



(OECS Secretariat, Castries, St Lucia) The OECS Secretariat will host an inaugural seminar on Protected Areas at the Coconut Bay Resort and Spa, in Vieux Fort, Saint Lucia. The seminar will take place over a period of three days from July 5-7 2010.

A number of persons are expected to participate in the seminar representing environmental agencies, OECS government departments, environmental NGOs, environmental consultants and scientists, international donor agencies, from across the OECS region and beyond.

The impetus of the Seminar is derived from the need to share outputs of and lessons learnt from the OECS Protected Areas and Associated Livelihoods (OPAAL) Project, as part of efforts to foster effective management of biodiversity through the establishment of a comprehensive system of protected areas in Member States of the OECS.

The Seminar is built around a series of six themes that are significant to protected areas. These are:

1. ***Awareness of Protected Areas: lessons from survey on Knowledge Attitudes and Practices***
2. ***Achieving Effective Monitoring and Evaluation of Protected Areas with Limited Resources***
3. ***Innovative Financial Solutions to Managing Protected Areas***
4. ***Conserving Biodiversity through Protected Areas***
5. ***Management Planning for, and Management of, Protected Areas***
6. ***Enhancing Sustainable Livelihoods through Protected Areas***

OECS to Host First Ever Seminar on Protected Areas

Written by Media
Friday, 02 July 2010 13:07 -

The announcement of the seminar has generated tremendous interest and enthusiasm across the OECS and the CARICOM region with some 87 persons so far registering to attend.

The OECS Secretariat, in the meantime, has drawn experts and scholars from the entire CARICOM region to address the Seminar in order to ensure a rich and varied exchange of experiences as it seeks a way forward for the continued development and viability of protected areas. In addition to resource persons from the OECS region, who are down to present on the various themes, resource persons have been confirmed from Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, Trinidad, Belize and as far as the USA.

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Officials at the OECS Secretariat anticipate vibrant and stimulating deliberations on all of the topics on the agenda of the Seminar, given the broad perspectives expected to be generated by the keynote speakers and other selected respondents.

Another key component of the Seminar will be an exhibition, focusing on environmental management. The exhibition will be mounted on the grounds of the Coconut Bay Resort and Spa and will feature exhibitions from the Environment Department of the OECS Secretariat; the Department of Fisheries, Saint Lucia, the Caribbean Environmental Health Institute (CEHI) and the Saint Lucia National Trust.

The Seminar will end with tours of the Pointe Sable Environmental Protection Area, the Millet Nature Trail, and the Soufriere Marine Management Area, three key examples of Protected Areas in Saint Lucia.

The Seminar is being held as part of the OPAAL project, a five year development project, being executed by the OECS Secretariat through its Environment and Sustainable Development Unit (ESDU), in partnership with the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (the World Bank) acting as an Implementing Agency of the GEF; and the Fond Français de l'Environnement Mondial (FFEM) of the Government of France.

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