



2012

ANNUAL REPORT



Protected Areas Commission

National Park, Thomas Lands, Georgetown, Guyana

December 2012

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

The submission of this, the first annual report of the Protected Areas Commission, is a significant moment for Guyana. It represents the latest step in a long history stretching back to 1929 and the creation of the Kaieteur National Park, which was one of the first protected areas in this region.

Since then, Guyana has made steady progress in conservation and protected area development. Key accomplishments have been the establishment of the Iwokrama International Centre in 1996, the signing of the Guyana Protected Areas System Project in 2004, and the creation of the community owned conservation area at Konashen in 2006. These achievements ultimately paved the way for the landmark Protected Areas Act of 2011, which was a watershed moment for Protected Areas in Guyana. For the first time, Guyana has in place a national legislative framework that allowed for the establishment, management and growth of an effective system of protected areas.

The passage of the Act was followed by the legal establishment of two new protected areas in the Kanuku Mountains and Shell Beach. These areas join the existing Kaieteur National Park and Iwokrama Rainforest Reserve, and the Community Owned Conservation Area at Konashen, which together account for approximately 8.6% of Guyana's landmass. The system also includes the National Park, Zoological Park and the Botanical Gardens. This puts us on course for achieving the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity target of having at least 17 per cent of our land and inland water under some form of protection by 2020.

With the Act in place, 2012 saw the appointment of the Protected Areas Commission (PAC) Board, recruitment of staff members, establishment of the PAC office and finally the opening the Commission's doors in November of 2012. With the PAC only becoming operational in 2012, our focus, as outlined in this report was on operationalizing the legal and institutional framework, raising awareness in communities on the new legislation and the work of the PAC, and preparing management plans for the areas within the National Protected Areas System.

Achieving this progress would not have been possible without a number of partners that over the years have consistently supported protected areas work in Guyana. These partners include the Government of Germany, Conservation International (CI), World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF), Flora and Fauna International (FFI) and the Guyana Marine Turtle Society (GMTCS), just to name a few. Special appreciation must also be expressed to the Environmental Protection Agency for their years of stewardship in Guyana's biodiversity conservation and protected areas development. The PAC is now able to use this solid foundation to create new partnerships, such as the recently signed MoU with Panthera and future collaborations with the private sector and corporate groups.

In 2013, important areas of focus will be the rehabilitation of the National Park, Zoological Park and the Botanical Gardens under the Three Parks Initiative, facilitating the creation of the National Protected Areas Trust Fund, developing a strategic plan for the PAC, a systems plan for the protected areas system, management plans for individual protected areas, and establishing a field presence in these protected areas. We will also continue to develop and strengthen partnerships with the local communities, the private sector, NGOs and other important stakeholders in-country and overseas.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the PAC and its staff for their hard work in helping us to get here and I look forward to even greater progress in 2013.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an overview of the Protected Areas Commission (PAC) 2012 programme of work and identifies key focal areas for 2013. The PAC is mandated to prepare an annual report under section 17 (1) of the Protected Areas Act of 2011 (hereafter the Act). The landmark Act of 2011 (hereafter the Act) established the Protected Areas Commission (PAC), and the National Protected Areas System.

The Board of Directors of the PAC was appointed in February 2012, followed by the appointment of the Commissioner in July, and finally the recruitment of the full staff component of five officers by November 12, 2013.

The National Parks Commission building was identified to house the offices of the PAC and was refurbished and extended in order to accommodate staff of the PAC. A public competition was launched to solicit designs for the PAC's logo. Several concepts were received and evaluated, with the Board identifying the winning entry.

The PAC collaborated with the EPA on the realization of the Guyana Protected Areas System (GPAS) Phase II project which is supported by the Government of Germany, represented by the KfW. This Project has already facilitated the setting-up of the PAC's temporary offices, and will fund the expansion of the National Parks Commission building to serve as the permanent location of the PAC.

