

Appendix 3: National Conservation Areas

The importance of St. Helena's natural, built and cultural heritage to tourism-based economic development on the island is demonstrated throughout National Planning.

Effective Management of the Environment is one of the islands 3 National Goals in the Sustainable Development Plan. This is to be delivered primarily through a National Environmental Management Plan (NEMP), but also includes cross-sector delivery as highlighted in the Sustainable Economic Development Plan where the St. Helena 'green brand' is an integral part of economic development.

National Conservation Areas form an important part of this National Planning. NEMP target 15.2 is to 'Develop National Conservation Area Management Plans: Diana's Peak National Park by July 2012, Sandy Bay National Park by December 2012, Broad Bottom Important Wirebird Area and Deadwood Plain Important Wirebird Area by December 2012, All NCA Natural Heritage Management Plans developed by 2016.

Significant effort was put into the background work which led to the final selection and designation of these areas.

(1) There is a foundation of historic reports and studies that have explored National Conservation Areas on St. Helena in various levels of detail:

- a. Protected Area Designation and Management on St. Helena (Mallia 2004)
- b. Protected Areas Plan for Central Peaks (National Trust 2008)
- c. Tourism Development Plan (Catherine Leech 2009)
- d. Tourism Strategy (Kelly and Robinson 2006)
- e. Land Use on St. Helena (ARS Ltd/Harvard 2006)
- f. St. Helena Land Development Control Plan 2007
- g. Infrastructure Plan (John Cox 2007)
- h. LDCP revision principles (St. Helena Executive Council 2011)

(2) Building on this foundation, 2 key pieces of work were commissioned by the St. Helena Government to provide the evidence for NCA selection and designation as required to feed into the Land Development Control Plan 2012.

- a. An NPA Phase 1 study carried out by the St. Helena National Trust
- b. An NPA Phase 2 study carried out by Nautilus Consultants.

(Nautilus Consulting (2012) National Conservation Areas of St. Helena: proposals for identification, validation, gazetting and management. Report prepared for St. Helena Government.

The outcomes of this evidence-base resulted in the designation of National Conservation Areas under the Land Development Control Plan into 4 categories. National Conservation Area Management Plans will be developed to manage designated NCA's. The development of these Plans will be a participatory process with all relevant stakeholders including land owners within the NCA. Criteria for NCA development and boundary revision will be included in the Management Plan preparation. There will be a public consultation process before NCA Management Plans are formally agreed.

The **4 categories** of National Conservation Area are: National Parks, Nature Reserves, Important Wirebird Areas and Historic Conservation Areas. Below are summaries of the purpose and proposed public access for each of the area categories. These will be formalised in the NCA Management Plans.

□ **National Parks** are for public access and enjoyment. They will be fully open to the public, with features to facilitate access (signposted parts, interpretation facilities, picnic and rest areas and visitor centres). These areas are large and include a wide variety of values such as landscape, biodiversity, built heritage and recreation. National Parks should be managed as 'living landscapes' where human activities that are consistent with the values of the park (e.g. agriculture, fishing, and eco-tourism) are encouraged and supported. Tourism will be a key activity within these areas, and development permitted is likely to be closely related to tourism.

□ **Nature Reserves** are for the protection and conservation of endangered, threatened and protected species. There will be limited public access in line with the focus on protection of undisturbed species, ecosystems and habitats. This is umbrella category that can be applied to a number of different values – specifically Nature, Scenic, Amenity and Geology.

□ **Important Wirebird Areas** are for the conservation of the island's only remaining indigenous bird species – found nowhere else on earth. There will be some restrictions on type of access in line with minimising disturbance of the birds and the habitats they depend on.

□ **Historic Conservation Areas:** priority has been given to the conservation of unique historic assets, but combined with the provision of public access to as much of the site and assets as feasible within the scope of good conservation practice. There will be managed public access for the purposes of living, cultural engagement with history for education and for enjoyment.

There are 23 National Conservation Areas designated in the Land Development Control Plan.

As required by the LCDP, this annex gives a short description of each area with rationale for management.

