

Forest News



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Cover photo: Donna Howe, Managing Director of Jamaica Bauxite Mining and Ainsley A. Henry, CEO & Conservator of Forests at the Forestry Department show solidarity for the tree-planting partnership launched between the Agency and bauxite company at the National Tree Planting Day Ceremony on October 6.

Forestry Department and JBM announce partnership to plant 20,000 trees



Ainsley A. Henry, CEO & Conservator of Forests (left) plants a Pride of Barbados seedling with Donna Howe, Managing Director of Jamaica Bauxite Mining alongside Dr. Kenneth Russell who represented Lisa Hanna, Member of Parliament for South East St. Ann at the National Tree planting Day main ceremony at JBM's Protocol House in Lydford, St. Ann on October 6, 2023.

A 5-year partnership to plant 20,000 trees between the Forestry Department and the Jamaica Bauxite Mining (JBM) Limited was launched during this year's National Tree Planting Day ceremony at the JBM's Protocol House in Lydford, St. Ann on Friday, October 6, 2023.

Following the announcement, guests planted 1,000 trees signaling a strong start to this partnership. Mr. Ainsley Henry, CEO and Conservator of Forests, who is pleased with the partnership, said, "Large-scale

planting of trees signals good things for expanding our tree cover and what with the recent lengthy and record-breaking period of heat and drought experienced across Jamaica, we certainly need it".

This partnership is part of a strategically aligned effort by JBM, over the next 3-5 years, as part of its reclamation and sustainable restoration of mined-out lands efforts. Mrs. Donna Howe, Managing Director of JBM, said National Tree Planting Day "aligns and identifies with our

environmental social governance objectives, and "JBM is getting behind a number of these types of environmental and socially impactful projects".

Mrs. Howe added that its tree planting goals support the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals of sequential land development as custodian owners of lands in St. Ann. The bauxite company planted 1,000 trees at the National Labour Day Project in May of this year and will plant an additional 2,000 trees by the end of the 2023/2024 financial year.

National Tree Planting Day was celebrated under the theme, "Keep the Heat Away... Plant a Tree Today!"



A police officer plants a seedling with students at the National Tree planting Day main ceremony at JBM's Protocol House in Lydford, St. Ann on October 6, 2023.

National Tree Planting Day

More than 100 volunteers including Jamaica Bauxite Mining (JBM) staff, political representatives, schools in St. Ann and other partners, joined efforts to plant 1,000 trees at the National Tree planting Day main ceremony held at JBM's Protocol House in Lydford, St. Ann on October 6, 2023.

This was among several tree-planting projects supported by the Forestry Department. Tree planting was also done several schools including Frome Technical High School in Westmoreland, Kingston High and McNie All Age in Clarendon.

The Agency also partnered with the Northern Rio Minho Local Forest Management Committee to plant 500 trees at the Bull Head Forest Reserve and with Total Energies to reforest two hectares in New Danks Clarendon. Entities such as Jamaica Red Cross, DiCawna Library, Cemex and Caribbean Tree Planting Project also led tree planting activities, which will all count towards the three million trees targeted for planting under the National Tree Planting Initiative.



Rockfort Resilience

East Kingston Community Excited about Community Garden Intervention under Forestry Department/CityAdapt Partnership

Members of the Rockfort Community in East Kingston gathered last Wednesday to unveil an educational sign to mark its landmark community garden started under an urban forestry and tree-planting programme implemented by the Forestry Department under the UNEP CityAdapt project that has been piloting climate-resilience interventions in communities and schools in and around Kingston.

The often-troubled community of Rockfort was chosen in 2021 as a prime location to plant a range of fruit and ornamental trees to create a community garden to serve as a source of nutritious food for residents, and to help the community become more self-sufficient and resilient in the face of climate change threats which disproportionately affect vulnerable areas in the city.

Not only is the Rockfort Community Garden sign testament to the work of CityAdapt in the community but it also serves to beautify the grounds of the Community Resource Centre and the community has acquired a wealth of knowledge about plants according to Renaldo Atkinson, a member of the community who liaised with the Forestry

Department to implement the project.

“The grounds that we are standing on were somewhat of a wasteland’, remarked Atkinson. “To see the people of Rockfort working together with the Forestry Department proves that green life really matters. I am hoping in the next few years to see kids playing in the trees and the community finding shade and rest in this garden”, he added.

Damart Williams, the Forestry Department’s Senior Director Zonal Operations (Eastern) who brought greetings on behalf of Conservator of Forests and CEO, Ainsely Henry, thanked CityAdapt for its investment in communities across Kingston and emphasised the importance of developing urban greenery.

