

Project

The St. George's Community Archaeology Project (SGCAP)

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■ Description

The St. George's Community Archeology Project (SGCAP) is a summer program in Grenada, West Indies, designed by Jonathan Hanna, Peace Corps Volunteer/Archaeologist, and Michael Jessamy, Historian/Ministry of Tourism Heritage Officer, in partnership with St. George's Methodist School, District 6 Secondary schools, the National Museum, and the Grenada National Trust. **The aim of the program is to engage young people and community members in science and history through the investigation and preservation of a local archaeological site.** The program focuses on core skills in science that reinforce the current public school curriculum. Participants will be taught basic techniques in archaeological excavation, laboratory processing, record keeping, technical drawing, scientific method, and how the information they collect fits into larger patterns and theories. More general areas of study include connections in anthropology, geology, history, geometry, and critical thinking skills. Participants will emerge from this program with a strong, well-rounded foundation in scientific thought and an appreciation for Grenada's history. The wider community will in turn benefit through the sustainable preservation of the site for future generations.

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■ Executive Summary

The Objective...

Conduct a community-based archaeological program that improves awareness and maintenance of an archaeological site in Grenada while also making it accessible for public education.

- ◆ **Need #1:** Improved awareness and protection of cultural heritage in Grenada
- ◆ **Need #2:** Improved exposure and development of youth science and social studies skills
- ◆ **Need #3:** Identification of educational sites for local and tourist development

The Opportunity...

The placement of a Peace Corps Volunteer with a background in archaeology presents a unique opportunity. Already integrated in the local community and teaching (computers) at the primary school in Queens Park, PCV Jon Hanna is in a distinctive position to conduct a progressive, community-oriented program focused on cultural heritage preservation and science education.

- ◆ **Goal #1:** Improve awareness of sensitive archaeological sites in Grenada and address issues of looting and destruction
- ◆ **Goal #2:** Engage youth in rigorous scientific inquiry and thought
- ◆ **Goal #3:** Lay the groundwork for the development of an archaeological site for local and tourist education

■ Background

Situated at 12 degrees north latitude, 61 degrees longitude, the island of Grenada holds a rich history with much to explore. As a pivotal stepping stone into the Caribbean archipelago, Grenada was home to thriving ports in prehistory. But very little archaeological work has been conducted here. In 1963, Ripley Bullen, of the Florida Natural History Museum, surveyed the island and conducted limited archaeological testing. His seminal report on this work, along with the identification of sites and local ceramic typologies, laid the foundation for subsequent archaeological inquiries in Grenada. From 1988 to 1991, the University of Florida (into which the Florida museum had merged) returned for several summer seasons at Grenada's largest site, Pearls. Aside from visiting researchers (and, notably, the current Univ. North Carolina project on the sister-island of Carriacou), no further excavations have been conducted on the island of Grenada since then.

Needs

Improved awareness and protection of cultural heritage in Grenada

Currently, two-thirds of today's population (66%) is under the age of 35 (UNECLAC 2009), yet over one-third of them are unemployed (PAHO 2007, CDB 2009). As the CDB Poverty Assessment notes, young people faced with stark unemployment generally look for underground opportunities. As both authors have seen, a small niche opportunity exists in the illegal antiquities market in Grenada, for those who know where to look. Those young people who know of archaeological sites readily subsidize their income by selling looted antiquities to tourists and other foreigners on the black market (particularly at Pearls).

A series of reports, most recently by the OECS (Turner, 2009a/b), have documented the need and laid the groundwork for plans to protect Grenada's cultural resources. Currently only Crown lands are officially designated as protected areas, but little is actually done to protect even them (much of Pearls, for instance, is on Crown lands). Nevertheless, all other sites on the island- Bullen identified 16- are left completely unprotected. The OECS reports outline the legislation currently enacted that could well protect these sites from damage. They also address the need for better implementation of these laws and the establishment of a system of national parks across the tri-island state.

While these issues cannot be addressed head-on by SGCAP, this project does present a different approach from top-down legislation. As has been seen in other community archaeological projects in the US, the protection of archaeological sites rests considerably upon the surrounding community, who often plays a lead role in looting and vandalism. As Maureen Malloy notes in her introductory discussion in *Archaeologists and Communities*, "Inviting community involvement in archaeological research early on, and keeping local communities involved throughout the process, builds public support for the stewardship of archaeological sites and enriches the quality of the archaeological research." (Malloy, 2003, pp. ix) SGCAP aims to employ these methods and engender support from the local community in protecting a local site.

