



Mafinga Hills

Forest restoration for nature, water and people

Annual Progress Report 2022



Summary

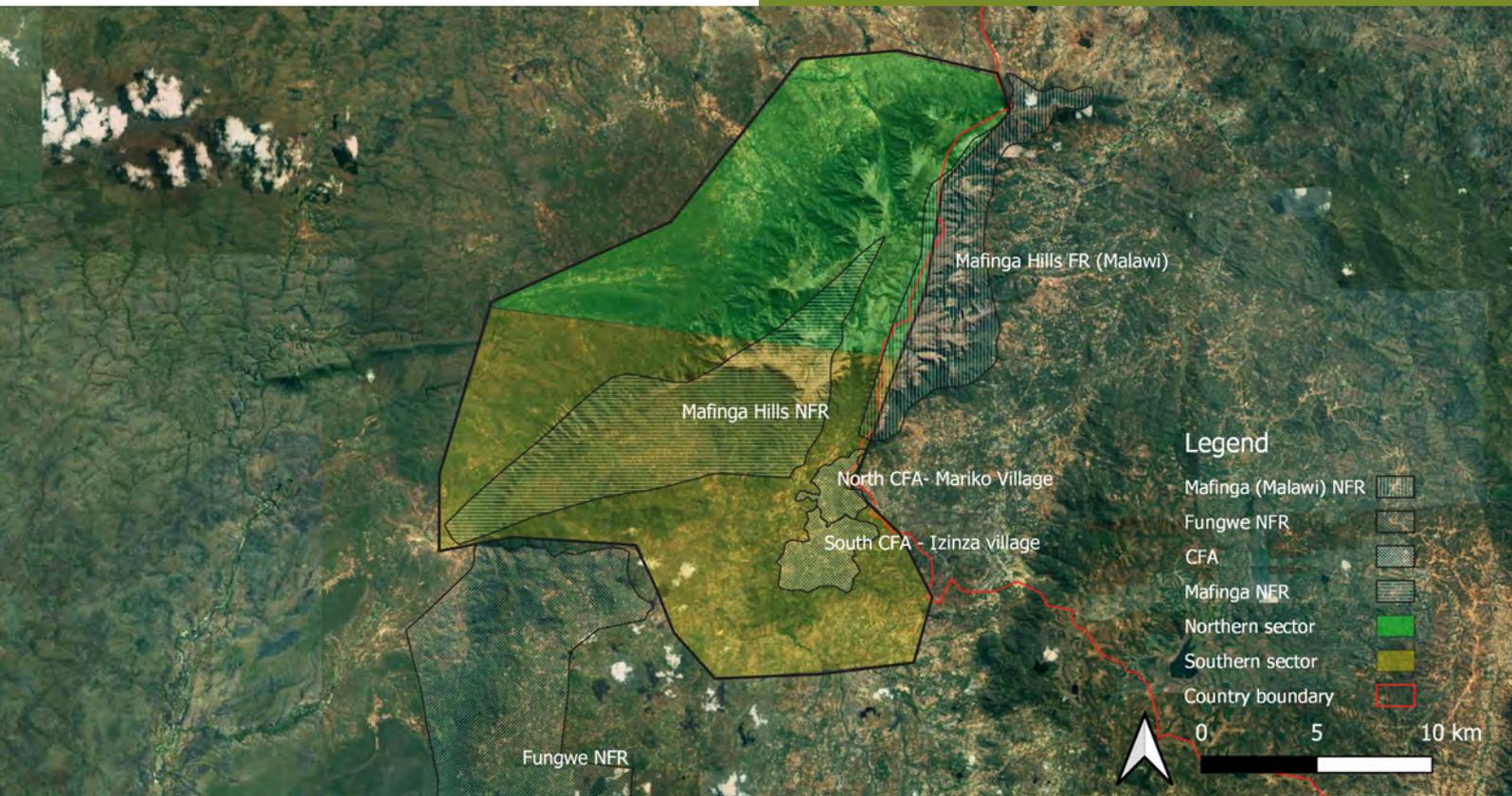
Our long term goal is to bring 1450 hectares of Community Forest Area (CFA) under sustainable restoration and management, working in partnership with The Wildlife and Environmental Conservation Society of Zambia (WECSZ).

At an estimated density of 1080 per hectare, this equates to 1.57 million trees protected and growing.

Find out more including the overview video [here](#) and see the maps and stories [here](#).

