

# ARK*ive*



## SOUTH WESTERN MAU

CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES GATHER PACE

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New rangers' outpost in South Western Mau completed



HUMANS IN HARMONY WITH HABITAT & WILDLIFE

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## RHINO ARK OBJECTIVES

Rhino Ark seeks solutions to the challenges facing the mountain forest ecosystems of Kenya, also known as the water towers. More specifically, Rhino Ark aims to:

- (i) Protect Kenya's mountain forests, other threatened habitats and their rich biodiversity;
- (ii) Engage and educate adjacent communities in conservation;
- (iii) Secure the connectivity between mountain forests and other threatened wildlife habitats;
- (iv) Establish sustainable financing mechanisms for the conservation of mountain forests and other threatened wildlife habitats;
- (v) Advocate nationally and internationally for the conservation of the mountain forests and other threatened habitats, their wildlife and their ecological functions; and,
- (vi) Use science to assess the impacts of, and review conservation interventions.



## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S VIEW

CHRISTIAN LAMBRECHTS

The recent drought has been a strong reminder of our dependence on natural ecosystems, in particular the mountain forests that provide much of the water required to sustain life and support economic development.

To mitigate our vulnerability to an increasingly volatile climate, we must protect and conserve our mountain forest ecosystems and make them healthier and more resilient. This has been the mission of Rhino Ark since its inception and is at centre of our conservation work.

During the drought, wildfires and livestock incursions were major challenges to the conservation of the ecosystems where Rhino Ark operates: Mt. Kenya, Aberdares, Mau Eburu and South Western Mau.

Since December 2016, over 30 fires have been reported in the Aberdares and Mt. Kenya, burning a total of approximately 22,000 acres of moorlands. In Mau Eburu, wildfires impacted on over 1,700 acres of open forest and bushland. These fires, however, did not spread into the adjacent closed-canopy forests rich in biodiversity. This is largely thanks to the incredible response and continuous support from KFS, KWS and the neighbouring communities who provided most of the much needed manpower. Other partners also helped contain and extinguish the fires, including the Mount Kenya Trust and the Kenya Defence Forces.

Critical to the successful mobilization of the forest-adjacent communities has been the long-term engagement with them and the benefits they derive from the protective functions of electric fences. The construction of these fences and their continued maintenance has necessitated the establishment of platforms where forest-adjacent communities, KFS, KWS and Rhino Ark meet on a regular basis. This has enhanced mutual understanding and collaboration among the partners.

Turning to the livestock issue, illegal incursions in the mountain forests were experienced at alarming levels. In South Western Mau for example, livestock were found in large numbers deep in the forest across the year.

A recent study estimated that 12,000 head of cattle reside illegally in the forest for fattening purposes. These cattle do not belong to the forest-adjacent communities. In other cases, livestock were brought by pastoralist communities from afar in desperate search of pasture.

Livestock grazing in forest plantations is permitted to suppress undergrowth and reduce fire risk. In indigenous forests, the practice should be discouraged as it inhibits forest regeneration, increases soil erosion and the transmission of diseases between livestock and wildlife. The latter is a major concern for the conservation of the critically endangered mountain bongo antelope of which less than 100 individuals remain in the wild in the world, all found in the mountain forests of Kenya.

Addressing unsustainable levels of livestock in our protected indigenous forest calls for further engagement at policy level between the relevant ministries and stakeholders towards restoring a vibrant, well-managed and sustainable livestock sector. Rhino Ark will continue to advocate for such constructive engagement.

# MAU EBURU ECOSYSTEM

## BLESSED POST COMMISSIONING SITE COMPLETED



View from main walkway



Stands for commemorative plaques



Rear wall of site with olive trees planted

The Ngobobo Hill is a dominant feature of the eastern boundary of Eburu Forest landscape. It offers commanding views of Lake Naivasha and Mount Longonot to the south east, the eastern Mau forest range to the south west and the lower, forested sloped of the southern part of Eburu forest.

Perched atop this hill is the newly completed Eburu Blessed Post site. This site has been prepared as the formal place that will hold a special fence post blessed by His Holiness Pope Francis. The post is one of three that was blessed by the Pope during his visit to Kenya

in November 2015, signifying recognition of the importance of the conservation of Kenya's water towers. The posts, made from recycled plastic waste, are similar to those used in construction of the Rhino Ark-spearheaded electric fences that are helping to conserve the Aberdares, Mt. Kenya and Mau Eburu forest ecosystems.

Following the completion of the Eburu site, a formal commissioning ceremony is planned. Once commissioned, the site will be accessible to the public and will provide a focal point for visitors to appreciate the physical and spiritual aspects of conservation.

## STEAM QUENCHES WILDLIFE THIRST

The geothermal steam-fed water trough built at the eastern boundary of Eburu forest is providing thirst-quenching relief to wildlife, especially during the prolonged recent dry spell. Ongoing monitoring of the trough using a trap camera is providing hard evidence of visiting wildlife. The trap camera unit, provided by Rhino Ark, has captured night-time images of buffalo, bushpig, waterbuck and hyena visiting the water trough, as well as, for the first time, a daytime image of a serval cat.

Steam fed water systems have long been used by local communities in the Eburu settlement, and it is envisaged that development of more of these systems may provide a sustainable option for enhancing wildlife welfare going forward.



Serval cat



Hyenas play near trough



Waterbuck



Male buffalo

# IMPACTS OF THE FENCE ON FOREST AND COMMUNITIES



Leopard scat at the fence line



Mountain Buzzard



Regenerating forest inside the fence at Centre One

The south western part of Eburu Forest Reserve holds intact, closed-canopy high forest rich in biodiversity. The mountain buzzard (*Buteo oreophilus*), is a Near-Threatened bird species that is among the denizens of the area. Adjacent to the forest is vast farmland belonging to the Agricultural Development Corporation (ADC).

