

NEWSLETTER



East African Wild Life Society | P.O.Box 20110-00200 Nairobi, Kenya Riara Rd, Kilimani, Nairobi | Tel: +254 (020) 3874145 | Mobile: +254 (0) 722 202 473 /+254 (0) 734 600 632 | Email: info@eawildlife.org

The East African Wild Life Society

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www.eawildlife.org

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SWARA 2021-4 ON SALE!

The Forest Challenge 2021 ends with a Bang!



The 2021 edition of the Forest Challenge lived up to the event's billing as a test of human endurance with 30 of the 48 teams that entered the competition finding some of the nine course obstacles in the forest unassailable. The industrious nature lovers ran the gauntlet of dark tunnels, slippery descents and ascents, barrow rides and tyre crawl - all in the name of forest conservation. Exhausted Challengers arrived at the finishing line muddied and with sore, bruised bodies but content that it was all for a good cause.

The Forest Challenge 2021, held at Kereita Forest in Kiambu County on 27th November, attracted some 500 entrants representing 31 organisations that heeded the call for a concerted effort to help restore degraded areas of Kenya's montane forests that are key sources of water for many of the country's rivers.

The event was presided over by Dr. Benjamin Kinyili, Assistant Chief Conservator of Forests on behalf of the Chief Conservator of Forests, Mr. Julius Kamau.



TOP: Participants in the Forest Challenge 2021.

BELOW: Dr. Benjamin Kinyili, Assistant Chief Conservator of Forests and Mr. David Kuria, Kiambu County Executive Committee Member (CEC) flag off participants during the Forest Challenge 2021.

Other dignitaries in attendance included David Kuria, the Kiambu County Executive Committee Member (CEC) in charge of the environment; Paul Karanja, Ecosystem Conservator, Kiambu County, and Geraldine Barasa, Assistant County Commissioner. Also present were several chief executive officers from the Forest Challenge 2021 sponsor corporations.

As the participants came to grips with challenging conditions in the forest on a day that had started amid a heavy downpour in Nairobi neighbouring Kiambu, corporate representatives, led by Dr Kinyili, planted commemorative trees in another area of the forest. It was indeed a day dedicated to the well-being of trees and the forest!

The winning four-member teams

The gold medal was claimed by the Jacaranda team, while silver went to Maple, with Apple grabbing bronze.



Corporate Awards

1. Forest Stewardship Award – Kenyan Medical Research Institute (KEMRI) – (highest in-kind donation)
2. Forest Conservation Award – SAFARICOM - (highest financial donation and trees seedlings pledged)
3. Forest Champions Award Virtual Edition – Base Titanium
4. Forest Champions Award Physical Edition – Kenya Forest Service (KFS)

Corporate Partnership Certificates presentation to:

Let's Go Travel in recognition of the company's seven-year sponsorship of the Forest Challenge.

Also receiving certificates as a token of appreciation for their unwavering support of the Forest Challenge over the years were the Kijabe Environment Volunteers (KENVO) and KFS.

The Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI) was at hand to carry out COVID-19 testing on all participants at no cost.

Juice makers Kevian Kenya Limited were generous in quenching the thirst of participants with copious amounts of an assortment of juice flavours.

The online engagement with the event was compelling. The Forest Challenge 2021 was trending on Twitter on 27th November.



Building Capacity of the Local Communities in Enterprise Development in Samburu

The East African Wild Life Society (EAWLS) a one year project entitled “Capacity Development of Kirisia Community Forest Associations in Enterprise Development” through a Letter of Agreement (LOA) with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in Kenya (FAOKE) in Kirisia forest, Samburu County, to improve the livelihoods of the local communities.

The project is a component of a larger FAO project titled “Capacity, Policy and Financial Incentives for Participatory Forest Management (PFM) in Kirisia Forest and Integrated Rangeland Management” being funded by Global Environment Facility (GEF 5) and implemented by multiple partners. Its purpose is to strengthen participatory forest and rangeland management in Kirisia Forest for the conservation of biodiversity and help communities adapt to climate change and support livelihoods.

