

## Creative Outlets for Conservation:

How beans and bike wheels are helping save Kibale



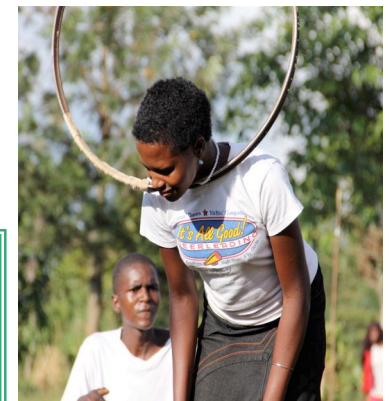
Community conservation requires a unified and collaborative population that is invested in a common goal, in this case the conservation of Kibale National Park. Without action from local stakeholders, there would be little chance of achieving such an endeavor. Fortunately, in the case of the Kibale Fuel Wood Project, we have found willing and able participants to drive the conservation efforts into full force. And, they want to have fun doing it!

To promote the fuel efficient stoves that so many families are now using, and to further push individuals to use less wood, cooking competitions were held last winter in Kabruala and Isunga, the pilot villages where project activities began in 2006. The culinary component was beans, one of the area's staple foods that usually requires large amounts of wood to prepare. Ten competitors at each location battled it out to see who could cook the best tasting beans with the least amount of wood. A panel including local governmental

officials and representatives of the Uganda Wildlife Authority were the judges of taste, while students volunteered to monitor the cooking, carefully weighing the wood. The audiences were taught by their peers about the benefits of efficient stoves, how to best use them to their advantage, and enjoyed a portion the 22 pounds of beans cooked.

The top winner used only 3.3 pounds (1.5 kg) of wood to cook 2.2 pounds (1 kg) of beans - shocking to all of those in attendance who had not yet tried cooking on an efficient stove. A crowd of more than 400 attendees listened silently to Mrs. Good as she explained how splitting wood into smaller pieces helped her rocket stove achieve the "impossible".

*(Continued on page 4)*



The KFWP is a program of The New Nature Foundation, a registered 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

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## Reduce the Need, Reduce the Threat

May 2011 marks the fifth anniversary of the Kibale Fuel Wood Project's *in situ* operations working to help conserve Kibale National Park. The results in this short time frame have been encouraging. (For a full description, please see the "Year Four Report" on the website, [www.newnaturefoundation.org](http://www.newnaturefoundation.org).) However, threats to Kibale still exist, and the demand for fuel wood continues. Though the project plans to begin research this year to determine the actual amount of wood still being cut from the forest each day, the illegality of this activity makes precise quantification difficult. Eyewitness accounts have shown that pressure on Kibale is still present, and it is clear that as long as there is a demand for wood, the park will be threatened.

During the directors' last inspection of the project earlier this year, they witnessed illegal commercial removal of wood from Kibale. In broad daylight, wood was piled along the side of the road to await pickup in a tractor and transport for sale in Kampala. Not the work of villagers trying to cook their own dinners, this effort was profit driven and organized by businessmen and women who live far from the forest. Over the course of several weeks, tons of wood was removed with impunity. Though this particular instance may have been more complicated than can be fully explained here (the majority of the wood removed was from pines planted inside the park, not natural forest trees), the breach of law served as a poignant reminder to the entire staff of the KFWP and all of its supporters that there remains a strong need to increase alternative fuel sources and to create opportunities for people currently relying on wood to understand the dilemma.

Uganda's human population continues to grow, and according to the Population Reference Bureau, Uganda is likely to soon have the highest population growth in the world. The country's population is projected to explode to 130 million by 2050, more than quadruple its current size! There is no stronger evidence that can be provided to support the need for energy conservation and fuel efficiency. Without continuation of community conservation activities, what will happen to Kibale, its wildlife, and to all of the Ugandans who rely on the multitude of benefits offered by the forest?

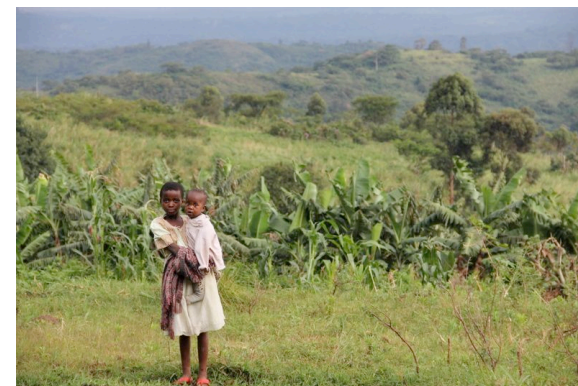
The KFWP remains dedicated to the conservation of Kibale and believes that sustainability can only be achieved through empowerment of the many communities that live along its borders. Trying new technologies (such as the biomass briquettes reported on in the last update), adapting to local modifications, and communicating with local and global communities are the KFWP's ways forward. Thank you for your continued support as we strive to make the next five years even more promising for Kibale's people and animals.



