Cop 21 Climate Change Conference

Recruitment of Forest Rangers

Eastern Regime Tree Planting Launched
FROM THE EDITOR

In this issue of the Forester Magazine, we cover various news, events and conferences that took place in the last three months and forecast activities that will take place as the year comes to a close.

There have been a number of conferences held this quarter which discussed various aspects of the forestry sector and sought to find sustainable, workable solutions towards environmental conservation. Key among them was the 21st Conference of Parties (COP 21) under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) that took place in Paris, France, in which Kenya was represented by His Excellency the President, Hon. Uhuru Kenyatta.

The Public Relations Society of Kenya (PRSK), supported by the Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management also held the first World Conference on Public Relations in Emerging Economies (WCPREE) at the Kenyatta International Convention Centre (KICC) in Nairobi during this quarter. The conference focused on crucial issues affecting emerging economies such as jobs and growth, health, sustainability and climate change.

We also touch briefly on the upcoming 20th Session of the Africa Wildlife & Forestry Commission conference (AWFC) which Kenya notably agreed to host upon request by the FAO. Among the issues to be discussed there include forestry and climate change adaptation and mitigation, opportunities and challenges in non-wood forest products, implementation of forest and wildlife policies in Africa, value addition and trade in timber and non timber forest products in Africa and enhancing sustainability and efficiency of wood fuel production and consumption among others.

The Service also partnered with East African Breweries Limited (EABL) in an event dubbed the EABL-Karura 10km Run that took place at the Karura grounds. The event was aimed at raising Kshs. 5 million to go towards supporting water tower and environmental conservation efforts and addressing the issue of water scarcity in different parts of the country. For these and more, I welcome you to read and enjoy your copy of the Forester Magazine. Please feel free to give us your feedback regarding the Magazine and any other issues touching on forestry.

Happy reading!

Anne Kaari

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DISCLAIMER
Views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Kenya Forest Service Board and Management.
Kenya participated at the 21st Conference of Parties (COP 21) that took place in Paris France under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCC).

The conference which saw animated deliberations regarding climate change and the responsibility of both developed and developing countries in addressing climate change eventually agreed to reduce global carbon emissions to less than 2% by the year 2020.

Developing countries including Kenya have suffered the consequences of adverse climate change even though they don’t contribute much in terms of carbon emission. Kenya which was ably represented at the conference by among others His Excellency the President and the Cabinet Secretary for Environment Prof. Judi Wakhungu put forward her plans to deal with climate change which includes the Climate Change Bill currently under consideration in parliament.

On the local front, the Service once again recruited over 240 more forest rangers to boost forest protection. This is meant to increase capacity in the management of forest areas which has been lacking due to non recruitment of rangers which had persisted for close to 10 years. The government has also continued to gazette more forest areas thus necessitating the addition of more rangers.

Currently, the Service is carrying out a Nationwide tree planting campaign that is intended to utilize the enhanced rainfall currently falling in the country. While this time of the year usually marks the short rains tree planting season, this year has seen enhanced rains falling across the country thanks to the El Nino rains phenomena.

We as a Service are thus calling on all Kenyans to plant as many trees as possible and to consult our technical officers for advice on best practices during tree planting.

Emilio Mugo,
Kenya was ably represented at the 21st Conference of Parties (COP 21) under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCC) that took place in Paris, France in early December, 2015. The Kenyan delegation was led by His Excellency the President, Hon. Uhuru Kenyatta, who aptly articulated Kenya’s position in the crucial talks that culminated in an agreement to reduce carbon emissions to less than two percent (2%) by the year 2020 through legally binding instruments. The outcome of this conference which was largely viewed as a success was the culmination of numerous deliberations mostly pitting developed countries against developing Nations and a build up to previous conferences notably Lima Conference in 2014 and Durban Conference in 2013. The French Presidency of COP 21 was hailed internationally for crafting and delivering a compromise that brought together the highly polarized positions of the Developed and Developing Nations.

To understand the COP21 outcome, a reflection on the key clauses of the Paris Agreement and the decision that adopted it is important. Firstly, the Agreement is a new legal instrument but it will need to be ratified by Parties for it to come into effect. It will only enter into force after at least 55 Parties to the Convention, accounting in total for at least an estimated 55 percent of the total global greenhouse gas emissions have deposited their instruments of ratification or acceptance. The Agreement is expected to come into effect from 2021.

Secondly, the Agreement states the need to limit temperature increase to 1.5 degrees centigrade above pre-industrial levels, to reduce risks and impacts of Climate Change. In addition, all parties are expected to increase the ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change and foster climate resilience as well as making finance flows consistent with a pathway towards greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient development.

The Agreement further indicated that its implementation will reflect equity and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities in the light of different national circumstances. This particular clause was a major milestone that will require all Parties to undertake and communicate ambitious efforts with the view to achieving the purpose of the Agreement, whilst supporting developing Countries through mitigation and adaptation techniques, finance, technology development and transfer and capacity building. All parties will be required to commit to a transparency framework for action and support and regularly prepare, communicate and implement their Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) towards achieving the purpose of the Agreement.

THE PARIS AGREEMENT, FORESTS AND REDD+

The Paris Agreement on climate change directly and boldly addresses the necessary role of world’s forests in slowing the march of rising global temperatures. The importance of forests is emphasized throughout the agreement which mandates that all countries conserve and enhance sinks and reservoirs (code words for forests and other ecosystems), that draw carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store it.

The agreement includes a package of REDD+ elements which have been debated for more than 10 years. Parties are encouraged to take action to implement and support, including through results-based payments and policy approaches and positive incentives for activities relating to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and the enhancement of forest carbon sinks in developing countries (REDD+). Given that tropical forests store 25% of global carbon and harbor 96% of the world’s tree species, it is clear that REDD+ and
other forest preservation and restoration policies will be vital if the world is to hit a 1.5 degree C target.

KENYA’S NATIONAL POLICY
During this landmark conference, the Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources and Regional Development Authorities, Prof. Judi Wakhungu chaired a session on Kenya’s progress in climate change matters. She informed the delegates of progress in Kenya’s National Climate Change Framework Policy as well as Climate Change Bill. She noted, the Policy sets out an integrated regulatory framework for climate change governance that sets up an overarching national legislative framework; and a technical institutional framework to guide policy and implementation of climate change legal obligations of the national and county governments. The policy recommends an institutional coordination mechanism with high -level convening power. An implementation framework provides for the use of national climate change action plans as the main tool, and integration of climate change actions in the national planning and budgeting process. It also focuses on research and technology, public participation, engagement of private sector, monitoring and evaluation and resource mobilization.

CLIMATE CHANGE BILL

During the COP 21 conference, the Cabinet Secretary also informed delegates of Kenya’s progress in coming up with a Climate Change Bill, noting that it was currently under consideration by the Senate, after successfully going through the National Assembly. The Bill establishes the National Climate Change Council, chaired by His Excellency, the President. The Council is responsible for overall coordination and advisory functions. The National Climate Change Action Plans are the basis for implementing climate change activities every five -year period. County Integrated Development Plans, required by law as primary planning tools, are the mechanism for mainstreaming climate change actions and interventions at the County government level. The Bill provides for setting greenhouse gas emission reduction targets and sets out obligations for measuring, reporting and verification of emissions. In addition, the Bill establishes the Climate Change Fund as a financing mechanism for priority climate change actions and interventions.

The next Conference is slated to take place in a year’s time in Marrakesh, Morocco, to take stock of progress by various countries.

