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From The Editor

In this issue of the Forester Magazine, we present articles of some of the biggest achievements in the country in as far as forest conservation and protection is concerned. The conservation of the Mau forest complex, the biggest water tower in the country has been a concern of the government and especially the Service.

However, efforts to conserve the forest complex had been hampered by resistance from people who had illegally settled there. The reclamation of the Maasai Mau forest in Narok county in an initiative spearheaded by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry was therefore a welcome relief in the continuing effort to restore the integrity of critical forest ecosystems in the country.

Other articles in the issue include the 43rd. graduation ceremony of Londiani Collage and the National Dialogue conference organized by the Forestry Society of Kenya. The Service also signed and launched a number of Participatory Forest Management Plans (PFMPs) and Forest Management Agreement (FMAs). We have also highlighted our collaboration with County governments in the management of forests as well as the launch of the short rains tree planting season activities.

In this issue, we have also carried a story, in the interview form, of one of our own staff members who best demonstrate the virtues of hard work and determination. Read all these and much more in issue 27 of the Forester magazine.

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DISCLAIMER
Views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Kenya Forest Service Board and Management.
As we usher in a new year and consequently the ‘decade of action’ to deliver sustainable solutions to all the world’s biggest challenges, it is imperative that I highlight the defining steps that the Organization took in 2019 that are essential building blocks towards shaping a sustainable future.

Looking back over the past year, the Service has played an integral role in formulating and implementing policy frameworks that are key in ensuring protection, restoration and the equitable use of forests and forest resources. Key among this was the successful eviction of illegal settlers in the Mau Forest Complex.

The water tower, which is the largest in Kenya, supports millions of livelihoods both nationally and internationally, and therefore reclaiming it was a vital step for the survival of the regional socio-economic livelihood support system and the natural ecosystem.

Furthermore, the concerted efforts witnessed during this exercise, between Kenya Forest Service, Ministry of Environment and Forestry and our partner agencies and organizations are a clear testament of the importance of multi-stakeholder engagement in forest conservation and rehabilitation.

Looking forward, we aim to centralize ourselves as an important facet in realizing the Sustainable Development Goals at a national level and achieving the 10% forest cover by 2022. This will be achieved through continued support in tree planting exercises, extending engagements with forest adjacent communities and citizens and creating a holistic partnership between the stakeholders, government agencies and corporates in conserving our forests.

I am aware of the immense yet important task that lies ahead for the Service. However, through the enthusiastic and formidable support and work ethic I have witnessed over the past year, I strongly believe that Kenya Forest Service will achieve its inherent mandate of providing the development and sustainable management of all forest resources.

Julius Kamau

Hello Kenya Forest Service my name is James Karuga a science journalist for Spore Magazine and Reuters. Kindly do You have any initiatives with local communities around Kenya on climate mitigation? I am very much interested in covering them. Thanks, I am looking to hear from You.

James Karuga

Hi James, Yes, we do work with communities living around forests in forest conservation and management all of which is aimed at climate change mitigation and adaptation among other environmental benefits. However, we have a project in Kwale doing mangrove protection and conservation for carbon trading.

Editor.
National Strategy to Achieve and Maintain 10% Tree Cover

By Leakey Sonkoyo

The Government of Kenya through the Ministry of Environment and Forestry has come up with a Strategy to guide the attainment of the Constitutional requirement for a 10% tree cover in the country by 2022. This requirement has further been reaffirmed in the country’s official development blue print, Vision 2030, which sets a target of achieving the threshold by the year 2030. It is this threshold that has been brought forward by His Excellency the President to the year 2022 that has necessitated the development of the National Strategy for Achieving and Maintaining Over 10% Tree Cover By 2022.

The rationale for the strategy is to broaden institutional and multi-stakeholder participation in accelerating the achievement of the target of 10% tree cover of the national land area as provided under the law as well as to implement the Presidential Directives that this target should be achieved through among other initiatives the revival of Chief’s tree nurseries with technical support of Kenya Forest Service (KFS) and allocation of 10% Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) by all public institutions to tree growing. The strategy will also assist in helping the government to implement several national and global commitments with respect to climate change, biodiversity conservation, and land degradation.

The government has committed to restore 5.1 million Ha of degraded landscapes as a contribution to the Africa Forest Landscape Initiative (AFR100), 50% reduction of greenhouse gases from the forest sector by 2030 as part of its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) to climate change, and to achieve land degradation neutrality by 2030 as a commitment to United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

Forests and the Big 4 agenda.

The 10% tree cover strategy will also be instrumental in enhancing the contribution of the Forestry sector towards implementation of the Big 4 Agenda. The Environment and Forest sector is the foundation upon which the performance of the key primary sectors of the economy is anchored including, manufacturing, energy, health and agriculture. The success of the government’s plan to provide at least 500,000 affordable and decent housing by 2022 will depend strongly on the inputs from the forest sector, including; timber, poles, pulp, veneer, parquets among other goods.

The furniture industry, which strongly depends on inputs from forests, has an estimated annual production value of KES 23 billion. Forests will also play critical roles in the achievement of 100% Universal Health Care (UHC) by supporting; production of raw materials for the pharmaceutical industry, absorption of pollutants, water purification, herbal medicine, and improved nutrition. There is significant clinical evidence that deforestation has significant impact on the mosquito vectoral capacity by increasing the number of new mosquito infections from one infected individual by 77%. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 80% of the population of developing countries relies on traditional medicine, originating from forests, for their primary health care needs.

It is further estimated that 60% of anticancer and antihypertensive drugs are of plant origin. Forests and trees serve as natural air conditioners, filter harmful pollutants and act as carbon sinks. Forests provide raw materials, energy sources for the industries, power transmission, and water sources. The assessment, of Mau Forest Complex, Cherangany Hills, and Mt. Elgon ecosystems valuation, established that they provide 35 million m3 of water valued at KES 3.4 billion per year for irrigation, industry, and commercial uses by various stakeholders.

In as far as food security is concerned, forests are a source of food, fodder for livestock, soil and water conservation, household incomes, and employment. The Mau, Cherangany and Mt. Elgon ecosystem contribution towards production of fodder, food in form of fruits and game meat and planted food crops is estimated at KES 634,770,000.

The rivers and streams that emanate from these ecosystems support the irrigation of 52,030 hectares of agricultural land in Kenya, thus making invaluable contributions to food security. They support soil and nutrient conservation, provision of water and habitat for pollinators.

The cost of implementation of the strategy is estimated to be KES 48 Billion, which will be shared between Government ministries, agencies, departments, County Governments, the private sector, farmers, community based organizations and all other stakeholders.

Implementation of the strategy is expected to yield numerous economic benefits to the country. Under the strategy, 1.8 Billion seedlings will be produced and planted for purposes of rehabilitation of degraded natural forests and commercial public forest plantations, establishment of private forests, bamboo, tree planting in schools and greening of institutions and infrastructure.

In the event that these interventions are not implemented, the consequences will manifest in form of reduced supply of important products and ecological services emanating from forested landscapes. The cost of inaction is estimated at KES 168 Billion.
The Launch of the Short Rains Tree planting season for Western Region has took place at Bukura Agricultural College, Kakamega County.

The launch facilitated planting of 11,200 seedlings by Kenya Forest Service partners, forestry stakeholders, students and community members. This launch was done concurrently with the launch of tree planting for Nyanza Region. The launches were followed by a series of tree planting activities led by KFS officers from the conservancies and representatives from Karura Headquarters and the Ministry of Environment and Forestry. The teams also visited Busia, Migori, Vihiga, Bungoma and Homabay Counties where meetings were held between KFS, The County Governments, stakeholders and communities living around forests in the region.

Busia Governor Sospeter Ojaamong mandated all 117 devolved village units in the county to have tree nurseries of at least 10,000 seedlings each to enable residents obtain seedlings with ease for subsequent planting during the rainy seasons. The Governor said it was part of his government’s concerted efforts to have the county achieve the 10 per cent forest cover by 2022.

Busia Forest Cover currently stands at 1.01%, a feat that the KFS and the Governor agreed to partner to ensure the target was achieved. By the time of meeting, over 30,000 trees have been planted in Busia County during the short rains by the County Government KFS and other partners.

At a tree planting event in Vihiga County, the Deputy Governor Dr. Patrick Saisi said the County Government has set aside Ksh7.5 Million this financial year towards the rehabilitation of Maragoli Hills and a further Ksh.80 Million funding expected from the European Union. He said that the County Government was working hard towards setting up tree nurseries in the county for production of indigenous seedlings to support tree growing in future rainy seasons.

Subsequent tree planting activities in the region were also led by the Vice Chairman of the KFS Board Mr. Peter Wandera where tree planting activities were conducted at Alupe University & Budalangi in Busia County and at Mirema Hills in Migori County where a total of 18,000 seedlings were planted.
The **43**. Kenya Forestry College Graduation Ceremony

*By Michael Kitum*

Kenya Forestry College (KFC), the training arm of the Service, marked the **43** graduation on 13th September 2019 in a colorful ceremony at Londiani, Kericho County which saw 82 graduands receive awards of certificates and diplomas in forestry related courses.

While conferring the graduands for their achievements, the Chief Guest CAS Ministry of Environment and Forestry Hon. Mohamed Elmi commended the graduands and called on Kenyans to enroll more students in the college noting that KFC was the only institution in the country offering diploma and certificate levels in forestry profession, so as to build capacity in forest conservation in the country which he said; “still has more opportunities in the field of forest conservation and management both at the county and national levels.”

