



**November 22, 2017**  
**Kingston, Jamaica**  
**For Immediate Release**

## **Cockpit Country Stakeholders welcome announcement by Prime Minister**

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The Cockpit Country Stakeholders Group (CCSG) is encouraged by the declaration made yesterday by Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness at a sitting of the House of Representatives, that over 74,000 hectares of land will be designated as the Cockpit Country Protected Area and closed to mining under the Mining Act.

This long-awaited announcement of the decision to formally protect one of Jamaica's most biologically and socio-culturally important areas, comes after 37,568 Jamaicans made their support for the area known through the new Jamaica House online petition portal, and by signing hard copy petitions. The *Save Cockpit Country* Campaign galvanised nationwide support for stewardship of the area in the interest of its residents and all the people of Jamaica.

The CCSG welcomed the Prime Minister's announcement that a management plan will be developed for the Cockpit Country Protected Area, and that any development or mining activity in the zone immediately surrounding the protected area will be subject to rigorous review, including by Cabinet. The group is also heartened by the Government's stated commitment to ensure appropriate funding will be provided, and greater attention paid to enforcement of environmental laws.

The CCSG is, however, concerned that the proposed boundary does not adequately protect the important water resources of Cockpit Country. Specifically, the north-eastern section of the boundary excludes sources of the Rio Bueno river system. The southern boundary excludes Nassau Mountains and its sinks and spring risings; these eventually reach the Black River. It appears a mining lease has already been granted for this area.

The CCSG will now request detailed maps of the boundary as presented by the Prime Minister for review. The CCSG also intends to lobby for adequate buffer zones for the protected area.

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## **SAVE COCKPIT COUNTRY CONTACTS**

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