



ARKive

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE RHINO ARK CHARITABLE TRUST

NO. 46 MAY 2015

Mt. Kenya

80kms fenced

P3 Executive Director's view

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Braeburn School
Summum Appeto



CELEBRATE YOUR CHILD!

At Braeburn we recognise that every child in our care is an individual. With over 80 nationalities represented in our schools, we are able to celebrate our children and all their differences, teaching tolerance and respect for each other. As parents, we want our children to be happy and successful; Braeburn schools share that fundamental goal.

Recognising that children have different learning needs and abilities is important, so we are proud at Braeburn, to be able to offer our young people, as they enter our Sixth Forms, alternative learning pathways, all leading to the opportunity of a successful university experience.

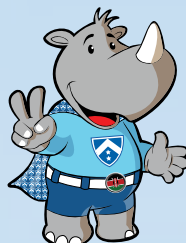
In selected Sixth Forms across the Braeburn Group, we offer:

- Cambridge International AS and A Levels - a two-year academic course, developing independent thinking skills and a deep understanding of between three and five subjects, culminating in examinations.
- International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) - The two year programme aims to develop students who have excellent breadth and depth of knowledge - students who flourish physically, intellectually,

emotionally and ethically. The final assessment is examination based.

- International Baccalaureate Career-related Programme (IBCP) - The programme was specifically developed for students who wish to engage in career-related learning while gaining transferable and lifelong skills in applied knowledge, critical thinking, communication, and cross-cultural engagement. Assessment is a mixture of continual assessment and examinations at the end of the two year course.
- BTEC Level Three National Diploma - This focuses on developing skills that will benefit students at university or in the work place. Teamwork, confidence, public speaking, independent research and problem solving are all emphasized in a two year, work related course that is continually assessed, with no examinations at present.

Speak to our Sixth Form and Universities Advisor, **Alex Manning** (alex.manning@braeburn.ac.ke), or our Secondary Education Manager, **Anne Bishop** (anne.bishop@braeburn.ac.ke), about the various options available to your own, unique child, and celebrate their learning!



EVERY CHILD A
CONFIDENT INDIVIDUAL, RESPONSIBLE CITIZEN, SUCCESSFUL LEARNER

www.braeburn.com



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:

- Mobilizing 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 ecosystems;
- 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

It is now almost three years since I joined Rhino Ark. These years have been marked by the expansion of our conservation portfolio that goes well beyond fencing to include: building capacity of KFS and KWS in fence management, combating wildlife crime and responding to wildfires; supporting community-based patrols; ecological monitoring; aerial surveillance; environmental education; promotion of bio-enterprise development; and securing wildlife corridors. At the same time, the strengthening of Rhino Ark as an institution has been a continuous activity, particularly in terms of financial management, human resource management, and renovation of our office spaces and other facilities. Many of our achievements have been highlighted in this and previous issues of ARKive, with our latest milestone being the completion of the electric fence around Eburu Forest.

The expansion of Rhino Ark's portfolio has been undertaken with careful deliberation, guided by our four priority thematic areas: (1) protection of mountain forests and their diverse wildlife; (2) support to forest-adjacent communities; (3) re-establishment and/or securing of the connectivity (wildlife corridors) with and between mountain forests; and (4) use of science to assess the impacts of, and review our conservation interventions.

There are still a good number of activities yet to be designed and implemented in these four thematic areas. But some of the key activities are now in place or are taking shape. We can now observe in the field how activities carried out under the thematic areas complement and enhance each other.

One of the challenges with the expansion of a programme is to secure its sustainability, not only financially, but also in terms of management capacity. This will be no doubt one of our challenges. We have to ensure that the conservation gains recently made cannot be lost. We have to ensure that our activities are well anchored.

With this in mind, Rhino Ark's main focus in the coming year will be to consolidate our wide-ranging conservation interventions. This will call not only for the strengthening of capacities within Rhino Ark and our partners, but also for securing full ownership of our activities amongst our stakeholders. As we move forward, we reflect on the fact that Rhino Ark is a partnership-oriented organization. Our achievements have been made possible by the quality of the partnerships we have cultivated, and on the complementary strengths of our partners to our own.

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Mau Eburu Forest perimeter electric fence completed – 43.3 km long

The comprehensive electric fence around Eburu Forest Reserve is now complete. The fence has been built in just 20 months, with construction having started in March 2013 and completed in November 2014. The completed fence measures 43.3 kilometres in length, which is 6.7 kilometres less than the initial project estimate of 50 kilometres, the shorter length being realized during construction by the more precise alignment along the forest boundary.

The speedy completion has been achieved despite the challenge of sometimes almost impossible fence line terrain that includes very steep slopes and plunging ravines. The smooth implementation of the fencing project has been made possible by the excellent collaboration between partners Kenya Forest Service, Kenya Wildlife Service, Rhino Ark Charitable Trust and the local communities. Funding for the project has been provided by the MPESA Foundation, the Kenya Government through Treasury, Finlays Horticulture, and from Rhino Ark core funds.

The fence is providing the management of Eburu Forest with an effective tool to mitigate human-wildlife conflicts, as well as help to address the challenges facing the forest, in particular charcoal burning, wildfires, overgrazing and illegal logging.

