



Newspaper article series in St. Vincent and the Grenadines

FAO LOA5: Testing Communication Products
October - November 2011



Introduction

A series of communication products were designed as a pilot project for the United Nations Food and Agriculture (FAO) funded project "Piloting communication products on participatory forest management" undertaken in St. Vincent and the Grenadines in October 2011. This project is the final component of a multiyear regional project **Participatory Forest Management: Improving policy and institutional capacity for development (2006-2010)**.

This project sought to improve policy for and the practice of participatory forest management for developing sustainable forest-based livelihoods in St. Vincent and the Grenadines by implementing a promotional campaign targeted at poor rural communities and the general public. The project was undertaken with the support of the Forestry Department as the local partner. A series of newspaper articles was identified as one of the communication products to aid in building public awareness and understanding of participatory forest management.

Article design

Focus and frequency

The material that was intended to be presented on the topic of participatory forest management required delivery 'in small doses', it was felt that content delivered in single-page articles published over a long period would be a useful approach to enable readers to obtain and digest the information incrementally.

In order to introduce the series, the design of the first article would mention that the article was the first in a series and the purpose and frequency of the series would also be outlined. The series was designed as a four-part series (weekly issue of an article) of whole-page newspaper articles, to be published during the period October-November 2011.

Content and feedback opportunities

The series of articles was intended to cover some main aspects of participatory forest management. Four messages were outlined that would incorporate key learnings and link with some of the stakeholders for representation of interests, conflicts and resolutions. These messages were generated as feedback from the regional Action Learning Group¹, viz:

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¹ The ALG was comprised of individuals from key national and regional institutions who could contribute skills, knowledge or experience to research and capacity building on forests and livelihoods and who could serve as 'change agents' by sharing learning on project findings within their countries, institutions and sectors. The group contained representation from government, private sector and civil society, including forest users, from the forestry and poverty reduction and rural livelihoods sectors and other relevant sectors in the project countries, as well as representatives of relevant regional organisations and technical and financial support agencies.

Messages	Article content	Partners highlighted
1. Forests contribute to 1% of the country's GDP	Economic value of forests to everyone; revenue earned and value to nation	Forestry Agriculture Tourism Community Groups
2. Forest management requires everyone's efforts	Everyone has a stake in protecting the resource as everyone has benefits to gain; water management; electricity generation; economic activities for sustainable livelihoods	Community groups VINLEC CWSA Forestry Agriculture Tourism
3. Improving livelihoods should be done in a sustainable way and be independent of external forces	Conflicts arise in resource use, impacts of external factors, clear definition of sustainability highlighting viable options	Community groups Farmers Forestry
4. The Integrated Forest Management Development Programme (IFMDP) will contribute to people using their natural resources sustainably	Highlight progress made with the IFMDP - communication among partners, any success stories thus far, opportunities for expansion	All (as above)

The content of each article was sufficiently generic so that it could be used in the other project countries. In order to however highlight aspects of the content in the St. Vincent and the Grenadines context, a "Fast Facts" section to the page was developed in which country-specific information was presented. The Forestry Department assisted with details for this section as well as photos and reviewed all articles before going to press.

Originally, it was suggested to the local partner that an invitation should be sent to local companies to explore their interest in sponsoring a quiz based on the content of the articles. In this way, interest could be stimulated in reading the articles and there would be an opportunity for feedback. Unfortunately, this idea did not materialise.

Additionally, since another communication product - the community caravan - was scheduled to take place at the end of October, the opportunity was taken to build an advertisement of the caravan into the newspaper series. This was done by building in an 'information corner' into the page space in which information pertaining to the caravan could be placed.

Contact information for the Forestry Department and a brief introduction to CANARI were provided for feedback purposes. Finally, the series was further defined by having three articles focused on different aspects of participatory forest management and the last article serving to report on the caravan activity.

Style:

The opportunity was taken to address various audiences: e.g. adults, students, teachers, domestic and foreign tourists, researchers/scientists, artists etc. in the language used and the presentation of text. Catchy sub-headings were used to maintain interest throughout the article and break up content to enable its gradual digestion and as well as provide indicators of the main points. Each article was preceded by a brief introduction/re-introduction to the series and a summarising statement of the focus of the present article (in an italicized font). By adopting a writing style which suits popular literature rather than technical reports, the intention was to have a greater chance of uptake by a wider audience.

