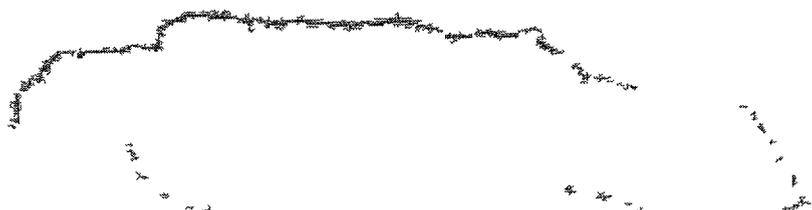


*CARING FOR ST ELIZABETH AREA LANDS,
WATER & RESOURCES*

March 1997



U.S. Agency for International Development
Development of Environmental Management Organizations Project
USAID Contract No 532-0173-C 00 3188-00



Natural Resources Conservation Authority

Technical Support Services, Inc.
Technical Assistance and Training Contractor



NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION AUTHORITY (NRCA)
Development of Environmental Management Organizations (DEMO) Project

Caring for the

ST. ELIZABETH AREA

Lands, Water & Resources

**Natural Resources Conservation Authority (NRCA) and
Development of Environmental Management
Organizations (DEMO) Project**

A Community Information & Discussion Booklet

MARCH 1997

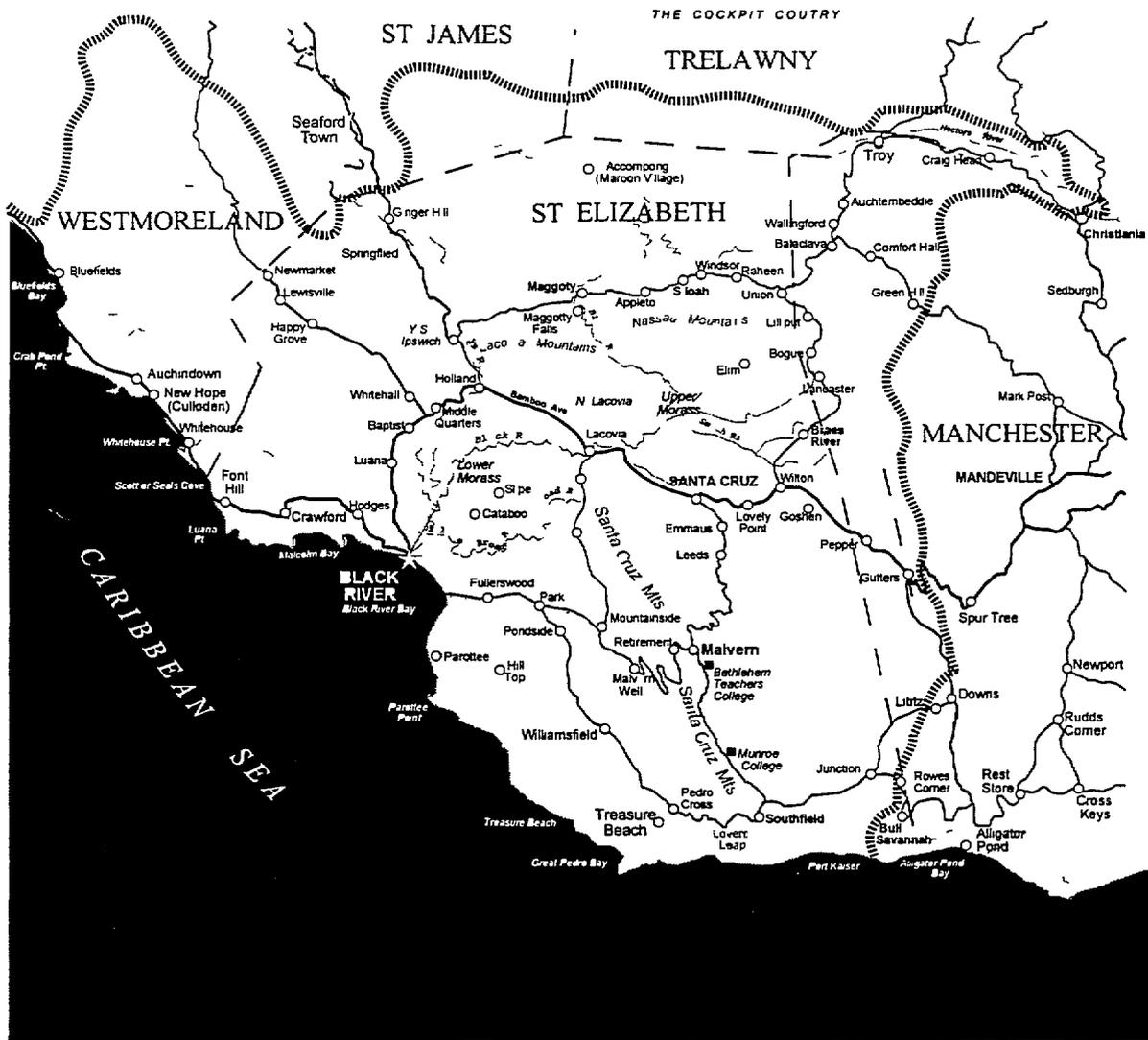


Funding support provided through the
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Technical Assistance Provided by Technical Support Services (TSS), Inc

