

Chapter 9
SOCIAL ASSESSMENT

9.0 SOCIAL FACTORS

9.1 Introduction

Large development projects often introduce changes in livelihoods, traditional and cultural resources and recreational uses, as well as introduce ethnic and demographical changes and dispersion by modifying the social, natural and cultural environments. But depending on the size and type of development, they create or enhance economic, health, education and other benefits that are valued by society. They can also enhance positively the domino effect of entrepreneurial enhancement in the service industries, supply and demand of construction materials, service providers at the micro level, etc.

Social impact assessments are an integral part of the EIA process and will continuously be improved as new development issues arise that become questionable by those impacted. Presently, they are not expected to be a complete sociological study nor a social cost/benefit analysis of a project. The assessment identifies, analyses, and evaluates those social impacts the proposed development may have on individuals, social groups, traditional users, and other stakeholders of the project area.

It is widely accepted that unanticipated negative social impacts can reduce desired benefits from any project. However, in the long term, unanticipated negative social impacts can come in the form of increased need and access to social services such as education and health services, etc., during construction, post construction and final development phases due to demographical population growth and migration.

The proposed False Caye Resort and Residential Development Project is expected, at its inception, and throughout the life of the project, to create long-term economic, employment and investment opportunities for the area, the region, and the country on a whole. Social infrastructure on a whole will be impacted and modified based on growth, need and demand. These impacts will include demographical migration of population on schools, medical facilities, communication, roads and transportation, markets, health, water supply and demand, sanitation, waste disposal systems, and institutional capacities of local government and organization to meet these needs. Also for consideration are the demand for goods and services, housing and skilled labor.

9.2 Regional Demographics/Population/Impacts of Proposed Development

The Stann Creek District is one of the smallest districts in size; Corozal has 718 sq. miles while Stann Creek has 986 sq. miles. The 2000 Population Census showed the district had a population of 24,548 representing 9.2% of the total population of Belize and a population density of 24.9 per square mile. The mid-year estimate for 2006 for the district population is 28,865 and a density of 29.3 per sq. mile (CSO Mid-year estimate 2006 at 2.7% annual growth rate).

The villages to be most likely impacted by the development are Placencia, Seine Bight, and Riversdale. All three villages had a combined population of 2,600+ in 2006 [Please refer to Table 9.1 below] as per discussions with Village Chairmen.

Table 9.1: Current and Projected Population of 3 Villages Directly Impacted by the Development (CSO Census 2000)

Village	Total in 2000	Males in 2000	Females in 2000	Estimates in 2006 (Total)
Seine Bight, Maya Beach & Riversdale	831	377	454	1,400+
Placencia	458	237	221	1,200+
Total	1,288	614	675	2,600+

Please note in the CSO reports that the annual population growth rate for Belize is 2.7%. The 2006 estimates were obtained from the Village Council Chairmen of Placencia, Seine Bight and Riversdale Villages.

In 2000, the population of the entire district was 24,548 with 12,734 males and 11,814 females [See Table 9.2]. This district had the second highest growth (35.7%) over this last inter-censal period (1991-2000). The projected mid-year population (2.7% annual national growth rate) of the district by 2006 was 28,865 and 32,157 by 2010.

Table 9.2: National Population by District, For Belize, 2000.

DISTRICT	MALE	FEMALE	% GROWTH	TOTAL
COROZAL	16,422	16,286	14.9	32,708
ORANGE WALK	19,948	18,942	26.8	38,890
BELIZE	34,035	34,162	19.4	68,197
CAYO	26,417	26,147	39.5	52,564
STANN CREEK	12,734	11,818	35.7	24,548
TOLEDO	11,722	11,575	33.6	23,297
COUNTRY TOTAL	121,278	118,930	28.32	240,204

A brief description of the three communities follows:

a. Seine Bight (including Riversdale Community and Maya Beach)

This village is located approximately 26 miles from Maya Center on the Southern Highway and is neighboring to Placencia. It is populated by 750 Garinagu, 450 Maya, Chinese and Hispanic immigrants and about 200 North Americans. The community of Riversdale was founded in 1987 and today has 13 families with a total population of 60.

The source of livelihoods of the inhabitants of the village has been artisan fishing, jobbing out and tourism activities. Currently Seine Bight has only 10-15 permanent fisherfolk and declining while Riversdale Community boasts of almost 90% of its population (reported at 60 by Mrs. Lampella) are fishers including two women.

