

Friends of the Environment Strategic Plan 2019-2021



FRIENDS of the ENVIRONMENT
ABACO, BAHAMAS

Mission: Preserve the environment of Abaco, The Bahamas through education, conservation, and research facilitation.

About Us

Vision: We are an island community that is living sustainably, and proud to be stewards of our rich biodiversity.

Friends of the Environment (FRIENDS) was established in Abaco in 1988 in response to a desire to see a sustainable future for Abaco. In the following years, FRIENDS grew from an all-volunteer organization in a small community to a non-profit charity run by five full time staff and a Board of 11 members that reach communities across Abaco. FRIENDS' mission is to preserve Abaco's environment through education, conservation, and research facilitation. Our focus is environmental education, specifically helping people gain an appreciation for their local environment to inspire sustainable behaviours. Organizational goals include implementing and assisting in conservation efforts that are supported by research, developing environmental programs and infrastructure that benefit the Bahamian community, and pairing education with experiential activities.

Since the inception of our education program in 2006, over 20,000 students have benefitted from our offerings of classroom presentations, field trips, summer camps, and after school clubs. First hand knowledge of our ecosystems inspires pride in our natural heritage and motivates people to become involved in protecting their environment.

Officially opened in April 2015, The Kenyon Centre aims to support the work of FRIENDS by facilitating scientific research and outreach, and promoting sustainable development in Abaco. To date, the Kenyon Centre has already hosted over 57 groups and institutions, 25 different research projects, and over 450 tour visitors who have learned about research, sustainability, and education initiatives in Abaco. FRIENDS constantly works to develop partnerships with these groups and individuals to benefit Abaco.

FRIENDS' office has now grown to become a campus with a number of features that can be utilized by local and visiting schools including a classroom, lab, solar array, nature trail, bush medicine and pollinator gardens, edible orchard, as well as a natural history museum in partnership with the Antiquities Monuments and Museums Corporation.

Organizational Goals

- Unify efforts of Frank Kenyon Centre and FRIENDS to support FRIENDS mission.
- Attract projects that satisfy goals under FRIENDS mission and FKC's vision while financially supporting both entities.
- Practice what we preach
- Hire a new staff member for FKC
- Foster and maintain partnerships with other organizations.
- Fill Gaps in our outreach plan

Who We Are

Executive Board

President: Wynsome Ferguson, Manager Abaco Tourist Office

Vice President: James Richard, Principal of Forest Heights Academy

Secretary: David Knowles, Chief Warden - Bahamas National Trust

Treasurer: Charlotte Dunn, President - Bahamas Marine Mammal Research Organisation

Directors

Joy Chaplin, retired teacher

Reg Patterson, Lucayan Surveying

Diane Claridge, Executive Director - Bahamas Marine Mammal Research Organisation

Justin Higgs, Principal of Hope Town Primary

Jody Albury, independent bonefish guide

Jeremie Saunders, Department of Marine Resources

Michelle Bailey, science teacher at Patrick J. Bethel High

Staff

Executive Director, Cha Boyce

Deputy Director, Olivia Patterson Maura

Education Director, Cassandra Abraham

Administrative Coordinator, Ruth Albury

Outreach Coordinator, Lianna Burrows

Contact Us

Friends of the Environment

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Institutional Goals

Kenyon Centre

Market the Kenyon Centre to attract school and research groups.
Complete and install false killer whale skeleton at the Kenyon Centre.
Maintain a composting program at the FRIENDS campus.

Outreach

Increase visibility of FRIENDS campus and organization through signage and other marketing materials.
Develop and share a community FAQ list to address topics such as recycling, animal strandings, pollution, and development concerns.
Host a community small grant program to facilitate and support local projects across Abaco.
Develop FRIENDS Ambassador criteria for Abaco students and implement into existing programs.

Education

Incorporate alternative livelihoods and eco-careers into existing education programs.
Host a Student Environmental Conference.
Develop a Teacher's Resource Guide for high schools and host a workshop to introduce it.
FRIENDS Staff and Board model sustainable behaviour.

Infrastructure

Improve the FRIENDS campus through the addition of a building dedicated as a classroom and storage area (existing classroom would be utilized for staff, and office space converted to welcome centre).
Increase/re-organize available space to incorporate room for a small welcome centre.
Upgrade the solar battery charger to increase charging capacity when the Kenyon centre is full.
Apply for and enable reverse metering on the solar system.
Install a water purification system so that we can eliminate our need for new plastic 5 gallon bottles.



Marine Conservation Goals

Develop and implement a community workshop program to understand community concerns and motivations with the ultimate goal of assisting communities with improving their environments.

Develop and implement an alternative livelihoods course for high school students to introduce opportunities in fly-fishing, diving, nature tours, and other low-impact eco-industries.

Continue partnership with Bahamas National Trust, dive operators, and other community stakeholders to maintain moorings at Sandy Cay reef, Fowl Cay reef, and Mermaid Reef.

Engage communities through art and media to raise awareness of the status of Queen conch and inspire support for legislation change.

Ensure relevant Abaco stakeholders are involved in management planning of newly established marine protected areas.

Expand marine best practices outreach through new formats and outlets.

Improve coral reef education through: Project Coral reef awareness project, completion and dissemination of a Parrotfish Poster, and increasing access of high school students to reefs (those who can't swim).

Seek to secure public access to Mermaid Reef from land.



Terrestrial Conservation Goals

Terrestrial Conservation Goals

Complete Phase 1 trails and signage at Iron Cay, and work towards making Iron Cay free of plastic and invasive species.

Share knowledge about invasive species and encourage community projects to assist with reducing invasive species.

Improve invasive species control along borders of the FRIENDS campus.

Support the maintenance of public parks by acting as a resource to community groups working on coastal restoration projects.

Initiate a multi-level litter campaign through: revitalizing the Cover Your Load Campaign, support for The Bahamas' 2020 Plastic Ban, promoting existing community efforts, engaging students in designing anti-litter signage, and promoting the use of compostables.

