

BAHAMAS PROTECTED AREAS FUND

2026 Impact Report

Bahamas Project for Marine Conservation

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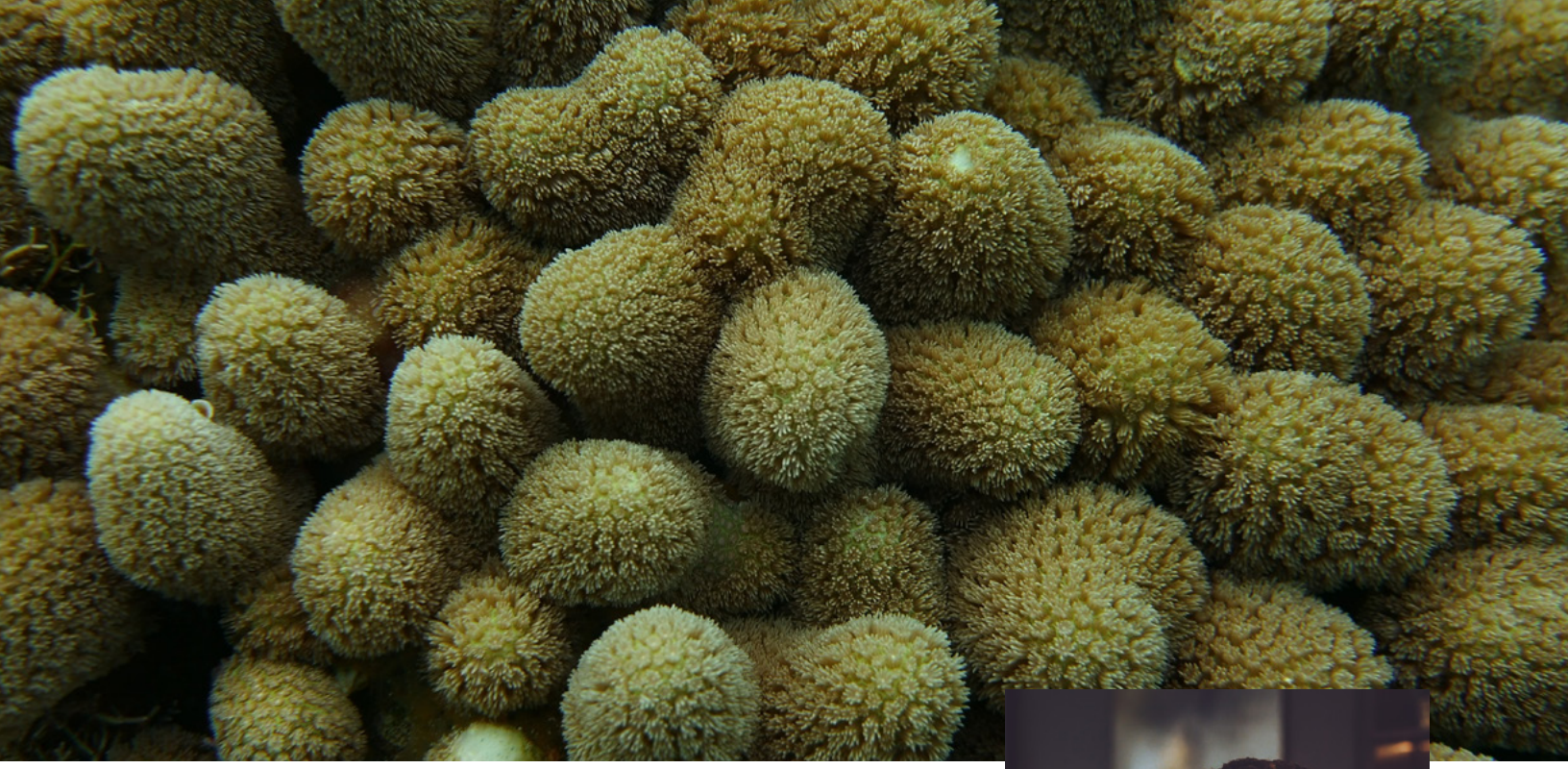
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Impact at a glance

In the inaugural year of the Bahamas Project for Marine Conservation, BPAF moved conservation finance from commitment to action across The Bahamas.



	Action	Impact
01	Funds approved	**$2,212,372**
02	Funds disbursed	**$1,896,103**
03	Awarded under the Government Strategic Allocation:	
	A: Government Agencies	**$1,153,178**
	B: Bahamas National Trust	**$653,775**
04	Grant amount in 15% competitive grants	**$405,420**
05	Grants approved	**9**
06	Organizations awarded grants	**9 NGOs, 3 government agencies**
07	MPAs assessed	**27**
08	People trained	**90+ people / 48+ organizations**
09	Publicity and awareness building	**8 media placements**



FOREWORD



KAREN PANTON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

> The foundation has been laid.
> The partnerships are in place.
> The momentum is growing.

Reflecting on the past year, I feel gratitude, optimism and responsibility. This was a pivotal year for The Bahamas Debt Conversion Project for Marine Conservation.

This unprecedented commitment to conservation financing is transforming how our nation finances, manages and safeguards the marine resources that sustain our economy, culture and way of life. It establishes a long-term framework for investing in marine protected areas, sustainable livelihoods, climate resilience and healthy ocean ecosystems.

At the Bahamas Protected Areas Fund (BPAF), we recognize that lasting conservation outcomes are built on strong institutions, empowered partners, and informed decision-making. This year, we focused on laying those foundations.

Significantly, we disbursed more than $1.8 million to build capacity within key government agencies and the Bahamas National Trust. This funded project staff and operations, office space, critical baseline consultancies, technical assessments, and foundational work across the country's 70 marine protected areas.

These achievements are not always the most visible, but they are among the most important.

The National Protected Area Steering Committee is now established and operational, providing a critical mechanism for coordination, oversight and collaboration. The capacity assessment of government agencies' needs is complete, giving us the evidence base to target future investment. Work has begun on the National Mangrove Management Plan, with an initial stakeholder workshop establishing baseline information.



This matters: mangroves underpin coastal protection, biodiversity, carbon sequestration and climate resilience, and mangrove conservation is a central pillar of the Project's commitments. In addition, management effectiveness assessments for 27 priority marine protected areas have set a baseline for measuring progress and directing investment where need and opportunity are greatest.

BPAF itself grew from two to nine staff, strengthening our ability to administer the Project, support grantees and monitor results. We finalized our Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Framework, Environmental and Social Management System and Grants Management System. These provide the accountability, transparency and performance structures to ensure every dollar entrusted to us delivers measurable outcomes.

A particularly rewarding milestone was our first call for proposals under the competitive grants pool: nine awards to organizations at the forefront of marine conservation, community engagement, research, education and sustainable resource management. These were the first direct investments of the debt conversion to reach Bahamian organizations and communities, marking the transition from planning to tangible action on the ground. To support grantees beyond funding in this reporting period, we delivered three training sessions, two in New Providence and one in Grand Bahama, on grants administration and monitoring, evaluation and learning.

Our work is only beginning. Success will ultimately be measured not by the systems we build, but by healthier ecosystems, stronger communities, more resilient livelihoods and a more sustainable future for The Bahamas.

My sincere thanks to the Government of The Bahamas, The Nature Conservancy and other international partners, grantees, community leaders, technical experts and the dedicated BPAF team. Together, we are demonstrating that innovative financing can translate into meaningful conservation action.

The foundation has been laid. The partnerships are in place. The momentum is growing.

With shared purpose, we look forward to advancing this journey of conservation, resilience and national stewardship for present and future generations.

