



ARKive

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE RHINO ARK CHARITABLE TRUST

NO. 40 MAY 2012

Safaricom Foundation Grants Rhino Ark Ksh 155 million For Mau Eburu

The Safaricom Foundation will provide Rhino Ark Ksh 155 million for the restoration of the Mau Eburu Forest and its wider ecosystem.

The funds will be rolled out over a four-year period starting with immediate effect.

The grant was announced on April 3rd 2012 at a press conference in the Michael Joseph Centre at Safaricom House, Nairobi.

Among the activities in which the funds will play a role are:

- Support for the Rhino Ark Eburu Forest Electric Fence to its completion;
- Restoration of areas degraded by unsolicited encroachment;
- Resolving of human/wildlife conflict with the fencing project;
- Engagement in partnership schemes with the forest-edge communities as part of a major forest rehabilitation programme;

- Establishment of tree nurseries for communities under the self-sustainable principle developed by Rhino Ark;
- Planning and development of compatible livelihood projects that will earn income for forest-edge communities;
- Creation of conditions for a broader ecosystem conservation effort to enable wildlife corridors to function through Eburu Forest linking the East Mau and Lake Naivasha range and wetlands areas; and
- Protect the forest's considerable biodiversity and particularly its outstanding birdlife and threatened wildlife including a special effort to support the critically endangered Eastern Mountain Bongo.

A portion of the funds will also be set aside for an endowment to be managed by a Trust in which the Government, through the Kenya Forest Service (KFS), the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), Rhino Ark and the Eburu communities, would manage the forest into the future.

... Continued on page 5

RHINO CHARGE '12

It's a way of life63 cars for the 2012 Charge

The 24th annual Rhino Charge – Kenya's self created unique motor sport off-road event – is just weeks away.

"The Rhino Charge is more than just an extreme sport, it becomes a way of life", mouthed one veteran entrant as he spat oil from his mouth whilst fixing an undercarriage oil seal on his bush scarred Land Rover.

With a total of 63 cars under starters orders and committed to fulfill their pledges to help fund Rhino Ark's mountain 'water tower' conservation drive, the event continues to attract more applications than there are entry slots.

As Rhino Charge rules clearly state, entrants pledge fund raise levels on a first-come, first-served basis. For the threshold of Ksh 1 million, a total of 19 entrants have made a pledge, and for the next level of Ksh 750,000, all the other competitors have pledged. No places remained for the last category for a Ksh 500,000 pledge. For the second year running, all 65 places were grabbed just three days into the 30-day second level offer period that opened on August 1, 2011.

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Fence Build begins April 2012 in Mt Kenya and Mau Eburu

Stories on page seven



Mt Kenya



MEET THE CHALLENGE!

Challenges come in many different forms throughout our lives. Take the Rhino Charge: sometimes the road ahead appears smooth, the views are amazing, the vehicle is performing and the team is working together, but at other times the road is rocky, steep and challenging. Finishing the Charge takes determination, grit and a desire to succeed.

No matter the obstacle, whether it be mental, physical or emotional, at Braeburn we know that determination, a positive mindset, an ability to work with others as a team to support, encourage and be encouraged are the character traits that success in all walks of life are built on. We work with all our students in our schools to help them set their own goals and aspirations and we give them the tools and support they need to reach them. Perhaps this is why they blossom into the creative, compassionate and confident individuals we are so proud of.

At Braeburn we want to help your child find the right path to the top! Visit our website www.braeburn.com for more details of the 14 Braeburn international schools in and around Kenya and Tanzania.



Braeburn Schools
Summum Appeto

Rhino Ark Objectives

Rhino Ark seeks solutions in the mountain range ecosystems of Kenya, and for the benefit of Eastern Africa in general, to:

- Conserve such ecologically precious, indigenous forests and their total habitat.
- Resolve human / wildlife conflict.
- Create a sustainable and harmonious environment for people and wildlife – indeed for all flora and fauna within them.

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.
- Become a service provider for creating sustainable programmes for forest-edge communities across a range of eco-systems including, but not limited to, carbon sequestration. All such programmes and projects will be targeted to create non-exploitive income generation for the communities.
- Raise funds and other forms of support to develop sound management processes over entire eco-systems.
- Create a framework where wider society and forest-edge communities become involved in the management processes through public-private partnerships.
- Build mechanisms and management structures to prevent illegal exploitation of the forest habitat wherever it is threatened.

In doing so, all the stakeholders will benefit and endangered species – indeed all flora and fauna – will be better secured.

Act now!...

help us to continue our work

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Colin Church

Chairman's view

Who benefits - pays

Rhino Ark is a Kenyan initiative that practices hands on management for mountain ecosystems under the public/private partnership concept.

As we now enter the exciting stage of participating in Mt Kenya and the Mau - two of Kenya's most vital and high valued mountain forest ecosystems and prime sources of water for millions - the pertinence of our work comes strongly into focus.

So often in conservation work there are two ingredients that seem to come in short supply: hands on participation from those who are directly and most effected by habitat loss; and a focus on the whole ecosystem or rangeland which is under threat.

There are many great initiatives that reach out and do very effective work for specific threatened species but lose traction if the target does not include those who live and are part of the life of the ecosystem.

Today the pressure on all resources is greater than at any time in known history. We are now 7 billion souls on this planet. Man is the greatest innovator, inventor and utiliser of our amazing natural resources; and also their most ruthless destroyer.

So planning and management of vital areas of great natural resource is increasingly at the heart of economic and social welfare planning.

Evidence of this new thinking is illustrated by those in the partnerships for securing Mt Kenya and, with Rhino Ark's first foray in the Mau forest

complex, with its commitment to Mau Eburu.

In both these initiatives 'partnership' is at its heart. The Government has committed to date 100 million shillings to assist with fencing – Ksh 70 million for Mt Kenya and Ksh 30 million for Mau Eburu.

Rhino Ark funds raised from the annual Rhino Charge are providing Ksh 24 million and with more planned. Then we have Kenya's corporate world led by the Safaricom Foundation with a grant of Ksh 155 million for Mau Eburu and Finlays, the horticultural export firm, with substantial support for Mau Eburu (see pages 5, 7 & 12). There are others who have done much early work in both areas – the Kenya Forest Working Group (the special focus arm of the East African Wildlife Society), African Wildlife Foundation, the Mt Kenya Trust, Greenbelt and Save the Mau Trust.

