Kenya is indeed a magical destination. What with large concentration of wildlife in our parks and reserves, the migration that is wonder of the world, diversity of cultures, our forests not forgetting our sandy beaches. Added to this is a well trained human resource that provides good service to our guests. Kenya also boasts a well developed tourism infrastructure with world class hotels & lodges, recreational facilities, restaurants etc.

Magical Kenya - the missing link -

When it comes to ecotourism, Kenya is a leader too. Kenya was the first African country to establish an Ecotourism Society, the first to set up a certification scheme to evaluate performance of hotels/lodges based on eco-principles and hence among the first countries to lend credence to the concept of ecotourism through practice. All these factors combined should offer visitors quality experience and keep them coming back, making Kenya the destinations of choice for eco-travellers.

Indeed we have everything that would make us a competitive destination, let alone magical. So why are
Word from the EK Chairman

As a member organization, Eco Tourism Kenya is very young. But it already has some solid achievements in areas of its core mandate of promoting responsible and sustainable tourism. These achievements have not gone unnoticed: Ecotourism Kenya received the 2010 Africa Investor Award for “Best initiative Facilitating SME Tourism Investment”.

I therefore feel privileged to be chairman of the board at this time. I recognize the contribution of those who have served in the past – particularly the outgoing chairman-Adam Jillo -and his team.

In brief I will mention a few areas which the new board will explore to grow the organization. The good progress with the East Africa Community project presents an opportunity to expand the organization beyond Kenya. Already there is interest from other countries in the EAC region and indeed in the last Special General Meeting I met a delegate from Uganda.

To achieve it potential the organization will need to raise its media presence. This will make it easier to recruit new members and in engaging government and local institutions. An enhanced public presence will also be of much help in playing an advocacy role with regard to the agenda of sustainable tourism in Kenya and the region.

In addition, Eco Tourism Kenya will need to go further in partnering with organizations -locally and abroad, on projects and programmes of common interest. This will not only help in stabilizing financing of the Secretariat, but also establish the organization as partner of choice in areas related to sustainable tourism such as energy management, water conservation, waste management, and issues of human-wildlife conflict.

The Board will also seek out-of-the-box ways of sustainably financing the Secretariat; for without adequate staffing it will be difficult for the organization to deliver on its mandate.

Our biggest resource is without doubt our members: their expertise, networks and resources. I would like to appeal to all members to participate more – by joining the various sub-committees and to volunteer when specifically called upon by the Secretariat.

Finally, I would like to appeal to those who have not signed the online petition advocating against the building of the road through the Serengeti to do so. Information of how to sign up is included elsewhere in this newsletter. A unique ecosystem such the Serengeti is of concern to all the people of the world: let us stand and be counted on this.

Andrew Muigai, Chairman, Ecotourism Kenya

Message from the CEO

Dear members and supporters,

Greetings from the Secretariat of EK. We have had a busy first half of the year and with the industry reporting an optimistic outlook to the growth of inbound visitor numbers the onus is on those involved in sustainability to continue to carry the torch and demonstrate that those who do things differently will sustain the industry. In our quest to bridge the gap between community-based tourism enterprises and ‘mainstream’ tourism we have partnered with FORD Foundation and UNDP-Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme (GEF-SGP) on two separate projects to support community outreach projects around the country. Funding support is an ongoing quest of ours and we will make our wish list available to you so that you can chose to be more involved in the Association....it is yours, make it work for you. Finally, may I welcome the new Executive Committee members who have hit the ground running. There are many exciting activities in the cards that will allow you to all participate actively and benefit more from your Association. Don’t be shy about your membership with Ecotourism Kenya, shout about it, place that certificate in the main reception area, include a write up for your brochures, let everyone know that they are dealing with an organization that does things differently for the future of the environment and communities in your countries of operation. We are happy to help you develop these materials. The more the message goes out, the larger the movement towards responsible tourism practices will be and EK will be one step closer to achieving its mandate.

Responsibly yours,

Edith Bosire

Sign the Petition: Stop the Serengeti Highway

Ecotourism Kenya has been following the developments around the proposed Arusha-Musoma highway which will cut right through important migration routes in the Serengeti National Park in Tanzania. This will have a significantly negative impact on the Serengeti Ecosystem with effects spilling over into Kenya’s Maasai Mara which boasts the migration as one of its key attractions. Ecotourism Kenya supports tourism activities and related development activities that are sustainable with regard to the impact they have in both the short term and long term. We oppose this road and urge the Tanzanian Government to adopt the existing alternative road that has been proposed.

SIGN THE PETITION and add your voice in opposition to a potentially negative impact on the Serengeti ecosystem through the alternative road that has been proposed.

http://www.change.org/petitions/view/stop_the_serengeti_highway

For additional information surrounding this topic we recommend: http://www.awf.org/documents/Serengeti_Road_Position_Statement.pdf
Magical Kenya - the missing link - contd from Pg.1

We need to get rid off sub-standard facilities that dilute the magic as a way of adding value to our destination. Most important we must adequately, appropriately interpret the magic!

WE NEED QUALITY GUIDING.

