



**FORS**

The Friends of Ruaha Society

FORS is a registered NGO based in Iringa, Tanzania near Ruaha National Park. FORS was started in 1984 to assist with the task of safeguarding the wildlife in the park and its environment. However, in recent years, TANAPA (Tanzanian National Parks) has received more resources and now does an excellent job. FORS has therefore changed its focus to involve the communities on the eastern boundary of the park. FORS strives to **increase the responsibility of the local communities around the park, in Idodi and Pawaga divisions, to slow the destruction of the environment and assist in the search for new balances between people, wildlife and the environment.**

# FORS News

Volume 13  
Issue 1

May 2004

## FORS Annual General Meeting

The FORS Annual General Meeting was held on Saturday April 17<sup>th</sup> in our new office. It was attended by 21 people. At the AGM a new committee was elected, as follows: Chairperson - Dr. Charles Dulle, Secretary - Kate Forrester, Treasurer - Annet Witteveen, Members - Chris Coppolillo, Sue Stolberger, Dorothy Bi-

kurakule.

We would like to welcome new members on board – Chris has already been working hard on the environmental education programme – with her background in primary education, she has provided invaluable advice and support. Dorothy is a mine of local information and contacts,

having worked for many years in the Idodi area, so we look forward to working with her. Sue has decided to step down as Chairperson but would like to remain involved with FORS, as committee member. We would like to thank her for her year as a chairperson, and welcome Charles Dulle as her successor!

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Sarah and Anna Marie in Environmental Education	2
Extension officers help in the field	2
Vegetables for RNP	4
Lion King Show	4
Farewell Jabiru	5
FORS Funding	5
Wildtze—Eli Weiss's visit	5
Tungamalenga group	6
Environmental Club at Idodi Secondary School	6
FORS organisation	6
RNP - Great Ruaha River	7
Ruaha Trust - FORS sister in UK	8
FORS & linkages to other organisations	8
FORS Shop	9
FORS Office	9
Various	9



Sarah and Anna Marie busy with an entertaining session during a teacher training workshop



## Anna Marie & Sarah, our first field coordinators

In an attempt to give the members of FORS a glimpse at the people behind the work, the two field coordinators living out in Idodi Region interviewed one another about their history and their experience living in rural Tanzania.

Anna Maria Malya, the Tanzanian Field Coordinator, began the interview by asking Sarah Vatland, the overseas Field Coordinator from America:

**Sarah, What is your previous experience in Tanzania before joining FORS?**

Sarah: Before joining FORS, I was a SPW (Student Partnerships Worldwide) volunteer. I lived out in a village called

Mgera and taught health education, environmental education and life skills to Class 5,6, and 7 in the local primary school. We also held seminars with the local villages on the same subjects.

**And what is your education in these subjects?**

Sarah: I finished my studies at Furman University in Greenville, South Carolina, USA in June 2002. I obtained a degree in Sociology with a concentration in environmental studies.

**How do you find life in rural Tanzania?**

Sarah: Life in rural Tanzania is tough. The people in our village, Makifu, are living with-

out much access to western amenities. They have no electricity and most of the primary school students have never experienced electricity because they have never reached town before. There is no running water in the houses, however there are taps in the village that work most of the time. But when the taps are not functioning, they must walk long distances to find water for their basic needs. We are lucky though, because we live in a very nice house made out of cement and we have running water in the home. But despite the hardship, I love

### FORSFORS:

- ★ **FORS in the FIELD**
- ★ **Vegetables for RNP**
- ★ **Many changes in FORS**
- ★ **Want to buy a JABIRU!?**

★ Continued on page 3

## Sarah & Anna Marie in Environmental Education

This is the area where FORS has been concentrating most of its activities. Our two volunteers, Sarah and Anna Marie, are enthusiastic, hard working and popular in the Idodi area - FORS is lucky to have found them! They spent their first few months out in the field, familiarising themselves with the area, visiting all the schools and getting to know the staff and pupils, learning about the way people live and interact with their environment, discovering local traditions and customs.

By December we were ready to start putting together our environmental programme for the following year. We decided that in order for the programme to be sustainable, and not just an anomalous extra tacked onto an already busy teacher's working day, it should contain what the current primary school syllabus already has in it. So we went through the national curriculum with a toothcomb and picked out all the items which were relevant to what we wanted to include in our programme - these mostly fell within the areas of science and social studies. We chose four topics to concentrate on - water, weather, wildlife, and soil/fire/forests. We made

lesson plans around each of the topics, using lots of new exciting teaching methods, and then held a teacher training workshop to introduce the new programme to the teachers.

