

World Wetlands Day

Urban wetlands making cities liveable

COMMUNITY FORUM



Wednesday
31 January 2018
09:00 – 12:00

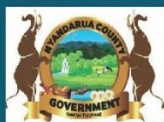
Lake Ol' Bolossat
Kasuku Grounds
Nyandarua

Join us!

The Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources in conjunction with County Government of Nyandarua, National Environment Management Authority and Wetlands International are pleased to invite you to COMMUNITY FORUM on 31st January 2018 at Kasuku grounds, Nyandarua County from 9.00am as a build up activity to celebrate the World Wetlands day, at Lake Ol' Bolossat on the 2nd of Feb 2018.

This forum will aim to raise awareness on the importance, value, challenges the lake faces and the way forward in conserving and ensuring a future for Lake Ol Bolosat wetland to the local urban community for the benefit of sustainable livelihoods.

Come and engage with different speakers from the government, the community, wetlands experts among others as they discuss community based responses in the sustainable management of this important resource to the urban population.



Report on Community forum



The community forum was held at Kasuku grounds, Nyandarua County on 31.1.2018. It was one of buildup activities planned towards the national celebration for the world wetlands day to be celebrated on 2nd February at Lake Olbolosat under the theme, “wetlands for sustainable urban future”. The community forum was fully funded by Wetlands International with the aim of bringing together different interest groups from the county that depend on this lake directly or indirectly to discuss the importance of the lake and sustainable utilization, hence minimizing resource use conflicts.

The meeting began by a word of prayer and thereafter introduction of the guests present including, Joy Kivata, Wetland International, Ms. Betty Nzioka, representing NEMA DG, Mr. Lawrence Mukundi CEC lands and urban development, Muthoni Muya, CEC Trade Industrialization and Cooperatives, Eng Mbataru Kariuki CEC Administration, Senior warden KWS, WRA regional coordinator and several MCA’s from Nyandarua county.



The forum brought together various interests groups as discussants to highlight issues that are of concern on behalf of their communities. These include:

- Samuel Kimani (Rep the Settlement Land Trust), highlighted that the lake borders Kirima, Murai, Oljoroorok and Ol bolosat settlement schemes. All these settlement areas were originally owned by white settlers before allocation to the current owners.
- Mr. Wameo-(Rep. the Water Resource Authority), mentioned that the lake is part of the larger Ewaso Nyiro North catchment which is the largest in the country (4800KM sq), and therefore is an ecosystem that needs to be protected and conserved. It has several streams draining into the lake and further drain into Lorian swamp and forms a special underground aquifer which serves the refugee camps in the northern part of Kenya. However, the sub catchment management plan is yet to be finalized.
- George Ndungu, (Crane foundation, Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS)) Noted that the lake is 2300-2400Mtrs ASL and the equator passes through the lake making it rich in biodiversity as well as winter refuge for migratory birds from the Palearctic. This attracts tourists both local and foreign especially birdwatchers. The lake is one of Kenya's, Important Bird, Areas and hosts approximately 150 species of birds, two endemic bird species (Sharpes long claw & *Aberdare cisticola*) as well as endangered grey crowned crane.
- Patrick Mwendwa (Kieni group): There are income generating activities around the lake such as bee keeping but these have not been fully exploited. The lake ecosystem also provides research opportunities for universities and colleges and educational tours especially for the learning institutions within the county.
- James Muchai Rep. Kirima Men Lakeview) Emphasized that the area is a natural heritage for the community as deserves to be protected by all means. The area covered by the forest receives a lot of rain hence has wildlife as well as fish which is a source of food

- Geoffrey Kariuki (Rep. National Land Commission) The role of the commission is to manage public land and ensure harmonious utilization of resource by monitoring all users of the resource and settling land disputes. They have been involved in settling conflicts and will continue to engage to ensure that the lake ecosystem is protected.
- Duncan Kamau, (Rep. chief administrator) Water determines settlement thus the lake is a source of livelihood for both livestock keepers and agriculturalists. However, the main challenge has been Human Wildlife conflict especially the hippo attacks. He recommended that the settlers should protect the riparian to reduce hippo invasions.
- MCA Mbogo He reiterated the need to designate an entry gate to the lake so as to collect revenue from tourists as well as gazette to become a county reserve. Educating the public on the importance of the lake will reduce over exploitation of the lake and its riparian land.
- Ms. Nancy Muir (Rep. NEMA) highlighted the legal provisions for the protection of wetlands in the country. Environmental Management and Coordination Act (EMCA) Section 42, 43, 54 and 55 states the requirements for gazettment, highest water mark as well as the riparian areas which should also be protected. She informed the participants that NEMA will consult with all stakeholders to ensure that Lake Olbolossat is protected.



The forum attracted approximately 400 pax representing various CBO, s NGO's, conservation groups, civil society groups, learning institutions, county leadership and faith-based organizations. Some of the organizations include: Ol Bolossat ECN; Kirima Lake view; L. Olbolosat scenery group; Kasuku PCEA; Rurie catchment farmers ;Umathi CBO ; AHITI college ; KMTCC; Laikipia University ; IMPACT, Laikipia and Samburu Water Resource Users, EAWLS, ANAW, NEMA, WRA, KWS, NLC, County Government, among others.

