



THE BOG

ONDIRI WETLAND NEWSLETTER

Last quarter Issue 2023

FRIENDS OF ONDIRI WETLAND KENYA BREAKFAST MEETING

Friends of Ondiri Wetland Kenya (FOWK) hosted a breakfast meeting and a meet and greet session for the partners who came through for the organization during the 2nd edition of Ondiri Wetland Conservation Run 2023 which took place on 28th January 2023.

During this auspicious event that took place at KENAFF Kilimo Grand Resort in Thogoto the Chief Guest was Dr. John K. Chumo the CEO Mama Doing Good and initiative of the FIRST LADY of the Republic of Kenya, Her Excellency Mama RACHAEL RUTO. Dr. Chumo, who is the former Ombudsman at the National Environment Complaints Committee, is one of the great champions and legend in the conservation of Ondiri Wetland. Other dignitaries include Dr. Estone Mutito the Regional Director for Central Region Highlands at Kenya Forest Research Institute (KEFRI).

“ Government has declared holiday on Monday, November 13, 2023, during which the public across the Country shall be expected to plant trees as a patriotic contribution to the national efforts to save our Country from the devastating effects of Climate Change. National Examinations scheduled for that day shall proceed normally.”



Dr. John Chumo former Environmental Ombudsman and the CEO of Mama Doing Good, an initiative of the first Lady of the Republic of Kenya was the Chief Guest during the breakfast meeting.

Others included Directors of Pro-Property, Petmall Shelters, Hotstep Holdings, Safari Incore, SN Kaniu & CO, Njeri Maria Foundation, Savannah Sunset Tours and Adventures, Volunteers Adventures, GGN, DLBA, Sidai Holdings, Mum's Hotel, Blue Springs Water, NextGen Asterism, Kikuyu Water Company, KenHa Corridor A team, Perfection Plus, Mygold, among others.

Dr. Chumo reiterated his commitment towards the conservation of Wetlands around the country and reminisced on the days that he worked at National Environment Complaints Committee how by then Ondiri was but a tragedy of the commons.

He thanked the community living around the Wetland for their sup-

portant bog. He went ahead to say that one of the key pillars in the First Lady's office is climate change mitigation and part of it was about tree growing and environmental conservation. He emphasized on the need to empower women since they are the most affected by the negative impacts of the climate change. Dr. Mutito on his side said he was very happy with the government initiative of having 18 seeds collection and storage facilities where all the tree species grown in Kenya can be found. He said KEFRI has been a partner and a participant in Ondiri Wetland Conservation efforts for the longest time. He went further to say that KEFRI has an open door policy to support the tree growing and research initiatives across the country.

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On the part of the (FOWK), the Chairman, Mr. SN Kaniu applauded the good and strong partnership that has made the conservation of Ondiri Wetland a reality.

The Coordinator and Founder of Ondiri Wetland was very optimistic about the future prospects and partnership with the corporates, companies and organizations around Kikuyu and indeed the government agencies such as NEMA, KEFRI, NECC, KenHa, KWFTA, NetFund, University of Nairobi, Alliance High School, Kenya Wildlife Service, Kenya Forest Service, and many other government agencies. He also thanked the non-state actors such as the Media, Nature Kenya, Water Resource Users Associations among others.

In His closing remarks, Dr. Chumo said that the Executive Office of the Lady and indeed the Executive Office of the President of the Republic of Kenya are committed to making this country a champion in climate change conservation.

Friends of Ondiri Wetland Kenya awarded certificates to all the partners and appreciated the support of Kes. 100,000 that the organization received from the Office of the First Lady. During the Run, the Chief Guest was Eng. Festus Ng'eno, Principal Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Climate Change.

The 3rd edition of Ondiri Wetland Run shall take place on Saturday, January 27th, 2024.



By David Wakogy

RACHEL RUTO, KISS HUMANITARIAN AWARD, INDIA, SEPT 30, PCS



First Lady Rachel Ruto has been awarded the Kiss Humanitarian Award 2022 in recognition of her outstanding contributions to humanitarian causes.

