

BLUEFIELDS BAY, JAMAICA

Geotourism Evaluation

Bluefields Bay Area:

»» Charting its Tourism Destiny

Presented By

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UNIVERSITY

2010



INTRODUCTION >>

Introduction

- ▶ A little about us...

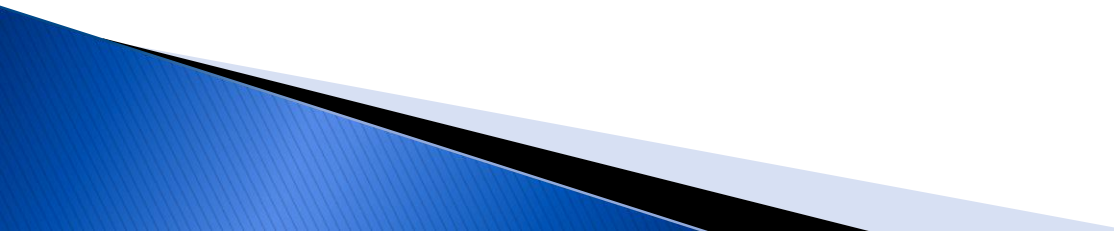


Introduction

- ▶ When we first arrived and said we were going to Bluefields Bay...



Introduction

- ▶ Bluefields Bay is located on the lesser developed south coast of Jamaica
 - ▶ It is a place of great natural beauty, small villages, native cultures and traditional crafts.
 - ▶ This is a place where Jamaicans can come to reconnect with the country's past, where high rises and mass market tourism has yet to intrude on this pastoral countryside
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Introduction

- ▶ The south coast affords an opportunity to protect some of the country's important coastal lands, when many areas of the coast have been dramatically impacted by mega hotels and resorts and valuable habitats have been lost

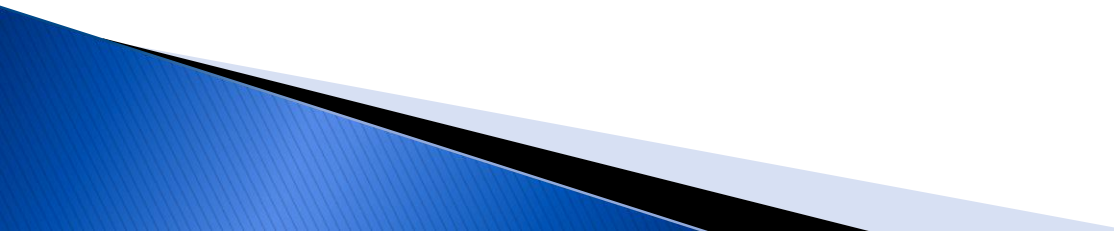


Introduction

- ▶ The Bluefields Bay Area of Jamaica is a unique position to take advantage of the growing trend in nature based tourism
 - There is an established birding and nature based tour operation
 - To date there has not been damaging development
 - The establishment of the fish sanctuary is a positive step toward protection of the area.



Introduction

- ▶ The challenges will be in financing for projects that will not destroy the character of the region
 - ▶ Challenges will also be in establishing and developing suitable accommodations that reflect the region's nature based focus, while providing quality amenities
 - ▶ In addition, the community needs to have a vested interest in the success of the tourism product and entrepreneurial efforts need to be encouraged
- 



EVALUATIONS >>

Accommodations

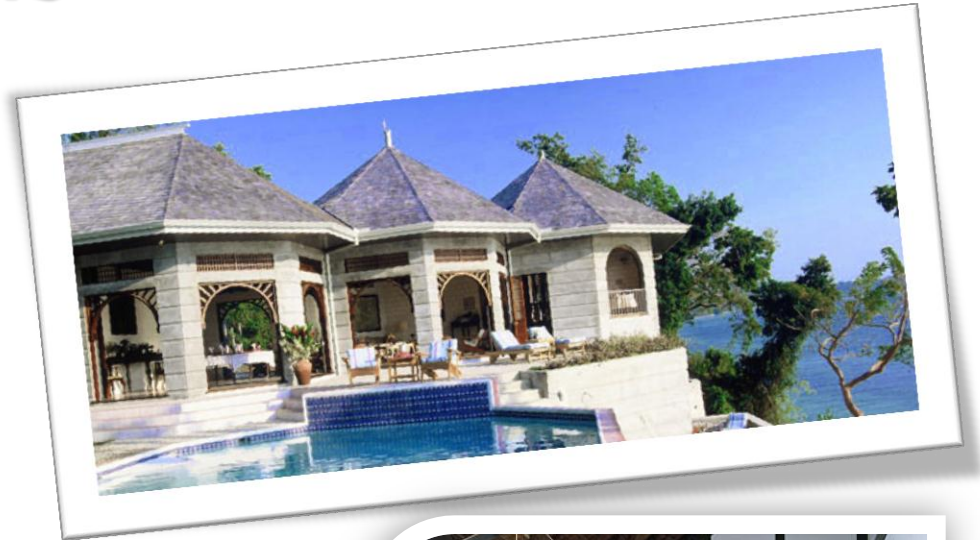
Accommodations

- ▶ There is a huge disparity between types of accommodations
- ▶ Several are quite charming and give a sense of “Old Jamaica”
- ▶ Other than Sandals Whitehouse, which is not specifically in the Bluefields Bay Area, there is no full service hotel



Accommodations

- ▶ Villas are available for rental with and without staff which fills a high-end need, to a degree
- ▶ There is an obvious lack of comfortable accommodations in the mid-price range that are above rustic standards



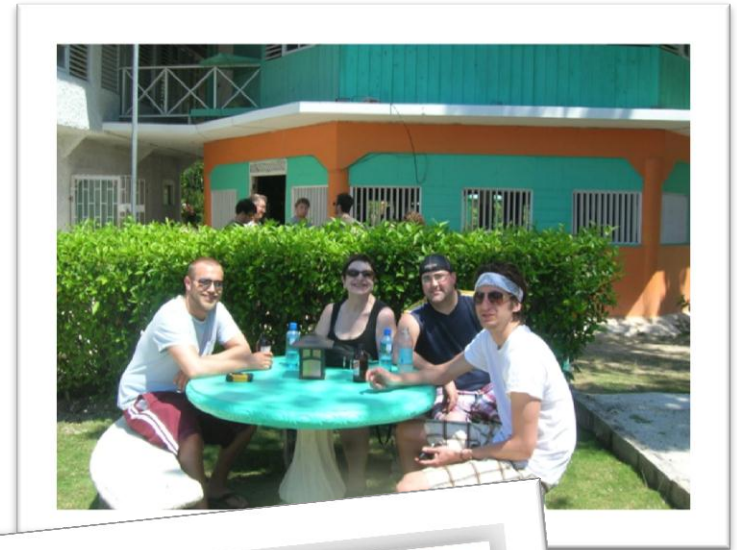


EVALUATIONS >>

Food and Beverage

Food and Beverage

- ▶ Again, a wide disparity in available restaurants and bars
- ▶ There are a few located seaside, but most are small stand up locations

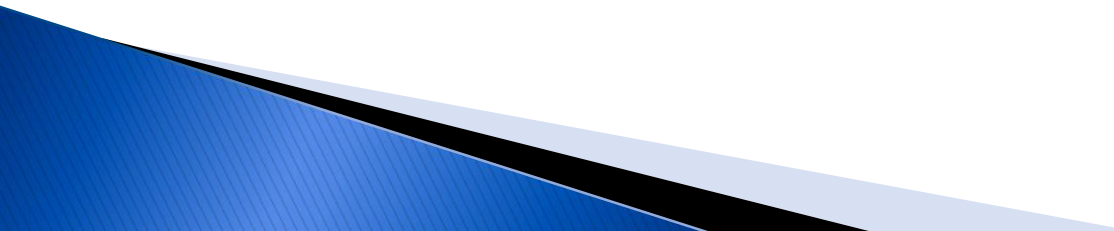


Street Food Vendors

- ▶ Readily available in many locations
- ▶ Affordable
- ▶ Diverse selections
- ▶ Well known Jerk Chicken one of the staples



