



ARK*ive*

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE RHINO ARK CHARITABLE TRUST

NO. 40 MAY 2013



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The Winning Team

BRAEBURN'S CAR 49, CAPTAINED BY PATRICK GARNER AND TERRY CHILDS, WON THE 2012 RHINO CHARGE

Winning is a goal we all strive for, but how we achieve that goal is perhaps even more important. Those that make it to the top need real determination to keep going when things get tough; they need a "can-do" sort of attitude and a desire to deal with difficulties head-on and not try to skirt around them or take the easy way out. 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 all face challenges at different stages of our life; it is how we deal with these challenges that will gauge how successful we will go on to be.

The Braeburn Group of International Schools boasts an ethos of nurturing personal growth by providing a friendly and supportive environment in all our schools in East Africa. Early years, primary and secondary students develop the skills, attitudes and awareness necessary to become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens.

To find out more about being part of the Braeburn team, visit our website: www.braeburn.com



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 generally to:

- Conserve such ecologically precious indigenous forests and their provision of vital environmental services;
- Create a sustainable and harmonious environment that enables people and wildlife, including all flora and fauna, to coexist;
- Create and provide sustainable programmes for forest edge communities based on payments for ecosystem services. Such programmes and projects will be tailored to create income generation for the communities that support the conservation of natural resources.

Rhino Ark is committed to:

- Mobilize 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 to develop sound management processes over entire eco-systems;
- Create frameworks 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 so doing all stakeholders will benefit and the flora and fauna, particularly endangered species, will be better secured.

Our conservation work is anchored in three key values:

- Protecting ecosystem integrity;
- Ensuring full involvement of and participation by local communities;
- Forming effective partnerships.

Act now!...

help us to continue our work

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Christian Lambrechts

Executive Director's view

Rhino Ark is now firmly on the ground in three of the five main water towers of Kenya, with a 400 km fence complete encircling the Aberdare, over 25 km already built on Mt. Kenya and 3 km in Mau Eburu which is part of the Mau Forests Complex.

To secure the benefits our fences provide in protecting both the forests and the adjacent communities, Rhino Ark is working on strengthening the management of the fence infrastructure. A thorough assessment of the status of the Aberdare Fence conducted last year revealed that the management of the gates is the weakest point. We, therefore, spearheaded the development of gate management rules. In addition, together with KFS and KWS, we embarked into a systematic review of each of the gates towards identifying specific interventions to improve their management. Once operationalized, a core function of the Aberdare Trust will be gate management.

Through the building and management of fences, the conservation of forests and critical water catchments in the water towers remain a core objective of Rhino Ark. To identify and help address the threats to the conservation of these natural assets, we established an aerial monitoring programme for both the Aberdares and Mt. Kenya. Every three months, KFS, KWS and Rhino Ark will carry out joint patrol flights over these two ecosystems.

The connectivity between the areas protected by our fences and the neighbouring conservation areas is essential to secure the long-term sustainability of the high diverse wildlife populations inhabiting these ecosystems. In partnership with the former Ministry of Environment and Mineral Resources, Rhino Ark launched a feasibility study on the conservation of the wider Eburu ecosystem. In addition, together with KWS, Mount Kenya Trust and Space for the Giants, Rhino Ark is considering a scoping study for the conservation of the habitat and wildlife corridor between Mt. Kenya and Aberdare.

The expansion of Rhino Ark conservation programme takes place at a time of major changes in Government. A new streamlined Cabinet has been nominated. Governors have taken office at the helm of the county governments, as part of a devolution process that will bring the management of our natural resources closer to the people of Kenya. In order to capture the opportunities that these changes can bring to our conservation work, Rhino Ark is already engaging actively with the new leadership at national and county levels.

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Eburu fence construction begins



Les Baillie places the first post of the Eburu Fence

The construction of a 50 km long comprehensive wildlife-proof electrified fence is a critical component of Rhino Arks' Eburu Ecosystem Conservation Project. This pivotal activity commenced on the morning of 20 March 2013 at Eburu location, with the placement of the first post at the fire watchtower on Ngobobo Hill. The honor of placing the first post was accorded to Les Baillie, Executive Director of MPESA Foundation, who was the chief guest at this event. MPESA Foundation is the single largest sponsor of the Eburu Project through a four year grant to Rhino Ark totalling Kshs. 155 million. The support from MPESA Foundation, together with funding from the Government of Kenya, Finlays Horticulture, and with core funds from Rhino Ark are critical elements that have made possible this important conservation initiative.

The start of fence construction marks a major milestone in the conservation of the 8,715.3 hectare Eburu Forest Reserve, and is the culmination of a lengthy statutory compliance process, that involved the undertaking of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and the approval of the same by the National Environmental Management Authority. The EIA process included extensive consultations with the leaders from the entire Eburu ecosystem, meetings with local communities in the five administrative locations bordering the forest, as well as placement of advertisements in the daily newspapers and the Kenya Gazette. It is anticipated that the fence shall be completed within 18 months, and it will completely encircle the forest reserve. The forest is managed by the Kenya Forest Service and is one of the 22 forest blocks that make up the Mau Forests Complex water tower.

Eburu forest gets mapped

Although identified as an area of important biodiversity, Eburu forest is largely unmapped. From available satellite images and spot inspections of various parts of the forest, it is clear that there has been significant degradation over the years occasioned by myriad illegal activities in the forest (logging, charcoal, firewood extraction, etc.) as well as through forest fires. This has impacted negatively on the wildlife habitat. The status of the forest is not well documented, and at present there is insufficient information about the extent of degradation. Such information will be a necessary tool to assist the planning for rehabilitation of the forest.

