

ENVIRONMENTAL BEST PRACTICES AT HOTEL MOCKING BIRD HILL

1. THE APPROACH

For the industry and the destination community to benefit, a symbiotic relationship must be developed, a relationship modelled on an eco-system framework. A sustainable approach has been chosen. This has been defined as the balanced interaction of three basic factors:

- Proper management of our natural and cultural resources.
- Improvement of the quality of life of the local communities.
- Economic success that contributes to other programmes of local development.

In other words it is necessary to achieve guest satisfaction and provide an enriching holiday experience without depleting resources or placing the local population at a disadvantage while conducting business. The main focus is low-impact in terms of both the physical and social environment.

Our green policies and practices are designed to educate our employees and guests, reduce waste and toxins, conserve natural resources and partner with local and environmentally-friendly businesses.

Our mission is to adhere to the strictest environmental standards, engage in sustainable practices and maintain an impeccable quality of guest experience.

This principle guides us in our decision making. We are often asked what constitutes or makes a “green hotel”. We are happy to note that today many hotels employ modern technology to save resources and recycle and reduce waste however we believe that far more than the use of modern technology, it is the process of evaluating the various possibilities when making decisions and selecting the option that will have the least negative impact. This decision making is ongoing starting from the selection of the hotel site, consciously choosing to transform an existing home rather than build from scratch to the selection of furniture, layout of the garden, the tour activities we offer and the people we partner with to the more mundane choices of which products and supplies we source and our menu selection. It is the host of many little details that make the difference and it is the small steps that make the big difference. It is not only about installing high-tech environmental technologies system or just about the bottom line, but it is about the triple bottom line, the corporate and social responsibility. It is about caring for the environment and being committed to spending the time it takes to create a holistic approach to the running of a truly environmentally friendly, luxury, boutique hotel in a wonderful setting and providing their guests with comfort, fine food and a memorable holiday.

The objective is to be vigilant, watching how the hotel operates, developing more nuanced policies, working constantly to improve environmental performance and ensure a gradual raising of standards. For the most part low-tech and inexpensive measures are used to accomplish these goals, with the most expensive component of the Sustainable Management Resources Programme

being the time spent in terms of constant monitoring, training team members on the job, devoting a lot of attention to preventative maintenance, sourcing suppliers to provide the hotel with the most environmentally friendly products – whether it be food, cleaning agents or renewable energy technologies.

Far more than the financial aspect is a question of long term commitment and the willingness to forego short term profits especially when it relates to areas which are not visible to the guests and therefore have no visual impact such as the decision to build a waste water treatment plant and establish an extensive rainwater harvesting system. Hotel Mocking Bird Hill cannot change the world, but it can set an example, help raise awareness and offer visitors a choice, and that choice is to take a small step to a more sustainable lifestyle. By being sustainable and showing a genuine sensitivity to community Hotel Mocking Bird Hill imparts real meaning into a holiday experience product.

2. MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

- The development is appropriate to the area and its carrying capacity thus ensuring that tourism does not invade the community. This means respecting the culture of the people of the area as well as their social and economic situation.
- The combined factors of smaller dimensions, carefully selected services and investments in renewable energies, such as solar energy, will provide an economical advantage in view of the increasing costs of traditional and energy sources.
- The concept of working with a minimum input but to the maximum benefit of all the partners is a fundamental principle. The hotel has for example, been furnished very simply. The accent is not on providing luxury in terms of the interior decoration, but on providing a comfortable, relaxing ambience that allows the visitor to enjoy the beauty of the natural surroundings and contributing to a memorable holiday experience.
- Providing decent working conditions. Salaries are above the minimum wage. The staff consists mainly of members from neighbouring communities who have been trained on the job and thus given a chance to develop new skills and enhance their earning capacity.

Hotel Mocking Bird Hill serves as an example for the development of a general concept that can meet the demands of an increasing market geared towards sustainable-tourism.

Demonstrate effective sustainable management.

- The company has implemented a long-term sustainability management system that is suitable to its reality and scale, and that considers environmental, socio-cultural, quality, health, and safety issues.
- Developing the business on a scale that will provide a balance between the community's needs and priorities and the tourist's demands in order to attain a profitable co-existence. Very large projects have

shown that they strain the resources and place unwelcome pressure on the local population.