Food and Beverage

- ▶ Overall there is little dining outside of very casual stand up vendors or small cafes
 - ▶ There are no full service dining establishments
 - ▶ There are limited seaside dining experiences
 - ▶ Tourists would be hard pressed to find meal options if they were not in a place where they could prepare their own food
- 



EVALUATIONS >>

Events and Attractions

Events and Attractions

- ▶ Peter Tosh Memorial Park
 - This is the only attraction in the area, but relatively unknown to those not aware of Reggae music
 - Not well maintained and needs interpretative signage



EVENTS

- ▶ No information on events was found other than Independence Day or religious holidays
- ▶ There are no events unique to Bluefields Bay that can be found by the tourist

ATTRACTIONS

- ▶ There are no built attractions other than the Peter Tosh Memorial
- ▶ The beach is intermittent and not comparable to the other beach areas of Jamaica.
- ▶ There are no natural attractions



EVALUATIONS >>

Marketing

Marketing

- ▶ An important factor in strategic planning is the use of appropriate marketing techniques.
- ▶ Currently, the Bluefields Bay area is not being marketed effectively.
 - There is an absence of positioning, profile, and awareness.
 - Public needs an awareness of the Bluefields Bay area and its tourism position

Marketing

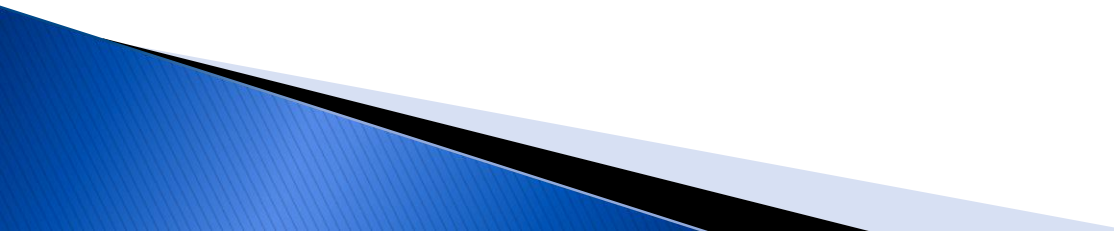
- ▶ A centralized website containing visitor information regarding the accommodations, attractions, and businesses of the entire area is desperately needed.
 - Reliable Adventures and Bluefields Bay Villas do have fairly good web sites, but there is no linkage to the community as a whole



EVALUATIONS >>

Destination

Culture and Heritage

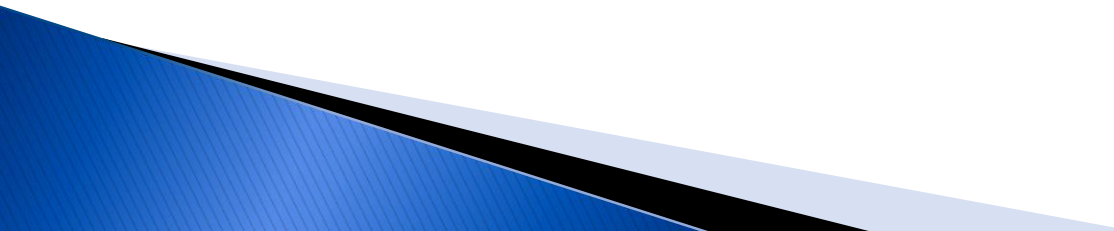
- ▶ The area seems to have strong connections to traditional Jamaican life and Jamaican history
 - ▶ There is a strong Rastafarian presence and a connection to Reggae music
 - ▶ There is a strong maritime history in Bluefields Bay from both the Spanish and English
 - ▶ There needs to be more of a relationship between the tourist and these cultural and heritage features
- 



RECOMMENDATIONS

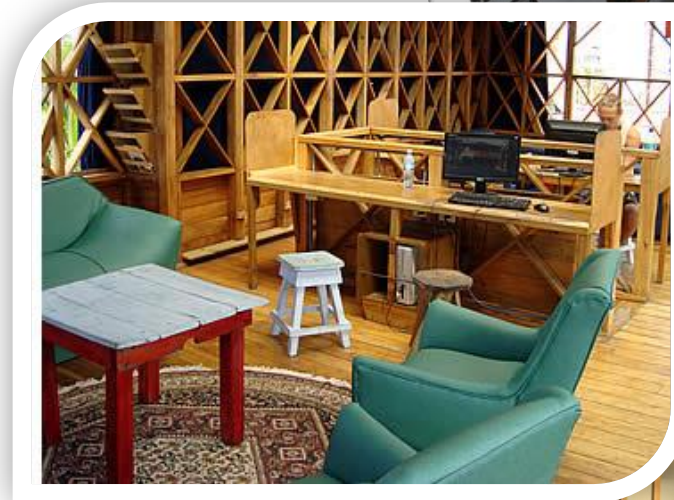
Accommodations

Accommodations

- ▶ Having a range of adequate lodging is a critical component of the development of an area.
 - ▶ Rates need to be more in line with common Jamaican and world standards, i.e. defined rates for single and double occupancy
 - ▶ The area would also best be served by more traditional style lodging that reflects the “Old Jamaica” atmosphere of the region
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Accommodations

- ▶ Student Lodging
 - Use of existing facilities
 - Hostel style
 - Group basis
 - Could adapt some of the abandoned or vacant villas



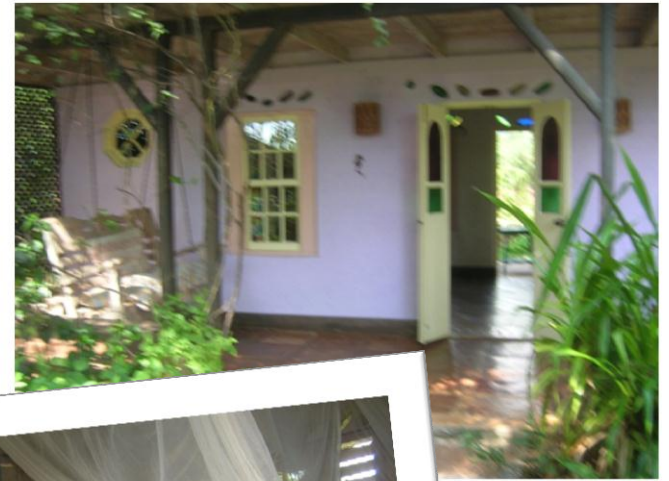
Accommodations

- ▶ Encourage the development of Bed & Breakfasts, particularly in some of the plantation houses in the area.
- ▶ Also some of the villas that are unoccupied could be changed to B & Bs.



Accommodations

- ▶ Look to traditional style properties, but with upgraded amenities





RECOMMENDATIONS >>

Food and Beverage

Food and Beverage

- ▶ The empty buildings along the beach that were former residences, now abandoned, can be restored to create beachside restaurants that will attract both visitors and locals alike.



Food and Beverage

- ▶ Bluefields Bay is rich in culinary elements.
- ▶ It has many different forms of agriculture.
- ▶ Locally made foods are easily accessible.
- ▶ Local restaurants can feature the recently rejuvenated fish population in the bay.



