



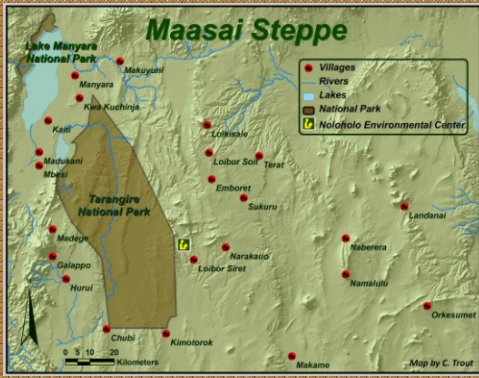
NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ACROSS THE MAASAI STEPPE, TANZANIA

The Maasai Steppe is a vibrant and important ecological stronghold for the wildlife and people of northern Tanzania. This breathtaking ecosystem encompasses approximately 40,000 square kilometers or nearly 10 million acres of woodlands, bushland and open grasslands and is home to rare species like the African wild dog and the fringe-eared oryx as well as one of Tanzania's most threatened African lion populations. Nearly 92% of this critical ecosystem is designated Maasai village lands where livestock husbandry represents the primary livelihood. Maintaining healthy rangelands is critical to both the Maasai people and the wildlife dependent on this arid environment. Pressured by a range of threats, including unregulated immigration and habitat degradation, the Maasai Steppe has been identified by the African People & Wildlife Fund as a primary project site for its conservation efforts.

Our Conservation Vision

The long-term vision for the Maasai Steppe is the conservation of a dynamically functioning ecosystem that supports healthy human and wildlife communities. This vision involves working in partnership with rural people to support community-led initiatives for sustainable natural resource management.





Site Description

The Maasai Steppe includes Tarangire and Lake Manyara National Parks as well as extensive Maasai village lands. This landscape contains the second largest wildlife population in northern Tanzania and is an important stronghold for the African elephant. Historically, land outside of the parks was used for livestock grazing, reflecting the Maasai's traditional pastoral system. However, human populations are growing rapidly in the Steppe and current land uses include livestock grazing, agriculture, small-scale mining and wildlife-based tourism.

Critical Threats

1. Unplanned livestock immigration
2. Water scarcity
3. Human population growth
4. Unregulated land conversion
5. Poor farming practices
6. Illegal wildlife poaching
7. Human-wildlife conflicts
8. Deforestation/charcoal production

Place-Based Conservation

The African People & Wildlife Fund recognizes that community-led initiatives driven by local interests, needs and aspirations represent the best chance for long-term conservation success in the Maasai Steppe. Building local skills and abilities, fostering good governance and promoting active community natural resource management are the cornerstones of our approach. This is a gradual process that requires flexibility and long-term commitment to the individual goals of each community we work with.

Our headquarters, the Noloholo Environmental Center, is located in the southern Maasai Steppe within the village lands of Loibor Siret and overlooking the southeastern boundary of Tarangire National Park. Included on the premises is a community educational facility where rural villagers receive training to improve their understanding of the environment and develop hands-on skills in natural resource management. The only one of its kind throughout northern Tanzania, the Noloholo Environmental Center is an important resource for local communities, conservation organizations and government authorities throughout the North.

Adaptive Management

Working with varying communities across the Steppe, we often encounter people who have different economic, social, political and environmental challenges despite living in relatively close proximity. Success on the ground is directly tied to our ability to navigate these complex challenges for the mutual benefit of people and wildlife.

In order to do this, we employ an adaptive management approach. This process has four steps: identifying key issues, developing strategies, taking action and measuring success. The cycle is then repeated, adapting strategies based on the outcomes of previous actions taken.

This process focuses local attention on key natural resource management issues in their community, helping people to consider threats and to measure their own progress towards locally-defined natural resource management goals. Access to reliable, objective information is fundamental to making informed individual and group decisions that improve the standard of living while protecting the natural environment and wildlife species of the Steppe.

