

Progress And Plans...

Since our last newsletter (Sept. '06) much has been accomplished by the JCDT, particularly with respect to management of the Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park and these were highlighted at:-

A Breakfast Presentation to report on implementation of 2006 Workplan – 27th February, 2007

The JCDT AGM and presentation of Audited Financial statements for 2004 and 2005 – 19th April, 2007.

Funding

As reported in the previous newsletter, a subvention was received from the Natural Resources Conservation Authority (NRCA) for April '06 to March '07. It is hoped that there may be another annual subvention forthcoming as the funds were very useful in covering critical costs. Proposals to the USAID REACT Project, the Tourism Enhancement Fund (TEF) and USAID PARE Project were expected to be approved in early 2007, but to date, only the USAID REACT Project has been approved, and this will enhance the Park's Recreation and Tourism Programme, with funding for a Programme Officer and other support for two years. Quantity surveying work needed for the TEF proposal is being completed and the other USAID project which will support Conservation and Enforcement should be approved shortly. Proposals for funds to support forest rehabilitation particularly in the upper Yallahs watershed were sent to the Forest Conservation Fund and the Environmental Foundation of Jamaica (EFJ) and we hope to obtain funds requested from the former as the latter was not approved.

An agreement was reached with the EFJ concerning a fundraising project to assist with JCDT's organisational sustainability. This will see increased publicity about the JCDT's work in the BJCMNP and a fundraising campaign targeting Jamaican individuals and companies, in addition to the establishment of an Endowment Fund to which the EFJ has committed JA\$1 million. JCDT estimates we need an Endowment of at least Ja. \$70 million

to earn enough interest annually to support administration and core Park management costs. Such a fund is urgently needed as it continues to be very difficult to obtain funds for personnel and other core programmatic funding.

Conservation Programme

A successful project to control the invasive tree *Pittonium undulatum* (wild coffee or mock orange) was completed in December, 2006 with funding from the Rufford Maurice Laing Foundation in the UK. 237 adult wild coffee trees - the most threatening invasive plant in the Blue Mountains and numerous seedlings were controlled over about 2.5km along the Peak Trail (an area of about 3ha) and 270 native forest species were planted with over 90% survival rate.

The Luis Kennedy Foundation supported Forest Rehabilitation project was completed in April, 2007 with 8ha

Catherine's Peak: Areas lined out, pegged and ready to be replanted



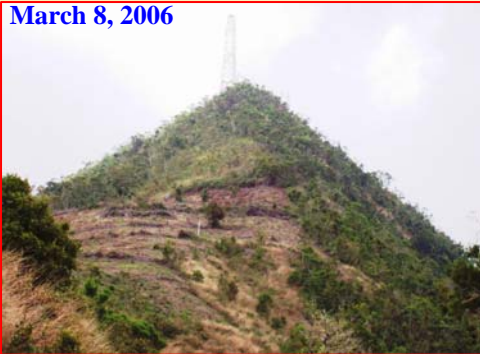
(20 acres) within priority areas of the National Park reforested or rehabilitated e.g. Catherine's Peak and Mt. Horeb. This project along with the GEF Small Grants Programme supported establishment of a nursery at Holywell with a full-time nursery worker, producing at about 600 native forest seedlings per month.

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Monitoring & Evaluation Programme

This programme received major support from the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act (NMBCA) Fund, which allowed strengthening of the bird monitoring programme with in-depth field and classroom training for Park Rangers conducted by UWI Ph.D. candidate, Marlon Beale. One of the permanent photo-monitoring points had its second annual photograph taken, and this showed significant improvement in terms of reduction in encroachment by farmers and fires.

March 8, 2006



May 14, 2007



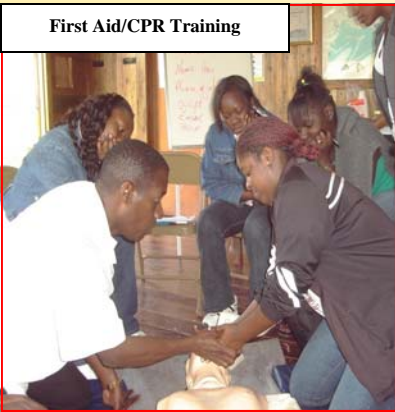
Catherine's Peak photo monitoring (lat.18.07450 long.-76.69990). Catherine's Peak area protected from conversion to agriculture and deforestation, and replanted with native forest tree seedlings.

