

The Bushmeat Crisis Task Force: Lessons Learned From a Decade of Collaboration

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15 January 2009
WWF Learning Week
Washington, D.C.



Running a Collaborative Often Compared with Herding Cats

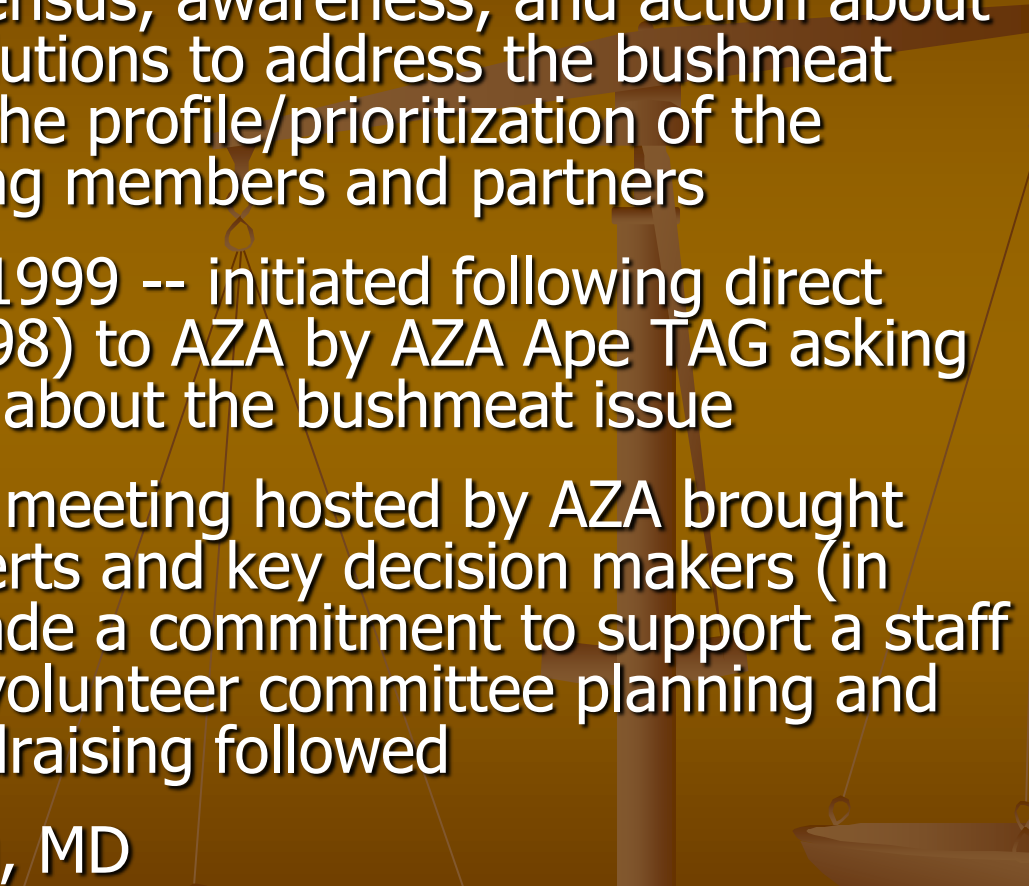


- **Herd cats 1.** (idiomatic) To perform an unpleasant task made difficult by uncooperative or unresponsive persons or other factors (Source: Wiktionary).