Food and Beverage

- ▶ Visitors to the area will expect a variety of dining options
- ▶ Visitors expect beachfront restaurants as part of the island experience



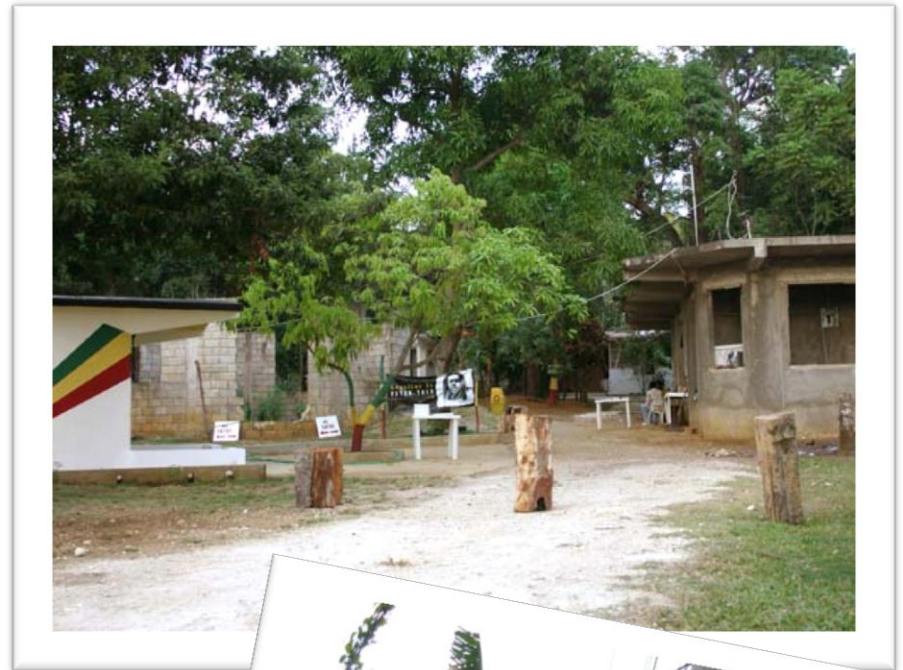


RECOMMENDATIONS >>

Events and Attractions

Peter Tosh Memorial

- ▶ Needs to be more defined with interpretive signage, brochures, information
- ▶ Needs to be upgraded, but not so that this changes the exterior substantially – it should retain its Jamaican flavor, but become more tourist friendly



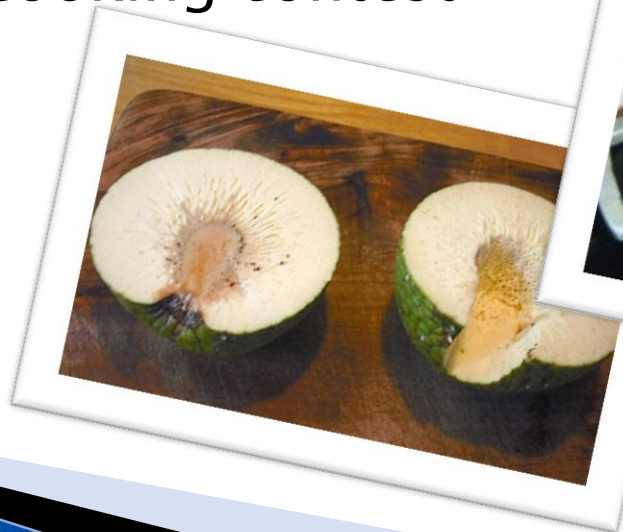
Peter Tosh Memorial

- ▶ Creation of a weekly Reggae Jam Festival
 - Where well known Reggae artists can jam with amateurs
 - There are a number of Reggae Festivals on the island, but not anything focused on the more informal type of event
- ▶ Building where visitors can make their own Reggae Records



Unique Events

- ▶ Some type of event that is associated with the area. For example...
 - Fishing contest outside of fish sanctuary area
 - Underwater photography contest and exhibition
 - Mock battle between Spanish and English fleets
 - Fishing boat races
 - Breadfruit cooking contest

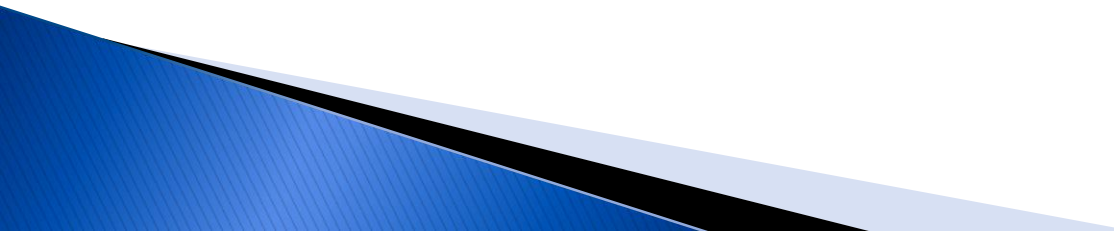




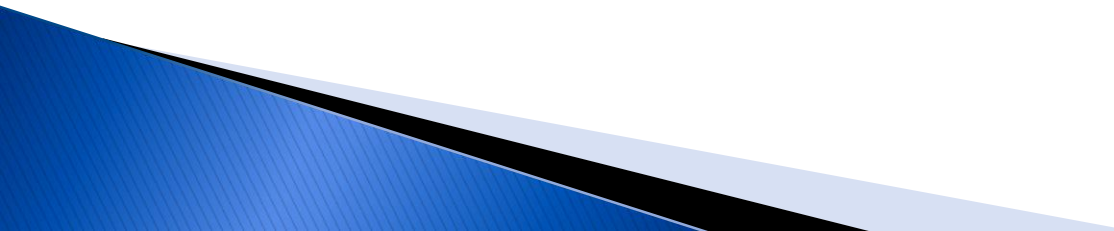
RECOMMENDATIONS >>

Marketing

Marketing Recommendations

- ▶ There are many avenues through which Bluefields Bay can better market itself as a tourism destination
 - Creation of a comprehensive website about the destination
 - Branding Bluefields Bay as a destination
 - Development of slogan and logo
 - Use of printed informative materials
- 

Comprehensive Website

- ▶ Currently the information on the internet about Bluefields Bay is scattered among many locations, and in many cases outdated
 - ▶ A comprehensive website containing all the information a visitor would need to know about Bluefields Bay will increase credibility and public appeal.
- 

Website Suggestions

- ▶ Create a central hub for information pertaining to Bluefields
 - Professionally designed
 - Information must be kept up-to-date
 - Useful visitor information
 - Lodging and business contact information
 - Photographs of Bluefields Bay, Maps
 - Safety information, Packing and traveling tips
 - Hyperlinks to additional useful websites about the area
 - Connection to the Jamaica Tourist Board



- ▶ Following are several examples of web sites that serve a particular region
- ▶ This is what is necessary for the Bluefields Bay area
- ▶ A web site like one of these will benefit the entire community and provide visitor information

Regional/Community Web Sites



Explore Southeast South Dakota



Discover Sun Horizons



Golf



129 Cultural Corridor



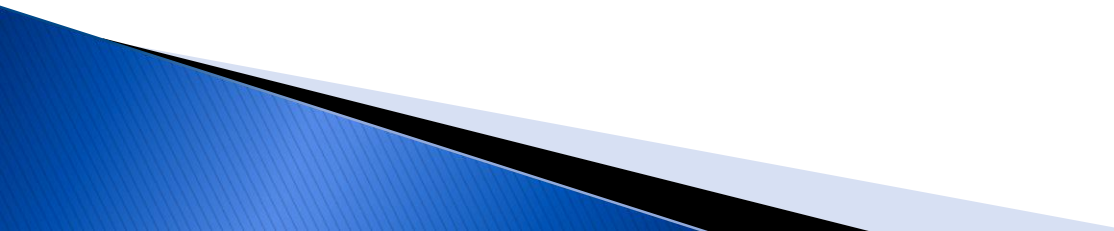
Lewis & Clark Trail



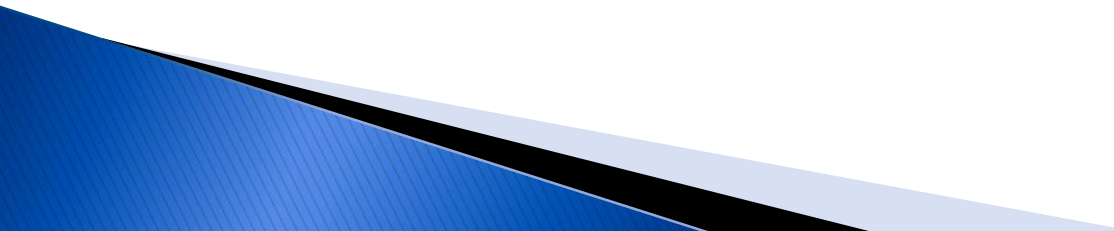
Cyote Trail



Branding Bluefields Bay

- ▶ Development of logo and slogan
 - ▶ Increases exposure and credibility of the community
 - ▶ Gives the marketing efforts a name
 - ▶ Allows for the targeting of niche markets
- 

Use of Printed Materials

- ▶ Once travelers arrive in Bluefields Bay, the use of printed informative materials will be necessary due to the lack of the availability of internet access.
 - ▶ This information could come in the forms of maps, pamphlets, or brochures, and should be available at every business or organization taking part in the website.
 - ▶ All of these printed materials should include the logo and slogan of the community.
- 

