

# The LNGG Monthly

Newsletter of the Lake Naivasha Growers' Group

## Agenda

- \* Hortifair 2009 - 3<sup>rd</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> October, RAI Amsterdam, The Netherlands
- \* LNGG AGM 2009 - 8<sup>th</sup> October, 2009, LN Simba Lodge starting at 1000h
- \* PM's Roundtable - 8<sup>th</sup> October, 2009, Nairobi

## Important Notice:

- Each farm must have a trained Occupational Safety and Health Committee; 6 members for 20-100 employees, 10 members for 100-1000 employees, 14 members for more than 1000 employees. Only new committee members require retraining.
- First-aid personnel need retraining annually. 3 first-aiders needed for up to 100 employees; for every additional 100 employees you require 1 first-aid person.
- 5 fire marshals are required on an average sized farm. The number is something your OSH committee can determine. Refreshers not required
- All chemical handlers must be trained on correct usage and disposal of chemicals and spray equipment. Need for refreshers can be assessed by on the OSH committee.
- LNGG continues to organize joint-training courses for its members.

## Naivasha Ecosystem Services - Why Bother to Restore?

At a recent stakeholder meeting with experts on the ecology and hydrology of Lake Naivasha, residents of Naivasha were treated to some interesting facts and scary scenarios that drove home the point that we need to work together for the future of this ecosystem! Following is a summary of some of the more interesting parts of the meeting.

The seminar hosted by the Lake Naivasha Water Resource User's Association (LANAWRUA) at the Naivasha Sports Club on September 9, 2009 was a resounding success. With standing-room only well before the start of the talks, it was apparent that interest in protecting Lake Naivasha is high amongst residents, growers, the Municipal Council, and interest groups.

*We need a common vision*  
The first to speak was Dr. Harper (University of Leicester) who once again urged us, the stakeholders, to come together with a common vision to protect the ecosystem of the lake, which when intact provides numerous benefits to our everyday lives. In particular, Dr.

Harper focussed on the importance of the "ecotone" or what we know as the riparian zone dominated by *Cyperus papyrus* sedge and *Acacia xanthophloea* woodland. The integrity of this area is critical to maintaining regulatory function of the ecosystem, as well as places of immense biodiversity (from micro organisms to birds) and hence, must be protected at all cost. His student, Edward Morrison then gave an interesting talk on his plans for a PhD program to restore papyrus (see page 3).

### *Flow reversal*

Dr. Becht (ITC) presented last, but was surely not the least! One critical point Dr. Becht made was the effect of the increasing number of centre pivots on the north lake side to the aquifer that feeds into the lake. Since the first pivot was put in, the groundwater table has reduced by 25 m, endangering neighbouring farms and the lake. His point was that pivots are relatively low investments compared to greenhouses and, therefore, less risky if

the groundwater system dries up as the pivots can be simply dismantled and shipped somewhere else. Hence, as stakeholders, we need to decide what is acceptable for our ecosystem with respect to abstraction. From a hydrological point of view, the reduction in the water table on that side has caused a reversal of flow resulting in water flowing back into the aquifer to fill the void caused by the excessive abstraction of water. The sad thing is that if all groundwater abstraction was stopped today, the reversal of flow to its natural state (aquifer to lake) would take tens of thousands of years.

### *The Muddy Fish Pond*

Dr. Becht has a few scenarios he loves to share, and here is a version of the ones he shared at the meeting.

At the moment, the major stakeholders in Lake Naivasha are the investors, pastoralists, fishermen, tourism and residents, and farm workers. Ecologically, Lake Naivasha has no indigenous

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## Naivasha Ecosystem Services ....

fish species, the lake itself is not biologically diverse in its own right as much of the diversity is in the riparian area, which is not doing so well. It is basically a muddy fish pond.

Scenario 1: Stop all abstraction of water

The lake will expand, along with the flooding of the current riparian area.

Beneficiaries: Fishermen, who will have a larger area to fish  
Losers: All other stakeholders. Millions of dollars of investment will be lost as with no water, plants will not grow, farm workers will lose their jobs in the thousands, pastoralists will have less access to riparian land, which is prime grazing land. Due to loss of investment, Naivasha will have less economic activity as tourism and residential population is low. This population will not be happy with only a

big pond with no diversity.

