

PUBLIC SECTOR CONSULTATION ON THE OVERARCHING POLICY FOR JAMAICA'S PROTECTED AREAS SYSTEM (GREEN PAPER)

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Black River

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Acronyms

CARICOM	Caribbean Community
EFJ	Environmental Foundation of Jamaica
FD	Forestry Department
GOJ	Government of Jamaica
HDRC	Heritage Development Review Committee
IOJ	Institute of Jamaica
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
JNHT	Jamaica National Heritage Trust
LFMC	Local Forest Management Committee
MDAs	Ministries Departments and Agencies
MEGJC	Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MP	Member of Parliament
MRC	Ministry responsible for Culture
MRE	Ministry responsible for the Environment
MRF	Ministry responsible for Fisheries
MRLG	Ministry responsible for Local Government
NCTFJ	National Conservation Trust Fund of Jamaica
NEPA	National Environment and Planning Agency
NFA	National Fisheries Authority
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRCA	Natural Resources Conservation Authority
PA	Protected Area
PAC	Protected Areas Committee
PAS	Protected Areas System
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation

Background

A protected area is a clearly defined geographical area of land and or water that is dedicated to and managed for the long-term conservation and sustainable use of its ecological systems, biodiversity and/or specific natural, cultural or aesthetic resources. A protected areas system may be defined as a “set of protected areas, comprising a combination of two or more protected area categories, whose activities are coordinated to achieve the protection and maintenance of biological diversity, and of natural and associated cultural resources”.

Protected areas are established to protect Jamaica’s biodiversity and cultural values. Indeed, protected areas which are appropriately governed and effectively managed have benefits which include: safeguarding biodiversity, providing ecosystem services, providing genetic resources for food and agriculture; conserving water resources; mitigating the impacts of natural hazards as well as climate regulation acting as natural carbon sinks, contributing to poverty alleviation by providing employment opportunities and livelihoods to people living in and around them and providing opportunities for research.

Jamaica’s protected areas are managed under law by four public entities, namely the National Fisheries Authority (NFA) formerly the Fisheries Division, the Forestry Department, the Jamaica National Heritage Trust (JNHT) and the Natural Resources Conservation Authority (NRCA)/National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA). Management of protected areas is also undertaken in collaboration with other government entities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

In 1997, the Policy for the National System of Protected Areas was approved by Parliament. The Policy envisaged the core of the System as being the areas established under the mandate of the Natural Resources Conservation Authority (NRCA), which would be the lead entity with responsibility for the protected areas system. The roles of the JNHT, the Fisheries Division, the Forestry Department, the Institute of Jamaica, the Water Resources Authority, local government agencies and NGOs were also addressed in the Policy. It was anticipated that the Policy would result in “enhanced cooperation and coordination of management activities among the many stakeholders in proposing, planning and managing protected areas across the country”. It is considered that this goal was not fully realized as there are still areas for improvement.

There have been fundamental changes in the institutional arrangements related to protected areas management since 1997 for example, the merger of the NRCA, Town Planning Department and the Land Development and Utilization Commission to form NEPA and the establishment of the Protected Areas Committee (PAC). Other developments include the establishment of the NFA under the Fisheries Act, 2018, NEPA and the Forestry Department becoming Executive Agencies (under the Executive Agencies Act) as well as the approval of the Forest Policy (2016), the National

Forest Management and Conservation Plan and the Protected Areas Regulations under the Natural Resources Conservation Authority Act. At the time the 1997 Policy was approved, many parts of the System were only in the early stages of formation, while others were still being planned. The Policy stated that in order to facilitate the further development of the System, a protected areas system plan would follow, outlining the steps and actions to be taken. Following reviews of the Policy and its implementation, and a re-statement in 2019 of the need for a plan for the protected areas system, between 2004 and 2005 a project funded by the Environmental Foundation of Jamaica (EFJ) prepared some elements of a system plan. In order to meet obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity's (CBD) Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA), other elements including Jamaica's National Ecological Gap Assessment Report (NEGAR), Sustainable Financing Plan for Jamaica's System of Protected Areas (JPAS) 2010 – 2020 and the National Report on Management Effectiveness Assessment and Capacity Development Plan for Jamaica's System of Protected Areas were prepared starting in 2005, for a protected areas system master plan which was funded by the Forest Conservation Fund (FCF).

The Protected Areas System Master Plan: Jamaica 2013-2017 (PASMP) was prepared in 2013 and approved by Cabinet in 2015. A project entitled "Strengthening the Operational and Financial Sustainability of the National Protected Areas System" (NPAS) was approved and implemented over the period 2010-2017 with funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF)/United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The project's goal which was to "safeguard Jamaica's globally significant biodiversity", also supported the implementation of the PASMP. Among the outputs of the NPAS Project were an enabling policy for the protected areas system (draft Overarching Policy for Jamaica's Protected Areas System), preliminary drafting instructions for Overarching Protected Areas legislation (Protected Areas Act for Jamaica) and the National Conservation Trust Fund of Jamaica (NCTFJ) which was established to provide financial support for the operation of the protected areas system.

The 1997 Policy for the National System of Protected Areas is being replaced by a new updated policy which will incorporate some of the provisions of the previous policy, include elements of the PASMP and guide new legislation related to the protected areas system. (Taken from the Overarching Policy for Jamaica's Protected Areas System – Green Paper).

Opening Remarks: Chief Technical Director, Development Planning, Environment Policy and Management, Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation (MEGJC)

Ms Guthrie welcomed the many public sector stakeholders who had taken the time to contribute to the finalisation of the draft policy for Jamaica's Protected Areas System (PAS). She also welcomed presenters from the agencies which had responsibility for oversight of the collective protected areas. They were National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA), National Fisheries Authority (NFA), Forestry Department (FD) and the Jamaica National Heritage Trust. Three of those entities would share the status of the protected areas for which they had oversight – National Environment Planning Agency (NEPA), Jamaica National Heritage Trust (JNHT) and the National Fisheries Authority (NFA). Ms Guthrie advised that on the conclusion of those presentations there would be a break in the agenda to facilitate a brief discussion on the information presented. The Forestry Department would be presenting at the Private Sector Consultation on June 20.

The presentation on the Overarching Policy for Jamaica's Protected Areas System would be made by Ms Toni Ann Miller, Director of Natural Resources in the Environment and Risk Management Branch of MEGJC.

Ms Guthrie reported that the meeting was being recorded and there was also a rapporteur who would produce a report that would be posted on the Ministry's website for the benefit of stakeholders who had been unable to attend. In addition, hard copies of the draft policy had been distributed to parish libraries and offices of municipal corporations and were available to all who wished to consult them.

This consultation was the first of a series of four consultations. The second with the private sector would be held on July 20, the third with NGOs, CBOs and academia would be held on June 28 and the final consultation would take the form of a virtual town hall meeting on July 11 to which the public and all stakeholders were invited.

Ms Guthrie advised that Senator the Honourable Minister Samuda who was slated to give the keynote address was unavoidably absent. His remarks would be presented by Cleon Williams, Adviser to the Honorable Matthew Samuda. She extended apologies on behalf of the Minister.

Keynote Address: Senator the Honourable Matthew Samuda, Minister without Portfolio, MEGJC, presented by Cleon Williams

Senator, the Honourable Minister Samuda extended a warm welcome to participants attending the MEGJC's public sector consultation on the Overarching Policy for Jamaica's Protected Areas. He observed that it was critical that stakeholders, including the public, participate in the decision-making process in the formulation and implementation of national policies, programmes and legislation. This, he said, fosters greater ownership and collective commitment to achieving common goals and objectives. Consultations are important in soliciting the views and opinions of stakeholders on key national development imperatives. Senator Samuda congratulated the Environment and Risk Management Branch of MEGJC on their work on the draft policy as well as the coordination of the consultative sessions.

