

Science, policy and national parks in Trinidad and Tobago

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Summary

Since the 1960s there have been various moves to create a system of national parks in Trinidad, including several well-funded initiatives involving international support from the FAO, OAS and most recently a World Bank supported project. Despite many plans, legislation and implementation is blocked. Reasons are to be found in (a) the production of science/policy by an elite (b) the nature of participation, and (c) the way tensions between national bureaucracies interplay with international,

The system, in its varied permutations, continues to be focused on the preservation not use of lands that are in part privately owned, farmed, forested, hunted, squatted or otherwise illegally used. The rationale, location and extent of the proposed parks has repeatedly been elaborated at a nexus between conservation activists (NGOs), the wildlife section of the Forest Department, conservation biologists at the university of the West Indies, and government and private sector interests in promoting ecotourism. They are supported by international scientists and funders who are keen to establish protected areas to blend international conservation goals with national development.

There is a tension between 'participation' as practiced within this science-policy nexus (principally involving several community based conservation organisations promoting a win-win ecotourism agenda and village tour-guiding), and 'participation' by others in the policy process through wider political systems. Land users whose rights and interests would be curtailed express critique via the press, the law, administrative politics and party politics. To date, resolution has been in favour of land users who, although marginalized from the participation managed by the 'project', have succeeded in blocking the national parks legislation politically.

Their success in this is assisted by opposition from (a) other bureaucracies (principally Forestry) which would lose control of resources, should an autonomous national parks authority be established – as donors repeatedly advocate, (b) legislators and politicians concerned by the costs and wisdom of taking large loans, and who are sceptical of the internationally-influenced science shaping the proposals.

Introduction¹

Since 1982, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and its members have aimed to expand the worldwide network of protected areas to 10% of all terrestrial ecological regions.² By 1993, 5% had been achieved and the expansion of national parks and protected areas remains a priority. In recent global analytics concerning prioritisation for the efficient allocation of international resources for global biodiversity conservation, largely in national parks, tropical islands feature prominently, including much of the Caribbean.

Yet the particular character that such parks should take, or indeed, the appropriateness of national parks as a conservation strategy for islands at all, is the subject of some debate. The creation of a system of national parks in Trinidad and Tobago has been on the agenda since the early 1960s, and national policy since 1981. To date, however, no such system – nor the legislation to support it – has come about. This paper explores why. Although this has been attributed variously to (a) lack of political will in a Trinidadian government more committed to industrial development issues, and (b) to inefficiency and infighting amongst the people and organisations promoting protected areas policy, we explore further reasons, rooted in the relationships between science and policy, and the social structures in which these have evolved.

Rather than assess the merits of different conservation strategies, we explore how opinions and debates concerning the nature of Trinidad's nature, its conservation needs, and the appropriateness of parks to address them, have been heavily shaped by policy debates and disputes over almost 40 years (we do not study Tobago). We focus on a series of attempts to legislate for, and establish national parks during this period, and trace the checkered career of national parks in concept, policy and practice, and the various roles played by government, non-governmental and international organizations and the scientific community in shaping it.

During this time, there has been a major shift worldwide towards participation and community-based approaches to natural resource and protected area management, including greater attention to (and aspiration for) participation in the policy process. This is part of a wider social-inclusionary vision of development, in which national parks and protected areas can have their place, with legislation and practice becoming acceptable when shaped through participatory planning, to contribute to livelihoods. Yet although participation has been part of Trinidad's policy world for 15 years, and was pioneered within the conservation community, it has not yet facilitated the establishment of national parks legislation and policy, despite funding opportunities. To understand why, it will be important to explore how the terms of participation have been shaped and circumscribed, as Trinidad's particular government and NGO structures have intersected with the international policy world, and with certain publics.

The emergence of contemporary policy concerning national parks and protected areas, and the science which informs it, have been shaped by Trinidad's particular history. We begin by outlining several structures and 'practices' in the country which have their own history and significance, but which also combine to shape the evolution of environmental debate and policy processes in powerful and enduring ways.

First, Trinidad's history has left the state in control over 50% of the island's land, with environmental debates hingeing on the proper management of state land, shaped by the social make-up of the state. Second, and linked to this, national debate concerning environmental problems in Trinidad turns on the question of 'squatters on state land' and 'abuse of state land by its custodians'. Environmental debates have thus been shaped by being the flip side of the politics of land allocation by the state. Third, there is a strong tradition in natural history among a Trinidad elite, fuelled in the 19th century by its botanical gardens. In 1891 the Field Naturalists Club was started by a group of scientists and professionals as a group for the study of natural history, and by 1894 its regular publications were advocating conservation messages (Mootoosingh 1979). Fourth, this expertise has left national environmental debates in tension with international debates. There is a tradition of strong national capability, linked to a sense of national administrative autonomy. On whose terms, this tradition would ask, is one to be 'part of the wider world'? Debates internal to the country often become 'politicized' and polarized in this way; questioning whether they are driven by actors in the international field (who 'do not know the country') or by Trinidad's people and issues.

In then narrating the evolution of policy around protected areas, we show how this configuration of historical structures and practices has contributed to the exclusion of ‘squatters’, ‘hunters’ and indeed smallholders from mainstream environmental debate – even though such debate has largely been about them. We explore how participation in environmental debate and policy process has been circumscribed to silence several sorts of critique: critiques emanating from many land users’ own experience with existing protected areas; critiques concerning the science of sustainability driving the ‘expert’ forest and wildlife management, and critiques of protected wildernesses, which in practice are used frequently for drug cultivation and become no-go areas for officials worried by trap-guns. One of the arguments of this paper is that the failure to engage effectively with these key publics has been an important factor contributing to problems of producing implementable protected areas policy.

The historical shaping of debate over protected areas

Trinidad’s substantial pre-Colombian population suffered catastrophically as European powers struggled to gain control over their island. And although Spain controlled this island until the British conquest in 1797, it found it hard to attract Spanish settlers, and the island soon became all but deserted. Eventually, from the 1770s, Spanish authorities encouraged settlement by granting land to French speaking ‘refugees’ from the French and slave revolutions, who came with their slaves. When the British acquired the island, they took on the capacity to grant ‘Crown’ land. At first this was granted mainly to those establishing plantations using slave labour imported from Africa, until the African slave trade was abolished in 1807 – and illegally from other islands until slavery itself was abolished in 1838. But even at this date, less than 5% of the island was cultivated, with the ‘Crown’ controlling the rest.

Crown land was not granted to freed slaves, so that they would be forced to become wage labourers. Many former slaves preferred, however, to squat illegally on state land. Thus the ‘labour shortage’ question resolved through slavery became the labour shortage question to be resolved in part through control over squatting (Pemberton 1996, Brereton 1981). Such control was ineffectual, and plantation owners turned to importing indentured labourers first from West Africa, then India to alleviate labour shortages. The squatting problem was only partially resolved when legal changes from the 1860s enabled crown lands to be sold to smallholders. Many (but by no means all) squatters purchased their holdings, as did former Indian indentured laborers, British West Indian Immigrants, Creoles and peons. They were taking advantage of the coffee boom (1866-1920), instigating a major phase of land clearance.

Despite most of the state land being covered by forest, and much of the remainder by cocoa forest, the late 19th century nevertheless saw recurrent concern in the administration with forest clearance, its waste, and its impact on climate (reviewed by Hart 1891). The environmental debate was thus linked to control over squatting which was (prior to the 1860s reforms) recognized as a principle cause of forest decline:

The wanton felling and burning of forests .. by a roving set of semi-civilized African Squatters, principally “Congos” and Cangas,” who, after reaping one or two crops of rice or corn, abandoned the place and wandered to some other convenient locality, generally fertile virgin lands, to do likewise. Whole tracts of rich forests have been thus ruthlessly destroyed (Devenish 1875, in Hart 1891:7).

From the 1880s, certain elements of Trinidad’s administration suggested that forests be reserved. As Pemberton (1996) shows, this was functional to the elite in restricting sales of crown land to small farmers, and thus promoting their availability as a labour force. Others felt it irrelevant and limiting to cocoa-driven economic growth. When an Indian forester was sent to report on forests (and on reservation), skeptics of reservation in Trinidad (and perhaps fuelled by tensions among the elite between

those with French and with English origins) felt undermined by external expertise, and were reluctant to accept a report with recommendations which were not on their own terms:

..the opinions expressed from this Colony were to the effect that his services were not required in Trinidad, and that my predecessor, Mr. Prestoe, reported in strong terms that he saw no cause for a report from such an officer, and was of opinion that local experience was quite sufficient to guide Government in its Forest policy (Hart 1891: 1).

Others, more in favour of reservation, sought justification for it in international 'good practice', but linked to national capability. For example, Hart himself asked: 'would it pay to conserve the forest? The answer to this is pointed out by the general activity of European, Australian, and American States, in paying attention to the resources and conservation of their forests, owing to the fact that such a course inevitably tends to the stability and welfare of a country.' Yet sensitive to accusations of being driven by external colonial interest, he was careful to draw on the ideas of Trinidad's wardens, who were behind the reservation of riversides and river heads, and to document the history of Trinidad's own environmental concern.

The way in which internally contentious issues become expressed in terms of arguments for and against 'outside' influence has become a recurring theme in the evolution of Trinidad's environmental policy. This can be seen, in turn, as linked to Trinidad's status as an island with its very particular social and economic history, at once needing engagement with the wider world but on its own terms, not as a 'colony' or – in modern times - as an 'aid dependent' poor country.

Early conservation under the Forest Department

Following Hart's report of 1891, which proposed a permanent scheme of forest conservation, another officer of the Indian Forest service reported on the forests, and a forestry branch of the Crown Lands Department was established in Trinidad in 1901. In 1918 this became a fully-fledged Forest Department.³

The administration soon began to reserve areas of crown land as forest reserves which were created and managed for their indirect environmental benefits (e.g. in maintenance of climatic conditions for agricultural crops, preservation of water supply, and prevention of erosion and flooding). Whilst the Forest Ordinance of 1913 regulated for the management of forests for timber production in Forest Reserves on State lands, and while some plantations were established, it was not until the late 1920s that timber production became an important concern of the Forest Department (Marshall 1925).

Increasing forest exploitation in the 1940s and the conversion of natural forests to teak and pine plantations also brought about an interest in preserving small areas of 'relict' natural forests, representative of the country's major natural forest types, as 'nature reserves'. The Forest Department began to set these aside in the 1940s as an internal arrangement, with no additional or special legislation enacted to govern their status or management (Shand *et al* 1993: 239). The nature reserves were established using the "prohibited area" legislation which provided for strict control, making entry an offence (section 8 (f)).

Concerns with wildlife protection had begun early in the twentieth century, with Trinidad's first game sanctuary established in 1928 (Thelen and Faizool 1980: 5). Conservation of wildlife legislation enabled the creation of 'wildlife sanctuaries' in 1933, and 13 were made between 1934 and 1968 (Bacon and French 1972). These were generally in forest reserves, but some extended into state lands (Shand *et al* 1993: 239). A dedicated Wildlife Section was established within the Forest Department in 1950, while the

Conservation of Wildlife Ordinance No. 16 of 1958 (becoming law in 1963) made further provision for the establishment of wildlife sanctuaries, where hunting was prohibited.

These early reservation efforts were significant for the subsequent course of protected areas policy in several ways. First, they created forest reserves, wildlife sanctuaries and nature reserves which 'exist' in the landscape, and would continue to influence subsequent decisions about where to site and how to manage protected areas. Second, they created a sense of experience, status and authority in the Forest Department – the post-independence Forestry Division - as the state agency with the capacity to control and manage lands reserved for environmental purposes.

