

Bluefields Bay

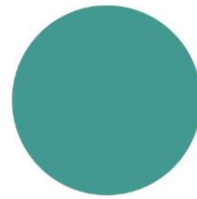
Jamaica

Study. Research. Service. Culture. Adventure.



Hello and welcome,

We are happy to meet you and to tell you about Bluefields Bay's Study, Research and Service Learning Abroad opportunities.



Members of our Team

Why Choose Bluefields?

20+ years experience in international study abroad & service programs.

Bluefields Bay Marine Protected Area.

Rich history and culture.

Varied geology and habitats.

Diverse opportunities for research.

Large project report & data base.

Experienced host community.



Why Choose Bluefields?

Friendly seaside agricultural and fishing village.

Three community-based organizations.

Socially progressive and engaged.

Dedicated to sustainable development.

Vibrant artistic community.

English speaking.

Excellent international airline connections.



What Our Academic Partners Say



I was initially attracted to Bluefields because of its long history of progressive action through the Bluefields Peoples Community Association. I have found it to be a beautiful seacoast community with warm and friendly people, and a pleasant and relaxing refuge from the hustle of resort areas. Bluefields has many important assets, including a rich history dating back to the prehistoric Tainos, a large marine sanctuary and fishers' society, an organic farmers group, outstanding schools, and a long-standing engagement with several universities.

Bill Wedenoja, Professor Emeritus in Anthropology, Missouri State University

The Bluefields community offers meaningful service learning opportunities that are rewarding for guests and hosts. Local knowledge is actively shared, not just presented. Project participants have the opportunity to experience Jamaican culture, not just passively consume it.

Heidi Savery, Adjunct Instructor in Anthropology, Bridgewater State University



What Our Academic Partners Say



Over the past eight years, I have learned to totally trust the safety and safe judgement of Wolde and his assistants Deceita and Veda. They help make things happen and take care of food, security, cultural side trips, and talks about the history of slavery in Jamaica.

Marilyn Wedenoja, Professor in Social Work at Eastern Michigan State University

The grassroots activism in Bluefields to date has accomplished an inspiring list of social and ecological changes and jumpstarted the connections that can build community through small, individual and collective actions and a future-oriented vision. Our University treasures the long-term partnerships with the people of Bluefields, where faculty and students can learn from their past and present.



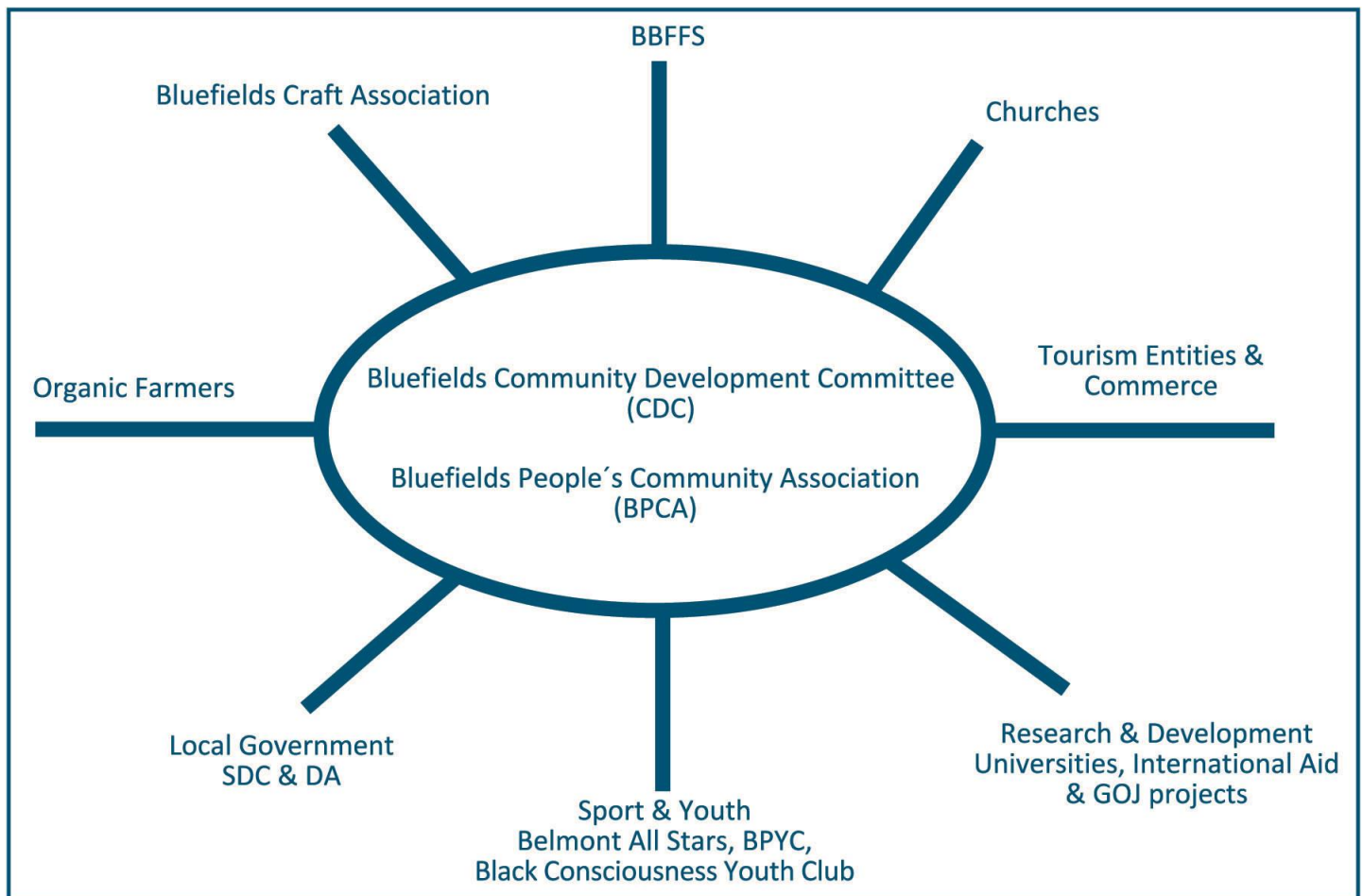
Candice Goucher, Professor of History, Washington State University Vancouver

