



Protected Area Nominations 2022 Report

NOVEMBER 2022

PREPARED BY

The Department of Environment

for the

National Conservation Council



Call for Protected Area Nominations 2022

Terrestrial Protected Area nominations are in!

This year has seen encouraging progress on Cayman's Terrestrial Protected Area system, particularly with the Cabinet's approval of Tarpon Lake on Little Cayman, a significant area to be protected under the National Conservation Act (NCA).

Beloved Sand Cay off of South Sound, Grand Cayman has also been approved, as well as some newly mapped small mangrove cays in western North Sound.

Purchase negotiations for an extension to the National Trust's Salina Reserve on Grand Cayman, and an extension to the East Interior Protected Area on Little Cayman, are well advanced. Negotiations also continue with private land owners where NCA Protected Areas have been approved subject to purchase.



The poster features the National Conservation Council logo, a megaphone icon, and a photo of a person in a field. It lists three nomination points and includes a red 'EXTENDED!' stamp. Contact information and social media handles are provided at the bottom.

Submit your letter of nomination outlining the following points in as much detail as possible:

- Why should the area be protected?
- What species of concern are known to live in or migrate through the area?
- Are there any special protective measures which may be required?

Deadline Extended to 31 May 2022!

email nominations to conservationcouncil@gov.ky
visit conservation.ky for details

#preservecayman Protect what you ❤️

With those long pending proposals now moving forward, and with the last call for nominations being in 2019, the National Conservation Council (NCC) decided it was time to issue a call for a new round of nominations.

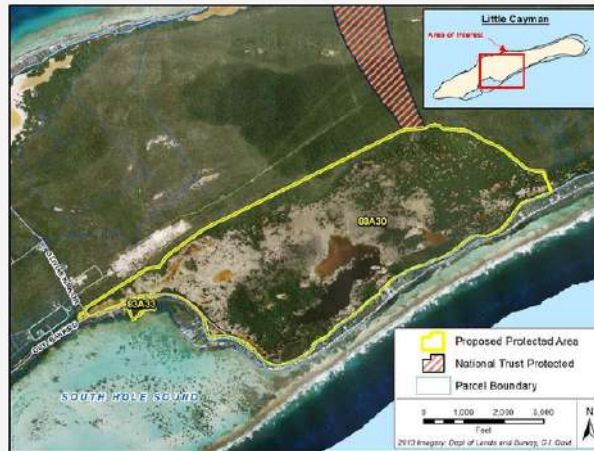
The formal nomination period began on 7th February and concluded on 31st May 2022 for a total of 113 days.

The response this year was truly exceptional. 89 nominations were received from individual members of the public, nonprofit organisations (including the National Trust and Sustainable Cayman), landowners and realtors.

Encouragingly, many were completely new proposals, while others added to multiple calls to protect well known areas, such as the Eastern Lighthouse area of Cayman Brac, the Central Mangrove Wetland and Barkers of Grand Cayman.

MAKING STRIDES

Tarpon Lake in Little Cayman was approved by Cabinet in early 2022, after having been nominated in the first ever round of TPA nominations in the Cayman Islands, back in 2016.



Open call for nominations 2022

WEBSITE | SOCIAL MEDIA | WHATSAPP | RADIO

Promotions of the nomination period were linked directly to the NCC web page dedicated for information regarding protected area nominations:

<https://conservation.ky/protected-area-nominating-process>

Several other means were employed to help promote the open call for nominations including:

- **Website news releases**

<https://conservation.ky/2022/02/07/fresh-perspectives-on-preservation-wanted/>
<https://doe.ky/ncc-call-for-nominations-2022/>

- **Social Media**

Posts to Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter on 07 Feb & 13 May 2022

- **WhatsApp circulation**

Social posts were circulated at regular intervals through WhatsApp to encourage nominations.

- **Radio**

Fred Burton and John Bothwell speaking on the nominations process on Radio Cayman's "For the Record" morning show on 13 April 2022 from 9-10am
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VbIr-nSDTCQ> (at approx 1hr 30m)

Jane Håkonsson & Judy Hurlston from DoE and Hannah Reid from Ministry of Sustainability and Climate Resiliency on Radio Cayman's "Talk Today" on 20 April, 2022 from 1:30 - 2pm

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nCnIc3OPFWQ> (at approx 1hr 40m)

Summary

One nomination proposed the whole of Little Cayman as a Protected Area, while on Grand Cayman both extensive and remnant mangrove areas received a lot of attention.

