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LAIKIPIA WILDLIFE FORUM

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NEWSLETTER

JULY 2007

Conceptual drawings for Oreteti
eco-tourism development
by Barnaby Ghau

**Public Waste:
Ignored Problems and
SAFI Solutions**
- Ryan Sheely

Throughout Laikipia, a variety of different enterprises are in the process of leveraging natural and cultural resources to promote local development and growth. However, it is common knowledge that if these resources are not utilized in a sustainable fashion, all gains from local development projects will be fleeting. A striking example of the need to take action to prevent environmental degradation can be seen in the problem of public waste that plagues commercial centers across Laikipia. The proliferation of shops and markets in small towns across the region has generated a mass of plastic and organic waste, which no local towns have been able to control completely. As a result, waste materials have accumulated in public spaces, diminishing the natural beauty of the area and posing health risks to humans, livestock, and wildlife.

The SAFI (Sanitation Activities Fostering Infrastructure) Project is a waste disposal and anti-littering program that seeks to directly address the problem of public waste in Laikipia. The primary aim of the project is to remove litter from the small town centers across Laikipia and to maintain the cleanliness of these areas through cooperation with local leadership, education and mobilization of local communities, and the monitoring and punishment of littering. In addition, the project is designed to provide leverage in understanding the precise social and political mechanisms through which community development projects can be effectively and sustainably implemented.

Ryan Sheely is a PhD student in Political Science from Yale University. The SAFI project is one piece of his larger dissertation research on the relationship between customary institutions and governance outcomes in Laikipia. For more information on the SAFI Project or to offer support to the project, contact Ryan at ryanmsheely@gmail.com



The Single Largest Rhino Translocation in East Africa Successfully Completed
Ol Pejeta Conservancy has created the largest breeding

population of black rhinos in East Africa
On the 3rd of February 2007 Ol Pejeta Conservancy, Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) and Lewa Wildlife Conservancy commenced the single biggest rhino translocation ever undertaken in East Africa.

Twenty Seven rhinos were successfully released into the enlarged 75,000 acres of Ol Pejeta Conservancy. This included the free release of a mother-calf combination.

The experienced translocation team equipped each rhino with a transmitter, placed in the horn. These transmitters have allowed complete post-release monitoring of the animals, ensuring their well-being and safety. Ol Pejeta Conservancy now holds a breeding population of 75 black rhino - the single largest in East Africa.

The black rhinos were moved from adjacent Solio Rhino Sanctuary - which held a surplus of 30 rhinos. This crucial translocation will help to ensure that maximum breeding rates are achieved and adequate food resources maintained.

Conservation of endangered species in their natural habitat represents a major part of Ol Pejeta's mission. Black rhinos remain critically endangered and efforts to successfully conserve this species and ultimately develop a viable national population will represent a land mark achievement in wildlife conservation.

In Kenya the numbers of black rhino dropped from an estimated 20,000 in the 1970s to less than 300 animals in the 1980s. This drastic decline was due to unabated poaching which took place inside and outside National Parks and Reserves. Kenya was at the forefront of efforts to offer concentrated and

effective protection in sanctuaries, a strategy that has been a major factor in the increase in numbers of black rhinos worldwide.

Through various conservation initiatives, the remaining black rhino population has been protected from intense poaching and the current population in Kenya is estimated at 539. By 2010 Kenya will aim to increase its black rhino numbers to 650. One major challenge to coping with the gradual but steady increase in rhino numbers will be the limited availability of areas with suitable habitat and adequate security; the expansion of the Ol Pejeta Conservancy will help in this regard by providing a further 75,000 acres of prime black rhino habitat.

To read more about the details of the translocation and the welfare of the new Ol Pejeta Rhino's please visit www.wildlifedirect.org/olpejetarhinos

The Ol Pejeta Conservancy occupies approximately 360 square kilometers of African savannah within the Laikipia District of Kenya and incorporates the Sweetwaters Chimpanzee Sanctuary. Laikipia carries large and growing wildlife populations and is home to almost 50% of Kenya's black rhino population. The Ol Pejeta Conservancy works to conserve wildlife, provide a sanctuary for great apes and to generate income through wildlife tourism and complementary enterprise for reinvestment in conservation and community development.

Visit: www.olpejetaconservancy.org

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Silver for Borana
Borana Lodge would like to congratulate our chief guide Boniface Gitonga on recently attaining his KPSGA silver level qualification. To our knowledge Boni is the first guide from north eastern (and possibly the whole of) Laikipia to have achieved this level of qualification and hope that he will be a role model for many others to aspire to. Well done Boni!