

December 2004

Newsletter 4/2004

# STENAPA Update



We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year !!!!!!!!!!!!!



## Beach Replenishment Project

In the May 2004 issue of this publication, our readers were informed of the proposed study and research into the restoration of the beach at Oranje Bay. STENAPA, together with the enthusiastic support of the Island Government and the financial backing of AMFO is well on the way to making this far-sighted concept a reality.

On Sept. 24th 2004 Statia's Lt. Governor Mr. Hyden Gittens, AMFO Project Evaluator Mr Robert Budike and STENAPA Manager Nicole Esteban signed the contract for phase 1, or design phase, of a three phase development programme. The proposed restoration site lies between the Blue Pier and Smoke Alley. AMFO will provide approximately NAF 60.000 for the survey and design of the beach restoration project.

Dr. Harris, Ph.D., P.E of the Coral Reef Foundation and Associate Professor at the Florida Institute of Technology is the consultant for the Oranje Bay Beach Project.

At the beginning of December Dr. Harris and his team, together with STENAPA staff and volunteers, carried out a hydrographical survey along the proposed restoration site. According to Dr. Harris, a detailed

design proposal should be ready by the end of January 2005.

This will include engineering and architectural research as well as designs and drawings of off-shore breakwaters, restored historical buildings, promenade and landscaping.

Phase 2 will see the construction of one or more off-shore breakwaters and the creation of a snorkel trail. A three section breakwater is envisaged, one section in front of The Golden Era Hotel and The Old Gin House, and two sections between Dive Statia and Smoke Alley.

In phase 3 the creation and restoration of the beach front will take place, including the restoring of at least two historic warehouses. The promenade will be created and landscaping will be done.

This is a very important feature as it helps to stabilize the area and control erosion during heavy rains.

For the construction of breakwaters and artificial reefs, it is planned to use Reef Balls, an ingenious invention to say the least. Reef Balls are constructed on site, measuring 2 meters X 1.80 meters and weighing 3 tons. They are made of concrete, with no steel re-bars added. What they do contain are some additives to increase strength and lower PH, thus aiding the growth of marine life on them. It is also planned to implant coral onto the Reef Balls, which will help threatened species to re-establish themselves. To place the Reef Balls in the sea, a balloon is inserted. Once inflated it can be floated to the designated site where the balloon will be pierced and the Reef Ball will undergo a controlled sinking. For further information go to [www.reefball.org](http://www.reefball.org), a most comprehensive website, featuring the use of Reef Balls worldwide.



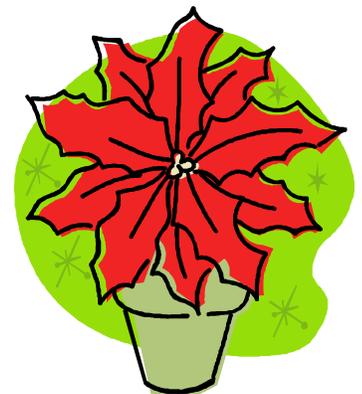
Photo by Heidi Duncan

### Inside this issue:

Beach Replenishment Project	1
Botanical Garden Zeelandia Beach	2
Junior Ranger School Visits	2
Snorkel Club	3
Volunteers	3
Meet the Board of STENAPA	4

### Special points of interest:

- The Botanical Gardens are open from 7am—12 noon every weekday. Contact the office if you want to visit outside of these hours.





## Botanical Garden

During 2004 the Miriam C. Smith Botanical Garden has been a hive of activity. Volunteers from around the world have worked hard alongside staff members and Interns of STENAPA, to make the garden a truly beautiful sanctuary to visit. November 11th saw the opening of the fifth and final arbour, the Sense of Sound Arbour. The creation of the Sensory Garden was inspired by Jean Gemmill, an untiring supporter of STENAPA in general and of the Botanical Garden in particular. As the cups of orange juice were raised to toast the new arbour, Jean was very close to those present who knew her. Sadly she left us a year ago almost to the day of the completion of the Sensory Garden.

The entrance to the Botanical Garden is sporting a brand new gate, designed and

put together by interns and volunteers. It is an impressive structure made of timber with trellis on the sides for creeping plants to eventually adorn it.

All the signs for the arbours have finally arrived from the USA as well as all bird signs for the Jean Gemmill Bird Observation Trail. They are printed on UV resistant material, encased in waterproof frames and mounted on metal posts. The signs were erected by the volunteers at each arbour and at intervals along the bird trail where the visitor will find benches in shady places to enjoy the glorious view over the sea towards St. Kitts. The bird signs as well as the sign at the entrance to the bird observation trail were designed on Statia and funded by contributions received in memory of Jean Gemmill. The signs for the Sensory



Photo by Heidi Duncan

Garden were sponsored by VNP (Netherlands Representation in St. Martin).

