

Cleveland Metroparks Zoo's Future for Wildlife Gorilla Program Strengthening conservation leaders and developing early career scientists



MISSION AND CORE GOALS

Focused action, trust in staff expertise, core goals and purpose and a newly adopted mission are the guiding tenets of the *Second Century of Stewardship System Plan*. The mission expresses the foundational aspirations of the Park District along with the values and community challenges of today:

Protecting nature, connecting communities and inspiring conservation of our world.

THE MISSION IS SUPPORTED BY SIX CORE GOALS

MOVING THE MISSION TO ACTION:

CONSERVE land, wildlife and water to protect the beauty and ecological function and resilience of our region and the world.

CONNECT people to nature and each other to build community and inspire action.

WELCOME all people to explore the parks and zoo and prioritize inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility.

ENGAGE and serve people with high quality facilities, compelling zoological experiences, volunteer and recreational opportunities and captivating programs and events.

SUSTAIN and uplift our region, our parks and our zoo, our people and our infrastructure for future generations.

INNOVATE by exploring new solutions to expand the health and well-being of our region and the world.



Future for Wildlife program

- Established in 1995
- > \$10 million to field conservation
- > \$700k/yr for 3 of the past 4 yrs
- AZA members contribute \$217 million each year to conservation
- A BILLION dollars every 5 years

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SCIENCE

CAPACITY BUILDING

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**THE DIAN FOSSEY
GORILLA FUND[®]
INTERNATIONAL**
Helping people. Saving gorillas. gorillafund.org

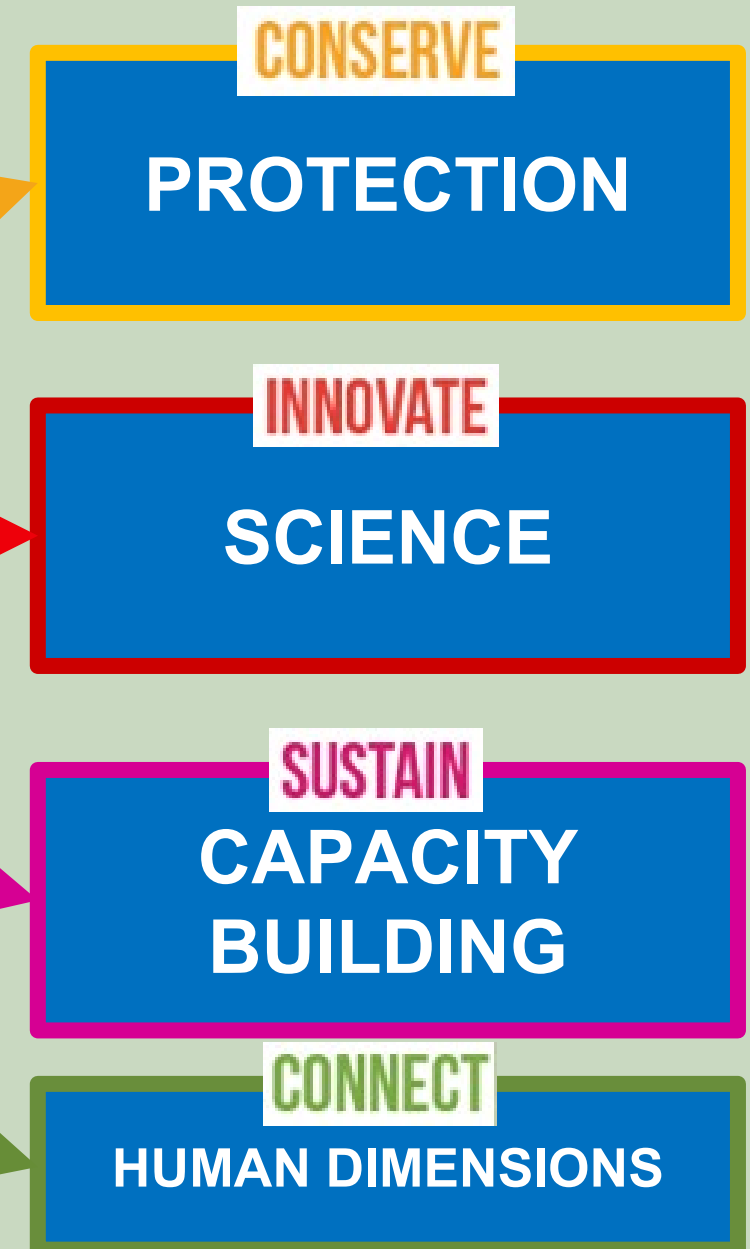
*The Zoo's primary
gorilla conservation
partner since 2014*



