

Terrestrial Protected Area Nominations 2017

A report to the National Conservation Council

Consultations made under section 9 (sub-sections 6 – 8) of the National Conservation Law 2013, from 1st February to 2nd May, 2017.

Introduction

The following twelve nominations for protection of land under Section 9 of the Law were placed out for public consultation on 1st February 2017:

Grand Cayman:

- Barkers
- Vidal Cay
- Salt Creek mangroves
- Western Crown Cays
- Lower Valley Forest
- Central Mangrove Wetland

Little Cayman

- Preston Bay ponds and shrublands.
- Booby Pond West
- Tarpon Lake
- North Coast wetlands
- Crown wetland 82A/17
- Crown East Interior

The full nominations are provided separately with this report.

In the case of the three nominations (Barkers, Lower Valley Forest, and Booby Pond West) which each include a parcel of land in private ownership, the proprietors were notified and consulted with under section 9(5) and 9(7) and have all since indicated willingness to negotiate with the Government towards sale of these parcels to Government for protected area designation under section 7 of the Law. The remainder of the nominated areas is all Crown land, and the Lands & Survey Department (Crown Estates manager) was advised of the nominations accordingly, as was the Cabinet.

Advice that these nominations were proceeding to the consultation phase was communicated by registered mail to all landowners neighbouring the nominated areas, in accordance with section 9(6) of the Law, on 31st January, 2017, with one accidental exception (see below).

The nominations were placed for public inspection in all district libraries, and government administration centres on all three of the Cayman Islands, on 25th January 2017, and press notices (Appendix 1) advising the public as per section 9(8) were published on 25th January and 1st February 2017.

A supply of response forms (Appendix 2) was placed with the nomination packs, and also implemented as a SurveyMonkey poll (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2NDG3X5>) containing exactly the same questions.

1st February 2017 was the first day of the required 90-day consultation period, which ended on 2nd May 2017.

Survey practices and modes of response

A policy was adopted to seek an unbiased response to the consultation, so that the results reflect views of the public at large rather than of specific sectors of society. However, as a digital poll, responses to the SurveyMoney questionnaire are obviously limited to persons with internet access. That constraint is unlikely to be strongly biased for or against establishment of protected areas. The poll was primarily promoted through local news media, and through a PSA and Facebook promotion by Government Information Services. The extent to which the poll may then have been independently promoted by other groups is uncontrolled and unknown: again this process could be taken up by individuals or organizations with any viewpoint on protected areas, and so should not be considered to be necessarily biased.

The online questionnaire required submitters to identify themselves (as a method to identify and delete any duplicate submissions by the same individual for the same area), and the majority (87.5%) provided at least a first name initial and a surname, or a company name. The submissions that lacked this minimum level of identification are excluded from summary statistics and analysis below. Digital responses were also screened for any evidence of improper manipulation of results. A number of similar and grouped consecutive responses from the same IP address, focused on one nomination, were identified as potentially involving multiple submissions from one or more respondents. However since all these also lacked adequate identification, they were excluded from analysis regardless. All responses excluded from analysis on these grounds are flagged but retained, in the listing of individual survey responses and comments below.

Where identified respondents submitted more than one submission for the same area, only one submission was retained though care was taken to include comments made in all submissions. In all these rare cases the duplicated submissions were identical except for presence or absence of comments.

Registered mail to neighbouring landowners stimulated some of the responses on the SurveyMonkey poll, and also resulted in ten written responses on the corresponding form. Additionally, these letters prompted a number of landowners and landowner representatives to come to the Department to discuss and clarify their views, or to telephone for the same purpose. These meetings, mainly conducted

