



TRUST NOTES



December 2009 Issue 6 No.3



BNT Council and Executive Committee at the BNT Ball. From left: Ms. Teresa Butler, Mr. Lawrence Glinton, Mrs. Lynn Gape, Mr. Eric Carey, Mr. Pericles Maillis, The Rt. Hon. Hubert Ingraham, Prime Minister of The Bahamas, Mr. Glenn Bannister, Mr. John F. Bethell, Mr. Peter Stokes, Mrs. Robin Symonette, The Rt. Hon. Brent Symonette, Deputy Prime Minister.

Government Adds Fowl Cay to Trust's National Park System

The Bahamas Government announced that it is set to expand the Bahamas National Trust's National Park System in Abaco, Andros and Conception Island. The official announcement came from Prime Minister Hubert Ingraham as he brought special greetings to the attendees at the BNT's recent 50th Anniversary Ball on 17 October.



Eric Carey and Glenn Bannister present the Prime Minister with a token gift of appreciation for the support of the government for the past 50 years.

The government's action will create a new land and sea park in Abaco – The Fowl Cays National Park, expand the existing West Side National Park in Andros, as well as add the valuable reef system which surrounds the Conception Island National Park.

The reaction of Ball attendees was one of excitement and celebration at the announcement made by the Prime Minister. It was evident that supporters of the Trust and conservation in The Bahamas continue to be ready to accept the responsibility and live up to the BNT's mandate of managing national parks.

"The Bahamas National Trust is very excited about this and thanks the government of the Bahamas for these additions to our park system," said Eric Carey, Executive Director, Bahamas National Trust. "This is a further indication of the confidence of the government in our management of the national parks of The Bahamas. We know that challenges will arise as we fulfil our goal, however, the expected challenges will be nothing in comparison to the end results"

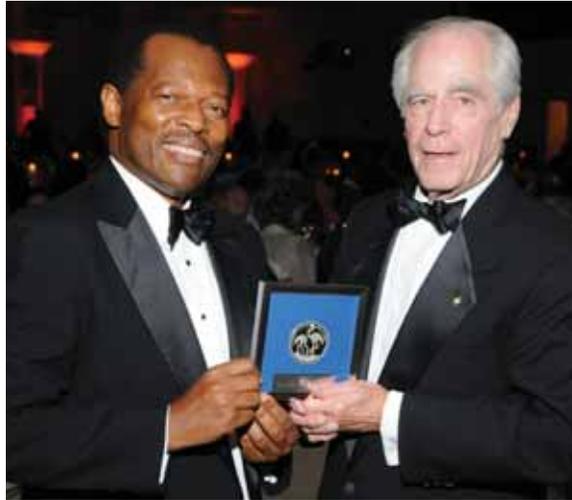
In the barrier islands of Great Abaco, Fowl Cays Land & Sea Park will be created between Scotland Cay and Man O'War Cay. In Andros the West Side National Park will be expanded to areas north of the western most point of the island including Williams' Island and Billy Island, Turner Sound, identified creeks with significant mangroves extending into South Andros, a lake system at the west side, Cabbage Creek to Timber Creek and the area south of Lisbon Creek including Sandy Cay in the South Bight.

Continued on page 3

Celebrating 50 years of

The BNT would like to recognize and thank our Gala Ball Committee

Mrs Robin Symonette
– Chair
Mrs Beth Bethell
Mrs Carleton Robertson
Mrs Amanda Lindroth
Mrs Betty Sands
Mrs Lynn Gape
Ms Natasha Wright
Mrs Urmie Braynen



Glenn Bannister presents Dr. Carleton Ray, honoree, a commemorative plaque

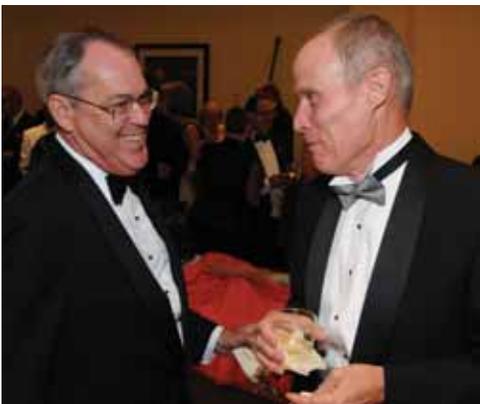


Glenn Bannister congratulates Mr. J. Andrew McKinney, founding member of the BNT.