Karen Panton



Who We Are

Background of the
Bahamas Protected Areas Fund (BPAF)

History

Established by the Bahamas Protected Areas Fund Act, 2014, and operational since 2017, BPAF is the sustainable finance mechanism for the Bahamas National Protected Areas System, ensuring financing in perpetuity for scientific and policy research, education, conservation and the management of protected areas, including national parks. It is a grant-making organization that is mandated to support areas established for biodiversity conservation generally, the protection of carbon sinks, water resources, wetlands and blue holes, degraded or threatened ecosystems as well as areas established in pursuit of The Bahamas' resilience to climate change.

Amendments to the BPAF Act in 2019 strengthened the fund's independence, governance and ability to attract international funding. The BPAF (Amendment) Act, 2025, allows the Fund to accept conditional contributions and to finance associated activities previously disallowed, such as staffing and operational expenses.

In 2022, BPAF became the first non-governmental organization (NGO) in the English-speaking Caribbean to gain observer status with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It is a member of the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund's Caribbean Sustainable Financing Architecture and a founding member of the Consortium of Caribbean Conservation Funds, established in 2025. Built on international best practices for trust funds and monitored locally and internationally, BPAF channels grants and strategic support to NGOs, government agencies, research institutions and community partners across The Bahamas.

Mission and Vision

Vision	Investing for the future of resilient biodiversity within The Bahamas.
Mission	Ensuring a sustainable financial base for the effective management of the Bahamas National Protected Areas System and for conservation activities that protect the future and productivity of our national resources.

Core Principles

Independence	BPAF is an independent entity governed by its own Board of Directors, with executive authority for managing its resources and regulating its activities according to its Acts.
Transparency	Embodied in the BPAF Acts' provisions on conflicts of interest and external audits.
Accountability	Information on BPAF is readily available to the Government and to the public. Annual reports and annually audited financial reports are publicly available on BPAF's website and distributed to the Government of The Bahamas.
Nonpartisanship	The Acts prohibit the fund from publishing propaganda, attempting to influence legislation, or participating or intervening in any political campaign on behalf of any candidate or party.



Strategic Objectives

BPAF's strategic plan sets six objectives for 2026-2030.



01

Ensuring compliance with our sustainable financing agreements

02

Increasing awareness of the fund among stakeholders, including the private sector and international funding agencies

03

Strengthening the Grants Framework, to support fair selection and sound oversight

04

Ensuring effective operation of the fund, to ensure capable staffing and appropriate support systems

05

Reducing threats to biodiversity, to address pressures on ecosystems and species

06

Improving climate resilience through adaptation, using nature-based solutions

Board of Directors

BPAF is guided by an independent nine-member board of respected leaders whose diverse expertise ensures the fund is well governed, accountable and credible to partners at home and abroad.



GLENN BANNISTER
Chair of the Board



MARCUS CHEETHAM
Treasurer



LAKESHIA ANDERSON-ROLLE
Director



LAWRENCE GLINTON
Director



DANIELLE HANEK
Director



MARCIA MUSGROVE
Director



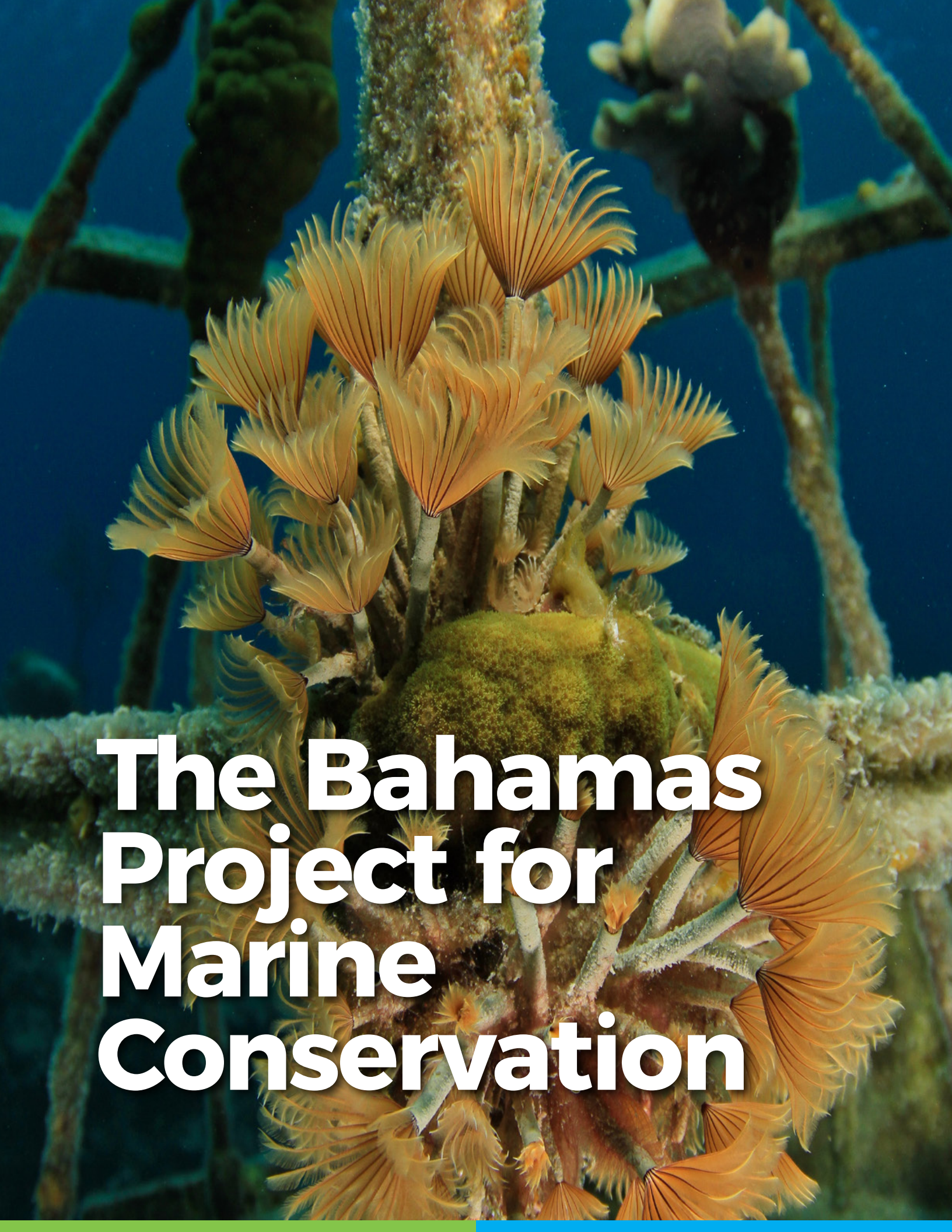
DR. RHIANNA NEELY-MURPHY
Director



ROCHELLE NEWBOLD
Director



DR. KRISTEN UNWALA
Director



The Bahamas Project for Marine Conservation

Bahamas Project for Marine Conservation Governance

The Bahamas Project for Marine Conservation (BPMC) is a 15-year national initiative established in November 2024 through the Bahamas Debt Conversion Project for Marine Conservation (BDCPMC), an innovative $300 million financing arrangement completed in 2024 that converted $124 million in debt savings into long-term funding for ocean conservation.

The Project strengthens the management and protection of The Bahamas' marine protected areas, supports sustainable use of marine resources, enhances climate resilience and safeguards the blue economy that underpins many Bahamian livelihoods. Funding is directed toward conservation planning, management capacity, scientific monitoring and effective stewardship of the country's network of 70 marine protected areas.

BPAF acts as the independent conservation trust fund (CTF), receiving, managing, disbursing and investing funds in accordance with the Project's Conservation Agreement (CA). The Fund ensures resources reach priority conservation activities and helps sustain marine conservation financing beyond the life of the Project through a Marine Conservation Endowment, targeted to reach $20 million by the Project's end.

Eleven milestones guide the Project in improving the management of The Bahamas' ocean resources.

