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ORGANIZATION'S PROFILE



The Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL) was established in 1986. Since its foundation, the SCNL has remained the lead national conservation organization in Liberia. We are a non-for-profit organization and the lead national conservation organization in Liberia.

Our mandate is to educate, encourage and assist the society understand and appreciate nature, build

consensus on effective management of biodiversity by ensuring that natural resources are sustainably managed.

Our Vision:

Our vision is a Liberia where biodiversity is sustainably managed for our wellbeing.

Our Mission:

Our mission is to promote biodiversity conservation by inspiring people to value nature through science, forests, and climate action, environmental education, partnership, stakeholder engagement and community development.

Our Values:

Passion: We are inspired by people and nature and driven to lead change for a sustainable future.

Respect: We build relationships based on trust and mutual benefit, respect each other, respect the demands, ideas, and customs of the communities and cultures around us.

Collaboration and Partnership: We work with others to reach our goals.

Accountability and Transparency: We strive to uphold values such as accountability and transparency.

Our works have impacted the lives of people in forest fringed communities, and the landscapes.

We are a partner of Birdlife International, a strong partner that has been providing support; funding,

capacity building, technical, for us all in an effort to enhance our work and conservation in Liberia.

Motto: Helping to Conserve Nature

KNOW YOUR SPECIES

FOREST ELEPHANT



The African forest elephant (*Loxodonta cyclotis*) is one of the two living species of African elephant, along with the African bush elephant. It is native to humid tropical forests in West Africa and the Congo Basin. It is the smallest of the three living elephant species, reaching a shoulder height of 2.4 m (7 ft 10 in). As with other African elephants, both sexes have straight, down-pointing tusks, which begin to grow once the animals reach 1–3 years old. The forest elephant lives in highly sociable family groups of up to 20 individuals. Since they forage primarily on leaves, seeds, fruit, and tree bark, they have often been referred to as the ‘megagardener of the forest’; the species is one of many that contributes significantly to maintaining the composition, diversity and structure of the Guinean Forests of West Africa and the Congolese rainforests. Seeds of various plants will go through the elephant’s digestive tract and eventually pass through in the animal’s droppings (likely in a new location where they will sprout), thus helping to maintain the spread and biodiversity of the forests.

Females reach sexual maturity between the age of 8 and 12 years, depending on the population density and nutrition available. On average, they begin breeding at the age of 23 and give birth every 5–6 years. As a result, the birth rate is lower than the bush species, which starts breeding at age 12 and has a calf every 3–4 years.

Baby elephants weigh around 105 kg (232 lb) at birth. Almost immediately, they can stand up and move around, allowing the mother to roam around and forage, which is also essential to reduce predation. The baby suckles using its mouth while its trunk is held over its head. Their tusks do not come until around 16 months and calves are not weaned until they are roughly 4 or 5 years old. By this time, their tusks are around 14 cm (5.5 in) long and begin to get in the way of suckling.

PREFACE



Mr. Alexander Peal
Acting Chairman
Board of Directors

As we continue advancing our mission to protect and conserve Liberia's invaluable natural heritage, we find ourselves at a critical juncture for reflection and renewal of our shared commitment to the work we do at the Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL). For nearly 40 years, SCNL has been a leading force in championing the protection of Liberia's rich biodiversity while fostering sustainable development practices that benefit both the environment and the communities that rely on it. As we look back on the progress we've made, we are more inspired than ever to drive forward with our shared vision of a sustainable and prosperous future for Liberia.

Liberia stands as a jewel in the Upper Guinea Forest region, one of the most ecologically diverse and vital areas on the planet. As the global environmental challenges, especially climate change, grow in urgency, the significance of these forests in mitigating climate impacts becomes even clearer. SCNL is unwavering in its dedication to safeguarding Liberia's natural treasures, home to an incredible array of species, many of which are found nowhere else in the world.

Our commitment goes beyond conservation; it is about creating practical, sustainable solutions that align with the needs of local communities. Over the years, SCNL has been at the forefront of integrating conservation with community development—ensuring that our environmental initiatives also enhance the livelihoods of those who live in and around Liberia's forests. From sustainable farming practices to forest-friendly cocoa production and climate-resilient livelihoods, SCNL has empowered local communities to thrive while remaining deeply connected to the land and its rich cultural heritage.

Our partnership with the Liberian government, the Forestry Development Authority (FDA), and international organizations has been vital to achieving milestones in the conservation of key protected areas, including the Gola Forest National Park. Efforts to establish the Foya and Kpo Proposed Protected Areas further demonstrate the growing success of our work, positioning Liberia as a leader in regional conservation initiatives in West Africa.

