



Friends of the Environment

Abaco, Bahamas

WINTER 2018

PROVIDING ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION & ACTIVITIES SINCE 1988

VOL. 25, ISSUE I

ABACO SCIENCE ALLIANCE CONFERENCE



FRIENDS hosts the Abaco Science Alliance Conference (ASAC) every two years in Marsh Harbour. The goal of the conference is to bring together researchers and the community so that science relating to The Bahamas may be used for education, management, and conservation purposes. Additionally, when scientists get together with others outside their normal circles of expertise they often make connections in their research and forge research partnerships that can further benefit the country. The conference presented 21 talks, 11 posters, and hosted 26 researchers from The Bahamas and The U.S., many of whom stayed at the Kenyon Centre. FRIENDS also organized field trips to Manjack Cay, and Cherokee Sound and Little Harbour to help conference attendees learn more about the island. A welcome reception at the start of the conference also served as a soft opening for the National Museum of The Bahamas' first natural history exhibit, now open to the public.



Above: FRIENDS signed a memorandum of understanding with the Forestry Department to facilitate our partnership in conservation and education. Minister of the Environment, Hon. Romauld Ferreira, attended ASAC and presented the MOU as the Forestry Department falls under his portfolio.

Center: Junior and Senior High winners of the FRIENDS science fair presented their projects, both on Queen Conch, at ASAC. These are the first high school students to give oral presentations at the conference. Photo courtesy of Michelle Bailey.



Field trip participants enjoyed the chance to explore Abaco! Above: Caving near Little Harbour. Below: Organic gardening on Manjack Cay.



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.

Board Spotlight



Charlotte Dunn

I was born in Nassau to a Bahamian mother and British father who was a Bahamasair pilot at the time of independence. Therefore with other families whose fathers were foreign Bahamasair pilots, we were relocated to

Hong Kong shortly after I was born, where the pilots were given jobs with Cathay Pacific (owned by the same company that owned Bahamasair at the time). I was educated in Hong Kong and the UK with annual visits back to the Bahamas, often twice a year, to see family. I began my career as a computer programmer on Wall Street and worked for Goldman Sachs and Merrill Lynch for over ten years before pursuing my passion to work with marine mammals. I re-trained by taking a masters in environmental science with a heavy focus on marine mammals, and returned home to work with the Bahamas Marine Mammal Research Organisation (BMMRO) in Abaco. I was invited to join the FRIENDS board as a Bahamian with some experience of environmental issues in other parts of the world, and technical skills that may benefit the organisation - I think I have been the Treasurer for over 10 years! I received my PhD in whale communication in 2015 and as such am able to advise FRIENDS as a marine scientist when issues arise. I am interested in how our actions, especially those that increase our ocean noise, are affecting whale communication. Abaco (and the Bahamas) is very fortunate to have an organisation focused on environmental education, and I am extremely proud to play a small role in it.

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



2017 Highlights

Our education program visited 15 of 22 Abaco schools, including 214 teachers and parents, gave 128 classroom presentations, ran 56 field trips, 3 after-school clubs, and 8 summer camps for 3,005 students! These experiences created some memorable moments for both students and parents. The Science Fair was attended by a total of 249 students from 12 schools, some of which participated for the first time. We were especially proud that we were able to fly in students from Moore's Island All Age School for their first science fair, thanks to donors at the 2017 Reef Ball. Additionally, FRIENDS hosted 10 interns and 2 high school work-study students throughout the year.

Since opening in April 2015, **53 institutions** have stayed at The Kenyon Centre studying over **27 different research topics** including ocean currents, seagrass health, shark populations, and coral reef restoration. Over **400 individuals** have toured the centre's solar demonstration site which is open for viewing Monday - Friday.

Right: Participants in the Sea Beans Camp (ages 3-5) learned about sharks and other animals in Abaco's environment.



FRIENDS Thanks Friends

Turtle Trot, HG Christie Real Estate, Hope Town Harbour Lodge, Susan Maxman and Family, PROMPT (Paradise Race Organization, Management, Promotion & Timing), Abaco Inn, Elbow Cay Properties, Hope Town Hideaways, Hope Town Inn & Marina, Abaco Inn, Abaco Family Medicine, Elbow Cay Properties, Hope Town School, Sheree Wallas, Kay Guinness

Science Fair, New Vision Ministries, Disney's Animals Science and Environment, BEP Foundation. Judges: Joy Chaplin, Charles de la Baume, Charlotte Dunn, Kaderin Mills, Huel Moss, Doranell Swain, Nancy Albury, Canishka Alexander, Arielle Kelly, Helen Jacobs, Jim Richard, Kelly Delancy

Kayak Challenge, Abaco Construction Ltd., Pete's Pub, Tony Sofo, Ben Puckett, Abaco Family Medicine, Abaco Petroleum, MH Exporters & Importers, Black Fly Lodge, L.C. Hull & Co., HT Fire Rescue, Abaco Cancer Society

Hope Town Music Festival, Chris Farren/Combustion Music, and all of the community members who made the event possible!