Layout:

A page layout was proposed that would be standard in appearance for easy recognition and to maintain common elements in common placement from one article to the next: the CANARI logo, the name of the series, the title of the article issue, the main text of the article, the 'Fast Facts' section, a contact information segment, photographs. Catchy title/sub-headings were selected and an advertorial look was recommended for more appeal.

Proposed layout:

Main article with photos	Fast facts
	Advertisement of upcoming caravan visit: where, when, content / Kingstown event
	Additional information / contact numbers / websites / feedback

Press partnership

The local partner provided the contact information for the major newspapers in St. Vincent and the Grenadines and correspondence was forwarded to each via e-mail and hard copy, requesting that the series of articles be carried in their publication. Only one company, *Searchlight* newspaper, responded to the request and agreed to carry the articles.

Articles were sent as Word document files to the newspaper by e-mail with accompanying photos sent as jpeg files, at least one week before the scheduled publication date. Pdf files of the published articles were conveyed to CANARI via e-mail. These are provided in Appendix 1.

Only after the series was concluded, a search of the newspaper's website revealed that there was a general newspaper quiz on the paper's content, and that in one quiz question, content of one of the weekly articles was featured (Appendix 2).

Evaluation

The articles were reviewed by the local partner before publication and approved. Input from Forestry Department for fast facts and photographs though slow, did not impede submission of articles on time to the Editor.

While a feedback mechanism was built into the article, up to the end of the project timeline there was no public response to these articles either to the Forestry Department or to CANARI.

Lessons learned

- Local partner connection with the newspaper company facilitated placement.
- Exploring other feedback opportunities may have yielded a greater chance of evaluation of the reach, impact and effectiveness of the newspaper articles.

Recommendations


The newspaper article is a passive form of public communication, but is an effective way of delivering content in a cost-effective manner via a vehicle which has widespread dissemination. In order to however gauge its impact, the medium should also incorporate feedback mechanisms which indicate that there has been uptake of the material, as was suggested by having a quiz built into the page.

Another useful mechanism for generating feedback may have been through posing a question at the end of the article, and asking readers to write their responses in i) a letter to the Forestry Division, ii) a letter to the Editor, iii) a comment on CANARI's Facebook page or iv) when visiting the caravan. e.g. How do *you* feel about participatory forest management?

Further recommendations are not possible since no feedback has been obtained on whether the layout, content, language or style of the articles impacted on the general audience for which it was written, to advise of improvements.

Appendix 1: PDF versions of newspaper articles on participatory forest management carried in the Searchlight Newspaper, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, October-November 2011.

SEARCHLIGHT Tuesday, October 4, 2011. 13



Forests are critical to human existence. When a harmonious relationship exists between man and this natural resource, basic elements of life are sustained. Here in Caribbean, a unique approach has been initiated for building this type of relationship. This, the first in a series of articles, provides insight into the economic value of forests and the need to enhance the sustainability of our livelihoods which are connected to our forest resource.

One with the earth
Many countries of the Caribbean hinge their promotion to visitors on the natural beauty; boasting of lush tropical forests placed as emerald gems in the surrounding brilliant blue Caribbean Sea. Some are even the homes of some of the oldest forest reserves in the Western Hemisphere. Some of the vibrant bird and other animal life inhabit these islands and are true endemics, found nowhere else in the world. The countries enjoy a bountiful natural heritage and citizens are the primary beneficiaries of this wealth, which is generously shared by an average of 80,000 tourists annually in each island.

Beauty with a purpose
Apart from being strikingly beautiful, this gift of nature also provides man with much that is critical to his existence. Our forest cover literally sustains the life of citizens, as the "external lungs" that

Promoting Participation in Forest Management

Article 1: Forests for people, people for forests

provide fresh supplies of oxygen; they are a vital link in the Earth's natural cycling of water; a buffer against erosion and the ravaging effect of natural disasters. And central to our day-to-day circumstance, forests also provide economic value. The forests of these islands directly and indirectly contribute 2-3% of their total Gross Domestic Products.