As part of our conservation work within the Eburu ecosystem, Rhino Ark has undertaken to support the mapping of the forest by the Eburu forester, Patrick Kiita. Starting in October 2012, Rhino Ark has facilitated the mapping process by providing GPS tools, technical and logistical support. The mapping process, which is now nearly completed has identified significantly degraded forest areas, mapped out areas that have been previously replanted by various stakeholders and also assessed the present condition of these replanted areas. The process has revealed that the survival rate of the replanted indigenous tree seedlings is very low, due to destruction by livestock grazing in the forest as well as a poor or nonexistent maintenance regime in some cases (– it is necessary to maintain the seedlings for up to three years after planting). These challenges have undermined the significant investment by various stakeholders towards forest rehabilitation. It is clear that the absence of an adequate protection for the replanted seedlings, as well as a sustainable framework for maintenance have been the dominant factors in this.



Livestock grazing in replanted areas

The construction of the Rhino Ark Eburu Ecosystem Fence, which commenced on 20 March 2013, will provide a new framework under which the forest rehabilitation process can be implemented. It will provide the necessary protection of the tree seedlings planted in the forest. By coordinating the replant efforts within the forest with fence construction, it shall be possible to achieve higher survivability for the seedlings. In addition, satellite and topographic maps for Eburu, which Rhino Ark has prepared will be valuable tools to assist the Eburu forester in the overall management of the forest and specifically in planning the forest rehabilitation process.



GPS mapping process in Eburu forest

Rhino Ark initiates bio-enterprise activity in Eburu

The Eburu ecosystem has long faced the challenge of unsustainable and illegal exploitation of forest resources by local communities. This situation has been driven by low income/poverty factors affecting these communities, compounded by poor infrastructure and limited access to knowledge, market opportunities and capital, among other things. As part of our Eburu community livelihoods engagement strategy, Rhino Ark seeks to engage with the communities to identify and implement appropriate livelihoods improvement initiatives that will reduce their dependence on the forest. One potential activity is the promotion of bio-enterprise, which can be defined as: "business based on natural products that deliver positive environmental impact". This includes wild harvested and 'organically' cultivated and livestock products.

On 6 December 2012, the Rhino Ark team led by Executive Director Christian Lambrechts, undertook a two-day visit to Laikipia and Mt. Kenya to study community bio-enterprise initiatives. Desert Edge, a non-profit making company established by the Laikipia Wildlife Forum and the African Wildlife Foundation, has developed a model to secure sustainable community conservation-based livelihoods. The model is based on a systematic approach that includes identification of high valued bio-products, market analysis, income generation potential assessment, KEBS approval, certification by fair-trade schemes, capacity building of communities through long-term coaching and marketing.



Participants of Bio-enterprise Workshop in Naivasha

Building on this study visit, and leveraging on the linkages cultivated with Desert Edge, Rhino Ark facilitated a bio-enterprise scoping study of the Eburu ecosystem in January 2013. This study found that there is potential for development of bio-enterprise activities amongst local communities within the Eburu ecosystem. Following this study, on 21-22 February 2013 in Naivasha, Rhino Ark organized the first Bio-enterprise Workshop for 26 community representatives from all five administrative locations adjacent to the forest. It was facilitated by Desert Edge. Participants included elders, Ndorobo community, women and youth. They are all part of the user group network of the Eburu Community Forest Association (ECoFA). The workshop gave the participants a clear understanding of the scope of bio-trade business processes and potential. It also gave an appreciation of the value chain that

can provide improved income opportunities from beekeeping. It provided quality learning materials and a roadmap for how to improve their honey production. From this foundation, Rhino Ark will work with experts and the local communities to develop a plan and to support activities that will facilitate rapid development of income generating bio-enterprise activities within the Eburu ecosystem.



Bio-enterprise scoping process, which involved examination of bee forage for honey production



Wild nettle harvesting in Mt. Kenya forest



Examining honey processing & packaging at Desert Edge facility in Nanyuki



An Eburu community member examines packages of herbal products made through bio-enterprise initiatives

Exploring alternative domestic energy solutions

Rhino Ark is exploring affordable alternative domestic energy solutions geared towards reducing the pressure on Eburu forest resources. In January 2013, Rhino Ark visited the Flexi Biogas Solutions demonstration centre to assess their portable biogas systems. These systems comprising portable biogas digesters and piping delivery lines can be installed on any flat ground in few hours, and only require animal dung and water as their primary ingredients.



Biogas digester units

Their capacity ranges from 3.5 to 9 cubic metres and their prices are in the range of Kshs. 35,000 - 75,000, and multiple units can be combined together to provide solutions to small institutions, such as schools or hospitals. Besides cooking, biogas can run generator to produce electricity, merely requiring a small adaptation to be made to the carburetor. Such systems can potentially offer low cost, sustainable alternatives for local Eburu communities that presently rely on charcoal and/or firewood. Rhino Ark will seek to create awareness among the local communities about such alternatives and work with partners to propagate the same where practicable.

Another potential domestic solution explored in January was the small domestic charcoal making unit. Rhino Ark visited the Cookswell Jikos demonstration centre in Lower Kabete, Nairobi, to investigate portable charcoal makers which can produce charcoal from twigs, maize cobs or bamboo. Their small charcoal making model is designed and priced for domestic use. The main advantage is that the unit enables any homestead to produce charcoal from plant based farm or domestic waste, and thus reduce reliance on charcoal illegally produced in the forest. During the tour of the Cookswell facility, the proprietor, Teddy Kinyanjui provided a practical demonstration of charcoal making using bamboo and twigs and used charcoal made by this unit to cook samosa pastries using an energy saving charcoal oven, also made by Cookswell.



Gas from the units is piped to a conventional domestic gas burner



Domestic charcoal making unit



Charcoal made from bamboo

Wider Eburu conservation study kicks off

The feasibility study for the conservation of the wider Eburu ecosystem formally kicked off on 4 April with the presentation of the inception report by the consultants, Acacia Consultants Ltd. to the study's steering committee, at the Department of Resource Surveys and Remote Sensing (DRSRS) offices in Nairobi.

The objective of the study is to provide a road-map that will guide stakeholders in working towards securing the habitat and wildlife connectivity between Lake Naivasha, Eburu forest and the Mau Escarpment. The study shall cover all aspects related to the identification, conservation and management of the wider Eburu forest ecosystem, in particular the securing of the wildlife corridors and dispersal areas, the restoration of the natural vegetation cover, initiated by the Ministry of Environment and Mineral Resources and Rhino Ark, together with a number of stakeholders.



