

## **BEST Accomplishments – 2017**

### **Responding to Events and Environmental Threats:**

- Ongoing review of all planning applications. For the year-to-date we have reviewed 143 application files and objected to 61, 9 of which were withdrawn having received additional information.
- Met with a Paget resident whose neighbor is cutting trees down along their shared border. Reviewed the policies with her and put her in contact with DENR and encouraged her to follow-up with Enforcement at Planning given it wasn't the first time this has happened.
- Email correspondence with a British man who is writing an article about microbeads and is hoping to meet during a visit to Bermuda in March. No meeting came about and just following-up with him to see if a meeting is still possible in the future.
- The One-Use Plastic Bag Campaign is currently on hold. The student group achieved their objective and could report on what it takes to create a campaign but the small group of adult volunteers lost momentum and the project became a victim of the shift in priorities. Plans to meet with George Grundmuller, GM of Brown & Company were deferred until the Autumn. We will propose that we partner with them to remind the public to increase their use of reuseable bags.
- Developing a project on derelict/uninhabitable properties with a member of the public who is personally affected by a neighbouring property that is uninhabitable and falling apart... onto her property. The goal is to discover who has responsibility for them, what those responsibilities are and to then test the system.
- Worked with Kristin Alexander, filmmaker of "Trusting Rain", to create an opportunity to make new BEST Friends by holding a re-showing of her film, followed by a talk on sustainable practices, at the Bermuda Library.
- Met with Kate Trueland, a Canadian student who lived in Bermuda as a child, who is very keen to develop ways to raise the profile of BEST. She is studying Sustainable Tourism and focused her university paper on a Marketing Plan for BEST. Her

recommendations are to develop BEST stories that can be shared in any number of ways and in engaging Instagram as a means to expand our reach. As our BEST Communications lead, Lynne has spoken with Kate to flush out her ideas in more detail.

- Started reviewing the approx. 200 Requests for Rezoning received by the deadline date of March 31<sup>st</sup>. We will be looking for instances where protected land will be considered for rezoning as the first step in the review of the 2008 Bermuda Plan. We submitted a letter to Planning asking about their approach to the review of the Plan and asking for them to work toward an established vision. Shared the findings with other environmental NGOs.
- Spoke with members of the public who had concerns: (i) about light 'pollution' where a neighbor keeps industrial strength LED lights on all night and (ii) about a person living on a boat very close to shore (in front of his house) and concern around whether that is legal and what policy holds in terms of toilet water disposal under this scenario. Referred this enquiry to Marine and Ports.
- Discussion with a Shelly Bay resident who is fighting to keep a fast-food restaurant out of their residential neighbourhood.
- Awaiting information from Planning regarding an area of excavation (without permission) at 26 Shell Point Road, St. George's.
- Worked with a resident of Coot Pond to keep pressure on a jet ski operator who was operating without permission out of Coot Pond.
- Meetings with other objectors to Morgan's Point applications for a grand entrance through the agricultural land in Southampton.

#### Active Campaigns:

- Beach Development – Will refocus on the Bermuda Tourism Authority's (BTA) Beach Plan as signs of some 'commercialisation creep' are showing up. The BTA issued an RFP for an iconic sculpture at Clearwater Beach and invited input and a sculpture judge from BEST. Lynne Matcham agreed to represent BEST. Parks Department in disarray. Amendments to the Parks Act are expected. Proposed legislation to update the Parks Act and possibly the Parks Department was delayed due to the election. Proposed changes include adding Southlands and Clearwater Beach among other lands

into National Parks.

- Cell towers – Now that the America’s Cup is over, we sincerely hope that we will get a response from the Regulatory Authority (RA) in respect of the concerns we raise consistently in our letters of objection. One of those concerns is that they still need to issue an updated list of towers and antennae in Bermuda (no update since 2009) especially because of the amount of hardware that has been erected for America’s Cup which we believe may remain erected once AC is done. Tried to piggy-back on One Communications’ critique of the RA but the press didn’t pick it up.
- Cross Island - the full Cross Island Report should become available soon. We don't anticipate any decision soon on development plans for the end uses of the reclaimed acreage.
- Morgan’s Point – Morgan’s Point was successful in their appeal for an access road through the agricultural land. BEST has initiated a judicial review of the Minister's decision to allow the roadway.
- Riddell’s Bay – the new owners and the Department of Planning are in discussions about zoning changes. The goal is for all but 20 acres of the approximately 90 acres to get protective zonings.
- Southlands – Awaiting announcement from Government about the status of Southlands as a Park. Good piece by Jeremy Deacon <https://jeremydeacon.wordpress.com/2017/04/02/southlands-a-national-resource-or-a-national-disgrace/>.

#### Shared Campaigns:

- Bermuda Marine Debris Taskforce (BMDT) – Anne Hyde reports: The members of the BMDT look forward to welcoming the [Race for Water](#) expedition team aboard their 100% energy self-sufficient pioneering vessel “Planet Solar” who will be berthed from May 26 – July 7 at the new Caroline Bay Marina to have a high profile during America’s Cup. There will be opportunities to join tours of the boat which has limitless energy through solar power coupled with the production of hydrogen. BMDT members and other local scientists, including “citizen scientist”, are being invited to join and support their research mission to study plastic pollution, micro-plastic characterization and the eco-toxicological effects of marine debris on marine life.