Improved exposure and development of youth science and social studies skills

A 1987 report by Errol Miller identified Social Studies as an area of greatest need in the Eastern Caribbean because it is often completely neglected. As Mr. Hanna can confirm, Social Studies tends to be an afternoon subject, which means it is regularly interrupted for other activities and events. Another report by Griffith (1997) notes that the social studies curriculum in the Eastern Caribbean contains a "heavy emphasis on knowledge-recall questions and low-level cognitive objectives, with only superficial attention paid to testing for values and higher-order thinking." The study also found that, "a lack of adequate and appropriate resource materials, and lack of variety in the use of teaching skills consistently stand out as, by far, the dominant problems." Indeed, interactive, hands-on applications of science and social-studies are sorely needed. As last summer's pilot archaeology camp showed, most of the sixth grade students involved not only knew very little of their own island's history, they also had difficulty understanding the scientific method and conducting basic tasks like taking measurements and noting observations. These students were among the brightest in their respective schools, but the problem was that they simply had never applied the knowledge they were being taught.

A 1998 CARICOM meeting defined the ideal graduate of a Caribbean education to, "demonstrate multiple literacies, independent and critical thinking, question the beliefs and practices of past and present, and bring this to bear on the innovative application of science and technology to problem solving." (quoted in MOE, 2006) This is exactly the caliber of critical thinking SGCAP aims to produce. By engaging young people (and a few community members) in science and social studies, we're presenting them with applications for critical thinking.

Development of sites for local and tourist education

The threats posed towards archaeological sites in Grenada could be mitigated through sustainable development and tourism. By engaging the local community- not just those participating directly, but by select, wider outreach efforts- SGCAP aims to educate and teach concepts on management and preservation of the site. By working with the National Museum and National Trust, SGCAP will help establish cooperation and understanding between local institutions and local communities. By sharing resources, responsibilities, and knowledge, this cooperation would lead to the empowerment of local people manage and develop a local asset.

Solutions

Within the context of these issues, a unique opportunity exists by the involvement of a Peace Corps Volunteer with a background in archaeology. His knowledge and experience with archaeological methods (see resume) coupled with his immersion in the local culture for the past two years creates a window of opportunity for a positive, community-based project to bring public awareness and education to the fore. By working with local historian Michael Jessamy, these efforts will allow some of Grenada's rich heritage to be properly showcased, while also preparing the nation's next generation to be stewards of their island's history.

During the summer of 2011, the St. George's Archaeology Camp was successfully piloted with twelve students from St. George's Methodist School, the Anglican Senior School, and St. Dominic's RC. The students learned about archaeology, scientific method, and the history of Grenada by participating in daily interactive classes, a scavenger hunt at the National Museum, a tour of archaeological sites around the island, and by excavating three areas of Queens Park. The later excavations revealed aspects of a substantial Arawak site dating between 0-600AD. Many lessons were learned in this first experience, and the team is well prepared to undertake a more extensive program next summer, utilizing the same sites (in particular, the St. John's River site).

Community-archaeology bridges the need for heritage preservation with the need for progressive science and social studies programs. Young people and community members would be given a rare opportunity to participate in rigorous scientific inquiry while also helping their nation and community.

■ Project Methods

The protection of archaeological sites rests considerably upon local communities, who often play a significant role in looting and vandalism. A community-based approach, therefore, would be the most effective employment of all the resources and skills at hand. Such an approach can be defined as a “partnership or collaboration...[where] the ‘goals and objectives of a project are developed jointly’ by the archaeologist and members of the local community.” (Malloy, 2003) This implies that the community is in some way involved in many of the decisions that the project makes. The first step, therefore, is to identify local persons interested in representing the wider community.

We've decided to use oral history collecting as a means of generating interest, identifying community representatives, and establishing trust. From there, regular meetings and collaboration will complement many of the subsequent steps- including the decision of which site to investigate. The camp's daily activities and curriculum will follow a similar pattern to the 2011 project plan (available upon request).

The Timeline in the following section outlines the format of the entire project. The camp will begin with a demonstration excavation at the St. John's River site, followed by a week of book readings, videos, hand-on activities, and other introductory lessons at the local school. The second week will involve a short practice excavation pit followed by real excavations for the next two weeks. During the final week, a public presentation day will be held for the participants to present their findings to the media and interested public. Certificates will be presented on the final day.

Following the camp, analysis of artifacts, features, and other findings will be conducted by Messrs. Hanna and Jessamy, which will facilitate the writing of a site report. Coordination with the museum will determine the necessary steps for displaying notable artifacts and information. A final report of the entire program will be written following the project's completion.