The recreation issue and early discussion of national parks

During the 1960s, several trends made these Forestry Division provisions for environmental protection appear insufficient for activists within the country. First, pressures from human use – especially squatting, illegal timber felling, quarrying etc. were seen to be growing. Second, provisions for protection were seen to be piecemeal, partial and ineffective. For example while in wildlife sanctuaries hunting was prohibited, other activities which affect wildlife habitat such as tree plantation and quarrying were not restricted under the existing law. And in forest reserves, for example, the 1913 ordinance allowed squatters to be charged for timber removal but not to be evicted from the reserve (Forestry Division [FRIM] 1989, Thelen and Faizool, 1980). In short, the existing legislation governing protected areas did not prohibit activities seen to destroy 'natural heritage'. Third, at least for wildlife, the Forestry Division felt that conservation efforts were carried out largely using a hit and miss approach.⁴ High degrees of scientific uncertainty about wildlife populations, requirements and habitats were hindering management, suggesting that effective management needed better data.

It was concerns with recreation, however that prompted the first concerted government reflection on national parks. A shorter working week, increased urbanization and a desire to participate in more outdoor recreational pursuits contributed to the growing demand of Trinidad and Tobago citizens (or at least those vocal in the press) for a variety of outdoor recreational activities (Thelen and Faizool 1980). Nature-based recreation would, it was argued, improve the health of the nation and its standard of living in general, by providing the population with an avenue of 'meaningful' expenditure of leisure time (OAS Technical Cooperation Programme 1974/76 and 1976/78). At the same time, internal tourism would distribute the benefits of urban economic growth to Trinidad's more rural regions. Such discourses were promoted particularly by Nationals who took holidays abroad and visited nature parks, and who felt that a similar type of development could be pursued in Trinidad, given the country's rich flora and fauna, dramatic scenery and waterfalls. Hence arguments were made for the creation of national parks to be used, not protected from use, and where recreational, aesthetic and educational values, rather than the heritage of pristine nature, would be given prominence.

The importance of recreation is evident in several earlier documents within and outside the Forestry Division.⁵ The first comprehensive statement was prepared by a Government Committee which presented one report on the establishment of a National Beach Authority and another on a statutory Authority to embrace the responsibility for National Parks and Wildlife Conservation. This led to the formation in 1972 of the National Environment and Conservation Council (NECC) which was formed to advise on proposed national parks in Trinidad and Tobago. The Council was headed by the Economic Advisor to the Prime Minister, with its members including the Director of the Town and Country Planning Division, the Conservator of Forests, and representatives of the Architect Society. The NECC therefore included members who would have had contrasting goals regarding national parks selection and development, and who had indeed made contrasting proposals outside this forum.

When, in 1973, the government earmarked four areas to be developed into national parks: Caroni Swamp, Navet Dam, Valencia Dam and Chaguaramas, the guiding features in this selection were notably recreational ones. The Government sought assistance to develop the first three, whereas Chaguaramas was designated a National Park in 1974 within the separate Chaguaramas Development Plan.⁶ Then, in 1974, the NECC proposed an executive body to manage and develop other national parks and beaches, suggesting a National Parks Service within the Forestry Division, to manage a parks systems including Forest Parks, Local Parks, Wildlife Sanctuaries, Nature Reserves, Historical sites, View Points and oversee Private Parks.⁷

Whilst these deliberations, especially the recreational component, had roots in national discourse, the evolution of government thinking was shaped very much by international conservation agendas. In particular, national discussions were inter-animated and shaped by on-going negotiations for a project supported by the Organization of American States (OAS) titled 'The Regional Development of the Northern Range with special emphasis on Re-afforestation and Rehabilitation and to the Establishment of a National Parks System.'

The OAS National Parks Systems Plan

Discussions for this OAS project, which was to frame much of the debate around national parks in Trinidad during subsequent decades, were initiated during two OAS missions to Trinidad in 1973 and 1976; part of a technical cooperation programme.

In 1977 the Government established an Inter-Ministerial Committee to make proposals for the creation and management of national parks.⁸ The Forestry Division was assigned the responsibility for their management. It is unclear whether the Division's success in the Committee in gaining control was because it had a broader vision for national parks, because it already controlled land, or because it had the promise of OAS project backing.

The same year the Government⁹ formally requested the OAS project to establish a plan for a system of National Parks and Protected Areas and to prepare a policy from which legislation could be enacted (Thelen and Faizool 1980).¹⁰ The OAS was appointed the consulting agency and offered technical assistance while the Forestry Division was the co-ordinating agency for the project. The 3 year project began in May 1978.¹¹ The OAS expert was Mr. K. Thelen¹², who had recently worked in Chile, on 'Planning national wildland systems: a guide to planning the National Park category of the Wildlands systems in Chile', and had links with both the FAO and IUCN.

The vision and strategy for national parks had to meet multiple agendas. On one hand it was shaped by recreational ideas which had developed within government deliberations, while on the other it was shaped by ideas concerning environmental protection which had been developing within the Forestry Division, notably the ideas of the then Conservator of Forests Bal .S. Ramdial. Ramdial had studied for a PhD in the USA, drawing on the US approach to national parks as wilderness carefully managed for recreational use, and applying it to his study of Caroni.¹³ Through the project, national parks strategy was also shaped by international conservation priorities then emerging as generic to IUCN approaches to national parks and protected area management.

A first and fundamental objective of the National Park system was therefore the 'preservation of vegetative communities and species' (Thelen and Faizool 1980). Vegetation was classified according to Beard's 1946 study of the natural vegetation types of Trinidad and Tobago, and provided the basis on which to select and preserve representative examples of natural vegetation otherwise at risk of destruction. In the eventual systems plan: 'Of the 26 faciatiions [Beard's vegetation classificatory unit], 21

will be provided with what is considered to be sufficient quantity of representation'. Second, strategies for plant conservation were also influenced by then growing international emphasis at the time on 'endemics'. An IUCN study of threatened plants identified 100 species which were endemic to the country and which might be threatened with extinction (in Thelen and Faizool 1980:42). Third, wildlife protection was another major objective, given that existing wildlife sanctuaries and nature reserves were argued to be 'too small to provide desired functions'. Established boundaries did not provide for the protection of the critical habitat requirements of many species. Moreover, 'Areas were protected on the basis of protecting game species without sufficient ecological and habitat consideration'. While it was admitted that habitat destruction – and only secondarily hunting – was the major cause of endangered or vulnerable species, parks development was to emphasize the protection of animals from hunting, the management of protected habitats and the provision of stock for 'restoration of populations in areas which have been depleted because of overhunting, collection or other practices which have upset the natural balance' (Thelen and Faizool 1980). The protection of numerous representative habitat areas was seen as an appropriate precautionary strategy to overcome uncertainties in scientific information about the habitat requirement of different mammals. In this sense, national parks were to further circumscribe hunting terrain.

That the balance was tipped in favour of preservation rather than use was explicit in the policy: 'Choices involving trade-offs between preservation and some aspect of use that will significantly consume or alter the resource must always favour preservation.'

A major emphasis, then, was on the ways land use had destroyed natural vegetation/habitat, and the need to protect representative areas. Other priorities, such as recreation and tourism were accommodated within other types of park. The clash between different visions of national parks was thus resolved within a multi-purpose park system, where different parks had different uses.

Sixty-one (61) protected areas in 6 categories were identified (Thelen and Faizool, 1980) for inclusion in the Plan:

- 13 Scientific Reserves
- 8 National Parks
- 8 Natural Landmarks
- 13 Nature Conservation Reserves
- 6 Scenic Landscapes
- 13 Recreational Parks

From 1978, the OAS financed project was assigned to a nascent 'National Parks Section' in the Forestry Division, comprising a half time national counterpart, two and then four foresters. The 'informal' Section had to compete for allotment of personnel with at least eight other sections within the Forestry Division.¹⁴ Some financial as well as technical assistance was provided by the OAS. The Section drew up management plans for a number of areas under its control, undergoing training in preparing management and development plans for Natural Area Planning, and focusing on the Caroni, Aripo and Chaguaramas areas.¹⁵

A draft policy was prepared in early 1979 and distributed to the government and NGOs for review. Meetings and discussions were then held with other interested agencies and groups.¹⁶ These groups represented the government, industry and the scientific community, but notably not communities, farmers, hunters, or citizens.¹⁷ The executive director of the IUCN Commission on National Parks visited Trinidad and Tobago to give his input on the document's second draft. The final version appeared in March 1980.

Whilst the policy was noted as supporting government aims, its overall objective places it wholly in line with international 'best practice' in national parks and protected area strategy: 'To protect in perpetuity those areas of the country which represent significant examples of the country's natural heritage and to

encourage public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the heritage in ways which leave it unimpaired for future generations’.

The National Parks Policy and the equivalent reserves were approved in principle by Cabinet in 1981.¹⁸ Although it had been anticipated that implementation could begin under existing legislation (for game sanctuaries, prohibited areas, and nature reserves), new more comprehensive and focused legislation was simultaneously prepared.¹⁹ However this legislation was given very low priority and was dropped.

Several factors could account for this legislative failure and lack of government follow up. A first relates to competition between government departments for control over national parks: what one might label as ‘bureaucratic bickering’, but which also concerns contested access to the significant resource flows and status accruing to the institutions managing such internationally high-profile areas. A second relates to land acquisition, and questions more fundamentally the political feasibility of the overall approach. A third relates to development priorities at this point in Trinidad’s political history, and questions the government’s commitment to such an extensive Systems plan.

In the first case, while the systems plan and all documentation leading up to it suggested that the agency managing the system would be a ‘Department of parks, beaches, wildlife and historic sites’ within the Forestry Division, the draft legislation provided for the establishment of a autonomous ‘National Parks Authority’. In justification it was argued that this fitted with international best practice:

This approach (a National Parks authority) is taken to enhance the unique responsibilities for managing the country’s heritage areas. Because no such formal responsibility now exists, there is the opportunity to do it in a way recognized by competent authorities world-wide as the right way (Wade and Bickram 1981: 4).

It was also argued that the Forestry Division’s previous experiences disqualified it from competence; a perspective which played up the division’s work in production forestry but which overlooked its experience in environmental protection.

To place this responsibility within an existing organisational structure would be to encumber it with precedents, traditions and practices that could be detrimental; and perhaps to subject it to conflicts and competing influences in decision-making, financing and most importantly choices in protecting the resource. It would be a definite mistake to place the administration of parks within the same organisational unit as Forestry because of the diametrically opposed ... philosophies of management of resources. On the other hand, there does [sic] need to be some very strong ties between the two (Wade and Bickram 1981: 4).

Supporting the Authority, it was envisaged, would be a Council comprising an appointed chairman and representatives from the Forestry Division, Health and Environment, Town and Country Planning, IMA, Ministry of Education and Culture, Tourist Board, and the private sector including UWI, and professional associations, and at least two conservation organizations. The Council would be empowered to circumvent normal public service hiring procedures on the grounds that ‘It will be important for the authority to be able to respond quickly and effectively to specialized research needs, problems etc. The normal delays encountered in bureaucratic hiring procedures and the often limited number of ‘available’ candidates must be eliminated’ (Wade and Bickram 1981).

In its opposition to the Forestry Division, the legislation thus went against the grain of national deliberation. It thus played into Trinidadian sensitivities to outsiders calling the tune.

A second issue concerned land acquisition. 24% of the land in the 61 proposed areas was private, so the systems plan was also a major state land acquisition plan (see tables 1 and 2). The policy stated that private land needed for inclusion would be acquired under the Land Acquisition Ordinance which enables land acquisition for public purposes. Adjacent to parks, town and country planning legislation (1960 Ordinance) was to be used, covering the preservation and protection of forests, woods, trees, shrubs, plants and flowers on private lands. It was envisaged that acquisition would begin with negotiation, possibly leading to land exchange, the acceptance of donations, the acceptance of donations and subsequent leasing to donor, and compensation to restrict uses to specified ‘acceptable ones’. Yet if these proved impossible, compulsory purchase would be enacted. But the policy and legislation did not problematise either the extent to which the state could afford this, nor the constitutional legality of forced acquisition of park land. According to a recent analysis (Kenny pers. Comm.), this would require a change in the constitution and therefore a (highly unlikely) 3/5 majority in parliament. Indeed the problems posed by land acquisition on such a scale were picked up by the national parks consultant to Trinidad’s National Forestry Action Plan a decade later. Noting the 24% of private land in the system, she observed that no legislation provides for the incorporation of private lands within in a national park, so implementation of the system would require major financial resources. That these had not been forthcoming had been a major factor hindering development of the system (Toppin-Allahar, 1991).

