



# ANNUAL REPORT

2021

BKHC



 **BELIZE KARST**  
HABITAT CONSERVATION





## TABLE OF *contents*

3	Message from Executive Director
4	Mission and Vision Statement
5	History of BKHC
6-7	BKHC Board of Directors
8-9	Patrols Done in the Reserve
10	Acknowledgments
11-12	Financial Summary



# Message from Executive Director

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As the pandemic is coming to an end, and our country and the rest of the world is starting to achieve some level of normalcy, the future now seems bright for the Tapir Mountain Nature Reserve. Our goal to achieve effective management is well on its way, as we are now able to attend in-person workshops and meetings. We have also resumed our foot patrol in the reserve since we are now able to move around freely. This has enabled us to see the effects of the illegal activities in the park as poaching and illegal logging was at an all-time high during the period of the pandemic.

Unfortunately, we have identified a new danger to the forest, which comes in the form of forest fires. Most of the buffer land on the north-east side of the reserve are owned by small farmers. The cheapest way for these farmers to clear their land is to use the slash and burn method. As we assess the damage the wildfires have caused to the north-east part of the reserve, it is a clear indication that we need to prepare and put into place a fire management action plan.

During the dry season, we took advantage of the accessibility to make our way deeper into the reserve by utilizing small logging roads. We were filled with hope and resilience as we encountered some of the indicator species such as the jaguar, tapir, wild pigs, and some of the game birds in only a single visit. This proves that Tapir Mountain is still worth fighting for. As the threat of illegal human activity grows, so must our presence in the reserve.

We have been building our capacity at an institutional level, and by doing so, we will be able to apply for funding to meet our goals for next year. We have also been doing a lot of networking with other NGOs and learning a lot from them in the process. We have identified 2 grants that we will be applying for so we can build a ranger station and hire and equip a set of 3 rangers. This will be a giant step towards the effective management and development of the Tapir Mountain Nature Reserve. I strongly believe that the year 2022 will bring about great progress for BKHC and the Tapir Mountain.

Best Regards,

Aaron Juan  
Executive Director  
Belize Karst Habitat Conservation

*"Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, ambition inspired, and success achieved."*

*~ Helen Keller*

# Belize Karst Habitat Mission and Vision Statement

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## **Mission Statement:**

BKHCP's mission is to promote sustainable development of Belize's natural resources through innovative management of the Tapir Mountain Nature Reserve for the benefit of all Belizeans.



## **Vision Statement:**

We are an innovative, dynamic and progressive community-based conservation organization with a global perspective that is committed to inspire people to sustainably develop Belize's environment through tourism, education, research, and sustainable management of its resources.





