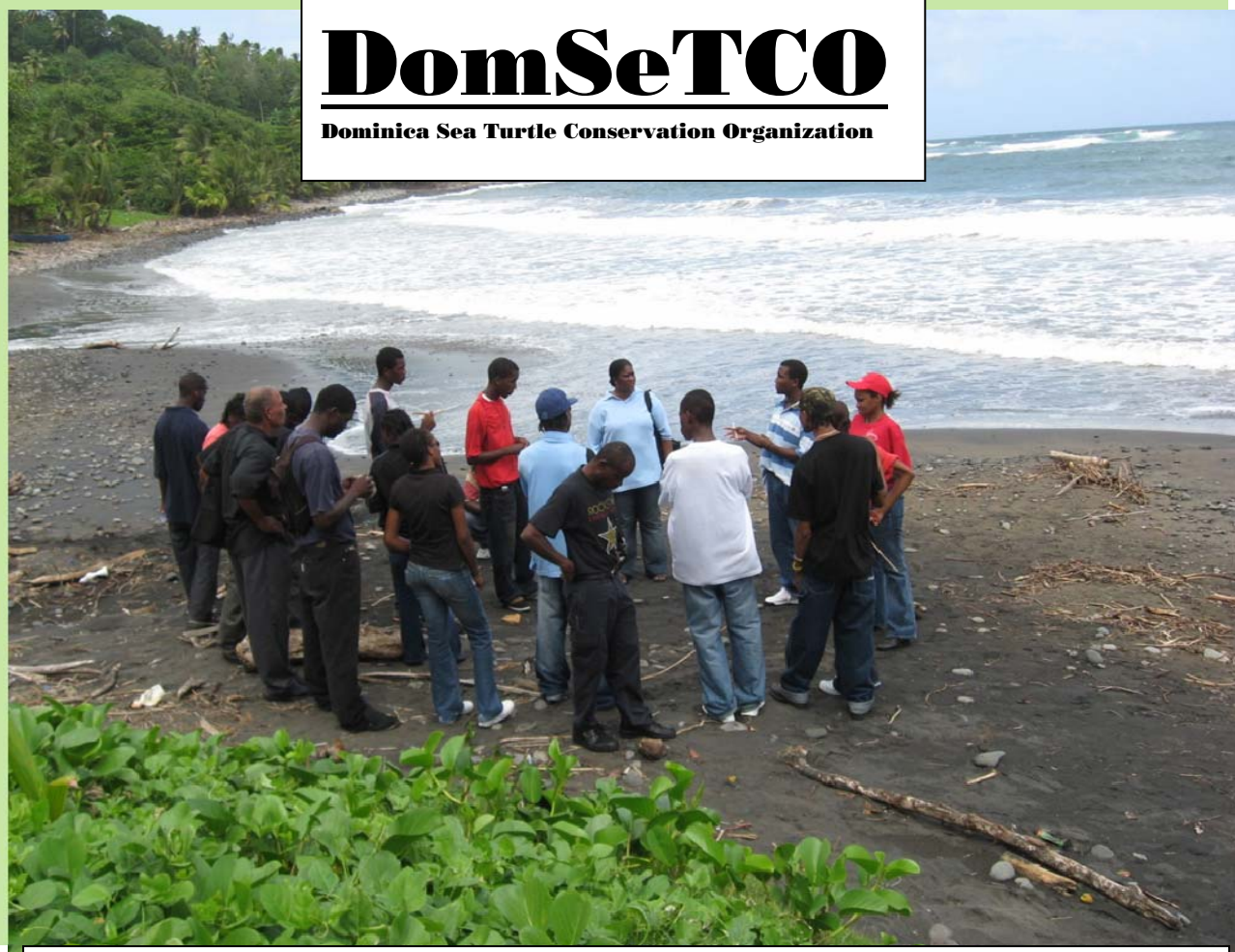


# **DomSeTCO**

**Dominica Sea Turtle Conservation Organization**



**A Training Project Implemented by DomSeTCO, in Partnership with WIDECAST and Nature Seekers, and Funded by USAID**

## **Basic Course: Final Report** **Sea Turtle Community Based Eco-tourism,** **Tour Guiding and Management**

*11 - 15 September & 1 - 12 October 2007*

**La Plaine Agricultural Training Centre, Commonwealth of Dominica**

**Suzan Lakhan Baptiste and Dennis Sammy (Nature Seekers)**  
**TRAINERS**



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Sea Turtle Conservation Program funded by United States Agency  
for International Development

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## **Cover Photo courtesy of Dennis Sammy**

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## **1. Summary of the Basic Training Course**

This course was designed to create awareness of the skills and knowledge needed to develop and manage community-based sea turtle tour guides. The course was held in two parts at the La Plaine Agricultural Training Centre, Commonwealth of Dominica, during the periods of 11-15 September and 1-12 October 2007.

The community groups that participated in the Basic Training Course were: Laplaine Environmental Advancement and Protection (LEAP), North Eastern Wildlife Conservation Environment Protection and Tours (NEWCEPT), Nature Enhancement Team (NET), and Laplaine New Dimensions (LAND) (see Appendix I).

The structure of the Basic Training Course was in three parts: Tour Development, Tour Preparation and Presentation, and Tour Management (see Appendix II). The purpose of this Basic Training Course was to open the eyes of the participants to the basic skills and activities that can lead to the successful development of an educational turtle experience on the part of paying clientele.

Each participant played an active role in course activities, and each contributed tremendously to the success of the programme. Each participant maintained a keen interest in the programme while they participated as individuals or in groups.

The course provided the opportunity for participants to develop their skills in the preparation of a tour, including preparation of the visitors and the guides. Participants also enhanced their skills in the delivery of the tour service. This level of personal growth is certainly one of the greatest outcomes of the course. Participants also benefited from training in managing guides and, by extension, managing their community groups.

Participants were also led to identify strengths and weaknesses of a tour guide and recommendations were made for improvements, showing that participants knew what qualities to look for in a tour guide.

It was indeed a learning experience for each one of them, including the facilitators! Compared to the first attempt at conducting a tour and their final delivery at the end of the course, there were vast improvements. Posture, clarity, dress, courage, enthusiasm and regurgitation of theoretical knowledge and practical skills learnt were all displayed. The facilitators feel satisfied with the participants' accomplishments and we are confident of the potential for growth and development henceforth in Dominica.

### **Acknowledgments**

The trainers wish to express their appreciation for the tremendous support given by Mr. Errol Harris (WIDECAS Country Coordinator and Chairman, DomSeTCO) and his wife, Marcella Harris. We certainly want to thank them for their enormous assistance during this programme, which could not have been conducted to its successful conclusion without them. We also thank Dr. Karen Eckert (Executive Director, WIDECAS) for her vision and leadership from the beginning of this programme.

## **2. Objectives**

Under the terms of USAID-COTS “Sea Turtle Population Monitoring and Community-based Eco-tourism Program” (Task Order number AFP-1-02-04-00002-00; USAID PRIME CONTRACT NO. AFP-1-00-04-00002-01; SUBCONTRACT Number: AFP-1-02-04-00002-00-WIDECAS-01), “Deliverable No. 1: Community-Based Ecotourism Training”, the subcontractor (WIDECAS) was responsible for providing “formal training” in professional, community-based eco-tourism through two training courses of 5 and 10 days, respectively, offered in Dominica to an estimated 30 participants, including training facilities, and refreshments and food.

In collaboration with the interagency Dominica Sea Turtle Conservation Committee (DomSeTCC) and Facilitators Mr. Dennis Sammy and Mrs. Suzan Lathan Baptiste of Nature Seekers, Trinidad, the objective was successfully met, including selecting and inviting participants and developing a core curriculum to teach participants about tourism expectations, tour guiding, common techniques for guiding on a turtle beach, structure of tours, communication, how to manage group behaviour, safety practices, program management, management of community groups, etc. The Basic Course was also designed to meet the requirements and standards of national certification processes, as required under the Laws of Dominica.

The specific goals achieved by the Basic Course were to train and develop participants from three rural communities in basic sea turtle tour guiding and group (and business) management skills to enable them to:

- 1. Develop a tour customized for each community**
  - a. Improve participants’ knowledge in sea turtle biology and conservation
  - b. Develop fact-finding skills
- 2. Develop and improve the skills in preparation and presentation of the tour**
  - a. Develop strategies to bring about interest and feedback from tour members
  - b. Identify the personality traits of a good tour guide
  - c. Develop strategies for managing and controlling difficult tour groups and individuals
  - d. Demonstrate knowledge of interpersonal skills by role playing different situations
- 3. Develop an understanding of the management of guides and community organisation**
  - a. Develop an understanding of what policies are necessary
  - b. Develop knowledge of techniques in managing guides

## **3. Methods**

The workshop was highly interactive, with extensive sharing of participants’ experiences and knowledge. A wide variety of facilitation techniques were used – including whole group discussions, brainstorming, nominal group technique, small group work, individual reflection, guided facilitation, round-robin with individual and group presentations. The facilitation techniques were used as potential tools for participants to apply in the process of individual and organizational development.



## **4. Course Sessions and Outputs**

### **4.1. Week 1 - Tour Development**

#### **Day I**

The workshop was opened by Mr. Errol Harris, Chair of the Dominica Sea Turtle Conservation Organization (DomSeTCO). Mr. Harris emphasized that DomSeTCO is committed to the conservation of sea turtles and the development of sustainability in Dominica, while incorporating and collaborating with communities as the focus for implementation. He noted that the challenges at the community level are huge, but, with the support of nongovernmental organisations (NGO), we can build the capacity needed to better collaborate within Dominica and offer greater service quality when dealing with foreign tourists and national visitors. He also urged the participants to keep an open mind and to stay committed to the programme, in order to realize the full benefits of the expertise of the facilitators (trainers) from Nature Seekers in Trinidad.

Participants introduced themselves, discussed their expectations and areas of interest, and established “ground rules” for the workshop. Their expressed expectations are listed in the side-bar.

#### **Context of Nature Seekers involvement in Tour Guiding**

Nature Seekers has been conducting tours for the past 17 years on Matura Beach, Trinidad. Their goals are to protect the sea turtles and to guide visitors to minimize impact to the nesting turtles. These tours were developed with the highest quality of service with a high percentage of visitor satisfaction. The tours are conducted by community guides and provide valuable experience and foresight in influencing a client’s behaviour and satisfaction.

Turtle conservation projects from elsewhere in the region have visited Nature Seekers in a sharing and learning capacity. These visiting projects both learned about our regionally acclaimed tourism management programme, and shared with us their successes and challenges. Some of these counties were: Grenada, St. Lucia, Dominica, and St. Kitts and Nevis, among others.

The introduction then focused on the benefits and drawbacks to developing community tourism. Our aims were to extract from the participants their knowledge of the benefits and cost to developing this type of tourism. The result showed that participants were very informed about the topic. This session led to creating a national framework for tourism development, and we identified some of the tourism development needs as they relate to accommodation, infrastructure, transportation, amenities and attraction ... and where guides fit into the puzzle.

The day ended with a ‘practice session’ where participants each took a topic that was familiar to them and presented to the group. The goal was to develop the participant’s skills in presenting to an audience. Everyone had a chance. More opportunities for participant presentation followed in the days to come.

