

## OECS TO HOST SERIES OF SEMINARS FOR THE MEDIA ON PROTECTED AREAS

Written by Media

Friday, 07 January 2011 09:18 - Last Updated Friday, 07 January 2011 09:20

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**(OECS Secretariat, Castries, Saint Lucia)** The OECS Secretariat will host a series of seminars on the role of protected areas in biodiversity conservation for the media in January and February 2011 across all independent States of the OECS.

The first such media seminar will be held for the Saint Lucia media from January 10-11, 2011, at the Bay Gardens Hotel, Rodney Bay. Following this seminar in Saint Lucia, five similar seminars will be held in the other independent States of the OECS.

The seminars are expected to bring together representative journalists from all news media organisations across Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, St Kitts and Nevis, Grenada, Saint Lucia, and St Vincent and the Grenadines.

The agenda for the seminars is a mix of presentations from well known regional stalwarts of biodiversity conservation; open discussions by the media on challenges of coverage; introduction to a media tool kit on biodiversity conservation; a media tour to a selected protected area; preparation of features on various angles on protected areas; and a pledge from journalists for increased coverage.

An estimated 15 media persons have been targeted for each seminar where they will also receive a series of resources on biodiversity conservation, including a directory of experts, a photo database, a bank of sound bites, and guidance on good angles for protected area stories.

The OECS Secretariat anticipates that the seminars will not only help to strengthen and increase much needed media coverage on protected areas and biodiversity conservation in the region, but will also help to create a cadre of journalists in the OECS, who are equipped with sound knowledge for evidence based coverage of this sensitive, yet significant area.

More and more environmental preservation and biodiversity conservation are becoming key areas of focus all over the world, and as small island States, there is an urgent need for us to intensify our efforts at fostering good environmental practices. The media is seen as a critical conduit for sensitizing and educating the OECS publics on such issues and particularly in light of the current and predicted impacts of climate change on the region.

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A key component of the Seminar will be a tour to a protected area in each country where journalists and media persons will have a first hand look at a working protected area, and will have the opportunity to ask questions of field experts in order to develop a feature story on the visited area for presentation and subsequent publishing.

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.

Seminars are scheduled as follows:

<b>January 10 – 11</b>	Bay Gardens Hotel, Saint Lucia
<b>January 13 – 14</b>	Department of Forestry, Dominica
<b>January 17 – 18</b>	Hospitality and Training Institute, Antigua and Barbuda
<b>January 20 - 21</b>	Foundation for National Development, St Kitts and Nevis

(to be confirmed)

<b>February 7-8</b>	Murray Heights Hotel, St Vincent and the Grenadines
<b>February 10 -11</b>	Grenada National Stadium Grenada

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