

**TOLEDO INSTITUTE FOR DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT  
(TIDE)**



# **CONGRESSIONAL REPORT**

**TROPICAL FOREST AND CONSERVATION ACT (TFCA)  
FUNDS**

**JANUARY – DECEMBER - 2020**

**Submitted to the United States Congress**

**December 2020**

## **Introduction**

The Toledo Institute for Development and Environment (TIDE) is a non-governmental organization that seeks to engage stakeholders in the sustainable management of natural resources in the Toledo district of Southern Belize, and in particular in the Maya Mountain Marine Corridor (MMMC), which is a high priority conservation area, extending from the Maya Mountain range in southwestern Belize to the southern end of the Belize Barrier Reef System. TIDE was founded in 1997 as a grassroots organization with a small group of dedicated volunteers, and has grown to a full-time staff of 30 members, working in 25 communities in the Toledo district. Through the Tropical Forest Conservation Act, TIDE acquired over 20,000 acres of lands which are managed for the people of Belize. These lands are predominantly tropical broadleaf forest, and play an important role in ensuring landscape connectivity for wildlife.

Despite challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, many accomplishments were made in 2020, in the following priority areas;

- i. The establishment, protection, and maintenance of parks, protected areas, and reserves and
- ii. The development and implementation of scientifically sound systems of natural resources management, including land ecosystems management practices;
- iii. Training programs to increase the scientific, technical and managerial capacities of individuals and organizations involved in conservation efforts and
- iv. The restoration, protection, or sustainable use of diverse animal and plant species.

## **Major achievements in 2020**

1. Continued enforcement of part regulations on the waterways and on land to protect natural resources within the MMMC and the protected land parcels.
2. Use of SMART technology during surveillance and patrols and human encounters.
3. Infrastructure development at TIDE's station on the Rio Grande river, and at the Big Falls Retreat.
4. Capacity building for rangers in bird banding to enhance biodiversity monitoring.
5. Riparian zone restoration through reforestation activities

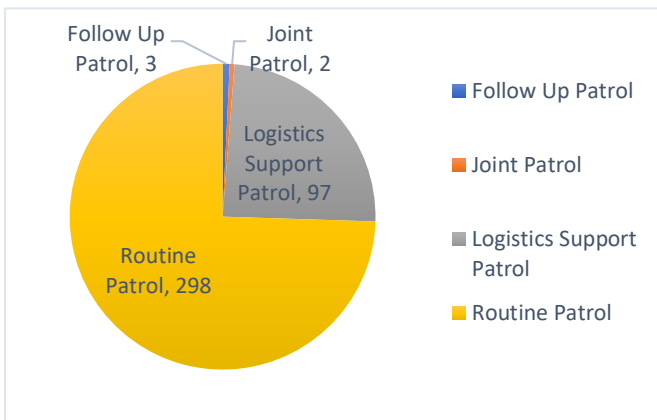
## Enforcement of park regulations

Between 1<sup>st</sup> January – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020, park rangers carried out 400 patrols, both on land and waterways. During these patrols, they encountered nine persons and came across evidence of two others. Mostly, people were catching crabs around the boundary line, however three persons were caught conducting illegal fishing activities. Rangers shared information with users about the rules and regulations that they encountered during patrols, whilst adhering to social distancing regulations.



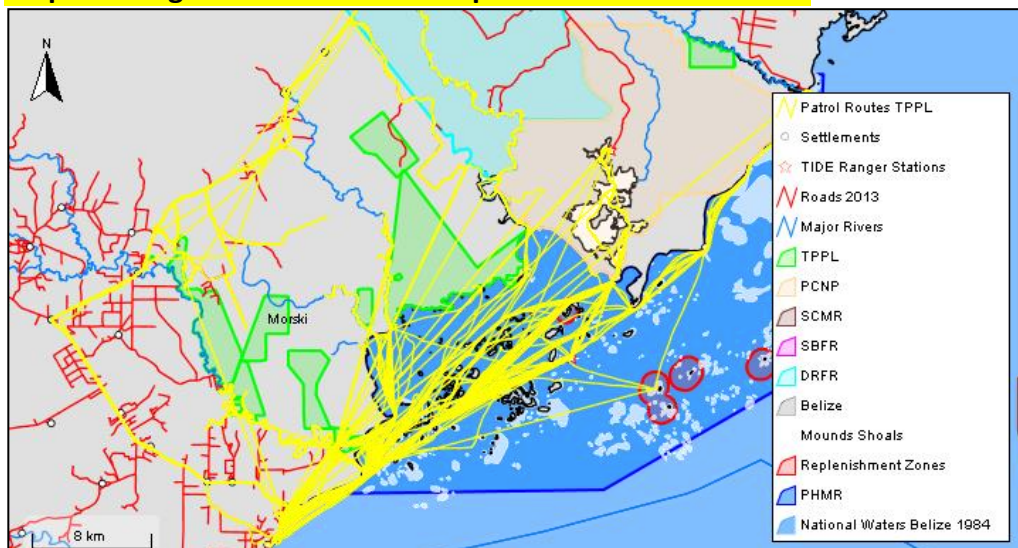
*Rangers finding gill net along coastline.*