Likely end point: Unless fisheries become a big income earner, the town will collapse economically, but there will be a large lake with lots of water. Nationally, employment levels and horticulture will take a big hit.

Scenario 2: Allow unchecked abstraction, with the lake reducing in size giving way to larger area for riparian ecosystem to develop

Beneficiaries: Growers, workers, tourism, pastoralists, and residents. Growers will have all the water they need to farm, workers will not lose their jobs, and the remainder will have an increased riparian zone that is biological diverse, provides for more birds, animals, and fodder for livestock.

Losers: fishermen will be out of

work

Likely end point: The Lake will continue to reduce in size, with short spells of expansion during the rains. However, one year one of our infamous droughts will hit and the lake will cease to exist. Everyone will be out of a job, investment will collapse, pastoralists will have to seek watering areas elsewhere, and eventually Naivasha will become a ghost town. Nationally, after a huge growth in employment and horticulture earnings, it will crash..

Then the rains will return, the lake will expand, be colonized by fauna and flora and one brave farmer will plant a rose.

### *The moral of the scenarios*

Over-exploitation is an economic, more so than an ecological risk

## Women say NO to HIV and Gender Violence

This was the theme of the NACOHAG Annual Women's Football Tournament, which was held on August 29 and 30, 2009 at the Karagita ground.

NACOHAG, which stands for the Naivasha Community HIV AIDS Group has been holding annual tournaments under various themes focused on Women's health and LNGG has been a prominent sponsor of the event. This year, LNGG sponsored the purchase and printing of the T-shirts, which were distributed to all winning teams

and VIPs. Crayfish, Panda Flowers, Rotary, Lake Flowers and John D'Olier also contributed to the event.

Thirteen teams participated, of



The stage on which skits about HIV – Aids and Gender Violence were enacted and prizes were distributed

which the majority came from LNGG member farms. Finally, the Oserian Ladies Football team, who were runners-up in 2008, emerged the winners after beating out the youngsters from Mirera Primary Girl's Football team.

An estimated 3000 people attended the finals. Onsite HIV tests and counseling were conducted.

Among the spectators, were local leaders, including the deputy mayor for Naivasha Mr. Gikonyo, area councilor Mr. Warothe, and a representative of the Police De-

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## Bringing back the Papyrus

As many of you will be aware, the edge of the lake was once characterized by tall swathes of wetland plants, dominated by the green giant 'papyrus' (*'ndago mwitu'*). When intact, wetlands act as natural purifiers of water, operating at zero cost to us: biological processes associated with such wetland systems are termed 'ecosystem services'. In Naivasha we have lost more than 90% of the papyrus we once had, through a combination of lowered lake levels and grazing pressure from game and livestock, in addition to deliberate human clearance.

Restoring our wetlands would allow Naivasha's present community (as well as future generations) to benefit from the ecosystem services provided by papyrus, which include: (1) a land-water buffer zone, protecting the shallow lake from excess sediments arriving in the Malewa and Gilgil rivers (think of the topsoil washed away by El Niño rains) which otherwise cause the lake to 'silt up'; (2) a biophysical filter, recycling excess nutrients from the catchment which presently cause the lake to be eutrophic; (3) a more constant volume of water for irrigation, since evaporation rates are lower inside papyrus swamps than over open water, and (4) critical habitat for wildlife which we all enjoy and for which Naivasha was made famous.

The broad focus of my project will be the implementation of a carefully-planned model of restoration and the creation of a 'demonstration site' to educate community members on the importance of intact wetlands. At present, there is no sustainable use of this ecosystem at Naivasha; means need to be tested whereby groups will soon be motivated to restore, protect and even harvest wetlands for the benefit of everybody. The project is a truly interdisciplinary venture, combining elements of ecology, economics, engineering, conservation and policy.

