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FORESTER

KENYA Forest Service

TREES FOR BETTER LIVES



LEAD STORY

MEGA TREE NURSERIES

DEVELOPMENT IN PROGRESS

CHERISH PROJECT

Launched to Restore Cherengany ECOSYSTEM

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EDITORIAL

The Kenya Forest Service (KFS) ushered in the New Year with a Thanksgiving Breakfast Meeting, bringing staff together in a spirit of gratitude, unity and renewed commitment to the Service's mandate. The gathering provided an opportunity to reflect on achievements and reaffirm the shared responsibility of safeguarding Kenya's forest resources.

KFS continues to modernize its nursery network through the development of high-capacity mega and model nurseries across the country. The Kinale Modern Tree Nursery is a notable example of these efforts, demonstrating the Service's commitment to increasing the availability and quality of tree seedlings to support Kenya's ambitious restoration agenda.

The International Day of Forests was marked with a strong call to recognize forests as engines of economic growth, environmental sustainability and community livelihoods. The celebrations underscored the importance of collective action in protecting and sustainably managing Kenya's forests.

The year also recorded significant milestones, including the official inauguration of the Forest Law Enforcement Academy main campus at Mukutani, Baringo County. The institution will strengthen the capacity and professionalism of forest law enforcement personnel and contribute to enhanced protection of forest resources.

The launch of the CHERISH Project further strengthened restoration efforts in the Cheranganyi Hills, one of Kenya's gazetted water towers, seeking to restore the landscape while promoting sustainable land management and strengthening ecosystem and community resilience.

In this edition, we invite you to explore stories that capture forest transformation, celebrate the people and partnerships driving change, and inspire greater action to protect Kenya's rich green heritage.

Anne Kaari, 'ndc' (K)
Editor



Cover Photo: Kinale Mega Tree Nursery

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Word from the Chief Conservator of Forests



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

The first half of 2026 has been marked by remarkable progress in advancing the mandate of the Kenya Forest Service. Guided by the Government's commitment to achieve 30 percent national tree cover by 2032, we have continued to strengthen our institutional capacity, modernise forest management, and implement transformative programmes that support environmental sustainability, climate resilience, and national development.

During this period, the Service made substantial investments to strengthen both its operational and institutional capabilities. We accelerated the establishment of mega tree nurseries across the country to support the National 15 Billion Tree Growing Programme by ensuring a reliable supply of quality seedlings for landscape restoration. We also operationalised the Forest Law Enforcement Academy (FoLEA) Main Campus in Mukutani, a landmark achievement that will enhance the professionalism, discipline, and effectiveness of forest law enforcement.

The recruitment and deployment of over 200 officers has further reinforced our technical and field capacity, while the commissioning of the KFS Resource Centre has established a centre of excellence for forestry knowledge, and innovation.

Protecting Kenya's forests has remained at the core of our work. We expanded electric fencing across key forest ecosystems to secure critical water towers, reduce illegal activities and safeguard forest resources. At the same time, we embraced emerging technologies through the integration of Artificial Intelligence and drone-based surveillance into forest fire management and forest protection, significantly improving early detection, monitoring, and rapid response capabilities.

These achievements are a testament to the dedication of our staff and the unwavering support of the Government, our development partners, county governments, the private sector, forest-adjacent communities, and all stakeholders who continue to champion sustainable forest management.

As we look ahead, we remain steadfast in our commitment to restoring degraded landscapes, strengthening forest governance, embracing innovation, and delivering lasting conservation outcomes that will secure Kenya's forests for generations to come.

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

The Government Invests in Tree Nursery Development



Kinale Mega Tree Nursery stands as a powerful symbol of Kenya's expanding seedling network, nurturing the trees that will drive the nation toward 30% tree cover.

By Peter Owino

Kenya is scaling up investment in tree nursery infrastructure as the Government moves to bridge a major seedling supply gap and build the production capacity required to support the 15 Billion Tree Growing Programme and the national target of achieving 30 per cent tree cover by 2032.

Under the Whole-of-Government Approach, the Kenya Forest Service (KFS) is spearheading the construction and expansion of tree nurseries across the country. The State Department for Housing and Urban Development is supporting KFS through the construction of housing units to accommodate National Youth Service (NYS) personnel, who will provide labour to support nursery development and operations. Nearly 100 nurseries are currently at different stages of construction and completion across the country.
The Government plans to establish 17 mega nurseries across the country, each designed to produce up to 25 million seedlings annually. Once operational, the mega nurseries will provide a high-volume production backbone for the national tree-growing programme. The 17 facilities are yet to commence production.

At the same time, KFS is undertaking a comprehensive upgrade of its existing nursery network to significantly increase seedling production. The Service is targeting more than 500 million seedlings annually from its nurseries, creating a stronger and more reliable supply of quality planting material for forest restoration and tree-growing activities across the country.

The expansion is aimed at addressing one of the most fundamental challenges facing large-scale restoration: ensuring that sufficient quantities of quality seedlings are available for planting in different ecological zones and at the appropriate time.

The transformation is already taking shape at Kinale Model Tree Nursery in Kiambu County, where the development programme targets seven nursery camps. Five of the seven camps have been completed, with each camp designed to have an annual production capacity of approximately two million seedlings. Once all seven camps are operational, Kinale will have the capacity to produce about 14 million seedlings annually, significantly increasing its contribution to national seedling supply.

The development of Kinale illustrates the Government's approach of combining high-capacity production with decentralised nursery infrastructure to bring seedling production closer to restoration landscapes. The facility is expected to support the production of indigenous and other appropriate species for forest restoration, catchment rehabilitation and sustainable forestry.

The involvement of Community Forest Associations (CFAs) and other local stakeholders is also critical to connecting nursery production with community participation, forest stewardship and long-term restoration outcomes.

Kinale is part of a much broader transformation of the KFS nursery network. The Service is upgrading existing nurseries across its forest stations while developing new high-capacity facilities to create a geographically distributed system of seedling production.
The strategy is designed to ensure that Kenya does not rely solely on a limited number of large production centres. Instead, mega nurseries, model nurseries, upgraded forest-station nurseries, community nurseries and other stakeholder-managed facilities will form interconnected layers of the national seedling-production system.

This decentralised model is particularly important given Kenya's diverse ecological conditions. Seedlings suitable for highland forests and catchments may differ from those required for drylands, coastal ecosystems, plantations, farms or urban landscapes.
Producing planting material closer to its intended restoration site can therefore improve species-site matching, reduce logistical challenges and strengthen access to seedlings by communities and other tree-growing partners.

The scale of the 15 Billion Tree Growing Programme means Government infrastructure alone will not be sufficient to meet the national requirement for planting material. KFS is consequently working with a broad range of stakeholders, including Community Forest Associations, counties, communities, farmers, schools, institutions, private nurseries, youth and women's groups, faith-based organisations, development partners and other actors, to expand seedling production and help bridge an estimated 1.5 billion-seedling gap.

The Service's e-nursery system provides a platform for recognising and connecting institutional, private, community, youth and women-managed nurseries while supporting nursery standards, mapping, networking and market linkages.

This partnership model is intended to create a wider seedling-production ecosystem in which Government facilities provide significant production capacity while communities, private actors and institutions expand supply and extend restoration to farms, rangelands, riparian areas, schools, urban spaces and other landscapes.

The expansion of nursery capacity is ultimately intended to support more than higher production figures. KFS recognises that the success of tree growing will be determined by the number of seedlings that are successfully established and survive to become mature trees.
This places quality at the centre of the nursery expansion programme. Seed quality, species selection, nursery management, water availability, planting seasons, site preparation, protection and post-planting care will all influence survival and the long-term ecological value of restoration.

Indigenous species will remain particularly important in the restoration of natural forests, catchments and biodiversity-rich ecosystems, while appropriate plantation species can contribute to sustainable timber production and help reduce pressure on natural forests.

Technology and data are also becoming increasingly important as the programme expands. KFS digital systems, including the e-nursery framework and platforms such as JazaMiti, are intended to strengthen nursery mapping, reporting, traceability and accountability across the tree-growing value chain.

The planned 17 mega nurseries, the upgrading of KFS's existing nursery network and the mobilisation of stakeholder-managed nurseries represent a fundamental investment in the infrastructure needed to deliver restoration at scale.

The approach brings together KFS nursery construction and forestry expertise, State Department for Housing and Urban Development support through housing infrastructure, NYS labour, community participation and private-sector and institutional support to expand the country's ability to produce and distribute quality seedlings.

With nearly 100 nursery projects already at different stages of development, the country is laying the physical foundation for a substantially expanded seedling-production system.

The immediate priority is to increase the availability of quality planting material, but the broader objective is to establish a dependable restoration chain—from seed collection and propagation to nursery production, distribution, planting, protection, monitoring and survival.

As Kenya advances towards 2032, the expansion of tree nursery infrastructure signals an important shift in the national approach: from tree planting as an event to tree growing as a sustained, data-driven and nationally coordinated restoration programme.

The investment in nurseries is therefore not simply an investment in seedling production. It is an investment in the infrastructure required to restore forests and landscapes, strengthen water security, protect biodiversity, support climate resilience and deliver the long-term environmental and socio-economic ambitions of the 15 Billion Tree Growing Programme.

CHERISH Project Launched to Restore Cherangany Ecosystem



H.E. the Deputy President of Republic of Kenya Professor Kithure Kindiki, the Chief Conservator of Forests Mr. Alex Lemarkoko, Interior Cabinet Secretary Kipchumba Murkomen, and Fifteen Billion Tree Growing Ambassador Hillary Kibiwott, planting a tree to commemorate the launch of CHERISH Project.

By Evans Barasa

The Cherangany Hills Ecosystem Restoration for Livelihood Improvement, Sustainability and Harmony (CHERISH) Programme, a landmark ten-year initiative to restore the Cherangany Hills, one of Kenya's five gazetted water towers, has officially been launched. Presided over by Deputy President Prof. Kithure Kindiki, the programme aims to strengthen climate resilience, secure critical water catchments, restore degraded forest landscapes and improve livelihoods for communities living around the ecosystem, with the Kenya Forest Service (KFS) providing technical leadership in its implementation.

The launch in Elgeyo Marakwet County brought together national and county leaders, development partners, conservation stakeholders and private sector players to rally support for the restoration of one of Kenya's most ecologically significant landscapes. As the lead technical agency, KFS will coordinate and oversee restoration activities throughout the programme's ten-year implementation.

Deputy President Prof. Kithure Kindiki described the restoration of the Cherangany Hills as a national priority, saying the Government remains committed to protecting the country's critical water towers through sustained investment, inter-agency collaboration and community participation. He noted that restoring degraded ecosystems is essential for safeguarding water security, strengthening climate resilience and supporting sustainable socio-economic development.

The CHERISH Project Patron and Interior Cabinet Secretary Kipchumba Murkomen, emphasized that the programme represents a long-term commitment to restoring the Cherangany ecosystem, calling for continued collaboration among government institutions, development partners, the private sector and local communities to ensure the restoration efforts deliver lasting environmental and livelihood benefits.

Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Forestry Dr. Deborah Barasa reaffirmed the Government's commitment to ecosystem restoration, noting that CHERISH complements Kenya's broader environmental agenda, including the 15 Billion Tree Growing Programme, while advancing the country's climate commitments and biodiversity conservation goals.

Speaking during the launch, Chief Conservator of Forests Mr. Alex Lemarkoko reaffirmed KFS's commitment to delivering the programme's technical mandate, noting that restoring Cherangany is critical to safeguarding Kenya's water security, biodiversity and climate resilience. He said the Service will work closely with communities, county governments and partners to ensure the programme delivers long-term ecological and socio-economic benefits through science-based restoration and sustainable forest management.

The Cherangany Hills form a vital part of Kenya's water catchment system, feeding 22 rivers that support millions of people in Kenya and flow downstream into Uganda and South Sudan as part of the greater Nile Basin. Beyond supplying water for domestic use, agriculture, hydropower generation and industry, the ecosystem also plays a critical role in biodiversity conservation and carbon sequestration.

Years of forest degradation, illegal encroachment and unsustainable land use have weakened the ecosystem, contributing to increased soil erosion, reduced river flows and devastating landslides that have claimed lives and destroyed property in downstream communities. Recognising that ecosystem recovery requires sustained intervention, CHERISH has been designed as a decade-long programme focused on lasting restoration rather than short-term tree planting campaigns.

As the lead technical agency, KFS will supply more than 100,000 indigenous tree seedlings during the initial phase of the programme, selecting species best suited to stabilising fragile slopes, restoring indigenous forests and enhancing carbon capture. The Service will also establish community and institutional nurseries, oversee site preparation, coordinate planting activities and undertake long-term monitoring to ensure high survival rates.

KFS will also employ geo-tagging technology and satellite-based monitoring systems to track restoration sites and assess changes in forest cover over time. Community custodians will also be assigned to restoration blocks to strengthen local ownership and accountability while ensuring planted trees mature into healthy forests.

The programme places strong emphasis on community livelihoods, recognising that successful conservation depends on creating sustainable economic opportunities for people living adjacent to forests. Through initiatives such as beekeeping, agroforestry, ecotourism and other nature-based enterprises, CHERISH seeks to reduce pressure on forest resources while improving household incomes and strengthening community stewardship.

County governments have committed to supporting enforcement efforts, promoting alternative energy solutions to reduce dependence on fuelwood and working with partners to establish long-term policy and financing mechanisms that will sustain the programme beyond political and budget cycles.

CHERISH also contributes directly to Kenya's 15 Billion Tree Growing Programme, the country's flagship initiative to increase national tree cover to 30 per cent by 2032. The restoration of more than 10,000 hectares of degraded landscape under the programme will accelerate progress towards national climate commitments under the Paris Agreement while advancing the objectives of the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

For KFS, success will extend beyond the number of trees planted or hectares restored. It will be measured by healthier forests, secure water sources, resilient communities and landscapes capable of withstanding increasingly frequent climate-related shocks.

Over the next decade, the Service will work alongside government agencies, communities and development partners, to help restore the Cherangany Hills and ensure the ecosystem continues to sustain lives, livelihoods and biodiversity across Kenya and the wider Nile Basin.



Part of the Degraded Cherengany forest earmarked for restoration through CHERISH

Kaptagat Forest Fencing Project Launched



Deputy President H.E. Prof. Kithure Kindiki (centre) with Principal Secretary, State Department for Forestry, Mr. Gitonga Mugambi, CBS (right), and Chief Conservator of Forests, Kenya Forest Service, Mr. Alex Lemarkoko (left), during the launch of the Kaptagat Forest Ecosystem Fencing Project.

By Peter Owino

The Deputy President H.E. Prof. Kithure Kindiki launched the Kaptagat Forest Ecosystem fencing project, strengthening Government efforts to secure critical forest resources, curb encroachment and accelerate the restoration of degraded landscapes.

The project, launched at Kapkoi in Sabor Forest Station, will commence with the construction of an initial 50-kilometre stretch of forest fence along part of the Kaptagat ecosystem boundary. Implemented by the Kenya Forest Service (KFS), the initiative is intended to establish a clearly defined and secure forest boundary while helping to reduce human activities that continue to place pressure on the ecosystem.

Speaking during the launch, Deputy President Kindiki underscored the importance of protecting Kenya's forests, noting their critical contribution to water security, environmental conservation, biodiversity, climate resilience and community livelihoods."The fencing is expected to help address threats including encroachment, illegal logging, charcoal production and unauthorised grazing, while creating conditions for degraded sections of the forest to regenerate naturally." Said the Deputy President.

The Kaptagat Forest Ecosystem is an important water catchment in Kenya's North Rift, supporting ecological systems and communities within and beyond the immediate forest landscape. Strengthening its protection is therefore expected to enhance the ecosystem's capacity to regulate water flows, conserve soils, support biodiversity and sequester carbon. The project will also support the recovery of indigenous vegetation and strengthen ongoing forest restoration efforts within the ecosystem.

However, as a Service we recognize that physical infrastructure must be complemented by community ownership if forest protection is to deliver lasting results. Speaking to residents, the Chief Conservator of Forests Mr. Alex Lemarkoko, called on communities living adjacent to the forest to take an active role in protecting the ecosystem by becoming "social fences." When communities are at the center of forest protection, they take responsibility to safeguard forest boundaries, report illegal activities and support Government conservation efforts. Residents were also urged to take advantage of the rains to plant and nurture trees, contributing to the national tree-growing and landscape restoration agenda.

