



**REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA
FORESTRY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (FDA)**



**DRAFT GAZETTEMENT PACKAGE FOR THE
ESTABLISHMENT OF KWA NATIONAL PARK**

Prepared by:

Forestry Development Authority (FDA)

*The Statutory Authority Responsible for Forest and Protected Area Management in the
Republic of Liberia*

Updated June 9, 2026

Monrovia, Liberia

Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
List of Figures.....	3
List of Annexes.....	4
I. Executive Summary.....	7
II. Introduction.....	13
III. Background and description of policies, laws and instruments guiding the establishment and development of Protected Areas in Liberia.....	14
3.1 History and background of Liberia’s forest and conservation management initiatives.....	14
3.2 International Instruments.....	16
i) International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN):.....	16
ii) Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD):.....	17
iii) The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC):.....	17
iv) International Timber Trade Agreement (2006).....	18
v) Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1984) ..	18
vi) African Convention for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (1968).....	18
vii) Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Treaty (1975).....	19
viii) ECOWAS Forest convergence plan (2013).....	19
ix) Strategy on Combating Illegal Exploitation and Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora in Africa (2015).....	20
x) West Africa Strategy on Combating Wildlife Crime (2020).....	20
3.3 National Instruments:.....	20
i) Constitution of Liberia (1986).....	21
ii) Forests Act, 1953.....	21
iii) Act Creating the Forestry Development Authority (FDA Act 1976).....	22
iv) Act for the Establishment of a Protected Forest Area Network (2003).....	22
v) The National Environmental Policy (2002).....	22
vi) Environmental Protection and Management Law (2002).....	23
vii) National Forestry Reform Law (2006).....	23
viii) Community Rights Law (2006).....	23
ix) Forestry Development Authority Regulations to the Community Rights Law with Respect to Forest Lands (2017).....	23
x) The Land Rights Act (2018).....	24
xi) An Act adopting the National Wildlife Conservation and Protected Area Management (The Wildlife Law of 2010).....	24
xii) Freedom of Information Act (2010).....	24
xiii) The Act creating the Sapo National Park (1983).....	25

xiv) The Act Establishing the East Nimba Nature Reserve (2011).....	25
xv) An Act Establishing the Gola Forest National Park (2017).....	25
xvi) An Act Establishing the Grebo-Krahn National Park (2017).....	25
xvii) Voluntary Partner Agreements with the EU (single countries)	25
xviii) Guidelines for the Gazettement of Protected Areas in Liberia (2022)	26
IV) Summary of pre-gazettelement activities and baseline studies: Justifying the designation of Proposed Kwa as a National Park	26
4.1 Background of the Protected Area Network	26
4.2 History of Proposed Kwa National Park.....	28
4.3 Location, size and boundaries of the Kwa National Park	31
4.4 Metes and Bounds.....	32
4.5 Summary of Fauna and Flora Assessment	37
Summary of demographic surveys and anthropogenic activities assessment	41
Summary of the community, regional and national consultations	43
Conclusion and Recommendations.....	49

List of Figures

Figure 1: Map of protected and proposed protected areas in Liberia.	22
Figure 2: Map showing the Proposed Kwa National Park (in green) inside the Krahn-Bassa National Forest (in stripes) where baseline surveys and the feasibility study took place, covering an area of 290,167 ha.	23
Figure 3: Map showing the location and the adjusted boundaries of Kwa National Park, now covering 236,246 hectares.	24
Figure 4: Kwa National Park with surrounding community forests and Forest Management Contracts/logging concessions.	24
Figure 5: Map showing the location of Kwa National Park with county boundaries.	25
Figure 6: Map showing the major rivers found in and around Kwa National Park.	25
Figure 7: Map showing transect layout for the baseline wildlife survey (top left). Spatial distribution maps of species listed vulnerable and above (top right), chimpanzees (bottom left) and elephants (bottom right).	32
Figure 8: Map showing villages within the PKNP study area with point size a function of population size.	33
Figure 9: Population densities within the PKNP study zone per County (top) and District (bottom).	34

List of Annexes

- Annex 1:** Minutes of the Inception Meeting: Creating a Protected Area in the Krahn-Bassa National Forest (2016)
- Annex 2a:** Demographic survey to assess the conservation potential of the Proposed Kwa National Park (2017)
- Annex 2b:** Socio-Economic Baseline Survey of the Proposed Kwa National Park (2017)
- Annex 2c:** Baseline Wildlife and Anthropogenic Survey in the Proposed Kwa National Park (2017)
- Annex 3a:** Inception Report – Conduct Biodiversity Baseline Survey and Socio-Economic Study for Proposed Kwa National Park under the Liberia Forest Sector Project of the Forestry Development Authority (2017)
- Annex 3b:** Progress Report – Conduct Biodiversity Baseline Survey and Socio-Economic Study for Proposed Kwa National Park under the Liberia Forest Sector Project of the Forestry Development Authority (2019)
- Annex 4:** Final Report – Conduct Biodiversity Baseline Survey and Socio-Economic Study for Proposed Kwa National Park under the Liberia Forest Sector Project of the Forestry Development Authority (2019)
- Annex 5:** FDA Board Resolution Approving the Continuation of the Pre-GazetteMENT Activities for Proposed Kwa National Park (2019)
- Annex 6:** Report on the Exchange Study Tour between Stakeholders from Proposed Kwa National Park and Grebo-Krahn National Park
- Annex 7:** Report on National Multi-Stakeholder Information-Sharing Meeting on the GazetteMENT of Proposed Kwa National Park (2020)
- Annex 8a:** Report on the Theater Research Tour conducted around Proposed Kwa National Park (2020)
- Annex 8b:** Report on the Theater Tour around Proposed Kwa National Park (2021)
- Annex 9:** Report on High-Level Awareness Mission around Proposed Kwa National Park (2021)
- Annex 10:** Report on the Legislative Forest Dialogue on Proposed Kwa National Park (2022)
- Annex 11a:** Report on the Community Engagement and Consultation Conducted around Proposed Kwa National Park (2023)
- Annex 11b:** Attendance Sheets and Minutes for the Community Consultation around Proposed Kwa National Park (2020-2023)
- Annex 12a:** Report on Participatory Land Use Mapping conducted with the communities around Proposed Kwa National Park (2023)
- Annex 12b:** Attendance Sheets, Minutes and Maps for the Participatory Land Use Mapping around Proposed Kwa National Park (2021-2023)
- Annex 13:** Signed Consent Forms for the Establishment of Kwa National Park and the harmonized boundaries (2023)

- Annex 14:** Report in Participatory Flagging conducted with the communities around Proposed Kwa National Park (2023)
- Annex 15a:** Livelihood assessment for Proposed Kwa Host Communities (2023)
- Annex 15b:** Draft Livelihood Strategy for Kwa National Park (2023)
- Annex 16a:** Field report on the Co-Management Workshops with Communities around Proposed Kwa National Park (2023)
- Annex 16b:** Signed Co-Management Commitment Forms (2023)
- Annex 16c:** Draft Co-Management Framework for the Future Kwa National Park (2023)
- Annex 17a:** Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (2023)
- Annex 17b:** Environmental Permit (2023)
- Annex 18:** List of species of Fauna and Flora recorded at Proposed Kwa National Park
- Annex 19:** Draft Gazettement Act for the Establishment of Kwa National Park

Acronyms:

CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CLF	Customary Land Formalization
COPAN	Consolidation of Protected Area Network
CW	Conservation Works activity project
EXPAN	Expansion of the Protected Area Network
FDA	Forestry Development Authority
GoL	Government of Liberia
GP	Gazette Package
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
KBPPA	Krahn-Bassa Proposed Protected Area
LLA	Liberia Land Authority
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MME	Ministry of Mines and Energy
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NF	National Forest
NFRL	National Forestry Reform Law of Liberia
NP	National Park
NTFP	Non-Timber Forest Product
PA	Protected Area
PAN	Protected Area Network
PKNP	Proposed Kwa National Park
REDD	Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNREDD	United Nations REDD Programme
WCF	Wild Chimpanzee Foundation

I. Executive Summary

The constitution of the Republic of Liberia, particularly Article 7, mandates the government to manage and utilize the nation's natural resources in a manner that advances the general welfare of its citizens and promotes sustainable development. In fulfillment of this constitutional obligation, the Government of Liberia (GoL) has consistently recognized the ecological, economic, and social importance of the country's forests and biodiversity. Since its establishment in 1976, the Forestry Development Authority (FDA) has been vested with the statutory responsibility to “*sustainably manage, conserve, and protect Liberia's forest resources for the benefit of present and future generations*”. In carrying out this mandate, the FDA collaborates with national institutions, local communities, development partners, and international conservation organizations.

The enactment of the National Forestry Reform Law (NFRL) of 2006 reaffirmed the Authority's responsibility for establishing and managing a Protected Area Network (PAN), covering at least thirty percent (30%) of Liberia's forest estate, back then representing 1.5 million hectares. In furtherance of this mandate, the FDA, with financial support from the Government of Norway through the Liberia Forest Sector Project (LFSP), managed by the World Bank, and with additional support from other partners, initiated and completed the pre-gazette processes for several Proposed Protected Areas, including the Proposed Kwa National Park (PKNP), located within the Krahn-Bassa National Forest in Sinoe, Grand Gedeh, and Rivercess Counties.

Since 2016, the FDA has led a comprehensive series of scientific studies, consultations, participatory mapping exercises, boundary harmonization activities, and stakeholder engagements in accordance with the NFRL 2006, the Act Establishing the Protected Forest Areas Network (2003), the Wildlife Conservation and Protected Area Management Law (2016), the Land Rights Act (LRA) of 2018, and the Guidelines for the Gazettement of Protected Areas in Liberia (2022). Technical and financial support for these processes was provided by the Wild Chimpanzee Foundation (WCF), the Great Ape Conservation Fund of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund, and other partners.

The completion of these processes has demonstrated that the establishment of **Kwa National Park** is ecologically, socially, economically, and legally justified. Consequently, this Gazettement Package presents the evidence and justification for the formal establishment of Kwa National Park as part of Liberia's Protected Area Network.

Following the establishment of the Sapo National Park in 1983, East Nimba Nature Reserve in 2003, Lake Piso Sustainable Multiple Use Reserve in 2011, the gazette of Gola Forest National Park in 2016, and gazette of Grebo-Krahn National Park in 2017, the FDA has prioritized the establishment of the Proposed Kwa National Park, as a critical component of Liberia's commitment to conserve at least thirty percent (30%) of its remaining forest cover.

Located west of the Tai-Grebo-Krahn-Sapo (TGKS) Transboundary Forest Complex, PKNP represents an important ecological extension of one of the largest remaining blocks of Upper Guinean rainforest. Since 2009, the Government of Liberia, through the FDA, has actively participated in regional transboundary conservation initiatives with the Republic of Côte

d'Ivoire aimed at ensuring the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable management of shared ecosystems while improving the livelihoods of local communities. The inclusion of PKNP within this broader landscape will strengthen ecological connectivity, enhance transboundary conservation efforts, and contribute to regional peace and security.

This draft Gazettement Package (GP) summarizes the scientific studies, consultations, participatory processes, and institutional arrangements undertaken by the FDA and presents the basis for the enactment of legislation establishing Kwa National Park.

Summary of Major Findings

- i. ***Political and transboundary importance:*** The location of PKNP West of the TGKS forest complex represents a crucial extension of this complex, providing additional habitat to threatened and endemic key species. Launched in 2009, the FDA has been working alongside its counterparts in Côte d'Ivoire to manage the complex for the “conservation of biodiversity and participatory sustainable management of natural resources of the ecosystems of the TGKS forest complex while taking into account the well-being of the local populations”. The establishment of the KNP is politically supported in an area that suffers often from civil unrest, and where over the past years uncontrolled immigration of foreign cocoa farmers and miners has increased the risk of conflict. KNP will contribute to help controlling cross-border illegal trades of Liberia's natural resources, as well as the uncontrolled immigration. Efforts to establish landscape corridors between the western, central and eastern parts of the TGKS forest complex, KNP's vicinity to Sapo National Park and its connection to Cestos-Senkwehn PPA are crucial for the entire southeastern forest complex and existing transboundary initiatives.

- ii. ***Outstanding Biodiversity Value (Fauna and flora presence):*** Scientific surveys and ecological assessments have confirmed that PKNP is among the most biologically diverse landscapes in Liberia. Results from nationwide surveys and ecological modeling have identified PKNP as the most diverse area for biodiversity in the whole of Liberia (Junker et al. 2015) and that it is a biodiversity hotspot within a hotspot. Specific KNP biodiversity surveys conducted between 2016 and 2019 (WCF 2017, 2019), as well as results from community Eco-guard patrols from 2020 to 2026 have shown that KNP is home to the second largest populations of the critically endangered West African chimpanzee, as well as a very large population of critically endangered forest elephant, the endangered pygmy hippopotamus, vulnerable leopards, and various threatened monkey and duiker species, to name a few. Furthermore, the results from biological rapid assessments in various taxonomic groups, such as plants, birds, amphibians and reptiles, butterflies and beetles, have identified several new species to science of trees (4 species, Jongkind 2019), and frogs (2 species, Rödel et al. 2019). The beetle survey has identified a large number of first country records, and the total number of species found during the surveys is not yet known. In total, the various surveys showed that KNP hosts more than 411 species of fauna of different kinds of taxonomic groups, excluding the beetles (39 species of mammals, 110 species of birds, 15 species of reptiles, 36 species of amphibians, 209 species of butterflies). These species include 30 species of conservation concern, which are species listed as threatened (critically endangered, endangered or vulnerable) on the IUCN Red list (IUCN 2023) and many of which are endemic to the Upper Guinea forest ecosystem. For the floral aspect, the surveys confirmed the presence of 344 species of plants. A full list of faunal and floral species so far observed at KNP is presented in Annex 17, while full biodiversity baseline reports can be found in annexes 2c, 3b and 4. The biomonitoring surveys identified four areas of very High Conservation Value Areas (HCVAs) within KNP, in terms of density of key species, such as the critically endangered West African chimpanzee and forest elephant. The four areas with the highest conservation priority inside KNP are located in Sinoe County (three locations): 1. along the road from Buchanan to Jacksonville, 2. around Shaw David, 3. Seekon District (at the level of Seekon Pellokon Community Forest), and 4. in Grand Gedeh County (entire northeastern side of KNP). These areas must be prioritized for future

protection, in order to protect KNP's key biodiversity, and also considering the fact that in these are areas with the highest chimpanzee and elephant density, if they are not protected, human encroachment will inevitably lead to substantial human-wildlife conflicts.

- iii. **Socio-economic Context:** An estimated number of approximately 26,698 people live within 75 towns and villages that are located within 5km around the proposed KNP. Ninety percent of these villages have a population below 600 people. The main results demonstrate that there are three main ethnic groups living in and around KNP: Krahn, Kru and Bassa, and that 96.62% are Christian. Only 30.11% had lived in these towns/villages their whole lives, suggesting a trend towards inward migration. Literacy levels were slightly above the national average, though women tended to be less literate than men (22.86% compared to 51.43% respectively).
Detailed socio-economic baseline reports led in communities around the KNP can be found in Annexes 2b, 3b and 4.

