



Kanha Circle
November 18-20, 2007
Kanha Tiger Reserve, India
Summary

TO: Debbie Banks
Urs Breitenmoser
Susan Bird
Bruce Budner
R.S. Chundawat
Shekar Dattatri
Grace Gabriel
Ullas Karanth
Kae Kawanishi
Sue Lieberman
Adam Roberts
John Seidensticker
P.K. Sen
Claudio Sillero
Ravi Singh
Mahendra Shrestha
Valmik Thapar
Will Travers
Joanna Van Gruisen
Jan Vertefeuille
Tony Whitten
Belinda Wright

FROM: Judy Mills

The Kanha Circle

A small group of respected experts¹ in tiger conservation, framing and campaigning gathered in India's Kanha Tiger Reserve from November 18-20, 2007 for a "Tiger Emergency Think Tank." The purpose of the gathering was to reframe the way the world talks and thinks about tigers with the aim of catalyzing global concern and action to secure a future for wild tigers. With the last wild tiger populations totaling as few as 3,000 (down from historic highs of more than 100,000), world buy-in is clearly necessary to generate the significant political will, financial investment and public passion needed to change the paradigm that keeps wild tigers in peril.

In short, the mission of what has come to be known as the "Kanha Circle" was to find a "frame" that would prompt the world to act immediately and decisively to increase wild tiger populations by stopping destruction of tiger habitats and prey as well as eliminating tiger poaching, trade and consumption.

¹ The following individuals participated in the Kanha Circle, held at Kipling Camp in the Kanha Tiger Reserve, India, November 18-20, 2007: Debbie Banks, Environmental Investigation Agency; Urs Breitenmoser, IUCN Cat Specialist Group; Susan Bird, Wf360; Bruce Budner, Rockridge Institute; R.S. Chundawat, Baavan; Shekar Dattatri, Indian filmmaker; Grace Gabriel, International Fund for Animal Welfare; Ullas Karanth, Wildlife Conservation Society; Kae Kawanishi, Malaysian Conservation Alliance for Tigers; Sue Lieberman, WWF International; Judy Mills, Save The Tiger Fund; Adam Roberts, Born Free USA; John Seidensticker, Smithsonian Institution; P.K. Sen, Ranthambhore Foundation; Claudio Sillero, Oxford University; Ravi Singh, WWF India; Mahendra Shrestha, Save The Tiger Fund; Valmik Thapar, Indian tiger specialist; Will Travers, Born Free International; Joanna Van Gruisen, Baavan; Jan Vertefeuille, WWF International; Tony Whitten, World Bank; Belinda Wright, Wildlife Protection Society of India. Susan Bird of Wf360 facilitated the meeting.



The Catalyst for Reframing

The inspiration for the November 2007 meeting in Kanha came from the success of the International Tiger Coalition² (ITC) in convincing the 171 member nations of CITES to decide in June 2007 that tigers should not be bred in captivity for trade of their parts and products. This unequivocal rejection of factory farming of tigers came about, in large part, because the ITC reframed the issue in a manner that encouraged CITES Parties to act with responsibility and integrity toward one of the most rare and precious species under CITES' remit.

Sadly, the overarching issue of saving wild tigers *in situ* has lost ground in recent years to poverty alleviation and global warming – both of which have been successfully reframed to win the hearts and minds of the world, playing poignantly and persuasively to deep human values such as responsibility, integrity and security.

Throughout human history, the tiger's popularity has waxed and waned. For centuries, the tiger symbolized mythical power and strength. But as humans began to expand further into the tiger's realm, it became a real-life "dragon" in need of slaying. By the 19th and 20th centuries, wild tigers were widely regarded as dangerous man-eating beasts and, therefore, a coveted target for big-game and bounty hunters.

Beginning in the 1960s, however, the wild tiger was deemed in danger of being lost in the wild if prevailing excesses of hunting and extermination continued. By the 1970s, the tiger had been successfully reframed in the eyes of the world, from a dangerous man-eater to a rare and victimized creature in need of man's sympathy and protection. This was the period in which Prime Minister Indira Gandhi established India's extensive network of tiger reserves and the tiger became the face of wildlife conservation. In the early 1990s, a *Time Magazine* cover story declared the wild tiger "doomed" to extinction. This prompted a spate of international concern and investment. Unfortunately, by the turn of the new century, this save-the-tiger-from-the-brink mentality had proven less and less effective, increasingly dismissed as either "crying wolf" or, at the other extreme, a hopeless cause – both of which made increased investments in wild tigers seem a waste of effort and financial resources.

