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SLNT Undertakes Wetlands Policy Review

Wetlands in Saint Lucia are prolific ecosystems that protect biodiversity, sustain livelihoods and build resilience to the impacts of climate change but are under threat from development pressures, poor land use practices and pollution. Recent and possible continued threat to the largest mangrove, the Ma Kôté mangrove in Vieux Fort is a manifestation of this threat. In an effort to find a holistic way to address this problem, the Saint Lucia National Trust (SLNT) undertook a review of the current wetlands situation inclusive of a review of the policy, institutional and legislative frameworks for wetlands protection in Saint Lucia. The outcome of the review will help the organisation better understand the challenges and to develop, along with its partners, approaches to begin addressing them.



Having reviewed various plans dealing with mangrove forest management and the legislative and institutional jurisdiction of agencies with responsibility for these protected areas, several observations were made. For instance, it was determined that there is no specific legislation for the regulation, use, management and conservation of wetlands. The laws that exist are inconsistent, with gaps and overlapping provisions which in turn result in uncoordinated and overlapping jurisdictions among the institutions with responsibility for wetlands management.

The review provided several recommendations to address the main challenges identified. By far the most vital requirement is for government to adopt a national policy - an overarching and comprehensive policy - replete with ways to address legislative reform to remedy the gaps and overlapping jurisdictional issues identified. This is an essential next step for effective wetlands protection in Saint Lucia.

The review was conducted during August - September 2019 by Ms. Thea Alexander (LL.B (Hons, LEC, (LL. M (Legislative Drafting) as part of an internship assignment for a Masters in Public Policy Programme being pursued at the University of Erfurt, Germany. The Trust is grateful to Ms. Alexander for doing her internship with us and for the valuable contribution her work will make in improving the framework for the sustainable management of these valuable ecosystems.