Cross Harbour, a wetland area critical to the health of Abaco's coastal environment, is under threat of development. Friends of the Environment and The Abaco Fly Fishing Guide Association are working with partners to protect it by applying for 1,800 acres of crown land from Blackwood Point to Cross Harbour Point to be declared a “no build area.” To be successful we need your support.

CONSERVATION APPROACH

To follow up on the Crown Land application FRIENDS will enact an awareness campaign.

The Goal: Ensure the commitment of Abaco's residents and visitors to protect Cross Harbour.

Campaign plans include:

Public media: Newspaper and radio ads, posters, marketing materials

Community meetings: Host community meetings targeting fishermen and guides who use the area

School education programs: To foster awareness with Abaco's students

Support scientific research: Bonefish and Tarpon Trust are working on identifying Cross Harbour as a bonefish spawning site. Additional survey and base line data is needed

Proposal follow-up: Trips to Nassau are required for face to face follow up meetings with the necessary government officials to ensure the application is being processed
CONSERVATION PROFILE

Biodiversity: At the mouth of Cross Harbour Creek alone, at least 73 fish species have been documented, ranging from juveniles of reef fishes (angelfish, parrot fish, etc.) to large marine transient species such as lemon sharks and spotted eagle rays.

Fish Stocks: Bahamas-wide, scientists have estimated as much as eighty percent of the seafood we eat utilizes wetlands as nursery habitats. Cross Harbour is one of the most productive of such systems in Abaco, especially in terms of the net contribution to adult populations (for fish like snapper and grunts). Further, as the next major tidal creek system at Cherokee Sound is 42 miles away, Cross Harbour may be the primary nursery area for all of southern Abaco.

Breeding Grounds: A breeding area for nurse sharks, conch and under study as perhaps the most important bonefish breeding ground on the entire Little Bahama Bank.

Fly fishing: Estimated to contribute $141 million to the Bahamas GDP and almost $5 million in Abaco alone! Cross Harbour is one of the primary bonefishing areas on all of Abaco, used by local lodges and independent bonefish guides.

Scientific: FRIENDS spear-headed a creek restoration project in Cross Harbour in 2006 resulting in expansion of the creek system by approximately 150 acres. The restoration project was one of the most successful and well documented in The Bahamas. Results from the project have international implications regarding how we think about the connectivity of coastal ecosystems and are being used around the world to design marine protected areas, establish conservation priorities and develop similar restoration initiatives.

Cultural: Residents of south and central Abaco use the pine forests, beaches and water for recreation, plus the ramp is an important put-in for local fishermen. These areas need to remain available for public use.

Historic: Cross Harbour was a site for logging and shipping in Abaco in the 1900’s, and holds an important place in Abaco history.

GET INVOLVED

Make a financial contribution by contacting FRIENDS

Attend one of the community meetings

Volunteer to support school visits or community events

For more information contact: Friends of the Environment
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