

An underwater photograph of a coral reef. The scene is dominated by a large, vertical, brownish, textured structure, possibly a dead or damaged coral column. To the left, there is a large, yellowish, porous sponge-like structure. The background shows various other coral and reef structures in shades of blue and green. A white box with a black border is overlaid in the upper right corner, containing the text 'FOR SALE' in red and 'Belize's World Heritage' in white on a red background.

**FOR SALE**

Belize's World Heritage

*The Pelican Cayes  
A Hotspot of Biodiversity and Destruction  
In the Belize Barrier Reef Reserve World Heritage Site*

March 2003



In the Pelican Cays, mangrove cays exhibit unique physical characteristics such as deep blue lagoon-like ponds encircled by steep, lush coral ridges. The reef, mangrove-root, and peat substrates are thickly overgrown by layers of brilliantly colored organisms, including sponges, ascidians, seaweeds, and corals. **The diversity of marine organisms occurring in the Pelicans is unparalleled in the Caribbean.**



**As mangroves are cut and filled with dredged material (including living coral in at least one case) the vibrant life in these marine communities disappears – along with their supportive role as a nurseries for fish and lobster**

**29% of the mangrove community in the Pelican Cayes has been lost since its “protection” in the Belize World Heritage Site**



March 2003



The Pelican Cays, which lie at the southern end of the South Water Cay Marine Reserve and **a key part of Belize's WORLD HERITAGE SITE** support unique, biologically diverse, and delicate ecosystems. The boundaries of the SWCMR were expanded to include the Pelicans specifically because they were identified by the Fisheries Department as special places of biological significance. Scientists have since documented that the **exceptional diversity and physical structure of this archipelago are unequaled anywhere else in the Caribbean**. However, these habitats are in serious danger from sediment suffocation caused by recent clear-felling, dredging, and filling of mangroves for resort development.

# Ascidians

70 species, 60% of all  
Caribbean species.

(Goodbody, 2000)

Including a new  
endemic species

Bryozoans – 31 species

(Winston, 2007)



# Echinoderms

**52 species**

**10 reported for first  
time in Belize**

**Hendler and Pawson, 2000**

**Encrusting Foraminifera  
7 species including  
2 new species**

**Richardson, 2000**



# Sponges

147 species

Consisting of  
45% of new  
species or  
variants.

(Rützler et al., 2000)