Presentation to the steering committee at DRSRS offices

Eburu wildlife watch – new Bongo antelope sighting

March 2013 has proven to be an exciting month for the Rhino Ark supported Bongo Surveillance Programme (BSP) in Eburu, with a new sighting of the Mountain Bongo antelope. BSP community scout Solomon Muriithi, who with other team members has been diligently tracking and collecting evidence of Bongo in Eburu forest was able to get fresh evidence of Bongo activity in the forest. This was done using a digital trap camera that he had set in a section of the forest though to be inhabited by Bongo. The highly elusive creatures are notoriously difficult to find in the forest due to their acute sense of hearing, preference for steep hillsides at higher mountain elevations and naturally shy disposition.

The BSP team generally relies on collection of secondary data to establish the whereabouts of Bongo antelope in the forest. This new sighting was a welcome confirmation that the Bongo continue to survive in the forest despite the myriad human related threats to their habitat. The last time a Bongo was seen in Eburu forest was in 2011, and it is estimated that only 12 individuals reside in the forest.

The Mountain Bongo is a large forest dwelling antelope that lives at high altitude in dense indigenous forest. It is a critically endangered species only found in Kenya. Fewer than 100 of these beautiful animals are thought to exist in the wild within Kenya's water towers in South-Western Mau, Western Mau, the Aberdares and on the south-western slopes of Mt. Kenya.



Trap camera image of Bongo

Rhino Ark partnerships

Memorandum of Understanding with Kenya Forest Service

In February 2013, Rhino Ark signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Kenya Forest Service. The MoU provides the framework for the collaboration between the two organizations for the conservation of the forest, including the building and management of a 50 km fence as well as the establishment of an operation base. Long-term arrangements for the maintenance of the fence are also spelled out in the MoU.



Rhino Ark Executive Director at KFS after signing the MoU

Memorandum of Understanding with WWF

On 26 February 2013, Rhino Ark signed a partnership MoU with the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), a leading international conservation organization that is active in the Lake Naivasha basin in which Eburu is located. The MoU provides the framework for the collaboration in the area of conservation-based community forest livelihood initiatives; access to, and sustainable management of water resources; access to sustainable energy sources; community conservation education and awareness activities.



Christian Lambrechts with WWF Conservation Manager, Sam Weru at WWF office after signing the MoU

Investigating Eburu community water issues

The local Eburu communities currently face myriad challenges both in access to and quality of domestic water. As part of the community livelihoods improvement strategy, Rhino Ark is working with local communities and other partners to identify possible interventions to address these challenges. In March 2013, Rhino Ark undertook a preliminary assessment of failed water systems in Ndabibi location. Technical support in this mission was kindly provided by Philip Holi, Davis & Shirtliff Technical Director and regular Rhino Charge competitor. Davis & Shirtliff are providers of water systems solutions within Kenya. Two failed boreholes, named Ndibithi and Shamba Boy within Ndabibi location were inspected and discussions held with local community leaders to understand these boreholes were not in use.

From these consultations it was found that since the failure of the Ndibithi borehole in 2011, over 4,500 residents of the location, living within a 10 kilometre radius of the boreholes are severely disadvantaged as they do not have reliable access to water and must travel long distances to access alternative water. The mission identified potential interventions which Rhino Ark, together with other partners, can explore. The technical recommendations from this mission have provided a roadmap for actions that may lead to possible solutions, which will greatly benefit the local community in this area.



Ndibithi borehole pump house



Inspecting generator unit at Shamba Boy borehole

Eburu Ecosystem – Landscapes and Biodiversity



Melanistic augur buzzard



Eastern double collared sunbird



Little bee eater



Snake



Von hohnel's chameleon



Giant red cedar



Butterfly



Butterfly



Forest view

Why it matters...

The mountain of the God, for many communities, has been acclaimed over the years for its beauty and its values. The moorland and the peak zone received the status of National Park in 1949. The surrounding forest belt was gazetted twice, first as Forest Reserve in 1932 and later as National Reserve in 2000.

Recognizing the global uniqueness of the mountain, Mt Kenya as a whole was enlisted by UNESCO in 1993 as a World Heritage Site being *“one of the most impressive landscapes of Eastern Africa with its rugged glacier-clad summits, Afro-alpine moorlands and diverse forests, which illustrate outstanding ecological processes”*.

Mt. Kenya is a key water tower of Kenya. The mountain provides vital environmental services that have enabled Kenya to develop the way it is today and that will continue to support the Kenyan society and its future development. 56% of Kenya’s total installed electricity generating capacity depends on the waters flowing from Mt. Kenya and Aberdares. The mountain forests help secure continuous river flows, even in the dry season, supporting the livelihoods of millions of Kenyans in the rural areas and providing water to urban centres and their industries. The forests also provide optimum climatic conditions for the growing of tea, one of Kenya’s top export products.



View from Glacier Lewis



Peak zone



View of Mt Kenya from Ol Pejeta



Forest canopy near Castle



Camphor tree



Misty Hagenia forest



Moorlands vegetation



Plant diversity



Rhino Ark interventions

Current Phase of the electric fence under construction: 50% completed...

Over 25 km of the Mt. Kenya Electric Fence have already been built since August 2012. The 50 km phase currently under construction runs from Kiringa River (Kirinyaga County) to Thuchi River (Embu County). The fence which started at the Kiringa River has now reached Ndongori in Embu County.

Since August last year, the fence has progressed steadily at an average build rate of 3 km per month. The progress in building the fence has been made possible by the excellent collaboration between the four partners, namely Rhino Ark, Kenya Wildlife Service, Kenya Forest Service and the fence-adjacent communities.

Along with the building of the fence, one energizer station, located near Castle Forest Station, is near completion. The siting of the second energizer station has been done and its procurement initiated.

In order to assist the KWS Sector Warden in supervising the building of the electric fence and the maintenance of the 25 km already built, Rhino Ark Executive Director handed over to KWS a new Suzuki-Maruti on 8 April 2013. The vehicle will also help in engaging fence adjacent communities in conservation.