Due to the good rains Statia enjoyed these last few months, the Corallita poses a never ending challenge to the hard-working volunteers and interns. They are tasked to keep the Miriam C. Smith Botanical Gardens a showpiece within the National Park. A bouquet to them all.

## Zeelandia Beach

Clean-ups on Zeelandia beach have become a routine activity for STENAPA. Volunteers, Interns and staff members tackle the daunting job at regular intervals. It is perceived that a large amount of this unsightly and dangerous litter comes from Smith's Gut Landfill, where rubbish is overflowing the revetments at times. Plastic and polystyrene, among others, are particularly dangerous to marine birdlife. If ingested it will remain in the stomach, making the bird feel full and stopping him from eating. The result is death from starvation. Ropes, fishing line and netting are killers for sea turtles, marine mammals, birds and fish.

With the end of November, the turtle breeding season officially closed for the year. All data collected still needs to be assembled. The final result of the survey on the status of sea turtles on Statia for 2004 will be published in the next edition

## School Visits

To mark World Animal Day on Oct. 2nd, STENAPA prepared a presentation on Statia's indigenous wildlife. This included most birds, reptiles and the one and only mammal native to this island, the bat. Armed with computers, memory sticks and lots of enthusiasm, Assistant Manager Gershon Lopes and volunteer Heidi

## Junior Rangers

After thirteen months of regular attendance, dedication and a desire to learn, two young Stadians have qualified as Junior Rangers. Gershon Lopes, in charge of the Junior Rangers Club, is pictured with Florisco Dembrook and



Photo by Jerry Kennedy

Junliang Feng. STENAPA's plan was to present the best Junior Ranger with an open water diving course, when the dilemma arose: They were both equally good! Golden Rock Dive Centre came to the rescue and will sponsor a course for one of the boys.

The Junior Rangers Course is very diverse, the curriculum including both land and marine environs.

It is hoped that more of the island's youngsters will enroll in the Junior Rangers Club, creating a nursery of local future Park Rangers.

All youngsters who have completed the snorkel course are eligible to enter the Junior Rangers course, beginning the first week in February.

Congratulations to Florisco and Junliang

Duncan set off to visit all of Statia's schools. In fact we had to set off a couple of times as the programme was comprehensive and therefore it was impossible to visit all the schools in one day. The presentation was well received by pupils and teachers, with lots of pertinent questions asked and

lively participation by the kids when it came to question time. School visits by STENAPA are ongoing and plans for the beginning of the next school year are already under way.



## Snorkel Club

On the 2nd of Dec. Gershon Lopes, his merry band of snorkellers, interns Lucy and Katie, as well as Walter Blair got together to celebrate the graduation from the snorkel course. PADI certificates were awarded to all who successfully finished the course. Children who previously received PADI certificates took part in this course as helpers to the novices and were presented with certificates of appreciation by STENAPA. At the end of the snorkel course, the children were required to write a "report" on their experiences, what they learned and the benefits of knowing how to snorkel, in their view. These kiddies are mostly of a very young age.

Below are some excerpts of the essays, copied verbatim. Lack of space prevents publishing them in full, a pity, as they are delightful and a joy to read.

I like snorkeling because I meet lots new friends and see fishes that you never have seen in your life. (Monique)

I was very excited about going to the snorkel club, I told my mother she can't be late to pick me up, and she promised

and she wasn't late (Akeem)

My group swam along the wall in the water and we saw red fish, blue fish, green fish and lots of other fish. The water is fun. (Naomi)

When I am snorkeling I am as free as a bird under water. But the real thing about snorkeling is exploring the sea, we must explore to find out what is happening. If you don't, you will know nothing !! (Alleandre)

Baracoota and Scorpion fishes are very dangerous. I love to see a dead

Baracoota. The lessons are such fun, especially going under (Gioshanty)

While we were snorkeling we saw pearls, coral and small fish (Kareem)

It was cool of Garson to start the program (Anthony)

My first day was like hell, the second week it started to get fun (Dwayne)

Diving is the act of oneself in water. Snorkelers as myself, wear masks with glass to improve sight, it so nice to see under water. (Celvon)

In snorkeling we must have a partner and look out for each other, we must also take responsibility for our equipment. Fishes are also important to the snorkeling club and to the people of Statia because we love our fry fish and snapper too. (Rijerika)

All these different fishes and other creatures live in Statia and maybe some eels and scorpion fish too, it can sting you and it's very poisonous (no name given)

Photo by Jerry Kennedy



## Volunteers

Since the last appearance of STENAPA UPDATE, two more groups of volunteers arrived on Statia. The group in the photo below hailed from Britain and Holland, with one young person from the USA. They were involved with the usual maintenance work throughout the National Park and the Botanical Gardens. This was a rather large group of young men and women with the result that a lot was accomplished during their stay on the

island. As always, it was sad to wave them off after their eight weeks were over. STENAPA extends thanks and appreciation to them all.