There are many ways through which we can add value to our product. Certainly its’ got nothing to do with giving flowers to our visitors when they arrive at the airports! We should definitely improve access roads to make travel to tourism sites more comfortable, we should have road worthy vehicles (sad to note that despite being the original home of the safari, we do not have standards for vehicles that can be used on a safari or even what vehicles can enter a park or reserve). We must have decent accommodation whether they be camps or lodges (again despite having a product as magical as ours, we do not have standards for building of lodges/camps or even for service/facilities that should be provided by a lodge/camp). We need to get rid off sub-standard facilities that dilute the magic as a way of adding value to our destination. Most important we must adequately, appropriately interpret the magic! WE NEED QUALITY GUIDING.

Until now, we have got away with stale statements about our product. There are claims that some large hotels at Kenya’s coast lay out their buffets the same way they did in the early 1970s. Similarly, our “guides” tell visitors the same facts they shared about the lion 40 years ago. The truth is our information and interpretation of the product is full of boring facts!

Yes the Lion is the King of the jungle. But who needs to travel thousands of miles to be reminded of this fact that we learn in kindergarten! There are many more interesting facts about the lion and its interaction with its environment and each individual is unique. Did you know that what makes the Big Cat Diary interesting is the fact that they don’t repeat generalized facts about the cats, but rather make a story of each day and every encounter? They educate rather than point out at things.

This is the missing link in our magical product. Our guides are detached from the product. Often, they make a few trips a month or year to the tourism sites when guests are available. Guided by the usually congested itineraries, they drive guests around for two days and off they go to the next place. These “Ferari Guides” as one guiding consultant refers to some Kenyan guides, cannot therefore adequately and appropriately interpret the product in a way that adds value and enhances guest experience. Instead they point out things for guests. They are stuck in the “tick off” days, when travel was about discovery.

So what makes a good guide today? A good guide should have adequate classroom and field-based training; there have to be a specialization. They must spend ample time in the destination or area of focus. This country, destination Kenya will remain in the magnificent images we posses of our country and which we use to wow the world to choose Kenya as a destination. This country, destination Kenya, must invest in a whole new form of guide training. An example of such training is what Koiyaki Guiding School is offering (www.koiyaki.com ). Unless we do this our visitors will choose us more for the price than the experience.

Lastly, those marketing Kenya must acknowledge that travel has transformed from discovery, to holiday, to adventure, to experience and lately to a transforming experience. People travel to relax, to learn, to know, to influence, and be transformed by the experience.

Without excellent guiding, the magic will remain in the magnificent images we posses of our country and which we use to wow the world to choose Kenya as a destination. This country, destination Kenya, must invest in a whole new form of guide training. An example of such training is what Koiyaki Guiding School is offering (www.koiyaki.com ). Unless we do this our visitors will choose us more for the price than the experience.
So, how does one decide on the best system to implement? Factors to consider are discussed below, followed by the range of treatment methods.

**Wastewater characteristic**

Whilst the character of wastewater is important, for most hotels and lodges this will be fairly “typical”. This means the water is not expected to contain complex contaminants (those more difficult to manage such as heavy metals, oils, extreme pH etc) and can be approximated based on numbers of users, facilities available and quality of service. It is important to include all staff; permanent, casual and those that live on the site. If greywater and blackwater are kept separate, they may also have separate treatment systems.

**Maintenance**

What level of commitment are you willing to place in the system? Some systems are complex and require a full time technician. They need a high level of input/attention on a daily basis and may contain complex components. These may require periodic replacement which is often carried out by the supplier as part of a maintenance contract. Others are very simple, need only basic input and maintenance and can be kept operating successfully by existing site staff.

**Available land**

Some sites have very limited space. Others have space, but may be located on solid rock (making excavation difficult) or clay (limited infiltration capacity) which can restrict your options. The systems range in size from those which are buried and require minimal space such as package plants, to those which demand more space such as ponds. If there is a gradient, is there space to put a system at the bottom of the site so that pumps can be avoided?

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1. Greywater is the mixture of water from showers, sinks, kitchen etc – basically, everything except that from the toilet. The toilet wastewater is called blackwater.

Wastewater Treatment – The Options
**course, shallow groundwater etc)**

How sensitive is your site? This should be included as part of the EIA and make reference to the environmental vulnerability of the area. If you are located on porous sand with abstraction wells around you, this would be deemed as vulnerable and you would be ill advised to use infiltration disposal systems. If there is a shallow water table and/or you are close to a river then this is also vulnerable as there is little distance between the site with its potentially polluting activities and the sensitive area.

**Power supply**

Some systems will require power for aerators and/or pumps and these must have a regular power supply. Lack of power may result in complete system failure. Power rating for such appliances is usually low so it may be possible to have a solar pump for many months of the year.

**Client preference**

A natural system of ponds and wildlife openly demonstrates how the wastewater is handled and is a feature in itself. This may be more in keeping with the ideals of the establishment than a more technical solution. Alternatively, it may be more desirable to treat the water at a secluded part of the site.

