

ENVIRONMENT WATCH



Monthly Environmental Newsletter

An initiative of the Liberia
Agricultural and
Environmental Journalists
Network

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Editorial Note to Readers

We are thrilled to introduce the **Environment Watch Newsletter**, a bold new initiative dedicated to reshaping the narrative around environmental reporting in Liberia. This newsletter is rooted in the belief that journalism should not only highlight problems but also present the innovative solutions and community-driven efforts addressing these challenges.

Through the lens of Solution Journalism, Environment Watch will focus on showcasing successful environmental practices, innovative solutions, and the stories of individuals, communities, and organizations working tirelessly to protect our environment.

In Liberia, like many parts of the world, environmental issues are pressing, but the focus often tends to be on the challenges and obstacles. While acknowledging these challenges is crucial, we believe it is equally important to shine a light on the positive actions being taken to create sustainable change. Our goal is to shift the narrative from one of despair to one of hope and progress.

Through this newsletter, we aim to inspire action, provide insights, and equip our readers with the knowledge to make informed decisions about their role in protecting the environment. By highlighting success stories, we hope to foster a collective mindset geared toward environmental resilience and sustainability.

We invite you to join us on this journey of positive change. Together, let's explore the possibilities, amplify the voices of those leading the way, and work toward a better future for Liberia and the world.

— **Editor, Environment Watch Newsletter**

About LAEJN

The **Liberia Agricultural and Environmental Journalists Network (LAEJN)** is a professional association dedicated to enhancing the quality of agricultural and environmental reporting in Liberia. Founded with the mission to promote accurate, in-depth, and solution-focused journalism, LAEJN serves as a platform for journalists committed to covering critical issues related to agriculture, climate change, environmental sustainability, and natural resource management.

Through capacity-building initiatives, training workshops, and collaborations with experts and institutions, the network empowers journalists with the knowledge and tools necessary to produce impactful stories that drive meaningful change.

One of LAEJN's key priorities is advancing Solution Journalism—a reporting approach that not only highlights problems but also explores responses and innovations that are making a difference. LAEJN aims to reshape the narrative around environmental and agricultural reporting, emphasizing sustainable practices, resilience, and development opportunities in Liberia.

Through partnerships with local and international organizations, LAEJN strives to ensure that critical issues affecting Liberia's environment and agriculture receive the attention they deserve, ultimately contributing to a more informed and proactive society.

For journalists, media professionals, and stakeholders passionate about agriculture and environmental reporting, LAEJN provides a dynamic space for collaboration, learning, and impactful storytelling. Environment

Coastal Communities Take the Lead in Mangrove Conservation Efforts



Coastal communities in Maryland, Sinoe, Grand Kru, and Rivercess Counties are stepping up as frontline defenders of Liberia's mangrove ecosystems, thanks to a series of community leadership and conservation trainings recently concluded by **Conservation International (CI)**.

The initiative, implemented under the **Blue Oceans Programme** and financed by **Sida – the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency** through the **Embassy of Sweden in Monrovia**, aims to strengthen local participation in protecting Liberia's fragile coastal and marine environments.

Members of Mangrove Management Committees (MMCs) from the four counties received training on sustainable mangrove management, the ecological and economic importance of mangroves, and practical conservation tools. Participants learned how healthy mangrove forests help protect fisheries, stabilize coastlines from erosion, preserve biodiversity, and capture carbon — a crucial role in fighting climate change.

[Click the link to read more about this story](#)

Sea Erosion Threatens the Livelihood of Coconut Oil Producers in Rivercess County

Rising sea levels linked to climate change are eroding the shores of Rivercess County,

destroying coconut trees and threatening the livelihood of hundreds of residents who depend on coconut oil production for survival.

Inhabitants of coastal communities, particularly in south-eastern Liberia, say the steady advance of the ocean has washed away large portions of farmland and uprooted dozens of coconut trees, which form the backbone of local household income. Coconut oil production is a traditional economic activity in the region, providing both food security and cash for school fees, health care, and other basic needs.

“We used to harvest more than 20 bags of coconuts every season, but now the sea erosion is destroying the trees,” said **Mary Toe**, a coconut oil producer in Cestos. **“Without coconuts, I cannot produce oil, and that means I cannot pay my children's school fees.”**



Environmental experts attribute the destruction to the effects of climate change, which has accelerated sea erosion along Liberia's coastline. Liberia is among the most vulnerable to rising sea levels due to its low-lying coastal settlements and limited infrastructure to withstand the impact. [Read more on this article](#)



Garbage Piles Fuel Disease Risk in Bong County



The state of sanitation in many Liberian cities, whether capitals or smaller established municipalities, remains troubling and increasingly hazardous. Across Bong County, especially in Gbarnga, uncollected garbage is piling up in streets, marketplaces, and residential areas, creating breeding grounds for mosquitoes, rodents, and bacteria. Experts have postulated that open burning of waste also releases toxic fumes, affecting air quality and public health.

