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Magazine
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A bi-annual publication of the Kenya Forest Service

TREES FOR BETTER LIVES

Ready to Serve!



National Tree Growing Day

Pursuing Partnerships in Tree Growing

Editorial

Dear Reader,

I am delighted to welcome you to the 35th issue of the Forester Magazine, recapping the monumental events and milestones achieved by the Kenya Forest Service from July to December 2023.

The highlight was undoubtedly Kenya's first ever National Tree Planting Day on 13th November, a historic public holiday dedicated to conservation through nationwide tree planting. This pivotal moment marked a step towards a greener future aligned with our goal of achieving 30% tree cover by 2030.

In a massive boost to our efforts, we saw the largest-ever Pass out parade of 2,700 new Forest Rangers. Their graduation underscores the government's commitment to increase personnel capacity as we scale up tree planting across Kenya. The recruitment of new Cadets, Foresters and Forest Assistants was another milestone.

Together with staff, partners and citizens, we carried out tree planting activities across multiple counties. We also marked significant events like World Ranger's Day, International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem, and World Bamboo Day among others.

I invite you to explore the many exciting updates in this issue as we recap an eventful 2023. Join us on this important journey towards a sustainable future for our people and our planet.

Happy reading!

Anne Kaari, 'ndc' (K)

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Cover Photo: Forest Ranger recruits marching during the pass out parade in NYS Gilgil in Nakuru County.

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The Chief Conservator of Forests Mr. Alex Lemarkoko plants a tree with school children at GSU Ruiru Camp.

Word from the CCF

The year 2023 was perhaps the most remarkable year in the recent history of the Kenya Forest Service (KFS) if some of the historic events that have taken place are anything to go by. The events and activities have cemented the commitment of the government and the people of Kenya to not look back on their resolve of protecting and conserving our precious forest resources for the economic and social sustainability of the country.

In October, the Service was most honoured to host the Head of State for the very first time at a passing out parade of Forest Rangers. This historic event also saw the passing out of the highest number of forest rangers ever recruited in over 100 years of history of forest management in Kenya. The bringing on board of 2,664 Forest Rangers which surpassed the number of existing rangers has brought with it a level of forest protection not experienced for a long time in the Service. This was perhaps the single most demonstration of the government's commitment to ensure proper protection of Kenya's forests.

In addition to this, the government also allowed the Service to recruit 300 foresters and 100 ranger cadets to help boost the number of technical officers and replace

exiting foresters as well as bolster the command structure of the protection and security directorate respectively.

It was also during the year 2023 that the 15 billion tree growing campaign that will elevate the country's tree cover from the current 12.13% to 30% by the year 2032 begun in earnest. We were again honoured to host His Excellency President William Ruto during the launch of this ambitious yet absolutely critical campaign at Kiu Wetland in Kibwezi Makeni County when he made a national call for all citizens to play their part by planting at least 30 trees each year for the next ten years.

It was also at this national event that our Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Forestry Hon. Soipan Tuya made a clarion call for the whole government whole society approach to tackling the existential threat of climate change by joining hands to grow trees and save our country.

As the country embarks on this journey, all public institutions including our counties have been given specific targets in order to actualize the strategy. We also have our target of growing at least 300 million seedlings annually which will result in

the planting of over 3 billion trees by the Service. We also have an additional task of offering technical support and backstopping to other partners involved in this campaign, a task that we have every intention of accomplishing.

A critical success factor in the 15 billion tree growing campaign in availability of high quality seedlings. To this end, we have refocused all our efforts and significant resources to production of high quality seedlings in our tree nurseries across all our forest stations. This is a major undertaking for which we are seeking collaborations with our various stakeholders and employing new innovations and technologies to fast track the process.

Climate change however continues to present a growing concern for forest conservation. Rising temperatures, changing rainfall patterns, and increased frequency of extreme weather events have had detrimental effects on forest ecosystems. We need to develop adaptive strategies to mitigate these impacts and ensure the long-term resilience of our forests.

To this end, we look forward to working closely with our stakeholders led by the Community Forest Associations (CFA) which have continued to be the strongest link in our consolidated efforts towards conserving our forests. It is now hard to imagine how our forests would be like without the invaluable support we have received from the communities living adjacent to forests. All partners who are involved in rehabilitation of forests can also attest to the support they have received from the community and the impact they have on the sustainability of their projects. The Service will therefore continue working very closely with CFA to strengthen their governance and to ensure that they reap maximum benefits from their conservation initiatives.

We are also looking forward to the finalisation of the review of the Forest Conservation and Management Act of 2016 that will help to enhance the management of our forests and give clarity to emerging issues in the management of forests. This will include the regulation of the trade in carbon credits to ensure that the country benefits fully from its carbon stocks by attracting investment in the green economy.

Alex L. Lemarkoko, EBS, 'ndc' (K)
Chief Conservator of Forests



H.E President William Ruto (Center), H.E Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua (2nd left) with The CCF Alex Lemarkoko during the National Tree Growing Day in Kiu Wetlands, Makueni

National Tree Growing Day

By *Leakey Sonkoyo*

The Government of Kenya led by His Excellency President William Ruto has committed to increase the country's tree cover to over 30% by the year 2032 as a way of mitigating against the adverse effects of climate change and securing Kenya's socio-economic development.

The Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) Mr. Alex Lemarkoko had the honour of guiding His Excellency President William Ruto when he launched the campaign during the specially gazetted National Tree Growing Day on 13th November 2023 at Kiu Wetland in Kibwezi, Makueni County at a ceremony where over 120 thousand trees were planted.

The event which was hosted by the

Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Forestry Hon. Soipan Tuya was also attended by the Deputy President His Excellency Rigathi Gachagua, the First Lady Her Excellency Mama Rachel Ruto, the Spouse of the Deputy President Pastor Dorcas Rigathi and the Governor of Makueni County Hon. Mutula Kilonzo Jnr among other leaders.

The Head of State reiterated his call for Kenyans to conserve their forests and wetlands in order to sustain the livelihoods of the local communities and stabilise the environment whose deterioration he noted would be devastating to the country.

The President said that conservation of the environment and especially forests would ensure adequate provision of water which will boost food production even in the arid and semi arid areas of the country.

The CS on her part said that her Ministry working with all stakeholders including County Governments will collaborate to secure fragile ecosystems which are crucial for the sustenance of life.

She called on the Kiu community to conserve their wetland saying that it was the only source of water for domestic use and irrigation in the area. All leaders agreed to work together to actualize the growing of 15 billion trees by 2032. The National Tree Growing Day which was marked concurrently in all the 47 counties saw the planting of 150 million trees. It is expected that over 500 million seedlings will be grown by the end of the rainy season and another one billion trees are targeted to be grown in the March April May long rains season in 2024.

The National Tree Planting Day, had all counties in the country engaging in tree planting activities, in a concerted effort to address environmental challenges and contribute to sustainable practices. Hon. Alice Wahome, Cabinet Secretary for the Ministry of Lands, Public Works, Housing, and Urban Development, led the charge the Nyeri Chapter, held at Gathiuru Forest Station in the Burguret block. Collaborating with diverse participants, including the public, National Security Services, corporate entities, and community-based organizations, the event resulted in the successful planting of 10,000 assorted indigenous trees.

The initiative was not confined to Nyeri alone; Nakuru County also actively participated, led by Governor Hon. Susan Kihika. Accompanied by other Government Officials such as PS Defence Hon Patrick Mariru and MP Bahati Hon. Irene Njoki, the team planted 10,000 trees in Bahati, Kabatini Ward, Nakuru North Sub County.

Nairobi joined the nationwide endeavor with a tree planting initiative at Bomas Beat. Led by the Head of Public Service, Mr. Felix Koskei, the event brought together corporate entities, the Kenya Forest Service, and members of the public, all striving towards the shared goal of planting 10,000 indigenous trees. The collaboration emphasized the importance of diverse stakeholders uniting for the cause of sustainable environmental practices and community well-being.

Further expanding the scope of the tree planting initiative, Uasin Gishu County witnessed the active involvement of the PS State Department of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises, Susan Mangeni, alongside Governor Jonathan Bii and Senator Jackson Mandago. The team, joined by various local leaders, cooperatives, and community members, planted an impressive

Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Forestry Hon. Soipan Tuyu joined by a youngster during the tree planting in Kiu Wetlands



total of 16,000 exotic tree seedlings and 23,000 indigenous tree seedlings at the Kemur wetland in Timboroa Beat.

CS Alice Wahome, during the tree planting drive in Nyeri, highlighted the critical need for widespread tree planting across the country. Emphasizing the government's commitment to combating climate change, she urged all state departments under her jurisdiction to exceed the Ministry's target of growing 500 million tree seedlings. This ambitious endeavor aligns with the national goal of planting 15 billion trees by 2032, aiming to elevate the country's tree cover from 12.13% to 30%.

CS Wahome, accompanied by Nyeri County Governor Mutahi Kahiga, led tree planting initiatives in both Nyeri and

Laikipia. The events received support from various conservation organizations, including the Mt. Kenya Conservation Forum, Rhino Ark Charitable Trust, and Mau Mau Original Trust, as well as active participation from government and private sector entities. The focus on environmental awareness and sustainable practices resonated with participants, fostering a sense of responsibility towards reforestation and conserving areas impacted by human activities. The collective efforts of these regions exemplify the "All Government, All People Approach" advocated by the current government, underlining the shared responsibility in mitigating the adverse effects of climate change.



Cabinet Secretary Ministry of Lands, Public Works, Housing, and Urban Development, Hon. Alice Wahome leads the tree national growing day at Gathiuru Forest Station in Nyeri County



The PS State Department for Industry Dr. Juma Mugwana waters a tree he planted during the event, leads the tree national growing day joined by the Embu Governor Cecily Mbarire and other leaders



His Excellency the President William Ruto and the Chief Conservator of Forests Alex Lemarkoko during the passing out parade

Forest Ranger Recruits Ready to Serve!

By Peter Owino, James Waitathu

His Excellency the President of the Republic of Kenya Hon. Dr William Samoei Ruto presided over the passing-out parade of 2,664 Kenya Forest Service ranger recruits from the Forest Law Enforcement Academy (FoLEA) at NYS Gilgil in Nakuru County.

This is the highest number of Rangers that the Service has ever produced at a go, nearing almost half the Service's strength since its inception.

While officiating the colourful event, President Ruto noted that by enhancing the human capital at the Service, forest rangers are strategic drivers of national landscape and ecosystem restoration programs. President Ruto also emphasized the importance of forest protection and sustainable management as a direct link that influences the national economic growth underscoring the vital role that the Forest Ranger owes the country.

"You enter our national economic transformation equation as the people's trustees and guarantors of fundamental constitutional mandate and custodians of our forests value chain," he stated.

The President inspired the cohort as they took on their duties with an emphasis on the crucial climate change mitigation remedies that forest resources offer to humanity and hence urged

the rangers to diligently take on their roles of safeguarding the environment by protecting these resources.

Noting that there have been cases of a few rogue personnel at the Service abetting criminal activities, President Ruto ordered a thorough 'clean up' of the Kenya Forest Service to rid it of such rogue and corrupt officers.

At the same time, the President called for a collective approach among state agencies, the private sector and members of the public in tree growing towards the achievement to enable the country to attain 30% tree cover by 2032. The President encouraged members of the public to support the government in planting an available stock of 150 million seedlings during the expected short rains.

During the auspicious event, family, relatives, friends and members of the public settled early at the Forest Law Enforcement Academy at the NYS Gilgil parade grounds.

The President was joined by Cabinet Secretary Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry Hon. Soipan Tuya, the Ministry's Principal Secretaries Mr Mugambi Gitonga (Forestry) and Eng. Festus Ng'eno, KFS Board of Directors led by the Chairman Mr Job Chirchir, the Chief Conservator of Forests Mr Alex Lemarkoko among other senior government leaders.

Prior to the Passing Out Parade, the Deputy Commandant Mr Wilson Leboo led 600 recruits in a tree planting exercise at FOLEA B Campus, Gilgil.

The exercise saw over 3,000 trees planted by the recruits who are part of the 2,700 recently recruited forest rangers, the largest batch of recruits in the history of Kenya Forest Service. The trees were planted on a 5 acre piece of land donated by the National Youth Service in an effort to embrace the “Whole Government and Whole Society Approach” in implementation of the 30% National Tree Cover Strategy.

In his remarks, Mr Leboo encouraged the recruits to lead by example once they have completed their training in welcoming their new roles as Managers, Protectors and Conservators of forests by becoming tree planting ambassadors in their respective areas of assignment. He also challenged the recruits to not only plant trees but to ensure they nurture the trees and increase their survival rate so as to compliment the efforts of the tree planting exercise.

Among the Senior Officers present was Nicholas J. Makokha HSC Commandant NYS Paramilitary Academy, Gilgil, NYS Senior Assistant Director Ann Njoroge NDC, KFS Manager Human Resource Julianna Ochieng and FOLEA B Campus Commanding Officer Apollinary Mwandigha.

In his comments, Mr. Mwandigha was confident in the quality of training that the recruits have undergone and was very proud and amazed in their transformation to the kind of people they have become. He also thanked the National Youth Service for hosting the Kenya Forest Service at FOLEA B Campus and their continued support over the years.



King Charles III Visits Karura Forest



The King Charles III of the United Kingdom visited Karura Forest during his official visit to Kenya and planted an Elgon Teak (*Olea welwitschii*) in honour of Nobel Laureate and Kenya's Environmental Icon the late Prof. Wangari Maathai.

The King who is also a great champion of environmental conservation and climate action was accompanied by Prime Cabinet Secretary Hon. Musalia Mudavadi, Environment, Climate Change and Forestry Cabinet Secretary Hon. Soipan Tuyu, the Chairperson of the Wangari Maathai Foundation Ms. Wanjira Mathai and the Britain's High Commissioner to Kenya Neil Wigman and the Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) Mr. Alex Lemarkoko among other leaders. Kenya has benefitted from Britain's support in forest conservation through the Queen's Canopy initiative.

Short rains tree growing season targets 500 million

With the onset of the short rains season, KFS together with the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry and all the agencies in the ministry have began a national tree growing exercise to plant over 500 million across the country.

The Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) Mr. Alex Lemarkoko joined the Principal Secretary for Forestry Mr. Gitonga Mugambi and the Secretary Administration Mr. Evans Mutari at Kapolet Forest Station in Transzoia County to plant over 10,000 assorted indigenous tree seedlings in an event graced by the Governor His Excellency George Nitembeya. This was part of the 15 Billion Tree Growing Programme intervention 6 which seeks to rehabilitate degraded natural forest areas and water towers.

The PS noted that Cherangany Ecosystem had lost about 30% of its cover due to encroachment. He urged the community to be at the forefront of forest conservation noting that community groups that are engaged in tree growing and forest conservation will in future benefit from revenues generated from carbon trading. He noted that it was everyone's duty to conserve forests for future generations. He said that forest rangers who graduated recently will be deployed to the area to assist with forest protection. He also informed them that soon the Ministry will roll out the recruitment of the green army to assist in seedling production and tree growing and urged the youth and women to present themselves for consideration.

On his part, the Governor warned the local community against forest destruction saying the consequences will be detrimental to their well-being. He noted that his government had set aside funds for tree growing noting that the counties agricultural sector depended on a stable environment.

The CCF urged the local community to work together with KFS officers to conserve local forests. He informed the stakeholders present

to move away from just planting trees to growing and nurturing them to maturity in order to ensure sustainable provision of critical environmental services. Mr. Lemarkoko warned those people involved in forest destruction through encroachment to move out and pave way for the conservation of the critical water tower which serves the country and the region.



The PS State Department of Forestry Mugambi Gitonga leads tree planting at Kapolet Forest Station, Trans-Nzoia County as the CCF Alex Lemarkoko and other officials look on.

Titus Korir appointed KFS Chairman



Cabinet Secretary of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry Hon. Soipan Tuya (center), PS State Department of Forestry Mugambi Gitonga and KFS Board of Directors at KFS Headquarters.



By Leakey Sonkoyo

Following the appointment of the new Board Chairman Mr. Titus Korir by His Excellency President William Ruto, and the appointment of Jane Simitia into the Board, the Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) Mr. Alex Lemarkoko welcomed the Cabinet Secretary of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry Hon. Soipan Tuya who visited KFS Headquarters at Karura to introduce the new members to the whole Board.

The CS who was accompanied by the Principal Secretary for Forestry Mr. Gitonga Mugambi congratulated the new Board members and informed them of the task to increase the country's tree cover and to restore and rehabilitate degraded landscapes as well as sustainably manage existing forests. She urged the board members to support their Chairman and the KFS management to ensure seamless

implementation of Ministry and government policies in regards to forest management. She assured the Board of the Ministry's support noting that the country expected efficient technical support and leadership from the Service in the forestry sector.

Speaking at the same event, the Chairman thanked His Excellency the President for showing confidence in him and appointing him to chair the KFS Board of Directors. He added that he looked forward to working closely with the CS and the Ministry as well as the KFS management in making reforms that are aligned to the implementation of the climate change and forest conservation programmes. The Chairman noted that his Board will strive to achieve the President's vision of growing 15 billion trees by the year 2032 and stopping illegal logging and encroachment into state forests.