The table (below) shows various treatment methods and factors which should be considered for each. Where a septic tank is required, this should be adequately sized and not leak. The recommended size for a mixed grey and blackwater system would have a minimum capacity of 2,200 litres for up to 4 people, with a further 180 litres capacity for each additional person. There should be baffle walls, well sealed access hatches and a vent. The effluent should be free from particular matter and have had its organic load reduced by 50% with a well operating septic tank. It is now also possible to purchase manufactured microbes which are added to part of your system to boost the naturally occurring fauna. These have various trade names (such as Effective Micro-organisms (EM)) and can target specific issues such as treatment in saline water, colder conditions, digestion of oils and many more.

The cross section through a typical septic tank demonstrates how the wastewater is handled and is a feature in itself. This may be more in keeping with the ideals of the establishment than a more technical solution. Alternatively, it may be more desirable to treat the water at a secluded part of the site.

A healthy eco-system of flora and fauna is created with this pond, the final stage of a reed bed system.

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### Treatment Method Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>System</th>
<th>Land/size</th>
<th>Septic tank needed?</th>
<th>Sludge disposal</th>
<th>Effluent quality</th>
<th>Energy use (system)²</th>
<th>Capital costs</th>
<th>Odour &amp; fly nuisance prevention</th>
<th>Maintenance</th>
<th>Ruggedness</th>
<th>Aesthetics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dry toilets</td>
<td>May be difficult to retrofit, need chamber below</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Dry compost low volume</td>
<td>None or very little</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Low if self build else approx 700 USD/toilet</td>
<td>Little with proper design</td>
<td>Basic, involves shovelling</td>
<td>Depends on design, needs awareness</td>
<td>Can be beautiful or a smelly hole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cesspool</td>
<td>Access needed</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Expensive as no separation</td>
<td>None on site</td>
<td>Medium (high running costs)</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Emptying</td>
<td>100% reliable until full</td>
<td>Underground</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Septic tank</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soakpit</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>influent should be free of sludge</td>
<td>&gt;10m from soakaway medium, but not NEMA standard</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Medium (dep on-ground conditions)</td>
<td>Good unless pits have filled</td>
<td>Preventative maintenance</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Underground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Package plant</td>
<td>Can be buried</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Yearly</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Electricity</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Generally good</td>
<td>Service contract common</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Usually underground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reed beds</td>
<td>Approx 3m²/person</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Can include sludge drying bed</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Medium to high</td>
<td>Good, occasional smell during dosing</td>
<td>Simple garden &amp; ongoing awareness</td>
<td>Good, if it fails does so slowly</td>
<td>Messy to beautiful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructed wetlands (ponds)</td>
<td>Approx 6m²/person</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Infrequent</td>
<td>Medium to good</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Medium to high</td>
<td>Fair to good</td>
<td>Gardening</td>
<td>Good, if it fails does so slowly</td>
<td>Messy to beautiful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planter beds (greywater only)</td>
<td>1m²/1000 litres</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Grease trap essential</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Low if able to re-use old container/tank</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Daily cleaning of grease trap and filter</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Messy to beautiful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waste Stabilisation Ponds</td>
<td>approx 10m²/person</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>None (digestion in anaerobic pond)</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Low (if land available)</td>
<td>Little with proper design</td>
<td>Open water (no plants)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trickling filters</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Every 1-5 yrs</td>
<td>Medium to good</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Medium to high</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Looks like a sewer-age system</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

²: Power is required for sites which do not have sufficient fall to move water by gravity
New Executive Board at Ecotourism Kenya

Following the Special General Meeting held on 24th June 2010, a new Executive Committee was elected or nominated to office for the year 2010/2011 as follows:

1. Andrew Muigai (Africa Point Ltd) - Chairman
2. Elizabeth Kimotho (Exclusive Eco Travels Ltd) - Secretary
3. John Duffy (Consultant) - Treasurer / Chairperson Finance Sub-committee
4. Steve Mwangi (Anste Tours & Travel Ltd) - Chairperson Community Outreach Sub-committee
5. Dr. Mordecai Ogada (Wildlife Conservation Society) - Chairperson Eco-rating Sub-committee
6. George Kamau (Lake Nakuru Lodge) - Chairperson PR and Marketing Sub-committee
7. Dr. Mohanjeet Brar (Gamewatchers / Porini Camps)
8. Ben Malasi (Express Travel Group)
9. Elizabeth Wachira (Ecoplan Ltd)
10. Edith Bosire (Ecotourism Kenya) - Chief Executive Officer

EcoTraining Programmes at Camp Tsavo on Rukinga Wildlife Sanctuary

Camp Kenya and EcoTraining recently completed their second 28-day Field Guide Level 1 Course held at Camp Kenya’s Rukinga Wildlife Sanctuary conducted by one of the Director’s Anton Lategan and assessor Megan Emmet. The course curriculum is the FGASA (Field Guides Association of Southern Africa) level 1 accredited course, which has been well supported by FGASA’s Directors Grant Hine and Brian Serrao. The course is set to provide Kenya and Southern Africa with guides of an exceptional standard.

