

## **Background Information**

### **Graeme Hall National Park Initiative Status of Initiative, and Proposal to the Government of Barbados**

In September 2006 the Friends of Graeme Hall provided a Reference Document to the Government of Barbados that provided a framework for creating a new National Park at Graeme Hall.

The Friends of Graeme Hall, a nonprofit volunteer citizens group, has been concerned that the 240-acre Graeme Hall site has been targeted for commercial and residential development, which would place an undue environmental burden on the already stressed Graeme Hall wetland. Furthermore, such development would obliterate the last remaining green space available for low-density, non-motorized recreational activities between the airport and Bridgetown.

After battling a proposal to put a high-density Waterpark within the Graeme Hall site, The Friends began seeking support for making the creation of Graeme Hall National Park a reality. The proposal for environmental, recreational, agricultural and educational activities for Graeme Hall Nature Sanctuary is located at [www.graemehallnationalpark.org](http://www.graemehallnationalpark.org).

This proposal has attracted considerable public support not only from the residents of Graeme Hall and surrounding districts, but from all across the country. As of January 2, 2007, the Petition for the support of the National Park has attracted in excess of 4,500 signatures, and is still growing.

The Graeme Hall National Park Initiative relies on three partners for creation, project development, and operations:

1. The Government of Barbados (provider of legal protections, management, oversight)
2. The Friends of Graeme Hall (citizens oversight and local/international fundraising partner)
3. The Graeme Hall Nature Sanctuary (private-sector donor and management partner)

The primary objective is for all partners to agree that creation of the National Park is an opportunity to create a legacy for of the people of Barbados, and for those who visit our shores from time to time.

The Friends of Graeme Hall have been engaged in negotiations with various donors and supporters of the Graeme Hall National Park. The strength of the Friends' organisation is steadily increasing, and in partnership with the Graeme Hall Nature Sanctuary stands ready to assist the Government of Barbados to create one of the finest legacies for the citizens of Barbados and future generations.

As of December 7, 2006, the Friends of Graeme Hall have arranged for, and will expedite, the following contingent on formal declaration of the approximately 240-acre Graeme Hall National Park:

1. Graeme Hall Nature Sanctuary will donate, free and clear, 25 acres of Sanctuary Lands to the new National Park, which would encompass approximately 240 acres at Graeme Hall. This initiative includes a generous donation of the majority of lands belonging to Graeme Hall

Nature Sanctuary. Note: There are significant fiscal and tax implications (FY2006-07) associated with the donation in regard to the estate of Mr. Peter Allard, owner of the Sanctuary. With this in mind, the Government of Barbados has been respectfully asked to consider and respond to this offer before March 1, 2007.

2. The Friends of Graeme Hall will initiate a Bds. \$6,000,000 capital campaign from local and private international donors to match public international grant funding to pay for recreational infrastructure improvements. All monies raised will be allocated to the Park – fundraising overhead costs will be underwritten by the Graeme Hall Nature Sanctuary.
3. Graeme Hall Nature Sanctuary and the Friends of Graeme Hall will assist the Government of Barbados with professional grant development and related technical services to help maximise funding from foreign agencies, individuals, and foundations. These funds will be allocated to National Park infrastructure development, and related stormwater and emergency wastewater containment projects that would benefit the South Coast, as outlined in the Reference Documents at [www.graemehallnationalpark.org](http://www.graemehallnationalpark.org).
4. Graeme Hall Nature Sanctuary, assisted by the Friends of Graeme Hall, will provide support for professional park design and development and will provide subsequent management services to the Government of Barbados for the new bioserve and recreational/community elements of the new National Park. The Sanctuary is committed to the highest quality of management, as reflected in its existing facilities, and will carry this commitment forward to the new National Park.

Fundraising for improvements for a National Park is an unusual role for the Friends of Graeme Hall and the Sanctuary, and one that has encouraged us to examine our priorities very carefully. Rigorous examination of our priorities underscores the fact that the RAMSAR wetland site at Graeme Hall, plus its upland agricultural buffers, is arguably the most significant biodiversity and agricultural centre on the island, and in need of formal legal protections, in perpetuity.