KFC holds 46th Graduation Ceremony

By James Waitathu

The 46th Graduation ceremony for the Kenya Forestry College was commemorated in a highly colored event presided over by the Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Forestry Hon. Soipan Tuya at the Londiani based institution. Established in 1956, the institution conferred Diplomas and Certificates to 118 graduates who excelled in the various courses offered by the college.

Speaking during the event, the Chief Guest Hon. Soipan Tuya said she was proud and pleased to be part of this milestone and urged the graduates to be vigilant and aggressive towards conserving and protecting our forests once they are absorbed by the various conservation organizations in the country. “The country requires you to support our efforts in sustainable conservation, management and protection of the environment for socio-economic development,” CS Tuya appealed to the graduates. In her concluding remarks, the CS challenged the college leadership to continue innovating new courses aimed at addressing the country’s pressing climate action priorities and directed Kenya Forest Service to ensure that the institution is adequately supported.

KFS Board Chairman Mr. Titus Korir took the opportunity to commend the institution for imparting knowledge on conservation for future generations and assured the college of continued support to effectively enable training of the best forestry programmes.

The Chief Conservator of Forests Mr. Alex Lemarkoko congratulated the graduating class and encouraged them to apply into good use the skills, competencies and expertise acquired at the college and to ensure they operate with utmost integrity, leaving no room for compromise when it comes to delivering the mandate of the service.

On her part, the College Principal, Dr. Elizabeth Wambugu noted that the graduates had invested their time and effort, working tirelessly to successfully earn their Diplomas and Certificates, she was therefore confident that the graduates were well trained and ready to serve.

The college is the only Forestry specialized college in the country and is registered with the Kenya Universities and College Placement Services (KUCCPS), it offers Diplomas and Certificates in Forestry, Environmental Management, Agriculture Management, Business Management, Carpentry, Sawmilling Technology, Bee Keeping among others.



Environment, Climate Change and Forestry CS Hon. Soipan Tuya receives a bouquet of flowers at Kenya Forestry College during the 46th graduation ceremony. Looking on is the Chief Conservator of Forests Mr. Alex Lemarkoko and College Principal Dr. Elizabeth Wambugu.

KFS Celebrates End Year Thanks Giving Service



KFS Chairman Mr. Titus Korir leads Board Members and Senior Management team in presenting offerings during the Thanksgiving service at KFS Headquarters in Karura.

By James Waitathu

The year 2023 was an eventful year for Kenya Forest Service with transition in leadership, new board of directors, 1500 promotions and recruitment of 2,667 among the top achievements in 2023, this is also the year when the implementation of the 15 billion tree growing campaign started following a presidential directive for attaining 30% tree cover by 2032. These events are among the many reasons the KFS fraternity led by the Chairman gathered at KFS Headquarters to give thanks to the Almighty God and to pray for a prosperous 2024.

The service which is held annually to commemorate and reflect on the past year was conducted by KFS Chaplain Bishop Amos Ololdapash among various religious leaders, the Bishop prayed for an end in the challenges encountered by the KFS family while delivering on their vision to conserve, protect and manage our National forests.

In his speech, the CCF Mr. Alex Lemarkoko, thanked the members of staff in their utmost dedication to their work in ensuring we remain on course to deliver on the presidents directive to grow 15 billion trees by 2032, he also took the opportunity to recognize and reward some of the most outstanding staff for their resilience and determination to deliver on their mandate despite the challenges that came their way. The CCF also led the attendees in observing a minute of silence for the 22 forest rangers who lost their lives while in



the line of duty in 2023 noting that their efforts did not go in vain.

While addressing the members of staff, the Chairman thanked the CS in her support for the board to ensure protection and conservation of our forests, he also maintained that the boards is keen to uphold integrity and eliminated any forms of corruption in the service. In conclusion, the Chairman urged everyone to embrace effective communication where ideas can be shared freely to assist in resolving conflicts and turning challenges into opportunities.

Building Partnerships For Tree Growing



The CCF Mr. Alex Lemarkoko joined by Earth Lungs staff member in Kisauni, Mombasa County

By Peter Owino

Forest conservation and especially tree growing is not a task that can be accomplished solely by one organization. It requires collaborative efforts between government agencies, private sector players, civil society organizations and local communities. Recognizing this, the Ministry of Environment and Forestry has adopted a whole society approach to fast track the 30% tree cover target by 2032.

One such partnership is between the Kenya Forest Service (KFS) and Earth Lungs Reforestation Foundation. The Chief Conservator of Forests, Mr. Alex Lemarkoko, recently visited one of the sites adopted by Earth Lungs at Majaoni in Kisauni, Mombasa County. Earth Lungs, a key partner in landscape restoration and forest rehabilitation through tree planting, has adopted 500 hectares of mangrove forests in Kisauni. They are working closely with the local community to rehabilitate the forests.

The organization is training and engaging community scouts to monitor the forests. They are also providing tree seedlings and helping local schools establish tree nurseries. Students are involved in raising indigenous tree seedlings that are then planted in the reforestation sites. Engaging the youth helps create environmental awareness and a sense

of ownership over the forests.

Earth Lungs is also working with smallholder farmers to plant trees on their farms. This helps prevent soil erosion and siltation which is a major cause of mangrove degradation. Fruit trees provide additional income for farmers once mature while also securing the landscapes. The CCF commended the

enthusiasm and leadership shown by the community in rehabilitating the mangrove forests. He also thanked Earth Lungs, led by CEO Mr. Victor Mwanga, for spearheading collaborative initiatives in forest conservation and meaningfully engaging local communities.

Another key partnership is between KFS





and the Kenya Pipeline Company (KPC) to support the national tree planting drive. KPC has been involved in tree planting initiatives for years including in Jomvu Kuu, Mombasa. During a recent meeting with KFS, KPC was represented by Mr. Ibrahim Adan and Mr. Bosco Yokomoi who expressed commitment to enhance collaboration.

KPC plans to plant over 220,000 tree seedlings this year and 5 million in the next decade. To achieve these targets, KFS and KPC will work together to establish tree nurseries to increase seedling production. KPC will also provide transportation support to move seedlings from nurseries to planting sites across the country.

Additionally, they will collaborate to protect pipelines passing through forests and prevent vandalism of this key infrastructure. KFS will share forest boundary maps with KPC to improve coordination of surveillance patrols. They agreed to form joint teams to conduct regular monitoring of the pipeline routes.

Partnerships such as these exemplify the collaborative efforts required to grow Kenya's tree cover. They enable pooling of resources, expertise and networks. The KFS Deputy Chief Conservator, Mr. Peter Waweru commended KPC for their long-time involvement in tree planting and willingness to formalize collaboration through a Memorandum of Understanding.

The government cannot achieve the ambitious 30% tree cover goal alone. Building partnerships with private sector, civil society and communities is integral to implementing this national agenda. Working together, it is possible to restore Kenya's

degraded landscapes and forests for the benefit of present and future generations.

Mobilizing Corporate Social Responsibility

Reaching the target of 30% forest cover will require significant investment. The government is exploring creative ways to mobilize resources including through corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives. Many private companies are stepping up and pooling resources in service of nature-based solutions.

For instance, Bidco Africa has engaged with KFS on carbon market financing to support forest conservation. Bidco Chairman, Mr. Vimal Shah met the Chief Conservator of Forests, Mr. Alex Lemarkoko to discuss potential collaboration. They agreed to form a technical team to explore carbon trading opportunities that would generate revenues for community-based reforestation.

Carbon financing presents a sustainable funding mechanism for forest conservation while benefitting local communities. However, Kenya requires experts to develop certified carbon projects and tap into these resources. Bidco has committed to work with KFS to build internal capacity on carbon trading to support the 30% tree cover campaign.

Mr. Vimal Shah encouraged KFS to pursue diverse funding streams beyond government budgets. He stated that the private sector is ready to partner in innovative ways to fill financing gaps for tree growing and reforestation programs. Building a coalition of the willing from the corporate sector will be impactful.

Kenya Forest Service (KFS) and Athi Water Works Development Agency (AWWDA) will undertake tree growing initiatives in Dandora Waste Water Treatment Plant and Kariobangi Waste Water Treatment Plant. This was agreed upon during a meeting the Chief Conservator of Forests Mr. Alex Lemarkoko held with the Ag. Chief Executive Officer of AWWDA Eng. Joseph Kamau in his office on Kiambu Road.

The engagement perfectly aligns with



The CCF Mr. Alex Lemarkoko together with KFS Senior Managers and Bidco Africa CEO and team



Mr. Francis Kariuki of KFS & Engineer Ezekiel Fukwo-Director Highway Design and Safety KeNHA addressing community members after tree planting in Kinale Forest.

H.E President William Ruto's 15 billion tree planting and restoration initiative and the broader goal of increasing Kenya's forest cover. By working together, KFS and AWWDA will ensure the sustainable management and conservation of water catchments which benefits the environment, including water cycle regulation, carbon sequestration, erosion control, and climate change mitigation.

The tree planting activities will focus on Dandora Estate Sewerage Treatment Plant and Kariobangi Waste Water Treatment Plant. The total area available for tree planting is 447 hectares, with phase 1 involving planting and nurturing 10,000 tree seedlings on 10 hectares. The project's stages include site preparation, tree planting, and protection and nurturing.

The project's objective is to sustainably manage these rivers, supporting natural ecosystems, socio-economic activities, and livelihoods while expanding green spaces within the city of Nairobi.

The Principal Senior Deputy Chief Conservator of Forests Mr. Peter Waweru also held discussions with a team from Safaricom Ltd led by the Senior Manager in Charge of Sustainability and Partnerships Ms. Evelyn Serro about continued collaboration in tree growing and forest rehabilitation. Safaricom who are long time partners of KFS in tree growing are committed to becoming a net zero carbon-emitting company by 2050 are

working towards rehabilitating 5,000 ha by planting over 5 million trees by the year 2025.

The corporation which has already planted over 1.3 million trees in various parts of the country is also working with communities

in order to assist them adopt energy efficient technologies through use of energy saving jikos for domestic use. The two teams agreed to work towards developing a framework of collaboration that will guide their future collaboration.

The Karura Forest was rehabilitated from a degraded state through CSR support. Organizations donated finances and labor to Gazette it as a nature reserve. Today, it is an iconic forest visited by thousands for recreation, education and research. This showcases the tremendous value of partnerships in restoring lost forests. The Kenya Forest Service invites more stakeholders to come on board.

Kenya's ambitious reforestation targets require consolidated effort from all actors. The government has adopted a whole society approach to fast-track achievement of the 30% tree cover goal. Partnerships create synergies that propel this common vision for a greener, more sustainable nation. They make available resources beyond what the exchequer provides.

It is inspiring to witness diverse stakeholders demonstrate commitment through action. Participation by local communities, NGOs, corporates and state agencies is enhancing the success of reforestation programs. Moving forward, the Kenya Forest Service will strengthen these bonds and foster new collaborations. Saving our ecosystems is a shared duty. Together, we can pass on to generations to come the gift of a forested, vibrant Kenya.



The CCF Mr. Alex Lemarkoko with the Ag. CEO of AWWDA Eng. Joseph Kamau in AWWDA Offices.



KFS Management Team Visits Base Titanium

By Leakey Sonkoyo

KFS is looking to expand areas for forestry development in order to increase the country’s forest cover. Currently, Kenya’s gazetted forests occupy an area of approximately 2.6 million. As demand for settlement and agricultural land increases, it is a key government objective to increase the area under forest cover in order to ensure sustainable development.

It is for this reason that a team of senior Kenya Forest Service (KFS) Officers led by the Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) Mr. Alex Lemarkoko visited Base Titanium in Kwale County to appreciate their mine rehabilitation program and begin discussions on the possibility of converting the area into a gazetted forest after the closure of their mining operations in December 2024.

The mine is close to forest patches that constitute the coastal forests of Eastern Africa Biodiversity hotspots. The Kwale Mine is located between Gogoni Gazi and Buda Forest stations and the conversion of the over 4,000 ha into a forest will therefore create a continuous forest ecosystem with rich biodiversity.

The KFS team was hosted by the management of the company led by the Operations General Manager Denham Vickers, the External Affairs GM Simon Wall and the Environment Manager Nick Okello who showed them the rehabilitation programmes being implemented which include growing of indigenous trees.

While making a presentation on their exit strategy, the managers expressed their desire to have the mine converted into a conservation area with a strong emphasis on environmental education involving schools and colleges as the primary focus and in collaboration with the host community.

The CCF thanked the management of Base Titanium for their long standing collaboration and support in forest conservation. He also

congratulated them for establishing an impressive tree nursery with many rare and endangered tree species. The CCF noted their annual tree growing program of planting at least 50,000 trees which he observed had transformed the formally mined area into a green area with signs of impressive biodiversity. He informed them of the desire by the Service to collaborate in the production at least five million seedlings annually using their enhanced nursery infrastructure.

Among the officers who accompanied the CCF were the Principal of the Kenya Forestry College Dr. Elizabeth Wambugu who said that the site will be an ideal location to train foresters on forest rehabilitation and management of coastal forests. KFS is looking forward to having fruitful deliberations with all stakeholders with the objective of advancing forest conservation for the benefit of the country.



The CCF Alex Lemarkoko visits the Base Titanium Tree Nursery

KFS takes part in Cop-28:

Pioneering Climate Action and Sustainable Forestry Practices in Global Discourse through hosting and participate in side events during COP28



By Peter Sirayo

During the COP28 conference in Dubai, the Kenya Forest Service (KFS) played a pivotal role by hosting two significant side events. The first event, held at the Kenyan Pavilion, focused on forest monitoring, while the second, at the Space Pavilion, delved into forest alerts. Both events aimed to spotlight KFS’s innovative contributions to climate action through technology-driven approaches in reducing forest degradation and deforestation.

Mr. Alex Lemarkoko, Chief Conservator of Forests, KFS, delivered opening remarks at the side event titled “Strengthening Forest Management, Restoration, and Monitoring through Innovative Satellite Solutions and Emerging Initiatives and Technologies.” He emphasized the critical role of monitoring in managing forests and land resources, particularly with the increasing emergence of technological innovations.

The CCF acknowledged the collaboration with Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in the development of essential tools like the National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS) and Forest Reference Level (FRL) and further, the JICA’s ongoing support in exploring methods for monitoring tree cover and developing a timber traceability system for Kenya through the SFS-CORECC project.

The side event came in when Kenya, under the leadership of the President, is committed

to increasing tree cover to over 30% by 2032. This ambitious goal involves strategies to grow over 15 billion trees across degraded landscapes.

From the Blue Zone to the Green Zone, at a Side Event at Space Pavilion, Mr. Alex Lemarkoko also addressed the audience during the side event titled “Enhancing Forest Monitoring and Management through Innovative Satellite Solutions - To Accelerate NDC Implementation through REDD+.” This event highlighted the pivotal role of satellites in effective forest monitoring, providing real-time data for swift responses to emerging challenges.

Satellites are recognized as powerful tools in assessing and preserving forests, offering a holistic understanding of forest conditions.

KFS showcased the success made in operationalizing the Forest Alert System. This system was piloted in two counties of Kwale and Kilifi through the Forest 2020 project. Fast forward, today, the system has been introduced in 3 other counties of Kericho, Makueni and Baringo. This has been enabled through support of a number of partners.

From these engaging side events, several crucial insights emerged, outlining a roadmap for the future:

Firstly, there is a pressing need to elevate the forest alert system to a national level to enhance the monitoring of our invaluable forest resources. Recognizing the magnitude of this undertaking, collaboration with other

interested partners becomes essential, both in terms of financial backing and technical expertise.

Secondly, the imperative for a comprehensive national forest inventory (NFI) surfaced, aiming to enhance the accuracy of forest data, including emission estimates derived from emission factors. This prompts the consideration of developing a project proposal and seeking support from potential partners dedicated to this noble cause.

Creating widespread awareness about the National Forest Monitoring System also emerged as a key point, underlining the importance of ensuring that stakeholders at all levels are well-informed and engaged.

Furthermore, in the wake of the enactment of the Climate Change (Amendment) Act, 2023, there is a growing necessity to explore pathways for REDD+ nesting, reflecting the evolving landscape of climate legislation.

The side event on UNFCCC 10 Years of Warsaw Framework on REDD+ came in when UNFCCC was commemorating the 10th anniversary of the Warsaw Framework on REDD+. The event served as a platform for countries to share their experiences in the implementation of REDD+. Challenges brought to light included the limited involvement of Civil Society Organizations, poor intersectoral coordination, and the absence of national consultation frameworks. Notably, the Forest and Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) was recognized for supporting 47 countries in the REDD+ Readiness phase.

In essence, these side events at COP28 provided a comprehensive overview of the challenges and progress in key areas of climate action. From transparency reporting to biodiversity conservation, sustainable construction practices, and adaptation finance, the discussions and initiatives unveiled during these events contribute significantly to the global efforts toward climate resilience and environmental sustainability. Particularly, the collective discussions and engagements during these side events mark a significant stride forward in the global pursuit of climate resilience, forest conservation, and sustainable practices. The insights gained and collaborations forged are integral to shaping a future where our forests thrive amidst the challenges of a changing climate.

