

We explored the relationships between protected area (PA) staff and adjacent communities in and around four PAs in Zimbabwe. A total of 938 local people and 133 PA staff participated in the survey conducted between July 2013 and February 2014. Our results showed that communities generally perceived a negative relationship with PA staff, while PA staff generally perceived a positive relationship with local communities. Only benefit-sharing had a different effect on PA staff–community relationship for the PA staff and community samples. In contrast, communication, perceptions (both communities' and PA staff's), community involvement in conservation, history of PA creation, and problems caused by PA existence to the communities or by communities to PAs had the same effect on PA staff–community relationship from both perspectives. We recommend that both conservation agencies and communities should pay more attention to factors that influence PA staff–community relationships so as to nurture positive relationships between PA staff and local communities.