

The Rufford Foundation Final Report

Congratulations on the completion of your project that was supported by The Rufford Foundation.

We ask all grant recipients to complete a Final Report Form that helps us to gauge the success of our grant giving. The Final Report must be sent in **word format** and not PDF format or any other format. We understand that projects often do not follow the predicted course but knowledge of your experiences is valuable to us and others who may be undertaking similar work. Please be as honest as you can in answering the questions – remember that negative experiences are just as valuable as positive ones if they help others to learn from them.

Please complete the form in English and be as clear and concise as you can. Please note that the information may be edited for clarity. We will ask for further information if required. If you have any other materials produced by the project, particularly a few relevant photographs, please send these to us separately.

Please submit your final report to jane@rufford.org.

Thank you for your help.

Josh Cole, Grants Director

Grant Recipient Details	
Your name	Travis Steffens
Project title	Preserving fragile ecosystems through a community-based fire management and education programme in NW Madagascar.
RSG reference	18917-2
Reporting period	January 2016-January 2017
Amount of grant	£5,000
Your email address	info@planetmadagascar.org
Date of this report	January 23 rd , 2017

1. Please indicate the level of achievement of the project's original objectives and include any relevant comments on factors affecting this.

Objective	Not achieved	Partially achieved	Fully achieved	Comments
Expand and evaluate our fire management program				<p>We were very successful in implementing our expanded fire management programme. We now conduct patrols 6 days a week year round. By expanding the project we were also able to generate more interest in our projects and were able to secure funds to partially fund the project through December 2018.</p> <p>We planned to cut 5 km of firebreak but were able to cut 6.6 km providing more protection to forests than anticipated.</p>
Responsible Fire Day				<p>We hosted a "responsible fire day" for 117 residents representing 8 communities in partnership with Madagascar National Parks. During the event we provided techniques for more efficient fire prevention and management. Our objective was to change residents' behaviour toward fire before the upcoming 2017 fire season</p>
Distribute an Educational film (430£)				<p>We were unable to finish the film during the course of 2016 due to funding limitations. However, were able to secure funds to finish the film and distribute to more communities via the Critical Ecosystems Partnership Fund. The film is in post-production phase and will be ready for distribution in spring.</p>

2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled (if relevant).

We ran into three main issues during our project:

1. 2016 was a particularly dry year in Madagascar due a continued drought related to El Nino (see Gizaw & Gan 2016). This year we witnessed more fires in the fire management zone than in the previous year even though we had implemented more patrols and built more firebreaks. The drought highlighted the precariousness of managing fire in a drought-prone dry forest region. Because there were greater impacts from fire in 2016 than in 2015 we feel that increasing our presence in the fire management zone and expanding our project are crucial to achieve our objectives of protecting forests from fire.
2. Last funding cycle our biggest issue was lack of staff. Although we are still limited in the number of staff we have a new issue is the need to increase staff salaries to be more commensurate with the incredible work they do. When we initially applied for RSGF funding we didn't fully appreciate the individual salary needs of our employees. Now with greater appreciation we plan to increase salaries to be more reflective of a living wage and to provide increased economic security for our both full-time and part-time employees.
3. We anticipated completing the educational film in early 2016. However, the cost of the film exceeded our initial estimates. To account for this hurdle, we applied for and secured a Critical Ecosystems Partnership Fund grant to finish the film. Unfortunately, the CEPF grant started in October and so we are still in the post production phase. Now fully funded, the film should be completed shortly and ready to distribute in spring of 2017.

3. Briefly describe the three most important outcomes of your project.

The most important outcomes for the project include:

1. Protection of fragmented forest and continuous forest through 395 patrols conducted by residents of three communities of the fire management zone. Although we saw more fire damage this year we expect that fires would have caused even further damage to forest if it were not for our patrols. Incidentally, we saw more lemurs during patrols in 2016 than 2015. Additionally the patrols provide necessary information on the impacts of human activity and the presence of lemurs to help us better manage the fire management zone.

2. Protection of fragmented forest and continuous forest through creation of 6.6 km of firebreaks, which will prevent fires from crossing over to threatened forest.

3. Reduction of poverty in for 15 local residents through employment as patrollers. By providing employment to these individuals we are providing an income that helps reduce poverty. Reducing poverty increases economic uncertainty and helps reduce reliance on forest products and lemurs for food. Additionally, community residents have a greater sense of ownership of the forest within the fire management and seek alternative methods to protect the forest in addition to existing patrols.

