

ARK*ive*



ABERDARES:

REHABILITATION OF 38KM PHASE 1 FENCE NEARLY COMPLETED

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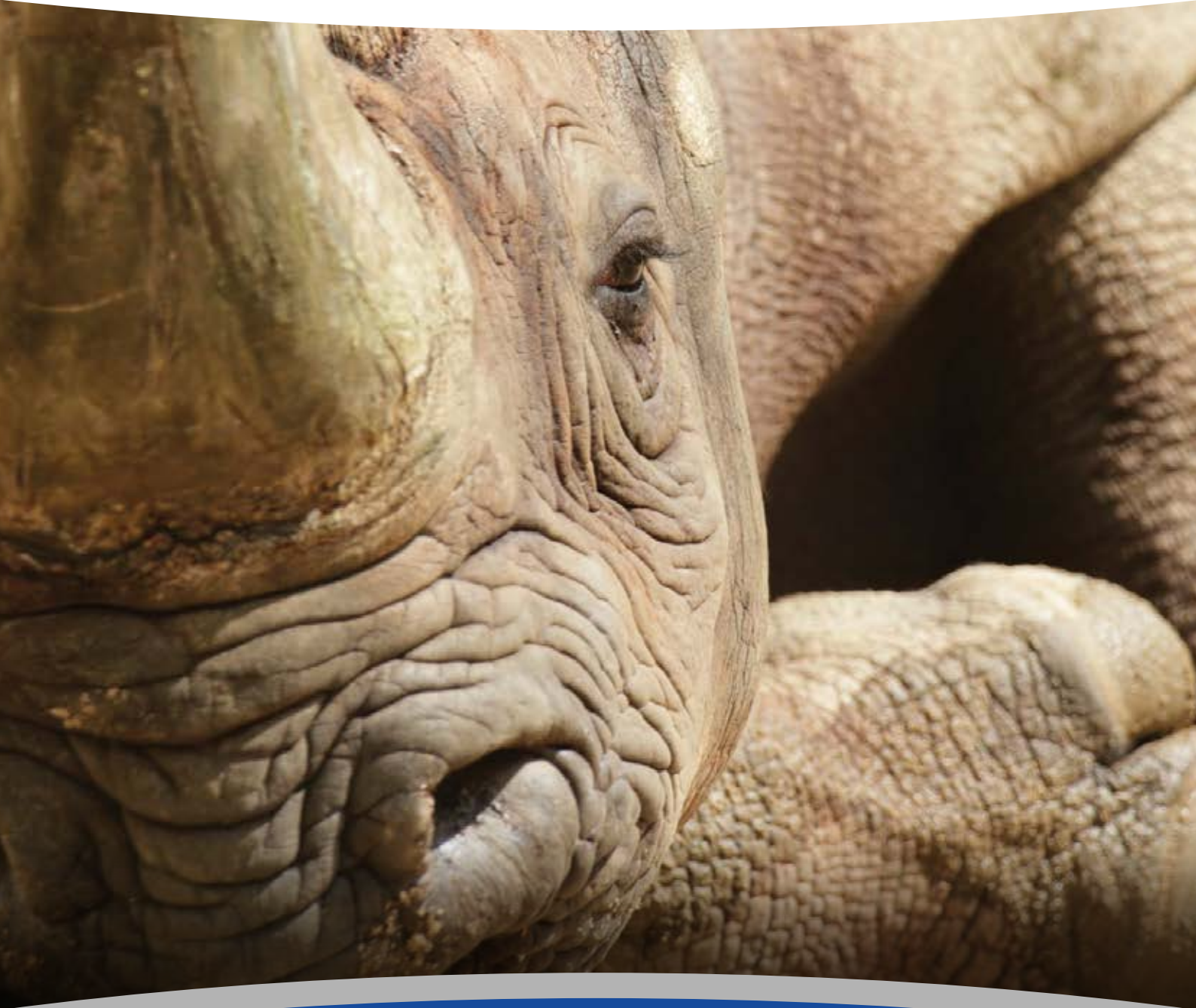
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PROGRESS ON THE
CONSTRUCTION OF
MT. KENYA FENCE



HUMANS IN HARMONY WITH HABITAT & WILDLIFE

**Braeburn Group of International Schools
supports the Rhino Charge. We wish
all participants an enjoyable event!**



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RHINO ARK OBJECTIVES

Rhino Ark seeks solutions to the challenges facing the mountain forest ecosystems of Kenya, also known as the water towers. More specifically, Rhino Ark aims to:

- (i) Protect Kenya's mountain forests, other threatened habitats and their rich biodiversity;
- (ii) Engage and educate adjacent communities in conservation;
- (iii) Secure the connectivity between mountain forests and other threatened wildlife habitats;
- (iv) Establish sustainable financing mechanisms for the conservation of mountain forests and other threatened wildlife habitats;
- (v) Advocate nationally and internationally for the conservation of the mountain forests and other threatened habitats, their wildlife and their ecological functions; and,
- (vi) Use science to assess the impacts of, and review conservation interventions.



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S VIEW

CHRISTIAN LAMBRECHTS

Rhino Ark continues to make an invaluable contribution to securing the ecological integrity and sustainability of Kenya's mountain forests and other threatened wildlife habitats, in line with its core mandate. This role was much evidence in our critical support for fighting wildfires that threatened vast areas of fragile forest and moorland habitat in Mt. Kenya and the Aberdares earlier this year.

It is this recognition of effectiveness in fulfilling its mandate that has seen that has Rhino Ark invited to support the conservation of Kakamega Forest. The Conservation and Fencing Project is poised to start in the weeks to come. This is a major development in many aspects. It reinforces Rhino Ark's mandate to safeguard critical threatened wildlife habitats. Kakamega Forest, the only tropical rainforest in Kenya, hosts an incredible array of biodiversity. It has 385 species of plants not found elsewhere in Kenya, 472 species of birds and 487 butterfly species constituting 54% of the 900 species known to Kenya.

Kakamega Forest is the first project spearheaded by Rhino Ark to be implemented in Western Kenya. From an initial focus in central Kenya (Aberdares and Mt. Kenya) and the Mau (Eburu and South Western Mau), Rhino Ark is expanding its geographical scope. Kakamega Forest spans the counties of Kakamega and Vihiga.

This conservation and fencing project is a first in terms of support provided by the county governments. To date, Rhino Ark has secured KES 230 million towards the project, with KES 100 million from Kakamega County Government and KES 30 million from Vihiga County Government. It is the first time in Kenya that county governments provide direct financial support towards the conservation of a forest reserve and a national reserve. Thanks to the continuous fundraise provided by the Rhino Charge, Rhino Ark has been able to commit KES 100 million.

This new and important conservation project is starting at a time when new commitments have been made by Kenya to increase the forest cover in the country to 10% by 2022. In parallel, new developments are taking place in the forestry sector. A review of the 2016 Forest and Conservation Act is on-going. The recommendations of the *2018 Task Force on the Inquiry into Forest Resources Management and Logging Activities in Kenya* have started being implemented. A new Chief Conservator of Forests has been appointed to the helm of the Kenya Forest Service.

