

October 26, 2010



ANNE K. TAYLOR FUND NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2010



ANNE AND THE AKTF/CFTW TEAM

Dear Friends and Supporters:

I write from Montana with elk bugling all around, the mountain peaks are snowcapped and the sandhill cranes are heading south – that is my cue for my annual migration back to Kenya! As I will be following my migratory instinct next month, and will not be able to send out a newsletter, I wanted to let all of you know what we have achieved in the past year with your generous support for which I am so very grateful. The year-end report, and this newsletter, will soon be posted on my website www.aktaylor.com click on Anne K. Taylor Fund newsletter or reports.

Please note: This is the first of two newsletters that you will be receiving from this email address. The second will be the A.K. Taylor International Newsletter.

ANNE K. TAYLOR FUND PROJECT NEWS:



AKT RECEIVED NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC FUNDING FOR LIVESTOCK “BOMA” FORTIFICATION PROJECT:

I am so excited to tell you that National Geographic Big Cats Initiative amazingly accepted my proposal for funding to support my Maasai Livestock Enclosures (“bomas”) Fortification project.

I am so proud to be a National Geographic grantee and I am excited to be working with them on this project.

Their funding has allowed me to accelerate the fortification process and we have now **completed the protection of over 200 bomas by surrounding the Maasai’s existing structures with 8’ chain link fence**, buried two feet deep to prevent the honey badgers from digging into the goat and sheep sheds.



MAASAI LIVESTOCK OWNER FORTIFYING HIS BOMA



KIMORO & ANNE CHECKING ON FORTIFIED SHEEP SHED

The Maasai livestock owners continue to be active partners both financially and physically. We split the expense of the chain link wire and they are responsible for installing it. I purchase the wire and transport it for them from Nairobi, delivering it to the closest place possible to their homesteads. To date, these protected bomas are 100% successful with no predation recorded and no revenge killings of the Big Cats and in particular the lions, whose very survival is threatened. Simply put, if the lions kill the livestock they in turn will be poisoned or speared. Like ranchers throughout the world, predation is not tolerated.

DR STUART PIMM, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SCIENTIST VISITS THE PROJECT: I was honoured to welcome Dr. Stuart Pimm, National Geographic Scientist, to the Mara to visit the project. We had a grueling drive down over abysmal roads – big rocks, washboard corrugations and thick dust. My Toyota Land Cruiser is not the most comfortable of vehicles but Stuart never complained and eventually we reached our destination, my house in the Mara. We were joined by my friends Dr. Paula Kahumbu, also a NGBCI grantee, and her husband Peter Greste from the BBC.

From that moment on we never drew breath! Stuart was interested in visiting the bomas project to which NG had committed funding. We drove all day from one end of our project site, covering hundreds of kilometers, to the other, visiting both protected and unprotected bomas, recording the history of each and delivering chain link, which was gratefully received.



DR. STUART PIMM IN FRONT OF FORTIFIED BOMA

One livestock owner had recently lost eight cows to lion predation. He informed us that 22 lions, which he knew of, had been killed by the Maasai in that area over the past two years in retaliation for killing their livestock. These are usually terrible deaths by poison or spearing...as lions' very survival is threatened this was a horrifying statistic. Now his boma is protected with the chain link he assured me that there would be no more lion deaths as there would be no need – if the livestock is safe, the lions are safe.

Another livestock owner we visited had a horrifying tale of a recent attack on his sheep and goats, at night, in their shed. A honey badger dug under the shed and started to mutilate the animals (they cause as much or more damage as the larger predators); the smell of blood attracted a hyena which continued the mayhem, which then attracted a leopard which finished the job. In all he lost 33 animals with only one survivor – a pregnant sheep which was paralyzed as her hind leg tendons had been severed in the attack. When one witnesses the damage that predators cause, first hand, it is easy to understand how upsetting this is to the Maasai livestock owners. It is truly devastating. The next day we were able to deliver chain link for this gentleman to fortify his sheep and goat sheds so we hope this will never happen again to him or his livestock. There were no revenge killings of the predators in this instance as we reacted fast to help him prevent further losses.



