



THE PEPPERBIRD



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SCNL ATTENDS LIBERIA'S FOREST AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE FORUM

PAPFOR SUPPORTS FOREST FARMING COMMUNITIES TO FOCUS ON DEGRADED AND LOWLAND

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Organization's Profile

The Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL) was established in 1986 in response to the Liberian Business Law of 1976 for not-for-profit organizations with Business Registration Number: 051185951. The organization is a nongovernmental, nonpolitical not-for-profit agency.

The SCNL as the Lead National Civil Society Organization for nature conservation has the mandate to educate, encourage and assist civil society understand the need and patterns of conserving nature, build consensus on effective management of biodiversity by ensuring the use of natural resources is sustainable and that biodiversity is effectively managed and appropriately utilized.

The SCNL also maintains a membership base as part of efforts to increase voices for nature conservation in Liberia as well within the West African Sub Region through sustainable partnerships. As part of the activities of the SCNL each year an Annual General Assembly (AGA) is hosted in order to deliberate on issues around nature conservation including a review of related policy issues and the advancement and sustainable way forward for the organization.

Vision: We ensure that biodiversity is effectively managed and wisely used.

Mission: We educate, encourage, and assist the public to understand the need to conserve nature, build consensus on the effective management of biodiversity, and ensure that the use of natural resources is sustainable.

Objectives:

- Increase institutional capacity for effective management of biodiversity.
- Strengthen community structures by providing basic information on the threats, use of other renewable natural resources, and biodiversity
- Increase advocacy for the creation of additional protected areas.
- Increase alternatives livelihood opportunities for communities around Protected and potential conservation areas
- Heighten public awareness of the socio, economic, environmental, aesthetic,
- Cultural values of natural resources.

Motto: *Helping to Conserve Nature*

Know Your Protected Species

Source: Wikipedia and Google

Pygmy hippopotamus -or pygmy hippo (*Choeropsis liberiensis*) is a small hippopotamid that is native to the forests and swamps of West Africa, primarily in Liberia. It has been extirpated from Nigeria. The pygmy hippo is reclusive and nocturnal. It is one of only two extant species in the family Hippopotamidae, the other being its much larger relative, the common hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*) or Nile hippopotamus. The pygmy hippopotamus displays many terrestrial adaptations, but like the hippo, it is semiaquatic and relies on water to keep its skin moist and its body temperature cool. Behaviors such as mating and giving birth may occur in water or on land.

The survival of the species in captivity is more assured than in the wild; in a 2015 assessment, the International Union for Conservation of Nature estimated that fewer than 2,500 pygmy hippos remain in the wild. Pygmy hippos are primarily threatened by loss of habitat, as forests are logged and converted to farmland, and are also vulnerable to poaching, hunting for bushmeat, natural predators, and war. Pygmy hippos are among the species illegally hunted for food in Liberia.

Conservation Value-They are classified as endangered on the 2015 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. A distinct pygmy hippo subspecies (*C. liberiensis heslopi*) that once existed in Nigeria has gone extinct. These declines result from habitat loss and hunting.

Habitat-The Pygmy Hippopotamus is found in western Africa, mainly in Liberia, but also in Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Côte d'Ivoire. A vital area for the Pygmy Hippo's protection is Sapo National Park in eastern Liberia. Swamps, wallows, or rivers and sometimes hollows under the banks of streams.

Feeding-They are vegetarians, feeding on leaves and roots of forest plants (including semi-aquatic plants and forest herbs) as well as on fallen fruit. The Pygmy Hippo is rarely seen because of its secretive, nocturnal habits.

Behavior- are mainly nocturnal, resting well hidden in swamps, wallows, or rivers during the heat of the day until dark, when they leave the water to feed on land for a few hours in the cool of the night.



Preface



*Mr. Alexander Peal, Acting Chairman,
SCNL Board of Directors*

The Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL) was established to maintain a wholesome biodiversity conservation and high environmental standard of living for all Liberians. At SCNL, we advocate for conservation and wise use of the country's natural resources. Liberia is incredibly endowed with a plethora of natural resources comprising, most importantly, large expanses of the remaining portion of the upper Guinea Forest with numerous endemic species. Research has shown that Liberia forest has 600 bird species, 75 reptile and amphibian species, 150 small and large animal species, 2900 vascular plant species, and 1000 insect species. The intact nature of Liberia's forest means that it can provide several invaluable ecosystem services, such as the provision of food, clean water, medicines, Non-timber Forest Products (NTFPs), cultural sites, and the regulation of the climate system. Additionally, there are numerous opportunities for long-term sustainable activities such as ecotourism and carbon financing.

As biodiversity and forest cover decrease across the globe, Protected Areas (PA) as a conservation measure is becoming increasingly popular and now cover about 15% of land and 7% of the oceans.