The Kenya Forest Service Board Chairman, Mr. Peter Kinyua reiterated the important role KFC College plays in training and equipping forestry professionals in the country with technical forestry management skills required to manage the country’s natural resource (forests). He called on county governments to consider sponsoring more students into the college who will be trained and be of benefit in managing the devolved forestry function at the county levels.

He further urged the graduands to consider using the knowledge gained at the institution for the good of the country.

On his part, the Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) Mr. Julius Kamau expressed his intention in fast tracking the revitalization of the College as a centre of excellence in practical forestry training, through concerted marketing strategy and campaigns.

“**There are plans to diversify training programmes at the College with the approval of the Board that the college introduces new courses to increase student enrolment.**” said the CCF.

The CCF also pointed out that the Service was in the process of facilitating the training of the college staff on teaching methodologies at Kenya Technical Trainers College, as a requirement by the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority (TVETA) registered institutions.

The graduation ceremony was attended by among others the Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI) Chairman Dr. Sammy Letema, KEFRI Director Dr. Joshua Cheboiwo, Chairman National Environment Trust Fund (NETFUND) Hon. Rev Moses Akaranga among other government and county officials.
The Forests 2020 has made notable strides in utilizing Earth Observation technology to survey and quantify forests biomass in four pilot regions of Kwale, Mt. Elgon, Laikipia, and Cherangany.

The Earth Observation technology is being used to improve forest biomass estimation methods to enhance the accuracy of forest resources assessment in Kenya. This is important because it will be possible to estimate carbon stocks in forests, as well as project future carbon stock trends in the country.

This information will inform carbon trading and national and international reporting. In addition, there will be quantification of biomass energy to guide tree growers and investors who will be equipped with tools for making sound forest management decisions. Further, information acquired from Earth Observation technology will assist County Governments in quantifying and managing forest biomass within their jurisdiction. Students and researchers will also benefit from the methods and algorithms that are being utilized and it will give a chance for further developments.

Forests play an important role in mitigation of climate change, however, the amount of carbon currently held in forest resources has not yet been quantified.

Biomass estimates in private forests and wooded grasslands in Kenya is also currently unknown. The Forests 2020 Project was therefore conceived to address this glaring gap in forest information, particularly to inform Climate Change processes.

The Project is funded by the UK Space Agency through Eco metric, a private company, in partnership with the University of Edinburgh and University of Leicester, KEFRI and Jomo Kenyatta University of Science and Technology (JKUAT).

Kenya is one of two countries in Africa that has been selected in this project which is in a pilot phase. Once successful, the Earth Observation methodologies for forest biomass estimation methods will be rolled out to other countries in the continent.

Forests 2020 Project has assisted to monitor forest dynamics and changes associated with fires, degradation and illegal logging in the selected pilot areas. Once rolled out to the rest of the country, the Earth Observation technology will facilitate more timely decision making in:

Identification and mapping out of forests under risks and prioritization of forests at risks to mitigate the reduction or degradation of the said forests; Documentation of trends on forest dynamics changes over time; Balancing technical forest management skills and technology to drive improvements.

Delivering on Kenya’s commitment to forest restoration and climate action; Restructuring of KFS to be more responsive and become the “center for excellence” for Forestry Management and Conservation in Kenya.

In October 2019, the Chief Conservator of Forests, Mr. Julius Kamau, accompanied by the Project Manager Mr. Jamleck Ndambiri and the Deputy CCF Forest Conservation and Management Ms. Charity Munyasya, paid a visit to the project partners in the UK. At a meeting with Eco metric Company, it became evident that the Earth Observation needs to factor Arid and Semi-Arid Lands in Kenya, which account for more than 80 percent of the country’s land cover, including woodlands and dry land forests, as part of forest biomass.

This had been omitted in initial resource assessments. Subsequent meetings with the University of Edinburgh and Carbonmaps Company displayed the kind of data maps that have been generated, revealing the changes in Kenya’s forest cover. Different methods would be utilized to assess the country’s dry land region and high potential areas in order to increase the accuracy of the data.
IRA-KFS Partner in Mangrove Restoration
By Royan Ndegwa

The Kenya Forest Service and the Insurance Regulatory Authority (IRA) conducted a tree planting exercise at Mikindani, Mombasa County where over 5,000 trees were planted. The event was presided over by the Environment Cabinet Secretary (CS) Hon. Keriako Tobiko where they also witnessed the signing of a five-year framework for collaboration by the Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) Mr. Julius Kamau and Commissioner of Insurance and CEO IRA, Mr. Godfrey Kiptum.

This MOU will facilitate the planting and adoption of mangrove trees along the 4000 kilometers coastal stretch. This is one of the many collaborations the Service is in partnerships with along the coastline. Hon. Tobiko ordered for a speedy planting of mangroves along the coast region and assured that the government will fully support the project by adopting the area including planting more to cover the entire creek.

He directed the Ministry agencies to meet and work on enforcing a 100-day Rapid Results Initiative of the planting of mangroves on the designated 4000 hectares along the Kenyan coast.

The Insurance Regulatory Authority has contributed Ksh. 1 million towards tree growing as Corporate Social Responsibility. They went ahead and conducted another tree planting exercise at the same venue after the 100 RRI days which saw over 10,000 mangrove seedlings planted led by their Board Chairman Hon. Abdirahin Abdi.

The CS called on Kenyans to continue planting trees in efforts to mitigate the effects of environmental degradation in the country. Hon. Tobiko praised the efforts by women and children who have continuously contributed to tree planting including the mangroves planted at Tudor creek in Mikindani Mombasa.

The CCF Mr. Julius Kamau challenged Mikindani residents to venture into mangroves business by conserving them and eventually selling them saying that would earn them income thus improving their livelihoods.

He observed that the government is keen on achieving a ten percent forest cover by 2020 as per the presidential directive. It is expected that every department within the government should commit 10 percent of its budget on environmental conservation.

In the past, KFS has been partnering with Big Ship Community Based Organization (CBO) to rehabilitate and conserve Tudor Creek where Insurance Regulatory Authority has now adopted the site and will be partnering with them in the rehabilitation. Big Ship is a community-driven organization working with the youth and their community in conserving the environment and promoting their sustainable development through empowerment programs. The organization strives at creating a healthy and sustainable environment for social-economic development in Mombasa County. Their mission is to promote sustainable development by empowering local communities in environmental conservation.

The Service thanks the Insurance Regulatory Authority for taking up responsibility and for its commitment to tree growing and looks forward to a long partnership and encourages other Government Ministries, Semi-Autonomous Agencies and organizations to promote tree growing as per the Presidential directive for all State Agencies to dedicate 10% of their CSR budget towards tree growing.
General News

Equity Bank Group Tree Planting- Ngong Road Forest

By Sylvester Okal & Michael Kitum

Equity Bank LTD and the Kenya Forest Service launched a 35 million trees planting initiative in October 2019 at Ngong Road Forest. This was part of the celebrations to mark the bank’s 35th anniversary. The bank has set aside Kshs.350 million to accomplish the exercise. The bank pledged to work through its 183 branches, 7,000 staff as well as the leadership program scholars. The bank will also work with its 14 million customers for each to plant at least 10 seedlings each across the county.

The partnership between KFS and Equity Group is designed to identify hotspots that require urgent tree cover and rehabilitation of degraded areas, mapping out of agro-ecological zones & identification of suitable tree species for planting in the different areas, identifying high quality seedling stocks across the country and supply of KFS officers at local levels to ensure proper planting & nurturing of seedlings.

KFS is tasked to ensure production and planting of quality seedlings for the success of the initiative. The Service through its 250 forest stations will secure the planted areas both within and outside gazetted forest lands.

During the launch, Equity CEO Dr. James Mwangi said that farmers will be incentivized within the program through the provision of commercial and fruit tree species for planting on farms.

As per the time of launch the bank had planted 100,000 seedlings in woodlots and planted 7,108 fruit trees. This partnership will scale-up Equity Group’s contribution to the attainment of the targeted 10% tree by 2022.

“Kenya Forest Service and Equity bank have a long and fruitful relationship that has seen farmers access capital for farm forestry enterprise,” stated KFS Board Chairman Peter Kinyua. He said the Service is open to working with communities and other partners to realize the aspirations of all entities.

At the same time The Chief Conservator of Forests Mr. Julius Kamau said the Service is glad and honored to have the partnership to attain the highest gains for the environment and deepen collaboration with Equity going forward. “The partnership is a significant boost towards the attainment of 10% tree cover by 2022,” said the CCF.

Equity Bank Chairman Prof. Macharia Muthure said the Equity Bank and Group Board is certain the target is achievable, affirming the bank has a tradition of meeting and surpassing its targets. He said the effects of environmental degradation are far-reaching and encouraged tree planting in all available spaces within and outside forests.

Earlier partnership between KFS and Equity Bank Group has seen strengthening of Farmer Field School networks across the country and among other projects founded on supporting the community for sustainable livelihood.
For the first time in Kenya, the REDD+ Academy took place in October 2019 whereby about 60 participants from Government, NGOs and other private sector organizations were taken through a one week training organized by UNDP, UNEP, and the Ministry of Environment and Forestry. The training is meant to enhance knowledge amongst policy makers and implementers of climate change programs and giving lessons on various modules, including providing international experiences in handling climate change issues.

The training includes modules on understanding climate change and the role of forests, understanding REDD+ and the UNFCCC, drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, developing national strategies and action plans, national forest monitoring systems for REDD+, forest reference levels for REDD+, policies and measures for implementation, safeguards, finance, incentives, stakeholder engagement and good governance.

