National Conservation Council

National Conservation Council
Cayman Islands

Promoting and securing
biological diversity
and the sustainable use
of natural resources
in the Cayman Islands

Annual Report 2019

The National Conservation Council at the Hemmington Forest Protected Area, Dec. 2019.

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Executive Summary

The National Conservation Council exists to promote and secure the biological diversity of the Cayman Islands and ensure the sustainable use of Cayman's natural resources. It acts to protect and conserve endangered, threatened and endemic wildlife and their habitats. The Council oversees the protection of terrestrial, wetland and marine areas with the support of the current generation and for the benefit of future generations of the Cayman Islands.

In furtherance of the above goals, in 2019 the National Conservation Council oversaw the issuance of over 200 permits or licenses for activities under the National Conservation Law, as well as almost 550 pieces of advice to various entities considering decisions or actions which may have had an adverse impact on native species and habitats. The Council consulted with the public and made recommendations to the Cabinet on a number of conservation measures such as the protection of land crabs, the revision of game bird hunting seasons, protections for stingrays and starfish, changes to spear gun and marine protected area regulations, the protection of wild marine turtles and the management of invasive species, as well as publicly nominated protected areas.

Looking ahead to 2020 one of the significant challenges for the National Conservation Council remains the positive resolution of conservation initiatives recommended to the Ministry of Environment for conclusion by the Cabinet, or which rely on the timely and forceful action of Government entities.

A feral cat predating a hatchling rock iguana in Little Cayman. Source DoE Sister Islands Rock Iguana Survey, Little Cayman 2019.

Ecologically effective feral cat control has still not been resolved and will be an increasingly significant conservation challenge for native birds and reptiles on all three islands if a solution is not found in 2020.

Chapter 1 Cayman Islands National Conservation Council

1.1 Purpose

The National Conservation Council (the Council, NCC) is established by, and to facilitate the goals of, the National Conservation Law 2013 (the Law, NCL), that is: to promote and secure biological diversity and the sustainable use of natural resources in the Cayman Islands; to protect and conserve endangered, threatened and endemic wildlife and their habitats; to provide for protected terrestrial, wetland and marine areas; and to give effect to the provisions of certain international conventions (the Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean region, the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (especially as waterfowl habitat), the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, the Global Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change).

1.2 Statutory Functions

The functions of the NCC are set out in Part 2, section 3 of the Law, in particular in subsection (9):

(a) subject to this Law, managing and making recommendations on the use of the Environmental Protection Fund;
(b) promoting the biological diversity and the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources in the Islands;
(c) co-ordinating the establishment and adoption by the public and private sectors of national policies for the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources, including-
  (i) the use of wetlands and wetland resources; and
  (ii) the excavation of aggregate and fill materials;
(d) recommending and maintaining protected areas and conservation areas and conserving, maintaining and restoring their natural resources in accordance with Part 3;
(e) conserving, maintaining and restoring populations and critical habitats of protected species in accordance with Part 4;
(f) promoting the training of professional and voluntary personnel in the fields of research, management and wardening of protected areas and species and the other natural resources of the Islands;
(g) promoting wider understanding and awareness of the significance of the ecological systems of the Islands, the benefits of conserving natural resources and of the provisions of this Law and the Conventions;
(h) publicising the establishment of protected areas and the designation of protected species and raising public awareness, through educational programmes and other means, of the significance and value of protected areas and species and of the benefits that may be gained from them;
(i) encouraging public involvement, particularly by local communities, in the planning and management of protected areas and the conservation of protected species;
(j) promoting the adoption of guidelines by entities for the integration of conservation issues into their decision making processes and for the achievement of the sustainable use of natural resources;

(k) promoting district, national and regional initiatives, including co-operative enforcement measures and mutual assistance in the enforcement of national laws, in order to further the objectives of the Conventions;
(l) promoting national plans for emergency responses to activities or events, whether caused naturally or not, that present a grave and imminent danger to biological diversity and encouraging international co-operation to supplement such national plans;
(m) promoting national plans for the sustainable management, conservation and enhancement, as appropriate, of sinks and reservoirs of greenhouse gases; and
(n) carrying out such other functions and duties as are specified under this Law and the regulations;

and in subsection (12):

the Council, subject to any directions of the Cabinet, may make orders and guidance notes and issue directives for the purpose of giving effect to the provisions of this Law and such orders, guidance notes and directives may include-

