

# Soufriere Sulphur Springs

Soufriere Valley  
DOMINICA

The Soufriere Sulphur Springs Eco-Tourism Site is an important geologic and recreational area on Dominica. The site is situated in the Soufriere Valley, about 1 mile east of the centre of the fishing village of Soufriere and the Soufriere-Scotts Head Marine Reserve.

In pre-Columbian times, the "Sulphur Springs" was a place of mythic geography for the Amerindians, as Soufriere was an important meeting place for Kalinagos from the Caribbean islands. Today, the area is well-known as a site for enjoying an invigorating bath in naturally heated, mineralized water.

Two main streams drain the area: the crystal-clear Glo Gayak (some Dominicans drink small amounts of the water from this stream as a cleanser), and the Glo Cho which, though turbid, is popular for warm baths; the water in Glo Cho has been diverted into four man-made pools. Please note that during the Rainy Season the temperature of the water in the pools and the Glo Cho is usually higher than the Dry Season temperatures. Other facilities which have been provided for visitors include an Information Centre, change rooms, picnic shelters and a hiking trail.

Segment 2 of the Waitukubuli National Trail begins in the Sulphur Springs area then

winds up *Katòz Dètou (Quatorze Détours)* - a historic track with 14 switch-backs - which connects Soufriere to Tete Morne Village.

The Sulphur Springs is also a fairly accessible site where one can witness geo-thermal activity up-close. The three main areas are the "Lower Deposits", the Lower Cone and the Upper Cone and Geothermal Area which is about ¾ mile from the Information Centre. These areas contain sulphur deposits, hot springs, sulphur crystals, and fumaroles – holes in the ground releasing various hot gases such as water vapor, sulphur gas, etc.

Apart from enjoying a bath in one of the pools, persons can also hike along the trail. For your safety, please stay on or as close to the trail as possible, even though you may be tempted to leave the trail to pick some of the fruits when in season. Be extra careful and cautious in the fumarole areas, on account of the fumaroles, hot springs and sometimes unstable ground.

## FOREST TYPE & VEGETATION

The Soufriere Sulphur Springs area is set mainly in the semi-evergreen forest zone, with Silk Cotton trees displaying their impressive buttresses, White Cedar, *Koubawi*, Red Cedar, Hog Plum, and *Galba* trees among others. Note the large patches of *Galba* seedlings in the ground cover; this is possibly the work of fruit-bats which enjoy *Galba* fruits. The ground cover in other areas is dominated by "rice-fern", and *Ti-kapi* - a small creeper with small, red berries and tiny white flowers. As you hike the trail you might observe a few rain forest plants such as *Maho Kochon*, *Chatannyé*, and even Tree Ferns. The main epiphytes here are mosses; wild anthuriums mostly grow as terrestrial plants. Climbers include Swiss-Cheese Plant and *Kab* - a liana with seed pods that children use as toy boats.

impressive patches of "mango forest". Other fruit trees growing in the area include breadfruit, coconut and cocoa (supporting vanilla orchid).

Ginger lilies, Heliconias and Manila palms have been planted near the buildings for landscaping purposes.



## FUMAROLE VEGETATION

Around the areas with fumarole activity is a special type of vegetation called fumarole vegetation. These plants are able to tolerate the hot, dry conditions and high acidity in the soil, and even includes two plant species from the rain forest: *Kabann Lavyèj* (a member of the fern family) and



*Bwa Wouj*, which grows as a massive tree in the rain forest but as a shrub in these fumarole areas; *Bwa wouj* leaves turn bright red before they shed. *Kaklen*, with its purple fruits and prop-roots, *Blechnum* fern, Cashew, Fat Pork and a bromeliad with red flowers can also be found in these areas.

#### WILDLIFE AND FAUNA

The most common form of wildlife that you will encounter here is a blue-and-grey, endemic ground lizard which is called *Abòlò*. It may be seen sunning in open spots on the trail or scurrying across the leaf litter. You may also see the Dominican Tree Lizard or *Zanndoli*. Iguanas are also present, but they are well camouflaged in the tree tops. The area comes alive with a variety of birds which you will hear and possibly see; these include hummingbirds, Lesser Antillean Bullfinch, Green Heron, Plumbeous and Yellow Warblers, Zenaida Dove, Common Ground Dove, Mangrove Cuckoo, Scaly-breasted Thrasher and Grey Kingbird among others.



