

ARKive

RHINO ARK

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE RHINO ARK CHARITABLE TRUST NO. 36 MAY 2010

President and Prime Minister Pledge up 4000 km Section



President Mwai Kibaki (centre) with Prime Minister Raila Odinga (second right) and Dr Noah Wekesa (extreme right), Minister of Forestry and Wildlife, with Chairman of KWS, David Mwiraria (third left) Director KWS, Julius Kipgn'etich (uniform) and Colin Church, Chairman of Rhino Ark Management Committee (left).

The Rhino Ark Aberdare fence is a significant "investment which should be secured and maintained" for the future management of the Aberdares declared Kenya's President, Mwai Kibaki at the commissioning ceremony on March 12 at Bondeni, Mweiga.

Accompanied by the Prime Minister, Rt. Hon. Raila Odinga, the President presided over a sparkling occasion at which thousands of fence line farmers from all areas of the Aberdares arrived to attend. The site was beside some of the earliest fence line built 21 years ago when Rhino Ark began its Aberdare conservation journey.

President Kibaki said the fence "will enable communities whose livelihoods are dependent upon the Aberdare Mountain range to benefit more from this forest ecosystem. Farmers' incomes and land

value have increased with the construction of this fence".

The President endorsed the work undertaken by the Kenya Wildlife Service, Kenya Forest Service and Rhino Ark "in preparation of a management facility to be called The Aberdare Trust Fund". He announced that the fund would soon be launched.

President Kibaki specially thanked "those early initiators of Rhino Ark who helped raise funds by creating the now world famous annual Rhino Charge event".

The President gave the annual Michael Werikhe Award for services to conservation in the Aberdares to the two Kipipiri groups – Kipkiami Cecaaffe and Gita – who provided no cost labour to the value of Kshs 0.5 million to build the final 45 km Kipipiri Extra Section last year.

Continued on page 4

"OUR GREAT MOUNTAIN FORESTS ARE THE 'WATER TOWERS' AND THE 'LUNGS' OF OUR BELOVED KENYA. THEY AND THE PRECIOUS FLORA AND FAUNA WITHIN THEM MUST BE SUSTAINABLY MANAGED AND CONSERVED FOR ALL KENYANS AND AS A GLOBAL HERITAGE FOR ALL TIME."

H.E. PRESIDENT MWAI KIBAKI

MARCH 12 2010

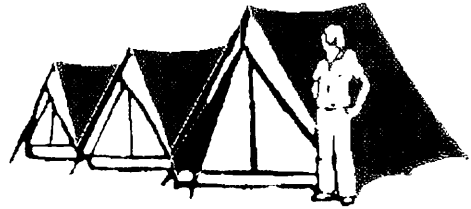
Charge fever high

Rhino Charge fever is running high. The event – the 22nd in its history – takes place on May 31 somewhere secret and deep in Kenya's magical landscape of remote hills and tough terrain.

Continued on page 9

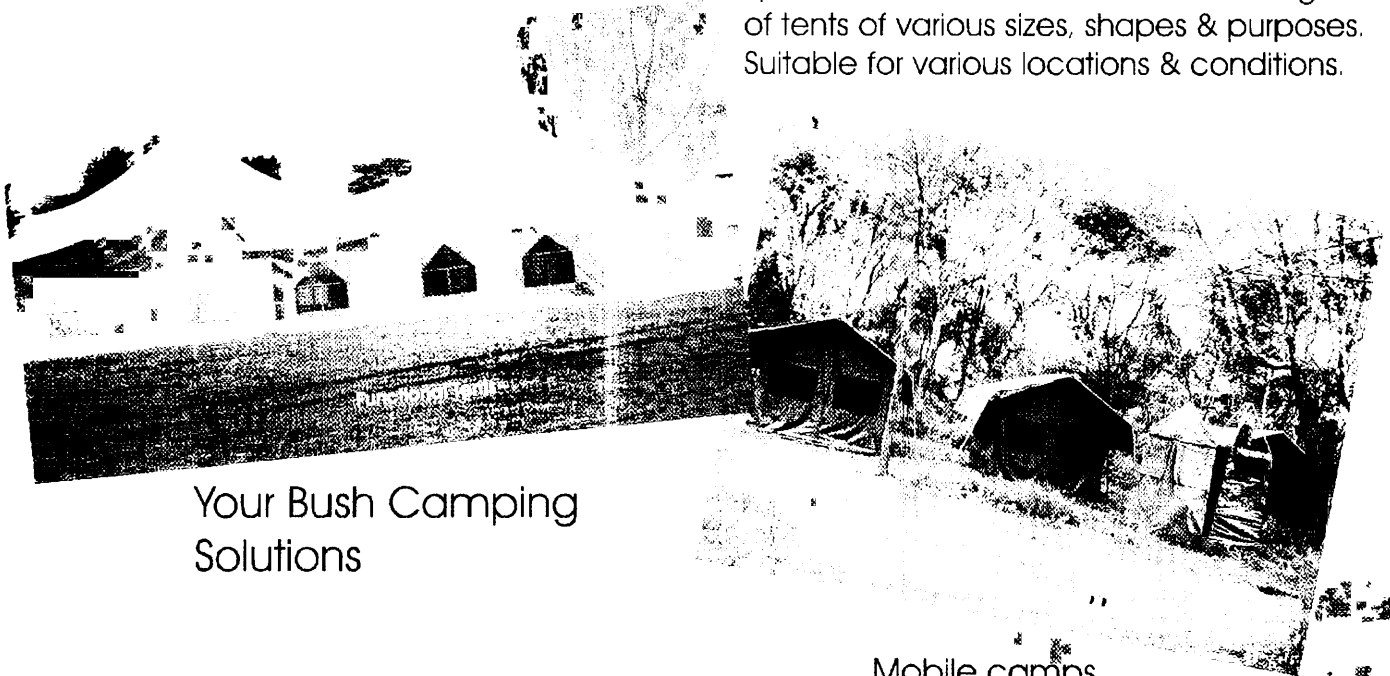


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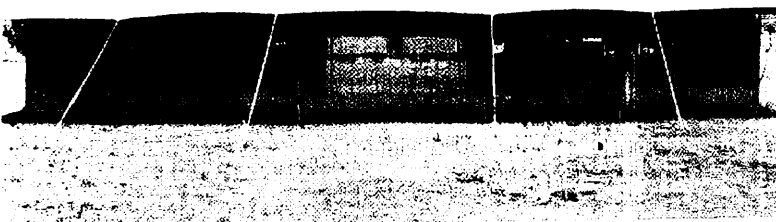
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Rhino Ark Objectives

Rhino Ark seeks solutions in the Aberdare mountain range and its eco-system to:

- Conserve one of Kenya's finest indigenous forests and its total habitat.
- Resolve human/wildlife conflict.
- Create a sustainable environment for people and wildlife.

