

~ 2018 Annual General Meeting ~  
Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network  
(WIDECAST)

Playa Del Este Resort

Matura, Trinidad

18-21 March 2018

## MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

### Dates:

The Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network (WIDECAST) will convene its annual general meeting (AGM) on 18-21 March 2018 in Trinidad, West Indies. Participants will fly into Trinidad Piarco International Airport (POS) on Sunday, March 18, where they will be met and transported to [Playa Del Este Resort](#) on the east coast. An intensive, *optional* Craft Enterprise Workshop will be offered post-meeting on March 22-24 (see "Tours and Additional Sessions", below); reservations must be secured in advance.

### Reception:

There will be a Welcome Reception Sunday evening, 18 March, at the Resort. Hors d'Oeuvres will include meat and vegetarian options. Alcohol is available at your expense.

### Host:

The meeting will be hosted by Nature Seekers (NS). Nature Seekers was founded in 1990 and is involved in marine turtle protection, as well as other natural preservation initiatives and recycling production lines. WIDECAST Country Coordinator Nevon Williams and NS Managing Director Suzan Lakhan-Baptiste will lead the Local Organizing Committee.

### Objective:

The aim of the meeting is to share information on national and regional-level sea turtle research, management, and outreach programs; to learn from peer experiences; to facilitate networking and partnerships; and to strengthen science-based conservation programming. The agenda will include national reports, regional issue reviews, working groups, and technical presentations with related discussion. WIDECAST country coordinators, biologists, policy-makers, and educators from throughout the Caribbean region are welcome to attend.

The meeting will also highlight the mission and structure of Nature Seekers, including the specific challenges and environmental issues that gave rise to its formation nearly 30 years ago, how it has grown to embrace the local community in a variety of successful, conservation-focused micro-enterprise developments, and how it has both benefited from and contributed to the broader Caribbean region, including as a member of the WIDECAS network.

### Location:

The meeting will be held at Playa Del Este Resort, Matura, northeast of the capital city of Port-of-Spain, about 1.5 hour drive from Piarco International Airport. We hope to have your flight itineraries as soon as possible so that we can most efficiently organize our transport.

### Airport Transport:

Participants will be welcomed upon arrival by NS team members! Look for someone holding a "WIDECAS" sign standing outside the Customs Exit Doors. Transportation from the airport to the hotel (on Sunday, March 18) and from the hotel to the airport (on Thursday, March 22) will be provided by NS. There will be no cost for this service. Please provide your flight details, including airline and travel dates/times, to Dr. Karen Eckert and copy to Nevon Williams (see "Contact Information" below) as soon as possible.

### Visas:

Generally citizens of CARICOM countries do not need a VISA for entry into Trinidad and Tobago. The exception applies to Haiti if the passport holder does not have a Diplomatic, Official or Service Passport. All tourist visas should be applied for (to the proper authority in a traveler's country of origin) at least one month in advance of the meeting. All passports should be valid for at least 6 months from date of entry. For additional information regarding immigration requirements for specific regions/countries, please visit <http://www.immigration.gov.tt/Services/Visas.aspx>

### Meeting Expenses:

Transportation to/from the airport in Trinidad: **None** (see "Airport Transport").

Registration fee: **None** 😊

Hotel: NS has negotiated very favorable rates for our meeting! Room rates as follows:

- \* Single Occupancy Room                      TT\$999 per room, per night (~USD \$150)
  - \* Double Occupancy Room                      TT\$1,299 per room, per night (~USD \$195)
  - \* Triple Occupancy Room                      TT\$1,599 per room, per night (~USD \$240)
- o These rates all include Caribbean Style Buffet Breakfast, Lunch *and* Dinner!
  - o Check In: 2 pm daily, Check Out: 12 pm daily

Please do **not** call and make your own hotel reservation, all reservations will be made by our hosts (see "Contact Information") so that we can place you with a compatible roommate(s). If you *prefer a single room*, you will be responsible for the balance of cost over a double occupancy room (i.e., USD \$52 per night). If you plan to arrive early or stay late, you are responsible for the cost of the extra hotel nights. The rates for these extra night will be the same as the conference rate.