- ▶ 81 individual response received
- ▶ 18 nominations on crown land & 63 for purchase
- ▶ Many entirely new nominations for ponds and wildlands within neighbourhoods across the islands.
- ▶ Some nominations were already protected through National Trust Law or designated as Marine Protected Area but sought additional protection.
- ▶ Many areas were previously considered including Barkers National Park, Lighthouse Trail Cayman Brac, and Central Mangrove Wetland.
- ▶ Several extensions to existing Protected Areas were submitted including areas adjacent to the Booby Pond Nature Reserve in Little Cayman, Hemmington Forest and Parrot Reserve in Cayman Brac and Meagre Bay and Mastic Trail lands in Grand Cayman
- ▶ Among the highest scoring areas were Mastic lands, Brac Bluff cliffs and lighthouse, Ironwood Forest and the Central Mangrove Wetlands.

Nominations are scored by the DoE and presented to Council.

DoE's Terrestrial Resources Unit runs nominations through the NCC's formal scoring system, and then presents findings to the NCC. This enables Council members to see all the nominations (new and old) in broad context, with metrics that point to which ones can offer the best conservation returns per unit expense and management effort.

Ultimately it is the Council's call to decide which of the nominations to seek to advance in 2022-2023, and which to defer for later cycles. In doing so, NCC has to scale land purchase proposals within the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) budget currently released for conservation land purchase.

Currently 6.4% of Cayman Islands land is protected under the National Conservation Act, with 5.5% protected by the National Trust for the Cayman Islands, giving an overall statistic of 11.3% protection. There is some overlap of National Trust land that is also protected by the NCA, which is why the percentages don't quite sum to the overall total.

To put this 11.3% in context, the current position internationally (IUCN), and formalised in the 15th Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, is a goal of 30% of land coming under protection by 2030 with a representation of all key habitat types.



Nominations & Score Summary

Nominations are sorted by island, and area and then technically scored for their ecological value across several variables by the Terrestrial Resources Unit team.

Considerations such as biodiversity, integrity, and ecological functions are made on a technical/ ecological level, while other factors such as whether it is Crown or private land, affordability, connectivity (to other protected or ecologically important areas) and complexity of management further weigh the score. Having received more nominations than ever before meant the teams were tasked with several new assessments with some needing reassessment from previous scores.

The outcome is a comprehensive list of socially and/or ecologically important areas across all three islands which become ranked with a goal of identifying to Council (and Cabinet) the areas most ideal for conservation.

While a higher score doesn't necessarily mean an area has the greatest potential for protection, since private landowners must be willing to sell for a price Government is willing to pay, it remains a strong indication of the practical importance of an area from a scientific perspective.

SITE	SCORE
Cayman Brac-Hemington Lighthouse, South-East interior (three different areas)	74.0
Little Cayman- Crown Lands (many different areas)	71.6
Little Cayman- (many different areas in a single nomination)	69.5
Mastic Reserve North only	68.4
Mastic Forest (north & west)	67.6
GC EE Collier's ponds and surrounding parcels (Interior & coastal)	66.4
GC-Mastic Ridge	64.7
Ironwood Forest (11 parcels)	62.1
Mastic Reserve (single parcel)	61.8
Bluff cliffs CYB	61.4
Preston Bay (Iguana Habitat Reserve)	61.2
GC_GT_Ironwood forest (Crown)	60.4
CB Parrot Reserve Extension (East & West)	60.3
CB East Lighthouse Park (Partial Coastal Parcel)	60.2
Christopher Columbus Park Extension	59.4
Crown Shoreline (Little Cayman: Jackson Pond & associated north coast wetlands)	58.4
Owen Island (including semisubmerged marine habitat)	58.1
Hemmington Forest Extension (eastward)	57.6
GC NS Malport's pond	57.3
Brac Hemmington Forest area westward to Dead Man's Point Bluff Trail	56.6
Owen Island (excluding semisubmerged marine habitat)	56.5
CB_Central_Vanilla Orchid forest	55.1
Weary Hills East Interior LCM	54.9
GC_SS_Basin & Mangroves trail	54.8
East Lighthouse Park CYB (all adjoining large parcels)	54.2
Sylvans Hollow	53.9
GC EE Forest & Vetner's Cistern & non-adjoining crown semi-flooded forest	53.6
GC_WB_Covenors Harbour mangroves	52.9
Saltwater Pond Trail buffer	52.9

