



The Kesho Trust

May, 2013

World Elephant Centre

Conceptual Design

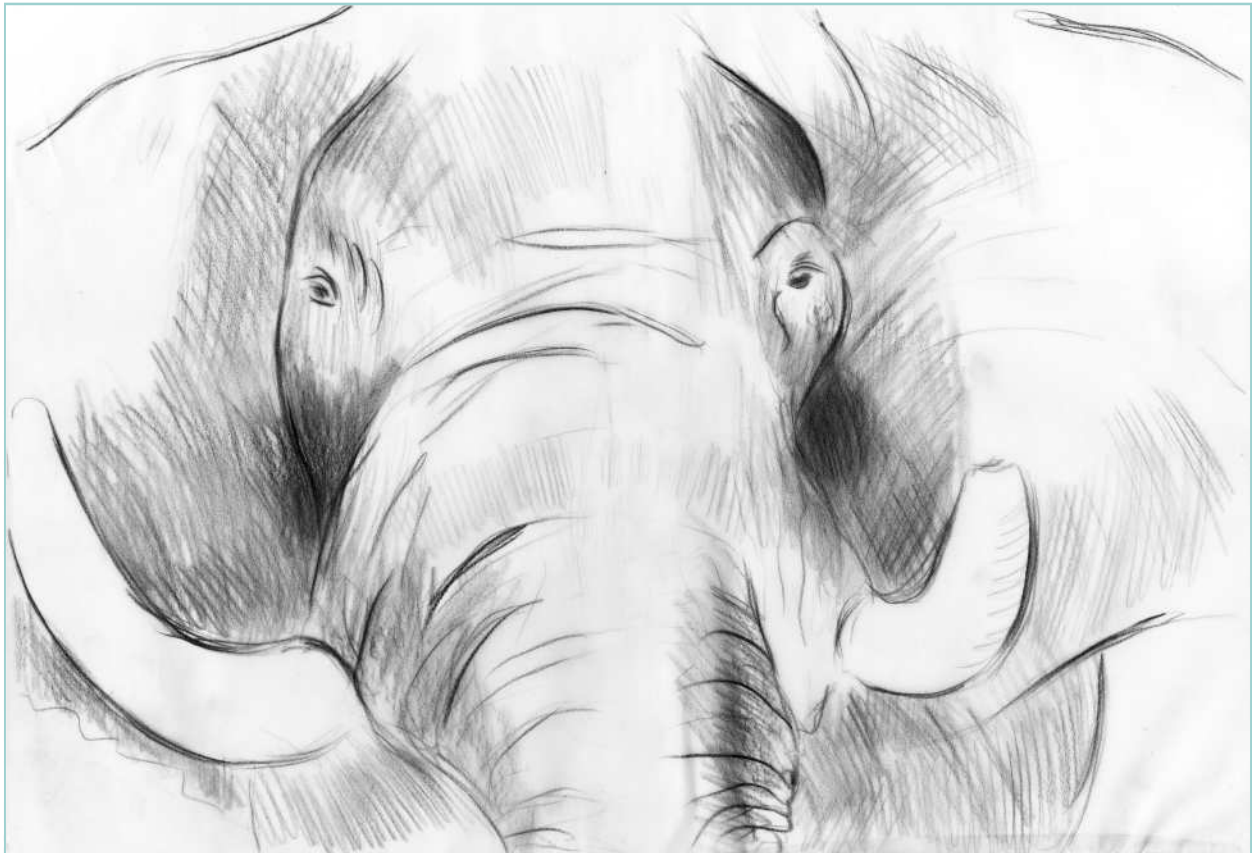


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Foreword

I am pleased to present the following report and recommendations on the proposed World Elephant Centre in Tanzania. After a two month volunteer assignment with Kesho Trust I had the opportunity to visit the site with renowned elephant expert Dr. Alfred Kikoti and Mr. Bruce Downie, Director of the Kesho Trust. I would like to sincerely thank them, and many other colleagues, for their help and advice in furthering this exciting and ambitious project. Also a word of thanks to Mr. Marty Samis whom assisted with the final layout. I hope this conceptual plan will help others envision the services, facilities and key interpretive messages to conserve, protect and preserve the world's largest land mammal, one of the most amazing, intelligent and majestic animals ever to walk this Earth.

