

The Protected Areas System Master Plan (PASMP) for Jamaica

1. Attached for the information of the Houses is the Protected Areas System Master Plan (PASMP) for Jamaica.

2. Background

2.1 The development of the PASMP is a requirement of the Policy for Jamaica's System of Protected Areas (1997) and fulfills an obligation of the Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA) under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), to which Jamaica is a Party.

2.2 The development of the Protected Areas System Master Plan (PASMP) was guided by the Protected Areas Committee (PAC). The PAC, which was established in 2006, comprises representatives of the four entities with management responsibility for protected areas, namely the National Environment and Planning Agency/Natural Resources Conservation Authority, the Forestry Department, the Jamaica National Heritage Trust and the Fisheries Division, as well as the Ministry of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change, with support from The Nature Conservancy.

2.3 After a comprehensive consultative process, the PASMP was prepared. This Plan was approved by Cabinet in November 2015.

3. Purpose of the PASMP

3.1 Jamaica's protected areas (PAs) contribute to the quality of the environment, people's lives, local businesses and the economy. This is achieved through the conservation of plant and animal species as well as the built heritage and the maintenance of ecological processes and ecosystem services that support human well-being. The goods and services provided by PAs are critical for the quality of life for Jamaicans in the fragile environment of a small island developing state.

3.2 The main objective of the Master Plan is to develop a network/system of protected areas that is representative of the diversity of our ecosystems and local heritage, effectively managed, and sustainably financed. These include national and marine parks; environmental protection areas; areas protected under the Beach Control Act; forest reserves; special fishery conservation areas; and national monuments and national protected heritage.

3.3 The PASMP is consistent with a number of national policies and plans, including the Policy for Jamaica's System of Protected Areas (1997), the National Strategy and Action Plan on Biological Diversity in Jamaica (2003) and Vision 2030 Jamaica: National Development Plan (2009). It will also guide and support the implementation of *inter alia* the Medium

Term Socio-Economic Policy Framework 2012 - 2015, the Strategic Forest Management Plan 2010 – 2014, the Master Plan for Sustainable Tourism Development (2002), the Culture, Creative Industries and Values Sector Plan of Vision 2030, and the Natural Resources and Environmental Management and Hazard Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation Combined Sector Plan of Vision 2030 Jamaica.

4. Issues

4.1 There are 19 different categories of protected areas which were established independently during the past century under various Acts of Parliament related to biological and cultural features. These areas are governed by a complex amalgam of legislation, policies, management authorities, and management actors. Inadequate linkages across agencies and ministries and a lack of clarity in definitions of categories of areas for protection have hindered effective management.

4.2 For successful implementation, the PASMP must be mainstreamed within the operations of the four government agencies with responsibility for protected areas management.

4.3 It is proposed in the PASMP that the PAC should be institutionalized and consist of a wider membership. This expanded PAC will include the government and non-governmental entities that directly manage protected areas and provide or leverage funding for the protected areas system, representatives from non-governmental organizations, local forest management committees and the Special Fisheries Conservation Area Network. The establishment of the PAC will support continuity of the efforts and momentum that led to the preparation of the PASMP as well as provide a mechanism for coordinating the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the PASMP. The proposed membership of the PAC is outlined in Appendix 1 of this Ministry Paper.

4.4 The PASMP Action Plan 2013 – 2017 will be financed through traditional funding sources for protected areas management, for example: GOJ budgetary allocations; funds raised by NGOs and GOJ agencies from local and international development partners and donor agencies; NGO membership dues and fund raising activities; and corporate donations.

4.5 Some of the key issues identified in preparing for the development of the plan included: (i) the need to come up with a clear definition of a protected area in the national context, (ii) the rights of private landowners, and (iii) economic incentives to support private involvement in protected areas management and conservation. In addition, legislative reform for protected areas management would need to harmonise and strengthen the existing legislative framework so as to eliminate any inter-jurisdictional conflicts.

4.6 In addition to fulfilling one of Jamaica's obligations as a Party to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the PASMP is also a useful tool in meeting the country's obligations under other multilateral environmental agreements as well those agreements relating to culture and heritage.

5. Consultations

5.1 The PASMP was prepared with the participation and support of a range of stakeholders from government and civil society. Specially commissioned reports and studies informed the development of the Plan and these reports benefitted from a process of stakeholder consultations before they were accepted by the PAC. Focus group meetings were held to re-examine the issues related to legal and institutional frameworks in an effort to ensure that the current realities were taken into account. Public consultations on the draft PASMP document were held on 10 February 2010 (Kingston), 27 November 2012 (Kingston), and 5 December 2012 (Montego Bay). An eight-week period ending on 11 January 2013 facilitated further public input; the comments received were reviewed by the PAC and where possible incorporated into the draft PASMP.

5.2 In accordance with Cabinet Decision No. 43/14, the MWLECC undertook further consultations with the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce, the Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy, and Mining and the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. The Ministry of Finance and Planning and the Attorney General's Department were also previously consulted.



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APPENDIX 1

Proposed Members of the Protected Areas Committee (PAC)

1. Ministry with responsibility for the Environment – (Environmental Risk Management Division)
2. Ministry of Finance and Planning
3. Forestry Department (CEO)
4. Fisheries Division (CEO)
5. Institute of Jamaica, Natural History Museum of Jamaica (Head)
6. Jamaica National Heritage Trust (CEO)
7. National Environment and Planning Agency (CEO)
8. Scientific Authority, (CITES), Jamaica
9. Planning Institute of Jamaica
10. National Protected Areas Trust Fund
11. The Nature Conservancy
12. CBD and biodiversity expert
13. One NGO responsible for managing a protected area - to be rotated every 2 years
14. One representative of a Local Forest Management Committee (LFMC) - to be rotated every 2 years, and
15. One representative of the Special Fisheries Conservation Area Network - to be rotated every 2 years