Community Forest Associations in Kirisia Forest are in their infancy and therefore are not self-sustaining now. EAWLS, therefore, aims through this project to wean the CFAs from being donor-dependent to self-reliant by improving their capacity and that of their user groups on organizational management and enterprise development. This will be achieved



EAWLS staff addressing user groups during field assessment meetings.

through training, mentorship, assessing viable businesses, developing business plans and linking the CFAs and user groups to financiers and supporting them to access opportunities for resource mobilization.

EAWLS have so far (1) introduced the project to key stakeholders for buy-



Group photo of participants during workshop to assess viable enterprises in Kirisia through SWOC analysis.



EAWLS staff with Samburu County Officials after the project inception meeting .

in, ownership and to identified areas of synergies and complementarity; (2) undertaken an assessment to identify entrepreneurial and organizational gaps among the CFAs and the user groups; (3) trained CFA leadership and user groups organisational gaps that affect their business as well as on business management modules; and (4) assessed existing and potential value chains and recommended three viable enterprises for support by FAO.

These activities are aimed at sustaining the gains already realized under the GEF 5 projects by improving the livelihoods of the local communities and reducing dependency on forest resources in both the short and long terms.

EAWLS and US Forest Service to Strengthen Conservation in Mt Elgon

The East African Wild Life Society (EAWLS) in partnership with the United States Forest Service (USFS) is implementing a project titled “Cultivating Local Civil Society Organisations for Community Forest Association (CFA) Support in Mt. Elgon Ecosystem”. The purpose of this project is to strengthen Community Forest Associations (CFAs) in the Mt. Elgon ecosystem and elevate their course as agents of forest stewardship, economic development, and community-based natural resource governance through the formation of a strong ecosystem-wide Civil Society Organisation.

The premise of this project is that a stronger civil society within the Mt. Elgon ecosystem will improve ownership of forest resources, enhance information flow, and better advocate for Mt. Elgon CFAs at multiple governance tiers (local, county, and national). The project is piloting a recommendation of a recent assessment done under the Kenya Water Tower Climate Change Resilience

Program (KWTP), which looked into factors that limit CFA effectiveness in sustainable forest management in Kenya. The assessment was funded by the Kenya and East Africa mission of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by USFS and the Government of Kenya (GoK).

EAWLS and USFS teams conducted stakeholder consultation meetings in Bungoma and Trans-Nzoia Counties at both grassroots and county levels from 9th to 11th November 2021. The objective of the consultations was to assess whether stakeholders were supportive of the proposed Mt. Elgon CSO. The meetings targeted representatives of the local communities (CFAs), national and county government officials, the private sector, NGOs and other development partners. The meetings were also aimed at providing a good understanding among stakeholders of the proposed CSO approach for Mt. Elgon.

The stakeholders of Mt. Elgon Ecosystem (Kenyan side) unanimously



EAWLS staff meeting with stakeholders in Bungoma at Tourist Hotel in Bungoma.

approved of the concept citing that the CSO will bring about inclusivity in decision making, provide technical backstopping to the CFAs, mobilize resources and enhance inter-county collaboration in the management of Mt. Elgon ecosystem, among others.

EAWLS and USFS hope to conduct similar engagements on the Ugandan side of Mt. Elgon and to work with all stakeholders to bring about holistic management of Mt. Elgon going into the future.

EAWLS joins other Stakeholders in Developing a Project for Mt. Elgon Restoration

The East African Wild Life Society (EAWLS) participated in a three-day workshop organized by United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO-Kenya) in Nairobi from 26th to 28th October, 2021 to engage stakeholders on improving and validating the project proposal before submission to the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Secretariat.