The first step will be to determine the optimal design criteria for restored plots, by experimenting with variations in: (a) source material (e.g. seeds, saplings, rhizome pieces, transplanted mature clumps); (b) starting population size; (c) slope gradient and water depth; (d) connectedness of patches; (e) protected (e.g. within rock-filled gabions to prevent hippo damage) or unprotected plots,



A healthy clump of *Cyperus papyrus*



A source of nutrients during the drought

and (f) the size of restored units.

I will be writing in a future issue to explain how papyrus can be assigned a monetary value that will bring its actual worth into the real world of economics, alongside the known value of flowers and vegetables to which it invisibly (but critically) contributes.

By Edward Morrison



Recently cleared papyrus patch to be converted to small-scale agriculture

## NACOHAG .....

partment. The leaders congratulated the organizers (NACOHAG), donors and participating teams for making the event a success. The leaders encouraged the residents to report any form of gender violence to the responsible authorities.

Overall, the event was much appreciated and enjoyed by all who attended.

LNGG continues to assist NACOHAG through monthly financial support, but through the annual women's football tournament we get to be part of a fun event for the women of Naivasha. Something we should be proud of!

By David Kihagi



Cllr. Warothe congratulating the girls from Mirera

## Managing the waters of Lake Naivasha Catchment

At a meeting with specific stakeholders on September 16, 2009, the DC launched the Lake Naivasha Water Resource Management Committee.

The formation of the Committee became necessary as a result of widespread concern about the current state of the lake and water resources within the Lake Naivasha watershed, and the urgent need for action. Its formation has taken place after wide consultation with stakeholder groups and approval from WRMA and the Ministry of Water and Irrigation. The Committee will be chaired by the DC and its membership will include 20 organizations/departments/institutions, with WRMA housing the secretariat.

The Committee will consider the interests of all sectors including the growers, pastoralists and become a platform for linkages between the upper and lower catchment communities.

### *Terms of Reference*

The committee has a number of terms of reference (TOR), which were discussed and vetted by the stakeholders invited. A smaller technical committee was formed to develop a work plan along the lines of the TOR and to report back to the committee on a quarterly basis.

The TOR, in summary, focus the committee on overseeing management plans (be it the management plan that is sub-judice, the sub-catchment management plan, the water allocation plan, or any other plan or proposed plan that touches on management of the water resource or related resource) in the Naivasha catchment, coordinating efforts from these plans, to monitoring the progress of the efforts, identifying any negative impacts, mobilizing resources, and keeping all stakeholders informed on the state of the water resources. The committee will also form the technical advisor to the District Environmental Committee,

which should be constituted soon.

LNGG was recognized as the stakeholder group representing growers and was invited to join the technical committee.

### *The way forward*

The legality and powers of the committee will be confirmed to ensure that its actions or directives are implemented.

Finally, all the stakeholders agreed that there was need for an integrated watershed management strategy for Naivasha.

By David Kihagi

## Mike

On Wednesday, September 16, 2009 we lost one of our best. Mike Higgins, who had assisted LNGG in countless ways, will always be remembered as a true gentleman. My acquaintance with Mike was short, having started in July 2007 when I joined LNGG. At the very first committee meeting he was warm and welcoming, giving me confidence that I can fit in and that my work will be appreciated. Ever since he always thanked me after each meeting and always ensuring that we ended on a positive note. Mike's knowledge of Naivasha, its history, its people, and politics helped us immensely, especially during discussions at the committee meetings. Whenever there was help needed, we could always call on Mike.

Mike's importance to Karagita was obvious when I attended meetings at the Mirera Primary and Secondary Schools. Everyone was always praising Mike and Sarah for their supportive and generous natures. The Higgins' are one of the most respected families around Mirera-Karagita.

Even though Mike has departed, his good work, kindness and generosity will not be soon forgotten. To Sarah and family, we at the LNGG would like to convey our sincerest and heartfelt condolences and thanks for your continued support.

Goodbye Mike!

