



 www.conservation.ky/hemmington-forest



HEMMINGTON FOREST

National Park

Protected Area Management Plan



Department of Environment
Cayman Islands Government



Management Plan Summary

This Management Plan summary outlines the establishment of Hemmington Forest as the Cayman Islands' first formally designated and protected National Park.

Hemmington Forest is a 194-acre area of biodiverse dry forest and shrubland in central Cayman Brac. It is Crown land and is protected under the National Conservation Act.

According to unverified accounts collected so far, "Hemmington Road" was most likely named after Hemmington Chesse Foster who would have originally established the pathway sometime in the latter half of the 1800's to access agricultural plots originally known as "Halfway Grounds" and to transport provisions across family-owned Bluff lands. The trail has long been maintained by District Administration as a nature tourism and local recreational asset.

The goal for the management of the Hemmington Forest National Park is to give the residents of Cayman Brac and their visitors an enjoyable and inspirational experience of the natural and human history of the land, while cherishing, restoring and protecting its natural biodiversity.



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What is the plan?



- This Management Plan envisages that the Protected Area it encompasses will be managed as a National Park.
- The traditional Hemmington Road trail will be improved, and a new trail network will extend this and give the public free access to representative areas throughout the National Park, including an area where historic land uses will be interpreted.
- An open trailhead shelter with information and interpretation, and a small restroom building will be accessed from Songbird Drive. An observation tower will give visitors a view over the forest canopy with its tall, emergent Yellow Mastic trees that are characteristic of this area.



Vitelline Warbler (*Setophaga vitellina crawfordi*)



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Key Park Highlights



An enhanced walking trail network suitable for a wide range of ages and physical abilities will be designed to bring visitors into close contact with nature and the human history of this land.

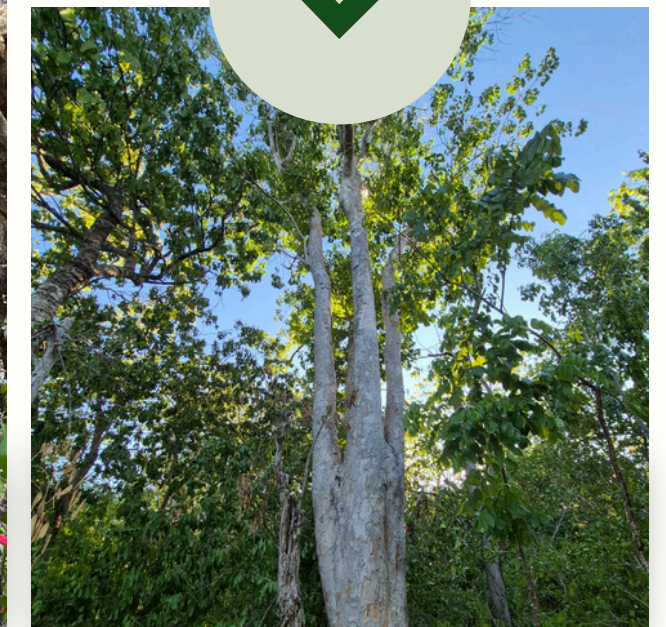
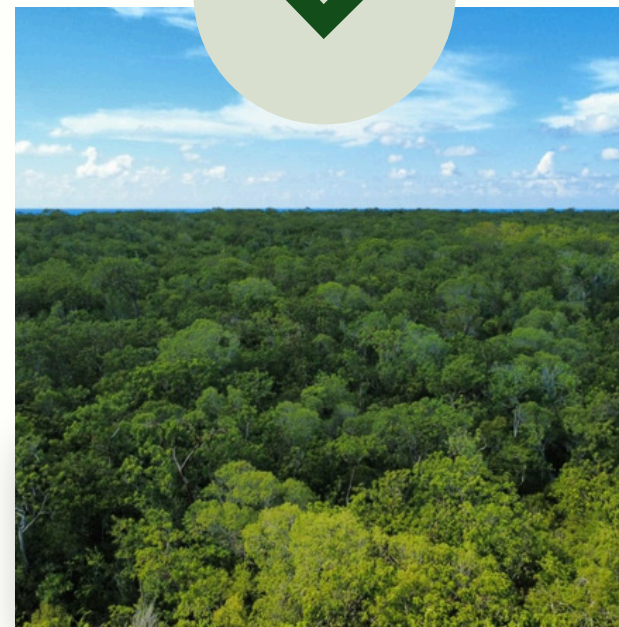
Infrastructure will include a sheltered meeting area, restrooms, and a canopy level observation tower.

The park will be managed by the Department of Environment, in collaboration with District Administration and local community groups.

A Protected Area Officer employed by DoE & funded through the EPF will be responsible for managing Park infrastructure.