Rhino Ark is Committed to:

- Mobilise stakeholders nationwide and internationally for initiatives to protect and conserve the habitat; and promote managed use of forest products for the benefit of present and future generations.
- Raise funds and other forms of support for the long-term management of the electrical fence and the entire ecosystem of the Aberdares.
- Build mechanisms and management structures to prevent illegal exploitation of the forest habitat wherever it is threatened. In so doing, all stakeholders will benefit and the rhino, bongo, indeed all flora and fauna species will be secure.



Colin Church

Chairman's View

The work goes on

Last year as the Aberdare Fence neared its completion I said in this column that there was a need to set aside time to celebrate and commemorate Rhino Ark's considerable achievements over the past 22 years.

Following the placement of the final post by the Minister for Forestry and Wildlife, Hon. Noah Wekesa on 28 August 2009 at Geta, Kipipiri, just 21 years since the first post was placed into the ground in 1989, we have been able to complete a round of well deserved celebrations. We are not just clapping hands and beating the drum, but the events have strongly raised the awareness of what has been achieved here and overseas, within the Government, amongst the bi-lateral and corporate donor fraternity and with those Rhino Chargers and their supporters who have consistently remained the core fund raise mechanism since the earliest days.

So a number of events have now been discharged. All of them hugely well attended. All reflecting that Rhino Ark is not only a vibrant mechanism for conservation in Kenya but attracting considerable attention at all levels of Kenyan society and internationally.

We hosted our overseas volunteer trustees from the US and the United Kingdom in February 2010 at a number of combined functions in the Aberdares. They met and talked to forest edge community groups, participated with great vigour in a workshop led by the Directors of KWS and KFS at the Outspan Hotel in Nyeri and attended the bonfire barbecue event at which over 200 Rhino Chargers accepted the KWS invitation to stay and camp as guests inside the National Park and attend the KWS sponsored evening.

Then on February 22 at the invitation of the fellows and members of the Royal Geographical Society (RGS) in London, I spoke to over 600 members about the achievements in the Aberdares. The UK's Guardian Newspaper said the Rhino Ark electric fence "has become a model for countries struggling to protect scarce water resources". The Daily Telegraph said "the massive task of ring-fencing" the Aberdares was a major sign that Kenya was determined to combat poaching of wildlife and illegal logging.

Finally on March 12 the President of Kenya, Mwai Kibaki accompanied by the Prime Minister, Raila Odinga formally commissioned the Aberdare Fence. President Kibaki declared that the fence "will be of great service in ensuring the harmonious co-existence of the people and wildlife". He stressed that maintenance of the fence required continued investment. He endorsed the proposed Trust as the way forward for long-term management of the fence and making a real contribution to the on-going objective to achieve a holistic management process for the ecosystem.

The Prime Minister reaffirmed the need to conserve Kenya's mountain 'water towers' and said Rhino Ark's work over two decades had shown the way for other hugely threatened areas – and he referred to the Mau and Mt Kenya.

So even as we celebrate what has been done, we must look ahead to ensure that posterity will judge us favourably for what we now build into the management mechanism for the Aberdares and that it is a model for all the mountain ecosystems of Kenya.

The work goes on.

Act now!... help us to continue our work

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CONTENTS

- P3 Chairman's View
- P4-5 Aberdare Trust – President urges immediate action
- P7 Ancient Simbara symbol of Aberdares' heritage
- P8 New Camping arrangements / 2010 Charge Raffle
- P10 Lord Aberdare visits the Aberdares
- P11 Community wins Michael Werikhe Award
- P14-15 Wildlife Watch
- P16 Spirit of the Charge 2009
- P17 Rhino Ark UK News
- P18 Donation Form

The award is donated by the East African Wildlife Society. The judges are members of Rhino Ark's Rhino Charge Committee.

The President and Prime Minister were accompanied by the Minister for Forestry and Wildlife, Hon. Noah Wekesa, MPs Nemeysias Warugongo - Kieni, Clement Muchiri Wambugu - Mathiyoia and Jeremiah Kioni - Ndaragua: all constituencies bordering the Aberdare fence line.

Mark Glen and Bryn Llewellyn of Car 48, winners of last year's Rhino Charge, attended with Jas Sehmi of Car 12 who has driven in every Rhino Charge since it began in his 1947 Willis Jeep. The Prime Minister climbed into Car 48 whilst President Kibaki turned the steering wheel of the car.

The President then flicked a switch to finally commission the fence. A flow of 7000 volts by impulse surged through the wire to the acclaim of the onlookers. The President expressed great interest that the fence was performing at full capacity ever since it was erected in 1989.

Two plaques were unveiled by the President – one to commemorate the event and the other with the message:

"Our great mountain forests are the 'water towers' and the 'lungs' of our beloved Kenya. They and the precious flora and fauna within them must be sustainably managed and conserved for all Kenyans and as a global heritage for all time".

Above this inscription a Simbara stone from near the upper moorland of northern Aberdares – estimated by a geologist to be over 5 million years old – was placed.

The Minister of Forestry and Wildlife, Hon. Wekesa proposed a permanent commemoration site, arboretum and education centre be established at the site for all Kenyans and overseas visitors to enjoy and learn from.

President Kibaki flagged off the Aberdare Fence celebration school relay run started by children from Bondeni Primary School. The relay baton will be carried by children from 77 schools close to the fence line. The baton will run along the entire near 400 km fence during the next few weeks.

"You have earned a place in Kenya's conservation history..."

Aberdare Trust: President urges immediate action

"Twenty one years ago a visionary and determined team came together to begin this effort that we celebrate today. The completion of this fence is therefore the product of consistent effort. It is a clear demonstration of the unwavering commitment of all those who have been involved in its construction. I commend all behind this momentous project. You have earned a proper place in the history of conservation in our country. I would like to particularly thank those early initiators of Rhino Ark who helped raise funds by creating the now world famous annual Rhino Charge event."

Referring to the Rhino Ark Aberdare fence project, he said: "In addition to the protection of wildlife and forest resources, this fence will be of great service in ensuring the harmonious co-existence of the people and wildlife. It will also enable communities whose livelihoods are dependent upon the Aberdare Mountain range to benefit more from this forest ecosystem. Indeed, farmers' incomes and land value have increased with the construction of this fence. This fence is a valuable asset in our efforts to protect wildlife as well as forest resources. Several critically endangered species including the black rhino and the mountain bongo are now better protected within a fenced ecosystem. Indeed, the Aberdares is a precious site of valuable biodiversity."

