

FORS News

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The Friends of Ruaha Society

FORS is a registered charity based in Iringa, Tanzania near Ruaha National Park. FORS was started in 1984 to assist with the task of safeguarding the wildlife and environment of the park. In recent years, FORS has expanded its work and focuses on environmental education in the communities that border Ruaha. These communities are now part of the new Lunda Mkwambi Wildlife Management Area (WMA), giving local people the opportunity to benefit from their wildlife and also making them an increasingly important part of the conservation equation. FORS strives to **conserve the Ruaha ecosystem by increasing environmental awareness in the communities that border Ruaha National Park, thereby ensuring that local people understand the balance between themselves, wildlife and the environment.**

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FORS & NEEMA CRAFTS BRING SODIS TO PAWAGA

(By Alexander Klose)

Solar Disinfection of Water, or SODIS, is a simple solution to a widespread problem: unclean drinking water. Developed by a Swiss research group in 1991, the SODIS method is as follows: put a bottle of water outside on a piece of black painted metal, and after six hours in direct sun, the UV rays and heat kill all the harmful bacteria, making it safe to drink.

Andy and Susie Hart, founders of Neema Crafts workshop in Iringa, have been using SODIS at home and at Neema Crafts for 5 years now. Andy and his experienced SODIS trainer, Pastor

Musa Kwanga of the Diocese of Ruaha, have introduced SODIS to dozens of villages in the Iringa Region.

Using hundreds of plastic bottles collected at Neema Crafts, and accompanied by Pastor Kwanga, FORS introduced SODIS to all Pawaga schools at our participatory methods workshops in October. Many teachers didn't know about SODIS, and they were grateful to Pastor Kwanga and FORS.

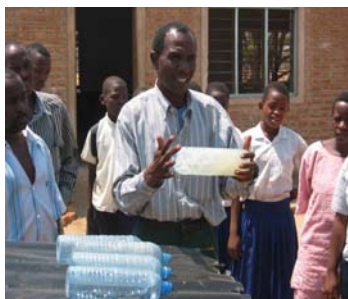
Judith, a teacher at Kimande Primary School, told us the workshop was right on time because Kimande teachers and parents had just concluded that it would be impossible to boil water for their 500 students. SODIS is an excellent solution for FORS schools because in addition to the need for clean drinking water in Idodi and Pawaga, the climate is perfectly suited for SODIS use,



Musa Kwanga demonstrating SODIS at Isele

and all schools have corrugated metal roofs where students and teachers can put their bottles.

At the end of each workshop, one teacher from every school was given 30 bottles in order to start using SODIS at the school. During our follow-up visits of the Wildlife module in Pawaga, we found that three schools had already painted their roofs black and started using SODIS – only a month after the workshop! Thanks to Andy Hart, Neema Crafts and Pastor Kwanga for contributing your knowledge and expertise on SODIS.



Remember to shake the bottle!

GRAFTING WORKSHOP

(By Magreth Fadhili)

In cooperation with the Tanzania Tree Seed Agency (TTSA), FORS arranged a grafting workshop on November 8th for Tungamalenga, Kitanewa and Kitesi Primary Schools as a reward to these schools for their great work in planting and maintaining tree nurseries.

FORS hired two experts from TTSA, facilitator Mr. Shellimoh and technical assistant Mr. Nyambo, to conduct the workshop in two sessions. The first session was about preparing nursery beds and different types of grafting, and the second session was a grafting lesson conducted in the Tungamalenga school nursery,

Teachers were very eager to learn different things during the workshop and thanked FORS for giving them this special opportunity of learning new technology about grafting - not only for the benefit of their schools but also for their own future, because they will be able to transfer the knowledge to their home.

"We would like to thank FORS for organizing this workshop, for sure this training came right on time; this knowledge can help improve our lives in different ways. We have learned a lot today and we are hereby promising you that next year we will raise even more tree seedlings and we would like to transfer the knowledge of grafting to our

students." -Mr. Elia, Tungamalenga Head Teacher.

Finally Mr. Shellimoh encouraged teachers to use their newly received knowledge about grafting as a tool to address poverty and as an alternative way to earn income. He gave different examples of how they can produce quality fruits and vegetables.



Teachers practicing grafting

Participatory Methods Workshops

(By Anette Kyvik)

In late October FORS conducted participatory methods workshops for all 13 Pawaga schools, hosted at four different centers: Isele, Itunundu, Mkombilenga and Magozi. The main goals were to model participatory teaching and learning methods and effective use of the FORS teacher's manual, which includes original, interactive lesson plans for Standard I to Standard VI.

The Tanzanian government is increasingly encouraging the use of participatory methods in teaching and learning, but few teachers have the knowledge needed to implement this mandate. In addition to a lack of familiarity with these methods, teachers struggle with class sizes of 70-120 students, making it very difficult for them to implement new practices without support. This is why we decided to conduct these workshops: to provide Pawaga teachers with the necessary guidance to use the FORS teacher's manual effectively and incorporate participatory teaching and learning into their classroom routines.



