



# Friends of the Environment

Abaco, Bahamas

WINTER 2015

PROVIDING ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION & ACTIVITIES SINCE 1988

VOL. 22, ISSUE I

## Introducing the Frank Kenyon Centre for Research, Education, and Conservation!

The brain child of FRIENDS Board and staff, the idea for a new research centre sprang into being two years ago as a natural next step for conservation in Abaco. Those involved were motivated to see the centre come to fruition, and though plans have evolved several times the centre is now a reality. If you are holding this newsletter in your hand you too have likely played a large part in making this dream possible. As each board, shingle, and nail is put into place by our talented construction team, we are working behind the scenes to make sure the building is furnished and programs are in place to get the centre up and running. And we couldn't do it without you.



Frank Kenyon, the centre's namesake, and his wife Nan, view the building site for the first time.



Construction progress as of (Jan. 21)

Together . We . Make . It . Possible

### Our Progress

We began with an ambitious budget of \$500,000 to construct the centre, and \$100,000 to purchase and install the solar array. To date, we have raised over \$660,000, largely in part to a family-led fundraising campaign which led to the naming of the centre as the Frank Kenyon Centre for Research, Education, and Conservation. \$100,000 was awarded from the United Nations Development Program Global Environmental Fund to install the solar system (see pg. 4).

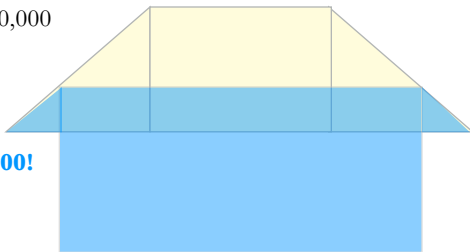
### About Frank Kenyon

Frank was one of the original founders of FRIENDS in 1988. Having lived in Abaco since the '50s he has grown to love and be a strong advocate for conservation. He has passed these principles on to his children and grandchildren, exemplifying the mission of FRIENDS by supporting sustainability and environmental ambassadorship. Frank has been a key player in various projects such as the proposal of new marine protected areas, best fishing practices, and promoting Abaco's environment as a tourism product.

### Filling Gaps

We have built the rooms, but now we need to outfit them in preparation for our first research groups! You can help make the building above a functional research and education centre. We have included an insert with a wish list of items that are needed to open the centre doors and ensure programs are running smoothly. Please let us know if you feel like you may be able to grant any of these wishes!

GOAL - \$1,000,000



So far - \$660,000!



We're an approved  
1% for the Planet partner!  
[onepercentfortheplanet.org](http://onepercentfortheplanet.org)

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.

## President's Letter



2014 was an exciting and rewarding year for us at Friends of The Environment, as we have accomplished much. The highlight of the year was breaking ground and commencement of the construction of the Frank Kenyon Research Centre.

Seeing this project become a reality is such an amazing achievement and I am proud to be associated with such a great organization. During the last year, we continued our educational and awareness programs of the preservation and conservation of our environment, throughout the length and breadth of Abaco, from Moore's Island in the South to Grand Cay in the North.

A special thank you to our donors, who overwhelmingly supported us with the construction of the Frank Kenyon Centre and to all those who assist with keeping the doors of FRIENDS open. To the staff, I must say a job well done! You continue to go beyond the call of duty to ensure that the goals and objectives of FRIENDS are met.

The Board of Directors and staff of FRIENDS look forward to completion of the Frank Kenyon Centre and having our grand opening during Earth Day in April and welcoming our first visitors this summer. Once again, a heartfelt thank you for your continued support and we look forward to working with you in this coming year.

*Wynsome Ferguson*

We are proud to share some of last year's accomplishments:



## 2014 Highlights

Our education program visited **21 schools**, including 285 teachers and parents, gave **55 school presentations**, and ran **47 field trips** for **2,350 students!** These experiences created some memorable moments for both students and parents.

**60 solar panels** were installed in the Frank Kenyon Centre solar array. These are supported by a 24,000kw inverter and a bank of state of the art (plus lead and acid free) nickel, iron, and saltwater batteries.

Researchers investigated everything from mangroves and patch reefs, to conch, plovers, bonefish, climate change and more! These studies are contributing to conservation in The Bahamas as well as our general understanding of our environment. Learn more on The Abaco Scientist blog: <http://appliedecology.cals.ncsu.edu/absci/>

The Abaco community rallied in support of International Coastal Cleanup in September: **404 participants** covered 18.5 miles of ground and collected **2,280 pounds of trash!!**

The Bahamas Government established a fixed closed season on Nassau Grouper (December 1 - February 28, annually).

The country is moving forward on progressive legislation amendments such as the Protected Areas Fund Act, Bahamas Parks and Public Beaches Authority Bill, and the National Energy Policy.

## Save the Date

**Feb. 7,** Hope Town Reef Ball

**Feb. 21,** Marsh Harbour Reef Ball

**March 20-22,** Great Abaco Family Fitness Weekend, Treasure Cay

**April** - National Coastal Awareness Month

**April 22nd** - Earth Day

**June 24th - Aug. 12th,** Summer Camps and field courses (tentative date)

## FRIENDS Thanks Friends

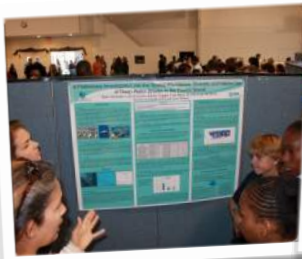
**Turtle Trot,** HG Christie Real Estate, Hope Town Inn and Marina, Hummingbird Cottage Art Center, Sunny and Don Meinhold, PROMPT (Paradise Race Organization, Management, Promotion & Timing), Java, Abaco Tourist Office, Islands by Design, Abaco Inn, Abaco Family Medicine, Marsh Harbour Exporters & Importers, Elbow Cay Properties, Abaco Petroleum, Chris Chapman, The Mitchell's, Sugar Shack

**Science Fair,** United States Embassy, New Vision Ministries, Abaco Tourist Office, Albury's Ferry, Shearwater Foundation, Lightbourn Family Farm, Disney's Animals, Science and Environment, GEF Small Grants Program, Judges: Joy Chaplin, Wendy Sneff (U.S. Embassy), Deon Stewart (GEF SGP), Stacey Moultrie (SEV Consulting Group Ltd.), Kellie Janes, Nadeen Beneby, Stacey Pitt, Canishka Alexander, Doranell Swain, Wendy Bishop.