With EcoTraining’s Directors Lex Hes and Anton Lategan partnering with well-known traveller and supporter of Kenyan tourism Ian Johnson, EcoTraining Kenya hopes to establish formal guide training in Kenya in association with established academic and government institutions, to service the needs of the industry. To do this they will create a professional guide training school based on the proven EcoTraining South African model.

The third course will start on the 3rd September 2010. Interested participants can email dipesh@campkenya.com, Tel: +254 733 989082 for further information.

News byte: Changes in Government Relevant to Tourism:

The Ministry of Tourism has a new Permanent Secretary, Leah Gwiyo who has been serving as PS Ministry of Public Works has moved to the Ministry of Tourism in the same capacity. She takes over from Rebecca Nabutola who has since been relieved off her duties.

Ali Dawood Mohamed previously Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of State for Special Programmes has now been appointed Permanent Secretary Ministry of Environment and Mineral Resources.

Lawrence Lenayapa moves from the Ministry of Environment and Mineral Resources to that of Development of Northern Kenya and other Arid Lands as Permanent Secretary.

Celebrating Excellence - Eco Warrior Award 2010:

Call for Nomination

Ecotourism Kenya would like to announce a call for nomination for the 2010 Eco Warrior Award. The Award is designed to recognize, encourage and applaud leadership and innovation in tourism business planning, development and management centred on community participation and natural resource conservation.

The award categories this year are:
- Most Responsible Tour Operator;
- Most Responsible Accommodation (2 – 50 beds);
- Most Responsible Accommodation (50 beds and above);
- Most Responsible carrier (air or road);
- Most sustainable and responsible Community Based Tourism Enterprise (CBTE) / Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) Enterprise;
- An individual who has initiated or demonstrated strong leadership in an innovative project, product, or program that advocates for uniting communities, tourism and conservation.

Members of the public, tourism industry organizations and development NGO’s are invited to nominate one entity or individuals in each category by sending back the completed nomination form with a brief description of the entity. The Secretariat will then contact the nominee who will provide a more comprehensive update on their achievements, which should exemplify best practice examples in tourism and sustainable development. The nominated organizations do not have to be members of Ecotourism Kenya but must be based in or conducting business in Kenya. Ecotourism Kenya members based outside Kenya qualifies for nomination.

The Award nomination process will be open through 30th September 2010. Details on the criteria for the Award, information on the award process and the nomination forms can be accessed through the Ecotourism Kenya website at www.ecotourismkenya.org. The finalist will be recognized during a Gala Dinner ceremony which will be held in their honour in October 2010.

For further enquiries or clarifications on the Award, contact the Ecotourism Kenya Secretariat on info@ecotourismkenya.org.
Public Lecture and Introduction to Live the Deal Campaign
Ecotourism Kenya held a public lecture on 12th March 2010 at the AMREF Training Centre. The successful event had 100 participants in attendance and was the preamble to the Annual General Meeting that took place later that day.

Curtain Raiser: Mr. Maurice Makololo took the participants through the legal support and advice for community based tourism ventures. He is a Director at the Institute of Law and Environmental Governance (ILEG) which has been playing an active role in Kenya to foster sustainable and equitable management of natural resources. ILEG subscribes to the views that laws and policies must be developed and implemented with the active participation of those who will be most directly affected. It therefore works with local communities to enhance their access to natural resources and secure their rights to these resources by enhancing their capacity to participate in the management of these resources.

Main Speaker: Mr. Hitesh Mehta is one of the world’s leading authorities, practitioners and researchers on sustainable tourism and ecotourism physical planning for both the landscape architectural and architectural aspects of eco-lodges. Mr. Hitesh shared on the innovative green architectural solutions by taking the participants through his 3 year – 46 countries – 6 continents odyssey and sharing on how visionaries round the world are creating once-in-a-lifetime eco-lodge experiences. He showcased eco-lodges from each continent by taking the participants into an exploration into the beauty and practicality of eco-lodge experiences. He showcased eco-lodges from each continent by taking the participants into an exploration into the beauty and practicality of eco-lodge experiences. He presented solutions that are cost-effective and environmentally friendly.

Guest Speaker: Prof. Geoffrey Lipman who is the founder of the Greenearth travel Foundation, an organization based in Geneva, Switzerland whose goal is to advance, promote and support tourism and travel in the evolving Green Economy introduced the Live the Deal campaign (www.livethedeal.com ). This is a not for profit initiative launched at the Copenhagen Climate Summit 2009 with the key goal of helping all travel and tourism stakeholders match the carbon reduction commitments established by their governments under the Copenhagen accord and promoting the sector as a vital contributor to the Green Economy. Prof. Lipman was the Assistant Secretary General of United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the first President of the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), the global business leaders’ forum.

Training Update: Ecotourism Kenya partners with NESVAX INNOVATIONS for waste water management training
NESVAX INNOVATIONS conducted a waste management training targeted at stakeholders in the government, private sector and local councils on the 24th – 28th May 2010 at the University of Nairobi’s School of Biological Sciences, Chiromo Campus. Ecotourism Kenya members received a special 35% discount on the 5-day training that covered waste characteristics, developing appropriate waste management designs, source separation, reducing, reusing and recycling, composting and bioconversion, energy generation from waste and designing landfills. Ecotourism Kenya will be working with various industry players to develop a lasting solution to waste management in protected areas. For further information regarding the waste management training, contact Chris Magero on info@ecotourismkenya.org .