By Leakey Sonkoyo

The Kenya Forest Service (KFS) has recruited 244 forest rangers to boost forest protection in the country. In a recruitment drive that attracted over 7,000 youth from across the country at the National Youth Service (NYS) training school in Gilgil, the Service selected the most suitable recruits from all the counties who will join KFS in the Enforcement and Compliance (ENCOM) Division to protect state forests and assets.

Speaking before the exercise kicked off, the Senior Deputy Director for Support Services Monica Kalenda who was leading the recruitment drive while assuring the candidates of a fair and impartial recruitment process said that KFS was in the process of boosting its capacity in forest protection. “It is recommended that one ranger should patrol 400 ha of forest area but at our current numbers, the ratio is one ranger to over 800 ha. There is therefore need to increase the number of forest rangers to the prerequisite level,” she said.

Addressing the same gathering, KFS Commandant Alex Lemarkoko noted that the forest rangers will play a critical role in the enhancement of forestry in the country. He said that new forestry sector continued facing various challenges associated with the high demand for forest products. “This can only be addressed by increasing the capacity of our protection wing even as we engage local communities in forest management,” he said. He noted that the Service required about 4,000 rangers to efficiently protect Kenya’s forest estate. “We however have a staff capacity in ENCOM of only 2,000 rangers and thus the need for this recruitment exercise,” he added.

After the recruitment which took the whole day, the successful recruits proceeded to the Kenya Forestry College Paramilitary School where they will undergo a four month paramilitary training. Additional reporting by Alfred Gichu
KFS Continues to Engage Community Forest Associations towards Forest Conservation

By Susan Ndethiu

The Kenya Forest Service (KFS) Board Chairman Mr. Peter Kirigua was in Meru County recently as the Guest of Honour at a function that brought together all Heads of Community Forest Associations (CFAs) in the Meru region.

Speaking at the event, he expressed his gratitude for the invitation by the CFAs to plant 1,000 tree seedlings with them and commended them on their hard work. He also commended organizations such as the Mount Kenya Trust on the continued good work and partnering with the Service to plant trees around the Mount Kenya region.

The Chairman also denied reports by the environmental lobby group Friends of Mount Kenya that the government was condoning deforestation in the Mount Kenya forest and said that no one had the permission to cut down indigenous trees as this had been banned in the country.

The function was aimed at forging peace between members of the lobby group Friends of Mount Kenya and the CFAs where the former had accused the latter of destroying forests in the Mount Kenya forest.

The County Executive Committee Member for Economic and Physical Planning Martin Bikuri, after passing on greetings from His Excellency the Governor Meru County Hon. Peter Munya and further said that which will ensure that Meru County continues to be a united and prosperous green model County. He also commended the CFAs for their hard work towards forest conservation for future generations.

Also present at the function was the Executive Officer of the Mount Kenya Trust Susie Weeks who said that she wished to continue the work of increasing the number of trees planted in Meru County with the assistance of KFS and the Community Forest Associations (CFAs) in the area, in order to help the Mt. Kenya area recover in the best way possible. She added that the Trust had planted a lot of trees in the Ontulili area. The Trust also works with CFAs in the area to battle forest fires when they occur.

Meru Forest Environmental Conservation and Protection Association CFA Chairlady Zipporah Matumbi said that CFAs in the Meru region have been continuously working with the Service and the County Government towards forest conservation and although they have faced some challenges, they still continue unbowed with the work of forest protection and a good working relationship. She also stressed that community members should register themselves with already existing associations in order to continue with conservation work and avoid conflict.
NEWS ROUND UP

By Leakey Sonkoyo

A total of 35 inspectors have undergone an important supervisory course at the Kenya School of Government (KSG) in a continuing programme by the Kenya Forest Service (KFS) to improve the capacity of its staff. The programme is aimed at equipping staff with supervisory expertise, to enable them run the Service’s programmes and activities in a professional manner. This brings the number of inspectors trained in this course at KSG to 39.

Speaking during the closing of the two week training programme at the KSG Kabarnet campus, Senior Deputy Director for Field Operations Essau Omollo congratulated the inspectors and noted that the supervisory course was vital for them because they played an integral part in the management of forest protection. He also thanked the KSG for tailoring a programme that suited the specific areas required for effective forest protection. “This course is also important because it serves as a yardstick in your future career progression,” he added.

The Director General of KSG Dr. Ludeki Chweya reiterated the importance of forests to the socio-economic development of the country. He said that forests must be managed professionally and thus the importance of enhancing the training of those responsible for their management. Dr. Chweya lauded the partnership between KFS and KSG which has seen the training of many senior and middle level managers from the Service. He noted that the short courses on strategic leadership and supervision among others were important in improving service delivery by public servants to the public. He urged the inspectors to be professional in their work. “A supervisor must complete his or her work and they must do it neatly,” he advised.

KFS Commandant Alex Lemarkoko while addressing the same gathering thanked KSG for the continued cooperation in training KFS staff and especially enforcement officers. He noted that this cooperation had seen the two organisations negotiate on a favourable budget for the training of officers suitable to both organisations. “This has helped us train an enhanced number of inspectors,” he added. He also thanked the Miti Mingi Maisha Bora Programme through its Project Manager Zipporah Toroitich who was in attendance, for sponsoring the training programme.

During the occasion, the Forest Patrol Control Register was launched. The register is important in forest protection because all occurrences in the course of forest protection are recorded therein. The inspector’s supervisory course also entailed record keeping, public relations and reporting skills among many other subjects.

Enforcement Officers Undergo Training

Forest Patrol Control Register also launched

By Leakey Sonkoyo

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The Service Holds End of Year Party and Award Ceremony

By Fridah Murugu

The Cabinet Secretary Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources and Regional Development Authorities Prof. Judi Wakhungu joined the Kenya Forest Service staff and other invited guests to celebrate the end of the year party at the Karura Headquarters grounds.

Speaking during the ceremony, the C.S said that the event offered an opportunity for members of staff to reflect on the past year and celebrate the milestones together. She added that her ministry would continue to spearhead policy issues and assist the Service in every possible way to achieve its mandate. She pointed out that when enacted, the new Forest Bill will replace current forestry legislation and is designed to cater for present realities in the sector including the role of County Governments in the management and development of forestry.

Prof. Wakhungu called upon the board and management to develop proposals aimed at inviting donors to fund some of the programmes and assured them that the ministry would work with them.

Kenya Forest Service Board Chairman Peter Kirigua introduced the board members to the staff and thanked the C.S for the inauguration of the new board. He said it has been tough working alone for the last two years and also noted some of the board’s achievements since it came into office early 2015. He added that they have participated in tree planting exercises and National tree planting launches, provided resources for tree planting in all Counties and decentralized plantation, allocation and harvesting decisions to incorporate the Counties which has greatly streamlined the industry leading to increased revenue.

KFS members of staff who performed exceptionally well in their various positions and work stations throughout 2015 were awarded and applauded for work well done. Sgt. Khisia Mbaya from Kakamega County scooped the award for Best Law Enforcement Officer, Peter Mwangi received the Innovation award, Thomas Kiptoo took home the Eco-system Conservator Award and Naomi Muritu who works in the Director’s office received the Best Secretary award, among others.

Retirees were also not left out and were recognized for their long service. Some of those awarded include Peter James Kamwara who served for 41 years, Caleb Manyala who served for 36 years in the Service and Jennifer Ngige who served for 29 years. Former KFS Director David Mbugua was awarded for his distinguished performance and valuable contribution to forest sector reforms in Kenya.

