

GRAEME HALL NATURE SANCTUARY, INC.

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Canadian cries foul over Barbados Government endangerment of key wetlands

[*Ottawa, CANADA* Dec. 3, 2009] Peter Allard, the Canadian owner of an eco-tourist facility in Barbados, has filed a complaint against the Government of Barbados alleging it violated its international environmental treaty obligations at Graeme Hall Swamp.

The Graeme Hall wetland is a Caribbean flyway stop for migratory birds between North and South America. The Sanctuary, located entirely within the wetland, is home to some of the heaviest concentrations of biodiversity on the island, and has been a major environmental education centre for children, adults and visitors. It is recognized internationally under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar).

Since 1994 Mr. Allard has invested more than \$35 million (US) in the 35-acre Sanctuary to preserve the last significant mangrove woodland and wetland on the island.

His complaint filed this week with the Ministry of the Environment alleged that Barbados has violated both the Convention on Wetlands and the Convention on Biodiversity. The complaint alleges that for over a decade, de-facto policies have been adopted that increase pollution, encourage high density land development, and ignore environmental stakeholder interests within the site.

Despite a 6,000 signature petition by citizens of Barbados to create a 240-acre national park at Graeme Hall, a new government zoning policy calls for commercial and residential development for the majority of the area.

“Even without the impending development, the wetland has already experienced increasing fish and crab kills in recent years along with unpredictable water levels and toxic algae blooms,” said Peter Allard, an ardent environmentalist. “We have requested assistance and offered technical and financial help to the Government of Barbados since the 1990s to help correct years of government-run sluice gate and pollution mismanagement.”

The complaint also alleges that government dumped raw sewage by the South Coast Sewage Treatment Plant into the Ramsar wetland contrary to international law and its agreement with international lenders who financed the plant.

A copy can be viewed at: www.graemehall.com/legal/papers/Ramsar-Complaint.pdf

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Additional Information:

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