#### **Result of Session**

##### **Participants’ Expectations**

1. Gaining a greater insight into tour Guiding
2. Improving skills needed to become a good guide
3. Gaining more information about turtles
4. Getting to know everyone in the class and others in the groups to which they belong
5. Gain more insight into managing guides and organization.
6. Development of Personal skills

#### **Result of Session**

##### **Benefits**

1. Employment
2. Rural Opportunities/ sustainable communities
3. Infrastructure Investment
4. Revenues - Diversification
5. Conservation of Natural Resources
6. Parks and other forest system protection

##### **Cost**

1. Uneven distribution of Benefits
2. Eco-Tourism is a buzz word for mass Tourism
3. Sale of heritage lands
4. Leakages
5. Seasonality
6. Increase in Crime
7. Exploitation of locals
8. Denied Access
9. Over use of Trails
10. Littering

## Day 2

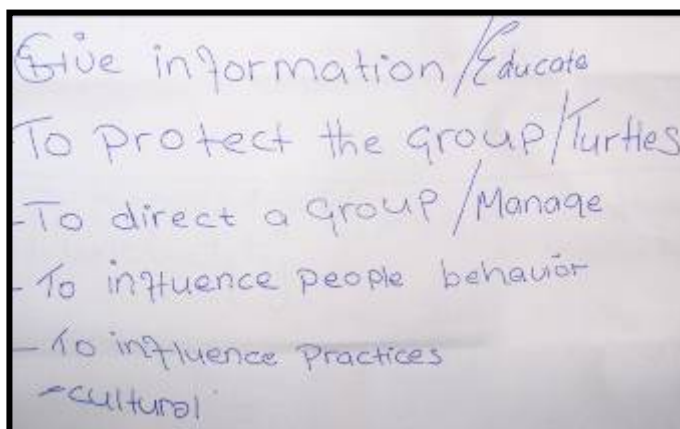
### Session 1: Introduction to Tour Guiding

Participants defined what they know about touring, and being a tour guide. *Definitions of a guide:*

1. Someone who takes tourist around.
2. A person who shows tourists something of interest.
3. Someone who tells guests about their country.
4. A person employed to give information to visitors.
5. Someone who has information to share with tourists.
6. A person who has knowledge, who can entertain and knows historical information.
7. A person who has the ability to communicate with others what s/he knows.
8. Someone who shows others the way, points out things of interest, and is paid to do so.
9. A person who takes both local and foreign tourist around to different places.

#### *Why the need for a tour guide?*

Tourists want information, and they feel safer with a person who knows the way. Apart from getting information, the tourist gets an opportunity to interact with a local guide and experience the local dialect. With this in mind, the Group came up with a common definition of a tour guide. *“A tour guide is a professional person who is employed to show others the way, give information, entertain and give historical records of one’s country”.*



**Figure 1. The Purpose of Guiding**

### Session 2: Preparing Practise Presentations

Again each participant was asked to choose a topic that they were familiar with, and had information on, to do their individual presentation. Topics range from being a Councillor, coaching a team, applying First Aid, banana planting, repairing a car, karate, my first time out of Dominica, a day in sports, and repairing computers.

### Session 3: Common techniques for guiding on a turtle beach

Participants were taken to the La Plaine turtle nesting beach. With the presence of a beach and some prior knowledge of turtle watching, participants outlined a number of techniques that can be quite useful for guiding. **These were:**

- a) Knowledge about the area.
- b) Where to stand when information is given? (Consider the elements: rain, wind, sound of the waves)
- c) Where to walk on the beach with visitors.
- d) The appropriate stage to give information.
- e) At what stage the visitors can go closer to the turtle.
- f) When lights should be used on the beach?
- g) When flash photos and video filming can be done?
- h) How to manage a group around a turtle?
- i) How more than one group can look at one turtle at the same time?
- j) When can/should tourist get involved? (e.g. Help to excavate an egg chamber when the turtle is missing flippers; assist the Guide in relocating a nest.)
- k) What distance is appropriate for visitors to walk? (Consider age, illnesses, weather condition, tides)
- l) What time to leave the beach? (After the nesting process, weather condition, tides)

### **Day 3:**

#### **Session 1: Structure of a Tour**

Participants were given a widely accepted tour structure that includes Introduction, Body, and Conclusion. *An example of how a tour is structured appears in the sidebar.*

#### **Session 2: Develop Fact Finding Skills**

Why is this skill important? Participants' responses:

1. To develop one's knowledge on the art of tour guiding
2. To acquire accurate and reliable information on different species that is relevant to tour guiding
  - i. To learn about other tour groups and what packages they offer
  - ii. To keep current with national and worldwide affairs

Where to look for facts? Participants' responses:

1. Community members.
  - a. Interviews with persons in charge of resources.
  - b. Newspaper articles.
  - c. Magazines.
2. Guide books.
3. Tourism organisation.
4. Library research.
5. Internet sources.
  - a. Electronic media sources.
6. Any other reliable source.

What kind of information to look for? Responses:

1. Environmental issues.
2. Sports.
3. Culture.
4. Tourism.
5. History.
6. Current national and world wide affairs.
7. Community base eco tourism projects.

Participants were placed in working groups of three; research assignments were given to each group. Each group had to do a presentation to the others on the information they gathered.

#### **Session 3: Practice Presentation (special skill develop).**

Each presenter had their information and generally the right attitude to begin. However, through the presentations we came up with some useful Do's and Don'ts in presenting. See side bar for details.

#### **Do's and Don'ts**

- Maintain eye contact
- Stay focus on your presentation
- Excessive body language distracts the audience
- Show enthusiasm in presenting your information.
- Voice pitch and tone is critical to the audience

#### **Structure of a Tour**

##### **Introduction**

- Introduce yourself
- Expectations
- Tour duration
- Safety rules and regulations
- Different programmes and other tours the group offers
- Souvenirs

##### **Body (information on sea turtles)**

- Biology and conservation of sea turtles
- Behaviour of sea turtles in the ocean
- Nesting Process
  - Approaching of the turtle
  - Preparing of the body pit
  - Excavation of the egg chamber
  - Depositing of the eggs
  - Covering of the egg chamber
  - Camouflaging nesting area
  - Returning to sea

##### **Conclusion**

- Thank the visitors for choosing your tour services.
- Encourage visitors to take home souvenirs.
- Sign the visitors' book, the visitor might offer comments and recommendations.
- Distribution of brochures and leaflets.
- Encourage visitors to invite friends and family.
- Remind visitors to take all their personal belongings with them when they leave.
- Wish visitors a safe journey home!

#### **Topics for Research**

- Geology and geography.
- Flora and fauna.
- Architecture.
- Economics of the area.
- Traditions and customs.
- Legend and folklore.
- Archaeological ruins.
- Current local and global news.
- Environmental issues.
- Local social knowledge.
- History.



#### **Day 4:**

##### **Session 1: Develop a Turtle Tour**

Based on the previous sessions the participants were divided into three groups and tasked with developing a turtle tour for each community.

Facilitators supervised the group work. The first part of the morning was devoted to developing the introduction to the tour. The second part of the morning was devoted to developing the body and the evening was devoted to developing the conclusion.



*Figure 2. Group Work in Developing a Tour*



*Figure 3. Discussion of Planning an Itinerary*

#### **Day 5:**

##### **Session 1: Plan an itinerary around a Turtle Tour**

A model of an itinerary was given to the three groups and, working from these models, they all drafted their own itineraries which would work best for them.

Each group presented their itineraries, which brought out the importance of fulfilling the time factor so as not to affect the smooth running of the entire process. It was noted that flexibility would be exercised at times, especially in turtle tours, but yet a plan must always be set in the undertaking of any venture.

This session went beyond guidelines and basic timing of tours into modes of dress, food, drinks, torch lights, insect repellent and some form of covering. These items add comfort to the visitors and heighten their experience.

##### **Session 2: Practice Presentation (Special Skills Development)**

Continuing from Day 3 the rest of the participants presented. Given the extra time to go things over, the enthusiasm continued and a lot of improvements in the delivery was shown. Participants now got a practical feel of how a tour was actually done. They agreed that regular practice in presentation is essential in accomplishing the tour objectives.

## **4.2. Week 2 - Tour Preparation and Presentation**

### **Day 6:**

#### **Session 1: Communication**

##### *Practice Presentation:*

Participants engaged in a lively brainstorming session to identify the different methods of communication. These methods include practicing oral and written communication, practicing listening and responding when interacting with tour members.

#### **Session 2: The Communication Process**

This process begins with the first encounter between the tour guide and the visitors. It is at this meeting that a negative or positive impact is created. It must be understood that there are both verbal and non verbal forms of communication; thus, they are both influenced by the culture, knowledge, attitude and level of communicational skills possessed by both sender and receiver. This process goes on before, during and after the tour. The intended meaning of the sender is perceived by the receiver, based on these factors.

#### **Role of Communication at each Stage of a Tour**

Through communication, information is shared. The variety of this information is important to create a degree of awareness amongst all involved in the tour process. However, the tour guide must never overestimate previous knowledge with audience intelligence. While it is important to develop unique experiences and change visitor behaviour, the guide must always be focused on achieving the outlined goals of the organisations perceptions.

#### **Session 3: Develop Skills Using Basic Communication Equipment**

<b>Telephone</b>	Appropriate greetings, grammar and conversations closers, details of tour price, tour type, etc.
<b>E-Mail</b>	Always identify yourself using clear and concise message, make sure your contact information is included, and be professional.
<b>Fax</b>	Always use a cover page which includes the headings: To From, Time, Subject, Fax Number of the recipient, and Number of Pages. If the Fax is handwritten, make sure that it is legible. Always check to see if the Fax was received by recipient.
<b>Letters</b>	Properly addressed to the sender, 'spell check', make a clear and concise message, proper finish.

### **Develop Interest and Feedback among members of the tour group**

A motivational guide would be familiar with all the strategies of generating interest. Participants were asked how we develop interest and feedback.

#### **Participants suggested:**

- Raising the energy level of group
- Asking of open-end questions and the use of bridge statements
- Creating a strategy for an interactive finish to the tour
- The designing of feedback questionnaires for the tour.
- Group Exercise
- Interesting/fun activities to fill the gap between attractions
  - Ice breaker activities (getting to know your visitors)
  - Local folklore stories
  - Information on local attractions
  - Information on local history

### **Day 7**

#### **Session 1: Understand what Human Need is being fulfilled**

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs was used in this session. The facilitators explained where the tourist's need(s) fit on the hierarchy of needs. The facilitators explained that when human needs change or fall to lower-priority needs, the demand for tourism decreases.

This session was very difficult for some participants to understand, so it was facilitated two times.

#### **Session 2: How to Effectively Manage Group Behaviour**

Group behaviour and group dynamics are shaped by societal, racial, socio-economic, religious and political forces. Within these, there are taboo subjects that include race, religion, and politics. It is wise to know your client, as well as the forces that exert influence on their attitudes and behaviours.

#### **Understanding the group:**

- Determine the different cultures existing in your group.
- Take time to explain things that people from other cultures may not understand.

*Participants were asked, what are the various forces that influence group behaviour?*

- Society
- Race
- Socio-Economic levels
- Religion
- Politics

*Participants were then asked, what are the strategies for managing the group?*

- Guides should lead the group and have a knowledge of the number of persons within the group
- Provide an effective Briefing with the necessary rules
- Give everyone the same attention
- Disruptive persons/group should be taken for a walk
- Praise has a positive impact on the group dynamic
- Involving disruptive persons in the activities. (adjusting strategies accordingly)

### Session 3: Preparing Tour Group for Tour

*Participants had to identify what pre-planning information is necessary for a tour:*

- Arrival time and location
- Cost of tour
- What the tour entails
- What they should wear
- Availability of food and drink
- Is there a need for insect repellent
- How far you will be going
- Level of difficulty
- Tour duration
- Rain gear
- What's on sale

*Do not tell visitors:*

- That you will see wildlife, except for plants, or, as in the case of turtles, you have scouts who can report and confirm sightings
- The time that, and/or number of, turtles will come to nest
- That their group alone would be observing the turtle, or
- That they will see the entire nesting process

## Day 8:

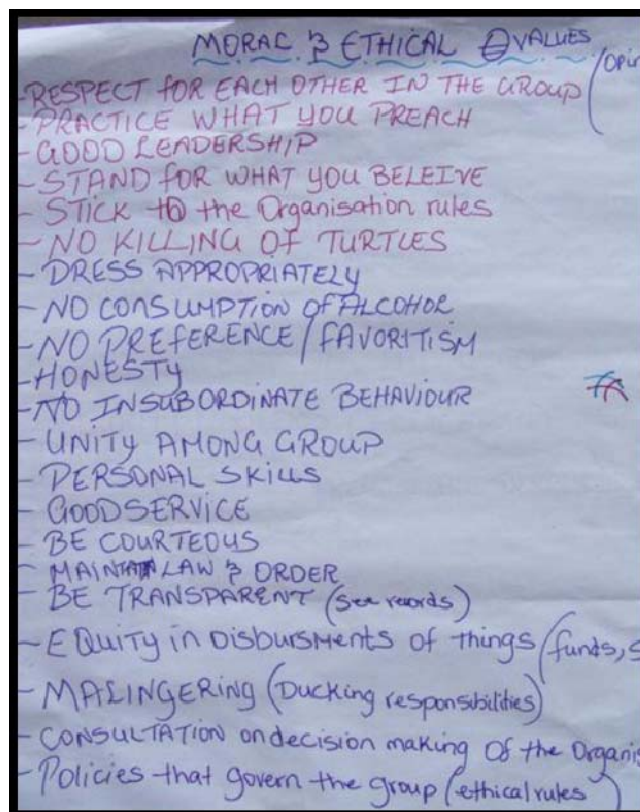
### Session 1: Develop Personal Skills

*Participants identified traits of a good tour guide:*

- Know your subject
- Be articulate, use proper grammar and correct pronunciation
- Avoid overly technical language
- Regulate your posture
- Do not try to speak over disturbances
- Speak with enthusiasm
- Do not be rude
- Do not spell out rules and regulations
- Have a logical progression of information
- Encourage audience participation
- Know how to use all your equipment
- Ensure proper presentation of exhibits
- Keep your audience interested

### Session 2: Social/Cultural, Ethical Skills

Participants listed moral and ethical values (Figure 4). Participants were encouraged to develop a feedback system, such as a Suggestion Box, in which an analysis can be done to determine your stage and rate of improvement.



