

Updated from August 2007 meeting (2007
PROGRESS REPORT)

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL CHARTER OF THE TURKS AND CAICOS



**Turks and Caicos Environment Charter Projects
Strategy for Action v 2: Priority Projects 2006**

Environment Charter Commitment 2: *Ensure the protection and restoration of key habitats, species and landscape features through legislation and appropriate management structures and mechanisms, including a protected areas policy, and attempt the control and eradication of invasive species*

Commitment 2 I: Protect, manage and improve the Protected Areas System created under the National Parks Ordinance.

2.b.1 *Lodge the boundaries of existing Protected Areas in the Government GIS System, planning and land Registry.*

ACTION POINT:

- a) *Lands and Survey in collaboration with DECR to incorporate the boundaries of the Protected Areas System into the LIS.*

Progress:

- *The existing boundaries of the protected areas were in a format that was not compatible with the format of the Lands Information System (LIS).*
- *In order to upload the boundaries into the LIS, the boundaries of the protected areas would have to be mapped using the compatible data format. This was achieved by the issuance of a consultancy to Sani Internationals.*
- *Once the consultancy was complete, the new and compatibly formatted boundaries were obtained and submitted to the Lands and Survey Department for uploading into the LIS database.*
- *Lands and Survey then carried out a series of exercises of “Ground-truthing”, whereby the boundaries were physically surveyed to test the accuracy of the data.*
- *In accordance with the law and customary practices, in order for the boundaries to be registered, a paper would have to be first submitted to CABINET for approval and to instruct the Land Registry to formally register the parcels as Protected Areas.*
- *DECR and Land Survey are in the process of seeking Cabinet’s approval for the registering of the parcels into Land Registry.*
- *Paper has been drafted for submission to Cabinet.*

- *Staging area for West Caicos at West Harbour bluff and the area where the Cruise Ship dock was constructed in Grand Turk at CLNP has been mutated out of Park System*
- *Pas Review study provides further recommendations for inclusion and deletion of areas within the System.*

2.b.2 To ensure that there is no further erosion of the PAS through inappropriate development use the National Trust Ordinance to put the Protected Areas System into inalienable conservation ownership, in trust for the future of the country.

ACTION POINT:

- b) *Follow up with Permanent Secretary of Natural Resources on the status of ExCo paper for transferring areas of Historical Significance to the National Trust, for which the Minister of Natural Resources would bring forth the above-referred paper to ExCo for consideration.*

Progress:

- *Cabinet approved to transfer over 500 acres of land to the Turks and Caicos National Trust (TCNT) for the people of the Turks and Caicos Islands. The areas include the important historical and natural sites listed below,*
 - *Wades Green Plantation - 50301/11, 50304/5, 50305/2*
 - *Cheshire Hall – 60706/31, 38, 39*
 - *Vera Hamilton Primary School Building – 40204/42*
 - *Village Pond – 40104/62 & 63*
 - *Indian Cave –40103/94pt (Mgmt Rights)*
 - *Conch Bar Caves – 40105/5*
 - *Garden Pond Field Road – 40301/3, 40301/24pt*
 - *Haulover Plantation Field Road – 40301/17,18,20,21(Mgmt. Rights)*
 - *Crossing Place Trail West from Conch Bar – 40101/0, 40102/0,*
- *It is noted that the TCNT has managed the above-listed natural and historical sites for over a decade. This involved several years of scientific study of the areas in North and Middle Caicos, and subsequently securing funding to develop and maintain nature trails, refurbish buildings and prepare interpretative and educational material.*
- *Process is not yet completed, but is now with Land Registry for registration. Follow ups has been made by the MNRs*

2.b.3 Complete development of a Protected Areas Policy with agreement at the highest level.

