

ROTARY CLUB OF NAIROBI NORTH

Project description:

Project Title: **Establishment of Water-point Based Community Forums in Marsabit**
Project site: Mt. Marsabit Forest Reserve
City/Village: Saku, Marsabit
State/Province: Eastern Province
Country: Kenya

1. Project objectives and activities:

Goal:

- Arrest and reverse the degradation of the isolated Mt. Marsabit Forest and improve living conditions of the communities who depend on this ecosystem for their survival.

Objective

1. Support the creation, initial management and operation of 8-10 Community Forums all around the mountain.
2. Strengthen the central tree nursery.

Marsabit mountain and its environs is a unique ecological system in Eastern Africa with the most developed and extensive upland forest on an extinct volcano within an arid setting. This upland forest over thousands of years has developed a distinct plant association endemic to this area. It is the only source of all the water for the surrounding desert region. The mountain harbours two crater lakes – Lake Paradise and the Elephant Pool Lake, the greater part of whose recharge comes, not from rainfall in this arid area, but from mist condensed on species of saprophytic moss plants living on indigenous forest trees.

Activities:

Community Forums

1. Formation of a legal membership organization, (Cooperative) with household heads as shareholders,
 - a) Setting up subcommittees on Finance, Water and Environmental Management
 - b) Providing initial and training on Financial, Water And Environmental Management
2. Registration of zone on which the water-point is located as property of the Coop with appropriate rules of entry and leaving the organization
3. Establishment of:
 - a) Protected community tree nurseries
 - b) Protected community woodlots
 - c) Livestock exclusion zones around the water points in which active tree planting will be done

Central Tree Nursery (Set within Marsabit Game Park)

Expand forest tree nursery from 20,000 to 50,000 seedlings per year capacity through

- a) Increased water storage capacity by building a 100 m³ tank
- b) Increase solar panel capacity so as to provide 200metres of 3-strand electric fence sufficient to exclude large game particularly elephant and buffalo
- c) Triple drip irrigation capacity to 600 liters
- d) Triple screen shaded area to 1,350m²

2. Describe the problem or need it will address and expected project results:

The Agricultural Research Foundation, a not-for-profit organization registered in Kenya but has worked in over 20 African countries from Tunisia and Egypt in the north, Swaziland and Zambia in the south, Nigeria and Ghana in the west as well as in Eastern Africa, is implementing a UNEP-managed, GEF-funded project on Marsabit Mountain. The project aims at understanding factors that are contributing to the steady degradation of the forest reserve on this mountain and provide a natural resource management plan that could halt and if possible reverse the degradation. During the on-going project, a resource inventory has been compiled by 14 post-graduate students working in a range of biophysical and socio-economic disciplines.

The studies have indicated that, the major threat to the forest, whose size has been reduced from around 40,000ha to the current 11,000ha in the past 40 years, is encroachment by a very rapidly growing human population of about 50,000. Because the forest is the only source of fuelwood, building materials and permanent water for an arid area stretching 50-100 km around it, demands on it have multiplied. In the year that the project has been operating, it has become evident that mere spreading of the environmental conservation message is inadequate. Rains have failed for an entire year, water has been scarce and the forest reserve and Game Park is currently hosting the area's livestock herds as well as the resident population of wildlife.

In response to the drought, there has been a concerted government-led effort to provide water to communities and their livestock in the area. Most of the emergency help has been in the form of drilling of boreholes as well as pans and small dams. In addition, there has been a more deliberate program to build weirs across the many gorges around the mountain. These appear to have the potential to hold much more water over longer periods.

Taking advantage of these water points, the project is embarking on a program to make the emerging water-points focal points at which practical, hands-on demonstration of environment conservation and afforestation. Although the GEF-funded has been attempting to bend its original program to take care of opportunities provided by this drought emergency, its resources are severely stretched and it is certain that the effectiveness of its evolving Resource Management Plan would be given a significant boost by the injection of the requested financial support.

The communities we have been working with are gradually accepting the principle of charging for water used both for domestic consumption and by livestock. This sets the stage for making these water-points evolving into self-sustaining entities. The path that the GEF project is following is to gradually incorporating themselves into semi-commercial bodies that will own the water points as well as the area surrounding them. Through appropriate clauses in their articles of incorporating, they will include guidelines on how their areas will be managed including the enhancement of natural resources through afforestation. Initially their seedlings will be provided by the GEF-funded project from the central nursery that has been gradually coming up. Already in the germination requirements of a number of forest and lowland trees have been determined. This information has been used to establish a sizeable tree nursery. But as the number of collaborating communities grows, the capacity of the central nursery will need to keep pace.

3. Describe the intended beneficiaries and how the project will benefit the community in need. Provide the estimated length of time needed to complete the project:

The primary and direct beneficiaries will be 9 pastoralist communities around Mt. Marsabit whose water management practices make them vulnerable to hardships at times of droughts

because of frequent interruptions in water supplies due to poor management. Each of the communities has up to 1,600 households and up to 6,000 cattle and an equivalent number of sheep and goats. These communities have user but not proprietary rights to the water nor do they have ownership titles to the land on which the water resource is situated. The project aims at incorporating each community into cooperatives in which households will own both the water and the land around it.