As we look to the future, we recognize the evolving global landscape and the increasing role that forests play in climate regulation and carbon storage. The global focus on nature-based solutions presents an exciting opportunity for Liberia to further contribute to the global fight against climate change. SCNL stands ready to seize these opportunities, leveraging our experience and partnerships to drive impactful change. But we know that achieving success in this evolving landscape will require innovation, collaboration, and forward-thinking approaches to conservation and development.

While we are proud of the progress we have made, we understand that the path forward requires an even deeper commitment to inclusivity, sustainability, and long-term vision. The continued engagement of all stakeholders—local communities, government agencies, international partners, and the private sector—remains critical. Together, we will ensure that Liberia's natural resources are preserved for future generations.

Thank you for your ongoing support, and we look forward to working together to continue this vital journey.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



Mr. Michael F. Garbo

We have reached the close of 2024, I find myself filled with immense gratitude and pride as I reflect on the year's journey. It has been a year of both challenges and triumphs, but despite the obstacles we faced, our collective efforts have led to remarkable achievements. The Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL) has continued to thrive, thanks to the unwavering dedication of our staff, the generosity of our donors, and the invaluable support of our partners.

This year, we have made significant strides in our mission to conserve Liberia's rich natural heritage while improving the livelihoods of the communities we serve. From advancing climate-smart agricultural practices to supporting forest fringe communities with micro-loans, and empowering cocoa farmers, SCNL has remained steadfast in its commitment to sustainable development.

Our key projects – LEH-GO-GREEN, FOLUR, WaBiled, PROBIO, and One Tree Planted – have been vital in furthering our conservation objectives, and the partnerships we've forged with organizations like EU, UNDP, Aactiva Small Grant, and CBFM have proven crucial in addressing both environmental and socio-economic challenges.

Though we have faced numerous challenges throughout the year, the support from our staff,

partners, and donors has enabled us to rise above and continue our work with renewed energy and purpose. Your contributions have been instrumental in our success, and for that, I am deeply grateful.

As we reflect on the year that has passed, I extend my heartfelt thanks to each one of you – our dedicated team, our donors, and our partners – for your commitment and perseverance. It is because of you that we continue to make meaningful progress in our mission, and I am excited to build on this momentum as we enter 2025.

Looking ahead, I am optimistic about the opportunities and projects that lie before us. Together, we will continue to grow, innovate, and make an even greater impact. Let us welcome 2025 with hope, determination, and a shared vision of a more sustainable and prosperous future for Liberia and its natural resources.

On behalf of SCNL, I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! May this festive season bring joy, peace, and a well-deserved rest, and may 2025 be a year filled with new achievements, growth, and greater success.

Thank you once again for your unwavering support. We look forward to accomplishing even more in the year to come!

SCNL PARTICIPATES IN UNCBD AND UNCCD COP16 IN COLOMBIA AND SAUDI ARABIA: CHAMPIONING INDIGENOUS RIGHTS AND COMMUNITY CONSERVATION



Michael F. Garbo making remarks at COP16 in Cali, Colombia

At the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD) in Cali, Colombia, SCNL played a pivotal role in advocating for biodiversity conservation and Indigenous Peoples' rights. As part of the official Liberian delegation, SCNL, alongside government and community representatives, engaged in key discussions, side events, and negotiations, amplifying Liberia's commitment to global biodiversity efforts.

SCNL's participation was marked by its active involvement in side events that highlighted the role of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) in achieving biodiversity goals.



Sylvia Dorbor presenting at COP16 in Cali, Colombia



A cross-section of participants at the 30x30 event on October 31, 2024 at COP16 in Cali, Colombia

The organization's Consultant for the National 30x30 Action Plan, Atty. Urias S. Goll, and the local community leader Paramount Chief Jamiyatu K. Watson of Porkpa District, shared insights on Liberia's progress with the Customary Land Formalization (CLF) process for protected areas, and community forest. CLF is vital for integrating local communities into conservation efforts, ensuring their active role in forest protection and management.

Another significant contribution came from SCNL's Sustainable Financing Coordinator, Miss Sylvia Diamond Dorbor, who represented Liberia at a panel on the governance of protected areas. She highlighted how SCNL's work with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the GEF-8 Critical Forest Biomes Program is driving sustainable financing and community engagement for protected area management in Liberia.

SCNL was instrumental in advocating for this indigenous people, emphasizing the need for community-led conservation and the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge in global biodiversity frameworks.

Through its active lobbying and participation in side events, SCNL strengthened Liberia's presence at COP16, ensuring that local voices were heard in



Dickarmien A. Deemie at COP16 in Riyadh global biodiversity discussions.

Meanwhile in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) Conference of the Parties (COP) 16, held in 2024, marked a pivotal moment for global efforts to combat land degradation, desertification, and drought. One of the most significant contributions to the event came from the involvement of the Society for Conservation of Nature Liberia (SCNL), represented by Program Manager Michael E. Taire and Science and Conservation Coordinator Dickarmien A. Deemie. Their participation in this global forum provided invaluable insights, fostered international collaboration, and reinforced SCNL's commitment



Liberia's delegation at the UNCCD COP 16 in Riyadh

to sustainable land management and biodiversity conservation in Liberia.

