





Save The Bays Gazette

Fall/Winter 2017



www.savethebays.bs    



Environmental Education • Freedom of Information • Legal Victories • Int'l Recognition

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Bimini: More Questions Than Answers • PG 3

Save The Bays stands for the rule of law not subversion or destabilization • PGS 4 & 5

Environmentalists Decry South Cat Cay Development • PGS 6 & 7

Engineering Coral Growth • P8

Beware Spy Bill; Don't Go Down That Path Again • PG 9

Hot Summer Days Were Cool Experiences for Eco-Campers • PG 10-11

Splashmania • PG 12

Anonymous Angel Donor Gains Save The Bays' Support for Another Successful Season of Learn-to-Swim Programs • PG 13

Waterkeepers Bahamas Urges Government Not To Shorten Closed Season For Grouper • PG 16

Sharks – Bahamas Continues to Lead in Protection of Valuable Species • PG 17

Bahamas Environment Takes Surprising Centre Stage at Global Conference • PG 20

Sam Duncombe on dolphins still held in captivity at Blackbeard's Cay despite court order

"A human being has to commit a crime to be locked up, but a dolphin only has to be unlucky. We need to learn to share the planet together and be respectful of one another. What happened at Blackbeard's Cay was and is in violation of the Planning and Subdivision Act – no public meeting held and no due process of law. Our message to government is that they cannot willy nilly decide what laws to follow and what not. I can't say enough good things about the legal team, fully prepared, a joy to watch them in action."



SAVE THE BAYS FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

SIGN THE PETITION



find it online at

www.chn.ge/15068LY



Bimini: More Questions than Answers, More Tears than Cheers

For nearly two decades and more aggressively in the last three years, Biminities have watched as their natural heritage and coral reefs, sand dunes, rocky beaches, mangroves, wetlands and land gave way to a development they railed against and could not stop. Where they once rode up to the eastern end of South Bimini, fished, swam, caught dinner, they can no longer pass. The road they believed all their lives was public is being jackhammered up and a pool being built in the middle of it, the latest addition to Bimini Bay, a gated community with a Hilton, marina, casino and high-end residences.

The people pleaded and petitioned as they watched the entire end of the island change, reefs torn up to dredge for a ferry dock

that now sits unused, shoreline stripped.

They asked question after question. They received only silence. Their questions were intense:

1. Who owns the Bimini Bay land that Gerard Capo and RAV Bahamas are building on?
2. What happened to the North Bimini Marine Protected Area (MPA) that was promised and legislated as long ago as 1999 and why was it never enacted?
3. What portion of the land since 1997 has been sold or leased to the developers? If

leased for how long and to whom?

4. What proportion of land at North Bimini (beyond the gate) and East Wells is owned by the Bahamian people? Or is it Crown Land?
5. What is the future plan for land owned by the Bahamian people beyond this project?
6. Is there now, or was there ever, a 99-year lease for a portion of the property at Bimini Bay? If there is such a lease, to whom was it leased and what is its status today?

Question after question answered only by silence.

In June, tired of the silence, a record number

of residents overflowed a town hall meeting.

Save The Bays, asked to help organize the event, served as emcee, exercising calm while encouraging free expression including from the representatives of Bimini Bay.

Fishermen, educators, second home residents, boaters, taxi drivers bared raw emotion. The Bimini they loved was being swallowed live by heavy equipment, many of the world famous coral reefs that provided the fish that was their food and for many, their livelihood, attracting 50,000 visitors a year, already demolished.

Frustrated residents demonstrated. They marched from town to the entrance of the Hilton. They withstood broiling

sun, waiting for answers. Neither past nor present government respected them with an answer.

“What I know is I been a fisherman all my life,” said Denver Stuart. “Tourists... ain’t really coming here to gamble ‘cause they have the same from state-to-state in the U.S. They ain’t come here for the Hilton. They tell me that. They coming here for the fresh conch, the fresh fish, the clean waters and all the marine life we have here what available for them to snorkel or to scuba.”

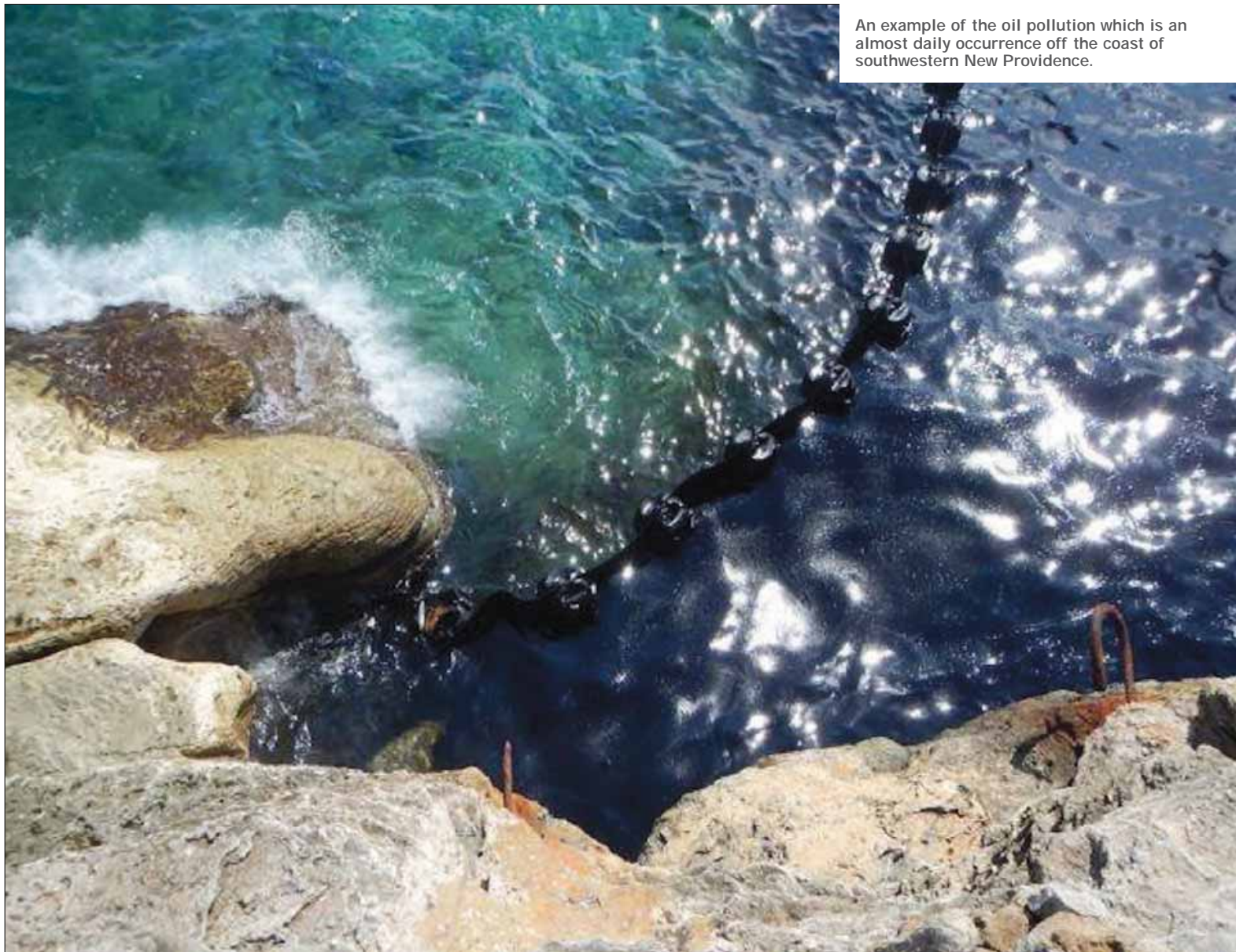
And a statement from the group called Save Our Home:

“East Wells is considered sacred ground to the local residents, a place our forefathers enjoyed and we would like to preserve this experience for generations

to come. It is also home to several endangered or threatened species, such as the Sawfish, Bimini Boa, Burrowing Owls, White Crown pigeons, Fish Hawks, Ospreys, Land Crabs and several species of Turtles. What measures are being taken to preserve and regulate their habitat?”

