

THE COMMISSION NEWSLETTER

Conserve nature, preserve life



TOP NEWS OF THE MONTH

NELSON'S GATE COLUMNS RESTORATION COMPLETE

THE NELSON'S GATE Columns on Crumpton Street in Bridgetown have been restored and marks the completion of the Gate Columns' Restoration Project in Queen's Park, which was executed over the past six months.

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PRESERVING THE INTRICATE wooden craftsmanship that signifies the essence of Codrington House has been the focus of the building's refurbishment and restoration team.

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CODRINGTON HOUSE'S FEATURES PRESERVED

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Batts Rock Facility 536-0690

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Browne's Beach Facility 536-0692

Enterprise Beach Facility 536-0694

Farley Hill National Park 536-0699

Folkestone Marine Park 536-0654

Hastings Facility 536-0701

King George V Memorial Park 536-0703

Oistins Bay Garden 536-0704

Pebbles Facility 536-0705

Queen's Park 536-0706

Rockley Facility 536-0708

Silver Sands Facility 536-0709

Three Houses Park 572-0437

Worthing Facility 536-0711

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GM'S MESSAGE

Environment Month, which is acknowledged and celebrated in June, serves as a poignant reminder of the importance of cherishing and preserving our planet's natural splendour.

It symbolizes a collective dedication to safeguarding Mother Nature and upholding the intricate web of life she sustains.

As a member of the National Conservation Commission (NCC), this significant event not only celebrates the beauty of our environment but also underscores our duty to protect it for future generations.

The hills, valleys, and seas that envelop our world embody a diverse tapestry of life forms, each playing a crucial role in maintaining the delicate balance of our ecosystems.

The lush greenery of the woodland and gully provides a sanctuary for countless species, serving as the lungs of our island by filtering the air we breathe.

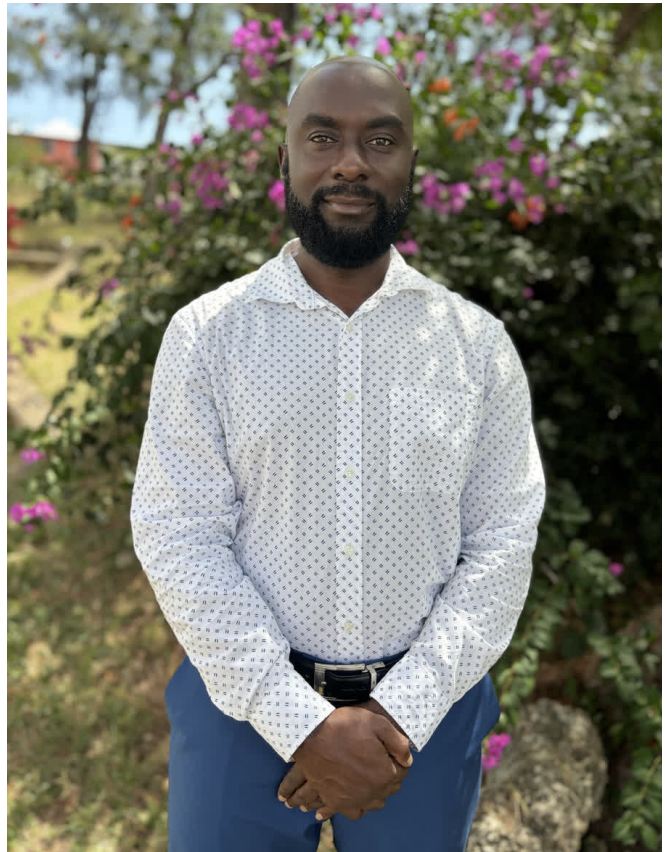
The majestic mountains stand as sentinels of resilience, their peaks bearing witness to the passage of time and the enduring spirit of nature.

The meandering water courses fed by springs and seasonal rains nurture life with their waters, sustaining a myriad of flora and fauna in their embrace.

Within the folds of the NCC, we recognize the profound interconnectedness between human existence and the environment.

Our commitment to the protection of nature extends beyond mere duty; it stems from a deep-seated reverence for the wonders of the Barbadian landscape.

Through our conservation efforts, we strive to safeguard the biodiversity that thrives within our borders, recognizing that each



Mr. Ryan Als

Acting General Manager

National Conservation Commission

species, no matter how small, contributes to the tapestry of life on Earth.