That is why Kanha Circle participants came together in the late fall of 2007 to reframe the wild tiger's position yet again, this time in order to tap into deeply held human values that could motivate multiple layers of global action to ensure that wild tigers survive and even thrive. In essence, they sought a means to create an "inconvenient truth" about wild tigers – a reason for the world to care about the survival of wild tigers and, more importantly, to act to ensure that their populations increase.

The New Frame

The Kanha Circle collectively agreed there are practices already in place that, if broadened and adequately financed and communicated, could increase the wild tiger population to an agreed-upon goal of "Ten in Ten," i.e. 10,000 wild tigers in 10 years – if the world declares, once and for all, "Stop killing our tigers!"

Tigers are a magnificent manifestation of all that is wild and irreplaceable on our planet. In essence, this new frame underscores that tigers belong to the world, and that a relatively few individuals are trying to kill them. Therefore, it is in the world's best interest to act to stop those who would kill even one of this resplendent flagship species. This core message taps into some of

² The International Tiger Coalition is an alliance of 40 organizations from the conservation, animal welfare, zoo and traditional Chinese medicine communities, which represent millions of people around the world and have agreed to speak with one voice and joint messaging against tiger trade.



the deepest, most motivating of human values, including responsibility, fairness, integrity, security and identity.

Some companion messages identified as appropriately playing to the new frame include :

- The world must stop killing tigers because humans and wild tigers are interconnected culturally, ecologically and economically.
- The killing of wild tigers must stop because they belong to the heritage and legacy of every human being, present and future.
- The spirit of the tiger is the spirit of the wild forest. Stop killing our tigers and our forests.
- If we act *now*, the killing of tigers will stop. *We* are the hope for wild tigers.
- Future generations will thank us for finding the moral courage to stop the killing of wild tigers.
- Wild tigers make the world a healthier place. Stop killing our tigers; stop killing our planet!

This reframing by the Kanha Circle stands to elevate the tiger to a key position in the hierarchy of current global concerns. Emphasis will be placed on the notion that wild tigers must thrive not merely for their sake but for the sake of the natural systems in which they live – places that make our planet a healthy, inhabitable place for the entire web of life, including humans. In essence, saving tigers means saving our planet. The message is hopeful, urgent, essential and personal.

Establishing the New Frame

Establishing a “deep frame” for wild tigers – one that triggers deep values and heartfelt action in key actors – requires consistency of widespread messaging over time. The Kanha Circle envisions no less than a global Ten in Ten campaign designed to engage people in all geographies, at all levels of influence, of all ages – a broad spectrum of constituencies, from the wild tiger’s closest neighbors to iPod-addicted urban teens to world leaders.

The Kanha Circle identified multiple key audiences, including businesses of various kinds; celebrities and sports figures; children; conservationists and scientists; consumers of products from tigers and from tiger habitat as well as consumers of products that can help save tigers and tiger habitat; donors; educators; filmmakers; forest guards, police and military personnel charged with protecting tigers; journalists; the judiciary and lawyers who process wildlife-crime cases; local people who live near tigers; religious leaders; tourists who want to see tigers; policymakers and politicians; and, traditional Chinese medicine professionals.

The foundation of the Ten in Ten Campaign comes from solid biological and neurolinguistic science, and its methods will include some of today’s newest, most compelling and far-reaching marketing and communications innovations.

The key point of Ten in Ten’s frame is that wild tigers are now the responsibility of the world – governments, corporations, institutions and individuals of the global community. If there are to be 10,000 tiger in ten years, then the *whole world* is responsible for – and must be invested in – making that happen! This is the “inconvenient” yet *hopeful* “truth” of wild tigers.

Deploying the New Frame Globally

Cause marketing

“Cause marketing” will be central to the Ten in Ten Campaign, taking advantage of the fact that, more than ever before, people want to be part of or associated with companies, products and services that support causes and issues they value. Few causes could be more seductive than supporting the world’s favorite animal (according to an *Animal Planet* poll) as the living manifestation of the earth’s entire web of life.