"In view of the importance of this investment, there is need to ensure that the fence is secured and appropriately maintained. Its maintenance will be a daily challenge that will require more resources. I am encouraged that much work has been done by the Kenya Wildlife Service, Kenya Forest Service and Rhino Ark in preparation of a management facility to be called the Aberdare Trust Fund. The fund will be launched next month (April 2010). I also call upon the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife to ensure that this project is properly managed as a public-private partnership through a comprehensive management plan in which all stakeholder interests are coordinated."

President Kibaki said that the Government's commitment to the project had already meant that Kshs 128 million had been provided from the Treasury for its construction over the past four years. He thanked various bi-lateral bodies which had also made sizeable grants including the European Union's Biodiversity Conservation Programme, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the United Nations Development Programme. He also thanked various conservation bodies who continued to participate and mentioned the African Fund for Endangered Wildlife (AFEW), the Giraffe Centre of Kenya and the Eden Trust.

"We all have a duty to protect this God-given heritage in the interest of present and future generations of humanity. The Government recognises the central role forests play in the development of our country. We must all bear in mind that agricultural production, livestock grazing, hydro and geothermal power resources, essential supplies for our industries as well as tourism depend upon our forest ecosystems. Forests and the precious flora and fauna within them must, therefore, be sustainably managed and conserved for all Kenyans and as a global heritage for all time. I encourage you to continue partnering with the government in our relentless efforts to conserve our environment."

He said: "the Government has embarked on an ambitious programme of re-forestation and restoration of all forests. Tree planting, therefore, remains on top of the government agenda with emphasis on conserving strategic natural resources. We are placing specific emphasis on:-

- Conservation and management of all the country's five water towers.
- Increasing our national forest cover from the current 2 percent to 4 percent by 2012 and 10 percent by 2030.
- Bamboo growing and industrial forest development.
- Encouraging all land owners to plant trees on at least one-tenth of their land".

"My Government acknowledges the important role that tourism plays in the economy, accounting for 21 percent of the total foreign exchange earnings and 12 percent of G.D.P. Tourism resources must, therefore, be guarded fiercely, hence Kenya's relentless conservation efforts."



President Mwai Kibaki – 'Maintenance a daily challenge'



President Mwai Kibaki greets Rhino Ark Chairman of Trustees Michael Karanja (centre), Colin Church (second right) and Wilfred Kiboro Trustee (right).



President powers up fence



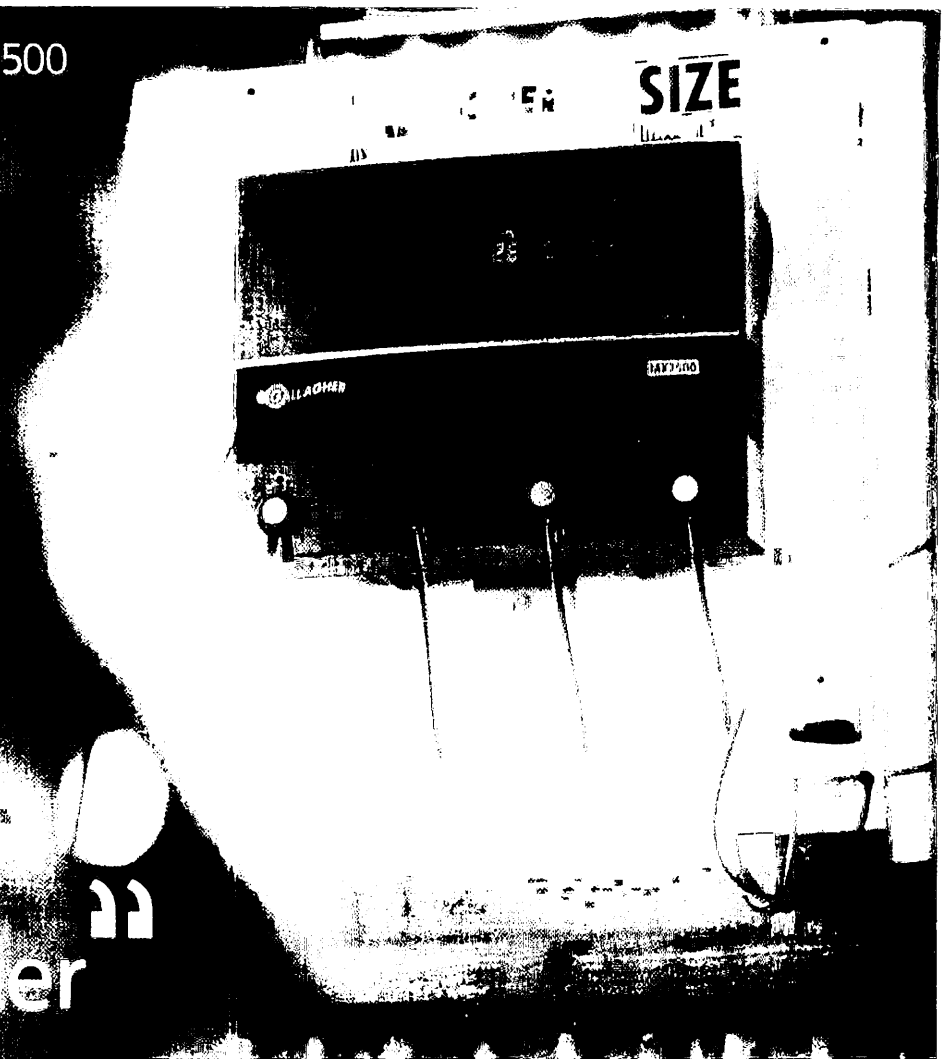
Prime Minister Odinga (second right) with Rhino Ark Trustees – Jonny Havelock, Wilfred Kiboro and Trustee Chairman, Michael Karanja



President and Prime Minister with Rhino Charge Car 48 and last year's winner Bryn Llewelyn and Mark Glen

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Private sector and communities have a pivotal role: Minister Wekesa



President Mwai Kibaki flags off Aberdare schools relay race (see page 4)

The Aberdare Fence is “proof that harmonious partnerships can be experienced in conservation management between the Private and Public sectors”, declared the Minister for Forestry and Wildlife, Hon. Noah Wekesa.

“The fence will contribute to sustainable forest management to conserve water catchment areas, soil and biodiversity,” he added.

