

Northern Rangelands Trust Grazing Planning Workshop

Held at Sarara/namunyak headquarters

August 19-20, 2013.



Prepared by
Joseph Letoole
Ass.Grazing coordinator,
Northern rangeland trust

Background

Namunyak community conservation trust was the first conservancy to be established in Samburu county, Kenya. The conservancy is home to most of wildlife species found in northern Kenya and it is also inhabited by greater percentage of Samburu pastoralist in Samburu east district.

Namunyak is one of the conservancies with highest amount of bare land on the eastern side of the conservancy; the western side of the conservancy is a dry season grazing area, which receives heavy grazing pressure from cattle over the Samburu east.

Rangeland degradation is raising questions about the future of pastoralism as well as the survival of greater wildlife populations that used to roam the rangelands in the last several years. Increasing livestock numbers due to increased population of the pastoral communities increased the rate at which grass resources are being overgrazed. New emerging land uses for development is expected to reduce grazing space for wildlife and livestock.

This scenario call for establishment of an effective grazing committee that is able to facilitate sustainable grazing management practices by adopting various rangeland management approaches that rehabilitates already degraded rangeland as well as rejuvenating existing potential grazing areas.

The process of establishing accepted settlement patterns backed by well thought out land use plans is critical for securing critical grazing areas for wildlife and livestock within the greater Namunyak.

Most conservancies neighboring Namunyak have established grazing management departments in their conservancies with a full time grazing coordinators dedicated to management of grassland within the community areas. Namunyak being one of oldest conservancy with good revenue should join the ongoing movement that facilitates the productivity of rangelands.

The workshop was organized by **Namunyak wildlife conservation trust** and it was facilitated by the **Northern rangelands trust**. The aim of the workshop was to enhance the capacity of the board members, grazing and group ranch committees to better address the challenges that stems from diminishing grass resources in most parts of greater Namunyak conservancy.

Training focused on the reasons why grasslands are increasingly becoming limited, why invasive bushes are taking over grasslands, why bare areas of are increasing and communities don't realize the extent at which rangeland have degraded. The whole training enabled the committees to reflect on their past knowledge and landscapes and compares it with the present knowledge and landscape in order to determine what is best for them far into the future.

The training was facilitated by Joseph Letoole (grazing coordinator) from NRT and Laurence Lentaam (grazing coordinator) from Meibae community conservancy

Executive summary

The training was attended from a total of 30 persons drawn from the following committees-

- grazing committee
- Board members/board of directors
- Group ranch committee

Nalowon unit has a total of 8 big settlement areas as follows

1. Sabache zone
2. serolevi zone
3. sionta zone
4. ntepes zone
5. lentanai zone
6. lpashie zone
7. lerata zone
8. sordo zone

The workshop also aimed to lay basic foundation for introduction of holistic management principles that empowers local communities to identify what is best for them in the long term. Nalowon unit is expected to be a learning site for other units of **Ngilai west** and **kalepo**. Once grazing management is enhanced within **Nalowon**, other units and other neighboring communities will be able to adopt the practices being applied there for improved rangeland health in the whole of northern Kenya.

The training is the first step of series of other that will see Nalowon unit improves the management of grazing in the conservancy.

Day 1-

The training started with a word of prayer from Mzee Letarekeri. The committee was welcomed by the Tom Letiwa, the community development coordinator for Namunyak community conservation trust. Tom informed the conservancy leaders that Namunyak has excelled in other aspects of conservation but has lagged behind in the management of grazing areas despite being the first conservancy formed in 1995. He noted the success of grazing management in the neighboring conservancies. He challenged the leaders to set pace for other to follow in the community.

Conservancy manager-Fred Njagi led the team in outlining the objectives of the workshop as follows-

Workshop objectives

- To develop a grazing management plan for the whole of nalowon unit/conservancy so the communities can reap the benefits of planned grazing
- To improve tourism products from improved grazing management

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- Develop village land use plans in the whole of nalowon unit(develop desirable settlements plans in each zone, develop grazing blocks in each zone and safeguard tourism areas
- To understand the causes of rangeland degradation and develop local solutions to addressing it
- To develop community good will for improved grazing management far into the future
- To sensitize the committee about the harmonized grazing by-laws
- To introduce the concepts of holistic management to nalowon grazing committees