The Park will be enhanced by selective control of alien invasive plants and animals, restoration of parrot nesting and allowing natural rewilding of disturbed areas.

- Defined as a Protected Area under the National Conservation Act.
- National Park under IUCN criteria.
- Protection assists in meeting the Cayman Islands' commitments under the Convention on Migratory Species and the Convention on Biological Diversity.



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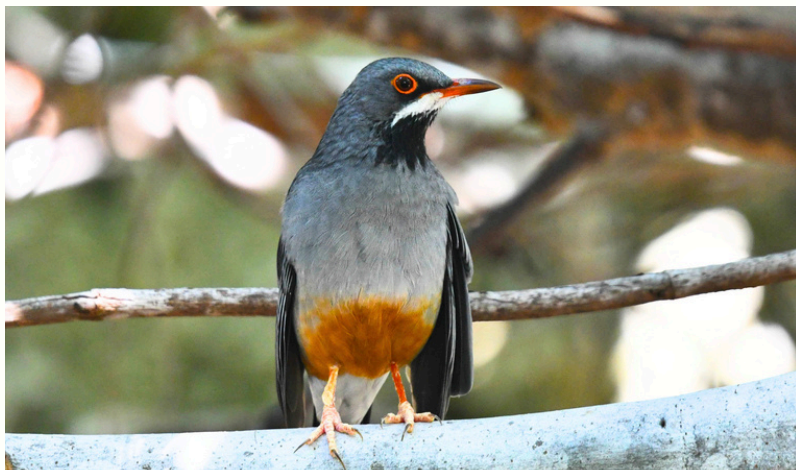




Hemmington Forest Biodiversity

The dry forests of Cayman Brac, Little Cayman and Grand Cayman are floristically distinct, and of the three islands, Cayman Brac has the lowest proportion of protected area. Hemmington Forest therefore takes on a high value both for Cayman Brac and for the Cayman Islands as a whole. It protects a large area of Cayman Brac's distinctive and biodiverse xeromorphic (drought resistant) forest and shrubland ecosystems.

Some species unique to Cayman Brac living in Hemmington Forest



Red-legged Thrush

(Turdus plumbeus coryi)



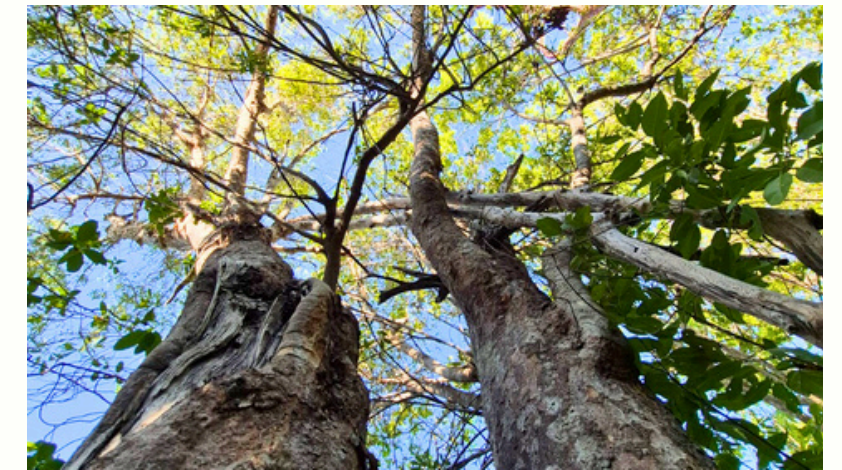
Sister Islands Rock Iguana

(Cyclura nubila caymanensis)



Cayman Brac Parrot

(Amazona leucocephala hesterna)



Yellow Mastic Tree

(Sideroxylon foetidissimum)



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Alien Invasive Threats

Alien invasive species confirmed to be present and causing environmental degradation within the National Park are the domestic cat, domestic chicken and the black rat.

Green iguanas (*Iguana iguana*) have not been observed to date in the National Park, but may well be present and otherwise are highly likely to invade.