Sarah and Anna Marie, being in charge of the implementation of the programme, explain further:

*'Our revised environmental education programme is off to a great start! The teachers are enthusiastic, the extension workers are encouraging, and the students are active!*

*After much research and hard work over the past five months, we've expanded the programme to include all classes from one to six, rather than working with class six only, as we did in the past. Now FORS has extracted four topics from the curriculum to concentrate on: water, weather, wildlife and a combination of soil, fire and forest. To increase sustainability, the teachers are now doing all the teaching, while the extension workers, who used to run the programme, remain an important resource.*

*We are also excited to report that we have increased the number of primary schools in the programme to nine, all of which are in Idodi division, bordering Ruaha National Park. One of the new schools is Msembe Primary School, which is located within the park itself!*

*To kick off the new school year*

*and to introduce the new programme, two two-day workshops were held with 27 primary school teachers, two students and one teacher from Idodi Secondary School, four extension workers, three Ward Education Officers, a representative from the District Education Office and a member of TANAPA (Tanzania National Parks) staff. The workshops were designed to break the mould of many Tanzanian style workshops - one person lectures, the others take notes. In our workshop, the FORS staff facilitated while the teachers participated, contributed their considerable expertise and had fun.*

*Tanzanian education is generally very formal. In an attempt to encourage more student participation and activity, in collaboration with input from teachers, we decided not only to include topics on the environment, but also to talk about how environmental topics can be taught using fun and active methods. Therefore the main part of the workshop was to familiarise teachers with new teaching methodologies and techniques, and how they can be used in the context of environmental education. Throughout the workshop, teachers practised using the new methods to create example lessons around the first topic of the year - water. Everyone was very enthusiastic about the methods, especially the games, case studies, banners, role-plays and concept*

*maps.*

*By the end of the two days examining the methods, practising them and actually preparing lessons around them the teachers felt confident and comfortable with the newly introduced techniques and could easily relate them to environmental education. They were excited about the year to come and what the new programme has in store for them and their students.*

*As the head teacher from Tungamalenga said, 'These new methods are really exciting. It's a rare opportunity to participate in a workshop like this, in which we're actively involved'. Another participant told us, 'Now I feel comfortable with the new methods and am looking forward to using them'. The teachers were so happy with the outcome of the workshop that one participant wrote on the evaluation form, 'I suggest that workshops like this should be done more regularly, and they should be longer. I believe there are still more methods!'*

Workshops and presentations of topics and methods are very important, but what is almost more important is the follow up. Left to themselves, many teachers may not feel sufficiently confident to try out new methods on their own.

★Continued on page 3

### Extension officers help in the field

Dr Dulle introduces the extension officers FORS have been working with:

Since we started the environmental education programme in 2000, four field extension staff have assisted us with the environmental activities. They are all government staff, employed in Idodi division, but are able to give us some of their time. The extension officers are: **Mr. Zayumba** and **Mr. Kirumba**

(livestock officers), **Mr. Mwampashe**, or Mzee wa Kwetu, as everyone in Idodi affectionately calls him (forestry officer), and **Mr. Hango** (agriculture officer). Last year, they conducted theory and practicals in the seven schools, on environmental issues agreed on by the teachers. Mr. Mwampashe helped the schools with tree planting and nursery establishment, and talked about deforestation and wildlife management areas. Mr. Hango introduced subjects relevant to agricul-



Mr. Mwampashe and Mr. Zayumba at Idodi Primary School

ture, such as soil erosion and uncontrolled fires, while Mr. Zayumba and Mr. Kirumba taught the students about the effects of livestock on soils, water management and pollution.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the extension officers for the long-standing support in education activities in schools. I would also like to thank the District Agriculture Officer, Mr. Mpwewhe for letting us work with these officers.



Continuation of page 2

But Anna Marie and Sarah are giving regular support through school visits and meetings.

At each school they hold a meeting where they facilitate discussions with the teachers, asking questions such as 'what went well? what wasn't so successful? what did the students like? how did they react?' In addition, one of the teachers who attended the workshop presents to the other teachers a method s/he has tried and it is then open for discussion. These visits take place on a regular basis, to give teachers confidence and to provide a forum for exchange of ideas for the whole staff of each school. Local extension officers also provide important back up for the teachers.

Anna-Marie and Sarah add 'One of our most successful follow

up visits was to Mabuniga Primary School. We were presented with an actual lesson taught in Standard 1 by Mr. Mella. Eager to show us what he was doing, he asked us to join his class. Mr. Mella's enthusiasm was encouraging. By using different teaching methods, many of which we had worked on together during our teacher training workshop, the students' interest was captured and maintained throughout the lesson.