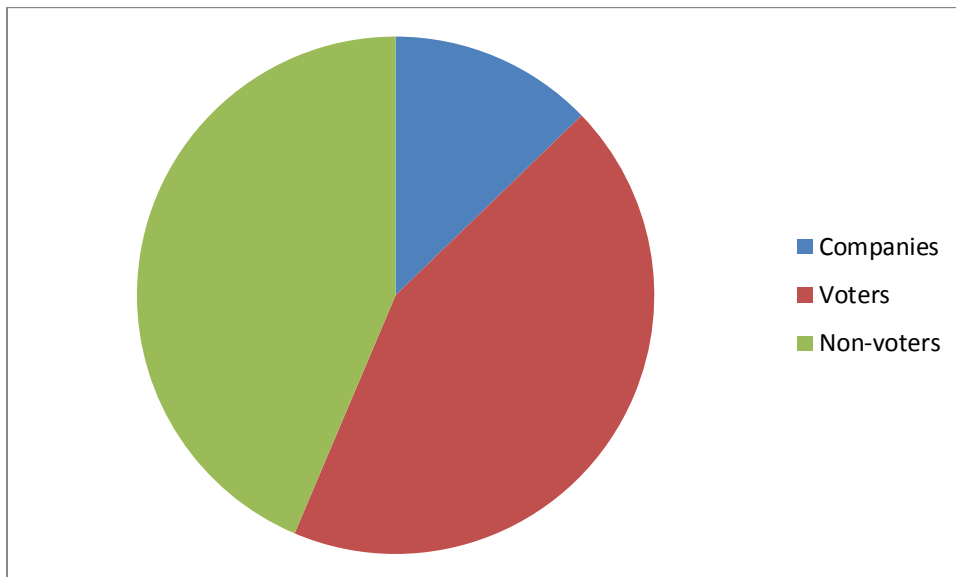
by the Manager, Terrestrial Resources Unit, and the NCC Secretary, were all amicable and constructive and did not prompt any expressions of opposition to the nominations. Discussions mainly focused on questions of land access, and on any restrictions which might arise from NCL section 41(4). These meetings always concluded with a request that the landowner then complete the relevant survey.

Summary of survey results

A total of 193 identifiable and unique responses were received by the Department in the period 1st February to 2nd May 2017, out of a total of 224 actual responses including duplicates and responses without name identification.

Some responders only provided comment on single nominations; others provided separate comments on multiple nominations. Responses were received from a total of 7 companies, and 82 persons identifiable as separate individuals.

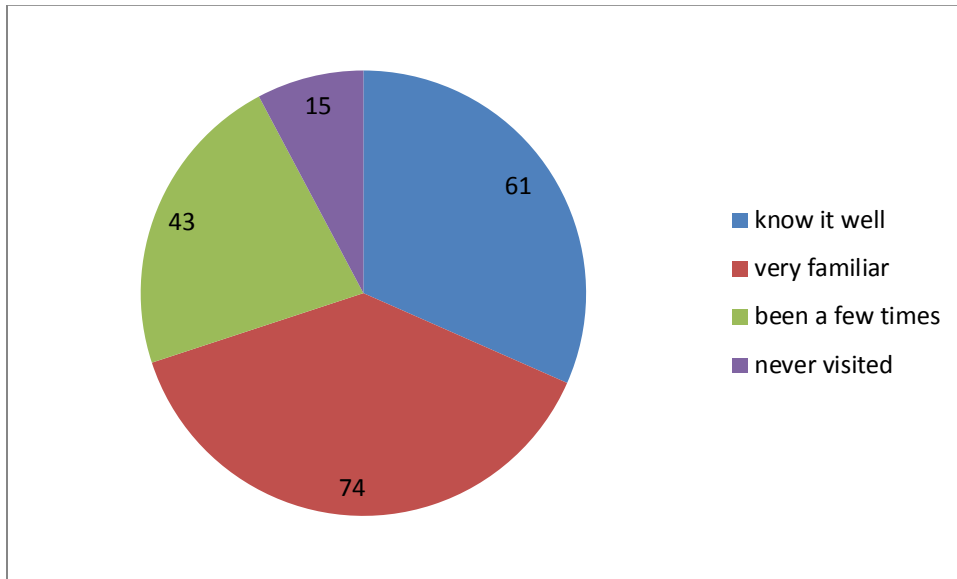
Individual responders were overwhelmingly residents of the Cayman Islands, with only 6 responses coming from overseas (mainly responding as owners of contiguous land). Of all responding individuals, 50% were registered voters in the Cayman Islands.



