

# CEPF SMALL GRANT FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

## I. BASIC DATA

**Organization Legal Name:** The East African Wild Life Society

**Project Title (as stated in the grant agreement):** Rehabilitation and Restoration of Mwambirwa Forest

**Implementation Partners for This Project:** Sigha Sigha Support Group.

**Project Dates (as stated in the grant agreement):** April 1, 2005 – September 30, 2007

**Date of Report (month/year):** 8<sup>th</sup> October 2007

## II. OPENING REMARKS

**Provide any opening remarks that may assist in the review of this report.**

Mwambirwa forest is one of the major fragments that make up the Taita hills forests. It is separated from the indigenous biodiversity-rich Mbololo forest by a narrow gap of less than 3 km. Mwambirwa forest is dominated by exotic plantations especially on the ridges and slopes. The exotic tree species are mainly *Eucalyptus saligna*, *E. maculata*, *Pinus patula*, *P. eliotii*, and *P. kirkii* planted in the mid-1950s. A significant portion of the exotic plantation was burnt down in 1997 and 2001. The burnt area is currently characterized by bare areas where eucalyptus and pine are rapidly colonizing, dead logs and standing dead or dying trees. Another forest fire will cause untold damage due to the dead logs and dead standing/dying trees that would provide a ready fuel. Along the river valley bottoms is a mixture of indigenous trees and a few exotic trees.

During the stakeholders workshop held in Taita in February 2005, it was recognised that, the rehabilitation of Mwambirwa forest is an activity of high priority. The aim is to re-establish some forest connectivity between the larger largely indigenous Mbololo forest with a small patch of indigenous forest (Rong'e forest) within Mwambirwa forest that had some of the endemic bird and plant species. The re-planting which would take place along the main ridge would reduce the gap between Mbololo and Mwambirwa forests to about a kilometre which would enable bird individuals move in between the forests.

## III. NARRATIVE QUESTIONS

1. What was the initial objective of this project?

The main goal is to contribute towards the conservation of endemic species through the replanting of a portion of Mwambirwa forest with indigenous tree species.

The project objectives are;

- Re-establish a continuum of indigenous forest vegetation between Mbololo and Rong'e forest (currently part of Mwambirwa forest).
- Raise awareness and commitment of the local community towards forest conservation.
- Build the capacity of the local community for conservation by creating partnerships among local groups.
- Put in place mechanisms for maintenance of the forest firebreak.

### **Project Deliverables**

- 91 800 indigenous tree seedlings raised and planted and surviving in Mwambirwa forest.
- 28 000 tree seedlings (indigenous, exotic and fruit) planted on farms adjacent the forest and beneficiaries committed to maintaining the fire breaks.
- Awareness created among community members in all the villages surrounding Mwambirwa forest.
- Firebreaks maintained around Mwambirwa forest.
- Partnerships created among local groups involved in conservation activities through their involvement in raising and planting of tree seedlings.

2. Did the objectives of your project change during implementation? If so, please explain why and how.

No changes.

3. How was your project successful in achieving the expected objectives?

- 91 800 indigenous tree seedlings raised and planted and surviving in Mwambirwa forest.
  - The Sigha Sigha Support Group which is a community group working together with EAWLS had raised 91 800 indigenous seedlings by the end of May 2006. Upto 20 000 tree seedlings (Fig. 1) had been planted in the last rainy seasons of Oct-Dec 06 and Mar-May 07. However, the amount of rain received and moisture build up was not adequate in most of the areas. It was therefore decided to plant the rest of the seedlings in the next rainy season, in the hope that it will be much better.
  - In addition, the Forest Department with the projects assistance carried out assessments of the trees that need salvaging for the planting site to be cleared. The report was forwarded by the District Forest Officer with a request for permission for the removal of the fire damaged trees. However, this permission is yet to be obtained. The seedlings were only planted in areas that had been left relatively open by the fires.



Fig. 1. One of the planted seedlings in Mwambirwa forest.

- 28 000 tree seedlings (indigenous, exotic and fruit) planted on farms adjacent the forest and beneficiaries committed to maintaining the fire breaks.
  - 18 000 tree seedlings have been raised, mainly being exotic trees (*Cupressus lusitanica* and *Pinus* spp). The main aim of raising these species is for the provision of timber and for resin extraction. The latter will particularly be a boost to the bio-prospecting component of the ICIPE – CEPF funded livelihood project. Due to the poor rains experienced in the last rainy seasons, few of these have been distributed to the local community living adjacent the forest.
  
- Awareness created among community members in all the villages surrounding Mwambirwa forest.
  - Public meetings have been held in both Rong'e Juu and Wongonyi from which the community surrounding Mwambirwa and Mbololo forest reside. The messages have mainly targeted fire control/proper fire use, the importance of the forests and its biodiversity.
  - Due to the high expenditure on labour to maintain the seedlings, the funds set aside for posters were used.
  - The public meetings have been jointly organised with the Forest Department, Sigha Sigha Support Group, MWAMBO Forest Association, the Provincial Administration and EAWLS.

- Firebreaks maintained around Mwambirwa forest.
  - The members of SSSG have been involved in fire-breaks maintenance together with the forest guards in Mwambirwa forest. In addition, the farmers living adjacent the forests have been urged to maintain firebreaks. However, this will be more effective once the people living adjacent the forest have been supplied with and have planted the tree seedlings.
  
