WeForest
Making Earth Cooler

Seret
Ethiopia

Mid-year report 2020

Empowering communities and fighting deforestation

A joint re-greening effort is taking place in Seret, in Ethiopia's Tigray region. The government, community and NGOs are working to stop land degradation, protect natural resources and improve food production.

The main approach is mostly using 'exclosures' – community-owned protected areas where livestock is not allowed. The degraded land is rehabilitated to restore its functions: landslide protection, clean water and a habitat for wildlife.

WeForest's work is now to maintain and protect exclosures using enrichment planting with native trees. We work in close collaboration with the local community and support them with materials and training on natural resource management, as well as income-generating activities such as beekeeping.

Seret

Our goals for the Seret project:

Area under restoration:

56 ha

Potential carbon sequestration after 20 years:

9,688 t CO_2

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 decurense, Grevilliea robusta, Acacia etbica, Cupresus lustanica).*

Fodder shrub species *(Chamaecytisus palmensis).*

What's new in Seret?
Recent highlights from the field

To improve vegetation cover and enhance the exclosures' rehabilitation process, the **seeds of native tree species** *Acacia abyssinica* were collected from the nearby province and sown over 10 ha to promote *in situ* germination and growth.

Harvesting grasses from the exclosures helps to maintain these areas, and the grasses are used either as a source of feed for livestock or as shade for homes. Most of the time grasses are sold in markets, but this year there was limited demand. However, the nurseries at our project site in Desa'a needed grasses for shade for the seedlings, so WeForest bought the Seret exclosure grasses and transported them north.

Collecting seedlings from mature trees to sow in the exclosures.

January	February	March	April	May	June
	Awareness raising		Development and validation of land use plan	Managing ANR trees	Silviculture
			Sharing best practises	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
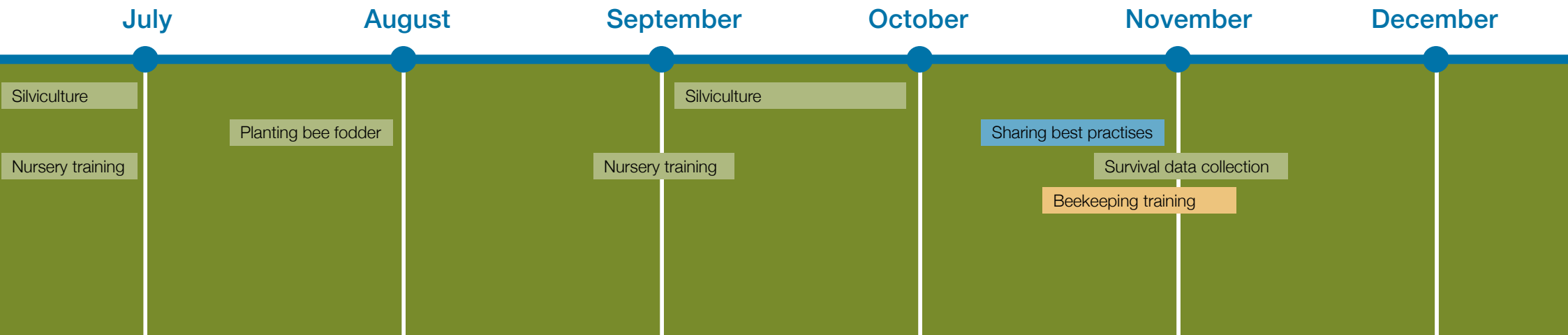
The four **exclosure guards** and their facilitator, who protect and manage the exclosures, received materials to help them carry out their work and feel a sense of belonging to the project: shoes and camouflage, all proudly sporting the WeForest logo!

One of them, Kiros G., who is managing more than 1000 of the 2,800 planted and naturally regenerated seedlings and saplings, says that he's delighted to see that some have reached more than two metres in height. The guards also make silvicultural structures, such as microbasins around the base of seedlings and saplings to retain water during the rainy season ready for the dry season.

The **COVID-2019** situation restricted staff mobility and delayed livelihood and other training sessions, but not before **poultry production and management training** was given to 30 women-headed households. Masks were worn and social distancing rules were followed during the training, which prepared the women to look after their 10 pullets each.

"I am proud to work with WeForest and see my birthplace rehabilitated. I am happy to think that I contributed to this success," says Kiros G., one of the forest guards. Right: the guards in their new WeForest uniforms.

July	August	September	October	November	December
Silviculture		Silviculture			
	Planting bee fodder		Sharing best practises		
Nursery training		Nursery training		Survival data collection	
				Beekeeping training	

What's next?

- Support will be given to the women-headed households in the livelihood improvement programme. As well as managing poultry, participants will be able to diversify their income sources with enhanced fodder production.

- Starting in September, COVID-19 allowing, 40 cooperative members will be trained in modern beekeeping, quality honey production and marketing.

- At the same time there'll also be training in silvicultural management and post-planting – such as watering and mulching – for those looking after 2,000 seedlings of bee forage species.

- Community awareness orientation will be provided on sustainable exclosure management in December. A land use plan for each village will be validated and implemented with the local community.

Stay up-to-date with our interactive Seret map.

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.

Check out our great new photos from the project on **Flickr**!

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