



EMD

Environmental Management Division

"Our Island. Our Environment. Our Responsibility."

July 2013

Monthly Newsletter from The Environmental & Natural Resources Directorate, Environmental Management Division.

Horse Point Landfill Site – Restoration Project – By Mike Durnford, Climate Change & Pollution Officer

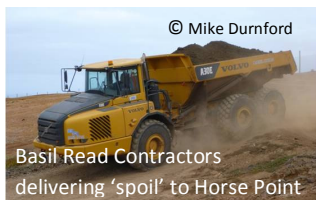
As part of the re-development of Horse Point, Landfill Site areas that have been compacted and capped are in need of restoration to beautify the area. Through discussions held during the June Recycling Forum on 28th June, followed by an on-site meeting at Horse Point on 1st July, the Environmental Management Division and the St Helena National Trust initiated a project to test plant up to 400 plants (200 Gumwood and 100 each of Ebony and Hair Grass) within a 20m x 20m area on the site.



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Ross Towers of SHNT said "This is a great example of what can happen with a few like-minded people moving forward positively. By the end of Friday, in the space of just one week, we should have over 400 plants in the ground on an old refuse site. The start of a great partnership hopefully." On 5th July members of EMD (including work experience students Kayleigh Harris and Harley Williams), SHNT and Basil Read worked on site at Horse Point to commence the restoration, the results of which will determine the possibility of further restoration, through planting of endemics, as the need arises across the site. There is potential for the whole of Horse Point Landfill Site to be restored to be more aesthetically pleasing and blend in with its' beautiful surroundings.

EMD would like to especially thank Basil Read for supplying the top soil (spoil) for this, and other areas within the landfill site, without which the restoration project would not have been possible.



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Basil Read Contractors
delivering 'spoil' to Horse Point



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Horse Point 2012



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Horse Point 2013



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Kayleigh and Harley assisting

St Helena Bird Ringing Scheme - June Update

June has proved a busy time for the St Helena Bird Ringing Scheme with a ten night expedition to Egg Island and lots of activity at the masked booby colony at Lots Wife. During the Egg Island expedition 734 Madeiran Storm Petrels, 67 Brown Noddies and 2 Red-billed Tropicbirds were ringed. There were also 60 "re-trapped" (birds already ringed by the Marine section) and 8 "controlled" (birds who were ringed by visiting RSPB specialists in 2009) Madeiran Storm Petrels, and 17 re-trapped Brown Noddies.

The Masked Booby colony at Lots Wife is also picking up pace as there were 20 nests with adults incubating eggs, compared to 10 in May. 32 new Masked Boobies were ringed and 28 of which were also fitted with orange colour-rings to be able to easily identify individuals at a distance. During Junes monitoring of the colony 24 masked boobies were also re-sighted already fitted with colour rings. We also received 2 sightings of colour ringed birds from members of the public so please keep your eyes open and let us know if you see any.

Annalea Beard
Marine Assistant



Lesser Gallinule

On Thursday 18th July, EMD received a call from Troy Henry and Dennis Young from Basil Read about an unusual bird in Ruperts. The bird was identified as a Lesser Gallinule before being released. The first confirmed record of this bird was in 1938 and has been recorded as an occasional or accidental visitor since. This is our fifth record in twelve years. We would like to thank Troy and Dennis for reporting their sighting.

Remember to call the Marine section on 2270 for any unusual bird sightings or leave a message on 2790. A picture is a very useful for identification if you should see an unusual bird.

Leeann Henry
Marine Assistant



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July 2013

My experience at EMD, by work experience student: Kayleigh Harris:

I chose this place because I want to become a conservationist. I picked Marine and Conservation so I can learn new and different things about the endemics and become familiar with the Marine side of Conservation. Since I wish to be working with plants and all sorts of wildlife in the future, these choices would help me the most.

My experience at EMD so far has been very interesting and I've learnt so much already. I have realised that different conservationists have different opinions about how to do things and this has expanded my knowledge. Harley Williams and I were given training on moving invertebrates and the Marine team taught us about their different methods on how to count birds.

The people at EMD has been a huge inspiration and help to me, teaching me the importance of the endemics on our island. I have been to the landfill to sort garbage; first I thought it was disgusting but after the importance of the data was explained to me, I was all for it. I am amazed at the plans EMD has and am most pleased that the landfill site is being restored.

I hope that I can do them and myself proud by taking everything they have taught me and becoming the best conservationist I can be.

My experience at EMD, by work experience student: Harley Williams:

In the past few weeks I have been a volunteer for the environmental management division. I have attained a wide range of knowledge in my time here, including a collection of facts on the islands endemics.

Until coming to work at EMD, I had no idea how much effort and work is directed at conservation of the environment here on St. Helena.

I have helped in the restoration work at the Millennium forest, and am pleased to know the government is funnelling money to develop the landfill site into a new recycling centre. At Blue point the National Trust has been working hard to try and re-establish St. Helena's once thriving ecosystem, as well as undertaking work in areas such as prosperous Bay Plain and High Peak.

Plans have been made for volunteers to go bird counting and make assessments based on the findings with the Marine team. Lab work was also worked into the schedule.

Impact assessment is also about to take on restoration work at the airport site, something I am very much looking forward to.

My time here has produced a wide spectrum of ideas and opportunities for me. Any doubts I had about working in the environmental sector have relinquished, I am thoroughly enjoying myself here at EMD.

EMD Work Experience Students – Environment Contribution

On Tuesday 9th July 2013 the Environmental Management Division Work Experience Students: Kayleigh Harris, Harley Williams, Chelsea Young and Megan Young undertook a black bag litter collection from West Rocks to the bottom of the Run, which included along the shoreline. This clean-up was in collaboration with the effort from Mr Phillip John who had previously removed much of the bulky waste that had accumulated in the area over time.

The students amassed 5 full bags of rubbish and a broken piece of road signage within just 30 minutes, after which the area looked far more pleasant.

The Environmental Risk Management Section of EMD would like to thank Mr Phillip John, Kayleigh, Harley, Chelsea and Megan for their contribution to our environment and remind the public that West Rocks is not a dumping ground, any litter should be placed in an appropriate waste bin and construction or bulky waste disposed of at Horse Point Landfill Site!



Mike Durnford
Climate Change & Pollution Officer

Research project for rare, threatened Endemic Ferns

The Environmental Management Division Nursery at Scotland has secured a grant for a research project to develop propagation techniques for rare, threatened endemic Ferns here on St Helena.

Ferns are often difficult to grow in cultivation. Over the next year a climate controlled propagation unit will be set up in the nursery for long-term propagation. The project funding will allow us to purchase equipment to create a sterile working environment; this will reduce contamination, a major cause of death of developing sporelings.

The project will aim to develop successful propagation protocols for St Helena's 14 native fern species, eleven of which are globally threatened. The protocols will then be used in on-going species recovery programmes.

The eleven threatened fern species include eight critically endangered endemics and three indigenous species. Each of these will be assessed initially for the cultivation approaches most likely to succeed (based on existing knowledge and literature searches).

Using established guidelines, the spores from each species will be collected. These will be grown in a number of replicated experimental trials incorporating different light and humidity levels to determine which method works best.

On completion the propagation methodology will be publicly available via the EMD web page.

The EMD nurseries staff and St Helena Government wishes to acknowledge the financial support of the JNCC Support Co. (Joint Nature Conservation Committee based in the UK).

Vanessa Thomas
Nurseries Officer