

NEWS FROM THE MOUNTAIN

JANUARY - AUGUST 2006

Newsletter of the Bill Woodley Mount Kenya Trust

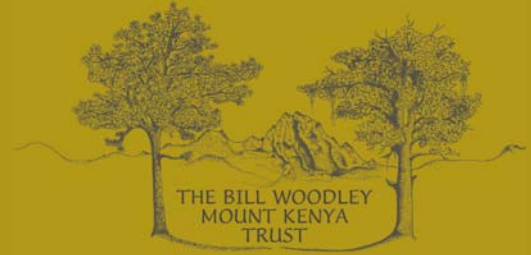
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www.10to4.org



This is an exciting time for the Trust as we are taking the necessary steps to expand. As we embark on an ever increasing number of projects, and our fundraising and administrative needs grow, we have become overstretched. To date the Trust has been run by the Executive Officer and Humphrey Munene our Field Co-ordinator. We now welcome the assistance of Lillian Wanjiku, our newly appointed Administration Officer.

Changes are taking place on the Kenya Wildlife Service front as well, and sadly we have had to say goodbye to Bongo Woodley as the Mount Kenya National Park and National Reserve Senior Warden, who served on Mount Kenya for 16 years. He has left the employment of the KWS after nearly 17 years of dedicated service. Thankfully he remains a Trustee of the Mount Kenya Trust enabling him to continue the Woodley legacy of helping to protect our Parks and Reserves. Mr. Baraza is the new Senior Warden and Mr. Warutere has been given the post of Assistant Director Mountain Parks, in charge of KWS on both Mount Kenya and the Aberdares. We give them both a warm welcome and we very much hope that we can all work together to strengthen the protection that Mount Kenya so desperately needs.

I am thrilled with the news that there are still Mountain Bongo on Mount Kenya, now our challenge is to ensure it stays that way. A small report is outlined in the newsletter. We now have an accurate map of our fencing programme that shows our progress, and we are very pleased that the Environmental Impact Assessment report for the planned elephant corridor has been approved by the National Environment Management Authority. It has taken a long time to get to this point, but now we can move full steam ahead.

The results and some photos from this years hugely successful 10 to 4 are printed in this issue and you can read all about Sue Parker and Colin Burch who left for Cape Town in a Model A Ford to raise funds for us. Leaving Nairobi on the 18th of July I was surprised when they got in touch to let us know they had reached South Africa in mid August.

We are very grateful to those of you who have signed up to our Regular Supporter Scheme and faithfully send a donation every year. Those of you who are particularly generous are mentioned in our newsletters as a token of our gratitude. For those of you who mean to keep helping but don't get round to it every year, please remember that just producing and printing the newsletter costs money, and the donations from those who remember to honour their pledge are less effective if they are not supported by all involved. If you signed up to be a supporter then we ask you to please keep sending your contributions to us so that we can continue to keep things moving forward. If you have not yet joined then every little bit really does count. Please fill in the form on the back of this newsletter and support us today!

We really appreciate feedback about our newsletters and projects and are also interested to find out about your concerns regarding activities in the Mount Kenya area if you live in the area, or visit regularly. I was shocked to hear that an expensive pipeline has been constructed within the National Park recently. This has caused a river to dry up and is, of course, completely illegal. This sort of activity can only be stopped if concerned people report these things to the relevant authorities or bring them to the attention of organisations who can help get the information passed on. Finally thank you for all your support in our efforts to conserve this unique environment and resource which is so valuable to all Kenyans.

Susie Weeks, Executive Officer

Newsletter: Susie Weeks

Photos: Susie Weeks, Peter Coleridge, Brent Keeble, Anita Balletto, Youth for Conservation, Alice Owen, Lillian Wanjiku, Amanda Mitchell and Bob Dewar Publicity.

News from the Mountain January - August 2006 / Issue No. 10

Mount Kenya Trust Updates

Administration Officer Appointed

Lillian Wanjiku has just joined the Mount Kenya Trust as our Administration Officer. Lillian is a graduate of the University of Nairobi, who started out as an accountant before joining the world of conservation. She joins us from the East African Wildlife Society where she worked her way up from an intern to Assistant Programme Officer for the Wetlands Programme. Her skills and experience will be of great value to the Trust and we welcome her on board.