Caring for the St. Elizabeth Area

Lands, Water, & Resources



A Community Information & Discussion Booklet
MARCH 1997

**NATURAL RESOURCES
CONSERVATION AUTHORITY**



d

The "St Elizabeth area" is both the parish of St Elizabeth and the Black River watershed. The parish is the administrative area for many Agencies, and is a common boundary for planning work. The somewhat larger watershed is useful in considering environmental issues. The watershed is that area of land which collects the rainfall that eventually flows into the Black River.

The NRCA is looking both at the "bigger picture", the parish and watershed as well as focusing on a smaller area—the morass and adjacent lands and waters which have been recommended for protection.

This Booklet was prepared by the Natural Resources Conservation Authority, with financial and technical assistance provided by the USAID Development of Environmental Management Organizations (DEMO) project, through its contractor, Technical Support Services

Introduction

In April of 1996 an island-wide review of the Green Paper about a National System of Parks and Protected areas was launched in Black River. Black River was chosen to start the process because it is a priority area for a National Park or some other kind of protected area. The NRCA is now returning to continue this work.

This booklet provides the background information citizens need regarding this important activity. Read it to understand the process and approach. Share it with interested friends and neighbours. Use the spaces provided to make notes. Bring it to community meetings and discussions with interest groups and stakeholders.

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1. Why take care of St. Elizabeth's environment?

Most people quickly agree that we need to take care of our environment. The lands, waters and resources of the parish directly provide much of what the 160,000 residents need to live, work and relax. The area also attracts and supports thousands of visitors every year. Here are eleven reasons why we should take care of our lands, waters, and resources.

Clean Water: The National Water Commission reminds us that "water is life." We cannot live without it. We use it in hundreds of ways. The land captures, stores, and cleans our water, not only for us, but for all living creatures here.

Health: Good health is our most precious gift. Clearly the environment is important to staying healthy and living a long life. The food we eat, the air we breathe, the water we drink, all contribute to our health.

Natural Resources: Resources are the products we take from the land and sea. Our environment can provide these in abundance: shrimp to eat and sell, thatch to make into beautiful crafts, trees for charcoal, marl to build with, soil to grow cane. The list of resources the St. Elizabeth area gives us is indeed long!

Money & Jobs: Most people in St. Elizabeth make a living from the land or water. The environment is the base of our economy. It is what attracts visitors, supporting the growing tourism industry. This productivity of the land and water, and its attraction to visitors can be destroyed if we are not careful.

Uniqueness: Black River is the island's largest river and surrounding watershed. The lower morass is Jamaica's largest natural wetland. Wallywash is the island's largest permanent freshwater lake. The area is internationally recognized because of its rare plants, crocodiles and birds. There is no other place quite like it.



Corals help create our sandy beaches. They break the force of waves. They are home to many sea creatures which we eat.

Land space: The population of St Elizabeth will continue to grow. As it does, we will need to have places to build homes, grow food, catch fish, and just relax. Areas may need to be set aside now so there is enough of the right kinds of places to do all these things.

Our Children: Today people commonly talk about sustainable development. This means meeting our needs in a manner which will permit our children, and their children to meet their needs. Every parent wants to provide a good life and promising future for his or her children. Giving them a clean, beautiful, and productive environment should therefore be a priority.

Natural Beauty: People talk about St Elizabeth as a beautiful place. Its variety of views, flowers, trees, animals, and special places gives us and visitors pleasure. However, natural beauty is delicate. It can very easily be destroyed if we are not careful.

Rare animals and plants: The Black River area is one of the most important habitats for rare or endangered plants and animals in Jamaica. Swamp forests, coastal woodlands, and wetlands are considered by many to be some of the country's rarest ecosystems. One still can find sea turtles, crocodiles, and manatees here. Many of the plants and animals have yet to be studied and identified.

Variety of Life (called biodiversity): The Black River area is one of Jamaica's three major centers of biodiversity. Wild plants and animals will be important to the future of medicine, agriculture, industry, and other aspects of the world's economy. They could be some of the future's most valuable resources. They are like money in the bank for our children.