These include:

- Improving the management effectiveness of marine protected areas (MPAs), including establishing climate-smart management plans
- Establishing a National Protected Area Steering Committee
- Completing the National Mangrove Management Plan
- Initiating and implementing a Marine Spatial Plan

Conservation Payments

BPAF manages the conservation payments in line with the CA, receiving $3,475,646 semi-annually to fund three distinct pools under the BPMC:

- Government Strategic Allocation Program (GSAP), noncompetitive 60% allocation: for all participating government ministries or agencies and the Bahamas National Trust.
- General Grants Allocation Program (GGAP), competitive 15% NGO allocation: for registered NGOs and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) whose proposals align with project priorities; government ministries and agencies may also compete. BPAF may enlarge this pool if funds held for the 60% allocation exceed a set threshold at each calendar year-end.
- BPAF's 15% Administrative Allocation: for the administrative and project management activities and obligations required under the Project.

A further $386,188.03 is paid twice a year into a fund at The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to establish the Marine Conservation Endowment Fund. These funds are intended to be transferred shortly to an investment manager contracted by the fund.

Category	$ (millions)	% of yearly payments
GSAP: government noncompetitive 60% allocation	4.63	60%
GGAP: competitive 15% NGO allocation	1.16	15%
BPAF: 15% administrative allocation	1.16	15%
BPAF endowment allocation	0.77	10%
Total	**$7.72**	**100%**

Bahamas Project for Marine Conservation

BPAF Marine Conservation Program

BPAF established the Marine Conservation Program (MCP) to channel grants to the organizations and partners implementing BPMC initiatives.

It has two components:

Government Strategic Allocation Program (GSAP) funds government agencies and the Bahamas National Trust to deliver BPMC milestones and conservation commitments. Priorities are guided by the Project Partners Meeting.

General Grants Allocation Program (GGAP) funds non-government organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), academic institutions and government agencies to participate in marine conservation and protected areas management.

Geographic Focus

The islands of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas constitute the Project's geographic scope, as set out in the BPAF Act 2014 and the Bahamas Project for Marine Conservation Agreement.



Figure 2. Map of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas.

Marine Conservation Program Grant Priorities

Bahamas Project for Marine Conservation priorities are agreed between the government agencies named in the Agreement, BNT and BPAF.

Current priorities include:

- Community-based marine conservation and management
- Climate-smart management planning and implementation
- National Mangrove Management Plan
- Integrated coastal zone management
- Blue economy and sustainable use of marine resources
- Capacity development and technical assistance for NGOs and communities
- Monitoring, evaluation and knowledge sharing
- Reducing threats to biodiversity within protected areas
- Improving climate resilience through adaptation in protected areas

These priorities were chosen for their synergy with the BPMC milestones.

While responsibility for achieving the milestones rests with the government agencies and BNT, the GGAP priorities complement and support this work, while giving other NGOs and CBOs the opportunity to participate in the initiative.



The Year In Review

Annual highlights

During the period through June 30, 2026, the BPMC made important progress establishing the systems, partnerships and technical foundation needed for implementation, with significant effort devoted to strengthening governance, building institutional capacity and advancing the planning processes that support long-term marine conservation.

1

Associated milestone: 1.
Establish National Protected Area Steering Committee

National Protected Area Steering Committee Takes Shape

With the establishment and operation of the National Protected Area Steering Committee (NPASC), Milestone 1 is complete. The NPASC shall, among other duties, validate existing MPAs and their marine extent, prioritize climate-smart management plans and zoning, develop a milestone-aligned roadmap, and recommend managers for unassigned MPAs to Cabinet. During the year, it facilitated discussion on protected area management, marine spatial planning, management authority assignments and implementation priorities.

2

Associated milestone: 2.
Approve Capacity Assessment

National Capacity Grows

The capacity needs and gap assessment, funded by the Inter-American Development Bank, was drafted and is in final revision. The assessment will identify staffing and technical skills gaps, examine recruitment and retention challenges, and evaluate whether a central protected area management authority would improve management of existing MPAs. The approved report will set annual hiring targets, estimate costs, identify potential funding for permanent staff and training, and provide a plan to implement its recommendations.

BPAF delivered three training workshops reaching 48+ organizations and 90+ participants in grant writing and project monitoring and evaluation. BPAF will continue to prioritize capacity development for Project partners and local NGOs and CBOs.

BPAF's internal capacity also increased significantly with the addition of several staff, including a marine conservation program manager, a grants manager, a monitoring, evaluation, and learning officer, and an ethics and compliance officer. In addition, the Fund completed its initial MEL Framework, revised and updated the Grant-making Framework, updated the operations manual, and also finalized its Environmental Social Management System. It invested in a more robust grants administrative and management system and expanded the office space to accommodate additional staff.

3

Associated milestone: 3.
Complete Baseline MPA Management Effectiveness Assessments

Marine Protected Areas Get First Effectiveness Baseline

The national Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) assessment was launched to establish a standardized baseline for evaluating the management effectiveness of The Bahamas' 70 MPAs.

At the first workshop, 31 participants from six organizations and seven islands completed assessments for 27 priority MPAs by the end of the reporting period.

Since the close of the reporting period, the remaining 43 MPAs were assessed, completing the national baseline for 70 MPAs.

> We have supported MPA management planning throughout the Caribbean. This group consists of very smart, committed, and skilled professionals.
>
> **~ Rich Wilson and Ramon De Leon, Consultants, Seatone Consultancy**

4

Associated milestone: 4.
Complete National Mangrove Management Plan (NMMP)

Work Begins on National Mangrove Management Plan

The Forestry Unit engaged a project manager, mangrove coordinator and mangrove officer to coordinate technical consultants and manage stakeholder engagement, towards the completion of the NMMP. At the NMMP inception workshop, 50+ stakeholders provided input on mangrove governance, monitoring, restoration, sustainable financing and stakeholder engagement. GIS analysis and information gap assessments were also initiated.

5

Associated milestone: 5.
Approve Climate-Smart Management Plans in Phase 1

Climate-Smart Management Plans Move Forward

BNT completed management plans for Moriah Harbour Cay National Park and Lucayan National Park. Efforts towards climate-smart management plans continue for Conception Island, Bonefish Pond, Inagua National Park and Union Creek Reserve.

Annual highlights continued

5

Associated milestone: 5.
Approve Climate-Smart Management Plans in Phase 1

Marine Reserve Studies Begin in South Berry Islands

The Department of Marine Resources and the Perry Institute for Marine Science advanced ecological and socioeconomic assessments for the South Berry Islands Marine Reserve and gathered updated data on seagrass, mangroves, fisheries resources, threats and stakeholder perspectives to inform an actionable management plan and co-management framework.



≈

Associated milestone:
Cross-cutting All Milestones

Media Plan Raises Project Visibility

Coordinated media outreach, partner meetings, social media and event documentation improved project visibility, securing eight media placements and 14 recruitment advertisements, with regular communications coordination among partners.

≈

Associated milestone:
Cross-cutting All Milestones

First Marine Conservation Grants Awarded

BPAF awarded $405,420 in nine grants under the first General Grants Allocation Program cycle, supporting community-based conservation, climate-smart planning, blue-economy initiatives, capacity development, and monitoring and knowledge sharing across The Bahamas.

A second call for project concepts opened in February 2026, resulting in 22 applications. Nineteen were approved in September 2026, after the reporting period closed.

Funding Overview

Payments to BPAF through June 2026 were received and disbursed in accordance with the BPMC agreement.

CTF Conservation Payments

Date	Amount (USD)
Feb. 25, 2025	400,000
May 25, 2025	3,115,646
Nov. 25, 2025	3,475,646
May 25, 2026	3,475,646
Total	**10,466,938**

The first conservation payment of $400,000 was directed to BPAF's institutional strengthening, after a 2023 capacity assessment by the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) and TNC identified the need for significant investments in administration, human capacity and risk management.

