



CARIBBEAN COURT OF JUSTICE

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MEDIA RELEASE
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BELIZE ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP LOSES AGAIN

CCJ, Port of Spain. The CCJ refused the Ya'axche Conservation Trust's application for special leave to appeal a decision of the Court of Appeal in Belize. In its brief decision in *Ya'axche Conservation Trust v Sabido* [2014] CCJ 14 (AJ) the Court found that the environmental non-governmental organization failed to meet the required threshold to proceed with its case.

The Ya'axche Conservation Trust, co-manager of the Bladen Branch Nature Reserve, initiated proceedings against the Chief Forrest Officer after he issued a permit to a private company to conduct hydro-electric feasibility studies within the nature reserve. The Trust contended that the issue of the permit ran afoul of the object and purpose of the National Parks System Act which was to protect the biological and ecological features of designated areas. Unsuccessful in both the High Court and the Court of Appeal, the Trust sought to move the CCJ to determine that the permit was invalid, even though by the time of litigation the permit had expired and was not renewed.

The Court indicated its willingness to hear what had become an academic appeal and expressed that its sensitivity 'to the fundamental importance of ensuring that the environment is protected and preserved'. However, it did not find that the Court of Appeal erred in its substantive assessment of the powers of the Chief Forest Officer in granting of the permit. No order as to costs was made.

The Court was presided over by Mr Justice Saunders along with Justices Hayton and Anderson. Ms Magali Marin Young filed submissions on behalf of the Appellants.

The final judgment of the Court and an Executive Summary is available on the CCJ's website at www.caribbeancourtofjustice.org.

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