Free Services: We sometimes forget about all the services the environment provides. Stop and think about how nature moves water for us. Clouds deliver it, fresh and clean. Mountains store it, and let it flow downhill to the many places where we use it. All this pumping, storing and purifying is invaluable to us.

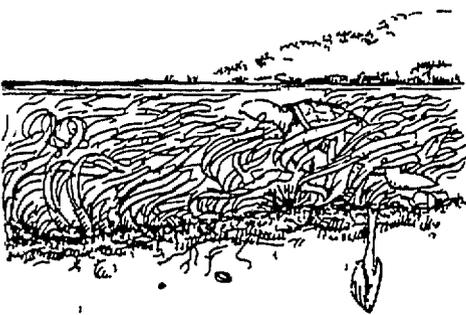
2. What are the most important environmental concerns in the St. Elizabeth Area?

As the following pages show, the list of environmental issues and problems is long. It is easy to become overwhelmed. To start with, priorities need to be set.

Wasteful and Overuse of Resources There are many examples of how lands and resources are being overused.

- Illegal taking of crocodiles, sea turtles and their eggs reduces populations of these protected animals
- Net fishing in nursery areas depletes fish stocks
- Animal grazing in forests prevents young trees from becoming established
- Boat traffic in the morass increases to the point of congestion
- Mangroves are cut faster than they can regrow
- Sand mining destroys beaches and shorelines

Other examples



Sea grass beds hold together sandy bottoms. They provide food and shelter for many animals, including manatees.

Pollution: This harms natural resources and disrupts economic activities.

- Water pollution comes from sewage pits, dunder, sediment from fields and forests, fertilizers and garbage
- There is no central sewage system in any of the St. Elizabeth area communities

Other examples

Ineffective Development Controls: Environmental problems are often identified, conservation measures are recognized, but no action is taken and the resources or area is degraded

- The current development order is over 15 years old, very generalized, and not available to decision makers
- Local government staff and resources inadequate to effectively guide changes
- Many laws and regulations exist, but they are not properly enforced and are frequently ignored

Other examples

Land for Growth: Available land has to meet growing residential, agricultural, commercial, and environmental maintenance demands for us and future generations

- Public lands are being encroached on for houses and other uses without permission
- While the parish has a low population density, many areas are inappropriate for development, including wetlands and mangroves, steep hillsides, and river flood plains
- Some important resources or attractions are privately owned and may not be sustainably used or accessible to the public
- Development is uncontrolled and often in conflict with surrounding uses and unattractive to look at

Other examples

continues on following pages

2. continued, What are the most important environmental concerns in the St. Elizabeth Area?

Tourism Development: According to tourism industry organizations, the emphasis on the south coast should be quality tourism, eco-tourism, and community tourism. The development of attractions should take priority over more hotel rooms.

- Increasing numbers of boat tours create congestion, possible bank erosion, and disturbance to wildlife
- Some resorts and packaged tours may reduce the opportunities for small local businesses and services to participate in the industry
- Tourism development requires considerable improvements to roads, water and sanitation systems, and facilities around attractions
- The historic center of Black River is deteriorating

Other examples



Mangroves are nurseries for fish, crabs, lobsters, and other important animals

Forest Resources: The growing demand for the area's forest resources is resulting in a loss of our forests and destruction of critical habitats.

- Clearing of steep hillsides results in soils washed into the rivers and increases flooding
- Timber often taken without permission of the landowner
- Cutting trees and only taking a small part of the trunk and other wasteful logging practices are common

Other examples

Black River National Park or Protected Area
(this issue is discussed on the following pages)

Other environmental issues not mentioned here.

Which issues are most important?

3. What about a Black River National Park or Protected Area?

The NRCA Act of 1991 gives the Natural Resources Conservation Authority responsibility for establishing and managing a national system of protected areas. The Black River area is a priority for some kind of action now. A number of issues need to be resolved in order to move forward.

Classification The National Protected Areas System, administered by the NRCA has the following categories:

- 1 National Nature Reserve, Wilderness Area
- 2 National Park, Marine Park
- 3 National Landmark, National Monument
- 4 Habitat, Species Management Area
- 5 National Protected Landscape, Seascape
- 6 Managed Resource Protected Area

In addition, there are a number of other classifications administered by other entities: Fish Sanctuaries by the Fisheries Division, Forest Reserves by Forest and Soil Conservation Division, and National Monuments by the National Heritage Trust. The appropriate classification for one or more areas in Black River needs to be agreed upon.



The morass is nature's giant sponge. It helps control flooding. It stores nutrients and purifies the water, not only for us, but for the coral reefs and other sea life.