Centre One is a remote village perched atop a hill at the boundary of the forest. The small but growing squatter community residing in the village ekes out a

subsistence livelihood by farming parcels of the ADC land or keeping livestock. The uncertain status of the community due to lack of tenure pre-empts the potential to invest in farming/livestock keeping best practices. This situation, coupled with lack of basic infrastructure, health facilities, schools, etc. has perpetuated a cycle of poverty. The pastoralist vs. farming practice divide between different elements of the community has also given rise to periodic conflicts over land use.

The forest, previously lacking effective protection, has provided an easy means for the community to extract resources (fuelwood, grazing, etc.) uncontrolled. It has also been a source of illegal gains derived from logging, charcoal burning and poaching/bushmeat trade. This has resulted, over time, in significant and ongoing degradation of the forest adjacent to the village.

The Eburu Electric Fence is a management tool designed to protect forest adjacent communities from wildlife, while also acting as a deterrent to human and livestock driven forest degradation. Since completion of the fence in November 2014, the positive impact of the fence is becoming increasingly apparent in Centre One and adjacent areas. Periodic inspections by the Eburu Fence Technical Committee reveal progressive natural regeneration of previously degraded forest – a most welcome result. Further, evidence that dangerous forest wildlife such as leopard reach the fence but are not able to cross into the community land has been observed. The fence and supporting management system is thus achieving its core objectives. Rhino Ark's conservation interventions in the area have also created a platform for other partners, such as Imarisha Naivasha to support alternative community livelihood programmes such as beekeeping in the area.

## FENCE TEAM KITTED UP



KFS management team receives uniforms



Fence team in branded kit

Through support from Rhino Ark, the Eburu fence maintenance team has received new uniforms. The uniforms, which the Kenya Forest Service (KFS) has branded with its logo, enable the fence team to work comfortably and safely, and be easily identified as members of the Eburu KFS team. Towards maintaining operational efficiency, the team has also received replacements for tools and equipment that have been worn out as a result of daily maintenance routine.

# COMMUNITY OUTREACH - PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Rhino Ark community outreach programme is a multi-pronged approach to conservation education and awareness building for forest adjacent communities. Key updates from the programme include the following:

## Conservation education

Ongoing implementation of the schools conservation education curriculum which was introduced to local schools in January 2014. Rhino Ark community outreach officer, Peter Munene, has visited each of the participating schools in the first term of the 2017 academic year, to provide mentoring support and monitoring of the implementation process. During the visits the schools were provided with the newly developed Birds of Eburu Forest conservation poster and brochure kit. New model tree nurseries have been established at Eburru and Loldia Primary schools, and training of Songoloi Primary pupils and staff carried out by Eburu forest manager, Samuel Mundia. The nurseries, established with support from the MPESA Foundation, are geared to enhancing the pupils' practical conservation learning experiences.



Samuel Mundia, Eburu Forest Manager (in hat) conducts tree nursery training at Songoloi Primary School



Conservation education workshop group

On 21 April 2017 Rhino Ark facilitated a conservation education workshop for teachers in Naivasha. The workshop provided an opportunity to induct new teachers into the programme and share experiences and best practices. Officials from the Ministry of Education participated in the workshop, together with 8 newly inducted Eburu Conservation Champions. The champions, drawn from each of the locations adjacent to Eburu forest are a team of community volunteers who will support the outreach programme. The teachers and champions team now has an active social media group with Facebook and WhatsApp platforms now in use. These forums are proving invaluable to rapid dissemination of information amongst members and also in highlighting threats to the forest such as forest fires.

## Eburru Rafiki – outreach initiative

Since its formation in April 2016 as an environmental community group, Eburru Rafiki has been active in forest conservation efforts, tackling forest rehabilitation and support for forest access road improvement. The group will operate as a community based organization. Eburru Rafiki has recently secured funding for grassroots educational outreach work which will be undertaken in partnership with Rhino Ark, with a focus on community sensitization on forest conservation, governance and alternative livelihoods.



# FOREST FIRES CHALLENGE



Survivor: a Von Hohnel's chameleon in fire-ravaged area



A charred fence post



A section of fence line impacted by fire

The extended dry spell affecting most of the country did not spare Eburu forest. The hot and dry conditions essentially converted the lower elevations of the forest into a tinderbox, simply awaiting a reckless or malicious spark.

The Kenya Forest Service Eburu Forest Manager, Samuel Mundia, reports that since January 2017 a total of 700 hectares, or about 8% of the total forest area, have been consumed by fire over nine distinct incidents. 90% of the fires have occurred within forest areas adjacent to the Ndabibi administrative location, with Kipkulei and Gachuma zones being the hardest hit, accounting for 50% of the fire damage. Following the completion of the Eburu Electric Fence in 2014, a number of previously degraded forest areas had been on a natural regeneration recovery path, and their damage by fire is an unfortunate setback. Wildlife, and in particular small animals, have

also been a casualty of the fires, suffering habitat loss or even death.

In some cases the fires have crossed over from inside the forest onto adjacent community areas, directly threatening homesteads. These fires have resulted in damage to the fence, necessitating repair and replacement of damaged fence components by the fence maintenance team.

In each case the fires were extinguished with help from the adjacent local communities, with, on average, up to 15 community members mobilized to fight the fires alongside KFS rangers. The extent of fires experienced in 2017 is raising awareness for the need for improved teamwork and coordination, as well as the need for training and proactive fire prevention measures, which Rhino Ark will play a role in facilitating.

# WILDLIFE CORRIDOR: WESTERN BOUNDARY SECTION ONE COMPLETED



Corridor committee inspects the fence



Completed and powered section of western boundary corridor fence

Great progress is being made towards fully securing the wildlife corridor that links Eburu forest and Lake Naivasha, through construction of game-proof fencing. The eastern boundary of the corridor was fence was completed in February 2016, and a survey of the western boundary carried out in June 2016, providing a roadmap for the construction work. The survey identified two sections that required fencing. The first section covers 851-metres from the forest boundary to a steep hill formed by a lava flow which acts as an impenetrable 1,500 metre long natural barrier along the corridor's edge. The second section is a 1,950-metre long stretch from the opposite side of the hill, starting at St. Andrews Secondary School and ending at the boundary of Rubi Ranch, near Kasarani shopping centre along the Moi North Lake Road.