**Figure 4. Moral & Ethical Values of Participants**



*These skills can be acquired by:*

- Being informed of the most current local and global news, including environmental issues. Read newspaper daily!
- Abide by a “code of ethics for tour guides”
- Continue to improve guiding techniques and general knowledge by attending seminars and workshops regularly

### **Session 3: Tour/Personal preparation, Personal Hygiene and Good Work Habits:**

#### *Tour Preparation*

- Create a route card
- Observe any items of interest along the way
- Prepare what you want to say
- Take a group of friends, practice your tour!

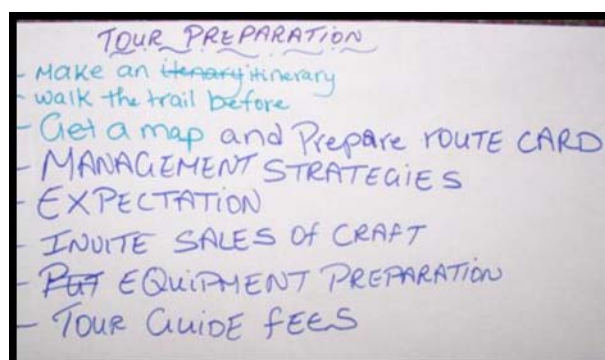
#### *Personal Preparation*

- Have a set of tour guide clothes ready
- Make sure you know the route well and have all of your information ready
- Give a copy of your route card to someone else in case of emergency
- Get a good night's rest
- Go over any notes on related information in which to share
- Relax
- Be on time, or early
- Ensure equipment is prepared from the day before to be certain of your preparedness

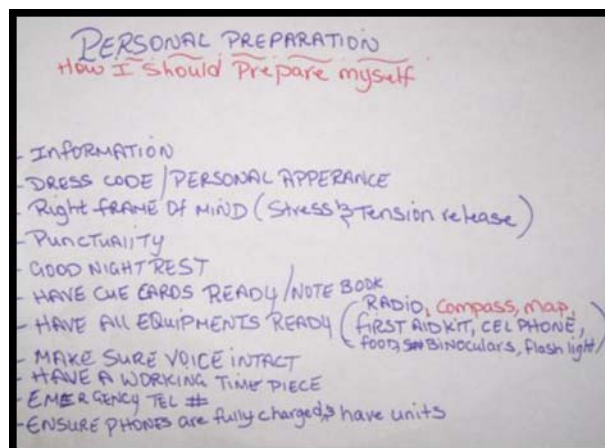
#### *Personal Hygiene*

A tour guide must take pride in his/her appearance and must appreciate the importance of practicing good personal hygiene:

- Keep the body clean by showering everyday
- Use deodorant in order to prevent offensive body odour
- Brush teeth and practice proper oral care
- Wear clean clothing
- Wash hands regularly and carefully
- Keep hair well-groomed



**Figure 5. Tour Preparation**



**Figure 6. Personal Preparation Required**



**Figure 7. Personal Skills Required**



## **Day 9:**

### **Session 1: Safety Practices**

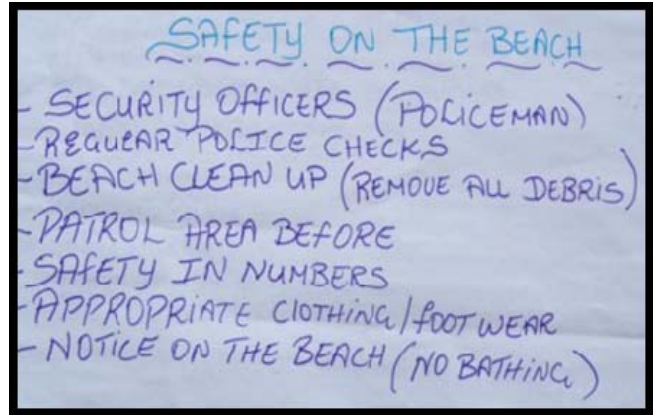
#### *Safety on the Beach:*

Participants engaged in a round-robin discussion concerning Emergency Management; Figures 8 and 9 show the results of our discussion.

Apart from safety on the beach, an efficient emergency management plan should be created to include the following:

- Location of the nearest hospital
- Best route to the hospital
- Ready list of emergency numbers (police, ambulance, fire)

It was also noted that further first-aid training is needed to treat shocks, eye injuries, fractures, head, back, neck and spinal injuries, exhaustion, nose bleeds, abrasions, bites, stings, burns and scalds. The participants recognised that in order to ensure the safety of all visitors, effective measures must be put in place.



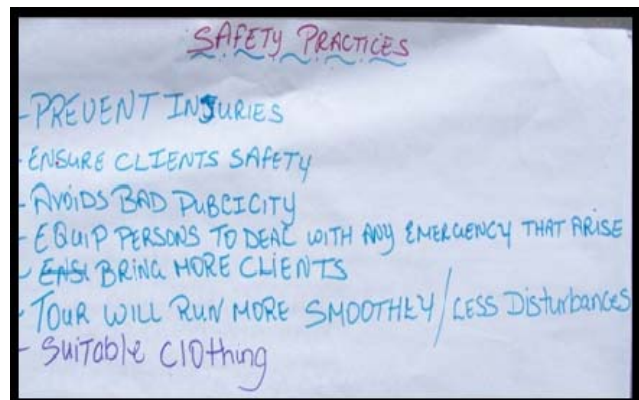
**Figure 8. Safety Required on the Beach**

### **Session 2: Decision Making in a Tour**

The participants were asked to identify problems that may occur in a tour. Participants were able to identify the problems that may arise when conducting tours, and possible alternatives were identified. Participants were able to weigh the options that are available to solve the problems that may arise.

Decisions should be made in the interest of the group and not for personal benefit; moreover, tour guides must demonstrate patience, exercise impartiality, display honesty, be objective when making decisions, be accountable, display integrity, and, last but not least,

*..... be firm when facing disruptive behaviour.*



**Figure 9. Safety Practices Required**

### **Session 3: Tour Presentations**

Continuation of presentations so that participants can become more acquainted with the art of tour guiding.

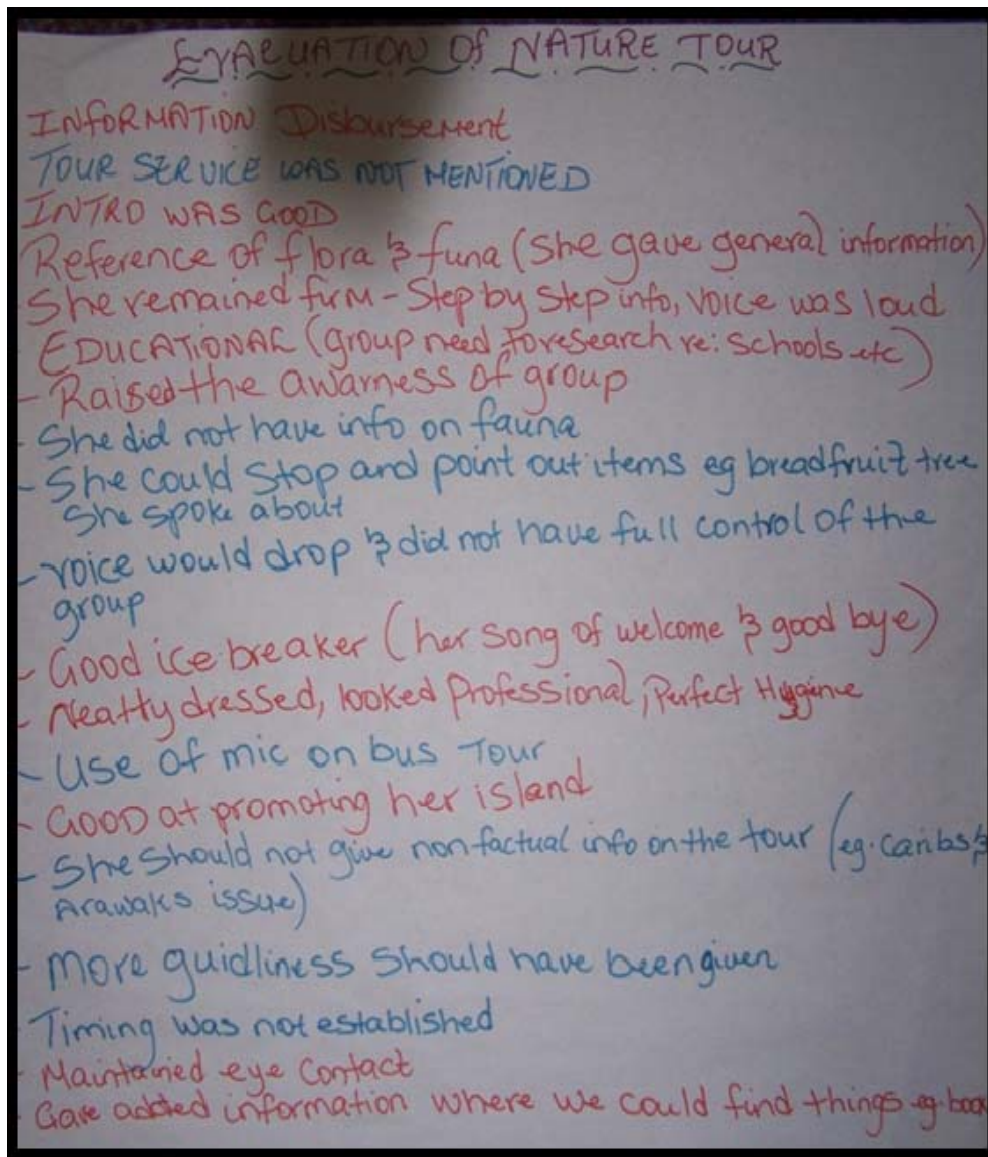
## **Day 10:**

### **Field Trip:**

Participants were taken on a field trip to visit the Emerald Pool in the nature reserve. The objective of this tour was to:

- create awareness
- allow them to experience first hand how an actual tour was conducted
- allow for evaluation of the guide in respect to what was learnt on the course
- view the use of natural resources for eco-tourism as a means of generating sustainable livelihoods

### Evaluation of the tour guide:



**Figure 10. Evaluation of Guide from Emerald Pool**

### 4.3. Week 3 - Tour Programme Management

#### Day 11

##### Session 1: How to Manage Your Tour Guiding Programme

The facilitators presented the tour guide programme of Nature Seekers (Matura, Trinidad and Tobago) and discussed differences in organisation management between Nature Seekers and other community programmes, especially as they relate to the management of guides, visitors and accountability.

