



# Friends of the Environment

Abaco, Bahamas

SUMMER 2017

PROVIDING ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION & ACTIVITIES SINCE 1988

VOL. 24, ISSUE II

## Summer Camps Make an Impact



### Why Summer Camps?

Every year we choose to make summer camps the headlining article of our summer newsletter. Why? Well, summer camps are a big part of what we do - a full 6 weeks of programs, not to mention months of prep work. So why do we choose to do all this work for students that we might only see once, for a week of their life? One reason - behaviour change.

*We have discovered that one of the most impactful things we can do is to introduce students to the environment, up close and personal, and provide them with the tools they need to learn more. And, why not have fun while we're at it?!*

The impact of summer camp goes beyond the students attending. Siblings, parents, and even grandparents often become absorbed in the palpable excitement when a summer camper returns home after a day of adventure. Family members learn about the day's lesson and are often encouraged to change their own behaviour for the better. Additionally, our camp programs have become so successful that we *do* see students returning for more summer camps or to take advantage of our after-school programs. Campers have gone on to become interns and volunteers, and several are pursuing degrees in environmental science.

Former camper turned intern, DaShane Knowles teaching the next generation about the importance of mangroves.



### Why Children, and Why Behaviour Change?

FRIENDS's mission is to work towards a sustainable environment for Abaco. So why work with kids? What about today's issues? Children are a vital part of today's issues, not to mention that they are the key to the future.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child emphasizes the right to learn, and the right for children to have their opinions heard. Children have a right to a healthy environment, and they have the right to use their knowledge to help protect that environment. This makes them very important stakeholders. Children are the decision makers of tomorrow, and conservation is a long-haul game, so FRIENDS feels that it is essential to invest in them.

And much like a parent can never be there all the time to shape a child's decisions, it is similar with enforcement in this country. We will fare a lot better if all citizens are supplied with the knowledge and tools to make smart decisions regarding the environment. And it all starts with the youth.

### 2017 Programs

- Sea Beans Camp (ages 3-5)
- Abaco's Ecosystems Camp (ages 6-8)
- Abaco Conservation Camp (ages 6-8)
- Sustainable Fishing Camp with IGFA (ages 9-11)
- Nature Detectives Camp (ages 12-16)
- Bahamas Plastic Movement Fun Day (all ages)
- Grand Cay Camp (ages 5-17)
- Sea Turtle Field Course (ages 14 - adult)

8 Camps 4 Communities 153 Students (ages 3-16)

## Message from the V.P.



I first joined the board of Friends of the Environment over 12 years ago as a teacher in Abaco because I saw the organization as a great resource for local educators and students. I saw the dedication and enthusiasm that the board members and volunteers brought to field trips and classroom presentations, and

I knew that it was something that I wanted to be part of. Having now served at FRIENDS in many positions including chairperson of the Education Committee, the President and the Vice-President I have watched the organization grow to include a hard-working staff of five, a new research center and continued expansion of its education programs and outreach.

Being a part of Friends of the Environment is important to me because I want to see my children and grandchildren experience all of the amazing outdoor opportunities that exist now on Abaco. FRIENDS' work in educating people about the fragile environment and best practices, reaching out to developers and community stakeholders, and providing resources for fishermen, homeowners, teachers and visitors all provide important steps in keeping Abaco's natural spaces and natural resources around for years to come!

I thank you all for your support of this amazing organization and your continued dedication to Abaco's environment - together we can ensure that this special place remains amazing for generations to come.

*Jim Richard, Board Vice President*

## Join Us at our fun Fall Events!



### **Kayak Challenge - November 4th, Pete's Pub, Little Harbour**

A partnership between FRIENDS, the Abaco Cancer Society, and event participants to raise funds for the work of both organizations while supporting healthy living and promoting one of Abaco's newest national parks - The East Abaco Creeks. The kayak challenge will begin and end at Little Harbour. There will be a fun party at Pete's Pub including music, food, and cold beverages!

### **Abaco Science Fair - November 16th, New Vision Ministries, MH**

This year's theme is "Exploring the Value of Marine Resources". All Abaco schools are invited to participate and the general public are welcome to attend (10am - 2pm).

### **Turtle Trot - November 23rd, Hope Town Harbour Lodge**

The best way to work up an appetite for your Thanksgiving meal! Join us for a 5k fun run/walk through Hope Town and North End all in support of marine environment education and awareness!

### **Fourth Annual Hope Town Music Festival - December 8th - 10th**

The Combustion Music Hope Town Music Festival is a memorable three-day-long celebration of music and giving back to Abaco. Venues include: Hope Town Harbour Lodge, Harbour's Edge, Abaco Inn, and Hope Town Inn and Marina.

**NEW!! Coastal Christmas Ornaments by Kim Rody**  
Partial proceeds to support FRIENDS! Buy online at [www.rodyChristmas.com](http://www.rodyChristmas.com) or locally from FRIENDS.



Please use the enclosed envelope or visit our website and make sure you are a member for 2018! Your support helps make all of our exciting programs possible!

## Save the Date

- November 4th - Kayak Challenge
- November 16th - FRIENDS Science Fair. (Theme: Value of Marine Resources)
- November 23rd - Hope Town Turtle Trot, 5K
- December 8th-10th - Hope Town Music Festival
- February 10th - HT Reef Ball
- February 17th - MH Reef Ball
- Jan 3-6, 2018 - Abaco Science Alliance Conference



Follow us!

