



HELP SAFEGUARD KENYA'S MOUNTAIN FORESTS



Nothing can be more gratifying than safeguarding Kenya's mountain forests. They are the most beautiful and diverse natural ecosystems in Kenya. They are the sources of water of the Nation. They host a very rich diversity of wildlife and plants.

Join Rhino Ark in this undertaking of protecting, conserving and restoring our most important natural ecosystems and be part of one of the most successful conservation initiatives in the country.



WHY RHINO ARK'S CONSERVATION WORK MATTERS

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 our fencing programmes, we currently protect over 80,000 families from the dangers of human-wildlife conflicts. But our conservation work has also a much wider positive impact by:

- Conserving over 570,000 hectares of prime mountain forests that are key water sources of the nation;
- Protecting Kenya's rich wildlife, including critically endangered and vulnerable species;
- Mitigating the impacts of climate change, by conserving and restoring mountain forests, to secure their ability to continue provide vital ecological services, in particular water services, to the country;
- Educating forest-adjacent communities through education programmes that benefit 178 primary and secondary schools;
- Providing conservation-compatible livelihoods to the forest-adjacent communities.



Rhino Ark's electric fences protect over **570,000 hectares of prime mountain forests that are the 'water towers' of Kenya**. The Aberdares, Mt. Kenya and the Mau Forest where Rhino Ark is operating, 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 the 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, such as the wider Laikipia-Samburu landscape and the Maasai Mara / Serengeti ecosystem.

Our conservation work helps **protect a very diverse fauna and flora** inhabiting these forest ecosystems.

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. These mountain forests include **World Heritage Sites, Important Bird Areas and National Parks**.

In these forests, Rhino Ark's work assists in protecting **15 threatened species**, including the critically endangered Black rhino and Mountain bongo antelope, as well as the vulnerable African elephant and leopard, to mention few iconic wildlife species that inhabit them.

Together these three mountain ecosystems **provide yearly ecological services to Kenya worth a staggering amount of KES 412 billion** (\$4.12 billion).

Rhino Ark's conservation work is paramount towards mitigating the impacts of climate change, in particular on water resources. Through our integrated conservation programme, we are protecting, conserving and restoring Kenya's largest mountain forests. These forests 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 our mountain forests denser and healthier**, therefore, increasing their resilience to climate change. Through our work, we are securing the ability of these forests to continue provide vital ecological services to the country despite a changing climate.

Educating forest-adjacent communities on conservation is paramount to secure the long-term



Before the fence was built, I was not able to farm due to buffalo, porcupine and baboon. The situation was so bad that I was forced to abandon my own farm. The farms were devoid of tree cover.

Some people did not even farm as they used to sustain themselves by illegally making charcoal in the forest and selling it. Livestock theft was also a common problem.

Now I have observed a behaviour change. The fence has curbed the illegal forest charcoal and logging problem and forced the perpetrators to begin farming. Also, people are now keen to plant their own trees. People who had abandoned their farms because of wildlife, myself included, have now returned to them, and the livestock theft problem has been addressed."

Ezra Magutu, Ol Jorai (Eburu)



"The fence has created a secure environment. It has helped to improve children's performance in school as well as the number of children enrolled in school.

Farming productivity in the area has greatly improved and land values are up. Farmers are now confident enough to grow horticultural crops, which they could not do before the fence. I have been able to earn a livelihood from my farm and educate my children. It was much easier for me than it was for my father when there was no fence."

Peter Kibuka, Bondeni (Aberdares)

communities' support towards the protection and restoration of our mountain forests. Rhino Ark's has spearheaded the development and implementation of conservation education programmes benefitting 178 primary and secondary schools in the 8-km buffer of the Aberdares, Mount Eburu and South Western Mau forest ecosystems.

Providing conservation-compatible livelihoods to the forest-adjacent communities is at the centre of Rhino Ark's community engagement. Our fences are built and maintained by the neighbouring communities, providing jobs for 177 fence attendants. In the Aberdares and Eburu, we have hired and trained community members to patrol the forests. In addition, we are promoting bio-enterprises. In Eburu, for example, our beekeeping programme involves over 21 groups from all the communities neighbouring the forest.





WHY IS THE CONTINUATION OF RHINO ARK'S WORK SO IMPORTANT?

Keeping our fences across three ecosystems fully operational is a critical function that serves tens of thousands of forest adjacent community members and millions of Kenyans beyond.

Our fences are “live”, and once built, must be maintained. Maintenance costs KES 80,000 (\$800) per kilometre per year, and Rhino Ark annually commits considerable resources to ensure that the fences remain fully functional on a continuous “24/7, 365” basis. Even a few hours of down-time can provide a window for wildlife to escape the forests and cause havoc in the community.

Maintenance begins with the full-time fence attendants, recruited from the community.