Minister Wekesa called for efficient management of fragile and threatened ecosystems. He affirmed that to ensure sound management practice, proper planning, management and conservation measures require reliable data on resource utilisation as a pre-requisite.

On the new Wildlife Bill and Policy soon to be tabled in Parliament, the Minister said it “would take cognisance of the

importance that local communities play in conservation”. He said that the Forest Act 2005 had fully incorporated similar thinking.

Reiterating the Government's commitment to evict those “who acquired and settled on forest land”, the Minister said: “Sustainable forest management and conservation has been recognised as one of the most promising pathways for mitigating climate change.”

He emphasised that Rhino Ark's special skill had been in securing the support and involvement of the local communities around the Aberdares. Referring to the Strategic Management Plan for the fence prepared jointly by KWS, KFS and Rhino Ark, he said that it provided an ecosystem management model and could assist with other threatened forest ecosystems.

Minister Wekesa referred to the 5 million year old Simbara stone mounted above the commemorative plaques for the event, and called for “this site of exceptional beauty” to become “an arboretum and education centre for the people of Nyeri, all Kenyans and indeed with international appeal in order to boost tourism in the area”.

Simbara - Ancient symbol of Aberdares' heritage

The stone placed above the commemorative plaque that President Kibaki unveiled is 5 million years old. It was identified by the geologist, Dr Abigail Allison from near the area known as Twin Peaks, a few kilometers north of the highest peak in the Aberdares – Ol Donyo Sattima.

The stone is known as Simbara. It forms part of the original upheaval in the earth's surface and pre-dates the volcanic activity which created the Aberdares Range at the period when the Great Rift Valley was in formation.

Herewith Dr Allison's explanation of the ancient stone:

“In the field the Simbara quartz trachyte forms striking craggy outcrops of vertically fluted rock, sometimes forming steep “towers” or more often ridges or escarpments; for example the Twin Peaks and Dragon's Teeth. The Simbara quartz trachyte is most probably the eroded remnants of the feeder system of dykes and sills which supplied Sattima. They are thought to be amongst the oldest rocks in the area and were emplaced approx. 4-5million years ago.

“The Simbara quartz trachyte is a porphyritic rock with alkali feldspar phenocrysts approximately 5mm long set in a fine matrix.



'Water Tower' heritage... Aberdares 5 million year old Simbara rock

The rock weathers grey colour with some iron staining particularly around the phenocrysts which also weather proud. The mineral assemblage of this rock type normally consists of essential alkali feldspar; relatively minor plagioclase and quartz. Biotite, clinopyroxene and olivine are common accessory minerals.”



2010 Raffle Prizes

OUR THANKS GO TO THE FOLLOWING DONORS WHO HAVE PLEDGED PRIZES FOR THE RAFFLE

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Many thanks to our Raffle Committee:

Jenny Davey, Henrietta Remnant and Belinda Levitan for their voluntary efforts to secure these prizes

Raffle tickets and prizes

Teams that have not received/collected their raffle ticket books should do so urgently from the Rhino Ark office. More tickets are available on request.

This year again promises a variety of exciting prizes.



Camping 2010 Charge - Tarpo Appointed

Tarpo Industries Ltd is the appointed outfitter for spectator camp accommodation and catering for the 2010 Charge.

There will be two distinct areas for camping: These are designated Competitor Camp and Spectator Camp.

Competitor Camp: Car Entrants are being requested to submit the names of those in their campsites at the Rhino Charge Driver Briefing (Braeburn School, May 8th at 11:30 am).

Spectator Camp: This will be in its own identified area.

During the Charge, there will be a payment of a Ksh 500 per head Venue Area entry fee (under 18 years old, free entry). The same wrist band system will be in force – a three colour coded one for

- a) Competitor Camp entrants / media
- b) Officials and Sponsors
- c) Spectator Camp visitors.

All persons who enter the check-in gate – including camp staff must wear the wrist bands at all times. Those found without a band by officials and KK Guards, our security service team, will have to pay again.

For Tarpo bookings please contact Ruth or Asim:
info@tarpo.com Tel: (020) 3561111 / 0733 958 400 / 0724 227 294.

As has always been the practice, the appointed outfitter can accommodate competitors, sponsors and media teams in their designated spectator area.

Venue security - KK Guards in Charge

The friendly-but-firm faces of the guards wearing the KK uniform will be on patrol and manning key access points at the 2010 Rhino Charge. Venue check-in, HQ and other important areas such as competitor and spectator areas including the Gauntlet will be important 'beats' for KK this year.

If you have a problem or an issue make contact with the men of KK. They are all equipped with radios and can assist or secure further assistance as may be required.

Rivercross – safety monitoring

This year, continuous monitoring of cars will again be provided by Satellite GPS transceivers from Rivercross Tracking Ltd in co-operation with Skywave Mobile Communications. It is the third year that Rivercross have provided such a facility to entrants.

In addition to regular position updates on the entrant's cars throughout the event, the GPS includes a 'panic button' that can be pressed in case of emergency. This will alert the organisers to any problem that a competitor may have and give co-ordinates to which the air and ground search and rescue teams can be directed.

"The concerns regarding installation of the units have been largely addressed," commented Rivercross MD David Gachuche. Units will be available for installation from the end of April. He urged entrants to contact Rivercross soonest to make arrangements for installation. Rivercross new premises is at Wilson Airport – Pewin House, 3rd floor (First building on the left, after the police block by the Shell Petrol Station). Tel: 020 6005678 / 6005438/9, 0720 030581.

Rivercross will have a tracking facility at HQ tent so that car followers can keep up with the logging process on their public screen.

Continued from page 1

Charge Fever high

Briefing for Charge drivers and their teams takes place on May 8th at Braeburn School, Nairobi when Clerk of the Course Anton Levitan announces 'Check In' – a deception itself, as Check In only gives competitors route notes to the actual venue many kilometers beyond!

Entries filled up even faster this year than in any previous event. Slots for million shilling pledges totalled 17 in July 2009 – one month after the 2009 Rhino Charge, and within five days of the Ksh 500,000 pledge being opened on August 1 2009 (August 5), all remaining 52 places (a maximum of 65 can sign up) were taken. Six new entrants – three taking million shilling positions – were confirmed. This shortened the close off time from 2009 by 17 days.

As per Rhino Charge custom there is no waiting list. Once all slots are filled, entries are closed. Thus the first-come-first-served rule remains strictly adhered to. Pledges made have to be fulfilled by February 28th – the deadline for deposits to be banked. This year there was only one withdrawal by Feb 28th. Entries are limited for both human footprint (environment) and management reasons.