Officers and Members of the Bahamas National Trust came together for an evening of celebration on Saturday, 17 October at the Sheraton Cable Beach. Joining the BNT in its 50th Anniversary celebrations was the Rt Hon. Prime Minister, Hubert Ingraham, The Rt. Hon. Deputy Prime Minister Brent Symonette and Mrs. Symonette, Minister of the Environment the Hon. Earl D. Deveaux and Mrs. Deveaux, and the Hon. Lawrence Cartwright, Minister of Agriculture.

The Trust honoured two founding members of the BNT, Dr. Carleton Ray, leader of the original Exuma Expedition and Mr. Andrew McKinney past President of the Trust. The Trust also honoured the Government of the Bahamas for its commitment to conservation and long standing support of The Trust. The Bahamas government literally made conservation history in 2002 when it doubled the size of the National Park System from 300,000 acres to over 700,000 acres.

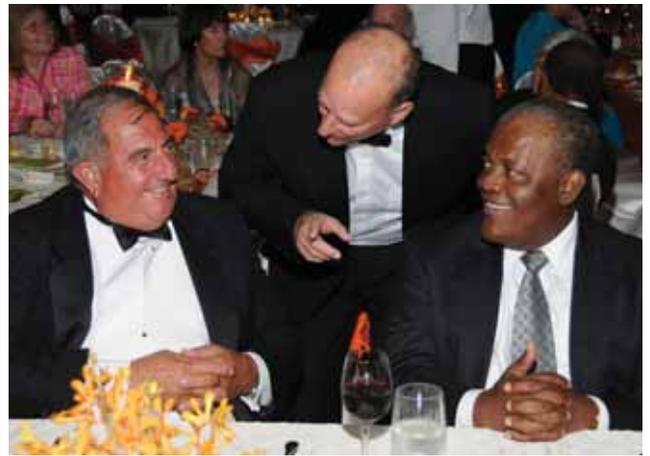


Special Thanks to:

- Cacique International Ltd
- Sheraton Nassau Beach Resort
- Media Enterprises



Conservation Success



Continued from page 1

“The BNT has conducted extensive community outreach in Abaco in partnership with Friends of the Environment” said Lynn Gape, Deputy Director of BNT. “And the Abaco Community is very excited about the Fowl Cays National Park.”

Community consultation has been conducted with regard to the expansion of the West Side National Park in collaboration with The Nature Conservancy, Andros Conservancy and Trust and Nature’s Hope. The final boundaries for the Andros West Side Park will be established at the end of these talks.

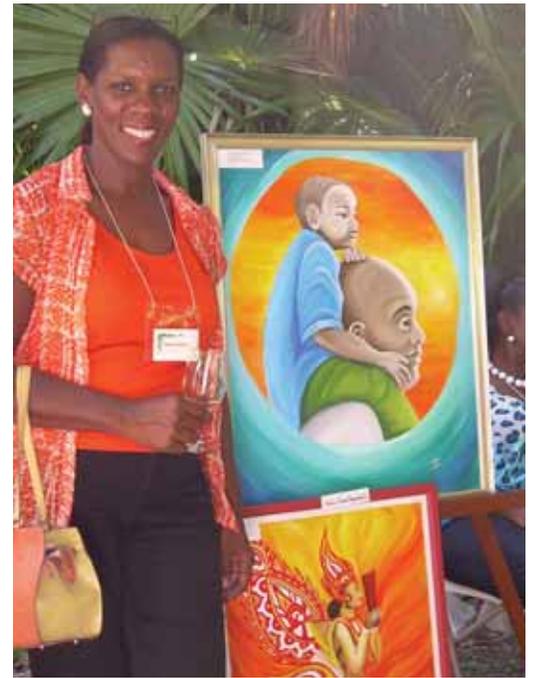
“The West Side of Andros is tremendously important for fisheries resources and provides important habitat for Bonefish. Andros has become famous as a premier bonefishing destination and the BNT and its partners will be seeking input from all stakeholders with regards to this park. We are grateful to the Kerzner Marine Foundation for its support of the Rapid Environmental Assessment and the stakeholder outreach that was undertaken so that proposal for expansion of the park could be presented to The Government of The Bahamas.” said Tamica Rahming, BNT Director of Parks and Science.