Invasive threats in Hemmington Forest



Domestic Cat



Domestic Chicken



Black Rat



Green Iguana

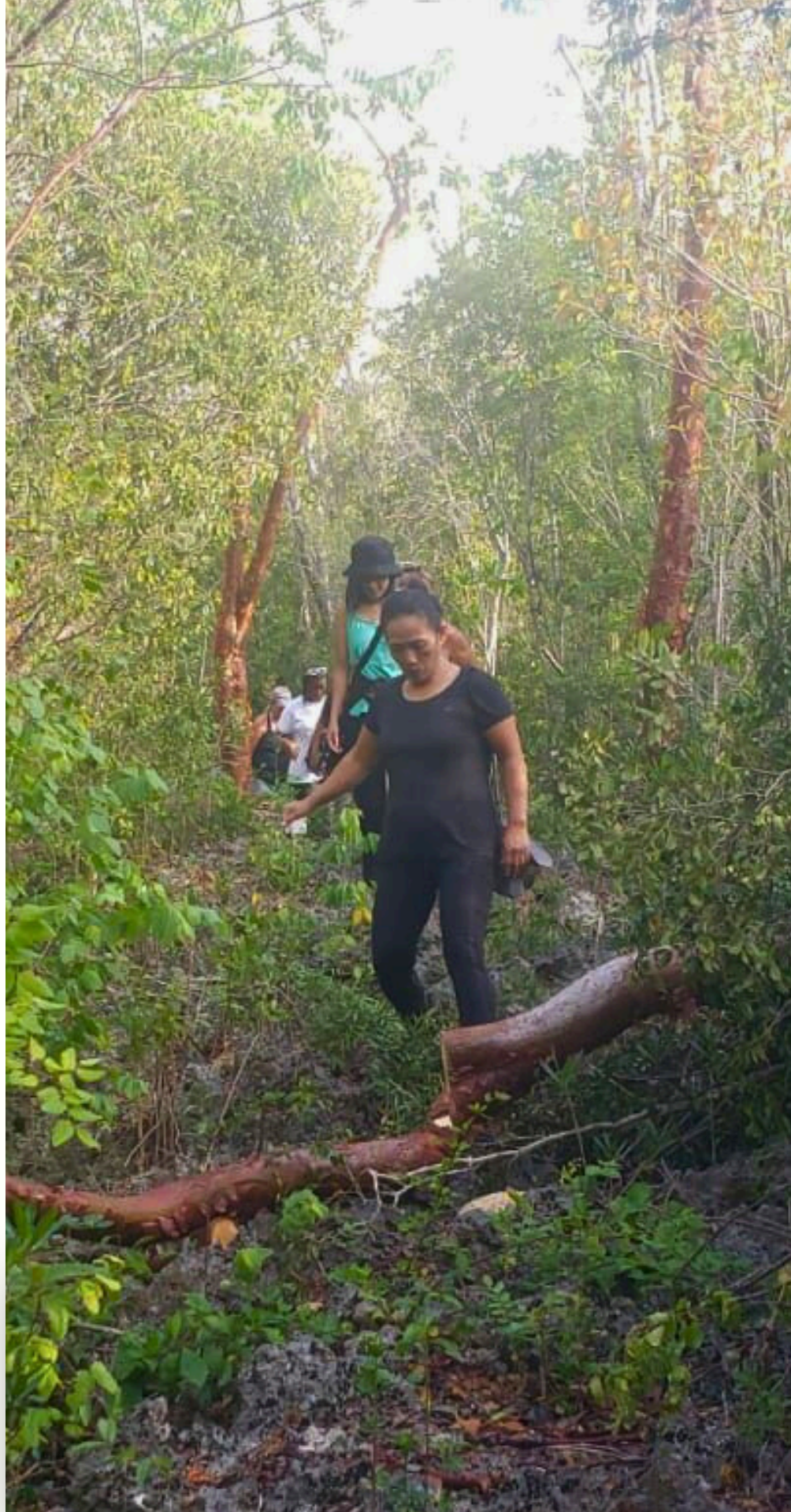


Public Use Management Plan

The goal for management of the Hemmington Forest National Park is to give the residents of Cayman Brac and their visitors an enjoyable and inspirational experience of the natural and human history of the land, while cherishing, restoring and protecting its natural biodiversity.

Public Use Management stages:

- Procure and design services for site development
- Create an extended trail network
- Construct a meeting shelter and restrooms with parking at trailhead
- Construct a canopy level observation tower
- Interpret and maintain a representative area of historic agriculture
- Open to Public
- Involve public in monitoring rewilding
- Develop and implement an on and off-site public engagement strategy



