

Section 7: Raising our profile - engaging policy makers and the public

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Advocacy for the conservation of biodiversity, environmental protection and sustainable development comes in many forms. Whilst conservation (in particular) remains on the margins of the political mainstream, and is perceived as an “optional extra” by many in the general population, much of the work falls to small NGOs and other elements of civil society. Principle audiences for those attempting to promote conservation are policy makers (politicians) and the public; and these two audiences are linked, as the public also constitute the electorate that ultimately determines which politicians hold office. Effectively engaging these audiences requires the champions of conservation to deploy their limited resources carefully, and to remain alert and responsive to new approaches and opportunities. Successful engagement can bring important and lasting rewards for all concerned.

The Raising Our Profile session at the *Making the Right Connections* conference heard presentations from a range of speakers, addressing very different aspects of the challenge. Economic valuation is an increasingly widely used means of emphasising that the “free” products and services provided by natural ecosystems cannot be taken for granted. Work in Bermuda has shown how this approach can be applied to assessing the value of the Territory’s coral reefs to stakeholders, thereby integrating environmental concerns into policy and decision making. With respect to environmental (as well as other) matters, the relationship between the UKOTs and the UK Government is a crucial one, and one in which the UK Parliament can have an important guiding role. The session heard perspectives on this from a member of the UK Parliament’s influential Foreign Affairs Committee. The focus of the next presentation was the history of the framework within which environmental management has developed in the British Virgin Islands (BVI). Here, environmental matters are increasingly motivating public opinion, even to the extent of influencing the results of a recent General Election. Targeted campaigning was then considered, based in the experience of the hugely successful *Buy Back Bermuda* programme instigated by two local NGOs. In the Cayman Islands (as in BVI, Bermuda and elsewhere) there appears to be an increasing public appetite for protection of the few remaining natural areas, and successful public opposition to a road that threatened to damage Grand Cayman’s Ironwood Forest provided the next theme. The final presentation reminded delegates that, whilst the relationship between science and religion was sometimes strained, the Church and conservationists had a common cause in promoting responsible stewardship of the natural world. The session closed with a discussion of the issues raised.



*From left: Rob Thomas (rapporteur), Bertrand Lettsome, Paul Keetch MP, Samia Sarkis, Bill Samuel
(Photos of participants in this section by Thomas Hadjikyriakou unless otherwise stated)*

Framework Document: Engaging policy makers and the public

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Samuel, W. , Cortés, J. & Cheesman, O. 2010. Framework Document: Engaging policy makers and the public. pp 236-238 in *Making the Right Connections: a conference on conservation in UK Overseas Territories, Crown Dependencies and other small island communities, Grand Cayman 30th May to 5th June 2009* (ed. by M. Pienkowski, O. Cheesman, C. Quick & A. Pienkowski). UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum, www.ukotcf.org

Conservationists cannot rely on everyone else sharing their perspective and aspirations. For many, the protection of biodiversity can seem like a luxury, especially at times of economic hardship. Even large conservation bodies have to work hard to promote their message, and the challenge is much greater for smaller organisations with limited resources. Nonetheless, if the right methods are employed, key audiences (policy makers and the public) can be engaged and found to be responsive. Specific campaigns may provide the vehicle, but there are also opportunities for profile-raising through other avenues.

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Introduction

No-one sees the world in exactly the same way as anyone else. Thus, we may be deluded in thinking that everyone out there knows and understands the value of what we do and why we do it. We would be wrong to assume that everyone shares our perspective and aspirations. Even large, successful, international organisations, which we generally consider to be well known and high profile, have to work hard to promote and garner support for their activities. The challenges are much greater for small organisations, with limited resources.

There are always those who are ready to profit from habitat destruction, over-exploitation of natural resources and other environmentally unsustainable practices. They benefit from political inaction and public apathy. The protection of biodiversity can seem like a luxury, or at least a low priority, es-

pecially at times of economic hardship. Economic valuation of ecosystems and the services they provide is one means of emphasising that nature does not provide an endless supply of free resources.

This is an important general message to get across, to policy makers and the public (and an important factor to integrate into wider systems of planning – cf. Section 6). In relation to specific environmental issues too, awareness raising is critically important for enhancing public understanding and support, and for influencing policy development. This is certainly true in relation, for example, to climate change (cf. Section 4) and the threats posed by invasive species (cf. Section 8).

Very often, simply promoting our day-to-day work goes a long way towards being noticed. What may be mundane and routine to us may be interesting to others. So we should aim to share what we do with those around us, be they colleagues, families or

friends, who can help to spread the word.

The real challenges, however, lie in raising our profile and promoting our work to the wider public and to those in positions of power. In order to reach them, it is important to identify channels of communication and to speak in a language that they can understand. Policy makers, in particular, often seem remote and elusive. However, some are deeply concerned over the state of the natural world and the welfare of small communities, and have a genuine thirst for the information and insights that organisations ‘on the ground’ can provide. Others, at the very least, keep a close eye on public opinion, especially as election time approaches.

Recent reports from UK Parliamentary Select Committees (the House of Commons’ Foreign Affairs Committee, FAC and Environmental Audit Committee, EAC) have demonstrated the concern amongst groups of British MPs for issues affecting the environment and communities in the UKOTs (see *Forum News* 33, p.8). UKOTCF’s submission to the EAC’s inquiry on *Halting Biodiversity Loss*, in particular, clearly made quite an impression on the Committee, and influenced its criticism of UK Government support for environmental protection in the Territories, leading to some changes. In a number of UKOTs, there is evidence that environmental concerns are increasingly important political issues, locally.

The value of active campaigning to mobilise public support for our work lies in the indirect benefits that come with influencing politicians and political parties, as well as in direct benefits. These include the potential to raise funds and attract volunteers (cf. Section 9). Campaigning comes in many forms, from the use of specific, targeted appeals for support, to more subtle methods of raising the profile of conservation, sustainable environmental management, and the organisations and individuals who champion them, through the media, community groups, schools and colleges (cf. Section 3) and other means.

We should view all our actions, from the routine to the extraordinary, as providing potential avenues for promoting our work. Similarly, wherever possible and appropriate, we should be ready to share our aims and our achievements – sometimes even our failures. Raising our profile and communicating the value of our work are always important. If people do not know who we are, what we do or what we aim to achieve, then they will not support

or help us, and ultimately will not even appreciate our successes – and we all like to be appreciated.

This section examines these issues, and considers ways in which we can achieve the objective of raising our profile. What tools do we have, and what others do we need? Who should we target? How shall we reach these targets? How can we encourage the media to support what we do? Can we think of any unexpected ways in which we can make the occasional extra special splash?

Framework for Raising our Profile session discussions – possible questions to address:

Who do we want to reach?

- Politicians in the UK
- Politicians in the UKOTs/CDs
- Funding bodies
- Citizens and students in the UKOTs/CDs
- Business communities in the UKOTs/CDs
- Potential partner organisations

How do we reach them?

- Direct approaches
- Targeted campaigns and events
- International / regional / national “theme” days (Earth Day, Endemic Bird Day, etc.)
- Using the media (in the UK and UKOTs/CDs)
 - Press Releases
 - Letters to editors
- Links to the school curriculum
- Participation in on-line forums

What messages do we use?

- Environmental benefits
- Economic benefits

Some useful resources:

www.mediatrust.org/training-events/training-resources/online-guides-1

A range of on-line resources providing public relations/media advice, particularly for charities

www.planninghelp.org.uk/resources/campaign-tips

Advice on campaigning

<http://blog.vitispr.com/2009/01/26/useful-public-relations-advice-and-tips-websites/>

A range of links to websites providing general public relations/media advice and tips

www.volresource.org.uk/info/mediapr.htm#issues

A range of media/public relations advice, particularly for voluntary organisations

www.free-pr-advice.co.uk/prchecklists.htm

Advice on a range of public relations topics (business orientated, but also more widely applicable)

www.bvihcg.com/index.shtml

BVI Conservation Group website, providing background on the Virgin Islands Environment Council and their legal challenge to a major development on Beef Island

www.parliament.uk/

A range of information on UK Parliament, including All Party Parliamentary Groups, Select Committees, etc.

www.jncc.gov.uk/page-4065

Environmental Economics “Toolkit” published with the UKOTs in mind

www.ukota.org/

Website of the UK Overseas Territories Association

www.octassociation.org

Website of the European Overseas Countries and Territories Association

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/consultations_en.htm

Information on EU-level consultations on environmental issues

www.ukotcf.org

Website of the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum

Economic valuation as a tool for engaging policy makers: Total Economic Value of Bermuda's Coral Reefs

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Sarkis, S., McKenzie, E. & van Beukering, P. 2010. Economic valuation as a tool for engaging policy makers: Total Economic Value of Bermuda's Coral Reefs. pp 239-245 in *Making the Right Connections: a conference on conservation in UK Overseas Territories, Crown Dependencies and other small island communities, Grand Cayman 30th May to 5th June 2009* (ed. by M. Pienkowski, O. Cheesman, C. Quick & A. Pienkowski). UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum, www.ukotcf.org

Assessing the Total Economic Value of Bermuda's coral reefs is a complex exercise, attempting to identify the "services" provided by Bermuda's coral reef ecosystem, and placing a monetary value on these. For the Bermuda case study, the following services are economically valued: commercial and recreational fisheries, tourism, amenity value (surplus value on real estate), recreational and cultural value (benefits to residents for recreation), physical coastal protection and biodiversity and research value. The integration of the monetary values estimated for each of the above services is compiled to obtain the Total Economic Value (TEV), expressed per surface area of coral reefs. This yields a quantitative measure of how important the reefs are to Bermuda in monetary terms, and hence provides quantitative information to guide decision making regarding management and conservation of this natural resource. There have been several challenges and limitations to comprehensive data collection, which are discussed. The methodology used for estimating the value for each service is summarised; for some of the services, namely for the amenity value, the development of the methodology itself is an important contribution to future coral reef economic valuation studies. Results obtained to date confirm and quantify in monetary terms the asset and contribution of coral reefs to Bermuda's tourism value, to the fishing value, and to the recreational and cultural value benefiting residents. The expected outcomes of the Bermuda study include the use of TEV in extended Cost Benefit Analyses involving marine developments, the establishment of damage compensation fees following ship groundings, and raising public awareness.