Cognizant of these important roles played by forests and the level of anthropogenic activities threatening their status, SCNL has been working with Forestry Development Authority (FDA) and partners, FDA is the principal authority that regulates the forest sector in achieving its mission and vision. SCNL has been instrumental in the establishment of the Gola Forest

National Park, (GFNP), in Grand Cape Mount and Gbarpolu Counties, and is in the process of establishing the Foya and Kpo Proposed Protected Areas.

Being aware that limiting the use of natural resources in protected areas can have a multitude of social and economic impacts on local people who have traditionally relied on these resources for their livelihoods, SCNL has been supporting forest-fringe communities with alternative livelihood activities, including bee-keeping, village saving loans, forest friendly cocoa production, climate-smart agriculture, local community empowerment through the employment of local community members as eco-guards, among others. SCNL understands that livelihood is a major component in its conservation work, and as such, sustainable alternate options should be provided for communities living around protected areas. In that regard, SCNL has recently recruited, for the first time, a Sustainable Finance Coordinator to design innovative financing mechanisms for the long-term sustainability of the institution and project-based interventions.

As the world turns to nature-based solutions to address the climate crisis, the role of forests goes beyond biodiversity conservation to include climate regulation. Forests play a major role in sequestering carbon from the atmosphere through trees and even wildlife. We need to protect our forests from threats to enjoy the benefits of nature and even take advantage of many emerging conservation opportunities. It is the responsibility of all of us to create an enabling regulatory environment to tap into the most talked about carbon market for long-term benefits for communities. And this will only happen, when local communities get involved and played lead role in conserving our forests resources.

With the vision reflected in this newsletter, SCNL, as the lead national biodiversity conservation organization, is willing and committed to taking action to effectively conserve biodiversity, but SCNL alone cannot do all of the work. This is why we are looking forward to partnerships, including corporate and private sector partnerships, to effectively conserve Liberia's biodiversity and wisely manage natural resources to ensure that future generations will also benefit from the resources.

“WE ARE COMMITTED TO IMPLEMENTING PROGRAMS THAT ARE EFFECTIVE IN CONSERVING NATURAL RESOURCES”

It is good to communicate with partners and well-wishers both locally and internationally. These are exciting times that offer new opportunities for collaboration, networking, and support. What hasn't changed is our commitment to supporting biodiversity conservation Liberia. We are committed to implementing programs that are effective in conserving natural resources. At the beginning of 2023, SCNL held its regular annual retreat, where SCNL Board urged the secretarial to enhance their work, takes SCNL to a higher level. There was a special statement from the executive director, where he encouraged the staff to work as a team. He went on to applaud the workforce, and said, team SCNL is a 'one team.' The staff also presented on achievements, challenges and work plan, and 17-count resolutions were accepted to guide the workforce through 2023.

SCNL, with technical support from BirdLife International, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) BirdLife, is coordinating with Forestry Development Authority (FDA), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), UNDP, civil society organizations, and other national and international partners in establishing protected areas and biodiversity.

SCNL, as the lead national conservation organization, is still advocating and encouraging partners and donors to provide job opportunities for forest-edge community dwellers, enhance livelihood programs, and gradually gets involve with developmental work.

Without the necessary funding, these demands can't be met. SCNL hopes for sustainable financial opportunity to enable the institution meet up some of the demands, especially in communities where they're mostly needed.

In the first quarter of the SCNL Newsletter, 2023, The Pepper Bird, we highlight the institution's progress. It is also our way of informing the public and our partners of our achievements covering 2023.



We owe it to our beneficiaries, stakeholders, donors, and most especially the Government of Liberia. As head of team SCNL, I am grateful to the staff for the continuous efforts shown in upholding team SCNL.

SCNL HOLDS ANNUAL RETREAT IN BOMI COUNTY

ENDS WITH DONATION, DEBATE, AND RESOLUTION



SCNL staff serving as judges during the debate (Queenette P. Johnson, Sylvia D. Dorbor, and Dickarmien A. Deemie)

The annual retreat carryout by the Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL) was meant to reflect on the past year, achievements, challenges, and a way forward gearing to improve the staff and the conservation work of the institution. The seven-day retreat started on 20th -27th January 2023. This year's theme: "Year of leading by example for SCNL growth" was held in Tubmanburg, Bomi County.

The retreat objectives were to rebuild and strategize – to plan and strategize on organizational processes and effectiveness to build a strong and well-supported implementation plan for the year. Deliberate on and build consensus on organizational strength tactics to promote team building and stronger bonds. Reflections on the working

modalities. Harmonization of working processes. Refresh –relaxing from day-to-day work schedule while improving work relations. Plan and ensure clear responsibilities for 2022/2023 activities.

During the opening of the retreat, SCNL Executive Director, Mr. Michael F. Garbo, welcomed the staff, and a special message was delivered by the SCNL Board Member, Mr. Moses A. Massah, on behalf of the board of directors. Program coordinators, the head of the county's offices, and the head of departments presented on progresses and challenges of their various projects. Work plans of various departmental heads were also presented at the retreat. Staff went hiking, and played a football match with students of the Forestry Training Institute (FTI).

