

## CEPF Final Project Completion Report

<b>Organization Legal Name:</b>	Forest of Hope Association
<b>Project Title:</b>	Strengthening the Conservation of the Gishwati Forest Reserve
<b>Grant Number:</b>	64733
<b>CEPF Region:</b>	Eastern Afromontane
<b>Strategic Direction:</b>	2 Improve the protection and management of the KBA network throughout the hotspot.
<b>Grant Amount:</b>	\$79,937.00
<b>Project Dates:</b>	July 01, 2014 - September 30, 2017
<b>Date of Report:</b>	December 01, 2017

### Implementation Partners

List each partner and explain how they were involved in the project

#### 1. Government institutions

- Ministry of Natural resources (MINIRENA)
- Rwanda Natural Resources Authority (RNRA)
- Rwanda Development Board (RDB),
- Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA),
- Army and Police
- local government institutions including Rutsiro District; Sectors and Cells

All these institutions participated in the development of the management plan and were represented in the technical planning team to guide the management plan elaboration process. Government officials helped to train community committees on different laws and reporting crimes and the ecological function of Gishwati. Local government officials played an important role in the forest protection and law enforcement.

2. Two NGOs: International gorilla conservation program (IGCP) and Wildlife conservation society (WCS) and were involved in the technical planning team to guide the management elaboration process.

3. Local communities were involved in this project activities. Community committees and agents were elected from and by local people. They have been involved in taking decisions on offenders to be reported to law enforcement officials for punishments.

### Conservation Impacts

Summarize the overall impact of your project, describing how your project has contributed to the implementation of the CEPF ecosystem profile

**The first impact is that The Gishwati Forest Reserve is declared as the northern part of the Gishwati-Mukura national park and 1484 hectares are under sustainable management of local community and covered by a management plan.**

**The second impact is that currently 1484 hectares of Gishwati forest ( part of the Gishwati-Mukura national park) are regularly patrolled by Community Forest Protection Initiative agents and Committees**

**The third impact is the improved knowledge about biological and ecological functions of the forest, and communicable diseases between people and primates among local communities.**

Planned Long-term Impacts - 3+ years (as stated in the approved proposal)

Impact Description	Impact Summary
The Gishwati Forest Reserve will be declared a national park of 1484 hectares under sustainable management of local community and Rwanda Development Board.	The Gishwati Forest Reserve is declared as the northern part of the Gishwati-Mukura National Park and 1484 hectares are under sustainable management of local community, FHA and Rwanda Development Board .


Planned Short-term Impacts - 1 to 3 years (as stated in the approved proposal)

Impact Description	Impact Summary
1484 hectares of the forest is covered by a management plan - 6 Community Forest Protection Initiative Committees, each composed of three people, active supporting the work of six respective Community Forest Protection Initiative Agents,	1484 hectares of the forest are nowadays covered by a three years interim management plan developed by FHA through this project, 6 established Community Forest Protection Initiative Committees, each composed of three people, are currently active supporting the work of six respective Community Agents, who together function as community and forest guardians. Illegal activities were reduced by 48% during this project implementation period.

Describe the success or challenges of the project toward achieving its short-term and long-term impact objectives

**This project has been successful and all the impacts were achieved.**

- **Gishwati Forest Reserve is declared as part of the Gishwati-Mukura national park**
- **1484 hectares of the forest are nowadays covered by a management plan**
- **6 Community Forest Protection Initiative Committees, each composed of three people, are active supporting the work of six respective Community Forest Protection Initiative Agents, who together function as community and forest guardians**
- **The knowledge of 18 representatives in six communities on environmental, mining, forestry and wildlife laws is improved**
- **The entire Gishwati Forest (a part of Gishwati Mukura national park of 1484 hectares ) is regularly patrolled by a force of 6 Community Agents.**



Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

**No unexpected impacts occurred.**

## Project Components and Products/Deliverables

Describe the results from each product/deliverable:

Component		Deliverable		
#	Description	#	Description	Results for Deliverable
1	Five year management plan	1.1	Outline of management plan defined in quarter 3	The outline of the management plan was defined in the consultation meeting with Ministry of natural resources, Rwanda Natural Resources Authority /Forestry department, RDB, REMA and Rutsiro district held in Kigali in September 2014. During this meeting, participants also agreed on the component of terms of references for the consultancy to develop the management plan including: its objectives, the scope of work, deliverable methodology, and requirements of consultant and final mode of application. The meeting participants also suggested the establishment of a multi-disciplinary Technical Planning Team (TPT) to guide the planning process and ensure that the interests, perspectives and concerns of key stakeholders are properly addressed and articulated. The consultant was selected and discussed the proposed management plan outline with the TPT. The team agreed with the consultant to elaborate MP that will include six management program including: Ecological management, Conservation partnership, Tourism development and management, Park development, Operation program and sustainable land management around Gishwati Forest Reserve.
1	Five year management plan	1.2	The draft management plan is produced in quarter 4	The consultant was facilitated to conduct different consultations with people working in all sectors including conservation, research and tourism infrastructure. FHA also helped the consultant in gathering qualitative and quantitative data about ecosystem and resources of Gishwati Forest. Two drafts were produced and discussed by established Technical Planning Team who provided technical inputs and guided the consultant to address all the perspectives from their respective institutions. As it was planned the final draft of the management plan was shared with all stakeholders in June 2015 (quarter 4) for their last inputs before the validation workshop held in the first two weeks of the quarter 5.
1	Five year management plan	1.3	The final copy of the draft management plan shared	The final copy of the management plan was submitted to the Rwanda Natural Resources Authority for signature, shared with partner and all stakeholders and posted on the FHA website in quarter 5.

			with stakeholders, posted on the FHA website, and presented to RNRA/FNC or RDB for signature in quarter 5	
2	Community Forest Protection Initiative Committees	2.1	7 sensitization meetings in community-based conservation and ownership in quarter 2, with provision to CEPF of details on sensitization materials and participants	In May and June 2015, FHA also arranged a series of meetings which allowed people to vote their representatives in six cells: Nyagahinika, Rukaragata, Mubuga and Rundoyi, Rurara and Gihira. In each cell, three persons were elected freely by their peers. The election was transparent with respect to all social and economic layers of the community including: men and women, men, youth, elders, revenue and historically marginalized people (Batwa). We realized that the Bugarura cells is mainly made by farms mostly owned by people from Gihira cell. We decided that the established Committee in Gihira cell will also represent Bugarura cell. 6 Community Forest Protection Initiative Committees, each composed of three people from each cell around Gishwati were established in June 2015. Since then, they are actively supporting the work of six respective Community Forest Protection Initiative Agents. As results of these committees work, the occurrence of illegal use of forest have declined compare to the previous months.
2	Community Forest Protection Initiative Committees	2.2	7 Community Forest Protection Initiative Committees are established in quarter 4.	In May and June 2015, FHA also arranged a series of meetings which allowed people to vote their representatives in six cells: Nyagahinika, Rukaragata, Mubuga and Rundoyi, Rurara and Gihira. In each cell, three persons were elected freely by their peers. The election was transparent with respect to all social and economic layers of the community including: men and women, men, youth, elders, revenue and historically marginalized people (Batwa). We realised that the Bugarura cells is mainly made by farms mostly owned by people from Gihira cell. We decided that the established Committee in Gihira cell will also represent Bugarura cell. 6 Community Forest Protection Initiative Committees, each composed of three people from each cell around Gishwati were established. Since then, they are actively supporting the work of six respective Community Forest Protection Initiative Agents. As results of these committees work, the occurrence of illegal use of forest

