



## **Jamaica Environment Trust**

### **World Wetlands Day, February 2, 2006 Final Report**

The Jamaica Environment Trust (JET) celebrated World Wetlands Day on February 2, 2006 by educating students across the island about the importance of wetlands. Information packages on wetlands were sent to all 353 schools in JET's Schools' Environment Programme (SEP). The packages included information on the functions and value of wetlands, a list of Jamaica's Ramsar sites, and suggested activities for the students to celebrate World Wetlands Day. Participating schools faxed a list of their activities to JET.

Students took tours of wetlands, mounted wetland exhibitions, and conducted research on wetland plants and animals. Students from Cedar Valley Primary and Junior High in St. Thomas went bird watching by the Yallahs Pond, St. Thomas, and SEP schools in St. Elizabeth and Westmoreland participated in wetland competitions organized by JET's NGO partners, the Malvern Science Resource Centre in St. Elizabeth and Negril Area Environmental Protection Trust in Westmoreland respectively. Over 50 schools participated and many did more than one activity. (See Appendices 1 & 2)

JET also participated in World Wetland Day activities on February 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Port Royal Marine Lab. These were organized by the National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA), Secretariat for the Ramsar Committee in Jamaica. The activities included an Opening Ceremony, a dramatic presentation on wetlands by Vauxhall Comprehensive High School, PowerPoint presentations on wetlands by JET, aquarium displays of mangrove roots set up by the Port Royal Marine Lab and a boat tour of the Palisadoes/Port Royal wetland, guided by staff of the Port Royal Marine Lab and NEPA.

JET gave a PowerPoint presentation entitled "Wetland Wonders" and distributed handouts on how to protect mangrove forests, copies of JET's *Earth Facts* publication on wetlands and posters on sea birds donated by the West Indian Whistling Duck and Wetlands project. The younger children were given copies of the *West Indian Whistling Duck Colouring Book*.



Figure 1: Students of Wolmer's Prep take a guided tour through the Port Royal mangrove forest on World Wetlands Day 2006.

### *Highlights of the activities at Port Royal Marine Lab*

Ms. Judith Maloney, the Principal Director in the Ministry of Land and Environment announced that Portland Bight was designated Jamaica's third Ramsar site, joining the other two: Black River Lower Morass (1998) and Palisadoes and Port Royal Cays (2005). Dr. Dale Webber, Chair of the Ramsar Committee was presented with a plaque in recognition of his contribution.

Aquarium displays of wetland plants and animals were set up for the students to view. These included mangrove prop roots, sponges, bivalves, sea squirts, anemones, starfish, jellyfish and juvenile fish.

On the boat tour, the students were able to see these animals in their natural habitat, as well as some of the threats facing the mangroves. These threats included hurricanes that had destroyed some of the mangrove trees, bags of garbage illegally dumped in the wetland and the effect of predation by rats and mongoose on the bird populations. The latter was evident by the significantly higher number of birds nesting on the cays than on the coast.



Students of Holy Childhood Prep viewing an aquarium display the animals on the mangrove prop root.



Figure 3: Bags of garbage illegally dumped in the Port Royal Mangrove Forest.

### *Participants*

Approximately 100 students from eight corporate area schools attended the activities at Port Royal Marine Lab. Three schools, Vauxhall Comprehensive High School, Immaculate Conception High School and Holy Childhood Prep are SEP schools. The other five are Camperdown High School, Campion College, Wolmer's High School for Girls, Wolmer's Prep and Port Royal All Age.

Also in attendance were Ms. Judith Maloney Principal Director in the Ministry of Land and Environment, Mrs. Joy Alexander, Acting CEO of NEPA, and Professor Emeritus Ivan Goodbody of the University of the West Indies, after whom the Goodbody Channel in Port Royal was named.

### *Media coverage*

Coverage for JET's activities was generated on four radio stations and in two national newspapers. Pre event coverage was generated on "Disclosure" Hot 102, *The Gleaner* and *Children's Own*. Post event coverage was generated on "Science in Action", JIS Radio, "Laing and Company", Power 106 and "Breakfast Club", Power 106. The JIS Radio programme "Science in Action" was aired on KLAS FM 89, Hot 102, Power 106, RJR 94 FM and twice on Roots FM 96.1.