Construction of the 851-metre section of the western boundary fence commenced in November 2016 and was completed on 1st December 2016. This fence section, which runs along the boundary of Loldia Viewlands, is now helping to secure an area previously highly vulnerable to illegal human activity. The fence is also helping to contain wildlife within a safe zone while protecting surrounding communities from human/wildlife conflict.

The completed section of the western corridor fence is now maintained on a full time basis by staff of Loldia Viewlands. The staff, based at the Naitolia joint patrol camp, work closely with, and receive technical training and advice from the Kenya Forest Service personnel. To ensure effective maintenance of the fence, the Eburu-Lake Naivasha Connectivity Committee periodically visits the fence to carry out comprehensive qualitative inspections together with the fence maintenance team.

# EBURU FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN – NEARLY COMPLETED



Technical session of PFMP committee

A key milestone in the management of Eburu forest is now imminent, namely the delivery of a 5-year, comprehensive Participatory Forest Management Plan (PFMP). The implementation of current PFMPs is a legal requirement for all forest reserves. Despite this requirement, Eburu Forest Reserve has lacked a current PFMP since the expiry of the previous (2008-2013) PFMP. Various attempts by stakeholders to review and update the plan had been unsuccessful until June 2016. With technical and financial support from Rhino Ark, the PMFP review process was rebooted, with the formation of a dedicated technical committee comprising a multi-skilled, cross sectoral team, in which

Rhino Ark is a key member. The review committee was able to draw on expertise in various relevant fields including forestry, wildlife management, ecotourism, community engagement and GIS, among others. This review team has since then worked towards the delivery of the PFMP, holding regular technical meetings.

The Eburu Community Forest Association (CFA) has been at the core of the PFMP development process, with the CFA leadership and representatives from all locations and key interests participating fully as members. A detailed grassroots community socio-economic survey was undertaken as part of due process. The data collected from the survey, together with inputs from a series of PFMP community sensitization barazas (public meetings) organized at location level were analysed and leveraged to inform needed interventions incorporated into the PFMP.

The PMFP document has now been drafted, and is now at the final consultative review stage. The 2017-2022 PMFP will provide a detailed road map for collaborative management of the forest and will recommend programmes to address both

in-forest and adjacent community area conservation and livelihood interventions. In a paradigm shift from other PFMPs, the Eburu PFMP will contain a comprehensive budget component for the various programme interventions prescribed. This will greatly support resource mobilization by facilitating greater transparency in the implementation of PFMP activities.

Rhino Ark spearheaded a low cost/high efficiency approach to development of the PFMP by inviting in-kind support from stakeholders. Imarisha Naivasha offered their boardroom as a meeting venue free of charge, and provided their in-house GIS expertise for specific content development. Kenya Wildlife Service also provided their education centre at Hell's Gate National Park for use on the occasions when the Imarisha board room was not available. National Museums of Kenya and the Kenya Bird Map project volunteered their expertise and provided valuable inputs in support of the committee's work.

It is anticipated that the PFMP will be ready for launch by June 2017, ushering in a new era of enhanced forest management and governance for this important ecosystem.

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# LANDSCAPES AND BIODIVERSITY



Flower at steam vent



Double-collared Sunbird



Grey-headed Negrofinch



Helichrysum foetidum



Flower in the central forest area



Forest cover



Prunus africana trees



Beautiful tiger butterfly



Carpenter bee



Twin rainbow on landscape



Blue monkey



Colobus monkey

# MT KENYA ECOSYSTEM

## BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER PLACES A FENCING POST IN THE IMENTI FOREST

Nic Hailey, the British High Commissioner to Kenya came to the Imenti Forest on March 25th to place a fencing post along the Mt. Kenya Electric Fence. He was welcomed by the Deputy Governor of Meru County, Meru County Commissioner, KWS Assistant Director for Mountain Conservation Area, KFS Head of Eastern Conservancy, Rhino Ark Executive Director and many community members, among others.

“The electric fence plays a key role in addressing human-wildlife conflicts, providing safer living conditions for local communities, including for children travelling to school, and greater security for wildlife. It also contributes to higher household incomes due to improved farmland security and crop harvests”, said Nic Haley.

Between January 2014 and February 2016, human-wildlife conflicts led to the death of ten community members. During the same period ten elephants were killed too. In order to address such crisis situation, KWS and Rhino ark deployed a fence build team to the Imenti Forest on 7 March 2016. To date, the fence around the Imenti Forest is nearly completed. Thanks to the fence built so far, no casualty has been recorded within the community last year, and only one elephant was killed last year, which is a major progress as to compare with the previous years.



## GEF EVALUATION TEAM HIGHLIGHTS KEY CONTRIBUTION OF MT. KENYA FENCE



GEF evaluation team together with Rhino Ark Executive Director and KWS Senior Warden at Naro Moru on 20th January 2017.

An evaluation team from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) based in Washington, DC, visited Kenya in January 2017 with the purpose of evaluating the IFAD/GEF-funded Mt. Kenya East Pilot Project for Natural Resources Management (MKEEP) that was completed four years ago. The team also visited Rhino Ark/KWS/KFS fencing project.

The purpose of the visit was to assess the long-term impacts on the IFAD/GEF MKEEP Project and advise the GEF on successful approaches, activities and programmes to help define the priority areas for the GEF 7th Replenishment (GEF-7).

In the discussion, the evaluation team highlighted the Mt. Kenya Fence as one of the most, if not the most successful conservation intervention on the mountain. The long-term positive impacts of the fence on people livelihoods and forest conservation was strongly felt not only in areas recently fenced, but also in areas fenced four years ago.

# RHINO ARK / FLAMINGO PLASTIC FENCING POST PRODUCTION FACILITY: A MODEL FOR RECYCLING PLASTIC WASTE



From left to right at Kingfisher Farm: Christian Lambrechts; Hon. Boniface Kinoti Gatobu, MP for Buuri Constituency; and Johnson Maina, Flamingo Ltd.