On People's Day, a key event during COP 16, the Indigenous Peoples' Declaration underscored the need for the recognition of Indigenous Peoples' rights within UNCCD policies and their role in land restoration. SCNL, through its participation, advocated for the integration of Indigenous knowledge systems into land restoration efforts, aligning with their ongoing commitment to promoting inclusive and sustainable conservation practices in Liberia.

This advocacy not only highlighted SCNL's commitment to the rights of Indigenous communities but also underscored the importance of preserving traditional knowledge for land management, a vital aspect of the organization's conservation efforts.

As part of the youth engagement discussions, SCNL championed the active involvement of young Liberians in land restoration projects.

The forum dedicated to youth emphasized the need for innovative approaches to policy influence and green job creation. SCNL's engagement with these discussions ensured that the voice of the next generation of environmental stewards was heard, reinforcing the organization's role in training and empowering youth in Liberia to become leaders in sustainable land management.



Michael Taire at COP16 in Riyadh

SCNL AWARDED “HIGHEST COMPLIANT TAXPAYER – LOCAL NGO” BY LIBERIA REVENUE AUTHORITY



J. Marcus Flomo, Finance and Administrative Manager receiving the award on behalf of SCNL

On Friday, November 22, 2024, the Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL) was proudly recognized by the Liberia Revenue Authority (LRA) with the prestigious “Highest Compliant Taxpayer – Local NGO” award. The award was received by Mr. J. Marcus Flomo, Finance and Administrative Manager on behalf of SCNL. This recognition is a testament to SCNL’s unwavering commitment to transparency, accountability, and service to the community.

As a leading environmental organization, SCNL has always strived to operate with the utmost integrity, and this honor further highlights the dedication the organization has toward fulfilling its responsibilities, not just in conservation, but in contributing to the nation’s growth.

For SCNL, paying taxes goes beyond fulfilling a legal obligation—it’s an essential part of our mission to contribute to the development of Liberia. By adhering to tax regulations and ensuring full compliance, we play a role in strengthening the country’s infrastructure, supporting public services, and enhancing the overall well-being of its citizens.

As a local non-governmental organization (NGO), SCNL sets an example for other organizations in Liberia and across the region, demonstrating that social responsibility and commitment to national development go hand in hand with environmental preservation and conservation work.

The award emphasizes the importance of transparency in financial management and accountability. By maintaining clear and honest records, SCNL ensures that every donation and funding received is used effectively for the benefit of Liberia’s natural resources and communities. This recognition is a reminder of the organization’s dedication to doing business the right way.

This recognition by the Liberia Revenue Authority further reinforces SCNL’s commitment to playing an active role in Liberia’s development. Moving forward, SCNL aims to continue building strong partnerships with government agencies, NGOs, and the local community, while staying true to its core values of sustainability, integrity, and community service.

LEH GO GREEN PROJECT EMPOWERS COMMUNITIES IN FOREST CONSERVATION EFFORTS



Davidetta Moore is informing the citizens of Grand Gedeh County about the CCA and its benefits for the community

From October to December 2024, local leaders and citizens from 19 communities in Gbarpolu, Grand Cape Mount, Grand Gedeh, and River Gee counties gathered to discuss the Community Conservation Agreement (CCA) under the LEH GO GREEN (LGG) project. This EU-funded initiative aims to promote forest conservation and sustainable livelihoods in Liberia, with two key components: CCA and Livelihood. Spanning five counties and impacting 30 communities, LGG focuses on protecting natural resources while fostering economic growth through sustainable practices.

Under the leadership of Project Manager Madam Davidetta Moore from UNDP, the team conducted visits to four community forests across the counties to complete the Free, Prior, Informed Consent (FPIC)



process for the Community Conservation Agreement (CCA). This agreement provides financial incentives to communities for forest conservation and supports investment in alternative sustainable development initiatives.



LGG Project's team posed with Grand Gedeh County Superintendent after a community entry meeting



Totoquelleh's Town Chief giving remarks during a CCA meeting held in Gbarpolu

Representing the Government of Liberia through the Forestry Development Authority (FDA) was Alvin Roberts, who assured the citizens that the LEH GO GREEN project would be different from other projects because the project was people-centered.

He also detailed the importance of community conservation especially for the next generation. The Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL) represented by Alexander Z. Forkpa, plays a key role, having established 510,000 cocoa trees and 102,000 native tree nurseries for 17 households in each participating community.

Additionally, BRAC, another implementing partner, is supporting 30 individuals per community with activities such as beekeeping, Village savings and loan association (VSLA), lowland rice production, vegetable production and animal husbandry, aimed at enhancing food security, creating income, and promoting resilience.

