

STRUCTURE AND LIST OF PROVISIONS
OF THE FOREST ACT

AN ACT FOR THE CONSERVATION OF THE FORESTS OF
THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

- I - TITLE
- II - INTERPRETATION : - Forests
- Forest Products
- Commercial Use
- Fish Resources
- Wildlife Resources
- III - ESTABLISHMENT OF THE BUREAU OF FOREST CONSERVATION
- IV - POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES OF CONSERVATION
- V - FUNCTIONS OF THE BUREAU OF FOREST CONSERVATION
- VI - ESTABLISHMENT OF GOVERNMENT FOREST RESERVES
- VII - ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIVE AUTHORITY FOREST RESERVES
- VIII- ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMUNAL FORESTS
- IX - APPOINTMENT OF FOREST OFFICERS
- X - ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL PARKS
- XI - POWER TO SET REGULATIONS AND RULES
 - Power to prescribe the form of licences, permits, agreements, and other instruments dealing with forest, recreational, fish and wildlife resources
 - Power to control transport and export of forest products and levy forest fees
- XII - PENALTIES AND PROSECUTION
- XIII- EFFECTIVE DATE AND PUBLICATION

FORESTS ACT

LIBERIA

Approved April 17, 1953

Forests Act 1953

AN ACT FOR THE CONSERVATION OF THE FORESTS OF
THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

WHEREAS, our forests are among our greatest natural resources and may best contribute to our economic and social welfare by being devoted to their most productive use for the permanent good of the whole people, and

WHEREAS, no program now exists for the protection, development, and utilization of these resources, and they therefore remain almost wholly unproductive, yet suffer from gradual depletion, and

WHEREAS, the conservation and utilization of these resources should be brought about promptly, efficiently, and wisely, under such restrictions as will insure perpetual benefits from this heritage, Therefore :

It is enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Republic of Liberia in Legislature assembled :

Section I. That this Act be cited as "An Act For the Conservation of the Forests of the Republic of Liberia".

Section II. That in this Act, the following words have the meaning indicated unless the context otherwise requires:

Forests - All areas supporting woody vegetation other than planted or cultivated crops, regardless of the composition, age or density of the vegetative cover.

Forest Products - The materials yielded by forests, as follows :

- (a) Trees, which include seedlings, saplings, brushwood, palms and canes;
- (b) Timber, including trees fallen or cut down, stumps and wood in any shape or form;
- (c) Charcoal, wild rubber, wood oil, resin and gums;
- (d) Leaves, flowers, fruits, seeds and all other parts of trees not hereinbefore mentioned;
- (e) Plants, other than trees (including grass, vines, reeds and moss) growing in the forest which are not cultivated for agricultural purposes, and all parts and products of such plants.

Commercial use - Any use other than the direct use for private purposes, whether such other use involves barter, sale, or any other disposition of forest products.

Fish Resources - All non-mammal aquatic forms of animal life found living in waters of any description.

Wildlife Resources - Wild mammals, birds, and reptiles of every description, but not including other lower terrestrial forms of animal life.

Section III. That the President, under the authority granted him by Section 4, Chapter XVIII of the Acts passed by the Legislature of the Republic of Liberia during the session 1947-48 entitled "An act to Create a Department of Agriculture and Commerce" does hereby establish, and the action is hereby approved, a BUREAU OF FOREST CONSERVATION within the Department of Agriculture and Commerce.

Section IV. That the initial policies and primary objectives of the program to be carried out by the Bureau of Forest Conservation shall be to :

- a. Establish a permanent forest estate, made up of reserved areas, upon which scientific forestry will be practiced;
- b. Devote all publicly owned lands to their most productive use for the permanent good of the whole people considering both direct and indirect forest values;
- c. Stop needless waste and destruction of forest and associated natural resources, and bring about the profitable harvesting of all forest products while assuring that supplies of these products are perpetuated;
- d. Correlate forestry to all other land use and adjust the forests economy to the overall national economy;
- e. Conduct essential research in conservation of forests and pattern action programs upon the results of such research;
- f. Give training in the practices of forestry; offer technical assistance to all those engaged in forestry activities; and spread knowledge and acceptance of forestry and the conservation of natural resources throughout the country;
- g. Conserve recreational, fish and wildlife resources of the country concurrently with the development of a forestry program.

Section V. That the functions of the Bureau of Forest Conservation shall be to :

- a. Take all action necessary to permit the creation of Government Forest Reserves, Native Authority Forest Reserves, Communal Forests, and National Parks;
- b. Administer all such reserved areas so as to best satisfy the policies and objectives set out in Section IV;
- c. Enforce all laws and regulations for the conservation of our forests and the development of their resources with impartiality, industry, and dispatch;

d. Carry out a program for the wise use and perpetuation of the forest, recreational, fish and wildlife resources of the country.