On 16th January 2017, Hon. Boniface Kinoti Gatobu, MP for Buuri Constituency – a constituency that spans from Nanyuki to Meru - visited the Rhino Ark / Flamingo plastic fencing post production facility located at Kingfisher Farm in Naivasha. The purpose of the visit was to learn on the processes and the technology used to convert plastic waste into high quality and durable fencing posts.

Plastic waste from horticulture farms, in particular worn-out greenhouse plastic sheeting and broken buckets and containers, are shredded and extruded into 10 feet long 6 inches wide plastic fencing posts that are used in Rhino Ark fencing projects. Approx. 60% of all fencing posts used in Mt. Kenya Electric Fence and Mau Eburu Electric Fence are made from plastic waste. They are highly durable, have the required flex to withstand pressure by wildlife and do not conduct electricity.

In November last year, Flamingo agreed to waive the production costs (electricity and labour) and to provide Rhino Ark with at least 500 plastic fencing posts per month free of charge. A big thank you to Flamingo!

Hon. Kinoti saw in our plastic fencing post production facility a solution to create jobs, clean the environment from plastic waste and produce valuable fencing posts that are in great need in his constituency

# SURVEILLANCE FLIGHT CONDUCTED ON MT. KENYA IN KIRINYAGA, EMBU AND THARAKA NITHI

Rhino Ark, together with KWS and KFS, conducted a surveillance flight above the forests of Mt. Kenya located in the counties of Kirinyaga, Embu and Tharaka Nithi on 11th May 2017. Participants in the flight included the KFS Ecosystem Conservator / Embu, KFS Ecosystem Conservator / Tharaka Nithi, KFS Inspector / Kirinyaga, KWS Senior Warden / Mt. Kenya National Park and Reserve, KFS Forest Manager / Chuka, Rhino Ark Executive Director and Rhino Ark Fence and Community Manager.

Although the forests were largely found quiet, there were two new areas with growing marijuana located deep in the forest, with nearby logging sites of camphor trees. The team participating in the flight discussed at length these new threats and agreed on joint interventions.



Surveillance flight team.

# REHABILITATION OF KARURI (MT KENYA FOREST) WELL UNDERWAY



On May 13th, over 300 people convened to Karuri on the northern slopes of Mt. Kenya, to plant 42,000 indigenous seedlings. The exercise coordinated by the Mount Kenya Trust with support from Rhino Ark, KWS, KFS, the Ontulili Community Forest Association and the adjacent schools, is part of a commitment made by the partners to rehabilitate the 3,000 hectares in Karuri area that were illegally clear-felled decades ago. Peter Kinyua, Chairman of KFS, participated actively in the planting exercise together with his family.

Karuri area is of critical importance as it forms the narrow forest belt on the northern slopes of the mountain that separates the moorlands from the neighbouring farms and acts as an important wildlife corridor. After being clear-felled, the area was designated as a forest plantation area by KFS. This decision was recently reversed and Karuri has now been designated as an indigenous forest area.

## 2ND TRAINING OF RANGERS IN THE PROSECUTION OF WILDLIFE CRIMES SUCCESSFULLY CONDUCTED

KWS, Rhino Ark and Mount Kenya Trust organized a two-day training workshop in the prosecution of wildlife crimes for 30 rangers from KWS and Mount Kenya Trust involved in law enforcement on Mt. Kenya. The training focused on management of scene of crime, handling of exhibits, handling of minor offenders, engagement with the police, drafting of witness statements, and appearance in court. The training was conducted by three senior magistrates, Florence Macharia, Helen Onkwani and Agnes Mwangi and one senior lawyer John Otieno Abwuor. The workshop was opened by the Executive Director of Rhino Ark.

The training's design drew from the training held in October last year. It aimed at addressing failures in the prosecution of wildlife crimes on Mt. Kenya.

A big thank you to Florence, Helen, Agnes and John for conducting the training on a voluntary basis.



Participants in the training workshop on the prosecution of wildlife crimes held on 20-21 January 2017.

## KENYA DEFENCE FORCES JOINED KFS, KWS AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN COMBATTING FOREST FIRES ON MT. KENYA

Since the beginning of the dry season, some 15 wildfires have been raging on the northern slopes on Mt. Kenya forest ecosystem. Combating those fires have required the nearly constant mobilization of the KFS and KWS teams, and the forest adjacent communities who have provided most of the required manpower, as well as the support from Rhino Ark and Mount Kenya Trust.

In light of the extensive fires that occurred in March 2017, Rhino Ark secured the support from the 4th Brigade based in Nanyuki.

150 men from the 4th Brigade joined some 150 members from the local communities to combat forest fires on 21st March 2017 and succeeded in extinguishing one of the largest fires of the season in Mt. Kenya.

Many thanks to KDF and the 4th Brigade for their prompt and effective response! Many thanks to all the teams for working relentlessly to combat these fires!



KDF personnel from the 4th Brigade extinguishing fires on 21st March 2017.



# ABERDARES ECOSYSTEM

## AERIAL SURVEILLANCE CONTINUES ABOVE NORTHERN ABERDARES

Together with KFS and KWS, Rhino Ark conducted a surveillance flight above the Northern Aberdare in November 2016. The area is a known hotspot area affected by illegal logging of cedar trees. The team that participated in the flight comprised of the KWS Senior Warden / Aberdare National Park, KWS Warden / ANP Northern Sector, KFS Regional Commander / Central Highlands, KFS Forest Manager / Ndaragwa Forest Station and Rhino Ark Executive Director.

The main illegal activity observed was the logging of cedar trees for fencing posts. The booming real estate development in the country has come with a huge demand for fencing posts. Despite the availability of sustainable alternatives, such as treated eucalyptus fencing posts, there is still a widespread demand for cedar posts which are illegal harvested from protected forests, leading to extensive destruction of indigenous forests and prime catchment areas.

