



INCEPTION REPORT & WORKPLAN

THE GRAND BAHAMA NATIONAL PARKS EXPANSION PROJECT

**Prepared for:
The Department of Sustainable Development
Organization of American States**

**Prepared by:
Bill Henwood
Global Parks
Vancouver, Canada**

April, 2013

April 18, 2013

Mr. Richard Huber
Executive Secretariat for Integral Development
Department of Sustainable Development
Organization of American States
1889 F Street, NW
Washington, DC

Dear Mr. Huber,

In keeping with the Terms of Reference for Global Parks for the Grand Bahama National Parks Expansion Project, please find enclosed the Inception Report that provides a workplan. This report reflects the results of the initial orientation meeting held with the Bahamas National Trust on April 9, 2013 in Nassau, Bahamas. In accordance with the Terms of Reference, I would request that, upon approval of this Inception Report, the initial tranche of funding be advanced to Global Parks to enable the project to proceed on schedule.

Global Parks appreciates the opportunity to participate in this project. I would welcome any comments that you might have so that I might incorporate them into our work plan.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Todd Koenings". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'T'.

Todd Koenings
Executive Director
Global Parks

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Government of The Bahamas is an active participant in several national, regional and international programs toward meeting global standards in achieving the long term conservation and protection of its terrestrial and marine ecosystems. As a signatory to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), it is committed to the establishment and effective management of a comprehensive and ecologically representative system of Protected Areas, as further articulated in the CBD's Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA) for the Bahamas. The Bahamas has shown leadership in the implementation of the PoWPA, both globally and in the Caribbean region, through the Bahamas 2020 Declaration and the promotion of the Caribbean Challenge, launched in 2008. In so doing, the Bahamas has confirmed its intent to meet and even exceed the CBD goals by setting aside at least 20% of its coastal marine waters as marine protected areas (MPAs) by 2020.

The Government of The Bahamas has also committed to other components of the Caribbean Challenge, including the development and implementation of ecosystem-based projects aimed at adapting to climate change and the development of sustainable finance mechanisms to fund protected areas. While not implicitly integral to this project, these factors will be given all due consideration in the development of recommendations for park expansion and establishment of new National Parks.

As the statutory body established by the Government of The Bahamas to establish and manage its system of national parks, the Bahamas National Trust (BNT) has entered into an agreement with Global Parks, supported by funding from the Organization of American States, to undertake the development of specific proposals for national park expansion and establishment on Grand Bahama Island (see APPENDIX II for detailed Terms of Reference). This project is comprised of two distinct components:

- Develop proposals for the expansion of two existing national parks, Lucayan National Park and Peterson Cay National Park; and
- Develop a proposal for establishing a new terrestrial and marine national park on the north shore of Grand Bahama Island.

2. PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Under the direction and guidance of BNT staff, including the Director of Parks and Parks Planner, Global Parks will provide a professional project team including a national park planner, a professional forester and a specialist in karst cave features and management to undertake the preparation of the park proposals. The lead role for project management will be retained by the BNT's planner throughout the project, who shall be responsible for providing the project team with all the information available with respect to the project sites. The Global Parks national park planner will assume overall responsibility for project completion, working in conjunction with the science specialists. BNT and Global Parks staff shall meet on an as-required basis to review information requirements, field visits, and project progress and process.

Support from other BNT staff and resources, including GIS capability, field personnel and equipment such as vehicles, will be made available by the BNT on an as-needed basis. The BNT will provide accommodation for the Global Parks staff at the Rand Nature Centre in Freeport for a period of 4 to 6 weeks.

3. PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND ACTION PLAN

The development of the park proposals will encompass the full spectrum of goals and objectives setting, information collection and analysis, the development of park establishment and expansion scenarios (with options) and conclusive recommendations for BNT’s consideration. The BNT has already undertaken an Ecological Gap Assessment including an overview of the protection status of major habitats and key species, as well as a series of assessments regarding management effectiveness, capacity and sustainable finance. For the upcoming project, the BNT is will address the socio-economic needs of the park proposal process, while Global Parks staff will focus on providing the biological context for the proposed park areas.