Mr. Mgelekele demonstrating concept map



Hands-on learning about soil

The workshops were a big success, with all teachers, local education officers and FORS staff participating eagerly in every activity. We started the workshops with an interactive and fun pairs introduction, before we all literally got our hands dirty in learning about different types of soil. Other techniques modeled were games, a debate, concept maps, a future wheel and different energizers.

FORS met with two experienced teachers before the workshops to plan the agenda together, and during the workshops, FORS staff and these teachers acted as joint facilitators. Thank you to Mr. Pascal Mgelekele (Head Teacher at Kisanga Primary School) and Mr. Bellington Mhango (Head Teacher at Isele Primary School) for your expertise and assistance!

FORS is Blogging!

Thanks to a great suggestion from Tanya Trevor Saunders of the African Environmental Film Foundation, FORS has now created a blog with Wildlife Direct, a website for environmental organizations from all over the world. On our blog we will write weekly updates and post pictures of our work, so it will be a great way to stay informed about what we're up to in the office and in the field. We encourage all of you to read our posts and we welcome your comments and questions.

Wildlife Direct is also an online donation website, so when you go to our blog you will be able to donate to specific FORS projects and activities. We have yet to secure funding for several important 2009 activities so we would appreciate help from all our members and partners to spread the word about our blog and help us do some fundraising.

Stay informed about FORS' work and donate online by visiting our new blog:
<http://friendsofruaha.wildlifedirect.org>

Hosted at 4 different centers, the workshops were also a great opportunity for teachers from different schools to exchange ideas and knowledge. The teachers asked FORS to conduct this kind of workshop at least three times per year because they recognize the effectiveness of participatory teaching and learning and are eager to continue using these methods in their classrooms.

Wildlife and Weather Follow-up Visits

(By Magreth Fadhili)

As most of you know, FORS staff conduct follow-up visits at all 24 schools after completion of each EE module in order to evaluate student learning and teacher progress. In years past, students in Standards I-III were given questionnaires just like the older students, but this year, for the Weather and Wildlife modules, we used games as a way to have fun while learning.

For the Weather follow-up, we brought dozens of balloons with us and took the younger students outside to learn about wind.

A few students from each standard were to blow up the balloons (often receiving help from eager classmates) and were then asked to throw the balloons up in the air. By observing the flight of the balloons and asking the right questions, we were able to see how much the children knew about air and wind.

For example, we were pleased when a Mafuluto student told us that air is "a mixture of different gasses." Students at all schools loved the game, and laughed with delight while chasing the balloons in the wind.



Using balloons to learn about wind

For the Wildlife follow-up, we brought pictures of different wild animals and used the riddles from the FORS teacher's manual. One of us read the riddles aloud while the other acted out the animals' behavior, eliciting smiles and laughter from all the students. The lesson from these follow-ups is clear:

participatory methods are a great way to get everyone engaged and motivated to learn together.



Wild animal riddles



Anette's hippo impression

Wildlife water utilization and importance of artificial waterholes during dry season at Ruaha National Park, Tanzania

A Summary by
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Water is essential for wildlife and the provision of water to wildlife in most protected areas of Tanzania has traditionally been left for nature take its own course; animals get their water from surface flows wherever they can find it (Douglas-Hamilton 1973)

The natural availability of surface water within some protected areas such as the Ruaha National park has been modified by human activities outside the protected areas. Since the mid 1990s this has led to the formerly perennial Great Ruaha River (GRR) ceasing to flow during the dry season

(SMUWC 2002; Mtahiko et al. 2006).

The man-made drying out of the GRR led to a degradation of the natural wildlife ecosystem in the RNP, for both aquatic and land

flora and fauna. Fish and freshwater bivalve beds in the GRR have been decimated and the population of the African Buffalo (*Syncerus caffer*) decreased by 42% along lower 92 km of the lower GRR (Coppolillo et al. 2004).

Yearly animal counts in 2004–2007 reveal that crocodile numbers increased by 25.40%, which was probably due to ease of predation on animals forced to come to drink at fixed water holes; Hippo numbers decreased by 7.71% (unpublished data).



Natural Waterhole



Artificial waterhole

Provision of water to wildlife during dry season is crucial so as to alleviate water shortage problem encountered.

