

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS AT OL PEJETA RANCH - Richard Vigne

Ol Pejeta Ranch in southern Laikipia has been sold to Fauna & Flora International (FFI), an international conservation organisation. (www.fauna-flora.org).

The purchase was made through FFI's Arcadia Fund. Ol Pejeta is critical to the conservation of endangered wildlife, including black rhino, and is an integral part of a wider wildlife ecosystem in Laikipia District. FFI through this purchase is facilitating a process whereby ownership will be moved to an appropriate Kenyan institution in the form of the Ol Pejeta Conservancy, a local organisation specifically established for the future management of the property.

The ranch will be used to develop an integrated conservation programme for the area, with the aim of establishing a stable and profitable land use to the benefit of Kenya and its people. This programme will integrate wildlife and livestock management, and will incorporate an

outreach programme to neighbouring communities with the view of contributing to sustainable local economic development.

Over the next five years there will be specific attention given to the following major areas:

- The expansion of the Sweetwaters game sanctuary to provide space for the expanding black rhino population. This will be in keeping with the Kenya Black Rhino Strategic Management Plan as produced by the Kenya Wildlife Services, and will create one of the largest black rhino sanctuaries in Africa. Simultaneous to this expansion will be the development of an all-weather road network and improvements to Sweetwaters Tented Camp. The game fencing required for the expansion will help alleviate human/wildlife conflict, so prevalent on Ol Pejeta's southern boundaries.
- Improvements to Sweetwaters Chimpanzee Sanctuary, with the aim of providing a world class refuge for orphaned chimpanzees. This will

provide a strong platform for the education of visitors regarding the plight of wild chimpanzees (and other great apes) and their natural habitat.

- The development of a profitable livestock enterprise that establishes an effective model demonstrating how a well administered livestock business can be run profitably with wildlife, in a manner that complements conservation aims and maximizes returns. Utilizing Ol Pejeta genetics, efforts will also be made to assist neighbouring communities to improve the quality of their livestock. Furthermore, the potential for developing a beef processing facility on Ol Pejeta is of particular interest and will be assessed.

- A community assistance programme that will work in conjunction with local and senior government to address the many and varied needs of the people living around Ol Pejeta. This programme will focus on healthcare, education, infrastructure and job creation

Long time ago man and wildlife co-existed peacefully and tolerated one another. They shared from drinking water to grazing grounds. But of late the situation is no longer the same and the one time friends are now rivals competing for what they shared equitably. This is due to human encroachment on the habitat without bearing in mind the immemorial friends now living as 'enemies'

Back in the 70's the black Rhinos were part of Mugie, by then poaching was at its heights and their numbers declined to an extent that only two were left. These, two were captured and translocated in 1980 to a more secure place. Mugie since then has practised a balance between livestock rearing and wildlife conservation and has also accommodated wildlife displaced from the recently demarcated Louniek and P&D settlement schemes in the neighbourhood. Mugie has ever wanted to remain natural and a thought of the black rhinos has never faded from the management's concept, not even after two white Rhinos were introduced to Mugie. Mr. N.Hahn the owner of Mugie had a long life aspiration and long term commitment to offer something meaningful to conservation. In this regard, he offered to set aside half of

THE PACHYDERM ARE BACK HOME

Daniel Lemoe



Mugie as a rhino sanctuary and is fully supporting all the demanding logistics. 20 black rhinos were translocated to this sanctuary from Nairobi National Park, Lake Nakuru National Park and Solio game reserve. So far, the animals are

doing well and seem to be enjoying their ancestral land.

The anticipated benefits from the translocation include an improvement in the tourism industry, infrastructure, and social amenities of the larger area. Clients from the neighbouring tourism facilities shall have a chance to see the rhinos in the sanctuary with prior arrangements. This is good news to Louniek, Kaptuya and Samburu district communities who engage in tourism activities and have a link to the lodges. The mega-herbivore re-introduction is also going to boost the environmental education programme of the Laikipia wildlife Forum. Employment and the rhino's ecological role in the ecosystem are amongst other benefits.

Mugie is in debt of thanks to KWS for their expertise in capture and translocation, the entire staff of Mugie in the rhino sanctuary who received the animals with lots of enthusiasm and passion. Profound thanks to the manager Mr. Claus Mortensen for administrative facilitation between the sanctuary and the KWS capture team. Finally a vote of thanks goes to the rhino conservationists who participated in enhancing the translocation, in that without them Mugie's black rhino dream would have not come true.