A crucial element of the project is job creation. Local Eco-Guards will be hired to protect the community forests, receiving monthly stipends for their efforts. The project also ensures financial transparency by distributing payments to communities through Community Forest Management Bodies (CFMBs) and holding regular meetings for resource management oversight.

Inclusivity is a key focus of the project, with special attention to women, youth, and persons with disabilities. Jonathan S. Q. Ballah, BRAC's Project Manager, emphasized the importance of equitable benefit distribution.

By promoting gender equality and empowering marginalized groups, the project helps ensure that all members of the community can contribute to forest conservation and share in the rewards of a sustainable future.

ROUNDTABLE DIALOGUE STRENGTHENS CONSERVATION EFFORTS IN LIBERIA



The 11th Edition of Liberia's Nature Talk, held in Monrovia, brought together key stakeholders to discuss urgent strategies for addressing conservation challenges in the country's protected areas. With a focus on the escalating threats of illegal mining and poaching, the dialogue provided a platform for collaboration between government agencies, international partners, NGOs, and local communities.

The one-day event, organized by the Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL), saw the participation of 43 representatives from the Forestry Development Authority (FDA), the Ministry of Mines and Energy (MM&E), the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), and various conservation groups, including the Wild Chimpanzee Foundation (WCF) and Conservation International (CI). The discussions underscored the urgent need for coordinated action to protect Liberia's biodiversity and the livelihoods of local communities.

A key outcome of the dialogue was the recognition that effective conservation efforts require enhanced coordination between agencies such as the FDA, MM&E, and MoJ. Participants highlighted the importance of harmonizing regulations and improving law enforcement to combat illegal activities in protected areas. In addition, the need for increased resource mobilization through government support and donor funding was emphasized, with a focus on strengthening ranger patrols, providing training on sustainable practices, and bolstering enforcement mechanisms.

Central to the discussions was the importance of community-centered solutions. Participants called for the prioritization of programs that offer economic

alternatives to poaching and illegal mining, such as eco-tourism, sustainable agriculture, and the formalization of artisanal mining. These initiatives were seen as vital to reducing environmental harm while improving the economic well-being of local communities.

Public awareness campaigns also emerged as a crucial component of the dialogue. Efforts to educate local populations on the importance of biodiversity conservation, sustainable resource use, and wildlife laws were seen as essential to fostering a culture of stewardship and compliance. Additionally, there was strong support for revising legal frameworks to increase penalties for wildlife crimes and to formalize artisanal mining, ensuring that environmental impacts are minimized.

In her keynote speech, Dr. Annika Hillers, Country Director of the Wild Chimpanzee Foundation, highlighted Liberia's significance as a biodiversity hotspot, noting that its forests and marine species play a crucial role in supporting rare and threatened species. She emphasized that, with concerted efforts, Liberia has the potential to become a global leader in biodiversity conservation.

The dialogue concluded with a call to action for greater collaboration between government agencies, international partners, conservation organizations, and local communities. Participants agreed that only through collective commitment and sustained advocacy could Liberia protect its natural heritage and secure the ecological and socio-economic benefits that its protected areas offer for future generations.

SCNL HOSTS GOLA TRANSBOUNDARY COORDINATION MEETING



Participants at the Gola Transboundary Coordination Meeting

The Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL) in collaboration with the Forestry Development Authority and partners, on December 17, 2024, held the Gola Transboundary Coordination Meeting at Mamba Hotel in Monrovia.

The Meeting focused on the theme “Sustaining Peace and Protecting Biodiversity,” bringing together key stakeholders from Liberia and Sierra Leone. The event was attended by government officials, conservation experts, traditional leaders, and international partners, all working toward safeguarding the Greater Gola Forest landscape—a vital biodiversity hotspot in West Africa.

The Gola Forest, shared by Liberia and Sierra Leone, was established as a peace park in 2009, symbolizing the unity between the two countries. During the meeting, stakeholders discussed collaborative efforts to preserve the forest and promote sustainable development in the region.

Nora Bowier, Deputy Managing Director of Carbon Conservation at Liberia’s Forestry Development Authority (FDA), emphasized the importance of collective action for both environmental and social goals. She stressed that the initiative’s core objectives include improving forest management, strengthening community governance, enhancing law enforcement, and raising awareness about conservation.

Thomas Fayia Kamara, Executive Director of Sierra Leone’s National Protected Area Management Authority (NPAA), reaffirmed the shared responsibility of both nations in preserving the Gola landscape, highlighting the importance of community engagement and collaboration to safeguard this vital ecosystem. Additionally, the NPAA expressed its commitment to working closely with Liberian partners to address conservation challenges.

Dr. Nouhou Ndam, Landscape Specialist for the WABiLED Program, underscored the global significance of the Gola landscape, highlighting its role as a peacebuilding model and biodiversity hotspot.