The workshop was attended by representatives from; Ministry of Environment and Forestry, Kenya Forest Service (KFS), Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KARLO), Kenya Forest Research Institute(KEFRI), Kenya Water Towers Agency (KWTA)), the county governments of Bungoma and Trans-Nzoia, NGOs, private sector, farmers cooperatives and indigenous communities, among others.

The proposed project is under GEF Impact Programme on Food Systems,



Mt Elgon area of western Kenya.

Land-Use and Restoration (FOLUR) initiative that aims to promote the sustainable, integrated management of the Mt Elgon landscape through the development of inclusive responsible

coffee value chain and sustainable staple food production systems. It is anticipated to start in 2022 for five years and will be implemented in both Trans-Nzoia and Bungoma counties.

Stakeholders' Consultation on the Proposed Expansion of Nairobi-Nakuru- Mau Summit Road



Nairobi-Nakuru highway

The Kenyan government will implement a project to improve and expand Nairobi-Nakuru-Mau Summit main road through a Public-Private Partnership scheme (PPP). The contract was awarded to an international consortium comprising of VINCI Highways, Meridian Infrastructure Africa Fund Rift and VINCI Concessions, and which incorporates a dedicated company in Kenya for the project: Rift Valley Highway. The consortium will design, finance, build, operate and maintain the new road for 30 years before handing it over to the government.

As a requirement of the Kenyan laws, the Kenya National Highways Authority (KeNHA) and the Rift Valley Highway have been undertaking public consultations with different stakeholders to gather views and concerns regarding the project as part of the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA).

The East African Wild Life Society (EAWLS) participated in the second round of public consultations held in July 2021 and noted that few conservation organisations were engaged in the consultations.

Public participation is key in conservation because it is an opportunity to inform stakeholders on a proposed project, gather their concerns and integrate people's knowledge and

experiences into project planning to guard against adverse social and environmental impacts.

EAWLS and the Natural Resource Forum (NAREF) organised a virtual stakeholders' consultative meeting on 7th October 2021 to provide a platform for more conservation organisations to give their views and recommendations on the road project. The meeting was attended by representatives from over 20 organisations, including Civil Society Organizations (CSO's), the private sector, academia, government and local community representatives.

At the meeting, it was noted that although relevant legal framework for public participation exists in Kenya, it is often inadequate and therefore ineffective in mitigating negative environmental and social impacts as evidenced by the shortcomings identified during the implementation of Lamu Port-South Sudan-Ethiopia Transport(LAPSSET) corridor and Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) projects. Shortcomings included late engagement of stakeholders, non-disclosure of crucial information, exclusion of some interested parties, failure to engage multi-disciplinary experts in the consultations and failure by project proponents to implement stakeholders' recommendations.

It was recommended that the National

Environment Management Authority (NEMA) improves the ESIA process through capacity-building, ensuring rigorous vetting of projects before issuing licenses and insisting on stakeholder engagement.

With regard to the Nairobi-Nakuru-Mau Summit road project, stakeholders expressed concern that environmental impacts during the operation and decommissioning periods had been omitted in the initial ESIA report. The report also lacked environmental and social management plans for decommissioning stages and failed to provide baseline information on certain environmental aspects, which would make it possible to monitor the impacts of the proposed project, among other gaps. Stakeholders recommended that the project company addresses these gaps among other recommendations before the project implementation.

The stakeholder's concerns and recommendations from the meeting were presented in the final round of public consultations organised by KeNHA and the construction company on 3rd November, 2021. A memorandum on the issue has been jointly prepared by EAWLS and NAREF and submitted to KeNHA on behalf of the organisations represented in the consultative meetings.

UN Climate Summit Ends with a Compromise Deal on Reducing Emissions



Delegates mark the closing of the United Nations climate summit (COP26) in Glasgow, Scotland on November 13

The United Nations summit in Glasgow ended on November 13 with nearly 200 countries adopting an outcome document that, according to the UN Secretary-General António Guterres, “reflects the interests, the contradictions, and the state of political will in the world today.”