Location and Boundaries Recommendations for a Black River National Park have usually focused on the morass. The most detailed study to date resulted in the following:

"It is proposed that a national park should be established in Black River which incorporates the entire lower morass as well as associated wetlands and marine communities. It would stretch from Shorthaul Point to Scotts Cove, including the lower part of Font Hill to the west and Parottee Pond to the east. To the north it would include Bamboo Avenue which is a National Landmark. The surrounding hills and upper morass would form part of the Buffer Zone. The Black River National Park would eventually be linked to the Cockpit Country protected area via a private reserve at YS Falls and environs."

from A System of Protected Areas for Jamaica: Black River Report by Conrad Douglas and Associates, 1990

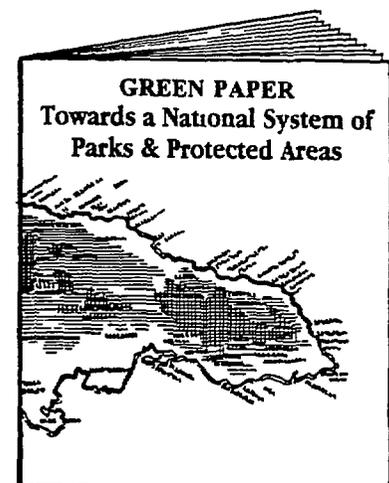
Financing: Donor funding is supplementing Government funds (NRCA) to pay for steps leading towards declaration of a Park or Protected Area. Operations and management costs may be met through a combination of the following strategies

- user or entrance fees, permits, licenses, and other cost recovery methods
- public sector support, particularly through Government allocations to the NRCA
- trust funds (National and local)
- individual initiative and volunteerism
- community fundraising activities
- grants and other donor assistance

Local Management It is NRCA's policy to delegate management authority to a capable community-based group whenever possible. The terms and conditions of these delegation agreements are subject to negotiation. Typically the local group would assume responsibility for recovering costs and paying for operations, providing staff, developing and maintaining facilities, and implementing educational, research, user, and enforcement programmes. The NRCA would establish a Local Advisory Committee(s) to represent various stakeholders and help guide management.

Cooperative Agreements: Protected areas usually require different agencies to agree to work together to meet shared objectives. For example the NRCA may cooperate with the Fisheries Division on the management of a Fish Sanctuary, with the Commissioner of Lands on setting aside Crown Lands as a National Park, or with the Urban Development Corporation to include its Font Hill properties in such a protected area.

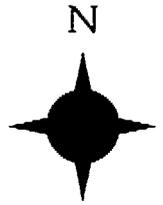
A System of Protected Areas The Black River Lower Morass is not the only area which has been identified as important. The maps on the following pages show other areas recommended for some form of protection, conservation or careful resource management.