Mr. Mella started the lesson by taking the students outside for a short game of 'paka na panya' ('cat and mouse'). The game was specifically used to



Anna Marie and Sarah listening to teachers during a teacher training workshop held in Idodi, January 2004

refresh the students after the last lesson and prepare them for the next lesson. It was such fun, that students from other classes were clearly longing to join in! Then the students went inside and brainstormed about the uses of water. As the kids shared their ideas, the teacher jotted them down on the board, and then hung up some posters illustrating these uses. To keep the pace vibrant, he then did another game – the students stood in a circle and passed a box around while singing. When Mr. Mella cried 'stop!', the student holding the box chose a task or question from the box. The kids called out uses of water, mimed animals which live in water, and generally had a great time.

Once the teachers have finished the water topic, the next topic – weather – will be presented to them, with basic lesson plans again worked out by Anna Marie and Sarah. So far the programme is going very well, and in informal discussions with other people and organisations, our environmental education programme is arousing a lot of interest. One teacher asked us 'Please could you make lesson plans for all the other subjects too!', while another teacher said, 'The children don't doze off in my lessons any more – the new methods have made an enormous difference!'

### School collaboration; support & cultural exchange

The all Austin Cooperative Nursery School in Austin, Texas donated audio and photographic equipment and hopes to raise funds for FORS. The Early Childhood Center of Sarah Lawrence College in Bronxville, New York, is raising money for the FORS Environmental Education Programme, aiming for \$5000, to fund both educational material and our volunteers. Both schools would like a cultural exchange with the "FORS" schools. To start with some of the primary schools are documenting their environmental work, which will be shared with both donor schools to start up a first exchange.

Continuation of page 1

Tanzania. I especially love the students, who come by our house always bringing smiles and laughter.

Sarah continued the interview by asking Anna Marie a few questions.

**Anna Maria, what is your previous experience in rural Tanzania?**

Anna Marie: Well you know I come from Moshi Town. My first experience in the village

was with SPW in rural Iringa: Kidabaga and Kilolo for six months.

**What did you do with SPW?**

Anna Marie: With SPW we were raising environmental education awareness with the villagers as well as doing some formal environmental education with the students of the primary schools.

**And what did you do after SPW?**

Anna Marie: I joined Sokoine University of Agriculture and

studied environmental sciences and management, which is a three year degree course in Morogoro 2000-2003.

**How do you find your work with FORS?**

Anna Marie: Exciting, it is my first job. I really like it because it is in line with my educational background whereas many of my friends did not get a job in their field of study. It is also a nice experience to live with someone from another culture. It is not always

easy but we are getting along and we like each other.

**How do you see the future of FORS Environmental Education program?**

Anna Marie: Since we have expanded to the whole school this year and integrated the environmental education in the curriculum, it seems to be more sustainable. Because it is going so well, I think, it would be a great idea next year to continue expansion of our program in other schools.

## Vegetables for RNP

The FORS horticulture programme started last year when Mama Mkundi, a local horticulturalist, stayed in Makifu village to teach interested farmers to grow vegetables, with the objective of selling them to the park. In the end, she had a group of 26 farmers, all of whom learnt the basic principles of vegetable cultivation and began to cultivate a wide range of vegetables.

We went on a trip to visit the vegetable growers. We picked our way over fields until we suddenly stopped, arrested by an unusual sight – courgettes! In the next plot we spotted basil, and a bit further on were some lettuces and leeks. All very odd in rural Tanzania, but proof that



Who is the lady with the lettuce?

something new was happening!

In the next plot we encountered **Mr. Malimbichi**, a colourful character, who showed us around his fields and explained what he'd been doing. His vegetables were looking good, and he gave us each a cucumber to eat, which, in the searing heat of the day, was possibly the most delicious cucumber we'd all ever eaten. We were curious about his name – *mali mbichi* means fresh fruit and vegetables. He explained that fruit and vegetable production has been his speciality for quite a while, and when everyone was loading their enormous sacks of rice onto trucks to transport them to town, he'd be shouting 'Mali mbichi! Mind my fruit and veg with your rice sacks!' and the name stuck.

He was pleased to have learnt about new vegetables and to grasp an opportunity to expand his business by selling to the park. We tried to put him right on a couple of points, e.g. he'd planted about a quarter of an



acre of basil, which we gently pointed out was generally not needed in quite such vast quantities, perhaps a couple of clumps might do for now... But he retorted that people in the village had started boiling up the leaves and eating it like spinach – so maybe we have something to learn from them!

Most of the other vegetable farmers have stopped growing vegetables during the rainy season, since they need their irrigated land to produce rice, a valuable cash crop. But Malimbichi has continued, and some of the lodges have already started buying from him. There have been some communication problems – Malimbichi's house is a kilometre off the main road - so we have had a big colourful sign made to point people in the right direction. Malimbichi's wives, who are at the house (in true local Hehe fashion, Malimbichi is a man of status and one way of confirming that status is by marrying several wives) don't necessarily know what vegetables are on offer that day, while

Malimbichi himself is generally busy in his fields, so we have now acquired a blackboard, kindly donated by **Kamwene Store**, Iringa, on which every day before he goes to the fields, Malimbichi will write what vegetables he has for sale. Now, when people go past they can leave an order and pick them up on the way back.

