

**STATEMENT
RE BLUE FLAG CERTIFICATION FOR PORT LOUIS
CAMPER & NICHOLSON MARINA IN GRENADA**

Citizens in Defense of Grenada's Lands and Heritage understand that the Port Louis Camper & Nicholson marina has applied for Blue Flag certification.

It is our understanding that the Blue Flag Programme:

- i. is "an exclusive, voluntary eco-label for beaches and marinas.
- ii. is given to beaches and marinas that meet a specific set of criteria concerning environmental information and education, water quality, safety and services and environmental management.
- iii. has become a symbol of quality recognized by tourists and tour operators."

We understand "eco-label" to imply:

- i. informed by a credible and thorough environmental impact assessment;
- ii. respect for the natural and physical heritage;
- iii. minimizing the environmental footprint.

Port Louis Camper & Nicholson marina is an integral part of the Port Louis development, around which there has been and continues to be many concerns and controversy in respect of its environmental and social impact. Given that the Blue flag certification is an "eco-label", permit us to share the following concerns and reservations in respect of the Port Louis Camper & Nicholson marina.

1. Planned Destruction of the Lagoon Park area:

The Lagoon Park is an area of green public space in boundary with what is locally called the Lagoon, that sea space now under the ownership and control of Camper & Nicholson. Representatives of Camper & Nicholson have publicly claimed that planned consent has already been granted for the destruction of this "green space" to facilitate plans to develop additional yacht berths or residential property on an area of the Lagoon Park.

The destruction of the Lagoon Park and the deprivation of access to this space is a very contentious issue for locals. Concerned persons took the opportunity to bring this matter to the public's attention with a street march as part of Labour Day celebrations in May 2008.

For nearly a year, we have noted the dredged and dumped material in the vicinity of the largest expanse of park area. We have heard explanations that the area will be temporarily filled in to form a firm base to facilitate the operation of equipment. We do not understand why this should be necessary when there is a barge operating in the area which can facilitate the operation of equipment.

We also recall that we heard similar claims from the Port Louis developer when the marina facilities were being developed. He made similar claims about the temporary nature of the filling of another area when the public raised concerns. That area has turned out to be very, very permanent.

That dumped material has also contributed significantly to marine pollution when it was washed into the Lagoon area during the periods of heavy rainfall which were experienced during our rainy season.

It is ironic that the Camper & Nicholson marina has planted trees to improve and enhance the ambiance of the reclaimed area in the vicinity of its mega yacht berthing but it maintains plans to destroy the green space of the Lagoon Park which serves a public recreation area.

2. Dredging and Land Reclamation in the Ballast Ground area to create mega yacht berths:

Considerable dredging has been undertaken to facilitate the construction of mega yacht berths. The dredging and reclamation has :

- (i) destroyed an area that was a breeding ground for fish stock, conch and lobster

(ii) increased the vulnerability of the Carenage commercial area (owned and occupied, for the most part, by local businesses), and the port area to flooding from storm surges and other extreme events now that the Ballast Ground area has been reclaimed and built up.

3. The Ballast ground was an area which played a significant part in dissipating storm waves and mitigating any effect of these waves on flooding in the Carenage area. In an era of climate change and sea level rise, the significance of that now dredged area to the safety and security of a key commercial area and commercial infrastructure cannot be overlooked.

(iii) destroyed the sand bank which protected the inner lagoon

(iv) has interfered with the natural flushing process which maintained the water quality of the inner Lagoon.

4. Failure to Implement Best Practices and Mitigating Measures:

During the dredging and land reclamation to create mega berths, silt plumes could be seen extending southwards in the direction of the Pandy and Grand Anse beaches with potential negative impact on the adjoining reefs. The presence of silt plumes seemed to suggest that best practices and mitigating measures such as silt traps were either not employed or were inadequate.

5. Sewage Disposal:

We note that the arrangements to facilitate sewage disposal in the marina are woefully inadequate, disrespectful to residents of the Lagoon area and in disharmony with the environment. Indeed, we are at a loss to understand how our Ministry of Health could have turned a blind eye to the erection of 2 plastic holding tanks for sewage next to someone's residence!

Furthermore, what is the fate of this sewage when it is pumped out of the holding tanks? Is it transferred to another location where it is duly treated before it is disposed of? Or is the responsibility simply transferred to the local authority which does not have adequate facilities to treat before disposal? Is the Port Louis Camper & Nicholson marina merely transferring the sewage and responsibility for its proper disposal elsewhere?

6. Destruction of the Islander Headland:

The St. George's harbour is internationally renowned for its natural beauty. The characteristic horse shoe shaped harbour has been described as "one of the prettiest natural harbours in the world". It was one of the sights that yachts people and persons coming in on the cruise liners never forgot!

Locals and visitors alike have regarded with horror the destruction of the land mark Islander headland, one of the twin headlands which guard(ed) the entrance to the harbour. We are still trying to determine the purpose for such extensive destruction of a natural feature which would both protect and enhance the aesthetic value of any marina in the area.

7. Conflict of Interest and the Environmental Impact Assessment:

To the best of our knowledge, there were no opportunities for public scrutiny of the Environmental Impact Assessment.

We also suggest that the integrity of the approval process could have been compromised since the former chairman of the planning authority was also a service provider for the Port Louis developer. Did the physical development of the Port Louis Camper & Nicholas marina conform to the planning regulations of the country? If it did not, has/is any action being taken to address this?

It is commendable that the Camper & Nicholson marina should be seeking Blue Flag certification. It is the opinion of Citizens in Defence of Grenada's Lands and Heritage that the above-referenced concerns ought to be of great significance and relevance to a certification process which will result in an "eco-label" which is "exclusive" and a "symbol of quality". Should these concerns not be adequately addressed the integrity of the Blue Flag status could well be compromised.

St. George's, Grenada
March 16th, 2008