- The company is in compliance with all relevant international or local legislation and regulations (including, among others, health, safety, labour, and environmental aspects).
- Customer satisfaction is measured and corrective action taken where appropriate.
- Promotional materials are accurate and complete and do not promise more than can be delivered by the business. As far as possible these are online on the hotel's website in order to reduce paper use.

Maximize social and economic benefits to the local community and minimize negative impacts.

- Local and fair-trade services and goods are purchased by the business, where available.
- Local residents are employed, including in management positions. Training is offered as necessary.
- The international or national legal protection of employees is respected, and employees are paid a living wage.
- The activities of the company do not jeopardize the provision of basic services, such as water, energy, or sanitation, to neighbouring communities.
- Guest amenities include hand-made recycled paper and chocolate tea balls. Both products are made by local co-operative projects. Other items such as herbs, greeting cards also produced by these projects are sold in gift shops. Local guides are used for escorting guest on eco-cultural hiking tours. As far as possible the services of local transportation and tour companies are recommended and sold, especially if the services of the tour companies are compatible with the overall objectives.
- Buying local products and services. This generates additional income in the community and since these items are not packaged, it helps to avoid garbage problems. Tinned products are seldom used.
- Promoting the cultural heritage of the area (maroon history as well as the natural sites such as the various waterfalls, caves, plantations etc.)
- Resource management and ecological considerations in terms of physical-biological parameters rather than clearing lands, existing infrastructure was used by adapting a private villa to meet the requirements of a hotel. The existing infrastructure serviced the property thus eliminating the need to extend roads, etc. The vicinity to the neighbouring village of Drapers also ensured that a potential for recruiting local staff with transportation-free access was available.

Land Use Planning and Management - Minimise negative foot print and conservation of flora and fauna

- Existing infra-structure (formerly a private home) was used and after the necessary retro-fitting was opened as an eco-boutique hotel thus minimising impact generally incurred during construction; we essentially “recycled” the house
- Of almost 7 acres of land, most of which is naturally vegetated, the buildings only covers just over an acre thus ensuring low density and leaving most of the land in its natural state. The hotel is embedded amongst the vegetation with indigenous trees and plants which both protect it during storms and help to keep the environment naturally cool.
- The planning design and sitting of the property have been keeping with the landscape and wherever possible enhancing it, for example by terracing the hillside and filling with soil that has been washed down to the bottom of the property by rain. Terracing helps to prevent further soil erosion. Built up areas have been kept to a minimum and represents a very low density project with only 10 rooms located on just under 7 acres of land. The pathways are covered with gravel allowing the seepage of rainwater into the ground rather than running off surfaced areas.
- Conservation of natural resources: the natural forest on the property has been preserved; the building fits into landscape and does not jar or obstruct the view of the natural hillsides. The gallery was built between two old fig trees and incorporates them in to the design.
- Tree replacement is ongoing as is planting of flowering and fruit trees to attract the birds
- Terracing system employed to reduce soil degradation and loss
- Culverts along the road cleared regularly and topsoil replaced in the garden
- Soil creation using terraces, mulch, compost and re-gained topsoil
- No chemicals used in the garden, only organic pesticides and fertilizers
- No fossil-derived fertilizers that leak chemicals into the ground and accelerate the release of nitrous oxide- a greenhouse gas – are used. Old fashioned alternatives such as compost are used.
- Practices to reduce pollution from noise, light, runoff, erosion, ozone-depleting compounds, and air and soil contaminants are implemented.
- Bamboo planted along property border
- Water landscape established at front of the hotel. This helps to provide natural habitat for frogs and fish that eat mosquitoes as a form of natural pest control.
- No chemicals are used for rodent control. Old fashioned traps are set with roasted coconut to attract them apart from the hotel’s two cats.

- We use locally made bamboo furniture. Cutting bamboo does not kill the plant as is the case with trees and provides a very sustainable and hardy material for furniture rather than using wood. Using bamboo helps to impart the economic value of this plant and thus helps against the destruction and burning of bamboo which is unfortunately quite a wide spread practise to clear hillside for agriculture. The bamboo roots are a valuable tool to hold the soil and prevent soil erosion thus we hope by promoting the use of bamboo furniture to encourage communities to safeguard their bamboo fields rather than destroying them.

