

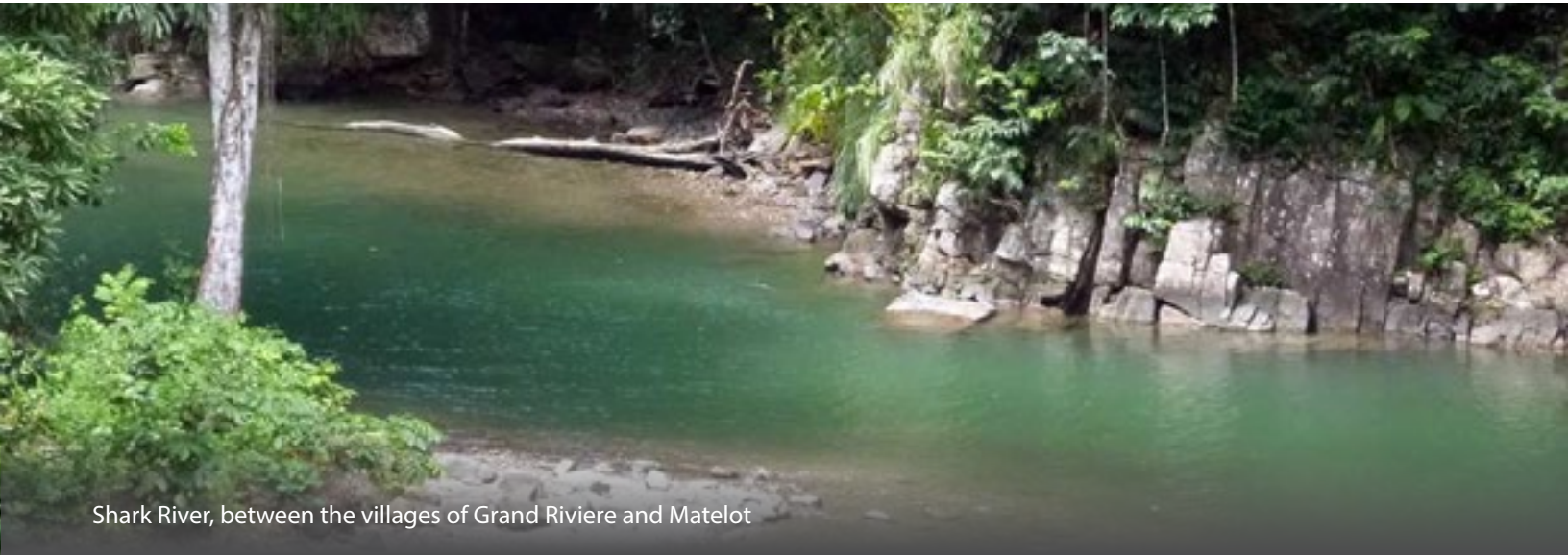


NEWSLETTER

MAY 2021

ISSUE 3

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Shark River, between the villages of Grand Riviere and Matelot

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FUN TIMES WITH QUIZ TIME

Our first quiz competition was launched in the last quarter of 2020. This proved to be a great way to close off the year with continued engagement of our online audience. We were able to reinforce our mandate of water management and conservation, education and awareness building of issues facing our watersheds, and highlight activities which can be done by individuals to improve the status of our watersheds.

The competition was launched on both our Facebook (FB) and Instagram (IG) pages on November 8th, with two (2) questions posted weekly for a five-week period which ended December 10th. Questions focused on water resources as well as on the environment generally, with some derived from our previously posted tips on "water conservation" and our "know your watershed" series.

Reponses and participation were instant and constant for the duration of the competition period. This indicated a level of environmental awareness of our participants which was very encouraging to say the least. Each week's winners were randomly chosen and awarded prizes. To qualify for the grand prize meant that participants were required to answer all 10 questions and answer they did! It went down to the wire with a few of our participants responding most accurately to all questions. Eventually, through random selection, an ultimate winner emerged with congratulations going out to Ms. Kafi Andrew as the Grand Prize winner of the first AARP Quiz Time Competition!