				have declined compare to the previous months. This was mainly due to collaboration of local people, committees, and eco-guards. For example, when the fire caused by honey harvester started inside the forest, the committee provided information on time.
2	Community Forest Protection Initiative Committees	2.3	Community Forest Protection Initiative Committees are trained in environmental , mining, forestry and wildlife laws, and related punitive sanctions in quarter 5, with provision to CEPF of details on training materials and participants.	The 6 Community Forest Protection Initiative Committees have been trained for three days on different laws. A training guide was designed and the trainees received a printed booklet of relevant articles in all laws. The trainer from RDB trained them on wildlife law, the Environmental Specialist of MINIRENA trained them on the environmental law, and the trainer from RNRA trained them on mining and forestry laws, and the police trained them about related punitive sanctions. The training was successful and has been an opportunity to the Committees to discuss with trainers possible solutions for offence happening in Gishwati, considering what the law provide. FHA has also provided phones, phone airtime and rain gears, to facilitate them to share information about suspected people using the forest resources illegally to be reached and educated and to participate in joint patrols as well as to help in cases of emergency.
2	Community Forest Protection Initiative Committees	2.4	Committees are trained in reporting crimes in quarter 7, with provision to CEPF of details on training materials and participants.	The training on supervising the work of Community Forest Protection Initiative Agents and reporting crimes was organized in March 2016. The main objective of this training was to strengthen community support to reduce human pressures on Gishwati and to ensure that the laws are enforced for identified crimes. To ensure that the community committees understand their role in reporting crimes, the trainer from RDB explained how collaboration in information sharing, reporting crimes and law enforcement facilitated the volcanoes national park to reduce offence. As results of this discussion, the community committees were asked to list offenders and share all related information with cell leaders, continue asking offender to sign statements that can be used as evidence in case of law enforcement, reporting crimes on time, and working closely with law enforcement officials. Joint forest patrols and forest visits were mentioned among the best ways of supervising the forest protection activities. This training has also been an opportunity to know all needed information when reporting crimes. Cell Leaders were also involved in the training to discuss and agree on the modalities of the work of community

				committees.
2	Community Forest Protection Initiative Committees	2.5	Committees report crimes to local authorities in quarter 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12	The FHA Coordinator and cells' officials receive report from community committees on monthly basis to FHA. These reports include cases of illegal use of forest resources with a list of observed and reported offenders; a list suspected offenders to be visited and educated. Many offenders were reported to law enforcement officials and a big number of suspected offenders was visited and educated as results of committees' report.
2	Community Forest Protection Initiative Committees	2.6	Committees get trained in Gishwati Forest Reserve biological and ecological functions and communicable diseases between people and primates in quarter 9	The training about the Gishwati Forest biological and ecological functions and communicable diseases between people and primates was organized in September 2016. The training was given by Mr. Marshal BANAMWANA, the environmental protection specialist of Ministry of natural resources. The training was mainly using historical evidence and tangible facts including the experience that some of these committees members lived when the forest was cut down and the current one with the forest restoration to make them understand the biological and ecological functions of the forest. They have been able to understand the importance of natural forests in providing habitats for animals, water provision, preventing soil erosion and climate change mitigation. Using some examples like cattle grazing and firewood collection, the trainers also explained human wildlife interaction is increasing day to day and how all this can be a source of diseases that can causes loss of life. Committees members were shown the impact of communicable diseases and all guidelines to follow when it happen to people that interact with animals. Committees appreciated this training by showing the commitment of sharing the gained information in their villages.
2	Community Forest Protection Initiative Committees	2.8	Awareness campaigns are organized in each Cell (each Committee will raise awareness in its respective Cell) in quarter 11 with provision to CEPF of details on awareness	In quarter 11, community committees organized awareness campaigns about Gishwati functions and communicable diseases between people and primates in each cell surrounding Gishwati. This was done twice a week for a period of three months. The message that was being shared includes the importance of Gishwati biodiversity to local development, the role of the forest in climate change mitigation and adaptation, communicable diseases between Human and primates and best practices to strengthen the conservation of Gishwati forest; a booklet and brochures with detailed information. Community committees started raising awareness targeting places where a big number of local population

