



NATIONAL PARKS COMMISSION

Annual Report 2011



Co-operative Republic of Guyana

**National Parks Commission
Annual Report
2011**

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Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment

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1.0 Executive Summary

For the year under review, the National Parks Commission continued to deliver results by recording growth in revenue over that of previous years.

Over the past year successful work has been done on infrastructural development, land reclamation, and many other areas that serve to enhance the product to the public.

We improved our overall performance by recording an increase in revenue generation in excess of our projected forty eight million target and over our 2010 actual.

Increase in revenue was attributed to increase in visitation to the Kaieteur National Park, increase in visitation to the Zoo, and an increase in landscape service requests.

The Commission's allocations of both capital and recurrent, complemented each other and allowed for improved works in infrastructure, drainage and irrigation, land transport all combined effecting a more efficient work plan and enhancement to the Parks.

Even as we faced challenges throughout 2011, we remained focused on our commitment to provide quality products and services, financial results and management performance.

The improved results can be attributed to revenue garnered from the increase in visits to Kaieteur National Park, efficiencies derived from infrastructural upgrades; and an improved electrical system and the installation of capital works.

Capital Expenditure

The improved infrastructure particularly at the Zoological Park during the year as part of our ongoing upgrading program enabled the efficient thereby contributing to improved presentation.

This is evidenced by the showcasing of the herps and aquatic mammals

A new vehicle was acquired for the transport fleet along with a truck; this has allowed for improved efficiency within the Operations Division.

Over 2011, the NPC continued its partnership with the local community of Chenapou and other important stakeholders in furthering the work of the National Parks Commission.

We continue to work with the Chenapou community and will complete the draft Kaieteur National Park Management plan by early 2012.

Capacity will be further developed among the staff and the infrastructure development was complete with the Park being out fitted with the establishment of a Visitor Arrival Centre with full office and communication facilities.

The year also saw a substantial increase in visitors to Kaieteur and improved and expanded souvenir lines with several promotional materials such as book marks, post cards, etc.

Finally we are pleased with the growth of our partnerships, especially as it relates to education and awareness as this is a cross cutting subject that will have a long term impact on our society. In this regard NPC / Zoo collaborated with Courts Guyana in defining a Botanic Gardens training Camp. We recognize the vital importance of early preparation and training. In July we conducted the premiere

Botanic Gardens holiday Camp a joint education and awareness project, with participants from the EPA, Guyana Forestry Commission, WWF and likeminded Agencies within the Sector. Courts Guyana sponsored a large part of the Camp.

Over the last year NPC has received substantial funding from WWF for work at Kaieteur National park. Support was also obtained the German Government in funding the Visitor Arrival Centre.

2.0 Mission Statement

Managing the natural and cultural resources of the National Parks on behalf of the people of Guyana through conservation, education and awareness while affording the opportunity for open air recreation for future generations

3.0 Organization and Management

The Vision of the NPC is to develop and maintain public amenity environment, conducive to healthy open air recreation thereby affording citizens and visitors enjoyment of Guyana's natural beauty through conservation, education and awareness.

National Park

The National Park was established in 1965 and named The Queen Elizabeth II National Park to commemorate the Queen's visit to Guyana.

It was officially opened on February 5 1966 and later that year renamed the National Park when Guyana attained independence.

The National Park occupies 57 acres of land at Thomas Lands and is located on part of what was formerly Plantation Thomas.

Zoological Park

The Zoological Park was opened on January 1 1952; it is located within the Botanic Gardens and occupies four (4) acres of land.

There are currently 84 exhibits within the Zoo and 232 animals representing 39 species

Botanic Gardens

On April 3 1877 a resolution was passed by the Royal Agricultural and Commercial Society to establish the Botanic Gardens.

The Gardens was established on April 4 1879 on 185 acres of land.

It currently occupies 96 acres of land extending from Vlissengen Road in the west to Sheriff Street in the east. It houses several varieties of tropical plants and many historical and cultural artifacts.