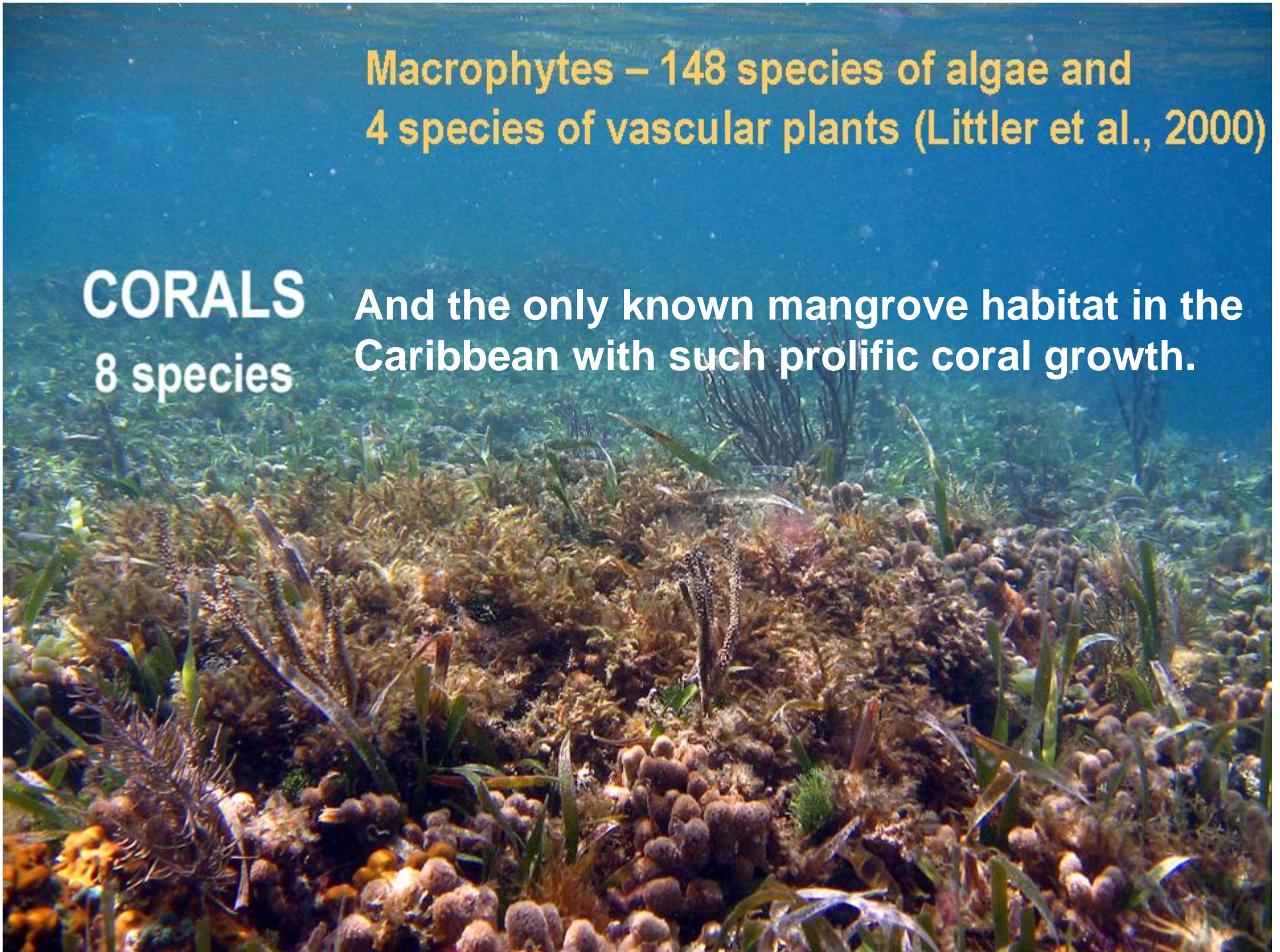




**Macrophytes – 148 species of algae and  
4 species of vascular plants (Littler et al., 2000)**

**CORALS  
8 species**

**And the only known mangrove habitat in the  
Caribbean with such prolific coral growth.**



March 2003

*Manatee Cay*

*Fisherman's Cay*

**The Pelican Cays resemble thousands of other mangrove islands throughout the Caribbean but with several intriguing differences. Here, red mangrove is anchored on top of a live and lush coral reef; several of the cays exhibit unique physical characteristics such as deep blue lagoon-like ponds encircled by steep, lush coral ridges. The Pelican Cays archipelago supports species richness and live surface cover that are unparalleled in the Caribbean. The reef, mangrove-root, and peat substrates are thickly overgrown by several layers of brilliantly colored marine organisms, including sponges, ascidians, seaweeds, and corals.**

Extensive clearing and filling for development of the Pelican Cays was evident at Northeast, Bird, and Ridge Cays in April 2006. The extraordinary marine diversity found in the Pelicans that is unique in the Caribbean will be destroyed as these cays are cleared and filled.