Environment Month serves as a time of reflection, prompting us to contemplate our place within the broader ecosystem of life.

It invites us to pause and appreciate the intricate dance of nature, where every living being, from the tiniest insect to the mightiest predator, plays a vital role in maintaining the harmony of the natural world.

It is a celebration not only of the beauty that surrounds us but also of the resilience and adaptability of life itself.

It is a reminder that life, in all its forms, is a precious gift that must be cherished and safeguarded.

Environment Month challenges us to adopt sustainable practices and advocate for policies that prioritize conservation.

Nelson's Gate Columns restoration complete



The coral rendered Nelson's Gate Columns on Crumpton Street in Bridgetown.

THE NELSON'S GATE Columns on Crumpton Street in Bridgetown have been restored and marks the completion of the Gate Columns' Restoration Project in Queen's Park.

The project, which also entailed the restoration of the President's and Queen's Gate Columns, was executed over the past six months.

Artisan, Peter Jules, led the restoration team and provided strategic direction on the restoration of the gate columns, which required varied approaches due to the materials and methods previously utilized for their construction.

Ryan Als, Acting General Manager of the National Conservation Commission (NCC), lauded the team's dedication while he highlighted the significance of the project. "Preserving the historical integrity of heritage sites is a vital aspect of cultural

conservation. The gateway to a heritage site often serves as the first point of contact for visitors, setting the stage for their entire experience," he averred.

Safeguarding the historic appearance of the historic sites' entrances, Als added, plays a pivotal role in 'promoting a deeper appreciation of our past'.

He added: "I see these entrance ways as heritage portals that bridge the present with the past. They are symbolic thresholds and their original architecture helps us to connect them with the stories, events, and people that have shaped our history".

Als believes that by retaining the original architectural features, materials, and design elements of the entrances, 'we preserve tangible links to their authenticity and aesthetic appeal'.

"These pillars are physical embodiments of our shared heritage, representing the

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NCC is committed to conserving historic sites

continuity of traditions, customs, and values passed down through generations. By safeguarding them, we also protect the physical structures and the intangible legacy they represent,” the Conservation Advocate said.

With authenticity being a fundamental principle in heritage conservation, Als emphasized ‘the need to foster a deeper connection to its historical significance’. He opined that the entrances of the historic Queen’s Park site serve as ‘touchstones that anchor us to our cultural roots, reminding us of where we come from and shaping our collective identity’.

“We work on these pillars, ruins and buildings and become connected to our cultural heritage, promote authenticity and aesthetic appreciation, and strengthen our connection to the shared stories of our ancestors,” Als declared.

As custodians of Barbados’ historical legacy, Als indicated that he believes ‘it is our duty to ensure that future generations

can continue to walk through these portals to the past, discovering and cherishing the wonders of our shared heritage’.

The Queen’s Park Refurbishment Project commenced in July 2021 and several areas have been restored including the Trident Fountain, the Band Stand, the walkway from the Band Stand to the Clock House and the Trash House.

The Trash House’s refurbishment and restoration included the removal and replacement of the existing roof, the stabilization of the existing wall and the removal and replacement of the existing columns.

The excavation of the floor, preservation and stabilization of the back wall and adjoining columns, the casting of a ring beam on all columns and the coral rendering of the entire structure were also executed.

Updates will be provided on additional aspects of the Queen’s Park Refurbishment Project in upcoming editions.



The coral rendering of Nelson’s Gate Columns was the final phase of this project.

Codrington House's wooden features preserved



Codrington House's doors are being restored to reflect the original architecture.

PRESERVING THE INTRICATE wooden craftsmanship that signifies the essence of Codrington House has been the focus of the building's refurbishment and restoration team.

Acting General Manager of the National Conservation Commission (NCC), Ryan Als, noted that the 'replacement of the original handcrafted doors, standing tall at 10 feet, with modern materials like aluminium and glass, did little for the imagination'. Restoring the wooden features in Codrington House, he added, became symbolic of revitalizing its heritage and authenticity.

"The meticulous attention being paid to the craftsmanship is not merely about refurbishing physical elements but it is also about reviving the soul of the house itself.

It is a process of honouring the legacy of the past while embracing the demands of the present," he disclosed.

Striking a balance between the restoration of the wooden features and introducing modern features has also been at the forefront of the refurbishment and restoration process.