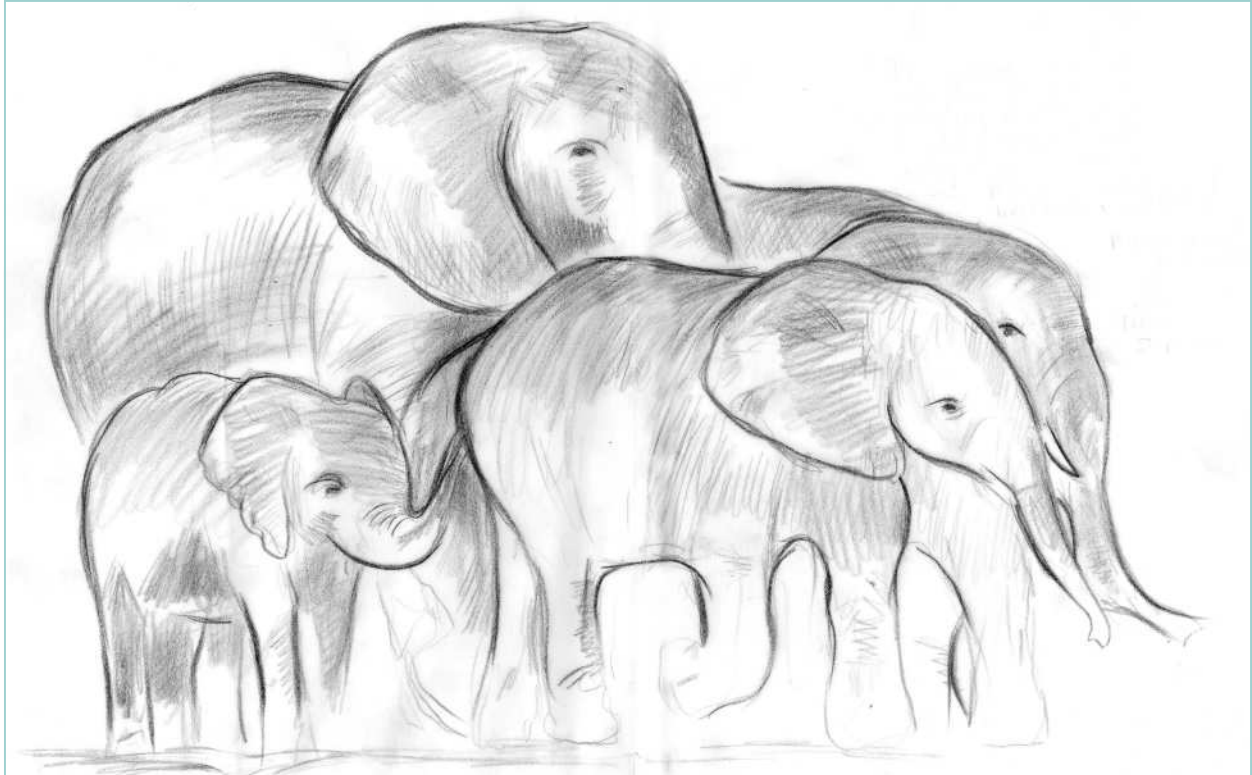


Brent Liddle
Yukon, Canada
April, 2013

Project Concept

The World Elephant Centre [WEC] is a vision – a vision of a world class visitor information and education facility that will promote greater understanding and appreciation for elephants world wide as well as improve the conservation efforts being mounted to ensure elephant populations remain healthy. It has been the personal vision of Dr. Alfred Kikoti, elephant researcher and founder of the World Elephant Centre. It is a concept that attracts many people from all walks of life and from all over the world since the elephant is such an iconic species and so desperately in need of advocates. Alfred has begun to gather people together and formulate ideas to help bring this vision to reality.

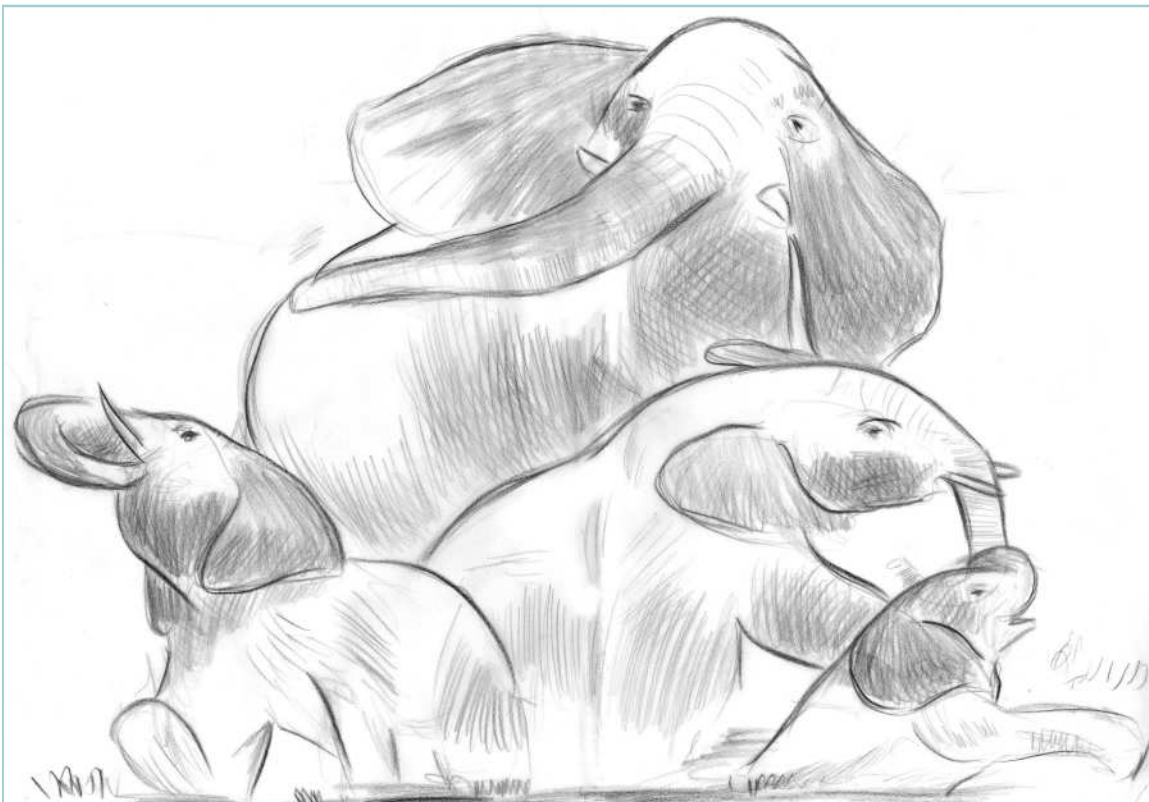
The organization is already active conducting research on elephant populations and movements in key areas of Tanzania such as Kilimanjaro, Saadani, the Selous and the Wami Mbiki. He is also documenting the significant challenges conservation agencies and organizations are facing from the exploding poaching activities that currently represent a huge threat to effective conservation efforts.



A major initiative of the organization is to build a complex to house the various components of the organization's mandate which includes research, advocacy, education and conservation. The priority is to focus initial efforts on constructing a visitor information and interpretation centre that will draw major public attention and support to the work of the organization.

The goal of the centre is to educate visitors about elephants, their ecology, current conservation practices, and the threats they are facing. Thousands of potential visitors to the centre pass the site en route to safaris in some of the best known conservation areas on the planet such as Ngorongoro and Serengeti. In addition, the centre will place a high priority on Tanzanians who should be encouraged to take pride in such a world class facility and utilize the opportunities to learn and contribute to the conservation of elephants in their own country. Critical to this engagement with Tanzanians is reaching the school children who represent the future of conservation. Media developed for the centre will also be shared globally via the internet reaching an enormous audience critical to the success of elephant conservation.

The alignment of these objectives with those of the Kesho Trust prompted the two organizations to develop a partnership in working toward the implementation of the centre. This report is a tangible outcome of that partnership



Site Description and Existing Land Use

The size of the titled property is a 7 acre parcel atop a flat upland area north of the Arusha – Karatu highway approximately three kilometers to the nearest village. This upland has a distant view of Lake Manyara in the Great Rift Valley to the southeast and the Ngorongoro highlands to the northwest. It is very well situated to capture tourist traffic en route to the famed parklands of the Serengeti and Ngorongoro Crater

A small road leading to the property rises quickly from the highway level and provides access to an abandoned quarry site. All of this area, including the road and the old quarry, is village land. Adjacent to the village land are some habitations which are generally screened from view by natural acacia tree cover. The titled parcel forming the core of the facility site is relatively flat agricultural land, approximately two thirds cultivated and one third with sparse vegetation cover. It is bordered by private lands for cattle grazing and has a well used trail to a nearby water source for the animals. Actively used fields also flank the property and may be available for sale to add to the existing parcel.

The titled parcel is of insufficient size within which to develop the full range of facilities and services envisioned for the site. The first consideration must be the acquisition of adjacent private and village lands between the highway and the titled property which is of critical importance to encompass the scope of the proposed development. Additional upland areas adjacent to the existing site will also be needed to ensure appropriate capacity for the planned facilities.

