



BAHAMAS RED CROSS SOCIETY

Community Risk  
Reduction



Safer, Healthier  
Communities

# Arthur's Town CAT ISLAND

## Community Assessment *For Disaster Reduction*

March 2010



## The International Federation's Global Agenda (2006–2010)

Over the next two years, the collective focus of the Federation will be on achieving the following goals and priorities:

### **Our goals**

**Goal 1:** Reduce the number of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.

**Goal 2:** Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.

**Goal 3:** Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.

**Goal 4:** Promote respect for diversity and human dignity, and reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion.

### **Our priorities**

Improving our local, regional and international capacity to respond to disasters and public health emergencies.

Scaling up our actions with vulnerable communities in health promotion, disease prevention and disaster risk reduction.

Increasing significantly our HIV/AIDS programming and advocacy.

Renewing our advocacy on priority humanitarian issues, especially fighting intolerance, stigma and discrimination, and promoting disaster risk reduction

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2008

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## Introduction

Cat Island is a boot-shaped island located in the Central Bahamas. It is the sixth largest island in the Bahamas' archipelago, the first of the windward group, south-eastward of Eleuthera, and encompasses an area of some 160 square miles.

Like many of the Bahamas' islands, Cat Island had no settlements of note until the emigration of the American Loyalists in 1783 who escaped the American Revolution. Among this group were settlers with surnames as Deveaux, MacDonald and Hepburn. These names continue to live on today through their descendants and the descendants of their slaves who also took these names.

During the Loyalist period, cotton plantations provided well for the economy of Cat Island. However, like many of its sister islands in the Bahamas, the economy had to be diversified in later years. Cat Islanders farmed crops such as pineapple and banana, and even exported cascarilla bark, from the native cascarilla tree, to Italy for the production of medicine and liquor (Compari). They also used local raw material such as sisal in the production of straw hats and other handicraft items. These exports, farming and handicraft activities continue today. Cat Islanders have added to their tourist economy by the promotion of their eight-mile pink sand beach, many white beaches, miles of native trails, boating, diving, snorkelling, and other interesting attractions with mythical stories surrounding them.

The topography of Cat Island consists of low coast lines, salt water lakes, and a range of hills which run through the island. Its most famous attraction is Como Hill also known as Mount Alvernia which reaches to 206 feet and has "The Hermitage" Monastery at its peak.

Some of the settlements of Cat Island include Port Howe, Bennett's Harbour, Orange Creek, Devil's Point, Dumfries, Bluff, Knowles, and the capital of Arthur's Town.

Cat Island is known as the home of Rake & Scrape music (the indigenous sounds of the Bahamas) and the native dances of the quadrille and the heel/toe polka.

The settlement of Arthur's Town was selected to do the VCA for Cat Island. It is located at the Northern tip of Cat Island which hosts various influential Government Agencies and businesses. Amenities and historic facilities that dwell in this settlement are Arthur's Town airport, Police Station, Administrator's Office, Arthur's Town High School, Bahamas Telecommunication Company and St. Andrew's Anglican church which is also a shelter for those in need during disasters.



The purpose of this assessment is to evaluate and observe all potential hazards, vulnerable areas and capacity measurements and resources. Our expectations for the Vulnerability Capacity Assessment (VCA) training is to improve response time, improve community knowledge and prepare the community unforeseen disasters through awareness and education.

Training participants have assessed their area to:

1. Identify hazards and vulnerabilities in the surroundings
2. Recognize skills and resources available

3. Identify actions which the community can implement to reduce risk
4. Prepare micro-project proposals.

What follows are the results of these assessments undertaken by community members over the period 15<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> March 2010 from the Arthur's Town High School, Cat Island.