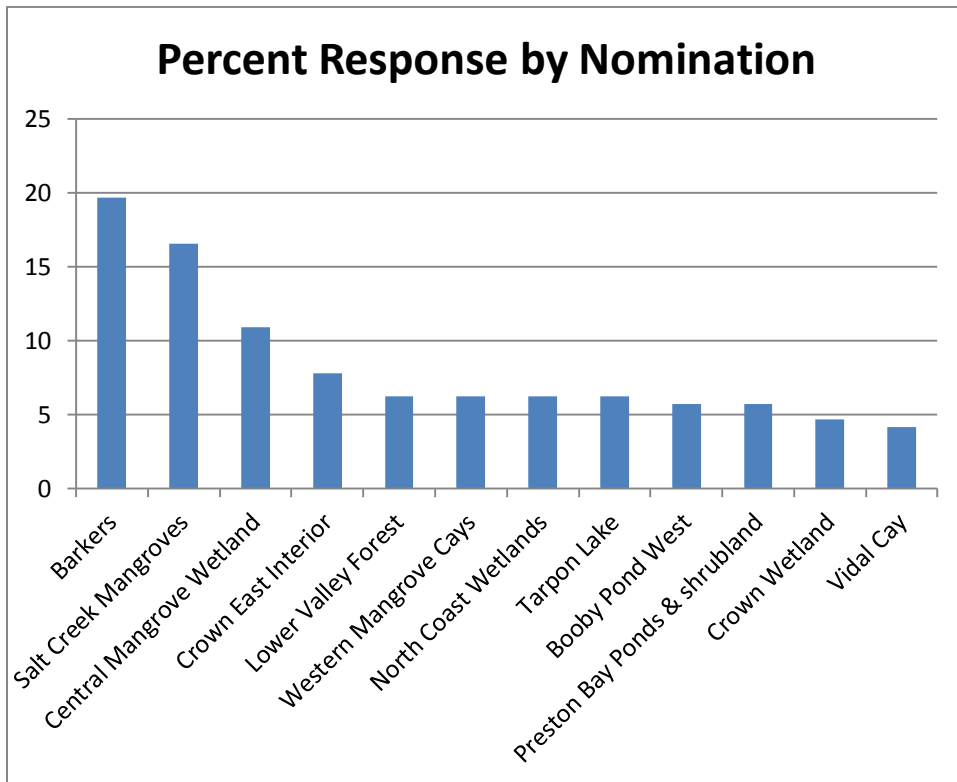
In general terms, there was very strong support for the concept of establishing protected areas. In response to the question “*Generally speaking, how do you feel about the idea of setting aside and protecting natural areas for the people of the Cayman Islands?*” **96.9%** of respondents indicated they support this, with the balance of respondents neutral, unsure or indifferent. No respondents indicated opposition to the idea.

All but one of the responses indicated that respondents had read the nomination for each nominated area they commented on.

Responses also indicated quite a high degree of familiarity with the areas, generally speaking:



Response rates varied considerably between nominations, reflecting varying levels of interest in each specific area, and also reflecting the larger population on Grand Cayman which weights the response rates relative to the Sister Isles.



The nominations received an extremely high level of support overall, with **90%** of responses indicating support for the nomination, 4% indicating that the responder did not support the nomination, 2% neutral, ambivalent or unsure, and 4% choosing not to provide this data.

Additional to comments for each nominated area below, it is clear that some respondents would be more confident in their support if there was some certainty over how the protected area will be managed in practice. The same theme emerged in comments for many of the other nominated areas also.

Theoretically, in future it could be possible to run protected area nominations and their corresponding management planning process and subsequent consultation, in parallel, and to submit both elements for Cabinet approval at the same time. In practice, uncertainty in nominations moving forward, and the extensive work involved in complex management plans, would make such synchronization extremely hard, if not impossible to achieve.

The Department of Environment has already begun meetings with a team from Dart Realty to explore options for joint management planning of the Barkers area, with the objective of achieving a viable final protected area configuration and management plan that involves both Crown and private land, and which fulfills the expectations of both environmental and economic stakeholders in the area, while safeguarding the high level of public interest and enjoyment in the area in a sustainable way.

Barkers

The Barkers nomination attracted by far the greatest number of responses, reflecting a high level of public interest in this area. 95% of respondents supported establishing the Crown land in Barkers as Protected Area, with 3% neutral, ambivalent or unsure, and 0% opposed.

Vidal Cay

This nomination was one of the least commented proposals, but 100% of respondents who commented, were in support of its protection. The only free-form comments submitted were “One of the few remaining pieces of who we are - perhaps especially for the people of West Bay”, and “Best use”.

Crown Mangrove Cays

92% of submissions on this nomination were in support of protection of these mangrove cays, with the remainder only providing comment. Comments focused on the value of the mangroves for aesthetic reasons, shoreline protection, and nourishment of marine life.

Salt Creek Mangroves

This nomination attracted a disproportionately high number of submissions from persons who did not identify themselves. Of the submissions coming from identified respondents, 78% were in support of protection of this area, 16% were opposed, and 3% neutral, ambivalent or unsure.

Supporting respondents commented on the value of the area as a small public space, the value of retaining a natural area, and much emphasis on the mangroves both as a valuable natural resource rich in wildlife, and as a recreational asset. Respondents opposed felt that there was too little information regarding how the area would be managed, but also expressed concerns over who would benefit, given that the area is surrounded by private development. Alternative concepts for use of this area were also offered.

Lower Valley Forest

All respondents on this nomination expressed support for the protection of the Lower Valley Forest. Comments highlighted its importance for bird watching and for conservation of native plants, and bats.