“We are recognizing more the value of urban forests. We are coming down to the flats, to the urban areas. In the heart of our bustling cities where concrete often overshadows nature, the simple act of planting trees can make a world of difference,” Williams explained.

Shanice Bedward-Grant, the National Coordinator of CityAdapt Jamaica encouraged



Members of the Rockfort community join with Forestry Department and CityAdapt project staff in a jovial moment by the urban forestry educational sign.

the Rockfort residents to continue to care for the Garden. “Rockfort is one of the most vibrant communities in Jamaica, and the work that has been done to start this community garden is remarkable. It will beautify and cool down the community, and benefit generations to come”, said Bedward-Grant.

The CityAdapt Project is funded by the Special Climate Change Fund of the Global Environment Facility, which has allocated over US\$1.5m to Jamaica to fund nature-based interventions to help Kingston to adapt and build resilience to the changing climate conditions.

Mangrove project goes back to its roots

SALT MARSH, Trelawny - An impressive 100 mangrove seedlings were planted in Salt Marsh to mark International Day for Natural Disaster Risk Reduction. The Trelawny community is the inspiration behind a five-year mangrove conservation project being embarked upon by The University of the West Indies' Discovery Bay Marine Laboratory, in collaboration with Sandals Resorts International and Sandals Foundation.



Sandals Foundation ambassador planting mangrove seedling in Salt Marsh

Environmental projects coordinator at Sandals Foundation, Georgia Scarlett weighed in on the importance of the partnership.

"Over the last three years Sandals Foundation has planted over 5,000 mangroves across the Caribbean...[Mangroves] serve as excellent risk reducers to coastal erosion, either through storm surges or tsunamis. In the Caribbean, where our populations are concentrated on the coast, mangroves are very important both for this and their excellent carbon sequestration powers, which exceed their inland forest counterparts," she said.

Outreach officer at The University of the West Indies' Centre for Marine Sciences,

Trudy-Ann Campbell spoke about the significance of two signs erected during the day's activities.

"The community signs are an indicator to Jamaica and the people of Salt Marsh that these agencies are serious and excited about mangrove conservation. This initiative is the first of its kind in Jamaica, where private lands are being transferred to government ownership and management, primarily to keep the mangrove forests as they are," she said.

Project partners include Sandals Resorts International, Forestry Department, National Land Agency, National Environment and Planning Agency, National

Solid Waste Management Authority, Recycling Partners of Jamaica, Trelawny Municipal Corporation, and residents of the Salt Marsh community.



Members of the team proudly stand beside one of two signs unveiled in Salt Marsh.

Source: Jamaica Observer

News Shorts

TotalEnergies ‘Adopts’ a Hillside in Clarendon

The Forestry Department has welcomed energy company TotalEnergies to the Adopt-a-Hillside family to plant and maintain 1650 trees over the next three years in Danks Forest Reserve, Clarendon.

The new recruits in the forest conservation programme have initiated their commitment, teaming up with the Forestry Department to plant approximately 500 seedlings on Friday, November 24, 2023. The seedlings will contribute to the reforestation of Danks’ hillsides with native species– Cedar (*Cedrela Odorata*), Jamaican Mahogany (*Swietenia mahoganii*) and Spanish Elm (*Cordia gerascanthus*).



Lenroy Smith (centre) Forest Technician at the Forestry Department, plants a Jamaican Mahogany seedling with Sanjeev Sheosanker (left), Commercial Director and Psylane Thomas, Transport Coordinator at TotalEnergies.

The Adopt-a-Hillside Programme encourages private-sector groups to play an active role in reforestation by funding the reforestation and maintenance of forests. Sanjeev Sheosanker, Commercial Director at TotalEnergies expressed that this commitment affirms the company’s corporate responsibility for environmental sustainability and that the company is “also making these moves towards better energies”. He also thanked the Forestry Department for the help and support extended so far in the programme.

Rubis powers tree planting with 3-day tour



Rubis joined forces with the Forestry Department to boost tree planting in a three-day seedling distribution tour from its gas stations in Port Antonio, Montego Bay and Mandeville between October 18-31, 2023.

The tour, which ended with the distribution of just under 1000 seedlings, provided timber, ornamental and fruit seedlings including coconuts donated by the Coconut Industry Board, to passers-by who were eager for more.



The Forestry Department is pleased with the company’s effort to contribute to a sustainable environment by increasing Jamaica’s forest cover and, in doing so, supporting the island’s resilience to climate change.