The Peaks National Park

□ **Description:** The peaks form the central ridge of St Helena and are the dominant landscape feature of the island and from here there are panoramic island views. The ridge has the largest remaining areas of St Helena cloud forest a unique and relict vegetation type containing a large number of endemic plants and animals. These include the endemic tree fern and cabbage tree thicket with 30 species of endemic higher plants, and very diverse endemic moss, lichen and liverwort community of more than 70 species. There are highly significant invertebrate populations with 244 endemic species more than 50% the total endemic invertebrate fauna of the island. The spiky yellow woodlouse occurs as does the surviving endemic

snail. The Peaks contains the site of an observatory built by the astronomer Halley in 1674, and is the centre of the water catchment for the island's freshwater supplies.

□ **Rationale for management:** Augment natural regeneration of endemic plants with planted individuals; Local weed control in endemic areas, particularly *Pseudoscleropodium purum* at High Peak, pheasant tail fern throughout, and flax surrounding endemic areas. Local control of some weeds such as small fuchsia, bilberry and whiteweed may be needed in recently created restoration areas; Control of rodents in endemic areas; Control of wasps in endemic areas and along walking trails Species conservation programmes will be required to support boxwood, gumwood, and ebony.

Sandy Bay National Park

□ **Description:** A spectacular volcanic landscape of cliffs and rock features, including the columns of Lot and Lot's Wife, with incised valleys formed by lavas, intrusions and ash from volcanic eruptions and subsequent erosion and later deposits of wind-blown calcareous sands. The park is at the centre of the south western Volcano and most features area accessible. The area contains the most important fragments of the original dryland vegetation, including endemic gumwood woodland, and the last known natural stand of boxwood, as well as populations of 16 other endemic plants. Fifty-five endemic invertebrates are known from the area. Colonies of masked booby have become recently established on the mainland. Red-billed tropic bird and fairy tern nest in many of the coastal cliffs. The area contains defensive lines, and lime kiln at Sandy Bay as well as remote defences on Horses Head. The area is the location for popular walks and recreation.

□ **Rational for management:** Improvement and maintenance of tracks, particularly that to the popular Lot's Wife Ponds and Blue Point; Localised weed control, particularly of African fountain grass *Pennisetum setaceum* near Lot's Wife and in Sandy Bay; Some rabbit control may be required in areas of endemic vegetation; Some cat control may be required in masked booby nesting areas and in Wirebird areas; Species conservation programmes will be required to support boxwood, gumwood, and ebony; Restoration of dryland community at Blue Point and gumwood community at Peak Dale; Protection of Blue Point and Peak Gut waterfall cliffs from tree invasion.

The Barn and Stone Tops National Park

□ **Description:** A dramatic area of coastal cliffs, deep valleys and prominent and distinctive hills in the arid north and east of St Helena, containing important landscape features including the Barn, Turks Cap and Great Stone Top. Encompasses outstanding views and includes the highest sea cliffs in the Southern Hemisphere (494m). Formed as part of the early volcanic periods of island formation, the now eroded landscape is typified by desert and cliff habitats with original vegetation communities persisting. It supports seabird breeding colonies most notably the Red-billed Tropic Bird.

Historically it contains the site of Holdfast Tom related to the recapture of the island from the Dutch as well as a series of gun emplacements, and the best preserved signal station on the island. It contains a wide network of fishing roads, fishing rocks and recreational walks.

□ **Rationale for management:** Improvement and maintenance of tracks, particularly that to Prosperous Bay, Flagstaff, Great Stone Top and Prosperous Bay Signal Station. Improved predator control in coastal cliff areas (especially Gill Point) to encourage seabird recolonisation. Localised weed control if necessary (none urgently required currently). Some rabbit control may be required in areas of endemic vegetation. Species conservation programmes at Turks Cap and Stone Tops.

