

# GREEN LEAF

## National Consultations on National Biosafety / Biotechnology and Biosecurity Legislation (Act & Regulations)

### Inside this issue:

- National Consultations on National Biosafety/Biotechnology and Biosecurity Legislation *Pg 1*
- Youth Camps Engaged in Environmental Awareness. *Pg 2*
- EPA hosts booth at Berbice Expo and Trade Fair. *Pg 2*
- International Days Observed *Pg 3*
- Litter Wardens Programme gains momentum. *Pg 4*
- Consultations on National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan. *Pg 4*
- Kids Corner. *Pg 5*
- Building Staff Capacity *Pg 6*
- Environmental Authorisations. *Pg 6*
- Complaints and Response *Pg 7*
- Upcoming activities. *Pg 7*
- Did you know? *Pg 8*

In September, 2014, the EPA, under the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment (MNRE), commenced a series of **Public Consultations on the Draft Biosafety/Biotechnology and Biosecurity Legislation (Act and Regulations)**. These consultations aim at facilitating public review and discussion of the Legislation prior to its finalization and will be conducted in various Administrative Regions of Guyana. They are expected to conclude in mid-October, 2014.

Guyana became a Party to the **United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD)**

in 1994, subsequently signing on to the supplemental agreement the **Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (CPB)** which entered into force in 2003. As a Party to the UNCBD, Guyana is expected to implement measures to support effective implementation of Modern biotechnology involving the use of GMOs/LMO-FFPs. One such measure, is the development of a National Biosafety Framework (NBF) an important component of which is to ensure that GMOs/LMO-FFPs introduced into the environment, either intentionally or by accident, would not negatively impact the biodiversity of the Caribbean region.

### Editorial Note

In June, 2014, EPA fully staffed its Water Quality Management Unit under its Environmental Management Permitting Division. The Unit's primary focus is to implement the Environmental Protection (Water Quality) Regulations, 2000. It will also focus on National obligations to the Cartagena Convention and its associated Protocols, specifically, the Protocol on Pollution from Land Based Sources and Activities.

Currently comprising three (3) Environmental Officers, the Unit has already taken part in a number of compliance investigations, audits, and site visits for renewal of Environmental Authorisations. Also engaging the attention of the Unit is pollution investigation in the Canje River and the conduct of surveys in the Konawaruk and Mazaruni Rivers. The latter is in collaboration with World Wildlife Fund (WWF-Guianas) Biodiversity Assessment Team (BAT) and the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission (GGMC).

The Unit is also working along with Guyana National Bureau of Standards (GNBS) and other stakeholders in developing National Effluent Standards for Guyana, which will be an important tool for the EPA in keeping with its mandate to protect the natural and human environment and Guyana's natural resources.

The new Biosafety Legislation is one of five components of the National Biosafety Framework and is aimed at ensuring that appropriate measures will be taken to minimize any potential risk, and to set a platform for the wise implementation of biotechnology initiatives.

*The document is available for public review and comments at : [www.nre.gov.gy](http://www.nre.gov.gy) and [www.epaguyana.org](http://www.epaguyana.org). Comments on the document can be submitted to: [benticknbf@gmail.com](mailto:benticknbf@gmail.com) by October 31,*

# Youth Camps Engaged in Environmental Awareness

It is now an annual feature, for EPA to collaborate with organisations hosting Youth Camps during the August vacation period, to raise environmental awareness among participants. This year, the EPA engaged youths during Day Camps hosted by the Caribbean Youth Environment Network - Guyana Chapter (CYEN); Red Thread Women’s Group; and the

National Museum. The EPA also capitalized on the Expeditions organized by the President’s Youth Award: Republic of Guyana Programme (PYARG) , to raise environmental awareness among youths. Specifically, the Agency used these opportunities to interact with youths aged 6-25 yrs and to highlight two key environmental issues, namely, Climate Change and Pollution.

Skits, puzzles, games, presentations, and videos, were used to get the message across. These tools were adapted based on the level of participants.

Over 350 youths participated in these sessions and key messages brought across included causes and effects of pollution and climate change and actions to reduce these problems. Focus was also given to the 3Rs of Waste Management.