The training workshop was officially opened by the Principal Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forestry, Ms. Betty Maina, who emphasized the importance of building a pool of REDD+ experts both in Government and private sector, to spearhead and fast track implementation of the national strategy on climate change.

The PS emphasized the need for County Governments to get involved in climate change programs and in particular through supporting tree growing and forest conservation. The PS asked the trainees to ensure they pass the knowledge gained to others, to ensure an increasing number of citizens who understand REDD+ and contribute meaningfully to its strategic goals.

The forestry sector offers over forty percent potential for mitigation of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

The UNFCCC hence developed REDD approach for developing countries to provide incentives for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation.

REDD+ factored other additional components, namely conservation of forest carbon stocks; sustainable management of forests (SFM); and, enhancement of forest carbon stocks. There are three stages in implementation of REDD+ which starts with ‘readiness’ and this involves preparing strategies and action plans and building capacity for implementation. The REDD+ academy training is part of the readiness stage.

Trainers gave global and national perspectives on each module, and it was evident that each country is expected to adjust to national circumstances.

Participants were given varying case studies from around the world. One point of concern for Kenya is the rights of Indigenous People in Cherengany and Mount Elgon water towers, a matter that is being looked into by a taskforce set up by the Cabinet Secretary Ministry of Environment and Forestry, Keriako Tobiko. The taskforce will present its findings and recommendations in early 2020, this will be a critical step in implementation of REDD+.

KFS was represented by Kenya Forestry College Principal, Mr Peter Waweru, Ag. Head Climate Change, Rose Akombo, CADEP Project Manager Mr. Peter Nduati, among other staff.

“...The training is meant to enhance knowledge amongst policy makers and implementers of climate change programs and giving lessons on various modules...”
Sporting Icon Eliud Kipchoge honored at Karura Forest

By Bulbul Ratemo & Royan Ndegwa

Marathon champion Eliud Kipchoge EGH, planted a commemorative tree alongside the Chief Conservator of Forests Mr. Julius Kamau during a family mock-marathon outing held in November 2019. The event organized by Isuzu East Africa at Karura Forest, was aimed at feting the global sporting icon following his record-breaking exploits in Vienna.

The event featured key personalities from the corporate world led by Isuzu EA MD Rita Kavashe, Centum CEO James Mworia and representatives from the Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA).

The guests also had the opportunity to plant commemorative trees at a setting adjacent to the pristine Amani Gardens.

The mini-marathon which preceded the tree planting proceedings was flagged off by the CCF and covered a 4km course through the canopied trails inside Karura Forest. Speaking after the mock race, the CCF noted the apparent connection that exists between forests and sports in general.

He further articulated that, “forests provide ideal training grounds for Kenyan athletes and as a result, plans are underway for Eliud Kipchoge to adopt Kaptagat Forest in Uasin Gishu County.” With Kenya Forest Service mandated to conserve, protect and develop forests and forest resources, “the Service intends to enhance ecotourism in all natural forests and identify sites for athletic tracks in order to promote equitable forest conservation,” Said the CCF.

The Chief Conservator of Forests also appreciated the organizers for selecting Karura forest as the site of the event. He encouraged corporate entities to delve into forest conservation as part of their CSR activities and highlighted Karura forest as an existing testament to the innate power of cross-sectoral involvement in forest conservation.

Karura Forest Reserve is located in the northern part of Nairobi city. At 1,041 hectares, it is one of the largest urban gazetted forests in the world. The forest contains nearly all the 605 species of wildlife found in Nairobi including three types of antelopes. It is managed by Kenya Forest Service (KFS).
Launch of the Mara Mara Participatory Forest Management Plan (PFMP)

By Benedetta Wasonga

The Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) Mr. Julius Kamau presided over the launch of the Mara Mara Participatory Forest Management Plan (PFMP) for the period 2019-2023. The CCF also signed the Forest Management Agreement (FMA) between KFS and Mara Mara Community Forest Association in Mara Mara Forest Station, Bomet County. The event involved various activities including tree planting and a visit to conservation sites within the forests where the CPA undertakes IGAs like bee keeping.

The development process of the PFMP was supported by Filays (K) and ISLA in collaboration with KFS, Bomet County Government, WRA and KTDA. The PFMP will form the background through which the Service will engage with the Mara Mara CFA in the conservation of the forest by non-extractive methods such as ecotourism, recreational and cultural activities, bee keeping and honey harvesting, grass harvesting, collection of medicinal herbs, wild fruits and vegetables, seedling production, water abstraction, scientific and educational activities, and other benefits.

Speaking during the signing of the FMA, the CCF noted that Bomet County is among the Counties that have already signed the Transition Implementation Plans (TIPS) which informs the legal framework through which the Service and the County will engage in the development of Forest programs for the devolved forestry function.

The CCF also noted the importance of empowering Community Forest Associations (CFAs) in forest protection and conservation by engaging them as the first line of defense against any forest illegalities.

The FMA, as a management tool, grants the CFA user rights to participate in the conservation and management of the forest reserve which covers an area of 16,700 Ha and is part of the South West Mau Forest within the Konoin Sub County of Bomet County.

Mara Mara Forest Reserve is one of the best-conserved forest blocks of the larger Mau Complex Ecosystem with the least reported degradation and through the FMA, the Service hopes to engage closely with the forest adjacent community towards the restoration and preservation of the forest block.

The CCF was accompanied by Bomet County Governor Dr. Hilary Barchok, Managing Director of Finlays Mr. Simon Hutchinson, Bomet Assistant County Commissioner Mr. Ezekiel Amonde, KFS Head of Management Plans Dr. Elizabeth Wambugu, Forest Conservation Committee Chairman Prof. Eric Koech, Head of Mau Forest Conservancy Mr. George Njenga, Bomet Ecosystem Conservator Ms. Anne Nyaoke among others present.
Forest Adjacent Communities Awarded for Conservation

By Michael Kitum

For the first-time, Community Forest Associations in the country have been awarded for their contribution towards forest conservation, management, and protection.

This took place on 21st November, 2019 in Chepalungu forest, Bomet County where the Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) Mr. Julius Kamau launched the Inaugural 2019 Community Forest Associations (CFA) Awards.

The award scheme, organized by the National Alliance of Community Forest Associations (NACOFA) with support from World-Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), KFS, East African Wildlife Society, and Kenya Forest Working Group aims to create public awareness on the importance of CFAs in forest protection, conservation, and management.

The event saw 11 CFAs namely; Mara Mara, Olenguruone, Sururu, Chepalungu, Nyangores, Kaptunga, Ndoinet, Itare, Olposimoru, Nairobi, and Likia CFA members awarded in four categories based on CFA Governance, Business and Enterprise Development in Forestry, Forest Conservation and Management, and Sustainable Forest Practices.

Speaking during the award ceremony, the CCF acknowledged the complimentary role CFAs play in the conservation of forest resources in the country as co-managers with the Government through KFS and other stakeholders.

“The main objective of this pilot award scheme is to recognize CFAs actively taking part in forest conservation and management in parts of the Mau Forest Complex.” said the CCF.

The CCF noted the importance of the award scheme in creating awareness among forest adjacent communities on the importance of forest conservation and management and thereby enhancing their participation towards the attainment of 10% tree cover by 2022. Additionally, the CCF expressed that, going forward, KFS in partnership with the National Environment Trust Fund (NETFUND) will develop a National CFA Awarding Scheme to recognize passion and award efforts in tree growing and forest conservation.

On his part the Bomet Governor, Dr. Hillary Barchok expressed the commitment of his administration in supporting conservation efforts through the signing of the Transition Implementation Plans (TIPs) which forms the legal framework of engagement between the two levels of government stipulating the responsibilities of counties via-a-vis that of the Service noting that forest management is a devolved function.

Governor Barchok committed to supporting the conservation efforts of Chepalungu by allocating funds towards the construction of a forest station in Chepalungu.

“As part of my Government’s commitment, I have instructed the relevant department to initiate the procurement process for the construction of a forest station in Chepalungu Forest station Chesambai block in this financial year,” said Governor Barchok.

NACOFA Chairman and Vice Chairman of the KFS Board Mr. Peter Wandera encouraged communities to adopt best farming practices that coincide with the KFS commitment of conservation towards the attainment of a 10% tree cover by 2022. He urged the youth in forest adjacent communities to join CFAs and carry out IGAs that will uplift their livelihoods.
The Forest Management Agreement (FMA) between County Government of Embu and Kiang’ombe & Kianjiru Community Forests Associations (CFAs) was officially signed at Kambachi School Grounds, Embu County on 1st October 2019.

The preparation and writing of the FMA was facilitated by the Capacity Development Project for Sustainable Forest Management (CADEP-SFM) a project based at Kenya Forest Service Headquarters.

CADEP-SFM is a technical cooperation project funded by the Government of Japan through the Japan International Corporation Agency-Kenya (JICA) and the Government of Kenya. CADEP-SFM also facilitated the preparation and writing of Participatory Management Plans (PFMPs) for Kianjiru Forest and Kiang’ombe Forest Hills. The FMA covers a total of 2,104Ha (Kiang’ombe Forest) and 1,004Ha (Kianjiru).

Speaking during the signing ceremony, the Deputy Chief Conservator of Forests Conservation Management, Charity Munyasya urged the community and the stakeholders to ensure implementation of the FMA is done conclusively to contribute to the achievement of the targeted 10% tree cover by 2022.