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Introduction

Increasing development places intense pressure on Bermuda's natural resources, both terrestrial and marine. Of immediate concern, is the lack of any "formal" procedure when assessing developments impacting the marine environment. The Bermuda study seeks to address the lack of environmental considerations in current policy and decision-making for the marine environment, by providing a means of recognizing the value of a range of ecosystem services provided by Bermuda's coral reefs.

Environmental Economic Valuations attempt to attribute a monetary value to natural resources; this enables the integration of environmental concerns into the policy and decision-making processes by placing them on a comparable basis with economic and social impacts. It provides a tool for the long-term conservation of natural resources and helps to identify and implement more sustainable policies and activities, thus balancing environmental, social and economic goals.

The strategy for this two-year project was developed in collaboration with environmental economists from the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), in the UK, and consultants from van Beukering Consulting in the Netherlands. A Bermuda-based team consisting of marine scientists is responsible for providing the necessary data for a comprehensive and robust evaluation. The whole project is overseen by a Steering Committee made up of well recognized members of the community. The Steering Committee also assists in providing a strategy for the promotion of the integration of economic valuation in policy-making. Finally, this project is considered a stepping stone to the valuation of other environmental resources in Bermuda; for this reason, long-term sustainability is ensured by developing college modules for the education of young Bermudians in Environmental Economics, incorporating it in the current Economics curriculum.

The current paper discusses the approach taken to assess the Total Economic Value of Bermuda's Coral Reefs, the expected outcomes and the strategies taken to promote the integration of this TEV in policy making. A brief background on Bermuda, and its policies related to coral reefs is first given.

Bermuda's Coral Reefs - Background

Bermuda has experienced tremendous economic growth over the last quarter of a century, mainly due to the booming international business sector. This has led to one of the highest per capita incomes in the world. This wealth has led to a high level of consumerism and results in a large local ecological footprint. Bermuda is one of the most densely populated countries in the world, recorded at 1,145 people per km², on a total land area of 55 km². Increasing human development is required to accommodate the needs of the peoples, associated with increasing marine traffic for import of goods and tourism.

Bermuda's sub-tropical climate, explained by its proximity to the Gulf Stream, has allowed for the northerly extension of coral reefs to Bermuda, making it unique worldwide as the northernmost coral reef system, situated at 32°N and 64°W in the middle of the Atlantic. The shallow-water Bermuda platform encompasses an area of approximately 1000 km². Reef communities are among the healthiest of the Wider Caribbean Region. Due to the northerly latitudes, Bermuda's reefs have been

less affected by climate change and global warming, increasing their importance on an international scale in the future.

In order to ensure optimal preservation of this pristine coral reef system in light of increasing coastal development, environmental economics was proposed as an alternative approach to conservation. Environmental economics considers the "goods" and "services" provided by an ecosystem, and attempts to attribute a monetary value to these. The project seeks to determine the Total Economic Value (TEV) of Bermuda's coral reefs, and use it in such applications as Cost Benefit Analyses of future marine developments.

Goods and services provided by Bermuda's reefs valued in the current study include the following:

- Tourism asset;
- Recreational and cultural value (benefits to residents for recreation);
- Physical coastal protection (avoiding damage costs due to natural hazards, e.g. hurricanes),
- Amenity values (surplus value on real estate),
- Fisheries;
- Employment revenues (boatyards, charter boat, SCUBA);
- Biodiversity (only local research value included - global importance is beyond the scope of this study).

As mentioned previously, the increasing needs and developments associated with a booming international sector and high level of consumerism, pose potential threats to the environment. With regards to the marine environment, the reliance of Bermuda on imported goods by maritime transport leads to a re-management of shipping docks; in addition, the drive to accommodate a changing cruise-ship industry requires the consideration of modified passage and berths for larger ships. This necessitates the dredging of channels and/or coastal developments which have a direct impact on the coral reef ecosystem.

The potential threats facing Bermuda's reefs are the following:

- a. Destruction of reefs for enhanced passage;
- b. Pollution and sedimentation of shipping channels;
- c. Impact on recreational and commercial fisheries;
- d. Increased potential grounding of boats with associated destruction;



Figure 1. The existing North and South shipping channels

- e. Tourism repercussion - quality of visiting experience declines with poorer reefs.

Despite a long history of protection, Bermuda coral reefs are ranked on a global scale in the “high risk” category (World Institute Report 2004). Conservative measures in fisheries management and legal protection of coral reefs (Coral Reef Preserves Act 1966; Protected Species Order 1978) have ensured that the reefs remain healthy. However, their proximity to a high population density and high volume of shipping traffic pose potential pollution threats. Bermuda’s reefs have been under stress in the past during such events as the dredging of Castle Harbour for the airport construction, ship groundings and pollution and sedimentation in shipping channels.

Current Issues

Under current legislation, marine developments require a special permit issued by the Minister of the Environment. Environmental Impact Assessments are not mandatory and recommended only for larger developments by the Marine Resource

Board, an advisory board to government. The process is less formal than that required for terrestrial developments. This reflects in great part the nature of development in the terrestrial environment, where adjacent properties or neighbours are directly affected. In the marine environment, there is often no direct impact on neighbours, and hence the community is generally less aware of, and less concerned by, marine issues. The pressure put on policy and decision-makers by local NGO’s and the community at large in curbing terrestrial developments is significant, and does not exist for the marine environment. Due to the lack of policy regarding developments in the marine system, and the absence of a mechanism for integrating environmental values, decisions are tourism or business driven with little consideration for the marine environment.

The more immediate threat to Bermuda’s coral reefs is the assurance that shipping channels are suitable for safe passage of larger boats. Figure 1 illustrates the existing North and South shipping channels. Currently the use of the North Channel, on the outer rim of the lagoon, has been renewed to accommodate larger ships. This passage has been

rarely used in the past, and has remained for this reason a pristine coral reef. Although mega cruise ships have been using this channel since 2005 without any recorded incident, ship agents are concerned for the safety of the ships, as the passage in the North Channel is narrow and extremely difficult in windy conditions. In addition, a more direct access to the docking berths is being considered, requiring cutting through the reefs. Prior to the advent of the mega cruise ships, the South Channel was the most common route; this caused routine sedimentation affecting the surrounding reefs. The current issue is that both the South and North Channel should undergo modifications to accommodate larger ships. Hence, in the shorter term, having a quantitative measure for the value of Bermuda's coral reefs would enable the incorporation of reef values in Cost Benefit Analyses, comparing the costs associated with modifications of the North Channel and those of the South Channel.

Total Economic Valuation of Bermuda Reefs - Goals and Objectives

The objective of the study is to carry out a total economic valuation of the coral reefs by estimating the main values of the reefs for: (1) Tourism, (2) Physical coastal protection, (3) Fisheries (commercial and recreational), (4) Amenity values and (5) Quality of life, or recreational and cultural values. Additional indicators of the social importance of reefs will also be provided, such as employment revenues.

Expected Outcomes

In the shorter term, the TEV will be promoted for use in making a more informed decision on the selection of the shipping channel for larger ships, as described above. Expected outcomes in the longer term are the provision of a tool for assistance in decision-making towards a sustainable environment. This tool will also help in advocating the preservation of the coral reefs in Bermuda, in establishing damage compensation fees following ship groundings, or in further enabling coral reef restoration through the evaluation of potential financial contribution by tourists and residents.

Work Phases

This two-year project is divided into five phases. The first year focuses on data gathering; the second on economic analyses and strategy development for integration into policy and decision-making. Each phase has several tasks associated with it.

Phase I: Scoping and Data Gathering

This initial phase defines current users, uses, and threats to Bermuda's coral reefs and adjacent habitats, and identifies which resources will be most useful in determining the existing conditions of Bermuda's coral reefs. It also defines the geographic boundaries of the study. Existing GIS data for the study areas, and maps of the entire island are available facilitating this. Available resources related to the project, including available literature on reef ecology, threats and economics, are assembled, including work conducted in Bermuda. Government statistics (e.g. fisheries statistics, population census, tourism exit surveys, elevation maps, land valuation) are also compiled at this stage. Other information required is for coastal/infrastructure protection, local prices for structures to prevent erosion and hurricane damage, and price of land and properties, and is collected from realtors, and government agencies.

Phase II – Economic Valuation Methods and Stakeholder Interaction

The main objectives of Phase II are to gather information from individuals with key knowledge about Bermuda's coral-reef related resources and economy, and to conduct a survey of local residents to obtain a monetary value of previously intangible resources, such as the cultural value of Bermuda's coral reefs. Some of the key steps to be taken during this phase of the project include:

- Key informants and focus group interviews: Available knowledge from local experts and policy makers is compiled, through interviews; this allows retrieving of data, as well as gaining their interest in the study. Community consultations are included within this phase as well.
- Survey: A combined local recreation/cultural/traditional/non-use value stated preference survey is being carried out. The survey is based on 'choice modelling' to give respondents a set of options regarding their reef-related activities and perceptions, which can be used to estimate the values that they place on different reef-related attributes. This also includes the perception of local residents of the importance of biodiversity supported by the coral reefs. A representative sample of 400-500 individuals

