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Laborie Community Takes Initiative to Protect and Manage Beach

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The Rudy John Beach Park, Laborie's very popular recreation spot, has been in the news on more than one occasion in the past, including in 2015 when residents found an official notice indicating that "the coconut trees will be removed". It was also in the spotlight recently with the unconfirmed news that a nearby hotel would construct facilities for its clientele at the Park.

On both occasions, the community and other concerned citizens have expressed their disapproval, and online petitions have been circulating calling on relevant authorities to maintain the Beach Park as a public attraction accessible to all. "We must save this beach," says Laborie resident Nicholas Ambrose, who has mobilised support for the protection of this site. "We must, because we have already lost too much. We need to preserve what's left for present and future generations."

"There are a number of issues that need to be addressed on that beach," says Augustine Dominique, President of the Laborie Development Foundation. "It's not only about responding to what people have heard on the news. We have issues with parking and vehicular access, beach erosion, intensive use on weekends, and noise pollution. We also want to make sure that the Laborie community benefits more from the use of this beach."

In response to these concerns, the Foundation, in close consultation with the Laborie-Augier Constituency Council, is organising a workshop to develop a management plan for the Beach Park. This will take place on Friday 21 September. National organisations such as the National Conservation Authority, community organisations and concerned citizens have been invited to attend and contribute.

"We want to start from a few basic principles," says Foundation Board Member and General Manager of the Laborie Credit Union Lucius Ellevic, "principles such as no-privatisation, optimum community benefits, local management authority, and environmental quality. From there, we will identify all the measures that are needed to keep this beach beautiful, clean, attractive and accessible to all."

The organisers of the workshop expect that a complete management plan will be available by mid-October, for submission to the relevant authorities, following a round of community consultation over the coming weeks.