



NRT NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2022





NRT Newsletter

March 2022 Issue

Dear NRT Partners,

At NRT, there is always a reason to celebrate, and as the first quarter of the year came to a close, March provided us with plenty of reasons to be thankful. From a wonderful visit by the US Congress's Committee on Ways and Means—the chief tax-writing committee in the House of Representatives, to the launch of the Northern Kenya Rangelands Carbon project which is the world's first large-scale grasslands soil carbon project, this March newsletter is filled with exciting news and we are delighted to have yet another opportunity to update you on our progress. Read on to find out the latest from NRT and our member conservancies!

NRT Hosts a Delegation from the US Congress

It is always an exciting time at NRT when we have visitors coming over to learn more about the NRT community conservancy model and how communities are participating in and benefiting from it. Each visit to our member conservancies in northern Kenya or the Coast presents a valuable opportunity to educate people at various levels about how and why the conservancy approach works. In March, we were beyond thrilled to host a delegation comprising the US Congress' Ways and Means Committee and the USAID KEA team led by USAID Kenya and East Africa Mission Director, Mark Meassick. NRT and its member community conservancies are transforming lives, promoting peace, and conserving natural resources, thanks to USAID's funding, and the delegation was enamored with the work they are doing.

During the visit, the delegation interacted with community members from the conservancies, learnt about our peacebuilding efforts—which are generously supported by USAID's People to People (P2P) Program and met BeadWORKS artisans and the Ujuzi Manyattani Program's beneficiaries.





Ujuzi Manyattani Program Set to Expand Following NRT Trading-NITA Agreement

The National Industrial Training Authority (NITA) and NRT Trading engaged in a new partnership aimed at jointly expanding the Ujuzi Manyattani Program, opening the doors for the training and certification of Ujuzi Manyattani beneficiaries using NITA curricula and the Government Trade Test.

This new partnership will drive the socio-economic development of the participating NRT community conservancies by ensuring the curricula offered in the chosen trades are current and relevant in the face of rapidly changing industry dynamics and technological advancements. NITA, led by the Director-General, Eng. Stephen Ogenga, and NRT Trading, led by the CEO, Vishal Shah, formalized the partnership by signing a collaborative agreement.

Ujuzi Manyattani is a mobile, village-based vocational training program that collaborates with polytechnics to help women and young morans in NRT member conservancies diversify their livelihoods, promoting entrepreneurship.



International Women’s Day Celebration

It is common knowledge that many women around the world have to overcome an obstacle race to succeed in life. While significant progress has been made in breaking the bias against women, much more work is left to be done. Every win during this journey of creating an equitable world is a reason for celebration. On the 8th of March, 200 women from NRT member conservancies in West Pokot, Laikipia, Marsabit, Baringo, Isiolo, and Samburu Counties gathered in Ngare Ndare Community Conservancy to celebrate the progress made in attaining gender equality, and the efforts of phenomenal women fighting for change and advocating for gender equality for a sustainable future. Laikipia North MP, Sarah Korere, presided over the event where women also underwent training on reproductive health, education, gender mainstreaming, and women’s role in peacebuilding.



Northern Kenya Rangelands Carbon Project Launched

In March, the world’s first large-scale grasslands soil carbon project, the Northern Kenya Rangelands Carbon Project, was launched. 14 NRT member community conservancies will benefit from the Project. Each partnering conservancy will receive Ksh 36 million (USD 316,205) this year, with similar amounts or more to follow each year, NRT CEO, Tom Lalam-paa, announced during the launch. The Project is one of few large, landscape-level carbon removal ventures currently on the market. It is anticipated to remove and store 50 million tons of carbon dioxide over 30 years which is the equivalent of the annual emissions from over 10,000,000 cars!

The sale of this sequestered carbon from community rangelands in northern Kenya will create additional and much-needed income for the communities and enhance conservation efforts, including the improvement of habitat for four endemic endangered species—the



Ksh 36M

Amount each partnering conservancy will receive this year

eastern black rhino, Grevy's zebra, reticulated giraffe, and Beisa oryx, as well as address the impact of climate change. At least 40% of carbon revenue will finance conservancies' operations and the rehabilitation of rangelands and degraded areas, benefitting community members' livestock and wildlife. The remaining 60% will go towards funding projects of the community's choice, such as health, education bursaries, water, and classroom construction.

NRT East Office Opened

NRT teams work tirelessly every day to help our member conservancies achieve greater independence and sustainability. Towards this end and as part of a newly introduced regional transition approach aimed at devolving programs and services to our member conservancies, NRT has established regional offices in NRT Center, NRT West, NRT Coast, NRT Mountain, and now, NRT East!