## FRIENDS Thanks Friends

**Lionfish Derby:** Green Turtle Club & Marina, Brendal's Dive Center, Abaco Tourist Office, The Bahamas Department of Marine Resources, Bobbie Lindsay, Chris Burdett, Enie & Marc Hensel, James Boyce, Jim Richard, Logan Kanan, Vicki Richard

**Advertising and Awareness:** Coastal Angler Magazine, The Abaconian, Abaco Cruiser's Net, Conch Salad TV, Steve Dodge and Cruising Guide to Abaco, The Abaco Scientist blog, Abaco Life.

**Rockin' with FRIENDS:** Abaco Inn, Doug's Place, Sail The Abaco's, Green Turtle Club, Hope Town Canvas, Abaco Pure, Verandah Resorts, Disney Cruise Line, Bruce Ost, Sasha Lickle, Lillian Cash, Sena Fuqua, Justin & Journey Higgs, The Aberle Family, Chris & Jessica Farren, Patrick Stewart, Rob Sands, Christopher Lightbourn, Elizabeth Covington, David Wright

**Summer Camp & Field Courses:** Disney's Animals Science and Environment, Disney Cruise Line, International Game Fish Association, Lindsey Sihau, Kelly Delancy and Adrianna McPhee (AMMC), Beth Whitman (FIU), Ryley Parent, Justine Thompson, Jody Albury, Lianna Burrows, DaShane Knowles, Macy Yust, Ebany Hanna, Jaro Curry, James Boyce, Grand Cay All Age School, Maxine Cephas, Greg Cephas, Kristin Russell, Big Grand Cay, Man-O-War Primary, Bahamas Plastic Movement, Kristal Ambrose, Jamie Pelecanos, Hope Town Community Center, Monica Cook, Carly Jones, Clay Wilhoite, Science Under Sail, Jerah Coviello, Robin Smith



# Kenyon Centre News and Updates

When FRIENDS undertook the challenge to design the Kenyon Centre, our goal was to bring science to the community, making sure that all research being done in Abaco is able to impact the community in some way. It is so rewarding to see these goals come to life in the form of hands-on experiences!



Oriol Lapiedra (Harvard University) has been studying anoles in Abaco for several years. This May, he was able to share his knowledge with our Discovery Club chapter (ages 7-12) during their herpetology badge.



An enforcement workshop held in May allowed officers to discuss common issues and seek solutions to fisheries threats.



Nature Detectives summer campers (ages 11-15) dissect an albatross bolus (regurgitated pellet) as part of activities led by Bahamas Plastic Movement to study plastic in the ocean.



Beth Whitman (FIU) has been studying Abaco's sea turtle populations in coastal wetlands since 2013. She and her research assistants have since expanded their studies to include sharks, sea cucumbers, and seagrass (AKA turtle food!). Each year, Beth partners with the Kenyon Centre to host field courses where members of the public can become a scientist for a day, helping to monitor and tag turtles in Snake Cay Creek. This year the course was held on July 13 and 14.



## Aliv with Science!

**Join us for the Abaco Science Alliance Conference, January 3-6, 2018.**

Registration is free to all community members and students, thanks to sponsorship by Aliv! The conference includes a welcome reception, talks, poster presentations, and field trips. New this time, we hope to feature presentations by winners of the Abaco Science Fair, which will be held this November. We are also planning an exciting preview of the first Bahamian natural history museum!

# aliv

[bealiv.com](http://bealiv.com)

*Frank Kenyon Centre Vision: To support the work of FRIENDS by facilitating scientific research and outreach, and promoting sustainable development in Abaco, Bahamas.*

# New Vans Donated for Education Program!



Sabine and Reinhold (center) with some of FRIENDS' staff, and the vans!

FRIENDS serves schools from north to south, and the majority of our field trips are off site, so transportation is one of our top expenses, not to mention a logistical challenge. FRIENDS members Reinhold and Sabine Probst recently visited our education centre and recognized the importance of getting students out of the classroom and into the environment, and generously donated two 12 passenger vans which will serve all of FRIENDS' environmental education programs. We were excited that they arrived just in time to take our first group of summer campers on their field trip!

As of printing in summer 2017, FRIENDS has already exceeded our 2016 field trip outreach!

# Green Turtle Cay Lionfish Derby Report

Boat Name	# of Lion Fish	Smallest (cm)	Largest (cm)
Spear Bender	419	5.4	34
Bolo Boys	141	7.0	31.2
All Play	14	6.5	27.1
Firefly	7	13.3	24.5
Weekend Cowboy	4		
Check Me Out	1		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>586</b>		



LEFT: Dale Sawyer with his catch.  
ABOVE: What a haul!

Lionfish was served to participants during weigh-in and was also a menu item at the Green Turtle Club that evening.

**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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## Officers:

*President*, Wynsome Ferguson. *Vice President*, Jim Richard. *Secretary*, David Knowles. *Asst. Secretary*, David Price. *Treasurer*, Charlotte Dunn.  
**Directors:** Justin Higgs, Diane Claridge, Reg Patterson, Jody Albury, Joy Chaplin, Jeremie Saunders, Anthony Bostwick

## Staff:

*Executive Director*, Kristin Williams  
*Education Officer*, Cassandra Abraham  
*Program Coordinator*, Olivia Patterson  
*Office Manager*, Ruth Albury  
*Development Officer*, Cha Boyce

