



Celebrating Kibale

This December, New Nature Foundation held its fifth annual conservation competitions in four villages around Kibale National Park. Over 1,700 people attended, the highest number to date. We wish you could all join us for these wonderfully celebratory days, but for those of you who cannot, welcome to *A day in the life of Kibale Conservation Competitions!*

The day begins around noon, when cooks participating in the efficient bean cook-off begin to arrive. Each brings his or her leftover firewood, which is weighed to see how much was used to cook a kilo of beans; a volunteer, who supervised the cooking, and; of course! one steaming hot saucepan of (hopefully) delicious beans. As the cooks arrive, and throughout the judge's tastings, other activities for the 400+ attendees begin, including: guessing the number of chimpanzees in Kibale, guessing how many elephants are poached in Africa each week and guessing the weight of an elephant bone. Once you've entered your name for each of those, head over to the next station and make an animal sculpture using recycled items (old water bottles, banana leaves, paper, wires - whatever is lying around). The final activity is to write a pledge to Kibale on a leaf, which is then attached to a paper tree, showing how each of our small actions can add up to something big.

The judges taste anywhere from 10 to 22 different beans (popular this year: g-nuts and eggplant; not so popular: spoiled ghee). The top three cooks take home a plethora of prizes, and then everyone attending enjoys the beans with rice.

In Kyanyawara, we had our first-ever winning male chef – the aud-



-ience was both intrigued and excited! All the winners showed pride and exuberance, many literally jumping for joy (right, in Isunga village). This helps demonstrate the efficiency of the stoves extremely well, and also has a clear impact on the lives of people around Kibale.

After eating, sit back and relax as acting ensembles, women's groups, and conservation clubs perform. (Continued on page 6)



Staff Spotlight: Bashir

Compiled from interviews by Rebecca Goldstone & Sarah Chudnovsky

Bashir Araali is 22 years old and has worked with NNF for the past seven years building stoves, taking surveys, promoting trees, presenting videos and heading the staff at the Kaburala Science Center. We first profiled him as a new intern in the Spring 2009 UPDATE.

What is your best memory of working with New Nature Foundation?

“Teaching and constructing rocket stoves.” Bashir tells a story of a visit to an old man named Pascal. When he introduced the efficient stove, the old man said, “My son, no. This three-stone stove is the stove I grew up with, even before you were born. I sit by it for warmth. How can I still get that warmth with your stove?” Bashir responded: “Let me make it and prove to you that it can do all of those things.” Though normally it takes only 1 hour for staff to assist a family building a stove, Bashir spent 5 hours this day, helping the *Mzee* carry bricks, bring water from the well and make mud. Four days later, Bashir returned to find that Pascal had finished the stove on his own, and together they cooked and ate some delicious sweet potatoes. “He no longer uses stones to cook, only his new stove. He loved it so much, he couldn’t believe it!”

What have you learned by working with the project?

“Give nature the respect it deserves.” Bashir says he learned how nature helps us and that a healthy environment is better for everyone. He has learned how to use less firewood, and how to teach people.

“For the matter of fact,” he said, “the science center was my eye opener to what basic things I can do to help the nature and people of Uganda. I was linked to many environmental books. I am learning that if you follow your dream and work, you will always follow that path. It is not just Uganda we must protect, we are all connected. Continent wide we must focus on conservation. Youth of the world with vigor must wake up and work towards it.”

What is the role of youth in conservation?

“We have energy because we are young, and we can use it to influence things. Definitely, in the population of Uganda the youth are very many. Conservation can start with us, and we can hope to have a bright future. We can know the difference between what leads to a good or bad environment because we are educated.”

What is your favorite animal?

“Chimpanzee. Since the beginning, it has been the chimpanzee.”

Where have you gone on NNF staff trips, and which was your favorite?

“Queen Elizabeth National Park, Kibale National Park, Semliki Wildlife Reserve and the Entebbe Zoo.” Tracking chimpanzees was his favorite. “It was my first time seeing them in



the forest. It was so amazing; I always liked reading about them so much. I loved to prove right all of the things that I had read and researched. I had read that they were social animals in groups, and I saw them socially grooming. I had read about the alpha male, and I saw the alpha male. I read that they were shy, and I understood that they really are very shy.”