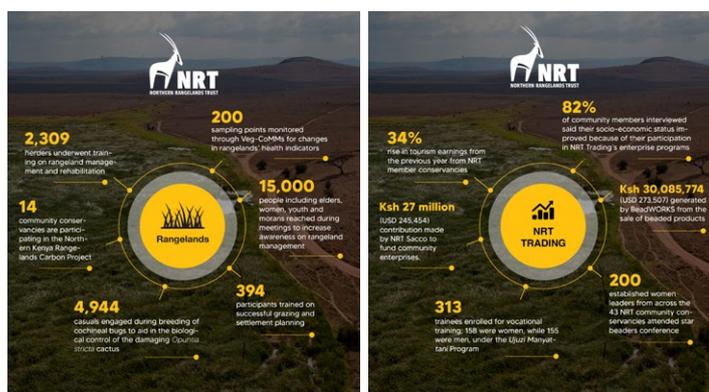
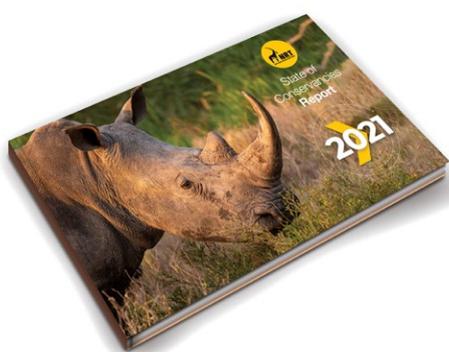
In March, the NRT East office was opened in Isiolo Town at an event attended by our partners from national and county governments, conservation-led organizations, community-based organizations, and non-governmental organizations.

The NRT East office will serve Leparua, Biliqo Bulesa, Nasuulu, Sericho, Nakuprat Gotu, Cherab, Nannapisho, Naapu, Garbatulla, Melako, Nannapa, Narupa, Shurr, Songa, Kinna and Jaldesa Community Conservancies.



2021 State of Conservancies Report Launched Online

The 2021 State of Conservancies Report is out! This annual NRT report details all the accomplishments our member community conservancies made last year. NRT's Communications Department rolled out a weekly internal and external campaign to create awareness of the 2021 State of Conservancies Report ahead of its online release. During the campaign, teaser posts were made which were accompanied by posters containing data on the impact of NRT's programs. The annual report was launched on March 29th on NRT's socials and website. To read all about our work and the progress made in 2021, you can access the entire report here: <https://www.nrt-kenya.org/document-library>



Council of Elders Suspends Namunyak Conservancy

NRT's Council of Elders (CoEs), 43 chairpersons and 5 regional women representatives from NRT member conservancies met on March 10th for the first 2022 bi-annual CoE to discuss the 2022 Annual Operations Report and Work Plan, NRT Trading updates, budgets, adoption of the 2021 State of Conservancies Report, potential partnerships, and conservancies' awards. During the meeting, the Council resolved to suspend Namunyak Conservancy and its 3 units (Nalowuon, Ngilai, and Kalepo) due to several issues including poor governance, lack of financial accountability and transparency in sharing community benefits, and low stakeholder engagement. Consequently, NRT immediately suspended all its operations, funding, and support to Namunyak. The Council's stance is that Namunyak Conservancy's membership will be reinstated after they comply with the requirements and submit a written application for reinstatement.



NRT goes International with Collaring Partnership in Uganda

Northern Uganda is a savanna punctuated by woodlands, thickets and shrublands with diverse wildlife. Many of its characteristics are the same as northern Kenya's, including climate, vegetation, livelihoods, and culture. Elephant populations across the wild borders of Kenya and Uganda garner little attention and information on the threats they face is scanty. We may not know all the challenges they encounter, but we do know holding a valid passport is not one of them—they roam across the Kenya-Uganda border freely, albeit we do not know when or the specific spots.

To gather data that would inform the conservation of elephants and avert elephant-human conflict, NRT and UCF launched a transboundary elephant-collaring operation in 2021 in Kenya's West-Pokot, South Turkana, and Marakwet Counties, and in Uganda's Kidepo Valley National Park located in northeastern Uganda, in partnership with the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA), Kenya Wildlife Research and Training Institute (WRTI), Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) and Save the Elephants (STE), with the aim of extending or renewing existing elephant-tracking operations, informing wildlife research and management and monitoring potential trans-boundary elephant movements between Kenya and Uganda.

STE and NRT, in collaboration with KWS, had previously collared and tracked elephants in West Pokot, Turkana and Marakwet Counties from 2017 to 2021. These collars had defined the elephant range and revealed intriguing movement patterns—males moved in close proximity to females, which is unusual because males are typically more self-reliant than females. This is perhaps an effect of the severe poaching these elephants endured before 2017, which may have encouraged the males and females to stay in larger groups for safety in numbers. The elephants' vulnerability and the upsurge in human-elephant conflict necessitated a collaring operation across the entire ecosystem to enable continuous elephant surveillance.