Even a group of personal watercraft operators based in the U.S. pleaded to save what makes Bimini the treasure it is. They published this statement: “The group would like to stress the importance of preserving the reefs around Bimini and Bimini’s Mangroves that served as a nursery for many species.”

Again, the answer was silence.



An example of the oil pollution which is an almost daily occurrence off the coast of southwestern New Providence.

Save The Bays Stands For The Rule Of Law

An Impressive Run Of Legal Victories

IN yet another year of impressive court victories, Save The Bays has repeatedly foiled the plans of unregulated developers, battled oil pollution, supported embattled local communities and defended the fundamental

rights of civil society and the individual.

The stunning successes of 2017 are part of a three-year run of favorable court decisions, the highlight of which was a first in Bahamian history – when the Supreme Court ordered the shutdown of a resort for gross environmental and animal rights infractions.

The STB legal team is not resting on its laurels though, and continues to

fight on multiple fronts to protect precious natural resources across the length and breadth of The Bahamas.

STB Wins Case Against Peter Nygard

In January, lawyers for STB successfully fought off a bid by designer Peter Nygard to continue to dredge in an

environmentally sensitive area of Clifton Bay.

Nygard and the Government applied to the Supreme Court to lift injunctions prohibiting any further destruction of the sea floor.

STB legal director Fred Smith strongly objected, pointing out that Nygard is a “serial contemnor” who has violated the injunction on more than one occasion.

In a number of rulings, The Government and Nygard have been held in contempt for breaching the injunctions which remain in place.

On March 8, STB scored another important victory when Nygard was found guilty of contempt of court for violating the injunction against dredging. STB was awarded their full legal costs and the perpetrator was fined \$50,000, ordered to remove the sand from Nygard Cay and place it at the public Jaws Beach and another



The idyllic community of Little Harbour, Abaco, the only carbon-free community in The Bahamas.



Peter Nygard and one of his associates leaving court. STB has been granted multiple injunctions stopping Nygard from conducting environmentally destructive dredging of the sea floor.

fine of \$50,000 and a daily fine of \$1000 until moved.

Later that month, the court ordered former Prime Minister Christie to pay STB's full legal costs in connection with a motion he filed to have Justice Bain remove herself (accusing her of bias) from all court cases involving Peter Nygard.

Christie's recusal application was rejected and he was also ordered to pay the legal costs of 103 neighbors of Nygard, who have also taken separate legal action over the destruction of Clifton Bay.

STB has been extremely vocal in criticizing what attorney Smith called the “unholy alliance” between the former PLP

government and certain developers like Nygard.

Court Awards Save The Bays \$150,000

In July, an appeal against STB's landmark ruling in defense of citizens' right to privacy was dropped by the Attorney General's office, signaling a landmark win for the environmental organization.

For more than a year, the group had faced a sustained campaign of intimidation, victimization and threats of prosecution at the hands of senior government officials, who gained access to and publicized their

private communications and financial information in an effort to discredit the work of STB.

In August of last year, Supreme Court Justice Indra Charles ruled that Minister of Education Jerome Fitzgerald had violated the privacy of STB members, fined him \$150,000 and ordered him to destroy all copies of the group's personal information which may be in his possession.

Fitzgerald appealed the decision and it was asserted that the matter would go all the way to the Privy Council in London. However, in June, the new FNM government



announced that it would be dropping the appeal.

As such, the ordinary citizen's constitutional right to privacy has been upheld and a new precedent set for the rule of law in The Bahamas.

Responding to the announcement, STB director of legal affairs Fred Smith QC said: "Judge Charles' ruling is a landmark in Commonwealth Constitutional jurisprudence protecting the right to privacy from unlawful abuse of Parliamentary Privilege. STB can now proudly boast that privacy 'Is Better In The Bahamas

Taking A Stand Against Oil Pollution

Following decades of unchecked oil and industrial pollution of the waters off southwestern New Providence, STB launched a landmark court action to bring an end to the incalculable environmental destruction caused by leaks from the Clifton Power Plant.

STB is seeking to bring an injunction against the Bahamas Electricity Corporation, state owned operator of the plant, which is estimated to ooze thousands of gallons of heavy fuel into the marine and terrestrial environment each year.

The group accused senior government officials of failing to take appropriate action to regulate, monitor, control, investigate and prevent the ongoing contamination of this ecologically sensitive area.

The Supreme Court gave STB leave to launch Judicial Review proceedings last year, and the group is now waiting for the government to comply with an order to produce relevant documents and





The STB legal team, led by Fred Smith QC.



STB lawyers march triumphantly from court. At left Romauld 'Romi' Ferreira now Minister of Environment and Housing.

background information in preparation for trial.

Supporting embattled local communities

STB is also supporting its community partner, Responsible Development For Abaco, in a legal battle to protect the unique and beautiful community of Little Harbour, which is facing ruin at the hands

of large-scale unregulated development.

RDA and its supporters fear a proposed marina and supporting facilities will completely change the character and environment of the Bahamas' only carbon-free community of fifty solar powered homes.

The group has launched Judicial Review proceedings, following the model established by STB, and alleging that both the government and developer have failed to undertake

adequate consultation with residents and affected parties as the law requires.

The legal action, which is being fully supported by STB, again raises fundamental issues and concerns about the development approval process in the Bahamas.

These include self-determination, and the right of Bahamians to have a say over development that impacts their communities; the ability of the government to impose its

vision on Family Island communities; the transparency of the investment approvals process; and whether the government is following its own laws.

STB wins judgment against contemptuous unregulated development at Nygard Cay

After several days of trial – involving 21

lawyers – of the 4th Judicial Review concerning further illegal dredging at Nygard Cay, Supreme Court Justice Rhonda Bain, on October 25, 2017 delivered a hard-hitting 74 page judgment against the Government. The court declared that the dredging permit issued to Nygard by the Government in October 2014 breached previous court injunctions, was in contempt of court, unlawful, irrational, fundamentally

flawed and procedurally improper. The court went on to quash the permit by Writ of Certiorari and further ordered a Writ of Prohibition against the Government restraining issuing any further dredging permits to Nygard until the final resolution of the 3 remaining Judicial Review actions by STB. Additionally, the Government was ordered to pay STB's legal costs in full.

Save The Bays Applauds Ragged Island Green Rebuild Plan 'Most Progressive Measure in Region to Prepare for Climate Change', Seeks Progress Report

OUTSPOKEN environmental advocacy and education organization Save The Bays today redoubled its support for the government's plan to rebuild storm-ravaged Ragged Island with sustainable design and renewable energy sources, creating the first fully green island in the region.

"The Bahamas now has an opportunity to become a regional leader in mitigating against the effects of climate change with the initiative the Prime Minister Dr. Hubert Minnis and his team of environmental engineers announced following their visit to Ragged Island, witnessing the devastation firsthand," said Save The Bays Chairman Joe Darville.