Conceptual Visitor Flow and Interpretive Message Points

The visitor flow must derive from a concept of how visitors will interact with the facility, the intended purpose of their visit, and the amount of time planned to explore the site. This may be summarized as follows:

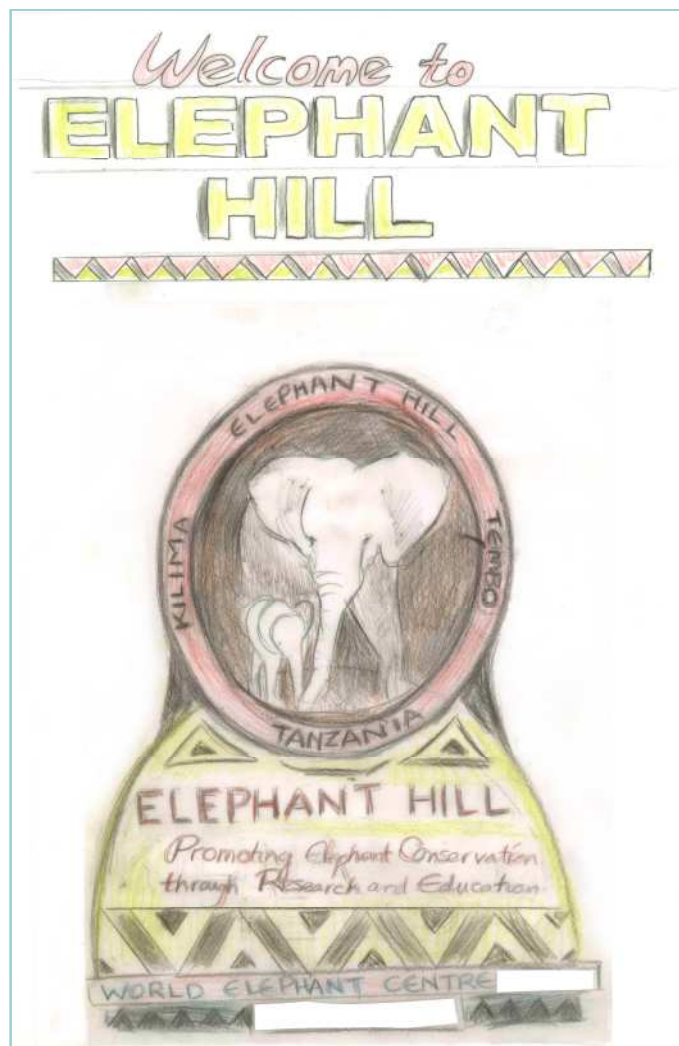
1. Highway Identification Marker

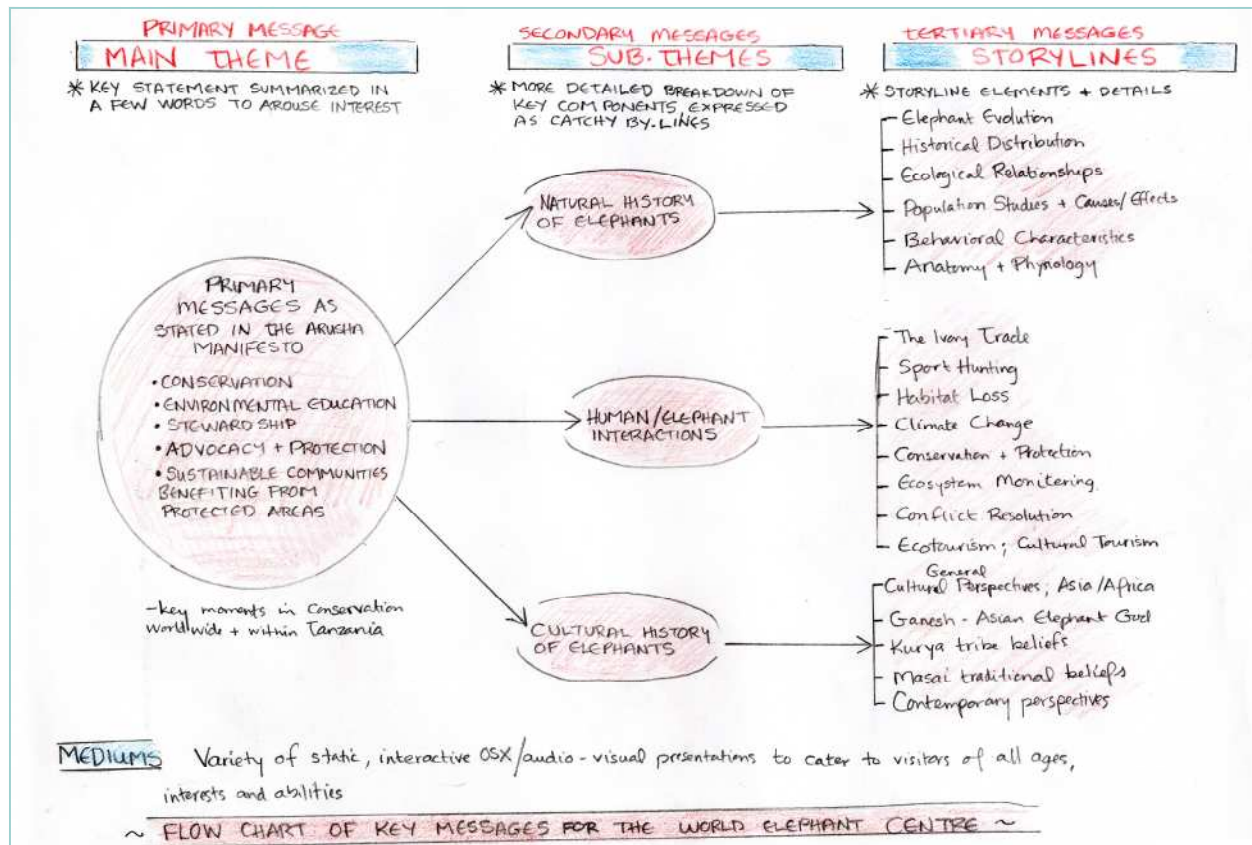
A large and impressive highway sign reflecting the importance of the facility as a world class attraction will direct visitors to the site. Advance facility markers approximately 2 km. away will alert highway travellers before arriving at the actual turnoff.

The sign must be well designed, easily legible, with strong graphics and simple text. An initial concept portrays a female elephant and young, representing the future generation of these magnificent animals with the World Elephant Centre logo.

2. Road Access and Parking

From the highway a redesigned road providing access for private and commercial vehicles would lead to a secured parking area located in a rehabilitated quarry site where a ticket booth and gate would provide a control point for the facilities.



