

TODY NEWS

April, 2012
Volume 15, Issue 1

Newsletter of the Jamaica Conservation and Development Trust/Green Jamaica



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Enthusiastic Executive Director



“We can do it!” Ms. Stacy-ann Robinson, JCDT’s newly appointed Executive Director/ Acting Park Manager seems to be saying as she rolls into her second lap around the Mona Reservoir with Mr. Errol Bucknal.

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She could probably have kept up with Mr. Bucknal’s prize-winning 6 laps but chose to stop and continue to help out with awareness raising activities at the JCDT/ Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park (BJCMNP) booth.

Ms. Robinson, who is originally from St. Ann, started her new job on 1st March,
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World Water Day Mona Reservoir Walkathon for the Blue Mountains

The first ever “Mona Reservoir Walk-a-thon for the Blue Mountains” was held on Saturday, 24th March, 2012 between 5:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. in celebration of World Water Day. Whilst there was a good turnout for regular walking and running at the Reservoir, the number of participants in the walkathon was limited. The event was a success however, as the participants

contributed just over JA\$100,000. Each of these individuals is now amongst the first Friends of the Blue Mountains and will be kept informed of activities concerning the National Park. The donations were made personally by the participants and from the sponsorship they raised from over 200 concerned persons. The event would not have been possible without sponsorship

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Blue Mountains Campaign

JCDT launched the Blue Mountains Campaign at Strawberry Hill on 29th February – the birthday of the Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park (BJCMNP).

The purpose of the Campaign is to:-

- (i) To raise awareness about the BJCMNP
- (ii) To raise awareness about the recreational and community tourism opportunities around the BJCMNP

- (iii) To raise support for management of the BJCMNP

JCDT is inviting everyone to be a Friend of the Blue Mountains by donating JA\$2,000 to JCDT to build its Endowment Fund to support management of the BJCMNP. Friends can help us make other friends by hosting an event so we can share about the Blue Mountains.

Thanks to the FCF for their initial support.

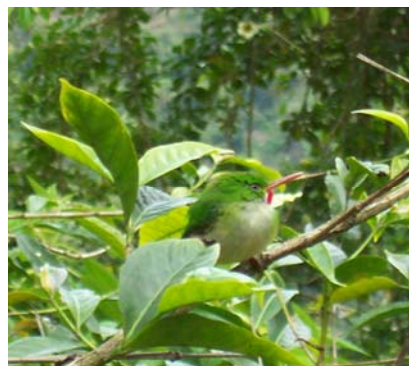
Active Conservation, Monitoring & Evaluation Programmes

The Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park Management Plan for 2011 – 2016 was approved by the Natural Resources Conservation Authority in February, 2012. Work had continued in all programme areas however, including reforestation with native tree species, bird and fresh-water monitoring. Mr. Marlon Beale who has resumed his substantive position as

Conservation Science Officer (CSO) and is awaiting his final exam for the Ph.D. in terrestrial ecology, reported that 28 ha were reforested or rehabilitated between 2008 and 2012. He said that this was mainly with funding from the Forest Conservation Fund (FCF) which approved another reforestation project for the

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One reason the founding members of the JCDT chose the Jamaican Tody for the logo was because it seemed to represent the Jamaican saying, “likkle but tallawah” – we might be small but we can achieve great things !



Jamaican Tody or Robin Redbreast (*Todus todus*).

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2012. Ms. Robinson has a Masters Degree in International Development, specializing in Environment & Development, from the University of Manchester in the UK and a first degree in International Relations & Political Science from the UWI, Mona.

She previously worked with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Foreign Trade as a Foreign Service Officer, responsible for environment and sustainable development issues. She has also served as a Foreign Language Instructor in Japan and as a Project Manager with a local environmental consulting firm.

Ms. Robinson has considerable experience with not-for-profit organisations in countries such as Japan, Guyana and Malaysia. She has also received various awards, including the prestigious Chevening Scholarship from the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office through the British Council, Jamaica, the Premier Award for Service from the UWI, and the Commonwealth Youth Award for Service (Caribbean Region).

Tody News asked Ms. Robinson, "What is it about the work of the JCDT that made you interested in the Executive Director/Acting Park Manager position?" Ms. Robinson said, "Over the past five or so years, I have grown increasingly interested in and committed to environment-related work and issues. Most

of my professional experience so far has been at the policy level so I was looking for an opportunity that would allow me to apply my previous experience as well as one which had a fair enough balance between field and office work. Notwithstanding this, the work of JCDT has always captured my interest, particularly as it relates to its sustainable livelihoods approach to development. I am happy to be associated with the JCDT and look forward to the work ahead".