There has also been some demand from other farmers for fruit trees. Before she left, Mama Mkundi helped some farmers plant lemon trees, and when she comes back later this year, she will bud/graft them, so that the farmers will be able to sell high quality citrus fruit, both locally and to the park lodges.

Says Malcolm Ryan, who runs Mdonya Camp inside Ruaha National Park - "I am using Malimbichi and he is really GREAT, his vegetables are really much better quality than in Iringa and WAY cheaper, not only that but he always gives us such a generous 'present' on top of what we buy."

## Lion King Show

FORS received a copy of Disney's *Lion King II* from **Disney**. The film was taken to the villages to show it in each school, partly as entertainment for children who had never seen a film before (there is no electricity in Idodi) and partly to extract environmental issues from it. Although the film was in English, Anne-Marie and Sarah had ascertained (by watching it themselves in Dutch!) that much



could still be gained from watching it without understanding the dialogue.

The film was shown, with the help of a video van and a generator, in seven primary

schools in the Idodi area. Before the film started, the children were given specific points to look out for – the presence or absence of water, dry and wet areas, the differences between highlands and lowlands. They were also asked to look for scenes with environmental degradation and to pick out the similarities between the scenes in the film and the environment in their own villages. At the end of the film, there was always a question and answer session, and it

was clear that the children had thoroughly enjoyed the film, as well as gaining some environmental understanding. Children asked questions such as: 'what happens to the land if fire spreads over it?' and 'Do white lions exist in real life?' and many spotted their favourite animals – lions, zebras or warthogs. The headteacher at Nyamahana school commented 'Our students were educated and entertained while experiencing something new'.



## Farewell Jabiru

FORS has been having a rather patchy time with the plane. After the first pilot left, another one was found almost immediately. Tim Harrison came with a glowing recommendation from our donor, Tusk. Tim found that the plane was in need of serious work and had to spend a long time repairing it. He was assisted in this task by Eve Jackson, a fellow pilot. Tim was finally able to get the plane up to the standard required to pass its annual Certificate to Fly from the Tanzanian Civil Aviation Authority.

After discussions with Tim and Eve, FORS concluded that the Jabiru should be sold for the following reasons:

- The plane itself is not suitable for the sort of work that needs to be done. The plane is very light and rather flimsy, and not designed for landing on the very rough airstrips in the park, or for flying in the hot conditions found in the park. If it was to be adapted for such work, we would have to invest in a lot of very expensive parts.
- Secondly, FORS, as a small NGO, does not have the in-

## Support by TUSK TRUST

The Tusk Trust, based in the UK, has been one of our oldest and most generous friends. They were the ones who assisted FORS in its purchase in the first place). This year, when they heard about our plans to get the plane off the ground, they donated UK£ 7000 for this purpose. Equally generously, when they heard the latest plans to sell the plane, they were happy to let us use any funds remaining from that grant, and the proceeds of the sale of the plane, for our environmental education project. We would like to thank Tusk once again for the continued support and generosity.

house expertise and the experience to implement an anti-poaching programme, including the maintenance of a plane.

The TANAPA Chief Park

Warden has also indicated that there is a possibility that TANAPA could supply the park with a plane for anti-poaching activities.



If anyone has an interest in buying a Jabiru plane, please contact FORS!

## FORS Funding

We would like to thank **Tusk Trust**, **WildIze** and the **Wild Foundation** for their continuing generosity:

**Tusk Trust** for their donation of UK£ 7000

**WildIze** for their donation of US\$ 3000 last year and another US\$ 6000 this year towards the Environmental Education Programme

**Wild Foundation** for their donation of US\$ 11000

We would like to thank individuals for some very generous donations of funds and items:

**The Willets family** in China for their annual do-

nation of £500

**Don & Sharon McLaughlin** for their annual donation of US\$ 500

**Bill and Lydia Edison** for a donation of US\$ 1000

**Lyons O'Keeffe** for UK£ 400 towards our Tunga-malenga group and the orphan schoolgirl.

**Liz Deleyser** for 500,000 Tsh. from the sale of "The Guide Book to the Southern Highlands"

And last but not least, we would like to thank all our **members** for their interest and support in our programme.

### WildIze -

#### Eli Weiss's visit

In October 2003, Eli Weiss, from WildIze, came to visit FORS from the States. Last year she generously gave us \$3000 to be used for our environmental education programme. After a quick visit to Idodi Secondary School, we went to Kitanewa primary

school, where a group of students had arranged a little show for Eli— a song about the environment followed by a debate. As a result of her visit, she very generously decided to donate a further \$6000 to us, for use for the environmental education programme, specifically park trips for the children.



