



Friends of the Mau Watershed (FOMAWA)

February 2004

News Letter Number 4

1. INTRODUCTION

Forestry is a long-term business, and it is essential that the Government puts in place the kind of policies that should stand the test of time, and get forestry back on its feet; but nevertheless progress is disappointingly slow. We have been busy on strategic/political matters, as well as doing practical things on the ground, and this newsletter concentrates on both.

2. POLITICAL

- 2.1 There has been no response from officialdom to the paper "A Suggested Policy For Conservation and Planting", which was distributed to some two hundred 'decision makers' in June 03; and yet there are some signs that it has been read and digested. Our ideas about what must be done have not changed. We recognise that for the Government to make the major moves from where they are now will take an act of considerable faith in the goodwill of the people of Kenya to do what is right, without the hand of the law clamped on their necks.

On a positive note the Minister has said that he recognises that environmental matters and forestry have been at the bottom of the Government's agenda, and he is attempting to have them raised to greater prominence.

- 2.2 Richard Muir attended a meeting organised by the East Africa Business Summit Group on Nov 21 03 at Karura, at which the Minister of the Environment and Natural Resources was present. The agenda concentrated on one issue, "COMMERCIAL FORESTRY". Richard Muir's ten bullet points, written before the meeting, were brought out verbally and were left with the Minister. These points are quoted as follows:

POINTS MADE TO THE MINISTER

- (i) Protect the indigenous forest using whatever resources are necessary. Do this so well that illegal activities cannot take place.
- (ii) Stop the shamba system, which has failed, and decide what to do in its place. If the FD is to be responsible for planting then it must adopt the methods used by the best commercial growers, i.e. the Tea Companies. It must auction stands of timber thus ensuring that it gets the market price. Royalties are around one fifth of current market levels. To the extent that the FD does not replant then tenants who know what they are doing must be found. There may not be many takers and they must be induced to step into the FD's shoes. Terms should include; A lease at least as long as the crop takes to mature; a subsidised annual rent, perhaps sh1500/ha; (this is almost four times

- the rent under the shamba system of sh420/ha, and a quarter of the going rate in the Molo area). A planting/management plan would have to be approved and adhered to.
- (iii) Planting of commercial forestry, at a commercial scale, on private land, to be encouraged. This has not happened in the past and there must be an inducement. Carbon Credits are supposedly available at dollars 300/ha and that should be enough as a tax-free grant.
 - (iv) All proceeds from the sale of timber to be free of tax for those farmers/companies whose sole business is timber growing and which have not set off the costs of planting and maintenance against other income.
 - (v) Growing of trees of commercial value to be encouraged everywhere. These could be to meet the farmer's own requirements, with any surplus for sale. The current need to get a permit to fell and sell is a source of great annoyance and inconvenience often taking up much time and money. (It took Richard Muir five weeks and two visits to Molo, one to Elburgon and one to Njoro, to take the inspecting officer home, for a single load of bits and pieces). Farmers will not plant for sale if they cannot sell. As the indigenous forest will be protected it follows that timber, charcoal etc that is for sale must come from a respectable source, and the need for permits must be abandoned.
 - (vi) In many places there are mature trees suitable for milling; but they are scattered, and there is no system for coordinating felling, and paying the farmer a fair price related to the value of sawn timber. This could be organised through the District Officers and their chiefs and might get a number of mills operating straight away. The country needs jobs as well as timber. There is a need to teach the millers that cypress and pine are not the only species that are suitable for timber. Grevillea is good as are many of the eucalypts, while acacia is suitable for furniture.
 - (vii) Users of poles, i.e. Kenya Power & Lighting Co. Ltd., and Telkom Kenya Ltd must not be allowed to import poles without first advertising locally and giving Kenyan growers the opportunity to supply.
 - (viii) It is not difficult to grow trees well, and in the circumstances of a severe shortage it is madness not to do so. Given that the FD has performed so badly in recent years it is not realistic to expect them to fulfil the role of 'telling farmers how to do it'. It may be that the teacher should be a private commercial body, rather than some kind of extension service from the Government. The service would include advice on the most suitable species for the location.
 - (ix) Encourage the efficient production of charcoal, perhaps by subsidising the construction of kilns at sawmills. It will be counter productive to involve the Kenya Bureau of Standards or similar bodies in charcoal; it is not a business that should be regulated. Promote fuel- efficient stoves.
 - (x) Finally promote an atmosphere, which is conducive to the growing of trees and becoming richer from them. If the farmer/grower is better off, and he will not do it unless he can see that he will be, then it follows that the rest of the country will be getting what it needs, i.e. trees and timber and healthier rivers, and an environment suitable to the long term well-being of its inhabitants. The Government must help; not get in the way.