Draft Management Plans for Kaieteur National Park were reviewed and the Board provided comments for the National Parks Commission in order to facilitate the finalisation of the documents. Additionally, a sensitization program on the Protected Areas Act for the hinterland communities was initiated in the Kanuku Mountains. The first draft of Terms of Reference was prepared for the development of a strategic plan. Work on preparation of a System Plan was initiated. An extensive plan for the rehabilitation and development of the National Park, Botanical Gardens and Zoological Park was also developed.

The 2013 Budget and Work plan, including a budget description and programme performance statement, were prepared and submitted to the MNRE. Moving from 2012 into 2013 and beyond, the focus of the PAC will shift from centralized administrative and financial arrangements to development of policy and ensuring a presence on the ground in each of the protected areas as well as addressing the establishment of management structures at the site level.

ACRONYMS USED

EPA	Environment Protection Agency
GPAS	Guyana Protected Area System
KCOPA	Kanashen Community Owned Protected Area
KfW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (Reconstruction credit institute)
KMCRG	Kanuku Mountains Community Representative Group
KMPA	Kanuku Mountains Protected Area
MNRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
NPAS	National Protected Area System
NPC	National Parks Commission
PA Act / Act	Protected Area Act 2011
PAC	Protected Areas Commission
SBPA	Shell Beach Protected Area

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SECTION 1: BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The landmark Protected Areas Act of 2011 (hereafter the Act) established the Protected Areas Commission (PAC), and the National Protected Areas System. The PAC is a body corporate responsible for establishing, managing, maintaining, promoting and expanding the national protected areas system (NPAS). Under this mandate, the PAC is tasked with monitoring and regulating activities and the use of resources within protected areas; preparing, developing and effectively implementing management plans; providing support and advice to Amerindian Villages to enable them to develop Amerindian PAs; and promoting public involvement in these processes.

1.2 SCOPE OF THIS REPORT

This report provides an overview of the PAC's 2012 programme of work and identifies key focal areas for 2013. The overall objectives of this report are:

- To provide an update on the progress and achievements of the PAC's activities in 2012.
- To provide a synopsis of the upcoming activities in the year 2013
- To receive a feedback on the performance of the Commission

SECTION 2: OVERVIEW OF ACHIEVEMENTS

2.1 ADMINISTRATION

2.1.1 ESTABLISHMENT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors of the PAC was appointed on February 14, 2012 (Table 1). As at December 31, 2012, eight (8) meetings were held on the following dates: Feb 24, March 14, April 11, June 13, July 18, August 15, Sep 19, and Dec 12, 2012. The Board regrettably lost one of its members on November 17, 2012, with the passing of



Mr. John Ceasar.

TABLE 1: BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF PAC

Name	Position	Organization
Members of the Board		
Mr. Shyam Nokta	Chairman	Advisor to the President, Office of Climate Change, Office of the President
Major General (Retired) Joseph Singh	Vice Chairman	Immediate past Chairman of the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission.
Dr. Indarjit Ramdass	Member	Executive Director, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
Mr. John Caesar (Deceased)	Member	National Parks Commission Chairman, Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Natural Sciences, University of Guyana
Ms. Shanomae Rose	Member	Director (ag), School of Earth and Environmental Sciences, University of Guyana
Mr. Nigel Dharmalaal	Member	Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Amerindian Affairs
Mr. Bertie Xavier	Member	Toshao, Wowetta Village, Region 9., representative on the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues for Latin America
Ex-officio Members of the Board		
Mr. Damian Fernandes		Commissioner, PAC
Ms. Annette Singh		State Counsel, Attorney General's Chambers, Ministry of Legal Affairs
Mr. Naseem Nasir		Manager, Land Information and Mapping Division, Guyana Lands and Survey Commission
Mr. Tasreef Khan		Deputy Commissioner of Forest, Forest Monitoring Division, Guyana Forestry Commission
Secretary to the Board		
Ms. Juliana Persaud		Environmental Officer II, EPA

2.1.2 STAFF RECRUITMENT

The Board approved the Terms of Reference for the recruitment of Commissioner. The position was advertised and short-listed candidates were interviewed by a panel consisting of representatives of the Board and the Permanent Secretary of the MNRE. Based on the evaluation report prepared by the panel, the Board submitted its endorsement of the results of the evaluation to the Minister, MNRE and Mr Damian Fernandes was subsequently appointed effective July 01, 2012.

