Report from Workshop to develop a public awareness strategy for the Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division, to promote sustainable wildlife use in Dominica

Workshop held at Springfield Plantation House
11-12 April 2002

facilitated by Dr Abigail Entwistle, Fauna & Flora International

**A National Strategy for Sustainable Wildlife Use, Commonwealth of Dominica
Project Ref. 162 / 10 / 010**

1. Background

This workshop was identified as an important element of the Darwin Initiative project to develop a national sustainable wildlife use strategy for Dominica, being implemented jointly by FFI and FWD. Having a planning meeting like this at the beginning of the public awareness campaign will ensure that messages are properly targeted, and are presented in a co-ordinated and integrated manner (with different members of the team showing a united approach). In addition, the workshop also provided a training function in demonstrating a novel approach to public awareness planning, and also allowing participants to share experiences and lessons learnt about public awareness delivery between themselves.

2. Activities

The workshop was conducted over two days following the outline agenda presented in Annex 1. Six individuals participated in this planning workshop (Annex 2). The workshop was conducted as a participatory group work exercise, using a series of brainstorming exercises onto flipchart sheets.

A brief introduction was given to the purpose of the workshop, and the workshop was opened with a prayer from Mr Adolphus Christian.

The workshop facilitator (Abigail Entwistle) took some time outlining the background to public awareness, what changes it can bring about and how these changes can be assessed and monitored. In addition, she went over the reasons why effective planning (i.e. strategy development) can improve the effectiveness of public awareness.

The workshop moved rapidly through an assessment of the current situation, highlighting the breadth of previous experience for public awareness work within the FWD. In addition, participants were asked to discuss which environmental and developmental issues the public was already aware of and cared most about, and to provide evidence to support these perceptions. An exercise was then conducted to examine how the FWD liaises with the general public (and different stakeholder groups), the different roles it takes and how it might be perceived by different groups of people (Annex 3).

The background to the project was reiterated to ensure that all participants shared a common understanding of what the project hopes to achieve and how it operates. From this basis participants were asked to conduct a brainstorming exercise to identify the key issues relating to wildlife use that could be addressed through public awareness activities. In addition, factors which might constrain public awareness delivery or effectiveness were identified. (see Annex 3).

It is recognised that wildlife use on Dominica is affected in different ways by a great many different sectors of society or stakeholder groups. The different stakeholder groups relevant to wildlife use on Dominica were identified in a brainstorming session against standardised headings. Each stakeholder groups recorded was considered for its likely impact on biodiversity and current levels of awareness on this issue (Annex 3).

It was then possible to return to the key issues to be addressed through public awareness, and look at how this issue could be 'sold' or made relevant to the different audiences it would have to be targeted at. Thus a set of public awareness 'messages' were developed to specific to different audiences for each key issue.

Participants were then asked to spend some time considering how communication works best in Dominica. Participants considered where people gain information, where people visit and meet, and what forms of delivery have been effective (or ineffective) in the past. On the basis of this, appropriate 'mechanisms' for delivery or dissemination were identified for each 'message' (or audience).

3. Progress

Due to a delayed start on the second day of the workshop it was not possible to achieve all the proposed outputs – which may have been an over-ambitious in any case, given the breadth of issues to be covered. The workshop was extremely dynamic, and all participants were actively involved in discussions. All the key exercises were covered, with details collected of key issues, and of messages and mechanisms for all but three of the issues identified. The facilitator was able to use the written outputs of the workshop to complete a public awareness plan, as far as was possible without further inputs from the local participants.

The next stage of the process will be for the FWD team to review the document for errors, and to complete message and mechanisms for the remaining issue that has not been covered (input is available from FFI over email on this, if required). In addition, the FWD team is asked to complete the tables within the public awareness plan for timing and priority of the different actions, and for which other organisations or agencies might need to be involved with specific actions. **It is recommended that this process is completed as rapidly as possible to ensure that the ideas presented in the workshop remain fresh in the mind.**

4. Evaluation and feedback

Evaluation forms enabled participants to provide feedback and viewpoints with regard to workshop, its relative success and how it might have been improved. Overall feedback was extremely positive, and the model of planning for public awareness was felt to be one that could be applied to other projects and shared with other departments. From the evaluation questionnaires, most participants felt the workshop had met its objectives and that it was a constructive and useful process. The workshop style and locations appeared to work well. The only suggestion was that it could have been extended over three rather than two days, to enable for more ideas to be discussed and captured.

