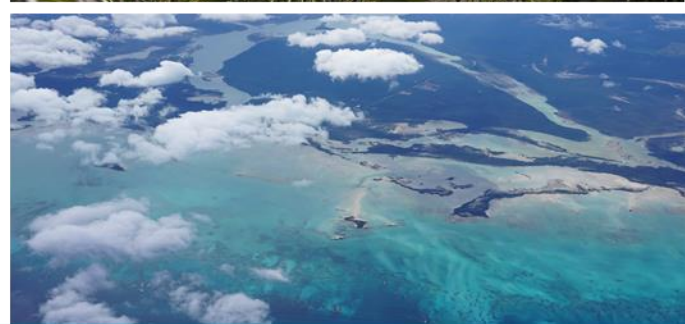


Bahamas Protected Areas Fund: Implementation Plan for Assessing and Moving Forward on High-Priority Revenue Options

*Prepared for The Nature Conservancy under
The Bahamas Protected Project*

Prepared by Blue Earth Consultants, a Division of ERG
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The Nature
Conservancy



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List of Acronyms

Acronym	Definition
BEST	Bahamas Environment, Science, and Technology Commission
BNPAS	The Bahamas National Protected Area System
BNT	Bahamas National Trust
BPAF	The Bahamas Protected Areas Fund
BREEF	Bahamas Reef Environmental Education Foundation
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CBF	Caribbean Biodiversity Fund
CCI	Caribbean Challenge Initiative
MPA	Marine protected areas
PA	Protected area
PR	Public relations
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
VAT	Value Added Tax

Bahamas Protected Areas Fund

Implementation Plan for Assessing and Moving Forward on High-Priority Revenue Options

Introduction

This implementation plan outlines an approach for the Bahamas Protected Areas Fund (BPAF) to assess and move forward with several high-priority revenue options to help capitalize the fund. This document is part of a consultancy that Blue Earth Consultants, a Division of Eastern Research Group, Inc. (Blue Earth) is conducting for The Nature Conservancy (TNC) under The Bahamas Protected project.

The Bahamas Protected Areas Fund

The BPAF is a national conservation fund established to ensure sustainable financing to support management of The Bahamas' protected areas (PAs) and related activities.¹ When fully operational and endowed, the BPAF will provide support through grants to national organizations for development and management of PAs, any system of PAs established by the Government of The Bahamas, and other programs described by the BPAF Act. To help the BPAF support national organizations in meeting the costs of PA management, the BPAF needs to develop and implement sustainable financing revenue options.²

Consultancy Background and Purpose of this Document

Bahamas Protected is a three-year initiative to effectively manage and expand the Bahamian marine protected areas (MPA) network. It aims to support the Government of The Bahamas in meeting its commitment to the Caribbean Challenge Initiative (CCI), which includes providing sustainable financing for effective management of MPAs in addition to PA coverage targets. Bahamas Protected is a joint effort between TNC, the Bahamas National Trust (BNT), the Bahamas Reef Environment Educational Foundation (BREEF), and multiple national stakeholders, with major funding from the international philanthropic organization Oceans 5.

TNC contracted Blue Earth to work with PA managers, the BPAF Board, and other key local partners to estimate the financial gaps for managing the Bahamas National Protected Area System (BNPAS) and

¹ The purpose of the BPAF is to ensure sustainable financing into perpetuity for the management of Protected Areas in The Bahamas, including management activities under the CCI and the objectives of the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund (CBF), for the scientific and policy research and education, conservation and management of: a) protected areas; b) any system of projected areas established by The Government of The Bahamas; and c) programs established for the management of any area required for biodiversity conservation, the protection of any carbon sink under the Forestry Act, 2010, the conservation and protection of water resources, wetlands or blue holes, degraded or threatened ecosystems, as defined under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, any area which may be designated for the purpose of giving effect to the ultimate objective of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, any other relevant multilateral environmental agreement or international Convention to which The Bahamas is signatory, or may become signatory for adaptation to and mitigating the adverse effects of climate change (The Parliament of The Bahamas 2014).

² Throughout this report, the terms financing, funding, and revenue are used interchangeably.

recommend sustainable revenue options for the BPAF to implement. Blue Earth performed research to estimate the costs, revenue, and financial gap for effective PA management for each key PA managing entity and for the BNPAS as a whole. We also projected the financial gap over the coming 10 years in “status quo” and “effective management” scenarios. Based on budget information and information on future PA designations available to Blue Earth during the research process, we estimated that the financial gap for effectively managing the BNPAS is currently \$10.5 million and is projected to increase to \$139.7 million by 2027. This projected increase is due to the increased expenses for managing current PAs (inflation) and new PAs that will be added to achieve The Bahamas’ 2020 Declaration under the CCI.³ For comparison, a recent study by the National Capital Project found that the total economic benefit of The Bahamas’ PA network from tourism, coastal protection, and spiny lobster nurseries was nearly \$900 million. Adding the estimated value of carbon sequestration causes this figure to jump up to more than \$5 billion.⁴

As a second component of this consultancy, Blue Earth worked with stakeholders to identify potential sustainable financing options to help capitalize the BPAF, and therefore help fill the financial gap for management of the BNPAS. This implementation plan provides an overview of priority funding options selected by in-country stakeholders and the BPAF Board, outlines preliminary steps for the BPAF to take to prepare for pursuing funding options, and maps out key considerations for assessing and beginning implementation of several specific potential revenue options.