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## Hazard Map of Arthur's Town Community, Cat Island

The main hazards in the Arthur's Town community are:

1. Hurricanes and its impacts: Floyd 1999. Francis 2003/5: TS Michelle 2002 and Noel 2007/8
  - a. Storm surge made worse by the simultaneous occurrence of the spring tide. Floods 3-5' from the gas station to the basket ball court. The Bay Road is impassible.
  - b. Flooding due to rainfall, poor drainage and ponds
  - c. Debris and falling trees- road and airport blockage
2. Wet Season – Flooding from the overflow of ponds
3. Mosquitoes and vector related diseases threats from the ponds
4. Threat of leaks from the tanks in the service stations and the contamination of the ground water

## **Observation of Arthur's Town after VCA Community Walkabout**

Participants from the Vulnerable Capacity Assessment (VCA) training ventured into the targeted community, Arthur's Town, to thoroughly evaluate and observe foreseen hazards, capacity and venerable areas. Teams were divided into smaller groups to accurately assess the community and listed below are their findings:

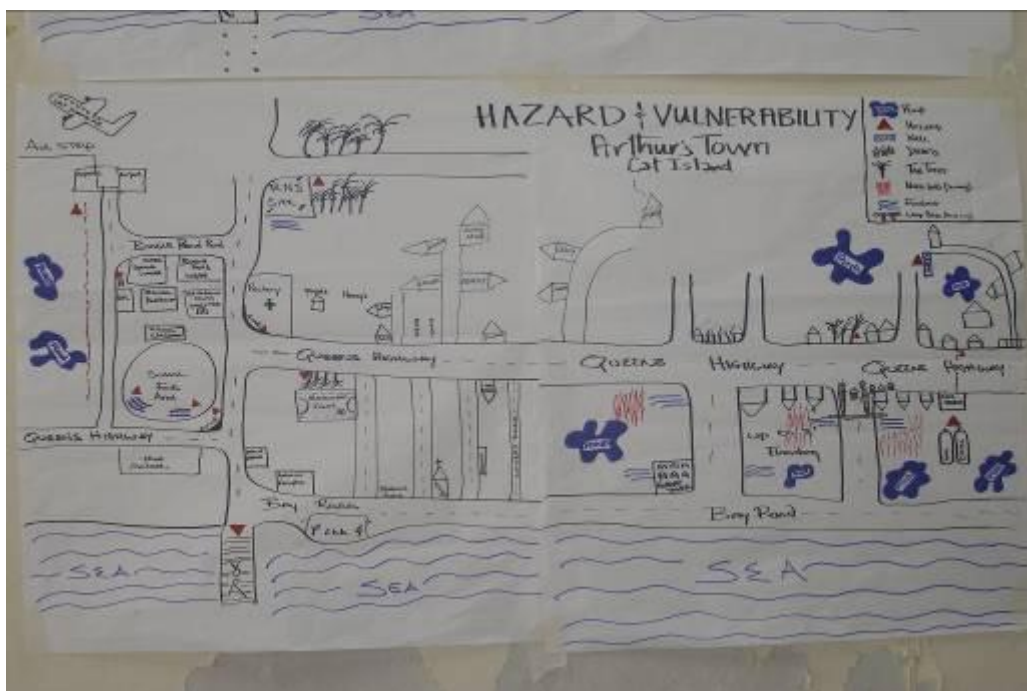
- Improper Drainage opposite gas station near poles 173 & 174
- Gas station holding tank needs changing ( it currently leaks)
- Tin roof on abandon building not properly fasten to house
- All homes on Western side of island resides near ponds and swamp land
- One family home has no running water nor outhouse
- Beautiful flowers
- Very friendly and welcoming residents
- Plenty of dogs in Zion Hill
- Tall coconut trees

Upon completion of the community walkabout participants were grateful to realize the unique attributes Arthur's Town has to offer and also the hazardous area in which it harbors. Participants also appreciated the profound knowledge learnt from the sharing residents of the neighborhood.

## Figure 1 - Vulnerability Map of Arthur's Town, Cat Island

Based on the hazards the vulnerable services are the airport due to the nearby ponds and the trees on its perimeter. The services in the town center due to storm surge flooding e.g. school, police station, rectory. The 3 access roads just outside of town will flood.

There are 12-14 families at the end of Cemetery road who are at risk to flooding. The ground water supply near the service station are at risk to contamination from ruptured tanks or overflow.