Annex 1 – Agenda

Workshop

**Development of a public awareness strategy
for the Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division,
to promote sustainable wildlife use in Dominica**

Springfield
11-12 April 2002

facilitated by Dr Abigail Entwistle, Fauna & Flora International
as park of the Darwin Initiative funded project
"Development of a strategy for sustainable wildlife use in Dominica"

Thursday 11th April

9.00   Introduction to w/s

9.15   Why engage in public awareness?

9.35   Public awareness for the sustainable use project

10.00   Audit of existing activities

10.30   Objectives of public awareness in relation to this project

11.15   Coffee break

11.30   Organisational perceptions and role

12.00   Identifying issues (what you want to change)

13.00   Lunch

14.00   Identifying audiences (who you want to reach)

15.30   End of day

Friday 12th April

10.00   Recap on previous day

10.30   Identifying messages (what you need to say)

13.30   Lunch

14.30   Existing opportunities for communications

15.00   Identifying mechanisms for public awareness (how you need to say it)

16.20   Next stages and evaluation

16.30   Close of workshop

Annex 2. – Workshop participants

Participants at public awareness workshop

Adolphus Cristian (FWD)

Arlington James (FWD)

Stephen Durant (FWD)

Ronald Charles (FWD)

Melvin Didier   (GIS)

Also present: Stephen Toussaint (FWD)

Facilitation: Abigail Entwistle (FFI)

Annex 3 - Workshop outputs

1 Analysis of the Current Situation

1.1 Audit of existing activities

List of existing or recent public awareness activities conducted by your organisation.
• Series of radio discussion programmes • PSA programme on radio and TV • Monthly 'Environment Corner' interview discussion programme • 'Talking Point' call-in radio show • Billboards • Booklets, brochures and posters • School visits • Training for taxi drivers etc. • Lectures to community groups • Occasional newspaper coverage • College course and YES corp • Direct contacts with visitors to FWD office (schoolchildren, visitors, hunters) • School attachment programmes • Social and private contacts by phone • Forestry week – exhibitions, events Project related coverage has included a GIS news item; a Voice of Life radio interview; a longer GIS interview; discussions on the radio show "Talking Point"
List of environmental public awareness activities conducted by other organisations
• DCA summer programme • SPAT summer programme • Fisheries have an active environmental education programme • Environmental health does awareness

1.2 Context of public awareness for this project

What environmental or development issues are people most concerned about?

- ECONOMY
- Banana crop
- Land availability
- Impacts of tourism (cultural, environmental, carrying capacity)
- Quarrying and impacts on marine environment
- State of agriculture: diversification, access to lands; markets; inputs; abandonment
- Garbage disposal/litter
- (solid waste management)
- State of rivers – quality and flow
- **Illegal hunting**
- **Crop degredation**
- Health (AIDS)
- Crime

What does the general public know about:
a) **Your organisation?**

- Well known organisation
- Public aware of its existence and services offered
- Different groups know different aspects of FWD work (forest services, education, enforcement, permit issuing)
- Know about project from radio coverage

Wildlife and impacts of wildlife use?
- Public relatively well informed about wildlife (all, including hunters) – species identification good in rural areas
- Recognise cultural value of wildlife (e.g. Creole day)
- Recognise tourism promotion of wildlife (& economic opportunity??)
- Knowledge of hunting high
- Knowledge of ban/closed season (but not details)
- Some concern about declines in wildlife populations (hunters)
- Don't really think about impacts of collecting reproducing individuals
- Concern about agrochemical use
- Awareness of economic benefits from hunting
- Some knowledge about exportation (but not details)

What evidence do you have to support your views on current awareness?
- Hunting survey in 1998
- Current social assessment questionnaire survey
- Anecdotal information
- Personal contacts and feedback
- Calls to the office
- Responses when breaking law (people know they are doing it)
- Quiz run during forestry week

How could a better informed public assist you in the work you do?
- A lot….
- Better observation of law
- Informing on infringements
- **Taking responsibility**
- Approaching law breakers (community policing)
- Changing behaviour

What do you think should be the objective of this strategy?
1. To encourage the public to take responsibility and change their own behaviour regarding wildlife use and protection, through recognising why this is important to them.
2. To encourage public participation, dialogue, feedback and ultimately ownership with regard to FWD's work on wildlife management
3. To target church and community leaders to spread the word on wildlife protection and to engage school children and 'ambassadors' for the project and catalysts for change in their parents behaviour.

