

Milking the Rhino (2008)

Director: [David E. Simpson](#)

Critics' rating



Average user rating



Movie review

From Time Out Chicago

The protection of wild species sounds good in the abstract, but the devil is in the details. It's all very nice to say we ought to save the rhino, but how? If we ban the killing of rhinos and prosecute poachers aggressively, then what to do about the fact that rhinos and other wild animals are often in direct competition with humans for natural resources? If you try to create giant game preserves, you are likely to find yourself kicking people off their land. And, to really pull at those liberal heartstrings, the displaced are often indigenous people trying to preserve a traditional way of life.

One solution that's been gaining favor is community conservation, an approach in which local people are given a role and a stake in protecting the environment and native species. In much of Africa, that means encouraging safari tourism. But community conservation demands consensus building and changing old ways without simply replicating colonialist paternalism.

To explore this challenge, Simpson looks at two cases: an eco-lodge in Kenya and a community conservancy in Namibia. To his credit, Simpson doesn't shy away from complexity and contradiction. As Helen Gichohi of the African Wildlife Foundation explains, the native people need tourism, but "tourism means the myth of wild Africa." Simpson might have done a bit more to make the distinctions between the two approaches he observes, but that's a minor quibble. This doc offers hope based not in platitudes but in practical solutions.

Author: Hank Sartin

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Cast & crew

Director: [David E. Simpson](#)

Rated: NR

Duration: 85 mins

US Release: Sep 26 2008