What hopes do you have for the Kaburala Science Center?

“I want to encourage the youth and even those small children that are growing what conservation means. I want them to know the values of Kibale forest, and wetlands, to know the values and roles (Continued on next page)



Bashir, continued

of development for the country and well being of the earth.”

What do you mean by the “values” of Kibale’s forests and wetlands?

“Most of it all, the value of the trees is to create life. The country and population are growing, we are already 41 million. As we are growing, we need oxygen and rain from the trees to grow crops well. We need to identify the roles the forest plays as a home for animals also. We need to protect all the habitat to attract tourists. We can convert that money to basic needs and services and infrastructure. Even me, as Bashir, will be on the same road as those tourists and it will be a good road. The hospitals will have drugs and there will be jobs for youth. The good thing of it

all is that it will encourage people to protect so everything will live for long. People will say, “my son is working there, I must protect the forest.”

Your dreams for the future?

“To become a biologist and specialize in ecology. I may pause to work hard first, to gather funds. I want to study biodiversity and know how things keep changing, what is the role of humans. My first service is to Kibale, to people around me. Maybe I will be helping my land, then we will see about going to other places and see how we can help or improve elsewhere. For me, if I become successful I must start with my village.

Please consider making a donation to support Bashir’s work, the Science Centers, and all of NNF’s programs. The New Nature Foundation is a 501c3 non-profit organization, and all donations are tax-deductible. Secure on-line giving via our website, NewNatureFoundation.org, or mail checks to: 1632 Humboldt Street, Denver, Colorado, 80218. You can also find gifts for NNF’s four Kibale Science Centers on our [Amazon Wish List](#).



Vietnam Stoves Progress

New Nature Foundation continues to partner with the Denver Zoo to protect habitat for critically endangered Tonkin Snub Nosed Monkeys through an efficient stove program. In August, on our second visit to communes in the Ha Giang region of the country's far north (where fewer than 250 of the species remains), we learned that the original stove design introduced was not gaining the popularity expected. After many questions and many home visits, we discovered families simply were not happy with a single burner because it did not cook rice in a culturally acceptable fashion. Adding a second burner (photo at right) was an easy solution and the project is back on track! Rather than mud and dung, these stoves are made from cement mixed with rice husks, a highly insulating and efficient substance.

Next, in November, Mr. Tuong Bach continued surveys in the communities surrounding Khau Ca Forest, to document wood usage and gain more information on how people are currently cooking. During this survey, Community Patrol Guards Mr. Canh and Mr. Sam helped Bach move around the vast communities, and we would not have been so successful without their help and the partnership of the Vietnamese Government. Mr. Bach reports from the field: "In Minh Son and Yen Dinh, we built 11 stoves with the strong help from Mr. Canh - he is now an expert in building stoves."

NNF will continue advising on this project in 2016, and also plans on extending other aspects of our work to other African countries. To help, please consider donating airline miles to reduce travel costs - it's a very long way to Vietnam!



Watch a video showing how banana plant stems play a vital role in molding this new stove design [here](#).

A Trip to America

In October, project manager Margaret Kemigisa came to America for three weeks. She presented about the project at the Zoos and Aquaria Committing to Conservation conference hosted by Denver Zoo, spoke at the Oakland Zoo, attended the Wildlife Conservation Network Expo and visited the redwoods in San Francisco (photo at right), and also spent time in Montreal and Iowa. When she returned to Uganda, we asked the eco-char staff to interview her to find out her reflections on the USA:

How was the food? I was never hungry the entire stay - the food was very delicious!

Did you eat meat there? The best meat I ever had.

How were the roads? Very good roads.

How many times did you fly? Ah! Too many times, and they kept checking me and double-checking me each flight. There were police dogs that made me nervous. I had never been checked by a dog like that before!