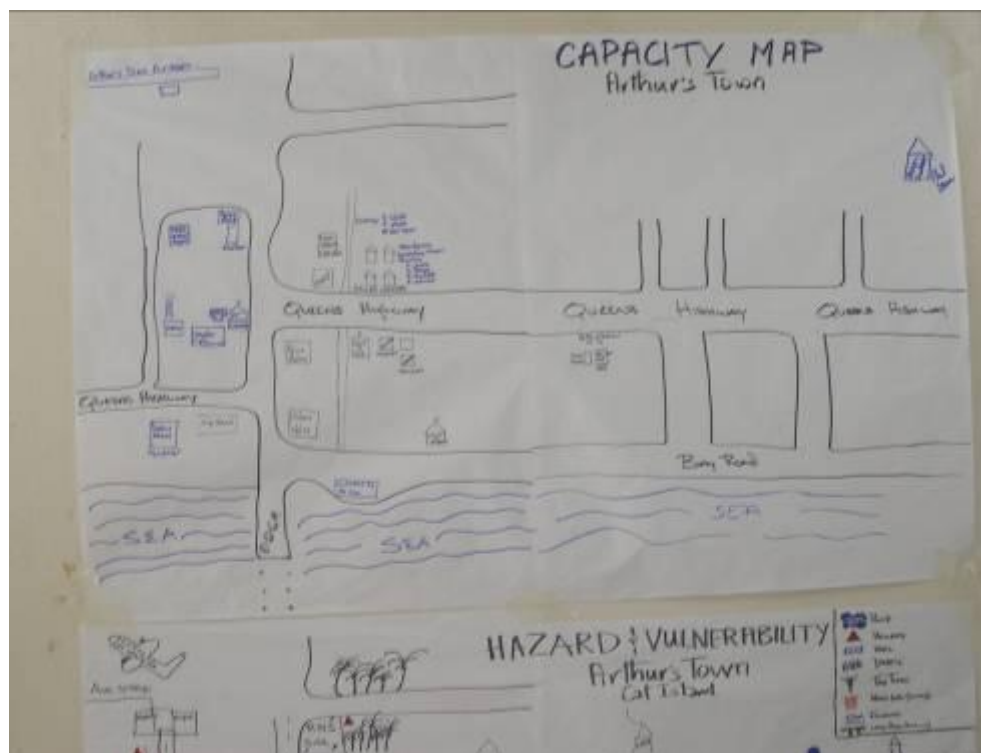
## Community resources and skills Map

No community is without skilled people and some items to help in an emergency. In Arthur's town there are services such as the police, fire station, administration e.g. public health, a food store, gas station, a cooking house and there are chain saws but whether these are functional will need to be checked.

There are many skills in the community such as carpenters, electricians, masons, 3 ton and larger trucks.

The dock is in poor condition.

**Figure 1: Resource and Capacity Map**





## Arthur's Town Historic Timeline

- 1491 Settlers - Arawaks / Lucayans
- 1492 Christopher Columbus Discovery of Cat Island
- 1493 Farming Industry Commenced - Sisal, Cotton, Pineapple
- 1700 Deveaux & Burbon Plantation, Greenwood Cat Island
- 1800 Railroad, Old Bight - Export of Sisal
- c. 1860 Typhoid fever
- 1929 Severe Hurricane killed several Cat Islanders
- 1950 Hermitage was built by Father Jerome Hawkins- Mount Alvernia  
St. Mary Anglican Church was given to Slaves to signify the end of  
Slavery
- 1950 Dock Built to accommodate Mail Boat Transportation
- 1960 Usage of Running Water was supplied to Cat Islanders
- c.1964 Measles outbreak. Classes closed.
- 1970 First Member of Parliament, H.G.Christie, represented Cat Island
- 1970 Cat Island became infamous for Cutlass Bay & Drug Trade  
New Farming Produced Introduced - Tomato, Corn, Pumpkin,  
Peas, watermelon
- 1982 Cat Island Air Originated - Native Owned
- 1990 Electricity was introduced to entire Island
- 1992 Hurricane Andrew - Damaged Sea Line
- 1999 Hurricane Floyd - Flooding, household damage, no electricity
- 2000 Tuberculoses (TB) Outbreak - Entire Island
- 2003 Hurricane Michelle - a little Flooding
- 2004 Reconstruction of Sea Wall
- 2005 Hurricane Francis - Flooding, Beach Erosion
- 2007 Modern cable Introduced to Island - six (6) Channels
- 2008 Hurricane Noel - Flooding, massive crop deterioration

