



Protecting Elephants and Their Habitats Across the Greater Mara Ecosystem

2021 Mara Elephant Project Kumi Anniversary

Mara Elephant Project (MEP) was established in 2011 by Suzie Fehsenfeld and her family with the mission of protecting elephants and their habitats across the Greater Mara Ecosystem (GME). The GME, an extension of the vast Serengeti ecosystem, is Kenya’s most important wildlife area and tourism asset. The Mara-Serengeti ecosystem is one of the last major wildlife refuges on Earth. Most famous for its annual migration of nearly two million wildebeest and zebra, the ecosystem is also home to an estimated 40% of Africa’s large mammals. Historically, people and wildlife peacefully co-existed when space for both did not overlap; however, as the human population has grown, so has livestock and farming, pushing wild animals into smaller spaces. Elephants are a keystone species to this ecosystem and when poaching emerged as the number one threat in 2012 (96 elephants that year alone were killed for their ivory) MEP took action to successfully combat this global threat. Today, the drastic expansion of the human footprint in the region is causing devastating loss of habitat, which means MEP must expand its mission and goals to save the Mara’s wildlife and wild spaces.

MEP’s vision is to see the existence of a stable elephant population co-existing peacefully with people across the GME. For over a decade at MEP, the Fehsenfeld family has been working together with MEP’s CEO Marc Goss, Kenyan stakeholders and a large team of local Maasai to build a better future for their families, Africa and the world. Together with MEP’s Director of Research & Conservation Dr. Jake Wall, who joined in 2019, we have worked to expand MEP’s capability through new renowned scientific programming. MEP is a remarkable force of talented, dedicated and determined men and women working together 24/7 to save elephants, a keystone species, the GME, Kenyan wildlife and wild spaces for generations to come.

While MEP was originally focused on combating elephant poaching, we always looked ahead knowing that human-elephant conflict and habitat loss would be the long-term threat to elephants. Our approach of **monitor**, **evaluate** and **protect** has worked when used in collaboration with partners to protect wildlife, communities and habitat in the Maasai Mara.

| Monitor | Evaluate | Protect |
|---|--|--|
| <p>MEP uses cutting edge tools to monitor elephants, rangers and asset movements in real time for threats to wildlife, communities and habitat. These tools include the helicopter, elephant collars and MEP’s own instance of EarthRanger.</p> | <p>MEP evaluates data to provide greater protection in our areas of operation. Data evaluation improves our program’s effectiveness and establishes a strong working relationship with key partners that inspires and advances conservation.</p> | <p>MEP employs Maasai rangers in patrol units working tirelessly in unprotected areas of the Mara. Our rangers lead the anti-poaching operations and stop conflict to increase security for wildlife, communities and habitat in the Mara.</p> |

Our 10 years of experience using the MEP Method of boots on the ground rangers and applied research all while taking a collaborative approach has disrupted poaching in the region and combatted conflict and habitat loss. To mark this milestone, we need your generous support to help us strengthen our efforts and expand our mission. MEP is a proven success, and we are committed to serving and saving wildlife and wild spaces with donors like **YOU**.

Between 2011 and 2018 MEP:

- Arrested 354 total ivory or bushmeat poachers
- Seized 1,494 kg (3,294 lbs.) of elephant ivory
- Reduced the number of elephants poached from 96 to 4
- Mitigated 479 conflict incidents
- Collared over 50 elephants
- Employed over 65 Maasai men and women to protect the Mara
- Launched a permanent ranger unit to protect the forest to keep the Mara River flowing
- Launched the only helicopter dedicated to wildlife flying in the GME
- Collected over 1 million data points from collared elephant movements

In the last two years MEP:

- Celebrated **zero** poached elephants in the GME
- Deployed three new ranger units in critical areas of the GME
- Employed over 30 additional Maasai men and women
- Collared an additional 18 elephants
- Launched the MEP Research Department to find long-term solutions to the greatest issues facing the Mara
- Removed 691 bushmeat snares
- Confiscated 461 kg of bushmeat
- Arrested 65 total ivory or bushmeat poachers
- Seized 480.5 kg (1,059 lbs.) of elephant ivory
- Mitigated 291 conflict incidents (that's almost three a week)
- Reduced the number of elephants killed as a result of conflict to 6
- Paid for 49 staff members to send two kids each to school yearly
- Established our own database called EarthRanger to visualize all of our assets in real time
- Tracked habitat loss in three key forest areas of the GME: Nyakweri, Mau and Loita
- Arrested 256 illegal logging or charcoal production suspects (that's more than two a week)
- Destroyed 455 kilns and 782 bags of charcoal
- Confiscated 44,639 illegal posts, timber and trees (that's over 60 a day)