A figure for the forest
This figure has remained relatively stable since the early 1990s when the National Forestry Action Plans of these countries were drafted. It represents the contribution of the forest sector in several economic activities such as: Production forestry/Timber production; Agroforestry - fruit tree crops; Furniture manufacture; Charcoal industry; Non-wood products e.g. handicraft industry; Recreation - value, national parks; Ecotourism.

Making it matter
Though it has not been emphasised or perhaps promoted locally, the monetary value associated with our forests is of vital importance. Here in the Caribbean, we live with the reality of natural disasters, the fickleness of tourism pegged to global economies, and a heavy reliance upon foreign imports. The value of forests to each nation's economy needs to be made more prominent. Though the percentage may seem small, efforts to ensure that the economies and livelihoods tied to forests can weather these storms will enable the country's maintenance or improvement of that single percentage which can make a difference in the lives of citizens.

All for one ...
The Forestry Departments of the countries of the English-speaking Caribbean are presently engaged in a process of building a framework for greater involvement of forestry resource stakeholders in the management of forests. This process, referred to as participatory forest management, supports the sustainable management of the forest resource by engaging a variety of users.

The Forestry Department performs a main co-ordinating role. In its initial phase of development, the various roles which bodies such as the Ministry of Tourism, Water and Sewerage Authority and traditional forest users and community based organisations play in the use of the forest resource were identified. The opportunities and constraints faced by them in forest management were also explored. The outcome of these exploratory meetings was the development of a team of stakeholders that seeks to improve the way in which the forest resource is managed.

This effort also provided stakeholders with a good idea of the value of the resource, particularly by clarifying the connections between management and livelihoods, between sustainability of operation and forest conservation. These partnerships also had the benefit of enabling sharing of knowledge and technical skills, as well as best practices among stakeholders. In our next article, we will share some insight into the team of stakeholders that take part in this programme and the value of their involvement to forest management in the Caribbean.

Fast Facts (St. Vincent and the Grenadines):

- Forest cover constitutes 29% and undisturbed forest 5% of the land area of St. Vincent and the Grenadines
- Deforestation rate has been estimated at 3 - 5% per annum
- 2011 marks the 220th anniversary of the establishment of King's Hill Forest Reserve
- The St. Vincent parrot is an endemic species, but it currently holds "endangered" status
- The agricultural industry contributes 13% of the country's Gross Domestic Product while forests contribute 1%

More information:
For more information on the **Integrated Forest Management Development Programme**, contact the **Forestry Division St. Vincent and the Grenadines c/o Ministry of Agriculture, Richmond Hill, Kingstown. Tel. No.: (784) 457-2452 or (784) 456-1111 Ext. 326**

To find out more about the **FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization) funded programmes on Forests and Livelihoods**, visit the **CANARI** website at: www.canari.org/forestmanagement

About CANARI:
The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute is a regional, technical, non-profit organisation which has been working in the islands of the Caribbean for more than 20 years. Our mission is to promote equitable participation and effective collaboration in managing natural resources critical to development. Our programmes focus on research, sharing and dissemination of lessons learned, capacity building and fostering regional partnerships.

Stay tuned: Coming soon! A community caravan activity will visit the communities of Georgetown and Chateaubelair to share more information on experiences in participatory forest management in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Details will be carried in subsequent issues of this series. **Stay tuned!**



Heliconia



Cumberland Watershed

Photos by Fitzgerald Providence



Livelihoods tied to forests are heavily dependent upon wise use and maintenance of the natural resource. Extraction activities need to be matched by enrichment processes. Economic gains can only be sustained when the raw materials are insured for the future. Forest users therefore also wear the hat of forest manager. This, the second in a series of articles, focuses on the ways in which sustainable livelihoods are achieved by community stakeholders in tandem with forest management.

Earthy economics

In the fable of the goose which laid the golden egg, the promise of lifelong prosperity was snuffed out by short-sighted action. The advantage of tying a livelihood to a natural resource is inherent in the ability of the resource to reproduce or replicate itself; in that regard, the activity must insure this capacity to itself be viable. This central aspect of co-preservation is at the heart of participatory forest management by forest user stakeholders. It is at the core of the "earthy economics" that governs forest-based livelihoods.