The Policy on Jamaica's Protected Area Systems had been approved by Cabinet and tabled in the Houses of Parliament as a Green Paper in March 2024, Senator Samuda explained. He added that an integrated protected area system was essential in preserving Jamaica's biodiversity, ecosystems and cultural heritage to ensure the conservation of vital resources for sustainability as well as to address challenges in managing and conserving the protected areas.

The emphasis that the Policy placed on enhanced collaboration among the entities responsible for the regulation and management of protected areas, he observed, encouraged a collaborative approach fostering more effective management and protection of Jamaica's natural and cultural attributes. The main goal of the Green Paper, he underscored, was to effectively and equitably manage protected areas for the protection and conservation of the biodiversity of the island's cultural heritage as well as to maximise social and economic benefits. To achieve this goal the government would develop enabling policies and legislation to further strengthen the governance arrangements to responsibly inform the promulgation of the protective areas legislation to address, among other things, governance and the institutional arrangements for the protective areas systems. He reiterated the government's commitment to building and maintaining an interconnected and resilient protective areas system that supports ecological processes and human well-being.

Senator Samuda pointed out that Jamaica had increased its protective areas network over the last five years by declaring the: Cockpit Country, Pedro Cays and its surrounding waters and the Black River as protected areas. In the 2023/24 financial year, the government enacted protected areas regulations under the Natural Resources Conservation Act and in the current fiscal year MEGJC, in collaboration with NEPA and the Forestry Department, would commence work in the declaration of four new protected areas under the NRCA Act – Canoe Valley which borders

Clarendon and St. James Montpelier, St. James, Long Mountain, St. Andrew, Industry Cove, Hanover and Bengal St. Ann. He added that over 20 parcels of crown land will be declared as forest reserves and forest management areas under the Forest Act. The declaration of these areas will assist Jamaica to meet the new global target of declaring 30 per cent of land and ocean as protected by 2030.

He also addressed the need for adequate and sustainable financing for protected areas management. The Ministry and its agencies – Forestry Department and NEPA were working diligently to secure the technical and financial resources for the management of protected areas.

Once finalised, the Policy would be positioned to have a significant impact on the nation's biodiversity, cultural heritage and help in promoting economic growth and development and the social well-being of the community.

Senator Samuda underlined the importance of engaging and educating Jamaicans about the protected areas system. He said that by strengthening communication and public awareness, a culture of conservation would be fostered, and the involvement of local communities secured.

He said the insight, experience and recommendations of the stakeholders would be invaluable as the Ministry worked to refine the draft policy. He stressed that it was through collaboration and active participation in consultations such as this that facilitated the development of a policy that truly reflected issues, concerns and needs of all stakeholders in the island's protected areas.

He encouraged proactive engagement and cooperation between and among government, community based and non-government organisations, academia and the private sector to effectively manage the country's protected areas. He reminded all present that protecting our cultural heritage was not merely a duty but a legacy for future generations.

Ms Guthrie thanked the Senator for his insightful and informative remarks. She advised that Permanent Secretary Arlene Williams would join the consultation later in the morning. She invited Ms Deandra Roberts of the National Fisheries Division to make the first presentation.

Marine Protected Areas in Jamaica: Fish Sanctuaries; Deandra Roberts, Research Officer, Protected Areas Branch, National Fisheries Authority (NFA)

Ms Roberts provided the context in which the concept of fish sanctuaries was established in Jamaica. J.L. Munro was the first to recommend the creation of sanctuaries as a strategy to manage coastal fisheries resources sustainably and to protect them from over-exploitation. Munro (1974 & 1983) suggested the introduction of fishery reserves to assist in re-building resources in Jamaica. Munro and his colleagues, Aiken and Haughton, had made thorough

investigations of the biology and ecology and fishery dynamics of the important commercial reef fishes in Jamaica's coastal waters and Pedro Bank (offshore).

Aiken and Haughton were the first to set out a management plan for Jamaican fishery resources which included a section on the establishment of fish sanctuaries. Later, they identified 12 locations for the first fishery reserves or protected areas in Jamaica.

Ms Roberts listed the benefits of a fish sanctuary as follows:

- Increase in the fish populations affected by overfishing, habitat degradation and land-based nonpoint-source pollution;
- The spillover effect which would see an increase in fish stock not only in sanctuaries but adjoining areas;
- Maintenance of the genetic diversity of marine species within Jamaica's water;
- Enabling species to reach full sexual maturity;
- Improvement in the catch per unit effort for fishermen;
- Increased opportunities for eco-tourism growth; and
- Provision of environments for further research and development initiatives.

The selection of fish sanctuaries was based on habitat assessment, stakeholder consultations and the existence of an entity to partner with the NFA. Ms Roberts described the management arrangements which were generally put in place for the administration of fish sanctuaries.

- There were two types of management systems. Some sanctuaries were managed by donor parties, and some were supported by subventions from the government
- Sanctuaries were managed by public private partnerships which required the signing of MOUs between the parties.
- If no partner NGO could be readily identified in a particular location, the Fisheries Division assumed the management of the Sanctuary and
- Training, budgetary support, research and development, instituting policy and enabling legislation, and monitoring control and surveillance of the Sanctuary.

She outlined the status of fish sanctuaries on the island. Fish sanctuary status, she advised, was authorized by the Minister of Agriculture under Section 17 of the Fisheries Act, 2018. It was, therefore, illegal and punishable by law to engage in any unauthorized fishing activities in the demarcated zones. She noted that, since 2010, Jamaica has established a network of 20 fish sanctuaries spanning an area of 10,895.32 (ha). It was intended to increase the area of our coastal fisheries waters being managed as sanctuaries to 20,000 hectares by 2027.

Declared Fish Sanctuaries in Jamaica

	Names Of Declared Fish Sanctuary	Parish	Year Declared	Managed by	Approximate sizes (Ha)
1	Three Bays	St. Catherine	2009	C-CAM Foundation	1,261.3
2	Galleon Harbour	St Catherine	2009	C-CAM Foundation	1,872.7
3	Salt Harbour	St Catherine	2009	C-CAM Foundation	1,022.1
4	Galleon St. Elizabeth	St Elizabeth	2009	The Breds Foundation	260.6
5	Sandals Whitehouse	Westmoreland	2012	Sandals Foundation	294
6	Bluefields Bay	Westmoreland	2009	Bluefields Bay Fisherman’s Friendly Society	1,359.409
7	Orange Bay	Hanover	2009	Negril Area Environmental Protection Trust	535.514
8	Montego point	St James	2009	Montego Bay Marine Park Trust (MBMPT)	302.796
9	Discovery Bay	St Ann	2009	Alloa Fisherman’s Cooperative	168.385
10	Sandals Boscobel	St Mary	2010	Sandals Foundation	99.115
11	Sandals Boscobel East	St Mary	2016	Sandals Foundation	18.7
12	Sandals Boscobel West	St Mary	2016	Sandals Foundation	21.0
13	Oracabessa Bay	St Mary	2010	Oracabessa Bay Foundation/ Fisherman’s Group	83.7
14	Bowden Harbour	St Thomas	1986	National Fisheries Authority	455
15	Bogue Island Lagoon	St. James	1979	MBMPT	450.0
16	Alligator Head	Portland	2016	Alligator Head Foundation	538.0
17	Bird Cay	Pedro Bank	2012	National Fisheries Authority	1,515.0
18	White River	St Mary	2017	White River Marine Foundation	150.0
19	Lucea	Hanover	2023	Grand Palladium Hotel	341.0
20	Grange Pen	St. James	2023	IberoStar Hotel	147.0
		TOTAL (Using Google earth)			10895.32 (ha)

National Environment & Planning Agency and Protected Areas, Hugarcia Green, Protected Areas Branch, National Environmental Planning Agency (NEPA)

Ms Green outlined NEPA’s primary function as providing the governance framework for the effective management of Jamaica’s physical environment for the conservation, protection and proper use of its natural resources and to manage protected areas.

