



QUARTERLY REPORT

July – September 2024

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*Where nature finds balance,
harmony thrives – wildlife and people coexisting,
sharing the earth.*



Mission statement

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

Vision statement

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

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

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.

Greetings from AET

The role of AET in the Amboseli landscape has continued to evolve. As a locally led institution our impact model is cemented on three overarching and interdependent roles: oversight, advocacy and support.

On the oversight, we have tirelessly worked with both the national and the county government, conservation partners and the local communities through the Project Implementation Committee to ensure sustainable land use and resource planning is responsible to secure our ecosystem for the benefit of our community and wildlife.

The advocacy role ensures policies at the National and County levels promote landscape level biodiversity conservation. In partnership with the Kajiado County Government and other stakeholders, we are supporting the development of the County Conservation Bill, a policy framework that will guide conservancies engagement with the county for improved economic benefits. AET has also been actively involved in the transition of the Amboseli National Park, a move which will amplify benefit sharing that communities will gain from wildlife conservation and tourism.

We worked closely with the Amboseli Youth forum and other stakeholders to develop the Amboseli Ecosystem Youth Inclusion and Engagement Strategy, a blueprint document that will guide our efforts to build youth participation in the governance and decision-making framework in our conservancies.

The advocacy role has resulted in the rise of the number of conservancies from 16 in 2018 to 35 in 2024. Our work on support to communities covers programs that enhance community livelihoods, advocate for women and youth inclusion and empowerment.

In this second quarter we have continued to work with our communities in the Amboseli landscape, with the VSLA trainings for women groups to enhance their access to savings and financial services, and also purchased beading materials for modern beadwork training we will conduct in the next quarter.

As the dry season intensifies and resources continue to reduce, we organized community meetings to build awareness on human wildlife co-existence and a zonal grazing committee meeting to ensure sustainable pasture management in the Amboseli rangelands.

I welcome you to read more on our amazing work and the impact that the different initiative are having in building oversight, advocacy and support for our local communities leading to a thriving ecosystem for people and nature.



Jackson Mwato
Executive Director AET

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.

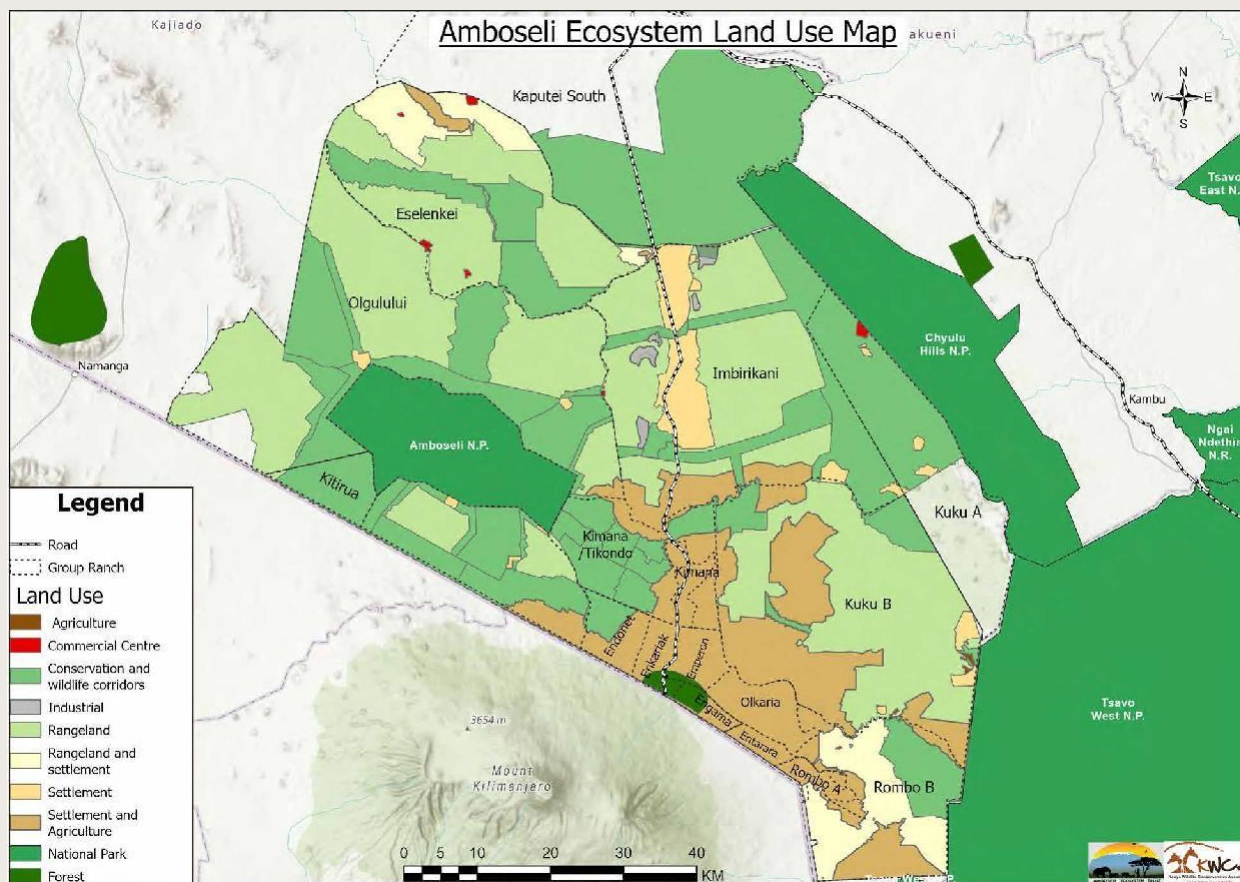
Since its inception, AET has established itself as a community led organization spearheading sustainable partnerships in the Amboseli landscape to benefit the people and the environment. Remarkable achievements and track record have mainstreamed AET as the reference point for policy advocacy and community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



