



Seychelles' Environmental Education Newsletter

Environmental Education Coordinating Committee • Ministry of Education and Youth • June 2004

Dear Readers,
You are already reading the third issue of *Enviro News* for 2004. As it has been the case in the past issues, you will be updated on how our school children have celebrated two environmental theme days; Biodiversity Day and World Environment Day. Another interesting

news featured in this issue is Seychelles involvement in the UNESCO Sandwatch Project.

You will also get update

Minister Jumeau launching Biodiversity Day



news regarding ARPEGE. And as usual you will read about what has been happening at school level in regard to environmental education.

I will take this opportunity to again thank all schools that have sent us news for this edition and will urge others to do the same.

Happy Reading!
Miss Larue

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Sandwatch officially launched

After Small Islands Voices, Seychelles has embarked on another UNESCO educational project. Sandwatch is a Caribbean beach monitoring project for school children.

Two secondary schools on Mahe are presently involved in the project, Anse Royale and Anse Boileau. One teacher and five students from each participating school received hands-on training in the methodology to be used in the project.

The aims of the project are: to train school children in the scientific observation of beaches through field measurements and data analysis; and to assist school children, with the help of their communities, to use the information collected to better

manage the region's beaches.

At the launching of the training workshop, Mr. Rolph Payet, the PS for Environment, asked the students who were to benefit from the training, to use the skills learnt "to inform and empower yourselves to impart change in our attitudes towards this very important interface between the land and the sea".

During the workshop, participants learnt the following skills:



Learning the use of new equipment



Hands-on training

how best to select an area of a beach; measure its debris and water quality; record human activities there, measure and record wave characteristics; assure seashore currents; and record the animals and plants.

Using the information gathered from all the observations, students will then identify the major problems and work on a plan to improve them. Students from Praslin and La Digue will also get training to take part in the project.

Thought of the Month

We are all linked together: what happens in the Arctic affects us all on the equator. We should not be so preoccupied with, or blinkered by, our own problems as to ignore what is happening in the rest of the world. When other countries mess up their parts of what is, after all, our same Mother Earth, they mess up ours too.

Mr Ronny Jumeau
Minister for Environment & Natural Resources

Write to:

Enviro News

Environmental Education Unit, ECA/PE Section, Ministry of Education and Youth, Mont Fleuri

Schools celebrate environmental theme days

Children in Seychelles joined other people around the world to celebrate **Biodiversity Day**. The local theme chosen was "Invasive Alien Species; Everybody's Problem!". To mark this day, a mobile exhibition was launched by Minister Jumeau at the Mont Fleuri Secondary School. The exhibition went to all schools in the country so that maximum young people could be targeted. Another activity was a humorous drama on the theme, which was performed at the launching ceremony. It aims to sensitise people on the need to stop smuggling

plants in the country as it the main cause of the introduction of invasive species in the country. School children around the country and other youth groups at district level were also involved in a number of field activities to



World Environment Day beach cleaning.

eradicate invasive species.

To celebrate **World Environmental Day** school children joined with other local environmental organisations and community groups to clean beaches. The local theme for that day was "Our Beaches First, Keep them clean!". The aim of the activity is to sensitise people on the importance of keeping our beaches clean as they play an important role in our everyday life, our coastal ecosystem and the country's economy. Ocean Day was celebrated together with the World Environmental Day as activities were organised during that same week.

News from the schools

Plaisance Secondary school organised a Public Speaking Competition to mark this year's World Environment Day. The four houses competed against each other on the



Team addressing the audience at the Public Speaking Competition

theme 'Wanted, Dead or Alive, Seas and Oceans'. Participants showed that a lot of research was done on the topic and important information was used to convince the audience that the ocean is one of the most important natural resource for Seychelles.

Students from the Colibri Wildlife Club and the Book Club of Plaisance Secondary School teamed up to explore and learn about Cas Dant, a part of the National Park. Participants learnt about some of the endemic plants and birds, which grow and live in the National Park.

On their side students from Anse Boileau Secondary School partici-

pated in a beach clean-up activity near their school.

Staff and students of Bel Ombre School continue to colour and green their new built school with colourful flowering plants and palms. The project is a long-term one, which they started early this year.

To mark Biodiversity Day, students of Mont Fleuri Secondary School organised an interactive exhibition based on invasive plants. Using basic scientific experiments they managed to attract a good number of visitors who were present at the Biodiversity Week launching ceremony.

La Retraite students learnt more about land birds through a talk by Nature Seychelles staff. Apart from learning about the different endemic and introduced land birds, they also learnt about the need to conserve the natural habitats of these species. Students from that same school gave their support to eradicate the alien species 'Faux Watouk' at Mission under the supervision of staff from Forestry division.

A group of adventurous Wildlife club members of Anse Royale Secondary School participated in a nature trail at Mare Aux Cochons. The trail



proved to be a natural outdoor classroom where a lot on Seychelles biodiversity can be studied and appreciated.

Members from the Polytechnic wildlife club participated in a beach clean up at Port Launay marine park to mark this year's Ocean Day. Participants collected rubbish which were most of them left-overs from picnickers.

A number of schools are liaising with several environmental bodies in preparation for this year's Science Fair Competition. Environmental issues will again this year dominate the competition.

An active group of young wildlife club members from English River school participated in community work at Foyer de Nazareth and Rehab Hospital at North East Piont. An activity which students said they had very much appreciated.

Beau Vallon Secondary targets invasive species

Alien invasive species is one of the biggest threats to Seychelles biodiversity. Every year, invasive species, such as the white flies, are carelessly introduced to Seychelles.

These introduced invaders can



compete with native plants and animals, displace them, act as parasites or transmit diseases, reduce growth or survival rates, cause the decline or extinction of local populations or even entire species, or damage plants.