Terms of References for other staff to be contracted by the Commission – Deputy Commissioner, Finance Officer, Protected Areas Officer, Driver/Office Assistant and Executive Assistant – were prepared and reviewed by the Board. The recruitment process, including advertising and interviewing, for the additional staff was completed during the third quarter and by November 12, 2012 all other staff members were appointed and assumed duty as illustrated in Table 2.

TABLE 2: STAFF RECRUITED AT PAC OFFICE BASED AT GEORGETOWN.

Name	Position	Date of assumption of duty
Mr Damian Fernandes	Commissioner	July 01, 2012
Mrs Denise Fraser	Deputy Commissioner	November 05, 2012
Mr Hosen Alam	Protected Areas Officer	November 12, 2012
Ms Andrea Beresford	Finance Officer	October 22, 2012
Ms Anesia Isaac	Executive Assistant	October 15, 2012
Mr Sean Veerapen	Driver / Office Assistant	November 05, 2012

2.1.3 ESTABLISHMENT OF PAC OFFICE BUILDING

The National Parks Commission building was identified to house the offices of the PAC. It was refurbished and extended in order to accommodate staff of the PAC. This project was executed by the EPA under Phase II of the GPAS Project, with support from the PAC. This activity was paired with an assessment and cost estimate for the installation of a photovoltaic system by engineers from the Guyana Energy Agency.



INTERNAL VIEW OF PAC OFFICE



REFURBISHED SECTION OCCUPIED BY PAC

2.1.4 PROCUREMENT

Equipment and furnishing for the PAC was procured and delivered under Phase II of the GPAS Project, with staff occupying the newly refurbished office from November 26, 2012. Prior to the completion of the offices, staff members were accommodated at the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment, as well as the Environmental Protection Agency.

2.1.5 PAC LOGO CHOSEN AFTER A PUBLIC COMPETITION

In August 2012, a public competition was launched to solicit designs for the PAC's logo. An advertisement was prepared and published in local newspapers and MNRE website. A flyer was also produced and circulated. To ensure wide circulation, the assistance of the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs, Regional Offices and Private Sector/NGOs was sought. Several concepts were received and evaluated, with the Board identifying the winning entry. The winning logo was submitted by Eerepami Regenwaldstiftung Guyana, a German-based non-profit organization involved in community development and biodiversity conservation in Guyana. The green section of the logo is dominated by the silhouettes of a tree, to represent terrestrial and arboreal biodiversity, and two persons, to highlight the important role of **people in parks**. The silhouettes are on a hill, which is meant to emphasise the importance of mountain biodiversity, as is found in Kaieteur National Park, the Iwokrama Forest and the Kanuku Mountains. The blue in the logo is the international symbol for water, and represents important coastal and marine environments, such as Shell Beach. The white space between the green and blue sections represents rivers,

wetlands, and other inland waters, and their importance to the conservation and sustainable development strategy of Guyana.

2.1.7 BUDGET AND WORKPLAN FOR 2013 PREPARED AND SUBMITTED

The 2013 Budget and Work plan – including a budget description and programme performance statement – were prepared and submitted to the MNRE.

2.2 POLICY

A guidance paper in relation to determining the legal options for moving forward, particularly as it relates to overall management and management of sites in accordance with the PA Act, 2011, was prepared for the Board, and submitted to the Attorney General for guidance.

A position paper on applications for extension to Amerindian titled lands that overlap with National Protected Areas was prepared and finalised by the Board in June 2012. The document is meant to provide relevant background information on this issue, and guidance on the development of a national policy on requests for Amerindian land extensions into existing national protected areas. The paper was submitted to the Minister, MNRE for review and consideration.

2.3 PROJECT ACTIVITIES

2.3.1 PROGRESS OF GPAS PHASE II

On September 10, 2009, the Governments of Guyana and Germany, represented by the KfW, signed a financing and project agreement for EUR 5M to support GPAS Phase II. The project is being implemented by the Environment Protection Agency (EPA). However, since the inception of PAC, EPA collaborates with PAC to realize the mission of the project.