ANNE & TEAM INSPECTING FORTIFIED CATTLE BOMA



DOUBLE FORTIFICATION – WIRE AND NEW PLANTINGS

Please click on the following link which will take you to Dr. Pimm's, and my own, blogs on the National Geographic Website. I know you will enjoy reading them and learning more about the boma project:http://blogs.nationalgeographic.com/blogs/admin/mt-search.cgi?tag=Anne%20Kent%20Taylor&blog_id=59

Dr. Mordecai Ogada kindly agreed to help me with data collection for this boma project so that we may scientifically quantify what a difference the boma protection project is making. His intern, Eddie, went to the Mara with Elias, our team leader. They took GPS co-ordinates of all the bomas, which we will now map. At the same time, they collected other data relevant to predation and revenge killings of predators. This information will provide valuable baseline data so that we will know how successful the project is long-term.

I would also like to thank Abercrombie and Kent Philanthropy for their generous donation towards the “bomas”, several of which have now been protected with this assistance.

BIO GAS DIGESTERS: Another exciting addition to the project is the introduction to the Mara of affordable bio-gas digesters suitable for individual use. They are designed by Dominic Wanjihia, *Simply Logic*, who is a brilliant inventor. If you have any interest in learning more about these digesters please follow this link: <http://wildaboutafrica.wordpress.com/category/biogas/>

The concept is so simple and the digester is so effective I feel their success is guaranteed. The unit consists of a large latex “balloon” which is “fed” with cow dung (of which there is plenty), mixed with water; it percolates in the sun emitting methane gas which is piped into the house for cooking.



DOMINIC WANJHIA INSTALLING BIO GAS DIGESTER



ELIAS & FELIX EXAMINING A BIO GAS DIGESTER

This has many advantages – the first being, if these units become popular with the Maasai, deforestation will be reduced; the children will be healthier as they will no longer have to live in smoke-filled houses and it eases the life of the women who will no longer have to go far afield searching for firewood. The unit is affordable enough for individual use so I am hopeful that, as the idea catches on, more people will install them. All very exciting and effective.

VERTICAL GARDENS: An additional advantage is that the slurry from these digesters makes excellent fertilizer. We have, therefore, introduced vertical farming in plastic sacks, fertilized by slurry, which can be placed in a protected, fenced area to prevent the wild animals from raiding the crop. This happens on a regular basis when vegetables are planted in the fields without protection, also leading to human-wildlife conflict. The gardens were also introduced by Dominic.



PILOT PROJECT - VERTICAL GARDEN

They are very productive and use much less water (which is very scarce) than traditional gardens. These can be easily, and inexpensively, introduced to schools and entire communities ensuring the people have a source of good nutrition. Vegetables currently are not often included in their diet which can cause multiple health issues.

SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMME: The University of Illinois funding for this project has sadly come to its planned conclusion. I have, however, recently shipped enough Insta fully nutritional porridge to the two schools currently involved with this pilot project, Pusangi and Oloomongi to last for this term. My thanks go to my supporters who specifically designated funding for the feeding programme, which allowed this extension.

The Stephenson Pope Babcock Foundation has just awarded AKTF a very generous grant to enable us to continue the school lunch programme through the first school term of 2011, for which we are most grateful. It is a wonderful way to celebrate Pope Babcock's memory. Pope was a very caring person and I am sure that he would be happy to know that, in his memory; these children are being nourished, ensuring both physical and academic improvement, perhaps changing the future of the Masai Mara. My sincere thanks go to the Board of this Foundation who made the decision to support these schoolchildren.



LUNCHTIME - PUSANGI PRIMARY AND OLOOMONGI PRIMARY SCHOOLS

I continue to hope and believe that the parents will commit financially to keep this programme going. This has always been the intention but, to date, it has not happened in spite of multiple meetings where agreement is reached. I will keep working on it as I cannot stand the thought of these children going hungry now that they are used to school lunch.

