

# Terrestrial Protected Area Nomination: Lower Valley Forest Addition, Grand Cayman

The attached nomination proposes that one area of land in the Lower Valley Forest of Grand Cayman be made a Protected Area under Section 7 of the National Conservation Law, additional to a second area which has already been designated protected area subject to completion of subdivision and sale to Government. With the agreement of the landowner, the National Conservation Council has resolved to advance this new nomination. If Cabinet approves this proposal, the natural environment in this forest area will be protected and managed according to a Management Plan to be developed under Section 10 of the Law.

The area proposed for protection is listed in the attached nomination. This is adjacent to newly protected land under the NCL and this extension will increase the ecological capacity of this area.

The forest is notable for a high density of wild Fig trees, which have and may still support a small



population of the White-shouldered Bat, *Phyllops falcatus*. Other endangered and endemic plants are present, and the forest flora is notably diverse.

Additional lands to expand the Lower Valley Forest protected area may arise through future nominations and conservation agreements under the National Conservation Law.



# Protected Area Nomination

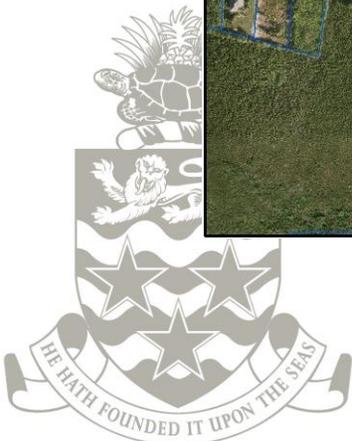
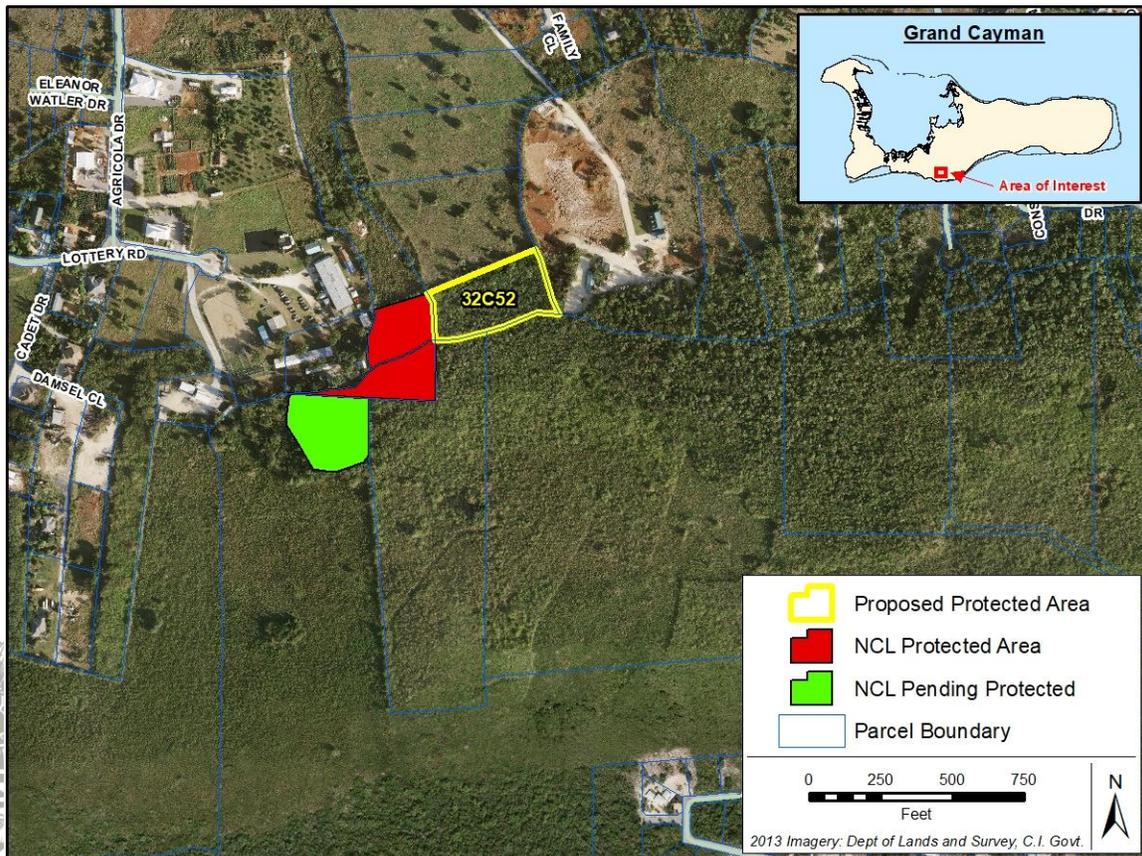
## Lower Valley Forest