KFS recognises that sustainable forest conservation cannot be achieved through enforcement and physical boundaries alone, but requires strong partnerships between Government agencies, communities and other stakeholders. The Kaptagat fencing project forms part of KFS's wider programme to strengthen the security and management of Kenya's forest estate. The programme complements interventions in forest rehabilitation, tree growing, surveillance, law enforcement and community engagement, with partnerships playing a central role in safeguarding forest ecosystems. The construction of the initial 50-kilometre section marks an important milestone in efforts to strengthen the protection of Kaptagat and provide degraded areas with the opportunity to recover.

The launch also reinforces the Government's broader commitment to restoring and protecting forests as critical infrastructure for water security, climate resilience, biodiversity conservation and sustainable development. It represents a renewed commitment to protecting the forest, restoring degraded landscapes and securing the ecological services that the ecosystem provides to present and future generations.

A Record Rooted in Hope



Hilary Kibiwot in action during the 24,000 tree seedlings record breaking challenge in Kessup Forest in Elgeyo Marakwet County

By Janet Kavutha

At sunrise in the rolling landscapes of Kessup Forest Station in Elgeyo-Marakwet County, volunteers, forestry officers, conservation partners, and local residents gathered for what would become a historic day for Kenya's restoration movement. As the countdown began, Hillary Kibiwott embarked on a challenge demanding unwavering focus, physical endurance, and meticulous planning over the next 24 hours.

Months of preparation preceded the attempt. Site readiness, seedling availability, logistics, independent verification, and volunteer coordination were carefully organized to meet Guinness World Records requirements. Kenya Forest Service officers and partners prepared planting lines, verified planting methods, and ensured every seedling was correctly planted, demonstrating that successful restoration depends on both individual commitment and effective collaboration.

Over the course of 24 hours, Hillary maintained a relentless pace, planting thousands of seedlings despite fatigue and the physical demands of the terrain.

Kessup Forest Station forms part of the larger Kaptagat Forest landscape, one of Kenya's key water catchment areas. The forest plays a vital role in conserving biodiversity, regulating water flow, reducing soil erosion, and supporting local livelihoods. Restoration efforts within the landscape strengthen ecosystem resilience while complementing ongoing conservation programmes led by the Kenya Forest Service and its partners.

The achievement also highlighted the growing role of young people in environmental conservation. Across Kenya, youth continue to participate in tree growing, ecosystem restoration, climate action, and community conservation, contributing to national restoration targets under the Presidential 15 Billion Tree Growing Programme. Record-setting initiatives such as Hillary's help inspire greater public participation in tree-growing activities nationwide.

Local community members played an important role by providing logistical support, encouraging the participant, and assisting with the organization of the event, reflecting the collaborative approach that underpins successful forest restoration.

Among those present were Kaptagat Integrated Conservation Programme Patron Dr. Chris Kiptoo, Principal Secretary for Forestry Gitonga Mugambi, Chief Conservator of Forests Alex Lemarkoko, conservation partners, and community leaders.

Congratulating Hillary, Chief Conservator of Forests Alex Lemarkoko described the achievement as a remarkable demonstration of passion, resilience, and commitment to forest conservation. He noted that it reflected the critical role of youth in advancing Kenya's restoration agenda and reaffirmed the Kenya Forest Service's commitment to supporting restoration through partnerships, technical expertise, and community-led initiatives.

As the final seedling was planted, the achievement became more than a world record it stood as a lasting symbol of how determination, collaboration, and a shared commitment to restoration can help build a greener Kenya.

KFS Unveils Flagship FoLEA Main Campus at Mukutani



Chief Inspector and Inspector trainees demonstrate tactical skills during the Middle-Level Command Course at the Forest Law Enforcement Academy (FoLEA) Main Campus in Mukutani, Baringo County.

By Peter Owino

The Kenya Forest Service (KFS) has officially inaugurated the Forest Law Enforcement Academy (FoLEA) Main Campus at Mukutani, Baringo County. The purpose-built tactical and command training facility marks a decisive shift in how Kenya prepares its forest protection officers, moving beyond general policing frameworks to establish specialised instruction tailored to the unique demands of forest crime prevention and ecosystem management.

The campus commenced operations with three concurrent programmes: A Tactical Operations Course, a Middle-Level Command Course, and an Officers Leadership and Development Course for recently promoted Inspectors and Chief Inspectors. The inaugural cohorts draw officers from KFS operational units in Baringo, Nakuru, and Kericho counties, representing the first wave of what leadership envisions as a sustained pipeline of professionally trained forest protection personnel.

The Mukutani campus represents the culmination of a self-funded, internally driven vision that began when KFS operated without any dedicated training facility whatsoever. Chief Conservator of Forests Mr. Alex Lemarkoko, who officially opened the campus, placed the achievement in historical context: "Through determination, we established facilities in Londiani, Gilgil, and ultimately this facility at Mukutani."

This trajectory from modest training outposts to the newly operational flagship campus reflects the Service's growing recognition that forest-specific law enforcement has historically lagged behind wildlife protection in terms of dedicated training infrastructure across the region. Where forest protection officers were once absorbed into general policing structures, Mukutani now stands as a specialised institution designed to close that gap at the command layer.

The Academy's newly developed curriculum addresses the multifaceted nature of contemporary forest crime, encompassing tactical planning, field operations, command and control, resource management, and inter-agency coordination. This last component has become increasingly critical as forest crime intersects with organised illegal logging networks and land encroachment operations that demand sophisticated, multi-agency response capabilities.

The campus's strategic location within Mukutani Forest, in Baringo County's Rift Valley stretch, offers an operational training environment that closely mirrors the variety of landscapes KFS officers patrol nationally. The terrain ranges from dense woodland to open dryland country, traversing sharp elevation changes and demanding dry-season heat, conditions that serve as an integral component of the curriculum rather than merely a backdrop.

The launch arrives at a critical juncture, with fresh evidence indicating that demand for specialised forest law enforcement training now outpaces what the Service's existing facilities can absorb. County governments and conservancies have sought training placements at the Academy, with several counties returning for second and larger cohorts after initial placements, a pattern suggesting the training is generating measurable confidence among county-level forestry administrations.

The training pipeline continues to demonstrate robust growth across multiple counties. Nyamira County has already trained fifty officers at the Londiani Campus, with preparations underway to send an additional fifty personnel. Nyeri County, having completed training for seven County Forest Rangers, has expressed interest in enrolling its broader County Law Enforcement Officer corps. Kisumu County is in the final stages of arranging training for fifty law enforcement staff, while Kilifi County has signalled interest in bringing twenty Community Scouts to the Academy. The Maasai Mara Conservancy is also planning to send personnel for training in the coming months.

With county demand for placements continuing to grow, KFS has announced that further courses will roll out nationally in the coming months as campuses operate to meet what is fast becoming a national training backlog. The nationwide, continuous capacity-building programme will eventually reach junior and middle-level commanders across all conservancies, counties, and stations.

The expanded training capacity directly supports Kenya's commitment to grow 15 billion trees by 2032, a pledge that demands protection capacity keep pace with planting ambitions. The command officers trained at Mukutani, and the growing pipeline of county-level officers passing through the college, are central to the campaign's long-term durability rather than peripheral to it.

Once fully operational, the school is expected to rank among Kenya's foremost law enforcement training institutions. The first cohort's training is now underway, marking the beginning of what KFS leadership envisions as a sustained pipeline of professionally trained forest protection officers equipped to meet the evolving challenges of forest management and conservation.

The Mukutani campus stands as testament to the Service's determination to build institutional capacity from within, establishing a self-sustaining training ecosystem that will serve Kenya's forests for generations to come. As the country pursues ambitious restoration targets, the officers emerging from this facility will form the backbone of a protection force capable of safeguarding those investments against persistent threats.

This specialised institution represents not merely a new building, but a fundamental reconceptualisation of how Kenya prepares its forest guardians, one that acknowledges the complexity of modern environmental crime and the necessity of command-level expertise in combating it.



Chief Conservator of Forests, Mr. Alex Lemarkoko (seated, centre), joins senior Kenya Forest Service officers and Chief Inspector and Inspector trainees for a group photograph at the Forest Law Enforcement Academy (FoLEA) Main Campus in Mukutani, Baringo County.

International Day of Forests Marked in Vihiga



Prime Cabinet Secretary H.E. Hon. Musalia Mudavadi planting a tree during the IDF in Maragoli Hills Vihiga County Flanked by the Governor Vihiga Dr. Wilber Ottichilo,CS MECCF Dr. Deborah Barasa, PS Forestry Mugambi Gitonga and RFC Western Dennis Kerengo

By Lydia Ogada

Kenya joined the global community in commemorating the International Day of Forests 2026 at the scenic Maragoli Hills in Vihiga County, with a strong call to recognize and harness forests as engines of economic growth, environmental sustainability, and community livelihoods. The national celebrations brought together government leaders, development partners, conservation stakeholders, and local communities to reflect on the critical role forests play in supporting Kenya's economy and enhancing environmental resilience.

The event was presided over by the Prime Cabinet Secretary, H.E. Dr. Musalia Mudavadi, who attended as the Chief Guest. Also present were the Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Forestry, Dr. Deborah Barasa; Principal Secretary for Forestry, Mr. Mugambi Gitonga; FAO Kenya Country Director, Ms. Farayi Zimudzi; and the Governor of Vihiga County, H.E. Dr. Wilber Ottichilo, among other leaders from both state and non-state institutions. Their presence underscored the Government's commitment to integrating forest conservation into the country's broader development agenda.

In his keynote address, Dr. Mudavadi emphasized the immense economic value of forests, describing them as strategic national assets that contribute significantly to livelihoods and economic development."Forests are not just environmental assets; they are economic enablers that support livelihoods, drive industries, and sustain our national development. We must therefore invest in their protection and sustainable management to secure our future," he said. The Kenya Forest Service (KFS) delegation was led by Board Chairperson Mr. Titus Korir, while the Chief Conservator of Forests, Mr. Alex Lemarkoko, was represented by Deputy Chief Conservator of Forests, Mr. Francis Kariuki. During the celebrations, KFS reaffirmed its commitment to sustainable forest management, ecosystem restoration, and community engagement as key pillars in delivering both ecological and economic benefits. Leaders highlighted the 2026 global theme, "Forests and Economies," noting that forests are among the country's most valuable natural assets, supporting livelihoods through water provision, agroforestry, eco-tourism, timber production, and renewable energy.

Kenya's major water towers including the Mau Forest Complex, Mt. Kenya, and the Aberdare Range continue to provide essential ecosystem services that underpin agriculture, hydropower generation, and domestic water supply, making them indispensable to the nation's socio-economic development. The celebrations also showcased progress made under the Government's ambitious 15 Billion Tree Growing Programme, through which more than 1.5 billion trees have already been planted and grown across the country. Beyond restoring degraded landscapes, the initiative is creating green jobs, strengthening community livelihoods, and contributing to the national target of achieving at least 30 per cent tree cover by 2032.

KFS emphasized the importance of a whole-of-society approach in achieving these goals, working closely with Community Forest Associations (CFAs), county governments, youth groups, development partners, and the private sector to accelerate restoration efforts and promote sustainable forest-based enterprises. As Kenya advances its climate action and sustainable development agenda, forests remain at the heart of the country's vision for resilience, economic transformation, and environmental stewardship. Through continued investment in conservation and restoration, KFS is championing forests not only as vital ecosystems but also as powerful drivers of a greener and more prosperous future for all Kenyans.

Mangrove Record Inspires Restoration



Antoine Moses with the help of his Assistants plants Mangrove Propagules during the exercise in Tudor Creek, Mombasa County.

By James Waitathu

Mombasa County witnessed a landmark environmental event as renowned conservation champion Mr. Antoine Moses broke the Guinness World book record of the most mangroves planted within 24 hours. The historic undertaking commenced at 6.30 a.m. on 30th April 2026 at Mirarani, Tudor Creek, bringing together government leaders, environmental experts, local communities and development partners in a shared commitment to ecosystem restoration. The record was witnessed by the Principal Secretary for the State Department of Forestry, Mr. Gitonga Mugambi alongside representatives from conservation organizations and other key stakeholders.

Mr. Antoine Moses planted an extraordinary 40,000 mangrove propagules within the 24-hour period at a mangrove restoration site adopted by Earthlungs NGO. The initiative was not only a quest for global recognition but also served as a powerful demonstration of the transformative role that environmental stewardship, science and community action played in restoring degraded ecosystems.

Mangrove forests remained among the world's most valuable ecosystems. They protected coastlines from erosion, served as breeding grounds for marine life, stored significant amounts of carbon and supported the livelihoods of coastal communities. Their restoration had therefore become a critical component in the fight against climate change and biodiversity loss.

The Tudor Creek restoration initiative exemplified how ecological restoration and public engagement could work hand in hand to achieve lasting environmental impact. Every phase of the project, from site assessment and ecological mapping to species selection and planting design, was undertaken under the guidance of technical experts from the Kenya Forest Service (KFS). This ensured that the restoration efforts adhered to ecological suitability and internationally recognized best practices drawn from successful mangrove rehabilitation programmes around the world.

Beyond the numbers, the Guinness World Record attempt was intended to inspire collective action and reinforce the importance of partnerships in environmental conservation. It showcased how governments, civil society organizations, communities and private sector actors could collaborate to address pressing environmental challenges while creating awareness on the importance of safeguarding natural resources.
The Kenya Forest Service continued to champion science-based restoration initiatives that prioritized sustainability and long-term ecological resilience. Through its technical leadership and support, KFS demonstrated that restoration was not a one-time activity but a deliberate and continuous process that required planning, monitoring and active stakeholder participation.

The event stood as a symbol of hope and determination in the global effort to restore nature. The work at Tudor Creek reflected a strategic balance between technical excellence, global best practices and meaningful public participation, laying a strong foundation for lasting ecological benefits.

The attempt not only secured a place in the Guinness World Records but also left behind a thriving mangrove ecosystem and an enduring legacy of environmental conservation for generations to come.

Run for Oloolua Forest: Turning Footsteps into Forest Conservation



The RFC for Nairobi region, Madam Joyce Nthuku, poses alongside her team that took part in the planning of Oloolua Marathon

By Janet Kavutha

Hundreds of conservation enthusiasts, government officials, corporate partners, and local residents converged at Oloolua Forest for the inaugural Run for Oloolua Forest. This was a community-driven initiative aimed at mobilizing resources and public support for the conservation and restoration of one of Nairobi's most important urban forest ecosystems.

The event highlighted the growing recognition of Oloolua Forest as a critical green space that supports biodiversity conservation, climate resilience, environmental education, recreation, and ecosystem services for surrounding communities. As Nairobi continues to expand, the protection of urban and peri-urban forests is increasingly becoming a priority for environmental sustainability and public well-being.

Speaking during the event, Principal Secretary Dr. Chris Kiptoo, emphasized that forest restoration remains central to Kenya's climate action agenda and national development priorities. He noted that initiatives such as the Run for Oloolua Forest complement the Government's efforts to restore degraded landscapes, strengthen ecosystem services, and contribute to the national target of growing 15 billion trees by 2032. "Protecting forests is not only an environmental responsibility but also an investment in climate resilience, water security, and sustainable livelihoods," he said.

The event reinforced the importance of partnerships in advancing conservation objectives. Patron of Oloolua Forest, Principal Secretary for Irrigation Mr Ephantus Kimotho, commended the broad coalition of stakeholders whose support made the event possible. He particularly recognized the Kenya Forest Service (KFS), through the Regional Conservator's Office led by Regional Forest Conservator Joyce Nduku, for providing technical guidance and coordination throughout the planning and implementation process.

The marathon demonstrated how collaborative action among government institutions, communities, conservation organizations, and the private sector can strengthen forest stewardship and mobilize support for restoration initiatives.

Representing the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry, Dr. Eng. Festus K. Ng'eno, reiterated the Government's commitment to protecting critical ecosystems through inclusive and participatory approaches. He observed that sustainable forest management requires active involvement of communities living around forests, noting that local ownership remains one of the most effective tools for safeguarding natural resources.

His remarks reflected Kenya's broader commitment to participatory forest management, which encourages communities to take an active role in forest conservation, restoration, and sustainable utilization.

Representing the Chief Conservator of Forests, Regional Forest Conservator Joyce Nthuku reaffirmed the Kenya Forest Service's commitment to supporting community-led conservation initiatives through technical expertise, stakeholder coordination, and sustainable forest management practices. She noted that public awareness initiatives, such as the Run for Oloolua Forest, create valuable opportunities to strengthen environmental consciousness and foster stronger partnerships for conservation.

Beyond the athletic competition, the event served as an important platform for environmental education and advocacy. Participants were sensitized on the ecological significance of Oloolua Forest and the need to protect remaining urban forests from increasing pressures associated with population growth, land-use change, and climate change.

