



THE JETTER

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Industry Pen, St. Ann

THE EDITORIAL

Change is not always pleasant, nor easy, but it is necessary. We had several changes at JET in 2023, some were more difficult than others to handle. Our Programme Director who had been with JET for the past five years moved on, but we also gained three new team members, including a legal officer.

JET has been without a lawyer for the last few years, which has limited our work. We are relieved that we were finally able to secure funding for this position thereby enabling us to offer more significant support to communities and individuals through our law and advocacy programme.

The team remains small, but our passion and commitment is strong and focused on protecting Jamaica's natural resources in 2024 and beyond.

We thank you for your support in 2023 and look forward to the opportunities ahead to partner with you and others in 2024!

Theresa Rodriguez-Moodie, PhD.
Chief Executive Officer
January 2024



Formed in 1991, the Jamaica Environment Trust is a non-profit nongovernmental environmental organization in the island of Jamaica. We are a membership organization and anyone who supports protection of the environment can join. Our activities are focused on education and advocacy.

For more information contact:

JAMAICA ENVIRONMENT TRUST
123 CONSTANT SPRING RD, KINGSTON 8
T| (876) 960-3693 F| (876) 926-0212
E| jamaicaenvironmenttrust@gmail.com
W| www.jamentrust.org



Highlights



2023



JAMAICANS WORKING TOGETHER TO 'SEA THE CHANGE'

ICC Day 2023

International Coastal Cleanup Day on September 15 was hot! Despite the blazing sun, thousands of volunteers, equipped with hats, sunscreen, water, clipboards, gloves and garbage bags came out to clean 155 km of Jamaica's coastline. Over 5,000 volunteers from 116 groups collected 75,223 pounds of garbage from 180 on-land and underwater cleanup sites. The volunteers were determined to 'sea the change' and do their part in protecting Jamaica's natural resources and increasing public awareness about solid waste issues affecting our coastlines.

We also hosted our flagship cleanup at the Palisadoes Go-Kart Track in Kingston. Our ~500 volunteers worked hard and collected 5,340 pounds of garbage. This is significantly less than 2019 when 21,990 pounds of garbage were collected. We are beginning to 'sea the change'!

While single-use plastic packaging continues to dominate the garbage collected in 2023, the cleanups recorded less banned items.

The items that dominated the coastlines are still plastic bottles, caps and single-use food packaging. None of these are included in the Plastic Ban. More work is needed in 2024 to reduce the use of single-use plastics and to encourage recycling where it is not yet possible to reduce plastic usage.

2023 was JET's 16th year as National Coordinator of ICC Day in Jamaica, and our 28th year conducting cleanups along the Palisadoes strip. Coordinating so many groups and volunteers is not easy, so we are grateful for the support of our partners and donors who helped us make it possible. ICC Day has been supported by the Tourism Enhancement Fund (TEF) since 2008. In 2023, it was also supported by Ocean Conservancy, Nestle Jamaica, KPMG, and Airport Authorities of Jamaica.

We are truly grateful for the continued support of ICC Day activities!



NUH DUTTY UP JAMAICA

Tackling the plastic problem



Poor solid waste management is one of Jamaica's most challenging environmental issues. Plastic pollution, in particular, has worsened since the 1990s as consumption has increased. Despite the 2019 ban on some single-use plastic items, the problems largely remain. This project entitled, **'Increasing Awareness on the Impacts of Improper Solid Waste Disposal on Public Health, Livelihoods, and the Marine Environment'**, implements several components of the Nuh Dutty Up Jamaica project but focuses on plastic pollution.