Eburu Forest Manager, Patrick Kiita observes, “The fence has helped to greatly improve revenue collection. Access to the forest can now only be done through the approved gates, so we can monitor all entries and exits by local communities and visitors and ensure that the appropriate fees are charged. Before the fence was built, we would collect as little as KES 50,000 per year, but in the current 2014-2015 financial year we have already collected over KES 300,000, a 600% increase! Incidents of illegal activities in the forest have declined as well, and we are now spending much less time on making arrests and following up on prosecutions.”

The focus is now on the completion of fence associated infrastructure, including the third fence energizer house at the Fire Watch Tower near Eburu Forest Station and the building of metallic lockable gates at each fence access point.



Project team members inspect the 43.3 km the distance marker at the fence completion point near the Fire Watch Tower



Steep section of the fence



Project team members during inspection of final section of the fence along Loldia Farm boundary

Eburu Forest: Lake Naivasha wildlife corridor work commences

A vast population of diverse wildlife inhabits Eburu Forest and surrounding areas up to Lake Naivasha to the south east, Kasarani and Ndabibi to the south and Enderit forest block of the Mau Forests Complex to the south west. These surrounding areas comprise a mix of large and small farms, rangelands, and a riparian zone along Lake Naivasha's shores. The movement of this wildlife between Eburu Forest and these areas has long been a source of human/wildlife conflict. The construction of the Eburu fence has addressed the conflict in the areas adjacent to the forest. However, the need to provide safe passage for wildlife moving between the forest and other areas remains a key challenge to be addressed.

On 9 September 2014, the inaugural stakeholders' forum workshop on the conservation of the wider Eburu ecosystem was held in Naivasha. This forum mandated the formation of three committees to address the challenges of wildlife corridors and dispersal areas within the wider Eburu ecosystem, as well as reforestation and community livelihoods. The first of these committees, the Eburu-Lake Naivasha Connectivity Committee commenced operations in December 2014. Membership of the Committee comprises Kenya Forest Service (KFS), Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), Loldia Farm, Marula Farm, Lake Naivasha Riparian Association and Rhino Ark. The operations of the Committee are facilitated by Rhino Ark.

The Committee is tasked with: (1) enabling wildlife movement between Eburu Forest and Lake Naivasha through the establishment of a wildlife corridor; (2) improving wildlife management, in particular reducing wildlife pressure in the various land units that are in the wildlife corridor; (3) promoting economic opportunities related to the wildlife corridor; (4) addressing human wildlife conflict along the wildlife corridor; and (5) addressing illegal activities in the wildlife corridor area.

Since its establishment the Committee has held regular monthly meetings, through which key interventions have been agreed upon and are being implemented. This includes identification of two locations at which wildlife has traditionally transited from the forest towards Lake Naivasha and surrounding areas, particularly in search of surface water. The locations are both found on the eastern boundary of Eburu Forest adjacent to Loldia Farm. Wildlife gates have now been opened on the

recently completed Eburu Electric Fence at these locations to enable wildlife to move across the wider Eburu ecosystem. The opening and management of the two wildlife gates is guided by the Committee.

The Committee is also working on joint patrolling, addressing human-wildlife conflicts along the boundaries between Loldia Farm and settlements, establishment of water pans in the forest and documenting wildlife movement through the gates using camera traps.

A new outpost, the Naitolia Joint Patrol Camp, has been established in Eburu Forest along the boundary with Loldia Farm overlooking the Ndabibi area, along a hot spot for illegal activities. The outpost will facilitate improved security against poaching of the wildlife moving between Eburu Forest and Loldia Farm and help to address illegal forest resources extraction in the eastern part of Eburu Forest and in the northern part of Loldia Farm. It will host two rangers from Kenya Forest Service, two scouts from Loldia Farm and two fence attendants. The two KFS rangers are already based at the outpost.

The Committee is further supporting a technical review of the existing private Loldia Farm fences along the wildlife corridor to Lake Naivasha. This process is geared towards ensuring that the fences meet necessary game-proof standards, and thus ultimately securing the wildlife corridor.



Committee inspects Naitolia Joint Patrol Camp



Wildlife movement in Ndabibi area



Committee inspects wildlife gate on Loldia Farm/Eburu fence boundary

Support for Eburu schools' conservation education programme enhanced

In January 2014 Rhino Ark rolled out a Conservation Education (CE) curricula programme in 32 schools within the forest adjacent communities of Eburu ecosystem. This voluntary programme aims to instill positive environmental conservation values in school children at both primary and secondary school levels through the teaching of a comprehensive conservation education syllabus developed for this purpose. Primary and secondary school curriculum books and teachers' guides were produced under this programme, and teachers from the participating schools were trained on the respective curricula and provided with the books.

As part of Rhino Ark's support strategy, an evaluation of the programme was carried out in October 2014 to assess the implementation progress within the schools. The evaluation team, which included external experts from the Kenya Wildlife Service, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Education, Nakuru County Government Environment Department and Maasai Mara University visited a representative sample of 11 schools for this purpose. The team found that good progress was being achieved in teaching the curricula, but noted a key challenge posed by the fact that the curricula are not examinable subjects. Additional challenges included understaffing leading to inadequacy of staff and transfer of teachers leading to loss of continuity.