(a) criteria for identifying endangered or threatened species or other species needing protection under this Law;
(b) criteria for evaluating proposals for the establishment and management of protected areas and for the measures required to protect and conserve protected species and their critical habitat;
(c) criteria for the application for, and grant of, monies from the Fund;
(d) criteria for the review, assessment and reporting of activities funded in whole or in part by monies from the Fund;
(e) the form and content of a petition under section 16(3);
(f) procedures for determining the circumstances under which permits and licences may be granted under Part 5;
(g) measures governing the methods and conditions under which the captive breeding or artificial propagation of protected species may be allowed;
(h) procedures for regulating and controlling wild populations and the import, introduction, possession, transportation and release of alien or genetically altered specimens;
(i) procedures for consultation by entities pursuant to section 41(3); and
(j) the carrying out of environmental impact assessments under section 43.

1.3 About this report

This report is prepared in compliance with the duty set out in section 5 of the Law requiring the Council, no later than three months after the end of the financial year, to prepare and submit to the Minister a report of its activities during the preceding year, following which the Minister shall submit it to Cabinet for laying on the table of the Legislative Assembly.

This is the fifth annual report of the National Conservation Council and covers the period from 1 January 2019 to 30 December 2019 inclusive.

1.4 Composition of the Council

The Law regulates the composition of the Council. The Council is composed of thirteen voting members (section 3(2)) who are more specifically identified in Schedule 2:

(a) the Director or his nominee from the Department of the Environment;
(b) the Deputy Director of Research in the Department of the Environment;
(c) the Director of the Department of Agriculture or his nominee from the Department of Agriculture;
(d) the Director of Planning or his nominee from the Department of Planning;
(e) a person nominated by the National Trust and appointed by the Cabinet; and
(f) eight persons appointed by the Cabinet.

The Cabinet appoints the Chair (Schedule 2). Amongst the Cabinet appointees at least four shall have relevant scientific or technical expertise and they are chosen such that there is at least one person from each of the six electoral districts.

The 2019 National Conservation Council comprised

- McFarlane Conolly - Chairperson; East End and Sustainable Development
- Franklin Thompson - West Bay and Marine Conservation
- Lisa Hurlston-McKenzie - George Town and Sustainable Development & Climate Change
- Dominic Williams - Bodden Town
- Edward Chisholm - North Side
- Pedro Lazzari - Sister Islands
- Nadia Hardie - National Trust for the Cayman Islands
- Patricia Bradley - Avifauna & Biodiversity
- Fred Burton - Terrestrial Biodiversity
- Adrian Estwick - Director of Agriculture
- Haroon Pandohie - Director of Planning
- Colleen Stoetzel - Planning Officer, representing the Director of Planning
- Gina Ebanks-Petrie – Director, Department of Environment
- Timothy Austin – Department of Environment Deputy Director, Research

The Department of Environment is charged with appointing a Secretary to the Council (section 6). John Bothwell, Manager of the Department's Legislation Implementation and Coordination Unit, has remained as Secretary throughout 2019.

Chapter 2 Council Activities, January – December 2019

2.1 Governance

Section 3 of the Law governs the proceedings of the Council. Seven voting members of the Council constitute a quorum. The decisions of the Council are by simple majority and the chair has a casting vote only. The Council is obligated to meet in a place open to the public and cause to be prepared and published the agendas and minutes of all meetings. The Council may, subject to the Law, regulate its own procedure.

The Council's Manual of Policy and Procedure contains rules for administration of the Council, a Code of Conduct, a procedure for Disclosure of Interests and for a Register of Interests. The Council chose to adopt the model Code of Conduct proposed by the Commission for Standards in Public Life.

In respect of Disclosure of Interests Schedule 2 of the Law provides, in subsection 9:

(1) If a member of the Council has any pecuniary or other interest in any matter to be dealt with by the Council he shall disclose the fact to the chairman and shall not take part in any meeting at which the matter is considered or discussed.
(2) A member of the Council who fails to comply with subparagraph (1) commits an offence and is liable-
    (a) on summary conviction to a fine of twenty thousand dollars and to imprisonment for two years; or
    (b) on conviction on indictment to a fine of fifty thousand dollars and to imprisonment for five years,
    unless he proves that he did not know that matter in which he had an interest was the subject of consideration at that meeting.
(3) A disclosure under subparagraph (1) shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting of the Council.

