

ABSTRACT

THE SURVIVAL AND SUSTAINABILITY OF THE FIVE COMMUNITIES IN THE BLACK RIVER LOWER MORASS, ST ELIZABETH, JAMAICA.

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The thesis examines the use of traditional knowledge and resource management techniques employed by the citizens of the five communities (Punches, Salt Spring, Cataboo, Frenchman and Slipe) in the Black River Lower Morass to sustain their fragile ecosystem. The traditional skills and management strategies allow the citizens to fashion cultural practices which enable them to symbiotically exist with their natural environment while extracting the consumptive uses through the communities main economic earners the artisanal fishery and basket weaving craft industry.

However, although their livelihood patterns do not appear to be a threat to the environment, the extent to which the citizens benefit from the Black River Lower Morass is contingent upon the type of property rights regimes which provides

them with access to the resources for their economic activities. the endogenously and exogenously driven forces which impact on the citizens' ability to sustain their environment with traditional practices, as well as the type of tourism development in that part of Jamaica particularly as the South Coast is being drawn into Jamaica's tourism net.

The view taken here is that the wise use of the morass can be achieved through "bottom-up-planning" at the community level coupled with co-management application of sustainable development strategies.

The area is slated to become a National Park. It is also on the Ramsar's list of Wetlands of International Importance. This research fills the gap in the studies on the Black River Lower Morass by providing information on the traditional resource management techniques and livelihood patterns of the communities in the morass. Methods applied in garnering data was ground truth mapping; questionnaire surveys.

Key words:

Wetlands; Traditional Resource Management; Basket Weaving; Artisanal Fishery; Ecotourism; Property Rights Regimes; Peoples' participation; Wise Use.