As Kenya advances its restoration agenda and climate commitments, initiatives such as the Run for Oloolua Forest provide a practical example of how partnerships, community engagement, and environmental awareness can contribute to the protection of critical ecosystems. Every step taken during the marathon symbolized a collective commitment to ensuring that Oloolua Forest continues to provide ecological, social, and economic benefits for generations to come.

KFS and KenHA Partner in Seedling Production



Model Tree Nursery by KFS in partnership with KenHA, producing quality seedlings for landscape restoration.

By Mark Sang

As Kenya advances towards its ambitious national target of growing 15 billion trees by 2032, the Kenya Forest Service (KFS) continues to strengthen the foundation of successful forest restoration through the establishment and management of model tree nurseries across the country.

The Model Tree Nursery has emerged as a center of excellence in seedling production, demonstrating best practices in nursery management, species diversification, and quality assurance. The nursery plays a critical role in supporting afforestation and reforestation programs by supplying healthy, vigorous, and site-appropriate seedlings to government agencies, community forest associations, private landowners, schools, and other stakeholders.

Over the reporting period, significant progress has been recorded in infrastructure development and operational efficiency. The nursery currently maintains a wide range of indigenous and exotic tree species, including high-value timber species, fruit trees, bamboo, and climate-resilient indigenous varieties. Improved germination techniques, regular potting schedules, and enhanced seedling care practices have contributed to increased survival rates and improved seedling quality.

To ensure consistent production, nursery staffs have undertaken routine maintenance activities including watering, weeding, root pruning, pest and disease monitoring, and shade management. These interventions have strengthened seedling health and readiness for planting during the onset of the rainy season.

The nursery has also served as a practical learning centre for stakeholders interested in tree growing and sustainable land management. Through demonstrations and training sessions, community members, youth groups, schools, and partner institutions have been equipped with skills in seed collection, nursery establishment, seedling management, and tree planting techniques. This capacity-building effort continues to promote community participation in forest restoration initiatives.

In support of environmental sustainability, the nursery has embraced water conservation measures and efficient resource utilization to minimize operational costs while maximizing productivity. The adoption of improved nursery technologies and regular monitoring has enhanced accountability and performance within the facility.

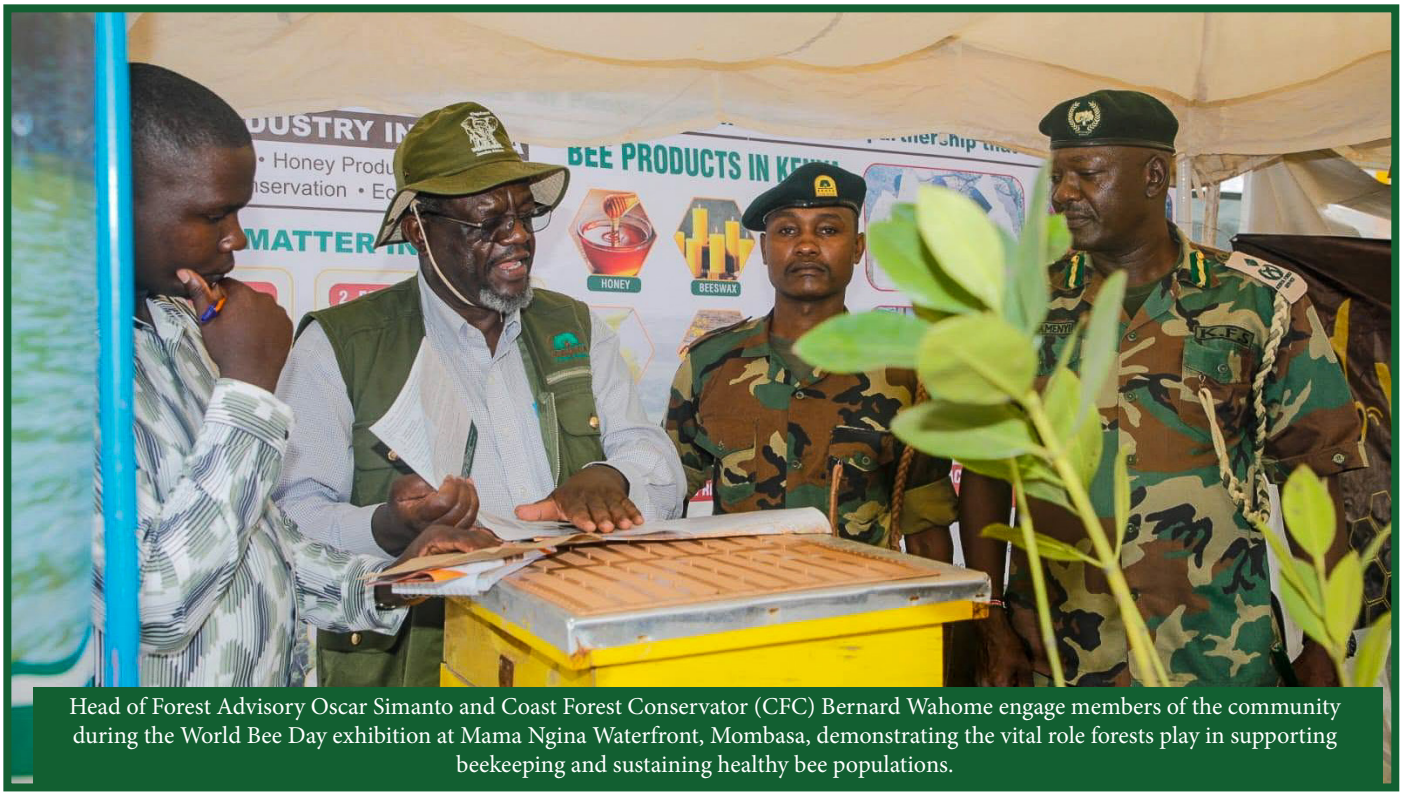
Looking ahead, the Kenya Forest Service remains committed to expanding seedling production capacity, increasing species diversity, and strengthening partnerships to meet the growing demand for quality planting materials. The continued success of the Model Tree Nursery underscores the Service's dedication to restoring degraded landscapes, enhancing forest cover, and contributing to national climate action objectives.

Through innovation, professionalism, and collaboration, the Model Tree Nursery continues to exemplify KFS's vision of sustainable forest management and a greener future for Kenya.



Model Tree Nursery by KFS in partnership with KenHA, producing quality seedlings for landscape restoration.

Celebrating the Role Of Bees



Head of Forest Advisory Oscar Simanto and Coast Forest Conservator (CFC) Bernard Wahome engage members of the community during the World Bee Day exhibition at Mama Ngina Waterfront, Mombasa, demonstrating the vital role forests play in supporting beekeeping and sustaining healthy bee populations.

By Michael Musyoka

There is a quiet but powerful force that has kept ecosystems alive the humble bee. Often recognized for honey production, bees have played a much greater role in sustaining the natural world. Through pollination, they have supported the growth of forests, strengthened food systems, and helped maintain the delicate balance between people, wildlife, and nature. As the world marked World Bee Day, the Kenya Forest Service (KFS) joined the global community in celebrating the vital role played by bees and other pollinators in protecting biodiversity and building a more sustainable future.

Kenya's forests served as critical habitats for bees, providing forage areas and healthy ecosystems where pollinators thrived. By conserving and restoring forest landscapes, KFS continued to create a supportive environment for bees while promoting natural regeneration and ecological stability.

The relationship between forests and communities also remained central to pollinator conservation. Through sustainable apiculture, KFS promoted a model where conservation and livelihoods worked together. Beekeeping provided communities with opportunities for economic empowerment while encouraging the protection of forest ecosystems.

Speaking during the commemoration, Mr. Oscar Simanto from the National Bee Institute, Ngong Road Forest, said the institute had continued to work closely with the Kenya Forest Service in building the capacity of officers, Community Forest Associations (CFAs), and forest-adjacent communities on responsible beekeeping practices, bee management, and pollinator conservation. He noted that these initiatives had enabled communities to adopt sustainable practices that protected both bees and their habitats while improving livelihoods.

Despite these efforts, bees continued to face increasing threats, including habitat loss, climate change, forest degradation, wildfires, pollution, and unsustainable agricultural practices. The decline of pollinators affected more than biodiversity; it also impacted food production, ecosystems, and communities that depended on nature's services.

KFS emphasized that protecting bees required collective responsibility. Conserving forests, restoring degraded landscapes, planting indigenous tree species, and creating public awareness remained essential steps towards securing the future of pollinators.

As the institution mandated to conserve, develop, and sustainably manage Kenya's forests, KFS reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening the connection between forests, communities, and biodiversity. Through restoration programmes, environmental education, and sustainable forest management practices, the Service continued to support a greener, healthier, and more resilient Kenya.

Protecting bees was protecting biodiversity. Protecting biodiversity was securing the future of generations to come.

KFS Strengthens Institutional Capacity Through Induction of Newly Recruited Staff



Newly recruited Kenya Forest Service staff join in prayer during their induction at the KFS Headquarters, Karura Forest, Nairobi, as they prepare to take up their roles in advancing sustainable forest management and conservation across the country.

By Felix Mwita

The Kenya Forest Service (KFS) has intensified efforts to strengthen institutional capacity and enhance sustainable forest management through the induction of newly recruited staff at the Kenya Forestry College (KFC) in Londiani, Kericho County.

The two-day programme brought together newly enlisted officers from across the country for orientation on the Service's mandate, operational procedures and their role in advancing Kenya's environmental conservation agenda.

The induction comes as the Government scales up interventions to restore degraded landscapes, increase forest cover and combat climate change through the national tree growing initiative. KFS considers the empowerment of newly recruited officers a strategic investment in ensuring effective and professional delivery of forestry services nationwide.

Speaking during the opening session on behalf of the Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF), Mr. Alex Lemarkoko, Senior Manager Corporate Services Ms. Lucy Kiboi welcomed the recruits to the Service and challenged them to uphold professionalism, integrity and commitment to public service.

Ms. Kiboi noted that the recruits were joining an institution whose mandate is central to Kenya's environmental sustainability and socio-economic development through sustainable forest management and conservation. She emphasized that the induction was designed to familiarize officers with KFS policies and operational frameworks while equipping them with the values and competencies required for effective service delivery.

"The future of sustainable forest management depends greatly on the capacity, discipline and dedication of officers entrusted with protecting and managing forest resources," she stated.

The programme covered key areas including climate change mitigation, ecosystem restoration, forest governance, community engagement and public service ethics. The training is expected to equip the officers with knowledge and skills to respond to emerging environmental challenges while promoting sustainable management and utilization of forest resources.

The recruits will also support community-based conservation initiatives, recognizing the important role of local communities in protecting forests and restoring degraded ecosystems.

Among the senior KFS officials present were Deputy Chief Conservator of Forests for Natural Forest Conservation Ms. Beatrice Mbula, Human Resources Manager Mr. Patrick Tialal, Finance Manager Ms. Anastacia Muasya, Administration and Infrastructure Development Manager Mr. Isaac Wanyonyi, Legal Services Manager Ms. Laura Yego and Corporate Communications Manager Ms. Ann Kaari.

The induction marks the beginning of a new chapter for the recruits as they prepare for deployment across various regions. Their service is expected to reinforce ongoing conservation efforts and contribute to Kenya's forest cover and environmental restoration targets.

Strengthened by Faith, United in Service



The CCF Mr. Alex Lemarkoko, Taita Taveta County Commissioner Ms.Linda Okola(left)Bishop George Muthaka, Father J.B. Macharia, Dr. Clement Ng'oriareng,Bishop Amos Ololdapash among other officers and Priests pose for a photo at Our Lady Queen of Peace Ctholic Church in Voi.

By Michael Musyoka

There is a particular kind of stillness that descends when men and women of uniform bow their heads in prayer. It is a moment stripped of rank and regiment, of radio calls and operational briefings, a moment where the weight of duty gives way, briefly, to something deeper. It was precisely this stillness that settled over Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic Church in Voi as officers and their families from across Kenya's disciplined services gathered for a Joint Prayer and Thanksgiving Service that was as much a declaration as it was a devotion.

The occasion marked the official launch of a nationwide prayer and thanksgiving journey, a structured, year-long spiritual programme with ambitions that stretch far beyond any single Sunday service. Opened by the Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF), Mr. Alex Lemarkoko, the event announced the Kenya Forest Service's bold decision to lead a coordinated programme of regional prayer engagements across the country for the next two years, creating dedicated space for officers and their families to pause, reflect, give thanks, and reconnect with purpose.

Held under the scriptural theme "Be Strong and Steadfast, for the Lord Your God is with You", drawn from Joshua 1:9, the service carried a message both timeless and timely. For officers who daily navigate the pressures of conservation enforcement, wildlife protection, criminal investigation, and public order, the call to courage anchored in faith is not merely inspirational. It is, for many, deeply personal.

Presided over by His Lordship Bishop George Muthaka, the service provided liturgical gravitas to what was, at its heart, a gathering of people committed to something larger than themselves. The Bishop's presence lent the occasion an unmistakable solemnity, a reminder that the spiritual and the professional need not occupy separate worlds.

What distinguished this gathering was not only its spiritual character, but it's remarkable breadth. Officers drawn from the Kenya Forest Service, Kenya Police Service, Administration Police Service, Directorate of Criminal Investigations (DCI), Kenya Prisons Service, and Kenya Wildlife Service sat together as one, a coalition of institutions that ordinarily operate in their distinct spheres, united here by faith and a shared sense of national calling.

In an era where inter-agency cooperation is increasingly critical to the success of conservation and security mandates, such visible solidarity carries significance well beyond the symbolic. It affirms what seasoned public servants have long understood: that the disciplined services are most effective not as isolated silos, but as a networked, mutually reinforcing force.

In his opening remarks, CCF Lemarkoko spoke with the measured conviction of a leader who has thought carefully about what sustains people in difficult work. He noted that operational excellence alone is insufficient, that behind every effective officer is a person whose well-being is anchored in something the performance metrics cannot capture: spiritual grounding, shared values, and family support.

"These," he suggested, "are not soft considerations. They are pillars."

His announcement that the Kenya Forest Service would take the lead in coordinating the prayer journey over the coming two years was received not simply as an institutional commitment, but as a statement of organisational philosophy, that caring for officers means caring for the whole person.

The programme's structure is deliberate. Rather than a one-off event, it is designed as a rolling, regional en-



KFS Officers Led by Dr. Clement Ng'oriareng Pose for a Photo in Nyeri

gagement, a living programme that will travel across the country, reaching officers and families wherever they serve. Each gathering is intended to do what the Voi service did: create a moment apart from the relentless pace of duty, where reflection is possible, where gratitude can be expressed, and where the invisible bonds of shared purpose are quietly strengthened.

There is wisdom in this design. Studies in organisational psychology, and indeed centuries of institutional experience, affirm that communities which invest in the interior lives of their members are more cohesive, more resilient, and better equipped to serve under pressure. Kenya's disciplined services, it seems, are taking this insight seriously.

As the congregation filed out of Our Lady Queen of Peace into the Voi afternoon, there was something palpable in the air, not merely the satisfaction of a service well-conducted, but a sense of renewed orientation. The prayer journey that began in Voi is, in the truest sense, a journey inward before it is a journey outward.

It is a reminder that the men and women who guard our forests, protect our wildlife, maintain our security, and uphold our laws are not machines of policy and procedure. They are people of faith, family, and feeling, and the nation they serve is best served when they are whole.

As the programme rolls out across regions in the months ahead, that reminder will travel with it: that service is not only defined by duty, but also by faith, resilience, and a shared commitment to the nation.



The Kenya Forest Service (KFS) Band leading other security services in a colourful band procession during the National Interagencies Prayer Day held in Garissa Town.

KFS Holds Thanksgiving Service to Usher in the New Year



Unveiling of the KFS 2026 theme by the Board Chairman Mr Titus Korir (Left), Chief Conservator of Forests Mr Alex Lemarkoko (Center) and Bishop Amos Ololdapash during the Thanksgiving Service.

By Rodah Mbatiany

The Kenya Forest Service held a Thanksgiving breakfast meeting, bringing together members of staff in a spirit of gratitude, unity and renewed commitment to the Service's mandate. The event, graced by the Chairman of the KFS Board, Mr. Titus Korir, provided an opportunity to reflect on the Service's achievements in conservation and appreciate the dedication of staff.

In his address, Mr. Korir commended KFS staff for their resilience, professionalism and dedication, noting that the Service had registered significant achievements despite various challenges. He assured staff of continued support from the Board and the Government to enable KFS to effectively deliver on its mandate. He emphasized the importance of teamwork, accountability and effective delegation of responsibilities as key drivers of institutional success.