**Meals: None. All meals are included in the hotel rates.** Meals will be served on-site with a variety of choices, including vegetarian.

**Conference Room:** The Conference Room has a capacity 100+ persons and is fully equipped with all amenities. Playa is a strong conservation supporter and they will provide the Conference Room to us at no charge - this is one of the ways they contribute to our efforts locally, by offsetting and absorbing costs associated with NS events.

### **Tours and Additional Sessions:**

**Tours:** The meeting will provide an opportunity for all participants to enjoy two of Nature Seekers' conservation enterprises. The objective is both to share some of the nature highlights of our beautiful twin-island paradise and, hopefully, to inspire you to consider developing similar business models at home. Participants will select one of the following on Tuesday afternoon:

- Trash to Cash: Crafting Session (Max 20 persons)
- Salybia River Kayak Tour (Max 12 persons)
- Mermaid Pool Tour (Max 40 persons)
- Nature Trail Tour (Max 30 persons)

...and one of the following on Wednesday morning:

- Trash to Cash: Crafting Session (Max 20 persons)
- Rio Seco Waterfall Tour (Max 40 persons)
- Mermaid Pool Tour (Max 40 persons)
- Nature Trail Tour (Max 30 persons)

Explore [www.natureseekers.org/tours/](http://www.natureseekers.org/tours/) for details. Come prepared to participate in your choices (e.g., bathing suit, hiking shoes). The cost will be USD \$15 per person per tour (USD \$30 total for both days). All tours are conducted by trained and certified Nature Seekers Tour Guides. Tours will last 2-3 hours. Cost includes transport.

**Additional Sessions:** Following the Annual General Meeting, Nature Seekers will host an *optional* 3-day (March 22-24) **Enterprise Development Seminar** focusing on their profitable "Trash to Cash" jewelry-making business. Space is limited and participation will be on a first-come, first-served basis. Accommodations will be provided by Suzan's Guest House in Matura, which is located on the same property as Nature Seekers' business offices and crafting

center. The Guest House costs USD \$80 per person per day (single room) or USD \$65 per person per day (shared room), including all meals. There will be an additional cost to the training and we will likely require at least two persons from your conservation program attend. We will send the details soon, but we wanted to alert you to this option in case you want to wait to make your flight arrangements. Transportation to the airport will be provided free of charge on Sunday, March 25.

### **Currency:**

Local currency is the Trinidad and Tobago Dollar. Credit cards are generally accepted, and so are US Dollars at a current exchange rate of USD \$1 = TTD \$6.7. Some stores or restaurants will return your change in TT Dollars. ATM's are readily available throughout the country and will dispense every withdrawal in TT Dollar equivalent, **NOT US Dollars**. Local banks usually support all major cards (e.g., Mastercard, Visa) but there is limited support for payment systems (e.g., Maestro, Cirrus, Cashnet) at business locations. Check your bank whether it requires you to adjust international settings for your card to enable using ATM's at Trinidad.

### **Electrical and Internet:**

Electrical: The hotel has 110V/220V outlets, which can meet the regular electricity demands of local and international equipment.

Internet: Free Wi-Fi Internet is available in all rooms, apartments, hotel lobbies and conference rooms.

### **Contact Information:**

If you have any questions, please let us know!

#### **Dr. Karen L. Eckert**

*Executive Director, WIDECAST*

1348 Rusticview Drive

Ballwin, Missouri 63011 USA

Cell: (314) 954-8571

Email: [keckert@widecast.org](mailto:keckert@widecast.org)

#### **Nevon Williams**

*Turtle Program Coordinator, Nature Seekers*

10 ¼ mm Toco Main Road

Matura, Trinidad, West Indies

Cell/Watsapp: (868) 312-5850

Email: [nevonwilliams@natureseekers.org](mailto:nevonwilliams@natureseekers.org)

[www.natureseekers.org](http://www.natureseekers.org)