**Community Baseline and secondary data:**

**Official Community Name:** Arthur’s Town, Cat Island

**Location of Community:** Coastal community, north leeward side of Cat island  
Between Orange Creek and Dumfries.

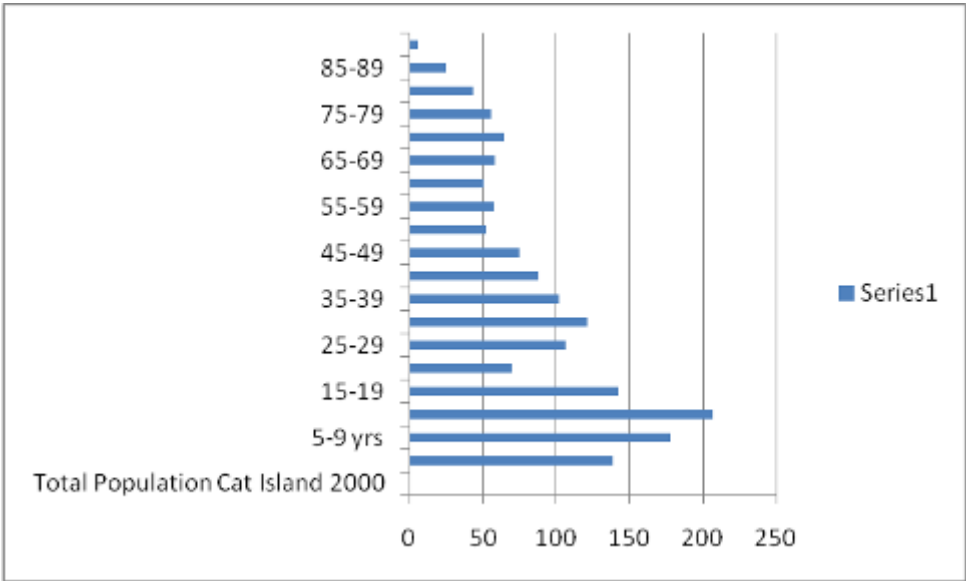
**Main access route:** Queen’s Highway runs through the town to the north and south of the island. There is the airport providing access as well. However, in severe hurricanes the road around Tea Bay is destroyed isolating the north from the south section of the island. Hence boats will be required.

**Population Arthur’s Town:** 163 persons 2010 (2000 Census 181)

66 households and families (2000 Census 62), 87 male (2000 Census 100) and 76 female (2000 Census 81)

Boys 34 Girls 27

Approx 9 disabled mental & physical Confined to bed elderly blind, Alzimers and dementia 7 females and 2 males



## Livelihoods and Coping Strategies

<u>Occupations</u>	<u>Amt. families</u>	<u>How Affected</u>
<b>Farming (Crops/Livestock)</b> (short crops, peas beans, corn <sup>1</sup> , tomatoes)	14	Flooding, wind damage, loss of crops
Fishing	2	Boat + equipment damaged
<b>Construction</b>	10	Sites destroyed
Transport (Airline)	5	Airport closed
<b>Small Business</b>	10	Decline in sales
Food Stores	1	Sales increase
Crabbing	3	Stop Holes, few crab
Craft	1	No sales
Barking - cascarilla for alcohol and perfumes	c. 10	Lack of trees due to bark loss

**Many families in Arthur's Town depend on their pensions as a main source of income. Families import their food from Nassau.**

### Coping strategies:

- Information comes from the Churches, police and the nurses.
- Persons get their stocks from Nassau if they can before the storm
- Fishermen pull their boats up on shore before the storm.
- In days of old the people went to shelter in the Bat caves from the hurricanes.
- Use the pump from the fire truck to clear out wells after the flooding.

## Seasonal Calendar

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Rainfall</b>												
<b>Dry (if no rain)</b>												
<b>Bush fires</b>												
<b>Hurricane season</b>												
<b>Mosquitoes</b>												
<b>Flu</b>												
<b>School Term</b>												
<b>Crops</b>												
<b>Festivals</b>												
<b>Crab</b>												
<b>Crawfish</b>												
<b>Grouper</b>												
<b>Hunting</b>												

