

Section 1: Opening and introduction to Cayman experience

The morning of Sunday 30th May 2009 was taken up with a choice of three field-visits to a range of terrestrial features of conservation interest. An outline of these visits is included in this Section.

The three groups came together for lunch at the QE II Botanic Park, followed by introductions (in two parts) to Cayman conservation issues. These stimulated extremely interesting discussions on issues stretching much wider than Cayman, and focussing particularly on physical planning and influencing. We have included fairly full reports on these discussions in this Section, based as far as possible on verbatim records.

Following a return to the main conference venue (and a planning meeting for student participation and a discussion meeting on the Darwin Initiative), H.E. the Governor kindly hosted an opening reception at Government House. The speeches given then by the Cayman Islands Leader of Government Business and the Minister of Environment start this Section.

We returned to Cayman-centred matters on Tuesday 2nd June, when the National Trust for the Cayman Islands kindly hosted a historical and cultural evening at their Mission House site. We end this Section with information on that event.



Lunch and discussion at the Park (Photo: Dr Oliver Cheesman)

Remarks from The Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, Leader of Government Business and Minister of Finance Services, Tourism & Development

for the Opening Reception of the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum conference “Making the Right Connections: A conference on conservation in the UKOTs, Crown Dependencies and other small island communities”

Your Excellency, Governor Jack, former Governors Gore and Dinwiddie, distinguished representatives from the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum and the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, other distinguished overseas and local guests, ladies and gentlemen:

It is indeed my pleasure to join His Excellency Governor Jack in extending a very warm Caymanian welcome to each of you and to say that I trust that you will all thoroughly enjoy your time with us.

As you may know, the Government which I lead was elected just over a week ago but I want to assure all those present that we are aware of the many challenges facing not only this country, but all of the countries and territories represented here, in protecting and managing our fragile environment and resources in the face of a growing list of impacts and threats. I would also like to say that our government is committed to taking the necessary steps to ensure that we have the legislative means and policy framework that will enable our environment and natural resources to be adequately protected and sustainably managed.

I have noted with interest that one of the conference sessions on Monday will be on “Climate Change – impacts and adaptation” as this is one of my main areas of concern. Specifically, I am concerned about the way in which climate change and climate variability are expected to profoundly impact small island developing states both regionally and worldwide. While there is still some uncertainty in the precise predictions, it is widely accepted that climate changes likely to occur in our region will include:

1. an increase in the intensity of rainfall but a decrease in total precipitation leading to increased risks of droughts;
2. higher sea surface temperatures and more acidic oceans, both with the potential to significant-

3. increased storm intensity with higher risks of flooding and coastal erosion.

All of these impacts have the potential to severely disrupt life as we know it, including serious impacts to one of the mainstays of our economy - our tourism industry. I am therefore very keen to see that our country takes immediate and deliberate steps to plan ahead and develop appropriate responses and strategies for adapting to climate change. I have been advised that we have begun this process under the “Enhancing Capacity for Adaptation to Climate Change” project funded by the UK’s Department for International Development, and the establishment of our multidisciplinary National Climate Change Adaptation Working Group which is being chaired by our own Department of Environment. In the coming weeks I look forward to being further briefed on the work of this group and also to learning of the outcomes of your deliberations at this meeting.

I trust that over the next four days you will take this opportunity to exchange ideas and share experiences and that you will have fruitful discussions that will leave you all better equipped to address the needs and challenges in each of your countries and territories. I wish you every success with the conference and I hope that you will also find the time to avail yourselves of some of our warm Caymanian hospitality while you are here.

Thank you.



Remarks from The Hon. Mark Scotland, Minister of Health, Environment, Youth, Sports & Culture

for the Opening Reception of the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum conference “Making the Right Connections: A conference on conservation in the UK OTs, Crown Dependencies and other small island communities”

Your Excellency, Governor Jack, former Governors Gore and Dinwiddie, other distinguished overseas and local guests, ladies and gentlemen:

As the newly elected Minister of Environment, I wish to add some very brief remarks to those of the Leader of Government Business, the Honourable McKeeva Bush, firstly to join with him in extending a very warm Caymanian welcome to each of you and secondly to underscore this Government’s commitment to facilitating the conservation and sustainable management of our natural environment and resources.

I understand that today many of you had the opportunity to see and experience first hand some of our unique and beautiful terrestrial habitats and species on the Mastic Trail and in the Queen Elizabeth II Botanic Park – I trust that you found the fieldtrips both enjoyable and enlightening. A few minutes ago you heard the Leader of Government Business mention that our Government is committed to ensuring that we have the legislative tools to afford the proper level of protection to these resources. Specifically, the Government is committed to passing legislation that will provide a comprehensive framework for the conservation and management of our biological diversity – both in terms of species and habitats. Among other things, the legislation will allow us to acquire, through negotiated purchase, environmentally important areas in order to establish a national system of protected areas on

land that parallels our long-established and successful system of Marine Parks.

The Leader also mentioned this Government’s commitment to addressing the challenges posed by climate change. It is now well accepted that the loss of biodiversity destabilises ecosystems and weakens their ability to deal with natural disasters like hurricanes, as well as the impacts of climate change – another very good reason to ensure that we take the necessary steps to set aside areas that will serve as reservoirs of the diversity of species and habitats on our islands.

As previously mentioned, the list of impacts and threats to our natural environment is growing and the challenges of finding appropriate responses are many. It is therefore encouraging to see that persons such as yourselves continue to commit to finding solutions to these challenges through meetings such as this one.

I join His Excellency and the Leader of Government in wishing you an enjoyable and productive conference, and look forward to hearing of the results of your deliberations.

Thank you.



Thanks

In speaking at the opening session, following the Governor's generous welcome, Dr Mike Pienkowski, UKOTCF Chairman, said:

Your Excellency, Honourable Leader of Government Business, Honourable Minister of Environment, Honourable Members of the Legislative Assembly, Permanent Secretaries, Directors, distinguished guests, friends and colleagues from Cayman, many other UK Overseas Territories, UK and elsewhere:

I would like first, on behalf of UKOTCF and all participants, to thank the Governor, His Excellency Stuart Jack, for his hospitality in providing this excellent venue and reception for the opening of our conference. I would like to link to this many thanks to all his staff, especially Staff Officer, Andy Holbrook, for much help throughout the planning of the conference.

We are very grateful also to the Cayman Islands Leader of Government Business, The Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, and the Minister of Environment, The Hon. Mark Scotland, for finding time just a few days after the General Election and their taking up of office to join us, to address and formally to open the conference.

I would like to recognise also, the presence and participation of two former Governors of the Cayman Islands, Michael Gore and Bruce Dinwiddy.

Some people have asked what happens to retired Governors and their spouses. Some, at least, become volunteers and we are very grateful to both Michael Gore and Bruce Dinwiddy who have, in turn, joined UKOTCF's Council and served as Chairmen of UKOTCF's Wider Caribbean Working Group. Volunteer organisations generate a whole range of tasks: Bruce and Emma Dinwiddy could even be seen, yesterday in our conference office, re-starting their careers at the clerical level, by sharing the tasks of preparing conference packs. We thank them.

I will keep these comments brief, but I would like to note that this conference marks 10 years since the first conference on environment in the UK Overseas Territories to be held, in London in 1999. (I say "to be held" deliberately, because the first conference of the present type was already in planning for 2000 in Gibraltar.) The main organiser, with UKOTCF support, of the 1999 conference was Iain Orr, who is here tonight and for the conference. Iain was then with the Foreign & Commonwealth Office and was responsible for many of the initiatives and support from UK Government that we now treat as normal. He is now on UKOTCF Council, and we warmly recognise his contribution.

Thank you for your attention

Field Visits

Sunday 31st May

The morning and early afternoon of the day after arrival was devoted to field visits. These served the purposes of: getting a view of some aspects of the local environment and issues; recovering from travel; and providing the opportunity for informal discussions.

All tours met up at the QEII Botanic Park at 12 noon for lunch and lectures about Cayman environmental issues.



*Bruce Dinwiddy ensures an orderly departure.
(Photo: Dr Mike Pienkowski)*

Option 1 – Mastic Trail (3 hrs)

This tour left the hotel at 8am for the coach ride of about $\frac{3}{4}$ hour to the trail. Then about 3 hours were spent walking part way along the trail and returning, before the short transfer to the Botanic Park for noon. The walking was through woodland rich in various forms of wildlife, with good chances of seeing rare endemic flora. Participants



*Discussions between participants in the Botanic Park
(Photo: Dr Oliver Cheesman)*



On the Mastic Trail (Photo: Dr Colin Clubbe)

were advised: The track is likely to be muddy and possibly flooded. Participants should be keen on hiking, dressed and booted for such conditions, and reasonably fit. More information can be found at <http://www.nationaltrust.org.ky/info/mastic.html>.

Option 2 – Pedro (1 hr) & Botanic Park (2 hrs)

This tour also left the hotel at 8am for the coach ride of about 20 minutes to Pedro, where about 1 hour was spent. A coach-ride of about 25 minutes then took the party to the Botanic Park. At Pedro the party toured the grounds, viewed a multimedia presentation and traced Cayman's history through that of the "Great House" (www.pedrostmjames.ky/). At the Botanic Park, gentle walks allowed viewing of plants, a range of birdlife in the woodlands, flower gardens and pond, and the Blue Iguana rearing facility (www.botanic-park.ky/). Participants were advised: Walking is moderate, and no special clothing or footwear is required, but at this season it would be wise to be prepared for the possibility of rain.