The growing tourism development has had a significant socio-economic impact on both men and women. With the growing number of tourists to the Peninsula Area, Cockscomb Sanctuary Wildlife Sanctuary and Gladden Split, this village, among the other tourism-based villages in the district has the best example of rural communities moving from the traditional livelihoods to service oriented activities that are characteristic of the tourism sector.

Between Seine Bight and Riversdale, there are approximately 20 resorts and many Bed and Breakfast facilities, a village Tour Guide Association and many taxi services that cater to tourists traveling as individuals or small groups. The villagers consider that tourism contributes today more to their livelihoods than fishing. More women are employed in the domestic chores of the hotel sub-sector. The second week of August each year is celebrated as Seine Bight Day and this activity attracts almost 1000 visitors.

The villagers enjoy the following social amenities: 24 hours electricity, potable water supply only in Seine Bight and Maya Beach while Riversdale awaits its own, several private internet cafes, one primary school with 450 students and 19 teachers, one community center currently used partly as office to the village Water Board, two religious denominations with their own church buildings, twelve grocery shops, several restaurants and bars. The village recently got a Police Station with 2 resident staff. No fire station is yet available. The village also has Health Center staffed with a nurse and community nurse's aid.

In regards to the employment situation: The Chairman reported that, approximately 50% of the working population is employed in the tourism sector. The construction industry is also putting a high demand on skilled and common laborers; the contractors need to bring in workmen from the Cayo District since the village and its surroundings cannot supply the amount of labour required. However, the Chairman mentioned that there are some unemployed men, young and old reason being they simply do not want to work. This unemployment can be attributed to the growing tourism business in the village; the Village Chairman considers that tourism has created a "culture of dependency on higher wages" since these men no longer want to work for Bz. \$30 a day.

The main positive concerns this village has on the proposed development are related to employment and job creation and the possibility for some villagers to enter into some kind of business relationships so as to increase their sales of handicraft at the boutiques or handicraft shops to be established in the resort. The sentiment expressed by the Maya Beach, Riversdale and Seine Bight Communities is that they hope the developer does everything right since he has the financial resources to do so.

The main negative concerns expressed, in no order of priority, are as follows:

- access to the fishing grounds for lobster, crab and scale fish,
- disposal of solid and sewerage waste,
- the cutting of mangroves resulting in lost breeding grounds and lack of protection from storms,
- dredging and where the source of fill material will come from,
- beach erosion, and
- possible destruction of the beautiful snorkeling grounds.

Persons interviewed in the Seine Bight Area were:

Mr. Adolph Williams, Village Council Chairman-Seine Bight

Mrs. Guadalupe Lampella, Resident Leader of Riversdale Community

Ms. L. Zaiden, Rural Development Officer

Mr. Clive Zuniga, Principal, St. Alphonzo R.C School

Mr. Leonard Williams, Chairman, Peninsula Citizens for Sustainable Development

Mr. John Lee, Maya Beach Hotel Owner, Maya Beach

Mr. Ray Rwano, Resident and former owner of Green Parrot Beach Hotel, Maya Beach

Mr. Charles Meares, Maya Playa Resort Owner- resident over 22 years

Mrs. Mardy & Eldon, Singing Sands Resort

b. Placencia

The village of Placencia, the “Southern Tourism Capital of Belize”, with an approximate population of 1,200+ is one of the fastest growing villages in the country; the chairman estimates that “the village population will double in 4 years”.

Traditionally a fishing village, Placencia was one of three villages (Sarteneja, San Pedro and Placencia) that formed fishing cooperatives in the late sixties and early seventies to commercialize and export the production of lobster, conch, shrimp and scale fish. In recent discussions with the Chairman of the Placencia Fishing Cooperative, Mr. Sidney Lopez, the overall production has been going down. Of the 53 active members, only two fishers are solely involved in fishing while the rest do both fishing and tourism. The Chairman sees the new development as another outlet (least cost) of the Cooperative’s products; the increased sales will eventually benefit the membership directly.

This modality of livelihood dependent on tourism began a gradual change in the late 1980’s when tourists began to arrive and needed room, board and enjoyment during their stays. Placencia fisherfolk, who had vision and the resources, began a gradual transition from fishing to tourism. By 2000 the Placencia Peninsula Area already had 47 (16%) hotels of the country’s total of 301; in 2006, this area had 81 hotels (14.4%) of the country’s total of 561. It should be noted that in 2006, there are approximately 16-20 hotels, including Bread and Breakfast facilities, from Seine Bight to Riversdale, alone.

i. Placencia Water Supply and Solid Waste Management

While Riversdale does not yet have a potable water supply system, Placencia and Seine Bight/Maya Beach get their potable water from Mango Creek/Independence Village through an underwater pipe system. Both major villages have a local Water Board that is responsible to make the monthly charges to villagers at a rate of one cent per gallon of water used and measured with individual meters.