The Chief Conservator of Forests Mr. Alex Lemarkoko reaffirmed the Service's commitment to advancing Kenya's environmental conservation agenda, highlighting the annual production target of one billion tree seedlings in support of the national 15 Billion Tree Growing Programme. He noted that KFS continues to strengthen seedling production through nurseries, while providing technical expertise and quality planting materials to support restoration efforts across the country. He also encouraged staff to remain focused, innovative and collaborative in delivering the Service's objectives.

The Thanksgiving service was enriched by a sermon from Rev. Fr. Paul Miring'u, Deputy Director of Kenya Prisons Service and National Coordinator, who encouraged staff to remain steadfast in faith and service. Drawing from Joshua 1:9, he challenged employees to embrace courage, integrity and discipline in the execution of their duties. KFS Chaplain Bishop Amos Ololdapash reiterated the importance of faith and strong values that enables staff to effectively perform their duties.

Deputy Chief Conservator of Forests (SDCCF–FCM), Dr. Clement Ng'oriareng, concluded the event by urging staff to continue fostering unity, teamwork and professionalism as they work together to achieve the Service's conservation goals.

KFS Marks World Rainforest Day at Kakamega Forest



National stakeholders lead the 2026 World Rainforest Day celebrations at Kakamega Forest Station. From left: H.E. FCPA Fernandes Barasa, OGW; Ambassador Canon Dr. Ida Odinga, EGH; CS Dr. Deborah Mlongo Barasa, EGH; PS Mr. Gitonga Mugambi, CBS; KEFRI DG Dr. Jane Njuguna; and SDCCF Dr. Clement Ng'oriareng'.

By Michael Musyoka

The Kenya Forest Service (KFS) joined stakeholders in commemorating World Rainforest Day at Kakamega Forest Station, reaffirming its commitment to conserving Kenya's only tropical rainforest and advancing sustainable forest management. Observed annually, the day raises global awareness of the indispensable role rainforests play in regulating the climate, conserving biodiversity, and sustaining livelihoods. This year's theme, "The Forest Within You," emphasized that every individual has a shared responsibility to protect forests and safeguard biodiversity for present and future generations.

Covering approximately 23,800 hectares across Kakamega and Vihiga counties, Kakamega Forest is Kenya's only tropical rainforest and one of the country's most important ecological assets. The Kenya Forest Service continues to work closely with county governments, local communities, Rhino Ark, and other partners to restore and protect the forest through collaborative conservation initiatives, including the ongoing forest fencing programme aimed at enhancing protection while improving community livelihoods.

The commemoration underscored the importance of collective action in safeguarding Kenya's forest ecosystems through partnerships that bring together government agencies, conservation organizations, county governments, and local communities. By promoting sustainable forest management and ecosystem restoration, the initiative continues to support national efforts to combat climate change, protect biodiversity, and secure the ecological services that forests provide to millions of Kenyans.

Speaking during the commemoration, Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Forestry, Dr. Deborah Barasa, called on Kenyans to actively participate in forest conservation, noting that healthy forests are fundamental to climate resilience, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable development. She encouraged citizens to support the 15 Billion Tree Growing Programme, describing it as a transformative national initiative that will secure Kenya's environmental future.

Principal Secretary for the State Department of Forestry, Mr. Gitonga Mugambi, reaffirmed the Government's commitment to strengthening forest conservation through sustainable management and strategic partnerships. He emphasized the importance of protecting critical ecosystems such as Kakamega Forest, noting that their conservation is essential for safeguarding water catchments, preserving biodiversity, and enhancing resilience against climate change.

The event was also attended by Principal Deputy Chief Conservator of Forests Dr. Clement Ng'oriareng', who represented the Chief Conservator of Forests, Mr. Alex Lemarkoko, alongside national and county leaders, development partners, and members of the local community, underscoring the collective commitment to conserving Kenya's rainforest heritage.

Kenya's Mangrove Restoration Journey



President Dr. William Samoei Ruto addresses delegates during the closing session of the 11th Our Ocean Conference (OOC11) in Mombasa.

By Brandon Ntai

The 11th Our Ocean Conference (OOC11), held in Mombasa from June 16–18, 2026, placed mangrove ecosystems at the centre of global conversations on climate action, biodiversity conservation and the sustainable Blue Economy.

Hosted for the first time in Africa, the conference brought together Heads of State, ministers, policymakers, researchers, development partners, private sector actors and conservation organisations to advance practical solutions for sustainable ocean governance and nature-based climate action.

The Kenya Forest Service (KFS) used the conference to showcase Kenya's progress in mangrove restoration and blue carbon conservation through an interactive exhibition. The exhibition highlighted Kenya's 61,271 hectares of mangrove forests across Lamu, Tana River, Kilifi, Mombasa and Kwale counties, with Lamu accounting for 37,350 hectares, or 61 per cent of the national cover.

The exhibition demonstrated how mangroves protect shorelines, store carbon, support fisheries, conserve biodiversity and sustain coastal livelihoods. It also highlighted restoration programmes where science, policy and community participation are helping rehabilitate degraded ecosystems. Community Forest Associations (CFAs), including Mtepeni CFA and Mida Creek CFA, showcased products such as Pure Mangrove Honey, Stingless Bee Honey and Arabuko Multiflora Honey. Their participation demonstrated how sustainable forest-based enterprises can create alternative livelihoods while encouraging communities to take an active role in protecting mangrove ecosystems.

The exhibition attracted Cabinet Secretary for Investments, Trade and Industry, Hon. Lee Kinyanjui, and Mombasa County Woman Representative, Hon. Zamzam Chimba Mohammed. They commended KFS for its restoration efforts and partnerships with coastal communities. Hon. Zamzam highlighted the Port Reitz Creek and Mchenjama restoration initiatives as examples of successful collaboration.

At the closing session, President Dr. William Samoei Ruto reaffirmed Kenya's commitment to ecosystem restoration, marine conservation and climate action, emphasising investment, innovation and partnerships.

OOC11 reaffirmed that mangrove restoration is more than environmental conservation. It is an investment in climate resilience, biodiversity, livelihoods and Kenya's sustainable Blue Economy.

A Framework for the Future: Kenya's Forest Law

By Dennis Kiplagat and Makena Lorna

Kenya has taken a significant step in reshaping its environmental future following the enactment of the Forest Conservation and Management (Amendment) Law, 2025. More than a routine legal update, the law reflects a broader shift in how forests are viewed not only as ecological resources, but also as foundations of climate resilience, economic stability and community livelihoods. The law builds on the repealed Forest Conservation and Management Act of 2016 and aligns with Article 69 of the Constitution, which requires sustainable use and protection of natural resources. Its primary contribution is the creation of a more integrated, accountable and climate-responsive forestry framework.

A major driver of the reform is the National Forest Policy 2023, which replaced the 1958 Sessional Paper and introduced a modern vision for forestry. The policy recognizes forests as sources of biodiversity, carbon storage, water regulation and economic opportunity. The 2025 law strengthens implementation by aligning legislation, institutions and operational mechanisms under a common framework.

One of the law's most important features is the strengthening of key forestry institutions. The Kenya Forest Service (KFS) is repositioned beyond traditional forest protection to include ecosystem management, technical support and closer collaboration with county governments and local communities. The Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI) is given a clearer role in generating research and innovation to support sustainable forestry, climate adaptation and ecosystem restoration.
The law also establishes the Directorate of Forest Regulation, Kenya's first dedicated forestry regulator. The Directorate is expected to improve compliance, standard-setting and oversight across the sector. Its creation addresses long-standing challenges such as illegal logging, inconsistent enforcement and weak regulatory coordination.

Recognizing the importance of local participation, the law strengthens the role of counties and communities in forestry management, particularly through agroforestry and off-reserve tree growing. This approach supports Kenya's goal of planting 15 billion trees by 2032 while emphasizing sustainability, species diversity and community ownership rather than focusing solely on planting numbers.

The legislation also embraces innovation in ecosystem restoration. Modern techniques such as aerial seeding and improved water-harvesting systems are introduced to support afforestation efforts, particularly in arid and semi-arid regions where conventional methods have achieved limited success. By incorporating technology, the law seeks to accelerate restoration while ensuring interventions remain scientifically and environmentally appropriate.

Another transformative aspect is its financing framework. Through Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) and REDD+ nesting arrangements, Kenya is positioning itself to benefit from global climate finance. These mechanisms allow communities and landowners who protect forests to receive compensation for services such as carbon sequestration and water regulation. They also create opportunities for participation in carbon markets, potentially generating new revenue streams for conservation and local development. However, effective governance and equitable benefit-sharing will be essential to ensure these opportunities reach forest-dependent communities.

To strengthen accountability, the law places the oversight of forest rangers under the Independent Policing Oversight Authority (IPOA). This reform aims to improve professionalism, transparency and public trust in forest enforcement while encouraging a more collaborative relationship between authorities and communities.

The law further introduces Natural Capital Accounting, requiring the valuation of forest ecosystems and the integration of their contributions into national economic planning. By recognizing the economic value of services such as water security, agriculture support, tourism, biodiversity conservation and climate regulation, policymakers can make more informed decisions that balance development with environmental sustainability.

Enforcement provisions have also been strengthened through substantially higher penalties for forest-related offences, including illegal logging, encroachment and degradation. While stronger penalties alone cannot eliminate environmental crime, they demonstrate a commitment to treating such offences as serious threats to national development and ecological stability.

Taken together, the Forest Conservation and Management (Amendment) Law, 2025 represents a major evolution in Kenya's environmental governance. By combining science, technology, finance, enforcement and community participation within a single framework, the law has the potential to position Kenya as a leader in climate-smart forestry and ecosystem-based development. Its ultimate success, however, will depend on effective implementation, institutional coordination and sustained commitment from government, communities, researchers and conservation stakeholders. The law provides a strong blueprint; the challenge now lies in translating its ambitions into healthier forests, stronger livelihoods and long-term environmental resilience.

Youth Team up to Plant Trees in Kinale Forest



The Chief Conservator of Forests Mr Alex Lemarkoko poses for a group photo with Gen Z after a tree growing exercise in Kinale Forest.

By Rodah Mbatiany

Kinale Forest came alive as hundreds of vibrant young people joined the Kenya Forest Service in a tree-growing exercise aimed at restoring forest cover and advancing Kenya's climate action agenda. The partnership highlighted the critical role of youth in achieving Kenya's ambitious environmental conservation targets.

The exercise brought together KFS Headquarters staff, youth groups, community members and conservation champions, demonstrating the growing momentum of collective action in support of the national 15 Billion Tree Growing Programme. A total of 24,000 tree seedlings were planted during the event, contributing to the country's goal of achieving 30 percent tree cover by 2032.

Speaking during the event, Chief Conservator of Forests Mr. Alex Lemarkoko emphasized the critical role of young people in shaping a greener and more sustainable future. He noted that Kenya's youth possess the energy, creativity and commit-ment needed to drive environmental conservation efforts across the country. "The future of our forests lies in the hands of our young people. By actively engaging t hem in tree growing and environmental stewardship, we are not only restoring degraded landscapes but also nurturing a generation that values natural resources," he stated.

The newly appointed 15 Billion Tree Growing Campaign Ambassador, Mr. Hillary Kibiwott, challenged young people to em-brace environmental conservation as a personal responsibility. He emphasized that every tree planted today contributes to a healthier environment.

Representing the Gen Z team, Mr. Anthony Karumba expressed appreciation to KFS for providing a platform for young peo-ple to contribute to national conservation efforts. He noted that today's youth are increasingly embracing climate action and are ready to play a leading role in restoring Kenya's landscapes. "Young people are ready to be part of the solution. We are channeling our energy into meaningful action and demonstrating that environmental conservation is everyone's re-sponsibility," he said.

The event was attended by members of KFS Senior Management led by Ms. Zipporah Toroitich, Ms. Lucy Kiboi and Com-mandant Mohamed. Also present were the Regional Forest Conservator for Central Highlands, Ms. Monica Ndirangu and the County Forest Conservator for Kiambu, Mr. Muriithi Matindi.

Set within the scenic Kinale Forest, one of the country's important water catchment areas within the Aberdare ecosystem, the exercise underscored the power of partnerships in achieving conservation goals.

Seedlings that were planted by the Gen Z will serve as a lasting symbol of the commitment by Kenya's youth, communities and conservation stakeholders to restore forests, combat climate change and secure a greener future for the nation.

KFS Strengthens Chaplaincy Training



Officers from the Kenya Police Service (KPS), Directorate of Criminal Investigations (DCI), Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), National Youth Service (NYS), Kenya Forest Service (KFS), and Kenya Prisons Service, together with chaplaincy representatives and trainers from Way of Truth Ministries, led by Bishop Amos Ololdapash (centre) and Director Dan Woodring (right), pose for a group photo after the successful completion of the training at the KFS Canteen.

By Michael Musyoka

The Kenya Forest Service (KFS) hosted a three-day Regional Chaplaincy Training Seminar at the KFS Headquarters, Karura, bringing together chaplains from various disciplined services for capacity building, spiritual reflection, and strengthening of ministry structures.

The training formed part of KFS' continued commitment to enhancing chaplaincy support within disciplined services by equipping spiritual leaders with the knowledge and skills required to provide guidance, counselling, and moral support to officers and their families.

The seminar was officially opened by Bishop Amos Ololdapash on behalf of the Chief Conservator of Forests, Mr. Alex Lemarkoko, EBS 'ndc' (K). In his remarks, Bishop Ololdapash highlighted the importance of emotional resilience, moral integrity, and spiritual strength in supporting officers who serve in demanding environments.

Held under the theme, "Equipping the Chaplain for the Work of Ministry," the training focused on strengthening practical ministry skills, leadership development, and the establishment of sustainable chaplaincy programmes that respond to the needs of officers and their families.

The seminar was conducted in partnership with Way of Truth Ministries, an organisation that has continued to support chaplaincy development within KFS over the past three years. Speaking during the training, Way of Truth Ministries Director, Dan Woodring, emphasized the importance of empowering chaplains to effectively carry out their mission of providing spiritual care and encouragement.

The regional training brought together participants from key disciplined services including the Kenya Police Service, Directorate of Criminal Investigations (DCI), Kenya Prisons Service, Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), National Youth Service (NYS), and KFS, demonstrating a shared commitment towards strengthening integrity, compassion, and resilience across the services.

The engagement also provided an opportunity for chaplains to share experiences, exchange knowledge, and explore approaches that enhance the role of chaplaincy in promoting officer welfare, unity, and a strong service culture.

Beyond the classroom sessions, the programme reinforced the importance of spiritual leadership as a pillar in building disciplined, ethical, and resilient institutions. Through continued investment in chaplaincy development, KFS continues to support the holistic well-being of officers while strengthening partnerships among Kenya's disciplined services.

The Regional Chaplaincy Training and Mass stand as a reminder that effective service is strengthened not only through professional preparation, but also through values, faith, and care for the people behind the uniform.

Rooting a Legacy: CBK@60 Tree Growing Initiative Takes Root at Karura Forest



Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Forestry Dr. Deborah Barasa, EGH, joins Central Bank of Kenya Governor Dr. Kamau Thugge and Chief Conservator of Forests Mr. Alex Lemarkoko, EBS, 'ndc' (K), during the launch of the CBK @60 Tree Growing Initiative at Karura Forest

By Makena Lorna

As Kenya pursues the ambitious target of growing 15 billion trees by 2032, institutions across the country are increasingly aligning their corporate milestones with national environmental priorities. For the Central Bank of Kenya (CBK), celebrating six decades of service presented an opportunity to invest not only in its legacy, but also in Kenya's natural future.

At one of Kenya's most iconic urban forests, Karura Forest, Kenya Forest Service (KFS) hosted the official launch of the CBK@60 Tree Growing Initiative. The event brought together the Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Forestry, Dr. Deborah Barasa, EGH, the Governor of the Central Bank of Kenya, Dr. Kamau Thugge, the Chief Conservator of Forests, Mr. Alex Lemarkoko, EBS, 'ndc' (K), senior government officials, KFS officers and conservation partners. The day began with a wellness run through the tranquil trails of Karura Forest before participants planted 200 indigenous tree seedlings, symbolising a shared commitment to environmental restoration.

The event reflected a growing appreciation that forests are more than landscapes; they are natural infrastructure that supports water security, biodiversity, livelihoods and climate resilience. Speaking during the launch, Chief Conservator of Forests Mr. Alex Lemarkoko observed that restoring forests requires sustained partnerships between government, the private sector and communities. Congratulating CBK on its 60-year milestone, he invited the institution to strengthen its contribution through the KFS Adopt-a-Forest Initiative, enabling long-term investment in forest restoration and stewardship.

The financial sector also has a vital role to play in Kenya's green transition. CBK Governor Dr. Kamau Thugge noted that climate risk is increasingly becoming financial risk, making environmental sustainability an economic imperative. By investing in nature-based solutions, financial institutions can help build resilient economies while supporting national climate goals.