Slogans

- ▶ A distinctive slogan gives the tourist a snapshot of the destination and what it has to offer
- ▶ The slogan can entice the future visitor, give them a clear picture of what to expect from visiting the destination and provide clarity of what the destination has to offer
- ▶ Sometimes the slogan also becomes the logo
- ▶ The slogan can also dissuade the visitor from coming



Logos

- ▶ A logo also represents a destination
- ▶ It is a signature that identifies the area and region, and can be used on a variety of media
- ▶ A logo also is easily identifiable and provides continuity throughout the community



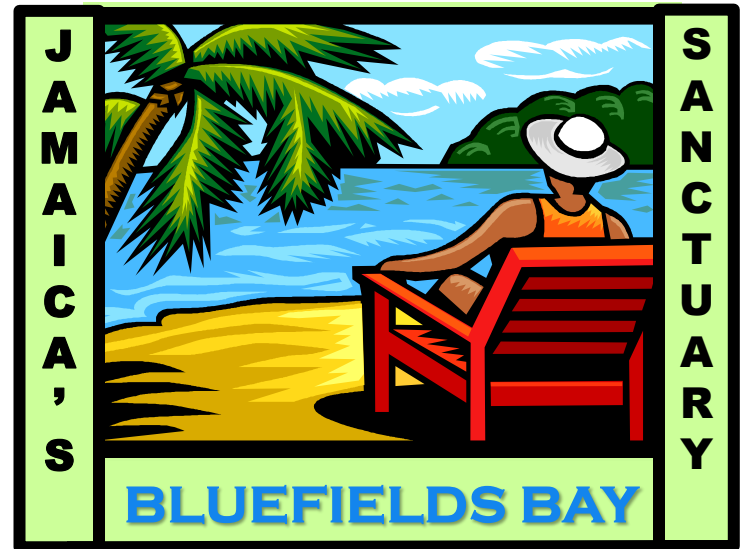
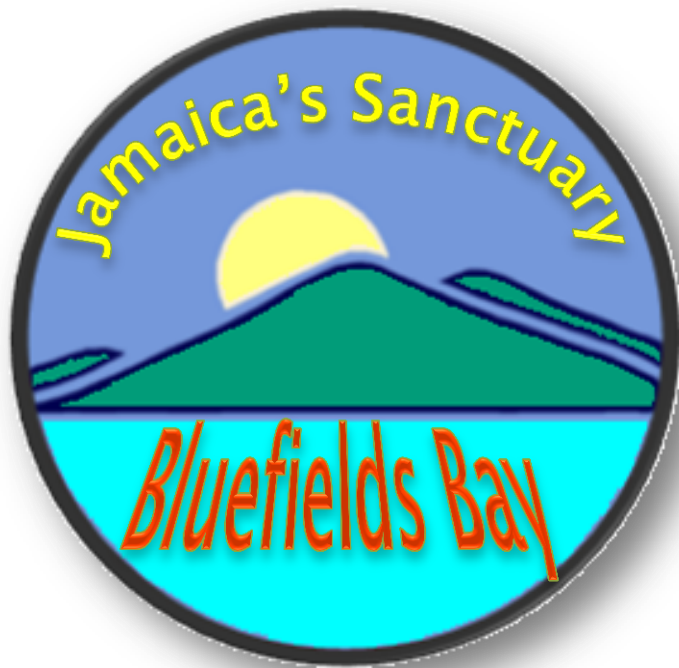
Slogan and Logo

- ▶ Put them together and you have identified yourself for the potential tourist
- ▶ You also provide a quick reminder of who you are

JAMAICA[®]
Once you go, you know.

Slogan and Logo

- ▶ Some ideas...





We recommend a three phased approach >>>

Three Phases

- ▶ We recommend the following tourism plan
 - Phase I
 - Expand and develop student study tourism
 - Develop Voluntourism projects
 - Upgrade accommodations, food/beverage and attractions
 - Develop nature-based and artist tourism
 - Phase II
 - Expand nature based tourism programs
 - Develop eco-lodges
 - Phase III
 - Develop sailboat marina

Three Phases

- ▶ As each phase becomes successful, the next phase will naturally occur
- ▶ As each phase is completed, additional opportunities might become clearer
- ▶ Each phase is a step toward sustainable tourism development...
 - ▶ ...And community economic benefit

PHASE I

- » Build on what you have, what you have an opportunity to develop and what you have the resources to deliver...



We build on a Strength >>

Magnificent sunsets, welcoming citizens and established relationships, plus miles of natural beauty

Phase I

- ▶ A community web site needs to be established with links to accommodations and sightseeing
- ▶ Upgrades must be done in the budget and medium priced accommodations in order to appeal to nature based tourists who are, by tradition, less apt to spend a lot of money
 - That said, they are also willing to pay for their creature comforts as long as that does not intrude on the environment

Phase I

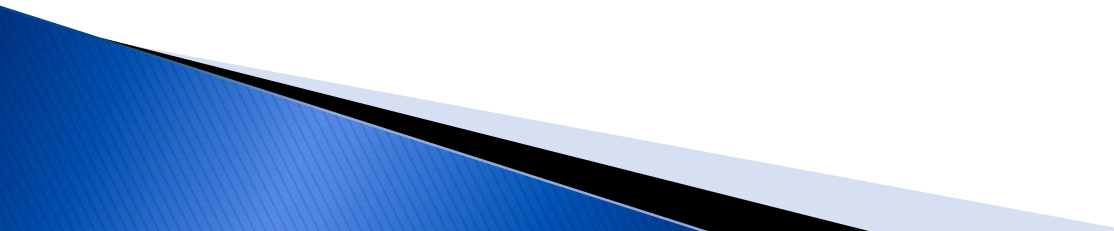
- ▶ As a Phase I initiative we recommend increased concentration on student groups
 - These can be full semester Study Away programs that can be developed with various universities and the University of the West Indies
 - There are cooperative programs already in place with many universities that can be utilized
 - These can also be limited time break or intersession classes, but often those come at the same time for all schools
 - There could also be field trips for graduate students to do research

Phase I

- ▶ This can provide increased income and tourism traffic while maintaining the traditional nature of the area
- ▶ However, accommodation upgrades are still required in order to attract additional tourists



Phase I

- ▶ If the accommodations are upgraded beyond rustic standards, then three additional year-round tourism options also open up
 - ▶ These three alternate recommendations require a few more amenities in both the food and beverage and accommodations areas
 - ▶ Again, we stress that the need is not for deluxe accommodations necessarily, but rather in comfortable two to three star standards
- 

Phase I

- ▶ One group of tourists that we feel has been underserved in Jamaica is nature based
 - There is an excellent birding program which can be used as a base to expand this market
 - ▶ Bluefields Bay has the opportunity to create hiking and birding trails, as well as scuba and snorkeling programs
 - ▶ These nature based programs should not only be marketed to international tourists, but to local Jamaicans as well
- 

Phase I

- ▶ Look at creating full day programs that can be marketed to hotels and cruise lines
- ▶ Develop partnerships with major nature based tour operators
- ▶ Create additional links from JTB Web Site

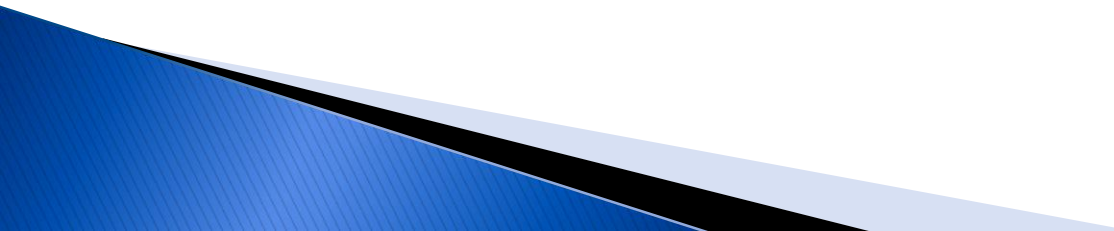


Phase I

- ▶ Another market that is trending is Voluntourism.
- ▶ These are programs where the tour members have time for sightseeing, but during the course of the program they participate in a volunteer activity.
 - Examples including helping to paint school classrooms, cleaning up beaches, counting sea turtle nests, etc.