These national developments, and others, present a positive outlook for enhanced forest management that will complement Rhino Ark conservation efforts in the water towers of Kenya.

MAU EBURU ECOSYSTEM

MOUNTAIN BONGO STUDY CAPTURES EVIDENCE OF ELUSIVE ANTELOPE



Bongo antelope.

In April 2018, Rhino Ark facilitated the commencement of a study to determine the population and distribution of mountain bongo antelope within Eburu Forest Reserve. This baseline study, carried out with technical support from the Calgary Zoo, involves the use of trap cameras to document this critically endangered species, as well as other fauna within the forest.

The data collected from this study will inform discussions by the National Bongo Task Force on the possibility of reintroduction, through translocation, of captive-bred animals into the Eburu Forest. This initiative would boost Eburu's bongo population, thereby increasing their chances of survival.



Bongo antelope.

From recent findings by the study team, we are excited to announce the capture of several mountain bongo with the remote cameras. The images likely show individuals from two or perhaps three separate groups within the very steepest sections of the forest. The cameras have also been able to capture an assemblage of other important species within the forest – we can confirm a healthy population of leopard, bushbuck, black & white colobus, blue monkey, red duiker, buffalo, mongoose, and many more in smaller numbers. The team has also mapped secondary signs from bongo and from the other species too – footprints, droppings, and scratching posts - to add to the biodiversity data.



Leopard by night.

Even as the success of capture of hard evidence of bongo is celebrated, the study team has grappled with the challenge of theft or damage to cameras by persons carrying out illegal activities in the forest. This challenge has caused some to delays in what would have been a 1 year study. It has made it necessary for the study team to innovate in order to better protect the cameras, as they seek the answer to the mountain bongo total population question.

With the establishment of improved measures to protect the cameras and their data, it is now envisaged that the baseline study will wrap up in the last quarter of 2019.

JOINT FIELD VISIT BY RHINO ARK BOARD OF DIRECTORS TO MAU EBURU FOREST



Members of the Rhino Ark Board made a joint field visit to Eburu forest on March 26, 2019. The purpose of the visit was to grant them invaluable insight into the status and the impacts of the comprehensive Eburu ecosystem conservation initiative spearheaded by the Rhino Ark since 2011.

The board learned about various aspects of the conservation initiative including but not limited to the 43.3 km fencing project, the Eburu- lake Naivasha wildlife corridor initiative, community conservation and livelihoods initiatives among them bee-keeping and biogas energy solutions.

Some of the key project areas visited by the board members included the fire watch tower, one of the energizer houses, wildlife water trough, and the blessed post's site.

The board members comprised of Isaac Awuondo (Chairman), Peter Kinyua, Michael Turner, Isabella Ochola-Wilson, Brian Haworth, Rose Kimotho, Dr. Perez Olindo, Alan McKittrick, and the Executive Director and Secretary to the board, Christian Lambrechts.

Others present were Kenya Forest Service Forester, Eburu Forest station Samuel Mundia and Rhino Ark staff among them Julius Kamau, Valerie Gunputrav, Eric Kihui, and Joseph Mutongu.



IMPLEMENTATION OF EBURU CONSERVATION CURRICULA: A MAJOR SUCCESS

Implementation of conservation education curricula in 32 Eburu forest-adjacent primary and secondary schools, has been on-going since January 2014. The ultimate goal of this intervention is to cultivate positive behavior change among the young generation towards the protection and sustainable management of Eburu forest.

An implementation committee meeting comprising of representatives from Ministry of Environment and Forestry, KWS, KFS, Rhino Ark, schools and community members was held on February 18, 2019, to monitor the progress of the intervention. Some of the key outcomes of the initiative were increased tree cover in schools, enhanced pupils' performance in environmental related subjects such as agriculture, science, and social studies; growth in income generating projects in schools such as tree nurseries and beekeeping and emergence of community conservation champions among others.

Attesting to the success of the initiative, John Wanderi, a teacher at Munanda Secondary School and chairman of the implementation committee said, "since the inception of this programme in our schools, we have seen positive behavior change towards conservation and increased environmental and conservational knowledge among our pupils, community, and teachers..."

On his part, Mr. Nganga, Quality Assurance Officer, Ministry of Education said 'this is a unique and practical programme and the first one to have ever been introduced and implemented in our schools. I commend the teachers for volunteering to implement this programme for the benefit of the pupils and community to save our current and future generations...'

Based on these successes, Rhino Ark is in the process of replicating similar initiative in the South Western Mau.



Ministry of Education Officer receives a branded wrist band.



Committee meeting in session.

BUILDING CAPACITY ON MITIGATING THE IMPACTS OF LINEAR INFRASTRUCTURES ON WILDLIFE MOVEMENT



Participants at the workshop.



Workshop in session.

Rhino Ark and the Kenya Wildlife Service organized a one-day workshop on wildlife overpass to mitigate the impacts of linear infrastructures on wildlife movement.

Participants in the workshop comprised of Government agencies in charge of the planning and implementation of linear infrastructures in Kenya (Kenya National Highways Authority (KeNHA), Kenya Rural Roads Authority (KeRRA), Kenya Urban Roads Authority (KURA), Kenya Railways Corporation (KRC)), as well as leading conservation agencies (Kenya Wildlife Service, Kenya Forest Service and the Directorate of Resource Surveys and Remote Sensing). The Kenya Institute of Highways and Building

Technology (KIHBT) also participated in the workshop, as well as conservation NGOs, including the Conservation Alliance of Kenya, Save the Elephants, African Conservation Centre, Amara Conservation and Elephant Neighbors Centre.

Participants in the workshop were very grateful to Rhino Ark and Kenya Wildlife Service for organizing the workshop which brought for the first time experts on linear infrastructure development together with experts in conservation.

Terry McGuire, a world lead expert from Canada in (wildlife overpasses and wildlife underpasses), was a key resource person

during the workshop. Terry McGuire has been contracted by Rhino Ark to assist in the siting, design, and construction of the first wildlife overpass in the country to be built in the Eburu Forest-Lake Naivasha wildlife corridor over the Moi North Lake Road.

The workshop was opened by Prof. Dr. Charles Musyoki, Ag. Director-General of the Kenya Wildlife Service. The purpose of the workshop was to:

- Exchange experiences between Canada / North America and Kenya on policies and practices to mitigate the impacts of linear infrastructures on wildlife movement;
- Gain better understanding of policy requirements to promote measures to mitigate the impacts of linear infrastructures on wildlife movement; - Gain better understanding on the siting, design, and construction of wildlife overpass/underpass.
- The workshop identified key issues to be addressed as a way forward.