Conservation Contributions: GSAP and GGAP

Contributions to the Government Strategic Allocation Program

Conservation payments received for the GSAP totaled $6.7m through June 2026.

The total budget approved and disbursed to Government Units and Bahamas National Trust for the first payment tranche under this program was $1,806,953 as below.

Recipient	Amount (USD)
Bahamas National Trust	653,775
Department of Marine Resources	506,780
Forestry Unit (MOE)	364,140
Project Management Unit (OPM)	282,258
Total	**1,806,953**

Government agencies faced implementation challenges due to delays in amending the BPAF Act to allow payment of salaries and other previously disallowed operating expenses. The amendment is consistent with a core purpose of the Project: strengthening institutional capacity across the relevant government ministries and the Bahamas National Trust.

Capacity constraints also delayed financial reporting, limiting the fund's ability to direct additional funds to the Project. These issues are being resolved with the ministries and the Ministry of Finance.

Expenditure and Commitments Against Approved Budget

Agency	Budget	Spent or committed	Rate
Bahamas National Trust	$653,775	$511,281	78%
Department of Marine Resources	506,780	192,375	38%
Forestry Unit (MOE)	364,140	226,878	62%
Project Management Unit (OPM)	282,258	276,835	98%
Total	**$1,806,953**	**$1,207,368**	**67%**

Contributions to the General Grants Allocation Program

Conservation payments received for the GGAP totaled $1.7m through June 2026.

BPAF approved $405,420 in nine grants in the first call under the program in April 2026, subsequently disbursing mobilization payments totaling $89,150 through June 2026.





Partners in Action

Government Strategic Allocation Program

Funded through the noncompetitive 60% allocation of BPMC conservation payments, the Government Strategic Allocation Program (GSAP) first 12-month tranche built the Project's institutional foundations. Partners spent or committed 67% of the approved budget, with progress slowed by the implementation delays outlined in the Funding Overview.

12
months of implementation

4
organizations awarded

$1,806,953
total awarded



01 The Bahamas National Trust

$653,775

Disbursed: July 17, 2025 · Timeline: 12 months · Tranche spent or committed: 78% · Status: On plan

Strategic Objectives	Progress to Date
Headquarters relocation: operational capacity enhancement	1 functional HQ operational
Bonefish Pond National Park (BPNP): capital works advancement	Consultants contracted and activated for BPNP capital works
Hiring of a project manager and other essential staff	1 budget officer hired; 1 project manager hired
Operational offices across targeted Family Islands to enhance site-level management	Abaco office lease executed and operational; San Salvador office arrangement established with the Gerace Research Centre; South Andros office lease executed; Long Island office lease executed
NPASC co-chair appointment	Institutional role confirmed

02 Department of Marine Resources

$506,780

Disbursed: Aug. 6, 2025 · Timeline: 12 months · Tranche spent or committed: 38% · Status: Behind plan

Strategic Objectives	Progress to Date
Implement the South Berry Islands Marine Reserve (SBIMR) management plan consultancy	Consultancy mobilized; stakeholder consultations completed; ecological assessments underway; draft management plan and co-management framework in development
Implement the MPA demarcation buoy and signage program	Buoy demarcation and signage program not yet implemented
Appoint project manager	Project manager onboarded
Deliver communications and public awareness supporting protected area demarcation	Outreach activities and educational materials developed in collaboration with the PMU
Procure priority operational assets to support implementation	Priority assets identified; procurement underway
Advise government agencies on docks, ramps and marine access infrastructure supporting protected areas	Technical advice and planning support provided on docks, ramps and marine access infrastructure supporting protected areas
Complete stakeholder consultations and ecological assessments to inform management planning	Draft management plan and co-management framework under development

03 The Forestry Unit

$364,140

Disbursed: Aug. 6, 2025 · Timeline: 12 months · Tranche spent or committed: 62% · Status: Slightly behind plan

Strategic Objectives	Progress to Date
Recruit the core NMMP project team and establish project governance arrangements	Project manager, mangrove coordinator and mangrove officer engaged; work planning initiated
Conduct the NMMP Inception Workshop and obtain stakeholder input on priorities and implementation.	National Inception Workshop completed; stakeholder priorities and recommendations documented.
Commence GIS and gap assessment workstreams to support evidence-based planning	Technical consultants engaged; BNGIS collaboration initiated; preliminary data gaps identified
Define GIS requirements for assessing mangrove extent, condition, threats and management needs	Preliminary GIS scope completed; spatial data requirements identified
Establish the preliminary NMMP results framework, indicators and monitoring arrangements	Draft outcomes, objectives, milestones and indicators developed
Procure tools and vehicles for use on Family Islands	Vehicle for use on Family Islands acquired. Other tools are being identified

04 Project Management Unit

$282,258

Disbursed: Aug. 6, 2025 · Timeline: 12 months · Tranche spent or committed: 98% · Status: Completed

Strategic Objectives	Progress to Date
Coordinate NPASC, Project Partners Meetings (PPMs) and interagency implementation mechanisms	NPASC operational; regular PPMs convened; working groups operationalized; partner coordination strengthened
Develop and implement standardized project management tools and coordination mechanisms	Monday.com implementation advanced; stakeholder mapping initiated; tools under development
Coordinate communications, stakeholder engagement and project visibility across partners	Communications Working Group operational; stakeholder engagement plan and consolidated stakeholder register under development
Support partners with financial reporting, budget planning and expenditure oversight	Financial reporting guidance provided; expenditure reviews completed; second-tranche budget planning coordinated
Develop project-wide planning, risk management processes and SOPs	Risk management framework and SOPs under development; implementation risks monitored through PMCM
Complete the national capacity assessment and identify priority institutional strengthening actions	Capacity assessment completed; institutional priorities identified; phased capacity development framework prepared
Coordinate national METT implementation, reporting and capacity building across partners	METT Capacity Workshop delivered; MEL & Science Working Group established; 27 MPAs assessed; standardized reporting strengthened

Marine Conservation Program

General Grants Allocation Program, First Grant Cycle

The General Grants Allocation Program (GGAP) is the competitive arm of BPAF's Marine Conservation Program, funded by 15% of BPMC conservation payments, or $1.16 million a year. It supports nonprofits, community groups, academic institutions and government agencies whose marine conservation work complements the BPMC milestones.

In this first cycle, BPAF awarded nine grants totaling $405,420, with mobilization payments disbursed in April 2026 totaling $89,150. A second call for project concepts opened in February 2026, and 19 more grants were approved in September 2026.

Cycle 1 Progress at a Glance

Target counts show status as of June 30, 2026. Full targets and status for each grant appear in the Annex.

Grantee	Grant	Target Status: Done / Underway / Not Yet Due	Progress Highlight
Bahamas Marine Mammal Research Organization	$50,000	Underway: 2 Not yet due: 5	Six vessel trips and 11 encounters, including a Gervais' beaked whale
Bahamas National Trust	$50,000	Underway: 2	Activities underway
Bahamas Reef Environment Educational Foundation	$50,000	Underway: 4	Activities underway
Bahamas Undersea Research Foundation	$50,000	Done: 1 Underway: 1 Not yet due: 1	31 sites assessed across four MPAs; 20 community interviews
Blue Action Lab	$36,995	Done: 3 Underway: 5	Site assessed; restoration plan and species selection finalized with Coral Vita
Waterkeepers Bahamas	$36,400	Underway: 3	Youth ambassador and cadet programs underway
ImagiNation Ink with Black Tide Media	$35,000	Underway: 4	Filming completed on two islands; three interviews conducted
ORG Bahamas Foundation	$50,000	Underway: 1 Not yet due: 2	Six nonprofits enrolled in the training cohort
Friends of the Environment	$47,025	Done: 4 Underway: 9 Not yet due: 4	463 students reached; 4,000 mangrove propagules collected
Total	**$405,420**	Done: 8 Underway: 31 Not yet due: 12	**51 targets tracked across nine grants**



Stories of Impact

Case Study Highlights

The Bahamas National Trust

Rising to the Call

Since 1969, BNT has led protected areas management in The Bahamas. Securing the staff and facilities to manage its parks and protected areas across the archipelago has long been a challenge, and its first tranche began to close that gap.