Millennium Forest Nature Reserve

□ **Description:** The largest area of indigenous vegetation restoration on St Helena, and includes what is now the world's largest population of endemic gumwood. It comprises part of the site of the Great Wood, the last indigenous woodland and the remains of the Great Wall built in an unsuccessful attempt to protect it and informed by the associated history of this early conservation effort. The forest is now managed as a community forest with over a thousand individuals contributing to the planting of 10,000 trees. The plantings contain eight other endemic species and a single natural specimen of scrubwood survives on Horse Point. Six endemic invertebrate species are recorded here which is one of the last known localities for the extinct giant earwig and ground beetle. The site is utilised for breeding by the Wirebird and includes eroded gullies of ancient coloured clays, known as the artist's palette.

□ **Rationale for management:** Management Plan for this area exists, to include: Continue planting programme, focussing on achieving areas of continuous canopy of endemic trees, a zoned plan should be developed to accommodate other land-uses; Localised weed control, particularly of aloe; Improve track to an all-weather surface; Some rabbit control may be required.

High Hill Nature Reserve

□ **Description:** A dramatic hill with steep rock faces and bluffs is a dominant part of the landscape formed of a volcanic dyke and cone parasitic to the main south western volcano. It supports one of the largest and best remaining example of dry scrub, grassland and fern plant communities including a large number of endemic species, including the largest population of the rediscovered neglected sedge and the only remaining rosemary population of the 'Blue Hill' phenotype. It also supports indigenous shrubland with gobblegheer and rosemary that is also replanted with ebony and bastard gumwood. There are extensive populations of endemic inland lichens on open rock faces. On Ebony Plain an extensive area ebony tree shrubland has been re-established. A signal point on top of High Hill is thought to be part of the lookout network installed during the imprisonment of Napoleon.

□ **Rationale for management:** Improvement and maintenance of tracks;

Clearance of pines to improve view; Localised weed control if necessary (none urgently required currently); Localised rabbit control in areas of endemic vegetation: Species conservation programmes for rosemary, bastard gumwood and hairgrass.

Deep Valley Nature Reserve

- **Description:** One of only two surviving gumwood forest communities, which occur at two localities within this site. Scattered gumwood trees are present on some of the bluffs and slopes, and there is some natural regeneration augmented with planting at one of the locations. Fourteen endemic invertebrate species are recorded some of these are only known to occur on gumwood. The steep and inaccessible valley contains a stream with waterfalls and consists of massive basalts with coloured inter-bedded ash layers.
- **Rationale for management:** Augment natural regeneration of gumwoods with planted individuals; Local weed control in gumwood areas.

Islands Nature Reserve

- **Description:** The islands and stacks are prominent features of the coastline formed from lava flows and dykes. The islands include Speery, Egg, George and Shore Islands and stacks such as Black Rocks and Frightus. These support significant nesting seabird colonies of sooty tern, brown and black noddy, masked booby, Madeiran storm petrel, red-billed tropic bird and fairy tern. Bulwer's petrel has also been recently recorded. Breeding populations of Madeiran storm petrel are known on at least four offshore islands. The islands and stacks are largely unvegetated but a population scrubwood occurs on Speery Island. Egg island is defended by Cockburn's Battery, the only off shore battery and was part of the Napoleonic defensive network. The islands were formerly of significant economic importance as a source of food, both birds and eggs, and for guano fertilizer.
- **Rationale for management:** Limit landing on important islands; Regular inspection of islands for rodents; Control of adventive invasive plant species.

Prosperous Bay Plain Nature Reserve

- **Description:** A unique desert ecosystem with an extraordinary concentration of endemic invertebrates which has developed through geological and climatological conditions found nowhere else on St Helena. It is a sparsely vegetated flat basin bounded by a dramatic gorge. It was created by lava flows overlain by ancient weathered dust, sand and grit layer to one metre thick. This substrate supports many endemic invertebrates such as wolf spiders, nocturnal burrow dwellers, pseudo-scorpions as well as flies, bugs and beetles associated with endemic desert plants. The area is considered the main evolutionary centre on St Helena for animals adapted to arid habitats. 35-40 such species occur in the area and of these at least 20 are

considered to be endemic to the plain itself and are highly endangered. The plain also supports 10-20 breeding pairs of wirebird which is around 10% of the island's total population, and is an internationally important wirebird area.