Officially launching the initiative, Cabinet Secretary Dr. Deborah Barasa reaffirmed the Government's commitment to restoring 10.6 million hectares of degraded landscapes and achieving 30 per cent tree cover by 2032. Beyond environmental benefits, she highlighted the programme's potential to generate approximately 3.5 million green jobs while unlocking opportunities in green finance, carbon markets and commercial forestry.

For KFS, the occasion reaffirmed the importance of collaboration in achieving the country's restoration agenda. It also showcased Karura Forest as a successful example of sustainable forest management, where conservation, recreation and environmental education coexist.

The CBK@60 Tree Growing Initiative may have celebrated a diamond jubilee, but its greatest achievement lies in what comes next. As the seedlings mature into thriving trees, they will stand as a lasting reminder that the strongest legacies are not measured only by years of service, but by the positive impact they leave on people, nature and future generations.

PFMP launches and Signings of Forest Management Agreements in Baringo and West Pokot Counties



The Principal Senior Deputy Chief Conservator of Forests Dr. Clement Ngoriareng (in glasses) together with other KFS Staff from the region holding the launched Participatory Forest Management Plan for Kapenguria Forest Station

By Lydiah Ogada

The Participatory Forest Management Plan derives its mandate from the Forest Conservation and Management Act and seeks to promote sustainable forest conservation, strengthen community participation, enhance stakeholder collaboration, support income-generating activities, promote ecotourism, and empower local communities on the importance of forests and environmental conservation.

It is with this notion that the Principal Senior Deputy Chief Conservator of Forests, Dr. Clement Ngoriareng, launched the Kapenguria Participatory Forest Management Plan (2026–2031) and presided over the signing of a Forest Management Agreement (FMA) between the Kenya Forest Service and the Kapenguria Community Forest Association (KACOFA) during a colourful ceremony held at AIC Kapchila in Kapenguria Forest Station, West Pokot County.

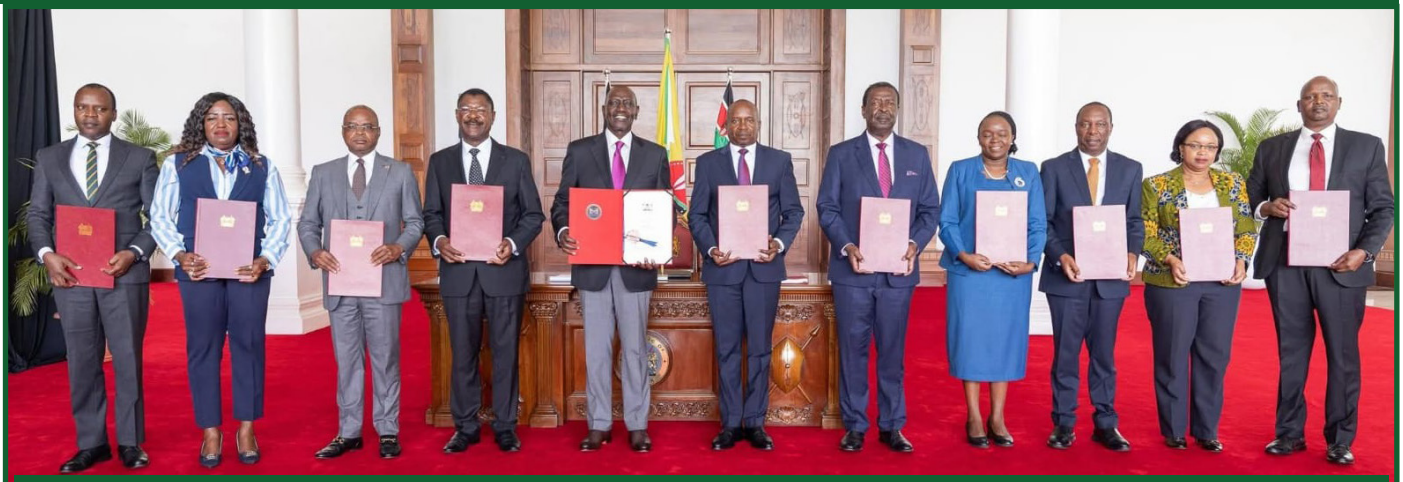
Speaking during the event, Dr. Ngoriareng thanked community members and stakeholders for their patience, commitment, and cooperation throughout the development of the management plan. He noted that although the process had taken time, it was worthwhile as it provides a clear framework for sustainable forest management and equitable sharing of forest benefits. He emphasized that communities living adjacent to forests play a critical role in conservation and should participate in forest management in a structured and responsible manner that safeguards forest resources for present and future generations. He encouraged members of KACOFA and other stakeholders to continue working closely with the Kenya Forest Service to restore degraded forest areas, increase tree planting efforts, and protect existing forest cover.

Baringo County witnessed the colourful launch of Participatory Forest Management Plans (PFMPs) and the signing of Forest Management Agreements (FMAs) for Maji Mazuri Station Community Forest Association (MASCOFA) and Lembus Chemususu Community Forest Association (LECHECOFA). The Maji Mazuri PFMP was developed with support from the Green Zones Development Support Project II (GZDSP II), while the Chemususu PFMP was supported by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

Speaking during the event the Head Forest Advisor and County Liaison Mr. George Abuto, who was the Chief Guest on behalf of the Chief Conservator of Forests, commended community members for their continued commitment to forest conservation and sustainable management. He highlighted ongoing Green Zones interventions within the county, including the construction of a Resource Centre in Maji Mazuri and the establishment of a model tree nursery in Narasha.

He also noted that the launch of the PFMPs and signing of the FMAs symbolize a mature partnership and a shared vision among stakeholders for sustainable forest management and emphasized that forest conservation is not simply about trees but about safeguarding entire ecosystems that support livelihoods, biodiversity, water resources, and climate resilience. He further noted that the initiative forms part of the larger Mau Landscape restoration agenda and aligns with the national goal of environmental sustainability.

The two events underscored the importance of collaboration in strengthening relationships among stakeholders and advancing sustainable forest management for improved livelihoods and environmental conservation.



H.E President William Samoei Ruto,Deputy Kithure Kindiki among other diginataries Ps's and Cs's pose for a photo during the signing of new forest law



H.E. the Deputy President of Republic of Kenya Professor Kithure Kindiki, the Chief Conservator of Forests Mr. Alex Lemarkoko, Interior Cabinet Secretary Kipchumba Murkomen, and Fifteen Billion Tree Growing Ambassador Hillary Kibiwott, planting a tree to commemorate the launch of CHERISH Project.



From left: Principal Secretary, State Department for Forestry, Mr. Gitonga Mugambi, CBS; 15 Billion Tree Growing Programme Ambassador, Hillary Kiplagat Kibiwott; Principal Secretary, The National Treasury, Dr. Chris K. Kiptoo, CBS; and Chief Conservator of Forests, Mr. Alex Lemarkoko



The Chief Conservator of Forests Mr. Alex Lemarkoko pose for a photo with the GenZs during tree planting in Kinale Forest Station



The Chief Conservator of Forests Mr. Alex Lemarkoko pose for a photo with the GenZs during tree planting in Kinale Forest Station



Chief Conservator of Forests Mr. Alex Lemarkoko shows the members of community how tree seedlings are removed from their nusery bags.



CCF Mr. Alex Lemarkoko inspects a tree nursery in kinale.



Forestry sector leadership at the World Rainforest Day celebrations in Kakamega, reaffirming their commitment to conserving Kenya's only tropical rainforest and advancing sustainable forest management. From left: Dr. Deborah Barasa, Mr. Gitonga Mugambi, Dr. Jane Njuguna, and Dr. Clement Ng'oriareng'.



KFS Commandant Mohamed A. Mohamed, poses between Ms KFS Robai Alera and Mr KFS Michael Muniu during a tree planting exercise at Kinale Forest



Kenya Forest Service Foresters pose for a group photo during Rainforest day in Kakamega Forest.



Communities engage in nursery preparations in Sosio, Trans Nzoia County.



The Director General KeNHA Eng. Luka Kimeli flanked by the Senior Deputy Chief Conservator of Forests for Resource Mobilization and Partnerships, Zipporah Toroitich(L) and Eng Monica Abonyo Director, directorate of Highway, design and safety (R)plants a tree during the KeNHA –KFS tree planting day at Ngong road forest.



Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Forestry Dr. Deborah Barasa, EGH, joins Central Bank of Kenya Governor Dr. Kamau Thugge and Chief Conservator of Forests Mr. Alex Lemarkoko, EBS, 'ndc' (K), during the launch of the CBK @60 Tree Growing Initiative at Karura Forest



Kenyan delegation pose for a photo after a briefing meeting during UNFCCC SB64 at Bonn, Germany in June 2026.

FoLEA Mukutani Emerges as The Service's Premier Paramilitary Training Academy



Chief Inspector and Inspector trainees demonstrate tactical skills during the Middle-Level Command Course at the Forest Law Enforcement Academy (FoLEA) Main Campus in Mukutani, Baringo County.

By Leaky Sonkoyo

The Kenya Forest Service (KFS) has reached a historic milestone in its transformation journey through the visionary leadership of the Chief Conservator of Forests, Mr. Alex Lemarkoko, with the successful establishment and operationalization of the Forest Law Enforcement Academy (FoLEA) Main Campus, Mukutani, as the Service's premier paramilitary training institution. The achievement marks a new era in the professionalization of forest law enforcement, strengthening KFS's capacity to train, mentor and develop its own officers within a dedicated environment designed specifically for tactical, leadership and conservation operations.

Unlike previous years when the Service relied heavily on borrowed or hired training facilities and instructors from other disciplined agencies, KFS has progressively built its own institutional training capacity. Today, the Academy proudly conducts its courses using qualified KFS instructors, significantly reducing operational costs previously incurred through external training arrangements. More importantly, the achievement has enhanced public confidence in the Kenya Forest Service as a disciplined organization that is capable, self-reliant and fully equipped to develop its own professional workforce.

The Academy has already demonstrated remarkable success by training the 2023 Ranger Recruit Cohort, the 2024 Inspector Cadet Course, the 2024 Forest Officers Course, and is currently conducting the Leadership and Development Course for Inspectorate Officers. These milestones reflect the growing institutional capacity of KFS to *produce competent, disciplined and highly professional officers ready to safeguard Kenya's forest resources.

As part of strengthening leadership development, senior management officers from KFS Headquarters have in recent months maintained regular visits to FoLEA Mukutani to mentor and inspire trainees. Their engagements provide officers with strategic leadership insights, organizational values and practical guidance aimed at preparing them for higher responsibilities within the Service.

During the latest senior management engagement held on 7th July, the delegation was led by the Principal Deputy to the Chief Conservator of Forests, Dr. Clement Ngoriareng, accompanied by the Commandant, Forest Protection and Security Directorate, Mohammed Adan Mohammed, Head of Corporate

Communications, Ms. Ann Kaari, Human Resource Manager, Mr. Patrick Tialal, together with other senior officers from KFS Headquarters.

Addressing the trainees, Dr. Ngoriareng challenged them to become visionary leaders guided by integrity, accountability, professionalism and teamwork while faithfully executing the Kenya Forest Service mandate of protecting and conserving the nation's forests.

The Commandant, Mr. Mohammed Adan Mohammed reminded the officers that they would soon assume leadership positions as County and Station Commanders and called upon them to enforce forest laws firmly, fairly and without compromise. He urged them to remain loyal to the organization, uphold discipline and reject any form of illegality or actions that could undermine the Service.

Ms. Ann Kaari, on her part emphasized the importance of protecting the image and reputation of KFS by delivering high quality services to the public while adhering to the ethos of integrity, transparency and fairness. She urged the officers to ensure that all official communication is conducted through the established communication channels and cautioned officers against unauthorized dissemination of official information.

In his address, Human Resource Manager Mr. Patrick Tialal applauded the tremendous progress made in human resource management within the Kenya Forest Service. He encouraged officers to remain focused, committed and dedicated to delivering quality services, noting that the Service now had comprehensive Human Resource instruments and policies that clearly define career progression and administrative structures for all cadres. He observed that these reforms had brought clarity, fairness and transparency across the organization.

The College Commandant, Appolinar Mwandigha, commended the prevailing security situation in Mukutani, attributing it to the excellent cooperation among multi-agency security teams operating in the region. He further appreciated the KFS Top Management for identifying Mukutani as the ideal location for paramilitary training, citing its unique terrain as highly suitable for tactical field exercises and leadership development.



Chief Inspector and Inspector trainees demonstrate tactical skills during the Middle-Level Command Course at the Forest Law Enforcement Academy (FoLEA) Main Campus in Mukutani, Baringo County.

GEF- 7 Project Empowers Communities to Restore Mt. Elgon Ecosystem



The Chief Conservator of Forests Mr Alex Lemarkoko handing over restoration contracts to Sosio CFA Chairman, alongside Bungoma Deputy Governor Janepher Mbatiany.

By Rodah Mbatiany

The restoration of the Mt. Elgon ecosystem marked a significant milestone following the official handover of restoration contracts to Community Forest Associations (CFAs) from Bungoma and Trans Nzoia counties under the Mt. Elgon GEF-7 Project. The ceremony, held at Mabanga Agricultural Centre, opened a new chapter in community-led conservation, where local communities are entrusted with implementing restoration activities.

Through the contracts, Community Forest Associations will take the lead in raising, planting and nurturing tree seedlings while ensuring their survival and growth. Collectively, the eight CFAs are expected to produce approximately 1.6 million seedlings annually, significantly contributing to the restoration of degraded forest areas within the Mt. Elgon ecosystem. The eight Community Forest Associations received an initial allocation of KES 2 million each to support nursery establishment, seedling production and restoration activities. The performance- based arrangement is designed to promote accountability and results. Each CFA will be eligible for an additional KES 2 million upon successfully fulfilling the contract requirements, including producing 200,000 quality seedlings, planting them in the mapped degraded sites and ensuring their survival. This approach incentivizes effective implementation while strengthening community ownership of restoration efforts.

Speaking during the event, Chief Conservator of Forests Mr. Alex Lemarkoko described the initiative as a transformative approach to ecosystem restoration that places communities at the heart of conservation efforts. He noted that the project seeks to restore 10,000 hectares of degraded land and improve the livelihoods of more than 60,000 people living adjacent to the ecosystem. "We are moving away from direct implementation to sharing the responsibility of restoration with communities themselves." he said. The initiative is expected to generate multiple benefits beyond environmental restoration.

Through nursery establishment and tree-growing activities, community members will gain employment opportunities, strengthen local institutions and acquire valuable skills in financial management, governance and sustainable natural resource management. Bungoma Deputy Governor H.E. Janepher Mbatiany lauded the initiative, highlighting that it empowers communities to become active stewards of the environment. She assured participants of the County Government's support in ensuring that restoration targets are achieved. She further urged Community Forest Associations to implement the contracts with transparency, accountability and dedication. Speaking on behalf of the communities, Mr. Pius Ndiwa noted that the project demonstrates the trust that Kenya Forest Service has placed in local communities.

The ceremony also served as the official launch of seedling production and restoration activities under the project. As Kenya intensifies efforts to increase forest cover and restore degraded landscapes, the Mt. Elgon GEF-7 Project demonstrates the power of partnerships and community participation in achieving lasting conservation outcomes. Through this innovative model, the people of Mt. Elgon are not only beneficiaries of restoration but also custodians and drivers of a greener and more sustainable future.

New Forestry Guidelines Set Stage for Dryland Forestry Growth and Ecosystem Services Assessment



By Janet Kavutha

Kenya has launched two new forestry publications to strengthen sustainable forest management, support climate resilience, and promote investment in dryland forestry.

The Guidelines on Commercial Growing of Melia volkensii Trees in the Drylands of Kenya and the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Assessment of Forest Ecosystem Services (FES) in Kenya provide practical tools for expanding dryland forestry and improving ecosystem valuation. They will also support Kenya's goal of growing 15 billion trees and achieving 30 percent tree cover by 2032. The publications address key gaps in the forestry sector. The Melia volkensii guidelines provide technical guidance for the commercial cultivation of one of Kenya's most valuable indigenous dryland tree species. The FES SOPs introduce standardized methods for assessing and valuing ecosystem services provided by forests.

Melia volkensii is a drought-tolerant species that thrives in Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs). It offers opportunities for sustainable timber production, climate adaptation, and improved livelihoods. The guidelines give farmers, investors, extension officers, and forest managers clear recommendations on establishing and managing commercial plantations. They are expected to attract greater private sector investment in dryland forestry.