De-snaring Operation - July 2006

It's heartening that only 7 live snares and 33 used ones were found during our July de-snaring operation. Our regular de-snaring patrols, KWS patrols and a good rainy season prior to the operation are the most likely explanations for this apparent decline in snaring. Sadly not all the news is good. The team found that there is an increase of poaching using dogs in some of the areas patrolled. There was also plenty of evidence of charcoal production, logging, debarking and excessive illegal livestock grazing within the National Reserve.

As usual there was a heavy emphasis on community education sessions during the operation. The team spoke at length to school children and community groups in each area they visited. Some of the photos from July's effort are posted below. A full report will be available on the Trust's website in due course. This operation was possible thanks to the support of Born Free USA who provided the funding. The operation was carried out on the ground by Mount Kenya Trust, Youth for Conservation and Born Free Kenya.



Mountain Bongo survive on Mount Kenya

Thanks to the work of a few dedicated men we now know that a group of about 12 bongo are still dwelling in the Mount Kenya forest. Knowing that a group of bongo have survived without being seen for well over ten years, despite wanton forest destruction and poaching on Mount Kenya in the 80's and early 90's, is extremely exciting.

The Mountain Bongo is Kenya's rarest antelope and they are close to extinction. It is thought that there are perhaps 100 remaining on the Aberdares, and until last year Bongo had not been seen on Mount Kenya for over a decade. In the 60's and 70's there were many Bongo around Ragati across to Kamweti and Irangi.

In early 2003, with no sign of Bongo on the Aberdares for over 13 years, Mike Prettejohn was approached by the then Warden Daniel Onsombe, who was keen to find out if the Bongo really had disappeared. Together they set up the Bongo Surveillance Project using trackers and forest dwellers. They systematically probed the depths of the forest with men staying deep in the forests for weeks at a time. By April the same year they had discovered the whereabouts of several small groups of 6-7 animals each. It wasn't until 2004 that the first picture was taken of a Bongo by a Ranger, and other sightings recorded. Now there are a number of photos, and dung samples have been collected for DNA testing. Since this time the presence of Bongo has been established on Mount Kenya, Eburru and the Mau, though it is clear the numbers are small. Evidence of the Mount Kenya group began to emerge at the end of 2005.

The Mount Kenya Bongo live in an area deep in the forest above Kihari Gate on the southwest of the mountain well within the National Reserve. A survey by William Duckworth-Chad with the help of Lewa Wildlife Conservancy has also confirmed Bongo presence in the same area. We are now working on raising funds to monitor the area and keep it clear of poachers. We have given a small initial grant to Mike's Project to keep two trackers in the area for a three month period while we work on helping out more substantially in the long term.

In 2004 captive Bongo were flown from the US to Kenya so that third generation offspring could be introduced back into Mount Kenya's forests. Now that we have evidence that there are Bongo still surviving on the mountain, it is a priority to do as much as we can to protect these existing individuals by keeping their habitat safe.