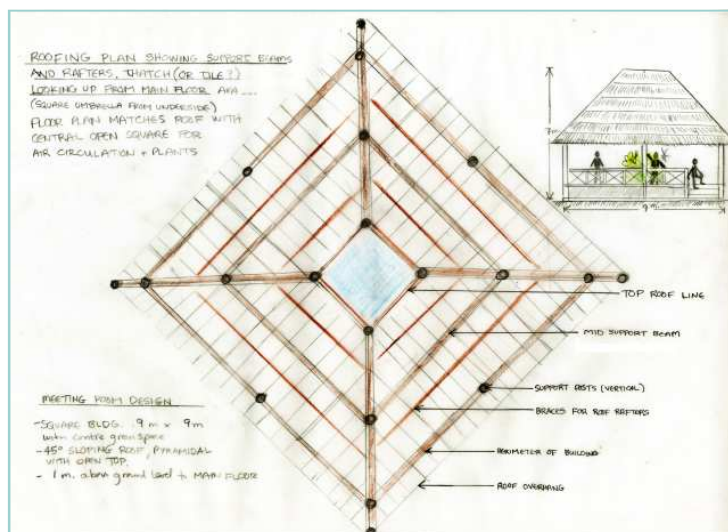


3. Interpretive Walking Trail

From the parking lot visitors will proceed on a well designed interpretive trail. Along its' route with be several nodes with exhibits or displays introducing the elephant story. Utilizing the naturally reclaimed quarry could provide some creative opportunities for onsite interpretation such as three dimensional sculptures of elephants or an inclined walkway to egress the parking area. With a landscaping plan, well placed boulders and smaller rocks, combined with the natural vegetation will quickly transform the site.