The Embu CEC for Environment Josephat Kithumbu stated that the County Government will allocate Kshs. 5million to support the two CFAs in their forest conservation activities. He urged the community living around Kianjiru Forest to keep giving a helping hand in protecting the forest for the sake of the future inhabitants of the area. The community pledged to compliment efforts of Kenya Forest Service to restore the forest to its former glory; a topic that was adversely mentioned by local leaders during the ceremony.

The signing of the FMA was followed by graduation of Farmer Field Schools where a total of 217 farmers graduated after studying for a period of one year. The graduation ceremonies were held in Siakago, Kambachi and Ishiara Sub counties in Embu County.

The County government efforts in conservation was evident in the support of the farmer field school program by the Environment Department throughout the study period.
A team of KFS senior forest officers recently undertook tree planting campaigns in Nyanza Conservancy. The team that was led by Mr. Samuel Muriithi, Head of Economics, Licensing and Marketing at the Kenya Forest Service was out to drum support towards increasing Kenya’s forest cover to 10% by the year 2022.

The campaign in Nyanza Conservancy was undertaken in four counties namely Siaya, Kisumu, Homa Bay and Migori in partnership with the respective National and County Governments.

The forest cover in Nyanza Conservancy in generally low against the national average forest cover of 7.2%. Nyamira County leads with 7.29% and is above the national average. However, the counties of Homa Bay (2.59%), Kisii (2.62%), Migori (0.64%), Kisumu (0.44%) and Siaya (0.42%) are way below the national average. Mr. Samuel Muriithi explained to the public and various officials the impact of low forest cover to the economic welfare of the people in the region with a view of spurring increased tree planting and better their own economic fortunes.

He says soil erosion at rate of 70-80 tons per hectare has been recorded in several hotspots in the region. This in turn has led to low land productivity to the point where farms record maize production of 3-4 bags an acre per year. “As a result, households use much of their income to buy food thus compromising their ability to save and diversify their livelihoods”, he observes. Erosion is also evident from high sediment load in most of the rivers draining into Lake Victoria. He says previous studies have shown that river Nyando had a sediment load of 900 units against the optimal level of 50 units. The sediment load has negative impacts on communities who depended on rivers for water and the health of the Lake. Water of high sediment load is known to block water canals in irrigation schemes in the region. This reduces the water available for irrigation and increases the water canal maintenance costs. All these reduce economic benefits from farming and related activities.

Lack of tree cover has exposed soil to severe erosion leading to loss of soil fertility, notes Mr. Muriithi.

Mr. Muriithi observes that water of high turbidity is known to be a good host for parasites and vectors which increase prevalence of diseases. Human disease can lead to high economic losses in terms of high treatment costs and morbidity. High turbidity levels in water also raises water treatment costs. High sediment load is known to decrease water holding capacity of water reservoirs. This not only reduces water available but also reduces the economic life span of water reservoirs in the region. The high amounts of sediments drained into the Lake Victoria lead to an increase of nutrients such as phosphorous and nitrates. These further lead to growth of green algae which competes with fish for oxygen. This results to falling fish stocks in the lake, leading to loss of income for fishermen, increased cost of fishing as fishermen are forced to go further into the lake and inevitably, increased cost of the fish to the consumers. Water of high sediment load is also unsuitable for recreation activities.

This may explain why some water sports such as sking in some sections of the lake have since been abandoned, he says.

Low forest cover increases the rate of runoff. This was evident from the enormous amount of water flowing across farms in all the counties visited.

Storm water causes damage on roads, houses and other important amenities.

Mr. Muriithi says the severity of floods would have been less if forest cover was higher. This is because trees increase soil water holding capacity therefore reducing the amount of runoff. Most households in the region depend on firewood as the main source of energy for cooking. Lack of enough firewood for domestic use has adversely affected the economic welfare of some households particularly in Kano plains.

“it was reported that women spend about three days a week fetching for firewood in the neighboring County of Kericho, time that would have otherwise been used to carry out other essential household activities if firewood was available on farms”, observes Mr. Muriithi. Mr. Muriithi says the message to stakeholders in the counties with least forest cover in the region is geared towards creating understanding on the direct linkages between optimal forest cover and their economic well being.
KFS athletics team excels in the 16th Edition of the Ndakaini Half Marathon

Bulbul Ratemo & Benedetta Wasonga

Kenya Forest Service (KFS) Headquarters and North Rift Conservancy Athletic Teams participated in the annual Ndakaini Marathon held in Murang’a County on 9th November, 2019.

The KFS Team was pitted against other corporate organizations most notably, Tima Flow and Royal Media. KFS came in second overall after Fonterra to cap off the top three standings. Forest rangers Hosea Rotich and Gladys Birir performed strongly from both sets of athletes.

Speaking after the award ceremony, team patron Patrick Namagwa commended the professionalism of the athletes and their desire to always improve on their performances. He further articulated on the training regime of the athletes as being the catalyst for their top performance. He added that, “the outcome of this race doesn’t come as a surprise to me as it is a reflection of the work we have been doing over the year and the athletes are benefiting from the sacrifices they have made.”

The team also participated in the Chebara Dam Half Marathon, Cheptongei Forest Station in Elgeyo Marakwet County and KASS Marathon to wrap up the local 2019 athletics calendar.

In a side event, Ndakaini Dam Environment Conservation Association (NDEKA), pledged to plant 350,000 tree seedlings in the Aberdares Forest during the 2019 edition of the Marathon with the aim of safeguarding the environment and contributing to the national efforts in attaining 10% forest cover by 2022.

He says all is not lost as most County Governments visited committed to increase budgetary allocation for tree planting. The County Commissioners who are in charge of coordination of National Government activities in Counties were also not left behind. They committed to mobilize Chiefs and their Assistants to spearhead tree planting campaigns in their areas of jurisdiction.

There are numerous mitigation measures to increase the forest cover in the region. These are highlighted by wide and active stakeholders’ engagement that include National and County Governments, Non-Governmental Organizations and Community Based Organizations.

According to the KFS Head of Conservancy Nyanza Mr. Dedan Ndiritu, wide stakeholder participation is realizing increased tree planting in the region and believes the low forest cover counties can better their fortunes through increased tree planting.

He says the Kenya Forest Service is working with Community Forest Associations as per the provisions of the Forest Conservation and Management Act 2016.

“We are seeking and implementing practical solutions to raise the tree cover in the region, we are working with CFAs, particularly women and youth in raising seedlings which are planted in public spaces and on farm,” Mr. Ndiritu notes.

Mr. Ndiritu notes that in counties that are adjacent to the lake, the Service is working with fishing entities both in raising and planting trees.

“Forest cover is an insurance against floods, food insecurity, declining water quality and quantity, water borne diseases and reduced human welfare,” affirms Mr. Muriithi.
Kenya Forest Service team led by the Head of Conservancy (HoC) Mau Mr. George Njenga, joined the Kenyan delegation under the banner of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, to visit Tanzania to celebrate the 8th Mara Day in Mugumu town, south of Serengeti within the Mara ecosystem.

The objective of this annual celebration is to create awareness on the importance of protection and conservation of Mara river basin and its sources, to recognize the contribution of different actors in the management of Mara river basin and to promote public-private partnerships to improve management of Mara river’s resources and biodiversity.

Held annually on September the 15th, Mara Day incorporates a different theme each year. The theme of this year’s celebrations is “I, Mara River-Stand with me (Mimi, Mto Mara-Nisimamie)”. The Mara river depends on the Mau Forest complex which sustains more than one million people for agriculture and clean drinking water both in Kenya and Tanzania. The Maasai Mara Game Reserve which is categorized as the 8th wonder of the world under UNESCO is dependent on the Mara river which cannot survive without the Mau Forest Complex.

The event was preceded by evidence-based seminar papers centered on four thematic areas each emphasizing the current state of the Mara ecosystem and action-oriented recommendations for the sustainable water resources, biodiversity and livelihoods in Mara River Basin.

“We need deep reflections on the state of the Mara River Basin to foretell its future. Sixty minutes of degradation of Mara ecosystem can compromise the future of an entire generations” Hon Adam Kigoma Malima observed while emphasizing the need for coherent and integrated actions to sustainably manage Mara River Basin.

Thematic areas of the seminar were tentatively emphasized on Environment and Ecosystem of Mara River Basin, Socio-economic issues and livelihood in Mara River Basin, importance of Mara River Water to the Community and the Role of key players in Mara River Basin for Sustainability and improved livelihoods.

Recognizing the importance and challenges of the Mara ecosystem, the 10th Sectorial Council of Ministers for the Lake Victoria Basin, held in Kigali, Rwanda on 4th May 2012, declared every 15th September “Mara Day”, to coincide with the great migration of wildlife from Serengeti National Park in the United Republic of Tanzania to the Maasai-Mara National Game Reserve in the Republic of Kenya.

The Mara Day Celebrations are guided by three inter-woven objectives: to create awareness among key stakeholders of the importance of Mara River Basin and its resources; recognize and involve the contribution of different public and private actors in management of Mara River Resources and to promote public-private partnerships as a pathway towards sustainable management of Mara River Waters and biodiversity.

Other members of the team included the Ecosystem Conservator (EC) Narok, Mr. Mwai Muraguri.
Following an attack on a Kenya Forest Service’s Ranger by settlers prior to the lapse of an eviction notice to illegal settlers living in Sierra Leone area of Maasai Mau forest, the Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) Mr. Julius Kamau marked the Huduma Day Public Holiday (10th October, 2019) by visiting the Multi-Agency Security Team deployed in the Maasai Mau Restoration Operation.

The CCF also visited Forest Ranger Mr. Victor Mwendwa at Narok Cottage Hospital, Narok County who was attacked in the line of duty while on a patrol at “Kass FM” area in Maasai Mau.