SITE	SCORE
CB_Rock Climbing and recreation bluff parcels	52.8
East Lighthouse Park CYB all large and many small parcels	52.7
Tarpon Lake	52.4
GC_Prospect_mangroves	51.8
Central Mangrove IV (single parcel)	51.6
Central Mangrove VII - (4 parcels)	51.6
Brac Parrot Reserve (extension)	51.5
Saltwater Pond Trail buffer	51.4
Haymon's Pond	51.4
East Interior addition (single parcel)	51.0
Central Mangrove Wetland III - Southwest	51.0
South Hole Mangroves	50.4
Preston Bay shrubland & ponds	50.3
GC_WB_Barkers	50.2
GC_SAV_Buddy's Way_forest	50.0
"The Mountain" Cayman Brac	49.7
Salina Reserve Extension (under purchase 2022)	49.5
CB_South_Booby bird Dr subdivision	49.4
CB_Central_Mountain bluff forest	49.3
GC_CMW	49.0
Great Cave Surround	48.7
Central Mangrove II - (single parcel)	48.7
CB Parrot Reserve Extension (single parcel)	48.5
Lower Valley Forest (single parcel, forest part only)	48.5
Barkers National Park (all)	48.4
Salt Creek mangroves	48.2
Central Mangrove Wetland (general)	48.2
CB_Westerly ponds, Billy's ponds, Salt pond	47.9
Prospect Shoreline Property	47.7
GC EE marshland - crown parcel	47.7

SITE	SCORE
GC_GT_Easterly Tibbets HW Mangroves	47.6
LC West Wilderness Reserve	46.9
North Coast wetlands LCM	46.8
GC_SS_02_Crawl Bay Mangrove buffer	46.5
CWR, Salina, linking properties	46.5
Seasonal Wetland Cayman Brac South	45.9
GC_GT_Sparkys mangroves	45.9
South-easterly Ponds LCM	45.7
GC_SS_DVLMangroves	45.3
Billy's Pond	44.9
Central Mangrove VI - (single parcel, in part)	44.9
Vanilla Orchid Reserve	44.8
GC EE (single parcel)	44.8
North Sound Mangrove Keys	44.7
Iguana sands and overlook	43.8
GC_EE_Salina Reserve expansion	43.8
Long Bridge wetlands	43.5
East End (single parcel)	43.1
Mastic eastern mangroves	43.1
Booby Pond Nature Reserve (extension, north)	42.9
GC EE shrubland - karst 'Hell' & shrubland	42.9
Little Cayman SW (single parcel)	42.5
GC_WB_RCIPS lot	42.4
Pollard Beach	41.8
Crown wetland (LC interior, single parcel)	41.5
CWR (Colliers Wilderness Reserve single parcel extension westward)	41.0
Sand Cay Expanded Area	40.8
Little Cayman (north coast interior, 2 parcels)	40.4
GC_BT_Joe Conyer bay	40.3
Crown wetland (LC interior, single parcel)	40.3
CB_Divi Tiara Beach resort beach & Scotts Dock beach	39.7
Smith Barcadere (single parcel)	39.5
SIRI nest site south side (NB draft species action plan request)	39.2
Stake Bay Town wetland	38.7
South Hole Mangroves	38.5
Charlotte's Trail south terminus	38.2
Snug Harbour Mangroves (in conjunction with now protected mangrove key)	38.1

SITE	SCORE
Preston Bay (Iguana Nesting Habitat)	37.5
Sand Cay	36.8
Midland Acres pond	35.7
Meagre Bay wetlands	35.4
GC_RB_Mangrove island	33.9
GC_Prospect_Coastline	33.7
Mastic trail lands	32.1
GC_WB_Boatswain bay / Sand Hole beach shoreline	32
Hell Road Open Land	31.9
CB Parrot Reserve Extension (SW single parcel)	29.5
Bel Aire Gardens Pond	25.9
West End turtle Crawl	23.6
GC_Savannah_Hirst Rd forest	23.4
CB_Caves: Peters Cave, Bat Cave, Skull Cave, Rebecca's Cave, Great Cave, Lamberts Cave, Chandelier Cave, Nani's Cave, Deadman's Point Cave	Caves do not fit into scoring criteria; need to be assessed separately