Data collected over the past four years on Mt. Kenya, Aberdares and the Mau Forests Complex show that cedar is the single most targeted tree species.

## STRONG PARTNERSHIP HELPED EXTINGUISH FIRES IN ABERDARES



Rhino Ark Fence and Community Manager handing over tyres for the water bowser to the Acting Senior Warden, Aberdare National Park.



Wildfire raging in the northern moorlands, Aberdare National Park.

On January 20th 2017, the wildfires raging in the moorlands of Northern Aberdares were extinguished. This was as a result of a strong partnership between KWS, KFS, Rhino Ark and the local communities.

Between 150 and 200 community members, together with the KFS teams from three forest stations (Muringato, Geta and Ndaragwa), the teams from three KWS sectors (Northern, Central Moorlands and Salient) and with Rhino Ark support, fought continuously the wildfires in the northern moorlands.

Rhino Ark organized daily surveillance flights to record fire lines and burnt areas and provide real time information to the teams on priority areas to be tackled and best access routes to reach those areas. Rhino Ark also provided rations to the team and new tyres to the KWS water bowser to keep it operational.

The concerted efforts from all the partners made it possible to prevent the fires from entering into the central moorlands and from damaging the surrounding forests.

# ABERDARE COMMUNITIES FURTHER ENGAGED IN CONSERVATION



Two workshops were held with the Community Forest Associations (CFA) surrounding the Aberdare ecosystem to exchange experiences on conservation activities undertaken by each CFA and identify potential bio-enterprises to be promoted in their respective area, as well as to learn from Mr. Kasim, Chairman of the Wechau Community Hyppo Sanctuary in Ghana, about the successful conservation initiatives implemented by the communities around that sanctuary

with the support of the Calgary Zoological Society.

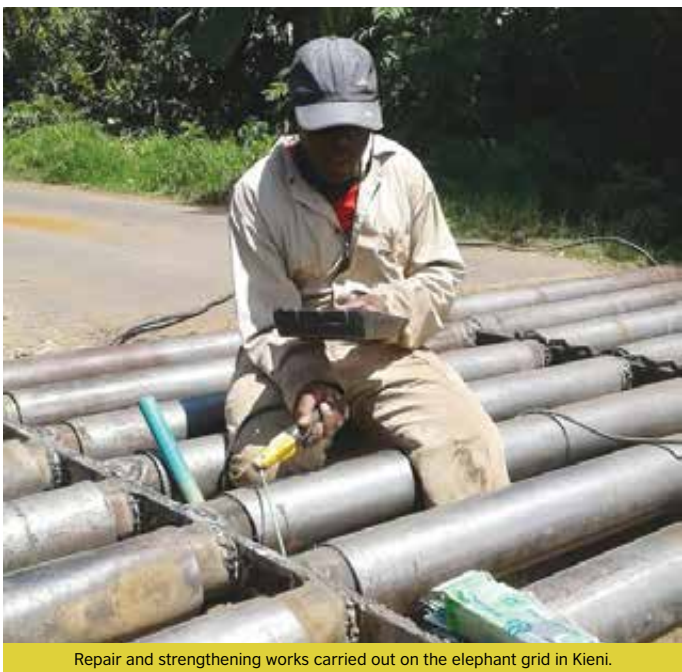
Thirty two participants attended the first workshop held on 1st February 2017, including: KWS Warden, KFS Forest Station managers and the Community Forest Association officials from the eastern side of the Aberdares, namely from Ndaragwa, Muringato, Kiandongoro, Zaina, Kabage, Wanjerere, Gatere and Kimakia forest stations. Bondeni Community Conservation Group also participated.

Thirty participants attended the second workshop held on 2nd February 2017, including KWS Sector Wardens (Southern and Central Moorland sectors), and KFS Forest Station managers and the Community Forest Association (CFA) officials from the western side of the Aberdares, namely from Geta, North Kinangop, South Kinangop, Ragia, Kamae, Kieni and Kerreita forest stations.. The Kijabe Environmental Volunteers (KENVO) also made a presentation on nature-based projects and the role of community in forest protection.

The workshops were officially opened by David Muiga, KFS Assistant Head of Central Highlands Conservancy.

A big thank you to the Calgary Zoological Society for financing the two workshops.

# ABERDARE FENCE MAINTENANCE: A CONTINUED COMMITMENT



Repair and strengthening works carried out on the elephant grid in Kieni.



Rehabilitation of Phase I of the Aberdare Electric Fence.

As the electric fence on Mt. Kenya is progressing well with over 150km built to date and early preparations are being made towards fencing part of South Western Mau Forest Reserve, Rhino Ark remains committed to, and directly engaged in the day-to-day maintenance of the 400km Aberdare Electric Fence. Routine fence maintenance is carried out by a team of over 100 fence attendants recruited from the forest-adjacent communities.

In addition to the care of the fence itself, maintenance work also

include:

1. Rehabilitation of the fence section that have outlived their 20 years lifespan;
2. Maintenance and upgrade of the fence guard post;
3. Repairs of the elephant grids; and,
4. Repairs of the systems powering the fence.

# SOUTH WESTERN MAU ECOSYSTEM

## SURVEILLANCE FLIGHT ABOVE SOUTH WESTERN MAU FOREST REVEALED MUCH FURTHER IMPROVEMENT



Debriefing session following the surveillance flight conducted on 24th February 2017.

As part of the South Western Mau landscape conservation project funded by the Dutch-based Sustainable Trade Initiative (IDH), Rhino Ark is coordinating periodic surveillance flights above the 60,000 hectares of South Western Mau Forest Reserve and parts of Western Mau Forest Reserve. The 5th flight was conducted on 24 February 2017. Participants in the flight included the Chairman of Safaricom Foundation, Senior Manager for Safaricom and MPESA Foundations, KFS Head of Research Liaison & Project Development, KFS Zonal Manager for Bureti, KWS Deputy Warden for Bomet and Kericho counties, Rhino Ark Executive Director and Rhino Ark Mau

Landscape Coordinator.