Table 1: Land status within the OAS 1980 National Parks system

Land status	Percent of area of NP and P areas system
Forest reserves	31
Wildlife sanctuaries	12
State land	33
Private (17,000ha)	24

Table 2: Tenurial status of selected parks as proposed in 1980

	Maracas	Matura	Eastern Tobago
Forest reserves	200	3200	1700
Wildlife sanctuaries	900		100
State land	1500	100	500
Private (17,000ha)	2200	200	3400

A third set of reasons relates to potential conflicts between national parks and other state development objectives. A senior official in the Forestry Division interpreted the dropping of the legislation as due to national parks being seen as anti—development. Especially at this time, the peak of the oil boom and associated construction, national parks could clash with demands – and state land acquisition – for oil development, sand and gravel, and building.²⁰ Furthermore as Shand *et al* suggest, the national parks policy ‘was never incorporated in any national plans because the government of the day, distracted by an embarrassment of riches in petro-hyphen dollars, had abandoned the discipline of central planning’ (1993: 212).

The Systems Plan and government policies in the 1980s

The incremental creation and establishment of a system of national parks and other protected areas as suggested in the 1980 Thelen and Faizool study would have required at least 440 core personnel, according to a later assessment (Chalmers and Faizool, 1992: 135). The Systems Plan was, however, never expected to be implemented in one, but provided a guide for sequential action, rather than 'a project'.²¹ So despite failed legislation, and perhaps in anticipation of its eventual enactment, the plan has continued to guide Forestry Division activities concerning protected areas.

The OAS lightly financed the National Parks Section during the 1980s to implement the policies laid out in the project. In the absence of new legislation, the National Parks Section relied on the Forests Act provision for the declaration of prohibited areas to afford protection for these parks. And it continued to use this legislation to create further prohibited areas, declaring eight of the then existing wildlife sanctuaries and forest reserves as prohibited areas between 1987 and 1990. Four of these had been listed in the 1980 systems plan. The idea of prohibition as the basis for management 'pending other legislation' cemented the idea of prohibition, not just of particular activities, but of entry. The legacy of legislative practice thus reinforced exclusionary protectionism as the management style for Trinidad's national parks.

The Forestry Division linked a growing emphasis on public education and recreation with its environmental protection concerns. In the new Forest Resources Policy (1981, prepared to coincide with the 11th Forestry Conference held in Trinidad in September 1980, but never adopted formally) one of the key shifts from the 1942 policy was the encouragement of "public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the country's natural heritage." In 1982, The Forestry Division completed five and ten-year Development Plans for the National Parks Section²² conforming with this new Forestry Resources Policy, and supportive of the Systems Plan. However, budget cuts following a shortfall in revenues from the petroleum sector meant that objectives were not met.²³

With a change of government in 1986, environmental issues were treated more favourably. This was despite the economic austerity of this oil bust period, since international concern with environmental issues chimed with Trinidad's pervasive environmental problems following decades of strong economic, industrial and infrastructural growth. Under the new government, there was significant continuity in environmental policy. Forestry, now in the Ministry of Food Production, Marine Exploitation, Forestry and the Environment, was under dynamic and highly committed Minister Lincoln Myers, and had environmental activist and politician, Eden Shand, as Parliamentary Secretary

The Ministry set up an inter-ministerial Standing Committee on the Environment to review and prepare guidelines for environmental administration.²⁴ It recommended the establishment of a new National Environmental Office (NEO) reporting directly to the Prime Minister. Backed up by a National Environmental Advisory Board comprised of technical specialists from ministries, the NEO would be a co-ordinating and monitoring body, work and with ministries to develop sectoral policies related to environment. It aimed to help develop a new cross-cutting Environmental Act, considered best practice, based on examination of a range of European countries. The Standing Committee specifically recommended that the National Parks function remain with the Forestry Division.

The newly located Forestry Division drafted a National Forest Resources Plan²⁵ (begun 1987, appearing 1989). This again considered the Systems Plan as official government policy. More specifically, it prioritized three new areas for national park development in Trinidad: Madamas and Matura in the Northern Range and the Nariva swamp. And again, implementation was impeded due to post oil-boom cuts and legislative difficulties.

The OAS project ended in 1988. By 1986 only 5 of the 61 areas in the 1980 Plan were managed by the National Parks Section in accordance with the recommendations stated: Caroni, Aripo Savannahs Scientific Reserve, Cleaver Woods, San Fernando Hill Natural Landmark and Quinam Bay Recreational Site. In 1989 4 areas - 3 historical sites (Fort George, Lopinot, and Fort Picton) and one Natural Landmark (Blue Basin) previously managed by the Tourism Board came under the management of the NPS. But otherwise, areas already managed by the National Parks Section were simply maintained by the Section with minor improvements, especially the upgrading of interpretative programs for visitors.²⁶

By 1989 the emergent international discourse on biodiversity entered Trinidad's policy arena. In March that year, a workshop on biodiversity and genetic resources was held, attended by international experts from IUCN and the Commonwealth Science Council (CSC) who sought to identify critical species for biodiversity conservation. Under the NAR administration a biodiversity advisory committee was established within the Ministry of the Environment and National Service (MENS), incorporating UWI and NGOs.²⁷ A project proposal for the development of a National Conservation Strategy was prepared in 1989 with the assistance of IUCN as part of its global strategy, directed towards biodiversity and other goals. With a change of government, and the arrival on the scene of another major donor-supported initiative, the Tropical Forestry Action Plan (TFAP), this project was also put on hold.²⁸

A Draft Forest Resource and National Park Conservation Act (1990) was prepared by the Forestry Division in an attempt to address the need for National Parks legislation. However, it made reference to only 2 of the 6 categories of protected area referred to in the 1980 Plan (National Parks and Natural Landmarks). In addition, it failed to make any provision for dealing with the management of the private lands which constituted 24 % of the area included in the 1980 proposed System (Toppin-Allahar, 1991; CARICOM/FAO/ODA, 1993: 11). The Act did not fare well with a change in Government. The chief Parliamentary Council, on submission of the draft Act, decided to remove the National Parks component for consideration under separate National Trust legislation. Senior staff in the Forestry Division objected strongly to this decision, arguing (a) that National Parks legislation should be separate, and not be attached to any other legislation, and (b) that it was long overdue.

TFAP was a major international planning exercise, backed by FAO, World Bank, UNDP, WRI, Rockefeller Foundation and major bilateral donors. In the Caribbean region it was initiated in 1988, linking CARICOM and FAO, and financed by the UK. A Country Mission Team arrived in June 1991 to extensive media coverage. The National Co-ordinator chosen for Trinidad's National Forestry Action Plan was Mr. Faizool who had been counterpart for the 1980 OAS National Parks project a decade earlier.

In this new planning exercise, the Country Mission Team considered the Division's own NFRP, accepted its merits as background information, and for defining policies and strategies, but felt it needed superceding as it 'lacked economic analyses' and 'justification of objectives'. When it reported in 1992 it accepted much of the 1980 Systems Plan, and planned funding the phased development and management of 32 of the 61 areas mentioned in the plan over a 5 year period (1992 - 1996)²⁹, with the necessary TT\$11.6m expected to flow from an international round table of prospective donors (Shand *et al*: 1993:242).

While the recommendation was for production forestry and conservation concerns to be united within a single organization, the consultant reporting on national parks (Toppin-Allahar 1991) felt that conflicts existed between the type of nature conservation efforts fundamental to obtaining the benefits which can flow from the development of a system of national parks and other protected areas, and other projects being advocated under the TFAP (e.g. projects for upgrading the existing system of forest roads and the saw mills industry). These conflicts were of the same type that had caused Wade and Bickram a decade earlier to divide production forestry from national parks; they would not have been addressed under the

Commission proposed by Chalmers and Faizool (1992). In this case, parks management was envisaged to be by the Wildlife Section of the Forestry Division.³⁰

Moreover, the team also recommended that the Forestry Division be removed from the public service and transformed into an independent Forestry and National Parks Commission (FNPC). This would report to a Board of Commissioners, the Chairman of which ultimately reported to the Minister of the Environment. The arguments for removing forestry from the public service responded to some of the critiques that were constantly levelled at the Division, concerning its inflexibility, slowness in decision-taking, and weak implementation capacities.

Once again, these proposals came to nothing. The NFAP failed to secure any funding. Those in conservation circles suggested that it failed because the plan's objective deviated away from forest conservation – which following the Rio conference in 1992 had become the international funding priority – and steered in the direction of “forest-based industrial development”, which was, in effect what the Forestry Division was already promoting.³¹ Others highlight the downturn in international donor interest in the Caribbean following the end of the cold war.³²

The Wildlife Section and participatory approaches to conservation

The Forestry Division's insistence that its National Parks Section should be the institutional locus for further national parks development – in legislation and funding support – was not uncontroversial. During the 1980s, a sustained critique of the Forestry Division was gaining force, both from within, especially from its own Wildlife Section, and then from environmental NGOs and the public through media reportage.

These critiques focused on several issues. First, they highlighted the Division's incapacity – indeed ill-will – for participatory and co-management approaches. Second, they emphasized the environmental problems caused by the Division's own focus and expertise on plantations and natural forest management. And third, they pointed to the Division's incapacity to deal with forest loss on private land, and on state forest land, accusing the service of negligence – or complicity – in illegal timber felling, and of hiding behind the excuse that the land in question was actually private. Such accusations added to the negative comments of those – such as the drafters of the 1980 law for the Systems Plan – who felt the Forestry Division NPS was not the best placed institution to develop and manage national parks.

Much dissent originated from within the Forestry Division's own Wildlife Section. In the 1980s, it radically transformed its approaches to wildlife conservation, embracing participatory approaches and co-management with communities in a manner which contrasted strongly with the rest of the Forestry Division, but which was more aligned with international ‘best practice’ on conservation. In this respect, the particular way that participation and co-management entered Trinidad's national parks discourse was shaped by Trinidad's particular administrative configuration, and its cultural and political embeddedness, in turn playing into it.

The objectives of wildlife management had earlier been focused partly on protection and prevention of species loss, but had also broadened to encompass the production of a sustained yield of wildlife for heritage values, recreation, tourism, education and environmental diversity.³³ In 1982, the Wildlife Section had taken over management of Caroni Swamp National Park from the National Parks Section³⁴. In the same year, the section was assisted by an FAO/UNDP project to evaluate wildlife resources which aimed to provide the basic wildlife information required to protect a certain species loss; an information gap exposed during deliberations for the Systems plan.³⁵

A zoologist, Dr. Carol James, was a key figure in this project. Concerned about the ‘disconnect between “us” and “them”’ which pervaded the Forest Division’s work³⁶, James saw the involvement of communities in conservation as a logical ideal to pursue. She argued that attempting to police those whose livelihoods depend on resource exploitation, and who frequently know much more than the so-called professionals, was futile. Her pioneering work in this project drew members of the national Hunters’ association and many other stakeholders into wildlife management, and explored and valued their knowledge (e.g. Pyke, in James ed. 1983).

In 1984, Dr. James became head of the Wildlife Section. The leatherback turtles of the north-east coast beaches provided her and dedicated members of her section with an arena for developing a set of pilot approaches to community-based conservation during the next few years. One project, which became the Section’s flagship, was at Matura beach, where a group of young inhabitants in a community with a history of hunting turtles, eventually formed the NGO Nature Seekers Incorporated in 1990, and became conservation managers and tour-guides. Linked to this, but extending to hunters and others, the Wildlife Section also introduced an honorary game warden system, empowering those working with wildlife with some responsibility for enforcing legislation to maintain it. In this, they forged links with a number of NGOs, hunters among them, and community-based organizations throughout the country.