*“Sometimes when we do our work in high-level meetings, we’re not making changes where they really matter.”
~ Wangari Maathai, Nobel Peace Prize Winner and African Environmentalist ~*



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Taking Action in the Steppe

Emphasizing the critical importance of community-led initiatives, the African People and Wildlife Fund provides information, training and service level support to its constituencies to strengthen local institutions and community-driven actions for natural resource management and wildlife conservation.

APW partners with Reto-o-Reto committees (Maasai for “interdependency”), comprised of community members and village officials, to address key natural resource targets and to ensure that resource interventions have the desired impact of reducing critical threats and improving local livelihoods along with wildlife and ecological conditions. To refine these interventions and to develop strategic actions in support of Reto-o-Reto goals, we conducted a natural resource management planning workshop in partnership with The Nature Conservancy. This process assists workshop participants to define the most threatened natural resources, the degree to which those resources are currently at risk and to establish a built-in evaluation mechanism to improve these resources over time.

The project is initially implemented at the village level with the Reto-o-Reto committee overseeing progress toward their goals. In next steps, it will go to ward and finally district levels. This bottom up strategy ensures stability of the strategies and action plans at all levels.

Community-Derived Natural Resource Management Strategies

A concerted effort is required to ensure conservation success. In order to achieve the objective of sustainable natural resource management in the Maasai Steppe, the African People & Wildlife Fund and its local partners will initially undertake the following strategies (with examples of specific actions).

Strategic Action One

IMPROVING WATER MANAGEMENT AND UTILIZATION

- Assist the village government in creating and enforcing policies & bylaws to protect water sources
- Rehabilitate habitat surrounding water sources

African People & Wildlife Fund Objectives

- Enable rural communities to develop and implement strategies for long-term natural resource conservation that also support community development interests;
- Provide information, education and training on natural resource conservation and management to rural communities;
- Reduce conflicts between people and wildlife through the development and support of culturally appropriate and preventative measures that are locally feasible;
- Support the development of community-based wildlife tourism and other sustainable income-generating projects in rural villages;
- Contribute to poverty alleviation through establishment of community-based enterprises in rural villages;
- Convene and facilitate corporations, NGOs and other charitable organizations with similar objectives to help support remote communities in the Maasai Steppe.

*“This is the best model of community conservation I have seen anywhere in the world.”
~ Professor Stuart Pimm, Winner of the Tyler Environmental Prize and Global Biodiversity Expert ~*



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Strategic Action Two

IMPROVE RANGELAND MANAGEMENT AND LIVESTOCK KEEPING PRACTICES

- Assist the village government in developing and enforcing an improved livestock immigration policy
- Develop new grazing plan and bylaws for pasture and livestock management
- Continue construction of Living Walls

Strategic Action Three

INCREASE LOCAL WILDLIFE NUMBERS AND BENEFITS FROM WILDLIFE

- Use village game scouts to patrol wildlife areas and enforce wildlife laws

- Determine viable areas for conservation easements, wildlife corridors and/or wildlife tourism
- Conduct workshops and carry out study tours to explore various models of community-based tourism
- Develop a local tourism plan

Strategic Action Four

IMPROVE QUALITY OF THE ENVIRONMENT THROUGH INTEGRATED LAND USE MANAGEMENT AND HABITAT PROTECTION

- Review previous land use management plans and determine important areas requiring changes
- Work at sub-village level to ensure broad scale community participation in the development of plans

Strategic Action Five

IMPROVE AGRICULTURAL METHODS

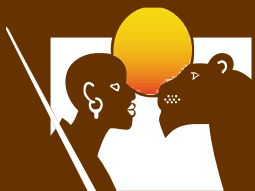
- Invite experts to conduct seminars and workshops on improved farming practices
- Conduct economic survey of agriculture and other land uses

Strategic Action Six

REDUCE POVERTY VIA ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

- Develop women's business ventures
- Increase access to small business loans
- Conduct workshops on small business development

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