

Ashton Lagoon Restoration:

A Case Study of Stakeholder Collaboration and Public Private Funding for Supporting Resilience in St Vincent and the Grenadines



Presenter: Orisha Joseph, Executive Director
Sustainable Grenadines Inc (SusGren)



SusGren ...Who are we?

The Sustainable Grenadines Inc (SusGren) is a trans-boundary non-governmental organization (NGO) registered in Grenada and St. Vincent and the Grenadines and was an original project of the UWI-CERMES from 2002 – 2010.

Administration: Skeleton Staff, Consultants, Interns
Focus: Project Development and Implementation
(Administrative funding)

It was based on the idea that the Grenadines, civil society partners are the least able to participate in bringing about change that is equitable and lasting.

They are also least able to access the benefits of development.



Why Ashton Lagoon



Largest mangrove ecosystem in the entire St. Vincent and the Grenadines, located on Union Island (Forestry department)

Marine Conservation Area – Under the Fisheries Division Act of 1986 and National Parks Authority (System Plans on Protected Areas – 2008)

Frigate Island - National Heritage Site (National Trust)

Listed as an Important Birding Area (IBA) – (BirdLife International 2008)

Important access route – local fishers, water taxi operators

Important for Climate Change adaptation (carbon sequestration) and sea level rise. Protected the coastal of the west side on Union Island twice during two catastrophic hurricane 2004 & 2024

Important for livelihoods and economic development (seamoss farming, birding, Kite surfing, tours etc)