She identified relevant legislation, governed by NEPA, with responsibility for protected areas including:

- Natural Resources Conservation Authority Act (national parks, marine parks & “protected areas”) had declared 12 protected areas, with other areas to be declared ecologically sensitive areas
- Beach Control Act (“protected areas”) with two areas
- Wild Life Protection Act (game reserves/sanctuaries) with 20 areas.

It was noted that additional protected areas would be declared.

Management Planning

- Protected Areas under the NRCA Act
- 1) Black River Protected Area
 - 2) Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park
 - 3) Cockpit Country Protected Area
 - 4) Coral Spring- Mountain Spring Protected Area
 - 5) Mason River Protected Area
 - 6) Montego Bay Marine Park
 - 7) Negril Environmental Protection Area
 - 8) Negril Marine Park
 - 9) Ocho Rios Marine Park Protected Area
 - 10) Palisadoes- Port Royal Protected Area
 - 11) Pedro Cays Protected Area
 - 12) Portland Bight Protected Area

Protected areas are guided by a management plan that describes and sets out the vision, objectives, strategies, management programmes and actions to be implemented over a given period of time.

Management programmes implemented included:

- Biodiversity Conservation
- Public Awareness, Education and Outreach
- Monitoring and Enforcement and
- Governance and Administration.

Biodiversity Conservation included:

- Mangrove planting
- Clean-up activities – beaches and mangroves
- Waste Management Programme competitions
- Sea turtle monitoring
- Erection of protected area signs showing boundaries

Patrolling and Enforcement – included the execution of terrestrial and marine patrols to ensure compliance with regulations governing the protected areas.

Public education and Awareness involved:

- Competitions with schools and community groups
- Environmental signature day activities
- Sensitization/training sessions with stakeholders
- Social media posts/websites (story maps) which aim to create greater awareness of groups and activities in the PAS.

Governance and administration

Partnerships were highlighted as being integral to the management of protected areas and the agency benefitted from the collaboration of several other agencies and departments as well as non-government organizations. These include:

- Management of protected areas (e.g. Jamaica Conservation and Development Trust, Caribbean Coastal Area Management Foundation and Montego Bay Marine Park Trust) ;
- Project implementation support (Institute of Jamaica) ;
- Property management in protected areas (Urban Development Corporation) Committees; and
- Multi-stakeholder Management Committees (in cases where there are no partnership agreements) strengthen collaborative efforts towards the implementation of management activities within the protected areas.

Funding sources are the Government of Jamaica and Natural Resources Conservation Authority (NRCA), projects and fees approved budget (2024-2025) and NRCA - J\$35.5 million and the GOJ - J\$44.3 million

Recap

Ms Guthrie reiterated key points from the presentation

- The protected areas for which NEPA has oversight were declared under three pieces of legislation: The NRCA Act, Beach Control Act and the Wildlife Protection Act;
- NEPA will be working on five of the 15 ecologically sensitive areas previously declared by the Prime Minister;
- NEPA has co-management arrangements with NGOs, government agencies and other stakeholders to run the protected areas.

Ms Guthrie noted that Mr Selvenious Walters, slated to present about the Jamaica National Heritage Trust was unable to attend due to illness. Ms Georgia Rookwood would make the presentation.

Protected National Heritage, Georgia Rookwood, Senior Research Officer, Archaeology Division, Jamaica National Heritage Trust

Ms Rookwood reported that the Jamaica National Heritage Trust was a statutory body under the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport. Its mandate, she said, was to oversee the preservation of national monuments and anything designated as protected national heritage for the benefit of the island by:

- Promoting the preservation of national monuments and anything designated as protected national heritage for the benefit of the Island.
- Conducting such research as it thinks necessary or desirable for the purposes of the performance of its functions.
- Recommending or undertaking development deemed necessary for the preservation of national monuments or heritage sites.
- Recording any precious objects or works of art to be preserved and to identify and record any species of botanical or animal life to be protected

Functions were described as:

- Legally protecting heritage sites and buildings;
- Conservation of archaeological objects;

- Providing technical advice to owners of heritage sites;
- Guiding the development/restoration of heritage sites and buildings, through its Heritage Development Review Committee (HDRC);
- Conducting archaeological and historical research; and
- Providing archaeological and heritage impact assessments.

Research and Documentation

The JNHT conducts research to gather information about Jamaica's heritage sites. This research helps to understand the historical significance and cultural importance of these sites. Documentation efforts ensure that valuable information about heritage sites is recorded and preserved for future generations

Education and Awareness

The JNHT works to raise awareness about Jamaica's heritage sites among the public. Through educational programs, outreach initiatives, and promotional campaigns, the JNHT encourages appreciation and respect for the country's cultural heritage. This helps to foster a sense of pride and ownership among Jamaicans.

Identification and Declaration

The JNHT identifies significant cultural and historical sites across Jamaica. Once identified, these sites are declared as heritage sites, acknowledging their importance to Jamaican history and culture.

Conservation and Preservation

The JNHT is responsible for the conservation and preservation of declared heritage sites. This involves implementing measures to protect these sites from damage, deterioration, or destruction. Conservation efforts may include restoration projects, maintenance work, and implementing guidelines for sustainable use.

Regulation and Management

The JNHT regulates activities within declared heritage sites to ensure their protection and preservation. This may involve establishing guidelines for development, land use, and visitor access. By managing these sites effectively, the JNHT helps to balance conservation needs with sustainable development goals.

Collaboration and Partnerships

The JNHT collaborates with various stakeholders, including government agencies, local communities, nonprofit organizations, and international partners to achieve its objectives. By working together, these entities leverage resources, expertise, and support to safeguard Jamaica's cultural heritage effectively.

Recap

Ms Guthrie noted that presentations had been made by the National Heritage Trust, National Fisheries Authority and the National Environment Planning Agency, three of the four agencies with oversight of the island's protected area system. The Forestry Department had not presented but was scheduled to do so at the next session. However, representatives were online and available to respond to any questions that participants might raise. Mr Jerome Smith and Donna Lowe, from the Forestry Department, were online.

Ms Guthrie noted that the Forestry Department was mandated to ensure compliance with the Forestry Act of 1996 which was currently being repealed and replaced. The term protected area in the current legislation would not be used in the new legislation. Ms Miller, in her presentation on the Draft Overarching Policy, would advise what had replaced this term. She added that the Forestry Department had responsibility for forest reserves and forest management areas. The former were highly restricted regarding the activities allowed, while the latter was less so. The Forestry Department was promoting that no mining activities be allowed in these areas, and this would be reflected in the legislation that was currently being worked on.

Ms Guthrie noted that the Policy would be discussed and then the Omnibus Overarching legislation that will be pursued after the finalisation of the Policy. The Forestry Department would be present at the next consultation with the private sector and at the virtual town hall meeting on July 11, 2024.

Discussion

The discussion focussed on the governance framework for fishermen's beaches and the importance of regulating land-based activities which negatively impacted the marine space, particularly fish sanctuaries.

Treveion Manning, St James Municipal Corporation raised several issues.