2022 in numbers

- 4 villages participating in the project
- 50 farmers supported in sustainable agriculture
- 8 Honorary Forest Officers patrolling
- 550 beehives procured for hanging in Community Forest Areas
- 22 farmers trained in apiculture management



Key Highlights and Progress

A Community Forest Group Management agreement has been approved and signed by the Director of Forestry in Zambia and covers 1500ha. The Mwita Community Forest Management Group (CFMG) now manages two areas: the Mariko area (“Mwita A”) of 265 ha and the Izinza area (“Mwita B”) of 1235 ha.

The ceremony in which the Mwita CFMG officially became the guardians of the forest was held on September 2nd 2022. The event was held in the Izinza area of Mafinga district, where the provincial Forestry Officer (PFO) acting on behalf of the Director of Forestry thanked WECSZ and WeForest for their support to the community in establishing their forest areas.

The Community Forest Ranger (CFR) system was set up. Training for the patrol teams is supported by the local Forest Department, and in 2022, eight forest rangers training from four local villages took part in training alongside rangers from our other projects in Zambia, and will enforce the rules agreed by the community for protecting the Community Forest Area. We intend to apply for them as Honorary Forest Officers (HFOs) in 2023 in accordance with the Community Forest Regulations of 2018 that provide for the establishment of HFOs.

One more training session for the Community Forest Management Committee and Honorary Forest Officers will take place in the first quarter of 2023 on governance, accounting, sustainable forest management, bylaws and their enforcement, and conflict management.

Firebreaks are a key part of effective forest management since wildfires can degrade entire natural forests. Communities have seasonal employment to make the firebreaks: one has already been made surrounding the boundary of the community forest areas.

To fund the long term costs of successful community forest management such as ranger patrols and firebreaks, the Community Forest Management Groups need a funding source. Honey sales can provide a good source of income. 550 beehives have now been purchased for the Community Managed



forests along with harvesting equipment including bee protective equipment, smokers, swarm boxes and hive tools. A total of 22 CFMG members have been trained and certified in beekeeping and basic financial management to successfully implement beekeeping in their Community Forest Area. The geotagging of the 550 beehives in the CFA was initiated and will be completed by the end of the second quarter of 2023.

By Year 5 the hives have a potential 38% return on investment (assuming occupation rates, two harvests per year and good management: ensuring water is close near the hives, having enough flowering vegetation near hives, and disease and/or pest control).

Reducing pressure on the forests requires a sustainable intensification of farming in the buffer zone, to reduce ‘slash and burn’ agriculture that threatens the local forests. This is perhaps one of the most challenging aspects of the project since it requires behavior change in very traditional practices and communities. Altogether 20 lead farmers supported during 2022 in sustainable agriculture. Farmers cultivated three 50 × 50 metre demonstration plots for maize, beans and finger millet. 30 additional farmers were recruited for the 2022-2023 farming season, and a total of 50 farmers are now participating.

We believe a long term supporting partner is needed in the landscape to deliver a stronger and more dedicated farmer support activity and are currently evaluating how that can



take place. One potential new stakeholder in the region is the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) – who are in discussions with the government on the long term management of the Mafinga Hills Reserve. We will evaluate the scope of this programme and the opportunity to leverage its work to provide complimentary support to this project.





Key partnerships

Office of the President

The District Commissioner (DC) has been present in several community meetings to reinforce government expectations on sustainable forest management.

Forestry Department (Ministry of Green Economy and Environment)

The Forestry Department is the legally recognised government institution in charge of Community Forest Area establishment in Zambia. The CFA model and associated process is relatively new in the country. The establishment process is rigorous, with five main steps that must be adhered to. The project's support to Mwita CFMG to secure the agreement with the Forestry Department is testament that a good working relation with the department was key and effective. Mwita Community

Forest Area is the one of the three CFAs in Mafinga district under the technical support of the Forestry Department.

Chief Mwenechifungwe

As the custodian of the customary land, Chief Mwenechifungwe was key to the CFA application process, having provided written consent and approval for the community to establish the area. The Chief (above, second from left) has been very supportive and collaborative in making sure that the project delivers its outcomes. He was in attendance at the annual general meeting and made a speech to motivate his subjects on the potential benefits of the community forest project.





