

**EXPERT WORKSHOP ON INTEGRATING
PROTECTED AREAS INTO WIDER
LAND- AND SEASCAPES, 2ND TO 4TH
NOVEMBER, 2008, VILM, GERMANY**

**A Presentation on Step No. 3 of the PA Integration
Process (Assessing protected area coverage and
management effectiveness, assessing other types of
conservation)**

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▪ LIBERIA'S EXAMPLE

- Brief background of Liberia
- Located in the Upper Guinean Forest Region of West Africa, spans an area of 111,370 square kilometers, neighbors are Sierra Leone on the west, Guinea on the northeast, Cote d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast) in the east, and the Atlantic Ocean on the west and south.
- The country was founded in 1822 through an effort to resettle free American slaves in West Africa, declared independence in 1847, is Africa's oldest republic. Present population is 3.5 million.
- Brief history of conservation
- 1950's to 1960's national legislative enactment established the Bureau of Forest Conservation which later evolved into the Forestry Development Authority in 1976. This is the agency I work with.
- Protected Area Network
- Liberia still has 4.52 hectares of forest area, and the government has committed itself to setting aside 30% or about 1.5 million ha for protection. At present only about 4.6% has been formally gazetted in two protected areas (Sapo National Park; 180,000 ha, and East Nimba Nature Reserve; 13,500 ha). Preparation is underway for the declaration of three additional areas.
- Mission of the PA Network
- To Conserve and manage Liberia's unique biological diversity and ecosystem services with stakeholders' (including local communities) involvement in the management system in a way that ensures sustainable benefits, cultural values, and poverty reduction.

Objectives of the Network

- To conserve and carefully manage Liberia's rich and unique biodiversity
- Secure the long-term quality and supply of ecosystem services (including carbon sequestration) for the benefit and improvement of human wellbeing.
- Ensure the fair and equitable distribution of benefits provided by environmental goods and services for the people of Liberia
- Protect Liberia's cultural heritage and values.

PA Network Opportunities

- Liberia has the largest and relatively continuous portion of the Upper Guinean Forest Hotspot (about 42% of what still remains in West Africa, in two blocks).
- A number of globally endangered species still exists in Liberia, (e.g. Chimpanzees, Pygmy hippopotamus, Jentink's duiker, forest elephants, Liberian mongoose, etc) which makes the country the last stronghold of these species.
- There remains a strong international interest in Liberia's biodiversity; several international and bilateral institutions are helping the country in its recovery programs following 14 years of civil conflict.
- There is political will of government to sustainably conserve and manage the forest sector (e.g. setting aside 30% of forested land as a network of PAs)
- PA Network has the potential to reduce poverty through improving the quality of life for communities bordering PAs, such as (employment, alternative livelihood programs, cottage industry, tourism, etc).
- The Network provides important opportunities for research and recreation.
- PAs Management effectiveness
- Policies and legal framework have been formulated providing for the conservation of natural resources – range from national laws, regulations and commitment to uphold international conventions we are signatory to, such as CITES, CBD, RAMSAR, etc.
- National Forest Policy and Forest Management Strategy in place and being implemented through three pillars (called the 3C's approach): Commercial, Conservation, and Community forestry.
- Annual budgetary allotment made for PA management
- Capacity of management staff is built through logistical support of government and partner NGOs and through training.
- Partner NGOs particularly Conservation International and Fauna and Flora International support alternative livelihood programs in affected communities.
- Stakeholders (including local communities, policy makers, CSOs, youth) are involved in PA establishment and management, beginning at the initial stage through awareness creation, assessment/data collection; consultations at various levels, employment, etc.
- Communities existing in an area prior to PA establishment are not relocated but form part of the management system to give them the sense of ownership and belonging and enhance their participation and cooperation.

Management Effectiveness

- A Technical Manager for Forest Conservation has the oversight of overall PA management.
- The Manager for Protected Area Management formulates programs for and supervises the work of field staff; chief park wardens control the day to day operations of PA staff (including law enforcement, community engagement, etc)
- Wildlife Management Division headed by a manager, shoulders all wildlife management responsibilities, including formulation of laws and regulations for regulating wildlife usage (e.g. bush meat hunting and trade, trophy hunting and export, permit and license system, etc)
- The Awareness and Ecotourism Division of the Conservation Department is responsible for public education regarding the Network and ecotourism, including designing and printing awareness materials such as brochures, posters, billboards, t-shirts, stickers, calendars as well as radio and TV talk shows, conservation education program in schools. Ecotourism has not yet resumed after the war.

Other types of conservation

- Nature conservation practices were long in effect in Liberia before conventional methods were known. Every tribe in rural Liberia practices traditional conservation in any of the following ways that have saved some forest ecosystems and animal species over the years.
- Sacred bush (Poro society for men and Sandi society for women) used as bush schools to train youth the norms of society. It is a taboo to cut down trees or hunt animals in these forests managed through traditional laws. There are grave consequences for contravention.
- Burial grounds – grave yards are never brushed for farms or other purposes
- Ancestral homes- certain forest areas may be known as home of the ancestors and as such are not tempered with. There is one in my village which has always been there before and since I was born.
- Certain animals may be considered a taboo for certain tribes or family line hence are never hunted or eaten by those people (may be fish, antelopes, birds, reptiles, rodents or just any kind of animal).
- Spring head – a patch of forest over the source of water may be protected by traditional law.
- Road shelter bush – Some tribes in Liberia when they cut the forest for farms always leave a strip of bush along the sides of major roads between towns for shelter from the sun.
- **THANK YOU.**

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**A Presentation on Step No. 3 of the PA Integration Process (Assessing Protected Area
Coverage and Management Effectiveness, Assessing Other Types of Conservation)**

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LIBERIA'S EXAMPLE

Brief background of Liberia

- ❖ Located in the Upper Guinean Forest Region of West Africa, spans an area of 111,370 square kilometers, neighbors are Sierra Leone on the west, Guinea on the northeast, Cote d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast) in the east, and the Atlantic Ocean on the west and south.
- ❖ The country was founded in 1822 through an effort to resettle free American slaves in West Africa, declared independence in 1847, is Africa's oldest republic. Present population is 3.5 million.