Gallah Varpilah, the Mayor of Gbarnga City, has also voiced concerns about sanitation challenges in Gbarnga. He attributed the situation to limited support from the government. According to Varpilah, the city government received the sum of \$10,150 United States dollars from the 2024 national budget and \$5,000 United States dollars from the County Social Development Fund in 2025, but said the funds were used toward compensating volunteer workers and purchasing a few motorcycles, which according to him, are not sufficient to address the challenges the city faces with waste management. [Read more on this story](#)

“How Much More?": Africa's Moral Reckoning on Climate Justice

The room grew quiet as Alfred Lahai Gbabai Brownell Sr. approached the podium. Outside, the African Climate Summit buzzed with conversations about

carbon markets, green growth, and adaptation finance. Inside Room M4, however, the mood was different — focused, intense, and unmistakably human.

Brownell's address came at a side event titled “Centering Justice in Climate Action — The Advisory Opinion and Human Rights-Based Solutions.” The event marked a critical moment in a bold new initiative: a petition before the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights seeking an Advisory Opinion on African states' legal obligations in the context of the climate crisis. It is the first of its kind.



If successful, it could establish that every African government has a binding duty — not a moral suggestion — to protect its people and ecosystems from the ravages of climate change. Governments could no longer expand fossil fuel projects, ignore community rights, or criminalize environmental defenders without consequence. ***“This is not an appeal for sympathy,” Brownell said. “It’s a demand for accountability.”*** [Read more](#)

Conservation International Strengthens Frontline Conservationists' Capacity in Lofa County

Conservation International (CI) has concluded a two-day capacity-building training for Frontline Conservationists (FCs) in Lofa County under the Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration (FOLUR) Impact Program. The training sought to enhance the technical and practical skills of community-

based conservation workers who play a vital role in safeguarding Liberia's rich forests and wildlife habitats.



The initiative brought together FCs from four communities within the Lower Guma Clan who are actively implementing conservation agreements aimed at promoting sustainable land management and forest protection. Through interactive sessions, participants deepened their understanding of conservation practices, biodiversity monitoring, and strategies to mitigate human-wildlife conflict.

The Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration (FOLUR) Project is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and implemented in partnership with the Government of Liberia through the Forestry Development Authority and other national stakeholders. It aims to promote sustainable agricultural practices, restore degraded landscapes, and conserve biodiversity across key ecosystems in Liberia. [Read more](#)

Greenville Establishes Environmental Committee to Tackle Local Challenges

The initiative seeks to bring together residents, businesses, civil society organizations, and other key actors to actively engage in the protection and improvement of Greenville's natural environment. Speaking at the launch, Mr. Abraham Kreku, the MRV focal person for the project, emphasized that the committee's primary objectives include decentralizing

environmental governance in line with the provisions of the EPA Act and Liberia's national environmental policy.

Community leaders and environmental advocates have welcomed the initiative, noting that it provides a structured platform for collaborative problem-solving and accountability in environmental management. As Greenville continues to experience pressures from urban development and natural resource use, the committee is expected to play a pivotal role in safeguarding the county's ecological future.



The County Environmental Committee is now set to begin consultations with local stakeholders, implement monitoring programs, and develop strategies to foster sustainable development practices across Greenville. [Read more](#)

SDI, WHH Launch Four-Year Ecosystem Restoration Project in Bong

The Sustainable Development Institute (SDI), in partnership with Welthungerhilfe (WHH) and with support from the UK Government, has launched a four-year project aimed at tackling deforestation, biodiversity loss, and climate change in Bong County.

The initiative, called the *Community Led Ecosystem Restoration Project*, will cover 30 communities in Suakoko District and directly benefit more than 7,500 people. Women are expected to make up half of the participants.



The project is expected to restore degraded forest areas, protect remaining ones, and promote sustainable practices that strengthen both the environment and local livelihoods.

[Read more](#)

Study Finds Cost of Climate Adaptation for Smallholder Farmers Lower Than Harmful Farm Subsidies

Investing in the climate resilience of smallholder farmers would cost less than maintaining harmful global agricultural subsidies, according to a new analysis released ahead of the COP30 climate summit.



The study, conducted by Climate Focus on behalf of *Family Farmers for Climate Action*, a global alliance representing 95 million small producers across Africa, Latin America, Asia, and the Pacific, estimates that **US\$443 billion annually** is needed to help smallholder farmers adapt to climate change. These farmers, who cultivate 10 hectares or less, produce roughly half of the world's food calories. [Read more on this story](#)

EPA Boss Pushes Global Partners to Fund Women Farmers' Climate Fight

The Executive Director of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of Liberia, Dr. Emmanuel K. Urey Yarkpawolo, has urged global donors and development partners to rally behind women smallholder farmers, calling for practical action to protect those most vulnerable to climate shocks.

Speaking at a high-level roundtable in New York organized by BRAC with support from Denmark, Liberia, Uganda, Tanzania, and Bangladesh, on Tuesday, September 23, 2025, Dr. Urey Yarkpawolo highlighted the urgency of translating climate commitments into tangible programs that improve lives on the ground.



The Big Bet program is expected to strengthen food security, improve nutrition, empower women economically, and help communities withstand the rising shocks of climate change. [Read more on this story](#)

EPA Launches Advanced Environmental and Radiation Safety Laboratory



Photo Credit: FrontPage Africa

Liberia has entered a new phase in its environmental and scientific development with the commissioning of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) modern Environmental and Radiation Safety (ERRS) Laboratory.

The commissioning ceremony, held at the EPA's newly constructed headquarters in Monrovia, marked a defining moment in the country's pursuit of evidence-based environmental policy and stronger inter-agency coordination. [Read more](#)