- He requested clarification on whether fishermen's beaches located in proximity to the two fish sanctuaries in St James were considered a part of the fish sanctuaries and how and by which entities they were regulated and managed.
- He asked if there was any room for the management of beaches to be included in the Policy.
- He cited Harvey's Beach in St James where the St. James Municipal Corporation had had to collaborate with the Public Health Department to address activities on that beach, highlighting the fact that land-based activities impacted the marine space, particularly in terms of the management of waste disposal.

- He highlighted the importance of ensuring that fishermen's beaches were reserved for fishermen and not appropriated by others with the result being the building of large structures on them.

Deandra Roberts, National Fisheries Authority, acknowledged that the Montego Bay Marine Park comprised two fish sanctuaries, comanaged by NEPA and the NFA. On the declaration of the sanctuaries over 10 years previously there had been consultations with the fishermen in that area to ensure they were fully apprised of the regulations and activities. The NFA had not experienced any issues with fishermen in those protected areas.

She advised that the sanctuary prohibits overfishing in the marine space but did not address activities executed on the beach. She added that the Beach Control Act, which regulated activities allowed on beaches, fell under NEPA's portfolio.

Stephen Smikle, National Fisheries Authority, clarified that the sanctuaries prevented overharvesting and ensured a sustainable fish population. He reported that other legislation and entities dealt with activities on fishing beaches. He recommended that activities on fishermen's beaches might be addressed by a cooperative through the implementation of a management plan and advised that specific issues be brought to the attention of the relevant agency, primarily the parish councils, in addressing local management issues.

He said an interagency approach would be taken in bringing about a solution to any issues reported.

Ms Guthrie observed that some significant issues were being raised which would inform the government's policy. She referred to the fact that the issues highlighted by Mr Manning were in direct reference to protected areas in Montego Bay and the NRCA also had jurisdiction over protected areas in this region and recommended the input of NEPA on their activities in the area.

Carla Gordon, Manager, Protected Areas Branch, NEPA, advised that the boundaries of some protected areas overlapped, resulting in the existence of multiple jurisdictions. The Agency had generated a management plan for the Montego Bay Marine Park to provide guidelines for activities as well as zoning plans to reduce conflicting uses. There were also marine park regulations. Any activities planned would require the interagency approach that Mr Smikle recommended. The Agency has an agreement with the Montego Bay Marine Park Trust which managed the site. Many of the activities previously mentioned in relation to biodiversity conservation, patrolling and monitoring were controlled by the Trust. She noted that NEPA would welcome further discussions on these matters.

Ms Guthrie paused to welcome Permanent Secretary of MEGJC, Mrs. Arlene Williams who had joined the meeting and invited her to make a brief comment.

Permanent Secretary Arlene Williams thanked Ms Guthrie and her team for convening the day's consultation. She expressed the Ministry's excitement and satisfaction that the Policy was moving rapidly towards becoming a White Paper and its conclusion as a Policy. PS Williams thanked the

presenters for their input which was integral to the process. She pointed to the essential role of consultations in the policy development process which was taken very seriously by the government. She emphasised that all issues raised were being recorded to facilitate the generation of a fulsome policy that benefitted from the input of all stakeholders. She commended them for taking time out to advance the Policy.

Ms Guthrie shared that some 300 areas had been designated protected areas under several pieces of legislation – NEPA: the Wildlife Conservation Act, Beach Control Act and the NRCA Act; NFA: Fisheries Act; JNHT: National Heritage Trust Act; and Forestry Department: Forest Act. These protected areas embraced both terrestrial and marine spaces.

The Cockpit Country Protected Area, declared under the NRCA Act, was the largest protected terrestrial area in the English-speaking Caribbean. She underscored the important benefits and values to be derived from the PAs including the support of economic development and social well-being and conservation of natural resources. She cited Mr Smikle who had noted that fish sanctuaries safeguarded the country's fishery resources. The PAS represented an essential part of our cultural identity and thus had to be conserved.

Overarching Policy for Jamaica's Protected Areas System: Toni Ann Miller, Director, Natural Resources, Environment and Risk Management Branch (Acting), MEGJC

Ms Miller reiterated that the consultation was an invaluable channel through which the Ministry sought to solicit the views of stakeholders to assist in ensuring that the final Policy was comprehensive and accurate, reflecting the views and concerns of the key stakeholders.

Ms Miller established that the major objective of the Overarching Policy for Jamaica's Protected Areas System (PAS) was to effectively and equitably manage protected areas for the protection and conservation of the country's biodiversity, preserve cultural heritage and glean social and economic benefits to be derived from their protection.

Background

Ms Miller advised that the development of the Policy was guided by the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms. Section 13(3)(I) specified the rights of all Jamaicans to enjoy a healthy and productive environment. She pointed out that it was also aligned with, Jamaica's National Development Plan, Vision 2030, with a focus on outcome 13 which focused on sustainable

management of the island's natural resources and Outcome 14 which addressed hazard risk reduction and adaptation to climate change.

International Commitments/Country-led Initiatives

The Policy also sought to consider several international commitments/country-led initiatives including:

- Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework
- Agenda 2030 and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People – Jamaica has committed to protecting 30% of its land and marine/coastal areas by 2030
- Global Ocean Alliance
- Leaders Pledge for Nature

Definition of a Protected Area

The definition of a protected area was presented as a “clearly defined geographical space, recognized, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of biodiversity with associated ecosystem services and cultural values”. Examples of protected areas included: Palisadoes/ Port Royal and the Black River protected areas. The objective of designating these areas is to ensure the long term conservation of biodiversity, with associated ecosystem services and cultural values.

Values & Benefits of Protected Areas were listed as:

- Protection and conservation of biodiversity
- Regulation of climate
- Provision of food, water, raw materials, medicinal and genetic resources
- Maintenance of ecosystem processes: soil formation, nutrient cycling
- Opportunities for recreation and support to key economic sectors such as health and tourism
- Enhance mental wellbeing
- Cultural identity
- Habitats for plants and animals
- Enhances food security
- Protect coastal areas

An account of the status of Protected Areas in Jamaica saw approximately 22.71 per cent of Jamaica's land and 15.47 per cent of the country's archipelagic waters as being protected. In recent years, the following areas have been designated as protected areas under the NRCA Act: Pedro Cays and surrounding waters in 2023; the Cockpit Country in 2022; and the Black River Landscape and Seascape Protected Area in 2021.

Several threats to protected areas were identified as: clearing of vegetation/forests for agriculture; unsustainable hunting and harvesting; mining and quarrying activities; habitat conversion; timber harvesting; encroachment; destructive fishing and farming practices; climate change; pollution; illegal fires; and invasive alien species

Ms Miller advised that several policies and plans had direct relevance to the protected areas.

- National Land Policy of Jamaica, 1997
- The Forest Policy for Jamaica, 2017
- Biosafety Policy for Jamaica, 2021
- The National Minerals Policy, 2017–2030
- The Climate Change Policy Framework, 2023
- Watersheds Policy for Jamaica, 2024
- National Policy for Gender Equality (NPGE), 2011
- Protected Areas System Master Plan (PASMP)
- The National Forest Management and Conservation Plan, 2016–2026
- Master Plan for Sustainable Tourism Development
- National Swamp and Mangrove Management Plan, 2023-2033 (draft)
- Ecosystem Restoration Plan (draft)

Several legislation also directly related to the PAS included the:

- Fisheries Act, 2018
- Forest Act, 1996
- Forest Regulations, 2001
- Jamaica National Heritage Trust Act, 1985
- Natural Resources Conservation Authority Act, 1991
- Natural Resources Conservation (Protected Areas) Regulations, 2023
- Natural Resources (National Parks) Regulations, 1993
- Natural Resources (Marine Parks) Regulations, 1992

Ms Miller also highlighted the key stakeholders involved in the management of the PAS.

