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## BAHAMAS NATIONAL TRUST STRATEGIC PLAN 2018-2022



# Foreword

*"You cannot protect the environment unless you empower people, you inform them, and you help them understand that these resources are their own, that they must protect them."*  
-Wangari Maathai, Environmental Activist & Nobel Laureate

The national park system of The Bahamas, comprising approximately 2.2 million acres of both terrestrial and marine areas, was created, and is managed by, The Bahamas National Trust, a private-public collaboration established by an act of Parliament in 1959.

Uniquely, the Trust is the only such non-governmental entity in the world responsible for the management of a country's national park system.

In 2019, the BNT will celebrate its 60th anniversary. During the past six decades, the Trust has helped to: "conserve and protect Bahamian natural resources", while serving as a "powerful force for [regional] and global biodiversity conservation."

Through passion and courage, a commitment to education and excellence, respect for others, and through integrity, transparency and accountability the Trust has helped to conserve and celebrate the archipelago of biodiversity that is our common wealth of national parks and protected areas.

Over the next five years, the Government of the Bahamas will collaborate with the Trust as it implements the 2018-2022 Strategic Plan. This will include ongoing efforts to address climate change, combating the effects of plastics on our environment, and other measures to conserve our natural environment and to educate Bahamians about our shared environmental trust.

We support the efforts of the Trust in the ongoing management and enhancement of national parks, inclusive of improved infrastructure and accessibility, and greater enforcement of regulations, and maintenance.

The Government will work with the BNT in the creation of policies necessary to enhance biodiversity conservation in alignment with international best practices and in accord with national sustainable development goals. Environmental education, especially of young people, has always been at the core of the work of the Trust. The national parks serve as living classrooms for thousands of young people.

We look forward to working with the Trust in designing and offering even more exciting and challenging experiential education possibilities, and opportunities for community service and volunteerism linked to the national school curriculum.

The Government will also work with the BNT to encourage citizens, members, donors, businesses, entrepreneurs and others to generously "invest their resources in national parks in a way that they never have before."

Stories are the repository of a group's or a people's shared inheritance, collective will and imagination, and common vision.

By sharing its broader story and park stories, including through social media, the BNT will help to realize the ambitious goals of its 2018-2022 Strategic Plan.

On behalf of the Government of The Bahamas, I thank The Bahamas National Trust for its towering achievements over the past six decades. I assure the Trust of the continued dedicated support of the Government in the conservation and celebration of our majestic national park system.



Dr. The Hon. Hubert A. Minnis  
Prime Minister  
Commonwealth of The Bahamas

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The "Peggy Hall", a gift from friends of the Exuma Cays Land and Sea Park (ECLSP), provides housing for the dedicated staff who live and work in this beautiful "blue sanctuary".

## INTRODUCTION

Over the past five years The Bahamas National Trust has made great strides as an organization. We planned thoroughly. We hired experts. We placed an emphasis on governance. We partnered with the community. We executed carefully. We accomplished much.

Between 2012 and 2017 and with the support of many friends, businesses and our government, we were successful in achieving the following:

- Creating awareness about the urgent action needed to save conch
- Connecting young people to nature through our programmes, including the award-winning Discovery Club
- Developing economic opportunities for Bahamians by training and certifying bird guides
- Significantly expanding the national park system, including marine protected areas which are critical to the replenishment of our fisheries resources
- Developing the Bahamas Natural History Conference, an international platform for scientific discourse on the Bahamian natural environment
- Discovering and describing two previously unknown species, the Silver Boa snake and a Katydid insect

As we began to develop the strategic plan you are about to read, we became focused on who we are as an organization and what we want to accomplish over the next five years. We are the caretakers, protectors and voice of our country's unique and diverse natural resources. The will to preserve this rich environmental heritage is what inspired the creation of The Bahamas National Trust in 1959 and today, nearly 60 years later, it is still the heart of our mission. We are the national park service of The Bahamas. We are BNT.



"This new strategic plan demonstrates BNT's renewed focus and dedication

to prepare the national park system and the biodiversity they represent for today's and tomorrow's challenges."

Matt Jeffery  
Program Director, Audubon

# THE Bahamas National Trust

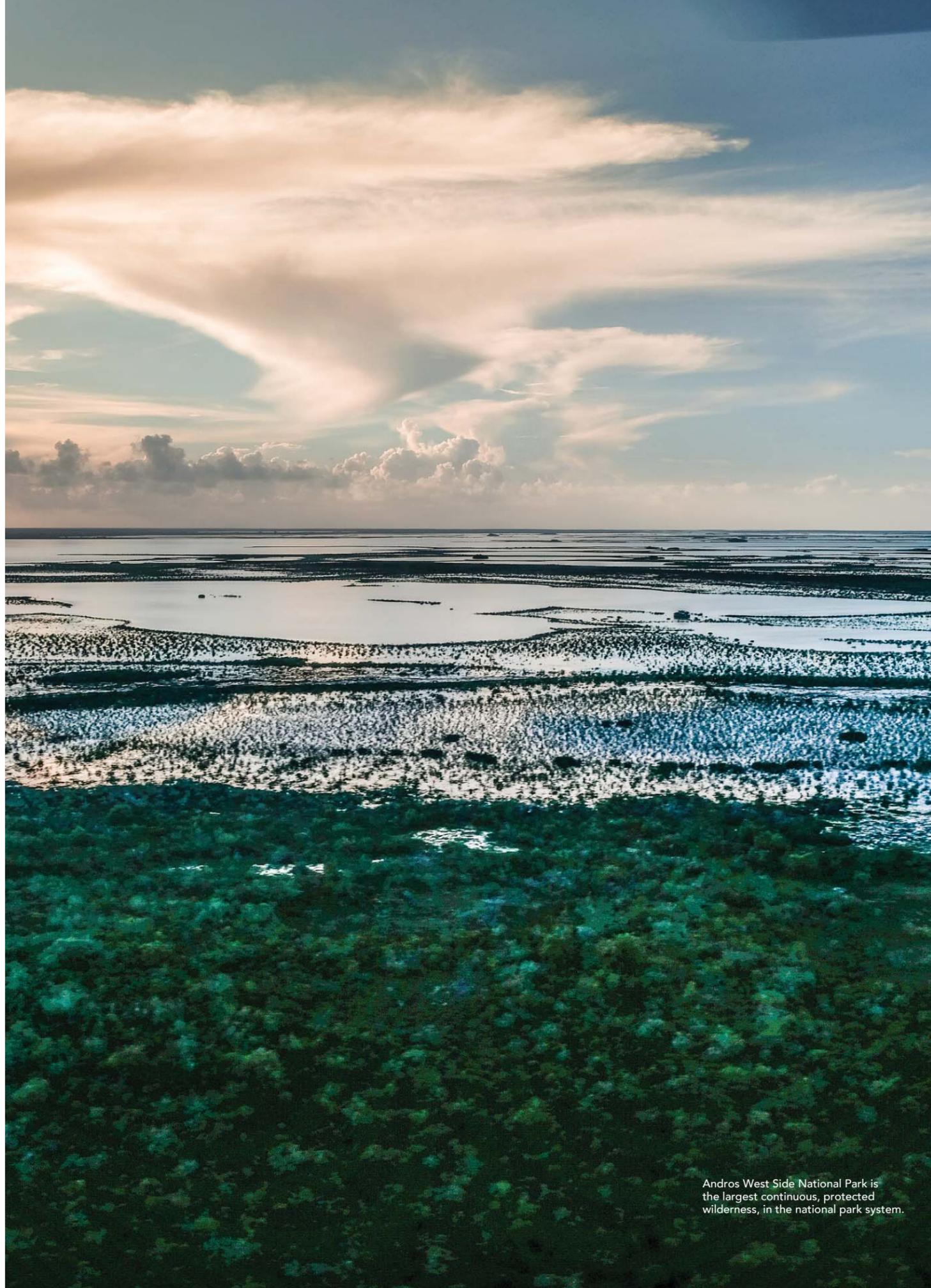
The Bahamas National Trust is a unique organization. Created by an historic act of parliament in 1959 and given the mandate to create and manage the national parks system of The Bahamas, we are possibly the only non-governmental organization in the world charged with this task.

As a non-profit organization, donations are our lifeblood. Our largest donor is the Government of The Bahamas which gives us an annual grant that, in 2017, provided roughly 33 percent of our funding.

The legislation that created the BNT also established the community we view as our valued partners in conservation, our membership. Our members provide financial support for our efforts and add strength to our voice.

We are governed by a 29-member council made up of appointed representatives from some of the most prestigious conservation and scientific organizations in the world and from government. Council members are also elected from our diverse membership.

Our structure uniquely positions us to receive funding from government, philanthropic organizations, private donors and our membership and enables us to access a vast network consisting of some of the greatest conservation minds on the planet.



Andros West Side National Park is the largest continuous, protected wilderness, in the national park system.