After the awards and speeches, it was time to relax and unwind as the Cabinet Secretary, Chairman and Director led other members of staff and invited guests to the dance floor.
Kenya Forest Service (KFS) partnered with the East African Breweries Limited (EABL) to host a running event dubbed the ‘EABL Karura Run’. The 10km run held on 5th December, 2015 at Karura forest, was aimed at raising Kshs. 5 million to go towards supporting water tower and environmental conservation efforts and addressing the issue of water scarcity in different parts of the country.

Speaking during the event launch held at the Serena hotel, KFS Board Chairman Peter Kirigua noted that KFS is keen to advance stakeholder relations that aim at transforming interests and the lives of people who depend upon them for their daily livelihoods. KFS is keen on community participation to ensure that communities understand and engage in collaborative measures to conserve the natural resource.

“The sustainability of our water towers depends largely on collaborative efforts in the realm of environmental conservation. Companies such as EABL are helping us unlock the recognition about the Kenya’s precarious ecosystem and water supplies, and their link to forests. If we can have more players joining in, we could be in a better place in securing our economy, upon which virtually everyone in Kenya depends on.” Said Kirigua.

EABL Group Corporate Relations Director and Foundation Managing Trustee, Julie Adell-Owino said that “This is a symbolic event that we believe will not only rewrite the history of one of Kenya’s most illustrious corporate and individual social philanthropy cases but also lay a strong foundation for sustainable conservation efforts by the citizens,”. She added “We are all aware of the dire situation of our country’s forest cover currently estimated at 7 percent”.

The 10km run attracted over 1,000 people both elite and non elite runners. Beijing Olympics champion Wilfred Bungei who flagged the run and participated noted that Karura is one of the places that athletics Kenya can turn into a training camp for global competition. He added that Karura forest is an ideal training ground for health-seeking individuals and urged the public to join them in supporting the conservation of the forest. KFS Zebedee Kiprono finished second in 29:04 just four seconds after the winner Elijah Mwangangi who finished at 29:00.

KFS is committed to conserving and managing all water catchment areas within forests and is keen on stakeholders for support to conserve these critical resources. EABL Foundation plans to partner with KFS to expand afforestation initiatives, underpinned by a long-term conservation programme aligned to the goal of raising Kenya’s forest cover to 10% by 2030.
The National Forest Programme (NFP)

By Fridah Kendi

The National Forest Programme is broadly based on a political, participatory, transparent, cross-sectorial process of planning, programming and implementation of sustainable forest management. It aims to develop and sustainably manage, conserve, restore and utilize forests and allied resources for socio-economic growth and climate resilience. The strategic objectives of this programme are to increase tree cover and reverse forest degradation through sustainable forest management, to sustain forest management for socio-economic and environmental benefits and for climate change mitigation and adaptation, to enhance capacity development, research and adoption of technologies, to increase value addition of forest products as well as to create an enabling environment for resource mobilization and investments to spur competitive forest production and development. The programme also aims to inculcate good forest governance through the integration of constitutional principles and values in forest development.

However the programme faces a number of challenges which include; forest degradation and the need to enhance forest areas, overgrazing and conversion of forests to other land uses, multiple conflicts, fuel wood and charcoal demand, climate change, wood deficit for most forest products, undervalued forests, value chains not developed and insufficient forest services for a rapidly rising population.

The National Forest Programme has identified some opportunities to help deal with these challenges which include seeing forestry as key in a green economy, forestry being regarded as key in climate change mitigation or adaptation, highlighting forests’ true value, devolving the programme to county forests, capitalizing on demand for bamboo and other NTFPs and options for commercialization of NTFPs, coming up with a framework for handling ethnic minority questions, and capitalizing on the surge in demand for wood. The programme will ensure transparency in governance and accountability and also formalize the informal forest sector based activities.

The programme has achieved so much following its implementation. The forest cover has increased tremendously on public, private and community lands while conserving and protecting forest ecosystems, it enhanced visibility and recognition of the multiple values and benefits gained from sustainable forest management to the National and Global development, it has improved utilization of forest resources for sustainable socio-economic development, biodiversity and environmental conservation, it led to improved participation in planning, decision making processes and public support for sustainable forest management through reliable and disclosed update information on forest resources. There have been more innovative, safer and effective forest based enterprises due to competitive capacity originating from innovative and modern technologies and solutions. It has led to better leadership and good forest governance and service delivery and has also strengthened capacity in conflict management through the establishment of a functioning conflict resolution and grievance mechanism.

KFS Choir tours different Counties on Charity Mission

By Caroline Kahuria and Fridah Murugu

The KFS choir joined other members of the permanent Music Commission in their annual Corporate Social Responsibility aimed at helping the less privileged in society. The event took place in Western Kenya during the festive season in a bid to spread Christmas cheer and extend a kind gesture to children’s homes.

Kenya Forest Service choir has been keen on uplifting the less privileged and has been touring the country encouraging, entertaining and distributing basic items to the homes. The choir in November 2015 toured Jomo Kenyatta home for children with physical disabilities under Kenya Red Cross Embu Branch Coordinator Embu County Lucy Mutua was very grateful for the gifts and especially the firewood, which she said would serve them throughout the year. Sister Teresia Mburu of the Embu children’s home expressed her gratitude for the gesture shown by the Kenya Forest Service choir. She said the gifts were of great help to children’s homes.

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Sister Teresia Mburu of the Embu children’s home expressed her gratitude for the gesture shown by the Kenya Forest Service choir. She said the gifts were of great help to the children, especially the diapers since they have children from as young as two months old. The children later joined the choir in tree planting as a way of conserving the environment.

The activities have so far been successful with each visit covering over 1,000 children and participating organizations turning up in large numbers.
World Conference on Public Relations in Emerging Economies Takes Place in Nairobi

By Pamela Gatwiri

The Public Relations Society of Kenya (PRSK), supported by the Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management held the first World Conference on Public Relations in Emerging Economies (WCPREE) between 14th–18th November, 2015 at the Kenyatta International Convention Centre (KICC) in Nairobi, Kenya. It brought together practitioners and academics from across the globe to look at the particular challenges faced by emerging economies in an evolving and continually changing environment. “With a wide appeal to emerging economies in Africa, Asia and South America, the conference is also of interest to developed economies on how the world is going to change and how business will be different in the future,” said Ms. Jane Gitau, Chairperson of the Public Relations Society of Kenya.

“It is a welcome prospect to know that Nairobi will host the world foremost professionals in the PR industry. The Government of Kenya through the PRSK’s Patron Ministry of ICT, has walked side by side with the PRSK to make this conference a reality. We are proud to announce the choice of Kenya as a destination for the conference,” said Mr. Joseph Tiampati ole Musuni, then Principal Secretary, Ministry of Information, Communication & Technology (ICT), during the official opening of the conference. In his speech, he further emphasized the role of PR by saying that as a country we need to start looking at PR as an economic phenomenon, as an element of markets and of markets’ ability to serve society by allocating resources and creating wealth.

The thought provoking conference focused on crucial issues affecting emerging economies such as jobs and growth, health, sustainability and climate change. It is increasingly clear that strategic Public Relations can drive innovation, strengthen economic growth and bring broad benefits. To the forest sector, Public Relations can be of great power. Having an active Communications Department, Kenya Forest Service has the upper hand in bringing stakeholders, the private sector and investors to chant a uniform tune of conservation throughout the country. Forestry can also be of great importance to the economy in creating jobs and sustaining livelihoods. Such benefits are what we need to echo constantly to be able push forward the agenda.