Brief history of conservation

- ❖ 1950's to 1960's national legislative enactment established the Bureau of Forest Conservation which later evolved into the Forestry Development Authority (FDA) in 1976.

Protected Area Network

- ❖ Liberia still has 4.52 hectares of forest area, and the government has committed itself to setting aside 30% or about 1.5 million ha for protection. At present only about 4.6% has been formally gazetted in two protected areas (Sapo National Park; 180,000 ha, and East Nimba Nature Reserve; 13,500 ha). Preparation is underway for the declaration of three additional areas latest next year.

Mission of the PA Network

- ❖ To Conserve and manage Liberia's unique biological diversity and ecosystem services with stakeholders' (including local communities) involvement in the management system in a way that ensures sustainable benefits, cultural values, and poverty reduction.

Objectives of the Network

- ❖ To conserve and carefully manage Liberia's rich and unique biodiversity
- ❖ Secure the long-term quality and supply of ecosystem services (including carbon sequestration) for the benefit and improvement of human wellbeing.
- ❖ Ensure the fair and equitable distribution of benefits provided by environmental goods and services for the people of Liberia
- ❖ Protect Liberia's cultural heritage and values.

PA Network Opportunities

1. Liberia has the largest and relatively continuous portion of the Upper Guinean Forest Hotspot (about 42% of what still remains in West Africa, in two blocks).
2. A number of globally endangered species still exists in Liberia, (e.g. Chimpanzees, Pygmy hippopotamus, Jentink's duiker, forest elephants, Liberian mongoose, etc) which makes the country the last stronghold of these species.
3. There remains a strong international interest in Liberia's biodiversity; several international and bilateral institutions are helping the country in its recovery programs following 14 years of civil conflict.
4. There is political will of government to sustainably conserve and manage the forest sector (e.g. setting aside 30% of forested land as a network of PAs)
5. PA Network has the potential to reduce poverty through improving the quality of life for communities bordering PAs, such as (employment, alternative livelihood programs, cottage industry, tourism, etc).
6. The Network provides important opportunities for research and recreation.
7. Opportunities exist for collaboration with neighboring states for transboundary forest management.

PAs Management effectiveness

- ❖ Policies and legal framework have been formulated providing for the conservation of natural resources – range from national laws, regulations and government commitment to uphold international conventions we are signatory to, e.g. CITES, CBD, RAMSAR, etc.
- ❖ National Forest Policy and Forest Management Strategy in place and being implemented through three pillars (called the 3C's approach): Commercial, Conservation, and Community forestry.
- ❖ Annual budgetary allotment made for PA management
- ❖ Capacity of management staff is built through logistical support of government and partner NGOs and through training.
- ❖ Partner NGOs and bilateral agencies particularly the USAID, Conservation International and Fauna and Flora International support alternative livelihood programs in affected communities.
- ❖ Stakeholders (including local communities, policy makers, CSOs, youth) are involved in PA establishment and management, beginning at the initial stage through awareness creation, assessment/data collection; consultations at various levels, employment, etc.

- ❖ Communities existing in an area prior to PA establishment are not relocated but form part of the management system to give them the sense of ownership and belonging and enhance their participation and cooperation.
- ❖ A Technical Manager for Forest Conservation has the oversight of overall PA management.
- ❖ A Manager for Protected Area Management formulates programs for and supervises the work of field staff, chief park wardens control the day to day operations of PA staff (including law enforcement, community engagement, etc)
- ❖ Wildlife Management Division headed by a manager, (yours truly) shoulders all wildlife management responsibilities, including formulation of laws and regulations for regulating wildlife usage (e.g. bush meat hunting and trade, pet keeping, trophy hunting and export, permit and license system, etc)
- ❖ The Awareness and Ecotourism Division of the Conservation Department is responsible for public education regarding the Network and ecotourism, including designing and printing awareness materials such as brochures, posters, billboards, t-shirts, stickers, calendars as well as radio and TV talk shows, conservation education program in schools. Ecotourism has not yet resumed after the war.

Challenges

- ❖ Budgetary constraints
- ❖ Inadequate number of staff
- ❖ Illegal occupation of Sapo National Park (the first park) by miners/hunters

The COPAN Project

- ❖ Means Consolidation of Protected Areas Network
- ❖ Is for the establishment and development of three additional PAs
- ❖ Funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) through the World Bank (WB) In the amount of more than USD \$750,000

Objectives

- ❖ To create and test mechanism for ensuring financial sustainability for the Network
- ❖ Implement alternative livelihood program for affected communities
- ❖ Improve institutional capacity for PA management

Components

- ❖ Strengthening of FDA conservation department and EPA environment monitoring unit
- ❖ Consolidation of PA management instruments
- ❖ Creation of new PAs
- ❖ Development of alternative e livelihood programs
- ❖ Project management

Launch of project

- ❖ October 18, 2008 by the Vice President of Liberia.

Other types of conservation

Nature conservation practices were long in effect in Liberia before conventional methods were known. Every tribe in rural Liberia practices traditional conservation in any of the

following ways that have saved some forest ecosystems and animal species over the years.

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