Without exception, all the land surrounding the water-points is severely eroded with scant and decreasing vegetation because people and livestock roam unchecked in the areas. There are no indigenous tree restoration and conservation programmes despite the presence of water. With the number of trees around the villages in decline, Mt. Marsabit, the only sizeable forested area near them has become the only source of wood fuel and timber for building and other uses. All the measures to be taken will have been agreed to by the communities. They have policy backing under the recently enacted Water Act and the new Forest Act. The project aims at creating well managed tree nurseries at the water points. These will be the source of material for community woodlots. In addition, livestock exclusion areas will be created in a zone around the water points to allow natural vegetation to grow back. Active replanting of indigenous trees in the exclusion zone will also be encouraged. With the registration of the Cooperatives, the communities will have title to the land and rights to water. They will have legal backing for levying charges on water use. They will also be able to impose penalties on individuals who are in breach of any regulations they might set to manage their land and water resources.

The woodlots and other means of increasing vegetation in the villages surrounding Mt. Marsabit will form a line of defense against tree and fuel wood demands on the mist forest whose precipitation is the source of all the water being used by the communities. The new Forest Act gives rights and responsibilities to communities living around forests. Agreement is being received to communities to extend tree planting to Mt. Marsabit itself. This will be done on appointed days during every rainy season.

The described activities will be accomplished within 12 months.

4. Describe how the benefiting community will maintain this project after grant funding has been fully expended:

This project takes advantage of a provision in the Water Act that communities should

- i) Organize themselves into corporate bodies for the purpose of managing their water and the catchments in which this water;
- ii) Levy water charges that will enable the communities to manage the commodity and its environs in a sustainable manner.

There are a few community water sources where charges were being levied even before the new legislation. What will now be possible is for communities to have ownership of the land and enact rules and regulations that will make it possible to manage the water and the areas around them in a sustainable way.

5. Describe specific activities of the host and international partners in implementing the project. What will the Rotarians who are members of the partner clubs do during the project? Describe your club's participation in the project. State what goods and services the club will contribute. Will your club be making a financial contribution? If so, please estimate the amount. To be filled up by Rotarian in charge.

This project will be overseen by the Community Service Committee (CSC) of Rotary Club of Nairobi North (RCNN) with the involvement of the Rotarian member who submitted it (Rtn. Daya Bragante). The RCNN will establish a working partnership with other Rotary Clubs which are located near the project area in Kenya as well as other potentially interested international Clubs to be visited by PP. Eric Kimani during GSE trip in April 2006. The RCNN will also conduct fund-raising activities and approach potential donors as well as the private sector such as Safaricom for the supply of mobiles and others to further support the project. A visit to the site upon completion of the activities will also be organized by the RCNN.

6. List any other organization that will participate in the project. Include government agencies, local charitable organizations, international agencies, etc. Describe their role:

The principal host agency for the project will be i) the GEF-funded and UNEP managed Mt. Marsabit Ecosystem project which has been in operation since the end of 2004. Execution of the project is through the Agricultural Research Foundation. The main collaborating government agencies are ii) the Forest Department, iii) the Marsabit Water Office of the Northern Water Services Board, iv) Kenya Wildlife Service through the Warden, Mt. Marsabit Game Park, v) the Arid Lands Resource Management Project of the Office of the President and vi) Food for the Hungry International (FHI).

7. List other materials about your project you have to share with potential donors (e.g., photos, brochures, videos, reports, invoices, blueprints). Also, provide your project's Web site address, if applicable.

Video film that the project has produced describing the environmental challenges facing Mt. Marsabit with its endangered forest and the emerging thinking on how to deal with these challenges.

8. Project budget (table including budget item, name of supplier, amount)

- a) Support for construction of a community project to construct a weir across a gorge near Marsabit town. This will be the prototype of 5 such structures around the mountain. Tendering will be done through the Ministry of Works.
Amount: \$21,200
- b) Support for establishment of 9 Water-Point Based Sustainable Management Associations for Mt. Marsabit and its Ecosystem. This to include:
 - i) Advocacy and technical support in establishing Cooperatives Central management as well as subcommittees on Water, Environment and Finance;
 - ii) Land survey and registration by the office of the District Surveyor
 - iii) Management training and opening of bank accounts**Amount: \$16,000**
- c) Facilitation of communication principally mobile phones
Amount: \$4,500
- d) Security against wildlife at the nursery by:
 - i) Building a guard-house/store solar electricity facility by direct labor
Amount: \$3,600

ii) Central nursery water storage tank capable of holding sufficient water for 150 days of normal use

Amount: \$21,200

e) Motorcycle (x2) purchases

Amount:\$5,000

f) Drip irrigation equipment for the water point nurseries

Amount: \$1,600

Total budget:\$ 73,100