

ARK*ive*



FENCE MAINTENANCE:

A TEAM EFFORT THAT REQUIRES CONTINUED SUPPORT

**SPECIAL
COVID-19
ISSUE**



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Braeburn Schools

Remote Teaching and Learning

#strongertogether



Confident Individuals

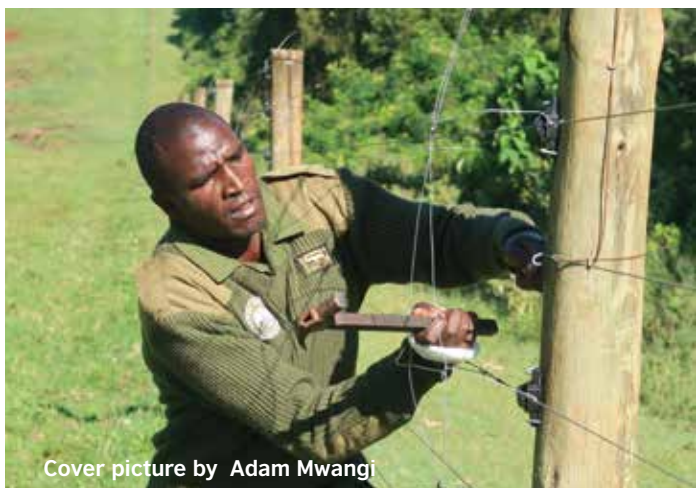


Responsible Citizens



Learners Enjoying Success

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Cover picture by Adam Mwangi

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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

We are in an era of unprecedented focus on the conservation of nature and forests, driven by the need to secure our collective sustainable future.

Amid the disruptions occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic, there remains a constant, most challenging threat in the background: climate change. Every year new reports are published observing that the changes are worse than predicted and that we are reaching dangerous tipping points beyond which changes are irreversible. But solutions exist. In a 2018 special Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report, the global scientific community highlighted the key role that forests will play in all pathways to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Here in Kenya, each of us have experienced the impacts of climate change. Rainy seasons are becoming more variable and extreme rainfall events more frequent. Our mountain areas are experiencing reduced cloudiness, making our forests drier and more vulnerable to fires in the dry seasons. These changes impact tremendously on our water resources.

Rhino Ark's conservation approach has proven to be very effective towards mitigating the impacts of climate change by increasing the resilience of our mountain forests, our most vital ecosystems. These 'water towers' are the source of major rivers that provide the much-needed water to Nairobi which is the key contributor to Kenya's GDP. These rivers support the livelihoods of millions of households in the rural areas and are the lifeline of key conservation and tourism areas downstream.

Thanks to the continued support of a wide community of friends, Rhino Chargers, supporters and well-wishers concerned with the future of this nation, Rhino Ark has developed and implemented a portfolio of targeted conservation initiatives that protect, conserve and help restore our water towers. Our conservation achievements over the past 31 years are considerable - with 650 km of fence built, over 500,000 hectares of mountain forests better protected, over 80,000 Kenyan families directly secured from the danger of human-wildlife conflicts, and 178 schools engaged in conservation education, among others.

The COVID-19 pandemic is affecting all of us. It is reminding us that we are an integral part of the environment and that the way we interact with nature in turn impacts on us - our health, well-being and our economic development.

Even as we grapple with COVID-19's far-reaching impacts, we must remain focussed on what has brought us together: our common vision of safeguarding our water towers for the benefit of Kenya and its people. We have an extraordinary conservation legacy that we must continue to cherish and support.

FENCES WITH A PURPOSE AND MAJOR IMPACTS:

LIVES OF 80,000 FAMILIES GREATLY IMPROVED, MILLIONS OF KENYANS BENEFITTING



Elephant marauding through village

You are a hardworking Kenyan farmer, living next to a verdant mountain forest on a productive farm. You grow lucrative cash crops such as tea or coffee and food crops such as maize, potatoes and vegetables.

You have healthy livestock. You have the means to sustain your family, and the future looks bright. But every so often, disaster strikes! Herds of elephant emerge from the forest and rampage through your farm, robbing you of your potential harvest. These are dangerous animals, and you are powerless to stop them.

Bush-pig invade your farm under cover of darkness and dig up your potato crop. Leopard raid your livestock, sometimes killing tens of sheep or goats in one night but only taking one.

Conventional fences around your farm don't work. The authorities, when called upon to help, may come to chase away the wildlife, but usually too late to prevent the damage. You live in fear and uncertainty. You regularly lose your crops and livestock to wildlife. These continued losses, season after season, make it difficult to plan and invest.

For decades, this had been the experience for tens of thousands of community members that live adjacent to Kenya's mountain forests: A perpetual cycle of conflict between humans and wildlife, with mounting casualties on both sides.

1989 marked a new beginning for the human-wildlife relationship around our mountain forests. It heralded the entry of Rhino Ark with a novel solution: investing in safeguarding the livelihoods of forest adjacent communities on one hand, and protecting vulnerable wildlife

on the other through building of game-proof fences.

31 years hence, much has been achieved through Rhino Ark's initiative. 650 kilometres of the game-proof electrified fences have been built so far in three mountain ecosystems: The Aberdare, Mount Kenya and Mau Eburu. This "live" system includes over 65,000 fence posts, 5,200 km of fencing wire, elephant grids, solar power systems, buildings, vehicles, and comprehensive management and monitoring systems.

The fencing solution represents a mammoth investment in conservation, worth 1.6 billion Kenya Shillings (US \$16 million). It is anchored in a durable public/private partnership between Rhino Ark, government conservation agencies, and the forest adjacent



Fence protecting adjacent farmlands

communities. The support of thousands of Kenyans through the annual Rhino Charge fund raising event, friends of Rhino Ark overseas and local and international donors has made this investment possible.

What impact has this initiative had?

Over 80,000 Kenyan families reside next to the 650km of electric fences built to date by Rhino Ark around the Aberdare, Mt. Kenya and Mau Eburu forests. To them, our fences are literally a matter of “life and death”. The fences directly safeguard their lives, livelihoods and property from the dangers of marauding wildlife, in particular elephant.

Human/wildlife conflict resolved

Communities no longer have to contend with the threat of wildlife on their farms. The fences have been effective in containing wildlife inside the forest.

Freedom of movement

In some areas, before the fences were built, the presence of dangerous wildlife imposed a form of “lockdown” on the community, particularly at night. Sightings of elephant or buffalo in villages during the day also prevented school children from going to school. Now, communities no longer have this problem.

Increased farm productivity and land values

In Eburu forest, farmers with land at the forest edge could not farm their land, some opting instead to lease land further away due to the heavy losses suffered from wildlife. After completion of the 43.3 kilometer Eburu fence, this has changed. Land values for forest adjacent farms have dramatically increased, in some cases by over 600%.

These farmers, now assured of their harvests and can plan and invest appropriately. This has directly translated into increasing economic potential, helping farmers to earn more from their farms.

The collaborative multi-stakeholder frameworks established by Rhino Ark to maintain fences also double up as forums to network communities with a pool of experts and technical resources that support their livelihood programmes. These forums have enabled local communities build rapport with resourceful partners. They have facilitated support for community water projects, on-farm training and capacity building in activities as diverse as establishing biogas systems, fruit farming, ecotourism and bioenterprise, among others. This network is helping communities diversify their income bases and utilize their farms more effectively.

Increased security

Fencing has resolved an age-old problem that once affected communities: cattle rustling was a common-place occurrence. Rustlers would raid farms and quickly drive the livestock through the porous forest boundary. The 650 kilometers of fencing built means that people can only access the forest through managed gates. This has essentially eliminated the cattle rustling problem in many areas.