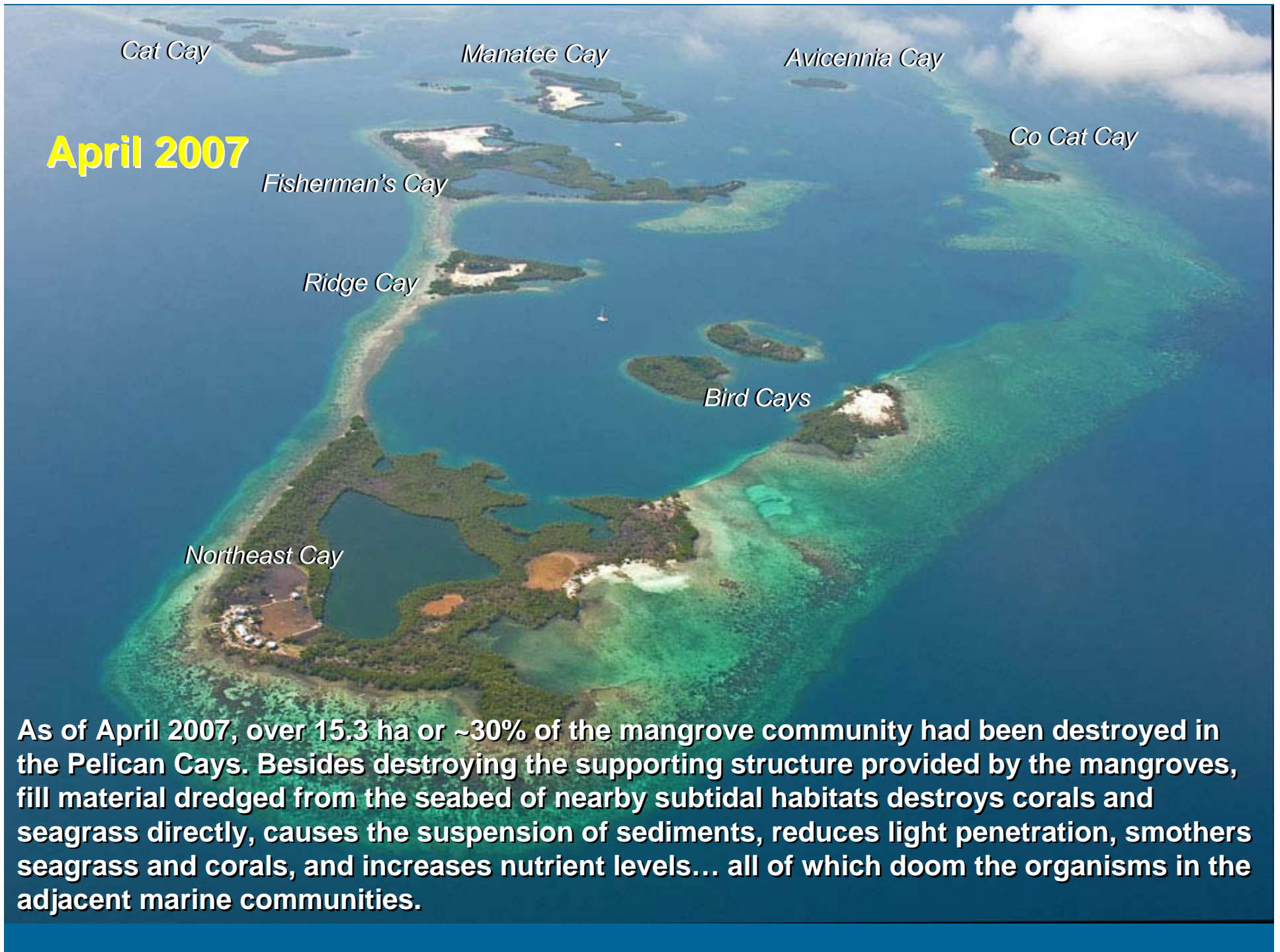
**April 2006**

**April 2006**

*Manatee Cay*

*Fisherman's Cay*

Deep blue lagoon-like ponds at Manatee, Fisherman's, and Cat Cays are encircled by steep, lush coral ridges. The mangrove forests on these cays were being cleared in April 2006.



**As of April 2007, over 15.3 ha or ~30% of the mangrove community had been destroyed in the Pelican Cays. Besides destroying the supporting structure provided by the mangroves, fill material dredged from the seabed of nearby subtidal habitats destroys corals and seagrass directly, causes the suspension of sediments, reduces light penetration, smothers seagrass and corals, and increases nutrient levels... all of which doom the organisms in the adjacent marine communities.**

**April 2007**

**Extensive loss of mangroves occurred on Fisherman's and Manatee's Cayes between April 2006 and 2007. Additional survey lines have been cut on both of these islands, suggesting that more clearing and filling are planned.**