Bluefields Development Committee

Vision: To become the leading community development entity in Jamaica & the wider Caribbean.

Mission: To provide a range of community development services to the people of Bluefields and its environs in harmony with the natural environment. This includes the provision of training and employment opportunities for the residents of the community and helping the residents to improve their economic, social and natural environment.

Food for All · Education for All · Jobs for All
Protection of Our Natural & Cultural Resources



Reliable Adventures Jamaica

ECO Friendly and Community tours
for an authentic Jamaican experience
Award-winning tour company. Works with
Bluefields Bay Fishermen's Friendly Society.
Operated by Wolde Kristos, a BPCA founder-
member who heads the Bluefields Sustainable
Development Programme.



Bluefields Bay Fishermen's Friendly Society

Sailing Together For a Sustainable Future

BBFFS creates sustainable livelihoods by managing the Bluefields Bay Fish Sanctuary, through education and community projects, and by partnering with RAJ

Tours to promote SAVE tourism

(Scientific, Academic, Volunteer & Educational)



Our Experience

We have over 20 years of experience hosting international learning travellers.

Study Abroad

Academic credit programs for universities and other educational institution partners

Service Learning

Programs combining academic learning with service in the community

Research Abroad

Researchers conducting scientific investigations, often for extended periods

Service Programs

Volunteers engaged in meaningful social, educational, health, etc. community projects