Management of Fresh Water Resources

- Rainwater flows through gravel filters into a main underground storage tank as well as into a series of 1000, 800, 600 and 400 gallon tanks (present storage:53,000 gallons/ 200,627 litres)
- Re-guttered the roof and included new roof surfaces as well as adding more down spouts to improve efficiency of rain water harvesting system
- Collected water used to augment scarce supplies from public system and avoid placing a burden on the community supplies
- Rainwater is treated with UV system
- Pool water used while backwashing the pool is collected and stored in drums and used for cleaning public areas.
- The use of harmful substances, including pesticides, paints, swimming pool disinfectants, and cleaning materials, is minimized; substituted, when available, by innocuous products; and all chemical use is properly managed.
- The chlorine content in the pool is minimised by using a copper ionisation process to keep the pool clean
- Only phosphate free and bio-degradable laundry agents are used
- As cleaning agents only natural based products are used using mainly citrus base, acetic acid and baking soda
- Only biological bacteria is used to clean drains, grease traps and maintain the efficiency of the waste water treatment plant
- Water usage monitored on a daily basis
- Reduction of laundry influences careful usage of water
- Use of water efficient or water saving equipment
- Water savers on taps and showers
- Low-flow toilets (6 litre) and ball arm in toilets bent to reduce water use in those toilets not yet retro-fitted
- Washing machine filled to maximum
- Dishwasher that uses second rinse water for first wash of next load
- Garden designed to survive in natural climatic cycles –very little lawn. A minimum area is cemented to minimise run off. Most of the area is left in its natural state to allow the rain to seep in.
- All aspects of operations have been reviewed with the goal of choosing the least damaging options. An algae inhibitor and floatron are used in the pool

to reduce the use of chlorine to a minimum. No chemical insecticides or pesticides are used that might contaminate the ground water. Only organic fertiliser and compost are used. Instead age-old household remedies such as pepper teas, mixed cultivation, etc. achieve good results. Phosphate free cleaning agents are used. Natural, non-toxic agents such as baking soda for cleaning, boric powder instead of chemical anti-roach poisons and khus-khus root instead of mothballs, etc are used

Waste Water Treatment

- Anaerobic wastewater treatment plant. Wastewater, including gray water, is treated effectively and reused where possible
- Minimising pollution by using those products, services and process least damaging to the environment.
- The Jamaican made furniture reflects a Caribbean flair using wicker and bamboo; no tropical hard woods have been used. The gallery was built on stub columns rather than blasting the rock to lay a foundation.
- Minimising waste and reducing the burden on the environment by recycling, re-using, pollution control and responsible disposal such as composting. The emphasis here is on avoiding waste problems rather than on solving problems once a difficult situation has arisen.
- Use of renewable energies (solar water heating) and energy efficient equipment and lighting.
- Increasing awareness of environmental issues within our own organization through staff training as well as working together with local environmental groups to increase the level of public consciousness for the environment. As representative of the local environmental group P.E.P.A. and an expert in the field of sustainable tourism Shireen Aga has conducted a series of "Greening" workshops for departmental staff of all hotels and villas in Port Antonio resort area. She now also lectures on ecotourism at the local College of Science agriculture and Education.
- Tinned products are seldom used.
- With the exception of a few alcoholic beverages such as whisky, sherry, and cognac, we concentrate on using locally made alternatives. In terms of the cuisine, recipes are adapted to use local alternatives. The menu uses a variety of local produce such as the dasheen, coco, yam, etc., and thus introduces visitors to these often otherwise untried alternatives. The restaurant has a reputation for fine cuisine using only fresh, seasonal produce.
- Promoting the cultural heritage of the area (maroon history as well as the natural sites such as the various waterfalls, caves, plantations etc.

These goals correspond with the overall objectives of the promotion of eco-cultural tourism in as much as they comply with the regional, national and international aims of environmental policies. Aside from being simple to follow and easily implemented they also provide an example for others, and encourage others to follow suit.

