



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

National Trust for the Cayman Islands Carries Cayman's Heritage Message to Global Sustainable Islands Summit

St. Kitts and Nevis – May 2025

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The National Trust for the Cayman Islands (NTCI) represented the Cayman Islands at the recent Global Sustainable Islands Summit in St. Kitts and Nevis, delivering a clear message: the protection of historic, cultural, and natural heritage is essential to building a sustainable future.

Thanks to the generous sponsorship of the Ministry of Education, the Trust was proud to bring Al Ebanks as a youth delegate. Al, a staff member at the Cayman Islands National Museum and a lifetime member of the National Trust, is passionate about preserving Cayman's heritage and represents the next generation of cultural stewards.

NTCI Environmental Programmes Manager, Catherine Childs, and Al Ebanks spoke at a key side event, *"Islands, Cultural Heritage, and Climate Change,"* which explored the vital role of heritage in sustainable development for Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

"A sustainable Cayman is one where growth doesn't come at the expense of identity," Childs said. "Cayman's natural world is deeply woven into our cultural heritage. By protecting it, we are preserving identity, supporting biodiversity, and strengthening our economy. The National Trust works to ensure that our children inherit not just land and buildings, but meaning and memory."

Al added that "the Global Sustainable Islands Summit brought together voices from across island territories to reflect on the power of culture and heritage in building sustainable futures. It was a privilege to represent the Cayman Islands and engage in meaningful conversations about how our shared histories can inform collective climate and development action"

The Summit also featured regional collaboration supported by the International National Trusts Organisation (INTO), with participation from National Trusts across the Caribbean, including St. Kitts and Nevis, Haiti, and Aruba (see <https://www.into.org/standing-together-for-heritage/>). At the same side event, Nigel Maduro, youth delegate from the Aruba National Trust and representative of the Indigenous Caquetío people, spoke movingly about his irreplaceable cultural heritage being lost to sea level rise and climate change.



As part of its presentation, the NTCI highlighted its core initiatives, including:

- **Conservation of over 6% of Cayman's terrestrial areas** through protected reserves.
- **Preservation of key historic sites** on all three islands.
- **Island Offsets**, a carbon offset programme safeguarding local mangrove ecosystems.
- **Climate education toolkit** for Cayman's schools that highlights impacts and solutions at the local level.
- **New mobile app** to help locals and visitors better engage with protected areas and historic sites.
- **Audio tour of historic George Town**, using technology to preserve and pass down Cayman's stories so that they are never forgotten.

The Cayman Islands were exceptionally well-represented at the Summit. In addition to the National Trust, attendees included representatives from:

- **Sustainable Cayman:** *Melanie Carmichael, Leanni Tibbetts, and Dani Seales*
- **The Ministry of Health, Environment & Sustainability:** *Kristen Smith and Emily Gilman*
- **Dentons Law:** *Joanna Hossack*
- **Dean of CARICOM Youth Ambassadors:** *Vanessa Burke*

Their presence reflected the depth and diversity of Cayman's commitment to sustainability — across civil society, youth, government, and legal sectors.

Joanna Hossack attended the summit in her capacity as an associate partner at Dentons law firm, and a member of the sustainable finance steering committee formed of interested members of the Cayman Islands financial services community.

Joanna stated that "Private sector support is absolutely crucial for achieving the UN sustainable development goals, particularly in financing climate change mitigation and adaptation – and this represents a huge opportunity for the Cayman Islands financial services industry. My aim at the summit was to try to bridge the gap between public and private. It was inspiring to learn about the many impactful projects that our island peers are undertaking, and I hope to support future projects both in Cayman and in the wider region. Dentons is the largest law firm in the world and has a well-documented commitment to sustainability, as well as a presence in many of the jurisdictions represented at the summit. As a finance lawyer, I want to be part of the solution, rather than part of the problem."



The Summit made clear that while small islands face shared challenges, they also have shared strengths — and that cultural heritage can be a powerful tool for climate resilience. The National Trust for the Cayman Islands remains committed to ensuring that Cayman’s heritage is not just preserved, but championed, as part of a just and sustainable future.

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About the National Trust for the Cayman Islands

The National Trust for the Cayman Islands is a non-governmental organization whose mandate under the National Trust Law (2010 Revision) includes the preservation of the historic, natural and maritime heritage of the Cayman Islands for present and future generations.

About the Blue Iguana Conservation Programme

The Blue Iguana Recovery Programme began in 1990 with only 30 dedicated Blue Iguanas and the primary goal to restore the wild population to 1,000 Blue Iguanas, encouraging viable population in the long-term. Having met its primary goal in 2018, the initiative formally transitioned to the Blue Iguana Conservation Programme in 2019 with a new focus of sustainably conserving the native species of Grand Cayman.

About the National Trust’s Environmental Programme

The National Trust for the Cayman Islands’ environmental programme was founded on the concept that the protection of native plants and animals is best achieved by protecting the natural areas in which they depend.



About the National Trust Conservation Programme

The National Trust for the Cayman Islands' conservation programme strives to protect Cayman's native species and the habitats in which they live, and includes the endemic Blue Iguana of Grand Cayman, the Sister Islands Rock Iguana and Cayman's native bat species.

About the National Trust Historic Preservation Programme

The National Trust for the Cayman Islands introduced the launching of its *Historic Preservation Fund* at its Annual General Meeting in September 2021 for the purpose of inviting increased support of its continuing efforts to encourage the preservation and protection of historic homes and buildings for present and future generations of the Cayman Islands.