- iv. **Community Consultations and Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC):** Between 2016 and 2026, the FDA conducted extensive consultations with communities, local authorities, line ministries, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders. Participatory land-use planning and awareness activities culminated in seventy-eight communities granting their Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) for the establishment of **Kwa National Park** and the agreed harmonized boundaries. These consultations were conducted in collaboration with the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA)/Local Government, Liberia Land Authority (LLA), and WCF. Besides the 75 communities located within 5km around Kwa National Park, additional 24 towns were included in the engagement activities, considering their importance as towns leading community clusters. In total, 78 towns gave their Free Informed Prior Consent (FPIC) and approval for the creation of the national park. This is proven through signed community consent forms, which also show consent to the harmonized boundaries, as identified through the participatory land use mapping with local communities. County and district authorities, as well as representatives from other key government institutions, such as MIA, LLA and Ministry of Mines and Energy (MME) and observers from national Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) witnessed the consultation meetings and also signed the consent forms. The scans of these consent forms are available in Annex 13. At the regional level, an initial awareness tour was conducted in May 2020, and final consultations in June 2026. The regional consultation was led by FDA targeted the County and District authorities, including representatives from other key ministries, such as the Environmental Protection Agency, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Mines and Energy, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, and Ministry of Public Works. The national consultation targeted key stakeholders from other government institutions, legislature, national and international NGOs, CSOs, and academia. An initial multi-stakeholder information-sharing meeting was held in December 2020 (Annex 7). Other major national consultation meetings were held through a legislative forest in November 2022 (Annex 10) and a final national consultation was held in June 2023. *The detailed report on all community, regional, and national consultation is available in Annex 11a.*

- v. **Co-management & Benefit Sharing:** A key result of the various consultations and also a request made by the national legislature was the development of a draft co-management framework for Kwa National Park, including a draft benefit-sharing

framework and a draft Feedback Grievance Redress Mechanism. Based on the request from national legislature, these drafts are the result from intense consultation starting with an independent consultation with local communities and further consultation with government and other national and international key stakeholders. The drafts were developed by an independent national consultant and can serve as the basis for the management plan and the co-management structure to be developed after the gazettelement of Kwa National Park. *The field report for the co-management consultation, the signed forms from the local communities committing to the future co-management of Kwa National Park as well as the draft Co-Management Framework can be found in Annexes 16a, b and c.*

- vi. **Sustainable Livelihood Opportunities:** Assessments undertaken by the Forestry Development Authority identified opportunities for sustainable livelihood interventions, including conservation enterprises, agricultural intensification, ecotourism development, research, community ecoguard programs, and other income-generating activities aimed at improving food security and enhancing community resilience. Several socio-economic studies (Annexes 2b, 3b and 4), the information from the co-management workshops (Annexes 16a and c), as well as a specific livelihood assessment (Annex 15a) helped to develop a draft livelihood opportunity, which is the basis for sustainable livelihood programs with local communities, based on their preferences. Besides direct employment through partly already ongoing programs, infrastructure development, will increase the development and economic benefits for the local population, besides providing unique opportunities for capacity building.
- vii. **Sustainable financing Opportunities:** Kwa National Park possesses considerable potential for long-term financial sustainability through REDD+, carbon markets, payments for ecosystem services, biodiversity finance, ecotourism, and support from conservation trust funds and development partners. These payments for ecosystem services are expected to be obtained for Kwa National Park, and initial funding to develop such programs after the gazettelement is available.
- viii. **Boundary lines Delineation, Location and Harmonization:** The final boundaries of Kwa National Park were established through participatory land-use mapping, extensive community consultations, and boundary flagging exercises. In response to these concerns, mining concessions, farms, settlements, sacred sites, and other culturally significant areas were excluded from the proposed park. Natural features, including the Dugbe River, Gwen Creek, and Siani Creek, were incorporated into sections of the boundary to improve clarity and minimize future conflicts. The various surveys and feasibility studies (for summary see Annex 4), defined the initial boundaries of Proposed Kwa National Park (PKNP) within Krahn-Bassa National Forest. Through the intense consultation with the local communities from 2020 to 2026 (Annexes 11a and b), the participatory land use mapping from 2021 to 2023 (Annexes 12a and b), and the participatory flagging of the boundary in 2023 (Annex 14) after the communities consented to the harmonized boundary, allowed to define the boundaries for Kwa National Park. During this process, the boundary line was adjusted based on the requests of the local communities. The areas of farms, towns and settlements, and one scared forest were excluded from the Kwa National Park and in some areas the proposed boundary was pushed to give more space to the local host communities and to fall behind some rivers, such as the Dubge River, Gwen Creek and Siani Creek.

- ix. ***Customary Land Formalization:*** Considering the Liberia Land Rights Act (LRA) 2018, communities around PKNP are entitled to go through the Customary Land Formalization (CLF) process and to obtain the deed for their land. The FDA signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with USAID which requires for the USAID-funded project Conservation Works activity to support the CLF process for the communities in and around PKNP. The MoU requires for the CLF to be done during the lifetime of the Liberia Forest Sector Project (LFSP). WCF, the entity contracted for the preparation of this GP, has had no influence on the CLF process, but it is anticipated that the process will start prior to the completion of the gazettelement process.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Based on the ecological, socio-economic, legal, and institutional evidence presented in this GP, the FDA concludes that the establishment of the Kwa National Park, located within the boundaries of the Krahn-Bassa National Forest/Proposed Kwa National Park is technically feasible, socially acceptable, environmentally necessary, and legally justified. The creation of the Park will contribute significantly to Liberia's national commitment to conserve at least thirty percent (30%) of its forest estate, strengthen climate change mitigation efforts, safeguard globally significant biodiversity, and promote sustainable development for present and future generations.

Accordingly, the FDA hereby recommends that the Draft Act Establishing Kwa National Park, attached as Annex 18, be submitted to the National Legislature of the Republic of Liberia for enactment.

II. Introduction

Liberia possesses one of the most significant remaining portions of the Upper Guinea Forest Ecosystem, harboring approximately forty-three percent (43%) of the remaining forest block, one of the most important biodiversity hotspots in the world, and supporting globally important biodiversity, critical ecosystem services, and substantial carbon stocks. These forests provide ecological, economic, and socio-cultural benefits at local, national, regional, and global levels, including climate change mitigation through carbon sequestration, watershed protection, biodiversity conservation, and the provision of livelihoods for forest-dependent communities.

Recognizing the strategic importance of these natural resources, the Government of Liberia, through the National Forestry Reform Law (2006), the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), and its commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), has adopted the national objective of placing at least thirty percent (30%) of Liberia's forest estate under an ecologically representative and effectively managed Protected Area Network. In accordance with the National Forestry Reform Law of 2006, the Forestry Development Authority (FDA) is the statutory institution mandated to establish, manage, and administer protected areas and to lead the legal processes necessary for their gazettelement.

To date, Liberia's Protected Area Network comprises five legally established protected areas: Sapo National Park (1983), East Nimba Nature Reserve (2003), Lake Piso Multiple Sustainable Use Reserve (2011), Gola Forest National Park (2016), and Grebo-Krahn National Park (2017). In furtherance of the Government's conservation agenda and the expansion of the national protected area estate, several additional landscapes have been identified as Proposed Protected Areas, including Wonnegizi, Wologizi, Foya, Kpo Mountains, Kwa, Cestos-Senkwehn, Grand Kru-River Gee, and Marshall Wetlands, where various stages of pre-gazettelement activities have been undertaken.

Through the Liberia Forest Sector Project (LFSP), with funds from the Government of Norway and management support of the World Bank, the Liberian Forestry Development Authority (FDA) is working relentlessly towards the establishment of new protected areas and their sustainable management, in order to ensure sustainable long-term benefits for biodiversity conservation and people.

Since September 2016, the FDA in collaboration with the Wild Chimpanzee Foundation (WCF) have been working closely together to conduct extensive demographic, socio-economic, biodiversity and threat assessments at Proposed Kwa National Park (PKNP), financed principally through the Liberia Forest Sector Project, confirmed the exceptional biological significance, ecological integrity, and conservation value of the landscape and demonstrated the suitability and necessity of establishing the area as Kwa National Park.

In accordance with the FDA Guidelines for the Establishment of Protected Areas in Liberia and consistent with the requirements of the National Forestry Reform Law, the Forestry Development Authority has led a comprehensive and participatory pre-gazettelement process for the proposed park. These activities have included stakeholder engagement and awareness campaigns, socio-economic studies, participatory land-use planning and mapping, consultations on the harmonization and validation of boundaries, Free, Prior and Informed

Consent (FPIC) processes, and participatory boundary flagging involving affected communities and relevant stakeholders.

The preparation of this Gazettement Package represents a critical milestone in the legal establishment of Kwa National Park and demonstrates the Forestry Development Authority's exercise of its statutory mandate to conserve Liberia's forest ecosystems for present and future generations. The declaration of Kwa National Park will contribute significantly to achieving Liberia's national target of conserving thirty percent (30%) of its forest cover, while simultaneously supporting the country's obligations under international environmental agreements, including the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Furthermore, Kwa National Park will secure one of Liberia's most ecologically diverse and unique forest landscapes, containing exceptional biodiversity and offering considerable opportunities for scientific research, environmental education, ecotourism development, and sustainable livelihood enhancement for adjacent communities. Through an inclusive co-management approach and equitable benefit-sharing mechanisms, local communities will remain integral partners in the management and stewardship of the park.

In addition, the conservation of Kwa National Park presents opportunities for long-term sustainable financing through emerging climate and biodiversity financing mechanisms, including nature-based carbon markets and other ecosystem service investments. The establishment of the park will therefore strengthen Liberia's position as a globally important forest nation and contribute meaningfully to international efforts aimed at combating biodiversity loss and mitigating climate change.

Accordingly, this Gazettement Package is submitted by the Forestry Development Authority as the competent authority responsible for the establishment, declaration, and management of protected areas in the **Republic of Liberia**, and serves as the basis for the legal creation and subsequent gazettelement of Kwa National Park.

III. Background and description of policies, laws and instruments guiding the establishment and development of Protected Areas in Liberia

3.1 History and background of Liberia's forest and conservation management initiatives

Liberia possesses one of the largest remaining blocks of the Upper Guinea Forest Ecosystem, a globally significant biodiversity hotspot recognized for its exceptional richness in flora and fauna, high levels of endemism, and critical ecosystem services. Scientific interest in Liberia's biodiversity dates back to the late nineteenth century when the first scientific collection of specimens from Liberia was done by Schweitzer, a German Naturalist, from 1875-1877, shortly followed by a Swiss Biologist, Johann Buttikofer, who collected specimens between 1879 and

1890. Much later, in the 1920s, Harvey S. Firestone sponsored the shipment of 500 plant specimens from Harbel (Firestone plantation) to the United States of America for museum collections, and soon after, Harvard zoologists (led by Glover Allen) conducted the first field studies on an array of insects, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals. It was not until 1951 that a first estimate of forest cover of Liberia was determined. A U.S. Army officer, Karl Meyr, interpreted aerial photographs and made some ground-truthing expeditions, from which he deduced that there was 3.6 million hectares of forest in Liberia. Following the global interest in Liberia's conservation and a new national interest in managing the exploitation of Liberia's forest, the Government of Liberia (GoL) took ownership of the governance of its forests by creating the Bureau of Forest Conservation and Wildlife in 1953 under the Act for the Conservation of Forests of the Republic of Liberia. This Act provided the authority to establish National Parks and other reserves.

Between 1964 and 1968, the German Government provided a technical assistance to the Government of Liberia to conduct a comprehensive inventory covering approximately 1.6 million hectares of Liberia's forest. The inventory confirmed the biological significance of Liberia's forests and documented many endemic and threatened fauna and flora species known today. Based on the results of the inventory, 11 National Forests (NF) were identified, all in need of conservation and sustainable forest management. The highest priorities were Sapo NF, Gola NF, Grebo NF and Krahn-Bassa NF, for which portion the latter is now to be designated as a national park.

The interest in protected and managed forest areas led to the establishment of the Forestry Development Authority (FDA) in 1976 and given the responsibility for conservation, recreational and wildlife resources, with the mandate to "sustainably manage and conserve all forest resources for the benefit of present and future generations". A Department of Wildlife and National Parks was created within the FDA to take on that main task. The World-Wide Fund for Nature and African Wildlife Fund provided many capacity building programs for the FDA to ensure they achieve their mandate. Then, in 1981, Liberia became a member of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural resources (IUCN) and also ratified the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES). This led to Liberia receiving a technical assistant, Jacques Verschuren, who conducted a nationwide tropical forest and wildlife survey, from which he identified seven critical habitats for future conservation initiatives and protection, and to be established as national parks. This was the beginning of the creation of Liberia's first National Park – Sapo National Park - established in 1983, initially protecting 130,800 hectares of primary forest. An original management plan for the Sapo NP was sponsored by the IUCN and WWF. Such momentum also saw the enactment of the Wildlife and National Parks Act (1988); further strengthened the legal framework for biodiversity conservation by providing specific provisions for the creation and management of national parks, nature reserves and wildlife sanctuaries. Subsequent policy reforms and legislative instruments have reinforced the role of the Forestry Development Authority as the principal institution responsible for establishing, managing and gazetted protected areas throughout Liberia.

Today, Liberia's protected area system forms a cornerstone of national efforts to conserve biodiversity, maintain ecosystem services, support climate change mitigation and adaptation, promote sustainable livelihoods, and fulfill international conservation commitments.

3.2 International Instruments and Agreements

The Article 34(f) of the 1986 Constitution of the Republic of Liberia empowers the Legislature to ratify treaties, conventions and such other international agreements negotiated or signed on behalf of the Republic of Liberia. Once ratified, such instruments become binding, and provide guidance for national laws and policies.

Liberia is a Party to many international and regional agreements that influence the establishment, management, and expansion of the Protected Area Network. These instruments provide standards and obligations relating to biodiversity conservation, climate change, sustainable forest management, gender equality and transboundary cooperation.

Major international instruments include: The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES, 1982), Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD, 1992), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement (2015), the International Timber Trade Agreement (2006) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, July 17, 1984).

Liberia has signed and ratified many international instruments related to protected areas and conservation, mainly in the form of conventions and treaties. The most important ones in the regional and global context are briefly described below:

- The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES)
- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
- The United Nations Convention Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, July 17, 1984)
- International Tropical Timber Agreement (ITTA)
- Abidjan Convention
- Nagoya Accord
- The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)
- Convention on Migratory Species (CMS)
- United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC)
- RAMSAR Convention on Wetlands Management
- IUCN-Guidelines for Applying Protected Areas Management Category
- Elephant Protection Initiative (EPI)
- Voluntary Partnership Agreement and European Union Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade “VPA-FLEGT”)

The principal international instruments influencing protected area development in Liberia are summarized below:

i. International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN):

Liberia has been a member of the International Union for Conservation of Nature since 1981. The IUCN provides internationally recognized standards for the classification and management of protected areas.