Overview of Priority Funding Options for Assessment and Possible Implementation

Blue Earth performed document review and interviews to identify possible financing options that the BPAF could consider.⁵ Stakeholders and PA managers discussed these and other funding options during in-person meetings in October 2017, and cast votes to help identify the most promising options to explore and vet further. The BPAF Board then selected eight funding options for further consideration over the coming months, focusing on short-term options (e.g., potentially implementable within the coming one to two years). These funding options are the focus of this implementation plan, and are listed below in order of their ranking by meeting stakeholders:

- Contributions through heads of agreements for large developments
- Access a portion of gaming house tax or secure gifts from gaming houses
- Cruise ship tax on passenger tickets
- Reallocation of existing revenue streams currently being channeled to the consolidated fund
- Additional hotel room tax
- Tourism opt in/out (e.g., on cruising permits, boat rentals, car rentals, dive trips)
- National PA entry fee or “passport”
- Secure proceeds from a National Lottery

³ See Blue Earth’s Interim Report for this consultancy for detailed results of the gap analysis (Blue Earth Consultants 2017).

⁴ Arkema, Fisher, and Wyatt 2017

⁵ See the Interim Report for a description of the research process and a list of 21 initial types of funding options considered (Blue Earth Consultants 2017).

Internal Steps to Prepare the BPAF for Pursuing Funding Options

Below are some key steps that the BPAF will need to take prior to moving forward on implementing any of the funding options addressed in this document. The steps are grouped by category below; please note that while some steps are predicated on the outcomes from previous steps, others may occur simultaneously. Suggested timing for when each step may occur is also included in below.

Due Diligence on Financial Systems, Policy, and Funding Options

- Confirm that the BPAF can legally accept funds as a statutory authority (Nov-Dec 2017)
- Ensure that the BPAF has the appropriate bank accounts (e.g., for endowment and sinking funds, as laid out by BPAF Act) and accounting capacity to accept and manage funds (Jan-Mar 2018)
- Review the BPAF Act and suggest revisions, such as a statement that the BPAF will be among the entities considered for allocation of a portion of heads of agreement contributions, and/or expansion of the BPAF's role to include coordination across the BNPAS (Nov-Jan 2018)
- Contract research to understand the potential investment required and return on investment from each of the funding options addressed in this document, as well as feasibility and necessary policies and legislation
- Consider forming a committee (e.g., BPAF, TNC, and government representatives) to maintain progress and momentum (Feb 2017-May 2018)

BPAF's Purpose and Pitch

- Determine and clearly document what percent of the projected financial gap the BPAF will aim to fill (Nov-Dec 2017)
- Establish fundraising goals and develop a fundraising plan outlining the BPAF's approach for generating target fundraising amounts (Jan-Mar 2018)
- Discuss and determine what role the BPAF aims to play in PA management; for example, whether it will simply act as a fundraiser and granter of funds, or take on a centralized coordinating role for PA management in the country (this could be addressed as part of the strategic visioning process mentioned in the activity below); consider costs associated with each role and any revisions to the BPAF Act that a coordinating role would require (Jan-Mar 2018)
- Refine the BPAF's strategic direction, such as by developing a vision statement, mission statement, and grant-making goals that fit within and fulfill the requirements of the BPAF Act (Feb 2017-May 2018)
- If the BPAF will take on a coordinating role for PA management, consider updating Blue Earth's cost projections to include a line item for the BPAF's costs and estimating reductions in managing entities' costs due to streamlining and cost sharing that the BPAF's coordination role would facilitate (May-June 2018)
- Develop a pitch, including a short deck of slides and talking points, that describes the value of PAs to The Bahamas, the BPAF and its purpose, an overview of relevant findings from Blue Earth's gap analysis research, percent of the financial gap that BPAF aims to fill, and return on

investment from supporting the BPAF (June-July 2018);⁶ this pitch may be tailored for the relevant Ministers or other leaders relevant to each funding option

- Engage the Minister of Environment and/or another minister or government official to champion the BPAF's efforts and help determine which revenue options are politically viable (April 2018-ongoing)

BPAF Membership

- Identify potential government representative(s) to advocate joining the Board (Jan 2017-Mar 2018)⁷
- Encourage the Minister of Environment to appoint chosen government representative to the current Board vacancy (Dec 2018-Jan 2019)
- Identify and recommend to the Minister of Environment top candidates for Board appointments in June 2018 (Apr-June 2018)

⁶ When developing the pitch, it will be important to consider how information in the gap analysis may be interpreted; for example, Ministers could perceive the projected financial gap for effective management as overwhelmingly large and reconsider the addition of new PAs in the future to meet the goals of the CCI. Clearly articulating the BPAF's role in providing centralized coordination (if this is the strategic path that the BPAF chooses) and the costs offset by that role may help allay concerns about high projected costs.

⁷ Inclusion of senior government officials on the BPAF Board will be important for generating government buy-in for the BPAF's selected revenue generation options.

Roadmaps for Priority Funding Options

Below are tables that outline a “roadmap” for further assessment and possible first steps to implementation of each of the eight funding options prioritized for further consideration by stakeholders and the BPAF Board.