The purpose of the flight was to detect illegal activities in the forest and assess the impact of law enforcement operations conducted since the last flight conducted on 13 September 2016. The flight revealed a further significant reduction in illegal activities in the forest, in particular charcoal making, with only one active charcoal kiln observed in the whole forest.

The flight was followed by a debriefing session during which joint interventions were agreed upon.

## NEW RANGERS' OUTPOST IN SOUTH WESTERN MAU COMPLETED



View of camp and surroundings.



Inspection of inside of unihut.



Large unihut.

Rhino Ark, with financial support from Finlays and technical support from KWS, has completed the construction of a new outpost for KFS rangers at Arorwet along the 45 km long north eastern boundary of South Western Mau Forest Reserve. This is one of the two outposts that will be built by Rhino Ark to address weaknesses in law enforcement along that boundary and in the southern part of Western Mau Forest Reserve. The camp comprises 1 large (2-room) and 3 small (single room) unihuts, together with a kitchen shed unit and an ablution block. The unihuts have panels to provide insulation against the cold

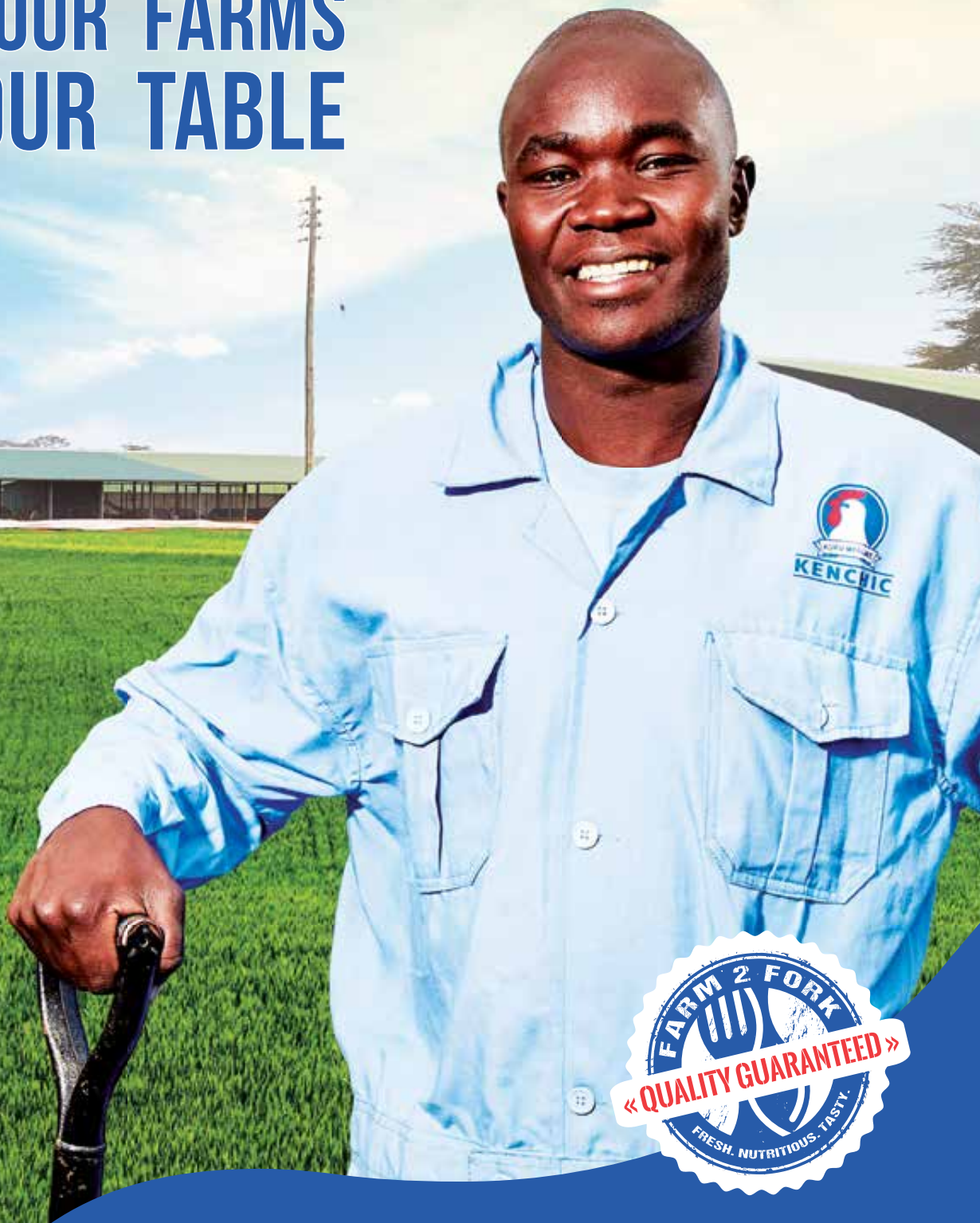
temperatures of the forest.

The quarterly aerial surveillance flights conducted by Rhino Ark, with support from IDH/ISLA and Finlays, revealed that the north-eastern boundary of South Western Mau is the most vulnerable boundary of the forest and that two additional outposts are required to patrol effectively the forest area adjacent to that boundary. The outposts will also greatly assist in controlling access to the forest.



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# RHINO ARK NEWS

## NEW DIRECTIONS AGREED FOR THE RECOVERY AND CONSERVATION OF THE MOUNTAIN BONGO ANTELOPE



The workshop in session.



Participants in the one-day workshop on the recovery and conservation of the mountain bongo, held at the Mount Kenya Safari Club on 9th December 2017.

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 mountain bongos are thought to exist in the wild, all in the Aberdares, Mt. Kenya and the Mau Forests Complex.

