

## **Project Update: December 2010**

**Background to Second Phase of Project:** Using the initial grant from the RSG programme, we developed a programme of activity, with the communities to highlight the potential extinction of the mountain bongo, unless these few remaining bongo were protected. The awareness programme was created through the investment made possible by RSG. In this first phase School mountain bongo wildlife clubs were launched. The schools club members are 9-10 years and form an influential group, playing a key role in awareness in their local communities.

With the support of the RSG programme, we have been able to offer more pupils the opportunity to experience conservation first hand through these mountain bongo School Wildlife Clubs. The educational activities of planting trees, investing in alternative fuels to conserve the environment are a top priority, together with the continuation of the vital work of our bongo Surveillance teams.

There are estimated to be less than 140 mountain bongo living in the wild in the Kenyan high forests. This year in a strategic international workshop facilitated by IUCN, the Antelope Specialist group, there is now formal recognition that the mountain bongo is a critically endangered species.

With RSG support in this next phase to the project, we have now been able to include nine schools in the Eburu, Aberdares and Mt Kenya areas. Outreach is now estimated at 10,000 local people and children. The nine schools have been selected as they are in relative close proximity, to where the last remaining mountain bongo has been identified by the bongo Surveillance team.

By supporting the schools, through the BSP Clubs, an alliance is forming to help prevent poaching, conserve the forests and give direct educational support to the community. The commitment from the Headmaster, the Patron and school club champions are vital to the success of the project.

**Project Launch:** The second phase of the project has resulted after a formal review was held with various BSP stakeholders, to assess future ideas and community involvement. The output from the report evaluated the need to not only continue to develop the BSP project, but to in fact strengthen and expand this further.

**Capacity Building:** To develop and share best practice, patrons and teachers from the schools and community members will be invited for in-situ training, including educational conservation films, provision of environmental information/leaflets, and presentations on key income generating activities such as agriculture, and fisheries projects.

**Conservation and Income-Generating Activities:** Conservation activities have been initiated; these will include tree planting, (more than 3000 trees planted), piloting solar lighting, and introducing new cooking methods i.e. donating jikos (using sawdust/dung) as well as creating tree nurseries.

Income generation activities will include: Building fish ponds, establishing potato farming, with the objective to increase local income for the community.

### **Activities Report September to December 2010**

**Mt Kenya Schools Progress Report September 2010:** Indigenous trees – a number of seedlings are now doing well. The areas are now fenced off to livestock. Pupils are looking after their own trees. A mountain bongo special classroom has even been set up for the Wildlife Clubs.

**September Visits - Sangare Conservancy and William Holden Educational Centre:** Visit to Sangare Conservancy by Kamburaini Community members to experience the benefits of conservation first hand. Two schools visit to Mt Kenya William Holden Educational and Wildlife Centre.

**Educational Visit – September 2010 Aberdares National Park:** With the support of the Rufford grant it has been possible to take 60 pupils and teachers to the Aberdares National Park. The logistics were complicated but the results outstanding. Almost all those that attended had never been into the National Park. The participants travelled in the park on the Kenyan Wildlife Service bus. The sharing of experiences between schools and the learning about the bongo, and its habitat was a priority. Demonstrations were given on cooking by Jiko, and the potential to use alternative energy sources, such as dung, and sawdust

**Best Practice Training Insitu Community/Patrons/Teachers:** On the 22nd October 2010 schools came to visit Kamburaini Primary School, as part of a best practice in situ training session. The visit was part of a request from the school themselves, as all are keen to learn from each other. The school demonstrated with the Clubs support how it had managed to grow and harvest a field of good quality potatoes. Using specific advice from agricultural experts, working with the bongo project and acquiring potato seeds from outside the area (from Timau), and also adding nutrients to improve the soil. (The nutrients added to the soil are from the juices from the worms from a newly built school “wormery”). The visiting schools were amazed at the results. The potatoes are a source of food for the pupils and in addition the sales of potatoes to the community, resulted in income to pay for the exam entry fees for the pupils hoping to go into secondary education.

Kamburaini School have also made eight indigenous tree seedling growing beds. They have collected the seeds from the local forest and are growing their own seedlings, which they can sell or give to the community. The seedling trees planted by the pupils in the school are doing well, and are maintained personally by each pupil. (So far Kamburaini School have given 300+ trees to parents).

**October 2010 - Gichami Primary, S. Aberdares, Karurumo School – S. Aberdares:** These two south schools took on the challenge of completing essays on the key theme of “What would they do to increase Kenya’s forest from 3% to 10% “ - Pupils described fuel alternatives, establishing tree nurseries, involvement of local people. Certificates and educational prizes were awarded to the top three essays.

These schools are doing whatever they can to protect and grow trees from the seedlings we donated. One has also a now thriving fish pond. The community after experiencing its success have already built the foundations for another, but this time funded by them.

**November 2010 – New Eburu Schools – Visits to Songoloi, Muthaiti Primary School:** The school coordinator took visits to these remote schools, to follow up on tree planting activities from the seedlings donated. There were demonstrations to the school on alternative lighting methods i.e. solar lights.

**November 2010 - Eburu Schools, National Park Visit (Hells Gate National Park):** Over 60 pupils and teachers had the opportunity to attend this educational day. During the visit to Hells Gate National Park, there was time to observe the wildlife in its natural environment. Training sessions, on the day included the importance of tree planting, tree care, solar lighting, and alternative energy options. i.e. presentations on the use of a Jiko using alternative fuels, dung, sawdust.

**November 2010 - Review Meeting - Kenya Wildlife Services, BSP and stakeholders:** During November a review meeting to assess progress was held. Members of all teams had the opportunity to review operational issues facing the project and to discuss achievements and potential ideas /solutions going forward.