4. Interim Facility

The interpretive trail will guide visitors to an interim facility at the

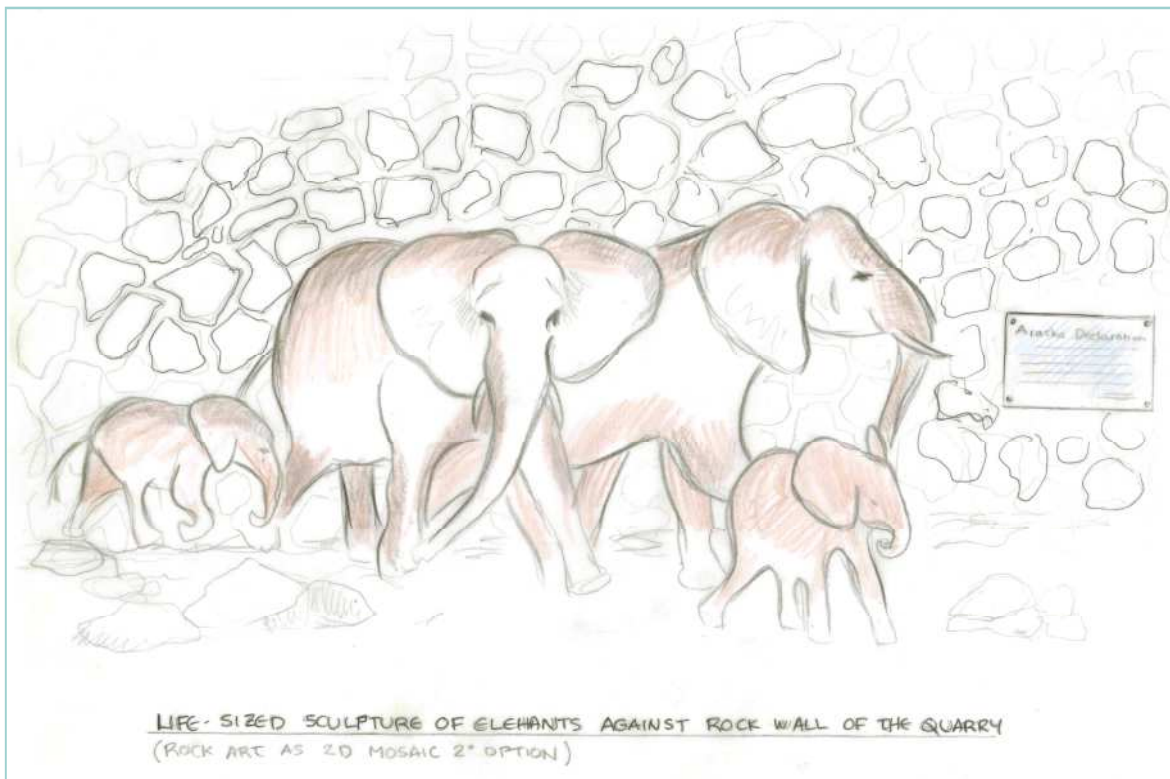


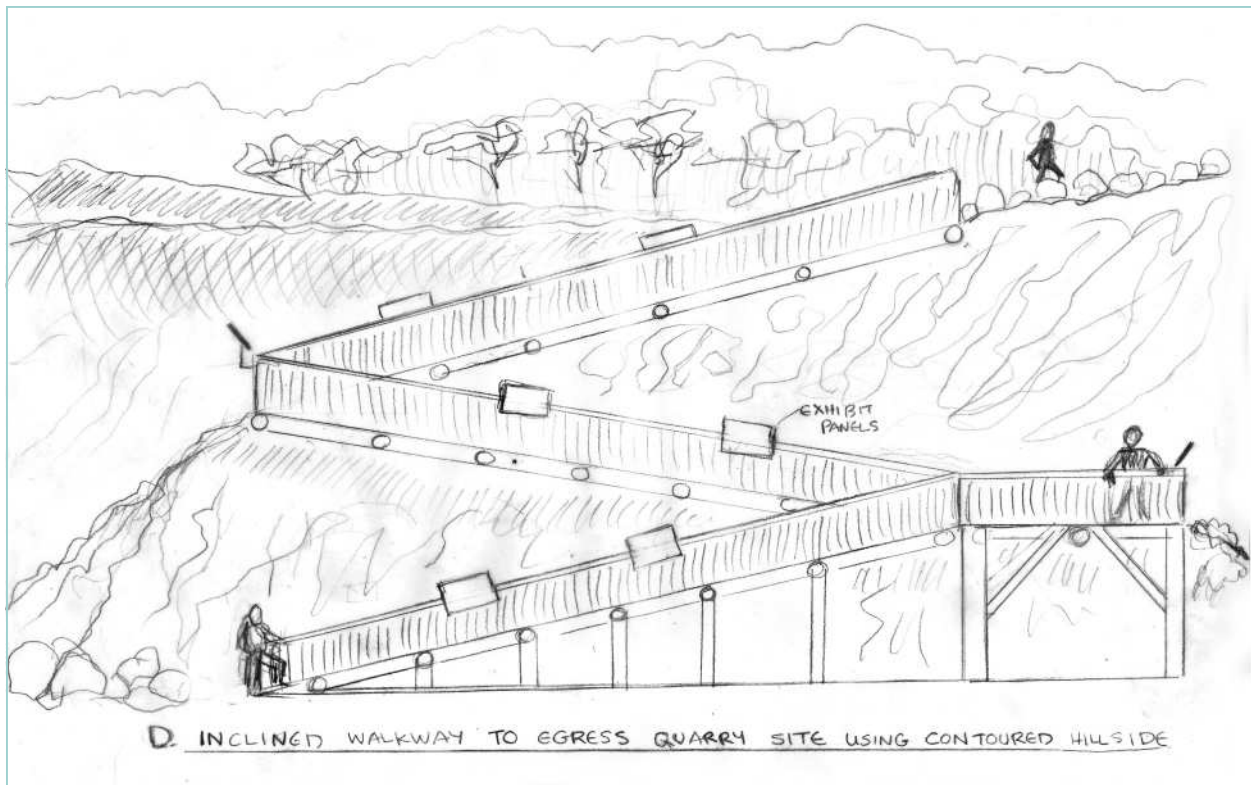
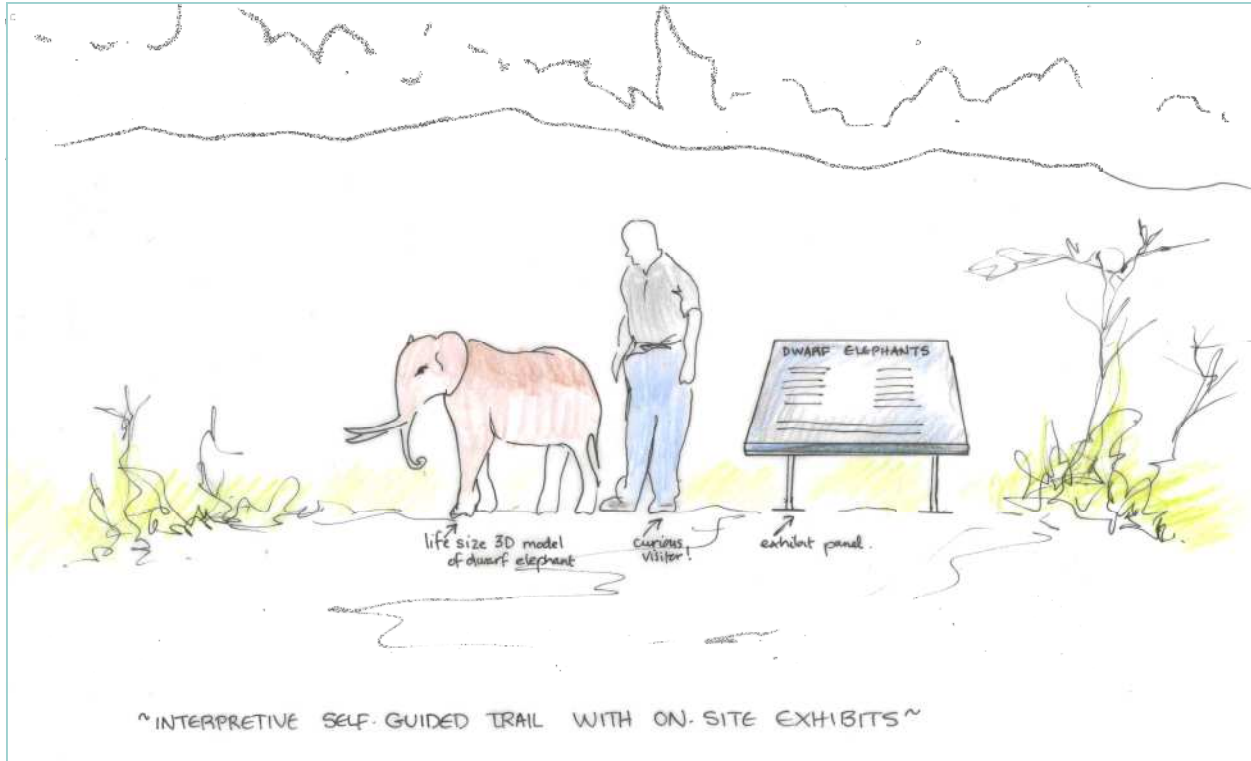
crest of the escarpment. This open air facility will house outdoor interpretive exhibits providing information and interpretation on the phasing and scope of the World Elephant Centre project , as well as on-site interpretation of “ Kilima Tembo “ or Elephant Hill. A simple roofed “banda” with exterior exhibits will also interpret the former migration corridor of elephants in historic times with reference to the protected areas of Ngorongoro and Serengeti.