Als noted that the epoxy application to Codrington House's entryway steps and the building's balcony offered a combination of durability, design versatility, and cost-effectiveness with features that made it the preferred choice over traditional tiles.

He anticipates that its aesthetically pleasing feature will also accentuate the wooden craftsmanship in NCC's main office building.

The restoration and refurbishment team has **Continued on page 7**

Refurbishment has been a ‘profound’ experience

also been lauded by Als for their commitment and perseverance throughout the project.

“The restoration of the Codrington House stands as a testament to our team’s commitment to preserving history and heritage. Through our reverent restoration of its wooden features, we are not only reviving a place of historical significance but we are also rekindling a connection to craftsmanship and tradition that transcends time,” Als affirmed.

While he noted that the experience is ‘profound’, Als said that he believes the process has unearthed hidden talents among the staff members.

Acting Assistant Superintendent, Verden Seale, echoed Als’ sentiments while he acknowledged that the project has brought the workers’ abilities to the fore.

These abilities coupled with their dedication has ensured the project’s timely

execution, which is at an advanced stage and the finishing touches are being applied.

The Codrington House refurbishment and restoration commenced last June with the removal of the building’s roof.

In addition to the removal and replacement of the roof, the project comprised the replacement of sections of the floor, the resurfacing of the walls, electrical and plumbing upgrades to the existing infrastructure as well as the replacement of the doors, windows and window hoods. Sections of the building’s staircase - the newel post and wooden balusters - were also replaced with mahogany pieces of wood. Several artisans have worked concomitantly to ensure that the project was executed in accordance with its timelines and the desired results.

The historic Codrington House has been the NCC’s long-standing residence was built in 1825.



The beach-themed epoxy floor at Codrington House’s entryway is taking shape.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Meet Ruth Cumberbatch, Acting Senior Field Superintendent



Ruth Cumberbatch is NCC's sole female Acting Senior Field Superintendent.

THE POWER OF perception has inspired Ruth Cumberbatch to look at life through positive lens.

Guided by her 'Father in heaven', the sole female Acting Superintendent at the National Conservation Commission (NCC) often consults Him through prayer before she executes any work-related task.

This practice has yielded rewarding results and notable achievements over her 18-year journey at the Commission.

With a warm smile, the soft-spoken but confidently lady indicated that the journey has been 'good', as she paid full credit to 'the Almighty'.

"I was selected by Mr. Belle through the Samuel Jackman Prescod Institute of Technology's programme to join the NCC team and I started as a general worker where I worked with Mr. Dane Sandiford,

who was the Head of the Commercial Department," she disclosed.

While alluding to feeling 'honoured' in this role, which focused on horticulture, Cumberbatch said it was akin to her experience in agriculture and noted that the same discipline is required in terms of nurturing and care.

After two wonderful years in this role, Cumberbatch became a Foreman and executed the assigned duties for next seven years.

"I worked with Mr. Als during this time, he was my senior and I appreciated the knowledge that he openly shared. Initially, our tasks included planting trees in eroded areas and also in spaces that needed to be stabilised to prevent soil erosion," she explained.

As Cumberbatch acknowledged her

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Cumberbatch appreciates the sharing of knowledge

appreciation for trees, she recalled the NCC's preparation for Arbor Day and the joy it brought to her.

Barbados celebrates Arbor Day annually on September 22nd. "We carried trees to the schools at that time and we partnered with organizations to plant trees in designated areas. This enhanced our relationships with officials from these organizations," she opined. Of equal significance to Cumberbatch was the concept and development of the open space that is now the National Botanical Gardens. She alluded to playing a key role in the initial development of the area, while she was a Foreman.

Cumberbatch recalled that her then Supervisor, Ryan Als, was also instrumental in the project and continued to provide guidance during its execution while he was based in The People's Republic of China. While she noted that Als' guidance was critical, Cumberbatch said that his temporary leave from the organization in 2015 brought her leadership skills to the fore.

"This aspect of my journey put me in the spotlight, I was given directives by the then General Manager and I executed them. The transition was not hard because I learned a lot from Mr. Als in terms of effectively dealing with people," she added.

Cumberbatch outlined that her approach included gaining insight to the staff members' personalities, which was a significant factor because some of them



Ruth Cumberbatch has a deep love and great appreciation for horticulture and beautification.

were new to the Commission.

