

BEST ACCOMPLISHMENTS - 2018

The BEST vision of 'a sustainable Bermuda for future generations' serves to keep us focused when the list of environmental threats and issues continues to grow. We manage our work across 4 Action Areas:

1. Responding to Environmental Threats:

Ongoing monitoring of Planning applications: reviewing and responding to any proposed developments on or around conservation zones. BEST also continues to assist members of the public who regularly report concerns about proposed development in their area. The new Draft Bermuda Plan 2018 was released late in the year and concentrated effort went into developing a plan of action to review the proposed changes to policy and zonings before the deadline in mid-March 2019.

2. Influencing Policy:

Wherever possible we work to minimize the need for taking reactive measures, by identifying opportunities to ensure that changes that are needed are elevated to policy level. For example: In 2018, BEST pursued a legal challenge regarding the permission that was granted for All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) tours to be run along the western portion of the Railway Trail and into the national parklands of Scaur Hill and Hog Bay Park. The outcome of that legal action was the quashing of the 2017 approval given the absence of the requisite legislative amendments, and evidence of there being 'overriding public interest'. The policies that are in place must be relevant and adhered to in order to avoid creating confusion and unjustified exceptions.

3. Communications & Outreach:

BEST promotes its ongoing work through: monthly bulletins; presentations at schools and in the community; via its website and social media; PR articles and media Opinion pieces written by team specialists and surveys to gauge public perception of Bermuda's environmental issues.

4. Building Capacity:

BEST is focused on increasing volunteer engagement, collaboration and funding:

Two summer interns joined us in 2018: one researched the issue of Hawaii's ban on sunscreen products containing chemicals that are destructive to coral reefs, to consider if Bermuda should also consider such a ban; the other researched current regulations/policies and practices associated with pesticide use in Bermuda, as well as ways to improve those policies and practices and lobby for the introduction of an Integrated Pest Management Plan.

Members of the BEST Board, Management Team and Operations Team also work with other environmental organizations to encourage collaboration and information sharing:

- The BUZZ - identifying and addressing factors that contribute to the health or demise of local bee populations
- The Green Bermuda Cooperative - encouraging sensible waste management for public events
- The Bermuda Audubon Society - encouraging the conservation of woodland and open spaces for local and migrant bird species
- Bermuda Beekeepers' Association
- ECO - an Environmental Coalition
- The Bermuda Marine Debris Taskforce (BMDT) – analysis of debris on Bermuda beaches
- The Environmental Authority – an advisory Board with primary focus on the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts.

The care of our natural environment is the responsibility of every citizen in the country and so we continue to appeal to individuals and corporations to make a contribution to the work that BEST does

on our collective behalf. Additionally, in 2018 we invited donations in support of BEST's 10th Anniversary; we held our first BEST Tag Day on May 24th (the original 'Bermuda Day ') and we held a Christmas Appeal.

BEST's 2019 projects and priorities are:

- **Eco Lunch & Learn** presentations – partnering with the Bermuda College as the venue host for Lunch & Learn presentations on environmental topics.
- **BEST Study Buddies and Summer Interns** – encouraging Bermudian students studying in the area of environmental science to do their projects/dissertations on a 'Bermuda issue' with support from BEST.
- **BESTNet** – a dedicated email address used by the community to inform us of environmental concerns in their area so that we can identify the best resource to assist with resolution.
- **BEST Energy** – The future of renewable energy production in Bermuda is upon us. BEST was assisted in making a submission to the Regulatory Authority's public consultation and will continue to highlight the need for Bermuda to make significant strides to move away from using fossil fuels for energy production.
- **Marine Protected Areas** - Concern for the health of our ocean should be on Bermuda's front burner. Concern for the coral reefs and the sustainability of our fisheries stocks need attention now. Later we can refocus on the work being done to protect the Sargasso Sea and on the former Blue Halo project to expand the area for protection.
- **One-Use Plastic Pollution** - The world and its oceans are drowning in plastic! In their 2017 platform, the Bermuda Government committed to producing a Green Paper for consultation on establishing a charge on single-use plastic bags and a beverage container deposit system. A good step we think, but does it go far enough, and will it happen soon enough? There should be many people and groups interested in driving us faster to the implementation of some real solutions.
- **Food Security** - It's time to map this concern and see which pieces of it we can start to impact now!
- **Climate Change** - It's late to be coming to this discussion but hopefully not too late! Again, it's time to map this concern and look for aspects that we can address now! Who knows, it could change the trajectory in terms of impact in Bermuda!