In addition, the fenced boundary has provided a deterrent to criminal elements that previously used the forest as the base for their activities, easily slipping across undetected. Community members observe that the fences have made their areas more secure.

Community engagement in conservation

Resolving human/wildlife conflict has enabled local communities to appreciate the forests and their wildlife as a resource rather than a threat. This has in turn created a positive environment for communities



Before the fence was built, I was not able to farm due to buffalo, porcupine and baboon. The situation was so bad that I was forced to abandon my own farm. The farms were devoid of tree cover. Some

people did not even farm as they used to sustain themselves by illegally making charcoal in the forest and selling it. Livestock theft was also a common problem.

Now I have observed a behaviour change. The fence has curbed the illegal forest charcoal and logging problem and forced the perpetrators to begin farming. Also, people are now keen to plant their own trees. People who had abandoned their farms because of wildlife, myself included, have now returned to them, and the livestock theft problem has been addressed.”

Ezra Magutu, Ol Jorai (Eburu)

to participate in conservation. The fences are built primarily with labour drawn from forest-adjacent communities, who have earned income from this work. Presently, 174 community members are employed in maintaining the fences.

Communities are involved in forest conservation activities including forest rehabilitation (tree growing) and establishment and management of tree nurseries from which they earn incomes. Community-based teams work in special conservation programmes, from which they earn a living.

The Aberdare Joint Surveillance Unit (AJSU), and the Bongo Surveillance Project (BSP) comprise highly trained scouts who carry out forest patrols, remove wildlife snares and collect scientific data. They make an invaluable contribution to the conservation of endangered species and the forest landscapes in which Rhino Ark operates.

The annual Aberdare Fence Relay Run provides conservation awareness for schoolchildren in 100 schools around the Aberdare landscape. This run, now in its tenth consecutive year, has led to twinning opportunities for schoolchildren with pupils from schools in the United Kingdom, giving them international exposure and broadening their perspectives.

Benefits of the fence to the nation

Beyond the immediate benefits to forest adjacent communities, Rhino Ark's fences directly benefit the nation at large. They protect critical water catchment forests from destruction through illegal logging. The Aberdares, Mt. Kenya and the Mau Forest where Rhino Ark is operating, are the three largest water towers of Kenya. They are the source of major rivers that provide the much-needed water to Nairobi which is the key contributor to Kenya's GDP. Together these three mountain ecosystems provide yearly ecological services to Kenya worth a staggering amount of KES 412 billion (\$4.12 billion).



"The fence has created a secure environment. It has helped to improve children's performance in school as well as the number of children enrolled in

school. Farming productivity in the area has greatly improved and land values are up. Farmers are now confident enough to grow horticultural crops, which they could not do before the fence. I have been able to earn a livelihood from my farm and educate my children. It was much easier for me than it was for my father when there was no fence."

Peter Kibuka, Bondeni (Aberdares)

The ecological benefits derived from the Aberdare, Mt. Kenya and Mau forests sustain the livelihoods of millions of Kenyans. The rivers that flow from them provide water to communities, towns and cities, provide power for industries and sustain tourism activities. Our capital, Nairobi, the axis around which economic growth revolves, relies almost entirely on the Aberdares for its water supply. These water catchments are a critical engine for economic development in the country.

Let's keep our fences alive

One kilometre of electrified fence costs KES 2.5 million (\$ 25,000) to build. Our fences are "live", and once built, must be maintained. Maintenance costs KES 80,000 (\$800) per kilometre per year, and Rhino Ark annually commits considerable resources to ensure that the fences remain fully functional on a continuous "24/7, 365" basis. Even a few hours of down-time can provide a window for wildlife to escape the forests and cause havoc in the community.

Maintenance begins with the full-time fence attendants, recruited from the community. They are well trained, well equipped, and housed in camps built along the fence line. Each attendant covers 4



My farm is the immediate neighbour of Mt. Kenya Forest and my fellow villagers have always regarded this forest as "Mutitu wa ngoma" (Forest filled with evil spirits). Elephants

raided my farm and this made me to resort to tea farming. I completely abandoned growing food crops owing to the losses caused by elephants. The only river crossing that elephants use to cross River Kathita is next to my farm and that's why we used to have high incidences of raids by elephants. I am very excited to see this fencing project and the former "Mutitu wa ngoma" will no longer be a source of our suffering but a source of joy".

Mzee Thurania (89 years old), Mt. Kenya

kilometres of fence line. Their daily duties include patrolling the fence line to clear vegetation growth from the 10-metre-wide fence buffer zone, equating to about 4 hectares of clearing daily. They repair fence damage arising from natural causes or illegal human activity. They also look out for any evidence of illegal activity and report on the same, acting as eyes and ears for the park/forest management. Currently, there are 176 fence attendants engaged across the 3 Rhino Ark fence projects.

Overseeing the fence attendants is a team of 10 fence supervisors. Using motorcycles, they patrol their respective zones to inspect the fences, ensuring that the maintenance work conforms to set standards.

A dedicated Rhino Ark fleet of 8 duty 4x4 off-road pick-up trucks provide support for fence operations, enabling movement of materials and people to and from remote fence locations.

Management oversight of fence maintenance is anchored in a robust institutional framework funded by Rhino Ark. Fence Technical Committees comprising technical officers of the project partners, Rhino Ark, Kenya Wildlife Service and Kenya Forest Service meet monthly on site to inspect the fence, together with representatives



Fence maintenance work

of community and the National administration. The team discusses and resolves arising issues. Each of the three fence projects has its own technical committee. For each of the projects, a Joint Senior Management Committee comprising top management of the partners is convened quarterly to address any policy level issues.

Working despite COVID-19 pandemic challenges

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented special challenges to Rhino Ark's conservation work, impacting adversely on our annual cycle of fund-raising activities that provide part of the resources needed to maintain our fences. Despite, our work continues. Keeping our fences across three ecosystems fully operational is a critical function that serves tens of thousands of forest adjacent community members and millions of Kenyans beyond.

The conservation gains realized through the investment in building and maintaining the fences are the result of the collective effort of a large community of like-minded persons – friends, chargers, supporters and well-wishers - who love this country, care for their brothers living in the highlands next to the forests and have profound concerns for the conservation of the environment.

Thanks to your support, we have established one of the most impactful conservation projects in Kenya. Let's continue working together through this uniquely challenging period and ensure that our conservation achievements remain our legacy for this country and its people.

MAU EBURU ECOSYSTEM

EBURU FOREST 2-YEAR CAMERA TRAP STUDY RESULTS



Trap camera image of two male bushbuck

Rhino Ark is pleased to report on the preliminary results of a two-year intensive camera trapping study at Eburu Forest conducted to determine the size of the remaining mountain bongo population and its distribution.

A systematic camera-trapping effort was conducted inside the 43km fence using 50 cameras over a 21-month period to document the bongo population, its habitat preferences and threats to survival. Cameras were spaced 1km apart, except in locations with bongo secondary signs. Here, cameras were twinned for increased capture success. Secondary bongo signs – including tracks, droppings and scratching posts - were also mapped.

With only 6 bongo events from a total of approximately 600,000 images analysed, results suggest that very few bongo individuals persist within the forest. Of this total number of images, 182,781 wildlife images were sorted (the remaining approximately 400,000 images were false triggers). There was a total of 33 species of mammals photographed including 99 hyena events and 35 leopard events. The most commonly photographed animal was the bushbuck with 6,695 events.

The bongo's habitat preference for the dense, high elevation forest zones above 2300m was determined through plotting of primary and secondary signs on a topographic map. The estimated area is approximately 1,132 hectares. The residual bongo population could be rejuvenated by translocation of captive-bred bongo, and this idea is broadly supported by neighbouring communities.

