



Friends of the Environment

Abaco, Bahamas

SUMMER 2011

PROVIDING ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION & ACTIVITIES SINCE 1988

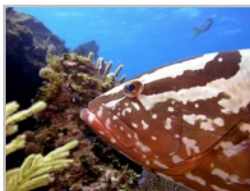
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Bringing attention to Abaco's Flats & Tidal Creeks



Despite their importance, wetland ecosystems are largely underrepresented in Bahamian protected areas. FRIENDS and our partners are trying to change this by working towards Government approval for two proposed protected areas: East Abaco Creeks National Park (which includes the Snake Key, Bight of Old Robinson and Cherokee Creeks) and the Cross Harbour Conservation Zone. Get involved with FRIENDS to help get these areas protected before they are gone forever.

Why are wetlands so important?

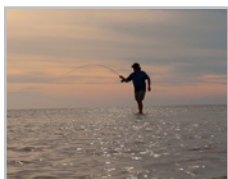


80% of Bahamian seafood grows up in areas like Cross Harbour and East Abaco Creeks. Animals like Nassau Grouper, Queen Conch and Spiny Lobster juveniles rely on mangroves and seagrass beds for food and protection from predators.



Wetlands help protect our shorelines by providing a physical barrier to storm surge. Mangroves and other coastal plants help reduce erosion and prevent sedimentation.

Preserving these areas means we can ensure that future generations of students have living examples of Bahamian habitats to learn from. Both areas are currently incorporated into multiple research projects that are helping us learn more about the Bahamian environment.



Approximately \$20 million of The Bahamas GDP comes from flyfishing in Abaco! The proposed areas are used frequently by local guides and are also excellent sites for kayaking, snorkeling and birdwatching.

Bahamians are running out of places for cultural activities such as fishing, conching and picnicking. Both of these areas have been historically used by local communities who still rely on them.



Cross Harbour



East Abaco Creeks



We're an approved
1% for the Planet partner!
onepercentfortheplanet.org

FRIENDS was just accepted as a 1% for the Planet Partner! 1% was built to support an alliance of businesses financially committed to creating a healthy planet. By joining, your business can contribute to FRIENDS and benefit from international exposure through their efforts! Contact FRIENDS for more information about the program or to find out how to join.

President's Letter



My family has just returned to Abaco from visiting some amazing colleges in the United States. The opportunities for future generations are so exciting. I see the same exciting opportunities at

Friends of the Environment with the extensive education program that is implemented throughout the year. Children today are amazing, and with the right tools, they have so much to offer! The education process continues with seven Friends environmental camps this summer.

The past months at FRIENDS have been busy and exciting. The second annual Lionfish Derby was successful beyond expectation. FRIENDS' partnership with AFFGA (Abaco Fly Fishing Guides Association) for the proposed protection of Cross Harbour is bringing awareness to the importance of the bonefish industry in The Bahamas and the need for habitat protection. FRIENDS continues to advocate for the protection of the East Abaco Creeks and the South Abaco Blue Holes Conservation Area. The support from the people of Abaco for these proposals has been overwhelming. With the opening of crawfish season fast approaching, FRIENDS remains dedicated to the "Pride Campaign", delivering the message that "Size Matters", to insure a sustainable Bahamian crawfish industry.

To all of you who support FRIENDS; members, volunteers, donors, board members, dedicated staff, and students, I personally thank you. Please be sure to join us in our exciting and fun fundraising efforts coming up this year.

I am so proud to be a part of FRIENDS, such an important organization, dedicated to preserving Abaco's environment now and for future generations.

Cha Boyce

Lionfish Derby has Record Results



FRIENDS hosted its second annual Lionfish Derby in Marsh Harbour on Saturday, May 28th. Lionfish have become a major threat to Bahamian marine resources. Although this fish is here to stay, derbies such as this one are a way to help reduce local populations and generate awareness about this voracious predator.

Several lionfish derbies have been held throughout The Bahamas but none have brought in numbers as alarming as Saturday's derby. Sixteen boats set out as early as sunrise in hopes to take home the grand prize of \$2,000 for the most lionfish caught. The first team to arrive at the weigh in station landed 55 lionfish. As boats continued to arrive, an air of friendly competition ensued. Volunteers from Florida International University helped count coolers full of lionfish. Competitors looked on in anticipation while staff at Marsh Harbour Exporters and Importers filleted the fish once they were counted. Once all boats checked in, the results were tallied arriving at an unprecedented number of lionfish...2,957 in total! The winning teams are as follows:

- 1st place \$2,000 prize - 622 by Lil Big Fish
- 2nd place \$1,000 prize - 522 by Grouper Lips
- 3rd place \$500- prize - 514 by Kiki

The awards ceremony was held at the Marsh Harbour Marina and Jib Room where some fillets were raffled off and others were cooked as appetizers for attendees. The prize money was donated by Marsh Harbour Exporters and Importers and The Bahamas Marine Exporters Association. Additional prizes were also given for the smallest and largest lionfish as well as the least number caught.