## COMPOSITION OF OUR COUNCIL

### Appointed Members

Office of the Governor-General  
Ministry of Agriculture and Marine Resources  
Ministry of Environment and Housing  
Ministry of Education  
Ministry of Tourism & Aviation  
American Museum of Natural History  
National Audubon Society  
Smithsonian Institution  
United States Park Service  
Wildlife Conservation Society  
University of Florida  
University of Miami  
University of The Bahamas

### Elected Members

15 Bahamas National Trust Members

### HOW WE BEGAN

When Ilya Tolstoy, grandson of famed Russian author Leo Tolstoy, assembled a concerned group of forward-thinking Bahamian and North American conservationists in 1958, he did not set out to create The Bahamas National Trust. He was just a dedicated naturalist who realized that the Exuma chain of islands was under threat from developers who wanted to buy it.

The expedition to save the Exuma Cays, that Tolstoy led, included key Bahamian officials Oris Russell and Herbert McKinney, Robert P. Allen of the National Audubon Society, as well as Carleton Ray, Dan Beard, John Randall and Don Squires.

While Allen was working with Tolstoy to save Exuma, he was also racing to prevent a different kind of loss. In the early 1950s he had discovered that, hunting and human intrusion were decimating the population of the West Indian Flamingo throughout the West Indies. In an effort to save key bird nesting sites, including a small, fragile population on the island of Inagua, Allen enlisted onto his team skilled flamingo hunters Sammy and Jimmy Nixon, two of the flock's greatest threats, turning them into the bird's chief protectors.

The reports that came from these tandem conservation efforts were groundbreaking. The teams shared the findings of the Tolstoy expedition and the urgency of the plight of the West Indian Flamingo with the government. The results were the establishment of the Exuma Cays Land and Sea Park in 1958, the first park of its kind in the world, and the creation of The Bahamas National Trust one year later. In 1965, the government designated the Inagua National Park. Today, the park serves as home to a thriving flock of more than 60,000 West Indian Flamingos, an integral part of the history of the BNT and a testament to one of the greatest conservation success stories of the 20th century.

## OUR VISION

A comprehensive network of effectively managed Bahamian national parks and protected areas that is recognized as a powerful force for global biodiversity conservation which is supported and enjoyed by the public.



"The Nature Conservancy is a long term funder and strategic partner of BNT because of the national and regional significance of BNT's role as

manager of national parks. The plants, animals and ecosystems managed by BNT not only underpin The Bahamian economy and way of life but also support the larger Caribbean seascape. Through BNT efforts some of the most important and unique places in the Bahamas and the Caribbean region are being preserved."

**Shenique Albury-Smith**  
Bahamas Director  
The Nature Conservancy



As the leading Bahamian conservation organization and manager of the national park system,

The Bahamas National Trust plays a critical role in safeguarding the biodiversity of The Bahamas as well as the function of its ecosystems and the services they provide to Bahamian people. The Bahamas National Trust also plays a pivotal role in supporting research efforts to better understand the species and ecosystems of The Bahamas and developing the tools and strategies needed to protect and restore them.  
**Dr. Craig Dahlgren**  
Perry Institute for Marine Science

## OUR MISSION

The Bahamas National Trust is a science-based organization dedicated to **effectively managing national parks** to conserve and protect Bahamian natural resources.

The Andros West Side National Park protects 1.5 million acres of complex ecosystems and productive fish nurseries.

# OUR VALUES

## Passion and courage

- for the environment
- for the conservation of our natural resources
- in the face of challenges

## Commitment to Education

- as a key to long-term conservation success
- as a key to supporting a public conservation ethic
- as an organization dedicated to developing our future conservation leaders

## Commitment to excellence

- quality, and best practices
- in protected areas management
- in consistent and reliable service to our constituents
- as a trusted advisor to government and the public on policies
- using sound science as the foundation for conservation management

## National Parks

as places of recreation where people connect with nature

## Respect for others

- demonstrated through
- teamwork
- partnerships
- community involvement in conservation decisions

## Integrity, transparency and accountability

- by
- demonstrating and measuring success
- employing best practices in governance



"The Bahamas National Trust (BirdLife in the Bahamas) is at the forefront of protecting Bahamian biodiversity for the Bahamian people through its custodianship of the

national park system. However, as a nation, The Bahamas is extremely vulnerable to the impacts of our changing climate and this new strategic plan sets out BNT's ambitions to expand the park system to ensure full protection of their Key Biodiversity Areas in the face of climate change. As part of the BirdLife Global Partnership, BNT is fully supported in this mission within international convention fora, the Key Biodiversity Area Partnership, by other BirdLife Partners (such as National Audubon), and by a dedicated Secretariat staff from around the world." Patricia Zurita, CEO Birdlife International

The waters of the Exuma Cays Land & Sea Park are world famous for their pristine beauty, outstanding anchorages and breathtaking marine environment.

# STRATEGIC PLAN AT A GLANCE

National parks are at the core of our work. We accomplish this work through five interconnected pillars. Every day, we are **managing unique spaces** as a form of **biodiversity conservation**; fostering environmental stewardship by offering **engaging education**; encouraging philanthropists and the business community to become involved by **investing in nature**; then sharing the impact we create together by telling our **park stories**.

**MANAGING UNIQUE SPACES** – Over the next five years we will continue to enhance our national parks by providing the necessary infrastructure to make them more accessible to people and encouraging community enjoyment of these special spaces. We will employ best practices in park management planning, increasing our capacity for enforcement, and we will continue to create the framework needed for regular maintenance of these places.

**BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION** – We will continue to conserve the unique biodiversity found within, and beyond, the boundaries of our national parks by regularly monitoring and restoring these critical habitats. We will conduct the necessary scientific research to influence the creation of the policies needed to protect these habitats and the vulnerable species that call them home. To ensure that our research can benefit all, we will remain committed to the dissemination of that scientific information to resource managers, policy makers and the public. We will align all of these activities with national development plans and international agreements.

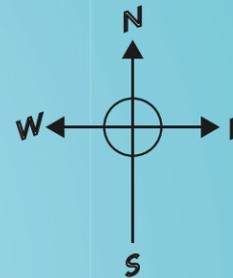
**ENGAGING EDUCATION** – Our award-winning environmental education programmes touch the lives and hearts of thousands of young people annually. We will continue to be a leader in youth environmental education, using national parks as outdoor classrooms to create environmental stewards. Our education programmes will continue to support the national school curriculum and provide beneficial volunteer opportunities for students.

**INVESTING IN NATURE** – Between 2018 and 2020 we will encourage people to invest their resources in national parks in a way that they never have before. We will immerse our donors in our work, reinvigorate our membership programme and connect parks to people, creating business opportunities for entrepreneurs to the benefit of local communities.

**PARK STORIES** – We will share with the community the impact of what we accomplish, with the support of our partners, donors and volunteers. We will highlight our achievements and celebrate conservation leaders within the BNT, among our partner organizations and in our scientific network.



# The BAHAMAS NATIONAL TRUST—OUR NETWORK



## National parks

- 1 Andros West Side National Park
- 2 Crab Replenishment Reserve
- 3 Blue Holes National Park
- 4 North Andros Marine Park
- 5 South Andros Marine Park
- 6 Rand Nature Centre
- 7 Peterson Cay National Park\*
- 8 Lucayan National Park\*
- 9 Walker's Cay National Park
- 10 Black Sound Cay National Reserve
- 11 Fowl Cays National Park
- 12 Pelican Cays Land & Sea Park
- 13 Tiloo Cay National Reserve
- 14 Abaco National Park
- 15 Primeval Forest National Park
- 16 Harrold & Wilson Ponds National Park
- 17 Bonefish Pond National Park
- 18 The Retreat
- 19 Exuma Cays Land & Sea Park
- 20 Moriah Harbour Cay National Park\*
- 21 Leon Levy Native Plant Preserve
- 22 Conception Island National Park
- 23 Southern Great Lake National Park
- 24 Pigeon Creek and Snow Bay National Park
- 25 Graham's Harbour Iguana & Seabird National Park
- 26 West Coast Marine Park
- 27 Green's Bay National Park
- 28 Great Hope House
- 29 Marine Farm
- 30 Little Inagua National Park
- 31 Union Creek Reserve
- 32 Inagua National Park

## Recently declared

- a) The Abaco Marls
- b) Cross Harbour
- c) East Abaco Creeks
- d) Bight of Acklins
- e) Andros Green Cay National Park
- f) Andros Joulter Cays
- g) North Shore –The Gap National Park
- h) East Grand Bahama National Park
- i) Booby Cay, Mayaguana
- j) Southeastern New Providence Marine Managed Area
- k) Perpoll Tract National Park
- l) Southeastern Bahamas Marine
- m) South Abaco Blue Holes National Park