Completed and powered fence near Kathandeni station



Mt Kenya fence construction team near Kamweti



Energizer station at Castle Forest Station



Christian Lambrechts hands over the new Suzuki to Simon Gitau, Senior warden Mt Kenya NP and Njoroge Muiruri (seated in car), KWS Warden, Kamweti sector

Engaging local leaders in conservation

On 4th December 2012, over 120 leaders from all the communities adjacent to the 50 km fence being built were sensitized on the importance of Mt. Kenya Forest, the benefits and management of the fence and other conservation issues. The Community Leaders Sensitization Workshop was organized jointly by Rhino Ark, KWS and KFS. Participants included DCs, DOs, Chiefs, Assistant Chiefs, CFA chairpersons, opinion leaders, woman group leaders and youth group leaders. Towards the end of the workshop, the leaders fully endorsed the building of the fence and committed themselves to:

- Provide leadership in the conservation of the forest and support to the fence;
- Sensitize the communities on the importance of Mt. Kenya Forest, the benefits of the fence, its construction and its management;
- Engage with community members who are involved in illegal activities in the forest and damage the fence.



Community sensitisation barazas



Completed and powered fence near Ndongori



Mt. Kenya Community Leaders Sensitization Workshop, 4th December 2012.

Engaging fence adjacent communities in conservation

Rhino Ark, together with KWS, KFS and the local administration held barazas in the eleven locations bordering the current phase of the Mt. Kenya Electric Fence under construction from 4th to 15th February 2013. The barazas aimed to sensitize the communities on the building and maintenance of the fence, the management of the gates and the need to protect the forest. Conservation-related documentaries were screened at the meetings. Over 1,000 community members have attended these barazas. Community members expressed strong support to the Mt. Kenya Electric Fence.



Addressing key challenges through partnership with BATUK

On 17-18 November 2012, Dr. Christian Turner, the British High Commissioner, visited Rhino Ark projects in both Mt. Kenya and Aberdares. The visit provided a unique opportunity for the High Commissioner to appraise himself of the importance of the water towers and the challenges facing their management.

Following the High Commissioner's visit, Rhino Ark convened joint KWS/KFS/Rhino Ark meetings with the British Army Training Unit Kenya (BATUK) and the Mount Kenya Trust (MKT) to identify potential areas of collaboration. The meetings have been successful not only in identifying areas of collaboration with BATUK, but also in strengthening the partnership among KWS, KFS, MKT and RA. Three collaboration areas have been identified: wildfire fighting; rehabilitation/development of infrastructure, in particular bridges; and training.

A first positive outcome of these meetings has been the preparation of a joint inventory of fire-fighting equipment and personnel covering both Mt. Kenya and the Aberdare Range. Wildfire has been recognized as one of the main threats to the integrity of both Aberdare and Mt. Kenya ecosystems.

In addition a joint KWS/KFS list of eight priority infrastructure to be rehabilitated has been developed. BATUK has already surveyed four of these eight infrastructure.



A joint meeting with BATUK

British High Commissioner visits Mt Kenya and the Aberdares



Dr. Christian Turner, the British High Commissioner to Kenya, visited Rhino Ark's project on Mt. Kenya and the Aberdares on 17-18 November 2012. The visit enabled the identification of potential collaboration. In the Rhino Retreat's visitor book, Dr. Turner wrote "I hope this will be the start of a strong partnership".

Impacts on the ground

Henry Mburu, 65 years

“School going children had to be escorted by their parents to school every morning. Time that would have otherwise been used to do other chores was wasted. At night we had to remain in-doors even walking to pit latrine located outside the main house was very risky. Many thanks to Rhino Ark and the Government of Kenya for initiating this project.”

Original quote in Kikuyu: *“Ciana cia cukuru nonginya cingiraumagaririo ni aciari o kiroko kugwo guteanga mahinda. Utuku twikaraga nyumba nginya guthii kahinda nja kwari thina. Ningatho kuri Rhino Ark na honge cia thirikari ni kwambiriria mubango uyu wa rugiri.”*



Alice Wairimu Bagio, 24 years

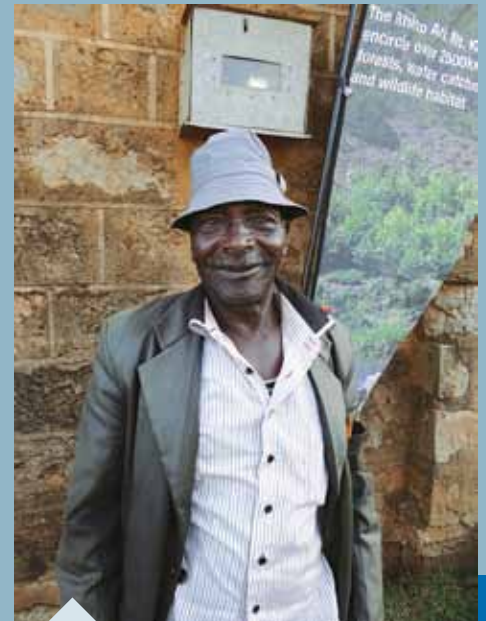
“We had abandoned growing of food crops especially maize, bananas, arrow roots and sweet potatoes. Now with the fence in place we are planting the above crops enough for household consumption and surplus sold.”

Original quote in Kikuyu: *“Nituratiganite na kurima irio ta mbembe, marigu, nduma ona ngwaci. No riu tuna rugiri, turabanda irio ciothe cia kuria mucii na kwendia.”*

Beatrice Wanjiru, 46 years

“Previously we had abandoned cultivating food crop and only depended on food from the market but now with the fence we’ve planted maize and arrow roots and are assured of harvesting the food crops. The fence is effective because ever since this fence was built not a single elephant has returned into my farm.”