## Appendix 1

### SEP schools that celebrated World Wetlands Day 2006.

1. Aadastra Marga Basic School
2. Belair Prep
3. Broughton Primary
4. Cacoon All Age
5. Cave Valley All Age
6. Cedar Valley Primary & Junior High
7. Christiana High
8. Churchill Primary
9. Claude McKay High
10. Clonmel Primary & Junior High
11. Columbus Prep
12. Denham Town Primary
13. Duncans All Age
14. Epping Forest All Age
15. Giddy Hall All Age
16. Green Island Primary
17. Happy Grove High
18. Holy Childhood Prep
19. Huntley All Age
20. Immaculate Conception High School
21. Kendal All Age
22. Kilsyth All Age
23. Knox College
24. Lannaman's Prep
25. Liberty Learning Centre
26. Little Bay All Age
27. Little London Primary
28. Mayfield All Age
29. Mico Practising Primary and Junior High
30. Mount Airy All Age
31. Mount St. Joseph Prep
32. Munro Prep
33. Negril All Age
34. Newcombe Valley Primary
35. Obistan Kindergarten & Prep
36. Port Antonio High
37. Randolph Lopez School of Hope
38. Revival All Age
39. Sandy Bay Primary and Junior High
40. Schoolfield All Age
41. Sheffield All Age
42. St. Alban's All Age
43. St. Mary High
44. Tower Hill All Age
45. Upper Rock Spring Primary
46. Vauxhall Comprehensive High
47. Vere Technical
48. Webster Memorial Basic
49. West Indies College Prep
50. Westwood High
51. White Hall Basic and Prep

## Appendix 2

### Activities conducted by the SEP schools for World Wetlands Day 2006

<p><b>Wetland Competition</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Broughton Primary</li><li>2. Cacoon All Age</li><li>3. Cave Valley All Age</li><li>4. Churchill Primary</li><li>5. Epping Forest All Age</li><li>6. Giddy Hall All Age</li><li>7. Green Island Primary</li><li>8. Little Bay All Age</li><li>9. Little London Primary</li><li>10. Mayfield All age</li><li>11. Mount Airy All Age</li><li>12. Munro Prep</li><li>13. Negril All Age</li><li>14. Negril All Age</li><li>15. Newcombe Valley Primary</li><li>16. Revival All Age</li><li>17. Sandy Bay Primary and Junior High</li><li>18. Sheffield All Age</li><li>19. Upper Rock Spring</li><li>20. White Hall Basic &amp; Prep</li><li>21. Broughton Primary</li><li>22. Cacoon All Age</li></ol>	<p><b>Exhibitions &amp; Wetland Models</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Adastra Marga</li><li>2. Belair Prep</li><li>3. Christiana High</li><li>4. Claude McKay High</li><li>5. Columbus Prep</li><li>6. Denham Town Primary</li><li>7. Duncans All Age</li><li>8. Huntley All Age</li><li>9. Kendal All Age</li><li>10. Kilsyth All Age</li><li>11. Knox College</li><li>12. Lannaman's Prep</li><li>13. Liberty Learning Centre</li><li>14. Mico Practising Primary and Junior High</li><li>15. Mount St. Josephs</li><li>16. Obistan Kindergarten &amp; Prep</li><li>17. Port Antonio High</li><li>18. Randolph Lopez School of Hope</li><li>19. Sandy Bay Primary and Junior High</li><li>20. Webster Memorial Basic</li><li>21. Tower Hill All Age</li></ol>
<p><b>Wetland Tour</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Christiana High</li><li>2. Happy Grove High</li><li>3. Holy Childhood Prep</li><li>4. Immaculate Conception High</li><li>5. Munro Prep</li><li>6. Port Antonio High</li><li>7. Vauxhall Comprehensive</li><li>8. Vere Technical</li></ol>	<p><b>Wrote Editorials</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Belair Prep</li><li>2. Duncans All Age</li><li>3. St. Mary High</li><li>4. Newcombe Valley Primary</li><li>5. Westwood High</li><li>6. Lannamans Prep</li></ol>
<p><b>Research</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Cedar Valley Primary &amp; Junior High</li><li>2. Clonmel Primary &amp; Junior High</li><li>3. Obistan Kindergarten &amp; Prep</li><li>4. West Indies College Prep</li></ol>	<p><b>Wrote Stories, Poems or Skits</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Belair Prep</li><li>2. Clonmel Primary &amp; Junior High</li><li>3. Duncans All Age</li></ol>
<p><b>Birdwatching</b> Cedar Valley Primary &amp; Junior High</p>	