BNT's first-tranche scope covered four programmatic areas:

- Relocating and upgrading BNT's national headquarters to enhance organizational capacity
- Advancing preconstruction capital works for Bonefish Pond National Park
- Establishing Family Island operational offices to strengthen field-level MPA governance
- Engaging technical personnel and specialist consultants to support project delivery

Capacity Building

In October 2025, BNT relocated its New Providence headquarters to East Bay Street and completed facility upgrades, followed by an operational office in Abaco the next month.

In San Salvador, the Gerace Research Centre provided office space at no cost. Final preparatory work for capital improvements at Bonefish Pond National Park, including environmental permits, assessments and construction plans, is in progress. BNT also recruited a budget officer and project manager.

Co-Management of the National Protected Area Steering Committee

The Government of The Bahamas approved the establishment of the NPASC, with the PMU as lead government entity and BNT as co-chair. PMU Director Rochelle Newbold and BNT Executive Director Lakeshia Anderson-Rolle were appointed co-chairs. The inaugural meeting, held virtually on Nov. 21, 2025, formally activated the committee. Its mandate is to:

1. Verify and approve the list and marine spatial extent of existing MPAs
2. Recommend management authorities for existing MPAs
3. Oversee prioritization of climate-smart management plans and zoning
4. Develop an implementation roadmap aligned with subsequent Conservation Agreement milestones
5. Provide strategic oversight of project implementation

The NPASC is a significant milestone for national marine conservation governance. By bringing senior representatives of government agencies and conservation partners into a single decision-making framework, it provides the platform to coordinate implementation across organizations, guide evidence-based decisions and ensure consistent oversight of the Conservation Agreement.

Development of Climate-Smart Management Plans

*** With funding support from the Blue Bonds project**

BNT's strategic objective under the Conservation Agreement is to make climate resilience a permanent, standing element of protected-area management, not a one-time addition, by embedding climate-smart principles into the management planning processes that already govern its national parks.

BNT has moved from framework to implementation, completing climate-smart management plans (CSMPs) for Moriah Harbour Cay National Park and Lucayan National Park. These are the first tangible outputs of the CSMP training initiative and a model for the plans now underway.



BNT staff with stakeholders at Union Creek National Park, Inagua



BNT staff with new signage for Union Creek.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- Institutionalize BNT's standardized climate-smart management plan and Management Planning Process Manual
- Complete the Conception Island National Park CSMP
- Recruit a parks planner
- Finalize and implement the Inagua National Park and Union Creek Reserve CSMP
- Complete additional priority management plans: Bonefish Pond National Park (BPNP) and Exuma Cays Land and Sea Park
- Initiate implementation of approved management and zoning plans
- Continue Bonefish Pond National Park capital works

> **Climate-smart management planning is building a more resilient national park system that will serve The Bahamas for generations to come**
>
> **~ Lakeshia Anderson-Rolle, Executive Director, BNT**

Department of Marine Resources

Building the Foundation for South Berry Islands Marine Reserve Management

The South Berry Islands Marine Reserve (SBIMR) does not have an established management structure. That foundation is now being built through an updated, actionable and stakeholder-informed management plan.

> The ecological and socioeconomic assessments being conducted now will provide critical updates for a well-designed and effectively implemented comprehensive management plan to protect marine biodiversity and support sustainable use of marine resources in The Bahamas.
>
> **~ Dr. Craig Dahlgren, Executive Director, PIMS/BURF**



First-tranche objectives:

- Appoint project manager
- Implement the SBIMR management plan consultancy
- Implement the MPA demarcation buoy and signage program
- Deliver communications and public awareness supporting protected area demarcation
- Procure priority operational assets to support implementation
- Advise government agencies on docks, ramps and marine access infrastructure supporting protected areas
- Complete stakeholder consultations and ecological assessments to inform management planning

Building Capacity

DMR onboarded its BPMC project manager and contracted the Perry Institute for Marine Science / Bahamas Undersea Research Foundation (PIMS/BURF) to prepare an updated management plan and co-management framework for the SBIMR.

WHAT'S NEXT?

A second expedition to assess coral reef habitats at Chub Cay in July 2026

Execute a new contract for procurement of demarcation buoys

Setting the Stage for Improved Management

DMR and PIMS/BURF engaged stakeholders from Great Harbour Cay and Chub Cay on management planning and progressed surveys, including ecosystem health assessments and surveys of economically important fish and invertebrate species.

While data collection continues and analysis is at an early stage, there is broad support for effective marine conservation in the area, from Chub Cay's management and from Great Harbour Cay stakeholders, particularly bonefish guides. Ecological assessments show the SBIMR's shallow habitats are productive for queen conch and other fishery resources.





The Forestry Unit

National Mangrove Forest Management

Mangroves cover approximately 141,957 hectares across The Bahamas, providing shoreline protection, storm surge mitigation, fisheries nursery habitat, improved water quality, biodiversity conservation, and support for tourism and local livelihoods. Despite their ecological, economic and cultural importance, The Bahamas has no dedicated national framework for mangrove management.

The National Mangrove Management Plan (NMMP) will change that. Once complete, it will guide national priorities, identify areas needing protection, restoration, monitoring and further research, support climate resilience and sustainable development, and ensure ecological, social, economic and community considerations inform mangrove decision-making nationwide.

> By combining scientific evidence, stakeholder collaboration, and national leadership, we are creating a framework that will guide mangrove conservation, restoration, and sustainable use while strengthening climate resilience, biodiversity, and the well-being of our communities for generations to come.
>
> **~ Danielle Hanek, Acting Director, Forestry Unit, Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources**





Building Capacity

The Forestry Unit has onboarded a BPMC project manager and a national mangroves manager.

Setting the Stage for the National Mangrove Management Plan (NMMP)

With the NMMP in early development, its most significant impacts to date are in capacity building, technical groundwork and stakeholder engagement, laying the foundation for a nationally coordinated approach to mangrove protection, restoration, monitoring and sustainable management. So far, the process has:

- Created a shared national forum on the future of mangrove management
- Generated early stakeholder input to shape the NMMP
- Strengthened coordination among agencies and organizations in mangrove conservation and restoration
- Identified the need to clarify institutional mandates, roles and management responsibilities
- Reinforced stakeholder and community knowledge as an essential part of planning
- Begun identifying priority information and spatial-data gaps
- Established the technical workstreams needed for evidence-based recommendations

WHAT'S NEXT?

- GIS validation exercise
- Additional stakeholder consultations
- Development of thematic chapters
- Refinement of policy recommendations
- First draft of the NMMP for Technical Review Committee review

Case Studies

General Grants Allocation Program

CASE STUDY 1

Restoring Reefs, Building Ocean Stewards

Blue Action Lab (BAL)
Project Partner: Coral Vita
Coral Restoration to Enhance Peterson Cay National Park

Peterson Cay National Park's coral reefs support biodiversity, fisheries, tourism and coastal resilience.

Aerial imagery shows significant reef degradation between 2022 and the 2023 mass bleaching event, yet ecological assessments confirmed the western reef retains enough ecological function to support active restoration. With Coral Vita, Blue Action Lab is building the scientific foundation to restore degraded reef while linking coral conservation to environmental education and community stewardship.