**Future for Wildlife
program**

Four pillars

- Protecting gorillas and their habitats
- Conducting the critical **science** needed for effective conservation strategies
- Empowering future conservation leaders
- Supporting and empowering **communities** through livelihood, food security, and education programs





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**SUSTAIN
CAPACITY
BUILDING**



Why gorillas?

**Why capacity
building?**



Gorillas are guardians of their forests, which are some of our last **biodiversity-rich places on earth** and our best natural defenses against climate change.



Their forests are critical “lungs” for our planet – they absorb more carbon than anywhere else in the tropics, thus reducing Co2 buildup in the atmosphere and slowing global warming.



Preserving these forests is vital not just for the future of gorilla ecosystems and the human communities that live around them, but for the world.

**This will require investments in strengthening scientific capacity,
to center African biodiversity research in Africa.**

In Rwanda

- Continuing need to **strengthen educational capacity and mentorship in conservation science** after 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.
- 2012 government initiative to promote **professional internships** to strengthen youth employment.
- Need to expand opportunities for **advanced graduate study**.
- Growing focus on **diversity and gender equity in science**.



Strengthening conservation leaders and developing early career scientists



The Memoirs Program
2014-present

STUDENTS

PROFESSIONAL
INTERNS

CMZ Interns
2016-present

Leading with Strengths
2015, 2022-present

STAFF

Women in Conservation
2021-present

STUDENTS: The Memoirs Program

- Intensive senior year research experience
- Training in research project development and execution
 - Technical skills and “soft” skills
- Subset of projects are selected for further development

More than 85% of Memoirs Program graduates have pursued careers or advanced degrees in conservation, science, or education



University of Rwanda undergraduates complete their Memoirs Program training with Cleveland Metroparks Zoo staff scientists

Since 2003, a total of 155 biology students have carried out their Bachelor's degree research project with the Fossey Fund.



"This memoir program gave me a strong foundation on how to carry out scientific research and incited me to go far in the research and conservation career."

T.M. (2013)

"This is an amazing program because it facilitates, supports the young conservationist from University of Rwanda to complete their research."

E.M. (2014)