As a member of the IUCN, Liberia must adhere to the standards and criteria set by the IUCN in creating and managing protected areas. The different categories of a protected area can be national park, strict nature reserve, multiple use reserve, nature reserve and international heritage reserve. According to IUCN, a protected area is defined as “An area of land and/or sea especially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity, and of natural and associated cultural resources, and managed through legal or other effective means.” One category of protected areas is National Parks (IUCN Category II) which are further defined as “Large natural or near natural areas set aside to protect large-scale ecological processes, along with the complement of species and ecosystems characteristic of the area, which also provide a foundation for environmentally and culturally compatible spiritual, scientific, educational, recreational and visitor opportunities”, with the objective to “protect natural biodiversity along with its underlying ecological structure and supporting environmental processes, and to promote education and recreation.” National Parks are therefore one of the highest protection levels for a designated protected area. Following these criteria, GoL has established the Sapo National Park, the East Nimba Nature Reserve, the Lake Piso Multiple Use Reserve and the Gola Forest National Park. The IUCN criteria are respected for the designation of the Kwa National Park.

ii. Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD):

Liberia ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity on February 6, 2001, which sets the performance standards by which member states must follow when transforming their biodiversity conservation areas into protected areas, following the IUCN guidelines. Under the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the global "30 × 30" target, Liberia is committed to expanding and effectively managing protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures. However, as it stands today, less than 6% is under protection. The establishment of the Proposed Kwa National Park contributes significantly toward achieving these commitments and strengthening biodiversity conservation within the Upper Guinea Forest Ecosystem.

iii. The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement

Liberia ratified the UNFCCC in 2002 and acceded to the Paris Agreement in 2018. This convention guides the stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. The treaty is not legally binding but does set the framework for countries to negotiate protocols to set limits on greenhouse gases. Programs such as UN REDD and REDD+ fall under this approach, for which the funding from the Government of Norway will be provided to push Liberia forward in this direction.

Protected areas serve as important carbon sinks and contribute to climate resilience. Consequently, the expansion of Liberia's protected area network supports implementation of the country's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National REDD+ Strategy, and climate mitigation objectives.

iv. Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)

Liberia became a Party to CITES in 1981. The Convention regulates international trade in endangered species and their products to ensure that such trade does not threaten species survival.

Protected areas provide critical habitats for many species listed under CITES and contribute to safeguarding biodiversity against illegal exploitation and trafficking.

v. International Tropical Timber Trade Agreement (ITTA 2006)

The objective of the International Tropical Timber Agreement, 2006 (is to promote the expansion and diversification of international trade in tropical timber from sustainably managed and legally harvested forests and to promote the sustainable management of tropical timber-producing forests. The Agreement encourages conservation of biological diversity and integration of protected areas within broader forest landscape management frameworks.

vi. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1984)

Liberia ratified CEDAW in 1984. The Convention promotes gender equality and women's participation in development processes. CEDAW is a United Nations Treaty that focuses on women's rights and women's issues worldwide. It is both an international bill of rights for women and an agenda of action. Originally adopted by the U.N. in 1979.

Liberia has taken steps towards upholding its obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and towards reducing discrimination against women, but much work remains to be done. The Liberian Government in 2009, amended its Inheritance Law to remove the dual legal systems for women in urban and rural areas. The Liberian Government represents that, as a result of these changes, both urban and rural women have rights to land ownership and equal rights as husband and wife inclusive of the rights to acquisition, management, administration, enjoyment, and disposition of properties. Women are free to acquire and own property exclusive of their husbands, regardless of whether it was acquired before or during the marriage, and women may also conduct lawful business in their own names.

vii. Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

Liberia acceded to the Ramsar Convention in 2003. The Convention promotes the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources.

Wetland ecosystems associated with protected areas provide essential ecological services, including water regulation, fisheries support and climate change adaptation.

viii. United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)

The UNCCD promotes sustainable land management and restoration of degraded ecosystems. Forest conservation and protected area establishment contribute directly to combating land degradation and maintaining ecosystem productivity.

ix. African Convention for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (1968)

Liberia is a signatory to the African Convention adopted in Algiers on 15th September 1968.

The Convention aims to encourage the conservation, utilization, and development of soil, water, flora, and fauna for the present and future welfare of mankind, from an economic, nutritional, scientific, educational, cultural, and aesthetic point of view.

The Contracting States committed to adopt the measures necessary to implement it in accordance with scientific principles and with due regard to the best interests of the people.

There is no known domestic legislation(s) or policy supporting the implementation of this convention.

The African Convention for the Conservation of Nature is rarely mention in reference to the reform taking place in the conservation sector in Liberia, so it is unclear whether the reforms taking place is at the result of this convention or other international convention like CITES.

x. Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Treaty (1975)

Liberia is a member of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which promotes regional cooperation and environmental sustainability.

The Community aims to promote co-operation and integration, leading to the establishment of an economic union in West Africa to raise the living standards of its peoples and to maintain and enhance economic stability, foster relations among the Member States and contribute to the progress and development of the African Continent.

To achieve the aims set out in the paragraph above, and following the relevant provisions of this Treaty, the Community shall, by stages, ensure; the harmonization and co-ordination of national policies and the promotion of integration programs, projects, and activities, particularly in food, agriculture and natural resources, industry, transport, and communications, energy, trade, money and finance, taxation, economic reform policies, human resources, education, information, culture, science, technology, services, health, tourism, legal matters; b) the harmonization and co-ordination of policies for the protection of the environment.

Liberia adopted its Forest Convergence Plan and is part of the collaborative Management of the Ziama-Wonegizi Wologizi Transboundary Forest Landscape between Liberia and Guinea. The Governments of Liberia and Sierra Leone signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) committing the two countries to protecting the Gola Transboundary Forest Landscape. The management of the Tai-Grebo-Krahn Sapo Transboundary Forest Landscape between Liberia and Côte D'Ivoire aims to implement the ECOWAS regional forest policies and plans for sustainable wood fuel production and consumption.

xi. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Protected area establishment contributes directly to the attainment of several Sustainable Development Goals, particularly:

- 1) SDG 1 – No Poverty;
- 2) SDG 5 – Gender Equality;
- 3) SDG 13 – Climate Action;
- 4) SDG 15 – Life on Land;
- 5) SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions;
- 6) SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals.

xii. ECOWAS Forest convergence plan (2013)

The Convergence Plan will strengthen inter and sub-regional cooperation in the area of forestry and wildlife while mobilizing political, institutional, financial and technical support and help

to address key issues of common interest and/or transboundary nature such as: Harmonization of forest policies, laws and regulations taking into account agro-ecological peculiarities and the different institutional settings; Participation in the efforts to address desertification and soil degradation through rehabilitation of fragile and degraded ecosystems (mangroves, humid and arid zones), control of bush fires and the anarchical exploitation of shared and/or transboundary pastoral resources; Facilitating the role of local/sub-national players (regional and local administrations, farmer and other stakeholder organizations, technical departments) in the decentralized management of forest and wildlife resources and improving governance approaches while involving also women and youth; Enhancing vital services generated by different forest ecosystems, including their contribution to food security and peoples' means of subsistence and optimize the use of current opportunities related to adaptation, mitigation and vulnerability to climate change and the way they impact forest ecosystems in the sub-region. In Liberia, there are no local policies, programs and regulations developed to support the ECOWAS Forest Convergence plan.

xiii. Strategy on Combating Illegal Exploitation and Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora in Africa (2015)

The overall objective of the strategy is to prevent and reduce with the view of eliminating the illegal exploitation and illegal trade in wild fauna and flora in Africa through the domestication and implementation of an Africa-wide strategic framework. It has been formulated to guide a common, coordinated response by countries in Africa to combat the illegal exploitation and illegal trade in wild fauna and flora.

xiv. West Africa Strategy on Combating Wildlife Crime (2020)

The Strategy is designed to help the ECOWAS Member States meet their obligations under multilateral environmental agreements, as well as national legal and policy commitments to biodiversity conservation. The WASCWC provides a framework for strengthening, coordinating, and operationalizing national and regional policies to combat wildlife trafficking. Mobilizing financial and technical resources to more effectively combat wildlife crime.

Maximizing platforms for collaboration and information sharing at the regional level. 4. Fostering strategic partnership.

Liberia lacks capacity in critical areas of enforcement and prosecution that are needed to effectively deter wildlife crime. However, the adoption of a new wildlife law could provide stronger tools to combat illegal activities that exploit the country's wildlife and ecosystems.

3.3 National Policies, Laws, and Institutional Framework Governing Protected Areas in Liberia:

There are series of national instruments that have been created that guide the establishment of protected areas. A list and summary of the instruments is provided below.

- The 1986 Constitution of the Republic of Liberia, particularly Article Seven
- Forests Act, 1953
- Act Creating the Forestry Development Authority (FDA Act 1976)
- The Act Establishing Protected Forest Areas Network (2003)
- **National Forest Policy (2006)**
- **National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP)**
- **National REDD+ Strategy**
- **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)**

- **Wildlife and National Parks Act (1988)**
- The National Environmental Policy (2002)
- Environmental Protection and Management Law (2003)
- The National Forestry Reform Law (2006)
- Community Rights Law **with Respect to Forest Lands** (2009)
- Regulation – 2017 – Forestry Development Authority Regulations to the Community Rights Law with Respect to Forest Lands
- The Land Rights Act (2018)
- An Act adopting the National Wildlife Conservation and Protect Area Management (The Wildlife Law of 2010)
- Freedom of Information Act of 2010
- The Act creating the Sapo National Park
- The Act Establishing the East Nimba Nature Reserve
- An Act Establishing the Gola Forest National Park
- An Act Establishing Grebo-Krahn National Park
- Voluntary Partnership Agreement with the European Union
- Guidelines for the Gazettement of Protected Areas in Liberia (2022)
- Protected Area Network Strategy and Expansion Plan (PANSEP)
- Roles of the FDA Board of Directors, Managing Director, Government of Liberia and Legislature
- Community consultation and Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) processes
- Co-management arrangements and benefit-sharing mechanisms
- Relationship between protected areas and carbon market initiatives

i. Constitution of Liberia (1986)

The 1986 Constitution of the Republic of Liberia recognizes the full participation and respect for the rights of all in the sustainable management of its natural resources; and has made several efforts in this direction. Liberian constitution mandates that the management of the natural resources of Liberia shall ensure the maximum realistic participation of Liberians under conditions of equality as to advance the general welfare of the population, and the economic development of the country. Additionally, this Constitutional mandate sets the basis for many national legislations outlining the inclusive and extensive participation and respect for the rights of all including the communities in sustainable natural resources management.

Consequently, all laws and policies relating to the establishment and management of protected areas derive their legitimacy from the Constitution and support Liberia's commitment to biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation, and sustainable development.

ii. Forests Act, 1953

The Forest Act of 1953 represented Liberia's first comprehensive forestry legislation and laid the foundation for the development of a permanent forest estate in the country. The Act established the Bureau of Forest Conservation within the then Department of Agriculture and Commerce (1948), and empowered it to create Government Forest Reserves, Native Authority Forest Reserves, Communal Forests, and National Parks, (s.iv and v). The law took care not to claim all forests (or forestland) as public property. Instead, it acknowledged that the lands where it would wish to establish Government Forest Reserves were owned and that those rights would have to be adjudicated and settled prior to their proclamation and the vesting of all rights, title and interest in them in government (Forest Act 1953 s.vi).

In laying out the reserves, which would in due course become government land, the Forest Act 1953 did not entirely forget the people. A gesture bespeaking the trend at the time ('little forests for little people') provided for communities to bring little forests under protection as Communal Forests. These were to comprise: "...small described forest areas immediately adjacent to one or more native villages, and use of these forests will be confined to the local population...as a source of forest products for (their) use..." (1953, s.viii).

iii. Act Creating the Forestry Development Authority (FDA Act 1976)

The FDA was created by an Act of the Legislature in 1976, which was subsequently amended in 2006 with the adoption of the Forestry Reform Law. The FDA provides forestry planning, develops forestry policy, administers and enforces the forestry laws, administers concession agreements, calculates forestry fees, carries out reforestation and forest research and training, monitors the activities of timber companies, and sets up and administers national parks. As the legally designated forestry institution of the Government of Liberia, the FDA serves as the national authority responsible for the identification, establishment, gazettelement, management, and protection of protected areas and conservation corridors. In exercising this mandate, the Authority collaborates with local communities, government institutions, development partners, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders to ensure the sustainable conservation and management of Liberia's forest ecosystems and biodiversity.

iv. Act for the Establishment of a Protected Forest Area Network (2003)

This Act sets the legal framework for establishing Protected Areas and adds definitions in Chapter 2 of the National Forest Act and completely rewrites Chapter 9 so as to provide anew for establishment and management of protected areas in Liberia. In Chapter 2 various definitions regarding protected areas are revised or added. Under Chapter 9 a Protected Forest Areas Network and Conservation Corridors shall be established. These protected areas shall incorporate National Forests and at least 30 percent of the existing forest area of Liberia. The Forestry Development Authority shall propose in the Protected Forest Areas Network the appropriate protected Forest Area Category for each area to be protected. A management plan shall be established for various types of protected areas, such as a National Park and a Nature Reserve.

In accordance with this Act, the Forestry Development Authority serves as the statutory authority responsible for initiating and coordinating the procedure for the establishment and gazettelement of protected areas, conservation corridor and for ensuring their effective management in collaboration with communities and other stakeholders. The Act remains the cornerstone of Liberia's efforts to develop a comprehensive and representative protected area network and to fulfill national and international commitments relating to biodiversity conservation and sustainable forest management.

v. The National Environmental Policy (2002)

Approved in 2002, this policy promotes "sustainable development and conservation of the environment on a long-term basis for the betterment of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs." The policy also states that Liberia should develop comprehensive policies, strategies and actions for the conservation of biodiversity; establish more protected areas and set up a protected area network.

vi. Environmental Protection and Management Law (2002)

This Act establishes a legal framework for the sustainable development, management and protection of the environment by the Environment Protection Agency in partnership with regulated Ministries and organizations. It also refers to the need to provide high quality information, advancing on the state of the environment and for related matters. Section 77 on the protection of forest sets that guidelines issued by the Agency shall take into account the fact that forest land acts as sink for greenhouse gases. Part VII, section 83, 1.g) charges the Agency to measure the value of unexploited natural resources in terms of watershed protection and influences on climate and other potential genetic value. Section 89 insists on the role of rain forests as a sink for greenhouse gases. In addition, Section 78 contains provisions on reforestation and afforestation.

The Act has a strong alignment with the Rio Conventions, and gives the EPA regulatory, coordinating, collaborating and supervisory functions.

It ensures public participation, upholds human rights, and seeks environmental quality standards, authority to issue environmental restoration order, protecting the right to a clean and healthy environment and has the authority for pollution control and licensing.

vii. National Forestry Reform Law (2006)

The National Forestry Reform Law (NRFL) is the current legal instrument that guides the management of forest resources in Liberia. It is based on the “3Cs” approach: Commercial, Community and Conservation forestry. The NFRL aims at assuring the sustainable management, conservation, protection and sustainable development of Liberia forest land. It provides for rules on the ownership and use of forest resources, policy and planning in relation to forests, the commercial and other use of forest resources, contractual aspects of forest resources licenses, relations between neighboring forest areas, environmental protection, protected areas network and wildlife conservation, community rights and forests management, rights of land owners and occupants, public use of holder infrastructure, trade in forest resources, fiscal provisions, measures for the promotion of forestry and wildlife activities, dispute resolution, miscellaneous, offenses and penalties, regional and international forestry initiatives and conventions.

viii. Community Rights Law (2006)

This Act seeks to empower communities to fully engage in sustainable management and conservation of forests of Liberia by creating a legal framework that defines and supports community rights in the management and use of forest resources.¹ It provides the legal framework that empowers local communities located in or near forest lands to access, manage, use and benefit from forest resources on those lands for sustenance and livelihood improvements as well as for community development. The Law complements conservation objectives by providing mechanisms for collaboration between communities and the Forestry Development Authority in the management of forests and buffer zones surrounding protected areas. It further strengthens participatory approaches to biodiversity conservation and contributes to reducing threats to critical ecosystems and species.

ix. Forestry Development Authority Regulations to the Community Rights Law with Respect to Forest Lands (2017)

The Regulation was published on May 17, 2017. It reflects and expands on the legal framework provided in the Community Rights Law of 2009, which is intended to empower communities

located in or around forests to access, manage, use and benefit from forest resources to sustain their livelihoods and pursue economic development. By establishing rules and procedures, the Amended CRL Regulation has the objective of (i) facilitating implementation of the CRL, (ii) clarifying rights, roles and duties of the FDA and communities engaged in community forestry programs, (iii) establishing rules and procedures to enable communities to exercise ownership of community forests, and to access, manage, use and benefit from the forest resources, and (iv) ensuring sustainable management of forest resources within community forests.