Kaieteur National Park

The Kaieteur Falls was created by ordinance No.41 of 1929 and has a size of 116.6 km sq. In 1999 the park was increased to maintain the integrity of its ecosystems as well as allow for effective management

Joe Vieira Park

This area was designated a Park on the 24th March 1982. It is situated on the West Bank of Demerara and is bounded as follows:

3.1 Organizational Chart

The National Parks Commission has a total of 115 staff across the five parks.

This includes the Administrative Staff at the Head Office and an Accounts Department;

The maintenance Department falls under the Deputy Manager / Operations Manager and consists of the Mechanical, Electrical and Building and Infrastructure Maintenance, and the Security Divisions.

These areas serve the various Parks with the exception of the Security division for the Joe Vieira Park and Kaieteur Park which is combined in the description of the Wardens.

The National Parks Commission is challenged by the absence of a Park Manager at Kaieteur National Park to supervise the day to day operations of the park.

In addition, the very limited technical staff in middle management / supervisory positions makes management of the Commission laborious as Management has to be involved in every minute aspect of the operations; this detracts from the larger matters that should be engaging the attention of upper management.

3.2 Description of Divisions and Departments

The National Parks Commission (NPC) was established in March 1972 to manage, control and develop park areas; and work in collaboration with local government authorities in the establishment of new parks.

The Commission is governed by the National Parks Act No.23 of 1977.

In 1984 the mandate for management responsibility for the Botanic Gardens and Zoological Park was given to the NPC.

The Kaieteur National Park is governed by the KNP Act Chapter 20:02 of 1929. This was amended in 1999 to extend the boundaries to 242 sq. miles and in 2000 amended to reflect indigenous people's rights to use the area for traditional and subsistence activities.

This Act constitutes a certain are of land in the vicinity of the Kaieteur Falls on the Potaro River in the county of Essequibo a National Park and provides for the control of the said park and for the preservation of the natural scenery, fauna and flora of the Park.

It further provides for use of the Park in accordance with the rules, where it is not lawful for any person to enter into, travel or encamp within the park or to build any structure therein, or to hunt, chase, catch, shoot at, kill or otherwise disturb the soil by mining or other operations within the park or to remove anything whatsoever from the park except in accordance with regulations made under the Act.

Currently NPC has under responsibility the following divisions:

- National Park
- Botanic Gardens
- Zoological Park
- Joe Vieira Park
- Kaieteur National Park

The technical / operational divisions are assisted by the Administration and Finance Divisions to carry out their respective mandates.

The National Parks Commission's functions are to:

- Maintain and regulate the use of any designated park so as to leave it unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations
- Make recommendations to the National Trust to achieve the conservation of the natural beauty of any area of land in Guyana and to carry out such acts as the National Trust directs for the purpose of attaining the objectives of those recommendations;
- Collaborate with local government authorities in developing any area of land subject to the control of any such authority for the purpose of affording to members of the public opportunity for open air recreations;

- Provide to local government authorities maintenance services in respect of Parks on such terms and conditions as the Commission sees fit
- Give general advice to the Minister or any statutory body in relation to the provision or improvement of opportunities for the enjoyment of the country side by members of the public.

4.0 Summary and Review of Current Year's Programme

4.1 Division 1 –

National Park and Joe Vieira Park

The National Park and Joe Vieira Park serves to provide areas of relaxation and recreation for the public. It offers arenas for various sport disciplines as well as picnic areas and open spaces for relaxation. In addition to providing and maintaining places for enjoyment the Parks also serves in other areas of environmental education and cooperation's.