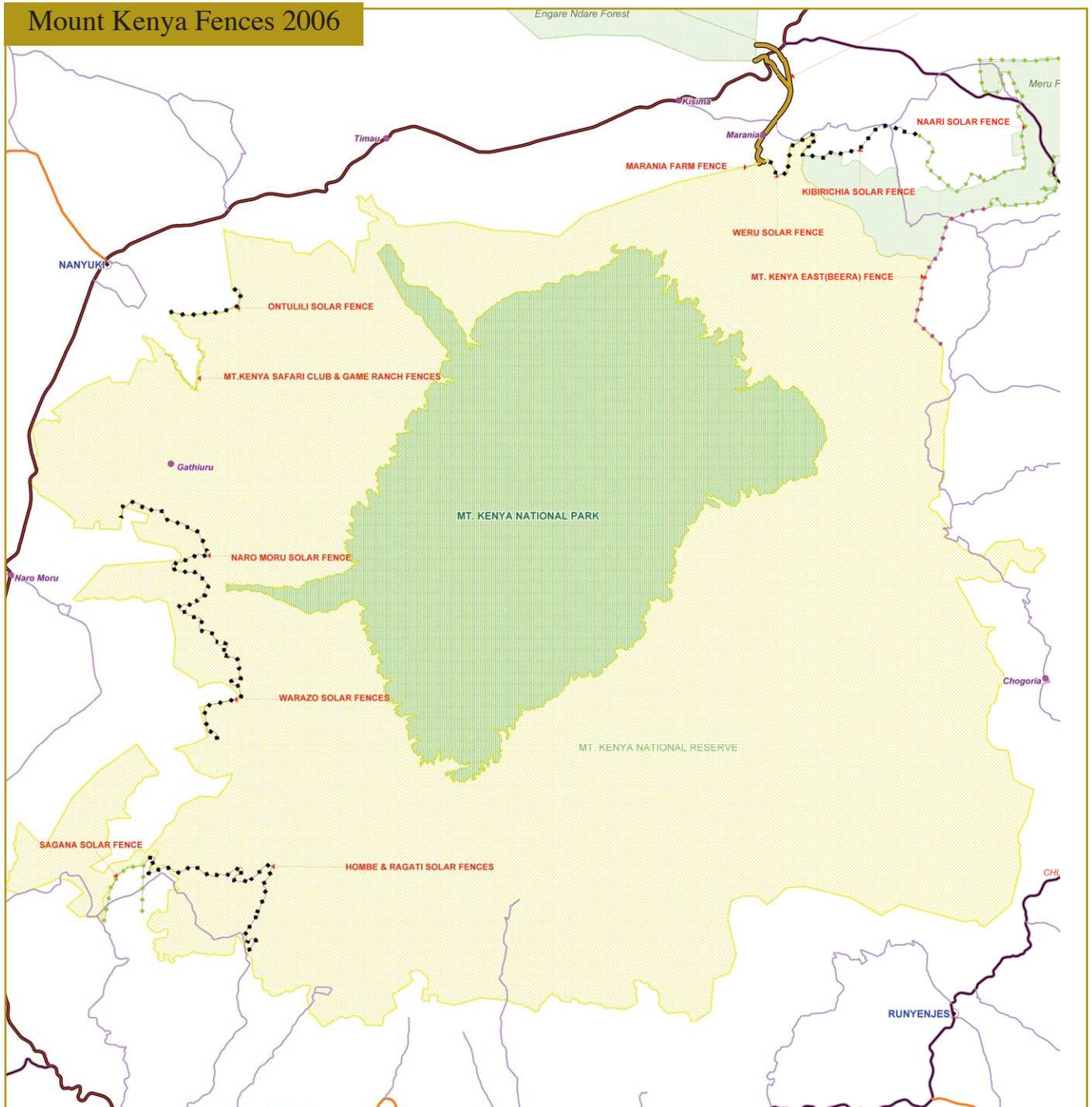


Fencing Progress

Thanks to the mapping work we have been doing we can now show you the extent of our fencing progress, along with the other fences that have been constructed on and around Mount Kenya. The adaptation of our map, shown below, indicates the elephant fences on Mount Kenya with dotted lines. The black dots are the Mount Kenya Trust fences. Thanks to funds from the Safaricom (Lewa) Marathon and proceeds from the last 10 to 4 Mountain Bike Challenge we have been able to complete Kibirichia fence in the north recently. This fence will form the start of the Trust's elephant corridor. We have also recently completed the Ontulili section of the fence, with the assistance of the Ontulili community. To date we have completed over 90 km of fencing.

Thanks to funding recently pledged by the African Fund for Endangered Wildlife and the International Fund for Animal Welfare we can now move on to our next priority areas beginning with Kangaita to the Sirimon Gorge, a fence which will run from the north of the recently completed Ontulili fence. We will also start the proposed Nithi - Mutonga fence near Chuka on the eastern side of the mountain with funds from this year's 10 to 4. We are delighted that we have more support for fencing as it is often difficult to find funding for human / wildlife conflict issues. Assisting with community livelihoods and poverty reduction on the boundaries of our protected areas is a key step towards improved community participation in conservation and an appreciation of the environment that supports them. The necessity for fences in such densely populated areas continues to increase. We are also moving forward with our elephant corridor project which seeks to allow elephants to still move off the mountain as more fencing is completed. We are confident that this project will forge ahead now we have formal approval to proceed.

