

Year in Review— 2014...

Challenges Facing JCDT

JCDT like most other NGOs, continues to face financial challenges. Less project funding is available for the work we do and donors are less willing to support administrative and other operational and recurrent expenses. Despite this, JCDT presses on to achieve the objectives and goals that will see us succeeding at our mission, which remains increasingly important. In September, we cut costs by down-sizing our office space to half the original size. We have not been able to replace some of the staff we lost in 2013 but with the hard work of existing staff, re-positioning the role of the Chief of Corps and help from volunteers and interns, we continue to address all the National Park's programmes. Financial support is on-going from the Natural Resources Conservation Authority (NRCA) through the National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA) with whom JCDT has an agreement to manage the Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park (BJCMNP). The former provides about 30% of our budget, the National Park Trust Fund and the recreational areas about 10% each and projects and fund-raising the remainder.

Your support for our fundraising events including hikes is increasingly important for the conservation of the forests, wildlife and cultural heritage of the BJCMNP.

World Heritage Site (WHS) Nomination—Update

The Ministry of Youth and Culture resubmitted Jamaica's nomination of the Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in January, 2014. This followed substantial revision of the dossier as per requests from the World Heritage Committee in 2011. From July to September, an awareness raising campaign was mounted including 10 community meetings, distribution of brochures and posters, radio advertisements and a tribute to the site during the Independence Grand Gala.

A team of three evaluators – one for the cultural and two for the natural heritage visited the site at the end of October for a thorough investigation. This included visits to Nanny Town deep within the Blue Mountains (only possible with the assistance of the JDF Airwing) and visits to all the Maroon communities within the National Park's Community Buffer Zone. The evaluators also hiked to the Blue Mountain Peak which literally crowned their visit. Jamaica now waits to hear from the World Heritage Centre if there are any further queries or comments to be made before the nomination goes to the Committee which will meet in Germany in June, 2015, for its final decision.



WHS-Site visit: Mr Marlon Beale (yellow top) from the Forestry Dept pointing out a bird on the Contour Trail to John Crow Peak which is located above Cinchona

Events

Blue Mountain Music Festival

One of our dreams came true in 2014 when Roshaun Clarke of TOK approached us with his idea for the Blue Mountain Music Festival. The inaugural event was held from February 22 – 23 and incorporated Misty Bliss on the Sunday with TOK closing the show whilst the Saturday night (rather early Sunday morning) featured Third World.

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Whilst the event had many challenges and was not a financial success, we look forward to the second staging of the event when the organizing team will have ironed out all the issues.

The Reggae Night and Misty Bliss shows will both end much earlier and Tarrus Riley has already been booked to cap the show on Saturday. **So, mark 21st – 22nd February in your diaries for the Blue Mountain Music Festival 2015.**

Footprints



Scotts Hall Maroon engaged hikers in one of their cultural dances

This Maroon culture and nature hike was convened in the Maroon community of Scotts Hall, St Mary on Saturday, 6th of December.

The Scotts Hall Maroon community is one of the least known of all the living Windward Maroon communities in the island. It is known as the “Hospital” and its location was always kept quiet so that injured warriors and the sick could be assured safety whilst they recovered there. It is also the furthest from the Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park and Protected National Heritage. On the other hand, this community is the closest to Kingston yet, nestled between hills and rivers it provides opportunities for walking and hiking, en-

This event took visitors on a 1½ hour hike along a trail within the Scott’s Hall community with Maroon guides providing information about some of the plants and their uses and thrilling stories of Maroon escapades. The trail led hikers to a beautiful spot near the river where we were served traditional food and entertained.

Conservation Programme

This year there has been no reforestation, only maintenance of existing 27 hectares (67.5 acres) of reforested lands at Cinchona (funded by the Forest Conservation Fund) and at Sherwood (funded by Recreation Pathways). Unfortunately a major fire at Cinchona in July at the height of the drought burned about 33 acres of reforested lands (the Forestry Department lost significantly more). There was invasive species control at Mt. Horeb – across from Holywell, with 1 ha of wild ginger cleared. At Holywell, Jamaica Energy Partners had a work-day on National Tree Planting Day - 3rd October when they planted native tree seedlings on 0.8 ha of land cleared of invasive species. On the same day, the Sandals Foundation/ATL launched their Drive Green Campaign and committed to sponsor at least 1 acre of forest rehabilitation at Holywell.



