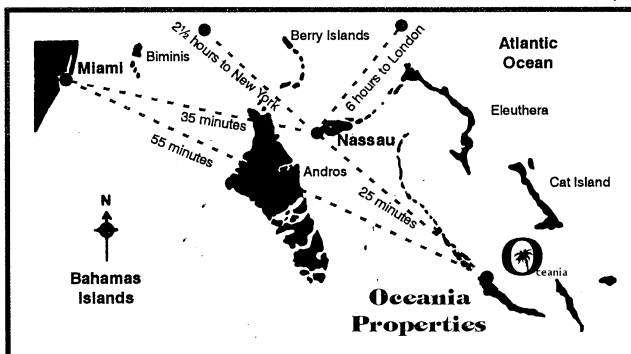


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BULLETIN BUSINESS

Miami Herald Business, Stocks, Analysis, Wall Street

What is the future for Exuma?

WHEN I look at the development at Emerald Bay and see how much land is being used, I realise that my children and grandchildren will never have the freedom to walk the banks of Ocean Bight to pick coco plums and seagrapes or to swim and play on that beautiful beach. Nor will they have the opportunity to hike the paths of Crab Cay to view the historical sites there.

The people of Exuma must realise that when land is approved for large scale development, it is lost to us forever and there is no getting it back. Exuma now has sufficient development to provide more than enough job opportunities. So, is it not time for the government to start thinking about setting aside land for future generations?

If they don't, then Exuma will become like Nassau where Bahamians have no access to beaches or to the surrounding islands.

Why is the government so reluctant to put aside land for the people?

Land which belongs to the people. Are they just looking at the big \$\$ signs with the idea that they will sell this land to the highest bidder who comes along?

Is it not time that we all start thinking about our children and grandchildren? Let us now act and take the first step by providing protection to the many public lands which exist throughout the Exumas.

There are three reserves on Stocking Island, all public land which need to be secured for the general public.

Not only do these areas provide material for the straw ladies from the acres of palmetto palms growing there, but they provide beaches which are used recreationally by both Bahamians and visitors alike.

What about Moriah Harbour Cay and its surrounding areas? This area is in desperate need of protection. This is an ecosystem which provides a nursery ground for juvenile crawfish, grouper, conch and many other species of fish which are so important to the Bahamian people.

It is also a nesting area for many birds, including the white crown pigeon. Students from the high school go on field trips here to swim in the pristine water and to view first hand how vital this fragile ecosystem is to us and to our future. The bonefish which reside and breed in the Moriah Harbour Cay area are extremely important to the local bonefish guides.

It is a place where we all go to enjoy the beaches and to see the true beauty of our islands. The beauty which we as Exumians brag about to so many people.

People on Great and Little Exuma are in need of public beaches and access to the water. Due to the building boom and the demand for waterfront property, many of the beaches are no longer accessible to the general public.

Some of these areas do have a public access area and these areas need to be set aside and marked properly.

Exumians need to know that they can take their families to a beach on a hot summer's day and our children need to know that they can count on us to leave a small piece of paradise in place for them.

These areas are all public lands and securing them for the future enjoyment of the Bahamian people should be a top priority for any government.

Exumians, we have been blessed with this piece of paradise and it is time to begin the process of protecting it, not only for our children and our grandchildren, but also for our great grandchildren. Let us remember that once it's gone, it's gone forever.

Thinking about the future.

LORRAINE MINNS
Nassau,
August 21, 2003.