In February 2022, 15 elephants were collared from Kidepo Valley National Park, through northeastern Uganda, into Kenya's West Pokot and Nasolot areas. These collars, generously donated by STE, will reveal the movement patterns of Kidepo's elephants, providing insight on how the elephants move, where they go, and what they need, and determine whether connectivity still exists between neighbouring countries. During the collaring operation, the team relied heavily on NRT's and STE's elephant distribution know-how and the KWS and



UWA's local insight. All the collared elephants are monitored using the satellite collars, in real time, through the EarthRanger technology which provides the KWS and UWA instant access to the data for management purposes. UWA further invited NRT and STE to assist with training UWA staff in Murchison Falls National Park and to provide technical expertise in collaring elephants.



BeadWORKS Team Distributes Toolkits to Beaders

NRT Trading's BeadWORKS joined forces with the IBU Foundation, a global movement that celebrates the imagination and skill of women, and gained the financial backing needed to procure and distribute 1,000 toolkits to women beaders across 8 participating conservancies. The kits, comprising of production equipment such as pliers and needles, will ease the women's work when beading. BeadWORKS has been on a mission to make its artisans more efficient and effective in their production by equipping them with the tools they require to both improve product quality and save on production time. BeadWORKS creates opportunities for pastoralist women in northern Kenya by translating beading, one of their traditional crafts, into much-needed income.



Conservation International (CI) visits NRT Coast

In March, we had yet another fantastic visit, this time at NRT Coast, as a delegation from Conservation International (CI) arrived for a field visit to the marine projects where they learned about NRT's marine work, gained insights on the impact of the NRT community conservancy model, and discussed potential partnerships. The team also visited Pate Marine Community Conservancy's Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMAs), where women-led temporary octopus closures are located, and convened an onsite meeting with women fishers and community rangers in which their accomplishments, difficulties, priorities, and plans were discussed.

Biogas Project set to Upscale to Five NRT Coast Conservancies

The NRT clean energy team held community awareness meetings in 5 NRT Coast Conservancies: Ishaqbini, Ndera, Lower Tana, Hanshak, and Pate Marine, to mobilize communities to embrace the use of clean energy for cooking and reduce their reliance on charcoal and firewood. The increased awareness will help to alleviate the pressure on dwindling forest habitats caused by firewood harvesting.

Each conservancy will receive 30 biogas units. All 5 conservancies are expected to establish a revolving fund based on household repayment plans, which will enable the purchase of more biogas units to benefit other conservancy members.

30

Biogas units to be received by each of the 5 conservancies

CEFA Hands Over Cheror Honey Processing Unit (HPU) Site to Contractor

The European Committee for Training and Agriculture (CEFA), a member of the Ustahimilivu Project Consortium, is supporting agriculture and water provision initiatives in the Ustahimilivu Project. Ustahimilivu is a four-year EU-funded consortium project that aims to support resilience for sustainable livelihoods through the community conservancy model, and restore drought resilience in 11 wards of the lowlands in West Pokot County.

CEFA officially handed over the site of a Honey Processing Unit (HPU) to an appointed contractor in March. The HPU is located in Lomut under the Cheror Self Help Group which was established in 2014 and consists of 22 members. Each member has about ten beehives. In one season, the group harvests up to 3 tons of honey.

To promote the spirit of ownership, Cheror Group was tasked with acquiring land and constructing a carpentry workshop to be used in making the modern Langstroth hives. CEFA will enlist a consultant who will equip the workshop and train carpenters. The total estimated cost for the provision of both services is slightly above Ksh 700,000.

The honey processing unit, whose construction will be complete in two months, will cost approximately Ksh 2.5 million. CEFA will equip the facility with all the necessary processing machines.

The HPU's construction will boost honey production by the farmers and improve the quality of honey produced. In addition to obtaining honey revenue, the farmers will also benefit from selling honey wax. CEFA has provided the farmers with wax processing equipment.

Ujuzi Manyattani Team Conducts Internal Trainee Assessment

NRT Trading's Ujuzi Manyattani team conducted an internal assessment of 90 USAID-funded Local Works Program trainees in Masol, Ruko and Ishaqbini Community Conservancies. The assessment data will enable the Program's implementation team to determine the trainees' progress. Ujuzi Manyattani is a mobile, village-based vocational training program that partners with polytechnics as part of a drive to diversify livelihoods and encourage entrepreneurship amongst women and young morans in NRT member conservancies.



World Wildlife Day 2022

Isiolo conservancies, together with the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), Kenya Forest Service (KFS) and other partners celebrated World Wildlife Day with a tree-planting exercise and a walk to promote awareness about the need to recover key species. NRT also lauded the efforts of Ishaqbini Hirola, Sera, Nakuprat Gotu, and Ruko Community Conservancies in spearheading the recovery of the critically endangered wildlife species among them, including the hirola antelope, Beisa oryx, Rothschild's giraffe, and the black rhino.