Launch of National Agroforestry Campaign



Ag. Manager, Resource Mobilization Mr. Noor Mohammed waters a tree during the Launch of the Agroforestry tree planting campaign.

By James Waitathu

Agroforestry provides employment, food, medicine, energy for cooking and heating, shelter, a healthy environment and a better quality of life for millions of Kenyans, especially rural communities, it is basically the interaction of agriculture and trees which helps to create a natural ecosystem that results in a bigger

harvest, a better climate and increased resistance to the effects of climate change. It is therefore, for this reason that the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry launched the National Agroforestry Tree Growing Campaign in Baringo county to take advantage of the short rains being experienced countrywide to promote tree growing alongside crop cultivation on private lands.

4000 seedlings, including 500 fruit trees were planted during the launch which saw

members of the public coming out in large numbers to partake in this noble exercise that took place on a private farm in Kimose, Baringo county. In remarks presented on her behalf by the Ministry's Secretary of Administration Mr. Evans Mutari, the CS said there is urgent need to restore degraded landscapes including private farms. She urged communities to take up farm forestry noting that this approach would assure food security, increased tree cover and also provide employment through the sale of fruits and seedlings to the community.

In his address during the launch, Ag. Manager, Resource Mobilization Mr. Noor Mohammed who represented the Chief Conservator of Forests Mr. Alex Lemarkoko acclaimed that the Kenya Forest Service is ready and up to the task in spearheading increased tree growing campaigns on a national level. Mr. Noor also noted with concern the escalation of forest related crimes in the country particularly in the Mau Conservancy and urged the local community to report the people who encroach and degrade the conservancy.

Echoing the remarks of Mr. Noor, Mau Regional Conservator Mr. Evans Maneno noted that the increase in crime within the Mau Conservancy is on an upward trajectory and said he was working closely with the regional security committee to ensure offenders are apprehended and presented to court for prosecution.



Participating students make their mark during the tree planting exercise.

20 Participatory Forest Management Plans Launched



Members of the CFAs celebrating together with partners following the launch of their PFMP

By Sylvester Okal

The management and conservation of the forest resources had long been done by the National Government with minimal involvement of the local people bringing about various constraints and challenges in forest conservation. However, the 2010 Constitution recognized the importance of involving the community in all matters, including those that are related to forests. According to the Forests Conservation and Management Act, No. 34 of 2016, the Kenya Forest Service (KFS) is mandated to conserve, develop and sustainably manage forest resources.

Participatory Forest Management is hence entrenched in the Forest Conservation and Management Act (2016) which allows for co-management of forest resources between KFS and local communities. The formulation of Participatory Forest Management Plans (PFMPs) is a collaborative and inclusive process where both entities identify, agree upon, and outline user rights. These rights emphasize non-extractive methods, ensuring responsible and sustainable resource utilization by community members.

Kenya Forest Service while working with several partners developed and launched Participatory Forest Management Plans for several

government managed forests including Nyangores, Ole Nguuruone, Ol Pusimoru & Nairobi forests in the Mau Forest Complex, Mpozi, Kipini, Chara & Kilelengwani in the Tana Delta, Nairobi City Park Forest & Ngong Hills Forest within Nairobi and forest blocks within the Arabuko Sokoke Forest. During the launching exercises, Forest Management Agreements (FMA) between the Service and the Community Forest Associations were also signed in line with the law.

These two integrated sets of documents (PFMP & FMA) serve as crucial management tools for the Service. They play a pivotal role in not only involving forest-adjacent communities in conservation, management, and protection but also in enabling them to sustainably utilize the forest. The benefit-sharing mechanisms, as precisely detailed in these documents, ensure that the engagement of communities results in mutual advantages.

The documents were also signed and launched for Menengai, Dundori, Bahati, Kiptunga & Logoman forest stations and the mangrove forests in Bodo, Shirazi, Munje and Funzi together with Buda Forest Block in Kwale County.

Reclamation of Mau Forest Complex

By Leakey Sonkoyo

The government is keen to reclaim and rehabilitate all forests in the country. Mau Forest Complex which is a gazetted forest and one of the key water towers is facing challenges of encroachment and destruction. It is for this reason that a multi-agency security team led by KFS and coordinated by the Ministry of Environment Climate Change and Forestry has begun an operation to reclaim the forest for purposes of restoring it so that it can continue providing critical environmental services for the country and region.

The Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) Mr. Alex Lemarkoko accompanied the Principal Secretary for the State Department of Forestry Mr. Gitonga Mugambi and the Chairman of the Kenya Water Towers Agency Hon. Rashid Echesa on a visit to Olorurto in Mau forest, Narok County to check the status of the forest and the ongoing operation. They also held a consultative meeting with members of the local community to sensitize them on the importance of conserving the forest for present and future generations.

The PS informed the gathering that the Ministry was keen to conserve the forest and was in the process of implementing the Presidential directive for people to move out of public forests to give way for their proper management and fencing.

The CCF urged the those people who live within the forest's boundary to move out voluntarily and assist the government in its conservation efforts. In attendance during the meeting were local leaders led by the Narok North MP Hon. Agnes Pareyio and the MCA for Olorurto Ward Hon. Joshua Kishoyian.

1. CCF Alex Lemarkoko addresses members of Olorurto in Mau Forest during a consultative meeting with the community

2. Member of Parliament for Narok North Hon. Agnes Pareyio speaking at the meeting

3. Member of the Community speaking during the meeting



World Rangers Day marked



Ag. Commandant Mr. David Chege with other KFS staff plant a tree in commemoration of the World Rangers Day in Aboetum, Nairobi .

By James Waitathu

World Rangers Day, celebrated on 31st July serves as a special occasion in the calendar of events for the Service to pay tribute and show gratitude to the courageous men and women who devote their lives for the protection and preservation of our precious natural resources comprising of forests across the country. It is a day set aside by the UN to celebrate and encourage the gallant men and women who put their lives on the line to protect nature for the common good of the current and future generations.

This day was founded 15 years ago when ANPR (U.S. Association of National Park Rangers), SCRA (Scottish Countryside Rangers Association), and CMA (Countryside Management Association, which represents rangers in Wales and England), got together and signed a joint agreement to raise support and awareness of the important work rangers around the world do in terms of conservation.

The Kenya Forest Service marked this significant day with celebrations held at The Nairobi Arboretum under the theme '30 by 30' which basically means that at least 30% of the planet is effectively conserved by the year 2030.

Addressing the Rangers, The Chief Conservator of Forests Mr. Alex Lemarkoko thanked the Rangers for the excellent role they play in protection of forests and encouraged them to continue serving with integrity and dedication while at the same time noting that it was not easy working on tough climatic conditions, limited resources and staying away from their families for long periods of time.

The Ag Commandant, Mr. David Chege on his part recognized the sacrifices made by the rangers in protecting forests and endangering their lives in the process, he took the opportunity to commemorate 11 Rangers who lost their lives and 32 who got injured in the line of duty during the 2022-2023 financial year, a moment of silence was observed to remember the lost souls.

During the colorful event, Mr. Chege also conferred ranks to Rangers who were among the 800 recently promoted Rangers and made a commitment to push for better working conditions while at the same time seeking compensation for those injured in the line of duty.



Ag. Commandant Mr. David Chege and SDCCF Charity Munyasia confer a rank to SSP David Mutoro, HSC

The Forest Challenge: Racing for a ‘Tree-mendous’ Cause



AG Manager Resource Mobilization Mr. Noor Mohammed and EAWLS CEO Ms. Nancy Ogonje flag off participants of the 2023 Forest Challenge at Kereita Forest Station, Kiambu County

By Michael Kitum

In a thrilling fusion of sportsmanship and environmental stewardship, Kenya Forest Service (KFS), alongside East African Wildlife Society (EAWLS) and Kijabe Environment Volunteers (KENVO), set the forest trails ablaze with the 8th edition of The Forest Challenge at Kereita Forest in Kiambu County.

Deputy Chief Conservator of Forests (Project Manager, National Tree Planting Campaign) Mr Noor Hussein, and Executive Director of EAWLS, Ms Nancy Ogonje, jointly flagged off the race, marking the beginning of an adventurous journey through the lush canopies. This annual event is not just a race but a powerful commitment to forest conservation, rallying participants to address the challenges facing our vital ecosystems.

The primary objective of The Forest Challenge is to raise funds for forest conservation initiatives to build resilient futures. KFS and EAWLS have solidified their commitment through an Adopt-A-Forest Partnership, targeting the rehabilitation of 100 hectares of degraded forest landscapes. The race serves as a dynamic platform to engage corporates and individuals in contributing to the crucial cause of preserving our natural heritage.

The 2023 event witnessed the active participation of 74 teams, each geared up for

the challenge under the theme ‘reforest for a resilient future.’ The Kereita Forest, part of the Aberdare Forest Ecosystem, provided a breathtakingly intriguing backdrop for this adventure sports event.

Speaking during the event, Noor urged participants to leverage the short rains for tree planting initiatives. He further emphasized that the resources generated

through the event would be instrumental in rehabilitating degraded forests, including vital water catchment areas. In his inspiring address, he reminded competitors that, by choosing to conserve forests, they were all winners in their own right.

Ms Ogonje, in her remarks, expressed her gratitude to the participants, highlighting the society’s commitment to conservation evidenced by the adoption of 100 hectares of degraded forest landscapes in Kereita forest and the planting of over 15 thousand seedlings in 2023 alone. She assured that the funds raised through the Forest Challenge would contribute to planting more trees during the rainy season.

The event also welcomed the presence of Mr. Thomas Kiptoo, the County Forest Conservator for Kiambu who also underscored the collaborative efforts between local authorities and conservation organizations. He further lauded the collaboration from community members living adjacent to Kereita forest who support tree growing initiatives through the Kereita Community Forest Association.

As the adrenaline of the Forest Challenge subsided, its impact reverberated; funds raised, trees planted, and a collective stride towards a more resilient and sustainable future established. The unique integration of sports and conservation not only showcases the spirit of unity but stands as a beacon for the transformative power of collective action in safeguarding our precious forests.



Some of the participants of the 2023 Forest Challenge

Conserving the Mangrove Ecosystems

KFS Board leads in conservation of Mangroves

By Peter Owino

Mangroves are effective carbon sinks, sequestering substantial amounts of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. The Mangroves are also hubs of biodiversity, providing habitat and nurseries for various marine and terrestrial species. They also act as natural buffers against storm surges, coastal erosion, and sea-level rise, thus enhancing the resilience of coastal communities to the impacts of climate change. Conserving them helps protect and restore these ecosystems, preserving the rich array of life they support.

Kenya Forest Service Board of Directors led by the Chairman Mr. Titus Korir, visited Gede Creek, to assess mangrove restoration efforts spearheaded by the Service in collaboration with the local community and other stakeholders. The board Chair led other directors in planting 300 mangrove trees to demonstrate the importance of this coastal ecosystem and the Service commitment to fully implement the 15 billion tree planting campaign.

Gede Creek harbors important mangrove forests with a high diversity of species. It is of international importance for some of the water bird species it supports, is a key spawning ground for several fish species, and a feeding ground for young turtles. This makes it one of the most important areas for conservation. However, the future of these important coastal ecosystems hangs in the balance. Every day a number of direct threats face the forest and creek, in particular illegal logging, poaching, over-fishing, and pressures for land clearance.

Mangroves form a large percentage of Kenya's forest cover, therefore restoration and conservation of this important ecosystem go a long way in contributing to the national target of attaining and maintaining at least 30% tree cover by 2032, to help mitigate the effects of climate change.

The choice by the Board of Directors to get their hands dirty and lead the restoration efforts by example is therefore deliberate and aims to rally every Kenyan to join the Service in tree growing and conservation of our forest resources.



KFS Chairman Mr. Titus Korir and Director Kunal Chowdhari in Gede Creek

International Day For the Conservation Of The Mangrove Ecosystems.



State Department of Forestry Principal Secretary Mr. Mugambi Gitonga during the Mangrove Day tree planting ceremony

By Sylvester Okal

Kenya Forest Service led the nation in marking the International Day for the Conservation of Mangrove Ecosystems in Kwale County on 26th of July. The General Conference of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) proclaimed the day in 2015 due to the concern on the worldwide loss and degradation of mangrove ecosystems. The day is aimed at raising awareness on the importance of mangrove ecosystems as “unique special and vulnerable ecosystems” and to promote solutions for their sustainable management, conservation and uses.

Though marked as an international commemoration, the celebrations in Kenya were led by the Principal Secretary for the State Department of Forestry Mr. Mugambi Gitonga. The PS was joined by the then KFS Board Chairman Mr. Job Chirchir and Her Excellency the Governor of Kwale County Fatuma Achani among other guests.

The PS noted during the celebrations that the local community’s enthusiasm for restoration of the mangrove areas would be backed up by the government through the National Restoration Strategy that had been rolled out to allow for an all year tree growing campaign.

While speaking on the importance of mangroves, PS Mugambi noted that “The mangrove forests and the ecosystem services they provide are key enablers to sustainable development as they serve many important functions, including water filtration, prevention of

coastal erosion, coastal protection from storms, carbon sequestration and storage, food, timber, livelihood provision, and biodiversity protection, among others.”

Mangroves have various adaptations that enable them to cope with the harsh environments that they inhabit including having above-ground breathing roots (pneumatophores), that penetrate the ground at a distance away from the stem (stilt roots) and seeds that turn into seedlings while still attached to the parent tree.

As such they contribute immensely to livelihoods and well-being of the coastal communities especially in providing ecosystem services that underpin fisheries, coastline/shore protection and blue carbon among others, Mangrove ecosystems have been shown to sequester a high amount of carbon up to three to five times more than terrestrial forests.

The event was also attended by members of Parliament from Kwale County, KFS Board members and officers among other government agencies and the local community.



CFA members sorting out seedlings in preparation for Mangrove Day

Parliamentary Committee on Forestry Visits KFS



The Departmental Committee on Environment, Forestry and Mining and KFS Senior Management Team at the Service Headquarters.

By Leakey Sonkoyo

The Departmental Committee on Environment, Forestry and Mining (DCEFM) toured Kenya Forest Service (KFS) as part of their field visit to the public institutions which they oversight.

The Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) Mr. Alex Lemarkoko had the opportunity of hosting the committee led by the Vice Chairman and Member of Parliament for Baringo South Hon. Charles Kamuren during a tree growing exercise in Karura Forest where over 320 seedlings were planted together with members of staff.

Speaking at the tree growing site, the Members of Parliament commended the KFS staff for the work that they do of conserving and protecting forests which they noted were major national resources. They urged the staff to keep up the good work and ensure that the country achieves the envisioned 30% tree cover by 2032.

The Committee then held a meeting together

with members of the senior management where they were informed about the mandate of the Service and the programmes being implemented in order to ensure that forests play their role of anchoring all the major economic sectors of the country.

They also had a candid discussion on the challenges hampering the achievement of the Service's mandate which included inadequate resources to effectively carry out the different forest management activities.

The CCF also informed the Members of the numerous opportunities which include renewed government goodwill for the forestry sector and the launching of the 15 billion tree growing campaign by non-other than His Excellency the President. The campaign will not only see the establishment of 30% tree cover but will also bring with it heavy investment in the sector.

The CCF also informed the Committee about the involvement of the forest adjacent communities through the Community Forest Associations (CFA) which he noted had been a game changer in forest management

in the country. He told the Committee that a good number of corporate organisations and individuals had also joined the Service in the rehabilitation of degraded forest areas through the Adopt-a-Forest initiative.

The Committee Members who also included the Kwale Women Representative Hon. Fatuma Masito, MP for Msambweni Hon. Feisal Bader, MP for Kajiado North Hon. Onesmus Ngogoyo and Hon. Joseph Wainaina who is a nominated MP sought to find out how they can support KFS to achieve her mandate. They agreed that there was need to allocate funds that are commensurate with the programmes being implemented by the Service and promised to lobby for adequate allocation of funds.

They also agreed that the ongoing review of the Forest Conservation and Management Act was timely as it will capture some of the emerging issues in forestry such as carbon trading and clearly define the roles of the various institutions in the forest conservation sector.

Kericho's Forests seek Community Guardianship



State Department of Forestry Principal Secretary Mr Mugambi Gitonga addressing a gathering during a tree planting exercise in Londiani forest station, Kericho County

By Michael Kitum

The CCF, Mr Lemarkoko was speaking during a tree planting exercise in Londiani where he joined the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry Principal Secretaries Mr Mugambi Gitonga (Forestry) and Eng. Festus Ng'eno (Environment & Climate Change), and the Kenya Forest Service (KFS) Board Chairperson Mr Titus Korir. The Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) Mr Alex Lemarkoko sounded a clarion call that highlighted the gravity of the situation of how Kericho's forests ecosystems, the lifeblood of communities, are under siege.

"As KFS continues to lead forest conservation, management and protection, noting immense gains over the past few years in reduction of forest crimes, Kericho County still emerges as a troubling epicentre of forest criminal crisis," noted the CCF.

The CCF further unveiled the stark truth by reading evidence of forest crime reports from the county that pointed to how the gains in forest conservation are slipping away, and strongly urged the audience that the time to act is now.