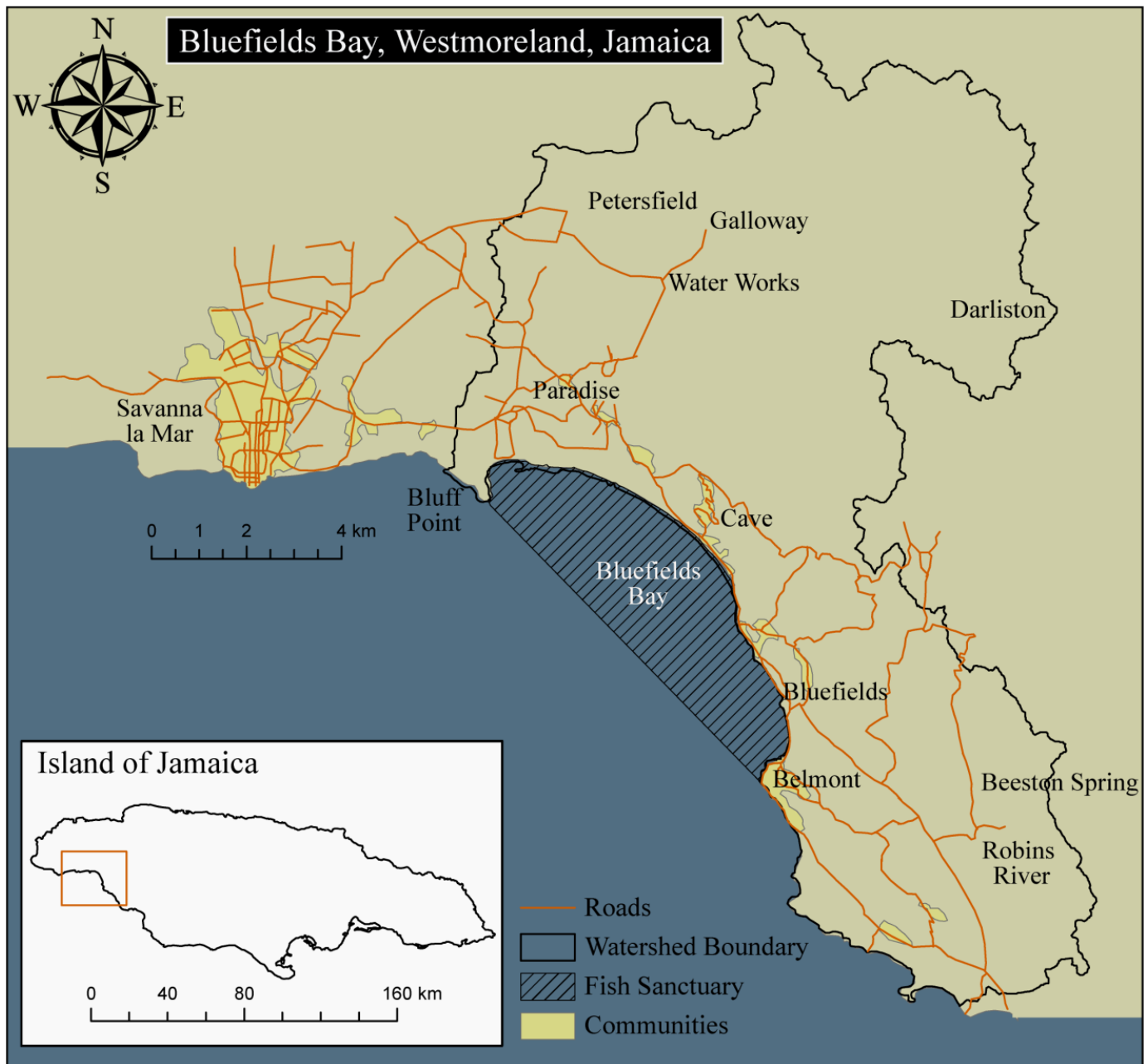
About Bluefields Bay

Bluefields is “Where the Mountains and the Sea Kiss”. It is located 1.5 hours from Montego Bay, and known for its natural beauty and community spirit. There was Taino occupation as early as 1200 AD. Settled by the Spanish in 1519, it is one of the oldest European settlements in the New World. The history is fascinating, from indigenous people to pirates and plantations. The vibrant culture melds African, Spanish, English, Maroon & Rastafari.



Bluefields Bay Fish Sanctuary

In 2009, the area between Paradise/Bluff Point and Belmont Point was designated as the Bluefields Bay Special Fishery Conservation Area BBSFCA. It spans 13.82 km² and is the largest contiguous Marine Protected Area in Jamaica.



Source: Jackie Elizabeth Ebert. 2010. Integrated Watershed Management in Bluefields Bay, Jamaica. Master's Thesis. Missouri State University.

Bluefields Research Habitats



Coral Reef



Artificial Reef



Seagrass Beds



Beach



Mangrove Swamp



Tropical River



Mountain Forest



Organic Farming

Bluefields Research Sites & Topics



An **artificial reef** structure with 350 modules was installed in 2012. **Coral gardening** began in 2014 to grow Elkhorn and Staghorn coral.



Turtle nesting sites are critical to the survival of the four species of turtles that nest in Jamaica. BBFFS has monitored and protected sites since 2012.



Taino sites, including an artifact-rich midden, were discovered in 2007. An archaeology project began in 2008. The Tainos date back to the 600s in Jamaica and the 1200s in Bluefields.



Endemic and migratory bird species in varied habitats for research and conservation projects. Renowned Victorian naturalist Philip Henry Gosse made the area famous.

Bluefields Research Sites & Topics



Oristan, now Bluefields, was founded by the Spanish in 1519. A new archaeological project looking for the first settlement site is underway. **Captain Bligh** came and brought breadfruit cuttings.



The English Navy used Bluefields Bay to resupply. **Pirates**, such as Sir Henry Morgan, used it as a haven. Historic artifacts and sites are found on land and sea.



The stories and legacies live on of the **planter class** and the **slave trade**. There are several **Great Houses** in the area, more than elsewhere in Jamaica.



Historic sites also include places such the Methodist church in Mearnsville and a tavern that was a resting place for old-time travelers along the South Coast road.

Bluefields Research Sites & Topics



Organic farming has long been practiced in Bluefields. The Westmoreland Organic Farmers' Society is the first registered organic-focussed cooperative in Jamaica.