The Ecological Gap Assessment provides the foundation for addressing the biological context, having already identified the conservation goals of greater importance to the national economy of The Bahamas. These include groundwater, beaches, mangroves, spawning aggregations and coral reefs. The assessment observes that the existing national parks offer no protection for coral reefs and seagrass systems with poor representation of mangroves, tidal creeks, beaches and rocky shores. To address these deficiencies and provide for a more ecologically representative National Protected Area system, the BNT has recommended the following:

- Lucayan National Park be expanded to incorporate the remaining karst system to the north, the extent of the tidal estuary to the east and a portion of the offshore reef system to the south;
- Peterson Cay National Park be expanded to include seagrass meadows and reef formations;
- A new national park in the Northshore/Gap area, will protect prime bonefish habitats, tidal creeks, mangrove forests and seagrass meadows; and
- In conjunction with the Northshore proposal, a system of four blue holes at Sweetings Cay is proposed for protection.

The individual tasks and deliverables necessary to develop these proposals are outlined in the table below and a draft Table of Contents for the final report (or reports) is attached as APPENDIX I.

Task and Deliverable	Timeline
Complete orientation meetings and description of planning context	Week 1
Complete field reconnaissance of all	Within weeks 1-2

sites	
Complete meetings with necessary 3 rd parties	Within weeks 1-2
Prepare a vision, goals and objectives for park establishment and expansion	Week 2
Complete review of available information	Within 2 weeks of project start
Conduct resource inventories and gather tourism and fisheries related data	Within 2-3 weeks of project start
Complete information analysis and issues analysis	Week 3
Develop establishment and expansion scenarios with recommendations for boundaries	Week 4
Submit and present draft report	Week 4

Formal consultation on the draft park proposals with the public and stakeholders and detailed discussions or negotiations with adjacent or otherwise affected property owners will be undertaken by BNT

In addition, these proposals will be highlighted as part of the overall objective of meeting the The Bahamas' Caribbean Challenge by portraying these proposals as part of an overall system of existing and proposed marine and terrestrial protected areas.

4. TIMEFRAME

It is essential that this project be completed by September 2013. The Global Parks project team will initiate work in the Bahamas on April 9 and will work toward completion of a draft report within 4-5 weeks, allowing for further public review and amendment prior to completing the final report by September.

APPENDIX I: Draft Table of Contents for Park Proposals

Executive Summary

1. Introduction and Purpose
2. The Planning Context:
 - Bahamas National Trust legislation, strategic plan, policies;
 - Review of existing national parks on Grand Bahama
 - The Caribbean Challenge;
 - Potential opportunities for expansion of the National Parks system on Grand Bahama Island
3. Development of a Vision, Goals and Objectives for Expanding National Parks on Grand Bahama Island
4. Integration with planning for Grand Bahama Island, the Grand Bahama Port Authority and Grand Bahama Development Company.
5. Natural Resource Inventory and Ecological Assessment in the existing National Parks and surrounding region, and for the North Shore:
 - Geological resources and karst features
 - Vegetation, including mangroves
 - Fisheries and Wildlife
 - Hydrology
 - Marine ecosystems, including coral reefs
6. Visitor Experience and Opportunities Assessment:
 - Existing levels and types of human impacts and visitor use
 - Existing visitor and tourism information, education and communications
 - Opportunities for improved and/or increased tourism and visitor use
 - Opportunities for improved visitor information, education and communications
 - Opportunities for associated livelihoods
7. Park Operational Considerations:
 - Assessment of existing levels of resourcing for staff, facilities and equipment
8. Identification of Information Gaps
9. Draft Recommendations for the feasibility of new park establishment and expansion opportunities including:
 - Location and recommended boundaries, and possible land acquisition requirements
 - Preliminary zoning
 - New or improved visitor opportunities and facilities
 - Improved opportunities for tourism and visitor information, education and communications
 - Operational implications for sustainable park management, including staffing, facilities and equipment with a draft budget.

