THIMLICH OHINGA

To promote the conservation and sustainable utilization of national heritage

Prepared by Sarah Kimmerle in support of the partnership between the National Museums of Kenya and San Francisco State University
THIMLICH OHINGA: WHERE HERITAGE LIVES ON

**Welcome:**
Orient visitors with map and site rules

**Stone to Shrub:**
Compares dala vs. ohinga; highlight Luo Kanyamwa

**Settling in Circles:**
Circular patterns repeat throughout the settlement; highlight Nilotic Kabuoch-Kachieng

**Tree Trimming:**
Nature landscape preservation challenge and the local stone mason solution

**Bandas Sphere:**
Another example of circular pattern and universal living tradition

**Play: Past & Present**
Bao as an example of ongoing recreational tradition

**Team Saga:**
Preservation as a community activity
Welcome to

Thimlich Ohinga
where heritage lives on

Ohinga is a local word for settlement.

The stone enclosures that you are about to visit were home to several groups throughout the site’s 500 year history.

Today, Thimlich Ohinga is an internationally recognized 52-acre heritage site managed by the National Museums of Kenya.

This park protects our natural and cultural heritage.
Please take care and enjoy.
Stone to Shrub

Oral history and archeological research tells us that the stone enclosures were built to keep out dangerous animals.

In the early 1900s the threat of wild animals declined and hedge enclosures called *dalas* replaced traditional stone ohingi.

The generations of people who called Thimlich Ohinga home

- Bantu Wagire-Kamageta
- Nilotic Kabuoch-Kachieng
- Luo Kanyamkago
- Luo Kadem
- Luo Kanyamwa

Thimlich Ohinga was inhabited by the Luo people well into the 20th century.

During that time, this dala homestead was used as the main living quarters. The ancient stone ohingi served as a medicinal plant garden and home for cattle.
Settling in Circles

Did you notice that the huts in the dala formed a circle?

Depressions of earth indicate that ancient houses were also built in a circular pattern.

The prefixes *ka* and *ko* mean “home of.”

In 1688, the Kachieng people migrated into the settlement.

They expanded this ohinga by building *kraals*, small enclosures for livestock.

Circular patterns are repeated throughout the Thimlich Ohinga settlement.

The generations of people who called Thimlich Ohinga home.
Play: Past & Present
This stone slab is an ancient version of the game Bao.

Sometimes also called mancala, this game was at the heart of social life in the ohingi.
Bandas Sphere
Are you camping at Thimlich Ohinga?

Camping is an important living tradition in Kenya. *Bandas* are round sites where ceremonies, celebrations and special food is prepared.

What is your favorite way to camp?
Tree Trimming

Maintenance of the wall is a daily chore at Thimlich Ohinga. The dense forest grows quickly in this tropical climate.

Look at the wall before you.
Do you see plant life growing between the rocks?
Are there fallen stones on the path?

Local stone masons regularly replace stones that are pushed out of the wall as trees, shrubs and other plants sprout.
Team Saga

Before colonial rule, elders took daily walks around the walls searching for loose stones.

When damage was spotted, elders called on the community to repair the wall together.

This team approach to preservation is known as saga.

Work together to repair the sample wall.

Like pieces of a puzzle, can you fit the stones securely together?
SAMPLE WALL

- open-faced/top-less box
  (could be made from sheet-metal or other sturdy material)

- sample stones 1 kilo or less
  (so children & visitors of varying skill level can participate)