- National Fisheries Authority
 - Fishermen Cooperatives
- Forestry Department
 - Local Forest Management Committees
- National Environment and Planning Agency
 - Jamaica National Heritage Trust
 - Caribbean Coastal Area Management Foundation
 - Jamaica Conservation and Development Trust
 - Montego Bay Marine Park Trust
- Urban Development Corporation

VISION: Jamaica's protected areas system is ecologically representative and sustainably managed, preserving its ecological functions and services and conserving its rich biological diversity and cultural heritage for the benefit of present and future generations.

Types of Protected Areas

The Policy outlines 14 types of protected areas including forest reserves, national parks, marine parks, fish sanctuaries, game reserves, forest management areas among others. The Policy seeks to align these types of protected areas with the IUCN categories which are: national parks, strict nature reserves, national monuments, protected landscape/seascape, protected area with sustainable use of natural resources and habitat/species management areas.

Types of Protected Areas	Legislation	Equivalent IUCN Categories	
Strict Nature Reserve (new)	NRCA Act	Ia	Strict Nature Reserve
Forest Reserves	Forest Act	Ia	Strict Nature Reserve
National Parks	NRCA Act	II	National Park
Marine Parks	NRCA Act	II	National Park
National Monuments	JNHT Act		
National Monument (natural site)	JNHT Act	III	Natural Monument
Protected National Heritage	JNHT Act		
Protected National Heritage (natural site)	JNHT Act	III	Natural Monument
Fish Sanctuaries	Fisheries Act	IV	Habitat/Species Management Area
Game Reserves	Wildlife Protection Act	IV	Habitat/Species Management Area
Protected landscaping/ Seascape (new)	NRCA Act	V	Protected landscape/seascape
Managed Resource Area (new)	NRCA Act	VI	Protected area with sustainable use of natural resources
Forest Management Area	Forest Act	VI	Protected area with sustainable use of natural resources
Fisheries Management Areas/Zones and Aquaculture Management Areas/Zones	Fisheries Act	IV	Habitat/Species Management Area

Institutional Arrangements- Protected Areas System

The diagram below portrays the framework for the management of the island's protected areas.

Ms Miller noted that existing entities would continue to undertake their current responsibilities. The Ministry with responsibility for the environment with its agencies: Forestry Department and NEPA/NRCA; the Ministry responsible for fisheries with the National Fisheries Authority and the Ministry with responsibility for culture and the JNHT. Ms Miller reported that the Protected Areas Committee (PAC) would be the body with responsibility for institutional coordination of the PAS and to ensure the effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the policy and its plans. The PAC would work in collaboration with the parent Ministries for the entities with management responsibility for protected areas, including the JNHT, NFA, NEPA and the Forestry Department. Cabinet was the final decision maker.

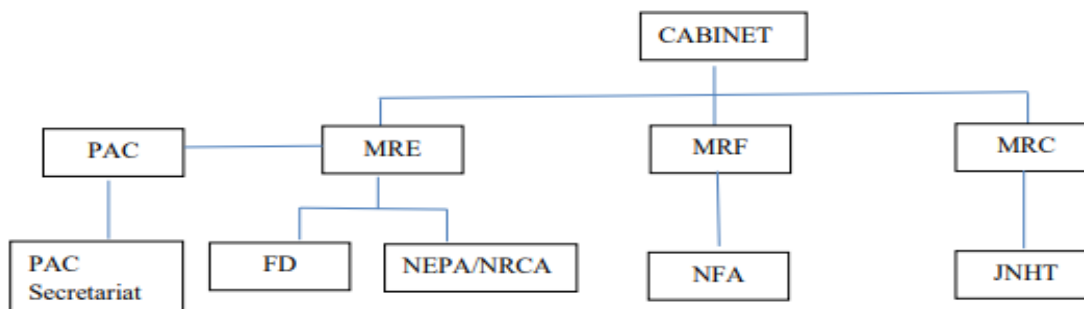


Figure 3: Institutional Arrangements-Protected Areas System

JNHT-Jamaica National Heritage Trust;
 MRC-Ministry responsible for Culture; MRE-Ministry responsible for the Environment
 MRF-Ministry responsible for Fisheries; NFA-National Fisheries Authority
 NEPA/NRCA - National Environment and Planning Agency/ Natural Resources Conservation Authority
 (Secretariat to the PAC)

The Implementation Plan

Ms Miller proceeded to provide a synopsis of the six objectives of the policy with a selection of their attendant implementation strategies and activities. A detailed accounting may be found in the Policy document between pages 79 and 110. In addition, there were indicators, suggested timelines, responsible entities and indicative costs. Stakeholders were implored to read these in full for a comprehensive understanding of the Policy and to be able to recommend appropriate amendments.

OBJECTIVE 1: Develop enabling policies and legislation and strengthen the governance arrangements for the effective management of a comprehensive PAS.

Implementation Strategies and Activities

1.1 Implement mechanisms for improved governance

- Enshrine the PAC in the Overarching Protected Areas legislation
- Amend Natural Resources (National Parks) Regulations, 1993
- Amend Marine Parks Regulations 1992 (This will be amended to have the PAC handling matters that the Council or Marine Advisory Board would have dealt with previously)
- Increase the number of local forest management committees (LFMCs) and enhance their capacity
- Share current/accurate data and information about new and existing PAS declared/designated
- Increase active involvement of NGOs and CBOs in the planning and management of PAS

Responsible entities: Ministry with responsibility for environment (MRE), Ministry with responsibility for local government (MRLG), PAC, NEPA/NRCA, JNHT, NFA and FD

1.2 Develop review and strengthen existing legislation and policies related to PAS management

- Promulgation - Overarching Protected Areas legislation: Ms Miller cited the Prime Minister's statement on the promulgation of the Overarching Protected Areas legislation which will include a definition of protected areas, types of protected areas and the criteria used in the designation of protected areas
- Mainstream biodiversity conservation and PA management into sector plans and programmes

Responsible entities: MRE in collaboration with other relevant Ministries

OBJECTIVE 2: Build and maintain a representative, inter-connected, resilient PAS that maintains ecological processes and systems, promotes human well-being and conserves, protects and preserves the country's natural and cultural heritage.

The effective management of the PAS was deemed important to maintain the integrity of the country's ecosystem.

Implementation Strategies and Activities

2.1 Declare/ designate PAs to address under-represented coastal and marine, inland waters and terrestrial ecosystems

- Incorporate PAs in development orders, local sustainable development plans and strategies
- Establish and maintain ecological connectivity between PAs
- Where lands contain cultural assets the Commissioner of Lands will include an endorsement on the title indicating same
- Identification and inclusion of national biodiversity conservation targets for PAs in the NBSAP
- Implement the National Mangrove and Swamp Forest Management Plan

2.2 Integrate nature-based solutions into disaster risk reduction efforts, strengthening disaster resilience at the local and community levels

- Review parish Disaster Risk Management Plans to ensure nature-based solutions and/or ecosystem-based approaches are considered
- Develop and execute capacity building programmes
- Mainstream disaster risk reduction strategies in PAs

OBJECTIVE 3: Improve protected area management effectiveness

Implementation Strategies and Activities

3.1 Improve PA site-based planning and management

- Prepare, revise and implement management plans and preservation schemes to include ecosystem restoration activities
- Prepare and implement business plans for PAs

3.2 Periodically assess the status of keystone, threatened, endangered and rare species to identify appropriate management strategies to ensure their conservation

- Assess the status of keystone, threatened, endangered and rare species in PAs
- Develop and implement management strategies for effective conservation

