



TETRA TECH

# Conflict: the Fourth “c” in Liberia’s Forest Management

**PERSPECTIVES ON 10 YEARS OF FOREST AND  
LAND MANAGEMENT**

Africa Biodiversity Collaborative Group

September 14, 2017

# Outline of the Presentation: biodiversity conservation, people and conflict

- Background on Tetra Tech's work in Liberia and broader biodiversity and socio-political context
- Legal framework on natural resources
- Summary of the 3C experience
- Conflicts related to 3C implementation
- Summary

# BACKGROUND



# Tetra Tech's 10+ Years of Forestry Programming in Liberia

- USAID/Liberia **Land Rights and Community Forestry Program (LRCFP)**
  - 3+ year pilot initiative (2007-2011) to develop and apply a “community forestry framework”; field activities in four pilot communities (Nimba & Sinoe Counties); worked closely with FDA and Land Commission
- USAID/Liberia **People, Rules and Organizations Supporting the Protection of Ecosystem Resources (PROSPER)** program
  - Five-year (2012-2017) project to support the expansion of sustainable forest management and CF in Liberia through education and improvements to human, legal, regulatory and institutional capacities
- World Bank Forest Carbon Partnership Facility **Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA)** for the REDD+ Strategy (2015-2016)
- USAID/**West Africa-Biodiversity and Climate Change Program (WA-BiCC)** (2015-2020)
  - Support for transboundary biodiversity programming including three PA in Liberia

# Liberia's Forest Resources and Biodiversity

- ~2.2 million hectares of closed canopy dense forest
- Ecologically diverse flora and fauna, holding 46% of the Upper Guinean rainforest ecosystem



# Liberia's Population

## A Diverse Populace

- 54% of population lives on less than \$2/day
- At least 27 local languages 16 tribes
- Dominant political class (~5%) has historically emphasized these differences
  - Land ownership limited to “civilized” peoples
  - “Growth without development”



# Liberia's Conflicts

## Liberia's Conflicts

- Long history of exclusion, political crisis, and civil wars (1989-1997 & 1999-2003) fueled by exploitation of timber and other natural resources
- More localized Protected Area disputes over access and use
- Conflicts with legal concessions



# Legal Framework

AN ACT ADOPTING THE NATIONAL FORESTRY REFORM LAW OF 2006

(AMENDING THE NATIONAL FORESTRY LAW OF :  
AS AMENDED; AND  
AMENDING AN ACT CREATING THE FORESTRY DEVELOPMENT  
AUTHORITY, AS AMENDED)

APPROVED: SEPTEMBER \_\_, 2006

Republic of Liberia

An Act to Establish the  
Community Rights Law  
of 2009 with  
Respect to Forest Lands



Approved October 16, 2009

AN ACT ADOPTING THE NATIONAL WILDLIFE  
CONSERVATION AND PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT LAW  
OF LIBERIA



# National Forestry Reform Law (NRFL)

- Passed in 2006; establishes legal framework for managing Liberia's forests
- Enshrines “3 Cs”: conservation, community and commercial
- Dislocates forest resources from forest land opening door to exploitation with compensation
- Calls for new law on community rights to forest resources



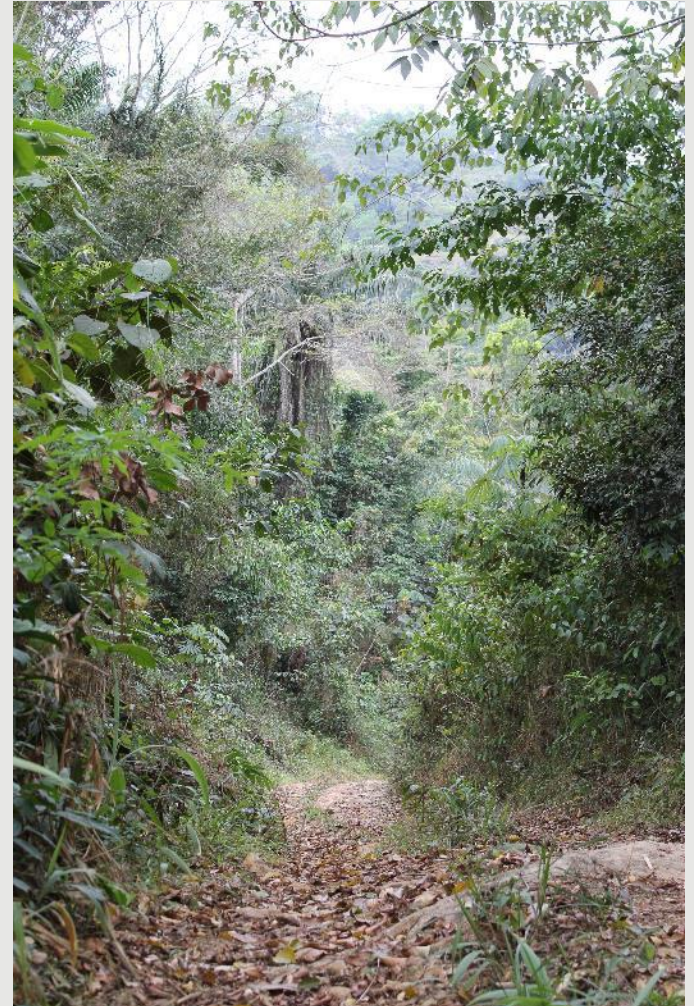
# Community Rights Law (CRL)

