



Eco-Char in Kenya

NNF prides itself on executing programs that are replicable in other environments. We put that to the test in November when Founder and President Rebecca Goldstone visited the Ol Pejeta Conservancy in Kenya to begin a replication of the Kibale Eco-Char Initiative. While many in Kenya's urban centers are already briquetting charcoal dust, very few are utilizing waste products to create fuel. The conservancy piqued NNF's interest for a number of reasons: it is full of savannah animals and home to a chimpanzee sanctuary; there is a steady waste stream from hotels and staff; they have an established community conservation program with 18 partner communities (about

23,000 people), and; they are very motivated to reduce fuel-wood and charcoal consumption in and around the 90,000 acre conservancy. Additionally, OPC has the infrastructure to continue a briquette initiative on their own (after receiving the needed tutoring from NNF staff), so the likelihood of success, even with minimal support, is high.

Research and discussions with community and conservancy experts revealed many possible briquette ingredients, which were experimented with, but the one with most promise was dung from the 8,000 cows that live on the conservancy. (For years, Ol Pejeta has been a shining example of how profitable ranching and wildlife conservation can go hand-in-hand.) While some might think this would be better (*continued on next page*)



utilized with biogas digesters, local schools had already tried that type of system and found it too difficult to maintain.

The landscape around OPC is arid, and they have experienced significant drought lately. After a visit to a local Masaii village, it was clear there is almost no wood available for cooking or heating homes - they are reliant on purchasing wood or walking extremely long distances. Not all of the communities around the conservancy are this desperate for fuel, but seeing the devastation of surrounding

woodlands first hand makes it abundantly clear to all what the future has in store.

We experimented with carbonizing orange peels, pineapple rinds, cardboard, cronut shells and dung from cows and rhinos. (OPC is home to the last three Northern white rhinos on earth.) All the ingredients worked well, though some required more labor to process. Drying the waste before carbonizing was challenging in an open environment where free-roaming wildlife may try to steal fruit rinds or knock over the drums! We were warned of a blind elephant that had caused some damage in the past. We did have to cage the food waste so no one would get to it - which helped support the resounding conclusion that dung was the key to any OPC briquette



program. Finding a binder required sifting through trash at the nearby resort; in the end it was the papaya peels that really helped to keep our charcoal dust together.

Ol Pejeta is an amazing place, blending farming, tourism and conservation. In addition to the Northern white rhinos, it is a haven for 115 critically endangered black rhinos. The chimpanzee sanctuary rescues individuals from traumatic situations, many arriving with horrific injuries sustained from abuse at the hands of humans. There are 38 chimps there now who have a second chance at life. In OPC, we believe we've found caring partners to help spread the reach of NNF's unique waste-to-charcoal program. Keep an eye on our Facebook page and future Updates to follow all the progress!



Science Center Update

With five natural history museums in close proximity to Kibale National Park, NNF aims to establish positive connections between people and nature, encourage the next generation of Ugandan conservationists, and provide a safe and appealing place for people of all ages to relax, enjoy, study and create. The first Kibale Science Center was opened in 2006 in the Kaburala Trading Center, with support from the Great Ape Trust of Iowa and the Uganda Wildlife Authority. This museum was the first of its kind in Uganda, located in a village and designed for local citizens. One of the current Kaburala staff, Patrick Abimanyire, was a winner of the tree planting competition years ago and still rides his prize bike to work; one of the earliest



employees, Sam Murungi, will be returning to the NNF family this January to oversee all five Centers.

Over the years, continued high attendance made it apparent that NNF and its supporters could make a larger impact providing education and resources to more and more people with each Center launched, and three more were opened in trading

centers close to Kibale. The first year's attendance in Kaburala was 5,752; through November, all five centers have reached 25,215 visitors for 2016.

Since opening this past June, the Fort Portal Science Center has hosted puppet shows and birthday parties, seen 10,585 people come through its doors, increased visibility and understanding of



eco-char and even gathered a few donations each month! Staff has represented the Center at the "Save Mpanga River" rally, a Rwenzori Tourism Cluster event, and a popular Christmas craft fair, showcasing (and selling) eco-char at each. The visitor book includes commenters from all over Uganda as well as Australia, Canada, Gabon, New Zealand, USA and Wales. School principals, radio presenters, UPDF (Army) captains, Wildlife Authority wardens, professors, religious leaders, doctors, nurses, district government officials and a member of the Ugandan Ministry of Energy have all stopped by. Some excerpts: "Uncomparably wonderful, extremely rare and yet good - bravo!" "Very nice and not boring." "An innovation that was missing."