# History of

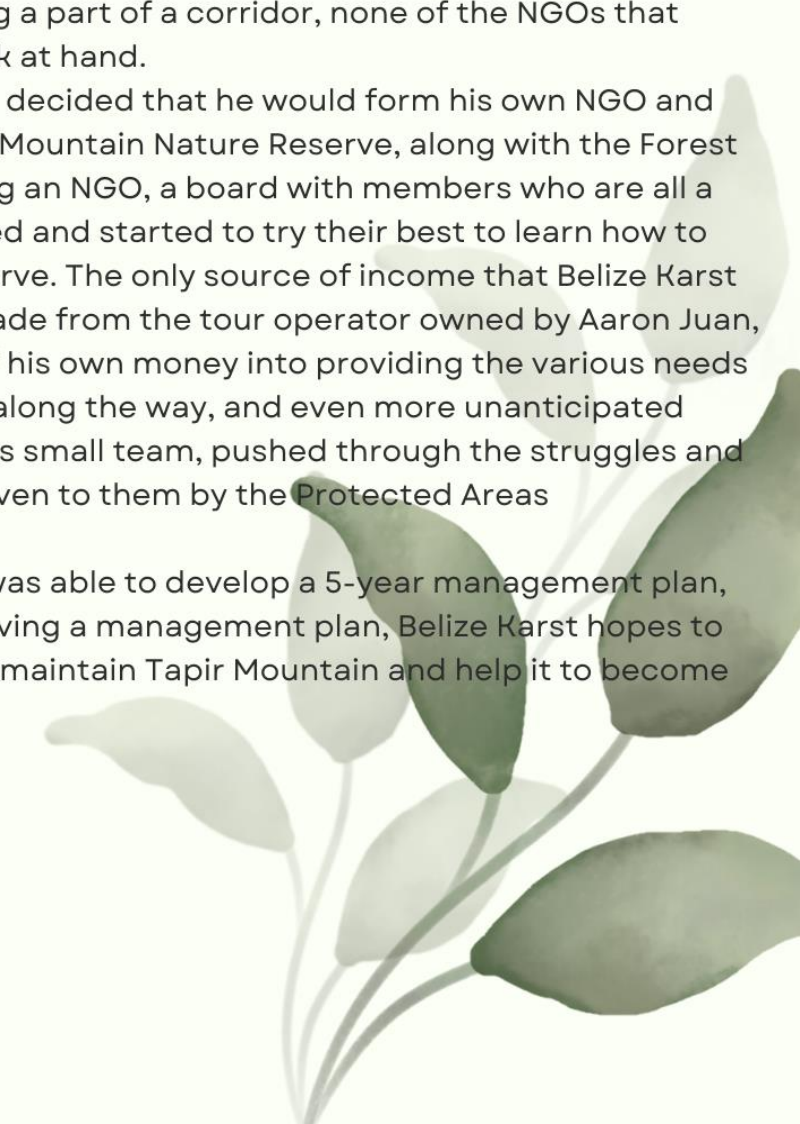
## BELIZE KARST HABITAT CONSERVATION

The Executive Director of Belize Karst Habitat Conservation, Aaron Juan, accompanied the first archeologists who discovered the Actun Tunichil Muknal (ATM) cave site, located in Teakettle Village. This cave site is directly in front of the Tapir Mountain Nature Reserve. From a very young age, Aaron has always had a love for animals and nature. He owned many different pets and took immensely good care of each of them. Being a tour guide for over 20 years has increased his exposure to nature. In addition, developing a newfound love for birding has opened his eyes even more towards the delicacy that nature entails and the importance of preserving and nurturing it.

Aaron quickly realized that there was an overwhelming amount of logging and illegal hunting occurring in the Tapir mountain Nature Reserve. Sadly, there was no management entity to properly manage the reserve in order to stop the illegal activities that were occurring. Different NGOs were then approached and asked if they would like to take up the task of managing Tapir Mountain so that the illegal activities could come to an end. However, due to Tapir Mountain being too small, not being a National Park, and not being a part of a corridor, none of the NGOs that were approached did not want to take up the task at hand.

Feeling momentarily defeated, Aaron decided that he would form his own NGO and undergo the challenge of co-managing the Tapir Mountain Nature Reserve, along with the Forest Department. Having no experience with managing an NGO, a board with members who are all a part of the tourism industry, in Belize, were formed and started to try their best to learn how to properly manage the Tapir Mountain Nature Reserve. The only source of income that Belize Karst Habitat Conservation had was from donations made from the tour operator owned by Aaron Juan, Mayawalk Tours. He placed countless amounts of his own money into providing the various needs that Belize Karst had. Many mistakes were made along the way, and even more unanticipated setbacks occurred, however, Aaron, along with his small team, pushed through the struggles and were able to obtain their first grant, which was given to them by the Protected Areas Conservation Trust (PACT).

With this grant, Belize Karst Habitat was able to develop a 5-year management plan, and clear and demarcate its border lines. Now having a management plan, Belize Karst hopes to be able to achieve more financial help to run and maintain Tapir Mountain and help it to become partially self sustaining.



## Belize Karst Habitat Conservation Board of Directors

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The Board of Directors for Belize Karst Habitat Conservation consists of 7 individuals who each have varying skills, talents, and experience in environmental conservation, tourism, and management. They each play a paramount role in ensuring that Tapir Mountain is effectively co-managed with the Forest Department.



