

Friends of Graeme Hall Inc.

www.graemehallnationalpark.org

3 Warners Terrace

Christ Church

Barbados

December 15, 2007

The Editor
The Nation Newspaper
Fontabelle
St. Michael

Dear Sir,

In a local press story dated December 15, 2007 the Chairman of Barbados Sugar Industries Limited (BSIL), lamented the fact that “We are losing roughly a thousand acres (of cane land) a year”

An editorial in the same newspaper quotes Prime Minister Owen Arthur as saying “before the House (of Assembly) rises, we will be putting in place the Physical Development Plan (PDP).....”

You may ask sir, what is the connection between these two statements? If the pending PDP 2003 (Amended) resolution is passed in Parliament without modification it has the potential to remove over 150 acres from agricultural use. It will do this in one full and probably irreversible swoop by changing the current land designation of the last remaining agricultural land at Graeme Hall to residential and other high density uses.

This change also runs counter to the Government’s National Strategic Plan of Barbados 2006-2025. This plan enunciates a policy of “Substantial increase in the area of land allocated to, and managed as, green spaces” and to “Safeguard arable agricultural land”.

The Friends of Graeme Hall, Inc. (www.graemehallnationalpark.org) is an incorporated, non-profit Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) whose broad aims and objectives for the Graeme Hall area are to:

- Preserve the last green open space between Bridgetown and the Airport.
- Preserve valuable agricultural land currently used for research by The Ministry of Agriculture and The Central Agronomic Research Station.
- Provide an educational, leisure and recreation park for citizens and visitors.
- Provide an environmental buffer and prevent damage to the sensitive habitat and ecosystem of our National Heritage Conservation Area and Ramsar (Convention on Wetlands) site.

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We have already written and mailed letters to all of the relevant authorities and to each Parliamentarian seeking their support in having this apparent contradiction in the PDP corrected. By rectifying this oversight, the originally intended land use(s) defined in the “Finalised” 1988 PDP, adopted 1991, and subsequently supported by scientific and other studies over the past 35 years may be maintained.

It is our sincere hope that our elected leaders and relevant authorities will join with Friends of Graeme Hall, the wide cross section of Barbadians and the 6000 citizens who signed a petition in support of preserving this agricultural area that also acts as an upland environmental buffer.

This buffer is part of a watershed that drains into the last remaining mangrove forest, the last major wetland, the largest inland lake, and the most concentrated biodiversity in Barbados.

Future generations will not forgive us if we lack the will and vision to protect and preserve our limited agricultural land, green spaces and environment but instead pursue a path of so called development that is not sustainable and that actually results in a reduction of quality of life for the citizens of our Nation.

Yours truly,
Friends of Graeme Hall Inc.