The following issues and their importance were discussed in terms of their benefits and costs:

- a. **Structure of Management-** The facilitators highlighted the important role played by Forestry Division in Trinidad, the international experts of the Wider Caribbean Sea turtle Conservation Network (WIDECAST), and the Community of Matura, highlighting clearly the role that each organisation plays in contributing to the success of the tour (and conservation) programme. If these roles are not identified, the potential for conflict increases.
- b. **Legislation-** Having legislative support in the management of marine turtles makes it easier to achieve business and conservation goals. We discussed the benefits, both in terms of conservation and economics, of making the nesting beaches protected and regulating visitor access. This level of control helps to manage the turtle viewing activity and reduces the opportunity for poaching of turtles.
  - i. **Permits (Tickets)-** the system whereby visitors acquire permits continues to add to guest-control, and also to the management of carrying capacity of the beach.
  - ii. **Visitor Control-** heavy fines for violation of laws are very critical in maintaining guest control and tour viability.
  - iii. In Trinidad and Tobago, the government has given, through a formal co-management arrangement with three communities, a monopoly mandating visitors to partake of the community service of guided turtle watching. Visitors include tourists, tour operators and community residents – *all* purchase tickets and all are supervised by community guides.
- c. **Management and Control of Guides-** Levels of guides have been created and the necessary criteria for advancement have been developed. The management and control of guides requires a system for: rostering guides, ensuring, among other criteria, there are a mixture of apprentice, junior and senior guides rostered each night and a payroll system for compensating guides.
- d. **Records-** Proper accountability of a work's night was developed to include recording guides' nightly duty and performance, visitor information (local adults, children and foreigners), craft and tour sales, and other financial information.

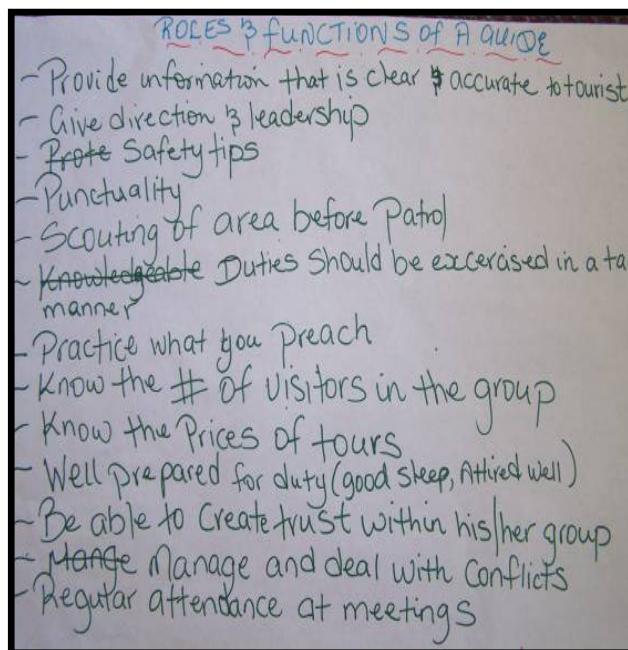


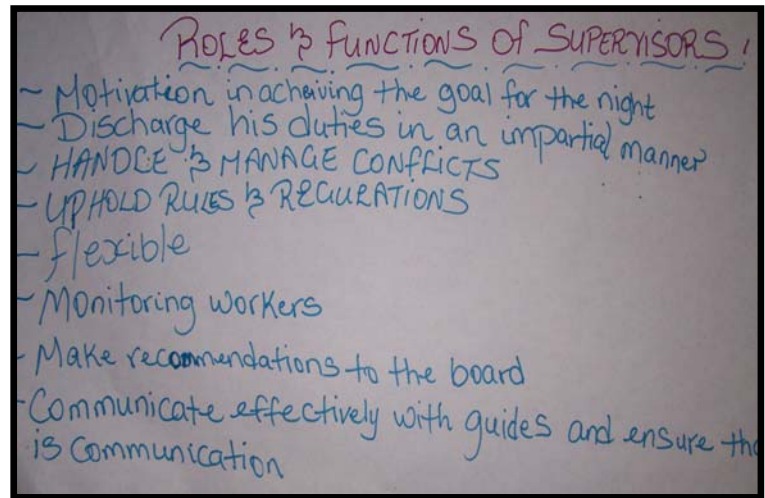
Figure 11. Role and Function of a Guide



## **Session 2: Role and Function of Guides and Supervisors**

Role and function of guides, supervisors and managers as they relate to the management of a turtle conservation programme (including tourism and conservation) were discussed. The participants produced the following job description for supervisors and guides collectively:

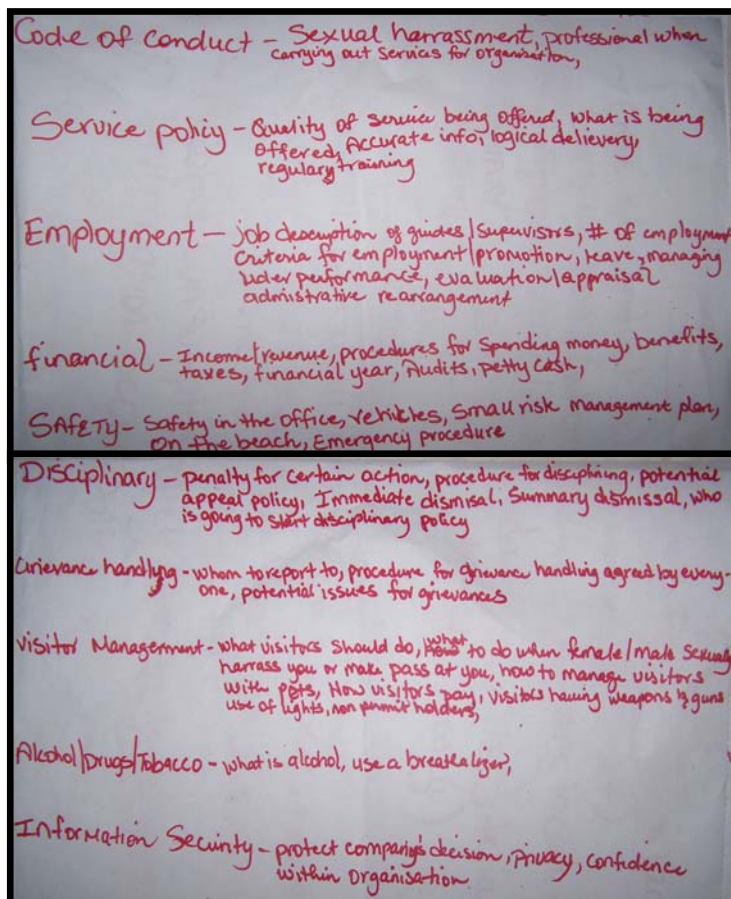
The participants also discussed the benefits of identifying and enforcing the proper roles and functions of staff. These are: encourage effective work performance, prevent duplication of roles or roles overlapping, increase accountability in performance, decrease the potential for conflict, reduce ambiguity within the organisation.



**Figure 12. Role and Function of Supervisors**

## **Session 3: What Policies are necessary for Managing Guides**

We discussed the policies that are necessary in managing guides and staff. These policies, and exactly what they include, are what the participants produced with facilitation:



### **Policies**

Code of Conduct Policy  
Service Policy  
Employment Policy  
Financial Procedures Policy  
Safety Policy  
Disciplinary Policy  
Grievance handling Policy  
Visitor Management Policy  
Drug, Alcohol and Tobacco Policy

**Figure 13. Policies for Managing Guides and Members**

## Day 12

### Session 1: NGO Management & Good Governance

Day 12 and Day 13 were dedicated to the management of community groups. When tour programmes are developed, there must be governance systems designed to implement and manage the programmes.

- a. *Governance*- Good governance is what is required in the context of a community organisation or nonprofit organisation, and it starts with identifying the values of the organisation. Some of the values recognised by the participants were: respect for others in the organisation, ‘practice what you preach’, good leadership, equity, honest, unity among members, quality service, transparency, and consultation. In addition, it was recognized that a well-articulated vision, a concise and measurable mission, and bylaws and policies that define how every aspect of the organisation works are all important to success.
- b. *Management by Objective* - Identify the goals of the community group, review the structure to see what all members and staff are doing. Should duties and responsibilities change, each member or staff’s activities must be strategically aligned (or re-aligned) to achieve the goals for the year.

The facilitators also raised for discussion the issue of *Capacity Building* in a community organisation, and noted that this represents actions that improve the effectiveness of the group towards achieving its mission. They also considered the issue of managing changes within a community group, and talked about the fact that community groups fear the unknown and are sometimes unwilling to change the way they operate. Dealing with change requires some leadership skills in anticipating that change both inside and outside of the organisation, while planning for it. There were examples discussed that showed how changes can support the growth of the organisation. Additionally, we also discussed other key elements of growth, including control, responsibility, tolerance of failure, and flexibility. The discussion led to what is needed for success, and also to a discussion of some of the causes of poor performance (see sidebar), which the participants were very interested in learning.

#### What is needed for success?

- Driving Innovation
- Managing finance
- Expanding revenue streams
- Productivity through people
- Structure of the business
- Technology advantage

#### Causes of Poor Performance

- Poor management
- High cost of operating
- Poor quality products and services
- Terrorism
- Changes in tourist demand
- Organisation inertia

### Session 2: How to Develop an Effective Board

Good governance is also supported by an effective board. How to develop an effective Executive Board was the next question discussed. As most of the community organisations (in the present training course) are new groups, they were not able to contribute much to this topic. However, the facilitators made a presentation created from material available at [www.boardsource.org](http://www.boardsource.org).

We first discussed what a Board is: “An organized group of people with the authority collectively to control and foster an institution that is usually administered by an executive and staff”. The role of board members is in regards to planning, monitoring, attendance, control, fund raising and organisation reputation. Then we looked closely at the role of the Executive Board in the context of setting goals,

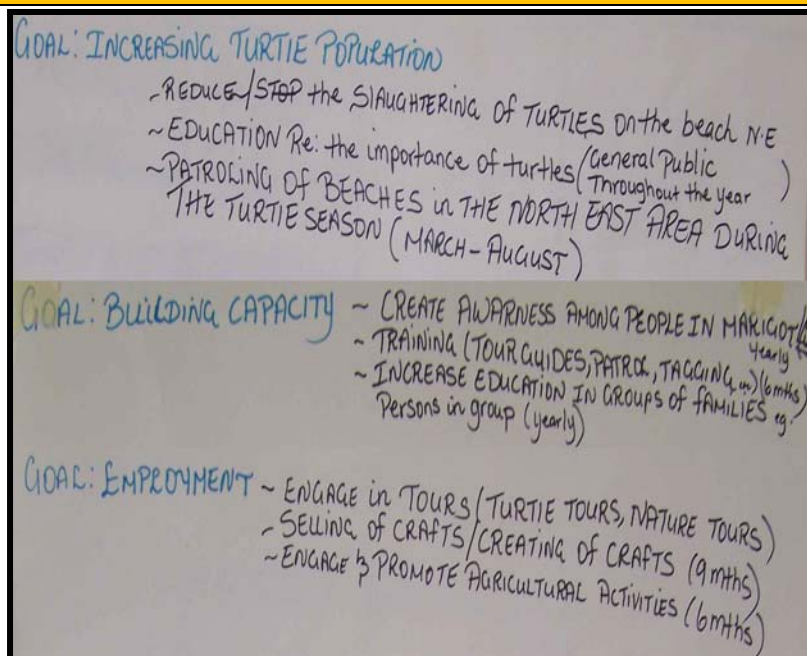


providing oversight, and ensuring that resources are available. They also have a responsibility to create a mission and a vision, design a strategic plan, develop policies and ensure proper accountability. We discussed how to select board members in terms of skills, reputation, interest in the community, and availability and we looked at Board Source's "12 Principles of an Effective Board" (for more detail, visit [www.boardsource.org](http://www.boardsource.org)). As growing organisations, the participants found tremendous benefits in learning about this topic.