ACTION POINT:

- c) ***DECR to submit Draft Protected Areas Policy to ExCo for review and approval***

Progress:

- *A comprehensive policy for the management of the Protected Areas of the Turks and Caicos Islands was developed by the DECR following several stakeholder meetings throughout the TCI.*
- *The policy document addressed among other things the following;*
 - *Safeguarding natural, cultural and historic resources in the Turks and Caicos Islands.*
 - *The Policy made provision for the establishment of specific criterion for the selection of areas to be protected.*
 - *The policy sets the geographical and legal foundation for legislative framework development.*
 - *It recognizes the economic values of the Protected Areas and gives credence to the establishment of a concession mechanism and also speaks to the management procedures of the Conservation Fund.*
 - *The Policy calls for public participation in the management and conservation of the natural resources within the Protected Areas system It also mandates the need for stakeholder participation and public awareness.*
- *The draft policy document was submitted to the Minister of Natural Resources for vetting and comments.*
- *The document was deferred, pending the drafting of an executive summary to accompany the policy, to facilitate quick reviewing of main points in the policy.*
- *The comments were received and incorporated into the document. The final draft is now ready (along with the accompanying executive summary) for submission to CABINET.*
- ***CABINET reviewed the draft policy document and returned it to the DECR with comments attached. The DECR is in the process of incorporating the comments and addressing some of the concerns of CABINET and to prepare the document for re-submission to CABINET***

ACTION: DECR to revised the draft document and re-submit to CABINET

ACTION POINT:

- d) ***NPEAC to review management and comment on management plans for South Caicos Protected Areas and Grand Turk and RAMSAR Site plan.***

Progress:

- *The National Parks Environment Advisory Committee (NPEAC) at its meeting, on May 22, 2006, approved for funding in sum of EIGHT THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$8,000) for the DECR to organize a workshop to*

review all existing management plans which were developed for the management of the various protected area.

- *These include, management plans for, Princess Alexandria National Park (Providenciales), East Harbour Lobster and Conch Reserve, and Bell Sound Nature Reserve (South Caicos), Columbus Land and Sea National Park (Grand Turk) and The RAMSAR Site (North, Middle and East Caicos)*
 - *The workshop aims to review the progress made thus far in implementing the various management plans and build on these plans towards the furtherance of management of these Protected Areas.*
 - *The workshop will also seek to devise management strategies for other protected areas, which currently do not have a management plan in place.*
- *In this regard, a request for technical assistance was sent to UNEP- Jamaica, to secure resource personnel to facilitate and coordinate this review process. UNEP has since responded and advised that they are unable to meet our request at this time.*
- *The DECR is currently seeking assistance from other external agencies such as the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) for technical support or aid in the sourcing a qualified expert to coordinate the review process.*
- *DECR have commissioned the services of CRFM to assist the department on identification of gaps and an implementation strategy for management effectiveness within the Protected areas system.. The next step is that they will be back on the week of the 20th of Aug. 07 to conduct a workshop with h stakeholder to present their finding and provide guidelines and a skeleton Mgmt Plan.*

Commitment 2 II: Protect and where necessary, restore key habitats such as coastal areas, wetlands, the Salinas and woodlands.

2.c.6 Ensure the proper protection of our coastal resources. Develop and implement Coastal Zone Management Policy to deal with coastal Works, flooding and disaster management and wise allocation of our valuable and very limited supply of coastal land

ACTION POINT:

- e) *DECR in Collaboration with Planning Department should seek avenues to confer additional protection to the Coastal Areas, in particular, the protection of the sand dunes.*
 - *No progress to date, however, a review of the Draft Policy from Planning Dept. is in needed with the inputs from other departments.*
- f) *DECR in collaboration with other agencies to develop and implement a Coastal Zone Policy that should take into account the development of docks, jetties on Grace Bay, boardwalks and shade structure, among others.*

- *DECR has moved ahead with a beach shade structures project on PANP, other areas are being encourage with other agencies.*

Some initial contacts have been made with agencies such as JNCC on invasive species mitigation.