Speaking during the launch, Chief Conservator of Forests Mr. Alex Lemarkoko, represented by Dr. Clement Ngoriareng, said the guidelines will accelerate forestry development in ASALs and contribute to Kenya's restoration agenda. He said expanding Melia volkensii cultivation will improve timber supply, diversify incomes, and strengthen climate resilience. It will also create new economic opportunities for communities in dryland areas. He added that success will depend on continued research, strong extension services, and sustained investment.

The Forest Ecosystem Services SOPs will strengthen evidence-based decision-making. They provide a consistent approach for assessing services such as carbon sequestration, biodiversity conservation, water regulation, soil protection, and socio-economic benefits. Better assessment of these services will support planning, policy development, investment, and resource allocation.

Representing the Principal Secretary for Forestry, Mr. Patrick Meso, Secretary of Administration at the State Department for Forestry, described the publications as practical tools that bridge policy and implementation. He called for stronger collaboration among national and county governments, development partners, the private sector, and local communities.

The launch also highlighted the role of international partnerships. Ms. Tae Ose, Project Formulation Advisor at the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), reaffirmed Japan's support through the Sustainable Forest Management Project for Climate Change Response (SFS-CORECC). She emphasized the importance of science-based decision-making, institutional capacity building, and stronger forest monitoring systems. Project Manager Ms. Beatrice Atemo said the publications respond to Kenya's emerging forestry priorities while supporting regional and international environmental commitments.

The launch marks an important milestone for Kenya's forestry sector. The two publications provide a strong foundation for restoring landscapes, improving ecosystem management, and unlocking the economic potential of forests. Their success will depend on strong partnerships, adequate financing, and continued engagement with communities, investors, and forestry practitioners.

CFA Record Steady Progress in Nursery Establishment



Kaboywo Community Forest Association Nursery established under the Mt.Elgon GEF-7 project.

By Rodah Mbatiany

Community Forest Associations (CFAs) in Bungoma and Trans Nzoia counties are making remarkable progress in nursery establishment and indigenous seedling production following the disbursement of restoration funds under the Mt. Elgon GEF-7 Project. A monitoring exercise conducted by the project team revealed that the communities have successfully undertaken key nursery operations and are on track to meet their restoration targets.

The communities have already completed critical nursery activities including site preparation, construction of nursery shades, potting, watering and weeding. In addition, the project has created employment opportunities for local residents, with community members being engaged in various nursery management activities.

The initiative is not only supporting ecosystem restoration but also providing a source of income for households living adjacent to the forest. During visits to Kaberwa, Cheptais, Kaboywo, Sosio, Saboti, Kimothon, Kiptogot and Suam Forest Stations, the project team observed encouraging levels of community participation and commitment. CFA members reported that the restoration funds have enabled them to address challenges that previously hindered nursery operations, including inadequate water supply and limited resources for seedling production.

The assessment further established that nursery management activities are progressing well, with thousands of indigenous seedlings already growing in readiness for planting. Areas rehabilitated during previous restoration activities, including the Mt. Elgon Day tree planting exercise, were also inspected to assess tree survival rates and inform future monitoring efforts.

With nursery establishment largely complete, the CFAs are now preparing for the next phase of restoration. Community members are eagerly awaiting the onset of the rainy season to commence large-scale planting activities aimed at restoring degraded forest landscapes.

Through continued technical support from the Kenya Forest Service and the Mt. Elgon GEF-7 Project team, the communities remain confident that they will achieve their targets and contribute significantly to the restoration and long-term sustainability of the Mt. Elgon ecosystem.



Communities engage in nursery preparations in Sosio, Trans Nzoia County.

The progress recorded so far demonstrates the effectiveness of community-led restoration approaches and highlights the vital role that local communities play in conserving forests while improving livelihoods.

Stakeholders Review ESIA for Green Zones Development Support Project Phase III in Naivasha



The Senior Deputy Chief Conservator of Forests Ms. Zipporah Toroitich while addressing Mau Conservancy stakeholders during the Workshop.

By James Waitathu

Stakeholders from across the Mau Conservancy convened in Naivasha for a public participation workshop on the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) for the proposed Green Zones Development Support Project (GZDSP) Phase III. The forum brought together representatives from government agencies, conservation organizations, community groups, and private sector stakeholders to assess the potential environmental and social impacts of the project's planned afforestation and reforestation activities within the Mau Ecosystem.

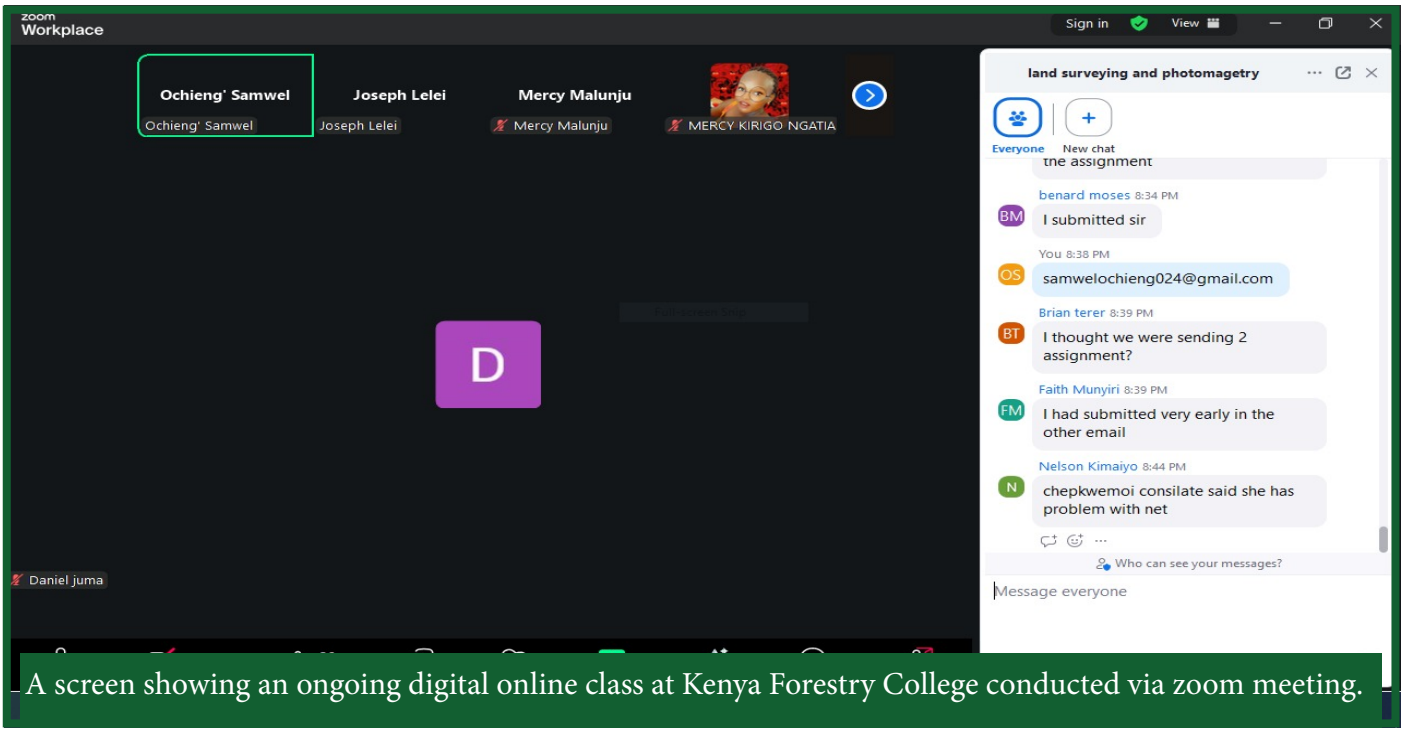
The workshop was officially opened by the Senior Deputy Chief Conservator of Forests, Ms. Zipporah Toroitich, who underscored the importance of stakeholder engagement in ensuring the success and sustainability of large-scale environmental restoration initiatives. She noted that meaningful participation by local communities and institutions was critical in identifying opportunities, addressing concerns, and fostering ownership of conservation programmes. Ms. Toroitich also expressed satisfaction with the achievements realized under previous phases of the Green Zones Development Support Project, citing progress in forest restoration, livelihood improvement, and community empowerment.

The Project Manager, Mr. Jerome Mwanzia, outlined the objectives, achievements, and proposed activities under Phase III of the project. He highlighted the progress made through previous phases and emphasized that the next phase would build on these successes by expanding restoration efforts, strengthening partnerships, enhancing community resilience to climate change, and promoting sustainable land-use practices.

Participants actively engaged in discussions and provided valuable feedback on various aspects of the proposed project. They shared perspectives on environmental conservation, community involvement, sustainable resource management, and potential socio-economic benefits. The forum also provided an opportunity for stakeholders to raise concerns and propose recommendations aimed at improving project implementation while ensuring alignment with local priorities and environmental safeguards.

The ESIA process was conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Forest Conservation and Management Act and the Environmental Management and Coordination Act, which require public participation in projects with potential environmental and social impacts. The process demonstrated the commitment of the Kenya Forest Service and its partners to transparency, accountability, and inclusive decision-making in environmental management.

Transforming Forestry Education Through Digital Learning



A screen showing an ongoing digital online class at Kenya Forestry College conducted via zoom meeting.

By Apilah Saigwana

Kenya Forestry College (KFC) continues to embrace technology and innovation in training as part of its commitment to improving access, quality, and delivery of forestry education. As a centre of excellence in forestry training, the College has integrated digital solutions into learning to equip students with relevant skills and competencies needed in the modern forestry sector.

A significant milestone in this digital transformation journey was the successful implementation of KFC's first online learning class. The pioneer virtual programme marked a new chapter in the College's training approach by enabling learners to access lessons remotely through digital platforms. The class comprised 45 students who participated in online lessons, completed coursework, undertook examinations, and are currently awaiting their results.

The successful completion of the programme demonstrated KFC's readiness to adopt emerging technologies and innovative training methods. Online learning is expanding opportunities for learners who face geographical and other limitations while pursuing forestry education. The College is now working towards strengthening and expanding digital learning platforms to reach more students while complementing its existing practical and field-based training approaches.

Mercy, one of the beneficiaries of the online platform, highlighted the impact of the programme: "My experience in participating in the online class was great. The lessons were well organized, interactive, and easy to follow despite our busy work schedules. The facilitators were knowledgeable and supportive, making the learning process enjoyable and effective. The flexibility of learning from any location allowed us to balance training with our daily responsibilities while interacting and sharing experiences with colleagues from different stations."

Beyond digital learning, KFC continues to enhance competency-based education through capacity-building initiatives for its staff. Lecturers participated in Competency-Based Education and Training (CBET) and TVET CDACC examination process training to strengthen their understanding of competency-based curriculum delivery, assessment methods, and learner-centred approaches.

Through technology, innovation, and continuous improvement, Kenya Forestry College remains committed to producing skilled forestry professionals who contribute to sustainable forest management, environmental conservation, and Kenya's national goal of planting 15 billion trees by 2032.

Eastern Conservancy Leads in Forest Restoration



Tree growing activity at Marania forest.

By Joy Ngugi

The Eastern Conservancy continues to play a key role in Kenya's forest restoration journey through the implementation of the national 15 Billion Tree Growing Programme. As one of the ten forest conservancies under the Kenya Forest Service (KFS), it oversees a vast landscape of approximately 5.7 million hectares covering Embu, Tharaka Nithi, Meru, Kitui, Machakos, and Makueni counties.

Stretching from the eastern slopes of Mt. Kenya to the dryland ecosystems of Eastern Kenya, the conservancy manages diverse landscapes that support biodiversity conservation, water catchment protection, climate resilience, and sustainable community livelihoods.

The conservancy manages 232,361.79 hectares of state forests, including indigenous forests, bamboo forests, grasslands, bushlands, and plantations. These ecosystems provide essential environmental services such as carbon storage, protection of water sources, wildlife conservation, and support for forest-based enterprises.

Through strategic programmes focusing on natural forest conservation, farm and dryland forestry, plantation management, and forest protection, Eastern Conservancy continues to restore degraded landscapes while strengthening community participation in conservation.

Several initiatives are driving this transformation, including the Green Zones Development Support Project Phase II (GZDSP II), the Forest Irrigation, Climate Change and Green Energy Project (FICCaGE), the Chyulu Hills REDD+ Project, and the SFC-COREC Project. These programmes support landscape restoration, climate adaptation, sustainable forest management, and community resilience across the region.

As Kenya works towards growing 15 billion trees by 2032, Eastern Conservancy has been assigned a restoration target of 1,172,512 hectares, requiring approximately 1.76 billion seedlings. So far, the conservancy has planted over 126 million seedlings across the six counties, with Meru leading at more than 64 million seedlings, followed by Machakos with over 39 million.

To sustain this momentum, the conservancy has set an annual seedling production target of 174.7 million seedlings, supported by partnerships with communities, county governments, private sector actors, learning institutions, faith-based organizations, and development partners.

The conservancy's restoration efforts are also anchored on promoting sustainable livelihoods among communities living around forest ecosystems. Through engagement with Community Forest Associations (CFAs) and other local stakeholders, KFS continues to encourage responsible resource use, tree growing, and conservation practices that create a balance between environmental protection and community development.

Through collaboration, innovation, and community-driven conservation, Eastern Conservancy continues to demonstrate the power of restoration in creating healthier ecosystems, strengthening climate resilience, and building a greener future for generations to come.

Kenya Israel and Strengthen Forestry Partnership for Sustainable Forest Management

By James Waitathu

The longstanding partnership between Kenya and Israel in environmental conservation and forestry management received a significant boost when the Ambassador of Israel to Kenya, His Excellency Gideon Behar, paid a courtesy call on the Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF), Mr. Alex Lemarkoko, at the Kenya Forest Service (KFS) Headquarters in Karura.

The visit underscored the commitment of both countries to deepen collaboration in forest conservation, tree growing initiatives, climate change mitigation, and the application of modern technologies in forestry, particularly in arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs).

During the meeting, Mr. Lemarkoko highlighted Kenya's ambitious 15 Billion Tree Growing Programme, a flagship national initiative championed by His Excellency the President. The programme aims to increase the country's tree cover to more than 30 percent by the year 2032 while contributing significantly to climate change mitigation, ecosystem restoration, biodiversity conservation, and improved livelihoods for local communities.

The CCF explained that achieving the target of planting 15 billion trees would require the production of large quantities of high-quality seedlings. He noted that KFS had prioritized the enhancement of seedling production systems and was actively seeking strategic partnerships that would support efficient nursery operations and enable the annual production and planting of approximately 1.5 billion trees.

The discussions also focused on the growing threat of forest fires, which had become increasingly prevalent due to prolonged dry conditions experienced across many parts of the country. Mr. Lemarkoko informed the Ambassador that Kenya had recorded more than 107 forest fire incidents through the Service's fire alert monitoring system. While acknowledging the effectiveness of the French-funded fire alert technology currently in use, he noted that its coverage remained limited to selected forest ecosystems. Consequently, KFS was exploring opportunities for collaboration with development partners to expand fire surveillance systems to all forested areas in the country.

Ambassador Behar commended KFS for its leadership in forest conservation and reaffirmed Israel's commitment to supporting Kenya's environmental agenda. He appreciated the successful collaboration that had already seen the Israeli Embassy adopt a forest block at Uplands Forest Station in Kiambu County and participate in the Zion Tree Planting Project. The Ambassador expressed the Embassy's interest in actively contributing to the national 15 Billion Tree Growing Programme.

Drawing from Israel's experience, Ambassador Behar noted that despite more than 60 percent of his country being covered by desert, technological innovations such as advanced irrigation systems had enabled the successful establishment and management of forests. He further observed that Kenya possessed extensive expertise in the management of natural forests, a field from which Israel could also learn. He revealed that Israel was gradually replacing highly flammable pine plantations with broad-leaved tree species that are more resilient to wildfires.

The meeting concluded with both parties agreeing to explore opportunities for cooperation in capacity building and knowledge exchange. They discussed strengthening the Kenya Forestry College through exposure to emerging forestry technologies, particularly those relevant to dryland forestry management. Additionally, they agreed to create platforms that would facilitate interaction between forestry professionals from Kenya and Israel, fostering the exchange of expertise, innovation, and best practices.

Partnerships Driving Kenya's Restoration Agenda



The Director General KeNHA Eng. Luka Kimeli flanked by the Senior Deputy Chief Conservator of Forests for Resource Mobilization and Partnerships, Zipporah Toroitich(L) and Eng Monica Abonyo Director, directorate of Highway, design and safety (R)plants a tree during the KeNHA –KFS tree planting day at Ngong road forest.