Donations at the Liberian Government Hospital



Mr. Marcus Flomo making remarks during the donation

As part of activities climaxing the week-long retreat, SCNL extended a humanitarian gesture by donating food items and toiletries to the Liberian Government Hospital and patients in Bomi County. It was an exciting time when SCNL's staff arrived at the hospital. SCNL staff visited each wall and presented a package to patients, a gesture that was so much appreciated.

SCNL Finance and Admin Manager, Mr. Marcus Flomo, who presented the items, said the humanitarian gesture was a way of identifying with the hospital because of the work they're doing to save lives. "We know exactly what is involved in serving humanity, and so, we are glad to be here today to give you a little of what we have. It is often said, 'little is much when God is in it'. So, we hope this donation will help to go a long way in supplementing what you already have," he said.

Also making remarks after the donation, SCNL Program Manager, Michael E. Taire, said it was

wonderful to see senior medical practitioners and patients excited about the donation.

"We were proud to see the patients so happy because of the gifts received. It gives us the strength as an institution to keep doing more. We are also calling on goodwill people, organizations, and philanthropists to join SCNL in providing more assistance to the needy across the country," he said.

In appreciation, Mr. Joseph F. Kanneh, Administer, Liberian Government Hospital, Bomi County, on behalf of the management of the hospital, extended a big thank you to SCNL for thinking about the hospital and patients, through humanitarian service. "Other people haven't been thinking about the hospital, but you, [SCNL] had come to assist. This means you were directed by God to do so. Again, thank you, we are grateful to God for you, and appreciate you".

Debate between C. H. Dewey Central High School and St. Dominic Catholic High School



C. H. Dewey Central High School receiving their prize from SCNL F. D. Harper

Also, to encourage young people to take an interest in conservation, SCNL held a debate between C. H. Dewey Central High School and St. Dominic Catholic High School, under the theme: Is Eco-Tourism Beneficial to the Environment? The one-hour thirty minutes debate was interactive. Mr. Flomo welcomed both schools and said the program was in line with the work of SCNL in conserving nature. “We chose to have the debate because in our mission statement, we educate people on the importance of nature, and the topic you’re about to debate falls in line with what we are doing at SCNL. We hope you prepared well for the debate, and we hope you will do your best to win,” he said.

Providing the overview of the program, Mr. Taire, on behalf of the SCNL’s board of directors, and the Executive Director, Mr. Garbo, welcomed the students. He shared that SCNL is a conservation organization, established in 1986, to help the government set up more protected areas across the country. “SCNL is considered the oldest conservation in Liberia, since its establishment, the non-profit organization has been working with the government, international organizations, and partners, helping to conserve nature. We have helped the government to establish Gola and Sapo National Park as fully protected areas. Along with the Wild Chimpanzee Conservation Foundation, we also

helped the government to establish Grebo-Krahn National Park,” he informed the students.

The program manager, who wished both schools well, said SCNL has worked with schools, with an interest in working in conservation to establish Nature Club in several high schools, such; RobertSport, Gbarpolu County, precisely, Kongba, Grand Bassa County, etc. “We hope in 2023, SCNL can work with your schools to establish Nature Club, because we want [each of you] to grow an interest in conservation so that when you leave high school, you can start a career by enrolling at the FTI or the University of Liberia (UL)”.

C.H. Dewey Central High School won the debate, and walked away with LD\$5,000.00 prize, while 2nd winner, St. Dominic High School, walked away with LD\$3,000.00. Herrietta T. Morris, 11th grade, C.H. Dewey Central High School, Solomon Forh, Jr. 12th Grade, St. Dominic Catholic High School, Bomi County, extended appreciation to SCNL, and fellow students for participating in the debate. Morris said, “Bravo to us for winning... St. Dominic Catholic High School, don’t feel defeated, it was a battle, and we all have won. Thanks to SCNL and our school administration, who granted us this opportunity to participate in the debate. We appreciate everyone”.

Awarding Deserving Staff



The award recipients after the program

SCNL also presented awarded five deserving staff with awards for their hard work and dedication to the growth of the institution. James P. Mubah (Employee of the Year), Massa S. Passawe (Longest Serving Employee), Abraham B. Flomo (Conservationist Award) and Raymond Ballah Kpoto, and Mambu S. Sheriff, dedicated Service to SCNL.

Mulbah appreciated SCNL Annual Retreat Committee, 2022, and the entire SCNL Family for the recognition and award. “My motivation comes from the Musician, Mohammed Deen, in one of his songs: “No One Knows Tomorrow”. It says anything you want to do in this life, do it well because no one knows tomorrow.... You may not know who is watching you as you perform your daily tasks, but do it with all your energy in getting the needed results. Let the award serves as motivation to staff and communities as we strive to conserve nature”.