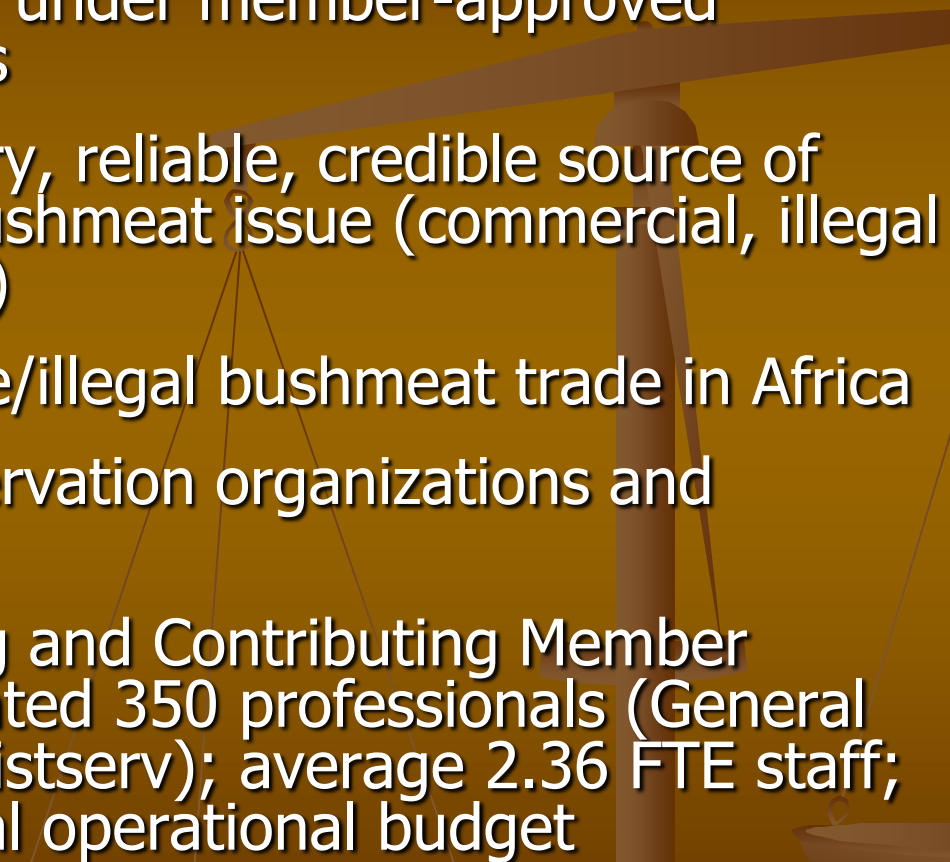
Purpose of Consortium

- The BCTF, founded in 1999, is a consortium of conservation organizations and scientists dedicated to the conservation of wildlife populations threatened by commercial hunting of wildlife for sale as meat.
- Our primary goals are to:
 - a) work with the members of the BCTF to focus attention on the bushmeat crisis in Africa;
 - b) establish an information database and mechanisms for information sharing regarding the bushmeat issue;
 - c) facilitate engagement of African partners and stakeholders in addressing the bushmeat issue; and
 - d) promote collaborative decision-making, fund-raising and actions among the members and associates of the BCTF.

Why, When, How, and Where It Was Formed

- **Why:** To build consensus, awareness, and action about the most effective solutions to address the bushmeat problem – and raise the profile/prioritization of the bushmeat issue among members and partners
 - **When:** 19 February 1999 -- initiated following direct request (October 1998) to AZA by AZA Ape TAG asking AZA to do something about the bushmeat issue
 - **How:** Organizational meeting hosted by AZA brought together leading experts and key decision makers (in conservation) and made a commitment to support a staff person. One year of volunteer committee planning and organization and fundraising followed
 - **Where:** Silver Spring, MD
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Formality, Identity, Focus, Membership and Size

- **Formality:** Operates under member-approved operational guidelines
 - **Identity:** The primary, reliable, credible source of information on the bushmeat issue (commercial, illegal and/or unsustainable)
 - **Focus:** Unsustainable/illegal bushmeat trade in Africa
 - **Membership:** Conservation organizations and professionals
 - **Size:** 30+ Supporting and Contributing Member Organizations; estimated 350 professionals (General Member non-paying listserv); average 2.36 FTE staff; \$168K average annual operational budget
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Communication, Coordination, Decision Making, and Accountability

- **Communication:** BCTF Members communicate primarily via email and the listserv with occasional face-to-face meetings. Outputs are communicated via the BCTF Listserv, BCTF website, media opportunities, and communications package (hard copy)
- **Coordination:** BCTF activities and operations are implemented by salaried staff (average 2.36 FTE) who operate under the direction of an elected Steering Committee and Executive Committee
- **Decision Making:** A 7-member BCTF Executive Committee composed of host-institution Co-Chairs and elected members of the Supporting Member organizations. It works with staff to plan programs of work, set priorities, and provide recommendations to the membership. Staff and the EC communicate via conference calls at least every two months and regularly by email
- **Accountability:** Annual accomplishments and deliverables of the BCTF are reported back to the Executive Committee by staff and staff are evaluated annually through institutional HR systems. There is no system of accountability for membership itself

Cost and Funding Sources

- **Total Cost:** \$1.52 Million for 10 years of operations (includes volunteer year) enabled over \$1 Million to be leveraged for field programs in Africa.
- **Average Cost/Expenses:** \$168K average per year for actual funded years to support 2.36 FTE staff. Operational budget supports salaries and benefits (35-40% of salary), office space, telephone, basic operating expenses, limited travel (one US-based trip per year for one staff member), printed materials etc.
- **Funding Sources:** BCTF Members (\$6K annually Supporting Members, \$1-5K annually Contributing Members) for operational budget; Grants (federal agencies, private foundations) for Africa-based initiatives

Achievements and Struggles, Evolve or End

- **Achievements:** Bushmeat a conservation priority institutionally, new policies incorporate bushmeat, state-of-the-art website and information sharing mechanism on bushmeat, regional programs on bushmeat initiated in Africa, many collaborative efforts emerged, broad awareness and focus
- **Struggles:** Funding for BCTF (only one staff member can be supported) and for bushmeat (lots of research but limited implementation), Ownership/Accountability (staff vs. members), competition, getting information from the field for monitoring trends in bushmeat
- **Evolve:** 'Right-size' staffing to one instead of expand to include field-based staff, remain focused on Africa, focus outputs/deliverables to just a few annual deliverables, secure core membership base (to minimize fundraising through grants or other sources)
- **End:** Currently the staff and Executive Committee have agreed to work toward a third five-year initiative - BCTF Phase III (2009 – 2014) – with a focus on the website and evaluating field-based efforts on bushmeat through an annual State of the Bushmeat Trade report.