Wildlife Expedition to Nigeria's "Mountain of Death"

30 January 2014

Professor Volker Sommer, scientific director of the Gashaka Biodiversity Project, will lead a two-week exploration of montane forests and river headwaters near West Africa's highest peak, the Gangirwal or "Mountain of Death".

A dozen world-renowned botanists, wildlife experts and engineers combine their expertise for this February 2014 expedition. They represent Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew (Wet Tropics of Africa Section), the North of England Zoological Society (Chester Zoo), the Ape Alliance (an international coalition of 90+ NGOs), Julius-Berger-International (one of sub-saharan Africa's largest construction firms) and the Nigeria Parks Service.

Two dozen porters will be required to move provisions and equipment through inaccessible and often steep rainforest. The expedition has three aims:

- Firstly, initiate a long-term plant collection program with Kew Gardens herbarium that will lead to a comprehensive flora of the region.
- Secondly, survey the forests for remnant populations of critically endangered Cross-River gorillas and distribution of the world's rarest chimpanzee, the Nigeria-Cameroon subspecies.
- Thirdly, design advice for local communities and national park management on how to improve conservation measures further to ensure that crucial watershed forests are preserved into the future.