The Turks And Caicos Conservation Fund: Towards Sustainable Financing of Marine Protected Areas

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“If an organization or business is unable to operate profitably, it will not long survive and will have little impact on preserving the world’s natural and cultural resources.”

Adventure Travel Society
Funding Mechanism for PAs

- Funds appropriated in national budget
- Entry Fees (charge for visitation)
- Leases/Licences/Concessions
- Grants
- Taxes/Levies
TCI Protected Area System
formed 1992

- TCI A nature based tourism dependant economy
- 34 PA’s established
- 19 Include a Marine component
TCI Protected Area System

formed 1992

- TCI A nature based tourism dependant economy
- 34 PA’s established
- 19 Include a Marine component
- Low Priority afforded to funding of protected area system (less than US$ 150,000 in 1992 estimated 2% of need)
TCI Conservation Fund: Background, 1992-1998

- Need for a funding mechanism identified as early as 1990’s
- By 1995 parks still largely ‘paper parks’
- Project and Fund concepts developed
1995 A Social and Economic Assessment of Protected Areas

A model was proposed:

- Controlling board
- Financial Plan
- Raising of endowment funds
- Collection of user fees
- Independent audit
1998 Project and Fund Start

1st April 1998 beginning of financial year

- Coastal Resources Management Project (CRMP) started (UK + TCI Gov)
- Establishment of the fund was a condition of UK project financing
- Conservation Fund established as a Special Fund under Finance Audit
The Donor Dream

- The Fund has successfully replaced Donor funds

Financial Years

USD

- Conservation Fund
- UK Government
- Consolidated Fund
Coastal Resources Management Project (CRMP)

Purpose
Initiate a programme for the effective management of the protected area system and enhance national environmental awareness.
Project outputs

1. Develop a National Parks Service (now PAD)
2. Management in 3 pilot marine parks
3. Support and capacity building to the National Trust
4. Plan to extend management to all 33 protected areas
5. Establish a National Environment Centre
National Environment Center
(NEC)
The Conservation Fund

- Funded by a 1% tax on hotel and restaurant revenue
- It collected with the other 9% of Accommodation Tax as a standard 10% charge on every transaction
- Collected by Treasury through the normal tax collection system
Structure of the TCI Conservation Fund (CF)

- Conservation Fund maintained as a sub-account of the Consolidated Fund
- Only paper not physical separation of funds
- Hypothecated once per year – which is a legal obligation
Financial Management

- Governed by TCI G overall financial procedures
- Has an Accounting Officer appointed
- Separately audited by the Audit Office which is established independently from government

Years


Closing Balance ($)

0 500,000 1,000,000 1,500,000 2,000,000 2,500,000 3,000,000 3,500,000
Distribution Policy of the Fund

- > $3.1 million available
- 70% Management of Protected Areas (shared between PAD and National Trust)
- 20% Community Conservation Projects
- 10% Reserve
Community Conservation Projects;

- Criterions / areas of priority for the selection and awarding of projects;
  - Reef Conservation
  - Beach Management
  - Coastal Clean Up
  - Cultural & Historical Preservation
  - Environmental Education
  - Protected Areas Support
  - Eco-Tourism & Nature Trails
  - Environmental Research
Examples of Project Funded by Conservation Fund;
Blending land and sea, mangroves form an interesting environment along our coastlines. Hardy, tropical plants, mangroves are one of the few trees that thrive in salt water.

Once considered useless, the many values of mangroves are now evident. A variety of wildlife finds food and shelter in the mangroves. Their roots help stabilize the shoreline and also filter pollutants. Graceful, long-legged wading birds build their nests in their branches.

**A Mangrove Food Chain**

- **Mangrove** feeds small fish and crustaceans.
- **Crustacean** feeds fish and seabirds.
- **Seabird** feeds fish and other birds.

**Types of Mangroves**

- **Black Mangrove** grows in salt water and has a smooth bark. Its leaves are small and pointed, giving it a dark, glossy appearance.
- **Red Mangrove** lives in salt water and has a thick, rough bark. Its leaves are large and pointed, giving it a reddish appearance.
- **White Mangrove** thrives in salt water and has a smooth bark. Its leaves are small and pointed, giving it a white appearance.

**White Mangrove**

White mangroves are usually found further inland from salt water. They are often found near mangrove groupings near the coastal areas where the land meets the sea. They help stabilize the shoreline and filter pollutants.
Grand Turk Cays
Land and Sea National Park
Long Cay Sanctuary

A number of small cays occur to the south and east of Grand Turk. These cays, along with the series of patch reefs located on the leeward side of Gibbs, Round, Long, Penniston, Pear and Martin Alonso Pinzon Cays offer protection to the main island from prevailing winds.

These cays also support a relatively large population of nesting birds, iguanas and endemic plants. Penniston Cay has a magnificent population of frigate birds (Fregata magnificens) and supports a significant breeding population of brown boobies (Sula leucogaster).

Gibbs and Round Cay host nesting sooty and brown noddy terns (Sula fuscata and Anous stolidus).

Long Cay is home to the last remaining Turks Island population of the TCI rock iguana (Cyclura carinata) and a spectacular assemblage of Turks Head Cacti (Echinocactus horizonthalonius).

Established under the 1992 National Parks Order
* Take Pride in our National Parks
South Creek National Park

With an area of 183 acres, South Creek National Park contains the largest mangrove ecosystem in the Turks Island group.

Healthy mangrove stands dominate the area. They consist of mixed forests of well-developed and relatively dense stands of red mangroves (*Rhizophora mangle*) and white mangroves (*Laguncularia racemosa*).

The forest detritus provides nutrients for the marine environment thus contributing to the nutrition of the reef community in the area.

This nutrient rich environment also supports immense varieties of marine life in an intricate food web, providing nursery grounds for a large number of commercially valuable marine species of fish and shellfish.

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Positive mechanism for engaging stakeholders and carrying out conservation work

- However:
  - High transaction costs
  - difficult to manage
  - difficult to monitor
  - Insufficient Stakeholder participation in projects
Conclusions - 1

- CF is now well established and providing significant funds to the PA system in comparison with prior allocations
- Management is broadly within guidelines but improvements can be made
Political commitment remains high
Institutional arrangements are still evolving
Challenge is to improve function and expand to all 33 protected areas
Recommendations for future development of the CF - Immediate

1. Improve regular management of the fund to provide quarterly income and expenditure
2. Better publicize the fund
3. Revise goals and objective for the fund
4. Produce public annual report