The alarming statistics revealed a harsh reality that over the past one year, more than 12 brave forest rangers, defenders of our green heritage, faced severe injuries in the line of duty. One among them paralyzed in an unprovoked attack in the Tulwap area within Londiani forest. Four (4) forest ranger outposts, pillars of protection, were also reduced to ashes in a relentless wave of destruction within the same time period.

Kericho, with an estimated tree cover of 23.23% and a total forest cover of 20.61%, finds itself in the clutches of several areas classified 'hostile' zones. These areas include Tulwap and Kedowa in Londiani Forest Station, Mugumoini in Marigat Forest Station, Kalyet, Kamwingi, and Cheres in Soget Forest Station, Gacharage in Kuresoi Forest Station, Kiplochi and Equator in Makutano Forest Station.

Acknowledging Government's support to KFS with an additional recruitment of 2,664 forest rangers, Lemarkoko noted that communities, by all means, must disengage from forest crimes that threaten not only the precious ecosystems but also the safety of those who defend them. He singled out illegal logging, farming on areas not delineated for

non-residential crop production, and the unsettling practice of cattle 'lodging' in the forest where communities sneak cattle into forests overnight, as the leading causes of forest destruction in the county.

Internal strife among community forest association leaders compounds the crisis as trees fall victim to feuds when one party secretly proceeds to destroy the forest to frame the other. Amidst this turmoil, the CCF noted a ray of hope emerging as he singled out Mr Alfred Soi, the present Chairman of Londiani Forest CFA whose relentless passion and leadership he lauded in advancing the rehabilitation of the station while preventing any further degradation.

Kericho's forests, spanning 71,712 hectares comprises South Tinderet, Londiani, Western Mau, and South West Mau. These forests are lifelines, bursting with diverse plant and animal species, and serve as vital water catchment areas, timber sources, and habitats for wildlife. They also serve as essential carbon sinks, purifying the very air we breathe.

In the face of this crisis, the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change & Forestry, KFS, Londiani CFA and the Kenya Forestry College (KFC) undertook a rigorous tree planting exercise where 16,000 seedlings were planted on 10 hectares in Londiani forest.

Within the 15 billion trees planting programme for Kenya to realize 30% tree cover by 2032, Kericho County has the daunting task of planting and ensuring maximum survival of 16 million trees annually for the next decade given its present circumstances. The clock is ticking, and the forests are calling. Will they answer?



Chief Conservator of Forests Mr Alex Lemarkoko speaks during a tree planting exercise in Londiani forest station, Kericho County

Chyulu Redd+ Project Records Success



The Board Members of the Chyulu Hill Conservation Trust and other officers during the Chyulu Redd+ Project Board meeting.

By Leakey Sonkoyo

Kenya Forest Service (KFS) is one of the partners implementing the Chyulu Hills REDD+ Project that aims to stop deforestation, forest degradation and grassland conversion within the Chyulu Hills ecosystem.

As a Board Member of the Chyulu Hills Conservation Trust, The Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) Mr. Alex Lemarkoko participated in a board meeting at Kilaguni in Tsavo West National Park to discuss the ongoing implementation of the project which has received international recognition and good ratings from formal audit reviews by external validators, verifiers and buyers of carbon credits.

As part of his submission to the Board, the CCF urged the Trust to also contribute to the 15 billion tree growing campaign initiated by His Excellency the President through establishing tree nurseries to support the production of seedlings. He said that he was thankful that the board had agreed to set aside funds to raise 10 million seedlings per year. The board also agreed to initiate and carry out tree growing activities within the project area and in the neighbouring areas.

The revenues generated from the project have been instrumental in developing the capacity of the Service to improve the management of Kibwezi Forest which is part of the project accounting area. KFS has been able to acquire a vehicle for Kibwezi Forest Station, improve the Thange Tree nursery infrastructure, refurbish two staff houses and rehabilitate over 90 hectares of degraded areas and riparian zones. KFS has also been able to support the local CFA with 480 beehives

and 60 honey harvesting kits as well as greening nearby institutions through tree geowing.

The other members of the board are the Chairman Mr. Samson Parashina from the County Government of Kajiado, Kenya Wildlife Service DG Dr. Erustus Kanga, local group ranches including Rombo, Imbirikani, Kuku A and Kuku B as well as the Sheldrick Wildlife Trust, Maasai Wilderness Conservation Trust and Biglife Foundation.



The CCF Alex Lemarkoko speaks during the meeting

The CCF joins other members of FSK during the National Scientific Conference in Nanyuki



FSK holds a National Scientific Conference

By Korir Caleb

The Forestry Society of Kenya hosted its 2023 National Scientific Conference and AGM at the Esiankiki Resort & Spa in Nanyuki. A forum for forestry sector professionals. The conference was a platform for professionals, researchers, stakeholders and students from various universities to engage in meaningful discussions, share insights, and collectively address the theme “Forests for the Betterment of Humanity and Climate Change in the 21st Century and Beyond.”

Forests are often referred to as the lungs of the Earth, and Kenya’s rich biodiversity plays a critical role in sustaining life. The forest plays an important role in achieving the national development goal outline in vision 2030. Kenya recognizes that forestry development as one of its flagship projects and with 12.13% tree cover and forest cover of 8.83% the vision will not be attainable.

The conference provided space for the delegates to deliberate on formulation of comprehensive actions plans and policies to increase tree cover to 30% in a decade. The increase of forest cover will go in hand with the government realization of the vision 2030 and bottom-up economic transformation model. The conference noted that by integrating sustainable forest management practices in the national development agenda, Kenya can realize full potential of its natural resource to drive economic growth without damaging the environment.

The 15 billion trees planting government initiative program was the key point as the delegates focus on the potential carbon credits it could generate. As the world experiences challenges brought by climate change, discussions centered on methodologies for accurately measuring and verifying carbon sequestration, as well as the potential economic benefits for the country through participation in carbon markets. The conference underscored the need for a holistic approach that considers both environmental impact and economic sustainability in tree planting initiatives.

The achievement 30% tree cover by 2030 up from the current 12.13% also took the center stage at the conference. This ambitious target by the government reflects its commitment to combat deforestation, promote biodiversity, and mitigate the impacts of climate change. In order to achieve this milestone, it requires a collaborative effort by relevant authorities, stakeholders to enhance production of trees



Members of the Forestry Society of Kenya Plant a tree during Forestry Society of Kenya (FSK) National scientific conference and AGM, Nanyuki

seedlings in terms of quality, quantity and accessibility. The participants deliberated on innovative ways to boost tree seedlings through community based nurseries, and research based programs.

The Principal Secretary (PS) for the state Department of forestry Mr. Gitonga Mugambi highlighted the importance of collaboration between stakeholders and policy makers to achieve the 30% tree cover. He urged collective efforts in monitoring and evaluating the number of trees planted and identified areas that require additional attention. The emphasis on collaboration reflects a recognition that achieving the 30% tree cover goal requires a coordinated approach involving government agencies, stakeholders and local communities.

Chief Conservator of Forest Mr. Alex Lemarkoko, in his opening remarks emphasized the commitment of Kenya forest service and its partners to the conservation and sustainable management of the nation’s forest.

The inclusion of students from diverse universities added a dynamic dimension to the conference. Young minds actively participated in discussions, presenting their research and contributing fresh perspectives to the ongoing discourse. The event provided a valuable opportunity for students to interact with seasoned professionals, fostering mentorship and networking.

In line with government target of achieving 30% tree cover by 2032 and the implementation of the 15 billion trees project, the conference plays a pivotal role in shaping the future of forestry in Kenya.

Chief Conservator of Forests Alex Lemarkoko and Baringo Central MP Hon. Joshua Kandie (both in the middle of crowd during a tree planting at Kabasis Primary School



KFS Promotes Conservation through Athletic Excellence

By Michael Kitum

Kenya Forest Service joined residents of Baringo County for the 3rd edition of the Kirdam Half Marathon, a distinctive event under the theme “Athletics against climate change; an effort to raise awareness of the climate change menace.” The annual event, held under the patronage of Baringo Central Member of Parliament Hon. Joshua Kandie, seamlessly intertwined athletic prowess with a profound emphasis on forest conservation in response to climate change challenges.

In a build-up tree planting exercise organized by the Service in forest ecosystems neighbouring Kabarnet town, the Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) Alex Lemarkoko, lauded Baringo residents for their steadfast commitment to conservation. He particularly highlighted the pivotal role of Community Forest Associations (CFAs) who form the first line of social fences surrounding all forests in the county. Addressing several gatherings during the tree planting, the CCF stressed the significance of conserving water catchment areas through tree growing to foster water security and mitigate the impact of climate change.

The marathon’s theme, ‘Athletics against climate change,’ aligns with the strategic vision of KFS, advocating tree growing as a paramount solution to combat climate change adversities. As a main sponsor, KFS supplied over 40,000 tree seedlings for planting during the preparatory exercises. Mr. Lemarkoko emphasized the multiple benefits derived from conservation of catchment areas, including sustainable water supply, environmental protection, elimination of air pollution, minimized soil erosion, and

enhanced water quality.

Hon. Kandie echoed the advocacy by KFS in promoting a tree growing culture, emphasizing the indispensable role of catchment areas like the Tugen hills forests in sustaining Kirandich’s water supply.

The planting sessions, held at Mosop Conservancy, Kimwochoch Community Conservancy, Kabasis Primary School, and the Kirandich Dam catchment area, witnessed the distribution of tree seedlings to residents by the Service. The event also attracted a German delegation, led by the Mayor of Gersthofen Mr. Michael Woerle, who lauded the global significance of local conservation efforts.

During the marathon event, the Cabinet Secretary for Cooperatives, Micro and Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Development Hon Simon Chelugui emphasized the imperative for personal initiatives, such as community-level tree growing, to counteract the severe effects of climate change facing the country, especially

in arid and semi-arid locations. Attending the Kirdam Half Marathon in Kabarnet, CS Chelugui applauded the Kenya Forest Service for its unwavering commitment to environmental conservation and stressed the importance of planting trees as a key facet in the fight against climate change.

The marathon included a Corporate Race, where the Kenya Forest Service athletic team demonstrated their prowess by securing the top ten positions in the 6kms Corporate Race. This remarkable achievement further underscores the dedication of the Service to environmental causes.

The Kirdam Half Marathon not only promotes physical fitness but also serves as a platform to champion environmental conservation and climate action at the community and corporate levels. The call for tree growing resonates not only locally but aligns with global initiatives, emphasizing the collective responsibility to address climate change for a sustainable future.



Cabinet Secretary for Cooperatives, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Development Hon Simon Chelugui (extreme left) and Baringo County Governor H.E Benjamin Cheboi (Centre) participate in the 3rd edition of Kirdam marathon in Kabarnet.

KFS in CSR Efforts to Support Vulnerable Communities



Staff of Compassionate Hands for Disabled foundation and discipline forces pose for photo with goods and items donated to the foundation, Ruai.

The Kenya Forest Service has spearheaded several impactful corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives aiming to support vulnerable communities across Kenya. As a responsible corporate citizen, KFS frequently engages in outreach efforts to assist disadvantaged groups and give back to society.

In a notable collaboration with Earthlungs NGO, KFS extended assistance to forest adjacent communities affected by floods in the Tana River delta. Marooned households were safely transported to secure locations using boats during a week-long operation. These communities, integral to KFS's efforts in conserving and rehabilitating mangrove ecosystems, were supported with employment opportunities through funding from Earthlungs. As the situation normalized, these communities resumed their crucial roles in forest conservation.

KFS's commitment to community support was further demonstrated through the donation of 14 tonnes of firewood to Shauri Moyo SDA Church in Nairobi. This initiative is part of KFS's ongoing CSR efforts, aimed to contribute to the well-being of the local community. Mr. Paul Musembi, Karura Forester, highlighted that such gestures were consistent with KFS's commitment to giving back. Mr. William Nzioki, a church patron responsible for caring for over 300 vulnerable children, expressed gratitude for the donation, emphasizing its significant impact on their ability to support those in need.

In another remarkable display of compassion, disciplined forces including the Kenya Forest Service, Kenya Police Service, Administration Police Service, Directorate of Criminal Investigation, Kenya Prison Service, Kenya Wildlife Service, and National Youth Service joined hands to support the Compassionate Hands for Disabled Foundation. This foundation, dedicated to improving the lives of children with disabilities, received a substantial donation on November 7, 2023.

While these collective efforts are part of the past, they underscore the shared values of unity and compassion among these disciplined forces. The donation reflected a commitment to making a positive difference in the lives of individuals with disabilities, showcasing the transformative power of collective action.

KFS's consistent engagement in impactful CSR demonstrates its commitment to compassionately serving Kenyan society. Whether assisting victims of natural disasters, disadvantaged children, or the disabled, KFS strives to make a difference through community service.



KFS boats aiding in transporting forest adjacent communities to safer ground in Tana River Delta during floods caused by El-Nino rains



Environment, Climate Change & Forestry CS Hon. Soipan Tuyu cutting a cake during her Birthday Celebration, in Mt. Elgon.



Inspector Daniel Otinga conferred with a new rank during the county's thanksgiving service led by the County Commissioner in Kiambu County.



The newly crowned Mr. and Miss KFS 2024 during the End Year Thanks Giving Service at KFS Headquarters.



KFS officers and a team from Fahari aviation pose with a drone during a flight test exercise in Soysambu conservancy, Gilgil.



Nandi County Governor H.E Stephen Sang joined by The CCF and KFS official during the Devolution Conference tree planting in Uasin Gishu.



The DCCF Beatrice Mbula launches the Participatory Management Plan for Ole Nguvuone Forest in Bomet County.



The KFS Board of Directors being taken through Gede Forest Station tree nursery



Esther Keige, Head of Legal Services joined by Mohammed A. Mohammed, H.O.C Central Highlands during a PFMP launch in Kiambu



KFS Chairman Titus Korir awards Chief Inspector Mathew Chirchir for exceptional performance during Forest Ranger Recruits course.



The CCF Mr Alex Lemarkoko lays a foundation stone during the groundbreaking ceremony of Karura Resource Centre



Kenya Forest Service choir performs during Mashujaa Day celebrations at Yuya Primary School in Trans-Nzoia.

KFS shines in ASK Shows



H.E President William Ruto confers with the CCF Alex Lemarkoko after planting a tree during the opening of the 2023 Nairobi International Trade Fair

Nairobi ASK trade fair theme: "Promoting Climate Smart Agriculture and Trade Initiatives for Sustainable Economic Growth"

By Lydia Ogada

KFS emerged the winner in the Community Projects and Services category after demonstrating strong community collaboration and empowerment initiatives at this year's Nairobi ASK trade fair. Under the theme "Promoting Climate Smart Agriculture and Trade Initiatives for Sustainable Economic Growth" The Service also attained position two and three in interpretation of the current Show theme and Energy Services categories respectively.

The Service was awarded the trophy for this achievement by His Excellency the President Hon Dr. William Ruto during the official opening of the Nairobi International Trade Fair at Jamhuri Park Showground as the president urged the public to take advantage of the expected El Nino rains to grow as many trees as possible towards the achievement of the 30% tree cover by 2032.

The Service recognizes the important role forest adjacent Communities

play in Conservation and Protection of Forest resources. Through Community Forest Associations, KFS has placed communities at the center of its operations and in turn these communities benefit immensely both socially and economically.

At the Mombasa International ASK Show in Mombasa county Kenya Forest Service won the best Energy Services and Conservation Sector Stand. The KFS Stand was able to demonstrate the efforts KFS is undertaking to conserve energy in the country.

Kenya Forest Service also scooped a recognition award for emerging as the second best exhibitor in the "Best Energy Service & Conservation Sector Stand" category at the ASK 2023 Kisumu Regional Show. The Service demonstrated how agroforestry, which includes the establishment of woodlots by farmers, aims to conserve the environment by relieving pressure from over-reliance on public forest ecosystems for fuel wood. At the same time, the KFS stand also showcased different kinds of energy-saving jikos that minimize the waste of fuel wood and encourage efficient use of energy. The Service also highlighted the role it plays in conserving, sustainably managing and protecting forest resources across the country.

This year during the ASK Shows all over the country KFS used the platform to demonstrate the efforts the Service is undertaking towards implementation of the 15 billion tree growing agenda and Conservation, Management and Protection of forests and allied resources which is the Service main mandate. KFS also demonstrated the latest technological inventions and innovations the Service is using to conserve and protect Forests. The Service mandate is aiding in mitigation of climate change, and sustainable economic growth.

Devolved Forestry Function 10 Years Later, a Miss or Gain?



CoG Chairperson H.E Anne Waiguru leading the Devolution tree planting in the Eldoret Arboretum

By: Peter Owino.

The 2023 Devolution Conference held at Eldoret Sports in Uasin Gishu County, under the theme “The Present and The Future”, provided an opportunity to interrogate and reflect on the ten years of devolution. With some of the forestry functions devolved in the 2010 constitution, the Kenya Forest Service participated in the conference as an interested party.