Reggae superstar and equal rights activist Peter Tosh grew up in the area. So did Bob Andy, an influential Reggae song writer. Tosh is buried here.



Tourism is one of Bluefields' main development strategies. Research reports and strategies have included community tourism, SAVE travel and geotourism.



Study and volunteer projects around **social work, social justice and social enterprise** for sustainability and community development have taken place in Bluefields.

Service Projects

Volunteer service programs provide guests to Bluefields with the opportunity to give back while being immersed in the real Jamaican culture. Here are examples of past service programs.



The Basic School serves children from 3 to 6 years old. Service programs have assisted with installing a water system and making the school 100% solar-powered.

After a significant pre-Columbian Taíno site was discovered, Bluefields received assistance from archaeology students to document the site.



Service Projects



The Missouri State U chapter of Engineers Without Borders built a rainwater catchment system for the Bluefields Peoples Community Association

A Missouri State U “Bearbreaks” service team built a solar-powered water supply for the new Bluefields Basic School



Service Projects

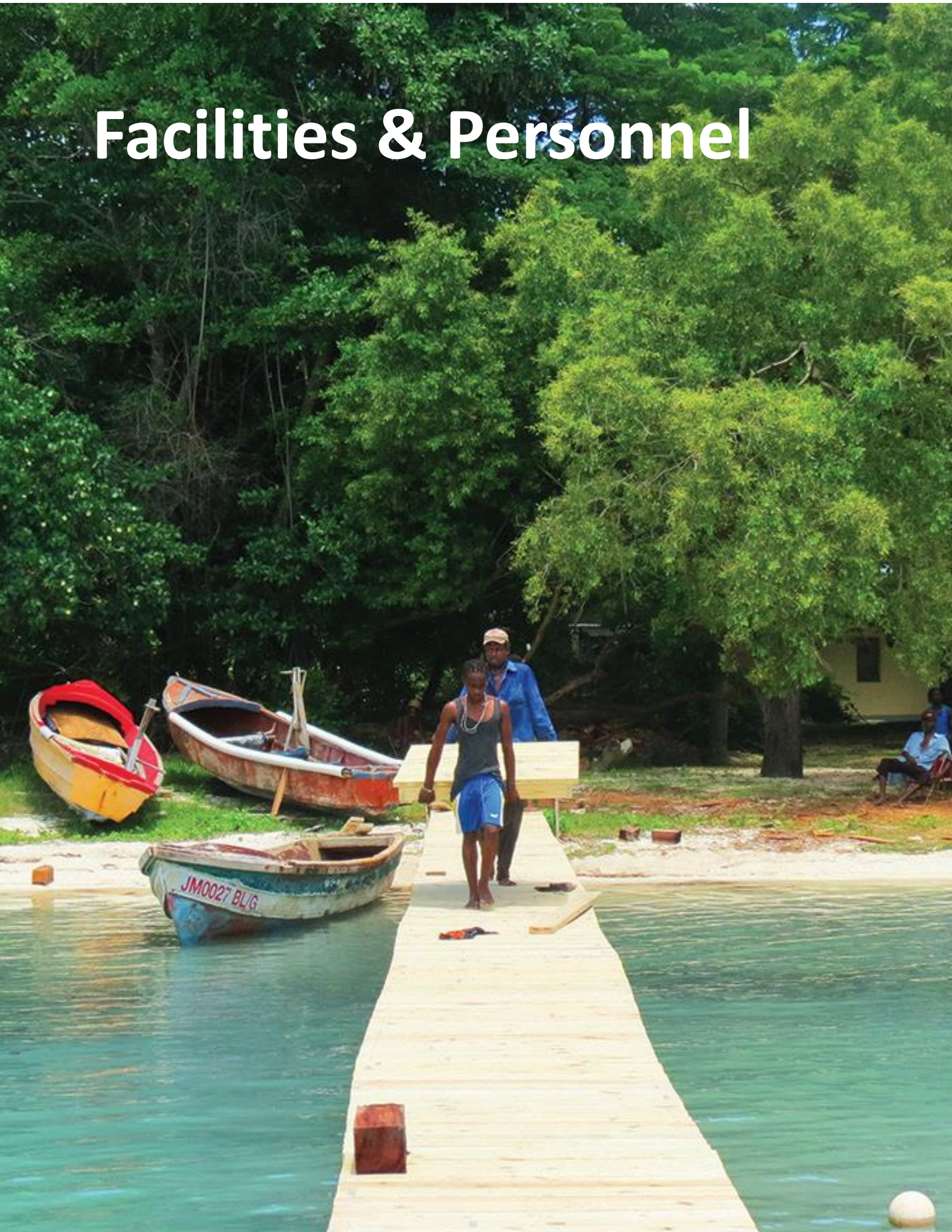


Grad students in Geography at Missouri State U collected water samples to measure water quality in the area