Productive sector

There are several types of economic activities that are tied to forests in the Caribbean. The state sector directly employs people in the forestry sector, both for watershed management and production forestry. These activities have spin-off benefits including



Packer in charcoal industry

Photos by Fitzgerald Providence

Promoting Participation in Forest Management

Article 2: Livelihood surety, Lifestyle Quality

activities tied to forest services like water production, electricity generation and the wood working industry, as well as domestic and foreign tourism activities from tours and outdoor experiences.

There are however, additional economic gains to individuals and community stakeholders that utilise the forest resource as a livelihood provider. Their income is hinged to the use of the forest for raw materials or for ecosystem values. These users depend upon the maintenance of a forest cover. As a result, the involvement of these stakeholders in participatory forest management is critical: for them, for their livelihoods and for the viability of the resource.

Elements of success

Some of these stakeholders recognize their role as not just users of the resource, but as managers. Charcoal producers therefore become involved in reforestation activities; tour operators take interest in ensuring that forest trails and forest cover are maintained; users therefore incorporate management approaches to maintain their livelihoods. Users that do not engage as managers, on the other hand, may lose more than they gain. For example, while short crop farming on a denuded hillside provides a crop profit, this can easily be "washed down the drain" by the next episode of bad weather in the Caribbean's hectic hurricane season, and therefore is not a sustainable livelihood activity.

Successful stakeholder economic activity is therefore also tied to sensible and strategic planning and partnerships. Forging a working relationship with other stakeholders goes a long way in sustaining livelihoods. With the sharing of experiences and the trading of learned lessons and best practices, partners contribute to each other's profit margin and sustenance. Learning about tree germination and best planting seasons, drought resilient plants and agroforestry techniques, innovative extraction procedures, lived experiences of natural disasters or encounters with endangered animals and discoveries of rare plants and other such matters is possible in an environment which facilitates exchange of ideas.

Coming together

In the development of participatory forest management processes in the Caribbean, stakeholder interface is a mechanism for facilitation of these types of exchanges. Over five years of funding support of the National Forest Programme Facility of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and facilitated networking by the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) have produced a forward movement of the participatory management of forest resources in the Caribbean.

The approach is strongly supported by the Forestry Department in each of eight countries in the region: Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Kitts & Nevis, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, and Trinidad & Tobago. It has so far yielded an increased appreciation by stakeholders for their role as co-managers of the forest resource, and also an understanding of the importance of measuring the benefits of their work, in sustaining their livelihoods.

Maintaining this momentum has therefore generated a win-win situation, whereby forest users and co-managers gain awareness that "livelihood surety produces a lifestyle quality".

Fast Facts (St. Vincent and the Grenadines):

- The Integrated Forest Management Development Programme was set up in St. Vincent and the Grenadines in 2003
- Active community groups in the IFMDP are: Keepers of the Environment, Partners of the Environment, Rose Hall Development Organisation, Rose Bank Development Association, Chapmans Craft Makers Association, and Diamonds
- Major milestones achieved include a Small Grant Action Learning Project for Partners of the Environment, UNDP GEF Small Grant Project of Keepers of the Environment, and FAO funding via the Environmental Watershed Protection Project for four community groups to facilitate sustainable livelihood opportunities.

More information:

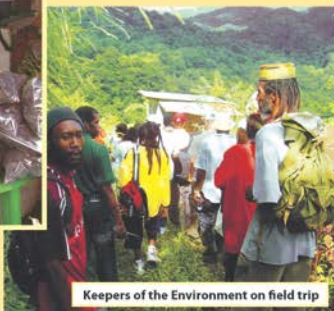
For more information on the Integrated Forest Management Development Programme, contact the Forestry Division St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Richmond Hill, Kingstown. Tel. No.: (784) 457-8594 or (784) 453-3340 or the Ministry of Agriculture at (784) 456-1111.

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Keepers of the Environment on field trip



Forest co-management is not without its challenges. The coming together of a range of forest users in the approach to participatory management is characterised by a range of differing perspectives on forest use and a range of understanding of the impact of such use on the resource. The process of developing a cohesive body of co-managers therefore features conflict resolution, progress towards a mutual understanding of the concept of sustainability and an exploration of viable options for forest users and managers.

