

Maps and Boundaries

2

RECOMMENDATION

The proposed Graeme Hall National Park should include the core lands (81.54 acres/33 hectares) described in the pending RAMSAR (Convention on Wetlands) Agreement, but also the additional upland environmental buffer and agricultural lands that stretch to the ABC Highway, Rendezvous Ridge and Harmony Hall as shown on the Map (Subject to final survey).

Total land area of the proposed Graeme Hall National Park is approximately 240 acres.

Subject to final survey and verification, the proposed Graeme Hall National Park would encompass the following contiguous parcels:

- **Graeme Hall Nature Sanctuary**
Owned by GHNS Inc, RAMSAR designated, within the Graeme Hall Watershed 100-year floodplain
- **Private pasture lands, west of Graeme Hall Nature Sanctuary**
Partially owned by Southdowns Enterprises, Inc. and various other landowners, RAMSAR designated, within the Graeme Hall Watershed 100-year floodplain
- **Agricultural Lands held by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development/Barbados Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation**
RAMSAR designated, within and adjacent to the Graeme Hall Watershed 100-year floodplain, inclusive of the South Coast Sewage Treatment Facility.
- **Environmental Buffer along Escarpment, Rendezvous Ridge (as noted by the 1997 ARA Study)**
*Held by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development/Barbados Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation
North of the Graeme Hall Watershed 100-year floodplain*

- Agricultural Lands adjoining the ABC Highway that have been conditionally defined as an Urban Corridor. These lands have been the subject of intense debate as a result of current attempts by Caribbean Splash, Inc. to build a water park. Held by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development/Barbados Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation.
North of the Graeme Hall Watershed 100-year floodplain

- Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development Complex and farm lands.
North of the Graeme Hall Watershed 100-year floodplain, east of Rendezvous and Amity Lodge, west of the Hwy 7 Roundabout at Graeme Hall.

At the present time, the Government of Barbados recognizes only 81.54 acres (33 hectares) of the proposed (approximately) 240-acre Graeme Hall National Park worthy of full environmental protections, calling this particular area an “environmental heritage site” and recognized by the the Authority governing the Convention on Wetlands, initiated in Ramsar, Iran in 1971. The lands within the 81.54-acre (33 hectare) RAMSAR site consist of both private and public parcels, the majority of which are held by the Government of Barbados in the east, the Graeme Hall Nature Sanctuary in the centre, and Southdowns Enterprises, Inc. in the west. It is probable that other, much smaller parcels owned by individual landowners are within this Site, but full understanding of the boundaries is subject to survey.

The RAMSAR site constitutes the primary 100-year floodplain of the Graeme Hall Watershed, and is thereby considered a “sump” for runoff from the Watershed, including the upland agricultural areas adjacent to the ABC Highway and Rendezvous Ridge.

As noted herein, and due to the sensitivity of these lands as they relate to the Graeme Hall wetland, these upland agricultural areas and the Ministry of Agriculture Complex should be incorporated into the new Graeme Hall National Park.

The 81.54 acre RAMSAR/100-year floodplain is essentially divided into an eastern and a western section by a wide, man-made footpath/roadway oriented from north to south through the area.

Graeme Hall Nature Sanctuary has control 34.25-acres of most of the western area of the Swamp, and Southdowns Enterprises, Inc. holds approximately 8-acres of pasture lands within the Swamp to the west of the Sanctuary. The area held by the Sanctuary has been significantly restored with mangroves and other native species under the direction of the University of the West Indies, while the eastern government-controlled area has not undergone any significant restorative effort.

The eastern section of Graeme Hall Swamp is managed by the Ministry of Health for mosquito control. The governmentally-controlled regime consists of periodic clearing of

vegetation from the freshwater dikes; cutting down of mangroves that overhang the embankment path/roadway and clog the exit canal to the sea; intensive thermal fogging with malathion, periodic opening of the sluice gate and maintenance of the channel over the beach with heavy digging equipment.

Note: The original ARA Study suggested incorporation of the 100-year floodplain, consisting of approximately 91 acres plus an 18.13-acre buffer zone, roughly bounded by Highway 7 on the south, Rendezvous Road on the west, the escarpment containing the old plantation property (Ministry of Agriculture) on the north, and the extension of the Harmony Hall Road to the Sewerage Treatment Plant on the east.

Since the ARA Study was performed, the Government of Barbados has further reduced the combined areas of sensitive habitat and protective buffer lands. The total acreage recommended for environmental protection by the ARA Study in 1997 was 109 acres. Inclusive of the buffer zone, this total has been reduced by Government to 81.54 acres (33 hectares), as embodied in the RAMSAR application, of which 34.25 acres belong to the Graeme Hall Nature Sanctuary. This is contrary to the recommendation to incorporate upland drainage lands to meet integrated wetland preservation objectives and provide appropriate wetland/residential buffers.