

## Protocol and Procedures for Handling Emergencies at GRACE North Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo

### I. Senior Leadership

Since the physical location of GRACE is in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and situations may require quick action, decisions regarding emergencies will be made by the team on the ground. The ultimate responsibility falls to the GRACE DRC Director, but in his absence, there are two managers that can assume this responsibility. The senior most leader present will be designated “Senior Leader” during the emergency. It is understood that the team in DR Congo will follow, to the best of their ability, previously agreed upon protocols and procedures.

#### Leadership:

1. [REDACTED] – GRACE DRC Director; +243 [REDACTED]; +243 [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]@ [REDACTED].com
2. [REDACTED] – GRACE Center Manager; +243 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]@ [REDACTED].com
3. Designated Manager – This is the Manager that has been designated to be in charge in the event that [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] are both absent from GRACE

### II. Communication Plan

Communication is a critical component of dealing with an emergency situation. The first priority is attending to the situation on the ground to ensure the welfare of GRACE staff and animals. This may extend to family members of staff and members of the community as appropriate (family example: if armed group has attacked the village; community example: if a gorilla has escaped and is in the village).

#### Responsibilities:

- 1) Senior Leader – This will be the GRACE DRC Director (or next highest person present if Director is absence). Responsible for communicating decisions and plans at GRACE and in DRC as needed on an emergency basis. As the situation permits, the GRACE DRC Director (or his designate) will communicate with the GRACE Executive Director in the U.S.

Working with the GRACE team, the Senior Leader will identify the Incident Manager and a Scribe for the emergency.

- 2) Incident Manager – This person will be in charge of managing the emergency response team and their actions, assigning roles and ensuring the team has the resources needed to do their tasks. He/she will also communicate with the Senior Leader. *If the Emergency is animal related, see Animal Emergency Document for additional details.*

- 3) Scribe – The Scribe is assigned to keep notes on the Incident, a timeline, assigned tasks and outcome. At the end of the Emergency, a report is created to document the event and response. The Scribe will also assemble the team to discuss the emergency, possible cause, response, changes (if any) needed to current practices/facilities, and lesson learned.

- 4) GRACE Executive Director (or designate) – The ED will be the communication point of contact for the GRACE DRC Director. The U.S.-based ED will be responsible for communicating with the GRACE Board of Directors and, as appropriate, ensuring U.S.-based advisors are aware of the situation.
- 5) Shared Communication Duties – As the situation permits, the GRACE DRC Director (or the designate in his/her absence) and the Executive Director will discuss the situation and make further communication decisions and assign tasks. Other people that may need to be informed include: ICCN in Kinshasa and at Virunga (provincial center), Bami or other community leaders, political authorities, military, police, MONUSCO, medical authorities, partner NGOs in DRC and U.S., and/or media.
- 6) All staff and advisors – It is the responsibility of all staff and advisors to refrain from sharing information without the explicit instruction or consent of the DRC or Executive Director.

### **III. Types of disasters that can occur**

Being prepared in advance of an emergency is critical to ensure the team can address a situation once it arises and achieve the safest outcome possible in a timely manner. We prepare using planning, drills, discussion, and by raising awareness with staff and community. In the DRC there are many types of disasters or emergency situations that may arise. Below is a list of possible scenarios. In all cases, human safety should be the top priority.

#### *1) Animal Escape*

This includes gorillas and monkeys. Human safety is the number one priority. Refer to Animal Escape Protocol.

#### *2) Animal Injury/Illness*

This includes gorillas and monkeys. Human safety is the number one priority. Consult Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Advisors for treatment/action plan.

#### *3) Human Injury/Illness*

This is for GRACE staff or anyone working at GRACE as contractor, visitor, or volunteer. Provide initial emergency care as per first responder training protocols. Contact medical clinic at Katoyo or Kasugho for assistance if available and needed. Arrange transport to appropriate location for additional treatment as needed.

#### *4) Forest Fire*

It is responsibility of GRACE staff, particularly management and security teams, to be aware of smoke or other indication of fire in the area around GRACE and to report these signs immediately. Once a fire is confirmed, a plan to control it should be implemented immediately.

If fire is in close proximity to GRACE, ensure gorillas have access to both the Night House and Forest Enclosures. If fire enters the Forest Enclosure, cut the wire so gorillas have a route of egress. If fire approaches monkey cages, monkeys may be temporarily placed in vari-kennels and moved to a safer location. If it is not possible to move monkeys, open the door to the cages.

#### *5) Severe Weather*

Thunderstorms with hail, high winds, lightning and heavy rain is common in the area. Human safety is the number one priority. All staff should cease outdoor activities and seek shelter immediately during storms. Observation towers and platforms around Forest Enclosures and mixing yard must be vacated.

If Animal Care team is aware of an impending storm, give gorillas access to the Night House prior to storm. If storm is in progress, do not attempt to operate metal shift doors in outdoor enclosures. Once storm has passed, immediately inspect fence around Forest Enclosures to ensure it is intact, free of limbs and vegetation, and check fence and chargers for electrical current. Inspect the integrity of the monkey cages.

#### *6) Insecurity*

GRACE is located in North Kivu Province of northeastern DRC. This region has experienced periods of insecurity. Insecurity may result from military or armed group activity. Bouts of armed conflict may be associated with gunfire, looting, and an influx of armed soldiers and/or non-state or foreign actors into the area.