He encouraged Mr. Mwendwa, together with his colleagues from the joint enforcement, for their great commitment in protecting and conserving forest resources in the country for the benefit of the current and future generations.

The CCF also commended the team for their bravery, wisdom, and tolerance in managing the incidence.

“I commend your tolerance in managing the incidence when one of you was shot by an arrow in the thigh; you exercised professionalism as armed officers by being humane and not retaliating with brutal force,” said CCF Kamau.

The CCF visited three joint enforcement outposts namely; Olposimoru South (KassFM), Loliondo, and Nkoben Operation Camp, where he took time to interact with the rangers deployed from Kenya Forest Service, Kenya Wildlife Service, and Administration Police.

Throughout the visit, the CCF gave the message of goodwill and support to the frontline officers whom he referred to as the ‘environment ambassadors’ for their dedication that often required them putting their lives in danger to ensure the Maasai Mau forest is protected and conserved.

The Maasai Mau forest is an important water catchment which forms part of the larger Mau forest ecosystem; the largest indigenous forest in East Africa and also the largest drainage basin in Kenya. Numerous rivers originate from the forest including South Ewaso Ng’iro, Sondu River, Mara River, and Njoro River among others. These rivers feed into Lake Nakuru National Park, Lake Natron, and Lake Victoria whose waters are the source of the largest river in Africa; River Nile hence the need to protect the pristine water tower.
The Forestry Society of Kenya (FSK) held its Annual National Policy Dialogue on 26th September, 2019 in Kakamega County with the theme of the year’s conference being “Future of the Forest Sector; Inspiring Innovations and Sustainable Investments.”

Participants of the two day conference were drawn from various institutions ranging from county governments, private sector, universities, community representatives, and government institutions; including the Kenya Forest Service who sponsored the highest number of attendants to SDUWLFLSDWH DQG EHQH¿W IURP WKH engagements of the National Policy Dialogue.

The Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) Mr. Julius Kamau officially opened the conference which aimed to provide a platform for members to deliberate on emerging trends, issues affecting the sector, as well as come up with viable solutions that would address and guide policies with an aim of achieving excellence in sustainable forestry and natural resources management.

The CCF also led a tree planting which saw the forestry professionals join hands with members of public to plant trees at Lurambi Forest station, as part of the launch of the short rains tree planting campaigns across the country for Kakamega County.

The conference was guided by seven pillars of engagements namely; the evolution of the forestry sector in Kenya and future trajectories, forestry research, milestones and opportunities, local policies and legislations, international policies, commitments and their achievements, and forestry investments.

The conference agreed that the forestry sector in the country was evolving with many opportunities especially on aspects of technology and innovations in geospatial mapping among other areas which could be tapped into to improve the profession in the country.

Speakers also acknowledged efforts in forestry research on tree species for the dry lands such as Melia volkensii and Acacia tortilis, and the promotion of bamboo.

Carbon trading was viewed as a new emerging market in Kenya and participants representing all sectors in forestry were urged to think along tapping on the market for the benefit of forestry (funding).

It was also observed that the forestry sector in Kenya was facing challenges by being in the limelight following among other things the mau eviction and restoration intention by the government whose eviction deadline was almost lapsing, and the ongoing moratorium on logging activities in Kenya that brought about a high demand for timber and a lot of trade from across borders. But despite all that, the participants were reminded to uphold professionalism and integrity in their fields of operations. Farm forestry plantations were cited as an approach that would be used to bridge the ever rising demand for timber and wood products in the country to reduce pressure on public and state forests.

Five groups were formed at the conference and tasked to come up with position statements on the following topical issues facing the country; the Maasai Mau eviction notice, the Ogiek, ten (10) percent tree cover strategy, the timber moratorium, and the polythene paper ban by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry. The submissions from the groups would then be used going forward to offer professional guidance as FSK and also inform policy.

At the end of the conference, an election was called as it was election year according to the FSK calendar and members choose a new team to take up leadership. Among the stewards chosen were Mr. Noor Hussein from Kenya Forest Service (KFS) as the Vice Chairperson of FSK, Ms. Miriam Kamau as the Vice Secretary, and Mr. George Tarus from KFS to FKDLUWKH6FLHQWL¿F&RPPLWWHH.

The Forestry Society of Kenya is a membership organization of professional foresters in Kenya, registered in 1979 to provide a forum for professional foresters to contribute to national development and the environmental conservation agenda.
Environment and Forestry Cabinet Secretary leads public in planting trees in Mt. Kenya

By Michael Kitum

The Cabinet Secretary Ministry of Environment and Forestry Hon. Keriako Tobiko on 9th November, 2019 led a tree planting at Castle Forest Station (Thumaita Block), which forms part of the larger Mt. Kenya Forest Ecosystem in Kirinyaga County where over 20,000 indigenous tree seedlings were planted purely for conservation. This was part of the launch of the short rains tree planting drive across the country.

Speaking during the event, the CS noted the importance of trees to livelihoods pointing out that forests purify the air, form water catchment for rivers, and provide fruits among other ecological benefits. He urged Kenyans to embrace tree growing in farmlands. “Based on Kenya’s Census Report for 2019, if all the 47 million Kenyans plant at least 5 to 10 trees annually, surpassing the recommended 10% forest cover by 2022 will easily be achieved.” said the CS.

The CS thanked CFAs countrywide for taking up forest conservation adding that forests belong to the people and communities; “The Government only comes in as a guarantor to ensure that forests are protected for the people of Kenya, and the forest adjacent communities must be incorporated in joint management of the forests and sharing of its benefits through CFAs.”

CS Tobiko also emphasized the importance for County Administrations to have certified registers of tree nurseries countrywide where public and environment stakeholders can acquire quality seedlings and boost the income generating activities by youth and CBOs with nursery establishments.

The CS noted the good efforts by the Service in collaboration with the local community in keeping the forest ecology pristine: “Today, we actually went deep into the forest looking for spaces to plant trees because of how well this forest is protected.” He said. He also cautioned and put on notice all members of the public who have encroached on any of the 18 gazetted forest water towers to “start packing and prepare to leave forest lands” noting that the forest cover in Kenya after independence stood at 30% and had reduced drastically over years to the current 7.2% due to encroachment and illegal activities. He also warned against the illegal abstraction of water downstream.

While appreciating several environment champions, CS Tobiko commended students for embracing tree planting whom he said, more often than not were associated with negative energy, and thus thanked the students from Kirinyaga University for sparing their time to plant trees with everyone else present.

The exercise brought together all Environment SAGAs including the Kenya Forest Service, Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government, Kirinyaga University, the forest adjacent community through the Castle Community Users Forest Association, and the organizers Green Spaces (CBO).


"Today, we actually went deep into the forest looking for spaces to plant trees because of how well this forest is protected.”
The Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) Mr. Julius Kamau launched the Adopt a Tree Program, Nyeri County Edition on 11th October, 2019 at Karatina Vocational Training Centre (KVTC). This was through a partnership between Kenya Forest Service and Hearts of Green Organization that incorporated the Ministry of Interior & Coordination of National Government, Nyeri County Government, and the Kenya Water Towers Agency among other entities.

The partnership brings on board students from public schools and the public in tree planting initiatives with an aim of greening counties by facilitating participants with tree seedlings for planting which they adopt for growth throughout their school duration.

Over 7,000 assorted tree seedlings were planted at the KVTC compound with 30,000 more being distributed within the county to various public institutions including primary schools, police stations, and tertiary institutions for planting.

KFS technical officers were also deployed to provide technical support and knowledge as well as distribute the seedlings.

The CCF in his remarks pointed out the importance of partnerships between all levels of Government and Non-State actors towards raising tree cover in the country to attain the 10% forest tree cover by 2022 as per the President Directive. In addition, the CCF noted the importance of planting trees for better livelihood in the present and future generations.

"Trees help in air purification, and to appreciate the importance of trees picture the amount of monetary resources one would require to sustain life through oxygen support in a hospital if trees did not aid in the process," said the CCF.

The two organizations also aim to establish model tree nurseries targeting to have at least 100,000 tree seedlings that students can and raise plant as part of their co-curricular activity.

Day scholars were also issued with seedlings for planting at private farms.

Also present during the launch was Nyeri County CECM Water, Environment, Natural Resources and Sanitation Mr. Frederick Kinyua who expressed the county’s commitment to working with KFS towards growing the region’s tree cover especially in ASAL areas within the County such as Kieni.

Hearts of Green Organization is a registered NGO operating in the field of environment conservation.

The ‘Adopt a Tree’ program targets students to plant and nurture trees and ensure a high survival rate as well as inculcate a conservation culture to the young generation. So far, the NGO has worked with 88 public schools where over 132,000 trees have been planted across five counties namely; Kiambu, Nakuru, Nakuru, Nyandarua, Laikipia, and Murang’a. Most tree species planted in schools are fruit trees for their benefits as well as indigenous trees purely meant for environment conservation.

The tree planting activities are usually conducted in a 35 minutes coordinated tree planting marathon across the participant schools, the equivalent of a one-class lesson. Together with KFS, the organization also has a monitoring program on areas planted to ensure over 95% success in growth.
The Deputy President of Kenya, H.E Dr. William Ruto awards a trophy to the KFS Nairobi Conservancy team during the ASK Nairobi International Trade fair.

Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Forestry Hon. Keriako Tobiko poses with KFS officers at the Nairobi International Trade Fair.

The launch of the #Mau10 MillionTrees initiative towards restoration of the Maasai Mau Water Tower.