The Register of Interests is available for inspection at the Department of the Environment. No disclosures of interests were made in the reporting period.

It is anticipated that the Council members will become subject to the provisions of the Standards in Public Life Law (as amended) on its commencement.

The Department of Environment's Freedom of Information staff have been delegated to administer Freedom of Information requests to the Council.

2.2 Meetings

The Council held general meetings on February 27th, June 19th, September 11th and December 4th, 2019. Notices and agendas were published in accordance with the statutory requirement and the Council's Policy and Procedure Manual and agendas and minutes are available on the Department of the Environment website (http://doe.ky/natl-conservation-council/general-meetings/). The record of member attendance at General Meetings is included as Appendix 1.

The first three general meetings of the year were held at the Government Administration Building on Grand Cayman and the December meeting at the Government Administration Building on Cayman Brac. Council was very happy to be able to do this, as Cayman's natural environment encompasses all three of the Cayman Islands. General Meetings are open to observation by the public and at each meeting members of the public and press were present, including members of the public at the Cayman Brac meeting.

Council also conducts non-binding working groups approximately every three weeks in order to prepare for the general meetings.

Matters for the Agenda are cast as Board Papers which may consist of Information Papers or Working Papers prepared by the Department of Environment and papers prepared by Council members either individually or representing Committees of the Council. Matters for decision are usually presented with a recommendation and a draft motion for approval as the resolution of the Council.

2.3 Implementation of the National Conservation Law

Parts 5 and 7 of the National Conservation Law, 2013 (NCL), with the exception of sections 46 and 47 of Part 7, came into force on the 15th day of August 2016. This included section 51, which repealed the Marine Conservation Law (2013 Revision). Now only sections 46 and 47 of the National Conservation Law still remain to come into force.

During the course of 2019 the Council identified irregular compliance with planning-related development controls as an increasing conservation concern. The issue of illegal clearing and other works prior to the receipt of Planning Permission has been raised regularly by members of the public and covered in the local press. The Department of Environment, on behalf of the Council, has investigated all reports and referred them on to the Planning Department/Central Planning Authority for further action, if applicable, because Department of Environment Conservation officers have no authority to enforce legislation other than the NCL. These improper acts mean that native vegetation and habitat can be lost before the Council has had an opportunity under section 41 of the Law to advise the Central Planning Authority on possible measures which could be employed in order to preserve native species and habitats while still allowing socially beneficial development to occur.

It has also become apparent that within the planning approval framework, some work is conducted through 'implied consent' whereby, for example, Planning permission to subdivide property is assumed to imply permission to clear and fill the land as well, without the entity engaging in the legally required conservation consultation which would be triggered by an application for permission to clear and fill the land. Also identified in 2019 was the unpermitted construction of 30' roadways over private vehicular rights of way, where the existence of the right of way is assumed to imply permission to construct the road without further permits or review. The Council has sought legal advice on this particular issue and have been advised that Planning permission is required to construct these roads. Council will continue to work with the Department of Planning and the Solicitor General's Office during 2020 to resolve these issues.

At the request of the Minister of Environment the Council produced recommendations updating the regulation of spear guns in line with Government policy as guided by 22(2)(d) of the NCL.

Implementation of these regulations is still pending completion of the legal drafting and conservation editing cycle.

2.4 Protected Areas

Enhanced Marine Protected Area System. "At a meeting held on 26 March, 2019, Cabinet Granted approval for the National Conservation Council's enhanced Marine Parks Proposal, which would increase the marine protected areas in the Cayman Islands from current levels to between 40%-50% of shelf area in the Cayman Islands". This included some amendments made by the Cabinet in consultation with the Department of Environment. The approved proposal is now being drafted in Regulations by the Legislative Drafting Department of the Portfolio of Legal Affairs, in consultation with the Department of Environment. Once a legally formatted draft is completed it will return to Cabinet for final approval.