EBURU FOREST COMMUNITY ADOPTS BIOGAS AS AN ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCE

Through the year 2018, Rhino Ark has worked to facilitate exposure of the forest-adjacent communities to biogas as an alternative source of energy and to encourage its adoption. This has been through capacity building, as well as establishing a beneficial linkage to a biogas unit supplier.

These efforts have yielded success: Bidii Ex-Lewis Women's Self-help group, comprising 17 members have firmly embraced the biogas initiative. The group has invested their own resources in biogas amongst some of its members and further encouraged other local community members to do the same. By December 2018, a total of 16 biogas units had been installed, of which three are now fully operational. The group's members have fully appreciated the benefits of biogas, and have expressed a strong desire to propagate its use in their community. With continuing support from Rhino Ark, the group is planning an ambitious roll-out of 100 biogas units among the local community.

This initiative is aimed at reducing the reliance of the forest adjacent communities on forest-derived fuel-wood, hence propagating sustainable conservation of Eburu forest. Biogas is a cleaner, more efficient and renewable energy source.



Biogas digester installation.



Community member enjoys clean cooking.



After installation: kitchen demonstration.



Biogas training session.

WILDLIFE OVERPASS INITIATIVE GAINS MOMENTUM

As part of the comprehensive Eburu conservation initiative, Rhino Ark in collaboration with the landowners spearheaded the establishment of a wildlife corridor between the forest and Lake Naivasha. Having secured the corridor, a new challenge emerged through the upgrade of Moi North Lake Road to bitumen, which bisects the corridor and acts as a physical barrier to free movement of wildlife. The increase in speed and frequency of traffic along this road has led to frequent road kills/injuries to wildlife. The night of 21 February 2019, a leopard was killed on this road, one of many recorded wildlife mortalities.

A possible mitigation measure to address this challenge is the construction of a wildlife overpass. This solution has been found highly effective in Canada, USA, and the Netherlands. Canada, in particular, has been a leader in building overpasses along the Trans Canadian Highway system that runs through various national parks. This concept has never been implemented in Kenya, pointing to the need to source expertise externally. Rhino Ark, through consultation with Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) and Parks Canada, identified and brought on board Terry McGuire, a leading expert in



Group view traffic at proposed overpass site.



Attentive audience during workshop.

wildlife overpass construction to assist with the development of an overpass design and budget.

Terry commenced his assignment in Kenya on 27 February 2019 with a site visit to Eburu forest and the wildlife corridor. Subsequently, a stakeholders' 1-day workshop, facilitated by Rhino Ark, was held at Loldia Farm, the site of the proposed overpass. The workshop was attended by officers from KWS, Kenya Forest Service, Kenya Rural Roads Authority (KeRRA), local community representatives, local administration and landowners presently hosting wildlife on their farms within the corridor zone and adjacent areas.

In this workshop, the Rhino Ark team, led by Executive Director Christian Lambrechts, provided an overview of the Eburu Ecosystem Conservation project and the status of the Eburu-Lake Naivasha connectivity initiative while Terry shared the Parks Canada experience and methodology for establishing wildlife overpasses. The workshop paves the way for further consultations and technical work by Terry to develop an overpass design and budget proposal. His inputs will build upon the provision of a crossing point site already accommodated by KeRRA's design. If successful, the overpass will be the first of its kind to be built in Kenya.

NEW COMMUNITY CONSERVATION CHAMPIONS INDUCTED



Small group discussion session.



Newly inducted champions.

The Eburu Community Conservation Champions is a Rhino Ark initiative started in 2016 to establish a strong grassroots-based pool of conservation proponents. It identifies and recruits, on a voluntary basis, local community members who are passionate about conservation. The members are then incorporated into our outreach and forest conservation activities within their respective communities. This approach helps to expand our conservation "reach" into the local communities.

In December 2018, Rhino Ark organized a full-day induction workshop for nine newly recruited conservation champions drawn from the five administrative locations adjacent to Eburu forest Ndabibi, Malewa, Eburru, OI Jorai, and Kiambogo. The workshop was jointly facilitated by Rhino Ark outreach officer Peter Munene and John Wanderi, one of the pioneer Conservation Champions.

Philip Kiriba, one of the inductees expressed his appreciation for the programme thus: "I have waited for a time like this for a long time but finally I am happy it has happened. Through this programme by Rhino Ark, we see ourselves as strongholds in conservation and as ambassadors of conservation. All we need is a little support from our stakeholders and conservation will be a lifestyle in Eburru community. I hope to connect with schools to work as a team and own this programme."

Going forward, the champions will be fully involved in, and act as the focal point for Rhino Ark supported conservation activities in their respective areas. Through continuing training and development support from Rhino Ark, they will provide strong conservation leadership within their communities.

EBURU WILDLIFE WATCH- EARLY BIRD TAKES FLIGHT



Early flight: augur buzzard at lift-off.



In formation: buffalo herd drinks by night.



Male bushbuck strolls past water trough.

Eburu forest is a well-conserved ecosystem that is teeming with wildlife. Rhino Ark's innovative steam-fed wildlife water system located along the eastern forest boundary is a prime location to which various wildlife species make regular visits.

The Rhino Ark trap camera system strategically placed near the wildlife water trough captures the pictures of wildlife both day and night. In early January 2019, this system captured a rare and spectacular sight: an augur buzzard bird at take-off, wings spread wide in cool early morning mountain breeze. This majestic bird preys on small

ground mammals (such as mice), snakes and insects, and plays an important role in maintaining balance in the ecosystem.

Other recent wildlife sightings at the water trough have included buffalo, hyena, and bushbuck, evidence that the steam-fed wildlife water system intervention is highly effective and impactful!

IMPROVING LIVELIHOODS: EBURU COMMUNITY GROUP LEARNS PYRETHRUM BEST PRACTICES



A farmer receives pyrethrum seeds.



Training farmers on pyrethrum growing.

Towards empowering forest adjacent communities to improve their on-farm productivity, Rhino Ark is facilitating training for local community groups in Eburu location. In November 2018, Rhino Ark arranged for training on pyrethrum growing for the Eburu Fruit Farmers community group. The practical, on-farm training, attended by 16 farmers from the group, was provided by agricultural officers from Gilgil sub-county.

The climate along the eastern boundary of Eburu forest is favorable for pyrethrum, a lucrative cash crop. The crop is increasing in popularity amongst local farmers, who have observed that it can earn significantly more income for them than, for example, maize. Rhino Ark support through linkage with agricultural experts is equipping farmers with knowledge to help them maximize their yields. As an added bonus, the farmers were

also assisted to procure quality pyrethrum seeds at favorable cost through this linkage.

This livelihood empowerment initiative is a complementary strategy of Rhino Ark to reduce dependency on Eburu forest resources by the community and creating a win-win relationship between conservation and local community livelihood needs.

ENHANCING FENCE EFFECTIVENESS THROUGH FENCE MONITORING SYSTEM



Rhino Ark visited the Rhino Sanctuary established by Tony Fitzjohn at the Mkomazi National Park, Tanzania, where a comprehensive fence monitoring system has been established to enhance the effectiveness of the fences and the security of the black rhinos.

