



Connections

13 October 2006

An electronic bulletin about interdisciplinary research, teaching and outreach at the Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (CERMES) Faculty of Pure and Applied Sciences, University of the West Indies Cave Hill Campus

The new semester has started. Our students are here and are well entrenched in the Masters Programme. This issue focuses mainly on them and their activities to date and of course we continue to keep you updated on staff activities.

New academic year, new students

CERMES continued to offer its MSc Programme in Natural Resource and Environmental Management welcoming 14 new students from Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. These students will be specialising in Coastal and Marine Resource Management (8), Climate Change (3) and Applied Meteorology (3). They come from diverse backgrounds which include biology, geography, computer sciences, electronics, mathematics, meteorology and forestry engineering.

Our new students had the chance to meet CERMES staff as they participated in an adventurous environmental education land and sea tour of the island. On the tour, specific environmental concepts and issues discussed in courses are highlighted by the lecturers.



CERMES students on tour with Dr. Leonard Nurse

We wish our new graduate students the very best in their Programme and welcome them to the CERMES family.

Learning to swim, tying knots, boat handling and fun in the sun

This year's CERMES Aquatic Skills training week from 18-23 September at Underwater Barbados, Carlisle Bay, was a resounding success in which ten of our students learnt to swim. Three other students who are

already PADI certified divers, had a refresher dive on Tuesday, and then went on a fun dive at the end of the week.

By the end of the week, all of the students were able to snorkel at the wrecks in Carlisle Bay marvelling at the wonders under the sea. Our students also learned how to make basic knots and splices, how to row a dinghy and also basic motor boat handling. They are all now more knowledgeable and prepared to work in and around the sea!



Onboard the 'UWI-Chill' and eager to get into the water

Strengthened links between the UWI and UNDP

At the start of the 2004-2005 academic year, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the UWI, under the UNDP's "Caribbean Risk Management Initiative", the purpose of which was to increase capacity building at the tertiary level for the development of regional professionals in the field of *climate change risk management* in the Caribbean; and strengthen the links between the University of the West Indies and the United Nations Development Programme. Under the initial agreement, the UNDP provided funding for four scholarships and teaching support to CERMES, in the climate change specialisation stream. Total funding was US \$60, 000.

Four MSc students – one each from Belize and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and two from Guyana – benefited from the scholarships. They all successfully completed their course work and research in the following areas:

- *The impact of climate change on the water resource sector in Belize;*
- *The influence of climatic factors on malaria endemicity in Guyana, Region 8;*
- *An assessment of climate and weather-related events on rice production on Leguan Island, Essequibo, Guyana; and*

- *An analysis of the vulnerability and capacity assessment methodologies with special emphasis on the agriculture sector in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.*

An amendment to the MOU between the UWI and UNDP was agreed to and signed in September 2006. This new phase of the agreement, funding to the tune of US \$55,000 strengthens UWI's relationship with the UNDP and makes a great contribution to the capacity building effort in climate change, which poses a major threat to the region's sustainable development. On 5 October 2006, Professor Hazel Oxenford received the first tranche of US \$40,000 in a brief handing over ceremony hosted by CERMES. Further disbursement of US \$15,000 will be made in due course. The UWI, and in particular CERMES, looks forward to continuing meaningful collaboration with the UNDP.

Towards Global Environment Outlook (GEO) 4

Maria Pena, CERMES Project Officer, participated in the second meeting of the Global Environment Outlook 4 (GEO 4) Biodiversity Chapter in Cambridge, UK, 22-23 August 2006. This meeting addressed external reviewer comments for Draft 1 of the report and resulted in the production of Draft 2. With one more review session to go and another Production Authors Meeting scheduled for November, the publication of the report in 2007 is fast becoming a reality.



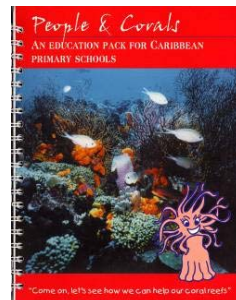
Biodiversity chapter working group. Front row: GEO Fellows attached to the Chapter – Andres Guhl, Maria Pena, Yoseph Assefa and Souvik Bhattacharjya
Back row: Coordinating lead authors and experts

Teacher training in coral reef conservation

Twenty-eight primary school teachers from across St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Grenada participated in the much anticipated "People and Corals" Teachers Training, 26-27 September 2006 at Sea waves, Hillsborough, Carriacou.

The workshop was facilitated by Cherrie Parris who introduced the teachers to the workbook: *People and Corals: An Education Pack for Caribbean Primary Schools*. The teachers were educated about the reef

environment, gained a broader understanding of environmental education and insight into education for sustainable development. On the second day of the workshop the teachers were taken on a field trip to Sandy Island where they participated in a field activity to demonstrate coastal drift.



On completion of the workshop, each participating school received 25 copies of the workbook donated by the Sustainable Grenadines Project. The teachers agreed to use the workbook during the school term and were eager to share their knowledge with the other teachers. This workshop is only phase 2 of the Coral Conservation in the Grenadines Project which aims to promote and improve coral reef conservation in the Grenadine Islands by introducing coral reef conservation concepts and approaches at the primary school level. The evaluation of the use of the workbook is proposed to be conducted during December 2006/January 2007.



"People and Corals" Teacher Training Workshop participants

The workshop was coordinated by Alexcia Cooke (Sustainable Grenadines Project), Virginia Fleary-Noel (Carriacou Environmental Committee) and Katherine Blackman (CERMES) and was funded by National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, CERMES, UNEP and the Lighthouse Foundation.

Where are they now?

To highlight our alumni and share the news of their achievements with you, in the next few months we will begin to feature some of our graduates in the CERMES Connections. So please stay 'connected' to learn about our shining Caribbean stars.

You alumni who we have not heard from in a while are invited to send your recent biographies and photos of yourselves to Maria Pena at mpena@uwichill.edu.bb.

Next in the December 'Connections'

In our next issue, CERMES participation at the 59th Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI), 6-10 November 2006 will be featured. Preparations are already underway to highlight staff and student research at this conference.