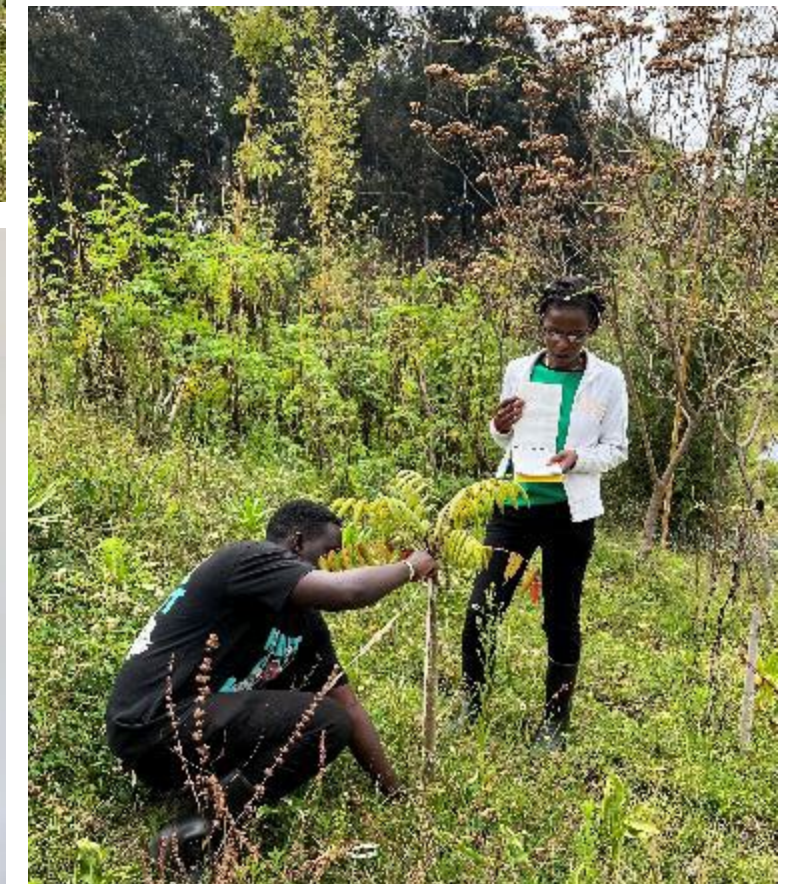
Since 2014, Cleveland Metroparks Zoo staff scientists have trained 81 Rwandan undergraduates via the Memoirs Program.



PROFESSIONAL INTERNS: Cleveland Metroparks Zoo Interns



- Post-graduate professional internships
- Interns gain important skills, knowledge, and experience in a professional setting
- Interns rotate across all Fossey Fund programs:
 - Gorillas
 - Biodiversity
 - Community
 - Conservation gallery



21 CMZ Interns to date

STAFF: Leading with Strengths



- CliftonStrengths® assessment measures natural patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving
- Top 5 Strengths
- My CliftonStrengths coaching sessions revolve around three goals:
 - **LEARN** Understanding and identifying natural talent themes
 - **LOVE** Gaining awareness of and appreciation for one's strengths
 - **LIVE** Investing in and applying strengths
- Common language and increased self-awareness



People who focus on their strengths are:

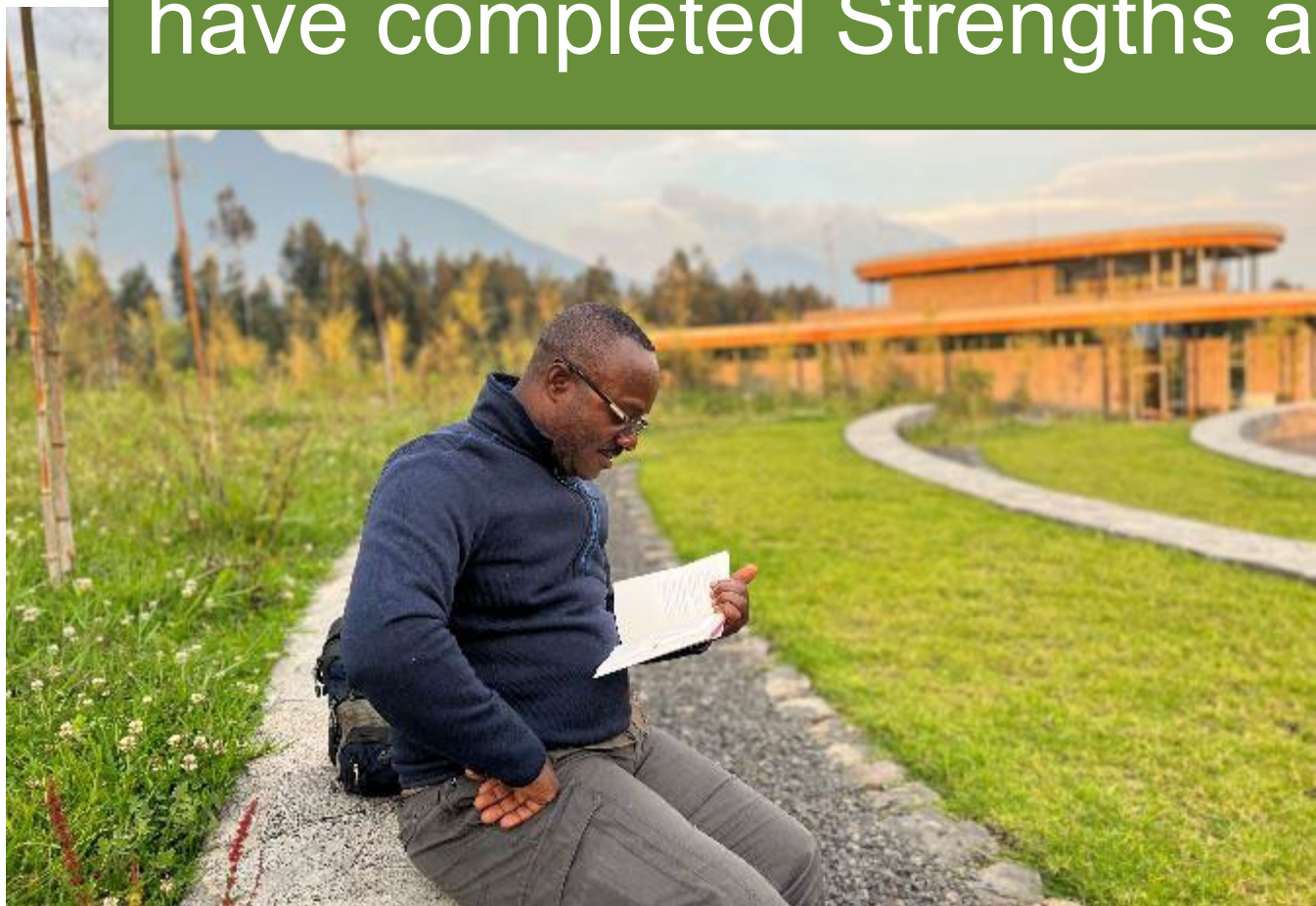
- 3 X more likely to report having an excellent quality of life
- 6 X more likely to be engaged at their work