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LAIKIPIA WILDLIFE FORUM

CONSERVATION

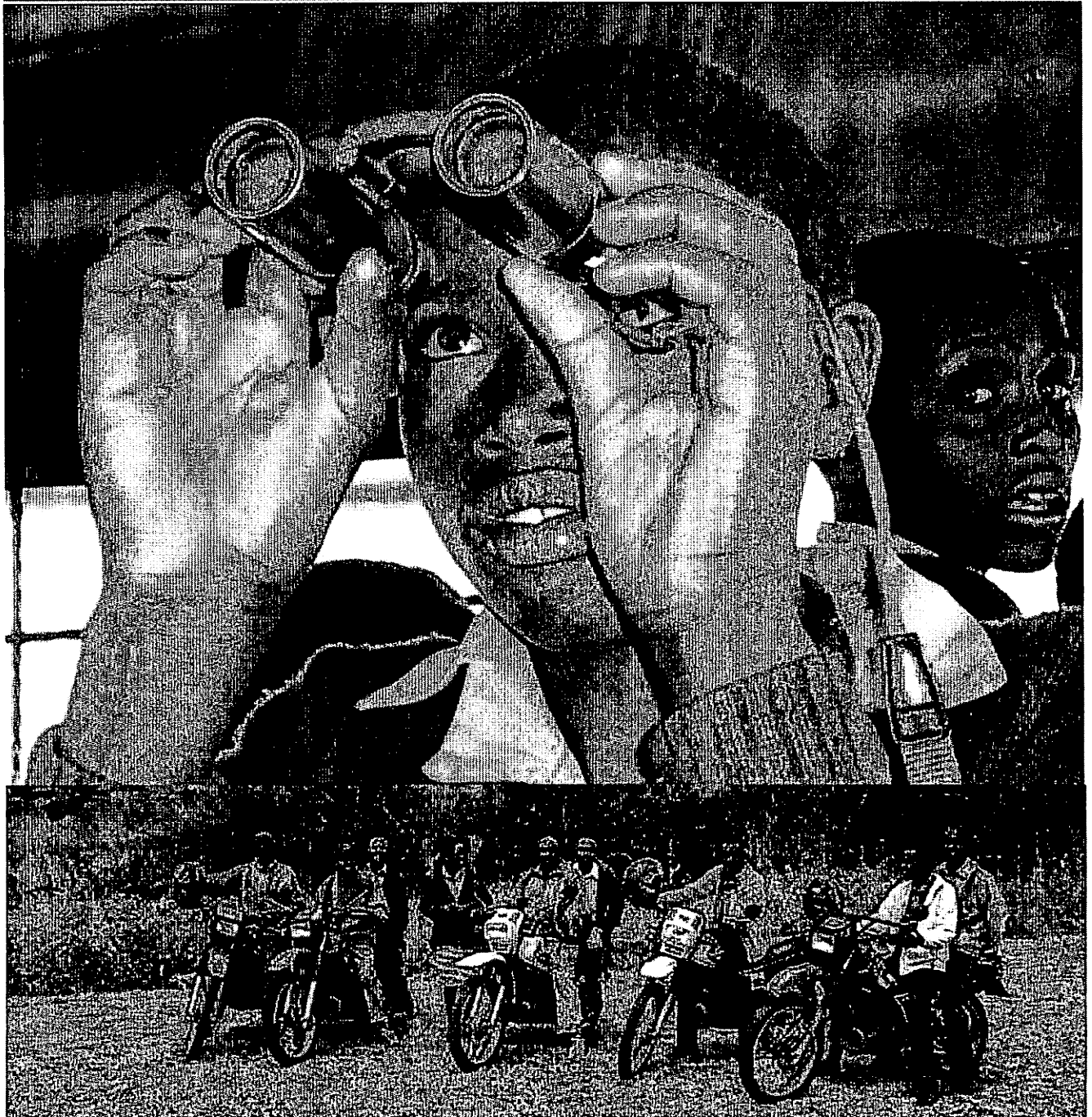
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NEWSLETTER



THE LAIKIPIA WILDLIFE FORUM - CONSERVATION IN ACTION

The Laikipia Wildlife Forum is a pioneering wildlife management association which has challenged traditional views and prejudices amongst the local community. Its motto: Conservation In Action reflects the spirit of the people who take part in this forum, which brings together private ranchers, small scale farmers, cooperatives, local community initiatives, and tourism ventures. They are united by a common goal: to take responsibility for and protect the biodiversity of their land.

