

## 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

RIU International hotel chain proposes to develop and operate a four hundred and twenty (420)-room hotel in Bloody Bay Negril adjacent to (1000 m) an existing RIU property (RIU Tropical Bay). The project entails construction of four blocks of 3 story rooms, but no more than 9 meters in height with independent kitchen, dinning and entertainment complexes. The construction phase will employ 600 to 1200 skilled and unskilled labourers and completion is estimated in 12 months. The operational phase will employ approximately 400 staff at 80% occupancy and will employ widely accepted water conservation strategies such as low volume toilets, aerated showerhead and faucets as well as landscape irrigation using grey water. No coastal structures have been proposed for the development and therefore no recommendations are presented herewith. Jamaican environmental requirements are itemised and strongly recommended with special reference to the Negril/Green Island Development Order, the NRCA act, and the green paper on Environmental Protection Areas.

There are no rivers or streams within the study area, and the main road (Normal Manley Boulevard) to the east of the site, is elevated above the nearby Negril Swamp further to the east. As such storm water from road runoff represents the major hydrological feature within the proposed site. The Bloody Bay area hosts a combination of ruinate coastal scrub with a few endemic flora species (*Roystonea princeps* and *Hohenbergia negrilensis*). Avifauna was surprisingly sparse with only six endemic species that were all common residents or very common residents of the area. Terrestrial fauna present were also indicative of a low sensitivity low diversity community typical of coastal scrub classification.

The marine environment is characterized by a shallow decline in topography from land to sea dominated by extensive seagrass meadows, interspersed with patches of sand and a few coral heads. While the marine community appears moderately healthy, the reef systems show signs of stress and much of the area falls within the recently demarcated fish sanctuary to the north of the site. Water quality and algal proliferation indicate some nutrient enrichment however, coral and vertebrate diversity confirm moderate environmental health. Erosion analysis and storm surge predictions indicate 10 to 100 year events would inundate the site and result in significant loss of

shoreline. However, observations and information available refutes these calculations since such levels of inundation and erosion have never been recorded.

Tourism is by far the major employer in the Negril and surrounding community and as such a new development of the magnitude of RIU is viewed with mixed responses where unemployment can be as high as 57%. This is especially important in a social impact area where the age group 15 to 29 is the dominant group and the population education mode is still primary only. Responses from residents within the study area indicate concerns related to beach access, competition especially for small hoteliers and limited benefits to the community due to the all-inclusive nature of the hotel. Others saw the development as an employment boost and a potential for increase in business.

Recent infrastructure developments such as improvements in the Negril sewage system and UDC efforts encourage developments such as RIU as Negril attempts to increase market share in the Jamaican tourism landscape where as third largest visitor accommodation resort it enjoys only 21% of island wide accommodation. RIU aims to target the European market as the resort chain has at other properties that should reduce competition with existing Negril properties where the North American market provides the major clientele. It is estimated that with the addition of the proposed RIU development, even with 100% occupancy and with local resident use neither the ecological carrying capacity nor the tourist social carrying capacity of Bloody Bay would be exceeded.

The Negril community is environmentally proactive and any development encounters scrutiny and participation to protect the environment. This resource and interest should be encouraged and employed within the identification of alternatives and implementation of a monitoring plan. Sensitive issues have been identified which include the proposed fish sanctuary, stands of mangrove and parking to the east of the main road on the edge of the great morass. Alternatives are suggested to address these issues, which range from adjustment of proposed fish sanctuary boundaries with negotiation to no development of parking adjacent to the morass and alternative

sites identified. An environmental management plan and suggested monitoring programme have been devised to allow continued best management practices within construction and operation and even assisting in the value of the final tourism product. Several mitigative strategies have been suggested which can be employed within both the construction and operational phase to improve the environmental ethics of the development with minimal loss in construction time and little change in construction cost. In the RIU development there exists an opportunity for development in an environmentally acceptable framework where partnerships may be fostered with long term mutually beneficial results.