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Next steps

Establish sustainably managed community forests

- Facilitate Honorary Forestry Officer training and patrols
- Support CFMG implementation of the Mwitwa CFA Forest Management Plan (Mwitwa FMP)
- Continue to provide technical support to WECSZ

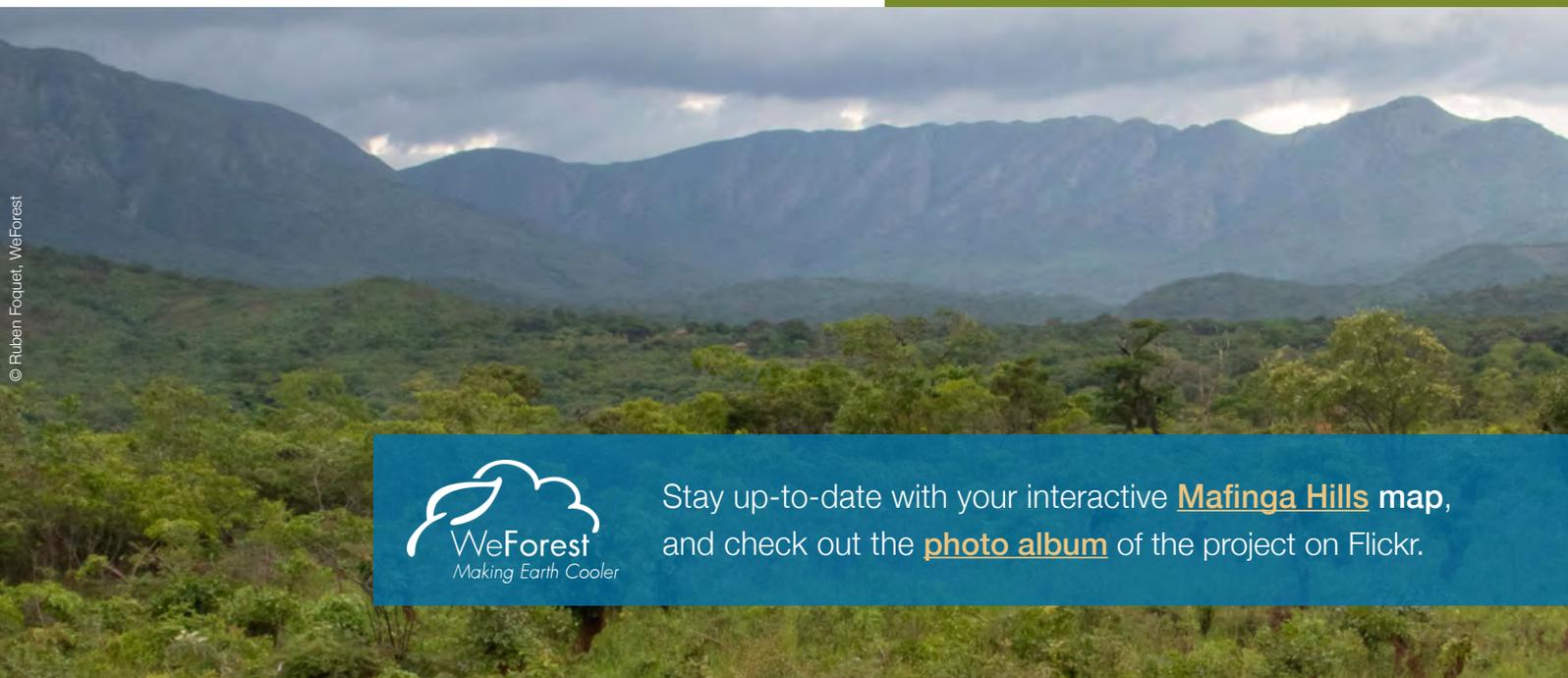
Promote and diversify sustainable agricultural techniques and forest-friendly livelihoods

- **Sustainable agriculture promotion**
 - Procurement of agriculture inputs for participating farmers
 - Establishment of a *Gliricidia* nursery for farmers
 - Monitoring and evaluation of farmer performance during and after field operations
- **Beekeeping**
 - Implementation of the beekeeping extension plan
 - Host community meetings for planning, reviewing and evaluation of the scheme's interventions

How do we know our restored forests are growing and making an impact?

Every hectare under restoration is mapped with GPS points to generate polygons (areas on a map) that are assigned to sponsors. Permanent monitoring plots are established in our sites and our forestry and science teams conduct surveys to monitor progress of biomass growth, tree density, survival rate and species diversity, among other indicators. Where social impacts are also critical, we measure socio-economic indicators such as the number of families benefiting, people trained, and income generated from forest-friendly livelihood activities.

Please visit our [What We Do](#) web page for more information.



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Stay up-to-date with your interactive [Mafinga Hills map](#), and check out the [photo album](#) of the project on Flickr.

Thank you for supporting the Mafinga Hills project!