The campaign will exploit the fact that support of social issues is becoming a brand differentiator for consumers. In essence, Ten in Ten will form commercial marketing partnerships with businesses that wish to market their products and/or services more effectively by linking to the Ten in Ten cause – for mutual benefit. This approach will generate marketing assistance for Ten in Ten and also dollars for sustaining Ten in Ten and, most importantly, implementing science-based tiger conservation and intelligence-led tiger protection on the ground.

Ten in Ten ambassadors

The tiger brings with it numerous celebrity tie-in opportunities. The key is to enlist celebrities who are willing to commit to long-term support for wild tigers as “their” cause and to take Ten in Ten messaging to world leaders and the general public across the planet.

Ten in Ten crowd sourcing

So many people who already care about wild tigers ask what they can do to help. The Ten in Ten Campaign would, at last, give them a role through a technique called “crowd sourcing.”

The concept of crowd sourcing is best exemplified by Goldcorp, Inc., which defied industry logic and tradition when it put up prize money and proprietary information about gold mining on the Web, asking for interested individuals to help find new gold mining sources and opportunities. Goldcorp struck gold, and thousands became engaged in helping it do so.

The Ten in Ten Campaign would do the same, using the Internet to make publicly available all that is known about wild tigers and current methods used to protect them, their prey and their habitats. Prize money would be offered to attract innovative approaches to reaching the Ten in Ten goal but, more importantly, the project could capture the imagination of governments, the press, schools around the world, and the global public at large. The campaign would use the crowd sourcing technique to engage the whole world to invest time and thought into the fate of wild tigers!

Timeline

The Ten in Ten Campaign will begin operation in January 2008. The initial phases will develop Ten in Ten messaging aimed at various constituencies for use and distribution by members of the Kanha Circle, the International Tiger Coalition, and other interested parties. At the same time, the campaign will begin to enlist private-sector investors/sponsors and celebrity ambassadors to ensure the campaign is formally launched in advance of the August Beijing Olympics.

Involvement of the Kanha Circle

Words cannot express the gratitude of the organizers to participants in the Kanha Circle. Those who took part brought extraordinary good faith and creativity in seeking a new approach and achieving a result that, we believe, will prove unprecedented for conservation of wild tigers. Please share your thoughts on this summary and any further thoughts you have regarding the involvement of you and/or your organization in implementing the Ten in Ten Campaign. As soon as possible, we would like to begin sharing news of the Kanha Circle’s results to the International Tiger Coalition and others asking to know more.



Next Steps

A number of you committed to actions to kick off the Ten in Ten Campaign, including:

- ✓ A book of short personal essays by eloquent tiger “wallahs” about why they are proclaiming “Stop killing my tiger!” – perhaps followed by a documentary film of the authors (Shekar Dattatri)
- ✓ A www.dontkillmytiger.org website (??)
- ✓ A YouTube “video vault” on all videos relevant to the Ten in Ten Campaign and its goals (Will Travers)
- ✓ A Web-based “Tiger Tracks” game in which players are a tiger (Will you get your leg caught in snare or happily roam the forest?) (Will Travers)
- ✓ A blog written by a tiger (Belinda Wright)
- ✓ A public awareness campaign in Malaysia based on Ten in Ten and “Don’t kill our tigers!” (Kae Kawanishi)
- ✓ Making Ten in Ten and “Don’t kill our tigers!” part of the WWF Network’s new tiger initiative (Sue Lieberman)
- ✓ Introduction of the Ten in Ten Campaign at IUCN’s tiger planning meeting (Urs Breitenmoser)
- ✓ Help enlisting celebrity Ten in Ten “ambassadors” (Valmik Thapar)
- ✓ Ten in Ten messaging for various constituencies for immediate use (Debbie Banks & Judy Mills w/ Bruce Budner)

A fundraising proposal for support to get the Ten in Ten Campaign off the ground in early 2008 is in draft form for presentation soon to potential donors.

Most remarkable of all, before all of us had reached home after our meeting in Kanha, Belinda Wright and the Wildlife Protection Society of India received an invitation from ZeeSports to make tigers the social messaging star of the Indian Cricket League’s debut at the Tau Devi Lala Sports Complex in Chandigarh. The offer included billboards, video screens and Asia-wide televised messages delivered by commentators in English and Hindi using cricket themes such as “Don’t let this be the tiger’s last innings.”

Let us hope that this is just a taste of what is to come!



Judy Mills
December 12, 2007