Project activities under Tranche I commenced in March 2012, and are expected to be completed by December 2013.

TABLE 3: ACTIVITIES AND STATUS OF GPAS PHASE II

Tranche	Activities	Status / Progress
Tranche I	Shell Beach PA management plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Framework for development of a management Plan prepared.
	Tukeit Resthouse and Warden Caretaker’s Building – Construction and Supervision Components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The contracts for both the supervision and construction components of the sub-project were signed
	Building for the Protected Areas Commission: Extension Works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertisement inviting tenders published and bids expected to be opened in January 2013.
	Minor Works to Boardroom –	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works to the Boardroom completed.
	Equipment and Furnishings for the Protected Areas Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The air conditioning unit, some office furniture and the computer systems and accessories delivered and installed. • Vehicle procurement process in progress
	Follow-up Support for GPAS I Community-Based Sub-projects and Baseline Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent to which the proposal will be revised to be discussed among the project partners.
Tranche II	Conservation Trust Fund (CTF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Commission participated in a workshop to develop the vision statement, values, goals and objectives of a five-year strategic plan for the CTF.

2.3.2 GPAS PHASE III - PROJECT PREPARATION AND SIGNING

The Situation Analysis Report (prepared through consultancy) and the report on the project design prepared by the EPA/MNRE have been consolidated. The draft was finalized based on the comments of the Executive Director. The report was submitted to KfW, Germany, on November 23, 2012 and the financial agreement for GPAS III was signed on (23 December, 2012)

2.4 PROTECTED AREAS MANAGEMENT

2.4.1 STATUS OF EXISTING HINTERLAND PROTECTED AREAS

By the end of 2012, there were five existing protected areas, namely: (a) Kaieteur National Park (KNP), (b) The Programme Site of the Iwokrama International Centre for Rain Forest Conservation and Development (referred to as IWOKRAMA forest) (c) Kanuku Mountains Protected Area (KMPA), (d) Konashen Community Owned Protected Area (KCOPA) and (e) Shell Beach Protected Area (SBPA). None of these PAs, except Iwokrama, had a functional Management Plan. However, WWF-Guyana had produced a management plan (draft) for KNP which was submitted to the Office of the President for approval. A draft management plan for KMPA, prepared by Conservation International with the collaboration of 18 Amerindian communities, was also submitted to the Office of the President. The management plan of SBPA is yet to be prepared

and is envisioned under GPAS phase II project. In accordance with PA Act 2011, these management plans must be accepted and approved by PAC.

2.4.2 STATUS OF URBAN PARKS

There are four urban parks which come under the purview of the PAC: The National Park, The Zoological Park and the Botanical Gardens located in Georgetown and the Joe Viera Park located on the West Bank Demerara. The infrastructure of these parks has deteriorated as a result of lack of maintenance over a number of years.

2.4.3 REVIEW OF DRAFT KAIETEUR NATIONAL PARK MANAGEMENT PLANS

Draft Management Plans for Kaieteur National Park including the Business and Tourism Plans were reviewed and the Board provided comments for the National Parks Commission in order to facilitate the finalisation of the documents

2.4.4 SENSITIZATION PROGRAM ON PROTECTED AREAS AND PA ACT 2011

In order to deliver an overview of protected areas, National Protected Areas System, PA Act 2011, and to address key issues pertaining to exercise of traditional rights on Amerindian PAs, PAC has initiated a sensitization program being offered to the hinterland communities since November 2012. The program is being executed in four PAs namely, Kanuku Mountains Protected Area (KMPA), Konashen Community Owned Protected Area, Kaieteur National Park and Shell Beach Protected Area.

A workshop for the Kanuku Mountains Community Representative Group (KMCRG) was held at Takutu Guest House, Lethem between November 21 and November 22, 2012. The workshop engaged the participants in an active dialogue on the issues following a series of PowerPoint presentations.

The outcomes of the program were very impressive as they provided coherent synergies between Protected Areas Management and legislation in Guyana.