James and her colleagues sensed resistance from the Forestry Division. One interpretation for this – emphasized by James herself³⁷ – was that the broader Forestry Division remained focused very firmly on production forestry and had no interest in other activities and in community-based approaches. The Forestry Division, however, continue to claim otherwise, claiming that they have always had a broader, conservationist vision (viz the Systems plan and their desire to manage it), and supported education and indeed a form of ‘co-management’ with woodworkers.³⁸ From their view, the divisiveness emerged from the Wildlife Section. What is certain is that strong tensions emerged between the main body of the Forestry Division and its Wildlife Section, and a set of very different interpretations of the conflict served to reinforce this tension.

From the vantage point of many working in Wildlife, professional staff in the Forestry Division, especially under the Conservatorship of Bal Ramdial, had become ‘office foresters’, out of touch with field-based realities and largely uninterested in them, despite the impressive public image of the Division promoted by Ramdial’s public education programme. From the vantage point of those working in forestry, however, the ‘co-management’ approach was not so new (having been pioneered, albeit in a different way, in Forestry Division work with woodworkers), and nor was it proper co-management, as Members of Nature Seekers were on the Forestry Division’s pay roll. Representations of the projects in the literature which the Wildlife Section and the NGOs produced, they argue, deliberately mislead on this point.

A second line of tension concerned management style. Co-management approaches, and the requirements of working with communities in a participatory manner, both necessitated and engendered a management style which departed from the more bureaucratic, regulatory approach of the Forestry Division. This contrast, accentuated by James’ own charisma, generated a cohort of staff which came to see themselves as distinctive³⁹; with a culture encouraging innovation, initiative-taking, and direct communication between field officers and section heads. In eschewing hierarchy and the unquestioning following-of-orders from above, James thus broke sharply with the deeply-rooted bureaucratic culture of the Forestry Division.

A third line of tension concerned orientation to national or international agendas. Deprived of national funds, and promoting a strategy which was embraced by international funders, the Wildlife Section was relatively successful in attracting international attention and funds for its work. Within forestry, this was seen as bending to international faddism, in ways inappropriate to ‘realities’ in Trinidad, with the Forestry

Division gaining a growing resentment for international consultants arriving ‘every month to tell us we should be doing participation’.⁴⁰ Indeed, attitudes towards participation among senior staff in the Forestry Division seem to have become extreme and entrenched – overlooking participatory ways the Division does work with woodworkers - within this dynamic: ‘local people are thieves engaged in timber stealing who could certainly not be trusted in the management of the valuable timber resources currently controlled by the state’. Within the Wildlife Section, however, international support only served to underscore their contempt for the backward, top down, ‘office forester’ dinosaurs.

Moreover, these tensions raised as ‘participation’ articulated with Trinidad’s administrative configuration became personalized. First, Conservator Ramdial’s attitudes towards James and the Wildlife Section were seen by critics as having been racist, favouring those of East Indian descent over those of African descent, with Ramdial claimed at one point to have attempted to replace Carol James with his brother. In contrast with the Forestry Division, for her wildlife staff, James stood against racial prejudice in employment. The retort from Ramdial supporters was that James’ appointment was itself linked to African politics; a political appointment, connected to her close ties of support with Rudder, then Permanent Secretary.

Second, the Chief Conservator of forests, Dr. Bal Ramdial, was considered by his critics to be sexist. The Wildlife Section stood out in being staffed by women; Dr. Carol James worked with graduate trainees Nadra Gyan and Robyn Cross who, in contrast with other graduates in the service, did not receive opportunities for further study, indicative of institutionalized sexism in a service otherwise entirely dominated by men at the professional level. Those in Wildlife defined themselves as working for a modern, anti-sexist organization. Professional staff remaining in the Forestry Division however decry the Wildlife Section’s co-management approaches as promoted unprofessionally by a sisterhood of women. Moreover, they were ‘not proper foresters’, lacking forestry degrees, limiting their professional capacity within the rest of the Forestry Division, and their capacity for advance.

Third, Ramdial was considered by many as corrupt: a charismatic figure who could talk well but did not translate his rhetoric, policy making and planning into action, and whose conspicuous wealth beyond his means fuelled rumor that he was enriching himself on the side. His supporters deny this, interpreting this as malicious gossip. People have clear views as to whether Ramdial was a hero or a fraud. Certainly none of this ever came to the courts.

The change of government in 1986 tipped the balance of administrative support in favour of the more participatory approaches being developed by Carol James, bringing her into favour. The personalized discourse came to the fore, where it was used by the new Parliamentary Secretary, Eden Shand, to remove Ramdial from the Forestry Division, to a non-functional position as conservator within the ministry. The newly titled ‘Director’ of Forestry became Selwyn Dardaine, who had been more supportive of Carol James. This change, and the support of the new Ministry of Environment relieved some of the immediate tensions between the Wildlife Section and Division. Nevertheless, the opposition in management styles and approaches ran deeper than personality. Those in Wildlife considered that situation of ‘office foresterism’ had ‘got so bad that it couldn’t be turned round’, whereas those in Forestry saw the Wildlife Section as wayward, and largely left it to its own devices. Thus the Wildlife Section was able to carry on in its own way, able to use the political power of community-based organizations to lever money out of the Forestry Division with threats of popular uprising, and able to attract international funding for community-based approaches which were becoming increasingly popular globally.

The particular structuring of the Forestry Division and the composition of its staff meant that differences in style were thus compounded by possibilities for insider/outsider, racial, and gender-based ascription, no matter what their veracity. The articulation of participatory approaches with the forestry administration exposed key fractures in Trinidad’s social politics along such inside/outside, race and gender lines.

The way that this became personalized could be argued to exemplify the tendency in Trinidadian culture and political culture to emphasize ‘scandal and excess’ in personal relations: Trinidad’s celebrated bacchanal (Wilson 1973, Miller 1994, Mason 1998). Yet, as we shall explore, the personalization of this opposition, and the way in which it appears to account for the failure of the implementation of a National Park system, seemingly desired by all, may perhaps occlude from vision more deeply-rooted reasons why policies fail. In this sense, a focus on the bacchanal can be understood as a narrative style, in which an elite come to play up and blame policy failures on interpersonal issues between themselves (competition, power play), without acknowledging the structural reasons for such failure (relating to their relationship with the wider population, and their relative powerlessness to have their way).

This tension between the Forestry Division and its Wildlife Section endures. With the retirement of Dardaine and his replacement by Narine Lackhan, and with the resignation of Carol James, (and some critics say, with the advent of the UNC Panday administration) action was taken in 1997 by the forestry administration to tackle the split – or disempower Wildlife – depending on how one views it.

A new Forestry Division personnel policy was enacted which required forest officers to circulate between jobs and specializations. One use (intended or otherwise but interpreted as intended by those who bore its brunt) was to take the 12 or so officers who had gained experience in the wildlife section under Carol James, and who bore the legacy of her style and co-management approaches, and ‘put them out to the conservancies’ where they had to adapt to the very different management styles. From the Forestry Division’s point of view, this could have been a response to the need to put Wildlife people back in contact with the masses in the conservancies, possibly linked to public relations problems which as we shall see surrounded a renewed attempt to pass a National Parks and Protected Areas law. It was also a policy which emphasized the idea of the forester as an all-rounder, able to integrate wildlife, production forestry, watershed management and conservation concerns: precisely the image the Division was stressing in its battle to retain the ‘turf’ of national parks and protected area management. The policy contested the image of wildlife as a specialism: nothing to do with forestry except to contest production forestry, and framed more by the discipline and intellectual sponsors of conservation biology than by forestry.

In the late 1980s, a second initiative also adopted and developed participatory approaches, and its eventual fate – many plans but not action – can be traced in large part to the tension between the Forestry Division and its Wildlife Section, which it needed to collaborate with. When the OAS terminated its support for the National Parks project, it continued its involvement with certain envisaged national parks in the context of a new Eastern Northern Range Project (ENRP). The particular need to conserve the extensive forest areas of Trinidad’s northern range mountains had been under discussion within the Forestry Division since the early 1970s. There was much old forest, and some regrowth following the abandonment of cocoa plantations. Much was state land, but significant amounts were private. The vegetation was threatened by timber ‘theft’ and agricultural squatting on state land, and by new use of private land. With OAS support, and the then Environment Minister, Lincoln Myers’ strong encouragement, a project was finally able to be launched. This set out to develop a management plan for the region, and to propose fundable projects (but not to implement them), with the objectives of both protecting the northern range, and diversifying production and increasing local living standards. While the project was inter-Ministerial and separate from the Forestry Division, the national counterpart to the OAS expert (a Jamaican, Neville Farquarharson), Carlton Sambury was seconded from forestry. A small staff was supplemented by a series of numerous short-term consultants, national and international.

A major part of the plan was the development of Matura National Park, justified largely on the grounds of protection for its stands of Mora forest, as the suggestion for this park in the Systems Plan had been. But unlike the earlier OAS effort, the ENRP attempted to use participatory planning procedures to involve

stakeholders in communities and local government in discussing developments. It also planned numerous income-generating activities – from wildlife farming to jam preparation from forest and orchard fruits – to help secure local support and fulfill income generation aims. However while the project elaborated plans, it lacked funds for implementation, leading to disillusion among community members. More significantly, it also suffered from problems of co-ordination. It was largely shunned by the Forestry Division, whose jurisdiction it competed with, whose approach it contradicted, and for whom it symbolized external intervention. It was also largely shunned by the Wildlife Section, which was doing community based conservation in the Matura area, and which was skeptical of yet another well funded planning exercise. Original promises to lend staff and support did not materialize, and the key vision of the ENRP – integrated management of all resources – was frustrated.⁴¹

The expanding roles of non-governmental and community organizations

A further transformation in Trinidadian environmental policy processes during the 1980s was an expansion in the number of non-governmental organizations, their environmental militancy and press vocality, which levelled further critical voice against the Forestry Division towards the end of the decade.

Some of these NGOs had their roots in Trinidad's long tradition of interest in natural history (the Botanical Gardens and Herbarium established from 1811; the Field Naturalists Club established in 1893; the Zoology Department at the University of West Indies (St. Augustine) established in the 1960s, and the Point-a-Pierre Wildfowl Trust founded in 1966, committed to wildlife protection and public education). While these organisations had long articulated conservation messages, they were joined, in the late 1980s, by organisations with conservation as their main *raison d'être*.

Severe fires during an extended dry season in 1987 galvanized many of those who were already anxious about trends in Trinidad's forest cover to act, forming the Caribbean Forest Conservation Association (CFCA). This committed itself to the concept of community co-management of renewable natural resources, and multi-stakeholder involvement in planning and management. The Guardian Life Wildlife Trust Fund - launched in July 1992 – aimed to support local conservation particularly in rural communities. Guardian Life pledged to match donations up to one million Trinidad dollars.⁴² Guardian Life brokered an agreement in which UNDP would assist the Fund in monitoring its local wildlife conservation projects. Environmental NGOs further unified to form COPE – the Council of Presidents on the Environment.

The establishment of NGOs was stimulated by the increased national and international respect and funding they could command, and this enabled members to participate in national and international policy processes. Within Trinidad, NGOs had begun to be included on certain statutory committees, such as the Wildlife Conservation Committee (under the Wildlife Conservation Act, Chapter 67:01), and ad hoc Cabinet committees such as the Standing Committee on the Environment (also founded in 1987). Membership also greatly facilitated participation in international meetings, and access to international funds, which were increasingly directed at NGOs, and which frequently stipulated NGO involvement in contracts. Initiatives were also being taken to link NGOs and CBOs. For example GREAT and CFCA formed a joint venture of equal partners and submitted a joint proposal on community-based forest fire prevention for international funding in 1995 (Eden Shand, Trinidad Express, 7/3/96).

Carol James, who had pioneered community based approaches in Trinidad from within the Forestry Division's Wildlife Section, eventually resigned out of frustration with the Division to take up a post at UNDP. Part of her role was to nurture the Global Environment Facility small grants programme (managed by Richard Laydoo) which was itself firmly committed to funding community-based approaches. Community-based organizations such as Nature Seekers Incorporated and the Toco

Foundation in the north-east also became politically vocal. The latter was involved in broader environmental campaigning, for example protesting against the establishment of a 750 acre ecotourism resort in the Matura area on the grounds that the "fragile Matura ecosystem could not sustain a project of such magnitude" (President of NSI, Solomon Aguilera, 1995).

