



Connections

3 September 2004

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 teaching semester has started and there are new faces around CERMES amongst the staff and students. Some old faces have also changed places.

Student round-up

It is that time of year again when CERMES gears up for the new academic year of the MSc Programme in Natural Resource and Environmental Management. This year we will be welcoming 22 students coming from Belize, Barbados, Canada, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Nicaragua and St. Vincent. The majority of students have backgrounds in natural sciences, but computer science, administrative management and social work are also included.

To get our graduate students off to a brisk start, we have introduced a three-day orientation programme. It is our aim for new students to use this opportunity to meet CERMES staff as they participate in a variety of on and off campus activities. These adventures include an environmental education land and sea tour of the island. In addition, we are also introducing an Aquatic Skills component into the curriculum. This will involve students in days of swimming, snorkelling and boat handling, so that they can later use these skills. Also, this year CERMES will offer a third Specialisation Stream, Solid Waste Management, for the first time.

To our new students, we would like to extend a warm welcome. We look forward to the year ahead. To others in the CERMES extended family, we hope that some of our new students will find places with you in research projects and internships as the year progresses.

Changing climate at CERMES

On Thursday, August 20th, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the UWI Office of Research signed a Memorandum of Understanding

for the support of the CERMES Master of Science in Natural Resources and Environmental Management to increase regional capacity and the further development of regional professionals in climate change risk management in the Caribbean. UNDP will provide scholarships for four students in the Climate Change stream of specialisation, and will also support the delivery of the several Climate Change specialisation courses taught at CERMES.



Familiar faces changing places

At the end of July, Dr. Hazel Oxenford stepped down as Acting Director of CERMES. Dr. Robin Mahon will act as Director for the next two years.



Dr. Hazel Oxenford



Dr. Robin Mahon

Dr. Oxenford is looking forward to returning full-time to research and teaching. All at CERMES extend their thanks and congratulations to her on a job well done.

The new Director, Dr. Mahon, shared some thoughts on the direction of CERMES. He said: "I look forward to the challenge of facilitating the development of CERMES as we enter the second decade of its Master's programme. There is much to be proud of as we look back over the past 10 years, over 200 CERMES graduates now work throughout the region, and beyond, in responsible and influential positions. They are making a substantial contribution to sustainable development in the Wider Caribbean. In the coming years we will continue this trend as well as place an emphasis on strengthening the networking among CERMES graduates and faculty. We also look forward to increasing activity in outreach and research that will contribute a lot to sustainable development in the Caribbean region and globally."

Joining the CERMES team is Dr. Leonard Nurse, the former Director of the Coastal Zone Management Unit and, most recently, the Permanent Secretary in the ministry responsible for the environment. Dr. Nurse brings to CERMES a wealth of international experience in coastal management, planning and climate change.

Holetown Community Beach Park

In our January issue we introduced you to the Holetown Community Beach Park Project, an activity of the CERMES Coastal Resources Co-management Project (CORECOMP). In the site development planning phase in January 2004, over 100 businesses in the vicinity of the Holetown complex were informed of the project.

The occupants of the 15 residences adjacent to the proposed community beach park were also visited and invited to take part in the proposed development.



The site development phase of the project resumed in July with a visit to the area by residents and businesses interested in the project. There was agreement among those present that the beautification of the area and the creation of a beach park would be a very desirable asset for the Hometown community and visitors.

During the meeting, a committee was formed to guide the site development planning phase, comprising three residents and a restaurant owner from 1st and 2nd Streets, Hometown. To date, BDS\$ 11,800 has been raised to fund this phase, with financial contributions from businesses in the area. Ian Morrison Associate Architects has agreed to draft the site development plan for the Hometown Community Beach Park at no charge. The total project value is just over the \$15,000 target for this phase. A meeting with the planning committee, surveyor, coastal engineer and landscape designer will be arranged shortly. Keep track of progress in coming issues of CERMES Connections.

FAO CITES Advisory Panel

Dr. Robin Mahon was invited to serve on the FAO ad hoc Expert Advisory Panel for the Assessment of Proposals to Amend Appendices I and II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Concerning Commercially-Exploited Aquatic Species. The



Panel met for the first time in Rome, July 13-16, to consider proposals for great white shark, humphead wrasse and date mussel, and an amendment to the listing for corals.

Visit from The Nature Conservancy

Raquel Seybert, Michelle Libby and Rob Weary of The Nature Conservancy visited CERMES in July to discuss



collaboration between CERMES, TNC and other partners active in the Grenadines.

The opportunities for networking with international and regional NGOs are numerous. For the benefit of coastal communities it is very important to ensure that there is adequate coordination among agencies in order to build synergies among initiatives rather than compete and duplicate where this can be avoided. Communities have scarce resources to devote to development projects in the midst of individuals often struggling to make a living. Governmental and non-governmental agencies are prone to squander community participation despite their genuine interest in assisting local social and economic development. Coordination pays off for communities.

International Association for the Study of Common Property (IASCP) meets in beautiful Oaxaca, Mexico

From 9-13 August the International Association for the Study of Common Property (IASCP) held its 2004



IASCP 2004
Oaxaca

conference in the mountain city of Oaxaca, Mexico. It was in a monastery, taken over by scientists, students and professionals, that Dr. Patrick McConney of CERMES gave a presentation on the co-management of coastal resources in the Caribbean.

It was an excellent opportunity to learn about the latest thoughts in common property theory and research. Property rights regimes have not received much attention in Caribbean coastal research, but are central to resource management in many other places.

CERMES, CERMES quite contrary, "How does your garden grow?"

For a long while the environment around CERMES hanging over the hill has been fairly "non-green". A few plants clung tenaciously to the slope. Grass competed with rocks and rubble on the barren ground. The advice of UWI plant experts and hobbyists was sought.

Now CERMES is eagerly beautifying the surroundings! Amidst the pouring rain, three intrepid staff members, including the new acting Director, travelled far and wide to obtain samples of indigenous plants for landscaping. To keep it indigenous, sea grape, seaside sage, goat's foot, prickly wild coffee, carpet daisy and fat pork will all feature in the work in progress. In a few months we may be surrounded by our very own environmental Eden.