



## Press Release

For Immediate Release  
10 August 2011

### Clearing of 66 feet reserve and steep slopes

The Department of the Environment, Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment, is hereby advising the general public that it is critically important for persons to respect the 66feet buffer reserve along all water bodies required under the laws of Belize. Use of this reserve requires authorization/approval from the Lands and Surveys Department. Land owners conducting clearing of vegetation are hereby reminded to maintain the buffer reserve in order to minimize or avoid siltation due to soil erosion, as well as pollution from agrochemical runoff. Respecting the buffer reserve particularly along water bodies will also aid in the survival of many wildlife species. Vegetation along water bodies provides a cool temperature and acceptable dissolve oxygen levels which are important for aquatic species. Clear water ways also allow for the transportation of food and nutrients for many endangered species between land and water corridors.

The Department of the Environment would also like to bring to the attention of the general public concerns with the increase in the clearance of steep slopes/hillsides with a gradient greater than 25° for agricultural purposes throughout the country, especially along the Hummingbird Highway. The potential negative impacts that could result from such activities are many but most importantly the endangerment and/or loss of human life or property. The clearing of vegetation which stabilizes these hillsides and steep slopes can result in landslides, both during periods of drought and heavy rainfall.

Both of these activities could lead to irreparable damages to the environment, personal properties and the general public on a whole.

With the above in mind, anyone presently clearing or intending to clear riverbanks or these hillsides/steep slopes are asked to cease all such actions for the safety and benefit of all.

Should anyone have any comment, question or would like to report such activities, please feel free to contact the Department of the Environment.

**HELP US PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT AND OUR LIVES!**

For further information please contact:

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