



FOR RELEASE AFTER 12:00PM

Tuesday, 22 April 2025

Contact:

Jennifer Gray buybackbermuda@gmail.com 332 2966

Karen Border karen.border@bnt.bm 533 0094

Janice Hetzel info@audubon.bm 735-0441

BUY BACK BERMUDA ANNOUNCES PUBLIC OPENING OF HIGH POINT NATURE RESERVE AT ALTON HILL, SOUTHAMPTON

Buy Back Bermuda is delighted to announce the public opening of the High Point Nature Reserve in Southampton. The purchase of this stunning 10-acre piece of land was possible thanks to a \$2 million gift from a private anonymous donor and funds from our acquisition account including \$300,000 donated by PartnerRe in 2008.

Buy Back Bermuda is a joint initiative of the Bermuda National Trust (BNT) and the Bermuda Audubon Society (BAS), working together to conserve the island's precious remaining open space, natural heritage and biodiversity for the benefit of present and future generations.

The reserve was officially opened today, 22 April (Earth Day) by His Excellency the Governor Andrew Murdoch, who planted a tree to mark the occasion.

Although unable to attend, Environment Minister Jache Adams sent the following message: "As Minister of Public Works and Environment, it brings me great satisfaction to see the work of Buy Back Bermuda so vividly on display through the official opening of the High Point Nature Reserve. In a small, densely developed island like Bermuda, protecting open spaces is not just a conservation priority—it is necessary for our environmental resilience, community well-being, and national identity. The opening of High Point Nature Reserve on Earth Day is a testament to what can be achieved when vision and stewardship come together to serve the public good. I applaud the Bermuda Audubon Society and the Bermuda National Trust for their dedication to safeguarding our natural heritage for generations to come. I look forward to seeing the people of Bermuda—young and old—enjoy all that this nature reserve has to offer."

High Point is the fourth Buy Back Bermuda nature reserve. Somerset Long Bay East Nature Reserve was the first, opened on Earth Day 2007. Vesey Nature Reserve in Southampton was

opened on Earth Day 2013. Eve's Pond Nature Reserve in Hamilton Parish was opened on Earth Day 2022.

Accessed off Alton Hill, High Point features incredible panoramic views of the South Shore and the Great Sound. The coastal portion has the largest nesting colonies of Longtails on mainland Bermuda and caves that provide critical nesting habitat for Barn Owls. Mixed woodland across much of the reserve offers habitat for local and migratory bird species. Three acres of the reserve is farmland in active use.

In accordance with a Conservation Management Plan, trails have been created, invasive casuarinas have been removed and trees have been planted, all with the help of volunteers and contractors.

"While there is much work still to do to replant with natives and endemics, create an additional coastal trail and install more interpretive signage, the reserve is now ready for members of the public to enjoy," said Jennifer Gray, Chair of Buy Back Bermuda. "We are delighted to have created another beautiful natural space for the benefit of the Bermuda community and our visitors. A great deal of work has gone into making it a wonderful place for a family day out. We urge everyone to come and enjoy this new nature reserve."

According to Janice Hetzel, President of the Bermuda Audubon Society, "Research has shown that time spent in nature improves our physical and mental wellbeing. By creating a new nature reserve, we're not only protecting habitat, but also investing in the health of our community. High Point offers a tranquil refuge from the demands of modern life — a place where people can slow down, breathe deeply, and reconnect with the sights, sounds, and rhythms of the natural world. At the same time, the reserve will serve as a sanctuary for plants and wildlife, persevering vital habitat where nature can truly thrive."

"Bermuda owes a huge debt of gratitude to the anonymous donor who provided the funds to preserve this open space from private development," said Karen Border, Executive Director of the Bermuda National Trust. "Thanks to their amazing generosity, combined with the vision of the Buy Back Bermuda team and the hard work of many dedicated people, present and future generations of Bermuda residents will be able to enjoy this spectacular green oasis."

For more information on Buy Back Bermuda visit www.buybackbermuda.bm