Staff from Energy Partners engaged in a tree planting exercise at Holywell Recreational Area.

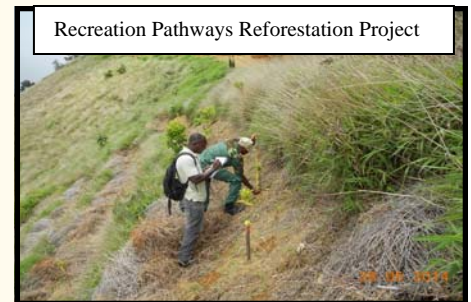
In terms of promoting and facilitating research, JCDT is in receipt of reports/research papers conducted in the Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park from approximately 25% of researchers who conducted research in 2011/12. Example, book (edited by E. Thomas Hope) with paper using the BJCMNP as a Case Study launched locally on 25th September (following publication in December 2013)

Enforcement and Compliance Programme

This year was a very active one for our Enforcement and Compliance Programme within the Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park and its buffer zone.

- ◆ Approximately 126 routine patrols including 19 joint patrols (FD, NEPA, UWI, NWC, and Community Members) were conducted.
- ◆ Four (4) main types of offences were noted and reported to the relevant entities such as NEPA, FD, and NWC. It must be noted that most of the offences were committed outside of the National Park boundary. The offences are as follows:-

1. Fire which was rampant in July– the drought resulted in high impact of what is believed to be regular slash and burn practices and possibly idle youth lighting fires. Most of these fires occurred outside of the National Park. Notwithstanding, a few impacted the Park example, at Cinchona.
2. Garbage at various locations around the Park
3. Animal waste/pig farm along rivers
4. Coffee waste pollution



- ◆ Nine (9) training sessions were held for Park rangers such as freshwater monitoring, tour guiding/interpretation, bird ecology, and forest ecology just to name a few. Special training/workshops attended by selected rangers were Bird Sleuth Programme and GIZ/CATS Sustainable Agriculture held in Grenada (attended by the Chief of Corps).

World Ranger Day Seminar

World Ranger Day was started by the International Ranger Federation (IRF) to remember rangers who have been killed or injured in the line of duty. It is celebrated on July 31 and was first observed in 2007 on the 15th anniversary of the founding of IRF.

This year July 31, 2014, with the assistance of the Environmental Foundation of Jamaica (EFJ) the Jamaica Conservation and Development Trust (JCDT) decided to recognize the frontline soldiers of the Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park in a way that could benefit other park rangers from across the island who work in a similar capacity and spread the word about World Ranger Day.

The event was in the form of a seminar and luncheon held at the Christar Villas Hotel. Representatives from the Forestry Department, National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA), Oracabessa Bay Fish Sanctuary (OBFS), Boscobel Fish Sanctuary, Portland Environment Protection Association (PEPA), Negril Environment Protection Trust (NEPT), Montego Bay Marine Park Trust (MBMPT) and Caribbean Coastal Area Management Foundation (CCAMF) were invited as well as representatives EFJ and from two print media houses. The main presentation by Guest Speaker Dr. Leachim Semaj was intended to motivate the rangers and help them find ways of handling various stresses they face/encounter while on the job.

During the recognition ceremony, all guests were presented with tokens of appreciation sponsored by EFJ, Pear Tree Press and Totally Male. The guest speaker along with rangers received varied gifts and plaques as a token of appreciation for work done in the protection and conservation of the environment.

Monitoring & Evaluation Programme

Fresh-water Macro-invertebrate Monitoring data collected earlier was analysed conducted by a graduate intern from the University of the West Indies. All reports were submitted to Ms Kimberly John (freshwater specialist) for assistance with the final analysis and evaluation of the results which will be undertaken within the first quarter of 2015. Meetings were held with NEPA's Water Quality Monitoring Unit as it relates to collaborating in the above exercise in 2015. It must be noted that the overall monitoring programmes were impacted significantly by the loss of a full-time Conservation Science Officer (CSO) and funding constraints.