IMPACT AT A GLANCE

1	priority reef system assessed for habitat condition and restoration suitability
1	restoration plan completed, including site identification and selection of resilient coral species
9	coral reef canal surveys incorporated into hands-on learning
3	young interns trained in coral ecology, reef threats and restoration techniques
47.71%	increase in average knowledge assessment scores after pilot training

From Reef Assessment to Restoration

Coral Vita's comprehensive preliminary assessment identified suitable restoration areas on the western side of the cay and confirmed the reef remains viable for active restoration. The restoration approach and species selection are finalized: an existing ex situ coral tree nursery is already producing fragments, focused on resilient species that historically occurred on the reef, providing the scientific basis for future outplanting.

Inspiring the Next Generation

Restoration is paired with education through BAL's Tides of Change program, now expanding to include coral reef restoration and hands-on conservation at Conservation Cove. Shortly after the reporting period closed, three Junior Ecopreneur interns completed practical sessions in July 2026 on coral biology, reef ecology, threats to Bahamian reefs and restoration techniques. The sessions also showed how healthy reefs support fisheries, tourism, coastal resilience and the blue economy, and the interns took part in coral reef canal surveys.

Early results were encouraging: average self-reported competency rose from 2.0 to 3.0 on a four-point scale, and average knowledge scores more than doubled, from 47.06% on pre-tests to 94.77% on the post-tests.

Why It Matters

Coral restoration is about more than planting coral. Pairing science-based restoration with hands-on education lays the foundation for healthier reefs and stronger stewardship, ensuring those who will inherit The Bahamas' marine resources have the knowledge and experience to protect them.

What's Next?

With scientific planning complete, the Project is positioned to move to active restoration and broader community education. BAL will expand school outreach, coordinate field experiences at Conservation Cove and use pilot evaluation results to strengthen programming; the first school group is confirmed for February 2027. Detailed site surveys will inform final outplanting locations.

Case Studies

General Grants Allocation Program

CASE STUDY 2

Building Climate-Smart Marine Protected Areas in Abaco

Bahamas Undersea Research Foundation (BURF)
MPA Management Planning for Abaco:

Identifying and Addressing Climate and Other Threats Through Rapid Ecological Assessments and Stakeholder Surveys

Abaco's coral reefs, mangroves and seagrass face mounting pressure from coral disease, marine heatwaves, fishing and other local stressors.

Effective MPA management depends on understanding both how these ecosystems are changing and how surrounding communities use, value and perceive them. BURF is building the ecological and socioeconomic evidence for climate-smart management planning in four priority protected areas: Pelican Cays Land and Sea Park, Fowl Cays National Park, No-Name Cay Marine Reserve and Crab Cay Marine Reserve.

IMPACT AT A GLANCE

170 hectares	of reef and surrounding marine habitat surveyed by drone
32 hectares	of mangrove and surrounding habitat mapped
5	reef areas documented through high-resolution underwater photomosaics
26	manta-tow transects recording queen conch, sea cucumbers, habitat condition and signs of fishing
20	stakeholders interviewed across five Abaco communities

Turning Monitoring Into Management

Drone surveys using RGB and multispectral imagery support detailed habitat maps and test methods for detecting live coral cover and distinguishing mangroves from other vegetation. At five reef areas, researchers created underwater photomosaics of 1,200 to more than 3,000 photographs per site; several sites monitored since 2019 allow the team to track changes linked to stony coral tissue loss disease, the 2023 marine heatwave and other pressures. Fish and key invertebrate surveys add further insight into ecosystem health and resource use.

Listening to Communities

Interviews in Marsh Harbour, Green Turtle Cay, Great Guana Cay, Man-O-War Cay and Hope Town are identifying management and outreach needs. Early findings point to limited awareness of some marine reserves, uncertainty about no-take rules, continued conch harvesting around certain sites, concern about fishing pressure and declining sizes of species such as hogfish and snapper, and limited awareness of how protected areas contribute to climate resilience.

Why it Matters

By combining science, long-term monitoring and community knowledge, the Project is moving Abaco's MPAs toward more informed, adaptive and climate-resilient management.

What's Next?

BURF will integrate ecological data, imagery and stakeholder feedback within a climate-smart management planning framework. Working with DMR, BNT and other management authorities, the Project will help managers:

- Identify ecological and climate vulnerabilities
- Better understand resource use and community perceptions
- Strengthen public awareness and stakeholder engagement
- Prioritize practical management actions

Case Studies

General Grants Allocation Program

CASE STUDY 3

Strengthening the Organizations Behind Marine Conservation

Organization for Responsible Governance (ORG Bahamas)
Strengthening Environmental NGO Capacity for Marine Conservation and Coastal Resilience in The Bahamas

Marine conservation depends on strong organizations as well as healthy ecosystems. ORG is building the institutional capacity of Bahamian environmental NGOs through a core cohort of six: Friends of the Environment, Perry Institute for Marine Science, SEAFARM, Conserve Habitats and Protect Organisms, Cape Eleuthera Institute and BREEF. The program combines training, organizational assessment and practical application.

IMPACT AT A GLANCE

6	environmental NGOs in the core capacity-building cohort
32	participants at the first training session, in person and virtual
3	practical governance tools introduced through an interactive Application Lab
1	customized organizational capacity assessment establishing a baseline
85%	of responses identified funding as the leading organizational challenge

WHAT'S NEXT?

Next comes Session 2, individualized coaching and tracking systems to help NGOs apply what they learn. The baseline assessment will be the reference point for measuring progress in governance, leadership, collaboration and internal systems.

Building Stronger Environmental Organizations

Recruitment and onboarding, including a program guide and an online orientation in June 2026, led to participation agreements with the six organizations able to commit fully. To track change over time, ORG built a concise baseline assessment informed by the international Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool and aligned it to the curriculum.

From Training to Practical Action

The first session, Leadership, Governance & Collaboration, paired expert facilitation with an interactive Application Lab and drew 32 participants, 14 in person and 18 virtual.

Organizations used three practical tools:

- A Board Roles & Structure Template to identify governance gaps and map short-term strategies
- An Internal Governance Checklist covering ethics, financial stewardship, record retention and organizational learning
- A Partnership Opportunity Canvas and Collaboration Action Plan to explore shared resources, set joint objectives and manage partnership risks

The tools help organizations turn training into concrete improvements.

Listening to the Sector

Participants named funding as the top challenge, cited in 85% of responses, followed by team capacity, internal communication and administrative burnout. They called for stronger succession planning and less reliance on founders, and showed strong interest in collaboration, including cluster models for sharing resources and running joint programs.

Why it Matters

By investing in NGOs' institutional capacity, not just their activities, the initiative is building a more resilient, collaborative environmental sector able to sustain marine conservation and coastal resilience.

Lessons Learned

The case studies under the BPMC highlight shared lessons for strengthening marine conservation in The Bahamas:

Combine science with community knowledge	Ecological monitoring is stronger when paired with stakeholder perspectives on how people use and perceive marine resources.
Invest in good planning first	Baseline assessments, site selection and technical and financial preparation improve subsequent implementation.
Make capacity building practical	Training works best when participants leave with tools, action plans and support they can apply immediately.
Measure change from the start	Baselines and simple indicators make it easier to show improvement in ecological condition, knowledge, skills and organizational capacity.
Stay flexible	Timelines and activities may need to adapt to seasonal schedules, participation levels and organizational realities.
Build strong partnerships	Collaboration among technical experts, communities, NGOs and management authorities improves delivery and sustainability.

OVERALL LESSON

Successful marine conservation requires more than protecting ecosystems. It depends on strong organizations, informed communities, practical partnerships and evidence-based management.

This inaugural year laid the foundation for continued implementation of the Bahamas Project for Marine Conservation. While several activities remain ongoing, the Project has established stronger governance, improved coordination, expanded national capacity and advanced the scientific and planning tools needed for effective marine conservation in The Bahamas.





