



# Annual Report 2012





Co-operative Republic of Guyana

**National Parks Commission  
Annual Report  
2012**

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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 the projected sum by twenty one million dollars. This is primarily due to increased visitation at the Kaieteur National Park, rental in advertisements and the stadium facilities. Over the past year work continued on infrastructural development, land reclamation, and visitor amenities 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.

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 2012, 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 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 efficiency thereby contributing to improved presentation.

This is evidenced by the showcasing of the macaws, primates and cougars.

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

Over 2012, the NPC continued its partnership with the stakeholders in furthering the work of the National Parks Commission.

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. We recognize the vital importance of early preparation and training. In July we conducted the 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.

Guyana was represented at the Regional Workshop on CITES Legislation in ACTO Member countries in Ecuador; report attached

### **Planning & Development**

The Pick It up Guyana Initiative was launched on June 5 2012 in the National Park; an initiative that focuses on involving the citizens in a cleaner and healthier environment for all Guyana.

### **Human Resources**

- A project officer was seconded to the NPC from the Environmental Protection Agency to focus on developmental projects on the Parks and to strengthen supervision of the grounds personnel.
- Occupational health and safety incidence resulted in one death during the year (February 17 2012) where an employee was involved in a vehicular accident and lost his life.

### **Friends of Parks & Gardens**

A Friends of Parks and Gardens initiative was launched in early 2012 which focused on bringing together a core group of private sector representatives charged with supporting the work of the NPC and garnering financial support towards specific developmental projects across the Parks.

The management of natural resources and the challenge climate change has presented highlights a new program direction for the Commission and places a higher priority and renewed emphasis on on-the-ground services that will strengthen employee skills and secure the resources needed to respond adequately and appropriately to the threat to natural resources.

This focuses the NPC on an integrated, results-oriented framework for implementing and assessing processes for managing park operations. Findings and other results of this effort will be useful in addressing future challenges to the NPC and will enable park managers to communicate this information to others and integrate it into the broader decision-making process.



## **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 24<sup>th</sup> 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.

NPC attended and participated in several workshops, consultations and discussions; the main ones are as follows:

1. National Stakeholders Consultation Forum on the Natural Resources Sector
2. National Training Workshop on continued Enhancement Building Capacity for effective participation in the Bio Safety clearing House
3. Implementation Review of 2<sup>nd</sup> National Biodiversity Action Plan
4. Launching of Guyana's Mining Toolkit
5. Caribbean Tourism Organisation's 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Caribbean Conference on Sustainable Tourism Development
6. Meeting on Multilateral Environmental Agreements
7. Guyana Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Annual General Meeting
8. National Tashas Council Meeting 2012
9. Attended Regional Workshop on CITES Legislation in ACTO Member Countries.
10. Seminar on Managing the Extractive Sector for Development in Guyana
11. Conservation Trust Fund-Stakeholder Consultations for Strategic Planning Process of the Conservation Trust Fund.

##### ***Education and Awareness***

- Several initiatives were undertaken in expanding the education and awareness aspect of the Commission. In particular the National Park focused on Improved signage focusing on - littering, animals in the Parks and smoke free zones

##### ***Inter-Agency Collaboration***

- Participated in the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment booth at the Trade and Investment Exposition (Guy Expo) September 27-30 2012 under the theme, "***Strengthening the Traditional, Embracing the New***"

##### ***Human Resource Management Staff Development***

Staff was exposed to training opportunities in several areas including counterfeit note detection conducted by the Bank of Guyana

### ***Retirement***

- Mr. Clement Trotz, retired after 40 years of service; at the time of his retirement he held the Office of Deputy Manager of the Commission
- Theresa Xavier retired after having served the Commission for 17 years in various categories

### ***Corporate Support***

- Play land Rehabilitation- phase I of the rehabilitative works were completed with the support of 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. It was re-commissioned on March 16 2012 and was attended by Her Excellency Mrs. Deolatchme Ramotar and Hon. Robert M Persaud, Minister of Natural Resources and the Environment among other invitees

- The Lawn Tennis Association commenced rehabilitative work on the tennis courts in the National Park; this is an ongoing project to raise funds for the resurfacing of the Courts. This initiative was supported by Republic Bank