Seagrass and Coral Reef Surveys Conducted in Pate and Kiunga Conservancies

NRT Coast undertook a seagrass survey in the Kiunga and Pate Marine Community Conservancies in partnership with the Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute (KEMRFI) to learn more about the state of the seagrass and the presence of dugong species.

Additionally, fish, benthic, and invertebrates were surveyed along the reefs of Pate Island during the coral reef monitoring surveys.



Tackling Insecurity in Conservancies

The rise of insecurity along the Kom triangle and Nasuulu grazing areas remains a cause for concern. Recent clashes and retaliatory attacks have resulted in the loss of life, displacement, cattle rustling, and tension amongst pastoralist communities.

NRT's Peace team met national government officials, security personnel and elders from Isiolo, Samburu, and Marsabit Counties to deliberate on the best strategy for managing the escalating crisis in grazing areas and on the roads.

Addressing Human-Wildlife Conflict in Samburu North

NRT's Samburu North team met with Samburu North conservation stakeholders to address rampant cases of human-wildlife conflict (HWC) and poaching of the endangered Beisa oryx, ostriches, and Grevy's zebras in Sarima, Nyiro Conservation Area. Partnerships, community participation, and raising awareness were identified as potential ways of addressing the rise in HWC cases.

Joy as Leiyai Community in Songa Conservancy Receives Water Infrastructure Support

The community in Songa Conservancy has relied on an old water supply connection from a spring in a nearby forest for years to access clean water, but the connection has been broken for some time by elephants, resulting in a water shortage.

In the last two years, the situation became dire and was aggravated by insecurity, placing women and girls at risk as they had to trek 5 kilometers to fetch water from a nearby village. NRT repaired the broken water supply system in the Conservancy with the support of Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and Rainforest Trust. To supply water to the Leiyai community, new water pipelines were laid and a 100,000-litre storage tank was installed.

Melako Conservancy Board Capacity Building

NRT Trading helps community conservancies to develop and market tourism products in order to maximize their revenue. To that end, 17 board members from Melako Community Conservancy were trained on governance, financial management, communication, the Eight-test Rule, and ways to identify business opportunities, in a bid to build their capacity in overseeing the operations of Melako bandas.



Conflict Resolution in West-Pokot Sub-counties

NRT's peace team met with national government leaders from Turkana East, Marakwet East, and Sigor Sub-counties in West Pokot to discuss the uptick of conflict in the area as a result of political incitement, land disputes and cattle theft.

Hanshak-Nyongoro Board Training

Hanshak-Nyongoro Community Conservancy's newly elected Board underwent a training on governance and leadership, which equipped them with knowledge of natural resource management and sustainable development.

Lower Tana Delta Conservancy Holds its Annual General Meeting

The Lower Tana Delta Community Conservancy held its Annual General Meeting on March 19th at which they discussed the Conservancy's progress, challenges, opportunities, and plans. Partners and members of the community attended the meeting and had productive discussions about conservation and community development.



In the Media



[Conservancies hailed for helping pastoralist women break barriers](#)

[Camping in the luggas of Kalama](#)

New Book Alert

We are happy to announce that ‘Flowers for Elephants’ written by renown author, Peter Martell, is out now! Available as an eBook and in hardback, the book features an intriguing account of NRT and shares an uplifting story of endangered livelihoods and species saved, by communities fighting climate change and poaching. While the book is available now through the publisher, it will be internationally released on May 15. Feel free to click on this link to grab a copy of the brand new book: <https://www.hurstpublishers.com/book/flowers-for-elephants/>



Newsbytes from the Conservancies



NRT Mount Kenya Conservancies held a second meeting to plan their quarterly activities.



Coral reef survey monitoring exercise carried out in Kiunga Community Conservancy.



Nasuulu, Naibunga Lower, Melako, and Il Ngwesi Conservancies held special AGMs to discuss the Northern Kenya Rangelands Carbon Project and proposed various community projects to be funded by 60% of the carbon revenue.



160 herders were trained on cross-breeding and livestock value chain practices in Shurr and Jaldesa Conservancies.



Ujuzi Manyattani vocational training sessions continued in Ruko Conservancy.



Kirimon and Nkoteiya’s rangers successfully recovered 20 goats stolen at the two conservancies’ border.

It is very encouraging to see NRT and our member conservancies continually rise to the challenge and make significant strides month after month, despite the odds. A heartfelt thank you to all our donors and partners who unwaveringly support us on this journey as we seek to serve our member conservancies and enable them to increase their resilience against climate change.

ASANTENI SANA

The Northern Rangelands Trust would like to thank the following principal donors, partners and investors (with many more listed on our website) for their invaluable support.