Camp Participants (approx. 21-24 total)

Two students from public Secondary schools in District 6 of St. George's parish (8 total):

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| 1. Boca Secondary School | 3. Presentation Brothers College (PBC) |
| 2. St. Joseph's Convent | 4. Wesley College, Queens Park |

1-2 community members from the following villages (3-6 total)

1. Darbeau
2. River Road
3. Mt. Rush

Returning Students from 2011 Camp (approx. 10 total)

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. [REDACTED]
Grade 6, Anglican Senior School | 7. [REDACTED]
Form 2, Happy Hill Secondary |
| 2. [REDACTED]
Grade 6, Methodist Primary School | 8. [REDACTED]
Form 2, Westerhall Secondary |
| 3. [REDACTED] (entering Form 1) | 9. [REDACTED]
Form 2, Happy Hill Secondary |
| 4. [REDACTED] (entering Form 1) | 10. [REDACTED]
Form 2, Grenada Boys Secondary |
| 5. [REDACTED] (entering Form 1) | |
| 6. [REDACTED]
Form 2, Anglican High School | |

■ Time Line

Key project dates are outlined below.

Description	Start Date	End Date	Duration
Update Manual and Curriculum	April 1 st	May 31 st	2 months
Equipment Assessment and Pricing	May 1 st	May 31 st	1 month
Receipt of donation	By the end of May		
Purchase of Equipment (by June 18th)	June 11 th	June 16 th	1 week
Meet with school principals to identify students	Throughout June (1 st -30 th)		1 month
Community Outreach, oral history	all weekends of June		3-4 days
Camp setup, demonstration excavations	July 6 th	July 8 th	3 days
Week 1 of program	July 9 th	July 13 th	5 days
Week 2 of program	July 16 th	July 20 th	5 days
Week 3 of program	July 23 rd	July 27 th	5 days
Week 4 of program	July 30 th	August 3 rd	5 days
Public Presentation Day	August 1 st		1 day
Camp Completion/Award Ceremony	August 3 rd		1 day
Site Clean-up	August 4 th	August 9 th	5 days
<i>Grenada's Carnival</i>	<i>August 10th</i>	<i>August 14th</i>	<i>5 days</i>
Analysis of data recovered	August 15 th	August 31 st	3 weeks
Write site report (of findings)	Sept. 3 rd	Sept. 28 th	1 month
Purchase and building of display cases & materials	Oct. 1 st	Oct. 12 th	2 weeks
Arrangement of displays at museum	Oct. 15 th	Nov. 2 nd	2 weeks
Write final report (of entire program)	Nov. 5 th	Nov. 16 th	2 weeks
Closing of project, final arrangements	Nov. 16 th	Nov. 30 th	2 weeks

■ Evaluation

In order to track the effectiveness of the project and to judge the outcome, the following evaluation plan will be used.

Goal #1: Improve awareness of a sensitive archaeological site in Grenada and address issues of looting and destruction

Evaluation Method: An oral survey will be conducted in communities around the St. John's River site (River Road, Queens Park, etc.), both before and after the program.

Indicators of Success: An improvement in knowledge of looting and destruction at the site by local community members

Goal #2: Engage youth in vigorous scientific inquiry and thought

Evaluation Method: Observation of participants will be ongoing. They will also be required to keep field books, which will be collected and graded weekly.

Indicators of Success: Participants demonstrate an improvement in knowledge and observations regarding archaeology, anthropology, science, history, etc.

Goal #3: Lay the groundwork for the development of an archaeological site for local and tourist education

Evaluation Method: Observation of increased interest from wider community

Indicators of Success: A volunteer committee of community members engaged in the maintenance of the site

Data Analysis and Reporting:

Data from notebook grading, surveys, and observation will be recorded throughout the program. A final report will be issued, documenting the results of the program as well as analysis of evaluation criteria.

■ Partnerships

The St. George's Community Archeology Project has formed strategic partnerships with the following organizations. Leveraging our relationships with these leading resources will ensure that the end result of the project is more successful.

◆ **St. George's Methodist School**

Queens Park, St. George's
(473)440-2669

Will provide daily classroom, storage space, facilities, computer/video lab
(SGMS is the primary worksite for Mr. Hanna's Peace Corps service)

◆ **District 6 Secondary Schools**

Boca Secondary School, Boca: 440-2608
Happy Hill Secondary School, Happy Hill: 440-2484
Presentation Brothers College (PBC), Old Fort: 440-2470
Wesley College, Queens Park: 440-2003
St. Joseph's Convent, St. George's: 440-3284

Each will provide two interested students to participate in the program

◆ **Grenada National Museum**

Incoming Curator: John Angus Martin
Carenage, St. George's
(473)440-3725

Will provide permanent storage space for artifacts and assist in public displays
(Mr. Jessamy is former curator; Mr. Martin is in full support)

◆ **Grenada National Trust**

Grenada National Museum
(473)405 3303

Will assist in community outreach, as well as various research and preservation activities
(Mr. Jessamy is a lead member)

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