Great care is taken at each venue – and each year a new venue is located – to ensure cleanliness and that it is left undamaged. After each Charge, entrants and organisers make sure rubbish is totally cleared. Re-visits to venue sites are made at random and records maintained.

Some tracks are made but all pre-agreed by host communities. Many continue to be used by them. Committee re-visits overwhelmingly record that sites return to their natural state very quickly – often within weeks.

Driver's Briefing set for May 8th at Braeburn School

This year's Rhino Charge driver's briefing will be held on Saturday 8 May 2010 at Braeburn School, Gitanga Road in Lavington.

Besides the drivers, representatives of each team, guard post officers and sponsors are expected to attend the briefing or send a representative. You will be briefed on pre-Charge check-in details. The Rhino Charge programme and the competitor bags will be handed out to each team and guard post sponsor.

Lunch and beer will be on sale at venue afterwards.

Quattro Charge 2010

Team Magic will be organising two Quattro Charge events this year and the dates are as follows:

- First event will be held on **Sunday 29th August 2010**
- Second event to be held on **Sunday 5th December 2010**

The Teams - 2010

They cut across all sections of Kenyan society and with a lively following of overseas participants – some as entrants and others filling the runner/navigator ranks for veteran Kenyan teams.

This year's Charger field sports seven first timers. The remainder have done it often year in, year out. Veteran Charger slot is firmly filled by septuagenarian Jas Sehmi of Nyeri with his decorative daughters. Jas has competed in every Rhino Charge in the same car – a 1947 Willis Jeep. This compact second world war off-road offshoot has kept spectators in the Gauntlet spell bound with it and its driver's wild antics over rocks, ravines and *kirongas*.

Gender has no boundary in Rhino Charge. Ladies vie to outdo the blokes and often do! The 2010 Charge has six cars listed with lady entrants. Among them the 'Girls in Pearls' Sapieha sisters in an S1 Land Rover that denies seeing better days; feisty Caroline Armstrong and her bevy of 'bush hardened' town girls always in there for a day of excitement and Tanya Church's Rhino Rouges fitness gang in their red short wheel Land Cruiser and with big fund raise reputation. New entrants Petra Somen/Sabine Kontos, tired of making sandwiches and coffee for their husbands Team 21, will sparkle up the event in Car 8.

Other greats are back. Car 5 of Alan McKittrick - so often in the top three and for nine years Victor Ludorum winner (money raised/highest position) and with Ksh 56 million raised for the cause will be there. Ian Duncan's 'Orange Box' of a Land Cruiser with more dents on its fuselage than a panel beater would want to tidy up and three times winner, will be vying again with last year's winners the young and fearless Mark Glen/Bryn Llewellyn of Car 48; Sean Avery's Bundufundis and Jonny Havelock's old blood laced with young blood this year in Car 32.

Peter Kinyua, big time fund raiser of Car 23, the Kanyali caterpillar-like Unimog no. 37 and new entrant Kit Karberry of London and Victor Ludorum winner of the UK Rhino Charge, here for the first time, are others to watch. Then there are the American Wags (*wageni* not wives and girlfriends) in Car 10 all the way from Boston, the Chris Welles father and son team who cut their teeth last year fagging for Jonny Havelock's car 32 and raising a bucket load of cash.



Veteran Charger Jas Sehmi and his wife Satindar meet President and Prime Minister



President and the 2009 Rhino Charge winner Car No. 48

Lord Aberdare visits the Aberdares....

US and UK trustees on celebratory visit.

With so much to celebrate after 21 years, the Kenyan Rhino Ark Trustees invited the volunteer trustees in Britain and the US to visit the Aberdares.

It was the first orchestrated visit with meetings with community groups and a workshop led by the Director of KWS Julius Kipng'etich and co-attended by Deputy Director Kenya Forest Service, Emilio Mugo. It ended with the KWS/Rhino Ark hosted bonfire barbecue event at a tented camp inside the Aberdare National Park attended by over 200 Rhino Chargers and their supporters.

Lord Aberdare, the great, great grandson of the President of the prestigious Royal Geographical Society of London in 1884 when the mountains were 'discovered' and named after him by the explorer Joseph Thomson was in the party. A member of the House of Lords, Lord Aberdare is Rhino Ark's Patron in the United Kingdom and was visiting the Aberdares for the first time.

"I was hugely impressed by what Rhino Ark with its partners – KWS, KFS and the communities living on the fence line – have achieved. This seems to be a superb model of what such a project should seek to be, achieving a whole variety of aims – conservation, community benefit and water resource protection – and creating a genuine partnership with all those involved and looking ahead to the needs of maintenance.

I wish you all success in consolidating and building on what has been achieved."

Lord Aberdare
Patron, Rhino Ark

Amongst those in the party were: US Trustee, George Griffin of Washington DC who in the mid-eighties was Deputy Head of Mission in the US Embassy in Nairobi; Sheena Jordan – Rhino Ark's volunteer manager of operations in the US office and representing her father, a founder trustee of Rhino Ark, Dr Bill Jordon, OBE; the London barrister Guy Tritton, Chairman of the UK Trustees; UK Trustees Nicholas Kuhle, eldest son of Rhino Ark founder the late Ken Kuhle; John Bowden, organiser of the UK Rhino Charge which has raised over Ksh 10 million for the fence project and entrant of Car 9 in the Kenya Rhino Charge.

The UK and US Charities have tax beneficial facilities for all fund raising sources and especially provide the Kenya and UK Rhino Charge donations with online donation facilities – justgiving.com/charity/rhinoark
firstgiving.com/RhinoArkCharitableTrustInc



Visitors test Safaricom Foundation's elephant grid at Kieni



UK/US Trustees at the Final Post plaque with Kikipiri fence build groups Kipkiama Cecaaffe and Gita.



UK Trustee Chair Guy Tritton (left), Lord Aberdare, Jas Sehmi of Car 12, KWS Director Julius Kipng'etich, Nick Kuhle, Sheena Bliss, Colin Church and George Griffin at KWS/KFS workshop.

Community wins Michael Werikhe Award



The communities that gave no-cost labour to build sections of the fence near their farms on Mt Kipipiri - Kipkama Cecaife and Gita - won the East African Wildlife Society's Michael Werikhe award for services for conservation in the Aberdare, presented to them by President Kibaki (centre). The award is in memory of the great conservation pioneer, Michael Werikhe, who in the nineteen eighties and nineties walked thousands of miles in Kenya, other African countries and all over the world to raise awareness at the plight of the Black Rhino threatened by the globally organised efforts to poach rhino for its horn. The choice of winner is made by the Rhino Charge Committee.