*Cont’d on page 3*



Playing the Carbon footprint game

# EPA Hosts Booth at Berbice Expo

The EPA hosted a Booth at the Berbice Expo and Trade Fair, the premier exhibition in Region 6. This four-day event held during the period July 25– 28, 2014, received a massive turnout of patrons.

education and awareness sharing by colouring



EPA Staff interacting with members of the public



Children and other patrons engaged at the EPA’s Booth

Visitors to the EPA’s booth were able to participate in games and be informed of processes and key environmental health issues. They also had the opportunity to ask questions and voice complaints. Children were also encouraged to be a part of the

environmental pictures with pertinent messages about caring for the environment. Some of the main areas of discussion included Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Composting as much of the persons visiting were housewives and farmers.

## Environmental Days Observed

### International Coastal Cleanup



Volunteers cleaning as part of ICC at 63 Beach

EPA joined a number of groups and organizations in observing International Coastal Clean-up Day on the 20th September, 2014. On the Day itself, the Clean-up activity took place along the Kingston Sea-wall, Georgetown, attracting over 200 volunteers.

The EPA also participated in Coastal Clean-ups at No. 63 Beach Corentyne, Berbice, and along the Mc Kenzie-Wismar Shore Line at Linden.

The Coastal Clean-up activities were a collaborative effort of CYEN, MNRE and EPA which garnered participation from youth groups, environmental clubs, schools, government agencies and the University of Guyana.

### International Day for Preservation of the Ozone Layer

On September, 16, 2014, World Ozone Day was observed globally under the theme: **“Ozone layer Protection: the Mission goes on.”** The EPA marked the occasion this year, with two Ozone Day Seminars at



Students playing an educational game on Ozone Day 2014

Bartica, Region 7. Participating in these seminars were pupils and teachers of two (2) secondary schools and four (4) Primary schools in the Region. Some one hundred participants watched educational videos and participated in games and critical thinking exercises during these sessions.

## Youth Camps Engaged in Environmental Awareness

*Cont'd from page 2*

The Agency also collaborated with the Berbice Shines Project to train twenty-five (25) Youth



Ambassadors on the final day of training

Environmental Ambassadors with the objective of establishing environmental clubs within 5 secondary schools in the Berbice Region. The focus areas of

the training included: Advocacy and Communication, Leadership and Environmental Club Management.



Ambassadors actively involved in discussion

At the sessions, the youths showed enthusiasm and interest in information on the environment and especially what they can do to help protect it.

The EPA commends the partnering groups for the good job they continue to do in helping to raise environmental awareness and looks forward to future collaborations.

## Litter Prevention Wardens Programme Gains Momentum

The Litter Warden's Programme being implemented by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), continues to make inroads, as the Agency seeks to improve the aesthetics and promote attitudinal change for positive environmental actions. During the review period, July- September, 2014, a total of seventy (70) citations were issued. Notably, however, was the fact that, the number of citations issued showed a significant decline from thirty-one (31) in July to eleven (11) in September. This is an indication that the Litter Wardens Programme is achieving its goal of creating a sense of responsibility in the attitude and behaviour of Guyanese citizens.

### EPA Supports the Clean up my Country Programme

The EPA participated in extensive community outreaches to promote the Cleanup my country Programme. The outreaches which culminated in the capital city on July 15, 2014, aimed to sensitize

communities on the initiative, seek collaboration and foster partnerships. The overwhelming responses received from the communities should be applauded and provided impetus for the programme to proceed. The much welcomed initiative saw many communities submitting proposals to Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development for Cleanups.

The Cleanup my Country Programme has since gained momentum in the capital city and has made significant progress. Several contracts were issued and work commenced for de-silting of the canals, cleaning of the Le Repentir Cemetery, and community Cleanups. The Programme complements the EPA's Litter Warden Programme as the Agency reiterates the call for participatory approach to environmental management and conservation.

## Consultation on National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan

Consultations on the Draft NBSAP III were held on the July 15, 2014, at Regency Suites, Georgetown. The forum was opened by the Minister of MNRE, Hon. Robert Persaud.

At the forum, the Draft NBSAP III document was presented which stimulated comments and feedback from participants. The comments would be considered for incorporation into the finalized draft NBSAP III submitted to EPA by Environmental Management Consultants (EMC).

The document was generally well received, however,, based on feedback, it underwent another phase of comprehensive revision and the final document is expected to be completed shortly.