Simeon Moribah, Secretary-General of the Mano River Union (MRU), pledged support for the Gola Forest Transboundary National Park, emphasizing its importance not only for Liberia and Sierra Leone but for the global community. He urged stakeholders to build on the momentum of the meeting.

In a historic show of unity, paramount chiefs from Sierra Leone’s Nomo Chiefdom and Liberia’s Sokpo Chiefdom jointly committed to supporting the conservation of the Gola Peace Parks. These local leaders emphasized the need for greater inclusion of communities in decision-making and resource allocation, highlighting their role as guardians of the forest.



SCNL CONDUCTS CUSTOMARY LAND FORMALIZATION WORKSHOP

In a significant stride to guarantee customary land ownership in Liberia, the country's oldest conservation organization, the Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL) and the Liberia Land Authority (LLA), have jointly embarked on a project to resolve all boundary disputes in three clans of Gbarpolu County, through community engagement dialogue and customary land formalization (CLF) process.

This project which was funded by the Rain Forest Trust focused on preserving rainforests and other threatened ecosystems worldwide.

The three clans, Zuie, Mbarma, and Normon are located in Kongba District, a densely forested district in Gbarpolu County.

SCNL's intervention in collaboration with the LLA around customary land formalization is deeply rooted in the Land Right Act of Liberia, which seeks to address issues around land tenure and ownership.

The Customary Land formalization activity is an additional fund secured under the existing project titled: "Liberia-Foya Reserve" a project focused on working with the government and communities to gazette the Foya proposed protected area.

The CLF inception workshop held in Bopolu was meant to provide a platform for open dialogue,

where communities and all stakeholders could flag out boundary dispute areas, and bring forth some resolution mechanism that the project team can work to implement.

Addressing a cross-section of citizens of the three Clans, during a consultative inception engagement in Bopolu, Gbarpolu County, SCNL Program Manager, Michael Taire, said his organization is committed to working with Zuie, Mbarma, and Normon clans in getting their customary land deeds.

Mr. James P. Mulbah, the Project Coordinator said, "The process is critical as formalizing community land around the Proposed Foya Protected Area is to prevent overlaps and disputes between clans and the proposed Foya soon-to-be GbarLo National Park. Often, unclear or contested boundaries lead to resource management issues, inter-community conflicts, and unregulated exploitation of natural resources and as such; getting these clans Deeded gives a further opportunity for the community forests around the park to enter into future conservation agreements, trade carbon, and secure other alternative support as the result of the protection of this critical biodiversity hotspot".

Mr. Tiare further assured the citizens that the process would be funded by SCNL and facilitated in collaboration with the Liberia Land Authority to ensure the full legalization of their customary land.

FDA IN COLLABORATION WITH SCNL AND WCF CONDUCTS LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING FOR AUXILIARIES IN LAKE PISO



From October 28 to November 6, 2024, a transformative training program took place at Lake Piso in Grand Cape Mount County, aimed at strengthening conservation efforts in Liberia. The initiative was generously funded by the European Union and was part of a broader effort to enhance the capacity of local communities to contribute to conservation efforts.

Organized by the Forest Development Authority (FDA), in partnership with the Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL) and the Wild Chimpanzee Foundation (WCF), the 10-day Auxiliary Law Enforcement Training was designed to equip a diverse group of individuals with the skills necessary to protect Liberia's wildlife and natural resources.

A total of 20 participants, including 14 men and 6 women, were selected to take part in the training. Throughout the course, participants learned essential skills in conservation law enforcement, community collaboration, and wildlife protection. One of the key modules focused on Navigation and Reporting, where Mr. Benjamin Queminee trained the participants in the use of GPS technology and the SMART (Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool) application. This training enabled them to navigate the forest effectively and report illegal human activities, ensuring that conservation efforts are informed by real-time data. Patrolling techniques were also a major focus. Under the guidance of Mr. Jallah Johnson, participants learned how to plan effective patrols, select safe

camping sites, and identify poachers. They were also trained in the critical skill of approaching suspects safely, which is vital for ensuring that wildlife law enforcement officers can protect themselves and the communities they serve.

Another vital aspect of the training focused on Species Protection & Community Engagement. Mrs. Princess Yormie and Shedrick E. Smith led this session, providing participants with insights into Liberia's endangered species and the best practices for engaging local communities. The goal was to equip participants with the tools to raise awareness about conservation and foster collaboration between local communities and wildlife protection efforts.

The final module provided an overview of Wildlife Protection Laws, where participants gained a deeper understanding of Liberia's legal framework for protecting wildlife and learned how to effectively enforce these laws to safeguard the country's natural heritage.