1.3 Organisational remit, role and image

What is the remit of your organisation?
- The organisation does not have a specific mission statement
- The FWD works to implement forestry policy (and wildlife and parks)

List the general roles of your organisation with regard to the general public and other agencies. How can these roles be reconciled?

- Enforcer
- manager
- revenue generation

- advisor to government
- monitoring resources

- educator
- service providers

Reconciliation of roles is an issue that might need to be tackled through the project**

Organisational image– what are the key words that you feel should portray an appropriate image for your organisation? [Bold = important; Underlined = currently recognised by public; Italic and * = elements of public image needing further attention]

- **professional**
- **credible**
- *efficient* *
- **responsible**
- *progressive* *
- **information source**
- **recognised contributors**
- world renowned
- integrated

- **effective**
- **knowledgeable**
- *scientific**
- **supportive**
- **accessible**
- transparent
- negotiators
- polite
- team workers

- **collaborative**
- *adaptable* *
- sympathetic (& firm)
- **respected**
- **approachable**
- friendly but firm
- *participatory* **
- investors in people
- important

How does your organisation's current image affect its communications with others?

- Public come for information
- Seen as helpful, knowledgeable and reactive
- Seen as a credible source of information
- Seen as being relevant (dealing with resources, water etc.)
- **Need for enhanced participation and dialogue**

Do internal communications support public awareness – is every staff member an interpreter and ambassador for your organisation?

- All staff are aware of their role and of the work of the department (particularly established staff, unestablished staff? – but will know how to redirect questions).
- Monthly staff meetings are used to disseminate information and issues to all staff

2. Analysis of problems

2.1 Key issues

Key issue/problem	List of related factors/problems/constraints
1. Lack of awareness of the details of the law 2. Lack of respect for the law 3. Lack of understanding of the need for the law 4. Attitude problems (a) indifference; (b) lack of respect/responsibility; appreciation 5. Cultural beliefs about wildlife consumption (a) myths (b) misinformation 6. Pressures from current socio-economic situation (a) unemployment (b) opportunities from wildlife 7. Ignorance of the idea of unsustainable/over-collection and declining populations 8. Lack of awareness of the importance/value of wildlife (a) culturally; (b) politically/ symbolically; (c) economically; (d) ecologically. 9. Disagreement with the ban on hunting 10. Lack of appreciation for the need for a closed season, and fact that people hunt reproductive females 11. Disagreement with timing of the closed season 12. Lack of concern and regard for limiting number of animals harvested during a hunting session or season 13. Lack of knowledge about the project and its aims 14. Demands of the tourism industry (a) cuisine; (b) safari; (c) ecotourism 15. Illegal export of wildlife **16. Lack of proactive community participation in wildlife management** 17. Hunting in protected areas (govt. and private) 18. Lack of co-ordination between FWD and police dept. on issue of hunting firearms and ammunition 19. Lack of appropriate sentencing of wildlife offenders by the magistrates 20. Wildlife farming – (a) illegal (b) future opportunity	• Inadequate legislation (relevant & effective) • False sense of ownership • Illiteracy • Cultural beliefs • Perception of common resource – should always be accessible, and someone else will always use it • Indifference • Greed • Economic needs • Believe there will always be more animals • Language of the law not very accessible (interpretation) • Not enough public access to copies of the law • Lack of community participation/support • Inadequate support from other law enforcement agencies • Lack of designated hunting areas • Lack of collaboration between FWD and the police dept. • Effects of crop depredation

3 Defining the Target Audience

3.1 Analysis of different audiences

Stakeholder group and sub-groups	Influence on wildlife use	Awareness of wildlife use issues	Priority
Local communities (list specific sub-groups of stakeholders)			
farmers	H	H	**
hunters	H	H	**
fishermen (sea)	M	M	-
housewives (as consumers)	M	M/L	*
Hotels/restaurants	H	H	**
Hucksters	H	M	**
Schoolchildren/students	L	L	*
Media	H (+ve)	M	**
Tour guides/operators	M	M	*
Taxi drivers	L/M	M	*
Fishermen (river)	H	M	**
Food retailers/vendors	H	M	**
Poachers	H++	H	*
Society hostesses	M	H/M	-
Expat Dominicans	M/H	M/H	**
Airline/shipping workers/owners	M	M	*
(community 'informers')	?	?	?
Visitors			
Ecotourists	M/L	M/H	-
Business visitors	L	L	-
Cruise ship passengers	L	L	-
Backpackers	L	L	-
Day excursions (from Guadeloupe)	M	M	*
Sports teams	L	L	-
Educational exchange programmes	L	L	-
Relatives/returning nationals	H	H/M	**
Official visitors	L	L	-
General tourists	M	L	*

