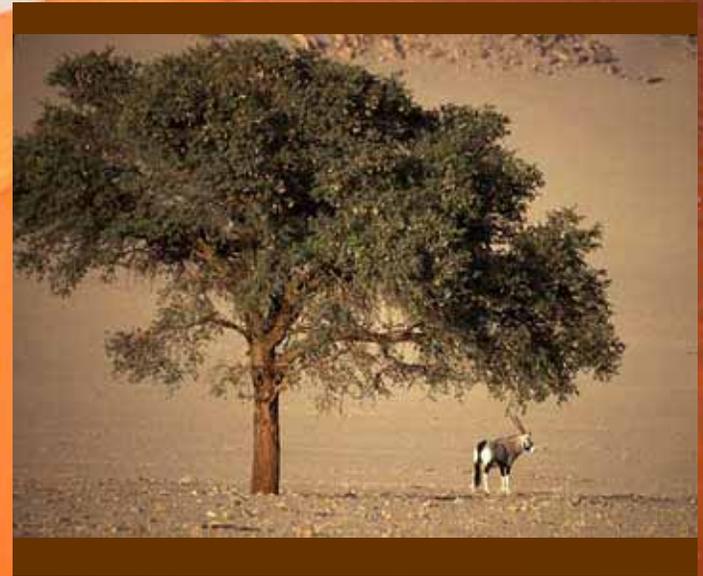


Area under Conservancies

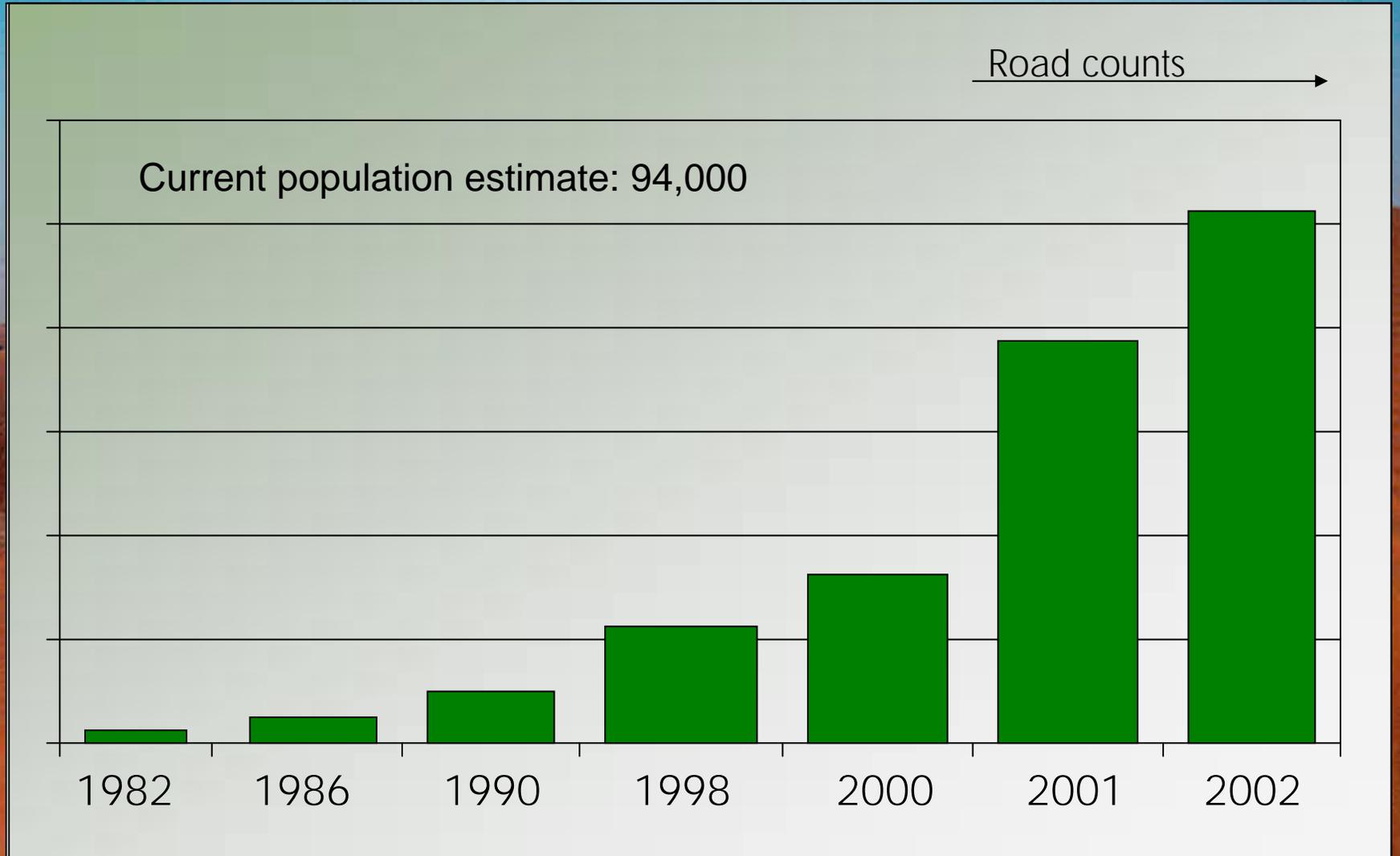


Conservation Benefits

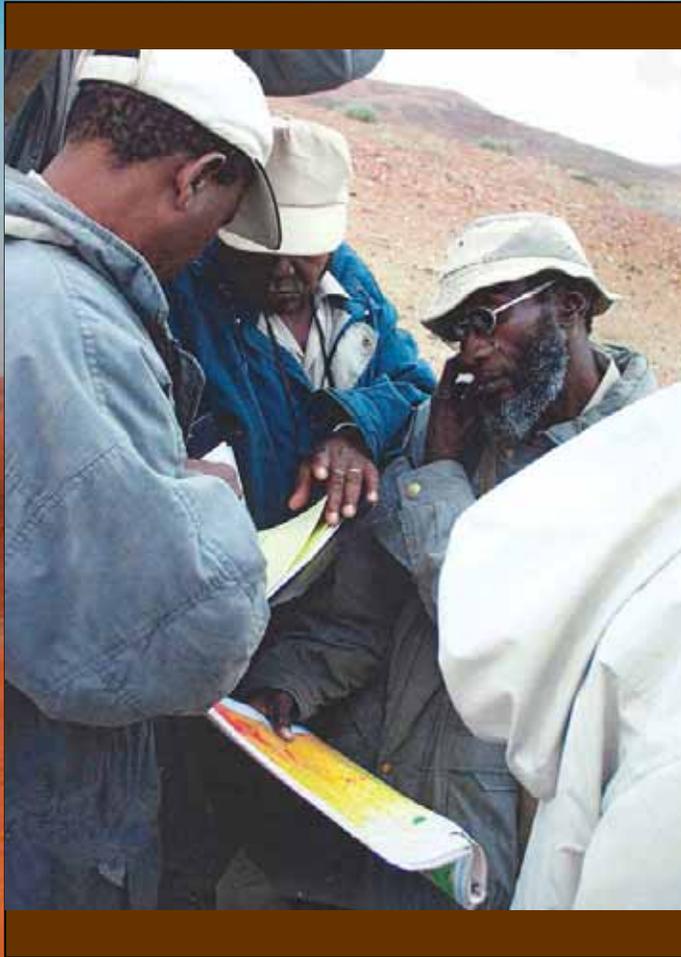
- ◆ Maintenance of wildlife habitat promoted
- ◆ Wildlife and tourism now viewed as legitimate land uses
- ◆ Successful reintroduction of game animals
- ◆ Losses to poaching reduced
- ◆ Stewardship is leading to recovery of wildlife populations



