



Imaging Heritage as a tool for Conservation & Sustainable Community Development

Smith, Andrew P.

University of Technology, Jamaica

Jamaica

Photography is recognized as an essential tool in the conservation of natural and cultural heritage – both to record on-site conditions and also as a historical reference. This photographic knowledge and documentation is an important first step in the conservation of a country’s natural and cultural heritage. In Jamaica, this conservation is necessary both for its citizens to gain a greater knowledge and appreciation of their history and identity, and also for the sites and associated communities to be developed in a sustainable manner through heritage tourism. Under Jamaica’s Vision 2030 plan, the agencies responsible for developing and implementing a strategy for community-based heritage tourism are the Jamaica National Heritage Trust (JNHT), the Tourism Product Development Company (TPDCo) and the Jamaica Conservation Development Trust (JCDT).

This paper will critically review of the use of photography by the JNHT, TPDCo and JCDT in the implementation of this Vision 2030 goal. Research of the existing global photographic archives of Jamaica’s heritage sites will be also done to determine the location of these images, and also the completeness of these archives. Comparison will also be made with the author’s photographic documentation of Jamaican heritage sites and their associated communities.

This is the initial part of a major study which has as its ultimate aim the formulation of a model for sustainable community development centred on Jamaica’s heritage sites and attractions. Many of these communities are underdeveloped and the correlation between their development levels, knowledge of these sites and their potential as heritage tourism sites will be examined.