One of the speakers during the conference Paul Holmes, founder and CEO of the Holmes Report, the News, Research and Insight Resource for Global Public Relations, said: “Your ambition shouldn’t be to catch up with the US. It should be to leapfrog the US.” The risk for African PR professionals is that the pace they are doing at the moment and seek to replicate old models from the USA and Western Europe. This is a challenge to Kenyan industries to come up with our own unique strategies that resonate more with our market as in the case of M-pesa.

The same can be applied in forestry by applying local solutions to the curb forest destruction in the country. Most indigenous forest land is communal in Kenya that saw a lot of back and forth battles between the State and the indigenous habitants in the 90’s on how such forests should be managed. Kenya Forest Service chose to embrace such communities and work with them in forest conservation for the benefit of both parties. Forest community associations sprung up from this idea and there have been fewer conflicts between State and forest communities. As a country, we can come up with more and more innovative ways of developing our country without much destruction on the environment and to the satisfaction of all stakeholders involved and PR is a good tool to do so. —
K-MACHO, Forest Monitoring Software Application Launched

By Pamela Gatwiri

Forestry remains an important part of the economy here and in many other areas of the world but the methods and procedures forestry firms use today are very different. Back in the 1930s, heading out into the forest would be rough as the forester scrambled over huge downed logs and through thickets in the old-growth forests of the day. Responding to reports on illegal forest activity such as logging and charcoal burning was a daunting task, one that still had to be done. Technology impacts our lives slowly in ways only recognizable when one looks back at the changes over an extended period of time. It impacts not only how we communicate and travel, but also how we work and live. Although not as immediately apparent to many, technology has also had a profound impact on the science of forestry and how land can be managed more efficiently and productively.

K-Macho is a software application that is exploring the possibilities and advantages of technology on Kenyan forests. K-macho is an application system that allows a user to collect geographical location specific information, take images/photographs that could be used for monitoring and management of resources and incidents. It integrates the databases to allow easy access and centralized storage of all required information for monitoring and relaying the information for decision-making and management purposes. The system is expected to enhance forest monitoring and reporting by various stakeholders for informed decision-making. Kenya Forest Service Director Emilio Mugo said that the smart phone app will enable users to report illegal activities in national forests and reduce the cost of surveillance. “We expect the app to complement the efforts of law enforcement officers to conserve Kenya’s forests,” said Mr. Mugo during the 20 year celebrations of the Kenya Forest Working Group (KFWG).

The system is a joint initiative of the KFWG, Forest Society of Kenya (FSK), University of Nairobi and K-MACHO application developers. Users with a smart phone will be able to download the app and capture an incident which will then be sent in real-time to the KFWG’s website, after which it will be made available to stakeholders. “Kenya’s forests are spread across the country and we don’t have sufficient resources to monitor activities in all forests in real-time,” Mr. Mugo added.

Forest Society of Kenya (FSK) Chairman Mr. John Mbaya commended the App saying it was a step in the right direction in Forestry. He added that there has been a significant change since the App became functional in capturing forest crimes especially in Nairobi’s forests. The app can work on literally any smartphone that is GPS enabled. A forester, forest guard or any individual can report suspicious forest activity by taking a photo of the crime being committed and of the perpetrator and upload it to the k-macho app and finally send it to the app’s online database. The photo should be taken while the phone’s GPS system is on so that it can capture the location.

Transformative technologies such as K-macho go further. They create core changes rather than marginal ones. Technology is changing far faster than the institutions we’ve traditionally relied on to inform and enforce our choices and values and KFS as a Corporation that is battling many evils to sustain the country’s crucial forest resource, using up-to-date methods of forest management is a step in the right direction.
Forestry Society of Kenya holds Forest Policy Dialogue Meeting

By Dr. Mercy Gichora and Rosemary Bargerei

Forests make a significant contribution to the sustainable socio-economic development of the country. It is the responsibility of Forestry Society of Kenya, as a professional body, to guide the standardization of forestry practice in Kenya for sustainable development.

The Society organized a forestry dialogue on 30th September, 2015 under the theme “Attainment of 10% tree/forest cover: is Farm Forestry and Dryland Forestry the answer?” The meeting brought together foresters, researchers, businessmen, representatives of civil society organizations and students. These diverse actors play a direct or indirect role in making significant contributions towards improvement in the management and use of forest and tree resources in ways that effectively support socio-economic development and environmental protection. They represented various institutions which play a central role in forestry training, management and research. These included Universities (University of Eldoret, Kirinyaga University College, Egerton University, and Kenyatta University), Kenya Forest Service and Kenya Forestry Research Institute. The East African Wildlife Society, African Forest Forum, Better Globe Forestry, Ministry of Agriculture and County Governments also participated.

CONCERNS/ ISSUES RAISED AND RESOLUTIONS

The importance of forests and forest ecosystems in biodiversity conservation and livelihood improvement was appreciated. These roles need to be appreciated by government in the form of facilitating programs promoting efficient management, utilization and conservation of forest resources. At the same time, there is need to increase financing to the public sector, provide incentives to tree/forest growers and support improvement of forest product value chains. Attainment of the 10% tree/forest cover as stipulated in the national constitution requires commitment by the Government at national level as well as the private sector.

County governments also share the responsibility to attain the 10% tree/forest cover. Farm forestry expansion and management of non-gazetted forests within counties are the mandate of county governments. Many counties, however, have not fully developed the necessary legislation and policies to deliver on the devolved mandates and as a result it was reported that county forest resources are threatened. A plea was made for counties to domesticate the relevant legislations governing those devolved forest functions from the national legislation.

Tree growing was reported to be a profitable business venture with potential to contribute towards the 10% tree cover. Trees can be grown on land unsuitable for crop production thus making better use of it. Tree growers and processors need to be encouraged to form associations for better bargaining power in markets, both locally and abroad. As a large and important stakeholder in the forestry sector their contribution in development of policies governing the sector should also be sought. It was noted that even though there are incentives already enumerated in relevant policies governing the sector, the problem was failure by relevant government agencies to enforce them.

RESOLUTIONS ON WAY FORWARD

1. Strengthen mutual cooperation and collaboration between the Government of Kenya and FSK to support capacity building in forest practice. This will take into account available technologies on forest resource establishment, management, monitoring utilization and marketing.

2. FSK shall at all times promote and guard competence, competitiveness and professionalism, in the practice of forestry in the forestry sector.

3. The Government in collaboration with FSK to facilitate harmonization and enforcement of legislations affecting the forest sector.

4. The relevant Government Departments to strictly enforce policies that safeguard/conservation of already existing land covered by forests and other land that is not legislated as so.

5. FSK to participate in the review and harmonization of forestry curricular and training offered by various Universities and colleges to ascertain that the courses utilize current available knowledge and are reviewed regularly to accommodate dynamism in the forest sector.

6. Involve forest sector players in the development of land use planning as forests are an important component of land use.

7. Encourage forest growers and forest product processors to form associations to foster better bargaining power in policy and market development.
Deputy President Hon. William Ruto waters a tree he planted at a fundraising event in Mariara, Meru County. He is flanked by KFS Board Chairman Peter Kirigia (centre) and Ecosystem Conservator Meru County Evans Maneno (right).

Kenya Forest Service Choir members donate foodstuff to the Crossroads Springs Institute in Hamisi Constituency, Vihiga County. This was part of the Service’s annual CSR drive that saw them spreading Christmas cheer across various counties in the country.