*Fisherman's Cay*

*Manatee Cay*





Manatee Cay

**Cleared mangroves are filled with material dredged from patch reefs in the nearby seabed. Fine sediment plumes spill into the adjacent ponds, smothering the attached benthic communities on mangrove roots and burying bottom communities.**



*source of fill*

Illegal dredging of coral/seagrass bed

**April 2007**

## Dredging permits never allow the removal of “fill” From coral reef areas as happened at Manatee Caye

This was an illegal  
act under the  
fisheries regulations  
prohibiting the  
removal of coral



This photo shows the area that was dredged – with living *Porites furcata* in the seagrass beds that were removed to fill manatee caye.



**October 2007**



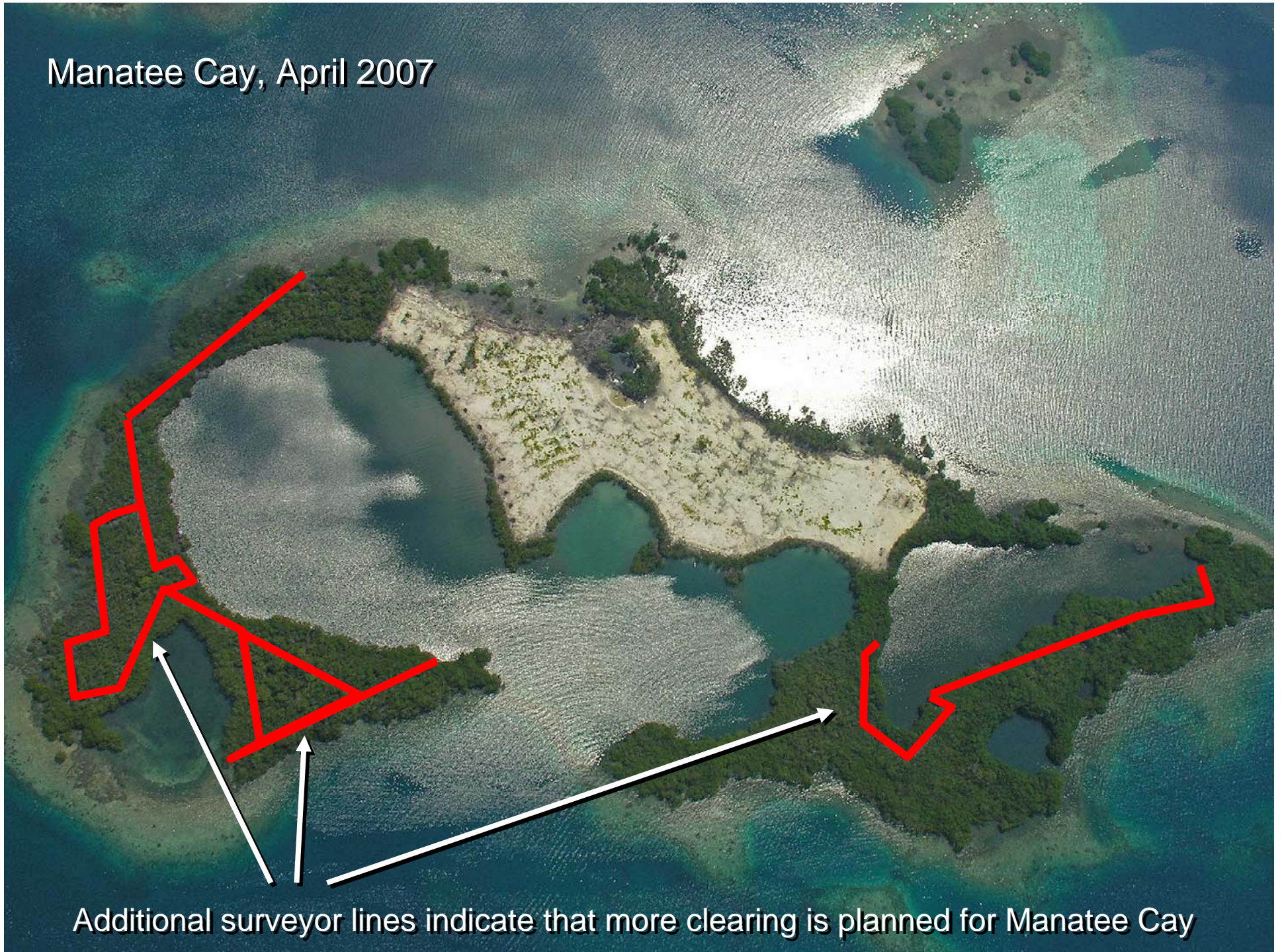
Like many of the mangrove systems of the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef, the Pelican Cays are peat islands that developed approximately 7000 years ago. These systems have underlying peat deposits ~7-10 m thick and have been mangrove communities throughout the Holocene. When these peat-based mangrove forests are cut, the underlying peat decomposes and the land collapses.