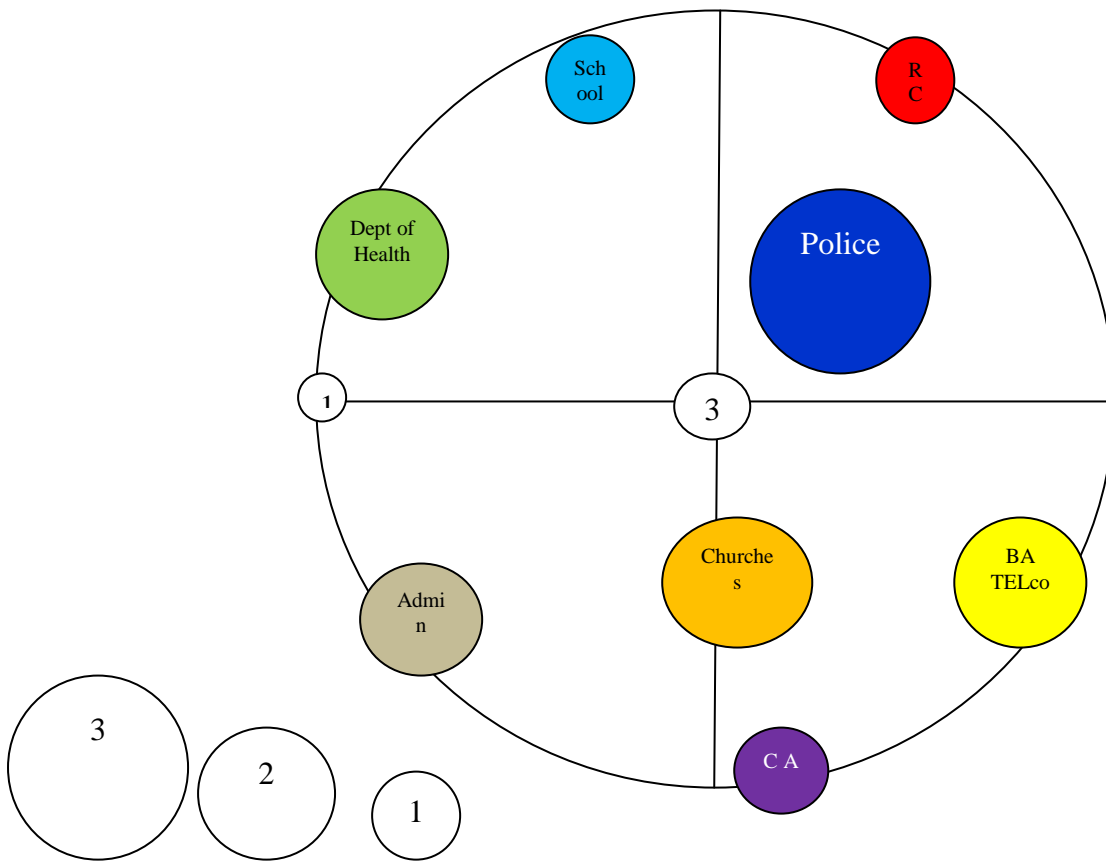
### Analysis:

The very busy time for everyone is June to August so activities in are best in the early part of the year.

Mosquitoes occur in abundance just after the start of the wet season and throughout the hurricane season. The Ministry of Health recognizes that the spraying for mosquitoes should start just prior to the hurricane season (just after the start of the rain). Flu season coincides with the school term. The flu campaign should occur during the summer when the children are out of school to intensify the prevention campaign. April May is the period of the most rainfall and therefore the time to grow crops.

### Social networks in Arthur's Town, Cat Island

For example	Groups & Institutions	Point of Contact	Telephone numbers
<b>Government</b>	Administrator's Office	Charles King	354-2043
	Royal Bahamas Police	Corporal Duncombe	354-2046
	Batelco (BTC)	Ann Ambrose	354-2060
	Civil Aviation	Omar Stubbs	354-2126
	Department of Public Health	Jessie Smith	354-4050
	Arthur's Town High	Mr. Dean	354-2175
	Local Government	Renee Russell	434-1874
<b>Business</b>	Boogie Pond Lounge	Wilfred Hepburn	354-2215
	Cocktail by the Sea	Sidney Isaacc	
<b>NGOs</b>	Rotary Club of Cat Island	Dr. Gwendolyn Rolle	354-4040
	Queen Esther Ch.2 OES	Jessie Smith	354-4050
	Northern Star Burial Society	Willard Cleare	354-4052
	Rake n' Scrape	Pamela Poitier	467-5859
	Bahamas Red Cross		
Toastmasters			
<b>Religious</b>	St. Andrew's Anglican	Father Barton	354-2040
	St. James Baptist	Rev.Laura Miller	354-2003



### Important / Influential Groups in Arthur's Town

More important groups are closer to the center. It is these groups which need to be engaged in disaster preparedness and response

Most important groups to the Arthur's Town community is the Police, Department of Health, BATELCo with the island's Administration, Civil Aviation and the three churches being recognized. Of greatest influence are the police and the churches. The previously mentioned organizations were also recognized. These organizations should be consulted where preparedness activities are being implemented.

