

The Conservation Trust Fund (CTF) Strengthens Collaboration with the National Protected Area Authority (NPAA) on Law Enforcement Activity across the country

Introduction



A view of Mamuta Lake

The Conservation Trust Fund (CTF) is a body cooperate with a mandate to serve as a fiduciary agency that provides funds and resources to support the work of the National Protected Area Authority (NPAA) in managing Protected Areas, Game parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries.

For the CTF to achieve this overarching mandate, it should ensure to work closely to understand the management and field operations of the National Protected Area Authority across all the Protected Areas, Game Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries. Over the period, the Trust Fund has found it very difficult if not impossible to understand what are the status and management of the different Protected Areas, Game Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries. It is upon this backdrop and in the interest of collaboration and effectiveness that the new Executive Chairman decided to work with the Authority to undertake this Law Enforcement activity around the country.

Outamba Kilimi National Park

27th August, 2026



First arrest at OKNP



Culprits from OKNP at Mena police station



A Dredge mining in Kabba River



Culprits arrested at a Camp in OKNP

The Outamba Kilimi National Park is located in Tambaka chiefdom in the Karene district. It is the oldest and largest park in Sierra Leone, which comprise of both terrestrial and wetland that host varieties of biodiversity, ranging from different tree species and primate. For which the most noticeable and renowned are the African elephant, the pigmy hippo and other varieties. This high ecological presence makes the Outamba Kilimi National Park a unique ecosystem and a spot of attraction for researchers, tourist and other climate change activist.

The Law Enforcement activity team headed by the Executive Director, visited the Outamba Kilimi National Park. Upon reaching, the team drive straight to a community called Thandeta. This community is annexed to the Kabba River which host a critical biodiversity, like the pigmy hippo and other aquatic species. Since we are at this point to ascertain the level of encroachment and illegal activities in the park, we found out that, there is a huge level of illicit dredge mining undertaking along the river. We were able to intercept about twelve dredges and arrested thirty four individuals from four camps situated deep in the park. Of the thirty for individual arrested, we were able to transport only seventeen of which twelve were male and five female to Mena police station in Makeni, who are awaiting prosecution for various offences, ranging from illegal park entrance,

logging, mining and other related offences. Furthermore, the team was able to arrest and brought to NPPA's makeni office, three motorbikes and two water pumping machine.

Mamuta Mayorsso Wildlife Sanctuary

28th August, 2026



The team right in Mamuta Lake

The team right in Mamuta village

Mamuta Mayorsso is one of the Wildlife Sanctuaries managed by the National Protected Area Authority that is located in Kholifa Mamuta Mayorsso chieftdom in Tonkolili district, it is a host to some critical biodiversity and primate, like Dwarf Crocodile and other bird species. The team visited Mamuta village and the lake, to ascertain the number of functioning game guards in that area and the status of the Lake. During the visit it was very clear that, most of the game guards deployed at that location are not on site and that has affected the effectiveness of the management level of the sanctuary. On the other hand, the lake is in a dysfunctional state to the extent that there is no boardwalk way to enter deep into the lake. This could be a possible investment opportunity, through a proposal development that will enhance tourism and research.

Tiwai Wildlife Sanctuary

29th August, 2026



Crossing the Moa River to Tiwai Island

The Team Traversing Tiwai Island

Tiwai is a UNESCO heritage Wildlife Sanctuary that is located in two chieftdoms, Koya chieftdom in Kenema District and Bari Chieftdom in Pujehun District. This Sanctuary has both terrestrial and a wetland landscapes that host different varieties of primates, ranging from the Western Chimpanzee, the Palm Nut Vulture, the Red River Hog, the Olive Colobus and a host of other varieties. This

sanctuary has been a unique spot for tourism and research especially for universities and environmentalist. The Tiwai Sanctuary is managed by Environment Foundation for Africa (EFA) through a committee that includes chieftdom and community stakeholders, with limited access to the NPAA and CTF who should have been the custodians of such valuable national asset as stated in the NPAA&CTF Act of 2012 and 2022 as amended. The NPAA and CTF as government institutions could benefit from this national asset if they undo the current bureaucratic arrangement and assume full ownership. Furthermore to fully harness the potential of Tiwai therein, the NPAA and CTF should engage community stakeholder and chieftdom authorities to understand the current status of the Tiwai management and benefit sharing mechanism.