*Some unusual road signs at the Botanic Park
(Photos: Dr Oliver Cheesman)*

Option 3 – Pedro, East End & North Side to Starfish Key (3 hrs)

This coach-based tour left the hotel at 9am. It was primarily a sightseeing trip around Cayman's coastal road with stops at selected beauty points, including:

- Pedro, Cayman's premier historical site;
- the Blowholes, a photographic opportunity of the artistic power of the sea;
- East End Lighthouse to reconnect with the "iron men, wooden ships" history of Cayman's settlers;
- Wreck of the 10 Sails, representing the shipwrecks which lay hidden below Cayman's azure waters;
- Starfish Key, looking back across the North Sound towards the conference hotel.



*Racer snakes on the Mastic Trail
(Photo: Catherine Quick)*

Thursday 4th June

In the late afternoon and early evening of the closing day, participants had a chance to see, from a boat, something of Cayman's marine ecosystems, including North Sound sand-banks and mangroves.



Grand Cayman's endemic subspecies of Parrot on the Mastic Trail (Photo: Dr Mike Pienkowski)



Views at Pedro St James (Photos: Dr Oliver Cheesman)

Some Cayman conservation issues (part 1)

Gina Ebanks-Petrie (Director, Department of Environment, Cayman Islands Government)

During our tour this morning, I was asked many questions centred around the issue of development control and planning. That will probably be my main focus in this talk, because that seemed to be the main area of interest. But, if anybody has a question, please just raise your hand; this is very informal. I realise that it's a very diverse group and I'll just try to answer your questions.

The Cayman Islands are really part of the Greater Antilles. So much of our local flora and fauna comes from Cuba and Jamaica and, to a lesser extent, the Central American mainland. Because we have been isolated for 2-3 million years, with no land-bridge connection to any other bits of land, there is actually quite a high degree of endemism on the islands, both for our plants and our animals.

Fred Burton is going to talk about the plants. In terms of our animals, to give you an idea: we have one endemic species of bat, we have 21 endemic species and subspecies of reptiles, lots of snails and other molluscs, five subspecies of butterfly and 17 endemic subspecies of birds. So, for a small island group, this is quite a high degree of endemism.

Obviously, we have our challenges in managing biodiversity in the Cayman Islands. While we do have a fairly good track record in the marine environment (with marine parks established for some 23 years), the situation on the land side is not nearly as progressive in terms of our conservation framework. And, in fact, even in the marine environment, we are struggling to keep up with the challenges.

For that reason, the Department of the Environment, which is the department I head up, has proposed a comprehensive national law (the Conservation Law) that would actually take care of marine and terrestrial issues under one umbrella piece of legislation. At the moment, for the terrestrial environment, we are operating under a piece of legislation that was passed in 1976. It is called the Animals Law, and that law is a mish-mash of numerous provisions for animal health and welfare. So, in terms of the conservation provisions, it protects all birds, except for domestic birds. It protects iguanas – and that includes, unfortunately,

the green iguana, as the law does not specifically say *Cyclura lewisi*. This is because, when the law was passed, the alien invasive green iguana *Iguana iguana* was not an issue here. So we actually have a piece of legislation which makes a legal problem for us, in that it protects all iguanas. We turn a blind eye to anyone wanting to do what they want with the green iguanas, as they are really out of control here now. They were introduced in about the late 1970s. They are so well adapted to this kind of environment that they do extremely well, and their population has just exploded.

The other thing the Animals Law does is to protect two ponds and two coastal lagoons, including Meagre Bay Pond and Colliers Pond, which some of you may have passed during the tour this morning. Those are essentially ponds that are protected because of their value for bird life. The problem is that the 300 feet of mangrove around the pond, while it has legal protection, is still in private ownership and that really causes us some concerns and problems in terms of protection and management of those areas.

Land ownership on Cayman is a very touchy and difficult issue, and we know that the only way that we are ever going to protect land here is to acquire it and preserve it. That's where the National Trust has come in. The Trust Law was passed in 1987. It set up a provision that any land acquired for conservation purposes by the Trust and declared inalienable by the Trust Council is basically locked away for that purpose, for conservation. Really, in perpetuity because, even if the Trust was somehow to fold, that land would revert to Government but it could only be used for the purpose for which it was protected in the first place.

So it is quite a powerful piece of legislation, and the Trust has done a really excellent job in protecting some parts of the Mastic Trail area, which some of you were on this morning. It owns land in the Central Mangrove Wetland as well, and it has protected forest on Cayman Brac, in the form of the Brac Parrot Reserve. The National Trust, with the help of the Department of the Environment, consolidated two fragments of the Brac Forest Reserve two years ago. The Trust obtained a grant,



*Gina Ebanks-Petrie talks in the Park.
(Photo: Dr Colin Clube)*

to advance from a national viewpoint.

So, going back to the legislation, if we get this new law passed, it will do a number of things. It will allow a framework for us to establish a system of protected areas on land that parallels the marine parks that we have. It will provide a mechanism for us to deal with the introduction of exotic species and genetically altered

and matching funds from Government, and closed a gap in the Brac Parrot Reserve.

But – with all the land under protection, through the National Trust and with the small bits of land that the Government has protected - we are still only looking at about 7% of the total land area of the three Cayman Islands under any type of protection. This new legislation, that we have had drafted now for several years, has been waiting for two administrations to pass. The newly elected one will be the third. We have just had an election, on the 20th May, so we have a very new government, and we are waiting to see what their disposition will be towards the legislation and the things that we need

species. It also establishes a schedule for protected species, which will all have to have conservation plans written for them.

We have actually gone a little bit down the road with that already, trying to pre-empt the legislation. The *Blue Iguana Recovery Programme* has a conservation plan, which is very well advanced. That has been in a collaborative form with the Trust, the DoE, partners from Durrell, the Iguana Specialist Group, San Diego Zoo, and RCF. We meet once every 5 years and go through that plan, update it and examine the goals.

I'll stop there, and ask if anyone has any questions.

Discussion

Q: What is the objection in Government to the Conservation Law?

A: The main objections that we had when we put it out for public comment were centred around ways of protecting land. We have had to make it very clear that the only way we will be able to protect land is to acquire it, through a negotiated process. There is no compulsory land purchase provision in the legislation. The other issue that we have had is that it will slow down development. You probably think that that would not be a bad thing. But, for some people in Cayman, that is a bad thing. Under our planning and development legislation, there is no requirement for

environmental impact assessment. Because we have put provisions in the law for environmental assessment, this raises other objections. While we have had environmental assessments carried out in Cayman, and we are working on one now for the new port, there is no process that's written, so that it is clear and unambiguous. Therefore, at present, a developer does not know the process. So we have put environmental impact assessment provisions in our draft legislation. It will require any agency who is basically making a decision or agreeing to a plan, or taking any action that has the ability to impact the environment, to consult with the National Conservation Council. So that's another reason why I think that the law is not really

embraced. The law also puts in place proper provisions for the Conservation Fund, which exists now as a nominal Environmental Protection Fund. This sits in the general treasury, and unfortunately, the National Trust, the Department of the Environment and other conservation organisations cannot readily access that money, because it is used to balance the books of the Government. In other words, it is used as a cash reserve. The Public Finance and Audit Law requires the government to have something like 90 days of operating capital. And so that fund, as far as I can understand, goes towards meeting those obligations. Thus, it is not available for the purpose that it was established for. So the draft Law actually establishes a Conservation Fund, and we are having discussions about how we transition from the Environmental Protection Fund to the Conservation Fund. The Conservation Fund would basically be managed by a board of directors that would include public and private representatives. I think that would be a far better and more workable situation, because we are going to need money to buy land if we are going to protect it.

Q: The Nature Conservancy has developed another mechanism of protecting land, through giving tax incentives. Has that been tried in Cayman?

A: The National Trust has actually made use of the Nature Conservancy in that way and the American citizens who donate land to the National Trust who live here, for example, can make a claim of some kind. I don't understand how the business part of it works, but the tax part of it gets reduced through the Nature Conservancy. So that has already been tried.

Q: How long has the Conservation Fund been in place, or is it the Environmental Fund?

A: It's the Environmental Protection Fund. The scheme was first put in place in the budget of 1997.

Q: Is that the Fund utilized normally to balance the Government's shortfalls? Is there a case where it has been used other than that, in the history of the Fund?

A: In the history of the Fund, yes. When it was first being collected, it was used for a variety of things that people thought were environmental. Some of that money was actually used to clean up after Hurricane Ivan. I think \$9 million in the Fund paid for the clean-up after Hurricane Ivan but, prior to that in the early days, it was used to clear a

channel in the reef, build a sports field, a variety of projects that really did not meet the criteria we had established for the Fund.

Q: Isn't the role of the Governor significant? Can't he just give the funds to the National Trust?

A: No, the way that the fund is set up was established by the Finance Committee. I don't know how it works in the Turks and Caicos Islands, but we have a committee of all of our elected officials in the Legislative Assembly that basically deals with the budget, and the appropriation of Government money. And so any funds that leave the Environmental Protection Fund have to be appropriated by the Finance Committee, which is a committee of all the elected officials

Q: When you say that it is used to balance the budget, you just mean it's held in reserve, not that it's spent?