Eli Weiss watching school children singing and dancing

## Tungamalenga group (KIMATU)

KIMATU, a group of five women and five men, have had some help with funding their activities from FORS, through a generous donation from **Lyons O'Keeffe**. The members of the group are all young and they admit that this season has been a 'learning experience' for them. They had 20 hens, and were hoping to build up their flock to 50 to sell for meat and eggs. They were advised by **Dr. Dulle** to have the hens vaccinated against Newcastle disease (NCD), which annually ravages the hen population in

rural areas. However, they had still not got hold of the vaccinations when all their hens died. 'In future, if we receive advice,' they said ruefully, 'we will follow it immediately.' They have started again with five hens, which have already produced chicks, so it won't be long until they have replaced their previous flock. And of course they will be contacting Dr. Dulle as soon as the NCD season starts...

Their seedling production has gone much better, as they grew over 3000 seedlings. They produced mostly indige-

nous species, including Tamarindus, Moringa, mkola, mdawi and mninga, often experimenting with propagation techniques, and asking older people in the community for their expertise. FORS have bought some of the trees to give to Mafuluto school, one of the new schools in the environmental education programme, which had thus not previously received trees to plant. **Liz Deleyser** from Iringa has also kindly bought seedlings, to distribute 350 to each school in Idodi. And some of the seedlings have

been planted along the roadside in Tungamalenga. However, the group members say that local people were not very interested in buying the species they had produced, which has taught them two lessons, firstly, that if they want to run a business, they have to look at market demand, and secondly, that if they want to grow local species, they have to educate people to value them as trees to plant, and thus buy them. They are looking forward to next season, armed with their experience and their lessons.

## Environmental club at Idodi Secondary School



**Mr. Joshua explaining to secondary school students how to grow flowers**

The MaliHai Club at Idodi Secondary school has slowly become active, working closely with Sarah and Anne-Marie. The club has over 50 members and seems to expand further at every meeting – we are already planning to break the club up into smaller more manageable groups, perhaps based around common interests, so that each group can pursue its own agenda. The club meets on a Saturday and a varied programme has already been drawn up, starting with a demonstration of flower growing

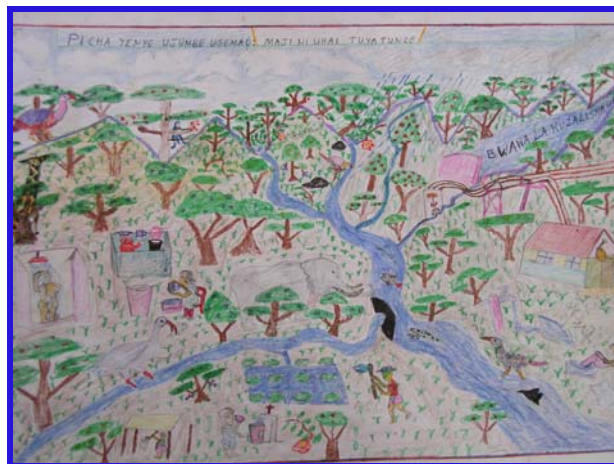
for the school garden – the students had expressed an interest in making their school grounds look more attractive. A flower grower from Iringa town was brought to the school, and he explained to the students about planting and looking after flowers. He was an amazingly dynamic character and infused the students with his enthusiasm. Due to a slight misunderstanding with Sarah and Anne-Marie, he had brought 4000 flower seedlings to plant, but the students set to with zeal to get them all planted during the course of the afternoon.

## FORS organisation

The organisation of FORS has changed over the last year. The running of FORS has always been done on a voluntary basis, whenever the committee members had time. If FORS wants to be really effective, we need full time people working in the field. So FORS linked up with SPW in Iringa and recruited Sarah and Anne Marie. In the search for systems – financial and administrative – to maximise time, FORS established itself in the Iringa NGO scene by updating its registrations and per-

mits and linking with local government officials and organisations. At the same time, new programmes have been developed. All this is very time consuming for people working on a voluntary basis. Our vision for 2004 involves taking Anne Marie and Sarah on as programme officers based in town, and recruiting two more volunteers to work out in the villages. Management and implementation of the FORS programme will gradually be handed over to the 2 programme officers.

## Drawing made by student of Kitaneva Primary School, the winner of the FORS drawing competition. The theme of the competition was WATER.





