



Eco News from

Malewa Wildlife Lodge + Kigio Wildlife Camp

Outstanding Eco-lodges in the heart of the Great Rift Valley

December 2008

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Six months later...

Dear All,

The last six months have been an exciting challenge at Malewa Wildlife Lodge and Kigio Wildlife Camp as we have expanded our eco-efforts. We have adopted new environmental standards including new waste management, water conservation, energy conservation, and staff training policies. We have initiated an indigenous tree-planting project, worked with local schools on fundraising activities and environmental education, we have begun partnerships with our neighbors to improve conservation and security, and we have been working with the 250 shareholders of the Kigio Wildlife Conservancy to form a Conservancy Board. We have launched the Malewa and Kigio Community Fund and begun to sponsor local artists, community groups, an organic farm, a dance troop, a clean water project, local students, university students, and others. If you are interested in learning more or contributing to any of these efforts please contact us at Conservation@kigio.com.

We are happy to introduce our new manager Ali Kibwana who has been intricately involved in the eco-efforts and will continue to support ways to minimize the Lodge and Camp's environmental footprint, help local people, and improve biodiversity conservation.



Ali talks to local primary school students about ecotourism on their fieldtrip to the Conservancy.

We would also like to extend a thank you to everyone who has contributed to our efforts. We have received generous cash donations to the Malewa and Kigio Community Fund from the Stevens Point Area Women's club and from numerous individuals. Additionally, guests have donated school supplies for local students, professional photographs from Hakuna Matata Photography, indigenous trees from the Art of Living Foundation, among other support. Each person who has purchased from our gift shop has also contributed. The following updates would not be possible without these gifts.

Heather Arrowood
Environmental Consultant
Conservation@kigio.com



Kimaru and Titus pose with Leah the giraffe

Wildlife Censusing

We are proud to be hosting two university students who are completing their field studies from the Kenya Wildlife Service Training Institute. Harun Kimaru Muna and Titus Makori Obuya are training to be protected area managers in Kenya. They will be staying with us through the end of the year to complete much-needed censuses in the Conservancy. As part of a giraffe ID project, they will identify each individual Rothschild's giraffe in the Conservancy, record behavioral data, and describe group composition and relationships. They will also be putting together a giraffe ID photo album for future researchers, students, and guests to consult. Additionally, they will be monitoring animals that cross the Malewa River to lands outside the Conservancy to identify the species vulnerable to inbreeding and species susceptible to hunting and snares outside the Conservancy. While they are here, Titus and Kimaru are available for guests questions during evening fireside chats and on request they can take those interested out on a research expedition to see the giraffes.

Malewa Community Products Expands

Over 35 local people are now selling products in our giftshop! These include recycled jewelry, Maasai beaded coasters, note card sets and boxes from banana leaves, and traditional Kikuyu kiondo baskets. The Tumaini Widow's group makes traditional kiondos from sisal fibers and wool. These women are looking for ways support their family after losing their husbands. Guests can further support this group and the Maua Self-Help group, that makes recycled necklaces out of our waste, by taking a community tour to learn how the necklaces and baskets are made. A portion of the proceeds from gift shop sales goes into the Malewa and Kigio Community Fund that sponsors community projects. We are continuing to look for local artists and providing local groups with training to learn new skills. We are currently organizing a training with 25 individuals to learn how to make bracelets and earrings.



Cards made from banana tree leaves show images and wildlife from the Conservancy.



Jane Wangari of the Tumaini Widow's group displays the kiondos she has woven.

Utamaduni Dancers

The Utamaduni Dancers grew out of a meeting at Malewa Wildlife Lodge with village elders. Many from the older generation were concerned that the younger generation of Kikuyu, the predominant tribe in the villages bordering Kigio Wildlife Conservancy, were losing their culture as Western influences have been introduced. They proposed starting a dance troop to teach the younger generation Kikuyu songs and dances. The Utamaduni dancers are now a destination on our community tour itineraries and they will be performing at the Lodge and Camp's Holiday parties. Additionally, they are performing at village events including the recent opening of a school. We hope to further support groups like Utamaduni that celebrate local culture with our Malewa and Kigio Community Fund.

A guest dances with the Utamaduni Dancers on a community tour. The group has over 25 members who meet weekly in Beggi village.



Indigenous Tree-Planting

Thanks to a donation from Rakhee Shanghavi and Archie Kotecha of the Art of Living Foundation, we have established an indigenous tree nursery inside the Conservancy with many species of trees that are well-suited to local conditions. We have also gathered the names of over 300 local families who are in need of trees. Deforestation is one of the biggest environmental problems outside the Conservancy. Most people are dependent on firewood for cooking and heating their homes. Many trees are illegally cut-down for building materials and firewood or they are burned to supply the charcoal industry. We are now including indigenous tree-planting as one of the activities on our community tour. Guests can help a local family to plant trees that will grow branches for firewood and fodder for many years to come. Additionally, guests can plant trees in a protected public area to offset the carbon emissions from their flight.

Guests plant trees in honor of their guruji in the village of Mwitumberia at Mama Karanja's house.





Staff Profiles

Our eco-efforts are only possible because of the hard work from many of our staff. It is vital that everyone works together from those stationed at the Lodge or Camp to those out in the field. In this issue, we would like to introduce you to our two Francis.' Francis Gichagga Mawangi is from Kikopey village near Lake Elementaita where he lives with his wife and three children. Francis worked for many years at a hotel in the Maasai Mara, but wanted to be closer to his family. At Malewa Wildlife Lodge, he is now working a short drive away, on his motorbike, from home. In addition to serving drinks and sharing stories, Francis will refill your empty water bottles with mineral water. This is another way the Lodge and Camp are minimizing waste. It has been reported that plastics make up 30% of the landfill waste in Nairobi!

Francis with a refilled bottle of water at the Malewa Wildlife Lodge bar.



Wachuma (holding a beet) in front of the cabbages at Lamwe Organic farm.

Francis Wachuma was born and raised in the neighboring village of Mwitumberia. He still lives there with his family and walks or bikes to work in the Conservancy. Wachuma is our community coordinator. He liaises with all of our community groups, coordinates trainings, organizes school fieldtrips, maintains the tree nursery, keeps the gift shop well-stocked, and manages the Lodge and Camp's waste. With help from others, Wachuma sorts all of our waste into organic waste, recyclables, re-usables, and other waste. Much of our waste is reused by the community groups we are supporting. In addition to making jewelery, groups use our milk cartons for pots in their tree nurseries and groups collect our glass, metals, and plastics to sell to recyclers. After six months of sorting, composting, reusing, and recycling waste from the Lodge and Camp, we were left with only 12 bags of garbage to dispose of at the municipal dump!

Harvest at Lamwe

After much hard work under often trying conditions including a break-in by goats, the disappearance of fence posts, and an interruption in the water supply, Lamwe Organic Farm began harvesting produce in mid October. The farm has harvested corriander, zucchinis, cucumbers, spinach, kale, collard greens, and beets. Guests at the Lodge and Camp have begun to enjoy these vegetables in our restaurants. In the coming weeks tomatoes, pumpkins, cabbages, lettuce, watermelon, turnips, celerly, onions, leeks, broccoli, cauliflower, dill, and artichokes will be ready.



Members of Lamwe weed a nursery of vegetables.

The cabbages are almost ready!



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