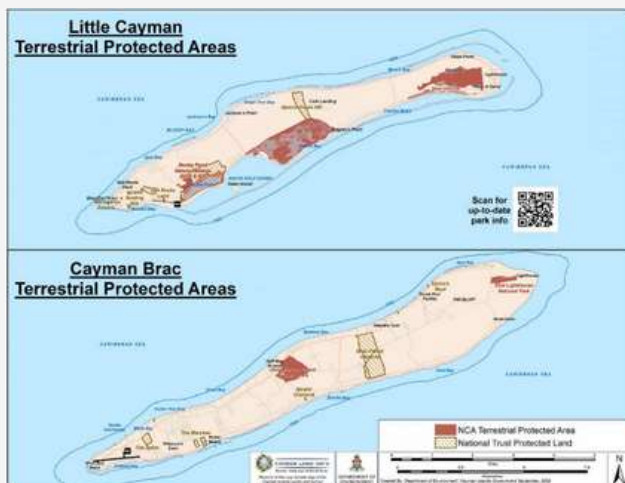
The Central Mangrove Wetland comprises 8655 acres of unimpacted wilderness in Grand Cayman and provides several ecological functions which are economically and culturally important to the islands.

It is also among the most nominated areas for protection in 2022.



Protected lands across all three islands is 11.3%

The internationally recognized goal for protected lands is 30% by 2030 with a representation of all key habitat types.



For Little Cayman, 30% protection, or even more, seems in close reach since today almost 22% of that island is already protected by the NCA or the National Trust Act or both. Grand Cayman has much further to go, with 10.9% protected as of 2022. Cayman Brac continues to lag far behind the other islands, with only 5.9% protection at this time.

The NCC and DoE are impressed by, and appreciative of the remarkable response to the call for nominations this year. The volume of submissions dwarfed all previous responses, and speaks to a growing environmental awareness and concern in the community as our islands continue to urbanise and our irreplaceable ancient forests, mangroves and wild rocky shrublands continue to be bulldozed as if they had no value at all.

However, ongoing work on Natural Capital Accounting for the Cayman Islands tells rather a different story by producing detailed measurements of the linkage between ecosystems and economic and other human activity.

Many thanks to the DoE Terrestrial Resources Unit



FRED BURTON | TERRESTRIAL UNIT MANAGER

Fred has lived and worked in the Cayman Islands since 1979. He founded The Blue Iguana Recovery Programme in 1990 which has inched the species away from the brink of extinction. Fred has been a key player in establishing the terrestrial protected area mechanisms and wildlife and habitat conservation in the Cayman Islands.

JANE HÅKONSSON | TERRESTRIAL RESEARCH OFFICER II

Jane is a zoologist with an MSc in Biodiversity, Wildlife and Ecosystem Health from the University of Edinburgh. She has over 15 years designing and implementing long-term monitoring projects and managing endemic and invasive wildlife populations. She also has a background in animal husbandry and public education.



TAYVANIS OYOG | TERRESTRIAL RESEARCH OFFICER

Caymanian & Bracker TayVanis (Tay) Oyog joined the DoE in 2018 after completing his BSc (Biology) at Wayne State University in Michigan and has been a volunteer intern with the DoE since high school. Tay's work has been integral to the population surveys of our native bats, birds and invasive green iguanas.

VAUGHN BODDEN | TERRESTRIAL RESEARCH OFFICER

Caymanian ecologist Vaughn Bodden joined the DoE in 2019 after completing his MSc at the University of Glasgow though he has been a volunteer intern with the DoE since high school. Vaughn's work has been extensive on the population survey data management for our critically endangered Sister Islands Rock Iguana.



SIMONE WILLIAMS | TERRESTRIAL RESEARCH OFFICER

Simone joined the DoE in 2022 with an MSc in Environmental and Life Sciences from Trent University, Canada. With a focus on ornithology (bird sciences) her zoological interests stretch to include nutritional, entomology and parasitic studies, animal husbandry, public education and policy development.