Mrs Ruto received the award in front of 40,000 students at the Kalinga Institute of Social Science (KISS) in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India.

The First Lady was chosen for her work in empowering rural women, climate conservation, and other crucial areas, making her well worthy of the KISS Humanitarian Award.

The award was initiated in 2008 and is conferred annually to felicitate individuals for their exemplary service to humanity across the globe.

“Students, ladies and gentlemen today I am incredibly grateful and humbled to accept this prestigious humanitarian award, from the depth of my heart. I say thank you very much,” she said.

Mrs Ruto said the award is a renewed call to action and an honor to individuals and communities who dedicate their lives to the betterment of humanity and those disadvantaged.

“This award is not just a recognition of my efforts, it is a testament to the resilience and spirit of Kenyan people, especially women, it is a tribute to the dedicated men and women of Kenya who work tirelessly underprivileged,” she said.

Mrs Ruto urged for equitable distribution of resources in creating a better future and offering free education to the underprivileged.

“I have always believed that the true measure of a nation's greatness lies in its ability to care for its people,” she added.

Through her faith diplomacy pillars and organizations, Mrs Ruto promised to continue addressing issues of climate change, women and youth empowerment.

“In the words of Mahatma Gandhi you must be the change you want to see in the world, let us make that change together,” she said.

The university recognised Mrs Ruto's journey from her rural village in Kakamega County to the national and global stage, noting that it has been inspiring to many.

Through her MaMa Doing Good Initiative, she was hailed for ensuring that children from marginalized areas receive food, health, and education, in addition to enabling economic empowerment for over 200,000 women.

Odisha Governor Galish Lal said Mrs Ruto's presence was an inspiration to many.

“On behalf of the people of Odisha, I express my sincerest gratitude to you,” said Mr Lal.

The Founder of KISS Dr.Achyuta Samanta said Mrs Ruto had made significant impacts through initiatives like MaMa Doing Good, Women Economic Empowerment, and Environmental and Climate Action.

Present were Kenya High Commissioner to the Republic of India Willy K Bett and MaMA Doing Good CEO Dr John Chumo

The First Lady of The Republic of Kenya is a great supporter of Wetlands Conservation and she has giving a lot of support towards Ondiri Wetlands Conservation. Her office has committed to plant 500 million trees within five years around the country.



World Wetlands Day 2024

February 2, 2024

World Wetlands Day is an annual observance that highlights the vital role of wetlands in our environment and raises awareness about their conservation and sustainable management. It provides an opportunity to celebrate the beauty and biodiversity of wetlands while also addressing the challenges they face. World Wetlands Day promotes the importance of preserving these unique ecosystems for current and future generations.

What is World Wetlands Day 2024?

World Wetlands Day 2024 is a global event dedicated to recognizing the significance of wetlands, which encompass a wide range of habitats, including marshes, swamps, bogs, and mangroves. These ecosystems play a crucial role in maintaining water quality, supporting biodiversity, mitigating climate change, and providing livelihoods for millions of people worldwide.

When is World Wetlands Day 2024?

World Wetlands Day is celebrated annually on February 2nd. This date marks the adoption of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands in 1971, an international treaty aimed at conserving and sustainably using wetlands around the world.

How to Get Involved with World Wetlands Day 2024?

Participating in World Wetlands Day can be a rewarding experience. Here are some ways to get involved and make a positive impact on wetland conservation:

Visit a Wetland: Explore a nearby wetland area, observe its biodiversity, and learn about its importance to the ecosystem.

Organize an Event: Plan or participate in events such as guided tours, clean-up activities, bird-watching excursions, or educational workshops focused on wetlands.

Support Conservation Organizations: Contribute to or volunteer with organizations dedicated to wetland preservation and restoration efforts.

Advocate for Wetlands: Raise awareness about wetland conservation by sharing information with your community and advocating for policies that protect these ecosystems.

Learn About Ramsar Sites: Discover Ramsar Convention-designated wetlands in your region and understand their significance in the global context.