Embu County Governor Martin Wambora (right) talks with Cabinet Secretary Ministry of Environment Natural Resources and Regional Development Authorities Prof. Judi Wakhungu (2nd from right) together with KFS Board Chairman Peter Kirigia (3rd from right) and KFS Director Emilio Mugo (4th from right) as they paid him a courtesy call at his office.

Johny Zapata (standing) FAO Representative from Rome explains a point during a field tour to Nettle world; a forest producer organization based in Laikipia that has benefited from Forest and Farm Facility funding that is aimed at strengthening forest and farm producers, at local and national levels as well as link voices through participatory communication and information sharing. He is flanked by Oscar Simanto Head Extension management (to the left) among other partners from FF-SPAK and We-Effect respectively.

Crown Beverages Limited 3 year Mau partnership initiative with KFS where 1200 seedlings were planted. Looking on are the Ecosystem Conservator Nakuru Samuel Mukundi and Jacinta Cheruiyot, the Molo Sub County Commissioner.

Kenya Forestry College Principal Prof. Donald Ogweno (left) presents the winners prize to Ambassador Kipyego Cheluget (right) during the KFS Golf Day at Eldoret Club.
The new Principal Secretary of the State Department of Environment, Natural Resources and Regional Development Authorities Dr. Margaret Mwakima (front row middle), poses with Board members and senior management of Kenya Forest Service (KFS) when she made her maiden visit to KFS headquarters at Karura. To the right is KFS Board Chairman Peter Kirigua and to left is KFS Director Emilio Mugo. The P.S was at the KFS Headquarters to be introduced to members of the Board.

Ambassador of the Republic of Korea Kwon Young-dae (centre) together with KFS Board Chairman Peter Kirigua (right), KFS Director Emilio Mugo (left) and other senior KFS Officials plants a tree with children during the Kenya - Korea Friendship Forest 4th Tree Planting event at the Uplands Forest Station.

The new Principal Secretary of the State Department of Environment, Natural Resources and Regional Development Authorities Dr. Margaret Mwakima (front row middle), poses with Board members and senior management of Kenya Forest Service (KFS) when she made her maiden visit to KFS headquarters at Karura. To the right is KFS Board Chairman Peter Kirigua and to left is KFS Director Emilio Mugo. The P.S was at the KFS Headquarters to be introduced to members of the Board.

Ambassador of the Republic of Korea Kwon Young-dae (centre) together with KFS Board Chairman Peter Kirigua (right), KFS Director Emilio Mugo (left) and other senior KFS Officials plants a tree with children during the Kenya - Korea Friendship Forest 4th Tree Planting event at the Uplands Forest Station.

Dr. Mogens Pedersens (left) consultant International Wood Company is accompanied by colleagues from Danish Forest Association, Kenya Forest Service, FF-SPAK and We Effect when they visited Kitui County to see how charcoal production using kilns works.

Mr. Emilio Mugo awarded certificate of recognition towards his contribution to the forestry sector in the country.

KFS Board Chairman Peter Kirigua together with Executive Committee Member, Economic and Physical Planning for Meru County Martin Bikuri engage in a traditional dance with community members during a tree planting exercise to bring together all CFA leaders in Timau, Meru County.
By Nancy Gacheri and Carol Wanjiku

Major forests in East Africa face major challenges from the ever-increasing demands of growing population and the unsustainable management and utilization. The need to conserve the existing forest resources has greatly influenced the production of wood whose demand is increasing. Over-time bamboo resource cover has undergone changes largely through clearing to provide clear areas for plantations, cultivation and settlement developments.

The area under bamboo is therefore presently much smaller and, may be only be a small fraction of what was there by the third decade of the last century. While bamboos have been used by human beings all around the world for thousands of years, the plant’s potential to be a substitute for slower-growing wood species in a vast number of modern commercial uses has only recently been recognized and the development of applications and markets is receiving increasing emphasis. However, bamboo contribution in environmental conservation, remediation, and restoration, climate change mitigation, community and human livelihood development, is most unique of plant species and is usually underestimated. Bamboo has the potential to contribute to socio economic, cultural and political development at the local, national and international level.

Forestry Society of Kenya organized a bamboo training workshop held on 9th & 10th April 2015, at Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI) Headquarters, whose theme was “Unleashing the Economic Significance of Bamboo in Kenya.” The workshop brought together foresters, farmers, academicians, researchers, entrepreneurs and the international participants to explore a number of interventions needed to support the development of bamboo sector.

The primary focus of the workshop was to identify and establish bamboo as a substitute timber material suitable for the production of bamboo flooring, plywood, charcoal, and biofuel with export potential, which will greatly support and promote the advancement of bamboo technology and the development of the bamboo industry in Kenya.

One of the key note speakers Prof. Gordon Sigu, highlighted that bamboo forests in Kenya cover almost 150,000 hectares, some of which are pure stands and others mixed with trees and shrubs. This is mainly of the indigenous arundinaria alpina. However, a few exotic species from many provenances have been tried at various sites in Kenya. Arundinaria alpina is generally used for fencing, house construction and scaffolding, water harvesting, cottage industries for production of matchsticks, toothpicks, fancy handicrafts and in supporting horticultural crops. Bamboo as its specific features which include:-

• Bamboo’s circular form and hollow sections make it a light building material, which is easy to handle, transport and store.
• In each of its nodes, the bamboo culm has a dividing wall that maintains strength and prevents rupturing when bent.
• Because of this inherent characteristic, bamboo structures are highly resilient to mechanical stress.

He emphasized that proper management plans on the establishment, production, utilization and marketing of bamboo would contribute tremendously towards employment creation in the rural areas thus improving livelihoods as well as ameliorate climate change at the local, national and global level. Bamboo as a biomass resource is important in carbon sequestration.
Conservation of River Tana & Sondu Miriu River Catchment for Hydro Power Generation

Benedetta Wasonga

Deforestation is one of the great challenges of our times. Scientists estimate that about half of all the forests that once covered the Earth are now gone. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) estimates that 13 million hectares of forests are destroyed around the globe every year. At that rate, a forest the size of Kenya would be cut in less than six years.

It is these same forests that are so important to Kenya's environment, economy, and particularly to the water supplies that sustain life. Kenyan forests are largely divided between five highland water towers which store rain during the wet seasons and release it during the dry seasons. The rivers that flow from these forests are drying up. This, in turn, is affecting crops, livestock, hydropower production and even tourism as wildlife movements change in response to water availability.

Luckily, although continued forest loss was reported in Kenya, net loss has slowed down in the last 10 years. The areas of planted forests are increasing and it is tree planting through partnerships between government, businesses, civic organizations, and communities that are helping turn the tide on deforestation.

The Upper Tana River and The Sondu Miriu River catchments are some of the country's critical ecosystems that sustain River Tana and Sondu Miriu on which the Seven Forks dams and the Sondu Miriu hydro dam that produces most of the country's hydropower are located. These rivers are under threat of drying up due to deforestation. A reduction of water volumes in these rivers which depend on forests is a reduction in the production of hydropower. It is for this reason that the Ministry of Energy & Petroleum resolved to enter into a three year partnership program with KFS to rehabilitate these forest areas that serve as source to these rivers as 70% of the hydropower production is generated from them.

The participatory program recorded a success rate of 80% with the involvement of the local Community Forest Associations while gearing towards achieving 10% forest cover and the UN millennium goal of eradicating extreme poverty by empowering the communities towards a self sufficient economy.

The Ministry of Energy & Petroleum in partnership with KFS and the communities aims at increasing forest cover in Kenya which will go a long way in increasing water levels towards sustainable hydro-power generation. Forests are not just important for biodiversity and for the storage of carbon but are also for the very tangible purpose of energy production.