Terrestrial Protected Areas. Public nominations of areas suitable for consideration as Protected Areas were received in 2018. After technical assessment and public consultation they were considered by the Council in February 2019 along with other areas previously nominated, assessed and publicly reviewed. In March 2019 the National Conservation Council recommended to the Cabinet the acquisition and designation of the following protected areas:

Grand Cayman:
- Central Mangrove Wetland 46A
- Central Mangrove Wetland South-West
- Lower Valley Forest Addition
- Salina Reserve Extension
- Sand Cay
- Western Mangrove Cays

Cayman Brac:
- Eastern Lighthouse Park Expansion
- Hemmington Forest Addition
- Sections of the Bluff Cliff Face

Little Cayman:
- East Interior Addition
- Tarpon Lake Revised

These were a mixture of Crown Lands and private properties which would have to be purchased at fair market value with the agreement of the landowners. (Before any nominations were progressed the landowners were contacted to confirm their interest in the possible purchase of their property, if a sale price could be agreed after Cabinet approval.) The Lands and Survey Department, who conduct any purchase negotiations on behalf of the Cayman Islands Government, provisionally assessed the lands proposed for purchase at just under CI$9.5 million dollars. However the 2018-19 Cayman Islands Government Budget (passed in 2017) did not contain any Environmental Protection Funds earmarked for protected area acquisition, as requested. Therefore any acquisition in 2019 was dependent not only upon Cabinet's approval of the proposed protected areas but also upon supplemental funds being made available from the

Environmental Protection Fund by the Government of the Cayman Islands. (The Fund is well resourced and was created to fund these ongoing purchases of land for conservation purposes.)

Caucus reviewed the proposals in July 2019 generally favourably but no further action has occurred pending refinement of the proposals by the Department and Ministry of Environment. Given the passage of time the Council will reinitiate these proposals in 2020. Recognising the increasing length of time which subsequent protected areas have taken to progress from public nomination through final acquisition and designation, the Council at its General Meeting of 11 September, 2019, decided to alter the timing of public requests for nominations. The public can still nominate an area for protection at any time. And the Council will request nominations at least once every two years. (So there will be a call for nominations in 2020.) But the Council will no longer be tied to an annual nomination period and so may call for nominations at a convenient time, taking into account the status of previously nominated lands.

2.5 Protected Species

The Council approved handling guidelines for stingrays and starfish in order to make it clearer to the public what handling of these Part 1 protected species is allowed at designated areas, and what is not in those areas or elsewhere. This was in response to prosecutorial concerns regarding ambiguity in what was an offense and what was not under the Law, especially within Wildlife Interaction Zones. Once enacted, after formal legislative drafting is completed, these guidance notes should promote conservation of these species by making prosecutions for improper handling more achievable. Changes to the wording of the Wildlife Interaction Zone regulations, as part of the Marine Parks Enhancement, should also assist.

A public consultation was carried out on a draft Species Conservation Plan for Sybil's Crownbeard (*Verbasinia caymanensis*).

The registration of pet Cayman parrots was initiated. This project will not conclude until the first quarter of 2020 and so will be reported substantively in the 2020 Annual Report.

Several species conservation measures were submitted to the Ministry of Environment during 2019 and are pending consideration by Cabinet. The Council remains in communication with the Ministry in an on-going effort to progress these proposals to a conclusion.

- Members of the public proposed increased protection for local land crabs. This was considered, the public was consulted on the listing of local land crabs on Part 2 of the Law, and the proposal was accepted by the Council and in April 2019 was transmitted to the Ministry of Environment for Cabinet consideration.
- The mangrove species conservation plan was submitted to the Ministry of Environment for the consideration of Cabinet in March 2019. This plan will provide additional protection for mangroves around the country from unpermitted or improper clearing or removal.
- In September 2019, after public consultation, the Council considered and agreed to a proposal from a group of Caymanian hunters to alter the local game bird seasons to

dates more in keeping with the natural cycles of the two game bird species (blue winged teal and white winged doves).

- After reviewing public and stakeholder input the Council approved a draft species conservation plan for wild marine turtles in December 2019 which was sent to Cabinet via the Ministry of Environment.

In April 2019 an Interim Directive under section 17(7) of the Law was issued for the immediate protection *Agalinis kingsii*. *Agalinis kingsii* is a plant endemic to the Cayman Islands, found only on Grand Cayman, and listed in Part 1 of Schedule 1 of the Law. This unique species is a habitat specialist with an extremely restricted distribution. It has currently been recorded in only two areas of Grand Cayman which comprise the major population centres for this species globally. While one site was previously known and is under the protection and management of the National Trust for the Cayman Islands the second, non-adjacent, population was only identified in 2019 as part of a pre-development conservation site assessment by the Department of Environment. (Proving the importance of these assessments before clearing begins, as mentioned in section 2.3 above.)