History of World Wetlands Day

World Wetlands Day was first celebrated in 1997, marking the 25th anniversary of the Ramsar Convention's adoption. The Ramsar Convention, officially known as the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, is an intergovernmental treaty that provides a framework for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands worldwide.

Each year, World Wetlands Day focuses on a specific theme related to wetlands. These themes highlight various aspects of wetland importance, conservation challenges, and the role of wetlands in our lives. They also inspire activities and initiatives aimed at protecting these valuable ecosystems.

Hashtags for World Wetlands Day 2024

When sharing your experiences and supporting wetland conservation efforts on social media, consider using these hashtags to connect with others and raise awareness:

#WorldWetlandsDay
 #WetlandConservation
 #RamsarSites
 #WetlandBiodiversity
 #SustainableWetlands

These hashtags can help you join the global conversation about the importance of wetlands and their conservation.

The Degradation and Encroachment of Ondiri Wetland

You would imagine with all the initiatives, campaigns, and sensitization on the message of conservation and preservation of Ondiri Wetland would reach all concerned. This is not the case however. There remain those that remain ignorant of the issue or are just outright culprits as encroachment seems to be on the rise once more.

In an unbelievable move, there have been recent activity where land next to the wetland was leveled by a bulldozer and had the soil dumped within the wetland. In this careless move, the soil is making its way into the wetland especially now with the heavy rains causing heavy siltation.

To make the matter worse, the perpetrator vandalized the riparian fence by destroying the wire mesh and even uprooting the cemented poles.



By Kiringo Gichanga

INUKA AFRIKA PROGRAM



Friends of Ondiri Wetland Kenya's (FOWK) conservation work is well known but whose work continues to expand. In its effort to achieve these ends, FOWK has partnered with the for-youth by-youth restoration project- INUKA AFRIKA which has been brought to us by Youth 4 Nature and founded in 2019. The project seeks to take advantage of experiential learning to deliver training on Nature-based Solutions (NbS) best practices, youth leadership and storytelling and scale-up solutions across five key landscapes in Kenya (*Coastal Mangrove ecosystems, Inland wetlands, Semi-Arid, Highland forests and Agro-forestry ecosystems*)

FOWK youth has established and will spearhead a project with INUKA on the Reforestation and Botanical Garden at Ondiri Wetland. In this project, INUKA aims to support a pioneering technique for reforestation and the creation of a botanical garden by FOWK. It will be set apart by having the youth spearhead the project, involvement of the community, and use of professionals for ultimate results. With this project, Ondiri Wetland wants to continue to set itself apart by making it the centre of biodiversity within Kikuyu and an example to others. Friends of Ondiri Wetland Kenya welcomes INUKA to Ondiri Wetland!

By Kiringo Gichanga

WATER LILIES IN ONDIRI WETLAND

In Ondiri Wetland, there is a shy discreet plant that grows in its cool still waters. It takes a particular eye to spot it. On the south west side is where you will spot it. It is called the Tropical Water Lily (*Nymphaea colorata*). Other names include; blue colorata or simply, colorata.

Water lilies are a group of plants in the family Nymphaeaceae. There are 70 known species of them. With up to 8 in. of rounded green leaves, this day-blooming aquatic perennial adorns blue violet flowers with 13-15 pointed petals surrounding a conspicuous bouquet of purple stamens. As they float on the water, the pinwheel-shaped flowers form a lovely backdrop. The plant is nonviviparous meaning it does not give birth to live young but internal fertilization takes place. The plant grows in shallow water to achieve a height of 15-30cm and 60-90cm wide. It performs best in full sun and undisturbed water.

This ornamental flower can also be planted in small containers and small ponds.

Sadly, in the recent past, it has been noted that all the water lilies have currently dried out with the fall of the water levels in Ondiri Wetland. This is another loss in the accelerated loss of water and growth of peat on the wetland.