Mount Kenya Fences 2006



The 2006 Safaricom 10 to 4 Mountain Bike Challenge



Riding High

Nearly 200 entrants took part in the 2006 10 to 4 which raised over two million shillings for the Trust and community projects. We are waiting for one final payment and will audit the income but at this stage it looks like the final figure is 2,082,762/-. This is twice our 2005 profit. Perhaps we can double it again in 2007! Our main sponsors and supporters Safaricom and Born Free provided us with the support and financial backing necessary to make this happen. We are indebted to all our sponsors and to the people who took part and we are proud that the event is gaining such popularity. We also recognise the 10 to 4 committee who give up their time to organise the event.

The Born Free Team of just four people from the US and the UK raised by far the highest amount for participants by far with a whopping 759,121/- in sponsorship. Julian Godwin raised the highest amount for any individual locally with 117,300/-. Details of the race results are available on our 10 to 4 website. Please visit 10to4.org for more information and photographs.

Next year's event will be held on the 17th of February 2007 and we hope more of you will take part. Entry forms and information sheets will be available on the 10 to 4 website from 1st November 2006.



Summary Results Table

MAIN EVENT:

Men's Race

1st - Davidson Kamau 1:47:45
2nd - David Kinjah 1:48:00
3rd - Nate Hinton 1:48:08

Women's Race

1st - Barbara Payne 2:22:12
2nd - Jane Kamau 2:33:28
3rd - Sharon Wambui Kirangu 2:33:36

1st man over 40 yrs - Thomas Thompson 2:06:51

1st man over 50 yrs - Peter Simpson 2:54:49

1st man over 60 yrs - Tony Payne (71 yrs!) - 3:17:52

1st woman over 40 yrs - Barbara Payne 2:22:12

1st under 18 - Luke Davey 2:32:06

1st Team - Bombafu:

Kevin Payne 1:53:06
Matt Woods 2:01:04
Nicholas Trench 2:09:14
Simon Greenwell 2:18:14
Gerald Osmond 2:22:06
Barbara Payne 2:22:12

Outstanding achievement prizes:

Ibrahim Wafula 2:23:26
Dedan Ireri 2:36:30

BLACK MAMBA EVENT

1st Francis Mwendwa 1:53:28
2nd Silas Muriira 1:58:00
3rd Patrick Murithi 1:59:22



Davidson Kamau and David Kinjah who compete on the international circuit came first and second respectively. They are pictured above accepting their trophies.



Will Travers, CEO of Born Free, accepts trophy for the highest sponsorship raised by members of his team from the UK and US.



Colin Burch and Sue Parker's adventure to South Africa in aid of the Mount Kenya Trust



Looking at possible routes for the epic trip.



Colin chats about the car at a press conference in Nairobi



Leaving Nairobi on a cold July morning

Nairobi to the Cape in a Model A Ford

On the 18th of July partners Colin Burch and Sue Parker were flagged off from CMC Motors in their 1928 Model A Ford on an adventure that will take them to Cape Town and back.

Colin and Sue run an exclusive operation based on a house boat at Lake Turkana where they take clients fishing for Nile Perch. Their itinerary usually includes touring Northern Kenya with visits to Mt. Kulal, Mt. Nyiru and the Ndoto mountains.

Having decided to embark on this journey, the couple generously decided that they should raise money and awareness for Mount Kenya and the plight of Kenya's forests on their journey. We have received 369,000/- shillings so far and hope to raise more from their efforts by the time they get back in December. At the time of going to print the couple had made it to South Africa. See their latest news on our website.

If we could make 2 million shillings or more from their efforts towards raising awareness for our cause, it would go a long way towards planting more trees in the Mount Kenya area. None of the money donated through the Trust goes towards the costs for their journey so if you are a company or individual who can give something back in recognition of what they are doing, please give generously.