It is hoped to have further meetings with the Minister.

In contrast to planting under the shamba system, which has failed; commercial tree planting with which FOMAWA has been involved has been a success.



Bare ground, April 02



Eucalyptus grandis about 5m tall Jan 04

- 2.3 Discussions have taken place with the Hon. Macharia Mukiri, the MP for Molo, who is anxious to get forestry and saw-milling back on their feet for the benefit of his constituents and the rest of the country. He has established The Molo Constituency Rural Afforestation Forum (MOCRAF) of which FOMAWA is a member. The MP said that there was a large sum of money available for forestry in the Molo area, and FOMAWA has written a paper as to how this might best be used. The main thrust being similar to the bullet points made to the Minister.
- 2.4 All the Forestry Officers from top to bottom were sent on some kind of compulsory leave, and we understand that the intention was then to assess the value of each, and keep the good ones with the others going into the "OUT" basket. Fine so far, but there do not seem to be satisfactory interim measures to take the place of the Forestry Officers. Responsibility for policing, regulation, the issue of permits etc appears to lie with the Administration, but briefing seems to have been perfunctory, and resources inadequate. There is evidence that the administration, police and GSU have joined together into an effective force in some areas of the indigenous Mau Forest; and yet in the forest to the north west of Salgaa and Rongai charcoal makers continue as before, with little being done to check them. LATEST NEWS. We have just read that seventy officers have been sacked and the balance reinstated. Fine, but what are they going to do? Our recommendation is that they concentrate on the protection of the indigenous forest.

2.5. COMMERCIAL PLANTING ON FORESTRY DEPARTMENT LAND

- a) We are told that the tenants under the shamba system have left as of Dec 31 03. So far as we know the only area "farmed" in this way within the Mau Watershed is between the turn off to Molo on the main Nairobi/Eldoret road, and Molo Township, and amounts to around four thousand hectares. This area was clear felled in 96/7. Some feeble attempts were made to replant, culminating in complete replanting in 02 when all the trees died, and replanting again in 03. This also failed. The few trees that have survived will get in the way and complete replanting will be needed once more. What a waste of time and money, and had it been done properly at the outset the trees would be a third of the way to maturity. IF THE INTENTION IS TO PLANT YET AGAIN THIS YEAR, ON THE ARRIVAL OF THE RAINS IN APRIL, WHO IS GOING TO DO IT AND ON WHAT BASIS--- RENT, LENGTH OF LEASE AND SO ON???? Our guess is that the land will lie idle for the whole of 04 when the bush will flourish and replanting will be more difficult. And with the exception of the Karura meeting all our attempts to be heard on commercial planting matters have failed.
- b) An additional consideration is the poor stands of eucalypts, which were felled and then allowed to coppice. But there has been no management, and felling and replanting is needed if these areas are to become productive.
- c) It is reported that some farmers who have been 'allocated' forestry land are being turned off. What is then to be done with it and by whom? FOMAWA, among the most active of the organisations in the Mau, has not been consulted.

3. OUR ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE MAU.

PLANTING

- 3.1 Within the area of our activities, which are roughly bordered by Nakuru, Rongai, Mau Summit and the line through Molo, Elburgon and Njoro the rains were well distributed and tree planting was possible from mid April till the end of November. As before we targeted schools where there have been some successes. However the Government's ban on the parents making contributions to specific projects has had an adverse effect; and in some instances watering, undertaken by the children in term time, was neglected during the holidays. With the dry period on us we will concentrate on in-the-class-room education using slides.
- 3.2 Progress was made with both the smaller farmer planting a few trees, and the larger ones planting many thousands. The latter category, have generally done better than the former. There is still wide scale concern about all the rules and regulations surrounding the right of the farmer to fell and sell his trees. As mentioned earlier, it took Richard Muir five weeks and two visits to Molo, one to Elburgon and one to Njoro, to sell a small load of timber. And if that kind of costly bureaucracy is imposed on the man who wants to sell two trees he will find that all his profit has gone in getting the permits; not to mention the time that he has wasted. We continue to work on convincing the government that these permits are a disincentive to planting.



Twenty-five hectares of Eucalyptus grandis were planted on private land near Njoro in November 2003.

Will the tax-man want to get his hands on the sale proceeds in ten years time?

- 3.3 Most of those who plant trees find it difficult to grasp that good after care is essential, and we now have a formal programme of follow-up visits which should keep failures to a minimum.
- 3.4 Overall we helped with the planting of 115,000 trees in 03.

4. RESEARCH

We mentioned in the last newsletter that KEFRI had become involved in monitoring the aphids in the young cypress plantation on Doune Farm. Generally aphid damage has not been severe, and the wasps, which lay their eggs in the aphid, which then dies, seem to be doing their job. An area of two hundred and forty trees has been marked out, and the position will be monitored every six weeks or so.