The Amended CRL Regulation requires conformity of all forestry programs managed by communities to the NFRL, CRL, statutes of Liberia, international conventions and treaties ratified by Liberia and Regulations and policies adopted by the FDA. It provides procedures for approval of an Authorized Forest Community and for executing and terminating Community Forest Management Agreements. It further sets up the governance structures of Authorized Community Forests, including roles, responsibilities, elections, tenures, meetings, etc. of the Community Assembly (the highest decision-making body of the Authorized Forest Community) and the Community Forest Management Body (the manager of the day-to-day activities pertaining to the community forest).

x. The Land Rights Act (2018)

The Land Rights Act ensures, for the first time, that the land rights of rural Liberians are recognized, protected, and guaranteed by law – an essential ingredient for these communities to achieve secure land rights.² Under the previous land tenure system, as much as 80 percent of Liberians lived without legally recognized rights to land.

The Act includes stronger protections for women’s land rights, including provisions for women’s participation on local land management committees.

The Land Rights Act recognizes community rights to benefit from all non-mineral natural resources. “A community’s ownership of Customary Land includes ownership and right to use and alienate, by any means, all non-mineral natural resources on the land.

xi. An Act adopting the National Wildlife Conservation and Protected Area Management (The Wildlife Law of 2010)

The Act was Approved and signed into Hand Bill on the 5th October, 2016. The purpose of this Act is to expand chapter 9 of the 2006 National Forest Reform Law to achieve the objective of establishing conservation areas and management of wildlife; protection of wildlife and wildlife management; provide for cooperative governance in the establishment of conservation and management of wildlife; effect a national system of conservation areas; provide for representation network of conservation areas on state land, private land and community land; promote sustainable utilization of conservation area for the benefit of people; promote participation of local communities in the management of conservation areas and wildlife and facilitate and integrated management of conservation and wildlife.

xii. Freedom of Information Act (2010)

This Act defines the right of the public to request, receive, review, reproduce and retain records and documents held by public bodies and private entities performing public functions or receiving public funding. The Act sets out the principles underlying access to information. The Act: Promotes effective, equitable and inexpensive exercise of the right of access to information; Establishes clear and concise procedures for requesting and providing of information held by (i) public bodies and (ii) private bodies receiving public benefits or

performing public functions or providing public service; Establishes appeal procedures in relation to exercise of the right to information; Provides appropriate penalties and other sanctions for wrongful failure to keep and or provide information.

xiii. The Act creating the Sapo National Park (1983)

Located in the southeast, in the counties of Sinoe, River Gee and Grand Gedeh, Sapo National Park was the first fully protected area established after the creation of national forests. In 1983, the park was gazetted comprising >130,000 hectares and subsequently extended to 180,400 hectares in 2003. This first National Park of Liberia is an example of how legislation can work to protect conservation areas.

xiv. The Act Establishing the East Nimba Nature Reserve (2011)

In light of the international importance of Mount Nimba and the Mount Nimba UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, the East Nimba Nature reserve was gazetted in 2003. The creation of this protected area is essential in protecting the integrity of the unique Nimba highlands ecosystem and its endemic species of global conservation concern. This is the second protected area created in Liberia.

xv. An Act Establishing the Gola Forest National Park (2017)

On the 27th of January 2017, the Gola Forest National Park was enacted (handbill). It has been internationally recognized as an important conservation area, most notably due to its transboundary nature with the Gola Rainforest National Park in Sierra Leone. This new national park in the northwest sets objectives to achieve similar conservation targets in the southeast. The key longer-term aim of the Gola Forest is the conservation of unique wildlife and biodiversity and eco-system services while ensuring the livelihood of the forest edge communities who depend on the forest resources for their survival and economic development within the greater Gola landscape.

xvi. An Act Establishing the Grebo-Krahn National Park (2017)

On the 9th of October 2017, the Grebo-Krahn National Park was enacted (handbill). It has been internationally recognized as an area of outstanding conservation value, most notably due to its location on center of the TGKS forest landscape connecting the Ivorian forests (Taï National Park and Cavally Classified Forest) with the Liberian forests (FMCF and Sapo National Park). The key longer-term aim of the Grebo-Krahn National Park is the conservation of unique wildlife and biodiversity and eco-system services while ensuring the livelihood of the forest edge communities who depend on the forest resources for their survival and economic development within the greater TGKS forest landscape. It also should serve to ensure the peace and monitor and control cross-border activities between Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire.

xvii. Voluntary Partner Agreements with the EU (single countries)

The Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) between Liberia and the EU is a bi-lateral trade agreement ensuring that all timber and timber products from Liberia entering the EU market are verified legal. The objective of the agreement is to provide a strong legal framework so that only legally produced goods leave Liberia and are imported into the EU, and, in doing so, also promote trade in timber products. In addition, the VPA provides a basis for discussion and cooperation between the Parties, helping facilitate the implementation of the Agreement thereby enhancing Liberian forest law enforcement and governance. The VPA negotiations started in 2009 and it was signed in 2011. On December 2, 2013, the Liberia-EU VPA was

entered into force, and marked by Liberian officials signing project funds over to civil society organizations.

xviii. Guidelines for the Gazettement of Protected Areas in Liberia (2022)

In order to ensure a standardized process for the gazettement of protected areas in Liberia, in line with existing laws, in 2021 and 2022, the guidelines for this process were developed and approved by the FDA Board in 2022.

IV) Summary of pre-gazettement activities and baseline studies: Justifying the designation of Proposed Kwa as a National Park

4.1 Background of the Protected Area Network

The Forestry Development Authority (FDA), acting under its statutory mandate to manage, conserve and sustainably utilize Liberia's forest resources and biodiversity, has over the years led the establishment and expansion of Liberia's Protected Area Network (PAN) in collaboration with local communities, development partners and conservation organizations. Through financial and technical support provided by the World Bank and a range of international conservation partners, including Conservation International (CI), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Fauna & Flora International (FFI), Wild Chimpanzee Foundation (WCF), and other stakeholders, the FDA has been working on expanding and consolidating its Protected Area Network (PAN) to enable active conservation and sustainable management of Liberia's forests and biodiversity, with the local communities.

The establishment and expansion of Liberia's Protected Area Network (PAN) has been implemented through a phased approach aimed at achieving the national conservation target of maintaining at least thirty percent (30%) of the country's forest estate under an ecologically representative and effectively managed protected area system.

Phase 1 focused on consolidating and strengthening the management of existing protected areas, namely:

- 1) Sapo National Park;
- 2) East Nimba Nature Reserve; and
- 3) Lake Piso Multiple Use Reserve.

These protected areas constitute the foundation of Liberia's modern conservation framework and provide protection for globally significant ecosystems and biodiversity.

Phase 2 concentrated on the establishment and formalization of additional protected areas to enhance ecological representation and connectivity across the Upper Guinean Forest Ecosystem. This phase included:

- 1) Grebo-Krahn National Park;
- 2) Gola Forest National Park; and
- 3) Wonegizi Nature Reserve.

The gazettelement processes for Gola Forest National Park and Grebo-Krahn National Park were successfully completed in 2017 through Acts of the National Legislature, while the formal gazettelement process for Wonegizi Nature Reserve remains pending.

Phase 3, currently being implemented under the leadership of the Forestry Development Authority, focuses on the establishment and gazettelement of the remaining proposed protected areas identified through national conservation planning processes. These include:

- 1) Proposed Kwa National Park;
- 2) Proposed Foya National Park;
- 3) Proposed Kpo Mountains National Park; and
- 4) Proposed Marshall Wetlands Ramsar Site and Protected Area.

Significant progress has been achieved in the implementation of pre-gazettelement activities for these proposed protected areas, including biological and socio-economic assessments, participatory land-use planning, stakeholder consultations, community engagement processes, boundary demarcation, and the development of management and governance frameworks.

The proposed designation of the Kwa landscape as a National Park forms an integral part of the Government of Liberia's broader strategy to expand and consolidate the Protected Area Network and to fulfil its commitments under the National Forestry Reform Law of 2006, the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), and various international environmental agreements, including the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The establishment of Proposed Kwa National Park will contribute significantly to the conservation of representative ecosystems within the Upper Guinean Forest biodiversity hotspot, safeguard critical habitats for threatened and endemic species, strengthen ecological connectivity among protected areas, enhance climate resilience, and provide opportunities for sustainable livelihoods and nature-based economic development for surrounding communities.

Accordingly, under the authority vested in the Forestry Development Authority by the National Forestry Reform Law of 2006 and other relevant legal instruments, the FDA has undertaken the necessary pre-gazettelement processes and now presents the Proposed Kwa National Park for formal designation and gazettelement by the Government of Liberia.

The existing protected areas and proposed protected areas within Liberia's Protected Area Network are illustrated in Figure 1 below.

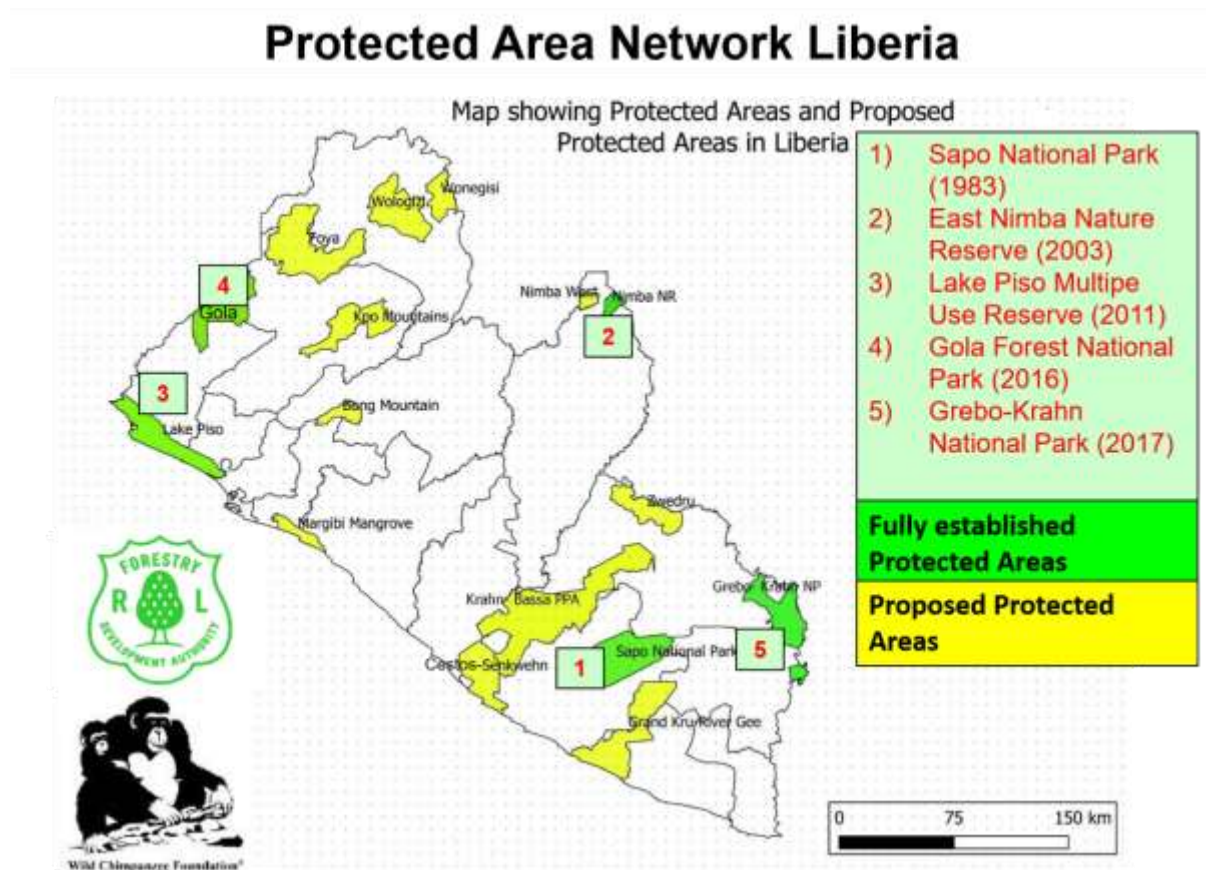


Figure 1: Map of protected and proposed protected areas in Liberia.

4.2 History of Proposed Kwa National Park

In late 2016, the Forestry Development Authority (FDA), in the exercise of its statutory mandate to manage, conserve, and sustainably utilize Liberia’s forest resources, initiated a collaborative process with the Wild Chimpanzee Foundation (WCF) launched a new project in southeastern Liberia - “Assessing the Conservation Potential of the Krahn-Bassa National Forest” (KBNF). Previous scientific assessments had showed the KBNF to be Liberia’s top Conservation Priority Area (CPA), based on a combination of ecological and socio-geographic criteria, including forest cover, human settlement patterns, presence and distribution of large mammals, endemism, and elevation (Junker et al., 2015). Furthermore, portions of the KBNF encompassed the Gbi Proposed Protected Area (PPA) and sections of the Cestos-Senkwehn Proposed Protected Area, both of which formed part of the Proposed Protected Area Network (PAN) developed by the FDA in 2007 following the enactment of the National Forestry Reform Law (NFRL) of 2006.

Subsequent reviews revealed that a significant portion of the originally proposed Gbi Protected Area had become unavailable following the establishment of the Neezonia Community Forest. In response, the FDA directed the Wild Chimpanzee Foundation to undertake an assessment of the remaining unallocated forest landscapes within the Krahn-Bassa National Forest, including adjoining portions of the Gbi and Cestos-Senkwehn Proposed Protected Areas.

Applying an evidence-based conservation planning approach, the assessment identified a biologically significant and contiguous forest block suitable for long-term protection. Consequently, the FDA expanded the original Gbi Proposed Protected Area to create the **Krahn-Bassa Proposed Protected Area (KBPPA)**, which became the focal landscape for detailed ecological and socio-economic assessments and future conservation planning.

Pursuant to this mandate, the FDA commissioned a desktop analysis of available spatial and land-use data within and around the Krahn-Bassa National Forest and the newly defined KBPPA. The assessment identified several existing land-use allocations, including four active Forest Management Contracts (FMCs B, C, I, and K), one unallocated Forest Management Contract area (FMC H), and three Commercial Community Forests—Boe Quilla, Doru, and Neezonie. In 2016, FDA Senior Management advised that, consistent with the commitments under the Government of Liberia–Kingdom of Norway Partnership Agreement on forests and climate change, Forest Management Contract Area H would remain unallocated. This provided an opportunity to incorporate the unallocated forest landscape into the proposed conservation area.

Based on these considerations, the Forestry Development Authority delineated a contiguous conservation landscape covering approximately **290,167 hectares**, which was designated as the **Krahn-Bassa Proposed Protected Area (KBPPA)**. The area subsequently became the subject of a series of scientific surveys, biological inventories, and socio-economic and stakeholder consultations aimed at determining the ecological importance, conservation value, and feasibility of establishing a new protected area within the Krahn-Bassa National Forest.

