

ABSTRACT

Sustainability of the Uses of the Queen's Park in Trinidad and Tobago

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The study was designed to examine the sustainability of the intended or historical uses of the Queen's Park in Trinidad and Tobago. This is in the context of the major uses as a horticultural conservation site and as an open green space that provides free and unlimited access to the general public. Over the years, there were various threats to its existence as an open park

The paucity of research studies in this area indicated a need for more in-depth studies on issues of conservation. The objectives of the study were to determine whether the actual uses were consistent with the intended uses and to evaluate whether the value of the Queen's Park as an urban to stakeholders will depreciate. To examine whether the Queen's Park will continue to be an urban park conserving various plant species as intended in the arboretum programme. Finally, to establish whether the current and projected levels of maintenance of the Queen's Park will sustain its intended uses.

In this study, both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to analyze the data obtained. An inventory of the trees in the Queen's Park was taken. Interviews were also held with five interest groups who use the Queen's Park to get the users perception regarding the threats to the sustainability of the uses of the park. From these interviews a user questionnaire was developed, and users from five groups were interviewed. These groups were joggers, workers from the Botanic Gardens, sportsmen, passive users, and kite flyers.

The primary use of the Queen's Park is as a horticultural site (arboretum) for the conservation of indigenous and introduced plants. Historically, the uses of the Queen's Park have evolved from the first commercial use (pasturage of cattle) and recreation to a host of other diverse uses including religious, social, cultural and other commercial uses. However, except for an amendment governing driving and parking in the Queen's Park in 1977, no other laws were enacted to govern these new uses.

The Queen's Park has and continues to provide a number of environmental, social and economic benefits to its users and is still considered to be a valuable asset to users. The plants (trees, shrubs and turf) which are responsible for its configuration have increased in numbers especially the trees over the last inventory taken. With a proper maintenance programme covering all the cultural and agronomic practices needed and with limited development, the Queen's Park will be sustained.

Keywords: Arboretum; sustainability; conservation; ecosystems; Queen's Park; tree inventory; urban trees; park maintenance.