Question and Answer session

It was a very interactive session with lots of queries raised and questions asked. In this section we will highlight the core questions;

How come the county has not benefited from the lake. It has only benefited others?

There is already a plan to develop an alliance of Ewaso Nyiro water users between Laikipia, Nyandarua and Samburu counties in order to harmonize utilization of the lake resources as well as conserve the ecosystem. The alliance will hold a forum in August 2018.

We do not even get water for basic need/uses and the fish supply has become inadequate over the years?

There has been over exploitation of the lake for agricultural and livestock use this needs to be regulated so that the water can benefit a wider population. The county has made provision to restock the lake

Is it possible to provide access road to the lake to open up tourism?

Several access roads have been identified for construction to open up the lake for tourism.

In the current CIDP, there is a provision to construct a 5-star hotel therefor investors can come in and put up the hotel facilities There is also a proposal to set up an economic block in collaboration with nearby counties to attract more investors into the region.

Lack of sewerage in the county is impacting negatively on the Lake, there plan to address this issue?

Rift valley water services has initiated a plan to construct a sewerage system in Ol Kalou

Is it possible to avail the 2013 demarcation report by NEMA?

The 2013 report is available at the NEMA county office. The Management plan was reviewed in 2013 and involved all stakeholders

How is it that the current grazing is impacting more on the lake while colonial owners also had livestock, yet the lake was intact?

This is because the number of livestock has increased as well as human depending on the lake as compared to colonial era.

Why can't we have clear boundary between lake and human activities?

The law (EMCA Cap 387) provides for a riparian area which acts as a buffer between the lake and human activities. This requires enforcement by the relevant government agencies.

There is human settlement right into the lake, where will tourism infrastructure be setup?

Tourism infrastructure will be setup outside of the riparian areas. However, requires multiple governmental agencies working together once the lake is gazetted.

Human Wildlife Conflict has become rampant, is it possible to address this issue?

The wildlife conservation and management ACT provides for creation of a County wildlife compensation committee whose role is to assess the applications of all HWC incidents and make recommendation for compensation or otherwise. Hence, it's the responsibility of community member affected to report immediately to KWS offices so that an assessment of damage can be made, and animal involved determined.

Is it possible to erect an electric fence around the lake?

Yes, a fence will be erected around the lake, but individuals should be careful when conducting activities around the lake.

Benefits of the lake to the communities adjacent to the lake to the community



Some of benefits highlighted during the forum include:

- a) Recreation - urban green spaces to enjoy family time,
- b) Provision of drinking water hence creating water security,
- c) support to a wide variety of biodiversity,
- d) Food security; farmers are dependent on the lake for water especially during the dry season.

- e) Recharge ground water,
- f) Climate change mitigation; cushions the communities against the adverse effects of extended droughts and floods.
- g) Bird watching for local and international tourists

Challenges facing survival of the lake

- a) Commercial conversion of the riparian land into farming and grazing areas.
- b) Mineral extraction from the lake threatening its survival
- c) Overfishing to feed the ever-increasing human population
- d) Siltation due to deforestation in the catchment and farming too close to the lake
- e) Discharge of pesticide into the lake from agricultural practices
- f) Encroachment right into the lake

Way forward towards conservation of the lake.



The County Government of Nyandarua is committed to saving lake Ol' Bolossat and ensuring sustainable use of the resource. Below are some highlights as shared by the CECs:

Survival of Lake Ol' Bolossat requires collaborative efforts between NEMA, Wetlands International, County Government, KWS, NLC, media and community members. All the stakeholders need to reflect on actions that degrade the lake ecosystem with the aim controlling them.

The County Government of Nyandarua will provide piped drinking water so that community does not draw water directly from the lake and also work with schools and institutions of higher

learning to plant trees around the lake. Tree planting will also include the neighboring counties; Laikipia and Samburu.

Gazettement of the lake is a key focus of the County government to reduce encroachment and overexploitation. This will be followed by implementation of the Management plan which provides for public participation in decision making.

County Tourism department will focus on making the lake an attractive destination and market it both locally and internationally. This will create job opportunities for the residents of Nyandarua as well as adjacent counties. The opportunities will be spread out in the entire county and 30% jobs will be offered to the youth.

Nyandarua County is home to many international athletes; therefore, the government will create the lake Ol' Bolossat international Marathon to raise funds towards conservation of the Lake and also raise awareness on the importance of the lake.

There is already Rapid Results Initiative (RRI) on land recovery grabbed around the lake by the county government.

Conclusions

The event brought together various interested parties who depend on the lake directly or indirectly. There were various conflict issues mentioned by the members of the public and the relevant authorities responded adequately. At the close of the meeting, there was commitment from the county government leadership on the need to protect and gazette the lake to enhance sustainable utilization. In addition this forum received a lot of coverage in the main stream media.

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