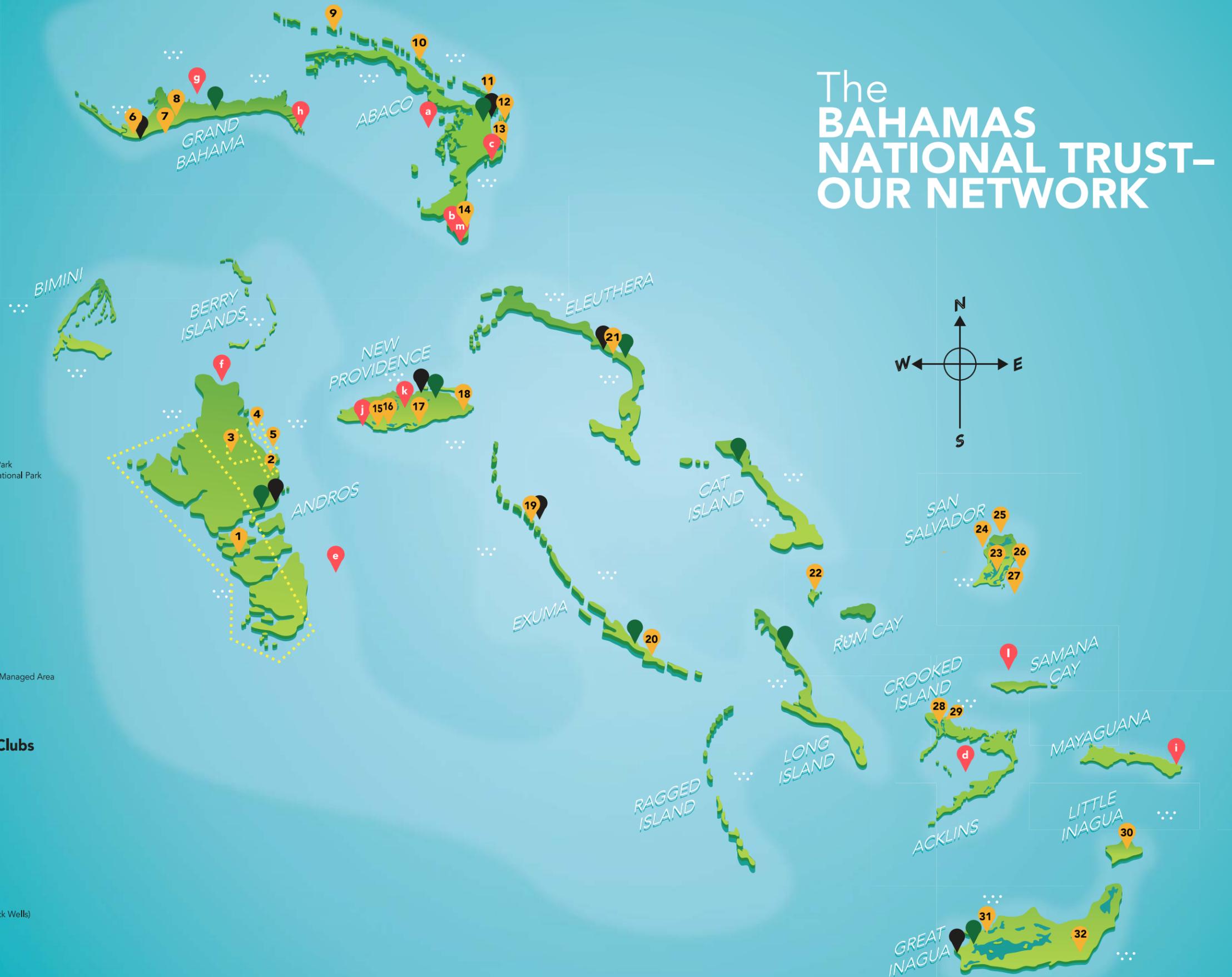
\* Recently expanded

## Islands with Discovery Clubs

- Abaco
- Andros
- Cat Island
- Eleuthera
- Exuma
- Grand Bahama
- Inagua
- Long Island
- New Providence

## BNT Offices

- Marsh Harbour, Abaco
- Freeport, Grand Bahama
- Nassau
- Exuma Cays Land & Sea Park (Warderick Wells)
- Andros (central)
- Eleuthera (central)
- Matthew Town, Inagua





# MANAGING UNIQUE SPACES

The majestic West Indian Flamingo in the Inagua National Park. Its rescue from the brink of extinction is one of the greatest conservation success stories of the 20th century.

Our goal is a world-class national park system that supports the most important Bahamian biodiversity and provides economic sustainability and climate resilience for people.

## Strategic Priorities

### Bringing people to parks

We will improve access to the 10 parks detailed in the following pages, making them easier to visit. These parks were chosen because they have the potential to be sustainable with the right investment. Over the next five years, as a part of this investment, we will expand their infrastructure, amenities and administration and implement management and development plans designed to safeguard the integrity of these sensitive resources against increased usage.

### Safeguarding our natural resources

We will strengthen our enforcement programme, by enacting park by-laws and policies, increasing staff, offering capacity building training, implementing innovative technology, procuring major equipment and partnering with national enforcement agencies.

### Maintaining special places

We will continue to maintain existing park assets and future infrastructural improvements allowing us to manage these special places and provide exemplary service to visitors.

## Our Impact





**OUR  
PRIORITY  
PARKS**

## The Retreat

**Target Completion 2018**

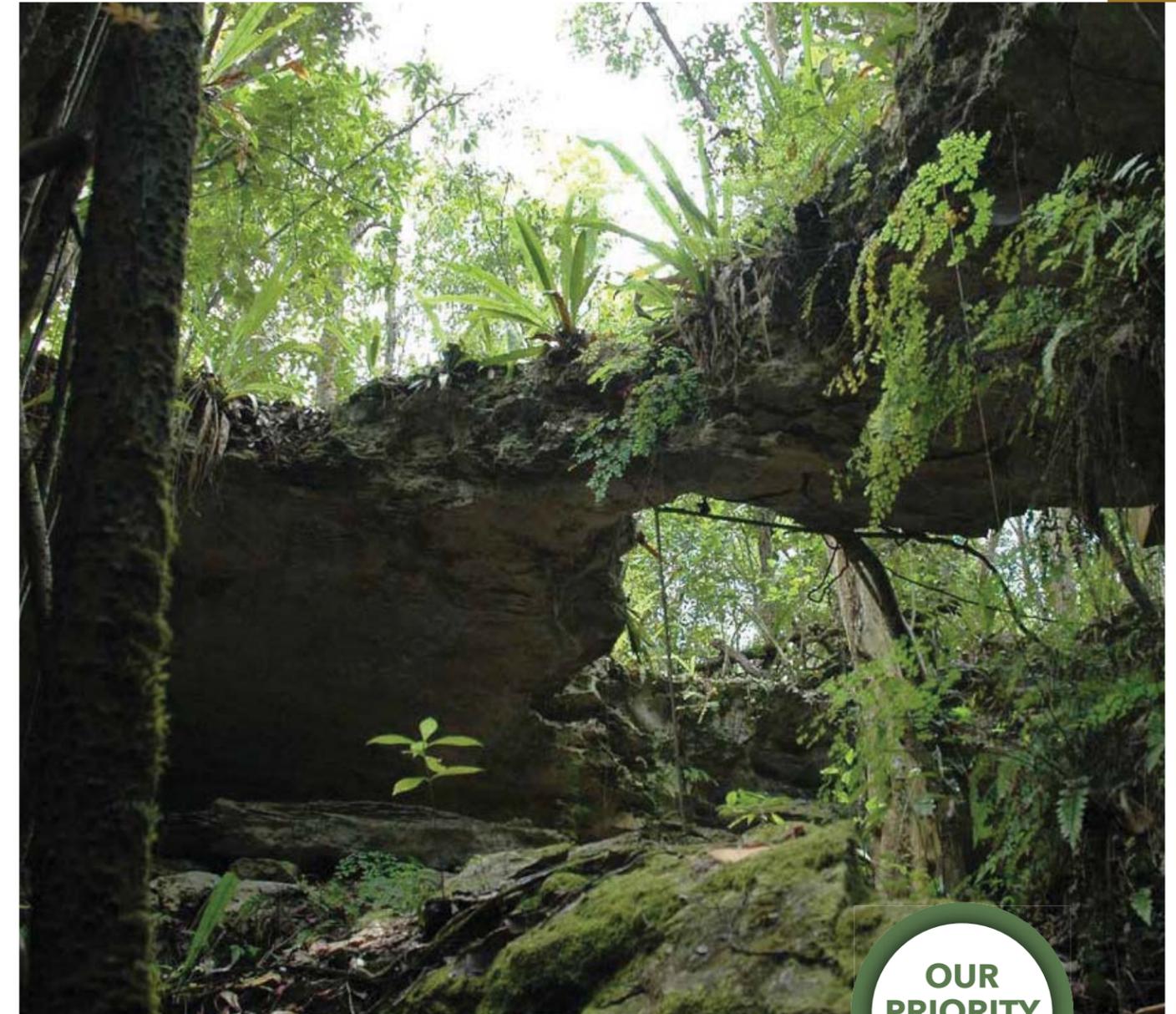
<b>Infrastructure Restoration</b>
<b>Signage</b>
<b>Entrance Improvements</b>
<b>Vehicles</b>
<b>Equipment/Chipper</b>
Investment needed - \$1.2 - \$1.5 million

Annual operating costs after expansion/upgrades - \$550,000

Established in 1985, the 11-acre Retreat is famous internationally for its unparalleled palm collection. Formerly a private home, it became the first national park on New Providence. Visitors can explore an authentic hardwood forest in a child-friendly atmosphere that has introduced thousands of students to the Bahamian environment.