As a mitigation to some of the challenges, Rhino Ark undertook to provide additional mentoring support to the schools through leveraging the manpower resources and schools/community outreach expertise of the Bongo Surveillance Programme (BSP). The BSP will dedicate the resource time of the Bongo Wildlife clubs coordinator for up to 2 weeks per month on an ongoing basis to visit the participating schools with the aim of: (a) establishing a long term system for monitoring CE implementation in participating schools; (b) identifying challenges to implementation and working with stakeholders to address these challenges; (c) providing mentoring and technical support to CE programme resource persons in the schools; and (d) providing a platform/focal point for experience sharing and process improvement for frontline teaching staff participating in the programme.

The mentoring support commenced in February 2015, with visits to each of the participating schools.



P. Munene, BSP schools outreach coordinator (right) discusses curricula with Deputy Head Teacher, Loldia Primary School



Meeting with school teachers

Eburu community trained on domestic charcoal alternative

Rhino Ark is continuing to support the propagation of alternative domestic energy solutions amongst forest adjacent communities in the Eburu ecosystem. The communities rely heavily on firewood and charcoal, sourced from the forest for their domestic energy needs – for cooking and heating their homes. This demand puts pressure on the forest and is a catalyst for much illegal extraction of forest resources, leading to its degradation. The first phase of the domestic charcoal making initiative was started in 2013 with the introduction to the community of domestic charcoal making stoves (jikos) and training on their use.

Phase Two of the programme commenced in January 2015 with direct training of community members. The training plan comprises a 6-workshop series at strategic locations within the communities adjacent to Eburu Forest. The first three of these workshops have been completed in Ndabibi, Eburru and Songoloi areas.

The training was facilitated by Rhino Ark using the training-of-trainers approach. Four local community members that were trained in Phase One of this initiative were the trainers that conducted the workshop sessions under Rhino Ark's supervision.

125 community members received training on the use of domestic charcoal making jikos, and 6 jikos were procured and embedded with the community for ongoing peer training. The jikos make it possible for households to produce their own charcoal using feedstock available on farms, such as tree branch prunings and dried maize cobs - at no additional cost. Since the purchase of local charcoal is expensive (up to KES 1,000 per 90kg bag), the jikos offer a means to reduce both domestic energy expenditure and the need to extract the resources from the forest. The training has been made possible with funding support from the MPESA Foundation.



Training at Ndabibi



Training at Songoloi



Training session at Eburru

Third fence energizer house under construction – 85% complete

Construction of the third fence energizer house is making steady progress, and is now over 85% complete. The facility will house two fence scouts, tools, fence maintenance materials and the power system for a 20km section of fence. The energizer house is located near the Fire Watch Tower on Ngobobo Hill near Eburru settlement. It offers a commanding view of the surrounding terrain and fence line, and will provide a base for two fence scouts who maintain an 8km section of the fence on a daily basis.



View of the Fire Watch Tower fence energizer house



An artisan carries out painting work

Ole Sirwa community water project commissioned



Inspection of spring protection works inside the forest



Nakuru County Deputy Governor, Hon. Joseph Ruto plants a tree at Ole Sirwa outpost

The Ole Sirwa community water project was formally commissioned on 14th April 2015 at a colourful ceremony held at the Ole Sirwa cattle trough in Ol Jorai location. The chief guest for the event was Hon. Joseph Ruto, the Deputy Governor of Nakuru County on behalf of the Governor.

Hundreds of local community members joined with invited guests that included friends of Rhino Ark, staff of the MPESA Foundation, senior officials of Nakuru County, soldiers from the Kenya Defence Forces, county administration to participate in the event. Pupils from three local schools also attended the event.

The event, organized by Rhino Ark with core project partners World Vision, Kenya Forest Service and Nakuru County, formally presented the water project to the local community who are its primary beneficiaries. Funding support for the occasion was provided by the MPESA Foundation.

The event kicked off with an inspection of the Ole Sirwa Spring points inside Eburu forest, followed by guests planting 1,000 indigenous tree seedlings at the Ole Sirwa forest guard outpost. The guests then proceeded to the Ole Sirwa water trough for the formal ceremony, which was enlivened by songs and traditional dances performed by pupils from local schools. Christian Lambrechts, Rhino Ark Executive Director gave an overview of the overall Eburu conservation project to help put into context Rhino Ark's support for the community water initiative. In his prepared speech read on behalf of the Governor, Nakuru County Deputy Governor expressed the Governor's appreciation for the contribution of the private sector towards the project.

The Ole Sirwa Springs inside Eburu Forest are the primary source of water for the local community in Ole Sirwa, Olepolos, Kambi Muhindi and Kambi Turkana areas of Ol Jorai location. Over 7,000 people and their livestock in this area are directly dependent on water from this source, which yields over 27,000 litres of water per day. The Ole Sirwa community water project is a collaborative partnership that was established between Rhino Ark, World Vision, Nakuru County Water Office, Eburu/Mbaruk Ward Member of County Assembly, Nakuru County Administration (Elementaita Division) and local community leaders to address water access and quality challenges facing the local community.

Through this partnership, funding and technical expertise has been harnessed to provide solutions to the water challenges facing the Ole Sirwa community. A master plan for community water infrastructure was developed, and specific components of this plan were implemented by the partners within the period 2014-2015, including protection of the spring points, construction of water tanks and water distribution kiosks, and a condition survey of the water pipelines from the forest to community areas. These activities have improved the water flow and water quality for the community. Laboratory tests conducted before and after the springs protection works indicate a substantial decrease in water contamination from high health risk to low risk. Rhino Ark's contribution to the initiative has been achieved with funding support from the MPESA Foundation.