ASAC, Aliv, JS Johnson, New Vision Ministries, Antiquities Monuments & Museums Corporation, James Albury MP, Abaco Chamber of Commerce, The Abaconian, Victor Roberts, Bill Herrington & Leslie Fouse, Jane Minty & Bob Gascoine, JoAnn Bradley, Ali Ball, Cherokee Shell Museum, Pete's Pub, Marissa Allen, Jan Swing.

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, Native Stew, Hope Town Bulletin

Iron Cay: Building on a legacy

George and Ophelia Gallup, of Princeton New Jersey, were among the first adventurous second home owners to visit Hope Town in the early 1950's. Today the 4th generation family continues the tradition. The Gallup and Laughlin Families gifted Iron Cay, a barrier island in the East Abaco Creeks National Park, to FRIENDS. We hope to honor their generous donation and ensure that future residents and visitors of Abaco can benefit from the cay by installing a simple landing and nature trails.



Please help us make this project possible through monetary donations or volunteer hours.

US-based donations to the Iron Cay project are tax deductible.



Laughlin's Landing

FRIENDS will install a rustic landing to enable boaters to disembark and explore Iron Cay. A welcome sign will orient visitors and educate them about the island.

Be a Trailblazer!

Help us clear and mark up to 2,000 feet of trail through the lush coppice of Iron Cay, revealing unique plants and other features of the island.

Re-articulation: A whale story



This false killer whale stranded (dead) on Duck Cay in Feb. 2017. FRIENDS and the Bahamas Marine Mammal Research Organisation are partnering to turn its unfortunate end into an educational opportunity: the skeleton is soon to be on display at the Frank Kenyon Centre!

The Frank Kenyon Centre for Research, Education, and Conservation

Comfortable dorm-style accommodations with a self service kitchen, indoor and outdoor lab space, and a covered outdoor classroom. The Kenyon Centre is available for individuals and groups doing research or service projects in Abaco. Ideal for small lab groups or larger travel groups (up to 28 beds). Nightly rate is \$30/person. Please help us spread the word! Share our info with your alma maters! More details available on our website, or call us at 242-367-2721.



Cultivating Interests with After-school Clubs



After school clubs resumed in full swing in January for students ages 3-16! These clubs meet once a week and cover a variety of topics about Abaco's marine and terrestrial ecosystems, such as mangroves, coral reefs, and pine forests. This year, we added a new club to our after school curriculum called *Eco-Scouts* for ages 6-11! This program allows students to achieve badges for their environmental accomplishments, e.g. global citizenship. Our clubs also include *Island Investigators* for ages 12-16 and *Sea Beans* for ages 3-5. Our students come eager to learn about the environment, proving these programs to be a huge asset to our education department.

Natural History Exhibit Now Open!!

Countless hours of planning and conceptualizing by the Abaco office of the Antiquities Monuments and Museums Corporation (AMMC) has culminated in this amazing exhibit titled "Shifting Tides: The ever-changing plant and animal communities of The Bahamas". The exhibit is located at the FRIENDS offices in Marsh Harbour and is open for viewing Monday-Friday from 9am-4pm. FRIENDS is partnering with AMMC to help increase outreach for the project and to find ways to incorporate new research into the evolving exhibit.



Nancy Albury, Director of Paleontology for the National Museum of The Bahamas, welcomed the Minister of the Environment to the museum during his visit to the Abaco Science Alliance Conference.



Kelly Delancy of AMMC explaining the geology of blue holes to Hope Town Primary, the first school to visit the new exhibit. Schools may coordinate field trips by calling 367-2721.



This tortoise shell on display shows evidence of interaction with crocodiles (see bite mark), which were terrestrial top predators in Abaco at the time. This tortoise lived approximately 1,000 years ago.

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

Education Center:
#2 Conservation Lane
Marsh Harbour, Abaco

Tel: (242) 367-2721
Fax: (242) 367-0722
info@friendsoftheenvironment.org
www.friendsoftheenvironment.org

Mailing Address:
PO Box AB-20755
Marsh Harbour,
Abaco, Bahamas

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

Staff:

Executive Director, Cha Boyce
Education Director, Cassandra Abraham
Program Coordinator, Olivia Patterson-Maura
Office Manager, Ruth Albury
Education Officer, Lianna Burrows

