



A PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING AGENCY

IN THIS ISSUE

Public Education: Spreading the Good Word

Jamaica's precious natural resources belong to us all. From our mist covered peaks to our verdant valleys, the land of wood and water is ours to protect and enjoy.

The National Environment and Planning Agency leads this charge by enforcing the many laws under which it operates. Each set of regulations is aimed at ensuring orderly development and environmental protection.

However, the battle of preserving Jamaica's natural resources and built environment should not only be fought by the officers of the island's premier environmental regulator but citizens from all walks of life are also required on the front line if we are to see victory. NEPA assists in equipping individuals with the knowledge to enable them to safeguard the environment through structured programmes and projects which have robust public education and awareness components.

The Agency works closely with the Ministry of Education each year to ensure information about Jamaica's natural resources is infused into the curriculum at the primary and secondary levels.

NEPA also trains the island's police officers in relation to Jamaica's planning and environmental laws on an annual basis. With hundreds of requests for presentations, lectures and sensitization sessions received by the Agency's Public Education and Corporate Communication Branch, NEPA is able to sensitize approximately 10,000 individuals each year through interactive personalized sessions.

Information on environmental matters is available to researchers and the general public through our Sharon O'Connor Documentation Centre.

If you can't visit us, then keep up to date with us through our social media platforms: Twitter, Facebook, Flickr, Youtube, LinkedIn and Instagram.

We believe that knowledge is power and take pride in executing our role of educating the public about the environment and planning matters. Through public education and with all hands on deck a cleaner, safer environment is within grasp, we only need to put in the effort to make it happen.



NEPA Nurtures Young Birders
Bird Investigation programme took flight in schools in November 2015.



Gordon House Goes Green
NEPA takes message of conservation and environmental protection to Parliament.

NEPA Nurtures Young Birders

In November 2015, primary level students in St. Ann were taken on a journey through the wonderful world of birds with experts from NEPA acting as guides. The programme, dubbed **BirdSleuth**, allows students to use their investigative skills to learn about the colourful feathered creatures- from reproductive and nesting habits to migration and the associated threats. Most of the activities took place in the great outdoors and help to foster a greater appreciation not only for birds, but the environment in general.

The BirdSleuth programme was developed by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and is administered regionally by Birds Caribbean - a non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of birds. NEPA has been assisting with the administration of the programme in Jamaica since 2012.

To date NEPA has equipped scores of teachers and community leaders with the skills to use the BirdSleuth materials in their lessons and outreach activities. Hundreds of students have also been sensitized through bird watching sessions, bird migration simulation exercises and other activities.

Through this latest partnership with the Ministry of Education it is expected that over a thousand students will be educated and inspired.



Taejon Powell (right) and Christopher Gordon, grade 4 students at Trafalgar Christian Preparatory School complete Nature Detective forms in a tree while looking for bird nests and insects.



Demario Gordon zooms in on birds in a tree while his classmate Geordan Reid at Trafalgar Christian Preparatory School looks on as a part of activities to mark International Migratory Bird Day on October 11.



Students of Trafalgar Christian Preparatory School in Kingston - Kanel Brown (front) completes bird bingo card game to identify birds while Demario Gordon (right) uses a binocular to look at the bird features and Abigail Scarlette and Dominique Wiggan stare at the birds in a tree on the school compound.

NEPA ON SHOW AT GORDON HOUSE!

As an agency of the Ministry of Water Land Environment and Climate Change, NEPA was invited by portfolio Minister, the Hon. Robert Pickersgill to set up a display at the House of Parliament to support his sectoral presentation. The Agency's display showcased aspects of our work in environmental protection and conservation.

The issues of biodiversity, protected animals and having at hand actual animal models were great conversation pieces for representatives who visited the booth.



State Minister in the Ministry of Transport and Works, Richard Azan takes a closer look at the freshwater species on display.



Member of Parliament and former Mayor of Kingston, Desmond McKenzie peruses NEPA's display of protected species.



NEPA's Patrice Gilpin engages Parliamentarian, Parnel Charles about Jamaica's endemic freshwater species.

YOUNGSTERS WOW DURING WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

Herbert Morrison Technical and Jonathan Grant High Schools walked away with top honours in a poetry competition organized by the National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA).

The contest kicked off activities in celebration of World Environment Day, on June 5, and National Environmental Awareness Week (NEAW) which was observed June 1 to 6.

"Litter less and recycle more. We need to reuse more items because it saves money, saves the environment and can even be fun."

Those that missed the stellar performances at the competition are able to view them on NEPA's Facebook, Instagram and YouTube accounts. Plans are in process to take the winning poems to the radio waves.



The winning team from Herbert Morrison and NEPA's Patrice Gilpin are all smiles.

Participants were charged with interweaving the theme - '**Our Planet, Consume with Care**' - into their poems which could have been in the format of dub poetry, dialect or Standard English. Performances had to be two minutes or less.