In 2021, MEP is celebrating 10 years of operation; our “kumi” or “10” in Kiswahili anniversary. To celebrate this milestone and support us as we strengthen and expand our efforts. **Please help us:**

Monitor & Protect Elephant Families Over the Next 10 Years

Monitor & Protect 10 Collared Elephants

Protect More Elephants by Employing 10 Total Ranger Teams

Monitor & Protect Elephant Families Over the Next 10 Years

Monitoring the overall population of all elephants in the GME with a long-term monitoring (LTM) team is a key element to ensuring MEP better understands how elephants use the limited space they have and if it changes with seasons or other human made factors. The future generation of elephants are key to ensuring a stable and healthy elephant population can thrive in the Mara and understanding herds of elephants, usually that are family, and tracking these families over time gives MEP more insight into this beyond what's available from GPS tracking of collared elephants alone. Studying one individual elephant and their herd over time can provide critical insight into population structure and help us establish the total elephant population living in the GME, sex ratios, which matters for breeding, and their age structure. Getting an up close and personal look at a herd's social behavior is vital as it can act as an early warning sign for increased levels of poaching or conflict. We can track information like new babies born into the herds and help increase their survival rate by getting a better picture of how to keep elephants safe. MEP's applied research creates solutions for conserving the Greater Mara Ecosystem for generations to come.

That's why to celebrate our Kumi Anniversary MEP is asking you to support our long-term monitoring team as it is launched in 2021. This pilot program will closely watch over elephant families over the next 10 years. The new team consists of four Maasai men and women recruited by Dr. Jake Wall and living on MEP's campus in the Mara. This team has a designated vehicle for tracking and professional photography equipment for capturing detailed images of individual elephants.

- 🐘 Employ four Maasai men & women for one year on the MEP LTM team for **\$16,000**.
- 🐘 Support the entire MEP LTM team's efforts for one year at **\$100,000** and help protect an elephant family over the next decade.
- 🐘 Protect and monitor an elephant family for one month for **\$3,000**.

Monitor & Protect 10 Collared Elephants

In 2016, with the elephant poaching crisis well managed by MEP's boots on the ground rangers and intelligence unit, conflict emerged as the number one threat to both wildlife and communities in the Mara. As space diminishes, tensions are rising between communities and wildlife, especially elephants who can wipe out an entire fence or field of crops overnight leaving a family with nothing to eat or sell for the entire year. MEP's well-trained rapid response ranger units consisting of Maasai men and women recruited directly from the local communities they protect will immediately react to conflict to protect neighbors from the threat of crop raiding elephants. It's not only MEP's efforts on the ground, but our daily monitoring of collared elephants that helps our rangers react in a moment's notice to a conflict situation. MEP has collared over 50 elephants in the last decade, which enables us to not only monitor their movements in real-time and react to protect them, but also help determine the extent of their range. MEP's collared elephants provide unique insight on elephant movements over a large area from Southern Baringo, Mau, Nairobi, Mosiro and Loita. This approach has been effective in the short term at decreasing the elephant conflict related death rate despite the rising number of conflict incidents; however, this is not sustainable for the future.

Why? Well, controlling conflict is difficult as elephants are very smart and use different tactics to raid crops while avoiding mitigations from farmers and rangers. For example, collared elephants Ivy, Fred, and Kegol all wait until night to raid crops, so they are difficult to detect. They are so quiet that even Ivy and her family group of nine are almost impossible to find at night. Other collared elephants hide in the forest during the day, a staging area, close to crops and leave at night to raid the farms.

Additionally, individual elephants also appear to have different proclivities for raiding. While some like Ivy are “cropaholics”, others will only raid occasionally or not at all. Discovering why some elephants crop raid and others do not is one of the questions the MEP Research Department led by Dr. Jake Wall is asking.

Collecting long-term data on these behaviors will not only help inform how MEP responds to conflict in the future but how the Mara is developed. MEP uses collared elephant data to inform future spatial plans that protect the ecosystem’s biodiversity and to explain why elephants move the way they do leading to long-term solutions for conflict. You can help us on this mission to see the existence of a stable elephant population co-existing peacefully with people across the Greater Mara Ecosystem in the future. The cost for protecting an elephant for a three-year period using the MEP approach of collaring, monitoring and collecting data on a keystone elephant candidate is **\$27,000**. Invest in MEP’s future of solutions by supporting this program and you can join us to collar the elephant and have naming rights.