- Partnerships created among local groups involved in conservation activities through their involvement in raising and planting of tree seedlings.
  - A good working relationship is building among the groups that have activities relating to forest conservation. Among these are the SSSG, MWAMBO Forest Association, bee-keeping groups, butterfly farming groups, and the resin-tappers group. In addition, the support towards the rehabilitation of the water system in Mwambirwa has helped better the relationship between the forest and the local community since the water system that supplies the tree nursery also supplies the local dispensary.
  - An important partnership was created recently with several actors locally, among them Matuku Self-help group, Mazido International and EAWLS whose efforts resulted in a CDTF-CEF funded project. The Project “Mbololo and Mwambirwa Integrated Forest Conservation Project” whose implementation is under a Project Implementation Committee known as Taita Environmental Management Alliance (TEMA)” will contribute in a significant way towards biodiversity conservation in the area. The completion of the work started under this EPF funded activity has been given the highest priority. The project has a budget of KShs 20,205,570.00. The activities include awareness creation, local capacity building, rehabilitation of riverbanks, soil conservation and management initiatives, tree seedling raising and planting, rehabilitation of degraded rangelands, energy-saving and alternative energy sources technologies, eco-tourism and others.
  
- Others
  - A two-day training workshop was held in Mwambirwa for SSSG. The training was designed to be as practical as possible. The participants were drawn from the CCEC, other group nurseries within Chawia, and the forest guards. The trainers were drawn from the forest department (the assistant DFO, the local forest extension agent and district forest nursery headman), EAWLS and Egerton University. The topics included; functions of trees, plant selection, nursery management, planting, seed collection, tree management and a discussion session.

4. Did your team experience any disappointments or failures during implementation? If so, please explain and comment on how the team addressed these disappointments and/or failures.

- ❑ In the beginning, the community members could not meet the tallies or the task-rates as used by the Forest Department (now Kenya Forest Service). This problem was resolved by calculating the equivalent earnings per work accomplished, i.e. if the task was pot-filling – one person is supposed to fill 600 polypots per day and paid KShs 170 – this was worked out to 1 polypot for KShs 3.53.
- ❑ The vagaries of weather did not spare the project activities. There were some rather dry months and in delayed onset of the rainy seasons thus making planting be delayed or more time be spent in fetching water and the watering of the seedlings. The repair of the hydro-ram pump really eased the water fetching problems.
- ❑ The strengthening of the Kenya Shilling against the US dollar had quite an effect on the overall available budget for the activities. A contingency budget line needed to have been provided for to take care of this. In addition, the need to repair the hydro-ram pump further aggravated the financial constraints.
- ❑ The increase in prices of equipment between the time the budget was written and the time of purchase also affected the financial aspects.
- ❑ The failure by the Director of KFS to give permission for the removal of the exotic trees in the areas to be planted with exotic trees was a drawback and also delayed the planting activities. However, it was decided to plant the indigenous tree seedlings under the exotic trees.

5. Describe any positive or negative lessons learned from this project that would be useful to share with other organizations interested in implementing a similar project.

- ❑ A thorough creation awareness programme/strategy must be carried out to avoid the local politics from interfering in the process.
- ❑ The involvement of the government agencies in the activities lends credence to the project and thus reduces suspicion among the local “doubting Thomases”.

6. Describe any follow-up activities related to this project.

- ❑ The permission to remove the exotic trees will continue to be pursued because at one stage they will need to be removed to allow the planted ones to take over.
- ❑ The planting of tree seedlings still in the nursery will be done once sufficient rains are received.

7. Please provide any additional information to assist CEPF in understanding any other aspects of your completed project.

#### IV. ADDITIONAL FUNDING

***Provide details of any additional donors who supported this project and any funding secured for the project as a result of the CEPF grant or success of the project.***

<b>Donor</b>	<b>Type of Funding*</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Kenya Commercial Bank – Wundanyi Branch	A	Ksh 250,000 (USD 3,762.23)	KCB assisted in the planting of tree seedlings.
EAWLS	C	Ksh 227,448.50	EAWLS contribution is in terms of

		(USD 3,069.15)	material and financial assistance.
CDTF-CEF	C	KSh 20,205,570.00 (USD 304,071.78)	A project just beginning to run for 3 years.

**\*Additional funding should be reported using the following categories:**

- A** *Project co-financing (Other donors contribute to the direct costs of this CEPF project)*
- B** *Complementary funding (Other donors contribute to partner organizations that are working on a project linked with this CEPF project)*
- C** *Grantee and Partner leveraging (Other donors contribute to your organization or a partner organization as a direct result of successes with this CEPF project.)*
- D** *Regional/Portfolio leveraging (Other donors make large investments in a region because of CEPF investment or successes related to this project.)*

<b>V. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
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## VI. INFORMATION SHARING

CEPF is committed to transparent operations and to helping civil society groups share experiences, lessons learned and results. One way we do this is by making programmatic project documents available on our Web site, [www.cepf.net](http://www.cepf.net), and by marketing these in our newsletter and other communications.

These documents are accessed frequently by other CEPF grantees, potential partners, and the wider conservation community.

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