There was also an emerging coalition between concerns with community-based approaches, and tourism. The prioritization of national parks in the National Forestry Action Plan had been rooted not only in conservation concerns, but also in arguments about the economics of tourism. It was recognized that carefully planned and controlled ecotourism could play a major role in the country's tourism drive, itself a priority amidst post oil-boom attempts to diversify the economy. The Tourism Master Plan of TIDCO claimed that the expansion of eco-tourism would generate employment and attract capital to parts of the country overlooked by traditional development projects, and provide a profitable and sustainable alternative to damaging economic developments such as logging of tropical forests for quick profits.⁴³ The Plan called for the designation of the Northern Range as a national park. The Tourism Management Plan (TIDCO, 1996), developed by Canadian consultants, placed emphasis on the development of parks as a major tourist attraction with sites being proposed in Chaguaramas, Caroni, Nariva and the Northern Range. The establishment of a system of national parks could thus serve the dual purposes of enhancing ecotourism opportunities and preserving biodiversity. The ecotourism industry was fast-growing, at a rate of about 18 % per year and because revenue flows from this sector were relatively predictable, funding agencies (such as IADB, World Bank) had become willing to invest in nature conservation projects. Ecotourism was increasingly seen as a 'win-win' option which united the goals of conservation and community involvement, since communities could help manage and share in ecotourism profits, as well as reconciling these with broader aspects of government economic policy. Nevertheless debates between conservationists and tourism officials also ensued over issues of type and scale of ecotourism development, given the possibilities for resort development to alter ecosystems and for visitors to have negative impacts on sensitive habitats.

With an emphasis on possible 'win-win' opportunities between national parks and CBOs, in particular those focusing on tour guiding and turtle protection, which had proven success and would be advantaged (or at least not threatened) by the establishment of national parks, it was easy to marginalize others in the community; 'others' who had at times (in the early 1980s under James) been incorporated into wildlife management. While embracing 'community approaches' and 'stakeholders', the reality was that only certain sections of the community gained profile (in most cases sections of the youth, and some families managing guest houses). Others - in particular, those land owners, farmers, squatters and hunters whose use of the lands earmarked for the park or its buffer zones might challenge the 'win-win' scenario became marginalized. But while marginalized within environmental policy processes, such groups in fact made up an effective majority (spanning the economically powerful and powerless) capable of orchestrating major political opposition to the eventual product of those processes. Their experience of the relationship between land use and biodiversity was very different from its representation in the environment policy process, and with it their idea of the possibility of conservation integrated with private land use. Moreover, as we shall see, their experience of park 'wilderness' was rather different, fearing that that they would become 'no-go areas' (except for limited strips around trails) open to colonization by drug cultivators and trap-guns.

International conservation and Trinidadian national parks

Just three months after the National Forest Action Plan report was published in 1992, the UNCED conference took place in Rio. The latter gave immense international profile and funding legitimacy to conservation agendas. In acknowledgement of this, there was an immediate reconsideration of NFAP priorities to reflect the major concerns aired there – particularly biodiversity, and the emphasis on

community participation in Agenda 21 - in the hope that global environmental concern reflected at Rio might develop into donor support of the TFAP project proposals.

The Trinidad inputs to the UNCED conference were largely prepared during the NAR government which had been more sympathetic to the participation lobby. The delegation included both Dr. Carol James representing the government, and former Parliamentary Secretary and environmental analyst and activist Eden Shand, who now represented Trinidad's emergent and more vocal environmental NGO community. Yet the Trinidad government changed just prior to the conference. A self-critical, hard hitting report on Trinidad's environment which had been prepared had to be shelved, to be replaced by an altogether more bland statement on the state of the environment.

The emphasis in Rio on community involvement in conservation had also been underscored by the 4th World Congress on National Parks and protected areas (Feb 1992), with its motto: 'Parks for Life'. The Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) supported Latin American and Caribbean participation in the Congress (which itself fed into the Rio conference), using it explicitly as an opportunity to focus on protected areas in the region.⁴⁴ The conference assisted IADB's Environment Protection Division 'to design policies and strategies for improving the financing and management of the region's protected areas', and to argue the case that 'Protected Areas are as essential the welfare of society, as legitimate a public investment, as defense, communications'⁴⁵ (McNeely 1993).

At this time, IADB funded a study to generate a Protected Areas project within a larger Land Rationalization Action Plan which it was considering funding. Eden Shand of CFCA and others worked alongside the TFAP team in this study (Shand et al 1993). The main emphasis of IADB interest was on improving agriculture through the elimination of tenure constraints. This Protected Area Project, again designed to kick-start the original OAS Systems Plan, was the 'green' component (if not a 'green' conditionality) of an otherwise production focused programme.

The project considered dealing with the private land question embodied in the Systems Plan head on. The issue was seen to present major challenges either in finding large funds for land acquisition, or in finding ways to involve private landowners in the planning and management of the parks – although as we shall see as the proposed project progressed in the 1990s, this component was gradually marginalized.

The proposals emphasized co-management, with the parks management unit in the Forestry Division sharing management with local communities, in line with approaches that the team of national consultants had already advocated in other contexts, and with IADB and IUCN best practice.⁴⁶ Co-management was intended to overcome problems of encroachment and lack of public awareness of and enthusiasm for National Parks. It was also necessary given the Division's inadequate staffing and the need to collaborate with local populations. Park boundaries were to be redefined and demarcated incorporating local consultation, and ecotourism promoted as a principle means of securing local involvement and revenues.

The project drew on the prioritization of areas of the Forest Resources Policy, finding these adequate to fit biodiversity concerns, although it dropped the proposed Madamas park (which encompassed 1600ha of private land), focusing on just Matura and Nariva in Trinidad. It was to develop pilot models which could be replicated. Matura was considered particularly suitable because of the proven success of Nature Seekers' community management of leatherback turtles on the beach which could, it was thought, translate directly into national park management.

Drawn up within the Ministry of Agriculture, Lands and Marine Resources, the project aimed to strengthen the Forestry Division's National Parks Section through technical assistance and staffing. It referred back to the Systems Plan (though notably not to its contrasting 1981 legislation) in seeing this as the appropriate way forward, noting that the National Parks Section was 'formed to be the recipient

agency for technical assistance from the OAS in the area of parks and protected areas' (MALMAR/LTC 1992: A9-8).⁴⁷

The Land Rationalization and Development Programme of which the project was a part was accepted by Cabinet at the end of 1992. It provided a series of IADB-fundable projects, including the five year protected area development project. Many of the IADB projects eventually saw the light of day in the IADB-funded Investment Sector Reform Programme. Others are contained in the proposed Agricultural Sector Investment Programme. The Protected Areas Project, however, was not funded by them. Rather, from around 1993 the World Bank took over development of the project. IADB remained involved only in stipulating (in 1993/4) that Cabinet must approve a National Parks and Wildlife Bill as a precondition for accessing the 3rd tranche of the IADB Investment Sector Reform Programme (itself a precondition for the 2nd tranche of the Agricultural Sector Reform Programme, itself a precondition for the 1st tranche of the Agricultural Sector Investment Programme). The brokerage and transfer across to the World Bank appears to have been made because IADB could not properly be the funding agency for a project which was to meet its own conditionality.⁴⁸ The World Bank was at this time already developing a "Natural Resources and Environmental Management Project". In the transfer, the National Parks project became a component of this project, and became linked with what became a Watershed Management Project.

Predictably, the first World Bank Mission of 1994 identified national parks and watershed management as priorities for funding. A Task Force⁴⁹ for the National Parks and Watershed Management Project was formed and preparations for World Bank funding began. The Japanese Government granted the Government of Trinidad and Tobago funding for the studies necessary for preparation of the project proposal to be submitted to the World Bank. C. Hollis Murray, the doyen of Trinidad forestry, having headed it before moving to the global FAO Forestry Division, was appointed Studies Co-ordinator for the project.

The contract to carry out the preparation studies – the first to select priority areas for national parks development, and the second to prepare management plans – was stipulated to be to an NGO, and was won by CFCA. The team which carried out the studies consisted of Eden Shand, Professor Stan Temple of the University of Wisconsin as international consultant, and a UWI M.Phil student who had carried out research in the Matura area, Amrit Barran, as junior member. In preparation for this undertaking, Shand, on behalf of the CFCA, invited many key stakeholders to attend a consultation, advocating as he did a participatory approach to planning (and as the World Bank stipulated, and as had become IUCN best practice),

This team was concerned about the System Plan's model of many, rather small parks or protected areas. It had prioritized the need to preserve Trinidad's different vegetative communities, and the protected areas were chosen to represent most of these. A view emanating from conservation biology, as voiced by Temple, argued on the basis of animal ecology the need for much larger conservation areas for conservation to be effective, echoing the ideas of vocal NGOs that the whole northern range (much of which is privately owned) be directed towards conservation.⁵⁰ Moreover, as the idea was strengthening that the problem of private lands for the Systems Plan could be resolved through co-management, rather than eviction of those within the boundary, there was no reason why the park areas involved could not be significantly larger. Hence a coalition emerged between the perspectives of co-management and of conservation biology.

In 1995 Professor Stan Temple employed the "umbrella species" concept in his UWI Conservation Biology Class. This holds that the organism with the largest transboundary range, if adequately accommodated, will provide an umbrella of protection for the rest of the biological community. Based on this, and on an estimation of the space demands of 20 forest-dwelling mammals, he and his students concluded that a protected natural area would need to encompass at least 31,250 ha to protect Trinidad's

forest-dwelling mammals fully (Shand, 37/7/96, *Daily Express*). Parks thus needed to be bigger to cater for as large a natural range for transboundary populations of animals as possible, suggesting the need for larger conservation areas or clusters of conservation areas with different management objectives. It was no good just protecting representative samples of Trinidad's vegetation types.

Professor Temple (the Beers-Bascom Professor in Conservation in the Department of Wildlife Ecology) had first visited Trinidad in the early 1990s with a Fulbright grant, and subsequently became an occasional visiting lecturer in Conservation Biology at UWI and at the Forestry School at ECIAF. Rather than compartmentalize nature into discrete natural resources, examining them separately in different disciplines, such as wildlife management and forestry, and managing them separately, Temple had long been advocating a more holistic and ecocentric approach (rather than such a reductionist and anthropocentric one), aiming to preserve biological diversity through maintaining ecosystem health. Accordingly, the science underlying Temple's perspective on national parks differed from that of the Systems Plan, in particular in how to classify and prioritize ecosystems. The Systems Plan had drawn explicitly on Beard's established classification. Temple and his students argue that this was strongly biased towards the concerns of timber production which dominated the Forestry Division at the time. For the most part it took commercially-valuable timber trees as its indicator species, and in almost all cases identified ecosystems according to the associations of large trees which dominated them. Temple and his student Howard Nelson have mounted a challenge to Beard's work, aiming to reclassify Trinidad's ecosystems according to criteria (such as biodiversity) more in keeping with current conservation agendas. A major study has been mounted to carry out inventories in sample plots of plant, animal, bird and some key indicator insect species (bees), and to use advances in landscape ecology computing to see how these variables cluster. This study has been extremely well-disseminated even prior to its conduct.

Eden Shand supported the argument for a larger-scale co-management approach. As an associate of the International Centre for Protected Landscapes at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth which he had visited in 1994, he argued in a newspaper article that the Centre had been encouraging countries to revise their ideas about National Parks by promoting the 'Protected Landscape' category of protected areas as more appropriate in certain cases. A Protected Landscape, according to Shand is an area where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinct character which has significant cultural, aesthetic and ecological value. The essential difference between National Parks and Protected Area Landscapes hinges on the presence of economically active resident communities within the area. In another article (30/7/96, *Daily Express*), he pointed out that protection of large areas was also advocated by the Switzerland-based World Conservation Union.