Exiting Kibale's gate with illegal wood



Piles awaiting pickup along a forest path



Family farm with Kibale in background



## Kibale Science Centers

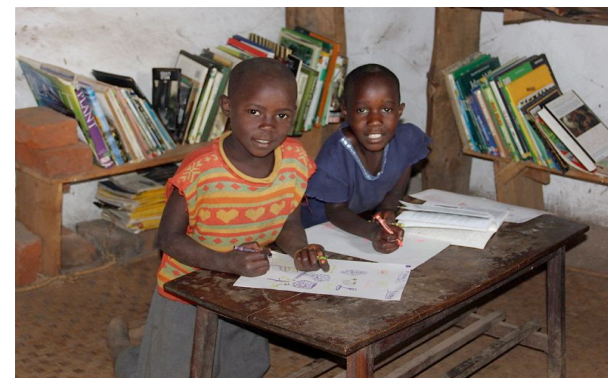


Take a moment and imagine you've traveled to Uganda - - to the lush green landscapes, the smell of fresh soil after a rain, and a silence that so often eludes us in our daily lives. The KFWP is taking you on a trip to the Science Center. Following the bumpy dirt road past children in school uniforms you come upon a hand-painted sign depicting a chimpanzee, a tree, and a rocket stove. Past the bamboo fence lined with nursery beds of *Sesbania* and flowers, young children are playing games as you meet the smiling face of your guide. "Webale Kwija!" -You are most welcome - to our Science Center. The mud walls are full of maps, posters, paintings, drawings and signs with information about many of the animals found within Kibale National Park, and some of those that have become locally extinct. A heart shaped craft hangs from the ceiling with the phrase, "Long Live Kibale!"



Next, you pass a woman reading a book about elephants as you enter another room filled with skulls, skins and mounted specimens. A small window lets in a bit of light to illuminate the lioness in the corner. Continuing on, a student smiles up at you and returns to studying as you grab hold of the nets and spears once used by poachers to capture the wild animals of Kibale.

Outside to the mud built kitchen where the rocket stove displays itself. Nearby, some bricks for you to try and build your own. Young adults are outside looking for specimens for their medicinal plant display and take some time to teach you about these wonders of our natural world. You walk with them, passing the fence of *Sesbania* trees that borders the entire farm as young children cross nearby looking for the next object to put under the microscope. You find that you've been smiling for some time and haven't even noticed! Maybe it's the warm hospitality surrounding you; maybe it's just the magic of the Science Center coming alive before your eyes.  
(continued on page 5)



## Creative Conservation, *continued from page 1*

While cooking demonstrations have long been a part of the KFWP methodology, these competitions marked the first time local participants were tasked with taking charge of the outcome for themselves. This slight change in how the day was organized produced much more excitement and drew audiences about ten times greater than the original cooking demonstrations, providing an example of how the KFWP is achieving its goal of handing over major project activities to community members.

The next part of the conservation celebrations was a dancing, singing, poetry, and creative expression competition. Eclectic groupings of all ages and genders competed against each other. All pieces were required to be original works related to Kibale, its animals, or general conservation. Traditional singing and dancing are beautiful aspects of the local culture around Kibale, and the linkage to conservation at these most recent events went above and beyond what we've witnessed in the past. Groups were entirely inventive, from their names ("Snow Capped Robin Chats" for one bird loving club), to their props (a taxidermy goat with a live rat living inside), to dances where bike wheels were used as hula-hoops (around a person's neck)! This adaptation of tradition to meet modern conservation needs is amazingly encouraging in terms of the future of grass roots initiatives continuing to protect Kibale.

The recitation of moving poems, music played on traditional instruments, and a variety of props fashioned from banana trees made for an amazingly genuine cultural experience. Though the Kibale Fuel Wood Project provided the venue, the community truly brought together this event. The prizes provided to winners not only served to reward them for a job well done but to encourage them to continue their efforts. Hopefully, this is a sneak peek into the future of the KFWP: individuals creating opportunities, working together, having fun, and highlighting the way forward for community conservation. To watch a video of these events, search "Kibale Dance Video" on YouTube!