1.3 million acres under conservation



650,166
acres under
conservancies



35 community conservancies



716,122 acres
under rangelands



2 AEMP Plans



744 community rangers

Achievements of Q3 at a Glance



Beading equipment worth **Ksh. 1,085,216** purchased for women groups (225kgs of beads 50 pieces tool kits, 50 nylon threads, 50 fishing lines, 50 elastic wires, 50 loom boards, 50 snaps, 50 needles, 50 spring bangle rolls and 50 beading leather)



29 Rangers trained on Fire Management



239 Community members (Male-170, female-69) trained on HWC protocols



127 women on Tree nursery establishment and Management



1400 Trees planted



51 women trained on beading



52 women trained on hay bailing, grass cutting and seed harvesting



50 Energy saving cookstoves constructed 46 ToT's Trained on Energy saving cookstoves



265 women trained VSLA's



7 AET staff trained on vegetation monitoring tool and other rangeland health indicators



1.7 tonnes of grass seeds harvested



14 Financial groups operationalized



2 radio talk shows conducted to raise awareness on rangeland restoration and Pasture Management

Ecosystem Planning:

Strategic Objective 1.3:

Strengthen land restoration work in degraded areas to support ecosystem integrity

➔ The Amboseli Ecosystem Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (2024 -2030)

The Amboseli Ecosystem Trust in partnership with the Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association (KWCA) engaged stakeholders, community leaders, conservancy leaders and partners to develop the Amboseli Ecosystem Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (2024 -2030).

The strategy anchors on four strategic goals which ensure rangeland resources are protected and sustainably managed, secures water sources to improve accessibility and sustainability, builds climate resilient conservancy-friendly livelihood options and enhances climate adaption and mitigation capacity of the Amboseli Ecosystem Trust.

➔ Tree Nursery Management Trainings

The impact of climate change is disproportional to women and youth in the Amboseli ecosystem, making them a power force in climate change mitigation efforts. Tree-based enterprises such as tree nurseries offer an opportunity for women and youth to participate in mitigating the effects of climate change through the restoration of degraded areas while making a livelihood to support their families.

Under the Sustainable Management of Amboseli and Tsavo landscapes project, the Amboseli Ecosystem Trust conducted a one-day training for

Dupoto Ontomonok Osoit Women Group on seed sourcing, handling, tree nursery management, tree seedling propagation and components of business, finance, and marketing skills.

Tree-based ventures such as the nursery managed by the group, enhance women's livelihoods and build their understanding of the many benefits of trees as essential prerequisites to overcoming the various ecosystem and livelihood challenges within the Amboseli ecosystem.



➔ Zonal Grazing and Stakeholder Engagement Meeting

The Amboseli Ecosystem Trust held an engagement meeting that brought together OGR Grazing committee representatives, area chiefs, and community rangers from the Olgulului Community Wildlife Rangers. The meeting was geared at building synergy between the different levels of leadership to offer support for the implementation of OGR Grazing bylaws outlined in the OGR Grazing Management Plan launched earlier this year.

Pasture availability is a crucial lifeline for livestock and wildlife in the Amboseli landscape. As grazing areas continue to shrink, a collaborative effort is crucial to ensure sustainable use of the rangelands and adherence to the bylaws.

