



Monthly Newsletter from The Environment & Natural Resources Directorate, Environmental Management Division. October 2013

LAUNCH OF THE PEAKS NATIONAL PARK

His Excellency Governor Capes officially launched the Peaks National Park on World Tourism Day, 27 September 2013. Attended by Councillors, school children, SHG officials, members of ESH, Saint Helena National Trust and members of the public the launch took place at 10am with an opening speech from Terrestrial Conservation Advisor and Trainer, Dave Higgins.

Dave welcomed everyone to the launch and expressed his appreciation for attendees' interest in conservation on St Helena. He went on to talk about the launch of the Peaks National Park as part of the development of 23 National Conservation Areas for St Helena. These NCAs will extend to over 40% of the Island. Dave then handed the floor over to Governor Capes for his opening remarks.

In his speech Governor Capes remarked on the hard work that has been done since 1996 when the area around Diana's Peak was proclaimed St Helena's first National Park. Since then much hard work has been done to preserve the tree fern and other endangered species. Governor Capes said: "As we prepare for the arrival of air access... it is right that we should raise awareness of the priceless asset we have in St Helena's natural beauty and take steps to ensure that we preserve it for the generations to come. By clearly defining the boundaries of our national parks and setting out clearly what may, or may not be done within those boundaries we will retain a place that all who live here can be proud of and enjoy.

Following this Governor Capes and Councillor Gavin Ellick each planted a tree within the National Park. The day continued with refreshments and various exciting activities organized by the Terrestrial Conservation Team, the St Helena National Trust and Tourism. Activities included tree planting for school children, workings of the Peaks Nursery, Flax Weaving with SHAPE and showing attendees the important but dangerous task of getting rid of flax. Also on offer was a walking tour around the Peaks and a chance to see some of the endemic invertebrates found there.

The theme of World Tourism Day for 2013 is: Tourism and Water: Protecting our Common Future. This theme is especially relevant to St Helena after the 2013 drought. The Peaks National Park offers potential for converting flax slopes into native and endemic habitats. This would capture more water from low cloud and deliver it to reservoirs for human consumption. Presently, this can only happen slowly as the land needs to be managed for a long period of time whilst native vegetation becomes established. However, the Peaks National Park management will aim to establish more areas of typical St Helena vegetation.

On the success of the launch, Dave commented: "A number of organisations deserve our thanks including the St Helena National Trust and Tourism; special thanks go to all who joined us on the day. The next 18 months will see further development of National Conservation Areas. The designation of these biodiversity hotspots will help meet the goal of a sustainable and green Island. Anyone interested in our work can contact me on 22270 or david-higgins@enrd.gov.sh

Dr David Higgins
Terrestrial Conservation Advisor and Trainer



Governor Capes declares the Peaks National Park officially open



Prince Andrew School students plant trees near the Peaks Hut



David Pryce and Liza Fowler prepare to sample invertebrates from dead wood and the surrounding vegetation.

FLYTIPPING IN THE RUN IN JAMESTOWN



A REMINDER to the public that it is an offence to dump any kind of waste (including organic waste) in the Jamestown Run. Discarding of waste in the Jamestown run is **ILLEGAL** and **offenders risk prosecution which could result in a fine of up to £10,000.**



October 2013

CAREERS FAIR 2013

Careers Fair was held on the 9th October at Prince Andrew School from 10am to 5pm. The Environmental Management Division of Environmental and Natural Resources Directorate were one of the many organisations that attended the event. The morning began with an official opening of the fair and launch of the awaited apprenticeship scheme.

The buzz of Careers Fair lingered throughout the day and the stalls were a great attraction. A lot of the visitors to the EMD stall showed a keen interest in the environment. Members of staff from the division were on hand to answer questions and give advice. Students from Prince Andrew School wondered from stall to stall, some students had some idea as to the career path they would like to embark on whilst others were undecided.

Amongst the many visitors, there were also pupils from the primary schools. The pupils had a lot of questions to ask and were very interested in the things that EMD does.

As one of the presentations for the day, Shayla Ellick, Species Conservation and Environmental Research Officer gave a presentation on her Career Path to EMD.

Overall the day proved to be a great success.

FOCUS ON APPRENTICESHIP: TRAVIS FRANCIS

Travis Francis joined the Terrestrial Team of Environment Management Division in August of this year as part of an apprenticeship scheme.

Travis says: 'I enjoy working here, in conservation. The best part of the job I like doing is visiting the conservation areas where rare endemic plants grow, I get to remove invasive species. I have learnt how to transplant endemic species into growing bags. I also learnt about seed sowing and transplanting endemic species back into their own home, their habitat. I have also learnt some endemic plant names and now I can identify the plants. I make sure that plants are watered daily.'



Travis with Species Terrestrial Team at the Peaks National Park Launch

From Left to right:

Travis Francis, David Francis, Darrell Leo, Vanessa Thomas, Neil Henry, Gurrance Leo

STAFF ACHIEVEMENTS

Congratulations to:

- Leeann Henry for gaining a Level 3 Diploma in Environmental Science
- Isabel Peters for passing the Prince 2 Foundation Exam

And:

- Graham Leo
- Leslie Benjamin/Melvyn Roberts
- William Crowie
- Ross Henry
- Derek Youde



For undertaking Emergency First Response.

SPECIAL MENTION



A special Mention to Elizabeth Clingham for presenting at the International Whale Shark Conference, in Atlanta Georgia. This was extremely well received and has generated much interest in St Helena.

SIGHTINGS SCHEME

Remember

to report your sightings of ringed seabirds, whales, dolphins, turtles, unusual **birds**. The marine section can be contacted at Essex House, Jamestown on telephone 22270 or a message can be left on the environmental hotline number 22790 or post on our facebook page:

www.facebook.com/sthelenaconservation.

For each sighting please note: date and time, species and number (photo), location. Please leave your name and contact details should we have additional questions.