□ **Rationale for management:** As detailed under the airport Landscape and Ecosystem Management Plan – LEMP to include: Localised weed control especially of creeper in the Central Basin; Plant restoration, as discussed in Ashmole & Ashmole 2004a, page 20, to establish populations of boxwood and salad plant (requiring protection from rabbits) in some areas, though probably not in the Central Basin itself; Control of mice and cats within the Central Basin.

Heart-Shaped Waterfall Nature Reserve

□ **Description:** A scenic waterfall and popular landmark above Jamestown that is formed by the seasonal Frances Plain Gut as it plunges from the plain into a plunge pool. The cliff face, when viewed from the Sidepath road forms an attractive heart shape. The cliff is the eroded edge of a thick lava flow of 10-9 million year old basaltic lavas from the south-western volcano. Plantains on the main cliff and that of Cat Hole are a fragment of the endemic cliff flora. The critically endangered bastard gumwood, with rosemary, hair grass, tufted sedge and plantain are being restored on old agricultural terracing at Drummonds Point. Fairy terns nest in the larger trees and in the cliff face and moorhen have been recorded in this area.

□ **Rationale for management:** to include: Maintenance of track and upgrading this to an all-weather surface; Localised weed control at endemic plant sites; Some rabbit control may be required in areas of endemic vegetation.

Heritage Coast Historic Conservation Area

□ **Description:** A heavily fortified area of steep sea cliffs that is one of the most concise and complete defended coast lines in the world and is the most complete East India Company defensive network demonstrating excellent examples of developments in military theory. The fortified coastline covered the sailing approach to James Bay rendering Jamestown virtually impregnable. King Williams Fort (late 17th century) is one of the earliest complete structures on the island. The later defences include Ladder Hill Fort and Munden's and Ladder Hill gun emplacements. The Rupert's Valley Liberated Africans Establishment is one of the most internationally significant sites on the island and handled thousands of liberated slaves from the transatlantic slave trade. The cemeteries which contain the remains of around 8000 first generation African slaves and the only site of its kind in the world.

□ **Rationale for management:** Will be linked to the Historic Environment Record.

High Knoll Historic Conservation Area

□ **Description:** High Knoll Fort contains a main tower, a rifle fort and surrounding military landscape. It has an excellent central Tower as part of a complete military landscape that includes links to Ladder Hill Fort, its own ancillary towers, lines of communication and quarries. The main tower, designed by Major Pierie is a striking landscape and historic feature, the subject of countless illustrations and has been a tourist attraction since 1798. Surrounding the main tower is an extensive and costly rifle fort illustrating changes in artillery technology. The Fort was central to the 1811 rebellion, acted as housing for freed African slaves, a signal station, and used for Boer prisoners of war. It is comprehensively archived and is moderately significant at the international level. The endemic and threatened barn fern and neglected sedge occur as well as other indigenous dryland ferns.

□ **Rationale for management:** Will be linked to the Historic Environment Record.

Jamestown Historic Conservation Area

□ **Description:** Jamestown is a complete colonial landscape, comprising an 18th Century town with earlier East India Company features and archaeology. The street pattern and many buildings are substantially unchanged since the later 18th century. Many merchant houses remain and retain Georgian frontages, domestic accommodation, and at the rear separate cook houses, slave quarters and warehousing. The town also retains fragile and ephemeral structures, including footpaths, access roads, and ironwork, glazing and interior fittings. The island's East India Company history and its links to Cromwell are extensively documented. It also has association with all visitors, including Napoleon, Banks, Darwin and Wellington. The town remains the seat of government and a living entity with the castle, gaol, library, and court still used as intended. The town's pattern of development, its completeness and its East India Company structure make it internationally significant.

□ **Rationale for management:** Will be linked to the Historic Environment Record.