## Kibale's Birds



Uganda is one of Africa's best birding spots, with over 750 resident species and 200 migrants. Kibale is certainly one of the country's birding jewels: With over 340 recorded species of birds living within the park, (a space less than ¼ the size of Rhode Island!) Kibale has been classified as an Important Bird Area by Birdlife International. There are endangered species like Nahan's Francolin and other rare species with colorful names like the White-Bellied Crested Flycatcher and Red-Faced Crimson-wing. Some of the most impressive are not as difficult to spot, including the Great Blue Turaco, whose laughing cry spreads out over forest clearings at sunset, or the Black and White Casqued Hornbill, which sounds almost like a helicopter as it flies from tree to tree in search of fruit. The swamps of Kibale are also a wonderful place to spot Uganda's national bird, the Crowned Crane. Because of the high number of tourists (*continued on next page*)



## Science Centers, *continued from page 3*

Head back inside, open a book or try out an experiment, but please, save your energy, we have three more Centers to visit!

The Kibale Science Centers are truly wonderful places. We asked previous volunteers to share their experiences with you:

"One of my favorite moments was reading a nature book to a group of boys. The book talked about animals around the world. They loved seeing the animals that were familiar -- giraffes, lions, hippos, etc. But their very favorite was the walrus. When I explained what walruses looked like, how big they were, and the fact that they have no legs but waddle around on land - the children laughed and laughed!"

"The uniqueness of each Center stood out:

- \*The traditional building in Kanyawara with its low ceilings and several rooms - great for kids to "discover" it and the items in it.

- \*The location of Bigodi Science Center - atop a small hill, neighboring other nature conservation projects. Peering through the windows to see activities inside as the stove cooks outdoors.

- \*The flexibility in Kaswa Science Center, using one small room for so many different activities and its' openness to everyone as it is located along the main road.

- \*The high number of secondary students visiting Isunga Science Center, the creative decoration of drawings made by Isunga people and staff along the walls.

These are experiences I will never forget!"

"It was such a joy to see everyone, kids, parents, elders, pastors etc. participate in activities; even very simple ones like drawing an elephant or playing musical chairs (done with drum beats). The laughter, joking and smiles didn't need translation. Ugandans know how to have fun and enjoy life. It is very catching."

If you are interested in volunteering and experiencing this on your own, send us an email. If you would like to make a donation of goods to the centers please visit our Amazon wish list or make a financial contribution to the New Nature Foundation!

## Birds, *continued from page 4*

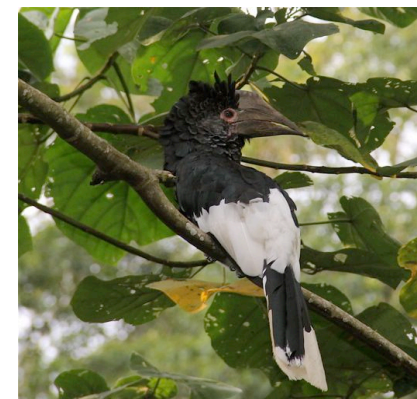
visiting Kibale each year, many of the birds are well habituated and will allow close observation. Yet it is not too difficult to get away from the larger groups and explore the less frequented areas both in and around the park with a skilled birding guide.

Sharing the fate of Kibale's other wildlife, the birds, too, continue to be threatened by habitat loss and logging. Of course, the bird's ability to fly to forest fragments outside the park without needing to travel through farmland gives them an advantage, and there is still a lot of avian diversity outside the



park boundaries.

Why not take the trip of a lifetime to see for yourself? One of New Nature's board members, Robert Berghaier, has repeatedly been ranked among the highest tier of East African travel specialists by Conde Nast magazine. Bob can tailor a safari for birding or any other special interest (primates, carnivores, cultural tours, etc.), and will donate a portion of your land costs to support the Kibale Fuel Wood Project. Contact him at Premier Tours: 800-545-1910; bobb@premiertours.com.



## Thank You!

The Kibale Fuel Wood Project has been made possible through the generous support of the following organizations over the past year:

Chester Zoo  
 Cleveland Metroparks Zoo Conservation Fund  
 Cole Manor Elementary  
 Columbus Zoo Conservation Fund  
 Fresno Chaffee Zoo  
 Genentech Giving Station  
 Honolulu Zoo  
 Idea Wild  
 International Primatological Society  
 Jack M. Barrack Hebrew Academy  
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 Roger Williams Park Zoo Sophie Danforth Fund  
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**And Many Generous Private Donors**



To donate, please write a check to "New Nature Foundation" with "Kibale" on the memo line.  
 Mail to: 412 Rockland Avenue, Merion Station, Pennsylvania, 19066

Secure on-line donation also possible with PayPal  
[www.newnaturefoundation.org](http://www.newnaturefoundation.org)

**Please also check out our wish list on Amazon!** Link from the "You Can Help" section of the website.

*The New Nature Foundation is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, and all donations are tax-deductible.*