Roadmap 1. Contributions through Heads of Agreements

Key Considerations	Description
Initial Steps to Implementation	<p>Conduct Background Research</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consultant conduct case study research on development mitigation contributions in another country (e.g., coastal protection tax on large developments in Miami, Florida or Barbados) and/or willingness to pay research regarding this type of contribution (Feb-May 2018) 2. Consultant conduct research and coordinate with Ministers regarding possible development of the Investments Bill and opportunities to include the BPAF (Feb-May 2018) <p>Build Political Will</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Develop a concept/thought paper with recommendations on a standard allocation to the BPAF from large developments (e.g., over \$1 million), to be approved by BPAF Board and submitted to Minister of the Environment and Housing for consideration and buy-in (May-July 2018) 4. Customize the pitch for relevant authorities (e.g., Bahamas Investment Authority) and BPAF and Ministry of the Environment and Housing deliver the pitch; demonstrate the value of The Bahamas’ PAs and how contributions from large developments could help conserve that value; include overview of collection and enforcement process (Aug-Nov 2018) 5. Customize the pitch for the Cabinet to encourage a commitment to prioritizing the BPAF as one of the beneficiaries for those contributions (Aug-Nov 2018) 6. Conduct outreach with potential developers to communicate the importance and value of PAs and highlight opportunities for positive public relations (PR) around BPAF contributions (Dec 2018-Feb 2019) 7. Organize and conduct a campaign to promote raising money for the BPAF through heads of agreements (Feb-June 2019) <p>Negotiate Policy and Fiscal Reforms</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Pitch to Prime Minister to include the BPAF as a priority beneficiary for future heads of agreement contributions and approve any necessary revisions to the BPAF Act (July-Dec 2019) 9. Develop detailed process and responsible parties for enforcing policy and collecting contributions (Jan-Mar 2020)

Key Considerations	Description
Key Decision-Makers that May Need to be Engaged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prime Minister's Office • Cabinet • Bahamas Investment Authority • National Economic Council • Ministry of Tourism • Ministry of Environment and Housing • Ministry of Finance • Ministry of Foreign Affairs (possible) • Bahamas Environment, Science, and Technology (BEST) Commission
Timeline for Implementation	2-3 years
Fiscal or Policy Reforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New policy to specify requirements (e.g., percent of development value or revenue to be contributed) and ensure enforceability • Possible revision of the BPAF Act to require their notification of qualifying developments in the negotiation phase • Could require fiscal reforms to direct revenue from heads of agreements to the BPAF
Information Relating to Potential Annual Revenue	<p>Example past agreements include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baha Mar (\$4.3 billion development value), included a \$50,000 donation to BNT (much less than 1% of development value)⁸ • May 2017 agreement with Carnival Cruise Lines for Eastern Grand Bahama cruise port (\$100 million), included agreement that Bahamians will participate in supply and sale of products, services, and construction⁹ • After Kerzner International completed construction of The Reef Atlantis tower, the Kerzner Marine Foundation contributed \$1 million to coral reef conservation and monitoring around New Providence and Paradise Island under the Blue Project¹⁰ • Bakers Bay Resort, including conservation funding, although the commitments to conservation funding and/or community projects may not have been fulfilled to date¹¹
Challenges/Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for perverse incentives, such as the support for large and potentially environmentally destructive developments • Potential political concern about discouraging outside investment • Competition with other sectors seeking contributions from developers; gaining support from Ministers • Potential lack of political will to develop new legislation • Opposition from developers/tourism industry • Difficulty enforcing agreements, guaranteeing transparency of fund collection, and delivery to the BPAF • Funding stream is not consistent and depends on the implementation of new major developments, which some Bahamians may not support

⁸ The Nassau Guardian 2017

⁹ Christie 2017

¹⁰ Hotel-Online 2007

¹¹ Information provided by interview respondents

Key Considerations	Description
Opportunities for Overcoming Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize gaining access to contributions from heads of agreements with environmentally conscious and lower-impact developers to reduce potential for perverse incentives • Encourage Ministries to regulate development best practices and prioritize environmentally conscious developments, emphasizing the marketing opportunities that developers could take advantage of when they take part in environmentally friendly tourism or ecotourism (e.g., develop a label, stamp, or other designation for “green” developers to share on website or in offices) • Ensure that the pitch to government officials conveys the ecological and economic value of the Bahamas’ PAs • Develop mechanisms for transparent and efficient fund collection • Supplement with other funding sources to reduce risk of inconsistent revenue generation

Roadmap 2. Accessing a Portion of the Gaming House Tax and/or Securing Gifts from Gaming Houses