Attentive local community members follow the event proceedings



Nakuru County Deputy Governor unveils the commissioning plaque

EBURU ECOSYSTEM - LANDSCAPES AND BIODIVERSITY...



Fence construction now in Chuka

Just over 80 kilometres of the fence have been built as of 7th May 2015. Fence construction moved to Chogoria Forest last year, skipping Chuka Forest where some members of the community claimed to have a cultural/ancestral interest in the forest and petitioned the High Court in Meru to stop any activities in the forest, including fencing. Rhino Ark, as a respondent in the case, challenged that the fence is a human-wildlife management tool and not a boundary marker. In his ruling of 18th December 2014,

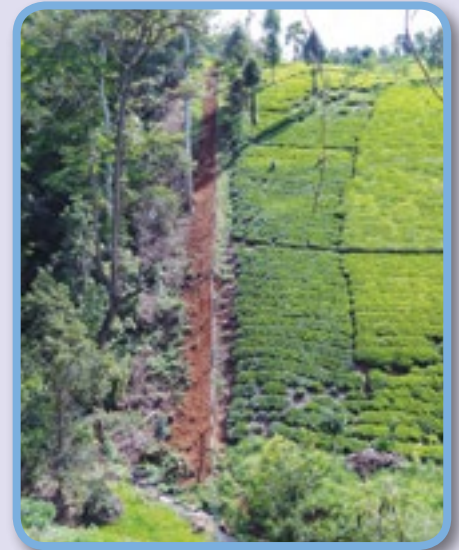
the High Court Judge recognized the benefits of the fence and allowed Rhino Ark and its partners to build the fence along Chuka Forest. Following the ruling, a consultative meeting with key stakeholders and leaders from Chuka was held on 23rd January 2015 at Chuka Forest Station. At the meeting, all participants expressed support to the fence and agreed that, if the land case succeeds, the fence will be moved to the new boundary. Since February, fence construction has started in Chuka Forest.



Newly built fence along Chuka Forest



Strainer assembly under construction near Chuka Forest Station



New fenceline near Nithi River (Chuka Forest)

New gates designed and built on Mt. Kenya

In June 2012, a comprehensive assessment of the status of the Aberdare Electric Fence was conducted. One of the key findings of the assessment is that the gates are the weakest points in the fence infrastructure. Learning from the Aberdare experience, new designs for the gates - vehicle and pedestrian gates – were prepared by Kenya Wildlife Service with inputs

from Kenya Forest Service and Rhino Ark. The new gates are metal, lockable and mounted on well anchored concrete pillars. They have standard dimensions. To date, all the gates in Kirinyaga County (six vehicle gates and four pedestrian gates) have been built, as well as the seven vehicle gates and three pedestrian gates in Embu County.



Newly built gate along Mt. Kenya Electric Fence

Sirimon Bridge rehabilitated and commissioned



Commissioning of Sirimon Bridge - Cutting of the ribbon by BATUK Commandant



Commissioning of Sirimon Bridge

The rehabilitated Sirimon Bridge was commissioned on 28th November 2014. Present at the commissioning were the Commandant of the British Army Training Unit Kenya (BATUK), the KWS Assistant Director of the Mountain Conservation Area, the KFS Head of Eastern Conservancy, the KWS Senior Warden of Mt. Kenya National Park/Reserve, the KFS Ecosystem Conservator of Meru County and the Executive Director of Rhino Ark, among others.

The rehabilitation work started in August and was successfully carried out by BATUK, with in-kind contributions from Kenya Forest Service and Kenya Wildlife Service. This is an outcome of the collaboration established by Rhino Ark between BATUK, Kenya Forest Service and Kenya Wildlife Service.

Sirimon Bridge is the second bridge rehabilitated by BATUK among eight key infrastructures identified in Mt. Kenya and the Aberdares due for rehabilitation. Sirimon Bridge, located in Ontulili Forest near Mawingu Airstrip is an important infrastructure for the management of Mt. Kenya Forest, in particular for addressing wildfires and illegal activities in the north-eastern part of Mt. Kenya.

Surveillance flight to detect marijuana fields



Aerial surveillance team on 14th January 2015

Rhino Ark, together with KFS, KWS and Mount Kenya Trust, flew above sections of the forest of Mt. Kenya located in Tharaka Nithi and Meru counties on 14th January 2015. The purpose of the flight was to monitor illegal activities in Chuka forest and the illegal cultivation of marijuana in the upper forest / bamboo belt in both counties. The surveillance team comprised of: KWS Senior Warden, Mt. Kenya National Park/Reserve; KWS Company Commander; KFS Ecosystem Conservator, Tharaka Nithi County; KFS Regional Commander, Eastern Conservancy; KFS Senior Forester; CEO, Mount Kenya Trust; Executive Director, Rhino Ark; Fence/Community Manager, Rhino Ark.

The flights revealed a reduction in the growing of marijuana, an illicit crop. A number of illegal logging hotspots were observed, albeit the overall level of illegal logging activities in the entire area was low.