Original quote in Kikuyu: *“Mbere nitwaticaniritie urimiwa irio na twategemeaga irio cia kugura thoko no kuma rugiri rwekiro, tubandaga mbembena nduma na tukorago na mwiboko wa kugetha. Rugiri ni rwega niundu kuma rugiri ruru rwekiro gutiri njogu icokete migunda-ini itu.”*



Simon Mwai, 67 years

“During the months of July our area is covered by fog. Before construction of the fence, elephants would get out of the forest and would come into our homesteads. It was very dangerous to walk at night. Even KFS rangers had abandoned one of their houses for fear of being attacked by wildlife”

Original quote in Kikuyu: *“Mwari wa Gathano guku gwitu gukunikagwirwo ni gikuu na nirio njogu ciomaga na igoka guku miciini. Kwari ugwati kuthii utuku. Nginyagia thigari cia mutitu ni ciatiganiritie nyumba cio niundu wa gwigira njogu”.*



Johnson Njeru, 67 years

“The electric fence will be a new beginning of life in this area. For sure we will not allow illegal loggers to mess up with this useful fence.”

Original quote in Kikuyu: *“Rugiri ruru rwa thitima rugukoro kiambiriria kieru guku gwitu. Nakwaria maa tutigwitikiria aici a mbau gututhukiria rugiri ruru rwa bata.”*

Maintaining and managing the fence

Assessing strengths and weaknesses of the fence and associated infrastructure

In June 2012, the Aberdare Joint Surveillance Unit carried out an assessment of the status of the 400 km fence, and associated gates and energizer houses (Aberdare Fence Status Report). The assessment was to build the knowledge base to inform policy-making in the management of the fence and the Aberdare Conservation Area. The report was commissioned by the Joint management Committee, comprising of KWS, KFS and Rhino Ark.

Improving the welfare and living conditions of the fence attendants

As a follow-up to the Aberdare Fence Status Report, high/medium and low priority rehabilitation work in the 41 guard posts/energizer houses along the Aberdare Fence were identified and costed. Rhino Ark provided KES1.6 million to carry out the high priority rehabilitation work, which includes repair of leaking roof, providing access to water; providing/repairing sanitation; and establishing connections to the GRID.



Post-2010 Energizer station- Guard post

Improving the management of gates

As highlighted in the Aberdare Fence Status Report of June 2012, "gates are the weakest points in the fence infrastructure. The weakness of the gates is mainly due to their management".

In order to strengthen the management of the gates, a joint KFS/KWS/RA meeting, comprising senior managers, KWS sector wardens and KFS county forest coordinators was held on 23 January. It was one of the first times that all senior and field managers from both KFS and KWS met together. The meeting reviewed gate management and forest protection issues. KFS county forest coordinators were tasked to identify gates that are no longer needed and should be closed, as well as to identify ways to improve the management of gates. Proposed interventions to improve the management of gates will be reviewed in late May 2013.

In addition, Rhino Ark prepared Draft Gates Management Rules. The Draft Rules were submitted to, and reviewed by KWS and KFS senior managers and field managers. It is anticipated that the Rules will be adopted at the next meeting of the Joint Fence Management Committee. The Draft Rules address issues pertaining to the opening and closing of community, management and temporary gates as well as the manning of gates. They will apply to both Aberdares and Mt. Kenya.



Addressing illegal activities

Aerial reconnaissance flights are cost and time effective means to detect illegal activities, assess their extent and prepare interventions to protect the forest.

On 23 February 2013, Rhino Ark Executive Director led an aerial reconnaissance of critical hotspot areas in the Aberdare forest. The surveillance team included the KFS Head of Conservancy, Central Highlands, the KWS Senior Warden, Aberdare National Park, the KFS Regional Commander and the Rhino Ark Fence Community Manager. The flight enabled the location and assessment of extent of illegal activities to prepare for immediate forest protection interventions. The flight was co-sponsored by Alexis Peltier from Air Adventures.

A second aerial reconnaissance of four forest hotspots in Northern Aberdare was further held on 8 April 2012. The team, led by Rhino Ark Executive Director, comprised of KFS County Forest Coordinator/ Nyandarua County, KWS Sector Warden / Northern Aberdare and KFS Senior Forester / Geta Forest Station. The flight assisted in the final preparation of interventions to protect the forest and its rich biodiversity as well as to engage forest-adjacent communities in conservation. Many thanks to Angus Simpson for flying the team in his Cessna 182.



Rhino Ark Executive Director led an aerial reconnaissance of critical hotspot areas in the Aberdare forest.

Aerial reconnaissance of forest hotspots in Northern Aberdare, 8 April 2013

Aberdare school run for 11 June 2013

A maximum of 60 schools are set to take part in the 4th annual Aberdare relay run. Pupils and teachers who have been drawn from various schools nearing the Aberdare fence are gearing up for this conservation awareness event.

The selection of the schools will be based on an essay writing competition. Participants are to submit two essays, one by the teacher and the other by the pupil.

The 400 km run around the perimeter of the Aberdare fence takes place over a period of two weeks. It is organized jointly by the Kenya Wildlife Service and Rhino Ark to commemorate the completion of the Aberdare fence in 2009.



ABERDARES WILDLIFE WATCH...

Large Bongo Herd Sighted!

On 9th March 2013, a herd of eight Mountain Bongo antelope visited a saltlick in the Salient of the Aberdare National Park at around 2:00 pm. This is the largest herd seen so far, and a photograph was captured using a trap camera placed by the Bongo Surveillance Programme (BSP). The herd included two young Bongo calves, an indication that this Honi sub-population is in good health.

Bongo are known to be active at dawn and dusk but in this case, the herd visited the saltlick at broad daylight. This is an indication that the Bongo are beginning to feel more secure, most likely due to the electric fence and frequent security patrols by BSP field teams and Kenya Wildlife Service rangers.

The BSP team seeks to improve its surveillance work by installing a WEBCAM at this location, and the programme seeks support for this.



Wild dogs spotted...



A pack of wild dogs were spotted by David Lowe near Mutubio Gate a few weeks ago. The sightings of wild dogs, although very rare some decades ago, are becoming more frequent, with the largest pack reported numbering 24 individuals.