The program has seen the rehabilitation of Chepalungu Forest, Saino Forest in Mau and Mbeu Forest among others and is targeting other forest areas in the next phase.
The Launch of the Eastern Regime Long Rains National Tree Planting Season

By Lydia Ogada

The long rains national tree planting season was launched on 25th November, 2015 at Riandu Primary School in Mbeere Sub-County, Embu County. Present at the event was the Cabinet Secretary Environment Natural Resources and Regional Development Authorities Prof. Judi Wakhungu who was the Chief Guest, the Governor of Embu County Martin Wambora, M.P Mbeere North Hon. Muriuki Njagagua, KFS Board Chairman Peter Kirigua, KFS staff, pupils from Riandu Primary School and the adjacent community.

Speaking during the launch, the C.S Prof. Judi Wakhungu recognized the role of the private sector in the development and utilization of our industrial forest resources particularly the saw millers. She urged the licensed investors to engage in good industry practices and to offer support to Kenya Forest Service for sustainable supply of stock for harvesting to meet the ever increasing market demand by the growing Kenyan population. She also thanked KFS for the ongoing preparation of Forest Station plantation management plans for all the stations with forest plantations, in order to guide the management of forest plantations. This is a positive thing seeing as wood-based industries in Kenya largely depend on these tree plantations for supply of raw material and tree plantations are also a viable economic enterprise. The supply from sustainably managed tree plantations reduces the demand curve for wood material and in this way indirectly assists the conservation objective for natural forests.

“It is important to state that our constitution under Section 69 supports the participation of communities in the conservation of our natural resources and that includes forest reserves,” she said and noted that Kenya Forest Service has prioritized country-wide programs that facilitate community involvement in the conservation of forest reserves. The 250 Community Forest Associations (CFAs) established are therefore involved in active forest rehabilitation work, forest protection and silvicultural practices necessary for commercial forestry programs through the use of the Plantations Establishment for Livelihood Improvements Scheme (PELIS). The benefits that forest adjacent communities derive from these partnerships are enhanced food security and income generation through the sale of farm produce as they tend to young growing trees.

She then reiterated the Ministry of Environment’s mandate of spearheading national tree-growing efforts in the country aimed at increasing the forest cover to at least 10 per cent. “This aspiration can be achieved and exceeded if we embrace a tree-growing culture among Kenyans through capacity building, provision of appropriate technologies, providing incentives to farmers and promoting efficient utilization of tree products. Towards this end, I wish to reiterate my Ministry’s commitment to the continued mobilization of additional resources to support all the 35,000 schools under the school greening program and commercial tree growing that was launched in 2013 and is expected to run for a period of 8 years.

KFS Board Chairman Peter Kirigua while addressing the gathering said that KFS was in the process of gazetting two new forests namely Boni and Mukutani/Lemaitai hills in Garissa and Baringo Counties respectively. He then appreciated the role of the Ministry in ensuring that the enactment of the Forest Conservation and Management Bill 2015 is concluded. The process of enacting new law being very consultative, he said that the board was looking forward to the Parliamentary Committee on Environment and Natural Resources to conclude the ongoing regional consultative forums. “The same Bill will be forwarded to the Senate for debate since it touches on the County Governments and we hope that this Bill will be approved by the Parliament in the course of next year.” He said.

The Chairman reiterated the Service’s commitment to implementing programmes that will help see the country continue to increase its tree cover to a minimum of 10% by the year 2030. This he said will help alleviate the problem of perennial flooding whenever the country receives heavy rainfall as is the case now. The Service lays emphasis on building the capacity of communities and the youth to raise tree seedlings for planting. This will see local communities bordering forests benefit by raising millions of seedlings for planting inside and outside gazetted forests. He then acknowledged that since KFS is at the height of planting programmes, it would take full advantage of the current enhanced short rains (EL Nino) pounding the country.

Over 500 trees were planted at Riandu Primary school and the Headmaster of the school promised to look after the trees and nurture them to maturity.
Forests and Landscape Restoration – A Key Component of Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation.

By Michael Muratha and Alfred Gichu

In many parts of the world, people have started to restore degraded forests and landscapes, creating many new opportunities to reduce poverty, improve food security, address climate change and conserve soil, water and biodiversity. The growing awareness of the importance of forest and landscape restoration can be attributed to several international processes, including the UNFCCC, the Bonn Challenge which set a target of restoring at least 150 million hectares of degraded land by 2020 and the Convention on Biological Diversity’s Aichi Biodiversity Targets which calls for countries to restore at least 15 percent of their degraded ecosystems by 2020.

Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) refers to a process that aims to regain ecological integrity and enhance human well being in deforested or degraded forest landscapes by restoring the function and productivity of degraded forest lands. FLR relies on active stakeholder engagement and can accommodate different land uses, including agriculture, agroforestry, protected wildlife reserves, regenerated forests, managed plantations, and riverside plantings.

Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) has been identified as a key area of focus if the forestry sector is to support the realization of national goals and ambitions reflected in several legislations, policies, economic blueprints and strategies. To ensure effectiveness and harmonization of on-going and future restoration initiatives in the country, the government through Kenya Forest Service is coordinating a multi-stakeholder project on “National Landscape Restoration Mapping” in collaboration with the World Resource Institute, Clinton Climate Initiative and the Green Belt Movement.

Further to this, the landscape restoration will be an important tool in helping the country meet its economic, development and environmental goals. To ensure these initiatives are linked and coordinated, Kenya Forest Service has established a Landscape Restoration Technical Working Group, with its members drawn from multiple sectors. The working group has so far made tremendous progress on analyzing landscape restoration options for the country. The options identified include reforestation and rehabilitation of natural forests, farm forestry and woodlots on cropland, commercial tree and bamboo plantations, tree-based buffers along waterways, wetlands and roads, as well as silvo-pastoral and rangeland restoration.

This restoration options have the potential to restore ecosystems services associated with trees, such as erosion control, regulation of water flows, soil quality and forest habitat. In addition the Technical Working Group has produced maps and associated area statistics as proposed priority restoration areas. These maps will help in identifying opportunities to scale up restoration efforts to reduce erosion, increase livelihood diversification, fodder production, as well as present potential areas for commercial plantations among others.

This project is coordinated under the overall guidance of the National REDD+ Coordination Office.
REDD+ Process in Kenya

By Michael Muratha and Alfred Gichu

Forests in Kenya are reported to release about 14 million tons of Carbon dioxide per year mainly from deforestation and forest degradation activities or about 50,000 hectares per year. Past attempts to reduce these emissions by addressing the problem of deforestation and forest degradation in the country have not been very successful undermined by among others increasing demand for land for agriculture, settlement and other developments, high energy demand and inadequate funding to support investments in the forestry sector. Unresponsive policy and weak governance in the forestry sector have often in the past compounded these problems.

Kenya has so far submitted its intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) in response to decisions adopted by the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC); that invites Parties to communicate their contributions towards achieving global greenhouse emission reduction targets. The INDC recognizes the central role of the forestry sector in achieving the national climate change mitigation goals.

REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation, and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks) presents a great opportunity to reduce forest sector emissions by providing innovative approaches, including incentives that support implementation of a comprehensive strategy that effectively supports sustainable management and conservation of existing forested areas. REDD+ seeks to provide compensation to governments, communities, companies or individuals in developing tropical countries for actions taken to reduce Green House Gas (GHG) emissions from the forest sector. REDD+ implementation involves the design and application of appropriate land and forest management practices, including enhanced forest sector governance, reduced deforestation and forest degradation and support to conservation and sustainable management of available forest resources.

