



MAASAI MARA CONSERVATION PIONEERS

MMWCA@10





INTRODUCTION

The Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservancies Association marks its 10th Anniversary in November 2023. As we commemorate its establishment and reflect on a decade of leading community conservation in the Maasai Mara, we recognise that we have realised the achievements we celebrate because of the work of the pioneers of Mara Conservancies.

This booklet is our attempt to honour and recognise conservation heroes and pioneers of Mara Conservancies who demonstrated leadership, unparalleled dedication and distinction in advancing conservation for the good of the community and wildlife.

We celebrate you and say

Thank You



Daniel Sophia
Chief Executive Officer.



Paramount Chief Lerionka Ole Ntutu (posthumously)

The Late Paramount Chief Lerionka Ole Ntutu laid the foundation for the community's conservation benefits in the Maasai Mara today. In the early 1990s, he challenged the then County Council of Narok through the judicial forum to share the revenue with the community, resulting in the 19% allocation of the revenue generated from the Maasai Mara to the community. He led the establishment of Olchorro-Oirowua Wildlife Conservation Association in 1992 and started collecting game viewing fees from tourism facilities outside of the Maasai Mara National Reserve.



Ron Beaton

Ron Beaton was a pioneer tourism investor in the Maasai Mara. He played a critical role in bringing the tourism investors together. Beaton sold the idea of guaranteed payments to his peers as a sustainable model for driving sustainable conservation, leading to long-term lease agreements. He also played a critical role in establishing Koyiaki Guiding School, Olare Orok and Motoroki Conservancies.



Allan Earnshaw

Allan Earnshaw, who led a consortium of campers in the Mara in the early 1990s under the ambit of Campfire Conservation Limited, leased land from part of the former Koyiaki Group Ranch Block 1 and 2, contributing to the first efforts of ensuring the community derived direct benefits from conservation and tourism. He played a critical role in persuading the community to zone land and use it sustainably and mobilised donors to support the community in the eastern part of Koyiaki (current Pardamat) to make it a comfortable settlement area to actualise zonation. Earnshaw was also critical in establishing a regional body for Maasai Mara (Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservancies Association). He contributed to fundraising efforts during the critical formative years to help the Association get grounded.



Dr. Lars Lindkvist



Svein Wilhelmsen

Dr Lars Lindkvist and Svein Wilhelmsen invested in research that informed the evolution of the Mara Conservancies to the model we have today. Specifically, they created a platform for innovation and co-creation — Ecological Brainstorming (EcoStorm) — that yielded a model for Mara Naboisho Conservancy. Upon establishing Mara Naboisho, they sourced for three-year bridge financing to support the conservancies before investors moved in. Ecostorm brought conservancies and other conservation formations together and allowed them to explore establishing a unifying body, thus contributing to the efforts to establish a regional body for the Maasai Mara—Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservancies Association.



Dickson Kaelo

Dickson Ole Kaelo was arguably the voice of reason at a time characterized by confusion after the collapse of the Koyiaki-Lemek Wildlife Trust. He devoted his time to helping opinion leaders who had come up with various formations after the collapse of the Koyiaki-Lemek Trust to come together. He played a critical role in guiding the founders of the Olare Orok, Motorogi and Later Mara North to avoid the pitfalls of the Koyiaki-Lemek experience. One of his notable contributions was coming up with a winning paper during Ecological Brainstorming, a platform sponsored by Basecamp Explorer Foundation, used as a model for establishing Mara Naboisho Conservancy.



Francis Ole Nkoitai



Konana Ole Kereto



Dominic Ole Nchoe



Rusei Ole Soit

These community leaders were early adopters of the concept of conservation. They used their resources and influence to mobilise the community to embrace conservation and pull their parcels to form conservancies. Their efforts led to attitudinal changes and, consequently, the successful establishment of the first conservancies when the idea of conservancies was still foreign to the community. They, therefore, laid the foundation that set conservation as a key livelihood option for Mara residents. Collectively and in various capacities, these vision bearers contributed to the successful establishment of Koyiaki Guiding School.



