

State of the Forests in Jamaica

Work session: 1 December 07 13:30 – 15:00 pm

Abstract: To set the stage for informed discussions during the National Forestry Conference, the presentation provides the big picture of the Jamaican Forest Cover. The extent, geographical distribution and changes of the Jamaican Forests are described. The land cover change dynamics over the last 4 decades are discussed based on a recent remote sensing study done by University of Edinburgh under the 2021-2022 Jamaican REDD+ readiness project.

Over the last decades the net forest area of the island has increased, mainly due to regrowth on un-utilised agricultural lands. However in parallel, mining, infrastructure, settlements, hotels and agriculture continue to convert forest areas to non-forest.

Over the same period, there has been a decrease in dense broadleaf forest, while the area of secondary forest has increased. These are indicators of forest degradation.

Approximately 75% of the forests of Jamaica are owned by private people and these forests do not enjoy the same level of legal protection as forests on Crown Lands do. The remaining 25% is managed by the Forestry Department – which translates into 11% of the area of Jamaica. Most of the observed land cover changes occur outside the Forest Reserves.

PRESENTER PROFILE



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