**Jobs created after investment:**

- Chief Warden
- Senior Park Warden
- 3 Deputy Park Wardens
- Curator
- 4 Groundskeepers
- Visitor Centre Clerk



**OUR  
PRIORITY  
PARKS**

## Primeval Forest National Park

**Target Completion 2018**

Established in 2002, this 7.5-acre park is a remarkably undisturbed old-growth woodland representative of the early evergreen and hardwood forests of The Bahamas. This area of southwestern New Providence features dramatic sinkholes, with unique limestone caverns up to 50 feet long and 30 feet deep, and also supports a diverse collection of plants and animals.

**Jobs created after investment:**

- 2 Deputy Park Wardens
- Visitor Centre Clerk

This park is almost complete thanks to major investments in trails, signage, restrooms and a visitor centre. Additional needs include staff, a vehicle and a marketing plan.

**Annual operating costs: \$125,000**



**OUR  
PRIORITY  
PARKS**

## Bonefish Pond National Park

**Target Completion 2020**

<b>Visitor/Education Centre</b>
<b>Restrooms</b>
<b>Boardwalk (extension)</b>
<b>Demarcation</b>
<b>Management Plan</b>
<b>Vehicles</b>
<b>Small flats boat</b>
Investment needed - \$1 - \$1.1 million

Established in 2002, Bonefish Pond covers 1,235-acres of coastal wetland where students can study mangrove ecosystems and the important marine life they support. The park is suitable for recreational activities, which enterprising Bahamians can turn into entrepreneurial opportunities.

- Jobs created after investment:**
- Park Warden
  - 2 Deputy Park Wardens
  - Visitor Centre Clerk

Annual operating costs after expansion/upgrades - \$250,000



**OUR  
PRIORITY  
PARKS**

## Exuma Cays Land & Sea Park

**Target Completion 2019**

<b>New Visitor Centre &amp; Restrooms</b>
<b>Boardwalk (extension)</b>
<b>Demarcation</b>
<b>Multipurpose Building &amp; Workshop</b>
<b>Sustainable Utilities - Water &amp; Energy</b>
<b>Management Plan</b>
<b>Enforcement Programme with Drones</b>
<b>ATV Vehicles</b>
<b>New Park Warden Vessels</b>
Investment needed - \$2.5 - \$5.4 million

The ECLSP is the world's first land and sea park. Established in 1958, this 176-square mile sanctuary is famous for its pristine beauty and as an important habitat for sea turtles, sharks, rays, fish, as well as migratory and nesting seabirds. The rarest living creatures in the park, the blue-green reef-forming algae known as stromatolites, provide ancient records of life on earth, some dating back more than 3 billion years. In 1986, the BNT declared the park the first no-take reserve in the Caribbean. It now acts as a fisheries replenishment area with significant 'spill-over' of important species such as conch, spiny lobster and grouper.

- Jobs created after investment:**
- Chief Park Warden
  - Park Warden
  - 3 Deputy Park Wardens
  - Outreach Officer
  - Visitor Centre Clerk

Annual operating costs after expansion/upgrades - \$542,000



**OUR  
PRIORITY  
PARKS**

## Lucayan National Park

**Target Completion 2019**

<b>Visitor/Education Centre</b>
<b>Trails</b>
<b>Signage</b>
<b>Demarcation</b>
<b>Mooring Buoys</b>
<b>Lucayan Village</b>
<b>Vehicles</b>
<b>Boats</b>
Investment needed - \$1.4 - \$1.7 million

Established in 1982, this 40-acre park was expanded to include offshore marine areas in 2015. It now protects 1,937-acres of land and sea habitats. The park features one of the longest charted underwater cave systems in the world, an elevated walkway through the last intact and most productive mangrove wetland on Grand Bahama's southwest coast, the wide, breathtakingly beautiful Gold Rock beach showcasing the tallest sand dunes on the island and a wealth of flora and fauna. The park is internationally recognized as an Important Bird Area (IBA).

**Jobs created after investment:**

- 2 Park Wardens
- 2 Deputy Park Wardens
- Visitor Centre Clerk

Annual operating costs after expansion/upgrades - \$317,000



**OUR  
PRIORITY  
PARKS**

## Rand Nature Centre

**Target Completion 2020**

<b>Restrooms</b>
<b>Restore buildings</b>
<b>Signage &amp; Pathways</b>
<b>Vehicles</b>
Investment needed - \$1.3 - \$1.9 million

Established in 1992, the Rand Nature Centre comprises 100-acres of natural beauty near the heart of downtown Freeport, Grand Bahama. Trails wind through pine forest and native coppice, leading to a fresh water wildlife pond and native plant arboretum. The centre houses educational displays, an exhibit room, art gallery and gift shop. It is also home to a rehabilitated Bahama Parrot and several Bahamian boa constrictors. The Nature Centre is well known as a birding hot spot from October to May, when the resident bird population is supplemented by wintering northern songbirds.

Annual operating costs after expansion/upgrades - \$451,000

**Jobs created after investment:**

- 2 Park Wardens
- 4 Deputy Park Wardens
- Visitor Centre Clerk
- Education Officer



**OUR  
PRIORITY  
PARKS**

## Blue Holes National Park

**Target Completion 2021**

<b>Visitor/Education Centre</b>
<b>Trails</b>
<b>Signage</b>
<b>Campsite</b>
<b>Restrooms</b>
<b>Vehicles</b>
<b>Demarcation</b>
<b>Management Plan</b>
<b>Lookout Tower &amp; Viewing Platforms</b>
Investment needed - \$600,000 - \$1.4 million

Annual operating costs after expansion/upgrades - \$352,000

Established in 2002, this 40,000-acre park protects 30 blue holes, rich coppice and pine forest, as well as part of Andros' freshwater lens. Andros has the highest concentration of blue holes in the world. This vast expanse of underwater cave systems is home to many unusual cave fish and invertebrates, some not found anywhere else in the world.

**Jobs created after investment:**

- 1 Park Warden
- 3 Deputy Park Wardens
- Visitor Centre Clerk



**OUR  
PRIORITY  
PARKS**

## Abaco National Park

**Target Completion 2021**

<b>Visitor/Education Centre</b>
<b>Trails</b>
<b>Signage</b>
<b>Campsites</b>
<b>Restrooms</b>
<b>Vehicles</b>
Investment needed - \$1.4 - \$2.1 million

Annual operating costs after expansion/upgrades - \$330,000

The Abaco National Park was established in 1994 to protect the breeding habitat of the endangered Bahama Parrot. It is also an Important Bird Area (IBA), providing habitat for the White-crowned Pigeon and wintering neo-tropical warblers as well as the endemic Bahama Swallow, Bahama Warbler and Bahama Yellowthroat. This 22,500-acre park includes 5,000 acres of Caribbean pine forest and an extensive area of mixed broadleaf coppice.

**Jobs created after investment:**

- 1 Park Warden
- 3 Deputy Park Wardens
- Visitor Centre Clerk
- Education Officer
- Parks Experience Officer
- Security Staff



**OUR  
PRIORITY  
PARKS**

## Inagua National Park

**Target Completion 2022**

<b>Restore Camp Vernay</b>
<b>Trails</b>
<b>Signage</b>
<b>Management Plan</b>
<b>Vehicles</b>
<b>Boats</b>
Investment needed - \$1 - \$1.1 million

**Annual operating costs after expansion/upgrades - \$109,972**

Established in 1965, Inagua National Park is located on Great Inagua, the southernmost island in The Bahamas and encompasses 220,000-acres. The Park is home to one of the largest breeding colonies of West Indian Flamingos in this hemisphere. The national bird

of The Bahamas now numbers approximately 60,000, having made a 40-year journey back from the edge of extinction.

The success of the Inagua National Park has contributed to flamingo repopulation on Mayaguana, Acklins, Crooked Island, Long Island, and other Caribbean islands with connections noted on Cuba, Turks and Caicos and Grand Cayman. In 1997, the Inagua National Park was designated a RAMSAR wetland site of international importance, which is the first and currently only such designation in The Bahamas.

Infrastructure is needed to compliment nature tourism initiatives for the larger Inagua community, as the park was selected for the bird watching niche tourism market by the Ministry of Tourism.

**Jobs created after investment:**

- 2 Park Wardens
- 2 Deputy Park Wardens
- Visitor Centre Clerk



**OUR  
PRIORITY  
PARKS**

## Andros West Side National Park

**Target Completion 2022**

<b>Visitor/Education Centre</b>
<b>Demarcation</b>
<b>Mooring buoys</b>
<b>Vehicles</b>
<b>Boats</b>
Investment needed - \$730,000 - \$2.5 million

**Annual operating costs after expansion/upgrades - \$278,850**

Established in 2002 and later expanded in 2012, the park encompasses 1.5 million acres, and is the largest protected area in The Bahamas and the Western Caribbean region. It protects a range of hydrological conditions, from freshwater lenses within the interior uplands to the shallow seawater of the Great Bahama Bank. The mix of tidal flats and mangrove creeks in the park provides important nursery habitat for bonefish and important flats sportfish, and is reputedly the best flats fishing area in the world. This park plays a vital role in sustaining the nation's local and commercial fisheries market. Its healthy mangroves provide breeding and nursery areas for commercially important marine species, which replenish marine stocks throughout The Bahamas and the wider Caribbean.