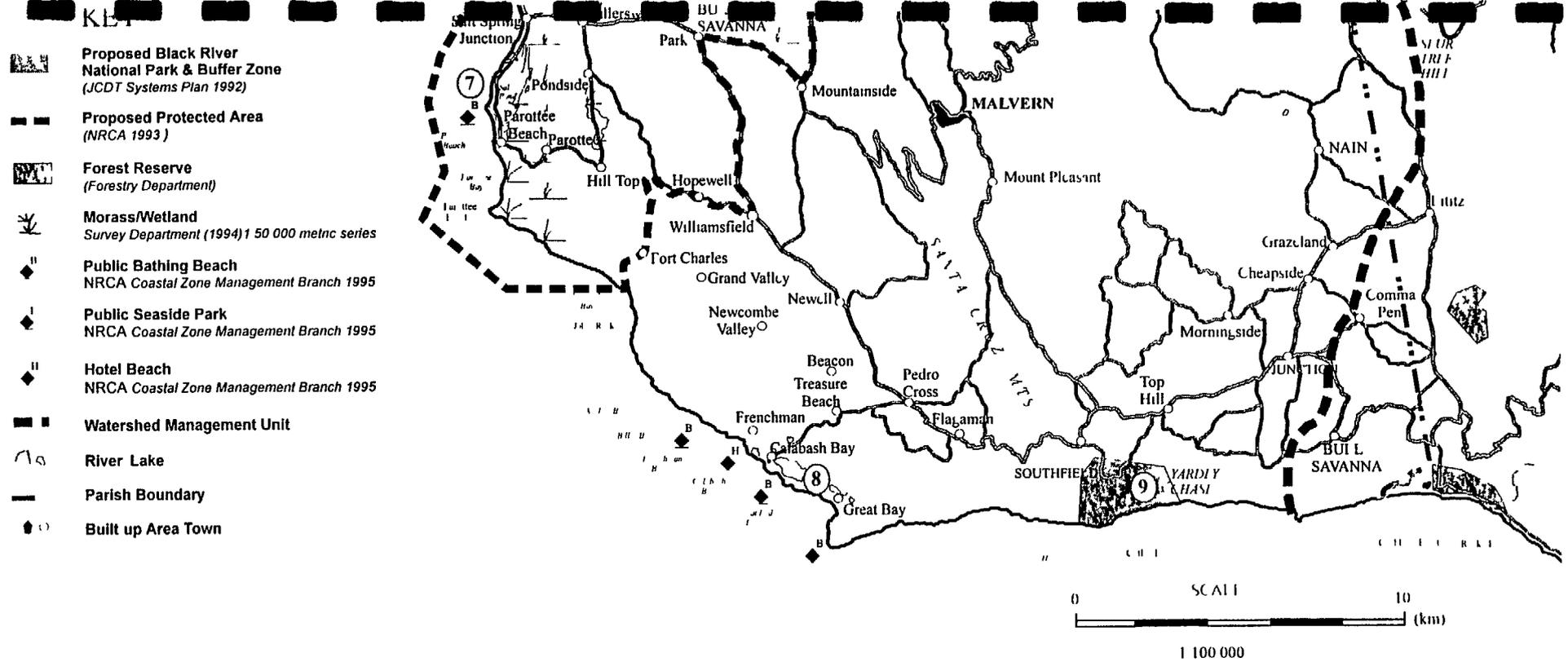


To learn more about the National Parks and Protected Areas System read the Green Paper (see the Parish Library or NRCA offices)

ST. ELIZABETH

Public Interest Lands, Waters, & Resources(draft)