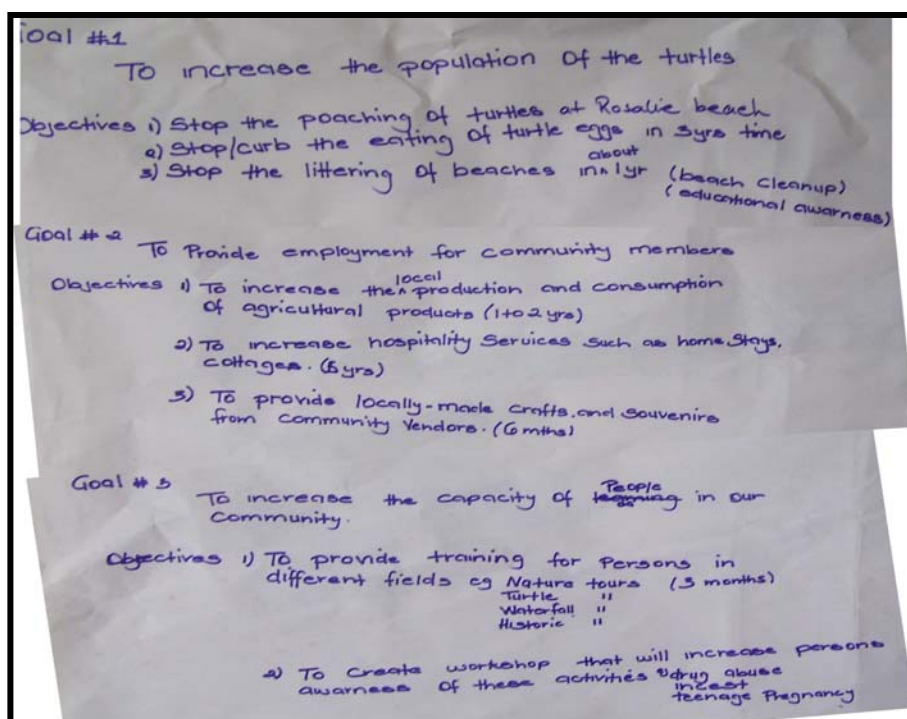
## Day 13

### Session 1: Setting Objectives

The participants were given the opportunity to develop goals for their organisation, recognising that goals guide organisational activities strategically. Goals are statements describing what your organization wishes to accomplish, stemming from your vision or mission. Goals are the ends toward which your efforts will be directed and often change from term to term or year to year, depending on the nature of the group. With this in mind, the participants were divided into their respective community groups and given specific criteria for goal development (see sidebar). Each group prepared and presented goals for their organisations (see Figures 14, 15).



**Figure 14. Goals prepared by the NEWCEPT Group**



**Figure 15. Goals Prepared by NET**

## SMART GOALS

### Must be:

Specific  
Measurable  
Attainable  
Realistic  
Timely

## **Session 2: Role of Leadership**

One of the key functions of leadership is succession planning, which ensures continued leadership. Therefore leaders must be able to communicate their vision with the group, develop strategies and create a path to achieving the vision. But, more importantly, leaders must be able to communicate the vision **to** the group. Only when people grasp the vision can they commit to it, and buy-in is critical to motivating action.

*Leadership is about getting results for your followers.*

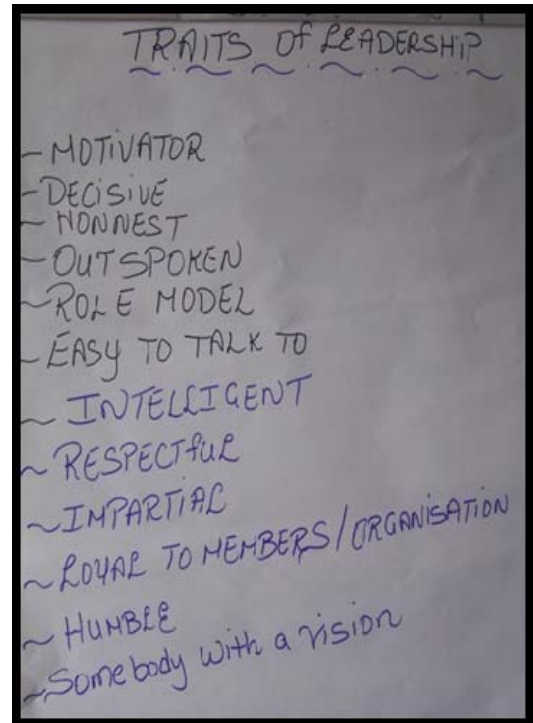
- Understand and interpret the environment in which you operate
- Develop winning strategies
- Execute them brilliantly
- Measure the impact of your strategies systematically, adjusting strategies as indicated
- Develop organizational team and personal capabilities

## **Session 3: Challenges of Developing a Sea Turtle NGO in Dominica**

Participants were given the opportunity to brainstorm the most critical challenges that they believe they will encounter in developing their community organisation.

*The following are their responses:*

1. Leadership
2. Standards/ Policy
3. Management
4. Funding
5. Poaching of Turtles & Culture Change in Dominicans
6. Organisational Inertia
7. Competition among Community Groups in La Plaine
8. Lack of Beach Control
9. Getting Dominicans to partake of Tour Guide services
10. Staff and Membership Turnover



**Figure 16. Traits of a Leader**

## **Day 14:**

### **Field Trip:**

#### **A tour of L'Escalier Tête-Chien (the "Escalator Chair")**

The scenic views were inviting, but the facilitators and participants were highly disappointed with the tour. It was only when we reached our final destination that we realised that the guide wasn't actually prepared for the tour. He was just a driver who had never been to the Escalator Chair before. The participants were unable to evaluate the tour, but a vital lesson was learnt concerning honesty to tour groups and preparation, a lesson which the participants will never forget.



*Figure 17. Dominica's famous L'Escalier Tête-Chien ("Escalator Chair")*



## **Day 15:**

### **Tour Guiding Practical**

#### **Participants were taken to the Castle Bruce Beach to conduct their final tour:**

The participants were divided into four groups. Within these groups each individual was given the opportunity to present. We were most impressed with their delivery. Compared to the first attempt (at making a presentation) given at the beginning of this course, their final delivery showed tremendous improvement. Posture, clarity, dress, courage, enthusiasm and regurgitation of theoretical knowledge and practical skills learnt were all displayed. We felt satisfied with their accomplishments and are confident of the potential for growth and development henceforth.



## **5. Meeting Expected Outcomes: An Evaluation**

1. The Basic Course was highly successful in engaging participants in a process of analysing needs associated with organizational development.
2. The Basic Course was highly successful in developing and expanding the skills of potential tour guides in tour preparation and presentation.
3. The Basic Course was successful in expanding participants' skills in evaluating guides in the context of preparation and delivery of tour services.
4. The Basic Course was highly successful in facilitating networking and the sharing of experiences among participants' community organizations.
5. Participants were able to start applying the tools of strategic and operational planning to their organizations during small group activities, discussions, and role playing. The skills they gained could then be applied to their individual organizational context, as well as shared with other members of the organization.
6. Participants acknowledged the value of a participatory approach in managing organizational development and changes, but recognised that eliciting and incorporating the perspectives of every member is, at times, both difficult and time consuming.
7. Participants demonstrated their satisfaction with the quality and relevance of the training provided by Nature Seekers and were motivated to attend the national training course in Dominica, as well as the Advanced Training Course in Matura, Trinidad and Tobago, in early 2008.
8. Given the experience presented from Trinidad, the participating organizations understand the need to collaborate for the protection of sea turtles.

## **6. Recommendations**

*(The following are a few recommendations. Other recommendations will follow in more detail in a related analysis conducted under the auspices of the USAID-COTS programme.)*

1. Further training in supervision and project management, as well as in sea turtle biology and conservation, is necessary to complement and expand the skills developed in the Basic Course.
2. Follow-up training and / or assessment should be done with each organisation in an attempt to ensure that the organisation is not dependent upon individuals, but rather strengthened and sustained by a system within which it is governed. There are many cases where leaders are the management and the management system; when they leave, the organisation dies.
3. An exchange programme should be developed for guides to work in other communities, occasionally, in order to maintain consistency of service among the three community groups.
4. National oversight, guidance, and mentoring are necessary in both the short- and long-terms. This role should be played by DomSeTCO in collaboration with other relevant experts and agencies both domestic and international.
5. Legislation is needed to protect nesting beaches, and to give community groups certain rights in managing these protected areas.



## Appendix 1 Participant List & Attendance

		September					October									
		Week 1					Week 2					Week 3				
	Date	11	12	13	14	15	1	2	3	4	5	8	9	10	11	12
	NEWCEPT															
1.	Richardson A. Dick	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.	Amelia A. Joseph	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Due to Work									
3.	Joshua Degallerie	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.	Hannah Williams	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.	Maffius Greenaway	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6.	Shirley Africa	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Due to Work									
7.	Nicky Mingo			☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8.	Edward Watty	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9.	Egbert Nelson	Due to Work							☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	NET															
10.	Simon George	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Due to Work					☐	☐	☐		☐
11.	Cheryll Felix	☐	Unknown													
12.	Odette George	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13.	Arnella Walsh	☐	☐	☐	☐		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
14.	Cyrilson Letang	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Due to Work				☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
15.	Malika Lawrence	☐		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
16.	Jemimah Cuffy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
17.	Shun Pascal	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
18.	Aminah Mason	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Due to Work									
	LEAP															
19.	Chavis Williams	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐			☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
20.	Cameron Warrington	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
21.	Sean Amon Stedman	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Due to Work					☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	VILLAGE COUNCIL & LAND															
22.	Leontius Corbette	Unknown					☐	☐		☐		☐		☐	☐	☐

## **Appendix 2 Course Outline**

# **DomSeTCO**

## **Sea Turtle Community Based Eco-tourism, Guiding and Management**

**DOMINICA**

**11 - 15 September 2007**

**1 - 12 October 2007**

### **Syllabus**



Training provided by:

Susan Lakhan  
Dennis Sammy



Designed and Implemented in collaboration with:



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Sea Turtle Conservation Program funded by United States Agency  
for International Development

## **Basic Training: Tour Development**

<b>Tuesday, 11 September</b>	
9:00 - 10:00am	Introductions and Expectations
	Break
10:30 - 12:30pm	Advantage and Disadvantage of Tourism to the community How does guiding fit within the broader tourism industry
12:30 - 2:00pm	Lunch
2:00 - 3:30pm	Participant Description of their Group-Leading Experiences (Practice Presentations)
<b>Wednesday, 12 September</b>	
09:00 - 10:30am	Introduction to Tour Guiding
	Break
11:00 - 12:30pm	Preparation for Practice Presentation
12:30 - 2:00pm	Lunch
2:00 - 4:00pm	Common Techniques for Guiding on a Turtle Beach (Visit to the nearest beach)
<b>Thursday, 13 September</b>	
9:00 - 10:30am	Structure of a Tour (by objective)
	Break
11:00 - 12:30pm	Develop Fact finding Skills
12:30 - 2:00pm	Lunch
2:00 - 4:00pm	Practice Presentation
<b>Friday, 14 September</b>	
	All-Day Group Exercises
9:00 - 10:30am	Develop a Tour (Parts of a Tour)
11:00 - 12:30pm	Break
	Exercises in Developing a Tour (Introduction, Body, Conclusion)
12:30 - 2:00pm	Lunch
2:00 - 4:00pm	Exercises in developing a tour (cont.)