Household and student surveys were conducted to document ecological knowledge; attitudes to bongo translocation; forest usage, and socio-economic needs within the neighbouring communities. Results from the household survey determined that 68.5% of 200 people interviewed were able to correctly identify a mountain bongo from

other antelopes, although 74.5% had never seen one in the wild. 94.5% of local people were in favour of increasing the forest population of mountain bongo using captive-bred bongo.

The 21-month study was impeded by camera trap theft and the threat of physical violence to local team members. Commonly documented illegal forest activities included setting of leg traps and neck snares, indicating that security issues remain the biggest challenge going forward with any reintroduction plans.

We have, however, been encouraged by our interventions in 2018 and 2019 in concert with our partners including KWS, KFS, BSP, Eburu Rafiki, and the Rhino Ark/ Calgary Zoo Mountain Forest Conservation Partnership, that have seen a major reduction in wildlife crime at Eburu Forest. We continue to work at perpetuating this trend going forward.

The above findings were presented in more details at the international Pathways Conference in February at Limuru, Kenya, and will be shared with local and national stakeholders as soon as the coronavirus restrictions are lifted so that we can gather large groups of people together once more.

ROAD SIGNAGE FOR WILDLIFE CORRIDOR ERECTED

The Moi North Lake Road links Morendat along the Naivasha-Nakuru highway to Kongoni. It traverses large farms, and wildlife conservancies, and links community settlements, and high end tourism and recreational facilities along the north western shores of Lake Naivasha. A section of the road, from Morendat to Kasarani settlement has been recently upgraded to tarmac. This road bisects the Eburu-Lake Naivasha wildlife corridor at Loldia Farm, near Kasarani. The road upgrade, while enabling the efficient movement of people and goods, has allowed vehicle to move at high speeds both day and night, thus presenting a threat to the welfare of wildlife along the corridor. Frequent

roadkills have been the result.

As efforts to establish a wildlife overpass are pursued, some interim mitigation measures to reduce the roadkills are being explored. One such measure is the erection of road warning signs marking the corridor zone. The warning signs inform motorists about the wildlife corridor and caution reduced speed.

The installation of the warning signs was facilitated by Rhino Ark, following a development process under the Eburu-Lake Naivasha Connectivity Committee and with authority from the Kenya Rural Roads Authority (KeRRA).



Warning Sign

It is envisaged that the placement of the prominent signs will encourage motorists to be observant and avoid speeding in this area, thereby helping to reduce wildlife injury and fatalities.

EBURU FENCE MAINTENANCE RECEIVES BOOST FROM MPESA FOUNDATION

Following completion of the fence construction in November 2014, Rhino Ark has supported fence maintenance operations on an interim basis, while working with stakeholders towards establishing the Eburu Trust and endowment fund. The Eburu Trust will be jointly established by Rhino Ark, Kenya Forest Service, Kenya Wildlife Service and M-Pesa Foundation and will have representation from forest adjacent local communities. It will provide the sustainable long term mechanism to fund the maintenance and management of the fence.

The MPESA Foundation, is a key sponsor of the fence project, and has made a commitment to support the Trust once it is established through providing KES 30 million as part of the seed capital that will build up the endowment fund. As completion of the Trust establishment process is awaited, the MPESA Foundation has undertaken to provide annual funding support for fence maintenance, channeled through Rhino Ark. The first annual contribution of KES 3,697,000 was disbursed to Rhino Ark on 18 March 2020, and will help to cover operations, maintenance materials, tools, equipment and maintenance gear for the fencing team, among others.



RE-BUILDING THE EBURU FOREST COMMUNITY FOREST ASSOCIATION (ECOFA)



Community elder being assisted to vote



New CFA officials holding Mau Eburu guidebooks



Voting box

One of the key features of the 2016 Forest Conservation and Management Act is Participatory Forest Management.

Participatory Forest Management requires that forest-adjacent communities be engaged in the management and conservation of forest resources through Community Forest Associations (CFAs).

The Eburu Community Forest Association (ECOFA) was first established in 2008 as the vehicle through which the local area citizens can engage legally with their Eburu forest. However, in recent years the ECOFA was plagued with a lack of financial and technical capacities.

Having a vibrant, active, and the registered CFA is an essential element in the successful conservation of the forest and implementation of economic bio-enterprise activities, such as the production of commercial grade Eburu Forest honey.

Therefore, Rhino Ark, and partner Calgary Zoo, teamed up to support the re-building of ECOFA. The re-building workplan includes: membership card production, membership drive, management board trainings, renewal of all required documentation with the Registrar of Societies and the Kenya Forest Service, re-establishing the CFA office at the KFS station, attaining financial support for the CFA, and forest-related employment for members.

Since the term of the elected officials had expired, the first, and most important, step was to facilitate free and fair elections of a new crop of CFA leaders. To ensure widespread representation, awareness raising was carried out in 10 zonal meetings including all administrative zones surrounding the forest.

The total number of participants was 717 (371 men; 169 women; 177 youth), with the biggest meeting attracting 116 people. Each meeting included a training session on the 2016 Forest Act, the history of the CFA movement, and the conservation and economic values of Eburu Forest, followed by zonal level elections. 7-member zonal committees were nominated by all present.

From those zonal committees, 30 members (10 zones x 1 man + 1 woman + 1 youth) went on to the higher level management board elections, held at the end of November 2019, for the positions of chairperson, vice chair, secretary, treasurer, among others.

We are pleased to report that the ECOFA is back on track now – administratively and legally –and preparing for the upcoming membership drive (after the threat of COVID-19 has passed). Stay tuned for more updates to come in subsequent issues of ARKive.

EBURU FARMERS TAKE TO BIOGAS TO CONSERVE THE FOREST



Installation of digester



Adding dung mix to digester



End product in the kitchen

Rhino Ark is facilitating the adoption of biogas as an alternative domestic energy solution by local farmers. The aim of the programme is to reduce farmers reliance on forest resources such as fuelwood, which is a threat to forest conservation. With a simple input of water and farm animal waste (dung), combustible methane gas that is the biogas process output is produced as a source of heat for cooking, and as a source of light. The waste product of the process, slurry is a high quality fertilizer that is suitable for sustainable organic farming.

To support the adoption and expansion of the programme, Rhino Ark organizes training for the farmers. The latest training carried out by officers from the Ministry of Agriculture, on 6 March 2020, with 16 farmers from Ndabibi location participating. The farmers learnt biogas unit installation and lighting.

The programme, established in 2018, has continued to grow, with farmers now self-financing the installation of the units on their farms. As of March 2020, a total of 33 biogas units have been installed in various farms in the Eburru, Kiambogo and Ndabibi Locations.

MAINTAINING THE EBURU FENCE: MITIGATING EROSION CHALLENGE IN STEEP TERRAIN



Before mitigation: extreme erosion at fence line



Structure of gabions

The 43.3 km long Eburu electrified fence traverses terrain with diverse topography. Some sections of the fence are especially steep, with near-vertical gradients, which the intrepid fence maintenance team must nevertheless patrol daily and keep in good order.

The current prolonged rainy season has posed some special challenges for maintenance along sections of the line that have very steep gradients. Two areas in particular, at Nyatoru (Kiambogo Location) and Gatimu (Ndabibi Location) have experienced extreme erosion, exacerbated by heavy livestock "hoof" traffic on the

outside of the fence. The gradient, coupled with the loose, easily washed-away nature of Eburu's volcanic soils has resulted in fence post and tightlock wire mesh sections that should be below ground becoming exposed.

To address this problem, the fencing team has had to innovate, applying a comprehensive erosion mitigation solution in the form of a series of rock and wire gabions. The gabions will serve multiple purposes: preventing livestock from eroding the ground next to the fence, breaking the momentum of rainwater runoff that carries off the topsoil, and allowing grass to re-grow along the fence line and stabilizing the soil.



