

QUARTERLY REPORT

Jan - March 2024

Mission statement

**An ecosystem
where people and
nature thrive in
harmony**

Vision statement

To foster sustainable development through effective conservation in the greater Amboseli Ecosystem.

Programmes and Goals



Ecosystem Planning

Goal 1: The Amboseli Ecosystem Management Plan 2020 - 2030 is effectively implemented through coordinated partnerships.



Conservancies Development

Goal 2: Community conservancies and designated Rangeland Management areas are effectively managed to enhance habitat connectivity.



Enterprise Development and Tourism

Goal 3: Economic growth and community livelihoods are enhanced through viable community enterprises.



Corporate Growth

Goal 4: AET's Institutional Capacity strengthened to deliver its mandate as a locally led umbrella body.

Greeting from AET



Jackson Mwato
Executive Director AET

I write to you in the cusps of a verdant landscape, revived by the short rains of last year that have continued to fall this first quarter in a magnitude we haven't seen in many years. In our ecosystem this is a season of relative peace and healing as wildlife population bounce back and livestock herds move from their temporary settlement back to their homes.

For us at AET, this first quarter has gone by very fast, but we have shared in the wins and renewal that this season of rainfall has presented. Our biggest win being the establishment of the Taisere Conservancy and the Olgulului Ranch Conservancy, two new conservancies that border Amboseli National Park to the west providing crucial landscape connectivity for wildlife.

The creation of new conservancies is not a small fete, however transforming conservancies into models of economic and ecological significance to communities and wildlife is an even bigger task. This quarter, under the auspices of our national partner, KWCA, we hosted conservancy leaders from across the landscape for a conservancy leaders forum to interrogate the gaps and opportunities that the Amboseli conservancies can exploit to propagate them to become strong well-established entities.

Our work formally started twelve years ago, our mandate was anchored on coordinating the implementation of the Amboseli Ecosystem Management Plan with a vision to sustainably manage and utilize the ecosystem natural resources to enhance community livelihoods through nature-based enterprise programs, enhancing leadership and governance, rangeland restoration and management, human wildlife coexistence, climate resilience and wildlife security programs.

On this note, we had moments of celebration and 'nyama choma' in this quarter as we joined the OOGRC community in launching their grazing management plan and awarding the best performing grazing committees. Our wildlife security program also celebrated the pass out of community rangers from the Amboseli conservation academy after a rigorous training to build their capacity to protect our wildlife and respond to human wildlife conflict incidences.

Am also pleased to report that the transition process of the Amboseli National Park to the Kajiado County Government made major strides in this quarter. AET's presence in both the national and county government transition committees enables representation, advocacy and partnerships that foster sustainable development for the benefit of our ecosystem.

As the year unfolds, I remain confident in the ability of AET secretariat to implement and deliver its mandate, and establish this institution as a community led institution that spearheads beneficial partnerships and programs in the Amboseli Ecosystem.

Lastly, I pass my heartfelt gratitude to our partners, donors, stakeholders, well wishers and the Amboseli communities for their continued support in our programs work as we endeavour to establish a thriving ecosystem for both people and wildlife.

Who we are:

Amboseli Ecosystem Trust was founded in 2009, to bring together the local community, government, conservation, and developmental stakeholders in the Amboseli Ecosystem to develop land use practices that improve the livelihoods and well-being of people and wildlife.