Phase I

- ▶ Another group that has minimal investment and is simple to operate are tours for artists
 - ▶ This group requires only a place that provides subjects to paint, and a place where critiques and lessons can be held, in addition to a place where paints and canvass can be stored
 - ▶ These are groups that tend to stay at one location and move around the area looking for subjects
 - ▶ Artists can take classes at the destination, not only in traditional oil and watercolor, but in traditional arts and crafts from the local artists
- 

Phase I

- ▶ Artists groups can be marketed through tour operators that specialize in niche travel tours
- ▶ Develop partnerships with plein air organizations and large galleries



Photos courtesy of The Art Barn School of Art – Valparaiso, Indiana

PHASE II

- »» Tourism is developing, and income increasing. Developers see the potential of Bluefields Bay...



We build on a Strength... >>

Birds, nature, tranquility; a place of quiet and peace and simplicity; a place to enjoy the beauty of Jamaica

Phase II

- ▶ One of the strengths that we identified was the nature based opportunities of the area
- ▶ Today one of the top trending aspects of tourism is eco and nature based tourism
- ▶ The Bluefields Bay area is relatively unspoiled, offers opportunities for birding and nature walks and areas of scenic beauty
- ▶ Combining tourism, sustainability and nature for community benefit could be found in the development of Eco Lodges.

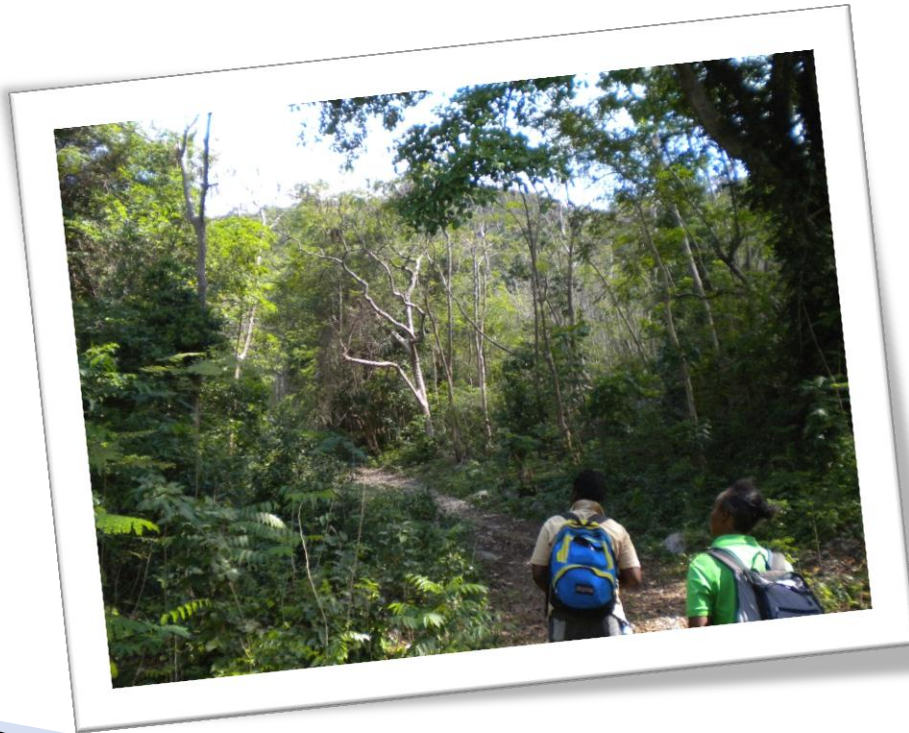
Phase II

- ▶ According to USA Today July 13, 2011 online edition, one of the growing travel trends are “Digital detox vacations:
 - “...take an “unplugged” journey...no TV or in-room phone, let alone iPhone and iPad – and look forward to exploring a place without being short-circuited by technology.”




Phase II

- ▶ Ecotourism is considered the fastest growing market in the tourism industry, according to the World Tourism Organization.



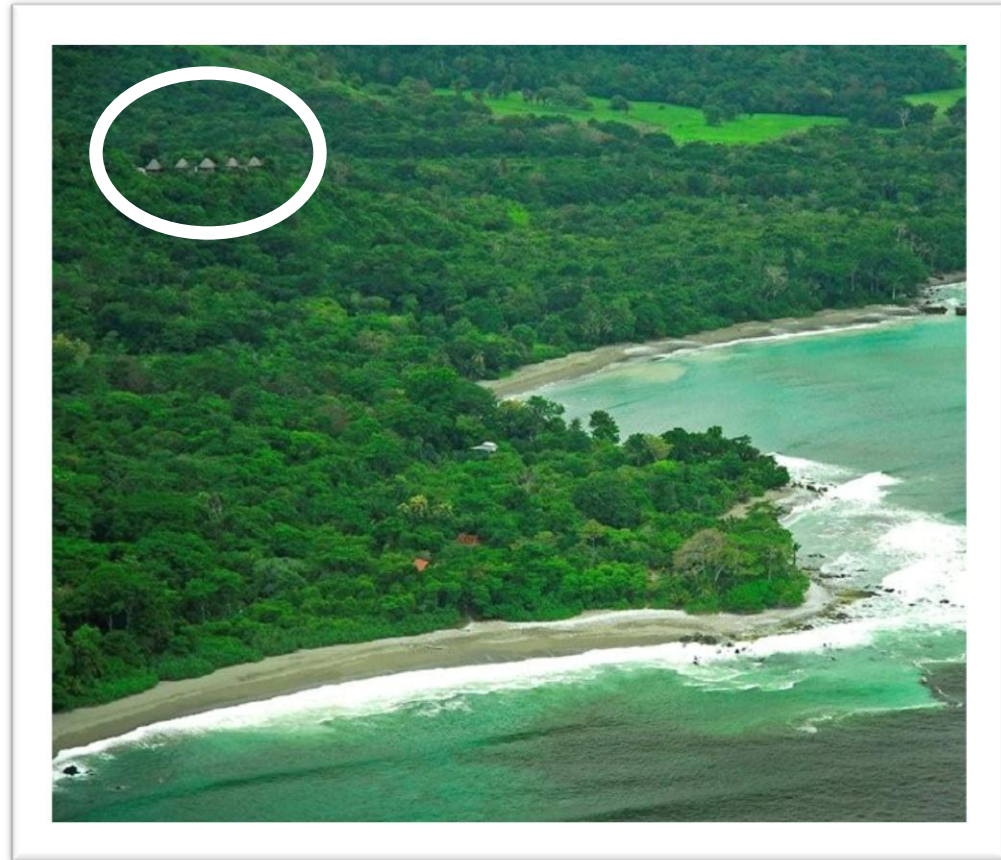
There has been an annual growth rate of 5% worldwide, representing 6% of the world's gross domestic product and 11.4% of all consumer spending – not a market to be taken lightly

Phase II

- ▶ Eco lodging spans the budget to deluxe market, which makes entry into this type of lodging affordable
 - ▶ Eco lodging also tends to contain less amenities, also making construction costs lower
 - ▶ Tourists who stay in eco lodges have lower amenity expectations, which again lowers construction costs
 - ▶ Eco lodges are meant to blend into the environment, making them less of a blemish on the landscape
- 

Phase II

- ▶ As you will see from the following examples, the best location would be up on the hills that front Bluefields Bay



Above: Eco lodge in Costa Rica. The terrain is similar to hillsides around Bluefields Bay (Left)

Phase II

- ▶ Not only does this location fit into the area where flora and fauna can be found, but offers spectacular views of the Bay
- ▶ The following resorts would be your benchmarks:
 - <http://www.selvaverde.com/lang/en/>
 - <http://www.laleonaecolodge.com>
 - <http://www.maho.org>
 - <http://www.laparios.com>
 - <http://www.ladera.com>
 - <http://www.asawright.org>



