Background Information

Wetlands play a vital role in maintaining biodiversity, enhancing the capacity of local communities to adapt to climate change and in checking global warming, climate change and wise-use of Mabamba Bay Wetlands.

The Role of Wetlands in enhancing Local Community Adaptability to Climate Change

Wetlands enhance the adaptability capacity of local communities by offering alternative livelihoods in addition to the traditional roles of wetlands. This is especially so in times of climatic variations like extended dry spells. For example in many communities, wetlands are the only sources of water during the dry season for both people and their animals; wetlands and riverbanks provide pastures; some times are the only viable sources of pasture; they also provide off-season cultivation support by supplementing supplementary watering.

Nature Palace Foundation’s approaches to Wetlands Conservation and Wise-use

Nature Palace’s approaches to wetlands conservation and wise use include Promoting Community Participation; Pro-poor Eco-tourism; Eco-system restoration; Schools Environment Education for Sustainable Development; Clean-Up Campaigns and Promoting Generation and Sharing of Information about wetlands.

- Promoting Community Participation and Support in Conservation and Wise use of Mabamba Bay Wetland

This project supported by The Buffallo Small Grants for Nature aims at promoting local Community members partici- pation to and kindle their support in conservation and wise use of Mabamba Wetland, through community organizing, sustainable resource-based and alternative income generating activities; and, an effective information system. As a result of the project, the community was mobilized through their association (Mabamba Wetland Eco-tourism Association); An Eco-tourism Information Centre was established and volunteers from the community trained to man it; cases of abuse and destruction have also reduced at significant level because of the Education and Awareness programmes that were organised for community members. Community mem- bers organised under Mabamba Wetland-Eco Tourism Association (MWETA), are also involved in alternative income generating projects – especially handicrafts and bee-keeping on top of hospitality services.

- Promoting Pro-poor Community Eco-tourism for sustainable Conservation, and Wise-use of Mabamba Bay Wetland

This project emphasizes that community’s recognition of the importance of a protected area is key to success of conservation programmes. Participation of community members is equally important, and ensures sustainability of interventions put in place.

At Mabamba, tourism activities started at least some eight years back, and are on an increase since the designation of the Wetland as a Ramsar Site in 2006.

Promoting pro-poor and pro-community eco-tourism; where participation of the community is central will ensure sustainable conservation of the wetland because a broader layer of the community will change from viewing the protected area as a lost opportunity in terms open and uncontrolled access to ani- mals, fish, and agriculture etc., and view the resource as a sus- tainable community asset for their livelihoods. This will avoid the dangers of getting opposition towards conservation efforts if community members maintain a negative attitude towards the programmes.

Mapping other tourist attractions in the vicinity will expand the tourism base from birds only to community and agro-tourism and reduce the pressure on the wetland resource that is likely to increase with the increasing in-flow of tourism.

The approaches above combined, will ensure that the interven- tions put in place are sustainable – not only for this project, but even other future projects, involving those of other developmental partners.

- Rehabilitation of River Bukoba for Livelihood Improvement for local Communities and Sustenance of Sango Bay Ramsar Site and Lake Victoria

Due to its natural ecological value, River Bukoba in Rakai District has for decades served a significant role to the local peo- ple as a source of water, fish and pasture for animals. Notably, this river was and still stands as a key feature to aid the local popu- lation adapt better to effects of climate change in this semi-arid region. But in the last three years, its water levels have dras- tically dwindled due to indis- criminate abstraction of water by banks through tree cutting, uncontrolled grazing and river bank gardening. This has seen it suffer the effects of situation causing some of its parts to dry up, thus posing a great danger to the local population and to Sango Bay-Musambwa Island Ramsar site and Lake Victoria in general.