That visit and the pledge that followed took place in September and Save The Bays said it is eager to learn of progress but remains hopeful that government was sincere.

"Our hearts go out to those in Ragged Island who weathered the storm either on the island or elsewhere and now have little left but their incredible pioneer spirit. We understand their pride when they say they lived a long time without government and they don't need government to tell them they can or cannot return home and how they should build. But these times are not like the times of old. We live in a new age when the warming of



Devastation pictured on Ragged Island after the passage of Hurricane Irma. (Photo: Nassau Guardian)

the waters and rising seas are combining to create more powerful storms and potentially deadly storm surges. The Prime Minister and his team recognize that with virtually every single building on Ragged Island lashed by winds or devastated, now is the time to build right for the future."

Save The Bays' positive response came on the heels of the announcement by the Prime Minister that government wanted to evacuate remaining residents temporarily to allow crews to move in and clean

up the destruction left by Hurricane Irma. The storm that made history for the length of its intense winds at more than 140 mph and for days at 180 smashed into the tiny 9-square mile island as a Category 5 and demolished everything in her path. The roof of the small schoolhouse was ripped off. All that remained of the teacher's residence was a pile of wood planks. Not a single building was left unscathed. More than a week later, there is no electricity or power. There is great fear of disease.

Carcasses of animals killed by the storm remain.

Clearing it all away will spell the beginning of a new life for Ragged Island, says the current government and Chester Cooper, Opposition Member of Parliament for Exuma and Ragged Island, agrees.

"If they are able to do as they say and create coastal zones that require a different building code including structures that are substantially higher off the ground to allow water to flow through in case of a storm surge, and if they use all renewable sources

of energy, Ragged Island can become a model for sustainable development in the face of climate change," said Darville, a certified climate change leader who trained under former US Vice President Al Gore who first brought climate change to the attention of a public that did not want to believe the reality that would be facing them in generations to come.

Minister of Environment Romauld 'Romi' Ferreira, a veteran environmental attorney, and

consultant, also fully supports the plan.

"We can no longer continue to put hydro and electric on these flood-prone, low-lying coastal islands and expect them to survive the conditions that climate change will dictate," said Ferreira. "What happened in Ragged Island is heartbreaking but sometimes it takes a tragedy to make us look at things with new eyes and a fresh perspective. This is a golden opportunity to rebuild and get it right. Ragged Island could become the model."

Environmentalists Decry South Cat Cay Development, Document Lack of Marine Protection ‘Before our very eyes’

A small plane circled slowly, flying over the blue-green waters of the northern Bahamas. It should have been a day of sightseeing, photographing an island under carefully managed development with its fragile marine resources protected as the gems that will lure those who will eventually visit, live there or leave their yachts.

Instead, what observers saw as they flew over South Cat Cay in the northern Bahamas sent chills down their spines. The group in the plane included representatives from Save Our Home, a Bimini-based organisation, Save The Bays and Waterkeepers Bahamas.

Save The Bays Chairman Joe Darville said what he saw convinced him more than ever of the urgency of creating comprehensive environmental protection legislation and placing an environmental watchdog on every project.

“It takes hundreds, sometimes thousands, of years to create a coral reef and minutes with heavy equipment to destroy it,” said Darville. “We are pleading, not asking, pleading with government. When will you listen? When will we begin to take these gifts that God

gave us seriously and stop allowing uncaring people to eviscerate them in the name of progress? This is not progress. This is evil.”

The story below is their story, in their words. Save Our Home wrote it at the close of their aerial and land inspection during early November, 2017. Their words have not been edited. The introduction, they said, was gleaned from previously published reports.

Report From Save Our Home, Bimini Activist Group

In 2009, the Government of the Bahamas under PM (Hubert) Ingraham gave full environmental approval for the 85-acre privately owned South Cat Cay for an exclusive, high end, hospitality and marina project. The project will comprise a 53 room five star branded boutique hotel with related amenities, 29 marina condo units, 37 residential units, a 137 slip marina, restaurants, shops and recreational facilities. This high-end resort will also include an upmarket residential community.

During the course of construction in two phases it is estimated that some 75 Bahamians will be employed, and upon



Environmental damage captured on video – Inadequate silt barriers allow disturbed sand and silt to float over open waters, smothering coral reefs and suffocating the life that depends upon the habitat, potentially endangering grouper, hogfish and reef species and upsetting the full eco-cycle in a fragile eco-system. The above image was taken from a small plane flying over a development underway at South Cat Cay in the northern Bahamas. Environmentalists from three groups want to know where are those who are supposed to be protecting the marine environment of The Bahamas? They fear the project will mirror the tragedies of nearby Bimini where world-famous dive sites were destroyed by a massive dredger to make way for a cruise ship dock. The cruise ship does not call on Bimini anymore and more than 150 people have been laid off from their jobs at the resort it was intended to serve.



completion and build out some 170 permanent jobs will be created. In addition to the \$94 million capital investment by the developers, their economic impact assessment projects over \$200 million in real estate sales over the first five years, which will significantly benefit government revenues, suppliers and employment. The developer said the project will bring considerable benefit to Biminities in the form of employment and entrepreneurial opportunities generated by proposed retail space and excursions in the marina village. They said they plan to purchase Bimini built skiffs for bone-fishing excursions led by Bahamian guides.

A Bahamian will operate a ferry service to and from Bimini; an artist in residence program will expose Bahamian artists to new techniques; a recording space will dedicate studio time for local musicians and local cooks will be provided with classical training. Additionally, a fund is being established for primary and secondary educational facilities in Bimini to further long-term environmental awareness. It is also proposed that a marine sanctuary will be created to the south east of South Cat Cay to complement the educational initiative.

But there comes a point when you start to feel like it's just Deja-vu, that we have heard all this before, been promised jobs for Biminities, been told the highest environmental impact studies are being adhered to, but the reality is, to those of us who live here, it's all just "hot air" and what they think people want to hear to sell us another story of jobs, progress and investment,



Sand and silt from dredging and excavating on South Cat Cay in the northern Bahamas can smother coral reefs and kill the life that depends on the marine habitat. Already, say representatives of three organizations that inspected the development site this week, the once plentiful sea turtles in the area are no more.

but at what expense is the big question?

On Thursday, November 9 the Save Our Home-Bimini Environmental Activist group was invited along with members of the Save The Bays team and Waterkeepers Bahamas to fly over South Cat Cay and witness for ourselves what is really going on. Pictures and videos don't lie and there before our very eyes was proof that the development is taking place as we speak, without the relevant silt barriers in place, the kind that actually work and contain the silt that is, properly installed without gaps and without proof of the silt drifting for miles. Memories of the same devastation at the hands of RW (Resorts World) Bimini in 2014 during the dredging of the cruise ship pier spring to mind, with the same ineffectual yellow silt curtains that within two

weeks of being installed broke open, covering the ocean in drifting polystyrene and the beaches to this day, covered in yellow plastics. The cruise ship was rendered obsolete in a year. Meanwhile, we lost 12 main dive sites off the west coast of Bimini, smothered in silt, which suffocated the corals and partially buried the stones of Atlantis, sites that divers come from all over the world to see and that locals earn their living from in dive tours. Marine life dwindled to a point that some species are no longer seen in these waters.

In the past couple of weeks, more than one hundred Bahamians have been fired from RW, leaving people wondering if the resort is going bankrupt over rumors that they are losing in excess of \$26,000 a day. And whilst the resort here in Bimini conjures images of

a sinking ship, long predicted by those of us in the know due to the size of the development being too big for the infrastructure on such a small island, the Government is meanwhile playing out the same story all over again in South Cat Cay.