Training of Rangers in fresh-water Macro-invertebrate was facilitated Ms Kimberly John was convened. However, additional species identification training will be conducted in 2015 and this is in tandem with the availability of funds.



FW Monitoring Training with Kimberly John dances

Education and Public Involvement Programme

The major environmental education projects completed successfully in this year were; “River Poisoning in the Buff Bay Valley” funded by the Environmental Foundation of Jamaica and “Climate Change and Inland Flooding in Jamaica” funded by Caribsava. Below are summaries of the aforesaid projects:-

Name of Project: Awareness Building for the Prevention of River Poisoning and Other Forms of River Pollution in the Buff Bay Valley, Portland

Within the context of the JCDT's Education and Public Involvement, and Enforcement and Compliance Programmes, this project aimed to increase awareness and knowledge of the dangers and consequences of river poisoning and other forms of river pollution among students, teachers, taxi drivers, buyers and sellers of insecticides, and the general public – farmers, fishers and their families etc in the Buff Bay Valley, Portland. Additionally, the project aimed at increasing the number of patrols carried out by the Ranger Corps and successfully launched a community-based warden programme.

The main objectives of the project were to assess the knowledge gaps and establish a baseline of attitudes and negative activity; increase awareness and knowledge of the dangers and consequences of river poisoning and pollution through public education and community engagement; and increase the number of patrols by the Ranger Corps and launch a community-based warden programme.

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The components of the project were as follows:-

1. Sensitization meetings to garner community support for the project objectives;
2. Assessment of knowledge gaps and baseline survey of attitudes and negative activity;
3. Dramatization and DVD production;
4. Presentations at basic and primary schools;
5. Additional patrols by the Ranger Corps;
6. Poster competition;
7. Town hall/community meetings;
8. Poster and sticker campaign;
9. Patrols by community-based wardens.

Again JCDT takes this opportunity to thank the Environmental Foundation of Jamaica for funding assistance given in the protection and conservation of the Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park. Lessons learnt from this project were noted and will be incorporated in future projects of a similar nature.



River Wardens posing for the camera

River Wardens Training



River Wardens in action



River Warden in action



School Presentations (Primary and Kindergarten Schools)



Education Programme Cont. on pg....6

Name of Project: Climate Change and Inland Flooding in Jamaica, risk and adaptation measures for vulnerable communities

The project was implemented by the University of the West Indies, Mona and coordinated by the Department of Geography and Geology. Some of the collaborative partners in the project were Mona Geoinformatics Institute, Rural Agricultural Development Authority, and the Jamaica Conservation & Development Trust just to name a few.

The project sought to address diverse questions such as;

1. What are the possible medium and long term impacts of climate variability and change on flood risk?
2. What sectors are most vulnerable to flooding and why?
3. What is the size of the population currently affected by flooding and the percentages of men, women and young people? How is this likely to change in future?
4. What adaptation measures can be adopted by the communities to changing flood risk, and what are the possible mitigation measures?

Some of the activities undertaken by JCDT were:-

1. Conducting reconnaissance to the project study area to assist in making a final decision regarding the choice of targeted communities.
2. Conduct meetings in the three (3) targeted communities in order to sensitize the community members about the project – its purpose and plans and how they will be involved.
3. Design and Conduct a Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) Survey amongst community members in the three (3) targeted communities (Lloyds, Grasspiece, and Brook Lodge) to assess these areas with respect to the project issues.
4. Analyze data and report on the KAP Survey (pre- and post-)
5. Production of posters for dissemination in schools
6. Production and airing of infomercials on relevant radio stations
7. Meetings in the three (3) targeted communities (inclusive dissemination of materials)
8. Presentations to primary and basic schools
9. Design, Production and Installation of Signage in each of the three (3) targeted communities.
10. Organize workshops for community mapping and training of community members in disaster and weather data collection.

