

December 5, 2007

**ANNE K. TAYLOR FUND
2007 COMMUNITY CONSERVATION NEWSLETTER**



Masai Mara rainstorm
Photo by: Abigail Allison

Dear Friends and Supporters:

This has been a very busy year and I want to thank each and every one of you for helping me by being so steadfast in your support – both financially and personally. I send you my heartfelt thanks.

The “bullets” below cover what the Anne K. Taylor Fund (AKTF), with your kind support, has achieved during 2007.

- **MASAI MARA DESNARING TEAM** - This has been restructured and the team members now work full time under the Mara Conservancy, with us (Care for the Wild (CFTW) UK and Kenya and AKTF) continuing to pay their salaries. This will be more effective as patrolling is continuous rather than in two week periods. The team continues to remove many snares and, working alongside Conservancy rangers, apprehends poachers. Our new Suzuki is being used for patrols. Thank you to the Mara Conservancy.



Anne with AKTF de-snaring team and rangers

- **PURCHASE OF THREE AND A HALF (!)SUZUKI MARUTIS**
- **#1 AKTF SUZUKI MARUTI-** Care for the Wild, Kenya sold their Landrover and it has not yet been replaced. AKTF bought a small Suzuki Maruti so that our team can continue with their patrols over large distances. CFTW maintains the AKTF vehicle and takes care of the running costs.
- **#2 SUZUKI MARUTI -** This vehicle was purchased by AKTF with generous designated funding from the Edward E. Hills Fund and Nicholas and Karen Chickering. It was donated to the OLARE OROK CONSERVANCY, MASAI MARA for patrolling and community purposes.
- **#3 SUZUKI MARUTI –** This vehicle was purchased by AKTF and donated to the MARA CONSERVANCY. It is to be used for patrolling and helping to monitor the human/wildlife conflict, particularly during the wildebeest migration when visitor number increase dramatically. The presence of this vehicle and a ranger patrolling the Mara Reserve deters visitors from approaching wildlife (particularly the cheetah which are diurnal hunters) too closely, which causes great stress. Tickets are issued to drivers who “misbehave”, which is critical for the well being of the animals.
- **# 4 (or 3.5!)SUZUKI –** Generous contributions for this patrol vehicle were made by the Case/Phelps families and Abercrombie and Kent to the Mara Conservancy, with AKTF contributing to the

balance. This vehicle is based in a different area from Suzuki #3 and will be used for similar wildlife monitoring purposes/patrolling in a different area of the Mara Reserve and its presence is a deterrent for poachers.

Mobility is one of the biggest challenges in Kenyan conservation and vehicles are expensive to buy and maintain. For these reasons, the use of these vehicles will greatly assist in counteracting the poachers' illegal snaring/hunting activities and keep the wildlife free from visitor harassment.

Thanks to Martin Forster of Cooper Motors, Nairobi, for allowing us to purchase these vehicles at a reduced rate for conservation purposes. Thanks, also, to all our supporters whose contributions to AKTF went towards the purchase of these vehicles. It is money well spent.

- **DISTEMPER AND RABIES VACCINATION PROGRAMME ON BOUNDARY OF MASAI MARA RESERVE PERFORMED BY DR. ASUKA TAKITA.**

Due to a serious outbreak of both rabies and distemper in local Masai dogs, AKTF sponsored **Dr. Asuka Takita** to vaccinate as many dogs as possible along the Mara Reserve boundary. If this disease were to spread to the wild carnivores in the Mara Reserve, we could lose our lions, leopard, cheetah, jackal, hyena etc. Several years ago, a large percentage of lion and other carnivores were lost to canine distemper in Tanzania's Serengeti National Park. Luckily, we were able to learn from this crisis and act accordingly to prevent such a thing from happening twice.

To date, Dr. Takita has vaccinated over 2500 dogs, with still more to go. She estimates that approximately a month's work still remains with the goal of vaccinating another 1000+ dogs. The approximate cost for this work will be \$5000.00. This is a monumental task as the dogs are not used to being handled. She is working both with the Scientific community from the Serengeti and the local Kenyan authorities. You can learn more about her work by going to "blogs" on www.wildlifedirect.org



Dr. Asuka Takita with Masai community members



Dog handler with newly vaccinated dog

Dr. Takita needs to purchase another 4x4 vehicle (Landrover or Toyota) to continue this work, as her own small Suzuki was totally destroyed by the terrible terrain during the operation of this project. Donations may be made through AKTF 501 (C) (3) if anyone may be interested in helping with this important project. She already has some designated funding.