3. ENERGY MANAGEMENT: TAPPING SUSTAINABLE RESOURCES AND ENSURING ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND CONSERVATION

- Hot water is provided by a solar hot water heating system. This significantly reduces electricity requirements.
- Without reducing the comfort of the guests, the management has chosen not to install equipment that is high in energy use in the rooms. The buildings have also been planned to maximise on natural ventilation. Given the advantage of the hillside location, the rooms receive cool breezes. Fans that use far less electricity than air-conditioning enhances the natural ventilation. Mini-bars and televisions are not provided in the room. Television is available in the lounge, but generally most guests enjoy the natural vistas and the twinkling lights of Port Antonio.
- Notices in the rooms request guests to assist the management in their efforts by turning off lights and fans, etc. when leaving the rooms.
- Motion detectors regulate all security lighting that is operated on solar energy. Energy saving light bulbs is installed in all areas where lighting is required for extended periods of time. We are now starting to replace the energy saving lights with LED's.
- Increased use of energy efficient equipment
- Electricity usage monitored daily
- Equipment regularly maintained and serviced to ensure optimal performance.
- Solar water heating
- Laundry dried in the sun
- Coffee machine has thermos pots so that machine can be turned off between brews and coffee remains hot
- Natural cross ventilation instead of air-conditioning
- The use of large windows allows the maximum use of natural light and keeps the use of electrical lights to a minimum.
- By reducing the amount of laundry, (details are listed under water management) the electricity consumption is also reduced. As this is a small property we are able to manage without laundry dryers. The dryer is seldom used, for the most part only on cloudy, damp days.
- The public areas and rooms are tiled rather than carpeted thus avoiding the need for vacuum cleaning and the resulting energy use.
- Guests encouraged to use towels and linen more than once to reduce laundry
- Napkin pouches with room numbers so that napkins can be re-used
- Tablemats rather than tablecloths used in the restaurant to reduce laundry
- Office moved from ground floor to a new upper level furnished entirely of recycled materials, has more ventilation and daylight reducing electricity use.
- Two air-conditioned storerooms fully insulated with re-used Styrofoam from packaging
- Automatic door closers installed on the storeroom doors to ensure that doors are not left open when persons go into the storerooms.
- Pool pump operates on solar power

- Energy for 4 rooms and 2 offices as well as outside lighting is supplied by renewable source (solar) to reduce dependence on fossil fuels. Solar panels have been installed to provide energy for 4 rooms, the Gallery (including managers' residence) and most of the outside lighting, which amounts to 51% of all lighting. Installed LPG generator to help augment public electricity supplies. LPG is cleaner and less noisy than the diesel generators.

4. WATER MANAGEMENT

There is an increasing danger of water shortages due to the following factors:

- The growing demand for water.
- The progressive pollution of available water sources.
- Changing weather patterns which leading to increased periods of drought.
- A collapsing infrastructure (high loss of water due, for example, to leaking water lines).
- Poor water management, which result in inadequate, and sometimes a complete breakdown of water supplies.

The key objectives in terms of resources management are:

- **savings:** reduction, wherever possible, of water usage,
- **caring:** protecting water sources from pollution,
- **substituting:** using water other than drinking water for the purposes which do not require drinking water quality,
- **reducing loss:** avoiding the waste of drinking water

Water usage monitored on a daily basis

Management of Fresh Water Resources

- Rainwater is collected in a large tanks under the house and used to supplement the water supply during those periods when there is no water being supplied by the public system. Long-term plans include extending the number of water storage tanks.
- Rainwater flows through gravel filters into a main underground storage tank as well as into a series of 1000, 800, 600 and 400 gallon tanks (present storage:53,000 gallons/ 200,627 litres)
- Collected water used to augment scarce supplies from public system and avoid placing a burden on the community supplies
- 2000 gallons (7,570 litres) of rainwater collected independently of main collection system for cleaning and watering flower
- Re-guttered the roof and included new roof surfaces as well as adding more down spouts to improve efficiency of rain water harvesting system
- Pool water used while backwashing the pool is collected and stored in drums and used for cleaning public areas.
- Reduction of laundry influences careful usage of water
- unless specifically requested otherwise, the linen is changed every three days in order to reduce water and electricity consumption as well as

reducing the use of detergents guests are requested to drop their towels in the showers if they are to be replaced,

- in the restaurant place mats are used instead of tablecloths, thus if any food spills occur only the place mat in question will require laundering making the total laundry load far less than tablecloths,
- long staying guests are presented with a serviette pouch that is embroidered with their room number and differentiated by the colour of the embroidered flowers, unless very soiled, the serviettes are used more than once, just as one would do at home
- Washing machine filled to maximum
- Water savers on taps and showers
- Low-flow toilets (6 litre) and ball arm in toilets bent to reduce water use in those toilets not yet retro-fitted