Annex 1 Persons and Organizations Consulted

APPENDIX II: Project Terms of Reference

Secretariat for Integral Development (SEDI) Department of Sustainable Development Terms of Reference for Global Parks for the Grand Bahama National Parks Expansion TERMS OF REFERENCE (TORs)

Marine/Coastal Zone Management Specialist

ReefFix: An Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) Ecosystem Services Valuation and Capacity Building Project for the Caribbean

Country:	Local In-Country Consultant (Bahamas)
Funding Source:	Governments of Mexico and Monaco
Period:	12 Months
Type:	Consultant
Amount:	US\$8,000.00

Preliminary Contact: <i>LaKeshia Anderson, Park Planner, Bahamas National Trust.</i> lakeshia.anderson@gmail.com Other Contacts: <i>Eric Carey, Executive Director, BNT</i> <i>Lynn Gape, Deputy Executive Director, BNT</i>	Other Contacts: <i>Bahamas Environment Science, and Technology (BEST) Commission</i> <i>Ministry of the Environment</i> <i>Department of Marine Resources</i>
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1. Introduction

The preparations for the **United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development RIO+20** identified the oceans and marine ecosystems as one of seven areas¹ which need priority attention to ensure global sustainability. The very first entry point to discuss ocean governance was a side event of the forum on science, technology and innovation for sustainable development held on June 12, 2012, focusing on science and governance for global sustainability. The panelists and the public called for more and new research, including in economic valuation techniques, to fully understand and evaluate the impacts on marine ecosystems such as coral reefs and mangrove ecosystems.

Noting that current governance remains fragmented along both sectoral and geographical lines that ignore the interconnectivity and scale of ocean issues, they recognized that there is an urgent need for an international framework of cooperation for both ocean research and governance, which will define the conditions for scientist to prepare accurate scenarios for the future. The **Rio Ocean Declaration**² called for strong and immediate action to meet the sustainable development goals for oceans, coasts, and **Small Island Developing States (SIDS)** at Rio+20 and beyond. Of the three primary goals one of them is to enhance the capability of SIDS and developing coastal countries to benefit from, and sustainably manage, their marine resources and to adapt to climate

¹ United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development “7 Critical Issues at Rio+20” available at <http://www.uncsd2012.org/7issues.html>

² The Rio Ocean Declaration is available at http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/SC/pdf/pdf_Rio_Ocean_Declaration_2012.pdf

change through increased financing, technology transfer, commensurate with the needs and challenges facing developing countries and SIDS, and ocean use agreements to ensure that the benefits derived from the sustainable use of resources in the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) of SIDS and developing coastal countries accrue to them.

As an example, inspired by the Micronesia Challenge, in Curitiba, Brazil on March 31, 2006, the nation of Grenada pledged to put 25 percent of near-shore marine and 25 percent of terrestrial natural resources under effective conservation by 2020 under the **Grenada Declaration**³, a **further advancement of the Caribbean Challenge**. The Declaration, approved by Grenada's Cabinet, will lead to a nine-fold increase in protection of Grenada's marine environment and more than double protection of its terrestrial environment. Grenada now joins the Bahamas, which in 2005, during the 10 Year Review of the Barbados Program of Action meeting, committed to set aside at least 20% of its productive marine bank areas as marine protected areas.

Coral reefs are sometimes referred to as “canaries of the sea” because of their early warning ability to forecast near-shore oceanic stress. Because of their biological diversity, they are also called “rainforests of the sea”. Coral reefs are vital to the well being of millions of people. Tropical marine and coral reef ecosystems, including mangroves and sea grasses, are vulnerable environmental resources that provide significant economic goods and services. The health of these resources is critical to human well-being. By accounting for coastal marine and coral reef ecosystem economic values in management decisions, Small Island Developing States (SIDS) can sustain their flow of goods and services in the interest of current and future generations.

Compared to just a few decades ago, the ever-increasing number and strength of forces affecting coastal ecosystems, including mangroves, require coastal managers to respond and adapt to ensure the sustainability of valued ecosystem services and products. One of the major challenges in the Caribbean region is strengthening the resilience of coastal ecosystems to the climate change-induced sea level rise and temperature increases

In this context, the GS/OAS Department of Sustainable Development (DSD) is implementing the **ReefFix** project as an Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) tool that works with SIDS to complete stakeholder analysis and socio-economic valuation with a view towards improving oversight of marine resources to meet commitments made by SIDS to increase coverage and effective management. **ReefFix** has multi-level linkages that trains participating countries in (i) ecosystem goods and services valuation methodologies (ii) cost effective interventions to improve marine ecosystem health, and (iii) revenue raising techniques of cost recovery and user pays/polluter pays principles. In this process, ReefFix will use and develop cost-effective techniques that can be replicated throughout the wider Caribbean by applying the ReefFix methodology up to 7 case study sites indicated below that will include capacity building exercises and a workshop to disseminate preliminary results and disseminate lessons learned and best practices.