**Kayak Challenge,** Adam & Sarah Lawrence, Ryan Cash, Frank Knowles, Pete's Pub

**Advertising and Awareness,** Coastal Angler Magazine, The Abaconian, Abaco Cruiser's Net, Conch Salad TV, Steve Dodge and Cruising Guide to Abaco, Click242 Nature

# So What's in Store for the Frank Kenyon Centre?



## Upcoming Courses

Habitat Conservation, adult course  
Habitat Conservation, (teens) ages 15-18  
Coastal Shark Ecology, ages 15-18  
Sea Turtle Tagging, ages 15-18  
Sea Turtle Research, adult course  
Ecosystems Camp, ages 6-9  
Ecosystems Camp level II, ages 6-9  
Sustainable Fishing Camp, ages 10-12  
Nature Detectives Camp, ages 13-15

## Join the Excitement

Want to bring a group down? Have a contact that might want to work with us? Give us a shout! We can help put together a program or itinerary at the Kenyon Centre to suit you.

242-367-2721

[info@friendsoftheenvironment.org](mailto:info@friendsoftheenvironment.org)

## Building Partnerships

FRIENDS is seeking partnerships with universities, research groups, and others who share similar goals of advancing research and conservation in Abaco. An advisory committee is being formed to assist in broadening the scope of the Kenyon Centre's outreach and funding capabilities.

## Upcoming Programs

We will be growing a repertoire of programs at the Kenyon Centre that will support FRIENDS' mission for a sustainable Abaco with goals to increase collaboration between research, education, and sustainable development. In-house programs will be offered to high school students, recent graduates, university students, and adults, and the centre will be available for use by other educational and service groups who may offer their own courses. Check out a sample of upcoming courses in the box to the left. The Abaco Science Alliance Conference will be planned for January 2016.

## Future Plans

FRIENDS will be working to develop programs and partnerships at the centre that encourage student scholarship in the sciences, build student experience in field research, and support new and continuing research projects on Abaco. These objectives all lead to an ultimate goal of sustainable development and conservation, and a new generation of environmental ambassadors and smart decision makers for Abaco.

## Why Join FRIENDS (or renew your membership)?

*Your contribution to FRIENDS:*

*\* Provides environmental education to create a new generation of responsible citizens and environmental stewards \* Reduces invasive species and promotes biodiversity \* Conserves Abaco's habitats and natural resources for future generations to enjoy \* Supports our amazing quality of life in Abaco*

Please use the enclosed envelope or visit our website make sure you are a member for 2015!

[www.FriendsoftheEnvironment.org](http://www.FriendsoftheEnvironment.org)



# GEF Helps FRIENDS Install the Largest Solar Array in Abaco

Rivaled only by the pioneering solar installation at Pete's Pub in Little Harbour, FRIENDS now has a 60 panel solar array capable of producing approximately 15kW of electricity. The solar project was made possible by a grant from the United Nations Development Program's Global Environment Facility Small Grants Program to help work towards climate change adaptation. The array was designed and installed by new local company South Island Solar using some of the latest technology from Kyocera and Encell. The structure supporting the solar panels was built by Miracle Builders of Dundas Town.

The solar system is supported by a 24,000kW inverter which is capable of managing solar, generator, grid, and other alternative energy inputs simultaneously. This means that when grid tie-in becomes legislated in The Bahamas we will be ready to implement it! The batteries (which will support the system at night and other times of low solar input) are lead and acid free, able to discharge up to 80%, and have a lifetime of approximately 10,000 cycles.

This solar installation is the jewel in the crown of the new sustainability showroom at the Frank Kenyon Centre for Research, Education, and Conservation, which will be a working example of sustainable building options that are available on Abaco. People who are building their own houses or development projects are welcome, and invited to visit the centre to see all of the equipment and materials in use.



This project is supported by the GEF Small Grants Programme  
<http://www.sgbahamas.org/>

## Teachers Making a Difference in their Communities

FRIENDS would like to acknowledge the great efforts of educators over the past years to go the extra mile teaching and showing students how important sustainable living can be. To reward and encourage those efforts FRIENDS introduced a program called The Green Teacher Awards. This program recognizes and honors the contributions of outstanding classroom teachers who have demonstrated a superior ability to care for the environment and take extra measures to promote and use sustainable initiatives in the classroom. The recipients of this award for 2014 are Ms. Keturah Duncanson at Treasure Cay Primary School and Mrs. Amanda Lightbourn-Higgs at Hope Town Primary School. Let us know if you would like to nominate a teacher for 2015!



**Left:** Ms. Duncanson has challenged herself to work with the local Treasure Cay community to reduce litter. She is also encouraging the next generation of environmental ambassadors by focusing on community pride and environmental education.

**Right:** Ms. Lightbourn-Higgs stands behind the camera as she lets her students shine.. showing the skills they have learned from her as they manage their schools garden! Her students also participate in annual coastal cleanups.



**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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