“It is incredible to live in the same place where we are working on projects. Here we can walk down the road to Mang’ula B and enjoy cassava and Coke while watching people come and go in local shops. We can talk to local people about ideas and strategies. Working in the community, we are more informed and have greater potential to design effective solutions for the villages and park.” (2012 participant)

Interdisciplinary Study Program: Context and Goals
Udzungwa Mountains National Park lies in south-central Tanzania, about 200 miles west of the coastal city of Dar es Salaam. Containing some of the highest biological diversity in Africa, Udzungwa also borders human settlements where villagers struggle every day to meet their basic needs for food, fuel, and clean water. One of the greatest challenges faced by the park is conserving nature amid growing local populations and their needs.

This interdisciplinary program focuses on those local communities, aiming to create plans and designs that can accommodate village needs for sustainable food, fuel and water on lands outside the park, thus reducing the pressure to use park resources. Reducing pressure on park resources is, over the long term, the best route to biodiversity conservation. Led by faculty conducting research in and around the park, the program also involves partners from Tanzanian universities and government agencies, international non-government organizations, and researchers, exposing students to a wealth of inter-disciplinary and inter-organizational expertise.

The program welcomes students from all backgrounds to gain hands-on experience in the principles of environmental design and land use planning through an applied community design workshop and field trips into Udzungwa and other parks, towns, and villages to observe and document land use and biodiversity.

Dates and Credit:
6 weeks, May 18-June 27, 2015. Students will take a 3-credit seminar, a 1-credit colloquium, and a 5-credit community design workshop structured to match individual student skills/interests. Students receive 9 credits, some of which may satisfy GN or GS requirements. Grades count toward Penn State cumulative GPA.

Program Costs:
Penn State in-state tuition, a program fee, plus airfare to Dar es Salaam. Students can use most components of their existing financial aid packages toward the cost of study abroad. The University Office of Global Programs (UOGP) also administers a number of grants and scholarships, including the Whole World Scholarship.

Further Information: For more details, you may contact a Program Ambassador, program returnee, or Whitney Strickler at UOGP (wss11@psu.edu), Prof. Gorenflo (ljg11@psu.edu), or Prof. Kew (bwk2@psu.edu).

Application: This summer 2015 program will accept rolling applications up to our February 1, 2015 deadline. Notice of acceptance will be no later than March 1, 2015. For more information, please see the following website: http://gpglobalea.gp.psu.edu/index.cfm?FuseAction=Programs.ViewProgram&Program_ID=10262.

“I rounded the corner of the house to find a group of women, consisting of three generations of the family, sitting in a circle. They saw me, then noticed the rest of my group, and immediately greeted all seven of us with warm smiles and a friendly “Jambo” or “Karibu.” (2012 participant)
Itinerary, May-June 2015
(in-Tanzania dates may vary slightly; departure and return are firm)

Monday 18 May: Depart Dulles, Monday morning. Arrive Dar es Salaam Tuesday afternoon, 19 May

19-21 May: Accommodation at Passionist Fathers House (hostel—search Internet for description of all destinations)

20-21 May: Orientation, University of Dar es Salaam—history, biodiversity, human-wildlife conflict, etc.

22 May: Travel to Hilux Hotel, Morogoro, in morning; relax and get a sense of the town

23 May: Lecture, Sokoine University of Agriculture, trip to Uluguru Mountains

24 May: Visit water development project near Morogoro field exercise, morning

25 May: Depart early for Udzungwa Mountains National Park, passing through Mikumi National Park; overnight—settle-in at Udzungwa Ecological Monitoring Centre hostel

26-29 May: Orientation to Udzungwa Mountains (short hikes); Mang’ula (walking tours); Udzungwa region beginning fieldwork; Afternoons/Evenings—seminar reading and discussions

30 May-31 May: Overnight in park, at Sanje Falls (optional for students)

1-6 June: Village observation/data collection in mornings; afternoon studio work; evening seminars

7-9 June: Safari in Mikumi National Park

10-12 June: Village observation/data collection in mornings; afternoon studio work; evening seminars

13-14 June: Free

15-19 June: Udzungwa Ecological Monitoring Centre; prepare final presentations, etc.

20 June: Deliver final presentations; final celebration, Hondo Hondo Udzungwa Forest Tented Camp

21 June: Depart for Dar es Salaam and Passionist Fathers House

22-24 June: Depart for Kilwa and Kilwa Dreams Beach Resort (three nights)

25 June: Return to Dar es Salaam and Passionist Fathers House; souvenir shopping

Friday, 26 June: Drive to airport and depart Friday afternoon. Arrive Dulles Saturday morning, 27 June

“Words and images cannot adequately describe what it is like to be in a new, unfamiliar place - to experience a culture so different from one’s own. Culture is a dynamic, complex, living entity. It doesn’t pause to be captured in a picture or to be explained to a friend. Before it can be explained it has already moved on. I knew I was going to see and experience new and different cultures while in Tanzania, but I had no idea the effect they would have on me.” (2011 participant)

“Development and community planning will never be an easy subject to tackle but I have found that with the greater understanding and a new way to approach the problem, the key issues more easily jump out. For instance, solving the problem of poverty is essentially impossible. However when I approach the problem on a smaller scale, providing a solution for bringing a little bit of income to a family, a village or a group of individuals is a lot more manageable. By tackling issues on a smaller scale, we as students and as potential planners become more capable of addressing the true roots of problem and creating a change, even if it is a small one.” (2010 participant)