Education and Awareness

- Developed with the assistance of a Peace Corps Volunteer the first National Park Website

Inter-Agency Collaboration

- University of Guyana- Donate a Tree Project - The NPC serves in an advisory capacity on the Committee set up to re-landscape the University Campus
- Ministry of Public Works & Communication –La Repentir Cemetery – The NPC sits of the Restoration of the La Repentir Cemetery Committee
- Bird Strike Committee- The NPC sits on the Committee that has been developed to address the Bird Strike issues at the airport

Staff Development

Staff was exposed to training opportunities in the following areas:

- counterfeit note detection by the Bank of Guyana
- Bio gas and solid waste management
- Protected Areas Management

Corporate Support

- Play land Rehabilitation- This commenced during the year under review and is expected to be completed in early 2012; the rehabilitative works are being done by a series of donors, the lead group being the Inner Wheel Club of Georgetown. The Play Park has been expanded to include a benab and washroom facilities. The Park has been designed to accommodate differently abled children
- Courts Guyana sponsored two benabs in the National Park. These are used by the public for picnicking and other recreational activities
- Lawn Tennis Association commenced some rehabilitative work on the tennis courts in the National Park; this is an ongoing project to raise funds for the resurfacing of the Courts.

Major Activities held in the National Park

- Children's Mash parade
- Republic Day Activities
- Kite Flying, Easter Holiday- Sunday / Easter Monday
- Independence Celebrations
- Arrival Day Celebrations
- Emancipation Day Celebrations

- There were also several games of cricket and a number of shows and various events held in the Stadium area

- In the **Sport Fields** several disciplines are practiced including cycle training and matches, athletic training, football and the opening of the Rugby Season with the Bank DIH Sevens Tournament was hosted.

The National Park assists the Ptolemy Reid Rehabilitation Centre with therapy sessions by allowing the use of the ponies by the children this enables an essential part of the physical rehabilitation therapy for the young patients in need of our services

In addition to improving the state of their physical and mental condition it also doubtlessly provide a source of much enjoyment and enrichment in their lives.

Capital Works

- **Revetment manatee pond and Land reclamation**

This work is being done in phases, commencing with the most critical spot first. This has helped to provide a better habitat for the manatees that is more conducive to breeding as well as ensuring the pond is habitable in dry conditions.

It has stopped erosion and land degradation and allows for the preservation of the Park.

In reclaiming the lost land to erosion we have also been able to preserve the landscape.

- **Resurfaced Carifesta Car Park**

The Carifesta Car Park in the National Park was in a deplorable state primarily because of wear and tear over several years of heavy use by members of the public who frequent the Park.

Early in the year under review the car park was resurface and has generated much satisfaction from the general public as to its rehabilitation.

- **Resurfaced cycle track**

The cycle track in the national park was another project that generated high praise following its resurfacing.

Almost every Saturday, the cycle track in the National Park is used for training and actual competition.

It is where many of Guyana's young cyclists commence their training for international races.

The now resurfaced cycle track has allowed for the sport to grow nationally as more interest is being generated in the sport.

Additionally the fitness enthusiasts who walk daily in the park and in particular the elderly much appreciate the smoother surface for walking.

Switch Gear upgrade

With the upgrade of the main power supply in load supply can now be maintained; these works were critical to the

4.2 Division 2

Botanic Gardens

During the period under review the following activities at the Botanic Gardens was undertaken

- **Education & Awareness**

- ***Development of the Botanic Gardens Web-site and Social Network Pages***

- The Botanic Gardens has developed a Botanic Gardens Website www.guyanabotanicgardens.gov.gy and developed social network pages in that of Facebook for outreach and information outflow.

- ***Botanic Gardens Camp***

- 2011 saw the premier Botanical Gardens Camp being conducted; the age ranged from 6-9 and 10-13 and had a total of 30 registered participants. The program included visits to the mangrove restoration sites, the Yarrowkabra Training Centre and other activities such as tree planting, environmental probes etc.

- This was sponsored by Courts Guyana in the sum of one hundred and fifty thousand dollars and supported by other agencies such as WWF, Pastry King and others.

- ***Infrastructural Works***

- **Revetment manatee pond and Land reclamation**

- This work is being done in phases, commencing with the most critical spot first. This has helped to provide a better habitat for the manatees that is more conducive to breeding as well as ensuring the pond is habitable in dry conditions.