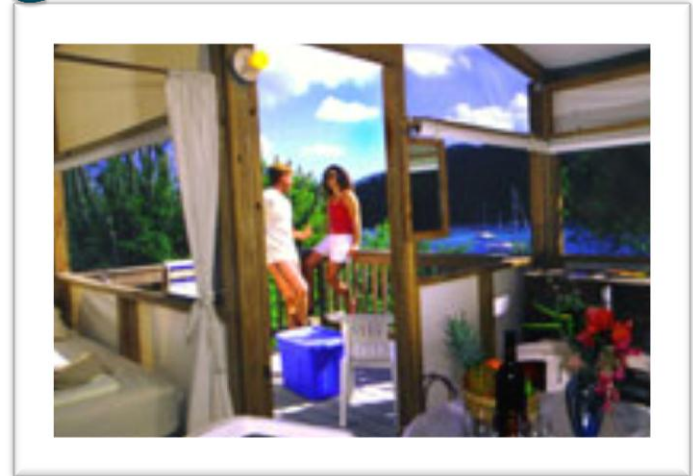
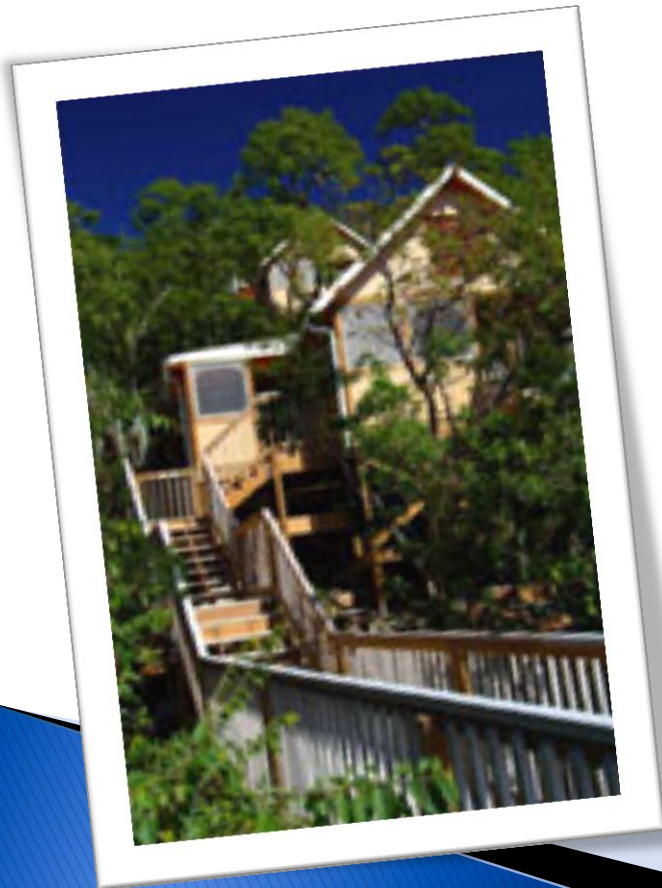
Selva Verde Lodge in Costa Rica

- ▶ <http://www.selvaverde.com/lang/en/>



Maho Bay Tents on the Island of St. John in the US Virgin Islands

▶ <http://www.maho.org>



Lapa Rios in Costa Rica

- ▶ <http://www.laparios.com>



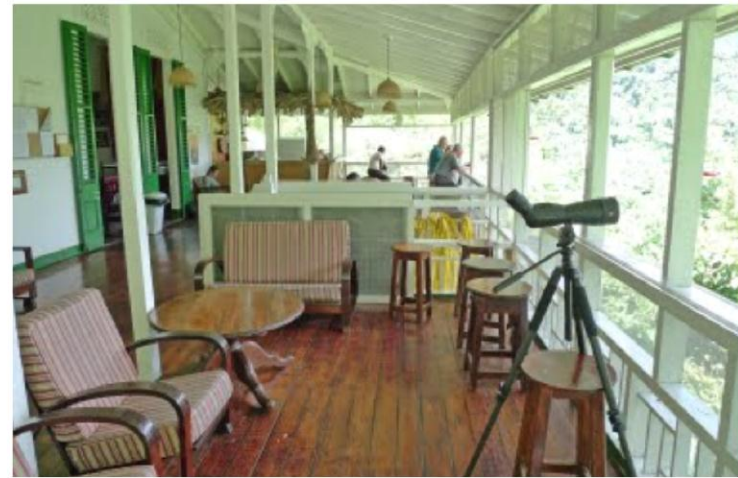
Ladera Resort on St. Lucia

▶ <http://www.ladera.com>



Asa Wright Nature Centre and Lodge in Trinidad

► <http://www.asawright.org>



La Leona Eco Lodge Tent Camp in Costa Rica

► <http://www.laleonaecolodge.com>



Eco Lodges – Rates Per Night

- ▶ **Selva Verde**
 - High Season: \$131 – \$160
 - Breakfast only
 - Low Season: \$96 – \$107
 - Breakfast only
- ▶ **Maho Bay**
 - High Season: \$145 – \$250
 - no meals
 - Low Season: \$85 – \$155
 - no meals
- ▶ **Lapa Rios**
 - High Season: \$800
 - All meals and transfers
 - Low Season: \$550
 - All meals and transfers
- ▶ **Ladera**
 - High Season: \$945 – \$1395
 - All meals
 - Low Season: \$700 – \$1275
 - All meals
- ▶ **Asa Wright**
 - High Season: \$340 – \$430
 - All meals
 - Low Season: \$300 – \$340
 - All meals
- ▶ **La Leona**
 - High Season: \$210 – \$280
 - All meals
 - Low Season: \$198 – \$250
 - All meals

Eco Lodges

- ▶ Hire more local people as there is a lower guest to employee ratio
- ▶ Attract tourists who will tend to spend more money on locally produced products
- ▶ Will purchase more locally grown products
- ▶ Have less impact on the environment
- ▶ Help retain the nature and traditional culture of an area
- ▶ Offer entrepreneurial opportunities for local citizens



Eco Lodges

- ▶ While larger developments bring in more people, they bring in less revenue
- ▶ Larger developments have a higher guest to employee ratio, so while you might have a much smaller property, you may employ more people
- ▶ Eco lodges also tend to use more local products, agricultural produce and locally made textiles, etc.
- ▶ They will also tend to employ more local people to serve as guides, drivers, etc.



PHASE III

- »» As more investment money becomes available, movement toward additional non-threatening development is the next stage...



We build on a Strength... >>

A place that faces due west, into the sunset. A place that ends the day in a golden glow caught by a single sail.

Phase III

- ▶ We envision this phase to be the construction of a sailboat marina
 - This should include some condominiums that conform to the environment and traditional architecture
 - This should include a restaurant and retail area



Phase III

- ▶ All of the elements are here
 - Sunsets
 - Protection by coral reefs and mountain ranges
 - Tranquil environment
 - Easy access from the sea
 - Culture, history and tradition





We build on a Strength... >>>

A beautiful, tranquil bay with mountains rising from sandy beaches. A place without high rises and masses of tourists, a place that you think of when you sail the Caribbean sea...

Phase III

- ▶ A sailboat marina would have minimal environmental impact
 - Marina could also incorporate captained and bare boat sailing
 - Marina could also provide sailing school to train local residents
- ▶ Sailors are traditionally interested in places of natural beauty and tranquility
- ▶ The marina can be developed first with lodging to follow, making it a less expensive initial investment



We build on a Strength... >>

There is a tradition of sailing ships in Bluefields Bay with well recognized names and fascinating histories.