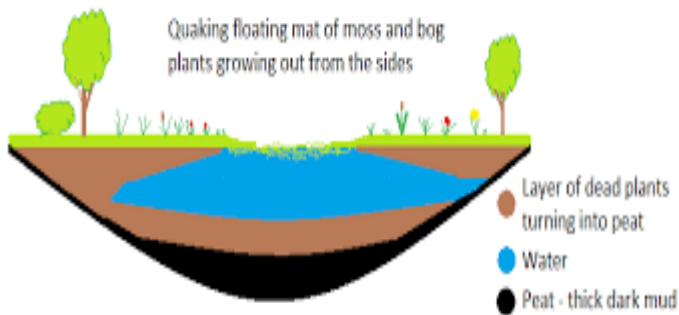
By Kiringo Gichanga

FORMATION OF A QUAKING BOG

Ondiri Wetland is a quaking bog. That means when you step on it, it shakes, a process we call 'quaking'. While many might be familiar with its exhilarating bouncy movement, not many know the process behind its formation. The cause of the quake of the bog is as a result of a floating mat covering the wetland.

You see, Ondiri Wetland was initially an open lake. Sphagnum moss gradually grew around the edges of the lake and floated on the surface of the water. This and other floating dead vegetation provided a mat for other plants to grow on. Soil erosion from the surrounding area also makes up a significant part of the mat. Gradually, the mat thickened and vegetation covered almost the entire water surface.

Diagram of a Quaking Bog



Under the mat, decaying vegetation is continuously sinking to the floor of the wetland forming a layer of fit that will eventually fill the bog.

While quaking bogs may be fun to bounce on, they can be quite dangerous. Great care should be taken when near them. Ondiri wetland is quite deep and it is no exception. It is not advisable to walk on the wetland but rather go round if you want to access the other side.

By Kiringo Gichanga

NAIROBI RIVERS COMMISSION



The Nairobi Rivers Commission (NRC) is anchored in The Constitution of Kenya through the Environmental Management and Co-Ordination Act (No. 8 Of 1999) and the Climate Change Act (No. 11 of 2016) on environmental protection. The commission was established through a Gazette Notice Number 14891 on December 2nd, 2022 to reclaim the rivers of Nairobi as a spine to the city's blue and green infrastructure for a better urban environment and quality of life. The Commission envisages a collaborative approach together with other stakeholders and development partners to secure, protect and restore the critical River Basin in order to achieve the shared goal of reclaiming the Nairobi Rivers.

The Commission was established by the President of the Republic of Kenya, HE Dr. William Ruto and has been in office for almost one year.

NRC is no doubt a game changer in the Nairobi Rivers reclamation and restoration. Ondiri Wetland has about forty streams that acts as the tributaries of Nairobi River through the underground recharge. This therefore defines the strategic importance of Ondiri Wetland in the Commission's mission. The Commission is planning to work with the stakeholders in Ondiri Wetland conservation to ensure that Ondiri is fully and sustainable conserved.

By David Wakogy

ONDIRI WETLAND CONSERVATION RUN

The run which happens every last Saturday of January is the biggest conservation run and it happens as a build up activity for the World Wetlands Day (WWD) which takes place on 2nd February.

The run carries the theme for the WWD with the next year's run being "Wetlands and human wellbeing" the celebrations of World Wetland Day in Kenya is organized by National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) and therefore NEMA plays a major role in the preparation and support of Ondiri Conservation Run.

Through this run, Friends of Ondiri seeks to create awareness of Ondiri Wetland as the biggest water reservoir for the residents of Kikuyu and the furthest source of Nairobi Rivers tributaries.

The run brings together over 3,000 participants and is the biggest conservation run that happens in Kiambu West.

The 2024 run will happen on the 27th day of January 2024.

Do you want to be a sponsor of the 3rd Edition of Ondiri Wetland 2023

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JOIN US
27th January 2024

ONDIRI WETLAND RUN

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SATURDAY 27TH
JANUARY 2024



ONDIRI WETLAND INFORMATION
CENTRE



6:00AM



Call +254 207 868 132 for more info.





The Gem of Kikuyu

Ondiri Wetland

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