A formidable force is developing to secure these precious and highly valued areas. A pillar of their future management has to include practical methods for the 'who benefits, pays' principle.

If rainfall, farm output, tea production, water outflow, stored carbon, hydro and geothermal power is essential for every person's daily lives then the utility and agricultural users and providers need to hunker down and invest back into the ecosystem in a realistic way. A cosmetic approach is passé. We need some hardheaded, hard nosed and specific ways into which participation is bedded for all future management processes for the mountain 'gold mines' of the country.

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Colin Church, Chairman, Rhino Ark (seated left) and Les Baillie, Chairman Safaricom Foundation (seated right) are congratulated by (standing l-r) Fred Owino, Chairman of the National Water Towers Trust Management Committee and EAWLS, Mohammed A.M. Wa-Mwachai, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife and Hassan Noor, Chairman Interim Co-ordinating Secretariat (ICS) for the Mau Forest Complex having signed the partnership agreement.

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Safaricom Foundation Chairman Les Baillie said that the Foundation is keen to provide sustainable support to the preservation of Kenya's environment and natural resources through partnerships to grow forests, conserve biodiversity, mitigate against human-wildlife conflict and promote the use of renewal energy sources.

"Integrating the principles of sustainable development into Kenya's communities through our various projects is helping to reverse the loss of Kenya's environmental resources," he said during the launch of the partnership.

The concept for the trust would follow the same structure as that established for the Aberdares.

Colin Church, Chairman of Rhino Ark Management Committee said: "Safaricom Foundation's commitment to Rhino Ark's vision for Mau Eburu and the provision of this substantial grant will have a major impact upon this precious but highly threatened forest ecosystem. It means that together with the Eburu forest bordering communities, and working in close partnership with the key government bodies - The Interim Co-ordinating Secretariat (ICS) for the Mau Forest Complex, the Kenya Forest Service (KFS) and the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) - we can together create a conservation model for other communities bordering state-owned forest land in the Mau Complex and other threatened 'water towers'".

The funding for fence construction provided prior to today's announcement totaled Ksh 42 million from Rhino Ark, the Government of Kenya and Finlays, the horticultural export company. The actual fence will cost Ksh 100 million. The 50 km fence is expected to be completed in 18 months.



Interviewed by *Arkive*, Michael Karanja, Chairman of Rhino Ark's Board of Trustees said: "In the practice of conserving our indigenous mountain forests, an essential ingredient is the partnership principle that must nourish and grow between the communities that live adjacent to the areas, the Government agencies mandated to administer them and the wider Kenyan public and private sector."

"Rhino Ark is a Kenyan initiative that practices hands-on management for mountain forest ecosystems under the public/private partnership concept as developed in the Aberdares," added Mr. Karanja.

Mr Karanja welcomed the support of other organizations working in the Mau Forest Complex including the Kenya Forest Working Group/ East African Wildlife Society, the Save the Mau Trust, the Greenbelt Movement, and the African Wildlife Foundation.

"Safaricom Foundation's commitment will, I hope, continue to induce further public and private sector support for conserving our vital mountain 'water towers'", Mr Karanja concluded.

▼ Les Baillie, Chairman, Safaricom Foundation addresses the press conference.



Safaricom
FOUNDATION



'This is a milestone'

Mohammed A.M. Wa-Mwachai,
Permanent Secretary, Ministry of
Forestry and Wildlife

"Your coming together to support the environment and in particular the Eburu forest marks a major milestone that will have a significant impact on the ongoing conservation efforts. Public-private partnerships have made a big difference, especially in environmental protection and conservation.

In September 2009, the government embarked on emergency intervention measures by establishing an ICS in the office of the Prime Minister. The objective was, among other things, to develop a work programme for the rehabilitation of the Mau and a five-phase plan for the repossession of the forest land. The initiative by government, Rhino Ark and the Safaricom Foundation is a milestone in a collaborative approach towards the rehabilitation of the Mau Complex.

The Rhino Ark provided stewardship for the fund-raising and construction of the 400km Aberdare Electric Fence. This fence is now serving as a model for conservation and mitigating human/wildlife conflict. The fence has improved the livelihoods of millions of people in central Kenya and enhanced forest and wildlife protection. The Aberdare Conservation Area model has also demonstrated that the use of electric fencing as a management tool is effective and efficient.

It underlines the benefits of public, private partnerships in managing nature".

Mt Kenya – the big challenge

Work began in April 2012 on the mammoth task of building a Rhino Ark quality fence on the gazetted forest edge of Mt Kenya. The venture follows months of preparation and funds for start up have begun to come in.

The first phase of 50 kilometers will begin at the Kiringa River on the Eastern side of the mountain and continue through to Irangi at the Thuchi River.

On March 1, 2012 the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) co-ordinated a stakeholder meeting in Embu attended by members of the community forest associations along the proposed fence alignment, UNDP and Mt Kenya Trust, as well as the Provincial Commissioner's representative, Head of Central Conservancy, Kenya Forest Service John Wachihhi and KWS Deputy Director Mountains, Robert Njue.

Rhino Ark has committed start up funds for the project, a Land Cruiser and a 4x4 tractor with trailer.

Under the agreement with KWS, Rhino Ark's construction partners in the project, support funds from Rhino Ark will go towards payment for labour for alignment clearing costs and fence build, transport and fuel.

It is Rhino Ark's policy to engage as many local people who live on the fence line for clearing the line and for labour for the fence construction. Fence scouts to monitor the fence are then selected from the best performers on the fence build team.

Funds for start up have begun to come in.

The Treasury has made a specific allocation of Ksh 100 million in the current budget for building materials for the Mt Kenya (Ksh 70 million) and Mau Eburu (Ksh 30 million) projects. Rhino Ark's commitment to the two projects currently totals Ksh 24 million.



Mt Kenya stakeholders who attended the inaugural meeting held on 1st March 2012 at Izaak Walton Inn, Embu

Mau Eburu – fencing begins



Illegal logging has critically depleted forest cover

The Rhino Ark/Kenya Wildlife Service construction team began work on the Mau Eburu fence in April 2012.

Severely encroached by charcoal burners and illegal loggers, the 87 km² indigenous Mau Eburu forest remains a significant water catchment and source of geothermal power.