Community members engaged in the conservation of the Aberdares

Joint efforts extinguished large wild fire in the Aberdare ecosystem

The Aberdare Joint Surveillance Unit (AJSU) joined the Kenya Wildlife Service, Kenya Forest Service and members from the forest-adjacent communities to extinguish one of the largest wild fires of the season in the moorlands of the Northern Aberdares in early February 2015. Wild fires most often occur during the dry season of January to March.



AJSU in the Northern Aberdares assist in fighting wild fires in early February

Aberdare Joint Surveillance Unit strengthened

The Aberdare Joint Surveillance Unit (AJSU) is a joint KWS-KFS-Rhino Ark initiative to engage members of the forest-adjacent communities in the protection of the Aberdare forest and its wildlife. Established in 2010, AJSU comprises of one coordinator, five scouts and one driver. AJSU is financed by Rhino Ark.

To enhance the operational efficiency and guarantee maximum performance, the Unit has recently been strengthened. Guided by a Joint Committee with representatives from KWS, KFS and Rhino Ark, AJSU is now focussed on desnaring, fence surveillance, monitoring of illegal activities, intelligence information collection, and gathering of scientific data for management use. The Unit is fully equipped to operate deep inside the forest and provided with a dedicated 4x4 vehicle to enhance mobility.

Successful joint desnaring operations in the Aberdare forest



Joint AJSU-BSP-KWS team during the desnaring operation in January 2015



Pit snares found and destroyed during the operation carried out in January 2015

As part of their monthly programme, the recently strengthened Aberdare Joint Surveillance Unit (AJSU) conducted a successful desnaring operation in the Aberdare forest in January 2015. Based on intelligence, AJSU, together with trackers from the Bongo Surveillance Programme and KWS rangers, was sent to the forest within Muranga County to tackle reported snare threats. During the joint operation, five pit snares were found and destroyed (buried). The pits were up to 9 feet deep. Fortunately, no animal signs were seen in the pits.

AJSU carried out another desnaring operation in Kieni, Ragia, Mundoro and Matara areas in the southern part of the Aberdare forest in February 2015. During the operations, they found and destroyed snares and pit snares. They also checked permits of people carrying forest produce, in particular firewood and collected data on illegal activities to be reported to KFS and KWS.

Aberdare Trust holds its first meeting



First meeting of Aberdare Trust - William Kiprono, Ag. Director-General of Kenya Wildlife Service, Christian Lambrechts, Executive Director, Rhino Ark and David. Mbugua, Director of Kenya Forest Service

The first meeting of the Founding Trustees of the Aberdare Trust was held on 4th December 2014. The Aberdare Trust is a public-private partnership involving Rhino Ark, the Kenya Wildlife Service, the Kenya Forest Service and the local communities, established to maintain the 400 km electric fence and ensure that the objectives of the fence are met.

The benefits of the Trust include:

- 1) Strengthening the existing public-private partnership around the fence by institutionalizing the partnership;
- 2) Providing a platform for all stakeholders, including communities, to work together;
- 3) Providing an attractive avenue for stakeholders, whether from the public or private sector, to invest in conservation;
- 4) Providing flexibility to respond promptly to emerging issues;
- 5) Increased legitimacy as well as greater levels of transparency and accountability.

Audit and rehabilitation of the oldest sections of the fence

As part of the work of the Aberdare Joint Surveillance Unit (AJSU), Phases 1 and 4 of the fence were audited in January 2015 whilst Phases 2 and 3 were audited in February 2015. Across the four phases, it was noted that many strainer assemblies were weak, leaning, or collapsed. The main reason is the age of the wooden posts which are rotting, in particular in Phase 4 where the fence is located inside the forest.

To ensure that the fence is in good working condition when the rains come, a fence maintenance response team has been set up, comprising fence technicians who completed the building of Eburu Fence in November last year. The purpose of the team is to support the repair work to be carried out by the fence attendants.

In addition to the Mitero-Wandare section (Phase I) that was entirely rehabilitated last year, sections of Phase 4 have also been rehabilitated this year.



One of the rehabilitated sections of Phase 4

Monitoring the impact of past management changes

An aerial surveillance was conducted on 23 April 2015 above the forests on the northern slopes in Nyandarua County. The area is a known hotspot. The purpose of the flight was to (1) assess the impact of the management changes made by KWS and KFS following the flight conducted on 8 August 2014; (2) detect any new emerging issue in the forest; and (3) assess the extent of the wild fires that affected the forest and the moorland during the dry season.

The observations made during the flight confirmed some positive impacts from the management changes made by KWS and KFS. However, the growing demand for cedar posts due to the booming real estate development in most parts of the country is exercising a huge pressure on the cedar forests in Northern Aberdares and other dry forests.

Alternative to cedar posts, such as treated gum posts and plastic posts are available widely on the market, albeit they are more expensive than cedar posts that are most often produced from illegally logged trees. Rhino Ark electric fences are exclusively made using treated gum posts, plastic posts and in the past metal posts.



Aerial survey of Aberdares in Nyandarua County on 23rd April 2015

New Scientist Magazine's environment correspondent touring Rhino Ark's projects



Fred Pearce interviewing Simon Gitau, Senior Warden, Mt Kenya National Park and Reserve



Fred Pearce interviewing members of the forest adjacent communities in Mt. Kenya

Fred Pearce, New Scientist Magazine's lead environment correspondent, visited Kenya for a week to collect information and conduct interviews on the importance of Kenya's water towers and the contribution of Rhino Ark towards their conservation.

