

Liberia
East Nimba Nature Reserve Forest Conservation Project
News from the Field

May 2016
Conservation International

Conservation Agreements

CI has identified conservation activities and livelihood improvement projects that form pillars of the Conservation Agreement with two communities around the East Nimba Nature Reserve. Under this Conservation Agreement, measures to tackle the problems faced in the East Nimba Nature Reserve form the conservation activities, and the aid offered to communities to shift their lifestyle to one that can co-exist in harmony with the surrounding natural environment forms the livelihood improvement project. The conservation activities and livelihood improvement project are not dictated by CI, but rather are a joint effort with the participating communities. Although decision making is difficult and time consuming, they are an important step in the overall process of creating a viable Conservation Agreement.

In discussing the conservation activities, CI and the communities identified the need to stop poaching and deforestation for farmland in the Nature Reserve. For the livelihood improvement project, the communities recognized the need for improved food security through efforts such as the intensification of rice farming and the diversification of vegetables grown in the fields. In addition, since there are members of the communities who previously hunted wild animals for a living, there is a plan to implement an initiative to maintain their source of income while simultaneously preventing the loss of wildlife by training them as Frontline Conservationists. Frontline Conservationists will patrol and monitor the forests, gather biological data, conduct conflict resolution between the locals and wildlife, and help raise awareness on conservation and sustainable land management practices. In return, Frontline Conservationists will receive a monthly stipend and ongoing training.

With the content of the Conservation Agreements finalized, signing ceremonies will be held to commemorate the start of this new project.



Community members taking part in meetings in Ghopayee town (left) and Yolowee town (right) to discuss the contents of the Conservation Agreements
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Providing Environmental Education and Increasing Awareness around the East Nimba Nature Reserve

On April 29, a debate was held between students at the Nimba County Community College. The debate brought together students from different programs within the Science and Agriculture Department, including those studying natural resource management, forestry, agriculture, mining, and geology. The college appointed three judges to help facilitate the debate. With students debating a number of different topics that centered around the exploitation of natural resources in Northern Nimba, the debate sparked a great deal of dialogue and was hailed as a great success.



Scenes from the debate between students of the Nimba County Community College
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Nimba Environmental Club Interschool Challenge

As mentioned previously, CI has established environmental clubs at 10 schools around the East Nimba Nature Reserve. The clubs are led by facilitators who teach students on an array of topics such as biodiversity, pollution, and climate change. In order to assess how well students are learning, CI organized an interschool challenge between the ten different schools that are participating in the environmental club program. Each environmental club nominated five members to participate in this event. The students showed great enthusiasm and passion and were able to accurately explain many of the new ideas that they had learned over the past couple of months!



Students from environmental clubs at the 10 schools around the East Nimba Nature Reserve take part in the Interschool Challenge

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