As the consultation process progressed, extensive engagements were conducted by the FDA with county authorities, traditional leaders, local communities, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders at national, county, district, clan, and community levels. During these consultations, concerns were raised regarding the designation “Krahn-Bassa,” as stakeholders considered the name insufficiently representative of the ethnic and cultural diversity of communities residing within and around the proposed protected area. In response to these concerns and in recognition of the importance of promoting inclusiveness and local ownership, stakeholders proposed the name “**Kwa**” for the future national park.

The proposed name received broad support during stakeholder consultations and was subsequently adopted by the Forestry Development Authority as the official designation for the proposed protected area. Thus, the **Proposed Kwa National Park** emerged as the product of a scientifically informed, participatory, and nationally driven conservation process aimed at safeguarding one of Liberia’s most ecologically important forest landscapes while promoting biodiversity conservation, ecosystem services, climate resilience, and sustainable development for present and future generations.

The establishment of the Proposed Kwa National Park represents an important milestone in the implementation of Liberia’s Protected Area Network and demonstrates the commitment of the Forestry Development Authority and the Government of Liberia to achieving national conservation objectives and fulfilling obligations under international environmental agreements, including the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and other multilateral environmental agreements to which Liberia is a Party.

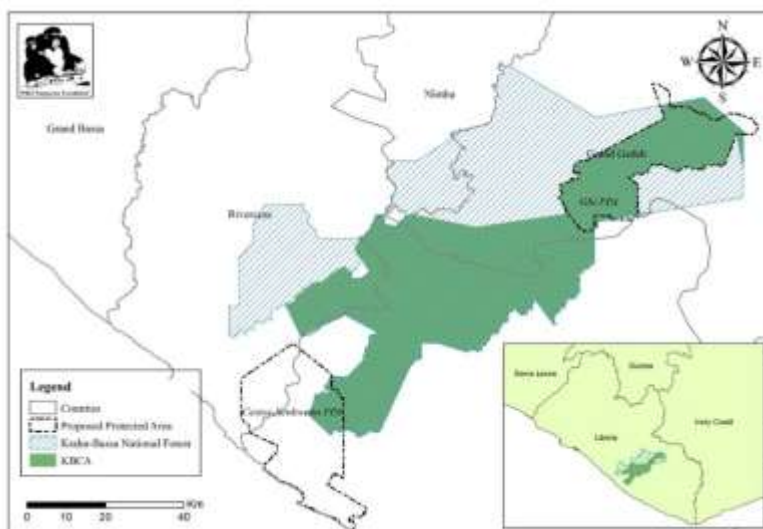


Figure 2: Map showing the Proposed Kwa National Park (in green) inside the Krahn-Bassa National Forest (in stripes) where baseline surveys and the feasibility study took place, covering an area of 290,167 ha.

4.3 Location, size and boundaries of the Kwa National Park

The Kwa National Park (KNP) is located across three counties in southeastern Liberia – Sinoe, Grand Gedeh and River Cess. In Sinoe County, it is located in Sanquin, Tarjuowon, and Seekon Districts, in Grand Gedeh County in Gbarzon, Cavalla, and Tchien Districts., and in Rivercess County in Yarnee District (Figure 3).

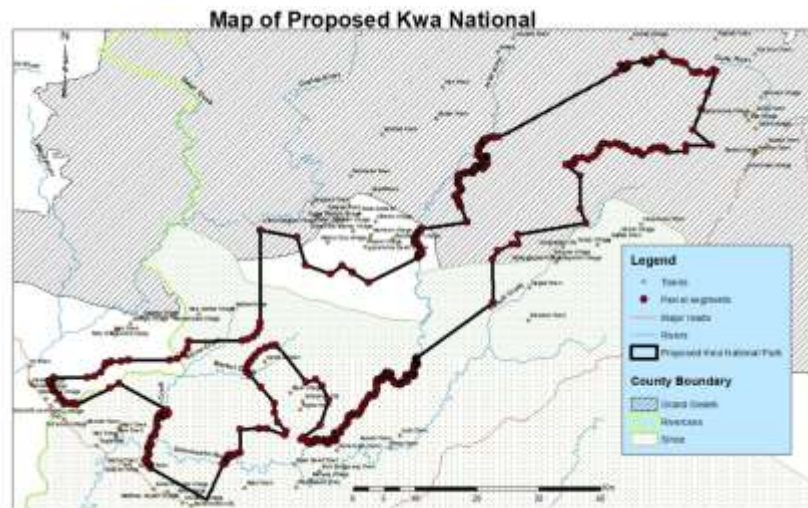


Figure 3: Map showing the location and the adjusted boundaries of Kwa National Park, now covering 172,200 hectares.

KNP is entirely located inside the Krahn-Bassa National Forest, and is surrounded by eight operational community forests focusing on logging activities (Zaidue & Teekpah, Doru, Bloquia, Neezonie, Marbo 1, Dugbe, Seekon Pellokon, and Sewacajua). The new Seekon Pellokon Community Forest is already in full logging operations. Furthermore, KNP is surrounded by three Forest Management Contracts (FMC B, K and I) (Figure 4). In the South, KNP connects to Cestos-Senkwehn Proposed Protected Area.

Figure 4: Kwa National Park with surrounding community forests and Forest Management Contracts/logging concessions.

The total size of Kwa National Park is 172,200 hectares (425,515.47 acres), with 84,800 hectares being located in Grand Gedeh County (49.25%), 81,300 hectares in Sinoe County (47.21%), and 6,100 hectares in Rivercess County (3.54%) (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Map showing the location of Kwa National Park with county boundaries.

Several major rivers are passing across and aside KNP. On the western side, the Cestos River and the Gwen Creek are marking the boundary of the national Park. The Senkwehn River, Siani Creek, Juboe Creek, and Bankui Creek are passing through the western part of the park, the Kulu Shaw Boe (also called |Joboe or Jumbo River) through the central part. On the north-eastern side, the Dugbe River is marking a short portion of the park's boundary (Figure 6).

Waypoint # 16 (0489441 – 0622523); thence a line runs N 35° E for 1,163 meters to a point, Waypoint # 17 (0490091 – 0623496); thence a line runs N 11° E for 1,180 meters to a point, Waypoint # 18 (0490319 – 0624644); thence a line runs N 89° E for 11,586 meters to a point, Waypoint # 19 (0501915 – 0624786); thence a line runs Due North for 17,896 meters to a point, Waypoint # 20 (0501891 – 0642567); thence a line runs S 79° E for 6,098 meters to a point, Waypoint # 21 (0507864 – 0641383); thence a line runs S 16° E for 4,635 meters to a point, Waypoint # 22 (0509177 – 0636936); thence a line runs S 70° E for 4,356 meters to a point, Waypoint # 23 (0513226 – 0635507); thence a line runs N 54° E for 2,255 meters to a point, Waypoint # 24 (0515094 – 0636849); thence a line runs S 57° E for 5,116 meters to a point, Waypoint # 25 (0519346 – 0634137); thence a line runs N 63° E for 8,876 meters to the point on the Jobo River, marked at Waypoint # 26 (0527351 – 0638045); thence a line runs along the Jobo River in the northern direction for 6,681 meters to the point marked Waypoint # 27 (0527875 – 0642745); thence a line runs N 81° E for 7,506 meters to a point, Waypoint # 28 (0535308 – 0643840); thence a line runs N 24° W for 3,657 meters to a point, Waypoint # 29 (0535306 – 0643845); thence a line runs N 68° E for 171 meters to a point, Waypoint # 30 (0535310 – 0643846); thence a line runs N 24° W for 3,649 meters to a point, Waypoint # 31 (0533855 – 0647192); thence a line runs N 67° E for 173 meters to a point, Waypoint # 32 (0534012 – 0647256); thence a line runs N 41° W for 968 meters to a point, Waypoint # 33 (0533380 – 0647991); thence a line runs N 23° E 154 meters to a point, Waypoint # 34 (0533439 – 0648132); thence a line runs N 65° E for 399 meters to a point, Waypoint # 35 (0533791 – 0648297); thence a line runs N 39° E for 879 meters to a point, Waypoint # 36 (0534344 – 0648979); thence a line runs N 44° E for 119 meters to a point, Waypoint # 37 (0534428 – 0649062); thence a line runs N 11° W for 248 meters to a point, Waypoint # 38 (0534379 – 0649308); thence a line runs N 47° W for 238 meters to a point, Waypoint # 39 (0534206 – 0649470); thence a line runs N 32° W for 404 meters to a point, Waypoint # 40 (0533992 – 0649812); thence a line runs N 38° W for 310 meters to a point, Waypoint # 41 (0533803 – 0650060); thence a line runs N 21° E for 188 meters to a point, Waypoint # 42 (0533875 – 0650236); thence a line runs N 6° E for 402 meters to a point, Waypoint # 43 (0533838 – 0650637); thence a line runs N 44° E for 131 meters to a point, Waypoint # 44 (0533932 – 0650731); thence a line runs N 4° E for 246 meters to a point, Waypoint # 45 (0533956 – 0650978); thence a line runs N 25° W for 450 meters to a point, Waypoint # 46 (0533874 – 0651166); thence a line runs N 26° E for 291 meters to a point, Waypoint # 47 (0534003 – 0651425); thence a line runs N 57° E for 391 meters to a point, Waypoint # 48 (0534332 – 0651637); thence a line runs S 88° E for 504 meters to a point, Waypoint # 49 (0534838 – 0651613); thence a line runs N 52° E for 334 meters to a point, Waypoint # 50 (0535101 – 0651820); thence a line runs S 88° E for 217 meters to a point, Waypoint # 51 (0535320 – 0651813); thence a line runs N 67° E for 401 meters to a point, Waypoint # 52 (0535686 – 0651968); thence a line runs N 86° E for 350 meters to a point, Waypoint # 53 (0536034 – 0651990); thence a line runs S 40° E for 229 meters to a point, Waypoint # 54 (0536179 – 0651813); thence a line runs S 72° E for 96 meters to a point, Waypoint # 55 (0536271 – 0651778); thence a line runs N 65° E for 125 meters to a point, Waypoint # 56 (0536390 – 0651836); thence a line runs N 12° E for 214 meters to a point, Waypoint # 57 (0536438 – 0652048); thence a line runs N 3° E for 398 meters to a point, Waypoint # 58 (0536461 – 0652448); thence a line runs N 68° E for 135 meters to a point, Waypoint # 59 (0536584 – 0652494); thence a line runs N 3° E for 321 meters to a point, Waypoint # 60 (0536600 – 0652817); thence a line runs N 42° E for 147 meters to a point, Waypoint # 61

(0536709 – 0652930); thence a line runs S 85° E for 430 meters to a point, Waypoint # 62 (0537132 – 0652894); thence a line runs S 37° E for 196 meters to a point, Waypoint # 63 (0537249 – 0652740); thence a line runs S 62° E for 267 meters to a point, Waypoint # 64 (0537486 – 0652612); thence a line runs S 86° E for 130 meters to a point, Waypoint # 65 (0537615 – 0652601); thence a line runs S 64° E for 223 meters to a point, Waypoint # 66 (0537813 – 0652507); thence a line runs Due East for 136 meters to a point, Waypoint # 67 (0537953 – 0652507); thence a line runs N 41° E for 138 meters to a point, Waypoint # 68 (0538048 – 0652613); thence a line runs N 14° E for 293 meters to a point, Waypoint # 69 (0538119 – 0652895); thence a line runs N 40° E for 416 meters to a point, Waypoint # 70 (0538389 – 0653212); thence a line runs N 66° E for 179 meters to a point, Waypoint # 71 (0538554 – 0653283); thence a line runs N 1° E for 1,131 meters to a point, Waypoint # 72 (0538577 – 0654415); thence a line runs S 48° W for 164 meters to a point, Waypoint # 73 (0538460 – 0654306); thence a line runs N 75° W for 185 meters to a point, Waypoint # 74 (0538283 – 0654353); thence a line runs S 48° W for 144 meters to a point, Waypoint # 75 (0538178 – 0654259); thence a line runs Due West for 142 meters to a point, Waypoint # 76 (0538037 – 0654258); thence a line runs S 35° W for 141 meters to a point, Waypoint # 77 (0537954 – 0654141); thence a line runs S 9° W for 168 meters to a point, Waypoint # 78 (0537931 – 0653977); thence a line runs S 68° W for 116 meters to a point, Waypoint # 79 (0537825 – 0653930); thence a line runs N 50° W for 125 meters to a point, Waypoint # 80 (0537731 – 0654012); thence a line runs N 65° W for 130 meters to a point, Waypoint # 81 (0537613 – 0654071); thence a line runs N 16° W for 114 meters to a point, Waypoint # 82 (0537583 – 0654180); thence a line runs N 44° W for 291 meters to a point, Waypoint # 83 (0537378 – 0654388); thence a line runs Due North for 152 meters to a point, Waypoint # 84 (0537378 – 0654541); thence a line runs N 50° W for 108 meters to a point, Waypoint # 85 (0537296 – 0654612); thence a line runs Due West for 294 meters to the point on the Jobo River marked Waypoint # 86 (0537003 – 0654612); thence a line runs along the Jobo River in the north-eastern direction for 4,797 meters to the point marked Waypoint # 87 (0539632 – 0657533); thence a line runs Due East for 829 meters to a point, Waypoint # 88 (0540461 – 0657532); thence a line runs N 61° E for 22,731 meters to a point, Waypoint # 89 (0560361 – 0668451); thence a line runs N 20° W for 683 meters to a point, Waypoint # 90 (0560136 – 0669094); thence a line runs N 78° E for 180 meters to a point, Waypoint # 91 (0560313 – 0669133); thence a line runs S 26° E for 473 meters to a point, Waypoint # 92 (0560521 – 0668708); thence a line runs S 67° E for 174 meters to a point, Waypoint # 93 (0560677 – 0668644); thence a line runs S 76° E for 165 meters to a point, Waypoint # 94 (0560838 – 0668604); thence a line runs N 81° E for 265 meters to a point, Waypoint # 95 (0561097 – 0668644); thence a line runs N 54° E for 140 meters to a point, Waypoint # 96 (0561214 – 0668723); thence a line runs N 32° E for 125 meters to a point, Waypoint # 97 (0561277 – 0668827); thence a line runs N 17° E for 136 meters to a point, Waypoint # 98 (0561320 – 0668959); thence a line runs N 27° E for 152 meters to a point, Waypoint # 99 (0561388 – 0669094); thence a line runs N 2° E for 136 meters to a point, Waypoint # 100 (0561394 – 0669231); thence a line runs N 13° W for 135 meters to a point, Waypoint # 101 (0561362 – 0669361); thence a line runs N 78° E for 2,607 meters to a point, Waypoint # 102 (0563910 – 0669916); thence a line runs S 20° E for 175 meters to a point, Waypoint # 103 (0563971 – 0669759); thence a line runs S 30° E for 181 meters to a point, Waypoint # 104 (0564061 – 0669609); thence a line runs S 47° E for 157 meters to a point, Waypoint # 105 (0564172 – 0669503); thence a line runs S 68° E for 164 meters to a point, Waypoint # 106 (0564326 –