Section 17(7) of the National Conservation Law provides that until such time as a Conservation Plan has been adopted for a protected species the Council may, on the advice of the Director, make such interim directives as may be urgently required for the immediate protection of that species, including the prohibition of hunting or collecting of specimens and disturbance of its critical habitat. The Director has advised, and Council agrees, that impending loss of a significant portion of the entire global population of a species due to proposed development constitutes an urgent threat to the species justifying the issuance of interim directives for the immediate protection of the species and its habitat from the immediate threat.

The interim directive shall cease to have effect on the adoption of a conservation plan for *Agalinis kingsii* or at such earlier time as the Council or the Cabinet may direct. The Department of Environment remained in regular communication during 2019 with the landowner on whose property the second population of the plant was found and is working towards production of a conservation action plan acceptable to the landowner for the permanent conservation of this very rare endemic species.

2.6 Invasive Species

In November 2018 a large-scale cull of green iguanas in Grand Cayman was initiated, building upon the knowledge gained during prior, experimental, culling exercises. By the end of the year over two hundred and ninety-four thousand iguanas had been culled. The cull continued, and remained successful, throughout 2019. By the end of the project, on 21 December 2019, the one million iguanas target had been surpassed and the project recorded the removal of 1,123,526 invasive green iguanas. The project will continue into 2020 but at some point the remaining dwindling number of green iguanas, especially in easily accessed and culled areas, will necessitate a change of programme, though this may not occur until 2021.

The Council have recognised the need for, and proposed to the Ministry of Environment, invasive species regulations. These are urgently needed to prevent persons from farming green iguanas for the bounty. They would also provide tools to better prevent or regulate the potential introduction of additional invasive species into the Cayman Islands. To bolster the rules already in place in the National Conservation, Animal and Plants Laws. The introduction of these regulations is needed in 2020 and Council will continue to push, through the Department of Environment, for the Ministry of Environment to have these regulations legally drafted by the Legislative Drafting Department.

In 2019 green iguana biosecurity and control activities continued on Little Cayman, largely through the National Trust's Green Iguana Be Gonna community programme, supported by an already on-island intern paid by the Department of Environment. Directed culling on Cayman Brac by Department of Environment organised teams also continued, with sadly increasing catches. Work on both islands will have to continue if we are to prevent the green iguana population on Cayman Brac and Little Cayman each reaching the epidemic proportions of the Grand Cayman population.

2.7 Section 41 Consultations

Under Section 41 of the National Conservation Law all Government entities are required to consult with the National Conservation Council before granting a permit or licence, or making some other decision, that would be likely to have an adverse environmental impact.

In 2018 five hundred and forty six environmental reviews (and two additional turtle friendly lighting reviews) were prepared by the Department of Environment under delegated authority from the Council for entities consulting the Council under Section 41.

Section 43 of the Law allows the Council, where necessary, to require the proponent to carry out an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). EIAs are only required where the Council is unable to robustly identify and evaluate the potential impacts associated with a particular proposal. Of the 546 environmental reviews prepared by the Department of Environment, none were determined to require an EIA.

EIAs remain international best practice at a relatively minor cost for those projects that require them, especially compared to the potential savings they can identify for the project, and an important tool for assuring the public that environmentally, socially and economically appropriate decision-making is occurring. The activation of Environmental Impact Assessments in local legislation has gone a long way to raising the profile of the Cayman Islands which in February 2013 were assessed as "weak" in each of the four areas of environmental governance (species,

sites, development control and people) evaluated by the Foundation for International Environmental Law and Development (FIELD). Having EIA legislation also assists the Cayman Islands in achieving commitments made under the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Ramsar Convention, the Environment Charter, and the Cayman Islands Constitution.