## Reducing risk and make the community stronger

### Flooding

- Proper Sea Walls **AAI<sup>2</sup>**
- Sand Bags **CIC**
- Proper drainage **AII**
- Good drainage – Clean of debris on a timely manner **CIC**
- Construct foundation at a higher level in low line areas **III**
- Quick response team with heavy equipment, skills and capabilities **C**
- Relocate road further inland **A**
- Introduce a control planning system **A**

### Fuel

- Relocate station to proper area that is environmentally friendly **A**
- Build proper encampment around fuel tank to contain fuel spillage or prevent flood water from mixing with fuel **I**
- Inspect fuel tanks on an annual basis **I**
- Have proper holding tanks **IIC**
- Repair or replace tank **III**

### Destruction to homes and roof tops – falling trees and debris

- Implement stronger building codes **ICA**
- Trim trees before bad weather and cart away debris and objects that can be blown away and water holding containers to the approved dump site **CCI**

### Poorly constructed houses and old structures with termites

- Renovate and treat bugs frequently **CCC**
- Plant utility poles away from shorelines, avoid planting trees under power lines and trim trees frequently to avoid touching power line that can result in power failure or fire **AII**

### Contamination

- Construct proper septic systems **III**
- Construct septic tanks 100 feet away from water tanks **III**
- Ensure that wells and septic tanks are properly sealed and covered **IAI**
- Lift height of well to avoid contamination **IAI**
- Treat water regularly with chlorine tablets **CCC**
- Build holding tanks or purchase water tanks that can be erected above grounds **III**
- Purchase manual water pump to extract excess water **IAC**
- Education awareness **CCC**

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<sup>2</sup> A Accept that change will take great time and effort. C the community Can make a change directly; I the community will need to lobby to Influence change

## Industries

- Set up fields with high bush around the perimeter III
- Set up drainage to excess sum off III
- Avoid lighting field during high and strong winds III
- Set field on high grounds IIII
- Set up green house farming CCC
- Fish during good weather and use proper storage skills CCI
- Do multi type fishing III
- Vacuum pack products for long storage III
- Set up market to sell products locally and abroad AAC
- Pickle crops or feed to live stock AAC

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## Project Proposals

**Title: Drainage**

**Time: Ongoing**

**Problem Statement**

Due to previous hurricane and tropical storms experiences in Arthur's Town, the drains which were poorly constructed were clog with debris. Some of the reasons why the drains were clog are as follows:

- Lack of attention / cleaning
- No technical assistance was given during the construction of the drains

**Activities**

Activities	When
1. Repair malfunctioning drain pipes	
2. Train and certify persons to assist and repair drainage systems	
3. Host awareness meetings	

Solutions
1. Work must be done prior to hurricane season

**Budget**

Activities/ Material	Cost	Who?
Heavy Equipment		
Concrete Mixture		
Labor		
Technical/assistant		
3 Sheets of Metal wire		
10 Bags Ash Fault		
200 Ft. - 12 inch. Pipe (Blue)		
	<b>\$5,000.00</b>	

<b>Partners</b> Cat Island Local Government
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## Project Proposals

### Title: Tall Oak Trees / Water Containment

**Time:** Ongoing

**Problem Statement**

By allowing trees to grow wild under power lines, problems have developed overtime, that result in power outages, damages and loss of household appliances. Fallen trees can and have damaged homes.

Containers retaining water can breed mosquitoes and other bugs that cause the growth of molds. Older buildings and new buildings not built up to the building code causes a threat to surrounding buildings/homes.

