



Friends of the Environment

Abaco, Bahamas

WINTER 2019

PROVIDING ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION & ACTIVITIES SINCE 1988

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A VISION, A MISSION, AND A PLAN

In the last 30 years since FRIENDS was established many things have changed. However, one of the mainstays of the organization is its motivation to connect people with the environment. The importance of environmental education and hands-on experiences can not be understated, as we have seen time and time again the difference it truly makes in someone understanding the natural environment. This focus on education led us recently to revise our mission statement and vision to better reflect the work of the organization.



Left: an early field trip (~1994) exploring mangroves in Hope Town Harbour. Right: Plymouth University students visiting Abaco in 2019 learn about Bahamian mangrove ecosystems.



Vision: We are an island community that is living sustainably and proud to be stewards of our rich biodiversity.

Mission: To preserve the environment of Abaco, The Bahamas through education, conservation, and research facilitation

In October of last year, FRIENDS' Board and Staff met for two days in Hope Town, back where it all started. The two day retreat was designed to help us assess current programs, identify strengths and weaknesses, and fill gaps where needed. We developed a vision that supports the goals held by our founders and revised our mission to reflect the work we are doing towards that vision. This new three year strategic plan highlights focal areas such as making environmental education more accessible across Abaco, incorporating creative outreach approaches into our programs, and reinforcing best practices for sustainable living.

If you are interested in learning more about our strategic plan feel free to stop in to our office for a chat, or download a copy from our website. We are looking forward to working with you to make Abaco more sustainable!



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1% for the Planet partner!
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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.

Student Spotlight

Arienne Doucet is a 14 year old student at Forest Heights Academy, she is currently a participant and volunteer for FRIENDS programs.



Q: How did you get involved with FRIENDS, and when?

A: I started coming to Discovery Club four years ago when my family moved to Abaco.

Q: How has FRIENDS changed: - your outlook on Abaco's environment?

A: I care much more about Abaco's environment now that I am involved with FRIENDS. I am more cautious while I am out and I have more knowledge on the plants and animals on this island.

- your personal interests?

A: FRIENDS has influenced me to be interested in the native animals of The Bahamas and much more interested in the mangrove environment.

Q: What do you think is something important that everyone needs to know about Abaco's environment?

A: I think it is important for everyone to know about the protected environments on the island. It is also important for everyone to be aware of the closed seasons for grouper and crawfish.

Q: What can people do to help the environment?

A: In my opinion, picking up trash is one of the best ways people can help the environment since it is such a major problem. If everyone would pick up their own trash, the environment would be in a much better place.

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



2018 Highlights

FRIENDS had another exciting and fulfilling year serving the Abaco community through our education program. Accomplishments include: visits to 10 of the 22 schools in Abaco, 119 classroom presentations, 60 field trips, 6 summer camps, 3 after school clubs and 1 field course. Thus, reaching and providing memorable experiences for 2,562 students, 214 teachers and parents! The Annual Science Fair was attended by 264 students from 13 schools and the Minister of Environment, The Hon. Romauld Ferreira, who served as our guest speaker. We were also very pleased to host 10 interns throughout the year.

The Kenyon Centre continues to fulfill its purpose of providing a place for students and researchers to stay and study. Since opening in April 2015, the Kenyon Centre has hosted over 59 institutions studying over 30 different research topics inclusive of sea turtle populations, climate change, coral spawning and mangrove health. The Centre also serves as a solar demonstration site; over 450 individuals have toured the facility. The Kenyon Centre is open for viewing Mon- Fri during business hours.

The AMMC Natural History Exhibit, the only natural history museum in The Bahamas, opened January 2018 in our shared office space. They have received over 300 visitors in their first year.

Right: Hon. R. Ferreira, Minister of the Environment visited all the science fair projects and engaged in discussion with students about solutions for reducing plastic pollution.