Temple's student and CFCA member Nicole Leotaud publicized the new vision of national parks in several newspaper articles during the mid 1990s, in one case defining national parks to include "the co-ordination of various human-related activities within a carefully managed area that usually incorporates valuable natural systems" (*Daily Express* 1995). The strong links between CFCA and Wisconsin conservation philosophy are exemplified not only in their co-participation in the World Bank team, but also in CFCA's 'mission statement' which was a quote from Aldo Leopold, the founder of the University of Wisconsin Department of Conservation Biology, and mentor of Professor Temple.

The scope to incorporate this emerging perspective in the conservation community into site selection proved to be limited as the prioritization and management plans were prepared for the World Bank. They followed, more or less, the Systems Plan and IADB study in choosing Matura and Maracas in Trinidad, although the areas concerned were to be slightly larger. Whilst the management study was to have had a chapter setting these parks within a broader strategy for a Northern Range Conservation Area, this was not written up and the idea was not carried through into the draft legislation (Eden Shand, interview, June 1999, Port of Spain). Whether this was because of (a) broken writing commitments within the

CFCA coordinated project, (b) anticipated political impossibility, or (c) pressure from within the Bank/Ministry to conform to the Systems Plan remains unclear.

Although the World Bank project appeared to be a direct follow-on from the IADB protected areas project, it differed fundamentally in imposing that an independent National Parks and Wildlife Authority – not a section of the Forestry Division - be the implementing agency. Furthermore, it went the step further of incorporating responsibility for national wildlife management into the new agency. The Bank's accompanying watershed project was to be implemented through the Forestry Division, but not until the National Parks and Wildlife Authority had been set up.

The motive for cutting loose the National Parks and Wildlife sections from Forestry was similar to that which had prompted the 1981 draft legislation to set up an autonomous National Parks authority. The arguments for conservation having autonomy from the production concerns of forestry, and for sidestepping the drawn-out bureaucratic procedures of the public service, were, however, further fuelled by the shift towards community based approaches which was seen to require innovation and flexibility. World Bank policy was also to support the establishment of an autonomous agency, in accordance with its general approach to liberalization and decentralization in governance and economic policy worldwide.

Cabinet approved, in principle, the development of a new National Parks and Wildlife Act which would lead to the establishment of an autonomous authority, in September 1994. It more or less had to. As stated earlier, Cabinet had actually to approve a Bill in order to qualify for several major IADB loans. Approving a Bill is one thing, however, but seeing it through to enactment is quite another.

The possibility for autonomy and for new legislation clearly appealed to those who had participated in formulating the World Bank plan (who could more easily find a personal role in the operation of the parks if they were managed by an independent agency). Equally it appealed to those in the Wildlife Section who continued to be frustrated by their administrative subordination to the Forestry Division. For Nadra Nathai-Gyan, Acting Head of the Wildlife Section, autonomy would relieve chronic resource and staff shortages, as to date the parks and Wildlife sections had been unable to source international funds independently of MALMR, including international funding agency trust funds.⁵¹ To proceed towards the necessary legislation to establish the parks and the Authority, two external legal consultants were commissioned to draft a bill, with the use of local counterpart advice (Mark R. G. Christensen from the New Zealand law firm, Russell McVeagh McKenzie Bartleet & Co.,). The Director of Forestry – who had to cooperate with the development of new legislation, despite opposition to it - established an expert committee to develop Schedules to be incorporated into the Bill before its publication for comment.⁵²

Increasingly, the promise of win-win between tourism and national parks guided the development of park planning. Thus whereas CFCA and Stan Temple began planning a broader landscape approach (incorporating co-management with land owners), based on conservation criteria, the World Bank, in its justification for financing as a national loan, focused on the importance of parks for tourism and revenue flows from it. In its agreement in principle to the creation of a National Parks and Wildlife Authority, Cabinet highlighted the need from the Tourism sector: "The process of creating an operational National Parks Authority with enforcement powers and strong linkages to the tourism industry should therefore be initiated immediately".

Win-win with tourism shaped planning and management, playing up co-management with tourist organizations. Importantly, it played down participation and co-management with other land users: hunters, squatters and other stakeholders. Thus policy began to be shaped by the financial strictures of the loan (focus on international tourism, and tourist CBOs), and the policy agenda of the loaning bank (autonomous management), rather than by local politics (pressure from land users, hunters etc.), and local administrative politics (tensions between the Forestry Division and its Wildlife Section, and the

reluctance of the Forestry Division to cede control). Whilst several tourist focused CBO groups began to prepare for national park status⁵³, others in the same communities began to organize opposition, and whilst the National Parks and Wildlife Sections prepared for autonomy, the Forestry Division prepared to resist. The active support of high profile CBOs such as Nature Seekers Incorporated, and others who had received GEF funding through UNDP small grants, was sufficient to give the appearance of community support and co-management, but this occluded from vision what came to be a powerful opposition.

Public comment on proposed legislation was, by the mid 1990s, an accepted part of the policy process. Individuals and groups make inputs before a Bill is passed and enacted. In the first half of 1997, the joint National Parks and Wildlife Bill was circulated for public comment. It received heavy criticism from three angles.

First, some of the strongest opposition came from members of the hunting community. Buddie Miller, President of the national Hunters' Association of Trinidad and Tobago (HATT) brought public attention to two sections of the Bill: Section 109 which empowers officers to enter the premises "without a warrant and without the consent of the owner or occupier" to search and seize any articles, and Section 95 which makes provisions for an officer to begin proceedings up to 3 years after the alleged offence, so that hunters could be charged for an offence up to 3 years after it was committed. Miller sent letters stating his position to the Prime Minister, Attorney General's office and to the Ministry of Legal Affairs. The draft Bill was seen as a threat to democracy and citizen's rights; it was "dangerous" and he called for its withdrawal.⁵⁴ His convictions were echoed by others in the press in the following days. The Bill seemed deliberately to manipulate Clause 13.1 in Part IV of the Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago: the preamble of the Bill, wrote Etienne Mendez⁵⁵, refers to this clause but omitted part of it; the exception which underscored upholding fundamental rights and freedoms. He accused the Attorney General of deceiving the public, exposing the 'sinister' motives and intentions of the authors of the bill and the Government. Mendez called for the dismissal of Minister Reeza Mohammed for having presented the "offensive" National Parks and Wildlife Bill. The Bill infringed upon "civil liberties and constitutional rights... [and]... appears to have been drafted without any knowledge of local peculiarities."⁵⁶ The Bill showed: "a lack of consideration for the legal rights of the law abiding hunters of Trinidad and Tobago."⁵⁷ Hunters and others questioned how the Government could "enact a law that would allow unrestricted rights to their conservation forces, to enter ones private estates and lands with powers like the 'Gestapo'". The Bill was 'too vague' and open to abuse of authority by NPWA employees. It gave too much 'extended authority' to persons who are not even members of the protective services. The Bill was "brutal, wicked" with "nasty shades of the reincarnation of a Hitler and Idi Amin all in one".⁵⁸ Even Sylvia Kacal of the CFCA shared the HATT view that Section 109 extended the powers of conservation authorities so far as to lose credibility.⁵⁹

By this time, the PNM government whose Cabinet had approved the establishment of an autonomous authority in 1994, had been defeated, and was replaced by the UNC in alliance with the NAR. Realizing the loss of political support these accusations of 'threats to democracy' could entail, the National Alliance for Reconstruction (NAR), the minority in the UNC/NAR coalition government, distanced themselves from taking any responsibility for the provisions stated in the Bill by saying that it was negative, severe and curtailed certain democratic rights and freedoms. Members of the party suggested that the Bill was drafted in an "irresponsible" way, violating some fundamental rights in the Constitution and giving too much power to certain groups".⁶⁰

A second set of criticisms related to the proposed autonomous authority. Several commentators felt that the Bill gave the proposed NPWA too much authority, which overlapped with both the Forestry Division and Trinidad's recently-established Environmental Management Authority (EMA). Indeed, the Bill was criticized as 'not couched within any particular policy position as regards National Parks and wildlife

conservation, nor is it placed in the context of existing legislation, such as the Environmental Management Act of 1995, and National Trust Act.⁶¹

This critique echoed that levelled at the Bill by the Forestry Division itself. All national policy documents had located National Parks within the Forestry Division. Why was this latest one out of line? The Forestry Division's response to the draft bill was to argue that they have been and remain the most suitable agency for dealing with national parks. The Systems Plan had been developed within forestry, and had always been conceived of as part of a broader conservation programme. Indeed forestry had or sought to develop many other tools for conservation, including slope limits to cultivation on the Northern Range, and new legislation to control felling on private lands; provisions already possible within Town and Country Planning legislation. A new 1997 Forestry Bill which set out these provisions for dealing with private land was by this time already being debated in Parliament.

The Acting Director of Forestry commented that the proposed legislation would overlap with provisions in existing legislation and would only cause conflict. Moreover, the recommendations in the Systems Plan for National Parks and other Protected Areas to be managed as a whole unit was being ignored in the Bill despite it being accepted by Cabinet as policy in 1981. Fundamentally, he argued, Trinidad and Tobago were too small to apply models of national parks in developed countries such as USA, New Zealand and Canada. The comparative countries were well chosen, USA being the location of the World Bank and Stan Temple, and New Zealand the country from which the legal consultants had come.

Other senior professional foresters who had been involved with the National Parks Section were concerned with problems in the allocation of agency and responsibility. Most importantly they were concerned that the "grass root" users need to be factored in. Their concerns, fears, needs and expectations should drive the legislative drafting/evaluation process with the ultimate goal of implementation in the context of sustainable use. It is not surprising that concern with 'grass roots users' was raised by foresters, who for all their bureaucratic problems had a tradition of working with and regulating other users, and who thus had experience of their concerns.

Third, commentators raised problems with the proposals for land acquisition. Rather than take the co-management route with land owners, the draft bill sought to acquire all lands within the park. Senator Julian Kenny argued - reflecting the opinions of many land owners in the region - that the State should not simply be allowed to declare areas of private property as national parks. If the State wanted to protect an ecologically important area on private property, then it should make arrangements to negotiate over conservation or acquire the land. And as a fourth issue, the Schedules which the draft Bill contained concerning rare species etc. were pointed out to be full of errors (Kris Rampersad, Sunday Guardian 25/5/97).

Under such criticism, the deadline for comment on the Bill was extended and a new draft went into preparation, in which the concerns of hunters were to be represented.⁶² The unpopular 1997 draft Bill was eventually withdrawn in early 1998. The decision was taken to remove and reformulate its components after criticisms that National Parks and Wildlife were two separate issues and should be dealt with as such.⁶³ Two Bills were prepared; a National Parks and Protected Areas Bill and a Wildlife Bill, each incorporating the appropriate changes and recommendations. Consultation and the drafting of the legislation was again facilitated by the World Bank funded project. Whilst consultation had been extended to include hunters, it was still limited (being heavily slanted towards environmental organizations, rather than 'grass roots' as such).⁶⁴

In the new drafts, it was proposed once again (a) that an autonomous National Park and Wildlife Authority be established to administer these two pieces of legislation (Leotaud, CFCA column, *Daily Express*, 27/5/98), and (b) that the Maracas and Matura parks include large areas of private lands. Land

owners again organized opposition in the regions. Critics again suggested the proposed legislation contradicted constitutional rights concerning 'enjoyment of property' and 'rights of way', and again had not been harmonized with other environmental legislation, including the new Environmental Management Authority.

Moreover, these Bills were drafted with many straightforward errors, ranging from inconsistency of definitions, measurement units etc. to flawed lists of scheduled species. Rumours abound concerning how such a flawed draft was submitted. Was it carelessness, a transmission of the wrong draft to printers or an act of sabotage? In any case the bills were shelved before they could reach parliamentary debate. In the eyes of Senator Kenny, the most expert politician on this subject, they were 'legislative rubbish' and 'almost certainly drafted to meet conditionalities of the international funding agencies, reflecting the thinking of bureaucrats who can only see uniformity of approach' (pers.com).

This is not the place (and it is not our place) to discuss on-going deliberations. Suffice to say that there is continued and as yet unresolved discussion concerning the administrative home for national parks and protected areas, the financing of them, and their legal framework.