The Village Council of Placencia took the initiative to establish a village garbage collection system that has become a very good example of a best practice that other villages can adopt and adapt. This service was later extended to Seine Bight and Maya Beach and has become a main source of income to the Placencia Village Council during the last 6-7 years.

ii. Placencia BTIA

The Placencia BTIA Branch is the largest and most active in the country with approximately 160 members. This community-based organization is the main active force in making tourism a buoyant and striving sector in the peninsula. In discussions with Mr. David Vernon, BTIA Chairman, he reports that there is 99% employment in the peninsula to the extent that people are coming in daily and weekly to look for jobs and most of them eventually settle permanently in the villages. In both Placencia and Seine Bight, there is a growing Hispanic/Mestizo community taking permanent residence status.

The Placencia BTIA welcomes this type of development at False Caye since it brings in employment at all levels. Chairman Vernon also envisions that the future of tourism in the peninsula is construction of condominiums; already two of the proposed five are already functioning. Generally, it is the expressed feeling that the development will attract more tourists to the peninsula area and thus increase business activity.

The main tourism attractions include:

- a. In the marine environment:- snorkeling, scuba diving, fishing, whale shark viewing in April-May at the Gladden Split and
- b. In the terrestrial environment:- Lobster Fest every June, visit to the Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary, the old Serpon Sugar Mill in Sittee River, tubing in the Sibun River, caving in the St. Herman's Caves.

In Placencia, the main positive concerns on the proposed development are related to employment and job creation and the possibility for some villagers to enter or expand their business. A similar sentiment by Placencia village leaders, as expressed by the Maya Beach, Riversdale and Seine Bight Communities, is that they hope the developer does "the right thing" since he has the financial resources to do so.

The main negative concerns expressed, in no order of priority, were:

- disposal of solid and sewerage waste,
- the cutting of mangroves resulting in lost breeding grounds and lack of protection from storms,
- dredging and where the source of fill material will come from,
- beach erosion,
- possible destruction of the beautiful snorkeling grounds, and
- senior management jobs in these resorts are reserved for outsiders while the local people are employed for the menial jobs only.

The boundary between Placencia and Seine Bight was the first to be defined in the entire country. This has been the result of the enactment of the National Village Council Act that calls for village councils to become more financially self-sustained by collecting local taxes for their sustenance. The Ministry of Rural Development spearheaded this process. On March 16, 2005, the two Village Council Chairmen signed "An Agreement for a Geographical Location" that established the "Southern Border of the Marvinton Estate" as the "Northern Border of Placencia" and the "Southern Border of Seine Bight".

The persons interviewed in Placencia were:

Mr. Bryan Yearwood, Chairman, Village Council
Ms. Natalie Young, Office Administrator, Village Council
Mr. Dwight Neal, Technical Coordinator, Friends of Nature (FON)
Mr. Lindsey Garbutt, Executive Director, FON
Mr. David Vernon, Chairman, Placencia BTIA
Mr. Anthony Ramos, Education Department, Dangriga
Mr. Walter Garbutt, ITVET, Melinda Forest Station
P.C. Morris Rubio, Placencia Police Station
Mr. Rodney Griffith, Principal, St. John's Memorial Anglican School
Mr. Sidney Lopez, Chairman, Placencia Fishing Cooperative
Mr. Glen Eiley, Ex- Village Council Chairman

9.3 Cultural/Historical Resources in Peninsula Area and Surrounding Areas and Protected Areas Management

There are many inland protected areas of importance to the development of tourism in the district. These include the Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary, the Serpon Sugar Mill Historic Site and the Mayflower Bocawina National park. These sites offer a strong tourism potential for the nearby villages and can be valuable links to the proposed development to eventually offer direct benefits to the villagers, either in the form of employment, handicraft production and tour guiding.