A: No, not spent; it's held in reserve. So, last time we looked, there was \$21 million or something in the fund sitting there and we need it.

Q: In Montserrat, we have the same system of financial management. We don't have an environmental fund set up but, if we were to set it up at the moment, it would go into that consolidated fund. We are trying to get legislation now to make it separate. If not, the money is basically used by the Government to balance the books. So, if there is a shortfall, they use it to top it up and then they are supposed to re-imburse, but, once it happens... It would go to an appropriations committee as you said.

Q: Is there a lot of available land that could be set aside? I mean Crown Land that could be set aside for protection or is there none left?

A: There is not a lot of Crown Land left on this island. There is still a significant amount of Crown wetland on Little Cayman, but not on this island (Grand Cayman) and the Brac. If we want to protect dry forest or shrubland, which Fred will talk to you about, the dry forest and shrubland being the most biodiverse area we are looking at, we need to acquire it.

Q: Is it private or is it Crown Land?

A: It's mostly private. Having said that, the Crown has just given, or leased, to the National Trust,

196 acres of dry shrubland in the East End of the island, which will form the core of our Blue Iguana Reserve.

Q: What's been happening in Turks is, even though we have protected areas that are set aside as nature reserves, they have been damaged. These reserves are [in theory] totally off-limits unless you have a permit, just to preserve the species and habitats. I don't know why we don't pressure the Governor finally to transfer the rights and properties to the National Trust, so that the Government can't come in and steal a little piece for this development or sell a piece to that developer. That would actually force their hand to hold it for its intended purpose.

A: In Cayman (and possibly in other Territories), the Governor can't hand land over to anyone. That has to be done through either the cabinet or the Legislative Assembly.

Q: Even in Caribbean islands where there is a lot more protected land, that hasn't been terribly successful unless there is a process of engaging private landowners and people. I'm a bit sad to hear you say that the only way in Cayman is to acquire land. Are there no other strategies such as working with public and private landowners to have a more balanced, sustainable-use, conservation approach. I can't see that you are ever going to be able to protect everything.

A: Yes, you are right. The law does actually allow for conservation agreements that we can sign with individual landowners. It's just that the culture of landownership here is such that that certainly would not be the way that one would set out to protect land by choice. It's not saying that you wouldn't ever come across an individual landowner who may be willing to co-operate with you and manage their property for a particular purpose. So the law does allow those conservation agreements to be signed between the Crown and individual landowners where it does not have to involve complete purchase of the land.

Q What about a viable budget?

A: Well the budget would have to be through this Conservation Fund that we are proposing in the legislation, or some hybrid of that and the Environmental Protection Fund .

Q: You said that the Government recently leased 100 and something acres to the National Trust.

Why wasn't it transferred directly rather than having a lease?

A: I don't know the answer to that, but at least it's a 99-year lease. I think maybe it was just a political decision; they gave a 99-year lease and that is what we've got.

Q: On the question of conservation agreements, do they just last as long as the owner lasts, or do they stay with the land?

A: They do stay with the land. We have a provision in the legislation that actually makes the conservation agreement continue on with the land.

Q: We have heard some instances where the developer or government wanted to acquire certain parcels of property for different reasons, for example if they were expanding the airport or were building a road and they needed to get a piece of land. Where they would swap? Would they actually give the landowner sometimes a better piece of property somewhere else, in exchange for that piece? I don't know if there is even enough land here to juggle like that. For example, for the dry forest area that you really wanted to acquire that is privately owned, would they be willing to give you some of it or half of it for another piece of land that they might like.

A: That's actually not easy to arrange here. The Crown does not own that much land here anymore: that's the problem. Even the National Trust has looked at that particular formula for land in the Mastic Reserve that we want to acquire, swapping land for another piece of land that we purchase and give the landowner, and we have not been successful in that either.

Q: Would it be true that landowners are hoping for development value so the planning system could play a fundamental part in reducing those expectations? If you have a strong planning system that was invoked, which made areas out of bounds for development and available for other sustainable uses...

A: The other thing about a strong planning system is that it incorporates some type of conservation value within development projects themselves. That could be effective if we had the planning mechanisms to underpin that type of development ethic. The problem is that our planning legislation is very weak, and the development plan is



Green Iguana (Photo: Dr Oliver Cheesman)



*Grand Cayman Blue Iguana
(Photo: Dr Colin Clubbe)*

inadequate. It's a highly political process to get the Development Plan revised, so I think we are working on the 1997 plan, I think that is the last time it was revised. The law says we have to revise that plan every 5 years, so we are 2 or 3 cycles out of that. It's just such a political hot potato that no-one really wants to take it up.

Q: What I really don't understand is that we are all British Overseas Territories, but we act so separately. We actually end up with different laws and different administrations that are beneficial in some areas but they are not in other territories. Why can't we all just come together and adopt the ones that are beneficial for us throughout, work together as a unit?

A: I can't answer that question; I'm just trying to deal with my little patch.

Comment from former Governor Dinwiddy: The answer is: it is just too late. Each territory has its own constitution, and the constitutions have developed in different circumstances in different territories through the decades and even longer. There is just no way now of getting together, or the territories getting together with London, and saying "let's all have the same constitution".

Comment from the floor: Ours is about to be dissolved, so we'll be at the bottom. We have to start over as well, so we can do it together this time .

A: We have just passed our new constitution. Does anyone else have any other questions? Is there anything else important that I should say before I turn over to Fred?

Q: What about mitigation and environmental impact? Has there ever been mitigation in place?

A: Yes, we did work with one developer. Mitigation is a strange thing, because the mitigation was actually for destroying seagrass, but we ended up getting mangrove in return. This was because the Crown owns all the seagrass, so we actually ended up with a type of a compensation. It was actually a 21-to-one ratio, which was very high. The Botanic Park is mitigation for a development project on the West Bay Peninsula in the 1980s, so this land was acquired by the developer and handed over to the Crown in compensation or in mitigation for the destruction their development caused....

Q: But these were one-off events?

A: Had to be done, correct.

Q: If you actually do manage to change the law or get something that is actually workable, I could imagine that a lot of private landowners are just going to start developing and the bulldozers are suddenly going to move in. Is that a problem you can foresee? I imagine a lot of private owners are going to do that, rather than allow their land to be protected or managed.

A: They would have to get planning permission to do that, because it does require planning permission to clear land with a bulldozer. Now that doesn't mean that we don't chase the bulldozers on a regular basis, because we do. However, would it be a widespread response? It is actually illegal to clear land with a bulldozer without planning permission, so hopefully that would not happen.

Some Cayman conservation issues (part 2)

Frederic J. Burton (Director, Blue Iguana Reconvert Program, Grand Cayman)

Many plants are absolutely endemic to the island. A couple of years ago, I did a Red List of the entire native flora funded by OTEP, through the Department of the Environment. It was a bit like writing some kind of a Doomsday Book, I think, because there was a horrible feeling of describing natural vegetation communities and all these wonderful plants on an island where they are disappearing right in front of our eyes.

The two really diverse environments that we are working with here for plants and animals (I'm just talking terrestrial, of course) are the dry forest system - this is like the Mastic reserve some of you walked through - and the dry shrub-land community, which we have a little bit of in the park here, where the giant agaves and blue iguanas are.

The forest has been a focus of protection. A lot of the Trust's protected areas are in dry forest areas. It is the easiest kind of habitat to raise money to buy land in, because people understand generally from mass media that the forests are important. People have even heard of dry forests - they have definitely heard of rain forest. But who has heard of a dry shrub-land? You know it's like the poor cousin. We have been using the blue iguana and this whole flagship species approach as a strategy to try and get shrub-land protected, because it is desperately under represented in our protected area system - up until the agreed land lease which we are hoping to sign in the next couple of weeks.

The Red List process was a desk exercise, because we had already done a lot of the basic research before. We did a big biodiversity mapping exercise in the early 1990s, and basically mapped the native vegetation communities over all three islands. We went to ground-truth them, and developed a comprehen-

sive database of species abundance throughout all of these different habitat areas in the islands. It was an enormous chunk of work and we were able to use those figures to estimate actual population sizes of the vast majority of the native plants.

That's the kind of starting point to be able to do a really proper Red Listing, because then you can look at deforestation rates historically. You can ask what this population is, and would have been if you had this much forest, and this much woodland left back then; you can look also at the development projectory, project forward a bit, and say where do we think we are going?

Well, where do we think we are going? Three generations ahead for an ironwood tree puts us past the hundred-year threshold for Red Listing. So, mostly we were looking at 100 years from now, and we were looking at what's happening in the islands, and we were making development-type scenarios and exercises. And it's just extraordinary: it doesn't matter who you talk to, whether its somebody at the Department of the Environment, somebody at the National Trust, somebody at the Finance Department, whoever it is, everybody really sees the same thing happening. By the end of this century, there will be no native vegetation communities on



Fred Burton talks in the Park. (Photo: Dr Colin Clubbe)



Grand Cayman Blue Iguana "Tootsie" distracts participants from the discussion. (Photos: Dr Colin Clubbe [above] & Dr Oliver Cheesman)

any of the three Cayman Islands, except whatever we have managed to set aside and protect through a protected areas system.

