

FOUNDATION NEWS



NATURE FOUNDATION ST. MAARTEN

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New education project: Water

Nature Foundation St. Maarten, the Saba Conservation Foundation and STENAPA St. Eustatius, are diving into the topic of WATER as their new educational project 'The Story of Captain Scout of The Black Turtle'. The program, sponsored by the Prins Bernard Culture Fund runs from September 2006 to July 2007.

The program focuses on marine life and the different characteristics of water. The major awareness goals of this project are that students learn about the importance of water to us but also to other life forms in our marine habitat and coastal vegetation. Hopefully this awareness will result in the loss of fear of what occurs in the

ocean at unknown depths and an increased respect for marine ecosystems.

As the title already implies, the WATER topic is fitted into a pirate theme. Again the sea turtle mascot, Scout, is involved. Cursed by the spell of greed, he becomes the wicked captain of the pirate ship "The Black Turtle" and he and his crew sail out to find a hidden treasure. Each of their adventures during this journey is the introduction to one new lesson on water. Topics that will be discussed include: 'scary underwater life (or rather, defensive survival strategies that only succeed by their chilling effects)'; 'fun facts on the different eating habits

of underwater life'; 'the water cycle'; and 'mangroves'. The program ends with topics that discuss the physical characteristics of water such as floating and surface tension. In the end, Scout is freed from the curse of greed and returns to the sea as the friendly turtle he always was.

The program is fitting for students in cycle one and cycle two.

On request, the class can first be visited with a general introduction to sea turtles and to Scout as the lead character. The program started in September on Saba and St. Eustatius. After Christmas, Captain Scout will sail off with the St. Maarten buccaneers!



Coming up ...

**Marine Park ordinance goes to Island Council—
January 2007**

Waste Watchers Contest: We Rap Against Pollution



Last year's 'Waste Watchers' project has ended this November with the announcement of the 7 winning groups or students of the WRAP-contest.

Since January 2006, 52 classes of 3 secondary schools and 13 primary schools on all three islands participated in this

intensive project of 5 class visits. In these lessons, the students were challenged to start thinking about the daily impact of their garbage on the environment. They experience they have a choice with every action they take to produce garbage or not and if they do have garbage, the choice to litter or not. Since recycling facilities are limited on these islands, the lessons focus on the importance of not producing garbage at all (refuse throw away articles and reuse).

As a closure of the project, the primary school student's gained knowledge on waste management and pollution was tested in a WRAP-contest (We Rap Against Pollution). They were challenged

to think about the importance of less pollution and to translate those thoughts into lyrics for a rap song.

Nature Foundation St. Maarten received many good entries and although originally the aim was to get one winner, due to the enthusiastic performances of the students, it was decided to have in total 7 songs recorded. The lyrics were judged on their message against pollution. Five grade 4 students from Learning Unlimited Preparatory School and from Sr. Magda School, the entire grade 3, six 5th graders and one student from grade 6 won the contest.

The cd is for sale at The Nature Foundation office for 10 dollar.



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Season's Greetings Dear Supporters,

As the year draws to a close, we would like to reflect on the recent changes in our staff. Once again, we will be saying goodbye to colleagues and good friends: long-time staff member and assistant marine park manager/ranger, Paul Ellinger and our easy-going and soft-spoken office manager, Eseld Imms. The new staff will be introduced in our subsequent newsletter.

It is often said of the New Year "Out with the old, in with the new", but here at Nature Foundation we never really lose old friends; instead, we keep on making new ones. Because each person brings their own work experiences to the table, we are able to create an atmosphere of mutual learning and in so doing make the Foundation function even better.

Next year will mark Nature Foundation's 10th anniversary and to celebrate we have exciting projects planned. We know you will be eager to share in our excitement and we will keep you abreast of our plans as they unfold.

Thank you all once again for being Friends of the Foundation.

Compliments of the Season and a Happy New Year to all.

Sincerely,

Beverly Mae Nisbeth (Marine Park Manager)

DCNA Holds Fifth Board Meeting on St. Maarten



At the end of November, the Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance (DCNA) celebrated its fifth Board meeting on

St. Maarten, which was opened by Commissioner Roy Marlin of Environmental Affairs, champagne style with the announcement that the Dutch Ministry of the Interior had approved a Euro 1 million per year grant for the coming ten years. The funding has been earmarked to cover the operational costs of DCNA and the nature parks of the Dutch Caribbean.