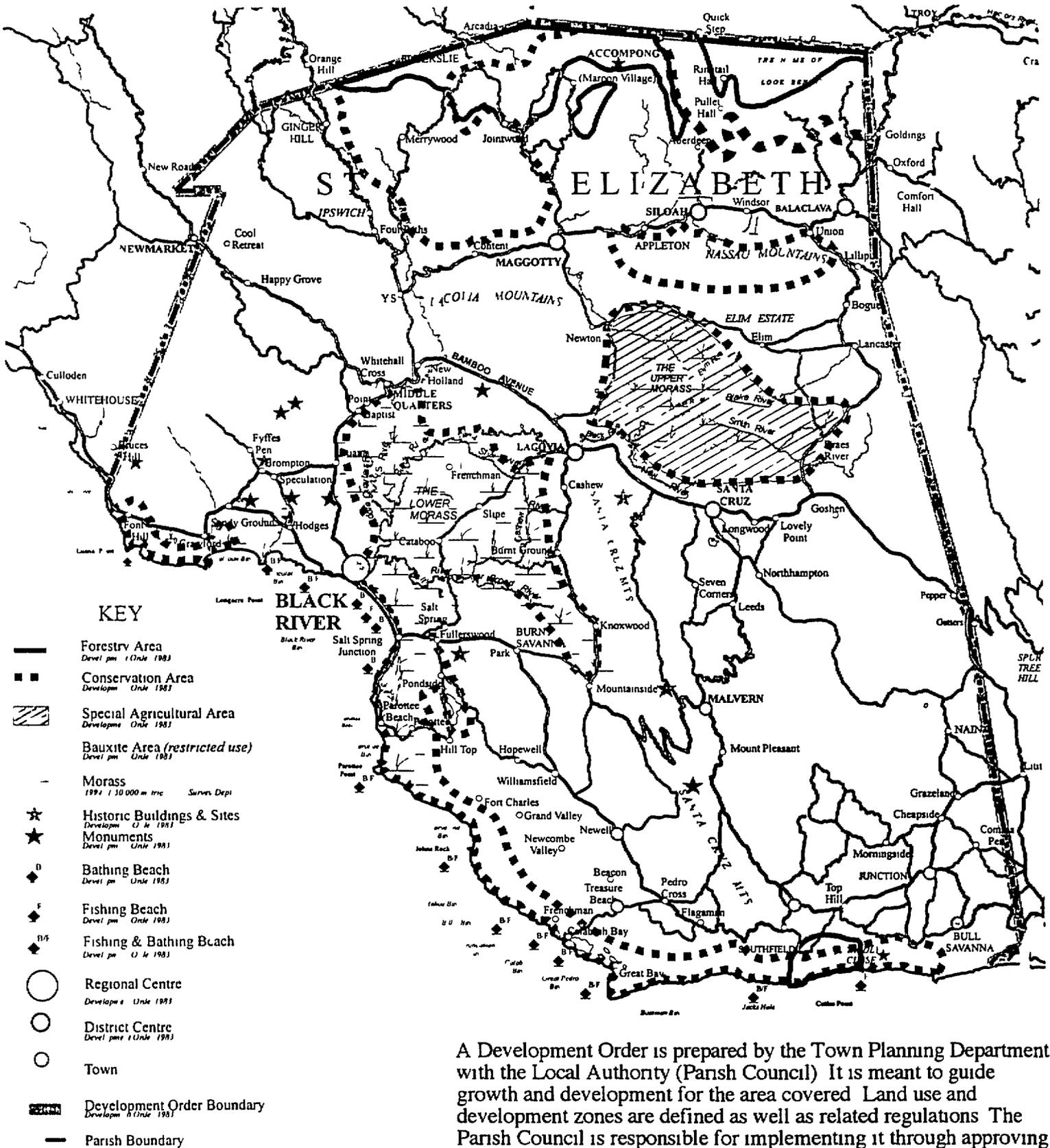




**Recommended Parks, Protected and Conservation Areas
(numbers refer to information sources on page 13)**

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <p>1 Black River Lower Morass
(National Park 1 2 3 4 8 conservation area 6)</p> <p>2 Black River Upper Morass
(National Park Buffer Zone 2 Special Agricultural Area 6)</p> <p>3 Font Hill, Luana Point, Galleon Beach
(Part of proposed National Park 1 8 conservation Area 6 8 public park 4)</p> <p>4 Malcolm Bay (Part of Proposed National Park 1 conservation area 5 6 Private Nature Reserve 5 Fish Sanctuary & mariculture development 7)</p> <p>5 Chocolata Bay (Part of proposed National Park 1 wetland protection 4 5)</p> <p>6 Scott Cove (Protected Area 1 public bathing beach restored 5 mariculture development 7)</p> <p>7 Parottee Ponds & Beach (part of Proposed National Park 1 protection 5)</p> <p>8 Pedro Ponds & Bluffs (possible part of national protected area system 1 protection 5)</p> <p>9 Lovers Leap
(possible part of national protected area system 1 needs upgrading 4 designated Forest Reserve)</p> | <p>10 Bamboo Avenue National Monument
(possible part of national protected area system 1 upgrade and protect 3 4)</p> <p>11 Y S Falls (possible part of national protected area system 1 linkage as private reserve between Black River and Cockpit Country national parks 2 acquire in public interest 4 protection 5)</p> <p>12 Black River Mineral Spa (promote investment to improve 3 acquire in public interest 4)</p> <p>13 Holland Swamp Forest (possible part of national protected area system 1)</p> <p>14 Cockpit Country (priority for addition to national protected area system 1 linked to Black River National Park via Y S Falls private reserve 2 conservation 5)</p> <p>15 Black River Historic Townscape (2 3 4 6 see source 2 for list of historic buildings identified)</p> <p>16 Nassau Mountain (possible part of national protected area system 1)</p> <p>17 Forest Mountain Mount Pleasant Cotterwood
(Special area watershed protection 5)</p> <p>18 Forest Pen Dalentober Fustic Grove (special area watershed protection 5)</p> <p>19 Source of the Black River
(scenic area 5)</p> | <p>20 Ipswich Cave</p> <p>21 Wondrous Cave</p> <p>22 Oxford Cave</p> <p>23 Bogue Forest Reserve (possible part of national protected area system 1)</p> <p>24 Cooks Bottom Forest Reserve (possible part of national protected area system 1)</p> <p>Other Forest Reserves</p> <p>25 Shoana</p> <p>26 Spring Vale</p> <p>Registered Historic and Cultural Sites</p> <p>A Ashton</p> <p>B Magdala House & Spa</p> <p>C New Forest Ruin</p> <p>D Spring Park</p> <p>F Hampstead Great House</p> <p>I Lacovia Tombstone</p> <p>G Parish Church & Monuments Black River</p> <p>II Court House & Offices Black River</p> <p>I Police Station Black River</p> <p>J Bamboo Avenue (see 10 above)</p> <p>K The Spa Black River (see 12 above)</p> |
|--|---|---|

St. Elizabeth Development Order 1983



A Development Order is prepared by the Town Planning Department with the Local Authority (Parish Council). It is meant to guide growth and development for the area covered. Land use and development zones are defined as well as related regulations. The Parish Council is responsible for implementing it through approving permits for new construction and changes in land use.

Note areas shown for Conservation, recreation (bathing beaches), wildlife protection (Game Reserves), and historic buildings and sites. Also shown are areas recommended for economic development (bauxite reserves and the upper morass "special agricultural area").

What do you think about a Black River protected area such as a National Park? What should its boundaries be?

Are there areas of national significance not shown here?

Which of the areas shown on these two maps should be part of the National Protected Areas system?

