



# Friends of the Environment

Abaco, Bahamas

SUMMER 2015

PROVIDING ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION & ACTIVITIES SINCE 1988

VOL. 22, ISSUE II

## Summer Camps Connect Kids with Nature



Straight from the Source:

“Even though I had to wake up early everyday it was worth it.” - Donovan, Age 14

“I love Friends of the Environment because we go on field trips and we learn stuff I don’t even know about.” - Jermaine, Age 7



This year, FRIENDS offered two different **Junior Camp** curriculums to help serve greater demand for environmental education for the 6-9 age group. Topics ranged from pollination to pollution!



The International Game Fish Association sponsored **Fishing Camp** for ages 10-12 in Marsh Harbour and Coopers Town. Campers learned how to use fly rods and spinning rods, and tied their own flies. Each camper went home with a brand new rod.



**Nature Detective Camp** challenges 13-15 year olds to dig deeper into the workings of their environment by undertaking small research projects. Students sharpen their skills using the scientific method and participate in fun activities, outdoor exploration, and service projects.



8 Camps

5 Communities

152 Students  
(ages 6-15)

## President's Letter



The opening of the Kenyon Centre, summer camps, and the Lionfish Derbies just to name a few, paint Friends of the Environment this year with colorful memories and pride that we the team and the community will never forget. All of the projects and activities put on by FRIENDS influenced the community and built bridges between new science innovation and the youth of the island. This fosters environmental growth, while stimulating the minds of everyone involved regardless of age.

The key highlight for FRIENDS this year was the opening of the Frank Kenyon Centre for Research, Education and Conservation, which was officially opened on April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015. This facility will enable local students and interested persons to be exposed to the expertise of researchers and the use of state of the art equipment. This incorporates science and conservation, while introducing technology to the Island. As a result of this facility, Abaco has the opportunity to engage in facilitating new research that will not only benefit the island but the world at large.

FRIENDS is known for our annual summer camps. This year the youth of the island were not disappointed; we hosted 8 summer camps that targeted 5 communities island wide. These camps served to create ambassadors who are taking pride in the distinctive and remarkable environment of their communities ranging from Sandy Point in the south to Grand Cay in the north. We would like to thank all the participants and individuals who supported our summer camps. Participants had the privilege of visiting blue holes, the mangroves, Abaco's dry caves, and snorkeled at Mermaid Reef and Snake Cay.

In addition to the Central Abaco Lionfish Derby, this year FRIENDS became the organizer of the Green Turtle Cay Lionfish Derby. Those who participated in this derby caught over 763 lionfish. In Central Abaco Lion Fish Derby participants caught over 1,062. There has been a drastic decrease in the presence of lionfish in our waters, in part as a result of the lionfish derbies.

Kudos to the team at FRIENDS for once again doing an amazing job! A very special thanks to our donors and of course the community of Abaco, for believing in us and their continued support.

*Wynsome Ferguson*

President



Do you receive email newsletters from us? If you, or a friend, would like to be added to the list, please email us at:

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

## Mermaid Reef gets a Facelift!



Thanks to the support of the Royal Marsh Harbour Yacht Club and LBT Marine, Mermaid Reef now has a permanent sign that explains the expected code of conduct for all of its visitors. Despite the amount of pressure the reef receives, it remains healthy and that is because of the respect and appreciation from those who visit it. We hope that this sign will further encourage users to help maintain one of Abaco's most popular destinations.

### Save the Date

November 14th - Kayak Challenge  
 November 19th - FRIENDS Science Fair. (Theme: Climate Change)  
 November 26th -  
 Hope Town Turtle Trot, 5K  
 December 4th-6th -  
 Hope Town Music Festival  
 February 6th - Hope Town Reef Ball  
 February 20th -  
 Marsh Harbour Reef Ball

FRIENDS is a registered 501 (c) 3 organization; that means gifts to FRIENDS are tax deductible in The United States.

## FRIENDS Thanks Friends

**Lionfish Derbies**, Marsh Harbour Exporters and Importers, Bahamas Marine Exporters Association, The Layman Lab (NCSU), Marsh Harbour Marina & Jib Room, Green Turtle Club & Marina, The Department of Marine Resources, Bobbie Lindsay, Maureen Koeppe.

**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.

**Summer Field Courses**, Stephanie Buhler, Beth Whitman, Pamela Murata, Jody Albury, Justin Lewis.

**Rockin' with FRIENDS**, Sail the Abaco's, The Abaco Club on Winding Bay, Pete's Pub & Gallery, Marjolein Scott- van Der Hek, Cracker P's, The Delphi Club, The Abaco Inn, Shane Cash, Nicole Berg, Justin and Journey Higgs, Meredith Knowles, The Aberle Family, Rhiannon Thomas, Andrea Gottlieb, Elizabeth Covington, Donnella Rolle, Aly Boyce, Chris & Jessica Farren, Rick Hearn, Christopher Lightbourn, Tom Hazel and The Abaco Inn.

**Summer Camp**, St. Martin's Anglican Church, Disney's Animals Science and Environment, International Game Fish Association, Tom and Mark DeAngelis, Ken and Anne Perkinson, Abaco Lodge, Sara Green, Nancy Albury and the Antiquities Monuments and Museums Corporation, Adrianna McPhee, Paul Pinder, Sara Gordon, Elizabeth Frasc, Monet Brown, Justin Lewis and Bonefish & Tarpon Trust, Scott Lightbourn, Miranda Albury, Tyler Knowles, William Parotti, Grand Cay All Age School, Maxine Cephas, Jan Russell, Alean Rolle, Amy Roberts Primary, Nicole and Tivonia (Bah. Swallow project)

## THE FRANK KENYON CENTRE FOR RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND CONSERVATION



The Frank Kenyon Centre for Research, Education, and Conservation (Kenyon Centre) officially opened on April 30th. Within two days the centre was already being put to task when our first researcher arrived for the summer.