The effect of some of these alien species such as the white flies, takamaka wilt diseases, and creepers, are having great negative impact on our small country, even our small backyard gardens.

At the launching of this year's

Biodiversity Day, Minister Ronny Jumeau, the Minister for Environment and Natural Resources made a special appeal to everyone in the country to be more conscious when we introduce new species in the country. He also urged the population to combat these disastrous pests.

In the past, school children have on many occasions participated in community-based activities to eliminate invasive species, especially creepers. This year, the staff and students of Beau Vallon Secondary school have made it

a must to put such environment beneficial activity on their school agenda. Since last term, they have identified a spot not far from their school, where creepers are invading the natural habitat. On several occasions, with the assistance of the Ministry of Environment, teachers and students of the school have removed creepers at the identified spot and taken all precautionary measures that it does not propagate again. The main species affecting the area is *Thumbergia*, an aggressive plant

which bears attractive and colourful purple or white flowers.

After several clearing occasions, they are now planting the area with native and endemic plants. School children have reafforested the area mainly with endemic palms such as *latanier fey* and other hard woods such as *bois dir*. The headteacher of the school, Mrs Elizabeth, said that this is a long-term project and an important one for the school this year. She said that she would do everything possible to motivate her staff and students on the importance of this project, which will benefit not only her school, but the Beau Vallon community. *Enviro News* team congratulates Beau Vallon Secondary on such important initiatives and wish them all the luck. Keep up the good job.



Wildlife Clubs of Seychelles (WCS) Activities

WCS celebrated its 10th anniversary in June this year with an activity with a difference. For this occasion, a recycling workshop was organised, an activity which brought some 25 leaders together to learn how to turn waste materials into useful art pieces. The workshop took place during the morning of Saturday 12th June at the Nature Seychelles new headquarters at Roche Caiman, which also houses the new WCS office.

The workshop facilitators included a guest from India as well as volunteers from a locally - run craft group who shared their expertise with the willing learners. Participants learnt how to create decorative hanging mobiles, pictures frames and mosaic glasses using materials found washed up on beaches. They also learnt how to turn eggshells into pretty decorations and used pet (plastic) bottles into sweet containers; cork and

discarded newspapers were turned into useful household products.

The aim was for the WCS leaders to learn new techniques that they could share with their club members and at the same time expand their range of activities. The products made would be sold at school fetes and help raise funds for individual clubs, whilst helping to minimise wastes in the environment. This would not only teach the youngsters to be more environmentally conscious but also engage

Latest Results

Horticultural Show

Primary Category - Wheelbarrow
1st- School for the Exceptional Child

2nd- La Misere
3rd- Port Glaud

Secondary Category - School Garden

1st - Plaisance
2nd - Pointe Larue
3rd - Mt. Fleuri

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Small Island Voices
Ministry of Environment & Natural Resources

Up Coming EE Programme

- Sustainable Development Day - 12th July
- Population Day - 11th July
- Science Fair Judging—12th-16th July
- SUBIOS Art & Creative Writing Competition, deadline 1st October 2004
- SFA Poster Competition - Sustainable Fishing, deadline July 2004
- Eco-School Competition - On going

Notice board

- *Enviro News* at www.env.gov.sc, or www.education.gov.sc
 - *Environment Programmes:*
 - *Seychelles Que J'aime, SBC TV, last Wednesday of the month, at 8.45 pm*
 - *Dekouver Nou Lanvironman, AM Radio every fourth night, on Fridays, at 7.30pm.*
 - *Dan Lanatir, Lapi Lapon, Children Radio Programme, every Saturday morning*
 - *Nation Newspaper, every Monday.*

Poet's Corner

Zil Arid

Teng, teng
Pe sot, sote

Parey bann "yo peng peng"
Pisantez,

I san pozisyon

Pe sey fer en poz sanpyon.

Kelek pe tir likou

Pou sirvey partou

pti payanke,

in maske dan trou

konmsi zot in vwar lelou.

Alor mon zanmi

Pa bezwen anvoy lanmen

Zis tir zot portre

E ou a vwar byen

Ki zot,

Bann vre mannen.

Reuben Lespoir

La Retraite

ARPEGE UPDATE

Mr. Olivier Tyack, ARPEGE Regional Coordinator spent one week in Seychelles to visit schools and other people involved in



the ARPEGE project. He managed to visit all nine participating schools, and met with school management staff and teachers involved to learn what has been achieved so far, the problem and constraints of teachers, as well as how schools can be assisted by ARPEGE.

All schools involved have already identified the problematic issues they intend to work on and have devised action plans to improve or solve the problems. Three schools are targeting school grounds, an important factor for effective learning to take place, and they are Anse Royale Primary, Anse Etoile and English River. Another

three schools have identified waste as one of the major environmental problems and are therefore targeting proper waste management as their project, and these are Plaisance Secondary, Baie Lazare and Mont Fleuri Primary. Anse

Royale secondary on their side, like their district administration office, are trying to better manage and rehabilitate the marsh next to their school. Bel Eau school, one of the schools which have been built on sloppy land, is targeting soil erosion, as it can be a menace to the children. La Retraite School has identified that mosquitos' habitat is a problem at the school. They are therefore trying to change a breeding ground into a recreational area.

The nine schools will have the assistance of the three Regional Animateurs to overcome problems identified.

This year's consultative meeting

took place in Seychelles. Members of the committee, coming from all four islands involved met for two days to evaluate and discuss the project.



Mr. Tyack visiting the project site at La Retraite

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Ministry of Environment & Natural Resources
Ministry of Tourism and Transport
Natural History Museum
Nature Seychelles
Wildlife Clubs of Seychelles
Public Utilities Cooperation
Marine Parks Authority/ SCMR