Chief Conservator of Forests Mr. Julius Kamau visits rangers deployed in Maasai Mau Restoration.

The Chief Conservator of Forest Julius Kamau poses for a photo with KFS Enforcement and Compliance Division officers at a Holy Family Basilica.
A tree planting activity during the International Day for the Conservation of Mangrove Ecosystems in Vanga, Kwale County.

Community Forest Association members pose for a photo with their certificates during Farmer Field School graduation in Embu.

KFS officers, Embu County Government representatives and CFA pose with signed PFMP and FMA.

Participants of the Forest Challenge heading out into the forest to tackle the obstacles.

Friends of Karura Forest conduct a tree planting session in Karura Forest after work hours.

In line with the presidential directive for all government ministries and agencies to dedicate ten percent of their Corporate Social Responsibility budget towards tree growing, Kenya Forest Service has conducted robust partnership engagements with corporates over the last quarter period of the year in a bid towards the attainment of the national target of ten percent tree cover on Kenyan land mass by 2022.

This has been actualized through tree planting initiatives that have seen organizations from both public and private sector partner with the Service for the course of landscape restoration and forest rehabilitation.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), through a partnership with KFS, conducted a tree planting where 1,100 indigenous tree seedlings were planted by members of the Diplomatic Corps in Nairobi as a contribution to the support of the Global Environmental Agenda. The tree planting saw MFA adopt one (1) hectare of forest land at Ngong Road Forest Station, Lenana Block where the Cabinet Secretary, MFA Amb. Monica Juma alongside her counterpart the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Republic of Suriname H.E Ms. Yldiz Pollack-Beighle unveiled a commemorative plaque to mark the occasion.

Equity Bank Limited, which has had a long standing engagement with the Service through the financial incentive programs to farmers geared towards farm forestry enterprise, launched a 35 million tree planting initiative worth 350 million Kenya Shillings during the 2019/20 period. This was unveiled by Equity Bank CEO Dr. James Mwangi in a tree planting exercise to mark the Bank’s 35th Anniversary in business where a total of 3,500 trees were planted at Ngong Road Forest Station.

The Service in collaboration with Kenya Defense Forces (KDF) planted 10,000 indigenous tree seedlings at Kibiku Forest Station in Kajiado County. In addition, KDF adopted 50 hectares of the forest to scale up environmental restoration of degraded forests through the Environment Soldier Program.

Members of the fourth estate have also joined the conservation bandwagon, through collaboration with KFS where members of the Kenya Environment Journalists Association (KENSJA) planted 3,200 indigenous trees at Ngong Road Forest, Lenana Block. While appreciating the patronage from the journalists in taking up the tree planting initiative, the Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) Mr. Julius Kamau urged the journalists to use the power of the media to inform the society about the perils of forest degradation as well as the benefits of sustainable forest management to human livelihood.
“Through a partnership with media, an increase in public awareness on new approaches in forest management technologies and techniques will be spread, as well as encouraging farmers to invest in commercial forestry since there is a market demand for provision of timber in the region that has not been met,” said the CCF.

The Service has also engaged with County Governments towards the implementation of the Presidential Directive. In a meeting with the County Assemblies Forum (CAF) Secretary General Hon. Kipkurui Chepkwony, the CCF urged county assemblies through the Secretariat to mainstream forestry extension roles into existing agricultural extension services in regards to the implementation of the Agriculture (Farm Forestry) Rules 2009 which requires 10% of every farm to be put under forestry development. To that effect, KFS deployed Technical Forest Advisors in counties to build capacity for effective implementation of forestry programs developed by county governments.

KFS has also signed a partnership with the National Oil Corporation of Kenya (NOCK) for the establishment of tree nurseries, raising and sourcing of seedlings for tree growing, and promotion of tree planting activities around the Mt. Kenya ecosystem.

The agreement was signed between the CCF, Mr. Julius Kamau and NOCK CEO Ms. Mary Jane Mwangi and was witnessed by the KFS Board Chairman Mr. Peter Kinyua and his equivalent from NOCK Mr. Kibuga Kariithi. The agreement committed to the planting of five (5) million trees through the initiative as well as the introduction of subsidized LPG for retail by Community Forest Associations (CFA) in the region as an income-generating activity as well as an alternative source of energy so as to reduce pressure on forest.

Academic Institutions, such as the University of Eldoret (UoE) have also expressed a commitment towards forestry as a key pillar in the realization of the Big 4 Agenda. UoE have signed a partnership framework for collaboration with KFS, through which the two organizations will establish a model tree nursery at the institution in Eldoret to scale up quality seedlings production to meet the institution’s needs and the region as well.

UoE will also adopt a forest block in North Rift Conservancy for rehabilitation and also as a practical’s ground for the faculty of forestry where students will be encouraged to plant and adopt trees for survival during their school duration.

The short rains tree planting season in October also saw counties such as Kakamega, Uasin Gishu and Nandi take advantage of the rains to plant trees. Five (5) million tree seedlings were planted over the period in six forest stations in Uasin Gishu County namely; Timboroa, Nabkoi, Lorenge, Kipkurere, Cengalo and Kapseret forest stations.

Through a partnership with media, an increase in public awareness on new approaches in forest management technologies and techniques will be spread, as well as encouraging farmers to invest in commercial forestry since there is a market demand for provision of timber in the region that has not been met, said the CCF.
Capacity Development Project for Sustainable Forest Management: Accelerating Forestry in ASALs

By Charles Ngunjiri

The Capacity Development Project for Sustainable Forest Management (CADEP-SFM) is a technical cooperation project between the Government of Kenya and the Government of Japan. The project rolled out in June 2016 and is expected to be completed by June 2021. The project is being implemented through five components including Policy Support, Forestry Extension in Arid and Semi-Arid Lands, REDD+ Readiness, Tree Breeding and Regional Cooperation.

“The Kenya Forest Service is implementing two components, the Forestry Extension in ASALs through private sector involvement and, the Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation components,” says Mr. Peter Nduati the Project Manager.

He notes that the project’s overall goal is promotion of sustainable forest management in Kenya towards achieving the National Forest cover target of 10%. The project’s purpose is to strengthen capacity at National and County levels of Government for sustainable forest management.

The Embu and Taita Taveta Counties were identified to pilot the component on Forestry Extension in Arid and Semi-Arid Lands.

“In Embu and Taita Taveta Counties we are managing Farmer Forestry Field Schools, supporting development of Participatory Forest Management Plans for forests within County Government jurisdiction, and promoting growing of Melia volkensii,” notes Mr. Nduati. He adds that the project is also working with private sector actors and NGOs in promoting growing of forests in Arid and Semi-Arid Areas.

The project has had some key achievements that include completion and launch of two Participatory

In Taita Taveta County, the Participatory Forest Management Plan for Mwambirwa Mbololo forest has been validated and is in the final stages before launching.

“The Plan for Mwambirwa Mbololo forest will be launched and the forest management agreement signed during the same event,” affirms Mr. Nderitu.

The project has trained 55 Farmer Field Schools, successfully graduating over 750 farmer participants who undertook one-year training in Farmer Forestry School methodologies. “These farmers were trained on various enterprises that include woodlot establishment for timber, fruit orchard, crop, and tree nursery development,” notes Mr. Nduati.

To promote uptake of the fast growing tree species, Melia Volkensii, the project has developed and published guidelines for the species management. The guidelines will ensure attractive return on investment for farmers choosing to grow the improved species that does particularly well in the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands.

“We have selected 150 key farmers from Embu, Tharaka Nithi, Kitui, Makueni, Taita Taveta, Kilifi and Kwale Counties to accelerate large scale growing of the improved Melia volkensii tree species. These farmers have been trained on basic silvicultural methods on growing and tending the tree species,” adds Mr. Nduati.

The project has further supplied to the selected farmers 500,000 seedlings of the improved Melia Volkensii for planting in their farms.

In a country where the youth account for the highest population, Kenya Forest Service has strategically identified a need to encourage the young generation to embrace a culture of conservation.

This has been done through active involvement of youth in schools and institutions during tree planting activities across the country.

The Service has also ensured leadership representation of youth and women in the formation of all Community Forest Associations (CFAs) in forest adjacent communities towards complimentary conservation, management, and protection of forest resources between KFS and the public.

Youth have also been inspired to establish tree nursery projects through the Service’s engagement with stakeholders such as County Governments in a bid to ensure promotion of income generating activities that in turn boost conservation efforts.

The Service has also offered capacity building to youth through training and empowering of community scouts to compliment Rangers in forest management and protection.
ENCOM Officers Participate in National Thanksgiving Prayers for Uniformed Service Personnel

By Bulbul Ratemo & Sylvester Okal


H.E President Uhuru Kenyatta led other high profile Government officials that attended the prayers including Interior Cabinet Secretary Fred Matiang’i alongside respective Service Commanders. The Chief Conservator of Forests Julius Kamau led the KFS contingent accompanied by Deputy CCF (Forest Conservation and Management) Charity Munyasya, Deputy Commandant Wilson Leboo, KFS Regional Commandants and other senior officers under the Enforcement and Compliance Division.

The Prayer Service was a culmination of a triad of prayers that took place across the country over the course of 2019. The theme for the 2019 edition was “God our refuge and strength” drawn from Psalms 46:1 and presided over by former military Chaplain Rt. Rev Salesius Mugambi. While the primary role of KFS rangers is to protect forests and its resources, they are often on the frontline in offering conventional security from internal and external threats. Their acts of valor portrayed in the operation to fight terrorism in Boni Forest are a clear depiction of the need to dedicate their safety in such prayer gatherings.