Enforcement & Compliance Programme

The EFJ continued to support this programme and funds to June, 2008 are already secured through the NMBCA. Bad weather and cashflow difficulties delayed repairs to the Millbank Ranger Station which will require additional funds due to the extremely bad condition found when repairs were initiated. The majority of the repairs are however almost completed. Patrols are averaging 11/month despite vehicles falling apart, and information from patrols e.g. GPS location and digital photos are being uploaded to the Park's GIS data-base for use in analysis, with the help of JCDT Director – Dr. Parris Lyew-Ayee Jr.

Education & Public Involvement Programme

First Aid/CPR Training

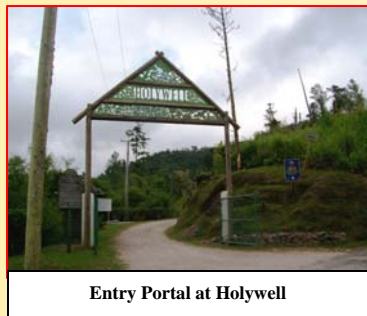


Community outreach in four targeted communities continues under a new Programme Officer – Courtland Grant, who started work in February, 2007. Almost 1,000 fruit trees were distributed to farmers in all the communities. An acre of degraded land belonging to the Woodford Anglican Church was planted with a variety of fruit trees, near to the local All Age School.

Since the last newsletter, 29 schools in the Park's Buffer Zone were visited with a presentation on watershed management for disaster mitigation. These included 6 that had never been visited by the Education Dept. due to their remote location. Under the Programme's youth outreach supported by UNESCO Youth PATH, fifteen youth from five communities around the Park benefited from a wide variety of training including Team Building, Basic Computer Skills, Flora and Fauna of the BJCMNP and First Aid/CPR.

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Recreation & Tourism Programme



With funding from the European Union Private Sector Development Programme (EU PSDP) two more components of the Holywell Ecotourism Development Plan were implemented – the Entry Portal and the new Ticket Booth. In addition, the JCDT/BJCMNP Craft Venture “Naturally Yours – Blue Mountains” was established with the development of a line of decoupage glass, wood and paper and training of three young women from the Park’s buffer zone communities. This line will be formally launched shortly.



Heritage Design – a consultancy based within the US Forest Service was contracted under an Inter American Development Bank (IDB) funded project to spearhead tourism product development plans for communities around the Park, create tour packages and marketing products for those sites that are “good to go”, initiate the marketing, develop community-level training in related critical needs areas and work with JCDT to develop sustainability plans for these. The concept plans were presented at community meetings and a joint stakeholders meeting held on July 17th, 2007. This included presentation of a draft proposal to the JDF for development of Newcastle as a Heritage Centre.

World Heritage Site Nomination

UNESCO’s World Heritage Centre (WHC) sent their comments on the draft nomination document sent late last year and the BJCMNP was placed on their website as Jamaica’s only tentative site listing. A proposal was sent to the UNESCO WHC for the funding to complete the nomination dossier as a terrestrial ecologist is required to complete the global comparison and other components. Funds are also being sought from the regional UNESCO office for assistance with this and Biosphere Reserve nomination. It is hoped that the nomination dossier can be sent to UNESCO WHC in Paris in time for their deadline in early 2008.

“LOOK OUT for plans for JCDT’s 20th Anniversary & the BJCMNP 15th Anniversary in 2008”

Welcome and Goodbyes

JCDT welcomes Mr. Courtland Grant the new Education and Community Outreach Officer. Mr. Grants comes to JCDT with a first degree in Agriculture from UWI and have experience in teaching and agricultural extension work.. He is presently pursuing his Masters in Adult Education at Mt. St. Vincent University in Canada. We wish him God’s speed and every success in his new position.

Ms. Shauna-Lee Chai, Conservation Science Officer of JCDT was recently awarded the 2007 Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Scholarship to pursue doctoral studies at Cambridge University in the United Kingdom this fall. The Board and Staff of JCDT congratulate her on this achievement and wish her all the success in her studies.

JCDT also welcomes Mr. Marlon Beale who replaces Ms. Chai. Mr. Beale comes to us with a background in Terrestrial Ecology with emphasis on Ornithology. He is now completing his PhD in the above field at the University of the West Indies.

Enforcement and Compliance Programme

The period of September 2006 to July 2007 was a very active one for our Enforcement and Compliance Programme within the Blue & John Crow Mountains National Park and its Buffer zone.

Number of patrols averaged over eleven patrols per month including two (2) joint patrols with the Fisheries Division of the Ministry of Agriculture and one (1) patrol with the Forestry Department. Nine (9) warning letters were issued for illegal dumping and farming in the Park etc.

Verbal warnings amounted to thirteen (13)

Two (2) incidents reported to NEPA in respect to illegal bird shootings.

Two (2) incidents were also reported to the Forest Department on illegal logging.



