

CONSERVING AND MANAGING THE GRA-GRA LAGOON NATIONAL PARK
IN A SUSTAINABLE MANNER TO BRING ECONOMIC BENEFITS TO
DANGRIGA TOWN AND COMMUNITIES ADJACENT TO THE PARK.

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Gra-Gra Lagoon National Park is a Protected Area managed for eco-system protection, aesthetic beauty and recreation management.

The Park was established on 5th. July, 2002 under the National Parks Systems Act of 1981. The Friends of Gra-Gra Lagoon Conservation Group in coordination with the Government of Belize and United Nations Development Program (UNDP) created the Park to protect the Lagoon, the surrounding mangrove forests and the wetlands.

Gra-Gra Lagoon National Park is situated in the Stann Creek District, one mile south of Dangriga Town. The 1,197 acres Park encompasses a wetland area which support three varieties of mangrove red, white and black. Other flora species can be found in the Park.

Animal life is plentiful in the area where many birds, resident and migratory, can be watched. Because the Park has salt and fresh water and extensive mangrove root system the area attracts fish such as snapper, tarpon, barracuda, jewfish etc. Spiny lobster and brown shrimp migrate to the mangroves after hatching. West Indian Manatees are seen along the estuary of the National Park during the mating season feeding on the seagrass beds. Several family of crocodiles also call the National Park home.

Friends of Gra-Gra lagoon conservation group was formed in 1994, with the goal of protecting the Gra-Gra lagoon area for future citizens of Dangriga and Belize. The group was registered as a NGO in 1996 and as a non profit company in 2002. Friends of Gra Gra were successful in advocating that the area be declared a national park. Today, with a Board of Director consisting 7 persons, the group continues its advocacy on behalf of Gra Gra Lagoon national park.

Below are the objectives of the group

- To protect the natural and scenic areas for scientific, educational and recreational purposes
- To manage visitors use
- To prevent exploitation and occupation
- To stop fishing in the Park

Above will be achieved with the following:

1. Development of a Management Plan
2. Building of a Visitors center, producing brochures
3. Consultations will bring awareness to traditional users with patrols for assurance
4. Regular Patrols should reduce this activity

Barriers foreseen

- 1 Shortage of Funds
- 2 Shortage of Trained Personnel
- 3 Disaster (hurricane)
- 4 Materials
- 5 Shortage of Management Plan

Benefits

- 1 Employment opportunities
- 2 Financial to communities members, members of Group
- 3 Taxi Drivers
- 4 Tour Guides
- 5 Cultural dancers
- 6 Businesses (gas stations, Hotel Owners etc.)

Activities	Indicators of Success	Resources Needed
1 Consultation with Communities	Participation of members of Communities	Finance ,Transport and,Conservationist
2 Management Plan	Completion of Plan	Finance and Expert
3 Training Rangers Tour Guides Managers Project Coordinator	More Patrols Assisting Visitors Planning, Managing Successful completion of Project	Canoes/ Personnel Canoes/ Personnel Office Space/ Personnel/ Finance /Office Space/ Personnel
4 Building Infrastructure Pier Tourist Lookout Visitors Center Parking Lot Bath Rooms Concessionary Stand	Structure completed Structure in use Building Completed/ in use Completion /in use Structure completed Building completed	Finance/ builder/ material “ “ “ “ “
5 Purchase Canoes	Using canoes for Tours and Patrols	Finance
6 Boundary Demarcation	Completed Survey/ Map	Finance/ Surveyor

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

- 1 Complete Management Plan in two years
- 2 Increase number of visitors to NP by 4% in year one
- 3 Reduce illegal fishing by 3% in year one
- 4 Complete three consultations by the end of first year
- 5 Have infrastructure in place by end of year two
- 6 Employ six male and six females in year one
- 7 Reduce cutting of mangrove by two percent in year one

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Adjacent Communities
Members of Group
Visitors/ Tourists
Students
Taxidrivers
Tour Guides
Tour Operators
Taxi drivers

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

UNDP
PACT
IUCN
G.O.B
Citizens of Dangriga
N.G.O's
CIPAM/ISPAM

POSITIVELY IMPACTED

Visitors/ Tourists
Managers
Tour Guides
Businesses in Dangriga
Gas Stations
Cultural Groups

NEGATIVELY IMPACTED

Fishermen
Contractors
Land developers
Tour Operators
Traditional users

IMPACTED NEGATIVELY

Fishermen
Tour Operators
Contractors
Traditional Users
Land developers

HOW IMPACTED

Reduced Fishing
Will pay to use PA
Discontinue cutting mangroves
Will pay to visit PA
discontinue cutting mangroves