The EPA is the executing agency for the NBSAP Project and contracted a private consultancy firm, Environmental Management Consultants (EMC) to draft the NBSAP III.

The Draft National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBSAP) III sets out the vision, roles, duties and obligations of the state and its citizens and the actions to protect, conserve,



use sustainably and share equitably the benefits arising from biodiversity. It also provides guidance and support actions for biodiversity; sets out the national priorities and the strategic objectives to be achieved.

The NSAP III also allows partners at all levels to better identify how they can contribute and support Guyana in meeting its national biodiversity vision while meeting at the same time, its obligations to the UNCBD. To this end, the Plan incorporates the goals of the UNCBD Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and selected Aichi 2011-2020 targets.

# Kids Corner

## International Day for Ozone Protection

### OZONE DEPLETION

Complete the puzzle using the words in the text box. Starting with the top row and working from left to right, place any unused letters in the blanks below to reveal the phrase below.



ANTARTICA  
BREWER  
CHLOROFLUOROCARBON  
DOBSON  
FREON  
GAS



MONTREAL PROTOCOL  
OZONE HOLE  
OZONE SONDE  
STRATOSPHERE  
ULTRAVIOLET  
UV INDEX

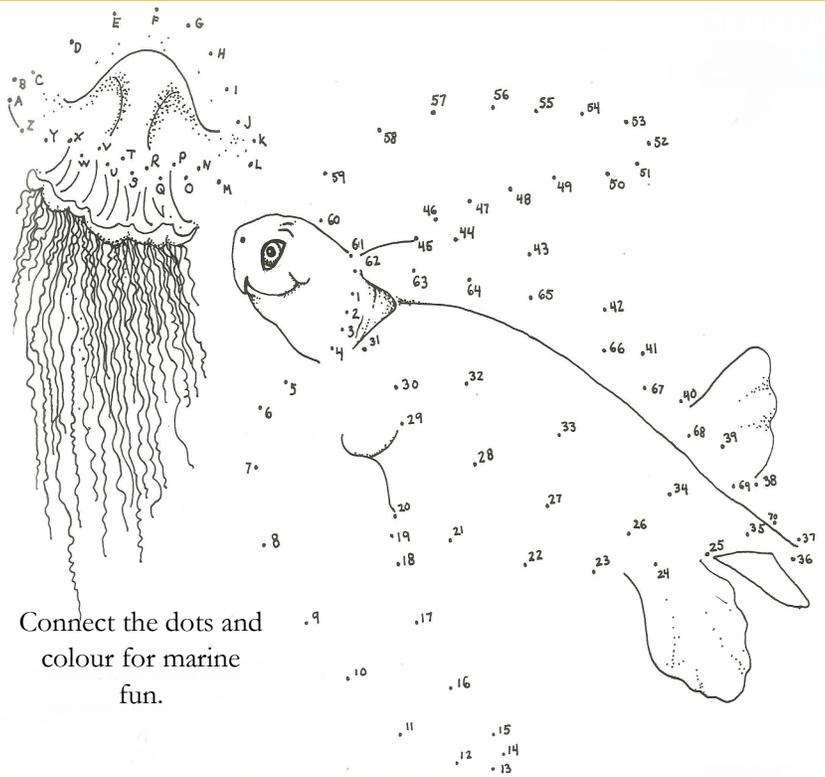


-----  
-----

## International Coastal Cleanup

*Tips on how can we keep our coasts clean.*

- STOP LITTERING!
- Practice the 3 Rs: Reduce, Recycle, Reuse!
- Encourage fishermen to dispose of their nets properly and not at sea.
- Talk to others about actions they can take to reduce marine litter.
- Participate in Cleanup activities such as International Coastal Cleanup and Cleanup the World Campaigns or organise clean up activities of your own in your schools, and communities.



## Building Staff Capacity

The EPA continues to take advantage of opportunities to build the capacity of its staff to execute the mandate of the Agency. During the period July-September 2014, staff participated in meeting and workshops as follows:

### **ACTO Regional Preparatory Meeting to 12<sup>th</sup> COP to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**

Ms. Stacy Lord, Senior Environmental Officer, Biodiversity Management Division, attended this meeting on 3-4 September, 2014, in El Puyo, Ecuador.