Working with an NGO managing a site of global significance will always have its many challenges but great experiences, too. Ms. Robinson describes her best experience in the short time she has been with the organization, "I really enjoyed the World Water Day walkathon at the Mona Reservoir. It was a good opportunity to reflect on the magnitude of the JCDT mandate."

Tody News final question was, "What is your personal vision for the JCDT and what plans do you have to achieve it?". Ms. Robinson responded, "I would like the JCDT to be the premier ENGO in the Caribbean. I hope to increase our visibility through more networking and marketing opportunities, and work on our internal systems."

Tody News wishes Stacy-ann Robinson all the best in her new position.

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from the National Water Commission, Pear Tree Press, National Outdoor Advertising and KOOL 97 FM.

Ms. Shanese Watson, a student at the Caribbean Institute of Media & Communication, UWI, raised the most sponsorship (over JA\$12,000) and was

awarded a weekend for two at Breezes, Runaway Bay, courtesy of SuperClubs. Ms. Watson is from St. Thomas, which includes about 25% of the BJCMNP. Mr. Errol Bucknal was awarded a gift basket with Jamaican sauces and vinaigrettes from Irie Isle and Spring Vale, for doing the most laps. He also raised the third most funds for the cause.



Shanese Watson receives her prize from Stacy-ann Robinson, Executive Director, JCDT

Project Update

JCDT is currently completing two Environmental Foundation of Jamaica (EFJ) funded projects:

1. **Water Harvesting & Supply System at Holywell** - to repair the catchment in order to improve the quality and quantity of water at Holywell,
2. **Hazard Mapping for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Blue Mountains** - this is a research project being done in conjunction with the University of the West Indies (UWI).

JCDT just signed an agreement with the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation for implementation of a small-scale project to conduct an assessment in the Hall's Delight community within the BJCMNP Buffer Zone. The assessment will provide baseline livelihoods information, assess disaster risk and identify sustainable agricultural practices.

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2012 – 2014 period.

Bird monitoring for 2011 was conducted in the Rio Grande Valley and this year will be conducted in the Claverty Cottage area. The data will be compared with data from the same areas conducted during the 2005 – 2010 management planning period.

Reforestation implemented by the JCDT within the BJCMNP uses native, non-lumber species such as Dovewood (*Alchornea latifolia*) and Soapwood (*Clethra occidentalis*). These trees promote biodiversity and soil conservation, unlike

Caribbean Pine (*Pinus caribea*) which is not native to Jamaica and is easily damaged by hurricanes. Because of the pine needles it sheds, few if any plants grow underneath, reducing biodiversity. The National Forest Management & Conservation Plan indicates that Caribbean Pine contributes to soil erosion. Therefore, Caribbean Pine should not be planted within the BJCMNP.

Forest rehabilitation involves primarily, control of invasive alien species such as Wild Ginger (*Hedygium* sp.) and Wild Coffee (*Pittosporum undulatum*) which grow very rapidly and smother the slower growing native species.

Education and Sustainable Livelihoods

The BJCMNP Education & Public Involvement Programme has been supported over the last two years mainly by a FCF funded project, “Capacity Building for Forest Conservation and Sustainable Livelihoods in the Blue Mountains”.

The highlight of the Programme for 2011/12 was that 21 community members from 7 communities received business plan training and business plans were produced for the 3 community tourism ventures that were most

developed. In addition, the three CBOs – Charles Town and Moore Town Maroon Councils and the Bowden Pen Farmers’ Association are to receive funds to help with their ventures.

Mr. Wellington Taylor, Education Officer said, “This is an excellent programme – helping the communities in terms of sustainable livelihoods”.

JCDT continues to seek funds for the proposed Blue Mountains Sustainable
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Tourism Programme, which will see the establishment of the Blue and John Crow Mountains region as a sustainable tourism destination. This is in keeping with the nomination of the BJCMNP as a World Heritage Site for both its cultural and natural heritage values. Funds are needed to continue to build local capacity, improve and develop products and to market tours.

Visits to basic and primary level schools continued in the Community Buffer Zone along with the hosting of educational packages for school groups at Holywell. Trained local community youth conduct most of these activities. Workshops to help basic school teachers integrate environmental themes into their classes were also implemented.

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