Summary of Events & Exhibitions:

Karibu Travel & Tourism Fair is held in Arusha, Tanzania every year and draws together tourism businesses, accommodation facilities, tour operators, travel agents and representatives from the service industry in a three day event. This year’s fair was held from 4th – 6th June, 2010, at the Magereza Grounds and brought together more than 250 exhibitors from the East African region.

Ecotourism Kenya was in attendance to represent its diverse membership. More than 100 Ecotourism Kenya Guides and Green Directories were distributed. In addition several networks and partnerships were established which will go a long way in promoting responsible tourism in Eastern Africa.

The Magical Kenya Holiday 2010 Fair whose main sponsor was the Kenya Tourist Board was held on 17th – 21st March at the Sarit Centre, Westlands. Ecotourism Kenya managed to secure a stand and used it as a marketing point for its hot-off-the-print publications namely the Ecotourism Guide 2010/2011 and Green Directory 2010. Visitors to our stand were very excited about having all the eco-friendly companies in one easy-to-access publication with the general comments being “with this book we don’t need to go picking flyers all over the exhibition”. We had massive support from our members and are grateful to:

- Banana Box Company Ltd for availing such beautiful props for our stand at such short notice (www. bananabox@wananchi.com).
- Straightline Enterprises Ltd – ONEWAY for providing the EK team with beautifully designed T-shirts made from 100% organic cotton (www.one-way.cc).
- Maro Designs Company Ltd for displaying their beautiful jewellery at the stand made from cow bones and horns (maro@wananchi.com).

The Safari Travel Market which was organized by Amazing Space was held on 3rd – 6th July 2010 at the Village Market. Ecotourism Kenya managed to obtain space at this much-hyped exhibition where though the turn-out was rather low, important contacts were obtained. Copies of the Ecotourism Kenya Guide and Green Directory were distributed and a solar powered lamp was given out as a raffle prize where the winner was selected from among the many business cards dropped at the stand. The winner was Evelyn Kamau a Sales representative from PROTEA Hotel in K Campbell.

Congratualtions to our New Corporate Members!

Ecotourism Kenya is honoured to welcome these new eco-friendly members who have joined us since January 2010. We are glad for the association and appreciate you supporting sustainable tourism.

1. Atua Enkop Africa Ltd
2. Eco plan Ltd
3. Exclusive Eco travel
4. Footstep Safaris Ltd
5. Hospitality Associates Ltd
6. Jamii Tours and Travel Ltd
7. KETAS Safaris
8. Leopard Mico LTD
9. Mt. Kenya Tourism Circuit Association
10. My Kenya Info
11. Naibor Camps Ltd
12. Papa Musili Safaris Ltd
13. Patterson’s Safari Camp
14. Pili Pila Dhow
15. Primavera Tours Safari & Travel Ltd
16. Satao Camp
17. Satao Elerai Camp
18. Strathmore University (SSTH)
19. The Safari and Conservation Company
20. Tsavo Buffalo Camp
21. Warrior Trails Ltd – Arusha, Tanzania
22. Westminster Safaris Africa Ltd
23. Wildlife Sun Safaris
Celebrating Tourism and Diversity: Community Based Tourism in Taita Taveta Region

Ecotourism Kenya would like to recognize the efforts of community-based organizations (CBOs) in Taita Taveta region towards promoting responsible tourism through the various community-based tourism initiatives. These CBOs have been able to display the cultural wealth and natural diversity of the Taita region, and are playing the important role of promoting sustainable tourism and preserving this diversity.

A visit to the area would undoubtedly give you an unforgettable experience, from the beautiful natural sceneries to the cultural interaction with the hospitable Taita community. For more information on the communities, activities and products, contact communities@ecotourismkenya.org.

Taita and Taveta districts are quite vast, measuring well over 16,000km² with a population of approximately 300,000 persons who have settled on only 11% of the total land surface. The rest of the area consists of unique landscape features such as the wildlife-rich Tsavo National Park, a picturesque of overlapping hills with unique rocky formations, a series of caves and a well-established biodiversity hotspot.

A visit to the area would undoubtedly give you an unforgettable experience, from the beautiful natural sceneries to the cultural interaction with the hospitable Taita community. Millo Tours, a community-owned tour operator and Ecotourism Kenya member can develop a package that guarantees personalized service that meets ones needs.

Local community groups offer wide ranges of activities. Besides the renowned game viewing at the home of the famous man-eaters and the rest of the big five, one can stop over at the Tsavo Kifaru Manyattas to get a spectacular demonstration of the Maasai culture and practices e.g. traditional fire making. Similarly, the Sagalla PMC Cultural group located 20km south east of Voi town have presentations on the Taita culture as well as dances and an artistic display of the big five imprinted on elephant dung paper produced on site by the locals. The Wray Memorial Museum contains an interesting collection of artifacts from the early missionaries and Sagalla community dating to the early 19th century.