Hunters and challenges to the conservation biology perspective

Recreational hunters shared a different set of visions concerning nature, society and what national parks should be. Forestry and Wildlife staff, and the international conservation biologists they are linked with, tend to be concerned with over-hunting as a general and serious threat to wildlife populations and biodiversity. However the South East Hunter's Association argues strongly against the accusations leveled at hunting as the prime cause of loss of wildlife. First, they distinguish themselves from 'poachers', emphasising the problems that poachers cause for proper hunters and imaging poachers as social deviants who may use hunting as a cover for marijuana cultivation. Second, emphasising the effects of hunting is to overlook, they argue, the effects of the timber production practices of the Forestry Division. There has been a net loss in diversified habitat through monocultural teak and pine practices and intensive timber removal programmes. Consequently, a number of birds and other species are becoming rare and endangered due to habitat modification. Close planting in teak forests is unfavourable for wildlife so few animals inhabit these areas; for example the Howler Monkey range in the Southern Watershed Reserve has been significantly reduced thus. In addition, lack of thinning prevents the inter-planting of nature trees which could enhance bio-diversity (CARICOM/FAO/ODA, 1993:18). Monocultures tend to form breeding grounds for pests of natural ecosystems and provide less protection for soil (TFAP Position Paper/CFCA, 1990 in Chalmers 1990). Pollution from oil developments, and the introduction of ticks from commercially ranched cattle, are having further detrimental effects on wildlife populations. Thus while illegal hunting has serious negative effects on the country's wildlife, this is in conjunction with the possibly more important processes linked to 'the expansion and the development of the country'.⁶⁵

Indeed the South East Hunters' Association argues that hunting (except by illegal 'poachers') does not generally reduce the populations of hunted species. This argument is based on tracking wildlife populations through a set of 'scientific' theories and methods that they have developed through experience, and which contrast with – indeed contradict the findings of – conventional conservation biology. The diameter of the circle in which an animal runs when chased by hunting dogs can be used as a gauge of its territory and hence population levels; a smaller circle suggesting smaller territory and higher population. The correlation between running area and population varies not only by species but also by terrain and other factors. Mohan Bholasingh, president of the Association, and others are using numerous observations to build this up into a reliable methodology. Notably, this is a method which depends on the use of animals/protected areas for its application.

In using these methods, hunters have recorded population increases of certain animals in areas where the Wildlife Section had considered them to be in decline. Indeed, the Association critiques the methodology for wildlife population monitoring used by the Section and by certain conservation biologists (e.g. Nelson 1996), based on the return sheets which all licensed hunters must complete. In a "Letter to the Editor" dated 24/8/96 in the *Trinidad Guardian*, Winsie M. of Mayaro defended hunters by saying that it is erroneous to use sheets as a measure of wildlife populations as they are often not filled out at the time of the hunt but rather at the end of hunting season, a factor which makes them inaccurate. Furthermore there is evidence that hunters in the north-east fill these out 'strategically' according to their interpretations of state wildlife management science and policy. If the reported number of kills is too high, they will be blamed for over-hunting, but if too low, the authorities will think animal numbers are in decline; both may presage restrictions on hunting, so the sheet is filled out at a 'happy medium' level (Amrit Barran pers. Comm.)

In line with their critique of the science of measuring wildlife populations at a distance, the SE Hunter's association critiques the management strategy of strict protection which follows from the conservation biologists' analyses. Just as effective measurement depends on use of wildlife and their habitats, so does effective management. They point to the ways that recreational hunters are able, while hunting, to police for illegal trapping, hunting and farming. They point to areas where the strict protection of wildlife sanctuaries – preventing such use – had precipitated a rise in illegal hunting so that wildlife populations are no better protected in such reserves, and sometimes worse.⁶⁶ Moreover, dismissing the idea of exclusionary protectionism, the Association goes on to argue that the country is too small to have 61 parks: instead, 'all of Trinidad and Tobago is a park.' But while the spatial integration of conservation within inhabited or used landscapes (whether called national parks or not) is certainly possible, and whilst it has been raised at different times, policies have turned away from this.

The Environmental Management Authority

Debates around the National Parks Project and Bill of 1997 were also inflected by the presence, by this time, of a new authority on the environmental management scene, making its own proposals for protected area management. Harking back to discussions in the 1980s and before about the need for an encompassing agency to co-ordinate environmental law and policy (e.g. in the 1987 Standing Committee on Environment which Carol James had chaired), an Environmental Act was eventually carried through in 1995 which established the Environmental Management Authority (EMA). The EMA was established with a World Bank loan. The 1995 Environmental Management Bill was established as a piece of framework legislation, intended to facilitate a co-ordinated approach to environmental management, and empowering the EMA to make rules for specific areas of environmental management.

While many of the EMA's advocates saw its key roles as lying in the neglected and unco-ordinated areas of industrial waste and pollution, from an early stage it focused on issues which overlapped strongly with the existing concerns of the Forestry Division and national parks debates, such as turtle protection. This partly reflected a desire to garner public support around established and emotive environmental issues, and partly the expertise of the first professionals recruited. The EMA also placed a strong focus on establishing its own policies and rules for the protection of areas and species. In accordance with Section 41 of the Environmental Management Act (1995), the EMA has the power to designate any species of living animal as an "environmentally sensitive species" requiring special protection to achieve the Act's objectives. A second proposed rule related to Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs); large conservation areas in which environmental clearance certificates would be required for a wide range of developments on public or private land. Two documents which influenced the drafting of these rules were Green Paper #1/95. 'Towards a National Park System of Protected Areas for Jamaica' (1995) prepared by the Natural Resources Conservation Authority; and previous IUCN Protected Areas Management

Categories. The Rules are still pending release for public comment. The potential for these rules to overlap and cause conflict with both the Forestry Division's work and that of the proposed NPWA was highlighted in commentary (e.g. by Julian Kenny) on the 1997 National Parks Bill.

While the EMA's documentation bows strongly to participation and co-management approaches, its overall approach to conservation is legalistic. Rules and certificates concerning prohibited actions are to be backed up by an environmental police force (under the Commissioner of police, though dedicated to environmental issues). An environmental commission is to provide a 'court' of recourse and appeal for citizens or firms who may wish to object to rules or police actions against them. The EMA is currently awaiting the government's establishment of this commission which needs to be in place before rules can come into force.

Alongside its development of environmental policy and legislation, the EMA is also the key agency for enacting Trinidad and Tobago's commitments to international conventions. As such it was given responsibility for developing the country's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan. This is providing yet another forum for discussion and development of policy towards national parks and protected areas. On one hand, the process is strongly influenced by some of the conservation biology concerns discussed above, particularly via Howard Nelson, the Ph.D. student of Stan Temple, who is a member of the EMA team, and Temple himself who is its international consultant. On the other hand, it claims to have adopted an innovative participatory process for its development, and team leader Robyn Cross, seconded for a year from the Forest division, has experience with participatory management within the Wildlife Section. The participatory process has involved the discussion of five sectoral reports at meetings with key stakeholders from ministries and industry, followed by a series of 13 consultations around the country. To date, the results of these have not been released, and the implications of the biodiversity plan for the protected area management debate are not yet clear.

Some conclusions

In this paper we have not sought to identify 'what should happen' around Trinidad's development of national parks and protected areas. Rather we want to understand how the ways different people understand and seek to manage their environment is shaped in part by the politics of the policy process with which they are engaged. We have examined closely the particular ways that 'globalized' discourse surrounding national parks and protected areas, and concerning participation in natural resource management, have played uneasily into Trinidad's particular bureaucratic structures and political history. Islanders' participation in the policy process developing national parks derives in part from struggles to participate from the island on one hand, and the strictures on 'local' participation guiding 'global' best practices on the other. The failure of the national parks process is attributable in part to the particular course that 'participation' in the elaboration of programmes has taken. This has generated a tension between 'participation' as managed by a project in its own planning and 'participation' in the policy process through wider political systems through the use of the press, law, administrative politics and party politics.

To date, resolution has been in favour of those who, although marginalized from the participation managed by the 'project', have succeeded in blocking the national parks legislation which has regularly overlooked their interests (helped, it must be said, by significant opposition within quarters of the government, including Forestry, and the poor quality of legal drafting).

The same is not true of the science driving the problematic which the policy process is addressing. The paper has indicated how policy debate has shaped scientific inquiry, and how it itself has been shaped by it. Yet the 'science/policy process' held within the University, Wildlife Section, EMA and NGOs has not

incorporated the perspectives of land users. As the example of hunters here indicates, their own observations, hypotheses (and their testing) concerning the nature of Trinidad's fauna and flora and its response to assorted land uses, and concerning the major problems the environment faces have not been heeded by the scientific and policy community. The existence of such 'citizen science' is certainly not 'impartial', linked as it is to those who seek to continue to manage resources. But it is no more partial, on this count at least, than the Wildlife Section and studies for parks which have the same ends in sight. Whilst there may be cynicism from scientists concerning the validity of such 'citizen science', the inverse is equally true, as public disrespect grows for conservation science.

It is to be expected that future struggles over national parks legislation may not just be expressed in relation to constitutional rights, but will be also involve struggles over how environmental processes in Trinidad should be understood. Put more constructively, future proposals that attempt to garner wide enough national support for national parks would do well to provide an arena which accommodate such citizen science and local knowledge.

We have noted the way in which internally contentious issues can easily become expressed in terms of arguments for and against 'outside' influence, and how this has become a recurring theme in the evolution of Trinidad's environmental policy. Put another way, external influences have played into internal tensions (frequently exacerbating them) as certain protagonists garner international support and funding, whilst others shun it, regretting the expensive, ill-informed, meddling international consultants it brings.

In a similar vein, internal personal differences have certainly played into internal tensions, and exacerbated them. We have explored this in relation to personal differences within the Wildlife Section and Forestry Division. Those involved in Trinidad's environmental policy process could certainly add to this list, where differences of professional opinion seem to map on to personal animosities and vested interests. Clearly such personal issues, and individuals' magnetism and charisma, influence everyday practice. Yet charisma owes a lot to the way leaders play out their role in structures, and a focus on the personal can easily obscure more structural aspects of these tensions. Trinidad's high profile affair with things 'bacchanal' often gives the impression that it is this which produces administrative paralysis. Yet in as much as it detracts attention from the more structural elements, a focus on the personal can be seen to overlook – and indeed widen - disjunctures between those who influence policy formulation, and the population.

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² World Conservation Union, 3rd World Congress on National Parks and Protected Areas, Bali. Bali Action Plan.

³ The colonial Forest Department eventually became the Forestry Division after national Independence.

⁴ Forestry Division, Progress Report Wildlife Section (in Lackhan, N.P. and Ramnarine, R. 1996a), 1976 – 1979: 25

⁵ Carlozzi, 1964; Forestry Division, Progress Reports 1968-1970, in Lackhan, N.P. and Ramnarine, R. 1996b, Forestry Division, Annual Report (1971, Section 11, pp. 68, 70).

⁶ This was approved by Parliamentary Resolution (Legal notice 99 of 1974) (Toppin-Allahar, 1991: 12). The Chaguaramas Development Authority (CDA) was given responsibility for the management of development in the Park, intended to function as an estate maintenance unit, not a proactive developer (Haven Allahar, CEO of Urban Development Corporation, *Daily Express*, 22/8/1998). Chaguaramas was a special case which would need to be explored in relation to other issues. It had been a US base during the Second World War. Its closure was a highly politicised issue in Trinidad, and following closure, the question emerged concerning the status of the land. The nationalist sentiment which led to the closure had difficulty with returning the land to elite owners who had been dispossessed. Creating a national park was an alternative.

⁷. Appendix E, Review of the National Environment and Conservation Council 1972-4.

⁸. Forestry Division, Progress Reports (in Lackhan, N.P. and Ramnarine, R. 1996b) 1976 – 1979: 23.

⁹. Under the National Technical Cooperation Programme for the biennium 1978-1979, the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Development.

¹⁰. Only after four years of consultation did the OAS reveal that they were not able to provide the technical orientation required by the Trinidadian government for the Northern Range aspect of the programme. They agreed, however, to supply technical assistance for the establishment of a system of National Parks.