Central Mangrove Wetland

Support for the protection of Crown land in the Central Mangrove Wetland was almost unanimous.

One single responder expressed opposition, in the form of a lawyer representing a party who is seeking claim to one of the parcels concerned. Government's position is that this matter has been long been settled by a special lands tribunal. The subject parcel (41A/3) is currently in provisional ownership by Crown. The protected area order in respect of this parcel should be made conditional on Crown acquiring absolute title.

A second responder provided comment only, again focused on uncertainty related to future management plans.

This nomination motivated the remaining majority of responders to offer a variety of comments emphasizing their very strong support for the protection of this area, summed up by one responder who stated "The mangrove system is vital for Cayman's well being."

Preston Bay ponds and shrublands

All but one respondent on this nomination was in support of protection of this area, with most noting its importance for the islands' rock iguanas. One respondent was unsure, but their comment was not so much a comment about this nomination, so much as a lament that no nominations were yet in place for Cayman Brac.

Booby Pond West

All respondents commenting on this nomination were in support of this area's protection. Comments alluded to protection of the island's best natural resources, and the importance of this area for conservation of high profile species, and for the island's tourism industry.

Tarpon Lake

All respondents commenting on this nomination were in support of protection of Tarpon Lake, with the exception of one respondent that provided comment only. The resort using the lake for catch and release fishing commented that they would welcome some management and regulation of the fishery, while one contiguous landowner observed "This is an outstanding proposal and I offer my encouragement for its adoption."

North Coast wetlands

This nomination received unanimous support from all responders but for one which provided comment only. One thoughtful commenter observed that they had some concerns regarding provision for interior land access to family land, but supported the nomination nonetheless. This was a subject of discussions between DoE and landowner representatives during the consultation period, and existing rights of way have been gazetted which go some way towards alleviating this concern. An appropriate balance between access and wetland continuity will have to be established and maintained in the management plan for this area, if protected.

Crown wetland 82A/17

This area received a small number of submissions, all of which were in support but for one which provided comment only. Comments reflected the importance of this area for the endemic Little Cayman Land Snail, as outlined in the nomination.

Crown East Interior

The majority of respondents (73%) were in enthusiastic support of this nomination, with comments focused on a diversity of natural values seen in this deep interior wilderness. Two respondents opposed stated "My plan is to build on my land in the future once planning permission is approved and my plot does not impeach on the area in question." The land concerned is a small lot in a subdivision to the north, and the respondents' concern therefore seems rather unfounded since as they state, indeed the plot does not "impeach" (encroach?) on the area in question. Residential development there is unlikely to be blocked by the protected area establishment, and could even gain in value through proximity to such a natural backdrop.

However, one neighbouring landowner respondent indicated that their registered mail notice did not arrive, and checking the underlying database and mail-merge documents it emerged that a clerical error had occurred leading to the notice being wrongly addressed. Unfortunately this technically leaves this nomination not in compliance with NCL 9 (6) and therefore it cannot be advanced at this time.

Summary of support by nomination

Nomination	% support	% ambivalent	% opposed
Barkers	95	3	0
Vidal Cay	100	0	0
Crown Mangrove Cays	92	0	0
Salt Creek	78	3	16
Lower Valley	100	0	0
Central Mangrove Wetland	90	3	3
Preston Bay Ponds	90	10	0
Booby Pond West	100	0	0
Tarpon Lake	92	0	0
North Coast Wetlands	92	0	0
Crown Wetland 82A/17	89	0	0
Crown East Interior	73	7	20

Individual survey responses and comments

Appendix 3 below reproduces all the responses received, in full, combined from the online survey, responses on the written form and other written responses.

Responses from persons who partially or completely withheld their identity are reproduced here, even though these were excluded from summary analyses above. They should be viewed with caution in the light of the possibility that they may involve repeat submissions from the same person (indeed many did come from the same IP address, close together in time, and focused on one nomination). Known duplicate submissions (same self-identified individual commenting more than once on the same nomination) have been combined into single responses without loss of any content.

Appendix 1 - Press Notices



National Conservation Council – Terrestrial Protected Area Nominations

The National Conservation Council wishes to invite the public to view and comment on twelve nominations of land areas in the Cayman Islands which have been proposed for protection under the National Conservation Law 2013. Protection of these areas would have the effect of conserving, maintaining and restoring the habitats within them, and their associated ecological systems.

This notice is made under Section 9, subsection 6 of the National Conservation Law. The nominations propose protection, under Section 7 of the Law, of predominately Crown land in the following areas:

Grand Cayman: Barkers, Vidal Cay, Salt Creek, Western Mangrove Cays, Central Mangrove Wetland, Lower Valley Forest.