The multi-agency meeting outlined strategies to combat unplanned livestock movement, grazing in grass banks (Inkaron), and the increase in bushfire incidences among other breaches of the by-laws. The meeting rallied the different stakeholders, community leaders, administration, and community rangers to work together to ensure proper management of the available pasture.

The Amboseli Ecosystem Trust in partnership with Justdiggitt under the Amboseli Sustainability Project III has continued to work closely with grazing committees across the landscape in restoration and grazing management.

In February this year, through funding from the project, the Amboseli Ecosystem Trust and the Olgulului Olalarashi community launched the OGR Grazing Management Plan a blueprint document that has enhanced pasture management.



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Conservancies Development:

Strategic Objective 2.1:

Build strong conservancies in the Amboseli ecosystem

→ Water tanks branding and distribution

The Amboseli Ecosystem Trust funded by USAID Kenya under the Sustainable Management of the Amboseli Tsavo landscape project (SMAT) in partnership with ifaw purchased and distributed ten 10,000 liters water tanks to ten conservancies across the Amboseli landscape.

Water access in conservancies transcends the basic need for survival. Improved water access and rainwater harvesting translate to better conservancy operations, increased biodiversity protection, and reduced human-wildlife conflict.

AET's conservancy program supports the community in establishing strong conservancies with inclusive governance structures and investments to sustain their operations and benefit the local communities.

The water tanks were distributed to ranger outposts in Kimana, Eselengei, Imbirikani, Rombo, the Amboseli Conservation Academy, and the Nasaru Olosho Conservancy.



Strategic Objective 2.2:

Strengthen governance for the management of designated rangeland areas to ensure maintain ecosystem integrity_____

→ Fire Management Training

In the lead-up to #WorldRangersDay, the Amboseli Ecosystem Trust organized a bush fire management training for rangers from Big Life Foundation, Olgulului Community Wildlife Rangers, Eselengei Conservancy, and Elerai Conservancy.

Bush fires in the Amboseli can be accidentally started by herders, honey harvesters, or farmers clearing their land. However, some fires are started by poachers to push wildlife closer to their traps away from protected areas.

Community rangers working in the conservancies are the first and the only defense against bush fires, therefore enhancing their fire management skills reduces the massive ecological losses caused by the blazes.

The rangers were trained to become adaptive fire marshals who can analyze fire incidences and use modern or improvised resources to tackle bushfires and prevent biodiversity loss. They were also trained in first aid and evacuation techniques to save their colleagues or the community who can be injured during bushfires.

The training was conducted by Ecohealth Company and funded by USAID Kenya under the Sustainable Management of the Amboseli Tsavo landscape project.

As the World celebrates #WorldRangersDay, the Amboseli Ecosystem Trust acknowledges the crucial role that community rangers play in the Amboseli landscape and celebrates them for their courage and devotion to wildlife conservation.



→ Rangers AGM 2024

The Amboseli Tsavo Community Wildlife Rangers Association (ATCWRA) was formed to coordinate and promote community rangers' affairs in the Amboseli landscape.

The Amboseli Ecosystem Trust funded by USAID Kenya under the Sustainable Management of Amboseli Tsavo landscape has supported the ranger association to enhance their leadership and governance to effectively advocate for the wellbeing of community rangers.

AET supported the association to hold its annual general meeting at its headquarters in the Amboseli Conservation Academy. The AGM provides rangers a platform to reflect, organize, and streamline their work, leading to enhanced biodiversity conservation and improved governance of the Amboseli landscape.



→ World Ranger Day 2024

The Amboseli Ecosystem Trust partnered with other conservation stakeholders from the Amboseli landscape and held a colorful event to celebrate the commitment and passion of wildlife rangers.

In his remarks, the Executive Director of Amboseli Ecosystem Trust and National Chair of Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association Mr. Jackson Mwato applauded the efforts of wildlife rangers saying their efforts have enhanced biodiversity protection in the Amboseli Ecosystem.

"The number of community rangers has grown exponentially and the success of conservation today is because of their dedication and commitment" He said.

At the national level, the Director applauded the efforts of the Kenya Conservancies Rangers Association who have worked closely with other partners to advocate for the wellbeing of conservancy rangers.

Lastly the Director mentioned that the Amboseli Ecosystem Trust will continue supporting ranger work to enhance their capacity to continue protection our diverse and intricate Ecosystem.



Enterprise Development and Tourism:

Strategic Objective 3.4:

Empower community groups, targeting women, youth, and other marginalized groups to engage in nature-based enterprises to realize equitable and sustainable development.