Order of gabions along fence

FOREST DESNARING OPERATIONS SAVING WILDLIFE

Our Rhino Ark fences are not a complete barrier to would-be criminals entering our protected mountain forest ecosystems to conduct illegal activities. But we have a solution for that!

We have been teaming up with our partners at the Bongo Surveillance Project, Kenya Forest Service, Kenya Wildlife Service and Eburru Rafiki, to conduct forest foot patrols to identify illegal activities and to stop them.

Most frequently detected are neck snares,

leg traps, and charcoal kilns. During the last 6-months in 2019, our surveillance units removed over 70 snares from Eburu Forest, and made several arrests leading to charges. At least 15 charcoal production kilns were discovered and destroyed; evidence of pole and rafter harvesting was recorded, and firewood collection points were found and dismantled.

We gps map the locations of all illegal activities, and have set up local intelligence teams to aid in detected trouble spots.

Armed with our maps, we are able to share hard evidence of problem areas to garner support from stakeholders for improved forest security.

At the time of this publication, we have documented a steep decline in the number of snares and traps in the forest. We are pleased to see the monthly de-snaring operations are greatly contributing to wildlife welfare and creating a more difficult environment for illegal activities.



Dismantling illegal charcoal kiln



Buffalo cable trap dismantled



Muthemba with neck snare

COMMUNITY CONSERVATION OUTREACH UPDATE



Ndabibi Central Primary School



Wildlife lesson from KWS-Ndabibi Secondary



Ecotourism brief at Ndibithi Primary School

As part of the ongoing community engagement process, Rhino Ark implemented a series of five outreach meetings in February 2020 targeting local schools in the Ndabibi Zone. The outreach forums, implemented with funding support from Eburru Rafiki, provided the pupils, teachers and local community members with relevant and current knowledge on forest conservation, wildlife, law enforcement and agriculture.

A total of 3,215 community members were directly reached through this series.

Two outreach study visits were organized for farmers from Ndabibi, Eburru, Kiambogo and Oljorari zones. The farmers visited the Ndabibi Environmental Centre model farm in Ndabibi location to learn sustainable best farming practices, including alternative agriculture and value addition, organic farming, fish

farming, water harvesting, woodlot farming and smart farming. A total of sixty-seven farmers participated in the study visits.

"I am so grateful to be part of these trainings. It has taught me how to work on my farms and boost my income. Let us implement the trainings and help in conserving our Eburu forest,"

Mary Kago, Eburu farmer

MAU EBURU LANDSCAPES AND BIODIVERSITY



Caterpillar



Grey Headed Negrofinch



Leopard



Blue Monkey



Black and White Colobus Monkey



Female Bushbuck



Warthog

SOUTH WESTERN MAU ECOSYSTEM

CONSERVATION EDUCATION INITIATIVE BRINGS BIG GAINS TO SOUTH WESTERN MAU SCHOOLS



A jiko and kiln demonstration



Pupils discuss curriculum

Rhino Ark commenced the roll out of a conservation education programme to 46 schools adjacent to the South Western Mau Forest ecosystem. The programme aims to equip pupils with the relevant knowledge to encourage and empower them to be proactive in the practice of environmental conservation in their daily lives. Key elements of the programme are implementation of comprehensive conservation education curricula for both primary and secondary schools, together with a pilot sustainable energy initiative in 15 of these schools.

Under the sustainable energy component, a kit comprising one large energy saving jiko (stove) and one large charcoal making kiln have been provided to each of the 15 schools selected for the pilot phase, and the schools trained on their use. The aim of the kit is to enable the schools to reduce their

fuelwood consumption by producing their own charcoal which is then used in the jiko for cooking.

The Rhino Ark team made a visit to Kipkoris Girls Secondary school to assess the status of the programme implementation. Also participating in the visit were representatives of the media, with journalists from The Nation, Standard and Radio Africa Group (The Star), invited to help in creating broader awareness of the ongoing conservation initiatives within the Mau Landscape. The team were warmly received by the school, led by Deputy Principal Denis Rotich. In discussions, the implementing teachers affirmed the benefits of the conservation education curricula, noting that its practical nature complements the teaching in subjects such as Geography and Social Science.

Using the kiln, the school is now able to produce charcoal from prunings of trees growing in the school, as well as from discarded small pieces of timber that would otherwise go to waste. The efficiency of the sustainable energy kit and the ability to convert even small pieces of woody biomass into charcoal has been greatly appreciated by the school administration. Mr. Rotich estimated that the school was now using up to 50% less fuelwood than they did before the jiko and kiln kit was introduced, a great saving in their budget. He also observed that the final year (Form Four) students sitting their KCSE examinations were delighted to use the cleaner and more efficient jikos for their exam practicals.

Rhino Ark's conservation education programme is an important pillar in the wider Initiative for Sustainable Landscapes (ISLA) partnership that supports conservation of the South Western Mau ecosystem. Funding support for the programme has been provided by the Safaricom Foundation.

"Partnering with Rhino Ark in conservation matters has brought a significant impact in our school especially with incorporating the Conservation Education Curriculum in our syllabus that aims at producing environmental conservation champions."

Dennis Rotich-Deputy Principal Kipkoris Girls Secondary School.

OUTREACH TO CHURCHES



Faith-based group meeting at AGC Church in sukutek.

Rhino Ark has rolled out a programme to engage faith-based organizations within the ecosystem. Local churches represent a sizeable constituency of the local community, and provide a means to reach and engage a wide audience. In the period October-December 2019 a series of 5 outreach meetings with leaders from 18 local churches was organized.

A total of 105 church affiliated persons, including 82 clergy members were directly reached. The meetings helped to sensitize the churches on conservation matters and encourage them to share the conservation basis with their congregations. The churches have been provided with project conservation posters that explain the project and present the project partners and sponsors.

Follow up engagements by the outreach team show that the churches have begun to incorporate conservation in their activities.

SOUTH WESTERN MAU FOREST REHABILITATION WORK PROGRESSING WELL



Acacia seedball



Prunus africana seedling



Dombeya torrida growing tall

The nearly 45km long eastern boundary of the expansive South Western Mau forest has been heavily degraded through human activities over the past two decades. Part of this boundary is defined by a nearly 30km long, arrow straight “cut line” demarcation that straddles Kuresoi North and South, from Timbili River in the north to Kipsonoi River in the south. The cut line separates with local communities on one side and forest land on the other, and lies at the boundary of Bomet and Nakuru counties.

Rhino Ark in collaboration with Kenya Forest Service is undertaking rehabilitation and maintenance of a section of forest at Kipkoris, a site of particularly heavy forest degradation. Located adjacent the Kenya Forest Service Kipkoris outpost, the indigenous forest rehabilitation site comprises four plots of 10 hectares each (sites A, B, C and D), planted in phases between 2017 and 2019, with over 59,000 trees planted. Micro fences have been erected to protect the delicate seedlings from trampling by livestock or larger wildlife that may pass through the area. The replant sites are under intensive maintenance and protection with a team of 4 community scouts on site.

Indigenous tree species planted include Acacia, Allophylus, Croton, Dombeya, Hagenia (rosewood), Olea, Podo and Prunus, among others. The seedlings are mainly sourced from the local communities that have established tree nurseries. Alongside conventional seedling planting, tree growing using seedballs is also being piloted at the site to explore the feasibility of this potentially lower cost option within the ecosystem.

The often unpredictable weather has provided both challenges and opportunities to rehabilitation work. The extended dry spell in 2017/2018 was a challenge that impacted adversely on seedling survival and called for infilling to replace lost seedlings. The extended rainy season of 2019/2020 has been a boon for forest rehabilitation efforts, presenting a longer window for rehabilitation work and allowing planted seedlings to show robust growth.