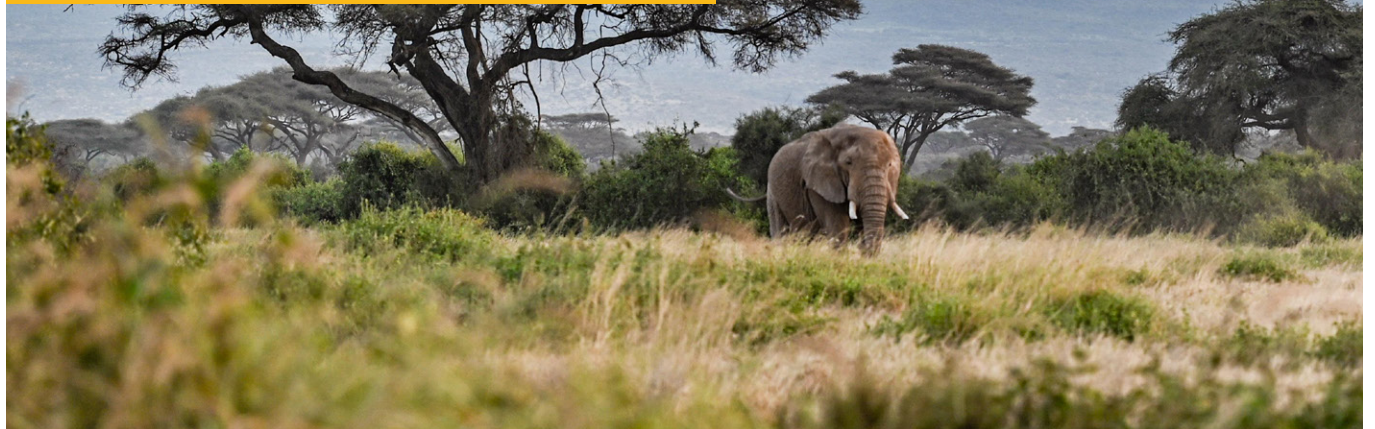
Since its inception, AET has established itself as a community led organization spearheading sustainable partnerships in the Amboseli landscape to benefit the people and the environment. Remarkable achievements and track record have mainstreamed AET as the reference point for policy advocacy and community engagement, earning recognition and respect from public and private spheres.



Our Ecosystem:

The Amboseli ecosystem is a delicate balance of ecological connectivity between the Amboseli National Park, adjacent group ranches, and conservancies with distant conservation areas such as Chyulu Hills, Tsavo West, and Kilimanjaro West in Tanzania.

The exceptional intersection of wildlife diversity with livestock and pastoralism makes the Amboseli Ecosystem a unique mosaic of people and wildlife for which it earned the designation as a UNESCO Man and Biosphere Reserve (MAB) in 1991. The MAB Programme champions sustainable use and conservation of the resources of the biosphere with a special focus on harmonious coexistence.



Amboseli elephants hold the world record for the longest and largest tusks, the ecosystem also boosts of having the most studied elephant population in the world.



Ecosystem Planning:

a) Partner Mobilization to Implement priority actions in the ecosystem plan

→ **PIC validation workshop for AEMP SEA Draft Report**

AET convened 1 PIC meeting to validate 2 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) reports, for the AEMP and the Olgulului Olalarashi Group Ranch (OOGR), land use subdivision plan. The findings of the validated reports will guide stakeholders in the landscape to make decisions that promote sustainable development while integrating environmental considerations effectively. The SEA process will also pave way for the gazettment of the AEMP and the enforcement of land zonation bylaws set out in land subdivision plans.



→ **Engagement with National, County government to mainstream conservancies and wildlife conservation.**

AET is actively engaged with the Kajiado County government on several fronts, the following are the key areas of engagement:

- i. **Conservancies Bill** – AET is advocating for the adoption and passage of the conservancies bill drafted in 2022 which provides a crucial guide to the County Government of Kajiado in providing infrastructural support to conservancies. AET is further working with the County Government in the development of an integrated action plan which aims to expand collaboration and support to conservancies in the Amboseli landscape.
- ii. **Mapping conservation areas** – AET is assisting the county government in mapping out key conservation areas and crafting a county policy that will restrict development in key wildlife areas and also facilitate the formation of new conservancies.



- iii. **Membership in Advisory and Technical committees** – AET holds membership in the National Advisory and County technical committee overseeing the transfer of Amboseli National Park from the national government to the Kajiado county government. This committee is tasked with formulating a transition strategy for the park transfer to the communities of Kajiado.
- iv. **MOU Implementation** – AET and the County Government of Kajiado are maintaining engagement guided by the MoU areas of partnership so as to ensure its effective implementation between the two parties. Recently AET has written to the County Government on its intention to review the existing MOU to capture the handing over of the management of the Amboseli Park.

→ Landscape Association CEO'S Forum Workshop

AET in partnership with Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association hosted the Landscape Conservation Association CEOs from TTWCA, MMWCA, NRT, LCA, PECFO, NECA, SORALO, AKWCA, RTLCA, and Western Region. The meeting brought together the network of leaders to discuss emerging issues in the various landscapes as a key step in developing a coordinated approach to landscape models for development and conservancies being a vehicle to spur development.



→ Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Strategy (2024 – 2030) Review workshop

The Amboseli Ecosystem Trust facilitated by the Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association (KWCA) held a workshop with Amboseli stakeholders, conservancies and group ranch leaders to review AET's climate change adaptation and mitigation strategy. The strategy facilitates a coordinated approach to deal with climate change challenges in the Amboseli landscape and currently undertaking a review workshop with relevant stakeholders with a focus on aligning the strategy with current context situations and emerging opportunities.



b) Establishment of strong conservancies in Amboseli ecosystem

AET working with the community in this first quarter has facilitated the formation of two new conservancies. The Taisere Conservancy and the Olgulului ranch conservancy. AET has been instrumental in ensuring that the ecological value and economic potential of conservancies are appreciated and communities are supported to establish new conservancies.



→ Taisere Conservancy

The landowners of the Olgulului Group Ranch, led by their management committee, agreed to form a brand-new conservancy that is to border the Kitenden Wildlife Corridor, Kitirua Conservancy, and the Amboseli National Park. The establishment of this 5,000– 10,000-acre conservancy was formalized through a collaborative consensus reached among landowners, representatives from AET, and the investor keen on developing a tourism facility within the conservancy. A meeting facilitated by AET has laid the groundwork for this initiative and an agreement formalization meeting is underway.

→ The Olgulului ranch conservancy

The Amboseli Ecosystem Trust working with the Oloiptip family have established the Olgulului ranch conservancy. The 10,000-acre ranch that is privately owned by the prominent family has been set aside as land under wildlife conservation and livestock production. This is a major milestone towards securing land connectivity and providing space that is crucial to extent the dispersal areas of wildlife from the Amboseli National Park.

→ Conservancy AGM

AET and KWCA hosted 40 chairpersons and managers from conservancies across the landscape for a workshop on the best management practises, governance and operation practises for conservancies. This workshop provides the conservancies with a forum to streamline the direction of conservancies in relations to policy and governance frameworks. The workshop further reviewed the various conservancy models and deliberated on a conservancy model that is best for the Amboseli landscape.

c) Strengthening Conservancies governance for proper management of designated rangeland areas.



→ **Launch of OGR GMP**

The launch of the grazing management plan marked a significant milestone for the communities of the Amboseli Ecosystem in their effort to enhance climate change resilience by amplifying traditional pastoral systems of grazing and pasture management into effective grazing management structures that can secure forage for both livestock and wildlife.

The event, organized by the Amboseli Ecosystem Trust with support from the Justdiggitt Foundation is a culmination of numerous engagements, trainings, cross-learning, workshops, restoration interventions, and field assessment reports on the best practices for rangelands management

The event was crowned by an awarding ceremony to recognize the best overall zone achieved through a survey that ranked the best zonal committees that demonstrated exemplary performance in implementing traditional grazing systems in their zone.

→ Landscape grazing committee members Workshop:

AET hosted 40 grazing committee chairpersons from across the Amboseli landscape to reflect on pasture management as a crucial intervention that enhance climate resilience for pastoral communities. The forum also offered grazing committees a chance to learn from other well established grazing committees such as the OOGRC committee who have launched their grazing management plans and bylaws.



→ Ranger Trainings:

Community rangers based in conservancies across the landscape are crucial in combating poaching, wildlife trafficking and tackling human wildlife conflict.

The rangers tackle a myriad of conservation challenges across a dynamic landscape; therefore, ranger training is crucial to enhance their capacity to secure wildlife areas and adapt to the changes in the landscape.

→ Rangers trained at Amboseli Conservation Academy:

The Amboseli Ecosystem Trust funded by the IWT grant facilitated the training of 20 community rangers from the Olgulului Community Wildlife rangers (OCWR) at the Amboseli Conservation Academy.

Community rangers working in the Amboseli Ecosystem tackle a myriad of conservation challenges across a dynamic landscape; therefore, ranger training is crucial to enhance their capacity to secure wildlife areas and adapt to the changes in the landscape.

The rangers underwent a rigorous training course tailored to the challenges they encounter protecting wildlife in the Amboseli community conservancies. The course included lessons in Kenya Wildlife Act 2013, Human Rights, Crime Scene Management, Anti-Poaching, Bushcraft Skills, Drill, and Discipline.



→ Rangers trained on human rights and code of conduct.

The community rangers based in conservancies are responsible for wildlife security operations to combat poaching and illegal wildlife activities in the Amboseli ecosystem. In their operations, the rangers come across persons they suspect to have committed or is complicit to a crime, therefore the knowledge on human rights safeguards the rights of the persons involved and the rangers.