Conception Island National Park will be expanded and regularized under a 99-year lease with a view to include important surrounding marine areas like Montastrea reef systems, bringing it into conformity with the other national parks managed by the Trust.

As The Bahamas is a part of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, which established targets for all state parties in regards to protection of marine and land ecosystems for 2010 and 2012, the establishment of these new parks moves the Bahamas closer to meeting these established goals.



Lemero Wright proudly poses at the Wine and Art Festival.



Moya Strachan, a long time Wine & Art participant



Glenn Bannister and Kim Smith unveil "Mangrove Tranquility"



Rusty Scates (centre), wine manager for Bristol Wines and Spirits, premiered Beaujolais Nouveau at the Christmas Jollification

Everyone Looks Forward to BNT's Annual Events

The Annual Wine and Art Festival attracted a great crowd on Saturday, 24 October. Over 50 artists exhibited work in a variety of genres and Bristol Wines and Spirits featured over 50 wines from around the world. Friday evening, saw the unveiling of *Mangrove Tranquility* by Kim Smith who is donating 15% of the sale of the original drawing to the BNT in honour of their 50th Anniversary.

With over 90 artists, artisans and culinary vendors, this year's Christmas Jollification was truly a Winter Wonderland. Sponsored by Bristol Wines and Spirits, Cacique Food Art, Bahamian Rental, Sands Beer and Bluebird Juice the event had something for everyone.

Talented artisans offered unique crafts and patrons were able to purchase beautifully finished woodcraft from Joe Krukowski, sparkling stained glass from Linda Turtle and beautiful shell crafts from Shell Shock by Darcia Christie. For those who were searching for Bling, the Jollification featured a number of jewellery designers such as Sherlene Blackwell, Amanda Darville and Designs by Shy.

Fabric Crafts area always popular and the Jollification was excited to have the ladies of Stepping Stone Quilters participate for the



Talented wood-worker Joe Krukowski.



Dr. Wendy Stuart, Botani Bath was the winner of the Booth Competition at this year's Jollification

first time as well as Pippa Cole with her uniquely designed pillows.

The Greek Booth was as popular as ever and Brian Evans with his pulled pork sandwiches and Mike Dames Roasted Corn were well-received new additions to the event.

Jolly Land the Children's Crafts area was expanded to offer not just crafts but special educational presentations on sea turtles and endangered species. Atlantis Water Features and Ardastra Gardens partnered with the BNT to offer young people the opportunity to meet juvenile sea turtles, a Bahamian Boa and our beautiful Bahama Parrot.

Bahamas Brewery Ltd introduced their High Rock Lager which was an instant hit with the crowd. All of this paired with the decorations and lighting provide by Cacique made Jollification a sparkling event.

All of the funds raised by Christmas Jollification support the upkeep and management of The Retreat Garden.



Festival Noël 09

On Friday, 4 December dozens of people turned up for the annual Festival Noël to support The Bahamas National Trust in Grand Bahama. Guests sampled wines from Bristol Cellars, and beer from Bahamian Brewery Company as well as a holiday menu of delectable dishes from local restaurants and caterers such as Le Med, Shenanigans, Lucianos, Grand Bahama Catholic High Catering Department, Social Butterfly Catering, Island Java, Joe Ret, and Livity Vegetarian Juice Bar. Supporters enjoyed live entertainment and viewed the work of artists Alisa Streather-Robinson, Janice Corkery, Ken Heslop, Rupert Watkins, Del Foxton, Sandra Bonnefil, and Caroline Anderson, as well as the special guest artist Anthony Morley.