- **MOBILE FILM UNIT**

In 2007 AKTF purchased a mobile film unit for educational purposes. In partnership with Born Free Foundation, we have, in this year alone, brought the message of “bushmeat”(illegal, indiscriminate and unsustainable poaching of wildlife for commercial gain) and conservation to over 100,000 local Kenyans. The medium of film is very effective and has shown a HUGE breakthrough in how people view poaching at this time, as opposed to nine years ago when I started the de-snaring project.

This is why community “conservation education” has always been high on my list of priorities. In the early days there was little understanding of what was actually happening and thus, no action was taken by the local communities. Now they are “on board” and our wildlife has a chance. Poachers are no longer welcomed nor tolerated by the Masai in the Mara.

- **MASAI WOMEN’S BEADING PROJECT, KILGORIS, MASAI MARA**



Masai women beading

- I loaned start-up money to this women's group, headed up by Regina Mpatiany, pictured on left, who design and make beautiful beaded bracelets. I sell these bracelets, with all profits being returned to the women who then decide what to invest in. **Sage Spa and Salon in Montana is marketing the bracelets on our behalf. www.sagespasalon.com. They have a recent interview with me on the project – if anyone is interested in listening to it, please go to: http://www.sagespaliving.com/sia_login.php and click on the 'sia podcast' graphic - when the player launches you'll see the 2 podcasts if you scroll down slightly.**
- With the initial profits, the Masai women purchased a generator-operated grain grinding machine. Ground maize (posho) is their staple food. This machine saves them back breaking work and earns them a steady income by leasing the use of it out to the community. A house also had to be built to protect the generator, so this was a huge, and expensive, undertaking.
- With the next profits, they want to build a small shop to provide basic needs (corn, fruit, eggs, milk, vegetables, etc.) to the community, who currently have to walk for miles to the closest market. We are close to making this a reality.



IF ANYONE WOULD LIKE TO BUY A BRACELET (OR TWO!) TO HELP THE WOMEN'S PROJECT, PLEASE LET US KNOW AND WE WILL SHIP THEM TO YOU. PLEASE CONTACT US AT 406 294 9430 OR explore@aktaylor.com.

THEY COST \$30.00 EACH PLUS POSTAGE. I, personally, think they are absolutely beautiful and wear them all the time. The colour combinations, and patterns, are sophisticated, some in darker browns and blacks and they can be worn all year round.

- **SNARE ART SCULPTURES DESIGNED BY KENYAN ARTIST KIOKO MWITIKI**

These small animal sculptures are made by this well- known Kenya artist from wire snares which our Masai de-snaring team removes from the Mara bush. All profits from sales of these wire sculptures are returned to the project.

Please think of them for your Christmas giving! We have rhino, lion, warthog, giraffe and elephant. They are \$50.00 each, plus postage.



Snare art commissioned through Kioko Mwitiki, world renowned artist.

Should you want to make any purchases, please contact us at 406 294 9430 or explore@aktaylor.com and we can ship them out immediately.

COMMUNITY

Our work in the Masai Mara community is far reaching and very broad-based. Under this title I will divide it into the various projects we have undertaken:



Anne with students and their parents

PUSANGI PRIMARY SCHOOL, MASAI MARA:

We purchased and the school installed a 4600 ltrs. water tank/gutters so that the children in this school may have clean water (or any water) to drink during the school day. This is a very remote school and just getting the tank to the school was a major achievement! To date, we have purchased and installed tanks in five schools in the area and will do more as funding allows.

In addition, we have purchased text books and sports equipment for the children and planted tree seedlings so there will be a lovely forest surrounding the school, as long as the elephants do not eat them!

Their wish-list now includes building an additional classroom as the existing ones are overflowing now that Kenya has instigated free primary education. If funding allows, we will help this to happen.

EMUROTOTO PRIMARY SCHOOL, MASAI MARA

With generous donations from some of our guests, we were able to purchase a large number of desks to help this school which is, again, very overcrowded. Some children have no desks at all and others have to share one desk between several students. We also provided more textbooks and sports equipment (having done this previously). The balls for any sport do not last very long due to the thorns on and around the respective fields! The girls' netball team is doing well and for the first time they have a sport of their own.



Schoolgirl

KOYAKI GUIDING SCHOOL (KGS) SCHOLARSHIPS, MASAI MARA

In an effort to empower women, we are sponsoring Miriam Kipas for a year's course at the KGS. This is an intensive programme covering a number of disciplines including conservation. She has achieved 100% on her written exam and has been well received in the field.

If you would like to know more about the Koiyaki Guiding school you may visit their website at: <http://www.koiyaki.com/> A year's scholarship costs approximately \$2000.00. If anyone is interested in making a donation towards a student's scholarship, you may do it through the Anne K. Taylor Fund 501 (c)(3) which would make your donation tax deductible. We can choose a qualified candidate.

