

2015 Issue 11

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America's Cup 35:

As you will have seen in the media, BEST welcomes the opportunities that the AC35 will bring to Bermuda. With thoughtful, sensitive and thorough planning and preparation Bermuda stands to benefit in many areas. It is important for Bermuda to ensure that due process is followed in all Planning Applications and that Environmental Impact Assessments and Statements (EIA/EIS) are conducted. Well-researched and structured EIAs and EISs have been shown to save money by avoiding costly mistakes and/or unnecessary work. BEST is working to pull together a Steering Committee, comprised of members from a wide range of environmental organizations, to examine environmental issues. BEST has also been in touch with organizers of AC34 who had worked to make that event carbon neutral.

<http://www.royalgazette.com/article/20141208/NEWS25/141209717>

<http://bernews.com/2014/12/best-welcomes-americas-cup/>

Tucker's Point:

BEST continues to monitor activities at Tucker's Point.

Southlands:

We are delighted that the cottage at Southlands has in fact been designated a Grade 2 Listed Building. It is hoped that the building will be secured, and urgent repairs made. It is long past time for Southlands to be integrated into our National Parks system.

The BUZZ:

The group is pleased to have North American Organic Beekeeper Ross Conrad ready and willing to visit Bermuda for a long weekend in March. The plan is that he will offer workshops/information sessions to Bermuda's experienced and budding beekeepers, and any other people interested in maintaining a local population of healthy bees. Sponsors for this event would be much appreciated - if you, or your business, are interested in supporting this important and rewarding event, please contact Kim Smith at office@best.org.bm.

Planning Applications:

BEST continues to monitor planning applications. An area of concern arose over the Christmas period when the usual 14 day period in which to review and object or comment on a slate of 29 planning applications was not extended despite the fact that several of those days were public holidays or weekend days, leaving only 6 days for the process. In the past, BEST has also suggested to the Director of the Planning Department that 14 days is not sufficient time when trying to grapple with the volume of the plans, drawings and reports submitted for large or complex projects, such as Tucker's Point, Grand Atlantic or the South Basin Marina. If, on occasion, you have had to check plans etc at the Planning Department and you have found the time frame to be insufficient, please let the Director of the Planning Department know by emailing her at aratteraypryse@gov.bm.

2015 - International Year of Soils:

Over the past few months several issues have been raised with regards to Bermuda's agricultural lands. BEST's work to preserve and improve these areas in Bermuda dovetails nicely with this year's United Nations theme: 2015 International Year of Soils.

Soil is a precious resource - the value of which is frequently overlooked in the drive to “develop”. Did you know that a single teaspoon (1 gram) of rich garden soil can hold up to one billion bacteria, several yards of fungal filaments, several thousand protozoa, and scores of nematodes, according to Kathy Merrifield, Nematologist at Oregon State University. Most of these creatures are exceedingly small; earthworms and millipedes are giants, in comparison, but each has a role in the secret life of soil. Soil also contains the building blocks for many antibiotics

Read more at:

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=49520#.VL6VBFpiPs4>

<http://www.bbc.com/news/health-30877343>

Marine Development Plan:

There have been many discussions locally about the Sargasso Sea Alliance, Marine Protected Areas, Blue Halo, the Exclusive Economic Zone and now America’s Cup 35, but more action is required. A first step would be the establishment of a Marine Development Plan; coherent zoning policies for the whole platform would be beneficial, given the fact that a healthy ocean is also vital to our well-being.

Thanks to YOU... our BEST Friend:

The help and support of our BEST friends encourages and sustains us. We look forward to hearing from you during 2015.