In the picture back centre is Professor Fred Owino, Chairman of the Prime Minister's Task Force on the Mau. Professor Owino is currently Chairman of the EAWLS. Back right is the Minister of Forestry and Wildlife, Dr Noah Wekesa. The perpetual trophy is created by the Kenyan artist Kioko. Each annual winner receives a replica donated by Rhino Ark.

Appointment

Bongo Team Strengthened

Adam Mwangi has joined Rhino Ark's field team as Bongo Conservation and Research Programme Co-ordinator.

Adam is a graduate of Moi University and has a post graduate Diploma in Ethnology and Animal Physiology from Linköping University, Sweden. He has had wide experience in field research and was assistant to Dr Lyndon Estes of the Rare Species Conservatory

Foundation of the US for the research programme he undertook on Bongo in the Aberdare and Mt Kenya in 2005/06.

Based in Nyeri, Mr Mwangi will work closely with the Bongo Surveillance Unit in the field and in all aspects of archive records, field dissemination, record keeping and dung sample collection and storage for DNA testing.



Adam Mwangi, Bongo Conservation and Research Programme Co-ordinator.



UNEP assisted Project Assessment in Progress

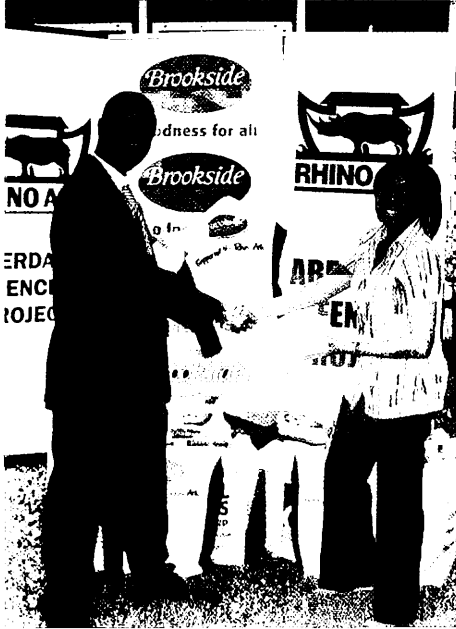
An environment assessment to review the fence's impact upon the stability, security, integrity and economic well-being of the Aberdare Conservation Area and its forest edge communities is well under way. The contract with the firm Biotope Consultancy was signed in January and is due for presentation in June 2010.

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has provided fund support together with Rhino Ark and the East

African Wildlife Society's Forest Working Group. The assessment includes active assistance from the Kenya Wildlife Service and the Kenya Forest Service, Greenbelt Movement and other interested stakeholders.

The assessment will give valuable insight into the fence's impact upon the Aberdare Ecosystem and its future management. It will provide an in-depth review of the role fencing can play to sustainably manage a conservation area.

Brookside kit for school's Aberdare Fence Run



Heri Nyaki (right), Brand Manager, Brookside Dairy Ltd is pictured presenting caps and t-shirts to Eric Kihiu, Resource Development Manager, Rhino Ark. Brookside donated 1,000 t-shirts and caps as kits for the Aberdare Fence Schools Relay - run by 70 schools on the fence to create awareness for conservation.

Forest people on patrol

Those who live near the forest edge know it better than anyone. Rhino Ark has consistently worked hard for inclusive management of the indigenous forest areas.

Within Rhino Ark's maintenance outreach objectives, the talents of skilled people patrolling the forest areas is as important as ensuring the fence line itself is in good order.

In May, the Aberdare Conservation Area Joint Surveillance Unit (AJSU) is to be launched. A small team has completed both a field test and interview assessment. Prime requirements were for candidates to have a keen interest in forest and wildlife lore and an ability to patrol deep in the forest areas for up to ten days at a time living under canvas constantly in tough conditions. Their brief is to monitor threats to forest integrity and illegal activity, undertake de-snaring, and monitor tree and wildlife regeneration. The team will

include selected KWS rangers under control of an officer so that security matters can be responded to quickly and efficiently. KFS rangers have also been invited to join the unit.

The Team will be equipped by Rhino Ark with a support vehicle – one that has helped build the fence – radios, uniforms and GPS. The team will be housed by KWS in their quarters on the edge of the Aberdare National Park in Mweiga.

Their brief is to primarily undertake patrols in the vast areas where the Bongo Surveillance Unit and the KWS Rhino Surveillance Unit cannot cover adequately.

With 2000 km² of forest and national park area inside the Aberdare Fence, the necessity for accelerated monitoring and patrol work by dedicated community teams will greatly assist in further securing the precious ecosystem and all within it.

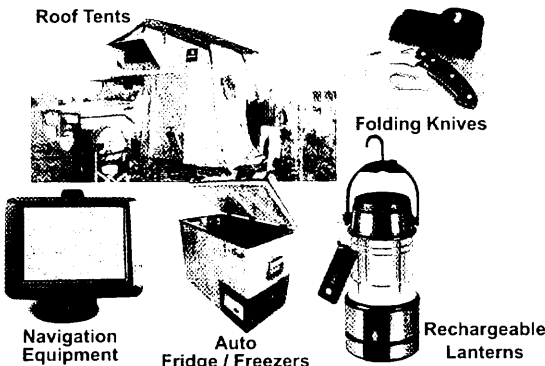
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Hog Charge 2010 sets new record

107 teams - Kshs 3,652,754

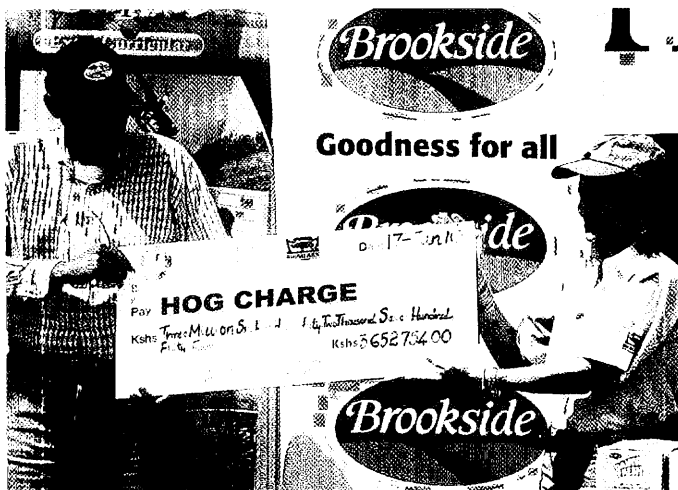
The 12th annual Hog Charge event raised a record of Ksh 3,652,754 for maintenance of the Rhino Ark Aberdare Fence.

