



**For Immediate Release**  
**May 30, 2019**  
**Cockpit Country, Jamaica**

## **BAUXITE MINING STILL THREATENS COCKPIT COUNTRY - JET**

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The Jamaica Environment Trust (JET) is growing increasingly alarmed at the activities of bauxite mining companies taking place next to the designated Cockpit Country Protected Area (CCPA) boundary. JET says it appears that the Government of Jamaica (GOJ) is placing interests of bauxite companies ahead of the welfare of Jamaican citizens and the safeguarding of their livelihoods and Jamaica's natural resources.

"Bauxite mining is expanding in Cockpit Country communities in St Ann and Trelawny which have been left out of the protected area" said Suzanne Stanley, Chief Executive Officer of JET. "The absence of information from the government and these bauxite companies operating near the CCPA boundary has made what is already a bad situation, worse."

At a recent meeting with Cockpit Country communities in Gibraltar, St Ann hosted by JET on May 16, residents of Gibraltar, Madras, Barnstaple in St Ann explained that no one from the GOJ or mining company has met with them since early 2018. These communities fall under an active bauxite mining lease - Special Mining Lease (SML) 172 - held by Noranda Bauxite (New Day Aluminum) since 2017. Residents reported that they have observed the rapid expansion of the activities of the mining company in their area over the last year. Bauxite mining is not only degrading their land and displacing residents, dust from the mining operations is also increasingly threatening their health and polluting their water supply.

JET has also received reports from Cockpit Country communities closer to the designated protected area boundary (Alps, Sawyers and Ulster Spring in Trelawny) that Noranda has been hosting what the company has termed "Voluntary Public Consultation Meetings" towards the preparation of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for a new bauxite mining lease (SML 173), which they obtained in late 2018; that mining lease will allow Noranda to mine bauxite right up to the edge of the CCPA. "Noranda provided very clear details at the meeting in Ulster Spring and Sawyers as to where mining will take place under SML 173," said Hugh Dixon, Executive Director of the Southern Trelawny Environmental Agency (STEA). "These communities are in objection to the mining because the area is Cockpit Country and defined geologically as having Cockpit Karst limestone topography...the area is where they live and produce crops, and has historic and archaeological value," he asserted.

JET's efforts to get information from the GOJ on the CCPA and bauxite mining near the protected area have produced little results. JET's September 2018 request for a copy of the agreement between the GOJ and New Day Aluminum (Noranda) from the Ministry of Transport and Mining using the Access to Information (ATI) Act has received no response. The decision of Jamaica's ATI Tribunal is also still pending on JET's May 31, 2018 appeal regarding the Forestry Department's failure to provide access to files used to create maps of the CCPA. These maps were presented in Parliament by Jamaican Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness during his November 2017 announcement of the CCPA boundary.

"The citizens of Jamaica deserve an explanation from the government about what is happening on the ground in Cockpit Country" said Stanley. "It appears that little progress has been made towards protecting Cockpit Country under Jamaican law, meanwhile bauxite mining is moving ever closer to the protected area boundary and threatening the welfare and livelihoods of surrounding communities."

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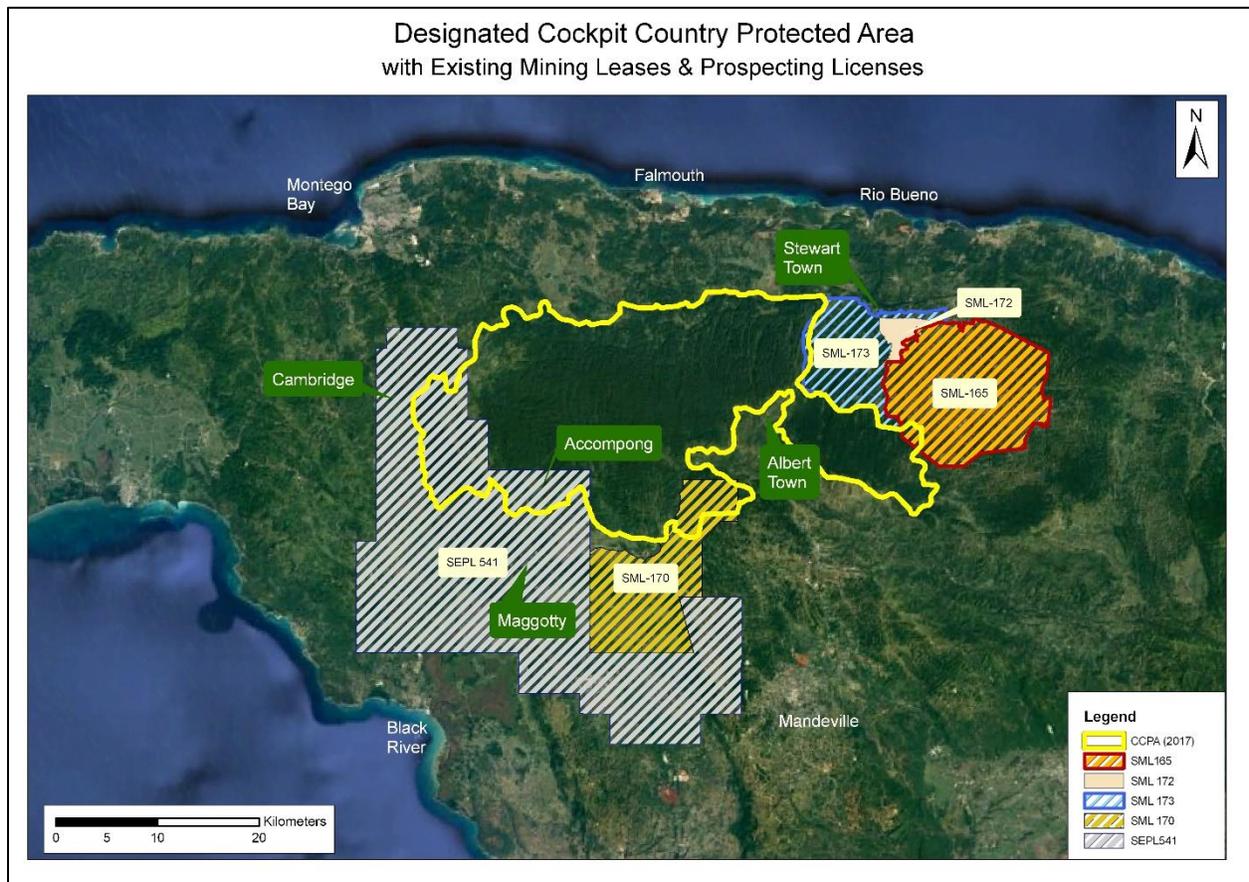
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*Dust from bauxite mining operations in Gibraltar, St Ann increasingly threatens residents' health and water supply*



*Photo of a bauxite pit being reclaimed in Caledonia, St Ann. Bauxite mining in degrades land, displaces residents and disrupts livelihoods*