Large populations of turtles used to be seen on the cays around South Cat, just like they did offshore from RW Bimini. Now the water is so muddy with silt, nothing can be seen and in Bimini an annual Power Boat Grand Prix is organized around the very reefs that are home to turtles and sharks.

Bimini and South Cat Cay has a blessing and curse, a blessing that it is at the top of the Bahamas chain and so brings an abundance of tourism to these shores, but a curse that successive governments seem to cash in on in taxes from such large scale developments, none

of which is seen invested back into the local communities. As Fred Smith QC has pointed out, until we have local governance and taxes made on these islands invested back into local community developments, instead of going into the countries capital never to be seen again, the family islands will continue to deteriorate and decline.

One would think that when heads of agreement come together, that a budget could be put in place with the developers to financially cover the employment of an on-site environmental advisor to monitor the development and provide weekly reports that all is in keeping with plans laid out, providing jobs for Bahamians and protecting our shores. Instead, developers seems to think they have carte blanche to do whatever they like while no one is watching.

Accountability seems sadly lacking throughout the Bahamas development. At the end of the day, we are left with our natural resources ransacked and foreign developers pulling out, once the damage is already done. New legislation is needed putting the environment first in order to save one of the most beautiful parts of the world before it's too late. With the Bahamas being such low lying islands and global warming and sea levels rising, it makes no sense not to put new environmental legislation at the top of the priorities list moving forward.

Dredging and infrastructure work is underway at South Cat Cay where a hotel and marina were approved for the 85-acre site under the former FNM government, but environmentalists want to know where is the protection for marine resources?



Hot Summer Days Were Cool Experiences for Eco-Campers

For the second consecutive year, Save The Bays and Waterkeepers Bahamas partnered to sponsor camps with a cause, allowing children and teens from Grand Bahama to experience the outdoors while discovering Nature's magic and wonders behind the world they see and touch.

Called Camp Eco-Explorer, this year's sessions were designed for fewer students, 12 per week, with those who

qualified for entry enjoying more individualized attention.

Organisers say the camps that involve days filled with hands-on experiences from recording debris on mangroves and cleaning up the detritus to snorkeling with sting rays and reef balls is different from summer camps worldwide.

"Campers all over the world ride horses, swim and eat S'mores by an open fire," said Rashema Ingraham, Executive Director Waterkeepers Bahamas.

"At Camp Eco-Explorer our campers got to hang out with fish, mangroves, reef balls and stingrays. How cool is that? And they had experiences that will stay with them for a lifetime."

Sixth grader Edissa Bain will never forget her come-to-camp moment: "I was allowed to feed and touch a stingray for the first time," said Edissa. "Their skin is soft and slimy like oil. Mr. Keith Cooper, our tour guide, explained that we should not be afraid of these creatures,

if we have an encounter with one while swimming not to get alarmed, instead quietly walk away or stand still until it swims away. Mr. Cooper also mentioned that stingrays are not harmful and will only attack if they feel threatened."

Campers monitored and reported water quality, learned how to bird watch, spent a day with Nature and the Bahamas National Trust tour guides at The Gap on Grand Bahama's north shore, one of the country's

newest national parks. They swam with stingrays, viewed sharks swimming peacefully below the hull of their glass bottom boat and every day mixed learning with leisure.

"The camps this year were so good, every day was a different adventure and the kids just ate it up, asking the most intelligent and important questions," said Save The Bays Chairman Joe Darville. "There was not a single dull or boring moment in either the older kids' camp or the camp



for the little ones the second week. It was such a shame we could only take 24 kids but we wanted each week's campers to have a lot of individualized attention and they certainly got that."

The two summer camps, events like Splash-mania, Youth Environment Ambassadors training and certification, the swim programs at the Grand Bahama YMCA and Freeport Aquatics Club – all sponsored by Save The Bays in partnership

with Waterkeepers Bahamas – have a common goal, to build appreciation for the beauty of the Bahamian waters.

"When you appreciate something, you take care of it," said Darville. "The same young children who are having fun at Splash-mania today or petting a stingray at Paradise Cove are going to be the ones who protect their oceans long after many of us are gone. It is good to know that our heritage is in good hands."



Splashmania

Waterkeepers Bahamas Hosts
Splashmania 1st Ever Event in
Bahamas Pits Powerful Paddlers
Against Sea in Fun Races

NOT every activity connected with water has to be about preservation or monitoring.

Sometimes, as they say, you just gotta have fun.

That's exactly what more than 100 kayak racers and party-goers did when they hit the beach at Manta Ray Village, Williams Town Beach, Grand Bahama in June for Splashmania.

The event was a first of its kind for the island and it was hard to tell which was louder – the plop-pop of the paddles or the chatter and laughter of racers.

Organized and hosted by Waterkeepers Bahamas,

Splashmania was a perfect excuse for spending a day at the beach.

“When you are a child, going to the beach is just about as good as life gets. As we get older and responsibilities weigh us down, sometimes we need a little reminder about why we live in The Bahamas and love the water so much,” said Rashema Ingraham, Executive Director of Waterkeepers Bahamas. “Hosting an event like Splashmania helps put us back in touch with the wonders of our waters and that is in line with what Waterkeepers represents which is to



make our waters fishable, swimmable and drinkable.”

“We had about 20 races, covering individual and team races, and participants were really there to have fun,” said Ingraham, who heads the local affiliate of an international alliance that operates largely with volunteer monitors. On six continents, thousands of volunteers

and limited staff monitor, test, assess and report conditions of their oceans, rivers, lakes, ponds and streams. The Bahamas has three affiliate Waterkeepers of the 300 in the global alliance – Grand Bahama, Clifton- Western Bays, and Bimini.

“I want to give special thanks to Manta Ray Village and Restaurant, Grand Bahama Nature



Tours and Freeport Aquatics Club,” said Ingraham.

Other sponsors included

- ALIV
- Barefoot Marketing
- 242NewsBahamas
- Bellevue Business Depot
- Fast Track Management
- Kosha Ltd.
- Mechanical Engineering
- Ocean Reef Yacht Club
- Out da Sea Restaurant
- Rotaract Club of Freeport
- Pelican Bay Resort
- Save The Bays
- Subway Freeport
- YMCA Grand Bahama



Amidst Staggering Numbers of Non-swimmers, Anonymous Angel Donor Gains Save The Bays' Support for Another Successful Season of Learn-to-Swim Programs

For anyone who has ever had the pleasure of swimming or just soaking in the velvet waters of The Bahamas, the feeling is one of near bliss. But for every good swimmer, there are far more who cannot swim and every year, more than 1.2 million people around the world die by drowning.

Statistics related to the numbers of non-swimmers and the consequences are staggering.

According to the International Life Saving Organization, more than two persons die from drowning every minute. Fifty percent of those are children with the category of highest risk being between the ages of 2 - 4. More males than females drown, some 4 billion people worldwide cannot swim and there are more than one million rescues a year.

Against that backdrop exacerbated by living on an

archipelago of 700 islands with 90% of the mass of the island nation made up of water, the people of The Bahamas cannot view knowing the ability to swim as a luxury.

One man who prefers to remain anonymous recognized that nearly a decade ago and has quietly funded a program at the Grand Bahama YMCA that has now taught more than 15,000 children and adults how to swim. Three years ago, Save The Bays joined the effort and helped him expand the program to the Freeport Aquatics Club. Both teach more than the basics, they include survival techniques, breathing, rescue and information about rip tides, currents and wave action, thorough programs designed by the program's funder and used around the world.