# Ruaha National Park - Great Ruaha River

## from Sue Stolberger

Isunguviula is a very remote area in the far west of the park, an intact wilderness with unique flora and fauna. This area is under threat from encroachment, especially in the form of fires, but there is no money from **TANAPA** to protect it since it is not a part of the park which will bring in any tourist revenue. Therefore FORS applied to the **Wild Foundation**, an organisation committed to preserving genuine wildernesses, for funds to create an access road, which will be built on the park boundary, and a new ranger post, so that the area can be patrolled and thus protected more easily. We are delighted to report that Wild Foundation have granted us \$10,000 for this project. TANAPA is fully supportive of this initiative, and will provide equipment and labour. Work will start as soon as the rains end, probably in May.

As promised in our last newsletter, I am reviewing the situation of the Great Ruaha River. This is a problem which has been continuing for over 10 years. The Great Ruaha River, formally a perennial river, stopped flowing for the first time in living memory during the dry season of 1993 and this drying-up has continued every year since, with the period of non-flow increasing to several months. As the Great Ruaha River is the life blood of the Ruaha National Park we have witnessed an environmental disaster unfold.

In the past decade, various improved smallholder irrigated rice schemes have been established in the Usangu catchment. In addition, two new large scale schemes were constructed - Kapunga (1988-1992) and, inexplicably in view of the problems already in evidence, Madibira in 1998.

The amount of water entering the catchment area has not changed to any significant degree. It seems that the obvious correlation between the building of the "improved" rice irrigation schemes and the river ceasing to flow was not immediately recognised and measures taken at an early stage. Delay in positive "on the ground" action has served only to exacerbate the problem and make its resolution more difficult as huge numbers of migrant farmers and pastoralists have come into the area to take advantage of the new economic opportunities.

FORS has been campaigning for years to save this unique ecosystem from total destruction, not only because of its international status of enormous environmental importance and bio-diversity but also for its huge economic importance to Tanzania. In March 2001, whilst in London at the Rio+10 preparatory meeting the Prime Minister of Tanzania, Mr. Sumaye, together with UK Prime Minister Tony Blair, committed Tanzania to restoring year round flows in the Great Ruaha River by 2010. However, three years on, the river, and thus the entire ecosystem, is in an even more critical state.

It is obvious that the problem is escalating daily. As a result, the 150 km of Ruaha River that flows through the Ruaha National Park, has increasingly longer periods of drought. This was never seen more clearly than last year, (2003) with the river drying up completely in early September. Naturally, this phenomenon has seriously affected the flora and fauna of the river system and the Park itself. The smaller mammals, birds, and amphibians are affected first.

The fresh oyster beds are now no more, the endemic fish for the River are now extinct, the White Crowned Plover, (whose only known breeding ground in Tanzania is on the Great Ruaha River), is now severely threatened by lack of success in breeding, which is directly due to the effect of the drying river. Irrevocable damage has already been done.

This year, the broader effects of the dry river are finally kicking in. The movements of the larger, more popular mammals have altered, elephants and wild dogs in particular. These animals all rely on water from the Ruaha River during the dry season. However, even elephants could not find water by digging below the dry surface of the Ruaha River bed, indicating the extent to which the entire water table has fallen. Scores of hippo, forced to mass together in muddy pools, died - this is not what tourists want to witness! The distribution of some of the mammals has changed markedly as a result of their search for water, leading them into conflicts with the villagers around the park. The elephants cause havoc in their fields and the dogs with their livestock. So we are not just talking about the disruption of a river system, we are talking about the destruction of a whole ecosystem, the losers being both the people who eke out a living on the outside of the park and the animals on the inside.

What is perhaps even more alarming, however, is that observations show that in the last two wet seasons, 2001-2003, plus the current one, 2004, the River has not received nearly as much water from the Usangu Basin as it has in the past. The wet season flow now appears to be much below its 'normal' levels.

This means that the River is now being affected by over use during the WET season as well as the dry season.

Historical records suggest that the Usangu/Ruaha area during the late 1880s, was regarded as a 'Garden of Eden', teeming with wildlife. However, fairly rapidly into the 1900s the area was heavily hunted and the volume of game was drastically reduced. However, since Ruaha was gazetted as a national park in 1964, all the money, time and effort spent by TANAPA has really paid off, and the Ruaha ecosystem is once again a Garden of Eden. It is really tragic that the very reason for the game being here in the first place, the Great Ruaha River, is now no longer the life-giving force that kept the system going. We now have the game but we don't have the water to sustain it.

## RUAHA+10

A workshop was held in Morogoro in Dec 2003 for all major stakeholders to discuss the issue, and **Dr. Dulle** and I attended from FORS. I was able to put forward my views on the issue and there was much debate on the current situation, and the possibilities for future interventions.

At the same time, **Jan Corlett**, one of our new trustees, has been doing a lot of research into the issue from the UK and has forged contacts with **WWF-UK**, who are working in the Ruaha area, and with **RIPARWIN**, a research organisation working in Usangu.