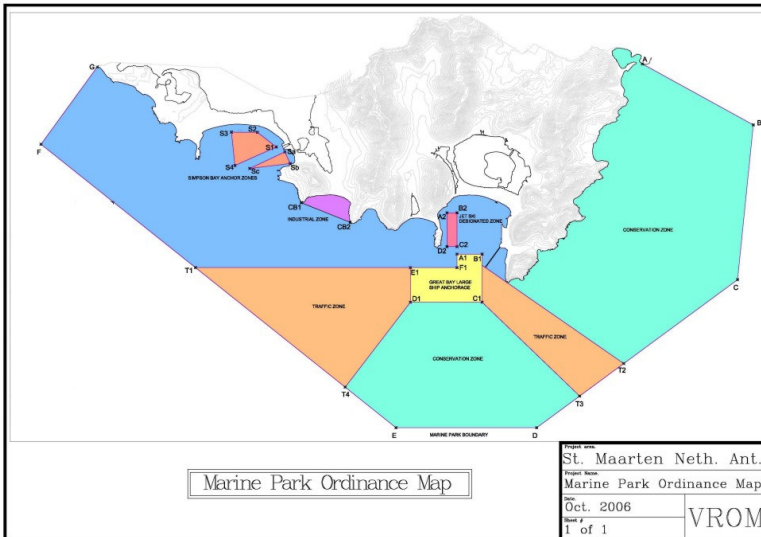
The news of the Dutch Government funding came after nearly a decade of lobbying on the part of the Central Government Department of Nature and the Environment (MINA) and DCNA's partners at the Netherlands Committee of the World Conservation Union (IUCN

NL). As long ago as 1998, it was recognized that funding was the single most pervasive threat to the future of the region's protected areas and that the most enduring solution would be to create a Trust Fund large enough to cover the parks' operational costs.

By committing these funds, the Dutch Ministry has created the opportunity for the Parks to donate an equivalent amount of money to the DCNA Trust Fund and thereby to create a sustainable future for themselves.

Executive Director, Kalli De Meyer, said that she was thrilled at the news but cautioned that this was just the first

Marine Park Ordinance still to go to Island Council



agenda after which it would move on to the Island Council. Unfortunately due to unforeseen circumstances, the draft has to go through the Central Committee again before it reaches the Island Council.

snorkel operators, the marine trade association, customs, coastguard, the public prosecutor, the Tourism office, other NGOs, Nature Foundation’s staff, the Simpson bay Lagoon and harbour authorities and representatives from the oil industry area in Cay Bay. One of the objectives of the meetings was to provide a mechanism for communication, where views, concerns and opinions on management of the area can be shared between the managers and stakeholders thereby leading to the identification and resolution of problems and to a greater understanding and support for the protected area.

The drafting of a management plan is a requirement of our contract with the government as the designated manager of the marine park. Nature Foundation is required to submit the draft management plan no later than three months after signing of the management contract. In that respect, we are ahead of the game, which allows us time to design and prepare for instance the dive/snorkel user fees collection system.

We’re getting there, one step at a time.

From its inception in 1997, the people at Nature Foundation St. Maarten have been working to draft legislation that protects the marine environment on the Dutch side. After nearly a decade of trying to get the draft Marine Park Ordinance approved by government, we were pleased when the document finally began its trek up the ladder of legislative hierarchy. The draft ordinance was approved by the Executive Committee on October 27th. The draft was on the Central Committee’s November 20th

As we are currently working out those unforeseen circumstances, we remain hopeful the Ordinance will proceed without further ado to the next meetings scheduled for early January 2007.

In the meantime, we have completed the draft marine park management plan, our monitoring and evaluation tool. During the month of October we held stakeholder consultation meetings with the various user groups of the marine park: the local fishermen, the dive/

DCNA Holds Fifth Board Meeting on St. Maarten (continued)



step towards a more sustainable future for the parks. “It may sound as though the Dutch Caribbean Parks will be swimming in money, but nothing could be further from the truth. In order to capi-

talize a Trust Fund large enough to cover the operational costs of one marine park and one land park on each of our islands we are going to have to tighten our belts and do an outstanding job of fundraising over the coming decade.”

DCNA’s Board Chairperson, Nicole Esteban, who manages the land and marine parks on St. Eustatius, said “The real challenge lies with ensuring that the six national park organizations receive sufficient operational funding in the next ten years until the Trust Fund is capitalized and revenue generated for the parks. In the meantime, the same funding challenge remains.”



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2 bumper stickers to support the marine and terrestrial wildlife of St. Maarten.

Price: \$2 per sticker



Book

Dr Robert Powell's beautifully illustrated book on the Reptiles and Amphibians of the Dutch Windward Islands



CD

We Rap Against Pollution
A product of the Waste Watchers lessons.
Students express their feelings about waste and littering in 7 'raps against pollution'.

Price: \$10.00



Heineken bracelets

Limited edition Heineken "Meet you There" bracelets- still available. Show your support for nature protection on St. Maarten. Come and get yours! Only \$2.

All proceeds go to conservation on St. Maarten.



Contest-winning Sr. Magda students receiving their copy of the CD

Nature Foundation executes different projects to involve the community in taking care of their environment. JOIN US TODAY

If you would like to make a donation, please contact Nature Foundation at **542-0267**

THANK YOU!

We wish to acknowledge the following organizations, individuals and businesses which have recently made donations to the Nature Foundation. We are incredibly grateful for their support.

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- Princess Juliana International Airport (PJIAE)
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