			materials.	meet. They were posting different posters in commercial centers, big markets and schools just after sharing the initiative messages. They also used different village meetings to share the message and distribute booklets and brochures. They also visited households and educated house to house in order to reach as many people as possible. Thanks to Gishwati community committees and CEPF, local awareness on Gishwati forest conservation is raised. The evaluation done shows that 82.9 % of local people were giving enthusiastic responses about the forest functions, communicable diseases and the best practices.
2	Community Forest Protection Initiative Committees	2.9	In quarter 12, the work of Committees in both reporting crimes and raising awareness is evaluated and a formal report on activities of the Committees is compiled.	In quarter 12, FHA hired a graduate from the University of Rwanda for the internship to evaluate the work of the community Committees. 180 households randomly selected in six cells around Gishwati answered twenty questions grouped into three evaluation categories: (1) the work of the community Committees in general, (2) awareness about the ecological and biological function; (3) awareness about communicable diseases and best practices. Based on results of this evaluation, all the interviewees confirmed that the work of community committees has had a significant impact on the Gishwati Forest conservation. 73.8% of interviewed people said that they regularly receive updates on the illegal use of the forest resources in meetings and discuss possible solution. Based on responses recorded, about 95.9% of the interviewees have been reached by this conservation message. Considering the project target, the level of awareness was 82.9% (n=180). This level of awareness demonstrates local communities' commitment to participate in this forest management which will continue influencing the positive change in attitude toward the future conservation of Gishwati Natural forest. FHA will continue doing all possible to sustain the Community Forest Protection Initiative Committees achievements.
3	Forest Protection	3.1	Regular forest patrols are organized by the Agents during all project quarters (from Monday through Sunday).	For the whole life of this project, The community agents have been patrolling the forest in teams of 2 and on Friday, do joint patrol to share weekly illegal activities encountered and elaborate a weekly. The most encountered cases are related to firewood collection, mining activities and cattle grazing. We have documented 165 cases of mining and 64 miners were reported to the police. An average of 45 farmers were found each year grazing their cattle inside the forest. 25 farmers were reported to the cell leaders to



				<p>pay a fine considering that they repeated this offence more than three times. Other offender including 137 people found collecting firewood, 20 people found collecting grasses for their cows, and 37 people found cutting trees for stick and beanpole were educated. In general, illegal activities were decreasing as result of regular patrols. The records from the agents report shown that from June 2014 up to September 2017, the occurrence of all illegal activities within the forest have been reduced to 48%. The strengthened collaboration between FHA and law enforcement officials (Local Leaders and Police) helped to reduce the number of crimes. The graph on the occurrence of illegal activities from 2014 to 2017 is attached to this report.</p>
3	Forest Protection	3.2	The agents and the Committees organize joint forest patrols every quarter.	<p>To identify areas with severe illegal activities and to discuss possible solutions, all members of committees had been meeting community agents once a month. Different joint patrols focusing on the area that was affected by illegal activities were organized. This led to an important decline of mining activities in the first months of 2017. These Joint activities also helped the community committees to understand the impact of illegal activities on the forest. Community committees had been elaborating quarterly working plans, where they have planned to participate in joint patrols, visiting the forest boundaries to record all information from their direct observation in their notebooks, produce a list of suspected offenders every month. They have also been very helpful in reporting all identified crimes, sharing relevant information and evidence to punish offenders. Considering all reports from both community agents and committees it is clear that there are some signs showing that the work of committees started to change the behavior and attitudes of local people toward the conservation of Gishwati. Also, this collaboration allowed agent to concentrate their effort where illegal activities were still intense and leads to a decline in the occurrence of illegal activities.</p>
3	Forest Protection	3.3	Agents organize monthly visits to households with offenders who have been found or reported by	<p>Every Thursday afternoon community Agents visit households of suspected offenders to educate them about importance of the forest and advise them to reduce pressure on the park biodiversity. 10 households with suspected offenders' area visited each moth to educate them. These visits have been a tools to continue strengthening the collaboration and joint practices of conservation with the communities.</p>

