

Rotary Clubs of Saint Lucia Tree planting activity 2011-12

As you all know these were the goals voiced by District Governor Lara at the district conference in Barbados last year April.

15.-18. Slide project overview

The mandate: To plant at least “10” trees

Our goal: To plant 1000 trees

Our strategy: Work with the local authorities like the ministry of agriculture, the forestry department and Rotary friendly consultants and the Rotary youth.

As you can see we wanted to plant more than just 10 trees and planned on making it an all encompassing nationwide generation spanning activity.

19. Slide Recalling Tomas

Here a quick reminder what had happened in Saint Lucia the year before. No need to go into more details. We obviously had lots of rain and damage.

20. Slide Picture of flodding

- In June we contacted the Ministry of Agriculture and had initial planning meetings with representatives from the forestry department. At the beginning communication and progress was rather slow.
- At the same time we looked for information that would allow us to undertake a meaningful project or projects and as it turned out also motivate our membership.
- We found a friend in Dr. Christopher Cox, an expert in rural land use and management and soil erosion. A former senior employee of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry now working with CEHI the Caribbean Environmental Health Institute made him ideal to address the Rotary Clubs.

21. Slide Picture of Club meeting

- Dr. Cox made a very compelling presentation and if there was any doubt that we were going to plant trees this year, now the opposite was the case and the members embraced the project. Chris Cox showed us several examples of planting techniques and where we could have a long term impact on the environment.

22. Slide The Future

- He talked of the future. The need for more living space and climate changes

23. Slide Water resources management

- Water resources management and it's Long-term impacts.

24. Slide River bed

- Even if Rotarians were not going to actively plant trees they now believed in the project and felt it had to be done.

25. Slide pig pen and water collection

- Seeing pictures like this one, some members suggested the entire presentation should be made to Government officials and it was in fact made to part of the public sector at a different occasion.
- Plus all members agreed that we should do it together with the other Rotary Clubs and the 2 Rotaract Clubs, as well as our 4 Interact Clubs.
- Progress from the Ministry was slow and it took a little persistence from Rotary to stay committed. Plus we were in the middle of a pre election campaign. It was very important to us that we were told what planting material was required and when we would be advised of a suitable area to plant these trees. We did not want to plant the wrong trees in a part of the country where nobody wanted them or where they would be pulled out or cut down again in the very near future.
- Being Rotary it was so very important to us to get this right.
- Once we had been given an indication of what plant material was needed we started to confirm where we would get these plants from. An early indication was that the Ministry of Agriculture would provide plants.

26.Slide Vetiver grass

- Now aware of what was needed we also wanted to include a little fellowship in the tree planting exercise. Since we knew of a place where we could get Vetiver grass sprigs for free we decided to set some on our own in small bags.

27.Slide Fellow ship setting of plants

28.Slide Fellow ship setting of plant

- Here are members of the Rotary Clubs and the Rotaract Club setting out about 600+ plants on a Saturday morning.
- By talking to various civil servants the public sector was by now very aware of our aim to plant trees.
- The first big event was during the celebration of the year of the forest.
- Rotary was singled out publicly as taking a very keen interest in reforestation work after Hurricane Tomas.

29. Slide AG Lisle with microphone

- Here is AG Lisle Chase addressing a gathering during a media event covered on TV and in newspapers. No use doing good and telling nobody.
- We also planted trees that day – mainly for show.
But every tree helps and I am sure the 150 – 200 trees planted that day for the media made a difference in this landslide area at the edge of the rain forest close to a main highway.

30.Slide planting trees

31.Slide Lisle planting a tree

- With the awareness out there we really wanted to do something with the young people and our Interact Clubs. We kept pushing and eventually the Saint Lucia National Trust approached us to participate in a joint project.
- We felt that International Interact Week would also be the perfect opportunity to do exactly that.
- Since money is always key in projects we at that time also received a US\$ 1,000.00 contribution from a Rotary Club in California making the tree planting all of a sudden globe spanning. One of their members happened to be visiting with us when we had the presentation from Dr. Cox.
She was so fascinated that Michele Webber convinced her club to donate money to our environmental project.