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FUN TIMES WITH QUIZ TIME WINNERS



Project Manager Avril Alexander presents prize to Kafi Andrew Week 3 & Grand Prize Winner



Week 1 Winner, Naya Sinanan receiving prize from Communication Officer, Alisia James-Perez



Week 2 Winner, Rhaven Nagina



Week 4 Winner, Annisha Channan



Week 5 Winner, Stasha Cato

THE ADOPT A RIVER PROGRAMME 4th ANNUAL RIVER CONFERENCE VIRTUAL CONFERENCE 2021



The Implementation Unit of the Adopt A River Programme

This year's Annual River Conference was held virtually for the first time, prompted by the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic which has necessitated that new and more innovative ways are sought to continue and enhance public engagement. This approach proved to be both challenging and exciting and was certainly a process of discovering and navigating new territory as the AARP plunged into the world of virtual gatherings.

Having established a trademark catch phrase of "Connecting the Dots" as part of each year's theme, the identifiable and pivotal theme for this year was "Becoming Agents of Change". The aim

was to focus on individuals, groups and organisations that are consciously and actively conducting activities geared toward protecting and enhancing our watersheds and the environment in general. We invited persons from varying fields to participate through video presentations, where their knowledge and experience, processes and projects were shared, providing invaluable information to our audience.

These sentiments were echoed by the Honourable Minister of Public Utilities Mr. Marvin Gonzales who, in his address to Conference participants, stated that events like this provide all stakeholders

with the invaluable opportunity to share information, adjust focus and realign efforts towards our common goal. Further, the Minister stated that all participants can come away from this event with renewed vigour as they return to their various spheres of influence with additional knowledge and tools to help in protecting our rivers and watersheds and by extension, our environment.

The process of collecting video footage and presentations of our Agents of Change in their operational spaces, took us to various locations in Trinidad and Tobago. From Shaw Park in Tobago to Matura in the east, Diego Martin in the

west, Cashew Gardens in central and Moruga and Penal in the south. One of the featured videos came from AARP's 2020 Youth Ambassador Luke Pounder who is an artist, an environmental activist and co-founder of TROD 868 which is an environmental NGO aimed at reducing our waste deposits and improving waste disposal. He highlighted numerous activities that can be conducted by the nation's youth and other citizens alike, in protecting our waterways and our environment.

Dr. Dave Cassie of the University of the Southern Caribbean (USC), the keynote speaker, gave insight as to the role of educators in fostering mental and behavioural changes among our students and the wider population in reducing our carbon and water footprints. A good example of these theories in action came from the presentation of Moruga Hill Rice farmer Mark Forgenie, who spoke to the importance of good water management in the agricultural sector, the importance and positive impact of employing organic systems in farming and encouraging youth and women into the sector as a viable livelihood, while improving our

country's food security.

The conference proceedings also included a vibrant panel discussion on 'Valuing Water', the theme of this year's World Water Day. Participating in the panel discussions were Dr Dave Cassie of the University of the Southern Caribbean (USC); Dr Angelle Bullard-Roberts also of USC; Mr. Denny Dipchansingh, Conservator of Forests, Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries; Mr. Juan Andrade, Director at Flying Tree Environmental Management; Mrs. Sian Cuffy-Young, Founder/CEO Siel Environmental; Ms. Daphne Parris, Education Officer of the Cashew Gardens Community Council and moderator Ms. Avril Alexander, Project Manager of the Adopt A River Programme. Panellists shared their vision for a water secure Trinidad and Tobago and endorsed the need for education, raised awareness and action by all stakeholders for the protection and improvement of our water resources and by extension, our environment.

All proceedings from the conference can be viewed on the AARP's Facebook and YouTube pages.



**Honorable Minister of Public Utilities,
Marvin Gonzales**



**Dr. Lennox Sealy,
Executive Director, WASA**



**Keith Meade,
Senior Manager, Water Resources Agency (WRA)**



**Keynote Speaker: Dr. Dave Cassie,
Lecturer USC**



**Mark Forgenie,
Moruga Hill Rice Farmer**



**Luke Pounder,
Environmental Activist**

2021 AWARDEES



**Denny Dipchansingh,
Conservator of Forests,
Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries**



**Ann Marie Dardaine,
Former Director, Engineering Division,
Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries**



**Ryan Rampersad,
Vice Chairman,
Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo Regional Corporation**

THE WATER QUALITY MOBILE UNIT

The Adopt A River Programme is pleased to be the recipient of a Mobile Unit donated by the Phoenix Park Gas Processors Limited (PPGPL). Practicality, efficiency, and functionality in the field was the focus and the basis for providing such a Unit to the AARP as part of PPGPL's corporate social responsibility as well as their commitment as an Adopter.