The fence will be 50 km long and will follow the survey beacons

of the forest boundary. It will begin at Eburu Forest Station office on the northern side.

The Rhino Ark quality fence will enable stronger management processes to be started in Eburu. Once the fence is built, it will enable the Kenya Forest Service (KFS) and the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) to introduce stronger management dynamics to bring illegal entry under control.

Rhino Ark's financial commitment includes provision of a Land Cruiser for the fence build team, fuel and payments for every completed kilometer of fence. Local communities are engaged to clear the fence line and build the fence under the KWS professional team.

Discussions are in progress regarding a policy of wildlife easements, utilizing Eburu forest as the centre of a biodiversity corridor that would link Eastern Mau through Mau Eburu to the Lake Naivasha range and wetlands. Such a process will depend upon the interest of several large-scale landowners for such a process on the Eburu to Lake Naivasha section and committed funds from internal sources and the global conservation community.

The concept is within the environmental expectations as expressed in the new Kenya Constitution. It is being strongly supported by the Interim Co-ordinating Secretariat for the Mau Complex (ICS) in the Prime Minister's Office.

It's a way of life63 cars for the 2012 Charge

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Entrants can opt out up to the end of February each year if confronted with impossible 'life changing circumstances or misfortune'. So this year just two cars have withdrawn, leaving 63 to take to the rugged hills somewhere in Kenya on the June Bank Holiday weekend to compete for the much revered little bronze black rhino trophy.

So teams of up to six per car will pit over 350 competitors to forage over some of the world's most rugged off-road terrain in the legendary secret location that they are only directed to at dawn on Charge Day, June 2nd.

The Committee does not keep a waiting list. From the last day of February each year when deposits are banked every entrant is committed. After that there is no turning back. The limited entry policy ensures a manageable event and that we leave our venues

– scattered all over the most beautiful, ruggedly wild and remote places of Kenya – clean and undamaged. Every year the Committee finds a new venue and this year's marks the 24th event.

350
competitors
to forage over some of
the world's most rugged
off road terrain always
in secret new
location

Briefing for the teams is all set for the popular new venue at Braeburn School on Gitanga road on May 5th from 11 am. Clerk of the Course Anton Levitan, well known for being very economic with the details, will announce Check-In and give drivers and teams a (very) vague idea of where the actual Charge Venue is.

With the exception that pre-agreed tracks be made as requested by host communities, re-visits overwhelmingly record that sites return to their natural state very quickly – often within weeks.

Mandatory purchase of Antenna for Global Positioning System (GPS) for EACH Rhino Charge 2012 entrant

Over the course of the last few Rhino Charge events it has become apparent that the installation and subsequent removal of the GPS antenna from the vehicles causes significant damage to the antennas and, as such, it becomes very difficult to re-sell this equipment.

It has therefore been decided by the Rhino Charge Management Committee that each entrant must purchase a GPS antenna kit through Rhino Ark which then becomes the property of the entrant. This GPS antenna can then be permanently installed into the event vehicle for use at this year's Charge and future Charges.

Rhino Ark has already purchased these GPS antennas on the entrants' behalf and they will be available for collection at the drivers' briefing on the 5th May 2012.

The landed cost (purchase price / freight / duty / VAT) to Rhino Ark of importing this equipment is US\$210 and therefore the cost to the entrant will also be US\$210 or KES 18,000. Please therefore ensure that your payment is made before the 5th May 2012. Cheques should be made to Rhino Ark and antenna's will only be released to the entrant upon receipt of payment.

In the event that an entrant does not compete the following year, and dependant on the condition of the GPS antenna, Rhino Ark will assist the entrant in disposing of the GPS antenna to an entrant who does not have an aerial.

RHINO CHARGE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE



Pictures by: Rivercross Tracking Ltd

Rhino Charge Driver Briefing on May 7th

The 2012 Rhino Charge driver's briefing is scheduled to take place on 5th May at Braeburn School, Lavington. This will be the 4th time that the school will be hosting this event.

All Charge entrants are to attend. Guard post officers and sponsors should also be present or send a representative.

Among the activities to take place are:

- briefing on pre-Charge check-in details by the Clerk of Course;
- distribution of the Rhino Charge programme and competitor bags;
- collection of car sponsorship; and
- filling of camping registration forms etc.

Lunch and drinks will be on sale at the venue afterwards.



2012 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, Devina Seipp,
Belinda Levitan, Valerie Gunputrav & Kate Mwangi
for their voluntary efforts to secure these prizes

KK on security patrol

KK Security will provide a dedicated team that will be in charge of all security issues at the 2012 Rhino Charge.

The entire venue check-in, information tent, gauntlet and HQ will be under tight security. The officers will also manage key access points for 24 hours to ensure a hassle-free event. All entrants to the

venue are issued with arm bands which allow access to the different zones for the event. KK are mandated to undertake barrier checks to ensure entry zone compliance.

KK Security have supported the Rhino Charge and Rhino Ark for eight consecutive years.



Camping Arrangements

Tarpo Industries Ltd is the appointed outfitter for spectator camp accommodation and catering for the 2012 Rhino Charge.

Every year, the Rhino Charge Committee gives a great deal of attention to ensure that camping facilities are as Charger and spectator friendly as possible. As in the previous years, there will be two distinct areas for camping: These are designated **Competitor Camp** and **Spectator Camp**.

Competitor Camp: Charge Car Entrants are requested to submit the names of those staying in their campsites at the Rhino Charge Driver Briefing (Braeburn School, May 5th at 11.30 am).

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

During the Charge, there will be a payment of 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
- b) Officials and sponsors
- c) Spectator Camp visitors

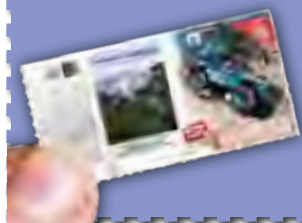
Everyone who enters the check-in gate, including camp staff, must wear the wrist bands at all times. Those found without a wrist band by officials or KK Guards will have to pay again.

Please contact Osman Adam Ganatra: osman@tarpo.com
Tel: 0722 204949 / 0733 958400 for details.

Raffle tickets and prizes

All teams should arrange to collect their 2012 Raffle books from the Rhino Ark office. For those who have already collected, more books are available on request.

This year promises new and exciting prizes.



