



NEWSLETTER

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**Introduction into the Adopt
A River Programme and Unit**

3rd River Conference 2020

**Outreaches/Clean Up
Activities**

**AARP Water
Warriors Training**

**Check out our Facebook &
Instagram pages for AARP
Tidbits**



The Adopt A River Programme

The AARP Implementation Unit's emergence in 2017 and its mandate of being stewards of watersheds, have led the Programme down some interesting pathways and waterways alike. Many partnerships have been forged along the way with private and public stakeholders, NGOs, CBOs and private citizens all working together to accomplish the common goal of preserving our watersheds and conserving our environment. In 2018, the Unit's work was recognised and awarded 3rd place in the IDB President's Award for Service Excellence and Innovation in the Public Sector.

In conjunction with partnerships, water quality training and demonstrations are conducted with various groups, after which testing kits are donated and water testing continued via individuals in various communities. The Programme's Implementation Unit also conducts water testing at various periods and seasons of the year. Educational tools which include videos, leaflets, power point presentations and graphs have been created to raise the awareness of citizens and to teach the importance of this very precious resource that is diminishing due to misunderstandings and mismanagement.

Since inception many partners have come on board and the list continues to grow. Some of the groups and organisations include Cashew Gardens Community, Asa Wright Nature Centre, Nature Seekers and Scouts Association of Trinidad and Tobago.

Adopt A River Programme's 3rd River Conference 2020



The Adopt a River Programme Implementation Unit hosted their 3rd River Conference on Friday March 6, 2020, at the Trinidad Hilton. The theme for this year's Conference was "Connecting the Dots..... Mentoring Towards Sustainability", designed with the youth in mind and the main focus of the Conference. As a result, various secondary schools from around our lovely twin island of Trinidad and Tobago were invited to attend and participate. Various youth speakers shared their experiences and stories of being good stewards for our environment and watersheds, adding to the ongoing movement of achieving sustainability for all.

The feature address at the event and declaration of the Conference opening was delivered by Ms. Beverly Khan, Deputy Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Public Utilities. In her enlightening and informative opening presentation, Ms. Khan highlighted the importance of community and youth engagement with the AARP, the importance of water in our lives and the effort necessary by all to ensure healthy and sustainable watersheds.

Mr. Alan Poon-King, CEO (Ag.) WASA, expressed similar sentiments in his greetings and recognised that any crucial change in our water sector aimed at sustainable development, must include the engagement of our youth, their energy and enthusiasm, as well as their fresh thoughts and new ideas. The Conference consisted of several speakers and presenters who offered their respective topics reflecting sustainability. Some of them were as follows:

- Dr. Ronald Roopnarine, Snr. Lecturer, Earth Sciences; Network Manager, Caribbean WaterNet/CapNet UNDP who spoke on Sustainable Development in the Caribbean and the need for Data Driven Decision Making.
- Mr. Luke Pounder, Adopt a River Youth Ambassador, who gave an enlightening presentation on his newly formed NGO and its role in sustainable water resource management.

- Ms. Janelle Seepaul, past intern of the MatchMe Project who was attached to the Adopt a River Programme, spoke on meaningful experiences from within the programme and the Unit.
- Ms. Curmira Gulston, another youth speaker, encouraged Youth Participation in Sustainable Development, being at the forefront of this cause herself, acquiring degrees in Marine and Conservation Biology and Integrated Coastal and Ocean Management.



Ms. Beverly Khan, Deputy Permanent Secretary at The Ministry of Public Utilities



Mr. Alan Poon King, CEO (Ag.) at the Water And Sewerage Authority addressing attendees at the Conference



One of the Networking Sessions conducted during the Conference



Attendees at the Conference seated in the Ballroom of the Trinidad Hilton

Other notable contributions were made by the Head of the Water Resources Agency (WRA), Mr. Rajindra Gosine; National Scout Association; Holy Cross College; The Cunupia Business Chamber's Zaheer Ali and various environmental partners who exhibited their services and products, engaging attendees during our two networking sessions.

The conference proceeded with the presentation of awards to the winners of the Riverspeak 2019 competition which included Kernesha Walters of ASJA's Girls College, Tunapuna. Vrishni Maharaj – Naparima Girls' High School and Chineka Boatswain, student of Vessigny Secondary School. Additionally, a Legacy and Leadership Award was presented to the former Project Manager of the Unit, Dr. Sharda Mahabir, for her contribution to the water sector.