For the nature lovers, local guides are at hand to show one the indigenous plant species into the forests and one can take pictures of endemic birds found in Kasigau area. For the more adventurous ones, a variety of excursion sites would captivate them. One can explore the Kino Caves Tourist Site, which were used as hideouts and shrines in historic times, and contain remnants of human skulls from the Taita ancestors. The Sagalla PMC Cultural group provides similar excursions to the Ngalawa, Ganjaha and Mwanakaviri caves. Alternatively, one can have a breath taking rock-climbing session at the Shomoto hills at the periphery of Wundanyi town and enjoy a scenic view of the landscape at the top.

There are many accommodation options offered by the community in the area. Kasigau Bandas situated in Maungu area, 30kms from Voi has affordable accommodation. Alternatively, one can put up at Lavender Garden Hotel in Wundanyi town or camp at the PMC Cultural Centre and sample some of the traditional cuisine.

Finally, to crown your stay, you can purchase some of the traditional handicrafts. These include hand woven baskets, necklaces, calabashes and khangas that are available in curio shops within Voi and Wundanyi towns and in some of the CBT facilities. While you’re at it, interact with the locals and engage the local youth of the Chemsha Bongo Youth Organization at Msau in some outdoor and sporting activities.

Taita region in itself has over 80 registered CBOs engaged in or they plan to have Tourism based initiatives. By visiting this area, you will be promoting ecotourism as well as uplifting the livelihood of the locals.

Would you like to be featured on this page? email info@ecotourismkenya.org or call Gonzaga on 2724403
New Silver Eco-rated Facilities:
The Nomad Tanzania properties, Chada Katavi and Greystoke Mahale who were previously Bronze Eco-rated have demonstrated a move towards excellence in their practices and are now the newest Silver Eco-rating certified facilities.

Chada Katavi is located within Katavi National Park is the third largest park, and is found in Mpanda district, in Western Tanzania. The park is home to some spectacular species of birds and wildlife. Chada is a low impact facility, with non-permanent structures, which have a small footprint and make it easy to relocate or take down the facilities.

Commendable practices:
1. Composting toilets use recycled ash from the kuni boosters*
2. Organic waste is composted; all waste is separated, measured and continually monitored.
3. Energy is managed by centralizing electricity outlets;
4. Shampoos and bathing creams are dispensed from refillable containers and water is served in reusable bottles.
5. Chada Katavi supports community tourism enterprises and ‘a day in the park’ trip for primary and secondary schools.

Greystoke Mahale is located in the pristine Mahale Mountains national park, which is popular for its unique habitat and wild chimpanzees, but it is also home to a plethora of birds and mammals. Greystoke is located along the sandy shores of the crystal clear Lake Tanganyika, and is only accessible by boat.

Commendable practices:
6. Semi-permanent rooms are built to blend into the natural forest environment.
7. The facility uses eco-friendly soaps and shampoos, which are dispensed in re-fillable containers.
8. The facility has good waste management systems, which allow organic waste to be composted on-site and all inorganic waste, are managed off-site.
9. They support the local community enterprise through the Tongwe Trust,
10. Support conservation education by showing environmental movies, and hosting trips for children from the local community to the park.

*Footnote: kuni boosters are energy efficient water boilers that use firewood.

Updates on Bronze Eco-rated Facilities

Sunbird Lodge
Sunbird Lodge is a Bronze certified lodge located about 127 Kms along the highway from Nairobi, overlooking the shores of Lake Elementaita, and bordering the Soysambu conservancy. The lodge has 12 rooms, all uniquely embedded on the cliff, providing a picturesque view of Lake Elementaita.

Lake Elementaita is one of the Great Rift Valley lakes, and lies between Lake Nakuru and Lake Naivasha. The lake is renowned for hosting the greater and lesser flamingoes. The surrounding environment is sensitive, replete with wildlife but facing pressure due to population increase.

Commendable Practices:
1. The overall architectural design of the buildings follows the traditional Masai architecture, and the rooms are all built from stones, which were excavated on site.
2. The lodge uses solar energy for heating.
3. Electricity consumption is monitored using the main meter and sub-metered
4. The Lodge uses energy saving bulbs.
5. Waste is appropriately managed by separation and measurement at the source; organic waste is effectively composted on-site.
6. Rain water is harvested and stored to supplement the water supply on-site.
7. Float switch technology is used to ensure zero water spillage from the tanks
8. Sunbird Lodge supports local community tourism enterprises including local dancers, local artefact industries, local vegetable suppliers, etc.

For further information, visit their site at www.sunbirdkenya.com

Lake Nakuru Lodge
Lake Nakuru Lodge is a Bronze certified lodge, situated in Lake Nakuru National Park, which is the most densely populated park in Kenya, and home to populations of several wildlife species including the rhinos, giraffes, zebras, lions, etc. Lake Nakuru is known for the thousands of flamingoes, which nest along the shore. It is a fragile environment, a fragment remnant of a once vast ecosystem.