The project began in 2022 but most of the activities took place during 2023. We've outlined a few of the activities below:

- We created a 'Breaking the Plastic Habit' show which aired on RJR for 13 weeks.
- We took the "Nuh Dutty Up Jamaica"(NDUJ) campaign on the road from Kingston to Portmore to Montego Bay for our "bring a bag a bokkle" road trip series.
- JET hosted two cleanups under the project. At the Earth Day Cleanup on April 22, 2023, we partnered with the Grace Kennedy Foundation and our 149 volunteers removed 4,100 pounds of garbage from Sirgarny Beach. For our second cleanup we partnered with the Port Royal Marine Lab to cleanup Refuge Cay on Saturday, October 7, 2023. Fishermen and UWI students removed 10,320 pounds of garbage. Unfortunately, there was a lot more left to be done.
- We had interactive workshops with our two model communities, Rose Town and Wickie Wackie focusing on recycling and composting. We provided both communities with garbage and compost bins. We also had an educational field trip to the 360Recycle facility in Linstead where young persons from these two communities were exposed to the entrepreneurial possibilities of upcycling plastic bottles.

- We reviewed the solid waste management policy and other waste management legislation identifying gaps with respect to plastic pollution and provided several recommendations.
- Our new and improved Nuh Dutty Up Jamaica jingle and short animated films focusing on plastic are now being played on CVM TV and ZIP FM.

In 2024 we are hoping to attract more private sector support to continue the project beyond the current funding.



SGP The GEF
Small Grants
Programme



THE JAMAICAN IGUANA

*More than just 2
likkle lizard!*



Photo by Robin Moore

In 2023, JET continued its partnership with the International Iguana Foundation (IIF) for the delivery of two interactive workshops under the theme "The Jamaican Iguana – More than just two likkle lizard". This year, 73 students and 11 teachers from five preparatory schools participated in JET's School Environment Programme (SEP) workshops at the Hope Zoo's Iguana Sanctuary in Kingston.

To convince these young bright minds that they were looking at more than just two likkle lizards, we knew these sessions couldn't be a simple presentation on the importance of this endangered Iguana and why we should protect them. For this reason, students were brought face-to-face with the reptile. This practical approach included learning about the stages of growth of the Jamaican Iguana, from juvenile to adult. Students then took part in a health screening exercise on how iguanas are measured and weighed. Furthermore, they were even allowed to touch an iguana.

The JET team and volunteers also played two educational games: Mongoose vs Iguana and Moths vs Bats. Students had the opportunity to learn about the impact of predators on iguanas and the competition for resources.

Mr. Joseph Brown, General Curator, and Ms. Shanique Lewis, Animal Care Supervisor at the Hope Zoo Preservation Foundation assisted JET in the delivery of these workshops. Their presentations included the brief history, importance and threats faced by the Jamaican Iguana. They also spoke about other conservation efforts to save the Jamaican Iguana.



THE RIU MODEL COMMUNITIES

A solid waste management initiative



In an effort to address the pressing issue of improper waste disposal, the Model Communities project, supported by the RIU Hotels and Resorts, included a comprehensive set of activities aimed at fostering sustainable waste management practices and ensuring cleaner and healthier environments. The target communities were Brown's Town, Discovery Bay and Runaway Bay in St. Ann.

The project involved the following main activities:

- The provision of garbage bins which were accessible and strategically located. The project aimed to minimize indiscriminate littering and promote responsible waste disposal.
- Solid waste management workshops where participants learned about waste separation, recycling practices, and composting.
- Cleanup kits were provided to the communities to facilitate community-based cleanups. Only two communities participated in this component of the project. A total of 2,400 pounds of garbage were cleaned up by community volunteers. The garbage was dominated by single-use plastics.
- As a visual reinforcement of the commitment to cleanliness, the project also included the installation of two 'Nuh Dutty Up Brown's Town' and 'Nuh Dutty Up Runaway Bay' each in the communities of Brown Town and Runaway Bay, respectively.

The RIU Model Communities project represents a holistic approach to solid waste management, addressing not only the physical aspects of waste disposal but also the crucial element of community engagement. By providing the necessary infrastructure, education, and tools, the initiative empowers communities to sustainably and actively participate in the ongoing battle against improper solid waste management.

Year 2 of the project begins in January 2024.



RIU
HOTELS & RESORTS

2023 LAW AND ADVOCACY *Highlights*

JET's Law and Advocacy Programme uses the law and the media to advocate for the good management of Jamaica's natural resources. The programme also seeks to strengthen the capacity of communities to protect their rights about how their environment is being managed.

