

WCK- Water Catchment Workshop information

Every year, Wildlife Clubs of Kenya convenes its National Coordination Committee (NCC) to carry out a critical analysis of the environmental situation of the country and decide on a theme of environmental importance which informs the core activities for the following year. The NCC mandates WCK secretariat and its regional centres and offices to develop education programmes and activities based on the agreed theme.

During the meeting of June 2007 the NCC decided on the theme, **“Conserve our Water Catchments”**. Water catchments in Kenya are key to many facets of life ranging from biodiversity conservation, ameliorating global climate change, wildlife conservation areas (important for animals species such as elephants, rhinos, lions etc), tourism, and the economy in general. However, these areas today are under great threat from encroachment and general destruction. There is need for a deliberate effort to highlight the status of such areas and refocus people’s attention to their conservation. This means that all activities of Wildlife Clubs of Kenya across the country next year 2008 will focus on the theme **“Conserve our Water Catchments”**. The main objectives of the theme which are:

- To enhance awareness of the status and importance of water catchments in Kenya.
- To enlighten Kenya’s youth of their policy involvement in protecting the country’s water catchments.
- To initiate and promote club projects at regional and national levels that help the conservation of water catchments in Kenya

Toward these objectives, WCK will hold a two day workshop for its Education Officers and Action Group Chairpersons from all regions early 2008 and produce an information pack on Kenya’s Water Catchments both large and small. WCK will invite resource persons from the water and forest sectors to give an overview of current water catchment areas in Kenya and equip participants with the correct information about them. The water catchments information pack will be distributed to aid staff in their day to day activities. WCK staff will undertake to gather the necessary information and compile the information pack.

The information pack will highlight the Major Water Towers of the country which are:

- Mount Kenya
- Aberdares Ranges
- Cherangai Hills
- The Mau Complex
- Mount Elgon.

The pack will also include some of the important regional water catchment areas such as:

- Chyulu Hills
- Taita Hills
- Mzima Springs
- Mbooni Hills

- Nyambene Hills
- Arabuko Sokoke
- Imenti Forest
- Mount Marsabit

Also featured will be little known water catchments such as the various Kaya Forests along the coast. Local experiences of tiny water catchments that offer lifeline support to villagers will come from the participants of this workshop.

The information in this pack will be categorized as:

- Location and status of the sites
- Importance to people and animals
- Threats to such sites
- Solutions undertaken to save the sites
- How WCK members can help.

The information pack will also include recommended education resources such as posters, fliers, DVDs and videos that education officers could use in their day to day running of the programme. These materials will be distributed to the six education centres and the ten Action Group Chairmen. Another channel to disseminate this information is the Mobile Education Unit both at the National and the five regional Mobile Education Units. The materials will serve as a basis for talks and discussions on water catchments in Kenya.

WCK has regional education centres in Nairobi, Kisumu, Nakuru, Mombasa, and offices in Kitui and Malindi. The six WCK Mobile Education Units on tour to schools reach over 400 schools and 90,000 students and teachers annually. WCK shall carry out the workshop and produce/print at least 1,000 information packs that will be used in the campaign on water catchments. Students who visit the WCK education centres or are visited by the Mobile Education Units will benefit from the materials about water catchments.

Conclusion

WCK education centres and Mobile Education Units provide the best opportunity for Wildlife Club members to gain lifetime experience. Materials produced will form the best opportunity for members to benefit from environmental education programmes and activities for young Kenyans. This is bound to exert a positive influence on the children's future outlook to the environment in general.

Water catchments are extremely important as biodiversity conservation areas. If we do not conserve them it will be disastrous not only to biodiversity but also the future of the youth of this country and the world.