

December 2006

# Montserrat Centre Hills Project

## Important steps made at planning workshop

Over 50 persons participated in a successful planning workshop from September 11-15 held at the Montserrat National Trust in Olveston.

There were several informational presentations made throughout the workshop by various partners and consultants, including results of the biological and socioeconomic assessments, ecological research, and preliminary legislative review. A field trip was held on the second day to allow participants a chance to observe some of the key Centre Hills' values and threats in the field. Both large

and small group discussions were employed to bring out the key issues and topics.

It was generally agreed that the following principles should guide management of the Centre Hills:

- Biological and ecological resources should be conserved
- Decisions should be made on sound research
- Resources should be used sustainably
- Stakeholders must be involved in the decision-making and management processes
- Management must be

adaptive and flexible

- When a resource is used, the user must put something back

Specific objectives were sketched out which begin to address policies for extractive uses (such as agriculture), non-extractive uses (such as tourism), monitoring of forest resources, education, and institutional arrangements for management. The details of these management objectives will be developed in greater detail with input from stakeholders such as resource users and managers, land owners, and decision-makers in the coming months.

### Inside this issue

<i>Planning workshop</i>	1
<i>Who is a stakeholder</i>	2
<i>News briefs</i>	2
<i>Research results presented</i>	3
<i>Draft vision and framework</i>	3
<i>First CHMC meeting</i>	4
<i>Facilitation training</i>	4

### Milestones Jul-Dec 06

#### July

- Stakeholder identification workshop

#### August

- Public consultations

#### September

- Planning workshop
- Rat knockdown begins
- Scientific partners visit—Kew, DWCT, RSPB

#### October

- Socioeconomic report completed
- Preliminary legislative review report completed
- Participation strategy completed

#### November

- First CHMC meeting
- Leaflet completed
- Rat maintenance and monitoring phase begins

#### December

- Trail map completed
- Revised airport tourist survey launched



Some of the participants at the Centre Hills Planning Workshop, September 11-15, 2006



**The primary strategy to facilitate equitable participation of all stakeholders in the planning process for the Centre Hills has been identified as the creation of a local management committee with representation from government, civil society, and the private sector.**

## Who is a stakeholder? Just about everyone!

Government natural resource management agencies

- MALHE (Forestry, Agriculture, Physical Planning Unit)
- Environmental Health

Government agencies benefiting from the Centre Hills

- Water Authority
- Montserrat Tourist Board
- Department of Education
- Disaster Management Coordination Agency

Government and other agencies with key roles

- Legal Department
- FCO/Governor's Office
- Development Unit
- Potential funding agencies

NGOs and CBOs with key interest in the Centre Hills

- Montserrat National Trust
- Community Groups - Cudjoehead, St. Peter's,

WSG10, etc.

- Youth Council
- Christian Council

Academia / education

- MCC & UWI School of Continuing Studies
- Primary and secondary schools
- Union of Teachers
- International scientific community

Resource users

- Hunters
- Farmers Association and any other farmers
- Livestock Association and any other livestock tenders
- M'rat Arts and Crafts Association, other craft producers/collectors of craft materials
- Agri-processors
- Vendors of local produce
- Harvesters of "abandoned" crops

- Medicinal plant collectors and users
- Horticultural collectors
- Wood product users (fish pots, furniture, charcoal, etc.)
- Tourists, hikers, birders

Private sector

- Trail, taxi, tour guides, Taxi & Tours Association
- Hotel, guest house, and villa owners
- Hospitality Association
- Utility companies
- Chamber of Commerce
- Water bottling company

Media

- Radio Montserrat
- Montserrat Reporter
- PTV
- Government Info Service

Individuals

- Private landowners
- Property Owners Association

## News Briefs



### Trail map produced

In collaboration with the CHP, the MTB has completed a new hiking trail map which will be on sale at a number of locations across the island.

With assistance from volunteer Carrie Howard, the trail mapping exercise was completed with support from the GIS Centre in the Physical Planning Department.

The map depicts nine trails currently promoted for tourism and recreation. A separate wildlife guide booklet is in development which will complement the map.

### UKOTCF Conference

Staff and partners of the CHP attended the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum conference in Jersey, UK from October 7-12th. Stephen Mendes, Calvin "Blacka" Fenton, Lady Eudora Fergus, and James "Scriber" Daley were on hand to benefit from the proceedings, as well as Janice Panton, the Chief Minister's Office UK Representative.