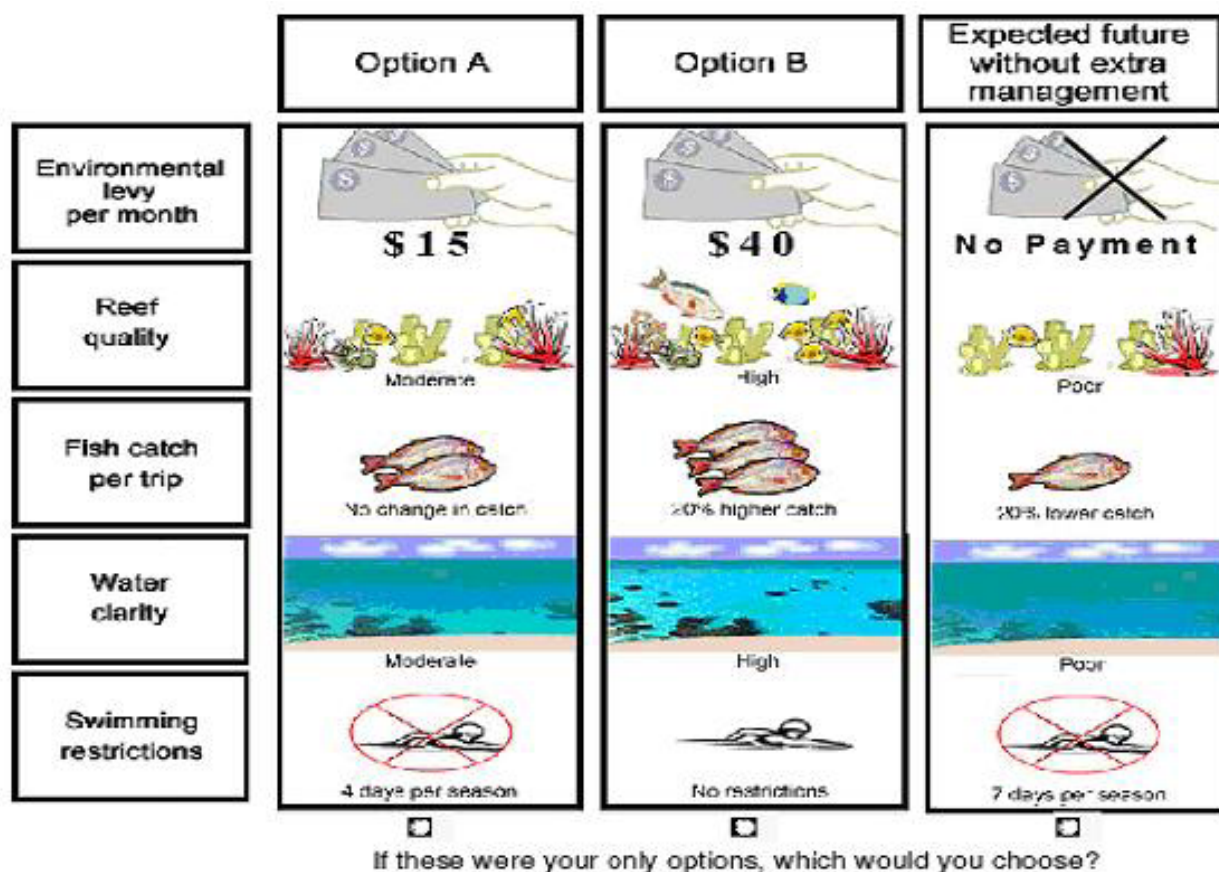


Figure 2. A sample of the choice card and description of the attributes developed for Bermuda's study

in Bermuda is being surveyed. A sample of the choice card and description of the attributes developed for Bermuda's study is given in Figure 2.

- The fisheries value of the reefs is obtained from existing surveys conducted by the Department of Environmental Protection. Market prices also provide information on the value of commercial fisheries.
- The value of the reefs as a tourism asset is determined using the Net Factor Income Method. This method requires data on revenues from SCUBA/Snorkelling/Sailing/Fishing Charters, on tourist expenditure through exit surveys, and on tour operator costs. A tourist exit survey is also developed and conducted, to supplement current information.
- The value of the reefs in coastal protection is determined through avoided damage costs, using data on local land, dwellings and infrastructure.

Figure 3 provides a graphical illustration of the range of economic values and valuation techniques used to determine the TEV of coral reefs in Bermuda.

Phase III – Synthesis of Values and Cost Benefit Analysis

The values for each of the categories above are combined to arrive at an estimate of the Total Economic Value (TEV) of Bermuda's coral reefs. Estimates are based for the 'production' side of tourism and fisheries on gross values. All other value estimates are, by their nature, in net terms. To enhance comparison and aggregation of the results, the tourism and fisheries values are transformed into net values. Final results are presented both in gross and in net terms.

Phase IV – Preparation of Final Report and Presentation

Once the data evaluation portion of the project is completed, a full-length final report is written, of sufficient quality and content to guide resource management in Bermuda, as well as a DVD for dissemination to the public and the media. The report is first submitted as a draft for review by advisors, stakeholders and the Steering Committee, at which time the final report will be prepared and submitted. A ten-page policy brief stemming from the report will be the main document for dissemination.

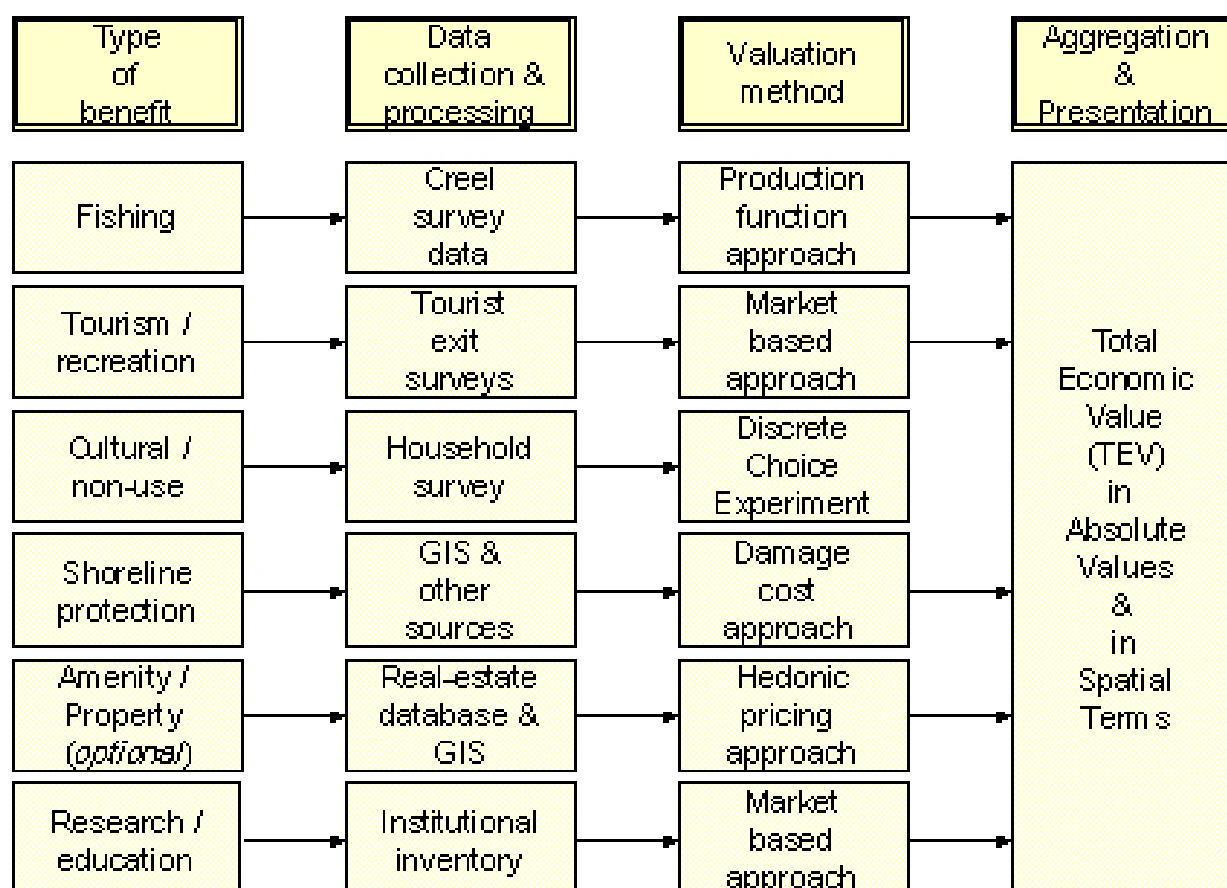


Figure 3. Valuation techniques for the services provided by Bermuda's coral reefs

Phase V- Capacity Building

The integration of economic valuation into policy-making is promoted through a workshop, to consult with senior policy-makers on the next step. The Steering Committee will assist in developing a strategy through public consultation and opinion surveys. This results in a list of recommendations for integration. In addition, the Environmental Economics Module developed for the Bermuda College, and a set of guidelines for future environmental economic valuation studies in Bermuda, will provide local expertise and tools for the long term.

At the time of writing of this manuscript, a first draft is being reviewed by the Bermuda-based manager and the Steering Committee. A number of challenges have been encountered, with some limitations relating mainly to data gathering which are outlined below.

Challenges and Limitations

Increased Costs: Economically valuating the services listed above requires comprehensive data, which may be obtained from existing databases and/or from developed questionnaires providing

the relevant information. Two main questionnaires were specifically designed: (1) Household survey, and (2) Tourist exit survey. For both of these, a representative sample of 400 needed to be interviewed face-to-face. Professional services were hired for the implementation, increasing the initial estimated budget substantially. Data from these surveys was used for the valuation of: (1) Recreational fisheries, (2) Tourism value, and (3) Recreational & Cultural value. In addition, economic analyses are comprehensive, conducted by a team of consultants assisted by M.Sc. students; consultant fees, travel and accommodation to Bermuda raised costs considerably, requiring active fund-raising from Bermuda-based companies during the second year of the project.

Limited dataset: Limitations in the data collection were encountered for the Amenity value; given the nature of confidentiality for Land Valuation Department records, data on houses sold could be obtained only by private Real Estate Companies; this became a labour-intensive exercise, yielding data on only 50% of the houses sold over a period of 4 years.

Lack of documentation: In order to obtain the

direct value of coral reef-associated fisheries, total catch, market fish value, and fishermen costs are required. Unfortunately, due to the lack of reporting on income – not required in Bermuda due to the lack of income tax - costs incurred by fishermen were difficult to obtain. Hence, although gross value of the fishery can be calculated on relatively solid data, net value is a guesstimate, and was based on the goodwill of a few fishermen (6) who shared information on their costs.