Key Considerations	Description
Initial Steps to Implementation	<p>Conduct Background Research</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assess BPAF’s policy on receiving gifts and ensure that it aligns with accepting funds from gaming houses, free of conflicts of interest; Develop and seek approval on BPAF’s Gift Acceptance Policy (Nov 2017-Jan 2018) 2. Consultant find legislation and policy outlining the percent of profits that gaming houses contribute to community causes, confirm that funds are being collected from gaming houses, assess status of determining where the funds will be allocated, identify key players for determining the allocation of funds, estimate revenue generation if the BPAF were to receive a portion of the funds, and research any potential risks and/or negative perceptions from donors or banks regarding the acceptance of funds sourced from gaming houses (Feb-May 2018) 3. Develop a concept/thought paper to be approved by the BPAF Board, including how the tax and/or gifts will be collected and allocation of revenue among the BPAF and managing entities (June-July 2018) <p>Build Support in the Gaming Industry and Relevant Government Bodies</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Develop proposal outlining any changes to the gaming tax structure or charitable contribution requirements for gaming houses (Aug-Sept 2018) 5. Customize pitch demonstrating gaming houses’ potential contributions to the economic and social well-being of the country by supporting PAs; deliver the pitch to the Gaming Association and/or relevant government bodies (e.g., Gaming Board, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Tourism), emphasizing the importance of including BPAF as one of the beneficiaries for reinvesting gaming revenue for public good (Oct-Dec 2018) 6. Work with the Gaming Board, Ministry of Finance, and Ministry of Tourism to determine the percentage of gaming house tax and/or gift revenue to allocate to the BPAF and/or tax increases necessary to generate revenue for BPAF; determine method for monitoring gaming revenue, tax payments, and process for channeling funds to the BPAF (Jan-Mar 2019) 7. Conduct outreach with gaming house and casino owners (e.g., Island Luck or the Gaming Association) to provide information about the value of The Bahamas’ PAs, their importance for bringing visitors to the country, and the link between PAs and

Key Considerations	Description
	<p>Bahamian livelihoods that rely on tourism; seek potential one-time or recurring gifts with tax write-offs, event sponsorships, or partnerships that will support their PR (Apr -Jun 2019)</p> <p>Negotiate Policy and Fiscal Reforms</p> <p>8. Amend existing policy as needed, such as to allocate a percentage of the income that is donated to community causes to the BPAF (July-Aug 2019)</p> <p>9. Seek parliamentary approval for changes to gaming legislation, if appropriate (July-Aug 2019)</p> <p>Build Public Support</p> <p>10. Conduct outreach to inform the public and provide transparency around the use of gaming house taxes to support the BPAF; Demonstrate linkages between healthy PAs and Bahamian livelihoods that rely on tourism (Sept-Dec 2019)</p>
Key Decision-Makers that May Need to be Engaged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gaming Association • Ministry of Tourism • Gaming Board • Ministry of Finance • Ministry of Environment • Treasury Secretary/Minister • Members of Parliament • Prime Minister
Timeline for Implementation	2+ years
Fiscal or Policy Reforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could require revision of existing gaming legislation • Could require fiscal reforms to channel tax revenue to the BPAF
Information Relating to Potential Annual Revenue	\$400,000-\$1.4 million could be generated for the BPAF through a gaming house tax (lower estimate = 1% of \$40 million forecasted tax revenue; ¹² higher estimate = 1% of \$138 million total revenue in 2015 ¹³)
Challenges/Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of clear link between gambling industry and marine and coastal protection could result in competition with other causes • Potential lack of support for allocating a portion of current gaming house tax revenue to the BPAF or revising current gaming legislation • Lack of transparency around gaming house revenue and potential difficulty enforcing agreements, guaranteeing transparency of fund collection, and ensuring delivery to the BPAF
Opportunities for Overcoming Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactively engage potential opposition through direct outreach • Articulate how channeling funds to the BPAF reinvests gambling profits towards the public good and protecting resources for future generations to help generate broad support

¹² The Government of The Bahamas 2017

¹³ Parker 2016

Key Considerations	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the pitch to government officials conveys the ecological and economic value of The Bahamas' PAs • Develop mechanisms for transparent and efficient fund collection

Roadmap 3. Cruise Ship Tax

Key Considerations	Description
Initial Steps to Implementation	<p>Conduct Background Research</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consultant conduct case study research on cruise industry taxes/passenger taxes in other countries (e.g., Jamaica) (Feb-May 2018) 2. Assess options for collecting revenue from the cruise industry, such as adding a per-passenger fee that is paid by passengers or adding a tax to cruise line expenses such as port fees and services; taxes may need to be nominal, such as \$1-5 per head or 2% on services that cruise lines purchase from The Bahamas, given the existing taxes that cruise ship tourists and cruise lines are already paying (e.g., passenger tax, port fees) (Feb-May 2018) 3. Assess the potential revenue from various tax structures and levels and likely willingness for government, cruise lines, and tourists to accept those levels; update willingness-to-pay studies as needed (Feb-May 2018) 4. Compile comparative information on the number of, and in-country expenditures by, cruise ship and fly-in visitors to help justify additional fees on cruise passengers (Feb-May 2019) 5. Assess the willingness of other Caribbean Community (CARICOM) countries, CCI countries, and/or the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association, to participate in joint discussions with cruise lines (Feb-May 2017) 6. Develop concept/thought paper to be approved by the BPAF Board, including how the fee will be collected and allocated among the BPAF and managing entities (Jun-July 2018) <p>Build Political Will at National and Regional Scales</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Work with Ministry of Tourism to develop a recommendation paper for how to administer the tax; seek approval from the BPAF Board (July-Aug 2018) 8. Customize and deliver a pitch to government officials (e.g., Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Finance) on the importance of directing funding to the BPAF and the link between The Bahamas' environment and cruise ship passengers' motivations for visiting (Sept-Nov 2018) 9. Customize and deliver a pitch to key industry representatives (e.g., through the Florida-Caribbean Cruise Association), that demonstrates government support for an additional passenger tax, the value of marine and coastal protection to their industry, and associated PR opportunities; obtain statements of approval from industry representatives (Sept-Nov 2019) 10. Work with other countries through regional governing bodies (e.g., CARICOM) to build support for drawing on the cruise industry to generate revenue for PAs, establish consensus on fundraising strategy, and agree on penalties as appropriate (e.g., for countries that lower prices to undercut the market) (Sept-Nov 2019) <p>Negotiate Policy and Fiscal Reforms</p>

