



# RHINO CHARGE

[www.rhinocharge.or.ke](http://www.rhinocharge.or.ke)

## What is the Rhino Charge?

The Rhino Charge is an annual off-road 4x4 competition held in Kenya in which entrants are required to visit 13 check points (Guard Posts) while travelling the shortest possible distance across difficult, trackless terrain, where speed is not a necessity. The event is organised in order to raise funds to support the activities of Rhino Ark Kenya Charitable Trust.

- The event is limited to 65 teams/cars, and cars can either be modified or unmodified;
- The location and venue of the Rhino Charge is kept secret until the last minute to maximise the challenge;
- The Charge takes place over a period of 10 hours.

The Rhino Charge raises funds in 3 ways.

- 1) **Team Sponsorship** – This is the main fundraising channel and it's thanks to the Teams and all their hard work that the event raises the amount it does. Each entrant must pledge and raise a minimum sponsorship fee between 750,000 KES and 1.5 Million KES. However, most entrants raise considerably more. Teams are responsible for covering their own and their vehicle costs themselves so all donations of sponsorship go to Rhino Ark.
- 2) **Event Sponsorship** – Sponsorship is offered for some areas of the event, such as Guard Posts, the Bar, HQ, Venue Check-in. This is a great way for organisations or companies to align themselves with the Rhino Charge cause and a good branding opportunity both pre-event and onsite. Event sponsorship is used to help offset the costs of running the event and, hence, to maximise the final donation to Rhino Ark.
- 3) **Community Funds** – The event is run on community-owned land at the invitation of the host community. In exchange for this permission, Rhino Charge collects Land Access Fees paid by all who access the venue. This money is then used for tangible community projects such as the construction of school classrooms or community clinics. The selection of the project is by the host community. Rhino Ark ensures the funds are efficiently and responsibly spent on the selected project. To date KES 55,030,000 (\$550K/£425K) Community Funds have been raised.

**In total since the very first Rhino Charge in 1989 the event has raised over 1.6 billion Kenyan shillings for Rhino Ark (approx. \$16 million/ £12 million).**

## **Limiting the impact of the event on the Environment:**

From the start, care for the host venue and the environment is a primary principle in every aspect of the event's design, regulations and conduct. The Rhino Charge is organized and run by a Committee. In keeping with Rhino Ark's conservation mission, the Committee's objectives are to leave the venue as clean or cleaner than they found it. This is supported by the body of competitors and visitors who buy into the conservation ethos. The following mitigating measures are in place.

1. The camping area
  - With 3000+ people in attendance at the Charge refuse disposal is a big undertaking. As the event has grown so has the process of disposing of litter in a safe and environmentally conscious manner. Today, the Charge organises a fully-fledged and professional waste collection and recycling operation on site. Biodegradables are buried and the rest (e.g. plastic bottles, glass bottles, cans, tetra pak) is sorted and taken back to Nairobi for recycling.
  - No litter is left onsite, anywhere. Teams/Sponsors/Spectators/Camp Providers are all responsible for ensuring that their Campsites/Guard Posts are left litter free. The Main Organising Committee takes it upon themselves to check the whole venue after everyone has left to ensure everything has been taken away and fines or exclusions to future events are issued should this not be the case.
2. Carbon Neutrality
  - Rhino Charge is 100% carbon Neutral. Rhino Ark conducts a complete audit of all travel to and from the event, fuel consumption during the event (all vehicles, aircrafts, generators), camp fires and any related activities, and fully offsets these.
  - Rhino Ark fully offsets the event's carbon footprint by purchasing Certified Emission Reductions (CERs) which go towards UNFCCC certified projects that reduce, avoid or remove greenhouse gas emissions from the atmosphere. To view a copy of this certificate please click [here](#).
3. Mitigating impacts of the competition day itself
  - Competitor numbers are strictly limited to 65 vehicles and the competition is for a period of 10 hours on one day only.
  - As the winner of the competition is judged by those who cover the shortest distance, the total distance covered by competitors is very low, usually between 20-30 km in total.
  - There are strict speed limits in place, with 40km/h being the maximum speed permitted during the event. This is monitored by GPS throughout the day.
  - Weight limits are in place to ensure vehicles remain light.
  - Tree cutting or damage is strictly prohibited.
  - The timing of the event is designed to occur prior to the rain. Any soil disturbance generally leads to increased germination of seed when it rains.
  - The impacts of the event have been assessed by scientists including Dr. David Western (former Director of Kenya Wildlife Services) and found to be comparable to the impact of a herd of elephants passing through the area.
  - Competition venues are unique and never revisited.
  - The course design and layout are carefully considered to ensure minimal damage.

## Rhino Charge Community Projects

The Rhino Charge also takes care with its “Social Footprint”. It has the commitment and systems not just to uphold the Hippocratic principle of “do no harm”, but also (however modestly) to actively improve conditions for the communities it visits.

As detailed above every participant pays a land access fee per vehicle, and all of this income is invested in a permanent project of the community’s choice, which is professionally tendered and executed. To the extent possible, community members are engaged wherever casual labour is required.

During the event, the event’s medical team runs a free clinic for all who live in the area, and offers additional training to resident practitioners.



*CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: A water project building for Ilmutiok; water pumps for Lorogoswa; support for schools in equipment and classrooms; medical training and treatment at Ol Ongaianiet and cash-earning jobs at all venues.*

## Who is Rhino Ark Kenya Charitable Trust?

Rhino Ark Kenya Charitable Trust is an NGO which works towards the protection, conservation and restoration of Kenya's mountain range ecosystems, the so-called "Water Towers". Rhino Ark seeks to create a "win-win equilibrium" that balances the needs of local communities with the goal of protecting nature.

