

# **Reef Ball Eco-Development Plan**

*To preserve historical*

**Boca Sami Bay, Curacao**

**May 4, 2006**

*Submitted to*

**Fundashon Sentro San Minguel  
(Foundation of Central San Minguel)**

**By The**



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**Reef Beach  
Company, Ltd.**

*(A division of the Reef Ball Foundation)*

**With Team Partners Including**

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## ?? Executive Summary



Boca Sami is a small, tightly knit fishing village on the south coast of Curacao in the Dutch Antilles. On October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2005 a series of very long period waves, arriving in sets of 3, struck the coast early in the morning without warning on an otherwise calm day. The source of the waves is suspected to be hurricane Wilma that was churning the waters over 500 miles to the north of Curacao, and although unlikely, even a local Tsunami event cannot be ruled out completely as the source. The event was very localized to this small community with surrounding areas receiving smaller, but sometimes-significant, but generally harmless waves.

Although usually not as damaging, very long period waves occur in this part of Curacao without warning usually from distant hurricanes with hundreds of miles of fetch to spread the period out so much that arrival times are not predicted. These waves often damage or destroy the small local fishing boats used primarily for hand line or traditional trap fishing. (Note: Hand line and trap fishing methods are among the most sustainable methods for fishing as they generally do not damage fishery habitat like commercial nets or bottom trawling, therefore reef communities are particularly in need of their services to supply local fish that provide local incomes without the need to bring in environmentally and economically damaging commercial operations).

The Boca Sami community itself could be in danger. The moderately developed properties, bay, beach and saline assets could make Boca Sami an ideal target for aggressive Caribbean developers. When community incomes are disturbed, such as the continual loss of fishing boats, the communities are more vulnerable to developer's offers.

With a well-planned, community based, strategic eco-development plan, it is possible to avoid such a disaster. The best defense against uninvited development is a strengthening the community economics and enhancement of the natural and cultural community assets so that political will and village unity can help protect this historic community.

Based on our visit and its community's desire to protect the natural resources of Boca Sami, The Reef Ball Foundation recommends the following:

? Development of a protected harbor with organized moorings to be used exclusively by traditional community based fishing and sailing vessels.

? Restoration of a community beach for recreational and swimming uses

? Underwater & Beach clean up of the community bay

? Creation of community based Ecological attractions to include

- Sustainable artificial reefs for guided recreational fishing and/or local restaurant consumption (only).

- Dive shop supporting snorkeling and diving trails with a focus on near shore habitat restoration to restore Oct. 23<sup>rd</sup> near shore reef losses

- Salina Nature Trail Walk, with historical educational signs & Red Mangrove juvenile fishery habitats

? Creation of community based economic strengtheners

- Community support for restaurants, hotels, shops and other businesses to be "visitor friendly"

- Basic maintenance (weed control) and historical educational signs for the Fort.

- Rebuilding of lookout tower adding visitor features (look out binoculars, etc.)

- Community based marketing, gating & entrance fee / visitor education center

The Challenge?

Boca Sami does not have the financial resources to accomplish such grandiose goals, however Boca Sami appears to possess the local leadership, drive and desire to accomplish them. This community leadership and broad support from the community makes these goals possible with relatively minimal philanthropic support. This report can serve as a starting point to guide the community to refine, develop and execute all or part of the above recommendations.