Deforestation and downstream effects

High rates of deforestation are matters of concern in the Caribbean. Not only does deforestation contribute to an increased impact of natural disasters such as hurricanes and flooding, but it also contributes to the loss of biodiversity and the loss of forest-based livelihoods. As mentioned in previous articles in this series, forested areas support a wide variety of livelihoods both directly and indirectly, and also provide a range of goods and services. The lack of co-ordinated use and management of the resource by the body of users can cause problems for everyone.

Participatory forest management however provides an avenue for resolution of possible conflicts among co-users of the forest resource. Traditional practices of legislation and enforcement by a single Government-entity have not been completely successful in reducing deforestation; this, driven by the global economic downturn and poorly regulated activities of individuals and groups, continues to put pressure on forests and forest resources. Bringing together all users therefore provides a mechanism for communicating and resolving issues.

Resolving conflict under the canopy

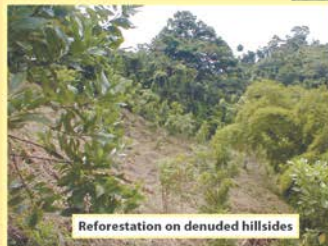
One of the conflicts arising from multiple users of the forest, is differing use of the resource. A forest user that builds a livelihood from use of wood products may be in conflict with a user that requires protection of a watershed. How would such conflict be resolved? One of the ways in which this is done, is by examining the livelihood activity and ensuring it is being undertaken in a sustainable fashion. Sometimes, also, the user that is dependent upon watershed protection may facilitate or encourage reforestation efforts through financial incentives.

Other times conflicts arise when there is no clear awareness of user responsibility. The ability to derive benefits from the forest is dependent upon the forest resource being maintained in an optimal state; if the user adopts practices which do demonstrate responsible action, the losses reaped later on by this user and others may exceed any gains obtained previously. Involvement in participatory forest management may therefore provide an opportunity to build awareness and gain knowledge on sustainable practices.

A third area of conflict arises when there are activities associated with the forest which are illegal. Such activities include

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Article 3: Sustainable Solutions



Reforestation on denuded hillsides

unauthorised removal of lumber and the planting of illegal crops. This conflict may have its own resolution through the legal system; but as well, through involvement in participatory forest management, alternative livelihood activities can be identified which would reduce the incidence of these activities and contribute to the protection of forests.



Bushfire and illegal cultivations

Reducing external impacts

Another concern which participatory forest management addresses is the impact of external factors on livelihoods. The island economies of the Caribbean have historically been linked very strongly to tourism and the export of certain food crops including bananas and cane sugar. The decline of these industries over time impacted heavily on associated livelihoods. Individuals and communities engaged in these industries have had to find other means of generating a viable and sustaining income.

Participatory forest management programmes have been able to facilitate idea development on alternative livelihoods. Additionally, the process has put resource users in touch with key agencies to help build community capacity in the development of innovative businesses. In this way, livelihoods are able to become independent of the impact of changes in the wider global situation and develop within a more controlled environment of self-reliance.

Passing it on

The promotion and prolongation of these efforts is sustained by the participatory process, with success stories being an effective medium for encouraging more communities, individuals and forest users to assist in forest management by adopting similar strategies.



Forest Users

Fast Facts (St. Vincent and the Grenadines):

- Estimates of deforestation in some watershed areas of St. Vincent and the Grenadines were estimated to approach 400-500 acres/year.
- Direct national spending on the forestry sector stands just over EC\$2.1 million annually.
- St. Vincent's Integrated Forest Management Development Programme has encouraged the use of mentors to assist groups in the development and implementation of successful projects.

More information:

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Mark your calendar: Coming soon!

A community caravan activity will visit the communities of Georgetown and Chateaubelair during the period October 24 - 26, 2011 to share more information on experiences in participatory forest management in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Come out in your numbers and learn how you can be involved!



Civil Society and State come together to support each other

The success of the Integrated Forest Management Development Programme in St. Vincent and the Grenadines can be measured by improvement in management of the country's forest resource and by the transformative impact on the variety of stakeholders associated with the co-management effort. Recent activities to convey the achievements of the participatory forest management process have afforded public evaluation and promotion.