RHINO CHARGE CALENDAR

NEW!!.....Rhino Charge calendar dated July 2012 - June 2013. Ksh 1,000/= . Available at the Driver's briefing and the Rhino Charge venue.

CHARGERS

THE STAKES GO HIGHER



It seems nothing will stop Chargers from coming back for more. Dust, spinning stones, searing heat, impossible luggas and hills. And it's big hills in this year's yet-to-be announced Charge zone that will await them once more.

And for the runners – well it will be running, climbing and more running – just lots of long leg stuff.

As for the competitors, brains and experience will be pitted starkly against some hot young teams out there determined to dislodge the veterans.

Equally there is a strong band of favourites who remain in un-modified bangers just to enjoy the ten hours of excitement. They want to be part of the adrenaline rush, mixed with some unbeatable fun, whilst raising money to help conserve those lifeblood mountains, and what they provide, at the heartbeat of the Kenyan economy.

Two time winners Car 48 with driver Mark Glen and navigator Bryn Llewellyn will be out there to defend the 2011 Trophy from their 2010 rivals, Bundufundis Car 38 (2010 winner) - the awesome (mainly) all Avery family with papa still at the wheel!

Having been right in the pod of lead cars for many Charges, Car 48 first gave the veterans a shot over the bows in 2008, coming second. In 2009, at Mogoswok, they dislodged rally ace and car fundi par excellence Ian Duncan in Car 2, taking their first ever win.

Other tough teams that will be right in there this year include Car 42, previous five-time winners who missed the event last year. Team leaders Will Carr-Hartley and Neil McCrae are with crew Mikey Carr-Hartley, David Francombe, Justin Larby and Simon Evans

Gray Cullen with his sister Crista and the team which finished seventh overall last year will be pushing for a win in their Car 22 – a Range Rover Buggy.

Not to be outdone, Gray's mother Gai and Team Fargo in Car 58 who snatched third overall last year, beating Duncan's Car 2 by just over 400 meters, will be there.

These family affairs have become common place where fund-raise fever keeps both *how to raise 'it'* and *modifications to machines*, no-tell secrets.

In the Somen family there will be two entrants: Petra with an all-girls team including Sabine Kontos, Joana Hechle, Millie Seagon, Catherine Coulson and Catherine Szlapak in Car 19; and husband Jonathan paring with Michael Kontos in Car 21. Both entries boast hybrids which were once Range Rovers.

And for the runners – well it will be running, climbing, and more running – just lots of long leg stuff.



Alan McKittrick's Car No. 5 manouvers through the rough terrain

From the Braeburn School yard comes Car 49 of school boss Terry Childs and son-in-law Patrick Garner in Car 4.

Amongst the intrepid band of all-ladies teams, the Girls in Pink are not competing to retain their Coupe des Dames award, kazi mingi this year. Also back after a year off (having babies) is Rhino Rouges team Car 17 of Tanya Church, Helle Sejer-Hansen, Louise Leakey, Julie Church, Tanya Markham and Gemma McRae in their headache coloured red Land Cruiser short wheel.

Karim Fazal will be aiming to beat his 2011 position of 8th overall driving in Jonathan Stichbury's Land Rover.

Nish Lakhani and Priten Patel both with excellent results last year, will be aiming to achieve a place in the top ten again this year.

Veteran entrant and master of the fund raise machine Car No. 5 and winner of ten Victor Ludorums and overall winner in 2008, Alan McKittrick with team mates Nick Hutchinson, Guy Jack, Bruce Knight, John Bovard and Tim Jessop will be amongst the entrants. And Ian Duncan's Car 2, whose team play hard on strongly built cars with much experience, will also be up there at the top.

Then we have the overseas teams: Proudly Nigerian in Car 32 back once more; great achiever Peter Castle in Car 14 and founder of Zambia's Elephant Charge; and the American Wags – the Chris Welles family from Boston in Car 10.

Also Sachin Patel, Victor Ludorum winner of the UK Rhino Charge last year is bringing a team to see if he can score in the 'big un' here in Kenya.

ReBuilding Mau Eburu

By Eric Kihui



Mau Eburu's pristine forest



Mukurwe tree (Albizia Gummifera)

Driving from Nairobi towards Naivasha, as you descend the eastern escarpment into the Rift Valley, a mountain range begins to loom large in your view. This mountain dominates the landscape, towering over the Lake Naivasha basin. It is Mount Eburu.

Mau Eburu forest is one of the 22 gazetted forest blocks that comprise the vast 420,000 hectare Mau Forest Complex. It is the easternmost extension of the Mau range and forms part of the wider ecosystem stretching from Lake Nakuru, Soysambu, Lake Naivasha and Hells Gate.

The Eburu forest comprises 8715.3 hectares (87 sq km) of prime indigenous forest nestled within the folds of a geologically active volcanic mountain. The forest forms part of the catchment for Lakes Naivasha and

Elementaita. It is the source of Ndabibi River and other small streams, as well as several ground springs. The mountain's highest peak, Ol Doinyo Eburu, stands 2,820 metres above sea level.

The area features a diversity of flora including tree species such as Acacia, Allophylus, Bamboo, Buddleia, Dombeya, Dovyalis, Ekebergia, Galiniera, Juniperus, Maesa, Maytenus, Nuxia, Olea, Olinia, Podocarpus, Polyscias, Prunus, Rapanea, Schefflera, Solanum, Tarchoranthus, Vernonia, and others.

The Eburu forest comprises **8715.3 hectares (87 sq km)** of prime indigenous forest

Numerous bird species inhabit the ecosystem and Eburu is acknowledged as a hot-spot for bird species in the Mau forest complex. Raptors such as the rare and majestic martial eagle and the more common augur buzzard are found in this ecosystem. Bee eaters, cisticola, coucal, doves, drongo, egrets, flycatchers, guinea fowl, ibis, manikin, starling, sunbirds, turaco, wagtail, weaver and wheatear can all be found in the Eburu area.

The ecosystem also does not disappoint in mammal diversity: aardvark, baboon, buffalo, bushbuck, bushpig, colobus, dikdik, gazelle, giraffe, hyrax, jackal, leopard, mole rat, porcupine, sykes and vervet monkey, waterbuck and zebra are among the species that inhabit the forest and surrounding landscapes of Eburu. Within the steep slopes of the dense forest, a small population of critically endangered eastern mountain bongo antelope still survive, against great and ever-increasing odds.