Park Rangers conducting patrol in the Cambridge Backland



Ranger along with visitors from the University of Technology (UTECH) mapping the Sheldon Trail using GPS

The Ranger Corps carried out GPS (Global Positioning Satellite) mapping of illegal farms and trails. Training is continuous especially for the younger Park Rangers. Park Rangers assisted in other activities such as facilitating external researchers, TNC programme for eliminating river poisoning in the Rio Grande Valley and reforestation projects just to name a few. Worthy of mention also is the support which the Ranger Corps provides to the BJCMNP Programmes such as bird and freshwater monitoring.

The Corps due to the lack of sufficient vehicles continues to be hampered in executing their duties effectively. Limited computer access, lack of District Constable status / identification cards and lack of clearly defined Park boundaries also make their work difficult.

In the near future, we will strengthen our partnership with the ISCF who is now fully equipped and standing by to work jointly with our Rangers for the protection of our environment

Conservation, Research and Monitoring

International Biodiversity Day

JCDT hosted International Biodiversity day (May 22) activities at Mt. Horeb, Hardwar Gap. Volunteers from JCDT, NEPA, Carreras, University of Michigan, and the Cascade community came out to remove invasive wild ginger (*Hedychium* spp.) from the forests of Mt. Horeb. With the ginger removed, the native forest tree seedlings will be able to regenerate once more.



The Jamaican Boa



Jamaican Boa habitat near Rural Hill-low altitude limestone forest with high humidity

Reports of Jamaican boa sightings were investigated in 2 communities around the Park – Rural Hill (*Si mi no more*) and Ness Castle in St. Thomas. Residents of Rural Hill reported killing a 9 foot long specimen earlier this year. They also reported that crab hunters frequently see the animal at nights in “crab bush”.

In Arntully, near Ness Castle residents reported that the snakes are thought to inhabit a particular rock face and cave by the road. There were no reports of snakes being killed recently, except for one incident in the 1940s where the rock face was dynamited to kill the snakes. Many residents, especially children view the snakes with trepidation. Recognizing the need for community education the Environment Community Education Officer and the Assistant Environmental Education Officer mobilized meetings in the two areas in conjunction with the USAID REACT Project’s plans for community biodiversity awareness workshop. Hence, on Saturday, 22nd of September a community meeting was held and power point presentations were conducted in the Ness Castle village square. Over 40 residents attended and the school teacher who helped organized the meeting asked for a visit to the school specifically.

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Bird and Water Quality Monitoring



Marlon Beale (PhD. Candidate, UWI)

Bird monitoring was conducted in the Clifton Hill area along the Vinegar Hill Trail, and two Rangers-Roger Thompson and Lyndon Johnson were trained by Marlon Beale to identify birds and conduct monitoring.

Water quality monitoring took place on schedule, thanks to the Chief of Corps and the Rangers. The results are being analysed.



Rangers conducting water quality monitoring

Jamaica Kite Butterfly

(Protographium marcellinus or Graphium marcellinus) - **Endemic**



Photo taken by Park Ranger Ryan Love



It is difficult to confuse this butterfly with others in the island, as it is Jamaica's only blue butterfly. The species has been observed historically most often in St Andrew, but it appears sporadically within weeks. The sightings last about a month and then there are no more. A strong direct flier, the Jamaica Kite always seems to be going somewhere on a mission!

Captures of this insect mostly occur at intervals and apparently by chance. Avinoff and Shoumatoff searched diligently for it for several years, both in winter and in summer, but without success. In 1946 they wrote, "this species appears periodically at long intervals. It was observed recently, also about 20 years ago and at similarly long intervals before that, with no recorded captures in between". Today, the Jamaican kite can be found in Rozelle, St. Thomas. It can also be found in the Cockpit Country and Marshall's Pen. As part of the Park's species conservation effort, special Kite Butterfly patrols have been into the Rozelle area since the article written by John Maxwell and published in the Sunday Observer dated December 10, 2006. On May 15, 2007 the Rangers were rewarded with sighting of four (4) of these butterflies. Unfortunately, the butterflies were too fast for the "camera". The sightings were reported to the Institute of Jamaica Natural History Division. Other patrols to the area have not reaped any success with sightings which supports the literature regarding the sporadic appearance of the Kite butterfly.

Blue & John Crow Mountains National Park Education Programme

Waters for Life: Eliminating River Poisoning in Jamaica's Rio Grande Valley (May 2007– December 2008)



Mill Bank— Poisoned Janga in a tributary of the Rio Grande river.