- Passed in 2009; establishes a process by which communities can secure their customary rights over forest lands
- Use a nine-step process to ensure Free and Prior Informed Consent (FPIC)
- Includes/envision commercial management
- Nine-steps include a proven conflict resolution process



# Wildlife Conservation and Protected Area Management Law

- Passed in 2016; provides a framework for conserving flora and fauna
- Supports community engagement in the conservation of biological diversity
- No implementing regulations in place



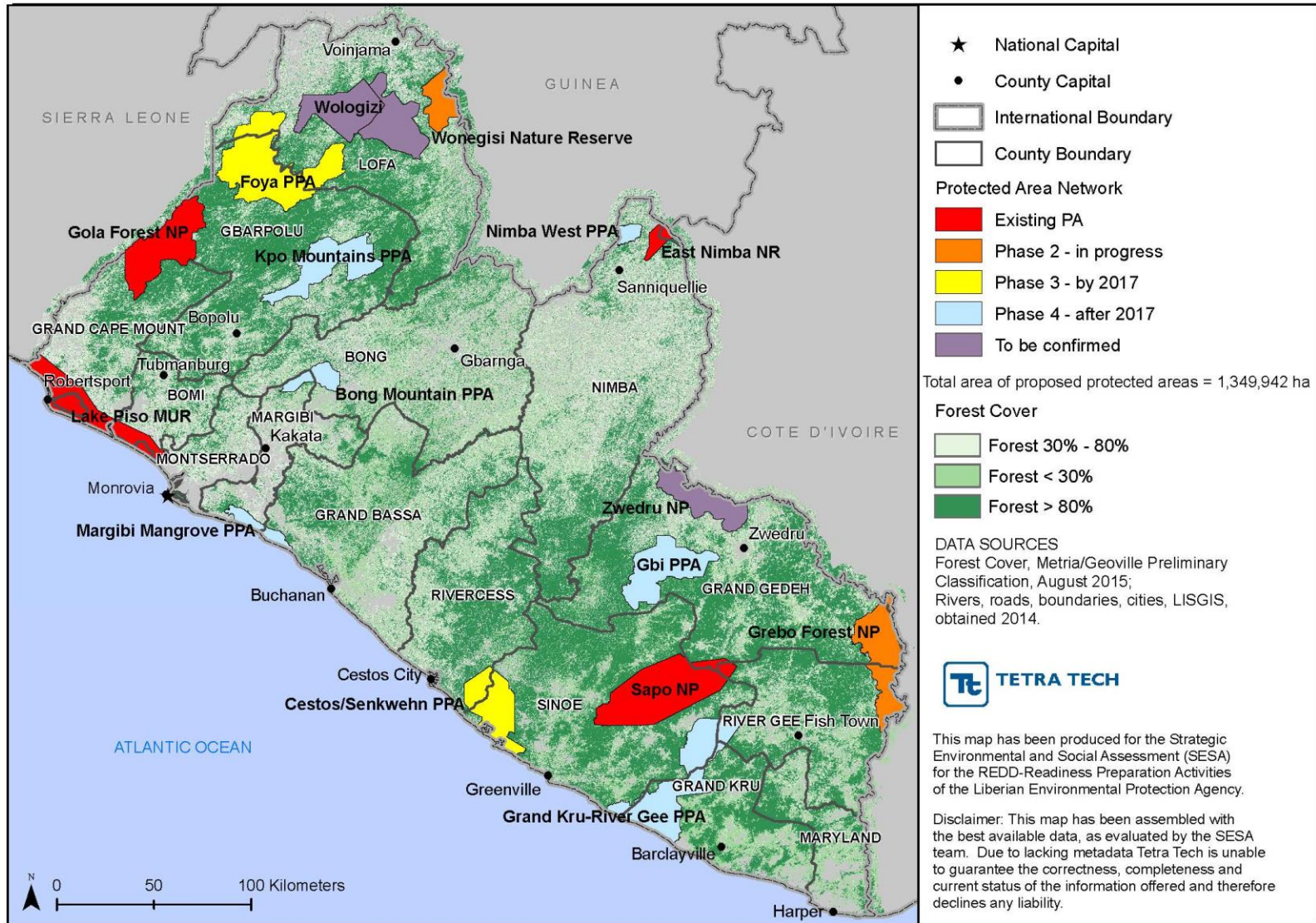
# CONSERVATION MANDATE & EXPERIENCES



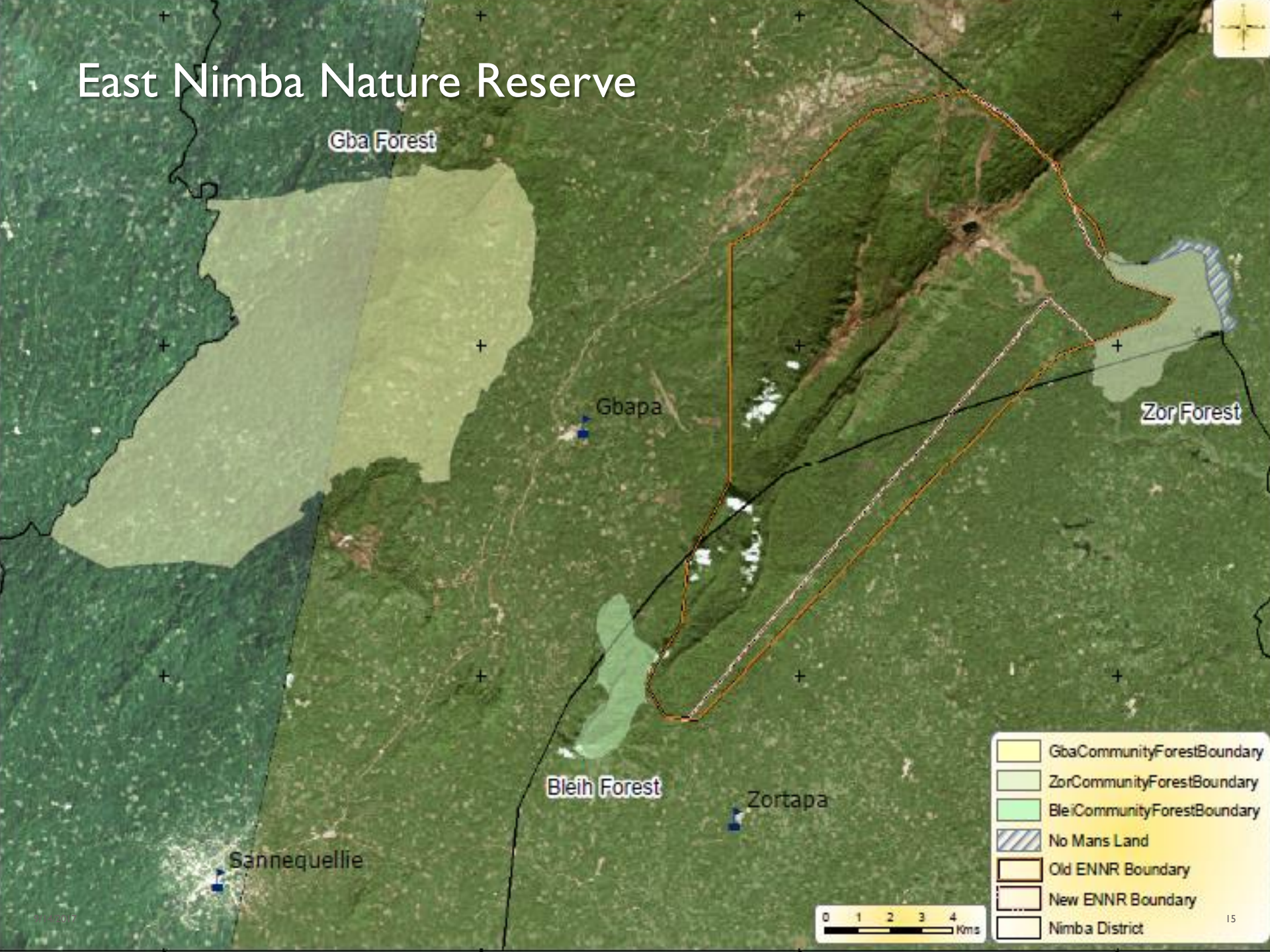
# Conservation Commitments

- The Government of Liberia has committed to establish a Protected Forest Areas Network, and Conservation Corridors that covers 30 percent of the existing forested area of Liberia ~1.5 million hectares