			the Committees to illegally use the forest resources more than 4 times.	
3	Forest Protection	3.4	Agents and Committees organize monthly meetings with the Community to update them about the illegal use of the forest resources.	Agent and committees organized several meetings after public work of every last Saturday of month, and they talk about the conservation of Gishwati and the status of illegal activities considering where the help of community is highly needed. This brought positive effect on reducing illegal activities. A good example is when the mining was very intense in January 2016 and as a results of these talk in the two cells, we have recorded only one case of mining from February up to May 2016. There is no doubt that the real success for this new park conservation will be relying on the strength of partnership with local communities.
4	A plan for transfer of the Agents, knowledge and skills to Rwanda Development Board once Gishwati National Park starts.	4.1	A one day workshop is organized to discuss the plan for the transfer of the Agents, knowledge and skills to Rwanda Development Board once Gishwati National Park starts.	This deliverable was eliminated form this grant
5	Application of CEPF safeguards	5.1	Prepare, implement, and monitor safeguard on involuntary restriction on access to resources	FHA has involved with all stakeholders including local people, leaders and government institutions in this project. Community committees and agent were elected from and by local people. They have been involved in taking decisions on offenders to be reported to law enforcement officials for punishments. Local officials and government institutions participated in the development of the management plan and their decisions was considered during the project implementation. Government officials from, RNRA, RDB, REMA and Police helped to train community committees on different laws

				<p>and related punitive sanctions.</p> <p>FHA continued linking the association of marginalized people (Cultural Dance Club) and women handcraft making cooperative to the tourist market to make sure that they make enough income and help in reducing their pressure on park resources. FHA also continue creating opportunities for traditional healers to make sure that they get alternative source of medicine helping them to get seedlings of medicinal plants and planting them in their own plots. The contact of FHA and CEPF was shared with all stakeholdes and were advised to raise any negative unexpected change as a results of this project. Until now, we have not received any grievance from both stakeholders and partners.</p>
6	The capacity of Forest of Hope Association monitored	6.1	The Civil society Tracking tool document (CSTT) is completed	The CSTT was completed and shared with CEPF
6	The capacity of Forest of Hope Association monitored	6.2	Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) is completed in collaboration with different stakeholders	The METT was completed and shared with CEPF
2	Community Forest Protection Initiative Committees	2.7	In quarter 10, educational materials (posters and brochures) are produced and Committees are trained in using them to increase awareness on Gishwati biological and ecological functions and communicable diseases	<p>The training in using education materials was organized with the aim of showing the community committee members the best techniques they will use to communicate the message to the local community efficiently.</p> <p>During the training the FHA coordinator has shown committees the essential elements that FHA need to emphasize during the awareness campaigns. To ensure that these materials increase awareness on Gishwati biological and ecological functions and communicable diseases between people and primates among the local community, best ways of distributing all these materials were agreed on. Community meetings, households visits and education on house to house basis was put among strategies to reach out a big number of local residents.</p> <p>FHA developed and printed 4 different posters including</p>

			between people and primates among the local	36 posters about the importance of Gishwati animals to local development; 36 posters about communicable diseases between Human and primates; 36 Posters about the role of the forest in climate change mitigation and adaptation; and 36 posters on best practices to strengthen the conservation of Gishwati forest, 200 booklets and 600 brochures. Posters was posted in places that bring people together such as markets and commercial centre in order to reach as many people as possible in the community.
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Please describe and submit any tools, products, or methodologies that resulted from this project or contributed to the results.

## Lessons Learned

Describe any lessons learned during the design and implementation of the project, as well as any related to organizational development and capacity building.

Consider lessons that would inform:

- Project Design Process (*aspects of the project design that contributed to its success/shortcomings*)
- Project Implementation (*aspects of the project execution that contributed to its success/shortcomings*)
- Describe any other lessons learned relevant to the conservation community

**Guiding local community to manage their natural resources by themselves is a strong factor for success in conservation.**


**The role that the Community Forest Protection Initiative Committees have been playing in the Gishwati Forest Protection has emphasized the invaluable place that must be taken by local people in the conservation of protected areas**

**This project success shown us that involving heterogeneous stakeholders in planning and implementation help to achieve the real impact needed**

## Sustainability / Replication

Summarize the success or challenges in ensuring the project will be sustained or replicated, including any unplanned activities that are likely to result in increased sustainability or replicability.