*Raymond Ballah Kpoto and Mambu S. Sheriff
after receiving their awards*



*RSPB Alade Adeleke presenting
Abraham B. Flomo his award*



*Mr. Michael E. Taire presenting
James P. Mulbah his award*



*Mr. Michael F. Garbo presenting
Massa S. Passawe her award*

RAINFOREST TRUST AFRICA STRATEGIST VISITS SCNL

ENSURING LIBERIA'S FOREST IS PROTECTED



Dr. Antoine F. Marchal along with SCNL staff and forest-edge community dwellers (loan beneficiaries) in Lofa County

The Government of Liberia has committed to establishing a network of protected areas covering at least 30% of the existing forest area (National Forestry Reform Law 2006). At present, only 10% of the existing forest area is protected. Foya Forest represents an additional 2.9%. Foya forms a substantial share (28.5%) of the Greater Gola Landscape which straddles the Liberia/Sierra Leone border and forms the largest remnant of the Upper Guinea Forest Biodiversity Hotspot and Eco-region. At least 70% of the Upper Guinea Forest has been

**AT LEAST 70% OF THE
UPPER GUINEA FOREST
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FRAGMENTED**

lost and the remainder is highly fragmented. Liberia holds the largest remaining portion (42).



In contribution to keeping Africa's last forest intact, Rainforest Trust has provided funding through SCNL to support the Government of Liberia in the gazettement of the Foya Proposed Protected area and the support to the community's forest establishment around the Gola and Foya Forest.



SCNL Loan Officer, Yuconjay Noyu Barchue welcoming Mr. Dr. Antoine F. Marchal in Lofa County with a kola nut

In an effort to understand the implementation of the project in terms of the progress and challenges, Dr. Antoine F. Marchal, Rainforest Trust Africa Strategist visited the Society for the conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL), the Wild Chimpanzee Foundation and Government partner. On the 23rd of January, Mr. Marchal met with the SCNL's team to get an understanding of the Rainforest projects that are being implemented in the Gola Forest National Park's communities and the Foya Proposed protected.

In that meeting were: James P. Mulbah-Project coordinator-SCNL, Michael E. Taire-Program Manager-SCNL, Alade Adeleke-RSPB Country Program Manager, Richard Hoff, II, -Rainforest Trust Project Coordinator. SCNL presented progress, challenges, and way forward on the two projects funded by Rainforest Trust in Gola and Foya, followed by a discussion on plans for future interventions in the forest sector of Liberia. Part of the reason for Mr. Marchal's visit was to see how Rainforest Trust can help to fill in the gaps or to develop new projects that could eventually support the current projects and other conservation-related projects in Liberia. Mr. Michael E. Taire, SCNL Program Manager stressed that there is a need for us to begin thinking about how Rainforest Trust can continue from where LFSP will end for Kpo after the gazettment package is prepared.

He also emphasized the need to begin looking into conserving or creating protection for the Mangroves and how government partners like Rainforest Trust

and others need to support the government in terms of increasing manpower and capacity strengthening as more protected areas are being established with less manpower to protect these PAs. Mr. Marchal said the points were valid and needed to be keenly looked at as he moves in the field to get a sense of the implantation of the projects.

On the 25th of January, Mr. Hoff and SCNL Loan Officer, Yuconjay Noyu Barchue accompanied Mr. Marchal to the field in the Foya Proposed Protected Area's communities. The team visited a few communities, namely: Yandohun in Hassala clan, walahun, and Mbaloma in the Lukasu clan. The team was highly received by the people of Yandohun. During the meeting in Yandohun, the Town Chief Mr. Massaquoi Sualay welcomed the guest on behalf of the town. In his remark, he praised and appreciated the SCNL Staff who always inform them about the Rainforest Trust-Foya Project and its activities.

The team was also welcomed by some Loan beneficiaries (women), headed by the Chairlady, Lusia Kamara. The women and the chief Elder of the town Mr. Boakai Moinena presented Kola-nuts and a chicken to the team as a sign of welcoming them traditionally. Mr. Marchal appreciated the women and the community dwellers for welcoming him and the team. Mr. Marchal said, "I am happy to see the level of collaboration between the SCNL and the people of Yandohun. This proves that the project is ongoing smoothly and is impacting the community dwellers positively".

SCNL RECRUITS A SUSTAINABLE FINANCE COORDINATOR

EXPANDING SCNL'S FINANCIAL GROWTH THROUGH INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS



Ms. Sylvia Diamond Dorbor

The Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL) has recruited Ms. Sylvia Diamond Dorbor as Sustainable Finance Coordinator. Miss Dorbor holds a Master of Science Degree specializing in Climate Change and Sustainable Development from the University of Cape Town, South Africa. She also has a Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Environmental Science and a Bachelor of Science in Geology and Environmental Science from Rhodes University, South Africa. After completing Cutting-Edge research on attribution-based parametric insurance at the African Climate and Development Initiative, she co-authored a book chapter in Criminology and climate: Insurance, Finance and the Regulation of Harmscapes. The book explores the role of the insurance industry in contributing to and responding to, the harms of climate change.