Lessons learned from work in Montserrat were well received by the 120+ attendees who represented all but one of the UK's overseas territories.

### Fundraising never stops

The CHP and partners recently submitted three funding proposals to the Overseas Territories Environment Programme (OTEP) and other funding schemes.

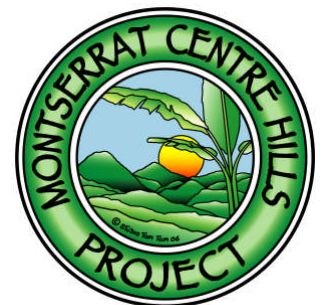
The activities, agreed to be key un-funded priorities, include 1) feral pig eradication, 2) economic valuation of the Centre Hills ecological services, and 3) development of species action plans for key plants and animals.

The results of this OTEP bidding round be known by the end of February 2007

## News Briefs

### CHP logo launched

A CHP logo competition was held in June. Several creative contributions were made and the judges decided on a piece produced by Studio Tom Tom depicting a view of the Centre Hills from the north, with a heliconia in the foreground.





## Research results presented

• The socioeconomic assessment report for the Centre Hills was released in mid November. This comprehensive 107 page report is the culmination of nine months of surveys and research carried out by the staff of the Centre Hills Project.

The forest offers a myriad of uses, be it biological, ecological, cultural, historical, economic, social, spiritual or medicinal.

Resource managers need to balance these uses versus sustainability so that it can be amicably utilised by all stakeholders. The report hopes to shed light on the perceptions of the general public and the activities that occur in and around the Centre Hills.

• A preliminary report has been released that has commented on the state of Montserrat’s environmental legislation. This report was done by renowned West Indian Attorney at Law Christine Toppin Allahar as part of an initiative of the Centre Hills Project and funded by OTEP.

The report will be circulated among stake holders and feed back given before the Attorney progresses with a proposed draft environmental legislation. The draft will be vetted by the Local Attorney General’s Office and the public before a final draft is written and presented to Council in June of 2007

• Extensive GIS mapping was carried out on the forest boundary effectively enabling it to be fully digitised and layered

onto a map. Landowner parcels are now more easily identifiable and accurately shows where their land lies in relation to the boundary. A list of landowners whose land falls within the forest boundary was generated.

• Comprehensive reports describing the status of flora and fauna of the Centre Hills are still in draft stage. It is hoped that these documents will be made available to the general public in the near future. Much of the content of the reports mentioned will play an integral role of the decision making processes of the newly formed Centre Hills Management Committee .

Copies of these reports will be on the Centre Hills web site.

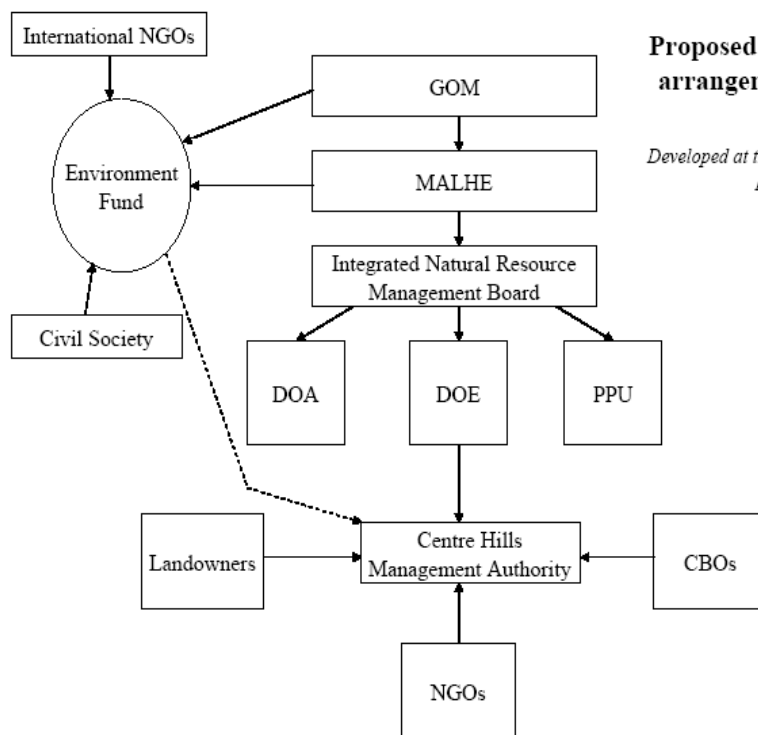
*“A socioeconomic assessment is a way to learn about the social, cultural, economic and political conditions of people, groups, communities, and organizations. There is no fixed list of topics that are examined in a socioeconomic assessment, however the most commonly identified topics are: resource use patterns; stakeholder characteristics; gender issues; stakeholder perceptions; organization and resource governance; traditional knowledge; community services and facilities; market attributes for extractive use; market attributes for non-extractive use; and non-market and non-use values.”*