### ***Major Activities held in the National Park***

- Chinese New Year Celebrations – Year of the Dragon
- Children’s Mash parade
- Republic Day Activities
- Kite Flying, Easter Holiday- Sunday / Easter Monday
- Independence Celebrations
- Arrival Day Celebrations
- Green Walk, Environmental Day
- GGMC National Mining Fair
- Emancipation Day Celebrations
- Inter Guiana Cultural Festival, Celebrating our Culture, Bridging Friendship, Culinary Exhibits
- 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 of the Irrigation Canal**

This work is being done in phases, commencing with the most critical spot first. This has helped to provide a better control of erosion caused by water as well as ensuring its capacity to hold water as a reservoir for the manatee ponds in dry conditions.

It also contributes to a stoppage of 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.

With the plan to expand the Operations at the NPC with the aim of increasing its revenue earning capacity improved land transport was considered with the approval of one pick up; In addition, with the increasing incidents of criminal activities in both the National Park and Botanic Gardens the vehicle also supports patrols on our locations

- **Security**

On November 16 2012 the National Parks Commission in collaboration with the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment and the Guyana Police Force launched the ***Operation Safe Parks Initiative***.

This initiative is designed to boost security at the Botanic Gardens and National Park in response to a surge in robberies in these areas.

The operation has lead to a heightened police presence in both locations, along with random police patrols and the hiring of additional security guards.

The NPC working through the MNRE is working to implement a long term security strategy that will focus on all areas under the responsibility of the Commission.

- The Commission also received a donation of two golf carts valued at 1.2 million each; these have been assigned to the Security Division at the Botanic Gardens and National Park.

## **Obituary**

John Cartey Caesar passed away on November 17 2012 in hospital after being ill for some time. He served the NPC as Chairman from 2002 up to the time of his passing; prior to that he served on the Board of Directors.

## 4.2 Division 2

### Botanic Gardens

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.

The Botanic Gardens was declared a Bird Sanctuary and is the first area in Guyana to be officially declared a bird sanctuary.

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

- **Education & Awareness**

- Several initiatives were undertaken in expanding the education an awareness aspect of the Commission. In particular the National Park focused on Improved signage focusing on littering, animals in the Parks and smoke free zones

Tree labels were also installed in the Gardens identifying the names of the trees, scientific names, family and country of origin. This is particularly useful to the Biology and Forestry students and enhances the Gardens in its tourism product also.

- **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.

- **Private / Public Partnerships**

- **Macorp** supported the work at the Botanic Gardens through the loan of an excavator to clear the water ways that are overgrown and blocking the main drainage canals and catchment areas.  
With the support received the drainage by way of the canals is much improved.

- **Inter Agency Support**

- As part of the activities to mark Tourism Awareness Month, enhancement projects in collaboration with GTA were done including installing signage informing of the bird sanctuary and speed control bumps



### **4.3 Division 3**

### ***Zoological Park***

The Guyana Zoo is a unique place to discover and learn.

It is charged with the mission of developing, operating and promoting a wildlife centre for the combined purposes of conservation, education, recreation and scientific study for the benefit of all Guyanese.

Over the past year, the Zoological Park focused on infrastructural development and other areas that served to improve and expand on the existing infrastructure and activities at the Zoo.

#### **Planning & Development**

- PJA landscape architects out of Seattle Washington came to Guyana at our request to review existing structures and the layout with a view of advising on expansion and improvements. The architect held a consultation with various stakeholders to expand and redesign the existing area.
- Funding has been secured for the development of a master plan; phase II of this aspect of the developmental works.
- An enrichment program was developed with support from Head of the Wildlife Management Authority and seeks to improve on the welfare of the animals on exhibit.

#### ***Education and Awareness***

##### **▪ *Nature School***

~~The Guyana Zoo offers a wildlife education programme for primary and secondary coastal schools.~~

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 2012 visitation to the Nature School

Month	No. of Schools	Total No. of Students	No. of Teachers	Sessions Held
January	22	507	22	22
February	13	285	15	13
March	11	397	12	11
April	-	-	-	-
May	26	656	28	26
June	10	836	13	10
July	<i>school</i>	<i>Holiday</i>	-	-
August	<i>School</i>	<i>holiday</i>	-	-
September	14	426	17	14
October	13	440	15	13
November	21	663	23	21
December	10	297	13	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>4507</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>140</b>

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.