- 16 PA and Proposed PA; 4 established to date

# Protected and Proposed Protected Areas



# East Nimba Nature Reserve



Gba Forest

Gbapa

Zor Forest

Bleih Forest

Zortapa

Sannequellie

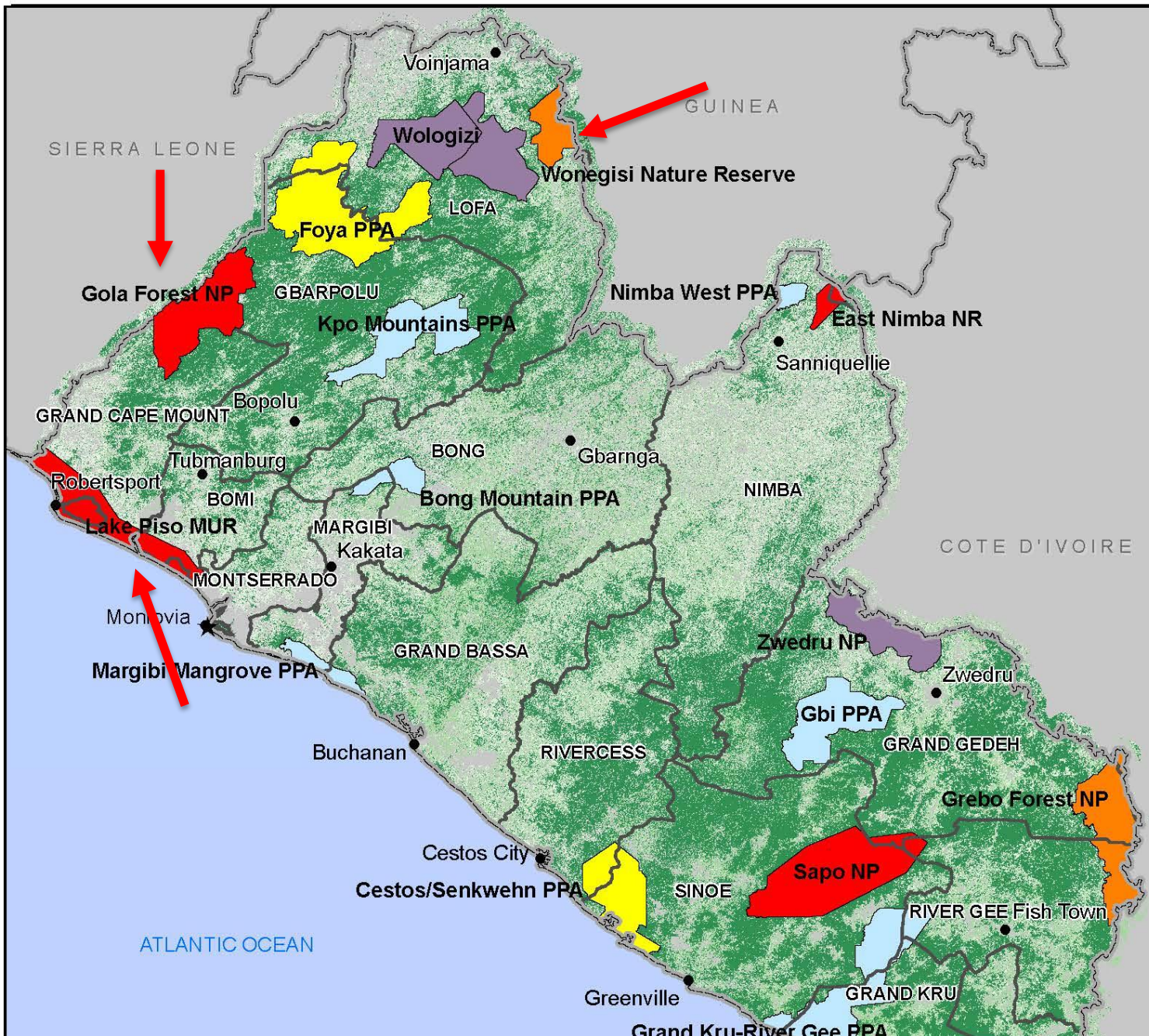
- GbaCommunityForestBoundary
- ZorCommunityForestBoundary
- BleiCommunityForestBoundary
- No Mans Land
- Old ENNR Boundary
- New ENNR Boundary
- Nimba District