Karin Sanchez, chairman of the Grand Bahama BNT branch explained that the funds raised at this year's event will go toward the restoration of the wildlife pond located at the Rand Nature Centre.

"The funds raised last year were earmarked for the wildlife pond as well and we've got great plans for observation decks, new signage to show the trails, and we'd also like to create an arboretum which will be a species collection of native trees," she said.

Sarah Kirkby, Festival Noel committee member pointed out that the event will support the BNT in its efforts to follow the direction provided by the Grand Bahama Tourism Board to improve the island's offering to visitors.

"The money raised at Festival Noel will go to do exactly what the tourism board has asked us to do which is to create another event or venue for tourists to visit," she said.

"When you go on a cruise anywhere around the Caribbean, they always take you to see their local environment - their birds, or their natural trees or their habitat, and that's what the Rand Nature Centre will provide.."

Kirkby commended sponsors-Bristol



Festival Noël: From left: Scott Ferguson, Furniture Plus and Top Notch; Jevon Butler, Bristol Wines; Karin Sanchez, BNT Regional Chair, Anthony Morley, guest artist, Ms. Melvern Pinder, Parfum de Paris; Mr. Eric Carey, Ms. Sharon Stanford, Colombian Emeralds

Wines and Spirits, Colombian Emeralds, Furniture Plus, Bahama Buy and Sell, Cool 96, Parfum de Paris, Freeport Advertising and Printing, Bahamian Brewing Company, Pelican Bay, Hush Intimate Apparel, the MailBoat, Western Air, Sunny Isles Rent a Car, for their continued support of the event, noting that their contributions allowed the BNT to fully benefit from all proceeds.



Festival Noel attendees get ready to taste the culinary creations that are part of the Chef Noel Competition.



Bristol Wines and Spirits was once again the major sponsor of Festival Noël



New Boardwalk and Viewing Platform at Bonefish Pond

A 600 foot boardwalk and covered pavilion have been completed at Bonefish Pond National Park. The Project was made possible by a \$300,000 grant through the government stimulus project which provided funding to support infrastructure improvements at Bonefish Pond National Park, Primeval Forest

and Harrold and Wilson's Pond National Park. The BNT has also been able to improve the farm road that provides access to the boardwalk with assistance from BNT Past President Pericles Maillis and donated fill from Mr. Tennyson Wells. The BNT will officially open the new boardwalk early in 2010. ■

BNT Hosts Economic Evaluation of Protected Areas Workshop

The Bahamas National Trust hosted a workshop in November funded by an early action grant from the United Nations Development Programme to assist in the implementation of the Programme of Work on Protected Areas as outlined by the Convention on Biodiversity.

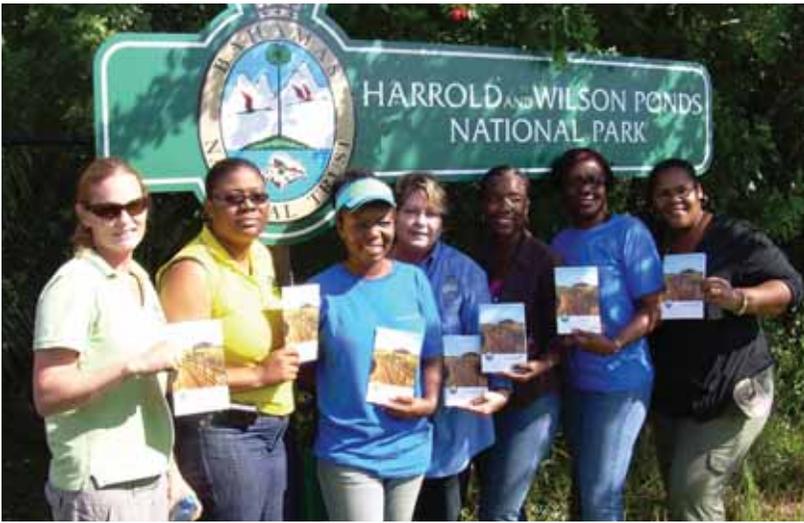
The workshop was attended by BNT Park managers and representatives from the Bahamas Environment Science and Technology Commission, The Nature Conservancy, Department of Marine Resources, BREEF, the Ministry of Tourism and the Department of Statistics.