¹¹. Forestry Division, Progress Reports (in Lackhan, N.P. and Ramnarine, R. 1996b) 1976–1979: 23. The project required a project coordinator, National Park manager, education coordinator, landscape architect, engineering surveyor, a clerk stenographer, a driver and three foresters. However, during this year, only the 3 foresters, the driver and a part-time coordinator were appointed (Section 13.1 of Forestry Division, Annual Reports 1978).

¹². Approved by B.S. Ramdial, the then Conservator of Forests and S. Dardaine, the Deputy conservator of Forests. He was granted a 24-month contract for the biennium 1978/1979. His national counterpart was Mr. S. Faizool.

¹³. See also his report on forest reserves and wildlife for the country (1972).

¹⁴. The Establishment of a System of National Parks and Protected Areas. Final Report (Phase 1) Number 02-45A-405-TD1 Prepared by E. Thelen, OAS Project Director. Pg. 7.

¹⁵. This was attended by: The Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of finance, Chaguaramas Development Authority (CDA), Institute of Marine Affairs (IMA), UWI, Tourist Board, Water Resources and various personnel from the Forestry Division (Forestry Division, Annual Reports 1979 Section 13.4).

¹⁶. 1979 Forestry Division, Annual Reports, Section 13.4, pg. 50.

¹⁷. It included the CDA; Chamber of Industry and Commerce; Commission on National Parks and Protected Areas, IUCN; Field Naturalist's Club; IMA; Planning and Development, Ministry of Finance; The Town and Country Division; Trinidad and Tobago Tourist Board; UNESCO, Trinidad and Tobago and UWI (Thelen and Faizool, 1980). Early in the year, a Park System Advisory Committee was formed, consisting of 12 members representing the relevant government agencies as well as individual experts (1979 Forestry Division, Annual Reports, Section 13.4, pg. 50).

¹⁸. Forestry Division, Progress Reports (in Lackhan, N.P. and Ramnarine, R. 1996b) 1980-1982: 25.

¹⁹. Wade, J. and R. Bickram, 1981. Proposed Legislation for a System of National Parks and Equivalent Reserves in Trinidad and Tobago. ms. August 1981.

²⁰. A. Ramnarine, interview, May 1999, Forestry Division, Port of Spain.

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- ²¹. The Caroni Swamp Forest Reserve was selected as the first area to be developed (by the Conservator and Senior Staff). The main considerations for selection were land tenure, existing resource data, threats to ecological integrity, potential for education and recreational use and desire to maintain economical productivity (Section 13.1 of Forestry Division, Annual Reports, 1978).
- ²². A.R. 1982.
- ²³. Forestry Division, Progress Reports (in Lackhan, N.P. and Ramnarine, R. 1996b) 1980-1984: 8.
- ²⁴. This was chaired by Dr. Carol James, and members were Ronald Bickram (Min of food production), Lynnette Attwell and Victoria Charles (min of planning and reconstruction), Avril Siung-Chang and Hazel McShine (Inst of Marine affairs), Eugene Laurent (Min of Health, welfare and women), Carrall Alexander (Min of Energy) and Frederick Brown (Ctty devt and local governance).
- ²⁵. This was prepared by the Forest Resource and Inventory Management section (FRIM) and revised in January 1990. This document contains broad guidelines for developing an annual program of work for the 1990-1999 period, to be revised annually as circumstances dictate (FRIM, 1989: 46-7).
- ²⁶. Lackhan, N.P. and Ramnarine, R. 1996a. History of the Forestry Division in Trinidad and Tobago (1901-1996): National Parks Section (chapter 56). Forestry Division. Ministry of Agriculture, lands and Marine Resources. Government of Trinidad and Tobago; 1989: 46.
- ²⁷. It included the presidents of the following organizations: Asa Wright Nature Centre, Archaeological Society, CFCA, Citizens for Conservation, Crusoe Reef Society, Point-a-Pierre Wildfowl Trust, Trinidad and Tobago Biological Society, U.W.I. Biological Society.
- ²⁸. NFAP, 1993. Pg. 23 #111.
- ²⁹. This selection needed to take account of the degradation of some of the areas since the 1980 systems plan. Most notable (Toppin-Allahar, 1991) were the proposed Melajo Nature Conservation Reserve (NCR), destroyed by forest fire in 1987; the Cocos Bay Scenic Landscape which had lost many coconut trees due to human action and coastal erosion; the Southern Watershed NCR destroyed by shifting cultivation, and Kilgwyn Scientific Reserve.
- ³⁰. With support from WASA, TTEC, Farmers, County Council, the Tourism Development Association (TDA), environmental NGOs and local communities.
- ³¹. Eden Shand, "The Geopolitics of Forest Conservation", *Trinidad Express* 21/9/95.
- ³². Klaus Eckelmann, interview, Bridgetown, June 1999.
- ³³. Forestry Division, Progress Reports (in Lackhan, N.P. and Ramnarine, R. 1996b) 1980-1982: 23.
- ³⁴. Forestry Division, Progress Reports (in Lackhan, N.P. and Ramnarine, R. 1996b) 1980-1984: 7.
- ³⁵. Forestry Division, Progress Reports (in Lackhan, N.P. and Ramnarine, R. 1996b) 1980-1982: 23.
- ³⁶. Interview, C. James, 2 June 1999, Port of Spain.
- ³⁷. Interview, C. James, 2 June 1999, Port of Spain.
- ³⁸. For example, interview, A. Ramnarine, June 1999, Port of Spain.
- ³⁹. Interview, Singh, Rio Claro, July 1999.
- ⁴⁰. Interview, N. Lackhan, June 1999, Forestry Division, Port of Spain.

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- ⁴¹. Carlton Sambury, interview, ECIAP, 8 July 1999.
- ⁴². Senator Kenny donated \$37,500, representative of his professional fees for an EMA based project on the biodiversity of Trinidad and Tobago.
- ⁴³. ‘Tourism the eco-friendly way’ by Nicole Leotaud, *Daily Express*, 1/1/98.
- ⁴⁴. ‘Parks for life: enhancing the role of conservation in sustaining society (Amend 1992)’ Parks for life: report of the 4th World Congress on National Parks and Protected Areas, 10-21 February 1992, Barzetti, V. (ed.) Parks and progress: Protected Areas and Economic Development in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- ⁴⁵. In the Caribbean, IUCN Commission on National Parks and Protected Areas, see chapter 8 for details. Putney, A. Investment opportunities for protected areas in the Caribbean’ Paper submitted to the IADB for the 4th World Parks Congress.
- ⁴⁶. This included Eden Shand and Sylvia Kacal in CFCA, and Robyn Cross from the Wildlife Section.
- ⁴⁷. MALMR and Land Tenure Center 1992: 4-23
- ⁴⁸. Nevertheless the IADB did continue to fund the visitor facilities at San Fernando Hill and Caroni Swamp under a separate Environmental Protection and Rehabilitation Programme.
- ⁴⁹. Members of the Task Force included: Mr. Winston Rudder (P.S., MALMR); Diane Blachford (E.M.A.); Sita Singh (TIDCO); Andrew Ali (Ministry of Tourism); Robyn Cross, Doolar Ramlal, Nadra Nathai-Gyan, and Ramjit Maysingh of the Forestry Division; Raye Sandy (Div. of Agriculture, Forest and Marine Affairs (Tobago)); Ricardo Ramdin (Water Resources Agency (WRA)); Mr. Edward Heesterman (COPE); Joseph Howard (Ministry of Planning and Development); Winston Tinto (IMA); Pamela Ford (Legal Advisor, MALMR); Trevor Murray (MALMR); Irwin Titus (Director, MALMR) and Jennifer Yearwood (MALMR).
- ⁵⁰. These recommendations are in keeping with those of Christine Toppin-Allahar, NFAP Parks consultant, who recommended that the Northern Range be declared a biosphere reserve under the Man and the Biosphere Programme.
- ⁵¹. *Sunday Express* 30/6/96 by Lisa Sankar.
- ⁵². This comprised: Selwyn Dardaine (Director of Forestry – Chairman); Pamela Ford (Legal Advisor – MALMR); Nadra Nathai-Gyan, Robyn Cross and Doolar Ramlal of the Forest division; Indra Furlonge Kelly (Botanic Gardens – MALMR); Dr. Julien Kenny; Yasmine Comeau (U.W.I. Herbarium); Ian Lambie, and representatives of COPE, the EMA, IMA and Town and Country Planning Division.
- ⁵³ The CFCA and Nature Seekers primed Matura village to take advantage of the business opportunities that co-managed ecotourism would provide for the proposed Matura National Park. The Paria Springs Eco-Community Limited prepared community-based ecotourism in the Paria area (Brasso Seco and Paria), Central Northern Range. The project was subsequently developed in collaboration with TIDCO, using social funds under TIDCO’s own IADB loan. While several such community projects were developed in this way, several have since dissolved. Prior to dissolution a national association of Tourist Action Committees was formed which has become a core of opposition to mainstream (TIDCO’s own) tourism policy.
- ⁵⁴. “Wildlife Bill a Threat to Democracy”, *Trinidad Guardian*, 22nd May, 1997.
- ⁵⁵. Etienne Mendez, “Letter to the Editor” *Trinidad Guardian* 9th June 1997.
- ⁵⁶. “Parks’ Bill Needs Serious Work” Kris Rampersad *Sunday Guardian* 25/5/97.

⁵⁷. S. Gomes of San Fernando, "Letter to the Editor", *Sunday Guardian*, 1st June, 1997.

⁵⁸. Lystra Lythe of Sangre Grande "Scrap this wildlife bill", *Trinidad Guardian*.

⁵⁹. Pers. comm in "Problems with Authority to control parks and wildlife", *Trinidad Guardian*, 8th June, 1997. She also maintained that the Bill has missed the opportunity to use "fiscal incentives" and criticises the reliance upon honorary game wardens, asking "How can you command a voluntary force, and what protection do they have?". The media also reported on debates between Professor Julien Kenny and Sylvia Kacal. Kenny, who had been lobbying for a National Parks Bill for over 3 decades, proposed that National Parks be managed under the National Trust Act which is already in existence (Kris Rampersad, *Sunday Guardian* 25/5/97). However, Sylvia Kacal disputed this view on the grounds that the National Trust Act "was never proclaimed and no Board was ever appointed." She goes further by saying that Kenny's suggestion to divide the Bill by having separate bodies manage National Parks, Wildlife and National Monuments seemed to be based on "hasty emotions" rather than "reason".

⁶⁰. "NAR: Wildlife Bill Negative" *Trinidad Guardian* 23/5/97.

⁶¹. "Parks' Bill needs serious work" Kris Rampersad, *Sunday Guardian* 25/5/97.

⁶². The Minister of Agriculture, Dr. Reeza Mohammed responded by meeting with HATT, and planned to set up a joint committee between officers of the Ministry and HATT representatives to discuss changes to the proposed legislation ("Deadline for comment on Bill will be extended" "Deadline for comment on Bill will be extended" *Trinidad Guardian*, 23/5/97.

⁶³. *Sunday Guardian*, 31/5/98: "Towards a New Wildlife Bill" by Nadra Gyan and Christopher Starr. According to this article, a Committee working to prepare a new wildlife Bill had been meeting fortnightly since July 1997. These meetings were convened by Pamela Ford, Legal Advisor to MALMR and committee members comprised of a number of governmental agencies and NGOs. Hardcore members are representatives of the Wildlife Section of the Forestry Division, CFCA, Field Naturalists' Club, Pointe-a -Pierre Wild Fowl Trust, and various hunters' groups. This has been supplemented by other organizations as needed. Separate legislation has been drafted for each sub-sector.

⁶⁴. Consultation included COPE, The Field Naturalists' Club, CFCA, The Orchid Society, 3 Hunters associations (TTHA/HATT/The South East Hunters' Association), Environment Tobago, Forestry Division, Ministry of Agriculture.

⁶⁵. Mohan Bholasingh, President of the South East Hunters' Association, Interview, Rio Claro, July 6 1999.

⁶⁶. Mohan Bholasingh, interview, Rio Claro, July 1999.