"The staff complied with my directives and there were no problems. I did not dictate, instead I sought to impart knowledge and through this experience, I got to understand them so that their strengths could be capitalized," she asserted.

The knowledge Cumberbatch imparted stemmed from her exposure to horticultural techniques such as grafting and budding at the Soil Conservation Unit as well as propagation techniques at the NCC.

"This knowledge that was shared with the new staff was a feather in their cap. And from this experience, I can say that I can go anywhere and work," she stated.

Another aspect of this transition was Cumberbatch's reassignment to Government House.

"I worked there under the then Governor

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Cumberbatch believes in the best and nothing less



Ruth Cumberbatch always has a positive outlook on life and is gives of her best in all of life's roles.

House for a short period after to ensure there was a smooth transition. As a Field Superintendent, I was assigned to oversee Farley Hill National Park, Speightstown, River Bay, St. James Mobile (Weston) and Half Moon Fort,” she said.

With a positive outlook and the support of her then Supervisor, Roger Forde, Cumberbatch familiarised herself with the routes to the sites and sought to give of her best in the role, which she remained in for two years until she transitioned to her current role as Acting Senior Field Superintendent.

Cumberbatch is currently overseeing 11 sites which includes Farley Hill National Park, Batts Rock, Brandon's, One Sandy Lane, Fitts Village, St. James Mobile (Thunder Bay), Speightstown, Harrison Point Facility, River Bay Facility, Half Moon

General, Sir Elliott Belgrave and this new environment also had different requirements in terms of the aesthetics of the property and the grounds always needed to be immaculate,” she outlined.

One of the highlights of this assignment for Cumberbatch was the compliments she and the team received from the staff, which made her feel ‘honoured’. “These compliments motivated me to do more and even enhance the work that I produced,” she added. Cumberbatch continued in this role until 2017 when she applied for the Field Superintendent role and was successful in her quest.

“I remained at Government Fort Facility and Folkestone Park and Marine Reserve.

“Mr. Grimes was retiring at that time and Mr. Als asked me to take up this role for the Northern Zone. One of my first assignments was the beautification of the Harrison Point Facility in St. Lucy,” she disclosed.

Visibly pleased, Cumberbatch highlighted that the staff were ‘phenomenal’ and ‘they went above and beyond’.

“Even when challenges arose, we dealt with them accordingly. We received a lot of compliments and I was proud of the team,” she affirmed.

While she alluded to still being the recipient of Als’ guidance, Cumberbatch reiterated that she ‘always consults with my Father in Heaven’.

“I have a practice in place whereby I have the staff assemble at Folkestone and I often do

Continued on page 11

Prayer is paramount to Cumberbatch's approach

do this to ask for God's guidance and protection for the staff through prayer," she revealed.

And when situations arise that require her intervention to reach a resolution, Cumberbatch prays before she takes any action.

"This brings guidance and even a resolution to me before I attempt to deal with situations. I also observe persons before I seek to resolve work-related matters," the trained Counsellor indicated.

While acknowledging that she is a 'Peace Advocate', Cumberbatch added: "I love a united force in terms of the staff and this is to ensure that the best work is achieved. I always urge persons to work together".

She believes that team building activities are also pivotal to the boosting of morale and achieving harmony among the staff.

"For the North Zone, we had a breakfast morning; the staff contributed in terms of the meals, which was a variety of foods. This was in an effort to build unity and camaraderie among the staff. It was delightful to see the staff engaging with each other," she noted. Cumberbatch firmly believes in and lives by the motto of treating others as she would like to be treated.

The application of this motto, she added, yields more productivity from staff members. "I treat my staff as I would like to be treated which is with respect. I see them as Christ would like me to see them, which is like myself. We all need each other even if we cannot see eye to eye at all times," she maintained.

In addition to her role at NCC, Cumberbatch is pursuing an Associate Degree in Agricultural Science.



Cumberbatch always encourages the staff to work together for the greater good.

World Environment Day celebrated at Folkestone



Students from several educational institutions joined NCC and its partners to celebrate World Environment Day on June 5th. (Picture by CORALL Barbados).

PRESERVING THE ENVIRONMENT and protecting the marine ecosystems were the focus of this year's World Environment Day and World Oceans Day celebration on Wednesday, June 5th, at the Folkestone Park and Marine Reserve.