Significant encroachment into the forest



Mau Eburu remains the focus of international attention for the critically endangered bongo

Despite its intrinsic biodiversity and water catchment value, the Eburu ecosystem is becoming increasingly isolated, surrounded on all sides by human activity and settlement. Illegal logging and charcoal burning are long standing and ongoing problems that have critically depleted forest cover. Its wildlife has been decimated by poaching/bushmeat hunting, loss of habitat and human encroachment. The eastern mountain bongo, in particular, faces the gravest of challenges. Due to poaching and the destruction of its habitat, the bongo has almost been wiped out in this ecosystem. Through the tireless efforts of the Rhino Ark supported Bongo Surveillance Programme (BSP), it has been determined that there is a small population of, at most, 12 members of this species left in Eburu forest.

There are myriad challenges facing the Eburu ecosystem. Eburu forest, the core of the ecosystem, is a gazetted forest reserve, under the jurisdiction of the Kenya Forest Service (KFS). However, the entire 8715.3 hectares of forest is protected by only a handful of forest rangers based at the Eburu forest station. The forest lacks a road network, so the movement of the rangers is greatly hampered.

The forest boundary is not clearly marked, and there is great pressure from adjacent

communities that use the forest for fuelwood, grazing and water extraction. Some communities around Eburu live as squatters on surrounding farmlands and have over the years encroached on forest land, clearing the forest to grow crops for subsistence. The inadequate protection of the forest means that it is easy to enter and exit undetected and illegally extract resources. Patrick Kiita, the forester in charge of Eburu observes that when a report is received about illegal activity in the forest, it can take several hours for the rangers to reach the site, by which time the culprits have long gone.

It is not all gloom and doom, however. Local communities have begun to organize themselves into groups to propagate conservation. Community tree nurseries have been established in several areas. Rehabilitation of sections of indigenous forest is being done. Some groups have embarked on conservation compatible enterprises such as bee keeping. Communities are increasingly appreciating the need for better conservation of the forest. Some have expressed anger at the illegal activities that are happening in the forest, and welcome the



Local communities have begun to organize themselves into groups to propagate conservation.

Community tree nurseries have been established in various areas

Eburu Fencing project. Though many challenges remain, the outlook for Eburu is now positive and Rhino Ark is at the heart of the drive to save this precious ecosystem.

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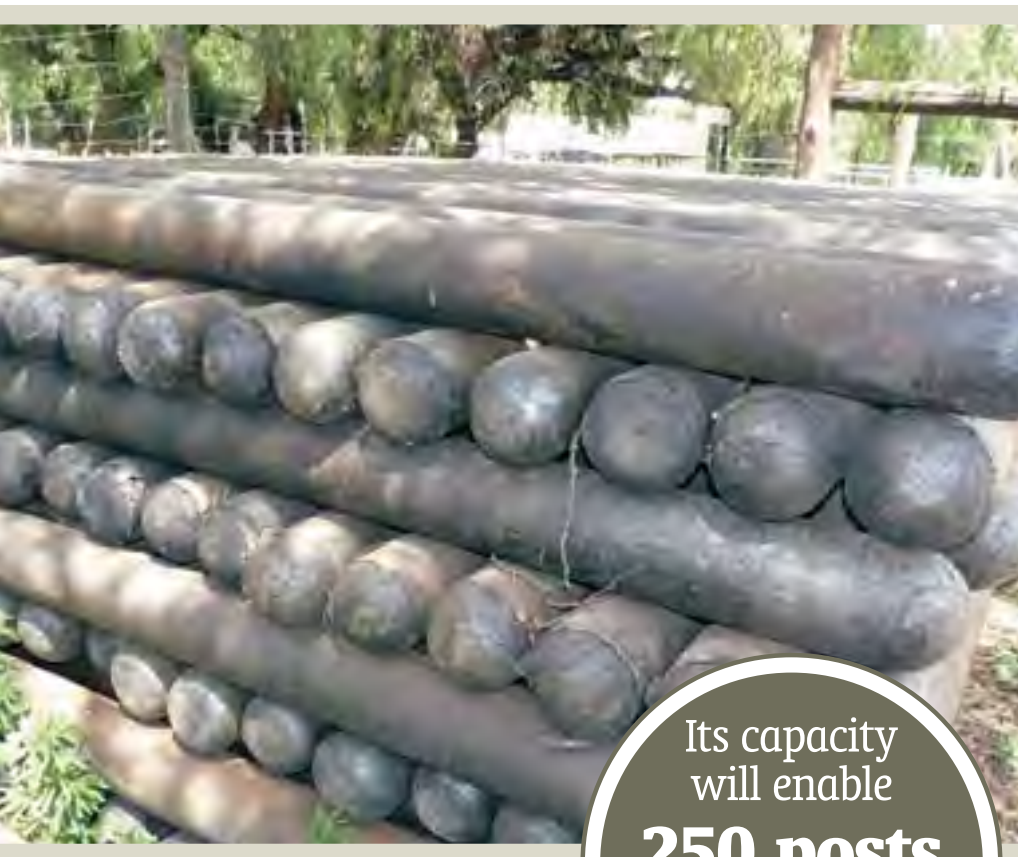
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Plastic waste for posts... Finlay shows the way



Its capacity
will enable
250 posts
to be produced
every month

Rhino Ark was able to use 20,000 plastic posts in the total 100,000 posts used to build the 400 km Aberdare fence completed in 2009.

The Finlay's 'plastic waste to plastic posts' scheme is now fully operational.

Under an agreement with Rhino Ark, Finlay, the horticultural export company has constructed a conversion plant at its Kingfisher Farm in Naivasha.

All posts are being made at cost and will be used for the new projects on Mau Eburu and Mount Kenya – both areas where Finlays have horticultural export production operations.

"It is appropriate indeed that Finlay have continued Rhino Ark's utilisation of flower farm plastic waste as a commitment to conservation", commented Colin Church, Rhino Ark Management Committee Chairman on a visit to see the machines in operation in January 2012.

It was in the late 1990s that Rhino Ark recognised the potential for utilising waste plastic to make fence posts to protect indigenous mountain forests.

The first machine was purchased in 1999 and started operating in 2000 under the guidance and management of the late



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Mike Higgins of Kijabe Ltd - the Naivasha based agricultural company - who became a trustee of Rhino Ark in 2003.