*(Bunce, et al., 2000)*

## Draft institutional framework and vision

Two important outputs of the September workshop were a proposed Centre Hills management arrangement, (right) and a vision statement (below). Both are in draft form and are open to public comment.

“The Centre Hills National Park is the heart of the green island of Montserrat – a biologically rich and diverse forest supporting unique plants and animals – secure for enjoyment, education and study. The government and people of Montserrat share ownership and management of these valuable resources to support sustainable populations of species, environmental services and local livelihoods for the benefit of present and future generations.”



**Proposed institutional arrangements for the Centre Hills**

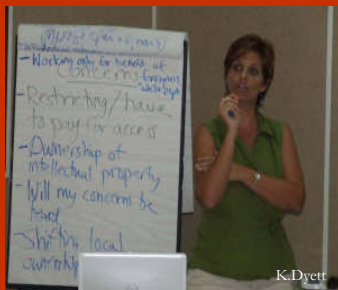
*Developed at the September 2006 planning workshop*

## The Centre Hills Management Committee Formed

**The Director of the newly formed Department of the Environment is Mr. Gerard Gray.**

**The first Centre Hills Management Committee meeting was held on November 22nd 2006.**

**The Education Recreation and Outreach sub committee meeting was held on the 23rd November 2006**



**Both meetings were facilitated by Nicole Leotaud of the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute CANARI**

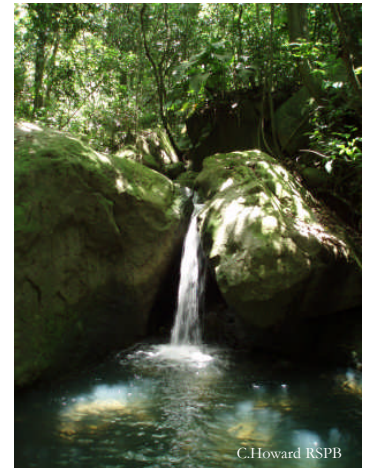
One of the recommendations coming out of the September workshop, was to have a more centralized and locally based management structure for the Centre Hills Project. While appreciating the fact that the Centre Hills Project is essentially a funded entity with a limited lifespan, it was generally agreed that activities can go beyond the March 2008 project closure and could be co-managed by a core group of stake holders that will include landowners, non government organizations, community based organizations, the Ministry of Agriculture, Montserrat National Trust and the Montserrat Tourist Board.

Co-management is a relatively new concept in Montserrat

### Roles and Responsibilities of the CHMC

- Produce a strategy to educate the public on the value of the Centre Hills resources
- Approve policy decisions as it pertains to the development of the Centre Hills
- Management of the proposed National Park
- Advise the planning department
- Ensuring local management and technical capacity is built.
- Ensure that the natural resources are sustainably managed

The Centre Hills Project submitted a proposal to OTEP for a study to be done on an



Economic Valuation of the Centre Hills ecological services.

This project will greatly assist in the future development strategies the CHMC has for the Centre Hills

## Involving the public in decision-making

As part of the CHMC's work plan, sub committees were set up to assist with various aspects of the management plan. One of the key groups formed was the Education Recreation and Outreach Committee. This group is responsible for collating all the information on the Centre Hills and bringing it to the general public for discussion and feedback. As the proposed management for the Centre Hills is of a participatory nature, it is imperative that all corners of Montserrat's society and the wider diaspora become

aware of the valuable resources. The group is responsible for identifying key organizations and clubs on island and to develop effective strategies to inform and engage useful opinions that could be taken into consideration in forming the Management Plan. One of the key players in this education process will be the GIS unit. Their capacity for creating layered maps to relay information will greatly assist in the dissemination of information.

Other sub committees of the CHMC are

- Tourism
- Legal
- Management

These groups should meet initially in early December