The system - developed, installed and maintained by INSTARECT - enables remote monitoring and control each section of the fence. It provides immediate alerts when a fault is detected on any fence section or within the fence power and communication system.

Rhino Ark is now evaluating the possibility of installing such a system in Eburu. This will assist management in detecting illegal intrusion in the forest and prepare for the establishment of a bongo antelope sanctuary.

Many thanks to Tony Fitzjohn for welcoming us at Mkomazi and showing us his various projects that have brought such positive changes in the park and within the surrounding communities. And thank you to Peter Hays for taking us there.

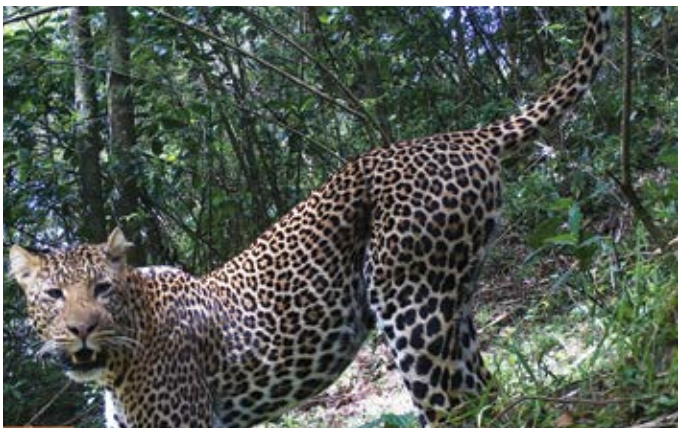
MAU EBURU LANDSCAPES AND BIODIVERSITY



Flowers of Eburu.



Buffalo in bamboo forest.



Leopard.



Flowers of Eburu.



Eburu landscape: view of forest.



A spider carries its young.



Black and white colobus monkey.



Flowers of Eburu.

SOUTH WESTERN MAU ECOSYSTEM

SOUTH WESTERN MAU SCHOOLS CONSERVATION EDUCATION PROGRAMME MOVES FORWARD



Inception workshop session.



Locational workshop session at Emitik.



Location workshop participants after session.



Outreach visit to Tinet Kapkoi Secondary.

Building upon the foundation set by the schools survey, and engagement with key stakeholders, the SW Mau conservation programme has achieved key milestones in the period to April 2019. These include: (a) A detailed literature review exploring relevant conservation education initiatives relating to the project area; (b) Grassroots stakeholder mapping; (c) Hosting a stakeholders' inception workshop, a key forum which endorsed the school survey report and discussed the programme implementation structure and workplan; (d) Development conservation education curricula for primary and secondary schools, aligned to the new Competency Based Curriculum approach; and (e) Completion of locational development workshops for teachers who will implement the programme in the targeted 46 primary and secondary schools around the ecosystem.

Supplementing the curriculum development process, is a continuing engagement with local schools through visits by the Rhino Ark outreach officer. The Rhino Ark outreach officer is tasked with establishing a relationship with local schools to facilitate implementation of conservation programmes.

The Conservation Education programme is fully supported by the Safaricom Foundation. The affiliated MPESA Foundation was also instrumental in supporting the establishment of the Conservation Education programme in the Eburu Forest ecosystem. The programme is a key component of the initiative for sustainable landscapes (ISLA) framework for South Western Mau.

ASSESSING THE POTENTIAL OF BAMBOO

Rhino Ark visited a joint Greenbelt Movement / Waterstone's pilot project on commercial bamboo plantation in Muranga County with the purpose of assessing the potential of using bamboo for large scale forest rehabilitation, such as in the Mau, while creating jobs and new economic opportunities for the forest-adjacent communities.

Bamboo is one of the fastest growing plant species. There is only one indigenous species of bamboo in Kenya: African alpine bamboo (*Yushania alpina*). It mostly occurs in the upper belt of our mountain forests. There are, however, many exotic bamboo species that have been piloted in Kenya and that are suitable to various agro-climatic zones.

Unlike forest plantations which when harvested are clear-felled, selective harvesting applies to bamboo. In each clump, bamboo shoots of a specific age (often four-year-old) are harvested every year. This selective harvesting method does not lead to the opening up of the bamboo canopy, and does not interfere with the water catchment functions of the bamboo forest.



Bamboo tree.



Harvested bamboo shoots.



BIOENTERPRISE (HONEY PRODUCTION) PROGRAMME MAKES BIG STRIDES



Small group discussion during training.



Honey processing training.



Learners inspect honeycomb.

The bioenterprise programme moved into top gear with the period from December 2018 to April 2019 achieving major milestones. Comprehensive practical training for community groups on beekeeping and value addition for the communities was carried out. The training, provided in blocks of 5-day modules to each group covered: (a) sharing experiences; (b) enablers and challenges in beekeeping; (c) laws and opportunities in beekeeping; (d) hive management, harvesting and processing of bee products; (e) marketing and value addition; (f) governance; and (g) monitoring and evaluation. The sessions included lectures, group sessions and presentations, provided to 552 participants selected, including 6 members from each Community Forest Association user group comprising 3 group officials, 2 beekeeping inspectors, and one person with monitoring and evaluation skills.

The training programme has now reached forest adjacent communities along the entire eastern boundary (cut line) of the forest. The high level of interest from the local community in this initiative is highly encouraging, and provides a solid basis for continuing engagement with the local communities to improve their livelihoods. The programme is being implemented by Rhino Ark with funding support by the Safaricom Foundation, under the Initiative for Sustainable Landscapes (ISLA) partnership.

SW MAU COMMUNITY MAKES STUDY VISIT TO EBURU



Honey processing discussion.



Beehive and charcoal kiln demonstration.

For local communities, observation of the progress made by counterpart communities in other areas provides a good learning opportunity. Towards providing the South Western Mau community with greater exposure on best practices, Rhino Ark, with funding support from the Safaricom Foundation, organized a study visit to Eburu forest. The visit, carried out in December 2018, enabled 36 SW Mau community members to learn about forest conservation, and observe actual beekeeping practices by a counterpart community.

The members also learnt about alternative energy options, and got a chance to observe the domestic charcoal making jikos (kilns) that are used by the Eburu community. These jikos will also form part of the alternative energy focus in SW Mau. The study visit provided an early opportunity for the participants to learn about an upcoming initiative that will be rolled out in their own area, under the ISLA programme framework.

PROJECT AWARENESS POSTER DEVELOPED AND DISSEMINATED



intervention areas, and explains the goals of the project.

The poster is presented in English and Kiswahili language versions. The graphic, visually striking poster is being distributed to partners, local communities and key centres across the SW Mau landscape. The “umbrella” poster is the first element in a suite of SW Mau printed materials under development. These materials will assist in: (a) drawing attention to the SW Mau forest ecosystem; (b) unpacking, to the community and other stakeholders, the values inherent in the ecosystem; (c) explaining and the efforts being made to conserve it; and, (d) Encouraging stakeholder participation in forest conservation.