Speaking during the Service, President Uhuru Kenyatta reminded the officers that their job is a calling with an immense responsibility and they should be selfless and give service to the people for the greater good of the society. Prior to the prayer service, the KFS Band led the procession along City Hall Way leading up to the Cathedral.

The combined Service personnel also took part in distributing offertories on 14th November 2019 to various homes for children and the elderly. The offertories included assorted food stuff, clothes and linens and other essentials.

The KFS officers proceeded with giving subsequent offertories on 18th December 2019 when they visited the “Compassionate Hands for the Disabled” in Ruai that houses 93 children. They held a prayer service with the children and planted 100 tree seedlings with each child adopting a tree.

The last offertory distribution to mark the close of 2019 took place on 20th December during the KFS End of Year Thanksgiving Service, where the enforcement officers distributed dry food stuffs and clothes to homes across Nairobi region.
What a year it has been for Kenya Forest Service at the ASK Nairobi International Trade Fair in Nairobi and Mombasa International Trade Fair. In Nairobi the Service outdid themselves to emerge winners in two categories and second and third in two other categories. KFS emerged first in the Best Energy Services and Conservation Sector Stand and Best NGO/CBO Project Stands. The Service also emerged second best in the Best Government Ministries Stand and third in the Best Organization/Association in Community Projects Service Stand.

At the Mombasa International Trade Fair, the Service scooped the 1st position in best Energy Services and Conservation Sector Stand category. Aside from KFS showcasing her efforts as a leader in Energy Conservation at the Trade Fair, other stakeholders such as Wasini Women Group, Mikoko Pamoja Carbon Project and Haller Park exhibited the efforts they are undertaking in forestry research, training, community forest conservation and eco-tourism.

During the visit to the KFS Stand at the Trade Fair, the Chief Conservator of Forests, Julius Kamau observed that the Service was at the forefront in supporting the achievement of the Big Four Agenda through the sustainable conservation and management of forest areas.

He also challenged the different stakeholders in the forestry sector to adopt modern scientific innovations and work together to promote best practice in the forest.

The Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Forestry Hon. Keriako Tobiko also visited the KFS Stand where he interacted with staff and other stakeholders showcasing different forest programs, activities and products in the sector. The CS congratulated the participants for putting up winning displays. He noted that the ASK Show provides an opportunity to educate the public about forest conservation and tree planting.

The Deputy President H.E. Dr. William Ruto presented the trophy for Best NGO/CBO Project stands to the KFS Nairobi Head of Conservancy Mr. Francis Kariuki during the awards ceremony.
Kenya Forest Service together with the Nakuru County among other partners celebrated the World Tourism Day 2019 by organizing a hiking excursion at Menengai Forest on 27th September 2019, with this year’s theme being “Tourism and Jobs”.

The purpose of this day is to raise awareness on the role of tourism within the international community and to demonstrate how it affects environmental, social, cultural, political and economic values worldwide.

KFS as the host within the Menengai forest participated and exhibited at the event which provided a great opportunity to sensitize members of the public.

One of the functions of Kenya Forest Service (KFS) is to develop programs and facilities for tourism, recreational and ceremonial use of forests.

The organization manages 1.7 million of its 2.4 million hectares of gazetted forests that range from equatorial forests such as Mt. Kenya, tropical rainforest (Kakamega forest), dryland forests (Matthews Range forest), coastal forests (Arabuko Sokoke) and urban forests (Ngong forest). These forests are rich in plant and wildlife biodiversity, in addition to having numerous attractive features including panoramic views, lakes, craters, waterfalls, caves and hills.

Consequently, KFS collaborates with different stakeholders to develop responsible tourism products and activities in forest reserves in Kenya. The objective is to develop ecotourism, defined as “responsible travel to natural areas areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people” (TIES, 1990). The products being developed in forest reserves therefore include eco lodges, tree houses, campsites, nature trails, canopy walkways among other nature friendly facilities.

Ecotourism products, activities and services should be non-extractive, implying that they do not take away resources from forests. They should also have very low negative impact on the environment.

Indeed for KFS, ecotourism should meet the following tenets: Minimize impacts on the environment; Protect and benefit forest biodiversity and forest conservation; conservation; Promote environmental awareness and cultural preservation; meet and exceed tourist expectations and benefit forest adjacent communities.

By promoting ecotourism, KFS aims to be the leading organization of excellence in development and operation of responsible tourism in forest reserves. Leadership entails bringing together research, planning, partnerships, global best practices and creativity to develop unique tourism products that have the least possible negative impacts on Kenyan forests. By promoting ecotourism, KFS is ensuring that future generations will experience aspects of the environment in almost the same way that we are doing now. Attending the event was the Head of Conservancy Mau Mr. George Njenga, area Ecosystem Conservator Mr. Francis Misonge and the Forester Menengai Mr. Erastus Mugo among other KFS staff.
The Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) Mr. Julius Kamau carried out a series of aerial and ground tours on some of Kenya’s water towers over the last quarter of the year to assess and appreciate a raft of measures put in place by the Service towards the conservation, management, and protection of the Mau and Aberdare forest ecosystems.

The CCF conducted impromptu inspections of Mara Mara, Ndoinet, Tendeno, and Tinderet forest stations on the eastern part of Mau forest complex where he noted that although challenges of charcoal burning and overgrazing had been curbed, the forest still faced pockets of threats from the vices. He appreciated that Mara Mara forest station was among the best conserved forests in the country not registering any cases of illegalities. He commended the lean team of KFS personnel manning the stations and called on them to continue carrying out their responsibilities diligently towards the fulfillment of the Service’s mandate.

While addressing the forest adjacent communities, the CCF thanked them for the cordial relations they had extended to KFS by working complimentarily with the forest rangers in exposing perpetrators of illegal forest activities. He urged them to embrace conservation practices that would in turn ensure the forest resources in the country thrive for the benefit of both the current and future generations. The CCF reiterated that the moratorium on all logging activities on public and community forest lands was still in place, and that the Service was adept at ensuring its implementation.

On his visit to Marmanet forest, the CCF appreciated the ecotourism potential of the forest which serves as an elephant migratory corridor through Shamanek forest station, which also forms the source of River Shamanek whose waters drain into Lake Bogoria. He appreciated the cooperation between KFS and the Shamanek Community Forest Association in ensuring the preservation of biodiversity in the forest is maintained. While on his visit to Ndaragwa forest station, the CCF thanked the multi-agency coordination between KFS personnel and other security agencies in ensuring preservation of forest resources in the region which had led to nabbing of perpetrators of forest illegalities.

He commended the station managers and noted the great potential of Ndaragwa tree nursery in provision of quality seedlings which he said “spoke to the needs of the region.” Mr. Kamau emphasized on the need of ensuring nurseries countrywide are prioritized through provision of funds as they formed the core of sustainable forest management.
The Government’s quest to achieve 10% forest cover has received a welcome boost with approval and commissioning of Green Zones Development Support Project Phase II. The project, which is financed by the Government of Kenya and the African Development Bank (AFDB), will be implemented by Kenya Forest Service in collaboration with other stakeholders, among them County Governments, other government agencies, Communities Forest Associations, NGOs and CBOs.

It will be implemented in 15 Counties within three critical ecosystems of Mau, Aberdares and Mt Kenya forests over a six year period until 2025.

The project’s goal is to improve forest conservation and community livelihoods for sustainable forest management in Kenya. The specific objectives are to enhance forest conservation and livelihood support for climate change resilience; and to develop timber, bamboo, horticulture and cereals value chain for improved household incomes. In terms of forest conservation, the project will rehabilitate a total of 328,750 Ha of degraded areas in both gazetted forests and community lands. This will be achieved through rehabilitation of degraded sites, protection for natural regeneration, plantation establishment, bamboo promotion, Riverine protection and on-farm intervention through agroforestry and woodlot establishment. This is significant as it translates to 66% of rehabilitation target contained in the KFS Strategic Plan 2017-2022.

“Implementation will involve various stakeholders, and the project design deliberately provides broad guidelines, leaving room for field implementers to utilize innovation and technologies in execution of the programs,” notes the Program Manager Mr. Jerome Mwanza.

He says that besides forest conservation, the project will contribute to the government’s Big 4 Agenda, specifically food security, manufacturing and affordable housing.

Through agroforestry, the project will partner with communities to produce 1.1 million tons of food. Promotion of fast-growing exotic tree species in State forests and farmlands will provide the required raw materials for affordable housing and manufacturing. The benefits to the participating communities will further be enhanced by value chain development on the raw materials in order to add value on primary products. The value chain will tap into innovative technologies available in order to enhance efficiency.

Community livelihood support will additionally be enhanced by implementation of 45 income generating activities, in line with market trends and analysis.

Mr. Mwanza emphasizes that the project has taken cognizance of rural communities’ overdependence on wood energy which directly contributes to forest degradation.

“As a mitigation measure, communities will be assisted to embrace either alternative energy sources or energy efficient technologies. It is expected that over 7500 households and 10 institutions will benefit from this venture,” he commits.

Communities will be key stakeholders in the implementation of the project. Indeed, the project will adopt a participatory approach with stakeholders’ involvement in planning, execution, monitoring and evaluation.
Environment and Forestry CS, Hon. Keriako Tobiko led fellow Cabinet Secretaries in planting 2,500 indigenous trees on 15th October to mark the adoption of Miotoni in Ngong Road Forest by the Cabinet.