CHILI PEPPER PILOT PROJECT

In an effort to deter elephants from raiding nearby maize farms, we initiated a pilot chili pepper project as elephants do not like their smell. A piece of rope is dipped in engine oil, rubbed in dried chili pepper which is then used as a fence to surround the farm. It is quite successful and we would like to expand this project. If we can get the Masai to grow chili peppers, rather than maize, we could find a market for the peppers (make salsa etc) which would bring them a steady income with which they could buy their maize from other sources and the elephant/human conflict would be diminished considerably. This will be an ambitious project but worth a try!

HAND PUPPETS AS TOYS AND EDUCATIONAL TOOLS

In collaboration with Dr. Abigail Allison, we are starting another community project which will be both educational and fun. This will be a cottage industry with Abigail designing hand puppets which can be used in puppet shows as a tool to bring the conservation message to the young Masai in whose hands the future of our wildlife will lie. The puppet characters will be poachers, Masai families, tourists and the animals.

Masai children have no toys so we will market these hand puppets as best we can and give them to the Masai children who can make up their own stories. I think this might be a valuable tool in helping the younger generations to understand the value of the wildlife and what needs to be done to sustain it through the medium of story-telling.

ADULT EDUCATION AND TEXT BOOKS FOR THE AKTF TEAM AND PARK RANGERS

In an effort to help our team members reach their highest potential, we are providing adult education for them to learn the basics of English, reading, writing and arithmetic. This will enable them to participate more efficiently in our modern world. We also provide text books for the children of our team members and the rangers who work with us so that they may do extra-curricular studies when at home, giving them a competitive edge in a very competitive market.

RESCUE OF “LITTLE KILGORIS” BY AKTF TEAM IN THE MARA

Our team assisted in the rescue of a tiny baby elephant which had been swept down a flooded river and was separated from his mother. He followed a herd of cows back to a Masai village. Amazingly, the village chief walked the baby elephant to the Kenya Wildlife Service headquarters, about 15 kms away! Our team was called in to assist and Little Kilgoris was flown to Nairobi by the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust (www.sheldrickwildlifetrust.org)

An abandoned newborn baby impala was also brought to us. I am very excited about these rescues because it means that the local population is now recognizing that we are available to help in these situations.



Little Narok

CANADIAN BROADCASTING FILM CREW

A wonderful film crew from CBC spent a few days in the Mara with me earlier this year to film our work, which was a great honour. It was recently shown in Canada on the David Suzuki programme called The Nature of Things. I am excited to see the final version!



Sara Marino, CBC Producer, with AKTF Team



Anne and her team being filmed by CBC

NEW TENT FOR AKTF TEAM

We had to purchase a new tent for our team as a very irate elephant tusked ours to pieces with a team member inside it. Fortunately our team member, Ole Saitoti, was unhurt although the elephant kicked him around a bit! We have no idea why this “attack” occurred but perhaps the elephant just wanted to be where the tent was located!



Kilonga



Ben



Nakuso



Saitoti

**DEVON PAGE McCLEARY, JEWELLERY DESIGNER AND
BARNEYS DEPARTMENT STORE**

Devon, who is a good friend, and supporter of the Anne K. Taylor Fund, is a very talented jewellery designer based in Los Angeles. This year she nominated the Anne K. Taylor Fund as her charity of choice for any sales of her jewellery sold through the Barneys' catalogue. I am most grateful to her for this recognition and generosity. She has been a very generous supporter to AKTF for several years which has helped us achieve so much.

In closing, I would like to thank all of you, once again, for your extremely generous support to the Anne K. Taylor Fund. Without which we would not be able to achieve anything. I hope that you are happy with how I have chosen to spend your donations this year in an effort to keep our wildlife safer and the community involved.

FUTURE DONATIONS

Should you want to make a donation in the future, which would of course be gratefully received, you may use my recent tax exempt status as follows and I thank you in advance:

**Anne K. Taylor Fund 501 (c)(3)
2724 Arvin Road
Billings, MT 59102
USA**

Should you have any questions, suggestions, comments please contact me at: anne@aktaylor.com. I will shortly be leaving for Kenya on my annual migration but this e-mail is monitored by my office.

**THANK YOU ALL AGAIN FOR SUCH GENEROUS
SUPPORT AND I WISH YOU ALL HAPPY HOLIDAYS**

**AND A WONDERFUL NEW YEAR. TOGETHER WE ARE
MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE MASAI MARA, KENYA**



In memoriam of Honey – the cubs are now adult and are doing well