- It has stopped erosion and land degradation and allows for the preservation of the Gardens.

- In reclaiming the lost land to erosion we have also been able to preserve the landscape.

- ***International Collaboration***

- **Peace Corps Volunteer**

- The National Parks Commission was successful in securing a Peace Core Volunteer for a period of eight months who focused on Education and Awareness Programs and provided technical and hands on assistance to the Botanic Gardens in the implementation of its program of activities as it relates to community development programs in the Botanic Gardens.

- Through this support the NPC has developed a plant data base and map; planned and implemented the Botanic Gardens Camp, expanded the Kaieteur souvenir line; developed a Botanic Gardens Website www.guyanabotanicgardens.gov.gy and developed social network pages in that of Facebook for outreach and information outflow.

Private / Public Partnerships

- **Tele-Gathering XVI**

Every year the Telephone Companies around the Caribbean host a tele-gathering conference in a member state country. In 2011 the host country was Guyana. A community project forms part of a series of activities;

2011's community project was the development of a Caribbean Garden in the Botanic Gardens where representations of participating countries national flower was planted; This was done in by a group of approximately eighty representatives from around the Caribbean. This was done on April 21 2011 and supported by Guyana Telephone & Telegraph Ltd.

- **Botanic Gardens declared a Bird Sanctuary**

The Botanic Gardens is now well known for its bird collection and is constantly growing as a bird watching site in Guyana.

It boasts of being the home of over 100 species of birds found in the heart of the City of Georgetown and is easily accessible on a transportation route.

At dawn and at dusk many visitors come to the Gardens to observe the many species with the Garden.

On November 18 2011 the Botanic Gardens was declared a Bird Sanctuary by the Minister of Tourism Hon. Maniram Prashad, being the first area in Guyana to be officially declared a bird sanctuary.

4.3 Division 3

Zoological Park

Education and Awareness

▪ Nature School

The Nature School in the Zoological Park on an average has five thousand students passing through the School and Zoo for a structured lesson and practical session per annum.

Everyday two schools are brought into the Zoo with the "Zoo Bus" a 36 seater bus which was made possible through donations from several Zoos, and likeminded organizations.

The kids are brought from as far as the West Coast, West Bank, East Coast and East Bank and spend approximately 2 ½ hrs. per session.

Materials and teaching aids are prepared by the Nature School Lecturer; other materials such as posters, colouring books etc. are supported from various donors such as World Wildlife Fund-Guiana's (WWF) which are distributed to the students for their class rooms.

Every Wednesday, the Environmental Protection Agency does a guest feature and presents a lesson on a particular environmental topic to the visiting class.

Below are the details of the 2011 visitation to the Nature School

Month	No. of Schools	Total No. of Students	No. of Teachers	Sessions Held	Sessions Lost
January	25	695	32	25	1
February	24	866	139	24	2
March	31	970	42	31	2
April	1	32	1	1	-
May	5	152	9	5	-
June	22	751	45	22	-
July	<i>Closed</i>	<i>for</i>	<i>school</i>	<i>holiday</i>	-
August	<i>Closed</i>	<i>for</i>	<i>school</i>	<i>holiday</i>	-
September	20	600	40	20	-
October	10	260	15	10	2
November	38	1216	76	38	7 due to elections
December	14	300	20	14	1
Total	190	5842	419	190	15

In addition to the Nature School Classes there is also a reference library that students preparing for CXC and Common Entrance use to assist them in completing assignments and course work.

▪ **Development of the Zoological park Web-site and Social Network Page**

The Zoological Park upgraded its Website www.zoologicalpark.gov.gy and developed social network page in that of face-book for outreach and information outflow.

▪ **Zoo Camp**

Every year the Zoological Park holds a Camp called the "Zoo Camp" which runs for four weeks with altering aged kids, 6-9 and 10-14;

This is designed to have the children engaged in meaningful fun exercises while at the same time learning something that has an impact on society and the environment.