Upon completing the training, the participants underwent an evaluation, and the top achievers were selected. We are thrilled to announce that the 10 highest performers—five women and five men—will join the Forest Development Authority (FDA) as Auxiliary Law Enforcement Officers at the Lake Piso Multiple Sustainable Use Reserve. This marks an exciting step forward in Liberia's conservation efforts, as these newly trained officers will play a key role in protecting the country's rich biodiversity.

SCNL CONDUCTS TWO-DAY BEEKEEPING TRAINING IN LOFA



Participants of the beekeeping training posed with training materials

The Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL), with generous funding from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), recently conducted a two-day beekeeping training workshop for fifty (50) beneficiaries in Guma Mende, a community in Vahun District, Lofa County.

The training is part of the broader efforts under the Ecological Restoration Fund (ERF) project, which aims to create sustainable livelihoods for local communities while reducing their dependence on forest resources.

The initiative comes at a critical time when many communities in Liberia face increasing pressure on natural resources due to unsustainable practices such as logging and farming. SCNL, through the ERF project, is working to provide communities with alternative income-generating activities that both improve their standard of living and support environmental conservation efforts.

The beekeeping training, facilitated by experts in the field, provided participants with essential

knowledge on hive management, honey harvesting, and the overall care of bee colonies. The training also emphasized the importance of sustainable practices in beekeeping to ensure that local ecosystems, including pollination services, are not disrupted.

“Beekeeping offers a unique opportunity for communities like Guma Mende to diversify their livelihoods,” said one of the training facilitators. “By learning how to manage hives and produce honey, they can generate income while contributing to the health of the environment, as bees play a crucial role in pollination and ecosystem balance.”

The project also aims to raise awareness about the benefits of sustainable land use practices. By encouraging beekeeping, which requires maintaining healthy natural habitats, the training helps reduce the pressure on forests caused by activities like slash-and-burn agriculture. Additionally, honey production has the potential to open up new markets and create economic opportunities, improving the well-being of families in the region.

SCNL'S TRAINING AND GRANT HELP LAUNCH LOCAL BUSINESSES



SCNL's staff posing with grant beneficiaries

The Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL) has successfully trained and empowered 80 members of the Community-Based Forestry and Protected Area Management (CBFM) program in three counties—Gbarpolu, Cape Mount, and Lofa—providing them with valuable skills in business entrepreneurship. To help turn their new knowledge into action, each participant received a \$400 USD grant to start small businesses within their communities.

The training focused on various aspects of business management, including planning, pricing, customer service, and financial record keeping. Participants learned how to assess their local business environments, develop effective operational strategies, and build sustainable businesses that could thrive in their regions. The sessions covered essential skills such as budgeting, savings, and profit analysis, which will help them manage and grow their ventures over time.

One of the key components of the training was the emphasis on community-based solutions. By equipping participants with the tools to start and manage their own businesses, SCNL aims to reduce reliance on environmentally harmful practices such as illegal logging and poaching, while also creating sustainable income sources for individuals and their communities. The \$400 USD each participant received serves as seed money for their entrepreneurial endeavors, enabling them to put their newfound skills

into practice and make a positive impact in their communities.

The training also provided important lessons on the importance of savings and financial management. Participants were introduced to strategies for managing their finances, including how to track expenses, set goals, and save for future business expansion. This financial literacy is a critical component of long-term success, as it helps participants build a solid foundation for their businesses and ensures they can weather lean seasons.

For many of the participants, especially women's groups, the training also served as an introduction to market-based business practices, offering them opportunities to engage with larger markets and grow their businesses beyond their immediate communities. The training sessions created a platform for learning and collaboration, fostering a sense of unity and shared purpose among participants.

By providing both the training and the financial support needed to launch small businesses, SCNL is helping to create a model of sustainable economic development that aligns with conservation goals. These small businesses will not only support the livelihoods of participants but also contribute to the broader economic and environmental health of their regions.

ECO-GUARDS BOOST CONSERVATION EFFORTS IN LIBERIA'S GOLA FOREST NATIONAL PARK



SMART Patrol training section

The society for the conservation of nature (SCNL)'s Eco-guards are playing a pivotal role in enhancing the management and protection of Liberia's biodiversity, particularly within the Gola Forest National Park (GFNP). Through strategic patrolling, data-driven insights, and strong community involvement, eco-guards are transforming conservation efforts in one of Liberia's most vital protected areas.

In the Gola Forest, eco-guards use a unique 81-cell grid system to ensure systematic patrolling across the park. Each 4x4 km grid cell is carefully monitored, with additional focus on high-risk zones affected by illegal hunting and human encroachment. This approach, which is adapted annually based on data, enables park management to efficiently target threats and improve law enforcement responses.

A key component of the eco-guard program is its emphasis on building local capacity. Under the guidance of the Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL), local community members are trained to use the SMART (Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool) system, which allows eco-guards to collect accurate data on wildlife and threats. This information is critical for both conservation research and law enforcement planning.