**Jobs created after investment:**

- 1 Park Warden
- 4 Deputy Park Wardens
- Office Clerk



This red mangrove has succumbed to increased salinity in the pond on Inagua where it is rooted. An important part of BNT's work is to monitor such habitats to determine whether changes are the result of natural processes or misuse of the environment.

# BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

Our goal is a nationally and internationally recognised and respected science programme that supports the management of, and decision making for, national parks, protected areas and biodiversity.

## Strategic Priorities

**Ensuring functioning habitats**

We will ensure that we collect the necessary data from our national parks and surrounding areas to make informed decisions about expansion, management, restoration and climate adaptation needs.

**Protecting species in peril**

We will continue to support work that ensures appropriate conservation planning for the unique biodiversity of The Bahamas by conducting research, informing policy and implementing management plans.

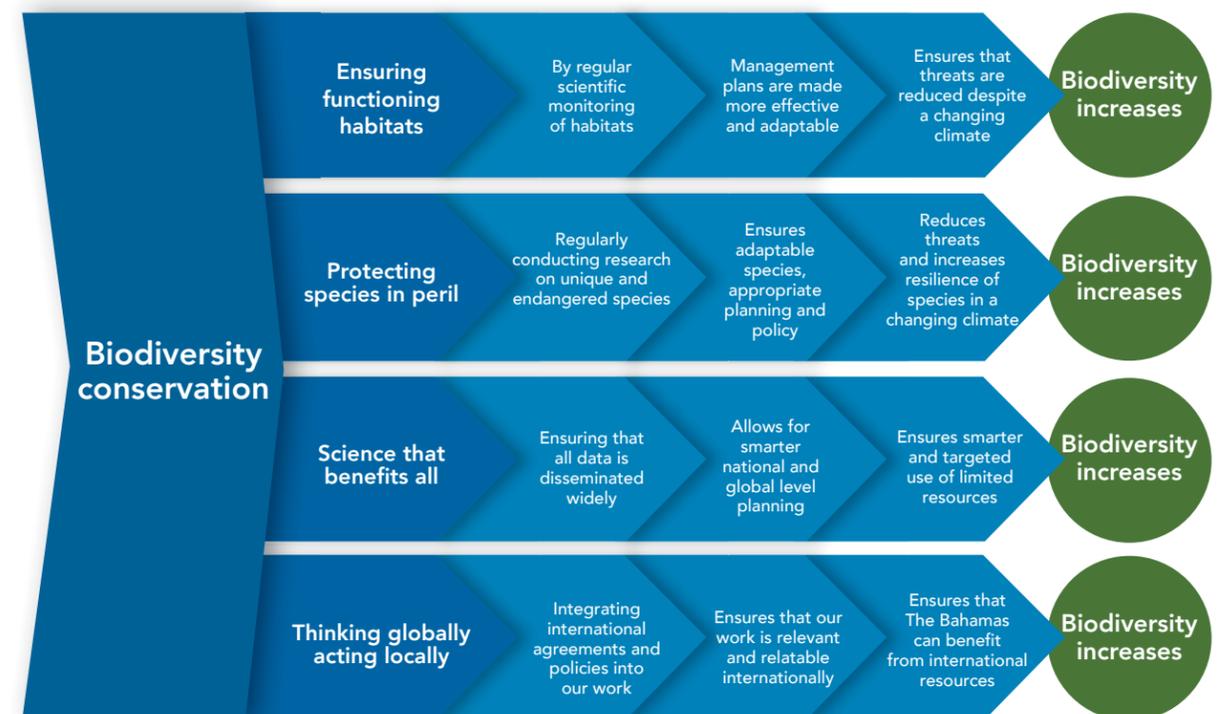
**Science that benefits all**

We will ensure that the data collected and lessons learned are made available to the public. This will be done through storing data, publishing reports, providing spaces for lectures and conferences.

**Thinking globally, acting locally**

We will integrate global strategies into our programme of work through the development of IUCN categorization for protected areas and national IUCN redlist of threatened species; through the integration of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation; the adoption of Sustainable Development Goals and the fulfilment of the Convention of Biological Diversity commitments.

## Our Impact



# ENSURING FUNCTIONING HABITATS

The regular monitoring of habitats using scientific methodology is a critical component of the BNT's national park management cycle, especially in the face of a changing climate. By spearheading the adoption of practices and policies that conserve, restore, and manage ecosystems to make them more resilient, we can protect communities from climate-related impacts and hazards, while delivering critical social, economic, and environmental benefits. The healthier ecosystems are, the better they can absorb climate change impacts, recover from serious events, and adapt to a new future.

We will address national park management needs and the threat of climate change by:

- Collaborating with the government and conservation organizations to identify and protect appropriate areas to safeguard Bahamian biodiversity and support communities
- Constantly monitoring national parks and their ecosystems to evaluate the current situation, detect changes and advise on adaptive management strategies
- Implementing invasive species removal and pollution control in national parks, preventing compromising development, regulating park activities, and restoring critical ecosystems
- Working with the Reverse the Decline of Coral Reefs Project and other partners to support new advances in coral restoration and facilitate the recovery of damaged coral reefs
- Adopting a hybridized approach to protect park infrastructure – using a combination of both man-made and living structures to increase the resilience of natural resources and built structures in the parks
- Influencing relevant policy to help reduce threats and build resiliency against climate change impacts, including advocating for an invasive species policy and a sand and rock mining policy

## REACHING THE GOAL

Annual budget range for maximum conservation impact  
**\$200K – \$800K**



The fast holding and pliable roots of mangroves offer great resilience to the effects of storm surge. By learning what we can from nature and restoring these living defenses to their full potential, the BNT is contributing to a more resilient Bahamas in the face of climate change.

# PROTECTING SPECIES IN PERIL

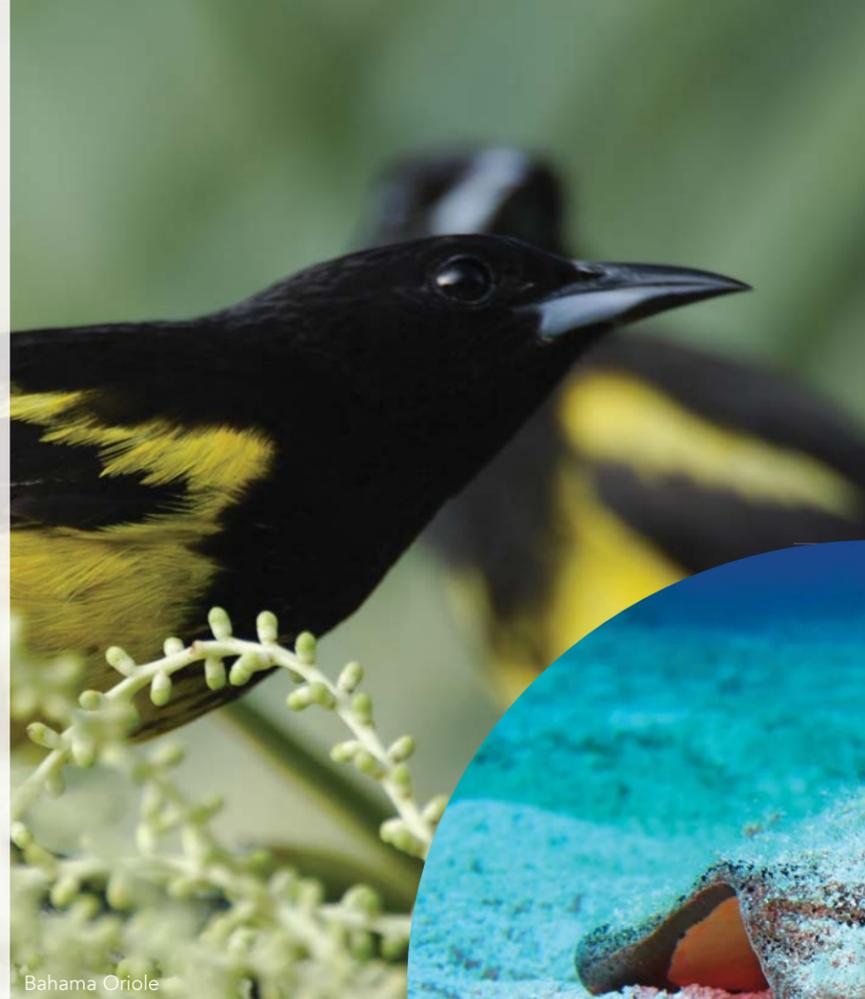
We will continue to support work that ensures appropriate conservation planning for the unique biodiversity of The Bahamas.

## Bahama Oriole

Found only on the island of Andros, the Bahama Oriole (*Icterus northropi*) is currently listed as critically endangered. Recent studies by Dr. Kevin Omland (University of Maryland, Baltimore County, UMBC) and the BNT suggest the population may be much larger than previously thought. There is still much to learn about its habitat requirements and the threats posed to it. The BNT will continue to work with UMBC to fill information gaps on the species, develop a conservation plan, inform policy and raise awareness on Andros.