One of the devolved functions under the 2010 constitution is farm forestry. Until 2013, all forestry functions were National Government affairs, when farm forestry extension was devolved to the 47 Counties. Before the 2010 Constitution, Natural resource management in Kenya had mainly been a state affair, with little or no involvement of the local communities and the public in general. Any efforts towards facilitating community participation or inclusion in such management had been peripheral.

The State acted as the custodian of natural resources with the public being expected to receive only accruing benefits if any, without participation in crucial decision-making. Inequitable benefit sharing, exclusion of the poor and the marginalized in the decision-making system, and indiscriminate environmental degradation are some of the features that characterized natural resources management systems in the past. State-centric natural resource management was a result of the colonial legacy. Under this

legacy, the colonial masters had mastered the art of grabbing the natives’ lands and appropriating all the land-related resources such as water, wildlife, forests, and mineral resources for their own benefit.

To date, 36 County Governments have signed the TIPs while 11 are yet to sign the document. However, the implementation of TIPs has remained a challenge, with the adoption and extent of implementation of the devolved farm forestry extension services remaining little known and its impact on rural livelihoods has not been effectively established as well. There is still a need for the County Governments to prioritize budget allocation and have adequate personnel as means to adequately implement the devolved functions and also to implement the Transition Implementation Plan as laid down by the Kenya Forest Service.

It is important to note though that the Kenya Forest Service has continued to work very closely with The County Government, including those that have not signed TIPs. It’s also worth noting that the Counties even those that have not signed TIPs have been engaged in tree growing and afforestation activities, with most practicing urban forestry, with the Service offering technical support whenever it’s needed. Other Counties like Kisumu and Uasin Gishu have established an Arboretum.

The 2023 devolution conference came at a time when Kenya has renewed her efforts towards the fight against climate change, whose negative impacts have been felt across the nation, ranging from extreme droughts

that ravaged the nation last year, to floods and landslides, that have claimed lives and livelihood. One of the mitigation measures that the Government of Kenya has put in place is the commitment to grow 15 billion trees in ten years, an ambitious agenda being spearheaded by none other than the President himself and being implemented by Kenya Forest Service and other Stakeholders.

The Service therefore presented its case, indicating what needs to be done to be able to grow 15 billion trees. First, there needs to be a plan, therefore the Counties need to develop strategic and operational plans that give direction on the development and management of forests and give a projection of resources required within a given timeframe. Secondly, the Counties have to put in place an effective human resource to ensure the successful implementation of the plan and offer necessary technical support.

To grow trees there must be the availability of seedlings and so thirdly and most importantly Counties must develop tree nurseries to produce quality tree seedlings for growing and replanting in harvested and degraded sites, on farms, institutions, and bare community forest land. This is key in any Sustainable Forest Management Program. A number of counties though have developed tree nurseries and the Service commends them.

The Key takeaway from the Devolution Conference 2023, is the need for more concerted efforts from all stakeholders for Kenya to realize her ambitious tree-growing program and increase forest and tree cover in the country for socio-economic and ecological benefits to the people of Kenya. Therefore, there is a need for deliberate efforts by the County Governments to put legal and institutional structures in place and allocate resources for the effective and efficient implementation of TIPs. There is also a need for a strengthened working relationship between KFS and County Governments for enhanced implementation of the TIPs in the County Governments.

KFS remains committed to continuing working and partnering with the devolved governments and other stakeholders to ensure the achievement of growing 15 billion trees by 2032 and the restoration program. This is in line with BETA and the whole-government approach system adopted by the Kenya Kwanza government. The Service also invites every Kenyan and non-state actors to come on board and help achieve the 30% tree cover, to avert the adverse effects of climate change, for the socio-economic good of the nation.

Strategic Plan Re-aligned to National Goals



The Board of Directors poses with the senior management team during the drafting of the strategic plan

By Peter Owino

To do this the Service's top leadership comprising of the Chief Conservator of Forests, Senior Managers from the Headquarters, Regional Forest Conservators, Regional Commandants, and County Forest Conservators took part in a two-day sensitization workshop on Climate Change and National Strategy for Achieving and Maintaining over 30% Tree Cover by 2032 in Naivasha.

The workshop's main objective was to sensitize the team on the enormous task ahead and inculcate team spirit and collective

responsibility towards the achievement of 30% tree cover by 2032. It also sought to sensitize field managers to embrace innovative approaches to improve service delivery and also noted that Forest stations which are the basic operating units of the Service will be strengthened to enhance operations.

The Field Managers were taken through presentations on Climate Change and its different aspects of implementation. The participants were also taken through the online reporting system for seedling production and planting. They identified increased production of seedlings as an area where a lot of emphasis was to be put if the Service was to achieve the task bestowed

upon it. Technological adjustments were another element the senior managers agreed to adopt to help accelerate the tree-growing initiative.

To be able to grow 15 billion trees, an equivalent amount of quality seedlings has to be produced. To do this the Service is undertaking rapid establishment of seedlings in forest regeneration or afforestation sites after planting which is a prerequisite for successful reforestation. The relationship between the quality of the seedling material and their growth and survival after planting has been recognized for decades. Despite the existence of a substantial amount of information on how to produce high-quality seedlings, there is still a need

to develop practices that can be used in nurseries and at planting sites to be able to produce well-growing forest stands in ever-changing environments.

The Cabinet Secretary Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry Hon Soipan Tuya who graced the workshop and addressed the gathering of the Service leadership, implored staff to be accountable and responsible for all forestry activities in their areas of jurisdiction. She urged all staff to be completely committed to providing leadership and coordination at national and county levels, towards achievement of the National Strategy for Achievement of 30% tree cover by 2032. Ms Soipan noted that growing of 15 billion trees would positively impact water flows, food security, and employment creation among other numerous benefits to bolster Kenya's socio-economic development.

On his part, the Principal Secretary, of the State Department of Forestry, Mr Mugambi Gitonga who also attended, noted he was glad to meet field managers and assured them of his unwavering support. He, however, urged the managers to uphold integrity and positively mentor new staff recruits. He also noted the Green Army recruitment process would be a boost to tree-growing and silvicultural activities.

Addressing the workshop, the Chief

Conservator of Forests Mr Alex Lemarkoko thanked the Ministry and Board for supporting the Service and pledged to lead staff in improving service delivery. He also called on Kenyans to support the tree-growing initiative by each individually planting 30 trees a year amounting to 300 trees in 10 years.

The program is being undertaken in all 47 counties nationwide with all stakeholders including community groups, NGOs, Schools, Churches, farmers, and others being called upon to take active participation by raising tree nurseries and planting trees in their compounds and forests.

The KFS Board has gone through the draft Strategic Plan for 2023/2027 for purposes of reviewing it to make sure it aligns with emerging forest management issues and government priorities for the sector.

The Board congratulated the management led by Directorate of Strategy, Partnerships and Resource Mobilization for developing the draft strategy internally using expertise and technical input from within the Service. They pledged full support to the management in the implementation of the strategy. Board members encouraged the management to be courageous and execute their mandate without fear noting that forest management activities were both legal and informed by scientific principles.

As the Board Secretary, the CCF Mr. Alex Lemarkoko assured the Board that the management will input their valuable contributions into the document so that it can help guide the execution of the all the programmes envisioned in the strategy. He pledged to the Board that management and staff of the Service will work hard to actualize the strategic plan.

The Directorate of Strategy, Partnerships and Resource Mobilization led by Senior Deputy CCF Ms Charity Munyasia presented the draft strategy that will guide the Service in the implementation of its programmes in order to achieve its mandate which is to develop and sustainably manage through conservation and rational utilisation of forest resources for the socio-economic development of the country.

The Board noted that there was need to diversify sources of revenue to help in actualizing the strategy including utilising carbon markets to raise resources. The management was also guided to rally all stakeholders to support forest conservation initiatives.

The Board also took the opportunity to bid farewell and congratulate Mr. Peter Leitoro who is proceeding on retirement. The CCF thanked him for his 6 years of service in the KFS Board and over 36 years in the public service.



SDCCF Mr. Peter Waweru making a presentation during the drafting of the Strategic Plan

KFS Scales up Forest Fire Management

By *Leakey Sonkoyo*

Forest fires pose a real threat to the survival of forest ecosystems. Out of the 47 counties in Kenya, 20 of them are classified as having forest fire hotspots and the situation is now being complicated further by the negative effect of climate change.

Over the last decade, the country has recorded 457 major fire incidences that resulted in a loss of 123,812.15 Ha. During the dry period experienced early this year, a total of 180 forest fire incidences totaling 789 ha were reported.

Whenever forest fires occur, they cause serious and irreparable damage to the forest ecosystems including loss of biodiversity, human lives and property. The effects of forest fires are ecologically, socially and economically costly and destructive. All the efforts and achievement in afforestation and conservation can be wiped out within days.

The continued loss of forests over the years are compounded by low institutional capacity of Kenya Forest Service (KFS) to manage forest fires. The Service faces constraints

that include inadequate personnel; inadequate forest fire management skills; outdated technologies in forest fire surveillance, detection and communication and inefficient firefighting equipment and tools among other challenges.

It is for this reason that KFS has established the Capacity Development Project for Modern Technology (CDPMT) in Forest Fire Management in Kenya with bilateral assistance from the Government of France. The aim of project is to respond to threats from forest fires and ultimately contribute to the strategic goal of achieving and maintaining 30% forest cover for environmental stability and socio-economic development of the country.



The CCF Mr. Alex Lemarkoko(2nd left), Forest Fire Project Manager Mr. Patrick Ithinji and Ag. Manager Supply Chain Victor Kobia being shown fire management equipment

The project will among other objectives help us to enhance our institutional capacity to effectively manage forest fires. It will also build the capacities of various stakeholders to operate in an integrated forest fire management system and to enhance the training capacity of the Kenya Forest College (KFC) on forest fire management. The utilisation of advanced technology in fire management will also assist in providing information and data on origin and cause of forest fires which will be instrumental in the prevention of fire incidences.

The Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) Mr. Alex Lemarkoko visited France on a mission to assess the progress of the delivery of various equipment for the project. The visit entailed inspection of various hardware and software including fire detection cameras, integrated surveillance and communication equipment, fire engines and troop carriers among other equipment.

By the end of the project period, the Service will have benefited from installation of a digital radio and video surveillance network for early detection of forest fires and mobilization of fast fire response, the supply of various fire fighting vehicles, specialized forest maintenance vehicles and drones in order to implement effective fire response and the supply of various personal protective equipment and tools to equip fire crews.



KFS Strategizes to Enhance Forest Protection



The CCF and Enforcement and Protection staff members pose for a photo during the Forest Protection Workshop in Naivasha

By Leakey Sonkoyo

Following the passing out and deployment of 2,664 Forest Rangers, all senior forest security officers from the ten conservancies, Forest Law and Enforcement Academy (FoLEA) and Rapid Response Units otherwise known as Rapid Forest Inspection and Protection Units (RFIPU) a workshop to discuss strategies and tactical activities they shall henceforth employ to ensure that forest resources are properly and effectively protected for the benefit of all Kenyans.

This is because of the heightened expectations of Kenyans for KFS to ensure that forests which are the anchor of all key economic sectors including community livelihoods are secure and performing their critical climate stabilisation roles.

While addressing the workshop, the Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) Mr. Alex Lemarkoko informed the officers that there was

increased outcry among the public regarding destruction and encroachment of forests and it was their duty to reverse this situation. Speaking at the same workshop, the Acting Commandant Mr. David Chege also called on the officers to ensure that no forest malpractices take place on their watch.

The forum also discussed Human Rights Based Approaches (HRBA) and the need to involve Community Forest Associations (CFA) in forest protection and management. Technology will also play a big role in enhancing the officers' capability to detect and deter forest offences and natural disasters such as forest fires. The Service is already using the Survey 123 App to report forest incidences and will soon start using drones for surveillance. Among other officers who attended the workshop were the Deputy Commandant Mr. Wilson Leboo and the FoLEA Commanding Officer Mr. Appolinary Mwandighah among other officers.



KFS Co-Hosts Side Event at Africa Climate Summit



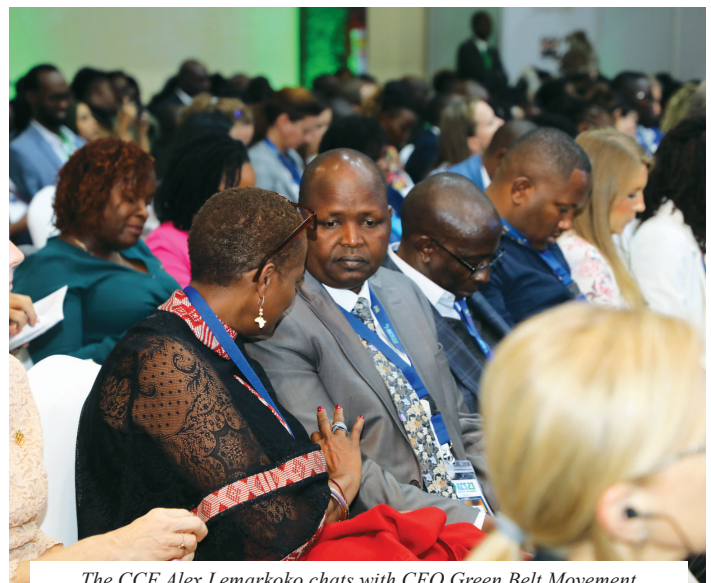
The CCF Alex Lemarkoko with KFS Staff Members.



The CCF Alex Lemarkoko greets CS Ministry of Health Susan Nakhumicha.



Head of Outreach and Liaison Mr. Oscar Simanto takes guests through the KFS Stand.



The CCF Alex Lemarkoko chats with CEO Green Belt Movement Wanjira Mathai.

The demand for data and information from Earth Observation (EO) has tremendously increased with the ultimate goal of supporting effective policy and decision-making processes for sustainable management of forest and allied natural resources. In addition, EO is getting increased appreciation due to its strategic value in the provision of data that addresses conservation challenges, disaster and risk issues, climate change impacts, modelling and prediction of future scenarios as well as other emerging issues.

Various stakeholders presented evidence on how the adoption of technology was contributing to improved forest monitoring and management, as well as nature-based solutions for climate change mitigation and adaptation, not only in Kenya, but also in Africa and around the world at large.

Other participants in the side event included Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry (MECC&F), Directorate of Resource Survey and Remote Sensing (DRSRS), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Mozambique Ministry of Land and Environment.

The KFS presenters included the Head of Outreach and Liaison Mr. Oscar Simanto, the Chief GIS and Remote Sensing Officer Ms. Faith Mutwiri, GEO Database Officer Mr. Richard Mwangi and Climate Change Officer Mr. Peter Sirayo.

KFS undertakes Public Participation on Forest Plantation



A public participation exercise in Nyeri

By Peter Owino

Public participation is a key component in undertaking environmental audits of forest plantation management within specific forest ecosystems. All forest plantations are issued with Environmental Impact Assessment certificates and, hence are required to periodically have environmental audits undertaken.

It is for this reason that Kenya Forest Service hosted Forestry Sector Stakeholders within the Mau Ecosystem, for a Public Participation Meeting, on Environmental Audit on Forest Plantations Management, as is required by law. The nationwide exercise witnessed commercial forestry stakeholders within the Cherangany ecosystem meet in Uasin Gishu County marking the beginning of the exercise.

The commercial forestry approaches adopted by the Service which are transforming the lives of forest-adjacent communities were lauded by a critical mass of participants taking part in an exercise on environmental audit on forest plantations in the Cherangany ecosystem. Noting that the trees are planted by the Kenya Forest Service, saying that the Service should not be stopped from harvesting the same trees.

Forest plantation establishment is entrenched in the Forest Conservation and Management Act 2016 provides that all plantation forests in a public forest shall be managed on a

sustainable basis for the production of wood and other forest products and services for commercial purposes. "Forest plantations are specifically for commercial purposes hence, growing of the crop must be undertaken professionally for optimum benefit, and utilized for the right purposes." emphasized the University of Eldoret don Dr. Bernard Orori Ondengi.

Public participation has been sighted as a key tenet in undertaking environmental audits of forest plantation management within specific forest ecosystems. Noting the uniqueness of each ecosystem and, within the framework consent entered between Kenya Forest Service and the National Environment Management Authority in the year 2014, an agreement was reached, that KFS undertake EIA at the ecosystem level totaling nine ecosystems. These ecosystems include the Cherangany forests, Mau forests, Mt. Elgon forests, Kakamega forests, Aberdare forests, Mt. Kenya forests, Machakos County public forests, Kitui County public forests, and Makuani County Public forests.

Environmental audits are undertaken to establish the impact of outcomes of undertakings in environmental spaces. It is applied to assess the actual impacts of the project activities and the mitigations therein.

The entities included representatives of the County Commissioners and County Governments of Uasin Gishu, Elgeyo Marakwet, West Pokot, and Nakuru County representatives of leaders in the National Assembly and Senate, and Regional Forest

Conservators of North Rift and Mau. Additional stakeholders included the Kenya Police Service, Kenya Wildlife Service, NEMA, Law Society of Kenya, Chairpersons of Community Forest Associations, Forest Station Managers, County Forest Conservators, Director of Public Prosecution, youth representatives, Persons Living with Disability, Timber Manufacturers Association, and Water Resources Authority.