5. FARMERS/MILLERS/TIMBER

Almost all the sawmills in Molo, Elburgon and Njoro are closed, and with no off-cuts available, scavenging for firewood is taking place in forests and riverbanks that should be protected. We have made little progress in assessing the availability of what might be called 'non traditional timber trees', which really means anything other than cypress and pine. If we find sufficient numbers of millable trees, grevillea and eucalyptus for example, we hope to link the farmer with a miller who is willing to stick his neck out and promote such non-traditional timbers to the consumer. We want to get the farmer a fair price in relation the

market value of the sawn product. We recognise that a way will have to be found through the red tape. We will continue with this work.

6. FUNDING

- 6.1 Progress has been made in obtaining more funds and this will enable us to extend the areas in which we work. We expect to assign a field office to Sigor, Bomet district, shortly; and are assessing where a second appointment would be most effective. We are anxious that some of our practical work should be in the upper reaches of the catchment.
- 6.2 Those, already on board, who have made a long-term commitment to funding include: James Finlay, ActionAid, the Scottish Safari Park and Rongai Workshop.
- 6.3 The East Africa Tea Trade Association, based in far away Mombasa has the sense to understand that without tea they cannot trade, and have made a substantial one off donation which has been used to buy a second hand motor bike.
- 6.4 We are delighted that new commitments have been made by: Brooke Bond who are funding one field officer and have also donated a bike, and the Department for International Development, (DFID) which is funding two employees.
- 6.5 We continue to receive numerous small donations and are grateful for these.
- 6.6 We have had further discussions with the Tea Board and seem to be on the way to convincing them that as TEA is the agricultural activity most dependent on the health of the Mau that it must make sense for them to be involved. We have tried to link the wish of the Kenya Tea Development Agency to plant trees for fuelwood, with ADRA, which wants to have an environmental project in the Kericho area. But despite goodwill and sound intentions on all sides we have got nowhere. The Round Tablers in Nakuru are interested, and we hope that that will be a route into the hearts, and pockets, of the Nakuru businessmen.
- 6.7 The Kenyan arm of the World Wildlife Fund, has started a "Corporate Membership Club", and arranged a flight over the Forest. FOMAWA's Hugo Dufresne who knows the area well, accompanied them; and Hugo Wood who farms in the Mara, and has a strong interest in the Mara River piloted his own plane with some of the guests. We hope to convince them that so far as forestry is concerned that the Corporate Club should see FOMAWA as the implementer of the ideas that they, and we, can develop together. This was an excellent opportunity for Fomawa to meet those who may wish to help to save the Mau and to demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of what is actually happening on the ground within the watershed, where GPS enables us to identify the trouble spots.

7. WORKING WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

It is pleasing that our involvement has been sought by NGOs in various presentations and workshops including: The Nairobi Trade and Agricultural Show where we joined the ActionAid stand. Our staff attended a seminar at Naivasha on how local people could benefit from a 'Local Authority Trust Fund' and participated in many more meetings and discussions.

8. AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

- 8.1 **Film:** The filming for the documentary on the Mau is completed. Editing will start soon and the film should be finished by the end of February.
- 8.2 **SCHOOLS:** We have made less progress with schools than was anticipated. We decided that the film from South Africa, which was about 'planting on community owned land', was not relevant to Kenya. It is intended to show our own documentary in due course. WWF kindly donated a large number of slides and with the pressure off planting; a programme of showing these in schools is underway. The posters on PLANTING are part of the education ammunition.



Gogar Primary: Children admire trees they planted.



“ Plant a bottle grow a tree” a concept/slogan promoted by FOMAWA

9. STAFF

9.1 Jacob Mwanduka continues to lead the executive team from the office on Gogar Farm near Rongai. He is assisted on planting and education by John Mbugua and James Kariuki who have experience of teaching, and James Langat who has spent twenty years as a chief and understands what the capitalist Kenyan farmer can be persuaded to do; while two tractor drivers attend to holing. The office is looked after by Eugenia Mwasi. While it is the aim to spend the major part of our time and resources getting things done on the ground it is essential that we have a strong administrative back up.

9.2 The executive team along with Richard Muir and Johnny Onslow meet every month to discuss progress. The Board meets every two months and seeks to plot the best way forward. Richard Muir concentrates on political lobbying.

10. IN CONCLUSION

It is cause for regret that the Government is not taking more action of a radical and productive nature. It must take the steps that are needed to safeguard the watersheds and to get forestry on its feet. Everyone in the country should shout loudly about these issues.

Best wishes for a healthy future.

Chairman

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