THE MISSION STATEMENT

To conserve the integrity of the Laikipia ecosystem, by creatively managing its natural resources to improve the livelihood of its people.

THE BACKGROUND

The Laikipia Wildlife Forum was established in 1992 by private and communal landowners with common interests in managing, conserving and profiting from wildlife resources. The organisation was created in response to an initiative by the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), designed to engage landowners and land users in the conservation and management of wildlife in non-protected areas. In the last decade the LWF has advanced far beyond this initial concept, expanding its focus to include essential environmental resources such as river flow, as well as improved livelihoods and security.

In 1995, the LWF was registered as a non-profit company limited by guarantee. Membership is open to any landowner or land user in the Laikipia District. The LWF was the first forum to develop a significant capacity to foster development and conservation goals on a district-wide level in Kenya. Membership is currently comprised of 36 large-scale ranches, 47 community groups, 50 tour operators, 54 individuals and 8 interest groups. The Directors are elected by the membership of five geographical "units", comprising all of Laikipia District, and including Lewa Wildlife Conservancy to the east (Meru

District). Additional Directors include those co-opted from the Mpala Research Centre and the tourist industry, as well as the KWS District Warden. The LWF employs an Executive Director, an Administration and Finance Officer, a Tourism Officer, a Community Conservation Officer, a Programme Development Officer, Education Officer and 5 Community Liaison Officers to facilitate collaboration at a community level and increase awareness of the need for wildlife conservation.

An estimated 60-70% of wildlife in Kenya is found outside protected areas, making conservation of wildlife in communal and private lands vital to the sustainability of Kenya's wildlife resource base. For 25 years wildlife population trends have been monitored throughout Kenya by the Department of Range Surveys and Remote Sensing (DRSRS). The results of these monitoring surveys show an alarming decline of large mammals throughout the country. Wildlife is under pressure as a result of population growth and land sub-division. Human-wildlife conflict is an increasingly volatile issue as land-use changes become incompatible with wildlife populations.

The LWF seeks to balance these changes through the primary objectives of:

- * The maintenance of ecosystem integrity and processes
- * The establishment and development of community conservation projects in wildlife dispersal landscapes
- * The development of wildlife enterprises

CONSERVING THE FLORA AND FAUNA OF LAIKIPIA

The Forum's objectives are being realised through its five operational programme areas: Community Conservation, Wildlife Management, Tourism, Education and Security. As a result Laikipia is an exception as the one district in Kenya which continues to record increasing or stable wildlife populations, in contrast to the declining trend throughout the country. Wildlife population densities in the Laikipia region now rank second to the internationally renowned Maasai Mara ecosystem in Kenya. The Ewaso eco-system is home to the second

largest population of elephant in Kenya (5,400) and hosts the highest populations of endangered species such as rhino (over half Kenya's total population), Grevy's zebra, and reticulated giraffe in the country, as well as the only viable population of Jackson's hartebeest and an expanding population of wild dog. In effect, the continued activities of the LWF in conserving Laikipia will contribute to it being one of the most important areas for biodiversity in Kenya in 10 to 20 years.

LAIKIPIA TOURISM - TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

By ensuring the remarkable integrity of the Laikipia ecosystem, the LWF has also been instrumental in demonstrating that wildlife can form the basis to the most economically viable and sustainable land-use option in drylands - ecotourism. The Forum has played a pivotal role in the development of world class community-owned tourism projects such as Il Ngwesi, Tassia, and Koija, and actively markets Laikipia internationally on behalf of such ecotourism ventures.

There are now 50 tourism operators in Laikipia, all of which are members of the Forum. Having secured donor support, the LWF has significantly improved organisational capacity and is able to offer a real service to its members. They are united by their goal of ensuring Laikipia is on the map in so significant a way that it rivals the Mara in the eyes of the world. Given the exclusive nature and outstanding

quality of Laikipia lodges, the remarkable integrity of the ecosystem with its immense wildlife populations, and the fact that the plateau is home to more endangered species than anywhere else in East Africa, the Forum is convinced that Laikipia will increasingly be seen as Kenya's foremost destination.

The tourism sector has undoubtedly the greatest long term interest in seeing the success of the Forum's work towards the maintenance of the integrity of the Laikipia ecosystem. In turn, the LWF recognises that tourism holds the greatest potential for development of a sustainable funding base, and a long term future for the Forum's pioneering community conservation and wildlife management programmes.