Commendable Practices:
1. The Lodge is actively involved in conservation with, Partnerships of Conservation of Lake Nakuru National Park and also Friends of Lake Elementaita;
2. The Lodge supports children’s education and empowerment, local community women’s enterprise, children’s homes for the destitute and Internally Displaced Persons, by purchasing a 25 acre piece of land for their resettlement;
3. The lodge uses Solar energy for heating;
4. Waste is incinerated and the energy is used for heating water
Visit their site for further information at www.lakenakurulodge.com

Kilaguni Serena Safari Lodge
Kilaguni Serena Safari Lodge is a Bronze certified facility, located in Tsavo National Park, and overlooking Mount Kilimanjaro. Tsavo national park is the largest in Kenya and is home to several species of birds and mammals. The prime attraction of the park include the Chyulu Hills, which has one of the youngest lava ranges and the Mzima springs with crystal clear water, inhabited by several species of fish and the happy hippos. The lodge is situated in a pristine and tranquil part of the park environment, and therefore prudent thoughtful management is always key to sustainability.

Commendable practices:
1. The lodge works closely with Kenya Wildlife Service to provide support services for conservation in the park.
2. Rehabilitating habitats by establishing indigenous tree species nursery and planting trees during the wet season.
3. Waste is separated at source with organic waste being composted and inorganic waste being managed off-site.
4. Supporting local community enterprises by purchasing of locally produced artifacts, facilitating community outreach programs at Tkilal primary school and Mtito Andei.
5. Regularly engage in environmental cleanup within the park and surrounding environment.

For further information, visit their site at www.serenahotels.com

Did you know that the Eco-rating Scheme has gone regional!

Would you like to be featured?
The Feature Eco-rated Facility is a column that Ecotourism Kenya is running in partnership with Eco-rated facilities. If you would like to be featured in the next newsletter, email info@ecotourismkenya.org
Ministry of Tourism promotes “Cultural Tourism” In Kenya

Introduction
The Ministry of Tourism is charged with the responsibility of formulating tourism policy and coordinating the implementation of strategies aimed at developing the tourism sector. Tourism was recently cited as accounting for 42.7% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), making it the third largest contributor after agriculture and manufacturing.

Kenya has traditionally been considered by tourists as a beach, wildlife safaris destination.

On the cultural front, the major cultural attractions of Kenya revolve around her population of about 40 million people made up of over 42 ethnic groups, broadly grouped as the Bantus, Nilotes and Cushites. The ethnic diversity has produced a harmonious mixture of people with a rich cultural heritage expressed through songs, dances, arts and handicrafts.

1. Cultural Tourism
According to the World Tourism Organization, cultural tourism accounts for 37% of the world travel and this is growing at the rate of 15% per year.

Cultural Tourism ... is the point at which culture, which defines in large part our identity as a society, meets tourism, which is a leisure activity pursued by people with an interest in observing or becoming involved in that society.

Global Tourism trends indicate that there is an increase in demand for quality interpretation of the natural, social and heritage features of places visited. Tourists are turning away from being passive consumers and turning towards being involved participants.

Definition of Cultural Tourism
Cultural Tourism embraces the full range of experiences visitors can undertake to learn what makes a destination distinctive – its lifestyle, its heritage, its arts, its people – and the business of providing and interpreting that culture to visitors. Culture consists of all distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features which characterize a society or group.

Cultural Tourism as the name suggests, is the point at which culture, which defines in large part our identity as a society, meets tourism, which is a leisure activity pursued by people with an interest in observing or becoming involved in that society.

The area of cultural tourism encompasses the following sectors:-
- Traditional culture
- Living culture
- Natural and built heritage

Cultural Tourism In Kenya
The development of new products like cultural tourism will contribute to the economy because there will be an increase in foreign exchange earnings, due to a new niche market; creation of employment because of new opportunities, it will open up the regions for economic growth, and cause the improvement and expansion of infrastructure, geographical distribution of visitors will improve, along with the image of the country. The satisfaction of our visitors is also expected to improve with the development of new products, adding enjoyment and length of stay. At the same time, it will enhance regional cooperation and increase competitiveness of Kenya as a tourism destination.

Kenya’s Rich Cultural Heritage
Kenya has a rich cultural heritage which is still quite unexploited. There are ancient monuments in almost every province and diverse cultural traditions in varying landscapes.
Cultural tourism stands a good chance of succeeding as a niche product because of the country’s natural diversities, an existence of traditional activities, the awareness by a rapidly growing cultural industry, and an awakening urban and rural population to the importance of culture as a tool for development.

**Current Situation Promotion of Cultural Tourism**

The Ministry of Tourism has always known the potential that exists in culture as a tourism product. Promotion of cultural tourism however, has been sporadic and largely spearheaded by the private sector, as should be the case. Efforts made by the Ministry to work with communities on Cultural Tourism promotion have not fully succeeded due to the inability of communities to own and sustain the programmes. This strategy is expected to seek ways of working with communities on the development of cultural tourism.

In early 1990, the Ministry of Tourism in collaboration with Provincial Administration compiled a calendar of all the major cultural events in every district with a view to promote and market them for our visitors through the media and Kenya Embassies abroad. This was done for a while. At the moment, other players do this via the internet or popular travel and event magazines like “Go places” etc. However, there is need for a “one stop shop” place to get all the weeks events i.e. a tourism information center.