Donations to date:

Shell - 100,000/-

Mike and Sarah Higgins - 100,000/-

CMC Holdings - 54,000/-

Irralie Murray - 50,000/-

Goodyear - 20,000/-

Tyremasters Ltd - 10,000/-

The Vintage and Classic Automobile Club - 10,000/-

Ava Paton 10,000/-

Bob Dewar - 10,000/-

Let's Go Travel - 5,000/-

The Daulatkhanu and Ahamedali Charitable Trust - 5,000/-

Africa and Asia Venture Ltd- 5,000/-

We can't do it without you!

Thank you to all our supporters. A special appreciation for support since our last newsletter in December 2005 goes to:

Project funding and administrative support and donations of equipment: The African Fund for Endangered Wildlife, International Fund for Endangered Wildlife, Born Free, Eden Wildlife Trust, Tusk Trust, CMC Motors Group, Kijani Trust, Dormans Coffee, Bush Homes, Kisima Farm, Peter Clayton and Fat Face.

Regular donors (donations over 5,000/-): Mike and Sarah Higgins, Jane McKeand, Denis Ruyschaert

Cape Town trip appeal: Colin Burch and Sue Parker, Mike and Sarah Higgins, Shell, CMC Holdings, Irralie Murray, Goodyear, Ava Paton, Bob Dewar, Tyre Masters, The Daulatkhanu and Ahamedali Charitable Trust, Africa and Asia Venture, Let's Go Travel,

Sponsorship and support for the 10 to 4 Mountain Bike Challenge: Safaricom, The Born Free Foundation, Land Rover, Friends of Africa International, Total, Highlands Water, Borana Lodge, The Driftwood Beach Club, Mount Kenya Safari Club, Loisaba Wilderness, Bayer Crop Science, Matbronze, Eye Design, Dormans, Commercial Bank of Africa, Lobelia Farm, Glen Edmunds Performance Driving School, Sandstorm, Wines of the World, Rift Valley Adventures, Wilken, Ligent Technologies, Adscreen Print, Cycle Land, Highridge Pharmacy, Orion Pharmacy and Teshi Safaris.

Organisational assistance for the 10 to 4: Peter Simpson, Martin Dyer, Nishit Thobani, Oliver Keeble, Sophy Grattan, Richard Harney, Barbara and Kevin Payne, Gerald Osmond, Kisima Farm, the Murrays, the Caldwells, the Dyers, Alice Owen and the Born Free Kenya Team, Matthew Owen, the Burts and James Chege.

10 to 4 Entrants who brought in sponsorship over 30,000/-: Will Travers, Adam Roberts, Kim Haddad, John Ochsenreiter, Julian Godwin, Amanda Mitchell, Steve Strong, Richard Harney, David Simpson.



PLEASE HELP SUPPORT US TODAY

If you believe in our mission to preserve and protect Mount Kenya please make a contribution to our successful conservation efforts. If you have joined the Regular Supporter Scheme and have not yet made your contribution for 2006 we ask that you fill in the form and send it to the Bill Woodley Mount Kenya Trust with your cheque to PO Box 20139-00200. If you have not yet joined then please start today and give something back to help our forests which provide you, your businesses and families with water and electricity. Mount Kenya is also an immensely important World Heritage site that supports a diverse range of flora and fauna including species that are severely endangered.

1. I would like to join your Regular Supporter Scheme. I understand that I will be asked to make a contribution once a year and that I am able to stop my support at any time. I therefore enclose a cheque payable to the 'Bill Woodley Mount Kenya Trust' for _____ Ksh as my contribution for 2006.

2. I am already a regular supporter and enclose a cheque for _____ Ksh as my contribution for 2006.

Name(s) in full _____

Postal Address _____

Email _____ Tel. Work _____ Tel. Home / Mobile _____

Trustees: Levi Wendo, Major General (Rtd.) Waweru, Martin Forster, Bongo Woodley, Martin Dyer, Antony Dyer, Ian Craig, Jimmy Caldwell, Irralie Murray, Raughton Nabea, Mark Barrah and Tarsem Sembhi.