The South Western Mau Ecosystem Conservation Project brings together diverse partners each with core strengths. This partnership, and the resources and technical support it is providing, is positively impacting on forest conservation and community livelihoods.

Towards communicating the nature and aims of the SW Mau project framework and goals to stakeholders, Rhino Ark has developed a large format project awareness poster. The poster presents the various partners participating in or supporting the project under the Initiative for Sustainable Landscapes (ISLA) platform. The poster outlines the respective roles played by each of the partners along the key thematic



Poster presented to KFS Head of Mau Conservancy.

SOUTH WESTERN MAU LANDSCAPES AND BIODIVERSITY



Flowers adorn the forest floor.



Aerial view of river snaking through the forest.



Natural forest spring at Kipkoris.



Bamboo forested area at Kapkembo.



Tea farming next to forest.



Aerial view of forest glade and river.



Podo tree towers over forest glade.

MT KENYA ECOSYSTEM

BATTLING THE WILDFIRE OF MT KENYA

A coordinated response was put in place to fight the wildfire on the southeastern moorlands of Mt. Kenya. Over 20,000 acres of moorlands were burnt.

Private institutions, including the Mount Kenya Trust, Rhino Ark Kenya Charitable Trust, David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust, and Tropicair mobilized their resources from the first day of the fire to help the Kenya Wildlife Service, Kenya Forest Service and the local communities in tackling the fire.

Two choppers from Tropicair were mobilized by Rhino Ark to drop fire-fighting personnel (from the local communities, Kenya Wildlife Service, Mount Kenya Trust, and Kenya Forest Service) to the fire lines high up in the moorlands. One chopper from the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust was mobilized to directly tackle the fire using chopper-borne water bucket.

In addition, two crop dusters from Farmland Aviation, mobilized by Rhino Ark, were spraying intensively the fire lines raging in the Aberdares as well as the fires that flared up again on Mt. Kenya. Kisima and OI Donyo Farms mobilized their equipment to provide water to the crop dusters on their farms on the northern slopes of Mt. Kenya, while KFS and KWS mobilized their water bowsers on Nyahururu airstrip for the crop dusters to load water to combat the fires in the Aberdares.

One caravan aircraft from Tropicair was mobilized by Rhino Ark to undertake twice daily recce flights to assess the location, extent, and direction of the fire lines and help identify best strategies to tackle the fires.

Over 600 men were on the ground from the Kenya Defence Force, Kenya Wildlife Service, Kenya Forest Service, Kenya Police Service, and Mount Kenya Trust.

Food rations to the fire-fighting personnel were mobilized by the Mount Kenya Trust. Transport to move the fire-fighting personnel to the site was provided by the Kenya Wildlife Service, British Army Training Unit Kenya (BATUK), Mount Kenya Trust, Kenya Forest Service, and Rhino Ark.

The success in combating the fires is largely due to the close collaboration between private institutions and government agencies in pulling their respective strengths together in a coordinated manner.

Many lessons have already been learned that will help entrench the response in the future.

A big thank you to all the teams who worked very hard every day to save our mountain. Many thanks to all our partners for mobilizing their resources (aircraft, vehicles, equipment...) in support of the fire-fighting efforts. Many thanks for the cash donations received from many Kenyans to cover part of the fire-fighting operation costs.



FIRST ELEPHANTS PASSING THE PILOT ONE-WAY GATE

The one-way elephant gate built along the Imenti Electric Fence was used for the first time by elephants, as revealed by camera-trap photographs. The experimental one-way elephant gate was built with support from the Wildlife Conservation Society and the Mount Kenya Trust to allow elephants coming from northern Kenya, such as Shaba National Reserve, to enter the forest, whilst preventing elephant inside the forest to exit and invade adjacent farms. Elephants can return to the northern areas using the Mt. Kenya-Ngare Ndare wildlife corridor.

Between 2016 and 2018, Rhino Ark and its partners have completed 53-kilometres of electric fence around the Lower and Upper Imenti Forests. A key objective was to address the high occurrence of human-wildlife conflicts in that area that cost the lives of 11 community members and the killing of 11 elephants. During the fence construction, information was brought to the attention of Rhino Ark that elephants were entering the Imenti Forests coming from the north. To provide a holistic approach to elephant movement in that area, Rhino Ark organized a workshop in August 2017 that was hosted by the Lewa Conservancy.

Following the workshop, it was agreed to build one-way elephant gates along the Imenti Electric Fence. Based on collared elephant data and local knowledge, three sites were identified where one-way elephant gates should be built. A first experimental one-way gate was then constructed, which is currently being fine-tuned.



An elephant passing the one-way elephant gate for the first time.

SPANISH- BASED COMPANY, MOREDA RIVIERE TREFILERIAS (MRT), VISITS RHINO ARK PROJECTS



EDRA (Left) hosts the MRT team at Rhino Ark- Nyeri Office.



MRT team donate a roll of tight-lock mesh wire.

On 2nd April 2019, Celsa Group - Moreda Riviere Trefilerias (MRT) Export Area Manager, Mathias Pignol, and Export Manager, Cristian Callejon, visited Rhino Ark Aberdare fence Project. The team was accompanied by Peter Hales of Instarect Ltd and Executive Director Rhino Ark, Christian Lambrechts. MRT team donated one roll of tight-lock mesh.

TOURISM EXPERIENCE IN MT KENYA NATIONAL PARK ENHANCED



Bitumen road viewed from Mt Kenya Park Headquarters.



Bitumen road past Kisoi Munyao Campsite.

Mt Kenya National Park boasts of having two bitumen roads reaching the highest point above sea level (10,000) in Kenya. On both Narumoru and Sirimon mountain climbing routes tourists can comfortably drive on 2 wheel drive vehicles up-to Meteorological station and Old Moses Camp respectively.

TREE PLANTING CEREMONY HELD IN MT. KENYA



Tree-planting team including the Chief Guest.



Chief Guest planting a Podo tree.



Ag. Assistant Director, KWS, Mountain Conservation Area - Mr. Mugo waters a seedling just planted.



The Chairman KFS addresses participants at the tree planting ceremony at Narumoru Forest Station.



CFA Members listen attentively to various speakers at the tree planting Ceremony at Narumoru Forest Station.



CFA Members applaud Rhino Ark for supporting the tree planting Ceremony at Narumoru Forest Station.

On 29th March 2019, a tree planting ceremony was held at Narumoru Forest Station, Mt Kenya Forest Reserve. The Chief Guest was the Chairman Board of Management KFS, Mr. Peter Kinyua.

The total number of Seedlings planted was 6,500 which included an assortment of indigenous species ranging from Red Cedar, Podo, Walbugia Ugandensis and Ficus Sp.