Through the Kenya Tourist Board and the Ministry’s website, potential visitors can learn about the cultural tourism events in the country and the dates. The Ministry has also continued to support BOMAS of Kenya to display aspects of indigenous Kenyan culture. Visitors here are given a first hand knowledge of Kenyan culture. They can also purchase DVDs and cultural artifacts crafted and sold by curio sellers at BOMAS.

The Ministry is also currently developing cultural homestay criteria before identifying homes where visitors can stay while in the country. This will in the long run have a trickle down effect on the communities.

**Cultural Festivals**

Apart from the BOMAS of Kenya, the Ministry of Tourism has promoted cultural tourism activities by supporting centers like the Abagusii Cultural Village, cultural festivals in Lamu, Meru, Turkana, Rabai; choosing cultural tourism ambassadors across the country; supporting the ‘Miss Tourism’ initiative; organizing cultural days, nights, luncheons, dinners, cocktails and exhibitions locally and abroad.

It is important to note that every year; new cultural festivals are organized by communities. This is a clear indication that locals have began to realize the potential of packaging their cultural heritage for consumption by outsiders and making gains out of this practice.

**Marketing Culture**

The majority of available tourist literature in the market now features Cultural Tourism and areas where various traditional artifacts such as curios, paintings, batiks etc can be found. Through word of mouth, tour guides and safari operators inform their clients on various cultural pursuits and venues in the rural areas where authentic cultural activities can be seen and experienced. In addition, local media both print and electronic, feature cultural events regularly. The private sector is also promoting cultural events like Art Gallery Openings, Book Launches, Classical and traditional music shows, local film shows etc. During conferences, workshops and seminars where parallel exhibitions are held, it is common to find a reasonable representation of culture ranging from traditional dances, food and oral representations.

**CONCLUSION**

The process of creating a product is complex and requires strategic planning and consistent co-ordination with the relevant stakeholders.

Effectively integrating new products into tourism markets is known to take between two and five years and requires sustained marketing efforts over this time. Any newly developed tourism products needs to be industry driven and take advantage of emerging trends and opportunities.

The Ministry of Tourism with the assistance of partners and stakeholders in both the public and private sectors intends to produce a framework for action towards realizing the development of cultural tourism to facilitate a viable and internationally competitive cultural tourism industry.
Ecorated Facilities*

Gold Eco-rated facilities
Basecamp Masai Mara www.basecampexplorer.com
Campi ya Kanzi www.maasai.com

Silver Eco-rated facilities
Kenya Camps/ Lodges
Amboseli Porini Camp www.porini.com
Mara Porini Camp www.porini.com
Ol Seki Mara Camp www.olseki.com
Olionana Camp www.sanctuarylodge.com
Porini Lion Camp www.porini.com
Turtle Bay Beach Club www.turtlebay.co.ke

Tanzania Camps/ Lodges
Chada Katavi Camp www.nomad-tanzania.com
Greystoke Mahale www.nomad-tanzania.com

Bronze Eco-rated facilities
Kenya Camps/ Lodges
Amboseli Sopa Lodge www.sopalodges.com
Baobab Beach Resort www.baobab-beach-resort.com
Bateleur Camp www.chelipeacock.com

Elephant Pepper Camp www.chelipeacock.com
Elsa’s Kopje www.chelipeacock.com
Il Ngwesi Lodge www.ilingwesi.com
Joy’s Camp www.chelipeacock.com

Keekorok Lodge www.discoverwilderness.com
Kicheche Mara Camp www.kicheche.com
Kichwa Tembo Tentd Safari Camp www.porini.com
Kilaguni Serena Safari Lodge www.serenahotels.com
Kizingo Lodge www.kizingo.com
Koja Starbreds www.loisaba.com
Lake Naivasha Sopa Lodge www.sopalodges.com
Lake Nakuru Lodge www.lakenakurulodge.com
Loisaba Kiboko Starbreds www.loisaba.com
Loisaba Lodge www.loisaba.com
Mara Explorer Camp www.heritage-eastafrica.com
Mara Intrepids Camp www.heritage-eastafrica.com
Mara Serena Safari Lodge www.serenahotels.com
Masaai Mara Sopa Lodge www.sopalodges.com
Olkukai Lodge www.oltukailodge.com
Samburu Sopa Lodge www.sopalodges.com
Sarova Shaba Game Lodge www.sarovaHotels.com
Saruni Safari Camp www.sarunicamp.com
Sereni Beach Hotel & Spa www.serenahotels.com
Sianas Springs www.heritage-eastafrica.com
Sunbird Lodge www.sunbirdkenya.com
Sweetwaters Tented Camp www.senalodges.com
Tassia Lodge www.tassiasafaris.com
Tortilis Camp www.chelipeacock.com

Tanzania Lodges/ Camps
Fundu Lagoon Resort www.fundulagoon.com
Sand Rivers Selous www.nomad-tanzania.co.nz

*Eco-rated facilities as at July 2010