Progress:

- *A draft policy is currently being reviewed, which aims to look at developing management strategies and legislations to confer additional protection to Sand Dunes and Coastal Habitat. Areas of concern include*
 - *Beach Furniture on Dunes*
 - *Sports Equipment, Boats, Kayaks and other equipment on Dunes.*
 - *Inadequate and inappropriate boardwalks.*
 - *Development encroachment on dunes.*
- *A comprehensive coastal zone management policy has to be drafted, which will seek to regularize the usage of Coastal Areas, by setting clear guidelines for usage along with recommended legislation for enforcement of guidelines.*

2.c.7 *Protect, manage and restore Salinas in all three of the Salt Islands.*

ACTION POINT:

- g) *Steps should be taken to list other wetland areas, which are not protected such as Salinas as priority areas for protection.*

Progress:

- *In mid 2006, the Executive Council commissioned a study to review the Protected Areas boundaries, and assess the rational for the current boundary demarcation.*
- *The review team considered wetland areas that were not protected; their recommendations for the protection of these areas are submitted in the final report.*
- *This report would now be submitted to CABINET for consideration.*
- *DECR reported that the PA review study also looked at areas that should be incorporated in the system, this document is still with Cabinet for acceptance. Cabinet have requested of DECR to provide separate papers on each area of the report.*
- *DECR also reported that they are working with Museum to develop signage, posters, etcnto bring about awareness on the Protected Areas & Salinas*

- *Mike Pienkowski of the UKOTCF & TCNT on the request of tourist board the had gathered information for birdwatching brochures development.*
- *There is a need to move on the new areas for Protection within the system to limit any further reduction of Salinas and other protected areas.*
- ***Action:** EGW (TCNT) had supplied DECR with a list of areas for protection, this should be reconsidered as a first step, by designating some level of protection to these areas..*

Note: C. Campbell of the Turks & Caicos Hotel and Tourism Association is interested in bring awareness on issues such as conserving resources (such as water) in hotel establishment and is willing to work with DECR on this. The Association will continue with the trash bins project along Grace Bay. Other activities, such as cleanup campaign was also on their agenda, starting with the Bight community.

2.c.10 TCIG develop (with National Trust) a policy for preservation of historic buildings, appropriate legislation and funding; amend sec 34 of the Public and Environmental Health Ordinance to afford protection to historic buildings

ACTION POINT:

- h) *National Trust, DECR, Planning Department, TCI National Museum to collaborate and move process further forward for the protection of historical buildings.*

Progress:

- *A meeting was held at the National Museum, on December 13th 2006 to develop a plan for the preservation of historic sites within TCI. The following agencies were present; National Trust, DECR and TCI National Museum.*
- *It was noted at the meeting that there was a previous study undertaken in 1988 to document historical buildings and recommendations were put forth to Executive Council for their preservation and restoration.*
- *The meeting ended with the following conclusions:*
 - *The National Trust to reproduce and distribute to key organizations the complete report on **the listing and preservation of historic buildings and zones of the Turks and Caicos Islands (1988).***
 - *DECR to locate the 1988-1989 minutes of the Executive Council.*
 - *National Trust to coordinate and convene another meeting of agencies to discuss and review the 1988 report and to prepare a policy document for submission to the government.*

Key Recommendations:

- *The formation of an inter-agency committee to oversee the process. The committee should include representatives from the National Trust, DECR, the National Museum, Planning and Tourist Board.*

- *The process should be approach in stages, looking at the most vulnerable sites within TCI first.*
- *The Committee should also observe the approaches used by other territories e.g. Cayman Islands.*
- *TCNT, DECR and the Museum were scheduled to meet after the meeting in Feb. 07 , however the group was unable to do so. This action will be taken up when new Museum director arrives.*
- *DECR is not able to locate the EXCO minute of 1988-89.*

2.c.11 Ensure the proper management of the Conservation Fund, including ensuring that management authority for the Conservation Fund is representative of both Governmental and non-governmental stakeholders and has transparent procedures.

ACTION POINT:

- i) *Steps should be taken to have a member form the Tourist and Hotel Association represented on the National Parks Environmental Advisory Committee (NPEAC).*

Progress:

- *A letter of invitation was sent to the Turks and Caicos Hotel and Tourism Association.*
- *Mr. Caesar Campbell was subsequently appointed to the National Park Environment Committee (NPEAC).*

ACTION POINT:

- j) *Tourist Board and the Hotel & Tourism Association should take steps to promote and educate the public about the Conservation Fund.*

See above note on the Awareness with regard to Greening of Hotels. DECR is working on developing Book marks on the TCI Environmental Laws TCI and the Conservation Fund.