"The performances exceeded our expectations. The submissions were exceptional as they demonstrated artistic prowess and a deep understanding of environmental issues. We wanted to find a creative way of enlightening youngsters about the environment and the importance of conservation," said Dionne Rose, Manager of the Public Education and Corporate Communication Branch at NEPA.

Nine schools competed in two categories - 12 to 14 age group and the 15-18 age group. There was stiff competition but when the dust settled, a quartet from Jonathan Grant High School emerged winners in the Junior Category while a trio of creative young ladies from Herbert Morrison Technical High School emerged the winner of the Senior Category.

Elated with her win, Christina Samuels of Herbert Morrison Technical High School said it took less than a day for the group to craft the award winning piece. She used the opportunity to share some of the environmentally friendly habits outlined in their poem that she would like to see adopted by more Jamaicans.



NEPA's Deleen Powell (second right) shares lens time with the winning team from Jonathan Grant High.

"As part of their prize package, NEPA has arranged for audio recordings of the winning pieces. These recordings will be incorporated into public relations campaign that will begin airing on local radio stations, so listen out," said Rose.

Winners received certificates, trophies and gift certificates. The Jamaica National Building Society and the Urban Development Corporation partnered with the Agency to provide sponsorship.

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS WEEK A HUGE SUCCESS

By Kay-Ann Miller



Kay-Ann Miller (right), Senior Librarian at the National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA) takes Professor Dale Webber, Director for Marine Sciences at the University of the West Indies; Karen McDonald-Gayle, daughter of Franklin McDonald, former Chief Executive Officer at NEPA and her son on a special tour of NEPA's Sharon O'Connor Documentation Centre



Students from Cumberland High School get an on spot tutorial on Water Quality testing from the experts at NEPA's Laboratory.

On World Environment Day June 5, 2015, the National Environment and Planning Agency head office was abuzz with members of the media, stakeholders, students, staff and representatives of the library and information fraternity. They all gathered to witness the launch of the Franklin McDonald Collection, named after the Agency's first CEO, Franklin McDonald, OD; the rebranding of the Sharon O'Connor Documentation Centre as well as launch of the University of the West Indies and the International Development Bank Coral Reef Restoration Project.

"I wanted to donate my documents to a library where they would be catalogued and utilized and not stored in boxes," said Mr. McDonald of the more than 400 documents that were donated from his personal collection to the organization's library. Though wide in scope, the collection consists of documents mainly on environmental management, environmental law, disaster and agriculture.

In rebranding the library, signage and documentation on both Mrs. O'Connor and Mr. McDonald were mounted in the library which will provide patrons background information on them both. Plaques were presented in recognition of their contribution to the library and were accepted by Troy O'Connor son of Mrs. O'Connor, now deceased and Karen McDonald Gayle on behalf of her father who was unable to attend as he is presently a visiting scholar at York University, Canada.

The launch of the Collection and the rebranding of the library was the perfect precursor to the Open Day which provided the Agency the opportunity to educate and showcase not only its work but those of its participating stakeholders as well to guests. Displays were mounted by the various Branches and Divisions of NEPA alongside those of the United Nations Development Programme, Ministry of Water Land Environment and Climate Change, Urban Development Corporation, the Planning Institute of Jamaica, Water Resources Authority, the Mines and Geology Department and the Jamaica Environment Trust. Presentations on various environmental issues were interspersed through-out the day.

NEPA Partners With Mico Primary & Junior High School On Vegetable Garden Project

By Ava Tomlinson



Dionne Rose (second left), Manager of the Public Education and Corporate Communication Branch assists students at Mico Practising Primary and Junior High School and teacher Melissa Plunket- Mills with the planting of pak-choi.

The National Environment and Planning Agency joined with the Mico Practising Primary and Junior High School to re-establish a vegetable garden at the school.

The partnership was part of the strategic objective of the Agency to build stakeholder awareness and support for NEPA's functions and programmes.

The year long project, which commenced in 2014 and ended in 2015 included planting of vegetable crops to support the school's meal programme and teaching students how to recycle organic materials through compost. NEPA also donated a water tank that was used for rainwater harvesting to provide water for the garden

Dionne Rose, Manager of the Public Education and Corporate Communication (PECC) Branch at NEPA said that the project was funded under the Agency's operations for environmental education programmes.

"The project, which is managed by the PECC Branch selected the Mico Practising and Junior High School because of its proximity to the Agency's Headquarters," she informed.

"It is hoped that this project will inculcate environmental awareness practices among the student population at Mico Practising Primary and Junior High School and to show how gardening can contribute to a sustainable environment," she said.

Geraldine Allen, Acting Principal welcomed the partnership with the Agency and noted that "the project is a good idea that will benefit the school."

Melissa Plunket- Mills, teacher at the school and co-ordinator of the Health and Environment Club said the programme was very interactive and uplifting to the students and the school.

"The project is practical, particularly the compost training sessions, which are meaningful and easy to understand," she said making reference to the training in Takakura Composting method, which was administered by Kenta Morishima, the Japan International Cooperation Agency Intern, who is assigned to NEPA.

The first crop of callaloo and pak-choi was reaped in January 2015. Forty-six students participated in the project.

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