Each female lionfish has the ability to produce up to one million eggs each year so if fifty percent of the total catch from this derby were female, participants of the derby eliminated over 1 billion lionfish eggs from Abaco's waters in one day!

Save the Date

August 14th - Sail Away at Baker's Bay
Sept. 16 - Keep Abaco Beautiful Awards
Oct. 15 - Kayak Challenge
Jan. 5-7 - Abaco Science Alliance
Conference (ASAC)
January 6th - Wild & Scenic Film Festival in
Marsh Harbour as a part of ASAC
January 27th - Wild & Scenic Film Festival
at the Hope Town Harbour Lodge
February 18th - Hope Town Reef Ball

FRIENDS is a not for profit Society incorporated under the Bahamas Companies Act of 1991. FRIENDS is also a registered 501 (c) 3 organization; that means gifts to FRIENDS are tax deductible in The United States.

FRIENDS Thanks Friends

Lionfish Derby, Marsh Harbour Exporters and Importers, Bahamas Marine Exporters Association, Florida International University, Marsh Harbour Marina and Jib Room

Earth Day, New Vision Ministries, Bahamas National Trust, Albury's Ferry, Disney Animal Programs and Environmental Initiatives, The Nature Conservancy

Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring, Tami, Charlie and Will Cash, Justin Higgs, John Foster, Tufts University

Size Matters, Dept. of Marine Resources, Bahamas National Trust, Bahamas Marine Exporters Association, Mr. Roosevelt Curry, Grand Cay Council, Evan Henderson, Octavia Dean-McIntosh, Greater Bethel Baptist - Moore's Island, Moore's Island All School, Simon Fraser University, The Nature Conservancy, Bahamas, Jo-Ann Bradley, Zyandric Jones

Advertising and Awareness, Coastal Angler Magazine, The Abaconian, Abaco Cruiser's Net, Conch Salad TV

Summer Camp, Disney Animal Programs and Environmental Initiatives, Disney Cruise Line, Bahamas Marine Mammal Research Organisation, Sancha Pinder, Shawn Roberts, Stanley White, Florida International University, Moore's Island All-Age School, Sara Haestad, Octavia Dean-McIntosh, Veronica Lightbourne, Chris Kenalty, Kendria Ferguson, Joey Peters, Serina Scibilian

Size Matters Marches On

The Size Matters campaign continues to do good work to promote sustainable fisheries in Abaco and beyond!

Fishermen Workshops

This summer Fishermen's Sustainable Workshops were held in 4 key fishing communities: Sandy Point, Moore's Island, Fox Town and Grand Cay. Supported by grants from the Global

Environment Facility Small Grants Program, World Wildlife Fund and the Nature Conservancy these full day workshops are designed to inform fishermen

of current initiatives of the Bahamas Fishery Improvement Project (FIP) led by the Department of Marine Resources and World Wildlife Fund to achieve Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification for lobster exports. Without this certification, The Bahamas will not longer be able to export crawfish, so working towards this certification is an important priority. Outreach to fishermen has been an important part of the success of this campaign thus far. Other partners in these presentations included the Bahamas National Trust, the Bahamas Marine Exporters Association and the Nature Conservancy.



Sustainable Menu Program

Baseline surveys are also underway with restaurants around Abaco to determine how and where they purchase their seafood. These surveys will be used to construct a Sustainable Menu program for area restaurants whereby they pledge to only purchase sustainable seafood.

Crawfish would be the first seafood for the program, with it expanding later to include other marine resources. Restaurants would pledge to buy seafood only while in season and not to buy undersized or spawning seafood. This would be a large step forward in creating a more sustainable future for our marine resources.



Abaco Summer Camps!



FRIENDS hosted another successful session of environmental summer camp this July! Camps were held simultaneously in Sandy Point, Marsh Harbour, Cooper's Town and Moore's Island in order to reach the widest range of youths possible. Camp Instructors and volunteers were enthusiastic to work with the new curriculum which Disney's Animal Programs and Environmental Initiatives helped FRIENDS design. The curriculum is tailored to FRIENDS' mission and focuses on Abaconian ecosystems and environmental issues.