Since May 1st, individuals from eight different academic institutions and conservation organizations have stayed at the Kenyon Centre. Research topics include bonefish population and genetics, mangrove die off, patch reef ecosystems, sea sponges, spiny lobsters, sea turtles, shark abundance, lizards and more. All the researchers that stayed at the Kenyon Centre had positive feedback about the facility and all it had to offer.

While the rest of the island experienced the normal summer power outages, the Kenyon Centre and the FRIENDS office remained cool and functional thanks to our solar array. The Kenyon Centre was able to continuously run the air conditioners, fridge, lights and fans, lab equipment, and other small appliances while the FRIENDS office was packed with summer campers. We encourage everyone to visit the centre for a tour to view all of the sustainable building practices that we have implemented.



*“You have put together something special here! I can’t wait to watch it grow! Here’s to attracting ecological research to Abaco that will empower Bahamians to protect their birthright.”-Stephanie Archer, North Carolina State University*

## Summer Field Courses



*“This was an awesome experience! One that I will never forget. My eyes were opened to the niche that each marine species plays, and without their presence the ecosystem will drastically be changed.”-Zoya Thompson*



Due to interest expressed last year, FRIENDS held our first adult summer field course with the assistance of Beth Whitman (Florida International University). Our adult students gathered in the Kenyon Centre classroom to learn about sea turtle biology and conservation, and then joined Beth on a research expedition to Snake Cay. While at Snake Cay, the group captured 8 green turtles which they measured, weighed, and tagged. This data will contribute to a growing study about the health of turtle populations in Abaco.

Three student field courses were held this summer: Sea Turtle Ecology and Coastal Shark Ecology in Marsh Harbour, and Flats Ecology in Grand Cay. Researchers Beth Whitman, Stephanie Buhler, and Justin Lewis did an excellent job conveying their respective topics and leading the students in field research. The Sea Turtle group assisted Beth in tagging and measuring turtles, and the shark group collected data about coastal shark populations in The Marls and Snake Cay Creek. The Flats group learned about the importance of flats ecosystems to The Bahamas, and about fly fishing as a sustainable industry.



Register for the 7th Biennial Abaco Science Alliance Conference January 6-9, 2016!

<http://www.friendsoftheenvironment.org/education/a-s-a-c/>

## AJ McIntosh Continues to Inspire



AJ standing proudly in front of "his" bedroom at the opening of the Kenyon Centre.

FRIENDS past student, volunteer, intern, and then programs assistant, AJ McIntosh was part of the inspiration for the Frank Kenyon Centre. He is the perfect example of a young Bahamian person that the Centre will provide opportunities for as they pursue careers in conservation, science or education.

Sadly, during the first few months of AJ's employment at FRIENDS he was diagnosed with Non-Hodgkin B-cell lymphoma at the age of 19. After a period of treatment and recovery, AJ recently faced a relapse when his cancer returned. Thanks to numerous guardian angels, most importantly the Abaco Cancer Society, AJ spent this summer undergoing specialized chemotherapy and a bone marrow transplant in Greenville, SC.

Despite all the odds, AJ is a remarkably positive person who impacts everyone he meets. We here at FRIENDS are cheering AJ on everyday, and are thankful to all those who have contributed to him in some way. AJ plans to return home in November and we can't wait to have him back!

## Lionfish Derbies



This year, FRIENDS hosted two lionfish derbies in Abaco! The first was in partnership with Marsh Harbour Exporters and Importers and the Jib Room, and the second in partnership with the Green Turtle Club. In total, 26 boats participated and caught 1,825 lionfish! Grouper Lips was the top boat with 387 fish. The largest lionfish caught was 35.9cm, and the smallest was 3.4cm. Thanks to all who participated and made the events possible!

3.4cm, the size of the smallest lionfish caught (smaller than last year!)

## 2014 Financial Report

INCOME	
Membership	\$19,107.63
Donations	\$32,517.44
Events	
Reef Ball	\$75,144.00
Other Events	\$18,381.00
Merchandise	\$3,379.00
Admin. Services	\$6,205.00
Interest from the CD	\$51.45
Rentals	\$23,500.00
Frank Kenyon Research, Education and Conservation Centre	\$330,671.2
Foundations	\$77,623.74
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$586,580.4</b>
EXPENSES	
Education Center	
Salaries	\$39,381.53
Rent	\$23,400.00
BEC Electric	\$5,525.63
Communications	\$2,545.68
Office Supplies	\$1,846.10
Office Maintenance	\$2,117.29
Vehicle Maintenance	\$2,433.54
Bank Charges	\$7,175.32
Meetings/Conferences	\$2,075.78
Insurance	\$3,740.00
Kenyon Center	
Capital Costs	\$210,608.0
Solar Capital Costs	\$103,653.7
Salaries	\$12,909.46
Programs	\$754.99
Iron Cay	\$2,745.00
Programs	
Marine Resources	\$10,097.32
Invasive Species	\$9,876.46
Environmental Education	\$50,608.59
Habitat Conservation	\$11,233.86
Development	\$51,714.55
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$554,442.8</b>
Revenue	\$32,137.61

**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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Abaco, Bahamas

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