

Ecoscience centre opens in Tarangire

By JESSICA TRAPPE

Saturday the 20th of October marked the official grand opening of the Ecoscience lodge and science center. In a ceremony that was attended by the Regional Commissioner of Manyara, Mr. Elaston Mbwilo, Prof. Burton Mwamila the Vice Chancellor of the Nelson Mandela Institute and Mr. Jowika Kasunga the district commissioner of Monduli, Mr. Ben Beeckmans, owner of the Ecoscience lodge and science, who is also a pianist, played a musical piece on the piano titled 'savannah' as a dedication to all who attended to commemorate the occasion.

Ecoscience lodge and science center is situated close to the North - eastern border of Tarangire National park on what is locally known as "the small Serengeti plain". This location could not be more perfect for the luxury lodge and science center; not only is it practically 'one' with nature, but it is also situated in a circuit which caters for many tourists. In an interview Beeckmans explained that although the lodge and science centre are independent, it is the lodge that ensures the continuity of the science center which was not started with the intention of earning a profit, but rather to act as a satellite in Maasai land for scientists and students as well as local and

international universities who are interested in the natural sciences and formations in Tanzania.

The science center specialises in natural sciences such as geography, geology, geophysics, volcanology, botany, zoology and much more. The science center, made from tents, consists of a restaurant, conference rooms, a library and eight rooms which are available for visiting scientists.

At the moment, Beeckmans and his group are studying and organising several projects including monitoring Ol'Doynio Lengai, our only active volcano for possible eruptions. This will be beneficial to the country as a whole as once a prediction is made efforts to evacuate can

be made.

They are also looking into agricultural systems designed for arid and semi-arid areas which are vital for areas like the Maasai plain.

It is clear to see that Ecoscience science center is a major contribution and benefit not only to Tarangire, but to the whole of Tanzania.

In a statement to the press, Beeckmans stated "We will start collaborating with institutions like the

Nelson Mandela Institute for Science and Technology, and in my personal speciality, an important project in geophysics is being organised with two German universities, and hopefully with the help of the University of Dar".

Beeckmans has been all over the world and is a well known scientist and volcanologist. He chose Tanzania, and in particular, Tarangire very carefully; wanting to be close to his hobby, interests in natural formations as well as his business.

Ecoscience also reaches out to the community in more ways than one, they have funded a small dispensary in Mswakini village and are currently organising the building of a 'mess' (dining hall for the local school there.



Official opening of the Lodge and Science Centre.