25TH ANNIVERSARY... A PACKED ENTRY FOR RHINO CHARGE 2013

By Kate Mwangi



Manee Choda's car no. 6 manouvers the tough ascent

Fast forward to 24 years down the line, the world famous event now raises tens of millions with a record of Kshs. 84.6 million raised last year.

As at 9.25 am on 1st August 2012, all 65 places for the Rhino Charge 2013 were filled. A full house of mad machines ranging from Land cruisers to Land rovers and Unimogs are geared to rev up on June 1st for the 25th edition of the Rhino Charge. 24 years ago, the verandah of the Members Bar at Muthaiga Country Club was the venue at which the Rhino Charge was conceived.

Just 60 kms from Nairobi, the rugged plains of Mt Suswa became the location for the first ever unique sporting event. 31 competing vehicles entered the 4th February 1989 Charge won by Travers Allison in a Suzuki. Distance was measured with the vehicle's standard odometer. The event raised Kshs. 250,000. Fast forward to 24 years down the line, the world famous event now raises tens of millions with a record of Kshs. 84.6 million raised last year.

It seems nothing will stop Chargers from enrolling in the event year in, year out. For the threshold of Kshs. 1 million pledge, a total of 32 entrants have snapped it up, and for the next level of Kshs. 750,000, all other competitors have pledged. Equally, there is a great band of fanatics who remain committed to the cause and drive up to the secret location every year for excitement. Adrenaline rush, unbeatable fun, the spills and thrills are guaranteed for anyone attending the 4x4 event.

"Rhino Charge Fever" has already hit Nairobi. Wherever you go, cars are being prepared in

garages, tested on and off the road. Shops are now full of camping equipment, and the words "where is the Charge this time?" are heard everywhere! On the Madaraka Day Weekend, the exodus will begin, and thousands of enthusiasts will head for the hills for another Rhino Charge.

1st time winner in last year's event Car 49-Terry Childs is set to defend his trophy and hopefully emerge triumphant once again. Alan McKittrick's car, a Land cruiser hybrid built to maneuver through anything will be hot on its heels at the 10 hour event. The Glen/Llwellyn team of Car 48 who won the 2009 and 2011 Charges will be at the heart of the chase again. Other previous winners including Car 38- Sean Avery/ Bundufundi team and Car 42-CarrHartley/ McRae are expected to be right in the pod of lead cars.

The ladies teams in the Charge this year set to battle it out for the Coup des Dames include Car 17- Tanya Church- Team Rhino Rouge, Car 19- Petra Somen/ Sabine Kontos- Bushbabes, Car 47- Teresa Sapieha- Girls in Pearls and Car 60-Rowena White- The Laughing Hyenas.

Other first time entrants set to tackle the course are Car 18- Karen Mathews, Car 25- Neeval Shah- Tropical Tigers, Car 40- Peter Francombe, Car 52- Hemal Pindolia, Car 55- Hamish Ker- Charging Hippos, Car 59- Richard Baudry- Victorious Secret and Car 63- Tim Carstens aussie rules.



Gauntlet action: Spectators watch the chargers as they power through

25TH RHINO CHARGE



2013 RAFFLE PRIZES



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Rob's Magic • Savage Wilderness Safaris

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Cheli & Peacock • Ekorian's Mugie Camp • Fairmont Hotels & Resorts
Flamboyant Boutique Hotel • Grogan's Castle Hotel
Hemingways Resort • Ikweta Safari Camp • Island Camp
Kaskazi Beach • Kenyaways Kite Village • Kicheche Laikipia Camp
Lake Nakuru Lodge • Leisure Lodge Resort • Lions Bluff Lodge • Loisaba
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Nomad At The Sands Beach Bar & Restaurant
Sails Beach Bar & Restaurant • Saffron Restaurant
Seven Seafood & Grill • Tribe Hotel

MANY THANKS TO OUR RAFFLE COMMITTEE:

Jenny Davey, Henrietta Remnant, Devina Seipp,
Belinda Levitan, Valerie Gunputrav & Kate Mwangi
for their sterling efforts to secure these prizes.



SUN MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT

The second edition of the Rhino Charge calendar is now on sale. The calendar which runs from July 2013 to June 2014 features great and exciting pictures from past events. Kindly purchase your copy for Ksh 1000 at the Driver's Briefing and the Rhino Charge venue

RAFFLE TICKETS AND PRIZES



The 2013 raffle books are ready for collection. All teams should arrange to collect them from the Rhino Ark office. For those who have already collected, more books are available on request.

New and exciting prizes have already been pledged.

RHINO CHARGE 2013 MERCHANDISE

This year's merchandise will be on sale at the Rhino Charge venue. Kindly purchase your t-shirts, caps, Rhino Charge DVDs and much more in support of Rhino Ark.



RHINO CHARGE AND RHINO ARK ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Would you like to see a selection of pictures from the past 24 years of the Rhino Charge? Do you want to receive news and updates about the Rhino Charge all year round? Do you want to hear about Rhino Charge related activities via social media?

Well, now you can...

Rhino Charge now has its own official Facebook page!

Find, like & share us on:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Rhino-Charge/173531366118659>

Not a Facebook user? We are also on Twitter:

https://twitter.com/rhino_charge

And if you want to see the official trailers of the "Spirit of the Charge" then find us on YouTube:

<http://www.youtube.com/rhinocharge4x4>

Finally, do follow how your contribution is making a difference in conservation through the Rhino Ark Facebook page:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Rhino-Ark-Charitable-Trust/221954667820810>



RHINO CHARGE DRIVER BRIEFING FOR 4TH MAY

For the 5th year running, the 2013 Rhino Charge driver's briefing is scheduled to take place on 4th May at the Braeburn School, Lavington.

Charge entrants must attend or have a representation of at least one member. Guard post officers and sponsors should also be present.

Among the activities to be briefed on include:

- pre-Charge check-in details by the new Clerk of Course, David Lowe;
- distribution of competitor bags;
- collection of car sponsorship from entrants;
- filling in of camping registration forms.