Next year, Save The Bays aims to expand its support

even further to at least one other island.

"We call the gentleman who has been funding the Y's Learn to Swim Program our angel with water wings," said Save the Bays Chairman Joe Darville. "It is our hope that that eventually every single child in this country will have the opportunity to learn how to swim. It has been estimated that more than half the population in The Bahamas cannot swim and that is unacceptable especially in an age when climate change will contribute to rising seas, stronger storms and storm surges. Someday perhaps in this century, unless there is dramatic and unforeseen change, water will cover some of our islands. On some islands particularly in the far southern Bahamas, swimming will be the new walking for many. Save The Bays is 100% committed to assisting in learn to swim programs and efforts."



boil fish?

Oil spills are happening in our waters.

What goes in the ocean, goes in you.
Protect our waters, our health, our economy, our children's future.
SIGN THE PETITION. SPREAD THE WORD.

COALITION TO PROTECT CLIFTON BAY

Learn More www.savethebays.bs
Sign The Petition www.chn.ge/15068LY
Tell Your Friends

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION • MARINE MANAGED HABITATS • COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS • OIL SPILLER • FISHING REGULATIONS • UNREGULATED DEVELOPMENT

ARABY LARSEN • MARINE ENVIRONMENTALIST • BOB THOMAS • BAHAMIAN NATIONAL TRUST • BAHAMIAN OIL ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION • BAHAMIAN OIL COAST GUARD • OILFIELD WILDLIFE RECOVERY TEAM • ENVIRONMENTAL LAWYERS OF THE BAHAMAS • THE OILFIELD ENVIRONMENTAL • THE BAHAMIAN ENVIRONMENTAL • RESOURCES • WILDLIFE DEVELOPMENT • THE OILFIELD • BAHAMIAN OIL COAST GUARD • BAHAMIAN OIL COAST GUARD • BAHAMIAN OIL COAST GUARD • BAHAMIAN OIL COAST GUARD

Engineering Coral Regrowth

DUTCH dredging and marine contractor Van Oord unveiled the results of its trials with coral regrowth during an event at Stuart Cove Dive in Nassau in August. Cove, a Save The Bays director and operator of the country's largest dive enterprise, served as host as more than 100 invited guests and media gathered to learn the potential for success of a project that over time offers to provide a partial solution to the decline and deterioration of the world's coral reefs.

Van Oord, a major dredging and reclamation engineering firm, applied its marine ingenuity engines to full experimentation with various asexual and sexual reproduction of coral polyps. The project was seven years in trial stages, one of those lasting for a little more than a year very close to Stuart Cove Dive on the Royal Bahamas Defense Force base in Coral Harbour. In that experiment, night divers netted

spawned gametes or coral larvae, placing them in cage-like apparatuses with four different approaches – regular ambient sea water, regular ambient sea water plus feeding, sea water with increased levels of total alkalinity and sea water with increased levels or total alkalinity and feeding. The results are still being analysed as the experiment was in some ways compromised by Hurricane Matthew in October 2016, but the results of some growth on tiles was encouraging enough to warrant being deemed ecologically significant and added to results from other areas, were signals that what man destroyed, ingenuity could rebuild with patience and care. Save The Bays applauds Van Oord, Stuart Cove, RBDF Commodore Tellis Bethel and others for participating in the application of serious science to active reef rehabilitation and notes that good outcomes are worth the wait.



Above, Dive operator Stuart Cove introduces coral regrowth engineering project.



Left, RBDF Commodore Tellis Bethel with Waterkeepers Bahamas Exec Director Rashema Ingraham and Diane Phillips PR.

Climate change linked to Harvey, Irma devastation

IN August, millions watched in horror as Hurricane Harvey swept ashore in the United States, ending a 12-year hurricane drought for the mainland, causing record flooding in Texas and bringing the medical capital of the nation, Houston, to its knees. Streets looked like rivers. Lakes looked like seas.

Two weeks later, Hurricane Irma barreled through the Caribbean, leaving a trail of destruction from St. Maarten to Charleston, S.C. with

sustained winds of over 140 mph for five days, another unwelcomed record. Total cost of the back-to-back storms has been estimated at more than \$200 billion. Some estimates place it at double that. There is no way to quantify the toll the storms took on human lives.

In the southern Bahamas, Irma totally devastated Ragged Island and Prime Minister Dr. Hubert A. Minnis declared the island unlivable, ordering a total post-hurricane

evacuation, leaving the Royal Bahamas Defense Force to try to guard what goods remained. Not a single building was left unscathed.

And still there were those who doubted that climate change was real.

"The facts are undeniable. The sweeping, destructive power of Hurricanes Harvey and Irma are direct results of the effects of climate change," said Save The Bays Chairman Joe Darville, who trained under former Vice President Al

Gore as a certified climate change leader. "It was Gore, you may recall, who first brought climate change out of the labs of science and the realm of meteorologists and into the living room with his stunning documentary 'An Inconvenient Truth.' That was in 2006. More than a decade later, there is much broader acceptance of the reality of climate change. It boggles my mind that there are still those who don't think it is real when the facts are right in front of us. And there are three

basic facts that explain the relationship between hurricanes and climate change."

Those facts, says Darville, are as follows:

- **Sea surface temperatures are rising dramatically**, increasing up to more than 7 degrees higher in the Gulf of Mexico than the baseline temperature in the last half of the last century. If you think of a hurricane as an engine churning, warmer waters make that engine churn with greater power.

- **It is not only the sea temps that are rising.** The earth as a whole is warmer and warmer temperatures means more vapor in the air, the more vapor the more rain, the more rain, the more flooding

when hurricanes hit land and where there is over-development and there is no place for the water to drain, the flooding is even more severe.

- **Sea levels are rising** and sea level rise contributes to greater storm surge.

Save The Bays has been at the forefront of climate change awareness in The Bahamas and welcomes support from individuals, educators, researchers and others in civil society. The chairman and Waterkeepers Bahamas Executive Director Rashema Ingraham, who is also certified as a climate change leader, are willing to address schools and organisations. Please contact Save The Bays or Waterkeepers Bahamas.

Beware Spy Bill: Don't Go Down That Path Again

The following piece appeared as a Letter to the Editor written by Save The Bays Chairman Joe Darville in his capacity as Vice President, RIGHTS BAHAMAS. He has asked that it be published in the Save The Bays Gazette to encourage discussion on a topic about which he is very passionate. We publish it as his request.

THE regurgitation or the "Spy Bill" sends shudders up my spine. Mind you, personally, I have absolutely nothing to hide. Actually, under the previous administration, I was very sure my phone was tapped and my emails hacked. But obviously, they found nothing untoward there to come at me for. To add to my contempt for what they were illegally doing, I even chided them with a few tasty words whenever I became aware of the interception.

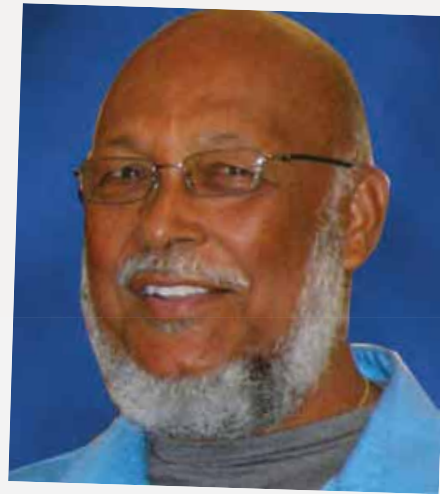
What boils my insides is the fact that with all the hope and expectations we had and hoped for with the new administration, we seem to be going down the same road of dictatorial and despotic rule. Now, don't get me wrong, I am quite aware of and in total agreement with the need for ways and means by which my government and law enforcement agencies should keep our country safe from nefarious individuals. However, to go as far as this bill proposes, reeks of real and certain foulness.