One Camp runs for a week and consists of several activities such as field trips, tree plantings, feed the manatees, educational videos, pony rides, lecture and activity (question & answer) sessions etc.

Various guest speakers are also invited from the Guyana Horticulture Society, the Environmental Protection Agency etc.

This is supported also through donations of materials, snacks and volunteering of time.

▪ **Zoo Volunteers**

The Zoo is supported by a group of young people called the "Zoo Volunteers" who visit primarily on weekend and holidays and assist in three main areas which include:

- ✓ "Policing of the Grounds" – this involves patrolling the grounds of the Zoo to ensure that visitors don't tease, poke, feed and injure the animals.
- ✓ Cage-side Talks – this involves the identification of specific species of animals and giving visitors a brief on the interesting facts of that species.
- ✓ Conducted Tours – groups of visitors can request a Tour of the Zoo either on specific species or a complete tour of the Zoo (as is requested)

▪ **Donations**

New Species at the Zoo

During the latter part of 2011 the Zoological Park was in receipt of several donations of animals particularly in the area of birds and snakes.

With the donation of snakes we were able to enhance the exhibit significantly making it more interactive for visitors.

In April 2011 a presentation of new species to the collection at Zoological Park was made by Premnauth and Violet Mohanlall owners of Hyde Park Zoo Sanctuary and Tropical Gardens; this included a Giant River Otter, George.

- **Olive Ridley Turtle Rescued**

The Zoo provided a temporary home for an Olive Ridley Turtle rescued near the Georgetown Ferry Stelling on May 19 2011. It was held at the Zoo for one week while under treatment and then released into the Atlantic Ocean.

- **Visitation**

The Zoological Park continues to attract a constant flow of visitors with an average visitation of approximately ten thousand persons per month

During the course of the year several special groups also visit the Zoological Park.

During the Easter holiday of 2011 a Cruise Ship, *Minerva II*, visited Guyana; approximately 80 passengers visited Zoological Park.

- ***Public Private Partnership***

In April 2011 the National Parks Commission / Zoological Park entered into an agreement with the Hyde Park Zoo Sanctuary and Tropical Gardens; this serves to provide for the exchange of knowledge, experiences, and support in the areas of techniques, capacity building, and animal exchanges.

To date the agreement has facilitated the donation of animals to the Guyana Zoo; medical support for the animals and other technical advice.

4.4 Division 4

Kaieteur National Park

The challenge for the future is to maintain the delicate balance between preserving this pristine environment and allowing Guyana to benefit from sharing this treasure with the world.

The National Parks Commission, the implementing arm of the Kaieteur National Park Board over the year in review focused on several areas for improvement at the Park.

The major activities have been detailed below.

Education and Awareness

- Developed with the assistance of a Peace Corps Volunteer the first Facebook page for Kaieteur National Park and the upgrading and expansion of the website, www.kaieteurpark.gov.gy these sites are the most comprehensive source of information on Kaieteur to date. The site is updated regularly and will highlight key activities at Kaieteur Park as part of efforts to raise awareness and promote a better understanding of the Park.
- Preparation of a Kaieteur Information package which includes a revised and updated brochure, post cards and book marks. This information is being used by Tourism promoters as part of the suite of information for promoting Guyana.

Stakeholder Relations

- In November the National Parks Commission in collaboration with Guyana Tourism Authority and USAID conducted a Tour Guide Training Program for the Tour Guides at Kaieteur National Park, this was also extended to the community where four persons were nominated by the Community to participate in the training. This is an ongoing initiative that allows for Community support and development while creating a pool of resource personnel with the knowledge of the Kaieteur National Park.

Training and Capacity Building

The National Parks Commission is fully committed to providing training and capacity building for staff of the Commission.

Enhanced abilities allow for staff to perform at a higher level and improve outputs and efficiency.