Other forms of wildlife and wild fauna that add to the area's biodiversity include bats, opossum, agouti, and a variety of insects such as butterflies, stick insects and dragonflies.

Site Passes to access this area may be purchased in the village of Soufriere.

The Soufriere Sulphur Springs area is an officially-designated Eco-Tourism Site which is being developed by the Government of Dominica for the enjoyment of Dominicans and visitors alike. There are official rules that govern this site.

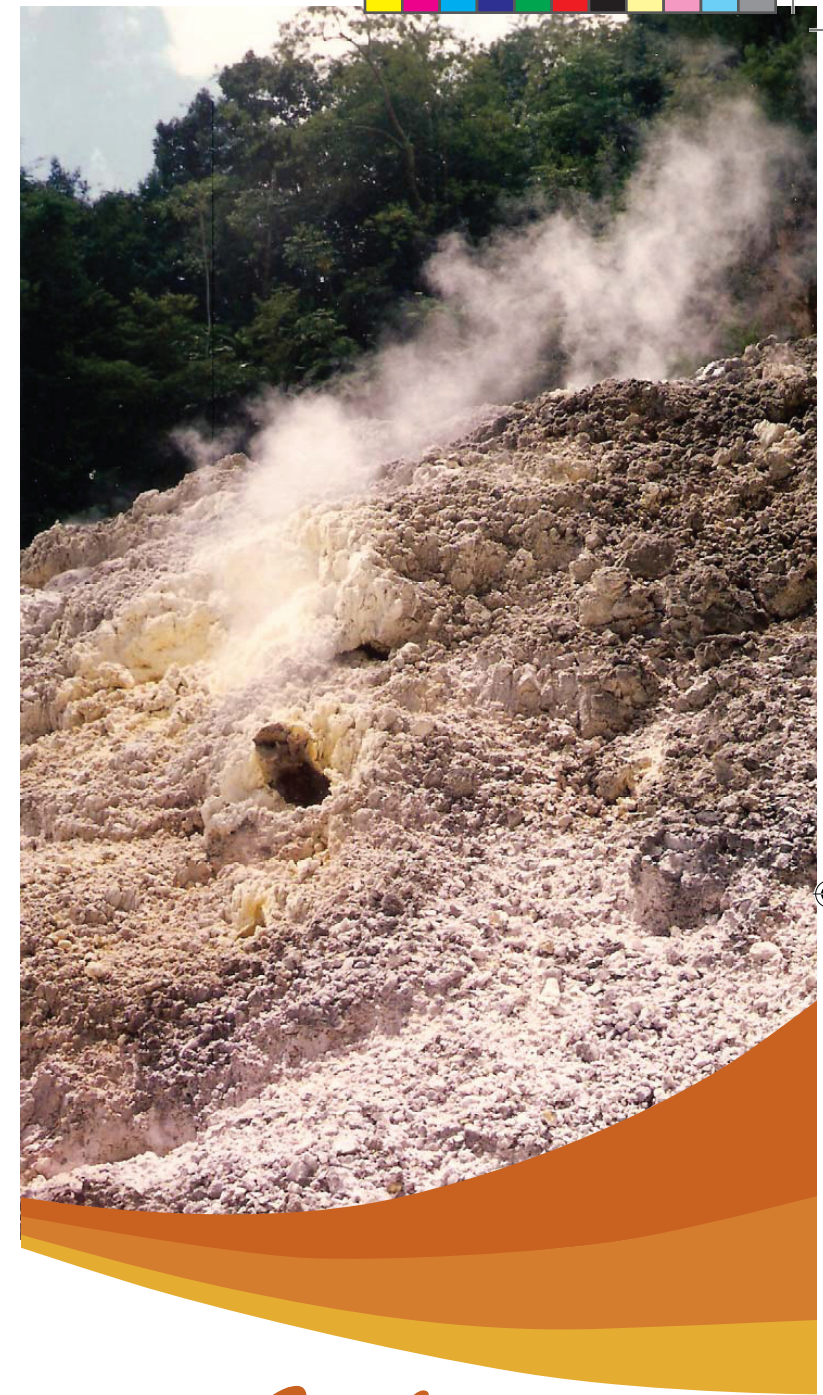


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