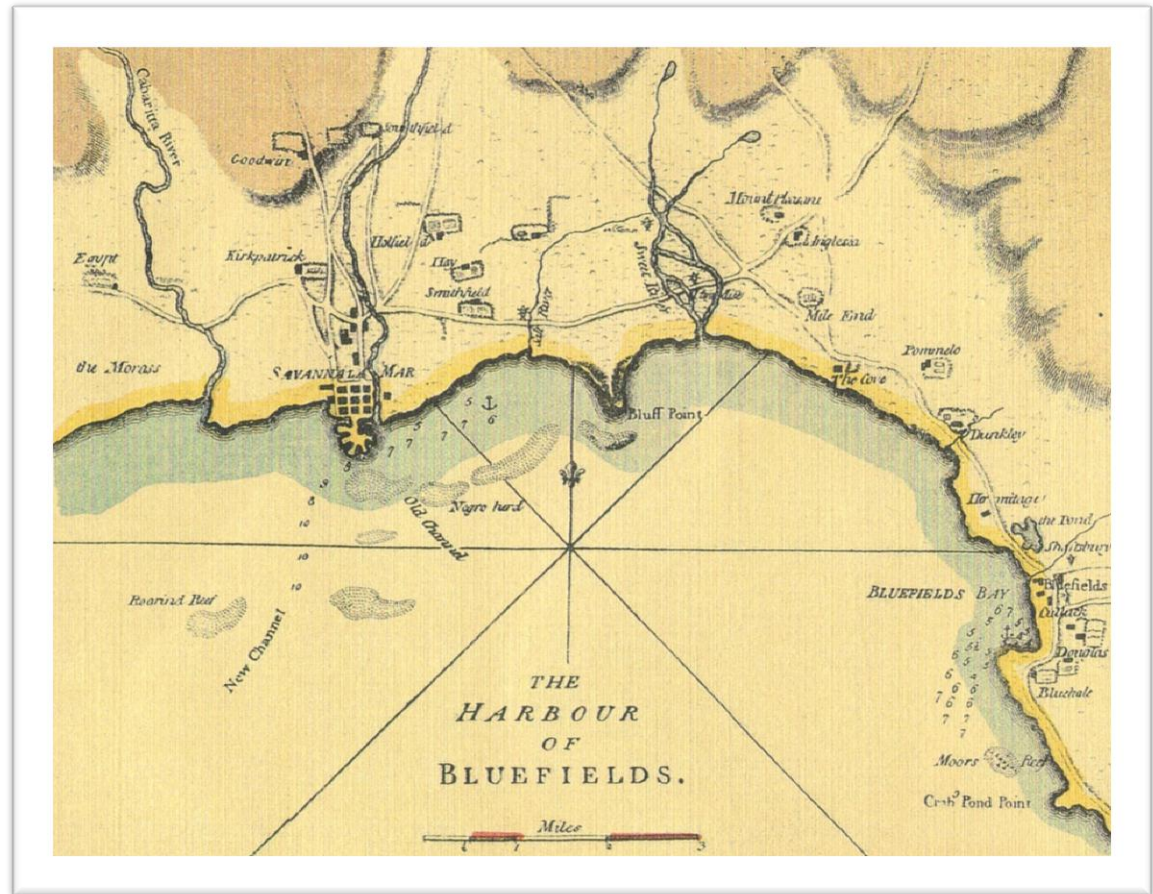
Phase III

- ▶ In 1670 Spanish attacks on English shipping and a raid on the Jamaican coast in which plantations were burnt and the owners and their slaves carried off, broke the uneasy peace between the two countries.
- ▶ In June of that year, it was decided to commission Sir Henry Morgan as Admiral and Commander-in-chief of all the ships of war in order to fight the Spanish.



Phase III

- ▶ Captain Morgan assembled his fleet of 36 ships in Bluefields Bay and sailed to attack Panama.



Phase III

- ▶ In 1787 Captain William Bligh had been sent to the Pacific to collect food and vegetable plants with a view to their being cultivated in the West Indies
- ▶ As we know his crew mutinied, but he did get as far as Tahiti where he first tasted breadfruit. He later returned to Tahiti and brought breadfruit to Jamaica in January 1793.

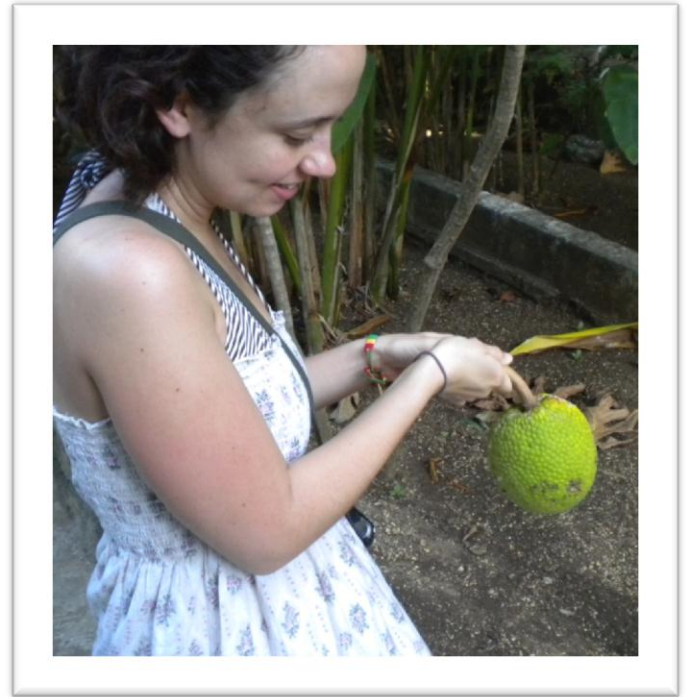


Phase III

- ▶ It was early June when Bligh at last received orders to sail for England with 876 carefully potted Jamaican specimens
- ▶ He weighed anchor at Port Royal, and struck west for Bluefields Bay. Here, Bligh intended to rejoin his tender, the *Assistant*, which had been earlier dispatched with 84 breadfruit for estates at this opposite end of the island.
- ▶ He spent the week off Bluefields readying his ship—overseeing the land parties that scavenged for timber or filled water casks from the Black River—and exercising the ship's guns

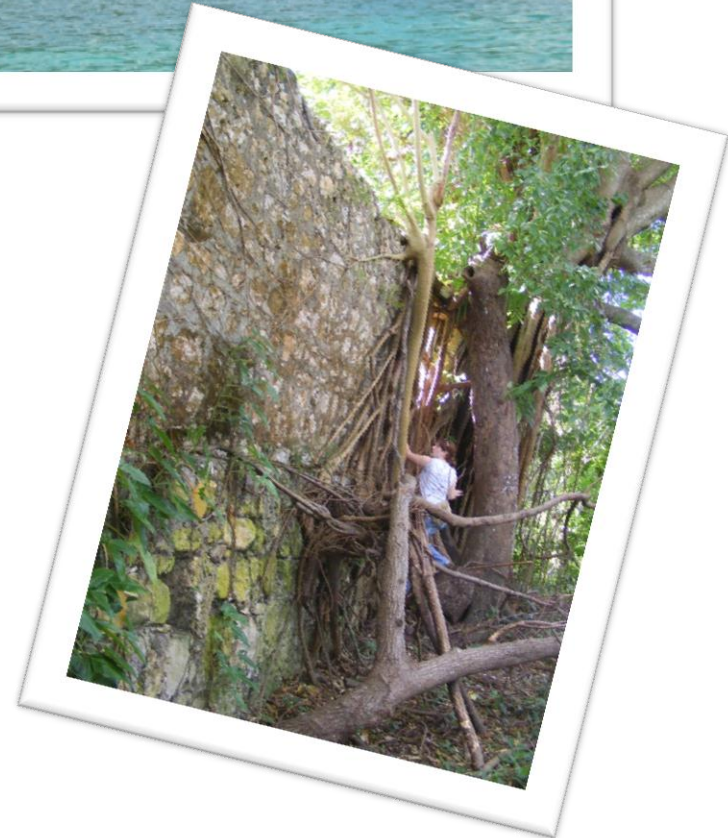
Phase III

- ▶ Bluefields was the site of Captain Bligh's final anchorage in Jamaican waters
- ▶ It is rumored, inland from the bay, two of Bligh's original breadfruit trees survive.



Phase III

- ▶ We know that there was a supply of fresh water for the ships
- ▶ We also know that ships were often brought to Bluefields Bay during hurricane season as the harbor was somewhat protected from easterly winds.
- ▶ We know that there was a factory that produced lime juice for the ships.



Phase III

- ▶ We see areas where wharves and piers were once present



Phase III

- ▶ We recommend that you look at a smaller marina development in order to have the smallest environmental impact
- ▶ Your benchmark marina would be Soper's Hole Marina in West End, Tortola
 - www.sopershole.com
 - <http://www.ultimatebvi.com/tortola/marinas/sopers-hole-marina>
 - Photos that follow are from Soper's Hole (with the exception of the two "new" signs that would be an idea of what could be done with the Bluefields Bay Marina)

The Marina



The Restaurant



Captain Morgan's Wharf and Marina – Captain Bligh's Bistro



Captain Morgan's Wharf and Marina - Captain Bligh's Bistro



Phase III

- ▶ The following information is taken off of the Noonsite Website. This is a global cruising information site for sailors.
- ▶ The information is provided by staff and members, particularly those who have recently experienced sailing in the area
 - <http://www.noonsite.com/Members/sue/R2010-06-07-1>

Noonsite Information on Jamaica

“Jamaica is a beautiful island with hundreds of miles of coastline and abundance of natural harbors.