Students from several educational institutions visited the western facility to join the National Conservation Commission (NCC) and its key stakeholders for an exciting Open Day, which was filled with engaging activities.

A wealth of information was on hand at the Coral Reef Restoration Alliance (CORALL) Barbados and the Wave Attenuation Natural Solutions with Elkhorn Coral (WANSEC) Project's booths, which piqued the students' interests.

They learned firsthand about the Elkhorn Coral Reef Restoration Project which is being executed by the WANSEC Project

team in partnership with the Coastal Zone Management Unit (CZMU) and the NCC. With attractive displays, the team edified the students about the Elkhorn Coral Reef's restoration process and the stages of the project.

Meanwhile, Executive Treasurer of CORALL Barbados, Deborah Roach, provided insight about three species of corals - Symmetrical Brain Coral (*Pseudodiploria strigosa*), Elkhorn Coral (*Acropora palmata*) and Staghorn Coral (*Acropora cervicornis*). Roach also equipped the students with knowledge of the individual coral polyps and colonies, which they greatly appreciated. Students were also delighted to tour the Folkestone Museum where they learned more about several areas of marine life and the marine ecosystems.

The tour's highlight for many of the students was the variety of marine species in the Museum's aquariums.

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NCC's Open Day was educational and engaging

While some students opted to maintain a safe distance away from the aquariums, most were keen to get a closer look at the various species of fish.

Members of the public also visited the Museum in recognition of World Environment Day, which is observed across the globe to reinforce and sustain awareness around environmental action. Acting Manager of Folkestone Park and Marine Reserve, Carlos Gilkes, expressed his satisfaction with the execution of the day's activities and while NCC's Acting General Manager, Ryan Als, noted that he was pleased to see the schools' participation to mark the significant days. Members of the NCC's staff also visited the Facility to join in the festivities which included tuk band and steel pan performances, a karaoke session and guest performances by several local artistes including Blood and Mikey.

The United Nations General Assembly declared June 5th as World Environment Day during the Stockholm Conference in 1972.

It was the first world conference to make environmental protection a major issue. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) was established in the same year.

World Environment Day was celebrated for the first time in 1973.

The first World Environment Day was celebrated in 1973 under the theme 'Only One Earth'.

This year, the theme of World Environment Day is Land Restoration, Desertification, and Drought Resilience.

According to the United Nations (UN) Convention to Combat Desertification, up to 40 per cent of the planet's land is degraded, directly affecting half of the world's population.



CORALL Barbados' Executive Treasurer, Deborah Roach, at NCC's Open Day.

Mount Gay's team celebrates World Oceans Day



Mount Gay Distilleries' team members after the beach clean-up (Picture by WIRSPA).

IN CELEBRATION OF World Oceans Day, 30 staff members of Mount Gay Distilleries Limited visited Folkestone Park and Marine Reserve for an action-packed day of activities, which commenced with a beach clean-up.

Greeted by pristine weather, the staff quickly assembled with their rakes, shovels and garbage bags to commence the removal of garbage from the west coast beach.

With diligence and determination, the team worked cooperatively and completed the beautification exercise within an hour.

After a quick inspection to ensure the beach was fully cleaned, the team set sail on two glass bottom boats for an adventure at sea - a 30 minute tour of the Folkestone Marine Protected Area.

Carlos Gilkes, Acting Manager of Folkestone Park and Marine Reserve, joined the team and provided an overview of the area while

Captain Kenrick Marshall, the Boat's Operator, shared a wealth of knowledge on the Green Sea Turtles.

The enthusiastic staff were keen to learn more about the Marine Protected Area and sought answers to questions on numerous topics including the Hometown Hole (the bridge opposite Limegrove Lifestyle Centre), the mangroves, the shipwreck and the coral reefs.

Gilkes and Marshall shed the desired light on each topic, much to the staff's appreciation. Their experience was enriched with the sightings of sea turtles, coral reefs and schools of fish.

Some staff members seized the opportunity to capture pictures of the invaluable moments with their smart devices, while others basked in the warm sunshine that accentuated the enviable appearance of Barbados' turquoise waters.

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Staff awakened new depths during the tour

On their return, the visibly pleased staff members expressed their appreciation for the information shared on the tour.

After a refreshments break, the team entered the Folkestone Museum for the final component of their activities.

Gilkes conducted an interactive tour of the Museum and facilitated a question and answer segment on the plethora of artefacts and marine species on display.