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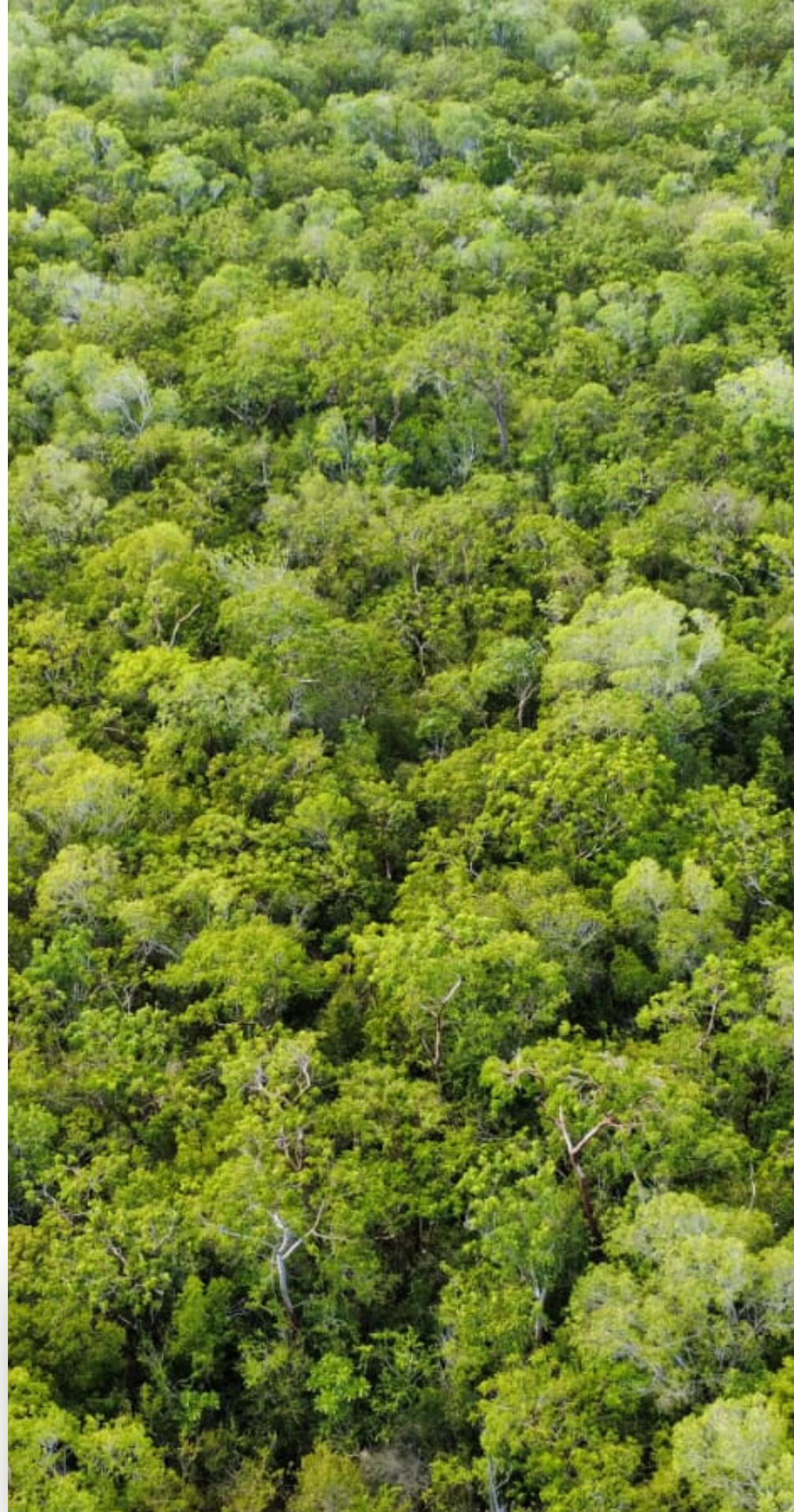


Natural Resource Management & Monitoring

The boundaries of the protected land will be surveyed and posted. The natural environments in the Park will be enhanced by selective control of alien invasive plants & animals, restoration of parrot nesting and allowing natural rewilding of disturbed areas.

Natural Resource Management Stages:

- Mark the outer boundaries of the Protected Area
- Include Hemmington Road footpath into Protected Area
- Complete purchase of land for protection
- Control alien invasive species
- Restore parrot nesting cavities
- Monitor trail usage volume & littering
- Monitor tree canopy health and National Park boundary integrity
- Monitor diversity and abundance of birds, native and alien species
- Monitor rewilding of disturbed areas



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National Park Guidelines

Basic guidelines help ensure the visiting public is aware of how we must work together to ensure our protected areas remain healthy and safe for everyone. Dedicated on-site signage, school visits and media outreach will help communicate this vital messaging.

Accessible Pathways

- Visitors must remain only on the paths and other public access areas provided.
- Paths are for pedestrian use only. No bicycles or motorized vehicles are allowed except wheelchairs.

Pet Free Park

- Dogs, cats or other pets are not permitted to enter the National Park.
- Any dog or cat found in the park may be removed.
- Officers may also remove and control any other non-native plant and animal found within the National Park.

Keep it Beautiful

- No one may leave any litter, food remains, or other waste in any place other than in the covered waste bins provided.
- Defacing or causing damage to infrastructure or natural features including trees in the National Park is strictly prohibited.
- No one may offer food to, or leave food accessible to any wild animal in the National Park.

Monitoring Protection

- No one may interfere with any equipment or infrastructure that has been installed for monitoring wildlife, alien species, visitor frequency, etc.



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THANK YOU!

**"Forest conservation is not only an environmental task,
but also the responsibility of our future generations."**



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Photos: Marique Cloete & Nick Ebanks



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