



UPDATE: JULY 2009

When it rains it pours...and I'm not necessarily talking about the weather – which has been delightful. What I am referring to is a number of new developments for the Placencia Peninsula and Cocoplum in particular.

THE ROAD



In case you haven't heard, the paving of the Placencia Road now reaches from the airstrip all the way to Cocoplum and is making daily progress through Maya Beach. That means quick and unfettered access to and between the most populated areas of the peninsula.

Major bridge, culvert and drain works at the north end of the road are being carried out simultaneously with the southern paving and it looks like the entire project should be wrapped up by June of 2010. Congratulations are in order for contractor Cisco Construction, whose crews are doing a great job

THE AIRPORT

This is the new airport as opposed to the old air strip. Construction is now in high gear, 24/7, on a full fledged international airport a mile or so northwest of the Riversdale junction at the top of the peninsula. It is a private effort, fully backed by the government of Belize, spearheaded by Eugene Zabaneh of Maya Island Air and Marco Caruso of the Placencia Hotel. The initial specs are for a 6000 foot, 150 foot wide concrete runway with room to double that length in the future. The airport will have its own customs and immigration and can accommodate all varieties of aircraft including jet charters. Initially it will be the hub for Maya Island's regional flights to Cancun, Honduras and Guatemala and will eventually take direct scheduled flights from North America. What this will mean for the area's long term development cannot be overstated. No completion date has been set but it should be seeing its first international flights at around the same time the Placencia Road is finished.



NEW REGIONAL AIR ROUTES



Even before the new airport is ready Maya Island is pioneering three new routes out of Belize City's Philip Goldson International Airport. Using three leased ATR72 aircraft configured for 68 passengers the airline commences twice daily service to Cancun and daily service to San Pedro Sula (Honduras) and Guatemala City on July 8th. This means that Europeans can now access Belize in one day via Cancun and avoid a US stopover. It also gives access to the huge pool of tourists that visit Cancun from all parts of the world. Even better for us is that when the new Placencia International Airport is ready it will serve as the hub for those flights, so passengers will no longer have to change planes in Belize City. Imagine: daily service from virtually anywhere in Europe or North America to Placencia via Cancun. No wonder we are excited!

BUILDING BRIDGES

It may not have the impact of a new resort or airport but the construction of five small pedestrian bridges to connect our "island park" on the lagoon side of Cocoplum is a major attraction – especially for kids. The area is set aside as a common area for residents and makes a great spot for children to explore, fish, kayak and just play. Adults might just enjoy the tranquility of the place with its surrounding stands of palmetto and mangrove.



**COMING SOON:
COCOPLUM'S
VERY OWN
LUXURY
RESORT**

...AND SPEAKING OF MANGROVE...

We are proud to announce that Cocoplum has been awarded first prize in the World Wildlife Fund's Mangrove-Friendly Development Challenge.

This was a competition that looked at all the development projects in Belize with an eye to see who was making the most innovative use of existing mangrove environments or promoting mangrove conservation within their respective projects. The judges were particularly impressed with the planting of thousands of red mangrove trees around the banks of Cocoplum's interior lagoons as well as the cultivation and "hedging" of Buttonwood trees just behind

the red mangrove. The combination is both aesthetically pleasing and represents a much more economical and environmentally friendly alternative to seawalls for shore protection. Congratulations to our hard working landscape crew as well as the master planning firm EDSA. The award will be featured in WWF publications and websites.



A luxury boutique resort was always part of the original master plan of Cocoplum and it is now about to become a reality. In May we signed a memorandum of understanding with the Grand Heritage Hotel Group of the USA to operate the facility, which will open with 22 one and two bedroom villa type compounds on our 19 acre beachfront site.

We have great respect for Grand Heritage, which operates each of its two dozen or so hotels as unique entities, maintaining a local identity but bringing a uniformly high level of personalized service. The architectural plans are now being finalized and construction should commence before the end of the year. We believe that the presence of the resort will enhance the living experience at Cocoplum as it will serve as a focal point for social activities and bring amenities like fine dining, spa, tennis and water sports.