Stakeholder group and sub-groups	Influence on wildlife use	Awareness of wildlife use issues	Priority
National agencies/decision makers			
Hucksters association	H	H	**
Parliament	H	M	**
Tourism department	H/M	M	**
NDC	H/M	H	**
Agriculture dept.	H	H	**
Planning dept.	H	H	**
Hotel & Tourism Association	H	H	**
Village Councils	M	M	*
Community groups	M	M	*
Cultural officials	M	M	*
Carib Council	H+	M	**
National enforcement agencies			
Police	H+	H	**
Airport & Port security	H	H	**
Customs	H	H/M	**
Judiciary/magistrates	H+	H/M	**
FWD staff	H++	H++	-
Special constabulary	M	M	-
Immigration	H	H/M	-
Educators ,researchers and NGOs			
Teachers	H	H	**
Visiting researchers	M/L	M	-
DCA	H	H	*
Development NGOs (SPAT etc.)	Potentially ↑	M/H	*
YES corp	M	M	*
Youth Division	M	M	*
S.E. Tourism Dev. Assoc.	M	M	*
National Youth Council	M/H	M	*
Community or religious leaders			
Clergy	Potentially ↑	M/H	**
Assoc. Evangelical Churches	H	M/H	**
Dom. Christian Council	H	M/H	**
Youth groups	H	M/H	*
Womens Bureau/associations	M/H	M	*

Stakeholder group and sub-groups	Influence on wildlife use	Awareness of wildlife use issues	Priority
Businesses			
Retailers (influence staff)	H	M	*
Hotels/restaurants	H	M	**
Tourism agencies	H/M	M	**
Hucksters/vendors	H+	M	**
Individuals in business	M	M	*
International organisations			
International NGOs (*incl. FFI, RSCF, Memphis Zoo, WWF, TNC, Birdlife*)	H	H	*
OECS-NRU	H	H	*
Carib. Dev. Bank	H	M/L	*
World Bank/IMF	H+	L	*
Japanese govt.	H	L	*
USAID	H	L	*
CIDA	H	M	*
CITES	H+	L	*
SCO	H	L	*
French/Guadeloupe authorities	H	L	**

4. Defining Key Messages

4.1   Analysis of appropriate messages for different audiences

See Public Awareness Plan

5. Identifying Opportunities for Awareness

5.1   Analysis of existing opportunities

Where do people look for information?		
• Forestry	• NDC	• Newspaper headlines
• Internet	• GIS	• Word of mouth/gossip
• Library	• TV/Radio	• Individual contacts
• Church	• Village meetings	•

Where do people meet to discuss issues/ gain information?		
• Shops/rum shops	• Health centres	• The block
• community groups	• bayfront	• youth groups
• village councils	• beach	• community resource
• social events (class)	• public meetings/lectures	centres
• church	• religious meetings	• cricket/football matches
• church	• market	

What events or places do many people visit?		
• Sunday mass	• Airline offices	• Airport/ports
• village festivals	• Immigration/customs	• Creole Day
• religious feasts	• Utility offices	• Restaurants
• sport events	• Independence day	• Bread depots
• health centres/doctors	• Special events	• Forestry
• Casualty	• Carnival	• Petrol stations
• Govt. offices		

Where do your target audiences meet or interact with your organisation and its staff?		
• FWD office	• In villages	• In the street
• In field	• In schools	• Tourism sites
• Issuing permits/licences	• Forest stations	• Socially
• Social assessment	• Call-in programmes	• At home

What forms of communication are/are not successful? (see 7.2 for ideas)	
Work	**Don't work**
• Community meetings (depends on timing and community –work if invited in and in evening)	• Letters (not mass mail, but to govt. departments)
• Email/web-based – only for schools and affluent individuals	• Newspapers – specific role but not immediate
• Press releases	• Few newsletters – n/a
• Exhibitions, signs and billboards	• Field trips – but try again?
• Posters – distributed and read	
• Educational booklets – children & tourists	
• Leaflets & flyers	
• Guided walks could work if offered	
• website/response boxes/contacts	
• quizzes/competitions	
• event weeks/days	

- T-shirts / bumper stickers
- Theatre/musicals/song contests
- Calendars

6 Developing Mechanisms for Delivery

6.1 Options for delivery

See Public Awareness Plan