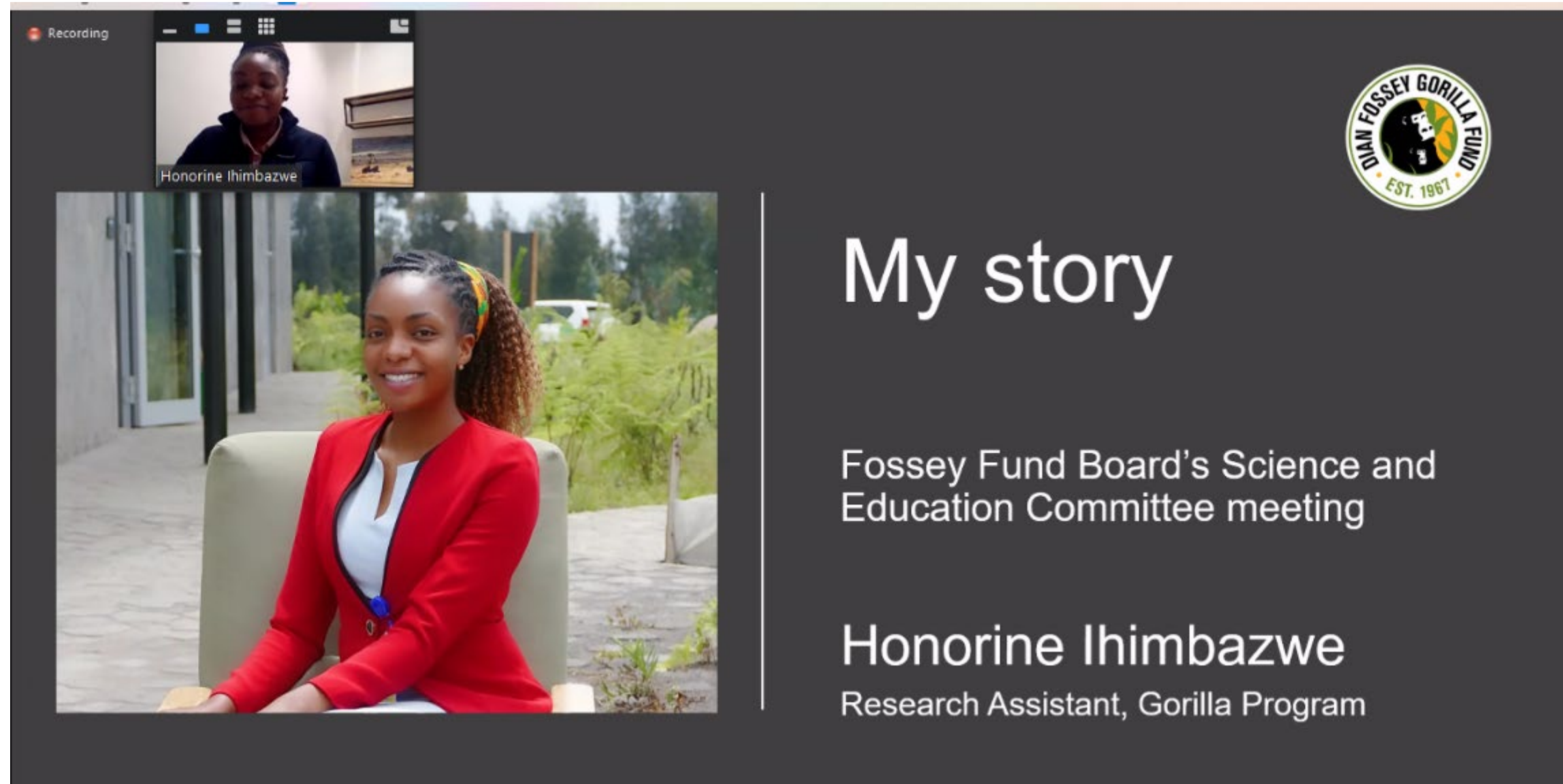
54 DFGF - Rwanda team members
10 DFGF – Atlanta team members
have completed Strengths assessments

38 - 1 coaching session
16 - 2 coaching sessions



STAFF

Supporting and Empowering Women in Conservation




Recording

Honorine Ihimbazwe

My story

Fossey Fund Board's Science and Education Committee meeting

Honorine Ihimbazwe
Research Assistant, Gorilla Program




DIAN FOSSEY GORILLA FUND

Gorilla Journal

March 2023

Focusing on women Advancing conservation through gender equity



By Tara Stoinski, Ph.D.
President and CEO/
Chief Scientific Officer

Empowering women, whether on our staff or in the communities we work with, is an important goal of the Fossey Fund. We were founded by a female scientist, yet more than 55 years later, the gender gap in science, conservation and related fields is still significant. For conservation to succeed long term, we believe this gap needs to be directly addressed.

Women, particularly African women, are greatly under-represented in science. So we have prioritized opportunities for women to advance their professional development. We are proud to now have many women scientists on our team (see story on page 2).

Women also made up 25% of the construction workforce and leadership in the building of our Ellen Campus, and our goal is to have half of the beneficiaries of our food security and livelihood programs be women.

Women, especially in rural areas, are significantly affected by environmental degradation, as they struggle to provide food, water and other resources for their families. At the same time, they have been historically and unfairly disadvantaged in access to education, business and leadership opportunities. Thus we believe a commitment to female empowerment is a commitment to their future, as well as to the future of the planet.

