

The BroadCAST

A Quarterly Newsletter of the
Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism



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Director's Cut

As the Atlantic hurricane season winds down, we have a lot to be grateful for. Apart from the islands of Martinique and St. Lucia, the Yucatan peninsula of Mexico and Nicaragua, which experienced effects from Hurricanes Dean and Felix, mainly, most other Caribbean islands escaped major devastation. We have to thank the strong winds which persisted in the upper atmosphere and which made it very difficult for the development of hurricanes. Instead, the Caribbean region experienced heavy rainfall which resulted in various levels of flooding at many destinations. Conse-

quently, we have also had reports of increased cases of dengue fever spread by the proliferation of the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito.

The larger point being made here is that we should not overlook the importance of understanding and preparation for all categories of hazards. This is so essential for minimizing operational risks.

This edition of the *BroadCAST* informs on various Caribbean-based agencies in the forefront on work on disaster management and risk reduction.

On page 4, we have provided an overview of the National Geographic *Traveler* magazine's latest rat-

ings report on tourism at island destinations across the world. See how Caribbean island destinations were rated.

We also provide in the usual sections, useful information on sunscreen products and a summary of sustainable tourism activities around the region.

As usual, we invite you to share your stories and best practices with us and express our sincere thanks to those who take the time to do so!

Send your questions &/or comments to cast@cha-cast.com.

Featuring: Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Activities Across the Caribbean

The recent announcement that the Nobel Peace prize was jointly awarded to Al Gore and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has served to keep climate change issues at the forefront. What is important for us here in the Caribbean to

understand is that global warming is predicted to increase the intensity and frequency of extreme natural and weather-related events e.g. major hurricanes, droughts, floods etc. Small islands are particularly vulnerable to extreme events which trans-

lates into increased risk of loss of life, property and a disruption in business operations. If there ever has been a time when the Caribbean tourism industry should pay attention to disaster risk preparedness and resilience, it is now!

Continued ►



Green Globe Company Standard Training Course

November 12th - 16th 2007
Barataria, Trinidad

— SEE P. 3

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◀ So what is meant by the terms "risk", "preparedness" and "resilience"? According to the UN's International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (www.isdr.org),

- **Risk** is the probability of harmful consequences or expected losses resulting from interactions between natural or human-induced hazards and vulnerable conditions.
- **Preparedness** involves pre-disaster activities within the context of disaster risk management which are based on sound risk analysis e.g. development of preventative policies, plans, strategies, warning systems etc.
- **Resilience** refers to the capacity of a system, community or society, potentially exposed to hazards, to adapt.

Without overloading the reader with definitions, the idea is to ensure that people and businesses are sufficiently endowed with the capacity to respond and adequately recover from natural or man-made hazards and disasters, and to return to normalcy within short time frames.

Because of the well known vulnerability of Caribbean destinations to hurricanes in particular (witness the devastating 2004 & 2005 seasons), much activity, resources and priority is now

being placed on disaster risk management and mitigation.

Disaster management is a hierarchical activity. This means that leadership and authority must be clearly established for mitigation strategies to be successful. Within this context, governments must accept responsibility for developing policies and promoting sound strategies to reduce vulnerability to disasters across destinations.

The Caribbean has a relatively unique arrangement for disaster management at the regional level. Leading the regional effort is CARICOM's Caribbean Disaster and Emergency Response Agency (CDERA) based in Bridgetown, Barbados (www.cdera.org). It is an intergovernmental agency established in 1991 with 16 member states. It's original mandate calls for development of a regional mechanism and capability to assist member states with their disaster response and recovery needs. This has now expanded to pre-disaster preparedness and risk reduction strategies; advising on disaster legislation, training and capacity building, education and public awareness, risk, hazard and vulnerability mapping and early warning systems, among other services.

The Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) with its 32 member states also assists

and advises on disaster preparedness and management in the tourism industry (www.onecaribbean.org). It frequently works in collaboration with CDERA, the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Caribbean Hotel Association (CHA), promoting sound disaster management strategies for the regional tourism industry.