Key Considerations	Description
	<p>11. Work with government to amend the Passenger Tax Act (which establishes a passenger tax for cruise ships) or develop other cruise ship contribution policy and mechanism for collecting funds and channeling to the BPAF (Dec 2018-Feb 2019)</p> <p>Alternative Implementation Approach: BPAF could work directly with industry to implement additional tax or fees; government backing/support would be needed, but government process could be reduced. Note that this approach would require strong relationships with and access to industry contacts</p>
Key Decision-Makers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Tourism • Florida-Caribbean Cruise Association • Ministry of Finance • Ministry of Environment • Ministry of Foreign Affairs • Island Administrators • Members of Parliament • Office of the Prime Minister • CBF • CCI partners • CARICOM
Timeline for Implementation	1-2 years
Fiscal or Policy Reforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could require fiscal reforms to channel tax revenue to the BPAF • Potential changes to Passenger Tax Act or creation of new legislation
Information Relating to Potential Annual Revenue	<p>Example potential revenue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$5 million annually if \$1 added to current \$18 passenger tax on cruise line passengers¹⁴ (could raise \$25 million if \$5 added; willingness to pay study indicated 95% of visitors would pay at least \$5 to protect the natural/cultural environment¹⁵) • Cruise line expenditures (e.g., port fees and services, crew expenditures) in The Bahamas totaled \$69.9 million in the 2014/2015 cruise year;¹⁶ 2% of this amount would generate \$1.4 million
Challenges/Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential pushback from cruise industry about increased costs to passengers • Concern from government officials and tourism operators about overtaxing and deterring visitors • Lack of political will to implement changes • Potential challenges directing funds directly to the BPAF; existing departure tax goes to the consolidated fund
Opportunities for Overcoming Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategically communicate findings about visitors' willingness to pay for environmental protection and marketing opportunities around environmental contributions; build a business case for increasing cruise lines' focus on conservation

¹⁴ The Government of The Bahamas 2017

¹⁵ Laura Jane Marketing & Consultants 2008

¹⁶ Business Research and Economic Advisors 2015

Key Considerations	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the pitch to government officials conveys the ecological and economic value of The Bahamas' PAs • Develop mechanisms for transparent and efficient fund collection • Consider approaching cruise lines through a regional initiative among Caribbean cruise destination countries

Roadmap 4. Reallocating Current Revenue Streams (e.g., environmental levy, proceeds from Crown real estate)

Key Considerations	Description
Initial Steps to Implementation	<p>Conduct Background Research</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consultant conduct research on whether funds are being collected from sources that were meant to be, or could be, channeled to environmental conservation, such as the air departure tax, fee on the export of fisheries products, environmental levy and proceeds from Crown real estate; if they are being collected, determine where they are being channeled (Feb-May 2018) 2. Develop concept/thought paper to be approved by the BPAF Board, identifying which revenue streams will be targeted for reallocation and how funds will be collected (June-July 2018) <p>Build Political Will</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Work with the Ministry of the Environment to determine amount of existing revenue streams that could be allocated to the BPAF and any necessary amendments to current policy (Aug-Sept 2018) 4. Develop and deliver pitch for government officials that shows value of The Bahamas' PAs and how a portion of the environmental levy can be used to support management efforts; demonstrate importance of allocating revenue collected for environmental purposes to conservation and resource protection efforts; customize pitch to make a strong case for reallocating other revenue sources (e.g., departure tax, Crown real estate proceeds) as needed (Oct-Dec 2018) <p>Negotiate Policy and Fiscal Reforms</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Work with government to amend current policies and establish process for channeling funds collected under the levy, taxes, or sales to the BPAF; seek Cabinet and Parliamentary approval, as necessary (Jan-Apr 2019)
Key Decision-Makers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Finance • Prime Minister • Ministry of Environment • Ministry of Tourism • Department of Lands and Surveys • Customs Department • BEST Commission
Timeline for Implementation	1-2 years or longer, depending on changes in the national debt and economy
Fiscal or Policy Reforms	Potential fiscal reforms to redirect a percentage of departure tax, environmental levy, and/or Crown land proceeds is sent directly to the BPAF