<b>Saturday, 15 September</b>	
9:00 - 12:30pm	Plan an Itinerary around a Turtle Tour
12:30 - 2:00pm	Lunch
2:00 - 4:00pm	Practice Presentation

## **Basic Training: Tour Preparation & Presentation**

<b>Monday, 1 October</b>		Communication
9:00 - 10:30am	Practice Presentation	
	Break	
11:00 - 12:30pm	Understand the Communication Process Role of communication at each tour stage	
12:30 - 2:00pm	Lunch	
2:00 - 4:00pm	Develop skills using basic telecommunication equipment (e.g. telephone, fax, microphone) Develop interest and feedback among members of the tour group	
<b>Tuesday, 2 October</b>		Manage Group Behaviour Effectively
9:00 - 10:30am	Understanding what human need is being fulfilled	
	Break	
11:00 - 12:30pm	Identify the psychological forces that shape group behaviour	
12:30 - 2:00pm	Lunch	
2:00 - 4:00pm	Identify strategies for managing a tour group Preparing the tour group for a tour	
<b>Wednesday, 3 October</b>		Develop Personal Skills
9:00 - 10:30am	Identify the personality traits of a good tour guide	
	Break	
11:00 - 12:30pm	Develop social/cultural, ethical skills	
12:30 - 2:00pm	Lunch	
2:00 - 4:00pm	Personal preparation / Tour preparation Personal hygiene and good work habits	

<b>Thursday, 4 October</b>	<b>Safety Practices</b>  9:00 - 10:30am Safety on the beach  <b>Break</b>  11:00 - 12:00pm Decision Making in a Tour  12:00 - 1:00pm Lunch  1:00 - 4:00pm Tour Presentations
<b>Friday, 5 October</b>	<b>Field Trip</b>

## **Basic Training: Tour Programme Management**

<b>Monday, 8 October</b>	<b>Program Management</b>  9:00 - 10:30am How to Manage your Guiding Program  <b>Break</b>  11:00 - 12:30pm Role & Function of a guide, supervisors, managers  12:30 - 2:00pm Lunch  2:00 - 4:00pm What policies or values are necessary in managing guides Possible Do's and Don'ts
<b>Tuesday, 9 October</b>	<b>Management of your Community Group</b>  9:00 - 10:30am NGO Management  <b>Break</b>  11:00 - 12:30pm Good Governance  12:30 - 2:00pm Lunch  2:00 - 4:00pm How to Develop an Effective Executive Board
<b>Wednesday, 10 October</b>	<b>Management of your Community Group</b>  9:00 - 10:30am Setting objectives  <b>Break</b>  11:00 - 12:30pm Role of Leadership  12:30 - 2:00pm Lunch  2:00 - 4:00pm Challenges in Developing an NGO



Thursday, 11 October	Field Trip
Friday, 12 October	Tour Guiding Practical (A special Audience must be created)



## **Appendix 3 Turtle Tours Developed by Members of the Various Communities**

### **North Eastern Wildlife Conservation Environment Protection & Tours**

#### **A tour to *Cabana Beach* to View Turtles**

By the NEWCEPT Group

#### **Introduction**

Good evening to everyone, welcome to the beautiful beach of *Cabana* which is situated in the village of Londonderry. Londonderry is a small community inhabited by Haitians and Venezuelans situated between Wesley and Marigot. My name is \_\_\_\_\_, I belong to the north eastern wildlife conservation environment preservation and tours (NEWCEPT) group. Other members of my team are Nicky Mingo, Hannah Williams, Joshua Degalarie, and Amelia Joseph. Our group is responsible for the patrolling of the twelve beaches from Hatton Garden to Hampstead in order to curb the illegal slaughtering of sea turtles in our area. We have been in operation for the past three years and we have been able to accomplish a rapid decline in slaughtering of turtles. We have also tagged a number of turtles, collected data on these turtles (for example, their length, width, number of eggs laid, how many times they nested in the area for the year), observed them (for example, we look for scratches and cuts, damaged flippers) and produced a great number of hatchlings! Although we know that just a few babies will survive, we still recognize it as a worthwhile effort.

*Before visiting a turtle, here are some basic rules and guidelines which must be followed:*

- No white clothing on the tour, as stated in the brochure
- Persons should apply insect repellent before going on the tour
- Persons should walk far away from the shoreline and closer to the vegetation in order to prevent drowning (personal safety) and so that approaching turtles are not disturbed
- No riding of the turtles
- No taking of the eggs
- No picture-taking or filming unless I tell you that it is alright to do so
- Parents/ Guardians, take full responsibility of your children
- No littering on the beach
- Persons should stick to the tour group (no unsupervised walking)

The tour should last about 2-3 hours and end when the turtle returns to the sea after the nesting process is complete. There will be no need for water breaks since it's a five minute walk down the beach to the starting point.

Now I will give you a brief summary of what the tour will entail. You are privileged to experience the nesting process of a turtle! You will see the -

- Approaching of the turtle
- Preparation of the 'body pit'
- Excavation of the nest
- Laying of the eggs
- Covering of the egg chamber
- Camouflaging of the nesting area
- Turtle returning to the sea

For the persons who will be staying in Dominica for a few days, we would love to take you on our nature trail tour or a visit to the pan lake. On the nature trail, persons would be able to observe our lush green vegetation, different flora and fauna in the area, and take a breath of fresh air. At the pan lake you will see the freshwater mermaid seen by our grandfathers who believe that she appears based on the expression and mood of the crowd visiting her territory. Once again, thank you for NEWCEPT, I'm Watty and now I'll hand you over to Nicky who will lead you down the beach.

### **Body**

Please follow me and walk to the vegetation side on the beach. When we walk to the vegetation side, the turtle would not be able to see us or hear us properly. Although we don't see her ears, she has them! The ears are covered with a layer of skin, but the turtles hear excellently. The bright-coloured clothes and lights would get her distracted and sometimes she would head right back to the sea and perhaps re-emerge on another beach. Take a note of your surroundings, particularly the beach area. What can you see? Can you see this large black rock in the surface of the waves? It's moving right? Well... this is not a rock; this is what we call a leather back turtle or in colloquial terms a 'kowine.' Notice as she approaches the beach slowly using her front flippers to drag her way up. Slowly, slowly up she comes.... she is now testing the area to determine where is suitable to lay her eggs. A suitable area would be classed as not too damp or soggy, and not too dry. See how she is moving her flippers and fins to form a comfortable spot for her to lie in. This is called 'body pitting'. I will now hand you over to Hannah Williams who will explain to you the entire nesting process. I'm Nicky, and I wish you to continue enjoying *Cabana*.

It appears that she has found the spot. She begins the digging process by slowly using her back flippers to excavate the hole. Look at how she scoops sand out of the hole with the tip of her rear flipper. This process would take about half an hour minimum, based on the conditions of the sand. If the sand is stony or water logged, then the process would take longer. Sometimes she would abandon the area if it is too difficult to dig the hole. Upon completion of digging the hole, the laying begins. Notice that both big eggs and small eggs fall at the same time. These things that we call small eggs are really spacers. They are used to provide nutrients and oxygen for the eggs during the incubation period, which lasts for 50 – 70 days. While she is laying we are going to measure and tag her. She is 169cm long and 116cm wide. To tag a turtle we use a pliers in which the tag is inserted between the tongs. The tags are labelled, for example, WC345 and WC356. "WC" stands for WIDECAST, the regional organization donating the tags to us. No other turtle will be tagged with these same numbers. Other countries use different letters on their tags so that it could be identified where the turtle was tagged. In Dominica, the tag is placed on each of the turtle's back flipper by pinching it with the pliers. It is not painful if done correctly, and it said that during the laying process the turtles go into a 'trance'. Also notice on her face that there are some scratches. These scratches were probably made during the mating process, and sometimes they are marks left behind when the turtle encountered a fishing net against its face. Also there are tears coming from her eyes – this is her way of getting rid of excess salt that comes out from her body. The salt is stored in her salt gland that is directly behind her eyes. The salt gland is larger than her brain and she oozes off the salt time and time again. The reason for this large amount of salt in her body is because of her feeding habit, she eats mainly jellyfish.

She is finished laying and begins to cover the eggs. She gently throws sand on the eggs and compacts this sand with her back flippers. She then begins to camouflage the area by spinning all around and throwing sand all over the place. After she has finished disguising the place she then heads back to the sea.

**Any questions? ‘What do you suppose is her age?’**

No one can determine how old the turtle is. After hatching the baby turtles swim to Wide Ocean. They feed on small animals, mainly jellyfish. During the early years, small turtles are food for many other sea animals. They dive deep below and camouflage themselves with the seabed so that their preys would not see them. The turtles are again seen when they come to nest, which is when they are about 25 to 30 (or more) years old and it is believed that the turtles come to nest on the same beach on which they were hatched.

***Mating***

Mating occurs weeks before nesting. Male turtles have long tails, curved claws on their flippers and an in turned plastron. These distinguished features help them in the mating process. The long tail helps the male to make proper contact with the female’s cloaca. His penis would erect directly into her cloaca and the direct transfer of semen into the female’s oviducts. Copulation may last hours. The claws on the male flippers help him to hold on firmly to the female because of the other males who try to dislodge him during the mating process. This steadfast hold sometime causes deep wounds in the females neck area. These wounds may take weeks to cure. (Only the leatherback turtle lacks these claws.) Mating for the turtles is a very tiresome and violent process, it is not done for any form of pleasure like in human beings who engage in sexual intercourse. The males fight; tear at each other (in order to mount the turtles) and this results in damaged flippers, scratches on both males and females. The female is a promiscuous breeder. The sperm from every male is collected in the female oviduct and is fertilized portion by portion after nesting. She mates with different males to ensure that her babies survive; e.g. if she mates with one male who is sick and the chance for survival of hatchlings would be very slim. During the mating season, divers should be extremely careful when diving. The male turtles try to mount on anything that resembles a female (logs in the ocean, fisherman’s decoy). Females who don’t want to mate retreat to areas where there are no males, or move up to the surface to bask. Basking occurs when the turtles lie motionless on the surface of the water to absorb heat from the sun, and also to hide from their predators.

***Diving***

Leatherback turtles dive down to more than 1000 m or 3280 ft below the surface. As in the case with all reptiles, sea turtles have no gills. She can stay below the surface up to 70 minutes if she is avoiding a predator. Her regular period below the water is 15 minutes, at which time she must come to the surface to breathe. As the turtle dives deeper, she flattens and most of the oxygen goes into her blood and body tissues. The air could not be stored in her lungs because, with deep diving, the lungs are compressed and flattened. If the turtle stays too long below the water (as when she is caught in a net), she will drown.

***Swimming***

The leatherback turtle can swim up to 1.5 m per second. They swim about 10,000 miles per year. She uses her front flippers to pull her forward; therefore, most emphasis is placed on it.

***Laying***

Most turtles nest every two years (or more) because the turtles cannot provide the amount of fat needed for fertilizing and laying eggs every year. A turtle lays about 80 – 100 eggs in one cycle and nest about 6 –8 cycles during the season. The turtle covers her egg to:

- Prevent the eggs from being destroyed by predators such as birds, dogs crabs
- Prevent the eggs from becoming dry and
- Maintain a regular temperature during the incubation period.



The temperature of the sand determines the sex of the baby turtles; the hotter the sand, the more females are produced. There is no parental care in turtles. After the turtle lays her eggs and goes back to the sea, she has no responsibility towards the eggs. Hatchlings are left to fend for themselves.

### **Threats and diseases in turtles:**

- *Oil spills* – baby / juvenile turtles may eat the oil substances, causing organ damage. Oil also clogs nostrils, can reduce hatch success, and can hinder hatchlings from reaching the ocean
- *Littering* – causes them to mistake plastic or junk for food, and the result can be choking and death
- *Tumor* – turtles can develop large fibropapilloma tumors, observed on various species of turtles and found on the skin and in the liver, kidneys, intestines and lungs. These can disable the turtle from moving about, feeding and breathing
- *High tides* – can destroy the nesting area and reduce the chance that hatching will occur
- *Predators* – crabs, birds, dogs and humans eat eggs and/ or hatchlings
- *Propellers from boats* – can cause severe, sometimes fatal wounds to a turtle's head and body
- *Development* – on the beach would damage nesting area (excavation and vehicles moving in the area)
- *Fishing* – deep sea fishing nets can kill a whole lot of turtles. They could be captured in the nets and drown as a result. Ingestion of hooks and other fishing gears can cause severe damage to the turtle organs. Fishing gear can also negatively affect basking and feeding areas.

The turtles are very essential in our life because they help maintain a balanced ecology by, for example, reducing the number of jellyfish in the ocean which would prevent us from getting fish (jellyfish eat young fish). Sea turtles are our friends, it's our duty to preserve and protect them. I will now hand you over to Amelia who will end our tour. Thank you for listening and I'm Joshua.