The workshop focused on the training of resource/park managers in the use of economic evaluation and natural resource accounting tools. The workshop was facilitated by the Conservation Strategy Fund which has developed programmes which use economics and strategic thinking to help conserve natural ecosystems. Resource managers will be developing national level assessments of the economic contribution of biodiversity conservation and the associated goods and services that are made to the Bahamian economy by national parks and protected areas.

The participants were introduced to basic economic principals, economic and environmental values and valuation techniques. The group participated in designing their own economic surveys and conducted the surveys in the field. Mechanisms for protected area revenue generation were discussed. Some of the mechanisms discussed were Park Entrance Fees; Concessions from Tour Operators and direct environmental tariffs on resource users such as the Cruise Ship Industry. ■



Pictured at back from left: Laura Millar, BEST Commission; Lynn Gape, BNT Deputy Executive Director; Georgina Delancey, Ministry of Tourism. Kim Bonine, Conservation Strategy Fund, Venetia Hargreaves-Allen, Conservation Strategy Fund. Middle row: Prescott Gay, Warden, Lucayan National Park, Grand Bahama; Felicity Burrows, The Nature Conservancy; Tamica Rahming, BNT Director of Parks; David Knowles, BNT Warden Abaco; Stacey Moultrie, The Nature Conservancy. Front Row: Stacey Lubin Gray, BEST Commission; Predensa Moore, BNT UNDP Project Manager; Tammara Lopez, Department of Statistics; Linwood Pendleton, Nicholas Institute, Duke University. Not Pictured: Casuarina McKinney, BREEF and Lakeishia Anderson, Department of Marine Resources, Greg Bethel, Department of Marine Resources.



Credit Suisse Fun Day at Harrold and Wilson Ponds

Credit Suisse hosted a special Fun Day on 28 November at Harrold and Wilson Ponds National Park for BNT members and residents close to the park. Activities included planting of native trees, painting of garbage bins for the park and special tours which highlighted the flora and fauna of the park. Premiered at the event was the new Parks Pal booklet developed specifically for Harrold and Wilson Ponds National Park and funded by a grant from Credit Suisse. ■

Bird ID and Surveying Workshop

Seven persons participated in a Bird ID and Monitoring workshop on Andros in November. The workshop was conducted to build capacity to monitor the bird life at Blue Hole National Park, which is one of the 43 Bahamas Important Bird Areas. The workshop was supported by a grant from the Aage V. Jensen Foundation facilitated by BirdLife International.

Participants were introduced to point count transects and received special presentations on migratory birds which winter in The Bahamas with emphasis on Piping Plovers. According to Predensa Moore, IBA Surveying Coordinator, "The workshop was a great success. The participants were enthusiastic and we look forward to providing them with support and establishing a quarterly monitoring programme for the park." ■



Southwest Marine Management Area

The BNT is developing a proposal for a managed marine area off the southwest coast of New Providence. This area poses both threats to nearshore marine resources and the opportunity for sustainable use of those resources since the location can be easily accessed by most Bahamians and tourists.

A managed marine area can protect our marine resources while providing non-destructive economic benefits, as well as recreational and educational opportunities. This proposed marine park can become a cornerstone example of conservation zoning for future multi-use national parks.