**Activities**

Activities	When
2. Persons preparing and serving food to workers	
2. Companies exterminating buildings	
3. Persons repairing old building	

**Solutions**

2. Identify areas where trees need to be trimmed
2. All new buildings should be made to adhere strictly to the building code
3. Tree trimming by B.E.C and B.T.C with heavy equipment for this purpose

**Budget**

Activities/ Material	Cost	Who?
New Building	30,000.00	
Renovation	15,000.00	
Extermination	3,000.00	
Tree Trimming	1,500.00	
Food	100.00.	
Equipment	3,500.00	

**Partners**

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**ATTENDANCE REGISTER VCA TRAINING**  
**ARTHUR'S TOWN, CAT ISLAND,**  
**BAHAMAS 15<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> March 2010**

Name	Organization	Telephone #	E-mail Address
Jaime Strachan	Bahamas Red Cross	323-7370	<a href="mailto:jaimestrachan@hotmail.com">jaimestrachan@hotmail.com</a>
Karen Johnson	Fernandez Bay	342-2154	
Mary Wilson	Dept. of Environmental Health	359-9742	<a href="mailto:berthamaewilson@yahoo.com">berthamaewilson@yahoo.com</a>
Noel Kemp	Police Dept.	342-3039	
Tony Taylor	Police Dept.	342-3039	<a href="mailto:Tonyt_1540@hotmail.com">Tonyt_1540@hotmail.com</a>
Zilpha Campbell	Min. of Education	464-6589/354-5102	
Melissa Dorsett	Contiental Connection	464-6178/342-8006	<a href="mailto:melissadorsette78@yahoo.com">melissadorsette78@yahoo.com</a>
Debra McCoy	Fernandez Bay	342-8021	
Rita Strachan	Un-employed	354-2036/636-3171	
Rose Saunders	Dept. of Public Health	342-2144/342-3026	
Elva Dean	Arthur's Town High School	354-2175/354-2051	<a href="mailto:elvadee@live.com">elvadee@live.com</a>
Mary Morley	Cat Island Air	342-2125/354-2126	<a href="mailto:Sweetm_09@hotmail.com">Sweetm_09@hotmail.com</a>
Sherita			

Wilson	Min. of Education	342-8013/342-3030	<a href="mailto:sheritaisld@hotmail.com">sheritaisld@hotmail.com</a>
Helen Thurston	Education	354-6058	
Marvin Webb	Education	354-2039	
Jessie Smith	Dept. of Public Health	354-4050/1	<a href="mailto:nursesmith08@hotmail.com">nursesmith08@hotmail.com</a>
Carolyn Stubbs	Dept. of Health	354-4135/354-4030	
Kevin Burrows	D.E.H.S. Vector Control	342-3296/342-2183-86	<a href="mailto:ejay18_61@hotmail.com">ejay18_61@hotmail.com</a>
Emma Hepburn	National Insurance	342-3034/354-1005	
Paul Pratt	Arthur's Town High School	354-2175/552-2807	
Vandyke Russell	D.E.H.S. Vector Control	342-2183/86	<a href="mailto:epjhardware@yahoo.com">epjhardware@yahoo.com</a>
Peggy Johnson	D.E.H.S. Vector Control		

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Rainfall</b>				Blue	Blue							
<b>Dry</b>						Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey			
<b>Bush fires</b>								Yellow	Yellow			
<b>Hurricanes</b>						Dark Red	Dark Red	Dark Red	Dark Red	Dark Red	Dark Red	
<b>Flu</b>	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow				Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
<b>Mosquito</b>						Dark Blue	Dark Blue	Dark Blue	Dark Blue	Dark Blue		
<b>School Term</b>	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey			Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey
<b>Crops</b>	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green			Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green		Light Green	
Peas	Bright Green										Bright Green	
Pumpkin	Blue	Blue	Blue						Blue			
Watermelon			Yellow			Yellow	Yellow	Yellow				
Corn		Pink	Pink			Pink	Pink	Pink				
Sweet pepper	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green					Light Green	Light Green			
Hot pepper	Dark Blue	Dark Blue	Dark Blue					Dark Blue	Dark Blue		Dark Blue	
<b>Festivals</b>	Light Orange	Light Orange		Light Orange		Light Orange	Light Orange	Light Orange		Light Orange		
Regatta								Pink				
Rake & Scrape						Green						
Back to Cat Island										Orange		
Junkanoo												Light Brown
Deep South				Pink								
Anglican Fair										Light Green		
Wahoo Tournament		Dark Blue										
Bull Fish Tournament				Light Blue								
Independence							Yellow					
Crab			Dark Red	Dark Red	Dark Red	Dark Red	Dark Red	Dark Red	Dark Red	Dark Red	Dark Red	
Crawfish	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green						Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green
Grouper				Light Blue	Light Blue		Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	
Hunting						Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue		
Police Church Service	Dark Brown											

