

The Land Conservancy (TLC) Barbados Inc.

Strategic Framework (2025-2027)

Mission

Our work is complex but our mission is simple:

“To protect and enhance precious natural landscapes and watersheds in Barbados to benefit our human and natural communities”

Vision

We envision a Barbados comprising fully functioning land and sea ecosystems supporting thriving communities of people, plants and wildlife.

Tagline

Taking bold action now to conserve nature for the future

Our Philosophy

TLC Barbados’ philosophy is simple, we wish Barbadians to live in harmony with the ecosystems that sustain life on our island and our planet. The way to do this is to protect these ecosystems while fostering a love, understanding and respect for them.

Background to our focus on Environmentally Sensitive Lands in Barbados

Our collective environmental history in Barbados began when Barbados was colonized by Europeans in 1627. During the 16th century much of the island was denuded to make room for sugar plantations and thus set a precedent for the way we treat our lands today. Over the years swampy and marshy areas, which were common on the South and West Coasts of the island, were reclaimed to make the land ‘usable’ and habitable.

Fast forward to 2021, the island has developed considerably over the rise and fall of the sugar industry and the rise of the tourism industry. The landscape has changed so much over a 300-year period that it would be totally unrecognizable to the first colonizers who described the island as having dense forest cover and marshy areas along the South and West coasts. The eastern coastline has not changed much due to its rugged nature as well as its soil composition (clay soils) that tend to slip and severely limit development. The “Scotland District”, where the geology has limited physical development, is now home to the only National Park on the island.

To this date, despite several efforts, community and otherwise, to create protected areas for some of our most ecologically sensitive land habitats, only the Barbados National Park, in the Scotland District has been officially designated. Chancery Lane Wetland, Jack in the Box Gully and Graeme Hall Mangrove Wetland lie outside of this area and despite several efforts still only have Special Study Area designation in the 2003 Physical Development Plan of Barbados. The most recent 2017 draft PDP designates them as part of the proposed Natural Heritage Open Space System. Long Pond, Green Pond, Hackleton’s Cliff Area, Turners Hall Woods and Highland all exist within the National Park and are also being considered as Conservation Areas under the Natural Heritage System in the Draft 2017 Physical Development Plan.

Our Stark Reality

Ecosystems on our island are under threat due to our way of life and the way that we perceive and use them. It is time for Barbadians to foster a new ethic for ‘These fields and hills’ as we set out on a journey

to reconnect with that which makes us who we are and supports us. Do we really want to be remembered by future generations as destroyers of life and ecosystems, who watched as some of our most precious and ecologically sensitive areas were destroyed through neglect, pollution and degradation? Or shall we collectively turn the tables, begin to fully understand our history and where we are currently, as a nation, with respect to protecting our ecologically sensitive areas and shift our consciousness to a new ethic, a land ethic where we respect and preserve our natural ecosystems and put systems in place to achieve this?

The Watershed Concept

The connectedness of our ecosystems through water leads us to embrace a watershed approach in our efforts at site specific conservation. Some of the water that falls on land percolates into aquifers and is used for domestic, industrial and agricultural purposes. The rest ends up in our ocean through runoff or groundwater percolation. Along the way water collects all types of pollutants and carries them through our watersheds into our water supply, estuaries, rivers and nearshore marine environments. These pollutants come from our activities: our homes, our industries, our transportation systems and our agriculture. The health of the natural ecosystems that we seek to protect is directly related to the health of the water that either passes through them or is used by them.

The Problem we Seek to Address - The Implementation of Protections

Many of the ecologically sensitive areas that we have identified have some level of protection in place, however, these protections such as the RAMSAR convention for the protection of wetlands or the Natural Heritage Conservation Area land designation of the Physical Development Plan have not been effective. These and other areas suffer from chemical and bacterial overload, physical destruction of ecologically sensitive habitat, inappropriate waste disposal (solid and liquid) and a lack of a coordinated private or public effort to manage and sustainably utilize these spaces for the benefit of all Barbadians.

Multilateral Environmental Agreements

We are guided by the many multilateral environmental agreements that Barbados is party to, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Ramsar Convention and the Cartagena Convention. We are also guided by the many national level policies and plans that Barbados has put in place to support ecosystem conservation. Our intention is to help make the aims of these agreements and plans a reality.

Our Goal and Objectives

Goal

To protect ecosystems in Barbados that are at risk, including ecologically sensitive areas and areas of outstanding natural beauty, for the benefit of all Barbadians.

Objective 1: To identify and document areas in need of protection.

Strategic directions

- a. Inventory areas in need of protection
- b. Document the need for protection through technical analyses

Objective 2: To put in place the measures needed to acquire and protect lands that have been identified as being in need of protection.

Strategic directions

- a. Engage and obtain support of the Government of Barbados
- b. Develop site-specific action plans

- c. Identify funding sources, develop a funding plan and acquire fundingⁱⁱⁱ
- d. Explore, document and apply policies and tools for protection

Objective 3: To work with communities and stakeholders in Barbados and internationally to protect these areas;

Strategic directions

- a. Develop and implement a national level plan to engage communities and stakeholders
- b. Develop and implement site specific community/stakeholder engagement plans
- c. Promote citizen science and 'ownership' of conservation

Objective 4: To inform all stakeholders, including the general public about the importance of protecting the areas that have been identified as being in need of protection.

Strategic directions

- a. Develop a communication plan
- b. Prepare and deliver communication material
- c. Maintain a website
- d. Use social and other media to deliver information

"In the end, we will conserve only what we love; we will love only what we understand and we will understand only what we are taught and allowed to experience."

Baba Dioum, Senegalese forestry engineer

Mechanisms

1. Land Covenant system

A covenant that is granted to a land owner or area and is sealed legally, which stipulates that the property must be used for conservation purposes only. This covenant is transferred when the property is sold and cannot be reversed.

2. Land Trust System

This system requires that the property be owned by The Land Conservancy and managed as a conservation area. Properties can either be bought or gifted to the trust and will be kept for conservation purposes only.

Proposed areas of Protection

The different types of areas proposed for protection are:

- 1. Seascapes and their watersheds
- 2. Wetlands and their watersheds
- 3. Gullies and their watersheds
- 4. Landscapes and their watersheds
 - a. Forests
 - b. Agricultural landscapes

Some of the areas that TLC has identified for preservation are:

- 5. Seascapes and their watersheds
 - a. Eastcoast – from Cattlewash to Morgan Lewis

6. Wetlands and their watersheds
 - a. Graeme Hall Swamp mangrove wetland
 - b. Chancery Lane Swamp
 - c. Long Pond and environs
 - d. Green Pond and environs
 - e. Chapman Swamp, St. Lawrence
 - f. River Bay, St. Lucy
 - g. Holetown Hole
7. Landscapes and their watersheds
 - a. Hackleton's Cliff
 - b. Turner's Hall Wood
 - c. Joe's River and watershed
 - d. Consett Bay and watershed
 - e. Bathsheba Stream and watershed
8. Gullies and their watersheds
 - a. Jack in the Box Gully

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