Ms. Dorbor is also the lead negotiator on loss and damage for Liberia at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change—where discussions are ongoing to operationalize a standalone financial facility for loss and damage from the adverse impacts of climate change—a ground-breaking agreement reached COP28 in Egypt.

She has represented Liberia at many international conferences and has contributed to global decision papers and national policies. December 2022, United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, Canada, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, COP 25 (Madrid, Spain, December 2019, COP26

(Glasgow, UK-December 2021, COP 27 (Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt-November 2022. Africa Climate Week-Libreville, Gaborone-August-September 2022, National Adaptation Plan Expo (NAPEXPO)-Gaborone, Botswana-August 2022, African Feminist Regional Convening-Accra, Ghana-August 2022.

Upon completion of her study in South Africa, Miss Dorbor worked for Fauna & Flora International-Liberia as the Project Assistant for the NorthWest Landscape (Wologisi and Wonegizi Proposed Protected Areas and East Nimba Nature Reserve). During her stay at FFI, she focused mainly on project development, including a REDD+ transboundary project, and supported the implementation of sustainable financing activities in the landscape.

As the Sustainable Finance and Program Compliance Coordinator, Miss Dorbor seeks to promote a paradigm shift from short-term donor-based project interventions to long-term sustainable programs for conservation and protected area management. Part of her tasks is to identify program risks and design innovative financing mechanisms and revenue-generating schemes for SCNL that extend beyond donor funding to include the private sector, carbon financing, and philanthropic financing. Ms. Dorbor believes in fostering gender equality, she places particular emphasis on mainstreaming gender and promoting the just and inclusive participation of women and girls in all of her works.

SCNL ATTENDS LIBERIA'S FOREST AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE FORUM

FINDING NEW WAYS TO TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE...
WHILE PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT



President George Weah and other dignitaries at the opening of the forum

Globally, tackling climate change is now becoming essential; while seeking to keep the ecosystem intact. President George M. Weah has initiated efforts leading to Liberia's forest and Climate change Resilience forum where national, international, and developmental partners sat to discuss forest-related issues and other cross-cutting Ideas.

On the 2nd and 3rd of February 2023, the Government of Liberia, with the support of the Government of Norway and the World Bank organized a high-level Forest and Climate Resilience Forum, with the specific purpose to catalyze renewed commitments to strengthen partnerships in sustainable forest management as a key strategy supporting the President of Liberia's pro-poor agenda for Prosperity and Economic Development (PAPD).

The Forum provided a platform for high-level stakeholders to discuss key areas of progress, challenges, and next steps in the forest sector, using local and regional examples. It highlighted and showcase Liberia's progress in forest and climate resilience policy, and tangible successes on the ground in relation to sustainable forest management, community forestry, and conservation forestry, among others. The Forum also explored lessons learned from other parts of the world and regionally regarding sustainable forest management, to inform future development of the sector in Liberia. This ultimately provided possibilities for the next steps in advancing forestry together with livelihoods, agriculture, climate resilience, and infrastructure.

The main objective of the Forest and Climate Resilience Forum is to catalyze partnerships and



President George Weah and other dignitaries at the opening of the forum

“LET’S SUMMON OUR HIGHEST POLITICAL, STRONGEST CAPACITY, AND COORDINATION ACROSS AGENCIES TO IMPROVE FOREST GOVERNANCE”

renew political commitments and broad interest at the highest level in sustainable forest management as a key strategy supporting the Liberia pro-poor agenda for economic development. The Forum presented an opportunity to take stock of policies and interventions, deepen understanding of forests’ multi-sector roles, generate ideas towards meeting Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) from COP26, and reconfirm commitments to work with partners and share knowledge in the context of natural resources management driven by comprehensive and scientific approaches to achieve sustainability in shared objectives.

During the forum, remarks were made by key dignitaries: Mr. Hans Brattskar, Special Envoy on Climate Change, Mr. Khwima Nthara, Country Manager for Liberia-World Bank, and Hon. Samuel Tweh, Minister of Finance and Development Planning, Liberia. In Minister Tweh’s statement, he expressed gratitude to partners and stakeholders for their efforts in protecting the forest of Liberia. “let’s summon our highest political, strongest capacity, and coordination across agencies to improve forest governance,” he said.

Lastly, President Weah, in a special statement, said the carbon market is a considerate effort associated with the opportunity for the social economic benefit of the people of Liberia. He also said he is looking

forward to discussing the way forward, strengthening partnerships, and renewing his commitment to ensuring sustainable forest management in Liberia and enhancing climate resilience.

The Liberian leader emphasized that the forum was a part of Liberia’s national vision to manage its forest in a sustainable way, contributing to local efforts to address climate change while leveraging carbon payment to national and community development. “Sooner than later, we will surmount the challenges faced in order to ensure forest resources benefit all Liberians. As we continue to work with our development partners, we will remain committed and stand with the rest of the world in combating climate change, this is a pledge,” he said.