(Top) Passers-by gather to receive seedlings at the Forestry Department’s booth at the Rubis gas station in Mandeville on October 31. (Bottom left) Kristen Green, Marketing Officer, did not keep customers waiting amidst the rain during the distribution at the Rubis gas station in Montego Bay on October 25. (Bottom right) Georgia Henry, Forest Technician, North East Region smiles bright with a customer who received seedlings at the Rubis gas station in Port Antonio on October 18.

News Shorts

Christmas tree shopping made easy with Plant Fair



Pre-ordered Christmas tree at the Forestry Department's head office ahead of its first Plant Fair on December 2, 2023.

Christmas tree shopping was made easy with the Forestry Department's first-ever Plant Fair held on Saturday, December 2, 2023 at the Agency's head office on Constant Spring Road in St. Andrew.

Customers were provided with a hassle-free process of pre-ordering Christmas trees, which were in high demand for the season. The weekend Plant Fair answers the ongoing calls of the Agency's customers for more convenient access to seedlings beyond weekdays.

Customers took advantage of the one-stop-shop to purchase Christmas trees, pine cones and a variety of potted plants and seedlings at the weekend fair.

The Agency also introduced potted Christmas trees for rent with prospects of a full launch next December. Ainsley A. Henry, CEO and Conservator of Forests, said, "We are moving away from the sale of cut Christmas trees to selling and renting potted Christmas trees". He added, "Despite the fact that our production of Christmas trees is done in a sustainable manner, we are seeking to give customers even more environmentally friendly options through the production of living trees".

Welfare Committee Treat di yutes right with Christmas Drive

The Forestry Department's Welfare and Social Affairs (WSA) Committee, through its *We Care Initiative*, hosted a Christmas Drive dubbed "Treat di yutes right!" to provide support to four childcare facilities and spread joy to the children in this season.

Representatives from the Agency visited the Sunbeam Children Home in Old Harbour, St. Catherine on December 15 to present donations made by staff, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security and the Jamaica Red Cross.



The Mustard Seed and Blossom Gardens child care facilities were visited on December 14 and 15 respectively in St. Ann and Montego Bay. Donations were also be made to the Mount Olivet Boys' Home in Manchester on December 20, 2023.

Chief Tree Planter Henry nurturing forests and literacy

An instance of reading demonstrates how literacy inspires constructive ideas.

While reading the newspaper, Ainsley A. Henry, CEO and Conservator of Forests, was inspired to launch a book drive at the Forestry Department (the Agency) in support of Di Cawna Library, a charity organisation founded by education specialist Rachael McDonald, establishing 'street corner libraries' in low-income communities.

As Mr. Henry came across the charity organisation's plan in the newspaper to expand its reach to more communities, he engaged the Agency to give back to communities and its partner in the National Tree Planting Initiative (NTPI). The charity actively supported the NTPI in several tree-planting activities including the CityAdapt Project in Rose Town, where one of the libraries has been established.

The book drive amassed just under two hundred books on an array of genres and topics, which were handed over to Ms. McDonald at the Agency's head office in St. Andrew on December 4, 2023.



Mr. Henry was first in line to make his donation to the book drive.

Mr. Henry said, "The book drive was a good way to express [our] the Agency's gratitude in support of Di Cawna Library's ambition to improve literacy in vulnerable communities". He added that "the books would be put to better use instead of having them sitting around".

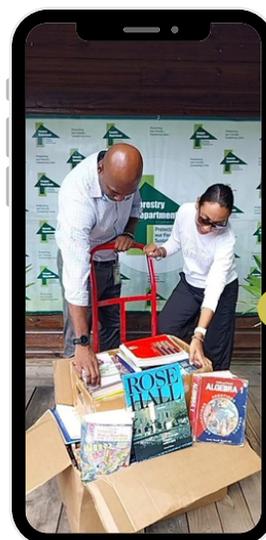
Mr. Henry encourages more Jamaicans to donate books in good condition, which can be done at 8 Hillcrest Avenue, Kingston 6.



Forestry Department drivers, Courtney Mullings (left) and Oliver Samuels placing books in the dropbox for the Book Drive at the Agency's head office.



Simone Chin-Roper, book donor, places books into the head office dropbox alongside Mr. Henry.



Listen what Di Cawna Library founder, Rachael McDonald had to say about the partnership with the Forestry Department.

[CLICK HERE](#) 



Books loaded into carrier for transport to the donation office at 8 Hillcrest Avenue, Kingston 6.

Follow @chief_tree_planter on Instagram for updates on the CEO's involvements.

See more from DiCawnaLibrary on Instagram @forthejunja and @mcdonaldrachael.



For more information:

 www.forestry.gov.jm.com

 (876) 618-3205

 fdinfo@forestry.gov.jm

 173 Constant Spring Road, Kingston 8

