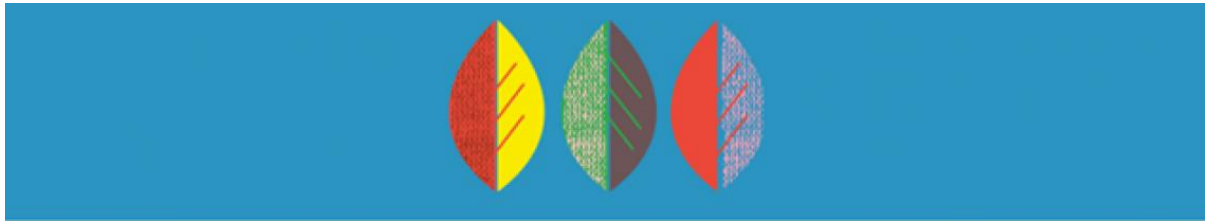


The Lost Mountain Symposium

- By Obaka Torto



ADDITIVE ADVENTURE **2015 LOST MOUNTAIN** **NEXT GEN SYMPOSIUM**

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(From one of the CEPF grantees in the Eastern Afromontane Hotspot.....)

On 11 July 2015, Lost Mountain Next Gen Symposium brought together an international group of university students, scientists, conservation leaders and professional adventurers in Gorongosa National Park, Mozambique. The twelve-day symposium will launch conversation on “disruptive” conservation--a new model for building community-driven conservation in some of the world's most remote and biologically diverse places in the world.

"The 2015 Lost Mountain Next Gen Symposium is about bringing future leaders into the discussion now," Lost Mountain Director, Majka Burhardt explains. "In doing so, we are taking a multidisciplinary approach to one of the most fundamental challenges facing our world today: can there be powerful collaboration between communities and ecosystems that allow them to both thrive?"

The Lost Mountain commenced in May 2014 when Burhardt, a professional climber and social entrepreneur, along with fellow professional climber Kate Rutherford, led a team of biologists, conservation workers, and filmmakers in an exploration of Mozambique's Mount Namuli. The expedition spent a month conducting scientific and conservation fieldwork, using rock climbing to access previously unexplored habitats.

Beyond establishing the first technical rock climbing route on Mt. Namuli, the team discovered one new snake species, 40 ant genera and 27 herpetological specimens, dozens of which have yet to be identified.

The mission of the Lost Mountain is to catalyze a collaborative future for Mount Namuli where people and ecosystems can thrive together. A key tenet of the work includes open-sourcing solutions to these complex issues through opportunities like the Next Gen Symposium.

The United Nations Development Program ranks Mozambique as the third poorest country in the world and the majority of news stories point to the country's emergence from a tumultuous civil war in 1992. "But Mozambique also has 14 major ecological regions, massive mountains, and numerous endemic species," Burhardt says. "With the Lost Mountain we're sharing a different narrative about this diverse land and its people."

During the 12-day Symposium, African and American students will be introduced to conservation planning and management principles, leadership development models, Leave No Trace techniques, and examinations of contemporary challenges facing conservation and development. The Symposium offers a chance for participants to explore a multidisciplinary approach to conservation, science, and natural resource stewardship in conjunction with learning hands-on skills for working in these environments and forging key connections with current and future leaders.

"By bringing key conventional and unconventional players into the mix, we were able to create nimble, effective, and innovative solutions for conservation and development," Burhardt says. "We are using the Symposium to make real time decisions and action plans for our next steps with Mount Namuli--*that* is disruptive conservation."

Drawing expertise from Princeton University to University of KwaZulu Natal, the Lost Mountain Symposium is diversifying groups' planning process, recognizing the strength, innovation and creativity that comes with bringing younger students with fresh perspectives onto the team.



Participants of the Next Gen Symposium © The Lost Mountain/Additive Adventures



Majka Burhardt (left) with one of the participants ©The Lost Mountain/Additive Adventures

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“As I wait for the first moment of this adventure, my spirit is captivated by an even greater enthusiasm...to invest time in looking for new perspectives,” says Next Gen student, Gerson Tembissa, a Masters student at Eduardo Mondlane University in Maputo, Mozambique. “To me, exploring and conserving nature is like moving a chess piece: the victory depends on the way of thinking.”

20 of the Next Gen Students hail from some of the best graduate and undergraduate programs in conservation sciences across Southern Africa. As the core of the group, they represent the bright future that lays ahead for conservation in their own countries. The Symposium also offers key networking opportunities in the conservation and park community—a key employer in Mozambique.

"At this point in the process, it's imperative to bring future leaders into the discussion around conservation and allow them to be part of the action," says Burhardt. "And what's even more important? That we do it right now."

ABOUT THE LOST MOUNTAIN

The Lost Mountain Initiative is an international venture to foster a future where people and ecosystems thrive together on Mount Namuli, Mozambique. The Initiative began with a 2014 field expedition combining rock-climbing, cliffside scientific research, integrated conservation planning, and media. Mount Namuli, a 7,936-foot granite monolith, is the largest of a group of isolated peaks that tower over the ancient valleys of northern Mozambique. It is one of the world's least explored and most threatened habitats. Here, plants and animals have evolved as if on dispersed oceanic islands, so that individual mountains have become refuge to their own unique species of life, many of which have yet to be discovered or described by science. Biologists and conservationists from around the world have identified Mount Namuli as a global hotspot: a place of critical biodiversity and an opportunity to model a new vision for wildlife preservation that integrates the wishes and needs of local people.

The Lost Mountain Consortium is directed by US-based Additive Adventure and Mozambique-based LUPA. The Lost Mountain is supported in part from a grant from the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund—a joint initiative of l'Agence Française de Développement, Conservation International, the European Union, the Global Environment Facility, the Government of Japan, the MacArthur Foundation and the World Bank. The Lost Mountain Next Gen Initiative is made possible by the support of Positive Tracks, Ethiopian Airlines, Osprey Packs and Goal Zero. With



Participants receive packs from Osprey Packs ©The Lost Mountain/Additive Adventures

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BirdLife International, together with IUCN and the Ethiopian Wildlife and Natural History Society, form the Regional Implementation Team that supports CEPF with their investment in the Eastern Afromontane Hotspot.

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