There was no shortage of questions during this segment as the staff sought to link their observations on the glass bottom boat's tour with the information on the Museum's artefacts.

With sound explanations from Gilkes, the staff were equipped with vast knowledge about the dynamic marine ecosystems.

Gilkes expressed gratitude to the engaging team for choosing Folkestone Park as their

venue for the celebration.

"It was a pleasure hosting the Mount Gay team for World Oceans Day. We are always willing and happy to open our doors to the public to edify them about our Marine Park and the Marine Protected Area, and what better day than World Oceans Day to do this," he added.

World Oceans Day was first proposed in 1992 at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. The UN General Assembly designated June 8th as World Oceans Day.

The aim of the day is to celebrate the world's shared ocean and our personal connection to the sea, as well as to raise awareness about the crucial role the ocean plays in our lives and the important ways people can help protect it.

The theme for this year's World Oceans Day is **Awaken New Depths**.



Carlos Gilkes (in blue polo shirt) sharing the history of boat building with the staff.

WORLD OCEANS DAY HIGHLIGHTS

All aboard for an adventure on the high seas!



The Mount Gay team boarded the first glass bottom boat at Folkestone.



The second glass bottom boat making its way to the shore for boarding.

WORLD OCEANS DAY HIGHLIGHTS

All aboard for an adventure on the high seas!



The removal of shoes is a requirement prior to the boarding of the vessel.



The Mount Gay team members listening attentively to the Boat's Captain.

WORLD OCEANS DAY HIGHLIGHTS

The Mount Gay Distilleries team sailed the high seas



Contagious smiles and infectious laughter filled the air as the team set sail.



The adventure at sea was a family affair and the team thoroughly enjoyed it.

WORLD OCEANS DAY HIGHLIGHTS

The Mount Gay Distilleries team sailed the high seas



Carlos Gilkes provided insight into the Folkestone's marine protected area.



Gilkes also facilitated a question and answer segment with the staff.

WORLD OCEANS DAY HIGHLIGHTS

Exploring Folkestone's Marine Protected Area



The dynamic marine ecosystems piqued the interest of the staff members.



They were particularly keen to learn more about the species of coral reefs.

WORLD OCEANS DAY HIGHLIGHTS

Exploring Folkestone's Museum was insightful



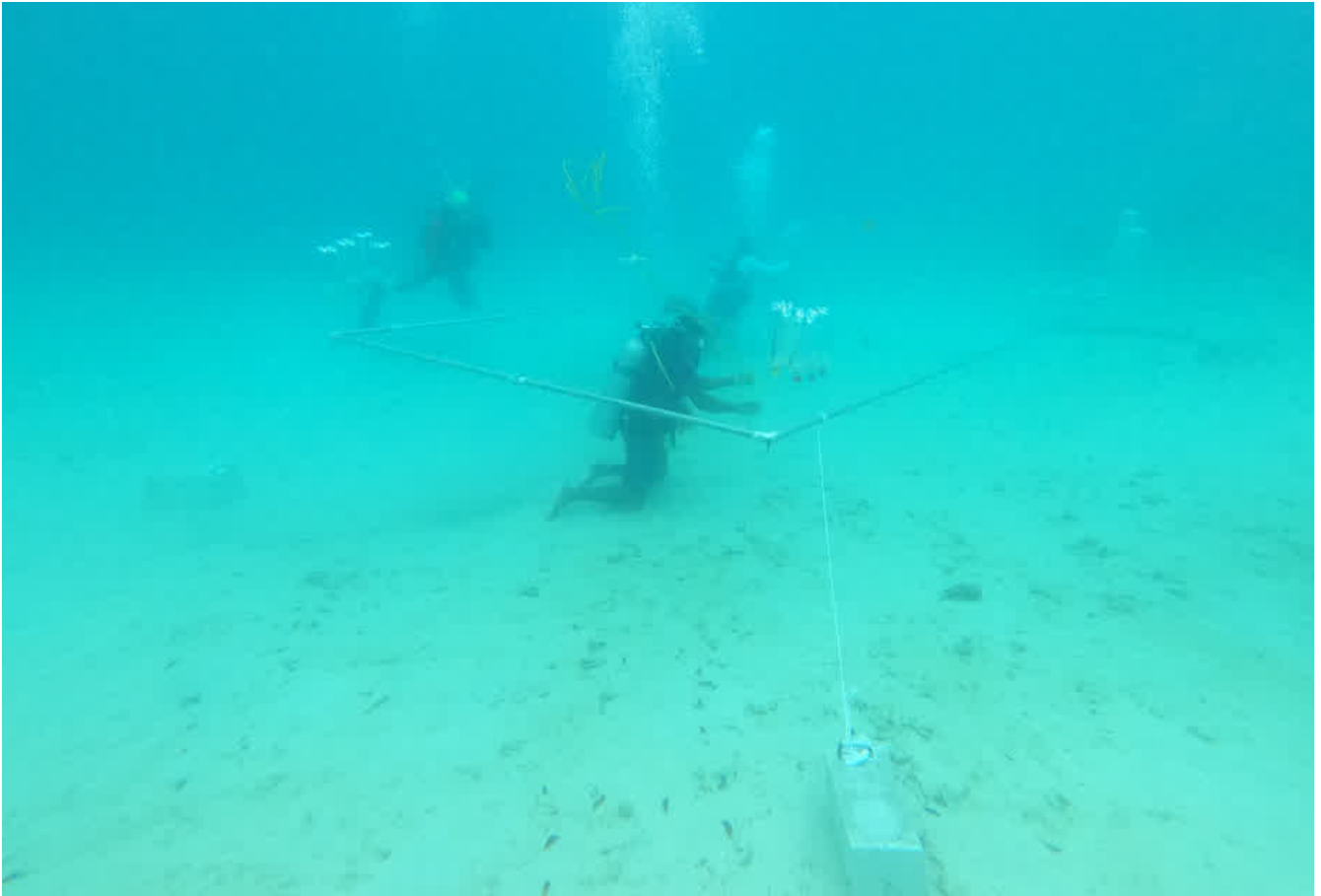
The Mount Gay team also toured the Museum and was fully captivated.