There is also the challenge of safeguarding the quality of the available drinking water. This challenge is met by using a UV filtration system and observing the following standards in order to reduce possible pollution:

- Products that contain formaldehyde or heavy metals are avoided.
- No pesticides or insecticides are used in the garden
- Only phosphate and chlorine free, bio-degradable detergents are used
- No strong chemical cleaning agents are used, but household, environmentally safe products such as baking soda, boric acid, and vinegar
- Use of chlorine in the pool is kept to a minimum by using an algae inhibitor that is connected to the pool's filter as well as a floatron
- Only biological bacteria is used to clean drains, grease traps and maintain the efficiency of the wastewater treatment plant
- The tiled floors in the hotel also avoid the use of any strong chemical carpet cleaner that would normally be used for stain and spot removals and shampooing

Lessen the amount of wastewater flowing into ground via soak-aways by treating used water with a biological treatment system that requires little energy and servicing.

The recycled water produced by the biological wastewater treatment can in turn be used for all those purposes that do not necessarily require drinking water quality. Apart from the environmental aspects, using "recycled" water enhances the profitability of the hotel by reducing the amounts of water required thus reducing the cost. Recycling water can reduce the volume of water required from the public system by half.

- Dishwasher that uses second rinse water for first wash of next load
- Garden designed to survive in natural climatic cycles –very little lawn. A minimum area is cemented to minimise run off. Most of the area is left in its natural state to allow the rain to seep in.

Waste Water Treatment

Anaerobic wastewater treatment plant. Wastewater, including gray water, is treated effectively and reused where possible

5. WASTE MANAGEMENT

Waste reduction and waste avoidance as well as the careful choice of products used are the priorities.

The guidelines that are adhered to maximise waste avoidance and waste reduction follow. Reuse and Recycling are the other components to utilise whatever items are still generated as a resource for something else rather than disposing of as waste.

- Single portions and single packaged items (food and toiletries) are not used. For example, liquid soap dispensers replace individual bars of soap ensuring no waste from the wrappers and a hygienic soap dispensing system.
- Goods purchased in bulk to minimise packaging
- Containers / crates returned to suppliers
 - Reusable or recyclable products are used in all departments. To this extent no paper napkins are used. Instead cloth napkins that are washed and reused are preferred. In the rooms cloth laundry bags are used instead of the plastic or paper version.
 - Products that are not necessary such as straws and paper coasters and small paper serviettes are avoided. Stainless steel cocktail sticks that can be used as re-usable straws are used in the bar for children. Guest response is very positive once they have received the information about the environmental objectives that are served by observing these policies.
 - The daily menu is written on a blackboard in the restaurant to highlight the daily specials-instead of printing new sheets each day.
- As much correspondence as possible done electronically
- Eliminating paper trail by banking and paying bills online.
- .No newspaper print-outs or daily newspapers are provided for guests – instead computers are available in the public areas for guests to access news online.
 - Picnic lunches are packed in re-useable boxes rather than disposable boxes for guests returning to the hotel. For departing guests, bio-degradable / compostable throw away food storage boxes made from plant starches are used.

- Notice requesting guests not to purchase beverages in plastic bottles and that drinking water can be provided by the hotel in re-useable containers.
- Guests are requested to take back any plastics they bring with them where there are proper recycling programmes. We have no plastic recycling facilities in Jamaica and try to avoid the problem by simply not purchasing goods in plastic.
- If plastic bottles are left by guests, we puncture them and fill them with water and use as a form of drip irrigation for young plants that have just been set.
- Reusable containers are used for storage rather than depending on aluminium foil and plastic cling wrap.
- The beverage list is limited to those that are supplied in deposit bottles. Non-deposit bottles are stored to be given to others who can use them, beekeepers, for example.
- No aerosols are used to avoid problems created by their disposal or through the CFC's that are still contained in many aerosol products available in this country. The housekeepers have been taught to maximise natural ventilation to keep the rooms fresh. The use of home-grown limes, sour oranges combined with cinnamon and added to the water for cleaning the floors adds a fresh and natural citrus aroma. Terrazzo tiles get their sheen when polished after having been wiped with vinegar and water.
- Products that contain formaldehyde or heavy metals are avoided.
- Rechargeable batteries for the torches for our security staff are used to avoid disposal and the consequent pollution of landfills caused by toxins in batteries. Guests are asked to take their used batteries home.
- All items from linen to furniture and other fittings are recycled. They are either donated to staff or re-used in the hotel for other purposes. When the rooms were recently refurbished and fitted with plantation serpentine windows and doors, we used the metal railings from those balconies to line the newly established terraces in the garden. Old bathroom fixtures, doors and windows were used to create new restroom facilities for the staff and a new office. Currently a little garden cafe is also be built using recycled items.
- Old computers were given to a local school.
- Styrofoam packaging has been used to insulate the two cool rooms for wines and beverages
- Garbage separation:
 - *Compostable waste*, which is used as fertilizer on the grounds together with chicken manure that we receive from our local egg suppliers
 - *Other waste food* that is used either as dog food or given to the neighbouring farmer for his hogs