Appendices

Acronyms

BAL	Blue Action Lab
BDCPMC	Bahamas Debt Conversion Project for Marine Conservation
BPMC	Bahamas Project for Marine Conservation
BMMRO	Bahamas Marine Mammal Research Organization
BNGIS	Bahamas National Geographic Information Systems Centre
BNPAS	Bahamas National Protected Areas System
BNT	Bahamas National Trust
BPAF	Bahamas Protected Areas Fund
BREEF	Bahamas Reef Environment Educational Foundation
BURF	Bahamas Undersea Research Foundation
CBF	Caribbean Biodiversity Fund
CBO	Community-based Organization
CTF	Conservation Trust Fund
DEPP	Department of Environmental Planning and Protection
DMR	Department of Marine Resources
FOE	Friends of the Environment
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
GOB	Government of The Bahamas
GSAP	Government Strategic Allocation Program
IAS	Invasive Alien Species
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank
MCP	Marine Conservation Program
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MPA	Marine Protected Area

Acronyms

NGO	Non-Governmental organization
NMMP	National Mangrove Management Plan
NPO	Nonprofit organization
ORG Bahamas	Organization for Responsible Governance Bahamas
PA	Protected Area
PIMS	Perry Institute for Marine Science
PMU	Project Management Unit
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change



Annex:

Cycle 1 Grant Targets and Status

Full targets and status as of June 30, 2026, for the nine grants awarded under the General Grants Allocation Program, first awards cycle.

GRANT PRIORITIES

01	02	03	04	05	06
CC: Community conservation	**CSPM:** Climate-smart planning	**BE:** Blue economy and sustainable use	**CTA:** Capacity and technical assistance	**MEK:** Monitoring, evaluation and knowledge	**MgMG:** Mangrove management

01 Bahamas Marine Mammal Research Organization — $50,000

Marine Mammal Presence and Resource Conditions in Southern Protected Areas

Near Conception Island · Southern Islands · Priorities: CC CSPM BE CTA MEK · **Timeline:** 12 months · **Status:** On plan

Strategic Objectives	Targets	Status as of June 30, 2026
Expanded marine mammal research and conservation in the data-deficient Southern Bahamas: Long Island, Conception Island, San Salvador and nearby MPAs	14 survey days from large vessel; 20 mammal sightings, encounters and photo IDs; 20 species seen; 24 survey days from small vessel; 48 mammal sightings, encounters and photo IDs; 24 species documented	**In progress** 6 vessel trips; 11 encounters 1 mammal sighted: Gervais' beaked whale (Mesoplodon europaeus) 1 oceanic whitetip shark sighted
Strengthened MPA performance by monitoring ecosystems during a 14-day large-vessel survey and 24 days of small-vessel surveys off Long Island, Conception Island, San Salvador, Little Inagua, Great Inagua and nearby MPAs	3 joint workshops with MPA managers; 5 MPA management decisions/changes informed by project data and collaboration; 200 habitat data surveys completed	**In progress**
Community engagement and co-management through education and citizen science on Long Island, San Salvador and Great Inagua, with at least 1 meeting or workshop per island	5 community meetings/workshops held; 300 participants, logged by gender and age; 1,000 materials distributed	**Not yet due**
Capacity building: training at least 20 key stakeholders: local scientists, NGO staff and Bahamian university students	Number of training sessions; 60 individuals trained; Knowledge improvement scores	**Not yet due**
Incorporate climate-smart data into monitoring and management planning of at least 5 MPAs around Long Island, Conception Island, San Salvador, Little Inagua and Great Inagua	Number of climate-smart variables; number of reports shared	**Not yet due**
Contribute marine mammal data to ecotourism and fisheries management on Long Island, San Salvador and Great Inagua	Number of tour operators trained; number of guidelines or policies influenced	**Not yet due**
Strengthened regional leadership through involvement with CAMAC	Number of vessel surveys under CAMAC; number of regional meetings attended	**Not yet due**

02 Bahamas National Trust — $50,000

Marine Baselines and Community-Led Park Management in San Salvador

San Salvador National Parks · San Salvador · Priorities: CC CTA MEK MgMG · **Timeline:** 12 months · **Status:** On plan

Strategic Objectives	Targets	Status as of June 30, 2026
Comprehensive report on the condition of the marine environment within the San Salvador National Parks	Rapid ecological assessment (REA) conducted; Ecological indicators recorded: % live coral cover; fish, invertebrate and coral abundance, density and biomass; biomass of key functional groups and species; benthic index; water quality data; REA report completed	In progress
Community meeting to share findings with local stakeholders	Community meeting advertised and hosted	In progress



03 Bahamas Reef Environment Educational Foundation — $50,000

Reef Signage, Buoys and Awareness for the Coral Reef Sculpture Garden and Nursery

Southwest Marine Managed Area · New Providence · Priorities: CC MgMG BE · **Timeline:** 12 months
Status: On plan

Strategic Objectives	Targets	Status as of June 30, 2026
Signage and navigation infrastructure installed for visibility and safe use of the Coral Reef Sculpture Garden within the Southwest New Providence Marine Managed Area	80% of visitors can identify MPA boundaries and rules	In progress
Snorkel routes, mooring buoys and lighted markers established to reduce reef damage, with boaters, divers and snorkelers following regulations	70% compliance with regulations	In progress
Community-focused educational materials and awareness campaigns delivered	4 community events per year with ≥20 participants; 4 underwater signs, 5 mooring buoys, 2 on-land signs, 100 posters in marinas	In progress
Monitoring and condition assessments conducted to track impacts	Anchor damage incidents reduced to less than 2 per month; 90% functionality of buoys, ropes and signage; ≥90% of surveyed visitors report a positive snorkel experience	In progress

04 Bahamas Undersea Research Foundation — $50,000

Climate-Smart MPA Planning Through Ecological Assessments and Stakeholder Surveys

Four priority protected areas · Abaco · Priorities: CC MgMG BE CTA MEK · **Timeline:** 12 months · **Status:** On plan

Strategic Objectives	Targets	Status as of June 30, 2026
Plan addressing management planning needs for each MPA	Plan developed to address data needs; Workshop held for managers and stakeholders to present data collected	**Complete** Field data plan complete. Data needs were identified from compiled PIMS data and planning meetings with BNT and DMR, and used to set sites and methods for each MPA. The plan will be refined with managers as data are analyzed.
Ecological and social data collection in 4 areas	Online database and reports produced; REA held in each of the 4 areas; Stakeholder consultations and interviews in communities around all 4 areas; At least 4 marine resource managers and 2 interns trained in at least one data collection method	**In progress** All field data collected; processing underway 31 sites assessed across all four MPAs 20 interviews conducted in five communities BNT staff took part in the May field surveys; training records will be compiled
Reporting for 4 MPA locations	Online data accessible and narrative reports produced; Online data visualization platform developed; Draft management plans produced for 4 areas	**Not yet due;** to be completed in the next reporting period

05 Blue Action Lab — $36,995

Coral Restoration to Enhance Peterson Cay National Park

Goal: improve marine biodiversity, climate resilience and community stewardship through coral reef restoration, contributing to sustainable blue economy growth.

Peterson Cay National Park · Grand Bahama · Priorities: CC BE MEK · **Timeline:** 12 months · **Status:** On plan

Strategic Objectives	Targets	Status as of June 30, 2026
Conduct site assessment and preparation: survey 600+ sq. ft.; select and document SOUs	Site assessment completed	**Complete**
Develop and finalize land-based restoration plan and species selection	Species list and plan validated	**Complete** Coral Vita finalized the restoration approach and confirmed species selection
Consult with local coral reef experts	Meet with ≥2 coral reef scientists and/or practitioners	**Complete** Consultations informed restoration site selection, species suitability, nursery planning and restoration methods
Consult with local environmental education professionals	MOUs or agreements signed	**Ongoing**

Strategic Objectives	Targets	Status as of June 30, 2026
Coordinate with local schools for participation	MOUs or agreements signed	**Ongoing**
Plan and conduct educational field trips to Conservation Cove	Host ≥125 students at Conservation Cove	**Ongoing**
Deliver interactive tours and training sessions on coral restoration	Lesson delivered	**Ongoing**
Collect feedback from students and teachers for evaluation	Evaluation summary completed	**Ongoing**

06 Waterkeepers Bahamas

$36,400

Youth Environmental Ambassadors and Cadets

Goal: improve marine conservation awareness and climate resilience through youth engagement and education.

