

▣ Moving Forward and Learning from our Past

For 2013, as we enter the New Year, The Belize Zoo is proud to share with our guests the SHED walkway. This pink-graveled path now allows fun zoo visits from people who are bound to wheelchairs or walkers. Strollers can easily be pushed along the pathways, too. The SHED pathway has received rave reviews. Before Easter time, it is our goal to see that this wonderful pink-pathway winds completely throughout our little animal kingdom.

And how about our new “star”, “Lucky Boy”!!.....once starved, terribly emaciated, and weakened to the point of nearly dying, “Lucky Boy” is now a stunning member of our zoo clan, bringing so much joy to visitors, young and old. He stands as a strong symbol for the humane treatment of all animals.

The zoo still continues to speak out AGAINST the mistakes made in the past which have done strong damage to our natural resources. The huge mistake, Chalillo Dam. No, Mr. Y I won't “get over it”, as this was suggested by you, a dam proponent. Mr. Y, please use your time to tell the people of Cristo Rey to “get over it”...they no longer can safely eat the fish from their once clean Macal river. And this is due to your pro-dam stand, and the input from Fortis of Canada and your then government friends Mr. F and Mr. M.....All of whom really don't care that our electricity rates have jumped up sixteen percent. Due to the Chalillo Dam, a suitable amount of money entered those same pockets, which will comfortably take care of any rise in energy rates. As the PUC recently and succinctly stated, the dams, not having produced the expected energy, have caused the need to explore other expensive options. The scarlet macaw population? As predicted, on its way to becoming historic. These stunning and extremely rare birds are now often poached. Their primary nesting grounds have been destroyed due to the Chalillo Dam development.

As the Director of the zoo and someone who fought long and hard against this unsound development project, earning myself the title “Enemy of the State”, I will continue to bring this to the attention to all Belizeans. Wouldn't it be wonderful if the idea of decommissioning these worthless edifices developed in our nation's profile? Decommissioning dams is occurring in the United States, and rivers are returning to their healthy states once again.

Decommissioning the dams would lead to the images of the above photos becoming history. The river could gradually regain its health. The scarlet macaws, above, dead as a result of poaching activities, could re-establish a breeding population and thrive into the future. Would

this be a simple procedure to pursue? No. But, a possible plan for a sustainable environmental and socio-economic profile? Yes.

The Belize Zoo will continue to be a strong voice on behalf of wildlife conservation as we enter a New Year. And we thank you all for your support of our dynamic institution, joyfully settled on George Price Highway. Happy New Year!!!!!!