The OAS (www.oas.org) with its 35 member states across the Americas is promoting a multi-hazard approach to disaster management, with its "Multi-Hazard Contingency Planning Manual for the Caribbean Tourism Sector" in collaboration with CDERA, CTO and CHA. At the request of member states training workshops have already been conducted at Caribbean destinations.

Established in 1994, the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) with its 25 member countries (www.acs-aec.org), has appointed a Special Committee on natural disasters which focuses mainly on fostering cooperation between the bodies responsible for disaster planning and response in the region. A main objective is to promote institutional strengthening through cooperative agreements and by providing prevention and

mitigation tools.

The Caribbean Hotel Association (www.caribbeanhotelsassociation.com) and its environmental division, CAST (www.cha-cast.com) have also been promoting preparedness planning for many years to the Caribbean hotel industry. CHA's "Hurricane Procedures Manual" has been extensively used in workshops conducted by CAST over a decade and is widely disseminated to regional hotels and institutions.

CAST is currently collaborating with the United Nations Environment Programme's Division of Technology Industry and Economics (UNEP/DTIE) based in Paris, France to develop a handbook on disaster risk reduction for tourism destinations. This Handbook will adapt UNEP/DTIE's much touted, Awareness and Preparedness for Emergencies at the Local Level (APELL) method and approach for disaster risk reduction, to the tourism industry. The Handbook which will be applicable to local tourism communities, will be available in April 2008.

For more information please see the listed websites or contact CAST at cast@cha-cast.com.

Leading Lights...in their words

The Truth About Suncare Products - Tamara Croes, Green Island Products, Curacao

Many products claim to protect against sunburn as well as sun damage, but the truth is that very few sunscreens actually do this. Most chemical sunscreens protect only against UV-B damage, but give no or scarce protection against the much more harmful UV-A rays. So they are actually removing the skin's warning mechanism (redness) but not the damage itself.

A second problem is that the "SPF factor" is only valid when the product is used in the way it was tested. Standard testing usually uses 2 grams of product per square cm of skin. Research shows that actual use is seldom more than 0.25 grams per square cm of skin. This reduces the protection value of the product significantly.

Does this mean you should not use suncare products? No, you definitely should, if you are outside for any length of time. There are

natural sunscreens with zinc oxide and titanium dioxide, which protect against UV-A as well as UV-B sunray damage. These sunscreens provide a physical barrier against damage.

Look also at the ingredient listing for the order in which they are listed: the ingredient which is mostly used is usually listed first. So if the sunscreen lists mainly the fragrance and the parabens (which are chemical preservatives), chances are there is not much protection in the bottle.



CAST News...

CHA's Small Hotel's Retreat convened September 27th—29th 2007 was a great success. CAST conducted two round table sessions on business continuity and energy conservation, which were oversubscribed by participating small hoteliers and other industry experts.

CAST signed an MOU recently, for cooperation with the United Nations Environment Program's Division of Industry Technology and Economics in Paris, France, for work on a disaster risk handbook for the tourism industry. CAST Director, Deirdre Shurland and expert consultant, Pieter de Jong visited the UNEP office in Paris in October 2007 to discuss the technical content of the handbook (see photo above right).



CAST Director, Deirdre Shurland (2nd from right) and expert consultant Pieter de Jong (4th from left) with the UNEP program team in Paris, France in October 2007

CAST in association with EC3 Global - managers of the Green Globe program and major sponsor, the Trinidad and Tobago Tourism Development Company Limited (TDC) will jointly host a *Green Globe Company Standard Training* course for auditors and participants (4 & 5 days respectively). The training will be conducted in Trinidad. Guy Chester of EC3 Global will conduct the training. Costs for

"participants" is US\$900 and for "auditors" is US\$1145 which includes daily lunch, materials and ground transportation. See the CAST website www.cha-cast.com for registration form and details. Deadline for receipt is November 8th 2007.