Knollcombes Historic Conservation Area

□ **Description:** Knollcombes is a Baptist cemetery containing the graves 167 of the 5000 Boer prisoners exiled to the island during the Boer War of 1901 - 02. Two memorials mark the graves, one by the prisoners themselves and a later memorial by the Union Government. The associated Baptist Chapel was built as one of three in the 1840s and was chosen as the focus for the burial of the Boer prisoners of war after the Anglican Church refused to use consecrated ground for the purpose. The cemetery also includes the grave of Janisch, the island's first native governor and of several other locally notable

individuals. The cemetery site is of moderate significance internationally as a relic of the Anglo-Boer War, a pilgrimage site for relatives and other interested individuals, and for the presence of Janisch's grave.

□ **Rationale for management:** Will be linked to the Historic Environment Record.

Lemon Valley Historic Conservation Area

□ **Description:** A isolated valley with internationally significant features containing ruins and sites associated with the abolition of slavery and St Helena's military history. Barkley's Platform is one of the earliest and most intact 18th century defensive complex anywhere on the island. The valley contains a complete 18th and 19th century planter landscape including exceptionally rare remains of fishermen's huts. The valley has a major place in the history of the abolition of the trans-Atlantic slave trade as the early base of the West Africa Squadrons Liberated Africans Depot. The Depot housed, treated and released thousands of liberated African slaves from the 1840s and the valley contains the remains of those that died. The direct evidence for the island's part in one of the most significant events in the 19th century makes Lemon Valley of considerable international significance.

□ **Rationale for management:** Conservation Area management Plan for Lemon valley exists.

Longwood Historic Conservation Area

□ **Description:** Longwood HCA contains the remains of major and ancillary Napoleonic structures within the historic setting and boundary. Napoleon spent much of his exile and died in Longwood House, which has a considerable associated archive. The building retains much of its form and elements of its setting. Bertrand's Cottage, was built for Count Henri Bertrand who accompanied Napoleon into exile. The building was regularly visited by Napoleon and played a role in island life and politics. Longwood New House was constructed to house the Emperor but he never occupied it and it now survives only as fragments. Ancillary structures include Longwood Gate that was constructed to bound the area of Napoleon's containment, the Avenue and Longwood Green. Longwood House and Bertrand's Cottage are both of considerable international significance.

□ **Rationale for management:** Will be linked to the Historic Environment Record.

Napoleon's Tomb Historic Conservation Area

□ **Description:** The site is a shady forested valley slope containing a small spring and is the location of Napoleon's burial on Saint Helena, and was reputedly chosen by the Emperor for its views. He remained buried in this complex tomb for 19 years before he was removed with great ceremony and

placed in Les Invalides in Paris. The location has been a site of pilgrimage ever since his burial. Much of the original material of the grave has been

removed from the site, though the original railings and location are untouched. The site is of exceptional international significance as the primary burial place of one of the pre-eminent figures in world history. The grave site is exceptionally significant in the local context as a site of tourism and pilgrimage as well as ceremony and local folklore since the Emperor's burial.

□ **Rationale for management:** Will be linked to the Historic Environment Record.

Plantation House Historic Conservation Area

□ **Description:** Plantation House is a fine example of colonial East India Company architecture. It was built in the early 1790s, as the Governor's summer residence and located in over 280 acres of grounds. Although significantly altered in the 19th and 20th centuries, with most of the interior and some of the exterior being remodelled, the building retains much of its external joinery and original form. The grounds are intact including the garden cottage, stables, many gates and pathways. The house is of moderate internationally significant as one of a small number of Colonial Governor's Residences, reinforced by its continued use in this role. An immensely rare Seychelles Giant tortoise, at least 107 years old, has been a feature of the house and gardens and is one of the oldest living terrestrial animal in the world.

□ **Rationale for management:** Will be linked to the Historic Environment Record. Also to include Management of paddock as a pasture for Giant Tortoises.

The Briars Historic Conservation Area

□ **Description:** The Briars was an early plantation house constructed in the 18th century. It was used as the site of Napoleon's first residence on St Helena. The present building has been considerably altered and restored following damage by white ants and neglect. The site has retained several of its ancillary features, including boundary walls and land boundaries. There is evidence for small structures, including stables and agricultural buildings within the grounds. The building is moderately internationally significant as a residence of Napoleon Bonaparte; the site gains considerable local significance because of this association and the fragments of retained East Indian Company period landscape.