Gilkes conducted the tour with Mount Gay's enthusiastic team members.

CONSERVATION CHRONICLES

Elkhorn Coral Nurseries created at Folkestone Park



The Elkhorn Coral Nursery at Folkestone Marine Park. (Feature pictures by CZMU)

FOLKESTONE PARK AND Marine Reserve is the home of two Elkhorn Coral Nurseries following their establishment by officials of the Wave Attenuation Natural Solutions with Elkhorn Coral (WANSEC) Project.

Dr. Henri Vallès, WANSEC Project Lead and UWI Senior Lecturer, indicated that the Coral component of the Nurseries was created from small fragments that were collected from existing colonies.

“We divided the small fragments into micro-fragments and allowed them to rest for 100 days in the Nursery, with the idea of outplanting them into two different sites at very high densities,” he explained.

The planting at high densities will facilitate the growth of small coral nubbits, which were strategically positioned at every metre in the

Coral Nursery.

The aim, Dr. Vallès averred, is the recreation of the system that reflects their appearance 200 years ago which was a dense, thick interlocking hedge of Elkhorn Coral that acted as a barrier against excessive wave energy and protected Barbados’ coastline.

Equally important to the WANSEC Project officials is the Nursery’s infrastructure.

“These nurseries are made up of a metal frame six metres long and three metres wide, gridded with a line to attach the coral fragments and are secured to the bottom with concrete blocks. They can be moved as needed and placed in a varying depth,” Dr. Vallès explained.

With the completion of the Nursery Stage of the project, the next phase is the Outplanting Stage.

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CONSERVATION CHRONICLES

Two outplanting sites have been earmarked by officials

“We will be putting the coral fragments into the planting sites by the end of the summer. These planting sites are Sandridge in St. Peter and Batts Rock in St. Michael,” Dr. Vallès disclosed.

While he acknowledged that ‘it will take years before we start seeing the effects’, Dr. Vallès projected that within the next year, ‘we should already get nice small coral colonies at these sites’.

“In order for us to detect the effects of wave attenuation, it would probably take a few years more because even though they are fast growing corals, they will still take time,” he explained.