### ***Closing***

On behalf of my group NEWCEPT, I would like to thank you for choosing our tour service. We would be glad to be of your service when you call on us again. For those of you who would love a souvenir of our island, we have some lovely crafts at our craft shop that is situated in the main building in the entrance of the beach. Here are some brochures that we would like to leave with you. Our visitor's book is on the front desk in the main building; we do appreciate comments from you. Please feel free in letting us know how we could serve you better. Remember your satisfaction and safety is our first priority. Please ensure that you have all your personal belongings before leaving. Do invite your friends to our wonderful beach and come again. Our contact numbers are on the brochures. Have a safe trip home and good night. On behalf of NEWCEPT we would be pleased to host you again.

*Thank you*

## **LEAP: Laplaine Environmental Advancement and Protection**

By:

Sean Amon Stedman  
Chavis Williams  
Cameron Warrington

### **Introduction**

Good evening everyone, my name is Sean Stedman from Laplaine and I'm a proud member of the Laplaine Environmental Advancement and Protection (L.E.A.P) group currently operating here in the south east. Our group was founded in June 2007 by a few concerned village members. The main reason why it was formed was to investigate and enhance environmental, local and cultural issues, mainly the turtle situation right here in Laplaine on the Bout Sable beach.

Before we begin I would like to point out certain rules and regulations, I would strongly recommend those of you with insect repellent to use it now in order to avoid the inconvenience of insect bites later on during this tour, also we urge you all to wear something warm because at times the nights get chilly. Parents are asked to pay serious attention to their children. We don't want them wondering off, straying away from the group and putting them in potential risks of any of them getting hurt. We also would like to tell you that littering on the beach is prohibited, littering bins are placed at the entrance and many other designated places on the beach so use them as to keep the surrounding clean. Just in case you don't know, the leatherback turtle eats jelly fish, a plastic filled with water looks a lot like one, and the turtle swallowing it will cause it to suffocate causing death. I would appreciate it if everyone remained together as one. We don't want nobody unsupervised, so follow me as to avoid walking on and damaging incubating nesting areas. Those of you with flashlights please note that you do not use them until you are told to do so by our officials. This is because the turtle uses its senses to determine vegetation by shades of light on land when approaching the beach. Some of you are extremely excited and we here at L.E.A.P are here to ensure you get a fun-filling experience, in so doing we don't allow nobody to ride or interfere with the turtle as she approaches for nesting, so keep in mind that any actions taken to disrupt the nesting turtle is strictly prohibited. Those of you who wish to take pictures or record videos are asked to first get a permit from our superiors and are asked to start taking pictures or recording videos when they are told it's safe to do so.

This tour will last about two and a half to three hours, and will end at the end of the nesting process.

The tour summary is basically experiencing the nesting process. Most of you who have already seen the process, know the time and precession the turtles play in their time of labour; those of you who don't, then this is an important time in your life. We will first see and observe the approaching turtle using its front and rear flippers to carry itself on the sand. We'll also have the opportunity to see how she prepares the 'body pit', meaning the way she determines where to lay her eggs. Also we will note how she excavates or constructs her egg chamber, using its rear flippers to create a bell shaped hole, the top narrow and the bottom being wider. During the egg laying process you'll observe how the eggs are deposited, quantity and quality of the egg. It's during this process that we can take pictures and videos from those of you who have permits as during this process it's not possible to disrupt them to do so. We'll see how she uses her rear flippers to compact the eggs after laying, then gradually covering the hole carefully. At this point we'll see her as she camouflages the nesting area by circling and covering the area.

We would also like to encourage you all who are interested in other programs which we offer, to check with us after the tour and make some reservations! We also have 'sea turtle adoption' programs whereby you pay a fee to receive information on where 'your' turtle has been sighted, tagged, etc. We encourage you to become Associate Members to further enjoy the experience, and to improve your knowledge about the different types of sea turtles. We have other programs, such as beach clean ups, turtle tagging where you learn to tag, weigh the turtle, and much, much more. We have other interesting tours such as hikes to the sari-sari waterfall and neg-marron adventure trails and hikes. Included in all these tours are gifts, such as t-shirts and many other souvenirs.

### **Feeding**

Leatherbacks feed exclusively on soft bodied pelagic prey, such as sea jellies and salps. The throat is lined with spines to assist in swallowing prey. Though primarily solitary, leatherbacks may gather in small groups in areas where their prey is concentrated. The pointed cusps and sharp edged jaws are perfectly designed for grabbing and ripping apart siphonophores, jellies and their many cousins. Leatherbacks feed both on surface and at great depths. Jellyfish wouldn't seem to be the most nutritious diet in the world, but clearly they sustain these massive turtles, many of whom weigh more than a ton!

### **Mating in leatherback turtle**

Mating is when a male and female of the same species copulate for reproduction purposes. With turtle mating, mostly it is done in the water close to the surface. The difference in the male and female is determined by the length of their tails, and this trait can only be recognized when they have become adults. The male turtle has a longer tail than the female, and he can weigh up to 2000 lb at maturity.

The female turtle mates every two (2)-three (3) years, this is due to the amount of calcium that is required for the formation of egg shell for the numerous amounts of eggs to be laid for that mating season. The female may nest up to 12 times during that reproductive year, and may lay 80-120 eggs each time it nests. A leatherback turtle becomes mature at 20-30 years after birth.

During mating male damages each other and in some cases the females, too. These damages can be severe and may take weeks to heal, damages are caused when much more aggressive males try to or dislodge other males during mating by snapping on each other's flipper, neck and other body. The female also makes choices on which male is allowed to mate/copulate with her. This is by simply folding her hind flipper together and also by positioning herself vertically in the water column and facing an over-eager suitor. Copulation takes 7-10 hours and females are very promiscuous which means that they copulate with more than one partner to ensure the viability of the offspring for the hundred of eggs to be laid that year.

### **Chavis Williams-Swimming and Nesting**

The leather back sea turtle is named for its tough rubber like skin and lack of a fused bony shell. The generic name *Dermochelys* refers to the distinctive leather, scale less skin of the adult turtle. Certain sea turtle species are breath holding champions. Sea turtles have the highest oxygen consumption rate of any reptile. Adult leatherback sea turtles can dive deeply, holding their breath for up to 70 minutes. Leatherbacks can dive deeper than 3900 feet which is exactly 1200 meters. Such deep diving may be possible in part due to a flexible carapace and plastron that resist cracking under pressure of such depth. Primary pelagic; meaning living in the open ocean, leatherback has the range of any sea turtle and tolerates cold water due to thermoregulatory adaptations. Mechanisms for thermoregulation include counter current heat exchange in the circulatory apparatus in their limbs, high oil content and large body size.

Nesting seasons vary strongly depending upon the geographic location. Nesting sites tend to be located on isolated beaches adjacent to deep water. Females mate every two to three or more years and can nest as often as 12 times during a reproductive year. The comparatively large eggs average about 2 inches in diameter. Most species undergo lengthy migrations from prime feeding areas to distant or isolated nesting beaches, and back again. Females nest during seasons that are most conducive to the successful incubation of eggs. In general, these are the warmest and/or driest months of the year. Most sea turtles show strong nest sites associations, often returning to the exact same nesting beach for many consecutive nesting and repeating the pattern for two decades or more.

The only parental care provided by sea turtles is the female's choice of nesting site and the effort she puts into creating an even refilling and disguising her nest. Once the nest site is selected, the female digs a body through use of both her fore and hind flippers; this involves clearing aside the dry surface sand so it doesn't sift back into the nest. After this she positions her body within it and uses her hind flippers to excavate an egg chamber into which she will deposit her clutch of eggs. After laying her clutch the female will use her hind flippers to cover the nest with sand and compact it.

Leatherbacks differ from other sea turtles in that the female deposits infertile, undersized eggs atop the fertilized ones before she reburies the nest. Given the large size of the leatherback eggs, these 'yolk-less' eggs may function as space fillers!

### **Basking-Anella**

Basking behavior is thought to play a role in thermoregulation. Some sea turtles may function as regional endotherms; that is, they keep only their active tissues at an elevated temperature. Such an adaptation is possible due to the heat lag associated with the large body size of many sea turtles and the excellent insulatory capabilities of some of their tissues. By elevating the temperature of their pectoral muscles above that of the surrounding water, the turtle's ability to sustain swimming over long periods is increased and may help to account for the ability of these animals to take long distance migrations. Some sea turtle species may spend hours floating on the surface; in essence, an aquatic form of basking, allowing the turtle to absorb solar heat energy and providing a welcome footrest for ocean going sea birds.

### **Conclusion of tour- Cameron Warrington**

This brings us to the end of our tour. We hope that you'll were touch by the information given. We would like to take this opportunity to thank you all a lot for selecting our service and a special thank you for your cooperation. Please make sure that none of your personal belongings are missing. However if anyone missed anything please report it to us. Also there are locally made crafts and product available for purchase, if anyone is interesting in purchasing this would be very delightful. We accept any comments and recommendations so please feel free to post it on the visitors' books. May God guide and protect you on a safe journey back to your respective homes.

Once more we would like to say thank you all very much, *merci beaucoup, mucho gracias* for visiting our village and beach and please do visit again and invite your families and friends and also we are kindly asking for a little favour to promote us by telling people about our services when you return to your country.....

*Thanks*



**TURTLE TOUR: Adventure in Paradise**  
**Presented by: NET Tour Services**

***INTRODUCTION***

Good evening. My name is Malika Lawrence. I represent Nature Enhancement Team (NET). Tonight I have the privilege of welcoming you to Rosalie Bay and the task of introducing you to our Turtle Tour. With me are my colleagues Simon George, Odette George, Jemimah Cuffy, Shun Pascal, Cyrlson Letang and Aminah Mason. Together, we will guide you along the Turtle Tour. I promise, by the time we're finished, you will have experienced an adventure in paradise.

My dear turtle lovers - welcome to Rosalie Bay. Congratulations! You have made it to Paradise. Treat yourself to the mystic of Rosalie Bay. Become one with nature. Let NET help you explore the wonders of South East Dominica and experience life in nature's splendor. We are ready to take you on nature hikes: lead you through tropical rainforests; expose you to exotic plants and wildlife; refresh you in majestic waterfalls and share with you the rich history and culture of our communities.

However, tonight is for the sea turtles. Oh those amazing creatures. They play such a vital role in maintaining a continued ecological balance in the marine environment. Yet, turtles are fragile. Natural predators and human activities make their continued survival dependent upon our protection.

We are proud to be a safety-net for turtles. Our Turtle Tour provides us the opportunity to equip you with information regarding the ecology of sea turtles and to give you the experience of watching turtles as they behave in their natural habitat. On this Turtle Tour you will witness a turtle approach the beach, select a nesting site, prepare a body pit, excavate an egg chamber, deposit her eggs, cover the egg chamber, camouflage the nesting site and return to the ocean. During the process, NET tour guides will furnish explanations and will entertain your questions.

As we embark on the tour, please follow the instructions of our tour guides and observe all safety procedures. In particular:

- Apply insect repellants;
- Stay with the tour group at all times;
- Operate no flashlights or cameras during the tour; and
- Never attempt to ride a turtle or interfere with turtle eggs or young.

The Turtle Tour will take approximately 2.5 to 3 hours. It will end when the turtle returns to the ocean. Now I am placing you in the capable hands of Simon George – he will walk you through the first leg of our adventure.

***BIOLOGY of SEA TURTLES***

Good evening! My name is Simon George. I am going to give you some information regarding the biology of sea turtles. I'll begin by pointing out three things to remember:

1. Sea Turtles are ancient, air-breathing vertebrates. The oldest fossils date back to about 112 million years ago.
2. Sea Turtles are reptiles: They are cold blooded, they have scales and they lay eggs.
3. Sea Turtles are former terrestrial animals which later adapted to marine life. Three key adaptive features are developments of flippers, hydrodynamic body shape, and a camouflaged body surface.

There are two groups (called “families”) of sea turtles:

1. Dermochelyidae represented by the flexible-shelled Leatherback (pelagic, jelly fish feeder) and
2. Cheloniidae, including the following five (5) hard shelled species:
  - Kempt Ridley (crustacean feeder)
  - Olive Ridley (crab feeder)
  - Hawksbill (spongivore)
  - Green Turtle (sea grass feeder)
  - Loggerhead (shell fish feeder)

Sea Turtle life cycle (beginning with adult) proceeds as follows:

1. Adults lay multiple clutches of eggs after reaching maturity at 20 to 50 years of age;
2. Hatchlings are pelagic (too many predators near shore!);
3. Juveniles frequent coastal areas; and
4. Adults are highly migratory, inhabiting both nearshore and open seas.