The powers that be may justify these draconian measures based upon the fact that other countries have such laws of invasion

into citizens private affairs. But for goodness sake, after forty-four years of political independence and over two hundred years of shackles being removed from our ankles, we have yet to establish a responsible, responsive and enlightened government in this country, which can be trusted. We have been deceived, disregarded, disrespected, bereaved by deceit, dishonesty, denial, disorder, and culminating with the seventh D: DAMNATION.

Psychological enslavement with all its trappings of attraction have our people mesmerized, hypnotized and mentally shackled. These are even more pernicious than what we had to endure under slave masters. That period, marked by pain, misery and hopelessness, still permeates our psyche. And the sounds and sensation of those damn shackles kept us in mental bondage. Even now, and after forty plus years of political independence, the curse of enslavement still hangs around our necks. And if we listen very quietly, we can still hear the hammering and the clinging of those despicable physical shackles.

For fear of retribution, many, too many of us, cling



to the old vestiges of the plantation. Our masters now, only having changed color, and having elevated themselves to the status of demi-gods, have so fine-tuned their capricious power and control over us, that mental enslavement has become potent. And our leaders over these forty plus years have developed an art of fear tactics to subjugate our people into the quagmire of submission. Where there is fear of our leaders, there is no love; love casts out fear, says the Good Book. Thus fear and psychological enslavement are so entrenched in the psyche of our people, they easily succumb to being so easily seduced, disregarded, disrespected, deceit, dishonesty, denial, disorder, and

culminating with the seventh D: DAMNATION.

The vindictiveness and unscrupulous mindset in a state where capricious powers reign, will ultimately spell doom to the majority of fundamental rights of its citizenry. When we have established a system of governance where enlightened individuals who serve the wellbeing of the nation is in place, then and only then will we be able to breathe a sigh of relief, knowing our best interest is paramount. Until then, I want no government or law enforcement agencies messing with my privacy. Even our great nation to the north has done dodgy things with such system, not only in its own boundaries, but within ours as well. Having ins been informed that every phone call or email from

our island nation is in their data bank, we squirmed at such an invasion.

In our small country, the usual and normal investigative agencies now operating should be sufficiently adept to delve into the affairs of those individuals who may intend to do harm to our nation, its institutions and people. Therefore, instead of wasting time and precious limited resources, our leaders should delve into the ways and means of bringing enlightenment and wisdom to the nation.

Deal with matters that can make a difference in elevating the deserving power of the people; give our children the means to learn and achieve at a level matching the 21st century; obliterate the notion that once an individual enters the halls of Parliament, he/she, simultaneously becomes an untouchable demi-god; pass a law which recognizes the value of our female population and give them equal rights to men; pass a law which will eliminate poverty in our nation; stop killing the poor with burdensome taxation; fully enact the Freedom of Information; enact legislation to deal with environmental terrorism, like what is taking place on North Bimini, Bakers Bay and elsewhere in the islands; deal with the relocation of the residents who continue to endure the death-carrying elements around the industrial sector of Grand Bahama; institute methods to deal with the dramatic impact of climate change

and sea level rise; and the list can go on and on for areas of real concern of the citizens of this country.

Why a damnable law to intercept the privacy of our people; it's simply another method to instill fear, apprehension and intimidation into the hearts of our citizens. Pray tell me who had a nightmare and awoke with demon horns?

The present administration, while in opposition called the bill the "Spy Bill" and so it is and we will mount the same or even more dramatic measures to kill the demon if it raises its ugly head again. Let's get on with governing this nation with wisdom, compassion, love, enlightening and uplifting edicts. Let this administration prove its worth with respect to the above before burdening us with more unnecessary invasion.

We are an independent people, and as such should have the freedom, the right and ability, even obligation to structure and build one by one our beautiful communities. We can then become the envy of island nations, the glory of our own nation and the focus of the world. Our beauty, of both people, land, and sea with their natural and abundance of resources, are all we need to become all that the Good and Great Creator has ordained for us.

Joseph Darville
Vice-President, RIGHTS
BAHAMAS
Freeport, Grand Bahama
1 September, 20

Waterkeepers Bahamas Trains Volunteers To Test Waters For Swim Safety

Waterkeepers
Bahamas
Executive

Director Rashema Ingraham spends hours at beaches in The Bahamas every week, but she isn't splashing in the water, combing for shells or searching for treasure.

Ingraham is part of a team that tests water at 16 public beaches in The Bahamas on a regular basis. The monitoring is a partnership between Waterkeepers Bahamas and an international organization called Swim Guide that maintains an up-to-date beach and water condition report on 7,000 beaches around the world. Reports are available at SwimGuide.org.

With the agreement between Swim Guide and Waterkeepers Bahamas inked in August, the monitoring duties have been so time-consuming that Ingraham has had to ask for volunteers. This week, they began their training.

"Getting volunteers to hang out at the beach filling vials with water samples is not the most difficult task," laughed Ingraham. "So while it sounds glamorous, once you start the work you appreciate how serious it is and how valuable a service you are performing."

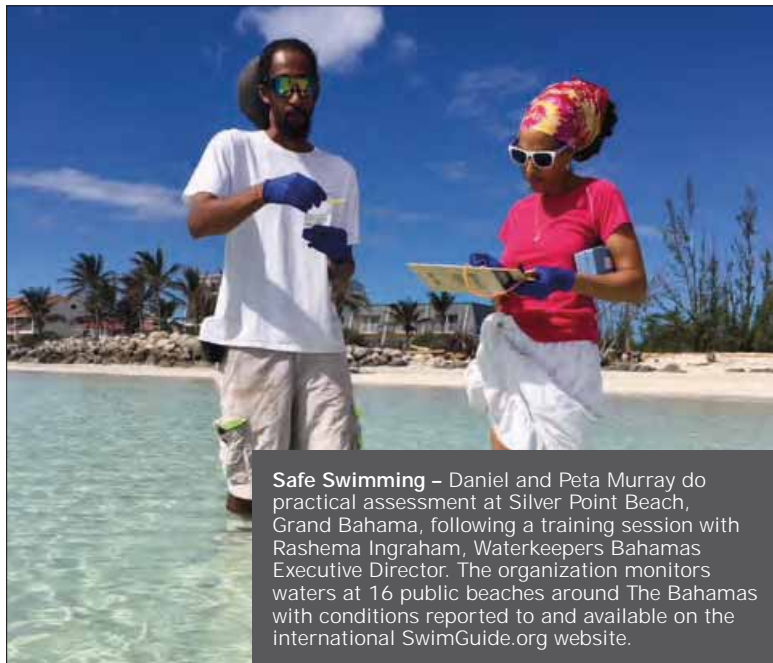
Ingraham, Grand Bahama Waterkeeper Joe Darville and Clifton Bay Southwest Bays Waterkeeper Fred Smith lead the local Swim Guide partnership. Testing is very time-sensitive. Collected samples are run through specialized equipment within an 8-hour



Waterkeepers Bahamas Executive Director Rashema Ingraham collects water samples for testing to measure the safety of beaches for swimming. Although testing has shown traces of feces in the water after a storm or a holiday, no beach in The Bahamas has been closed because of health hazards since Waterkeepers Bahamas began partnering with SwimGuide.org to test and keep the waters safe.