2019 Section 41 Consultations	Coastal Works Application Review	Comments to Min. Env. or Other Agency	Planning Application	Total	Deny	EIA	Approve, w/ Conditions, Defer, etc.
January	1	4	22	27	0	0	27
February	1	2	26	29	0	0	29
March	0	0	40	40	0	0	40
April	1	1	36	38	0	0	38
May	5	4	47	57	1	0	56
June	2	0	43	45	2	0	43
July	3	4	50	57	5	0	52
August	3	2	57	63	0	0	63
September	1	1	46	48	0	0	48
October	1	6	49	56	1	0	55
November	4	1	34	39	1	0	38
December	2	2	45	49	5	0	44
Total	24	27	495	548	15	0	533
%	4%	5%	90%	100%	3%	0%	97%

2.8 Climate Change Committee

Throughout 2019 the Council, individual members, and the Department of Environment continued to engage with local and international partners to both better understand the potential impacts and responses to climate change, as well as to promote the need for a robust, national-level local response to the reality of climate change for our small, low-lying country. In exercising its delegated authority the Department of Environment, with input from the Climate Change Committee, ensured that all of its Section 41 environmental reviews recommended measures to reduce physical vulnerability to climate change impacts, and enhance resiliency in efficient ways that address the consequences of and responses to changing climatic conditions.

The following 2019 activities provide an understanding of the range of climate change issues at play and the efforts of the National Conservation Council and Department of Environment to mainstream adaptation and mitigation across national planning initiatives and decision-making.

- In February the NCC and DOE accepted an invitation to dialogue with the High Commission of Canada's Climate Infrastructure Roundtable discussion on "Climate Resilience & Infrastructure Planning in the Cayman Islands." Issues relevant to the public and private sector included lack of a climate policy, access to international

climate finance, investor confidence, opportunities provided by Canadian companies, and elevating responsibility for climate change to high-level decision-makers to ensure cross-Ministry coordination.

- Also in February the DOE and NCC Chair separately consulted on the draft National Planning Framework for *PlanCayman*, the former noting climate change deficiencies throughout, the latter providing an extensive submission on climate change considerations (including projections) and mainstreaming opportunities.
- In March the DOE and National Trust attended a symposium held by the Ministry of Health, facilitated by PAHO, to raise awareness of the Caribbean Action Plan on Health & Climate Change for SIDS (formalized in May 2019) and the need for future national implementation efforts.
- In September the NCC and DOE participated in several Climate Week activities, including the National Trust's speaker sessions and the Cayman Compass' article series. The DOE also supported Car Free Day organized by the Civil Service.
- In December the DOE and NCC meet separately with students and the National Trust Education Programmes Manager who were attending UNFCCC COP25 in Madrid as delegates of the International National Trust Organization. The Council's Climate Change Committee chair provided local environmental non-governmental organisations with information to aid their activism or online advocacy efforts, and advanced blue-green-digital economy discussions with other individuals. DOE Director attended a high-level Climate Change conference on building resiliency for SIDS in Washington, D.C which was aimed at the finance sector. Council also considered a DOE request for EPF funding to research the sediment regime of Seven Mile Beach which would also enhance local knowledge of past and future climatic influences on this system.

Chapter 3 Financial

All accounts for the National Conservation Council and the Environmental Protection Fund are held and administered by the Department and Ministry of Environment. The following tables are for qualitative purposes only. Accounts for financial reporting or auditing purposes should be sourced from the Department or Ministry of Environment directly.

3.1 Council Budget and Expenses

2019 expenditure's reported by the Department of Environment on behalf of the Council was $3,654.45 for member stipends, travel and other costs for the general meeting on Cayman Brac, and public outreach.

The Council budget for the financial years 2020 & 2021 was again included with the Department of Environment's budget. The Council continues to be of the view that the Council's budget and expenses should be accounted for separately in core government accounts.

3.2 Environmental Protection Fund

Section 3 (9) of the NCL provides that the Council manage and make recommendations on the use of the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF, Fund). Although sections 46 and 47 of the Law (which provide in greater detail for the operation, management and reporting on activities financed from the Fund) remained unimplemented in this reporting period and the Fund continued to be operated under the pre-existing 1997 legislation[1], the Council makes the following report in completion of its duties under the National Conservation Law.

In 2019 the following was spent from the Environmental Protection Fund by the Department of Environment on behalf of or with the approval of the National Conservation Council.

EPF Projects - to 31 Dec 2019	$ Expenditure
ENV0002 - National Conservation Law Administration	9,150.00
ENV0003 - Stingray Study	100.00
ENV0004 - Traffic Calming Proposal for SIRI	3,469.93
ENV0005 - Cayman Parrot Amnesty	19,796.30
ENV0006 - Turtle Friendly Lighting	123,978.76
ENV0007 - Coral Reef Restoration	18,866.35
ENV0008 - Legal Advice for NCC	7,367.90
ENV0009 - Green Iguana Expenditures	4,508,018.44
Total EPF Expenditures	4,681,597.68

All information as reported by Department of Environment.