And mapped the Bluefields River to understand a major flood event



Facilities & Personnel



Research Facilities & Equipment



- Patrol boat, 2 engines
- Traditional fishing boats
- 15 passenger van
- 30 passenger bus
- Waterfront study center
- Class/training space
- Meeting space
- A/V equipment
- Species or artifact preparation space
- Kitchen & catering
- Gazebo classroom
- Mangroves boardwalk
- Pier & dock
- Snorkelling equipment
- Project database
- 24-hour power



Our RAJ-BBFFS Tourism Team

- **Wolde Kristos** – Owner of RAJ Tours, President of BPCA and Founder of BBFFS. Wolde led a team and got Bluefields Bay designated a fish sanctuary. He is a community tourism and development leader. Wolde manages all tour groups.
- **Livingston Thompson** – President of BBFFS. A lifelong fisher, he was a leader and co-founder of BBFFS after Hurricane Ivan devastated Bluefields in 2004.
- **Deceita Turner** – Sanctuary Supervisor, Tour Guide and Co-founder of BBFFS. She is a knowledgeable marine, hiking & birding guide. She has studied, and is passionate about, agriculture and conservation.
- **Veda Tate** – Sanctuary Assistant Secretary, Catering & Tour Guide. She is one of the best birding guides in Jamaica, and a marine and hiking guide. She cooks the most delicious and nutritious meals.



Our Academic Advisors



Dr. William Wedenoja is a cultural anthropologist and Professor Emeritus at Missouri State University. Bill has been conducting research in Jamaica since 1972 and has worked with Bluefields since 2000, bringing numerous students and faculty from several fields and universities to the area to learn about Jamaica and to conduct projects of use to the people.

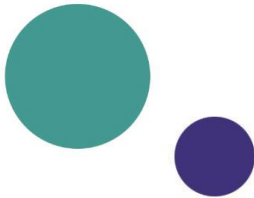
Dr. Bob Pavlowsky is a physical geographer and Distinguished Professor at Missouri State University. Since 2009, he has been coming to Bluefields with students and faculty 2-3 times a year for study-away programs and environmental research projects to support community efforts to manage the fish sanctuary, protect water quality, and develop sustainable tourism.



Our Academic Advisors



Dr. Marilyn Wedenoja is a Professor in Social Work at Eastern Michigan University. She has a longstanding interest in international exchange and culture, working professionally in Germany and England and taking students abroad. She initiated an award-winning study abroad program in Bluefields, Jamaica and has directed it for eight years.



Heidi Savery is an anthropologist and Fulbright scholar. She is a heritage resource management and sustainable tourism specialist. She has over a decade of experience with study abroad programs in Jamaica, and has lived in Bluefields since 2011. She teaches online courses for Bridgewater State University and leads their study abroad programs.



Heidi Savery, left, with Prof Diana Fox, Bridgewater State University

Our RAJ-BBFFS Boat Captains



Calbert Walters (Bertie)

Passionate about fishing, he has a traditional boat and tells stories about some of his famous clients.



Caven Lattiebudare (Brownman)

A patrol boat captain and a master fisher, he is also very resourceful and can fix almost anything on a boat. He is also a master chef.



Emsley Graham (Borry)

A patrol boat captain, he has a traditional boat and will tell you all about growing up as a fisher in Bluefields.



Past Programs

University Guests

Binghamton University

- Student and staff volunteers for field archaeology
- PhD research
- Coordinator: Heidi Savery

Bridgewater State University

- Anthropology study tours
- Director: Professor Diana Fox (ANT)

Drury University

- Study tour
- Director: Professor Erin Kenny (Global Studies)

East Carolina University

- Masters research in maritime history

Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis

- Service learning summer sports camp
- Director: Hilary Kahn, Ph.D. (ANT)

Eastern Michigan University

- Spring break trips for Social Work students and faculty
- Director: Professor Marilyn Wedenoja

Missouri State University

- Winter, Spring Break, and Summer study tours in Anthropology, Geography, Biology, and Geotourism since 2000
- Summer course in History and Anthropology
- Archaeological field schools, surveys, excavations, and lab work
- Service Projects by Anthropology Club, Bearbreaks, and Engineers Without Borders
- Masters research in Anthropology, Archaeology, Biology, and Geosciences
- Directors: Linnea Iantria (TRM) and Professors Jamaine Abidogun (HST), Dan Beckman (BIO), Robert Pavlowsky (GRY), William Wedenoja (ANT), and Scott Worman (ARC)

University Guests (continued)