## SMART Technology for surveillance and patrols



Rangers use a GPS device with SMART technology to capture information during patrols, including human activities and encounters, recreational activities, and wildlife. On rare occasions, the SMART device is not operational so cannot capture the patrol data. In order to ensure the device is always available, TIDE is investing in additional devices in 2021. The patrol data is downloaded on a weekly basis, and is used to generate summaries and maps. The data presented below includes all patrols captured on the SMART device.

## **Map showing 2020 Patrol routes captured on SMART device:**



## Infrastructure Development

Continued investments were made in 2020 on the Starcher Property, to facilitate visiting tour groups to the site. These included maintenance of the solar system, furnishing the new kitchen with cabinets and stove, tiling the kitchen floor, installing bathroom ceiling, and building a secure boat shed.

The Big Falls Retreat also received ongoing maintenance investment in 2020. Due to the pandemic, no guests stayed at the Retreat after March, however efforts to market the property through TIDE Tours have continued.

TIDE Tours was successfully certified as a Gold Standard tour operator at the end of 2020. This certification is required for any Belizean operator wanting to host international guests in this pandemic era. The certification included providing capacity building training to guides, rangers and other tourism staff.



## Capacity Building



In order to better monitor the status of resident and migratory bird species in the area, TIDE has established a MoSI monitoring site, and rangers attended several bird banding training opportunities, both within the park and with external partners in Belize. By December, staff were able to fully operate the site without assistance, and conducted their first monthly monitoring “pulse”, which takes three to four days per month.

## Riparian Zone Reforestation



Rangers continued ongoing reforestation efforts in the riparian zone along the Rio Grande River throughout 2020. Seeds were collected from desirable trees, then planted at the nursery. Once the seedlings were ready, an area of ground was cleared and then they were planted into the ground. In 2020, 110 fig seedlings were planted, of which 87 have survived to date.



## Summary

Despite the many challenges faced during 2020, TIDE rangers were successfully able to continue their important work in the MMMC. Surveillance and enforcement will continue to be important as rising unemployment could increase threats on natural resources in the region.

## Financial Report

<b>Report in USD</b>						
<b>Fund Data</b>	<b>2002-2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>Total</b>
No. of proposals submitted	34.00	1.00	3.00	4	4	46.00
No. of proposals approved	34.00	1.00	3.00	4	4	46.00
Total approved funding for grants (TFCA Land Management account.)	1,312,855.93	109,046.60	106,652.00	103,961.00	95,520.72	1,632,515.53
Total approved funding for grants (TFCA Land Purchase account.)	667,500.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	667,500.00
Total approved funding for grants (TFCA Endowment account.)	902,558.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	902,558.00
Total of counterpart match (grantee cost-share)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Other leveraged matches (e.g. co-financing)	267,532.61	0.00	89,800.00	42,631.13	2,725.58	407,514.33
Total matching funds as % TFCA Land Management grant	22%	0%	84%	41%	3%	24%
Amount spent on administrative costs	343,702.57	27,261.65	26,663.00	25,990.00	23,880.18	447,497.40
Administrative costs as % of Land Management grants	26%	25%	25%	25%	25%	25%
Interest and capital gained on TFCA investments	770,216.02	24,071.83	19,176.08	12,806.68	14,164.11	881,780.08
Fund balance at the end of the year (Endowment & Land Purchase accounts)*	1,413,568.13	1,325,657.71	1,313,399.84	1,236,257.56	1,179,454.27	1,179,454.27

\*Note: Amounts are determined on a cash basis.