Introduction

River poisoning is an illegal fishing practice which has had a serious impact on the Rio Grande River fishery and the wider ecosystem over many years. A project was designed in 2006 by The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Jamaica Conservation and Development Trust (JCDDT), and Bowden Pen Farmers' Association (BPFA) to address this problem through community education, improved enforcement, training, and research.

In March, 2007 funding was secured by TNC from the Swiss Re hence, the commencement of the project began in May, 2007. The overall goal of the project is to reduce the incidence of river poisoning in the upper Rio Grande Valley by December, 2008.

Project Background

Rio Grande river poisoning project is located in the Rio Grande watershed area which is situated between Jamaica's Blue and John Crow Mountains.

The Rio Grande watershed is found in the parish of Portland and is a priority conservation area with significant aquatic and terrestrial biodiversity.

The Rio Grande River is one of Jamaica's largest rivers and a major inland fishery.

River poisoning was identified as a principal threat to the Rio Grande river ecosystems, human health, and to the livelihoods of many persons who depends on the river. The Rio Grande River provides drinking water, food, fun, recreation, and income from tourism to thousands of people. Above all it is a way of life for the people of the Rio Grande Valley. Water knows no boundaries, so whenever water is polluted, it is no longer available for others, especially downstream communities and the fishery will gradually disappear.

Project Objective & Strategies

The objective of the project is to significantly reduce the use of illegal poisoning agents to harvest fish, shrimp and crayfish in the Upper Rio Grande Valley by December, 2008.

Three strategies will be employed by the project to achieve the stated objective:

- Conducting a community education and awareness campaign on the dangers and illegality of river poisoning.

- Training of community members to monitor their own waterways and to assist in the prosecution of river poisoning offenders.

- Developed sustainable harvesting methods and viable alternatives to river poisoning.

Substances used in River Poisoning:

The substances used in river poisoning are all poisonous to humans and animals including fish and shrimp. Some of the substances used in river poisoning are agro-chemicals (pesticides) such as: Sevin (carbaryl), Karate (lambda-cyhalothrin), Tilt (propiconazole), Roundup (glyphosate), Gramoxone (paraquat) and chlorine.

What are the effects of river poisoning?

The following are some of the effects on:

Fishery: Using pesticides as a fishing practice destroys the small fishery in the river. The killing of entire generations of fish and shrimp will eventually cause the population of the fishery to crash since they would be unable to regenerate themselves. The result is that there are at present fewer fish and shrimp in the rivers and those that remain are relatively small.

Human Health: Pesticides are poisons and can have serious effects on humans when used as a fishing practice. Some effects are immediate and obvious such as belly ache, weakness, diarrhea, nausea, and vomiting. Other effects happen more slowly and may take years to show up as illnesses and deformations. These may occur in children as physical and mental abnormalities.

Environment: Pesticides in the river are very toxic to other aquatic organisms such as snails (Bussu) and insects which may result in long term adverse effects not yet known. Poisoning may also kill the eggs and larvae of these aquatic organisms.

Project Partners:

This project is a coordinated effort between several agencies listed below:

Non-Government Organisations (NGOs):

- The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
- Jamaica Conservation & Development Trust (JCDDT)

Government Agencies:

- Ministry of Agriculture and Lands – Fisheries Division
- National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA)
- Island Special Constabulary Force (ISCF)
- Pesticide Control Authority (PCA)

Community Based Organisations (CBOs):

- Bowden Pen Farmers Association (BPFA)
- Moore Town Maroon Council

Education and Community Outreach Programme

Under the UNESCO YouthPATH programme a group (13 young persons) from Buffer zone communities have been exposed to several training workshops/courses. The areas in which these persons have been trained are as follows:-

- Communication skills
- Introduction to basic Spanish
- CPR/First Aid
- Use of Computer (basic)
- Team Building and Drug Awareness
- Craft Making
- Tour Guiding



Andre Henry of Cascade being tested orally in Spanish at Holywell.

Most of the participants were successful and have been certified in CPR/First Aid (Heart Foundation of Jamaica), basic computer usage and Communication Skills (HEART/NTA) and Tour Guiding (TPDCO).

School Presentations



Asst. Education Officer makes presentation at Bowden Hill Primary School

“Watershed Management.....A must for Disaster Mitigation around the BJCMNP” was the theme selected for the 2006/2007 BJCMNP Environmental Education Programme. The theme was selected primarily to sensitize students residing in the buffer zone communities on watershed management as a disaster mitigation measure. Funding was secured from the Environmental Foundation of Jamaica (EFJ) and the Global Environmental Fund (GEF).

Under the Park’s Education Programme about thirty three (33) schools were visited during the period. Students as well as teachers responded positively to the presentations which were very informative and interactive.