Progress:

- *The DECR have developed and printed over 1000 brochures for distribution.*
- *The brochures gives basic information about the conservation fund, it provides various examples of what the fund is being used for and also highlights the process for society members to submit bids for funding of various micro-projects.*
- *The DECR have since recruited an Environmental Education Officer. One of the responsibilities of the Education Officer is to promote and educate the public about the Conservation Fund.*

Commitment 2 III: Protect Important Species

2.d.1. To control; invasive species and other environmental health reasons, carry out a major project to implement port environmental security.

ACTION POINT:

- k) National Trust in collaboration with the DECR to develop and implement an emergency action plans to address the fungus that is affecting the Caicos Pine.*
- l) DECR to include Caicos Pine and other plant species for protection under the Plant Protection Ordinance.*
- m) DECR in collaboration with Environmental Health, Customs Department to take urgent steps to amend Plant Protection Ordinance. Phytosanitation provisions should also be included as a requirement for the importation of plants.*
- n) Need to put in place phytosanitation requirements for the importation of plants.*
- o) DECR in collaboration with Environmental Health, Customs Department to take urgent steps to amend Plant Protection Ordinance. Phytosanitation provisions should also be included as a requirement for the importation of plants.*
- p) Steps should be taken to minimize lost of wild, native trees to development.*
- q) Steps should be taken to enforce Land Clearance Regulations and Plant Protection Ordinance in development proposals.*
- r) DECR should seek to adopt the protocols of the Convention on Biological Diversity, which may also feed into the Development Plan.*

Progress:

- In 2006, DECR submitted a proposal for funding from OTEP, which was approved to recruit a legal draft person to draft the necessary legislations, which would enable TCIG to ratify the various Multilateral Environment Agreement (MEA), extended to it by the UK Government, including the Convention on Biological Diversity.*
- It is anticipated that while the legal draft person is in house, he would also review and update some of the current Environmental Legislations including Plant Protection Ordinance. This would confer additional protection to the Caicos Pine and other native plant species.*
- The National Trust has moved forward in the development of a proposal on the Caicos Pine Fungus and submitted to DECR. Two meetings held to discuss findings with KEW Gardens representatives were held. Currently, DECR has been asked to prepare a paper for funding to Cabinet.*

- *DECR and TCNT met with the MNRs following the meeting \$136,400.00 was agreed on for the first phase of a project on the aforementioned subject matter. The paper was prepared and submitted to Cabinet, we are now, awaiting the minutes.*
- *DECT reported that the Caicos Pine species have not been included in plant protection ordinance, however it is in Wildlife management Bill (draft) and Endangered Species Bill (draft).*
- *Work is ongoing with regard to Plant Protection Ord. By Environment Health, A paper has been submitted to DEPS for funding of a post for overseeing that provisions are met in this Ordinance. The post will be referred to as the Plant Protection Officer.*
- *Env. Health is also review reports on Caicos Pine Scale.*

Environment Charter Commitment 3: *Ensure that environment considerations are integrated within social and economic planning processes; promote sustainable patterns of production and consumption within the territory.*

Commitment 3 I: Carry out planning processes, which integrate environmental, social and economic needs

ACTION POINT:

- s) *Need to develop terrestrial maps of other islands.*

Progress:

- *The DECR contacted a team from the United Kingdom that provided us with the costing estimates for the project.*
- *One of the critical factors, which were required for the successful implementation of the project, was the need to have an updated set of aerial photographs with high resolution, covering all the islands and the coastal areas.*
- *This aerial photograph would use in conjunction with the GIS software, with data incorporated to form the terrestrial maps.*
- *The aerial photograph, which is currently with the Lands and Survey Department, is over five (5) years old and as such, was not considered appropriate.*
- *The DECR in collaboration with Lands and Survey Department commissioned a consultancy to obtain current Aerial Photographs of the Turks and Caicos Islands, which would be used as the GIS base for the development of the terrestrial maps.*
- *The DECR have already developed the project concept and has also submitted in the 2007/2008-budget session for funding from TCIG.*
- *WC DECR has budgeted funds for Habitat Biodiversity Mapping, however in the*