As a result of this pioneering work in utilising plastic waste, Rhino Ark was able to use 20,000 plastic posts in the total 100,000 posts used to build the 400 km Aberdare fence completed in 2009.

Rhino Ark is now in the process of consecutively starting two major ecosystem conservation projects which between them will require over 110,000 posts.

The two agronomer machines now installed at Finlay Kingfisher Farm are from old technology much of which was donated to Rhino Ark. Its capacity will enable 250 posts to be produced every month. The cost of each post is nearly one third that of commercially produced posts in wood, plastic or cement. Plastic posts are not only cheaper but have an indefinite life span.

It is Rhino Ark's intention that in addition to plastic posts being used for the new projects, aging wooden posts in Aberdares – can be replaced with plastic. No sections of the Aberdare fence where its first posts were installed in 1989, 23 years ago – have had to be replaced yet. Only individual posts, either damaged by animals or floods, are currently being replaced.

2012 Aberdare Fence Relay Run set for 12 June

The third annual Aberdare relay run is set to kick off on 12 June. Pupils and teachers from up to 60 schools around the Aberdare Ecosystem will take part in the 400km relay run around the perimeter of the Aberdare fence over a 2-week period. The Run, organized jointly by the Kenya Wildlife Service and Rhino Ark, is a way to commemorate the completion of the Aberdare fence and to remind the local communities of its continued importance to their livelihoods.

A new feature of the Run this year will be the selection of participating schools through an essay writing competition.



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Rhino Ark wins Total Eco Challenge Award



Rhino Ark received a special award from Total's Eco Challenge for the most exceptional and sustained commitment and incremental achievement. Total Managing Director, Alexis Vovk (right) presented the award to Rhino Ark Chairman, Colin Church. The award ceremony was held on Tuesday 28th February at the Brackenhurst Conference Centre, Tigoni.

Mr. Vovk commended Rhino Ark's conservation efforts of seeking solutions in the mountain range ecosystems in Kenya for the benefit of flora and fauna, spanning over the last 24 years. This is the third such award Rhino Ark has received from the Total Eco Challenge National Initiative.

Aberdare farmers welcome tree nursery training

In January 2012, Rhino Ark facilitated a 6-day community forestry training course in the Aberdares. The training team comprised officers from Kenya Forest Research Institute (KEFRI), Nyeri and was led by Adam Mwangi, Rhino Ark's Bongo Programme Coordinator. The team trained six Aberdare fence line community groups from Mugagu (Othaya), Bondeni, Kiamboga, Soko Huru, Geta/Bush and KEKKA. Its purpose was to create interaction, participation and practical skills for forest edge farmers.

Community members were trained on:

- Seed collection;
- Processing/treatment and storage and testing for seed viability before sowing;
- Tree Nursery Management; and
- Vegetative propagation of bamboo using culms/stems.

Bamboo is fast gaining popularity. Its ability to tolerate repeated harvesting, a short growing cycle and capacity to restore degraded sites are its strong points. It will greatly benefit communities and the ecosystem if groups adopt bamboo woodlots on their farms.



▲ Community members are shown a demo on seed sowing- broadcasting

▼ Community members at the training session



New vehicles for new projects



Rhino Ark recently expanded its vehicle fleet by acquiring two Toyota Landcruisers. The vehicles will be used in the building and construction of the Mt. Kenya and Mau Eburu fencing projects.

Both projects began simultaneously in April this year.

A tractor has also been purchased for the Mt Kenya project.

Greensteds Run-a-Ton Relay Raises Ksh 218,800

A total of 76 participants aged between 8 and 48 years participated in the second annual Run-a-Ton fundraising relay organized by Greensteds school. The tough, 110 km long relay route traversed the Mau range, starting in Narok, moving due north east via Mau Narok and East Mau, and onward to Nakuru. Organized into four teams, the mix of pupils, teachers and a group of international athletes braved the heat, hilly terrain and dust to complete the challenging run in just under 10 hours. The runners, organized into 4 teams, ran successive 2 km sections before handing over their batons to the next group of runners.

A team of 4 cyclists – Kunal Patel, Kush Patel, Eddie Cunningham and Kevin Van der Gugden rode 90 of the 110 kilometres, only leaving out 20 kms of the route between Olokirikirai and Mau Narok due to the extremely dusty conditions created by recent grading of the dirt road.

Other notable performances included 14 year old pupil Wabakwira Koinange, who ran a distance of 16 kms in some of the most dusty conditions, and teacher Saningo Martyn who ran a total distance of 26 kms.

The event has so far raised Ksh 171,500 in pledges received, including a donation from Arsenal Football Club in the UK, More donations are expected. The funds raised go towards supporting Rhino Ark's conservation work.



▲ Highest fundraiser Lekh Shukla receives an award from Ramnik Shah.

Car 27 Rhinathon Marathon

This year's Car 27 Rhinathon, an annual cycling marathon, took place on a private tract of land in Nyari on 31st March. The 2012 event was the 7th consecutive one and had 41 teams, a total of 590 riders.

The event is a day and night marathon cycling relay, mostly on fairly rough but grassy tracks, with a tough "gauntlet" section. The juniors have to raise a minimum sponsorship of Ksh 25,000/= and seniors Ksh 50,000/=.

The highest individual collector was Lekh Shukla of team Muddy Fox with Ksh 70,001. The team also secured the highest team collection title raising Ksh 176,802. A special race was organised for a group of "Special" children. The team, Space Flyers, raised a sponsorship of Ksh 63,710/=.

Over Ksh 1 million was raised at the event.



The inaugural Athi 4x4 Challenge at Swara Plains

The April 1st event attracted numerous competitors in all classes from the intermediate, expert, quads junior and senior and the newly introduced bike class.

In the intermediate category, Alvin Mohammed emerged winner, with 105 points lost. Larry Gow and Michael Kwinga came in 2nd and 3rd, losing 525 and 565 points respectively.

The expert category saw John Kanyali in his Unimog secure a win without losing any points. Rally ace Ian Duncan came in 2nd place, having lost 125 points, and Sachin Choda, 3rd, losing 140 points.

Event organizers led by Gray Cullen of Rhino Charge car 22 expressed their thrill with the competitor turnout and the mammoth spectator numbers.

With the event being characterized by a mud hole, axle twister and river lager, among other challenges, it created the perfect atmosphere for a fun family day out.