32.Slide Rotaractors on a bus

- This helped us paying for buses that picked up the members of the Interact Clubs from their 4 schools and take them to different parts of the country where they would plant trees.

33.Slide Rotaractors gathering

34.Slide Rotaractors receiving instructions

- At the entrance to the rainforest all received instructions on what trees we were going to plant how, where and why.
- Since the activity took place on the 11. 11. of 2011 each group planted a minimum of 11 trees in 11 areas.

35.Slide Rotaractors heading into the rainforest

- At the end we planted quite a few more trees than that along a rainforest trail shoring up small landslide areas.
- Besides the work after Hurricane Tomas this was the best project I participated in during my app. 15 years with Rotary.
- In addition to having an amazing time with the students we all felt we did something meaningful hands on and felt good about it.

36.Slide Rainforest trail

- Some of this planting was 2 miles into the rainforest and it was nice to see students and teachers participating.
- Since this was Interact week we also wanted to reward the Interactors and took them on a boat trip along Saint Lucia's west cost. It was officially sold to the parents and schools as an educational outing but you all know what really happens on a catamaran boat trip and I will not share any pictures.
- Now having planted a fair number of trees we were still short of our goal and the district deadline was approaching.

- After the Interactors we still wanted to do a planting activity with the 2 Rotaract Clubs. We kept pushing and eventually were able to get a date and area allocated by the Forestry Department and set out to plant the rest of our plants.
- So we headed to an area called Fond St. Jacques in the southern part of Saint Lucia, well know to us from our earlier Shelterbox projects.
[37.Slide Hurricane damage Fond Saint Jacques](#)
- Some of you may remember these pictures from last year's District Conference in Barbados.
[38.Slide Shelterbox village](#)
- This time we went further up that valley we had visited only a year earlier.
[39.Slide Tree planting Fond St. Jacques](#)
- Together with members of our 2 Rotaract Clubs we planted app. 750 trees – mainly local species like Fat Poke, Mahogany, Glory Cedar, Mahaut Cochon, Bamboo, some fruit trees and our Vetiver plants.
[40.Slide Tree planting Fond St. Jaques](#)
[41.Slide Tree planting Fond St. Jaques](#)
[42.Slide Tree planting Fond St. Jaques](#)
[43.Slide Tree planting in Fond St. Jacques KW](#)
- I don't think it really matters if we met our goal of setting out the 1000 trees. We may even have surpassed it.
What in my opinion counted was that we had some really good generations spanning fellowship while doing some good together with the Interactors and the Rotaractors.

36.Slide The Petit Piton Soufriere

While I leave you with this picture of one of Saint Lucia's Pitons taken from the place we planted the trees, allow me to talk a little bit about the long term effect of the project.

Because of the exposure gained by these small undertakings we have meanwhile been approached by ARC the Atlantic Race for Cruisers that finishes every December in Saint Lucia. They want to join forces with Rotary to start a sustainable reforestation project for at least the next 5 years. The plan is that every year ARC participants from the app. 250 yachts that arrive in Saint Lucia plus friends and families arriving via airplanes participate in an environmental project planting trees.

Talks to this effect have started with the relevant Ministries.

We have further been approached and DG Lara knows this, by World ARC, The World Race for Cruisers to help them with organizing environmental projects in their ports of call around the world.

To this extent PP Albert Daniels from the Rotary Club of Saint Lucia is currently trying to establish contact with Rotary Clubs in

- Hiva Oa, Marquesas (late March)
- Vava'u Tonga (late May)
- Vanuatu (early July)
- Mauritius (September) we may have a contact there.
- Salvador de Bahia, Brazil (February 2013)

With the assistance of Rotary International District Governor Lara and District Governor Herve we are hopeful to initially at least connect with one or two of these places in an effort to start a globe spanning legacy project.