Hon. Wilson K. Tarpeh, Executive Director, EPA, Liberia, spoke on creating the enabling environment for climate resilience in Liberia, Mr. Richard Damania, Chief Economist, Sustainable Development Practice Group, the World Bank; presented on maximizing carbon sequestration: How to create a resource efficiency frontier for Liberia, and Madam Loretta Alethea Pop Kai, Chairperson, National Civil Society Council of Liberia: CSO’s calls for attention to finance adaptation and forest communities.

SCNL CONDUCTS THREE-DAY INTENSIFICATION AND ACCELERATION TRAINING IN BOMI COUNTY

PARTICIPANTS APPRECIATE SCNL AND PARTNERS FOR THE TRAINING



The Liberia Forest Sector Project, (LFSP), funded by the Government of Norway, through the World Bank, implemented by the Forestry Development Authority, (FDA), through the Joint Venture (JV) of the Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia ((SCNL), and IDH-the Sustainable Trade Initiative, under the consultancy titled, “Intensification and Acceleration of Impacts on Livelihood Development and Land Use Support to Cluster Communities in North West Landscape”, has ended a three-day training for beneficiaries of motorbikes. Nick Benitos Goll, Environmental Safeguard Coordinator, REDD+ Implementation Unit (RIU)-EPA presented on health and safety, motorbike management, and

maintenance., Hawa Biddle- Dugbeh, SCNL Gender, and Safeguard Officer presented on sexual exploitation and abuse while Richard Hoff, II, LFSP Project Coordinator presented on cooperative management and the business aspect of the motorbikes.

Mr. Hoff, making remarks said SCNL and partners provided the training for motorbikes recipients to train them on relevant information they need when riding the motorbikes. “Today, we are here to demonstrate that commitment to you, by [training and providing] all the necessary information you need. You are already perfect riders, but we are

DISTRIBUTION OF MOTORBIKES CONTINUES IN WESTERN LIBERIA

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT, PROTECTING THE FOREST



SCNL Richard Hoff, II, listens as beneficiaries thank SCNL and partners for the motorbikes donation

The Liberia Forest Sector Project, (LFSP), funded by the Government of Norway, through the World Bank, implemented by the Forestry Development Authority, (FDA), through the Joint Venture (JV) of the Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia ((SCNL), and IDH-the Sustainable Trade Initiative, under the consultancy titled, “Intensification and Acceleration of Impacts on Livelihood Development and Land Use Support to Cluster Communities in North West Landscape” have completed the donation of motorbikes to forest edge communities in the project areas.

Richard Hoff, II, LFSP Project Coordinator, said the 26 motorbikes were the second batch of donations to the communities bringing the total donation to 52 motorbikes.

The motorbikes donation was meant to help each of the cooperatives to generate funds through

commercial transportation, for forest edge communities while at the same time working towards reducing deforestation.

Mr. Elijah Nyumkor, Tonglay Clan Chief, Steven Kanneh, Town Chief of Normon Town, and Washington McGill, Officer-in-charge of the District Commissioner office were amongst those who received the motorbikes on behalf of their respective communities, expressed thanks and appreciation to SCNL and partners for the donation.

Mr. McGill said, “On behalf of the office of the District Commissioner, “I tell donors, partners, and SCNL thank you very much for the hard work and the donation of the motorbikes. We didn’t know the importance of the forest, but through the work of SCNL, and the support from partners, we now know the importance of protecting the forest. The motorbikes received will be used for the benefit of the community”.

SCNL JOINS CONSERVATIONAL INSTITUTIONS TO CELEBRATE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF FORESTS

HIGHLIGHTING LIBERIA'S FOREST FOR THE BENEFIT OF COMMUNITIES AND PEOPLE



SCNL Sylvia Dorbor making special remarks

The Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL), on March 21, 2023, joined other conservational institutions to celebrate International Day of Forest (IDF), in Buchanan, Grand Bassa County. This year's celebration was held under the theme "Forest and Health-A Path to recovery and well-being". Participants from the Forestry Development Authority (FDA) and partners, including SCNL, USAID-funded Conservation Works, UNDP, FFI, and WABiLED, as well as students, paraded through the streets of Buchanan from Monrovia junction to Buchanan Fare Ground.

The Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL), on March 21, 2023, joined other conservational institutions to celebrate International Day of Forest (I, in Buchanan, Grand Bassa County. This year's celebration was held under the theme

"Forest and Health-A Path to recovery and well-being". Participants from the Forestry Development Authority (FDA) and partners, including SCNL, USAID-funded Conservation Works, UNDP, FFI, and WABiLED, as well as students, paraded through the streets of Buchanan from Monrovia junction to Buchanan Fare Ground.

