

Celebrating a Decade of Growth

The first decade of the 21st century marked a period of change in the Jamaican environmental management landscape. It saw the establishment and growth of a unique professional organization that sought to bring together persons from diverse disciplines for a common cause - the judicious management of the Jamaican environment. Thus, the Jamaica Institute of Environmental Professionals (JIEP) was formed in March 2000 with 25 members at its inaugural annual general meeting. Prof Ivan Goodbody as the first honorary member addressed the gathering on the need for and the role of the environmental professional in Jamaica. Over the decade the JIEP has grown to 163 registered members and has witnessed the increasing acceptance of the environmental professional as a legitimate and invaluable component of the national development process.

During the past decade we have seen both globally and locally the subject of the environment become more mainstream with businesses, governments and individuals adopting greener practices in an effort to play their part in protecting the environment. With more persons being directly affected by natural (hurricanes, floods, earthquakes) and manmade (increased emissions, water pollution, overpopulation) occurrences and with the media reporting more frequently on environmental issues, the need for an organization such as the JIEP becomes more critical.

Since its inception the JIEP has provided a forum for highlighting environmental issues of local and global concern. Through partnerships with various organizations such as the Environment Action Programme (ENACT), the Environmental Foundation of Jamaica (EFJ), Jamaica Promotions Corporation (JAMPRO), the Private Sector Development Programme (PSDP) and the Institute of Professional Environmental Practice (IPEP) the JIEP has carried out its mission “to maintain high standards of professionalism among its members in order to improve environmental management capacity and practice in Jamaica”. These and other organizations have provided support and facilitated the development of environmental codes of practice, public awareness programmes, speaker fora and conferences. Support was also provided for capacity building through the development of the JIEP website, the launch of the Caribbean Association of Environmental Professionals (CAEP) and the establishment of the JIEP Secretariat at Environmental House (Forestry Department). The JIEP also undertook to support the professional development of its members through the adoption of IPEP’s QEP/EPI professional certification programme. In addition to these various programmes the JIEP has played its part in influencing public policy through serving on various national committees, working with the private sector and reviewing policy documents.

In June of this year, during National Environmental Awareness Week, the JIEP will be hosting its 5th Biennial Conference on the Environment under the theme “Balancing National Development and Environmental Protection”. The JIEP is working closely with the Jamaica Conservation and Development Trust (JCDDT) and Green Expo to focus public attention on the Jamaican environment through oral and poster presentations, organized field trips and exhibitions, all designed to raise awareness and encourage dialogue on this important topic.

A debt of gratitude is owed by the JIEP to all those organizations that provided support in various forms over the past ten years. The JIEP also appreciate and value the contributions of the members and non-members who have given of their time and talent in various forms to nurture, support and promote the work of the JIEP, particularly those who participated in the various activities, served on various committees and our past and present council members. Special recognition is due to the past JIEP Presidents who have provided exemplary foresight and leadership over the past decade and whose dedication to the vision is responsible for the JIEP existence today.

In closing, I would like to throw out the challenge to all environmental professionals for the next decade, to continue to perform to the highest standards, to continue to contribute to the sound management of the Jamaican environment and to give your words meaning by acting upon them.

Marcia Creary
President 2010-2012