→ Grass Seed Harvest

Breaking the Ceiling: 1.7 tons of Grass Seeds ☐

There is nothing quite like the feeling of triumph, and as the world cheers for athletes competing in the Olympic Games 2024 taking place in Paris, in the Amboseli, we also have something to celebrate. The women groups under the grass seed bank program have just crossed a monumental milestone.

They have harvested an astounding 1.7 tons of *eragrostis superba* (Maasai love grass) and *Cenchrus ciliaris* (Buffel grass). The two grass types are indigenous and perennial to the Amboseli rangelands and will be used to restore degraded areas of the Amboseli to provide highly nutritious pasture habitats for wildlife and community livestock.

The grass seed bank program is a conservation enterprise program implemented by the Amboseli Ecosystem Trust through funding from Justdiggit under the Amboseli Sustainability Project Phase III.

We celebrate the dedication of the women groups who have tirelessly weeded, monitored, and cared for their grass seed banks and have made such a remarkable achievement.

→ The success of the Eselengei Kitchen Garden

In Eselengei Group ranch, the Esirit Naningo women group has had profound success in their kitchen garden enterprise.

Glaring economic and social barriers still face many women in the Amboseli landscape, most lacking alternative livelihoods to support their households.

Under the SMAT project, the Amboseli Ecosystem Trust conducted a training on the establishment and management of a kitchen garden for ten women groups from across the Amboseli landscape as an alternative source of income to support their households.

The women were trained on reseedling, weeding, watering and best group dynamic practices to ensure the success of the vegetables planted in their kitchen garden.

In their first circle of harvest, the Esirit Naningo women group collected over Ksh. 8,000 from the sale of the vegetables.

This translates to financial support to meet their household needs and empower the women to positively contribute to the wellbeing of the community leading to improved sustainable conservation outcomes.



Energy saving jikos

AET conducted trainings on the establishment and installation of 40 energy saving jikos for women groups in Kalesirua, Imbirikani and Loositok in Kuku Group ranch.

Energy saving jikos help to reduce the reliance on traditional resource intensive methods of cooking and improve energy efficiency leading to sustainable environmental practices.

The program will develop a network of trainers who will disseminate knowledge and skills within their communities creating a livelihood for their families.

→ Star Beaders of Amboseli

Fifty women from across the Amboseli ecosystem have started a 5-day training workshop on modern beadwork, value-added products, marketing, and designs.

Women groups drawn from Kuku, Rombo, Eselengei, Nasaru Olosho, Kimana ALOCA, Olgulului Ololarashi, and Imbirikani group ranches are currently undergoing the beadwork training aimed at enhancing their traditional beads into modern designs, value addition, and best quality control practices.

Traditionally, beads are produced as ornaments that express cultural beauty and are deeply intertwined with status and identity, however through this training women are empowered to transform these traditional arts into tradable commodities for significant economic and social benefits.

By combining traditional beadwork with innovation, modern techniques, and designs this training aims to enhance the quality of beadwork products done by the women to meet market demand and generate higher income to support their households.

It is part of AET's mission to advocate for women and youth empowerment and inclusion in climate change adaptation and biodiversity protection in the Amboseli landscape.





➔ VSLA Training

The Amboseli Ecosystem Trust funded by USAID Kenya in partnership with ifaw under the SMAT project has conducted VSLA trainings for women groups in the Amboseli landscape.

Village Saving and Loan Associations (VSLA) offer simple savings and loan facilities to women who do not have easy access to formal financial services. It stimulates the creation of self-managed women's saving groups that enhance their savings, access to loans, and support in emergencies.

Women groups in Enkii area, Eselengei Group ranch, were trained on VSLA skills including group dynamics, financial literacy, savings, and loan management. These skills will enhance the capacity of the women groups to provide financial support to their families, access financial services, and explore investment opportunities that provide alternative income sources.

AET's commitment to women's empowerment is anchored on enhancing their inclusion in conservation in the Amboseli landscape. By involving women, conservation initiatives can benefit from increased innovation, local knowledge, and long-term community support, ultimately leading to more effective and inclusive biodiversity protection. After the training, the women groups were issued VSLA toolkits such as saving boxes, digital calculators, member passbooks, counter books, pens, pencils, and other tools.



Advancing Women and Youth Inclusion in Conservation and management of natural Resources

Amboseli Youth Inclusion and Engagement Strategy

The Amboseli Ecosystem Trust held an engagement workshop with Youth representatives from Amboseli Conservancies under the Amboseli Youth Forum to gather their input and contribution towards the development of the Amboseli Youth Inclusion and Engagement Strategy.