Key Considerations	Description
Information Relating to Potential Annual Revenue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental levy: \$1.0 million annually could be allocated to the BPAF (assumed 10% of current forecasted levy revenue of \$10.1 million¹⁷) • Portion of air departure tax: \$2.7 million annually could be allocated to the BPAF (assumed 5% of current forecasted tax revenue of \$54.1 million¹⁸) • Sale of crown land: \$250,000 annually could be allocated to the BPAF (assumed 20% of current forecasted revenue from sale of land of \$1,250,000¹⁹)
Challenges/Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty securing political support for reallocating revenue from the consolidated fund, especially given the current focus on reducing the national debt • Potential competition with other initiatives
Opportunities for Overcoming Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the pitch to government officials conveys the ecological and economic value of The Bahamas' PAs and protecting these resources helps assure the country's long-term financial stability • In communications with government officials, highlight the impacts of recent storms to catalyze more investment in PAs, which provide coastal protection • Remind government officials of the costs associated with expanding the BNPAS to achieve its commitments under the CCI

Roadmap 5. Additional Hotel Room Tax

Key Considerations	Description
Initial Steps to Implementation	<p>Conduct Background Research</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consultant conduct case study research on hotel taxes, revenue, and revenue usage in neighboring countries to understand regional landscape, including impacts of increases in hotel taxes in other countries; conduct a comparative analysis of conditions for success between the case study countries and The Bahamas (Feb-May 2018) 2. Conduct a willingness-to-pay study (or update the existing study) to understand visitors' willingness to pay extra for environmental conservation (Feb-May 2018) 3. Work with Ministry of Tourism to develop a concept/thought paper, including tax amount and how it will be collected and seek approval from the BPAF Board (Apr-June 2018) <p>Build Political Will</p>

¹⁷ The Government of The Bahamas 2017

¹⁸ The Government of The Bahamas 2017

¹⁹ The Government of The Bahamas 2017

Key Considerations	Description
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop pitch and conduct outreach to key hotel and travel industry representatives (e.g., through the Bahamas Hotel & Tourism Association), demonstrating value of marine and coastal protection to their industry, PR opportunities, and addressing financial concerns; obtain statements of approval from industry representatives (July-Sept 2018) 2. Develop and deliver a pitch for government officials that demonstrates industry support for tax and importance of directing funding to the BPAF (Oct-Dec 2018) <p>Negotiate Policy and Fiscal Reforms</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Work with government to amend or reintroduce hotel tax policy (Jan-Apr 2019)
Key Decision-Makers that May Need to be Engaged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Tourism • Ministry of Environment • Ministry of Foreign Affairs • Ministry of Finance • Bahamas Hotel & Tourism Association • Out Island Promotions Board • Travel agencies, bookings, and tour network • Members of Parliament • Office of the Prime Minister
Timeline for Implementation	12-18 months
Fiscal or Policy Reforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could require new or amended legislation to reintroduce hotel occupancy taxes in addition to the Value Added Tax (VAT) • Potential fiscal reforms to ensure funds can be channeled to the BPAF
Information Relating to Potential Annual Revenue	\$12.3 million annually (2.5% of 2015 rooms revenue of \$413.5 million; ²⁰ Bahamas used to have a 10% hotel room tax and now only charges 7.5% VAT)
Challenges/Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential pushback from hotel industry about increased costs to guests • Concern from government officials and tourism operators about overtaxing and deterring visitors • Lack of political will to implement changes • Potential challenges directing funds directly to the BPAF; VAT currently channeled to the consolidated fund
Opportunities for Overcoming Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategically communicate findings about visitors' willingness to pay for environmental protection and marketing opportunities around environmental contributions; build a business case for increasing focus on conservation • Ensure that the pitch to government officials conveys the ecological and economic value of The Bahamas' PAs • Develop mechanisms for transparent and efficient fund collection

²⁰ The Bahamas Ministry of Tourism 2015

Roadmap 6. Voluntary Tourism Contributions (e.g., collected on cruising permits, boat rentals, car rentals, dive trips)

Key Considerations	Description
Initial Steps to Implementation	<p>Conduct Background Research</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consultant conduct research on case studies of successful voluntary contribution programs currently operating in The Bahamas and/or region, including the pros and cons of opt-in versus opt-out models (Feb-May 2018) 2. Identify high-priority tourism service providers to collect contributions (e.g., yacht cruising permits, cruise ship tickets, boat rentals, car rentals, dive packages, travel booking websites); select 2-3 for initial piloting (June-July 2018) 3. Explore opportunities for a funder or corporation to provide matching funding for visitors' voluntary contributions (June-July 2018) 4. Develop concept/thought paper to be approved by the BPAF Board, including how contributions will be collected, target audience/collection locations, and allocation of contributions among the BPAF and managing entities (Aug-Sept 2018) <p>Build Political Will and Develop Partnerships</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Refine pitch and deliver to key ministries whose buy-in could help support implementation (Oct 2018) 6. Develop pitch and conduct outreach to selected high priority tourism service providers; secure agreements to include voluntary contribution on transactions (Nov 2018-Jan 2019) <p>Design and Implement Program</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Design simple mechanism for tracking and collecting contributions and transferring to the BPAF, as agreed by participating pilot travel service providers and ensuring that turnover of funds is completed and enforced (Feb-Apr 2019) 8. Support implementation and monitoring of fund collection mechanism with pilot group of selected tourism service providers (Apr-June 2019) 9. Explore opportunities for broader engagement of tourism service providers and scale up program as appropriate (July 2019 onward)
Key Decision-Makers that May Need to be Engaged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism service providers and travel booking web sites • Ministry of Tourism • Ministry of Environment • Ministry of Finance • Bahamas Hotel & Tourism Association • Association of Bahamian Marinas
Timeline for Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 months for pilot with selected tourism service providers • 2-3 years for broader implementation
Fiscal or Policy Reforms	Ideally, the agreements with tourism service providers will ensure that funds are channeled directly from the providers to the BPAF, so no legislative or policy reforms would be necessary