107 teams - ten more than last year - battled it out at the Kahawa Sukari Ranch, Ruiru, on Sunday 17th January. Children from over 15 schools participated in this event. Hundreds of supportive parents and friends attended.

The highest cash sponsorship was raised by Team 98, The Wild Hogs from Peponi House. They raised a whopping Ksh

258,350. They were followed by Team 14, Bizza Bikers from Kenton College with Ksh 178,650. In third place was Team 17, Hoglets, also from Kenton College with Ksh 135,000. Pembroke House emerged the best check-point sponsor.

Each team must raise a total of Kshs 20,000 in sponsorship to qualify for the event. The money raised is donated to Mark Tilbury of Car 35 as sponsorship for his 2010 Charge entry. The Hog Charge has now raised over Kshs 21 million for Rhino Ark since the first event in 1998.



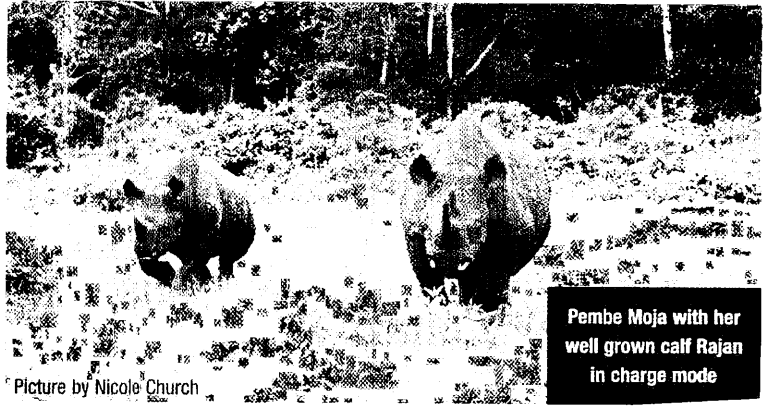
Chairman of Brookside, Muhoho Kenyatta (left) holds a cheque for Ksh 3,652,752 for Car 35 for the 2010 Rhino Charge. At right, Valerie Gunputrav of Rhino Ark.



Rhinos in charge

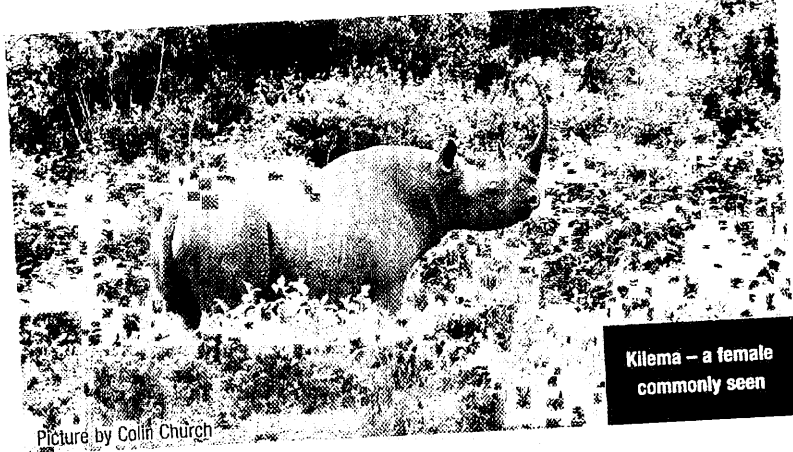
Black Rhino – though greatly threatened by the international trade for its highly (but mistakenly) valued horn – inhabit the Aberdares. It is of supreme importance that the Black Rhino population in the Aberdares is rigorously protected. KWS's Rhino Surveillance Unit, with some help from Rhino Ark, is currently undertaking a Zoological Society of London (ZSL) led project to scan the entire Salient hot spot zone for Black Rhino using 34 laser cameras and covering each square kilometer of the range.

"We will have scientifically supported information as to the surveillance teams' identified numbers of Black Rhino in this 50 km² area where our daily patrols keep up a constant monitoring process," comments KWS Rhino Program Coordinator Ben Okita.



Picture by Nicole Church

Pembe Moja with her well grown calf Rajan in charge mode



Picture by Colin Church

Kilema – a female commonly seen

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Aberdare leopard's tale

Picture by David Gulden

The Aberdares is fast becoming one of the sought after places to watch leopard.

The forest environment is not only home territory for these normally nocturnal beasts, but is also where these perceived shy cats parade themselves at any hour of the day.

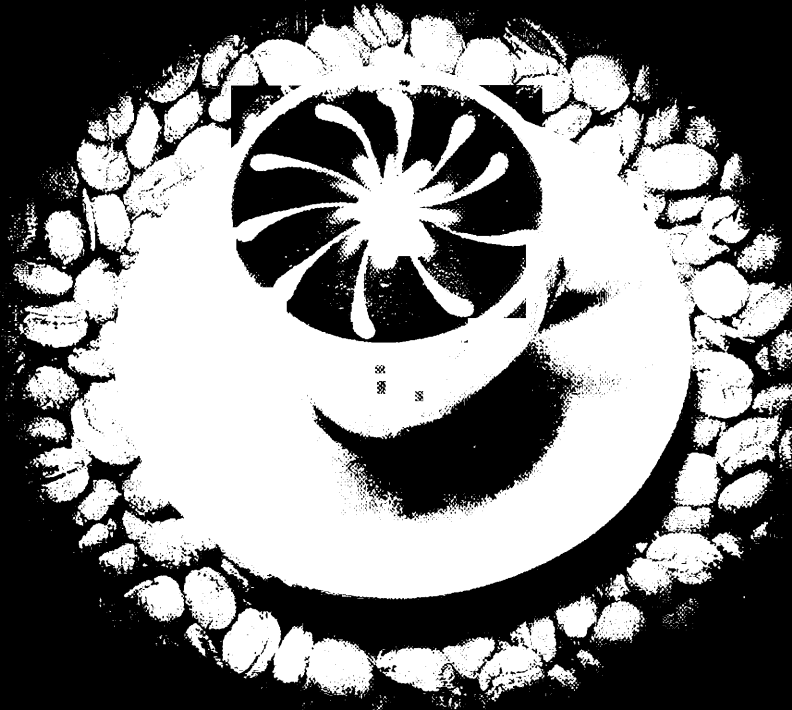
They are rarely seen snoozing in trees – a more common sight in dry country – but walking, lolling and frolicking in the grassy roadside glades, the bamboo belt as well as the high moorland areas.