Participants noted multiple benefits that have accrued for communities in matters of plantation forestry. These include improved livelihoods and food security, and benefits accrued from collecting firewood from the non-merchandise parts of harvested trees. They said that it is heart-breaking to see over-mature plantation trees going to waste with diseases, while others are felled by the wind.

The exercise is per the requirement of the law, which stipulates that the audit must be led by an independent auditor for the initial environmental audit. In this case, Mr. Joseph Machua of the Kenya Forestry Research Institute environmental auditors led the process. The stakeholders were stratified into groups that generated information that would be analyzed by the independent environmental auditors, and submitted to the relevant authorities. These processes will lead to KFS being issued with a compliance certificate from NEMA. The meeting in Uasin Gishu was hosted by KFS Regional Forest Conservator Mr. Anthony Musyoka.

GSU Ruiru Camp holds Tree Growing Exercise



In order to achieve the 30% tree cover by 2032, the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry has adopted a whole government all society approach to grow the 15 billion trees required to reach this target. In the spirit of this objective, Cabinet Secretary Hon. Soipan Tuya led a tree growing exercise at General Service Unit (GSU) RECCE Ruiru Camp where over 2,000 assorted indigenous seedlings were planted. Speaking at the event that was hosted by the General Service Unit Commandant Mr. Eliud Lagat, the CS said that scarcity of natural resources had become a security issue. She thanked the GSU for showing leadership in tree growing by having a tree planting programme in all their camps. The CS gave notice to all people illegally residing in forests to move out saying the government will not go back on its commitment to restore the integrity of all forests.

The Principal Secretary for Forestry Mr. Gitonga Mugambi encouraged those present to take up the Presidential challenge of each growing at least 100 trees annually saying this will hasten the achievement of the 30% tree cover before 2032 as envisaged.

While addressing the same gathering CCF Mr. Alex Lemarkoko reiterated the need to secure the country's natural resources and especially forests in order to ensure peace in the country noting that well conserved forests will provide adequate livelihoods for everyone. He assured the CS that KFS was ready to offer technical support to all institutions and individuals participating in tree growing.



Consultative Meeting with Regional Officers

The Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) Mr. Alex Lemarkoko recently held a consultative meeting with Regional Forest Conservators, County Forest Conservator and Regional Commandants to discuss forest conservation and management programmes in their areas. This is following the passing out of 2,664 forest rangers who have been deployed to forest stations country wide. The senior field officers were also briefed of the deployment of the newly employed foresters. The CCF informed them that there were serious concerns about the integrity of forests following increased reports of illegal forest activities. He reiterated His Excellency the President's sentiments during the pass-out parade that culpability in illegal forest activities will not be tolerated. The CCF informed them stern action will be taken on all officers found to be involved in illegal forest activities.

Kenya Volleyball Federation Visits KFS



The Kenya Volleyball Federation (KVF) led by its President Mr. Charles Nyaberi recently paid a visit the Kenya Forest Service (KFS) headquarters to have discussions with the Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) Mr. Alex Lemarkoko on how the two organisations can collaborate to promote forest conservation through sports and especially volleyball which is one of the Kenya's favourite and popular sports.

The KFS Volleyball team is one of the top teams in the league having emerged 6th in last season's tournament. The team also has five players in the national volleyball team adding more prestige to the young team. The KFS Volleyball team has already had an impact in the league through the introduction of a tree planting culture in all tournaments where all teams participate.

The CCF thanked the federation for the visit and for also supporting the KFS team which had made major milestones in the league. He pledged that KFS will continue to support the team and in fact encourage talented young staffers to join the team. They agreed that there was a lot the Federation can do to promote tree growing and especially the 15 billion trees campaign. They further agreed to formulate a framework of collaboration that will guide the promotion of tree growing through sports while at the same time nurturing talents in the game of volleyball.

Thanks Giving for Disciplined Officers

The disciplined forces in Kenya are charged with the critical role of protecting the people and their properties as well as securing key public resources and premises and performing other duties to safeguard the wellbeing of the citizens. These duties as are sometimes fraught with risks and danger and many a times, officers have lost their lives in the line of duty. It is for this reason that all disciplined and uniformed forces gather regularly to thank the Almighty God for their protection and for sustaining their families and loved ones when they are away on duty.

The Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) Mr. Alex Lemarkoko joined fellow Service Commanders for this year's thanks giving service presided over by the Archbishop of Nairobi Metropolitan His Immense Most Rev. Philip Anyolo at the Holy Family Basilica. The message was derived from the Book of Isaiah 43:10 that says; 'Do not fear, for I am with you'. The Archbishop urged officers to be courageous and uphold the virtues of integrity. The Principal Secretary for Correctional Services Ms Salome M. Beacco reminded the officers that their job was a calling and they should give their all in order to live a good legacy. The Inspector General Mr. Japheth Koome also encouraged the officers to be steadfast in their work despite the many challenges.

The disciplined forces include: the Kenya Forest Service, Kenya Police Service, Administration Police Service, Directorate of Criminal Investigation, Kenya Prison Service, Kenya Wildlife Service and the National Youth Service.



YED Foundation to Support Tree Growing



15 billion tree growing campaign that seeks to increase Kenya's tree cover to over 30% by the year 2032.

The Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) Mr. Alex Lemarkoko recently hosted the Youth Empowerment and Development Foundation (YED Foundation) officials for a discussion on how the youth can be involved in the 15 billion tree growing campaign that seeks to increase Kenya's tree cover to over 30% by the year 2032.

The CCF thanked the foundation led by its CEO Mr. Adam Israel for their many youth empowerment programmes which continue to engage youth in meaningful activities geared towards building the nation and deterring them from harmful practices. He welcomed their willingness to be part of the Green Army that will drive the attainment of the Presidential target noting that the youth had the greatest interest in a sustainable environment. He said that the Service was ready and willing to work with individuals and organization that share the same dream of helping the country attain a sustainable forest that will drive the country's social economic development.

Speaking at the event, the CEO informed that CCF that his organization had a lot of experience working with youth, women and people living with disabilities having partnered with a number of public agencies to mobilise their participation in national development activities. He noted that there was a big opportunity for the youth to get involved in the 15 billion tree growing campaign as the youth and women stood to gain most from the programme. The two agreed to form a technical working group that will guide the foundation's involvement in the programme.



CCF meet with UNODC Officials

Officers from the United Nations office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) paid a Courtesy call on the Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) Mr. Alex Lemarkoko in his office at KFS headquarters in Karura. The officers, Baranabas Kibui Gioche and Samantha De Vries, who are Consultants in Environmental Crimes thanked the CCF for the support so far received from his office since the inception of the KFS/UNODC partnership dating back to 2014. They noted that from partnership, a Rapid Reference Guide (RRG) booklet had been developed for Forestry, Wildlife, Fisheries and Marine Crimes for use by prosecutors and investigators across the country.

The team briefed the CCF on their next step in the collaboration journey which includes going round various forest stations to get feedback from the field officers on the level of use and the impact of the RRG on forestry crimes. This, they indicated would inform the areas of improvement and further trainings in the near future.

While thanking the team for the continuous support to the Service on capacity building, the CCF noted that a number of KFS officers had been taken through various capacity building sessions sponsored by UNODC, including the use of the RRG. He also informed the visitors of the employment of 2,664 rangers who he noted had come at the a time when conservation efforts were required most in the country.

According to the CCF, more patrols, surveillance and detection of crimes would be achieved with the doubling of the number of rangers. He however requested the UNODC to consider upscaling capacity building programs for the new rangers for improved work performance

In attendance during the meeting was the Ag. Principal Legal Officer Ms. Laura Yego among other officers.

Kenya Joins the World in Celebrating the Bamboo Day



The Ag. Senior Deputy Chief Conservator of Forests, Strategy, Partnership and Resource Mobilization Ms. Charity Munyasya delivering her speech during the World Bamboo Day Celebrations

By Lydia Ogada

The World Bamboo Day was celebrated at Kanyonga Wetlands, Kyeni South, Embu County. The event was presided over by the Principal Secretary State Department of Forestry Mr. Mugambi Gitonga who was accompanied by the Embu Governor Hon. Cecil Mbarire.

While speaking at the event the PS urged the people of Embu and the public at large to continue planting trees in support of the 15 Billion trees growing campaign and to help avert the effects of climate change.

The Chief Conservator of Forests Mr. Alex Lemarkoko was represented in the event by the Ag. Senior Director Chief Conservator of Forests, Strategy, Partnerships and Resource Mobilization Ms. Charity Munyasya.

The World bamboo day is celebrated on 18th September every year and is a celebration of one of the most versatile and sustainable natural resources on the planet that is the bamboo. This year's theme was bamboo for sustainable wetland and Climate Change mitigation.

The World Bamboo Day serves as a platform for Kenya to raise

global awareness about its commitment to sustainable practices and environmental stewardship. By actively participating in this international event, Kenya showcases its dedication to addressing environmental challenges and promoting sustainable development. This engagement can lead to valuable partnerships, knowledge sharing, and collaboration with other nations that share similar goals in the bamboo sector.

The choice of Kanyonga Wetland in Embu County as the location for the national celebrations is symbolic. It underscores the pivotal role bamboo plays in the conservation of critical water sources, which are vital for both environmental sustainability and human well-being. Bamboo's ability to reduce soil erosion, stabilize water catchment areas, and contribute to watershed management exemplifies its importance in preserving these essential resources.

“Operation Imarisha Misitu Campaign” Boosts Forest Protection



By Wilson Leboo

The Directorate of Forest Protection and Security is mandated to protect approximately 2.61 million hectares of gazette public forests, secure corporate assets, and also support County government forests in forest protection. To achieve this mandate, the Directorate is required to have an establishment of 5,000 forest law enforcement personnel as well as leveraging with appropriate technology. Over a period of years, Kenya Forest Service (KFS) experienced an acute dwindling number of its law enforcement officers and was operating with only 2,300 forest rangers by the beginning of the year 2023 thus limiting the Directorate in achieving its mandate.

The Government saw this gap and His Excellency the President Dr. William Ruto directed the immediate recruitment of 2,700 Forest Rangers and 600 Forest Officers to drive the Government’s agenda to increase Kenya’s forest cover to more than 30 percent by 2032. This led to the recruitment, training,

and deployment of two thousand six hundred and sixty-four (2664) additional forest rangers in 2023.

The deployment of these new forest rangers was a blessing to the Kenya Forest Service and forest sector at large. The Chief Conservator of Forests took this advantage and initiated a six (6) months country-wide forest operation dubbed “Operation Imarisha Misitu Campaign” from 30th October 2023 to 30th April 2024.

This operation’s main goal is to; eradicate all unlawful human activities in all public and community forests in the Country which range from unauthorized harvesting of forest exotic plantation, charcoal making, unregulated fuelwood collection, encroachment, and illegal cultivation against PELIS guidelines, illegal logging of indigenous trees for posts, poles, timber and carvings among others.

Since the inception of the operation, KFS has witnessed a significant reduction in forest related crimes countrywide. The achievements so far recorded include 706 suspects arrested/prosecuted, seizure of the

following; 13 tonnes of timber, 32 motor vehicles, 35 motorcycles, 11 power saws, 10,446 cedar posts (from both public and community forests), 806 cows, and over 10,000 hectares of land recovered from illegal settlement.

The main hotspots for Illegal cultivation, illegal settlement and illegal grazing have been in Kericho, Bomet, and Narok in Mau forest complex, Cheptais, Kaberua, Kaboywo and Sossio in Mt Elgon forest ecosystem, and Embombut, Chesoi, Kapolet and Lelan in Cherangany forest ecosystem.

The recovery of forest land and keeping forest offenders away from the forest was not a walk in the park, but it was met with a lot of resistance from some sections of the local community, resulting in some of our forest rangers being physically assaulted leaving them with lifelong injuries and psychological traumas. The Government, KFS Board, and Chief Conservator have been providing full support to our gallant soldiers in their job performance.

Importance of Wetland Plants with Medicinal Properties in Kenya

By Dr. Benjamin Kinyili

The significance of wetlands in providing ecological, environmental and socio-economic, benefits is critical. Wetland also double as reservoir for plant biodiversity and preserving important plant genetic resources. While the role of wetlands in plant diversity conservation has continued to be advocated, fewer studies are dedicated to understanding the importance of plant biodiversity in wetlands of Kenya. Moreover, utilization of medicinal plants from wild is receiving more attention and wetland roles continue to be emphasized. Ethnopharmacognosy / Ethnopharmacology is the study of medicines derived from naturally occurring substances like plants and fungi that have been traditionally used by specific groups of people for medicinal purposes. Ethnopharmacology and herbal medicines from the wild including in wetlands are being recommended and promoted as herbal remedies for a number of diseases especially in rural areas where conventional medicines are expensive and out of reach of many folks. This is particularly true in many parts of rural Kenya including those areas near wetlands. However, there is paucity of studies in medicinal plants in wetlands of Kenya. Therefore, there is need to document medicinal plant species in the wetlands of Kenya.

Wetlands are defined by Ramsar Convention as an “areas of marsh, fen peatland or water, whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt including areas of marine water, the depth of which at low tide does not exceed six meters. These areas include lands that are permanently or occasionally waterlogged with fresh, saline, brackish or marine waters at a depth not exceeding six meters. These areas may incorporate riparian and coastal zones adjacent to the wetlands, and islands or bodies of marine water deeper than six metres at low tide lying within the wetlands”. Thus, wetlands exist in the forms of bogs, floodplains, marshes, shallow lakes, swamps, ox-bow lakes as well as river meanders which support plant growth.

In Kenya the definition of wetlands considers it as “areas of land that are permanently, seasonally or occasionally waterlogged with fresh, saline, brackish or marine waters, including both natural and man-made areas

that support plants and animals. The size of wetlands in Kenya is estimated to cover between 3 to 6% of the landmass 14,000 km² (140,000 Ha.). Based on the Ramsar convention, wetlands in Kenya can either be inland, marine or coastal with some man-made wetlands also considered. The inland wetlands are the riverine and lacustrine, palustrine while the marine wetlands in estuaries.

Wetlands in Kenya are classified based on size and the larger wetlands include wide range of lakes such as L. Amboseli L. Baringo, L. Chala, L. Elementaita, L. Jipe, L. Kanyaboli, L. Magadi, L. Naivasha, L. Nakuru, L. Ol’Bolossat as well as the near the edges of L. Victoria. There are also notable swamps in Kenya such as Lorian, Saiwa, Shompole and Yala. Coastal wetlands are mangroves swamps, sea grassbeds and coral reefs. Numerous man-made wetlands in Kenya occur in Mwea, Ahero, Bunyala irrigation schemes as well as in Kenya hydroelectric power stations located in Gitaru, Masinga, Kamburu, Kiambere Kindaruma, Sagana, and the Grand Falls Mutonga.

Most of medicinal plants in wetlands belong to the family Fabaceae, Asteraceae, Euphorbiaceae and Lamiaceae. The most commonly used part of the plants are roots, stems, leaves and branches. Undertaking a comprehensive inventory study of wetland medicinal plants is recommended as a strategy to provide information that would encourage conservation of wetlands as potential source of medicinal plants.

In Kenya it was found out that roots, stems, leaves and branches were the commonest part of the tree used in medicinal treatments. The use of roots and leaves may be due to their pharmacological properties and ease of collection. However, harvesting of roots of the plants may lead to destruction of the plants. Therefore, there is need to conduct research and establish other parts of the plants containing active phytochemical compounds and which can be harvested without destroying the entire plant.

The wild medicinal plants from the Kenyan



wetlands have shown strong tendency to manage diarrhea, general ailments, fever, chest problems, eye problem, typhoid and asthma. There were several diseases that these species may treat but limited research was encountered in this realm. However, these diseases are just based on general surveys elsewhere and the diseases they treat. Therefore, there is a need for additional research and studies on ailments treated by the Kenyan wetland medicinal plants.

In conclusion the wetlands of Kenya contain high diversity of wild medicinal plants. The full inventories of medicinal plants in Kenya are however lacking and this is an area neglected in research. This calls for more research undertakings on the complete wild medicinal inventories of the Kenya wetlands, as well as developing exploitation index to analyze the status of medicinal plants of the wetlands. In undertaking a comprehensive inventory of wild wetland medicinal plants is crucial to obtain a database and information from which future studies can be pegged.

The threats of overexploitation of the wild medicinal plants, due to the relatively low numbers of the species compared to many studies on medicinal plants in Kenya, may point to the need to protect these plants from overexploitation. This can be achieved through sustainability in the use of the plant resource where the plants may be integrated with other wetland resource and advancing their use for alternative livelihoods for wetland adjacent dwellers. Education to the local community on threats and the need for conservation of the wild wetland plants is highly encouraged.