They are well trained, well equipped, and housed in camps built along the fence line.

Each attendant covers 4 kilometres of fence line.

Their daily duties include patrolling the fence line to clear vegetation growth from the 10-metre-wide fence buffer zone, equating to about 4 hectares of clearing daily. They repair fence damage arising from natural causes or illegal human activity. They also look out for any evidence of illegal activity and report on the same, acting as eyes and ears for the park/forest management. Currently, there are 176 fence attendants engaged across the 3 Rhino Ark fence projects. Overseeing the fence attendants is a team of 10 fence supervisors. Using motorcycles, they patrol their respective zones to inspect the fences, ensuring that the maintenance work conforms to set standards.

A dedicated Rhino Ark fleet of 8 duty 4x4 off-road pick-up trucks provide support for fence operations, enabling movement of materials and people to and from remote fence locations.

Management oversight of fence maintenance is anchored in a robust institutional framework funded by Rhino Ark.



My farm is the immediate neighbour of Mt. Kenya Forest and my fellow villagers have always regarded this forest as “Mutitu wa ngoma” (Forest filled

with evil spirits). Elephants raided my farm and this made me to resort to tea farming. I completely abandoned growing food crops owing to the losses caused by elephants. The only river crossing that elephants use to cross River Kathita is next to my farm and that's why we used to have high incidences of raids by elephants. I am very excited to see this fencing project and the former “Mutitu wa ngoma” will no longer be a source of our suffering but a source of joy”.

Mzee Thurania (89 years old), Mt. Kenya



HOW CAN YOU GET ENGAGED AND SUPPORT THE CONSERVATION OF OUR WATER TOWERS

We welcome your kind donations to support our work. Your contributions help us achieve the following:

1. Fencing programme:

***KES 2,5 million to build one kilometre of fence
KES 80,000 to maintain one kilometre of fence
for one year.***

Our comprehensive game-proof electrified fences help secure prime indigenous forests and resolve human/wildlife conflict, keeping forest-adjacent communities engaged in conservation.

One kilometre of electrified fence costs KES 2.5 million (\$25,000). Once built, fences must be maintained continuously. We have 176 fence attendants maintaining our fences daily, supported by eight 4x4 vehicles. Fence maintenance costs KES 80,000 (\$800) per kilometre per year.

2. Endangered species and forest conservation:

***Support our community-based patrol programme:
KES 73,500 (\$735) can cover a 2-week field
mission deep in our protected forest.***

The Aberdare Joint Surveillance Unit (AJSU) is an elite, 7-man team of community scouts that patrols the Aberdare ecosystem. AJSU targets illegal activities such as logging, charcoal kilns, snaring and wildlife trapping. They also monitor wildlife abundance and distribution, gather intelligence information, and participate in forest fire fighting.

In Eburu, a 5-man Foot Patrol Team responds to local intelligence reports to enact dark sting operations to catch would-be wildlife or forestry criminals. Their main targets are wildlife snares, illegal logging and charcoal kilns.

Support forest rehabilitation:

***KES 100,000 (\$1,000) will enable re-planting one
hectare of degraded forests and taking care of it
for three years.***

Large areas of prime mountain forest habitats degraded by illegal human activities and forest fires need to be rehabilitated. Donate to help restore our mountain forests. KES 100 (\$1) will enable planting and caring for a tree seedling.

3. Community conservation education and livelihoods

We can tailor a community conservation



education & livelihood programme, based on your area of interest and funding level.

Our community programmes are geared to reducing forest adjacent communities’ reliance on forest resources, improving their livelihoods, and raising their environmental awareness. These interventions result in formal education of the youth in environmental conservation, community participation in forest conservation, adoption of on-farm best practices and improvement in incomes.

WHAT IS IN IT FOR YOU?

If you join us in the fight to save the water towers of Kenya, you will receive:

1. The knowledge and awareness that your efforts are helping to conserve vital habitats for generations of Kenyans to come
2. The possibility to deduct your donation from taxation (Rhino Ark has an Income Tax Exempt Certificate)
3. Recognition of your support to Rhino Ark as follows:

Bronze: KES 1-2 million

- feature article (1/2 page) in Rhino Ark’s biennial ARKive magazine
- posts promoting your donations on our social media channels.

Silver: KES 2-5 million

- feature article (1 page) in Rhino Ark’s biennial ARKive magazine;
- posts promoting your donations on our social media channels;
- your company name on a plaque on the Mt. Kenya ecosystem conservation fence.

Gold: Above KES 5 million

- feature article (2 page) in Rhino Ark’s biennial ARKive magazine;
- posts promoting your donations on our social media channels;
- your company name on a plaque on the Mt Kenya ecosystem conservation fence;
- a weekend get-away to the Rhino Retreat in the heart of the Aberdare National Park.



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