Kipeen Ole Sayialel



Dennis Ole Mako



Tipapa Ole Nabaala



Maloi Ole Kiu

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Daniel Sopia



Jackson Mpario

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Moses Ole Karia



John Ole Seng'eny



David Rakwa



Benard Ole Leperes

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Daniel Ole Muli



J.T Ole Kaigil



Joseph Lepilal Nkurumwa



Sammy Ole Nkoitai
(posthumously)

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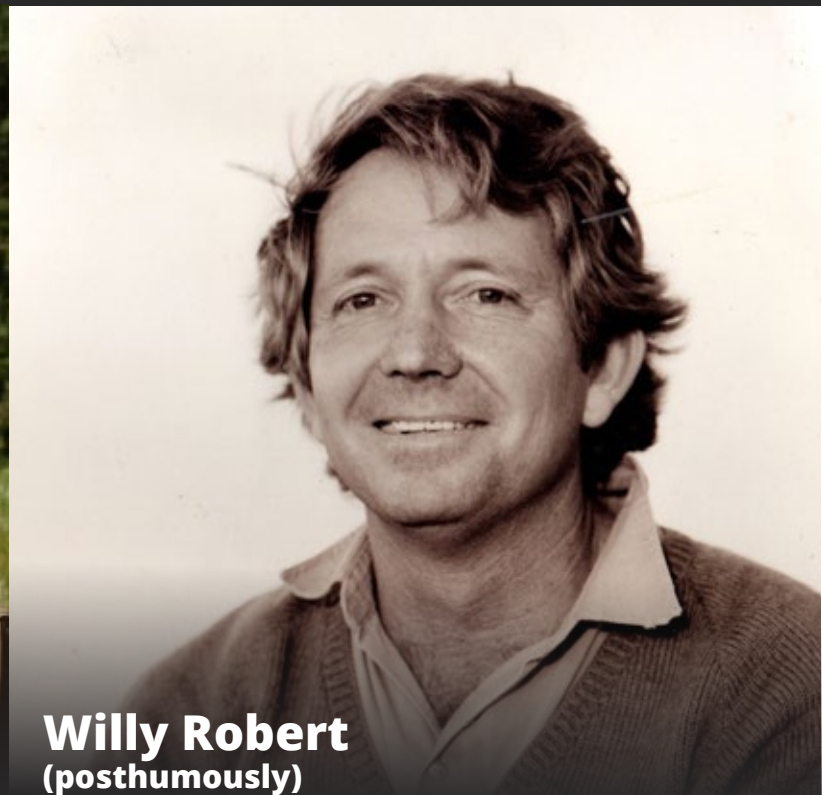
Greg Monson



Jake Grieves Cook



Stefano Cheli



Willy Robert
(posthumously)

These tourism investors took the risk of engaging in a new business in an unpredictable environment. They were early adopters who pioneered the idea of guaranteed payment, leading to long-term lease agreements with the community. Guaranteed lease payments are a distinct feature of the Mara Conservation model critical to the sustainability of community-led conservation.



Mokompo Ole Simel

A Maasai Spiritual leader, Mokompo Ole Simel, has used his powers to advance conservation. Ole Simel, or Mokompo as he is often called, uses the traditional system to conserve Naimina Enkiyio – Forest of the Lost Child. Naimina Enkiyio is one of the few intact indigenous African forests protected by a community without using guns.



