

**Liberia**  
**East Nimba Nature Reserve Forest Conservation Project**

**News from the Field**

**August 2015**  
**Conservation International**

**Attaining the Free and Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) of Communities Living Around the East Nimba Nature Reserve**

The success of biodiversity conservation depends on whether conservation efforts actually improve the living standards of local communities. You have to first understand and document the needs and priorities of communities. Over the past several months, CI has been holding meetings with members of the Yollowee and Gonakoli communities, who live around the East Nimba Nature Reserve (ENNR).



Attaining FPIC from communities  
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Reducing human impact on nature is crucial if communities are to continue benefitting from the blessings of nature in the long term. This requires changing the way communities live, and to this end CI has been engaging with communities in an extremely important process called 'Free, Prior, Informed Consent' or FPIC. The central idea behind FPIC is that people living in Nimba should give or withhold their consent for any action that would affect their lands.

In order for CI to continue negotiating Conservation Agreements with communities, our focus of this quarter has been on attaining FPIC in the two communities. The process has been highly collaborative and the communities have shown a strong willingness to work hand-in-hand with CI to achieve conservation objectives.

**Education and Awareness around the East Nimba Nature Reserve**

*Environmental Clubs within the Primary Schools*

CI has established environmental clubs in 10 schools around the East Nimba Nature Reserve with the intention of promoting biodiversity conservation among primary school students. We have developed a curriculum that covers an array of topics including deforestation, climate change, and endangered species, and the clubs have proven to be incredibly popular. Given the success of this initiative, CI is looking for opportunities to increase the number of environmental clubs in schools with the hope that the program might be active across all schools in Nimba.

### *Theater Troops Deliver Conservation Message*

Theater is often used as an important tool to convey important messages in Liberia. CI has partnered with a local theater troop and developed a series of different dramas that involve singing, dancing, and storytelling. The theatre troops conducted performances on a range of different topics including ones that help explain the impacts of farming, fishing, hunting, and alluvial mining on the environment. These plays were performed in a number of towns during the last quarter, and were well received in all of the towns where the troops performed.



Cultural troops performing in Nimba

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### **Conservation Forum in association with the Nimba County Community College**

Human resources in the areas of forestry, natural resource management, and biodiversity conservation are desperately needed. CI is partnering with the Nimba County Community College (NCCC) to support students who are studying different environmental disciplines including forestry and natural resources management. Part of this support is the Conservation Forum, which provides an environment for students to interact with respected professionals from the natural resource and forestry sectors. The goal is to inspire a new generation of environmental professionals. We held a number of Conservation Forum meetings during the last quarter.



A village on the border of the East Nimba Nature Reserve

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Students from the college are also being offered internships with CI. We currently have two interns, and it is our hope that we will be able to bring on more interns in future.

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