0669442); thence a line runs S 82° E for 346 meters to a point, Waypoint # 107 (0564670 – 0669400); thence a line runs N 80° E for 146 meters to a point, Waypoint # 108 (0564810 – 0669426); thence a line runs N 56° E for 151 meters to a point, Waypoint # 109 (0564937 – 0669508); thence a line runs N 42° E for 198 meters to a point, Waypoint # 110 (0565069 – 0669659); thence a line runs N 19° E for 175 meters to a point, Waypoint # 111 (0565127 – 0669822); thence a line runs N 10° E for 189 meters to a point, Waypoint # 112 (0565156 – 0670003); thence a line runs N 8° W for 180 meters to a point, Waypoint # 113 (0565131 – 0670181); thence a line runs N 78° E for 2,357 meters to the point on the Dube River, marked Waypoint # 114 (0567423 – 0670679); thence a line runs along the Dube River in the eastern direction for 9,566 meters to a point marked Waypoint # 115 (0575019 – 0668518); thence a line runs S 60° E for 617 meters to a point, Waypoint # 116 (0575558 – 0668202); thence a line runs S 21° W for 10,248 meters to a point, Waypoint # 117 (0571850 – 0658714); thence a line runs S 50° E for 3,815 meters to a point, Waypoint # 118 (0574788 – 0656259); thence a line runs Due West for 4,199 meters to a point, Waypoint # 119 (0570637 – 0656261); thence a line runs Due South for 962 meters to a point, Waypoint # 120 (0570632 – 0655290); thence a line runs S 88° W for 2,975 meters to a point, Waypoint # 121 (0567663 – 0655221); thence a line runs N 39° W for 471 meters to a point, Waypoint # 122 (0567375 – 0655581); thence a line runs N 52° W for 454 meters to a point, Waypoint # 123 (0567015 – 0655869); thence a line runs S 70° W 486 meters to a point, Waypoint # 124 (0566559 – 0655701); thence a line runs N 63° W for 922 meters to a point, Waypoint # 125 (0566175 – 0655893); thence a line runs S 83° W for 742 meters to a point, Waypoint # 126 (0565431 – 0655797); thence a line runs S 58° W for 2,084 meters to a point, Waypoint # 127 (0563679 – 0654693); thence a line runs N 69° W for 388 meters to a point, Waypoint # 128 (0563319 – 0654837); thence a line runs N 40° W for 434 meters to a point, Waypoint # 129 (0563031 – 0655173); thence a line runs N 54° W for 769 meters to a point, Waypoint # 130 (0562767 – 0655365); thence a line runs S 74° W for 675 meters to a point, Waypoint # 131 (0562108 – 0655175); thence a line runs N 67° W for 1,053 meters to a point, Waypoint # 132 (0561135 – 0655581); thence a line runs N 23° W for 425 meters to a point, Waypoint # 133 (0560967 – 0655965); thence a line runs N 60° W for 339 meters to a point, Waypoint # 134 (0560679 – 0656133); thence a line runs S 83° W for 371 meters to a point, Waypoint # 135 (0560319 – 0656085); thence a line runs N 60° W for 585 meters to a point, Waypoint # 136 (0559815 – 0656373); thence a line runs N 78° W for 544 meters to a point, Waypoint # 137 (0559287 – 0656493); thence a line runs S 78° W for 913 meters to a point, Waypoint # 138 (0558399 – 0656301); thence a line runs N 79° W for 975 meters to a point, Waypoint # 139 (0557439 – 0656493); thence a line runs S 75° W for 356 meters to a point, Waypoint # 140 (0557102 – 0656397); thence a line runs S 21° W for 833 meters to a point, Waypoint # 141 (0556805 – 0655642); thence a line runs S 68° W for 222 meters to a point, Waypoint # 142 (0556598 – 0655557); thence a line runs S 18° W for 486 meters to a point, Waypoint # 143 (0556454 – 0655101); thence a line runs S 45° W for 751 meters to a point, Waypoint # 144 (0555926 – 0654573); thence a line runs S 66° W for 484 meters to a point, Waypoint # 145 (0555494 – 0654381); thence a line runs S 57° W for 827 meters to a point, Waypoint # 146 (0554798 – 0653925); thence a line runs N 73° W for 850 meters to a point, Waypoint # 147 (0553982 – 0654189); thence a line runs S 89° W for 1,081 meters to a point, Waypoint # 148 (0552902 – 0654165); thence a line runs S 34° W for 490 meters to a point, Waypoint # 149 (0552638 – 0653757); thence a line runs S 15° E for 375 meters to point, Waypoint # 150 (0552734 – 0653397); thence a line runs S 39° W for 298 meters to a point, Waypoint # 151 (0552542 – 0653157); thence a line runs S

81° W for 538 meters to a point, Waypoint # 152 (0552014 – 0653061); thence a line runs N 77° W for 488 meters to a point, Waypoint # 153 (0551542 – 0653180); thence a line runs S 71° W for 237 meters to a point, Waypoint # 154 (0551318 – 0653109); thence a line runs S 52° E for 2,877 meters to a point, Waypoint # 155 (0553598 – 0651357); thence a line runs Due South for 5,361 meters to a point, Waypoint # 156 (0553553 – 0645998); thence a line runs S 23° E for 2,560 meters to a point, Waypoint # 157 (0554519 – 0643658); near the Butudi Creek; thence a line runs S 80° W for 11,226 meters to a point, Waypoint # 158 (0543463 – 0641812); thence a line runs S 2° W for 1,538 meters to a point, Waypoint # 159 (0543509 – 0640275); thence a line runs N 87° W for 1,001 meters to a point, Waypoint # 160 (0542514.30261 - 0640320.38850); thence a line runs S 1° W for 0.396 meters to a point, Waypoint # 161, (0542514.30488 - 0640320.00199); thence a line runs S 65° W for 2,545 meters to a point, Waypoint # 162, (0540214 – 0639244); thence a line runs S 29° W for 1,627 meters to a point, Waypoint # 163 (0539409 – 0637835); thence a line runs S 1° E for 6,937 meters to a point, Waypoint # 164 (0539503 – 0630900); thence a line runs S 54° W for 15,033 meters to the point on the Jobo River, marked Waypoint # 165 (0527235 – 0622021); thence a line runs along the Jobo River in the south-western direction for 33,171 meters to the point marked Waypoint # 166 (0509475 – 0608401); thence a line runs N 72° W for 1,140 meters to a point, Waypoint # 167 (0508391 – 0608754); thence a line runs N 47° E for 659 meters to a point, Waypoint # 168 (0508869 – 0609187); thence a line runs N 54° E for 3,311 meters to a point, Waypoint # 169 (0511541 – 0611118); thence a line runs N 19° E for 4,240 meters to a point, Waypoint # 170 (0512930 – 0615153); thence a line runs N 23° W for 2,530 meters to a point, Waypoint # 171 (0511922 – 0617475); thence a line runs N 47° W for 1,529 meters to a point, Waypoint # 172 (0510789 – 0618543); thence a line runs S 75° W for 1,567 meters to a point, Waypoint # 173 (0509289 – 0618121); thence a line runs N 40° W for 7,679 meters crossing a tributary of the Sehnkwehn River in Sinoe County marked Waypoint # 174 (0504383 – 0624034); thence a line runs S 82° W for 756 meters to a point, Waypoint # 175 (0503659 – 0623939); thence a line runs S 70° W for 965 meters to a point, Waypoint # 176 (0502745 – 0623596); thence a line runs S 60° W for 1,151 meters to a point, Waypoint # 177 (0501754 – 0623025); thence a line runs S 46° W for 2,174 meters to a point, Waypoint # 178 (0501030 – 0622320); thence a line runs S 39° W for 1,399 meters to a point, Waypoint # 179 (0500154 – 0621235); thence a line runs S 32° W for 693 meters to a point, Waypoint # 180 (0499792 – 0620644); thence a line runs S 19° W for 674 meters to a point, Waypoint # 181 (0499583 – 0620016); thence a line runs S 14° E for 354 meters to a point, Waypoint # 182 (0499673 – 0619677); thence a line runs S 42° E for 6,718 meters crossing the tributary of the Sehnkwehn River in Sinoe County marked Waypoint # 183 (0504168 – 0614658); thence a line runs S 1° W for 1,425 meters to a point, Waypoint # 184 (0504140 – 0613227); thence a line runs S 20° E for 1,716 meters crossing the Blone Creek to a point, Waypoint # 185 (0504741 – 0611621); thence a line runs S 41° E for 1,975 meters to a point, Waypoint # 186 (0506024 – 0610121); thence a line runs S 16° W for 573 meters to a point, Waypoint # 187 (0505872 – 0609572); thence a line runs N 72° W for 3,169 to the point on the Blone Creek, marked Waypoint # 188 (0502877 – 0610544); thence a line runs S 89° W for 4,299 meters to a point, Waypoint # 189 (0498606 – 0610487); thence a line runs Due South for 3,887 to the point, Waypoint # 190 (0498602 – 0606595), which is 56.49 meters to the point where the Blone Creek enters into the Sehnkwehn River; thence a line runs along the Sehnkwehn River in the south-western direction for 3,951 meters to a point, Waypoint # 191 (0495834 – 0604803); thence a line runs S 25° W for 6,234 meters to a point, Waypoint # 192 (0493229 – 0599131); thence a line runs N 61° W

for 10,315 meters to a point, Waypoint # 193 (0484200 – 0604174); thence a line runs N 11° W for 429 meters to a point, Waypoint # 194 (0484123 – 0604604); thence a line runs N 33° W for 325 meters to a point, Waypoint # 195 (0483945 – 0604871); thence a line runs N 43° W for 542 meters to a point, Waypoint # 196 (0483577 – 0605265); thence a line runs N 52° W for 509 meters to a point, Waypoint # 197 (0483177 – 0605588); thence a line runs N 42° E for 1,022 meters the point on the Sehnkwehn River, marked Waypoint # 198 (0483872 – 0606346); thence a line runs along the Sehnkwehn River in the northern direction for 8,495 meters to the point marked Waypoint # 199 (0487238 – 0613367); thence a line runs N 61° W for 9,317 meters to a point, Waypoint # 200 (0479091 – 0617820); thence a line runs S 64° W for 7,736 meters to a point, Waypoint # 201 (0472142 – 0614415); thence a line runs N 62° W for 503 meters to a point, Waypoint # 202 (0471703 – 0614656); thence a line runs S 75° W for 590 meters to a point, Waypoint # 203 (0471126 – 0614490); thence a line runs N 89° W for 912 meters to a point, Waypoint # 204 (0470211 – 0614513); thence a line runs N 19° W for 533 meters to a point, Waypoint # 205 (0470056 – 0615017); thence a line runs N 39° W for 719 meters to a point, Waypoint # 206 (0469601 – 0615573); thence a line runs N 29° W for 509 meters to a point, Waypoint # 207 (0469353 – 0615999); thence a line runs N 53° W for 789 meters to a point, Waypoint # 208 (0468732 – 0616471); thence a line runs N 37° W for 642 meters to a point, Waypoint # 209 (0468331 – 0616988); thence a line runs N 27° W for 612 meters to a point, Waypoint # 210 (0468052 – 0617534); thence a line runs N 21° E for 324 meters to a point, Waypoint # 211 (0468170 – 0617838); thence a line runs N 12° W for 191 meters to a point, Waypoint # 212 (0468133 – 0618021); thence a line runs N 35° W for 260 meters to a point, Waypoint # 213 (0467987 – 0618233); thence a line runs Due West for 169 meters to a point, Waypoint # 214 (0467819 – 0618233); thence a line runs S 80° W for 91 meters to the point of **COMMENCEMENT**, (Waypoint # 1 / 0467728 – 0618215), embracing **171,888 hectares, or 424,735 acres** of primary forest land and **NO MORE**.

4.5 Summary of Fauna and Flora Assessment

The Forestry Development Authority (FDA), in collaboration with the (WCF) and other national and international partners, has undertaken a series of biological, ecological, and socio-economic assessments to establish the conservation significance and management feasibility of the Proposed Kwa National Park (KNP). These assessments have generated substantial scientific evidence confirming that the proposed park represents one of Liberia's most important biodiversity landscapes and warrants permanent protection under the national Protected Area Network (PAN).

Results from nationwide biodiversity surveys and ecological modeling conducted by (Junker et al. 2015) identified KNP as the most diverse area for biodiversity in the whole of Liberia, and that it is a biodiversity hotspot within a hotspot. Specific KNP biodiversity surveys conducted between 2016 and 2019 (WCF 2017, 2019), as well as results from community ecoguard patrols from 2020 to 2026 have shown that KNP is home to the second largest populations of the critically endangered West African chimpanzee, as well as a very large population of critically endangered forest elephant, the endangered pygmy hippopotamus, vulnerable leopards, and various threatened monkey and duiker species, to name a few. Furthermore, the results from biological rapid assessments in various taxonomic groups, such as plants, birds, amphibians and reptiles, butterflies and beetles, have identified several new species to science of trees (4 species, Jongkind 2019), and frogs (2 species, Rödel et al. 2019). The beetle survey has identified a large number of first country records, and the total number

of species found during the surveys is not yet known. In total, the various surveys showed that KNP hosts more than 411 species of fauna of different kinds of taxonomic groups, excluding the beetles (39 species of mammals, 110 species of birds, 15 species of reptiles, 36 species of amphibians, 209 species of butterflies). These species include 30 species of conservation concern, which are species listed as threatened (critically endangered, endangered or vulnerable) on the IUCN Red list (IUCN 2023) and many of which are endemic to the Upper Guinea forest ecosystem. For the floral aspect, the surveys confirmed the presence of 344 species of plants. A full list of faunal and floral species so far observed at KNP is presented in Annex 17, while full biodiversity baseline reports can be found in annexes 2c, 3b and 4.

Given the potentially outstanding high conservation value of the Krahn-Bassa National Forest (KBNF), its strategic location connecting to the Tai-Grebo-Krahn-Sapo (TGKS) Transboundary Forest Landscape and Cestos-Senkwehn PPA and considering the commitment of the Liberian government to protect 30% of its forest cover through the creation of a Protected Area Network (PAN), FDA and WCF were successful in gaining funds in 2016 for initial demographic, socio-economic and biodiversity/anthropogenic surveys of KBNF. Funding was acquired through the Great Ape Conservation Fund (GACF) of the US Fish and Wildlife Service as well as the German-based Rainforest Rescue initiative. The project started in September 2016. Data collection for the socio-economic survey was completed in March 2017, the data collection for the biodiversity survey, focusing on chimpanzees, other large mammals and anthropogenic threats, was finalized in August 2017.

Furthermore, from December 2017 to September 2019, WCF was contracted by the FDA to conduct the feasibility studies for Proposed Kwa National Park, including the biodiversity and threat assessment, which allowed to conduct additional surveys, such as biodiversity rapid assessment with national and international experts for various taxonomic groups (birds, amphibians, reptiles, butterflies, beetles, plants) and camera trap surveys.

The detailed surveys are presented in Annexes 2c, 3b and 4.

The baseline data collection focusing more on mammal diversity and density as well as threats with an extensive line transect survey, took place between the December 2016 and June 2017 and was performed by four teams. Data was collected on all direct observations of large mammals and indirect observations for target species. Indirect observations included vocalizations, dung, tracks and nests (as explained above for chimpanzees). Perpendicular distance measurements were taken for elephant dung, chimpanzee nests and nut-cracking sites, direct observations of monkeys and duikers. Details of the methodology used can be found in the guidebook (WCF 2016). Overall, the teams walked a total of 238 km of transects within PKNP, representing 98.35% of the theoretical survey effort (L = 242 km) (see Figure 7 for transect layout).

Results showed the presence of 58 species including mammals, birds and reptiles. Included within the mammal observations were four species of duiker, ten primate species and the presence of forest elephants and pygmy hippopotamuses. Encounter rates for selected large mammal species can be found in Table 2.