- **Signage**- Improved Signage on tree species was another project undertaken in an effort to improve education and awareness aspects of the Zoo

90 trees were labeled in the Zoo with the common name, scientific name, country of origin and the family the species belongs to. This information is particularly useful to CXC and University students

- **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; 105 students attended Zoo Camp in 2012

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.

- **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.

- **Public Private Partnership**

Courts Guyana – rehabilitating the play land area. Courts committed one million Guyana dollars to rehabilitating Play land in the Zoo. This included repairing existing structures and adding new structures and play equipment to the area.

- **Developmental works**

Architect James Brighton from PJA architects, Seattle, Washington visited Guyana at the request of the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment on September 22 2012, this was to review the layout of the Zoological Park and based on consultation with various stakeholders over a two day workshop revised the existing layout.

A draft layout was prepared and presented to the stakeholders present.



### **Security Matters**

Security continues to be the biggest challenge at the Zoological Park; during the year the Zoo suffered several invasions resulting in the loss and deaths of many animals. Police investigations remain unsolved.

The initiative was taken to invest heavily in Motion lights, trip beams, cameras and privatized security in an effort to curb the invasions to the Zoo and the brutality inflicted on the animals.

### **Captive breeding**

The Zoological Park has recorded several successes in captive breeding at the Zoo during the year. Macaws for the first time in twenty years nested and hatched young macaws; while the snakes mated and gave birth on two occasions.

Credit must be given to the hardworking and dedicated staff, in particular Adonika Spellen who works tirelessly at the Zoological Park for the betterment of the animals and who has made several strides in advancing the Zoo since her appointment.

The Zoo has not had this intensity of commitment at this level in at least the last sixteen years.

### **Veterinary Care**

Dr. Nardeo Bassoodeo, was assigned to the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment with specific responsibilities for the Zoological Park (twice per week – Tuesdays and Thursdays)

### **Institutional Relationships / Interagency Collaboration**

- Wildlife Division and Zoological Park

The Head of the Wildlife Division, Ms. Alona Sankar is presently assisting the Zoo in the development and implementation of an enrichment Program.

This enrichment program seeks to enhance the quality of care provided to the animals by identifying and providing the appropriate environmental stimuli which is necessary for optimizing the physiological well being of the animals.

The goal for each animal is to increase the desirable behaviours and decrease undesirable behaviours.

The specific objectives are to identify the desirable behaviours to be increased and those to be decreased to determine why the animal is engaging in the undesirable behaviour, to decide what behavioural change is desired and to determine what type of enrichment will be provided.

#### 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***

- 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.

#### ***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.

#### ***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. This is installed just off the air strip at the Park.

At the Tukeit Station a Rest House & Wardens Quarters will be constructed in 2013. The contractor is currently mobilizing for the commencement of this project.

Upon completion this will strengthen the Ranger presence with the Park and expand and improve upon the Visitor Services

#### ***Filming at Kaieteur***

A filming permit was applied for by Marion Pollmann of Blue Paws Artist, a German filming company and granted by Guyana Tourism Authority and the Environmental Protection Agency to film and photograph at Kaieteur National Park and other areas in Guyana for the production of a documentary.

#### ***Human Resources***

The Human Resources at the Park are constantly being improved upon.

A Senior Warden was hired during the year and is charged with overseeing the day to day operations at the Park.

### Visitation

Kaieteur National Park continues to have several notable visitors to the Park and in particular the Falls.

#### Notable Visits during the Year

- Hon. Devant Maharaj, Minister of Food Production, Ms. Myrna Thompson, Permanent Secretary, Mr. Matthew Lee, Director, Agricultural Planning Division, Mr. Nigel Grimes, Large Farms Coordinator, Ministry of Food Production, Trinidad and Tobago.
- Outstanding CXC & CAPE students
- Miss Universe and her delegation

Table showing number of visitors to Kaieteur National Park during 2012

Month	No. of Persons Visiting
January	561
February	253
March	410
April	594
May	974
June	440
July	832
August	598
September	313
October	448
November	562
December	297
<b>Total</b>	<b>5985</b>

#### • 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 a 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. 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 2013.