Northern Caribbean University

- Student volunteers on the archaeology project
- Day visit from faculty and students in the Department of History, Geography & Social Studies

Spring Arbor University

- Study tours on ethics
- Director: Professor David Hopper (ED)

University College London

- Masters research in Conservation

University of the West Indies

- Day trip by an Anthropology course
- Day trip by a Conservation course
- Masters research in Development Studies

University of Waterloo

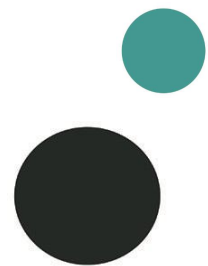
- Field course in Environment and Resource Studies
- Masters and Doctoral research in Environment and Resource Studies
- Directors: Professors Derek Armitage and Steven Alexander

Utah State University

- Archaeological field schools in Zooarchaeology
- Masters research in zooarchaeology
- Director: Professor David Byers (ANT)

Washington State University

- Visits by faculty and students in History and Tourism
- Thesis research
- Coordinator: Professor Candice Goucher (HST)



Research Reports

Here are titles of reports prepared by researchers.

Agricultural Livelihoods and Climate Change: Employing the Livelihood Vulnerability Index in Bluefields, Jamaica

A Governance Analysis of Bluefields Bay Special Fisheries Conservation Area, Jamaica.

An Ethnographic Approach to Environmental Issues in Bluefields Bay, Jamaica

Assessing the Vulnerability of Beach Tourism and Nonbeach Tourism to Climate Change: a Case Study from Jamaica.

Benthic Mapping of the Bluefields Bay Fish Sanctuary, Jamaica.

Bluefields Bay, Jamaica Geotourism Evaluation.

Catastrophic Valley Entrenchment and Debris Fan Formation in the Bluefields River, Westmoreland Jamaica.

Ecosystem Services and Social Wellbeing Linkages: The Impact of a Marine Protected Area in Bluefields, Jamaica.

Effects of Artificial Reef Implementation on Fish Populations in a Marine Protected Area; Bluefields Bay, Jamaica

Efforts to Preserve Fish Stocks Affect Well-being of Fishing Communities.

Integrated Watershed Management in Bluefields Bay, Jamaica.

Late Taino Occupation of Jamaica: A Zooarchaeological Analysis of Faunal Materials from the Bluefields Bay Site.

Microhabitat Selection by Caribbean Damselfish in a Marine Protected Area, Bluefields Bay, Jamaica

Photovoice: Community-based Research in Bluefields, Jamaica.

Physical Habitat Mapping and Assessment in Bluefields Bay Fish Sanctuary.

Sustainable Tourism Assessment for a Marine Protected Area in Southwest Jamaica.

The Impact of Empire : The Effects of British Imperial Culture on the Maritime Landscape of Bluefields Bay, Jamaica.

The Rise and Fall of Markets Along Bluefields Bay, Jamaica.

Research Videos

Here are videos about the Bluefields Fish Sanctuary and community development projects.

[Bluefields Bay Coral Restoration Project](#)

[Bluefields Bay Fishermen's Friendly Society work in Jamaica Bluefield Bay](#)

[Bluefields Bay Fish Sanctuary is Flourishing](#)

[Bluefields Bay Fish Sanctuary EcoReefs Installation](#)

[Bluefields Bay MPA, Jamaica](#)

[Bluefields Jamaica Introduction](#)

[Community Conservation in the Bluefields Marine Sanctuary](#)

[Fish for our Future: Communities and Marine Conservation \(in Bluefields\)](#)

[Snorkeling at Moor Reef](#)

[The Soul of Bluefields](#)



More Reviews by Faculty

RAJ Tours is always willing to work with groups on specific needs for lodging, transportation, and tour services including community projects and nature tours. My students always rate the staff's helpfulness, knowledge, and friendliness at 110%. Plus, they provide authentic Jamaican cooking for excellent meals that you can get nowhere else. Bluefields Bay and surrounding communities are both accessible and safe. I always encourage my groups to go out to explore the town and meet people. Most of the students have stayed in contact with RAJ staff and other people they have met in Jamaica.

Bob Pavlowsky, Distinguished Professor in Geography, Missouri State U

Bluefields is an incredible place to pursue a huge variety of research topics in an incredibly safe, friendly, and experienced host community.

Dina Bazzill (BA Missouri State, MA East Carolina U), Nautical Archaeologist and Principal Archaeologist and Tribal Coordinator, Environmental Corporation of America.

My experience at Bluefields helped me gain a cross-cultural perspective on community building that has been useful in my personal and professional life. It was an excellent opportunity to develop intercultural awareness and communication skills, as well as other skills relevant to any kind of community-based endeavors, and should prove useful to students going into a variety of fields.