Table 2. Table showing encounter rates of selected species.

Species/Groups of species	Encounter Rate (Signs/km)
---------------------------	---------------------------

Monkeys	0.37
Chimpanzees	0.95
Bovids	4.21
Elephant	1.07
Pygmy hippopotamus	0.05

Alongside the selected mammals mentioned above, the presence of 13 species which are listed as critically endangered, endangered and vulnerable (by the IUCN Red List) were also located within the PKNP. The encounter rate for mammals listed as vulnerable or a higher threat status is 2.75 signs/km. Areas of high abundance of signs are found in Grand Gedeh County (part of the original Gbi PPA) and along the southern border of PKNP. A large area of seemingly low abundance of signs can be found in the central and western areas, including all of River Cess County within PKNP and areas in Grand Gedeh and Sinoe Counties.

Signs of chimpanzees were found throughout the Proposed Kwa National Park. The eastern side of PKNP (South, Central and North) show high abundance of signs of chimpanzees (Figure). In River Cess and in the western centre of PKNP, there is an area of low abundance of signs of chimpanzees (Figure). In order for a reliable population density estimate of chimpanzees to be performed, any wildlife survey must have a minimum number of 60 observations of chimpanzee nests. During the wildlife survey in PKNP 172 nest observations were made, allowing for a population estimate to be made using Distance 7.1 software. The density of chimpanzees was calculated to be 0.151 weaned chimpanzees per km². Consequently, their population size was 438 weaned individuals and a total population of 515 including juveniles/infants.

Signs of elephants were found almost throughout PKNP, although in the centre of the survey area and in the survey area located in Rivercess County, there were seemingly few or no signs (Figure). In Sinoe County and Grand Gedeh County areas of high numbers of signs of elephant presence were detected. Additionally, off transect a further 208 signs were seen (73 dung, 43 tracks and 92 paths) suggesting that there could be a relatively large elephant population in PKNP. Unfortunately, of the 68 dung observed on-transect, only 12 were in the decay stages of 1-3 and therefore the only dung that could have been used to calculate the population estimate, which is way below the 60 needed.

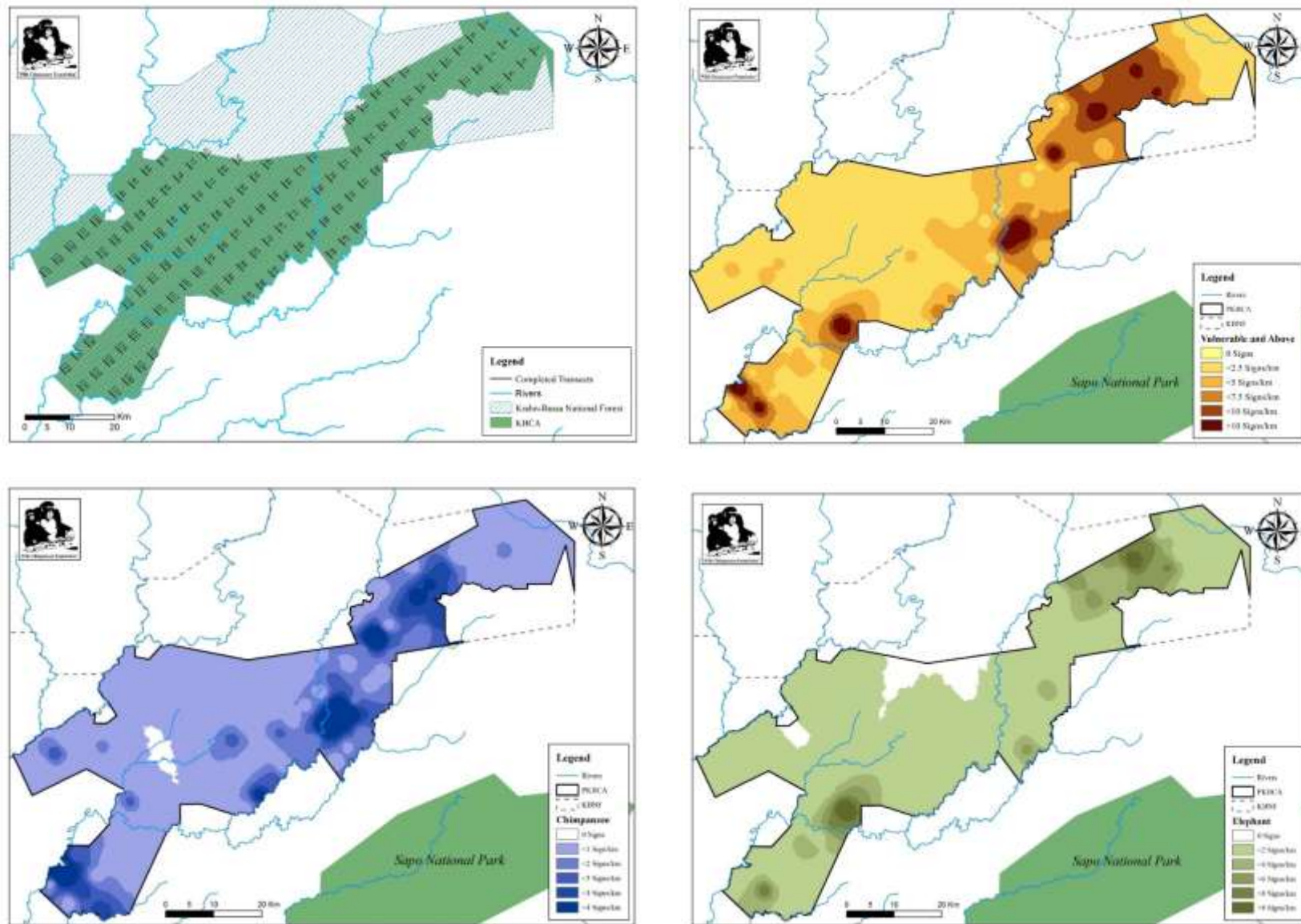


Figure 7. Map showing transect layout for the baseline wildlife survey (top left). Spatial distribution maps of species listed vulnerable and above (top right), chimpanzees (bottom left) and elephants (bottom right).

Summary of demographic surveys and anthropogenic activities assessment

The detailed reports for the demographic and socio-economic surveys, as well as the livelihood assessment can be found in Annexes 2a, b, 3b, 4, and 15a.

Due to the size of PKNP (172,200 ha), it was decided to limit detailed initial data collection on settlements to a 5 km zone directly surrounding PKNP and settlements situated within PKNP, in a total of 3 counties and 14 districts. During data collection, 228 settlements were visited, with 75 of these falling within the study area (28 in PKNP with a population of 13,328 inhabitants and 47 within the 5 km buffer zone with a population of 13,370 inhabitants). In these 75 towns/villages, population estimates show that there are 26,698 people currently living there (Figure 8).

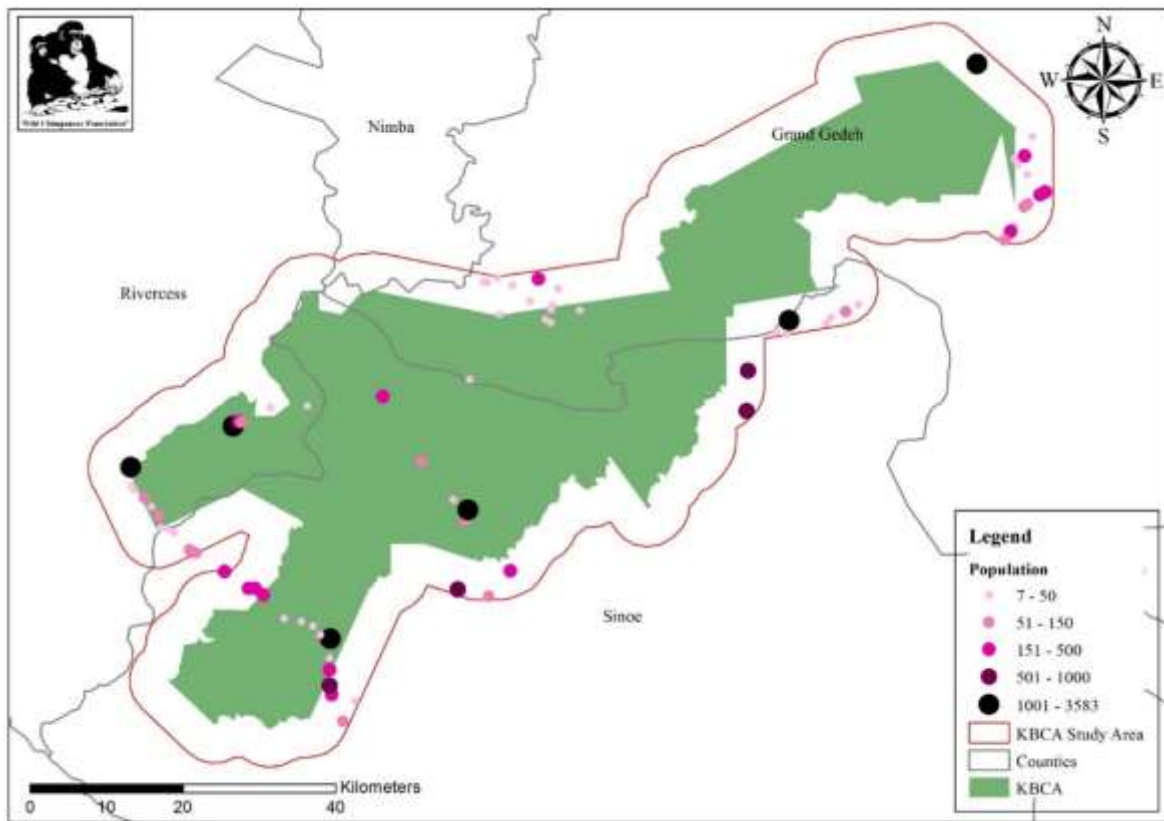


Figure 8: Map showing villages within the PKNP study area with point size a function of population size.

Population densities were calculated within the study area per county and per district (Figure 9). In Grand Gedeh County, the population density is 2.71 individuals/km², while Sinoe County has a population density of 6.40 individuals/km² and River Cess County 10.08 individuals/km². Sinoe County, representing the largest county by area in the survey area (2,449km²), contains three of the largest towns/cities and also the highest number of settlements in the survey area. However, even though River Cess County has a relatively small surface area (573km²), it has two very large towns/cities (ITI Town and Solo Town).

Five districts within the PKNP study area have a population density of 0 individuals/km²: Pynes Town, Sanquin District #2 and Sanquin District #3 (Sinoe County); Central River Cess County (River Cess County). Tchien District in Grand Gedeh County, located in the buffer zone, has the highest population density (22.12 individuals/km²), while Yarnee District in River Cess County has the second highest population density of 16.54 individuals/km², mainly due to the presence of both ITI Town and Solo Town, combined with a smaller surface area (349 km²), both of which are located within PKNP.

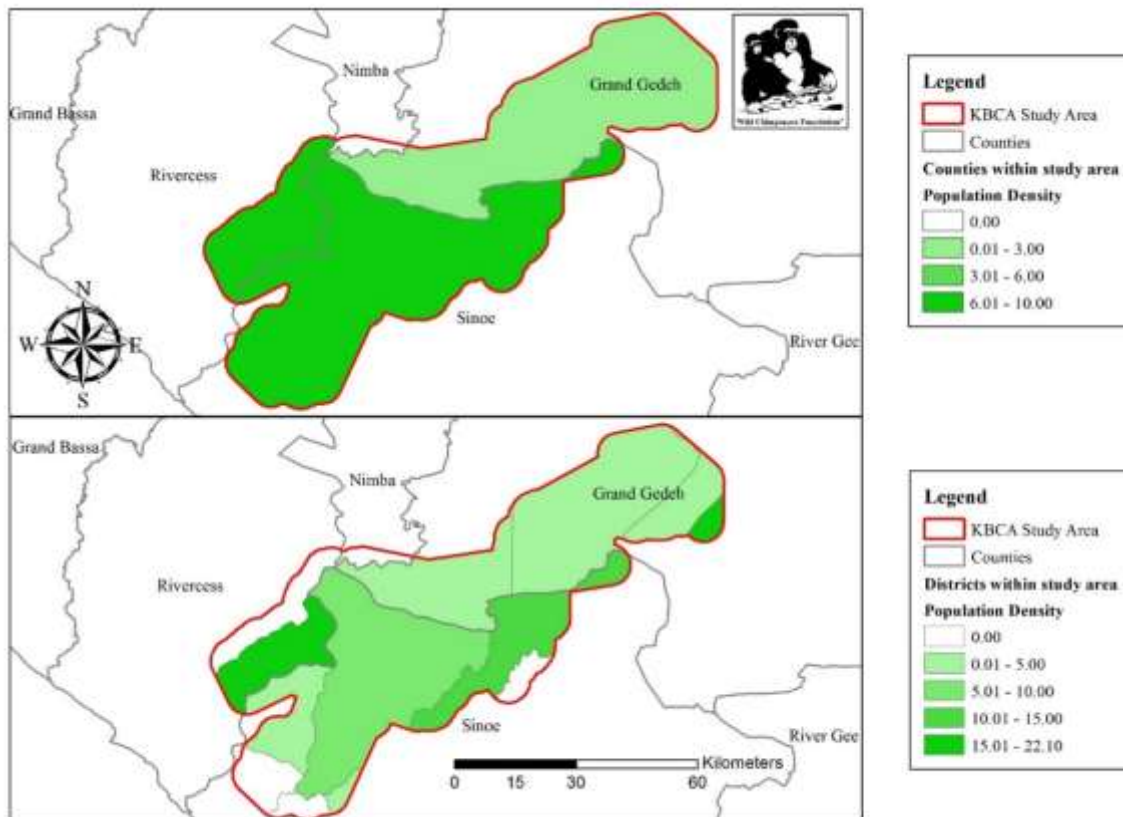


Figure 9: Population densities within the PKNP study zone per County (top) and District (bottom).

All roads that the team used during the survey were recorded using the tracklog of the GPS. In total, the team traversed 1,128 km during the scoping mission, 797 km of these were car roads, while 106 km were motorbike roads and 225 km were human paths. There are four main car roads which surround and go through PKNP. Northwest of PKNP is the Zwedru-Ganta Highway, the Sinoe Road runs along the southeastern edge of PKNP, the Greenville Road passes through PKNP in the southwestern region and the ITI Highway is a logging road which passes from ITI Town to Gboe-Geewon through PKNP.

Socio-economic were collected between January and March 2017, as well as in February and March 2018. Overall, 820 households were interviewed in the three counties in which PKNP is located (Grand Gedeh, River Cess and Sinoe Counties). The main results demonstrate that there are three main ethnic groups living in and around the PKNP: Krahn, Kru and Bassa, and that

96.62% are Christian. Only 30.11% had lived in these towns/villages their whole lives, suggesting a trend towards inward migration. Literacy levels were slightly above the national average, though women tended to be less literate than men (22.86% compared to 51.43% respectively).

The majority of persons are farmers with hunting as a secondary economic activity. Overall, nearly two thirds of people interviewed took part in some form of hunting, on average 10.32 days a month. The majority (76.80%) of the hunting is done inside the PKNP, mostly using traps (79.18%). The main reason for people to hunt was financial gain, while farming activities seemed to be for personal and family consumption, though a more in-depth study on this aspect should be done in the future. In relation to their diet, fish was the protein eaten most regularly, with 85.93% declaring to consume it on a daily basis, followed by duiker meat (42.20% consume it on a daily basis). Chimpanzee was the species most likely to never have been consumed by the respondents (84.62%).