Preliminary Results

Results at the time of writing were not finalised but have brought to light new information on the uses of the marine environment and more specifically of coral reefs. This study has provided a first dataset quantifying the recreational fishery in Bermuda. This has highlighted the significance of this fishery in terms of total catch, and suggests the need for monitoring, if not regulating, this activity. Currently, there is no legislation with respect to recreational fishing, and based on this study, the majority of recreational fishermen comprise those fishing from shore. With respect to the coral reef value, the recreational fishery appears to be comparable to the commercial fishery. Secondly, the study confirms the importance of coral reefs as a tourism asset; however, it is interesting to note that the health of the reef seems to be a major contribution to the attraction it exerts on tourists, where a marked decrease in tourists is estimated should Bermuda's coral reefs become severely damaged. It follows that tourists do show a willingness to pay for restoration and preservation efforts. Similarly, the concern of residents for environmental issues, among which are damage to coral reefs and overfishing, was quantified through the household survey; 25% of residents interviewed showed willingness to support financially conservation efforts for the preservation of coral reefs; the main incentive is to preserve the ability to swim in any section of the island without restrictions (due to pollution or other causes) and have the continued assurance of swimming in areas with high water clarity.

Developing a strategy for promoting integration of TEV

The robustness of the methods used and thoroughness of the data obtained to date facilitate the acceptance of results by the Steering Committee at first, and by policy makers thereafter. A strat-

egy for promoting the integration of the results by policy and decision makers is developed by the Committee, as well as for raising awareness of the general public. The link between the Department of Conservation Services and the Education Department of the Bermuda Zoological Society provides several opportunities for dissemination of this information to Bermuda's youth.

The incorporation of TEV into a Cost Benefit Analysis for modifications to the South and/or North Channel will furthermore serve as a clear example of how such a tool may be used in future developments. Politicians have already bought into the idea of a TEV for the coral reefs, following newspaper articles and interviews on this topic. It is hoped that with adequate dissemination to the general public, political will shall be engaged and that the valuation tool developed becomes an inherent part of decision making in the future; this should further encourage the economic valuation of other natural resources in Bermuda.

Raising the Profile of the UKOTs in the UK Parliament

Paul Keetch MP



Keetch, P. 2010. Raising the Profile of the UKOTs in the UK Parliament. pp 246-250 in *Making the Right Connections: a conference on conservation in UK Overseas Territories, Crown Dependencies and other small island communities, Grand Cayman 30th May to 5th June 2009* (ed. by M. Pienkowski, O. Cheesman, C. Quick & A. Pienkowski). UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum, www.ukotcf.org

The UK Overseas Territories (UKOTs) are not directly represented in the UK Parliament. This is despite their status as British sovereign territory, and the UK's 'ultimate responsibility' for the UKOTs, notably in areas such as good governance, representation under international conventions (including Multilateral Environmental Agreements) and wider aspects of international relations. Various mechanisms do exist in the British parliamentary system by which those in the UKOTs can highlight issues of concern. For example, anyone can make submissions to relevant Select Committee inquiries or establish contacts through relevant All Party Parliamentary Groups. Recent experience has demonstrated how Select Committee reports can influence UK Government thinking on UKOT issues – notably those arising from the Foreign Affairs Committee inquiry into *Overseas Territories* and the Environmental Audit Committee inquiry into *Halting Biodiversity Loss*. What can be done to enhance awareness and encourage use of these mechanisms by those in the UKOTs? What new mechanisms might be developed for raising the profile of Overseas Territories in the UK Parliament, for ensuring that the UK Government better promotes UKOT interests internationally, and for enhancing the UK Government's support to UKOTs in critical areas such as good governance and environmental management?

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I feel I must start by saying that, despite being a Member of the Foreign Affairs Committee (FAC), my opinions are just my own, although they have been influenced and formed from FAC meetings, evidence and reports.

Until last year the FAC had not published a report on UK Overseas Territories, apart from Gibraltar, since 1997. During this extended period, many important events occurred, none more so than the British Overseas Act 2002, which gave UKOTs their current name and provides the inhabitants of all UKOTs, except for Akrotiri and Dhekelia on Cyprus, British citizenship, although it is interesting to note that it cannot be acquired through naturalization in one of the UKOTs.

The FAC has had also an essential role in recommending and implementing the British policy towards the situation in the Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI), which the UK Government failed to address expeditiously, and I am proud of the work that we

have achieved, as one of the three MPs who went to TCI. The case of TCI shows that when a crisis does occur, the UK has the capability to intervene and implement successful measures to correct the situation. I believe we have done not only what is best for UK interests but also for the residents of TCI.

So I sincerely hope that, in future, the FAC will not leave discussing UKOTs for such a long period, as the Territories still maintain a unique status in the United Kingdom and they are not simply another member of the Commonwealth. I hope that all current UKOTs maintain this unique connection for many more years to come, as it is beneficial for all parties.

The FAC's report published last year was, I believe, comprehensive and fair. It evaluated what we believed were the most important issues, challenges and threats that faced the UKOTs and, obviously, environmental issues played an impor-

tant part, due to the incredibly diverse and unique environments that exist in UKOTs.

During the last parliamentary session in the lead up to the publication of the report, RSPB and UKOTCF both reported to the FAC that good governance is essential to ensure suitable legislation to protect the local environment. One of the largest criticisms from UKOTCF was that UKOTs 'lagged behind the UK in terms of environmental protection' and this was due to low political status, confusion over responsibilities, muddled departmental responsibility and confusion over the role of Governors. In my opinion, most of these are easily avoided through good and clear governance. Whilst I realize that each UKOT is different and almost all want a different degree of UK involvement in domestic matters, there has to be a clearer framework which allows better governance.

The direct funding that the UK provides many UKOTs is essential to ensure that the correct measures can be implemented to protect the environment, and also to provide infrastructure. It was the conclusion of both the Environmental Audit Committee (EAC) and of the FAC that the current funding by both DEFRA and the FCO is wholly inadequate to maintain the varied and complex environments of UKOTs. I am extremely disappointed that the FCO refused to increase the funding of the UK Overseas Territories Environment Programme (OTEP) during the last Parliamentary session. Furthermore, I am concerned that the FCO has told the FAC and the EAC that 'responsibility for environmental issues has been devolved to the individual territories'. I believe this to be completely the wrong attitude, as the UK Government must assist UKOTs in environmental protection. During the RSPB testimony, they suggested that £16 million per year should be spent to protect ecosystems, and rare species from extinction. I am extremely disappointed that the UK Government seems not have taken this message seriously as of yet, and that the small financial assistance that comes from DEFRA is wholly inadequate to address the situation. As the EAC report on *Halting Biodiversity Loss* states, 'the [UK] Government has a clear moral and legal duty to help protect the biodiversity of UKOTs', I could not put it better myself.

The UK isn't the only country that maintains overseas territories; France, Denmark and the Netherlands are the main European countries with overseas territories. I want to touch briefly on the different approaches that France uses.

France has a differing relationship with each of its territories in terms of autonomy. However, all French territories have elected representation in both houses of the French Parliament as well as voting rights for European and Presidential elections, giving them a more visible and active role in mainland France's political system. The latest French territory to embrace this system was Mayotte, which voted in a referendum in March this year to change its status from an 'overseas community' to France's 101st Department in 2011. This shows that overseas territories still feel that there is a benefit in the system.

The UKOTs have not independently signed up to international treaties, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Ramsar Convention; and are instead represented by the UK - which shows that there has to be more cooperation to tackle environmental problems. UKOTs are also not members of the UN or the EU (although Gibraltar is of the latter) and instead rely solely on UK representation. Whilst no Dutch or Danish territories are parts of the EU, France's four overseas departments are, and so can more easily access EU funding and EU assistance. OCTA and UKOTA do provide representation for UKOTs to the EU but cannot effectively deal with specific issues for each territory.

I want to go into the background of the UK political system and talk about the options available for Overseas Territory Governments and NGOs to discuss and lobby on their domestic matters.

Committee inquires

Select Committees play an essential role in UK parliamentary life. They allow selected backbenchers from all parties who are appointed to the committees to access and assess information, including by conducting interviews on matters relating to the committee's mandate. Persons of interest called to give evidence to the committee can include cabinet ministers, members of NGOs and experts in the field; importantly, evidence sessions are not just for UK Government officials and representatives. Each committee has its own staff and they can provide more information concerning future and current reports.

APPGs – All Party Parliamentary Groups

All Party Parliamentary Groups (including those that focus specifically on UKOTs) comprise members from of both the House of Commons and the House of Lords, and can also include members of the European Parliament. The members can be from any political party or can be a crossbencher from the House of Lords. These groups meet at least once a year for an AGM. The objective of these groups is normally to ‘improve links and mutual understanding’ with the respective territory. The groups can be contacted through the Chairman of the group, whose name, political party and address can be accessed on the parliament website.

PQs - Parliamentary Questions

Parliamentary Questions are a useful tool for backbenchers in both Houses from all political parties. They are asked to the cabinet minister in charge of a Governmental department, although they can be answered by a junior minister. They can be submitted either for a written answer or for an oral answer in the chamber of the House. PQs are normally formed by contacting an MP, who is interested in the relevant field, and suggesting along what lines the PQs should be asked.

EDMs - Early Day Motions

These motions normally consist of about 250 words and, although sponsored by one MP, a motion will be co-sponsored by another five. These MPs can be from any political party although it is custom that no cabinet minister puts their name to any. Whilst these motions originally were supposed to be tabled for debate at the earliest possible day, they are now simply symbolic and are a way of disseminating information and attracting political support from other MPs. More cross-party support does help the cause, and improve the chances of the motion being approved should there ever be a vote on it, although this is almost unheard of. Despite this, EDMs remain a very useful tool in informing parliamentarians about a subject and gaining support.

St Helena

I want to move onto a specific case example from one of the territories that, for me, has managed to

use almost all the tools available in the UK political system. It has certainly raised its profile in the UK Parliament, so much so that, here I am in the Cayman Islands talking about it! I hope that by keeping to one specific example it will more clearly demonstrate how each step can have a different impact.

I am sure that you are all aware of the situation on the Island of St Helena, but I will just briefly touch upon it. St Helena is one of the most remote locations on earth and has a population of about 4,000. It is extremely rich in its biodiversity, partially due to its isolation. At the moment, it is extremely difficult to obtain access to the island, either to visit or provide supplies (or to try and leave, as Napoleon found out the hard way!) The only way is via *RMS (Royal Mail Ship) St Helena*, on which it takes two weeks to sail to the UK or about a week to South Africa, and is even a two-day sailing from the nearest airstrip on Ascension Island. However, the Government and the majority of the population of St Helena have managed to use almost every political tool to try and lobby the UK for an airstrip on the Island.