The data collected helps inform patrols by pinpointing hotspots of illegal activity, such as hunting and logging, ensuring that resources are directed where they're needed most.



Eco-guards' data also supports the Forestry Development Authority (FDA) in enhancing law enforcement efforts. The collected information is sent to the FDA's centralized database, enabling targeted enforcement actions based on current threats. Additionally, eco-guards assist in biomonitoring efforts, including camera trapping, to assess the health and distribution of species in the park.

Beyond patrolling, eco-guards engage in awareness-raising campaigns within local communities to combat illegal activities like poaching and farming in protected areas. As part of the program, eco-guards receive monthly stipends to support their livelihoods, ensuring long-term commitment and creating sustainable alternatives for park-fringe communities. The SMART mobile tool is integral to the program's success. It allows eco-guards to upload field data directly, which is then analyzed and used to generate maps that help plan targeted law enforcement actions. These maps track incidents of hunting and illegal activities, providing park managers with critical insights for decision-making.

The success of the eco-guard program in the Gola Forest National Park demonstrates the importance of community-driven conservation. Through capacity-building, data collection, and direct involvement in park management, eco-guards are helping protect Liberia's rich biodiversity for future generations.

SCNL AND PARTNERS LAUNCH ECOBRIGADES IN FIVE CITIES EMPOWERING YOUTH FOR A GREENER LIBERIA



Photo collage of the Eco-Brigade's launch

With funding from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL), launched the Eco-Brigade Programme to address pressing environmental challenges in Liberia.

This initiative focuses on engaging vulnerable youth in environmental conservation while providing them with entrepreneurial skills to create sustainable livelihoods.

The Eco-Brigade Programme involves 300 youth volunteers aged 18-35 from five cities—Sanniquelle, Gbarnga, Kakata, Paynesville, and Monrovia. These youth are trained as environmental stewards, empowered to lead community-based clean-up campaigns and climate change adaptation efforts.

The programme trains volunteers in environmental stewardship, waste management, and small business development. It also facilitates leadership development through elected positions within each Eco-Brigade group. Volunteers gain practical skills to tackle local environmental issues while learning how to start and manage small businesses.

The programme is implemented in Sanniquelle, Gbarnga, Kakata, Paynesville, and Monrovia cities, targeting communities in need of environmental restoration and economic opportunities.

The recruitment and training process took place from August 5-12, 2024, with the official launch of the Eco-Brigades following the intensive mentorship and leadership development sessions.

Liberia faces severe environmental degradation, including pollution, deforestation, and the adverse effects of climate change. The Eco-Brigade Programme aims to empower youth to address these challenges while providing them with economic opportunities to uplift their communities and protect their environment.

The launch of the Eco-Brigades marked a significant milestone, with parades and clean-up efforts across the five cities. By combining environmental stewardship with entrepreneurship, the programme is laying the groundwork for a sustainable future, empowering youth to be agents of change in their communities and beyond.

SCNL CELEBRATES A MILESTONE AT THE 10TH EDITION OF THE NATURE TALK



Participants of the 10th Nature Talk

On Friday, October 25, 2024, the Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL) proudly hosted the 10th Edition of the Liberia Nature Talk in Kolahun, Lofa County. This impactful event was made possible through the generous support of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB).

This year's Nature Talk marked a significant achievement in line with Pillar 4 of SCNL's 5-Year Strategy Plan, which emphasizes Environmental Education and Awareness. The event focused on the critical importance of biodiversity conservation, particularly in areas adjacent to forest edges.

We were delighted to see an overwhelming turnout of approximately 300 participants, far exceeding our initial target of 60. The attendees represented a diverse group, including the Forestry Development Authority (FDA), SCNL, F. Bambayan Academy, School of Faith Mission, and Kolahun Central High School. Their enthusiasm and engagement underscored the community's strong desire for environmental education.

The interest shown by participants highlights a growing awareness and passion among those living near forested areas about the need for conservation



Johnson G. Koikoi, SCNL's Environmental Education Officer giving remarks at the 10th Nature Talk

efforts. As a result, we were inspired to expand our discussions and share valuable biodiversity conservation messages with this engaged audience. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who participated and contributed to the success of this event. Together, we are fostering a greater understanding of environmental issues and working towards a sustainable future for our forests and biodiversity.

SCNL SURPASSES 1,000 MEMBERSHIP MILESTONE: A REMARKABLE MEMBERSHIP GROWTH



Membership awareness and recruitment drive at the Forestry Training Institute in Tubmanburg, Bomi Co.

The Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL), the leading organization dedicated to safeguarding the nation's rich biodiversity, is expanding its reach faster than ever before. In a remarkable display of both grassroots effort and a growing public awareness about environmental preservation, SCNL has witnessed a membership rise that is transforming the landscape of conservation in the country.