Casey Reid, Director of the Writing Center at Linn-Benton Community College in Eugene, Oregon

More Reviews by Faculty

What a great alternative to "Big Box" tourism destinations for studies abroad!

Marcie Venter, Assistant Professor of Archaeology in the Department of Geosciences at Murray State University

Bluefields is a small, quiet fishing village with a fascinating history and a beautiful landscape. It is an ideal place to introduce students to the rich cultures of the Caribbean.

Scott Worman, archaeologist & assistant professor of anthropology, Missouri State University

Bluefields was my springboard for discovering Jamaica and later other Caribbean islands.

Jack Ray, research archaeologist at Missouri State University



More Reviews by Faculty

With my former student, Dr. Steve Alexander, I have co-lead two field courses in which we spent 3-4 days in Bluefields each time. The field courses had a big impact on the participants - they had a unique opportunity to interact with community members in Bluefields, and to learn directly about how they are protecting their environment while building more sustainable livelihoods.

Derek Armitage, PhD, Professor and Associate Director, Graduate Studies, School of Environment, Resources and Sustainability University of Waterloo, Ontario



Reviews by Students & Volunteers

The Bluefields Bay communities provide an ideal study location, for two reasons: because the possibilities of study are endless and because the residents are so eager to share their home and learn more in-depth about it to ensure a sustainable future for the region. As a bonus, the views aren't bad either.

Carly Wilson, MS in Applied Anthropology, Missouri State University, focusing on environmental problems

During my time at Bluefields for my masters dissertation I was warmly welcomed by the community, allowing me to undertake the research and interviews I needed and felt very supported by everyone there over the 6 weeks I spent in the area.

Claire Thorpe, MS in Conservation, University College London

I have never been to a place that left such a lasting impression. Bluefields overflows with positive energy and incredible beauty, in both the land and the community.

Caitlyn Eberle, BA in Anthropology, Missouri State University (participated in service project that built a solar-powered water supply for the basic school)

Bluefields is the best place to relax with good friends, enjoy sand, sun, and the very best sunsets!

Sharon Henslee, medical transcriptionist and archaeology volunteer, Missouri State University

It is hard to overstate the beauty of Bluefields, but the welcoming spirit of the people and the opportunity they give students to enter their lives is what made my time there unforgettable. I will always remember my time in Bluefields. The people were open and frank and treated me like a person, not a paycheck.

Jason Shepard, Anthropology Instructor at Missouri State University (participated in a study tour as an undergraduate)

Reviews by Students & Volunteers

The people of Bluefields made me feel like I was part of the family.

[Kelli Keith, bioarchaeologist](#)

I had the amazing opportunity to go to Belmont with my grad school class to do a service learning trip. The trip definitely changed me and gave me a new perspective on things such as slavery, oppression, privilege and social work in a third world country. Through the GoFundMe campaign I had created prior to the trip we were able to raise nearly \$900 to help the community put up a sign preventing child abuse and paint a school as well as many other adaptations. While there I was also able to speak to adults in the community about alcoholism and addiction as well as 250 high school students during a career day about social work and how the problems of underage drinking in their community is having an impact on their futures. I am grateful and humbled for this experience and am eager to go again.

[Thomas J. Sudia, participated in service program with Eastern Michigan University](#)





Travel Information

Accommodation & Meals



Accommodation options include villas, small hotels, guest houses and homestays.

Our catering staff prepares healthy, delicious meals made from fresh local foods and recipes.



Travel Info

Flying to Jamaica - Sangster International Airport is located in Montego Bay, about 1.5 hours from Bluefields. Many airlines fly into this airport and most visitors to Bluefields land here.

Transfers – RAJ Tours provides group and private transfers from and to Montego Bay airport.

Health – a public medical clinic is available in Bluefields. Doctors and hospitals are located in Savannah-la-Mar (45 minutes) and Montego Bay (1.5 hours).

Internet – wireless internet is widely available.



Food

The food in the Bluefields area is freshly prepared and delicious. You can enjoy Jamaican specialties including Ital food at local eating spots. Some favorite places include the Cracked Crab (at Luna Sea Inn), Dor's Crab Shack (famous for Crab Sunday events), Leroy's Bar and Restaurant (fun karaoke nights), Omar Austin (roadside jerk chicken stand) and Belmont Pastry Shop (specialty is Ackee Loaf).



Arts & Crafts

Bluefields and area are wonderful places for lovers of arts and crafts – Artistic, Beautiful and Creative. Artists are inspired by the beauty, history, nature and culture of the area. There are several art shops where you can meet and buy direct from artists, choosing from a diversity of unique and original Jamaican crafts and memorabilia.