*This nomination is made under Section 9 of the National Conservation Law, 2013*

### 1. Description of the Area

This nomination covers a section of an old-growth dry forest in the Lower Valley area. Protection of the entire forest will be advisable in time, but the current nomination only proposes immediate protection of a small area which is under threat.

Block	Parcel	Ownership	Portion of parcel
32C	52	Private	Part



## **2. Reasons for Nomination**

### **Purposes and Objectives**

**2.1** Protection of the nominated land will safeguard part of a habitat that may provide for the recovery of an endangered Part 1 species, the White-shouldered Bat. NCL ref. 8 (1) (a)

**2.2** Protection of the nominated land will expand the forest area, which is a representative, and to some extent unique, example of Grand Cayman's dry forest habitat. NCL ref. 8 (1) (b)

**2.3** Protection of the nominated land will begin a process that may lead to recovery and maintenance of a former (and possibly still present) population of the White-shouldered Bat. NCL Ref. 8 (1) (d)

**2.4** Protection of the nominated land will begin protection of an area which is of special concern as the only remaining dry forest area in Lower Valley, and the only known Grand Cayman habitat for the White-shouldered Bat. NCL Ref. 8 (1) (e)

### **Criteria for Protection**

**2.5** The nominated land is almost entirely in a natural state. NCL Ref. 8 (2) (a)

**2.6** The nominated land supports a very high diversity of life, especially of plants and birds. NCL Ref. 8 (2) (b)

**2.7** The nominated land is of ecological importance due to the scarcity of dry forest habitat remaining in the Lower Valley area. NCL Ref. 8 (2) (c, d)

**2.8** Management of the nominated land will be simple and feasible initially and will evolve as and when more of the forest comes under protection. See Management Considerations below. NCL 8 (2) (g)



### 3. Species of Special Concern

The following table lists the species of concern known to depend at least in part on the nominated land:

Common name	Scientific name	Description	NCL Schedule 1	Habitat use
White-shouldered Bat	<i>Phyllops falcatus</i>	Bat	Part 1. Current status unknown	Depends on this forest type
(no local name)	<i>Pisonia margaretae</i>	Shrub	Part 1. Critically endangered	Present in forest edge
Grand Cayman Parrot	<i>Amazona leucocephala caymanensis</i>	Parrot	Part 1	Feeds and may nest in forest
Vitelline Warbler	<i>Dendroica (Setophaga) vitellina</i>	Warbler	Part 1	Foraging and nesting
White-crowned Pigeon	<i>Patagioenas leucocephala</i>	Pigeon	Part 1	Foraging

### 4. Conservation Problems and Special Protective Measures Required

**4.1** The Lower Valley Forest is suffering severe ecological damage from alien invasive Common Iguanas (*Iguana iguana*). The iguanas are particularly damaging to native fig trees whose fruits are the main component of the White-shouldered Bat's diet. Control of this major invasive species is a wider issue beyond the scope of this nomination. In recent years the forest has also suffered from heavy infestation by invasive scale insects. Patterns of infestation and subsequent recovery elsewhere on Grand Cayman suggest this damage may not be permanent.

**4.2** The nominated land adjoins Agricultural facilities to the north, and is close to man-modified pasture land to the south. Edge effects will be strong and can only be buffered by future protection of the substantial forest area to the east.

### 5. Management Considerations

The current nominated land should not require immediate management beyond boundary marking, green iguana control (probably as part of wider green iguana control efforts), and occasional monitoring especially of trend in the scale insect infestation, and any boundary transgressions. Full-scale Management Planning should be scheduled when the protected area is expanded to a near-final configuration.