0 1 2 3 4 Kms

# PA Establishment Process

- East Nimba Nature Reserve (~11,500 ha.)
- Transboundary area of international importance
- Passed in October 2003
- Opposed by local population
- FDA unable to demarcate until 2011 and with significant USAID investment





## PA Establishment Process examples...

- GEF investment to support consolidation of the PA Network (2008-2011)
- Lake Piso, Gola and Wonegezi
- “This project expected too much, too quickly from FDA... FDA had never managed a conservation project on its own.”
- Livelihood Activities: “No clear change attributable to the project”

# Current Status

- Four Protected Areas
- Draft Management Plans
- Limited capacity to implement
- Support from WB/Norway, WA-BiCC, Arcelor Mittal

# COMMUNITY FOREST MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCES



# The CRL is an extremely powerful tool...

- Allows communities to define their forests
- Secures management rights
- Management rights include conservation, commercial and community use



# As such, there have been multiple efforts to undermine its use...

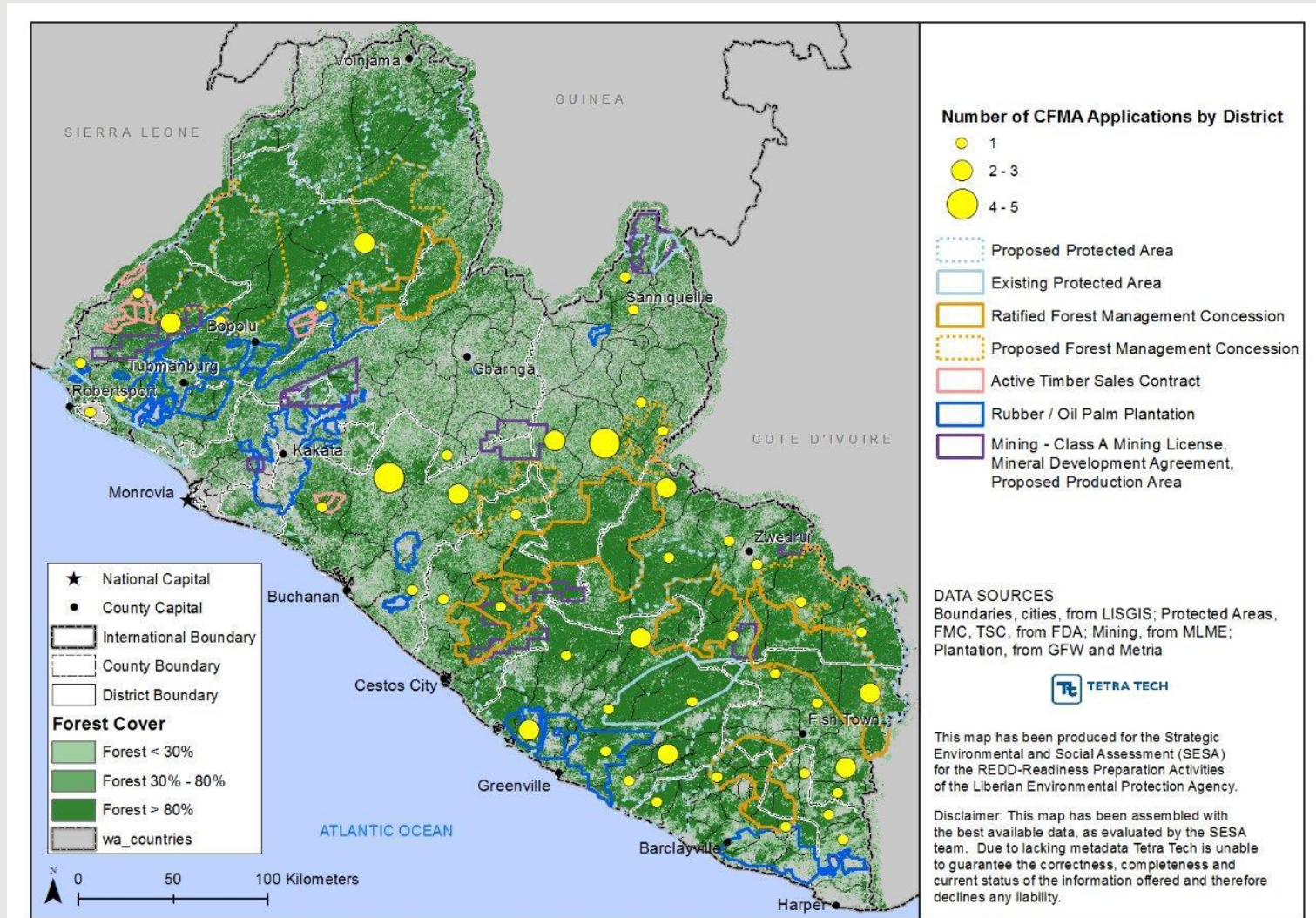
- Private Use Permits
  - Illegally granted to harvest timber on community lands
- Community Forest Applications
  - Developed and submitted for commercial purposes
- Land Rights Act
  - Introduced to the legislature with provisions removed that would have provided compensation to communities whose lands were “taken” for PA management