The forest rehabilitation effort is a Safaricom Foundation supported programme under the Initiative for Sustainable Landscapes (ISLA) partnership framework which brings together private and public sector stakeholders. Rhino Ark is an ISLA implementing partner.

MAU FORESTS COMPLEX LISTED IN THE QUEEN’S COMMONWEALTH CANOPY

Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Forestry, Keriako Tobiko, committed Kenya to the Queen’s Commonwealth Canopy (QCC), nominating restoration and rehabilitation of Mau Forests Complex as its dedication.

QCC creates a unique network of forest conservation projects that brings collective credibility and integrity to individual Commonwealth initiatives. It uses that network to facilitate knowledge exchange, share best practice and create new, collaborative initiatives for forest conservation. It also aims to raise awareness within the Commonwealth of the value of indigenous forests and to saving them

for future generations.

The Mau Forests Complex is the largest forest ecosystem and the most important Water Tower in Kenya, covering approximately 416,000ha. It comprises of 22 forest blocks, including Mau Eburu and South Western Mau that are two key conservation projects of Rhino Ark.

The inclusion of the Mau Forests Complex in the QCC will provide further visibility, commitment and support towards the conservation of this mountain ecosystem and the work undertaken by key government partners, including Rhino Ark.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH



Conservation champions' tree nursery at Kapnoo

Rhino Ark has rolled out the conservation champions programme in SW Mau. The programme involves the recruitment of a team of community volunteers who are passionate about conservation. These “champions” act as focal points for community conservation activities in each location.

They work closely with the Rhino Ark outreach team to propagate conservation values within the communities. They are first to receive training in relevant conservation and or compatible livelihood practices. The champions support the conservation education programme, participate in community outreach activities and forest conservation including desnaring work.

A total of 9 conservation champions are currently in the programme (6 men, 3 ladies) across the forest adjacent communities. The champions have also undertaken to establish tree nurseries.

SOUTH WESTERN MAU FOREST PATROLS: SAFEGUARDING WILDLIFE



Snare removal work in the forest



Recovered snare



Rhino Ark outreach officer with patrol team

The 60,000-hectare South Western Mau Forest ecosystem is a rich habitat for wildlife. However, its borders with adjacent community lands are porous, leaving it vulnerable to illegal activities such as hunting and bush meat poaching. Snaring of wildlife is a reality of this forest and requires constant action.

Rhino Ark is an active participant in this process. Our outreach officer, Thomas Mutai, regularly joins with community scouts and forest rangers to trek through kilometers of lush forest trails. Through these forest patrols, the team discover and remove wildlife snares and disrupt illegal activities.

Thomas is proud of the work they are doing, and personally making a difference – this year, he has participated in removing over 20 snares, and destruction of 6 illegal charcoal kilns. In the process, he is also learning about, and mapping interesting features of the forest, such as waterfalls and natural caves.

SOUTH WESTERN MAU LANDSCAPES AND BIODIVERSITY



Kapkoi -Tirigoi water fall in SW-MAU



A group of butterflies enjoy nectar



Dragon fly



A section of Emitik Forest



Amalo River



Kapnoo Forest bamboo and indigenous trees

MT KENYA ECOSYSTEM

EQUIPING AND TRAINING 60 FIRE FIGHTERS FOR MT. KENYA AND ABERDARES



KWS Assistant Director, Simon Gitau, addresses trainees during firefighting training at Ontulili Forest, Mt. Kenya



Firefighting training session - a mock forest fire



Training firefighters on how to approach a helicopter used to drop/pick firefighters to the mountains

During the festive season, a week-long training was held to train 60 men in fighting wild fires on Mt. Kenya and Aberdares. The team also received new equipment and clothing. The training was coordinated by the Mount Kenya Trust and co-financed by Rhino Ark.

Participated in the training are field officers from the Mount Kenya Trust, the Aberdare Joint Surveillance Unit funded by Rhino Ark, a team from Kisima Farm and rangers from KWS and KFS.

Enhancing the overall coordination of fire fighting operations were also discussed during the training.

Many thanks to Tropicair for availing a chopper during the training, Ontulili Secondary School for providing rooms to host the teams and Turaco Farm for agreeing to fire suppression exercises on their land.

FIGHT ON COVID 19 TAKEN A NOTCH HIGHER



Rhino Ark Fence/Community Manager (in Cap) presents the water tank to Mr & Mrs Salim Ibrahim (the two in the middle) as Assistant Chief Themba Sublocation, Ms. Judy Manyara looks on

As fight on Covid 19 heightens, Rhino Ark and Kithoka/Themba Community were out to promote hygiene at Nchoroiboro Village, Ruiri Location in Meru County. On 27th April, 2020 a five thousand litre water tank was donated to Mzee Salim Ibrahim, a survivor of elephant attack that left him maimed and unable to fend for his family.

Mzee Salim is still passionate about wildlife especially after Rhino Ark and partners built the Upper Imenti Electric Fence which is part of the Mt. Kenya Electric Fence.

Personal hygiene especially washing hands with soap and sanitizing as well as wearing face masks have been identified as remedies to curb the spread of Corona Virus. Rhino Ark and Kithoka/Themba Community donated the water tank to enable Salim and his neighbor to harvest rain water during this wet season. The water will be used in hand washing and for domestic use.

While receiving the water tank **Mzee Salim** said that, "I live in Nchoroiboro village, Meru County and this part of Meru is water scarce. I've been buying 20-litre gallon of water at Sh. 5. On average I would spend sh.200 per day. A lot of time was wasted following long queues as fellow villagers went out to fetch water. This water tank will help me collect rain water which was previously draining to waste. In addition, I will be sure that the water my family will be using is clean and safe.....I wish to thank Rhino Ark and Kithoka/Themba community for coming to my aid. God bless all of you."

Ms Judy Manyara, the Assistant Chief Themba Sub-location, Meru County mobilized the community to raise the much needed funds while working with Rt. Colonel Nahashon Mutea.

ENGAGING ELEPHANT COOPERATION TOWARDS SUPPORTING THE MT KENYA FENCE



Rhino Ark met with Elephant Cooperation in Kithoka, near Meru, to discuss potential support towards the Mt. Kenya Electric Fence. Of particular interest is the construction of elephant grids on the Meru-Ruiru road that crosses the Imenti Forest.



The meeting was organized by members of the Kithoka community. Many thanks to Scott and Suzzie from Elephant Cooperation for their interest in our conservation work on Mt. Kenya.

MORE SUPPORT IN CONSTRUCTING AND MAINTAINING THE MT. KENYA ELECTRIC FENCE



Damaged fence line



First landslide covering a section of the road



Flooding river Iraru posing a challenge to Fence maintenance

The Mount Kenya Electric Fence constructed under a public-private partnership, involving Government agencies (Kenya Wildlife Service and Kenya Forest service), Rhino Ark, the Upper Tana Natural Resources Management Project- (this is a government project under the Ministry of Water and Irrigation), Mount Kenya Trust and the local communities have played a significant role in curbing human-wildlife conflicts in the adjacent mountain region.

A milestone in the construction of the Mount Kenya Electric Fence has been reached with the completion of 200 kilometers of the 450 kilometers comprehensive fence that will eventually encircle Mount Kenya. The fence requires regular maintenance, to that effect Rhino Ark has a team of fence attendants that monitor and fix the damages to enable the full functionality of the electric fence. It is a daily activity that is done with commitment and supervised by a technical team to be effective. Poor maintenance of an electric fence means that wildlife will challenge the fence more often, causing more breakage.