- Warden Rudolph Bob Semple in July attended the Tour Guide Training Program conducted by the Guyana Tourism Authority along with Guyana Trade & Investment Support - USAID.
- In November as part of the KNP initiatives to mark Tourism Awareness Month, the National Parks Commission in collaboration with Guyana Tourism Authority and USAID conducted a Tour Guide Training Program for the Tour Guides at Kaieteur National Park.
- Guest House Attendant attended a Training Course on Food Safety and Security

Infrastructure

Basic infrastructure is a major need at the Kaieteur National Park; noting this efforts have been made to expand the services and improve upon existing structures combining them all into one central place serving the needs of the visitors.

With this in mind KfW supported the establishment of a Visitor Arrival Centre which was commissioned on September 25 2011 at the Kaieteur National Park with a small ceremony.

Invitees included the German Ambassador to Guyana Mr. Stephan Schulter, then advisor to the President, H.E Donald Ramotar, now President of Guyana, Ministers of Government, KfW/GFA representatives and Community members.

The Centre houses the office of the Park, a communication centre, a souvenir shop, cafeteria, interpretation centre and rest room facilities.

Research and Assessments

A Biodiversity Assessment at Kaieteur National Park was done in collaboration with WWF; for this assessment focus was on areas beyond the falls area and aimed to assess terrestrial biodiversity-plants, mammals, birds, reptiles, insects and amphibians.

Four representative sample areas were done, Mure Mure, Lower Potaro, Tukeit/Elinku and Amakwa. This supported some elements of the management plan and gave some idea of species richness, description of vegetation and as a spin off from the assessment biodiversity monitoring protocols and guidance notes for tourism development.

A multi-disciplinary team from the University of Guyana, Research Institutions and the Community of Chenapou effected the survey.

The reports are being compiled and will feed into the Kaieteur National park Management Plan.

Improved Communication

On September 25 2012, the first ever "land line" telephone call was made from Kaieteur National Park following the installation of the first such telephone at Kaieteur.

This allows visitors, residence and the community a faster and more efficient communication mode. It is particularly useful in cases of emergencies and enhances the emergency response plan.

Overnighting visitors find it particularly useful as they are able to have communication with family while being in a remote location

Filming at Kaieteur

During the period under review the BBC filming crew visited the Kaieteur National Park to conduct two filming sessions

Visitation

Notable Visits during the Year

- *Board Members of World Wildlife Fund- Washington*
- *Vice President IDB and Nobel Prize Winner Dr. Rajendra Patchouri*

Table showing number of visitors to Kaieteur National Park during 2011

Month	No. of Persons Visiting
January	228
February	321
March	257
April	276
May	272
June	279
July	322
August	300
September	270
October	275
November	243
December	230
Total	3273

- ***Cruise Ship Minerva II***

The Kaieteur National Park over the Easter Weekend hosted approximately 80 guests, passengers of the Cruise Ship Minerva II which docked at the Georgetown port.

- ***Planning - Development Projects***

▪ **Kaieteur National Park Management Plan**

The National Parks Commission (NPC) the implementing agency of the Kaieteur National Park Board, through funding from the World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF Guiana's), commenced the development of management plan for the Kaieteur National Park in 2010; it was envisioned that the plan would guide, over the coming eight years, the conservation and management of the KNP and wider ecosystem including strengthening linkages to local community development. The Commission has contracted the services of a Protected Area Specialist who was tasked with the responsibility of leading the Management Planning Process, and the Project Team which included representatives of NPC, KNP Board, EPA, WWF and Chenapou Village.

The management planning process included public and private consultations with various stakeholders. These consultations were conducted by members of the management planning team which comprised of: Dr Graham Watkins (PA Specialist), Odacy Davis (Project Coordinator), Padmini Ragnauth (Project Assistant), Vibert Welch (Tourism Development Specialist), Oronde Drakes (Geographic Information System Specialist) and representatives of NPC, KNP Board, WWF, EPA and Chenapou Village.

The management plan will be presented in three parts; the core management plan, a Tourism Development document and a Business Plan;

These documents are expected to be fully completed in early January 2012.