2. Background

During the Seventh Conference of the Parties (COP-7) of the Convention for Biological Diversity (CBD), the signatories reached a historical agreement to promote the establishment and effective management of a comprehensive, ecologically representative system of Protected Areas, articulated within a Program of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA). The Bahamas Environment,

³ At the 2006 8th Meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 8) Grenada pledged the Grenada Declaration

Science, and Technology (BEST) Commission, The Bahamas National Trust (BNT), Department of Marine Resources (DMR) and The Nature Conservancy Northern Caribbean Program (TNC NCP), signed a National Implementation Support Programme (NISP) agreement to ensure successful implementation of the PoWPA. Under the partnership, these agencies have been able to productively complete a number of assessments including an ecological gap assessment, management effectiveness assessment, capacity assessment and sustainable finance assessment (SFP). The Ecological Gap Assessment analysed the extent to which viable examples of biodiversity features; such as species, habitats, natural communities and ecosystems, are sufficiently represented in a protected area system, thus identifying where species and ecosystems are left unprotected.

The Bahamas 2020 Declaration was formally presented in Bonn, Germany at the Ninth Conference of the Parties (COP-9) in May 2008. The 2020 Declaration served as the Government of The Bahamas' confirmation of its intent to preserve the country's marine and terrestrial environments and to meet the targets established by the UN CBD PoWPA for 2010 and 2012. The Government of The Bahamas also stated its intent to exceed CBD goals by effectively conserving at least twenty percent (20%) of the near-shore marine resources across The Bahamas by 2020. The declaration was made as part of the official launch of the Caribbean Challenge, which represents a regional initiative to establish a mechanism to sustainably finance Protected Areas.

The Bahamas National Trust is working closely with the other NISP partners and the various stakeholders to expand the system of Protected Areas, to assist the Government of The Bahamas' commitments to achieve the PoWPA goals and 20% marine goals. The BNT's strategic plan highlights the organizational goals to increase both terrestrial and marine targets by 10% and 8% respectively.

3. Purpose

The Bahamas National Trust is a non-profit, statutory organization, established to manage the National Park System of The Bahamas. Currently, the BNT manages twenty-seven (27) National Parks and Protected Areas throughout the archipelago, three (3) of which are situated on the island of Grand Bahama (figure 1). Peterson Cay National Park, Lucayan National Park and The Rand Nature Centre encapsulates 142 acres of upland and coastal habitats, seabird nesting site, cultural resources, and blue hole systems that access one of the longest charted caverns systems in the world.

The Bahamas has completed an overview on the protection status of major habitats and key species under the existing protected area system through the development of an Ecological Gap Assessment. Conservation goals of greater importance to the national economy such as groundwater, beaches, mangroves, spawning aggregations and coral reefs receive little to no protection. Specifically, the Grand Bahama National Park System does not protect coral reefs and seagrass systems, while mangroves, tidal creeks, beaches and rocky shores are grossly underrepresented.

The Bahamas National Trust is recommending that the Lucayan National Park be expanded to incorporate the remaining karst cave system to the north, the extent of the tidal estuary to the east, as well as a portion of the offshore reef system to the south (figure 2). The Northshore/Gap area (figure 3) will protect prime bonefish habitats, tidal creeks, mangrove forests, and seagrass meadows. A system of four blue holes at Sweetings Cay is also proposed for protection in

addition to tidal creeks and flats, as well as the expansion of the Peterson Cay National Park (figure 4) to include seagrass meadows and reef formations. These expansion efforts for Grand Bahama will depict a more ecologically representative system for addition to the National Protected Area system, increasing marine, freshwater and terrestrial biodiversity targets.

4. Overall Goal and Objective of the Project

Assessments of socioeconomic and ecological conditions are fundamental to the designation of new parks, forming the basis for park proposals. These factors guide park boundary delineations, provide various management options, offer opportunities for local economic benefit, and are heavily dependent on scientific justifications and community consultations. The Bahamas National Trust is addressing the socioeconomic needs of the park proposal development process, and seeks to engage Global Parks on providing the biological context for the proposed park areas.

