



SAINT LUCIA NATIONAL TRUST

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**Patron: Her Excellency Dame Pearlette Louisy
Governor General of St. Lucia**

PRESS RELEASE

Driving the Conservation Mandate Forward

Members and staff of the Saint Lucia National Trust (SLNT) gathered at the quaint conference facility at the Morne Coubaril Estate in the historic town of Soufriere for its 35th Annual General Meeting on Saturday, November 19th, 2011. The forty-nine (49) members and fifteen (15) staff in attendance, gathered to ascertain how the Trust performed since the last AGM in January 2011 and the plans to continue to transform the organization into a more formidable movement which strives to conserve the island's natural and built heritage.

The outgoing Chairman, Mr. Sylvester Clauzel noted that although the life of the Council was rather short it was indeed meaningful. He said that although the OECS Protected Areas and Associated Livelihoods (OPAAL) project which had several positive deliverables had ended, the Council took a policy decision to retain the Site Manager to complete work related to the Livelihoods sub-project, to develop a proposal for a continuation of the OPAAL project and to serve as the Trust's officer in the



south. Mr. Clauzel also said that the Officer will also be coordinating an initiative born out of the OPAAL project to develop a tour company, to be called ECO South Tours, with various stakeholders who operate within the Pointe Sables Environmental Protection Area. He also pointed out that the Trust will place greater emphasis on site development by focusing on the; development of Morne Pavillon, a natural and historic site in Cap Estate which was recently acquired; the redevelopment of the Pigeon Island National Landmark and the development works on the Morne.

It was also mentioned that the World Heritage Committee decided to offer support to the Government of Saint Lucia to undertake a Limits of Acceptable Change Study for the Pitons Management Area, as such Mr. Clauzel pointed out that the Trust is looking forward to the timely completion of this study, which if done well and implemented would eliminate the threat of having the site removed from the List of World Heritage. He also said that the Trust continued with our key advocacy programmes and had encouraging results in relation to beach protection, the Queen's Chain matter and the potential loss of Monument Park to a development.

The Trust, he also noted, has continued with its programme of activities and sought to introduce new income generating streams despite the economic decline. One of the new activities which falls under the newly activated Business Services and Events portfolio, is the hosting of a Christmas Market dubbed Laplas Nwél, which will be held at the Pigeon Island National Landmark from December 2 -4, 2011.

In getting down to the crux of the AGM, the Director, Mr. Bishnu Tulsie explained the election process. After nominations were completed, the following individuals were elected as the new Councillors who will guide the work of the Trust in the upcoming months; Mr. Sylvester Clauzel, Mr. Calitxe George Jr., Mr. Cyril Saltibus, Ms. Maureen Louis, Ms. Simone Mondesir, Mr. Martin Satney and Mr. Kemar Louisy. The newest addition to the elected Council is Mr. Louisy, a member of the SLNT Youth Chapter. The Government's representatives are Crispin d'Auvergne and Duane Marquis. In order to have the full complement of Councillors we await the Saint Lucia Archeological and Historical Society to confirm their representatives.

The presentation on the Invasive Lionfish by Ms. Allena Joseph of the Department of Fisheries and Ms. Sonia Cazaubon of the Soufriere Marine Management Association was very informative. The presenters pointed out that so far three lionfish have been sighted in Saint Lucian waters but only one has been caught. They noted that the lionfish poses a threat to our local fish population, as such fishermen and the wider populace are encouraged to carefully catch the fish, remove the venomous spines and then cook them as this is one of the best ways to control the species which breeds at a rapid rate. Additionally, members were able to find out more about the Invasive Iguana from Alwin Donnelly from the Department of Forestry. He informed the gathering that the invasive iguana has been sighted in Soufriere and adjoining communities. He went on to explain its entry into the island and the work his department is doing in collaboration with the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust to capture the iguana in an effort to prevent it from breeding with our native iguana, Iyanola as this would interfere with its unique qualities. He mentioned that there have been many sightings and some two hundred (200) iguanas have been caught.

Some of the other highlights of the AGM included two raffles where members got an opportunity to win a gift voucher compliments the Trust from Feng Shui Spa and a cake which was donated by the SLNT Southern Chapter compliments Shernell's. Ms. Sardia Cenac was the lucky member who copped the Feng Shui Spa prize for purchasing a Pigeon Island Polo Shirt which was being sold at a discounted price during the AGM. All proceeds from the cake raffle were donated by the SLNT Southern Chapter to the Youth Chapter. Ironically, out of all the members who contributed to the raffle, Mr. Jonel Marshall, the Membership Liaison Officer for the SLNT Youth Chapter won the lovely cake which was decorated with the SLNT logo.

