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PRESS RELEASE

GOB Signs More Protected Areas Co-Management Agreements

Belmopan. October 6, 2023.

Today, the Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management and some of its conservation partners signed agreements to enter formal public-private partnerships (or co-management) for a few protected areas across the National Protected Areas System (NPAS).

The ministry, on behalf of the Government of Belize, signed co-management agreements with:

- Steadfast Tourism and Conservation Association - Billy Barquedier National Park
- Hummingbird Environmental Tour Guide Association - Five Blues Lake National Park
- Gales Point Wildlife Sanctuary Management Committee - Gales Point Wildlife Sanctuary
- Friends of Swallow Caye - Swallow Caye Wildlife Sanctuary

The formalization of co-management is accomplished through the parties entering into the agreements. These agreements are site-based and entail the necessary scope, coverage, and commitments to comprehensively address gaps related to financial accountability and transparency, reporting and data availability. These agreements allow for greater collaboration between the government and its conservation partners and endeavour to enhance governance of the NPAS for the benefit of Belizeans. The development of the agreement was led by the National Biodiversity Office (NBiO) under the ministry, which has now entered into agreements for 21 protected areas with its various co-managers.

Hon. Orlando Habet, Minister of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management, spoke on the importance of partnerships in achieving shared goals, as highlighted in the Sustainable Development Goal 17. Emphasizing the importance of all parties working together for advancements, Minister Habet stated, “The government has its role to play, and in this same regard, the community also has its role to play.”

Marcial Alamina, president of Friends of Swallow Caye stated that “the true value of this agreement lies ahead of us in our united efforts to get the best work done as we protect our flagship signal species, the world-renowned manatees in their natural habitat. Together, we thereby contribute to the optimum performance of the cycles of nature for the benefit of all.”

Sherman Cawich, park manager from the Hummingbird Environmental Tour Guide Association, expressed the organization’s honour in renewing its commitment to managing the Five Blues Lake National Park.

The ministry and NBiO continue to implement these initiatives to strengthen the governance, management effectiveness and financial sustainability of the NPAS. These initiatives include launching the Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool, the Biodiversity Impact and Investment Tracking Tool, and business and investment training, among others.

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