2.4.5 BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S FIELD VISIT TO KMPA AND SURROUNDING WATERSHED

The technical staff of the PAC accompanied the Board on its field visit to the Kanuku Mountains, Karanambu Trust and Ecolodge, Caiman House, Atta Ecolodge on November 30 to December 2, 2012. The objectives of the visit were to familiarize PAC Board members and staff with the area and some of the communities, and to gain insight into socio-economic and development perspective of protected areas in the region. A report on this visit has been prepared.

2.4.6 PROJECT PROPOSED TO CABINET ON THE REHABILITATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF SECURITY IN THREE URBAN PARKS

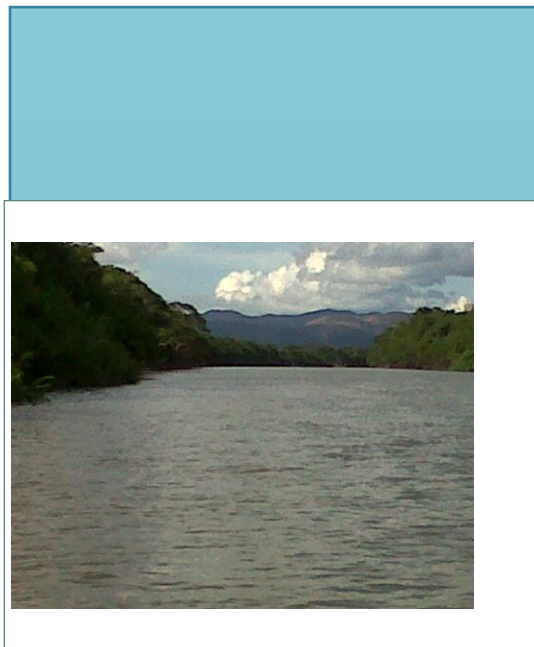
The Commission initiated work with a US based landscape architecture firm to prepare a Master Plan for the Zoological Park. A workshop was conducted during the period September 22-23, 2012, and a zoning plan prepared.

Following this discussion, the MNRE requested the preparation of an overarching plan for the rehabilitation and development of the National Park, Botanical Gardens and Zoological Park. An extensive plan was then developed by the PAC, in collaboration with the General Manager of the National Parks Commission and submitted to the MNRE. The PAC was then asked to present the plan to the Cabinet, which was done on November 20, 2012. Following the presentation, the PAC submitted the proposed plan in writing to the MNRE.

The overarching goal of the project is- *to enhance key facilities and rehabilitation of infrastructure in each of these "green" spaces, thereby improving the quality of services provided to the public, and ultimately increasing their ability to generate revenue for long-term maintenance.* The Cabinet accepted the proposal on December 17, 2012 and approved allocation of resources to support the execution of the plan.

2.4.7 STRATEGIC PLANNING

WWF has indicated that they have resources to support the PAC in developing a strategic plan for both the Commission as well as the NPAS. The first draft of Terms of Reference was prepared for a consultant/resource person to assist the development of the strategic plan.



VIEW OF THE KANUKUS FROM RUPUNI RIVER



BOARD OF DIRECTORS AT CANOPY WALKWAY, ATTA LODGE, RUPUNUNI.

2.4.8 SYSTEM PLANNING

A component of the strategic plan will be a National Protected Areas System Plan, as articulated in the Act. This System Plan is required to be submitted to the Board of Directors within one year of the appointment of the PAC Commissioner. A draft System Plan has been prepared with the available information, and will be discussed and revised following a stakeholder consultation. The Plan is expected to be completed and submitted to the Board by the June 30, 2013 deadline.

2.5 TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Ms. Anesia Isaacs, Executive Assistant, attended a training program titled 'Volunteer Programme Development and Management' offered by CUSO International LAC - Guyana, formerly known as VSO. This training was held at Lake Mainstay Resort, Essequibo Coast from the 14-24 of November, 2012. The VPDM course is a certificate course that specializes in volunteer management and equips participants with the requisite skills to develop and manage volunteer programs. With this course Anesia will help the PAC to undertake a number of volunteer initiatives throughout the protected areas.