The role of partners involved was:

- a) Rhino Ark: Financed the procurement of all the seedlings and provided refreshments for the community;
- b) Kenya Wildlife Service: Provided for the transportation of seedlings to the planting site;
- c) Kenya Forest Service: Offered technical advice and the planting site;
- d) Mt Kenya Conservation Forum: Coordination and logistical support;
- e) Local Community: Participated in tree planting and promised to continue nurturing the seedlings;
- f) Local schools: participated in tree planting.

PROGRESS ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF MT. KENYA FENCE



Senior Warden Meru National Park, Mr. Bakari Chongwa, explains to members of Mt Kenya Fence Technical Committee on fence inspection protocols, 26th Feb 2019.



Mt. Kenya Fence-line descending River Kathita Valley, Meru County.



Mr. Francis Mbaka, KWS Warden Meru County, gives a hand to the Assistant County Commissioner Abothuguchi West Sub-County, Ms. Abigel Bett to cross R. Kathita during the Mt Kenya Fence technical committee site inspection.

Construction of Mt Kenya Electric Fence has gathered momentum and by the end of February, a total of 185 kilometres of the electric fence had been built, with fence construction taking place in the Kibaranyeki section in the lower part of the upper Imenti Forest Reserve. The building and signage of all gates in the Phase I section of the project have been completed. The building and signage of all gates in Phase II has now started.

The comprehensive electric fence covers Kirinyaga County, Embu County, Tharaka Nithi County and construction is currently working in Meru County. The fence-line within Meru County is anticipated to cover close to a half of the entire 450km Mt Kenya fence.

The fence energizer house at Thambana, in the fertile foothills of Mount Kenya, is 85% completed. A similar project at Chogoria – a well-known route up the mountain for trekkers and climbers – is 95% completed.

Rhino Ark has received confirmation from the Upper Tana Natural Resources Management Project (UTaNRMP) that the Board of IFAD (International Fund for Agricultural Development) will contribute US\$ 1.4 million to the building of 60 kilometres of the Mount Kenya Electric Fence. This is the second major contribution that IFAD has made to the project.

Fence build process is hinged on solid Private-Public partnership. The partners include Kenya Wildlife Service, Kenya Forest Service, Rhino Ark, Mount Kenya Trust, National Government, County Governments and Community Forest Associations (CFAs). These partners make a direct contribution to the fence construction process. Notably it is a requirement for the local community to provide in-kind contributions in terms of unskilled labour. On a monthly basis a committee dubbed “Fence Technical committee” meets to assess the construction progress and this involves walking from one post to the other traversing the rugged terrain of Mt. Kenya and crossing deep rivers.

MT KENYA LANDSCAPES AND BIODIVERSITY



Herd of Waterbuck.



Elephants put at bay by Mt. Kenya Electric Fence.



A pair of Crowned cranes.



Herd of Buffaloes.



Grosbeak weaver nest woven on reed stems at marsh.



Expansive landscape in Mt. Kenya affected by forest fire.



Snow on the peak of Mt. Kenya.



Mt. Kenya - Meru countryside with undulating slopes.

ABERDARES ECOSYSTEM

BRADLEY THEODORE VISITS RHINO ARK PROJECTS



Bradley Theodore displays art work.



Bradley having an aerial view of Karuru waterfalls in Aberdares.



Bradley addressing Bondeni community.



Bradley joins pupils from Bondeni Primary School where he drew a mural image displayed on the water tank.

Bradley Theodore, a world-renowned visual artist based in New York, came to the Aberdares and Mt. Kenya to visit Rhino Ark's fencing and conservation projects in these two mountain ecosystems. Bradley dedicates a significant portion of time in supporting charitable organizations.

Accompanied by Peter Kinyua, Chairman of the Kenya Forest Service, and Christian Lambrechts, Executive Director of Rhino Ark, he got a first-hand aerial view of the two water towers, engaged with community members in Bondeni (Aberdares) and Castle (Mt. Kenya), and met with the horse patrol team of the Mount Kenya Trust, based on the northern slope of Mt. Kenya.

In the Aberdares, Bradley engaged extensively with the pupils of Bondeni Primary School where he taught some key painting techniques to the art class.

IMPACT OF RHINO ARK ABERDARE ELECTRIC FENCE ON CONSERVATION OF MOUNTAIN BONGO



Plate 1: Female bongos and their young ones at Karuiria mineral lick, Aberdare (Courtesy of BSP).



Plate 2: The 'first' photo of wild mountain Bongo lying down at Karuiria mineral lick site, Aberdare.

Efforts to conserve the remnant Mountain bongo sub-population in Aberdare National Park is bearing fruits. The construction of the Rhino Ark Aberdare Electric Fence coupled with patrol efforts by Kenya Wildlife Service Rangers and Bongo Surveillance Project (BSP) scouts have provided a safe 'heaven' for the bongo sub-population at Honi Valley. This sub-population is the most promising in reversing Mountain bongo conservation status from 'Critically Endangered' to a sustainable population as we continue witnessing new births, Plate 1.

Mountain bongo are known to be crepuscular in their behavior only being active at dawn and at dusk. And previously images of these rare and shy bongo antelopes were only captured on camera-traps but in the recent days there are reports of sighting by tourists visiting the Aberdare's Salient. The current population at Honi Valley is being sighted at broad daylight and traversing new habitats outside their usual dense forested areas and deep valleys. The Bongo herd at Honi seems very relaxed and for the first time images of bongo lying down have been captured in BSP camera traps, Plate 2.

ABERDARE FENCE REHABILITATION PROGRESSING WELL

The rehabilitation of Phase I is continuing, with 30.8 kilometres of the 38 kilometres completed. The team is working on the Ark Gate – Bondeni section. As part of the rehabilitation work, Rhino Ark is building new gates to replace gates which are in poor condition. The Phase II rehabilitation is continuing with 18 kilometres of the 40 kilometres rehabilitated. The team is now working on the Mugunda-Kamiruri section.

ABERDARES LANDSCAPES AND BIODIVERSITY



Aberdare Ranges.



Jackson's Francolin.



Coipus.



Egyptian goose.



Leopard (Courtesy of Geoffrey Kariuki - KWS).



Hyena (*Crocuta crocuta*).



A Giant Forest hog.



Elephant (Courtesy of Geoffrey Kariuki - KWS).



Hornless buffalo.



Aberdare Ranges.

RHINO ARK NEWS

RHINO ARK/RHINO CHARGE MARKS 30TH ANNIVERSARY IN SPECTACULAR STYLE IN AMANI GARDENS, KARURA FOREST



The Rhino Ark, often described as the most important conservation project in Kenya hosted its partners, chargers, sponsors, friends and the communities in a dinner cocktail to mark its 30th anniversary and launch the Rhino Charge Book.

The event took place at the Amani Gardens, a serene ground inside Karura Forest, an urban upland forest on the outskirts of Nairobi, the capital of Kenya. This remarkable geographical location and natural resource are one of the largest gazetted forests in the world fully within a city's limits.