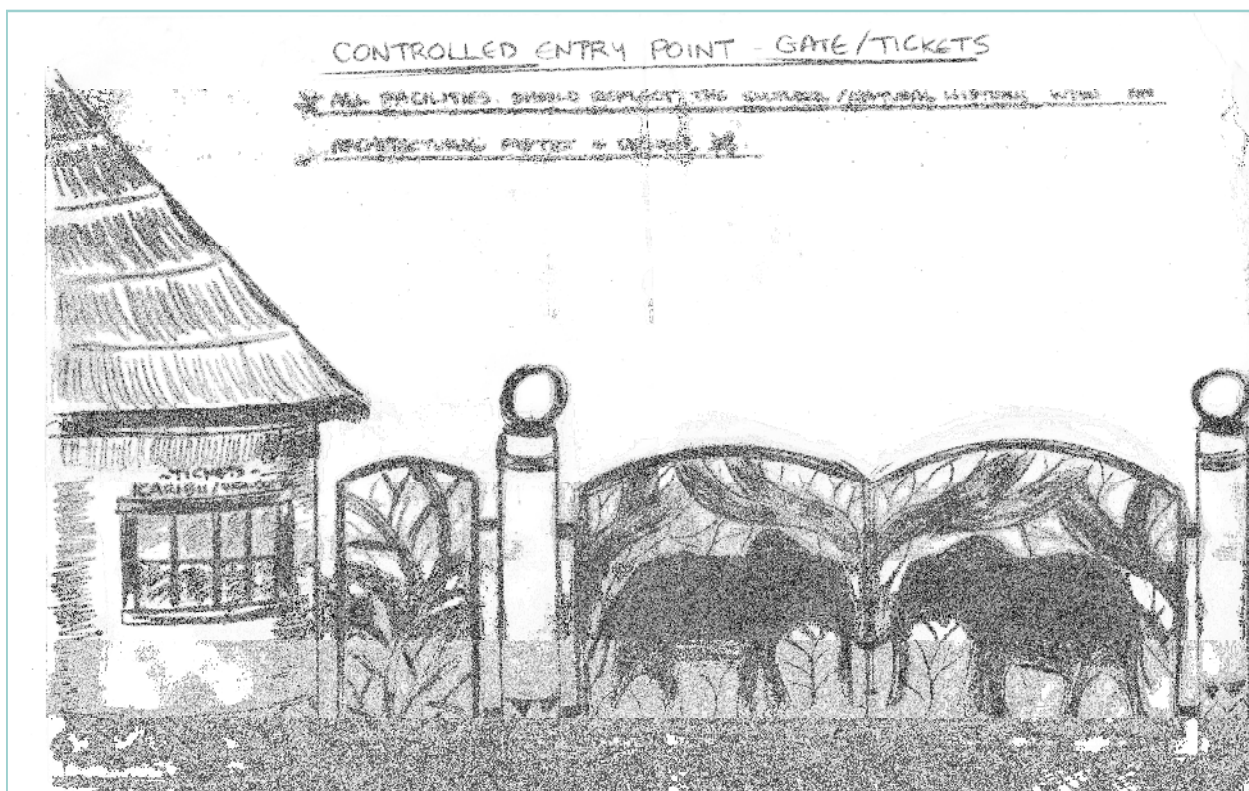
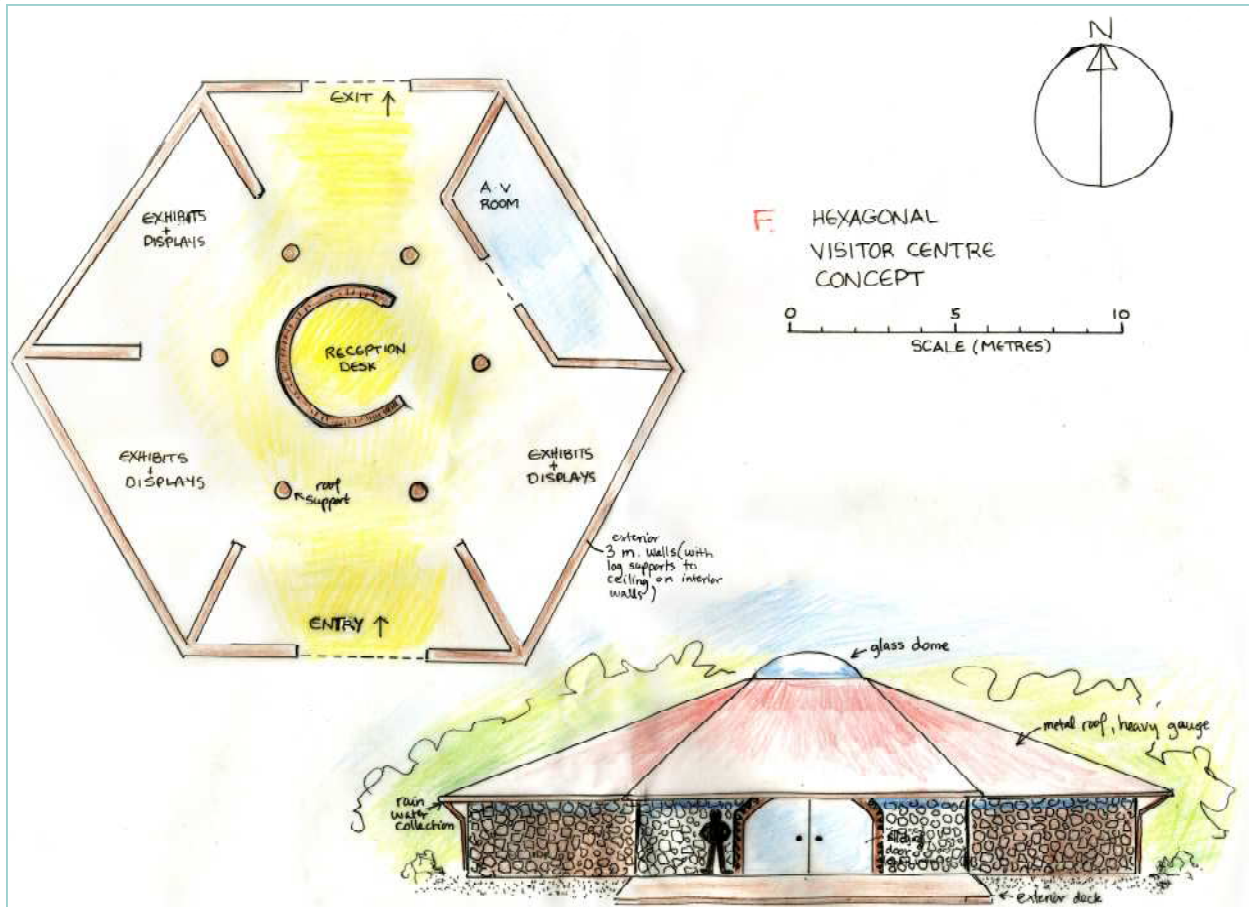
5. Key Interpretive Facility and Research Station

Once beyond the visitors will be guided to the main facility where the key messages will be presented in a variety of formats from exhibits, displays and audio visual media to personal interpretation. This is the focal point for highway travellers wishing to get an overview of the key educational and interpretive messages of the World Elephant Centre. It will be complemented by a restaurant and lounge facility, washrooms and a gift shop.

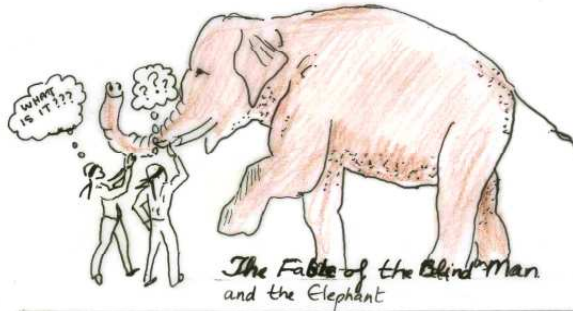
An initial design of a hexagonal building, temperature controlled, would house the exhibit material and provide for staff interaction with the visiting public. From the Interpretive Centre visitor’s may choose to further explore the grounds with a connecting trail , complete with shade areas and rest benches, to the Research Station where a small amphitheatre provides visitors an opportunity to learn about ongoing science projects and conservation efforts.





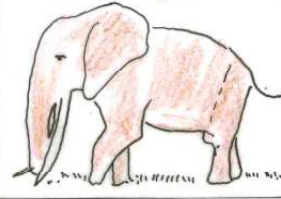


IF YOU CAN'T SEE IT ALL YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND IT ALL!

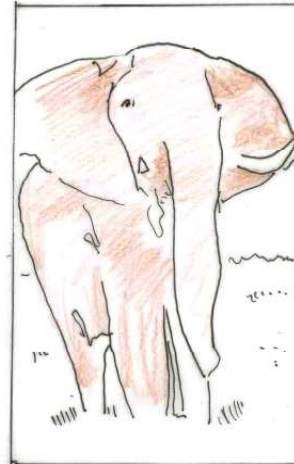
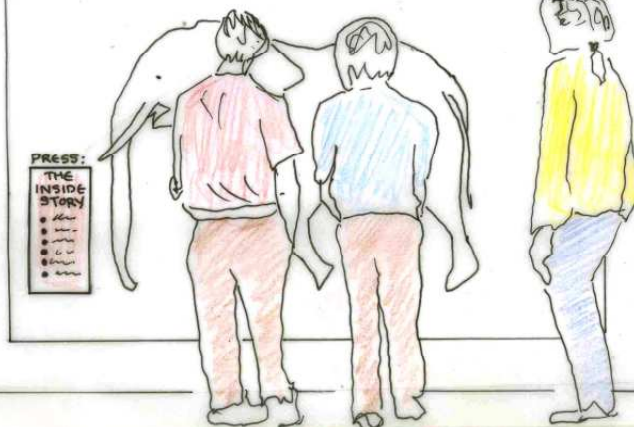


AMAZING BUT TRUE!