Environment Charter Commitment 9: *Encourage teaching within schools to promote the value of our local environment (Natural and built) and to explain its role within the regional and global environment*

- mean time DECR Scientific Officer specialist in Forestry, and now we are developing a plan for mapping habitats)marine and terrestrial with JNCC, Tracey Knight UK Rep for TCI. August 14th we will convene a workshop to dev. This plan in its entirety for such a project proposal for funding.*
- *Ann P. BVI has devel an digital atlas for schools, where a local programmer has develop a framework for the island.*
 - *WC we have a set of aerial photos for the entire TCI, that could assist this program.*

Commitment 9: Encourage teaching within schools to promote the value of our local environment (natural and built) and to explain its role within the regional and global environment.

ACTION POINT:

- t) The DECR and National Trust should seek to develop teacher workshops to sensitize and inform the teachers about the TCI environment, and funding should me made available.*
- u) The Education Department should identify an individual (Education Officer) who will work in close collaboration with the DECR, National Trust and TCI Museum to organize workshop.*

DECR has worked with Ministry of Education. on securing scholarships for students wanting to study Environment. Studies. Secondly, we have sponsored 4 science teachers to Key Largo, Fla to study Marine ecology. Thirdly, DECR will convene a workshop include later this year to develop a curricular for TCI Schools with SFS for marine Studies.

TCNT with regard to built environment project will go into schools and mobilizing communities and initiating clubs among the various communities, e.g. Rotoracts. One teacher's workshop has been completed on built and environment/natural heritage of TCI.

UK Collaboration on Calendars, Birdlife.

Incorporate. Findings on research conducted into eco echos.

Ann. P. Cross territories project on Environment. Education within OT's. UKOTCF website will be updated with educational material developed or avail. In other Territories, Virtual tours, and on line discussions on line.

Dept. education working with TCNT and ensuring dates for workshops for teachers for upcoming academic year.

Consented that teachers be a part of DECR program. Revising with asst. of Curricular officers (new) the curricular development. Mr. Howell is the responsible officer for Science in the Dept. of Education

Director, Disaster & Emergencies Dept. has also engaged the Dep. Of Educ. on education information on Disaster , materials developed by UNICEF. Need to promote collaboration to avoid duplication.

DECR draft Education Strategy, 3 goals improve public knowledge availability, increase activities on Env. Awareness, put natural resources at center stage. This should be completed by the end of the year. Progress include DVD;s and adverts on public television, eco-corners in newspaper, initiatives in churches and among businesses.

DECR is in the process of initiating a program to develop a curriculum on Environmental Education to be incorporated into all the high schools across the Nation.

Progress:

- The National Parks Environmental Advisory Committee (NPEAC) approved at its meeting, on May 22, 2006 for funding in sum of NINETY THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS (\$90, 500) for the National Trust to develop and revised educational materials which would be distributed to all the schools within the Turks and Caicos Islands.*
- It was recognized that there are limited resource material and information about the flora and fauna of the TCI in existence within the local schools. The Trust had developed eleven (11) modules in the series “Our Land, Our Sea, Our People.”*
- The modules are over seven years old, and need to be revised to incorporate information from ongoing research in the respective areas covered. The Members of NPEAC recognizes the importance of this project and therefore approve the project on the condition that the funds are awarded in three installments of \$30,166 each.*

Outstanding 2006 Action Points

Commitment 2 II: Protect and where necessary, restore key habitats such as coastal areas, wetlands, the Salinas and woodlands.

- b) The Office of Disasters Management should take steps to develop and implement a Public Relations Campaign to educate the public on areas that are susceptible to flooding.*

Director, Disasters & Emergencies Dept. has engaged Dr. Vincent Cooper from UWI Trinidad to prepare a flood hazard map to education public on specific areas on areas prone to flooding. This is an intersectoral consultation, possible completion date of map will be end of this year, and widely circulated for community education. Disaster community groups formed on Provo so far.