After the parade, there was an indoor program held at the Fare ground where several remarks and speeches were made. Mr. Moses A. Massa, Head of the Energy & Environment Unit, UNDP, served as the keynote speaker for 2023 the International Day of Forests. He appreciated Honorable C. Mike Doryen, FDA Managing Director, and the organizing committee at FDA for selecting him as the keynote speaker. He said in 2012, the UN assembly set aside March 21 as an International Day of Forest and this



*Honorable C. Mike Doryen,
FDA Managing Director planting a symbolic tree*



*Honorable C. Mike Doryen,
FDA Managing Director planting a symbolic tree*

“TODAY’S OCCASION ALLOWS US TO REFLECT ON THE GLOBAL THEME OF OUR NATIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND THE SPECIFIC NEEDS OF FOREST DWELLERS IN LIBERIA,”

day is celebrated around the world. This year’s Global theme is ‘Forest and Health’, a day set aside to raise awareness of the importance of all types of forests. “Today’s occasion allows us to reflect on the global theme of our national circumstances and the specific needs of forest dwellers in Liberia,” he added.

The key speaker spoke on the theme: ‘Maintaining the integrity of Liberia forests and responsibility for all’. Shared forests are very important and irresistible. Forests are home to 80% of land animals and plants and cover 31% of the world’s land area. About 1.6 billion people around the world depend on the forest for their livelihood and trees absorb up to 160kg of carbon dioxide per year. He informed the audience that trees are important for creating a clean city. “The urban area trees cool the air up to 8° by reducing air by 30%. Urban trees act as air filters by reducing harmful pollutants. Trees supply global renewable energy supply, and more than 25% of medicine that we used comes from trees product”.

Atty. Urias Goll, Deputy Chief-of-Party, Conservation Works Activity (CWA), recommended to the FDA to carry the International Day of Forests celebration to the people who live near the forest. SCNL Sustainable Finance and Program Compliance Coordinator, Sylvia Dorbor, making special remarks, thanked the management of the FDA for organizing this event. She spoke on the importance of coordination between key state actors for the protection of the forests and urged relevant institutions involved to find a niche through which they can work together to conserve nature. She also urged all students, especially females, to consider a career in conservation or environmental science-related disciplines. She thanked international partners for their support but urged all to consider long-term financing of Protected Areas that goes beyond donor funding that is project-based. A symbolic tree was planted in observance of the day by FDA Managing Director.

THE U.S FOREST SERVICE, USAID, AND SOLIMAR INTERNATIONAL VISIT THE ELEPHANT FALLS

BEAUTIFYING THE FALLS THROUGH A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT



The guests viewing the Elephant Falls

As SCNL through the funding from the EU-PAPFor Project continues working with the Forestry Development Authority (FDA), and the communities in developing the Elephant Falls in the Gola Forest National Park (GFNP), SCNL is really open to a stronger collaboration that will add value to the site and make it more ecotourism viable for tourist attraction. The mission of the visit was for the team to collaborate their efforts with SCNL in the development of trails and other future infrastructures that will beautify the site, and at the same time keep the ecosystem environmentally intact.

On the 24th of January 2023, a team comprising 17 persons including drivers from the US Forest Service, USAID, Solimar International Consultancy, DW-TV, and staff from SCNL arrived at Camp Israel at sundown and were warmly received by residents of Camp Israel Community. The team later went to

visit Elephant Falls, and SCNL PAPFor Project Coordinator, James P. Mulbah, who led the visitors, informed the community of the purpose of the trip. The group was divided into two, Arthur M. Madawee, PAPFor Community Focal Person for the Elephant Falls Development Venture led one group of eco-lodge and trails designers or mappers and engineers. While, Adolphus Tiah, SCNL Ecotourism Officer, also led group two, which comprised people with expertise in sign interpretation development, and Journalists for DW-TV who have come to cover stories from GFNP, and livelihood interventions made by SCNL to communities around the park.

After two nights of stay at the Elephant Falls Campsite, the trip climaxed with an awareness education meeting on trial development with residents of the Camp Israel community. During this educative and information-sharing meeting, Matt Humke, a consultant from Solimar International highlighted the importance of



A partial view of the Elephant Falls

Providing Maintenance, Attracting Tourists

the trail being constructed at Elephant Falls. He said residents of Camp Israel will have the opportunity to get trained in hospitality, tour guide, and the hiring of skilled and unskilled people during the construction of the trail and eco-lodge.

Meanwhile, the key points of education on trail development were: Planning, designing, construction, griddling and drainages, signposts, mapping interpretative experiences, exploring, education, and communities.

With support from PAPFor, and in keeping with the commitment signed by SCNL and communities close to GFNP, in the upper Sokpo Region of GFNP to regularly maintain the road leading to the Elephant Falls and campsite facilities, a total of ten community workers including two females were hired to do side brushing, repaired damaged bridges and clean up the Elephant Falls Campsite site.