Being a predominantly ethnically mixed community, these three villages have access to the culture of its people as the main cultural resource; from Garinagu to Creole and Hispanic, North American and Chinese cuisine and art. The residents of this area have a great potential to benefit from the tourism service opportunities that may arise from this proposed development. Even though there are no Maya sites in the close vicinity of these three villages, the Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary (CBWS) or Jaguar Reserve and Mayflower Bocawina National Park offer another opportunity for the youth to become specialized tour guides in ancient Maya Archaeology. Other opportunities for tour guiding are at the Sittee River Serpon Sugar Mill.

The Mayflower Bocawina National Park was established in 2001. This park has over 7000 acres of pristine lowland broadleaf forest, located in Belize's "saw-toothed" Maya Mountains. The park includes parts of Belize's first protected area, the Silk Grass Forest Reserve. The Park has two unexcavated Maya Temple Mounds (one of the few in the Stann Creek District) and vast amounts of flora and fauna can be seen along several miles of hiking trails. It has become a popular tourist attraction to the extent that over 16 tour operators and lodges offer trips to Mayflower. Jan Meerman et al concluded that the Park has an above average tourism attraction.

In 1984, the Cockscomb Basin Forest Reserve was declared as a "No Hunting" area to protect the natural prey of its resident jaguars. The Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary, with an area of 3,640 acres, was established in 1986 and in 1990 the area was expanded to 102,400 acres by the

Forest Department. Today this protected area is a world famous attraction to the eco-tourist visiting Belize. The main trails pass through various ecosystems that range from sea level to over 3000 ft at Victoria Peak. The Belize Audubon Society has a co-management agreement with the Forest Department and ensures that most employees of the Sanctuary are the indigenous Maya from Maya Center Village.

In Sittee River there is the Serpon Sugar Mill, one of the first sugar mills that were introduced into Belize by the American Confederates after the American Civil War. The two sugar mills were operational between 1863 and 1890. These mills were operated by locomotive steam engines imported from England and Scotland. In 1989 a group of concerned Sittee River residents and the Department of Archaeology saved the mills from destruction by bulldozers and the site was declared a National Historic Site. Today the site is managed by committee of local residents aptly called "The Pride of Sittee". With assistance from foreign and local donors, the site has a visitor's center, a picnic shelter, the Tapir Trail and rest rooms. The Tapir Trail is approximately one mile long and leads through tropical lowland forest, cohune ridge and a massive bamboo stand. Birding is excellent and jaguar and tapir tracks can be seen on many occasions.

9.4 Social Infrastructure and Services

9.4.1 Education/Health Services

Primary schools are available in Placencia and Seine Bight. Riversdale is the exception since even its primary school level students need to travel to Santa Cruz Government School and Hummingbird Mennonite School.

The students from these villages attend other distant communities with high schools and Junior Colleges, namely, Independence Village and Dangriga Town, respectively.

The Stann Creek District has three high schools (Delille, Ecumenical, and Independence High Schools) and one Junior College. Enrollment in 2006/2007 school year at the secondary schools in Stann Creek District totaled 1,815. Approximately 40 Primary School leavers from the three villages attend these high schools in Dangriga and Independence Village.

The enrollment at the Ecumenical Junior College for the current school year is 254 with the majority of students being females. Although there is no University Campus in the district, students do enroll at the Belmopan and Belize City Campuses of the University of Belize (UB); no data specific to the Stann District was available from the UB.

The Southern Regional Hospital is located in Dangriga which is approximately 36 miles of paved (24 miles) and dirt (12 miles) road from the development site. In case of major accidents, the patients need to be taken to Belize City where two more sophisticated hospitals offer twenty-four hour services. Among the three villages directly to be impacted by the development, only Seine Bight and Placencia have Health Centers; while Placencia has a resident physician and a nurse, Seine Bight has only a Nurse and a nurse helper.

Placencia has the following social amenities: cable TV, potable water and electricity, one Police

station, a very rudimentary fire control system (a pump with 250 ft of hose), airstrip, two church denominations, one Anglican Primary School, two telephone systems, many internet cafes, etc.

Table 9.3: Social Infrastructure/Amenities of Villages Impacted by Project.

Community	School	Fire Station	Police Station	Health Center	Church	Community Center	Cable TV	Internet Cafe
Seine Bight	1	0	1	1	2	1	1	yes
Maya Beach	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	yes
Riversdale	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Placencia	1	0*	1	1	2	1	1	Many

*= rudimentary fire control system

9.4.2 Labor and Employment

The Stann Creek District is highly dependent on two main activities: tourism and agriculture. Tourism visitors to the Stann Creek District are attracted for its scenic views, the cayes, the rainforest, archaeological sites and its world re-known Jaguar Reserve.