By 6:00 p.m., the guests had started trooping into the Amani Gardens through a walk-way, symbolically marked on both sides by Rhino Ark's noble cause- the fence and the Rhino Charge spirit- 2 charging cars. Every guest was received with a lapel pin of Kenyan and Rhino Ark flags embedded together, a way of sharing and spreading the spirit of Kenyans for Kenya. Settling into a well decorated dome tent, with magnificent chairs and tables sporting a golden theme, the more than 400 guests were treated to signature cocktail, bitings and drinks.

Christian Lambrechts, Executive Director, Rhino Ark kicked off the programme by narrating the idea, the journey and the achievements of Rhino Ark over the last 30 years and ushered in a short documentary entitled 'Responding to the challenges in the mountain forests'. 'This incredible journey of the last 30 years both from the side of Rhino Ark and Rhino Charge, has been driven by two things, one is the love for this country, and I know we all love Kenya, and the second thing is our commitment for its future.' Christian stated.

Does Rhino Ark matter to people? There were no better persons to answer this question, other than Peter Maina Kibuka from Bondeni Conservation Group (Aberdares); Lydiah Nyota from Eburru Fruit

Farmers CBO (Mt. Eburu); Daniel Mworira of Imenti Solar Fence CBO (Mt. Kenya) and the emotional June Njoki Wachira a pupil from Bondeni Primary School (Aberdares). The answer was Yes!

Nicholas Hutchinson (Car 5), John Kanyali (Car 37) and Jaswaran Singh Sehmi (Car 29) then took the podium and shared their charging experience and what keeps them motivated. There are three things that have kept the chargers going: one, to have a cause, the need to conserve the water towers; second, the challenge, the fundraising; and third, the satisfaction that the efforts make a difference and every penny raised is used wisely.

The event was also graced by Michael Joseph, Chairman, MPESA Foundation who are so far the largest single corporate donor for Rhino Ark. He expressed Safaricom and Mpesa foundations commitment to support conservation in Kenya, as demonstrated by their support to Eburu fence. He also affirmed his support to Rhino Ark and urged other corporates to come together and support Rhino Ark.

On his part, the Chairman of the Rhino Ark Board, Mr. Isaac Awuondo spoke on the successes of partnerships and future commitments. Quoting the wise words of Joseph Powell, 'It is an absolute human certainty that no one can know his own beauty or perceive a sense of his own worth until it has been reflected back to him in the mirror of another loving, caring human being', he said that, the communities and what they had said about Rhino Ark reflected truly what Joseph Powell was referring to. While thanking the author of the Rhino Charge Book, Mr. Gavin Bennett, he pointed out that over the next 30 years, threats and pressures on the mountain forests and other critical ecosystems will continue to rise and demand for conservation interventions will continue to increase. Hence Rhino Ark's work into the future will be more relevant than ever before.

The event was graced by the presence of Principal Secretary, Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife, Dr. Margaret Mwakima. In her speech made on behalf of Cabinet Secretary Najib Balala, she acknowledged Rhino Ark's efforts in conserving the mountain forests, saying that the protection of these ecosystems have enhanced their integrity, wildlife and habitat protection, hence providing an enabling environment for tourism development. She affirmed that her ministry will continue strengthening its partnership with Rhino Ark in advancing conservation and protection of our natural habitats into the future.

The climax of the celebrations was when the Chief Guest, Cabinet Secretary Ministry of Environment and Forestry, Hon. Keriako Tobiko took the podium. He represented and read the speech on behalf of H.E. the President of Kenya, Hon. Uhuru Kenyatta. In his speech, the President said, 'I am deeply grateful for the conservation work that Rhino Ark has done for the last 30 years, which in a great way, have complemented government efforts towards environmental protection'.

Hon. Tobiko, emphasized the initiative Kenyans for Kenya, appreciating that all the efforts that have been spearheaded by

Rhino Ark and Rhino Charge are 99.9% Kenyan. He thanked Rhino Ark for mobilizing local resources. He further stated that investing in conservation is no longer philanthropy, and for corporates, it is not corporate social responsibility, but good business practice. It is a partnership between corporate and government. He further said that the narration by communities on how efforts by Rhino Ark has transformed their lives is the key.

The CS then proceeded to launch the Rhino Charge book and handed over signed copies to the five clerks of the course, namely Trish Combes (on behalf of her late husband Rob Combes), Brian Haworth, Anton Levintan, David Lowe and Don White. The official programme ended with the National Anthem, and the guests were treated with continued entertainment leaving at their own pleasure.

This was a landmark milestone for both Rhino Ark and Rhino Charge, which affirmed the spirit of Kenyans for Kenya!

Sincere thanks to all those who joined us in sharing our conservation achievements and everyone who made this event such a success.

Looking forward to Rhino Ark/Rhino Charge at 60!

SCALING NEW HEIGHTS OF PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP TOWARDS THE CONSERVATION OF KAKAMEGA FOREST



Rhino Ark Deputy Executive Director, Mr. Julius Kamau met with H.E. Dr. Wilber Ottichilo - Governor Vihiga County on February 13, 2019, in Nairobi. Also present at the meeting was Mr. Noah, the Chief of Staff, Vihiga County. The meeting was aimed at updating H.E. the Governor on the newly formed public-private partnership on enhancing the conservation and protection of Kakamega Forest and calling upon his government to be part of this noble initiative. The initiative will entail fencing Kakamega forest (117 km), ecotourism development and community conservation education and livelihood improvement.

H.E. the Governor expressed the intention of his government to inject a total of KES 30 million over a period of 3 years towards the implementation of the project. The County Government of Vihiga joins the other financial partners among them County Government of Kakamega, KWS and Rhino Ark.

The only equatorial rain-forest found in Kenya, the Kakamega Forest is situated in both Kakamega and Vihiga Counties and it is, therefore, encouraging to have both Counties on board.

FOSTERING PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN RHINO ARK AND THE COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF BOMET

Dr. Richard Sigei, Chief Officer- Environment and Natural Resources accompanied by Mr. David Serser, Director – Training Center for Devolved Governance, County Government of Bomet paid a courtesy call on Mr. Julius Kamau, Deputy Executive Director – Rhino Ark.

The intent of the call was to explore possible areas of partnership. Also present was Mr. Eric Kihui, Mau Landscape Coordinator and Resource Development Manager – Rhino Ark, who briefed them on the Rhino Ark's South Western Mau Project activities. Bomet is one of the Counties within Mau landscape where Rhino Ark operates.



CHARGERS' CORNER

CAR 35 HOG CHARGE TEAM RAISES KES 5,013,184



KES 5,013,184 was raised at the 21st annual Hog Charge cycling event. The event is organized to raise funds to go towards Mark Tilbury's team (Car 35) entry pledge for the Rhino Charge, and ultimately towards Rhino Ark's conservation projects. Brookside Dairies, Peponi School, Northlands and East African Chains are the main sponsors and supporters of the Hog Charge.