Key Considerations	Description
Information Relating to Potential Annual Revenue	\$8-10 million (assuming about 1/3 of about 6 million visitors ²¹ are reached and most are willing to contribute \$5 ²²)
Challenges/Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not a secure revenue source; could be subject to fluctuations in tourism activity and economic conditions • Difficulty consolidating revenue from multiple sources, avoiding leakage, and monitoring to guarantee that all funds collected make it to the BPAF • Tourists could be deterred by multiple requests/lack of coordination among entities requesting information
Opportunities for Overcoming Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure the voluntary fee as an opt-out instead of opt-in to increase chances of visitors accepting the fee • Supplement with other funding sources to reduce risk of inconsistent revenue generation • Invest in development of an efficient and coordinated collection mechanism for contributions (e.g., seek pro bono support to develop a website that service providers can link to, etc.)

Roadmap 7. National PA Entry Fee or "Passport" to all PAs

Key Considerations	Description
Initial Steps to Implementation	<p>Conduct Background Research</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consultant conduct research on existing case studies of park system entry fees (e.g., Belize, Costa Rica, Australia, Saint Lucia, Bonaire, Myanmar), including the pros and cons of applying entry fees to visitors only versus visitors and locals, and multi-year or annual versus day pass, etc. (Feb-May 2018) 2. Consultant assess options for the type of visitors that the entry fee will target (e.g., fly-in, yachters); for yachters, the entry fee program could center on a “marine trail” of yachting destinations throughout the country, or draw from the model tested in Saint Lucia where yachters pay an extra fee to moor within certain marine areas and receive environmental educational materials in return (Feb-May 2018) 3. Consultant assess options for the point(s) at which entry passes would be purchased (e.g., airport, customs, tour company websites) (Feb-May 2018) 4. Consultant research possible technological applications to assist with ticket purchases or alerting visitors when they enter a park (Feb-May 2018) 5. Develop an agreement with BNT regarding their current collection of entry fees and how revenue will be distributed from the national park entry pass (June-July 2018) 6. Develop an agreement among PA managers regarding expectations for use of funds and PA management effectiveness (June-July 2018)

²¹ The Bahamas Ministry of Tourism 2017

²² Laura Jane Marketing & Consultants 2008

Key Considerations	Description
	<p>7. Develop concept/thought paper to be approved by the BPAF Board, including how the fee will be collected, target audience (e.g., marine trail yachters, airport arrivals, visitors entering PAs, non-Bahamians, etc.), and allocation of the revenue among the BPAF and managing entities (Aug-Sept 2018)</p> <p>Build Political Will and Partnerships</p> <p>8. Customize and deliver BPAF's pitch to build buy-in with ministries and PA agencies; emphasize importance of bringing in revenue to support PA management activities and visitor services in heavily visited PAs; work with Ministry of Tourism to place information on their website (Oct-Dec 2018)</p> <p>9. Conduct outreach to any entities that would be involved in collecting – or enabling collection of – entry fees (e.g., customs officials, tour providers, etc.) (Jan-Mar 2019)</p> <p>Negotiate Policy and Fiscal Reforms</p> <p>10. Work with appropriate government ministries to develop and implement policy requiring entry fees to access PAs (Jan-Mar 2019)</p>
Key Decision-Makers that May Need to be Engaged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Tourism • Ministry of Environment • Ministry of Finance • Customs Department • PA Managers • Tour operators
Timeline for Implementation	1-2 years
Fiscal or Policy Reforms	Policy stating that PA entry fees are required, to enable enforcement and prosecution
Information Relating to Potential Annual Revenue	If visitors paid \$5 per person per day, ²³ an estimated \$1.9 million could be allocated to the BPAF annually (MPAs in The Bahamas receive an estimated 383,000 visitor days per year, ²⁴ and the existing willingness-to-pay study found that 95% of visitors were willing to pay at least \$5 to protect the natural and cultural environment)
Challenges/Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict with current revenue generation efforts of BNT and necessary negotiations about the portion of revenue that will be allocated to BPAF versus the managing entities • Depending on the fee structure, could lead to the necessity for visitors to purchase a national pass plus individual park passes, which they may not appreciate • Difficulty consolidating and tracking revenue and ensuring transparency; risk of misuse of funds • Could require infrastructure and maintenance (e.g., moorings) beyond current capacity; an organization would need to provide staff and funding for installing and maintaining infrastructure