## Conception Bank Silver Boa

The Conception Bank Silver boa (*Chilabothrus argentum*), was discovered in the Conception Island National Park by Dr. Robert Graham Reynolds in 2015. After genetic analysis, the Harvard University team led by Dr. Reynolds, confirmed it was a previously unknown species. We will continue to support Dr Reynolds' work by conducting population assessments and research to understand the boa's habitat requirements and potential threats. The aim is to develop a species conservation plan which we will incorporate into the management plan for the Conception Island National Park.



Bahama Oriole



Conception Bank Silver Boa



Queen Conch



Piping Plover



Bahamian Rock Iguana

## Piping Plover

Migratory shore birds like the Piping Plover rely on healthy coastlines along their migratory route. Our Piping Plover work with the National Audubon Society led to the protection of the Joulter Cays, an important wintering habitat for these birds. We will continue to ensure that the Piping Plover and other shore birds have healthy stopover and wintering coastal habitats through regular monitoring, influencing policy, and conducting climate-smart habitat management. These actions will both stabilize and enhance the populations of at least 16 rare species, while simultaneously benefiting 375 other species that rely on similar habitats.

## Bahamian Rock Iguana

The Bahamas has three species and several sub-species of Bahamian Rock iguana populations scattered across the archipelago that are all either endangered or critically endangered. They have suffered due to: habitat loss, the introduction of predators, illegal hunting, increased contact with tourists and poaching for the illicit pet trade. We will continue to collaborate with the Shedd Aquarium and Island Conservation to research this species, reduce threats through policy and habitat management, and encourage the use of best practices when visiting iguana populated islands.

## Queen Conch

This national icon is of grave conservation concern. Due to inappropriate legislation, insufficient enforcement of regulations, and a lack of data, this species is in serious decline. Immediate action is needed. We will continue to work with partners to ensure that the necessary research is conducted to lobby for scientifically informed regulations, increase capacity for enforcement, and raise awareness of the plight of the species.

## REACHING THE GOAL

Annual budget range for maximum conservation impact

**\$250K – \$500K**



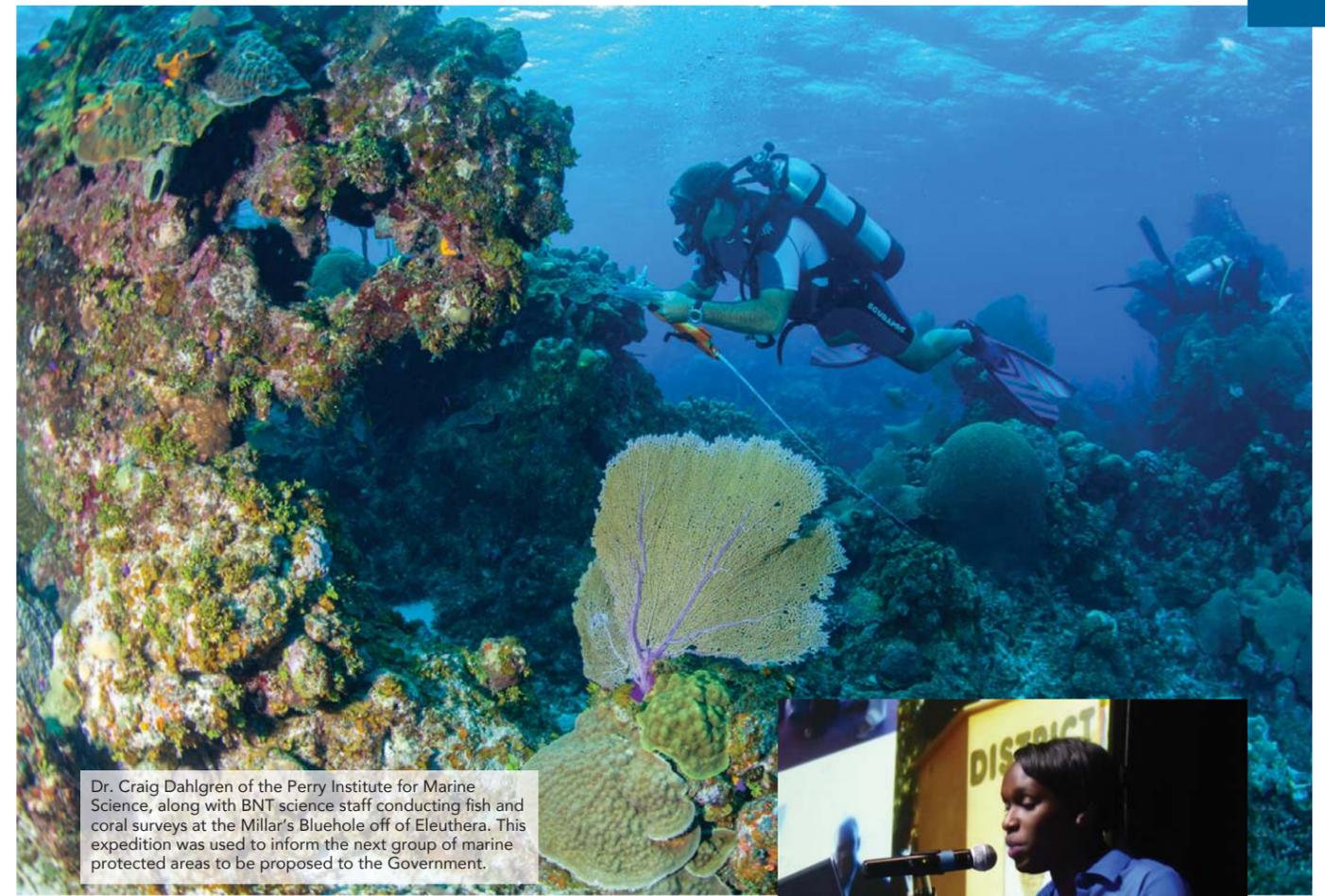
This aesthetic freshwater wetland exhibit at the Leon Levy Native Plant Preserve showcases a unique collection of freshwater plants from around The Bahamas. The Preserve's plant conservation work, at left, includes the growing of rare and endangered Bahamian plants in the Lath house, such as these endemic *Agave indagatorium* used for restoration projects and school beautification programmes.

## THINKING GLOBALLY, ACTING LOCALLY

The Bahamas National Trust continues to adopt global conservation strategies to benefit the Bahamian environment and meet global objectives. We are aligning our protected areas with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) categories to be consistent with the rest of the world; compiling an endangered species list to create a national level IUCN redlist; incorporating the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals; and working to meet the requirements under the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC).

The GSPC is an agreement to which The Bahamas is a signatory under the Convention of Biological Diversity. This agreement aims to ensure the long-term

conservation of plant diversity. Thanks to the expansion of the national park system the BNT has protected 34 percent of our endemic plant species exceeding the requirements outlined under the agreement. Over the next five years we will work to reach the GSPC goal of protecting 75 percent of our most important endemic plants to preserve diversity. Through our work at the Leon Levy Native Plant Preserve, we will achieve the remaining GSPC targets. These include, creating a searchable, online, scientific catalogue describing 50 percent of all vascular plant species; promoting indigenous and local knowledge through the Preserve's medicinal plant beds, economic botany trails and edible history displays; and executing a suite of botany educational programmes.



Dr. Craig Dahlgren of the Perry Institute for Marine Science, along with BNT science staff conducting fish and coral surveys at the Millar's Bluehole off of Eleuthera. This expedition was used to inform the next group of marine protected areas to be proposed to the Government.

## SCIENCE THAT BENEFITS ALL

We are committed to making our research available to the scientific community, students, teachers, conservation practitioners, resource managers and the general public. This will be done through publishing papers and technical documents, presenting at conferences and hosting the Bahamas Natural History Conference (BNHC).

The first Bahamas Natural History Conference was held in March 2013 under the theme, "Highlighting the Importance of Research, Conservation, and Environmental Stewardship". Featuring over 100 presenters, it attracted local and international researchers, educators, natural resource managers, students, and naturalists. The conference created a forum to encourage interdisciplinary research and conservation in The Bahamas. It marked the beginning of a more direct dialogue between the scientific community and national decision-makers. BNHC remains the only Bahamian natural history conference on New Providence and it inspires new avenues of research and cooperation across disciplines while highlighting the benefits of research.

### REACHING THE GOAL

Annual budget range for maximum conservation impact  
**\$50K – \$100K**



Seeing mangroves up close in a tidal creek in Bonefish Pond National Park, is an experience offered through our education programmes.

# ENGAGING EDUCATION

Education programme participants will have multiple opportunities to participate in transformational and engaging learning experiences that promote stewardship. Our national parks will act as the optimal classroom for anyone wanting to learn about nature.

### Strategic Priorities

**Touching the lives of Bahamian youth**

We will touch the lives of Bahamian youth by exposing them to programmes that facilitate personal growth, promote critical thinking and foster a love of nature.

**Outdoor classrooms**

We will immerse students in nature using national parks as outdoor classrooms that provide experiential learning.

**Building environmental stewards**

We will provide meaningful and mutually beneficial volunteer opportunities that help people make personal connections to park resources and increase stewardship.