During the long rains experienced in April-May period 2020, rainfall has caused massive landslides in the ecosystem resulting in 300 meters of comprehensive electric fence covered beneath. Tens of mature indigenous trees were uprooted along with the electric fence and dumped at River Iraru bridge rendering the road completely impassable. The estimated cost to fix the fence damage stands at KES 750,000. The effects are massive along Chogoria-Kiunyu Road at the crossing point of River Iraru, South Imenti Meru County.

This calls for immediate action to ensure electric current flow across all the sections of the fence. A Rapid Response Team was deployed to ensure that the power flow is efficient. Rhino Ark is working on site preparation, especially in mapping a new fence alignment as we wait for the flooding River Iraru to subside for the actual construction work to commence. It highlights some of the challenges that we face as Rhino Ark at a point when the COVID 19 pandemic is also impacting on our day-to-day activities.

TREE PLANTING AT ONTULILI FOREST STATION IN MT. KENYA

On Saturday, the 11th April 2020, two thousand seedlings of indigenous trees species were planted in Ontulili Forest Station, Mt. Kenya. Rhino Ark, Kenya Forest Service led by their Board Chairman, Mr. Peter Kinyua who was the chief guest, Mount Kenya Trust, Ontulili CFA and Mount Kenya Conservation Forum participated in the exercise.

The team also toured Ontulili Forest Station tree nursery that has a capacity of producing over one million seedlings per season. The Chairman observed that forest restoration programmes are

succeeding in Mt. Kenya thanks to Private/ Public Partnerships.

Ontulili Forest Station is a forest fire hotspot and therefore the replanting of the trees will go a long way in rehabilitating sites previously affected by forest fires.

In the midst of COVID 19 virus pandemic, the team undertakes the tree planting exercise while observing the government directive of social distancing, washing hands with soap and sanitizing.



Executive Director Rhino Ark, Mr. Christian Lambrechts plants a Podo tree at Ontulili Forest Station



Chairman board KFS, Peter Kinyua plants a Podo tree at Ontulili Forest Station



Bitumen road viewed from Mt Kenya Park Headquarters.

WORK CONTINUES AT PACE TOWARDS ESTABLISHING A MEGA TREE NURSERY ON MT KENYA



Mega Tree Nursery at Nanyuki Forest Station, Mt Kenya

Rhino Ark, together with the Mount Kenya Conservation Forum, Kenya Forest Service and the Nanyuki Community Forest Association, is establishing a mega tree nursery in Nanyuki Forest Station, Mt. Kenya. The work includes the rehabilitation of the existing tree nursery and its expansion to cover an area of 2.7 acres. It is estimated that the tree nursery will be able to produce 700,000 tree seedlings at once.

The young tree seedlings will be used largely to rehabilitate degraded forest areas on Mt. Kenya. An initial and key activity was

the construction of a gravity fed water supply which has now been successfully implemented with water flowing steadily into the main water tank.

Rhino Ark provided the material while the labour was provided by the community. Community members are preparing the ground for the tree seedlings (while keeping social distance). In the meanwhile, various indigenous tree seeds, worth over KES 300,000, have been purchased and are being sown in the seed beds.

MT KENYA LANDSCAPES AND BIODIVERSITY



Beautiful mountain stream



Rapids on the Ragati River



Tall trees



Sun setting on Mt. Kenya



Terere and Sendeo peaks from Sirimon route in Mt. Kenya



Chameleon

ABERDARES ECOSYSTEM

FENCE MONITORING SYSTEM IN ABERDARES:



Aberdare Fence Monitoring System



Testing the live wire voltage



Rhino Ark Executive Director explaining how Fence Monitoring System works

The 400 Kilometer Aberdare electric fence construction started in 1989 and was completed on 28th August, 2009 making it the world's longest electric fence. The fence rises seven feet above the ground. It is electrified and wired down to three feet below ground to deter burrowing wildlife and the upright posts that are hot-wired to deter baboons and monkeys from scaling them. The fence construction costed approximately KES. 800 million (approximately US\$ 10 million) to construct. The current construction rate of such a fence is KES 2.5 million per kilometer.

31 years down the line, Rhino Ark is still committed to protecting and conserving the Aberdares ecosystem. One unique system put in place by the organization is a **Fence Monitoring System** that uses short messages to pass on the information. Previously, a team of trained fence attendants could patrol the fence daily to identify problems, repair and maintain the fence so that it continues to reduce human-wildlife conflict and protect the forest.

Today, the fence monitoring technology has made work easy. It is able to detect issues and send information through SMS to the fence attendants and the fence manager instantly. Every 4km is being maintained by a fence attendant. *"The Fence Monitoring System has*

made my work easy. I can monitor the fence through my phone while seated in my office. I can tell where exactly the problem is and for that reason the attendants plus the KWS team respond very fast to issues" **Adam Mwangi- Fence/Community Manager Aberdare - Mt Kenya Landscape.**

The system which was set in 6 zones for the pilot study is proving to be very effective. The Aberdare Electric Fence has been appreciated by the community around the ecosystem citing that there has been tremendous reduction in human-wildlife conflict since its construction. The farmers have been getting 100% offtake of crops from farms and the land values have also appreciated by up to 300%. The rehabilitation of the forest is ongoing with the planting of indigenous trees inside the protected areas to help in achieving the 10% forest cover by 2022.

"The fence has kept off the elephants from getting in our farms. We appreciate Rhino Ark for constructing and maintaining this fence. We can do our farming comfortably without wildlife interference. The previous years we could get nothing from our farms."
Alice Mwari - Community Member.

ABERDARES FENCE REHABILITATION AND FOREST CONSERVATION



Rhino Ark and KWS inspecting fence rehabilitation.



Part of rehabilitated fence separating Aberdare forest and community farms

Protecting the precious but fragile ecosystem of the Aberdares needs constant fence maintenance to deter poachers, illegal loggers, charcoal burners and forest encroachment.

Rhino Ark, together with Kenya Wildlife Service, begun a rehabilitation programme to upgrade part of the fence surrounding the Aberdare ecosystem that are over 21 years old. This has been divided into various phases of which the first phase –the oldest part of the fence (38 km long) – has been rehabilitated. Work on Phase II is on the eight-kilometre in Wandare-Ngare Ngiro river section, of which 4.9 km has now been fully rehabilitated.

Fence maintenance is one of the areas of responsibility of the Aberdare Trust, and among the financing options for Rhino Ark is the partnership with Powering Africa-Recharging Conservation (PARC). PARC creates technologically innovative and economically viable solutions to open up access to clean energy and secure long-term funding for conservation projects that protect the environment and promote Climate Change resilience in rural areas in Africa. PARC, in turn, secures funding from investors who are not just driven by financial returns, but also wish to provide long-term funding for conservation.

Working with the Kenya Forest Service, Rhino Ark has established the status of all the forest plantation compartments situated inside the Aberdare Electric Fence, from a list provided by KFS. Rhino Ark then visited the 14 Forest Stations in the Aberdares that have forest plantations inside the fence, cross-checked and updated the data.

Plantations managed by the Forest Stations total 6,912.74 hectares inside the electric fence, representing approximately 3% of the fenced protected area. Of these, 45.8% have been earmarked to be reverted to indigenous forest. To date, 534 hectares of these forest plantation have actually been returned to indigenous forest – representing 17% of all forest plantations so designated.

NEW GATES BUILT IN ABERDARES



Gate under construction



installing gate



Aberdare ecosystem partners

The 2012 Aberdare Fence Status Report highlighted a number of shortcomings that were noted regarding the existing gates installed in the previous years. These include inconsistency in the gate design and weak hinges.

The maintenance team came across broken hinges that were prevalent and very costly to repair. Permeable gates translated to having a fence that is porous to both wildlife and humans. Gates were mounted on wooden posts and with time these posts would be leaning. This would eventually make the gate unlockable thereby compromising its purpose.