4. Briefly describe the involvement of local communities and how they have benefitted from the project (if relevant).

The local communities have been intimately involved in our work from conception to execution. They were the ones who originally identified the issue and requested support to conduct patrols. They benefit by helping to protect forests for future use but also by receiving income to conduct patrols. We have witnessed demonstrable evidence of community engagement in our programme activities. In April 2016, for example, a group of community members took it upon themselves to fix a road to allow for easier transport of our project materials. This action was unprompted by Planet Madagascar, and illustrates that the community members have a sense of ownership and pride for our collective project.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes, we have already received partial funding to continue this project through December of 2018. We plan to extend the programme indefinitely as needed. We plan to apply for the next round of RSGF funding to achieve our goals of extending and expanding this project.

6. How do you plan to share the results of your work with others?

We plan to make our final report available to local partners including Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, Madagascar National Parks, and publicly via our website (planetmadagascar.org)

7. Timescale: Over what period was The Rufford Foundation grant used? How does this compare to the anticipated or actual length of the project?

The RSG was used from January 2016 through January 2017 for all project components except the distribution of the fire educational film. The RSG funds for the fire educational film will be used in the spring of 2017, once the film is finished.

8. Budget: Please provide a breakdown of budgeted versus actual expenditure and the reasons for any differences. All figures should be in £ sterling, indicating the local exchange rate used.

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Transportation to and from Ankarafantsika (12 visits – once a month)	84	84	0	
Transportation to 3 core communities (12 visits – once a month)	31	31	0	
Film distribution to 12 communities	430	0	430	We plan to spend these funds in spring of 2017 to distribute the film to the 12 communities.
Taxis in Antananarivo for supplies and business	78	78	0	
Staff food stipend while in Ankarafantsika (183 days)	397	397	0	
Forest monitoring team salaries (dry season)	933	933	0	
Forest monitoring team salaries (wet season)	466	466	0	
Planet Madagascar Project Coordinator (12 months)	957	957	0	We have tried to raise salaries for each of our staff members and therefore actually paid more for this and the next line item.
Planet Madagascar Project Assistant (6 months)	352	352	0	
Firebreak Staff (20 people for 30 days)	652	652	0	
Fuel	130	130	0	
Signs for firebreaks	130	130	0	
Post project community celebration	130	130	0	
Refreshments for meetings with local authorities (12 meetings)	130	130	0	
Miscellaneous expenditures	100	100	0	
TOTAL	5000	4570	430	

9. Looking ahead, what do you feel are the important next steps?

The next steps for our project is to secure funding for the unfunded portions of our continued fire management project and for a long-term implementation of this project. Specifically, we aim to increase salaries for our staff and community patrol members. As our project matures, we look to extend the depth of the fire management project in the communities we work by helping to create community nurseries run by a female cooperative and improve the capabilities of patrollers. The nurseries will be used as an income generating activity with some efforts earmarked for replanting of indigenous trees to reforest deforested portions of the fire management zone that we aim to protect and rehabilitate. As part of our ongoing interest in building capacity in the communities we see real potential for some of our existing patrollers to work as assistants working with researchers that frequent the area. Our goals would be to train patrollers in a variety field data collection techniques and for them to train new patrollers to cover them if they are hired as research assistants.

10. Did you use The Rufford Foundation logo in any materials produced in relation to this project? Did the RSGF receive any publicity during the course of your work?

The Executive Director gives public and private talks on the work Planet Madagascar conducts in Madagascar. He has given talks to the University of Toronto, to schools across North America via an organisation called Exploring by the Seat of Your Pants, and Nerd Nite Toronto. During each talk the Executive Director thanks RSGF and their funding for supporting the work we do. The RSGF logo is also featured on Planet Madagascar's website (www.planetmadagascar.org).

11. Please provide a full list of all the members of your team and briefly what was their role in the project.

12. Any other comments?

The continued support via the RSGF has allowed Planet Madagascar to greatly expand our projects and to be more successful in receiving grants from additional sources. We feel that because of RSGF's continued support we were able to secure a large Critical Ecosystems Partnership Fund grant (CEPF). The CEPF grant allowed us to continue the project that RSGF initially funded in 2015 and 2016 and now through 2018. Planet Madagascar has grown from 1 full-time staff member in Madagascar to four full-time and 15 part-time employees in Madagascar (not including the 29 temporary workers that help build firebreaks) and one part-time employee in Canada mostly because of the support from RSGF.