



Green Diamonds – Mining restoration in the Kono District

The Conservation Society of Sierra Leone (CSSL) and One Sky are undertaking a mining restoration project in Nimikoro Chiefdom, Kono District of Sierra Leone. The land was originally mined by a British diamond mining company who fled the region during the war and left the land overturned and exposed to the elements. The community of Bandafayie has a strong desire to turn this land back for agricultural use. The hard, rocky soil has not been mined or cultivated on for over ten years. The Chief of Nimikoro strongly supports the restoration project as the benefits to the community will be an extra 10-acres of agricultural land. A memorandum of understanding (MOU) has been signed between the Chief of Nimikoro and the Executive Director of the Conservation Society of Sierra Leone (CSSL).

The land has been surveyed by the Ministry and there is potential collaboration with some existing diamond mining companies to get discounted or donated excavator service to help loosen the soil and help restore a stream. 20 community members (youth and farmers) are going to be hired to then work by hand for a minimum of 45 days. They will be paid more than diamond miners and be served lunch. 20 farmers will then do the planting over a 10-day period. Medicinal and fruit trees will also be planted for soil retention and shade. Tools that are purchased for the mining restoration will be left for the community to work in the agriculture fields.

Community sensitization has started and will continue throughout the project. Workshops will be given to community chiefs, Paramount chiefs, mining companies, youth and women's groups, and community members at-large. Radio shows will also help reach the broader Kono community. A celebration once the restoration is complete should also garner attention and raise awareness.

The restoration project stands to directly benefit 50 farmers/youth and supervisors in direct employment, over 75 Bandafayie community members to use the land for agricultural purposes, and 600,000 in indirect beneficiaries (families of farmers and community members, Nimikoro Chiefdom as a whole, workshop participants and Koidu area for sensitization).

Sensitization and preparation are underway in December. Actual land restoration will begin after the holidays on January 4th, 2008 and continue until the end of March. First crops might be ready for harvest by June.

Total direct costs of project are estimated at \$10,000. The success of this project and more fundraising will hopefully ensure that a second site can be restored.



Bandafayie – abandoned mining site agreed upon toward restoration goal.