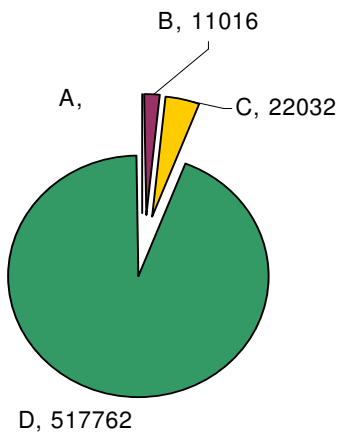
**Sunita**

## According to WRMA...

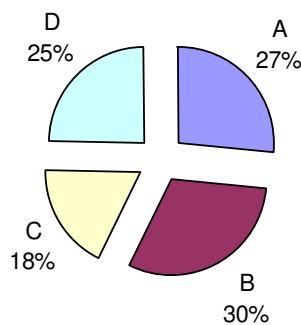
Preliminary results from the water abstraction survey.

At the WRMA meeting held on September 10, 2009 the following results were unveiled. However, readers should be warned that these data are only preliminary and may change. The final report is being prepared by WRMA and will be distributed as soon as we receive it. Interestingly, most illegal users fell in Category A and those using groundwater. The discrepancy between authorized and actual volumes of water abstracted was attributed to the drought and reduction of water usage by most abstractors. However, the data suggest that actual use is 24% of authorized, which seems a little low. Once the full report comes out, we hope to know more about what we use and how we can manage it! Below is some of the data in graphical form, separated by category (A, B, C, D) of permit as classified by WRMA.

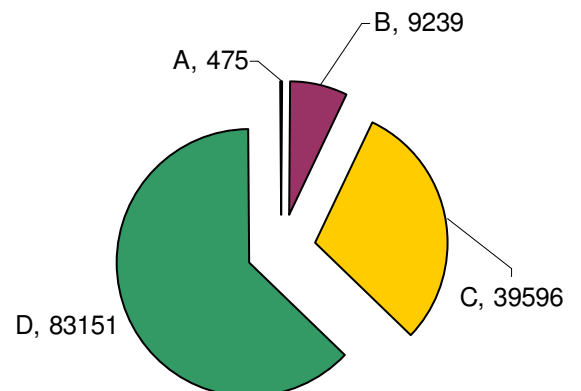
Authorized abstraction ( $m^3d^{-1}$ ) distributed by permit category; Category A is authorized for  $<500 m^3d^{-1}$



Distribution of permits by category



Actual abstraction ( $m^3d^{-1}$ ) distributed by permit category



## Vacancy Announcement

LNGG is heading for a bigger and brighter future and the Select Committee is looking for someone to take over the helm from me when I finally move on to my brighter future.

Hence, we have started advertising for the position of the Executive Officer and would really appreciate all the assistance we can get. Here is the announcement for the vacancy.

Please pass it along. Thank you!

*Sunita*

The Lake Naivasha Growers' Group is a consortium of farms, particularly involved in flowers and vegetable products, which believes in sustainable use of natural resources for a sustainable commercial sector.

The group is looking for a suitable candidate for the post of Executive Officer (EO). The EO will be the active representative of the group and will be responsible for the development and implementation of the group's operations, as instructed/directed by the Select Committee. The selected candidate will have to live in Naivasha and be willing to travel to meetings in Nairobi and Nakuru. Overall, the applicant must be confident with a pleasant personality, who is a good communicator, self-motivated, and able to expand and expose her/himself to new ideas and perspectives

### Qualifications:

- MSc environmental management/natural resource management/ agriculture with 3 years experience; or BSc in the same disciplines with 5 years experience
- Excellent communication skills, fluency in written and spoken English a must. Ability to speak Kiswahili a plus
- Excellent computer skills that include the use of email systems, word processing, data processing and publishing software (Microsoft Publisher). Knowledge of website management, GIS and database management is a plus
- Experience in lobbying and interaction with persons ranging from the local community to government officials
- Some experience or knowledge of auditing and legislative language, or the willingness to learn

Please send a CV and cover letter stating why you feel you are the right person for the position to:  
PO Box 1356-20117, Naivasha or [Ingg@africaonline.co.ke](mailto:Ingg@africaonline.co.ke)

Deadline for applications: October 30, 2009  
Only successful candidates will be contacted



Lake Naivasha  
Growers' Group

WE'RE ON THE WEB:  
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