Serious work where others play – Young Vernice Flores, a volunteer with Waterkeepers Bahamas Swim Guide program, is learning the skill of collecting water samples at Xanadu Beach. Looking on are Flores' parents, Drs. Ryan Perez and Vermie Jean Florendo-Perez. Samples are tested within eight hours for feces and other bacteriological substances that could pose a risk to swimmers.



Safe Swimming – Daniel and Peta Murray do practical assessment at Silver Point Beach, Grand Bahama, following a training session with Rashema Ingraham, Waterkeepers Bahamas Executive Director. The organization monitors waters at 16 public beaches around The Bahamas with conditions reported to and available on the international SwimGuide.org website.

window of retrieval and uploaded on the SwimGuide website within 28 hours for public access. For accurate comparison, every sample is collected at the same GPS coordinates as the previous one at every beach.

"Timing and scheduling can be challenging," said Ingraham. "If one of us is in Nassau and we need to get back to the testing equipment in the office in Grand Bahama, we have to time our collections and our flights to the minute."

The good news is that the beaches in The Bahamas that have been tested have never been found to pose health threats to swimmers that many others around the world



do, leading to beach closed signs.

"We have found traces of feces, usually after a storm or after a holiday when beaches are very crowded," said Ingraham. "But most of our waters enjoy excellent tidal flow and the tides and currents keep the waters surprisingly free of perils. We cannot say the same for beaches and mangroves which are not respected.

We are a country that continues to litter and we should be ashamed of ourselves. That's why it is so important to get the message across to boys and girls when they are young."

Among the beaches monitored in New Providence are Jaws Beach, Montagu, Adelaide Beach, South Ocean and Coral Harbour.

Waterkeepers Bahamas Urges Government Not to Shorten Closed Season for Grouper

Climate Change Already Adding More Threat To Survival Of Endangered Species, Says Environmental Advocacy Group Whose Expression Of Concern Reached 31 Countries

Waterkeepers Bahamas has expressed alarm over government's announcement it was considering a plan to shorten the closed season for Nassau grouper, a critically endangered species already threatened by over-fishing and climate change.

"The Bahamas is one of the few places in the world where the Nassau grouper still survives," said Waterkeepers Bahamas Executive Director Rashema Ingraham. "The species is on the IUCN Red list because it is critically endangered. It has been wiped out by overexploitation in far too many places where it was once plentiful and one of the reasons that it survives in The Bahamas despite fishing to satisfy the daily consumption demand is because there is a closed season that allows adult grouper to aggregate, spawn and reproduce. Without that legislated time, we could be facing the same outcome resulting from mistakes other countries made and from which they are now trying to recover."

Ingraham cites Cayman as an example.

In 2016, after suffering a major reduction and near loss of its once prolific Nassau grouper,

Cayman enacted sweeping legislation, including a closed season that last for five months from December through April and limiting the take to five a day per vessel and restricting size to 16 inches.

Florida has gone even further. The state has enacted a total ban of the harvesting of both the Nassau grouper and mammoth grouper, also known as Jewfish.

Ingraham also cites international authorities who have studied Nassau grouper and other marine life in The Bahamas.

Craig Dahlgren, a marine ecologist who works with the Perry Institute of Marine Science, said the most recent studies from The Bahamas indicate the abundance of Nassau grouper has declined over the past two decades between 70% and 90% in several historical locations. Dahlgren found only two of six documented spawning aggregation sites in Long Island still active. And The Bahamas is one of the few remaining places in the world with active aggregate spawning sites.

In study after study, marine scientists and ecologists are reporting the same findings. Overfishing is the primary cause of decline of Nassau grouper

worldwide, resulting in far more of the threat to survival of the species than natural disasters or marine environmental changes, she said.

Nassau grouper is the fish of The Bahamas. "Ask any Bahamian what kind of fish he wants, ask any restaurant what the most popular fish is and the answer will invariably be grouper," said Ingraham. "The Bahamas without Nassau grouper. That could very well be the case if we do not ensure a suitable closed season is enforced, a breathing space for the species

and allow it to reproduce. Now, with climate change resulting in rising seas and warming sea temperatures threatening the health of coral reefs on which the grouper depends, the species is at even greater risk."

Ingraham's comments came on the heels of remarks by the Minister of Agriculture and Marine Resources Renward Wells that the government was considering reducing the period of the closed season that now runs from the first of December through the end of February. The remarks drew immediate reaction from the Bahamas National Trust and others.

"In December of 2014 when the government instituted a fixed closed season rather than having to debate and set the policy every year, there

was a great sigh of relief," said Joe Darville, Chairman of Save The Bays and Grand Bahama Coastal Waterkeeper. "Organisations like the Moore Bahamas Foundation and BREEF rushed to thank the government for its foresight when that legislation was passed. It is hard to believe, in fact I had to read the headlines twice because I thought I must have misunderstood, that the government would now be thinking about moving backward when we were gaining. Just look at what is happening in the crawfish industry. Since the Defence Force has been patrolling the more remote southern islands with the Sandy Bottom Project, doing a good job keeping poachers at bay, and with the closed season

that is harder to violate because of the stepped up patrols, the fishermen who go after crawfish are saying they are having the best season in years."

Both Waterkeepers Bahamas and Save The Bays urge government to maintain the current fixed closed season and monitor the Nassau grouper population carefully, ready to act if the season has to be extended.

"The fishermen who are asking for a shorter closed season could soon be asking a different question if we do not give the Nassau grouper a chance to reproduce," said Darville. "They could be asking Where did all the fish go? Let us not be greedy now and sorry later."



Sharks – Bahamas Continues to Lead in Protection of Valuable Species

\$113+ Million Industry, Essential To Healthy Oceans

IF you watched Shark Week on TV this year, you may have noticed a difference. It was the 29th season that Discovery TV brought stories of the world's most fascinating fish to the small screen but this year along with the sensational attacks, mysteries and unfailing fear factor came a huge dose of reality. In nearly every episode of drama that aired day and night in late July, researchers and announcers included information about the importance of sharks to the eco-system.

The recognition of the important role sharks play to the life of the oceans represented a major cultural shift and Save The Bays is proud that The Bahamas is continuing to play a leading role in the

survival of these fish that range from barely bigger than a thumb nail to the giants of the sea.

Two of the episodes broadcast to more than 200 countries this year focused attention directly on The Bahamas. The Great Hammerhead Invasion traced the annual pilgrimage of great whites to waters off Bimini. Tagging has shown that many are pregnant females and researcher Dr. Todd Guttridge believes the mothers-to-be choose the bountiful warm waters of The Bahamas to winter in and feed the life growing within before moving north to the Florida coast, preying on other sharks in their migration pattern.