### Our Impact





## TOUCHING THE LIVES OF BAHAMIAN YOUTH

“My first interaction with the BNT was during a high school career fair at Kendal G.L. Isaacs Gymnasium where it had been promoting its 2015 EcoCamp. The experience sounded like a dream vacation to me - a week long, all-expenses-paid trip on Andros with the ocean in your backyard! Fascinated with the idea, I returned to the BNT’s table seven times during that event to ensure the lady had marked repeated asterisks next to my name to indicate how interested I was. Fast forward, I was accepted, attended the camp and to this day, it’s still the best week I have ever had. I have had countless wonderful opportunities with the BNT since eco-camp, but two that stand out to me are the 2016 Bahamas Natural History Conference where I volunteered and the Sea Turtle Research Internship, which allowed me to tag turtles and go into communities in the Abacos.

The Navigators programme was started at my school some time later, and of course I was the first person to officially join. In summer 2016 the Navigators programme provided me an opportunity to work with the BNT through a summer student employment program and I haven’t left since. During the summer internship I was tasked with media work for Conchervation, the conch conservation campaign. That landed me with a camera in my hand and I was a natural with it! My creativity and willingness to learn eventually made me the organization’s “media whiz kid”.

Following the internship I volunteered for a few weeks. Through my connection with the BNT, I was able to join the Youth Environment Corps Programme a few months later and that’s where I started my ‘real’ BNT journey.

I have acquired a ton of skills and proficiencies at the Bahamas National Trust and to top it off, I have been exposed to a great network of people and wonderful opportunities. I can’t wait to see how my journey will continue. Of course, visiting all the major Bahama Islands to create stories of conservation is at the top of my Wish List! //

**-Elijah Sands, Apprentice**

### REACHING THE GOAL

Annual budget range for maximum conservation impact

**\$700K – \$1M**

A **BioBlitz** is an event that focuses on finding and identifying as many species as possible in a specific area over a short period of time. Scientists and volunteers work to get an overall count of the plants, animals, fungi, and other organisms that live in a place.



Every year thousands of BNT volunteers give their time to national parks. Here a volunteer supports mangrove restoration efforts in Bonefish Pond National Park.

## BUILDING STEWARDSHIP

The BNT has always recognized volunteers as our conservation ambassadors. From our inception they have played a significant role in shaping our organization and achieving our mission. Volunteers contribute new ideas and ways of doing things and they connect with others in their communities to share our conservation stories. Our volunteer initiatives have yielded important information on internationally endangered species such as the Piping Plover, uncovered the occurrences of new species such as the Greater Black-backed Gull and recorded the loss of species on certain islands.

Over the next five years we will continue to run volunteer programmes, like our Citizen Science Programme, which allow for greater public participation in national park management. Our parks, science and education departments will collaborate to determine monitoring gaps and needs for our national parks, build a digital platform for data collection and train volunteers. Under the direction of scientists and researchers, people of varying expertise will be able to assist in our first BioBlitz. Volunteers will also assist with wildlife-monitoring initiatives, database management, mangrove restoration and invasive species removal projects. We will continue to work with citizen scientists to implement the annual Christmas Bird Count (National Audubon Society), Caribbean Waterbird Census (Birds Caribbean) and Bahamas Shorebird Surveys (US Fish and Wildlife Service). The Navigators, our Discovery Club high school level, and clubs at tertiary institutions will provide opportunities for increased scientific knowledge among young Bahamians, giving them skills to assist in marine and terrestrial resource management.

As citizen science becomes better integrated into our management of national parks, we will refine best practices and expand the scope of our programmes to engage at least 3,000 people in the next five years. We intend to capitalize on the internet and smart technology to motivate participation by park users, which will allow more people to make meaningful connections to national parks and inspire new stewards, supporters and users.

### REACHING THE GOAL

Annual budget range for maximum conservation impact  
**\$50K – \$100K**

## OUTDOOR CLASSROOMS

Using national parks as outdoor classrooms we will host at least 100,000 participants in our field trip programme over the next five years. By using technology, visitors will be encouraged to engage in self-guided learning, providing opportunities for them to co-create knowledge about park resources by telling their stories and sharing the meanings that they discover in those unique spaces. We will also train teachers to use national parks as outdoor classrooms, leveraging their ability to deliver the multiplier effect on the number of students who visit and connect with national parks.

In the Discovery Club, our year-long outreach programme, we will continue to develop young stewards through environmental themed learning units that improve understanding of our natural surroundings and national park management. Members will complete indoor and outdoor classroom sessions to earn badges. Through innovative teaching techniques, traditional games and mentors who serve as environmental influencers, young people in our school and community-based clubs will develop a deeper appreciation for all that surrounds them in the natural world.

Through increased training workshops and engagement with teachers and community leaders the BNT aims to expand the Discovery Club programme by 48 percent over the next five years to achieve our goal of 100 clubs spread across the archipelago. The combination of these 100 Discovery Clubs, our national parks and offices will make the BNT's country-wide network unparalleled in size, reach, scale, influence and diversity in The Bahamas. A 100-club operation will ensure better success for Discovery Club in building a regiment of stewards and advocates for the environment and national parks across the length and breadth of the Bahamas. With that, we continue our legacy of building lives to build our nation.

### REACHING THE GOAL

Annual budget range for maximum conservation impact  
**\$100K – \$150K**



Annually our education programmes touch the lives of thousands of young people like this student visiting Lucayan National Park with his class.



Nature is deceptive; even this seemingly harsh landscape in the Inagua National Park still provides a critical habitat for the iconic West Indian Flamingo.

# INVESTING IN NATURE

For our national park system and organization to grow, we must ensure availability of the necessary resources. These include vital funding, capital, and the time, energy and talents of a committed membership and volunteer base. We want to encourage our supporters to invest in nature with us, by whatever means they can.

## Strategic Priorities

- Immersing donors in our work** Our donors are our partners in conservation. They positively impact the Bahamian environment through our work. We will do a better job of sharing that impact with them, connecting them to their national parks
- Members Matter** As the saying goes, membership has its privileges. Our goal is to work harder to make our members feel special.
- People for Parks** We created People for Parks to connect with people. The Bahamas National Trust wants to engage the wider community in the important and impactful work that we do.
- Capital for conservation** We will maximize existing and unlock new sources of capital to fund our work.

## Our Impact



## Immersing Donors in Our Work

As a nonprofit organization, every goal that we achieve, is through the support of our members and donors. Our objective is to maintain a mature national park system that provides the palpable community benefits people should enjoy from these special places. They include opportunities for recreation and entrepreneurship, as well as support for tourism and education. We will conduct meaningful science to support our national parks and through our education programmes we will touch the lives of young people in meaningful ways. The BNT will continue to draw strength from its donors and members to help us reach our goals and we in turn will keep them immersed in what we accomplish together.

## Members Matter

We will employ several strategies to show our appreciation to our members. These include:

- Hosting regular member appreciation events
- Expanding our member discount programme
- Strengthening our reciprocity agreements with participating national trusts, museums and zoos around the world.

Through the above approaches, and other strategies within our Members Matter campaign, we will endeavour to grow our membership to 5,000 by the end 2020.

## People for Parks

It is our belief that the more people learn about the breathtaking national park system that we manage for their benefit, the more they will want to become involved. As BNT ambassadors, People for Parks participants will help us build bridges to the community that will support the BNT's work in national parks by:

- Deepening the involvement of corporate Bahamas
- Increasing membership
- Increasing the volunteer base
- Raising the public profile of the BNT

The People for Parks programme will also provide a recruiting ground for the next generation of volunteer leadership of the BNT. Many of our long-standing and committed volunteer leaders are looking to step away from active leadership of the organization. Our People for Parks programme will help us to identify and engage with a new group of conservation leaders who can play a key role in the BNT of the future.

From their very first step, through their entire seventy year lifespan, flamingos thrive in our national parks.



## Capital for Conservation

We will continue to invest in nature by pursuing appropriate strategic opportunities, cultivating partnerships and seeking beneficial and conservation friendly commercial relationships to support national parks. Our strategies will include:

### Concessions

As the expansion of our 10 priority parks progresses, we will enter into concessionary arrangements for the operation of cafés and beverage depots. We will engage nature tour operators to enhance the visitor experience. We will provide entrepreneurial opportunities for local communities.

### An Innovative approach to merchandising

We intend to make disciplined brand and growth investments during the next five years with a view to:

- Merchandise maximization. We will focus on maximizing the revenue we generate through the sale of branded merchandise by expanding our offering to include park specific products and innovative apparel designs featuring improved graphics.
- Introducing new and exciting product lines to our gift shops.
- Ensuring all our products are environmentally responsible.
- Supporting, as far as possible, local arts, crafts and products.

### Maximizing Revenue Generation

We will increase revenue by improving park services and adding infrastructure to our parks. We will strengthen our fee collection efforts and our internal controls to ensure maximum cash collection from park user fees, mooring and anchorage fees, gift shop sales and concession arrangements.