Community Signage on Climate Change and Flooding—Location: Brook Lodge



KAP Survey

Community Meetings—Grasspiece



Recreation and Tourism Programme

Holywell Goes Solar

The US National Parks Service has a programme called “Climate Friendly Parks” which promotes climate change mitigation and adaptation and environmental sustainability within the system. The US Parks Service falls under the Department of the Interior of the Government of the United States of America (DOI). This year, the DOI signed an agreement with JCDT to establish a small scale renewable energy system at Holywell in a manner which will be self-sustaining and contribute to raising public awareness. This work is funded by the United States Department of State, Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs (DOS/WHA) through the participation of DOS/WHA and DOI in the Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas (ECPA). Under this project, the following renewable energy solutions have been installed:-

- ◆ A 1.5kW grid-tied photovoltaic system at the Ranger Station/Visitors Centre;
- ◆ A 1.5kW battery-based photovoltaic system at the Cabins/Tuck Shop;
- ◆ Solar water heaters at the Cabins and Ranger Station.



Cabins equipped with solar panels

By early March, 2015 an interpretive and educational programme will be installed at Holywell under the theme of climate change and renewable energy. This will also see a re-vamping of the Visitors’ Centre. In March, the National Park will host a three day workshop to help us prepare updated plans for our Environmental Management System and Disaster Risk Management and Emergency Preparedness.

Governance and Administration Programme

Within the context of challenging economic climate and reduced project funding, the focus of the small team of management was on seeking new sources of funding and cutting costs. A partnership was established with Bird Life Caribbean and a joint proposal was submitted to the US National Fish and Wildlife Service but unfortunately was not funded, however the partnership continued and allowed for the training of one of the Park Rangers in bird identification and monitoring. JCDT signed an agreement to assist the regional project—Caribbean Aquatic Terrestrial Solutions (CATS) which is funded by the German Sustainable Development Aid (GIZ) with activity for sustainable forests and agriculture in the Blue and John Crow Mountains. Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park Advisory and Maroon Community Committee meetings were held.

Welcome and Goodbyes

- ◆ JCDT welcomes Ms. Gabrielle– Jae Watson, the new Chief of Corps and Mr Gary Campbell, Park Ranger to the JCDT’s family.
- ◆ The board and staff of JCDT wish the best for Ms Mavis Powell, Office Attendance and Mr Roger Thompson, Park Ranger all the best in their respective future endeavors.

Plans for 2015...

2015 will see the JCDT revisiting our Strategic Plan and updating it as necessary for the 2015 - 2019 period. Towards the end of the year, we will begin the management planning process for the Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park. The latter will likely be with the assistance of the German Development Agency (GIZ) who conducted an assessment of Park management earlier this year particularly with respect to addressing greater integration between the government and NGO stakeholders.

Management of the National Park is expected to continue with improvements being made in the Monitoring and Evaluation Programme in particular where work in bird and fresh-water monitoring and data analysis had been reduced significantly between 2011- 2014.

We look forward to funding for the refurbishing and improvements on the Peak Trail and at the Peak itself. The Peak Trail and other infrastructure in that area are in urgent need of repairs. Not only is this area important for visitors but is an excellent example of one of the few tropical montane cloud forests in the world.

We will continue to work along with the Ministry of Youth and Culture and the Jamaica National Heritage Trust on Jamaica's nomination of the site for World Heritage inscription. The final decision will be made in June/July 2015 and we hope that Jamaica will be well represented at the World Heritage Committee meeting, in order to defend our case as necessary.

There continue to be many needs and we continue to reduce costs where possible and generate more income as well. Following our visitor survey at Holywell earlier this year, we submitted a request to NEPA to increase the entry fee at Holywell - as the feedback from our visitors is that they are willing to pay more. We anticipate an increase in fees for cabins once we do some refurbishing in the first quarter.

You can help by supporting our fund-raising efforts e.g. our annual World Water Day Lap-a-thon at the Mona Reservoir on World Water Day at the end of March or by funding/fundraising for one of the following needs:-

Bird Monitoring Programme - \$200,000
Freshwater (Stream Monitoring) - \$75,000
CPR/First Aid Refresher/Certification for Park Rangers - \$60,000
Field Skills and other Training for Park Rangers - \$70,000
Motor-bike Repairs - \$65,000
Motor-bike Helmets - \$15,000
Patrol Support for the Year - \$200,000
Construction of Market Place for Vendors at Holywell - \$200,000

Best Wishes to All our Partners and Friends for the New Year !

Dr Susan Otuokon
Executive Director/Park Manager