As we celebrate International Women's Day and Women's History Month in March, I hope you enjoy learning more about our incredible women carrying on Dian's legacy.

And we can't forget the amazing female gorillas and the central role they play in gorilla family life, exemplified by our most successful gorilla mom, Gutangara. ■

"Becoming a tracker was difficult at first because of some people who had discouraged me, telling me that the field is not for women, that it requires more effort, and that I am not capable of hiking and working in remote areas. But because it was my passion, I persisted and achieved my goal of becoming a strong mountain gorilla conservationist."
— Pelagie Mutuyimana, one of the first female gorilla trackers, now a research assistant

Inside

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- Gutangara: A record-setting gorilla female 6

Gutangara is known for her close family ties.



gorillafund.org

Women in Science and Education Fund established to promote professional development opportunities, advance gender equity initiatives, and support scholarships for graduate study.

STAFF

Supporting and Empowering Women in Conservation

Mentoring the Trifecta



STAFF

Supporting and Empowering Women in Conservation

Women's Empowerment Meetings



1st meeting August 2022



5th meeting February 2023

WHAT'S NEXT?



17-20 July 2023 | Kigali, Rwanda

Women Deliver 2023 Conference

Where the world comes together to advance Gender Equality

Follow us

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Society for Conservation Biology
A global community of conservation professionals

23-27 July 2023

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ICCB2023

THE FUTURE IS NOW:
SUSTAINING BIODIVERSITY
FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW



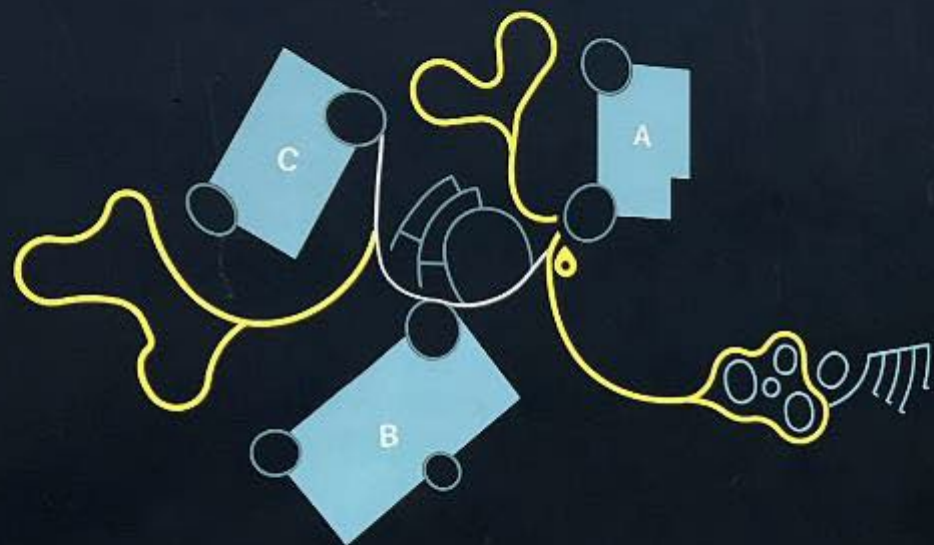
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ABSTRACT:

It's the "Helping People" part for me: Strengthening individual and team capacity at the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund to maximize conservation impact.

Lukas, Kristen
Cleveland Metroparks Zoo

Cleveland Metroparks Zoo Interpretive Trails



↗
Gorilla Habitat Trail

↑
Biodiversity Trail

↙
Wetland Trail

- YOU ARE HERE
- A CONSERVATION GALLERY
- B RESEARCH CENTER
- C EDUCATION CENTER
- ~ INTERPRETIVE TRAILS
- ~ MAIN CAMPUS PATH / ADA ACCESS

Murakoze cyane!