The Mobile Unit is a converted Mitsubishi 24-seater maxi, outfitted as a lab with audio/visual aids and other materials with the aim to: facilitate on the road water quality sampling and testing; support outreach activities and educational initiatives; raise awareness of issues facing our rivers and watersheds, and

highlight our role and responsibility as citizens in improving the status of our rivers and watersheds. It is also fueled by CNG which is a more environmentally friendly fuel source. The Mobile Unit will be put to good use by the AARP to reach out to communities across Trinidad and Tobago.

The brief handover ceremony of the Mobile Unit was held on Tuesday 27th April 2021 at the Sports and Cultural Club at WASA's Head Office in St. Joseph. President of PPGPL Mr. Dominic Rampersad indicated that the donation of the Mobile Unit was a contribution towards environmental sustainability for current and future generations. Senior

Manager at the Water Resources Agency Mr. Keith Meade and WASA's Executive Director Dr Lennox Sealy, praised PPGPL for their recognition of the importance of our country's water resources and for investing in the advancement of Integrated Water Resources Management throughout.

Also in attendance was Mrs. Elsa Lara-Joseph, Team Lead, Public Relations for PPGPL; Mr. Daniel Plenty, Senior Manager, Corporate Communications WASA; Ms. Avril Alexander, Project Manager, AARP; Ms. Alisia James-Perez, Communication Officer, AARP and supporting staff of AARP and WASA.



Dominic Rampersad,
President of PPGPL



Dr. Lennox Sealy,
Executive Director, WASA



Keith Meade,
Senior Manager, WRA



AARP Project Manager Avril Alexander, Dominic Rampersad and Dr. Lennox Sealy cut the ribbon