Kenya’s participation in REDD+ is premised on the conviction that the process holds great potential in supporting the:

- Realization of vision 2030 objectives of increasing forest cover to a minimum of 10%
- Access to international carbon finance to support investments in the forestry sector
- Design of policies and measures to protect and improve its forest resources
- Realization of the national climate change goals
- Contribution to global climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts

REDD+ READINESS ACTIVITIES

Developing countries that wish to participate in REDD+ implementation, will have to demonstrate their capacity to do so upfront. This capacity is demonstrated by developing or establishing through a stakeholder consultation process the following mandatory UNFCCC requirements which together constitute REDD+ Readiness:

A National Strategy and Implementation Framework;
- Reference Emission Level/Forest Reference Level (baseline on GHG emissions);
- National Forest Monitoring System for assessing performance; and
- Safeguard Information System for informing how REDD+ safeguards are addressed.

The Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF), of which World Bank is the Trustee, and the United Nations Forum on REDD+ (UN-REDD) are the major initiatives supporting developing countries in their readiness efforts. Kenya is a member of both Forest Carbon Partnership Facility and UN-REDD and is receiving financial and technical support towards developing its Readiness activities.

KENYA’S READINESS ACTIVITIES

The National REDD+ Coordination office is co-ordinating a multi-stakeholder driven process that will deliver the four elements of a Readiness process. In support of this, the following activities have either been undertaken or are in the process of implementation:

1. The following analytical studies have been completed to support REDD+ strategy and implementation framework:
PROJECT NEWS

- Detailed analysis on the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation in the country.
- Detailed analysis of demand and supply of forest products in the country.
- Analysis of the charcoal value chain analysis & barriers to investment.
- Development of a Strategic Environment and Social Assessment (SESA) road map.
- Opportunities and challenges for REDD+ law reform and implementation in Kenya.
- Institutional capacity assessment on carbon rights, Benefit sharing and corruption risks studies completed.

2. Stakeholder sensitization and information sharing to support inclusive participation in the strategy formulation process is ongoing;
3. UN-REDD Program Support for REDD+ Governance System activities is ongoing;
4. A National Forest Cover Map has been developed and cover change detection done at three epochs (1990, 2000, 2010) to support the establishment of a National Forest Monitoring System;
5. National Forest Inventory planning activities under way; In addition, the following activities are under implementation, supported by the United Nations Program on REDD+ (UNREDD).

The UN-REDD support to REDD+ readiness is provided through three agencies including FAO, UNDP and UNEP.

1. FAO is currently supporting the following activities:
   - Accuracy assessment of the land covers maps, change and change detection Atlas that was developed with support from the Japanese government.
   - Coordination of MRV activities on the ground to ensure coherence and support delivery of REDD+ outputs;
   - Development of a roadmap for establishing a Forest Reference Level and NFMS;
   - Legal preparedness for a REDD+ implementation phase

2. UNDP is supporting the following activities that seek to strengthen REDD+ and forest sector governance:
   - Mitigating anti-corruption risks of REDD+ and forests.
   - Development of stakeholder engagement guidelines for supporting inclusive stakeholder consultation and participation in REDD+.
   - Development of Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) Guidelines
   - Assessing options for an efficient, effective and equitable REDD+ financing mechanism.

3. UNEP is currently supporting an analytical study that seeks to identify opportunities for improving efficiency in forest operations across the country with special focus on timber, poles and charcoal. In addition, UNEP is supporting the REDD+ process in the country in defining and conducting relevant spatial data analyses and developing maps to inform decision-making on REDD+, especially with regards to spatial planning.
Effects of Alcohol and Drug Abuse in the Work Place

By Monicah Rutto

Alcohol and drug abuse is a phenomenon that is as old as mankind. Over the past two decades the use of illegal drugs and misuse of therapeutic drugs has spread at an unprecedented rate and affects every part of the globe. No nation has been spared the devastating problem caused by alcohol and drug abuse. At the same time a broad spectrum of the world community has demonstrated intense concern over the problem. Surveys on alcohol and drug abuse did not provoke much concern in Kenya until the early 1990s. This may have been as a result of the perception that it was not a major problem among the Kenyan populace. Consequently, discussions on alcohol and drug abuse have tended to be shrouded with rumors and ambiguity.

A study by National Agency for the Campaign against Drug Abuse Authority (NACADAA) observed that the use of alcohol, bhang and miraa has indigenous roots and that the three substances have been widely used in the indigenous society. However the exists no evidence that substance abuse has been part of indigenous heritage; indeed the indigenous society for most part regarded drunkenness as a disgrace. The rapid spread of substance abuse is attributed to the breakdown of the indigenous culture and introduction of foreign influences that have made a variety of substances available on a large scale. It has been realized that many Kenyans are taken captive by alcohol and drug abuse. Recent studies have shown that the prevalence in Kenya is expanding rapidly to the destruction of society. Kenyans cannot afford to be complacent about it, least of all the KFS fraternity whose employees are not spared. The Services’ employees have been faced with many challenges including family issues which spill into the work place, work related separation of families and couples inter personal conflicts, HIV and AIDS, increased stress and burnout, poor morale, poor financial and time management among others. This has led to alcohol and drug abuse which is used as coping mechanism.

Alcohol and Drug Abuse (ADA) causes crime, violence and corruption and drains human, financial and other resources that might otherwise be used for social and economic development leading to the destruction of individuals, families and entire communities and undermines national economies.

ADA in the workplace has the potential to negatively affect the health, safety, productivity and performance of employees which results in organizations’ abilities to achieve their goals. It is therefore clear that ADA affects service delivery hence it is imperative that KFS employees are protected against it if high standards and other KFS mandates are to be realized and maintained.

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE

It is the responsibility of every individual to promote a drug free workplace, inform employees on the dangers of Alcohol, Drugs and Substance Abuse, dispel denial and misconception surrounding Drugs and offer a way forward and a sense of hope to those affected. This therefore calls for concerted efforts from all employees in order to address the menace.
Kibwezi County is a place widely perceived as a region regularly haunted by long drought seasons and harsh climatic conditions. Far from this belief, lies green and fertile stretches and hills covered by forests and terraces - the Kibwezi Forest Reserve which lies along the Nairobi-Mombasa highway. Driving along the highway, you would hardly realize that in the midst of the dry climate, there exists a gem known as the pearl of Kibwezi in the middle of the forest. This gem is the Umani Springs, hidden in the middle of the forest, which provides clean water that supports over 800,000 residents in the expansive Makueni County. Regarded as one of the water towers of the Chyulu ecosystem, it is an impressive water source for the people in the area with water being extracted and piped to the major towns in the area.

According to the area Forest Manager Joseph Mwangi, the Umani Springs have been used to supply water to the local communities, continuing to sustain the mixed forest and wetland ecosystem as well as a small but valuable tourist enterprise.

The forest is administered by the Kenya Forest Service and the local community, who are members of the Kibwezi Community Forest Association (KICOFA), derive benefits from user rights allocated to them as provided for by the Forest Act 2005 through permits issued by the local forest office to carry out activities such as grazing and collection of firewood.

KFS has partnered with the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust to conserve the forest. The forest is also a wildlife habitat the the Trust is using as an elephant orphanage. In the context of climate change and the consequent emission-reduction, there lies an opportunity to view the forest as a potential long-term carbon sink even as it continues to provide vital ecosystem services. It is important to continue to raise awareness about forest issues especially through global processes like the UNFCCC and intensify efforts to make REDD+ a reality.