Another episode featured the mysterious

sawfish, a ray often misidentified as a shark. One of the most bizarre looking creatures in the animal kingdom, the head of the ancient species is shaped like a hand saw. Researchers are just beginning to understand the life of the sawfish now that it is facing extinction and is only found in a few places in the world, The Bahamas being one of them. The Moore Bahamas Foundation has been instrumental in funding research to try to save the endangered species before it is too late with efforts that are beginning to show promise. Most studies indicate that shark populations are

in severe decline, largely due to the demand for shark fin soup, a delicacy in the Far East. In 2011, after strong campaigning including presentation of indisputable research about the value of sharks to maintaining the balance of the underwater eco-system, The Bahamas enacted progressive shark sanctuary legislation that prohibited the commercial trade of sharks, shark parts and products. Among the research findings – the fact that sharks rid the oceans of sick and unhealthy fish, help to maintain balanced food chains and are an economic golden goose. The

largest study to determine the value of their worth found that shark dives generate nearly \$114 million a year in revenue and attract some 45,000+ visitors annually to The Bahamas to dive with sharks. The Moore Bahamas Foundation, the patron sponsor of Save The Bays, has assisted with research through Save The Bays community partner, BREEF, which operates the highly successful Bahamas Environmental Stewardship Scholars program.

The deeper you dive into it, the more you learn that sharks are important protectors of life in the sea and big business

The deeper you dive into it, the more you learn that sharks are important protectors of life in the sea and big business for The Bahamas.

for The Bahamas. As the shark sanctuary legislation comes up for renewal, we urge continuing protection for the powerful predator, critical to corals, conch, crawfish and other marine species and a major propellant of the Bahamas economic engine.



MUSIC WITH A MESSAGE

CD IN STORES NOW!

Available on **iTunes**

featuring **KB's LATEST HITS**

♪ **LET'S SAVE THE BAYS** ♪ **CONCHSERVATION** ♪ **DAS NASTY** ♪ **DREAM FOR OUR BAHAMALAND** ♪ **AND MORE**

Proceed support Save The Bays youth education



Beach, water conditions at your fingertips, thanks to new monitoring service by Save The Bays, Waterkeepers Bahamas

Thinking about a swim? There's an app for that. In recent months, Save The Bays and Waterkeepers Bahamas have been monitoring 16 beaches on New Providence, Grand Bahama and Bimini, collecting and testing water samples to check for bacteria and ensure safe swimming conditions and shoreline activities.

The testing and reporting are part of an international program known as Swim Guide, produced by an organization that provides information on 7,000 fresh water and marine beaches in New Zealand, Canada, the U.S., Mexico, and now The Bahamas. The information it shares ranges from historic perspective on weather, tides, water quality and conditions to current levels of *Enterococcus* (bacteria). In some places where there are specific issues, swim guide tests for sewage pollution as it does at a popular beach where the

water is no longer fishable in Canada.

"We couldn't be more excited to announce that, thanks to Save the Bays and Waterkeepers Bahamas, recreational water quality information for the Bahamas is now available to the public. The Bahamas is the fifth country to join Swim Guide. And Waterkeepers Bahamas and Save the Bays are our first Swim Guide affiliate in the Bahamas," said Gabrielle Parent-Doliver, Swim Guide editor. "Thanks to their work, Swim Guide users have access to information about the quality of the water in the Bahamas. Their sampling program is critical providing the public with information about the quality of the waters, which will allow them to take precautions to protect their health when water is contaminated."

According to Waterkeepers Bahamas Executive Director Rashema Ingraham, the



testing has been smooth, revealing healthy conditions in those beaches tested to date.

"What makes the swim guide site or app so helpful is that the information is real time up to date," said Ingraham. "If the water sample is more than seven days old, instead of a green icon meaning it's safe to jump in or eat the fish from that water, it will have a gray icon indicating test results are too old



to be useful. There will also be a place where you can easily see if the waters on that beach have passed

the monitoring service should be an asset for The Bahamas and an aid for officials.

"Both the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Health benefit from our regular testing which we are required to do every week with samples run through the lab equipment that we maintain," said Darville. "We are honoured that Save The Bays and Waterkeepers Bahamas were selected as the official monitoring and reporting organisations by Swim Guide. This makes The Bahamas the only country in the region that can say it reports on the safety of its waters on 16 of its most popular beaches every week. And we would not be able to do this without the network of volunteers we have, including the cadets who have graduated from our marine environmental programs in Grand Bahama."

the safety test 95% of the time."

Chairman of Save The Bays Joe Darville believes

Bahamas Environment Takes Surprising Centre Stage at Global Conference

MORE than 300 environmental rights advocates, environmental organisations trustees, supporters and volunteers who monitor the world's waters gathered for the 2017 Waterkeepers Alliance conference in Park City, Utah, in June but it was one of the smallest countries of all that took centre stage – The Bahamas.

“We were completely surprised that so much of the spotlight was on The Bahamas,” said Joe Darville, chairman of Save The Bays. “There were so many countries represented -- Australia, the U.S., Mexico, Asian nations like China and Bhutan and African nations like Senegal but the spotlight really shone on The Bahamas. I think it was because of the fragile nature of our coral reefs, the beauty of our waters and the very energetic legal battles we have launched in recent years to protect this rare gift from Mother Nature.”

In fact, The Bahamas was the only country invited to make two presentations. The messages delivered were very different.

Waterkeepers Bahamas Executive Director Rashema Ingraham spoke of engaging diverse communities to create awareness about the importance of the environment.

“Whether you are raising awareness with schoolchildren, bank presidents, the well-to-do or the person scraping to get by you need to make the environment real – that wetlands are not swamp to be trampled,



they are the nurseries that serve as infant habitats for the fish you will catch and eat. If the habitats are gone, the fish will be, too. We always stress how the health of our waters and our wetlands impacts you in a very real way today and how what you do today determines what you will leave for the Bahamians of tomorrow,” said Ingraham.

Clifton-Western Bays Waterkeeper Fred Smith, QC, revealed the challenges of trying to protect the environment, fighting case after case for environmental rights in the face of

a government that made secret deals for large developments without public consultation. Such projects, said Smith, disrupt life and may displace populations. They interrupt nature, paying no attention to what has allowed that community to survive for hundreds, if not thousands of years, and many of the projects outright destroy vast acres of precious natural resources, including coral reefs that protect many of the islands of The Bahamas from storm surge. (See pages 4 – 7 for STB's legal wrap-up.)

More than 300 delegates from countries around the globe packed the 2017 Waterkeepers Conference in Utah where the small island nation of The Bahamas took a surprising centre stage. Because of the country's vast and varied marine resources and its vulnerability to climate change and other pressures, including overdevelopment without adequate environmental management, The Bahamas seemed a magnet for attention and was the only delegate country invited to make three presentations on separate topics, including one on Save The Bays' series of court victories.





DIRECTORS

Dedicated on preserving the environment of The Bahamas for future generations.



Troy Albury



Joseph Darville



Louis Bacon



Hon. Nicholas F. Brady



Kirkland Bodie



Stuart Cove



Sam Duncombe



Paco Nunez



William Hunter



Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.



Fred Smith



Jessica Minnis



R. Craig Symonette



Gail Woon



Matt McCoy



Peter Douglas



NORTH BIMINI MARINE RESERVE

BIMINI MANGROVE



Watch the video online

www.youtube.com/watch?v=skAN-53eWcl



Save The Bays partners with existing Bahamian conservation, environmental and educational organizations on jointly agreed-upon initiatives.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Abaco Cares • Andros Conservancy and Trust
 Bahamas National Trust • Bahamas Reef Environment
 Educational Foundation • Bimini Blue Coalition
 Clifton Heritage National Park • EARTHCARE
 Young Marine Explorers • Friends of the Environment
 The Island School • Lyford Cay POA
 Responsible Development for Abaco • Save Guana Cay Reef
 Swim for Ocean Survival • The Nature Conservancy
 Grand Bahama Human Rights Association • reEarth
 Citizens for A Better Bahamas • Waterkeepers Bahamas
 West End Eco Fishing Camp Association

Team work makes the dream work, save our environment.