EXPECTATIONS OF THE PARTICIPANTS

- to strengthen grazing committee that is already weak and doesn't understand its roles
- To develop a plan for rangeland rehabilitation
- To develop grazing by laws that inhibits cattle rustling , curb livestock encroachment within the community areas
- To hire a grazing coordinator who will strengthen management of grazing in the whole of nalowon and greater Namunyak
- To acquire new knowledge on grazing management and learn how NRT plans to support grazing management
- To develop new hope in the management of rangelands in community areas
- To initiate actions that will take forward grazing management in the whole of Namunyak
- To give support to grazing committee to take forward the grazing management agenda
- To develop grazing plans in the whole of settlement zones and not concentrate around the core-conservation area and the bufferzone
- To develop an exposure plan for the grazing committee
- To develop plans for involvement of morans in grazing management in the whole conservancy
- Put in plans for electing women into the grazing committee
- To come up with plans of controlling Non-governmental organizations from messing up the core conservation areas by building new structures
- To develop a plan for management of natural resources for the benefit of the community eg. dead wood and sand harvesting

Mapping exercise-comparing past and present landscapes

The participants were divided into two groups, where one group is composed of the old elders and the other one composed of young elders. Each group was tasked with the role of developing as follows-

- group 1-Elderly elders-map of the past and their preferred holistic context
- Group 2-Young elders-map of the present and their preferred holistic context.

The following is brief overview of the past and present landscapes as discussed by the above groups

<p>Past Landscape Description:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abundant wildlife species • Healthy animals • Healthy grasslands • Respect is foundation of leadership • Strong local culture and people uphold cultural practices • Huge and healthy livestock herds • more useful trees • More cover of grasslands • Cooperation and unity among the community members • peace and security 	<p>Present Landscape Description:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Few wildlife species and others have become extinct like rhino • Leadership is top down approach not appointed by the people • many small herds of livestock • More people getting educated • Disappearance of perennial species of grasses • Drying of springs. • More bare grounds • Many settlements spread all over the landscapes • Less unity and cooperation • regular conflicts with neighbours
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Desired landscape

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More and healthy wildlife species • More grasses • Introduction of lost species of wildlife • More unity and cooperation among people • Upholding of our local culture • Respect as foundation of leadership |
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Holistic context- Holistic goal (group work)

The long range goal of the community was induced in a participatory exercise in which each group was asked the following questions.

1. What do you value in your life?
2. What can you do to support what you value?
3. How do we sustain what we want far into the future?

Response of the group members

What do you value in your life	What can you do to support what you value	How do you want your landscape to be/future
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		landscape
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • peace and security • plenty of grasslands/perennial grasses • unity and cooperation • abundance of wildlife within our areas • Education for our children and communities • More and diversified income sources • strong bylaws/rooted in elderly authority/samburu traditional governance • Employment opportunities • Good settlement plans • Recognition of women potential in grazing committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage peaceful coexistence among the community members and with neighbor communities • develop good grazing plans in all the settlements • Develop common vision that bonds the community together • Improve the security of wildlife by the community and the rangers • Capacity building of community members on various issues that affects their lives • More schools for children • Develop conservancy bylaws to regulate land use practices • creation of livestock markets • Boost tourism potential to create more employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement long term conservancy wide land use plans • Develop strong community led bylaws • Maintain integrity of grazing areas • Strict adherence to the desired settlement plans • Diversify livelihood sources • develop good grazing plans • Plenty of wildlife and return of rhino. • Maintain peace and security • Maintain community unity and cooperation • Incorporate women in grazing committee

The future map-(harmonized views of the participants



Tom Letiwa-community development manager for Greater Namunyak led the participants on drawing a harmonized map showing the following areas

- Settlement plans in each village of nalowon conservancy
- Grazing areas in each village of nalowon conservancy
 - Dry and wet season grazing areas
 - Grazing blocks
- Tourism management plans
 - Lodge privacy area
 - New conservation areas
 - New bufferzone area and boundary
- Forest areas/forest management plans
- Water catchment areas
- Livestock corridors
- wildlife corridors
- Degraded areas in the conservancy-Bare areas and areas invaded with invasive species
- Areas set aside for social amenities-Towns,schools,dams,churches etc

Discussing the roles of a grazing committee

1. Develop and implement grazing plans in the settlement zones
2. Coordinates grazing plans among various settlement zones in the conservancy
3. Develop desirable settlement patterns in the conservancy
4. Develop grazing bylaws that facilitates grazing within and outside the conservancy
5. Resolve conflicts resulting from grass resources/pasture and water
6. Promote good management of buffer zone, core-conservation area and lodge privacy area
7. Promote peace and security within and outside the conservancy
8. Create awareness on conservation of environment/promote wildlife conservation
9. Creation of new grazing areas within the conservancy-through rangeland rehabilitation
10. Link the community elders with new knowledge for improve rangeland health-promote use of various approaches to natural resource management

DAY 2-INTRODUCTION TO ECOSYSTEM PROCESSES

There are four ecosystem processes which holistic management uses to know whether the management is improving the ecosystem health: water cycle (its effectiveness), mineral cycle (the flow of nutrient through plants and soils) biodiversity (the complex of biological communities) and energy flow (the flow of solar energy through living things)

In the case of this training we gave more emphasis on water cycle and energy flow due to high amount of bare grounds and degradation.