River Bukoba feeds Sango Bay Wetland system which is consid- ered an important bird sanctuary with an exceptional biodiversity, supporting among others, congregations of breeding birds. The system is known to have the largest breeding colonies for the Grey-headed fish eagle and 75 % of the total global popula- tion of the Blue Swallow, Egyptian Goose, Little Egret, Long-tailed Cormorant and Great Cormorant. Unique reptiles like snakes and lizards are also found in the wetland and Island system which are covered with forest mosaic containing 30 endemic floras, restricted sub- species of primates, Elephants and Shitabungas. The over-degradation of River Bukoba and its water catchment areas has led to a significant change in the course of the river. Today, with the district wetters on the edge of disaster and no doubt if no serious action is taken, the ruinous wave of Climate change could push it over the edge.

Using the support from Artists´ Project Earth support, Nature Palace Foundation teamed up with other local Civil Society Organisations, Local Government and Schools to launch a massive environmentally friendly campaign to restore the river. Other participants included Rakai Friends of the Environment (RAFEO); Concerned Women- Farmers’ Organisation of Rakai, Masaka and Kalangala; The Wetland Management Department; Rakai District Wetlands Office; Rakai District Forest Office; Kakuuto Sub-county local gov- ernment; local schools and area member of parliament.

- Clean-Up Campaigns for Well-being of Ugandan Wetlands

Bukoba is a world known for its water. Bukoba local community is central will ensure sustainable conservation of the wetland as a Ramsar Site in 2006. In order to aid a more conven- ient avenue to get information about Uganda’s wetlands, espe- cially Wetlands of International Importance known as Ramsar sites, Nature Palace Foundation created an interactive sub-domain. This facility will enable accumulation and sharing of information about Uganda’s wet- lands with different stakeholders who include conservationists/ scientists, researchers, students, policy makers, tourists etc. The facility is still under construction.

Nature Palace Foundation: Empowering Local Communities to conserve Uganda’s Wetlands

Nature Palace Foundation is a not-for-profit Community Development and Human well-being focused organization that operates on the principle of blending conservation with development.

We respond to universal concerns of biodiversity loss, climate change, poverty and disease through innovative community-based approaches that include a Community Botanic Garden, Home Herbal Gardens, Pro-poor Eco-tourism etc.

Our Vision: A world where all people are leading sustainable livelihoods

Our Mission: To transform traditional survivalist tendencies into those which make optimal and sustainable use of natural Resources

Our Strategic Approaches

- Community Botanic Garden
- Home Herbal Gardens
- Nature school approach
- Pro-poor Sustained Eco-tourism
- Indigenous knowledge documentation and sharing
- Popular participation
- Frequent and on-going Data collection to monitor change and facilitate self assessment

About Nature Palace Foundation

We are a not-for-profit Community Development and Human well-being focused organization that operates on the principle of blending conservation with development.

Partnership

Nature Palace Foundation works with kindred civil society organizations at national, regional and international levels, works in collaboration with The Wetlands Management Department, National Environment Management Authority and various departments of Local govern- ments. We also welcome more partnerships. If you wish to collaborate with us please contact us on the address provided.

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Theme: ‘Wetlands, Biodiversity and Climate Change’

Nature Palace Foundation Day 2010

Nature Palace Foundation Day is part of a world-wide campaign coordinated by Clean Up the World, an International Environmental Agency. The Clean Up the World weekend (19-21 September) celebrates and culminates the many important environmental actions and achievements of the year.

The Guest of Honour for the event was His Excellency Mr. Johnson Kamata, State Minister of Water, the Environment, and Natural Resources.

The event was attended by the Minister of Water, Lands and Environment, Hon. Malcom Mbuligwe. Among the participants were the Minister of Agriculture and the Deputy Minister of Water, Lands and Environment.

The Clean Up event coincided with the campaign to restore River Bukoba Banks and took place at Bukoba Sub-County with tree planting activities at River Bukoba.

The theme for the campaign was ‘Our Climate needs Your Attention’.

Nature Palace Ecolife

http://ecolife.naturepalace.net

An Interactive source of information about Uganda’s Wetlands.

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