In 2023 year we received funding to hire an in-house attorney to expand the scope of our Law and Advocacy Programme. She will be working closely with the CEO on environmental and climate justice issues and cases (as they arise). Importantly, in 2024, we plan to conduct several training sessions with the legal profession in areas relevant to the environment and climate change. Attention will be given to the introduction of climate litigation and the Escazu Agreement.

In 2023, we continued to engage government entities on behalf of the concerned citizens who made environmental complaints as well as other pressing environmental matters. We conducted site visits, wrote several articles, letters for representation and advocacy, and participated in media interviews. Our advocacy efforts focused significantly on the extractive industry, air quality regulations, solid waste management and plastic pollution, climate change and the need for improved environmental monitoring and enforcement.

Some major highlights this year include:

- Through our efforts, alongside those of local community groups, 120 fishers who depend on Rio Cobre for their livelihood received compensation following the major fish kill in 2022. We remained consistently engaged with the relevant authorities on matters related to Rio Cobre and will continue to do so until there are significant improvements in the environmental monitoring and management of this important river system.



JAMAICA
CONSERVATION
PARTNERS



A PROJECT OF THE
C.B. FACEY FOUNDATION

- We gave testimony about the risks and challenges faced by environmental defenders in Jamaica at the Second Annual Forum on Human Rights Defenders in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean, 26-28 September de 2023, Panama City, Panamá.
- We continued to advocate for changes in the bauxite-alumina industry. We made a presentation at the University of Princeton at the Neoliberal Natures Symposium presenting Jamaica's bauxite-alumina industry as a case study of (slow) violence in resource extractivism.



We would not be able to do this work without funding from Jamaica Conservation Partners, Open Societies Foundation and the technical support of the Environmental Law Worldwide Alliance (ELAW). We are grateful for these partnerships.

Three things to know about Cockpit Country

1. Cockpit Country is a unique and ecologically sensitive region in west central Jamaica. It is a biodiversity hotspot home to 281 plant species and 270 animal species that are endemic to Jamaica.
2. Cockpit Country is renowned in Jamaican history as the refuge of the fiercely independent Maroons, descendants of the earliest slaves who were freed by the Spanish settlers around the time of the British conquest in 1655.
3. Cockpit country provides 40% of the water supply for western Jamaica.



ENSURING THE PROTECTION OF JAMAICA'S COCKPIT COUNTRY

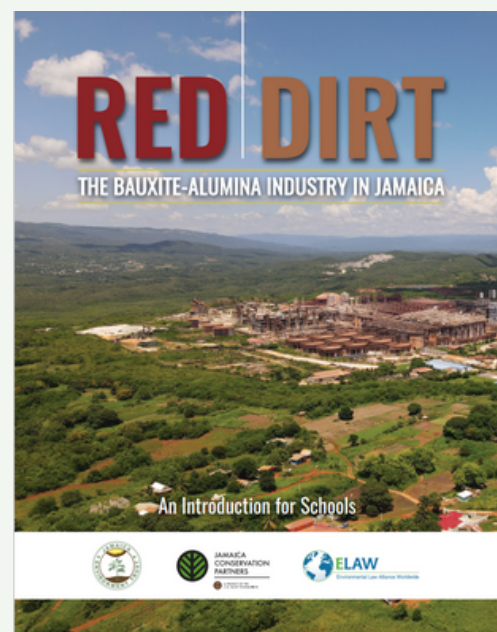


In 2023, JET maintained the momentum of prior years through the project "Ensuring the Protection of Jamaica's Cockpit Country" with funding from an anonymous donor received through the Environmental Law Alliance Worldwide.

It was a very productive year. We collected air quality data from within bauxite mining communities, conducted research into the compensation mechanisms within the industry, engaged with students and teachers and also prepared a short radio jingle on 'The right to a healthy environment'.

The bauxite-alumina industry is characterised by significant inequities which we investigated in our study "Compensation within the Bauxite-Alumina Industry in Jamaica". The study examines the management of compensation within the bauxite-alumina industry in Jamaica and provides recommendations for providing fair compensation. The report was shared widely for feedback which was then incorporated into the final report. We are hoping that the recommendations are considered by the government to improve compensation within the industry.