- Elephants live as long as humans
- Dwarf elephants only waist high once existed
- Elephants once ranged across 4 continents

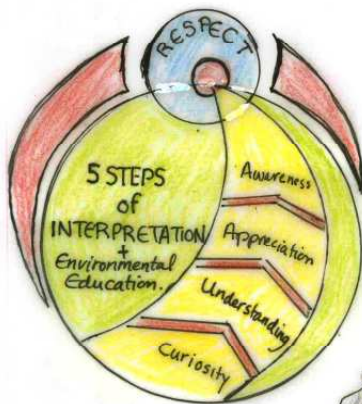


KNOWING ELEPHANTS FROM THE INSIDE OUT!
Here's the guts of the story...



GOING... GOING... gone!?

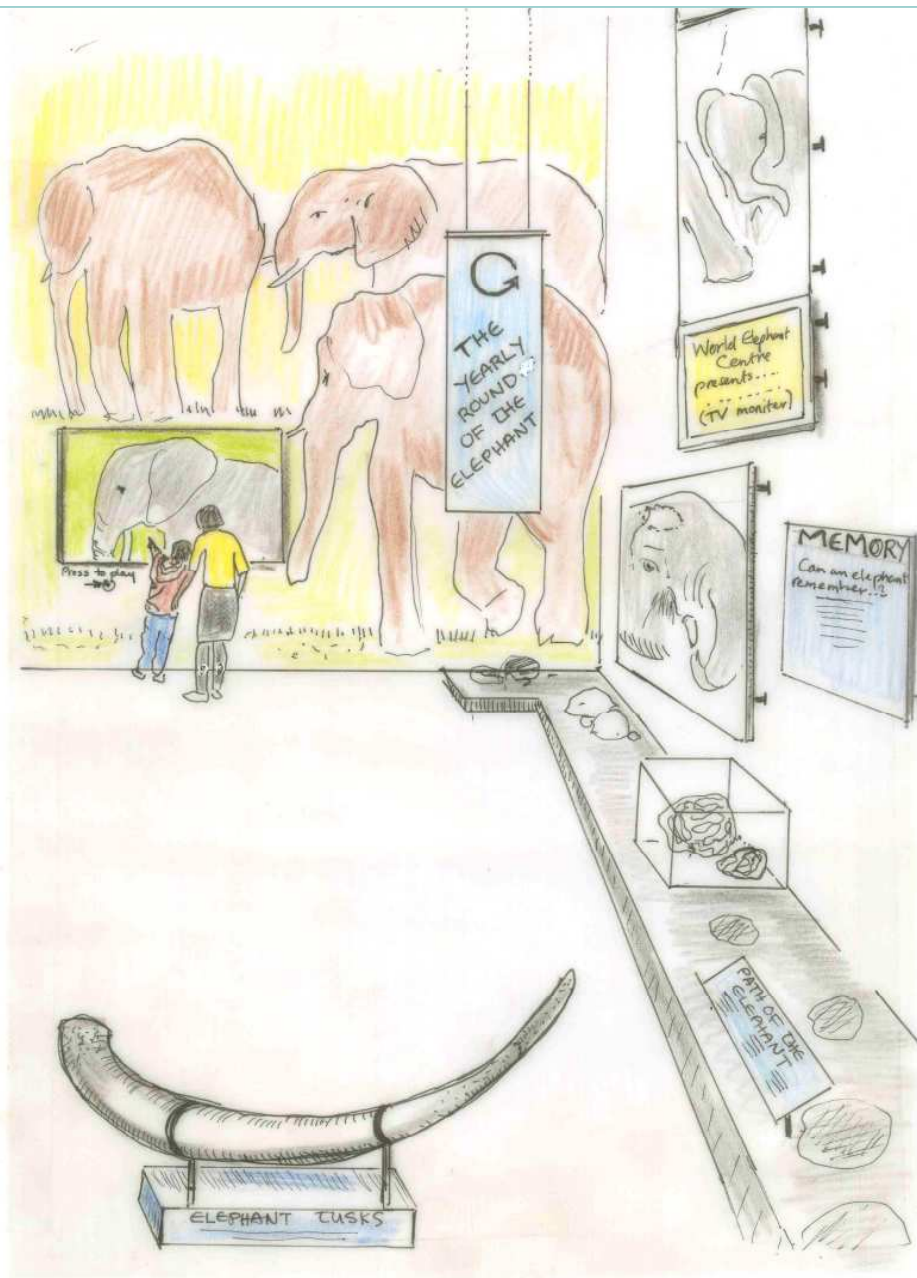
Elephant survival is up to all of us...



"Respect for plants and animals with whom we share a place is the best measure of humanity." Anonymous

"These wild creatures... are important as a source of wonder and inspiration" M. Nyerere





* INTERIOR INTERPRETIVE EXHIBIT CONCEPT

General principles of exhibit design:

- use a variety of mediums and techniques to interpret your message
- keep it clean and simple with strong text and visuals
- include hands-on displays, exhibit cases, interactive and a.v presentations
- cater to all ages and ability levels
- entice visitors to learn more on their own
- utilize open space wisely considering viewing distances + visitor flow
- font size and contrast of text important for the visually impaired
- consider viewing distances for children, those with mobility issues or hearing problems