Fred Pearce's visit to Mt. Kenya, Aberdares and Mau Eburu helped further enhance Rhino Ark's visibility at the international level. A number of articles were published:

- The New Scientist Magazine, "Kenya's electrified route to human-wildlife harmony" (<http://www.newscientist.com/article/mg22530104.200-kenyas->

[electrified-route-to-humanwildlife-harmony.html#_VPVfG_mUeSr](http://www.newscientist.com/article/mg22530104.200-kenyas-electrified-route-to-humanwildlife-harmony.html#_VPVfG_mUeSr))

- The e360 of Yale University, School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, "In Kenya's Mountain Forests, A New Path to Conservation" (http://e360.yale.edu/feature/in_kenyas_mountain_forests_a_new_path_to_conservation/2850/)
- The CGIAR's Agriculture and Ecosystems Blog, "Poachers turned gamekeepers" (<http://wle.cgiar.org/blogs/2015/02/24/poachers-turned-gamekeepers/>)

NEW ARRANGEMENTS FOR EVENT ACCESS & SPECTATOR ACCOMMODATION

The Rhino Charge Ticketing Portal, developed by Ignite Africa Limited and sponsored by Kenya Commercial Bank Limited, is NOW ONLINE: www.rhinocharge2015.org

This Portal is the OFFICIAL and ONLY website to use to book and pay for the following:

1. Entry Ticket - Please note that entry tickets are not transferable or refundable
2. Vehicle Pass known as a Landowner Access Fee (LAF) - Please note that vehicle passes are not transferable or refundable.
3. Accommodation in the Spectator Camp from accredited camp operators which are:
 - Ker & Downey Safaris – luxury - www.kerdowneysafaris.com
 - Bunduz – economy - www.bunduz.com
 - Feast with the Beast – budget - www.feastwiththebeast.co.ke
 - Bunduz – budget - www.bunduz.com

RHINO CHARGE 2015	BUNDUZ BUDGET	FEAST WITH THE BEAST BUDGET	BUNDUZ ECONOMY	KER & DOWNEY
	KES	KES	KES	KES
Option 1 (tent sharing, self-drive)	15,000/-	15,750/-	18,500/-	36,000/-
Option 2 (tent single, self-drive)	17,000/-	17,500/-	20,000/-	40,000/-
Option 3 (tent sharing, incl. transport)	22,500/-	21,250/-	25,000/-	N.A.
Option 4 (tent single, incl. transport)	24,000/-	23,500/-	28,000/-	N.A.
Option 5 (self-camping, self-drive)	7,500/-	6,750/-	7,500/-	N.A.



THE NEW RHINO CHARGE WEBSITE IS NOW LIVE!

The website is accessible through the known web link: WWW.RHINOCHARGE.CO.KE

The new website intends to enhance the viewers experience and aims for a user-friendly and exciting journey through the Rhino Charge.

Some of the new or enhanced features include:

- An updated list of the Rhino Charge organisers;
- A 13 point journey on how the Rhino Charge works;
- A competitors section where each team will be able to update their own team profile (details will be sent to team leaders shortly);
- A spectators section where all those interested in coming to the Charge as spectator can find useful information;
- A sponsors section where all sponsors categories (service, guard post and raffle sponsors) are recognised;
- A results section where results of previous charges as well as live updates (during the competition day) will be made available;
- A new calendar, which will show not only the Rhino Charge events, but also the events organised by the competitors (if the teams provide this information through their team profiles);
- Finally, join our thousands of supporters... be part of the **I Rhino Charge** movement... express your support to the Rhino Charge and its mission of conserving Kenya's water towers by signing up to the I Rhino Charge network now set up in the new website.



The Rhino Charge Committee hope that you enjoy the new website and wish you lots of fun exploring the new features and information.

The Committee would also like to thank **SQUAD DIGITAL** who have sponsored the development of the new website. Additional thanks go out to the Rhino Charge volunteers who have dedicated their free time to build the new website and develop the content that you can now see.

Please be aware that the website has not been optimised for all mobile versions yet. If you are having problems accessing or navigating through the website on a mobile device (phone or tablet) then please use a computer to see the full functionality of the website.

KK SECURITY TO MARK 10 YEARS OF VENUE SECURITY AT THE CHARGE

For the tenth year running, KK Security is set to offer seamless security at the 2015 Rhino Charge. The team will be on 24hr patrol and man the key access points at the event. Venue Check-in, HQ, Gauntlet and competitor and spectator camps will be key zones for KK Security this year.

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



THE RHINO CHARGE BOOK

CALL FOR PHOTOS

THE PREPARATION

The story of the Rhino Charge has been written; from the beginnings, along every step of its adventure and achievements, and towards the future.

So far we have 23,000 words of narrative text, capturing the purpose, the progress, the people and the spirit of this unique event. A committee of sages has read the draft, smiled and nodded. They believe it tells the story as it should be told.

That team is now trawling through a mountain of archive documents to extract the facts – on every event, every entrant, and every result – for an authoritative and comprehensive reference section. When that is done, all the material will be turned into a photo-rich book.

But the Rhino Charge is not the story of a committee. It is the story of every participant, from Day One to Date. So you are now invited to add your own personal mark... in pictures. The Rhino Ark has a library of many thousands of photographs. And so do you.