Building Capacity in Tree Ring Science



Trainees in the Africa Dendrochronological Field School 2023 in Kitiwe Zambia

By Ms. Eunice Maina

The African Dendrochronology field school took place in Copperbelt University Kitwe, Zambia on 24th July- 2nd August, 2023. The Kenya Forest Service benefited in this training being the third training on tree-ring science that was provided on the continent of Africa. The training aimed to impart basic scientific knowledge to participants on the techniques and application of tree-ring science to understand and solve various environmental problems affecting the forests. The training focused on building skills in sample collection, preparation, and tree-ring measurements, cross dating, chronology building, and interpretation of results. The expected result of the training was that the trainees will be able to apply tree-ring science to construct climate trends, estimate forest's productivity, and determine pollution patterns associated with various activities.

The Copperbelt University in collaboration with Indiana State University, Brigham Young University, University of Cambridge, Association for Tree-ring Research, Cybis Elektronik & Data AB, and Past Global Changes are the lead organizing team of the training in tree-ring science and its applications in Africa. The training is done annually for capacity building enrichment to the beneficiaries of the Natural Resource utilization and sustainable Management in Africa.

The training provides a platform for researchers from around the globe to interact and create network. Participants gained knowledge from experienced scientists from around the globe. The training enabled participants to explore new approaches to multi-disciplinary research. It was research based and the output will be published which will be used as bases for proposals to funding agencies.

The training provided a hands-on learning

environment, transferring skills that can immediately be used in individual projects after the training. To the forest managers the training enhanced tree data collection techniques to address the biomass estimation and environmental change effect on the tree hence affecting the carbon sequestration.

The Kenya Forest Service has document and published biomass estimation field manuals; Field Manual for Biophysical Forest Resources Assessment in Kenya (2016) and Technical Guide for Establishing Permanent Sample Plots and Monitoring Above Ground Biomass in Kenya's

Woodlands (2020). The manuals address the biomass estimation in woodland and high mountainous forest. The Dendrochronology science comes in handy for value addition in the tree data type and further analysis on amount of carbon accumulation per tree species annually.

This will benefit our natural forest ecosystem which has different mixed indigenous species that sequester a lot of carbon. The science can as well help in assisting the value of each tree in our ecosystem in relation to carbon sink annually. The science can show us more than just the age of trees where effects of climate change per tree species can be analyzed due to its effect on a glimpse into past climatic conditions.

In temperate zones, one year of growth will equal one tree ring. A wet growing season makes a wider ring, while a dry growing season makes a narrower ring. This informs the forest management apart from tree species site matching which tree species to plant and the survival rate and predictions of carbon sequestering in a given period. The data can be used to produce predictions maps in natural forest per specific tree species, which uses tree rings to their exact year of formation to analyse temporal and spatial patterns of processes in the physical and cultural sciences.

The training of trainer (ToT) expertise acquired form the Dendrochronology training can be used to train our forest managers, the forest oriented researches, and proposal writing for project supports to our Forest Resources Management by funding agencies.

Empowering Communities through Sustainable Farming: Success stories from Greenzones Development Support Project Phase II



The ADB Mission team, GZDSP II Project Manager Jerome Mwanza, KFS Staff and Uplands Mushroom Growers group in Uplands forest station in Kiambu County

By Irene Chepnetich

In an effort to combine environmental conservation with community empowerment, the Greenzones Development Support Project Phase II, jointly funded by the Government of Kenya and the African Development Bank (AfDB), has become a beacon of success. Operating in 15 counties across Kenya, the project is championing sustainable agricultural practices while empowering forest adjacent communities.

During a supervisory mission led by Mr. Onesmus Maina, the ADB team, including Ms. Kalekye Mwau and Ms. Winnie Wairimu, witnessed firsthand the tangible outcomes of the project's initiatives. The success stories are particularly evident in collaborations with community groups such as the Uplands Mushroom Growers and the Shalom self-help group.

The Uplands Mushroom Growers, part of the larger Uplands Community Forest Association, have reaped sustainable income through mushroom farming with the support of the project. With three established mushroom farms, the project has not only provided economic opportunities but has also ensured the sustainability of these ventures through training of the group by Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT).

A distinctive feature of the project is its emphasis on community-driven initiatives. Communities under community forest associations, draft business plans for activities they wish to undertake, ensuring that they receive funding to implement their chosen projects. Mushroom farming, identified as a focal point for the Uplands Mushroom Growers, serves not only as a crucial food source but also as a means of generating income. This community-centric approach reflects a commitment to responsible agricultural practices, ensuring the long-term success of the Uplands mushroom growers.

The collaboration extends to the Shalom self-help group, which aligns with the project's objectives of sustainable forest management. The group focuses on briquette production, providing an alternative energy source that reduces reliance on

charcoal and firewood. This not only contributes to sustainable forest management but also addresses energy challenges within the communities, showcasing the project's holistic impact on both the environment and livelihoods.

The supervisory mission team visited locations that have been transformed by the Project's community-centered approach. At the Karura Resource Centre, the Dundori Horticulture Group, and a PELIS site in Kinale, the mission witnessed firsthand what happens when communities are given agency over their livelihoods. They gain the capacity to sustainably manage their forests, farms, and futures.

The GZDSP Phase II demonstrates that when communities are equipped with resources and knowledge, they can create lasting change from the ground up. The Project's remarkable outcomes show that empowering local communities unlocks potential.

A member of the Shalom Self Help Group demonstrating the Briquette making process to the ADB Mission team



Harnessing Solar Power for Conservation



Bomet County Commissioner Dr. Ahmed Omar, GZDSP II Project Manager Mr. Jerome Mwanzia, Bomet local leaders and stakeholders during an Environmental Impact Assessment workshop in Bomet County.

Green Zones Development Support Project Phase II, undertook groundbreaking projects centered on the installation of solar-powered electric fences in a move to protect and revitalize Kenya's forest ecosystems. These initiatives not only aim to counter environmental degradation but also actively involve local communities in sustainable practices. Public Participation exercises were carried out in Nakuru and Bomet counties in order to gather sentiments from the forest adjacent communities. The goal was to find a balance between conservation needs and community welfare.

Menengai Forest, covering an area of 6,018.9 hectares is part of the fencing project. In the past, the forest has faced persistent degradation, primarily stemming from illicit activities such as illegal logging, charcoal production, encroachment and unrestricted human and livestock movement through its expanse.

Public gatherings, known as barazas, were strategically held in Kipngochek and Mutukanio locations where community members received detailed insights into the proposed solar-powered electric fence, with assurances that the barrier would safeguard against wildlife threats while posing no harm to humans.

Communities living in proximity to the forest expressed agreement with the proposed fence. Their anticipation of various benefits, both for their families and the rehabilitation of Menengai Forest, underscored the success of the public participation exercise. Notably, key figures such as Area Chiefs, Environmental Social Impact Assessment experts, Kenya Forest staff, and local law enforcement actively engaged in these discussions.

Similarly in Bomet County, the Project laid out plans to regenerate the degraded Siongiroyi Forest block through a 20km solar-powered fence around the 871-hectare area with the aim of facilitating its regeneration and rehabilitation.

Before implementation, an in-depth Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process was held in a workshop led by Environmental impact assessment experts, Mr. Benedict Omondi and an EIA expert from Kenya Wildlife Services, Mr. Peter Mwangi.



A public participation Exercise held in Menengai Forest Station

Engagement with communities was also a leeway to educate communities on sustainable practices in conservation. The sessions emphasized the roles of energy-efficient technologies, such as the Kuni Mbili Jikos, in reducing dependence on firewood. Community members were also encouraged to register as members of community forest associations so as to fully benefit from forest resources.

Public barazas organized in Kaptunoi, Siongiroyi, Kamegunyet, Kipchumbe, and Lelbarak became platforms for locals to express their support for the project. Recognizing the potential benefits for the environment and their livelihoods, communities welcomed the proposal, paving the way for a sustainable future.

Key stakeholders involved in the proposed project include representatives from the Kenya Wildlife Service, Nema, Kenya Prisons, Ngao representatives, County Commissioners, Community Forest Associations (CFAs), Friends of Menengai Trust, the National Lands Commissioner, Kenya Meteorological Services, Water Service Providers, and other Kenya Forest Service staff.

Role of Forest Policy and Legislation in Enhancing Commercial Forestry in Kenya



By Dr. Benjamin Kinyili

Kenya is endowed with diverse forests that play a crucial role in supporting local economies, providing forest products, and sustaining livelihoods. The forest sector's performance is closely tied to effective governance, encompassing policy, legislation, and institutional arrangements. The evolution of Kenya's forest legislation reflects the need for conservation and sustainable management.

Historically, the forest sector focused on timber production, leading to the formulation of the Timber Act (1972) and Forest Act (2005). However, recognizing the need for conservation and sustainable management, the Forest Conservation and Management Act (FCMA) (No. 34 of 2016) replaced the Forest Act (2005). The FCMA outlines guidelines for sustainable forest management, designating the Kenya Forest Service (KFS) as responsible for public forest management, including commercial activities.

The Kenya Forest Act (2005), effective from February 1, 2007, established the KFS to manage and protect forests. Innovative provisions in the Act emphasized partnerships, community engagement, and private investment. Notably, the Act recognized forest community associations (CFAs) as partners in forest management,

encouraging leasing of commercial plantations to supplement government efforts. The FCMA of 2016 builds on these principles, enhancing the availability of timber and other forest products for domestic use and export.

The FCMA designates KFS to manage public forests, emphasizing commercial production. The Act allows KFS to issue licenses, leases, and concessions for forest management, fostering partnerships with interested individuals or groups. Part 6 of the Act emphasizes benefit sharing, ensuring that local communities gain infrastructure, employment, and other amenities from forest resource investments. Additionally, the FCMA provides tax and monetary incentives to promote forestry investment, address degradation, and encourage sustainable practices.

The Kenya Forest Policy focuses on managing forests and tree resources to meet societal demands while ensuring sustainability. It addresses biodiversity conservation, wood production, and watershed protection. Recognizing past shortcomings, the policy advocates for Participatory Forest Management (PFM) to involve local communities in sustainable resource management. It encourages private sector investments in gazetted forest reserves and led to the establishment of the KFS and Community Forest Associations.

Kenya's forest policies shape the future of forestry, addressing the balance between

public and private goals. Policies and laws are essential to minimize conflicts, employing various instruments, including social services, laws, and economic incentives, to influence behavior. The forest sector has seen donor-promoted participation, recognition of local needs, and attempts to align policies with national and grassroots requirements. Effective implementation necessitates political commitment, increased budget allocations, and stakeholder involvement in policy processes.

To maximize the impact of forest policies, political commitment and increased budget allocations are essential. Stakeholder involvement in policy processes should be formalized, requiring a shift in attitudes and a willingness to address institutional reforms. Transparency in data collection and dissemination is crucial to avoid policy failures based on inadequate information. A purposeful approach to data collection, generation of relevant information, and robust monitoring systems are imperative for successful forest governance.

In conclusion, Kenya's journey in forest governance involves adapting policies to address historical imbalances, encourage sustainability, and incorporate local perspectives. The success of these endeavors relies on a holistic approach, combining legal frameworks, participatory processes, and continuous adaptation informed by accurate information.

The Journey of Technology in Transforming Kenya's Forestry Sector



In the face of escalating threats to Kenya's rich ecosystems, the forestry sector is at a critical crossroads. A confluence of challenges, including the global Climate change, habitat loss, and the menace of illegal activities such as illegal logging, this confluence of challenges demands urgent attention. However, emerging as a beacon of hope, Forest Information Management technology (FIS) takes center stage in the effective management of these forestry treasures. This pivotal role is evident as Geographic Information System (GIS) seamlessly integrates into the landscape, providing detailed maps for insightful analysis. The application of GIS extends beyond mere mapping; it facilitates strategic decision-making and plays a crucial role in forest zoning—identifying areas earmarked for high conservation and sustainable use. This sophisticated mapping not only paints a vivid picture of Kenya's diverse forests but sets the stage for informed and strategic forestry management.

Elevating the Mapping narrative to new heights, the story unfolds with a journey into the skies, where remote sensing technology becomes a guardian of Kenya's canopies. Aerial surveys, in real-time, provide a dynamic perspective on forest cover. The prowess of remote sensing extends beyond observation, actively monitoring changes, detecting illegal activities and relaying the information in real-time, and assessing the overall health of the Forest ecosystems. The technology's ability to capture high-resolution images enables the pinpointing of areas requiring immediate attention

and intervention. As the narrative unfolds further, the real-time capabilities of GIS come to the forefront, allowing for swift detection of deforestation and fostering patrols and precise action from the Forest Rangers. Empowering authorities, GIS ensures immediate action to protect the forests, targeting logging hotspots with precision interventions to curb illegal activities and preserve the ecological integrity of Kenya's invaluable forested landscapes.

The narrative takes a nuanced turn as GIS steps into the realm of sustainable forest management. Within this paradigm, GIS becomes a planning ally, guiding responsible harvesting strategies that strike a balance between economic needs and ecological preservation. Harvesting quotas, informed by GIS data, ensure that only mature plantations are harvested and practices remain sustainable, thus safeguarding the longevity of Kenya's forests. The story ventures deeper into the heart of biodiversity conservation, revealing GIS's instrumental role in identifying hotspots and highlighting critical areas for protection and rehabilitation in view of this, restoration Maps come into play allowing the Forest Managers to be eternally vigilant and keep track of the restoration process, GIS aids in monitoring and safeguarding vulnerable fauna. The narrative pivots towards the involvement of local communities, portraying GIS as a tool for empowerment and participation. Valuable local insights contribute to decision-making, and community-based monitoring initiatives actively involve residents in protecting their forests, fostering a sense of shared responsibility for the well-being of Kenya's natural treasures.

FOREST COVER CHANGE IN MAKUTANO FOREST STATION

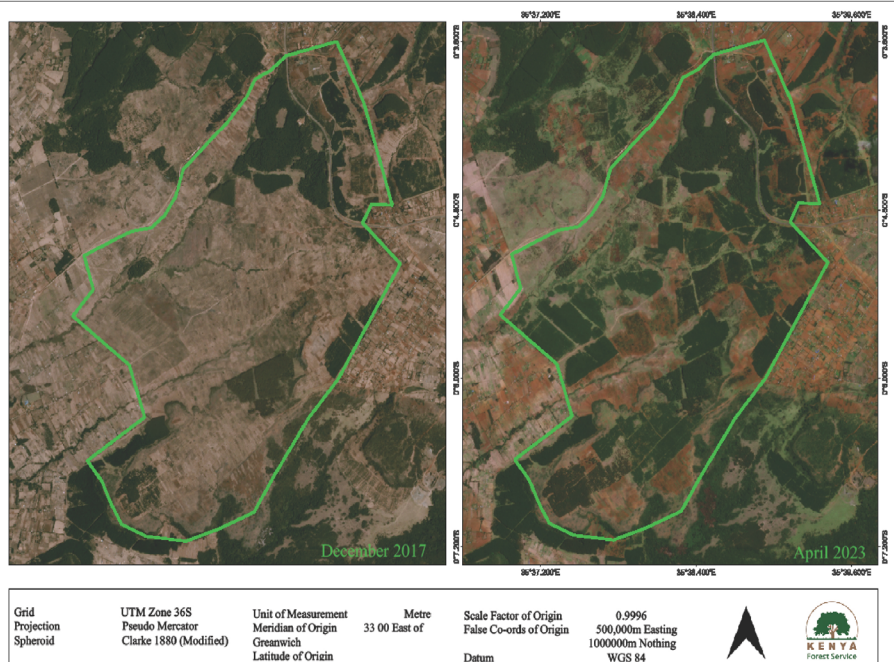


Figure 1 Satellite Map of Kiptunga Forest

Safeguarding Lives on the Road: A Call for Action

By: Dr. Benjamin Kinyili

As members of the Kenya Forest Service (KFS) community, we are deeply saddened by the countless lives lost on our roads due to preventable accidents. We are confronted with a stark reality of the rising number of road accidents annually which has become an undeniable and concerning fact. Globally, road accidents claim 1.3 million lives annually, with an additional 50 million people suffering injuries. Shockingly, this makes road accidents the leading cause of death among young individuals and children.

The grim truth is that over 80% of these incidents are behavior-related, stemming from issues like speeding, drunk driving, reckless overtaking, overlapping, non-utilization of seatbelts, and driving while using phones or headphones. Many of these tragedies are entirely avoidable, and it is our collective responsibility to reverse these alarming statistics.

Road Traffic Injuries (RTIs) rank among the top ten leading causes of death worldwide, impacting the economic wellbeing and macroeconomic performance of nations. Annually, they cause over 1.35 million deaths and affect 20-50 million individuals, a significant portion of whom constitute the economically active population. Annually, in Kenya, an estimated 4,000 lives are lost, and many more individuals suffer severe injuries. Beyond the human toll, the economic cost to our nation is staggering, amounting to 3-5% of the GDP each year.

In response to this critical issue, the Kenya Forest Service Road Safety Committee urges all readers to prioritize safety while driving. It is our collective responsibility to reverse these alarming statistics and create a safer environment for everyone on the roads. This committee serves as a driving force to integrate road safety into our organizational culture and, by extension, the nation.

In the pursuit of safer roads, it is crucial to acknowledge the role of the National Transport and Safety Authority (NTSA), the lead agency with the responsibility for supporting all aspects of this essential road safety governance mechanism. The NTSA plays a pivotal role in coordinating efforts, implementing policies, and fostering collaboration among various stakeholders to enhance road safety.