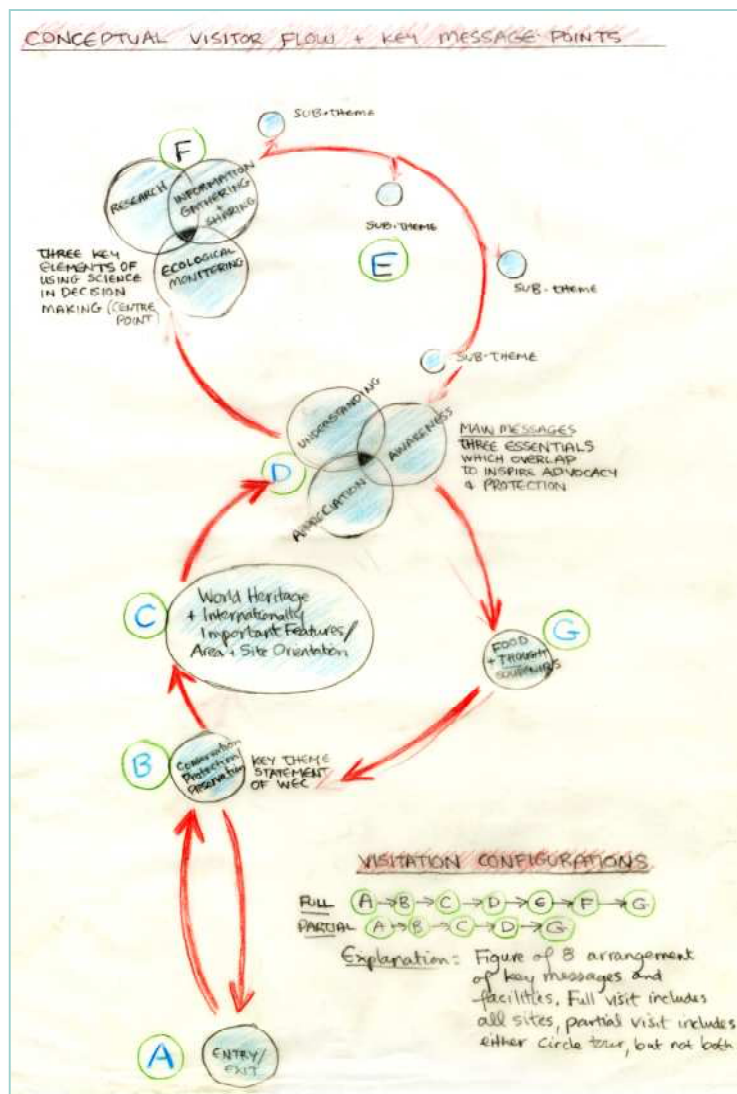
Interpretive Goals and Objectives

The main goal of the World Elephant Centre is to “Promote Elephant Conservation through Research and Education“. It is reflected in a statement by *Mwalimu Nyerere* who delivered a powerful speech known as *The Arusha Manifesto*:

“These wild creatures amidst the wild places they inhabit are not only important as a source of wonder and inspiration, but are an integral part of our future livelihood and well-being.”

The objectives to achieve this goal are based on four key points, namely:

- Conservation
- Environmental Education
- Stewardship
- Advocacy & Protection



Interpretive Themes and Storylines

The three major storyline elements can be broadly categorized into:

1. The Natural History of Elephants

- Elephant evolution and historical distribution
- Ecological relationships
- Population studies & causes/effects
- Behavioral characteristics
- Anatomy & physiology

2. The Cultural History of Elephants

- Cultural perspectives and differences in Africa & Asia
- Ganesh, the Asian elephant God ,
- Kurya & Masai traditional beliefs
- Contemporary perspectives from ecotourism and cultural tourism

3. Human / Elephant Interactions

- Impacts of climate change
- Habitat loss due to human infringement , lack of travel corridors
- Declining populations resulting from sport hunting , poaching and the ivory trade
- Conservation and protection measures to resolve human/ elephant conflicts
- Ecosystem monitoring

Each of the storyline elements needs to be researched and fleshed out with an appropriate match to the means of interpretation, whether it is an exhibit, display or audio-visual presentation.

Phasing of Project

This conceptual work is just the beginning of a long and complex process. During the course of this work a number of topics were raised that could not be addressed during this task. Thus the future steps in the process are identified as follows:

- Land assembly: adjacent to the existing parcel of land there are both village lands and privately held lands that should be considered for acquisition. The village lands need not be purchased, and indeed it may not be possible to do so, but there would be a need for a long term agreement for the use of such lands. Access to the site as well as parking and staging area are the most pressing potentials for such land although further design work will be needed to know the specific uses and locations.
- Financial management mechanisms: WEC needs the capacity to attract, receive and manage significant amounts of capital to accomplish this project. The organizational logistics need to be strengthened to be able to effectively and securely manage such funds.
- Hire a project manager: this is essential for the coordination of all the various activities that are needed to advance this project. The board members or others linked to and supporting the organization at the moment do not have the time to implement such a complex and highly demanding project. Guidelines for such hiring have been produced – both a job description and a statement of qualifications. These guidelines are important as getting the right person will be extremely critical.
- Undertake utilities assessment: a critical look at the access to utilities [power and water] should be undertaken. Options will need to be well documented so that these needs can be adequately considered in the design of the facilities.
- Develop a detailed interpretive plan: the concepts provided here are preliminary and more work needs to be done to work out the themes, messages and storylines for each of the facilities on the site. Such detail will be helpful in undertaking the full facility design work and will make that process more efficient.

- Develop an interim reception area: design and build a basic but good quality reception area on site that can attract the attention of the public as well as local interest. The purpose of the facility should be to publicize the project and also to generate support for its implementation. Conceptual designs should be displayed in the reception area and people should be available to present the concepts to visitors along with an understanding of the importance of the facility and what it hopes to achieve for elephant conservation.
- Raise funds for design: the design work will be expensive. This concept suggests a global building cost estimate for the visitor interpretive centre in the order of \$5 M to \$7 M. Design costs can be expected to be in the order of 10%. Raising the necessary funds will require significant effort.
- Contract a world class design firm: this is perhaps the most critical point in the process for without a world class design, efforts to attract financial supporters and the public interest that has been building will be jeopardized.
- Raise funds for construction: the work of the design company will result in a comprehensive construction package complete with costs. The company will assist in moving the process from design to construction and will supervise the work but the key will be having the funds available in a timely fashion.
- Build the facility: construction will take time and there will need to be good coordination between the construction schedule and the phasing out of the interim facility. Also it would be very valuable if major construction tasks were not scheduled in prime visitor season. If such coordination is not feasible, the interim facility should be removed and the public engagement stopped in favour of efficiency in the construction schedule.

Recommendations

Recommendations are provided here to assist WEC in formulating the next priority steps of the process towards development of a visitor interpretive facility. From the discussions with key individuals in the organization, the visits to the site and the work done within this concept, insights were gained that it was felt should not be lost. This report is intended not only to provide some basic conceptual guidance but to be a preliminary step in a well conceived process of design and implementation leading to the world class facility that was envisioned.

The summary recommendations outlined below have been discussed in this report earlier but are provided in capsule form here to highlight the priority actions required.

- assemble additional lands: ensure adequate land and the right configuration of land is confirmed to house such a world class facility;
- Financial management mechanisms: to prepare for the soliciting, receiving and management of the large amounts of money necessary to plan and develop this major facility, including the hiring of necessary staff;
- undertake more detailed assessments and plans: ensure that detailed information is available for designers to work from including a comprehensive utilities assessment and detailed interpretive planning and visitor experience planning; and
- conduct comprehensive facility design and construct facilities: selecting world class experience is essential to achieve the goals of this project and this should be a priority for WEC. At the same time, ensuring that sufficient funds are available in a timely fashion to undertake this major task.