I realize that, due to the biodiversity of the island, there maybe a few of you in the room today that are against these plans, especially as the intended site of the airport, Prosperous Bay Plain, is known for being the home to a wide selection of invertebrates and the Wirebird. However, it is essential for the survival of the island that freer access is made available, not just to receive supplies more frequently, but also to generate more revenue on the island. There has also been an agreement to implement a Wirebird mitigation programme, which would hopefully protect this rare species from any environmental damage the airport might cause.

No one is advocating that the island should completely open up to mass tourism, as this could have serious ecological consequences, and so the plans would limit the size of aircraft able to land there, but an airstrip would be extremely beneficial to the islanders and would also make it more accessible. At the moment, the UK Government provides St Helena with annual funding amounting to approximately £5million. However, the projections of income provided by the new airport equate to £30million per annum. With the environmental programme in place, which will hopefully limit the environmental impact, the benefits seem to outweigh the costs.

In 2005, the Department for International Development (DFID) agreed to provide funding to build an airport on the island, due to be completed in 2010, in time for the end of the life for *RMS St Helena*. This would provide the island with a direct, more frequent and more efficient supply route. Unfortunately, due to the current economic climate, the plan was suspended on 8 December 2008. From that moment on, the Government of St Helena, local ‘Saints’, and expatriates have spent months lobbying the UK Government and politicians on what the future access to the island should be, and have been incredibly successful. So far they have achieved numerous PQs, two EDMS, a meeting of the St Helena APPG, a Westminster Hall Adjournment debate, and a petition to the Prime Minister. The Adjournment debate was actually called by Meg Munn, the former Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the FCO, showing just how high profile the campaign has become. My Liberal Democrat colleague, Bob Russell, is the Chair of the St Helena APPG and has taken an important role in involving himself with the Adjournment Debate, drafting the two EDMs and asking various PQs.

DFID has now opened up a consultation. I am sure that the organized campaign that has, so far, achieved great success in lobbying the UK Parliament is partly responsible for this.

Adjustments to the current system

Whilst I am not in favour of changing much of the current system, there are certain tweaks that can be made to make it more effective.

1. The first change would be concerning the role of a Governor. Whilst the majority of Governors do an exceptional job, there are no criteria for their selection or training and, unfortunately, they are often not given the support they require to do their job effectively. Under the current system, I appreciate that the majority of Governors have differing levels of responsibility throughout the UKOTs. However, more training and influence should be given to Governors, as suggested in the FAC report on *Overseas Territories* during the 2007/08 session. Another suggestion made by the FAC report, which I again agree with, is that the FCO should consider appointing Governors who were not career diplomats.

2. Although most Territories have signed Environ-

ment Charters, we must ensure that all do so, so that there can be full co-operation between the UK Government, the UKOT Government, the private sector and NGOs and, more importantly, so that the progress from all sides can be monitored.

3. I believe we must also ensure increased representation of UKOTs in the UK. Whilst there are a number of options available, I would like to see an elected representative based in London, either as a fully fledged MP or as part of a new UKOT Assembly, representing all UKOTs where British citizenship is available, which could have a direct relationship with the UK Parliament and UK Government. True, there may be problems implementing such a scheme, but this would ensure that the most important issues of all UKOTs could receive the same importance with the UK Government. At the moment, despite doing an excellent job, the UKOTA does not have elected, but appointed, officials, and so their viewpoints are very dependent on the respective Governments, which in itself presents its own problems. There is also no mandate for representing NGOs, which play an important role in the UKOTs. What we need is a representative, elected by the citizens of UKOTs, who can successfully lobby the UK Government on the issues that really matter to the people of the UKOTs. I also believe that the French system of having an elected representative of overseas territories in their parliament could work very well for UKOTs. It would give UKOTs full access to the UK Parliament.

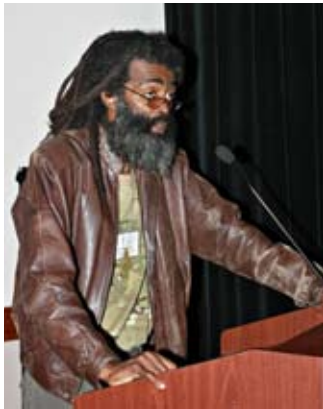
4. Most importantly, we must ensure that there is a clear definition of what the role is for each department within UK Government (including HM Governor). This would prevent ‘passing the buck’ as well as ensuring that closer co-operation is possible. I believe also that the time has come to have a designated junior minister specifically dealing with UKOTs. This would allow UKOTs to be more easily represented internationally and would also give the UKOTs a direct voice in the UK Government. Finally, The UK Government must pledge support both in an advisory and financial capacity to assist UKOTs support their fragile and unique ecosystems and the endangered species that live there. I would urge the UK Government to listen to the recommendations of both the EAC and FAC, and provide the necessary framework to pool the resources of DEFRA, the FCO and DFID to take more responsibility for the environments and biodiversity of the UKOTs.

I would like to end with another passage from the FAC report from the 2007/08 session which, in my opinion, summates what relationship the UK should have with UKOTs: the UK Government 'must take its oversight responsibility for the Overseas Territories more seriously - consulting across all UKOTs more on the one hand while demonstrating a greater willingness to step in and use reserve powers when necessary on the other'. With this policy, both sides will receive a greater benefit, better governance, greater environmental protection and fully utilize the unique connection that UKOTs enjoy with the UK.

Thank you.

The Environment as an Election Issue: The Virgin Islands Experience

Bertrand Lettsome (Dept of Fisheries & Conservation, British Virgin Islands)



Lettsome, B. 2010. The Environment as an Election Issue: The Virgin Islands Experience. p 251 in *Making the Right Connections: a conference on conservation in UK Overseas Territories, Crown Dependencies and other small island communities, Grand Cayman 30th May to 5th June 2009* (ed. by M. Pienkowski, O. Cheesman, C. Quick & A. Pienkowski). UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum, www.ukotcf.org

The British Virgin Islands has a legacy and long standing tradition of conservation and sound environmental management, having enacted its first set of environmental legislation more than half a century ago, and its first National Parks Trust Act in the early 1960s. The post of Conservation Officer was established within the Ministry of Natural Resources in September 1984, and the National Parks Trust Office was established in January 1985. The Conservation and Fisheries Department was established under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Labour in 1990. The Virgin Islands are party to a number of multilateral environmental agreements (The St George's Declaration is an example, regionally) and a bilateral environmental agreement (the Environment Charter).

As the Virgin Islands developed, a series of plans, policies, and strategies were instituted and legislation enacted to address the growing myriad of environmental issues. These included the 1995-1999 National Integrated Development Strategy, National Environment Action Plan, Public Sector Development Programme, The National Physical Development Plan, and National Parks and Protected Areas System Plan; The Fisheries Act 1997, Fisheries Regulations 2003, Physical Planning Act 2004, National Parks Act 2006, and the Draft Environmental Management and Conservation of Biodiversity Bill 2009.

Environmental education and public awareness; institutional strengthening and succession planning; and legislative reform were the main areas of focus, and remain the bedrock, the fundamental principles on which this emerging culture of conservation and environmental responsibility is based. "As the environment goes, so goes the Virgin Islands" and the fact that "the environment is everyone's business", have been burned into the consciousness of the people of the Virgin Islands. Public consultation has always been the norm, but now it is a fundamental component for policy, strategy, and legislative review and development. This need for public consultation is now enshrined in the four major environmental Acts: Fisheries, Physical Planning, National Parks Trust, and the Draft Environmental Management and Conservation of Biodiversity Act. While the environmental situation in the Territory continues to evolve, it is of significant note that an umbrella environmental Non Government Organization, The Virgin Islands Environmental Council (VIEC) has been formed, and using the provisions of the Fisheries Act and Regulations, National Parks Act and Physical Planning Act, they have successfully challenged the planning approval of a major development project and earned the right to a judicial review.

There is a high degree of environmental advocacy and activism within the general population. Public sensitivity to environmentally-responsible development contributed to the recent outcome of General Elections in the Virgin Islands, wherein public perception of the previous administration being too accommodating of environmentally-irresponsible new developments led to an upset. A similar public sensitivity has been observed growing in other UK Overseas Territories.

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Campaigning - Buy Back Bermuda

Jennifer Gray (Executive Durector, Bermuda National Trust; and Bermuda Audubon Society)



Gray, J. 2010. Campaigning - Buy Back Bermuda. pp 252-257 in *Making the Right Connections: a conference on conservation in UK Overseas Territories, Crown Dependencies and other small island communities, Grand Cayman 30th May to 5th June 2009* (ed. by M. Pienkowski, O. Cheesman, C. Quick & A. Pienkowski). UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum, www.ukotcf.org

Buy Back Bermuda is a partnership between two synergistic conservation charities with similar goals and mandates which have combined their energies into a single force to buy back Bermuda's precious open space.

The *Buy Back Bermuda* Campaign materialized as a result of development challenges in Bermuda where open spaces are vanishing rapidly during times when landowners can achieve all-time high prices for selling to developers. We recognized that, as our open spaces became scarcer, the "free" natural services that they provided made them equally (if not more) important economically than some of our developed areas. For the first time in Bermuda, two environmental charities considered paying full real estate values to save open space.

Buy Back Bermuda was started in 2004, when the Bermuda National Trust and the Bermuda Audubon Society joined forces to raise money to purchase a significant area of open space which was about to be sold to a developer for mass condominium creation. After a successful first campaign, a second is now underway to further save two threatened open spaces.

With a mission 'to save our precious remaining land by reclaiming special areas for the benefit of the people of Bermuda and her flora and fauna', the *Buy Back Bermuda* Committee have set site selection criteria to assist in the overwhelming response to our efforts and tailored an engaging public relations drive across all sectors of the community. This article outlines the tremendous success of the collaborative approach to conservation and fundraising and the unexpected challenges generated from this success.