In 2006, the agriculture industry continues to contribute an important role in the economy of the Stann Creek District, particularly in the rural communities. Most of the agricultural production in this district is characterized by the export crops (citrus, bananas, papaya, cacao, and newly developed organically produced fruits) and subsistence farming. Most recently shrimp farming has taken a lead role in export production together with the aforementioned commodities

The employment situation in the Stann Creek District during 2003 - 2006 is shown in Table 9.4.

During the period 2003-2006, citrus prices have been increasing and tourism sector growing thus resulting in 80-85 % of the labor force being employed. The unemployed during the same period represented 10-13% of the available labor force. There is growing evidence as per interviews with the leaders of the three villages that the expansion of the tourism industry will take over this unemployed sector of the labor force in the district. The proposed development will contribute to the development of the tourism industry in the district. Job seekers represented 5-7% of the available labor force and are represented equally between the sexes. Male employment accounts for almost twice that of females during the same period.

There will be the need to give on-the-job training to some of these unskilled job seekers while it is also expected that skilled workers would come other parts of the country to fill in the jobs to be generated by the tourism and tourism-construction related boom in the Peninsula Area.

Table 9.4: Employment Data in the Stann Creek District during 2003-2006

Employment Situation	Total	Male	%	Female	%
a. Employed- 2003	8,880	5,984	67.4	2,994	33.7
b. Employed- 2005	10,419	7,167	68.8	3,252	31.2
c. Employed- 2006	10,909	6,890	63.2	4,019	36.8
a. Unemployed-2003	1,434	556	38.8	878	61.2
b. Unemployed- 2005	1,195	481	40.3	713	59.7
c. Unemployed- 2006	1,408	444	31.5	963	68.4
a. Job Seekers- 2003	746	366	49.1	380	50.9
b. Job Seekers- 2005	680	332	48.8	348	51.2
c. Job Seekers- 2006	889	389	43.8	500	56.2
a. Total Available Labor Force- '03	11,060				
b. Total Available Labor Force- '05	12,292				
c. Total Available Labor Force- '06	13006				

Source: Labour Force Survey by CSO in 2006

9.4.3 Communication Utilities

Communication and utilities are well established in the area with public and private telephones, fixed cellular phones, fax and email, and internet facilities. All three villages have 24-hour electricity and cable television, except for Riversdale. Potable water is not available only in Riversdale.

9.4.4 Roads and Transportation

The project site and surroundings are linked by the Southern Highway and main feeder roads running from the junction of the Southern Highway at Santa Cruz. Access to Dangriga is through the Southern Highway and the Hummingbird Highway while access to Belmopan City and Belize City is through the Hummingbird and Western Highways.

Traffic to the region of the proposed development has increased over the last few years due to the increasing population growth of the area and the increasing tourism activity, agriculture and shrimp production. The area is serviced by two bus lines, namely James Bus service and Southern Transport. The movement of cargo and fuel container vehicles from Belize City to Placencia has been on the increase in the Peninsula Area due to the construction boom. Even with the existing dirt road, there has been an increase in use of private vehicles to the Placencia tourist destinations. Since 2006, the GOB has approved the investment to pave the road from the Santa Cruz junction to the wharf in the village of Placencia

The nearest landing strip is located in Placencia Village and will service the proposed development. Another landing strip is the public one in Dangriga which is approximately 36 miles away.

9.4.5 Planning

Immigration

In-country migration to the area has been mostly from laborers from the Cayo and Toledo districts who are seeking jobs in the citrus, banana and shrimp farms. Their permanence and settlement in the area is limited by the lack of village lots. The Village Council authorities have not presented a plan for addressing this development issue of the area.

Hurricane Evacuation

The Stann Creek District, because of its physical location on the sea coast is one of the most vulnerable districts to hurricanes. The passing of several hurricanes in the country of which the first was Mitch in 1998, changed Belize's system of disaster management forever. The National System for Hurricane management has been placed in the mandate of the National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO). This national system has been designed to function from the national to the district and village level. After Hurricane Iris, the experience gained in addressing the hurricane preparedness issues was used to prepare a hurricane Preparedness Plan for these coastal villages in the Placencia peninsula. Each Village Council Chairman is responsible to put into effect and manage the Plan in case a hurricane threatens or strikes. The main issues in the Peninsula Area are security and evacuation.

