



Laikipia Biodiversity Conservation Program

USAID/Jason Russell



The Laikipia Wildlife Forum celebrates the signing of Shamenek Community Forest Association Agreement with a day of songs and tree planting.

Funding Level:
\$3.2 million

Duration:
October 2009 – June 2015

Activity Goals:

- Improve the lives of the Laikipia people
- Protect the biodiversity of Laikipia
- Promote rangeland management, rivers and wetland management, conservation enterprise development and forest management

Activity Accomplishments:

- Two out of three community members across the Laikipia group ranches now recognize the importance of planned grazing as being key for good rangeland management
- 4 group ranches are implementing land and water restoration community learning sites
- 24 river resource-user associations, 10 community-forest associations and 13 community conservancies and grazing management committees support the sustainable use of resources
- More than 500 households have adopted improved natural resource and management practices
- 340 schools reached with targeted environmental education and eco-literacy programs
- An estimated 38,000 hectares (91,000 acres) under improved land management practice
- Wildlife in Laikipia has increased by 15 percent

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

The Laikipia Biodiversity Conservation Program supports the Laikipia Wildlife Forum, a membership-based organization established to conserve Laikipia's wildlife and ecosystem integrity. The program improves the lives of Laikipia's people by bringing communities together to conserve and sustainably use the natural resources on which they depend. The program also promotes innovative strategies for rangeland management, river and wetland management, conservation enterprise development, and forest management.

ACTIVITY AREAS

The program supports the Laikipia Wildlife Forum to work with pastoralist communities and small-scale farmers in four critical areas: rangeland management, rivers and wetlands management, conservation enterprise development and forest management.

The goal is to increase understanding of the value of effective conservation and natural resource management, and to maintain a healthy and productive natural environment that benefits communities.

- Rangeland management supports restoration and preservation of pastoral land and promotes environmentally sound decision-making to improve relationships between grazing animals, predators, and grasslands.
- Rivers and wetlands management builds awareness between upstream community water users and users at the downstream level along 24 rivers in Laikipia.
- Conservation enterprise development promotes ethical trade in indigenous plants by building producer capacity, promoting enterprise partnerships, and supporting infrastructure development. The enterprise program focuses on aloes, stinging nettle and other medicinal plants, essential oils, and bee products.
- Forest management builds capacity among forest users to participate in the management of their forests through development of community organizations that design and implement forest management plans.

Implementing Partner:

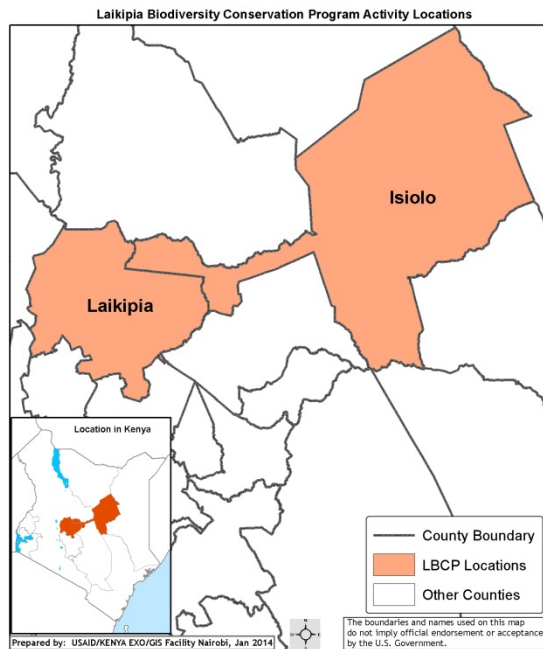
Laikipia Wildlife Forum

Key Partners:

Kenya Wildlife Service, Water Resource Management Authority, Kenya Forest Service
Laikipia Wildlife Forum

Activity Locations:

Laikipia County, and Nyeri, Meru, Samburu and Isiolo Counties

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ACTIVITY IMPACT

The lives and livelihoods of Laikipia County's pastoralists, ranchers, smallholder farmers, and tourism operators are intertwined with the health and well-being of the area's abundant natural resources. Nestled in the shadow of Mount Kenya, Laikipia is home to the "Big Five" mammals – elephant, lion, leopard, water buffalo, and rhinos – and to the planet's largest population of Grevy's Zebra and the Reticulated Giraffe, both endangered species. Laikipia boasts 500 species of the medicinal plant, aloe, and several hundred native bee species.

It is a challenge to harness these rich resources while sustaining the area's biodiversity. Responding to increasing demand from national and international markets for honey, beeswax, and beauty products from natural ingredients, Desert Edge is helping communities in Laikipia develop environmentally sound and sustainable conservation-based enterprises. As a result, community members are diversifying and supplementing their traditional livestock-based incomes by sustainably harvesting their own natural resources.

Desert Edge's training in business and finance management, beekeeping technologies, and organic farming for more than 843 producers has streamlined business operations and yielded higher-quality products. Forty-eight percent of Desert Edge partners are women who now play a larger role in harvesting, processing, and packaging products. Training sessions are held in community areas to encourage women to participate.

"Through the income raised from the sale of honey and aloe to Desert Edge, I am now able to send my second child to school," said Ngina Muthoka.