

Status Report – WCPA Caribbean

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WCPA Caribbean Membership

The membership database was updated again over the past 4 months. Caribbean WCPA membership is comprised of 34 members from 10 countries (English, French, Spanish and Dutch) in the region.

WCPA Caribbean Steering Committee

The WCPA Caribbean Steering Committee (CSC) is comprised of four members: Enrique Hernandez (Cuba), Lloyd Gardner (US Virgin Islands), Susan Otuokon (Jamaica) and Floyd Homer (Trinidad and Tobago). Email has been used as the primary means to get inputs from the CSC on several issues related to protected areas and heritage sites in the Caribbean.

WCPA Caribbean Action Plan

Comments on the draft WCPA Caribbean Action Plan was received and incorporated into the final version. Many of the members were concerned about implementation in the context of lack of dedicated funding for the identified activities. The final version of the action plan was translated into Spanish. Both English and Spanish versions were distributed to WCPA Caribbean members in November 2007. Members were also requested to provide information on the activities in the Plan that were being implemented in their countries.

Meetings and Workshops

The report on Managing Protected Areas in Times of Change: Leadership in Governance of Protected Areas held during 14-17th October 2006 in Anguilla, was prepared in the first quarter of 2007 and is available at: <http://www.sustrust.org> The workshop was organized by WCPA Caribbean and the Trust For Sustainable Livelihoods in collaboration with IUCN/US and the US National Park Service.

Technical Assistance

Requests were received from several agencies and individuals in the Caribbean and elsewhere for technical advice on protected areas issues. Technical assistance on a voluntary basis, was provided as follows:

- Review and comment on the Caribbean Capacity Building Programme on cultural heritage sites in the Caribbean.
- Review and comment on the request for World Heritage funding by Jamaica.
- Review and comment on the request for World Heritage funding by Dominican Republic.
- Review and comment on the Training Needs Assessment for the OECS Protected Areas and Livelihoods Project.
- Review and comments on the draft management plans for the St Eustatius Marine Park, and the Bonaire Marine Park.
- Facilitate the visit of the IUCN Chief Technical Advisor-Caribbean Initiative.
- Review and updating of Caribbean contact details for the World Database on Protected Areas.

Challenges

- The major challenge is still the lack of timely or adequate responses from WCPA members in the region. Getting members excited and motivated to promote the WCPA agenda requires some innovative approaches.
- Awareness on the IUCN and WCPA and their relevance to protected areas and conservation issues in the Caribbean seem limited. How can IUCN and WCPA become more meaningful to members and potential members?

Implementation of the Caribbean Action Plan

The WCPA Caribbean Action Plan was based on the previous WCPA Caribbean Action Plan (promoted at the World Parks Congress in Durban, 2003), the WCPA Strategic Plan 2005-2012 and on comments from members during April to July 2007. Members should note that there was no dedicated funding for the implementation of the Caribbean Action Plan. Therefore most of the activities outlined in the Plan were things that several members or their agencies were already doing or proposed to do.

The Plan is intended to guide local WCPA action related to protected areas in the Caribbean and to serve as the basis for reporting WCPA work as a component of the IUCN Programme. The summary of activities under the Strategic Directions given below, is based on recent reports from WCPA Caribbean members.

CONSERVATION OF BIODIVERSITY

- Ecological GAP Analysis as part of the work to achieve the CBD PoWPA Goals by Bahamas.
- Participation in the development of the Invasive Alien Species Caribbean Project proposal led by CABI. Project proposal grant approved by GEF. Pilot projects being developed for six Caribbean countries.
- Preparation of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan for Anguilla.
- UNEP Caribbean Environmental Programme (CEP) collaboration with the CBD on the 2010 targets and support for conservation of marine mammals and sea turtles.

SCIENCE AND MANAGEMENT OF PROTECTED AREAS

- Review of the status of protected areas management in 6 OECS countries.
- Assessment of PAs for preparation of PA Master Plan for Bahamas.
- Supported efforts by The Ocean Conservancy to finalise management effectiveness protocols and planning for the East End Marine Park, St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands.
- Assisted the British Virgin Islands on the review of the National System of Protected Areas – included linking national categories to WCPA management categories.

- The Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), Environment and Sustainable Development Unit is supervising the preparation of protected area management plans for several countries in the OECS.
- Development of criteria and guidelines by UNEP CEP for the prevention of species from becoming threatened or endangered.

CAPACITY-BUILDING AND AWARENESS-RAISING

- Core themes for education, awareness and communication programmes relevant to protected areas in the Caribbean identified. Report in preparation.
- UNDP Early Action Grant accessed by some countries to support protected areas management training and capacity-building programmes.
- Sustainable Finance Plan initiated in the Bahamas, including a Financial Gap Analysis.
- Information on training opportunities disseminated through regional PA network.
- Continued support for CaMPAM (Caribbean Marine Protected Area Managers Network) by UNEP Caribbean Environment Programme.
- Link to regional PA project inserted in PALNet site. Data on experts and documents also added. Information and documents on Caribbean programme submitted to PA Office in IUCN-HQ to be added to WCPA Caribbean website.

GOVERNANCE, EQUITY AND LIVELIHOODS

- Promotion of increased community participation in a wider range of management activities in the U.S. and British Virgin Islands.
- Promotion of socio-economic related research – included in implementation plan for the System Plan for the British Virgin Islands, opportunity being investigated in the East End Marine Park (U.S. Virgin Islands).