A look inside the Mobile Unit

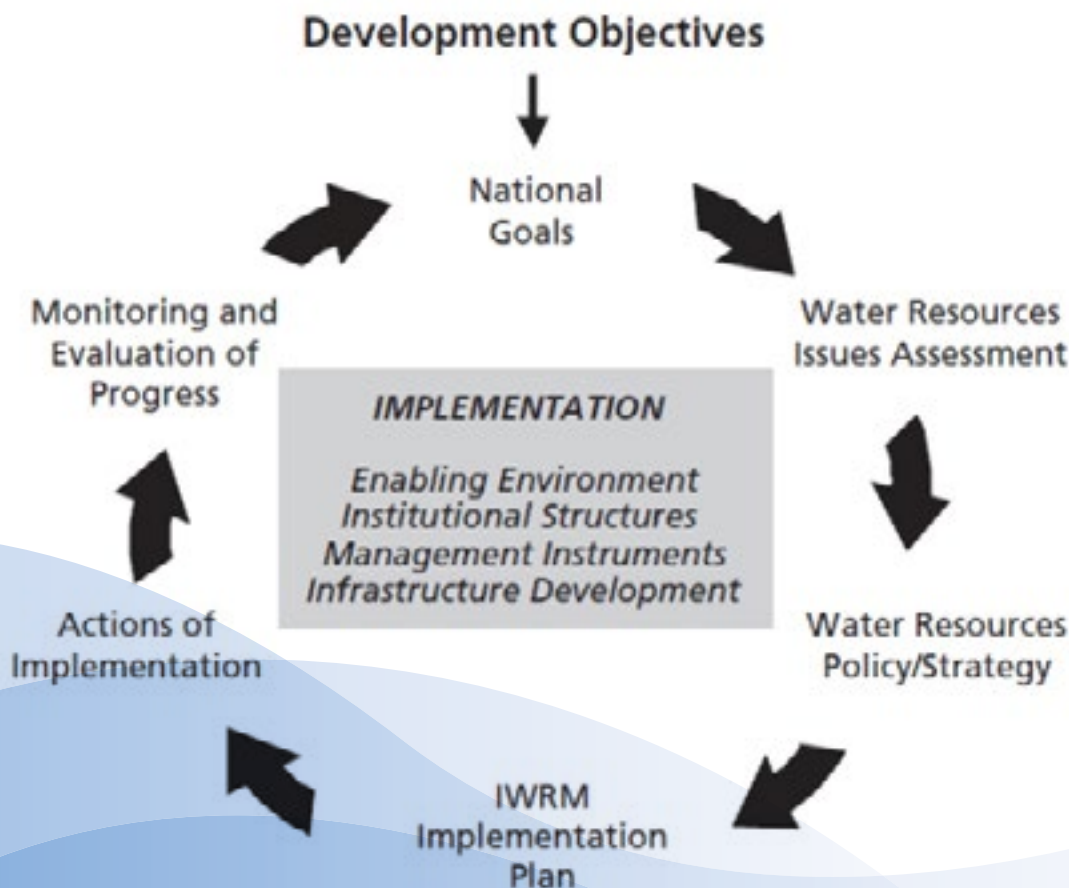
MANAGING OUR WATER RESOURCES

Most of Trinidad and Tobago's portable water supply (60%) comes from surface water sources such as rivers and streams. It is important that we manage the activities that take place within our watershed so that the quality of water is good and safe for consumption, as well as to provide the requisite quantities of water for economic activities and ecosystem services. There are a number of agencies and institutions involved in the planning, management and execution of water resources management functions. These include: the Environmental Management Authority (EMA), Ministry of Health (MoH), Ministry of Agriculture Land and Fisheries (MoALF), Tobago House of Assembly (THA), Town and Country Planning Division (T&CPD), Drainage Division (DD), Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries, Ministry of Local Government, Institute of Marine Affairs (IMA), Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA), and the Water Resources Agency (WRA). Each of these organizations has its own mandate however the sustainable management of our water resources requires coordination and cooperation among all stakeholders. An Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) approach

is needed.

Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) "is a process which promotes the coordinated development and management of water, land and related resources, in order to maximize the resultant economic and social welfare in an equitable manner without compromising the sustainability of vital ecosystems" (Global Water Partnership). IWRM is a concept applied globally and is based on the three principles of Social Equity, Economic Efficiency and Environmental Sustainability. Considering these principles means answering the following questions:

- **How will my decision/ action affect access for other users to water or the benefits from its use?**
- **Will my decision/ action result in the 'most efficient use of the available financial & water resources'?**
- **How will my decision/ action affect the functioning of natural systems?**





St. Joseph River

With the aim of creating the enabling environment for IWRM in Trinidad and Tobago a National IWRM Strategy was developed in 2000 followed by a National Integrated Water Resources Management Policy (NIWRMP) in 2005. The draft Policy was since revised in 2016 under the Water Sector Improvement initiative of the Ministry of Public Utilities. The intent of the existing NIWRMP is to unify the various initiatives related to water and provide a strong direction and vision for the effective management of the nation's water resources in an integrated and sustainable manner. Corresponding with the Policy, the Water Resources Agency developed an Integrated Water Resources Management Plan to address the specific challenges affecting water resources such as pollution and water treatment issues. Some corrective actions identified by the Plan included:

- **Public education and awareness**
- **Watershed rehabilitation**
- **Legislation**
- **Community governance**
- **Water quality monitoring**

The legal, institutional and management frameworks for IWRM are currently under consideration by the Ministry of Public Utilities and the Water and Sewerage Authority as they seek to modernize and improve the water sector. Some of the IWRM principles which will be useful in guiding this process nationally include:

- 1. Water resources will be managed on the basis of river basins in an integrated fashion, with a continued and deliberate effort to maintain and restore ecosystem functioning within catchments and coastal and marine ecosystems**

with which they are connected.

- 2. Water resources management will be intrinsically linked to planning and environmental management.**
- 3. Socio-economic planning, environmental management, and water resources management must be conducted in harmony with each other.**
- 4. Water resources management will be participatory and responsibility for water resources management will be assigned to local communities and non-governmental entities to the maximum extent practicable.**
- 5. Responsibility for water resources policy, planning, and regulation will be kept distinct and separate from the responsibility for water resource development and distribution.**

The Adopt A River Programme was established on the foundation of IWRM principles as a managerial approach to improve the health of watersheds in Trinidad and Tobago and seeks to address water resources management at the local level with the involvement of all stakeholders. The renewed focus on IWRM nationally is a positive step in even broader participation and responsibility for our rivers and water resources.

We at the AARP will continue to do our part to raise awareness and engage communities in activities that will lead to improved health and rehabilitation of watersheds throughout Trinidad and Tobago.

WATER WARRIORS ON THE MOVE AGAIN

During this period, in our continued quest to bring awareness and keep our soldiers motivated and updated with water monitoring, Water Warrior's training was again conducted with Nature Seekers and the Sangre Grande Conservation and Awareness Group at the Nature Seekers conservation centre in Matura from February 17th to 19th 2021.