Three species nest at Rosalie Bay. They begin mating approximately one month before the start of reproduction, and then come ashore several times during the summer months. Each species has a different schedule, as follows:

- Leatherback – lay eggs about every 10 days
- Hawksbill – lay eggs about every 12 days
- Green – lay eggs about every 15 days

Sea turtles do not usually nest every year, but will return to the shores of Dominica every 2 to 5 years to begin this cycle again.

Sea Turtle eggs incubate in the sand for about 55 to 70 days. The sex of the emerging hatchlings is temperature dependent: warmer nest temperatures produce females, while cooler nest temperatures produce more males. All hatchlings depend on light (the relatively bright, open ocean horizon) to find the sea.

Odette will tell you more about sea turtles that visit our beach at Rosalie Bay.

### ***SEA TURTLES NESTING at ROSALIE BAY***

Good night! My name is Odette George. It is my pleasure to give you information specific to sea turtles nesting at Rosalie Bay. Three species of sea turtle nest at Rosalie Bay. They are the Hawksbill, the Green, and the Leatherback sea turtle.

#### **Hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*)**

The Hawksbill is the smallest of the three species (60 – 200 lbs). It has a narrow face, a bird like beak and two pairs of scales between the eyes. Its carapace has a serrated rear edge, especially when the animal is young. The carapace is predominantly golden to dark brown in color but has red, black and orange streaks and patches. Hawksbill sea turtles feed on sponges!

Nesting generally occurs at 14 to 16 day intervals. Females lay up to 200 or more eggs. Their eggs are relatively small. They come ashore to nest in non-consecutive years.

The Hawksbill is classified as “*critically endangered*” by the World Conservation Union and nesting turtles are protected by law here in Dominica. Over-harvested for its beautiful shell, which until recently was heavily traded between the countries of the Caribbean and the countries of Asia, it is among the most endangered of all sea turtles.

### **Green Turtle** (*Chelonia mydas*)

The Green sea turtle is the largest of the hard shelled sea turtles (200 – 500 lbs). It has a single pair of scales between the eyes. Each flipper has a single claw. Carapace color ranges from green, olive brown to black, but the belly (plastron) color is yellowish. Green sea turtles are vegetarians, feeding on seagrass and sea weeds.

Females only nest every 2 to 5 years. During a nesting year, egg-laying occurs at 12 to 15 day intervals. During the season, they deposit multiple nests. Green sea turtles dig deep body pits, which is one way that we can identify a green turtle nest even if we don't see the female. The female will often lay between 75 and 150 eggs, but not all of the will hatch.

The Green is classified as “*endangered*” by the World Conservation Union and nesting turtles are protected by law here in Dominica. Over-harvested for its meat, eggs and shell, populations are mostly very small in the Caribbean islands.

### **Leatherback** (*Dermochelys coriacea*)

The Leatherback is the largest of all sea turtles. Its head has no scales. Its flippers are elongated. Flippers have neither scales nor claws. The Leatherback has no hard shell, instead it has a carapace composed of tiny bones that are embedded in cartilage tissue. The carapace is flexible, elongated and is black to very dark brown in color (with pale white or bluish spots).

Leatherbacks are mostly pelagic (meaning that they live in the open sea) and they prefer to eat jellyfish. This sea turtle has the widest range of any sea turtle and is the most northern occurring reptile. With recorded dives of more than 1,200 meters, they are also the deepest divers.

At Rosalie, the nesting and hatching season for Leatherbacks begins in March and ends in September. During the reproductive season, females can lay up to 12 nests ... but usually it's more like 4 to 6. Nests are laid at intervals ranging from 8 to 11 days. During each nesting, female Leatherbacks deposit approximately 80 yolked eggs. Leatherbacks are unique in also laying a variable number of yolkless eggs that will not develop into young.

The Leatherback is classified as “*critically endangered*” by the World Conservation Union, and is protected while nesting here in Dominica. In recent years, populations have declined drastically in the Pacific. However, thanks to conservation efforts, encouraging signs of growing populations exist in the Western Atlantic.

Jemimah will talk to you about the behavior of sea turtles.

### **MATING BEHAVIOR**

O.K, my name is Jemimah Cuffy. I'll be explaining the mating behavior of sea turtles. In doing so, I'll explain different characteristics of males vs. female sea turtles.

First of all, it is not easy to differentiate the sexes of sea turtles while they are in their juvenile stage. However, as adults, you can distinguish males from females by the difference in tail length. Adult males have very long tails and strong, curved claws on their flippers. Adult females have short tails (barely visible beyond the shell edge) and their flipper claws are small.

Male and female sea turtles have different reproductive patterns. Adult males mate every year, but females do not (as we said earlier, females only nest every 2-5 years). As a result, reproductive patterns and reproductive activities differ between adult male and female sea turtles.

In sea turtles, courtship and mating occur weeks before nesting begins. The mating process may last up to 7 hrs. During copulation, the male mounts the female from behind. Using his enlarged claws on his flippers, he holds on to the female's shell. From there, he curls his long tail beneath her body till it makes contact with her cloaca. At this point, he erects his penis and discharges semen into both of the female's oviducts. The female stores the sperms and fertilizes her eggs internally. Often during mating, males nip the neck and flippers of females and tear the shells of females with their claws.

The mating moods of sea turtles vary between the two sexes. Adult males are aggressive. During the mating season, they sometimes mistake a wide variety of objects for female sea turtles and attempt to mate with them. Female sea turtles are less sexually aggressive. When they are not "in the mood" they employ many techniques to dissuade amorous males. Most often, they simply retreat to an area away from where males are congregated. On some Pacific islands they may go ashore to bask in the sun. However, a common practice is for females to prevent males from mounting them by folding their hind flippers behind them or by facing their aggressors with their body positioned vertically in the water column.

Sea turtles are promiscuous breeders: They copulate for long periods and they have multiple partners. This promiscuous behavior is designed to ensure the viability of hundreds of eggs that are to be laid during the year. Once sea turtles have finished nesting and return to the ocean, the developing embryos are "on their own". The sex of the hatchlings is determined by the temperature of the sand in the nest - in general, warmer temperatures produce females and cooler temperatures produce more males.

Here is Shun. He will talk to you about sea turtle nesting behaviors.

### ***NESTING BEHAVIOR***

Thank you. My job is to explain sea turtle nesting behaviors. I am going to talk about three important activities conducted on the beach by nesting sea turtles. They are turtle movements, nest building and egg laying.

For a nesting female turtle, her flippers play a critical role in all three activities. Once the turtle leaves the ocean and comes ashore, the use of her flippers change from swimming and steering her body through the water to pulling and pushing her body up the beach slope.

After she has selected a suitable nesting site, her flippers become digging tools. She uses both her fore flippers and hind flippers to dig a body pit. Once settled in the body pit, she uses her hind flippers to dig an egg chamber into which she deposits her clutch of eggs.

When she is finished laying her eggs, her flippers become handy tools again. She uses her hind flippers to cover and compact the egg chamber. She uses her fore flippers to camouflage the nesting site. To return to the ocean, she uses her flippers to pull and push her body down the beach.



Female turtles nest during the warmest and / or driest months of the year. In selecting their nesting sites, they look for beach area that is:

- a) accessible from the sea,
- b) higher than the high tide line,
- c) safe from the underlying water table,
- d) composed of nesting substrate that is
  - moist enough to prevent collapse during construction of egg chamber and
  - porous enough to allow gas diffusion during incubation.

The body pit helps prevent dry surface sand from falling back into the egg chamber. The angle of the turtle in the body pit and length of the turtle's hind flippers determine the depth of the egg chamber. The number of eggs deposited in the egg chamber depends on the species of the female. The figure may vary anywhere from 50 to 200 or more perfectly round eggs. Laid eggs are surrounded by thick mucus which, along with their soft leathery shell, helps cushion the drop and protects the developing embryos from the elements.

Most sea turtles nest on the same beach repeatedly. They show multiple nesting strategies. All species practice solitary nesting. However, some species aggregate to nest. Sometimes, thousands of Ridentles may gather to nest at the same time. This mass nesting event is called an *arribada*. We do not have *arribada* nesting here in Dominica.

During their nesting activities on the beach, female turtles leave behind distinct flipper tracks. These flipper tracks reveal important information about their owner: they help identify the species of the turtle; they show the various stages of nesting and they can provide clues that suggest whether or not the turtle successfully laid her eggs.

Thank you. Cyrlson will take over.

### ***SEA TURTLE THREATS***

Under normal conditions, an estimated 1 out of every 1,000 sea turtle eggs survives to become an adult sea turtle. In recent times however, human activities have driven sea turtle populations almost to the brink of extinction. My name is Cyrlson Letang. I am going to talk to you about natural and human threats faced by sea turtles and the impact of these threats on sea turtle survival.

#### ***Natural Threats***

Sea turtles face (particularly during the early stages of their development) many natural threats. Nests suffer and sometimes perish from the effects of bacteria, root growth and erosion. Eggs and emerging hatchlings fall victims to predators such as crabs, ants, lizards and sea birds. In the ocean, surviving hatchlings face even greater danger. Waiting for them are more sea birds and hungry fishes competing for a meal. Mature sea turtles are less vulnerable to natural predators. However, they are subject to attacks by sharks and other large marine predators.

#### ***Human Threats***

Humans threaten sea turtles in two ways. First, humans threaten sea turtles directly. Poachers harvest eggs and slaughter adults for their meat and shell. Second, humans threaten sea turtles indirectly. They do so in the ocean and on the coast as well.

In the ocean, their commercial fishing industry damages and kills sea turtles. Every year, thousands of sea turtles get entangled in fishing nets and ropes where they drown. In addition, the fishing industry continues to deplete important sea turtle food sources (horseshoe crab for the Loggerhead). Ocean vessels lacerate sea turtles with propeller blades, collide with them causing severe head injuries and pollute the marine environment with debris and oil spills.

On the coast, developers interfere with sea turtle nesting activities. Their constructed sea walls prevent nesting females from reaching prime nesting sites and affect patterns of sea turtle nesting and foraging. Their coastal lightings disorient sea turtles, preventing them from returning to the sea. (This is why we do not allow you to use torchlight on the beach.) Feral animals and stray dogs destroy sea turtle nests. In short, human coastal activities threaten sea turtle eggs, hatchlings and nesting females.

Thank you for listening. I leave you with Aminah.

### **CONCLUSION**

We who have participated in this Turtle Tour have experienced a wonderful adventure. We have increased our knowledge about the ecology of sea turtles and we have witnessed at Rosalie Bay a female turtle come ashore, perform her nesting activities and return to the ocean. But alas, all good things must come to an end. For you, I trust the end of this Turtle Tour will be the beginning of many more adventures here in Paradise.

NET Tour Services encourages you to embrace this opportunity to help shape your future adventures in Paradise. Writing your comments in our visitor's book is a good way to start. Kindly give us your honest assessment of the tour and your suggestions as to how we may improve our services. We invite you to join our "adopt a turtle program". Enroll in this program and you will receive from us regular information regarding the activities of your turtle on the beach at Rosalie Bay.

When you return home, keep nourishing the memory of your adventure here tonight and your dreams of future adventures with us. Share them with family and friends. Bring them a copy of our brochure and a local craft item for a souvenir. Our tour guides will provide you with brochures of NET Tour Services and will lead you to the *NET Gift Shop*. At our gift shop, local craft items are available at reasonable prices.

In bidding you good bye, I wish (on behalf of NET Tour Services) to say thank you for giving us the opportunity to strengthen your love for sea turtles. You represent the widening of our safety net for these ancient and fascinating creatures.

As you leave the beach tonight, remember to take along the memories of your experience with turtles and your interactions with our tour guides. However, do grant a favor to NET and to the turtles. Kindly place any remaining waste materials in our mobile cabbage bin and please, take along all your personal belongings.

My name is Aminah. Have a safe trip home!



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