Towards the recovery and the conservation of the bongo, a one week experts' visit was organized under the auspices of the National Bongo Task Force. Three experts from USA involved in the breeding of bongos in Florida and Texas and one expert from Canada joined the Kenyan experts to chart a way forward. Overseas experts were;

- (1) Dr. Paul Reillo, President, Rare Species Conservatory Foundation,
- (2) Dr. Mark P. Davis, Center for Conservation of Tropical Ungulates,
- (3) Mr. Rhudy Holly, Micanopy Wildlife Preserve, and

(4) Dr. Axel Moerhenschlager, Director of Conservation & Science, Calgary Zoological Society and Chair, IUCN Species Survival Commission / Reintroduction Specialist Group. As a key stakeholder and a member of the Task Force, Rhino Ark facilitated the organization of, and participated in the experts' visit.

The team visited Eburu forest, the Aberdares and part of Mt. Kenya. They also visited the Mount Kenya Game Ranch which is holding 62 captive mountain bongos.

The one-week visit culminated in a one-day workshop during which new directions for the recovery and conservation of the mountain bongo were agreed upon focusing on (1) removal of the threats to the remaining populations of bongo in the wild; and (2) improvement of the health of the captive herd held at the Mount Kenya Game Ranch.

## NEW RHINO ARK NYERI OFFICE TO BE COMPLETED SOON

Rhino Ark Nyeri Office will soon move to the KWS King'ong'o Station. The new office is currently being built and should be ready by early July. Last year, Rhino Ark signed a 10 years lease agreement with KWS with a peppercorn rent.



New Rhino Ark Nyeri Office under construction.

The move presents many advantages, including:

- a) Better visibility and accessibility. The KWS King'ong'o Station is located on the main road between Nyeri and Kiganjo.
- b) Better security. Rhino Ark Nyeri office was broke into in early 2013. During the robbery, Rhino Ark lost equipment, including a GPS and a digital camera.
- c) Better coordination with KWS. The Station provides services to both Aberdares and Mt. Kenya. It hosts several units with which Rhino Ark collaborates: Research (Bongo, wildlife corridors), Radio Communication (maintenance of the radios located around the fence), GIS (collection of spatial data).
- d) No rent. This will enable Rhino Ark to save over KES 300,000 yearly that will be invested in conservation activities.

The new block will comprise of four office spaces that will be able to accommodate the Aberdare Trust.

# CHARGERS' CORNER

## HOG CHARGE 2017 RAISES **KES 3,107,312**



The 19th edition of the Hog Charge saw over 20 schools and 120 teams battle it out in the annual cycling event held at Sukari Ranch in Ruiru on January 22nd 2017.

The bicycle challenge brings together children from various schools in the country and volunteers whose main aim is 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.

Each team is required to raise a minimum of KES 24,000 in sponsorship to qualify for the competition. A total of KES 3,107,312 was raised this year.

The Banda School Team 200 (Percy Piglets) was this year's highest cash sponsor. The team raised a total of KES 113,760. In second place was Team 165 (Wild Coyote II) from Hillcrest Preparatory, with KES 63,320. Team 187 (Team Extreme) emerged third, raising KES 44,000.

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

Since its inception, the Hog Charge has raised over KES 42 million for Rhino Ark's conservation projects in Mt. Kenya, Aberdares and Mau Eburu.



## RHINO CHARGE TO BECOME CLIMATE NEUTRAL



Science tells us that to avoid the worst effects of climate change we must reach greenhouse gas (GHG) emission neutrality (i.e. climate neutrality) in the second half of the century, as detailed in the Paris Agreement.

Climate neutrality is achievable, but it requires action from all of us. Rhino Ark has, therefore, made the commitment to make the Rhino Charge "climate neutral" from the 2017 event onward by offsetting the CO2 emissions related to the event, including the CO2 emissions related to all vehicles coming to the event, whether

competitors, officials, sponsors, camp providers or spectators. To do so, Rhino Ark will calculate the climate footprint of the Rhino Charge and purchase the corresponding offset.

As part of this commitment, the Rhino Charge has joined the Climate Neutral Now movement (<http://climatenutralnow.org/Pages/Orgs.aspx>).

Join us in realizing a brighter, climate-neutral future: <http://ClimateNeutralNow.org>

# THE 2017 RAFFLE DONORS

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

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Thank you to the raffle committee for securing these prizes

Helen Feather, Valerie Gunputrav, Belinda Levitan, Leah Levitan, Devina Meinzingen,  
 Kate Mwangi, Aparna Patil, Henrietta Remnant, & Tracey White

# WILD CHARGE EVENT FOR CAR 6



The 2nd edition of the Wild Charge was held at the Lukenya Hills on 8th April 2017. The 4x4 event is held specifically for ladies. The idea to have this event came about last year to encourage ladies to not only to compete but also to learn how to drive a 4x4 vehicle off road (extreme). This year had a total of 10 stages, 6 of them being Intermediate (the average 4x4) and expert (modified for extreme 4x4), while the last 4 were for experts only. The course ran on a points system where the ladies had to ensure the utmost skill whilst maneuvering through the stages.

As the time drew nearer for the first stage to start all competitors were allowed to recon the course and come up with a strategy to tackle the challenge ahead. The ladies

battled it out on the first six stages and were very competitive throughout the day. They maneuvered each stage with caution and sheer determination to succeed.

Drivers and navigators tackled the brutal expert stages and it was clear that none of these ladies were ready to back off and it was going to be as competitive as ever. As the event went on, it became evident that the challenge pushed them to their limits and tested their endurance and skill in driving 4x4 machines.

The sun's rays settled over the Lukenya Hills, it was time for the organiser's to tally up all the points and announce the winner of the Ladies wild charge.

## CONGRATULATIONS to the following Wild Charge teams!

**1st Place** - Christine Bovard and Fiona Kisoso - Car no.13-points 590

**2nd Place** - Trishna Patel and Rebecca Boonstra - Car no.1-points 930

**3rd Place** - Sunaina Choda and Neha Erasmus - Car no.6-points 1310

**The most meritorious** - Billy Choda Memorial Floating Trophy - Car no.12-points 2140

Photography by - Cake Photography

## RHINO CHARGE 2017 MERCHANDISE

This year's merchandise will be on sale at the Rhino Charge venue. Kindly purchase your tshirts, caps, Rhino Charge DVDs and much more in support of Rhino Ark.