In response to this critical issue, the Kenya Forest Service Road Safety Committee urges all readers to prioritize safety while driving. Committed management of road safety within government institutions will ensure coordinated efforts to reduce the risk of workplace road traffic crashes and collisions.

Ministries, County, Departments and Agencies (MCDAs) including KFS, have constituted Road Safety Committees to steer road safety mainstreaming. These committees play a vital role in sensitizing all staff members on road safety and ensuring that road safety issues become an integral part of Government business, policies, and objectives.

The objectives of these committees include providing a framework for the mainstreaming of road safety, reducing the number of road traffic crashes and injuries involving public sector employees, enhancing compliance with traffic laws, promoting a culture of safe driving, reducing costs associated with road accidents, and providing effective tools for workplace road safety monitoring.

Some road safety tips and pointers for effective driving include obeying speed limits, Avoiding distractions, buckling up, not driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Now, let's focus on what each of us can do to contribute to road safety. As drivers, passengers, and pedestrians, we all play a crucial role in ensuring our safety on the roads. Follow Traffic Rules: Obey traffic signals, signs, and rules. Yield the right of way when required, and be courteous to other road users.

Maintain Your Vehicle: Regularly check and maintain your vehicle, including brakes, tires, lights, and fluids. A well-maintained vehicle is less likely to experience mechanical failures that could lead to accidents. We should also learn to be mindful of pedestrians, use turn signals, staying alert and rested, learning to adapt to weather conditions

As we embark on this journey into 2024, we acknowledge the timeliness of our message. The festivities, often marked by joyous celebrations, can also bring increased traffic and heightened risks on the roads. As we reflect on the revelries of the past season, let's carry forward the spirit of responsibility into our daily lives. Road safety is not a seasonal concern—it's a year-round commitment that transcends festivities. By adhering to these road safety tips and pointers, you actively contribute to a safer and more secure environment for everyone on the roads.

While the current state of road safety may present a challenging scenario, it is crucial to recognize that positive change is not only possible but within our collective grasp. It's a journey that starts with each one of us toward a future where road safety is a shared priority.

Each sensible choice on the road is a step towards making our roads safer for everyone. Your commitment to cautious driving today shapes a secure future for all and makes you a part of the global movement for safer roads. Drive responsibly, arrive safely, and let the echoes of our collective actions resonate throughout the year.



KFS Benefits from Global Monitoring for Environment and Security and Africa (GMES & Africa)



By Eunice Maina

The First GMSE & Africa Phase 2 Forum was held in Shem El Sheikh, Egypt on 27th – 30th November 2023. The Kenya Forest Service participated as a platform of diverse invited participants with a view to enhance and integrate Earth Observation (EO) services for the socio-economic development. GMES & Africa has been delivering on its Pan African mandate of strengthening the capacities of African institutions with the required resources for access to and exploitation of Earth Observation-based services, particularly in the Water and Natural Resources, and Marine and Coastal Areas domains. This is in line with the AU Agenda 2063 and the African Space Policy and Strategy that advocate for the promotion of environmentally sustainable and climate resilient economies and communities.

The GMES & Africa through the IGAD Climate Prediction and Applications Centre (ICPAC) Consortium initiative, has been providing information to key stakeholders

including policy makers, scientists, businesses, academia and end users, through consortia of institutions implementing EO services and natural resource management projects across the five regions of Africa. Once every two (2) years, GMES & Africa brings all its stakeholders together through a forum.

The congregation comprised the policy makers, scientists, academicians, user communities, to contribute in enriching the EO services. AUC sponsored some delegates while consortia sponsored participation of partners and associates, including the students that have benefitted from the scholarships. AU Member States, Regional Economic Communities, the African Union Commission; the European Commission, regional and international institutions, Non-governmental organizations and the United Nations system were among the participants.

The following were the recommendation and proposals for the service;

GMES & Africa Services and products have provided scientific and strategic basis

for decision making and policy direction in Kenya across sectors supporting the BETA (Bottom up Economy Transformation Agenda) by Government of Kenya.

There is need for GMES program to continue bringing together decision and policy makers for enhanced ownership of its services and products for mainstreaming across MCDAs (Ministries, Counties, Departments and Agencies) as decision making tool.

Through the Forest Conservation and Management theme the EO data satellite and Carbon Sequestration data required will be accessible through ICPAC Consortia where the product will be Forest Cover maps, Tree Cover and Forest degradation maps. This will contribute to policy on National tree growing program to attain 15B tree growing by 2032, the forest conservation and management will be enhanced.

KFS will access the Regional Centers on processing of Sentinel data via the eStation/Climate Station by ICPAC. Collaboration between ICPAC and KFS will be established for effective data access and sharing

Trends and Drivers of Private Financing in Forestry



By *Tabitha M. Kimeu*

Forests are vital pillars of the ecological and economic vitality of Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). As home to over 635 million hectares of forest cover, the African continent harbors immense potential within its forestry sector to drive sustainable development and support millions of livelihoods that depend on forest resources.

However, despite this promise, the forestry sector in SSA faces a substantial financing gap between the financial needs for sustainable management and value addition, and the available public sector resources. Private financing remains relatively limited, posing a significant challenge to unlocking the full potential of the sector.

In Kenya, the Timber Manufacturers Association reports a thriving sawmilling industry heavily reliant on wood from public plantations and private farms. Approximately 80% of raw materials are sourced from public forests, while private tree growers contribute the remaining 20%. This dependence highlights the immense value derived from both public and private forestry resources.

The sector sees an estimated annual turnover of 27 billion Kenyan Shillings, demonstrating the potential economic gains if properly managed and financed.

However, numerous systemic and structural challenges continue to hinder long-term private investments into forestry development across SSA. These include issues such as unclear land tenure regimes, pervasive poverty among forest-adjacent communities, corruption, inadequate infrastructure to transport and process forest products, scarcity of technically skilled workers, and an overall weak enabling environment for businesses. Additionally, limited data and information availability on specific forest resources and potential investment opportunities also constrains investors by increasing costs and uncertainty.

The constraints in stimulating private sector financing for forestry in SSA are further compounded by additional factors. These include limited domestic investment, where only a handful of countries have seen significant private capital deployment into plantations and processing. The real and perceived risks of investing in African forests also pose a key deterrent, given weak availability of both local and foreign equity

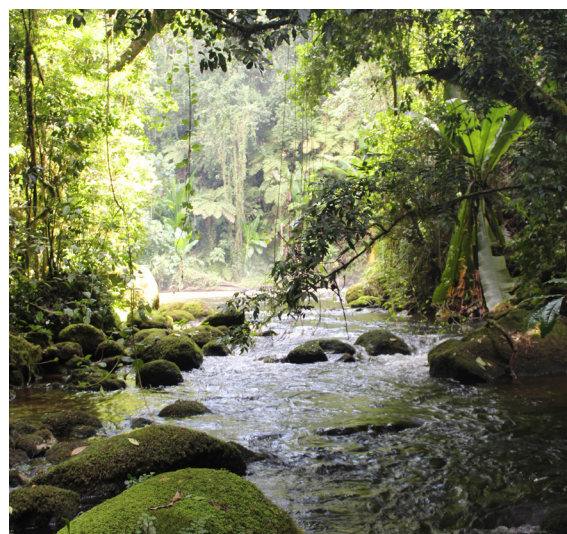
and loan financing. Accessing debt financing is also often hindered by stringent collateral and equity requirements before funds are extended. Finally, weak public-private partnerships constrain effective transfer of resources and responsibilities between public forest agencies and private entities.

However, promising opportunities exist to enhance private financing flows into SSA's forestry sector. Indirect investment products such as forest-backed securities allow alternative capital raising, especially in countries where traditional financing channels like bank loans may be inaccessible. Pooling of assets into dedicated forest funds also allows targeting investments specifically into forestry activities. Highlighting sustainable practices can make African forestry more appealing to impact investors aligned with global environmental trends. Government incentives, tax breaks and other policies that encourage private investments can further stimulate interest.

Additionally, technological innovations such as blockchain, remote sensing, and genetic improvements can attract financing by enhancing transparency, productivity, and resilience. Meaningful community engagement builds vital social license and local support while also mitigating risks. International collaborations allow SSA players to tap into global expertise, resources and funding sources. Positioning projects as contributing to shared goals like poverty alleviation and climate change mitigation can also open up emerging pools of social and environmental finance. Finally, realizing the value of ecosystem services and participating in carbon markets could offer African forests new revenue streams to sustainably self-finance their conservation.

Unlocking the immense potential of private financing in SSA's forestry sector will require concerted and collaborative efforts between all stakeholders. Key actions include improving the overall investment climate, formulating comprehensive national strategies, building local institutional capacities, supporting financial innovation, and fostering greater information exchange and partnership. Sustainably managed forests can drive local economies, preserve global climate stability, and improve millions of lives and livelihoods. The time is ripe for African nations, businesses, communities and development partners to work together in transforming the financing landscape for forestry and unlocking a prosperous green future.

Irangi Forest Station



Irangi station was proclaimed a public forest under Gazette Notice no: 104 of 19th December 1938, within the Mt Kenya forest Ecosystem putting it under the management of the then Forest Department (current Kenya Forest Service).

The forest is has an area of 15,501 ha and forms the largest part of forest areas within Embu County. The station is managed by Station manager assisted by, Forester Trainee, 1 Inspector, 1 Sergeant, 1 Corporal, 18 Forest Rangers, manning 11 Gates. 10 Beats in Mt. Kenya and one in Kirimiri Hill Forest near Runyenjes Town.

Irangi forest is unique due to the abundance of resources that can be used in development of non-consumptive utilization of the forest, ranging from eco-lodges, hiking, trout farming as a result of various river systems that traverse the forest. The rivers currently are a source of water for various community water projects and currently there is proposed major water project by the Embu County Government for the supply of water to the major towns of Embu and Runyenjes.

Ecotourism Sites such as Waterfalls; Rwanyoni and Nthuci in River Rupingazi and Nthuci respectively just to single out a few are elegantly beautiful. One peculiar site is "OXFORD" where any visitor would not wish to miss out. Locals has it that the place Holyand even when you' re sick you visit do a hmble prayer in silence you get well. We got Mau mau Caves, and a special 100M Long Café at KIRIMIRI which is very dark and full of Bats and Bats dung. Kirimiri is frequented by Faith Based Groups for meditation.

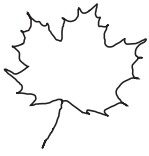
The Hill forest is Perceived as Holy such that if parties disagree while up there they get lost of their way out until dusk.

This forest is one of its own, with a broad biodiversity, characterized by low, medium and high canopy.

The management programmes currently being implemented include:

- Natural Forest Management Programme,that addresses conservation and management of the natural forest that forms 97 percent of the forest area.
- Plantation Development Programme is limited in Irangi due to the fact that the forest are was fenced under the Mt.Kenya fencing program and as a result plantation development is facing challenge of animal damage to newly established plantations. The programmes forms basis of interventions with partners and stakeholders for the continued development of the ecosystem.

Forest Rehabilitation is done with Partners that include; Community Forest Association (IRACOFA), Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) housed in Thambana, Green Zones Development Support Project (GZDSP II), Nyayo Tea Zones (NTZs), Mt. Kenya Ecosystem Conservation (MKEC), International Tree Fund (ITF), Kenya Revenue Authority, Nature Kenya, Local Administration(NGAO), MP Manyata and MP Runyenjes, Rain Forest Alliance (RA) and last but not least County Government of Embu.



Forestry Terms Wordsearch

S O H E X E P H S H B K S N U X
 U R E D D I K S A I A T E O A Z
 S E A Y L P A R M L D S C B V H
 T V L V B U V R P D A E N R J P
 A I T G A E M G L J P V A A L Y
 I S H M S C T O E S T R B C O T
 N A Y T A E F S Q B I E R W X I
 A V W R L R N W S I V S U Y L S
 B N L Z K T E N U R E N T G M R
 L I H P U I E E C R U O S E R E
 E B A R K F D U L E V C I T B V
 K F I R E I L D E G G S D O T I
 V J O T F C E G A R X A V U K D
 Z P C G S A T L R Z Y Y N D S O
 A W O O D T E R C E R M S A P I
 Q V N A S I M L U L T O B S M B
 L K E C R O W N T A S T D Q I S
 O P I D D N T B B R E F I N O C
 D E C I D U O U S B R K W T Z M
 Y G O L O N O R H C O R D N E D
 X Y M G W V U E O D F A G P A Y

SUSTAINABLE
 CERTIFICATION
 TENURE
 CROWN
 HARVEST
 SKIDDER
 DENDROCHRONOLOGY
 CARBON
 MANAGE
 FORESTRY

ADAPTIVE
 WOOD
 BARK
 BIODIVERSITY
 DISTURBANCE
 HEALTHY
 BASAL
 RESOURCE
 SAMPLE

CLEARCUT
 CONIFER
 DECIDUOUS
 LEAF
 CONE
 NEEDLE
 CONSERVE
 INVASIVE
 FIRE

POEM

Whispers of the Grove

In the heart of the ancient wood,
 Where the trees, like sentinels, stood,
 A whispered secret softly flowed,
 A tale of life the trees bestowed.

In the silence of the sylvan glade,
 Where time itself seemed to fade,
 A chorus of branches intertwined,
 Each tree, a guardian of its kind.

“Listen,” said the ancient oak,
 With a voice that gently spoke,
 “Each leaf, a page in nature’s story,
 Written in hues of green and glory.”

The willow wept in graceful boughs,
 Its tears, the morning’s gentle drowse,
 Yet in its sorrow, strength revealed,
 A tale of resilience, softly concealed.

The pine, with needles pointed high,
 Whispered secrets to the sky,
 “Guardians of the air we be,
 Breathe in, breathe out, set your spirit free.”

Oh, the trees, the wise old sages,
 Rooted in the ancient pages,
 Of Earth’s enduring, ageless tome,
 A testament to life, to growth, to home.

In every rustle of the leaves,
 A plea for care, the forest grieves,
 “Guardians of this sacred space,
 Let conservation be our grace.”

So, let us stand, hand in hand,
 Protectors of this vibrant land,
 For in the whispers of the grove,
 Lie the secrets of life and love.



TREES CAN BE ‘PUNNY’!

- Why did the pine tree get in trouble?
Because it was being knotty.
- What kind of tree can fit into your hand?
A palm tree!
- What was the tree’s favorite thing about Star Trek?
The Captain’s log
- What did the tree wear to the pool party?
Swimming trunks!

- What’s a tree’s favorite dating app?
Timber.
- Why did the tree need to take a nap?
For rest.
- Why do you never want to invite a tree to your party?
Because they never leaf when you want them to.
- Do you want a brief explanation of an acorn?
In a nutshell, it’s an oak tree.
- What do you get when you cross a tabby cat with a lemon tree?
A sour puss.



From the Archives

A letter from 1965 requesting for an extension on a saw milling license

THE LUMBERMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF KENYA

(45)

PHONE 58001.

P.O. Box 86,

Ref. No. LAK/43/FTH

NAIROBI, 17th May, 1965.

The Chief Conservator of Forests,
Forest Department,
P.O. Box 30513,
NAIROBI.



Dear Sir,

Extension of Licenses

We have been informed that certain Sawmillers who are not members of this Association have recently had their licenses extended. The license concerned was due to expire on 31st December, 1966, in common with many similar licenses held by members of this Association (and, we believe, also by members of the Kenya Sawmillers Association). We understand that the license concerned has now been extended for a further five years until 31st December, 1971. As some of our members have heard of this extension, they are naturally interested to know whether their own licenses are going to be extended accordingly. We should therefore be glad to receive any information you may have on the subject, so that we may provide our members with a proper reply to their queries.

Yours faithfully,
pp THE LUMBERMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF KENYA

D.P. Pickett

D.P. Pickett (Mrs).
Secretary

FTH/JP

F.B.t. CF (F.D.) Is this true and which mill is referred to?

KNOW YOUR TREES

Olea capensis subsp. *Welwitschii*

Family: Oleacea

English Name: Elgon Olive

Local Names: Elgon Teak, Mucarage (Kikuyu), Ol-loliondo (Maasai), Murguiwet (Nandi), Muukuru (Meru), Musuga (Luganda)

Description: *Olea capensis* subsp. *Welwitschii* is tree usually up to 25m, but can grow more. With a straight bole, occasionally buttressed. Flowers are white or pale yellow. Mature fruits are purple with a pointed apex about 1cm and in Lake basin

Bark: pale grey to white, grooved vertically

Leaves: opposite and oval, to 5 x 15 cm, on a stalk 2-3 cm, the tip drawn out and pointed

Ecology and distribution: The species occurs in wet and dry upland forests between 1150-2250m. It is mainly found in the slopes of Mt. Elgon, in Kakamega forest and the lake basin.

Flowering and fruit development: In western Kenya, the species flowers between October and November. Pollination is by insects.

Seed Collection: The mature dark green fruits are collected from the crown by spreading a net or canvas under the tree and climbing the tree to hand pick the fruits or shaking the branches to release the fruits

Uses: Firewood (branches), charcoal, timber (furniture, veneer), medicine (bark) and glue



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