Funded by the IWT program, the Amboseli Ecosystem Trust facilitated the training of 27 conservancy rangers on human rights and code of conduct, at the Amboseli Conservation Academy.

Human Rights and
code of conduct

27 Rangers

Crime Scene
Management, Anti-
Poaching, Bushcraft
Skills, Drill, and
Discipline

20 Rangers

Ranger trainings

d) Women and Youth Empowerment – For active participation in governance and management of natural resources



→ **Training on inclusion of youth and women in conservation leadership and governance:**

Amboseli Ecosystem Trust held a training workshop for women and youth in the Amboseli Landscape and provided a platform for participants to voice the reasons behind their exclusion from conservation work and the challenges they encounter. Women cited traditional gender roles, limited access to education and resources, and cultural norms as barriers to their involvement, while youth highlighted lack of opportunities, limited awareness, and exclusion from decision-making processes among others. However, they emphasized the importance of their inclusion, noting that diverse perspectives and skills enrich conservation efforts, enhance community engagement, and foster sustainable development. By involving women and youth, conservation initiatives can benefit from increased innovation, local knowledge, and long-term community support, ultimately leading to more effective and inclusive conservation outcomes. The comprehensive meeting facilitated dialogue, understanding, and commitment towards creating pathways for meaningful participation of women and youth in conservation within the Amboseli Landscape

Women & Youth Empowerment

Financial
Literacy Training

77 Women
23 Youth

Training on Women
& Youth roles in
conservation

20 Women
20 Youth



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Enterprise Development and Tourism

AET's Enterprise Development and Tourism program comprises of five thematic areas: livestock production, sustainable tourism, nature-based enterprise and the empowerment of women, youth and marginalized groups to ensure equitable and sustainable development.



i) empowerment of community livelihood groups

→ Kitchen Gardens:

The adverse effects of climate change that result to prolonged drought, erratic rainfall, soil degradation, and biodiversity loss have had a direct and disproportionate effect on the livelihoods of local communities in the Amboseli Ecosystem.

The Amboseli Ecosystem Trust through funding from USAID Kenya and in partnership with Ifaw under the Sustainable Management of Tsavo and Amboseli Landscape project is conducting training for youth and women in kitchen gardening to equip them with the skills needed to adapt to challenges posed by climate change.

The women of Osiram Cultural village in Imbirikani area and the women from Lemongo Nasinya Women group in Kimana are some of the groups that have undergone the training and establishment of kitchen gardens.

These gardens provide a solution for the women to grow fresh vegetables and fruits that can be sold in nearby markets to raise money to cater to household needs while also improving the health and nutrition of their families.

These alternative livelihood options and opportunities for women and youth reduce pressure on natural resources and diversify their income sources to build resilience and sustainability.





→ Grass seedbank:

AET in partnership with JustdiggIt is implementing the grass seed bank program: a rangeland restoration intervention and enterprise venture.

The program works with local women groups to manage grass seed bank sites in Noonkotia, Meshenani, and Lenkisim areas of Olgulului-Lalarashi Group Ranch.

This quarter AET conducted monitoring visits to the grass seedbanks areas, to assess the condition of the grasses, progress of weeding and get feedback from the women groups. Additionally, during the visits, women received their monthly stipend for the monitoring of the grass seedbank.

The grass seedbanks greatly benefitted from the November – December 2023 short rains that have propelled the grasses and in the next quarter the women are expecting a good harvest of grass seeds. The grass seeds are sold at the local markets or to regreening projects, providing a source of income to the local women while greening the landscape. A win for the rangelands and the local communities.

→ 18 Energy saving jikos

AET under the SMAT project funded by USAID and in partnership with Ifaw this quarter facilitated the training and establishment of 18 energy saving jikos in Enkii, Ilmarba and Engumi areas. This energy saving jikos offer clean energy solutions to household that depend on nature for cooking fuel in form of charcoal burning and firewood collections. AET targets to develop 500 energy saving jikos across the Amboseli landscape in 5 years. By burning fuel/ firewood more efficiently, the energy saving Jikos reduce the emission of harmful gases into the atmosphere and mitigate deforestation and habitat degradation.