## FAMILY FUN DAY FOR CAR 26 AT KEREITA FOREST



Photo: Jeske van de Gevel



Photo: Heather Cronk

Rhino Charge Car 26 organized a family fun day of zip lining, paint balling and archery to raise funds for this year's pledge to Rhino Ark. The recently opened 'Flying Fox at the Forest' is East-Africa's longest zip line tour consisting of 2.4 km of flight and it offers spectacular views over Kereita forest and the Aberdares Range. They were the well-organized hosts for this day.

Supporters, family and friends and zip lining junkies all flocked together on Sunday

morning the 26th for what turned out to be a great day outdoors. The first group departed at 9:30 am while the last group closed off the day at 17:30 hours. It was a full day where kids, parents and grandparents all got their adrenaline fix albeit through zip lining or some serious war fare in the paint ball range or archery. With some persuasion from their children "it's not that scary, Mommy" many parents put on a harness and voluntarily strapped themselves to a 425 meter long cable to experience speeds of up to 60

kph. The kids turned out to be naturals and all made it to the end of the line without stopping. The adults however seemed to be more interested in their surroundings and kept turning around in circles instead of making it all the way to the end.

Over 70 people participated in the event and a total of KES 130,000 was raised. All the proceeds will go towards Rhino Ark's conservation efforts. The day was a great success and will surely be repeated next year.

## CAR 4 - PINK HORNS HOST A FUNDRAISING EVENT



L-R: Wanjira Longauer, Alex Theran, Glaiza de Guzman



The Pink Horns team

The Pink Horns hosted an event on Friday 17th March to raise funds for Rhino Ark. The team is made up of six young, energetic and fun-loving women (half of them are mothers) who have come together in the efforts to help conserve our wildlife for their children and their children's children.

This year, they have decided to dive into it and challenge themselves to build a platform to empower other women to undertake something that is predominantly a man's game. The event was held at Talisman Restaurant with an amazing turn out of family, friends and many other great supporters.

The all-girls team came out in their fabulous pink dresses, and showed off their monster car that is proudly built Kenyan by Hans Kenya; a team of top notch fabricators, engineers and mechanics, who also mentors and guides the team throughout their practice sessions. Filled with amazing food & drinks by Talisman, entertainment by Kavi Pratt and music by DJ Arkitekt, together with great raffles prizes, from generous sponsors, the night was surely one to remember.



L-R: Nili Dodhia, Glenna de Guzman - Jiwani, Glaiza de Guzman, Nimmi Chauhan, Emmy Bisley and Fatima Sidi

# RHINO CHARGE PRE-EVENT BRIEFING HELD AT BRAEBURN



The 2017 Rhino Charge Pre-Event Briefing took place on 6th May at Braeburn School, on Gitanga Road, in Lavinton. Charge entrants attended the social as well as informational event and guard post officers, and sponsors were also well represented.

## The Briefing included:

- An update on Rhino Ark activities by the Executive Director, Christian Lambrechts;
- Briefing to all present by the Clerk of the Course, David Lowe;
- Briefing to Guard Post officials and sponsors.

## The Briefing also provided an opportunity to:

- Collect the Medical Kit from the Medical Desk. AMREF was able to

renew people's membership at a discounted rate;

- Submit any sponsorship collected to date, along with the mandatory minimum advance sponsorship required at this time, as per the RC 2017 Rules & Regulations (Sponsorship Forms available on the Rhino Charge website or from the Rhino Ark office);
- Collect the Rhino Charge competitor bag from the Sponsorship Desk (subject to deposit of the required minimum sponsorship);
- Register with Rivercross Tracking Ltd and book the installation of their GPS distance measuring device;
- Submit as many Raffle ticket stubs as possible and return any books not required. Raffle ticket books will also be available for collection should you require more.



# 6-A-SIDE HOCKEY TOURNAMENT FOR CAR 49



On 25th March, Car 49 held the fourth edition of the annual fundraising hockey tournament at Braeburn School. A number of teams participated in the event and after four long years of exhaustive effort, Double Trouble finally got their hands on the much coveted Car 49 6-A-Side Hockey Tournament Trophy (only to promptly break it). Don't worry... it can be repaired!

They overcame last year's winners, Simba Veterans, in a thrilling final played under lights on Braeburn School's Astroturf. In the Plate competition, perennial winners of the wooden spoon, Braeburn Seven Squared defined the odds to overcome last year's defeated finalists, the Red Herrings. The Wooden Spoon was eventually claimed by Mbagathi Mbogos after losing on penalties to Peponi Fat Dads who were undoubtedly handicapped having lost their captain earlier in the day to injury.

The tournament is organised to raise funds to go towards Terry Child's team (Car 49) entry pledge for the Rhino Charge and ultimately towards Rhino Ark's conservation projects. As ever, huge thanks to everyone who took part and helped raise KES 175,000/- for the cause.

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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.

■ **Challenge Aid**

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■ **KWS**

Rhino Ark Offices

■ **Mpesa Foundation**

Schools tree nurseries (Eburu)

■ **IDH-ISLA**

Support to the surveillance flights and conservation of the bongos (South Western Mau)

■ **Flamingo Horticulture Kenya Ltd**

Supply of plastic posts

■ **Calgary Zoological Society**

Support to the conservation of the bongos

■ **Rare Species Conservatory Foundation**

Support to the conservation of the bongos

■ **James Finlays (Kenya) Ltd**

Support to the construction of outposts and procurement of law enforcement equipment (South Western Mau)

## Order your copy of:

- Environmental, social and economic assessment of the fencing of the Aberdare Conservation Area. Available for KES 3,000 only.
- Rhino Ark Profile.
- 2016 Spirit of the Charge film in DVD. Available at KES 1,000 only.
- 2017 Rhino Charge Calendar for KES 1,000 only.



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**Rhino Ark Kenya Charitable Trust**

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Website: www.rhinoark.org / www.rhinocharge.co.ke

**Rhino Ark (UK) Charity No. 1047083**

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