3.3 Improve monitoring and enforcement

- Increase monitoring activities
- Evaluate current monitoring and enforcement strategies
- identify gaps and areas for improvement
- assess new methods for surveillance and enforcement including the effective use of technology

OBJECTIVE 4: Strengthen communication, education and public awareness and enhance and secure the involvement of local communities and other stakeholders in the conservation and protection of the PAS

Implementation Strategies and Activities

4.1 Increase public education and awareness

- Develop and implement strategies, programmes and plans to increase awareness and understanding of the values and benefits of PAs and PAS

4.2 Involve stakeholders in PAs management

- Utilize a variety of mechanisms and programmes to facilitate the involvement of stakeholders including local communities taking into consideration youth and gender equity
- Develop and implement legislation - ABS legislation for access to genetic resources and equitable sharing of benefits
- National PA Database to store information on protected areas

OBJECTIVE 5: To provide adequate and sustainable financing for the PAs within the national PAS

Implementation Strategies and Activities

5.1 Identify and generate funds from diverse sources and enhance the effective and efficient use of funds

- Develop and implement sustainable finance plans
- Identify and generate additional funds for PA management

- Identify potential sources of funding to increase contributions to the NCTFJ (National Conservation Trust Fund)
- Secure a percentage of annual revenue generated from the Environmental Levy for the management of protected areas
- Development and implementation of a PAs resource mobilization strategy

OBJECTIVE 6: Ensure that scientific and traditional knowledge contribute to the establishment and effectiveness of PAs and the PAS

6.1 To utilize scientific and traditional knowledge for PA management

- Continue to pursue formal agreements for partnerships in scientific research
- Develop and implement a national research agenda
- Develop a scientific database on the status of the island's flora, fauna and cultural resources to inform decision-making
- Promotion of scientific research in PAs and appropriate framework developed and implemented.

Ms Miller pointed out that the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework could be found on page 94. It outlines the indicators, expected results, targets, means of verification, methods of data collection. She reported that the M&E activity would be led by MEGJC in consultation with the PAC.

Recap

Ms Guthrie thanked Ms Miller for the comprehensive overview of the draft policy. She informed stakeholders that their input was required to refine the document and asked them to examine the draft for gaps in policy prescriptions. Encouraged participants to read through the document and send written comments by July 2 to ermb.gov.jm.

Ms Guthrie reminded participants that there were experts from the relevant agencies with responsibility for the PAS – NFA, FD, NEPA and JNHT –online to respond to comments and questions.

Ms Guthrie advised that hard copies of the draft Policy were available at parish libraries across the island as well as at the offices of municipal corporations. Additionally, electronic copies may be accessed on the Ministry's website – www.megjc.gov.jm. The series of consultations would continue on June 20 with private sector stakeholders, July 28 with NGOs, CBOs, and academia, and on July 11 the series would be concluded with a town hall meeting. She invited all participants to attend the town hall meeting.

Discussion

The following questions were provided as a guide for the discussion.

1. In relation to existing policies, legislation and state and non-state actors. Are there additional gaps or other matters to be addressed by the Policy?
2. Are the Vision, Goal and Objectives adequate?
3. Are strategies and activities adequate?
4. Are there any key programmes, projects, strategies, plans or other initiatives (past, ongoing, or planned) that may have an impact on the Policy's context and its recommended objectives, strategies/actions?
5. Other recommendations?

Ms Guthrie pointed participants to the objectives outlined in the Policy, which could be found on page 70 and asked them to examine them with a view to identifying whether any other policies might be addressed as well as the governance framework.

She reiterated that each objective was accompanied by implementation strategies and activities. The implementation plan was comprehensive outlining all the implementation strategies, of which Ms Miller had highlighted only a few in her presentation. The 10-year implementation plan also comprised activities, timelines, responsible entities and indicative costs which, she observed, might likely increase before the completion of the Policy.

Ms Guthrie pointed, also, to Appendix 3 which listed proposed legislative amendments, noting that this represented a small subset and Appendix 3 would be expanded with progressive consultations. She asked for further suggestions for the strengthening of the legislative framework for the PAS. She reminded stakeholders that once the Policy was finalised the drafting of overarching Protected Area legislation would proceed.

She pointed to the risk matrix on page 113.

Appendix 1 comprised a list of declared protected areas under the NRCA Act, Beach Control Act and Wild Life Protection Act. It, too, was a work in progress and would be updated with lists from the NFA, JNHT and the FD. The Policy also included maps indicating the locations of the protected areas.

The floor was opened for discussion. She asked participants to first consider Objective 1 in relation to other policies and legislative issues that might be addressed in the governance framework.

Sharisa Buckle, Senior Technical Officer, Climate Change Branch, MEGJC, asked how the Policy addressed the ongoing issue between farmers and the bauxite company in relation to mining in the Cockpit Country.

Ms Guthrie reminded her that when the Prime Minister declared the Cockpit Country a protected area under the NRCA Act he had indicated the prohibition of mining in the area. It was a provision in the ministerial order so that was already dealt with. The Prime Minister had also declared that there would be no mining in the Dry Harbour Mountains which, while not yet declared a protected area, was considered an ecologically sensitive area. In his 2023/24 financial year presentation he declared 15 areas, including the Dry Harbour area, as ecologically sensitive areas.

NEPA and the Forestry Department would have the responsibility to decide whether these areas should be governed under the NRCA Act as protected areas or the Forest Act as forest reserves. She advised that the Forest Act was being repealed and replaced. A provision was being contemplated under the new legislation that prohibited mining in forest reserves or forest management areas.

She noted that this document, as it currently stood, did not address mining, specifically, however, it addressed issues of pollution and biodiversity and the intention for forest reserve and forest management areas was that there would be no mining. She asked Ms Buckle to advise where in the document this might be addressed.

Ms Buckle advised that she had not gone through the document but had read about the problem, pointing out that the aftereffects of mining would include pollution, a threat to the biodiversity of the area. It was her opinion that efforts should be made to address this in the document.

Ms Guthrie asked Ms Buckle to confirm that her recommendation was a specific reference to mining and the need to rehabilitate areas that had been mined to recover biodiversity. She noted that the section of the draft policy that dealt with threats cited mining as a threat to protected areas (page 20). She said Ms Buckley's recommendation to have specific reference to mining as a policy prescription would be considered in the finalisation of the draft.

Ingrid Todd, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Mining, concurred with the speakers who highlighted the issues related to the Cockpit Country. She noted that the document defined protected areas and defined types of protected areas but suggested the expansion of scope to include examples. She interpreted the previous comments as a wish for more specific references. She committed to send comments from her Ministry after they had had the opportunity to go through the document.

Ms Guthrie asked for comments on the legislative framework and governance arrangements. She noted that the administrative arrangements for protected areas included a Protective Areas Committee (PAC) to assist with the coordination. The PAC comprised protected area managers as well as other key stakeholders. The PAC would be enshrined in law after the finalisation of the Policy. This information could be found on page 71 and 72.

Participants were asked for their views on the governance framework including the role of the PAC and its effectiveness. It was not currently included under the strategy that cited education but could be utilised to assist with education and awareness raising. She also asked for recommendations regarding any other existing bodies that might be effective in assisting in this regard or was the PAC sufficient.

Ms Guthrie referred participants to pages 71-72 of implementation strategy 1.2b: "The Ministries, Departments and Agencies responsible for forestry, tourism, land use, natural resources, culture, planning and mining will ensure policy coherence and remove or reduce conflicts in policy positions and land use and ensure that protected areas and the protected areas system are

streamlined in the decision-making process.” She asked participants to provide comments on the statement. She cited the discussion on the Cockpit Country area, underscoring the rich biodiversity of the area as the home of some of Jamaica’s primary forests, a major source of water, and many interests in this area including mining, cultural heritage, and conservation. She acknowledged conflicts among agencies in treating particular areas, thus underscoring the need for policy coherence. Cabinet, she pointed out, was the final arbiter.