2.6 WORKSHOPS, SEMINARS, AND CONFERENCES

Three staff members of the Commission participated in a two-day workshop titled 'Sustainable Management of the Extractive Sector in Guyana at National Convention Centre, Liliendal held between November 14 and November 15, 2012. Mr. Alam performed the role of rapporteur on the session titled 'Environmental Sustainability'.

Mrs. Denise Fraser, Deputy Commissioner, participated in a Workshop on Strategic Planning held on December 4, 2012 for representatives of the Natural Resources and Environment sector towards development of the strategic plan for the subject Ministry. This workshop was facilitated by the team of consultants contracted for the development of strategic plan who also held separate meetings with the PAC, among other agencies.

Mr. Damian Fernandes represented Guyana at Conference of the Parties (COP) 11 Convention on Biological Diversity in India held on 8-9 October 2012. Mr. Fernandes presented (Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) issues in Guyana in a meeting held by Knowledge Cafe at EPA Board Room.

2.7 OTHER ACTIVITIES

The Commission participated in GuyExpo 2012, during the period September 27 to 30, 2012.

2.8 KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2012

Table 4: Key achievements, at a glance

Achievements	Status
1 Establishment of Board of Directors	Completed
2 Staff Recruitment	The Commissioner and Five staff members were recruited.
3 GPAS Phase III Project Proposal	Completed and Signed with KfW
4 Community outreach initiatives	Partially completed and will be completed in 2013
5 Rehabilitation project at three parks (Three parks Initiative)	Initiated and will continue in 2013
6 System plan	First Draft prepared

SECTION 3: KEY WORK/ PROGRAME AREAS FOR 2013

Key areas of work projected for 2013 and initiated in 2012 include the following:

Administrative and Human Resources

- Preparation of Strategic Plan for PAC
- Continued preparation of internal guidelines, policies and controls to facilitate the functioning of PAC
- Facilitation of the monthly statutory meetings of the PAC Board of Directors
- Recruitment of additional staff

Protected Areas Management

- Development of the National Protected Areas (NPA) System Plan, as per the Protected Areas Act, 2011, including collation of existing information, contracting technical services, conducting community meetings and other stakeholder consultations, and collecting relevant data.
- Facilitation of the finalisation, evaluation and approval of Management Plans for the Kanuku Mountains, Kaieteur National Park and Shell Beach.
- Preparation of draft regulations under the Protected Areas Act, 2011, for the description and management of the Kanuku Mountains, Kaieteur National Park and Shell Beach under this new legislative framework.
- Provision of support for the implementation of the German funded Guyana Protected Areas System (GPAS) Project – Phase II, including the development of a management plan for Shell Beach.
- Facilitation of the creation of the statutory Protected Areas Trust Fund, as per the Protected Areas Act, 2011.

Training and Capacity Building

- Capacity-building and training activities for PAC officers, including programmes focussed on Protected Areas management, monitoring and evaluation, financial

accounting systems and tools (e.g., software), strategic planning and project management.

- Participation in Sectoral Boards and Committees.

Education, Awareness and Outreach

- Community Outreach Activities in Shell Beach, Kaieteur, Kanuku Mountains as well as Konashen in relation to their community owned conservation area
- Facilitation of visits by the PAC Board to the sites of the various protected areas and surrounding communities.

SECTION 4: CONCLUSION

Despite its late start in the year 2012, the Protected Areas Commission made significant progress in establishing its central office. Centralized administrative and financial arrangements were developed providing the base on which further progress and development could take place. Additionally plans were made for the rehabilitation of the urban parks to enhance the services to the public by these green spaces.

Beyond the PAC central office, community outreach work was initiated and work commenced on familiarization on the Protected Areas Act, its provisions and the implications for Amerindian Communities.

Moving forward into 2013 and beyond, in order to fully achieve the Commission's mandate, the focus will shift to development of policy and ensuring a presence on the ground in each of the protected areas as well as addressing the establishment of management structures at the site level. The Commission will also be looking towards working with communities and building partnerships with key stakeholder organizations. The Commission looks forward with excitement to the challenges that lie ahead.