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Buy Back Bermuda is a community-wide fundraising campaign to purchase and save open space in Bermuda. It is the result of a focused partnership between two like-minded conservation charities, the Bermuda National Trust and the Bermuda Audubon Society, which together set a mission to save our precious remaining land by reclaiming special areas for the benefit of the people of Bermuda and her flora and fauna.

The driving force behind this partnership was the challenge both charities faced in advocating for, and acquiring, open space in a time of escalating

property prices and development. Open space is becoming increasingly rare, and therefore able to command extremely high prices on the market. In Bermuda, incidentally, the market means that whatever someone is prepared to pay determines its value. So a basic principle of economics follows: if a resource is diminishing, especially because of consumer demand, then the law of supply and demand dictates the price will increase. In 2004, when landowners were achieving all-time high prices for selling their open space to developers, the two NGOs joined forces in an attempt to meet



Housing density is high in Bermuda.

the current demand and challenge the developers in purchasing rights.

To give you an example of what I mean by a challenge consider this: Bermuda's luxury homes market is still buoyant despite the current economic crisis, with total sales up at \$63 million in 2008. More than \$30 million worth of luxury home sales were closed during the last six months of 2008. Approximately 10 luxury homes were sold in the 4 to \$13 million dollar range.

The average price of a condo is now just above \$1 million. More than a third of family's spending in Bermuda is now going on housing — nearly double that of the US. The Bermuda standard price for real estate is now \$1.6 million an acre, for undeveloped land, without a house or utilities.

In 2001, the *Bermuda Biodiversity Country Study* reported that over 13.7% of the land in Bermuda was covered in concrete, with an estimated 227 acres lost to development every 10 years - and this on an island of only 13,000 acres. The current area of land protected in parks and reserves is only about 800 acres.

Pressure on open space for housing, tourism and commercial development is so great that it is predictable that all land not specifically protected in Parks, Reserves, golf courses and other recreational grounds will eventually become urban. The skyline in Bermuda is so interrupted with construction equipment that local environmentalists now joke that the crane is replacing our beloved Cahow as the national bird.

Without a doubt, precious open space is becoming fragmented. Perhaps the biggest threat of all to our biodiversity and our quality of life is the lack of human awareness. Our affluence and associated concepts of greed and ownership are leading to the

demise of our own life support system.

Unprecedented in their respective 50- and 40-year histories, the Audubon Society and the National Trust entered in 2004 into market value purchase of land in a brave attempt to protect open space.

It all started at a round table discussion of environmentalists when it came to light that planning permission had been granted to develop pristine open space in the western end of the island to build 22 beach front condominiums. The 2.86 acre lot included an inland pond frequented by local birders looking to record migratory species on their approach to the islands and the breeding season's first appearances of waterfowl offspring.

The idea of approaching the owner to purchase was then discussed by the Audubon Society, who determined that, even emptying their bank account, would not cover the down-payment on the land. A proposal for collaboration was taken to the National Trust Council, who embraced the concept despite financial concerns regarding the vast holdings they were already struggling to manage on limited resources. Three members of the Trust and three members of Audubon approached and nominated a facilitator to the new committee, and the *Buy Back Bermuda* Campaign was launched.

The committee reviewed all potential and threatened open spaces in Bermuda and framed the site selection criteria which mandated that suitable sites:

- Be significant in terms of a natural habitat with biodiversity, and worthy of protection and conservation as a nature reserve;
- Be at risk to development or loss of habitat or public amenity;
- Be capable of public access;
- Have educational value to the public at large;
- Be contiguous with an existing protected site;
- Be bordering a natural shoreline on at least one of its boundaries;
- Have a connection to a historic structure or use.

Somerset Long Bay East is bordered by a National Park and a Nature Reserve in the charming and secluded area of Long Bay, Sandy's Parish. With an inland pond, woodlands, grassland, beach and the rocky coast, the property provides a diverse range of habitats for local biodiversity.

For the people of Bermuda, the woodlands and



Existing and new reserves at Somerset Long Bay

beach provide a place of serene beauty and tranquillity, the best medicine for weary souls suffering from today's fast pace.

For our birds this is one of the most important nesting habitats in Bermuda. Moorhens, Pied-billed Grebes and Purple Gallinules have established breeding niches in this pond habitat.

Meeting the criteria on all counts, an approach was made to the land owner of the threatened property. An environmentalist at heart, in financial difficulty, the owner was all too happy to pull out of the sales and purchase agreement with the developer and sell to *Buy Back Bermuda*. And so it was in June of 2004 that the *Buy Back Bermuda* Committee were tasked with putting a vision into action. The target for the campaign included the purchase price, professional fees and an additional \$300,000 for implementation of a conservation management plan. As agreed with the land owner, and after a deposit was made,

we had 18 months to reach our target and make final payment.

The financial plan for the campaign relied heavily on major gifts from the corporate world in Bermuda and, in particular, key foundations. Thousands of letters were sent out, presentations made to numerous committees, philanthropic groups and schools and personal phone calls and visits made to friends and business associates.

A marketing strategy was key to advertising the campaign with flyers distributed island-wide. Posters were also distributed and ads placed in the local print media. A Christmas ad encouraging the public "to give the gift that gives back" proved to be very popular with the older generation who purchased countless gift certificates for nieces, nephews and grandchildren. All donors were offered the opportunity to have their name engraved on a bronze plaque to be erected on the Nature Reserve.

I have to say that the response to our campaign was overwhelming and, indeed with the community behind us. *Buy Back Bermuda* Round 1 proved to be one of the most successful campaigns Bermuda had ever realized, with funds raised in cash and pledges within only 7 months. The campaign was oversubscribed, raising more than \$2 million through donations from school children, individuals, large corporations, foundations, government



Marketing: print ads, internet, flyers, posters, media coverage

and a grant from OTEP for management plan implementation. This first *Buy Back Bermuda* campaign showed unequivocally that we had struck a sensitive nerve in our community and that people were aware and concerned about the critical issue of vanishing open space.

Under the direction of our dynamic *Buy Back Bermuda* team, an incredible amount of effort went into implementing the conservation management plan for the site. Truck loads of bottles and trash and invasive species were removed, the pond dredged and expanded to create a healthier environment for biodiversity, and native and endemic flora planted across the landscape. The community showed their support once again with hundreds of volunteers contributing gifts of time to assist in the field over the course of an entire year.

Finishing touches included the addition of a small dock where school groups can better view pond life, a bird observatory and educational interpretive signage. An education guide has been created for the Reserve for supply to all schools on the island. Earth Day 2007 was a memorable day indeed as the Reserve was officially opened to the public. By this time, plans were already in the works for campaign II.

Following the success of the first campaign and having received numerous calls concerning threatened open spaces, we once again followed our criteria to identify possibilities for land acquisition and protection. In October 2007, *Buy Back Bermuda* Campaign 2 was launched with a target of 2.5 million to save not one but two parcels of land totaling 11 acres.

Some years ago, the Audubon Society had been interested in acquiring a 3.36 acre plot near Shelly Bay, that is the site of the former Eve's Pond. As luck would have it, this property was on the market again. The inland tidal pond, which connected to Harrington Sound, was filled in with the dredgings of Flatts Inlet in the early 1940s. *Buy Back Bermuda* has provided a new opportunity to purchase the land, which incorporates a diverse range of habitats including a rocky coast with tide pools, an



*Somerset Long Bay East Nature Reserve:
Implementing the Conservation Management Plan*

inland valley and an upland hillside with a densely forested lower slope. The property is connected to the Shelly Bay National Park by a Parks Railway Trail, and there is potential to restore the original pond if funding allows.

The second site in the Round 2 Campaign had been put out to tender in the local papers and we submitted a modest bid for it. The 7.5 acres extends from the verges of Evans Pond in Southampton, over a high ridgeline, to the shoreline of the Little Sound. It borders a Government-owned Nature Reserve and is adjacent to the Parks Railway Trail. The site is predominantly lush woodland, with many live cedars and rare native flora, including the *Rhacoma*, a relative of the sage bush found only in a couple of locations in Southampton Parish. Evans Pond, in the bottom of the valley, is a tidal saltwater pond bordered by mangroves and arable farmland.

Overgrown quarries occur along the east slope of the valley and are of great interest culturally and for the native and introduced ferns they support.

Following the template of Campaign 1, Campaign 2 was well on its way to being another success.

This was especially true with the welcome news that the landowner of the Southampton site wished to donate the land to *Buy Back*. This gift has allowed *Buy Back Bermuda* to realize our vision of not only saving precious open spaces, but implementing management plans that enhance the quality of these reserves.

I am thrilled to report that, as of 10 days ago [i.e. in May 2009], Campaign 2 reached its goal of 2.5 million dollars. Donations were received from



Round 2 Campaign Launch, October 2007

- Governments can sometimes be guilted into giving.
- Be passionate about whatever you do, and...
- It's important to have a 'face' for your campaign.

The public face of our campaign is our nominated Committee Chair, Dr David Saul, known widely in the community for his years in politics as Minister of Finance and for a short period as Premier of Bermuda. Now retired, David is well connected in the community, knows where all the money is, loves to be in the limelight, and is passionate about the

environment. While his tactics sometimes border on unorthodox, there is no doubt that his leadership has been fundamental to our success - giving testimony to the importance of carefully choosing the public face of any campaign.

over 1,000 individuals, 96 organisations and the government's Ministry of Environment. The children of Bermuda embraced the concept, with many asking for donations to *Buy Back Bermuda* in lieu of birthday presents. Schools across the island held fundraisers, with one prep school in particular raising \$10,000 through trash-athons, bake sales and neighbourhood enhancement projects. *Buy Back Bermuda* has infiltrated the community, and perhaps the greatest reward of all is the emergent awareness for the need to protect our dwindling open spaces.

Keeping your message simple and relevant is also key to capturing an audience.

Don't be afraid to tug on their heart strings

and never hesitate to ask for money for something you believe in.

So what have we learned through the success of our campaigning?