□ **Rationale for management:** Will be linked to the Historic Environment Record.

Man and Horse Important Wirebird Area

□ **Description:** A series of open grassy valleys, flat bare spurs and slopes dropping towards South West Point and edged by the dramatic Man and Horse coastal cliffs. The pastures of rough grassland, creeper waste, shrubs and bare ground support an internationally important breeding population of the endemic and critically endangered Wirebird, being greater than 5% of the breeding population. A signal station on the site was part of signal network that covered the western side of the island in 1815 and was part of the Napoleonic era and East India Company island defences.

□ **Rationale for management:** Continued grazing to agreed standard to benefit Wirebird (subject to management agreement); Control of woody weeds, particularly furze; Restriction on insecticide usage; Control of Wirebird predators when required

Broad Bottom Important Wirebird Area

□ **Description:** The area consists of a broad pasture basin that supports an internationally important breeding population of the endemic and critically endangered Wirebird, being greater than 5% of the breeding population. The site includes the only local place name related to wirebirds – Wirebird Hill. The pasture covers the site of a Boer Prisoner of War camp from the Anglo Boer War of 1900 –1902. The camp grew from tents to permanent structures - including shops, community buildings and workshops. There is a high likelihood of considerable archaeology relating to the camp which is one of a limited number of Boer Prisoner of War Camps internationally. The camp was succeeded by a mid-20th century flax mill with extensive buildings.

□ **Rationale for management:** Continued grazing to agreed standard to benefit Wirebird (subject to management agreement); Control of woody weeds, particularly furze; Restriction on insecticide usage; Control of Wirebird predators when required; Manage the access and grazing to protect potential buried archaeology

Deadwood Plain Important Wirebird Area

□ **Description:** A distinctive pasture plateau supporting a large and internationally important breeding population of the endemic and critically endangered Wirebird, being greater than 5% of the breeding population. The site includes Middle Point, a pasture spur with a feeding population of wirebirds. The Plain hosted an encampment for troops guarding Napoleon and a site for horse races witnessed by him. It was a Boer Prisoner of War camp from 1900-1902. The camp was initially tents and surrounding barbed wire, later having permanent structures. The cricket pitch associated with the

camp is extant and remains the only surviving structure from either PoW camp, and is one of a limited number of Boer Camps internationally.

□ **Rationale for management:** Continued pasture management with rotational grazing and fence management to agreed standard to benefit Wirebird (subject to management agreement); Control of woody weeds, particularly furze; Control of Wirebird predators when required.

Bottom Woods Important Wirebird Area

□ **Description:** Bottom Woods is a flat topped pasture spur that supports an internationally important breeding population of the endemic and critically endangered Wirebird, being greater than 5% of the breeding population.

□ **Rationale for management:** Continued grazing to agreed standard to benefit Wirebird (subject to management agreement); Control of woody weeds, particularly furze; Restriction on insecticide usage; Control of Wirebird predators when required; Maintain vehicle restrictions.

Upper Prosperous Important Wirebird Area

□ **Description:** The area consists of three habitat types including an extensive area of flat-topped spurs and eroded and largely bare valley slopes of Upper Prosperous Bay Plain, the pasture of Woody Ridge, and the wetland floor Fisher's Valley. The area supports an internationally important breeding population of the endemic and critically endangered Wirebird, being greater than 5% of the breeding population, breeding both on the crown wastes and pasture of Woody Ridge, and watering in Fisher's Valley. Wetlands are rare on St Helena and the permanently inundated wetland of Fishers Valley contains the main breeding location for the indigenous moorhen, a rare St Helena bird, as well as populations of indigenous invertebrates. It is a nationally significant water source and was traditionally a location where thatching grass was harvested.

□ **Rationale for management:** As detailed under the airport Landscape and Ecosystem Management Plan – LEMP; Localised weed control especially of creeper in the Central Basin; Plant restoration, as discussed in Ashmole & Ashmole 2004a, page 20, to establish populations of boxwood and salad plant (requiring protection from rabbits) in some areas, though probably not in the Central Basin itself.