FRIENDS Thanks Friends

Turtle Trot, HG Christie Real Estate, Hope Town Harbour Lodge, PROMPT (Paradise Race Organization, Management, Promotion & Timing), Abaco Inn, Elbow Cay Properties, Hope Town Hideaways, Hope Town Inn & Marina, Abaco Inn, Abaco Family Medicine, Hope Town School, Firefly Sunset Resort, The Thompson Group, Bahamas Compostables

Science Fair, New Vision Ministries, Disney's Animals Science and Environment, BEP Foundation, Kleen Kanteen, G & L Ferry Services, Ministry of Environment and Housing, Victor Roberts. Judges: Joy Chaplin, Charles de la Baume, Kaderin Mills, Huel Moss, Nancy Albury, Meredith Albury, Stephanie Russell, Sabine Probst, Jim Richard, Paula Lamm, Lauren Riviere, Stephanie Russell, Mardi Moss

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

Great Elbow Cay Cleanup, Firefly Sunset Resort, Elbow Reef Lighthouse Society, C&C Waste, Bahamas Compostables, HT Zero Waste, and the many volunteers and participants!

Parents Celebration, Abaco Lodge

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

Kenyon Centre: University Destination

This April will make four years since we opened the doors of the Frank Kenyon Centre for Research, Education, and Conservation. We couldn't be more proud of the progress we have made and the connections that have been developed because of The Centre. A normal day at The Centre might see researchers and university students from two different states finding common interests and making plans for collaboration. Then, with coordination from FRIENDS, these collaborations can then become part of education and conservation efforts here in Abaco. In addition to researchers and explorers, The Kenyon Centre is also becoming a popular site for universities and other organizations wishing to travel to Abaco to learn more about conservation and research. Many of the students who come here are having their first real taste of field research and are getting to see first-hand the ecosystems that they have been studying in class. We are excited about the potential for the future when so many people will have built their passion for research and the environment in Abaco, through the Kenyon Centre.



University of Plymouth (UK) third year marine students on a field trip with FRIENDS. Credit: S. Ingram.



Middlebury College students learn reef assessment techniques and put them in practice at Sandy Cay Reef. Credit: W. Greene.

FRIENDS Welcomes New Employee



Lyndeisha Curry joined our team this January as FRIENDS' new education officer, and we are very happy to have her! Lyndeisha is from Abaco and has grown up with FRIENDS' programs. She graduated from College of The Bahamas with a Biology degree and has worked formerly as a camp counselor, teaching about the Bahamian environment. She has hit the ground running, getting hands on with curriculum design and program development. We hope you will welcome her and encourage her in her new role. To contact Lyndeisha about education programs for your school or community group, please email: lcurry@friendsoftheenvironment.org

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). 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.



Single-use Plastics Banned in 2020



The Bahamas has committed to banning single-use plastics by 2020. This is part of a global effort to reduce plastic waste, which - as we know - never goes away. Plastic debris is a threat to human, wildlife, and environmental health in general. Additionally, the quantities of plastic waste being produced tax an already overloaded waste management system.

The items that will be banned in 2020 include plastic bags (point-of-sale), plastic food utensils, plastic straws and styrofoam food containers and cups. The Bahamas Ministry of The Environment is recommending sustainable alternatives to these products. Please take note of the items that will be banned - we encourage you to use the rest of 2019 to work on changing habits, and accustom yourselves to using alternative products. Suitable alternatives are already available from local companies such as Bahamas Compostables and Darville Packaging.

Left: Hope Town Primary Student Skylar Ogden setting a good example by designing and selling reusable canvas shopping bags which included info about the Bahamian environment. (Proceeds were also donated to FRIENDS! Thanks, Skylar!!)

Project Coral Is On The Move!



BEP FOUNDATION
Bahamian Environment Protection

Local school groups, after school clubs, and visiting universities have assisted with building coral nursery trees for the Abaco coral restoration program in partnership with Perry Institute for Marine Science (PIMS). The trees will be installed and populated with coral fragments this May with the assistance of PIMS and local dive operators.

We are now distributing Coral Courtesy and Protect Our Parrotfish posters. If you'd like one, feel free to pick up from our office!

We are producing a video about the importance of coral conservation and restoration in partnership with Conch Salad TV and will soon be announcing a launch date sometime after Earth Day. Stay tuned!



FRIENDS' Mission: To preserve the environment of Abaco, The Bahamas through education, conservation, and research facilitation.

FRIENDS' Contact Information

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