



RUAHA CONSERVATION FUND



environmental day celebrations

As usual our Environmental day celebrations went off with a huge bang. This year the event took place at Kitanewa Primary school, situated between Idodi and Tungamalenga villages.

We were approached by The Friends of Ruaha Society who were keen to collaborate with us, they were anxious to get involved in this program. We agreed if they shared some of the costs. They paid for the food for the lunch and we paid for all the transport, prizes and items needed to stage the event.

The 7 primary schools convened at 11 am and the fun began with entertainment from the children. Wonderful songs created especially for the day and a couple of entertaining plays depicting poachers being caught red handed. Some of the boys like to create 'rap' songs or are they called 'hip hop'? Anyway, the young audience love them but the teachers and parents look on rather bemused.

This event was organized by the teachers themselves, with the help of Mr Mwangosi, who is the

education officer for the area. The 21 prize winners (the top 3 students in each school for Math, Science and English) were given books and geometry sets, and will later on this year have an overnight stay in the park.

It was noted that after over 10 years of staging this event the school and village environments, had much improved, with many trees planted providing shade, fruit and fuel for the villagers.



SCHOOL TRIPS TO RUAHA PARK



The annual school trips were their usual success!

LAST YEAR WE SENT 600 STUDENTS FOR AN OUTING TO THE PARK!

1. THE DAY BEGINS EARLY FOR THE EXCITED CHILDREN. THEY ARE FROM STANDARD 6, WHICH MEANS THEY ARE ABOUT 11 YEARS OLD.
2. AT THE PARK ENTRANCE GATE THEY COLLECT A PARK GUIDE WHO GIVES THEM AN EXCITING TOUR.
3. THEY RETURN TO HQ FOR A LATE, BUT DELICIOUS LUNCH, AND THEN LEAVE FOR HOME VIA THE HIPPO AND CROC POOLS.

The annual school trips to Ruaha Park are without doubt the highlight of the year for all the children and is an eagerly awaited event.

The trips took place during a week in November last year. Most of the groups saw lions, some saw ostrich and cheetah, which was very unusual, and of course many elephants, buffalo, zebra, giraffe and all the more usual antelope and small mammals.

A memorable time for all!

Thank you!

To our Dutch donors for their continued support. Harry and Ans have sponsored these trips for the past 9 years, plus the other annual activities, such as World Environmental day celebrations, and the overnight stay in Ruaha for the top 21 students in the 7 primary schools.

We would not have been able to ensure the continuity of our programs without these two very special people! Thank you

Guide training for the ongoing development of cultural tourism

Steph Perkins, continues to develop and improve on last years cultural tourism activities in Tungamalenga, Makifu and Mahove Villages. Again we are very happy to be able to sponsor her new initiatives, which consisted of organizing a training program for guides to enhance the visitor experience. This was a 4 week course providing training for six young men involved in the cultural tourism program. A one week course was also held for interested ladies, next year we hope to expand and develop this program.

Steph hired local bird expert, Leons Mlawila for teaching about the birds, Anderson Kalinga for the tree, and shrub identification; Khalfan Kipufya for instruction in English, Steph also helped out with this. The course took place at the well known Chogella campsite in Tungamalenga where the teachers and students slept and ate. Chogella built a classroom from local materials, which is now being used as the booking office and shop for the Cultural tourism activities in the area. It was an intensive course, the students were up and out birding at 6.30am every morning, classes all day and often times they were still listening to lectures at 8pm at night.

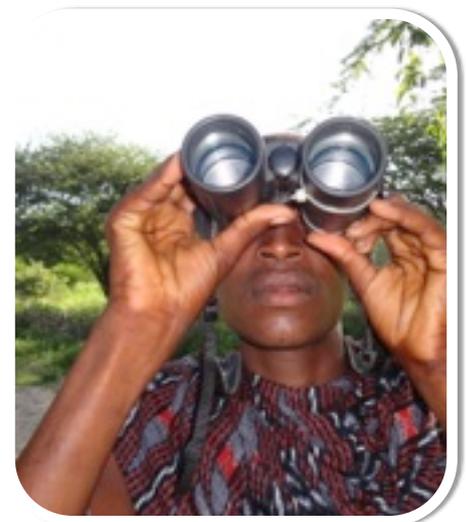
There were many challenges due to the diversity of the levels of education of the students. One student had left school after only a few years of primary education and others had reached much higher levels of education. Interestingly though, Steph commented on the fact that the students with the least education tried the hardest, and as they were not afraid to make mistakes, perhaps learned the most, whilst others with more sophisticated education were not so keen to admit to things they did not know. Their English improved tremendously, and when the first visitors of the season arrived in early June, Steph did not need to do any translating for the visitors, as the guides handled it beautifully. So all in all it was a tremendous achievement, and well worth the great effort made by the teachers and students alike. A big thank you goes to Steph for her energy and enthusiasm.

So, to sum up, last year many groups of visitors were able to engage in Maasai activities and village life. This year they are expanding their activities to include hikes into the beautiful hills that surround the villages, overnight stays in a traditional style home, Hehe drumming and dance ceremony, village craftsman tours, pastoralist walk with the Maasai plus many other treats.

For more information on this please visit their brand new website www.ruahaculturaltourism.com



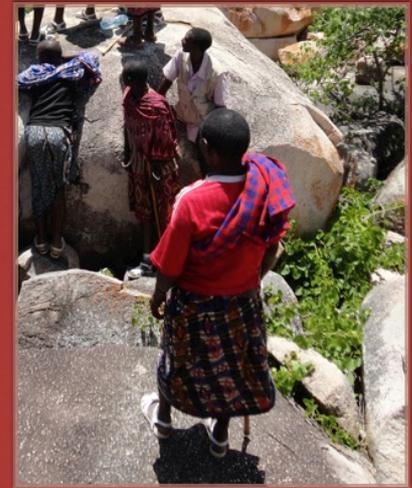
Tree Identification and Classroom Work, Bird Watching, etc.



ENVIRONMENTAL CLUB



Traditional stories being told to the students



environmental and cultural initiatives in the primary schools and villages

Cultural tourism is a new concept for the people living outside Ruaha Park so a meeting was held in Tungamalenga for the village government and elders to discuss and expose the importance and relevance of cultural tourism for the area.

We are very excited to see the continued enthusiasm by Steph Perkins who initiated the 'Ruaha Environmental Club Kick-off Program in February this year. We were very happy that we were able to sponsor this initiative and hope to incorporate it as an annual event. This provides training to local primary school's elected environmental club leaders from standards six and seven along with one teacher and one community member. The training provided training in flora and fauna identification, perma-culture gardening, composting, and appropriate farming techniques, and wildlife and forest conservation; through hands-on learning activities, classroom sessions, nature and community walk-about, and a Ruaha National Park trip. The aim of this training was to act as a training

of trainers with students returning to their communities and schools to train other club members, students, and community members. An action plan is drawn up by club members during the training and the progress of this action plan will be monitored by staff members once a month through school visits. The program was extremely successful with students showing a significant increase in their environmental knowledge through a pre- post- test analysis. The pre- test scores rose by 21% from an average of 59% to an average of 80% for the post test scores. Currently the students have already conducted a fuel-efficient stove project in the Makifu community since returning. The funds used for this program were from the money accrued from the sales of the Ruaha National Park map.

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