Protect More Elephants by Employing 10 Total Ranger Teams

MEP deploys Maasai rangers in partnership with government organizations who work tirelessly to protect wildlife and wild spaces. These local men and women are at the forefront of our anti-poaching operations and human-elephant conflict mitigation efforts through MEP’s boots on the ground efforts. They live in the field alongside communities they call neighbors and wildlife they value as national assets, protecting both passionately. It’s important for key habitats to remain intact to support Kenya’s wildlife, but it’s also important that communities living alongside them feel protected and connected to the Mara. MEP rangers are tasked with mitigating conflict to protect their neighbor’s farms and livestock. MEP deploys rangers in well-trained rapid response units that are tasked with immediately reacting and mitigating an intense conflict situation. These teams are mobile and move around seasonally to areas that are in need of the most protection against crop raiding elephants. All MEP rangers are trained in advanced first aid and are often the first responders during an emergency. MEP has a hotline number that is answered 24 hours a day and is well known in the communities; if they call in distress, MEP answers. This doesn’t just apply to conflict; it also means emergency medical assistance. We act as the defenders of the Mara’s wildlife, people and habitat because our rangers are the future generation of Kenyan conservationists.

MEP has a vast intelligence network that has been at the center of key poacher arrests and ivory seizures in Kenya in the last decade. While quietly working undercover, our network of informants and intelligence officers has reduced poaching and increased security for not only elephants but other wildlife. While ivory poaching in the Mara has been eradicated, bushmeat poaching is MEP’s new poaching concern. Bushmeat poaching is illegal in Kenya; however, due to the pandemic and subsequent loss of tourism revenue for communities, bushmeat poaching using snares has exploded in the Mara. MEP has ranger teams operating in the three key forest areas of the Mara: Loita, Mau and Nyakweri to combat this rise in poaching. These permanent teams are not only addressing poaching by arresting poachers, confiscating bushmeat, and removing snares but they are also focused on the increasing habitat destruction activities in these precious forest habitats. In 2020, we saw the highest level of habitat destruction in the history of MEP and in response, we launched a brand-new ranger team. Despite mounting issues arising from the long-term effects of the pandemic, our rangers are safeguarding elephant habitat day and night to discourage illegal logging and charcoal production.

While all of this seems overwhelming, in the next 10 years, MEP rangers are up to the task. MEP rangers are focused on the future of the Mara for their families and that's why we need your support to increase our ranger presence in the GME. When establishing a ranger unit, MEP recruits young people from the local community to train on MEP's campus for six weeks. The training course is all led by MEP senior staff and is based on a curriculum that MEP developed.

- 🐘 Support a new MEP ranger unit for one year for **\$185,000**.
- 🐘 Support existing MEP rangers and their efforts in 2021 for **\$75,000** a month.
- 🐘 Support MEP's intelligence officers who work undercover to root out poachers and ivory crossing the Kenyan border for **\$7,000** a month.

WAYS TO GIVE

The Mara Elephant Project is a registered trust in Kenya and operates on a non-profit basis. The Sidekick Foundation, Inc.® does business as MEP in the USA and is a 501(c)3 registered charity. We are active on both Facebook and Instagram, @maraelephantproject, and continually update our blog and send out quarterly newsletters to promote transparency and engage supporters.

MEP offers a wide range of giving options:

- Give with a credit card via PayPal. The Sidekick Foundation, Inc.® has a platinum GuideStar rating and your donation will be securely processed.
- Give with a check in the USA. Please mail checks payable to Sidekick Foundation, Inc. D.B.A. Mara Elephant Project 4000 W. 106th Street Suite 125-238 Carmel, IN 46032 with a note indicating you would like your donation to go to Mara Elephant Project USA. Please include your address for the mailing of tax information. All donations are tax deductible. Tax Exempt ID 45-3996413.
- Give via U.S. wire transfer, information [here](#).
- Give via foreign wire transfer, information [here](#).
- Give via bank transfer in Kenya. Email info@maraelephantproject.org.
- Give via stock in the United States, information [here](#).

Leaving a legacy is one of the easiest ways to make a lasting gift to charity. A planned gift may help you give more to elephant conservation than you thought possible while still providing you with favorable financial and/or tax benefits. We would be grateful if you could inform us of your decision. For more information contact us, info@maraelephantproject.org.