Commitment 4.1: Ensure that environmental issues are considered before key approvals are made

- *The Governor will seek to implement policy for Environmental Scoping to be carried out prior to the Government signing Development Agreement.*
- *Steps should be taken to ensure that EIAs are conducted for Government Developments as well.*
- *Steps should be taken to develop guidelines for considering environmental issues in all the stages of development (i.e. Proposal to TCInvest, Development agreement, Planning permits, construction and operation)*

P/S MNR indicated that some scoping is done at TCInvest at the distribution of proposals stages for a development, afterwards each agency and dept send in their comments which should be incorporated in the Development Agreement, which should be circulated in draft, but this is not the case.

DECR indicated that the draft development agreement are coming for comments to DECR. The EIA should actually be done before the Dev. Agreement to see what the negative impacts are, but this is costly to developers.

TCNT inquired whether development agreements could be circulated to other NGO's for comments, given the groups composition.

ACTION: for the governor's office to inquire if project proposal could be vetted by the other groups, NGO, etc. Public Consultation.

TCNT indicated that the TCNT is mandated in their Ordinance. to provide advise to government on developments affecting their work.

UKOTCF indicated that this is happening in other countries

Commitment 5.1: Ensure that the Public has meaningful opportunities to review and comment on proposals before decisions are made.

- *Planning will ensure that a copy of all future EIAs are sent to the Public Library.*
- *Planning to require of developers to also submit EIAs as electronic copies on CD, which can then be made available on CD, web or email on request.*

- *DECR indicated that the current Planning Dept. system is that they have EIA in their office available for viewing by the public. MH recommended that the reports should be made more widely available. This was echoed by UKOTCF and Governor's Office.*

Commitment 2 I : Protect, manage and improve the Protected Areas System created under the National Parks Ordinance.

- *DECR and the Department of Economic, Planning and Statistics should seek to produce an end of year report on the Conservation Fund to facilitate more transparency.*
- *NPEAC, DECR and DEPS, with the support of the National Trust, should take steps to produce a simple annual report for visitors to explain the uses that their visitor tax in the Conservation Fund has been put, in order to maintain and strengthen support for this.*
- *DECR met with DEPS and concluded that the simplest way to do this is to use the Audit report and format it into a 2 page pamphlet, to commence at that end of the year. DECR commented that the DECR Green Pages segment will highlight the projects submitted and funded by the Conservation Fund.*
- *P/S MNR recommended that the Audit report be sent to TCHTA in user friendly format for publishing.*

Commitment 6:

DECR has retained the services of a Consultant to develop MEA's (OTEP funding). The Consultant has progressed reflect the following:

Preparation of draft Legislation

The following draft legislation has been prepared: -

- *Wildlife & Biodiversity Protection Bill (3rd draft)*
- *Marine Pollution Bill (4th draft)*
- *Endangered Species (Trade) Bill (4th draft)*
- *National Parks and Protected Areas Bill (4th draft)*
- *Environment Management Bill (4th draft)*

- *Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations (draft)*
- *National Parks Regulations*
- *Pollution Regulations*

These have gone through AG's Chambers and some degree of consultation .

In a meeting with DECR and the Governor's Office and OT Funding Manager on the implementation of the MEA's it was advised that TCI should collaborate with Cayman Islands.

Governor's office has made a commitment to funding the same.

The P/S Ministry of Natural Resources spoke on the current status climate change the UKOT. She highlighted her participation in a meeting to look into this issue.

She continued by stating that this year is the Year of the Environment, hence, we should be sensitizing persons on Climate Change.

ACTION: The Director of Disaster & Emergencies should seek to collaborative efforts of the group ahead by establishing a Climate Change Committee that will be a multi sectoral body

The Director of Disasters & Emergencies Department accepted the invitation and echoed the sentiments of the P/S Natural Resources on the importance of Climate Change. And noted the importance of this subject matter to the EIA process.

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The DECR informed the group that an output of the Habitat Mapping, to be held will be a Climate Change Map and Vulnerability Map..

The ECWG further proposed that the Director of Disasters & Emergencies should seek to identify some key actions points and training for the Climate Change Committee..

DEH updated the group on the large resource pool of students interns .

UKOTCF Chairman informed the group that they too can provide linkages with areas with common interests, to share research efforts in the UKOTs.