Who was cooking? We went to hotels, Abooki [Rebecca] cooked a very nice dinner, we ate with our friends. (Continued on next page)



America, continued

Did you go to the zoos? Yes, they were all very big very pretty. Right now in Denver, it is full of Christmas lights. I saw Michael working and how much he loves his zoo, and also I pet the giraffe and fed the buffalo!

Did you meet any of our sponsors? Yes, quite a few. As I traveled around, everyone was so lovely.

What else did you do? I sang on stage! I was an entertainer singing about Africa. I also was drumming with a drumming club in California. I went to the beach - as usual I was not ready to swim. Everyone else ran into the water. I thought I would just run on the sand. I did not know it is impossible to run in the sand!

Did you dance with Rebecca and Michael? No, but it was still fun.

What about the hospitals? Do they have family planning in America? I did try and go to a clinic where they advise about family planning. I entered but I didn't really get to see, we were not allowed in.

Tell us about your talk. I went to the conference, and practiced many times so I would be very ready to talk. The only problem was that everyone was using the remote very well and I was not able to get it to go in the right way. I had to raise my hand and say I am ready for help. Luckily enough other people made mistakes as well.

Did you sleep on the plane? My eyes were open the whole time.

Did you pray? When I went to church I started to cry. I think I was happy. The lady asked if she could pray with me - it was so nice.

In the end? It was such a marvelous time. All in all it was a wonderful trip that I will never ever forget!

Crop Raiding

The annual competitions focused on solutions for crop raiding. We wanted the community to share not just stories about raids by wild animals, but what they could do to address the issue in realistic ways. Groups either sang and danced or performed plays to express their thoughts. Here is what we learned:

SOLUTIONS:

- “The Wildlife Authority should compensate us for the losses.”
- “People should plant hot pepper - if you burn the *piri piri*, the animals smell it and run back to the forest.”
- “Families should plant acacia trees - thorns keep animals from easily penetrating at the border of the garden. They can still grow food in the center of the farm.”
- “People should start bee hives, to scare elephants.”
- “Don't kill the animals - that is illegal, and we get tourists in the country because of them and we get money.”
- “People should dig a trench to protect their farms.”
- Some groups thought tea was the answer - you can make a lot of money and the market is already available. They also mentioned coffee, but unfortunately some animals feed on coffee.

The community had many wonderful ideas, and we hope that this day of celebration inspired more to take action to protect their land.



Competitions, continued

This is a wonderful opportunity for cultural dance, song, poetry and drama to be incorporated into the conservation conversation. The performances are judged and winners are announced. But please, don't go home just yet! Next is the race to see who can build an efficient stove the fastest.

Five competitors are provided with bricks and must race with them from one end of the field to the other, and then build a fabulous efficient stove. The crowd is frenzied, cheering for favorites and hysterical as racers carry as many bricks as they can to the building site. The top three winners – who built accurate stoves the fastest - receive prizes.

The day ends with two final races, just for the pure pleasure of running, with the prize of a soccer ball, which is a highly desired item here in Uganda.

It was a long day, but we hope you had fun. We will do it again (four times) next year – maybe you can join us in person!



Recycled animal winner holds his banana leaf elephant creation.

If you're planning a safari in East Africa or would like to volunteer with NNF in the field, please contact us at info@newnaturefoundation.org

A day-long visit to the eco-char factory, the Science Centers or a video show can be worked into any itinerary, and we can also help arrange longer stays.

Eco-Char for Sale

After four years of trading briquettes for waste with villagers around Kibale, NNF now has biomass briquettes for sale to the general public. (Non-carbonized briquettes have been sold to our partners at McLeod Russel Tea for the past year – this is the first time we are marketing a true replacement for charcoal to people in towns around Kibale currently cooking on this habitat-endangering commodity.) Congratulations to the staff on this momentous achievement. The briquettes are made from carbonized farm waste (like leaves, peanut shells and avocado pits) held together with pulverized banana peels. The staff will target a number of environmentally minded hotels as well as influential members of the communities around Kibale in hopes of them being the first to adopt this eco-friendly charcoal replacement in this region. We are hopeful that sales will allow this portion of the project to be self-sustaining by the end of 2016.





Thank you!

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