The clearing of the road is now providing clear access to tourists and guests the opportunity to safely drive to Elephant Falls. The youth who helped to brush the road expressed satisfaction with SCNL for the ongoing collaboration. SCNL Eco-tourism Officer, Adolphus Tiah, and Camp Israel Assistant Town Chief, Mohammed Kamara Commended PAPFor and SCNL for the outstanding services for the maintenance of the Elephant Falls.



SCNL Adolphus Tiah explaining to DW-TV staff about the huge eco-tourism potential in GFNP



Youth carrying side brushing along the Elephant Falls Road

PAPFOR SUPPORTS FOREST FARMING COMMUNITIES TO FOCUS ON DEGRADED AND LOWLAND CONSERVATION EFFORT TO SAVE FOREST SIZE OF 28.4853 HECTARES FROM SLASH-AND-BURN

“I CRIED AND I REFUSED TO SIT IN ANY OF THE CHAIRS OFFERED ME BY THE COMMUNITY AND THIS BROUGHT SERIOUS ATTENTION TO THE COMMUNITY. THE FARMERS’ ACTION OF UNDER BRUSHING AND PLANNING TO CUT DOWN THE TREES HAVE TAKEN OVER 25 TO 50 YEARS TO GROW... MY THANKS AND APPRECIATION GO TO SCNL, COMMUNITY LEADERS, AND EU-PAPFOR FOR THE SUPPORT AND TIMELY INTERVENTION IN SECURING 28.4853 HECTARES OF FOREST”

For decades, slash-and-burn agricultural practice in Liberia has been the way of life for many farmers, but with continuous engagements and efforts from conservation organizations and the Government of Liberia (GoL), as well as our international development partners, the practice has dropped significantly. Creating awareness, the development of the Elephant Falls, and youth empowerment, through the hiring of citizens and bringing for the maintenance of the Elephant Falls are helping to transform minds in forest preservation.

The people of Camp Israel Community have shifted from conservation practices to devastating and unsustainable forest farming. These slash-and-burn farming practices also have devastating effects on the biodiversity in the area. With large areas of land being incinerated, many animal habitats are lost in the fire. This pushes animals out of the forest, decreasing biodiversity, and increasing the number of endangered and extinct animal species.

They have “Under-brushed” the total forest area is 28.4853 hectares awaiting to fell the trees and

finally burning the area when the SCNL-PAPFor team saw the need to reinforce the engagement with the community; especially with the seven forest farmers. Through the community engagement that was led by the PAPFor Project Coordinator, James P. Mulbah, the community, and the farmers made a commitment to stop and would concentrate on degraded land and lowland for their farming activities. The farmers also made an appeal to SCNL for some support that will enhance their lowland and degraded land farming. SCNL through funding from the EU-PAPFor project timely intervenes with support for the farmers to keep the trees standing.

Mulbah said “I cried and I refused to sit in any of the chairs offered me by the community and this brought serious attention to the community. The farmers’ action of under brushing and planning to cut down the trees have taken over 25 to 50 years to grow... My thanks and appreciation go to SCNL, community leaders, and EU-PAPFor for the support and timely intervention in securing 28.4853 hectares of forest”.

SCNL APPRECIATES RAINFOREST TRUST



Rain Forest Trust has been supporting SCNL since 2014 to establish protected areas and community forest management agreements for fringe communities around both the Gola Forest National Park (GFNP) and the Foya Proposed Protected Area in Lofa, Gbarpolu, and Capemount Counties.

Scaling up its support in 2016, Rainforest Trust supported the gazettelement of the GFNP in Liberia. In 2021, with support from Rainforest Trust and other Institutions, Normon and Tonglay Community Forest in Gbarpolu was established by the Forestry Development Authority, with communities actively managing the forest with a strict conservation zone between the communities and SCNL established. Today, with support from Rain Forest Trust, SCNL is supporting the establishment of four new community forests and landscapes in Zuie, Mbaima (Gbarpolu), Sokpo 1, and 2 (Capemount) through the Liberia Land Authority Customary Land formalization process.

At the core of its support between 2020 and 2022, Rainforest Trust supported capacity building support for three SCNL staff to Ghana to learn QGIS and

other courses to support conservation works in Liberia, the building of three major plank bridges and road works along the Kongo road in Gbarpolu, major support to the joint security sector under FDA to patrol the Gola Forest and removed illegal occupants. Also, three staff were supported on an exchange visit to Nigeria Conservation Foundation in Lagos to learn the process of establishing a conservation center in parallel to that of the Lekki Center in Lagos.

SCNL is most grateful to the management and board of Rainforest Trust for making its voice heard in the communities, and for ensuring that communities are at the core center of conservation work in Liberia at all times. The management of SCNL wells supports at every level of its conservation work by Rainforest Trust, our trusted partner over the years. We are forever grateful that SCNL was empowered to make its representation at the Africa Protected Area Conference as well as at the UNFCCC COP27 conference in Egypt. Without Rainforest Trust's support over the years, SCNL would not have had its inputs at a wider level with so many staff being capacitated.



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