5. Scope of Work and Activities

This consultancy will expand on the activities undertaken in 2009-10 which was limited to Moriah Harbour Cay National Park in Exuma situated between Little & Great Exuma in the Bahamas. <http://www.oas.org/dsd/IABIN/Component1/ReefFix/BahamasApr29-29.09/ReefFix-Bahamas.htm> Whereas the previous study was very limited to the a small protected area, the present work encompass marine baseline planning for the **Lucayan National Park** and system planning for all of the Bahamas targeting sites proposed for the expansion of a nation-wide network of MPAs to put 25 percent of near-shore marine and 25 percent of terrestrial natural resources under effective conservation by 2020 under Caribbean Challenge.

1. Review reports and literature associated with the **Peterson Cay National Park, Lucayan National Park and Northshore/Gap areas and compile:**
 - General health and status of coral reefs in the area
 - Status of fishery resources
 - Overall composition and structure of reef fish assemblages
 - Diversity of fish and corals
 - Status of ecologically important species
 - Identify specific human impacts or other threats to the area
 - Species composition and vegetation structure (mangroves)
 - Inventory of bird species
2. Analyse existing data, and data collected during rapid ecological assessments for proposed park areas.
3. Make recommendations for proposed park boundaries.
4. Provide biological inventory of species found within proposed boundaries **of the Peterson Cay National Park, Lucayan National Park and Northshore/Gap areas.**
5. Work with the appropriate Ministry to gather tourism, fisheries, and bio-physical and socio-economic data on important ecosystems and complete a reef and marine inventory that would add a marine component to **Lucayan National Park** managed by the BNT indicating (i) any existing management plans with significant data and maps on visitation, (ii) any parks with an entry fee, and (iii) inventory different kinds of tourism that visit the different existing marine areas and proposed new marine protected areas (e.g. dive tourism, day boating, etc) with a zoning plan such as fishery priority areas and marine protected (no take zones) areas.
6. Use Google Earth Maps to increase details/outline of the extent of proposed marine protected areas for the Bahamas and include larger marine areas if required including extensions into the EEZ/Territorial Seas System Plan of most representative marine

ecosystems to meet Caribbean Challenge to put 20 percent of near-shore marine resources under effective conservation by 2020.

7. Once the data is filled out, support a workshop with stakeholders to analyze and confirm the data and field trip to the marine park. The workshop will cover all expenses, and the in-kind resources that are indicated in the budget are for the time of the ministry and any NGO that might be helping out in this valuation exercise.
8. Oversee that the document has an executive summary.
9. Provide BEST and Department of Marine Resources with relevant information concerning this activity.
10. Submit the final report to the GS/OAS, and appropriate Ministerial contacts.

In undertaking this assignment, the Independent Contractor (hereinafter referred to as “The Consultant”) will work closely with Bahamas National Trust staff from the Science and Parks Divisions, under direct guidance of the Director of the BNT. **The Consultant** will also work as part of a project team to achieve the outcome of assigned tasks and **will be technically responsible to Mr. Richard Huber from the Department of Sustainable Development (“DSD”)** of the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States (“GS/OAS”), for fulfilling the obligations established by the terms of reference of this contract.

6. Outputs and Deliverables

The expected deliverables are as follows:

1. Summary report of results of rapid ecological assessment.
2. Park proposals depicting the expansions of Lucayan National Park and Peterson Cay National Park, and for the Northshore/Gap area.
3. Map of proposed areas to be included in Caribbean Challenge
4. Comprehensive report on Rapid Ecological Assessment.
5. Case Study Brochure: Unformatted content and pictures for a 4 pg brochure.
6. PPT presentation, press release, and photographs of Public Participation and Capacity Building Stakeholder Workshop.
7. Final Report with all activities 1-10 documented and assembled.

7. Payment Schedule

The total amount of this contract is US\$8,000.00 for a period of 12 months. The consultant remuneration will be provided in 3 payments as follows:

Payment	Amount	Payment upon Submission of:
1st Payment	USD\$2,400	Upon submission of a work plan
2nd Payment	USD\$3,600	Upon submission of draft deliverables 1-4
3 rd Payment	USD\$2,000	Upon submission of final version of deliverables 1-7