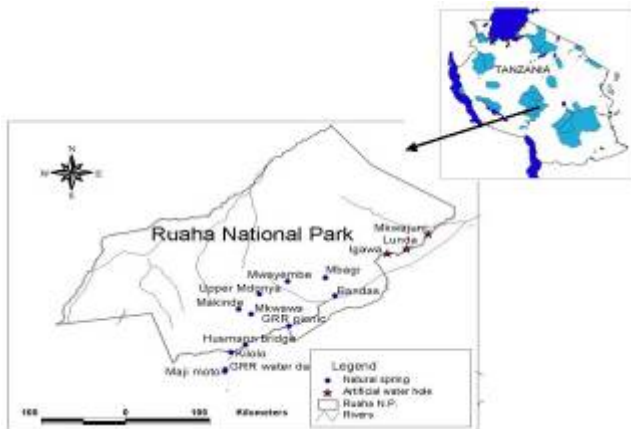
The water from artificial waterhole inside the park did provide an alternative source of water to wildlife and hence prevent it from being forced by the lack of water to migrate into unprotected areas with high risk of poaching (Herve et al. 2003; Mtahiko et al. 2006). Availability of water within their home range reduced the long distance walking and resulting water stress to the animals in search for forage. Visual observations suggest that this also minimized intra- and inter-species fights.

The survival of the Ruaha ecosystem is facilitated by providing artificial water holes, but the ecosystem is altered and degraded.



Elephant drinking from small waterhole

The best solution would be to restore the natural conditions of a perennial flow in the Great Ruaha River. If restoration of permanent water flow in the river is not possible in the near future, then the only solution to prevent an ecosystem collapse is to provide water at artificial water holes dug in the sandy river bed of the GRR.



FORS Promo Video

(By Jackson Ngowi)

After months of filming and countless hours of editing, a seven-minute video showcasing FORS' work is now completed! Thanks to Anette's great work of filming in the field this year, she and Alexander have put together a video featuring all aspects of the FORS EE program: teacher training, active student learning, film shows, safaris and more! This video will help us to make FORS' work better known both in Tanzania and abroad, and we will show the video at presentations, on fundraising trips, and even at next year's environmental film shows in Idodi and Pawaga. When the video is uploaded to YouTube we will post the link on our website, and we will also upload it to our blog on Wildlife Direct.

WEBSITE

Check out our recently updated website www.friendsofruaha.org. Thanks, Bruce Fox, for your continued support and work on this website!

Thanks, Chris!

Christina Coppolillo, FORS secretary for the past four years, has moved back to the US with her family to live and work in Montana. Since joining FORS as a committee member in 2004, Chris has been an essential part of the FORS team. An experienced teacher and advocate of participatory methods, she was one of the main creators of the FORS teacher's manual. She contributed tirelessly to our teacher training, newsletters, fundraising, reports and evaluations.

Chris has provided invaluable support to all of us here at FORS with her optimism, enthusiasm and consistently great ideas on how to improve our EE program. Although she can no longer serve as our secretary, she will continue supporting us as a FORS advisor.

Thank you so much for everything you have done for FORS, Chris.

We wish you and your family all the best in your new life in Montana, and hope you will come to visit us here in Iringa soon, we miss you!!



Chris Coppolillo

Jackson's Reflections on EE Training in South Africa

(By Jackson Ngowi)

From 1st September to 25th of October 2008 I was among 14 participants who attended an environmental education course in South Africa organized by the SADC Regional Environmental Education Programme in collaboration with Rhodes University.

I was so excited to visit South Africa and to interact with a group of people with different cultures, educational backgrounds and professional experiences. The teachers were good as they stressed how we are all learners and educators, something that made the course interactive and highly participatory.

I was inspired by many different things, from the country and its people to the classes and the course content. We had the opportunity to visit primary schools, secondary

schools, municipalities, a methodology and learning support materials center and organic farmers. On all of these visits I learned how people are able to integrate environmental issues in their day-to-day activities, and how this has a tremendous impact on protecting the environment.

In the classroom the course was relevant and productive to the work I am doing in FORS, and it gave me more insights and experience in the EE field. I learned about global and local environmental issues and risks, responses to these risks with a focus on environmental education, monitoring and evaluation in an organization, and the importance of participatory methods in an EE program.

The focus on active learning was particularly interesting as it made me reflect on the teaching

ing support materials program. I realized how important it is to make sure that the approaches, methods and learning support materials complement each other, and that they are selected according to the needs of the target group.

I would like to express my gratitude to SADC and the partners who organized the course. And of course a big thank you to FORS for giving me the great opportunity to attend this course.



Jackson Ngowi
FORS Program Manager

How to contact FORS

Anyone who would like to get in touch with FORS for information or other matters is welcome to contact any of the FORS Team at the postal, email addresses and mobile below:

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National Bank of Commerce
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NBC IBD SWIFT: NLCBZTX
Iringa Branch
Iringa, Tanzania
Branch code: 851528
Friends Of Ruaha Society
Account No. 028103002483

Overseas: (NEW UK ACCOUNT)

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Membership Form

Membership fees	Student/Volunteer	Individual	Family	Corporate
Tanzanian citizen (Tsh)	2,000	10,000	24,000	200,000
Expatriate (Tsh)	12,000	20,000	50,000	200,000
Overseas (US \$)	24	40	100	400
Overseas (£ Sterling)	15	25	55	225

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