People have underscored the importance of forests for poverty reduction and development and the governments’ role in sustainable land use and forest management. The Forest Act 2005 encourages private sector and community participation in forestry, fostering a proactive approach towards managing the country’s forest resources. This collaboration is the most effective way to protect and conserve forests as noted by Mr. Mwangi, the area Forest Manager. In its efforts to reduce poverty in the area and improve the livelihoods of the local community, KFS is in the process of introducing other income generating activities such as bee keeping and bamboo production.

“We are seeking a collaborative partnership in order to introduce bamboo growing in the area. We recognize the benefit of forests to the local communities and have therefore partnered with civil society organizations to develop and implement national forest programmes that are broad-based, participatory and inclusive. Additionally, support is provided to develop and implement community forestry initiatives aimed at enhancing the socio-economic values and livelihood benefits derived from the forest.” he said.

“What we do today is not for our own benefit but more for the billions of people who will inherit our earth. Therefore, the responsibility is upon us who live today, to protect and save our forests for our children’s children.” He added.
Sky Is The Limit For The KFS FC Football Team

By Immaculate Maina

Kenya Forest Service football club has become one of the best teams in the league so far and as such it is revered by its opponents, both at home and away. The team started off the season a little late due to wrangles between the Football Kenya Federation and the Kenya Premier League concerning fixture delays. Despite this, the team had been training for four months leading up to the start of the season in May. The major competition for the team has so far been Savannah FC which is sponsored by Savannah Cement. They are currently leading the log and are the only team privileged enough to have snatched points off of the Rangers in both ties in Athi River and Karura grounds respectively.

The team is excited to be playing in the FKF Division 1 Zone A2 for the first time, surprising other teams who knew them as a Provincial League team. Their success in 2015 has been partly due to the fact that they acquired a new coach, Joseph Milimu who replaced Joseph Siguili who had to leave because of ill health. The new coach who has experience coaching Nzoia Sugar, Utalii and Tusker FC has led them to consecutive wins in the last season.

Meanwhile, the team’s standing is at position two and they are hoping to rise to the National Super League which depends on the FKF elections depending on how the league will be constituted. Beaming with positivity, the team hopes to join the Premier League in the next two years. They are also hoping for sponsorship from companies as that will help with providing the soccer balls, uniforms and other finances. This will not only scale them to greater heights but will also be a good platform to market the Service.

Backed by the theme “we plant trees and score goals”, KFS FC has become a team talked about widely both at the federation and its entire leagues. The second leg, though very hurried due to the late start of the league, has brought about the best run for the team winning seven, drawing two and losing one in the twenty team league. This in turn has made the team leapfrog to position two with eight matches to go. In its current form, the team has set a goal which is to maintain their position until the end of the league. Matches for the team have been quite regular as they have been playing at least two matches a week during the last three months. With the continued and unwavering support from the Service and the entire management, this team has made it clear that their core vision and mission is to grow and place Kenya Forest Service both as a brand and a football team respectively, at the crème de la crème of Kenyan football and that is, the Kenya Premier League.

Running to Conserve Kakamega Forest

By Caroline Kahuria

Kenya Forest Service athletes joined other participants in the Inaugural Kakamega Marathon held on 28th November, 2015. The marathon dubbed “ingomarathon” aimed at enhancing, conservation and protecting the national heritage, which is a source of livelihood for communities adjacent to the natural resource.

Kakamega tropical rain forest which is the only Guinea Congolian type of rain forest remaining in Kenya is threatened by human encroachment which is a threat to climate change, which Kenya is keen on addressing through attaining the 10% forest cover as envisaged in vision 2030.

Water and Irrigation Minister Hon. Eugene Wamalwa while addressing the participants emphasized the need to protect the forest and warned against destroying nature since it can be very unforgiving. He emphasized that nature gives back what you invest in it and as a result it is important to protect and conserve our ecosystems so as to benefit from them.

Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources and Regional Development Authorities, Prof. Judi Wakhungu also addressing participants during the marathon in which she participated together with Hon. Eugene Wamalwa, noted that forests are the lungs of the world as they take in excessive carbon dioxide among other gases, giving us a healthy and clean environment and thus should be jealously guarded.

According to the organizers, Kakamega forest heritage foundation, the event will be an annual event to ensure funds raised focus on reforestation, fencing, and cultural conservation. The funds will also focus on empowering local communities on importance of conserving the forest to reduce over dependence of the resource for a green economy.
FROM THE ARCHIVES

A letter dated 15th December, 1949 addressed to the Divisional Forest Officer by a resident of the then Baringo District requesting an extension of the notice to move his cattle elsewhere until the start of the rainy season.
POETRY

The Sound of Trees
Robert Frost

I wonder about the trees. Why do we wish to bear
Forever the noise of these
More than another noise
So close to our dwelling place?
We suffer them by the day
Till we lose all measure of pace,
And fixity in our joys,
And acquire a listening air.
They are that that talks of going
But never gets away;
And that talks no less for knowing,
As it grows wiser and older,
That now it means to stay.
My feet tug at the floor
And my head sways to my shoulder
Sometimes when I watch trees
sway,
From the window or the door.
I shall set forth for somewhere,
I shall make the reckless choice
Some day when they are in voice
And tossing so as to scare
The white clouds over them on.
I shall have less to say,
But I shall be gone.

RIDDLE

1. I have a trunk but I’m not an elephant  Tree

GREEK PROVERB

A society grows great when old men plant trees in whose shade they know they shall never sit.
Greek Proverb

QUOTE

A nation that destroys its soils destroys itself. Forests are the lungs of our land, purifying the air and giving fresh strength to our people.

~ Franklin D. Roosevelt ~

JOKES

How do trees access the internet?
They log on

What did the tree do when the bank closed?
It started its own branch
There is nothing quite like a getaway from the hustle and bustle of the city to a picturesque and serene place where you can really unwind. Nestled amongst some of Nyandarua County’s most pristine natural landscape, Ndaragwa Nature Trail has a lot of eye-catching views from the perennial Pesi river waterfall to the sprawling Ndaragwa Forest.

Developed and managed by Kenya Forest Service, Ndaragwa Nature Trail is located in Ndaragwa Forest Station which is situated in the northern end of the expansive Aberdare Forest, approximately 26km from Nyahururu and 77km from Nyeri.

Surrounding the Nature Trail are restaurants and curio shops where one can refresh themselves and soak in the wonder of Ndaragwa’s landscape.

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CAPE CHESTNUT
Calodendrum Capense

Also known as the Fern Leaf tree or Thika Palm, it is a well-known African tree. The Cape Chestnut has a spectacular display of pink flowers and is found mostly in the Coastal forests due to its preference for a sunny open position in rich, moist, well-drained soil. In Kenya, it is typical of evergreen highland forests and riparian forests ranging from 1200m-2200m above sea level.

It is a semi-deciduous tree growing up to 20m tall with a shapely spreading crown. Sometimes bare for several months, it has a grey bark, smooth young hairy branchlets, its opposite leaves are broadly oval and wavy to 14cm with a clear midrib and veins. It looks spectacular when in flower, as the large, showy, pink-white flowers cover the whole of the crown (the leafy part of the tree).

Its fruits are knobbly to softly spiny becoming hard capsules (chest nuts). It has a wide variety of uses such as fuel wood, charcoal, timber, poles, tool handles, ornaments, cosmetics, shade, milking and windbreaks.