Detailed seasonal calendar

## Methodology

The Community Assessment (Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment - VCA) is a participatory investigative process. It is designed to assess the risk that people face in their local areas, as well as the resources and skills the community haVE to cope and recover from adverse events.

The process is a skills-transfer approach. The community is trained to carry out the assessment and develop solutions which will reduce risk. The output is not only an assessment of community risk and capacities, but also micro-project solutions to reduce the frequency and impact of disasters.

The results of the VCA are developed through direct observation and interaction with other community members over a period of time. Persons gathering the information in the field record and analyze their:

- Direct observations of visits through the community,
- Structured and semi-structured interviews with other community members
- Focus group meetings with target audiences
- Mapping of hazards, vulnerabilities, capacities and resources
- Brainstorming as a team and
- Quick surveys.

The information gathered from the community is cross referenced with secondary statistics, historical records and other materials available.

The intention is to understand the community better and have the residents implement solutions to risk reduction developed by themselves.

## Glossary

**Brainstorming:** The gathering of as many ideas as possible in a short period of time, usually to solve problems.

**Capacity (C):** Combination of all the strengths and resources available within a community, society or organization which may reduce the level of risk, or the effects of an event or disaster.

**Coping Strategies:** The ways in which people manage and reduce the impact of a hazard.

**Disaster:** Serious interruption of the functioning of a community or society which causes loss of human life and/or important material, economic or environmental losses which exceed the capacity of the affected community or society to manage the situation using their own resources.

**Direct Observation:** A process of observing objects, people, events and relationships.

**Emergency:** A situation of a threat or actual hazard which requires an almost immediate response, to prevent or reduce harm. Often the affected community has the capacity to respond using their own resources.

**Hazard (H):** A potentially damaging physical event, phenomenon or human activity, that may cause the loss of life or injury, property damage, social and economic disruption or environmental degradation.

**Historical Profile and Historical Visualization:** Tools for gathering information of what has happened in the past to tell how past events has had an effect on the community. These are represented as lists and a table of sketches respectively.

**Livelihoods:** The way people use the resources they have available to support their lives. For most people this means the method of earning cash income.

**Mitigation:** Structural and non-structural measures undertaken to limit the adverse impact of natural hazards, environmental degradation and technological hazards.

**Mapping:** A visual form to get an overview of the main features of an area in relation to its surroundings (Spatial map). It can also show dangers and exposed homes, services and infrastructure (Hazard and Vulnerability map); or resources and skills available in the community (Capacity Resource Map)

**Risk:** Probability of harmful consequences or expected losses (deaths, injuries, property, livelihoods, interruption of economic activity or environmental deterioration) as a result of interactions between natural or anthropological disasters and conditions of vulnerability. It is sometimes expressed as  $(H \times V) / C = R$

**Seasonal Calendar:** Visualization over the course of the year of weather patterns, social and economic conditions, festivals and other seasonal activities.

**Social Network:** The community's key groups and individuals, the nature of their relationship with the community and the perceptions residents have of their importance.

**Transect Walk:** A walk through the community to observe the people, relief of the land, surroundings and resources. It is represented as a cross-section diagram beneath which are descriptive topics. It helps to understand inter-relationships in a selected section of the community.

**Vulnerability (V):** The conditions determined by physical, social, economic, and environmental factors or processes, which increase the susceptibility of a community to the impact of hazards.

## **Bibliography**

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Terminology for Disaster Risk Reduction, International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction Updated March 31, 2004. <http://unisdr.org/eng/library/lib-ty> and Capacity Assessment:

VCA Toolbox with Reference Sheets. International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies 2007

### **Humanity**

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

### **Impartiality**

It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

### **Neutrality**

In order to continue to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

### **Independence**

The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

### **Voluntary service**

It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

### **Unity**

There can be only one Red Cross or one Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

### **Universality**

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all Societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.