The recommended areas for conservation, protection and careful resource management shown on the two preceding maps come from the following sources

- 1 *A Plan for a System of Protected Areas in Jamaica* by Jamaica Conservation & Development Trust, 1992
- 2 *A System of National Protected Areas for Jamaica Black River Report* by Conrad Douglas & Associates, (undated)
- 3 *Seven Year Development Plan for St Elizabeth* by Trevor Hamilton et al (1995)
- 4 *South West Coast Development Plan* by Urban Development Corporation (1991)
- 5 *Environmental Study-Southern Westmoreland and St Elizabeth* by Anne Haynes Sutton (1990)
- 6 *St Elizabeth Parish Development Order* by Town and Country Planning Authority and St Elizabeth Parish Council (1983)
- 7 *Report on the Fisheries of South East Westmoreland* by Karl Aiken (1990)
- 8 *1978-98 National Physical Plan*

4. Who should take care of our environment?

Many people say that it is the responsibility of the government to care for the environment. Yes, the government does have an important role to play. However, it cannot do it alone. It is a team effort, requiring that government, non-government organizations, businesses and individual citizens work in partnership. Agencies, institutions, organizations and others with interest in and responsibility for the St Elizabeth area environment include

Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and Non Government Organizations (NGOs)

- St Elizabeth Environmental Protection Association (local environmental leadership, education, projects, etc , formerly BREPA)
- St Elizabeth Homecoming Foundation Ltd (local interest groups representation in promoting economic development)
- Service Clubs (Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, etc)
others

Private Sector Businesses & Support Organizations include

- Jamaica Tourist Board
- South Coast Resort Board
- Holland Estate
- Appleton Estate

others

Local Public Agencies and Institutions

- St Elizabeth Parish Council (development control)
- local police
- Area schools
- Bethlehem Teachers College

others


Forest trees help keep water clean and abundant. They protect us from floods and prevent soil erosion.

National Government Agencies

- Natural Resources Conservation Authority (overall environmental protection and sustainable resource use)
 - Commissioner of Lands (control of Crown lands)
 - National Heritage Trust (historic and cultural resources)
 - Petroleum Corporation of Jamaica (management of designated public lands)
 - Tourism Product Development Company (TPDCO)
 - National Irrigation Commission
 - Forest and Soil Conservation Division, Ministry of Agriculture (management of Forest Reserves)
 - Urban Development Corporation (preparation of South Coast Development Plan)
 - Superintendent of Public Gardens (Bamboo Avenue)
- others

National non-Government Organizations

- Environmental Foundation of Jamaica (project financing)
 - National Environmental Societies Trust (NGO support)
 - Jamaica Conservation and Development Trust (protected area development)
 - Jamaica National Parks Trust Fund (protected area financing)
 - University of the West Indies
- others

Individual Stakeholders include

- Fishermen
 - Shrimp hugglers
 - Crafts people
 - Charcoal producers
 - Loggers and Farmers
 - Business people
 - Estate and factory owners and workers
 - Visitors and tourists
 - Boat tour owners and workers
- others

5. Building St Elizabeth's Environmental Action Agenda

The Natural Resources Conservation Authority is leading the effort to outline a clear action agenda to respond to the St Elizabeth area's most pressing environmental problems. It has put together a planning team to

- look carefully at available information
- listen to people, getting their ideas on environmental problems and possible solutions
- document the findings and recommendations in what is called an Environmental Policy Framework (EPF) for the St Elizabeth area

An Environmental Policy Framework is .

a statement of environmental policy for a large area, typically a Parish or watershed,

a framework for NRCA annual work programs and budgets, projects, and activities,

a basis for cooperative agreements on policies to follow and actions to be taken,

an action plan for dealing with priority environmental problems and issues

a feasibility assessment of priority candidate areas for the National Protected Areas System

a commitment by public sector agencies, NGOs, business, and others to work together,

a process designed to allow all interests, especially area residents, participate in deciding on an acceptable approach to dealing with environmental problems and issues,

The primary products or outcomes of the EPF process are:

- 1 EPF document, outlining environmental policy and immediate action agenda for the area
- 2 Map with Public Interest Lands, Waters, and Resources (natural & cultural)
- 3 Recommendations for immediate additions to the National Protected Areas System
- 4 Cooperative Agreements
- 5 Recommendation from NRCA Board to Minister to adopt as policy for the area

continued on the following pages

5. continued, Building St Elizabeth's Environmental Action Agenda

Preparing an Environmental Policy Framework means that clarity is reached on priority problems and what can be done about them. Community meetings and discussions with organizations, stakeholders and interested individuals will focus on answering the eight questions presented here.

1 What are the priority environmental issues for the area? (see pages 4-7)

2 What about a Black River protected area such as a National Park? (see pages 8-9)

3. What are the "public interest" lands and waters and natural resources in the area which need protection or careful management? (see pages 10-13)

4. What kinds of projects, programmes, and activities should be included in an Action Agenda to respond to priority environmental issues and problems?