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Making Strides for Snub-nosed Monkeys

Home to the largest population of Tonkin Snub-nosed Monkeys in the world (~125), any and all efforts to protect Vietnam's Khau Ca Forest are urgently needed. Recently, Denver Zoo and NNF were awarded two new grants to continue efficient stove and alternative livelihood programs and expand into increased monitoring of incursions into the protected area with camera traps and boundary signage. The grants will also fund Ha Giang's first conservation competition, to take place in November 2017. As with all NNF programs, the approach is slow and thoughtful, adapting as we go, listening to feedback, and reading between the lines to create valuable and successful community-



conservation endeavors.

Slowly but surely, we are seeing more success. On this last trip (the fifth since NNF started work in 2014), more headway was made on the alternative

livelihood program. From the onset, it was clear that there is tremendous skill, beauty and

authenticity in the household tools, tribal clothing, and jewelry that we encountered while making home visits to discuss stoves. NNF saw an opportunity: for those who could not afford \$4 for stove materials, if they had something to sell then the cost would be covered not only to replace the item but also to buy cement and sand for a stove. The items are then used as donation incentives at NNF lectures and fundraisers, with all proceeds supporting the programs. The idea of selling household goods, and the curiosity as to why foreigners might want them was an extreme hurdle. There also was concern of what would happen to the family (a curse or a blessing) if they sold an item. At the beginning, people would shake their heads - nothing to sell. Some brave individuals were on board, selling unique hand made drums and knives, hand forged bracelets and necklaces, all extremely unique and rare to find outside these villages. But still, it was a surprise that more weren't interested - until this September, when everything changed. The community has chosen to trust us, understanding that good things will come from this interaction.

Which leads to the story of a man who explained that he wanted a stove but could not afford cement. He had seen the stove working well at neighbors' homes and knew a lot about the project - a positive sign that the message is making headway. As we sat over tea, we asked if he might have something to sell to help with the cost of cement. At first he said no, he couldn't imagine that there was anything in his house that we would want to buy. Luckily, we had noticed his hand made field knife with brass decoration and buffalo horn hilt, a staple of Ha Giang village life. He was more than happy to sell it, and after the exchange he immediately scheduled a stove builder to come the next day. Smiles all around, toasts with the local brew, and a great way to improve his home and family health, use less firewood and save endangered habitats and animals!



Science Centers, Continued

As of this writing, the Isunga Science Center is nearly bursting at the seams. To keep initial costs low, that Center and another in Kaswa are simple one-room museums, which is a challenge when busy. In 2017, we plan to move Isunga to a new location down the street to accommodate everyone who wishes to enjoy. In Nabweya, the four rooms are enough to hold the crowds, but staffing needed to be doubled due to its extreme popularity!

For a better understanding of where the Science Centers are located, just search “Kibale Science Center” on Google Maps - you’ll find photos of each, while the satellite view gives a good representation of just how few trees remain outside Kibale’s boundaries. All of the Science Centers are free, opened 2-3 days each week. We believe that all Ugandans deserve the same chance to learn about nature that we in the West enjoy. With your support, NNF can continue operating these community learning centers at a very reasonable cost, educating tens of thousands of people each year about the forest, its inhabitants, and how to protect them.

“I learned the way nature behaves when I discovered the Science Center, and I am proud of it because it gives me the motivation to go deep in my art with the nature around me.”

- Sadik Abubakar

This holiday season, please consider buying something for the Science Centers from our Amazon wish-list or making a donation in honor of a friend or loved one.

Details at NewNatureFoundation.org

The New Nature Foundation is a 501c3 non-profit organization. All donations are tax deductible.

New Address: 3410 Leahi Avenue #305, Honolulu, Hawaii, 96815

Conservation Competitions

The sixth annual Kibale Conservation Competitions focused on how animals are similar to humans. We had visitors from Oakland Zoo assisting with judging - Daniel was a very brave bean judge, tasting 20 different beans. As always, groups in four locations performed traditional dances, poems and plays to share what they have learned about the subject with audiences as large as 600 people (1,850 total). A few recurring themes included how animals breastfeed, how they mourn for the dead, and what foods we both enjoy.



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