The National Emergency Management Organization, NEMO, has upgraded its ability to deal with national disasters by the construction of a national headquarters in Belmopan, the establishment of a coordinated national body, with District Emergency Management Organizations. Annual exercises in hurricane preparedness are conducted, and attempts made at improvement of the system. Exercises include hurricane simulation, rescue and recovery exercises as well as evacuation of personnel.

9.5 The Tourism Sector in the Placencia Peninsula Area

In 2006, of the ten destinations identified by the BTB, Placencia Area placed 3rd in number of hotels and rooms, 4th in number of beds, 4th in number of tour operators and 5th in number of tour guides.

Comparing 2000 and 2006 tourism statistics between the Peninsula Areas and the rest of country, as can be seen in Table 9.5, except for the tour guide parameter, the Placencia Peninsula Area has grown at very high rates in the tourism industry. While these figures are good indicators for the level of investment, the BTB does not have segregated visitation figures for each of the ten destinations being monitored in order to determine market share.

Table 9.5: Comparative Tourism Industry Statistics in the Placencia Peninsula

Tourism Statistics - Placencia Peninsula Area			
	2000	2006	% Increase Peninsula/Country
# of Hotels	47/ 301	81/ 561	72/ 86
# of Rooms	298/ 4106	612/ 5789	105/ 41
# of Beds	472/ 7045	908/ 9651	92/ 37
#Tour-guides	83/ 929	78/ 1145	(9/ 23)
#Tour operators	22/ 129	28/ 197	27/ 53
Employees in Hotel Sub-sector	262/ 2769	576/ 4347	120/ 57
Countrywide			
Occupancy	41.7	42.9	2.88
% Labor	8-9%	13.70%	52.0
Over-night visitors	195,766	247,309	26.3
Cruise Visitors	58,131	655,929	128.0
Tourism Contribution to GDP	14.40%	16.80%	16.0

Source: BTB Annual Statistics for 2006, Feb, 2007

The current construction boom that is going on in the area reflects that tourism is growing at a very fast rate on the peninsula.

9.6 NGO and Public Interest

Prominent resident non-government or community-based organizations in the peninsula include the Friends of Nature, the BTIA-Placencia branch, the Placencia Fishermen Cooperative, the Peninsula Citizens for Sustainable Development and the Placencia Humane Society. The concerns of these NGOs/CBOs, both positive and negative, have also been summarized on previous sections of this assessment. Both the BTIA and the Fishing Cooperative have been discussed in previous sections of this social assessment.

Friends of Nature (FoN)

FoN is a conservation Non-Governmental Organization with its administrative offices located in the community of Placencia. Members of the board of the Friends of Laughing Bird Caye and Friends of Placencia Lagoon officially registered the organization in March 2002. FoN was formed through the amalgamation of those two existing community groups. The mission of the organization is: "Preserving and promoting the sustainability of marine resources, islands, and cayes for our children and the country of Belize". FoN co-manages Gladden Spit and Silk Cayes Marine Reserve with the Fisheries Department and Laughing Bird Caye National Park with the Forestry Department.



Photos by: Rachel Graham

FoN maintains deep roots in the community. Their constituency includes the six coastal villages in the central southern region of Belize. The six communities are: Hopkins, Sittee River, Seine Bight, Placencia, Independence and Monkey River. The Chairperson of each Village Council sits on FoN's Board of Directors, which also includes representatives from other key stakeholder groups. FoN's motto is "Protecting our natural resources by developing our human resources".

The Peninsula Citizens for Sustainable Development (PCSD)

The PCSD is a Belizean non-profit corporation and grass roots community organization of Placencia Peninsula residents concerned with the rapid, and often poorly planned and executed, development of the Peninsula. PCSD seeks to bring information about proposed developments to Peninsula residents to ensure that all developments are environmentally sustainable with respect to water quality and mangrove protection of

the fragile eco-systems of the Peninsula and its communities and cultures.

The Placencia Humane Society

Until 1999, pet owners on the Placencia Peninsula could only obtain care for their pets by transporting them to Belize City, or waiting for sporadic visits by veterinarians from other parts of the country. The Placencia Humane Society was formed in 1999 primarily to respond to the need for regular veterinary care on the Peninsula. Today, the Placencia Humane Society has expanded well beyond its original purpose and now offers temporary emergency shelter for stray and injured pets, no-interest loans to area residents who need help caring for their pets, spaying and neutering clinics for feral cats, and is now in the process of raising funds to build a permanent clinic facility on land leased from the Placencia Village Council.