5. What kinds of Cooperative Agreements and partnerships are needed to support the Action Agenda?

6. What role can local government play in implementing the Action Agenda?

7. What role can community based non-governmental organizations and private sector interests play in implementing the Action Agenda?

8. What government policies are needed to support the kinds of recommendations outlined in the Action Agenda?

6. What can you do?

There are many ways that individuals and organizations can work together with the NRCA to solve St Elizabeth's most important environmental problems

First, stay informed Read this booklet, come to the meetings, watch for additional information on the radio, television, or newspapers (see calendar)

Second, let your ideas be heard Speak up at the meetings Use this booklet to write down your ideas and give it to the NRCA representatives Speak with them about your concerns and recommendations

Third, do something positive for the environment

- Fishermen can organize mariculture projects, use sustainable fishing methods, help make nursery areas fish sanctuaries
- Tour Boat Operators could help pay for a Protected Area by implementing a user fee system
- Local Businessmen can follow "Green Guidelines" to help make Black River Jamaica's premier eco-tourism destination
- Small Farmers can till along the contour, build terraces and use tree crops to conserve hillside soils
- Shrimp Higglers can ask for pollution control so shrimp stocks remain healthy and abundant
- Artisans and crafts people could ask that areas which they depend on for materials are managed for sustainable harvests
- Charcoal makers could work together to establish fast growing tree plantations to ensure a steady supply of wood

Teachers can organize a Junior Ranger Programme in their school Teacher training workshops are being planned for early 1997 The programme is expected to be launched in St Elizabeth during Earth Day, 1997 Interested teachers contact the NRCA Environmental Officer in Black River or its Public Education Information & Outreach Office in Kingston for more information

Students can become NRCA Junior Rangers

You can become a volunteer NRCA Game Warden Join a community group or organization working on local environmental projects Be part of Earth Day, World Environment Day, and Beach Clean-up activities Compost your garbage Build an appropriate sanitation system such as a dry toilet Plant trees

Calendar

March & April, 1997

NRCA representatives will continue the process begun last November, meeting with stake holder groups, organizations and individuals. Community meetings will be held in different locations throughout the St Elizabeth area. Watch for notices regarding dates, times, and venues.

Consultations will also continue with National government planning agencies. Environmental management capacities of local agencies, organizations and groups will be assessed.

May, 1997

Meetings and discussions continue. A first draft Environmental Policy Framework (EPF) document will be ready by the end of May. It will include an "Action Agenda" as well as an assessment of the feasibility of a Black River National Park or Protected Area.

June & July, 1997

The Draft Environmental Policy Framework document will be circulated for review and comments. NRCA representatives will continue to meet with stakeholders, organizations and interested individuals to discuss the findings and recommendations of the draft EPF. Assistance to selected local organizations to improve environmental management capacity initiated.

August, 1997

Final draft of Environmental Policy Framework completed. Steps towards implementing the framework's Action Agenda begin, including a boundary survey and other actions in anticipation of declaration of a Protected Area for the morass.

September & October, 1997

Management Plan for a Black River Park or protected area initiated. Local Advisory Committee established. Other Protected Area start-up tasks completed.

March through October, 1997

Community education, information and awareness programme will be active throughout this planning period.

About the NRCA...

NRCA is the official agency of the Government of Jamaica specifically charged with environmental protection and management of the nation's natural resources, as well as with enforcing environmental laws. NRCA's responsibilities include both land and sea habitats. NRCA is prepared to work in partnership with local community-based environmental management organizations in reaching environmental goals and implementing programmes.

The function of the Natural Resources Conservation Authority is broadly defined in the 1991 Act under which it was established:

"to take such steps as are necessary for the effective management of the physical environment of Jamaica so as to ensure the conservation, protection, and proper use of its natural resources "

NRCA powers and responsibilities focus on

- establishing and enforcing pollution control and waste management standards and regulations
- guiding environmentally appropriate development, through such tools as prescribing areas, requiring environmental impact assessments, and granting of permits and licenses
- maintaining a system of national parks and protected areas
- promoting broad public awareness through information, environmental education, and outreach activities
- monitoring and enforcing environmental laws and regulations outlined in the NRCA, Beach Control, Watersheds Protection, and Wildlife Protection acts
- providing national environmental leadership, coordinating activities of other government agencies, and supporting local, non-government efforts at protecting and enhancing the environment

For More Information, Contact:

Michael Spence, NRCA Conservation Officer, Black River Jamaica Tourist Board Office, Phone 965-2074, Phone/Fax 965-2076

Brian Byfield, NRCA Protected Areas Branch, 53 1/2 Molyneux Road, Kingston Phone 923-5125, 923-5155, 923-5156, Fax 923-5070