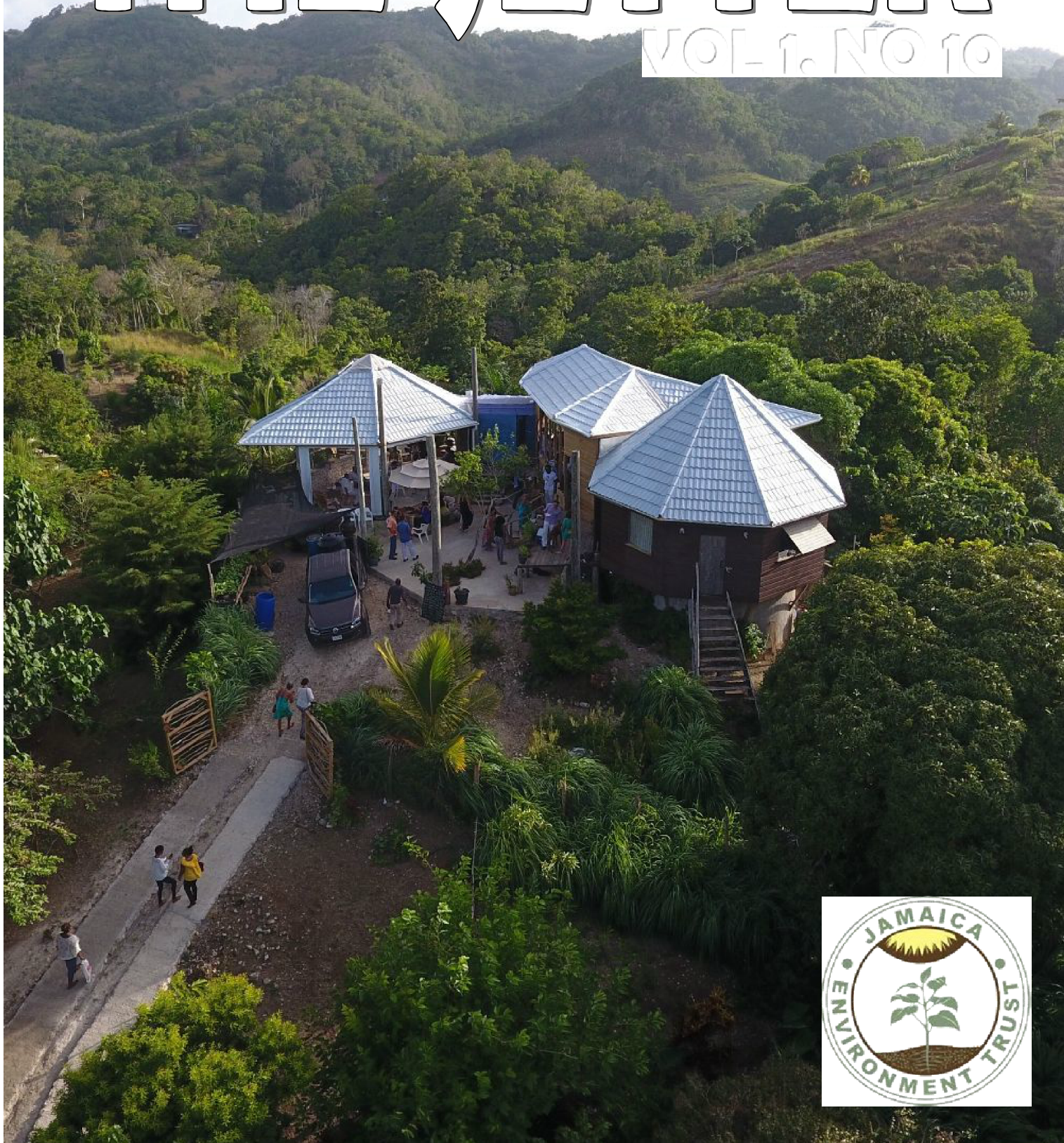


THE JETTER

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SPECIAL EDITORIAL

Saved by a Tweet

On September 22, 2016, our Prime Minister, the Most Hon. Andrew Holness, was attending a town hall meeting in New York City. In response to a direct question from a participant about the status of the proposal to build a large transshipment port or logistics hub near to the two Goat Islands in the Portland Bight Protected Area, the Prime Minister responded that while his government intended to pursue the logistics hub, the site would not be at Goat Islands. He then tweeted:



Andrew Holness
@AndrewHolnessJM

In essence, despite some media reports, the government will not be allowing a Port at Goat Island. That decision was made a while back.

7:36 PM · 22 Sep 16

The Jamaica Environment Trust (JET) first became aware of this proposal in August 2013, when it was announced by then Environment Minister, Robert Pickersgill, while on a visit to Beijing. For two years, JET worked with local and international partners to oppose the proposal. Many advised us that resistance was futile – the project was a “done deal”.

The Save Goat Islands campaign led by JET incorporated too many elements to list here, and there were activities undertaken by other NGOs, both here and abroad. As we reflect now on what worked and what didn't, we believe these were the important overall initiatives:

- 1) **Keeping the issue in the news.** This happened in many different ways, but for at least 18 months, the Goat Islands proposal grabbed headlines. To be sure, not all responses were in opposition to the port, but the campaign succeeded in getting the proposal discussed in the public domain. Without the public sensitization, it is doubtful the Prime Minister would have been asked about the project at the town hall meeting.
- 2) **Developing effective audio visual materials.** The campaign used a jingle, photographs, film and animated public service announcements (PSA) to allow those who had never visited Goat Islands to appreciate what was at stake. Photographs, time

and creativity were donated by numerous people, including internationally recognized photographers and film makers. The materials were disseminated using social media and paid television advertising, thanks to several funders.

- 3) **Support from international partners.** Many international conservation agencies working on the recovery of the Jamaican iguana assisted in diverse ways, including developing the Save Goat Islands website, garnering celebrity backing and mobilizing funding.
- 4) **The Goatillas - taking people to see the Goat Islands.** It was sobering how few people had any idea this place existed, or of its value. Once they had seen it, for the most part they became supporters of the campaign.
- 5) **Identification of alternative sites.** Both Smith Warner International and the Conservation Strategy Fund (for CCAM) proposed other locations.

The work is by no means over. The original plan for a sanctuary on the Goat islands for the Jamaican iguana and other vulnerable species needs to be reactivated, and JET hopes to engage with these efforts. But for now, we congratulate the Government of Jamaica for a decision made in favour of our irreplaceable natural assets. The future of the heart of the Portland Bight Protected Area no longer hangs in the balance.

Diana McCaulay, Chief Executive Officer October 2016



Formed in 1991, the Jamaica Environment Trust is a non-profit nongovernmental environmental organization in the island of Jamaica. We are a membership organization and anyone who supports protection of the environment can join. Our activities are focused on education and advocacy.

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Great Goat Island © Jonathan Chambers; Cover photo: Zionites Farm/Stush in the Bush - JET's 25th anniversary celebration © Nicholas Benjamin

An aerial photograph of a tropical island, likely in the Pacific, showing lush green vegetation, a turquoise lagoon, and a sandy beach. The text 'GOAT ISLANDS SAVED' is overlaid in large, white, distressed letters.

**GOAT
ISLANDS
SAVED**