There are however only three secure docking facilities; the marina in Port Antonio, the Montego Bay Yacht Club and the Royal Jamaica Yacht Club in Kingston. All three facilities have very good security.”



Noonsite Information on Jamaica

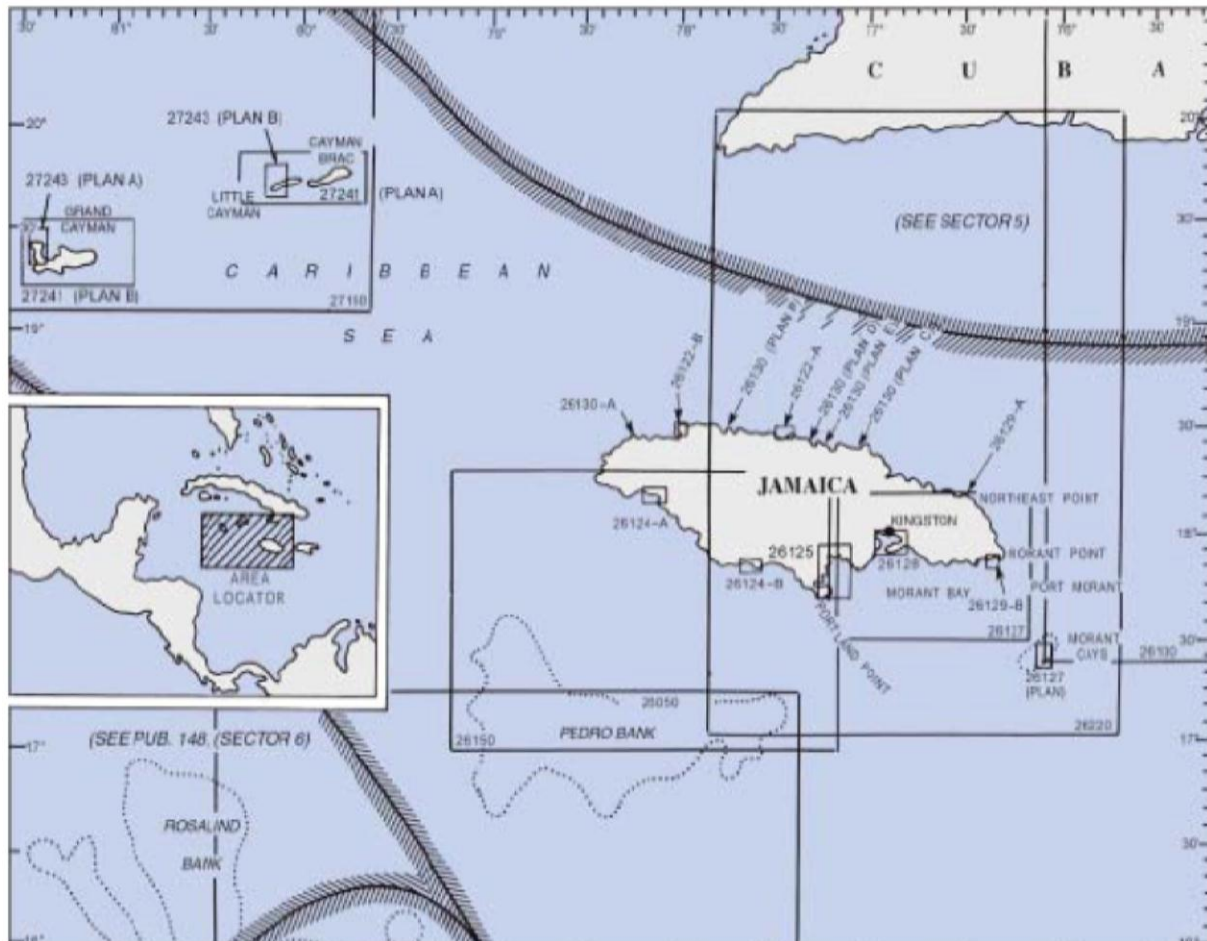
“On the south side the winds veer to the south and the wind is generally south of east on that side.

The south coast is more secure than the north coast when northerlies blow; but less secure when the rare but possible westerly blows through.”



Phase III

- ▶ An additional advantage to the positioning of a marina in Bluefields Bay is its accessibility for short sails to Jamaica's islands
- ▶ Undeveloped, unusual and only a short sail away are the Pedro Banks
 - Bluefields would be able to offer one or two day sails from a protected harbor
 - Working with the Nature Conservancy there could be a partnership to help with conservation efforts as well as assisting the few local residents.

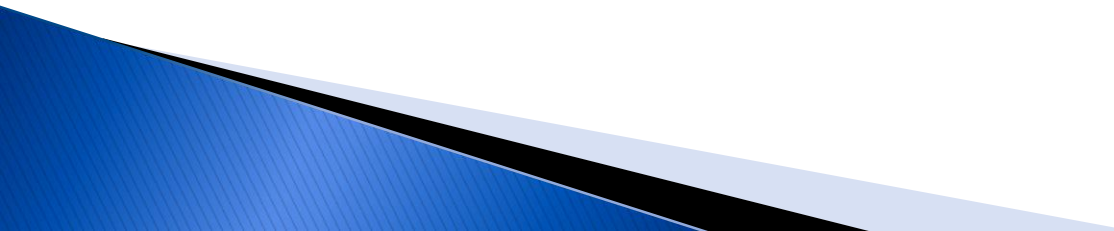


<http://www.nature.org/ourinitiatives/regions/caribbean/jamaica/placesweprotect/the-pedro-bank.xml>

Final Thoughts

- ▶ “Jamaica’s Sanctuary” would be a brand identification that would bring you through all three phases of tourism development
- ▶ The area could control its own destiny by being pro-active with development from a pro-environmental perspective
- ▶ The area also would have development locally based and benefit local citizens

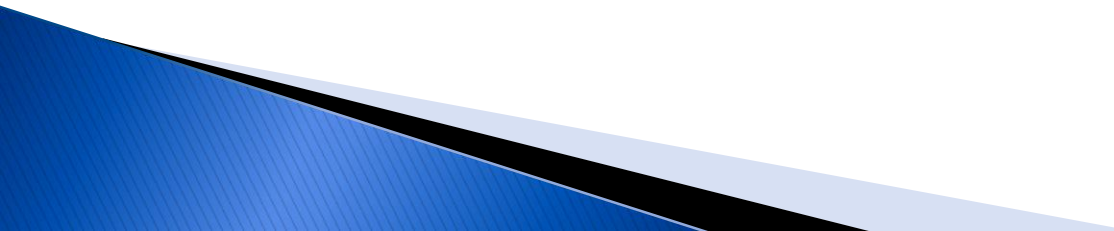
Final Thoughts

- ▶ There is opportunity for responsible tourism development in the Bluefields Bay Area
 - ▶ That opportunity is now, before property is purchased for mega-hotels and before the residential development permanently scars the landscape
 - ▶ But, that opportunity has a limited window of opportunity and issues must be addressed immediately
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Final Thoughts

- ▶ We highly recommend a formal Tourism Plan, approved by the community and by the Jamaican government
- ▶ The plan should be strategic and look at 2, 5 and 10 year goal setting
- ▶ Bluefields Bay can be a place of sanctuary for international tourists as well as Jamaican citizens.
- ▶ The area can educate about flora and fauna, as well as geography and geology, providing a valuable service for the entire country

Final Thoughts

- ▶ If a Tourism Plan is not immediately considered, the Bluefields Bay area will become just another mass market destination
 - ▶ There will be a destruction of habitat, culture and tradition, and those things cannot be resurrected.
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We hope that the Bluefields Bay community will take advantage of its window of opportunity. >>