### Managing Costs

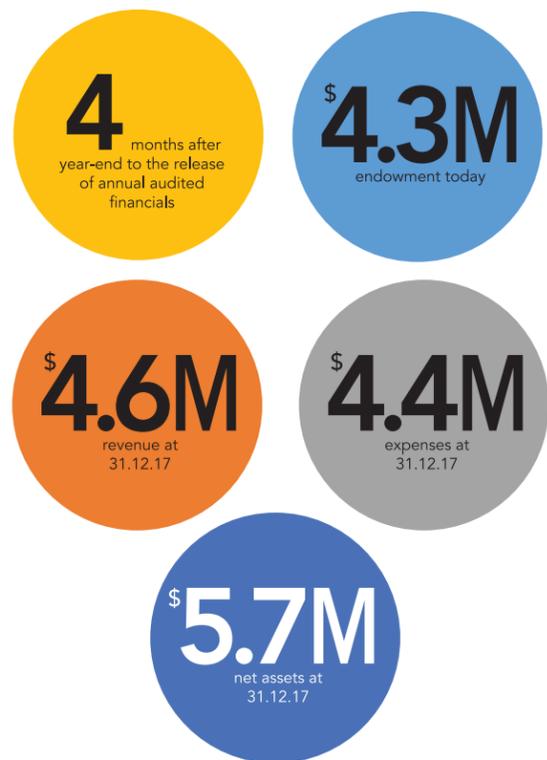
Over the next five years we will implement stronger cost management procedures to drive organization-wide efficiency through:

- A more aggressive focus on productivity, challenging every dollar we spend across our business centre and operating units.
- Continued staff training including a focus on enforcement training for park wardens.
- Acquisition of grant specific software for more efficient implementation, tracking and reporting of grants.

# FINANCIAL FITNESS

Financial transparency and accountability continue to be important to the BNT. Our goal is to assure our donors and partners that we are fiscally responsible.

## BY THE NUMBERS



## HOW WE PLAN TO GROW

The key pillars of our financial strategy are to:

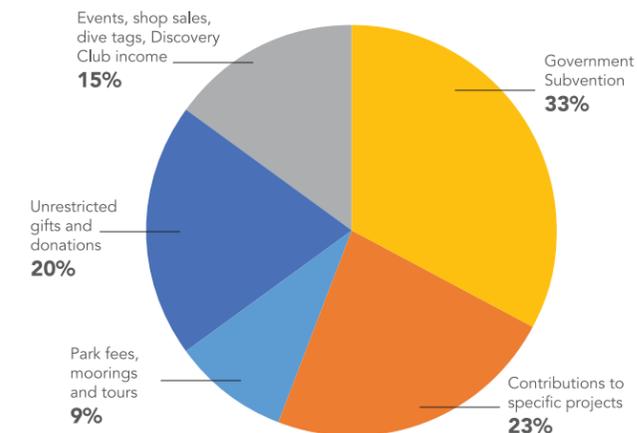
- Build long-term sustainability in the parks by increasing the revenue that they generate. As outlined previously, we will do this by investing in visitor centres, broadening our user fees, and entering into concession agreements for services in the parks, starting with the ten priority parks. As the parks generate more income, our cash outflows will include significant expenditures on fixed assets as we bring the parks on stream between 2018 and 2022.

Sunset on the flats of the Westside National Park, Andros. These shallow water environments are often overlooked but are extremely productive, supporting many of our Bahamian fisheries, including the bonefishing industry.

- Build fundraising capacity through our Advancement Committee. This volunteer leadership committee will work as a part of our fundraising frontline to help us secure the investments needed in our priority parks. They will also focus on the longer-term goal of building our Heritage Fund to an amount that can generate \$7-10 million in annual income.
- Secure more grant funding to support special projects.

A laser focus on this strategy will help us grow our net income over the next five years from \$4.5 million (2017) to \$7.8 million (2022).

## KEY REVENUE SOURCES



## Strategic Financial Goals 2018-2022



**\$4.3M**  
endowment NOW

LONG-TERM  
TARGET

**\$100M**  
endowment  
FOR SUSTAINABILITY



# PARK STORIES

 BNT is an important partner to Friends of the Environment as we collaborate efforts to promote and protect Abaco's National Parks. If we didn't conserve our diversity of ecosystems, Bahamians would lose out on the resources and experiences that are key to our culture and livelihoods. FRIENDS is proud to partner with BNT on helping to make sure that these valuable areas are set aside for future use and we look forward to planning for effective management of the Abaco parks.  
**Cha Boyce,**  
 Executive Director Friends of the Environment

As you approach any pond in The Bahamas you will often hear the characteristic alarm from a Common Gallinule, alerting their peers and allies to pending danger. Likewise, the BNT continues to work on sharing the stories from our work to bring awareness to key biodiversity issues and gain support for these special places in the country.

Constant communication with the community, our stakeholders and donors is key to keeping them engaged in our work.

## Strategic Priorities

### Sharing our impact

We are the voice of the national parks system of The Bahamas. Our goal is to tell people about these unique spaces, the value they bring to their lives today and the benefits they hold for their tomorrow. We will use all types of communication media to spread this message.

### Inspiring investment in natural capital

Our goal is to inspire people to support national parks by telling them stories about their history, their beauty, the wild life they protect and the dedicated staff who work in service of them. We also want to showcase the philanthropists who support us.

### Celebrating conservation leadership

The Bahamian conservation community includes some of the brightest minds and dedicated environmentalists in the field. Our goal is to celebrate their contributions and broadcast their efforts.

## Our Impact



# THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS

“Cross-sector partnerships are more important than ever to help protect the natural resources that fuel our prosperity and sustain our planet.”  
–World Wildlife Fund

Coming together to develop solutions to shared challenges, creating consensus around sustainability standards and sharing information have the potential to make lasting impact on resource scarcity, climate change and national park management.

The BNT realizes and embraces the need to establish cross-sector partnerships in order to deliver the ambitious goals of our 2018 – 2022. Emphasis will be placed on strengthening existing partnerships and developing new collaborations with partners that share concern for the environment and value the biodiversity of The Bahamas.

We recognize and thank our partners with a view to future collaborations:

Abaco Beach Resort  
ALIV  
American Bird Conservancy  
Aquacat Cruises  
Archie Carr Center for Sea Turtle Research  
Asa H Pritchard Ltd  
Atlantis Resort  
BahaMar  
Bahamas Waste  
Bahamas Hot Mix  
Bahamas Wholesale Agencies  
Bahamas Ferries  
Baker’s Bay  
BirdLife International  
BREEF  
Breezes Resort Bahamas  
Bristol Wines and Spirits

Bahamian Brewery  
Bonefish and Tarpon Trust  
BTC  
Cable Cares Foundation  
CANARI  
Caribbean Bottling Company  
Colina  
Commonwealth Bank  
Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF)  
Department of Forestry  
Department of Marine Resources  
Eugene Dupuch Law School  
Freeport Harbour Company  
Friends of the Environment  
Global Environmental Fund (GEF)  
Global Parks  
Grand Bahama Airport Company  
Grand Bahama Port Authority  
Inter-American Development Bank

International Field Studies (FORFAR)  
IUCN  
Kamalame Cay  
KPMG  
Lary Foundation  
Leon Levy Foundation  
Living Oceans Foundation  
Lyford Cay Foundation  
MacTaggart III Fund  
Ministry of Education  
Ministry of Tourism & Aviation  
Maillis and Maillis  
Moore Bahamas Foundation  
Morton Bahamas Ltd.  
National Audubon Society  
Oceans 5  
Perry Institute of Marine Science  
RBC Foundation  
Royal Bahamas Defence Force  
Sandals Foundation  
Sandyport Resort

San Salvador Living Jewels  
Sagoma Construction  
Scotiabank  
Stuarts Cove’s  
Summit Insurance  
The BEST Commission  
The Government of The Bahamas  
TDG Architects  
The Nature Conservancy  
The PEW Charitable Trusts  
The Shedd Aquarium  
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)  
University of Maryland  
University of The Bahamas  
University of Maryland - Omland Lab  
US Fish and Wildlife Service  
US National Park Service  
Waite Foundation



These young flamingos will soon take flight. Morton Bahamas’ partnership with, and support of, the Inagua National Park will help to ensure that they soar.

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## **The Retreat**

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Tel: 242 393 1317

## **Primeval Forest National Park**

Hillside Place  
Nassau, Bahamas  
Tel: 242 -362- 6794

## **Abaco National Park**

Marsh Harbour, Abaco, Bahamas  
Tel: 242 367 6310  
Fax: 242 367 6309

## **Andros BNT Office**

Staniard Creek,  
Central Andros  
Tel: 242-368-2221

## **Exuma Cays Land & Sea Park**

Warderick Wells, Exuma, Bahamas  
Park Office: 242 601 7438  
Park Administrator: 242 359 0124

## **Inagua National Park**

Matthew Town, Inagua, Bahamas  
Tel: 242 339 2125  
Fax: 242 339 2123

## **Leon Levy Native Plant Preserve**

Banks Road, Governor's Harbour  
Eleuthera, Bahamas  
Tel: 242 332 3831

## **Lucayan National Park**

Freeport, Grand Bahama, Bahamas  
Tel: 242 353 4149

## **Rand Nature Centre**

Freeport, Grand Bahama, Bahamas  
Tel: 242 352 5438  
Fax: 242 351 4192

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