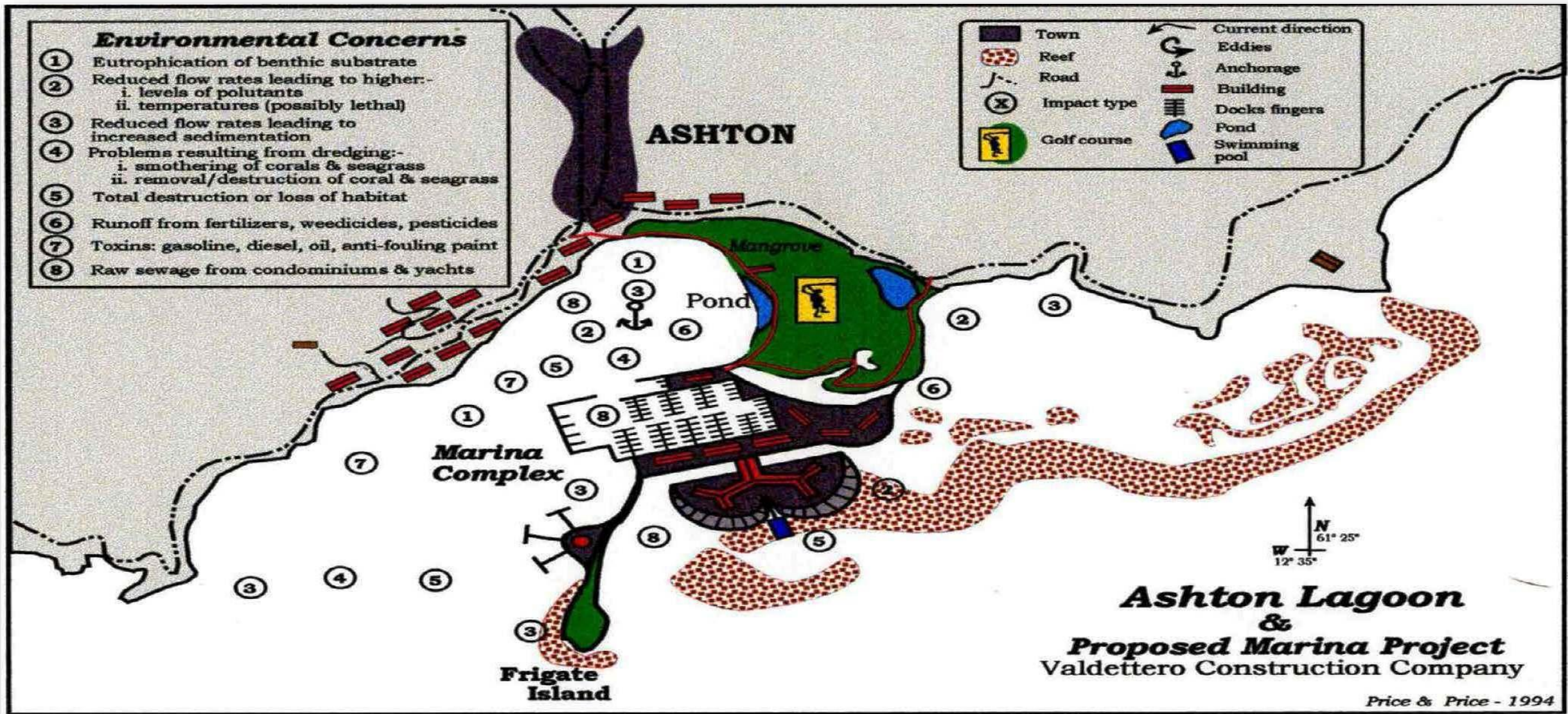


Figure 4. Ashton Lagoon with proposed Ashton Marina Project showing the areas of environmental concern.
(from Price & Price, 1994c)



Project Objective

- Restore ecological function of Ashton Lagoon
- Strengthen coastal resilience to storms and sea-level rise
- Mobilize a collaborative financing package combining public and private funds
- Build local capacity for long-term stewardship

Initial Challenges



- SusGren received government approval in February 2015 (after losing funding from NMBCA in November 2014)
- SusGren and partners started to work on finding other funding to continue the restoration work, this was came about in 2016, but only got off the ground in 2018.
- Persuading a Government oversight committee to approve planning documents
- Keeping the community engaged and interested



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Accomplishments / Activities



1. Restoration to included breaching of seven (7) areas in the marina pier structure to allow for the circulation of water in an out of the Lagoon for improved water quality to benefit avian and marine life .

2. Restoration of mangrove forest by installing three swale system to facilitate the exchange of water in and out of the mangrove forest. The excavated material was used to create additional bird habitat.

3. Conducted mangrove restoration of re-planting 3,000 red mangroves in the 'die-back' area of the mangrove forest.

4. Constructed SusGren office and interpretive centre.

5. Constructed two bird watching tower to encourage bird monitoring/watching among locals and visitors alike.

6. Constructed two over the water wooden swing bridges to facilitate pedestrian crossing

7. Conducted the CBT Interpretive Guide Training workshop for participants of Grenada and St. Vincent and the Grenadines hosted by BirdsCaribbean

8. Established a Community Researchers Program to conducted ongoing biophysical monitoring to include bird monitoring, water quality monitoring, coral and fish monitoring and mangroves



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Breaching of Gaps for water circulation



Before Restoration



After Restoration - Tourism Marketing Tool



Before and After Restoration



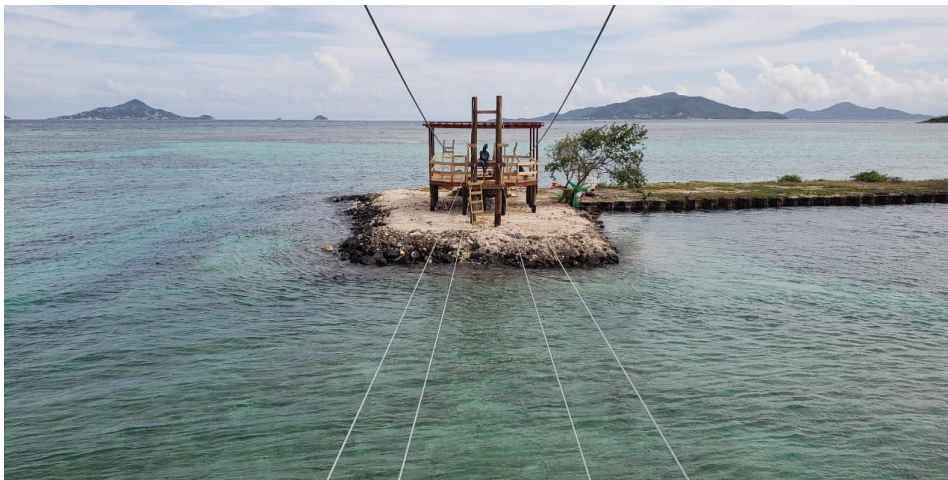
Before restoration, you can see the eutrophication and turbidity