²³ Laura Jane Marketing & Consultants 2008

²⁴ Arkema, Fisher, and Wyatt 2017

Key Considerations	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obstacles to enforcement of PA entry fees: The Bahamas is an expansive archipelago with many points of entry, many visitors enter The Bahamas by boat, patrols of remote areas are limited, there is limited capacity to follow through on prosecution of violators, and the capacity of PA managers is already stretched by current management responsibilities Potential pushback from Bahamians if included in fee requirements
Opportunities for Overcoming Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work closely with BNT to develop an approach that maintains their existing revenue streams while simultaneously generating new revenue for the BNPAS Develop a streamlined and efficient platform for selling PA passes and consolidating and tracking revenue Explore partnerships with government and nonprofit entities to facilitate the collection and enforcement of entry fees Facilitate stakeholder meetings to discuss and come to agreement on who the fees should target

Roadmap 8. Securing Proceeds from a National Lottery

Key Considerations	Description
Initial Steps to Implementation	<p>Conduct Background Research</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Assess BPAF's policy on receiving funding allocations and ensure that it aligns with accepting funds generated by a national lottery, free of conflicts of interest (Feb-May 2018) Consultant research the process and status of implementing a national lottery, status of political will to support a national lottery, political willingness to utilize a portion of funds for environmental causes, and possible revenue (Feb-May 2018) Develop concept/thought paper to be approved by the BPAF Board, including process for building support for the national lottery and potential revenue generation and allocation among the BPAF and managing entities (June-July 2018) <p>Build Political Will</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Develop proposal outlining implementation process for a national lottery, amount of revenue from the lottery proposed to be allocated to the BPAF, and/or proposed changes to the gaming tax structure if necessary (Aug-Sept 2018) Customize pitch demonstrating a national lottery's potential contributions to the economic and social well-being of the country by supporting PAs; deliver the pitch to the Gaming Association and/or relevant government ministries (e.g., Gaming Board, Ministry of Tourism), making a strong case for including the BPAF as one of the beneficiaries for reinvesting gaming revenue for public good (Oct-Dec 2018) Work with the Gaming Board, Ministry of Finance, and Ministry of Tourism to determine the process for allocating lottery revenue and amount the BPAF will receive; determine method for monitoring lottery revenue and process for channeling funds to the BPAF (Jan-Mar 2019) <p>Negotiate Policy and Fiscal Reforms</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Seek approval and sign-off from ministers, develop draft legislation, and seek parliamentary approval (Apr-Aug 2019)

Key Considerations	Description
	Build Public Support 8. Hold press brief/launch of national lottery once approved; highlight the use of lottery revenue to support the BPAF and how this benefits Bahamians (Sept-Dec 2019)
Key Decision-Makers that May Need to be Engaged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gaming Association • Ministry of Tourism • Gaming Board • Ministry of Finance • Ministry of Environment • Treasury Secretary/Minister • Members of Parliament • Prime Minister
Timeline for Implementation	2 years
Fiscal or Policy Reforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a national lottery could require new legislation and potentially a public vote, though this may not be necessary if favored by the Prime Minister • Could require fiscal reforms to channel tax revenue to the BPAF
Information Relating to Potential Annual Revenue	\$1.9 million could be generated for the BPAF through a national lottery tax (1% of estimated \$190 million annual revenue ²⁵)
Challenges/Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pushback and negative press from the religious community and other groups due to perceived negative social consequences of gambling • Lack of clear link between gambling industry and marine and coastal protection could result in competition with other causes • Potential lack of political will to develop and implement a national lottery • Potential difficulty ensuring delivery to the BPAF • Given that the public referendum on the lottery failed, there is a risk that moving forward a national lottery could create public backlash or lack political will
Opportunities for Overcoming Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactively engage potential opposition through direct outreach • Articulate how channeling funds to the BPAF reinvests gambling profits towards the public good and protecting resources for future generations to help generate broad support; emphasize that a national lottery keeps gambling spending in the country • Ensure that the pitch to government officials conveys the ecological and economic value of the Bahamas' PAs • Develop mechanisms for transparent and efficient fund collection

²⁵ Brown 2012

Conclusion

With continued development of the BPAF's strategic direction and Board, the BPAF will be uniquely positioned to support non-governmental organizations and Bahamas government agencies working to manage The Bahamas' PAs and elevate The Bahamas' role as a regional leader in environmental conservation. As estimated in Blue Earth's gap analysis, the projected financial gap for managing the BNPAS is significant and growing over the coming ten years, including due to future designations of new PAs to meet the goals of the CCI. With adequate funds, the BPAF will be able to offset part of that financial gap by providing grants to PA managers and partners. These grants will complement support that individual PA managing entities gain from other sources. Depending on the decided role of the BPAF, it may expand its role to act as an overarching coordinator for PA management in The Bahamas, supporting the creation of BNPAS-wide systems like monitoring, evaluation, outreach and education, resource sharing, and more and leading to greater efficiencies across the system. The BPAF can use this implementation plan as an initial guide for assessing the eight prioritized funding options for the BPAF; depending on the findings from those assessments, the BPAF may pursue one or more of these funding streams.

While this document lays out several funding options for initial consideration, the BPAF will need to continually seek out and assess new funding streams. Given factors like the recent shifts in The Bahamas' economic stability and potential future changes in availability of PA funding from global sources, the landscape of funding options will be ever-changing and sources secured for the BPAF in one year may not be stable into the future. Blue Earth's final report under this consultancy outlines a selection of other funding options, including some options that were identified as high priority, but requiring more time to implement. The BPAF can consider a range of funding options, with the aim of diversifying sources to create a robust and adaptable funding portfolio.

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