The Youth Inclusion and Engagement Strategy is anchored on the four mutually reinforcing and interconnected objectives revolving around leadership, knowledge-building, empowerment and capacity building.

The Strategy, funded by USAID Kenya in partnership with ifaw under the SMAT project, draws insights from the National Youth Engagement Strategy 2023 implemented by the Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association.

The Engagement is part of a consultative process which will also include participation by stakeholders, partners and conservancy leaders, building up to inclusive Amboseli Ecosystem Youth Engagement Strategy.



PHOTOSHOP EXPRESS

→ Conservation Education in Schools

Our efforts to resolve the Amboseli Ecosystem challenges of today are crucial, but how do we ensure that the future is secure? Our conservation and education program is tailored to nurture a deeper appreciation for conservation and build environmental stewardship through tree planting, sports, and education tours to the Amboseli National Park.

The Amboseli Ecosystem Trust has distributed a total of 1,200 tree seedlings to six schools including the Kimana Girls' Secondary, Olmapitet ManHae Secondary School, Kimana Mixed Secondary School, Kimana Primary School, Merueshi Maasai High and Merueshi Primary School.

We have also facilitated two education tours to the Amboseli National Park for 100 students from Merueshi Maasai High School, PCEA Imbirikani Girls High School, and Olmapitet ManHae Secondary School.

These engagements create pathways to empower the youth to gain a deeper understanding of the intricate Amboseli ecosystem and help foster greater conservation awareness for sustainable biodiversity protection across the Amboseli landscape.



→ Women Forum

Under the Rise project, the Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association in partnership with Amboseli Ecosystem Trust organized a women forum, that brought together women representatives from across the Amboseli landscape.

The women forum is geared at building women awareness on their roles in conservancy leadership, additionally, through the forum women enhance their advocacy skills to meaningfully participate in advocating for their inclusion in decision making.

In the forum, women come up with gender advocacy agendas for the different conservancies that they represent in order to enhance landscape level empowerment and inclusion of women in natural resource governance and leadership.

Corporate Growth



→ Training on Vegetation monitoring

Staff ToT training for JDI and Soralo on group dynamics, LRE and grass seedbank development process and hay baling.

At the staff Training of Trainers (ToT) for Amboseli Ecosystem Trust (AET) and Soralo, facilitated by JDI, staff members were introduced to group dynamics concepts as well as practical rangeland management.

The training on group dynamics included the specifics of running a group, surrounding stage development in groups, characteristics of a successful group and principles of interactions with these groups. This knowledge is even more critical for the promotion of teamwork and collaboration in the organization.

Furthermore, the training included an in-depth training in Landscape Restoration Enterprises (LRE) concentrating on the formation of grass seedbanks, marketing of the grass seeds and the technique for hay baling. We went on to do a field demonstration as well, where we actually took part in the harvesting and baling of hay taking place at Noonkotia helping us learn first-hand sustainable rangeland management practices

→ The William and Mary Research Program

The Amboseli Ecosystem Trust hosted students from the William and Mary Institute of Integrated Conservation for a joint research-based program to give solutions to local problems affecting communities.

The students conducted research on women's perspective on conservation entrepreneurship support systems and documenting community perspective on benefit sharing structures for carbon markets in Kenya.

Through these partnerships and engagements, the Amboseli Ecosystem Trust is working to build networks for landscape level sustainable growth to foster biodiversity growth to benefit the community and wildlife in the Amboseli Ecosystem.



→ Pause and reflect

Under the Sustainable Management of Amboseli Tsavo landscape, an AET team attended a pause and reflect workshop organized by the lead partner Ifaw, to assess the progress of the project, reflect on the lessons learned and make the required adjustments going into the final half of the project, to improve implementation and facilitate adaptive management.

During the trip, the team had an opportunity to visit the Olpejeta Conservancy to benchmark and learn on their diverse investments and potential to introduce them to the Amboseli conservancies.



The team interacted with Baraka the Blind Rhino to build their knowledge and awareness on black rhinos as they were given a lecture on the ecological and behavioral characters of black rhinos. The team also visited the Olpejeta Beef Farm a pioneer integrated approach that connects wildlife conservation and livestock production. Beyond creating a source of income, the model employs livestock production as rangeland restoration tool through a wholistic grazing management plan.

The farm employs cutting edge technology such as tracking chips, artificial insemination and breed control to sustain quality control and production. The visit was a crucial eye opener for the team as they learnt of new alternative sources of income for their conservancies that have struggled due to their sole dependency on tourism investments



An Ecosystem where people and nature thrive in harmony.

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