

The Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL) Holds Two day workshop with Villagers in Western Liberia.

The Role of the local community in forest management

Mr. Thomas O. Gonda, Township Commissioner of Beh –Gonda zone presenting on behalf of the Commissioner of Gola Konneh District spoke on THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY IN FOREST MANAGEMENT. He advice that local Authority should avoid the abuse of power and encouraged broad base decision making which will help in bringing unity to the District. He also called on hunters, fisherman and women to help manage the trees of Gola because “medicinal plants are very helpful to people’s health therefore; it is up to us to protect them”. He also order that people stop using chemicals to fish as it destroys the aquatic life and advised that they learn to accept ideas from other people in the management of the forest. He however encouraged SCNL to help them with alternative means for livelihood.

For his part, the Town chief of Kongbor, Mr. Raymond Kpoto said, ‘our resources are being exploited without us reaping benefit, now SCNL is guiding us on how to manage our forest, let us therefore work with them’.

The usual procedure of registration of participants was done and followed by the recap of day one activities by Mr. Woloba M. Sumo, Community Mobilization Officer of SCNL. Thereafter, group presentation of SWOT analysis on local community’s current activities around the Gola Forest was made. Mr. J. Alex Musa a representative of Kongba District Development Council presented on behalf of group 1, while Mr. Lawrence G. Musa the School representative from Kongbor presented for group 2.

GROUP WORK AND PRESENTATION

Mr. Amos D. Paye, Special Assistant to the Executive Director of Farmer Associated to Conserve the Environment (FACE) facilitating the workshop divided the participants into two groups to discuss and analyze current activities of local communities around the Gola forest.

The two groups were headed by two Commissioners, Mr. Amos Musa of Gola Konneh District who headed Group 1 and Mr. David Zoe of Kongba District headed Group 2.

STRENGTH

1. Own the forest
2. Have knowledge of the forest
3. Have the man power to protect the forest

Lack of management skills

Lack of funding for management

Lack of sincerity

Lack of communication

Weakness

OPPORTUNITIES

1. Good health facilities
2. Good roads network
3. Quality education
4. Communication
5. Safe drinking water
6. Improved agricultural activities
7. Job opportunities
8. Free border movement (improved border movement)
9. Construction of communities centers

THREATS

1. Pit-sawing
2. Illegal hunting
3. Illicit mining
4. Shifting cultivation
5. Water pollution
6. Burning of char coal for living
7. Bad road condition
8. Illegal settlement
9. Insecurity (Porous border, lack of immigration and constant Police patrol)

STRATEGIES AND WAY FORWARD

The participants presented problems and recommended solutions and targeted individuals and authorities to be contacted to help solve these problems.

Strategies (way forward)

Threats	Agent(s) responsible	Recommended solution (s)
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Pit-sawing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community - Forestry Development Authority (FDA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitor forest activities. - Report illegal activities to FDA. - Set forest aside. - Regulates all forest activities.
Illegal Hunting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community - Forestry Development Authority (FDA) - Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stop all trapping. - Set forest aside. - Arrest, confiscate and auction all illegal bush-meat. - Issue licenses to all potential hunters and register fire arms (single-barrels). - Empower hunters in animals' husbandry.
Illicit mining	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ministry of Lands, Mines & Energy - Community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Issue licenses to all individual miners and especially concessionaires - Arrest, confiscate and persecute all illegal miners. - Stop illegal miners from operating within their community (forests).
Shifting Cultivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide improved method of farming for local farmers - Introduce corporative /merchandize farming
Water Pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community - MOA - Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Report the use of pollutants (eg. Chemicals). - Encourage the use of nets and lines in fishing. - Set time for fishing at a specific site or area - Train fisher men in fish pond raising - Arrest, confiscate and persecute the illegal of pollutants (chemicals)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regulate the use and importation of chemicals (especially pollutants) into the country.
Char coal burning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community - Forestry Development Authority (FDA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourage the use of wood from cultivated farms and fallen trees. - Issue char coal producers licenses. - Arrest, confiscate and auction char coal from unlicensed char coal sellers
Bad roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ministry of Public Works (MPW) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Construct roads and rehabilitate existing ones
Insecurity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ministry of Justice and Defense 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved security network.
Illegal settlements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community and Ministry of Internal Affairs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Abolish illegal settlements.

ACHIEVEMENTS/OUTPUT

As a result of the two days workshop SCNL successfully introduced Across the River to the combined communities of Kongba and Gola Konneh Districts. The two District Commissioners along with Mr. Sengbeh McGill general town Chief of Jenneh Mana, Mr. Thomas O. Gonda, General Clan Chief Commissioner do a presentation on **The Role of the local community in forest management.**

WORKSHOP ACTIVITIES IN JENNEH MANA TOWN



Workshop Participants



Chiefs and Elders



District Commissioner Amos Musa



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