As to the participants' perception on conservation issues, 46.37% said that hunting and the sale of bushmeat does have an effect on the decrease of wildlife in the forest, 79.65% stated that they thought forest conservation was good, mostly in relation to future generations, and 74.95% stated that it is important to protect chimpanzees. Lastly, when asked which projects communities would like to benefit from, agricultural support (42.42%) and loan/micro-credit programs (35.16%) were the most wanted.

Overall, the study provided baseline socio-economic data on the human population of the PKNP providing a first understanding on the conservation issues at hand in relation to the communities there. Little conservation action has been led there in recent years and, as a priority, it is recommended that FDA increases its presence to liaise with communities to improve the latter's understanding towards current conservation issues and the protection of PKNP and local wildlife. Moreover, prior to the creation of a future protected area, and seeing that the majority of community members believe the forest should be protected, we suggest that much awareness raising should be done, focusing on the effect of forest degradation, the over-hunting of wildlife, the dangers for humans of consuming bushmeat, the pet trade, etc. Engaging communities at the outset of a conservation project might prove important for the future protection of the PKNP.

Summary of the community, regional and national consultations

Since early 2020, FDA and WCF have been working towards the gazettelement of PKNP alongside the county representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, (MIA), since 2021 also with very strong involvement of the Liberia Land Authority (LLA), and since December 2022 with full support of the central staff of MIA. The pre-gazettelement activities have put high emphasis on the full participation and involvement of local community dwellers, strictly following the principles of Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC). Annexes 6 to 14, as well as 16a, b and c include detailed information on all community, regional and national consultations and awareness meetings held, including the respective documentation for the meetings, i.e. the attendance sheets, pictures and maps, and meeting minutes or reports, as appropriate.

The consultations and awareness were part of all the pre-gazettelement activities and were done from May 2020 to June 2026. Meetings and workshops were held at the community, regional and national level, involving all relevant stakeholders.

All communities have been engaged since 2016 in creating the Kwa National Park, through a series of consultations and awareness raising programs led by FDA, Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), Liberia Land Authority (LLA), and WCF. Besides the 75 communities located within 5 km around Kwa National Park, additional 24 towns were included in the engagement activities, considering their importance as towns leading community clusters. In total, 78 towns gave their Free Informed Prior Consent (FPIC) and approval for the creation of the national park (Annex 13). This is proven through signed community consent forms, which also show consent to the harmonized boundaries, as identified through the participatory land use mapping with local communities. County and district authorities, as well as representatives from other key government institutions, such as MIA, LLA and Ministry of Mines and Energy (MME) and observers from national Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) witnessed the consultation meetings and also signed the consent forms. The scans of these consent forms are available in Annex 13. At the regional level, an initial awareness tour was conducted in May 2020, and final consultation is pending in June 2023, which will be described in the final gazettelement package. The regional consultation was led by FDA targeted the County and District authorities, including representatives from other key ministries, such as the Environmental Protection Agency, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Mines and Energy, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, and Ministry of Public Works. The national consultation targeted key stakeholders from other government institutions, legislature, national and international NGOs, CSOs, and academia. An initial multi-stakeholder information-sharing meeting was held in December 2020 (Annex 7). Other major national consultation meeting were held through a legislative forest in November 2022 (Annex 10) and a final national consultation will be held in June 2023, which will be considered for the final version of the gazettelement package.

The detailed report on all community, regional, and national consultation is available in Annex 11a.

The list of the 99 towns and villages involved during the community engagement and consultations is shown below (Table 3). Out of the 99 towns, 78 towns were on board with the process, while there were 21 towns that were engaged between 2020 and 2023, but who after repeatedly agreeing for the participatory land use mapping process to move forward changed their position and in the end preferred not to be involved in the gazettelement and activities of the future national park.

Table 3: List of towns and villages around Kwa National Park that were part of the various pre-gazettelement activities.

No.	Town	District	County	Participatory land-use mapping completed	Community Consultation - Consent form signed	Flagging	Co-management input
1	Solo Town	Yarnee	Rivercess	yes	yes	Completed	yes
2	Teto Village	Yarnee	Rivercess	yes	yes	Completed	yes
3	Amib Camp	Yarnee	Rivercess	yes	yes	Completed	yes
4	George Village	Yarnee	Rivercess	yes	yes	Completed	yes
5	Gbarbo Village	Yarnee	Rivercess	yes	yes	Completed	yes
6	Mohamed Village	Yarnee	Rivercess	yes	yes	Completed	yes
7	ITI	Yarnee	Rivercess	yes	yes	Completed	yes
8	Kolatree Village	Yarnee	Rivercess	yes	yes	Completed	yes
9	One House Village	Yarnee	Rivercess	yes	yes	Completed	yes
10	Sarfee Village	Tarjuowon	Rivercess or Sinoe	decided not to be part, consultation still ongoing though			yes
11	New Sarfee Village	Yarnee or Tarjuowon	Rivercess or Sinoe	yes	yes	Completed	yes
12	Camp A Town	Tarjuowon	Sinoe	yes	yes	Completed	yes
13	Simijillah City	Tarjuowon	Sinoe	decided not to be part, consultation still ongoing though			Did not attend co-management workshop
14	Myer Village	Tarjuowon	Sinoe	yes	yes	Completed	
15	Pajibo Town	Tarjuowon	Sinoe	decided not to be part, consultation still ongoing though			
16	Shaw David	Tarjuowon	Sinoe	yes	yes	Completed	yes
17	Wieh Town	Tarjuowon	Sinoe	yes	yes	Completed	no, was not invited
18	Manneh Town	Tarjuowon	Sinoe	yes	yes	Completed	yes
19	Jacksonville	Tarjuowon	Sinoe	yes	yes	Completed	yes
20	Buu Village	Tarjuowon	Sinoe	yes	yes	Completed	yes
21	Grebo Community	Tarjuowon	Sinoe	yes	yes	Completed	yes
22	Matthew Tarpeh	Tarjuowon	Sinoe	yes	yes	Completed	yes
23	Noah Handford Village	Tarjuowon	Sinoe	yes	yes	Completed	yes
24	One Way Town	Tarjuowon	Sinoe	yes	yes	Completed	yes
25	Saywon Town	Tarjuowon	Sinoe	yes	yes	Completed	yes
26	Teah Town	Tarjuowon	Sinoe	yes	yes	Completed	yes

No.	Town	District	County	Participatory land-use mapping completed	Community Consultation - Consent form signed	Flagging	Co-management input
27	David Village	Sanquin	Sinoe	yes	yes	Completed	yes
28	Tenneh Village	Sanquin	Sinoe	yes	yes	Completed	yes
29	Children Village	Sanquin	Sinoe	yes	yes	Completed	yes
30	Gbayan Town	Sanquin	Sinoe	yes	yes	Completed	yes
31	God With Us Village	Sanquin	Sinoe	yes	yes	Completed	yes
32	Karlor Town	Sanquin	Sinoe	yes	yes	Completed	yes
33	New Town	Sanquin	Sinoe	yes	yes	Completed	yes
34	Nenneh Town	Sanquin	Sinoe	yes	yes	Completed	yes
35	Sayon Town	Sanquin	Sinoe	yes	yes	Completed	yes
36	Kay Town	Sanquin	Sinoe	yes	yes	Completed	yes
37	Solve Problem Village	Sanquin	Sinoe	yes	yes	Completed	yes
38	Togbaville	Sanquin	Sinoe	yes	yes	Completed	yes
39	Teahn Town	Sanquin	Sinoe	yes	yes	Completed	yes
40	Wiah Town	Sanquin	Sinoe	yes	yes	Completed	yes
41	OJ Village	Sanquin	Sinoe	yes	yes	Completed	yes
42	Cut Wood Village	Sanquin	Sinoe	yes	yes	Completed	yes
43	Cheyewulu	Seekon	Sinoe	yes	yes	Ongoing	yes
44	Dagbe Town	Seekon	Sinoe	yes	yes	Ongoing	yes
45	Judu Town	Seekon	Sinoe	yes	yes	Ongoing	yes
46	Pellokon	Seekon	Sinoe	yes	yes	Ongoing	yes
47	Plandialebo/ENI	Seekon	Sinoe	yes	yes	Ongoing	yes
48	Voogbadee	Seekon	Sinoe	yes	yes	Ongoing	yes
49	Saylee Town	Seekon	Sinoe	yes	yes	Ongoing	yes
50	Gboyee Village	Seekon	Sinoe	yes	yes	Ongoing	yes
51	David Village	Seekon	Sinoe	yes	yes	Ongoing	yes
52	Soday Village	Seekon	Sinoe	yes	yes	Ongoing	yes
53	Wologbaduo	Seekon	Sinoe	yes	yes	Ongoing	yes
54	Daniel Village	Seekon	Sinoe	yes	yes	Ongoing	yes

Draft Gazettement Package Proposed Kwa National Park

No.	Town	District	County	Participatory land-use mapping completed	Community Consultation - Consent form signed	Flagging	Co-management input
55	Deyelle Village	Seekon	Sinoe	yes	yes	Ongoing	yes
56	Slon Bridge Way	Seekon	Sinoe	yes	yes	Ongoing	yes
57	Zanwonjah	Seekon	Sinoe	yes	yes	Ongoing	yes
58	Kumah Town	Seekon	Sinoe	yes	yes	Ongoing	yes
59	Tobo Town	Seekon	Sinoe	yes	yes	Ongoing	yes
60	Menyea Village	Seekon	Sinoe	yes	yes	Ongoing	yes
61	Daniel Village	Seekon	Sinoe	yes	yes	Ongoing	yes
62	Pintrozon	Seekon	Sinoe	yes	yes	Ongoing	yes
63	Bolu Village	Seekon	Sinoe	yes	yes	Ongoing	no, was not invited
64	Bargblor Town	Cavalla	Grand Gedeh	yes	yes	Completed	yes
65	Old Solo Town	Cavalla	Grand Gedeh	yes	yes	Completed	yes
66	Tojallah Town	Gbarzon	Grand Gedeh	yes	yes	Completed	yes
67	Quebo	Gbarzon	Grand Gedeh	yes	yes	Completed	yes
68	Juluzon	Gbarzon	Grand Gedeh	yes	yes	Completed	yes
69	Zarzar Town	Gbarzon	Grand Gedeh	yes	yes	Completed	yes
70	Goluay	Gbarzon	Grand Gedeh	yes	yes	Completed	yes
71	Tiah Town	Gbarzon	Grand Gedeh	yes	yes	Completed	yes
72	Jellue Town	Cavalla	Grand Gedeh	yes	yes	Completed	Did not attend co-management workshop
73	Johnson Village	Cavalla	Grand Gedeh	yes	yes	Completed	
74	Gee Village	Cavalla	Grand Gedeh	yes	yes	Completed	
75	Dugbarwulue Village	Cavalla	Grand Gedeh	yes	yes	Completed	
76	Tarwo Village	Cavalla	Grand Gedeh	yes	yes	Completed	
77	Kumah Town	Tchien	Grand Gedeh	yes	yes	Completed	yes
78	Goluay	Tchien	Grand Gedeh	yes	yes	Completed	yes
79	Pennue Town	Tchien	Grand Gedeh	yes	yes	Completed	yes
80	Bassa (Deh) Village	Tchien	Grand Gedeh	yes	yes	Completed	yes
81	Jones Grear Village	Tchien	Grand Gedeh	yes	yes	Completed	yes

No.	Town	District	County	Participatory land-use mapping completed	Community Consultation - Consent form signed	Flagging	Co-management input
82	Gboe Geewon	Gbarzon	Grand Gedeh	Decided not to be part			Did not attend co-management workshop
83	Lawrence Dweh Village	Gbarzon	Grand Gedeh				
84	Gibson Village	Gbarzon	Grand Gedeh				
85	Morris Kommon Village	Gbarzon	Grand Gedeh				
86	Road Seven Village	Gbarzon	Grand Gedeh				
87	Harrison Village	Gbarzon	Grand Gedeh				
88	Wilson Duo Village	Gbarzon	Grand Gedeh				
89	Emmanuel Marley Village	Gbarzon	Grand Gedeh				
90	Othello Village	Gbarzon	Grand Gedeh				
91	Togba Jarbiah Village	Gbarzon	Grand Gedeh				
92	Alfred Dragar Village	Gbarzon	Grand Gedeh				
93	Peter Zeagbah Village	Gbarzon	Grand Gedeh				
94	Gbayea Town	Gbarzon	Grand Gedeh				
95	Arthur Zeepair Village	Gbarzon	Grand Gedeh				
96	Panniwen	Gbarzon	Grand Gedeh				
97	Zamie Town	Gbarzon	Grand Gedeh				
98	Zean Town	Gbarzon	Grand Gedeh				
99	Zeagbah Town	Gbarzon	Grand Gedeh				

IV. Conclusion and Recommendations

Since September 2016, the FDA, the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), the Liberia Land Authority (LLA), other relevant government institutions, the Wild Chimpanzee Foundation (WCF) and the local communities around Proposed Kwa National Park (PKNP), have been working closely together to complete all steps towards the gazettelement of Kwa National Park, as required by Liberian national and international frameworks.

The feasibility studies conducted between 2016 and 2019 confirmed the unique level of biodiversity of PKNP, with high population sizes of threatened and endemic key species, paired with a low human population density. PKNP therefore was identified as a high priority area for conservation and the demographic and socio-economic characteristics, as well as the general support of the population for conservation activities, led to the suggestion to protect the area as a national park, which was endorsed by the local population that was sensitized about the various protected area categories.

From the start of the activities, the local population was fully involved in all activities, with some benefits received through the community ecoguard program that started in 2020, livelihood activities, such as beekeeping, village saving and loan schemes, vegetable farming, seed gardens, capacity building and targeted awareness activities, as well as infrastructure development, such as hand pump water well construction and school rehabilitation. The gazettelement of Kwa National Park will increase the opportunities, not only for direct employment and capacity building, but also an extensive program for sustainable livelihoods, the establishment of conservation enterprises infrastructure development, ecotourism and research.

The local communities, as well as lawmakers, government, civil society, academia and the private sector have supported the idea and the development of a robust and sustainable co-management framework, including a draft benefit-sharing framework and a draft grievance mechanism. The management of Kwa National Park shall be fully participatory, with an active role of local communities in taking and executing decisions. Women and youth shall play a particular role in the management of Kwa National Park.

The successful gazettelement of Kwa National Park, with a size of 172,200 ha, will significantly contribute to the aim of the Liberian government to protect 30% of the remaining forests, or 1.5 million hectares.

Considering the provision of Article 7 of the Constitution of the Republic of Liberia, the Forestry Development Authority has complied with the requirements of Chapter 9, section 9.3 of the 2006 National Forestry Reform Law by completing the preparation of this Gazettement package for the Kwa National Park. All standards and procedures required by international laws, conventions and treaties in establishing protected areas have been taken into account. In keeping with Section 9.4 of the NFRL, the President of the Republic will endorse this package and forward it the National Legislature for action according to Section 9.5.

The Authority has made an accurate description of boundaries; assessed the wildlife, cultural, and other resources, as well as existing state of human disturbances and resource utilization in the Kwa National Park. A summary of numerous consultations on local, regional, and national levels involving government agencies and persons confirms Free Prior Informed Consent of all.

Within the framework of its mandate the Forestry Development Authority therefore recommends to the President and the legislature the attached proposed Gazettement Act of the Kwa National Park for enactment into law.