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



CAMPING ARRANGEMENTS



Tarpo Industries Ltd. has been a proud and trusted provider for the Rhino Charge for the past 10 years, and 2013 will be no exception.

For the Competitors: Tarpo will be providing a variety of packages for the competitors' camps. For more information, please contact Martha Kisaka on: Email: kisaka@tarpo.com or info@tarpo.com

Tel: (+254) 20 356 1111/2222. Cell: (+254) 722 204747/4949 or (+254) 733 958400

For the Spectators: Tarpo's spectator camp options will be managed by Alpine Adventures and they can be reached via email on rhinocharge@alpineadventures.co.ke. All spectator reservations must go through Alpine.

The deadline for reservations is strictly 15th May 2013.

RECOMMENDATION OF SPECIFICATION FOR MANDATORY INDEPENDENT POWER SUPPLY FOR RC2013 COMPETITION GPS EQUIPMENT

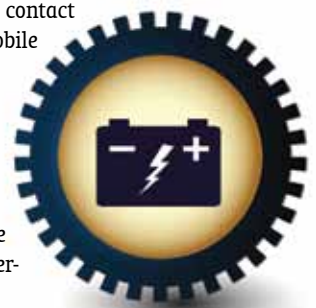
Most competitors (over 90%) are now compliant with providing a completely independent power source for the competition GPS equipment but for those of you who are not please be advised that for RC2013 it is mandatory. A separate power supply for the GPS tracking equipment improves reliability, reduces the chances of power surges & drops associated with the use of winches and reduces the risk of damage to the equipment.

Rhino Charge in conjunction with Rivercross Tracking Limited have carried out tests with the competition equipment whilst running the specially designed "Rhino Charge GPS script" and as a result of these tests we therefore recommend that competitors use the following battery as a minimum:

12V – 12 AMP HOUR – GASTON SEALED BATTERY.

These are in stock and available from Creative Innovations, Road A Industrial Area, Nairobi – contact person is "Joseph" on mobile 0722 201 376.

Competitors should test their battery prior to use to ensure it is functioning correctly as well as ensure that it is fully charged when the vehicle comes for scrutineering on the 31 May 2013.





HOG CHARGE 2013 RAISES KSHS. 3.3 MILLION

The 15th annual Hog Charge event raised a total of Kshs. 3,354,957 for the construction of Mt. Kenya and Mau Eburu, and maintenance of the Aberdare Fence Projects.

A total of 125 teams battled it out at the Brookside sponsored event staged at Peponi Secondary School, Ruiru, on Sunday 27th January. Children from over 10 schools participated in this event and hundreds of supportive parents, relatives and friends attended.

The highest cash sponsorship was raised by Team 77, Unknown from Pembroke House. The team raised a total Kshs. 129,100. They were followed by Team 71, Mashmallows with Kshs. 102,500 also from Pembroke House. In third place was Team 46, Ruthless, from Kenton College with Kshs. 90,800.

Pembroke House once again emerged as the best check-point sponsor.

The Hog Charge has raised over Kshs. 30 million for Rhino Ark since the first event in 1998

SPIRIT OF THE CHARGE 2012 FILM LAUNCHED- CARNIVORE, NAIROBI

Friday 16th November 2012 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" - a film about the Rhino Charge 2012 competition.

Cocktail Reception, Dinner Buffet & BBQ, a free copy of Spirit of the Charge 2012 DVD (worth Kshs. 2,000), a goodie-bag, live entertainment & raffle draw are some of the excitements that featured in the Spirit of the Charge Function.

The dramatic 26 minute film was well received by the audi-

ence. The top 5 fundraisers were also awarded with prizes. They are:

- Car 5- McKittrick/Hutchinson/Knight/Jessop/McKittrick/Bovard
- Car 35- Mark Tilbury/Hog Charge team
- Car 10- Chris Welles/ The Wags
- Car 38- Sean Avery/ Team Bundufundi
- Car 17- Tanya Church/Team Rhino Rouge

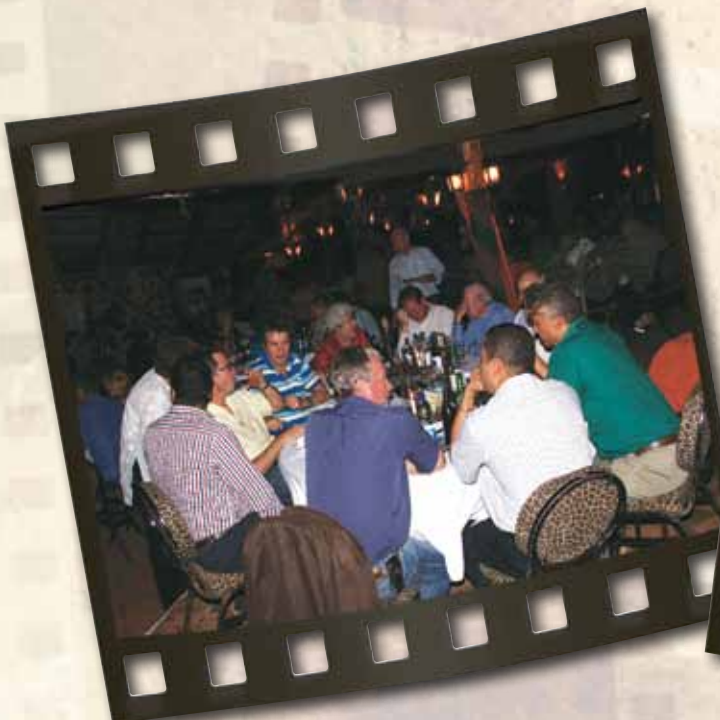
A total of approximately. Kshs. 85 million was raised at last year's Rhino Charge



Sarakasi dancers entertain the audience



Rhino Charge 2012 highest fundraisers with Rhino Ark Executive Director, Christian Lambrechts (far left) and Valerie Gunputrav (centre)



Guests enjoy their dinner



Rhino Charge Clerk of Course, David Lowe (r) with Devina Seipp.

