

Portland Bight Area

Frequently Asked Questions And Answers

Question #1

What is the purpose of the Environmental Management Scoping Report?

Response:

The purpose of the Report is to identify biologically sensitive features of the marine and land-dwelling fauna and flora that inhabits the area; current industrial and other activities, and the laws governing use of the area.

Question #2

Where is Portland Bight located?

Response:

Portland Bight is located at latitude 17°53'00" and longitude 77°08'00", and spans the Parishes of St. Catherine and Clarendon, as depicted in the below photograph



Question #3

Is the Portland Bight Area a protected area?

Response:

Yes! Portland Bight Area was declared a protected area in 1999 under the Natural Resource Conservation Act of 1991; and is recognised as a Multiple use National Park because in addition of its natural heritage resources it hosts a number of major industrial, commercial, residential and agricultural activities.

Question #4

Does the Portland Bight Area fit any of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) categories?

Response:

No, it does not. Portland Bight is not exclusively an environmental conservatory and is intended to facilitate multiple activities in a sustainable manner.

Question #5

What is the role of the Caribbean Coastal Area Management Foundation (C-CAM) in the management of the Portland Bight Protected Area (PBPA)?

Response:

The Caribbean Coastal Area Management Foundation was established in 1997 to promote coastal conservation and has been delegated management responsibility for the PBPA and is contractually responsible for implementing it. This includes securing funds for financing the activities.

Question #6

Are there industrial and commercial activities occurring in the Portland Bight area at the moment?

Response:

The PBPA is host to significant industrial, commercial and agricultural activities which are important to the national developmental agenda. Current Industrial activities in the PBPA include the Jamalco Rocky Point Port, the Jamaica Public Service Old Harbour Power Station and Transmission Sub-Station, the Wallenford Coffee Processing Plant, the Chemical Lime Quarry, the Doctor Bird Power Barges, the Jamaica Broilers Ethanol Plant and several commercial fish, shrimp and chicken farms. In addition, in 2004 Jamalco received a permit to expand its alumina and port, doubling its alumina production capacity from 1.4 to 2.8 million tonnes per year.

It should also be noted that in 2009 Rinker/CEMEX obtained a permit from NEPA to establish a Port to host Post Panamax size vessels with a capacity of 60,000 tonnes. This includes dredging of a ship channel and turning basin to depths of in excess of 14 m.

Question # 7

Is there any evidence that Tainos occupied the Goat Islands prior to 1494?

Response:

Yes! Skeletal remains and relics have been found on the Goat Islands. We will initiate an Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) to ensure that any remains are documented and relocated in accordance with the Jamaica National Heritage Trust requirements.

Question # 8

What level of development took place on the Goat Islands during the time of World War II?

Response:

The development was extensive and includes construction of an air strip, barracks, power plant, fuel storage facilities, water treatment system and dredging of 2.8 million cubic yards of material which was stored between the islands. The Goat Islands are therefore not pristine and untouched environmentally, as the dredged material contributed to the current land formation.

Question # 9

What are the dominant land dwelling fauna present on the Goat Islands?

Response:

There is evidence that the Great Goat Island is still occupied by wild goats. It does not appear that there are any iguanas on the Goat Islands. The most commonly observed life forms are snails and slugs, lizards and mangrove tree crabs. See below photograph.



Mangrove Tree Crab

Question # 10

What are the dominant sea dwelling and flora present on the Goat Islands?

Response:

The area is dominated by mangroves and sea grass. The designs will be done such that it minimizes the impact on this flora. In addition, appropriate mitigative measures will be undertaken to compensate for any initial disturbances in accordance with the environmental conditions stipulated by NEPA.

Question # 11

What is the current state of the existing coral reef?

Response:

The existing coral reef has already been severely damaged due to the effects of dynamiting.

Question# 12

What is the current state of fishing in the Portland Bight Area?

Response:

Fishing has been severely degraded as the majority of fishers' fish outside the Portland Bight Protected Area. In addition, the fisher folk place greater reliance on other – income earning activities. Fishing therefore provides mainly supplemental income to other activities in which the fishers are engaged.

Question # 13

Are there fish sanctuaries in the Portland Bight Protected Area?

Response:

Yes! There are three (3) declared fish sanctuaries, but only one in close proximity to the Goat Islands. Indications are that the Galleon Harbour sanctuary is in a degraded condition due to the existing substrate, which consists of relatively deep, soft hydrogen sulphide enriched sediment which reduces the oxygen and likely to be the root cause for the less than satisfactory result of this sanctuary.

Measures will be taken to enhance and enrich the other sanctuaries as well as to create alternative sanctuaries at a suitable location within the area.

Question # 14

What will this project entail?

Response:

Discussions are now being undertaken with the investors towards the signing of a frame work agreement. It is at this stage that the Government will be in a position to speak to the details of the project.

Question # 15

Will the development of the Goat Islands result in a Chinese enclave in that area?

Response:

No! The project is aimed at attracting investment both locally and internationally.

Question # 16

What employment opportunities will be available to locals?

Response:

Measures will be put in place to ensure that the majority of the employees are local nationals.

Question #17

Could the project not be done elsewhere?

Response:

Significant work was done to explore other locations. However, it was determined that the suitability of those locations was limited based on the scope of the project as well as other strategic considerations such as proximity to the North/South Highway.

Question #18

What are the next steps?

Response:

The Port Authority of Jamaica will continue liaising with the investors to clarify the details of the project and development a frame work agreement to be submitted to the Cabinet for approval. Assuming the project meets the approval of Cabinet, it will be submitted to NEPA for determination of the Terms of Reference of and Environmental Impact Assessment.

Question #19

Who will be funding the project?

Response:

The project will be funded by the investors who are China Harbour Engineering Company (CHEC).