AARP Training Session with the Chaguaramas Development Authority



Training was also conducted with the Aripo Police Youth Club on January 30th and Dinsley/Trincity Police Youth Club on March 6th.

In conjunction with the trainings, AARP staff also conducted water monitoring exercises at various rivers within the watersheds both in Trinidad and Tobago. Some areas include Courland in Tobago; Talparo; Gran Chemin, Moruga; Maracas; Santa Cruz; Sangre Grande; Maraval and Diego Martin.

CLEANING UP T&T

Clean up exercises assist in our drive to not only keep our environment clean, but also in keeping our watersheds free of pollutants which compromises our waterways. Our aim is to increase our chances of attaining healthier watersheds and creating higher levels of useable resources. Our continued partnerships with communities and various like-minded groups, ensure that our mandate of watershed management is maintained throughout our beautiful twin island of Trinidad and Tobago.

ARIPO



CHAGVILLE BEACH, CHAGUARAMAS



LA PASTORA, SANTA CRUZ



MATURA



THE RENEWED SOUTHERN HOTSPOT

Gran Chemin also called Moruga Beach, is located on the southern coast of the island of Trinidad. In 1498, Christopher Columbus made landfall at this very spot. The beach has become an extremely popular spot for vacationers and visitors, ideal for its calm and shallow waters.

The AARP has infused new life into the Moruga landscape and in particular the Gran Chemin area. This was accomplished through clean ups, outreaches and the installation of no litter and beautification signs. Recently the demonstration and installation of plastic sequestration objects such as benches and planters were provided by Flying Tree Environmental Management and United Nations Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme (UN GEF-SGP).



RAINWATER HARVESTER HANDOVER

Rainwater harvesting is the collection and storage of rain into vessels of varying sizes for a variety of uses. These include watering gardens and house plants, tending to livestock, flushing toilets and other domestic use through proper treatment for potability.

The AARP installed a 1000g Rainwater Harvester (RWH) at the Mundo Nuevo Roman Catholic School, located at John Dillon Trace. The Programme was pleased to officially handover the RWH to the principal and teachers at the school on Monday 8th March 2021. It is the first of many that our Unit hope to install after consultation and assessment of other schools and communities throughout T&T.



Ribbon Cutting for the RWH



Principal and teachers of the school



Epic Club representative and AARP Team

LOPINOT COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Community meetings and consultations are a necessary step in establishing and identifying issues that are specific to the community and present workable solutions. On Tuesday 23rd February 2021, the Adopt A River team participated in a community consultation in Lopinot which was hosted by the Member of Parliament for Lopinot/Bon Air West and Minister of Public Utilities, Mr. Marvin Gonzales.

This consultation brought together key stakeholders in water, including representatives from the Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA), the Water Resources Agency (WRA) and the Adopt A River Program (AARP) to discuss the water supply issues in the community and how their access to potable water would be improved. Speaking at the event WASA's Executive Director, Dr. Lennox Sealy, assured the community that their concerns were being addressed and that WASA was actively seeking to improve water supply to the area. Ms. Shaira Ali, Senior Manager (North East Operations), WASA shared the findings of investigations into new water sources available to the community and the plan to construct a new intake in the La Pastora area which would add at least 75,000 gallons to the already existing supply. This would significantly improve the community's potable supply. Ms. Avril Alexander, Project Manager, AARP outlined the Programme's plans to work with the community to improve the management of their rivers and water resources. This includes training for farmers on good agricultural practices. Water Warriors Training, and water quality monitoring.



Lopinot Consultation Team



Honourable Marvin Gonzales addressing audience



Members of the community

AARP OUTREACH HIGHLIGHTS

FOOD BASKET INTERNATIONAL, ARIMA



WEST BEES SUPERMARKET, AROUCA



AARP OUTREACH HIGHLIGHTS (Continued)

PORT MALL, TOBAGO



MASSY EXPRESS, MARAVAL



MARAVAL YOUTH CLUB



Check our pages below for our
Water Conservation Tips & AARP Tidbits, Activites and Events.
Full Conference Highlights available on Youtube.

Facebook: **Adopt A River Trinidad & Tobago**

Instagram: **@adoptarivertt**

Youtube: **Adopt A River TT**