HOG CHARGE 2012 ATTRACTS 130 TEAMS RECORD KSH 4.2M FOR CAR 35

The 14th annual Hog Charge event raised a record of Ksh 4,201,346 for the fence construction in Mt. Kenya and Mau Eburu and maintenance of the Aberdare Fence.

130 teams battled it out at the Brookside-sponsored event staged at Peponi Secondary School, Ruiru, on Sunday 15th January. Children from over 15 schools participated and hundreds of supportive parents and friends attended.

The highest cash sponsorship was raised by Team 120, Hog Rovers from Peponi House. It raised a whopping Ksh 239,000.

They were followed by Team 2, GP-Karting Hot Wheels, with Ksh 150,000. In third place was Team 114, Horrid Hogs, from Peponi House / ISK with Ksh 145,000.

Pembroke House emerged the best check-point sponsor.

Started in 1999, the Hog Charge was Kenya's first national mountain bike competition. It is a charity event that raises money to honor Mark Tilbury's (Car 35) pledge towards the Rhino Charge every year. The Hog Charge has now raised over Ksh 28 million for Rhino Ark since its inception.

“SPIRIT OF THE CHARGE”

Rhino Chargers, Sponsors and Friends of Rhino Ark gathered at the Carnivore’s Simba Saloon on 11th November 2011 to celebrate the launch of “Spirit of the Charge” - a film of the Rhino Charge 2011.

The evening was characterized by a full Buffet & BBQ, live entertainment by The Itch band and Sarakasi Trust Dancers, as well as the Rhino Charge photo competition awards. The dramatic 26 minute film was introduced by Gavin Bennett, Master of Ceremonies and editor of AUTONEWS. The top 5 fundraisers were also awarded prizes.

Fuji Kenya Ltd donated the photo competition prizes while the gate entrance tickets were sponsored by Paraprint Ltd.

The top fund-raisers this year were Alan Mckittrick - Car 5, Mark Tilbury - Car 35, Sean Avery - Car 38, Ben Woodhams - Car 39 and David Bromham - Car 15 who was a first time entrant.

All guests received a goodie bag with a copy of the 2011 Spirit of the Charge DVD. A total of Ksh 77 million was raised in last year’s Rhino Charge.



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1 Bill Lay, MD CMC (right) and Charles Njonjo hand over a Land Rover to Colin Church, Rhino Ark Chairman. CMC donated the vehicle to Rhino Ark.

2 Kate Mwangi, Rhino Ark PR Officer, with Gurmeet Mehta, Rhino Charge Car 3, receiving a millionaire award.

3 Eric Kihui (right), Resource Development Manager at Rhino Ark, and Priten Patel of Fuji Kenya Ltd award Raj Rihal, one of the Rhino Charge photo competition winners.

4 Valerie Gunputrav, Rhino Ark Management Committee, hands over a prize to Ben Woodhams and Dirk Sickmueller of Rhino Charge Car 39.

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Mau Forests: Bongo are there . . .

AFEW and Finlays give grant support

The efforts of the Bongo Surveillance Project (BSP) will be further strengthened with new grants from the African Fund for Endangered Wildlife (AFEW) and Finlays, the horticultural export company. Funds totaling ksh 4.2 million will be used in 2012 and 2013 to keep BSP teams on regular patrol in Mau Eburu and South West Mau. It will also enable the teams to search for other remnant groups in other areas of the Mau.

The long-term intention is for a re-introduction process of captivity bongo to their endemic forests from overseas conservancy care centers.

One of the most active of these is based in Florida where a group of ranchers are rearing Bongo in an intermediary free-range process to prepare them for eventual repatriation. The Rare Species Conservatory Foundation has spearheaded this process. There are other Bongo currently in captivity at Mt Kenya Game Ranch, which could form part of the core release process. Essential DNA verification of all Bongo in captivity and in the wild is awaited. The BSP have been central to the collection of species dung and hair samples for this DNA verification. Dr George Amato of The American Museum of Natural History in New York and Dr Hendrik Svengren of Sweden's Uppsala University are managing the DNA verification process. Once complete, further developments can be announced.

As the catastrophic destruction of significant sections of the Mau Forest Complex escalated for 20 years, the shrinking of the indigenous forests and all that makes for such a precious habitat for wildlife has been, and remains, under withering attack.

Uncontrolled human access, excisions and habitat destruction has left deep scars on what still remains of a significant pristine forest ecosystem.

No animal depicts this situation better than the Eastern Mountain Bongo (*tragelaphus eurycerus isaaci*). It remains firmly lodged on the list of the United Nations critically endangered species due to poaching and habitat loss. Its future regeneration depends upon the reconstruction of Kenya's 'water towers', the Bongo's habitat, of which the Mau Forest Complex remains Kenya's largest, covering 4000 km² of water catchment.

Rhino Ark has been at the forefront of the campaign to bring the plight of these rare, illusive forest antelope to public attention – nationally and internationally.

Since 2003 the BSP, comprising community scouts living near the forests of the Mau, Aberdares and Mt Kenya, have been monitoring their behavior and assisting the law enforcement units of the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) and the Kenya Forest Service (KFS) to pin point illegal activity.

A determined policy to secure the Mau was initiated by the President of Kenya, Mwai Kibaki and Prime Minister Raila Odinga of the current coalition government and later endorsed by the coalition government's cabinet in 2008, thus creating an enabling environment for reclaim of grabbed land and a process of reconstruction in the Mau to gain momentum.

The efforts to protect the existing Bongo herds in the wild are part of the process of reconstruction.



83 elephant march to Kipipiri

Geta community members who helped build the Aberdare fence have started an elephant watch on the corridor linking the main Aberdares with Mount Kipipiri.

A substantial herd of 83 elephant were reported crossing into Kipipiri during one day during the very dry weather before the rainy season this year.

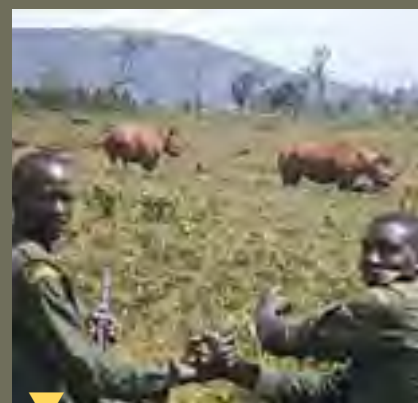
The corridor is 700 meters wide at its narrowest point where the Nduonyo Njeru to Geta road, crosses it. The elephant grids at each end of the road, funded by the Safaricom Foundation, are working efficiently to prevent elephant breakouts.