The human population is increasing, doubling every 10 to 12 years; we have got 60,000 people on this island now. Another 10 years and we are going to have 120,000 people; there is nothing to suggest that that is not going to carry on happening. Half of this island is completely consumed by human activities now: the other half will be gone within that 10-year period. On Little Cayman, land prices are higher than they have ever been before; the speculation has started. Cayman Brac's dry forest is just being bisected by roads. It's just not a cheerful future we are looking at. There is no real reason to think that the underlying causes for this are going to change at any time soon. So, the Red Listing stuff came out looking rather grim. It came out so grim that I looked at these statistics, and I sent them to Colin Clubbe, and said: "I've made a mistake, figure this out for me will you?" Colin wrote back to me saying: "I don't think so; it always comes out looking like this".

Forty-six percent of our native plants are threat-



ened, 20% are critical, 15% endangered, 11% vulnerable, 32% least concern, 21% data-deficient. So, the real endangered number is going to be a lot higher, because we are missing information on a lot of data-deficient species. It feeds very much into Mat DaCosta-Cottam's and the Department of the Environment's work on Biodiversity Action Plans for the Cayman Islands. Several of these endemics are having Action Plans written for them. One of the things I am going to be talking to you about on Wednesday is this thorny question of how on earth do we resource doing all of that. I am not going to go on much more. I do want to say that this book, which is the Red List, (and it's also got the habitat classification in the back) is available. A few people were asking me where they can buy it. Well you can buy it here, C\$20 cash sales; you can pick up a copy of the book, if you like.

Discussion

Q: Do people in Cayman know how many trees are in danger?

A: We did a lot of publicity about this. I don't know if you find the same thing in TCI, but what we tend to do here, we have a big splash. We put it out in the newspapers, we get on the television, we put it on the radio, we did all of that. Then we have a book launch, and we go to the bookstore, and we sign copies, etc. And we get about 20 or 30 people, and they are the same 20 or 30 people we see at every one of these functions, no matter what it's about. They are the people who come to the talks. It's not really reaching into the community, and I think we are struggling with that, more and more here, because we have got such a diverse community. This is an island where more than half the people living here don't come from here. And there are people from the Philippines, and people from Honduras, and people from just about anywhere you care to imagine. And then there's a couple of very different generations of Caymanians, the young Caymanians and the older Caymanians, and they've got a very different view of things, they get their information in different ways. We are not, I think, reaching a high percentage of the population here, with this message.

Q: If people would realise that the reason they are here or they come here is being destroyed... I mean, they came here because it is beautiful, but they are destroying the natural beauty, perhaps because people are selfish by nature. Can't you just lock the whole island down and not allow more development. If you tell them, the people that are here now, you don't want to allow any more development, that's it, that's how it is going to be. Do you think people that are here would then go for it? Maybe you could get enough signatures and stop it.

A: I think it's a discussion you need to have with our new Leader of Government Business - I'm sure that he would enjoy it.

Q: Let's think about it, this beautiful garden here. Fred, how much of this we are looking at is native?

A: From this viewpoint, with the tent cutting off the top canopy, I don't see anything native at all. But I think I should defend the Park a little bit. This is a very small percentage of the total area of the Park. Everything inside the woodland trail has

been left alone, and a good deal else besides. Here mostly, where these exotics have been planted, the native trees have been left as a top canopy, so there is still some wildlife habitat worth in it. I am not a great defender of pretty flower gardens in natural areas, but as those things go, this one has been done quite sensitively, and it's fairly local in its impact. The park is more than 70% retained in a natural state. And I think that is probably a very good compromise, given that we need to try and encourage people to come and see. And we could even use these flowers a little better as a sort of bait. We could certainly use the iguanas as bait and the parrots as bait to bring people in and talk to them about things that they wouldn't come looking at otherwise.

Q: That wasn't an attack on the Park, but it shows the problem of saving the Red Listed species for people. It's not really going to bother most of us if several of those species go extinct, because they are not in our gardens, they are not what the tourists come to see, they are not a problem, or they are a problem but they are not our problem. So, I think that is the human dimension and it is a very separate dimension from the biodiversity problem that we have.

A: It's also about what you see. I mean, if you go back to your hotel and look around, and you will not see a native plant in the landscaping – not even the grass. The weeds may be, if they are pan-tropical weeds. The trees come from everywhere except here. And it's that way, in almost every developed property on this island. The whole concept is of what does a yard look like: it's got to have hibiscus and bougainvilleas, and these things they call crotons that aren't crotons (they are *Codiaeum* or whatever it is). It's almost like it's been programmed into people's minds - this is what a yard should look like; these are the flowers we have around us. It's not to say that we can't change that. I really do believe we can change that. Tucked away in the back of the Park here is a native tree nursery. It's a joint programme with the Department of the Environment, the Botanic Park and several different community groups. We are trying to change that equation a little bit, so that people entertain the possibility that they might buy a native plant and put it in their garden – because some of them are really beautiful, some of them produce flowers, they grow a lot better, and they need a lot



Above & below: Endemic banana orchid, Botanic Park
(Photo: Dr Oliver Cheesman)



less maintenance. There is an interesting level of take-up on that from developers and architects. I don't know if Mat DaCosta-Cottam is going to be talking about this later on in the conference. (Mat: Maybe)

Q: Have you had a problem with any sort of invasive species, or plants dying because of the vegetation that was brought in, like maybe bugs or whatever.

A: Yes and yes. Actually most of the real invasive problems we are having that are affecting plants are other plants. So we've got huge stands of *Casuarina* growing along the coast and laying down these carpets of dead needles that inhibit germi-

nation of other species. We've got huge ranks of Pacific *Scaevola sericea* growing all over coastal beach ridges and sands, totally choking out any other sort of vegetation. We've got logwood running rampant. We've got *Leucaena leucocephala* running rampant. We've got a bunch of plants that just do this. They take over an area of land and stop anything else from growing. We also have all kinds of insect pests here. The Department of Agriculture is trying to do integrated pest studies; there are even some insects that have been brought in to control other insects – which makes me slightly concerned. So, all of that's going on, but there is basically not a lot of information about what was here before and what is here now, because that's been going on for a long, long time.

Q: There are two things. First of all your projections: there is an awful note of resignation in that, and I agree with that. It's the sort of thing that the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment says, as it's common for the world to have these problems. We have to tackle some core issues. You also mentioned two core issues. You mentioned over-use, and you mentioned population. And they are going to have a dire effect on this small island. But they are also having an effect on the world. Now, we also talked about rule changes. Bruce [Dinwiddy – in a response during the discussion following the previous presentation by Gina Ebanks-Petrie] mentioned that the scene had been set. And to a certain extent it has, but there is always an opportunity to change those rules and, in fact, if all of these islands have similar problems. However, you address them in different ways, with different legislation, with different mechanisms, and have different rates of success, and don't have the mass effect to make them work, by following through with proper controls, and enforcement, then you have to think up at a higher scale. Now it just so happens that the European Union has a new sustainable development strategy, which has 3 clauses in there which meet most of our needs. So the policies work systemically, through all layers of government policy. The third thing is to incorporate the value of ecosystem, ecosystem services, into the economic decision making. It's there, in principle, and it behoves a group of us here to say well, its not good enough just to accept the way things have been in the past, and just to accept the trends. We have to say what are we are, and that we need to do something different and ask how we use these high level policies: how do we link and push things forward? And you do it corporately. This is a big group. You get together and you connect; you operate in terms

of regions, for regional interest; you operate in terms of themes, to address particular issues; and you do it that way. Now is the time to be bold, and not to be dashing about doing a chaotic number of things, sometimes in opposition. For instance, do the groups of islands collaborate over issues that are common? That will build strength. Because, if you don't, if you operate as individuals, you are going to be prey to the big corporations, planning organisations, development enterprises, they are going to make you look silly. I know; I was a planner for years, and they can do that anyhow, even with powerful organisations. So my answer would be, don't forget about individual issues, continue with them, but address the big problems.

A: I certainly say continue with the individual issues as well, because who knows how effective or ineffective the top-level approach would be. But certainly those are interesting ideas. One thing I would add to that is that, certainly in a small Caribbean island political situation, the kinds of things you are talking about are quite sophisticated politically for what is in scale here, which is effectively a small town council. And there's a lot of resistance to pressure from outside. I'm not saying don't try anything like that, but sometimes these things backfire here when people think 'Big Brother' or whoever it is trying to tell them what to do.

Q: What have we got to lose? In a few years it's going to all be gone anyway. There are so many threat levels, they are so high and we are losing to them in the short run. I mean what have you got to lose? You are losing them already. It's a race against the clock.

Q (from previous but one questioner): Can I just clarify my point? I wasn't saying accept the notion of Big Brother. I was just saying you determine the rules. You fix the relationship, you determine the links, and you make the running.

A: Yes, but where's the power coming from? The thing that is missing here, and I think is missing quite widespread, is the kind of level of focal community support that you need to get the power base to make things like that happen. It's interesting here recently, that there's been some public agitation, which is very much not the culture here. This is a very non-confrontational society; people do not like saying "you are doing wrong", nor "I don't believe in what you are doing." It's more a matter of whispering behind someone else's back and all this sort of thing. But we had a situation where

government was about to put a road through the middle of a forest. I think actually Lilian Hayball is going to be talking to you all about that, so I don't want to take her territory. However, basically what happened was an anonymous website sprang up and it was very interesting, for all of us, to see the level of participation that suddenly appeared out of nowhere. We never thought so many people cared about one little environmental issue like that. And it was enough to make politicians back off and at least temporarily stay execution. It certainly made me think that there is an unexpressed potential for very powerful environmental advocacy coming out of the general community here. We just have to learn how to tap into that. Because people are afraid to speak, sometimes with justification, sometimes just because it's the culture. I don't know if we can find the keys to unlock that. If we could, then maybe some of these big ambitious policy ideas could gather some currency and some credibility. Because the forces lined against us are very organised and very well resourced.

