

November 2009
Issue 7



ReefComm

A bi-monthly bulletin of the Community-based Coral Reef Monitoring and Management project

Project Notices:

*Underwater and beach
clean up at Folkestone
Marine Reserve*

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Welcome

Welcome to the seventh and final issue of the project's ReefComm newsletter. We would like to thank all stakeholders from the Folkestone area for supporting the project. To our many readers, while our project ends in December, news regarding Folkestone and community-supported activities will continue...look out for that in the New Year!

Address from Park manager

In setting about the achievements of the goals and objectives, the project provided training for teachers in the use of the **People and Corals Resource Pack** and distributed copies of the workbooks to 68 primary schools across the island. The Junior Coral Reef Ambassadors programme has been established at two of the secondary schools (Alexandra School and St. James Secondary School) within close proximity to the Folkestone Marine Reserve, and the Community Reef Watchers Monitoring Programme was implemented. The Reef Watchers Monitoring programme has produced its first report on the selected reef sites within the Reserve.

Of significance was the inaugural Folkestone Marine Reserve Summer Camp which focused on children between the ages of 6-15 years, and included both classroom activities and field activities.

The sessions included learning about coral reef ecosystems, sea turtles and the importance of the Marine Reserve. The children also learnt to snorkel, were taken on trips to the Reserve and observed the release of hawksbill sea turtle hatchlings.

These activities, in addition to the establishment of a communication network via the internet and the Adopt-the-Reserve initiative, have generated significant interest and attention in the Marine Reserve. The opportunity for involvement in activities and operations will assist in ensuring compliance with stated regulations, the provision of valuable scientific information to enable improved management of its resources, and strengthening of the maintenance capabilities for deployed infrastructure. It has also greatly increased the human resource assets available for successful management.

Adopt-the-Reserve initiative



Participants discussing changes in the west coast over the years



Participants assigning priority actions for Folkestone



Be volunteers at the Underwater and beach clean-up

The private sector will be playing an important role regarding the marine environment through the Folkestone Marine Reserve's **Adopt-the-reserve initiative**.

This initiative is essentially a further component of the Community-based Coral Reef Monitoring and Management project based at Folkestone.

This initiative seeks to engage the Folkestone Marine Reserve stakeholders, such as hoteliers, real estate agencies and dive operators, to partner with the Reserve in an effort to assist with resource mobilisation aimed at enhancing the Reserve and maintenance and monitoring within the Reserve.

A meeting facilitated by Ms. Sharon Almerigi of People Dynamic Associates was held with stakeholders at Discovery Bay Hotel on October 28th, 2009

to discuss key actions and some options for collaboration between Folkestone Marine Reserve and the stakeholders.

Ms. Katherine Blackman of CERMES, UWI introduced the participants to the Folkestone project and emphasised the importance of the Adopt-the-Reserve initiative. Mr. John Nicholls, Manager of the Folkestone Park and Marine Reserve spoke to the group about the Reserve, its significance and associated regulations.

As a result of the meeting, the participants assigned the name "Folkestone Marine Reserve Action Group".

Meetings are expected to be held on a quarterly basis to discuss and arrange activities.

Underwater & beach clean-up

The Folkestone Marine Reserve Action Group will be hosting an Underwater and Beach Clean-up on Saturday, 5th December 2009 along the Folkestone Marine Reserve.

The dive session will be led by the dive operators HIGHTIDE Watersports.

To be part of the dive squad or beach volunteers, just contact HIGHTIDE Watersports at 432-0931 or email them at: hightide@sunbeach.net. You can also or contact Mr. John Nicholls, manager of the Folkestone Park and Marine Reserve at 422-2314 or via email at: folkestonemarine@yahoo.com

SMMA trip to St. Lucia



Soufriere Marine Management Area

Two staff members from the Folkestone Park and Marine Reserve will be traveling to the Soufriere Marine Management Area (SMMA) in Soufriere, St. Lucia on November 23rd 2009.

SMMA has been known for its outstanding work with local fishing communities to develop and maintain no-take marine

reserves.

The site visit to the area will allow for the exchange of knowledge and expertise regarding the maintenance of equipment and moorings, as well as some of the administrative procedures used. Discussions will also be held with community groups.

Buoyage infrastructure maintenance

A partnership agreement is being developed between the dive operators of HIGHTIDE Watersports and Folkestone Park and Marine Reserve Office. The agreement seeks to provide assistance to the Folkestone's

boating staff with the buoyage infrastructure and maintenance.

HIGHTIDE Watersports is a dive operation is located at Coral Reef Club which is adjacent to the Reserve.

JCR Ambassadors on turtle patrol

On the last turtle patrol, the Junior Coral Reef Ambassadors of Alexandra School visited the Drill Hall and Hilton Beach to witness the nesting of hawksbill sea turtles.

The JCR Ambassadors were

once again quite fortunate to see turtle hatchlings. They assisted the Barbados Sea Turtle Project patrol team with the excavation of the nest, noting the number of hatchlings and saving a lone hatchling that remained in the nest.

Baseline coral reef survey completed

Finally, the hard work of the Community Reef Watchers team is documented. From June 2008 to August 2009, the team has been monitoring the nearshore and bank reefs within the Folkestone Marine Reserve to determine the status of these reefs.

We would like to thank all of the Reef Watchers volunteers that assisted with the gathering of the baseline information that will be used for the Folkestone Marine Reserve's coral reef monitoring database. This is not the end of the dives; it is just the beginning!



JCRA members discovering a hatchling



Sponges in the Reserve

JCRA at St. James Secondary

The newly re-organized St. James Secondary School Environmental Club, under the supervision of Mr. Elroy Payne and Ms. Jeanette Neblett, held its first meeting on Tuesday, November 11, 2008 with a total attendance of 7 persons. The club continues to meet every Tuesday and now has a total of 31 registered members spread through the various year groups of the school.



JCRA members at St. James Secondary School

The decision to re-organize the Environmental club was made because there seemed to be very little concern for the natural environment and a lack of awareness of environmental issues amongst the general student body. This might be attributed in part to the fact that the assigned syllabuses offered very limited scope in relation to environmental studies, especially within the junior school.

The Environmental Club of the St. James Secondary School therefore affords students the opportunity to be part of an extra-curricular activity which is geared towards the

Project achievements

The project 'Community-based Coral Reef Monitoring and Management' has made a significant contribution to the Folkestone Park and Marine Reserve through community

promotion of environmental education and the protection of our natural environment.

The Junior Coral Reef Ambassador Programme was officially introduced to the club on Tuesday, September 28, 2009 in the form of a power point presentation given by Mr. Elroy Payne. The programme was well received with all students present expressing an interest in joining the new initiative. It is envisaged that the JCRA programme, which will function as a sidearm of the Environmental Club will be an asset in the attainment of the goals of the St. James Secondary Environmental Club.

support from divers, schools, government agencies and private sector. Look out for our project achievements flyer on the project's website.

Visit our Website

<http://www.cavehill.uwi.edu/cermes/folkestone.html>



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newsletter

The Community-based Coral Reef Monitoring and Management is a project of the Caribbean Conservation Association in collaboration with: National Conservation Commission and Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies



The project has been funded by GEF/SGP UNDP.