In just under two decades, SCNL's membership has skyrocketed from a modest 672 members between 2007 and 2023 to a staggering 1,431 in 2024—marking a growth of nearly 213% in just one year. This remarkable expansion is a testament not only to the dedication of the SCNL team but also to the increasing commitment of the Liberian population to protect their natural heritage.

At the beginning of 2024, SCNL set an ambitious goal of reaching 1,000 members by year's end. This target was more than just a number—it was a reflection of the organization's drive to foster a deeper, more widespread understanding of conservation across the nation. Thanks to the tireless work of Janet Urey-Mulbah, SCNL's Membership and Outreach Officer

and Johnson G. Koikoi, Environmental Education Officer, the organization exceeded its goal with ease. Janet's and Johnson's strategic outreach efforts have been pivotal in the recruitment of members, particularly in schools across the country.

Over the past year, both Janet and Johnson have worked diligently to engage young people, visiting over 15 schools in both Monrovia and rural areas, igniting a passion for conservation among students and educators alike. Through presentations, workshops, and interactive discussions, they have not only helped educate the next generation about Liberia's unique ecosystems but also encouraged them to become active participants in preserving their natural surroundings.

The result of this effort is clear: the target of 1,000 members was not only met but exceeded, with SCNL now boasting a membership of 1,431, representing an increase of 212.9% from the previous year. This surge in numbers speaks volumes about the increasing interest among Liberians in protecting their environment, driven by a new generation of conservation champions.

SCNL'S IMPACT AND CONTRIBUTIONS AT COP29: ADVOCATING FOR LOSS AND DAMAGE AND CLIMATE ACTION IN LIBERIA



At the recently concluded COP29, held from November 11-24, 2024, in Baku, Azerbaijan, the Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL) played a pivotal role in supporting Liberia's climate agenda and advocating for critical climate action on the global stage. As part of Liberia's delegation, SCNL worked alongside government representatives, non-governmental organizations, academia, and local communities to ensure the country's climate priorities were strongly represented in key discussions.

Liberia's delegation to COP29 was led by the Vice President of the Republic of Liberia, Hon. Jeremiah Kpan Koung, and included prominent figures such as Senator Simeon Taylor and Senator Johnny Kpehe of Grand Cape Mount County and Bong County respectively. The delegation focused on various climate-related issues, with the Vice President delivering a high-level statement on November 12, 2024, calling for a streamlined and accountable process to access funding for loss and damage for vulnerable nations. His remarks highlighted the need for a simplified system that could better address the

urgent financial requirements of countries facing the worst impacts of climate change.

One of SCNL's key contributions was through its representation by Sustainable Financing Coordinator Miss Sylvia Dorbor. Miss Dorbor took on a leadership role in the negotiations surrounding loss and damage, a critical issue for Liberia and many other nations vulnerable to climate impacts. She worked tirelessly to support the discussions under the WIM EXCOM (Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage) and the Santiago Network (SN), which focus on the financial and technical assistance required to address the loss and damage caused by climate change.

The discussions at COP29 were especially significant as they centered on reviewing the effectiveness of the WIM and the Santiago Network, aiming to create stronger synergies between the two entities and enhance their capacity to support vulnerable nations. The joint review of these bodies was a critical part of the agenda, and SCNL, through Miss Dorbor, ensured



Liberian Delegation with the Cambridge team during the signing of the MOU in Baku, Azerbaijan



Sylvia Diamond Dorbor at COP 29

that Liberia’s voice was heard in the negotiations. There was also a focus on the Loss and Damage Fund, with Ibrahima Cheikh Diong appointed as the first Executive Director of the Fund’s Board, paving the way for more effective financial mechanisms to address climate impacts.

Liberia’s Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), which play a crucial role in the country’s climate strategy, were also a major topic of discussion at COP29. As a nation highly dependent on its forestry sector, Liberia called for greater attention to both economic and non-economic losses related to nature, including the irreparable loss of biodiversity. This aligns with Liberia’s broader climate ambitions, which emphasize the preservation of nature and its vital role in mitigating climate change.

SCNL’s role at COP29 exemplified its ongoing commitment to supporting Liberia’s climate leadership and advancing global climate discussions. Through



Sylvia Diamond Dorbor posed with Vice President Jeremiah Kpan Koung at COP 29 in Baku

technical expertise, policy advocacy, and negotiation support, SCNL continues to be a vital partner in the government’s efforts to tackle the climate crisis and secure funding for loss and damage. The Society’s participation in COP29 not only strengthened Liberia’s position on the international stage but also contributed to the broader global dialogue on climate finance and loss and damage.

Looking ahead, SCNL remains dedicated to ensuring that Liberia’s climate priorities are integrated into international frameworks and that the voices of vulnerable communities are heard in the ongoing fight against climate change.

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