Population Trend: Springbok



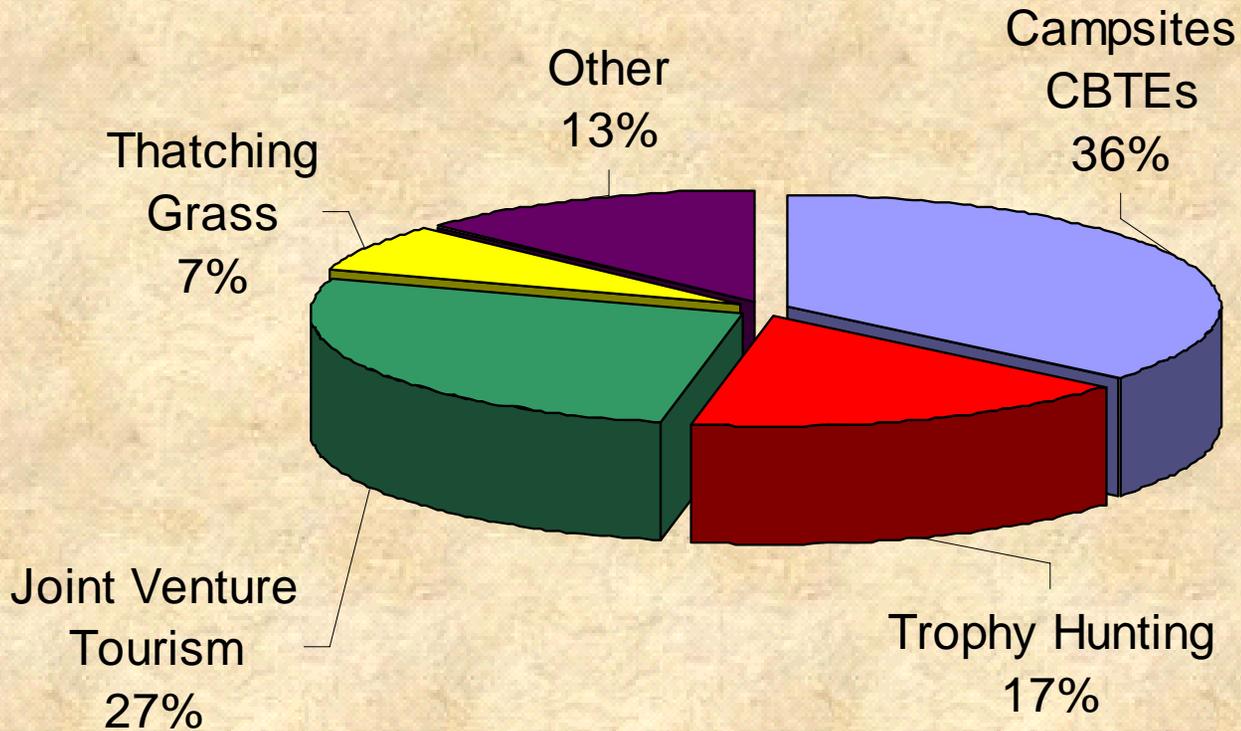
Socioeconomic Benefits



- ◆ Direct income and benefits totaling \$1.8 million
- ◆ CBNRM enterprises employ 542 local residents full-time and 2,933 part-time



2003 CBNRM Program Benefits by Percentage



Total Income = \$1,764,061

Total Conservancy Income = \$877,042

Total Household Income = \$697,405

Democracy & Governance Benefits

- ◆ Successful devolution of authority to locals
- ◆ Broader decentralization of NRM
- ◆ Increased capacity of local conservancies as local decision-making bodies



Lessons Learned



- ◆ Importance of local ownership and partnerships
- ◆ CBNRM projects need long-term support
- ◆ Balance process and product



Conclusions

- ◆ Successes through incentive-based approaches to conservation
 - Conserving biodiversity
 - Improving livelihoods
 - Improved democratic governance



Thank you!