**October 2007**



**In the 6 months since the small mangrove island Manatee Cay was cleared and filled, the shoreline has eroded approximately 25 meters. Attempts to develop these valuable intertidal environments into tourist attractions have destroyed not only the mangroves but also the surrounding coral reef and seagrass ecosystems as well.**

Manatee Cay, April 2007



Additional surveyor lines indicate that more clearing is planned for Manatee Cay

**This is what the developer has planned for Manatee Caye**  
(but he failed to even check with Belizean Authorities)



<http://www.treasurecovebelize.com/>



For a glimpse of what the developers have planned for the Pelican Cays, click on this URL.

*Extracted from the website of:*

# Treasure Cove Belize

YOU BETTER BELIZE IT

The ongoing clearing/filling at Fisherman's and Manatee Cays is for the sake of a new mega resort with over-the-water accommodations

The Beautiful Country of Belize is soon to have a new Mega Resort



Click on the website below for a promotional video of what the developers are planning for the Pelican Cays.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YJmTO3jZUoU>



'make believe" beach

**The following message was posted on the web by the Treasure Cove developer, Dan Mililli, on 08/22/07 at 03:18 PM:**

“A new island resort in Belize is being built within a few miles of Placencia. This will be a high end resort. **Over the water Bungalows and Beach Villas are for sale** with a substantial cash flow potential per month. If you are interested in learning more about this project and are open to international investments please contact me (Dan) at 619-838-3559. P.S. We have commitments from Jon Ric International Spas as well as a *cirque du soleil* show for entertainment.”

**Dan Mililli, TCB Financial**

Chula Vista, CA 91913 Tel: 619-838-3559

You can view more details at <http://www.treasurecovebelize.com>

**The Department of Environment has not received any information from the developers and no EIA is in the pipeline**



- Geology Dept. says only one caye (Cat Caye) had a legal dredging permit within the Pelican Cayes - so it appears all other dredging was illegal.
- Forestry reports no mangrove clearance permits have been issued in the area.

**Most (or all) of these mangrove cayes are thought to have been national ‘land’ (most are sub-tidal) when the reserve and World Heritage Site was established in 1996. This needs to be verified with Lands Department for each caye.**

**Any leases or sales subsequent to 1996 are a breach of the law enacting the south water caye marine reserve – and Belize’s commitment under the World Heritage Commission**



Belize's World Heritage is still

**FOR SALE**

[www.caribbeanislandbrokers.com](http://www.caribbeanislandbrokers.com)

has 43 islands listed and 40 of them are in Belize

**24 of these islands are still in a natural state**

**16 of them are recently filled mangroves**

**14 of these cayes are in the South Water Caye Marine Reserve and World Heritage Site**

**These are the highest biodiversity mangroves in the Caribbean – and were a major component of the marine ecosystem protected in the reserve but almost 30% of them have already been destroyed**

**More on other websites such as [www.privateislandsonline.com](http://www.privateislandsonline.com)**



**In Belize, current loss of mangroves will have serious consequences for reef ecosystems, particularly fisheries productivity (Mumby et al., 2004).**

**Mangrove losses also reduce our natural resiliency to storms hurricanes and sea level rise.**



**STOP  
THE MADNESS**

For more information contact [apamo@pfbelize.org](mailto:apamo@pfbelize.org)