Disney also provided FRIENDS with the materials and supplies needed to execute each activity. "The additional resources made a noticeable difference in the amount of information the campers retained each day", said Marsh Harbour Camp Instructor and Board Member, Jim Richard.



Camp Instructors attended a workshop led by Disney representatives to learn the curriculum and test some of the activities prior to using them at camp. The majority of the Summer Camp Instructors were local teachers and many of the camp activities are also appropriate for classroom work, so we know that we can reach an even wider audience with our new curriculum.

Daily activities at summer camp included games and crafts related to a local ecosystem and its inhabitants and a corresponding field trip allowing the campers to develop a sense of pride while being in nature. Campers were encouraged to share their knowledge and do good deeds for the environment through a daily "Conservation Checklist" activity.

Some of the games taught campers about local coral species and the threats they face, while others, such as "Sea Turtle Survival" (a form of "Tag") demonstrated the challenges that sea turtle hatchlings encounter once they leave the nest. Animal ID Bingo helped campers learn about animals that use seagrass beds through clues and pictures. An edible seagrass bed made with pudding, coconut and brown sugar showed how helpful seagrass beds are in trapping sediments and keeping our waters clear. Campers used investigative and critical thinking skills when they tested the waters of a blue hole and discussed the design of their own mock National Parks.

This summer, many of Abaco's children snorkeled a coral reef for the first time, swam in a blue hole for the first time and came to understand how important it is to have healthy ecosystems for the future of Abaco.

Summer Camp is one of the most important components of FRIENDS' Education Program as it allows kids to truly get hands on with their environment, while learning how they can incorporate conservation measures into their daily lives.



FRIENDS Sends Abaco Student to Environmental Leadership Summit

FRIENDS Intern and Forest Heights student Briana Maxwell recently attended an Environmental Leadership Summit held on Farmer's Cay, Exuma by the Young Marine Explorers group (YME). YME (formerly known as Young Bahamian Marine Scientists) is a group based in Nassau that aims to foster a generation of youth motivated to become stewards of the environment and shape the future of The Bahamas.

While at the summit, participants learned more about their host island, Farmer's Cay, through exploration and interaction with community members. Briana remarked, "some locals took us fishing and we were able to enjoy what I think is the real Bahamas. Even coming from a family island, their way of life floored me. Our northern islands have developed so much compared to the south. On Farmer's Cay, the community really depended on the sea. The men spent their mornings fishing while the women plaited leaves by the sea. In the afternoon the socializing was based on the cleaning of

the morning's catch which would later become dinner for many! Everyone lived with the bare necessities and were quite content to do so."

The summit included many team building and leadership activities, as well opportunities to explore the environment surrounding Farmer's Cay. Briana said that one of the most insightful projects was a group role-play where attendees took on civilian roles in a dispute on development for a fictional island.

"I sure began to understand the difficulties in such a situation. Especially when you need to save your environment, but you have hundreds of people unemployed with no way to feed their families."

About her trip, Briana said "It was an amazing experience, one I would not trade for the world! When I think about my trip the first word that pops into my mind is insightful, and it truly was. I became so much more aware of my environment and community. Thank you so very much for such an opportunity! It is one I will surely never forget!"



2010 Financial Report

INCOME

Membership	\$31,761.00
Donations	\$42,208.00
Reef Ball	\$47,393.50
Size Matters	\$20,073.48
Other Events	\$17,886.50
Merchandise	\$10,603.00
Admin. Services	\$1,765.16
Interest from the CD	\$539.25
Rentals	\$25,277.50
Foundations	\$38,572.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$236,079.39

EXPENSES

Education Center	
Salaries	\$34,587.96
Education Center	\$30,785.81
Office Supplies	\$3,976.51
Transportation	\$1,181.98
Financial & Legal Services	\$1,050.00
Bank Charges	\$3,875.08
Depreciation	\$3,699.48
Insurance for Office	\$1,476.36
Programs	
Marine	\$15,204.55
Terrestrial	\$11,332.88
Solid Waste Reduction	\$12,766.56
Environmental Education	\$44,806.85
Size Matters	\$30,273.08
Sustainable Development	\$2,650.48
Development	\$35,261.87
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$232,929.45
Revenue	\$3,149.94

FRIENDS' Mission: To preserve and protect Abaco's terrestrial and marine environments in order to achieve sustainable living for the wildlife and people of Abaco, Bahamas.

FRIENDS' Contact Information

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