- *Left over vegetable oils* are collected in a drum that is collected by a company that recycles the oil into soap and enriched chicken feed
- *Glass*: the bottles are given to the local beekeepers association for honey production.
- *Jars* are collected and given to a local micro-business partners who makes homemade jams. The jars and bottles are re-used many times – each time filled with delicious jams made from fruit in season.
- *Wine bottles* used to create raised flowerbeds and path borders
- *Paper*: after it has been used on both sides, it is collected and taken to the local womens community project where they make high quality hand-made paper where it is combined with natural fibres and made into high quality individual textured writing paper,
- *non-compostable* waste such packaging etc.
- *Tins and juice cartons* are used for setting plants in the hotels nursery
- There are two waste bins in the rooms; one for recyclable items such as paper and glass bottles and the second one is for other waste.

Avoiding waste is also crucial. In addition to the following methods avoid and reduce waste:

- the small scale of the hotel makes it possible for us to make many food items such as jams and marmalades, bread, pasta, ice-cream ourselves, this not only has the advantage of providing our guest with high quality and healthy produce, it also avoids all the packaging that would normally be involved if these products had been bought,
- all torn linen and towels are reused in the hotel as cleaning and kitchen cloths.

Garbage collection in the Port Antonio area is erratic to non-existent the municipal garbage dumps have already exceeded their limits. It is therefore vital that waste be reduced to a minimum to avoid straining the situation any further and perhaps easing it in the future.

Green Supply Chain

- Offer ethical fine dining with full-bodied Caribbean influenced dishes, made as far as possible with organic, healthy food sourced from local producers.
- Priority is given to supporting local community projects by sourcing supplies from them and providing them with regular sources of income
- We only use fresh seasonal products ensuring they come directly from plot to plate thus avoiding food miles and cold storage and reducing the environmental impact.
- We purchase fair trade, shade coffee which is bird-friendly
- By sourcing mainly locally, we reduce the food miles and the resulting carbon-emissions related to transporting supplies
- Gluten-free breads and lactose-free milk (goat's milk) offered for guests with dietary requirements.
- The daily changing menu offers vegetarian options to encourage low-meat diets to help reduce greenhouse-gas effects from methane and nitrous oxide resulting from bovine digestion.

We observe stringent purchasing policies including a strict policy of refusing plastic bags at shops. Suppliers are requested to deliver in re-usable containers and using cloth bags and re-usable folding boxes for shopping. Packaging in any form is avoided as far as possible.