Q: On that point, does the National Trust have a campaigning remit. There is fertile ground to work with?

A: Yes, and it does. I worked full-time with the National Trust as Environmental Programs Director for a number of years. We always struggled with balance. On one hand, we could be friendly and cosy with the government so that the government would do good things for us – they have the power to do a lot of good and they have the power to do us a lot of harm. We wanted them to give us money. We wanted them to give us land. We wanted them to back us up on all sorts of issues. And if we were nice to them, they helped. And then we discovered that the government were doing various bad things, so we decided to take them to court. And then we ended up in Grand Court; we won the fight and the Government changed the law so that the court ruling didn't apply any more. And then the Government cut off the Trust funding. So we are always playing this balancing game between being advocates or not. One thing really struck me when we met in Gibraltar a number of years ago, when John Cortes was talking to us: this incredibly mature relationship, in Gibraltar, between the NGO and the Government, where they could agree, and they could agree to disagree, they could challenge each other and still talk to each other. We are not there yet; the Trust has tried that game and it really did not work. I think it requires a kind of maturity of politics that hasn't really had time to develop in



Conference participants visit the native plant nursery at the Botanic Park (Photo: Dr Colin Clubbe)

some of these areas.

Q: So why not let the people decide on all issues, like where development is concerned? Why not ask the people for their consent or their vote? If they vote largely for it, let it go through; if they don't, then let the people speak. If you had enough signatures, that could make a difference, or, you could use the internet, start websites on all major developments that were threatening the environment, to get the people's feedback. Because government always does what the majority of people want.

A: I wish that was true.

Q: A lot of things happen and people don't know about it.

A: We did a national exercise here, we called it Mission 2008. Now we're in 2009. It was 10 years before 2008 that we sat down and said: let's have a national vision. Let's decide where we want this island to be in 10 years time. We had all these community subcommittees. Everybody who had anything to say contributed. We produced this document, and it had environment written all through it. And that was a very strong vote, if you like, from the people. I don't think that anything in Mission 2008 has been implemented.

Gina Ebanks-Petrie: I have to say, in terms of the national conservation legislation, the government itself did have focus groups on what the community thought, and at all levels and all ages. The community supports the legislation. The government failed to put it to the Legislative Assembly.

A: The government is responding to special interest groups.

Q: Does the government respond to the opposition over here? We don't have any opposition in Turks and Caicos Islands, so that doesn't count, but I mean over here. Does the government respond to the opposition?

Gina Ebanks Petrie: The government does respond to the opposition, but really the government and the opposition are not all that different. They are both looking at this issue from the political angle, and it's still a vested interest situation, whether it's the opposition in power or the government.

Comment from the floor: You need some green party leaders

Comment from the floor: Yes we do, I was just going to say that we have the wrong people in power.

Q: I wanted to ask you if there was anything in the international dimension. After all, the majority of the people are here from other territories, from the UK, from other European countries and so on. It has struck me over the years: can anybody remember British Ministers, when they are talking at meetings of the Convention on Biological Diversity, who have ever spoken powerfully and emotionally about successes and failures in biodiversity in relation to the UK Overseas Territories. I don't think they do. What you will find, and I don't want to queer Eric Blencowe's pitch with this evening's talk about the Darwin Initiative, but the Darwin Initiative is a marvellous one for the UK making a contribution to the protection of global biodiversity. But that is in a scenario where the UK seems to look at it from the viewpoint of: well, we've trashed an awful lot of our biodiversity; biodiversity is elsewhere; it is not in the UK; therefore we have a responsibility to help elsewhere. Well, part of the elsewhere is here, in Cayman, and in other UK Territories, and do you think that would have any effect in Cayman, and in other territories, if the good stories were told? And there are good stories, like the Blue Iguana, like the Bermuda Cahow, like

the Millennium Gumwood Forest in St Helena. There are very good stories to be told, but they can be told only honestly if you are also prepared to highlight the dangers, like the extent of native fauna and flora which is under threat. Do you think that would have any contribution to helping to affect public opinion and the behaviour of elected politicians in Cayman?

A: Yes, I think so. I think we need to work on the techniques of delivering that message. It's not my area of expertise, but I do feel that we are not getting this information out to people in the ways that are effective. We are not putting it on to their radar screens. People are getting information in so many different ways, and it is changing so fast. We tend to rely heavily on the mass media, and I think we are missing too many targets. I think we are not reaching the people we need to reach. We have got the messages; we think most people believe in what we believe in if we communicate with them. I don't think we are really communicating with them at the level and depth that we ultimately need to do. That's just a growing feeling I have and its getting more complicated on that side of it. I remember, many of you are familiar with Rare Centres campaigns in the Eastern Caribbean using flagship species, and very similar to what we are doing here with the Blue Iguana. In fact, I think that is probably what inspired us to do what we are doing with the Blue Iguana. The idea is you reach everyone; so, for example, all of St Lucia's folk, directly or indirectly, to every single human being. And that makes a difference. I don't think that happens here with anything. The closest I saw to it was somebody took a photograph of a snake eating a green iguana the other day and it went viral on the internet. Everybody I spoke to that day had seen that photograph and wanted to know how big was the snake and how big was the iguana. And I thought: WOW! If we could get messages out like that, that went viral like that, then yes, people would say "the national conservation law needs passing". How do we present that way? A snake eating a green iguana in a picture on the internet, that's the connection thing that we need. We need to find a way to do that better.

Comment from the floor: Good afternoon. I will tell you what we have done in the British Virgin Islands. We had a problem with one of our islands, Beef Island, where some development was approved by Government. So, to start with, the BVI Fishermen's Association got involved. We started crying out to the people because the environmen-

talists needed support. So we got out to the people, which was the lay people. We held meetings, we encouraged people, got on the radio, newspapers, we got all sorts of people getting involved, we got flyers, had rallies, all sorts of things. Sometimes, just a handful of people came out, but that handful meant an awful lot, because the word got out, people were on the outside listening. We started working, working and working. We got more and more people involved. Of course, a lot of people there worked for government and, once you're working in government, you are afraid to take a stand. Once you have large parcels of land you are afraid, once you have businesses you are afraid, because you figure they are not going to pass or approve whatever you are doing. I worked for government and I resigned. Not being afraid, you have to have, excuse me, you have to have some guts, or some people would say you have to have some balls. Just get out there take a stand and just don't be afraid. Pray to the Good Lord: let it be. What we did, once we got out there, we got various different people to act together from all over the world, assisting us once we were going. We went to court two times and this is the last time here at the court where the judge is going to make a decision on what the opinions are, what the judgement is regarding the issue. We got people from all over. We got 18,000 signatures I don't know maybe some of you folks are here.

(Other Questioner): Your population is 22,000?

Comment from the floor continues: This is what we got from all around the world, so this is something that all islands can do. People are afraid to take a stand, but you have to stop it because of the generations to come. If you don't protect what God has given you now, we are not going to have anything, because everybody wants to be like America, to develop and have this and have that. We have it all here. Well all the natural Earth, we have what God has given us for our environment. We must take a stand and protect it and stop being afraid. We are still working on it right now. The people must get together, swallow their pride, pray and the Good Lord, I guarantee, you will help. The politicians – we went to see the politicians – some were running behind that tree, some were running over there – while they were running we got together, you go that way, you go that way, you go that way - we cornered them. And that's what you got to do. Don't be afraid, that's all you got to do. Am I wrong or right? You got to get there, you got to take that stand, because if you don't you're

going to lose it, and God don't want us to lose. He put us as stewards of the land. We must protect what God's given to us. Right? People take a stand. Don't be afraid – there's nothing to be afraid of. Don't let Satan grab you, because that's what they are doing. Take a stand, I'm telling you. We fought, and we're still fighting right now, waiting for the judgement and we believe they are going to go in our favour because they did it twice. They stated we weren't in compliance with the law. All kinds of things came up. The gentleman who purchased Beef Island, he sold it to several different people because he did not have the funding. This is something we need to take a stand on. We love it more than them and they just want it for development to destroy it. The pond and fish are protected. I caught all species, seen all sorts of birds, everything in that area and that's the only place that our people have to go in to swim. And the soil is beautiful; we could grow our agriculture; we could do all sorts of development there. But take a stand and stop being afraid of your shadows – it's not going to get you anyplace. Just stand up; they can't kill all of us. I'm serious. We must take a stand. Thank you very much and I certainly hope that you would take that stand.

A: I don't think there's much to say after that.

Q: I've not heard such an impassioned speech for a long time and I think you could make a tremendous improvement. I would suggest you pay this lady to travel and go to speak to people. I've seen there are lots and lots of churches in these islands. I would pay her to come over here for a month or so and go to all the churches, and actually rally support. You might be able to get the people to stand up.

A: You've got one of our churchmen coming to talk to the conference about church and conservation on Wednesday.

