



Seret Ethiopia

Mid-year report 2021

Empowering communities and fighting deforestation

The restoration approach in Seret uses 'exclosures' – community-owned protected areas where livestock is not allowed.

56 ha of degraded land in Seret is being restored to grow an estimated 65 000 native trees and restore the land's functions: landslide protection, clean water and a habitat for wildlife. WeForest's work now is to maintain and protect the exclosures here in close collaboration with the local community, supporting them with materials and training on natural resource management, as well as income-generating activities such as beekeeping.

2021 has been the most challenging year to date. Since war broke out in Tigray in late 2020, the communities and our team have faced considerable set-backs and have made the best possible progress in the circumstances.

Our goals for the Seret project:

Area under restoration:

56 ha

Potential carbon sequestration after 20 years:

9 688 t CO₂

Restoration techniques:

ANR with enrichment planting

13 tree species are being planted.

Native trees (*Olea europaea*, *Cordia africana*, *Acacia abyssinica*, *Croton macrystacus*, *Acacia polyacantha*).

Fuelwood and timber species (*Acacia decurrens*, *Grevillia robusta*, *Acacia etbica*, *Cupressus lusitanica*).

Fodder shrub species (*Chamaecytisus palmensis*).



What's new in Seret?

Recent highlights from the field

Now that our target of 56 ha in the enclosure between Seret and Walta is all under restoration, our focus now is managing the naturally regenerated tree species through pruning and other Farmer-Managed Natural Regeneration activities, as well as continuing some direct seed sowing with mixed native species and bee fodder. However, this year the ongoing conflict in Tigray, as well as COVID-19 and locust swarms, have had an impact on our activities.

Road closures meant that even reaching the enclosure became impossible, so seed sowing, maintenance such as pruning and the survival count have all had to be postponed. Until 2020 the survival rate of seedlings planted in 2017 and 2018 were 56% and 60% respectively, and we hope for an improved outcome from the 2019 count that's taking place at the time of writing.



Fieldwork in the Seret enclosure now involves managing the naturally regenerated tree species through pruning and other activities. Most acacia seedlings, like this one, are performing well.

January

February

March

April

May

June

Awareness raising

Development and validation of land use plan

Sharing best practises

Managing ANR trees

Silviculture

Seed sowing

Survival data collection

Poultry training and implementation of poultry livelihood programme

Maintaining soil and water conservation terraces and building water harvesting structures

Key

Restoration activities

Monitoring, etc

Livelihood activities

Soil and water conservation

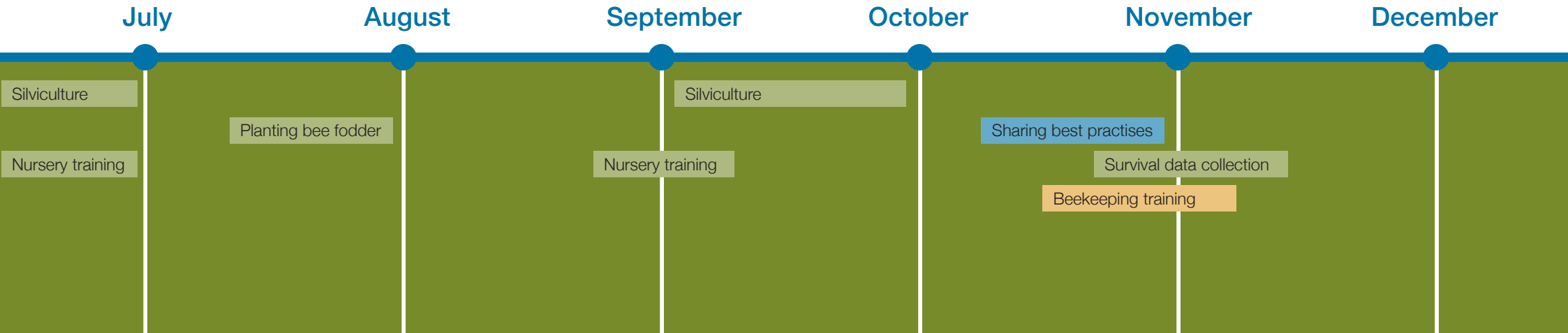


The two cooperatives that have been beekeeping since 2018 need support and follow-up until they can continue by themselves and earn a sustainable income. Between January and April the war prevented the planned visits to strengthen the cooperatives, but by June it was possible to meet and discuss the current situation and challenges. The good news is that all the co-operative members and bees are OK!

Nevertheless, the enclosure has been under the strict protection of the forest guards throughout the year – a joint collaboration of the community, WeForest and the District Office of Agriculture. The four guards were elected by the community and protect the enclosure from trespassers, livestock interference and illegal logging. The project has provided clothes, shoes, torches and raincoats to support the patrols day and night and in all seasons. The guards have also built the soil and water conservation structures that the new saplings need for a good start in life.

The 30 women-headed households (15 from Seret and 15 from Walta) who received poultry training in 2020 are still waiting to receive their 10 pullets each because of security issues and transportation restrictions. It's hoped that the chickens will arrive before the end of this year.

Though our core work here faced these unusual challenges this year, the communities were nevertheless the focus of some more immediate and short-term action that goes beyond WeForest's 'business as usual'. See the Global Giving page [here](#) for more information.





What's next?

- Direct seed sowing of *Acacia abyssinica* and *Acacia etbaica* to fill gaps, improve vegetation cover and enhance the rehabilitation process is postponed to later in 2021 or even 2022, depending on the conflict.
- Maintenance activities such as pruning and weeding of both the naturally growing and planted trees in the enclosure.
- Delivery of chickens to women-headed households in Seret and Walta.
- Training and awareness programmes about sustainable forest management are ongoing so that continuous and proper enclosure management will be carried out by the community in the future.

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 beneficiaries, people trained, and income generated from forest-friendly livelihood activities.

Please visit our [Why and How](#) webpage for more information.

Stay up-to-date with our interactive [Seret map](#), and check out the photos on [Flickr](#)!