## Current Status

- Less than 20 CFMA (all of the donor-supported CF have conservation objectives, while others have commercial objectives)
- More than 100 applications that may have links to commercial interests and many are located around PAs
- Current donor strategy supports those around PA
- Livelihoods from CF are extremely limited



# Community Forestry Applications and other land uses





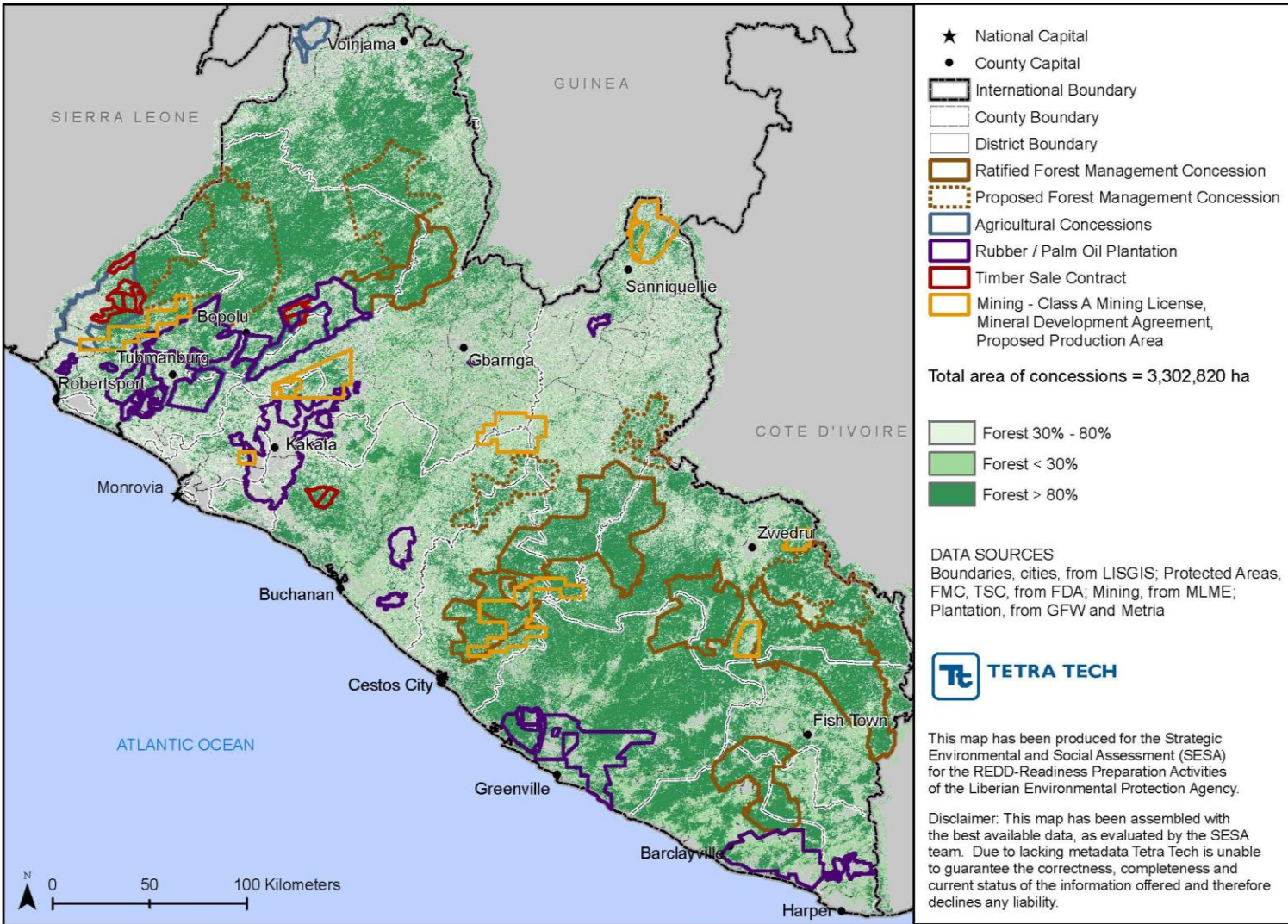
# COMMERCIAL FORESTRY EXPERIENCES



# Commercial Forestry Experience

- Significant portions of the country have been identified for timber concession management
- Laws and regulations are in place but support limited to EU
- Some agricultural concessions convey timber harvesting rights outside of the NFRL
- Some of these overlap with community customary lands
- Some overlap with other land concessions

# Allocated and Unallocated Concessions



# Summary of the Status of 3C Management

- There are overlapping land uses and claims between the three Cs
- Liberia has set ambitious conservation targets but has limited capacity to implement
- Communities require incentives for conservation
- The interest in commercial exploitation of forests is alive and well



# CONFLICTS – the 4<sup>th</sup> C?



# Conflict: PA Management

- Sapo National Park ~ 180K+ ha.
- Forest elephants, Pygmy hippo, etc.
- On-going conflicts between local people and FDA over use and access rights

## Poachers, miners, squatters leave Sapo National Park

MONROVIA, 2 September 2005

Conservationists have moved hundreds of squatters out of Liberia's largest national park, putting an end to their slaughter of wildlife and illegal gold mining.

NEWS

November 02, 2009 1:23  
PM

## Illegal Mining Threatens Liberian Rainforest

Daily  
**OBSERVER**

2 MAY 2017

