



PROFESSIONAL MANAGEMENT COMES TO THE HEART OF THE MASAI MARA

MASAI MARA, KENYA (January 1, 2010) – A new conservancy in the Masai Mara, formerly known as the Koyaiki Lemek Conservation Area, has been formed. The Mara North Conservancy (MNC) is a not-for-profit company established in January 2009. The conservancy is a partnership between eleven member camps and over 800 Maasai landowners to professionally manage and protect the north-western border of the Masai Mara ecosystem, which represents the heart of the most important wildlife habitat in the world. MNC consists of approximately 30,000 hectares, effectively increasing the size of the Masai Mara National Reserve by 21%. This area is the key dispersal zone for the annual “Great Migration” and supports an extensive variety of additional species, the most recognizable include lion, cheetah, leopard, buffalo, hyena, elephant, crocodile, wild dog, giraffe, hippopotamus, and over 450 bird species.

THE AREA

The +30,000 Ha conservation area, lying on the northern boundary of the Masai Mara National Reserve, is rich with wildlife and includes sites such as the world famous “Leopard Gorge.” This land formerly belonged to two Group Ranches and was subdivided into individual, private titles in 2002. Uncoordinated land-use decisions are severely impacting the ecosystem and its wildlife. Mass tourism, human population growth, lack of planning, poor infrastructure, growing numbers of livestock, introduction of agriculture, and charcoaling are just some of the issues facing the area. These issues are being addressed through innovative solutions created by the founding member camps and the Maasai landowners.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

To form the conservancy MNC leased land from individual Maasai landowners. This income is fixed and does not fluctuate based on the number of visitors. The idea of guaranteeing a fixed amount marks the first time that these Maasai landowners have received direct, predictable and transparent income from wildlife, allowing community members to plan for the future. Together, MNC and the Maasai are implementing sound land management policies, including managed grazing, holistic management practices, low volume and low impact tourism, and community land-use plans.

Professional wildlife management is equally as important as securing the land. Brian Heath, Seiya Ltd. has been appointed as Mara North Conservancy wildlife and land area manager. Mr. Heath is a well known, international conservationist and has worked for more than 40 years within the conservation community. Mr. Heath and Seiya also manage the Mara Conservancy in Transmara, a neighboring conservancy. This allows holistic management of a much larger ecosystem.



MISSION

The aim is to create a best practice, world-class conservancy with long-term commitments to the environment, wildlife, and local communities.

Mara North Conservancy's mission goals are:

1. Professional land and wildlife management
2. Direct and transparent revenue distribution to the Maasai landowners
3. Fundraising and endorsing corporate social investment for the betterment of the local communities
4. Low-density tourism and vehicle numbers to minimize environmental impact
5. Promotion of strong eco-tourism practices and use of environmentally friendly technologies
6. Stewardship of the environment for future generations

MNC MEMBER CAMPS

Elephant Pepper Camp, Kicheche Camp, Offbeat Mara Camp, Rekeru Homes, Safaris Unlimited, Serian Camp, Karen Blixen Camp, Mara Plains Camp, Offbeat Safaris, Royal Mara Safari Camp, Saruni

ACTIVITIES

In Mara North guests are able to enjoy early morning game drives, afternoon game drives, full day game drives and thrilling night drives. Game drives are conducted in custom built 4x4s for the ultimate wildlife experience. Game walks with armed guides are arranged for those who wish to experience the magnitude of the Mara savannah on foot. Bush breakfasts, lunches or dinners are arranged in beautiful and carefully selected areas. (Night drives, walking safaris and bush dinners are not allowed in the Masai Mara National Reserve.) Cultural visits and balloon trips can be arranged through the various member camps.

CONSERVANCY FEES

All guests visiting the Mara North Conservancy camps are kindly asked to pay a Mara North Conservancy fee. Conservancy fees support Maasai landowner's lease payments and professional land management. Mara North Conservancy is a not-for-profit.