

GRAEME HALL NATURE SANCTUARY, INC.

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Graeme Hall Nature Sanctuary in Barbados to Close

[Vancouver, Canada] Environmental philanthropist Peter Allard announced that the 35-acre Graeme Hall Nature Sanctuary in Barbados will close on December 15, 2008.

Saying that “no one individual can stand longer than a generation in the wilderness of environmental preservation,” Allard despaired that to preserve the environmental heritage at Graeme Hall for future generations of Barbadians would require “a government-led consciousness.”

“I thank the the citizens of Barbados who came to the Sanctuary to visit, and thank those who signed the petition with the Friends of Graeme Hall for a National Park,” said Allard. “I believe the Sanctuary would not have been possible without the support of the many eco-visitors, school children and the hard-working employees who put their heart and soul into making the Sanctuary a first class visitor experience.”

Allard went on to say that the Sanctuary would not exist if it had not been for special individuals who helped make it happen such as Dame Billie Miller and her kind and capable Permanent Secretary, the late Brie St. John, Dr. Lorna Inniss, Dr. Trevor Carmichael, Dr. Karl Watson and many, many others.

Approximately 85 employees and contractors will be negatively affected by the closing. It is expected that tour companies, taxis and local businesses will lose bookings as well.

In 2007, over 6,000 Barbadians signed a Friends of Graeme Hall petition in favor of preserving the approximately 240 acre green area at Graeme Hall as a National Park. As the largest green space on the South Coast between the Airport and Bridgetown, the proposed National Park would include the designated 91-acre RAMSAR wetland approved under the international Convention on Wetlands, the 35-acre Sanctuary, and recreational lands.

Saying that that the future of the Sanctuary and the National Park is in the hands of the people of Barbados, Allard believes that the Friends of Graeme Hall and the citizens of Barbados must decide what their priorities are.

“We have great affection and regard for the people of Barbados, and the Sanctuary effort has always been a philanthropic mission. This has been an incredibly painful and saddening decision, but ultimately it is not for us to initiate or set national goals and long term legacies for the nation.”

More information about the Sanctuary and the proposed Graeme Hall National Park can be found at www.graemehall.com/press and www.graemehallnationalpark.org .

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