When Rhino Ark together with its partners resolved to rehabilitate Phase 1 and 2 (fence existing for over 20 years) of the Aberdare

Electric Fence, it was important to replace the old gates too. The new gates currently are fitted with steel lockable gate.

Features of the new gate include: standardized gate design which is 6meters wide; vehicle gate has an in built man gate; robust heavy gauge hinges with a provision for oiling; built with two vertical columns interconnected with a horizontal concrete beam. This ensures that the vertical columns do not easily collapse/lean under the weight of the metallic gate. The vertical concrete columns are anchored in one-meter cubic base further strengthening the gate.

Adequate gate signage are installed, showing the name of the gate and the various institutions that have supported the construction of the fence.

ABERDARES LANDSCAPES AND BIODIVERSITY



Warthog



Aberdares moorlands



Hyena



Buffalo



Olive thrush



Queen's Cave Waterfall

KAKAMEGA ECOSYSTEM

FORMALIZING THE PARTNERSHIP FOR FENCING KAKAMEGA FOREST



Participants who attended the meeting

A two-day meeting was held at the Kenya Forest Service HQ to finalize the partnership agreements for the conservation and fencing of Kakamega Forest. The meeting was attended by Rhino Ark Executive Director, the County Executive Committee Members (County Minister) for Trade, Tourism and Industrialization from both Kakamega and Vihiga Counties, the County Executive Committee Members for Environment, Forest and Water Resources from Kakamega and Vihiga Counties, senior legal officers from Kakamega and Vihiga Counties, Head of the Directorate of Forest Conservation of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, Kenya Forest Service Projects Coordinator and Kenya Wildlife Service Forest Programme Coordinator, among others.

The meeting prepared a draft umbrella Partnership Agreement for the conservation of Kakamega Forest and finalized the draft Implementation Agreement for the fencing of the forest. It is hoped that the NEMA license will be issued soon which will enable to start the work immediately after.

KES 230 million has been raised to start a 117-kilometre fence around Kakamega Forest. The project, which is expected to run for two years, is projected to cost KES 378 million and is a partnership between Rhino Ark Charitable Trust, Kenya Wildlife Service, Kenya Forest Service (KFS), Kakamega and Vihiga counties. Of the KES 230 million raised so far, Kakamega committed KES100 million while Vihiga KES 30 million.

The fencing is expected to secure the forest that is home to a diversity of rare animal and plant species, such as the black and white colobus monkeys, from encroachment and illegal logging. It is also expected to tame human-wildlife conflicts and boost tourism activities within the scenic forest.

Following the two-day meeting, a visit was organized to Karura Forest to learn from the successful partnership established between Friends of Karura Forest and Kenya Forest Service that enabled the transformation of Karura Forest to one of the most visited protected forests in the country. Hon. Wycliffe Oparanya, Governor of Kakamega County and Chairman of the Council of Governors, joined the visit to Karura Forest to appraise himself on what could be done in Kakamega Forest.



CHARGERS' CORNER



**32ND ANNUAL
RHINO CHARGE EVENT
POSTPONED TO
19TH OCTOBER 2020**

The coronavirus pandemic is affecting us all individually and collectively, and as such the Rhino Ark Board of Directors and Rhino Charge Committee made the very difficult, but necessary, decision to postpone the May 2020 event to later in the year.

Even though things continue to remain uncertain we are very clear on the role the Rhino Charge plays in ensuring financial stability for Rhino Ark and so are working tirelessly to understand if, and how, the 2020 Charge might be able to go ahead in these uncertain times.

The enthusiasm and support from the Rhino Charge community is second to none. It was with great sadness that the original date passed without a Charge but we know that when we are able to get back out there we're going to make up for lost time.

Rest assured that the planned October Charge will run within the public health regulations and guidelines put in place at that time by the Government, and the Rhino Charge organising team will put in place all necessary measures to ensure the safety of everyone who attends. Due to the uniqueness of the circumstances, and breaking with Charge tradition (just this time!) it is likely that the event location will be announced ahead of time to ensure that Chargers can plan sufficiently and avoid any unnecessary costs. Other than this, the overall competition format will remain as normal.

We want to thank those Chargers that have already remitted funds to Rhino Ark that have been raised towards teams' original 2020 pledges, this is greatly appreciated and will go a long way in helping Rhino Ark continue to do its valuable work during these challenging times.

To stay up-to-date with details of the 2020 Rhino Charge please visit www.rhinocharge.co.ke

The Rhino Charge Committee



DID YOU KNOW?

www.rhinocharge.co.ke



65

The event is limited to 65 teams/cars and cars can either be modified or unmodified

1989

The event was initially conceived in 1989 to raise funds for the construction of the Aberdare Electric Fence

181m

Whilst the first Rhino Charge raised only KES 250,000 this amount increased tremendously over the years to reach KES 181 million in the 2018 event



The Charge is organised by a Committee of Volunteers (supported by Rhino Ark employees) who believe passionately in the event and the cause it supports. This Committee is made up of people from all walks of life who volunteer their time throughout the year to organise and stage the unique event



The location and venue of the Rhino Charge is kept secret until the last minute to maximise the challenge



10h

The Charge takes place over a period of 10 hours

The event is featured in local and national media



Each entrant must pledge and raise a minimum sponsorship fee between 750,000 KES and 1.5 Million KES. Most entrants however raise considerably more

What makes the Charge the Charge?

Every Charger (be them competitors, sponsors or supporters) has a story and a reason why they do this. These stories are what makes this event, and community, so unique and something that people take enormous pride in being a part of.

Here are some Competitor anecdotes from years past...



For Team Chomz, the Charge isn't just about the 4x4 cars but also about bringing people together. One member of Team Chomz met their future wife at the Slater & Whittaker guard post 3 years ago.

"When we drove into the starting guard post 3 years ago at Slater, my eyes latched onto my future wife who was there with the guard post crew. My words to the team as we approached were "We are completing today and coming back to Slater" and of course the responses I shall keep to myself as they are too rude to quote. But in spite of all the difficulties and hurdles of that Charge, we did finish and end up at Slater, and I am a happily married man today."

For Team Ole Choda, out of the amazing 30 Charges they have done their most memorable Charge was their 3rd Charge. "We had a new navigator that insisted he knew where he was going and told us, even if we are lost never follow another car, we will find our own route! Only to realise we had been going round in circles for the ENTIRE Charge and were so lost they had to send the chopper to look for us! By this time, it was completely dark so we had to use our fuel from the car to light a fire, to our luck we were spotted and saved! The next day, we realised when we went to get the car that we were only 15 mins away from the main camp! What an experience!"



In 2018, Team Moto Moto, Car 34, won the Garmin Award but their most memorable moment comes from the 2017 charge where they managed to "complete approx. 3.5kms in 9.5 hours having tackled the Mother of all ravines! We broke our Rear Diff, Front and Rear Winches. We were stuck on a 45-degree slope, the car took us an additional 6 hrs and 3 other vehicles to recover the next day! 3 crew members suffered heatstroke, 1 almost lost a leg to a falling boulder and the resident black mamba that slithered by us at 4.00 pm elicited ZERO reaction from the whole crew."

The 2019 Rhino Charge was car Number 10s first charge and sadly they broke down before they even reached the first checkpoint! This hasn't deterred them and word on the street is that Car 10 will look very different when they next charge...



For more stories about the Chargers, the Supporters, #WhyWeCharge and the event itself and to be part of our community please follow us on social media:

 @Rhino.Charge

 @Rhino_Charge

 @RhinoChargeKenya

HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT THE RHINO CHARGE?

ENTER A TEAM OR JOIN AN EXISTING TEAM

Spaces are limited and competition is fierce but once a Charger, always a Charger!