Q: What about the schools system? Any environmental education on the curriculum in the schools here?

Comment from the floor: I wanted to comment on that. I was thinking about it earlier. The best way to get the message across is through the schools system. But the problem is that most schools around the Caribbean are locked into a system. They have a fixed curriculum, so we can't do it from an individual island level. This is going to have to be done, for example, from a Caricom level.



Discussions continue. (Photo: Dr Colin Clubbe)

A: Having said that, we been quite successful here in getting environmental stuff into the curriculum, certainly at the younger age schools. It's a lot more difficult as they get older. But we have done school resource packs on all the flagship species: the orchids, the national symbols as it were; and we have just released the Blue Iguana one into the school system. It's pegged, so you know this belongs to this curriculum item and this subject area. The teachers want that kind of stuff. There is scope certainly within the curriculum we are using here to substitute from the frog pond in Europe; you can actually put something in that has relevance to Cayman Islands. As long as it is teaching the same principles and you can use it in the same way, you can substitute. I think the teachers are really keen. At least we get a lot of good feedback on that. It's all about amplifying your capacity to deliver a message. One individual can visit only one school at a time, but if that person is distributing the message and all the teachers in all the schools have got the message, then away we go. We are putting a lot of effort into that here and I know several other territories are doing the same. I know TCI has been doing the same.

Q: I was wondering whether it was possible to switch the government into ecotourism, like the blue iguanas.

A: I don't think we would have got this far, at least without the ecotourism concept as a key part of it. They are so sold on ecotourism; they want us to put a clause into the lease [of the dry scrubland previously referred to] to share the revenue.

Q: When you come into the airport there is nothing, no iguana signs, so I think people barely know about it. When I was over at the dive shop, I was here asking them if they had ever been to the Mastic Trail, and their response was "What's that?". There's not a lot of signs or anything about the islands in George Town.

A: You will see a certain amount of it in the hotel, brochures and that kind of stuff. I don't doubt we need to do a lot more. Terrestrial ecotourism here is very undeveloped. It's all been about marine, it's been about diving, water-sports, all this kind of stuff. And the Mastic Trail does not have the potential to take a huge number of people. The Botanic Park here can handle more, but it's still not hopping, and certainly when we get into the new Blue Iguana Reserve at the east end of the island we are going to have to push to get people to come

out there in numbers. So it is relevant.

Q: It seems, with this being such a hot spot for diving, if they could combine the terrestrial part of the tour, this island would be very good for ecotourism specifically. I mean if they stopped focusing on just trying to make it a big cruise ship hot spot which will ultimately destroy the island anyway. If they focused on conservation and ecotourism, in the long run it would be a whole lot better off.

A: We have a national Tourism Management Plan that talks that language very loudly. But it's like so many of these plans: it reads well but, when it actually comes to implementation, it's being selective to cherry-pick the things that don't conflict with other people's interests.

Comments from Cayman participants: Yes, exactly.

Q: Is there any scope for planning legislation that means that, for new developments, there has to be some provision for the vegetation being native vegetation. One problem I heard about was that part of the planning and tendering process is that people have got to go out to tender. Now, if you are in BVI and you go out to tender for the vegetation for a new development and the only suppliers are in Florida, all that you can get in your tender are Florida plants - which seems crazy. Now, there is obviously going to be an economic cost if you demand that developers use native plants, because it's very easy to source grasses and ornamental shrubs from all round the place. I imagine, if people were told that they had to build native flora into development projects, they would turn round and say "Where could we get them?"

A: I think there is hope in this whole area. The answer to that right now is that the nursery is here. You can go up there and buy native plants and put them into your landscaping scheme. It needs to be bigger, but there are plans to do that. It's one of those little cycles. You have to have the demand, and you have to have the supply. You can't create the demand if you haven't got the supply. So you have got to create the supply first, and then create the demand. We are creating the supply. The Planning Department, the bureaucrats as opposed to the politicians, are very keen on this type of stuff. At the last development planning review meeting that I was involved in, which was, I think, the one before the last, we put a lot of effort into the proposed regulations for retaining native vegetation in pristine areas that were being developed

for housing. I'm talking about leaving corridors of native vegetation between adjacent lots, leaving public open space with native vegetation, all these sorts of things, requiring use of native vegetation, landscape, requiring footprint clearing if you are building your driveway, and leaving xx% of the lot native vegetation, all these sorts of things. The planning people are excited about that kind of thing. They see that as being a real way they can find a balance between people's need for somewhere to live, because the population is exploding, and yet not totally destroying everything that people move into. We got a long way ahead with that stuff - it got into the final proposals - then it was ditched by the politicians again. It sometimes comes down to an individual who looks at that and can say take all of that out of there. It's really at that kind of level. You've got this huge level of administrative and popular support for something, and it gets to a certain point, then somebody sees a red flag and it's going to affect their chances of re-election, and they put the red pen through it and it's gone.

Michael Gore (former Governor): Fred, when I was here, there was a requirement that in any development, I can't remember the percentage, but something like one in six plot areas had to be turned over to natural vegetation. Has that all gone?

A: It was never really finished. It's the land for public purposes thing, and that could be a playground. It tends to be a big plot with weeds growing on it that nobody wants to do anything about. There was a proposal about trying to pool them to let the developer have this, if he puts money into a fund for buying an area like this. Again, these are things we try to develop, for example, at the last but one Development Plan review. They are good ideas, and they could and should work, but we could not get it past the political stonewalling.

Q: You mentioned the development plan. Has the development plan got a strategic impact assessment as part of the package, and does that strategic impact assessment talk about the carrying capacity of the island? If it does, then it should circumvent some of the problems you have with political individuals.

A: I don't think you realise how limited and weak our planning legislation is here. Our development plan is a map, a land-use map. At the first development plan review meeting I went to, the first issue

I raised was: we are doing a development plan, so what population projections are we going to base this on? Are we talking about population growth of xx? The response was: Oh, you can't talk about that, no, that's not on the agenda.

Same questioner: That was a sort of rhetorical question. I kind of expected that you didn't have a strategic impact assessment that was meaningful. Even if you had one, it didn't take into account the carrying capacity. What I'm saying to you is that is fundamental to the whole business of strategic planning and if it's not there things are not being done right.

A: That's true. It's a screaming hole in our legislation. Development planning law is a joke.

Q: Fred, listening to this conversation, I'm thinking that the single most important thing is policy advocacy - and it's creating that resource with the UK's aid, or home grown, or collaborating around the Caribbean, or something else. Would you agree?

A: Policy advocacy: it is interesting because it appears in every one of our strategic plans.

Comment from Cayman participant: It can work that way and also with other policies that the government is trying to pass which have been very controversial. I draw a parallel here with the proposed tobacco legislation that was floated around for a long time. What happens sometimes is that there is a very big popular groundswell. Eventually what happened with the tobacco issue is that businesses around the island just started doing it. They just started saying "we're going tobacco-free", and then people started to write into the paper saying: "that's fantastic; we're going to start going to that restaurant". So, rather than supporting the policy, it came in from the business side. It was the corporate people who did it. For some reason here in Cayman, we all seem to live in dread of big corporations, terrified that the cruise ships are going to go somewhere else if we actually want to do something that's positive, if we try to do something that is pro-active. Whereas in fact, a lot of these big developers, the people from overseas who come to the island, are actually expecting some sort of structure to be in place, they are actually expecting an EIA, they are expecting some sort of list of laws and rules and regulations that they can follow, and then they are amazed when there is nothing here. And we all seem to think that's a good thing. Actually, it's not. Sometimes they get dealt

with on a very random basis, sometimes there are recommendations and sometimes they get off scot free and that's just no way to progress. When the government seeks public comment to support or not support the conservation view, there is an overwhelming groundswell of support from the community. Another example, in the case of non-native landscaping, rather than trying to get this through policies, try to get it through the public wanting to do it. Another example of problems with policy is protection of public open space. Public open space more often than not is protected now. But it's not always a natural habitat or a park, it's a road. Road is public open space, because everybody uses the road. So that's where you can take an idea of a policy and completely screw it up. I don't think that the Government will pick up the policy idea until everyone else is doing it. And, when it's safe to do, they'll pick it up and will make it happen.

Comment from the floor: So it's got to be a many-headed policy. It would be a mistake putting all your eggs into the government basket; you've got to leave some to work with those corporations. If they were asking the government for the same thing you might just crack it.

Gina Ebanks Petrie: That's what we've done. This week, we met with Deloitte to talk to them about helping us to advocate to the government, on a national sustainable development plan that we have had on ice for ages now. We are stuck in a political sandwich basically, but we know that corporations like Deloitte have this high level corporate responsibility policy, and we knew that they were interested in it. So we met with them and said "Here's what we want to get done, and what we are doing here, but can you help us as well, from your end."

Q: If you can create that capacity on a higher level then maybe all the Caribbean countries should be talking to Deloitte in the same way about the same things.