By Lydia Ogada

Kenya's goal of growing 15 billion trees by 2032 continues to gain momentum through partnerships that bring together government agencies, communities, institutions, and conservation groups. Tree-growing exercises at Ngong Road Forest and Karura Forest demonstrated how collaborative efforts are supporting ecosystem restoration while advancing the National Tree Growing and Restoration Campaign.

At Ngong Road Forest, the Kenya Forest Service (KFS), in partnership with the Kenya National Highways Authority (KeNHA) and the Ngong Road Community Forest Association (CFA), led a tree-planting exercise aimed at restoring degraded forest landscapes. Speaking on behalf of the Chief Conservator of Forests, Senior Deputy Chief Conservator of Forests for Resource Mobilization and Partnerships, Ms. Zipporah Toroitich commended the strong partnership among the institutions, noting that their collaboration had evolved from tree nursery development to active ecosystem restoration. The exercise brought together several stakeholders, including the Wildlife Research and Training Institute, and resulted in the planting of 2,000 indigenous and assorted tree seedlings.

The spirit of partnership was equally evident at Karura Forest, where KFS hosted the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC), led by Chairperson Dr. David Oginde and Chief Executive Officer Mr. Abdi Ahmed Mohamud, , for a tree-growing exercise in support of the national campaign.

The event also brought together Ambassador for the 15 Billion Tree Growing Programme Hillary Kibiwott, representatives from the Kenya School of TVET, Friends of Karura, and students from Laiser Hill Academy. The exercise was conducted on land recently recovered through coordinated inter-agency efforts to protect public forest land from illegal encroachment.

The restoration of approximately 7.11 hectares of land marked an important milestone in safeguarding public resources and strengthening environmental stewardship. Representing the Chief Conservator of Forests, Regional Forest Conservator Madam Joyce Nthuku commended the EACC and other stakeholders for their role in reclaiming the land and reaffirmed KFS's commitment to protecting forest boundaries and restoring degraded ecosystems.

The two initiatives underscored that successful ecosystem restoration extends beyond tree planting and depends on strong partnerships, community participation, and shared responsibility. Together, they contribute to increased forest cover, enhanced climate resilience, and a greener, more sustainable future for Kenya.

Forests, Finance & The Future: Kenya's Forestry Agenda at The Bonn Climate Conference

By Dr Rose Akombo and Nicole Wambui

The Subsidiary Bodies for Scientific and Technological Advice and Implementation recently wrapped up their sixty fourth sessions in Bonn, Germany, mapping out a highly debated path forward for the upcoming COP31 in Antalya, Türkiye. Amid intense geopolitical pressures, global energy insecurity and the cascading impacts of climate extremes like El Niño, international delegates worked to transform the high-level principles of the Paris Agreement into practical, technical rules.

Kenya's delegation including senior officers from Kenya Forest Service (KFS), arrived with a focused mandate: secure recognition of forest-based solutions, demand equity in climate finance and hold the line on the principle established at Rio in 1992 - that historical emitters bear a greater burden of responsibility.

By matching the Kenya Forest Service Strategic Plan (2023-2027) and the National Landscape and Ecosystem Restoration Strategy (2022-2032) and the 15 Billion Tree Growing initiative with these shifting global frameworks, Kenya continues to establish itself as a proactive leader in environmental governance. However, unlocking the full economic and conservation potential of these forests depends heavily on the international community resolving deadlocks regarding carbon markets, technical cooperation and adaptation funding.

The Mitigation Work Programme (MWP) was established under the Sharm el Sheikh Climate Change Conference (COP27, November 2022) as part of the decisions taken by Parties to the UNFCCC. It was created to scale up mitigation ambition and implementation in line with the Paris Agreement, responding to gaps identified in the Global Stocktake and NDC synthesis reports. The programme is overseen by the Subsidiary Bodies (SBSTA and SBI) and is designed to run until 2026, with annual high level ministerial roundtables and technical dialogues feeding into its work. In essence, the MWP provides a structured platform for Parties and stakeholders to exchange best practices, identify barriers, and mobilize support for mitigation actions across sectors such as energy, industry, agriculture, and transport. It also emphasizes linkages with finance, technology, and capacity building mechanisms, ensuring that outputs are actionable and can directly inform national implementation. MWP faced ideological divisions at SB64.

Since, delegates could not finalize draft conclusions, this debate will carry over directly into negotiations at COP31. From Kenya's perspective, this standstill emphasizes a major institutional challenge. Through its expansive tree-growing initiatives, KFS serves as a clear example of climate ambition driven by a developing nation despite limited domestic resources. For KFS, stabilizing Article 6.2 bilateral rules is essential to transform tree reserves into assets, while Article 6.8 Non-Market Approaches perfectly accommodate locally led efforts like the FLLoCA initiative. SB64 dialogues on mountains and oceans mirror Kenya's water towers and mangroves, positions KFS to secure targeted adaptation and blue carbon funds. The ongoing gridlock reinforces Kenya's position that expanding domestic forestry conservation must be supported by predictable international climate finance and structured technology transfers, rather than shifting an unfair mitigation burden onto developing countries.

The negotiations at SB64 in Bonn made it clear that while international policy can be slow and compromised, domestic climate action cannot afford to wait. For the Kenya Forest Service, the global focus on nature-based solutions, mountain water towers and blue carbon directly validates its current institutional priorities. By maintaining a strong emphasis on equity, closing implementation gaps and demonstrating real results on the ground, Kenya is well-positioned to lead by example on the road to Antalya, turning global climate commitments into sustained ecological and economic resilience.

Carbon Markets: What they Mean for Kenya's Forest Sector



Kenyan delegation pose for a photo after a briefing meeting during UNFCCC SB64 at Bonn, Germany in June 2026.

By Nicole Wambui

As the world intensifies efforts to address climate change, carbon markets are emerging as one of the most significant tools for mobilizing finance towards environmental conservation and sustainable development. For Kenya, a country rich in forest resources and committed to ambitious climate action targets, carbon markets present a unique opportunity to unlock new sources of investment while strengthening forest conservation efforts.

Kenya is positioning itself as Africa's carbon credit hub, leveraging its natural assets, community-based conservation models, and evolving policy frameworks to attract climate finance. The country hosts a growing portfolio of voluntary carbon projects focused on forests, mangroves, and landscape restoration. On February 17, 2026, the Government launched the Kenya National Carbon Registry (KNCR), managed by the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) a centralized digital ledger that tracks, verifies, and manages all carbon credit transactions.

The KNCR ensures digital sovereignty over Kenya's climate data. By linking forest project authorizations to Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, it eliminates double-counting. Forested ecosystems sequester approximately 2–15 tCO_2 per hectare per year while storing significant carbon in biomass and soils, making them critical long-term carbon sinks. The registry converts these metrics into high-integrity, satellite-verified assets that attract premium value globally.

Carbon markets can bridge funding gaps by attracting private sector and international climate finance to strengthen forest protection, restore degraded landscapes, and improve monitoring systems. Communities adjacent to forests stand to gain through employment, tree nursery development, and participation in community-based carbon projects. Through equitable benefit-sharing mechanisms, local communities become active partners in conservation and climate action.

Kenya's focus on carbon markets aligns with its broader development ambitions. However, realizing these opportunities requires strong governance, transparency, and scientific rigor. Accurate carbon stock measurement and meaningful stakeholder engagement remain essential. While not a silver bullet, carbon markets are a powerful tool every restored hectare, registered credit, and shilling channelled to a community brings us closer to a future where conservation pays for itself.

Understanding Kenya's Computer Misuse and Cybercrimes (Amendment) Act, 2024)



A user interacts with a computer displaying cybersecurity alerts, highlighting the growing risks associated with computer misuse and cybercrime in the digital age.

By Shellys Ntimama

In an era where digital platforms have become indispensable for communication and advocacy, the Kenya Forest Service (KFS) finds itself at the intersection of technological advancement and regulatory compliance. The enactment of the Computer Misuse and Cybercrimes (Amendment) Act, 2024 (the "Amendment Act"), presents both a challenge and an opportunity for the Service to recalibrate its digital engagement strategies. This article provides a comprehensive analysis of the Amendment Act, placing it within the operational and legal context of KFS as it continues its mandate of protecting and managing Kenya's forest resources.

The Amendment Act, which amends the principal Computer Misuse and Cybercrimes Act (Cap 79C), was introduced via the Computer Misuse and Cybercrimes (Amendment) Bill, 2024, sponsored by Hon. Aden Daudi Mohamed, MP. The Bill was published on 9th August 2024 and subsequently reviewed by the Departmental Committee on Communication, Information, and Innovation, which recommended its approval with amendments following public participation.

The principal object of the Amendment Act is to expand the scope of the existing legislation to address emerging cyber threats, particularly the use of electronic mediums to promote terrorism, extreme religious and cultic practices and to clarify definitions surrounding cyber offences. For an institution like KFS, which increasingly relies on digital platforms for outreach, stakeholder engagement and public communication, understanding these amendments is critical. The Amendment Act introduces several significant changes to the legal framework governing cyberspace in Kenya. The following provisions are particularly relevant to KFS operations:

The Act amends Section 2 of the principal Act to provide a clearer definition of "access" to a computer system, specifying that it can occur "through a program or a device". It also introduces crucial new definitions, including "identity theft," which is defined as the use of another person's personal identification information, including name, identification number, SIM-card, and bank account information. This broadened definition has direct implications for KFS's data handling practices, especially concerning the personal information of staff and stakeholders.

Clause 3 of the Amendment Act grants the National Computer and Cybercrimes Co-ordination Committee the authority to issue directives to render websites or applications inaccessible if they are proven to promote illegal activities, child pornography, terrorism, and extreme religious and cultic practices. While this provision is primarily aimed at combating harmful online content, it underscores the government's commitment to regulating the digital space, which KFS must navigate when developing its online presence and content.

The Amendment Act expands the scope of the offence of cyber harassment under Section 27 of the principal Act. It now includes conduct that "is likely to cause [a person] to commit suicide". This expansion highlights the severe consequences of online harassment and the need for KFS to ensure its digital platforms are safe and free from such conduct.

The Act amends Section 30 to broaden the offence of phishing. The definition now includes "makes a call" in addition to "sends a message," and references to "call" have been inserted alongside "recipient of the message". Phishing is a cybercrime in which a target is contacted by someone posing as a legitimate institution to lure individuals into providing sensitive data. This has significant implications for KFS, which may be a target of phishing attempts aiming to compromise its data or systems.

The most notable addition is the introduction of a new section, 42A, which criminalises the unauthorised alteration and unlawful taking of ownership of another person's SIM-card. A person convicted of this offence is liable to a fine not exceeding KES 200,000 or imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years, or to both. The Parliamentary Committee reviewing the Bill noted that this provision was introduced due to a significant increase in the number of SIM-swap fraud cases reported to the Communications Authority of Kenya.

The provisions of the Amendment Act, when read alongside the existing Data Protection Act, 2019, create a robust legal framework that KFS must comply with in its operations. The following are key considerations for the Service:

The Data Protection Act, 2019, regulates the collection, processing, and storage of personal data. The Amendment Act complements this by criminalising unauthorised access, identity theft, and other cyber offences. KFS, as a data controller, must ensure robust cybersecurity measures are in place to prevent cybercrimes. The recent enforcement actions by the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner (ODPC), including significant fines for data processing without consent, serve as a stark reminder of the consequences of non-compliance. KFS's status as a State Corporation and data controller means it has heightened obligations to protect personal data and prevent its misuse.

KFS relies on various communication channels, including its "Forester Magazine," website, and social media platforms, to share information and promote conservation. The Amendment Act's provisions on cyber harassment and the Committee's powers to block websites underscore the importance of maintaining the integrity and security of these platforms. KFS must ensure that its digital presence is not used to promote illegal activities or to facilitate cyber harassment.

The Amendment Act introduces new offences that can be committed by individuals. KFS staff and contractors who handle data and interact with digital systems must be aware of these offences. This includes ensuring that they do not engage in phishing, unauthorised access, or identity theft. The Act's expansion of the definition of "access" may also have implications for KFS's monitoring and surveillance activities, such as the use of cameras and drones in forest monitoring.

The Computer Misuse and Cybercrimes (Amendment) Act, 2024, marks a significant step in Kenya's efforts to regulate cyberspace. For the Kenya Forest Service, this legislation, together with the Data Protection Act, 2019, necessitates a proactive and comprehensive approach to digital compliance. By adopting a robust Digital Engagement and Communication Policy, the Service commits to effectively navigate this new legal landscape, ensuring its digital operations are lawful, transparent, and respectful of the rights of all Kenyans. This is not just about avoiding penalties; it is about building public trust and reinforcing KFS's position as a responsible, modern, and digitally-savvy government agency dedicated to the sustainable management of Kenya's forests.

Drug Abuse in KFS: A Cross-Cutting Concern

By Shellys Ntimama

The Kenya Forest Service (KFS) is the principal state agency mandated to manage, conserve, and develop Kenya's forest resources. Established to safeguard the country's ecological heritage, KFS plays a pivotal role in climate change mitigation, biodiversity conservation, and the promotion of sustainable livelihoods. However, the efficacy of the Service is increasingly threatened by a myriad of cross-cutting issues.

Among these,substance and drug abuse has emerged as a silent but devastating crisis. While often overshadowed by discussions on illegal logging, deforestation, and climate change, drug abuse among forest personnel and within forest-adjacent communities fundamentally undermines institutional integrity, operational security, and the overall mandate of the KFS. This paper provides a comprehensive, in-depth analysis of drug abuse as a critical cross-cutting issue within the Kenya Forest Service, anchored in the relevant legal and policy frameworks, and proposes actionable, strategic interventions.

Addressing drug abuse within the KFS requires a robust understanding of the legislative instruments that govern both forest management and substance control in Kenya. The following Acts form the bedrock of institutional response:
The Constitution of Kenya, 2010: Article 42 guarantees every person the right to a clean and healthy environment, while Article 43 guarantees the right to the highest attainable standard of health.

TheKenya Forest Service Act, No. 7 of 2016: This Act establishes the KFS and outlines its functions, powers, and the management of its staff.
Section 28 and the subsequent Kenya Forest Service (Staff) Regulations, 2017, mandate strict codes of conduct, disciplinary procedures, and the promotion of staff welfare. Substance abuse constitutes gross misconduct under these regulations, warranting disciplinary action.

The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (Control) Act, 2022:This landmark legislation repealed the older Cap 245, introducing stricter penalties for the trafficking and use of illicit drugs while emphasizing a public health approach that includes mandatory rehabilitation and counseling for users.
The Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA), 2007 Section 6 places a duty on employers to ensure the safety, health, and welfare of all persons at work. This includes maintaining a drug-free workplace, as substance abuse significantly increases the risk of occupational hazards, especially for KFS staff operating heavy machinery or carrying firearms in remote forest zones.

Drug abuse within the KFS is not an isolated phenomenon; it is deeply intertwined with the unique operational environment of forest management. Several factors contribute to this vulnerability:
Forest rangers and guards are frequently deployed to remote, isolated forest stations (e.g., the Mau Complex, Mount Kenya, or the Coastal forests) for extended periods. The lack of direct supervision, coupled with limited recreational facilities, creates an environment ripe for substance experimentation and abuse, particularly of alcohol, bhang (cannabis), and prescription drug misuse.

Illegal logging, charcoal burning, and wildlife poaching are highly lucrative criminal enterprises. Syndicates operating in these spaces often use narcotics as a tool to compromise, blackmail, or recruit vulnerable forest personnel, turning a blind eye to environmental crimes in exchange for substances or the money to buy them.

KFS personnel often face immense psychological stress due to hostile community encounters, inadequate remuneration, delayed promotions, and harsh working conditions. In the absence of robust mental health support systems, some staff resort to drugs and alcohol as maladaptive coping mechanisms.

Forest-adjacent communities sometimes engage in the cultivation of illicit substances (e.g., bhang) within or near forest reserves. This local availability normalizes drug use and increases the likelihood of interaction and abuse among forest workers interacting with these communities.

Central Highlands Region: Building Stronger Communities for Sustainable Forestry



The green slopes of The Mt. Kenya forest

By Martin Koome

The Central Highlands Region is one of Kenya's most important ecological and economic landscapes, encompassing the iconic Mount Kenya and Aberdare forest ecosystems. These critical water towers regulate local climate, protect river catchments, conserve biodiversity, and support millions of livelihoods downstream. Beyond safeguarding these vital ecosystems, the Kenya Forest Service (KFS) Central Highlands Regional Office continues to strengthen the relationship between forests and the communities that depend on them through practical conservation initiatives and public engagement.