If you are interested in getting involved please contact us on info@rhinocharge.or.ke and we can explain more about how the Charge works and what you need to do to.

SPONSOR A CAR OR THE RHINO CHARGE EVENT

The Rhino Charge offers some fantastic branding and PR opportunities and is a unique way to support Rhino Arks' conservation efforts. Details on how to get involved as a sponsor can be found on the Rhino Charge website.

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

For live updates, including information on the competitors, event news and #WhyWeCharge please follow us on all our social channels.

@Rhino.Charge
@Rhino_Charge
@RhinoChargeKenya

HELP OUT AT THE EVENT

If you're interested in volunteering your time and helping out at the event please do get in touch with the Rhino Charge Organising team on info@rhinocharge.or.ke

ATTEND AS A SPECTATOR

Attending a Charge as a Spectator is a fantastic way to support the event and be a part of one of the most unique off-road 4x4 competitions, all in the name of conservation.

For more info on attending the Charge as a Spectator please visit our website.

JOIN OUR MAILING LIST

To keep up-to-date on the Rhino Charge news, please visit our website and subscribe to our mailing list

www.rhinocharge.or.ke

www.rhinocharge.or.ke

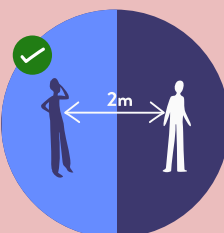
COVID-19 PREVENTION TIPS



WASH HANDS FOR 20 SECS



CATCH IT, BIN IT



PRACTICE SOCIAL DISTANCING



STAY AT HOME

Following the Government's directive in regards to the Covid-19, kindly be advised that our offices will be open to the public on Tuesdays and Fridays ONLY from 9.00am to 3.00pm until further notice. Meanwhile, Rhino Ark remain operational on emails and phone numbers.

You can protect yourself and help prevent spreading the virus to others if you:

Do

- Wash your hands regularly for 20 seconds, with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a disposable tissue or flexed elbow when you cough or sneeze.
- Avoid close contact (1 meter or 3 feet) with people who are unwell.
- Stay home and self-isolate from others in the household if you feel unwell.

Don't

- Touch your eyes, nose, or mouth if your hands are not clean

Rhino Ark Management.

PATRONS:

LORD ABERDARE DL.

DR. DAVID WESTERN

DR. SALLY KOSGEI

JONATHAN SCOTT, CHARLES NJONJO

US TRUSTEES:

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ISABELLA OCHOLA-WILSON

PETER KINYUA, ADIL KHAWAJA

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
- **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 Eburu Forest
- **Rare Species Conservatory Foundation** - Support to the conservation of the bongos
- **Wildlife Conservation Society** - Construction of two elephant grids on Mt. Kenya
- **Eburru Rafiki** - Community awareness raising and desnaring operations (Eburu)
- **AutoXpress** - Provision of tyres for Rhino Ark
- **Safaricom Foundation** - Support for the conservation of South Western Mau
- **MPESA Foundation** - Support for the maintenance of Eburu Electric Fence
- **Mount Kenya Trust** - Firefighting capacity building (Mt. Kenya & Aberdares)

Order your copy of:

- Environmental, social and economic assessment of the fencing of the Aberdare Conservation Area. Available for KES 3,000 only.
- Rhino Ark Profile.
- Rhino Charge book KES 5000 only.
- 2020 Rhino Charge Calendar for KES 1,000 only.
- Mau Eburu Visitors' Guidebook for KES 1,500 only.



Act now!...

help us to continue our work

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Website Donations:

Firstgiving.com/Rhino Ark Kenya Charitable Trust Inc.
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Please make cheques payable to:



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websites: www.rhinoark.org / www.rhinocharge.co.ke

Your donations of **USD 200 or KES 20,000**
will maintain **250 meters** of fence

FRIENDS OF RHINO ARK

ACT NOW AND HELP US TO CONTINUE OUR VITAL WORK

I/We:

of

.....

Please tick your selection and fill in where applicable:

☐

We wish to receive ARKive, the bi-annual newsletter, and enclose a cheque/Postal Order for KES 1,000 or US\$ 10.

☐

We wish to make a donation in the form of cheque/Postal order for 2020 (KES/US\$).

☐

We wish to complete a Standing Order / Deed of Covenant - please send an application form.



HELP TO SAVE OUR MOUNTAIN FORESTS AND THEIR ENDANGERED WILDLIFE



WHY IT MATTERS

The Aberdares, Mt. Kenya and the Mau mountain forests are key 'water towers' of Kenya. They are the source of major rivers that provide the much-needed water to Nairobi which is the main contributor to the country's GDP. These rivers support the livelihoods of millions of households in the rural areas and are the lifeline of key conservation and tourism areas downstream. Together these three mountain ecosystems provide yearly ecological services to Kenya worth KES 412 billion (\$4.12 billion).

These important forests include World Heritage Sites, Important Bird Areas and National Parks. The critically endangered Black rhino and Mountain bongo antelope, the African elephant and the vulnerable leopard are among the iconic wildlife species that inhabit them.

The forest-adjacent communities are critical to conservation of these forests. They are the front-line guardians. Conversely, they are the most directly dependent on the forests and also the most impacted by human-wildlife conflict.



WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED?

- 1.6 BILLION KENYA SHILLINGS (\$16 MILLION) invested in conservation
- 650 KILOMETERS of game-proof electrified fences built
- Over 500,000 hectares of MOUNTAIN FOREST SECURED
- 80,000 KENYAN FAMILIES protected from human/wildlife conflict, and their livelihoods secured
- 178 SCHOOLS actively learning about conservation
- 90 HECTARES OF FOREST rehabilitated

DONATE!

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

We welcome your kind donations to support our work. Your contributions help us achieve the following:

1. Fencing programme

Our comprehensive game-proof electrified fences help secure prime indigenous forests and resolve human/wildlife conflict, keeping forest-adjacent communities engaged in conservation. One kilometre of electrified fence costs KES 2.5 million (\$ 25,000). Once built, fences must be maintained continuously. We have 174 fence attendants maintaining our fences daily, supported by eight 4x4 vehicles. Fence maintenance costs KES 80,000 (\$800) per kilometre per year.

2. Endangered species and forest conservation

Support our community-based patrol programme:

The Aberdare Joint Surveillance Unit (AJSU) is an elite, 7-man team of community scouts that patrols the Aberdare ecosystem. AJSU targets illegal activities such as logging, charcoal kilns, snaring and wildlife trapping. They also monitor wildlife abundance and distribution, gather intelligence information, and participate in forest fire fighting. KES 73,500 (\$735) can cover a 2-week field mission.

In Eburu, a 5-man Foot Patrol Team responds to local intelligence reports to enact dark sting operations to catch would-be wildlife or forestry criminals. Their main targets are wildlife snares, illegal logging and charcoal kilns. KES 24,000 (\$240) can cover a 2-day field operation.

Support forest rehabilitation:

Large areas of prime mountain forest habitats degraded by illegal human activities and forest fires need to be rehabilitated. Donate to help restore our mountain forests. KES 100 (\$1) will enable planting and caring for a tree seedling.

3. Community conservation and livelihoods

Our community programmes are geared to reducing forest adjacent communities' reliance on forest resources, improving their livelihoods, and raising their environmental awareness. These interventions result in their participation in forest conservation, adoption of on-farm best practices and improvement in incomes.

HOW TO DONATE

1. Mobile money
2. Bank Transfer
3. PayPal

If you wish to make a donation kindly contact us on:

Email: info@rhinoark.or.ke

Telephone: +254 722 230 929

Or Visit our website donations page
<https://rhinoark.org/donate/>

