

November 30, 2007

Andrew Bruckner, Ph.D.  
NOAA Fisheries Federal Program Officer  
Office of Habitat Conservation  
1315 East-West Highway  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Re: NOAA GCRF Program Agreement # NA04NMF4630331  
"Building Capacity for St. Croix East End Marine Park"  
TNC Reference # 1710053805, "EEMP1"  
Final Report October 1, 2004- August 31, 2007

Dear Dr. Bruckner,

Please see the enclosed final report for the NOAA GCFR Program grant "Building Capacity for St. Croix East End Marine Park", Agreement # NA04NMF4630331. This final report covers the activities conducted during the award period of October 31, 2004 through August 31, 2007.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns. I may be reached at (340) 718-5575, ext. 203 or via e-mail at [jeanne\\_brown@tnc.org](mailto:jeanne_brown@tnc.org).

Sincerely,



Jeanne Brown  
Coastal Conservation Program Manager  
SE Caribbean Program

“Building Capacity for St. Croix East End Marine Park”  
NOAA GCRF Program Agreement # NA04NMF4630331

TNC Reference #:1710053805 “EEMP1”      FINAL REPORT      Period Ending: 8/31/07      Date Submitted: 11/30/07

**NOAA GCRF Program Grant- Final Report**  
October 1, 2004 –August 31, 2007

The GCRC grant entitled “Building Capacity for St. Croix East End Marine Park” outlines several activities that were aimed at increasing local capacity to manage the East End Marine Park (STXEEMP) and assist in the implementation of priority projects as identified in the Park Management Plan developed by The Nature Conservancy in 2002. In order to achieve the goal of increasing local capacity, The Nature Conservancy designed a program working in collaboration with the Division of Coastal Zone Management (CZM) to increase the commitment of local stakeholders in the park’s activities. Three major activities were the focus of this grant: 1) implementation of a marine internship program to provide staff support to the STXEEMP office, 2) facilitation of the employment of a local community member as a Park Ranger/ Interpreter for the Park, and 3) development of a Volunteer Support Network for the STXEEMP. A summary of the objectives achieved for each of these activities is illustrated below.

**Marine Internship Program:**

Three rounds of interns worked with the STXEEMP from October, 2004 through July 2007 (six interns total). These interns assisted the Park Biology and the Education and Outreach coordinator for the Park by conducting monitoring activities and all relevant field and outreach work. In this period, the interns assisted in the following:

- Development of a Biological Monitoring Protocol including a Seagrass Monitoring Plan which was intended for incorporation into a formal monitoring plan for the STXEEMP.
- Development of a Resource Use / User Monitoring Protocol to collect baseline data on the amount and use of Park resources and perceptions that locals have regarding the Park.
- Outreach materials including an Outreach Guide for use by education and outreach practitioners such as local school teachers, summer camp leaders, and Park Education and Outreach coordinators.
- Support of the development of a STXEEMP web page including the design and implementation of a “Kids Corner” (<http://www.stxeastendmarinepark.org/>)
- Development of a “Coral Alert” program to inform local stakeholders about a coral bleaching reporting program to be able to better monitor bleaching events as they occur.
- Establishment of a sustainable financing strategy for the Park.
- Data management of spawning aggregation research in the Virgin Islands.
- Leading summer camps for local school children, creating a curriculum for a three week summer camp (Camp KEEP), coordinating learning activities, and giving presentations in classrooms.
- The development and promotion of mascots used in presentations and overall conservation campaigns promoting marine stewardship.
- Setting up and operating booths and other displays to highlight the activities of The Nature Conservancy, the STXEEMP, and other marine conservation efforts at various environmental fairs such as at Eco Fair on St. Croix and at the CRTF meeting on St. Thomas in 2006.
- Creation of a “snorkel journal” and fact sheets for children to promote snorkel safely and raise awareness of coral reefs.
- Developing strategies for a media campaign to raise awareness of marine resources conservation in the USVI, including a media survey and plan for the dissemination of messages and materials.
- Coordination of an Interpretive Host Training for STXEEMP Park Rangers and staff.

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- Presentation of a report and poster documenting the historical processes and partnerships involved with the creation and implementation of the STXEEMP for the 59<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the GCFI (Nov. 2006).

The goal of this internship program was to provide support and build the capacity of the STXEEMP staff. This included providing field assistance for field work and monitoring activities by the Park Biologist, to provide GIS support for the identification of major sources of sedimentation to the park and the compilation and analysis of water quality monitoring data. These last field monitoring objectives were not achieved during this award period in large part due to staffing limitations at the STXEEMP office and the prioritization of needs of the STXEEMP during this time period.

**Marine Park Ranger/Interpreter:**

TNC contracted one of the Marine Park Ranger / Interpreter candidates to work with Park staff for a period of seven months to receive training for ranger activities and marine conservation efforts while the hiring process progressed with the CZM in St. Croix. The candidate has undergone exposure to coral reef conservation through attendance at the US Coral Reef Task Force. He participated in a “Host Interpretative Training” with the National Association of Interpreters. He also received training for the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) approved Operator of Uninspected Passenger Vehicle or 6-Pak boat captain license. The candidate assisted the outreach and education intern in the design and launching of a comprehensive marine resource stewardship program. He has also been working to help create an interpretive guide for the STXEEMP.

The overarching goal of this strategy was to provide employment and training for a local stakeholder who would then in turn be employed by the CZM. The arrangement that was made between TNC and the CZM involved TNC contracting one of the candidates to work with Park staff for a period of time until officially hired as a Marine Park Ranger / Interpreter. To date, the candidate has not been officially employed at the CZM due to severe delays in the formal hiring process; however the candidate has been trained and is prepared to take the position.

**Volunteer Support Network:**

TNC staff and interns have given numerous presentations for local dive groups, business owners, environmental organizations, yacht club members, primary, secondary and tertiary school groups, homeowners associations, and the local Boy Scouts chapter to solicit support and participation in marine conservation activities in the STXEEMP, around the island of St. Croix and throughout the Virgin Islands. TNC organized volunteer participation in a clean up of the Great Pond, a saline pond and mangrove lagoon located on the south shore of the STXEEMP, as well as tree-planting activities and other trash clean-up events in and around the Park.

A territory-wide Marine Protected Areas Advisory Committee was established, of which the STXEEMP Advisory Committee (STXEEMPAC) is a sub-committee. By-laws have been drafted, officers elected, and meetings held to establish a work plan and help draft the rules and regulations for the Park. TNC staff and the interns provided support to the Advisory Committee and efforts to finalize and obtain approval of the Parks’ rules and regulations.

The goal of the development of a Volunteer Support Network was to increase awareness and support of the STXEEMP by actively involving local community members in the management of the STXEEMP. Through the multiple presentations given throughout the island, this goal was achieved. Further, preliminary lists of contact information of community groups has been compiled with the intention of involving interested parties in a formal network for future activities. The other goal for the development of a Volunteer Support Network was so that

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regular feedback to the STXEEMP staff would be provided in response to management approaches and actions. This was accomplished through the formation and activities of the STXEEMPAC.

**Summary of Funded Activities:**

For the most part, funds from this grant were used to support the hiring of a local stakeholder for a seven month training and orientation phase in order to build local capacity. Funds from this agreement were also used to support the purchase of a research vessel to be able supplement in-water monitoring activities within the boundaries of the STXEEMP. Materials and supplies for activities performed to generate public interest and involvement in the Park came from this grant. Finally, a percentage of the salaries of the TNC personnel who coordinated the activities of this grant and the stipends and reimbursable expenses of the interns were paid for by this grant.