Recognizing that successful forest conservation relies on community participation, the region has embraced a people-centered approach to forest management. Through continuous engagement with Community Forest Associations (CFAs), forestry officers promote sustainable livelihood opportunities such as beekeeping, commercial tree nurseries, and eco-tourism. The region also participates in environmental clean-up campaigns and community outreach programmes that encourage local residents to become active custodians of nearby forests, helping reduce illegal logging, encroachment, and forest degradation.

The Central Highlands Region is equally committed to nurturing a culture of environmental stewardship among young people. Forestry officers work closely with primary, secondary, and tertiary institutions to facilitate tree-growing programmes by supplying quality seedlings suited to local conditions and providing technical guidance on planting, maintenance, and aftercare. School woodlots and fruit orchards established through these initiatives not only enhance learning environments but also instill the importance of growing and protecting trees for future generations.

Beyond conservation, KFS officers play an important role in resolving tree-related disputes within communities. Working alongside local administrators, they provide technical advice on boundary tree management, pruning, pollarding, and safe harvesting practices near homes, roads, and power lines. Their expertise helps resolve conflicts amicably while ensuring mature trees are conserved wherever possible.

The region also continues to educate private landowners on the importance of obtaining Tree Growing Certificates of Origin for timber harvested from farms. Through public barazas and farmer field days, forestry officers explain the certification process, helping farmers comply with legal requirements while promoting a transparent and traceable timber supply chain.

The work of the Central Highlands Region demonstrates that modern forestry extends well beyond forest boundaries. By combining forest protection with community empowerment, youth engagement, conflict resolution, and farmer education, the region is building a resilient model of sustainable forestry. Through continued collaboration with communities, educational institutions, and local administration, the Kenya Forest Service remains committed to safeguarding Kenya's natural heritage while improving livelihoods for present and future generations.

From Global Climate Promises to Local Forest Protection: Kenya's Forestry Diplomacy in Action

By Joy Ngugi

As climate change continues to threaten ecosystems and livelihoods across the globe, Kenya has emerged as a leading voice in international climate diplomacy. Through ambitious tree-growing campaigns, forest restoration programs, and active participation in global climate negotiations, the country has demonstrated its commitment to environmental sustainability. However, translating these international commitments into tangible outcomes on the ground presents both opportunities and challenges for the forestry sector.

Kenya's Growing Role in Global Forestry Diplomacy
Kenya has firmly established itself as a global leader in forest conservation, actively participating in major international forestry forums. Its leadership is driven by ambitious national goals, including the growing of 15 billion trees by 2032 and the restoration of 10.6 million hectares of degraded landscapes. These commitments position Kenya as a key contributor to global efforts aimed at mitigating climate change, combating desertification, and enhancing biodiversity conservation.

The country's active engagement in international forestry and climate platforms has strengthened its reputation as a champion of sustainable forest management and nature-based climate solutions.

Among the notable international forums that Kenya has recently participated in are:

Global REDD+ Summit (May 2026).
In a significant milestone for global forest conservation, Kenya hosted the landmark Global REDD+ Summit in Nairobi, bringing together representatives from 59 REDD+ countries. The summit served as a vital platform for participating nations to strengthen collaboration in addressing deforestation, improving forest governance, and advancing access to results-based carbon financing. Kenya's hosting of the event reaffirmed its commitment to leveraging forests as a key solution in the fight against climate change.
21st Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests

(UNFF21) – May 2026.
At the 21st Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF21) held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, Kenya joined global leaders, policymakers, and forestry experts in shaping the future of sustainable forest management. During the session, the Kenyan delegation championed the need for predictable and accessible forest financing mechanisms while highlighting the country's groundbreaking operational REDD+ Registry the first of its kind globally which promotes transparency, accountability, and credibility in forest carbon management.

International Court of Justice Climate Solutions Conference (April 2026).
Kenya further demonstrated its leadership in climate and environmental governance by hosting the International Court of Justice Climate Solutions Conference in Nairobi in collaboration with CIFOR-ICRAF. The conference convened legal experts, policymakers, and environmental practitioners from across Africa to deliberate on state obligations in addressing climate change and protecting natural resources. Discussions emphasized the critical role of forests in climate mitigation, environmental governance, and the pursuit of climate justice, strengthening awareness of the legal dimensions of forest conservation and sustainable development.

For Kenya to fully realize its forestry and climate ambitions, there must be a strong connection between international commitments and local implementation. Tree-growing initiatives must be accompanied by effective tree nurturing, monitoring, and protection. Forest restoration efforts should prioritize ecosystem health, indigenous species, and long-term sustainability.

Strengthening partnerships among national and county governments, conservation agencies, research institutions, development partners, and local communities will be critical in translating diplomatic achievements into meaningful environmental outcomes.

Looking ahead.
Kenya's forestry sector stands at a defining moment. As the country continues to champion forest conservation and climate action on the global stage, the success of its commitments will ultimately be measured by the condition of its forests and landscapes. Protecting forest ecosystems, restoring degraded lands, and empowering communities will remain central to achieving both national development goals and international climate obligations.

Foresters are at the forefront of this mission. Through their expertise, dedication, and stewardship, they continue to transform global climate commitments into tangible conservation achievements, ensuring that Kenya's forests remain a lasting legacy for future generations.

The Water Behind the Trees: Optimizing Nursery Practices for Kenya's 15 Billion Tree Programme

By Sylvester Chisika

Did you know that daily watering of your tree seedlings can waste up to 85% of the water applied to a tree seedling? New research from Karura Forest Station Nursery reveals a critical trade-off in nursery management: while frequent watering promotes rapid growth, it often leads to massive water losses. For a country aiming to produce billions of seedlings, this insight is key to making the ambitious 15 Billion Tree Growing Initiative more efficient and sustainable.

Kenya's tree-growing agenda has placed seedling production at the centre of landscape restoration. To restore degraded lands and increase tree cover, we need not only huge quantities of seedlings but also efficient nursery systems capable of producing healthy planting material.

One of the most important but often overlooked inputs in nursery production is water. Water influences germination, nutrient uptake, root development, and overall seedling health. Both under- and over-watering can affect seedling quality, increase production costs, and reduce survival rates after planting. As Kenya expands its nursery network, an important question arises: How can we produce high-quality seedlings while using water as efficiently as possible?

The Study: Testing Three Watering Frequencies

A study conducted at Karura Forest Station examined this question by investigating the effects of different watering frequencies on two key species: the indigenous hardwood *Croton megalocarpus* (Mukinduri) and the exotic softwood *Pinus patula*. Researchers evaluated three watering frequencies: once weekly, twice weekly, and daily.

The researchers measured seedling height, stem diameter, health status, and critically, water retention the percentage of applied water that remained in the soil immediately after watering.

Daily Watering: Higher Growth, Higher Losses

Seedlings watered daily recorded the greatest growth. *Pinus patula* grew up to 1.47 cm in height over four weeks, with excellent health scores. However, this came at a high cost.

Under the daily regime, approximately 85% of water applied to *Croton megalocarpus* and 73% applied to *Pinus patula* was lost through drainage. This means that for every 10 litres of water used, over 7 litres are wasted often carrying valuable nutrients away from the seedling's roots. At the scale of a nursery producing millions of seedlings, this inefficiency translates into enormous volumes of wasted water and increased fertilizer costs.

Once-Weekly Watering: Insufficient for Acceptable Performance

At the other extreme, once-weekly watering resulted in poor seedling health. *Croton megalocarpus* seedlings averaged only 0.52 cm in height growth and displayed severe water stress. Health scores were near mortality levels. This regime is clearly unsuitable for operational nurseries.

Twice-Weekly Watering: A Practical Balance

The most promising finding was the performance of seedlings under the twice-weekly regime. This frequency provided a favorable balance between seedling growth, health, and water conservation.

Height increments ranged from 0.78 to 0.91 cm, and seedling health remained acceptable (scoring about 3 out of 5). Most importantly, water retention improved significantly: Croton retained 32.1% of applied water, while Pinus retained 38.7%.

These results suggest that under conditions similar to Karura, twice-weekly watering provides a practical baseline for nursery operations.

Species-Specific Management is Essential

The study also highlighted important differences between the two species. *Pinus patula*, with its fibrous root system, showed better water retention and growth responsiveness than the tap-rooted *Croton megalocarpus*. This reinforces a vital lesson: a one-size-fits-all watering regime is not effective. Species, seedling age, container size, growing medium, and local climate all influence water requirements. The seedlings physical conditions at the end of the 4th week is as shown in Plate 1.



Plate 1: Seedling physical condition at week 4 (left) *Pinus patula* and (right) *Croton megalocarpus*

Implications for the 15 Billion Tree Growing Initiative

Kenya's 15 Billion Tree Growing Programme requires efficient and sustainable nursery management. Findings from Karura Forest suggest twice-weekly watering as a practical baseline, with water volumes adjusted by species, such as approximately 48 ml per Croton megalocarpus and 70 ml per Pinus patula seedling per watering event. Regular soil moisture monitoring and minimizing excessive drainage can reduce water and nutrient losses. At national scale, efficient watering could significantly reduce resource requirements and production costs. Future research should examine whether controlled water limitation improves seedling resilience after planting. Ultimately, success depends not only on producing more seedlings, but on producing healthy seedlings sustainably and efficiently.

Muringato Forest Station



Muringato Forest Station

By Martin Koome

Muringato Station is situated within the Central Highlands Regional Conservancy (which encompasses Nyeri, Kiambu, Kirinyaga, Murang'a, Nyandarua, and Laikipia counties). The Kenya Forest Service (KFS) Station in Muringato plays an essential role in balancing environmental conservation with active community participation.

Grounded in a strong ethos of social responsibility, the station actively engages in giving back to local communities while serving as an educational anchor for sustainable environmental practices. A key priority for Muringato Station is overseeing and coordinating tree-planting initiatives across local schools. By guiding students and educators in proper planting techniques and tree care, the station actively fosters environmental stewardship among the youth and supports Kenya's broader target for expanded tree cover.

Beyond institutional outreach, the station serves as a crucial mediator in local land and forestry governance. The Muringato KFS team routinely resolves tree- and land-related disputes among community members, handling issues ranging from boundary tree encroachments to regulated tree pruning. By addressing these localized conflicts directly and systematically, the station maintains civic harmony, protects property rights, and prevents the illegal or hazardous felling of trees. This conflict resolution role reinforces the station's position not just as an enforcement body, but as an accessible partner in sustainable resource management.

To support private forestry and commercial tree growing, the station actively sensitizes landowners on legal timber production processes, specifically regarding Tree Growing Certificates of Origin.

The key management and administrative practices implemented include:

- School Outreach & Youth Stewardship: Conducting hands-on educational sessions and tree-planting programs in local academic institutions to expand forest cover.

- Community Dispute Resolution: Facilitating fair resolutions for private boundary tree disputes, encroachment concerns, and pruning permissions to maintain civic harmony.

- Private Timber Traceability: Establishing joint verification where both the local Forester and the area Chief sign off on private farm tree harvesting, guaranteeing legal traceability and protecting farmers against illegal logging.

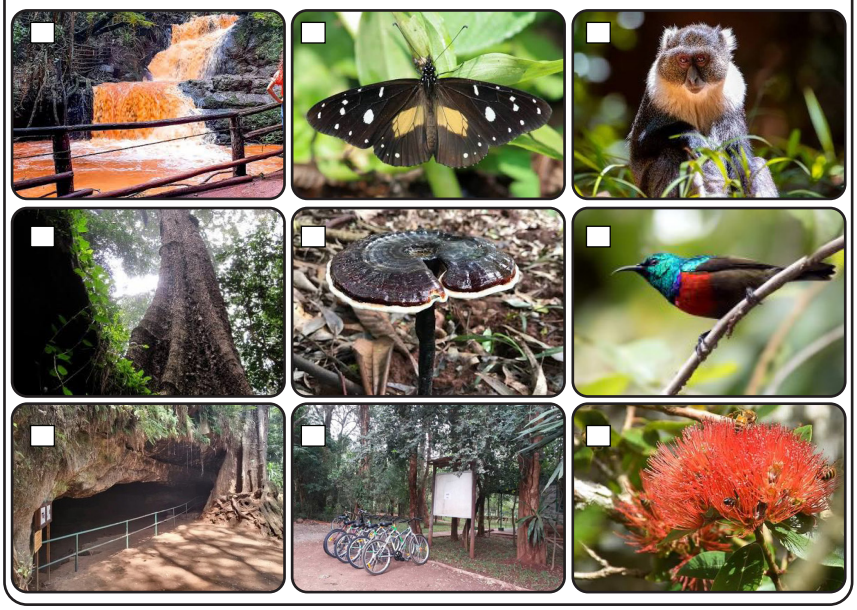
Through collaborative oversight with local administration (NGAO), local schools, community forest associations, and local landowners, Muringato Forest Station ensures private timber enters the supply chain legally and profitably under recognized environmental standards.

FORESTER FUN PAGE

1. FIND THESE IN THE FOREST

PHOTO CHALLENGE

How many can you spot on your next adventure in Karura Forest?

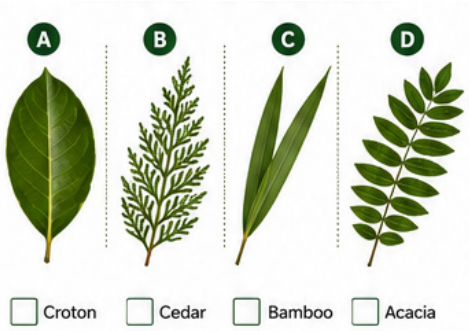


2. THIS OR THAT?



Tick what you will be doing on your next adventure in Karura Forest.

3. GUESS THE LEAF



4. FOREST SELFIE CHALLENGE



Take a selfie, share your best moment in Karura Forest and tag us!

Best photos will feature in our next issue.

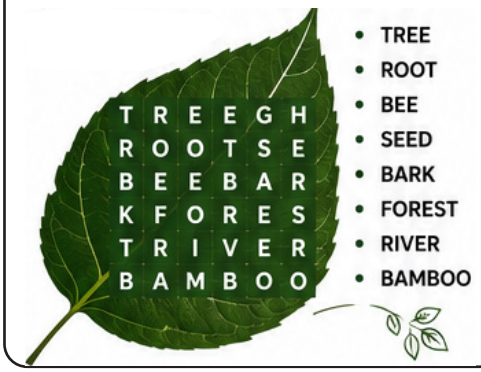
5. DID YOU KNOW ?

Elephants are known as "Forest gardeners" because they help in seed dispersal.

Bees pollinate over one-third of the food crops we eat.

One mature tree can produce enough oxygen for several people each day

6. WORD HUNT



7. PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Title:

Forest Dweller

"Captured along the Karura trails during an early morning walk".

From The Archives

MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES & WILDLIFE.

FOR 62/17/36

FOREST DEPARTMENT,
P.O. Box 30513, NAIROBI
KENYA
24th September, 1965

R.J. Dewe, Esq.,
C/o Spartan Air Services,
2117, Carling Avenue,
OTTAWA, 13,
CANADA

Dear

I wish to record my very great appreciation of all the work you have done in Kenya over the last 2 years to assist us in carrying out an inventory of our timber resources. You managed to achieve a great deal while you were here both on the technical side of obtaining results, and on the training side in training up local Africans in inventory work. Your departure and return to Canada will leave a gap which I know Ben Heldhoen will do his best to fill but nevertheless, you will most certainly be missed.

I know that John Logie would wish to join me in this appreciation.

May I wish you and your family all the best in the future on behalf of us all.

Yours sincerely,

(J.B. SMART)
AG. CHIEF CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS

Know Your Trees

KENYA Forest Service



English Name

Ana Tree; Apple-ring Acacia; Winter Thorn

Indigenous Name

Ana Tree

Family

Fabaceae

Local Names

- Swahili: Mguu
- Turkana: Ewoi
- Borana: Garri

Plant Description

A medium to large deciduous tree growing 15–30 m tall with a broad, spreading crown. It has grey to whitish bark that becomes rough with age, small feathery compound leaves, creamy-white flower spikes, and curved orange-brown seed pods rich in livestock fodder.

Ecology / Distribution

Common in Kenya's arid and semi-arid areas, including Turkana, Baringo, Samburu, Isiolo, Marsabit, Garissa, Tana River, Kitui, and Makueni. It thrives along riverbanks and floodplains in areas receiving 250–800 mm of annual rainfall.

Flowering and Fruit Development

Flowers mainly during the dry season, producing fragrant cream-coloured flower spikes. Curved seed pods mature several months later and provide valuable fodder for livestock and wildlife.

End Uses

Improves soil fertility through nitrogen fixation, provides nutritious livestock fodder, shade, firewood, and charcoal, helps control soil erosion, supports beekeeping, and is widely used in agroforestry systems.

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