Deandra Roberts referred to Mr Manning’s earlier statement regarding pollution in protected areas. She contended that fish sanctuaries were impacted by land-based pollution and thus assumed that other protected areas were also impacted by activities in the adjoining or peripheral areas and, hence, the Policy needed to address the management of those areas as well. She underlined that if buffer zones were not effectively managed then protected areas were at risk.

Ms Guthrie conceded the need to be more deliberate in dealing with issues related to land-based pollution and to climate change and their impact on protected areas to further strengthen the document.

Mr Manning pointed to the imperative of including land use in development orders and local sustainable development plans that municipal corporations are legislated to carry out. He noted that the St. James Municipal Corporation was currently preparing sustainable development plans. Development orders were under review for confirmation. Consequently, it would be prudent to highlight any issues to be included in those orders. He observed that squatting, a major challenge, was not highlighted in the Policy. Informal developments, he stressed, represented a major problem, particularly on government land, and were significant sources of pollution and degradation of some PAs.

Ms Guthrie noted that activity 2.1.2, on page 83 of the implementation plan, cited development orders “Incorporate development orders in local sustainable development plans and strategies”; also on page 85 2.1.6 “The Government of Jamaica continues to pursue the designation of ecologically sensitive areas”. She, again, referred to the Prime Minister’s declaration of additional protected areas.

Ms Guthrie reiterated the importance being placed on land-based sources of pollution. She acknowledged that the issue of squatting was a challenge for protected areas and the Policy had to be more deliberate in addressing these issues. Page 85 2.1.7 looks at climate change “Integration of climate change adaptation measures in protected area planning, management strategies and the design of the protected areas system.”

Ms asked participants to turn their attention to the Vision, Goal and Objectives.

VISION: Jamaica’s protected areas system is ecologically representative and sustainably managed, preserving its ecological functions and services and conserving its rich biological diversity and cultural heritage for the benefit of present and future generations.

Ms Guthrie asked participants for comments on the proposed text of the vision statement.

Dionne Newell, Natural History Museum, IOJ said her comment related to style rather than content. She thought the statement could be tightened up by removing two “ands”.

Ingrid Todd suggested that the vision was more in keeping with a mission statement. She volunteered to reformulate the statement to reflect a vision rather than a mission statement.

GOAL: To effectively and equitably manage protected areas for the protection and conservation of biodiversity and cultural heritage as well as for social and economic benefits

Ms Guthrie focused on the goal on page 70. There being no recommendations she pointed stakeholders' attention to the six objectives.

1. Develop enabling policies and legislation and strengthen the governance arrangements for the effective management of a comprehensive PAS.
 - 2: Build and maintain a representative, inter-connected, resilient PAS that maintains ecological processes and systems, promotes human wellbeing and conserves, protects and preserves the country's natural and cultural heritage.
 - 3: Improve protected area management effectiveness
 - 4: Strengthen communication, education and public awareness and enhance and secure the involvement of local communities and other stakeholders in the conservation and protection of the PAS
 - 5: To provide adequate and sustainable financing for the PAs within the national PAS
- Implementation Strategies and Activities
6. Ensure that scientific and traditional knowledge contribute to the establishment and effectiveness of PAs

Ms Guthrie asked for recommendations on any additional objectives on topics such as land-based pollution and criteria for the classification of protected areas. She also asked for suggestions regarding the wording of the objectives.

Objective 1.

Dionne Newell cited objective 1, requesting clarification as to whether there was an existing enabling policy to be amended or was such a policy to be developed.

Ms Guthrie explained that the current Policy would replace the 1997 Policy and sought to update it by including issues not addressed in the earlier document. She noted that once the Policy was finalised the team would move to address the Overarching Protected Areas legislation. There was no legislation dedicated to PAs but there were various legislation that addressed different aspects of PAs. The overarching legislation was intended to coordinate the legislation falling under respective agencies into a more cohesive system. The Policy would inform the drafting of the overarching protective areas legislation.

Omar Chedda, Director Investment Division, Ministry of Investment and Commerce suggested that Objective 1 include the phrase “to ensure proper alignment with laws, regulations and policies at national, regional and international levels”. He noted that within the environmental community policies were sometimes instituted that were not aligned with other areas. He underscored the importance of being aware of what was happening in other sectors as well as regionally. He advised that CARICOM was putting in place a regional investment policy and, internationally, negotiations were underway in relation to laws impacting investments, specifically investor state dispute settlements. This meant that a declared protected area which impacted an existing investment could be taken to international arbitration and the agency/government sue for USD millions. Awareness of legal implications was vital, he cautioned.

Gillian Guthrie explained that this had been her reason for asking colleagues to opine on implementation strategy 1.2 (page 72) which addressed policy coherence. 1.2.b stated “The Ministries, Departments and Agencies ... will ensure policy coherence and remove or reduce conflicts in policy positions and land-use and ensure that protected areas and the protected areas system are streamlined in the decision-making process”. She asked Omar if that addressed his concern.

Omar Chedda said it would be in line

Objective 3

Ingrid Todd opined that Objective 3 was too vague and required strengthening by the inclusion of references to climate change mitigation strategies and enhancing ecosystem resilience. This recommendation was supported by **Sharisa, MEGJC**, as well as **Deandra Roberts**. Deandra suggested the inclusion of pollution in this objective also.

Gillian Guthrie accepted the recommendations to reword Objective 3, but asked if a new objective should be inserted.

Ranya Reid-Edwards opined that Objective 3 should not be replaced but agreed with recommendations of including climate change adaptation which should be represented upfront in Policy. She added that disaster risk management strategies might also be included in this objective.

Mr Guthrie committed to amend Miss Todd’s formulation to include issues related to disaster risk reduction.

Objective 5

Ryan Wallace, Manchester Municipal Corporation, cited Objective 5 which addressed the financing of the PAS. His assumption was that this referred to funding the management of PAS rather than the cost incurred by the destructive impact of disasters. He observed that the latter often overlooked and advocated for the institution of funding for emergency recovery and restoration, citing the example of the destruction of forests in the Blue Mountain by Gilbert.

Ms Guthrie pointed to the implementation plan starting on page 79 which discussed issues related to disaster risk reduction and financing. She asked Ryan to look at the plan to see whether his concerns were already addressed in the policy by an activity and/or an objective.

She noted that various strategies addressed disaster risk reduction including 2.2.c. "Mainstream disaster risk reduction strategies in protected areas". She asked stakeholders to advise if points sufficiently captured the issue of disaster risk reduction.

Objective 4

Dionne Newell suggested a slight adjustment to Objective 4 to read "Strengthen communication, increase public awareness and education and enhance and secure the involvement of local communities and other stakeholders in the conservation and protection of the PAS."

Ms Guthrie will look at tightening the objective and including the word increased.

Objective 5

Ms Guthrie focused stakeholders' attention on the issue of adequate and sustainable financing addressed in Objective 5 – "A percentage of revenue generated per annum from the Environmental Protection levy will be utilized to provide dedicated financing for protected areas management". She was interested in comments from the Ministry of Finance which was responsible for the management of the Levy. She also pointed to strategies under 5.1.f which looked at ideas for resource mobilisation – tax regime to identify areas for possible waivers to incentivise private sector stakeholders; issuing of green and blue bonds; institution of debt for nature swaps – the Environmental Foundation of Jamaica was an example of a debt for nature swap between the US and Jamaican governments; carbon trading to maximise benefits to Jamaica in the management of protected areas; opportunities for public-private partnerships.