A: Many of these companies are in it for the long haul. It's in their interests that these islands don't overdevelop, for the good of their business. It's good corporate planning to take an interest in the environment

Q: I would just like to ask a question after listening to this conversation because I'm not totally familiar with the United Kingdom Overseas Territories. I should explain that I am Honorary Director of the International National Trust Organisation, which is

a very new organisation of National Trusts just set up a year and a half ago. It resulted from a declaration at the Edinburgh International Conference in 2003. It was decided at that conference that we should all act as advocates to our respective governments to try and persuade them that heritage is important, that they should not continue just to budget for roads, hospitals, buildings etc, but they should actually take note of the cultural heritage before it was destroyed. And that was a very powerful message coming out of the conference. It strikes me that, if the United Kingdom Overseas Territories act in some way like that, I mean about the things we have been discussing this afternoon, there could well be a declaration coming out of this conference that everyone could sign up to and take away. The UKOT Conservation Forum could then use that as a tool for going to the government and trying to persuade them. Everyone here from the United Kingdom Overseas Territories could do the same for their own governments and their countries and so on and so forth. People sometimes say "Oh, not another declaration", but in that particular case, out of that declaration, the International National Trust Organisation was formed in December 2007. We have, in the last month, taken on a third Honorary Director who is going to be in charge of policy and advocacy and he is preparing policy statements even as I speak on this particular topic, one of which will be climate change. And at our Dublin conference this September, the fourteenth International Conference of the National Trusts, we will be signing another declaration on climate change which will be presented to the governments for the Copenhagen summit in December. So I just urge you to think about the possibility of having a declaration out of this conference.

Comment from the floor: I think there have been a lot of interesting points and I don't want to be too sceptical about some of the suggestions that have been made. But I think that some of them are being made without really taking into account the special situation of government systems in very small islands, where you are dealing with very small numbers of people, where you pretty well never have an effective opposition and you have very little chance of having any opposition within the ruling party. If you come from larger countries like the UK, there are many more points of advocacy that you could make. I am all for advocacy. and I think the example of Beef Island is an excellent one, but I think there is something else that we need to look at and I see too rarely in conservation communications, which is other than demonising our politi-

cians. We have to accept that their job, whether we like it or not, is to get themselves elected again in 5 years time, and to please their electorate. I think that the big tension in conservation and politics is that they have a short-term agenda and we have a long-term agenda. I don't think we very often sell our messages to them in terms of what's in it for them now, or within the next 5 years, how it can benefit them, how their electorate will appreciate what they are doing. And I think that there is something that we can do in terms of thinking about how we communicate, as Fred was saying. The means by which you get the message out is one aspect - do you stop having print materials and have more audio visual? The example of Rare in the Eastern Caribbean is good, because they not only talked one-on-one with a lot of people, they did not demonise people as being the bad people. They invested a lot in a radio soap opera that brought out a lot of the points without people even knowing that they were being lectured to. And I think that one of the challenges, certainly in the Caribbean, is that people feel, a lot of the time, that they are being lectured to. Most of us, if we are told we are doing something wrong, act defensively rather than feeling that we are partnering with someone. So I really think that the whole area of communications, and what influences politicians, is very important. There is very little research. I can speak only for the Caribbean, because we work in the islands of the Caribbean, whether its the Overseas Territories or the non-Overseas Territories, but there is a small amount of research that we have done to look at why politicians change their minds. And very little of it is to do with things like our policy briefings, and so on. So, I think there's real scope for being a little more experimental, and of course, the other big point I would make is: they need to be in the room. We have specialist conferences where we don't have politicians and civil servants. If we want to be effective in the Overseas Territories with our planning, we need our planners in the room, we need our tourism people in the room, we need our politicians there from time to time, otherwise, to some extent, we are talking to ourselves. So I think, communication is an area where we perhaps need to invest a little more of our energy and particularly communication research to really establish what is it that's making people change their minds, because I don't think that we know yet.

Q: What about becoming politicians. No, seriously, I mean, lets take it out there. We campaign in a political general election, or we infiltrate one of the

major political parties. For the size of the populations in our territories there is a fairly good chance that one of us at least would get elected. Seriously, has nobody else thought about that? We certainly have. It takes one person to slash out one bit of legislation, it takes one person to put it in.

Comments from several persons on the floor:

We will try it next time.

But don't just infiltrate one party, infiltrate them all.

We have a number of ex-politicians, including one on our board. This is very helpful for understanding what motivates them, and for understanding a little better, the complexities of the situation that they're in.

Sadly the Greens haven't been very successful, have they?

Questioner: No, that's not what I mean. I mean, getting involved in political parties. It takes one person to slash out one bit of legislation, it takes one person to put it in. Can't we become politicians?

Mike Pienkowski: Thank you very much to Gina and to Fred for getting you all in the mood for the conference. In fact, I hope the rapporteurs have actually been recording those speaking as it should save a bit of work in some later discussions. I have often found in the past, that being in the right environment does move things along quite well. In just a few minutes we will need to make our way back coach-wards.

[Administrative announcements followed.]

So, thank you very much. Thank you to guides and drivers, caterers, tent company, the folk at Pedro St James and, of course, the Botanic Gardens, as well as Fred Burton and his Blue Iguana Team, and thank you to the Department for setting most of this up and putting it all together today.

National Trust for the Cayman Islands host UKOTCF Evening Event at Mission House, Bodden Town, Grand Cayman, Tuesday 2nd June 2009, 5:30pm-8:30pm



Order of Events

- 6:00 Arrival of His Excellency Governor Stuart Jack CVO, & Mr. Huw Irranca-Davies, UK Minister of the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
- 6:05 Welcome: Mr. Roger Corbin, Chairman, National Trust for the Cayman Islands
- 6:10 Thank you: Dr. M. W. Pienkowski, Chairman UKOTCF
- 6:20 Talk "History of the Mission House"
- 7:05 Bat Fly Out with Lois Blumenthal, Secretary, National Trust Council
- 7:15 Mission House Tours, Gift Shop Open

Beer donated by Caybrew and wine donated by Jacques Scott Group Ltd.

Music: North Side Kitchen Band

Piano: Katie Moore, NT Volunteer

Mission House Tours: Arthurlyn Pedley, NT Life Member, & Aida D'Angelo, NT Mission House Coordinator

Retail: Janice Brown, NT Office Manager

Photographer: Courtney Platt

NT General Manager: Frank Balderamos

Over dinner: Costume re-enactment of key historical events of Mission House

Roles and Performers:

Narrator & Mrs Watler	Denise Bodden, NT Historic Programs Manager
Pirate	Darvin Ebanks, NT Board Member & Videographer
Wench, Mrs Redpath & Mrs Lions	Rita Estananovich
Rev. Elmslie & Rev. Redpath	David Whitefield
Rev. Niven & Custos Coe	Michael McLaughlin
Nettie Levy	Erica Daniel, NT Education Programs Coordinator
Mr. Lion	Chris Bowring
Mr Watler	Pastor Alson Ebanks
Extras	Carmen Conolly, Kem Jackson, Jerilo Rankine, Stuart Mailer, NT Field Officer

Dinner of traditional foods by Welly's Cool Spot, Elrita Seymour and Zelmalee Ebanks.



*Mission House
(Photo: Dr Oliver Cheesman)*



Mrs Carmen Conolly demonstrates traditional basket making at the Mission House Event.

(Photos in the Mission House report by Thomas Hadjikyriakou unless otherwise stated)

Remarks and Thanks

Dr Mike Pienkowski, Chairman, UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum

Let's be informal and not list everybody, if you will bear with me. I should say first of all that I am not Roger Corbin. We decided to change the order a bit. I am just going to say a few words before more interesting things happen.

For those who don't know me, I'm Mike Pienkowski, and I chair the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum – and I apologise for both long names. Before I do anything else, I really would like to take this opportunity to welcome Huw Irranca-Davies, who is the UK Minister for Natural and Marine Environment, Wildlife and Rural Affairs. We are really pleased to have him here. I think it is the first time that a UK Environmental Minister has attended one of our conferences, and we are really very pleased that you have come, Sir.

(Mr Irranca-Davies: I am very pleased to be here.)

We look forward very much to hearing your speech on Thursday, but actually this evening is a bit more relaxed – both for those participants who have had three hard days of working, and also for those who

have just arrived after a long flight. Even though, unlike the birds I used to research, they don't actually have to fly themselves, it's still extremely exhausting to do that. We are really delighted that the Forum's Associate for Cayman, the National Trust for the Cayman Islands, invited us here to spend the evening with them at their historic Mission House. And we are grateful to all their Council and Staff for the work put in. Denise Bodden, who looks after their cultural heritage aspects, expressed some concern to me that the evening would be cultural rather than natural. I assured her that we are actually not quite as narrow-minded as some people may think. In fact, most of our conferences do have an historical or cultural or built environment section. For some strange reason, we do not have that in the conference room this time: we have it even better in the session they have provided for us this evening. So, without more ado from me, I will now hand over to the real Roger Corbin, who is going to tell you what is going to happen and to introduce the evening.

Thank you very much to the Trust.



Participants listen to the Introductions. From left: Mary & Steve Cheeseman, Dace Ground, Colin Clubbe, Huw Irranca-Davies MP, Paul Keetch MP, Gina Ebanks-Petrie, Oliver Cheesman, HE Governor Stuart Jacks

Welcome

Mr Roger Corbin, Chairman, National Trust for the Cayman Islands

We are very pleased at the interest you have shown in our environment. The National Trust, like all organisations, relies very heavily on its volunteers – and it really is the staff and volunteers of the Trust who have put this evening on. You know I have been at the conference, and my earlier excuse was that I was planning for the conference, so I could not work on this evening's arrangements. So, whatever happens this evening, the Trust staff and volunteers are responsible for it. If it's good, tell me at the conference; if its bad, just take it on!