At the core of Rhino Ark's success are four key values:

- Protection of ecosystem integrity by fostering harmony between humans and wildlife;
- Full involvement of, and participation by, local communities;
- Formation of effective partnerships;
- Ensuring sustainability through the development of long-term arrangements.

## What do they do?

Since its establishment in 1988, Rhino Ark has invested KES 1.6 billion in conservation in Kenya, including the building of 650 km of electric fences. Through the fencing programmes, over 80,000 families are being protected from the dangers of human-wildlife conflicts.

Rhino Ark's electric fences protect critical mountain forests that are the 'water towers' of Kenya. These mountain forests are vital ecosystems that support the country's economic development and the well-being of most Kenyans.

The Aberdares, Mt. Kenya and the Mau Forest where Rhino Ark operates, are the three largest water towers of Kenya. They are the source of major rivers that provide the much-needed water to Nairobi which is a key contributor to Kenya's GDP. These rivers support the livelihoods of millions of households in the rural areas. They are also the lifeline of key conservation and tourism areas downstream. Together these three mountain ecosystems provide yearly ecological services to Kenya worth a staggering amount of KES 412 billion (\$4.12 billion).



*Aberdare Fence line*

Although mountain forests cover less than 2% of Kenya's total land area, they harbour a disproportionate amount of the biodiversity in the country, not only in terms of plants where over 50% of the species are found in these forests, but also in terms of mammals, birds and butterflies.

Kenya's mountain forests include World Heritage Sites, Important Bird Areas and National Parks. The critically endangered black rhino and mountain bongo antelope, the vulnerable African elephant and leopard are among the iconic wildlife species that inhabit them. Rhino Ark's conservation work helps protect the diverse wildlife species inhabiting these forest ecosystems.



*Elephant Grid at Geta*

In areas where wildlife movement has not been blocked but are causing conflicts with settled communities, Rhino Ark is working with partners towards securing safe wildlife passages. A corridor between Kipipiri Hill and the Aberdares has been established enabling the safe movement of elephants. In Eburu, Rhino Ark has spearheaded the establishment of a corridor linking the forest with Lake Naivasha. In Nyeri County, Rhino Ark and partners are working towards securing a wildlife corridor between Mt. Kenya and the Aberdare Range.

In Kenya the impact of climate change is evident. Rainy seasons are becoming more variable and extreme rainfall events more frequent. The mountain areas are experiencing reduced cloudiness, making the forests drier and more vulnerable to fires. Rhino Ark's conservation work is paramount towards mitigating the impacts of climate change. Through integrated conservation programmes, Rhino Ark is helping protect, conserve and restore Kenya's largest mountain forests which play a key role in limiting global warming (as highlighted by the global scientific community in a 2018 report). Rhino Ark's conservation interventions are making Kenya's mountain forests denser and healthier, therefore, increasing their resilience to climate change. Through Rhino Ark's work, the ability of these forests to continue to provide vital ecological services to the country despite a changing climate is being secured.

Educating forest-adjacent communities on conservation is paramount to secure the long-term communities' support towards the protection and restoration of our mountain forests. Rhino Ark has spearheaded the development and implementation of conservation education programmes benefitting 178 primary and secondary schools located within the 8-km buffer zone of the Aberdares, Mount Eburu and South Western Mau.



*Faith based engagement meeting Kapkembu Swme*

Providing conservation-compatible livelihoods to the forest-adjacent communities is at the centre of Rhino Ark's community engagement. Rhino Ark's fences are built and maintained by the neighbouring communities, providing jobs for 177 fence attendants. In the Aberdares and Eburu, Rhino Ark has hired and trained community members to patrol the forests. In addition, they are promoting bio-enterprises. In Eburu, for example, the beekeeping programme involves over 30 groups from all the communities neighbouring the forest.

For more information on Rhino Ark please visit [www.rhinoark.org](http://www.rhinoark.org).

## Hear from those that Rhino Ark's work is impacting



### **Wainaina Kiringa** Farmer, Ndabibi Location

"I have been a resident in the area for over 35 years since my childhood. I farm maize, beans and potatoes, and also keep livestock.

Before the fence was built bush pigs would invade my farm and destroy my crop harvest. Each acre can produce up to 40 bags of maize, but I would only salvage between 10 to 15 bags an acre at most – a terrible loss. Now with the fence in place I get the full yield from my farm."

### **CATHERINE KINYANJUI** Chairlady of the Karui 91 Self Help Group

"When I was a little girl, before the fence was built, we once lost 9 cows and 30 goats to wildlife in one night. There was such bitterness and desperation in those days. We would spend our nights concentrating on wildlife problems instead of studying. During the rainy seasons, children could not attend school for up to 2 weeks at a time because of fear of encountering wildlife. We could not even attend church for weeks as we had to guard our farms during the day. The fence has solved so many problems for us."



### **LYDIAH NYOTA** Community Leader and Farmer, Eburru

"Before the fence was built, we had major problems with wildlife. Since my farm is small, I use it for zero grazing and to grow fodder for my livestock. I rely on renting farmland in the area to grow food crops. I am one of the people who has suffered most from wildlife. At one time, I completely lost 2 acres of maize and 1 ½ acres of potatoes to wildlife for 2 consecutive seasons.

Since Rhino Ark built the fence, the forest is recovering, and there is more rainfall observed. Wildlife from the forest is no-longer a threat and the farms are profitable. What we put into the farms is recovered many times over, and I find that farming is a now superior investment. I have been able to improve my life, and even built a good home with the profits made from farming."

### **ACHIM STEINER**, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UNEP

"The Aberdares conservation efforts underline the extraordinary and wide-ranging returns possible when a more creative, decisive and sustainable approach to managing nature is undertaken. They also offer a model for exemplary public/private partnerships."