THE PROPOSITION

Every crew, every official, is invited (and urged!) to submit their “favourite” pictures. Each of you is asked to select and send just THREE (this month if possible) to: gavin.bennett@africaonline.co.ke; copy to rhinochargebook@gmail.com

They should be high resolution* digital originals or scanned prints. They can be on any aspect of the Charge. No limits whatsoever. Above all, we are looking for pictures which tell a particular story or evoke the character of the event. Anything, anything, anything from action shots to spectacular landscapes, accidents, mechanical damage



and repairs, fund-raising parties/events, ceremonies and celebrations, pre-event preparation, scrutineering, medical rescues, strategy meetings, map planning, bush running, encounters with wildlife, eating and drinking, guard post antics and hospitality, camp site panoramas, headquarters, rubbish pits, laughing, weeping... and anything else we might not have thought of.

We are especially keen to strengthen the resource of pics on the early years, and insights on less conventional facets of the event. Interesting and quirky are just as welcome (and important) as technical quality.

This is not a photo contest. It is a bid to capture hidden treasures that will help illustrate or add to the Rhino Charge story, and enrich its documented history.

Please let us have a short “fact note” on each picture – where and when it was taken (if known) and who is in it (if relevant). All contributors will be acknowledged in the book, and... the name of every contributor, whether their pictures are used or not, will go into a lucky draw pot with a chance of winning a truly handsome prize!

Many thanks,

Rhino Charge Book Committee

08 May 2015

* High resolution” at least 600 dpi or “press quality” if possible (pic dimensions not bigger than A4 and file sizes of between 1MB and 3MB are the hoped-for “norm”). Jpegs best, Photoshop and PDFs also okay.

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THANK YOU TO THE RAFFLE COMMITTEE FOR SECURING THESE PRIZES

Valerie Gunputrav, Gillie Hutchinson, Belinda Levitan, Leah Levitan,
Devina Meinzingen, Kate Mwangi, Henrietta Remnant & Tracey White

RHINO CHARGE PRE-EVENT BRIEFING TAKES PLACE AT BRAEBURN



The 2015 Rhino Charge Pre-Event Briefing took place on 9th May at Braeburn School, on Gitanga Road, in Lavington.

Charge entrants, Guard Post officers, and sponsors attended the social as well as informative event. They were briefed on:

- Registration of all persons accessing the Rhino Charge; this is to be done through the online portal;
- Commencement point of route notes to venue; this will begin at Nanyuki;
- General rules and regulations; this included:
 - i. Waste Management;
 - ii. Speed limit (40kph);
 - iii. Maximum tyre size;
 - iv. Camping arrangements.



The Briefing also provided an opportunity to:

- Collect the Medical Kit from the Medical Desk;
- Submit any sponsorship collected to date, along with the mandatory minimum advance sponsorship required at this time, as per the RC 2015 Rules & Regulations;
- Collect the Rhino Charge competitor bag from the Sponsorship Desk and purchase a GPS antenna and a box to contain the GPS;
- Register with Rivercross Tracking Ltd (our results partners);
- Submit as many Raffle ticket stubs as possible and return any books not required;
- Highlands Mineral Water Co. was well represented and took orders for bottled drinking water to be collected on arrival at the venue;
- The Iceman was also represented and took in advance orders.



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CAR 35 HOG CHARGE TEAM RAISES KES 3,423,503



KES 3,423,503 was raised at the 17th annual Hog Charge cycling event. The event is organized to raise funds to go towards Mark Tilbury's team (Car 35) entry pledge for the Rhino Charge, and ultimately towards Rhino Ark's conservation projects.

On Sunday 25th January 2015, 107 teams battled it out at the event held at Sukari Ranch (Peponi School) in Ruiru. Children from over 15 schools participated in this mountain bike challenge and hundreds of supportive parents and friends attended.

Peponi House Team 27 (Heroic Hogs) was this year's highest cash sponsor. The team raised a remarkable KES 348,000. In second place was Team 10 (Super Strikers) from Peponi House, ISK & The German School, with KES 200,000. Team 94 (Speedy Spiders) from Pembroke House emerged third, raising KES 132,000.

Each team must raise a minimum of KES 24,000 in sponsorship to qualify.

Once again, Pembroke House emerged the best check-point sponsor.

Since its inception, the Hog Charge has raised over KES 37 million for Rhino Ark's conservation projects in Mt. Kenya, Aberdares and Mau Eburu.

Pembroke House emerged the best check-point sponsor.



THE ATHI 4X4 CHALLENGE FOR CAR 45



The Athi 4 x 4 Challenge is a tough off road event that takes place on a 20,000 acre wildlife conservancy near Athi River some 30 km from Nairobi. The event has now been running for 3 years and the revenue generated goes towards Car 45 (Team Loosey) entry pledge in the Rhino Charge. Team 'Loosey' is a collection of old timers headed up by driver Phil Tilley, a veteran of more than 20 Charges. All team members are in their sixties, making them the oldest Charge team around.

The event held on 29th March 2015 raised nearly KES 500,000 for Car 45 who will be participating in the upcoming Rhino Charge. The categories of entry included: expert teams, intermediate teams and motorcycle and quad bike teams. There are several stages that the cars have to get through. They are: Quarry Rally, Mud Madness, Reverse & Blindfold and Water Eruption. The driver who completes the most stages in the shortest time is the winner.