## Liberia: Two Forest Rangers Killed in Sinoe

# Conflict: Concessions

- Concessions have the force of law and many for 25-50 years
- Independent audit found that many were signed without compliance with public consultation requirements
- Overlap with customary rights
- Include timber rights

## Riot on the Plantation: In Liberia, Palm Oil Has Set Off a Dangerous Scramble for Land

By Elaisha Stokes, Al Jazeera America  
05 October 15

## Africa land grabs 'could cause conflicts'

Feb. 3, 2012 at 1:07 PM [Follow @crudeoilprices](#)



## Liberia Land Deals with Foreign Firms 'Could Sow Seeds of Conflict'

## Arrests and Harassment of Community Leaders in Liberia Must Stop, Says Rights and Resources Initiative

*Recent Punitive Actions Undermine the Legitimacy of 300,000+ Hectare Acquisition by Golden Veroleum (Liberia)*

December 20, 2012 02:17 PM Eastern Standard Time

## Liberia - communities join to fight the palm oil land grab

Jacinta Fay & Silas Kpanan'Ayoung Siakor

18th July 2014

# Conflict: PA and Transboundary Conflict

- Protected Areas are located in remote, transboundary areas
- Historically staging grounds for internal and trans-boundary conflicts
- Now international wildlife trade are using these routes and networks



# SUMMARY

A photograph of a lush, green forested hill under a blue sky with white clouds. The foreground is filled with tall, dry grasses and some green plants. The word "SUMMARY" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font in the upper center of the image.

## Proceed with caution and consider all 4 Cs

- Ambitious conservation targets – 30% now supported by WB/Norway
- Limited capacity
- Economic barriers to adoption by communities
- Liberia is **STILL** emerging from its years of conflict and other challenges





**THANK YOU!**



TETRA TECH