The day ended with Mr. Wayne Clement, Deputy Chairman of the AARP Steering Committee, giving the Vote of Thanks. Special thanks was extended to the Ministry of Education for granting permission for schools to attend. Thanks and appreciation was extended to all the students and teaching fraternity that attended. Special thanks as well to the Green Fund Executing Unit and also the members of the AARP Steering Committee. AARP certainly looks forward to continued participation at our next River Conference along with ongoing partnerships in achieving our unified goal of sustainability and improved quality of life for us all.

Highlights of Outreaches And Clean Up Activities



Outreach Officer Dinnisha Samlal and Outreach Assistant Dinisha Porter engage visitors at the booth.



The Former Minister of Public Utilities Senator Robert Le Hunte at The Green Market, Santa Cruz in February.



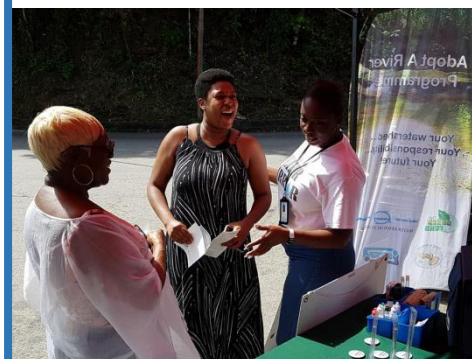
Members of staff Jamila, Lateisha, Corde and photographer Darion at the Maracas Lookout as they engage with passersby.



Volunteers came out in their numbers to participate in the Matura Beach Clean Up in March



Visitors at The Green Market proudly displaying Adopt A River Signs



Staff members engaging visitors to the AARP booth at the Maracas lookout back in February



Volunteers at the Blue Basin River clean up on the morning of Saturday 8th February

The members of the AARP conduct outreaches to various communities throughout Trinidad and Tobago. It is a critical and necessary step in highlighting the mandate of the AARP which is to initiate awareness of our watersheds, facilitate monitoring and water testing, as well organise and encourage collaborative clean up campaigns which enhances and preserves the rivers in our beautiful Twin Islands.

Educating all citizens including our youth, is an approach aimed at changing mindsets and creating a more sustained and organised method of water conservation and environmental preservation. Mediums employed include radio, television, print and social media which has been increasingly utilised due to its nature: easy access to wide cross section of the population, faster dissemination of information, engagement and feedback. This platform has proven to be most useful more so in recent times, due to the current COVID-19 Pandemic being experienced worldwide.

Since preservation is a major part of our mandate, clean up campaigns and beautification projects are among some of the activities the Unit employs as a means of maintaining our precious watersheds.



Councillor for the area Ms. Alina Renn, AARP Project Manager Ms. Avril Alexander, Outreach Officer Eldon Coker, Outreach Assistant Jamila Nichols and members of the Beausejour Community

AARP Water Warriors Training

Water Warrior Training is an important step in creating a platform and a climate for preservation and sustenance of our watersheds through changed mindsets and commitment from community members, including youngsters, NGOs, CBOs and stakeholders alike. It is designed to not only continue to raise awareness for the importance of the precious commodity that is water, but to teach and demonstrate the process of water testing and monitoring.

This training is usually the first step in developing projects and further activities and initiatives existing in some communities, all aimed at finding solutions to improving the status of our watersheds. With this premise in mind, a training session was conducted in March with thirty-eight (38) members of the BioSci Club at ASJA Boys' College Charlieville. Comprising Form One to Upper Six students.



Water Warriors Youth Training Session in progress at ASJA Boys' College, Charlieville back in March. Session conducted by members of the AARP



Youth Members of the BioSci Revolution Club, ASJA Boys' Charlieville with Outreach Officer Dinnisha Samlal and Outreach Assistant Denisha Porter of the AARP Implementation Unit

The students also received hands-on training in water quality testing through a visit to the Felicity Cremation Site and the Munroe Road Bridge. Water samples were taken from these two locations in the lower Cunupia Watershed using the LaMotte Testing Kit. The combined efforts reinforced the commitment that is needed from participants to develop projects within the Charlieville and Cunupia areas.

Check our pages below for our **Water Conservation Tips, Know Your Watershed Series & AARP Tidbits.**

Facebook: **Adopt A River Trinidad & Tobago** Instagram: **@adoptarivertt**