Climate Change, Carbon emissions and protection of Air Quality

- Since its inception the hotel has operated as an eco-boutique hotel offering green but gracious ambiance to minimise the impact while providing high quality service and experience to the guests. The focus has always been on simple elegance and the belief that “small is beautiful” based on the belief that one can operate in a caring, responsible manner without compromising comfort if we consume less and share more.
- The hotel ensures that no waste is burnt that could contribute towards air pollution nor do they use any products that could emit toxic fumes
- Sign requesting drivers to switch off their engines while waiting to pick up guests. This also reduces noise.
- Employees are engaged that live close to the work place within a radius of ... km ensuring short commutes. Many live in the neighbouring village of Drapers and walk to the work thus reducing carbon emissions generated by travelling to and from work.
- Company car is serviced regularly to help improve gas mileage and improve efficiency with clean filters, properly inflated tires etc. – thus helping to place less CO₂ into the atmosphere each year.
- All employees use public transport for commuting to work saving gas and CO₂.
- Fruit, vegetables, fish, meats, dairy and other products are sourced from local farmers and providers close to the hotel to reduce “petroleum miles” – and provide great taste!
- Reducing paper usage by banking and paying bills online as well as paying employees directly online not only helps save trees but reduces car trips into town and resulting fuel consumption as well as helps curb green house-gases emissions
- Had an audit conducted to establish carbon footprint of the business.
- Purchased offsets for carbon emissions generated through the hotel’s operations.
- A second audit will be conducted now that various improvements and steps to change energy source have been implemented.
- Offer guests the possibility to offset carbon emissions generated through their travel by contributing either towards a local programme offered in conjunction with the J.C.D.T. (Jamaica Conservation Development Trust) in terms of re-forestation of the National Park in the Blue Mountains or contributing to the programme My Climate.
- The hotel plants a tree for every couple that gets married or celebrates their honeymoon at the hotel.

- The hotel offers green weddings using only locally grown, seasonal flowers and giving a local touch with handmade paper invitation using recycled paper or other gifts made by various community projects.
- Planted a bamboo fence as it is one of the best plants for absorbing CO².
- Planting trees in a tropical region is proven to be very effective to mitigate climate change. We have been planting trees in the garden to not only replace trees lost during storms and hurricanes but to also add more and thus improve habitat for fauna.

Transport

- Company vehicle uses diesel and is regularly serviced every 5000 km for optimum performance
- Trips to Port Antonio reduced by only going when there are many items to be seen to – trips for a single purpose only are avoided
- Local transport company who does hotel's transfers asked to do run errands in Kingston for the hotel when they have a transfer there thus reducing need to drive to Kingston.

Partnerships for Sustainable Development

Work closely with:

- Nature's Handmade Paper
- Community projects, example, Charlestown Maroons
- Created ENOUGH (Education Needs Our Urgent Generous Support) to support a local school in Port Antonio
- JCDT (Jamaica Conservation & Development Trust) with regards to the tree planting

PROMOTION AND ADVERTISING

The commitment of the hotel to environmental preservation is communicated to the guests. Explaining our goals and listing our best practices is part of our efforts to provide transparency and share information with our guests.

We seek partnerships with like-minded organisations and work towards building mutually beneficial relationships.

Involving staff, Customers and Communities

Information about and interpretation of the natural surroundings, local culture, and cultural heritage is provided to customers, as well as explaining appropriate behaviour while visiting natural areas, living cultures, and cultural heritage sites.

- Guest information folders include advice on how to avoid damaging the local Environment. They also include extensive information that will provide an insight and understanding of the local culture. A collection of Jamaican poetry, for example, is an interesting way to highlight various social issues.
- The minimisation of social and cultural damages is very important to the management and every effort is made to introduce the visitors to the local

culture while striving to achieve an understanding and respect for the cultural history.

- To serve this goal, the hotel website has been extended to provide detailed information not just about the hotel but also about the various programmes, projects and the area with its attractions.
- Substantial funding has been obtained through our initiative on behalf of the women's paper making project in Fairy Hill and for general awareness building seminars in 5 near by communities and skills training and literacy programmes. We remain personally involved in the development of the hand-made papermaking project in the neighbouring village of Fairy Hill.
- Seminars have been held on environmentally friendly hotel operations for staff of Hotel Mocking Bird Hill and other local hotels
- Training on environmental issues and operations is ongoing and staff orientation and documentation has been established
- Participation in events organised by the Portland Environmental Protection Association (PEPA)
- Detailed information in folders in the guest rooms.
- Launched new website called Jamaica Explorations to help promote community based tours and soft-adventure; nature based tourism and encourages visitors to explore the interior of the country to spread the benefits of the tourism dollar to a wider base.

We communicate our concerns and our aims to them and together with them we seek to practice a sustainable form of tourism.

Global thinking-local actions

We do not restrict the practice of sustainable tourism to the hotel alone, but also include the community as a whole and try to raise the awareness of our colleagues as well as other operators in the tourist industry. It is necessary to demonstrate the connections between nature, the environment, quality of life, health and responsibility and help ensure that the environmental dimension is properly taken into account with regard to the further development of tourism in the area