



**EARTH DAY TREE PLANTING CEREMONY
BOGUE PROPERTY,
DUNN'S RIVER WATERSHED
APRIL 22,2003**

SUBJECT: "THE IMPACT OF TREES ON THE WATERSHED"

Madam Chairperson,

- The Hon. Bobby Pottinger, Custos of St. Mary and President of the J.A.S
- Mr. Marilyn Headley Conservator of Forests and Executive Director of the Forestry Department
- Miss. Biggs Executive Director of Friends of the Seas
- Other Members of the Forestry Department
- Other Members of the Environment Foundation of Jamaica,

- Members of the Forestry Department
- Members of the press, boys and girls and Friends, Good Morning.

It is my pleasure to be asked to speak on the subject “The impact of trees on the watershed.” Do you ever wonder just what is a Watershed? Well, the next time it rains, look to see where the water that runs off from your roof and the driveways goes. Usually you will see it running down the street into drains or culverts along the road. Finally it enters into the streams and lakes. All of this area is a watershed.

A very basic definition of a watershed states that, it is an area of land that drains into a body of water such as a river, lake, stream or bay. The watershed is separated from other systems by high points in the area such as hills or slopes. It includes not only the waterway itself but also the entire land area that drains to it. For example, the watershed of a lake would include not only the streams entering the lake but also the land area that drains into those streams and eventually into the lake. In Jamaica there are 26 named watershed areas for management purposes. This means that these areas are closely monitored to ensure that the watersheds are protected.

Today we are at the Dunn’s River Watershed, which is one management unit. It is apart of the Rio Bueno Watershed. We are here for **Earth Day Tree Planting Ceremony**. Over 2000 trees will be planted in this watershed area today. Trees are very important for our quality of life. They are most valuable to the environment. The importance of trees can be viewed from the following **four** areas.

1. **Firstly**, their Economic value- Lumber for the making of furniture and building construction.
2. **Secondly**, their Aesthetic beauty- think of the Poinciana, poi, and the flame of the forest,
3. **Thirdly**, their role in the eco system – the nesting of birds, food and safe haven for wild life and
4. **Fourthly** and most importantly the value of the trees in protecting the watershed. It is this area that I wish to highlight today as we focus on the subject, **the Impact of Trees on the Watershed.**

As we consider the subject we shall examine four ways in which trees impact on the watershed.

1. **Firstly**, trees are necessary for rainfall. Water evaporates directly into the air by the process of Transpiration, thus, producing clouds and water molecules. Without trees rainfall would be reduced considerably and this would be a threat to our trees and vegetation.
2. **Secondly**, trees prevent soil erosion and land slides. The leaves and branches of trees reduce the direct rainfall on the land surface, hence, reducing soil erosion. Leaves reduce raindrop impact, and gentler rain causes less erosion and reduces land slippage.
3. **Thirdly**, Trees with their rooting system reduce sediments from entering our rivers, lakes and beaches. These natural resources are so important to our ecology as well as our economy. What a nightmare it would be for us to awake and find a muddy Dunn's River and a muddy Ocho Rios Beach. If this were to happen its consequence

would be as great as the 9/11 tragedy. Tourism would come to a standstill. No swimming! No climbing of the waterfall! No Fishing! No Blue Marlin tournament! Deforestation plays several roles in the flooding equation because trees prevent sediment runoff and our forests are most important in this respect.

4. **Finally**, Trees reduce the runoff speed of the water from the land. The faster water runs from the watershed into the river, the greater the flood will be. Therefore, anything that reduces the runoff speed of the water the less damage will occur. Tree roots hold the soil in place, reducing the movement of sediment that can shrink river channels downstream.

Ladies and Gentlemen may I invite you to acknowledge the work of the Friends of the Seas (FOTS), Members of the Environment Foundation of Jamaica (EFJ) and the Forestry Department for their contribution in Replanting, Preserving and Educating us on the importance of our trees to the environment.

- Thumbs up for Reforestation
- O.K for Reforestation
- High Five for Reforestation

A few recommendations:

1. Continue to Replant and preserve our trees.
2. Continue to educate the nation of the disastrous effects of Deforestation.

3. Discourage the destruction of our trees to burn coal.
4. Provide employment for such persons to propagate plants. These should be produced both for domestic use as well as for the export market. This could include ornamental plants, fruit trees and sapling to produce timber.

In conclusion, Remember, God made a beautiful world. He looked at it and said that it was good. He made Adam and Eve to tend the garden. We belong to humanity.

- Let us play our part in protecting our watershed,
- Let us play our part in preserving our trees, and
- Let us play our part in caring for our environment.

This land is my land,
This land is your land.

Help me to preserve it for my children and grand children.
God bless you all. Have a wonderful day.

Rani Sittol (11years old)

President of Moneague Primary & Junior High School Environment Club.