Wildlife Corner



The illusive but brightly coloured Crested (maned) Rat is captured by photographer Nigel Pavitt under the water tank beams on the back verandah at Rhino Retreat.

Visitors to Rhino Retreat now report sightings quite frequently. **By Nigel Pavitt**



This photo taken by Rgr F. Nyakundi shows Rgrs B. Keriako (left) and R. Opondo (right) pointing at Cheruiyot & Kilema as they browse near Treetops on 28/12/2011.



UK RHINO CHARGE

This year's Rhino Charge UK will take place on Sunday 23 September at Pippingford Park, Wych Cross, Sussex, TN22 3HW.

Registration will start at 08.30 and the briefing will start at 09.30 sharp. Prize giving will take place at the end of the day.

Organizer John Bowden comments: "Any light 4x4 fitted with road-legal tyres and a strong tow point front and rear may enter. Non road-legal vehicles will be scrutineered thoroughly by the organisers in the same way as road-legal vehicles. There will be a minimum of two and a maximum of six crew per vehicle."

A limited number of loan cars are available for this event. To use a loan car, you need to raise a minimum of £900 sponsorship. For further details, contact John on jbowden@gumtree4x4.co.uk

Founding Trustee Vivien Craggs died on Jan 8th 2012

Vivien Craggs contribution to our conservation efforts in Kenya has been immense.

It is thanks to her work that today so many millions of Kenyans can depend more reliably upon the water outflow, hydropower and a more stable climate and rainfall to grow their food and commodity crops.

She was such a strong advocate for conservation – especially of Black Rhino and their precious mountain habitat within the Aberdares.

Michael Karanja
Chairman - Rhino Ark Board of Trustees

Article featured in 'Geographical' – the magazine of the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG)

Royal
Geographical
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"ABERDARES has enabled Kenyans nationwide to make the connection between this region and their own wellbeing. Now, a woman living hundreds of kilometres away in the north of Kenya, whose land has been affected

by drought, is aware of the importance of Kenya's water towers to her life,"

"Many other countries are facing the same problems as Kenya is facing. The Aberdares fence is just the beginning."

March 2012

Aberdare – the links between Kenya and Wales

- Growing links between schools in the Aberdare region of Wales and schools on the periphery of the Aberdares in Kenya are likely to be cemented with the Aberdare Fence Relay Run which takes place between the 12th and 26th June this year.
- During its first year in 2010, President Kibaki flagged off the relay, This year the event expects to acknowledge the historic moment in February 1952 when Princess Elizabeth and Prince Philip visited Treetops, only for the Princess to learn of the death of her father, George VI. While staying at the lodge, she became Queen and Head of the Commonwealth. Now, in 2012, Queen Elizabeth II celebrates her Diamond Jubilee.
- Kenya, it is said, has a special place in her heart.
- No doubt the 600 schoolchildren taking part in the relay will be made aware of this.
- And they will also be aware of the importance of the fence which took 21 years to build and now protects one of Kenya's most precious eco-systems – as well as providing security for their families at the forest edge.
- The links between Aberdare Wales and Aberdares Kenya were forged initially by Lord (Alastair) Aberdare who visited Kenya with Rhino Ark UK trustees early in 2010. He is the Patron of Rhino Ark – as his father was before him – and the great, great grandson of Lord Aberdare, President of the Royal Geographical Society in London in the 1880s and after whom the Aberdares were named. The people of the area had little choice in the matter in those days!
- However, during his visit, Alastair Aberdare took a personal interest in linking up the Kenyan schools with schools in Wales. Progress has since been made with Rhondda Cynon Taff's local education authority, in his 'home area' of Aberdare, in establishing these links.
- The process is also being driven by Iestyn Thomas, who runs the Welsh-based charity, *Schoolchildren for Children*, which raises money from schoolchildren exercising at their schools for projects in the developing world. The charity is supporting a number of 'homework clubs' and other activities in Kibera and Korogocho in Nairobi.
- Iestyn Thomas will be announcing the start of a new homework club in one of the Aberdares' schools to mark the relay run. In future years, Welsh schoolchildren will take part in the relay and there are plans for twinning arrangements between schools of the two Aberdares – Kenya and Wales.

Rhino Safari Run

As well as the more competitive Rhino Charge this year Rhino Ark UK are also organising a Rhino Safari Run for owners of everyday road-going 4x4s who want to enjoy a day out in beautiful Pippingford Park, experience driving their 4x4s off-road, see something of the Rhino Charge and contribute to the fund raising effort.

The Safari Run will take the form of a convoy round some of the less testing tracks on the estate in a controlled environment with experienced marshals on hand to guide and advise participants as required.

THANK YOU!

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

Carnivore Restaurant -
Venue for Spirit of the Charge 2011

Gavin Bennett -
MC at the Spirit of the Charge 2011

KWS -
RA offices

Kenya Tourism Federation -
Assistance with conference room

Braeburn Schools -
Drivers' briefing venue

CMC -
Land Rover Pick up

**African Fund For
Endangered Wildlife** -
Mau Bongo Support

Finlays -
Ksh 4 million for Mau/Eburu

Goodyear Kenya -
Support assistance for Rhino Ark vehicles

Gallagher Power Systems -
Logistical Support
Sponsorship of Rhino Charge Programme 2012

Michael Jones Software -
Pre-press assistance

Paraprint Ltd -
Design and printing of
Spirit of the Charge tickets

Tracy Levitan -
Rhino Charge 2012 logo

Ali Bush -
Rhino Charge calendar

Rob's Magic -
Service support

Robin Johnson -
Cash donation

Order your copy of:

- **Strategic Evaluation of the Aberdare Fence... transition from fence build to ecosystem management**
(Published February 2007)
- **Aberdare Profile**
- **2011 Spirit of Charge film on DVD available for Ksh 2,000 only**

All the above are available from Rhino Ark offices in Nairobi, UK and the USA

Pictures courtesy of: Colin Church, Kate Mwangi, Eric Kihui, Lucy Kibue, John Thuo & Adam Mwangi

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