CAST participated in a cooperative mission and study tour in Jamaica in October 2007, organized by PAHO for representatives of the

Sistema Integración de Centro America (SICA). The representatives learned of the best Caribbean example of integration in the health and tourism sectors, in Jamaica, providing key solutions to chronic health and safety issues, including prevention of illness and disease outbreaks, HIV/AIDs education and sensitization of hotel workers. The mission was organized as part of a larger program strategy of PAHO/WHO on health and tourism in the Americas.

Regional Sustainable Tourism Round Up...

DOMINICA

Jungle Bay Resort & Spa was recently awarded the prestigious Condé Nast Traveler World Savers Awards 2007, in the category - Small Hotels & Resorts. The award ceremony was held during the World Savers Congress at Gotham Hall in New York City. This Congress featured an international forum for top travel industry leaders and executives discussing key travel issues including social and economic responsibility.

Excerpting from a press release from the Discover Dominica Tourism Authority, Jungle Bay Resort & Spa was "recognized for its responsible tourism practices & community programs including donating more than \$22,000 to the House of Hope, a local orphanage and residential care facility for the physically and mentally disabled and launching a fund that lends up to \$12,000 to underprivileged youth and farmers to start businesses that work with the resort. Additionally, the Resort was built using local labor and materials, all but four of Jungle Bay's 59 employees are from Dominica, and the Resort only purchases local fish and produce!"

Congratulations! For more details, see www.junglebaydominica.com.

BARBADOS

The Caribbean Tourism Organiza-

tion (CTO) has developed a **Draft Regional Policy Framework** for more sustainable tourism development in the Caribbean. The Policy is available to the interested public for comment and feedback until January 31st 2008 and available from the CTO website at: www.onecaribbean.org.

ST. JOHN, USVI

Maho Bay Camps, renowned for its award-winning ecotourism resort, is now featuring handmade arts and crafts in its gift shop made from recycled bottles and textiles. Featured products include a glass starfish which is hand-blown from recycled glass made at the onsite Maho Glass Studio. For details see: www.maho.org.

CARIBBEAN

National Geographic *Traveler* magazine recently published its latest ratings report for island destinations. According to Editor, Jonathan B. Tourtellot, "The results show that beach-blessed islands draw sun-and-sand resort tourism development that can get out of hand quickly, although there are exceptions. Multiple cruise ship crowds can also overwhelm an island, transforming it."

So how were Caribbean island destinations rated? Out of the 26 island destinations rated, about 40% were described as experiencing "minor difficulties". Among these were Dominica, the Grenadines, St. John, USVI, Anguilla, Ne-

vis, the Bahamas Out Islands, Bermuda, Bonaire and Tobago. Others were scored in the categories "Moderate Trouble" and "Serious Trouble". Islands making the latter category and at the bottom of the chart were, notably, St. Thomas, USVI, Providenciales, Turks & Caicos and Jamaica. For details see:

www.nationalgeographic.com/traveler.

ABTA the Travel Association, recently launched its **Reduce My Footprint (RMF)** tool to help consumers and the industry understand and reduce impacts on the environment.

RMF explains in simple terms what the issues are, where the impacts are and puts travel in context. It encourages people to think about their daily activities and demonstrates how to reduce the impact of those activities by simple measures such as reducing energy use, waste etc. RMF also allows people to calculate their carbon emissions from flying, driving etc., and contribute to offsetting those emissions by investing in a range of emissions reduction programmes ranging from UN Kyoto level Certified Emissions Reductions, through Verified Emissions Reductions to destination projects.

Notably, part of the money in the RMF investment mix is put into destination projects, mostly with the Travel Foundation with quantifiable carbon benefits. In the RMF mix there are clear benefits the offsetting investment will bring not only to high level carbon reduction projects but also to the kind of destinations people are likely to go to on holiday. For details, see www.reducemyfootprint.travel).

News! News! News!

Do you have a news item to share? Send a brief summary to: cast@cha-cast.com

Or contact us at: Tel: 787-725-9139; Fax: 787-725-9108

The BroadCAST is a quarterly publication of the Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism (CAST), the environmental division of the:



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