TEXT BOOKS, SCHOOLS, CLASSROOM CONSTRUCTION, DESKS, WATER TANKS AND SPORTS EQUIPMENT: This year, we delivered water tanks, and water collection systems, to many Masai homesteads to provide a source of potable water and to save the women from having to haul water, which usually is not even fit for human consumption, from many miles away.



NEWLY DELIVERED WATER TANK



ANNE AND TEAM WITH WATER COLLECTION SYSTEM

AKTF continues to purchase text books to distribute to students, my team and the rangers with whom my team patrols. Education is a top priority for most Kenyans and the extra hours the children can study by owning their own books, and being able to take them home with them, makes a huge difference to their performance. I am proud to tell you that the son of Ole Sirere (an AKTF team member) took first place in his district. The daughter of Joseph and Regina Mpatiany, Naomi Naipamei, came in 2nd place in the large Kilgoris district – a huge achievement. Kimojino, from the Mara Conservancy, told me that his daughter also excelled coming in third in her district. Their excellent results will allow these achievers to have the possibility of being accepted into the top flight secondary schools, which are very competitive and where few students from rural areas are accepted.

We provided desks for the new classroom at Oloomongi School along with a car full of soccer balls, jump ropes and numerous other active “toys” for this nursery school. You cannot imagine the happiness on their faces when we delivered these items! The second classroom at Oloomongi School has been partially completed.

On November 9th, my good friend and generous AKTF supporter, Sandee Bartkowski of Sandee O Photography, is joining VINCE and 944 for a Charitable Evening of Fashion and Art in Atlanta. One of Sandee’s amazing African photographs will be auctioned for the Anne K. Taylor Fund to support the Emurototo Primary School in the Masai Mara. A portion of the evening’s proceeds will also benefit the Rally Foundation. My humble thanks go to Sandee for this generosity. The school will be most grateful for this incredible gesture.



PHOTOS BY SANDEE BARTKOWSKI

WOMEN'S BEADING GROUP LED BY REGINA MPATIANY: Exciting things are happening this year. I met with Ellen Gustafson, the co-founder of FEED Projects www.feedprojects.com in New York, who has given us a substantial order for beaded bracelets to be specifically made with FEED beaded into the design. They will sell these on their website.



FEED BRACELET & OTHERS IN BEADED BOWL

I also met with Jena Gardner who founded The Traveler's Collection www.thetravelerscollection.com who has also requested some of these beautiful beaded bracelets.

We have a new product, beaded pashminas, which we hope will be as popular as the bracelets! They are also produced by a women's group, headed up by Magdalene, shown below. They are stunning! The proceeds from the pashminas and the bracelets support and benefit the women more than one could ever know.



MAGDALENE WEARING BEADED PASHMINA



PASHMINA BEADING WORK

MOBILE FILM THEATER: David Manoa, from Born Free Foundation visited the Mara with our mobile film unit earlier this year. We showed "Living with Lions", which had been translated into Maa, throughout the area. Literally hundreds, sometimes thousands, of people showed up for each "showtime" and a lot of discussion was generated by the conservation message on a very hot topic – that of predation and revenge killings of predators. It was very interesting to hear the feedback from the viewers, many of whom had never even considered the conservation possibilities. Born Free Foundation has now adopted the Mara boma protection prototype to protect bomas in the Amboseli region where predation, and the killing of lions, is a huge problem. I hope they will work as well there as they do for us so that both the livestock and the lions will be safe. I see no reason why they would not...

MARA NORTH CONSERVANCY (MN)– We have purchased 100 rolls of wire for MN so that they can protect bomas on their Conservancy where predation is a huge challenge and where lions have been killed in retaliation. Marc Goss, who runs MN, has been most helpful in delivering this wire to the bomas and recording the GPS co-ordinates of each so that we can incorporate the information to our data from the Mara Conservancy area of operation.