### **Conference of Parties to the CBD**

Executive Director of EPA, Dr. Indarjit Ramdass attended this meeting in the Republic of Korea during the period, September 29 – October 03, 2014.

### **Meeting on Solid Waste Management**

Director of EMCD, Mr. Kemraj Parsram and SEO in the EMPD, Mrs. Sonia Gumbs-Luke attended the Solid

Waste Management Meeting in Jamaica during September 30 – October 03, 2014

### **The Red Siskin Recovery Planning Meeting**

Mr. Sean Mendonca, Senior Environmental Officer, Biodiversity Management Divisions, attended the meeting on July 08 – 12, 2014, Virginia, USA.

### **Tropical Basic Offshore Safety and Emergency Training**

Ms. Sharmin Joseph, Environmental Officer, EMPD, attended the training workshop, in Trinidad during August 11 – 15, 2014

### **NEW STAFF**

Mr. Mahendra Budhram, EO I, attached to EMCD, and Mr. Steffon George, Litter Prevention Warden, also attached to EMCD.

## Environmental Authorisations

One hundred and thirty four (134) Applications for Environmental Authorisation were received for the period July to September, 2014. Of these, twenty one (21) were for New Projects, ten (10) for Existing projects, seventeen (17) for Renewal of Environmental Authorisation and three (3) for Variance. Eighty two (82) Applications for Short-Term Noise Permits and one (1) Application for long-term Noise Permit were received.

The Division conducted nine (9) site visits for New Projects and seven (7) site visits for Existing Operations. Compliance/renewal audits were also conducted for six (6) Operations that were issued with an Environmental Authorization.

The Agency granted one hundred and thirty two (132) Environmental Authorizations during this period. These included fourteen (14) Environmental Permits; nineteen (19) Operation Permits for Existing Projects, one (1) Transfer and sixteen (16) renewal of environmental permits were granted. A total of eighty four (84) short-term Noise Permits were issued by the Division.

The Division continues to process the other applications received during this period to determine whether these projects will be required to conduct Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) or prepare Environmental Management Plan (EMP).

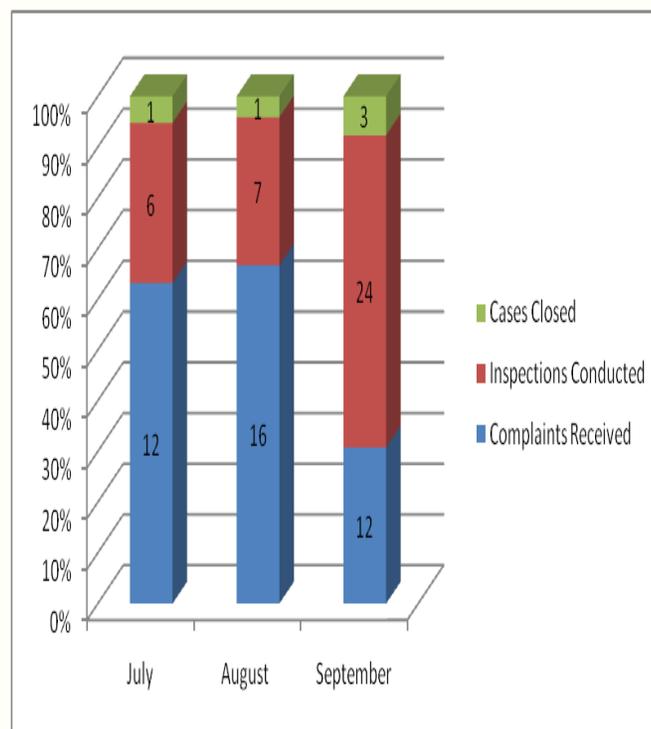
## Complaints and Response Management

For the period July to September, 2014, a total of forty (40) complaints were received, of which nineteen (19) were new and twenty-one (21) were recurring. Regions four (4) and six (6) recorded the highest amount of new complaints and most of these were related to odour nuisance.

A total of thirty-seven (37) complaint investigations were conducted during this period. Thirteen (13) inspections were related to new complaints and twenty-four (24) were follow-up inspections. Forty-one percent (41%) of the inspections were related to noise nuisance, and the others were related to odour, fumes, dust, and improper waste management.