“It is an important step but is not enough. We must accelerate climate action to keep alive the goal of limiting global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees,” said Guterres in a statement at the close of the two-week 26th Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP26) that went into one extra day as delegates haggled over the language of the final document.

Guterres urged the international community to go “into emergency mode” to end fossil fuel subsidies, phase out coal, put a price on carbon, protect vulnerable communities, and deliver the \$100 billion climate finance commitment.

“We did not achieve these goals at this conference. But we have some building blocks for progress,” he said.

Guterres also had a message to young people, indigenous communities, women leaders, and all those spearheading action on climate action.

“I know you are disappointed. But the path of progress is not always a straight line. Sometimes there are detours. Sometimes there are ditches. But I know we can get there. We are in the fight of our lives, and this fight must be

won. Never give up. Never retreat. Keep pushing forward”.

Highlights of the agreement

The outcome document, known as the Glasgow Climate Pact, calls on 197 countries to report their progress towards more climate ambition next year, at COP27, set to take place in Egypt.

The outcome also firms up the global agreement to accelerate action on climate this decade.

COP26 President Alok Sharma became emotional when announcing a last-minute change to the pact, demanded by China and India, who sought to soften language circulated in an earlier draft about “the phase-out of unabated coal power and of inefficient subsidies for fossil fuels”. As adopted on Saturday, that language was revised to “phase down” the use of coal in power production.

The text urges governments to provide tighter deadlines for updating their plans to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases.

On the nettlesome issue of financing from developed countries in support of climate action in developing countries, the text emphasizes the need to mobilize climate finance “from all sources to reach the level needed to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement, including significantly increasing support for developing country Parties, beyond \$100 billion per year”.

Many countries had earlier lamented that the package of agreed decisions

was not enough. Some called it “disappointing”, but overall, said they recognized it was balanced for what could be agreed at this moment in time and given their differences.

Other achievements

Beyond the political negotiations and the Leaders’ Summit, COP26 brought together about 50,000 participants online and in-person to share innovative ideas, solutions, attend cultural events and build partnerships and coalitions.

The conference heard many encouraging announcements. One of the biggest was that leaders from over 120 countries, representing about 90 per cent of the world’s forests, pledged to halt and reverse deforestation by 2030, the date by which the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to curb poverty and secure the planet’s future are supposed to have been achieved.

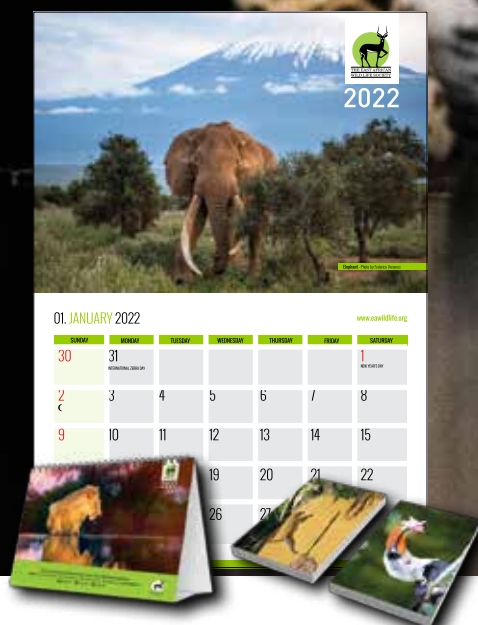
There was also a methane pledge, led by the United States and the European Union, by which more than 100 countries agreed to cut emissions of this greenhouse gas by 2030.

Meanwhile, more than 40 countries – including major coal users such as Poland, Vietnam and Chile – agreed to shift away from coal, one of the biggest generators of CO2 emissions.

Source: UN News
<https://swara.co.ke/un-climate-summit-ends-with-a-compromise-deal-on-reducing-emissions/>



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