★ Continued on page 8

Continuation of page 7

**Bruce Fox**, also based in UK, happened to meet the Tanzanian Minister for Tourism, **Mrs. Meghji**, in Berlin and explained the situation to her and she took great interest in

it and made a point of asking for a report on it. So FORS has played an important role in lobbying on this issue. Much research has been done into finding the reasons for the drying of the Great Ruaha.

The issue is now to translate these ideas into ACTION so that we restore a permanent flow to the Great Ruaha River and its environmental dependants.

## Ruaha Trust - FORS sister in UK

We promised in the last newsletter that we would introduce our new board of trustees. Although FORS is a Tanzanian registered NGO, it also has a sister organisation in the UK, the **Ruaha Trust**, which gives it international status. Formed in 1989 to raise funds to buy the original plane, the membership of the trust has dwindled to such a point that we decided we needed to revitalise our overseas arm. The new board of trustees is therefore as follows:

**Jan Corlett (Secretary)** first visited East Africa in the mid 1980s. Then from late 1980s to early 1990s she lived in Serengeti where she made numerous friends, who provided a wonderful reason to visit Tz. frequently and a welcoming base from which to explore Tz. During these explorations she discovered the Jewel in Tanzania's

Crown – Ruaha N.P. - and was instantly smitten. Fortunately the Fox family recognised her condition and invited her to assist at their camp, which she very happily did during the next few years, becoming ever more captivated as each season unfolded. Her chief aim in life at present is to do all that she can to prevent any further destruction of Ruaha's unique ecosystem and to see the Great Ruaha River flowing throughout the year again.

**Emma Forrester (Treasurer)** has worked in the travel industry since 1984, overseas and in the UK, and currently runs the London office of a specialist ski tour operator. She hopes that her administration skills and languages will be an asset to the FORS team, and is looking forward to seeking ways of raising money and forging contacts for FORS in the UK.

Emma has visited her sister Kate (FORS secretary) in Tanzania many times during the last ten years, and is particularly interested in the potential for sensitive ecotourism which would bring benefits to the people of the Ruaha area.

**Martin Walsh** first came to Tanzania in 1980 to do anthropological research in Usangu, and after completing his Ph.D. in 1984 lived and worked in different parts of East Africa. From 1997 to 2003 he was the Field Manager and Social Development Adviser of the DFID-funded MBOMIPA Project, which works in the FORS area. Martin's principal obsessions are East African ethnography, ethnobiology, history and linguistics, and he is currently pursuing these as a Research Associate in the Department of Social Anthropology in the

University of Cambridge. He returned to England from Tanzania last summer and since October has been living on the outskirts of Cambridge with his Zanzibari wife and daughter.

**Claire Campbell** is a single parent working part time with Stepping Stones, a project that helps people with mental problems, long term unemployment, drug problems, etc. to get back into a working environment. With her 2 children, Esther (almost 11 yr) and Luke (3,5), she visits her cousin in Iringa regularly. She loves being in Tanzania and hopes that her children will learn and benefit from the contact with a country as poor as Tanzania and the problems associated. As a family they like sharing their Tanzania experiences with people in England, e.g. Esther recently told her school friends about Tanzania.

### FORS linkages to other organisations

Friends of Ruaha continues to maintain important relationships with many other organisations, both locally and further afield. Ongoing connections with **TANAPA, Concern, Mbomipa Association, Iringa NGO Platform** and **WWF** continue to provide FORS with opportunities to share information as well as receive and offer support in the field.

FORS is enjoying a renewed

and strengthened relationship with the **Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)**. WCS is donating many resources to assist us in our environmental education efforts, is helping with fund searching and is donating flight time to assist us in the filming of an environmental education film. This exciting film project is being developed with the Brock Initiative (see box on page 9).

Other new linkages include our work with two schools in the States, **All Austin Cooperative Nursery School** out of Austin, Texas and **the**

**Early Childhood Center at Sarah Lawrence College** in Bronxville, NY. The former is providing FORS' environmental education program with camera and audio equipment in order to facilitate a cultural exchange around environmental issues as well as provide a way for local schools to document their work. The latter is providing funds and assisting in further fund searching, also to assist FORS with environmental education efforts. Exploring cultural exchange options for schools in the Ruaha area is one of our new activities,

which could benefit both teachers and school children of the area.

Equally important is our linking up with local government such as the District Education Department and the Village Councils in Idodi area.

In its endeavour to effectively implement its activities, FORS will continue to look for linkages and maintain relationships with local and less local organisations and individuals as an integrated part of its programme. We aim to share our experiences with all those interested and to learn from our partners.



**FORS**  
P.O. Box 692  
Iringa  
Tanzania

**Phone:**  
255 26 2702859 (Annet)  
255 26 2700424 (Kate)  
**Email:** fors@iringanet.com

**www.friendsofruaha.org**

FORS is a Non-Government Organisation registered in 1984 with the Registrar of Societies, Tanzania under Charity Number SO 6394.