Gola Rainforest National Park

29th August, 2026



Team Meeting with Head of Gola

Skull of Pygmi Hippo Gola HQ

The Gola Rainforest is a National Park located in three district Pujehun, Kenema and Kailahun and a host to various biodiversity. It is currently run by a private sector, the GRC-LG and RSPB, with limited government control that ensures the details of the arrangement are follow through and to the letter. Gola Rainforest management model have proven to be efficient and effective in the management of natural resources to the extent that it is now engaged in carbon trade and financing, which is a sustainable financing mechanism for the Trust if replicated to other national parks, game parks and wildlife sanctuary. The visit to Gola was to examine and learn from their successful management skills and ascertain the level of NPAA and CTF involvement into their board and inform them on the level of willingness to work and collaborate with the Gola board and management. To this, the Head of Gola has demonstrated willingness to collaborate with government institutions to achieve a proper protected area management practice as may be directed by his superiors.

Kambui Hills

30th august, 2026



The team at the foot of Kambui Hills



Stone mining at Kambui Hills

The foot of Kambui Hills

The team visited Kambui hills after a brief stop at the NPAA Kenema district office where the Executive Director admonished the NPAA staff on efficiency and unity among themselves, especially unity between regional coordinator and the conservation officer who are the head of the region. He advised them and register his frustration on the spate of illegal activities that is going on in Kambui hills which right in their face. He strongly warn them that, if the seeming spate of activities is tone down he will be left with no alternative but to change the whole team or dismiss them from the job. The visit to Kambui hills was eye opener and demonstrated the level of inefficiency by the NPAA staff in that region. The team identify a large portion of stone mining pits, seeming gold mining areas and logging which have the tendency to be upscale if our rangers those not nip it in the bud.

Challenges

The challenges encounter during this activity are not peculiar or unique to one location or one area rather it permeate right across

The first challenge is accessibility, as it is always and by natural design, protect areas, game park and sanctuary are mostly difficult and rough terrain, which makes accessibility a challenge in some cases hinders effectiveness especially during patrols and monitoring

The Law enforcement activity was seemingly not plan accordingly, especially in the area of logistics. The team found it difficult to transport defaulters from OKNP to makeni and that in itself reduce the level of enthusiasm from the team and subsequently affects the general outcome

The time allocated for the said activities was not sufficient. This affected the efficiency and thoroughness of the activity, in that, the team could not address every issue at a go, especially the increase spate of mining at OKNP, such area needs ample and sufficient time to address the anomaly

Possible compromised was realized by our game guards, staff and securities. This was visible on the field when we arrested thirty four individuals and half of that number ended up disappearing with no valid explanation from those that were looking after the culprits.

Some of the agreement of the protected areas, game parks and sanctuary are not clear and such has the tendency to affect and reduce the influence and authority of both NPAA and CTF when it comes to revenue and benefit sharing of those areas.

Recommendations

In the midst of the seeming challenges, the NPAA and CTF should be able to look inwards and device a model that work best to achieve a greater outcome in their subsequent field activities as indicated below:

As indicated in the challenges, to access the protected Areas, game park and sanctuaries, the team should have a prefeasibility of each of the parks and understands the best routing and what is required for ease of access

In subsequent field trips the team should ensure to provide logistical support, especially if need be carry two empty vehicle designated for the movement and transporting of culprits

The team should ensure to allocate more time of their operation, in areas where there are a high level of illegal activities and vast. For example OKNP

In subsequent activities all the field staff should undergo some integrity check, to reduce the risk releasing defaulters as this will exacerbate security threat and seemingly reduce the potential outcome of the operation

Lastly management should ensure to engage institution, individuals or cooperate societies that are currently custodians of Gola Rainforest National Park, Tacugama sanctuary and Tiwai wildlife sanctuary to understand the bureaucratic arrangement and what role can the CTF play.