A Rapid Ecological Assessment was undertaken during July 2009 to collect quantitative data on the ecology of the area and surrounding marine ecosystems (e.g. from the shelf edge to the shoreline and coastal wetlands of southwestern New Providence), including information on the habitats of living marine resources, their current status, and

the threats that they face. The full report is available here <http://www.bnt.bs/SouthwestMarineParkREA.html>

A managed marine area will allow use by recreational fishermen, commercial dive operators and the general public, but stakeholder input during the project's development phase is essential. Readers are invited to complete a brief survey in this regard, by visiting the following link: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=7CuPKudDPv0IV_2bMMdraHDw_3d_3d ■



Upcoming Events

TOWN MEETING: RESEARCH AND CONSERVATION OF BLUE HOLES IN THE BAHAMAS

When: 7 PM, Wednesday, January 13, 2010
 Where: Bahamas National Trust, The Retreat Gardens, Village Road, Nassau

Why: Proposed protection of blue holes on Abaco, with discussion on a national conservation effort.

The Antiquities, Monuments and Museums Commission/National Museum of the Bahamas has proposed to the Bahamas Ocean Research Foundation, Friends of the Environment and the Bahamas National Trust a large scale conservation project of 4 bays in Nassau before containing more than 10 miles of underwater caves located on southern Abaco. These amazing blue holes are considered the most highly decorated natural wonder the world has ever known. They have been discovered the geological remains of the ancient animals.

The blue holes are currently the primary focus of a National Geographic/News on the Edge documentary, as well as an upcoming feature article in National Geographic Magazine. The purpose of this presentation is to highlight the natural beauty these caves contribute to the landscape of the Bahamas, as well as to encourage the general public to support conservation efforts to the protection of these highly sensitive natural world. Please join us to discuss your thoughts and concerns.

For more information please call the Bahamas National Trust at: (242) 393-1317

Get ready for an *Exciting 2010*

Mark your Calendars for an exciting start to 2010

Research and Conservation of Blue Holes in The Bahamas

January 13, 7pm, The Retreat, Village Road

Special public meeting to discuss the conservation proposal for four known blue holes containing more than nine miles of underwater passages located on southern Abaco. These amazing underwater caves have yielded fossilized remains of the ancient animals that once roamed the islands of The Bahamas.

Abaco Art for The Parks

January 29, Gala Opening 6 – 8 pm, Abaco Beach Resort

January 30 & 31 – Abaco Beach Resort, Marsh Harbour, Abaco

Join the BNT for its first fundraiser for the Abaco National Parks. Over 30 artists have joined us for a three-day art and craft festival that will feature art, international cuisine and a special children's crafts area. Special Package including a visit to the Abaco National Park available for members. Call Candy Adderley 393-1317 or email at bntmembership@bnt.bs to make reservations.

Climate Change and Coastal Erosion in The Bahamas

Guest Speaker: Neil Sealey

February 10, 7pm, The Retreat, Village Road

Annual Cuban Pig Roast

February 13, 2 pm, The Maillis Farm Adelaide

Join us for our annual Cuban Pig Roast. Spend a wonderful afternoon enjoying authentic Cuban Cuisine, Cuban and Bahamian music and Mojitos. Tickets are \$150 per person. Call Candy Adderley at 393-1317 or email at bntmembership@bnt.bs to reserve your tickets.

Green Earth Festival

February 27, 10am – 5 pm

Join us for this special event that will promote healthy life styles and sustainable living. Vegan and Vegetarian cuisine, Lionfish demonstrations and vendors with products supporting sustainable life styles.

ART PARKS
 Abaco Beach Resort and the Bahamas National Trust Present
 THE ART PARKS
 A THREE-DAY ART AND CRAFT FESTIVAL
 January 29, 30 & 31, 2010
 Abaco Beach Resort, Marsh Harbour, Abaco

BNT CUBAN PIG ROAST LUNCHEON
 @ Maillis Farm, Adelaide Road
 on Saturday, 13 February, 2010
 Cost \$150pp
 for tickets Call Rosita @ 393 1317
bntmembership@bnt.bs



Bahamas National Trust
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 Nassau, The Bahamas