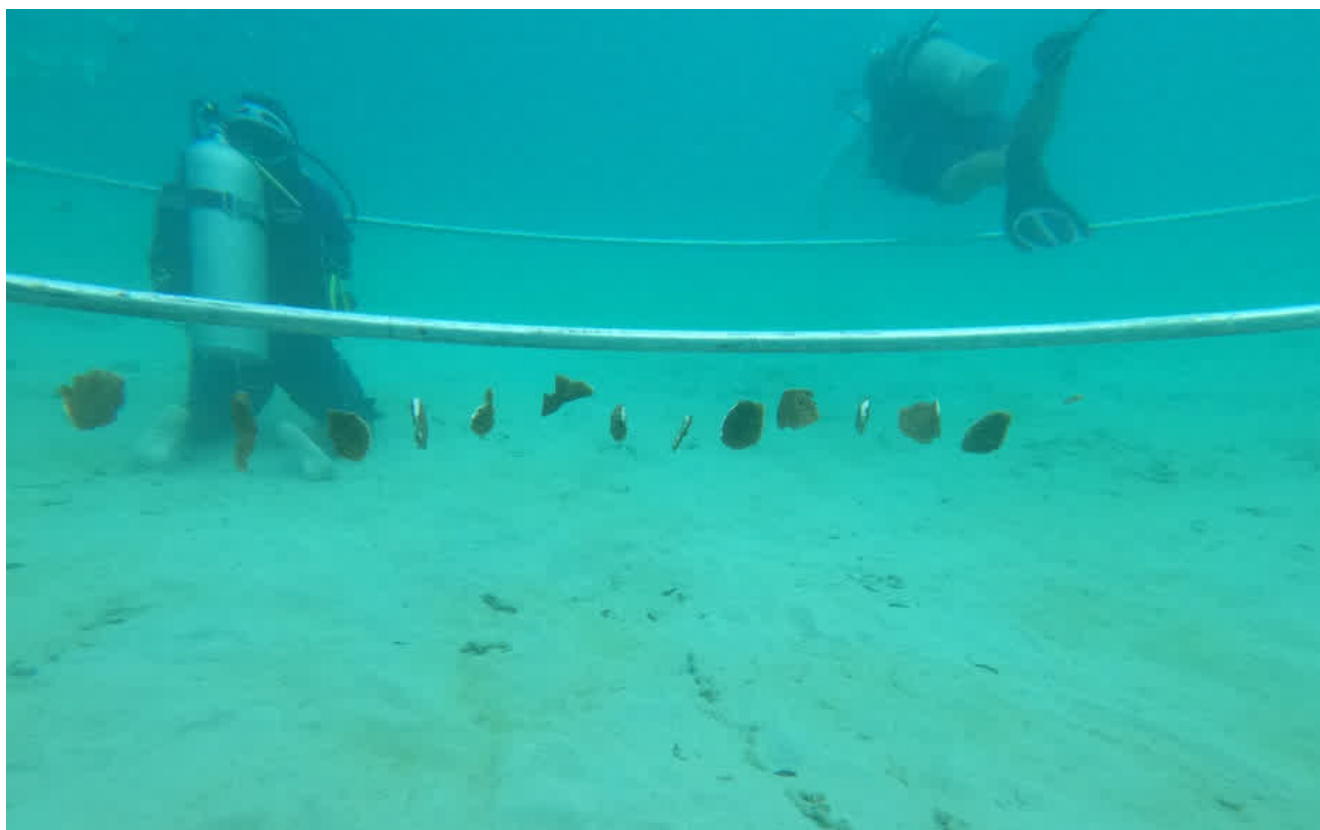
During this time, Dr. Vallès said that the WANSEC Project’s team will monitor the sites to track their development.

“We already did a baseline survey of all the sites to characterise their current status to compare how they will change over time. This will help us measure the outplanting

of the corals with their growth,” he explained. Carlos Gilkes, Acting Manager of Folkestone Marine Park, lauded the WANSEC Team for their commitment and dedication.

“This is a comprehensive project, through which they are utilizing the coral for its ecosystem services and these services can vary from creating nurseries for small fishes to having the properties of the wave attenuation that can decrease the level of erosion at the out planting sites,” he opined. Gilkes also lauded Folkestone’s Boat Operators for the assistance they lent to the WANSEC team during the creation of the two Coral Nurseries.

The WANSEC Project, which is funded by the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund, is being executed in collaboration with the Coastal Zone Management Unit (CZMU) and the National Conservation Commission (NCC). Updates will be provided in upcoming editions of The Commission Newsletter.



Coral Fragments attached to the line which is gridded to the metal frame of the Nursery.

NCC's Garden Centre Staff Selection

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