Water cycle

The participants were given pictures representing rain clouds, water runoff, water infiltration and transpiration/evaporation. The participants were asked to explain what each picture represented and to organize pictures in order of how water cycles within the environment. Discussions were leading around desirable the desirable and undesirable aspects of water flow in the community areas. Run off was considered as bad and infiltration of water was regarded as good.

Example

	
<p>Figure 1-participants prepares different plots to demonstrate the effect of soil surface management on rainfall effectiveness</p>	<p>Figure 2-Use of laminated pictures to demonstrate the cycling of water through the environment</p>

Energy flow

Participants were given pictures of the sun, cow, a person and a plant. They were asked to organize these in order (sun, plant, cow, person) to demonstrate the flow of energy through basic food chain. In the current landscape energy flow is not being maximized because of limited to capture solar energy and pass it through the food chain. This is not good to people and animals in the conservancy. The group was taught two ways to increase the capture of solar energy

1. increase the density of plants (more grass/trees);
2. increase growing time of plants - more perennials than annuals

Tools for managing the ecosystem

Grazing and overgrazing

Laminated pictures were used to demonstrate overgrazing and planned grazing. Recovery period of plants was taken into consideration. Planned grazing in form of dry and wet season grazing areas has historically been practiced by the Samburu but the traditional systems that maintained it has weakened over time.

All the elders agreed to institute planned grazing within their settlement areas to avoid selective grazing of grasses that has led to overgrazing of perennial grasses that were palatable to wildlife/livestock

Animal impact

A discussion was held about the behaviors of animals when bunched and in large numbers and their effects to the soils (trampling, dunging and urination). This was illustrated with the pictures of wildebeest in Maasai Mara and *Holistically managed cattle at Dibangombe, Zimbabwe where both groups produce animal impact through bunching.*

It was agreed that, it is possible to simulate the behavior of wild herds using livestock to create animal impact that creates ideal conditions for plants to grow. Animal is locally available tool that can be used to improve the health of grasslands

Technology

This amounts to clearing efforts to remove invasive species, reseeding and gully healing by use of technology and manpower.

The participants agreed that, this approach is good but it is costly to undertake in the community areas. *In addition it was also agreed that, it amounts to treating symptoms of land degradation and not addressing the real cause of it - overgrazing and partial rest of land*

Challenges affecting the Nalowom grazing committee

A brainstorming session was held to identify the gap in the management of grazing land in the conservancy. The following issues were identified.

1. a week grazing committee that does not know its roles/lack of

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2. Limited meeting held by the conservancy with the grazing committee
3. Lack of clear focus on grazing management in general by the grazing committee/motivation to pursue grazing issues
4. Lack of community support for the grazing committee
5. Giving more focus on management of grazing in the core area and neglecting the villages

Identified solution

- Regular facilitation of grazing committee meetings by the conservancy
- Allocate 5% of community fund to facilitate grazing management in all the 3 conservancies of The greater Namunyak(kalepo,ngilai west and nalowon)
- Board and group ranch committee to give more support to grazing management
- Awareness meetings in each village to articulate the roles of the grazing committee

Fred Njagi and Tom Letiwa led participants in developing resolutions to be presented in the oncoming annual general meeting towards the end of the year-

Key Resolutions

- The new buffer zone and core-conservation area map will be adapted as per the drawn map during the AGM
- The bufferzone will be opened for grazing management every September every year or any other time suitable after considerations of tourism season.
- 5% of 60% of the community allocation from the conservancy revenue will be used to facilitate grazing management/improve rangeland health in the whole of the *Greater Namunyak conservation area*
- Sarara area will remain a dry season grazing area and no permanent settlements will be allowed
- No use of tintil corridor
- Grazing management plans to be adopted in each village of Nalowon conservancy

Grazing management action plan for Nalowon conservancy

Activity	When	who
Creation of awareness on planned grazing/settlements in each and every village	August	Nalowon conservancy grazing committee
Morans trainings and exposures	september	NRT/NWCT
Grass harvesting within the sarara core area	August	NRT/NWCT
Employment of a grazing coordinator for Nalowon conservancy	January 2014	NRT/NWCT

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Grazing committee meeting to open the buffer zone for grazing	August	NRT/NWCT
Adoption of harmonized grazing bylaws	August	NWCT