Without extolling areas of the Salient over other range areas within the Aberdares – as leopard are found in the less frequently visited southern and northern forest regions – but it is common for a game run visitor to the Salient to see at least one leopard on an average day's driving if they look carefully and keep their eyes focused at ground level.



Picture by Nigel Pavitt

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Spirit of the Charge 2009 film launched - Carnivore, Nairobi

December 3rd 2009 marked a significant day in the Rhino Charge Calendar. Competitors, sponsors and friends of Rhino Ark gathered at the Carnivore, Simba Saloon to celebrate the launch of the "Spirit of the Charge 2009" - a film about the Rhino Charge 2009 competition.

A full Buffet and BBQ, a copy of Rhino Charge 2009 DVD, live entertainment, a disco and Rhino Charge website photo competition awards characterised the evening. The dramatic 26 minute film was dedicated to the late Mike Higgins, a former Trustee of Rhino Ark and Veteran Charger. The top five fundraisers were also awarded with prizes. Carnivore were joint sponsors with Rhino Ark.

All guests received a goodie bag with a copy of the 2009 Spirit of the Charge DVD, Rhino Ark's publication, the ARKive magazine and a cap. A total of Ksh 65 million was raised in last year's Rhino Charge.



Car 5: Victor Ludorum winners in the 2009 Rhino Charge – Alan McKittrick and Nick Hutchinson



Ben Woodhams (right) of Car 39 and friends



KEKIKA PLANTS 79,000 TREES

In 2007, the KEKIKA Community comprising members from Kereita, Kinari and Kamae communities began a tree nursery project to support conservation of forests in the Aberdare Ecosystem. Rhino Ark has provided support funds for this project. From left to right: Samuel Kung'u, Vice Chairman of KEKIKA; Wilson Gioko, Chairman; Lucy Kamau, Treasurer; James Githui, Community / Fence Manager, Rhino Ark and Stephen Kusero, Secretary are pictured planting a tree at Kereita forest. Since inception, 79,000 trees have been planted in the three sectors and 2,000 seedlings sold to farmers for their woodlots.

Rhino Ark wins Total Award



Total's Eco-challenge gave Rhino Ark a special award for its conservation work in the Aberdares. Total MD, Felix Majekodunmi (left) presents the award to Rhino Ark's Eric Kihui and Valerie Gunputrav at a ceremony held at Carnivore on November 24th 2009. Mr. Majekodunmi commended Rhino Ark's outreach programmes for tree nurseries for fenceline communities in the Aberdares. This is the second such award Rhino Ark has received.

London's Royal Geographical Society Hosts Talk

On 22 February, the Aberdares came to London when an audience of over 600 fellows and members of the historic Royal Geographical Society gathered to hear Colin Church give an insightful talk on the completion of the Rhino Ark Fence.

In the hour-long lecture, Colin said that in the early days of the project "the motivation was to protect the black rhino. Then we all woke up to the fact that the farmers, who lived near the fence, were celebrating. The reality is that this forested mountain area was the lifeblood for millions of people. We realised that the whole ecosystem was at stake."

"Our thinking had to change. The Aberdares are now the most secure ecosystem in the whole of Kenya – and maybe Africa. Now all wildlife and precious fauna in the Aberdares are better able to flourish."

The project has started to attract serious international interest. Renowned travel writer Brian Jackman, in an article in the Sunday Telegraph, referred to the completion of "the massive task of ring-fencing" the Aberdares as a major sign that Kenya was determined to combat poachers. A two-page feature on the Aberdares, published in the current edition of African Business, highlighted the close collaboration between Rhino Ark and the Kenya Wildlife Service – for the building, management and future maintenance of the fence. As reported in the Guardian, the Rhino Ark electric fence "has become a model for countries struggling to protect scarce water resources."

The strong historic connection between the Aberdares and UK was emphasised by the presence of Lord Aberdare – a Patron of Rhino Ark. In 1884, the Aberdares were named after his great, great grandfather – then President of the Society by the explorer Joseph Thomson.



RGS Director Rita Gardner (centre) with Lord Aberdare (left) and speaker Colin Church (right)

Date set for UK Rhino Charge



Sunday 3rd October is the date for this year's UK Rhino Charge. Once again the event is to be held in East Sussex at beautiful, 1,500 acre Pippingford Park, near Wych Cross.

Comments organiser John Bowden: "As in previous years the Charge itself is open to any 4x4. There will be harder Tiger Lines for those who do not mind a few scratches and dents on their pride and joy. In previous years, competing vehicles have

ranged from a 1950 80 Series One Land Rover, via a 1958 Hotchkiss Jeep and an Auto Union Munga through various Range Rovers, Discoverys and other Land Rovers and hybrids to Suzukis, Land Cruisers and Pajeros. Good teamwork and concentration can be as important as pure off-road ability in this competition, in which the many and varied tasks set out by Brain Hartley of Club Off Road help to give everyone a chance of success. As before loan vehicles will be available should prospective entrants not possess a vehicle of their own and if they are prepared to add to the coffers in return."

Past teams have included the usual individuals plus groups from 4x4 specialists, offices and clubs who have grouped together to raise the necessary sponsorship and enjoyed a very different day out competing in a unique and highly enjoyable event.

Further details can be found on www.rhinoark.org or phone UK Rhino Charge coordinator John Bowden on 01444 241457.

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.

- Nigel Pavitt,
Laila Bahaa-El-Din,
David Gulden
Donation of images
- Steadman Associates
Media monitoring
- Carnivore Restaurant
Venue for Spirit of the Charge 2009
Film Premier
- Gavin Bennett
MC at the Spirit of the Charge 2009
- KWS
RA Offices
- Kenya Tourism Federation
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- Braeburn Schools
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- Goodyear Kenya
Support assistance for Rhino Ark Vehicles
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Sponsorship of Rhino Charge Programme 2010
- Michael Jones Software
Pre-press assistance
- Maidana Nann, Robin Johnson,
Peter & Anne Broomfield
Donations
- Lois Khule
Donations
- Car 48 & Car 12
Displaying of vehicles during the
fence commissioning ceremony
- Brookside Dairy Ltd
Donation of caps and t-shirts
for the Aberdare Fence
schools run
- Express Automation
Provision of radios for
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- **Strategic Evaluation of the Aberdare Fence... transition from fence build to ecosystem management**
(Published February 2007)
- **Aberdare Profile.**
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All the above are available from Rhino Ark offices in Nairobi, UK and the USA

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