



Ministry of Sustainability
& Climate Resiliency
Cayman Islands Government



Media Release

Trees planted to offset COP26 travel

Grand Cayman – On Saturday, 26 March, the Premier and Minister of Sustainability & Climate Resiliency, Hon. G. Wayne Panton joined the National Trust for the Cayman Islands, youth climate ambassadors and their families to plant trees as part of efforts to offset their travel to the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in November 2021.

The Cayman Islands sent a contingency of 12 – including nine Caymanian students – to the international climate summit. Accordingly, a total of 12 trees (including 10 Broadleaf, *Cordia sebestena var. caymanensis*) were planted at the Blue Iguana Conservation facility at the Queen Elizabeth II Botanic Park to offset the air travel emissions.

Mr. Panton said, though trees are no longer required to build traditional cottages or twist rope, they have renewed importance in national efforts to prevent, mitigate and adapt to climate change.

“What is becoming more significant is the reality that we need those trees alive. We need them for shade, to give off water vapor through their leaves, to absorb carbon and emit oxygen,” he said.

National Trust Environmental Programmes Manager Catherine Childs, who accompanied the student delegates to COP26, said a highlight for the young climate advocates was the opportunity to sit down with the Premier and discuss the opportunities and challenges for sustainability in the Cayman Islands.

“Imagine being 18, 19 or 20 years old, sitting across from the leader of your country and having him seriously ask you what you think we should be doing? That was an incredible experience,” she said. “And now he’s here to plant trees so we can offset the emissions. The Premier is here today supporting young Caymanians and literally getting his hands dirty to support climate action.”

The event was also supported by members of the private sector: Cayman Islands-based re-insurance company Aureum Re contributed to the offset efforts by donating toward local mangrove protection through Island Offsets, and Dart donated the 12 trees for the event.

In addition to offsetting emissions of travel, absorbing carbon dioxide and emitting oxygen, the trees will also provide the reptilian residents of the Blue Iguana Conservation facility with both shade and food, supporting our efforts to safeguard the future of this iconic indigenous species while contributing to national tree planting efforts.

Mr. Panton said the goal of his ministry is to create a lasting legacy of sustainability that will benefit future generations of Caymanians.

“I look down the road and I care about our future, I care about our children and the legacy we are leaving behind. What is really important is what we leave behind for our children and their children; the future generations. That’s what drives me,” he said. “We have a right to try to seek our own prosperity today but what we don’t have a right to do is seek it at the expense of the prosperity of the children of tomorrow. To me, that’s what sustainability means.”

The Caymanian student delegation was able to attend COP26 because of the generosity of the Cayman Islands Government, Dr. Tasha Ebanks Garcia and the Cayman Islands Government Office UK, the International National Trust Organisation, the Caffarelli Family Foundation, Caribbean Utilities Company, Block.One, Tim Ridley, and the Perera family.



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(ENDS)

GroupPhoto.jpg

Caption: Premier Hon. G. Wayne Panton and representatives of the Ministry of Sustainability & Climate Resiliency and the National Trust for the Cayman Islands join youth climate ambassadors and their families to plant 12 trees at the Blue Iguana Conservation facility.

PremierTreePlanting.jpg

Caption: From left: Dart President Business Development Jackie Doak, BIC Assistant Operations Manager and Maintenance Supervisor Joe Jamieson, Premier Hon. G Wayne Panton, BIC Assistant Iguana Warden Dillen Douglas, local student Emery Augustine and NTCI Environmental Programmes Manager Catherine Childs.

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