Little Cayman: Preston Bay ponds and shrubland; Booby Pond west, Tarpon Lake, north coast wetlands, Crown wetland 82A/17, Crown east interior.

The nominations can be inspected at the following locations:

1. All public libraries in Grand Cayman and in Cayman Brac
2. The National Trust Booby Pond visitor centre on Little Cayman
3. The main Government administrative offices on all three islands
4. Online at www.DoE.ky

The period for public comment on these nominations will end on **2nd May, 2017**.

Comment on these nominations must be submitted on the form supplies with the nominations:

- On a paper form which is available with the nominations
- On the same form implemented as an online poll at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2NDG3X5>

Forms can be dropped off at the front desk of the Department of Environment, 580 North Sound Road, Grand Cayman, or mailed to:

National Conservation Council, c/o Department of Environment
PO Box 10202, Grand Cayman KY1-1002, Cayman Islands

Forms can also be scanned and emailed to ConservationCouncil@gov.ky

experience. We offer an excellent benefits package including pension, health, life and disability insurance.

Suitably qualified Caymanians should apply in writing by **3 February 2017** to:

The Senior Vice President
 Administration & Human Resources
 Cayman National Corporation Ltd
 PO Box 1097, Grand Cayman KY1-1102
 CAYMAN ISLANDS

Or E-mail: human_resources@caymannational.com

DOG WALKER / PET SITTER

Needed

- Must love animals and have at least 3 years experience owning dogs and cats.
- Must be flexible with working hours and able to do sleep in jobs.
- May only have one walk scheduled a day.
- Must be a people person and able to interact with new clients.
- Must be physically fit and able to work outside in all weathers.
- Must have own reliable transportation and full clean driving license.
- Must be reliable and have good time keeping.
- Must be able to feed, clean after animals and administer medication as needed.
- Must be willing to pick up dog poop.
- Must respect clients confidentiality and do the work on own.
- Must be well groomed, neat and tidy and must refrain from smoking on the job.
- Must be able to attend training as requested.
- Must have access to the internet and a cell phone to receive jobs.
- Must know how to do exit papers.
- Pay is \$6 an hour.

Pension and Health included as per Labor law.

Email ppscayman@gmail.com
 With letter of application and resume



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Appendix 2 – Response Form

National Conservation Council, Cayman Islands

Terrestrial Protected Area nominations, January 2017 – Public Consultation

1. **Which of these protected area nominations are you commenting on**, on this form? Check one only.
Use additional forms for commenting on other nominations.

Grand Cayman:

- Central Mangrove Wetland
- Barkers
- Salt Creek mangroves
- Western Crown cays
- Vidal Cay
- Lower Valley Forest

Little Cayman:

- Tarpon Lake
- Preston Bay ponds & shrubland
- Booby Pond west
- North Coast wetlands
- Crown east interior
- Crown wetland 82A/17

2. **Have you read this nomination?**

- Yes No

You can read them at [web link] or in printed form at all district libraries, the Booby Pond visitor centre on Little Cayman, and the Government Administration offices on all three islands.

3. **How familiar are you with this area?**

- I've never visited it I've been there once or twice I know it quite well
 I'm very familiar with it

4. **What is your overall feeling about this specific nomination?**

- I support it I am neutral, unsure or ambivalent about it I do not support it

5. **Please let us know any specific thoughts, opinions or suggestions you may have about this nomination:**

6. Generally speaking, how do you feel about the idea of setting aside and protecting natural areas for the people of the Cayman Islands?

I support this I am neutral, unsure or ambivalent about this I do not support this

7. I am commenting as:

An individual living in the Cayman Islands

A business or company operating in the Cayman Islands

An agency of the Cayman Islands Government

A group, club or association of persons in the Cayman Islands

A person or entity based outside of the Cayman Islands Other (please specify):

8. Are you registered to vote in the Cayman Islands? (Your opinion matters regardless of the answer to this question).

Yes No

9. Your name, or the name of the organization for which you are commenting:

Please answer all the questions. Your comments will be included in the final report on consultations which will be presented to the Conservation Council and thence to Cabinet. The last day for receipt of responses on this set of nominations is 2nd May, 2017.

You can mail this form to:

National Conservation Council, c/o Department of Environment
PO Box 10202, Grand Cayman KY1-1002, Cayman Islands.

You can also scan and email this form to ConservationCouncil@gov.ky or drop it of at the front desk of the Department of Environment, at 580 North Sound Road, Grand Cayman.

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