**Aaron Juan**  
Executive Director



**Philip Balderamos**  
President



**Ed Boles**  
Vice President



**Belize Karst Habitat Conservation Board of Directors (Cont.)**

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**Vicki Snaddon**  
Secretary



**Emily Bull**  
Board Member



**Francis Canto**  
Board Member



**Nicola Buxton**  
Treasurer



# *Patrols Done in Reserve*

A total of 12 patrols were done at Tapir Mountain Nature Reserve in the year 2021. One patrol per month was scheduled to try and stop some of the illegal activities that occur in the reserve. Some of these patrols were with the Forest Department and other patrols included some of the board members, along with Aaron. The following activities were done during the patrols:

- All the boundary lines of Tapir Mountain Nature Reserve were patrolled.
- A few carcasses from wild pigs were noted.
- A few hunting camps were found and destroyed.
- Some old stumps were found from illegal logging that occurred in the past.
- Active hunting and logging trails were found, which shows that a physical presence is needed in the reserve on a permanent basis, rather than sporadically, like what is currently being done.
- Data collection and recording of birds and wildlife that can be found in the reserve was done on the different patrols that occurred, so that a data base can start to be developed.









## Acknowledgments

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Belize Karst Habitat Conservation would like to extend its deepest gratitude to the following stakeholders and allies that has helped it in different ways during 2021.

Belize Bird Rescue and Pook's Hill allowed the members of Karst to have several meetings at their establishments, and they were a wonderful host for these meetings. The National Biodiversity Office offered workshops that members of Karst were able to attend and learn valuable information on their journey of effectively managing the nature reserve. APAMO greatly helped BKHC to learn about different documents and forms that needed to be prepared and filled. They remained constantly available to answer any questions or concerns that the members of Karst had and provided great information that assisted with forming a more efficient internal structure.

PACT has consistently supported BKHC, and we greatly benefitted from the management plan and demarcation of the boundary lines that the grant PACT provided enabled us to do. The Forest Department helped us by accompanying us on some of the patrols that were done and guided us on the proper methods to handle the illegal logging and hunting that we came across during the patrols. MayaWalk Tours has been a supporter of BKHC since its existence in 2016. They have provided financial support and human resources throughout the years and continue to do so.

BKHC would also like to thank all the board members who continue to help by offering their expertise to make important decisions concerning the management of Tapir Mountain. Lastly, we would like to thank everyone who supported us with kind thoughts and words, and who keep believing in us to continue along the road of managing the Tapir Mountain, despite the many challenges that we have been facing along the way.



# Belize Karst Habitat Conservation Statement of Operation

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## THE BELIZE KARST HABITAT CONSERVATION PROJECT ( BKHC) STATEMENT OF OPERATION AS OF 31ST MARCH

INCOME	2022	2021
	\$	\$
PACT operating grant	-	1,027
Other grant income	1,661	1,201
In-kind contributions	15,000	25,000
Recognition of capital grant	6,860	-
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>23,521</b>	<b>27,228</b>
<b>Administrative and operating expenses</b>		
Administration costs	15,000	25,525
Professional fees	1,125	1,125
Contingency fees	-	981
Membership fees	1,500	-
General depreciation	4,040	-
Filing fees	36	-
Bank charges	8	-
<b>Total administrative and operating expenses</b>	<b>21,709</b>	<b>27,631</b>
<b>Operating Surplus/ (deficit)</b>	<b>1,812</b>	<b>(404)</b>

## Belize Karst Habitat Conservation Balance Sheet

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### THE BELIZE KARST HABITAT CONSERVATION PROJECT ( BKHC) BALANCE SHEETS AS OF 31ST MARCH

ASSETS	Notes	2022 \$	2021 \$
Cash on hand and in bank		212	720
Management Plan	2	15,712	19,640
Signage	2	4,447	5,559
Survey and boundaries	2	12,345	12,345
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<b>32,716</b>	<b>38,264</b>
<b>LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCES</b>			
Accounts Payable		1,125	1,125
PACT capital grant	3	26,938	34,299
Counterpart capital grant		3,245	3,245
General funds		1,408	(404)
<b>TOTAL LIABILITES AND FUND BALANCES</b>		<b>32,716</b>	<b>38,265</b>