It is the responsibility of all staff to be aware of activity in their surroundings, especially if there is potential for fighting. Human safety is the number one priority. In the event of fighting near GRACE, the following actions may be taken as deemed appropriate.

- *Staff:* If necessary, staff and their families may need to evacuate GRACE or nearby villages to safer locations, which could be other villages or towns or the forest, depending on the situation. A plan should be made to determine who should leave, who should stay, and what is needed to accommodate the decided-upon plan.
- *Gorillas/Monkeys:* Give gorillas access to Forest Enclosures and Night Houses. If all staff must evacuate, load as much vegetation as possible into both inside and outside enclosures for gorillas and monkeys. If insecurity is in close proximity to GRACE, cut the wire to the Forest Enclosures so gorillas have a route of egress and open doors to monkey cages.

## **IV. Emergency Preparedness**

GRACE has taken steps to ensure maximum preparedness for emergency scenarios, including:

- *Fire Break* - GRACE has a 20 meter-wide fire break cut (1,525 m long) around the perimeter of the forest enclosures, 8 observation towers measuring 6-8 meters in height. We also employ a team of 6 people that assist in surveillance of the region surrounding GRACE for signs of fire, encroachment, and insecurity.

- *Safe Storage Location* – This is a location that can be used for safely storing important equipment, nonperishable food and other items during emergencies.
- *Vehicles* - GRACE has one 4-wheel drive Landcruiser, one large truck for transporting supplies and if needed, people and gorilla crates, and a motorbike. Additionally, the GRACE Director has a 4-wheel drive vehicle.
- *Helicopter Landing Sites* -  
Located on GRACE Center campus is a helicopter landing site that could be used by MONUSCO or Tropic Air for emergency evacuation. GPS coordinates:

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

There is a second landing site 2 km from GRACE GPS coordinates:

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

- *Virunga National Park Air Wing* - Virunga National Park has several planes and ultralights used for transporting rangers, moving confiscated apes, and have provided transport for GRACE staff. The planes can land at an airstrip in Lubero, approximately 45 km from GRACE.
- *Medical Facilities* - There is a small clinic in Katoyo Village, adjacent to GRACE. However, at this time it does not have a doctor (just nurses). There is also a clinic in Kasugho village, 18 km directly down the hill from Katoyo. At this time, the facility only has nurses but in the past there have also been 1-2 doctors present. They may return in the future. The nearest hospital is in Butembo, 90 km from GRACE. Butembo also has an airport capable of accommodating small passenger planes to Goma, the provincial capital of North Kivu, (1-hr flight), which has a well-equipped and staffed hospital and a full-size airport. *Note: while Butembo is only 90 km away, it takes 4-6 hours by vehicle over rough roads.* GRACE staff underwent first responder training in 2018 to learn skills to stabilize injuries at GRACE for transport to medical facilities.
- *Radio Station* – The local radio station is located 1.5 km from GRACE and reaches over 30,000 people. We have access to the station for Emergency Announcements.
- *Communication* – All GRACE Managers and most of the care staff have Smart phones and cell service is available in several areas around GRACE. GRACE has internet and a Satellite phone. GRACE staff carry two-way radios. Staff also carry whistles for notifying each other of emergencies and there is a Blow Horn for remotely notifying the village if necessary. The village residents are familiar with the purpose of the Blow Horn and the appropriate response.

#### Important emergency contacts in DRC:

- [REDACTED] – GRACE DRC Director; +243 [REDACTED] +243 [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED].com
- [REDACTED] – GRACE Center Manager; +243 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]@ [REDACTED].com

- [REDACTED] - GRACE Animal Manager; [REDACTED]@ [REDACTED].com, +243 [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]
- [REDACTED] – GRACE Facility Manager; [REDACTED]@ [REDACTED].com, +243  
[REDACTED]
- [REDACTED] - Interim Research and Farm Manager;  
[REDACTED]@ [REDACTED].com, +243 [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED], Caregiver/Vet Assisant, [REDACTED]@ [REDACTED].com, +243  
[REDACTED]
- [REDACTED] – GRACE Communications & Logistics Manager in Goma;  
[REDACTED]@gracegorillas.org, +243 [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED] – GRACE Advisor, DRC; +243 [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED].com
- [REDACTED] – GRACE Advisor, DRC; 011 +243 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]@ [REDACTED].com
- [REDACTED] – +243 [REDACTED] [REDACTED].com
- [REDACTED] – ICCN & Chief Park Warden, Virunga National Park; 011 243 [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]; [REDACTED]@gorilla.cd, [REDACTED]@virunga.org
- [REDACTED] - ICCN & Logistics Chief, Virunga National Park; [REDACTED]@virunga.org, +32 [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**Important U.S. & international emergency contacts:**

- [REDACTED] – GRACE Interim Director; +1 [REDACTED] (US)  
[REDACTED]@gracegorillas.org
- [REDACTED] – GRACE Board Chair; +1 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]@ [REDACTED].com
- [REDACTED] – Okapi Conservation Project & GRACE Board Advisor;  
[REDACTED]@ [REDACTED].com, +1 [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED] – Tropic Air pilot; [REDACTED]@ [REDACTED], +254 [REDACTED]

**V. Key Decisions and Questions to Guide Plan Development**

- 1) Who is in charge in DRC? In US?
- 2) What is the emergency?
- 3) What is Plan A? What is Plan B?
- 4) Assign staff to various roles required to implement plan.
- 5) Who needs to be informed?
- 6) Who is responsible for the after-action review of the event, documentation and communication of results?