

In this issue:

Devil Nettle	1
Sustainable Boating	1
CERMES-UWI Student Researchers	2
Bio-Inventory for	2
Training for Water Taxi Operators	2
People and corals project	2
Stakeholder Meetings	2

“Devil Nettle” - A Painful Experience

Throughout the Grenadines there is a very toxic and harmful plant that the residents through painful experience have learnt to respect and avoid. In Carriacou it is called “Zorti” from the French word ortie that means a plant having needles. In Union Island it is “Burn Bush”, in Mayreau it is “Paschal” and in Canouan it is “Calaloo-show” this “Devil Nettle” (the Bequia name) is *Cnidioscolus urens* and it belongs to the Euphorbiaceae family of plants. A small shrub with white flowers that can reach two meters in height, this plant has its large star-shaped leaves, stems and fruit all covered with minute hair-like needles. These needles inject an irritating liquid when touched. The uninitiated hiker even with long pants quickly discovers extreme discomfort upon contact. The result is very irritatingly painful



and the part touched becomes swollen and easily infected when scratched. In some cases medication and bed-rest are necessary.

Sustainable Boating in the Grenadines – the role of water taxi operators

Care for the marine environment must occur at several levels. Water taxi operators are one key group that, can have a big impact while operating in the waters of the Grenadines.

The GEF Water Taxi Project and the Sustainable Grenadines Project aim to build the capacity of water taxi operators to provide better customer service and to reduce impact on the environment.

Here we present a few boat operation tips that water taxi operators can implement as first steps towards sustainable boating.

A ‘best practices’ booklet for Grenadines boaters will soon be available from Counterpart Caribbean and the Sustainable Grenadines Project.

BOAT MAINTENANCE:

- Tune up your engine to reduce emissions into the air and water
- Clean boat bottom to improve boat performance
- Wash your boat often with fresh water and other natural cleaners to reduce

the amount of strong chemical cleaners used

- Use diesel fuel which is cheaper and more environmentally friendly
- Fix propeller since damaged props reduce the efficiency of your engine
- 4 stroke engines are most environmentally friendly, use less fuel and operate more efficiently.

FRIENDLY BOATING OPERATION

- Stash your trash – never throw things into the water. Keep trash onboard, bring it back to shore, and dispose of it properly.
- Watch your wake – large wakes can accelerate shoreline erosion
- Use moorings rather than anchoring in sensitive areas like coral reefs .
- Use the tilt in shallow water to avoid damage to engine propellers and the environment.
- Get involved – be a watchdog, report any incidents such as oil or chemical spills to the relevant authorities.

SAFETY (Safety saves lives)

- First aid kit – it is important, keep one on board to treat small injuries
- Emergency tools – keep basic boat tools for engine repairs, etc.
- Anchor lines – keep these on board in case of emergencies
- Emergency contact – have distress flares, VHF radio, mobile phone, etc. at all times on board.
- Other emergency necessities – life jackets for each passenger, water, and lights on the bow of the boat.



People and Corals Project Approved

A proposal by the Sustainable Grenadines Project to the US National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) has been approved.

The project will put the 'People and Corals' workbook into Grenadines primary schools, provide training for teachers in

the use of it, and look at how students react to the workbooks.

The workbook was developed specifically for Caribbean primary schools by the Caribbean Conservation Association (CCA), and has already been used in other OECS countries.

UWI Researchers in the Grenadines

Three students from the Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (CERMES), UWI have completed their research in the Grenadines. Their research relates to the Tobago Cays Marine Park (TCMP) and the Water Taxi operations the Grenadines.

Ms. Dominique Lizama and Ms. Alexcia Cooke contributed to the Water Taxi Project by looking at the green boat practices of the water taxi operators and assessing the livelihoods of the water taxi operators. Alexcia used the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach developed by the UK Department for International Development (DFID).

Ms. Bertha Simmons focused on whether the conditions for successful co-management are present among stakeholders with interest in the TCMP.

Their reports will soon be made available.

Bio- inventory for Mustique

The Mustique Environmental Committee and the Mustique Island Company have begun a project to catalogue all the species of the island. This checklist will cover most of the indigenous flora, fauna and marine species of Mustique. Ms. Dianne Wilson and Fr. Mark de Silva have volunteered to be the principal researchers for this project that will hopefully result in a "scientifically correct" but easily readable and accessible field guide by December this year. This very ambitious project will be the first of its kind for the Northern Grenadines and will produce a valuable

resource for all the Grenadines.

Although the plants, larger animals and many of the more common marine species are fairly well covered, there are areas where the researchers need voluntary specialist assistance, in identifying some of the more difficult species. Of concern for example, are macro fungi, beetles, grasshoppers, small marine crustaceans and marine algae.

For more information please contact Fr. Mark de Silva at mayreau@caribsurf.com

Counterpart Caribbean and 84 representa-

Water Taxi Operators Trained in Caring for Our Coasts and Our Future

tives from the water taxi operators and the wider community in the Grenadines participated in three two-day training workshops held in Bequia, Carriacou and Union Island.

Participants learned and interacted with each other while they designed an accreditation scheme to motivate water taxi operators to distinguish themselves by good practices in the marketplace. This special Caribbean Accreditation Scheme, as well as enhanced communications among water taxi operators in the Grenadines, will help businesses and the coastal environment to thrive

The workshop focused on ethical practices and laws governing the coastal areas of the Grenadines – especially the coral reefs – their restoration in the event of drastic damage created by storms and hurricanes, and user-friendly reporting procedures of other adverse conditions and activities. Participants identified ma-

ior reef species and their ecology and discussed the effects of human activities on these sensitive ecosystems. They also planned future activities to enhance their livelihoods while caring for the environment.



Certificates of participation were presented and these certificates represent a crucial first step towards accreditation of participants and the establishment of standards of practice in the coastal zone.

The workshop is the first of a series for

Stakeholder Meetings Scheduled for October

Stakeholder meetings for the Sustainable Grenadines Project will be conducted throughout the month of October. These meetings seek to re-affirm the aims and objectives of the project and to find out what the stakeholders think the project needs to address in its upcoming year. Mini-project application forms will also be distributed.

Grenadines Water Taxi operators from the GEF/UNDP SGP Project In conjunction with Counterpart Caribbean and the Sustainable Grenadines Project.

The Sustainable Grenadines Project is implemented through collaboration among:

- The Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (CERMES), UWI, Barbados
 - The Carriacou Environmental Committee, Grenada
 - Projects Promotion Lt., St. Vincent and the Grenadines
 - The Caribbean Conservation Association, Barbados
 - The Governments of Grenada and St Vincent and the Grenadines
 - Numerous Grenadines NGOs.
- It is funded by **The Lighthouse Foundation**, Germany

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