Section VI. That the President is hereby empowered to create and establish GOVERNMENT FOREST RESERVES embracing any portion of the forests of the country, such reserves to be bounded and described at the time of their establishment and thereafter to be administered and protected as a permanent forest estate, in accordance with such rules and regulations as may be promulgated by the Secretary of Agriculture and Commerce for that purpose. All such Government Forest Reserves shall be created and established by presidential proclamation after all rights and claims of the original owners have been heard in a court settlement. Upon the adjudication of all such rights and claims and the proclamation of these reserves, all rights, title, and interest in them shall be vested in the Government.

Section VII. That the President is also hereby empowered to authorize the creation and establishment of NATIVE AUTHORITY FOREST RESERVES embracing forests lying in one or more tribal chiefdoms, such reserves to be bounded and described at the time of their establishment by presidential proclamation. Thereafter, such Native Authority Forest Reserves shall be protected as potential Government Forest Reserves in accordance with such rules and regulations as prescribed by the provision of this Act. The rules and regulations affecting reserves of this type shall be designed to minimize damage to the reserved forests and avoid unnecessary depletion of their resources pending the establishment of a Government Forest Reserve embracing the concerned area.

Section VIII. That the President is also hereby empowered to authorize the creation and establishment of Communal Forests to be administered by the concerned native authorities. Such forests shall be limited to small described forest areas immediately adjacent to one or more native villages, and use of these forests will be confined to the local population under such rules and regulations as prescribed by the provision of this Act. Said rules shall be designated to assure the perpetuation of such communal forests as a source of forest products for the private use of the local inhabitants and to prohibit any and all commercial use of forest products taken from these areas.

Section IX. That the President is also hereby empowered to appoint and commission, upon the recommendation of the Secretary of Agriculture and Commerce, Forest Officers to perform all the duties and functions requisite to the accomplishment of the policies and objectives established for the Bureau of Forest Conservation. All such Forest Officers shall be authorized to exercise the powers necessary to fulfil their duties, and all

shall be public servants in the employ of the Republic of Liberia. The categories of Forest Officers may include Chief, Bureau of Forest Conservation, Deputy Chief, Bureau of Forest Conservation, Forest Conservator, Assistant Forest Conservator, Forest Ranger, and Forest Guard. The salaries of all Forest Officers shall be fixed from time to time in the general budget in common with other public servants of the Republic.

- Section X. That the President is also hereby empowered to create and establish NATIONAL PARKS embracing any areas of the country having such outstanding scenic, recreational, scientific or other pertinent values that it is deemed wise and expedient in the national interest to set aside as permanent parks to be retained insofar as is practicable in their existing condition. Such National Parks shall be created by presidential proclamation after all rights and claims of the original owners have been heard in a court of settlement. Upon the adjudication of all such rights and claims and the proclamation of these parks, all rights, title and interest in them shall be vested in the Government.
- Section XI. That the Secretary of Agriculture and Commerce with the approval of the President, will describe and promulgate all rules and regulations as may be required to insure the accomplishment of all the purposes of the present Forest Conservation Act. The Secretary of Agriculture and Commerce shall also prescribe the form of all licenses, permits, agreements, and other instruments dealing with the use of forest, recreational, fish and wildlife resources; control the issuance of such instruments, and determine the conditions under which such instruments may be granted, exercised, produced, revoked, or returned. He shall also control the transportation or export of the products of forests by land, water or air, and he is responsible for the imposition and collection of all fees in connection with anything done under the rules and regulations cited above.
- Section XII. That any person who contravenes any rule or regulation made under Section XI above, or fails to comply with the condition made a part of any license, permit, agreement, or other instrument issued or entered into under any such rule or regulation, for which no penalty is expressly provided in the rules and regulations, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and prosecuted according to law. Where any person is convicted of any offense against any of the rules and regulations promulgated under this Act, the Court may in addition to or in lieu of the imposition of any fine or term of imprisonment, order that the whole or any part of the forest products, in respect to which the offence was committed, be confiscated and forfeited to the Government, to be sold or otherwise disposed of in such manner

as the Secretary of Agriculture and Commerce may prescribe.

Section XIII. That the law herein created and established shall become effective thirty days after it shall have been approved by the President and shall be published in handbills.

Any Law to the contrary Notwithstanding.

Approved April 17, 1953