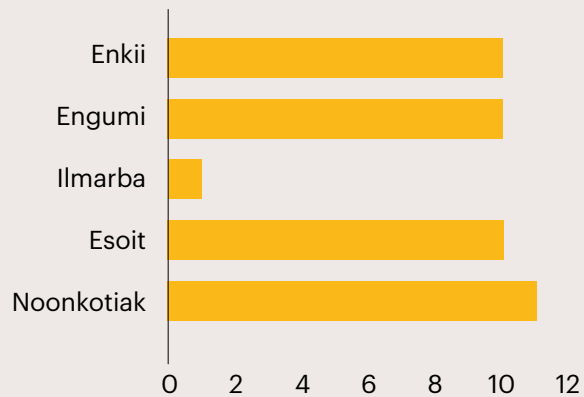


Figure 2: Distribution of Energy saving Jikos that have been established so far

→ Students from Local Schools taken to ANP for education tour

To commemorate World Wildlife Day, the Amboseli Ecosystem Trust facilitated 30 students from the Namelok Secondary School and 30 students from Oloile Secondary school (33 male and 27 female) for educational tours of the Amboseli National Park.

These education tours, provide students with the opportunity to learn about the ecosystem,

the wildlife, and the challenges that face conservation in their communities.

As decision-makers and change-makers of the future, knowledge of the ecosystem and the intricate coexistence of wildlife and people in the Amboseli as a man and biosphere reserve secures the future of conservation in the Amboseli Ecosystem.



→ The Noonkotiak Resource centre:

The Amboseli landscape is renowned globally as man and Biosphere reserve for its conservation success and as home to the most celebrated culture in the world, the Maasai culture. Unfortunately, the scale on the economical gains from the cultural experiences of Amboseli is unfavourable to the local community.

However, the Amboseli Ecosystem Trust, Africa Conservation Centre and the Los Angeles Zoo have begun the actualization of the Noonkotiak Community Resource Centre, which will include components of the Amboseli Visitor Centre, Education and training Centre, and research and information Centre for the whole Amboseli Ecosystem and also a culture based eco-tourism venture that will amplify the benefits to the local community through tourism visitation.

Apart from enhancing the preservation and showcasing of the exquisite Maasai culture, it will also be a focal research hub for ecosystem monitoring and environmental education for the locals and international tourists.

During the site visit today, the Noonkotiak community led by the leadership of the Olgulului Land Trust applauded the project saying it will be a knowledge hub, a cultural



living Museum and enterprise element that will not only safeguard their rich traditional knowledge, but also a livelihood opportunity for the communities of Amboseli.

In the foregoing, in the intended plan, the partners will work to refurbish the Noonkotiak Women Cultural boma launched in 2016, by adding value to the existing infrastructure with

the aim of transforming it to provide guests with a living Maasai homestead experience.

We are grateful to our partners who have made this project a possibility, and look forward to working together to enhance benefits from conservation to the local communities for a thriving ecosystem.

Corporate Growth

AET's capacity to deliver on its mandate as a locally led organization was strengthened by the addition of three new staff members, two program vehicles and the construction of AET's office complex.

AET's Monitoring and Evaluation officer is a key contributor to the overall organization strategy formulation, policy and monitoring of project progress. Jesse Mwingirwa brings on board a rich background on project monitoring in the conservation spectrum will amplify AET's ability to tracks its impact in the Amboseli landscape.

AET's communication and development officer is a crucial role that will enhance the institutions brand visibility, public, donor and partner relations. John Kasaine brings on board diverse experience and will enhance AET's brand visibility both locally and globally.

AET's Finance Assistance is a key supportive role that enhances AET's financial capacity in the implementation of activities while upholding the highest levels of transparency and accountability. Agnes Muntet's experience in the financial sector amplifies AET's commitment to the highest levels of financial integrity in the execution of its mandate in the Amboseli landscape.



Jessy Mwingirwa



John Kasaine

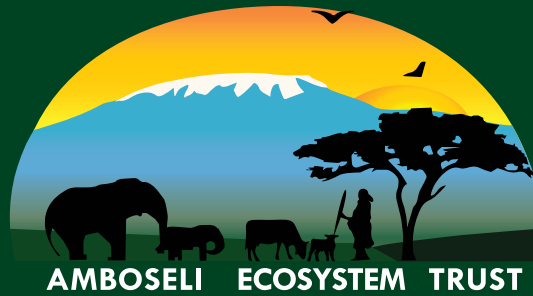


Agnes Muntet





AET in partnership with William & Mary University - Institute for Integrative Conservation, implementing a research based program to give solutions to local problems affecting communities in the Amboseli landscape.



AMBOSELI ECOSYSTEM TRUST

Working together for the benefit of the people
and wildlife of the breathtaking Amboseli Ecosystem.

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