Over the past month, various forest-based stakeholder groups and the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Forestry Department have promoted their joint efforts in forest management in a variety of communication products. These have ranged from newspaper articles to radio magazines and a community caravan staged in the districts of Chateaubelair and Georgetown.

The activities were co-ordinated by CANARI - the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute - and were funded by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (UNFAO). The communication products not only served to bring to the public's attention the work of these groups, but also provided an opportunity for the horizontal exchange of information and experiences among stakeholders.

In respect of the Community Caravan, the exercise resulted in useful brainstorming opportunities and opened the door for



Children learn about the snakes of SVG of Chateaubelair Community Caravan

Promoting Participation in Forest Management

Article 4: Measuring Project Success



Students learn about papercraft from CYEN members



Visitors learn about the work of the St. Vincent National Trust

deeper collaboration among stakeholders. Here are some of the benefits identified in this exercise by participating stakeholder groups:

- "It helped us to meet with other groups and learn something new"
- "More insight about the groups involved in participatory forest management."
- "Helped us to build relationships with other organisations."

At the first caravan in Chateaubelair, the Rose Hall Cultural and Development Organisation and Partners of the Environment shared information on resources and project experiences. From a successful community exercise in cleaning up the Chateaubelair River to sustainable use of forest products in drum construction, the past projects each underscored the power of civil society action in environmental management.

At the second caravan, members of the Caribbean Youth Environmental Network and the St. Vincent National Trust shared similar discussions with the Forestry Department while the Diamond Cultural and Heritage Association and Chapman's Craftmakers Association mounted displays.

The National Trust shared information on how their work had provided new avenues for tourism livelihood activities and helped them to find new donors for support of their work. The CYEN shared their plans for an environmental fair and were happy to gain potential partners in staging the event through the caravan. The general feedback on the exercise from stakeholders was that the caravan activity was very beneficial in providing new information, broadening

knowledge on the work of other organisations and in stimulating greater interest in contributing to participatory forest management.

Visitors to the caravan were also happy with the staging of the exercise. One visitor mentioned that it was "good to see this kind of activity outside of Kingstown, for a change". Another visitor recommended that the activity should be held again before the end of the year, with greater involvement by community groups and more promotion of the event.

The Forestry Department also gained a deeper perspective on participatory forest management from this exercise, as seen in a comment from one of its officers:

"As a Government organisation, it is good to know that people out there have the same values for things you are working so hard to protect."

Staged by the traditional manager of the resource, this caravan activity has provided a useful mechanism for communicating and building support for the approach to shared management.



Partners of the Environment members at Community Caravan



Groups share experiences in participatory forest management

Fast Fact:

Six civil society groups from St. Vincent and the Grenadines participated in the community caravan exercise; learn about them and take part in their activities to protect the forest resource:

- Caribbean Youth Environmental Network
- Partners of the Environment
- Chapman's Craftmakers Association
- Rose Hall Cultural and Development Organisation
- Diamond Cultural Heritage Association
- St. Vincent and the Grenadines National Trust

More information:

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Appendix 2 Extract from (online) Searchlight newspaper, with quiz question on Community Caravan



<http://searchlight.vc/index156.htm>

Answers and winners in Searchlight Treasure Hunt November 9, 2011

Answers

1. Teachers' Strike, 1975– (pg 6)
2. Chateaubelair, Georgetown – (pg 13)
3. 300 – (pg 20)
4. Dr. George Lamming, 'Rethinking Perspectives on Independence' – (pg 21)
5. "Gabby" the Garbage Bin – (pg 25)

Winners

1. Chiarra Peniston
2. Andrea Audain
3. Tosca Neverson
4. Tammy Richardson

Prizes

- 1 – A gift from Courts
- 2 – A \$25 credit from Digicel
- 3 – A \$20 gift voucher from Jujube
- 4 – A \$10 patty meal from Bickles

Treasure Hunt clues for Tuesday, November 8, 2011

1. What event triggered the establishment of the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Teachers' Cooperative Credit Union and in what year did that event take place?

2. In Which two towns did the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Forestry Department recently stage community caravans?

3. How many seats are there in Greece's Parliament?

4. Which renowned Caribbean author gave a lecture in St. Vincent and the Grenadines in October and what was the topic?

5. What is the name of the mascot of the SVG Central Water and Sewage Authority (CWSA)?