THE ATHI 4X4 CHALLENGE TAKES PLACE AT SWARA PLAINS

The second annual Athi 4x4 Challenge was held on 17th February at Swara Plains Conservancy in Athi River. This year, the event saw Quad Bikes being used for the first time. Over 40 teams of amateur 4x4 enthusiasts and seasoned veterans took on the best of what the plains had to offer.

The mud wallows and rocky steep ravines proved tricky for most, but it was Gurmeet Mehta who eventually emerged the winner with 845 points closely followed by Alex Gibbs in second place with 875 points and Calvin De Souza taking third position with 945 points all in the expert category.

Alexis Boulanger emerged victorious in the quad bike category with 16 points while Shasa Corcoran took first place in the junior category with 1325 points. Bhevic Soni won the intermediate category with 145 points.

The event attracted over 2,000 supporters and is organized by Rhino Charge competitors Gray Cullen Car 22 and Phil Tilley Car 45. Funds raised in this event go towards their pledges for this year's Rhino Charge.



Pictures by Jonathan Githongo

HANGAR DAY FOR CAR 36

On Sunday 28th April, Rhino Charge Car 36 - the Aberdair Devils held a Hangar Day at Wilson Airport to raise money for their pledge towards the upcoming Rhino Charge.

Enthusiastic fans came together to witness a variety of planes and helicopters in the Aberdair Aviation facility take off. Children were able to speak to pilots and engineers and find out all the fun facts of flying.

The event also offered helicopter rides from outside the hangar with 10 min flights around the game park for those who were willing. Indeed it was a unique, fun and educational day for all who attended.



GREENSTEDS 'RUN-A-TON PLUS ONE' RAISES KSHS. 151,060



On 2 February 2013, about 60 participants from Greensteds International School took part in the third annual Greensteds "Run-a-Ton Plus One" fund raising relay run. The 110 km long relay started in Narok town and ended at the school in Nakuru via the Maasai Mau forest and included a 1 km tall hill climb section. Four teams, comprising of students and staff of the school enthusiastically took part in the Run, which also featured

a team of three cyclists. Local and international athletes training at the Kipchoge Keino Olympics training camp, a representative from the Kip Keino Foundation, and Sure 24, a local children's home in Nakuru also participated in the Run.

The event was completed in an impressive time of 8 hours and 20 minutes. In another notable achievement, for the first time, the cycling team, comprising Kush Patel, Kunal Patel and Eddie Cunningham managed to break their own record by finishing the whole 110 km without dismounting.

The total amount raised from the event was Kshs. 151,060. This was achieved by various donations from the students, a generous Kshs. 11,000 donation given by the Kip Keino Foundation and a surprise Kshs. 35,000 donation from an anonymous onlooker at the event's end. The funds raised are a donation towards the Rhino Charge 2013 for supporting Rhino Ark's conservation projects.

Rhino Ark's Eric Kihui was on hand at the end of the Run in the school to receive the participants, and appreciated the initiative by Greensteds to support Rhino Ark's conservation work. He encouraged the pupils and staff to take an active interest in conservation of the Mau Eburu forest, which is literally in view of the school, and provided maps of the Eburu forest for educational purposes.

RHINOTHON MARATHON FOR CAR 27

The Rhinthon, now in its 8th year, was held at the Karura forest in Gigiri, as a daylight event, quite different from the regular format of day and night cycling.

The format for the Juniors, school year 1 to 3 and 4 to 6, had a similar format to previous years, except that their track was far more challenging and a lot longer than previous years. The Seniors – year 7 to 9, 10/11 and "Open" had a much tougher route. They were required to visit 8 checkpoints randomly located all over the forest, using their map reading skills.

The fastest team finished the course (8 checkpoints) in a very fast team average time of 98.30 minutes. The fastest rider from Team Lacosta clocked an impressive 68 minutes. The highest individual collector was Priyank Shah raising Kshs. 55,000. A total of 38 teams registered for the event, with almost 600 riders.



RHINO CHARGE UK 2013 IS SET FOR SUNDAY 22 SEPTEMBER AT PIPPINGFORD PARK IN EAST SUSSEX

This year, in addition to the traditional Rhino Charge UK, the 1,500 acre estate will also host a Rhino Safari for drivers and families with sports utility vehicles who want to enjoy a day out in the beautiful surroundings of the Ashdown Forest. The day will consist of driving off road, trying a number of non-damaging sections, as well as watching some the challenges facing the UK Rhino Chargers.

As usual, the more adventurous and experienced off-roaders can enter the Rhino Charge UK. This year, the course will include more spectator sections giving supporters the chance to follow the event and cheer on their favourite teams from up close.

Rhino Ark supporters in Kenya and worldwide are called upon to let their friends and families in the UK know about this event. It is a unique opportunity for home-sick ex-pat Kenyans and friends of Kenya to meet together and continue to support the conservation of the water towers of our beloved Kenya. If every supporter of Rhino Ark could persuade one person to become involved as a competitor, spectator or helper, the UK Rhino Charge could snowball from a small, although unique, UK based fund raising event into something really special.



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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.

- **Carnivore Restaurant** - Venue for Spirit of the Charge 2012
- **Gavin Bennett** - MC at the Spirit of the Charge 2012
- **KWS** - RA offices
- **Kenya Tourism Federation** - Assistance with conference room
- **Braeburn Schools** - Driver's briefing venue
- **Goodyear Kenya** - Support assistance for Rhino Ark Vehicles
- **Gallagher Power Systems** - Logistical Support Sponsorship of Rhino Charge Programme 2013
- **Paraprint Ltd** - Design and printing of Spirit of the Charge tickets
- **Kenton Ward** - RC 2013 logo
- **AFEW** - Support of the Bongo surveillance programme
- **Rare Species Conservatory Foundation** - Support of the Bongo surveillance programme

Order your copy of:

- *Environmental, social and economic assessment of the fencing of the Aberdare Conservation Area. Available for Kshs. 3,000 only (Published September 2011)*
- *2012 Spirit of the Charge film in DVD and Video. Available for Kshs. 2,000 only.*



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