### How to contact FORS

Anyone who would like to get in touch with FORS for information or other matters are welcome to contact Kate Forrester or Annet Witteveen at the postal or email addresses mentioned on this page.

Tanzania:  
National Bank of Commerce  
H/O Dar es Salaam  
NBC IBD SWIFT: NLCBTZTX  
Iringa Branch  
Iringa, Tanzania  
Branch code: 851528  
Friends Of Ruaha Society  
Account No. 028103002483

Overseas:  
The Ruaha Trust  
Coutts & Co. Duncannon Branch  
4440 Strand London WC2R 0QS  
Account No. 49773270

## FORS Shop

The FORS elephant dung products have been selling well. They are exclusively made for us by **Neema Crafts**, a workshop established under the auspices of the Anglican Church, and staffed by graduates of the Deaf School here in Iringa, who, due to their disability, have difficulty finding jobs

elsewhere. The workshop started with just two people making all the paper in one small room, but has now expanded to two rooms and their own shop, where FORS merchandise is sold alongside their own lines. All our products are made of elephant dung, brought from near Ruaha National Park, and include cards, photo frames, photo albums. Most of the

products are sold in the national park, through the camps, and at the airstrip and the gate, but we have already begun to sell in Iringa at the Neema Crafts shop, and have found some outlets in Dar es Salaam, at A Novel Idea (Seacliff Village), Out of Africa at the airport, and African Art on Bagamoyo Rd. Our range of t-shirts have also continued to sell well.



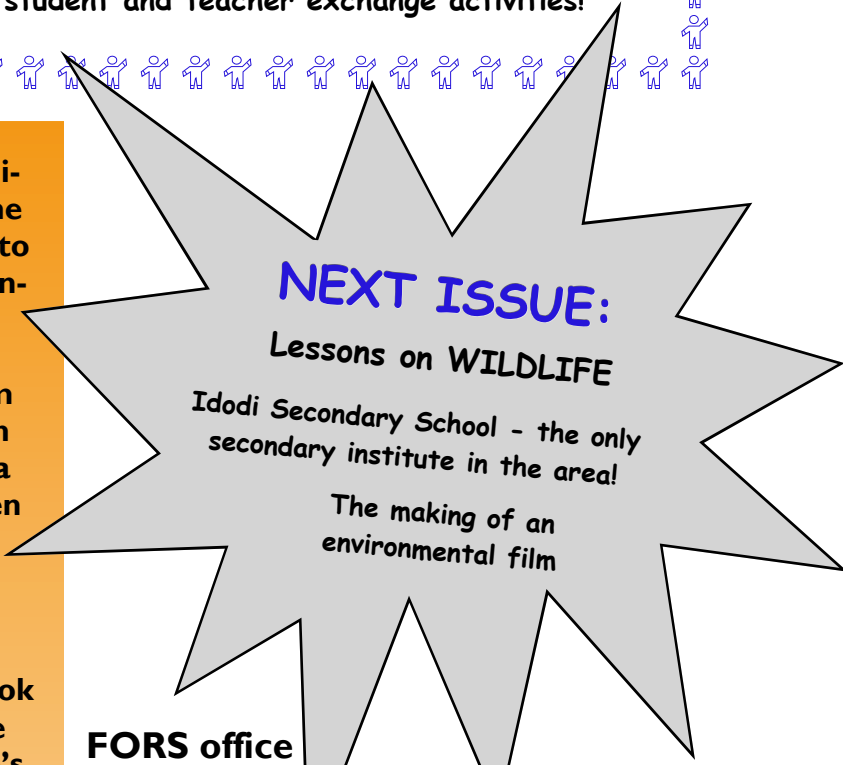
**FORS is looking for assistance to Idodi Secondary School. The school is in urgent need of text books (1 book per 8 students) and other teaching aids.**

**DONATIONS are very welcome**

**FORS would also like to assist the school with looking for an overseas secondary school which is interested in school collaboration with the aim to give support but also a lot of fun through student and teacher exchange activities!**



**The BROCK Initiative out of the UK has offered to make an environmental education film for FORS. The film will be made in the Ruaha area with the children and will be used by the schools in the FORS Programme. We look forward to the Brock Initiative's second visit this month during which the final filming will occur.**



**NEXT ISSUE:**  
**Lessons on WILDLIFE**

**Idodi Secondary School - the only secondary institute in the area!**

**The making of an environmental film**

### FORS office

The 1st of January 2004, FORS opened its own office. Office space is rented from another local NGO SHILDA. Our new office is situated in the centre of town, behind the Iringa Regional Administrative block.

**KARIBUNI!**