On Sunday 20th January 2019, 152 teams battled it out at the event held at Northlands Ranch and Peponi School in Ruiru. Children from over 10 schools participated in the mountain bike challenge and hundreds of supportive parents and friends attended.

Peponi House Team 14 (Unicorn Squad) was this year's highest cash sponsor. The team raised a remarkable KES 497,000. In second place was Team 48 (Percy Piglets) from The Banda School, with KES 438,265. Team 78 (Biking Bacon) also from The Banda School emerged third, raising KES 95,823.

Team 132 (The Hog Pack) raised KES 161,000 but unfortunately most of this sponsorship was received after the Prize giving. Each team must raise a minimum of KES 24,000 in sponsorship to qualify.

Once again, Pembroke House emerged the best check-point sponsor. They also entered the most teams – 28 – from one school.

Since its inception, the Hog Charge has raised over KES 50 million for Rhino Ark's conservation projects in Mt. Kenya, Aberdares, Mau Eburu and South Western Mau.

CAR 49 ANNUAL HOCKEY TOURNAMENT



As the annual 6-A-Side Hockey Tournament which raises money for Car 49's entry into the Rhino Charge entered its 6th edition, anticipation was high. Could the Karen Kifarus break their duck? Would Double Trouble make it a hat trick of wins. In perhaps the most evenly contested tournament to date, new entrant, Pamoja Fireants surprised everyone by deservedly winning the Cup; snatching it from Karen Kifaru's grasp in a hard-fought final. The plate was remarkably won by Braeburn 7 Squared, who just pipped defending champions Double Trouble with a 'back to the wall' display of defensive hockey (or perhaps just a lot of good fortune). Horny Rhino's went home with the wooden spoon. Many thanks to everyone who took part and to Braeburn School for hosting.

2019 RHINO CHARGE PRE - EVENT BRIEFING



The 2019 Rhino Charge pre-event briefing was held on 4th May at Braeburn School on Gitanga Road. Rhino Ark Executive Director, Christian Lambrechts' used the noble chance to explain to the competitors, sponsors and officials' the activities and programmes that have been undertaken by Rhino Ark in the year 2018-2019. The key areas were Mt Kenya Fence Project, Mau Eburu Forest, Aberdares, South Western Mau and Kakamega Forest.

The Rhino Ark Executive Director urged everyone present and the Nation at large to take it as personal responsibility to help conserve forests and key water towers. On behalf of Rhino Charge, he was thankful for the continuous support that Rhino Ark has been receiving from various sponsors, partners, and the entire Rhino Charge fraternity.

Don White, the new Clerk of Course and Chairman of the Rhino Charge committee briefed the Charge entrants, guard post officers, sponsors and officials on the following:

- Registration of all persons accessing the Rhino Charge; this is to be done through the online portal
- Commencement point of route notes to venue; this will begin at Nanyuki
- General rules and regulations; this included:
 - i. collection of litter;
 - ii. speed limit of driving (40kph);
 - iii. noise pollution;
 - iv. use of steel bottles instead of plastic.

Rhino Charge 2019 is scheduled for June 1st 2019. Many thanks to Braeburn School for hosting the event consecutively for 11 years.



THE RHINO CHARGE 2018 HAS BECOME CLIMATE NEUTRAL



In order to reduce the overall environmental footprint of the #RhinoCharge, Rhino Ark and its Rhino Charge Committee have implemented and are implementing a number of mitigation measures. These include making the Rhino Charge climate neutral, namely offsetting the CO2 emissions related to the event by purchasing corresponding amounts of carbon credits on the market.

The climate footprint of the 2018 Rhino Charge has been estimated at 298 tonnes of CO2e. This is lower than the footprint of the 2017 Rhino Charge (486 tonnes of CO2e), due largely to the proximity of the venue. The climate footprint takes into consideration, travel to the venue, international air travel, travel at the venue, competing cars, aircraft, firewood, generators and refuse incineration.

Following the completion of the estimation of the climate footprint, Rhino Ark has purchased offsets from a REDD+ project in the Chyulu Hills.

RHINO CHARGE 2019 MERCHANDISE

This year's merchandise will be on sale at the Rhino Charge venue. Kindly purchase your tshirts, caps, Rhino Charge DVDs and much more in support of Rhino Ark.



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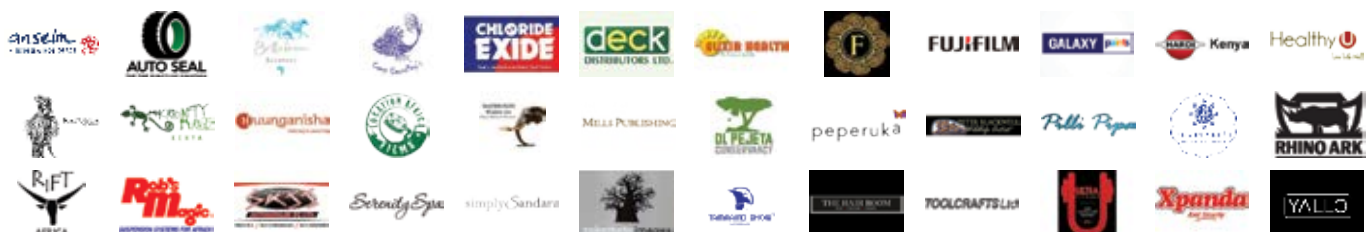
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THANK YOU!

Rhino Ark wishes to thank the following people and companies who have provided services or specific donations in cash or kind to Rhino Ark.

- **Challenge Aid** - Support to the Schools of Hope (Aberdares)
- **KWS** - Rhino Ark Offices
- **KWS** - Provision of fence material and construction of fence energizer houses
- **IDH-ISLA & Finlays** - Support to the surveillance flights and conservation of the bongos (South Western Mau)
- **Flamingo Horticulture Kenya Ltd** - Supply of plastic posts
- **Calgary Zoological Society** - Support to the conservation of the bongos
- **Rare Species Conservatory Foundation** - Support to the conservation of the bongos
- **Kenya Rural Roads Authority** - Support to fencing and construction of animal grids on Mt. Kenya
- **Wildlife Conservation Society & Mount Kenya Trust** - Construction of one-way elephant gates (Mt. Kenya)
- **Eburru Rafiki** - Community awareness raising (Eburu)
- **AutoXpress** - Provision of tyres for Rhino Ark
- **Safaricom Foundation** - Support for the conservation of South Western Mau
- - Support to firefighting operations on Mt. Kenya
- **MPESA Foundation** - Schools tree nurseries (Eburu)
- - Support for Mau Eburu for bioenterprise (honey production)
- **Mount Kenya Trust** - Support to firefighting operations on Mt. Kenya
- **Tropicair** - Support to firefighting operations on Mt. Kenya and Aberdares
- **David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust** - Support to firefighting operations on Mt. Kenya
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- Environmental, social and economic assessment of the fencing of the Aberdare Conservation Area. Available for KES 3,000 only.
- Rhino Ark Profile.
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