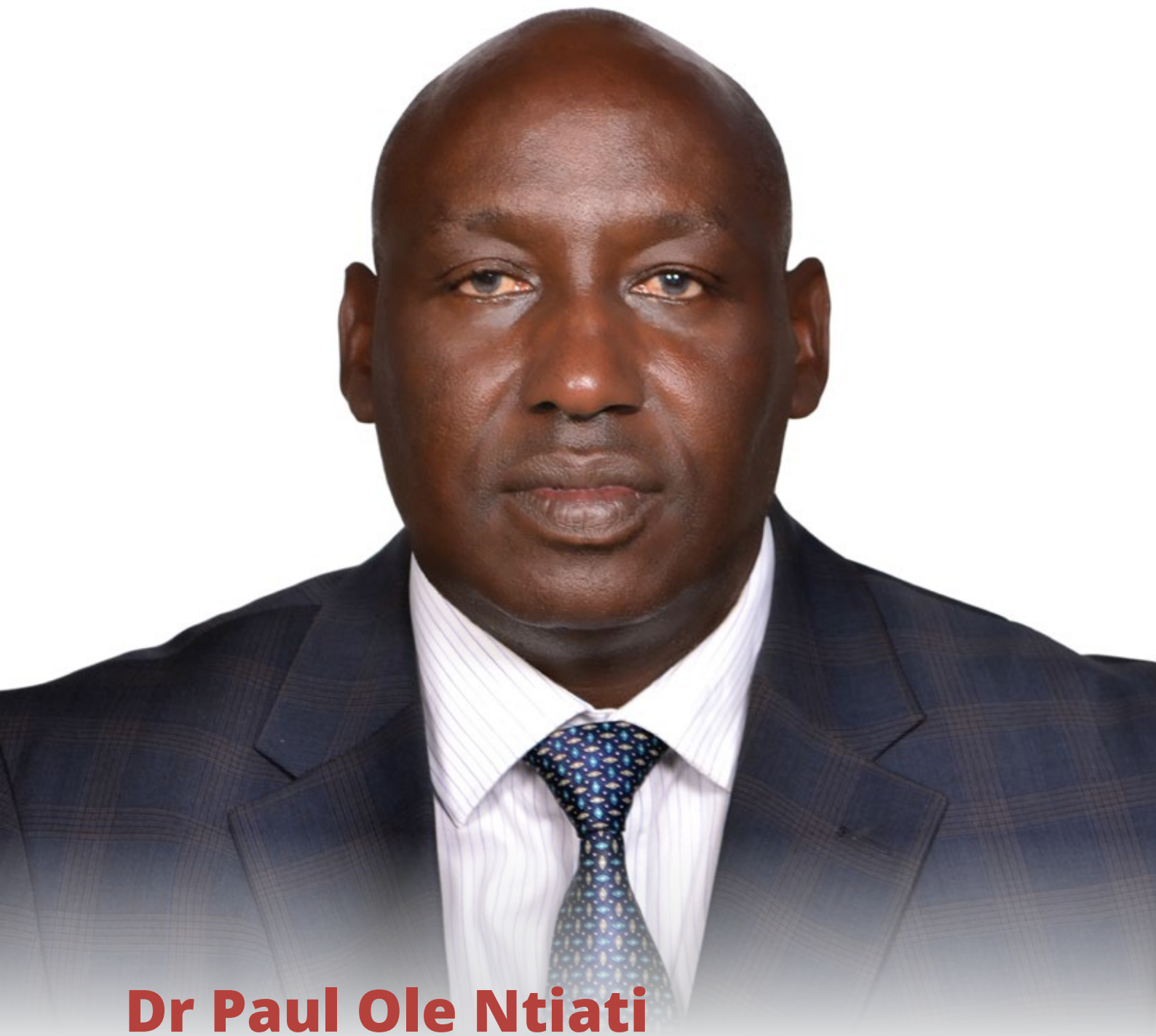
Judy Kepher-Gona

Judy Kepher-Gona, a thought leader in sustainable tourism, played a critical role in establishing Mara Naboisho Conservancy. She facilitated research through Ecological Brainstorming while at Basecamp Explorer, playing a vital role in the evolution of conservancies to the current model. Judy also facilitated the registration of the Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservancies through the Kenya Land Conservation Trust.



Kasaine Ole Koisikirr

Joseph Ole Koisikirr is famed for his unwavering commitment to conserving wildlife despite great challenges and adversity. One of the pioneer rangers, Ole Koisikirr, led a solitary life for 36 months at Koiyaki-Lemek, doing patrols on foot or atop his Black Mamba Bicycle to guard the gains made through the Koiyaki-Lemek Trust. Through his personal initiative, Kenya Wildlife Service officers were able to foil and forestall wildlife crimes. Ole Koisikirr served in the wildlife security field until his retirement.



Dr Paul Ole Ntiati

Dr. Paul Ole Ntiati played a crucial role in helping conservancies to professionalise their management. He played a key role in training opinion leaders and mobilising them to consolidate their independent community-based organisations formed after the collapse of the Koyiaki-Lemek Trust, leading to the successful establishment of Mara North Conservancy.



Jonathan and Angela Scott

Jonathan and Angela Scott have invested their talents in telling the Maasai Mara story most compellingly using, among others, photographs, books, fine art and their highly acclaimed programme, the Big Cat Diary and, most recently, Animal Planet's Big Cat Tales. Jonathan and Angela engage in their trade with the utmost integrity and have invested in developing standards for photographers to ensure observance of ethics and respect for nature. They established a non-profit, Sacred Nature Initiative, whose ethos is to inspire, educate and conserve by helping reconnect people to nature. In 2023, they partnered with the County Government of Narok to create the Safari Etiquette - a code of behaviour that helps to ensure the best safari guiding protocols and visitor experience on safari in the Greater Mara. Jonathan and Angela have earned their place as undisputed spokespersons for the One Mara Brand!



Ole Sopia Loorgiso

A musical genius and a great literary mind, Ole Sopia Loorgiso has deployed traditional folklore to promote conservation. Employing art, he has kept generations engaged, his masterpieces presenting a glimpse of the glorious Mara and its phenomenal inhabitants. Using personification and vivid description, he has allowed his audience to experience wildlife and various natural phenomena.





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