We also felt it important to engage the youth more in the dialogue. We created a student and teacher-friendly version of RED DIRT. Its purpose is to share some main findings of the original RED DIRT Study in a simple format while providing activities for students that will encourage deeper thinking into the issues associated with extractivism. We engaged several primary and high schools to discuss extraction vs extractivism in two workshops in November 2023 and encouraged the students to imagine a future beyond extractivism.



Finally, the bauxite-alumina industry generates a significant amount of dust which has negative environmental and health impacts. The industry and regulators however, have generally been unsympathetic to the complaints. We have therefore been focused on collecting Air Quality data from within affected communities in an effort to support the complaints as well as to support the calls for changes in our existing Air Quality Regulations.

CLIMATE CHANGE: *A threat to Cockpit Country*

In January 2023 JET received a grant from the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) under the project Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) Caribbean Islands Biodiversity Hotspot Small Grants Mechanism.

We worked with the Climate Studies Group Mona from the University of the West Indies to prepare a climate change assessment for Cockpit Country. We also worked with representatives from the communities in Southeast Cockpit Country to prepare a community-led adaptation plan.

Here are a few key takeaways from the project:

- Cockpit Country is expected to become hotter and drier- up to the end of the century.
- Cockpit Country is a biodiversity hotspot, and its important ecosystems and water resources are being threatened by climate change.
- Most of the communities in Cockpit Country depend on small-scale farming and will be negatively impacted as it gets hotter and drier.

Adaptation measures were identified, prioritised, and included in the Community Adaptation Plan which will be presented to relevant state agencies in January 2024.

Community-led climate adaptation plans recognize the value of local knowledge and expertise to address climate risk. It ensures that local actors on the front lines of climate change have equitable access to power and resources to build resilience.

The project ends in January 2024.

CRITICAL | **ECOSYSTEM**
PARTNERSHIP FUND



CANARI serves as CEPF's regional implementation team for the Caribbean Islands Biodiversity Hotspot.



Climate change is a threat to Cockpit Country and

Cockpit Country is a unique landscape in central Jamaica home to many endemic species. It is of historical significance and the source of fresh water for the region.



MEET THE JETTERS

This year our team definitely grew!



Justin Saunders

Justin joined in June, 2023 for the post of Programme Director. He has a BSc in Marine Biology, UWI (Mona). He is most passionate about protecting Jamaica's wildlife, especially our endemic birds.



Kourtnie Dixon

Kourtnie joined in September 2023 for the post of Legal Officer and holds an LLB, UWI (Mona) and LEC from the Norman Manley Law School. She appreciates the need for and seeks for Jamaica's environmental laws to be appropriately updated.



Jonelle Wright-Smellie

Jonelle joined in July 2023 for the post of Project Coordinator. She is pursuing a BSc in Marine Biology (Major) and Freshwater and Terrestrial Ecosystems (Minor) (pending), UWI (Mona). She is passionate about the need for sustainable development, in particular, in our infrastructure which impacts natural ecosystems.



See yuh lata Lauren!



In May 2023 we said lata, but not goodbye, to Lauren Creary. She joined us in September 2018 as a Project Coordinator and was later promoted to Programme Director in 2020. She successfully maintained JET's legacy as we operated without a CEO in 2020 into 2021, and during the pandemic. She then worked to facilitate the seamless transition of the current CEO, Dr. Theresa Rodriguez-Moodie.

We know her for her attention to detail, considerate heart, ability to work under immense pressure, and innovative ideas.

We are saddened for the closure of your chapter with us, but are excited cheerleaders for the societal mover and shaker you are destined to become. See yuh lata Lauren!

Thank you for your support in 2023!



From L- R: Theresa Rodriguez-Moodie, Yonique Taylor, Justin Saunders, Jonelle Wright- Smellie, Kourtnie Dixon and Jonathan Khan (intern)



For more information contact:

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123 CONSTANT SPRING RD, KINGSTON 8

TI (876) 960-3693 FI (876) 926-0212

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