- Anything is possible and you won't get what you don't ask for.
- Foundations like to give to charity partnerships – they get to cross off two charities in one donation.
- If you send the press an image-rich, camera-ready story they will often print it – no cost to you because you've done the work for them.
- Campaigning is a great tool for raising awareness.
- Donors like to have their name cast forever in bronze.
- Don't underestimate the power of our youth.
- People love to get out in the great outdoors to help you get your work done - but only once, so plan lots of different groups.

And now just a few comments on the unexpected challenges generated from our success.

The perception of the community that we have been, and should continue to be, the environmental watch-dog for the entire island is reasonable, based on past outcries and successes, but this role has become very challenging in times when legal processes are not followed, enforcement is weak and the rate of financial growth and development is exponentially greater than our organisations' resources can accommodate. The *Buy Back Bermuda* campaign has resulted in a marked increase in pressure from the public to stop development and save all open spaces. This can be viewed as posi-



Eve's Pond, Hamilton Parish. From left, top row first: joined to a National Park via a walking trail; rocky shore tide pools (x 2); inland valley (previous site of a pond); water still there.

tive regarding awareness and action, but has put extra pressure, in the form of public expectation, on the organisations. It is our hope that the emerging 'green generation' will join forces in a voice for conservation rather than expecting the Trust to fix every problem.

It is interesting to note that the Ministry of Environment historically had an open space budget of one million dollars per year. The last known parcel of open space purchased by Government was in the year 2000. In 2004, the budget was reclassified as an open space and environmental enhancement budget, and funds were soon after allocated to small neighbourhood projects and the hiring of consultants. In 2007, the budget allocation was 500,000 and, in 2008, it was zero. It is concerning to see such a decline in Governments prioritization of open space, and one has to wonder if there is any association with the launching of *Buy Back Bermuda*.

Perhaps the greatest challenge brought on by *Buy Back Bermuda* hit the National Trust, the larger of the two organizations, in the form of a huge drop in funding to support our operations. As this is a charity reliant on donations to support our programmes and general operations, it became apparent that we could no longer rely on the corporations and foundations that have historically supported us when they are giving in a grand way to *Buy Back Bermuda*. In essence, we found we were in competition with ourselves for funding. Corporate foundations, individuals and the Bermuda Government have all been extremely generous to us in the past, but the recent economic crisis has changed the giving trend. In 2009, the donor com-

munity is sharply focused on ensuring the survival of those most vulnerable in tough times: families, children, the elderly and the sick. Funding has been cut for arts and environment until recovery from the recession is realized. The success of *Buy Back* and the unfortunate timing of the recent economic crisis have left the Trust with a budget deficit that will challenge us for months to come. The *Buy Back* Committee has much work to do to finalize and implement conservation management plans for the two new nature reserve, and campaign 3 has been put on hold for the time being.

We have without a doubt raised our profile and engaged a wide cross-section of the community for the better of Bermuda's environment and look forward to future successes in our campaigning.

How long a reprieve for the Grand Cayman Ironwood Forest?

Lilian Hayball (University College of the Cayman Islands)



Hayball, L. 2010. How long a reprieve for the Grand Cayman Ironwood Forest? pp 258-260 in *Making the Right Connections: a conference on conservation in UK Overseas Territories, Crown Dependencies and other small island communities, Grand Cayman 30th May to 5th June 2009* (ed. by M. Pienkowski, O. Cheesman, C. Quick & A. Pienkowski). UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum, www.ukotcf.org

Located on raised dolomite rocks, the Ironwood Forest occupies a small area of land that has long been above sea level. The ecosystem is a haven for endemic plant and animal species, some reliant on the humid conditions generated by wetland within the forest. This ancient forest ecosystem has developed on sharp, abrasive jagged limestone pinnacles. Threats to the Ironwood Forest emerged in 2002, when the first edition of the *Official Street Atlas of the Cayman Islands* showed the location of a proposed 4-lane highway through the forest. This paper summarises increasing concern expressed by the public, resulting in a stop to the work, at least in the short term.

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Located on raised dolomite rocks, the Ironwood Forest grows upon a small area of land that has been above sea-level for longer than any other parts of central and western Grand Cayman, except Hell. The Forest is a haven for endemic plant and animal species found nowhere else in the world.

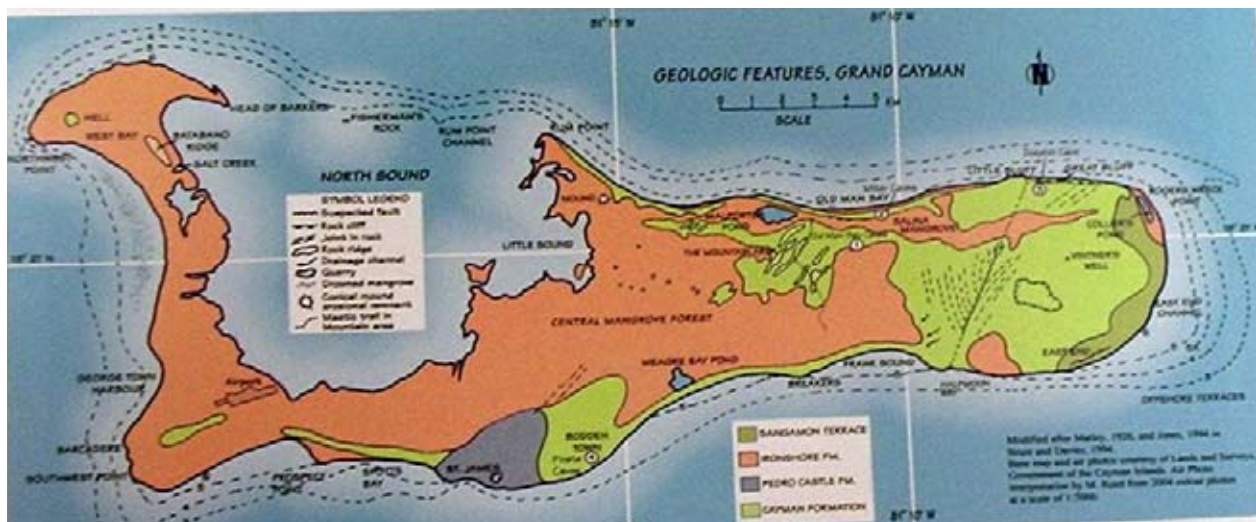
This ancient forest ecosystem has grown uninterrupted at the back of the capital, George Town, on sharp, abrasive jagged limestone pinnacles. A wetland area within the forest provides a warm and humid atmosphere ideally suited to the growth of a diverse range of plants and trees, many endemic to Cayman. The Ironwood Forest supports the only remaining natural population of the 1 - 2 metre tall, strap-leafed, endemic bromeliad *Hohenbergia caymanensis*, dubbed "Old George" in the recent Darwin Initiative *Plant with No Name* competition, entered by Cayman's school-age children.

Unique environmental characteristics make this tiny, 70-acre patch of dry forest ecosystem a stronghold for at least twenty critically endangered Red-Listed species of Cayman's plants and trees.

Threats to the Ironwood Forest emerged in 2002, when the first edition of the *Official Street Atlas of the Cayman Islands* was published. The atlas was a full-colour, alphabetically indexed, 170-page publication, and clearly showed the route of a proposed 4-lane highway through the Forest. Though it is now out of print, each page from the first edition of the atlas is available in PDF format from the following link:

http://www.caymanlandinfo.ky/Portals/0/ls_documents/atlas/gcindex.html. (The location of the proposed road can be seen marked in red dashes across the forest area on pages 41 and 42. To identify the required page, select Grand Cayman and an index map will appear. Click on the page of interest and it will load on your screen.)

Apart from disrupting a long-lived ecosystem, the planned road would have reduced this unique forest habitat into unsustainable fragments, introducing weed species to the heart of the forest, increased sunlight and road-polluted air into this stable humid system, drying the surrounding area and threatening endemics like Old George, Ghost Orchids and others, which thrive in the moist air,



The Ironwood Forest is on the most southwestern outcrop of Cayman Formation rock (shown in pale green). Map from Murray Roed's Islands from the Sea (2006).

Public concern mounted for the preservation of the Ironwood Forest. On Wednesday 30 April 2008, concerned citizens of Cayman gathered in front of the Grand Cayman Glass House to protest about the proposed road that would effectively cut the 70-acre Ironwood Forest in half. Following this public protest, more than 50 people attended a lunchtime rally on Friday 2 May 2008.

On 14 May 2008, at a public meeting, the Cayman Island Government spokesman on the proposed road said, "I don't think that you or anyone else has to convince us about the preservation of the forest. As a matter of principle, the Government is in total support of preserving what is known as the Ironwood Forest. No one has to have any fear of us going behind anybody's back and building a road in the middle of this forest if that's not what people want."

Speaking of the proposed alternative route, which skirts the forest's northern edge, it was noted that it would cost Government an additional \$5-6 million and was "absolutely necessary" in alleviating traffic congestion from the eastern districts to George Town. However, it was understood by the public that the forest would still be invaded and areas lost by this alternative road-building scheme.

On Monday 26 May 2008, citizens at a community meeting attended by Cayman Island Government officials, argued thus: "Cayman has seen much development in recent years, and we all know that no one can stand in the way of progress... but what is progress? Gaining a road at the expense of two unique species going extinct is not progress. Gain-

ing a road at the expense of our cultural heritage is not progress. Gaining a road at the expense of losing a unique learning opportunity for ourselves and our children is not progress. If this road is essential, why not select a different route? If no other route is available, why not design the road as a scenic two-lane parkway, with a maximum speed of 20-25mph, skirting around the forest and delivering the traffic to the schools at a safe and steady rate? This would protect the forest and our children."

During deliberations on the budget for 2008/2009, Cayman Island Government officials stated that there was no need for an Ironwood Forest Environmental Impact Assessment, since it has now been decided not to build the road through any section of the forest. Proposals were now on the table to approach the private land-owners about purchasing the land in order to leave the forest as an environmentally sensitive area in perpetuity. Funds in the budget would continue to be used as planned to expand the roundabout at the head of the Linford Pierson Highway, and to do work on Outpost Road to alleviate some of the congestion during morning school traffic. It was stated that, as these are not near the Ironwood Forest, an Environmental Impact Assessment was rendered unnecessary.