CHAIN LINK DELIVERY

AKTF is purchasing two-way radios for MN as they currently do not have a single one and have been trying to operate with cell phones which are less than effective as reception is lacking in much of the Mara. These radios will improve their security and allow for more effective patrols.

THE AKTF/CFTW TEAM, PATROLS AND WILDLIFE RESCUES – last but not least, our team continues to be active and effective, working with the authorities to capture poachers and illegal charcoal burners who are devastating our forests, remove snares and assist in wildlife rescues – some of which are more “exciting” than I would perhaps prefer!



REMOVING DEEPLY IMBEDDED SNARE



ZEBRA WITH SNARE WOUND

It does, however, feel wonderful when the snare is removed and one knows that the animal will soon heal and be out of the terrible pain it had been suffering. The team has to be commended for the incredible difference they are making to the very survival of the wildlife – sometimes against great odds. They have my total admiration and gratitude. My thanks go to Care for the Wild Kenya and CFTW UK for their consistent and ongoing financial and logistical support for our team.



TRUNK SEVERED BY SNARE



RESCUED LION WITH SNARE WOUND – LION SURVIVED

Through Care for the Wild UK, we received a Landrover to replace our trusty, but small, Suzuki. The team will now be able to fit well in the vehicle and will be able to cover a lot more territory in this sturdier vehicle. The other Suzukis which I purchased a few years ago continue to be used for wildlife monitoring and community work.

We purchased new tents and uniforms for the team which were long overdue. They are very happy! The team has attended a couple of interesting workshops this year to further their conservation interests and education:

27th February 2010 - Law Enforcement Workshop in Narok town – This workshop was partially sponsored by Care For The Wild International and was focusing on examining the current lax penalties for poachers. Our team leader, Elias Kamande, was asked to give a presentation on our work highlighting the issues of bush meat and logging. It was a productive workshop and received a lot of “press”.

Bushmeat Eastern Africa Network (B.E.A.N.) August 29th – 31st, 2010 .

In August, our team was invited to participate in this workshop by Evanson Kariuki, who was the AKTF team leader for many years. BEAN’s goal was to promote further collaboration between key groups in the greater Masai Mara ecosystem. Together they aim to reduce poaching for the bush meat trade. This will be approached in several ways: improved law enforcement, collaborative monitoring of the extent of the bush meat poaching, information on protein alternatives, increased knowledge on the devastating impact of the illegal bush meat trade. A data analysis system was established and the participants were trained to collect and monitor incidences of bush meat poaching using GPS technology.



HERD OF DEAD IMPALA



DRYING MEAT FROM ANIMALS KILLED BY POACHERS

In closing I want to share a quote attributed to Frederick Buechner defining “vocation”, which was sent to me by my friend, Father David Duprey: *“To find your mission in life is to discover the intersection between your heart’s deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger”* and another: *“True vocation is where your deep gladness meets the world’s deep need”*. These quotes resonate with me and I feel blessed to have the life I do in which, with your incredible support and generosity, I am able to make a difference in the lives of so many along with protecting the precious wildlife to the best of our ability.

I want to particularly thank those of you who continue to support my project so generously year after year. Knowing of your continuous support allows me to make commitments where otherwise I would fear to tread – thank you very, very much.

The Anne K. Taylor Fund never sends out a formal fund raising appeal but would be so grateful for your continuing support during these difficult times so that our work may continue. Thank you in advance for whatever you can do. We are also set up to accept gifts of securities. Tax deductible donations may be made to:

Anne K. Taylor Fund
2724 Arvin Road
Billings, MT. 59102
USA

Many thanks again to all of you for your unwavering generosity and support. I will continue to spend your money wisely to achieve our objectives and I hope that you will be able to visit the project personally sometime in the near future to see for yourselves how it is progressing and to meet our team.

With warm regards,
Anne



Anne Kent Taylor
Anne K. Taylor Fund
E-Mail: anne@aktaylor.com
Billings, Montana Office: 406 294 9430
E-Mail: info@aktaylor.com
Web: www.aktaylor.com