After restoration, improved turbidity and almost cleared of algal bloom, water circulation is occurring



Double bridges at Ashton Lagoon for pedestrian access



Swale system to allow the exchange of oxygenated water in mangrove forest





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Community engaged in mangrove restoration (nursery maintenance and out-planting)



Bird watching towers



Economic activities (Kayaking, Kite Surfing, Apiculture & Seamoss Farming)





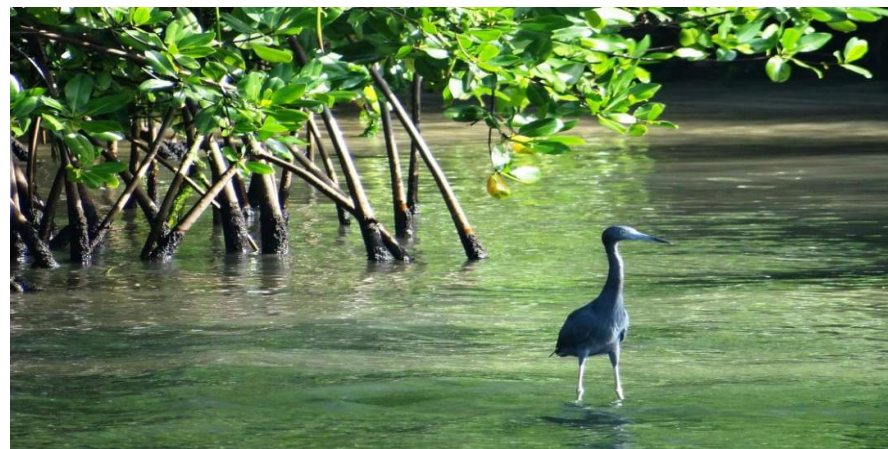
Recreation (swimming, yoga, leisure, social gatherings)



Research, Conservation, Education, Awareness etc



Thriving bird population and diversity



Ashton Lagoon Restoration - Blended Finance Mix

Type	Partner	Contribution	Purpose
Public	Government of SVG	Provided co-finance through in-kind	This included permitting, oversight, and technical support
Private	The Philip Stephenson Foundation	Direct investment	Phase I – Restoration and Eco-trail
Donor	International donors	Grants	Restoration works, training, monitoring
Community	Local fishers, youth (Schools),	In-kind labor & materials	Planting (mangrove and corals), maintenance, community engagement

After hurricane Berly 2024



Lessons Learned

Structural resistance matters – Reconstruction should not just restore what was lost, but improve upon it: higher standards, more resilient design, thoughtful location.

Integrate Disaster Risk Reduction into EbA Project Planning - Strengthen local capacity for monitoring and recovery, establish an insurance/emergency fund. (6 mth – 1yr)

Mental health and livelihoods need attention

– Loss of homes, boats, livelihoods (fishing, tourism) has wide consequences. Psychological impacts are real. Recovery must include support (financial, emotional) for people who lost not just physical assets but sense of security.

– ***Diversification*** of livelihoods could reduce dependence on a single sector that's vulnerable (e.g. fishing being highly exposed).

Thank you! ☺

twitter: sus_gren
IG: susgreninc
FB: Sustainable Grenadines
Email: susgreninc@gmail.com
Tel: 1 784 497 1172