**In previous years, FHA was mainly relying on small grants and our impressive achievements confirm that no matter how much money is invested; guiding local community to manage their natural resources by themselves has been a strong factor to our success. Our approach will be to continue**



employing local people, supporting local community to protect the forest by themselves, community education and outreach, solving human-wildlife conflicts using conservation agreements and improving local livelihoods through community tourism development. FHA will continue applying for different grant to ensure that the project is sustained and that the community based- conservation approach is replicated

## **Safeguards**

If not listed as a separate Project Component and described above, summarize the implementation of any required action related to social, environmental, or pest management safeguards

FHA has involved with all stakeholders including local people, leaders and government institutions in this project. To protect the forest, local people through the community forest protection initiative and represented agents and committees were involved in the management of this new park. Community committees and agents were elected from and by local people. They have been involved in taking decisions on offenders to be reported to law enforcement officials for punishments.

Local officials and government institutions including Rwanda Natural Resources Authority/ department of Forestry and Nature Conservation (RNRA/FNC), Rwanda Development Board (RDB), Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA), ARMY, National Police, Rutsiro District; Sectors and Cells participated in the development of the management plan and their decisions were considered during the project implementation. Government officials from RNRA, RDB, REMA and Police helped to train community committees on different laws and related punitive sanctions. Confidently, knowledge gained from training reached local people because community committees were elected from them.

The FHA missions to continue engaging local people in protection of Gishwati forest. The success we are having is mainly due to the involvement of heterogeneous stakeholders and local community in our everyday activities. Local communities and all stakeholders were informed about the project objectives and their right to report FHA. In every talks after community work and meetings FHA were requesting them to contribute to this project success. Key achievements of this project were shared with partners during meeting with environment sector actors.

FHA continued linking the association of marginalized people (Cultural Dance Club) and women handcraft making cooperative to the tourist market to make sure that they make enough income and help in reducing park resources. FHA also continue creating opportunity for traditional healers to make sure that they get alternative source of medicine helping them to get seedlings of medicinal plants and planting them in their own plots.

The contact of FHA and CEPF was shared with them and were advised to raise any claim and negative unexpected change as a results of this project. Until now, we have not received any grievance from both stakeholders and partners.

## **Additional Comments/Recommendations**

Use this space to provide any further comments or recommendations in relation to your project or CEPF



We thank very much CEPF for supporting this project and We hope to continue working with CEPF to strengthen local community participation in forest protection and in other projects.

## Additional Funding

Provide details of any additional funding that supported this project and any funding secured for the project, organization, or the region, as a result of CEPF investment

**Total additional funding (US\$)**

*\$0.00*

### **Type of funding**

*Please provide a breakdown of additional funding (counterpart funding and in-kind) by source, categorizing each contribution into one of the following categories:*

- A Project Co-Financing (other donors or your organization contribute to the direct costs of this project)*
- B Grantee and Partner Leveraging (other donors contribute to your organization or a partner organization as a direct result of successes with this CEPF funded project)*
- C Regional/Portfolio Leveraging (other donors make large investments in a region because of CEPF investment or successes related to this project)*

## Information Sharing and CEPF Policy

CEPF is committed to transparent operations and to helping civil society groups share experiences, lessons learned, and results. Final project completion reports are made available on our Web site, [www.cepf.net](http://www.cepf.net), and publicized in our newsletter and other communications.

1. Please include your full contact details (Name, Organization, Mailing address, Telephone number, E-mail address) below

**Thierry Aimable INZIRAYINEZA; Coordinator, Forest of Hope Association; P.O.Box 538 Gisenyi, Rwanda; Phone: +250783491512; E-mail: fharwanda2012@gmail.com**