Cultural Activities

To fully discover Jamaican culture there are fun cultural activities you can try such as learning to play dominos or visit a maroon community. You can join the locals to play catch or football, or just enjoy ice-cold fresh coconut on the street!



Active & Adventure Activities

Bluefields is an outdoor adventure playground. Your activity choices include beach walking, boating, hiking, snorkelling, swimming, horseback riding and bird watching.



Local Attractions



The memorial of reggae artist Peter Tosh, a founding and core member of the Wailers, is found in Belmont, where he grew up.



Learn about Jamaican fruits and vegetables at Keith's Bluefields Organic Fruit Farm, Vegetables & Herbs Tours.



The Bluefields Basic School serves children from 3 to 6 years old. It has a state of the art, solar-powered building and welcomes guests.



Crescent-shaped Bluefields Bay has warm turquoise waters and powdery white sand. The public beach is a popular place for locals.

Reliable Adventures Jamaica Tours



On the eco-marine tour, run with BBFFS, learn about historic Bluefields Bay and the Fish Sanctuary. It visits the coral garden and artificial reef. You can go snorkeling and might see wild dolphins.



Take a circle tour to visit surrounding communities. Learn about how the locals live, the geography and history, and the local livelihoods. A highlight is panoramic views of the coast.



Half or full-day hikes in the mountains explore the natural and cultural environment of Bluefields. The Belvedere walk takes you into the mountains for a Bluefields' nature lesson.

Reliable Adventures Jamaica Tours



You can see up to 23 of Jamaica's 28 endemic species on birdwatching tours. Expert guides share the natural history of the area, including butterflies, plants and folklore.



Take a driving tour of the backcountry and visit nine important historic sites in the Bluefields and Belmont area. They include colonial estates and buildings and historic churches.



Go back in time by visiting the Oristano and Tate-Shafston Great Houses, plantation homes built in the 1700s during the colonial era and which are still lived in today.

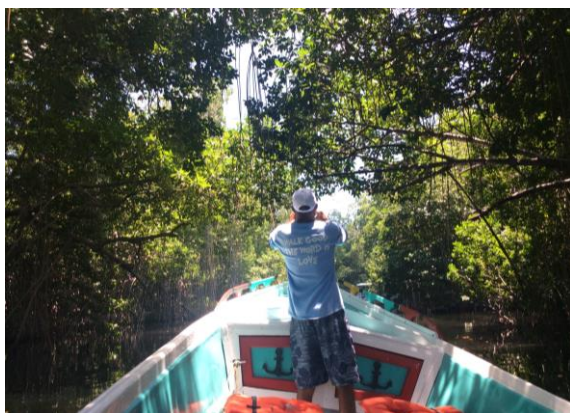
South Coast Attractions



Visit the downtown market in Savanna-La-Mar for a fantastic array of fresh tropical fruit and vegetables.



Whitehouse is the largest fishing community in Jamaica. Traditionally and today, it provides fresh seafood across Jamaica.



Travel through Jamaica's largest wetland to see crocodiles, birds and aquatic life on the Black River Great Morass tour.



Floyd's Pelican Bar is made entirely of driftwood and located on a huge sandbar 20 minutes out to sea.

South Coast Attractions



YS Falls has a seven-tiered waterfall, canopy ziplines, river tube rides and swimming and natural beauty.



Lovers Leap is a 1700-foot cliff overhanging the sea. The legend says two young lovers plunged to their deaths there.



The Appleton Estate Rum Tour shows visitors how rum has been made at this distillery since 1749.



Bamboo Avenue is a 2.5 mile stretch of giant bamboos that form a shady tunnel across the road. You can get yummy peppered shrimp at one end, in Middle Quarters.

Special Events



The Maroon people of Accompong host an annual celebration of their 1795 treaty signing with the British on January 6



Calabash is a major biennial literary festival held in Treasure Beach in even numbered years

To plan your trip to Bluefields or for more information, please contact:

Reliable Adventures Jamaica (RAJ)

Wolde Kristos

Mobile/What's App: +1-876-821-7449

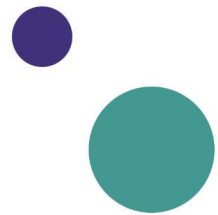
Email: gm@gmail.com

Deceita Turner

Mobile/What's App: +1-876-434-1174

Email: wolette2006@yahoo.com

www.jamaicabirding.com





USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

The Nature
Conservancy 
Protecting nature. Preserving life.

Caribbean Marine Biodiversity Program

Bluefields Bay, Jamaica

SAVE Travel Guide

April, 2018

This document is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the responsibility of The Nature Conservancy and its partners (CEBSE, FoPROBIM, C-CAM, and SusGren) and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.