[1] The 1997 legislation describes the purpose of the Fund as "defraying expenditure incurred in protecting and preserving the environment of the Islands"

Chapter 4 2020

4.1 Goals & Objectives

With the National Conservation Law now substantially in force the National Conservation Council will balance long-term policy direction with short-term initiatives to achieve those longer-term goals, while maintaining a watching brief on ongoing conservation operations. These ongoing operations for 2020 will include:

1. Issuing Permits and licences.
2. Providing guidance and advice to all government entities under the consultation requirements set down in Section 41 of the law, as well as screening certain projects for the requirement for EIA's and managing various EIAs for ongoing major infrastructure projects.
3. Elevating the status of climate change on the national agenda.
    a. Continue to advise the National Security Council and other branches of the Government on the implications of climate change for the Cayman Islands and measures to enhance resiliency.
    b. Support the implementation of the National Energy Policy through DOE's position on the Energy Policy Council and other collaborations.
    c. Work with the Minister of Environment and other agencies and stakeholders to review and adopt a National Climate Change Policy.
    d. Support research by the DOE and continue to provide evidence-based recommendations for managing climate change impacts on Seven Mile Beach and other coastal systems.
    e. Continue to consult on PlanCayman as this Development Plan review moves into the next phases of developing Area Plans and updating zoning maps and regulations.
4. Management Planning for protected areas, both marine and terrestrial.
5. Continued acquisition of high conservation value lands for protected areas, including a call for public nominations.
6. Species Conservation Planning for the management of selected listed species.
7. Public education and outreach activities, particularly to educational institutions, and in coordination with conservation partners such as the National Trust.
8. Resolution of implied development consent, with Dept. of Planning and Solicitor General's Chambers.
9. Council strategic planning retreat or workshop.
10. Continuation of Invasive Species Control Programmes.
    a. Green iguana culling efforts on all three islands.
    b. Feral cat control activities in selected areas for the protection of native species, the welfare of the cats, and the avoidance of potential human health and nuisance issues.
    c. Invasive Species Regulations. In coordination with the Endangered Species Trade & Transport Law, and Animals and Plants Laws.
    d. Licencing individual and group lionfish control efforts.
    e. Targeted invasive plant removals.
11. Work with the Minister of Environment on administrative and capacity issues:

a. Entry into force of sections 46 and 47 of the Law (which provide in greater detail for the operation, management and reporting on activities of the Environmental Protection Fund).
b. Enhancement of Marine Parks System, as accepted by Cabinet in 2019.
c. EPF funding for the acquisition of lands for protected areas.
d. Initiation of a plan for a biosecure holding facility. For improperly imported potentially invasive species, the holding of seized evidence pending trial, hybrid iguanas pending breeding tests at maturity, etc.
e. Biosecurity enhancement of ports and other avenues of entry.

4.2 Schedule of General Meetings for 2020

Council meetings are presently scheduled for 2pm on March 25th, June 17th, September 9th, and December 2nd, 2020, in the Government Administration Building on Grand Cayman. However the Council wishes to again have at least one meeting on the Sister Islands so at least the location of one of the above quarterly meetings is likely to change during 2020.

Appendixes

1 General Meeting Attendance

Council Member	February 27	June 19	September 11	December 4
McFarlane Conolly	Present	Present	Present	Present
Franklin Thompson	Present	Present	Present	Present
Lisa Hurlston-McKenzie	Present	Present	Present	Present
Dominic Williams	Absent	Absent	Absent	Absent
Edward Chisholm	Apologies (sick)	Absent	Absent	Present
Pedro Lazzari	Present	Apologies	Present	Present
Nadia Hardie	Present	Present	Present	Present
Patricia Bradley	Present	Present	Apologies	Present
Fred Burton	Present	Present	Present	Present
Adrian Estwick	Apologies	Present	Present	Apologies
Haroon Pandohie	-	-	-	-
Colleen Stoetzel	Present	Present	Present	Present
Gina Ebanks-Petrie	Present	Present	Present	Apologies
Timothy Austin	Present	Present	Present	Present