Various sites · Grand Bahama · Priorities: CC CTA MEK · **Timeline:** 7 months · **Status:** On plan

Strategic Objectives	Targets	Status as of June 30, 2026
Improved marine conservation awareness and climate resilience through youth engagement and education	25 students enrolled per session; 4 field trips; 6 training sessions delivered	**In progress**
Strengthened Waterkeepers Cadets Program for grades 10-12, with scuba and maritime training	15 cadets enrolled; 100% achieve scuba certification; 1 new maritime module delivered	**In progress**
Enhanced youth-led community outreach and environmental advocacy	2-3 youth-led outreach events; 200+ community members reached	**In progress**



07 ImagiNation Ink with Black Tide Media

$35,000

The Last Barrier: Paradise in Peril

Goal: strengthen national environmental awareness and community engagement in marine conservation, climate resilience and protected area stewardship.

Various protected areas · **Priorities:** CC CSP CTA MEK · **Timeline:** 18 months · **Status:** On plan

Strategic Objectives	Targets	Status as of June 30, 2026
Documentary film produced	4 island groups filmed; 25+ interviews completed; Full media library assembled	**In progress** 2 islands filmed; 3 interviews conducted
Educational content and toolkits developed	10+ short educational clips; 5+ toolkits created; Media pack for NGOs and schools; 100+ youth submissions to the #ProtectTheBarrier campaign	**In progress**
Translation and subtitling	Multi-language subtitles created	**In progress**
Community outreach and knowledge sharing completed	10-15 community screenings; 15+ schools reached; 10,000+ digital reach; Documentary submitted to 5 festivals	**In progress**

08 ORG Bahamas Foundation

$50,000

Stronger Environmental NPOs for Marine Conservation and Coastal Resilience

Goal: improve marine conservation, climate resilience and sustainable coastal and marine management through stronger, more capable and collaborative civil society organizations.

National · No single protected area · **Priorities:** CC CSP CTA MEK · **Timeline:** 12 months · **Status:** On plan

Strategic Objectives	Targets	Status as of June 30, 2026
Cohort of environmental NPOs trained and mentored in leadership, governance, stakeholder engagement, fundraising, advocacy and M&E	Outreach and selection of 8-10 core NPOs; participation list finalized; 7 structured training sessions delivered; ≥90% participant completion rate; ≥85% average satisfaction score	**In progress** 6 NPOs in the cohort
Applied conservation and climate resilience projects implemented by trained NPOs	At least 8 NPOs apply new skills in conservation or resilience projects; Minimum 3 peer-learning case studies documented; ≥3 NPOs begin replication within 6 months	**Not yet due**
Strengthened sector-wide sustainability, knowledge sharing and monitoring systems	10 sustainability roadmaps developed; 1 public outcomes brief and evaluation report published; Online toolkit repository launched; Final dissemination and peer-learning event with at least 30 stakeholders	**Not yet due**

09 Friends of the Environment

$47,025

Abaco Coastal Stewardship Through Education and Engagement

Goal: improve coastal and marine ecosystem health in Abaco through enhanced biodiversity conservation and sustainable community livelihoods.

Abaco marine protected areas · Abaco · Priorities: CC MgMG MEK · **Timeline:** 12 months · **Status:** On plan

Strategic Objectives	Targets	Status as of June 30, 2026
MPA-themed after-school clubs for ages 3-17, spring 2026, with a potential reach of 80 students	60-80 students participate	**Complete** 71 students participated
Earth Week presentations and assemblies across Abaco on MPAs, ecosystem services and sustainable livelihoods	Presentations at 5 schools	**Complete** 463 students reached at three Abaco schools
Mangrove restoration field trips for classes from three local high schools, linked to the Bahamas Awareness of Mangroves Project and the Northern Bahamas Mangrove Restoration Project	3 field trips for 10th-grade students in the Bahamas Awareness of Mangroves Program	**Not yet due**
Engage community members in mangrove propagule collection and nursery care for restoration	4,000 mangrove propagules collected	**In progress**
Increase mangrove nursery capacity and provide signage for new sites	6 new troughs placed at community sites	**In progress** 9 new troughs installed across Abaco schools and the Friends of the Environment facility
Run 4 iterations of the conservation workshop over the year, alongside sustainable livelihoods apprenticeships and beyond	Community members participate in conservation workshops	**In progress**
Contract two interns to help run summer camps in Central Abaco and prepare materials for outer-community camps	Number of interns contracted	**Complete** Two interns contracted for summer camp
Partner with the Delphi Club and other ecotourism stakeholders on a sustainable livelihood apprenticeship in ecotourism/ fly-fishing	Number of apprentices enrolled	**In progress**
Raise awareness of sustainable livelihood opportunities among upper high school students and recent graduates through school visits, career fairs and community service groups	Total student reach on sustainable livelihoods and eco-careers	**In progress**
Promote the sustainable livelihood program and interview applicants	Total community reach via social media; number of applicants interviewed	**In progress**

Strategic Objectives	Targets	Status as of June 30, 2026
Host a fly-fishing/ecotourism mixer for guides, industry professionals and youth interested in the industry; date TBD	Mixer held at the Friends of the Environment Learning Centre	**Not yet due**
Develop a two-day conservation workshop for apprentices and community stakeholders to improve environmental literacy and ambassadorship	Curriculum produced; Event completed as planned	**Complete** Curriculum developed
Produce outreach materials such as stickers, posters, brochures and social posts on MPAs, natural resources and environmental best practice, for workshop participants and targeted Abaco ecotourism businesses	Materials available for distribution at workshops and community events	**In progress**
Summer camp: hands-on learning and field trips on Bahamian protected areas and critical habitats	Number of field trips and number of students in mainland Abaco Summer Camp	**Not yet due** To be completed in the next reporting period
Host Summer Camp in Grand Cay with a field trip to Walker's Cay National Park	Grand Cay Summer Camp and field trip held	**Not yet due** To be completed in the next reporting period
Encourage student participation in the FRIENDS Abaco Science Fair to raise environmental awareness and build research capacity	Abaco schools participate in the Science Fair	**In progress**
Create Exploratorium exhibits promoting MPAs and current research and conservation projects	Number and type of exhibits produced	**In progress**



Photo Credits

Cover	Ellison Gomez
1 – Impact at a Glance	Ellison Gomez
2 – Foreword (coral background)	Perry Institute for Marine Science
3 – Foreword (stingray)	Royce Fonseca – Unsplash.com
4 – Who We Are	Ellison Gomez
7 – Strategic Objectives	Ellison Gomez
9 – Marine Conservation divider	Ellison Gomez
12 – The Year in Review	Tika Penn
16 – Funding Overview (coral reef)	Marek Okon – Unsplash.com
17 – Partners in Action	Jessica Wiseman – The Nature Conservancy
18 – Government Strategic Allocation	Ellison Gomez
22 – Stories of Impact	Ellison Gomez
30 – Lessons Learned	Shane Gross
31 – Appendices	Ellison Gomez
32–33 – Acronyms background	Mark Godfrey – The Nature Conservancy
40 – Annex (moray eel)	Ellison Gomez

BAHAMAS PROTECTED AREAS FUND

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