The majority (73%) of the complaints investigated related to the industrial sector with the remaining falling within the agriculture sector. These inspections targeted Regions 2, 3, 4, 6 and 10 were concentrated primarily in Region four (4).

pursued in court, and three (3) injunctions have been issued.



## Upcoming Activities

The EPA initiates and undertakes activities on a continuous basis to pursue its mandate. Having successfully achieved the set goals for the third quarter of the year, planning and coordination have already begun towards its planned objectives for the next quarter.



Activities scheduled for October - December, 2014, include the following:

Activity	Theme	Target Group	Date
<b>Guyexpo</b>	Transformation: Partnering for a Better Guyana	General Public	Oct 2-5
<b>Teacher's Training Camp</b>	Incorporating EE into School Curriculums	Training	Oct
<b>NRMD-Regional Biosafety Consultations</b>	Draft Legislation	Interested Public	September 24- October 14
<b>EMCD Outreaches - Spray Painting Guidelines</b>	Monitoring and Public awareness	General Public	Nov. 1-30
<b>EMPD -Site Visits</b>	Projects going through the Environmental Authorization Process	Projects in Regions : 1, 4, 6, 7, 9 & 10	Oct- Dec 2014

# WILDLIFE SPOTLIGHT

## Did you know?

### The Leatherback Sea Turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*)

The Leatherback is the largest turtle most endangered sea turtle on Earth. Growing up to seven feet long and exceeding 2,000 pounds, these reptiles are the only remaining representatives of a family of turtles whose evolutionary roots can be traced back more than 100 million years.

#### ***Appearance***

Its head has a deeply notched upper jaw with 2 cusps and is the only sea turtle that lacks a hard shell. Its carapace is large, elongated and flexible with 7 distinct ridges running the length of the animal. Composed of a layer of thin, tough, rubbery or leathery skin, strengthened by thousands of tiny bone plates, the carapace does not have scales, except in hatchlings. All flippers are without claws. The carapace is dark grey or black with white or pale spots, while the plastron is whitish to black and marked by 5 ridges. Hatchlings have white blotches on carapace. Leatherbacks have delicate, scissor-like jaws.

#### ***Habitat and Ecology***

They are primarily found in the open ocean, as far north as Alaska and as far south as the southern tip of Africa. However, recent satellite tracking research indicates that leatherbacks feed in areas just offshore. They are known to be active in water below 40 degrees Fahrenheit, the only reptile known to remain active at such a low temperature.



#### ***Diet***

They feed almost exclusively on jellyfish, squids and tunicates.

#### ***Reproduction and Nesting***

Female leatherbacks may lay 4 to 5 times per season with an average of 10 days between nesting, each time depositing 60 to 120 eggs, the size of billiard balls, and 30 smaller, unfertilized eggs, in each nest. Leatherbacks appear to nest once every two or three years with an incubation period of approximately 60 days.

#### ***Facts***

- This large, active animal can survive on a diet of jellyfish, which is composed mostly of water and appear to be a poor source of nutrients.
- The leatherback turtle is the largest marine turtle and one of the largest living reptiles.

#### **About Our Logo...**

Our logo is the Passion Fruit leaf. Yellow Passion Fruit (*Passiflora edulis flavicarpa*) is native to the Amazon. The passion fruit plant produces beautiful flowers and a sweet - tart fruit. It was named by the Spanish missionaries in South America. Passion Fruit is widely grown throughout the tropics and subtropics. The leaves are used in traditional medicine to settle edgy nerves. They are also used for colic, diarrhea, dysentery and insomnia.

### THE GREEN LEAF

The Green Leaf is published quarterly by the Environmental Protection Agency, Guyana.

This publication is intended to promote awareness on the work of the Environmental Protection Agency.

#### **Editorial Committee:**

Sharifah Razack

Fareena Alli - Narine

Candacie Brower - Thompson

Deuel Hughes

Gracelyn Trim

Vanessa Williams

#### **E-mail:**

[eit.epaguyana@gmail.com](mailto:eit.epaguyana@gmail.com)

#### **Mailing address:**

Environmental Protection Agency,  
EIT Division,  
Ganges Street,  
Sophia,  
Georgetown.

#### **Telephone Numbers:**

225-6044, 225-6048, 225-5467-9,  
225-0506, 225-6917, 225-1218,  
225-2062

**Fax # 225-5481**