Two members of the group stayed on as interns, Adam Levy from England and Rob van Oosten, a Hollander. They will be with us until April. Other interns currently with STENAPA are Lucy Savage and Katie DiCioccio.

On the 22nd of November an entirely British group arrived and will be here until January. They are doing battle with the Corallita, also called Mexican Creeper (an invasive alien), besides all the other work on the programme. Projects on the list are, developing the Crater Trail, extending the Kitchen Garden, creating a Palm Garden as well as a Shade Garden under the big Knip tree near the greenhouse.

Last but not least, Kath Selkirk and Jim Taggart returned to Statia at the end of August. This is their second stint as volunteers/interns with STENAPA. Kath's

and Jim's hard work, initiative and dedication is an example to the volunteers and certainly a very hard act to follow.

Alas, the beginning of January will see the departure of Kath and Jim from this island. They will return to cooler climates for the moment, before venturing on to other exciting destinations. They plan to do volunteer work for the foreseeable future.

STENAPA's best wishes and gratitude go with them as we bid farewell to a truly remarkable couple.

Photo by R.J. van Oosten



## St Eustatius: National and Marine Parks and Botanical Gardens



STE•NA•PA FOUNDATION  
St. Eustatius National Parks



STE•NA•PA FOUNDATION  
St. Eustatius National Parks

Marine Park Office  
Gallows Bay  
St. Eustatius, Netherlands Antilles

Phone: 599-318-2884

Fax: 599-318-2884

Email: semp@goldenrocknet.com

STENAPA is an environmental not-for-profit foundation on St Eustatius and was established in 1988. The objectives of STENAPA are to upkeep the natural environment, to preserve and protect endangered or endemic species (flora and fauna) and to educate the community about the importance of the protection of the natural environment.

Areas of responsibility include management of the marine park, the national parks and the Miriam C Schmidt Botanical Gardens. STENAPA is legally delegated by the Island Council to manage these protected areas.

President: Ronnie Courtar

[www.statiapark.org](http://www.statiapark.org)



## Meet the Board Members of STENAPA

At the end of a very successful year for STENAPA, we would like to introduce the people who keep this foundation running and on an even keel.

### Board Members of STENAPA

#### Office Bearers

**President:** Ronnie Courtar

Ronnie has been President for the last five years. He is what one would call a "good all rounder" as he is involved in so many things. He owns a plant nursery, he is a boffin with cars (which is a blessing for STENAPA for Ronnie overhauls and services all of STENAPA's vehicles free of charge), he has a share in a hardware shop and he is a Pilot with his own plane. Ronnie is a born and bred Statian and the welfare of this island is very close to his heart.

**Vice President:** Irving Brown

Irving has been in this position since 2002 and is a very able and dedicated man to fill in for the President whenever the need arises. Irving works for Statia Terminals, is married to Monique and

they have two children, a son Deandre who is four and a brand new little girl Eliscia, who arrived on the 22nd of October of 2004. Our heartiest Congratulations.

**Treasurer:** Jana Mason

Jana hails originally from the USA but has lived on Statia for 25 years. Besides having a full time job at one of Statia's businesses, she has been looking after STENAPA'S purse strings for several years. The Foundation is truly lucky to have a conscientious and hard working treasurer such as Jana.

**Secretary:** Jessica Berkel

Jessica has been on the board of STENAPA for 4 years. When she is not organizing meetings and writing letters for the Foundation, she produces the STENAPA Nature radio programme on the first Thursday of each month. Jessica works in the control tower of Statia's Airport. She is also involved with Statia Pride, a group of volunteers whose aim is to beautify and enhance the appearance of their native island. With all this

she still has time to be a freelance designer; her boards and signs grace numerous businesses on Statia.

#### Other Board Members

Ira Walker, Daniel Eaton, Kay Boyd, Maaïke Patrick and Michelle Faires.

**Manager:** Nicole Esteban

**Assistant Manager:** Gershon Lopes

On behalf of all Board Members and staff, STENAPA wishes to extend sincere gratitude and appreciation to donors, benefactors and friends, as well as all volunteers and interns, past and present. Without their dedication, help and support STENAPA would not be the proud Organisation it is today.

To all our readers on Statia and wider Caribbean as well as overseas, may you have a happy and peaceful Christmas and may the new year have only the very best in store for you.