Roger Corbin (right) speaks with (from right) Huw Irranca-Davies MP, Will Pryer, Mike Pienkowski, Tim Austin and Gina Ebanks-Petrie

I really hope also that, as part of the experience you are having in Cayman, you will get to meet the people. The people are our heritage; the people are our culture; and we can't rule them like we can plants and trees. We are very natural and very neighbourly, so please make a point when you see them to speak to them.

The National Trust for Cayman has many facets. We have a very interesting programme which has just started which is butterfly watching. This is in its infancy, and we hope to be able to tell you more about that in future conferences. You will have seen some of the ecological sites, and this evening

you will see the historic site of Mission House.

I don't know what is going to happen this evening, so I am going to let Denise come up and tell you what is going to happen. The one thing that I will ask you is: please try to follow the instructions that Denise is giving us, because we have two bat houses over here. The bats have a timetable that they follow, and we might miss the fly out if we are too late. So let's just get things moving this evening.

Thank you.



Conference participants entertained over dinner by the historical play

Introduction

Denise Bodden, Historic Programs Manager, National Trust for the Cayman Islands

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. It's a pleasure to have you all here this evening.

I know that you are mostly conservation-minded, but conservation and culture and heritage are all very important and especially dear to my heart. As some of you may remember, I was on the bus with one of the tour options on Sunday. I think you will see that the Trust has many people involved in it, and we tend to spend most effort on the historical and environmental. I am trying to produce a little impromptu play. And when I say impromptu, I do so very mean impromptu! However, we have an excellent cast of characters; some of them have performed in events annually. One such is Darvin Ebanks, and we also have a gentleman that I worked for in the financial community before I became the Historic Programs Manager, David Whitefield – who is going to play several roles. We have Chris Bowering, who is going to be a teacher this evening and, of course, the lovely Rita – who is being very shy and hiding at the moment. We also have a very important gentleman, whom I believe you have all heard speak earlier today, Pastor Alson Ebanks. Again, he is a very dear person to the Trust, having been very involved many years ago with the Trust and its programmes.

So we do hope to keep you entertained and a bit informed about the history of the Mission House Historic Site. If you would all like to take your tables, or if you would like to go and actually start



Denise Bodden introduces the play, from the veranda of Mission House

browsing through the buffet, either one is fine but we will be beginning the performance soon.

At about seven o'clock, we are going to try to be done with our little performance and give you all an opportunity to actually go and watch the bat fly out with Lois Blumenthal. She is Secretary of the National Trust and a very conservation-minded

person whose accomplishments in the bat world have just skyrocketed from year to year. I think we have actually got more bat houses in Cayman than anywhere because of Lois' determination. So that's kind of an accomplishment for one lady, but I do tell you that, when she starts something, she does not let up until it's finished. So we are thankful to have people like her involved in the Trust.

So please feel free to stand up, take a seat, tables are over there, there's plenty of wine and food. If you would like to pick a table, then we can get our performance started.



North Side Kitchen Band

Bat House Project

The National Trust Wildlife Rescue Program has the largest and most successful bat house project in the tropics. Bats consume billions of insects yearly, including mosquitoes and crop pests. Due to loss of habitat, they roost in roofs where their survival is threatened. Bat houses provide alternative shelter for these ecologically valuable native animals. To download a PowerPoint presentation that can be modified to fit your conservation education needs, visit www.caymanwildlife.org or, for more information, email info@caymanwildlife.org.



*Bat houses at Mission House
(photo: Dr Mike Pienkowski)*

Mission House – a National Trust Historic Site

The Mission House is located in Bodden Town, Cayman's first capital, and is approximately 20 minutes' drive from George Town.

It is owned and managed by the National Trust for the Cayman Islands, a non-profit statutory body with a mission: "To preserve natural environments and places of historic significance in the Cayman Islands for present and future generations."

History

Mission House was built in the mid-1800s in a unique setting of Cayman's dry- and wet-lands. Prior to its destruction by Hurricane Ivan in September 2004, the Mission House was one of Cayman's oldest known dwellings.

The property is closely linked to the early



*Mission House
(Photo: Dr Mike Pienkowski)*

house and was used as a school for several children in the community. Mr Lyon also had an adjoining general store for some time.

In 1920 the house was sold to Mr Emile Watler, and it remained in the Watler family's possession until 1997 when Mr Watler donated the property to the National Trust.

Other interest at the site

In addition to the physical structure of Mission House, its grounds are also a site of historical, archaeological and environmental importance. The garden reflects that of a late 19th Century Caymanian garden, with various fruit trees that would have provided the resident families with a source of food. Walk around the garden and amongst the lime, avocado pear, guava and tamarind trees, and you will discover a seasonal natural pond that attracts a variety of different birds, such as the Common Moorhen, American Coot and West Indian Whistling Duck, in addition to the herons and egrets that regularly visit the watering hole. Also local to the pond is the Cayman hickatee, a type of freshwater turtle.

Special thanks to the families and friends of the National Trust for the Cayman Islands and also to the Cayman Islands Government, Cayman Islands National Recovery Fund, Mr Fenwick Wailer & family, the Historic Advisory Committee, Dr & Mrs Hartman-Koehlin, Maples Finance Ltd, Seth 'Boosie' Arch and the Webster family.

For more information about Membership of the National Trust for the Cayman Islands or to donate, please contact info@nationaltrust.org.ky Tel +1 (345) 949 0121.

Important Dates in the History of the Cayman Islands relating to the Mission house and before its construction

1503	On 10th May Christopher Columbus sighted Cayman Brac and Little Cayman.
1586	Sir Francis Drake's English fleet stopped at Grand Cayman for two days.
1592	Captain William King (an English Privateer) sailed across from Jamaica and landed at Grand Cayman.
1658	The first reputed settlers, Waller and Bowden, arrived in Little Cayman and Cayman Brac.
1666-1671	First recorded settlers arrived in Little Cayman and Cayman Brac.
1734	On September 7th, the first Crown Grant of Land was made in Grand Cayman.
1773	The first hydrographic survey was made by the British Navy of Grand Cayman. George Gauld estimated the population of Grand Cayman at 400.
1780	Pedro Castle built by William Eden.
1790	Fort George constructed at approximately this date.
1802	The first Census was carried out by Edward Corbet, member of Jamaica's Governor's staff. There were 933 residents on Grand Cayman, including 551 slaves. The Sister Islands were uninhabited.
1831	Election held at Pedro St James for first Legislative Assembly, on December 10. They met and passed a law on December 31st. The first Custos or Chief Magistrate was appointed. Anglican (1831-1837), Wesleyan/Methodist (1837-1844), and Mico Charity groups minister in Bodden Town.
1830-1835	The exact date of construction of Mission House is unknown. However, oral accounts suggest that the house was built by slave labour. Slavery was not abolished until 1835, which would suggest that Mission House was built before then.

1835 May 3rd	Full emancipation of slavery was proclaimed by the Governor of Jamaica in George Town, then Bodden Town on May 5th.
1846-1863	Rev. James Elmslie ministers throughout Grand Cayman.
1857	William Whitecross, first Presbyterian minister to work full-time in Bodden Town.
1862	Mr James Panton, first full-time Presbyterian teacher to work in Bodden Town.
1878-1901	Mission House is used as a Presbyterian mission.
1887	Public funds made available for education for West Bay and Bodden Town primary schools. Edmund Parsons was appointed as the last Custos.
Nov. 15th letter	Mr McMillan, the Island's sole missionary, with the help of a Mr McNeill, held revival/ evangelical meetings in Bodden Town. They report that, following services in the church, "after-meetings were held & personal dealings in the mission house by day". This report goes on to quote in detail from a letter dated 9th December 1887 written by a Mr Webster "one of the native elders". He writes at length about the work of the church at Bodden Town.
1897	Rev. Thomas Redpath and his family comes to reside and minister in Bodden Town.
1898	Frederick Shedden Sanguinetti, the first Commissioner, was appointed.
Circa 1900	Rev. Redpath brings Mr Lyons (from Cayman Brac) to teach in Bodden Town. Mr Lyons teaches and lives in the Mission House with his family.
1901	Rev. Redpath writes of new manse consecrated on January 25th. This probably not only replaced Mission House as Pastors' residence but was the first house on Manse Road). Redpath credits Mr Lyons as being the main driving force behind this project. Mrs Redpath responsible for bringing Christian Endeavour Youth Ministry to the Island.
1907	Mr George Stephenson Shirt Hirst appointed Commissioner.
1908 April 27th	Indenture records the sale of the Mission House property by Rev. Redpath to Anna Bernard Lyons.

1911	Census estimated the population at 5,564.
1914-1918	World War I
1917	Mr Lyons sells the Mission House to Mr Emil Watler and moves to George Town to teach with Mr Cochran. Mission House remains in the Watler family's possession until 1997.

1920	Education Law passed making education compulsory up to age 14.
1997	Mission House becomes the property of The National Trust for The Cayman Islands.
2004	Hurricane Ivan severely damages Cayman.
2007	Mission House is re-opened to the public.



The "Pirate" seems attracted by the ladies. However, conservation work is safe as we managed to recover UKOTCF Council Member Liz Charter, UKOTCF Co-ordinator Catherine Quick and Anguilla National Trust Executive Director Farah Mukhida.



Some rather more peaceful characters