[http://www.raceforwater.com/r4w\\_odyssey\\_2017\\_2021/a\\_pioneerin\\_g-100-energy-self-sufficient-vessel](http://www.raceforwater.com/r4w_odyssey_2017_2021/a_pioneerin_g-100-energy-self-sufficient-vessel)

- The Green Bermuda Cooperative – this group works with hosts of public events to influence the event’s waste management. Please visit their website for more details: [www.greenbermuda.org](http://www.greenbermuda.org)
- The BUZZ group:
  - made a substantial submission to the DENR in respect of (i) the government’s study of glyphosate and (ii) of issues of general concern re chemical pesticide use in Bermuda. Will make representation of that submission to the new Minister for the Environment
  - met with a law student who undertook a project for us to consider the co-formulants of pesticides
  - The BUZZ is working on an opportunity to bring a soil specialist to Bermuda (Dr. Elaine Ingham) to share her knowledge about soil testing, sustainable practices for healthy vs unhealthy soil and composting as a way to remediate imbalance in soils. We had a Skype call with Dr. Ingham to discuss a plan for her coming to Bermuda to provide information/instruction on: soil testing, biological agriculture, composting and remediation of toxic soils, and for the reduction or elimination of the use of pesticides in Bermuda.
  - will poll/survey farmers, former members of the defunct Department of Agriculture and Fisheries etc. Kim and Jennifer will meet with a young farmer who is very interested in helping organize a visit to Bermuda for Dr. Ingham
  - met again with Warren Brown to discuss the value of a plan to result in a good food-quality compost product. Compost is a critical element in Dr. Elaine Ingham’s biological agriculture methodology
  - met with a small-scale farmer who believes we will have more success promoting the goal of ‘no pesticides’ with that group than with the commercial farmers who are more likely to want to hold on to their ways of doing things given they rely on the income from their farming
  - considering other ideas for supporting the small-scale farmers by (i) matching them with individuals who have agricultural land but not the desire to farm it and (ii) advocate for training for the small-scale farmers in Bermuda by seeking funding from some of the companies

most interested in supporting specific projects. We are still discussing promoting the improvement of the compost product at Marsh Folly, which could be available to home gardeners and to the commercial farmers who may be inclined to consider shifting to more of a 'no pesticide' approach.

### **Influencing Policy:**

(A number of initiatives detailed in our Responding to Events and Environmental Threats section are also applicable under Influencing Policy)

### **Communications and Outreach:**

- Facebook:
  - We have 943 Likes.
- BEST Bulletin:
  - Bulletin #27 sent out at the end of July.
- BEST Website:
  - The website is updated promptly with news articles and interest pieces and remains current.
  - The BEST website was given an award by the Bermuda National Trust, recognizing it as "informative and well-designed". Congratulations to Sebastian Matcham for the redesign and to Lynne Matcham for keeping it current and full of eye-catching images.
  - Working on a CONTENT MANAGEMENT PLAN for all online media: Website, Facebook, Twitter & Instagram.
  - Most popular topics:
    - Stuart's article on Megan was, by far, the most popular post ever!
    - continued interest in plastic pollution and what to do about it (straws, microbeads)
    - the 'lawn' gardening project - with a suggestion that BEST do 'something' - perhaps we could capitalise on this type of interest through The BUZZ and the question of small, privately owned pockets of agricultural land that are presently not utilized.
    - Actions against Monsanto

- We have new pages on the website: **Sustainability** to share articles on 'the bigger picture' and **Thumbs Up/Down** to highlight good and not-so-good practices in Bermuda. Please submit articles/comments with us to post/share.
- Instagram:
  - Lynne worked with Kate Trueland to get a BEST Instagram account off the ground.
  - Kate is posting about environmentally-related activities in Bermuda as well as BEST-related initiatives. Follow us @bestinbermuda.
  - Namrata, a student volunteer, is working on creating a bank of photographs to be used for future Instagram posts.
- Twitter:
  - We have gained more followers, taking us to 700 in total, with our tweets from this month having been seen by 934 people (on average 34 per day). Overall, it seems like our tweets about the America's Cup have been the most popular ones, as well as ones connected to news articles (usually the RG).
  - The twitter page is up to date (to the best of my knowledge), Megan has just graduated from BHS and will, no doubt, have a very rosy future ahead! Congratulations and all BEST wishes for your future, Megan!
  - Articles on plastics produced most viewings and responses.
  - Congratulations to the winners of the International Sea-keepers Award which also attracted a lot of attention
  - International Day of Caves - provoked interest
  - Going forward will continue to post articles on plastic pollution & solutions along with posts regarding other environmental issues.

### **Building Capacity:**

- Participation in a Collaboration Initiative with the Centre on Philanthropy to explore more formal collaboration with Greenrock resulted in the decision that there will be no formal merger of Greenrock and BEST but that we will continue to collaborate on issues as opportunities arise. In a press release, the organization said that, "cost effective operating structures are maintained by both parties, which would limit any material benefit from the cost

savings and efficiencies that would typically be a key driver of a merger.”

- New Management Team chair, Susan Armstrong, took on her role with guns blazing to lead a very successful brainstorming session on the topic of Revitalisation!
- We welcome two new members to the Management Team: Adam Farrell and Alex Conyers.
- With the rejuvenation of the Management Team we aim to generate interest for additional volunteers from the BEST Friends database to help us with new projects being developed.
- New Board members: Lynne Matcham and Alma Dismont
- We engaged another student volunteer to develop resource materials/contacts around Sustainability.
- Kim and Jennifer did a Mind-Mapping training session with the Centre on Philanthropy. We agree that it is a good tool for really thinking a project through (but in a more creative way), to flush out all those pesky details and to get clarity on which are the more important critical early steps for a project.
- Volunteers/interns Hayat and Namrata filming video in Hamilton to gauge the public understanding of the term "sustainable" and to express what a 'sustainable Bermuda' would look like.
- Gail Miller, Lynne Matcham, Kim Smith and Mariya Tsitron (volunteer) will work as a voluntary fundraising committee for the Board.