

# Liberia

## East Nimba Nature Reserve

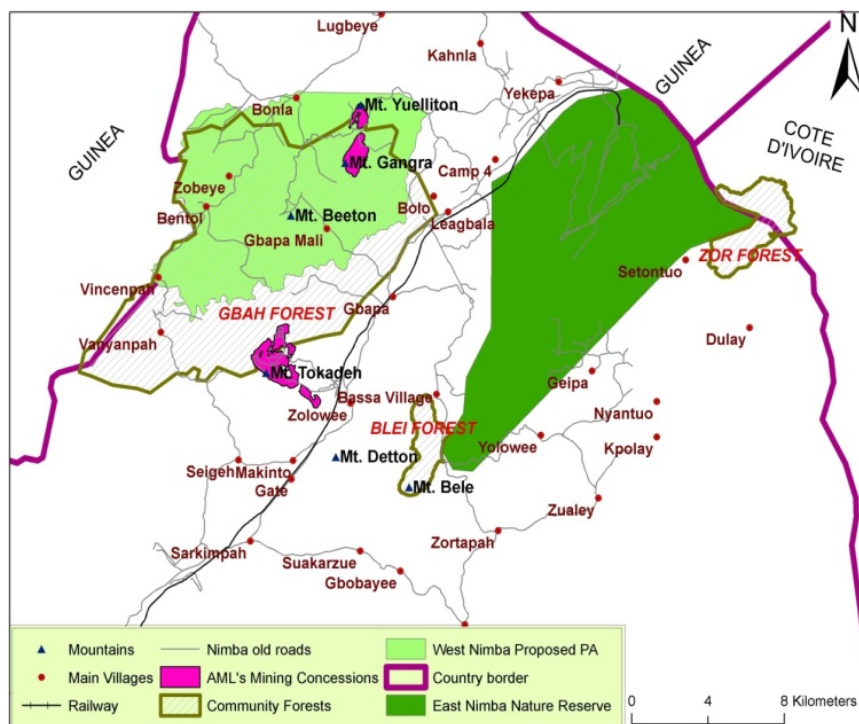
### News from the Field

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#### About the East Nimba Nature Reserve

The East Nimba Nature Reserve is Liberia's second protected area. This 13,565-hectare reserve is surrounded by three community forests. The reserve and surrounding forests are home to several characteristic species including the Western Chimpanzee and numerous other unique wildlife species.

Liberia is in the midst of recovery following many years of civil war. The East Nimba Nature Reserve is currently under threat from illegal logging, wildlife poaching, forest clearing for agriculture, and environmentally damaging mining development. For the sake of Liberia's future, development must occur in harmony with nature.



#### What's the Project About?

Since 2012, CI Liberia has been working towards sustainable development in the region in cooperation with Liberia's Forest Development Authority and local NGOs like SADS (Skills and Agricultural Development Services) and RICCE (Rural Integrated Center for Community Empowerment). On the strength of these partnership and our experience so far, we are conducting education and awareness-raising efforts with the aim of protecting biodiversity in the areas surrounding the East Nimba Nature Reserve. We also have conservation agreements with

communities living around the reserve under which we are striving to improve people's lives and forest management.

Project activities are conducted with the following goals in mind.

- Promote conservation agriculture and lessen the use of slash-and-burn methods.
- Provide high-efficiency cooking stoves and solar power equipment in order to decrease the use of firewood, which is a cause of deforestation.
- Plant trees in degraded areas so as to restore forests.
- Raise environmental awareness through activities such as an environmental club at elementary schools, local community movie nights, and environmental protection forums at Nimba County College.

We worked with local partners and communities in carrying out the following activities in this reporting period.

#### Creation of Partners' TORs (Technical Operating Reports) for Feasibility Assessment

We created TORs (technical operating reports) for assessing the feasibility of conservation agreements with four local communities. These TORs were implemented by SADS and RICCE, which together with other partners are coming up with stipulations of agreement that can be applied to model conservation agreements.



#### Education and Awareness-Raising on Protecting Biodiversity

With the goal of changing people's behavior in order to improve governance and management of forests, we have come up with strategies for biodiversity education and awareness-raising activities. We are working with Nimba County College in conducting such awareness-raising. Also, at the beginning of this reporting period, we launched a campaign titled 'Eat Some, Leave Some', under which we aim to change people's behaviors. A locally trained theater group is giving presentations in communities aimed at raising awareness of the importance of biodiversity.



### Using High-Efficiency Cooking Stoves

By providing women in rural areas with cooking stoves using green energy, we are strengthening communities' resistance to climate change and forest depletion. By doing this, people's health is improving, and they are spending less time gathering firewood, less time cooking, and less of their household budget on firewood and charcoal. The stoves have been provided to more than 300 women in 12 communities around the East Nimba Nature Reserve.





### Education and Awareness-Raising to Stop the Spread of Ebola

Liberia is currently one of the hotspots of the Ebola virus. So far almost 3,000 people have died from the virus and the number of people infected continues to rise. In support of government and donor organization efforts, we are working with partner institutions that are conducting public-awareness campaigns aimed at stopping the spread of the Ebola virus. To boost recognition of the Ebola virus and to maintain relations with our local partners, together with the Forest Development Authority, SADS, and RICCE, we are conducting activities titled 'Ebola and Its Relation to Hunting, Selling, and Consuming Wild Animal Meat' in communities covered by the project. We have created awareness-raising posters, and we purchased a variety of sterilizing agents and liquid hand soap, as well as over 100 plastic buckets with taps on them. These have been distributed to homes in the project communities to improve the state of their health and sanitation. The head of the East Nimba Nature Reserve led a team in charge of these activities.



### **Challenges**

It is clear that Daikin's support has been extremely effective in helping carry out the forest protection activities in the project area. But the fact remains that Liberia is in the midst of an Ebola epidemic that is causing great suffering. This infectious disease is having a disastrous effect on the country's health sector, and the government has declared a national state of emergency. Due to the outbreak of Ebola, CI had to put its activities in Liberia on hold temporarily, and this put the project behind schedule. CI is developing plans to prevent the spread of Ebola and has created a strategy to resume activities in Liberia, and it has come up with new ways to work with partners to ensure success for the project.

Other problems that the project faces are the change of government in Nimba County and political instability in the region. CI is building mechanisms to deal with such changes and ensure that we can continue working in Nimba County.

### **Recommendations**

The Ebola outbreak has had a huge impact on all facets of life in Liberia, with implications for society, the economy, health, and household budgets. There are still no clues as to how to bring this outbreak under control, and local communities are directly in the path of this scourge. We believe that the best way to fight this problem is to continue to engage and participate in communities, strengthen partnerships with other institutions that are working directly with local society to fight Ebola, and refine Ebola measures with the aim of resuming our activities in Liberia at the earliest possible time.

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