It is likely that the building of a road through the Ironwood Forest has been delayed by public action and also by the recent global economic downturn of November 2008. The Ironwood Forest endemic species have been given a reprieve and a new lease of life by these efforts and the change in fiscal circumstances which affect Grand Cayman.



Views of the Ironwood Forest

That said, it is important that a weather-eye be kept on future road-building initiatives on Grand Cayman, in case the old arguments for invading the forest re-surface as funds become available for road-building once more. It is imperative that consolidation of interest in conserving the Ironwood Forest be strengthened during this period of reprieve by educating the public further, in schools and colleges, and by keeping the issue in the public eye. Preserving the Ironwood Forest should always be at the top of the list of Grand Cayman's conservation agenda.

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The Church as an Advocate for Conservation

Rev. M. Alson Ebanks, Cert. Hon. (Cayman Islands)



Ebanks, M.A. 2010. The Church as an Advocate for Conservation. pp 261-263 in *Making the Right Connections: a conference on conservation in UK Overseas Territories, Crown Dependencies and other small island communities, Grand Cayman 30th May to 5th June 2009* (ed. by M. Pienkowski, O. Cheesman, C. Quick & A. Pienkowski). UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum, www.ukotcf.org

Ecological conservation is one of those areas that should naturally offer both the scientist and the churchman wonderful opportunities for joint advocacy. Unfortunately, these opportunities have not always been embraced, and I would suggest that both sides are to blame. Unfortunately, the church has been rather deaf to the groanings of creation, and in some quarters it may have even promoted practices that exacerbated the pain. The scientific community has contributed to the rift by the attitude and behaviour which some scientists have displayed towards those of faith. Both sides must demonstrate tolerance and understanding for other points of view. Whether sentient or one-celled beings, all need conservation. We all know that when we isolate ourselves, we also insulate ourselves from new ideas that have the potential to radically change our paradigms. Therefore being inclusive is tantamount to adopting a survival strategy. The stakeholders in the conservation of planet Earth are not just those whom we choose to engage in the planning and strategising processes; it is all of us! Policies that promote global conservation necessitate public participation. Our job, not just mine, is to convince our community that conservation is a religious duty as much as a civic duty, because the “world” is not just humanity, but creation as a whole. As a churchman, as a Christian, I encourage you to engage the church as a key stakeholder in this critical business of conservation. And I applaud you for even considering that the church has anything worthwhile to contribute to this vital campaign.

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Any cursory study of history will reveal that the pulpit and the laboratory — religion and science — have had a rather interesting relationship over the past several centuries. Copernicus was demonised and Joseph Mendel was idolized. In more recent years, however, this relationship has been mostly adversarial, with very few instances of cooperation and joint advocacy for causes that transcend both the lab and the pulpit.

Ecological conservation is one of those areas that should naturally offer both the scientist and the churchman wonderful opportunities for joint advocacy. Unfortunately, this has not been the

case. And here I would suggest that both sides are to blame. The church, for example, continues to preach and promote a very narrow view of Redemption. Our favourite verse is John 3:16: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life.” We continue to interpret the Greek word, “kosmos” that is translated as “world” in the narrowest sense to mean humanity, rather than in the broader sense of the whole created world; this despite the fact that a fuller understanding of Redemption is inclusive of both humanity and all of creation. In Romans 8:19-22, for example, it is absolutely clear that all

of creation is the beneficiary of the Redemption. The English Standard Version states:

“For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.”

Admittedly, the church has been rather deaf to the groanings of creation; and unfortunately in some quarters it may have even promoted practices that exacerbated the pain. Therefore it is high time for the church to reevaluate our doctrines as well as our practices.

But the fault does not lie singularly at the feet of the church. The scientific community has contributed hugely to the rift, primarily by the attitude and behaviour which some scientists have displayed toward those of Christian faith. And here I am not referring to assertions and pronouncements that this or that theory is proven fact, whether it is the existence of God or macro-evolution. What I refer to may be best explained by way of an illustration from the trenches of religion.

I’ve had occasion to minister to the sick in hospitals. With growing frequency I will meet someone of another faith other than Christianity. One such case comes to mind. I had been visiting a particular gentleman, conversing with him, and before leaving his room, I offered to pray for him. He always graciously accepted the offer. However, on a return visit, I found his partner there. When I offered to pray, she reminded me that they were of a certain faith and asked that I respect that. I prayed, and as usual ended my prayer with, “In Jesus’ name. Amen.” The lady quickly chided me for not respecting their faith. However, on reflection, I realized that, in a subtle way, she was not really asking that I respect her faith, but that I disrespect my own faith. To respect her faith would require me to allow her to practice her faith as she desires, and pray as she is convicted to pray; for her to respect mine would require the same. I have found that the lady’s point of view reflects a growing trend in our western culture — to the point that tolerance does not mean live and let live for all; rather it means, to use the words of George Orwell, “all animals are created equal, but some are more equal than others.” And apparently, the less equal do not deserve

to have a voice.

Now, what exactly is my point? My point is that, until the scientific community can allow the church to be the church, and hold to its dogmas with the same sincerity and tenacity that it does to its dogmas, without condescension and a “high brow” superior attitude, there can be no cooperative effort, no real partnership in advocacy. The scientific community needs the voice and the views of the church, just as it needs a genuine partnership with policy makers and legislators. We all know what happens when science is devoid of morality and ethical guidelines — and hopefully we will not forget Auschwitz or Dachau.

But it is even larger than that. Just as the church must review its dogmas and expand its thinking on Redemption to include our stewardship over all of creation, so must the scientific community rethink its approach to the Church. For in a rather strange sort of way, both are guilty of a similar sin — the sin of inconsistency. Some in the church seem willing to allow creation to go to hell (figuratively), provided we can save mankind, while some in the scientific community appear to prefer the conservation of the planet at the expense of human life or welfare. Inconsistency in our core values and practices serve to further erode any basis for partnership that will enlarge the advocacy base that influences policy-makers, and the community that influences them.

I believe that a clear understanding of conservation instructs us that all of creation is groaning — whether sentient or one-celled beings. It is therefore the duty of policy makers to be inclusive in their entire approach to conservation — and not after policies have been crafted, but from Alpha to Omega. The stakeholders in the conservation of planet Earth are not just those whom we choose to engage in the planning and strategising processes; it is all of us!

We all know that when we isolate ourselves, we also insulate ourselves from new ideas that have the potential to radically change our paradigms. Therefore, being inclusive is tantamount to adopting a survival strategy.

If policy, by definition, means that which an organization always or never does, then policy making is by far the least important aspect of the process. It is the implementation that is crucial. It means that policies that promote global conserva-

tion necessitate public participation from (to use modern parlance) the “get go.” Our job, not just mine, is to convince our community as a whole that conservation is a Christian obligation, a religious duty as much as a civic duty and the duty of legislators, because the “world” of John 3:16 is not just humanity, but creation as a whole.

Pastors and theologians need to trumpet the call to conservation with the same vigour that the church has embraced its duty to the poor, the sick and the orphan. Regardless of one’s eschatological position, it is clear that we have no mandate from God to hasten the destruction of the earth by poor stewardship. A better theology of conservation that is true to the Biblical view of redemption can and should be taught in our seminaries and preached from our pulpits.

Church-run schools should ensure that their curricula include the teaching of conservation as a biblical mandate. “This is my Father’s world” should be more than a song that we teach our children. We need to take it one step further and teach that because “this is my Father’s world” we have a duty to protect and conserve as good stewards of God’s creation.

My hope is that those from among us will initiate focus groups and “think tanks” that include teachers from faith-based schools in an effort to ensure that the message of conservation is integrated into their curricula in the same way that diligent faith-based schools strive to integrate faith principles into their lesson plans and classroom presentations. And why can’t our annual Earth Day themes be contextualised to a greater degree so that churches and church schools — and indeed societies that are more religious than secular as a whole — will have faith-friendly avenues to promote and practice conservation? To paraphrase a patriot of another era and another cause, “Either we all stand together, or we will all sink together.”

As a churchman, but more pointedly as a Christian, I encourage you to engage the church as a key stakeholder in this critical business of conservation. And I applaud you for even considering that the church has anything worthwhile to contribute to this vital campaign, which as we know, it most assuredly has.

Discussion

In regard to getting economic value from the environment, an example was given from the English Lake District where local businesses charge a voluntary levy for tourism operations, thereby contributing to an environment fund.

Raising the profile of the UKOTs in the UK Parliament was felt to be very important. Concern was expressed that there needs to be more joined-up, cross-departmental thinking – which a dedicated Minister for the UK Overseas Territories would address. The example of the postponement of the St Helena air access was cited where greater cross-departmental consultation, particularly involving the DFID Minister, would have been helpful.

The issue of UKOT representation in the UK Parliament was raised, with the French model cited as a better system than the UK-UKOT relationship. Participants commented that the profile of the UKOTs certainly needed raising within UK Government, and also within UK generally. Although members of the Foreign Affairs Committee had visited many UKOTs (Paul Keetch having visited 11 of the UKOTs and CDs), many other members had very limited knowledge and understanding. However, the question of potential taxation implications of achieving parliamentary status at the territory level was also raised. A further comment about the role of UK Government was made

about training and expectations of the Governors appointed to UKOTs. In particular, what could Governors do when presented with poor decision making by UKOT governments. Were they expected to be silent on such matters?

The importance of monitoring progress in implementing Environment Charters, as an important part of the UK-UKOT relationship, was also noted.

On successful campaigning strategies, specifically with the strategies used in the *Buy Back Bermuda* campaign, it was confirmed that the approach used had been appropriate but, for the future, including NGO overhead costs within a strategy plan was required.

The extremely important role of the Church as an advocate for conservation had been raised previously, but was specifically addressed in this session. In answer to a question about the best way of getting support from the church for environmental issues, this was considered to be through the children. The effective use of gospel choirs, reaching a wide audience (for example at the 1999 London Conference *A Breath of Fresh Air* and the education package resulting from that) was also mentioned. A final comment that conservation should be considered a Christian duty was widely supported.



From left: Rob Thomas (rapporteur), Rev. Alson Ebanks, Lilian Hayball, Dr John Cortés, Jennifer Gray