The Cabinet Secretaries present included, Amb. Monica Juma (Foreign Affairs and International Trade), Amb. Raychelle Omamo (Defense), Hon. Raphael Tuju, Dr. Margaret Kobia (Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs), Charles Keter (Energy) and Amb. Amina Mohamed (Sports, Culture and Heritage). Also present were KFS officers led by the Chairman Peter Kinyua, KFS Board Members, Senior Management Staff and Officers from the Head of Conservancy’s office in Nairobi.

The tree planting event coincided with the launch of the National Short Rains Tree Planting campaign. During these short rains season, the Ministry together with all stakeholders will plant over 50 million seedlings. The ministry will provide technical support for local public and private sector institutions taking part in the National tree planting campaign.

During his address, the Environment CS highlighted the importance of multi-sectorial collaboration in conserving the Kenyan forests.

“I urge the Ministries, Government Agencies, Corporates and the private sector to heed to the President’s decree and set aside 10% of their Corporate Social Responsibility to tree growing,” said the CS.

Also speaking during the tree planting event, Environment PS Betty Maina encouraged Kenyans to actively take part in the campaign and help increase Kenya’s Forest cover with estimated 250 million plus trees to be planted next year during the long rains. She further articulated on the importance of rehabilitating and restoring the 9.5 Ha Ngong Road Forest, with a portion of that has now being adopted by members of cabinet.

Community Forest Association members who play an important role in forest conservation have also been included in the maintenance of the forest block in a bid to actively involve the community in promoting equitable use of forest and forest resources through community organizations.
The Forest Challenge is an annual event organized by East African Wild Life Society (EAWLS) in conjunction with Kenya Forest Service (KFS) and Kijabe Environment Volunteers (KENVO); it creates a platform where outgoing and adventurous individuals can directly interact with nature while raising awareness on forests conservation and most importantly it gives them an opportunity to contribute towards rehabilitation of forest ecosystems and rural communities. The proceeds drawn from the Forest Challenge are ploughed back to conservation of our water towers through tree planting. Some of the resources are also dedicated to community CSR projects.

The Forest Challenge 2019

**By Lydia Ogada**

Heavy rainfall, mud and cold weather these were the scenes that greeted the over 1000 nature fanatics who descended on Kereita forest for the Forest Challenge 2019 on Saturday 30th November, 2019. These conditions however did not dim their spirits for in their minds they knew it was all for a good cause and could not wait for the challenge to begin. The teams were flagged off by the Chief Conservator of Forests, Julius Kamau. UAP Old Mutual, who during the event planted 4,000 seedlings in partnership with Kenya Forest Service, Kiambu County Government, and Kijabe Environmental Volunteers (KENVO) among other corporates represented.

Base Titanium, Kiambu Water & Sewerage Co. and Sanitation emerged overall winners and went home with the trophies: Forest Champion Award Winner, Forest Champion Award Runner up 1 and Forest Champion Award 2nd Runner up, respectively. KFS was represented by ENCOM team drawn from Kiambu County led by Inspector Rodgers Ruriga. The Chief Guest, Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) Mr. Julius Kamau appreciated the efforts of the private sector entities in forest conservation and urged them to adopt forests to carry on with rehabilitation processes of key forest blocks in Kenya by complimenting the Service’s efforts.

He reiterated the readiness of Kenya Forest Service in partnering with different organizations for the sake of forest conservation and called on individuals to also chip in efforts by planting trees so as to achieve the National target of attaining 10% tree cover by 2022. KFS was also presented with an honorary award for hosting the event for the sixth time.

Money raised from The Forest Challenge 2019 will fund forest rehabilitation projects in and around Kereita Forest, which forms part of the southern Aberdares water towers, supplementing the over 4,000 tree seedlings planted concurrently as the Forest Challenge took place.

Having witnessed a very successful Forest Challenge 2019 the organizers are looking at an even bigger and better Forest Challenge 2020.
Celebrating a decade of partnership in forest conservation, management and protection

By Michael Kitum

The Friends of Karura Community Forest Association (FKF-CFA), one of Kenya’s iconic CFA model, on 9th October, 2019 marked their 10th anniversary since inception as a CFA partnering with Kenya Forest Service (KFS) towards complimentary forest conservation, management, and protection of Karura forest.

The auspicious ceremony, graced by the Chief Administrative Secretary (CAS) Ministry of Environment and Forestry Hon. Mohamed Elmi, brought together the forest adjacent community living around one of the world’s largest urban forest, at Amani Gardens to celebrate milestones achieved since joining hands towards the course of converting the once dangerous no-go forest into its current prime eco-tourism forest attraction in a city.

While launching a Two Million FKF Bursary Fund towards the education of deserving less privileged children in Nairobi, the CAS appreciated the CFA for playing a crucial role in the transformation and preservation of Karura forest. He noted the role the forest played in keeping the city’s micro climate conducive for its residents as well as being a habitat for wildlife. He urged FKF to mentor CFA’s around the country into emulating best CFA governance practices that would spur improved livelihood through development of ecotourism facilities such as nature trails and parks. The CAS also lauded the KFS & FKF collaboration that had far since managed to plant over 80,000 indigenous tree seedlings during the onset of October short rains period.

The KFS Board Vice Chairman who is also the National Alliance of Community Forests Associations (NACOFA) chairperson, Mr. Peter Wandera celebrated the role of FKF as a CFA has played in setting the bar for others countrywide and reiterated the importance of FKF mentoring other CFAs for the important role forest adjacent communities’ play in conservation. He reiterated the need for FKF to mentor and equip many other CFAs with expertise towards livelihood improvement.

On his part, the Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) Mr. Julius Kamau recounted the long journey the forest sector had undergone in ensuring reforms, such as the incorporation of public participation in forest conservation and management through formation of CFAs by forest adjacent communities. He also pointed out that so far KFS is working with 255 CFAs countrywide of which 159 have developed Participatory Forest Management Plans (PFMP), 97 have signed Forest Management Agreements (FMAs), and 12 Ecosystem Management Plans.

The FKF chairperson Dr. Winnie Kiiru noted from statistics that Karura forest features as among the most visited ecotourism facilities in Nairobi County which provides the residents 50Kms of secure trails to exercise, and also hosts the world’s most successful reintroduction of arboreal primates (a remnant Aberdare Mountain population of a threatened black and white colobus monkey sub-species) and over 200 bird species recorded in the forest. FKF-CFA has worked in tandem with KFS into converting Karura forest into a prime ecotourism site as the city’s largest green space which receives nearly 30,000 visitors monthly, 75% of whom are Kenyan citizens, who come to enjoy the beautiful sceneries provided by the forests which has set an anti-pollution example by banning use of plastic in the forest in line with the Kenya-wide ban on plastics bag.
LEISURE

DEFORESTATION

Across
1. Another word for landslides
5. Forests play a ............. role
8. Deforestation creates 15% of all ....... gas emission
9. One way we can regenerate the growth of trees
11. What is the leading cause of deforestation?
12. Rainforests help regulate the earth’s ...... and weather pattern

Down
2. Forests ....... is the act of managing forest according to forest principles
3. Which continent hold the largest rainforest
4. It is another form of many types of deforestation
6. Another word for cutting down rows of forestry
7. Who are the main causes of rainforest destruction?
10. Root word for deforestation

What do you call an animal that conforms to and follows the principles of the forest?
A-Deer (Adhere).

If a man goes into a forest and cuts down a tree and the tree can’t figure out why he was cut down
Do you think the tree is stumped?
If you ever get lost in a forest
Just start talking about politics and someone will show up to argue with you.

Why are forests so creepy?
Because the trees are all shady.

Why do mathematicians like forests?
Because of all the natural logs
The Tree in Chains

No, not again
The painful pain,
The suffering in vain,
The chain of disdain and strain,
Why me?
Or did I lose my importance?

I long to be cared for,
Just a little mercy on me,
And I promise I will beautifully blossom,
My roots will run deep down the soil,
Firm and unwavering,
Happily spreading my leaves,
A forest shall be born.

But when will my grief and supplication hit an ear? 
In this world of doom and heartless creatures?
How long will it take before workers and loggers come?
Will I ever smile and be happy?
But do they realize they can’t do without me?

I pray that a savior will come just one day,
Restore my strength, my power, my worth
Unfortunately, I don’t know if I will even be there tomorrow,
I plead for love,
For the future is long, dark and confused.
**PINUS PATULA**
By Susan Wego

English name: **Mexican weeping pine**
Local name: **Mucind-nugu**

Pinus patula is an exotic evergreen tree growing up to 35m high with long straight bowl and more or less horizontal branches turning up at the tips. It has conical crown that becomes domed with age. Its bark is grey to dark brown and fairly smooth, papery, red brown on young branches. It has long, slender needles’ soft but hard-tipped leaves in bundles of 3.

**ECOLOGY AND DISTRIBUTION**
It is native to Mexico. Grows in high potential areas with over 1000mm rainfall e.g. parts of western, rift valley and central provinces.

**PROPAGATION**
It is best to sow the seed in individual pots as soon as it is ripe. A short stratification of six weeks can improve the germination of the seeds. Seedlings are then planted out into permanent positions when they are between 30-90cm.

**FLOWERING AND FRUIT DEVELOPMENT**
In most areas two main flowering periods can be observed in March and April and October and November. Pollination is by wind. Cones mature within two years and turn pale brown.

**SEED COLLECTION**
Mature pale brown cones are collected from the crown by spreading a net, canvas etc under the tree and climbing the tree to cut bunches with secateurs.

**END USES**
Timber, pulp, fuelwood and posts. Tan or green dye is obtained from the needles.