The event has been organized mostly by volunteers associated with Car 45 with logistics support coming from Biz Baz Events Ltd. The team plans to organize two events per year (in March and November) going forward at the ranch venue.

CAR 49: 6-A-SIDE FUNDRAISING HOCKEY TOURNAMENT

On 29th March, Car 49 (Braeburn 7²) held the second edition of the annual fundraising hockey tournament at Braeburn School in Lavington. The format was the same as the previous year and in the spirit of inclusivity each team was required to field two players who were either female, under the age of fourteen or over the age of 50. Ultimately, last year's champions, Gappies + 1 managed to retain their trophy. The team, made up primarily of Braeburn teachers, clearly making use of their home advantage.

A total of ten teams participated in the hockey tournament. The day was a resounding success and KES 250,000 was raised. This amount will go towards Car 49's sponsorship pledge for this year's Rhino Charge. The tournament is now established as an annual event and it creates the perfect atmosphere for a fun family day out.



The winning team: Gappies + 1

GREENSTEDS 'RUN-A-TON' RAISES KES 143,850

Over 100 participants from Greensted International School took part in the 110km relay dubbed Run-A-Ton. The run which was held on 1st February 2015 began in Narok town and ended in Nakuru.



The unusually hot and dry weather made sections of the road very dusty. Some of the students ran through the 2km long sections while two teachers cycled the entire distance. "Run-A-Ton was a superb experience. There was excellent spirit and support from teachers and students. Everyone put in loads of effort," said Sneha Dandia, a student at the school.



The event was flagged off by Francis Ole Nkako, CEO Kenya Water Towers Agency. A total of KES 143,850 was raised. The funds raised are a donation towards the Rhino Charge 2015 to support Rhino Ark's conservation projects.



RHINOTHON MARATHON FOR CAR 27



This year's Rhinathon event was held on Saturday 11th April at Newbury Grounds, Nyari. The event, organized by Car 27 with support from Car 25 and Car 61, featured 156 cyclists in teams of up to 10 riders. Well secured with helmets, the teams set out to compete for first place which was determined by the maximum number of laps done by each group.



The minimum sponsorship required to participate in the Rhinathon is KES 40,000 per team in the 1-3 and 4-6 classes KES 50,000 per team in the year 7 to 9 and 10-11 classes, and KES 70,000 in the Open class. Some teams however raised considerably more. Team Baditude collected the highest sponsorship of KES 123,550 and Aditya Shah who was the highest individual collector collected KES 60,000.

Over KES 500,000 was raised at the event. All the proceeds will go towards their entry pledges for the Rhino Charge this year and ultimately to Rhino Ark's conservation projects.



CAR 46 & 18 FUNDRAISING EVENTS

PAINTBALL CHALLENGE

Rhino Charge Team 18 organised a paintball tournament on 21st February 2015 in order to raise funds to go towards their entry pledge for this year's Rhino Charge. Strategy, grit, and a lot of paintballs... those were the basic requirements for successful teams in the Paintball Challenge.

A total of twelve teams met on the field of battle that was characterized by great tactics and awesome victories. Competitors had loads of fun as they eliminated their opponents by tagging them with capsules containing water-soluble dye propelled from a device called a paintball marker (commonly referred to as a paintball gun).

In the end, the team from BlueSky Adventures vanquished all foes. A total of KES 25,000 was raised.



BRIC-A-BRAC SALE

Rhino Charge Teams 18 and 46 organised a sale dubbed 'Bric-A-Brac sale' on two different occasions, one at Rosslyn and the other at the Nairobi Art Centre. Hundreds of supporters donated items such as furniture, electronics, garden equipment, clothes etc which were then displayed and sold to the public at affordable prices.

The teams managed to raise a total of KES 193,340 which all goes towards their entry pledge for the Rhino Charge this year.



5TH ANNUAL FAT RHINOS GOLF DAY FOR CAR 24

The age old question for many teams taking part in the Rhino Charge is, "How can we raise money for the Rhino Ark?" This is a question that Car 24 - the Fat Rhinos has managed to answer and put into action. Fat Rhinos Golf Day is organized by Jaspal Matharu - Car 24 annually in support of their pledge towards their Rhino Charge entry. It is not really about winning or losing rather more about raising money and providing the opportunity to their supporters to incorporate their love for golf as well as donate to a great cause. This year marked the 5th anniversary of the Fat Rhinos Golf Day. The event was held at the Royal Golf Club, Nairobi on 17th April 2015.

This year, a total of KES 725,000 was raised at the event. All the proceeds will ultimately go towards Rhino Ark's conservation efforts in Aberdares, Mau Eburu and Mt. Kenya ecosystems.



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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.

- **R. N. Johnson**
Donation
- **KWS**
RA Offices
- **African Fund for Endangered Wildlife**
Support to the conservation of bongos
- **Rare Species Conservatory Foundation**
Support to the conservation of bongos
- **Mr. Kelley**
Support to the conservation of bongos
- **Belinda Levitan**
Camera
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Fence Monitoring System
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Support to Eburu fence and the conservation of the bongos
- **Mt. Kenya Trust**
Support to Mt. Kenya fence
- **Upper Tana Natural Resources Management Project**
Support to Mt. Kenya fence

Order your copy of:

Environmental, social and economic assessment of the fencing of the Aberdare Conservation Area. Available for KES 3,000 only (Published September 2011)



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