Omar Chedda reported that the Jamaica Stock Exchange had released guidelines on green and blue bonds. He advised caution in accessing new instruments as there were some sophisticated investors who used them in ways that did not benefit the environment although marketed as such. Sometimes Jamaicans became caught up in new hype and these mechanisms should be thoroughly investigated.

Ms Guthrie concurred that stakeholders should be mindful of guidelines put out by the Stock Exchange on blue and brown bonds. In addition, these should support investments in protected areas. She explained that each of the agencies had groups to which they delegated management authority – NEPA worked with NGOs, The NFA with fishermen's cooperatives, the Forestry Department with LFMCS (local forest management committees) that implemented programmes

in the protected areas. These local community groups consistently expressed concern regarding the dearth of financial resources. Page 76 5.6.1 referred to the National Conservation Trust Fund (NCTFJ) which had emerged out of a project that NEPA implemented to address financing. It was NGO led and represented another opportunity for resource mobilisation, an area that the government continued to grapple with.

Entities such as NFA and NEPA had to seek additional sources of sustainable financing for protected areas as most of the funding for the PAS was generated from the Consolidated Fund. The Forestry Department would continue the implementation of REDD+.

Trevor Anderson, Principal Director, Economic Management Branch, Ministry of Finance responded to the suggestion embodied in 5.1 d. (regarding securing a percentage of the Environmental Levy). He would not support that idea but suggested that funding requests be channelled through the budget allocation process. He recommended that MEGJC submit requests for additional resources from the Consolidated Fund. He did not support the redirection of certain types of revenue away from the Consolidated Fund.

Ms Guthrie acknowledged that the suggestion, included in every policy, had not gained any traction. She stressed the need for dedicated funding, explaining that NEPA, which fell under MEGJC, was not the only agency that required this type of funding. There were the NFA (Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries) and the JNHT (Ministry of Culture), all of which required funding. Sourcing dedicated funding per annum for the management of the country's PAS was a serious challenge. The local management groups were seriously challenged to source financing with many pursuing various projects to access supplemental financing. The funding from the Levy was one of the ideas suggested to provide some certainty in getting funds to manage the over 300 protected areas.

Mr Anderson posited that redirecting revenues away from the Consolidated Fund defeated the purpose of central treasury management. The optimal approach, he suggested, was evangelising the ministries to advocate for the resources to protect the environment.

Ms Guthrie asked whether the point should be deleted or revised.

Mr Anderson suggested that it should be deleted and appropriate language which indicated looking at alternative funding sources such as the imposition of fees, charges, etc. utilised instead. He recommended alternative sources of revenue such as charging for entry into sanctuaries rather than attempting to redirect revenue away from the Consolidated Fund.

Ms Roberts shared that some sanctuaries collected entry fees, but it was sufficient only to manage the space on a day-to-day basis. That source did not generate the level of funds required to monitor the spaces and to increase the effectiveness of sanctuaries and institute measures to protect ecosystems from degradation by climate change impacts, hence the request for money to supplement activities. They submitted applications to the NCTFJ, but additional support was required.

Ms Guthrie asked Mr Anderson to review Strategy 5.1.f and provide advice.

Ranya Reid-Edwards, Ministry of Tourism, supported Mr Anderson's position regarding PAs developing business plans supported by marketing and promotional strategies. She observed that many global PAs have been able to retain the integrity of sanctuaries while enjoying visitation. She also suggested exploring ideas such as creating memorabilia for sale.

Ryan Wallace suggested a change in wording "strategy for resource **collection** and mobilisation". He also addressed the possibility of accessing foreign grants through collaboration between legally established NGOs and foreign donors such as CIDA and the EU. These entities were reluctant to channel their funds through the government.

Objective 6.

Dionne Newell questioned the use of the term "ensure" Objective 6. She suggested "Put measures in place" as an alternative or some other more appropriate term. She committed to providing alternative wording for the objective.

Ms Guthrie noted that the word research was missing and the correct phrase was scientific research ... The idea, she explained, was to mainstream scientific data and information to provide evidence-based knowledge to manage the PAS effectively. She emphasised the seeking of knowledge residing at the local level.

Ryan Wallace Spatial Planner, Manchester Municipal Corporation, suggested "Put in place a protocol to guide scientific research etc.

Ms Guthrie remarked that "developing a protocol" would more appropriately represent an activity rather than an objective.

Ryan Wallace observed that it could be seen as an activity or objective. Maybe the use of the term "template" would indicate that data was being collected in a scientific format in order to protect PAS.

Ranya Reid-Edwards, Ministry of Tourism, recommended "Promote the use of scientific and traditional knowledge" or "enable the use". She also recommended the use of the terms – scientific technology and research.

Tetrice Prendergast, Planning Policy Officer, National Development Policy and Monitoring Branch, MEGJC. Highlighted Objective 6.1.c which referred to the development of database on the island's flora and fauna and cultural assets. The entities involved were NEPA, JNHT, NFA. She noted that the use of the word "will" expressed certainty regarding the execution of this project and requested clarification on the arrangements related to the management of the database. Her assumption was that one entity would lead the activity while others would collaborate in providing the data to populate the database which would be accessible to all entities. She asked which entity would take the lead. She cited the AMANDA system which was shared among the various agencies.

Ms Guthrie said although not decided it was likely to be NEPA. But all entities had to provide information to database. It would be made accessible to the public with restricted access only to sensitive information. She referred to the open government approach and access to information approach which facilitated information sharing. She advised that there were existing databases (IOJ flora and fauna), but the idea was to have a dedicated database on the island's 300 plus PAs and their resources on one platform. This data would be invaluable in informing policy and legislation going forward.

Tetrice observed that populating the database would take a long time and asked if there was a targeted deadline for this as it would be beneficial once completed.

Ms Guthrie pointed to page 93. 6.1.3. – the implementation plan. She emphasized that the Policy referred to free, prior and informed consent of the knowledge holders, particularly where the intent is to commercialise it. The end product must be applicable and appropriate to the Jamaican situation.

Ms Guthrie asked participants to look at page 74 (3.1) and page 75 under 4.1.b. She asked whether these were appropriately placed or should they be placed under 5.

Ranya Reid-Edwards advised that 3.1 b be put under sustainable financing and 4.1.b stay in place.

Closing Remarks

Ms Guthrie reiterated the importance of the draft Overarching Protected Area Policy to national development and the conservation of the island's PAS. She asked that they read the document carefully and provide their perspective. Where possible the comments should be specific and the desired placement in the document. She assured them that the Ministry was open to revisiting any part of the draft Policy to ensure clarity, completeness and more effective communication. It was paramount that it covered the best Policy prescriptions for the protection of the island's biodiversity and ecosystems and to ensure that the document responds to the concerns of the country's 300 plus PAs for the benefit of all Jamaicans. She observed that the document must stand the test of time. She implored stakeholders to read and share their comments in writing.

She was pleased with the rich discussion and thanked all participants for taking the time to contribute to the finalisation of the Policy on behalf of Senator Matthew Samuda and Permanent Secretary Arlene Williams. She thanked the presenters for the information shared on the roles and functions of each of the entities which worked so hard to manage and protect the PAs.

Ms Guthrie noted that discussions would continue with other stakeholders. The consultations would continue on June 20 with the private sector, June 28 with the academia and civil society and conclude on July 11 with the virtual town hall meeting. She invited participants to attend the town hall meeting. Comments should be submitted by July 2 to ermb@megjc.gov.jm. Reports will be available on MEGJC's website.